



RURAL BEST 2010



Facts about the Swedish Rural Network:

Is operating within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and will strengthen its implementation.

Gathers authorities and organizations involved in the development of the Swedish countryside.

Is a forum for exchange of information, experiences and methods between stakeholders, authorities and experts at local, national and international level.

Collects, analyzes and disseminates information about the situation on the countryside and the opportunities offered within the Rural Development Programme

Is led by a steering group which allocates funds to activities within the network.

Is the Contact Point for Leader groups in Sweden.

All the texts in the booklet is written by Agneta Borgström.



The winners of the Rural Awards will be honoured with a wool-ram of cast iron. Price conveys weight and tradition but it is also playful with a game ball in a glass! It is the Swedish artist and multi active Peter Gadh who designed the prize.



Last year was the first time the Swedish Rural Network arranged a Rural gala with a ceremony awarding Woolly Rams. The aim was to showcase the very best countryside initiatives in the country within the framework for the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

The Rural networks in Europe have the task of disseminating good examples from each country's Rural Development Programme, but to do this in the form of a competition, where the administrative authorities responsible for the programme and the country's Leader groups made the nominations, was a completely new approach. And what a success it was! Knowledge about the previous years' nominees, and in particular the winners, had been published widely, both in the media, in the rural sector and within the European network collaboration. Disseminating good examples are important, not just in order to show that the SEK 36 billion invested in the Rural Development Programme is doing good, but also in order for us to learn from the rural initiatives that have been successful. By sharing the information about the development that is occurring in the countryside, we are also showing the breadth of knowledge, ideas and creativity that exists there. Agriculture is of course important, but the countryside covers more than just cow sheds and arable fields. With

this publication, we are proud to present the nominees for the Woolly Ram awards 2010. And you are very welcome to spread the knowledge about these good examples further. We all need to help out with this, just as we all need to help with realising the visions we have about a flourishing future for the rural areas throughout the country.

Peter Melin
Chairman
Swedish Rural Network Steering Group

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL PROJECT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

There is such a thing as "the best Karlsson in the world". One village inhabitant, Ingemar Karlsson, in the project "Trygga Jämtön" (Secure Jämtön) helps old people by shopping for food, clearing snow or changing fuses. The innovative home care project has led to discussions with the municipality about new forms of housing for old people.

Project name: Trygga Jämtön
Project owner: Jämtöns Folkets hus förening
Contact: Göran Åberg
Contact information:
goran.berg44@telia.com
Project period: Nov 2009-Oct 2010
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 277,600
Do you want to find out more?
www.jamtön.se



In Jämtön, old people can live at home for longer

The small village of Jämtön in Norrbotten has around 400 inhabitants, of which approximately eighty are older than 65. The municipality's home care service was not sufficient for all the needs the old people had, which was the basis for the project that started a year ago.

"The aim is for old people to be able to remain living at home a bit longer. They can just phone Karlsson and get help with mowing the lawn or hanging curtains," says Göran Åberg, project leader for the initiative, as well as a long-term villager.

Ingemar Karlsson is the other key person, and the general factotum, who is always on hand for the jobs the old people need done. The work has provided important gains for the people living there, according to Göran Åberg.

"Having the security of phoning someone is important, and getting help with everyday jobs you can not longer do yourself. We also have meeting places, such as a village café and various activities, that means contact between old people is getting even better. They can sit down for a chat over a cup of coffee," says Göran Åberg.

The project started when Luleå Municipality asked the People's Community Centre Association in Jämtön whether it was interested

in running a pilot project to help old people. The inspiration came from an Irish EU project, "Older for older". The Association received a grant from the Rural Development Programme and the municipality contributed working time as co-financier.

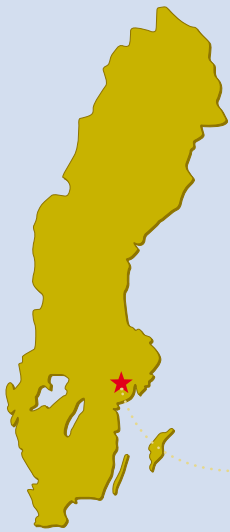
"With the project money, we have been able to employ Karlsson on a half-time basis, arrange office furniture, computer equipment and work clothes," says Göran Åberg.

In addition to the village café, which is also part of the project, the Association arranges computer courses and sometime also wide-screen television events, such as ice hockey matches or cinema screenings.

"We have now got a good community spirit in the village with the help of the project," says Göran Åberg.

Recently, the project has led to discussions with the municipality about developing care for the elderly.

"We have done blue-sky thinking about continuing the project, for instance about new forms of housing for old people in the villages. There is some thought about organising a housing association in the village," says Göran Åberg.



Project name: Sörmlands Matkluster
Project owner: Sörmlands Matkluster
Cooperative Association
Contact: Magnus Åberg
Contact information:
info@matkluster.se
Project period: Dec 2008 - Dec 2010
**Funds from the Rural Development
Programme:** SEK 500,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.matkluster.se

Sörmland wants to become the Tuscany of Sweden, and the food region before all others. The visions are many in the project Sörmlands Matkluster (Food cluster), which is arranging a rhubarb festival, farmers' market and an appetite tour. Some 60 local producers, growers and companies are collaborating in an association.

Food cluster with cooperation from soil to table

"We are a county-wide cooperative association, working to promote craftsman-made food from the region. We have wide frameworks and want our members to be represented from soil to table. Because of this, we do not just have farmers, but also food manufacturers, restaurants, advertising agencies and others working with food," says Magnus Åberg, a member of the board of the association.

The list of members includes everything from Rinkeby Struts & Kalkon, producing ostrich and turkey, to the dairy Jürss Mejeri, Flen Municipality and the designer Ekografill AB. There are constant exchanges within the large framework. Meetings, talks, and other dialogues are important for the association, which aims to raise food skills with the help of each other. The idea is to ensure the member companies develop to become living and profitable operations, a prerequisite for the countryside to survive. Glad tidings last year about money from the Rural Development Programme, for developing a website for disseminating information and creating an operation plan, have meant a lot.

"Setting up a county-wide operation about food is incredibly important. We hope and believe that the development of craftsman-produced quality food in Sörmland has only just begun, and that in perhaps ten years' time, it will be natural for Sörmlanders and visitors to Sörmland to eat locally-produced quality food," says Magnus Åberg.

The current focus in the food cluster, which is lead by a board, is to support the projects that are up and running, and to wait a bit with starting new ideas urgently suggested by others. There are many members, and sometimes it has been difficult to make them all "sing from the same hymn sheet", considers Magnus Åberg.

"We want to start projects, but everybody does not always see the member benefit of them. Just making all the members in the cluster visible is a major job. But the relatively small obstacles that exist will be overcome. And we have come far along this road," says Magnus Åberg.

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL PROJECT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Jonatan Nilsson

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL PROJECT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Henrik Wester

A guide from a wildlife safari and a strategist from the world of public authorities. Together, the duo Marcus Eldh and Henrik Wester created the training course "Ekoturism i praktiken" (Ecotourism in practice) in Västmanland. On the basis of the course, tourism companies develop their services and gain more paying customers.

Project name: Ekoturism i praktiken

Project owner: Västmanland Municipalities and County Council

Contact: Henrik Wester and Marcus Eldh

Contact information: henrik.wester@vkl.se

Project period: Jan-Dec 2009

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: 2009: SEK 146 200

Do you want to find out more?

www.vkl.se and continue under "Turismfunktioner" and then "Projekt & utbildningar".



Tourism companies receive training for eco-labelling

The concept of Ekoturism i praktiken is to get more tourism companies in the county to offer environmentally-friendly experiences and services. Soon, two training courses covering twelve full days each will have been completed.

"The training aims to raise the quality and develop the companies, so that in the end they can be certified according to the criteria of Naturens Bästa (Nature's Best)," says Henrik Wester, Project Manager and Tourism Developer at Västmanland Municipalities and County Council, who are behind the project that was first awarded funds in 2009 and later a new training round for 2010.

A clear demand for more high-quality nature-based experiences existed in the county according to Henrik Wester, who soon saw results in the form of more quality-labelled experiences.

"Several of the participants have applied to the Swedish Ecotourism Society, a couple have been awarded Nature's Best designations, and several are in the pipeline," Henrik says.

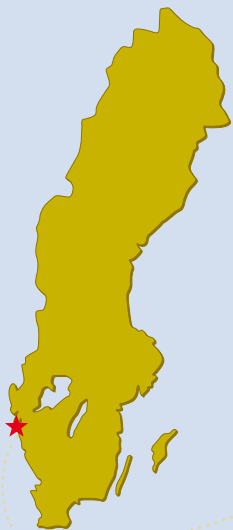
He leads the operation together with Marcus Eldh, who is a wild-

life guide offering wildlife safaris with his own company, "Skogens konung". With Marcus's practical skills, and Henrik's strategic ones, they help the companies to develop. In the courses, they also use the Ecotourism Society's training material and use its staff as lecturers. According to Henrik Wester, the exchanges between participants just get better if company owners, associations and cooperatives from widely different operations take part. They learn from each other, gain insights and hone their operations. One example is the pricing and evaluation of the own operation.

"One business owner, who had been offering two-hour walks including food and a guide, who previously charged only SEK 150 per person, has now increased the price to SEK 500," says Henrik Wester.

The fact that the project has a clear foundation in the area is important.

"We have a conscious strategy to start development based on the local resources available. Nor do we use hired-in lecturers, but instead recruit all resource persons regionally," says Henrik Wester.



Project name: Hällö kapell
Project owner: Hällö Chapel Association
Contact: Bertil Abrahamsson
och Leif Larsson
Contact information:
abraham.b@telia.com
Project period: Feb-Oct 2009
**Funds from the Rural Development
Programme:** SEK 310,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.hallokapell.se

Sweden's most vivid altarpiece. The view from the window of Hällö Chapel across the roaring western sea and pink granite slabs astonishes visitors. A totally unique ecumenical chapel has been built from an old machine room on the well-known lighthouse island outside Smögen.

A room with a view on Hällö

Transforming an old machine house with diesel engines into a peaceful ecumenical chapel may sound like an impossible task. But with the help of a number of energetic pensioners with lots of ideas, the whole project was completed. They did receive help with financing.

"We got SEK 310,000 from the Rural Development Programme for renovations. The money has been crucial for the work. We also got money from a bank foundation, local companies and individuals who sponsored the work. In total we raised SEK 1,010,000," says Bertil Abrahamsson, chairman of Hällö Chapel Society.

The society was formed in 2007, when the idea began to grow to buy the old machine house from the Swedish Maritime Administration. The machine house was used for producing emergency electricity for the lighthouse, which is close by. The society had a clear picture of building a chapel in the style of the "Capella ecumenica" located on an island outside Söderköping. Said and done: the building was bought in 2008 for SEK 25,000. During the year, the society also re-

ceived approval for the rebuilding from the National Heritage Board.

It took almost a whole year of cleaning and removing the former fittings before construction workers could arrive and complete the chapel. Bertil Abrahamsson is very proud.

"It is such a fantastically beautiful building, and we must have Sweden's most living altarpiece with this view," he says.

He sees the importance of the chapel both for the local population and the coastal environment, but also for tourism as a way of attracting visitors. There are many tourists who take the ferry out to the chapel, which is open from May to September. The high season is of course the summer, when a religious service is held every Sunday. It has also become common for people to exchange rings on the little island.

"Previously, people got married on the cliffs, sometimes in the rain and wind, which perhaps wasn't all that great. Now there is the chapel and an assembly room nearby. This year, so far we have had as many as 35 weddings and five christenings," says Bertil Abrahamsson.

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL PROJECT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

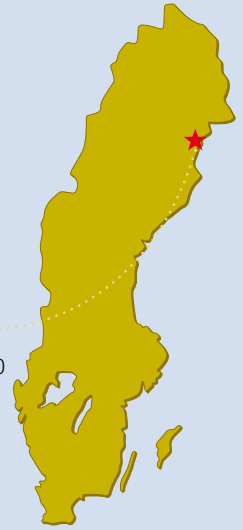
NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

In the summers they run a farm stay concept. In winter, they help companies that do tyre testing. The farmers at Skataudden farm run an extremely diversified agricultural company operating all year.

Project name: Skatuddens Lantgård AB
Project owner: Skatuddens Lantgård AB
Contact: irene.oja.johansso@alvsbyn.net
Contact information:
goran.aberg44@telia.com
Project period: Mar-Dec 2009
and Mar 2009-Mar 2011
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 231,555 and SEK 287,000



Farmers increased housing opportunities

The farm is located in the beautiful area of Lillkorstråk next to a lake outside Älvsbyn. The grazing cattle keep the meadows open. Nature also attracts all the holiday makers who come each year to experience the farm's animals, to fish, swim off a floating sauna and to enjoy the midnight sun. But the farm, which also runs 70 milking cows, has broadened its operation over the last 15 years.

"From November to March, we become entrepreneurs, when the German tyre company Pirelli, together with the testing company Arctic falls come and stay here," says Iréne Johansson, who runs the farm together with her husband Ulf.

Every winter, testing of winter tyres is carried out on land tracks and ice tracks on the lake. The companies also rent the farm's garage for vehicles and tyre storage as well as for an office. The farm also helps in the preparation of the ice ahead of the test drives, by packing the snow, making the ice friable with a peat miller or by watering the ice to make new smooth ice.

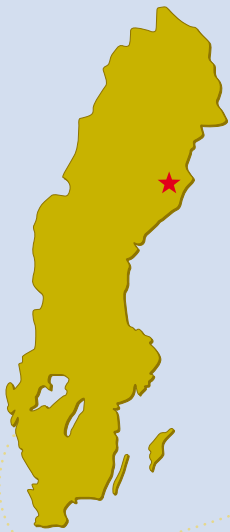
"We simply fill the manure tub with water and drive it out onto the lake to make tracks," says Iréne Johansson.

In order to broaden the business over the years, the farm has had to build several garages and other premises. At the moment, a construction project is in progress with the support of the Rural Development Programme.

"Last year we were granted funds to extend a cottage with several accommodation spaces, kitchen, toilet and shower, which will all be completed in 2011. In 2008 we also got money to build a boiler house for a new boiler using wood and wood chips, giving us lower heating costs," says Iréne Johansson.

In future, they will be able to house several companies at the same time. From March to November, wind power construction is in progress in the area, which will probably require accommodation. At other times of year, work teams from the Forestry Research Institute of Sweden and the Swedish National Forest Survey arrive, and may need somewhere to sleep. Thanks to the financial grants, they have been able to expand the farm's operation so quickly, explains Iréne Johansson.

"We would not dare to build and take out such big loans ourselves. Now we have customers here all year, and the farm is alive."



Project name: Hällnäs Handelsträdgård AB
Project owner: Hällnäs Handelsträdgård AB
Contact: Björn Isacsson
Contact information:
info(at)hallnas.nu
Project period: Jun 2008-Apr 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 700,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.hallnas.nu

Pots of lettuce and herbs are grown in an environmentally friendly way at Hällnäs market garden in Västerbotten. To achieve sustainable transport, these are coordinated with the dairy Norrmejerier, which saves both money and the environment. New growing systems are now being tested, thanks to the Countryside Programme.

Environmentally friendly garden grows with the help of company support

"We heat our greenhouses with biofuel, wood chips, from the forests around here, heat them carefully in winter and transport our goods with Norrmejerier, which reaches everywhere," says Björn Isacsson, who owns the family company located 70 km west of Umeå.

The gigantic greenhouses, which cover 40,000 sqm, are not the environmental villains they are usually portrayed as. In Hällnäs, the sun heats the plants in summer, and the assimilation lamps hanging over the rows of plants during winter. In order to save energy, the roof is covered with energy fabric and the walls with a 10 mm layer of polycarbonate plastic. Using woodchip boilers, whose water-borne heating is disseminated through pipes in the floor, the greenhouses are heated up to the lowest possible indoor temperature.

"We heat to only 16 degrees indoors. More is unnecessary," says Björn Isacsson.

For the KRAV-labelled herbs, they are testing environmentally friendly alternatives, such as using peat pots instead of the usual plastic ones, but also other innovative ideas, he tells us.

"We want to remove the pot altogether, and deliver cut herbs in

environmentally friendly plastic foil, in bubbles, with reduced oxygen levels to make the herbs more resistant to cold," says Isacsson.

In recent years, the market garden has grown significantly, to becoming one of the three largest producers in terms of herbs and lettuce in pots. In order to expand further, SEK 20 million has been invested over the last ten years. Last year, the garden received money from the Rural Development Programme, which helped to speed up the development, says Isacsson:

"We are now testing new growing systems for lettuce and herbs."

The company has become an important employer in the Västerbotten countryside, with 25 employees. Double the number work there in summer.

"Today we have an increasing turnover for herbs and lettuce of SEK 30 million on an annual basis, while the flowers produce SEK 12 million," says Björn Isacsson, who today has the largest number of customers locally, among them ICA, Konsum Nord and Konsum Norrbotten.

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Simon Lundström

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

No lucky pigs, but very much happy pigs. This is how the farm Nibble Lantbruk describes its quality-aware breeding of free-range pigs. A project involving a trademark, airdrying ham and soon Sweden's first pig village is in progress.

Project name: Nibble Lantbruk AB
Project owner: Nibble Lantbruk AB
Contact: Sven-Erik and Magnus Johansson
Contact information: sven-erik.johansson@nibble.se, 070-519 17 05
Project period: Aug 2008-Dec 2012
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 800,000
Do you want to find out more? www.nibble.se



Delicacies produced from happy free-range pigs

Since the early 1970s, Sven-Erik Johansson, and in recent years also his son Magnus, have been driving the development of pig husbandry in Sweden at the farm outside Västerås. Many milestones in Swedish animal husbandry have been reached at the farm. Yes to free-range sows and planned breeding, no to chemical additives and swine production. Over the years, the operation has created its own procedures for good animal husbandry, committed keepers and good grain feed for the pigs. Since twelve years ago, they deliver twice weekly to slaughterhouses in Skövde, and the pork is then sold under the trademark Nibble Gårdsgris. All along, well-informed consumers have led their activities.

"They wanted to know where the meat comes from, what it contains and to buy tasty quality meat, at the same time as we of course wanted to develop our business further. People also travel abroad and get food influences from there, which has also influenced us," says Sven-Erik Johansson.

Despite all the success, profitability is under pressure for animal farmers today. Money from the Rural Development Programme in

the form of company support was therefore important for the farm in several respects, explains Sven-Erik Johansson:

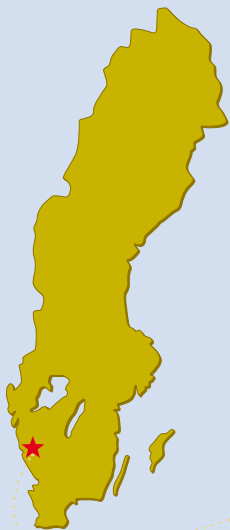
"We have been able to develop our own trademark, and have had an initiative involving air-dried ham during three years."

The farm is also in the process of realising its next idea: Sweden's first pig village. In simple terms, a mini-farm made up from a large number of smaller houses for pigs, hedges and tree plantations in order for the pig, the keeper and the environment to feel as well as possible. This is always the guiding light in the work.

"For the pigs to play, eat and feel good in every way is a better measure than talking about happy pigs. We are not producing pigs, we rear them," says Sven-Erik Johansson.

He thinks that the company with its projects means a lot to the countryside. Unless there are businesses there all year round, it will be shut down in future.

"There must be people who live and work in the countryside, and achieve good profitability, for it to live."



Project name: Kvarnen i Hyssna Melltorp Såg AB

Project owner: Melltorp Såg AB

Contact: Catharina Johansson

Contact information:

melltorp_sag@spray.se, tel 0320-38023

Project period: Dec 2008-Sep 2010

Funds from the Rural Development

Programme: SEK 500,000

Do you want to find out more?

www.kvarnenihyssna.se

First restoration of buildings, then café and now a guesthouse and spa. Kvarnens Pensionat in Hyssna and its cultural history environment is attracting a growing number of overnight guests since the accommodation was extended. Everything has been built with consideration for the environment: ground-source heating, solar heating and LED lighting.

Environmentally friendly guesthouse built by old mill

The year was 1999, and Hans and Catharina Johansson, the current owners of Kvarnen in Hyssna, were faced with a difficult decision. Hans had just bought the sawmill from his brothers, but the question was whether they should let the mill building fall to pieces, or take matters into their own hands. They saw the potential, and started renovating the buildings over several years. The turbine channels were filled with soil, and the roof practically falling down. The mill chamber, which had been pulled down, was rebuilt. As time went, the idea of a café emerged, and a new bake house was built. In 2008, work started on building a guesthouse, with eight high-class rooms and a spa where the old village smithy had been.

"Thanks to the guesthouse, we are switching to a new direction, where we can receive more guests. You could say that we have developed in steps since we started the café in 2002," says Catharina Johansson, who has refined the historical environment, which is located north-west of Kinna.

She believes they soon can make a living from the operation all year round. Receiving project funds from the Rural Development Programme was totally crucial.

"This meant we had support behind us, and our credibility towards the bankers was increased, so that we could take out a bank loan.

With the project funds, they could invest in well thought-out heating provision, which was costly, among them LED lighting, solar heating and installation of ground-source heating. The aim is to have the whole operation Svanen-marked.

"Ecological and environmental concerns are very important to us. Many large companies, who we want to attract, also require environmentally friendly accommodation," says Catharina Johansson.

Suddenly, the 400 year-old industrial environment has become a top-modern operation with breath, which can receive wedding guests, conference groups, private guests wanting to be close to nature, or just day guests who want a cup of coffee. She has a positive view of the future for the area, and she is noticing that their work is rubbing off on others.

"Others are getting inspired. I know some meat farmers who are opening a butcher's shop, and another person who wants to open a herb garden. With the right ideas and right attitude, it is possible to do something," says Catharina Johansson.

NOMINATED FOR THE RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

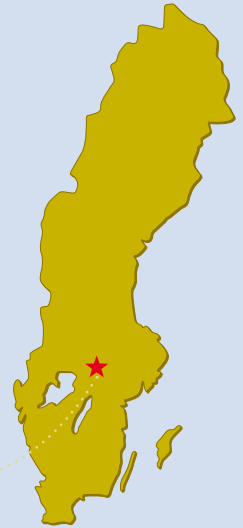
NOMINATED FOR THE LEADER OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Daniel Johansson

Gold panning school, family fishing and a treasure hunt for children. The project "Barn i Bergslagen" (Children in Bergslagen) has opened a new website where all the local destinations for families with children are presented. Through marketing at fairs, in social media and advertisements, the project leaders are hoping to see a good influx of visitors.

Project name: Barn i Bergslagen
Project owner: Tursam Cooperative Association
Contact: Susann Rickan, Anna Magnusson
Contact information: info@barnibergslagen.se
Project period: May 2009-Oct 2010
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,102,700
Do you want to find out more? www.barnibergslagen.se



All of Bergslagen for children with a single click

"The aim of our project is to develop the whole of Bergslagen so that families with children find their way here. We also want to tag onto the trend of Swedes travelling more within the country, and thereby make them interested in our area," says Susann Rickan.

She and Anna Magnusson are the project leaders behind the website. As parents of young children with an interest in outdoor life, they saw the need for a rebirth of Bergslagen that breathed "mining community, dark and mysterious region". The work with the website was not about "creating something new", but about emphasising values that already existed.

"We want to use everything Bergslagen has got. You don't need big swimming pools or complexes to attract children. They are just as interested in the forest, walking and paddling. But we noticed that the companies here had difficulty reaching out. By gathering all the information in one place, the resonance gets bigger. With one click you can access all the information," says Anna Magnusson.

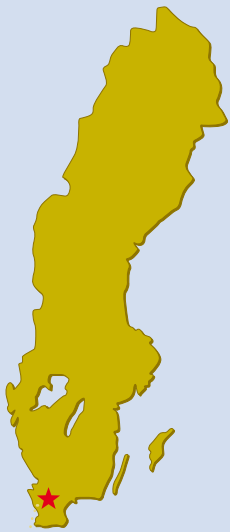
The regional tourism association Tursam was granted leader funds for the project, which was managed by the two girls. Co-financing

was also received from the municipalities in Leader Bergslagen. From the start, the project has helped the tourism companies with product development, packaging and marketing of accommodation or different activities, which has contributed to new ways of thinking.

"One example is a sheep farmer manufacturing cheese, where you can now visit and help feed the sheep, and another company has done a quiz walk for families in a forest," says Anna Magnusson.

So far, no measurement of the increase in the number of tourists and bookings due to the website has been made. The website currently has 100 visitors per day, and markets around 50 companies and associations. All actors with a nature or culture profile aimed at children can participate on the website free of charge. In return, m "motmedeln betalar ingenting, men runda i skogen.a verksamheter. erkontoret. uristmål, medan yngre har utblivit. bara passathey are encouraged to network in order to start a discussion about local tourism. Side effects of this are being noticed in the region.

"Municipal administrations, organisations and projects have started to take note of families with children," says Susann Rickan.



Project name: Förstudie Utvecklingsprojekt Röstånga

Project owner: Röstånga Tillsammans

Contact: Nils Phillips

Contact information:
info@rostangatillsammans.se

Project period: Aug-Dec 2009

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 161,956

A cultural association is just as important as a coach for juniors and a village school, everything contributes to development. The words are those of Nils Phillips, project leader in the Röstånga area in Skåne. A pilot study ahead of a collaborative project about the area's development has been carried out.

Together, Röstånga will be stronger

In the Röstånga area in north-western Skåne, consists of the villages of Röstånga, Ask, Nackarp and Härsnäs among others, the charitable independent umbrella organisation Röstånga Tillsammans (Röstånga Together) was formed in spring 2009. The idea is for the association to initiate, coordinate and develop initiatives that benefit the area.

"In the countryside, you can never take anything for granted, everything is threatened with closure," says the project leader Nils Phillips, and explains that no issue is too big, or too small, to be brought up.

"Our point is that everything contributes to the development of the village, everything hangs together and affects each other. Coaching the juniors in football, preserving the ICA shop, or making sure the school is not closed down, everything is needed," says Nils Phillips.

The words just explode out of him. He is the fiery spirit who can see how initiatives have been started by the people in the area. Last year, the association Röstånga Tillsammans was granted leader funds for a pilot study about how a local collaboration project should be organised. The willingness to cooperate was strong from the start.

Of the 850 inhabitants, around 100 had been engaged in talks and discussions. Five different development groups concentrating on housing, schooling, nature, culture and business have been formed. A joint project leader for all the groups has led to synergy effects and "cross-groups". Plans have been formed and realised, such as a concert event in the station house.

"Last year, Timbuktu played and 300 people came. Half of them had never been to Röstånga before. The day after, many stayed on, walked in the woods and looked around. That is one way of making people find their way to Röstånga," says Nils Phillips.

The plan is to construct own bicycle paths, acquire a collective "culture bus" for excursions and to start a building project for eco villages. The work is now converting into practical actions within a leader project granted SEK 1.7 million during 2010-2011. For a region characterised by depopulation and a lack of jobs, turning round the development is the alpha and omega.

"If we can find a platform for development and a common viewpoint, we can do this ourselves," says Nils Phillips.

NOMINATED FOR THE LEADER OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Jonatan Nilsson

NOMINATED FOR THE LEADER OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Anna Fredriksson

A project that is making the cod return promotes outdoor life, benefits tourism and gives a fillip to business. In the leader project "Utveckling av 8 fjordar vid Orust och Tjörn" (Developing 8 fjords by Orust and Tjörn), there are many natural links between better sea environment and countryside development.

Project name: Utveckling av 8 fjordar

Project owner: Orust, Kungälv, Tjörn, Stenungsund and Uddevalla Municipalities, as well as the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Anglers Association.

Contact: Niclas Åberg

Contact information:
niclas.berg@stenungsund.se

Project period: Jan 2009-Dec 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,390,988

Do you want to find out more?
www.stenungsund.se, click on Miljö, then Miljö och hälsa, then 8 fjordar.



Living fjords bring life to coastal villages

The bathing inlets were beginning to be smothered by algae and fishing deteriorated, which increased the pressure from inhabitants in the municipality to make improvements. This was the beginning of the three year project around the fjords inside Orust and Tjörn.

"It is about measures that can make the sea cleaner and help animal life in the coastal zone, such as constructing nesting sites for sea eagles. This also gives added value to tourism companies," says Niclas Åberg, project leader.

Last year, cod mature enough to spawn was found in Havstensfjorden, which may be a result of the careful fishing that has been at the heart of the project. During spring 2010, new rules were introduced limiting fishing in the fjords, and reserves were also created where no fishing could be done at all, as well as decisions in other areas about using selective fishing tools, such as big-mesh nets. In other areas, the project has led to new fishing business being introduced, leading to positive environmental effects.

"Mussel farms provide environmental gains in themselves, as mussels absorb excess nutrients from the sea. We are also creating new

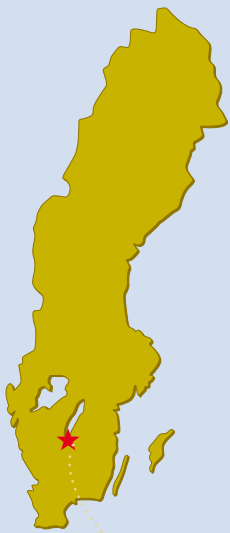
job opportunities in the region," he says.

Once life in the sea has recuperated, innovative experience-based companies are also starting up.

"Langoustine and crab safaris can be found in Marstrand, and activities for seeing migrating sea trout in the Uddevalla area," Niclas Åberg says.

The project is supported by five municipalities: Orust, Tjörn, Stenungsund, Kungälv and Uddevalla, and by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Anglers Association. Financing consists of around SEK 1.4 million in leader funds over three years, plus co-financing from municipalities, organisations and private individuals. The work has been constructive from the start, which according to Niclas Åberg is due to systematic work across municipal borders.

"As we make a knowledge inventory right at the start, we were all on the same platform and could discern important issues. Then we had a steering group and other, smaller working groups for fishing, environment, nature and business, which led us forwards," says Åberg.



Project name: Från idé till företag – Grön omsorg

Project owner: LRF

Contact: Ingrid Whitelock

Contact information:
ingrid@whitelock.se

Project period: Sep 2009-May 2010

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 469,640

Do you want to find out more?
www.lrf.se/garden/omsorg

Looking after rabbits and the kitchen garden are examples of occupations in countryside companies for persons with special needs. Several gains are noticeable in the leader project "Grön omsorg" (Green care), which has started training courses for farmers in order to make them invest in new businesses.

"Now I am looking after others myself"

Ingrid Whitelock, the project leader, noticed that interest and curiosity existed at an early stage among farmers in the area for so-called green care: offering jobs on farms to people with social needs, learning disabilities or functional impairment. The gains were many, both for the individuals and for society, she explains.

"There is a clear win-win situation. This can be a way of developing and gaining new countryside entrepreneurs, often female entrepreneurs, who are often interested in caring work. There is also a great need for daily occupation within the municipal care provision," says Ingrid Whitelock, also an expert within the Federation of Swedish Farmers, LRF, in Jönköping.

The work is a collaborative project between LRF and four leader areas, Västra Småland, Sommenbygd, Mitt i Småland and Astrid Lindgrens Hembygd, who developed a training package after a needs inventory within the 13 municipalities in the county. The leader areas were awarded money from the Rural Development Programme, while LRF co-financed the project and contributed SEK 50,000. After a first training round with eight meetings last autumn, new companies are already on the springboard.

"Thirteen new entrepreneurs are negotiating with the municipalities about entering into agreements. The process may take some time, but many have already started trial operations," says Ingrid Whitelock, and also points out that care operations are surrounded by legislation, which means that the selection of actors is taking its time.

She thinks that the project work has run unusually smoothly, and almost sounds surprised at the actual results achieved in a short time. In the longer term, the project will probably lead to increased entrepreneurship in the countryside at the same time as goodwill is spread to the urban areas around the country. The knowledge about persons with needs is also increasing. She sees the work as "a example of how animals, nature and society can collaborate", where the roles are also reversed.

"I can best summarise this with what one girl said after having been rabbit manager: now I am looking after others myself!" says Whitelock.

NOMINATED FOR THE LEADER OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Jonatan Nilsson

NOMINATED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Leif Björk

The pride in the cultural reservation and the two hundred year old Sami village Gallejaur is tangible in people from Norrbotten. Log cabins, farms and meadows now attract thousands of tourists. An exhibition and information operation has been developed.

Project name: Projekt Gallejaur

Project owner: Gallijar-Järvlia Cultural Area Association

Contact: Leif Björk, Crister Lövgren

Contact information:
gallijar-jarvlia@swipnet.se

Project period: Mar 2009-Mar 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 2,700,500

Do you want to find out more?
www.gallejaur.se



"Gallejaur is the finest thing there is in Norrbotten"

"Using the project funds, we have organised grazing for our sheep and have opened a public operation where people can come and see the old agrarian environment, how people lived and were housed," says Crister Lövgren, one of the project leaders behind the work in Gallejaur village.

It is Gallejaur-Järvlia Cultural Society that is behind the Gallejaur project, and it has been granted SEK 2.7 million plus public co-financing. The funds have been used to build an information centre with a café, which this summer held an exhibition about medical cures from the old days. Guided walks around the village, information material, and a "school bag" with teaching materials for schools have also been developed by the society. Visitor figures shown that they are heading in the right direction.

"This summer we had 4,000 visitors. That can be compared to 1,100 visitors last year," says Crister Lövgren, who together with Leif Björk, the other project leader, has received much appreciation from locals and others.

"This is the finest thing there is in Norrbotten", we hear people say. I believe that the village and the reservation are of incredible

importance to the countryside. Just the fact that we can employ twelve persons each summer for restoration work, guiding, running the café and the visitor centre is important in a sparsely populated area," says Leif Björk.

The little village, whose nextdoor village is Jävträsk, and nearest town Arvidsjaur 60 km away, is undeniably located in an isolated spot in Lappland. But the restoration of the log cabins, the maintenance of pastures and meadows and grazing sheep has given life to the area once more. Leif Björk believes that the village in itself can create an interest in living closer to nature:

"The more people live in cities, the more prestigious it will be to live in the country. We believe that our project may make people want to move away."

In answer to the question whether there are any lessons to take away from the project, Leif Björk answers that public authority rules sometimes are difficult to apply in real life.

"EU rules about animal husbandry were a bit difficult to marry with our 19th century farms. But we are working on solutions," he says laughing.



Project name: Tullstorpsån project

Project owner: Tullstorpsån Cooperative Association

Contact: Johnny Carlsson

Contact information:
johnny.carlsson@trelleborg.se

Project period: Feb 2009 - Dec 2013

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 600,000 in leader funds and SEK 3.4 million to the landowners.

Do you want to find out more?
www.tulltorpsan.se

In five years' time, cleaner water will be flowing from Tullstorpsån into the Baltic sea. The target has been set by around 90 landowners, who are collaborating in the restoration of an entire watercourse. A show stretch has been built for visitors, who can enjoy new wetlands, bird life and spawning sea trout.

Farmers save the Baltic Sea

Farming around Tullstorpsån on Söderslätt has led to over-fertilisation of the watercourse and the sea. In summer, the problem became obvious, with reddish-brown smelly algae accumulations along the sandy beaches.

"With the Tullstorpsån project, we want to reduce the nutrient supply to the sea, and achieve a good ecological status, but also to correct the flooding problems and to make the care of the river easier. We also want to increase biological diversity in the area," says Johnny Carlsson, project leader.

An area of great natural beauty is being recreated around the 30 km river, with a sinuous course, flatter inclines, leafy trees and fresher water.

"Lots is happening in the area. Insects are coming back, more bird species can be seen, and the sea trout is spawning in the sixteen new spawning locations we have created along the show stretch," says Johnny Carlsson.

An amount totalling several million kronor from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has laid the foundation for the environmental work. With help from the County Administrative Board, last year a two kilometre long show stretch open to the public was

also built, where leader funds have financed display boards, brochures and a website. On the website, all the reports, information and results can be disseminated to others.

"We have had many visitors find their way here during the year," says Johnny Carlsson, who also receives many study visits from public authorities, universities and schools.

This year, Tullstorpsån has also received leader funds for landscaping, which means that 5,000 trees and shrubs have been planted to date. A further SEK 3.4 million, received from the Rural Development Programme as environmental investment support direct to the landowners, has helped to create 13 wetlands. The goal is to have 50 built wetlands - and a completely restored river.

So what can others learn from the working methods for the project? The project leader thinks that the bottom-up perspective is an important method.

"No pointers come from above. The landowners plan, manage and carries out the work themselves. The fact that so many landowners take part in the work is also important for the unified approach to the whole catchment basin," says Johnny Carlsson.

NOMINATED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Johnny Carlsson

NOMINATED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Linus Höök

The milk packaging shows happy cows and illustrations from the farms. The trademark for the milk companies within Sju Gårdar (Seven Farms) breathes security, recognition and local production. An increasing number of Upplanders are buying the milk, which is organic farming and climate labelled.

Project name: Sju Gårdar
Project owner: Sju Gårdar Cooperative Association
Contact: Henrik Johansson
Contact information: info@sjugardar.se, henrik.ostana(at)telia.com
Project period: Feb 2009-Mar 2011
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,5 million
Do you want to find out more? www.sjugardar.se



Climate-friendly milk in the right format sells in shops

The milk producers from the seven farms Kvangården, Roteberg, Almunge, Östanå, Bärby, Grånome and Stabby in Uppland noticed that there was increasing demand for ecological milk products. At the same time, they wanted to get closer to the consumers.

"We wanted to bring over as much as possible into the chain between farm and shop, and to keep it close to us geographically. The reason it was us who started on the seven farms was because we knew each other," says Henrik Johansson, chairman of the cooperative association Sju Gårdar.

In February 2009, the farmers launched milk products under their own trademark following a lot of preparation. The basic idea of the operation Sju Gårdar is based on production on the farms having as small an effect on the environment as possible, through measures such as a high proportion of own-produced feed, no chemical pesticides or herbicides and no artificial fertilisers. Since June 2010, the KRAV-labelled milk has been climate certified in accordance with Svenskt Sigill's regulatory framework.

"We are the first in Sweden to have this labelling, and we are so

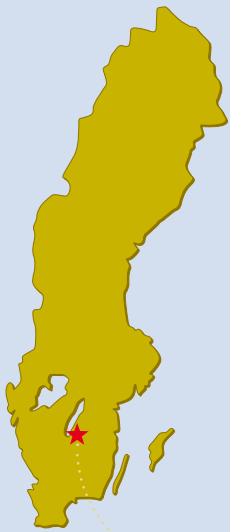
pleased to have succeeded. To become climate certified, you have to do things like work on energy efficiency, use green electricity and get training for economical driving, so-called eco-driving," says Henrik Johansson.

The milk from the farms is taken care of and packaged at the dairy Gefleortens Mejeriförening in Gävle, and then distribution throughout the region.

"We want the have the shortest possible route between farm, dairy and consumers," says Henrik Johansson.

After just over a year's hard work, the farms are noticing increased profitability. Sales of the locally produced eco milk are ever increasing in shops. Henrik Johansson believes that the clear added values, origin and identity have been crucial, and that they are the result of careful profiling work. Funds from the Rural Development Programme made this possible.

"We developed a trademark profile and a concept for our milk with the help of the money. The packaging markets each farm, there is a clear sender for our products," says Henrik Johansson.



Project name: Sparsam körning
Project owner: LRF Konsult, Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies and Swedish Machine Circles.
Contact: Sören Dahl
Contact information:
soren.dahl@konsult.lrf.se
Project period: Dec 2008 - Dec 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 229,060
Do you want to find out more?
www.lrf.se/Energi/Sparsa-energi

10-15 percent of fuel can be saved through so-called economical driving of tractors, combines and other vehicles. Both the environment and wallets benefit from a better style of driving. A training package for instructions has been developed in a project in Jönköping County.

Smart style of driving spares the environment

"When you are carrying a heavy load on the tractor, you need high air pressure in the tyres, while if you are driving on a slippery and soft field, you need lightly pumped tyres," says Sören Dahl, project leader for Sparsam Körning (Economical driving) and energy adviser at LRF Konsult in Nässjö.

He also tells us how correct wheel alignment, maintenance of engines, oil changes, choice of tyres and driving planning can make farmers save fuel, achieve better profitability - and spare the environment.

"When driving a front loader, you can for example remember to drive with even engine revolutions, use the correct gear and the right bucket angle," continues Sören Dahl.

Economical driving, or eco-driving, which is a similar concept, is quite simply a natural way of saving resources. Four trial training courses with a total of 30 participants have been carried out within the project. He has also run one instructor course with ten participants from all over Sweden, who are qualified to use the material and

run training courses of their own. The plan is now for LRF to market courses to farmers on the basis of the course design worked out. The knowledge is needed, considers Sören Dahl:

"Knowledge about how to drive is of enormous importance for the environment and for wallets. Economical driving rarely takes extra time, but on the other hand you save money.

As a consultant at LRF, he applied for funds together with the organisations Swedish Machine Circles and the Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies. The three organisations were co-financiers and contributed with time and money.

For LRF Konsult, the goal of the training is for agriculture to reduce emissions by 10-15 percent over 15 years. Sören Dahl knows that farmers can easily make savings by switching to other forms of fuel or reduce diesel consumption by driving better.

"Agriculture in Sweden could easily save SEK 600-700 million per year," says Sören Dahl.

NOMINATED FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Sören Dahl

NOMINATED FOR THE INTEGRATION EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Luis Fagundez

Refugees from Burma are growing vegetables, making cheese and baking flatbread at a farm outside Sandviken. The skills of persons born abroad is utilised in the training project "Landsbygd och integration via traditionellt lantbruk" (Countryside and integration through traditional farming). The work also gives a fillip to the countryside.

Project name: Landsbygdsutveckling och integration via traditionellt jordbruk
Project owner: ViboL Cooperative Association
Contact: Luis Fagundez
Contact information: landsbygd.integra@gmail.com
Project period: Oct 2009-Oct 2010
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,278,000



Knowledge among refugees utilised in traditional farming

"It is all about utilising resources among people born abroad who come here. Identifying, drawing out and developing their own skills through traditional farming, so that they can become self-supporting. Many refugees also arrive straight from the countryside in the home countries when they come to Sweden," says Luis Fagundez, project leader and agronomist.

The deeper meaning of the project "Landsbygd och integration via traditionellt jordbruk" is in fact that people born abroad can utilise their knowledge and earn money from farming and food production. The project owner is the cooperative association ViboL Ekonomiska Förening, which received support from the Rural Development Programme and co-financing with funds from the regional development fund. Luis Fagundez has worked full-time on the project together with the course instructor Anna-Karin Modin, who has assisted with her own land in the village of Moms. But it is the 16 refugees from Burma who have been the focus.

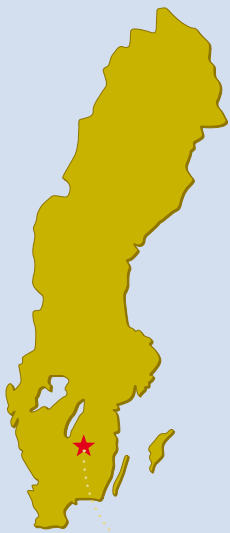
"All come from a refugee camp in Thailand. They are persons in political exile, Karen people, who really do not want to be called Burmese," says Luis Fagundez.

What may seem like an enormous clash of culture in the middle of a Swedish depopulation area has, in fact, been a relatively successful integration, where one part of the work has been familiarisation with vegetables and crops, and another learning how to produce cheese and bake flatbread. Knowledge has also grown about how to live from the new skills. But as yet Luis Fagundez is not seeing any new entrepreneurs. It is too early.

"Those who have skills in, weaving carpets or growing plants for instance may perhaps continue with this in company form. The project aims to produce such gains later on. We are seeing many who have grown," says Fagundez.

An insight in the project is that the people come from simple environments. Many have lived in camps, and have lost their initiative and routines. Many still have poor language skills, even after several years.

"Perhaps we should have worked more with each individual," says Fagundez.



Project name: Qibbla Halal AB
Project owner: Qibbla Halal AB
Contact: Diler Mustafa Taher
Contact information:
qibbla@qibblahalal.se
Project period: May-Dec 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 480,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.qibblahalal.se

The charcuterie company Qibbla Halal saw mostly advantages of moving the production to a small village. In Stockaryd, there were cheap premises, reliable employees and security for the staff. Today, modern halal products, such as spicy meatballs and nuggets, are produced on an assembly line.

Halal food made the depopulating village grow

The demand for halal meat increased to the extent that Qibbla Halal last year decided to move production from Johanneshov in Stockholm to Stockaryd in Småland. The company invested in an already extant charcuterie facility, where top modern equipment was installed, among them a frying line. The company also invested in a special fryer and steamer, after being granted support from the Rural Development Programme. The factory today produces chicken nuggets, shish kebab and falafel, but also more traditional meatballs and burgers.

"I think we are enriching Swedish food culture. We use flavours from the Turkish, Arabic and Persian cuisines in well-known products," says Diler Mustafa Taher.

In addition to semi-finished products, the company also produces charcuterie products in new ways, such as Turkish sausages, unusual spicy mortadella and smoked product based on flavours from the Balkans. In addition, there is butchered meat from beef, lamb and chicken for sale. The foundation for the food production is halal meat slaughtered according to strict Muslim rules.

"We simply combine the industrial requirements and food safety regulations with halal products. We are the only company in Europe with a broad product range," says Diler Mustafa Taher.

He points out that the number of Muslims is increasing in Sweden, and therefore also the demand for these products. Sales have risen sharply in supermarket chains such as Axfood, ICA and Coop. During 2008/2009, turnover was SEK 142 million, and it is expected to increase by one third this year.

"We have great opportunities to start exporting our products to Muslim countries in the Middle East," says Diler Mustafa Taher.

Today, there are 23 employees in Johanneshov, and in Stockaryd there are eight employees, which need to increase to 14 during 2011. Choosing the small Småland village was a wise decision in many ways.

"In big cities, premises are so much more expensive. The employees also feel more loyal in the countryside, calmer and more stable. It is also a more secure place to live."

NOMINATED FOR THE INTEGRATION EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Sören Dahl

NOMINATED FOR THE INTEGRATION EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Lars-Göran Nybränn

The garden furniture company Grythyttans Möbler is well-known to many. But they do not know that just a little distance away, there is a company, LGN Allack, which lacquers all wooden parts of the furniture. Business is booming, and new employees are being recruited after a couple of successful investments.

Project name: LGN Allack HB
Project owner: LGN Allack HB
Contact: Lars-Göran Nybränn
Contact information: tel 0587-72034
Project period: Jan 2008-Nov 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 140,550



Paint workshop expanded and employed immigrants

In the middle of nowhere, along a twisting private road through the dense spruce forest in the village of Älvhyttan outside Karlskoga, lies LGN Allack. The core of the business is paint work for Grythyttan's garden furniture. The company, which is run in limited partnership form, last year received company support from the Rural Development Programme in order to grow.

"We built a new heating plant, a wood chip boiler, in a separate house in order to get better heating that was sufficient for our needs. We also built a new hall and workshop for our stores and another one for production. The new premises have a new machine for oil impregnation and lacquering," says Lars-Göran Nybränn, owner of LGN Allack.

When the work orders from Grythyttans Möbler grew in number, he realised that the company needed to apply for financial grants. Even if most of the building work has been done inhouse, in order to keep down costs, he would not have been able to expand without these extra funds. Soon, more employees were needed as well.

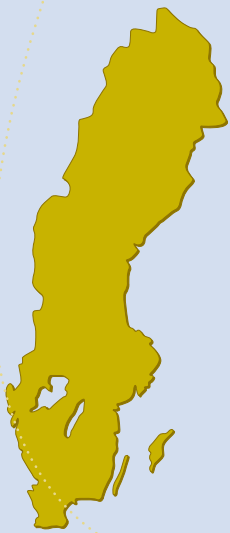
"Last year I employed two guys from Lithuania, who moved to the area with their families. Another guy from Lithuania has had summer work with me. A further four men have been working for the company since 1992," says Lars-Göran Nybränn, who has recruited another woman for the workshop, starting from next week.

He is satisfied with all the contacts with the County Administrative Board during the course of the project.

"A great bow to them. This is the first time I have received such good help from the authorities," says Lars-Göran Nybränn.

The school in the village of Älvhyttan was closed a few years ago, which was a great loss. But the village has received a new start thanks to the immigrant families that have arrived. Hopeful feelings can be found among the new "pioneers". Lars-Göran Nybränn is helping the villagers in his own way.

"If anyone breaks anything, I help them to repair it in the workshop. I have also made sure my employees have received training in Swedish for immigrants, and are in contact with the authorities."



Project name: Cash, kollo och kompisar

Project owner: MIKLO and the Swedish Board of Agriculture

Contact: Maria Peterson

Contact information:
maria.peterson@jordbruksverket.se

Project period: Sep 2009-Aug 2010

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 280,000

Do you want to find out more?
www.jordbruksverket.se (click on "Möjligheter på landsbygden" and then "Företagare med utländsk bakgrund")

Of course you can make young people from 1970s suburbs understand that there is life outside the city. The project "Cash, kollo och kompisar" (Cash, camps and friends) wants to "hype" the rural areas through TV programmes, business concept competitions and a new portal for company contacts and summer jobs.

Wanted: Suburban entrepreneurs for the rural areas

The rural areas suffers from depopulation, although it offers both freedom and security to new arrivals. The opportunities are great for young suburban entrepreneurs from areas such as Rosengård in Malmö, Angered in Göteborg and Nacksta in Sundsvall who can contribute with new creative ideas and business concepts in the rural areas. The project "Cash, kollo och kompisar", led by the organisation MIKLO and the Swedish Board of Agriculture, has been in progress since autumn 2009 together with young people from the 1970s suburbs and people living in the countryside. Meetings, workshops and focus groups have been held in order to discover new "cross fertilisations" between cities and the countryside.

Maria Peterson, from the Business Team at the Board of Agriculture, thinks that it has been exciting to set two different worlds, suburbs and rural areas, against each other. And there are also some similarities between them.

"Both parties often mention that they are alienated, that they do not get access to society or can joint in." Yet the number of people living in the countryside forms the majority in Sweden.

The project ended with a big meeting with organisations, public authorities and companies on 23 August this year in the suburb Vårby gård in Stockholm.

"We wanted to tie together what we had worked out, and find ideas to take the work onwards. We mixed young people from different areas with youth organisations such as Vi Unga, Ung Företagsamhet, but also with county administrative boards and municipalities. We developed several concrete proposals in various discussion groups," says Maria Peterson.

One idea that emerged during the meeting was to start a portal on the Internet, where rural entrepreneurs who had no successors could sign up. A company agency, but aimed at the countryside.

"Other ideas were a TV programme with the working title "The blackie wants a farmer", business concept competitions where suburbanites solve countryside challenges, and summer jobs for suburbanites in the countryside," says Carlos Rojas, Project Leader at MIKLO, who is seeing 40 persons being busy with launching the changes proposed.

NOMINATED FOR THE INTEGRATION EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Lili Ha

NOMINATED FOR THE GENDER EQUALITY EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Marie Lekare

Learn to tie up at a jetty and manoeuvre a sailing boat. The boat club Smedjebackens Båtklubb has been holding training course for women to encourage them to enjoy life on the waves more, and to gain greater confidence on water. After the leader project, several of the 40 participating women have become much more self-confident.

Project name: Kvinnor ombord
Project owner: Smedjebackens båtklubb
Contact: Marie Lekare
Contact information:
marie.lekare@dalnet.se
Project period pilot study: May-Dec 2009
Project period: Nov 2009-Oct 2010
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 50,000 and SEK 192,360
Do you want to find out more?
www.smedjebackensbatklubb.se



Women can now sail their own boats

"Our ambition is to create a boating environment where women and men take part on equal terms," says Marie Lekare, who led the project Kvinnor Ombord (Women onboard) for Smedjebackens Båtklubb.

She was herself an experienced sailor and had grown up with the family's steel gig. But she noticed that as a woman, she was astonishingly alone in this occupation.

"Smedjebacken is after all one of Sweden's largest inland harbours, with more than 400 berthing places, but however much I thought about it, I could only think of about five women who could manoeuvre their own boat without problem. I thought it was odd that so many women refrained from something that I valued so highly myself. Did we not want to, or did we not believe we could do it?" wondered Marie Lekare, who soon established that a project was needed.

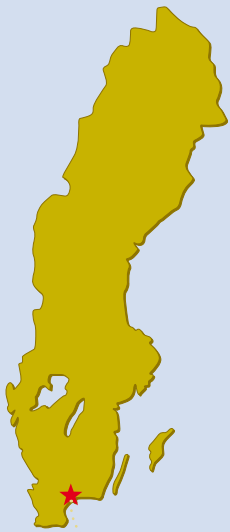
Leader Bergslagen granted funds to Smedjebackens Båtklubb for a pilot study to find out why women did not sail boats more. The survey responses from 210 women pointed to three main reasons:

firstly, they felt men were so much better at handling boats, and they also felt themselves to be unsure and lazy.

"My goal was not a feminist project; instead, my focus was on increased quality of life for women, which in this form affects both safety at sea and gender equality in a positive direction," says Marie Lekare.

The survey then formed the basis for a training project during 2010, also supported by the Rural Development Programme, where Smedjebackens Båtklubb collaborated with several local organisations. Lectures were held for women about bravery/motivation and basic knowledge about navigation and manoeuvring, followed by study circles for skipper qualification, splicing ropes, tying mooring knots and practical manoeuvring. The result noticed forcefully by Marie Lekare is increased quality of life, and primarily for the women who have taken part in practical manoeuvring.

"There are so many more who can enjoy life at sea now. I know one woman, Ami, who says: 'Now I can take the kids out in the boat myself, and do not have to wait for Lasse to come home!'"



Project name: Queenia
Project owner: Queenia Local Resource Centre
Contact: Sylvia Persson
Contact information:
sylvia@goingenaringsliv.nu
Project period: Jan-Nov 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 81,729
Do you want to find out more?
www.queenias.se

Of course women can. But women entrepreneurs sometimes need to develop their skills. This was the view of the network Queenia, which started a leadership course for women in Östra Göinge in north-eastern Skåne.

Queenia made women brave the challenge

Two courses for 22 women was the result of the project initiative. The effects for the participants involved were even greater: the women have gained in self-confidence, have become more professional and directing in their companies. The operations manager Sylvia Persson talks with empathy about those she has met, in particular one woman.

"For example, there was an unemployed woman, and with the help of Queenia, she started the meat company Nedanbäck's Gårdsprodukter, with butchered meat and ready-cooked products. The company has grown fast, and her husband has actually had to leave his job in order to start working for the company," says Sylvia Persson, whose network in part of the cooperative association Göinge Näringsliv.

The result can be seen in an increased number of new start-ups or new employment, but the women present their operations in another way today. Before, some did not even know what a business card was, yet today many have websites and lecture about their businesses.

"We have quite clearly made more women regard themselves as entrepreneurs, and they have improved their businesses. Before, we had many hidden entrepreneurs. Women could say that they worked a bit

for their husbands, while in actual fact they ran the entire company," says Sylvia Persson.

The training for the women took place during three full days and two half days, with Camilla Dahlström as project leader. Some of the women also received more targeted training within the group's retail, service and tourism companies. The funds from the Rural Development Programme contributed to a solid course plan, invited lecturers and subsidised fees

Sylvia Persson has undoubtedly become a character in Östra Göinge, which has 13,000 inhabitants. As an adviser at the municipality's business liaison office, she has much knowledge about the companies run by women within the municipality, which she has used constructively in the work with Queenia. Help with marketing, access to other networks, seminars, exhibitions and fairs are strategic ways of helping the women in the municipality. 140 companies are today members of the network.

"Several have said that it is the best thing to happen in the municipality in recent years."



Photo: Sören Dahl

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Photo: Lotta Fabricius

Woman and beekeeper. Traditionally, these two concepts in combination have not been that self-evident in the Swedish National Association of Beekeepers, SBR. For this reason, a project was started to fulfil the needs of women beekeepers through courses and meetings.

Project name: SBR:s Kvinnliga Nätverk

Project owner: National Association of Beekeepers, SBR

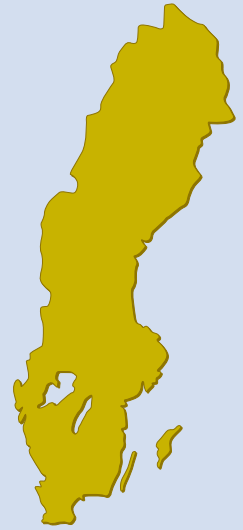
Contact: Lotta Fabricius

Contact information:
lotta.fabricius.sbr@biodlarna.org

Project period: Apr 2007 - Dec 2009

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 300,000

Do you want to find out more?
www.biodlarne.se/sbrquinnor



Women beekeepers strengthened through regional meetings

A clear wave of new beekeepers is noticeable in the country, and shows in SBR's list of members. Of the new beekeepers added in recent years, 40 percent are women, which means that the proportion of women in the membership has increased to 23 percent of the 10,000 members in total.

"There are quite a few women in the organisation, but they cannot always be seen. Beekeepers are few and far between, and even more so among women beekeepers within the organisation, so we wanted to strengthen their position in particular," says Lotta Fabricius, one of the project leaders and an administrator within the female network and SBR Quinnor, the women's section.

This contact network has now been in place for seven years, for exchanging information and increasing skills. The latter in particular needed greater emphasis. The network, with Lotta Fabricius at the helm, was granted funds from the Rural Development Programme in 2007 in order to stimulate training initiatives in the regional networks around the country. Co-financing was also granted from SBR. The background for the project was clear.

"Women have a slightly different attitude to beekeeping than men; they might regard it as an environmental initiative, or as an opportunity to earn an income from part-time work. Several women start beekeeping with a view to making a living from it," says Lotta Fabricius.

Since the project start, an annual training meeting for women has been held. There are now also more activities in the regional networks aimed at women; for instance, Skåne District has held meetings about bee diseases, ergonomics and a visit to a bee wax factory. Special "contact women" have also been appointed in the districts, and one of them is Ingrid Hallberg in Skåne.

"Meetings with only women are good, as the discussion is quite different. Women talk in women's ways," says Ingrid Hallberg.

The effect of the project is difficult to predict, thinks Lotta Fabricius, as she considers the image of beekeepers has changed around the country.

"I know that many women come into beekeeping after they have been in contact with one of the contact women."



Project name: Hästlyftet – Kompetenscentrum Gävleborg

Project owner: Gävleborg County Administrative Board

Contact: Mariana Femling

Contact information:
mariana.femling@lansstyrelsen.se

Project period: Feb 2009-Mar 2011

Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,156,000

Do you want to find out more?
www.hastlyftet.eu

More than 800 participants have increased their skills in business finance and law through the project Hästlyftet. The aim is to put the spotlight on horse-based business, which turns over one billion kronor, just in Gävleborg County. The next step is a permanent skills centre.

The horse sector is improved through training courses

Mariana Femling, project leader, considers that horse-based business is an important growth factor, of great importance to the social and financial development of society, in particular the countryside. The project has been given support by the Rural Development Programme and is owned by Gävleborg County Administrative Board, which is also a co-financier. The project has been designed to direct courses at persons within the horse industry, horse owners, entrepreneurs and future exponents.

"Since the project start, we have held 32 courses; everything from evening classes to two day courses, with more than 800 participants. The focus has been primarily on company development, such as business development, marketing, finance, tax regulations and horse-related legislation. But animal welfare is also an important part of what we are working with," says Mariana Femling, project leader from the County Administrative Board in Gävleborg.

She thinks it is difficult to analyse the results for only one year.

"I can see that people are making contacts to a greater extent, and that they are becoming more knowledgeable," says Femling, who can see more obvious effects during the eight years the work has been in progress, with project support from various donors.

One result is the bridleway Ridled Hälsingland, which is a network of around 20 horse enterprises who are basing their operations around the way, among them the company Tur o Ton, which offers trips in a horse and cart accompanied by music.

But the Hästlyftet project wants to reach further. The goal is to create the prerequisites for a skills centre for horse-related issues in the county. Mariana Femling, who is now a lobbyist, considers that the work needs an independent principal and long-term financing.

"Region Gävleborg or the County Administrative Board may be one option."

The fact that the horse sector is important and must be revalued in business is shown by statistics from several sources according to Femling. Just in Gävleborg, the sector turns over one billion krona each year.

"Good prerequisites for horse-based businesses are important for the county's powers of attraction, and for getting people, and in particular women, to stay, to move back and to move here," says Femling.

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Photo: Claes Larsson

NOMINATED FOR THE YOUTH EFFORT OFF THE YEAR



Photo: Anna Andersson

Sweeping moors with grazing lambs spread out by the reefs in Jonstorp. Here in Kullabygden in north-west Skåne, a sheep farmer has been building up his dream over several years. Otto Ramsay produces much-demanded lamb that he sells through his farm shop.

Project name: Kulla Lamm
Project owner: Otto Ramsay, Kulla Lamm
Contact: Otto Ramsay
Contact information:
otto.ramsay@kullalamm.se, info@kullalamm.se
Time of payment of start-up grant:
autumn 2009
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 200,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.kullalamm.se



Sheep farm in Kullabygden invested in a farm shop

"So far, we are not slaughtering ourselves, but we sell all of our jointed lamb meat in our farm shop," says 27 year old Otto Ramsay. He was grateful to receive SEK 200,000 as start-up support from the Rural Development Programme last year, in order to rebuild the old stables into a modern farm shop. The customers have more-or-less been banging on the door since the first day he opened in autumn 2009.

"There is enormous demand from private customers and restaurants around us, and we are working continuously to follow up the growing interest in locally produced lamb. It is fun for us that people are appreciating our lamb," says Otto Ramsay.

He took over his parents' farm only two years ago, but he is not running it completely alone. At his side is his girlfriend, Anna Andersson, who is a graphic designer and therefore could help with the marketing, and also in the shop.

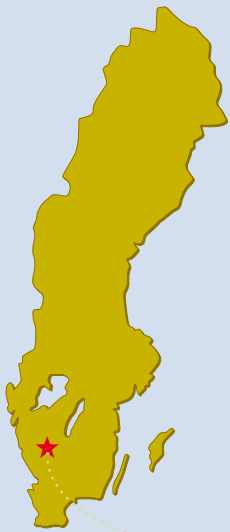
"My parents are also helping with the farm, particularly with lambing," says Otto Ramsay, who previously worked as green keeper at a nearby golf course, but chose to concentrate on the farm.

The grazing land today holds 220 ewes and their lambs, and they will next year be increased to around 300 ewes. The decision to increase the stock was necessary, in order to fill the demand from customers.

"The challenge is to retain the small scale quality and control, but at the same time produce a sufficient volume. It is about maintaining the good animal husbandry, good feed and care for the animals," says Otto Ramsay.

Currently, all the lambs are slaughtered in Munka-Ljungby, and the meat then brought back for butchery and sale in the shop. Apart from supply good, locally produced meat, Otto Ramsay also wants to give the customers an insight into the farming operation.

"I hope we can give a positive picture of Swedish farming. We farmers are too bad at marketing ourselves and each other. A living countryside with a strong belief in the future is something we can give back to the area and to those visiting us," he says.



Project name: Sixten
Project owner: Leader Sjuhärad
Contact: Marcus Mellqvist
Contact information:
marcus(@)leadersjuharad.se
Project period: Oct 2008–Oct 2011
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 2,026,700
Do you want to find out more?
www.sixten.info

Young people have many ideas, but few listen to them. The leader project Sixten in Sjuhäradsbygden realised the problem and took it into its own hands. For two years, young people carrying out projects receive cheques. Jesting and clay pigeon shooting are some examples.

Sixten sees committed and proud young people

"Sixten is a project for young people. In this way, they can develop their own countryside."

These words from the project leader Marcus Mellqvist shows a unique attitude to young people. In the same way, it gives a clear failure mark to a society of adults who have rarely dared to believe in the next generation. This was the background for the creation of the umbrella project Sixten 2008 within Leader Sjuhärad with earmarked funds for young people from the Rural Development Programme. "Youth cheques" are then given out to projects.

"Young people can apply for cheques of up to SEK 20,000, in order to realise different ideas. Then we help them to plan them and carry them out," says Marcus Mellqvist.

Eight young persons, one from each municipality in the region, are part of the deciding group that assesses the applications according to the applicable framework.

"I am only an advisor about the rules," continues Mellqvist, who is working full-time on the project.

After two years, eleven cheques have been granted to projects. Street theatre, geo-caching (treasure hunt with GPS in the forest), table tennis, clay pigeon shooting and boxercise are some examples

in progress. The results are noticeable, mainly in the minds of the young people.

"We are seeing a lot of personal development in the young people. Before, they did not believe in themselves, today, they are lecturing about their projects. But we also have examples such as one guy who ran an earlier jesting project, who then started to work within the culture academics", says Marcus Mellqvist, who is a qualified theatre teacher.

The point of the projects is to make young people feel at home in their depopulating areas, to develop their ideas and themselves. This may make some of them stay, or come back after finishing their training.

"I am really keen to make people listen to young people, so that they can continue living here. Sixten is a really important tool, which can also be used for other youth activities. Young people who are supported and have the chance to commit themselves probably do not end up as easily in drug abuse or criminality. Give young people the opportunity to take responsibility and to carry something out - and you have the foundation for proud and committed adults."

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Photo: Marcus Mellqvist

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Photo: Jürgen Heeger

24-year-old Anna Heeger received support for her company from the Countryside Programme. As a young entrepreneur and garden engineer, she and her sister succeeded in turning the market garden Katrineberg Handelsträdgård into a flourishing business.

Project name: Katrinebergs Handelsträdgård AB
Project owner: Katrinebergs Handelsträdgård AB
Contact: Anna Heeger
Contact information:
katrineberg@yahoo.se
Project period: 2007
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 250,000
Do you want to find out more?
www.katrinebergs.se



Young woman's company got support to grow

The family company, which is located five kilometres outside Frövi, had been run since 1963 by her parents. Three years ago, it was taken over by two of their daughters. Anna Heeger can clearly remember how, as a young girl, she was absolutely determined not to become a market gardener, after having seen how many hours of overtime mum and dad worked. This feeling changed as she grew older.

"I trained as a garden engineer at Alnarp Agricultural College, and then wanted to continue running the garden," says Anna Heeger, who owns and runs it together with her sister Laila.

Just now, at the start of September, it is the quiet season. The only thing grown is ivy, which is sold in gross to retailers. The season with summer flowers in pots, in hanging baskets and as standards, ended as usual in June, and resulted in yet another increase in sales. Turnover is increasing for the company.

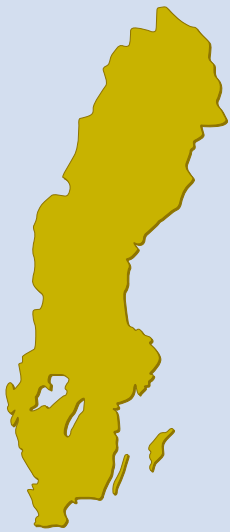
"We have a growing number of customers, here in the Örebro area. We are an old-fashioned type of garden, with a genuine environment and high quality, which many of the customers appreciate. They can also walk around the greenhouse and see the plants growing," says Anna Heeger.

The competitors in the area specialise in other things. Plantmarknaden in Lindsberg has mostly perennials, and Plantagen in Örebro concentrate more on price and the large scale. But Katrineberg Handelsträdgård also sells flowers to cemeteries. The broad range of customers, consisting of home sales and wholesale customers, is one of the reasons for the success.

"We create personal customer relationships. We have also tried to market ourselves more, and have started a website, for instance," says Anna Heeger.

The start-up support of SEK 250,000 from the Rural Development Programme was granted to her and the company in summer 2007. That was also when the girls took over the company, which in principle started from "zero", with a small amount of cash in hand. Nor did they have time for any summer sales that year. Having the extra money in the bank from the Countryside Programme was a great help.

"I no longer had to charge the company for my wages. The money has been a real help," says Anna Heeger.



Project name: Naturbrukselever landsbygdsutvecklar
Project owner: Association of Agricultural Schools
Contact: Maria Elinder
Contact information: maria.elinder@naturbruk.se
Project period: Aug 2008-Jan 2011
Funds from the Rural Development Programme: SEK 1,500,000
Do you want to find out more? www.naturbruk.se

Entrepreneurial agricultural students can give new life to the countryside. This is the thought behind the project "Naturbrukselever landsbygdsutvecklar" (Agricultural students develop the countryside), where students at these upper secondary schools are stimulated to be even more focused on entrepreneurship.

Agricultural students give a lift to the countryside

Sweden's agricultural schools currently teach 3,300 students per school year on courses that already have fifteen weeks' workplace experience during periods of practical work. By further strengthening the young people's knowledge about entrepreneurship, they will become even better at realising their dreams within their own businesses. With funds from the Rural Development Programme and co-financing from the Association of Agricultural Schools, the current project could be started two years ago. Maria Elinder, agronomist, has run the project from the Association, whose steering group put together competence-enhancing activities into five different strategic parts.

"The first part is about stimulating students and teachers and giving them knowledge about entrepreneurship," says Elinder.

The second part is aimed specifically at third year students, to provide particular support for them to become entrepreneurs, with lessons in business economics, marketing and other business subjects. The third part of the project was to gather together teachers and instructors regionally at the Agricultural University in Alnarp, Uppsala and

Umeå for a three-day conference about entrepreneurship.

"In week 44 in 2008, we held a giant event with three parallel conferences for 1,100 agriculture teachers," says Maria Elinder.

The last two parts relate to young people with foreign backgrounds, and also entrepreneurial girls within the area of animal husbandry. The work with young people born abroad aims to interact with other integration projects, such as "Cash, kollo och kompisar" (Cash, camps and friends), which is aimed at young people from the suburbs. Initiatives aimed at girls are about getting companies started within the pet sector, for instance dogs.

The project leader has not yet been able to measure the result in the form of new entrepreneurs among leavers, but she is seeing how their competence is growing.

What advice can she give to other similar projects?

"It was clear that a new process started with every year group at the schools, and if any teacher left it became vulnerable. And it is important to anchor the work among school leaders, in which we have succeeded well," says Elinder.

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Photo: Bengt Jonsson

...last, but not least



Tips and good advice from this year's initiatives

- Realise your dream and your project, but be prepared to invest time and effort into the work.
- Write a project plan that can be used by yourself - not for outside authorities. A check list is a good idea for project work.
- Think bottom-up. A smart and important approach to make people cooperation. It provides more inclusiveness.
- Continually anchor the project, e.g. between the steering group and parties involved, so that everybody is pulling in the same direction.
- Use all the local knowledge you can find, business secretaries, association members, companies and other experts in your own region.
- Find a sensible balance between words and actions. For instance, administration must not be so heavy that "activities" do not take place.
- Too many actors can also contribute to the work being administratively heavy, for instance if everybody is documenting in project diaries. Minimise and work efficiently.
- If a large number of actors are cooperating - make sure you prepare ahead and tell people about every step in the project. Inform to achieve transparency, openness and support.
- Market and inform about the project via a website, in different media, advertisements and on the net.
- Do write a communication plan if the project is aimed strongly outwards. For instance, always contact the press and news ahead of any activities.
- Do document the project process, both in writing and in photographs.
- Lobby already during the project period for the continued existence of the work. Try to create resource persons, such as in municipal administrations, who can take over functions/work.

Factors for success

- Good strategy and careful planning.
- Commitment and drivers.
- Good resource persons linked to the project, such as lecturers, construction staff and other executors.
- The need directs demand. This applies also to projects aimed at reaching a target group. Listen to target groups and their needs before the project is planned.
- Surveys and minor market analysis can be successful, e.g. before training activities.
- Strategic contacts for collaboration with municipalities, county councils or organisations to provide help and support in the work.
- Work across borders, e.g. between municipalities or between municipalities and organisations. Broad collaboration facilitates region-wide solutions that favour e.g. environmental and business issues.



