



NRN Success Stories – Cooperation Examples from Sweden

Linking stakeholders with networking

There are some 110 members in the Swedish Rural Network, authorities and organizations involved in rural development at national level and furthermore also the 63 LAGs. It is not a homogenous group. Some organizations are big and some are representing a very small group of rural actors. Some of them have not cooperated or even met before.

The organization Coompanion is working to support new businesses especially in the social economy sector. They provide advice on how to start firms in a cooperative way. The Swedish mapping, cadastral and land registration authority (Lantmäteriet) is another network member responsible for the legal advice and approval of real estates.

Representatives from the two network members met at a network event and realized that they had complementary competences. They have together produced a guide line with pros and cons of different owner models for village groups with plans to invest in community owned windmills.

- They say that without the rural network they had never started cooperating or not even learned to know each other.

Linking LAGs with folk music

One day a LAG (Hälsingebygden) called asking for help to identify LAGs in Finland interested in cooperating on the theme of folk music and especially training in folk music. Through contacts created in the NRN-meetings and the regional Nordic Baltic Rural Network meetings it was easy to pick up the phone and call Hans Bergström at the Finnish Rural Network Support Unit. He showed to have been working with folk music for several years. He immediately gave the contact details to a LAG with folk music projects.

- Half an hour later the Swedish group had the contact details and the following week representatives from the Swedish group visited the Finnish LAG and they started a cooperation project.

Linking LAGs with forestry

A summer day in 2009 an Englishman, Mr Murray, member of the Northumberland Upland LAG (NULAG), called and asked for contacts with a Swedish LAG with competence in bio-energy based on wood. He happened to be visiting Sweden and asked if he could come to the rural network office. Mr Murray was persistent and eager to meet with the network and when I told him that I was not working from the office but mostly from a city some 200 km north of the office he said that he was going to visit a relative in that city. Unfortunately I was in Stockholm some 200 km even further away when he called but then he said he was on his way to Stockholm so eventually we could meet at a restaurant along the highway. After his description of the specific interests of NULAG to learn more about heating techniques with fire wood and wood chips I wrote an e-mail to the Swedish LAGs asking if anyone was interested and could answer fast during the time the NULAG representative still was in Sweden. When no answers came during the following days I started to call the LAG managers in the area close to where Mr Murray had his summer house in the south of Sweden.





A LAG manager, Mrs Nilsson said that in their LAG they had special competence in forestry based bio-energy and that they were interested in the proposals from the NULAG. When I said that Mr Murray had his summer house in Markaryd, Mrs Nilsson said that she was going to visit that town the day after. So just a couple of days after my first meeting with Mr Murray he and the manager of LEADER Linné met and the preparation of their future cooperation started.

- In spring 2010 the both LAGs signed a general agreement of cooperation and today they have visited each other several times, started some cooperation projects and carried out a web-based LAG training in EU knowledge ending in a joint study visit to Brussels.

A German LAG sent a partnership request looking for Swedish LAGs interested in developing tourism based on joint historical events. Much of the history was linked to Swedish kings engaged in warfare in ancient Germany. The request was sent to all the Swedish LAGs. A couple of weeks after a Swedish LAG member called, without knowing about the German request, asking for help to find partners in Finland linked to the war history and a special Swedish general operating in western Finland in the beginning of the 19:th century. I remembered the request from Germany and sent it again to the Swedish LAG.

- The week after we had a LAG-cooperation-conference with Finland during a ferry trip between Stockholm and Helsinki. The Dalsland Årjäng LAG joined the trip and met with LAG Ostrobothnia and now they have signed an agreement together with the German LAG to develop skills and models for historical tourism.

Linking LAGs with history

Author

Hans-Olof Stålgren, Swedish Rural Network

