

Highlights of the Sollstedt Smart Village Strategy Germany



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About Sollstedt

The municipality of Sollstedt (Nordhausen County, Thuringia) has been marked by economic and demographic change since the closure of the potash mine, following the German reunification in 1990. A broadly diversified development concept is necessary in order to master the consequences of the economic downturn in the region as well as the demographic change in a sustainable manner.

The Smart Rural 21 project provides an opportunity to develop and implement smart solutions. It is the starting point for Sollstedt to become a smart village. Sollstedt aims to become more attractive for new companies and a place to live and work. Broadband internet is seen as the basic requirement which will enable Sollstedt to become a 'digital landmark' of Northern Thuringia, from which impulses for the entire region could flow.

Key challenges & assets

The analysis of the status quo shows that the central strengths and challenges for development are mainly related to economic and demographic change. Nowadays, almost one third of the residents are in the 65+ age group and a further decline in population is expected. With regard to the economy and infrastructure, the main need is to expand the existing broadband network and develop new services in order to create an attractive location for skilled workers and companies, and to prevent the closure and migration of businesses.

With regard to village life and the social infrastructure, the lack of attractive public spaces, gastronomy, activities for young people, and age-appropriate housing possibilities represents a great challenge. For future development, it is important to provide attractive infrastructure and services for an increasingly interconnected world.



Picture: © Bernd Peter

Main objectives of smart village strategy

- Objective 1:** Expand digital infrastructure
- Objective 2:** Experience Sollstedt
- Objective 3:** Bring Sollstedt together
- Objective 4:** Strengthen people's digital capacity

What is smart?

Community Participation in Strategy Development

The strategy development was significantly assisted by Sollstedt citizens and companies. In addition to private volunteers, members of the village development advisory board and responsible persons of the municipal administration, representatives of companies that will contribute to the implementation of the strategy by expanding infrastructures and developing new services were also involved.

Links to other strategies

- ✓ The Smart Rural 21 project ties in with the **Community Development Concept** (GEK) and understands the strategy for a smart Sollstedt as a contribution to the implementation of the GEK.
- ✓ The **Kali Master Plan** aims to shape structural change and develop new regional perspectives following the decline of mining.
- ✓ Between the **Regional Development Strategy** (RES) of the Regional Action Group (RAG) Southern Harz and the strategy for a smart Sollstedt there are thematic overlaps in the areas of tourism and village life and social infrastructure.

What smart actions are implemented and planned?

- ✓ Developing smart infrastructures, e.g. fibre optic networks, charging stations for electric cars;
- ✓ Developing new, digital services for the people of Sollstedt, e.g. shopping for everyday necessities, medical care;
- ✓ Providing information on locations and activities through digital channels;
- ✓ Capacity-building for the people of Sollstedt to handle digital technology.



A smart action that we are planning...

... is to expand the fibre optic network. This action is the backbone of the smart village strategy. It will provide the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of all upcoming activities and services.

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