

FINLAND
RURAL VISION
2040

SHAPING THE FUTURE TARGET/PURPOSE



The President of the European Commission has announced that the Commission will develop a Long Term Vision for Rural Areas. This should be done in close consultation with people living in rural areas, as well as local and regional authorities. In Finland, the NRN organised a future vision process, where the Rural Vision 2040 was deliberated in four online workshops.

The work involved rural development actors, public authorities, regional developers, researchers, citizens and business owners from both rural areas and cities.



Where rural communities would like to be 2040?

Where the current trends suggest they may end up?

The types of action needed for achieving the opportunities and filling the gaps?



WHAT WAS DONE



Online meetings using Zoom for discussion and Google environment for harvesting

110 participants

50 participants

20 participants

40 participants

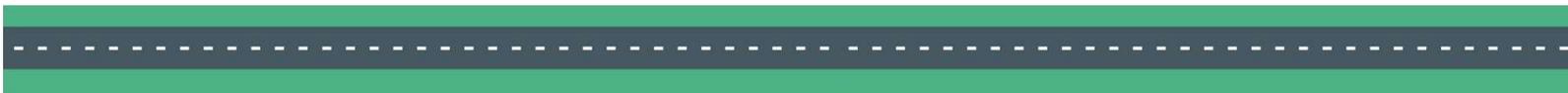


Viima
66 ideas
101 comments
26 registered users

Future workshop for youth

Part one: Minecraft game workshop. Online meeting using Minecraft game platform and Discord as voice and chat channel. mainly pupils and students aged 13-20.

Part two: Online meeting using Zoom for discussion and Google environment for harvesting. Mainly youth Leader and 4H representatives and students aged 15-25.



CHANGE IN OPERATING ENVIRONMENT 2020-2040

POLITICAL



Preferable future

- There is a clear political will to develop rural areas.
- There is active citizenship with focus on supporting rural areas and rural issues.
- The urban-rural divide has faded
- Decision-making, especially on municipal services, is more devolved to the local level.
- Young people are included in the formal decision-making.
- Digitalisation has improved citizen participation and active citizenship in the rural areas.
- Foresight work has improved to anticipate crises.

Probable future

- Not all municipalities use the opportunity to use their own decision-making power and renew their structures and services.
- Municipalities and their tasks are differentiated in terms of their load-bearing capacity.
- Crises become more common. Resolving crises takes political resources from other work.



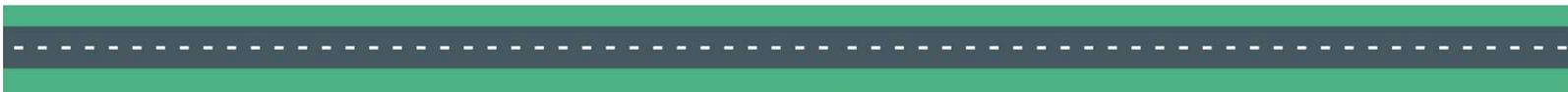
ECONOMIC Preferable future



- Economic inequality has been reduced
- More economic resources are directed to rural areas: also external/foreign investment
- The state has taken over the social and health care budget.
- The rural enterprise base is wider and more international. There are more entrepreneurs, also amongst young people. Digitalisation and nature-based well-being services bring new jobs.
- Types of enterprises have diversified: the role of community entrepreneurship has increased.
- Services are more reachable.
- The profitability of agriculture and forestry is improved through technological development, digitalisation and improvements in the value chain.
- There are compensation mechanisms for carbon sequestration and other environmental actions.

Probable future

- Distance work and place-independent work are the new normal.
- The number of jobs in the countryside will decrease due to people and production concentrating in areas near bigger cities.
- The rural services are concentrated into rural centres.
- There are new jobs through entrepreneurship.
- The future of the forestry sector is uncertain, but there are a lot of new opportunities.



SOCIAL



Preferable future

- Responsibilities of the local communities have increased.
- Community spirit and working together for the common good are normal.
- Young people are actively involved in communities and villages, and the village activism has developed to suit the needs of the new generation.
- There is a new wave of in-movers to the countryside: multi-local dwellers and 'city-rurals'.
- Secondary and tertiary education in the rural areas through e-learning and hubs.
- Distance working is the new norm. As a counterweight to the virtual life, there are more real-life interactions through spare time and travel.

Probable future

- The importance of rural communities is diminished as there is a rise in digital and value- and activity-based communities.
- Digitalisation enables maintaining social interactions, but there will be greater division into social bubbles interacting amongst themselves.
- Multi-local living, seasonal living and place-independent work and study have increased, and they benefit rural areas. There is a new working culture (distance or hybrid work, flexible work times, mixing of work and leisure).
- Rural areas are more international: seasonal workers, international trade, globally operating companies, travel, multi-local living, international migration, refugees.
- The entire Finland will remain inhabited but the population is concentrated in and around cities. There is a great variation in the age structure between regions.



TECHNOLOGICAL

Preferable future



- The digital connections work well everywhere.
- Robotics and AI are widely used.
- There are a lot of digital services and solutions (e-doctor, multi-service centers in self-driving cars, delivery drone).
- Use of virtual and augmented reality in service provision has increased.
- Transportation has become easier (fast speed trains, teleportation and rideshare solutions) and climate-friendly.
- Renewable and diversified energy production and circular economy are efficient and profitable.
- Smart houses produce food and energy.
- Automatisations and smart technology have made agricultural production efficient and effective.
- The ethical questions surrounding food production have gained foothold (e.g. gene technology).
- There is still space for people in working life. Use of AI is widespread, also in specialist professions, but they are used to do repetitive task. New kinds of work are related to hobbies and spare time, which people will have more of.

Probable future

- Functioning digital connections everywhere.
- There has been a move from a world fragmented through applications to compatible systems.
- Robotisation and drones are normal.
- More food is produced in 'protein factories'.
- Digitalisation is applied also in food production: more food is produced in 'protein factories'.
- The basic services are more easy to reach as digital health monitoring is more widespread.
- Digitalisation improves the social interaction between people, especially within their own bubbles.
- Digital divide grows.
- Division in values: how much do people give power to digital systems gathering information on them and monitoring them?
- Distance working and place-independent working is the new normal.



ENVIRONMENTAL

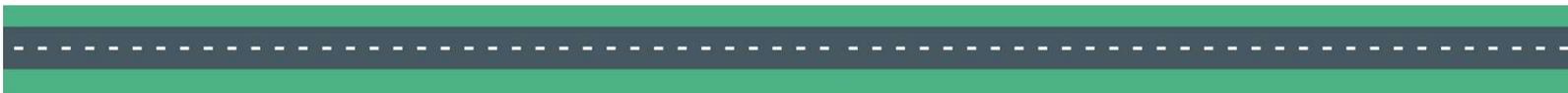


Preferable future

- There has been balanced and logical progress globally in climate change mitigation.
- There are also regional and local actions, especially related to renewable energy, circular economy and more ecological fuels.
- Digitalisation has improved circular economy and recycling.
- Farmers are the frontrunners in climate change mitigation work.
- Biodiversity has increased, also in residential settings (villages, towns, cities), where more attention is paid to green areas, environmental comfort and green landscaping.
- The environment is seen as a source for well-being. The economic use of forests continues.
- There are compensation mechanisms for carbon sequestration and other environmental actions. Economic use of forests continues.
- Extreme weather challenges food production.

Probable future

- Climate change has affected biodiversity, nature and farming, and inhabitable areas have been reduced globally.
- Nature and pleasant environment are seen as sources of well-being.
- Climate change will also affect rural enterprises (especially food production), which will need to quickly adjust to using new technologies, growing new kinds of crops and operating in networks.
- Increase in new local energy and biofuel production.
- Consumption patterns have changed, which will also affect food production.
- Increased mining is a threat to the environment.



VALUES



Preferable future

- Values have softened and moved away from money and consumerism towards community, sharing, equality and tolerance.
- Food consumption is more ethical and more plant-based.
- Rural areas and rural actors are respected and commended for their work towards environmental and climate goals.
- People's freedom to choose a lifestyle is increased (living, working, spare time etc.).

Probable future

- Rural areas are held in high regard.
- Sustainability and climate change are seen as guiding people's lifestyles.
- People are more selfish and less committing - living in the moment and personal benefit has increased.
- There is a rise in digital and value- and activity-based communities. Digitalisation enables maintaining social interactions, but there will be greater division into social bubbles interacting amongst themselves. The social groups will become more diversified based on values and common activities.
- Hyperlocality is important: local forests, sports activities nearby, near-produced food.



YOUTH WORKSHOPS

“We should ensure that there is physical and mental space in the rural areas. We should not focus on the small circles but be empathetic and permissive, include newcomers. For this, we need meeting places in the rural areas. The adults should be braver to engage young people and meet the youngsters as individuals.”

‘Build your ideal future rural area’

On Minecraft gaming platform, Discord as voice and chat channel.

Video: <https://youtu.be/FDJyxHiDagk>

- Digitalisation visible everywhere.
- Distance working.
- Green architecture seen in houses, village and in the landscape.
- The built structures included technological, sustainable and circular economy solutions (e.g. smart houses producing energy and food, recycling).
- The energy solutions were all renewable (solar and wind power, smart buildings creating their own energy).
- Farm-based food production and people growing their own food on a small scale.
- A lot of communal structures and sharing economy solutions (e.g. village sauna, common barbeque place and sports activities, public transport).
- Open nature near inhabited areas.
- Farms offering farm adventure tourism.

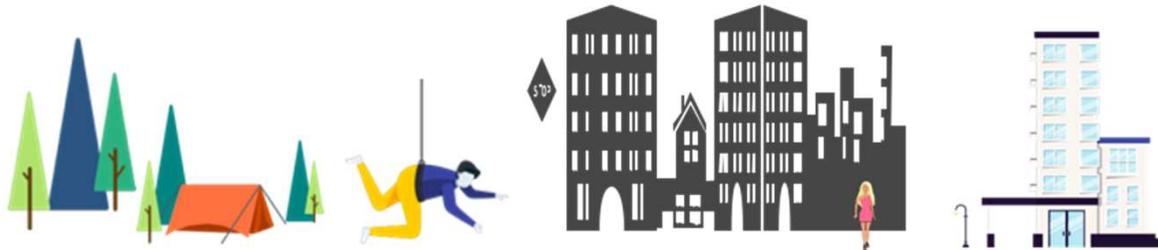
‘How the ideal future rural area can be reached?’

Speakers: Sámi parliament youth group chairwoman, young female dairy farmer youtube-star and the youngest Finnish MEP.

Online meeting using Zoom and Google environment.

- Maintenance and improvement of the rural infrastructure (digital, transport and electricity)
- Improving the image of the rural areas through research, branding and training
- Combating climate change and improving biodiversity.
- Economic use of natural resources versus biodiversity and nature as a resource for well-being?
- Including young people in the formal decision-making and the 3rd sector.

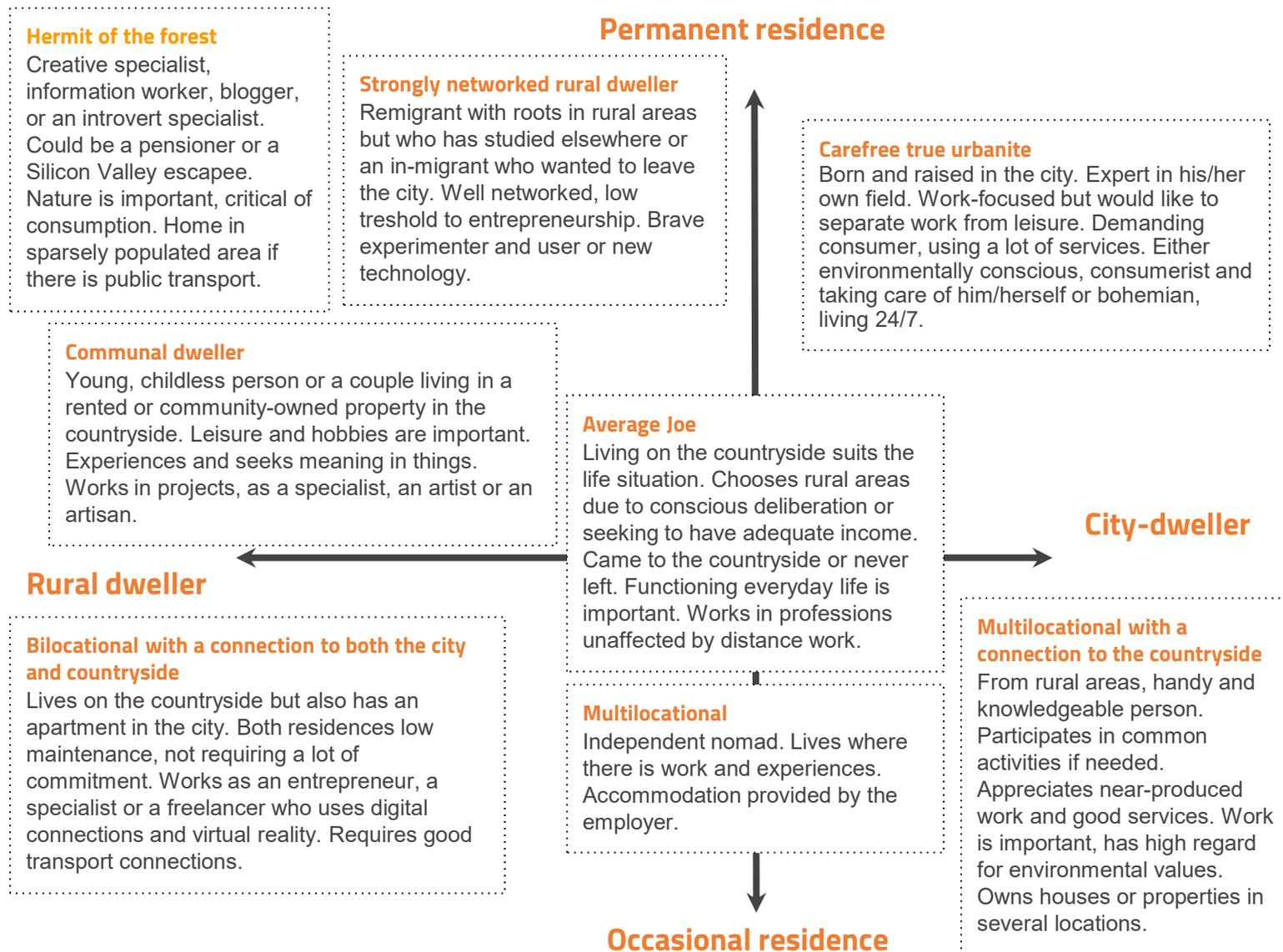
RELATIONSHIP TO RURAL AREAS



During the Rural2040 future workshops, we pondered on the kinds of relationships people will have to rural areas in the future. Where do they live? What do they do for living? What is their relationship to rural areas?

The next slide contains a short description of eight different archetypes with varying relationships to rural areas.





VISION



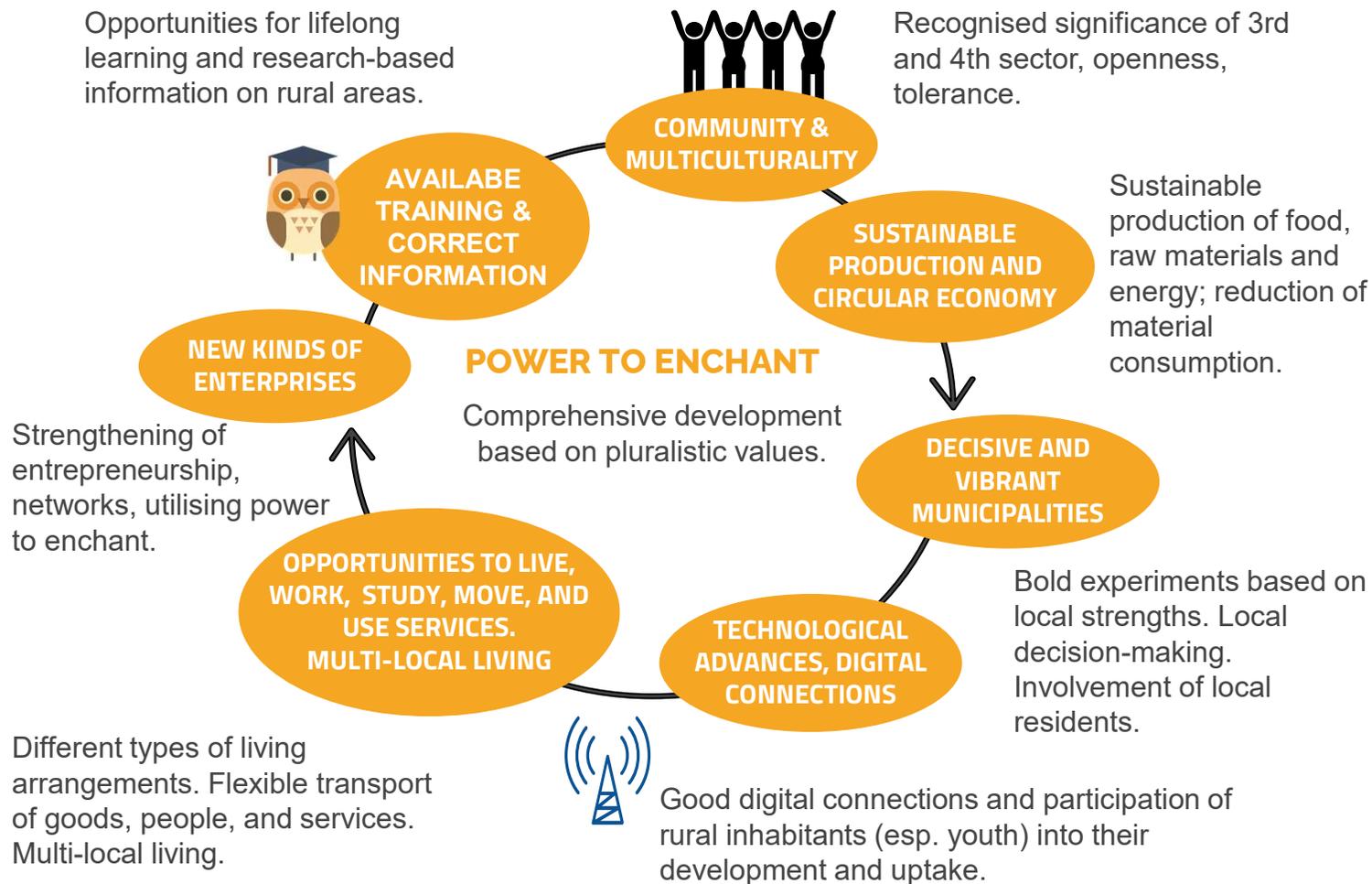
Enchanting rural area 2040 - breeding ground for a good life.

**It is resilient, sustainable and full of enterprise,
and creates new things together.**

The vision contains an idea of a vibrant, communal and also somehow a bit mystical - people who see its beauty and power cannot stay away - hence the rural population is growing. The rural area offers roots, peace of nature and community spirit. Everyday life is good in the rural areas.

The rural areas produce well-being for the entire country. Entrepreneurship and co-operation are natural for the rural way of life. The rural enterprises are manifold, versatile, and they cooperate through different networks. The rural areas are an environment for innovation and renewal. The vision also contains an idea of sustainability and resilience in the face of hardships.

PRIORITIES OF DEVELOPMENT



RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGE

ALL OF US

- Welcoming atmosphere
- Community spirit and participation
- Rural awareness
- Climate change
- Uptake of technology
- Multiculturality
- Seeking and using correct information

ENTREPRENEURS, (incl. all rural enterprises)

- Innovativeness
- Uptake of new technology
- Increase in the degree of processing
- Circular economy solutions
- Biodiversity
- Services, comprehensive service solutions (e.g. related to sustainability)

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS

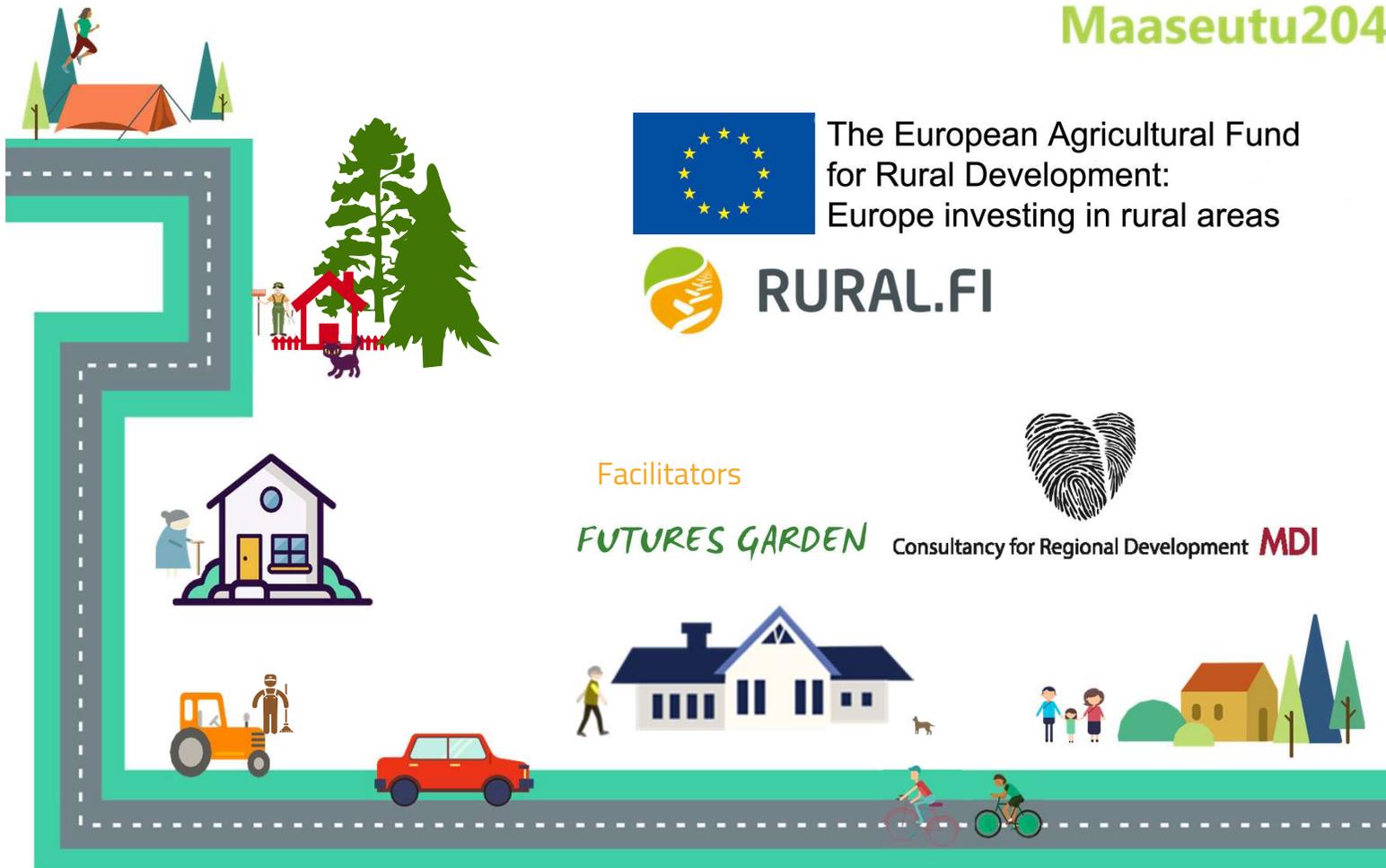
- Training and education opportunities
- Rural awareness and research on rural issues
- Innovativeness
- Spreading innovativeness, digitalisation, robotics etc. in the area

MUNICIPALITIES, REGIONS

- Transport connections
- Multi-locality
- Training and education opportunities
- Distance working opportunities
- Living arrangements / opportunities
- Biodiversity
- Preconditions for entrepreneurship
- Participatory governance
- Well-functioning everyday life

STATE, EU

- Digital connections and preconditions for developing new technology
- Dismantling legal barriers
- Increasing local decision-making power
- Ensuring clean water and communal ownership rights of water
- Transport connections
- Ensuring the continued everyman's rights




Maaseutu2040



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



RURAL.FI

Facilitators

FUTURES GARDEN

Consultancy for Regional Development **MDI**

