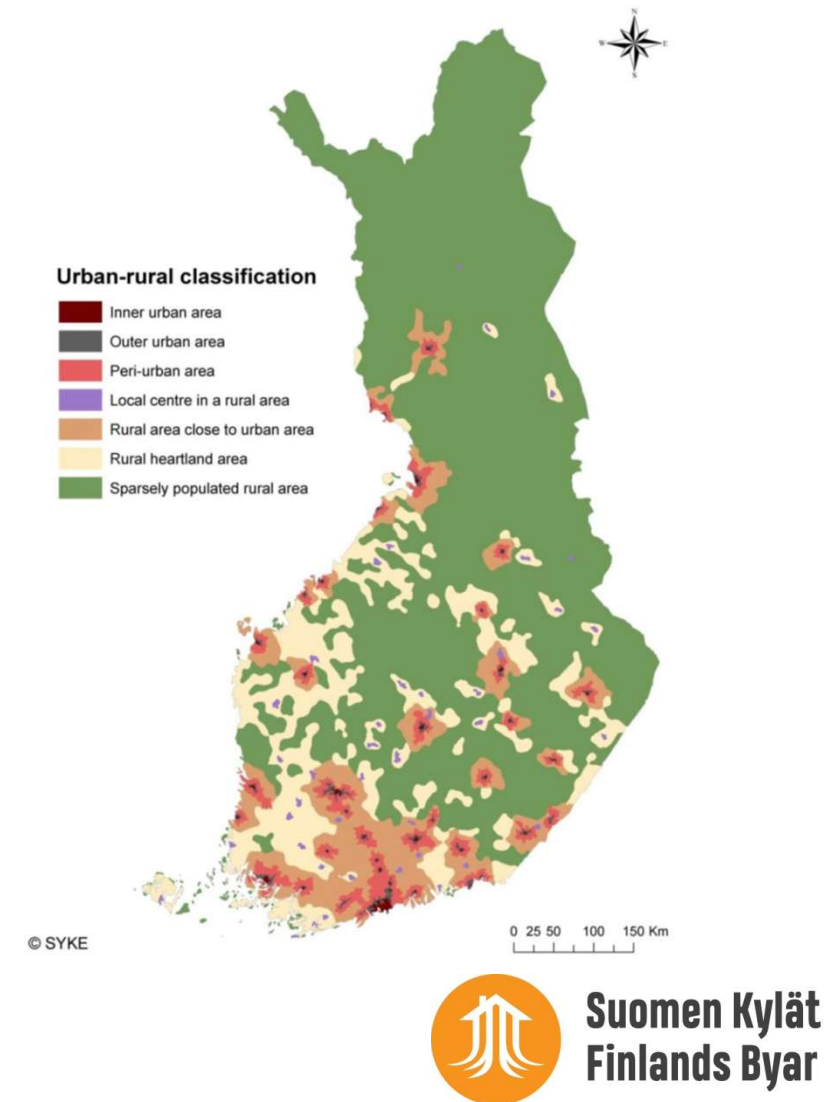
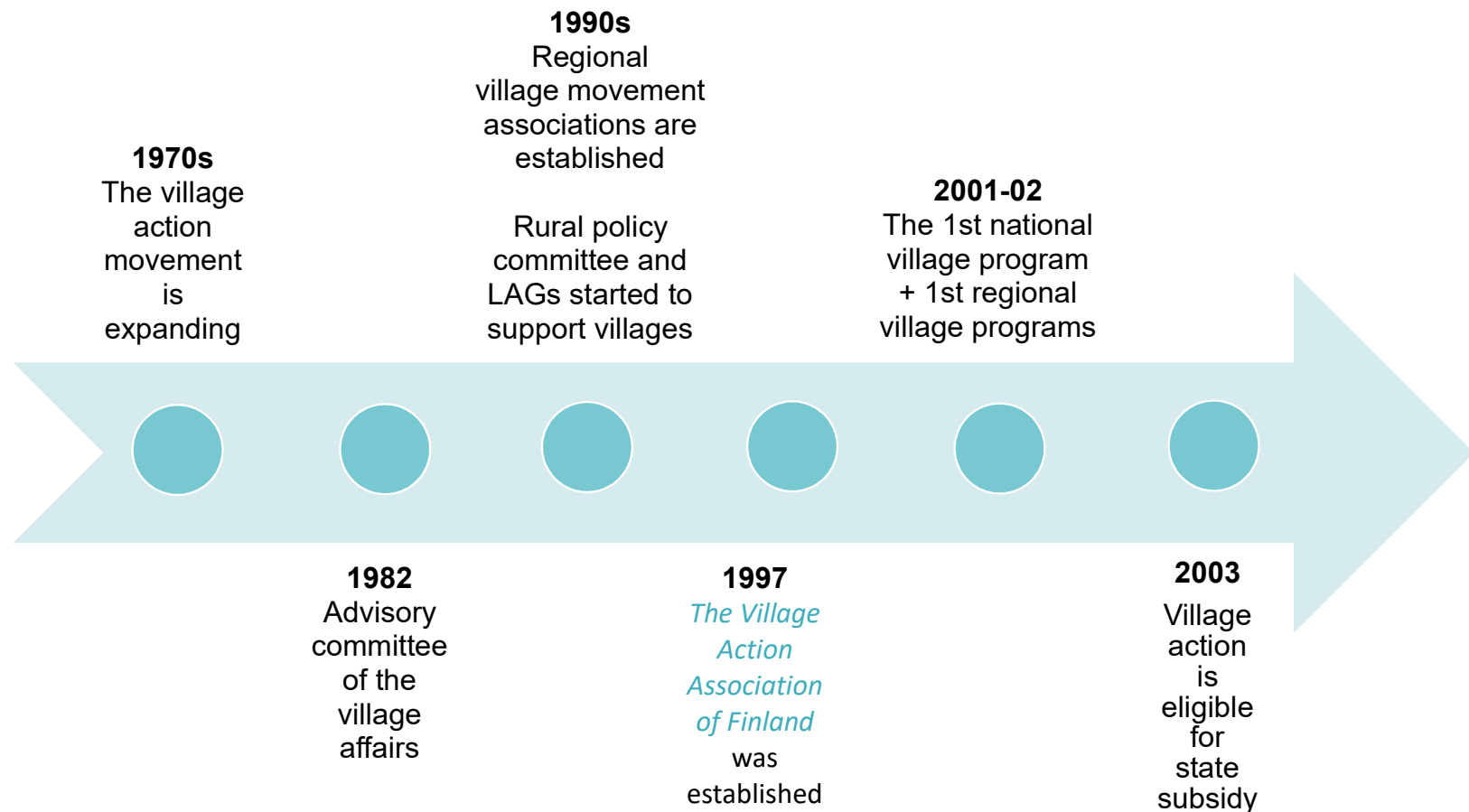


THE MOST RURAL COUNTRY OF THE EU

- Population 5 525 487 (30.9.2019)
- 95% of the area is rural
- 70 % of the area is sparsely populated rural area
- 6 % of the population live in a sparsely populated area
- 70 % live in urban area
- Population density 18 people/km² (ranking 201st in the world)
 - In Punavuori, Helsinki 20 000/km² vs. 0.17/km² in Savukoski, Lapland
- TOP export products in 2018 by value: diesel oil, paper, cars, sheet metal, sawn wood, medical instruments, cruise ships...
- 340 000 jobs in the food producing chain, tourism fastest growing business with 140 000 jobs
- 50% live in rural areas as defined by LEADER, 80% want to keep our countryside viable



STORY OF THE FINNISH VILLAGE MOVEMENT



FINNISH VILLAGE MOVEMENT ASSOC.

- A national umbrella and advocacy organisation for community-led local development (CLLD), community well-being and public participation.
- Promotes and develops village action and locally initiated rural development on the national level.
- 4000 village development associations (vs. 450 in 1995)
- 54 LEADER LAGs
- 19 regional village movement associations and village development coordinators
- → **90 million euros worth of voluntary work for rural development in 2018**
- → **hundreds of new rural businesses, jobs, services and infrastructure projects every year**
- So, what is needed, is something more and/or different:
 - Digitalisation
 - Innovation



FINLAND'S SMARTEST VILLAGE COMPETITION



32 villages want to be the smartest in Finland

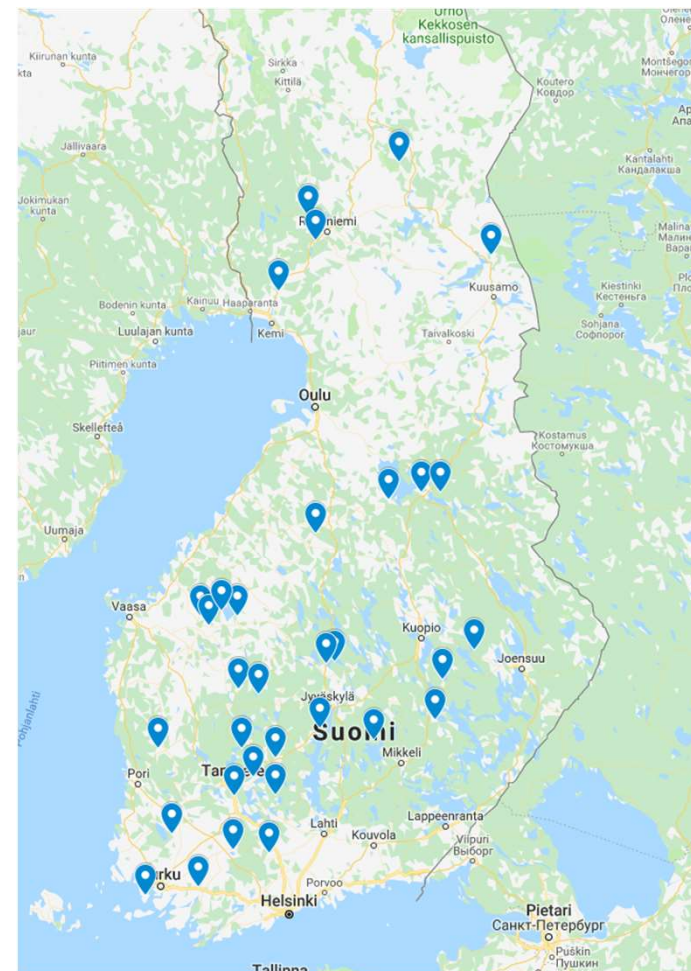
32 villages from all over Finland have entered the Finland's Smartest Village competition. The competition involves a search for villages with the willingness and need to become more vital, active and innovative, in order to thrive now and in the future.

The 'Finland's Smartest Village' path aims to help and encourage villages to find smart solutions (based on phenomena such as digitalisation) to the challenges of today and tomorrow. A smart village is one that actively seeks new solutions for providing services in areas such as healthcare, education, food and energy production, mobility, retail, hobbies and culture. 'Smart Villages' is a common theme of the European Union.

The Smartest Village competition is organised by the Rural Network (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) in cooperation with the structural funds ESF and ERDF, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Rural Policy Council of Finland (MANE), the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Village Action Association of Finland.

Although 'Finland's Smartest Village' is a competition, development is the key issue. The winning village will be chosen by a panel of experts at the end of 2019. The selection criteria include higher service accessibility and quality, idea-rich solutions and the number of villagers actively involved.

One and a half years of guidance, examples and peer support will be offered to the participating villages.



<https://www.maaseutu.fi/en/the-rural-network/smart-villages/>

NATIONAL THEMATIC GROUP ON SMART VILLAGES

What?

- Part of the Rural Network Support Unit's actions
- In action 2019-2020

- 8 members from different fields of expertise (digitalization, broadband, mobility & traffic, education, youth, service network, rural development, policy & research in general)

- ...from different organizations, from different parts of the country
 - Sami Tantarimäki (University of Turku), Suvi Pesonen (Suomen lähikoulut ry), Heli Siirilä (University of Vaasa), Timo Vattulainen (City of Lieksa), Minna Jaakkola (Netplaza Oy), Sampo Juhajoki (4H), Vali-Matti Karppinen (Kainuun Nuotta ry), Juha-Matti Markkola (Rural Network Support Unit)

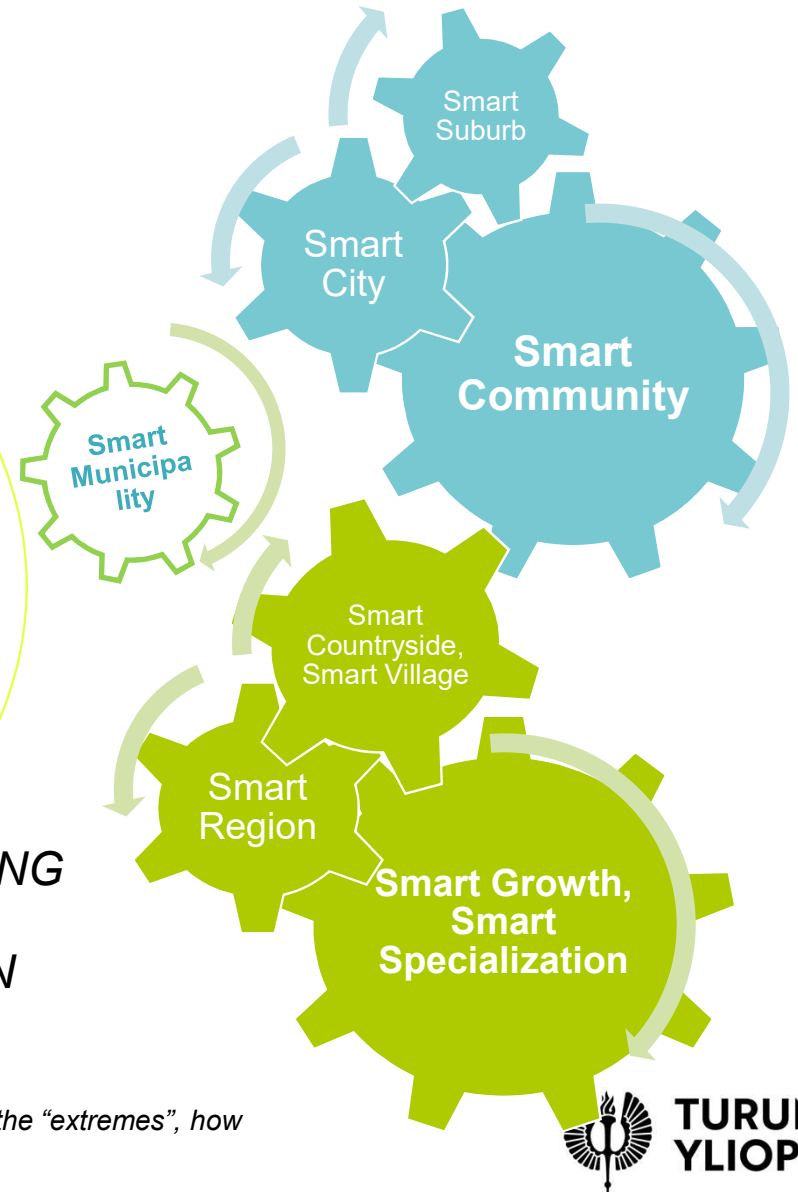
Doing what?

- Open and share information about the theme, prepare the locals for a digital society
- Support, advise, encourage, network, collect good practices
- Produces and provides information for the preparation of strategies and programs (CAP, Leader, regional, local etc)

- Goes to field and villages and areas (wherever there is a need...)
- Organizes seminars & webinars, participates and
- Is active & visible!

<https://älykäskylä.fi/>

THE "SMART FAMILY"



From Smart Villages to Smart Cities. How does the network of centres operate between the "extremes", how a smart region is built on? (> an ongoing research in Finland by Sami Tantarimäki)