Workshop 2: Digitally-led innovative rural futures

Draft first reflections from the workshop

ENRD Contact Point

Rural Vision Week

- The **three basic conditions for digitalisation** need to be met: i) **Physical** infrastructure; ii) **Human** capacity, skills (for all groups) (at local but also national levels); iii) **Access** to technology, tools, applications.

- A **'rural-based' approach to digitalisation, starting from local contexts.** Local rural stakeholders, farms, households, rural businesses… can tailor digital tools and solutions to address local needs, adapting them to the context, avoiding possible risks, and harnessing opportunities based on local capital.

- **Networking and Local Digital Brokers.** Horizontal and vertical networking at all level (local, national and EU) connecting the local needs with the technological providers and innovation sources.

- **Rethinking rural areas post-COVID.** Support and enable new models for businesses & service delivery (e-health, e-mobility, e-education. Move beyond the traditional systems and models.

- **Empower local communities in rural areas to engage with higher-level governance structures**, funding mechanisms, research on a more equal basis.

Rural Vision Week

- **Set a number of targets** (e.g. relative targets) to boost action and resources for **rural digitalisation**. Hence, focused on **infrastructure** (starting point), skills, services, rural digital economy, funding (e.g. ring-fencing DIH funding for those located in rural areas).

- Develop **'local digital innovation ecosystems'** by deploying a **network of rural innovation hubs** in any form they take in rural areas (e.g. Research villages, community hubs, FabLabs, Co-working spaces, Territorial factories, multifunctional centers, community hubs). Support **community-led innovation** in new emerging areas such as new business models, models for service delivery, new economic sectors (e.g. data economy).

- Support **local digital brokers** to animate and network local actors (ensure no one is marginalised), and connect them with relevant digital players (e.g. research, tech companies, etc). Build an EU-wide **Network of digital brokers** to support digitalisation in rural areas, transforming AKIS into ARKIS (that goes beyond agro-forestry and food sectors).

- Ensure an **enabling legislative frameworks for new emerging areas** (e.g. Nomad / Remote working) – revising existing ones (e.g. cutting red-tape).

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