Smart Villages & smart communities in Europe
Developments & lessons learnt

Edina Ocsko, E40 / Smart Village Network Services

Who am I and what the SVN is?

- **Former coordinator of two EU-funded projects** (Smart Rural 21 and Smart Rural 27) that aimed to help implement Smart Villages in the EU

- **Coordinator / Animator of the Smart Village Network** (Smart Village Network Services / E40)

- **Vice-Chair of the Rural Pact Coordination Group** (member as SVN Services/ E40)

- The Smart Village Network is **an *independent* network of rural communities** – as core members – and village groups/ LAGs and village associations/ networks – as associated members

- **Continues with technical support for local communities & LAGs like:** events/ discussions, support for cooperation and networking, support for strategy development, support for developing and obtaining funding for innovative ideas

What is in it for me?

« *LEADER is asked to do more with less.* »

…However…

✓ Also need to renew its approach.
✓ Demonstrate animation strengths & local knowledge of LAGs.
✓ Focus on local communities & innovation.

1 LEADER & SMART VILLAGES

The 7 principles of LEADER

The principles of Smart Villages

The 7 principles of LEADER	The principles of Smart Villages
✓ Sub-regional (LAG) areas	✓ Local rural communities/ villages
✓ Public-private-civil society partnership (LAGs)	✓ Public (local government) –private (innovation) – civil society (engagement) partnership
✓ Integrated/ multi-sectoral strategies	✓ Integrated Smart Village strategies or plans
✓ Bottom-up (based on local needs)	✓ Bottom-up & participatory
✓ Innovation	✓ Innovation: technological & social
✓ Cooperation (LAGs)	✓ Cooperation (villages)
✓ Networking (LEADER networks)	✓ Networking (Smart Village network(s))

Animation & capacity-building support to local communities

2 Diverse themes

Reconstruction of old buildings
How to make it sustainable? - For what use?

Old school building to local farm & businesses
Old mill to local business & community hub
Old cellars to tourist accommodation
Eco-building to become a local agricultural hub and community space

Data management platforms & digital platforms for better interactions

How to use digital technology for improving services?

Young people: How to engage?

Landscape planning for new buildings
Preserving environmental heritage

Sustainable / regenerative agriculture through new agricultural methods and technologies

Retirement village & (e)care
Is digital the solution?

Smart mobility solutions
Transport in remote rural areas

Renewable energy & local energy communities

3 Innovation in Smart Villages

- Innovation / 'smartness' is most difficult to define
- Not just digital/ technological + social innovation (sounds like buzzword but true)
- Not the smart theme that matters
- Encouraging vision & open thinking
- Support for new ideas (smart adaptation of existing examples)
- Expected to bring change in the village

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2014 2020

4 **Smartness in the process: Planning**

- **Identifying rural communities** in your area that are good candidates for Smart Villages: openness to new ideas, someone to lead (human capacity), vision, motivation

(Self-)monitoring of the Smart Village Strategy design and implementation process

The short guidance and related templates serve to help monitor the (smart) village strategy development & implementation process. This method was used for the purpose of monitoring, learning and drawing overall lessons of the process of smart village strategy development and implementation process in the Smart Rural 21 Project.

Read more

Photo by Patrick Perkins on Unsplash

- **Understand/ map / encourage public-private-civic partnership** – create linkages

- **Help develop vision (strategy/ plan) for the community** (aligned with LAG strategy) – might not be suited for all types of lead organisations (more for elected mayors)
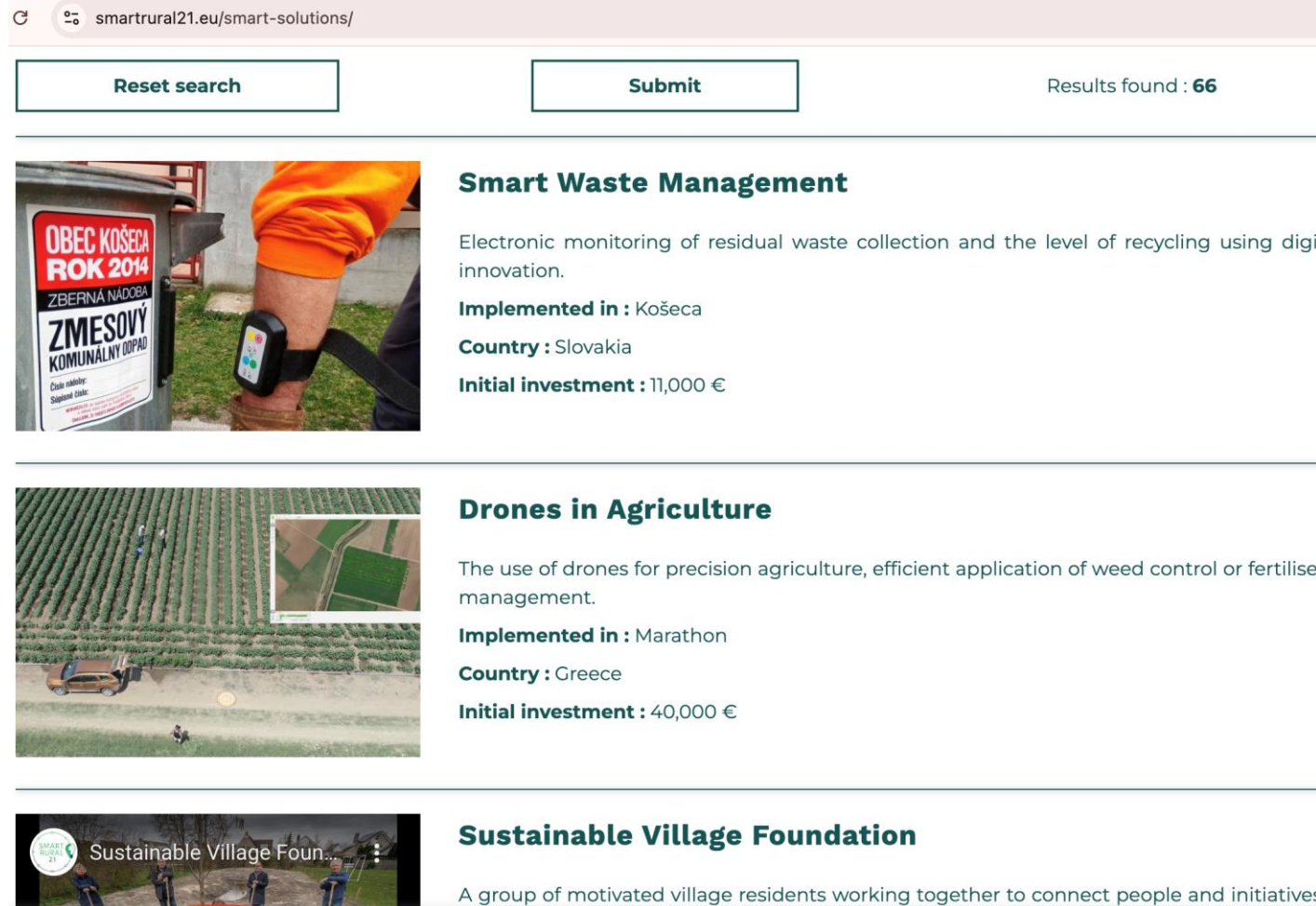

Smart Village Strategy Template

The smart village strategy template is a tool to help local communities to develop a local development strategy that is adapted to the 'smart village' concept. The template aims to help creating a vision and a development path for the village in the medium to long term. ...

Read more

- **Support in identifying innovative solutions** (Smart Rural 21 database & beyond)

- **Help create partnerships**: bring in expertise in consultation with the village: specialists (private/ research)

- **Help identify and submitting funding** applications: within LEADER and beyond

- Help identify **international cooperation**

What we do in the SVN?

- **SVN village (and LAG) database**: sharing information about villages – support planning

- **Enabling exchange among communities**: Online and (later) face-to-face events / discussions & SVN App (work in progress)

- **Support implementation of smart actions**, including joint project applications (help direct access to funding)

- **Improving policymaking** - Making the voices of villages heard: Rural Pact Coordination Group membership (Vice-chair)

Smart Village Network membership

- Membership is focused on rural communities/ villages (core members)
- LEADER LAGs as associated members
- Condition of membership: No membership fee.
- Villages to complete membership profile online:
  - ✓ Village database
  - ✓ Support from LAGs

Our current members are:

| Country ⌄ | | Village Group ⌄ |

Hungary

Vox Vallis Development Association

Koppány-valley Naturpark covers an area of some 16,000 hectares and integrates 10 small villages along the Koppány-creek, with a total population of 2100 people. A LEADER Action Group also operates in the area. Relevant fields of development include addre ...
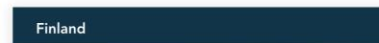
Details

Spain

Association of Rural Development of Catalonia

The Association of Rural Development is a non-profit organisation and a Local Action Group (LAG) in Central Catalonia that aims to foster entrepreneurship in rural areas, especially through a strategic project on circular economy and improving ICT. We beli ...

Details

Finland

Latvia

Profile & strategy

- Basic village information
- Information on key challenges/ solutions (optional)

- Ownership by the village (and/or support by LAG)
- Access to others' information as much as own is being shared
- Option to download strategy (work in progress)
- Cooperation!

Exchange and networking

- **Online events** (planned): Smart Village café, online debates on key issues (e.g. newcomers)
- **Face-to-face events**: fee of charge (travel costs to be covered by communities) with a practical focus – visits to other communities
- **Larger fairs for exchange**: invite diverse stakeholders from all levels (also beyond membership)

If you are open to host – get in touch with us!

Policy work

- Rural Pact Coordination Group membership
- Currently involved in elaborating joint declaration on future RD policy in RPCG
- Supporting the work of national / regional policymakers

- Advocacy for better support to local rural communities

All Posts   definition   engagement   policy   multi-funding

Edina Ocsko
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Can the EU's Long Term Vision and the Rural Pact become a reality in the post-2027 Rural Development Policy?

Food for thought in response to the questions set by the LTVRA Report No more business as usual [1] Rural areas are confronted with...

122 views   0 comments

GET IN TOUCH!

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