



**“It’s really interesting to see where Werder is situated. The result is quite alarming, but fortunately a couple of young families moved in our village. Hopefully they would like to stay ...”**

Elisabeth Jäger,  
local mayor Type 9 village Werder (Germany)



## Hinterland Infoletter 2007



### Hinterland – online Vitality-Check for your village

#### Demographic transition

Many rural areas suffer from decline, but not every village in the same way. Some are strongly affected by decline. Others (especially near large cities) still have a growing population - but for how long? Therefore, all rural regions have to keep an eye on this problem - do it because of prevention or because of already existing need for action. Only if inhabitants know, what’s going on in their village regarding to the demographic change and the corresponding conditions, they are able to act in the right way.

#### Vitality-Check for your village

A method to find the answer is to pass the Vitality-Check. The Vitality-Check works as follows:

1. Open the webpage: <http://hinterland.krc.karelia.ru/>
2. Read carefully and collect required data referring to demographic, social and economic situation.
3. After data input the computer will compare your data with those of all the other participated villages and assign it to one of our 9 types.
4. Last but definitely not least, you will get your type description and recommendations.

#### Don’t be afraid of the efforts! It will be worth the trouble!

The results should mainly activate the discussion between the inhabitants of your village. The affiliation to one of the nine types and the recommendations involved should be question critically. Besides this animation to continuing discussions about the further development of your village, you will see how other villages start their actions to deal with decline! Learn from experience!

**Come on!  
Start now and check your village!**

Marita Plötner  
Region Havelland-Fläming, Germany



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## Work at the Lithuanian pilot areas

### Investigation zone

Pilot area data collection started from the meetings with local people. Tailored and honest communication between experts and local people is the key to get trust. Data was collected from six Hinterland areas. Every meeting was different, as Heraclites has said: "There are no possibilities to wade in the same water". Sometimes you get warm, well wishing feedback, but sometimes people are discreet and closed; even if there is a big potential in the area.

### Pilot message

People need attention to their local situation. This is the wish, they expressed in words and emotions. One of the problems is loss of the mood to go to meeting for fill in questionnaires; people are interested just in concrete and material results, like application of pilot projects. Main question of the local people is: "What concrete results will be reached?". Be prepared for concrete answering ...

### Together on Hinterland decline control

Finally, it seems that we together, have created specific Hinterland culture as well as a strong team in the whole of the region.

Laura Lazarevaitė  
Lithuanian University of Agriculture, Kaunas, Lithuania



Pilot meeting in Viešvilė

## Backstage support from Petrozavodsk

### Unique instrument

The Vitality Check web-tool is a unique instrument for diagnosing the status of rural communities. Using this tool in an interactive mode, a community can both identify problems and bottlenecks, and get recommendations on how to develop further and to utilize existing potential.

Having first experienced using such a tool, representatives of pilot settlements remarked on its novelty and convenience. They were particularly keen on the possibility to update data, and to store them in the database, so that knowledge process is continuously.

### "How do we look compared to others?"

One of the first question from heads of pilot settlements asked after familiarization with the testing system was: "How do we look compared to others?". It helps getting answers and making local officials visibly satisfied or eager to improve local situation ...

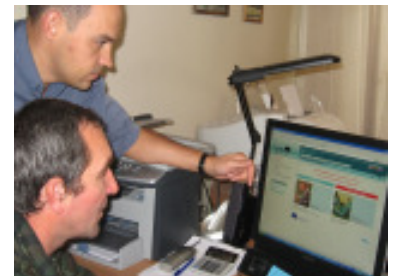
### Interactive testing

According to Natalia Lugovaya, the main software engineer, interactive testing is fairly widespread, and generation of the Vitality Check web-tool encountered no big technical difficulties. As regards the application of the Vitality Check by rural settlements however, the tool is indeed an innovative practice for all of them, expanding their visions of evaluation and planning of their activities.

Igor Shevchuk  
Karelian Research Centre Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation



Natalia working on the programming



Vitality Check in operation! Helylä Mayor Anatoli Ryzhenkov applying the tool.

## Latest News – online vitality check: [www.hinterland-info.net](http://www.hinterland-info.net)

- Online Vitality-Check is now available in Russian, English, Danish and German!
- Polish, Lithuanian and other will follow soon!



## Hinterland Task Secretariat

### HINTERLAND

#### Potentials for spatial development under decline

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