

Rural Vibrancy Measuring Index (Community Group Questionnaire)

Version 3.0

Manual

Thank you very much for using the Rural Vibrancy Measuring Index (Community Group Questionnaire) that is being developed by the EU funded INTERREG IVB project Rural Alliances!

BEFORE YOU START

- Purpose**
- The purpose of this index is to acquire knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of local communities on the basis of information from community groups. The compilation of this information will enable communities to determine their vibrancy. Besides this outcome a second purpose of this index is the process of interacting with other community people and the joint reflection of community actions.
- This group survey tool is one pillar of a toolkit created to vitalise community development and finally produce a community vibrancy action plan. An additional individual questionnaire for inhabitants should be use complementary (www.ruralvibes.eu).
- Information can be filled in the rows for administratively defined areas (1) (e.g. one village), a various amount of settlements within or beyond administrative boundaries (2), for different community groups within one settlement (3) or within different areas (4). You have to define what category you want to choose: either Community Group or Administrative Area. (See 1. Basic Information).
- Definition of "Rural Vibrancy"**
- 'Rural Vibrancy' describes the nature of a rural community, which is characterized by active involvement and the creative, dynamic interaction of people from different groupings with the capacity to create common objectives and to act jointly to develop their community.
- What is a "community"?**
- We use 'community' as a term for a particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants. That can be any kind of human settlements e.g. neighbourhoods, villages, towns, municipalities, etc.

What is a "community group"? We use 'community group' as a broader term for any group of people that is acting in a certain area. This can be officially registered sports clubs, a local Greenpeace group, cooperatives, community enterprises, religious groups, village makeover groups or any other citizens' groups. Information can also be gathered for any kind of human settlements e.g. neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities, municipalities, etc. You can define it by using the drop-down list if "Administrative Area" (**1. Basic Information**) has been chosen.

How to get the information? The gathering of information should take place in group discussion. Therefore it is important to form a working group that will answer the questions. For the establishment of this group it is important to watch out for community members from different backgrounds (old and young people, newcomers and long-established ...). It is experienced that a facilitator is absolutely necessary. You can designate a facilitator from your community (group) or ask for external expertise.

WORKING PROCEDURE

The following steps will guide you to using this index. There is a distinction between a whole community/area with several community groups (a) and a single community group (b).

- Step 1**
- a) If you will use the Group Survey for a whole area, please form a working group of community people (about 5-8 people) that know their community and the community groups well. This group has the task of answering the questions by discussing the questions within the group. (Use several rows for several groups)
 - b) If you will use the Group Survey for one community group, please form a working group of community group members (about 5-8 people) that know their community group well. This group has the task of answering the questions by discussing the questions within the group. (Use one row for your group)
- Step 2**
- Provide the basic information on your community: **working sheet 1: Basic information**.
- Step 3**
- Due to the flexibility of the RVMl group survey you can list whole administrative areas e.g. a list of villages/community groups within a certain area (a) or a single community group (b). You should list the community groups / settlements on spreadsheet "**1. Basic Information**" as well as in column 2 on spreadsheet "**2. Community group questions**".
- a) Please list all the community groups that exist within your community/area (-> first column of **working sheet 2: Community group questions**). Gather with your working group members and do a brainstorming session and think about which community groups exist within your area and write them down in this document. You can also use any additional material like registers, council reports, websites, etc. to complete your information.
 - b) go one step further (Step 4)

Step 4

Answer the questions on the community group(s) within your working group. You should work through this document by answering all the questions on one community group first **(b)** and then continue with the next community group(s) **(a)**. There are two different steps to answering every question: YES/NO/Don't know/Not relevant questions and open questions to write down more information.

Explanation: "Not relevant" answers lead to an assumption that you are aware that this issue is not relevant for you. Example Question. "Does the community group organise events/festivals for the whole community?" For groups such as energy community group or alliance who supplies energy for the whole village you would respond NOT RELEVANT since organizing events would not be a relevant activity.

Step 5

YES/NO/Don't know/Not relevant questions: These questions should be answered first.

If your answer is YES you are asked to give more information in the text box below that question.

If you are very short on resources (e.g. time) you have the option to only answer the YES/NO questions without giving more information in the text box. This way you will be able to perform a quick community evaluation, but you will fall significantly short on explanatory information. It is advisable to give more information in the text box.

If you have no detailed information about one issue you can chose "Don't know" (Box turns blue).

If you think that one issue is not relevant for the community (group) you can chose "Not relevant" (Box turns into orange).

Step 6

We assume that if you meet with the group of community experts you will be able to answer many of the questions within your group. But there might be questions that you cannot answer within your group. For questions you cannot answer within your working group we propose two ways to obtain the data.

1. You could select a responsible person within the community group who has a good knowledge of the community and issues relating to it, to ask them for the answers to the information that is missing.
2. You could choose to send them a blank version of the document and ask them to fill in the information for their group.

INTERPRETATION

How to get information from this index if you have answered all questions?

Now your facilitator is needed: When all questions are answered you can zoom out (set zoom to 25%) and you will see a green, red, blue and orange coloured mosaic. This visualisation should enable you to identify columns **(a)** or single spots **(b)** that are dominated by green and red. This way you can identify strengths and weaknesses within your community (group).

- a)** If you have identified significant red columns look for green spots within this column. The green spots can function as starting points and best practice examples in an area where your community has weaknesses.
- b)** If you have identified significant red and/or green spots start a discussion why and what can be done?

a+b) If you identify lots of orange spots it can be useful to discuss these issues with all community members, the community board, external experts etc. to think about why these issues are not relevant for you as well as if and how they could become more relevant. If you identify lots of blue spots you can change the members of the working group or ask for external help.

The most important aspects of this tool are that the RVMl group survey can help you,
o to start a discussion about vibrancy within your areas,
o to identify strengths and weaknesses within your area,
o to support rethinking of existing activities,
o to implement exchange activities with other groups/alliances/villages etc.,
o to visualise your activities/ the groups' activities,
o to regularly update yourselves about the development over time

Contact

If you have any questions on this index or problems answering/understanding questions please contact us:
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	Example 1	Example 2
Date	05.02.2014	15.02.2014
Community Information:		
Name of Community	Anytown	Smallville
Community group	Bioenergy Anytown	Smallville community development group
Size of Community Group	150	10
Category:	Community Group	Administrative Area
Administrative Area:	--- Please choose ---	Village
Population	500	400
Age structure		
< 15 years	15 %	12 %
15 to 64 years	60 %	50 %
65 and over	25 %	38 %
Main type(s) of employment	Farming, handicraft, trade, tourism industry	Tourism and Elderly Care
Average household income	Below average	Below average
Level of unemployment	Average	Above average
Level of diversity of businesses	Average	Below average
Level of public and private Services	Average	Below average

No		Community group list	Basic information					
		Name your community group.	Please describe your common goal:	How vibrant do you consider your community to be (5= high; 1=low) and why?	Name the topics/sectors in which the community group is engaged. E.g. tourism, energy, environment, etc	Estimate the number of members of the community group.	What is the structure of the community group? E.g. A company limited by guarantee, charitable status, trust, constitution, association, cooperative etc	Is the community group open for membership? E.g. open, closed membership, fee paying
Example 1	Bioenergy Anytown	<i>Our common goal is to provide the whole community with renewable energy, become autarchic and reduce carbondioxide production to a minimum.</i>	4 <i>Very vibrant due to a lot of active people, many active groups and some good gathering places (pub, shop). Whole community is involved in village events.</i>	<i>Renewable energies</i>	150	<i>Cooperative</i>	YES <i>Cooperative is open for everybody to join. Cost to become a member of the cooperative (to by one share) is 500€.</i>	
Example 2	Smallville community development group	<i>Not yet defined</i>	2 <i>Not very vibrant due to a lot of old people, few active groups but still some good gathering places (pub, shop).</i>	<i>Community development</i>	10		YES	
1							--- Please choose ---	

Community involvement				Finances and funding	
Is the community group involved in other activities other than their own core activity? If YES, name the activities.	Does the community group try to involve the whole community? If YES, name their activities to do this.	Does the community group organise meetings that are open for the whole community to participate on a regular basis? If YES, how many meetings are organized per year? Estimate the average number of participants.	Does the community group organise events/festivals for the whole community? If YES, estimate the number of visitors of the events.	Does the community group fundraise locally for (a) their own activities or (b) other activities? If YES, name the source of funding.	Does the community group apply for external financing (regardless of whether this was successful or not)? If YES, please name the source where funding was applied (e.g. LEADER, EU funding etc).
YES	YES	YES	Not relevant	YES	YES
<i>Facilities of the cooperative are offered for birthday parties or wedding parties.</i>	<i>All community members were asked to join when the cooperation was founded.</i>	<i>1x year: Official cooperative plenary assembly. Only for members. ~150 participants</i>		<i>(a) 1/3 of the costs for the local heat supply were raised by community members</i>	<i>EU Leader, German development fund</i>
Don't know	YES	YES	YES	Don't know	Don't know
	<i>All community members were asked to join when the cooperation was founded.</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>not yet</i>	<i>not yet</i>
--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---

Cooperation			Communitication	
Does cooperation/support exist with/from other community groups from (a) the same or (b) a different area? Name the cooperation partner/supporter and indicate the type of cooperation/support.	Does cooperation/support exist with/from enterprises from (a) the same or (b) a different area? Name the cooperation partner/supporter and indicate the type of cooperation/support.	Does cooperation/support exist with/from public institutions from (a) the same or (b) a different area? Name the cooperation partner/supporter and indicate the type of cooperation/support.	How does the community group communicate their actions? Please name the media that is used and indicate if the communication is (a) limited to the local community or (b) goes beyond the local community.	Does this group have a common "vision"? How is this vision articulated?
YES	YES	YES	YES	Don't know
(b) The cooperative supports other villages by providing information on how to organise a energy cooperative	(a) Local farmers supply the cooperative with biomass	(a) Municipality supports the cooperative by providing securities for a credit	(a) face-to-face communication by street team	
YES	NO	YES	YES	Don't know
a) Local association is supporting the action planning		a) Local government is supporting the action planning	b) local newspaper	not yet articulated
--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---

Inclusion & Integration		Knowledge	Governance	
Do the following social groupings take part in community actions or events? (a) migrants, (b) disabled people, (c) pensioners/older people, (d) youth, (e) newcomers to the community. Please name the action or event in which they are involved.	Are actions undertaken to improve the integration and participation of the following social groupings into community activities? (a) migrants, (b) disabled people, (c) pensioners/older people, (d) youth, (e) newcomers to the community. Please name the actions that are undertaken.	Does the group provide training courses or information to others? Name the topic and the courses and estimate the number of participants.	Do people in this community group exist that have an outstanding function as a champion or pioneer (e.g. in the organisation of this community group)? Please list those people and provide information on their function.	Does this group undertake efforts to take part in public decision-making and planning processes? Please name the areas in which they are active and describe how they try to influence decision-making.
YES	Not relevant	YES	NO	NO
(c) (e) are members of the cooperative		The cooperative is giving tours to visit (10-30 people) the bioenergy facilities and giving speeches during other events to inform people.		
YES	YES	Not relevant	YES	YES
all except young people	d) young people are asked for their support in order to keep them staying		1) Michael G. (leader of local association) 2) Monika O. (local politician)	Group is asked to prepare an action plan including whole community.
--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---	--- Please choose ---