



Added Value of Networking

Success Story

Success Story title *Telephone Think Tanks*

Theme *Network communications; Knowledge exchange;*

NRN *Sweden* Coordinator *NSU*

Partners *The Network Stakeholders*

Resources *4,000 Euro (6-12 tele-think tanks) plus staff working hrs*

Geo-location *Distance performance via telephone*

Beneficiaries *Many of the network member organizations*

Background

Within the network several issues are discussed among the stakeholders. Sometimes one or two member organisations initiate a discussion in a specific team. Sometimes the Managing Authority or the Ministry of Rural Affairs want a broad dialogue with the network members or need answers on specific questions. Since the distances in the country are very long a structured telephone meeting method was introduced by the network. The issues have been for example: Most important rural development issues in my organization, The use and value of the NRN, Analysis and learning, The performance of the RDP measures, CAP post-2013, Youth visions of the rural future.

Main activities

To answer questions for instance about the performance and bottlenecks in the existing RDP the members are invited to join telephone meetings with several optional dates. Each telephone meeting, or tele-think-tank, has a maximum of 8 participants, chairman and a secretary included. The meetings are restricted to one hour with a very exact structure. Three thematic questions and background information of the issue are distributed in advance to all registered participants. The meeting begins with a presentation round followed by five minutes per participant to express their or their organisation's opinion without being interrupted. Then there is a general discussion for some 20 minutes followed by a quick summary done by the chairman and finally some minutes for comments to the summary. About 1-2 hours after the meeting all participants are receiving the notes from the meeting with a request for response within 48 hours. The responses are worked into the final report from all parallel tele-think-tanks.

Main results/benefits

This method of working opens up discussion and moves away from hinders caused by distances. It is a potentially very powerful tool as many stakeholders discuss one topic in a structured way within a given timeframe.

The specific method has been used on 10 occasions from 2008 -2011 engaging from 15 to over 100 participants.





European Commission
Agriculture and
Rural Development



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Rural Development

Contribution of the NSU

The NSU is involved in the planning, invitation and production of the background material. A consultancy firm is contracted for the coordination, using a web-based registration system. The NSU staff is also used as secretaries in many of the tele-think-tanks. The results are always published on the NRN web site.

Contribution of the partners

Many participating representatives of member organisations act as chairmen for the individual tele-think-tanks. All the participants are asked to communicate with their organisations before the telephone meetings to get the opinions in the issues addressed. Every participant has at least five minutes to talk in each tele-think-tank and of course also possibilities to participate in the general discussions. Since the number of participants is restricted it is easy for the participants to express their views.

Success factors

The restricted number of participants and the very structured way of performance for the tele-think-tanks together with the rapid feedback system offer a very close communication and a very quick way of collecting answers and views of the network members. The system is composed by short telephone meetings so many people are willing to participate since it does not occupy long time for travelling but gives very good ways of having a say.

