



ERUDITE & Smart Villages: Co-creating the Digital Transformation of Rural Europe

Each village, rural town and region has common but also unique needs and challenges, each one needs tailored help and support to develop a 'Smart' vision for its own future.



ERUDITE partners recognise that digital transformation in rural, peripheral and emerging regions is more than speeding the uptake of digital technologies; it is about ensuring that each rural village, town and region their communities can translate them into economic and social opportunity. For ERUDITE 'Smart' means galvanizing the 'intelligence' of the whole 'ecosystem' of each region: its people, culture, knowledge, natural resources and business, to ensure it becomes a player not a spectator in its own future. A smart village is one which has the capacity to effectively utilize its assets, to innovate and deliver the social and economic changes it has prioritised, either by itself or in partnership with other regions rural or urban.

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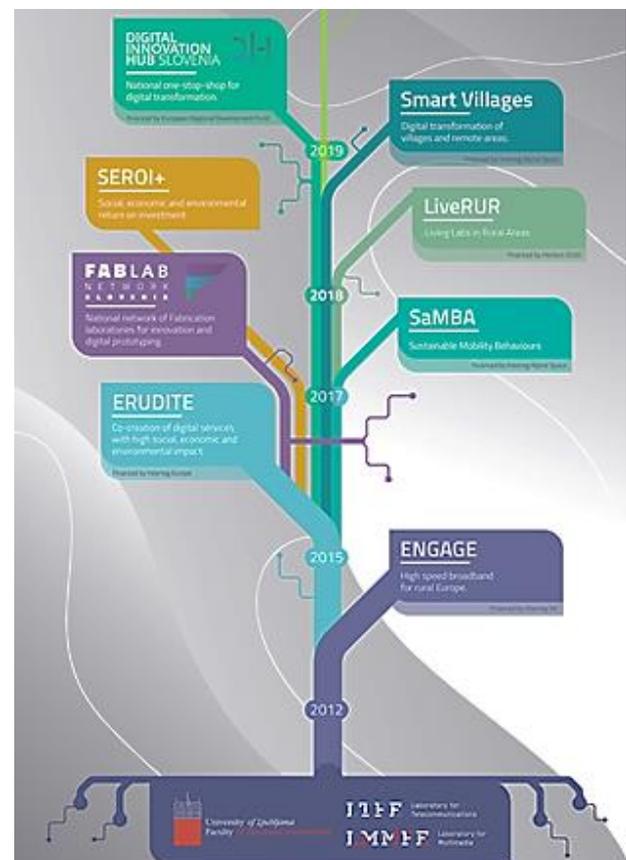
The rural market town of Lormes (FR) with its dynamic rural digital hub & co-designed Village of the Future strategy hosted and enthused the 1st meeting of the ERUDITE project

(Click photo for ENRD Case Study)

To achieve this transformation or evolution requires investment in programmes, strategies, mediators and tools and which both complement and enhance the impact of the new technologies themselves: in competences and skills, in organisational change, in new processes, business and governance models and in the intellectual assets that help create value from

the new business models and technologies. For ERUDITE the development, design & implementation of effective digital services in Europe requires an innovative re-thinking of all the processes involved in their creation and by integrating digital demand stimulation with digital education and training.

In Slovenia ERUDITE has catalyzed the formation of primarily the national FabLab Network Slovenia, with 28 fabrication laboratories across the whole country, which then led to the establishment of the Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia. As an operational authority of the national digital coalition, DIH Slovenia serves as a national one-stop-shop for digital transformation and digital competence development in Slovenia:



<http://fablab.si/en/about-fablab-network-slovenia/>
<http://dihslovenia.si>



Smart Villages cannot be achieved simply through top-down imposition of digitalization. In ERUDITE our aim has been to fully exploit the economic and social potential of local stakeholders and networks, by designing new digital services with and for them, responding to real public, private and community need and better direct public investments in infrastructure and uses. Through our merging of Open Innovation and Social Return on Investment into our SEROI+ process, partnerships have been fostered between businesses, citizens and public administrations, empowering them to innovate and plan services for maximum value and benefits.



In Donegal, Ireland, ERUDITE has facilitated the creation of a new hub in a remote peninsula to integrate the enterprise

sectors in Inishowen into the region's (and Europe's) wider innovation ecosystem. Click on hub image and look in ERUDITE Projects for more information.

ERUDITE Has changed the way our partners approach service design and roll-out by creating a clear value-led roadmap (SEROI+) with four steps that constitute the building blocks for service co-creation for smart rural communities and ecosystems:

1. **Define policy or practice goals for the services**
2. **Identify and engage relevant stakeholders and define their goals**
3. **Co-design the service**
4. **Set indicators & values; estimate then monitor social, economic & environmental return on investment**



Our video will introduce you to SEROI+ (click above!)
 + To check out how SEROI+ works in practice
<https://www.interregeurope.eu/erudite/seroi-documents/> and take a tour through the methodology
<http://seroi.plus/tool/>

Each regional partnership in ERUDITE has undertaken a multi-stakeholder process to prioritise, select, co-design and implement new digital services which combine social and economic return on investment analysis with an open innovation process and which allows the evaluation and monitoring of their potential impact & of course improves the delivery of Policies (see ERUDITE Regional Action Plans)

Each partner in ERUDITE has identified a service for monitoring where key indicators and values have been selected by stakeholders to monitor and measure the social, economic and environmental impact the new services will have. Results available in Spring 2020 – tools presented at in **Dijon, France on June 4 and 5** for our final conference (link)

Our Conclusions

Smart villages and towns in the Rural, Peripheral and Emerging regions of Europe need smart citizens, business and public administrations and above all networking and cooperation **in and between** rural communities, their citizens and stakeholders to maintain the dynamic they have begun.

Truly bottom up and resilient digital transformation in rural Europe is more complex and requires greater investments than the diffusion of the technologies themselves. Moreover, it has been moving more slowly, particularly in regions outside the economic and social mainstream, where the impacts of new technologies are often complex.

It is vital to co-create and integrate Smart Villages and rural regions into wider SUSTAINABLE digital innovation ecosystems', which on inter-regional cooperation: sharing, co-development, social and economic inclusion and make sure that so-called 'Smart Villages' are not just on gateways to services delivered by metropolitan areas which could accentuate the regional digital divide.

Crucially Digital transformation increases the pressure on communities, firms and public bodies to innovate continuously. ERUDITE has demonstrated that collectively we need to catalyse, lever, network and expand inter-regional digital eco-systems, enhancing inclusion; mediation or brokerage capacity to provide universal access to the integrated solutions and eco-systems our citizens, public administrations and enterprises need.

We have developed our SEROI+ process to meet this challenge.