

RURACTIVE OPEN CALL - CHALLENGE 1

Title of the challenge	Digital platform for operationalising the Village Janitor System
Dynamo (pilot location)	Northern Ostrobothnia, Pudasjärvi villages, Finland
RDD (Rural Development Driver) <i>addressed by the challenge</i>	Local services, Health and Wellbeing
Overall context description and specific context to be addressed by the challenge	<p>Pudasjärvi is a vast rural and sparsely populated municipality with one larger center area and 14 remote villages with a diminishing population. Distances between the villages are quite long and for this reason people are relying a lot on neighbour help and other unofficial peer networks to solve everyday problems. The elderly people especially have a tough time dealing with snow shoveling, making firewood, running errands to the town etc.</p> <p>Previously, the local village associations have organised a “village janitor” service, where the local unemployed people were hired to help the older villagers with their everyday household tasks and transportation needs, while at the same time helping the unemployed people themselves to develop their skills. The village janitor system stopped functioning when the public sector did not fund the unemployed people anymore to do such tasks. Thus, the challenge is to revive the “village janitor” system. “Village janitors” would be the lifeline of these communities helping the villages to stay vital and the elderly people can continue to receive services and to live in their homes, but it could also offer small income for unemployed and other people willing to use their skills for the support of their neighbors, fostering social inclusion.</p>
Scope of the Challenge	To develop an easy-to-use digital platform where those needing the services and the village janitors providing those services could connect regarding specific tasks. The solution must take into consideration the users of the “village janitor” service which are often older people, that are not very tech savvy and prefer personal contact with the service providers and guarantee accessibility and inclusivity. The solutions should include ideas for integrated incentives and payment and provide an exemplary system (once up and running) that

	<p>can serve as a proof and incentive for potential financiers (e.g. local firms looking to enhance their corporate social responsibility; energy companies - wind, hydro, solar- who want to compensate the negative impacts they have on local communities).</p>
Solution requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digital platform/application/tool for operationalising the “village janitor” service system. The platform/app/tool should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A geographically organised system to accessibly and intuitively connect and match people in need of services and the services and skills that each janitor could offer. ○ An intuitive and easy to use “make a call” function for people in need of services and quick response alerting function for janitors, able to screen and match specific skills and geographical operational area. • Technology to integrate and distribute funding from interested firms and a payment system in the platform/app/tool. • A user-friendly technological approach to facilitate the elderly users of the “village janitor” service.
Specific objectives and expected outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible, easy to use and functional platform for the exchange of services. • Support collaborative community development and liveliness of the village communities. • Support the social life of older people by increasing the possibility for elderly people to continue to be active and living in their home villages. • Ensure open access and utilise open data sources.
Available resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing community-based experiences and ideas of what the “village janitor” system can be like. • Active community in some of the villages (village associations). • Publicly available demographic and infrastructural data • Good coverage of internet services. • Financing possibilities to be tackled to grant future sustainability (e.g. wind power companies want to enhance their image as responsible firms also for enhancing the social acceptance of wind power at local level).

