

17/03/2011

## ACTIVITIES OF THE SWEDISH NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK

### 1. Summary of Work Programme

A detailed description of the content of the network's activities and initiatives, as well its relevance to the RDP, is included in an action plan. The action plan, which is annually updated, outlines the key objectives and activities to be undertaken, qualitative and quantitative targets, and proposed timescales.

The activities of the NRN support the dissemination and collection of information relevant to the RDP, as well as training and transnational cooperation. This includes raising awareness about rural development, gathering and analysing information in relation to conditions in rural areas, promoting best practice between stakeholders and successful project development, management and evaluation of projects, gathering questions and suggestions regarding rural development and the RDP from the network members, cooperating with the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD), supporting the implementation of the RDP and acting as a contact point for LAGs.

The action plan currently supports the implementation of the RDP by:

- Organising network meetings for mutual learning and cooperation, which targets either the whole network, groups of member organisations or LAGs;
- Initiating and supporting thematic working groups and virtual think-tank workshops;
- Gathering information and experience from network members to analyse the progress of the RDP;
- Website maintenance, including streaming video, and newsletters;
- Disseminating brochures and leaflets;
- Delivering communication activities and targeting the press and media;
- Specific activities for LAGs including supporting the work of the LAGs coordination group;
- Funding regional support measures for LAG:s capacity building;
- Promoting transnational cooperation;
- Scientific Council and researcher conferences;
- Participation in EN RD activities;
- 'Best practice' award.

### 2. Focus and Annual Priorities Supporting the RDP Implementation

The work programme for 2011 was approved by the Steering Committee on the 17 of March, 2011. The main priorities are:

To gather, develop and spread knowledge about rural development in general and the RDP in particular mainly among active organisations, LAGs, county administrations and other authorities;

To improve cooperation in the fields of:

- Methods to support entrepreneurs
- Local Financial Capital Supply
- Innovations
- Diversity - youth and integration
- Environmental Challenges - Energy and Landscaping
- Spatial Planning for Sustainable Rural Development
- Contact Point for Leader
- The next programming period
- Exchange of experience and transnational cooperation
- Exchange of experience and research collaboration
- "Bureaucreativity"

The main target groups rural entrepreneurs including farmers, LAGs, national organisations and authorities dealing with rural issues,. At a European level the target groups are mainly other NRNs and other networks (researchers,

universities, other organisations, etc). The main aim is to continue collecting good practices and experiences and support cooperation in order to improve the implementation of the RDP.

### 3. Thematic Activity

#### 3.1 Thematic Initiatives launched by the Network

The Swedish NRN has during the years launched eight thematic working groups (TWGs) , related to the following topics:

- Gender equality; which now has ended it´s task and the results are implemented in ordinary work
- Supply of Local Financial Capital
- Local spatial planning for a sustainable rural development;
- Diversity Integration;
- Diversity Youth.
- Energy, one of the environmental challenges
- Future payments for environmental public goods

Two additional thematic working groups are planned to start in 2011, with a focus on Management of the landscape – one of the environmental challenges and on Innovations.

The main tasks of the TWGs are to collect good practice examples, and to develop and implement new and more efficient methods of work.

Another priority area during 2011 is to identify and promote new methods to support entrepreneurs and rural development practitioners, even though there has not been a TWG established for this purpose. .

#### Events:

- 4 Feb, National meeting for all Leader chairmen
- 8-9 Feb “Creative Rural Areas”, a national conference regarding rural development together with the MA
- Spring 2011, 6 regional meetings “24-hours race” to find new methods to support entrepreneurs
- 31 March – 1 April, National Leader Conference
- 24-25 May Nordic/Baltic Rural Networks meeting in Finland.
- 7-8 Sep General meeting for all national TWG:s
- 9 Nov, National Rural Network meeting and Swedish Rural Gala
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#### 3.2 Relevant Experiences/Good Practices

The third selection of good practice examples (Rural Best) will be held 9 of November 2011, during the Rural Gala. The 24 county administrations (regional Managing Authorities) and the LAGs (for Leader) propose the most interesting projects in the seven following categories:

- Leader of the Year;
- Rural Entrepreneur of the Year;
- Rural Project of the Year;
- Rural Innovation of the year
- Environmental effort of the Year;
- Integration effort of the Year;
- Gender equality effort of the Year;
- Youth effort of the Year.

The final selection for the Rural Best Awards in the eight categories is carried out by the NRN Steering Committee. Criteria are based upon the objectives of the Swedish Rural Development Programme (RDP), for example as for the ‘rural project of the year’:

- Preserving and/or creating employment;
- Creating conditions to increase the number of companies that develop, produce and/or commercialise new products and services;
- Increased tourism;
- Village renewal and development;
- Strengthening the local infrastructure, increased access to basic services and broadband;
- Maintaining and upgrading the natural and cultural heritage.

Other categories have their own special criteria related to the RDP.

### 3.3 Leader Related Activity

#### NRN Support for LAGs

A specific "Coordination Group" for LAG managers has been created by the LAGs. Two members of the Network Support Unit (NSU) are specifically working with LAGs and the Leader approach. At the beginning, the NRN organised training and education activities for LAGs, but recently this responsibility has been transferred to the LAG task-force set up within the Managing Authority (MA) - the "Team Landsbygd". Two members of the NRN team are working specifically with LAGs, but no specific guidelines have been provided so far.

#### Guides or other support documents:

So far there have been no special guides provided by the NRN.

### 3.4 TNC Activity

#### NSU members dedicated to TNC support:

The two members of the NSU specifically dedicated to Leader, mainly provide support for TNC activities.

#### Cooperation fairs and similar events:

Nordic/Baltic rural network meetings are organised at least twice yearly, with the participation of representatives of the networks of Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Sweden.

#### Partner search facilities, guides, other support documents:

The cooperation offers circulated by the Contact Point are published on the NRN website. Cooperation offers from other NRNs are both published on the web site and distributed to the LAGs.

#### Approved TNC projects as of 1st of June 2010:

So far, 27 cooperation projects have been approved. Some five or six of them concern transnational cooperation and the majority of them are feasibility studies.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation of Networking:

An external consultant evaluated the performance of network activities, carried out last year. The main recommendations were that it should focus more on specific/relevant themes (instead of trying to do everything), undertake more in depth surveys and analysis of the RDP implementation, and use more resources to promote and facilitate cooperation activities.

## 5. Communication

- The MA coordinates the communication plan of the RDPs, and the NRN also has a communication plan which is frequently updated.
- Training sessions on communication skills have been carried out.
- Several videos have been produced on areas such as good practices, as well as case studies about other topics, such as gender equality. They can be downloaded at the following link:  
<http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/inspirationsfilmer.4.78be32b411dd24541d28000530403.html>

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#### Communication plan and the NRN:

There is a communication plan and it is frequently updated.

#### Communication plan and the RDP:

Communication is ongoing with the MA so as to coordinate RDP information and communication; Several videos have been produced both on good practice and about gender equality etc. They can be found and downloaded at:

<http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/inspirationsfilmer.4.78be32b411dd24541d28000530403.html>

## 6. NRN Knowledge Base

The newsletters and the publication "Rural Best" in English can be downloaded at the following link:

[http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/download/18.3229365112c8a099bd98000554/Landsbygdens+b%C3%A4sta\\_engelsk\\_2010-webb.pdf](http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/download/18.3229365112c8a099bd98000554/Landsbygdens+b%C3%A4sta_engelsk_2010-webb.pdf)

#### Latest version of the NSP and RDP:

<http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/8723/a/82731>

#### Link to MA/NSU/RDP's website:

<http://www.jordbruksverket.se/amnesomraden/mojligheterpalandsbygden/landsbygdsprogrammet.4.1cb85c4511eca55276c8000655.html>

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