

CORA

GUIDE TO RURAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Scan the QR-Code to find out more about the CORA model or go to:
<https://ruraldigital.eu/model/>



The CORA model

Digital divide across rural areas of the North Sea Region is limiting their attractiveness for families and businesses. CORA targets this and emphasizes on main components of digital divide namely **digital infrastructure, services and skills**.

CORA developed a **model** enabling local authorities to identify their common challenges and empowering them to exchange experiences and test innovative solutions to create an advanced digital environment. By facilitating the development of advanced digital infrastructure and services as well as enhancing the digital skills and competences, the aim is to **bridge the digital divide**, improve public services delivery and create an environment stimulating digital innovation in rural areas.

CORA invites local authorities to embark on their **Smart Rural Journey**, to think (deeply) about their digital infrastructure, services and skills, to map their challenges, develop their own digital agenda and step up the digital divide. Local and regional municipalities become drivers for innovation and digital transformation in an integrated, innovative and sustainable manner.

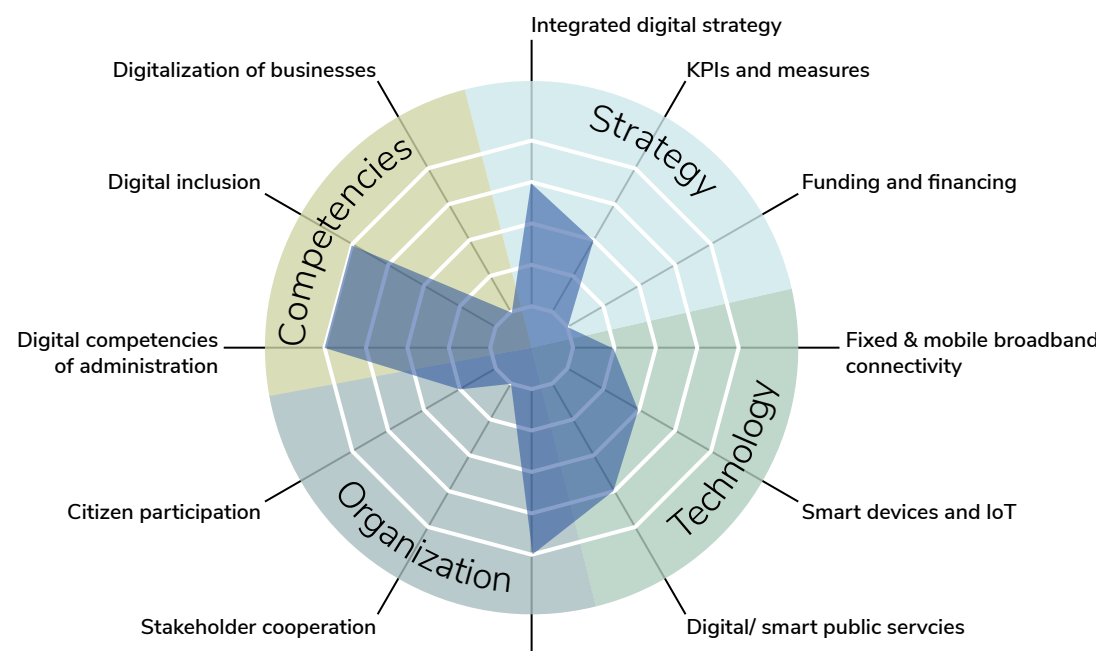
Your knowledge and skills



The steps for your rural digital transformation journey

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Identify your position in the digital transformation journey by checking your municipality's digital maturity (see below).	Identify and prioritize the challenges along the way (Check out the six common challenges below).	Identify and include relevant stakeholders in your region (e.g. citizens, local companies, neighbouring municipalities etc.).	Increase knowledge by using training-materials on: https://ruraldigital.eu/ (Click on each supporting material by CORA below).	Organize workshops with your regional partners to deepen the vision and strategy and what actions need to be taken (Click on each supporting material by CORA below).	Develop your action plan including vision and strategy and a concrete approach.

Check your municipality's digital maturity



The aim of the maturity analysis model is to provide a simple, intuitive yet comprehensive tool for small municipalities and rural areas. The maturity check enables to get a quick overview of the digital readiness and helps to identify priority areas, in which further investments and development is critical.

As a next step, you can check the digital maturity of your municipality using the CORA Digital Maturity Check! The check is free to use and takes 20-30-minutes.

Have you ever wondered how your municipality performs on its way toward its digital transformation?

Our Digital Maturity Check helps you assess your digital maturity on various dimensions and identify your strengths and potential gaps.

Scan the QR-Code to check your Digital Maturity or go to:
<https://ruraldigital.eu/check-your-digital-maturity-2/>



Six common challenges you might face along the way

1 Digital Divide

Rural regions often experience a significant digital divide, where certain segments of the population lack access to digital devices, skills, and digital literacy. This divide can further exacerbate inequalities and hinder inclusive digital transformation.

Training modules:

- Uptake of internet and internet services
- Digital hubs: understanding the concept
- Digital hubs: practical guidance for operations
- Physical development of digital hubs

Workshops:

- CORA Workshop 3: Digital skills for employees

Inspirational Projects:

- Digital Citizen Portal | Amt Hüttener Berge, Germany

CORA Policy Brief:

- Developing and Delivering Digital Services in Rural Areas

2 Limited Digital Infrastructure and Resources

Rural areas often face limited access to high speed internet connectivity and other digital infrastructure. The lack of reliable broadband coverage can hinder the adoption of digital technologies and restrict the potential benefits of digital transformation.

Training modules:

- Broadband technologies and network

Workshops:

- CORA Workshop 6: Cyber Security

Inspirational Projects:

- BROADEN | Norway & Sweden
- Smart Fibre Hubs | Leiedal, Belgium

CORA Policy Brief:

- Opening up Opportunities for Cross-border Fibre in Rural Areas
- Boosting the Delivery of Digital Infrastructure in Rural Areas

3 Digital Skills

Rural areas may lack the necessary digital skills and expertise within their workforce to effectively implement and manage digital initiatives. Staff members may require training or the hiring of specialized professionals to bridge the skills gap.

Training modules:

- Digital skills for local communities
- Digital skills for public authorities
- Creating a digital innovation culture

Workshops:

- CORA Workshop 3: Digital skills for employees

Inspirational Projects:

- Municipality | Vejle, Denmark

CORA Policy Brief:

- Enhancing Digital Skills in Rural Areas

4 Costs and Affordability

Implementing digital technologies and infrastructure can be costly, and the return on investment may take longer to realize in rural areas with a smaller population and market size. The affordability of digital solutions, both for individuals and businesses, can be a significant challenge.

Training modules:

- Investment models for funding and financing broadband infrastructure
- Financing tools for funding and financing broadband infrastructure
- Broadband deployment methods
- Reducing the costs of broadband deployment

Inspirational Projects:

- BROADEN | Norway & Sweden
- Smart Fibre Hubs | Leiedal, Belgium

5 Citizen Engagement and Inclusion

Engaging and involving the local community in the digital transformation process can be challenging. Ensuring that digital services are accessible, user-friendly, and meet the diverse needs of residents can require additional efforts, especially in communities with varying levels of digital literacy and access.

Training modules:

- Digital skills for local communities
- Digital skills for public authorities

Inspirational Projects:

- Digital learning for all | Vejle, Denmark
- Smart public welfare solutions and in place support | Gemeente Oldambt, Netherlands

6 Stakeholders

Given the limited resources and expertise in rural areas, fostering collaboration and partnerships between different stakeholders becomes crucial. Collaboration between local governments, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations can help pool resources, share knowledge, and collectively address the challenges of digital transformation.

Training modules:

- Uptake of internet and internet services
- Digital hubs: understanding the concept
- Physical development of digital hubs

Workshops:

- CORA Workshop 4: Stakeholder and Citizen Participation

Inspirational Projects:

- THINK – Technology hubs improving networking and knowledge | University of Lincoln, United Kingdom

CROSS-CUTTING TOPIC: Cyber Security

Ensuring security is a critical challenge in any digital transformation. Rural areas may face additional concerns due to limited expertise, resources, and awareness about cybersecurity measures. Safeguarding sensitive data and building trust in digital services is essential.

Training modules:

- Cyber security in internet of things
- Cyber security in Industry 4.0
- Cyber security, an introduction
- Who are cyber criminals
- Detecting and preventing cyber attacks
- Cyber attack vectors

Workshops:

- CORA Workshop 6: Cyber Security

Get additional support by the partnership

Contact the CORA partnership for further information and support. Click on their logos and request a matchmaking session with our partners:



Get in touch!

Want to learn more about an integrated digital transformation and join our community? Get in touch with the project management team.

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