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Smart Villages in Europe

An instrument for sustainable development - experience and lessons learned

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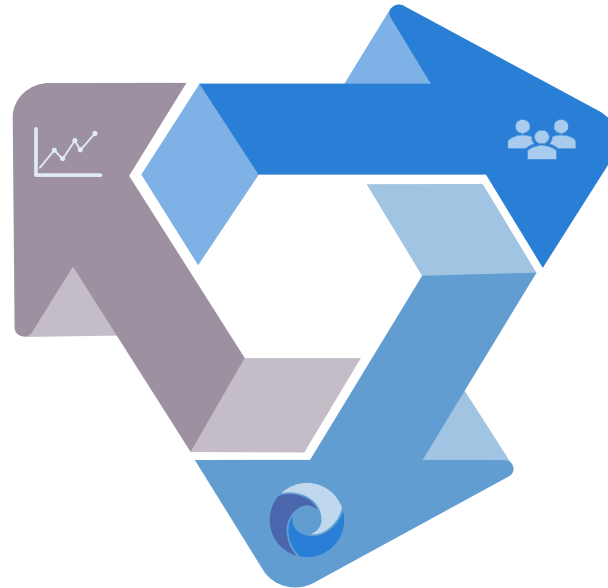
Contents

- Understanding the Smart Villages concept
- Smart villages approach and opportunities
- Key elements of a Smart Villages policy framework
- Key intervention areas and (examples of smart solutions)
- Challenges of preparing and implementing Smart Villages strategies
- Lessons learned

Small scale fishing communities: challenges and opportunities

ECONOMIC

- Market diversification
- Business development
- Equipment, technology, infrastructure
- Alternative livelihoods
- Collaboration and networking
- Credit and financial services
- Insurance systems
- Policies and regulations



SOCIAL

- Healthcare and safety
- Education and Training
- Social Services
- Gender equity
- Generational renewal
- Cultural identity and heritage
- Housing and basic infrastructures
- Leadership and Governance

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Climate adaptation
- Sustainable fisheries management
- Eco-friendly practices
- Conservation efforts and resource management
- Collaborative research

Addressing challenges and seizing opportunities

Paradigm shift towards new approaches

- Holistic and tailored perspective with a view to making the most of resources / strategic assets, while promoting social well-being and assuring environmental sustainability, particularly in a scenario of deteriorating climate change.
- Collaboration between fishing communities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, academia, and the private sector.
- Explore and consolidate the link with current priorities, namely, digital transition, circular economy, research and development, innovation and technology, climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Identify and implement creative and effective solutions adapted to different geographical and socioeconomic and cultural contexts.



Smart Villages definition

“Smart villages are communities in rural areas that use innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategy to improve their economic, social and/or environmental conditions, in particular by mobilizing solutions offered by digital technologies.

Smart villages benefit from cooperation and alliances with other communities and actors in rural and urban areas. The initiation and the implementation of Smart Villages strategies may build on existing initiatives and can be funded by a variety of public and private sources.”

Smart Villages definition

- Rural communities
- Build their sustainable development process on existing local strengths and opportunities
- Rely on a participatory approach to develop a development strategy
- Mobilize and use smart solutions, in particular offered by digital technologies
- Benefit from cooperation and alliances with stakeholders
- Have Smart Villages Strategies, which often build on existing initiatives and can be funded by public and private sources

What would it take to program and implement
a Smart Villages policy framework?

Programming Smart Villages

Political commitment, acknowledging that

- Sustainable and resilient rural areas and communities is vital for society as a whole;
- Development processes requires collective action, including policies and investments;
- Innovation is essential for finding new ways to address challenges and seize opportunities;
- Local development cannot be achieved without local people.
- Integrated territorial approaches, articulating multisectoral and place-based vision, are the most efficient to lead a local development pathway.

Encourage open discussions and seek feedback to incorporate into the policy framework. Common understanding of the Smart Villages concept and its relevance. Understood by all actors and development agents and translated into political commitments.

Programming Smart Villages

Reflection towards the **design of a comprehensive policy framework**

- Vision and objectives (clear definition and added value compared to other policy instruments).
- Policy articulation and complementarity (alignment with broader objectives outlined in national policies and development plans and strategies).
- Governance and Regulatory Frameworks (lead and responsibilities by relevant government ministries, agencies, and departments);
- Resources allocation.

Capacity-building at national, regional and local levels (for designing and implementing).

There is no defined model for implementing Smart Villages. Essential to find a balance between top-down and bottom-up, while ensuring the active involvement of communities (representatives).

Programming Smart Villages

Operational framework for policy interventions

- Territorial level of intervention (specific types of communities, networks, clusters, regions, ...).
- Intervention logic (needs and opportunities; conceptual model and implementation approach, expected outcomes, results and impacts).
- Priority intervention axes (all or specific thematic areas).
- Funding and financing (support preparatory activities and investments related to Smart Villages implementation).
- Monitoring and evaluation (adjustments and continuous update the policy framework to changing factors).

Programming Smart Villages

Preparatory activities for implementation

- Awareness and community engagement initiatives (inform about the concept and its benefits).
- Guidelines and administrative documents (including roles and responsibilities, publication of calls, criteria).
- Development and testing of tools (roadmap for implementation, Smart Villages strategy template, monitoring and evaluation system).
- Knowledge transfer, experience sharing, facilitation activities.

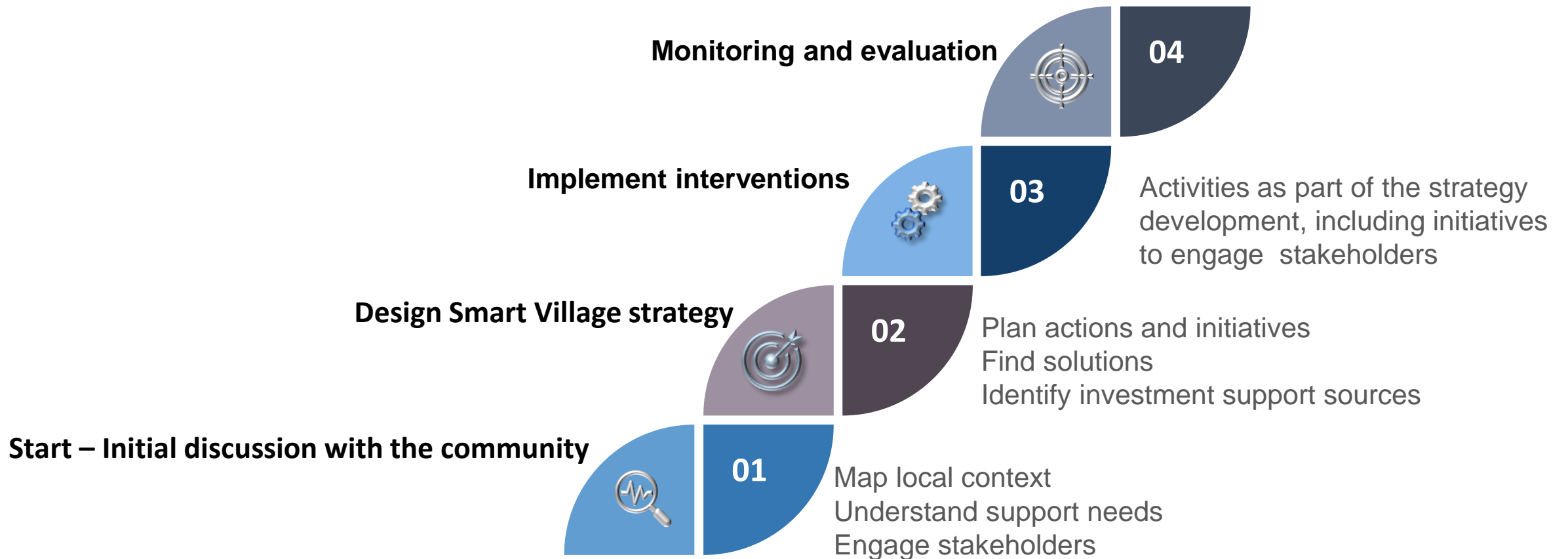
Pilot projects and proof of concept: test and validate the effectiveness of approaches, implementation tools, smart solutions).

Implementing Smart Villages

Operational framework within a specific programme, strategy, measure designed at national or regional level.

- Previously defined structure for designing the strategy.
- Criteria for evaluating and selecting Smart Village strategies: articulation with other policy interventions at the same or higher territorial level, added value, level of innovation.

Implementing Smart Villages



Implementing Smart Villages

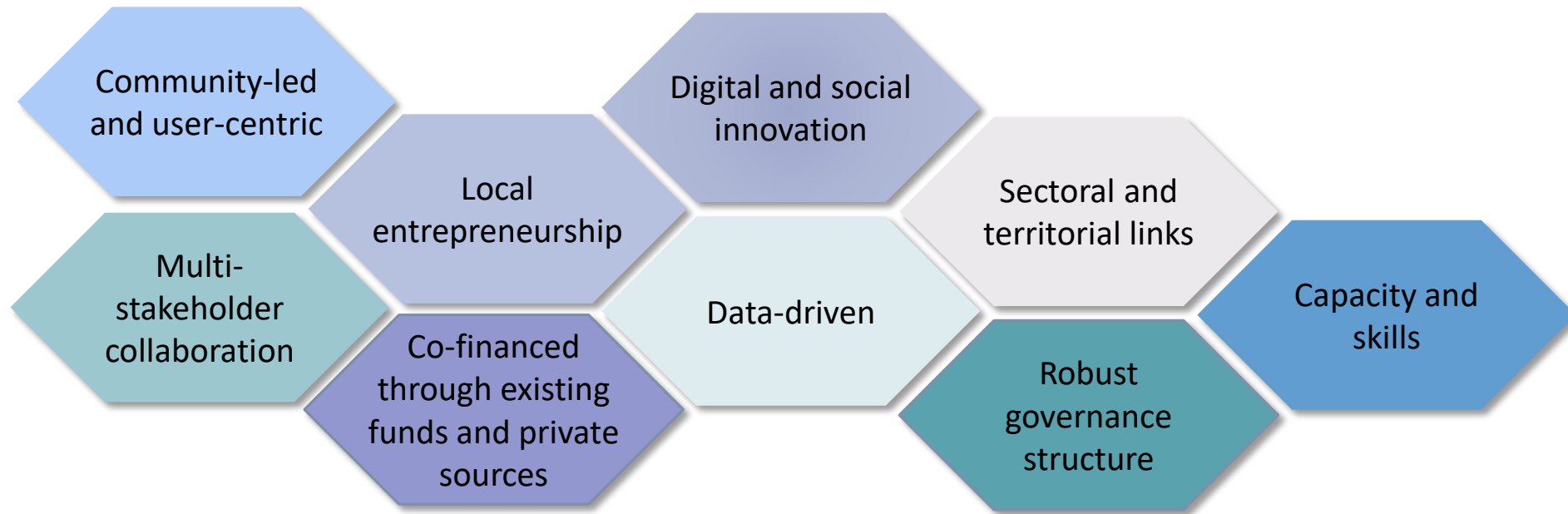
Smart Villages strategy – Key elements

- Represent a common vision on medium-long term development perspectives on a micro scale.
- Favor a holistic development perspective - integrated and comprehensive (all thematic areas).
- Ensure action planning using innovative, future-oriented solutions (digital but not only).
- Provide an effective tool for communicating a community's development vision.
- Give stakeholders an advantage in positioning themselves for access to investment support.

Other important elements: build on existing dynamics; intervention's sustainability and scalability / transferability.

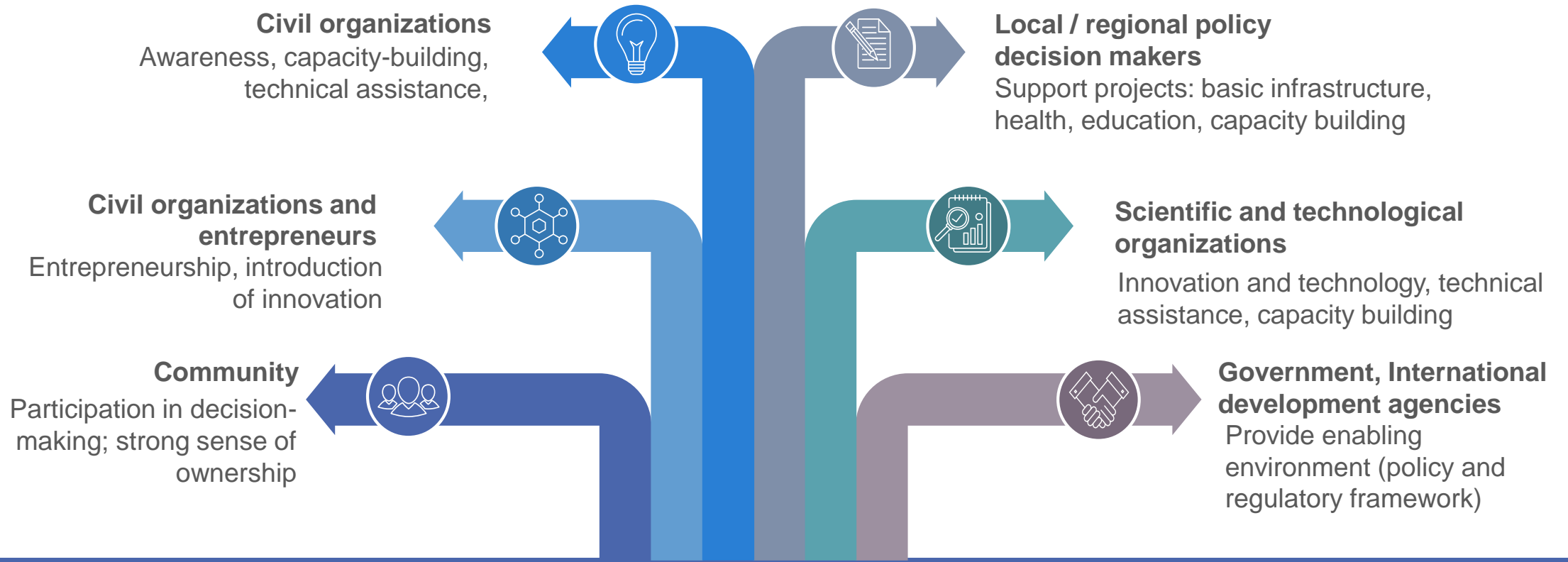
Implementing Smart Villages

How a Smart Villages strategy should look like



Implementing Smart Villages

How a stakeholders mapping should look like



Lessons learned – supporting development and implementation of Smart Villages

All communities can embark on Smart Villages processes, but a set of **conditions should be met to ensure success**

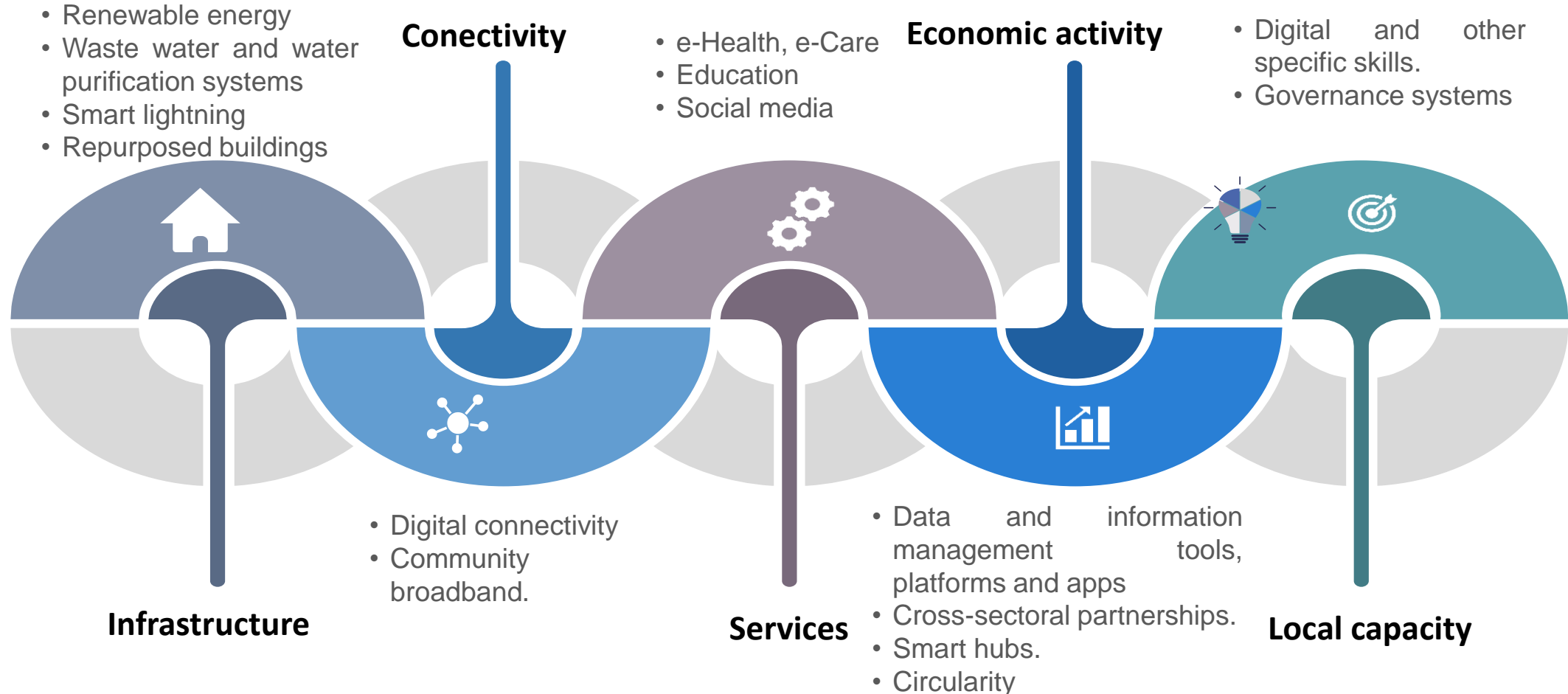
- Financial and human resources (including technical/expert knowledge - capacity to plan and implement interventions).
- Robust governance system ensuring design and implementation based on a participatory approach (based on available resources and local context limitations).
- Strong commitment from all parties involved (participation, collaboration, capacity building, resource mobilization and accountability).
- Innovative solutions affordable and easily accessible to communities.
- Advantage in transferring or getting inspiration from already tested smart solutions.

Lessons learned – supporting development and implementation of Smart Villages

Implementation process

- Identify clearly the responsibility for management.
- Favor incremental and adaptive approaches - implementing the action plan in stages allows for adjustments and adaptations based on lessons learned and changes in context.
- Ensure the interventions viability and sustainability.
- Assure adequate monitoring and evaluation (strategy update upon progress and results).

Smart Villages - Key intervention areas



Thank you.
