



# SMART AGRI HUBS

Connecting the dots



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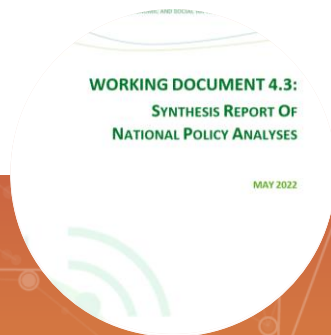


# The role of regional, national and European policies for the digital transformation

# Building a policy roadmap for sustainable and inclusive rural digitalisation in Europe



**National  
policy  
analyses**



**Synthesis  
report**



**Policy  
roadmap**



**Your  
contributions**

# NATIONAL POLICY ANALYSES

Available at Desira website ([here](#))

# National policy analyses

15 analyses

- Context for digitalisation
- Influence of European policies
- National, regional, local policies boosting digitalisation
- Private strategies



# National policy analyses, challenges

## NATIONAL

- Within EU, ex-EU & outside EU
- Geographical spread
- Highly rural to mostly urban countries
- Federal states/centralised
- Different approaches to digitalisation policies
- Different access to public data about digitalisation

## EUROPEAN

- Dynamic domain
- Policies influencing rural digitalisation are varied and depend on different administrative bodies
- Data is hard to assess (only ex-post)

# SYNTHESIS REPORT

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

# Synthesis report

## EU POLICIES INFLUENCING RURAL DIGITALISATION

RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CAP II  
PILLAR) & COHESION POLICIES

EU DIGITAL POLICIES

### NATIONAL POLICIES

Implementation: context, preparedness, capacity  
Impact assessment: data



DIGITALISATION  
STRATEGIES

RURAL  
DIGITALISATION  
STRATEGIES

BROADBAND  
STRATEGIES

DIGITAL  
LITERACY

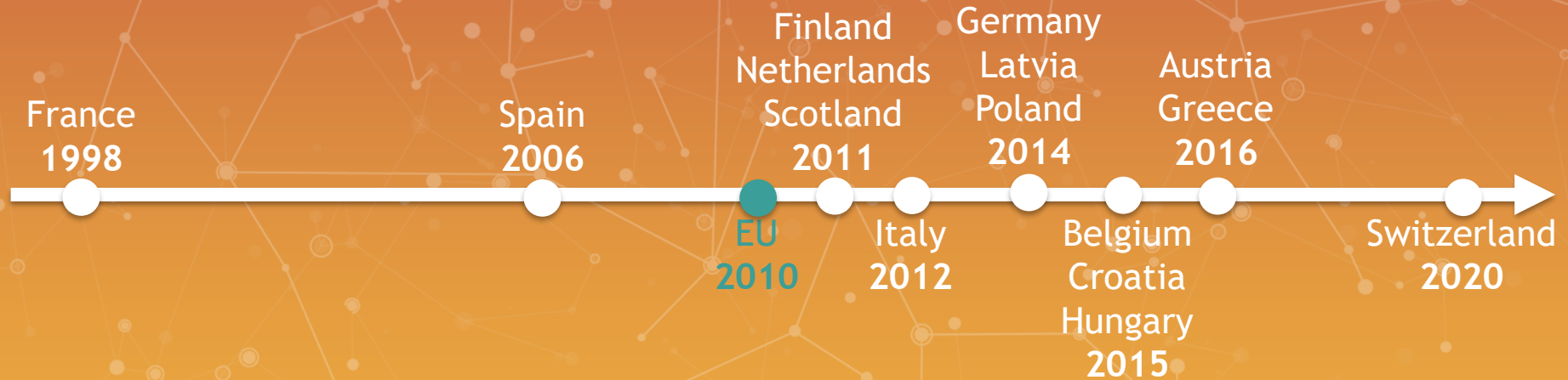
DIGITAL  
TRUST





# Synthesis report: digitalisation strategies

Publication of first national digital agendas



# Synthesis report: digitalisation strategies

- Majority implemented national strategies following the EU digital agenda
- Some have implemented digitalisation strategies at lower territorial scale ( “Vlaanderen Radicaal Digitaal”)
- Shared competences (economy, education, transport, infrastructure, digital affairs, etc. EU and lower levels)-> strong coordination



# Synthesis report: rural digitalisation strategies

- DEDICATED
  - Greek Smart Rural Areas and Villages (2020)
  - Digital Agriculture Strategy of Hungary (2021)
  - Spanish Strategy for the digitalisation of the agri-food and forestry sector and for rural territories (2019)
- INCLUDED IN WIDER RURAL DEV POLICIES
  - Italian Strategy for Inner areas (2014-2020)
  - Federal Programme for Rural Development of Germany (ongoing)
  - Austria's Master Plan for Rural Areas
- OTHER
  - Latvia: specific for rural connectivity
  - Netherlands: digital technologies in agriculture, not rural areas (urban country)



# Synthesis report: broadband strategies

- Deployed in all study countries with an '*easy-to-access connection*' approach: profitable areas and then also the rural and less profitable
- Currently:
  - Dedicated strategies with revised objectives (AU, PO, IT, FR, CR, FI, UK)
  - Incorporated in digital agendas (HU, BE, GR, SP) or similar (LT, NL)
  - Included in the government coalition agreement (GE)



# Synthesis report: digital literacy

- Strategies, initiatives, or both (not targeted at rural areas)
- Promoting digital skills in education, among labour force and general population, supporting ICT specialists training (e.g., Poland's *Digital Competence Development Programme 2020-2030*)
- Hungary *Digital Workforce Programme 2018*: shortage of ICT and digitally trained professionals across all economy sectors

# Synthesis report: digital trust

*Digital uptake depends on connectivity, literacy and trust*

- **Cybersecurity**, all study countries have transposed the European NIS Directive; but different maturity levels (Greece deployed its first cybersecurity strategy in 2018)
- **Interoperability** guidelines in all countries; however devoted policy frameworks or embedded in wider strategies, still a challenge
- BE, CR, HU, LT, NL, AU failed to communicate national measures before July 2021 in relation to EU **Open Data** Directive
- European **Data Governance** Act, applicable since September 2023

# Reflections

## Insufficient (accessible) data

- policy impact assessment
- comprehensive rural digitalisation policies to examine

## Targets for 1st European Digital Agenda not achieved for rural areas

- Important gaps transposing EU policies for rural areas
- Policy adoption depends on:
  - capacity to integrate and implement policies
  - administrative complexity
  - whether countries are pioneers or followers
  - timing (alignment with national contexts and priorities and starting points)

# Reflections

## Urban-rural digital divide exists for skills & infrastructure

- Next Generation Access technologies available for 60% of rural homes vs 87% in urban (DESI 2021)
- % rural areas remains unconnected (unprofitable investments)
- 48% of the rural population have basic digital skills vs 62% in cities (DESI 2021)
- Worsened by gender gap + demographic challenges (ageing, depopulation)

## COVID-19: digitalisation push

- progress in distance learning, e-health and e-administration
- gap among wealthier and poorer groups in society has widened



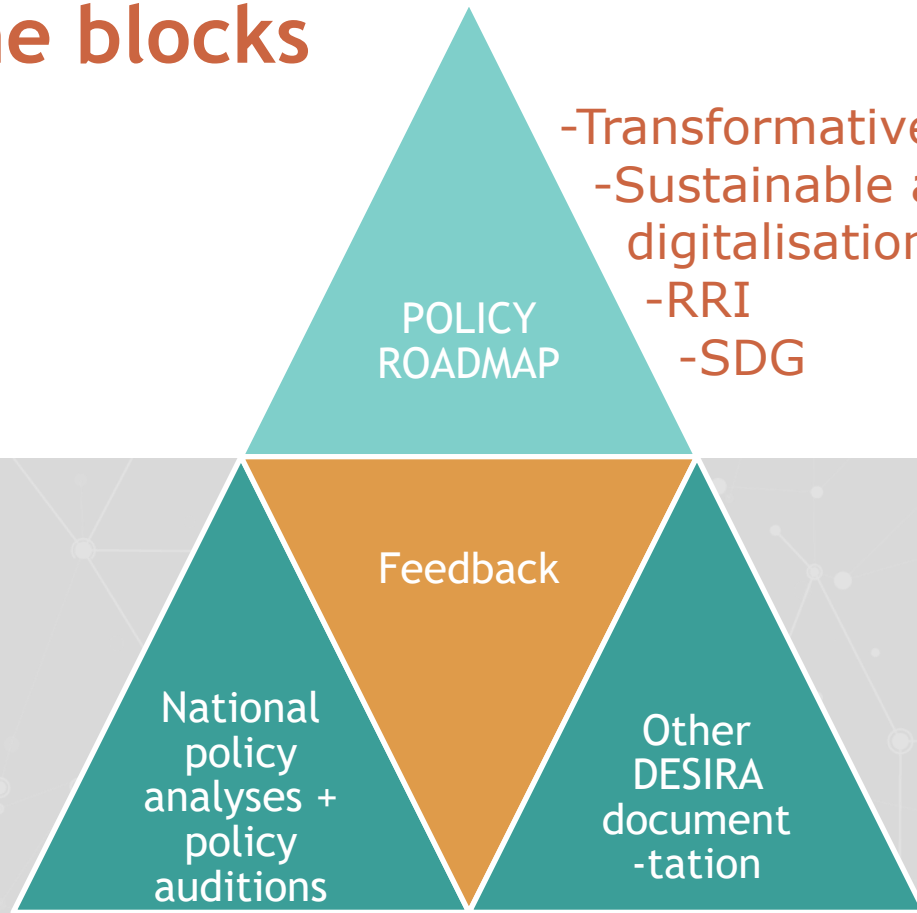
Questions,  
doubts, remarks,  
suggestions...



# POLICY ROADMAP

WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

# The blocks



- Transformative policies
- Sustainable and inclusive rural digitalisation
- RRI
- SDG

# Policy objectives (rural areas)



## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Accessible connectivity and digital infrastructures in rural areas



## DIGITAL COMPETENCES, LITERACY

- Digital education and competences, adapted to different groups
- Easy-to-use, affordable digital services to farmers and advisors
- Digital competences and digital ecosystems in rural areas



## RURAL DIGITALISATION

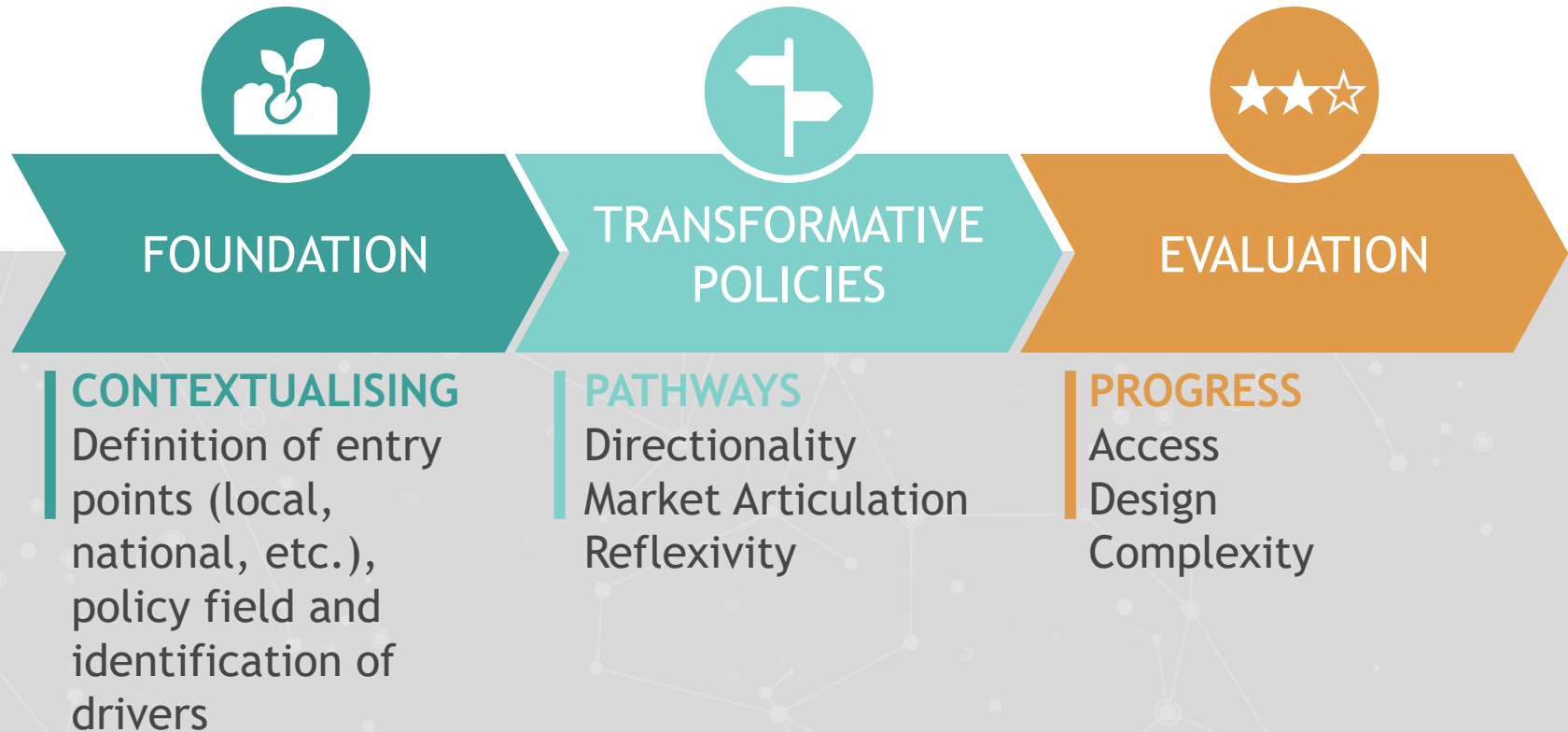
- Digital solutions to support service provision & admin. routines
- Rural digitalisation as a specific policy with appropriate funding
- Awareness about rural issues and values, public engagement
- Rural digitalisation policies progress, impacts and efficiency



## DIGITAL TRUST

- To improve rural and agriculture data governance and management
- To overcome fragmentation and to connect systems (e.g., European Data Space)
- To support data-driven decisions

# The purpose



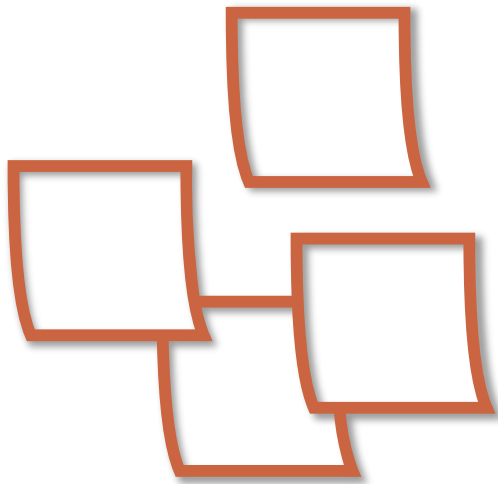
# YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Build your own pathway towards rural digitalisation

# Policy objectives

1. To ensure accessible connectivity and digital infrastructures in rural areas
2. To streamline digital education and competences in rural areas, adapted to different groups
3. To provide easy-to-use and affordable digital services to farmers and farmers' advisors.
4. To promote digital competences and digital ecosystems in rural areas
5. To mainstream digital solutions to support service provision & administrative routines in rural areas
6. To tackle rural digitalisation as a specific policy with appropriate funding
7. To raise awareness about rural issues and values, to foster public engagement
8. To monitor rural digitalisation policies progress, impacts and efficiency
9. To improve rural and agriculture data governance and management
10. To overcome fragmentation and to connect systems (e.g., European Data Space)
11. To support data-driven decisions

# STEP 1. PRIORITISE





## STEP 2. Set the context

- Think about the **entry level**

Is it a local, regional, national or European policy?

## STEP 2. Set the context

- What's the **main policy domain** (agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, economy...)?

And the secondary?  
Is coordination with other administrative bodies/entities needed?

## STEP 3. Find your allies

- Drivers
  - SOCIO-CULTURAL
  - TECHNICAL
  - ECONOMIC
  - ENVIRONMENTAL
  - REGULATORY-  
INSTITUTIONAL

# This is the beginning of your journey

ENTRY LEVEL	POLICY FIELD	DRIVERS				
		SOCIO-CULTURAL	TECHNICAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL	REGULATORY-INSTITUTIONAL DRIVERS
Local	Agriculture	Practical demands	Quality	Market demands	Impact reduction	Regulatory restrictions
Regional	Digitalisation	Cultural tendencies	Service	Organisational	Control	Economic incentives
	Infrastructure					Educational support
National	Education			Business needs		Promotional
	Economy			Financial		
European	Transport			Labour		

