



Digitalisation in rural areas

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CO-CREATING RURAL FUTURES

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MAPs involved

AKIS
Hungary
MAP

MAP
Norrbotten

MAP Finland
Suomi

Centro
Portugal
MAP



MAPs' contexts

- Digitalisation is high on the policy agenda in the national, regional, and local strategies of the four MAPs
- At national level, some national initiatives explicitly aligned with the EU Digital Compass and the four main areas under this framework (skills, digital infrastructure, digitalisation of businesses, and digital public services): e.g., Finland Digital Compass, Hungary Digital Success Programme as umbrella strategies
- Coordination by national digital agencies, in charge of integrating different institutions: e.g., Digital Hungary Agencies, Coord. Group at the Ministry of Finance (Finland), Agency for Digital Government in SE.
- Centro Portugal MAP stresses more the local level (Fundão region) for the comprehensive approach to the promotion of digitalisation (a set of strategies and plans operationalised via coordinated projects and actions)
- Interest in looking beyond specific initiatives targeting digitalisation in rural areas, as many types of support schemes may indirectly affect digitalization (e.g., SE supporting schemes for commercial services, for democratic activities, and LAGs)



The challenges

- Overcoming the rural digital divide
 - connectivity, digital capital, and motivation
- Improving the attractiveness of rural areas
 - quality of the rural environment, quality of social relations, quality of work, quality of services
- Strengthening local governance



Policy recommendations

Promote and ensure the deployment of adequate resources for the continuous generation and update of **basic digital competences** in rural areas, paying specific attention to the **digital inclusion** of low-skilled and vulnerable groups (e.g., migrants and refugees, the elderly, the hard-to-reach), to ensure the process benefits the whole society

Ensure **public support to investments for basic digital infrastructure**

To ensure an effective use of available resources, promote a culture of **efficiency, coordination and cooperation** among and within public administration and societal levels, through adequate public-led monitoring.

Design more **flexible and long-term orientated funding schemes**, to better adapt available resources to specific needs and contexts

Promote **opportunities for scaling out regional/local best practices**, by favouring exchanges between different rural towns and villages

Promote **coordination among public agencies owning or involved in collecting and storing data**, to enhance public data-sharing and facilitate decision-making

Facilitate processes and/or promote the creation of spaces for the **co-design of locally adapted strategies** including members and organisations from civil society, policy, businesses and researchers

Promote the provision of **technical assistance and need-based services** dedicated to crucial sectors identified at the local level (e.g. agriculture, forestry, tourism and leisure) through the establishment of competence centres

Thank you

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