[Smart Rural 21 logo of village + own logo if village would like to add]

**SMART VILLAGE STRATEGY OF**

**[NAME OF VILLAGE]**

**[PHOTO]**

Prepared in the framework of the project on:

**Preparatory Action on Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century**

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| **General Guidance*** The Smart Village Strategy **has to be developed in a way and format that is useful for the village.** It is not meant to be a ‘tick-the-box’ exercise for the Smart Rural 21 project.
* **You do not necessarily need to develop a new strategy**: Please build on existing relevant strategies. You might simply need to adapt these.
* You are welcome to use the template provided, however, **there is no obligation to do so**.
* **There is no pre-defined length of the strategy**. As an indication, the previous smart village strategies ranged between 30 and 40 pages (without annexes).
* **The time period of strategies is up to you**, it has to be adapted to your local needs.
* **The strategy can be in your own language:** It is not a requirement to develop strategies in English (it has to be useful for your village and community). However, we will ask the village to develop at least a short (e.g. 5-page) English summary for the benefit of the Smart Rural 21 project and other European villages.
* **Always consider the S.M.A.R.T. principle**: Strategies need to be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.
* **Whichever, format or shape the strategy takes it is important that**: (1) it contains a clear intervention logic/ logical framework (including challenges & assets/ opportunities; specific and targeted actions to address these; human and financial capacity planning); (2) smart elements: links to existing strategies (also at higher level); stakeholder engagement; innovation/ smart solutions that can have an impact on the future of your village.
* **Strategies should not be funding or programme**-**driven**: While it is important to think about potential linkages with higher-level strategies (and possible future funding sources), the strategy is meant to be a longer-term meaningful development concept of your village. Think about development goals you’d like to achieve (not only those that you have funding for). At the same time, be careful not to include vague and non-achievable goals and actions. Always keep in mind the ‘S.M.A.R.T.’ principles.
* **Strategies need to be integrated/holistic**: Please do not focus on individual projects or initiatives only. Think in a more holistic way – integration/ synergies among various actions (i.e. how one builds on the other). However, strategies **can have a specific thematic focus**.
* **Stakeholder engagement**: Consider engaging local stakeholders at all levels of your strategy development early on; or if time is short, simply plan specific actions for engaging them in the strategy itself. You can of course describe/ rely on existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms and outcomes (you do not need to set up a new one just for the project!).
* **The Smart Village Strategy is an evolving document**: Do not think of the strategy document as ‘set-in-stone’ once developed. You can shape it further at a later stage. You might want to consider using specific tools that allow strategy development directly through community engagement (we have identified such tools and can provide guidance with that).
* The national expert is your first reference point. However, **you are always welcome to contact the Smart Rural 21 core team** directly at smart-rural@e40.eu.
 |

# Foreword: Smart Rural [Name of village]

An informal and personal foreword from key village representative(s) on why smart villages is important for the village/ what has been their main motivation to get engaged in the Smart Rural 21 process.

# INTRODUCTION

## Local governance in [Country]

Please describe briefly the local governance system in your country, among others based on the questions provided in the box below, and explain where your village fits within this structure

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 1: Local governance – indicative list of questions**Does your municipality/village have local elected leaders? At which administrative level local leaders are elected? How does village governance relate to elected governance (if the two are not the same)?If your community has local elected leaders (election is at the community level) how often elections take place? When is it next?What are the key responsibilities delegated to the local level? What roles mayors, civil servants, etc. fulfill?If your community does not have elected leaders, what other local governance structures are in place?How local councils/ village associations/ etc. are formed? What are their roles and competences? |

## What is a ‘village’ in [Country]?

The concept of ‘village’ varies widely from country to country. The ‘smart village’ term has been much ‘criticised’ for not being suitable for certain types of rural communities (e.g. rural towns).

In our interpretation ‘smart village’ is a symbolic term, meaning that village does not need to be taken literally, rather as an encompassing concept of rural communities, or local communities dealing with rural challenges. In this context, there are no limitations set in terms of the size of the village or the type of region where it should be located.

However, we argue that some sort of typology of rural areas (‘villages’) is required to better understand the various contexts in which smart villages can operate.

Therefore, please describe here what a village means in the context of your country, in the national context, language, interpretation.

## What smart is for [Village Name]

The meaning of ‘smart’ is also much debated, among others how far it should focus on digital or other types of (especially) social innovation.

Please describe briefly what ‘smart’ (innovation) means to your village: What do you see as new ways/ methods/ projects that could help you overcoming your challenges and meeting new trends of the 21st century?

# CONTEXT

## Context of the smart village strategy development

Who initiated the process of strategy development/ how the village got involved in the Smart Rural 21 project/ any other relevant initiatives?

…

…

## Existing strategies & initiatives

Please describe existing strategies and initiatives that are *relevant* to your smart village development. [**Note**: Please do not describe national/regional strategies in general but always highlight how it is relevant for your smart village strategy development in your village, what are the specific (potential) linkages, etc.]

## Links to existing local strategies

Describe what kind of strategies exist and what kind of strategic planning took place already & how the smart village strategy can build on this: (i) integrate existing strategy information into the ‘smart village strategy’; (ii) update/adapt existing strategy to make it compatible with the smart village approach; (iii) develop new strategy.

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 2: Mapping existing strategies and flagship projects – indicative list of questions**Are there any comprehensive village strategies that the smart village strategy could build on/ adapt, etc?Which parts of these strategies are relevant in the ‘smart village’ context? How could the strategy meaningfully extended/ adapted to develop a smart village strategy?When and how (in what context) has such strategy been developed? Which period it covers?How local stakeholders have been involved in the development of this strategy?How does the local strategy links to wider territorial development plans/ strategies (e.g. at LAG, regional and national levels)? |

…

…

## Links to higher level (local, regional, national, European) strategies

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 3: Highlighting relevant ‘higher’ level strategies – indicative list of questions**Which other relevant local/ regional/ national/ European strategies your smart village strategy can link to?What are the specific objectives/ priorities of these strategies that your smart village strategy can contribute to?How do you see the potential synergies between these strategies with your smart village strategy (e.g. which measures could potentially fund some of your planned actions)?**Note**: Please do not describe strategies in general, focus on those that are relevant for your local strategy. Please do not describe strategies in much detail (e.g. you do not need to describe all parts of the strategy only those relevant to your local strategy). Focus on the main objective of these, and specific priorities/ measures that could be relevant for your local development strategy. |

…

…

## Review of past and ongoing (flagship) projects and initiatives

Please describe relevant projects and initiatives that have had an important impact on the development of your village/ that future smart village activities can build on.

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 4: Highlighting relevant existing projects & initiatives – indicative list of questions**Did you already have any relevant (smart) initiatives that the strategy can build on/ follow-up on? Which are these?Why are these projects relevant (set the basis) of future actions specified in your strategy?**Note 1**: Please do not describe all projects that your village has ever had. Focus on those that are relevant in the context of your current smart village strategy development (e.g. can form the basis of future actions). For instance a ‘community broadband’ project carried out in the past might be relevant for setting up a multi-service hub with internet connectivity now. You also do not need to describe in too much detail your projects – focus on what is really relevant.**Note 2**: These projects can be included in the ‘smart solutions’ database of the Smart Rural 21 project. At the time you develop this section, you might want to consider including your example also here: <https://eu.jotform.com/E40/smartrura21-solutions> |

…

## Cooperation with other villages

Please describe how you cooperate with nearby villages and rural communities based on indicative questions in the box below.

Please describe how your village is cooperating with other (non-neighbouring) villages, towns, cities and stakeholders, including partnerships and membership in networks and associations and cooperation projects, and contribution of membership and partnerships to local development of your village.

…

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 5:** **Partnerships and memberships - indicative questions**Please describe the linkages of your village to other local communities/ villages in your neighbourhood and/or (nearby) towns or cities and also how you cooperated with other non-neighbouring entities:* How is your cooperation with nearby villages/ other rural communities of your area? How your activities complement each other and how far you developed cooperation with them?
* Are you cooperating with (nearby) towns or cities? Please describe any specific cooperation activities.
* Have you been a member of any village associations, partnerships or networks, including local ones (e.g. group of villages, LAGs), national (e.g. village associations) or European (e.g. Association of Municipalities, [ELARD](http://www.elard.eu), [Smart Village Network](http://www.smart-village-network.eu), etc.)?
* If yes, which ones? What kind of support have you got from these organisations that has helped developing your community?
* Have you been involved in any national or international projects and initiatives that are relevant in the context of developing the smart village strategy?
* If yes, what were these? Please describe briefly any key projects that you’ve been involved in/ their focus & theme / your role/ its relevance to you village development, etc.

**Note**: Please only focus on partnerships and projects that have relevance in the context of smart village strategy development. |

# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF [XYZ VILLAGE]

## Key characteristics of the village and rural area

Please describe the key characteristics of your village/ rural area considering questions in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| Box 6: Mapping key characteristics in participant villages – indicative questionsDescribe key characteristics of the area / quantitative and qualitative description considering the following:* What are the key / unique characteristics of the rural area (e.g. size, type: mountainous, coastal, etc.)?
* What are the most relevant aspects that describe the area?

**Note**: Feel free to build on any other surveys to assess the baseline (socio-economic) situation; (recent) strategic/ policy or analytical documents/ SWOT that describe the village characteristics. |

For comparability, some of the most relevant quantitative information should ideally include (based on official statistical data whenever possible):

**Closest towns:**

Table 1: Closest town or city

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of closest town or city** | **Population of town or city** | **Distance between village and town/ city** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Table 2: Key statistics

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Value** | **Latest year** | **Comments** | **Source of information**(Note: if all the same – sufficient to quote under the table and delete this column) |
| Population*Out of which migrants**Out of which people with disabilities* |  |  |  |  |
| Elderly dependency ratio % |  |  | The ratio between the elderly population (aged 65 and over) and the working age population (aged 15-64) |  |
| Unemployment rate % |  |  | Percentage of unemployed aged 15 and over, divided by the labour force (those aged 15 and over) |  |
| Employment rate % |  |  | Percentage of those employed who are aged 15 and over divided by the working age population (aged 15-64) |  |
| Participation rate % |  |  | Percentage of the labour force aged 15 and over divided by the population of those aged 15 and over |  |
| **Age structure:** |  |  |  |  |
| Share of population aged 0-14 |  |  |  |  |
| Share of population aged 15-59 |  |  |  |  |
| Share of population aged 60-65 |  |  |  |  |
| Share of population aged 65+ |  |  |  |  |
| **Educational attainment:** |  |  |  |  |
| Share of workers with tertiary education |  |  |  |  |
| Share of workers with primary education |  |  |  |  |

…

## Key challenges

Please elaborate on the most important challenges, supporting this by evidence, research, surveys, needs analysis, etc.

You can describe specific challenges under separate sub-headings

|  |
| --- |
| Box 7: Mapping challenges – indicative questionsDescribe key challenges of the area and community:* What are the key challenges that your rural area is facing and the strategy aims to address?
* What are the specific needs of your rural community/ area (is this based on a stakeholder needs assessment?)
* How far the local community has been engaged; e.g. were needs of specific groups mapped, were there any consultations, sessions, workshops, etc. to involve the community in identifying local needs? Which groups were involved? How representative it is of the population of the village? What methods were used to involve these groups?
 |

For comparability, some of the most relevant quantitative information should ideally include

…

## [Name of challenge 1]

…

## [Name of Challenge 2]

Etc.

…

## Main assets & opportunities

Please elaborate on the main assets and opportunities/ based on ‘strengths and opportunities’, supporting this by evidence, research, surveys, scenario/forecasting etc.; responding to questions in the box.

|  |
| --- |
| Box 8: Identifying local assets and opportunities* Has there already been any analysis to identify the main assets and opportunities of your village/ rural area?
* How and to what extent have you involved the local community in identifying local assets and opportunities? In particular how far the community constitutes an asset (e.g. voluntary work, generation of ideas, etc.)?
* Are there any specific trends/ opportunities that the village strategy could particularly capitalise on (e.g. people moving back into attractive rural areas; closeness to urban centres; unique natural environment; digitalization; etc.)?
 |

…

## [Name of Asset / opportunity 1]

…

## [Name of Asset / opportunity 2]

…

## Key characteristics of the local community

Please describe on the basis of the questions in the box below, who the key stakeholders / active citizens in your village are. Through what platforms local stakeholders cooperate/ are engaged in village development. What have been the main challenges for engaging local communities, etc.

|  |
| --- |
| Box 9: Working with villages - Mapping active stakeholders – indicative questions* Are there any local stakeholder/ ‘enablers’ groups – such as councils, boards, expert groups, etc. – that support/ enable the village development process?
* Is there scope/ need to extend the membership of existing local enablers’ group?
* How is the structure (e.g. age structure) of local community? Who are the key stakeholders (individuals, organisations, etc.) that drive village life and development?
* How representative is the active local group of citizens of the local population?
* How do you engage local youth in village planning/ implementation of local activities?
* Which stakeholders can/ have been involved in the strategy development process through the local group?
* How far there is need to set up new platforms and groups to enable village development?
 |

…

## SWOT Analysis

Please summarise in bullet points/ short description the information above. Please be consistent with the previous sections, i.e. do not add new weaknesses, opportunities here not described above and *vice versa*. Simply structure challenges under weaknesses and threats; and assets/ opportunities under strengths and opportunities.

Table 3: SWOT analysis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths**What do you do well?What unique resources can you draw on?What do others see as your strengths? | **Weaknesses**What could you improve?Where do you have fewer resources than others?What are others likely to see as weaknesses? |
|  |  |
| **Opportunities**What opportunities are open to you?What trends could you take advantage of?How can you turn your strengths into opportunities? | **Threats**What threats could harm you?What is your competition doing?What threats do your weaknesses expose you to? |
|  |  |

# INTERVENTION LOGIC

Objectives are informed / set on the basis of a ‘rationale’: i.e. what can be done to address specific challenges/ build on strengths and opportunities. Think about a coherent set of realistic objectives. Objectives should be set to address specific challenges or seize opportunities through new innovative ways.

Ideally objectives should be structured in a hierarchy (overall, specific and operational objectives) and they need to be S.M.A.R.T.: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. Key indicators to measure the achievement of objectives need to be set.

Prioritising objectives is crucial, and should ideally be done with the involvement of the local community. To be realistic, smart village strategies need to be focused.

Consider how your strategic objectives contribute to wider objectives set out in other, ‘higher-level’ strategies (e.g. the [Sustainable Development Goals](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300) set out at a transnational level and relevant national, regional and local levels).

## Overall objective

What is the main objective (vision) of your strategy? Describe in one (or max. a few) paragraph.

|  |
| --- |
| Box 10: Defining goals and objectives – indicative questionsBased on the assessment of needs/challenges and assets/opportunities the strategy needs to draw up a set of coherent objectives:* What are the most important objectives that the village would like to achieve through its smart village strategy (in response to specific needs/ building on opportunities)?
* How objectives of this smart village strategy link to any other local strategies (if applicable)?
* Has the local community been involved in defining the main needs/ objectives for village development? If yes, how/ with what result?
 |

## Specific & operational objectives in response to SWOT

What are the specific objectives (key concrete directions / expected results) through which you want to achieve the main/overall objective?

What are the more operational (e.g. linked to purpose of activities/ outputs) objectives of your project to achieve specific objectives?

Provide concise clear descriptions only. Group objectives logically. Some operational objectives might contribute to more than one specific objective.

**Specific objective 1: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

**Operational objective 1.1: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

**Operational objective 1.2: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

…

**Specific objective 2: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

**Operational objective 2.1: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

**Operational objective 2.2: [Title of objective]**

[Brief description]

…

Keep consistent numbering with previous sections. Establish the main linkages between the set objectives and their relevance: i.e. how they respond to identified needs or builds on strengths and opportunities.

Table 4: Setting objectives in response to SWOT

| **Specific objectives***[Sufficient to copy title from above/ Be consistent in numbering!]* | **Operational objectives***[Sufficient to copy title from above/ Be consistent in numbering!]* | **Challenges & threats***[Which challenges & threats it addresses/ Be consistent with SWOT table!]* | **Strengths & Opportunities***[Which strengths/ opportunities it aims to build on/ Be consistent with SWOT table!]* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Smart solutions: actions, outputs and results

Please indicate planned actions that can contribute to achieving your objectives. See indicative questions in boxes below.

Please describe how planned activities contribute to specific/ operational objectives, what are the expected outputs results and impact on the rural area.

Include financial and time planning of actions/ smart solutions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 11: Identifying actions & resources – indicative questions*** What are the actions that respond to planned objectives the most effectively?
* What are the key actions/ ideas that the village planning to pursue? Has the village/ community already identified specific solutions that it would like to implement? If yes, what are these?
* Who initiated these projects/ ideas? Which local stakeholders have been actively involved and how?
* Do these (planned) initiatives involve cooperation with other villages and stakeholders?
* Has any planning started (e.g. applications for funding in process)?
* Who are the main stakeholders that can be mobilised for action?
* What are the main human and financial resources at the disposal of the village?
* What other sources could be mobilised / have been identified?
* What are the expected human and financial resources required to realise specific planned actions?
* Has any projects planning started (e.g. applications for funding in process)? What are these?
 |

Table 5: Intervention logic: objectives, activities, expected results and outputs

| **Specific/ operational objectives** *[could be separated into different columns]* | **Activities planned or taken***[Which actions are planned to achieve objective – Use new rows for individual activities]* | **Expected results** | **Expected outputs** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SO1: …** |
| **1.1.** [Operational objective] |  Activity 1.1.1 | * …
* …
 | * …
 |
|  Activity 1.1.2 | * …
 |
| **SO2: …** |
| **2.1** [Operational objective] |  Activity 2.1.1 | * …
 | * …
 |
|  Activity 2.1.2 | * …
 | * …
 |
| **Example:****SO1: Reinforce the supply links with the neighbouring agricultural production areas** |
| **1.1.** To develop contacts with surrounding rural areas and notably with farmers from [xyz] area | 1.1. Organisation of preliminary exchanges with the [xyz] area, together with well-known local actors (Local association of organic farmers, local group of cities, Regional natural park etc.) | * Consolidated partnership with producers from the neighbouring areas
* Strengthened partnership with the inter-communality in the field of agriculture
 | * Regular meetings with Préalpes d’Azur area stakeholders (3 to 4 per year)
 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Table 6: Planning actions

| **Actions planned or taken***[Which actions are planned to achieve objective]* | **Timeline**[From – To] | **Necessary human capacity** [Which capacity is needed, e.g. which stakeholders to be involved for management / implementation etc.] | **Necessary technical capacity** [e.g. broadband, building, infrastructure, land] | **Financial resources needed**[Estimated financial resources] |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action 1: |  |  |  |  |
| Action 2:  |  |  |  |  |
| Action 3: |  |  |  |  |
| ***Example:*** |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 1: Organisation of preliminary exchanges with [xyz] area, together with well-known local actors | From: Sept 2020To: Ongoing (3-4/year) | * Village staff
* Farmers and producers from [xyz]
* Elected representatives
* Natural Park and intermunicipal rganisations
 | * N/a
 | * …
 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Entire strategy** | **[Overall timeframe]** |  |  | **[Overall planned budget]** |

# MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

## Management

Describe how strategy will be managed, who will be involved in what/ who will be responsible for managing the strategy, etc. – Consider questions in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 13: Management of strategy – indicative questions*** Who has initiated the smart village process and strategy planning?
* Who will be responsible for the management (including financial management), and implementation of the strategy?
* How the village is planning to secure the necessary financial and human resources to realise smart solutions?
* How the local community has been involved in the implementation of the strategy? How the strategy foresees community engagement and mobilisation?
 |

## Monitoring

Describe specific arrangements for monitoring/ how indicators will be measured / by whom and how regular review/ update to the strategy will be done.

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 14: Monitoring the strategy implementation – indicative questions*** What are the provisions for monitoring the process of strategy implementation?
* How long the strategy is running/ how regularly (or ongoing) the monitoring will take place?
* Who will be responsible for the monitoring of the strategy?
* Do you have any specific methods for monitoring foreseen? Any stakeholder engagement methodologies involved?
 |

#

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Please describe how stakeholders have been engaged in strategy development: which stakeholders, at what stage and how; among others through answering questions in box below.

…

|  |
| --- |
| **Box 15: Stakeholder engagement – indicative questions*** How stakeholders have been involved in the development of strategies from needs assessment, through identifying opportunities to setting objectives?
* Which stakeholders have been involved and how representative they are of the village community?
* What stakeholder engagement methods/ platforms / tools have been used and how?
* Which stakeholder groups should be better engaged in the process? What steps are planned to improve engagement of local community?
* What actions are planned to communicate strategy towards the wider local community and to mobilise stakeholders for strategy implementation?
 |

## Stakeholder engagement in needs assessment

If and how stakeholders were engaged in needs assessment (surveys, consultations, etc.).

…

## Stakeholder engagement in strategy development

If and how stakeholders were engaged in identifying priorities/ objectives of strategy; potential actions, etc.

…

## Key channels of communication and awareness raising among citizens

How local citizens are informed about strategy development; what opportunities are there to get involved.

…

|  |
| --- |
| Box 16: Interaction and awareness raising with citizens – indicative questions* Are there any key platforms through which you communicate towards local citizens (e.g. village forums/ community gatherings, local media, social media: Facebook, Twitter or other; etc.)?
* Are there any methods/ tools to mobilise local citizens: volunteer groups, calls for projects, etc.?
* Can and (if yes) how these be used to raise awareness about the smart village process among citizens and mobilise them for the implementation of the strategy?
 |

## Planned actions to mobilise stakeholders

How are you planning to mobilise stakeholders for realising planned actions

…