European Network for
Rural Development

LEADER Umbrella Project – Sweden

Carin Alfredsson, Swedish Board of Agriculture

1. Who developed the tool?

Department for Rural Development, Swedish Board of Agriculture

2. Why was the tool/mechanism put in place?

Groups implementing the LEADER approach have been able to make use of these umbrella projects since 2001. They have helped to simplify the administration for small projects and to mobilise and engage new categories of stakeholders.

3. Short description:

An umbrella project is defined as a project with a common purpose, goal and one specific focus. Throughout the duration of the project actors can apply for support for various subprojects that will contribute to the goal of the umbrella project. Each umbrella project has a decision making panel that decides on which subprojects are to be granted support. The project owner of the umbrella project is also the formal recipient of support for the subprojects.

The umbrella project must not be so broad or so general that the supporting authority cannot apply the regulations to determine what costs and which subprojects would be included in the umbrella project when it agrees its support. Support for subprojects is granted continuously during the project period and is usually not known when the decision is taken on the umbrella project. Each subproject should be approved based on a submitted project plan. Once the subproject has been approved, an agreement is drawn up with each subproject.

An umbrella project should not contain more than 30 subprojects and a subproject should not comprise more than 3 000 euro. If an umbrella project has considerably fewer subprojects, say about ten, it may be reasonable for the subprojects to comprise higher amounts.

Preferably the LAG is the project owner of an umbrella project however; the project owner may also be a party with high capacity and useful experience of administrating projects. It should be clear from the project plan how its funds are to be distributed, i.e. who has the right to approve subprojects within the project. Irrespective of whether the LAG or some other party is the manager of the umbrella project, the project approval board that has the mandate to decide which subprojects to implement should always include a LAG representative.

Example Umbrella project "Youth Culture"
Journal number: 2008-001

Streetfestival Jnr 2008-001/1
Animation Jnr 2008-001/2
More culture Jnr 2008-001/3
Bio Rio Jnr 2008-001/4
Young organizer Jnr 2008-001/5

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Each subproject is reported separately within the umbrella project using separate identification numbers. Project management, awareness raising, administration etc. for the entire umbrella project are reported separately and are recorded as a separate subproject in the project's accounts.

Each subproject should have a defined project period within the umbrella project. It is important that activities, costs and incomes are clearly described and defined in the project plan of each subproject. The person in charge of the umbrella project has to verify that the correct amounts are paid to the subproject.

When the umbrella project applies for support is it a good idea to gather a number of completed subprojects in each payment application submitted to the support authority. This may mean that their reporting periods overlap. Each subproject should submit some form of final report to the project management. There will then be one final report for the entire umbrella project.

The umbrella project has to submit lists of names and organisation numbers to the support authority, identifying the persons or other parties who receive reimbursement for their costs within an umbrella project. This is needed for evaluation and follow-up, and to facilitate controls of double financing.

4. What was the main impact in relation to financing LEADER and on which level was this impact achieved?

The main impact of the LEADER umbrella project has been:

- To mobilise and reach new groups of stakeholders so that more people have become interested in developing good ideas. Many subprojects are the first step towards developing a big project.

- A more efficient way for LAGs to reach the goals of their Local Development Strategy. It is a way for LAGs to promote and call for project ideas with a specific focus.

- Simpler administration of small projects, since the person in charge of the umbrella project is the one who submits the application for payment to the support authority. This helps the subprojects with their accounts.

- Quicker decisions for small projects. The subprojects do not need to wait for LAG meetings.

- More efficient administration at the support authority, since many small subprojects are treated as one decision and one project.

- Quicker payment helps smaller projects with their liquidity. The umbrella project can usually pay the money directly to the subprojects without waiting for the support authority to make its decision.

5. What was needed to be able to design and implement the tool?

There was no need for specific national regulations in order to implement umbrella projects. This is because each umbrella project is decided in the same way as other projects. The contributions are made for the expenditure by different parts taking part in one "all in" project. The project owner normally signs an agreement with the participants, limiting the costs, time etc. Every umbrella project normally needs to have a project leader (not necessary full time) for coordination and to administrate the project.

6. What are the lessons learnt and relevance for LEADER 2014-2020?

The main lessons learnt whilst delivering the umbrella projects are:

- Maintain a clear distinction between subprojects in the accounts. It is important for the project owner to have a clear system for bookkeeping of the different parts of the umbrella project.

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- Mobilise and get enough project ideas into the umbrella project.

- Choose an appropriate size and duration for the umbrella projects, so that the LAGs do not tie up unused project funds.

- Inform the subprojects about what is required of their accounts, to avoid situations where information is missing.

- It is important that LAGs only use umbrella projects where it's appropriate i.e. to mobilise and more effectively reach the goals of their strategy. It should not be used just as a way of simplification or to speed up the process.

Sweden is planning to continue to use umbrella projects in the next programming period. We are looking for an effective way to handle this kind of project in our IT-system – both how LAGs apply to participate and how to administrate the whole process of umbrella projects.

7. Is there any further information on the tool?

There is further information about the umbrella projects in an intranet (called the Leader-guide) that all LAGs in Sweden can access.

8. Contact details for further information

Carin Alfredsson

Carin.alfredsson@jordbruksverket.se

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