GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK OF THE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS FOR SMART TRANSITION
and
INTERNAL CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINAR

Deliverable D.T1.1.1 – Work Package T1

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Foreword and Context

The present document has been produced in the context of **Alpine Space project SmartVillages** (AS623 – Smart digital transformation of Villages in the Alpine Space), as deliverable **D.T1.1.1** of **Work Package T-1** "Regional Analysis of readiness and needs for a smart transition in the Test Areas", led by project partner **Poliedra-Politecnico di Milano**.

This deliverable is produced in conjunction with the **Capacity Building Seminar**, to be held in Milan on November 28th 2018, that forms integral part of the deliverable itself and that will dedicate a specific session on the presentation of the Guidelines for the Work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups and that will, mutually, feed the possible re-orientation and the actual implementation of the Guidelines themselves.

This deliverable is accompanied by **further deliverables** that complete it and that concur in creating a more thorough framework to facilitate a smart transition in the Test Areas. Most namely:

- The **Template on the Test Areas**, 'Presentation of the Test Areas and the Pilot Activities', aiming at describing the Test Areas, their needs, expectations, and themes to be developed in their smart transition.
- The **Template on Stakeholder Mapping for the Regional Stakeholder Groups**, that represents the core section of deliverable **D.T1.1.2**, which will be drafted in the final form once all Test Areas have completed their own respective mapping.
- The **Indicators of Smartness for Villages**, both in its complete list divided in 6 dimensions (Smart Economy, Smart Environment, Smart Governance, Smart Living, Smart Mobility, Smart People) and in its core subset, that will be the object of a specifically dedicated session in the Capacity Building Seminar.

COMMUNITY VISIONING FOR SMARTVILLAGES and the OREGON MODEL

The concept of **community visioning**[1] can be traced back to the founding concept of "anticipatory democracy", defined as a democratic evolution of governance encompassing the engagement of the wider community of citizens in the process. Community visioning can be defined as a planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future and begins to make it a reality.
Community visioning is both a **process** and a **product**. The process of creating a shared vision of the future in a community is often as important as the final product of creating a shared vision, and/or an action plan for a community. In the context of SmartVillages, the 'community' refers to the '**village**', within the defined boundaries and meaning of the project's **Test Areas**. '**Community**', therefore, represents the human element of any Test Area in SmartVillages, and, in a narrower sense, the group of interested stakeholders that have been identified as members of each **Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG)**.

Community visioning is well suited to SmartVillages. By definition, rural and mountain villages encompass small and often strongly connected communities, that have a higher potential in developing shared solutions and a higher commitment in working together towards a common aim. Community visioning appears to fit adequately the scope of SmartVillages of structuring and facilitating a smart transition in the project's Test Areas.

The **Oregon Model**[2], named after the US State in which the described model was first conceived and used, represents a comprehensive platform of community visioning on which to build the Guidelines for the work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups.
The Oregon Model, slightly customised and integrated to take into account the specific needs for a smart transition within SmartVillages, normally encompasses **five main steps**, that support the whole community visioning process, define activities and allow for the elaboration of products.
Not all these steps are inherently necessary for the work of SmartVillages RSG, but they will all be described in detail in the following as the backbone of the Guidelines. A **further sixth step** is proposed and discussed in the Guidelines, that

Community Visioning

Community visioning can be defined as a planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future and begins to make it a reality.

The Oregon Model's steps:

1) *Where are we now?*
2) *Where are we going?*
3) *Where do we want to be?*
4) *How do we get there?*
5) *Are we getting there?*
6) *How are we disseminating and transferring our results?*

[1] Community Visioning, defined e.g. in "The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook", National Civic League Press, Denver, Colorado, 2010.
[2] Oregon Model, defined e.g. in "The new Oregon Model – Envision, Plan, Achieve", Journal of Futures Studies, November 2010, 15(2): 163 – 166.

takes into account one of the most important aspects of any Interreg project, that of transferability and dissemination. The steps will be declined in terms of their definition, and will be compounded by the description of possible activities, themselves linked to possible products for each step.

Before delving into the six steps of the SmartVillages-customised Oregon Model, it is important to briefly outline some guiding principles to the work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups within SmartVillages. The guiding principles will inform and set the boundaries for all the proposed six steps of the SmartVillages-customised Oregon Model, and can be summarised as the four C's of Community Visioning for SmartVillages:

General Guiding Principles[3] – The four C's of Community Visioning for SmartVillages:

- ***Community Boundaries*** – firstly, and somehow self-evidently, a community must clearly define its physical and societal boundaries; the definition of the physical boundaries is self-explanatory, and has the scope of clearly setting the limits within which a Test Area is contained for the scope of the project and an RSG community is expected to work; the definition of societal boundaries is somehow more complex, and basically revolves around defining the leading societal forces linking the community together, the main actors and the main stakeholders that are actively living and operating within the Test Area.
- ***Community Values*** – The shared values and beliefs of the community (in SmartVillages, the Test Area) need to be identified and acknowledged, in order for them to inform and shape the process of smart transition. Each community should also be encouraged to define a community motto, or a community slogan, that encompass the main message the community has for itself and the rest of the world.
- ***Clarity*** – Clarity represent a guiding principle that can be described in clearly defining the main theme or issue on which the community wishes to work, and in also identifying the main needs and aims the community, defined above, is willing to work. In SmartVillages, this principle was fulfilled in the definition of the main theme, needs and aims to be addressed for the smart transition in each Test Area.
- ***Creativity*** – Once clarity of theme and scope is ensured, the process of community visioning must be open-ended with no pre-determined endings or set preferences for results. Creativity complements clarity in the sense that allows for the free development of possible visions within the constraints set by the clear definition of issues, needs and aims.

[3] Guiding Principles in Community Visioning, defined, e.g., in "Building our future, a guide to Community Visioning", edited by University of Wisconsin, 2000, G3708.

Definition of 'smart villages', according to Euromontana Survey[4] August 2018:

Smart villages are communities in rural areas that develop smart solutions to deal with challenges in their local context. They build on existing local strengths and opportunities to engage in a process of sustainable development of their territories. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategies to improve their economic, social and environmental conditions, in particular by promoting innovation and mobilizing solutions offered by digital technologies. Smart villages benefit from cooperation and alliances with other communities and actors in rural and urban areas. The initiation and the implementation of smart village strategies may build on existing initiatives and can be funded by a variety of public and private sources.

1) WHERE ARE WE NOW? Profiling the smart village

DESCRIPTION:

The first step in the Oregon Model for Smart Villages refers to the **accurate description of the state of the art of the community** with respect to the agreed issue on which the community, or the SmartVillages Test Area aspiring to be smart, intends to work. The 'Where are we now?' step is built on the guiding principles of 'Community Boundaries', 'Clarity' and 'Community Values' and is based, for a more thorough quali-quantitative analysis, on a set of **indicators of smartness** for villages.

This step, in SmartVillages, has been kick-started with the drafting and dissemination of the **Template on the Test Areas**, that mainly aimed at identifying:

- The territory of the Test Area in which the work centred on smart transition is going to be held.
- The issues on which the smart transition is going to be framed and performed. In the lexicon of Smart Specialisation Strategies, the issues are best known as 'domains', and the specific issues are known as 'niches'.
- The specific territorial needs that have determined the selection of the domain(s) for smart transition in the Test Area.
- The possible linkages, if present, with the relevant Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) that is active in the Test Area (at local, regional and/or national level). The domains included in the S3 often set quantitative and qualitative benchmarks on which pinning the actions of a specific area.
- The creation of a first draft on indicators, based on the six 'dimensions' proposed by the University of Vienna, University of Ljubljana and the Delft Institute of Technology in 2007, i.e. smart people, smart economy, smart environment, smart living, smart mobility and smart governance.

ACTIVITIES:

The 'Where are we now' step encompasses a series of activities of definition of the state of the art with respect to the specific issue on which each of the Test Areas wishes to work. In the context of SmartVillages, some of the following activities have been performed in the framework of WPT_1.

Possible activities for the definition of the state of the art of smartness in specific issues in the Test Areas are:

- **Inventory and analysis of the Test Areas**' resources and assets, with respect to the specific smart village domain of interest, leading to the creation of a Test Area profile and/or a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-

[4] Euromontana survey on the definition of 'smart village', available at: https://www.euromontana.org/en/towards-a-definition-of-smart-villages/

Opportunities-Threats) assessment; in SmartVillages, this has been mostly accomplished by filling in the Template on the Test Areas.

- **Rating of the Smartness of the Test Areas**, by means of several possible procedures of multi-criteria analysis. This is an interesting research objective overall for the project, but will not be part of the work of the RSG themselves, although the RSG are expected to provide data that are to be used both in the evaluation of the state of the art and on the rating of the smartness of the Test Areas.
- **Discussion and evaluation of the indicators of smartness for SmartVillages**. The set of indicators, divided in the six dimension of smart people, smart economy, smart environment, smart living, smart mobility and smart governance, discussed in the allocated segment of the Capacity Building Seminar, will have to be filled in by the RSG and will represent not only a way to define the current smartness of the Test Areas, but also a way to track changes due to the activities of the project (performance indicators) and to accompany the smart transition towards the expected results (indicators of result). The actual number of indicators to be filled in by each Test Area, out of a grand total of about 90, will be discussed at the 'Indicators in Action!' session of the Capacity Building Seminar, the work of which will concentrate on 24 (4 indicators per each smart dimension) 'core' indicators.
- **Value statements for each Test Area**, defining the community values and the Test Area's core beliefs, for example by means of a motto or a slogan.

2) WHERE ARE WE GOING? Analysing the Trends in the context of relevant legislation(s)

DESCRIPTION:

The second step in the Oregon Model of community visioning, applied to SmartVillages, concerns the evaluation, by the Regional Stakeholder Groups, of where each Test Area is currently headed if the present situation and activities continue.

In terms of smart transition this means evaluating whether the current situation, namely on the issue in which each Test Area is planning to work, is **adequately responding to the expectations and requirements of the Test Areas' Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)[5] and/or other relevant policy instruments**, or whether the situation is static and no significant changes are to be expected. Together with the evaluation of the expectations and requirements of the relevant S3 for each of the Test Areas, other relevant policy measures and/or laws regulating the specific issue on which each Test Area works on can be considered, and the current situation with respect to the aims and objectives of all relevant policy instruments should be evaluated.

Scenarios can be created at this stage, in which the current situation is projected in the nearest future. Alternative scenarios can also be created, taking into account possible changes in legislation, policy instruments and activities on the territory.

ACTIVITIES:

- **Determination of the current and projected trends**, in the context of the requirements and expectations of the S3 and other relevant policy instruments.
- **Creation of a likely scenario, or alternative scenarios.** Possible driving questions can be: Where are we going, if the situation stays the same? What is the price of inaction and business as usual? Are we on track to reach the goals of our S3? Are we on track to reach the goals set by other relevant policy instruments?
  The creation of scenarios can be also performed by means of a **specifically appointed task force/working group** dedicated to the creation of scenarios, if possible.

[5] Smart Specialisation Strategy Portal: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

3) WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? Creating the Vision for a smart transition

DESCRIPTION:

After profiling the smart village and analysing the current trends in the context of relevant legislation, the third step in the Oregon Model customised for SmartVillages concern the creation of the vision for a smart transition itself, responding to the crucial question: "Where do we want to be?".

This step encapsulates the **creation of the vision** for a smart transition in the Test Area, with respect to the expected smart transition in the domain chosen by each RSG. Ideally, the creation of the vision should take into adequate account the policy framework in each Test Area, with specific reference to the Smart Specialisation Strategy that is defined at national/regional or local level.

The creation of the vision should include the elaboration of alternative solutions and their comparison, which can be performed by means of more analytical methods (e.g. Multi Criteria Analysis) to the more qualitative ones (creation of a set of 'ideas' and prioritization of said 'ideas'), critically depending on the degree of relevance, influence, orientation and motivation of the stakeholder composing the RSG.

Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA)[6] is one of the analytic procedures aiming at supporting the choice of solutions (in our case, visions) in decision problems; in particular, MCA can be applied in decision problems formulated in terms of a discrete number of alternative solutions, and in which the aim is to take into account the performance of such solutions with regard of multiple criteria and indicators and the point of view of multiple actors with their different interests. Since MCA is requires some effort to be properly applied, which might not be perfectly suited to the work of the RSG within the Test Areas. That said, a possible alternative procedure might be that of **idea creation and prioritization** via dedicated meetings and brainstorming sessions aiming at maximising harmony and agreement among the different members of the RSG. In this context, the mapping of stakeholders performed in the Test Areas during 2018 helps in acknowledging and making effective use of the characteristics of a RSG in order to facilitate an optimal compromise, and create a shared vision.

Indicators of result, to be built together with steps 1), 4) and 5) are also of capital importance in the *3)Where do we want to be?* phase of the SmartVillages-customised Oregon Model. Indicators of result embody quantitatively or qualitatively the preferred vision, and represent the value or threshold towards which the smart transition in each of the Test Areas tends. The indicators of result might be already explicitly included in the relevant policy instrument(s) that represent the policy framework in which the smart transition operates, with specific reference to the Smart Specialisation Strategy that is relevant for each Test Area.

The shared vision for a smart transition in each Test Area should be summarised in a **document** detailing the vision for smart transition. The vision can be presented to the public in the Test Area, especially when a wider participation is desired, and can represent an ideal document to be shared beyond the borders of the Test Area to disseminate and publicise activities and results.

ACTIVITIES:

- **Creation of the vision** of smart transition in the Test Areas by means of evaluation and comparison of possible alternative visions using Multi Criteria Analysis or a simple procedure of idea prioritizing. This activity incorporates the definition of indicators of result, themselves linked to the set of indicators defined in step 1).
- **Creation of a document** presenting the vision to the wider Test Area community and beyond.

[6] MCA, defined, e.g., in Kourtit, Macharis and Nijkamp (2014): "A multi-actor multi-criteria analysis of the performance of global cities", Applied Geography 49 (2014) 24-36, and in Vito Albino, Umberto Berardi & Rosa Maria Dangelico (2015) Smart Cities: Definitions, Dimensions, Performance, and Initiatives, Journal of Urban Technology, 22:1, 3-21, DOI: 10.1080/10630732.2014.942092.

4) HOW DO WE GET THERE? Creation of an Action Plan

DESCRIPTION:

The selection or creation of a vision, or a preferred scenario for the smart transition in the Test Area, implies the **creation of a specific Action Plan**, in order to enable and implement in the practice the smart transition in each Test Area.

The Action Plan should be strategic and as specific as possible, detailing implementation actions with the assignment of responsibilities, of timelines, of funds, of constraints. The creation of the Action Plan can, in itself, be considered an optimal outcome of the work of the RSG together with the creation of the Monitoring Plan emerging from step '*5) Are we getting there?*'.

The Action Plan will include a set of actions that can be described using the following possible scheme:

i) description of the Action, including the relevant indicators;
ii) description of the stakeholders involved in the Action, with the specification of roles, tasks, responsibilities, to be linked with the characteristics that emerged from the mapping of the stakeholders in each Test Area, with specific reference to their possible contributions, their influence, relevance, expectations and orientations;
iii) description of the costs funding sources for the Action;
iv) description of the policy context of the Action;
v) description of the timeframe of the Action;
vi) description of possible present and future constraints for each Action.

The **set of indicators** that were created and used in step '*1) Where are we now?*' also encompass performance indicators, themselves linked to indicators of result described in step 3). In this sense, step 1 and step 4 are linked by the set of indicators in a progressive manner: from the present situation to a step-wise process to get from the present situation to the desired outcome of the smart transition. **Indicators** accompany the step-wise process, and can and should be linked to the specific Actions described in the Action Plan.

The creation of the Action Plan logically follows the selection of the preferred scenario, and the statement of the Vision, and can be done by specific focused meetings of the Regional Stakeholder Groups, in which the Vision is, possibly, transformed into an Action Plan by the use of subgroups working on specific Actions.

The creation of the Action Plan represents, together with the activities and products described in the following step *5) Are we getting there?* (see further on) the final stage of the foreseen work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups within SmartVillages.

ACTIVITIES:

- **Creation of an Action Plan**, or an implementation plan detailing all steps that are necessary to get to the preferred scenario/Vision.

5) ARE WE GETTING THERE? Implementation & Monitoring Phase

DESCRIPTION:

The creation of the Action Plan kickstarts the **implementation phase** of the smart transition in the Test Areas. The implementation of the activities, however, necessitates the creation of a monitoring plan for the activities themselves. The **Monitoring Plan** accompanies the Action Plan and it is based on a set of monitoring indicators (or performance indicators) defined in the step 1).

The performance indicators that accompany the monitoring phase in step 5) are themselves logically linked to the indicators of result defined in step 3) and, like the indicators of result, might be themselves already incorporated in the relevant policy instrument regulating the future smart transition, with specific reference to the Smart Specialisation Strategy that is relevant for each Test Area.

The monitoring plan accompanies the implementation of the activities and is necessary to ascertain that the activities themselves are going in the direction of the smart transition that was foreseen in the Vision, including the fulfilment of all relevant policies, norms and regulations. The presence of a monitoring plan allows for evaluating whether the implementation activities for smart transition are going according to the Action Plan and are having positive effects on the territory and/or the populations in the Test Areas. In case of unsatisfactory results or worse, negative effects, the monitoring plan should also contemplate **re-orientation activities**, that can go as far back as leading to a selection of a new Vision (step 3).

ACTIVITIES:

- Based on the Action Plan, **operational implementation of the activities** for a smart transition, compounded by a **Monitoring Plan**.
- If needed, **re-orientation of the activities** due to unsatisfactory results, or previously neglected challenges: possible re-selection of Vision or previously discarded alternatives (new iteration of MCA, if needed).

6) HOW ARE WE COMMUNICATING AND DISSEMINATING OUR RESULTS?

DESCRIPTION:

The scope of this step is two-fold: to provide for communication beyond the Regional Stakeholder Group to other possibly citizens in the Test Area and in the neighbourhood of the Test Area, and to provide for a **wider range of dissemination** beyond the borders of the Test Area to other possibly interested mountain and rural areas within the country.

The **communication activities** can be organised according to the local expertise and knowledge of the territory and its responsiveness: it is however important that the project activities and results are not held solely within the Regional Stakeholder Group, but that, in the spirit of openness and inclusivity, they are shared with the rest of the community within the Test Area and with possibly interested similar areas in the neighbourhood of the Test Area.

A more Interreg-centred step concerns the necessity for each of the Test Areas within SmartVillages to **develop a dissemination plan** for its activities and results beyond the Test Areas and their more immediate surroundings. Interreg funds often focus on the need for project activities not to be limited in scope, but to develop actions in order to inspire and involve further areas in similar geographical, demographical and societal contexts. Since SmartVillages is among the first projects in EU co-financed programmes to focus on the smart transition of rural and mountain areas, it is specifically important that a project dealing with a new topic, and a topic specifically linked to the implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategies, is disseminated to **other potentially interested areas**. A dissemination plan, once more, can be organised according to the specific needs and the relevant contacts that each area has: it could be in particular interesting, if feasible, if each Test Area within SmartVillages, '**adopts**' one or more mountain and/or rural areas on which specifically focus for dissemination.

ACTIVITIES:

- **Creation of a Communication Plan**, covering the community of citizens within the Test Area beyond the Regional Stakeholder Group itself.
- **Creation of a Dissemination Plan**, identifying one or more mountain/rural areas to inspire thanks to the activities of SmartVillages.

CONCLUSIONS

The **Guidelines for the work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups** aim at creating a consistent framework for the activities of the stakeholder groups that have been formed throughout the Test Areas of the project.

The proposed rationale of the present framework is based on a **SmartVillages-customised version of the Oregon Model** of participation for community visioning, a tool that was deemed flexible and adaptable enough to be easily implemented in the project's Test Areas.

The present product is to be logically linked and connected with the activities of all the other project's WPs, most namely with the Digital Exchange Platform of WPT-2, that will gather information and data collected at Test-Area level by the Regional Stakeholder Groups, and with the work of WPT-3, with particular reference to the State of the Art of participatory tools, methods and techniques (deliverable D.T3.1.1), and the Digital Smart Village Toolbox (deliverable D.T3.2.1). WPT-4 will, eventually, make use of the data gathered in the activities focusing on indicators to assess the different smart villages initiatives.

Moreover, the Guidelines are to be considered as intrinsically linked to the main findings of the Capacity Building Seminar, most namely as far as the **Guidelines-dedicated section** and the work on the **indicators of smartness for villages** are concerned. In a sense, the actual conclusions on the clarity, desirability and feasibility of the Guidelines for the Work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups will emerge from the activities of the Capacity Building Seminar, as well as from the actual feedbacks from the Test Areas on the foreseen activities.

The CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINAR for the work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups, discussions, feedbacks and further conclusions

On November 27th, the **Capacity Building Seminar for the work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups**, part of deliverable D.T1.1.1 was held in Milan, in the Palazzo Pirelli premises of project's observer Regione Lombardia. The Capacity Building Seminar has been conceived as a highly participated and interactive moment of work, in which two main sessions were organised in order to present and discuss, respectively, the Guidelines for the Work of the Regional Stakeholder Groups (session: ***Guidelines in Action!***) and the Indicators of Smartness (session ***Indicators in Action!***).

The Agenda of the Capacity Building Seminar is attached in Attachment 1 to this document. The attendance list for the Capacity Building Seminar can be found in Attachment 2.

GUIDELINES IN ACTION: Discussion and feedbacks

Picture 1: a moment of the Guidelines in Action! poster and post-it session

The session 'Guidelines in Action!' was organised with the presentation of each of the step of the Guidelines followed by a post-it session in which all partners, representing their own Test Areas, were to address the clarity and the feasibility of the step itself, and possibly provide suggestions. The discussion was animated and lively, and the main findings can be summarised as follows:

Where are we now?

The step was generally considered very clear, and it was acknowledged that it is imperative for all Test Areas working on their own smartness assessment, a precondition to a smartness transition, to create a clear picture of where they are now in terms of the issues they most need to address.

The issue of smartness assessment has been repeatedly highlighted by partners, in order to create an effective dialogue with WPT-2 Digital Exchange Platform, in which one of the main functions regards the assessment of smartness of the Test Areas. In this sense, following the Capacity Building Seminar, the WP leaders have agreed to create a common framework for the smartness assessment using feedbacks form the CBS and the work performed on the project's Digital Exchange Platform.

In terms of feasibility, the step was deemed largely feasible: it was however remarked the need to have long term plans and to harness private initiatives and public funds, and possibly external experts to both assess the current situation and inspire for changes. In all the work of the Test Areas, it has been highlighted the importance of

proving the legitimacy of the SmartVillages partners in organizing and leading activities, and in clarifying the long-term durability and usability of the project's results.

As per suggestions, co-analysis with local stakeholder was encouraged, as a way to involve the regional stakeholder groups in the assessment of smartness.

Where are we now?

In terms of clarity, this step was generally deemed as the less clear, especially since the step itself was to be linked to public regulations and policies. Participants underlined that, often, it is private enterprises that embody innovation and smartness transition and that Smart Specialisation Strategies are often difficult to scale at local level, or scarcely relevant at mountain and rural levels. It was also remarked that Regional Stakeholders might not agree on the trends and might not have the same motivations in acting, something that was already partially addressed in the Regional Stakeholder Mapping that has been part of Deliverable D.T1.1.2.

Finally, it was also recognized that it is often hard to talk about trends, that the language risks to be too technical and distant from local interests and competences: it is, however, important to recognize urgent needs of the Test Areas, and from those to construct scenarios.

In terms of feasibility, the step clearly needs external support. This external support can also take the form of gathering good practices from other mountain areas, or other rural areas that have successfully worked on smartness and innovation. The issue of good practices arises in several of the steps of the Guidelines and, similarly to smartness assessment, has been covered in dedicated post-CBS discussions and will be added to the Digital Exchange Platform.

Where are we going?

The step was considered generally clear, and perhaps could be triggered by some targeted questions such as 'What if we do something?'. Partners also reflected on where their TAs would like to be: the aim to have the same opportunities as urban areas, the need to make good use of innovation and industrial clusters, the need to rationalize costs and get to better life conditions were all mentioned as possible parts of preliminary visions of the future in SmartVillages' Test Areas.

The main issue with the feasibility of this step lies in the need of persuading stakeholders in creating a vision, and a possible solution to that is the use of external expertise and the encouragement to people to feel really involved in a co-creative approach. The use of good practices to this end, to inspire and encourage, has also been underlined. It was also remarked the need to overcome possible legislative blocks to enable the implementation of the vision of the smart future of Test Areas.

Suggestions cover, once more, an effective use of the Digital Exchange Platform for smartness assessment, the need to guarantee that the vision experiences can be replicated in other areas, once they are durable in each Test Area, and a good inter-project exchange on visions and expectations for the future.

How do we get there?

The step was considered mostly clear. However, it was once more underlined the fact that the main issues are those of funds, of human capital, of motivation, and of the general complexity in leading a Test Area towards a smartness transition the targets of which can change in time, depending on the economic situation and on the possible changes in laws and regulations.

The feasibility of the step is linked to an effective involvement of both the stakeholders, and foremost in the creation of robust public-private partnerships, and on the presence of adequate funds. It has also been

underlined how it seems contradictory to talk about an 'open-ended process' with the definition of a well-structured Action Plan.

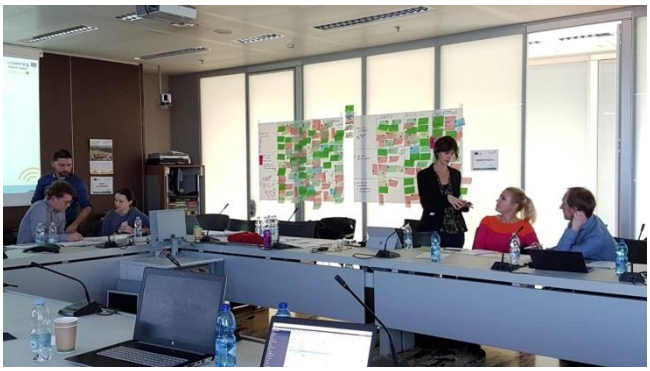
In terms of suggestions, the possible use of volunteers has also been proposed, to this end. Once more, partners have highlighted the need of creating good synergies with the Digital Exchange Platform, making good use of best practices, and also of creating an Action Plan that, in itself, contains the seeds for change and possible reorientation of activities.

Are we getting there?

The clarity of the monitoring plan step has been considered rather good. That said, the creation of the monitoring plan itself has also been considered a bit difficult to prepare a monitoring plan that includes the risk assessment phase, the re-orientation activities and phases, and the repeated assessments of the status of the activities.

Once again, the effective use of the DEP, of good practices in monitoring on collaborative tools to facilitate capacity building and increase of competences. The importance of a transparent and participated process was also highlighted, in order for the monitoring to take place in the clearest and most aware way for all the people potentially affected.

INDICATORS IN ACTION: Discussion and feedbacks



Picture 2: a phase of the Indicators in Action! session

The 'Indicators in Action!' session was centered on the presentation of a complete list of 92 indicators of smartness for villages, divided into the six dimensions of Smart Economy, Smart Environment, Smart Governance, Smart Living, Smart Mobility and Smart People. A subset of 24 indicators was selected for a session of common work, via the use of a specifically designed Indicator Card. The Indicator Card is attached to the present deliverable as Attachment 3.

The main results obtained from the second session are discussed; the analysis is structured considering the smart dimensions.

Smart Mobility

Mobility issues are considered essential to a smart transition by the majority of the project partners attending the meeting. In particular, they are more focused on designing a digital integrated traffic platform in order to manage all the transport facilities in the TA and make the access to public transports more comfortable for the users.

The partner ADRETS proposes solutions involving the mobility of services to enhance the situation among elderly people as well as the concept of "reverse mobility".

Smart Governance

This smart dimension seems not be considered as important as it is in the context of all analyses regarding Smart Cities. The discussion revealed that bottom-up initiatives with the support of a smart decision makers are considered more effective than imposed top-down activities. Thus, an involvement of rural communities is essential to create a smart village.

Smart Economy

New and innovative approaches in the economic filed are a theme of special interest for all the project partners, in particular the digital farming turned to be a focus for the smart transition of all the Slovenian partners.

Furthermore, it must be highlighted that the vast majority of the TAs already perceive the topic of tourism as a fundamental area to invest in in order to be considered a smart village, for example by designing a tourist-related apps or by ensuring that the tourism strategy does not have a negative impact on the environment.

Finally, the definition of a unique brand or logo for the TA is fundamental for the recognizability of the village among the others and may help the growth in the tertiary sector activities.

Smart Environment

Worldwide, renewable energy resources (RES) issues are central in all mitigation and adaptation strategies; in fact all the project partners are very focused on this issue: the TAs are working towards a zero-waste economy and they are implementing even more strategies to produce more energy from RES and/or to derive a bigger share of their energy from RES.

However, some partners feel that it is possible that data are not always available at the village spatial level, so it might be necessary to verify if the RES data are scalable.

Smart Living

The smart dimension 'Smart Living' is the quite possibly the one with the widest meaning; with 'smart living', in fact, it is possible to range from topics concerning the Services of General Interest (SGI) to the more recently developed concept of smart working.

However, before considering all the most innovative activities that could be developed to improve rural community life, there is an essential topic that needs to be discussed: the coverage and the type of internet connection. In fact, the TAs recognize that an adequate infrastructure for internet connection is essential to develop any kind of service which could enable all the inhabitants to continue living in the village and thus contribute in countering the depopulation of rural areas.

Smart People

All project partners revealed an interest in defining the digital literacy level of the TAs: these data are necessary to start the digital transformation of rural areas, considering that there is the evidence that rural populations lack the necessary digital skills and that the use of digital technologies is lower than urban areas.

Other important issues that emerged during the meeting are the presence of citizen assemblies or associations, but also the participation of citizens during public meetings.

Therefore, it appears clear that the basis for starting a smart transition is a community with a great initiative and social, environmental and digital awareness, and also a community that is aware of the situation that the village will face if everything remains unchanged.

Considerations and conclusions

The lively discussions and feedbacks during and after the Capacity Building Seminar have led the partnership, and most namely Poliedra, ADRETS, SCCH and the University of Maribor for WPM, WPT-1 and WPT-2, to intensify efforts to harmonise their work and create a common framework for deliverables.

This has resulted in a closer cooperation especially on the Digital Exchange Platform (https://smartvillages.informatika.uni-mb.si/language/en/home/) and in a renewed attention for a common logical structure for the assessment of smartness for villages.

A survey for smartness assessment, including 24 core indicators in the form of questions with multiple answers has been created and will be available to the partnership by the end of January 2019.