Digitalisation in rural areas
CORA – COnnecting Remote areas with digital infrastructure and services
Rural digital divide
A European territorial challenge
Status Quo

Distribution of population, by degree of urbanisation, 2015

Rural areas matter!!!

In 2015 more than 140 Million Europeans were living in rural areas.

28% of EU population!
NGA coverage in rural areas

NGA coverage in Mid-2015

Limited connectivity!
Digital skills

Individuals with basic and above basic digital skills (in sparsely populated areas – 2016)

A considerable digital divide!

- Digital competences shortages
Digital skills

Individuals who have never used the internet (in sparsely populated areas – 2016)
Rural digital divide

Main aspects of rural digital divide

**Structural disadvantages of rural areas:**

- Demographic transformation
- Lack of business vision for enterprises
- Geographical barriers in terms of access to public services

Digital Skills

Digital Infrastructure

Digital Services
Rural digital divide

- High upfront investment in net infrastructure
- High risks in investments
- Limited service uptake
- Limited knowledge about potential profits of NGA among local actors
- Limited digital skills and competences
- Very slow development pace
Rural digital divide

- Exchanging Know-How and transnational solutions!!!
  - Identify the problem
  - Develop common solutions
  - Test the solutions
  - Transnational guiding and policy measures!

Think and act transnational!
CORA – A transnational platform
CORA concept

Exchanging Know how and empowering rural areas matter
CORA challenge
Mueters wants to invest in data networks

Flemish Minister of Innovation Philippe Mueters wants Flanders to invest in a high-speed fiber optic network. According to Mueters, this is necessary because digital data explodes and private investments lag behind. In order to realize his project, he wants to sit together with the telecom companies Telenet and Proximus. But Mueters does not rule out that Flanders will put fiber into the ground.
CORA aim

Aim

✓ Bridging digital divide and stimulating digital innovation in rural areas.
✓ Enabling local authorities to fill in the digital gaps in terms of advanced infrastructure, digital skills as well as digital public services &
✓ Empowering them to create an environment to facilitate digital innovation in rural areas.
CORA partnership

18 Partners from 7 EU member states:

- Intercommunal Leiedal, BE – lead partner
- atene KOM, DE
- BürgerBreitbandNetz GmbH & Co. KG, DE
- Vejle Kommune, DK
- Middelfart Kommune, DK
- Aalborg University, DK
- University of Groningen, NL
- Oldambt Municipality, NL
- Groningen Internet Exchange Foundation, NL
- Norddjeurs Kommune, DK
- Syddjurs Kommune, DK
- Grue Kommune, NO
- Hedmark fylkeskommune, NO
- Eidskog Kommune, NO
- Kongsvinger Kommune, NO
- Värmland County Administrative Board, SE
- Torsby Municipality, SE
- University of Lincoln, UK
CORA activities

Phase 1 ➔ Knowledge exchange & development of guiding measures

Phase 2 ➔ Testing the solutions
- Cross-border fibre sharing model
- Superfast wireless internet for rural communities and enterprises
- New digital public services for rural communities and businesses
- Fixed & mobile digital hub concepts
- Digital skills training in rural areas

Phase 3 ➔ Evaluating the impacts

Phase 4 ➔ Mainstreaming!
CORA expected outputs!

- Guiding measures for local and regional authorities to improve their digital environment
- Show cases and pilot activities (valuable practices)
- Rural digitalization transnational strategies
- Establishing a community around rural digital divide

Improved level of digital inclusion and public digital skills (local communities and enterprises) in rural areas.

Some of the outcomes!
Fiber connectivity

Open fiber network

- Increased connectivity
- Shared costs
- Effects of scale
- Vendor lock-in
- Innovation hubs

Leiedal, Stad Kortrijk, KULAK, Fluvia, Gemeente Zwevegem
Case Belgium – Kortrijk North
Future proof business parks

- Cities close to innovation companies
- Infrastructure is important to park management
- Shared data center for data analysis
- Alternative business models for companies
- Creation of a smart region
- Wachtbuizen
- Connecting existing infrastructure
- Optimalisation of digital service delivery
Future proof business parks

- GIS analysis
  - Overview fiber
  - Overview cameras
- Cooperation model
  - Connecting stakeholders
- Big data analysis
- Open networks
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Thank you very much!

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