



SMART ERA

Revitalizing rural communities with digital technologies and participatory approaches

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**Good Practice
Webinar on rural
innovation**

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PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI TRENTO

SMART ERA



HORIZON EUROPE

Smart solutions for smart rural communities: empowering rural communities and smart villages to innovate for societal change

Through processes of co-design, co-development and co-validation of innovative solutions

4 years

January 2024 → December 2027

Consortium

25 partner/affiliated entities from 10 EU countries

Budget

€ 6 861 437.50 (around 1 Million Euro FSTP)



MISSION AND VISION



MISSION

Improve the life of **communities living in rural areas**, and in particular their well-being, resilience to shocks, and their **capacity to innovate...**

VISION

...by providing **methods to build solutions** that can be interlinked into Smart Innovation Packages (SIPs) to tackle socio-economic and environmental challenges and promote a **community-led transition** pathway.



From isolated solutions..

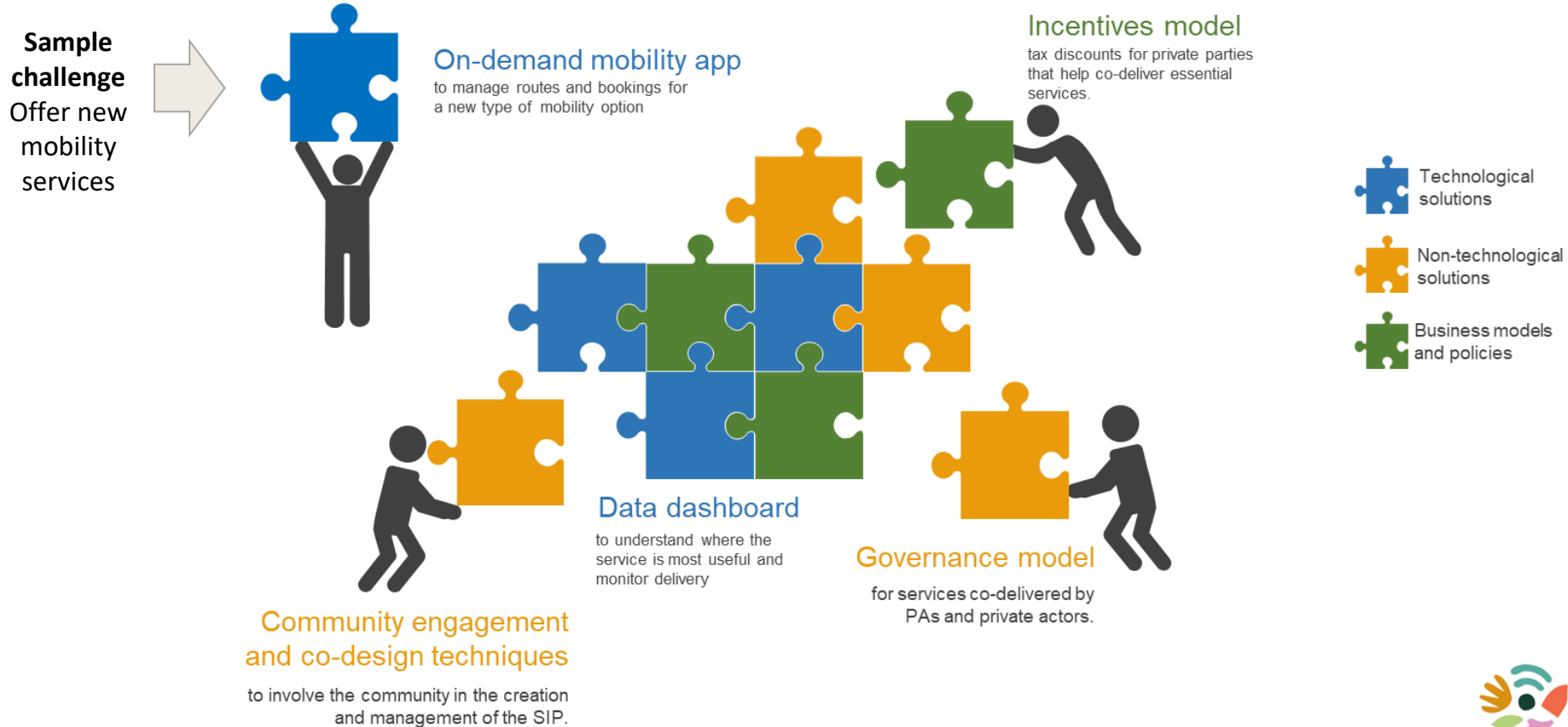
**Sample
challenge**
Offer new
mobility
services



On-demand mobility app
to manage routes and bookings for
a new type of mobility option



From isolated solutions.. .. to Smart Innovation Packages



The SMART ERA methodology

1

CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

- Needs assessment
- Data screening
- Mapping stakeholder expectations
- Definition of challenges

2

SOLUTION CO-DESIGN

- SIPs co-design with 6 rural communities
- Technology development and local data integration
- Non-technological solutions

3

PILOT EXECUTION

- SIP deployment in the 6 pilots' environment
- Pilots execution
- Evaluation of obtained results
- Impact assessment

4

REPLICATION

- Replication in other 4 follower regions (Open call)
- Policy recommendations
- Post-project exploitation strategy



Pilot sites

FINLAND

Northern Ostrobothnia

Platform economy: economic model based on **digital platforms that facilitate interactions and transactions** between different users

ITALY

Valle di Sole

Digital services to sustain the agrifood sector by **tracing the production chain and communicate the product value** through community engagement

SPAIN

Sóller / Mallorca

Digitalisation of the local economy and data sharing (especially tourism and agriculture)

SLOVENIA

Šmarje-Padna

Sustainable mobility and tourism; community involvement in the circular economy

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Trebinje

Rural tourism development; **digital services for agrifood promotion and sales**

BULGARIA

Devetaki Plateau

Developing **digital infrastructure and connectivity**; health centre for remote counselling



Key Challenges

Human Capital Gaps

- Aging populations, low digital literacy
- Difficulty attracting/retaining talent in rural areas

Innovation System Gaps

- Weak links between local SMEs, research institutions, and funding instruments

Resources

- Lack of human resources
- Lack of long-term funding

Sóller, Mallorca (ESP)



Devetaki Plateau (BG)



Key reflection points

Participatory methods and co-design

- Empowering groups of local stakeholders and guiding them through the process.
- Manage stakeholders' expectations.

Maximize efficiency

- Stakeholders give their time for free, avoid over-stressing them and limit the number of meetings/homework maximizing efficiency.

“Phygital” solutions for engagement

- The “SMART ERA Toolkit” for engagement combines physical and digital elements.

Give a credible path to a long-term vision

- Importance of long-term funding, not just short project cycles.

Valle di Sole (ITA)



Trebinje, East Herzegovina (BIH)





SMART ERA

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