

# The Use of the Concept of Smart Villages in the Multifunctional Development of Rural Areas on the Example of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship

Anna Bielska, Natalia Sajnóg and Katarzyna Sobolewska-Mikulska (Poland)

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## SUMMARY

The concept of Smart Villages does not offer a single solution but allows to build on the potential of each territory, its unique cultural environment and needs and desires of local community. Ideally, it is also the community, in cooperation with the local authorities, that drives changes in the local area with the aim to preserve the viability of the area and to improve the quality of life. The Smart Village concept also implies that rural development should be stimulated by unique local characteristics and economic opportunities with view to diversifying incomes of rural holdings.

Rural areas in Poland are highly diversified in terms of their spatial structure. The intensive social and economic changes in rural areas in the recent years have underpinned the necessity of spatial restructuring to meet the challenges of the present.

The aim of the study is to diagnose the main problems which result in spatial conflicts and to offer the possibility of mitigating them with the use of innovative digital technologies and public participation, in line with the Smart Village concept. The research conducted in Mazowieckie region has identified areas where dedicated measures are needed to adapt rural space to rural development. The underlying assumption of the study is that the key barrier to multifunctional development of rural areas is the spatial structure of land plots and holdings which is not adapted to the present needs, technologies and potential land use.

In addition, the paper also considers the issue of areas planned to undergo revitalisation as the ones in need of comprehensive transformation. The adopted research methodology has allowed to identify municipalities in most urgent need of change, including those where agricultural holdings should transition to intensive farming, as well as those likely to undergo a change from farming to residential or other land use, which requires the spatial structure to be adapted to present needs.

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Identification and evaluation of the areas in the region that require land-use transformation and the areas which are not in such need of spatial restructuring have helped define thematic software applications that should be dedicated to different areas of the region to foster their optimal growth.

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