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# **Smart Villages in Finland**

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# Actions for Smart Villages in Finland: background information

- 2008 the first national strategy for Fast broadband, **national funding** for rural broadband -> 2018
- 2016: Study for Smart countryside, governmental project
- 2017: New governmental decision for **Rural Digitalization**
- 2018: Governmental alignment: Priority of digital services (public sector)
- **Co-operation** between national administration and other actors → **Broadband Competence Office** Finland [www.bco.fi](http://www.bco.fi)
- National Rural policy council: **target setting** for rural areas
- **Rural Development Programme 2014-2020**, regional and local actions (Leader),
  - Broadband funding (village broadband)
  - Digitalisation projects
  - **Smartest Village of Finland -competition 2018-2019**





<https://www.maaseutu.fi/en/the-rural-network/smart-villages/32-villages-want-to-be-the-smartest-in-finland/>



# How to make difference?



- Village action has long roots in Finland
- Village action association of Finland
  - *the Village Action Association of Finland promotes and develops village action and locally initiated rural development on the national level. The Village Action Association of Finland is an umbrella organisation for regional actors in rural development.*
  - There are more than 3000 village associations in Finland
  - Association was established in 1997 when EU activity and the LEADER approach were just starting in Finland and provincial village associations had been established in eight provinces.
- So, what is needed, is something more and/or different:
- Village development plans are normal tools for villages
- How to take the step to be smart? How to make the difference?
  - Village development plan vol 2 / goes digital / implementation and action plan

# The current and potential scope and scale for smart villages

- **Regional – multi fund co-operation - “rainbow” plans or strategies for Smart Villages, so called cover plan for local smart village plans.**
- **Local Smart Villages plans, based on cooperation at local level. In connection with local Leader strategies**

Possible scale for smart villages:

- **Economic** – investments and actions to support (business development in) emerging value chains and local economic clusters (both agricultural and non-agricultural) based on local assets and (potential) areas of comparative advantage (biocenomy, smart tourist destinations, etc.). Smart transport and logistic solutions, smart local services and service chains and smart food chains, digitalization and co-operation of enterprises. And **connectivity** (broadband) and different models for businesses (for example social entrepreneurship)
- **Social** – innovations to ensure sustainable and good quality social and cultural services. Investments in skills for the future. Urban-rural linkages. Sustainable wellbeing: preventing segregation and inequality between people, improve integration of immigrants and other new comers, community, living conditions, culture, safety. Knowhow, knowledge – also silent knowledge - of villages into operation.
- **Environmental** – innovations to improve resource efficiency, create local energy communities, reduce the carbon footprint, enhance biodiversity, both protect and valorize environmental assets. The municipal authorities, business representatives, local residents, research institutes and experts work together to devise and tailor new cost-effective solutions to reduce emissions, especially in the contexts of transportation, housing and food. Low carbon villages : circular economy, sustainable food production and local food,
- **Importance of co-operation between every spatial scale cannot be underlined too much.**

## Possible alternatives for implementation **at this point** (Co-operation)

Model	Innovation partnership (EIP) type of funding: Smart Village Groups /OG's	SV project as a part of Leader-strategy / SV activator in LAG	Co-Ordination Project / Umbrella or Theme Project for Smart Villages
<b>What/how</b>	<p>Operational group of village actor, local research, entrepreneurs, associations... Working as “smart village innovator”</p> <p>Implementation of SV plan with immaterial /small projects. Investments and bigger projects with separate applications and funding</p>	<p>A “smart village / innovation broker” plays the role of 'matchmaker' as a worker of Leader group or a common worker of several Leader groups.</p> <p>Animation, activation and guidance for project application process and managing, information sharing.</p>	<p>Co-ordination group (at least 2 actors, village actors or some other association or others). A “smart village innovation broker” plays the role of 'matchmaker' (at least 2 actors)</p> <p>Guidance, activation, animation, sharing of information and know-how. Meetings, seminars and networking at local level and between groups.</p> <p>Projects from different funds with separate applications</p>
<b>Indicators:</b>	<p>Number of SV-groups</p> <p>Number of SV-actions funded</p>	<p>Number of SV activators</p> <p>Number of SV projects connected to SV plans</p>	<p>Number of groups</p> <p>Number of SV-actions funded</p>