



# Added Value of Networking

## Success Story

Success Story title *The Rural Best Award and Gala*

Theme *Network communications*

NRN *Sweden* Coordinator *NSU*

Partners *The whole network with the steering committee in charge*

Period *Starting spring 2009* Resources *125,000 Euro per year*

Geo-location *Nomination all over Sweden with the Gala in Stockholm*

Beneficiaries *All stakeholders of the Rural Network*

### Background

There is always a need to lift forward good examples and get publicity for the positive achievements of the RDP. Many of the final beneficiaries, doing the real implementation of the program, also need to be acknowledged for their efforts. Beside this there is a need to activate the regional MAs and the LAGs in a discussion about what defines a good and successful business activity or project support as a learning process and skills acquisition. By organizing a national competition with a long nomination process for projects and initiatives in several themes and offering a reward for each of the themes at a large rural party, a gala, all these three needs can be met. The themes are Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Rural Development project, Environment, Youth, Integration and Gender equality.

### Main activities

In spring, starting in 2009, the NSU announces the start of the nomination process, describing the themes of the year and the criteria for selecting projects. All the 21 regional MAs and also the 63 LAGs are entitled to nominate. The nomination form is standardized and contains the main information required for the ENRD projects database together with a motivation for the nomination. In late spring all the nominating partners and the national MA vote for the candidates together with the Steering Committee to select the four final nominees in each theme. With the help of assessments made by the researchers in the NRN Scientific Council the final winners are chosen by the Steering Committee. For each final nominee a presentation video is produced and a joint Rural Best Brochure. The final nominees are all invited to the Rural Gala together with paying guests from the whole network where the final winners are presented.

### Main results/benefits

The first clear result of the Rural Best Awards is the yearly repetition of the knowledge sharing and awareness raising event. The awards are a means for highlighting specific good practices and informing stakeholders about how rural development can change local communities. Furthermore, specific promotional and communications material is produced and disseminated, thereby strengthening the awareness raising process. In fact, other Member States (e.g. FI) have taken on board this model. Finally, selected best practices are also included in the RDP Projects database of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).





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#### Contribution of the NSU

This is entirely planned, coordinated and implemented through the NSU. Sending out the invitation and gathering the nominees is done by the NSU, as well as the collection of the votes from the regions. The NSU Steering Committee elects the final winner from the final group of four best nominees in each of the seven themes. The NSU is producing a video documentation of each of the final nominees and with that a Rural Best Brochure in Swedish and English. Finally the whole gala is planned and organized by the NSU, with the help of a contacted producer. Some of the nominated projects have also been posted in the ENRD project database.

#### Contribution of the partners

The regional MAs, as well as the LEADER groups, are nominating and voting in the first round. The researchers in the Scientific Council assist the Steering Committee when electing the winner in each category.

#### Success factors

The nomination process and the gala strengthen the nominated projects and gives them pride and acknowledgement of what they are doing. The winners and other nominated projects inspire others to do similar things in other rural areas. The success factor is the positive publicity created both in the nomination process and through the final gala with media coverage. Another success factor is the assessment process necessary in the regions to be able to nominate successful business activities and projects creating learning. Finally the success is proven by many of the winning projects and businesses telling about how their businesses are blooming after the publicity the prize has resulted in.

