



Smart Villages in CAP Strategic plan Croatia

Factsheet

The Smart Rural 27 project (2nd Preparatory Action on Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century, 2021-24) aims at improving the Smart Villages support framework at both the local (rural communities) and regional/ national (policymaking) contexts.



Smart Villages in the CAP Strategic plan Croatia

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Smart Villages in the CAP Strategic plan in Croatia



DEFINITION OF SMART VILLAGES

There is no formal definition of Smart Villages in Croatia.

Is there a focus on digital innovation? There is a focus on digital innovation in the Croatian CAP SP. Innovation and digitalisation are envisaged to contribute “to economic development in the agricultural sector and beyond and consequently to strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural areas” (HR CAP SP, p.31). Smart Villages are expected to contribute “to the Long-Term Vision for EU Rural Areas by 2040 [...] with a view to achieving a smart and sustainable rural area. Digitalisation of everyday processes in rural areas for the purpose of sustainable development is highlighted in all activities” (HR CAP SP, p. 271). Also, the Croatian CAP SP states that projects to be implemented through the LEADER Local Development Strategies will be contributing to the implementation of the Smart Village concept if they are related to: “innovative and smart solutions in villages; digitalisation in agriculture and other social activities in villages or contribute to environmental objectives and climate change mitigation in villages” (HR CAP SP, p. 768).

Dedicated Smart Villages interventions

There is no dedicated Smart Villages intervention in the CAP Strategic Plan.

Other relevant interventions

✓ Support for LEADER (CLLD) (77.06.)



Mostly contributes to...

SO8: Promoting employment, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusions and local development in rural areas.



R.40: SV strategies - Target

R40 is not programmed.



Other relevant programmes:

The Smart Villages Pilot Programme: A national programme to support the Smart Villages concept to be implemented in rural pilot areas in collaboration with LAGs to improve or enhance socioeconomic and living conditions in villages.

SMART VILLAGES IN THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic statement

There is no specific reference to Smart Villages in this section of the CAP SP.

Assessments of needs and intervention strategy

The assessment of needs in the Croatian CAP SP directly recognises the role of Smart Villages as a part of the preparation and implementation of LEADER Local Development Strategies (LDSs). LEADER enables local stakeholders to directly influence the improvement of conditions or quality of life in rural areas while the role of Smart Villages is seen as a tool to contribute *“even better to the implementation of the needs and potential of a given local area”* (HR CAP SP, p.43). The CAP SP recognises that quality of life is closely related to the quality and development of physical/municipal infrastructure, which in rural areas still lag behind compared to urban areas (HR CAP SP, p.42). For that reason, public infrastructure, including the availability of high-speed broadband internet that enables the usage of digital tools, *“will contribute to mitigating unfavourable demographic developments in rural areas and will provide conditions for social and sustainable economic development and contribute to maintaining existing and creating new jobs”* (HR CAP SP, p.42). Finally, it is accentuated that due to the limited resources within the CAP SP, local communities will have the opportunity to access other EU funds and programmes, primarily the Integrated Territorial Programme within Cohesion Policy while broadband will be funded from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 and the operator’s own resources (HR CAP SP, p. 42).

Specific Objectives

SO8: Promote employment, growth, gender equality

Smart villages are recognised as one of the opportunities in the SWOT analysis (2.1.SO8.1.3 Opportunities as a tool to reduce the developmental gap between villages in the developed EU Member States and Croatia). It is also expected that Smart Villages *“should further encourage and simplify the local population’s decision-making on the future, in order to better steer local social and economic development”* (HR CAP SP, p. 153). LAGs will also play a significant role in SV implementation. The intervention, that contributes to Specific Objective 8, aims to have *“a positive impact on the quality of life in rural areas, the creation of an enabling environment for the development of economic activities and the active participation of the local population in the creation of development directions of the environment in which they live”* (HR CAP SP, p. 155). The Need P16: 'Encouraging stakeholder involvement in local development' is particularly important. It is further linked to 77.06. — Support to the LEADER approach, in which SV is mentioned (HR CAP SP, p. 155).

Target plans

R40 is not programmed in the CAP SP.

Consistency of the Strategy and complementarities

There is no specific reference to Smart Villages in this section of the CAP SP.

Elements common to several interventions ...including the CAP Network

No specific CAP Network support actions for Smart Villages have been identified in the CAP SP.

Smart Villages interventions

DEDICATED INTERVENTION

There is no dedicated Smart Villages intervention in the CAP SP.

OTHER RELEVANT INTERVENTIONS

Support for LEADER (CLLD) (77.06.)

The LEADER intervention envisages to contribute to the implementation of the Smart Villages concept. Synergies of this intervention with Smart Villages are clearly present since the projects to be implemented through the LDS are encouraged, among other aspects, to contribute to the following activities:

- innovative and **smart solutions in villages**;
- digitalisation in agriculture and other **social activities in villages**;
- contribution to environmental objectives and **climate change mitigation** in villages.

Modernisation: AKIS and digitalisation

Digitalisation is one of the aspects relevant for Smart Villages within the Croatian CAP SP. The Digitalisation Strategy will comprise three levels of investment. The third level directly concerns Smart Villages since it provides support for skills development, knowledge transfer and digital transition, AKIS, LEADER and Smart Villages, and on-farm investments. (HR CAP SP, p.888-889) The AKIS strategic approach is related to support relevant dimensions of the SV concept through. e.g. *“strengthening links with scientific and other relevant institutions and sources of knowledge [...], fostering and strengthening innovation partnerships and effective use of information and communication technologies to improve the flow and sharing of knowledge”* (HR CAP SP, p.209-210). Also, *“AKIS and the CAP National Network (in one part also LEADER) will have an important role in data collection on the situation and needs related to digitalisation, primarily digital knowledge and skills”* (HR CAP SP, p.888). Furthermore, *“within LEADER, LAGs will have the opportunity to create interventions related to digitalization within their LDS”* (CAP SP, p.889). In addition to that, their role, together with CAP network, will be *“raising awareness of the value of digitalisation in business practices but also in improving the quality of life in rural areas, including overall sustainable development and adaptation to climate change”* (HR CAP SP, p.889). *“Interventions from LAGs’ LDSs, as well as other activities through e.g. participation in the AKIS, from the point of view of digitalisation, will have a synergistic effect with other CAP SP interventions mentioned above”* (HR CAP SP, p.889).

Smart Villages in other EU funds and programmes

The Smart Villages Pilot Programme (National and other funding sources): In the Republic of Croatia, the concept of Smart villages will be implemented through two models: through the Local Development Strategies (LAGs), described above (intervention 77.06.), and through the Smart Villages Pilot Programme (national and other funding sources). The Ministry of Agriculture plans to develop a national programme to support the Smart Villages concept to be implemented in pilot rural areas in collaboration with LAGs to improve or enhance socioeconomic and living conditions in villages. The Smart Villages pilot programme will define the criteria for selecting the pilot areas, the sources and means of funding, the eligible activities, the period of implementation of the programme, and the conditions and method of implementation of the programme. The role of SV is seen as a tool to contribute *“even better to the implementation of the needs and potential of a given local area”* (HR CAP SP, p.43), as a tool to reduce the developmental gap between villages in the developed EU Member States and Croatia and *“should further encourage and simplify the local population’s decision-making on the future, in order to better steer local social and economic development”* (HR CAP SP, p.153).

Ex-ante Evaluation

There is no specific reference to Smart Villages in this section of the CAP SP.

*The overall analysis and the references are based on the original **Croatian CAP SP version 1.2 approved on 28/10/2022**. The Factsheet is produced under Contract No AGRI-2020-0332 with the Union and the opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the contracting authority's official position.*