"Long term DEP dissemination strategy report"

Work package: WP T2
Activity A.T2.5
Deliverable: D.T2.5.4

Report "Long term Digital Exchange Platform dissemination strategy"

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Deliverable: D.T2.5.4

Version: 1.0

Date: February, 2021

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1.Introduction

One of the deliverables and core activities of ASP623 Smart Villages Alpine Space project, driven during 3 years from 2018 to 2021 was the creation of a Digital Exchange Platform, to be used between partners and among all smart villages stakeholders in the whole european alpine space and beyond.

That platfotm has been released, with a lot of functionalities and different more or less successful usecases. It is free to use at https://smart-villages.eu
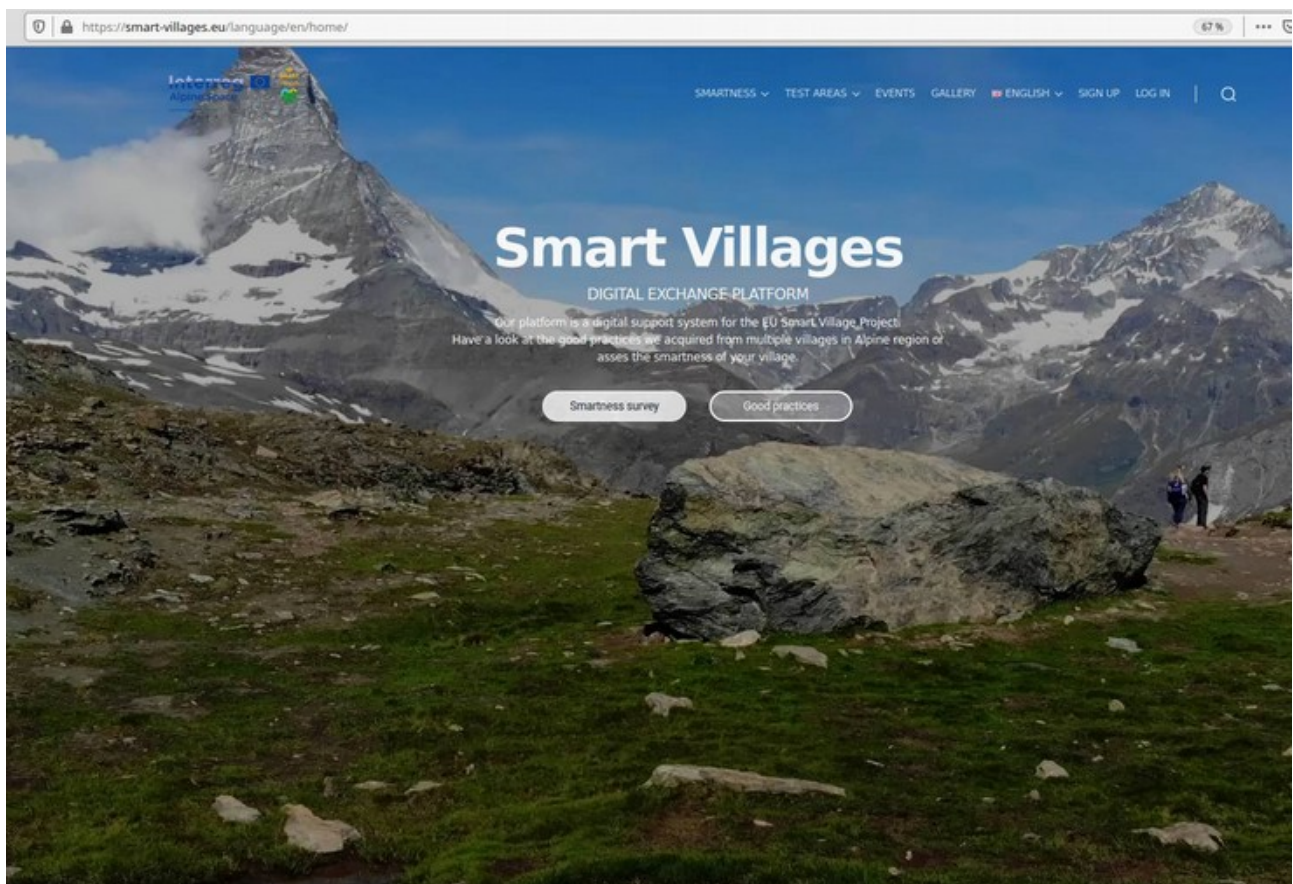

Figure 1: DEP home page

Now, near from the end of project, it's time to get the lessons from that DEP creation and use and to have a look at what we should do to ensure the durability of that DEP and a real use among all those communities in order to help the development of Smart Villages initiatives.
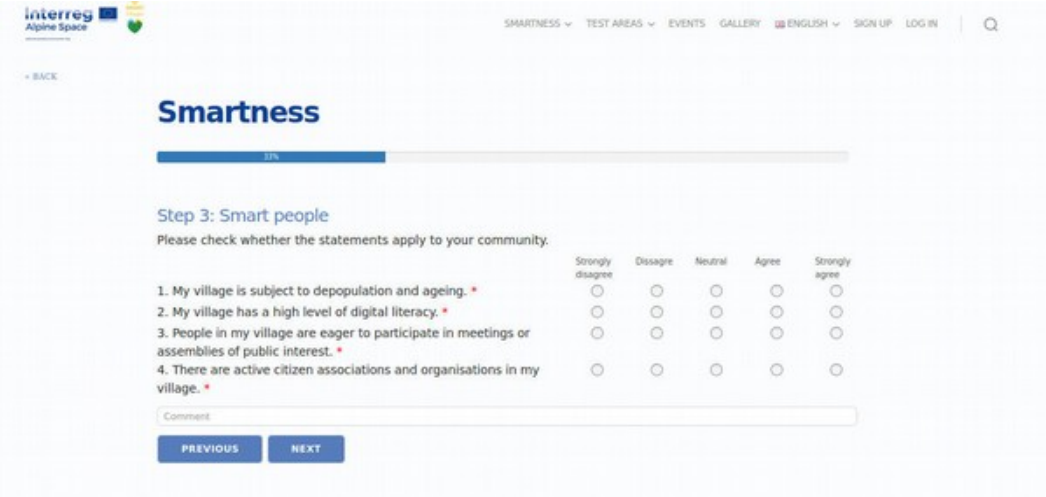
2.DEP : State of the art and maintenance challenges

Digital Exchange Platform (DEP) is now available at that url : https://smart-villages.eu

2.1 Added-value functions

It proposes a lot of functionalities.

Among them, we used forum, documents storage, and other collaboration tools during the project.

But the core of what is our topic today is around two very added-value functions : Smartness Self-Assessment and Smart Villages best practices collection. Those functionalities weren't exist, at least for the self assessment tool. Best practices collections existed formerly either at a lower scale or in a non-ordered way (cf. ENRD below).

Figure 2: DEP smartness self assessment

You can have the full list of functionalities and how they have been deployed in our project deliverable DT2.1.2 « DEP Architecture report ».

2.2 Easy to use and user-experience centered

- Conception of the DEP has been very iterative to take into account feedbacks from the partnership and from the different RSGs. So it is a long time work that allowed us to present the actual state of functionalities like smartness assessment and best practices collection. University of Maribor, in charge of the interface development had a very user experience (UX) centered approach for the development of that tool.

- One of the key lessons from that iterative work has been the need for natural langage interfaces. So translation processes have been tested and integrated inside the platform : natural multi-languages interface, manual translation for all the assessment process and the main menu, to get the better possible user experience, automated translation for best practices, to avoid a huge and long-term translation work very difficult to handle beyond the SmartVillages project end.

- Last element of easy to use experience was the need for clear documents. So an updated user manual has been designed from the beginning of the DEP use inside the partnership and updated all along the project. And a video tutorial has been released in 2020 : https://youtu.be/Us-xVtEKlGY

Figure 3: DEP Video tutorial

2.3 Technical continuity challenges

- First challenge, taken up in the framework of the project was the durability of the platform hosting. University of Maribor, in charge of the technical implementation of the platform accepted to host on a middle-term period those tools beyond the end of the project and could keep this role of DEP technical referrer if futher upgrades or corrections were required.

- Other challenge is the need to be able to propose access to collected data inside the platform. That challenge has also been taken up with export methods allowing to reuse both good practices and assessment results : https://smart-villages.eu/language/en/export-data/

- Last challenge we can identify is the need for sovereignty over collected datas and used components inside the platform. Today datas on the platform are not covered with an open licence. It could be very useful and secure to do so. Also, the platform itself is opensource (Wordpress) but some of the components rely on Google, mainly mapping and translation. In the future ideally opensource and european driven components could replace those Google tools, which use conditions can change without any right of review.

Main lessons for partnership
Need for a technical referrer

Main lessons for external stakeholders
Only real added value functions can be used beyond the partnership
Need for easy to use and explained tool

3. Spreading : means to make known the DEP

3.1 Scientific networks

Considering our partnership (4 academic institutions among the members) scientific networking has been very natural way to spread the knowledge of DEP. Different congresses have been handled as well as different scientific publications from Universities of Llubjana and Maribor, SCCH or Poliedra.

For example, that common article named "Facilitating the digital transformation of villages" in the framework of Central European Conference on Information and Intelligent Systems : CECIIS Conference Proceedings

Figure 4: CECIIS Conference

3.2 European policy networks

European policy makers and territories networks are also very good vectors for increasing the knowledge of DEP. European Network for Rural Development has developed a Smart Villages portal, DEP should definitely be well referenced at that place :
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/smart-and-competitive-rural-areas/smart-villages/smart-villages-portal_en
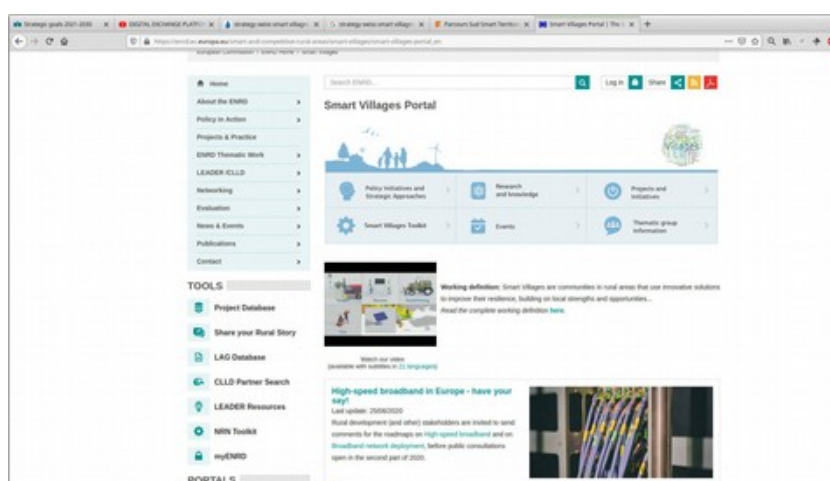

Figure 5: ENRD Smart Villages portal

Alliance in the Alps is another very important network that can be very interested in the DEP use, in particular to collect and share best practices throughout the alpine space :
https://alpenallianz.org/fr/actuel/les-communes-intelligentes-gagnent-en-attractivite?searchterm=smartvillages

3.3 National / Regional strategies

National or regional strategies around Smart Villages thematic could rely more on DEP tools (assessment, toolbox, best practices).

The swiss Smart City Hub (https://www.smartcityhub.ch/) and federal policy is going to condition the entry in the device to the use of the DEP.

Figure 7: French Sud Smart territoires device
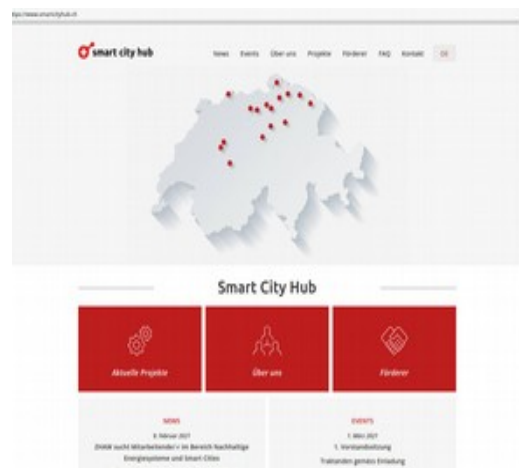
Figure 6: Swiss Smart City Hub website

In France, PACA region has developed a "Smart Territoires" program to support local authorities wanting to initiate such a process, it could rely on the DEP. More info : https://www.maregionsud.fr/aides-...il/parcours-sud-smart-territoires

French national rural network just launched a call for tenders for a Smart Villages guide. Such a document should rely on the different european initiatives and DEP should be one of the support platforms.

Main lessons for partnership	**Main lessons for external stakeholders**
Systematically integrate DEP use in future works	*Network as a key to spread DEP use*
Network as a key to spread DEP use	*Try to touch different targets : scientists, policy makers, technicians*
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4. Beyond the knowledge : appropriation of the DEP by the stakeholders

Use of the DEP to get some information is one thing, but real appropriation by all the potential Smart Villages alpine stakeholders is another challenge, implying a deeper knowledge of the platform, and a deeper understanding and involvement to keep it alive.

4.1 Replicating

Replication of the DEP to get a dedicated platform at a local level for instance can be one answer. You can refer to deliverable DT2.1.3 "Build your own DEP" to get all the informations about the process to follow.

One example is the french platform built throughout the project at the scale of the french TA Royans Vercors. It is called "Echo des falaises" https://echodesfalaises.org, some parts are inspired by the DEP but technology choices were not the same. It will continue working beyond the project, referencing transition and smart initiatives of the territory, proposing video content like Local heroes videos, online services for e-car sharing....
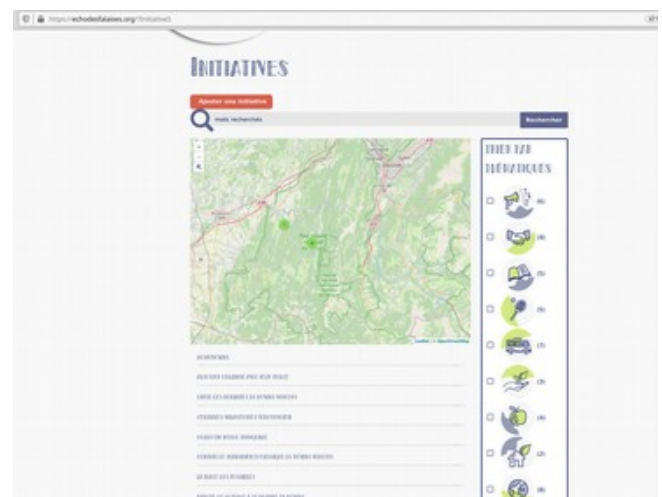
Figure 8: French "Echo des falaises" local platform

One question about replicated platforms should be the link with supra-platforms like DEP or other ones. For instance, the Echo des falaises is not yet connected to DEP nor to another practices collection platform.

4.2 Increasing contribution

One of the main concerns during the project has been the question of contribution and active use of the platform, beyond just viewing existing contents.

Two tracks can be follow :

- One is about networking and making DEP contribution tools more visible through different events and projects.
  In Grenoble, 6th october 2020, during the EUSALP event "Key opportunities for a sustainable and attractive alpine region" tablets were available for viewing and contributing on the DEP, with help from Adrets team.
  DEP could also be seen as a systematic tool to be used and valued for future works by project partners. Actually smartness assessment, toolbox and best practices collection can be all very valuable tools for scientific purpose and for local development purpose (both for consulting and inspiration / putting process in action for local authorities).

- Second track is about conditioning the entrance to a device, and specifically financial device, to the contribution or use of DEP tools. Example : if you want to get some money for your project please share the way you implemented it in the good practices collection. That track is going to be implemented right now in Switzerland.

4.3 Linking with other initiatives

A big technical work has been done to make all the datas available through APIs (https://smart-villages.eu/language/en/export-data/). Now the next step should be to make more connections with existing and future platforms across Europe.

There are already a lot of european plateforms (see ENRD collections of Projects & Practices), national or regional databases that collect initiatives covering the fields of Smart Villages .
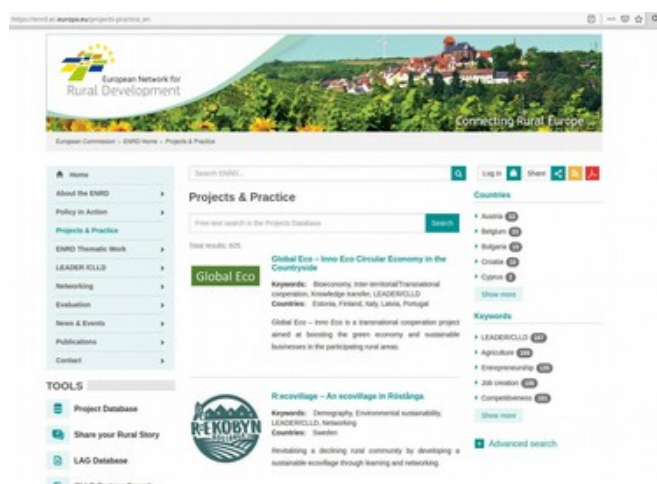

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Figure 9: ENRD Smart Villages projects & practices collection

For instance in France "Le Carrefour des innovations sociales" (www.carrefourdesinnovationssociales.fr/)

Links with other potential DEP around SmartVillages issues (like mentioned for Echo des falaises) should also be studied. We could imagine to propose assessment on such platforms, to mix local and alpine practices as collection resources...

Main lessons for partnership	*Main lessons for external stakeholders*
More education about possible data access *More links with existing platforms supported by other networks or institutions*	*Integrate in projects the added-value of global use of the DEP self-assessment, toolbox and good practices*

5. Conclusion : Towards a durable and appropriated tool for european alpine space

Through that document, an interesting profile of the DEP is emerging.

Today it is a unique tool, proposing real added-value functions for Smart Villages processes all around alpine space and beyond. It is fully functional, open, easy to use and documented.

The project is now well-known in the different networks interested in those questions at a european or national levels, there are still efforts to make the DEP itself well-known and well referenced on other platforms.

There are also still education efforts to do, more linkages with platforms and perhaps conditionality processes to put in action to allow getting a global view on all good practices across alpine space and consolidated results for self-assessment and matchmaking thanks to a more important number of uses.

Beyond that, a further goal could be to link best practices collections and tools around Smart Villages into some connected Smart Villages tools web on the Web.