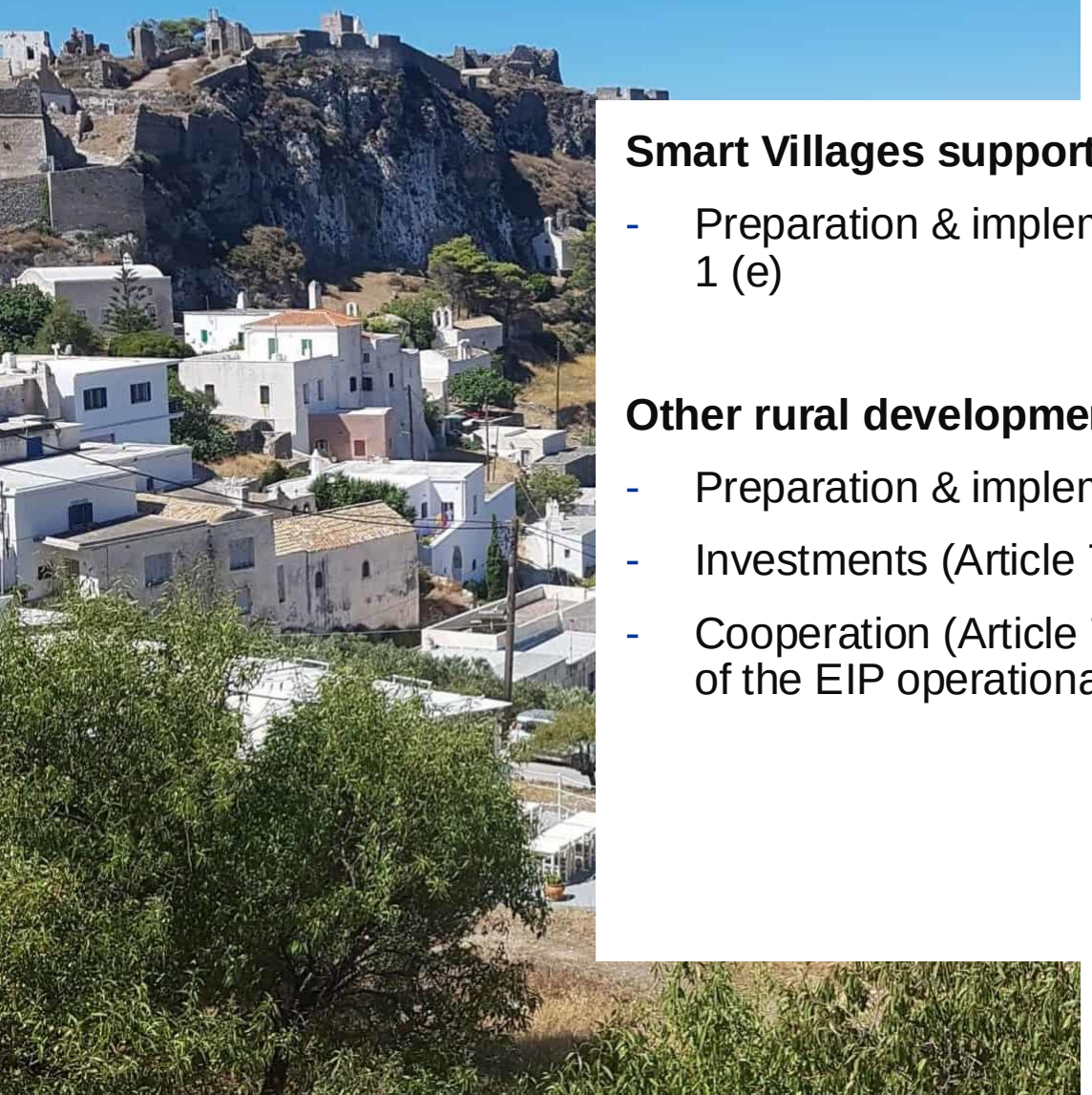
Smart villages in CSPs

Maria-Christina MAKRANDREOU, European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Unit B3

3rd meeting of the Subgroup on LEADER and Territorial Development, Brussels, 5-6 March 2025

European Commission

SPR & Smart Villages



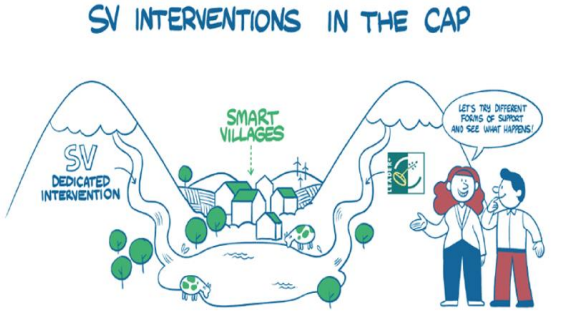
Smart Villages support explicitly introduced in SPR

- Preparation & implementation of smart villages (Cooperation (Article 77, paragraph 1 (e)

Other rural development interventions contributing to smart villages

- Preparation & implementation of LEADER (Cooperation (Article 77, paragraph 1 (b)
- Investments (Article 73)
- Cooperation (Article 77, paragraph 1 (a): preparation & implementation of projects of the EIP operational groups

Smart Villages in the CSPs (2025)



Smart Rural 27, Final conference, 18-19 March 2024

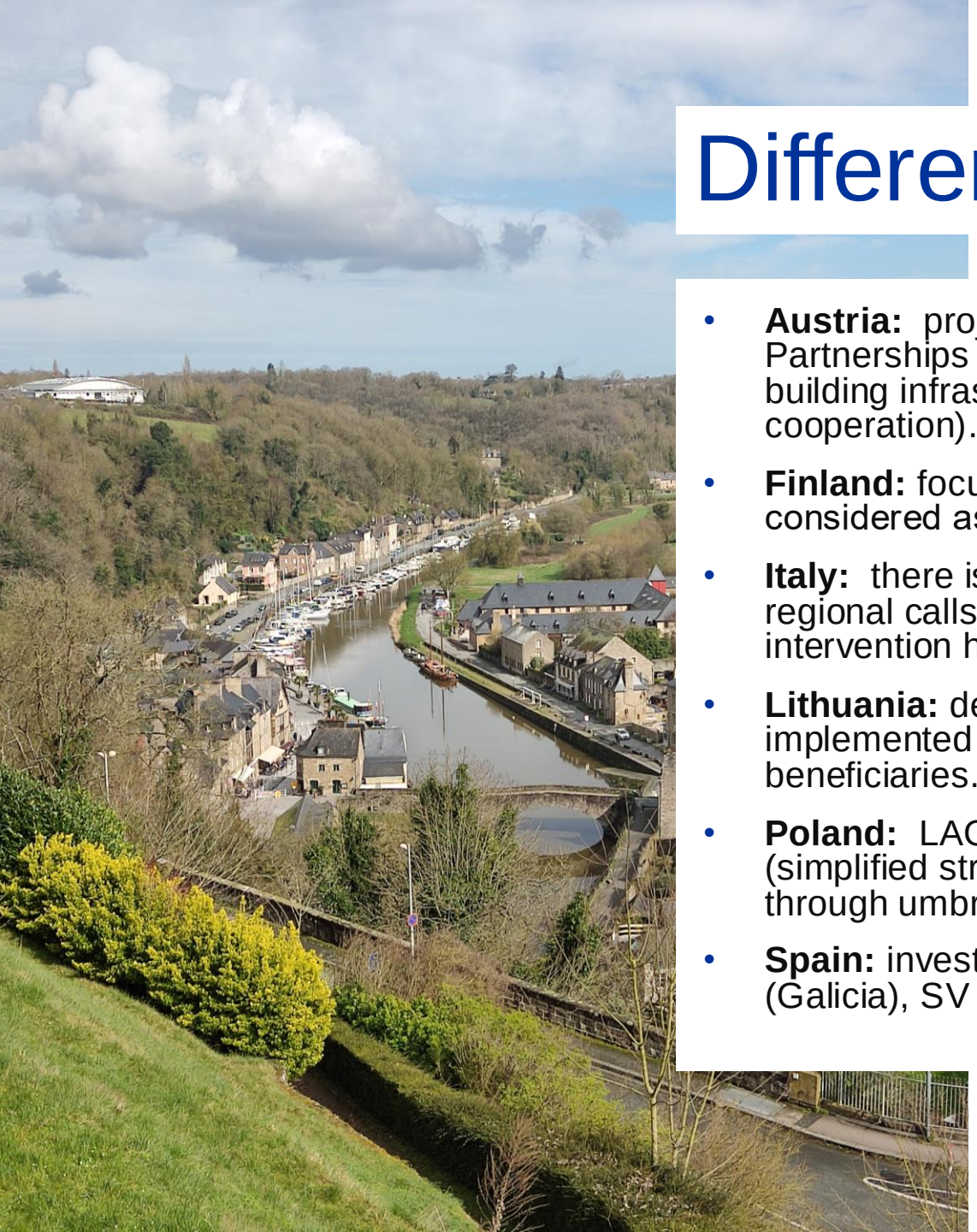
LEADER: 18 CSPs (AT, BE-Flanders, BG, HR, CY, CZ, FI, EL, ES, HU, IE, IT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE)

Dedicated SV intervention: 5 CSPs (AT, FI, HU, IT, LT)

Investments: 3 CSPs (AT, PL, ES/Galicia)

EIP – AGRI OP: 1 CSP (AT)

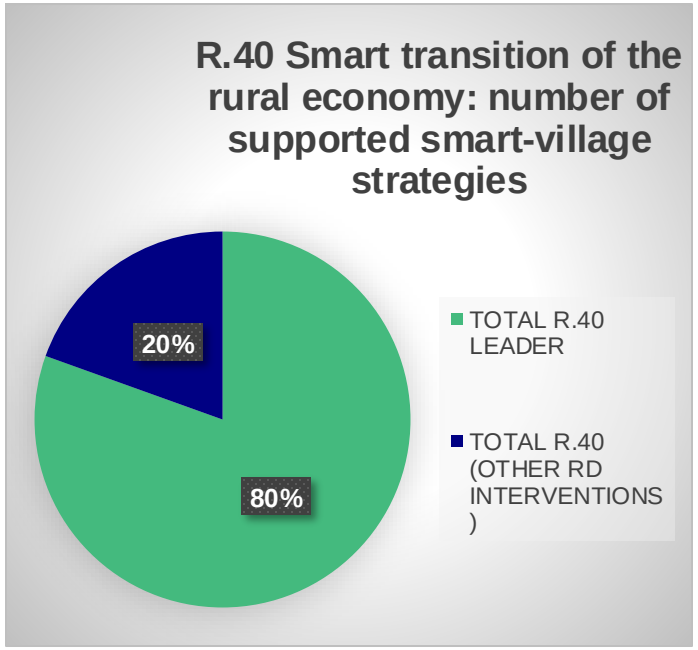
6 CSPs (AT, FI, HU, IT, PL, ES): more than 1 rural development interventions



Different approaches

- **Austria:** projects supported in the context of LEADER, Rural Innovation Partnerships & Networks (EIP-AGRI), as well as in the context of public building infrastructures and vacancy reactivation (investments, cooperation).
- **Finland:** focus on smart village projects and project action plans considered as ‘strategies’.
- **Italy:** there is possibility to implement SV intervention either through regional calls or through LEADER (especially in regions where the SV intervention has not been activated).
- **Lithuania:** dedicated intervention on Smart Villages, which is implemented through LEADER LAGs in partnership with other beneficiaries.
- **Poland:** LAGs support villages within their area to prepare SV concepts (simplified strategies) and could support these integrated approaches through umbrella projects.
- **Spain:** investments in basic services by supporting model villages (Galicia), SV within LEADER (Extremadura).

R.40 Smart transition of the rural economy: number of supported smart-village strategies



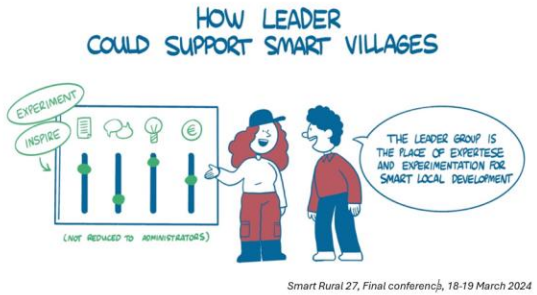
- **LEADER contribution: 2.112 SV strategies/projects** (AT, BE-Flanders, CY, CZ, IE, ES, NL, PL (not yet approved), PT, RO, SE, SI)
- **Other RD interventions contribution: 512 SV strategies/projects** (AT, FI, HU, IT, LT)

- **Still waiting for 6CSPs (BG, EL, FI, HR, HU, IT)** the LEADER contribution to R.40.
- **3 CSPs (EE, LV, LU):** LEADER will not contribute as initially planned.

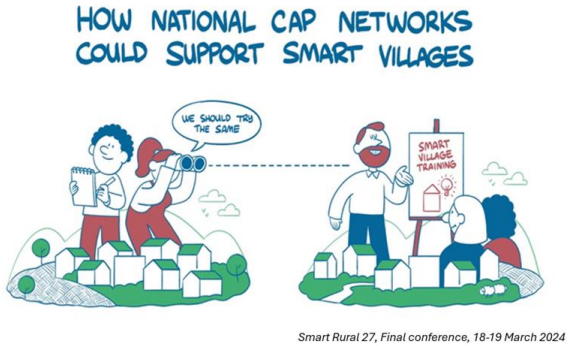
- **Total R.40: 2.624 SV strategies/projects** → **Lack of clarity whether the value of R.40 refers to strategies or projects**

Some questions are still pertinent for SV implementation

- Is it a requirement to design some forms of smart village strategies (action plans, concepts, etc.) at the local level, or is it sufficient to design projects/ project plans?
- At what level (e.g. LAGs or local communities) are smart village strategies designed? Who is in the “lead”: local level municipalities/ villages, other local associations or LEADER LAGs when it comes to designing the strategy?
- What are the quality requirements for a strategy? What should a strategy entail exactly and how these characteristics will be validated?
- Is innovation defined in general? Is digitalisation a requirement or innovation is defined more broadly, e.g. including social innovation without technological / digital innovation?
- What are the quality characteristics of a smart project and how these can be validated?
- How far it is requested to include municipalities in the Smart Villages interventions, and how far other entities (e.g. local NGOs, associations, research, etc.) are involved?
- Is “rural area” defined for Smart Villages, e.g. in terms of population size, population density, etc.? Is participatory approach a requirement for Smart Villages? Is it defined what participatory approach is?
- Is cooperation among various stakeholders a requirement? Which stakeholders (municipalities and beyond) should be involved?
- What distinguishes Smart Villages from other concepts and programmes (including LEADER and various national / regional village support programmes)?

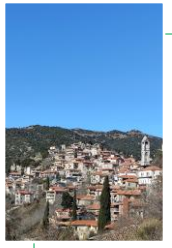


Smart Rural 27 Final Report Recommendations



Further consolidation of the SV concept: better definition of SV, specific guidance, monitoring

Capacity-building especially at local level (LAGs, local municipalities)



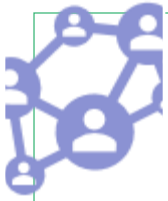
Direct support for local communities/ municipalities

Links to other CAP RD interventions and other programmes & funds

Improve communication on SV

Bring together various stakeholders involved in CAP Programming

Create dedicated Smart Villages platforms for exchange at all levels like European Pilot Smart Villages Observatory under Smart Rural 27 Preparatory Actions



Improve synergies between relevant EU & national networks

Explore and consider synergies with start-up villages and EIP Operational Groups

More information & inspiration

Publication of the final report of Smart Rural 27, accompagnied by two reports on Smart Villages in the CSPs and the contribution of Smart Villages in the Green Deal, Farm to Fork and biodiversity strategies: **Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century - European Commission**

Declaration of Rural Pact (2024): **Rural Pact Coordination Group (RPCG) Declaration on the future of rural areas and rural development policy in the European Union | Rural Pact Community Platform**

Rural Pact Smart Villages Community group: **Smart Villages | Rural Pact Community Platform**

Horizon projects working on local innovations in rural areas (FUTURAL, RURACTIVE and SMART ERA): **Smart solutions for smart rural communities: empowering rural communities and smart villages to innovate for societal change**

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