



# Taskforce Action Plan - Cyprus

*Version 4 (November 2022)*

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## 1. Context

The Smart Villages (SV) approach is a completely new and an undiscovered concept for Cyprus. The National Taskforce has no option but to start with the basics. The SV policy needs a public body, a policymaker, the appropriate ministry, to get the ownership of the policy. The policy needs an owner that is recognised as the one responsible for the definition of SV, the planning of actions, the planning and the implementation of a Strategy, the monitoring and the promotion of any activities, funding schemes etc., under the SV approach.

There is an EU definition for Smart Villages, but a national definition, customised to the national reality is needed. A national definition is expected to define and specify the content of SV approach. Defining specific and measurable preconditions, for a village or an area to get the title of a Smart Village or a Smart Rural Area, is also needed. **The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy is already supporting scientific research**, investing in innovative entrepreneurship and implementing an ambitious digital transformation reform. It aspires to develop a modern and efficient state, competitive at European and international level, and a dynamic digital economy, where every citizen and every business will be able to grow and prosper. **The Deputy Ministry is designing the “Smart Cyprus Platform”**, focusing to the urban areas of Cyprus for the moment, but also planning to include rural areas in the near future. The ownership of the Smart Villages Policy is expected to be owned to the Deputy Ministry.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment is the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programmes and the CAP Strategy 2023-2027. The Managing Authority is responsible for the management and implementation of the programmes in an efficient, effective and correct manner. It is expected to bring together the stakeholders coming from the primary sector with all the other relevant Smart Villages stakeholders. National NRN, that is also working under the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment is expected to add value to activities connected to networking, exchanges, capacity building and promoting of the policy, including the planning of the policy, Smart Villages or Smart Villages in transition at national level, good practices and successful approaches of other countries.

The National Taskforce is expected to suggest specific CAP policy interventions, securing that duplications are avoided. For that purpose, the Taskforce is built in a way that most of the relevant interventions and funding schemes are represented (Smart Waste Management, Smart Resources Management – Water, Smart Energy, Smart Mobility, Smart Farming).

The National Taskforce is also expected to “bring together all the pieces of the puzzle”, as many different interventions take place or planned in villages or rural areas but are not connected under a specific strategy or local/regional policy.

## 2. The purpose of the taskforce

### Key policy areas of taskforce interventions

- ✓ Specific CAP policy intervention (e.g. LEADER, EIP-AGRI)
- ✓ Other relevant EU, national or regional policies & Smart Villages
- ✓ Bringing together representatives of different EU funds (for a multi-funded approach)
- ✓ Creating ownership of the Policy,
- ✓ Developing National SV definition,
- ✓ Identifying categories of proposed interventions under the SV concept & avoiding duplications



- ✓ Planning specific interventions for capacity building in rural communities to develop and implement smart village strategies
- ✓ Prioritizing the needs of rural communities, concerning smart solutions

The specific aims of establishing the Taskforce have been:

- Defining the state of play of Smart Villages at national level
- Bringing together representatives of different EU funds, not only the representatives and stakeholders connected to CAP Strategy 2023-2027
- Proposing specific CAP policy interventions, securing that duplications are avoided.
- Capacity building at local level, where it is needed or asked.
- Promoting the SV approach in rural areas, as it is a new philosophy, not promoted yet in Cyprus.
- Integrate results into the regular work of the relevant ministries and agencies (desirably it should result in changes to the legislation, and to the method / procedures of defining and developing policies).

### 3. Membership

The membership of the taskforce includes representatives that are stakeholders connected to:

- (a) policy planning, mostly the representatives from ministries,
- (b) local authorities, including representatives from LAGs
- (c) farmers
- (d) research and innovation and
- (e) networks, like the national NRN.

**The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy is expected to have a key role.**

By supporting scientific research, investing in innovative entrepreneurship and implementing an ambitious digital transformation reform, the Deputy Ministry aspires to develop a modern and efficient state, competitive at European and international level, and a dynamic digital economy, where every citizen and every business will be able to grow and prosper. Other policymakers – ministries include innovation and new technology projects under their strategies, most of them connected with Smart Village approach. For example, one of the missions of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works is the qualitative upgrade of providing services with use of modern technology and the reduction of environmental repercussions caused by the road transports, promoting funding schemes for smart mobility and electric vehicles.

The Cyprus Digital Innovation Hub is also expected to have a key role at the taskforce, with relevant on the ground experience. The Hub is a national network hub of research, innovation, business and industry organizations, utilising state of the art infrastructure, in order to bring the fourth digital revolution in Cyprus by offering cutting-edge digital technology innovations and services to the manufacturing industry.

Other entities may also be added with a more local nature (e.g. Associations of Village Residents, representatives of Parish Councils), and/or with a national institutional nature (Programme Management Authorities and national funds financing the RPPI).

## 4. Planned actions

### 4.1 Taskforce meetings

The table below contains the list of meetings carried out and planned and their focus.

Planned timing	Focus of meeting
12/01/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ownership of the Policy</li> <li>✓ National SV definition</li> <li>✓ Categories of proposed interventions under the SV concept</li> <li>✓ Avoiding duplications</li> <li>✓ Specifying CAP policy interventions</li> <li>✓ Having an Owner of the SV policy</li> <li>✓ Having a definition and the preconditions of a Smart Rural Area.</li> <li>✓ Mapping funding schemes of the ministries that are connected with the SV approach</li> <li>✓ Proposing specific measures under CAP policy</li> </ul>
25/11/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Presenting the results for the National Definition of Smart Villages</li> <li>✓ Presenting the results of the priorities of Rural Communities for Smart Solutions</li> <li>✓ Presenting the National Strategy for Smart Cyprus</li> <li>✓ Presenting the way in which municipalities worked to develop and implement Smart Cities Strategies</li> <li>✓ Organising consultation and promotional meetings at the villages / areas that are interested about SV approach</li> <li>✓ Checking what is already done, under CAP or other funds</li> <li>✓ Identifying and promoting SV practices and examples at the national level</li> <li>✓ Promoting the development of procedures and funding schemes to approach the SV philosophy</li> <li>✓ Ensuring that duplications are avoided</li> <li>✓ Smart Villages or Smart Villages / Areas in transition</li> <li>✓ Promoting the results of the Final Conference of “Smart Rural 21” Project</li> <li>✓ Promoting Smart Solutions from the database produced by the “Smart Rural 21” Project</li> </ul>
3/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Thematic workshop on energy (?)</li> <li>✓ Checking what is already done, under CAP or other funds</li> <li>✓ Lighthouse Examples and Smart Villages / Areas in transition</li> <li>✓ Ensuring that duplications are avoided</li> <li>✓ Organizing Regional Consultation Meetings with the Dep. Ministry of Innovation</li> </ul>

### 4.2 Other actions of the Taskforce

#### 4.2.1 National Definition for Smart Villages

The Internal Note of the National Taskforce for the “National Definition for Smart Villages” was finalized in March 2022 and implemented during the period February to March 2022. The Internal Note includes four basic chapters: (a) the EU definition for Smart Villages, (b) Definitions and Approaches on Smart Villages in Member States, (c) the proposal for the National Definition and (d) the context of the National Definition.



The need for a National Definition was highlighted during the 1st Meeting of the National Taskforce for the "Smart Villages" of Cyprus, held on January 19, 2022.

After discussions, consultation meetings, e-mails and feedback exchanges, the National Taskforce's proposal for the National Definition for the Smart Villages was the following:

*The "Smart Rural Areas" are Collaborating Rural Areas that design and implement Smart Local Strategies based on the participatory approach in order to promote their attractiveness as living and working areas.*

*Smart solution interventions, including smart agriculture interventions, are implemented, stemming from the needs of the local community and utilizing, where possible, digital technologies, to improve their resilience and so that sustainable development, social cohesion and environmental optimization become characteristics of these areas.*

In this part, the methodology is recorded, which is directly linked to the definition of "Smart Rural Areas", as recorded above.

The context - methodology for characterizing areas as "Smart Rural Areas" was suggested to include the following criteria:

(A) Adopt / Apply the definition of "Smart Rural Areas" (concerning collaboration, local strategy, participatory approach etc.) and

(B) Designing and implementing at least four "smart solutions", in addition to "Smart Agriculture". For example, smart solutions could be smart waste management, smart water management, smart energy, smart mobility, smart e-health and volunteerism.

Regarding the definition, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy accepts the National Definition for SV given by the National Taskforce. Concerning the emphasis given in the definition to smart agriculture solutions, the Dep. Ministry also agrees on the importance of farming in rural areas and the importance of adopting smart solutions in the primary sector as well.

The approved version of the new Cypriot CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2026, includes the following reference:

"Especially for the Smart Rural Areas initiative and strategy, there is continuous consultation and communication with the contractor of the '2nd Preparatory Action for Smart Rural Areas in the 21st century' project, shortly 'Smart Rural 27' or 'SR27' project, funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture. The project has set up a Taskforce in cooperation with the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy and the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, whose aim is to give suggestions and proposals for the development of smart rural areas."

#### 4.2.2 Survey to define the priorities of rural areas on adopting smart solutions.

The study "Defining the Priorities of Rural Areas in terms of Designing and Implementing Smart Solutions" was written in September 2022 and implemented during the period April to August 2022. The study includes three basic phases: (a) bibliography review, (b) research at the field – including questionnaires and (c) results analysis.

The need for study was highlighted during the 1st Meeting of the National Taskforce for the "Smart Villages" of Cyprus, held on January 19, 2022.

Specifically, the need for the study was highlighted by the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, as another corresponding study was elaborated by the Deputy



Ministry itself, in collaboration with the Union of Municipalities of Cyprus, for the urban-mayoral areas.

It is noted that the research at the field, which was the most important part of the study, was elaborated with the cooperation and support of the Union of Cyprus Communities.

The Survey tackles the priorities of the Rural Areas in terms of the planning and implementation of Smart Solutions.

The Aim of this Study was to identify and to track down the opinion of the representatives of the Local Authorities in the Rural Areas of Cyprus, regarding the current priorities of their areas, in relation to the utilization of specific Smart Solutions.

Through bibliographic research, the main concepts and definitions used in the Study were examined, such as the concept and the legal framework of Local Authorities in Cyprus and the definitions of Rural Area, Smart Solution and Smart Rural Area.

The Study includes recording of the current situation in Local Authorities in Cyprus, the transitional period – considering the upcoming reform of Local Governance (May 2024), conducting qualitative interviews and the SWOT and PEST analyses.

It also captures the implementation of primary research, which highlights important evidences regarding the planning and implementation of a Smart Development Strategy and the most important smart solutions (priorities), the implementation of which is expected to significantly enhance the resilience of rural areas.

Smart solutions are then prioritized, based on the responses deriving from the primary survey participants. For each smart solution, local authorities, Ministries or departments involved in its planning and implementation are also listed.

Finally, specific suggestions were made, regarding the preparation of Smart Development Strategies, the undertaking of the coordination of actions for Smart Rural Areas by the competent Ministry, the implementation of pilot projects, etc.

The priorities of the Communities of rural areas, as highlighted by the survey, concern:

- Smart waste management,
- Smart energy management, including smart lighting,
- The smart management of water resources and hydrometry (telemetry) and
- The smart management of sustainable mobility and the analysis of traffic conditions – smart mobility, including the smart parking and the promotion of electric mobility – EVs.

The study also suggests such as:

- The Communities of Rural Areas, through the Service Complexes to be established, proceed to draw up Smart Development Strategies, in order to highlight the needs and record specific and targeted smart solutions to be implemented.
- The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy to undertake the coordination of similar actions and projects for rural areas, within the framework of the National Strategy for Smart Cyprus.
- Actions to be taken to adapt and include applications - smart solutions in the National Platform for Smart Cities which is under construction, for those solutions which are the priorities of the Communities of rural areas.
- Resources allocation for the preparation and implementation of a Pilot Smart Development Strategy in a rural area per Province, so that there is a pilot project in each Province, which may



also constitute a Good Practice to be adopted (with corresponding adaptation) by the rest of the rural areas.



## nex I: List of members

## Membership of the Taskforce

a/a	Name of member	Name of organisation of member	Type of organisation (policy, village, research, NGO, private...)	Short description of role of organisation in the taskforce (reason why member was included)	Member on GROOP?	Participated in meetings?
1	Mrs. Elena Poulli	Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy	Ministry, (Policy) Implementing Body	By supporting scientific research, investing in innovative entrepreneurship and implementing an ambitious digital transformation reform, the Deputy Ministry aspires to develop a modern and efficient state, competitive at European and international level, and a dynamic digital economy, where every citizen and every business will be able to grow and prosper	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	Marios Adamides	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	Ministry, (Policy) Managing Authority of CAP Strategic Plan	The Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment acts as the Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programmes. The Managing Authority is responsible for the management and implementation of the programmes in an efficient, effective and correct manner.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Yiannos Mavrommatis	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	Ministry, (Policy) Managing Authority of CAP Strategic Plan	The Managing Authority is responsible for the management and implementation of the programmes in an efficient, effective and correct manner.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
4	Kyriakos Kareklas	Mayor, Municipality of Athienou	Local Authority	The Municipality Council, together with the Municipality's services, the political parties and the youth of Athienou, are working hard for realising the vision of transforming	YES	1 <sup>st</sup>





				Athienou into a small modern and smart rural city.		
5	Christos Papapetrou	Pancyprian Farmers Union	Farming Organisation	The Pancyprian Farmers Union (PEK) aims at the promotion and resolution of agricultural issues. It is a Union with special interest in innovation and smart agricultural practices.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	Andreas Savvides	Agronomy's Council of Cyprus	Non-Profit, Think and Do Tank	Purpose of Agronomy's Council of Cyprus is the unification of the agricultural potential of Cyprus to serve the goals of Rural Development and the strengthening of ties between the agronomists.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup>
7	Christina Christodoulou	Cyprus Organic Farmers Association	Farming Organisation	The Cyprus Organic Farmers Association is the body that represents organic farmers in Cyprus. It organises, represents, trains and claims the best for its members. It was founded in 2002, by a small group of ideological organic farmers. In 20 years, the number of organic farmers in Cyprus has exceeded 1000 people, with a 6% of the total cultivated area of the island. Basic crops are olives, cereals, vines, herbs and vegetables.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
8	Constantinos Stavrou	Union of Cyprus Communities	Village Association	Basic aims of the Union of Cyprus Communities are: - the promotion of the Members interests, rights and privileges and, generally, of the independence and	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>



				<p>self-sufficiency of the Local Authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the permanent and organised cooperation for achieving common targets among Communities.</li> <li>- the expression of opinions to Authorities (including the Government and the House of Representatives).</li> </ul>		
9	Petros Chatzikostas	Development Agency of Troodos	LEADER Local Action Group	The Development Agency of Troodos unities all the regions (7 sub-regions / 68 communities as a Leader Local Action Group to date and 110 communities at the Geopark level) that constitute the Troodos region and develops inseparable links, aims at their development and promotion. It is a reliable and effective development mechanism for the area.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup>
10	Flourentzos Papanikolas	Department of Agriculture	National Rural Network	Networking is widely recognised and adopted as a key tool for supporting and promoting sustainable rural development. The main added value of networking is to provide solutions to the problems faced by rural areas through sharing knowledge and information and encouraging the dialogue between the stakeholders.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
11	Michalis Stylianou	Cyprus Digital Innovation Hub	NGO	The Cyprus Digital Innovation Hub (CyDi-Hub) is a regional network hub of research, innovation, business and industry organisations, utilising state	YES	1 <sup>st</sup>



				of the art infrastructure, in order to bring the fourth digital revolution in Cyprus by offering cutting-edge digital technology innovations and services to the manufacturing industry.		
12	Christiana Syzinou	European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior	Ministry, (Policy) Intermediary Body	The European Funds Unit aims, through the European resources, at the following: - achieving efficient management of migration flows; - creating development and infrastructure projects; - implementing projects contributing to the economic growth and social development in general;	YES	
13	Eliana Elia	European Funds Unit of the Ministry of Interior	Ministry, (Policy) Intermediary Body	- ensuring sustainable development; - maintaining social cohesion, prosperity and welfare of the citizens in a constantly changing environment.	YES	
14	Giorgos Adamides	Agriculture Research Institute	Research Institute	The Agricultural Research Institute conducts research aiming to create and transfer knowledge for the development of the primary sector and to solve problems at the farmer's level. The research results are transferred to stakeholders through modern educational programs and dissemination tools. Its research activity strengthens rural development and contributes to the	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
15	Andreas Stylianou	Agriculture Research Institute	Research Institute		YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>



				adoption of a sustainable rural policy and innovation offer.		
16	Iakovos Iakovou	Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organization	Payments Agency	The Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organization (CAPO) was established under Council Regulation (EC) No. 1258/1999 on the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy, of the European Union.	YES	2 <sup>nd</sup>
17	Iosif Spyrides	Energy Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry	Ministry, (Policy) Intermediary Body	The mission of the Energy Service is to formulate and implement the state policy in the field of energy, with the main strategic goals of creating a sustainable and competitive energy market and utilizing the national potential of Energy Saving and domestic Renewable Energy Sources. One of its most important actions to achieve its mission is the implementation of financial incentive plans for households and businesses, with the aim of implementing Energy Saving measures and / or the use of RES.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>
18	Kyriaki Kyrmani	Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	Ministry, (Policy) Intermediary Body	The mission of the Department of Environment is to protect the environment through effective management, and strengthening public awareness for the benefit of public health, quality of life and against loss of biodiversity both for today's society and future generations.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>



				Environmental protection is achieved through the rational management of resources and waste, the impact assessment, pollution control, tackle actions on climate change and halt the risk of loss of species and habitats, while helping to promote green growth within the contents of circular economy.		
19	Giorgos Georgiou	Forests Department	Ministry, Implementing Body	The vision of the Forests Department is to maintain the forests in the best possible condition and achieve the greatest environmental, social and economic benefits that will be balanced, will be based on the principle of sustainability and will fulfil the expectations of the society.	YES	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>

## Annex II: Meeting Reports

### 1<sup>st</sup> Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – [CYPRUS]

#### Purpose of the meeting

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the National Taskforce aimed to:

1. Bring together all the relevant stakeholders,
2. Receive their engagement for supporting the Smart Villages philosophy,
3. Mobilise stakeholders with capacity, ability and interest in shaping future Smart Villages policies,
4. Define the role of the Taskforce.

#### Date of the meeting

12/01/2022

#### Location

Conference Room of Agricultural Research Institute, Nicosia

#### Participation

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting had 17 participants, including the National Expert.

The membership of the Taskforce includes representatives that are stakeholders connected to:

- (a) policy planning, mostly the representatives from Ministries,
- (b) local authorities, including representatives from LAGs
- (c) farmers
- (d) research and innovation and
- (e) networks, like the national NRN.

Policymakers are directly involved in the formal management of policies, including policy / programme development, implementation and evaluation. This group includes stakeholders such as the Managing Authority of the RDP, the NRN, intermediary bodies responsible for managing specific programmes, etc.

Policy practitioners include organisations that might have an important point of view and know-how, interest and possibly direct influence on how relevant policies are being shaped. This category of stakeholders includes stakeholders such as the Communities Association, a Rural Municipality, LEADER Associations, agricultural umbrella organisations, organisations contributing to digital strategies, key environmental organisations, etc.

Other knowledgeable organisations are specialists that might have an interest and good knowledge on Smart Villages development, including researchers, specialist NGOs, etc.

Local community representatives include representatives of local communities.

Further analysis of the role of each organisation / participant is included in Annex I.

During the meeting the representatives of the Deputy Ministry of Research and the Ministry of Agriculture, as policy makers, indicated that they fully support the promotion of the Smart Villages approach.

The representative of the Deputy Ministry of Research presented the CY Smart City Platform, designed by the Deputy Ministry, which will be able to adopt elements and data from applications already created or planned. It excludes no one. As mentioned, the goal of the Deputy Ministry is to promote the Strategy for Smart Cyprus.

Stakeholders that participate in the Taskforce and have an important interface with the primary sector (PEK, ARI, NRN) made important reports regarding the specificity of Cyprus and the need to be a prerequisite for the implementation of smart agriculture solutions, in an area that wants to be characterized as a Smart Village / Smart Rural Area.

Reports from specialists – members of the Taskforce – indicate that smart applications and solutions have already been implemented in Cypriot cities. There is know-how, equipment and experience, nationally, that should be exploited.

A general finding is the fact that the availability of resources (funding resources) is limited.

### Main outcomes & lessons learnt (including deviations from initial plan)

The main policymakers concerning the Smart Villages support and promotion in Cyprus, the Deputy Ministry of Innovation and the Ministry of Agricultural, fully support the need for developing and implementing Smart Villages Strategies.

The Deputy Ministry of Innovation is designing the Cyprus Smart Cities Platform and it is preparing the Strategy for Smart Cyprus. Both tools and projects could include rural areas as well and initiatives / smart solutions that satisfy the needs of rural communities.

Members of the Taskforce, from different organisations, mentioned the peculiarity of Cyprus as an island, with 37% of its land occupied by Turkish troops, expressing the importance of supporting the development of agriculture and farming in rural areas. Smart Agriculture / Farming could be a smart solution for having better results in agro-economy and it could also attract young farmers and families to rural areas. Smart Solutions in Agricultural / Farming should be a basic / necessary activity in any Smart Village Strategy in Cyprus.

It was also mentioned that there is expertise, know-how and technologies in Cyprus, as many Municipalities have already developed and now implement Smart Cities Strategies. Rural Areas should take advantage of the existing expertise, having in mind that resources, especially funding resources, are limited.

Two main gaps that were noticed and the members of the Taskforce asked the National Expert to cover them were:

1. Having a national definition for smart villages or smart rural areas, to fit better to Cyprus needs and stakeholders understanding.
2. Having the priorities of rural areas in smart solutions. The Deputy Ministry of Innovation was running an exercise for Cities, to set the Cities' priorities for smart solutions, like smart parking and smart lighting.

Even more, the participants had a great interest about the subjects discussed during the meeting. They also had the opportunity to express their commitment at the Taskforce tasks.

### Next steps

The next "official" meeting is planned for the end of the year. In the meantime, meetings and tele-meetings will be organised connected to the tasks and the needs that the Taskforce and the Project is facing.

Consultation meetings are expected to take place for finalising the national definition for Smart Villages and for prioritising the needs of the rural communities on smart solutions. Policymakers are expected to give important feedback concerning the Smart Villages approach and how it will be promoted at national level. It will also be important to ensure the cooperation of the Union of Cyprus Communities, as the stakeholder that represents rural areas.

The next steps include the following:

1. Finalising a national definition for Smart Villages / Rural Areas
2. Prioritising the needs of the Rural Communities on Smart Solutions (research to the ground)
3. Having a Ministry as the Formal Owner of the Smart Villages initiative
4. Organising consultation and promotional meetings at the villages / areas that are interested about SV approach
5. Identifying and promoting SV practices and examples in national level
6. Promoting developed procedures and funding schemes to approach the SV philosophy

#### Supporting documents

1. Agenda
2. Presentation, Mr. Makis Papamichael, National Expert SR27 Project
3. Presentation, Mrs Eleni Poulli, Officer, Dep. Ministry of Innovation
4. Participation List (list & signatures)
5. Pictures









## 2<sup>nd</sup> Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – [CYPRUS]

### Purpose of the meeting

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the National Taskforce aimed to:

1. Bring together all the relevant stakeholders,
2. Enhancement the engagement of the Taskforce members for supporting the Smart Villages philosophy,
3. Presenting the results for the National Definition of Smart Villages,
4. Presenting the results of the priorities of Rural Communities for Smart Solutions,
5. Presenting the updates concerning the National Strategy for Smart Cyprus,
6. Presenting the way in which a municipality worked to develop and implement a Smart City Strategy,
7. Discussing updates concerning relevant policies, projects and legislations, such as the new CAP Strategy, the legislation for energy communities, projects for smart waste management and smart agriculture.
8. Promoting the results of the Final Conference of “Smart Rural 21” Project and
9. Promoting Smart Solutions from the database produced by the “Smart Rural 21” Project.

### Date of the meeting

25/11/2022

### Location

Conference Room of Agricultural Research Institute, Nicosia

### Participation

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting had 15 participants, including the National Expert.

During the meeting, the National Expert (NE) presented an overview of the SR27 Project, the results for finalizing the National Definition of Smart Villages, the results of the study for the priorities of Rural Communities for Smart Solutions and their connection with the Smart Cyprus Strategy and the Smart City Platform etc.

The Smart City Officer of the Municipality of Nicosia presented the methodology followed by the Municipality for becoming a Smart City. The SCO emphasized on the need for having a Strategy and a team for implementing and evaluating the Strategy.

The Taskforce members also discussed the updates concerning relevant policies, projects and legislations, such as the new CAP Strategy, the legislation for energy communities, projects for smart waste management and smart agriculture.

The representative of the Deputy Ministry of Innovation presented the updates concerning the National Strategy for Smart Cyprus and the progress in designing and implementing the Smart City Platform.

The representative of the Managing Authority of the new CAP Strategic Plan (Ministry of Agriculture) presented the final draft document of the new CAP Strategic Plan, that is expected to be approved by the European Commission in early December. The new CAP has many references in smart agriculture and smart villages, but also different funding schemes for investing in smart solutions and for approaching the smart philosophy in rural areas.



LEADER is expected to have a great impact on promoting the philosophy and for implementing small projects connected to the philosophy.

The representative of the Energy Service (Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry) presented the Funding Schemes for investments connected to Renewable Energy Sources. The references on the legislation, not voted yet, for the Energy Communities gave the opportunity for discussions connected to the new dynamics arose by the specific legislation.

The representative of the Environment Department presented the National Plans connected to Circular Economy and the Waste Management, focusing on a LIFE project that is expected to have a great impact in rural areas, especially for collecting recyclable materials, biowaste and dangerous household waste.

### Main outcomes & lessons learnt (including deviations from initial plan)

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Taskforce gave the opportunity to its members to meet face to face after a long time. It was also an opportunity for enhancing their support and engagement for the Smart Village philosophy and approach.

During the meeting, the National Expert (NE) presented:

1. An overview of the SR27 Project – Current Situation.
2. The main results of the SR21 Project, as presented at the Final Conference of the Project, that took place in Sopot, Poland, last October.
3. The current situation in Cyprus concerning Smart Cities Projects and developed Smart Solutions in rural areas.
4. The results for finalizing the National Definition of Smart Villages.
5. The results of the study for the priorities of Rural Communities for Smart Solutions and their connection with the Smart Cyprus Strategy and the Smart City Platform. The priorities are:
  - The Smart Waste Management,
  - The Smart Energy, including the Smart Lighting,
  - The Smart Water Management and
  - The Smart Mobility, including the Smart Parking and the promotion of the use of electrical vehicles.
6. Selected Smart Solutions from the database produced by the “Smart Rural 21” Project.

The NE also presented the results from the meetings he had lately. Concerning the meeting he had with the Permanent Secretary of the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, Dr Chimonas, the NE presented the main outcomes of that meeting:

1. The Deputy Ministry confirmed that rural areas are an integral part of the National Strategy for the development of Smart Cities, which is evolving to the Smart Cyprus Strategy.
2. The Smart Solutions prioritized by the Communities of Rural Areas are already included in the provisions of the “Smart City Platform” (its development is in progress).
3. It was also agreed to co-organise regional meetings in rural areas, with the support of the Union of Cyprus Communities and the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority. The scope of these meetings will be to promote the Smart Cyprus Strategy, the available smart solutions, the SR27 Project, the survey which prioritized the smart solutions for the rural areas etc. The methodology and the logistics of this decision are going to be discussed in the near future.

The Smart City Officer (SCO) of the Municipality of Nicosia presented the methodology followed by the Municipality for becoming a Smart City. The SCO emphasized on the need for having a Strategy and a team for implementing and evaluating the Strategy. The Strategy was designed in 2014, but it is updated when it is needed. The SCO also presented the results of the Strategy and the solutions implemented already, like the Smart City Command and Control Center, the Smart City Platform, the local fiber and wireless network, the LoRaWon network, info points, smart parking, smart waste management, smart lighting, etc. The SCO also mentioned indicative obstacles during the whole procedure, such as the GDPR regulation and other legal issues.

The Taskforce members also discussed the updates concerning relevant policies, projects and legislations, such as the new CAP Strategy, the legislation for energy communities, projects for smart waste management and smart agriculture.

The representative of the Deputy Ministry of Innovation presented the updates concerning the National Strategy for Smart Cyprus and the progress in designing and implementing the Smart City Platform.

The representative of the Managing Authority (MA) of the new CAP Strategic Plan (Ministry of Agriculture) presented the final draft document of the new CAP Strategic Plan, that is expected to be approved by the European Commission in early December. The new CAP has many references in smart agriculture and smart villages, but also different funding schemes for investing in smart solutions and for approaching the smart philosophy in rural areas. LEADER is expected to have a great impact on promoting the philosophy and for implementing small projects connected to the philosophy. The representative of the MA also asked from the NE to participate in meetings that the MA is organising for announcing and promoting the call for LEADER LAGs and Strategies. As it was mentioned “during those meetings, it would be helpful to present and promote the outcomes of the SR27 Project and the work implemented by the National Taskforce so far”.

The representative of the Energy Service (Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry) presented the Funding Schemes for investments connected to Renewable Energy Sources. The references on the legislation, not voted yet, for the Energy Communities gave the opportunity for discussions connected to the new dynamics arose by the specific legislation. As it was discussed, the specific legislation is going to be a great tool for new cooperative initiatives in private sector, in public sector, but also in public-private-partnerships. It is expected to be voted early next year.

The representative of the Environment Department (ED) presented the National Plans connected to Circular Economy and the Waste Management, focusing on a LIFE project that is expected to have a great impact in rural areas, especially for collecting recyclable materials, biowaste and dangerous household waste.

Even more, the participants had a great interest about the subjects discussed during the meeting. They also had the opportunity, once again, to express their commitment at the Taskforce tasks.

### Next steps

The next “official” meeting is planned for the March of 2023. In the meantime, meetings and tele-meetings will be organised connected to the tasks and the needs that the Taskforce and the Project is facing.



The next steps include the following:

1. Organizing a thematic group on energy – especially energy communities (?).
2. Scanning the new National CAP Strategy and other funds for possible funding schemes in favour of Smart Villages' approach.
3. Organising consultation and promotional meetings at the villages / areas that are interested about SV approach, in cooperation with the Deputy Ministry of Innovation and the Union of Cyprus Communities.
4. Identifying and promoting SV practices and examples in national level (lighthouse examples and smart villages in transition).
5. Promoting developed procedures and funding schemes to approach the SV philosophy.

### Supporting documents

1. Agenda
2. Presentation, Mr. Makis Papamichael, National Expert SR27 Project
3. Presentation, Mrs Nandia Lortzie, Smart City Officer, Municipality of Nicosia
4. Presentation, Mr Marios Adamides, Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
5. Presentation, Mrs Kyriaki Kyrmani, Officer, Department of Environment
6. Participation List (list & signatures)
7. Pictures

### The event in pictures



