

The Challenges of Rural Areas in Croatia

Can information improve rural governance and service delivery to combat depopulation?

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01 The Challenges

Impact of deagrarianization and depopulation





Rural areas face a great number of challenges such as:

DEAGRARIZATION AND DEPOPULATION

Agrarian exodus leads to trade disruptions, reduction of agricultural production and affects the self-sustainability and resilience of the community

- demographic decline leading to a declining working age population,
- a modest labor market,
- depopulation,
- a lack of health and education infrastructure
- a lack of other basic services,
- social inequality,
- lack of knowledge and information,
- lack of full connectivity,
- distance from urban centers.



02

Case studies

Lekenik, Sisak-Moslavina County and
Jelenje, Primorje-Gorski kotar County



	Lekenik, Sisak-Moslavina County	Jelenje, Primorje-Gorski kotar County
No. of Inhabitants 2011.	6.032	5.321
No. of Inhabitants 2021.	5.345	5.077
Depopulation in 10 years	-11,39%	-4,21%
Area	231 km ²	109 km ²
Population density 2021.	23 inhabitants/km ²	47 inhabitants/km ²
Health care	3 small local medical infirmaries (1 renewed after earthquake) and 1 pharmacy	1 renewed medical center & pharmacy; free Local Governance co-financed medical exam yearly for all inhabitants
Schooling and Preschool Care	1 elementary school; 1 kindergarden (in bad shapes after earthquake)	1 renewed elementary school, 1 kindergarden
Internet connectivity	start of initiative for optic fiber in 2021.	Full connectivity - optic fiber, 1 GBPS in 2021.
Distance from urban/administrative centers	Sisak - 21 km Zagreb (capital) - 39 km	Rijeka - 13 km Zagreb (capital) - 157 km
Basic infrastructure	More than 50% settlements - without water supply or electricity or paved roads or public transport	full coverage
Budget of the local self-government unit 2021.	2,66 mil. EUR	2,4 mil. EUR



LEKENIK



JELENJE



03 The Rocky Path to Self-sufficiency

Beyond CAP - *best practices*



POLICY AND FI COMBINING

The way to ensuring self-sufficiency in the long run is:

- Combining EU, national and regional funds
- Delivering information through LAGs and FLAGs -
- Assessing the needs of local communities
- Networking and sharing ideas
- A holistic approach to all aspects of rural development
- Ensuring equal access to funding and knowledge

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exploring innovative ways to solve community problems through entrepreneurship, activating the community and connecting with local government



Solar Power Plant and Desalinator



📍 UNIJE AND SUSAK ISLAND

Financing: Primorje-Gorski kotar County & EFRD

Project value: 640.000 EUR

Beneficiaris: 239

Brighter Future of rural Croatia



📍 LISINE, KARLOVAC COUNTY

Financing: combined private-public investments; crowdfunding

No. of Projects: 57

Beneficiaris: TERRA HUB partners

A Lady for the Island



📍 DUGI ISLAND AND IŽ ISLAND

Financing: ESF

Project funding: 75.000 EUR

Beneficiaris: 41

BEST PRACTICES - *Going beyond CAP*

HITRO

cross-border operational protection and rescue team



 DUGA RESA (CRO)&ČRNOMELJ (SLO)

Financing: INTERREG SLO_HR
Project value: 808.000 EUR
Beneficiaris: 16.348

RURAL 3.0

e-learning virtual HUB



 8 EU COUNTRIES

Financing: ERASMUS +
Beneficiaris in Croatia:
LAG 5 stakeholders

RUNE Network

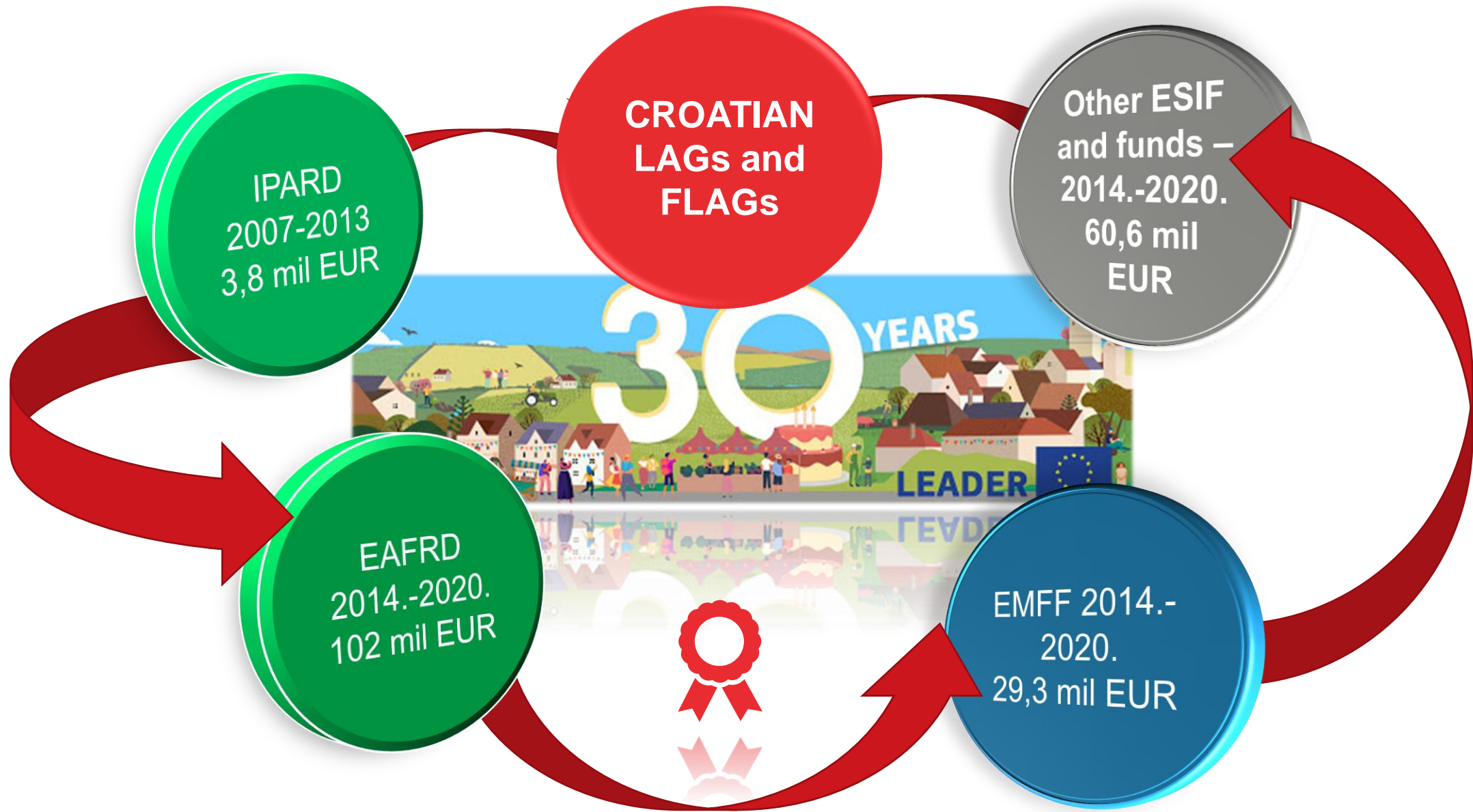
Ultra-wide broadband infrastructure in rural areas



 UNIJE AND SUSAK ISLAND

Financing: CEBF
Connecting Europe
Broadband Fund
Project value: 51 mil. EUR
Beneficiaris: CRO&SLO

LEADER groups in Croatia – sources of funding activities for subregional development





04

Information is Key

Ideas for the rural revitalisation platform



Possible solutions – ideas

Create OPEN FORUM platform which can be easily used with open and closed/direct connection, by:
themes important for subregional/local areas which can be searchable by:

- type of subregional areas or size, and then by specific themes such as:
 - public infrastructure: local water supply, local waste water treatments, EE, RE – for living „out of grid”
 - entrepreneurship (SMEs) connections incl. social entrepreneurship
 - heritage and environment protection/revitalization and sustainable use led by locals
 - digital public service – ideas/connections to e-EU/national/regional/local governments
 - sustainable mobility/transport in remote areas ...
- emphasise on good practices examples and contacts/direct connections with carriers/project promoters
- and - on possible sources of funding on international (worldwide), EU, national and regional levels – where to find informations on simple and easy/clear way

More/better use of LAGs (from direct EU level) as information brokers/contact links to the „bottom” – they are only organizations that reach local populations on „micro” level in settlements/villages

LEADER Network Croatia - Spotbe

Good practice example – internal networking tool
with documents/data base – for Croatian
LAGs/members



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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