

ENRD webinar

Valorising and communicating successful projects

Highlights report

The workshop focused on valorising and communicating EAFRD-supported projects implemented in rural areas. Participants exchanged ideas about how to identify the added value delivered by such projects. They also considered examples of where and how projects had used communication and networking to ensure their success.

Projects which encouraged stakeholder involvement and integration were presented as examples of best practice and drivers of change.

The workshop showcased project promoters from national, regional and local levels who presented a variety of approaches employed in the identification of factors contributing to added value and successful outcomes. The project promoters and NRNs discussed and outlined the best channels for the dissemination of successful project examples.

Event Information

Date: 24 November 2020

Location: Online

Organiser: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: 77 participants from 24 MS including National Rural Networks, RDP Managing Authorities, EU institution representatives and project holders including Rural Inspiration Awards (RIA) finalists and winners.

Outcomes: An exchange of experiences on how to identify and demonstrate the key success factors and the added value of a project, and lessons shared on the communication of these.

Web page: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-national-rural-networks-valorising-and-communicating-successful-en>



Identifying the key success factors and added value of projects

The first session of the workshop focused on the identification of the key factors which add value to a project. NRN representatives from five Member States presented their approaches. Nils Lagerroth (NRN) presented the [‘Swedish Rural Gala’](#) and its objectives including the process for project nominations and jury criteria. Examples offered included inspiring others, learning from them and the importance of long-term results. In Finland, the NRN’s recent [LEADER ‘Eurovision’](#) initiative with regional LAGs judges and their ‘pearl of the programming period’ approach was introduced by Sinikka Torssonen (NRN). Jurgita Pugačiauskaitė-Butrimienė from the Lithuanian Managing Authority (MA) articulated how ‘good’ is defined and measured and outlined the [success factors in project identification](#), citing examples such as looking for innovative solutions or encouraging community engagement. Simona Radecka (NRN) presented the [Slovak evaluation grid](#) which considers how projects might attain the goals of the RDP programme. David Armellini (NRN) outlined the [French approach](#) which looks across national, regional and local tiers of delivery. Finally, Irma Potočnik Slavič and Sara Uhan from the University of Ljubljana presented their [‘Newbie’ Horizon 2020 project](#) involving nine countries in cooperation, the foundation of which is the co-creation of a supportive environment for new farming entrants. At the end of the morning sessions, the Contact Point presented updates on the [2021 Rural Inspiration Awards](#) and the consultation on the [Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas](#).



Group discussion outcomes

Factors of success and added value of a project

Participants in four groups discussed possible project success factors. Each of the group discussions was kicked-off by a project presentation from [Slovenia](#), [Austria](#), [Spain](#) and [Poland](#) respectively. These groups identified a wide range of [possible success factors](#) such as investment in human resources, addressing the needs of the specific target group and establishing a feedback loop. Groups noted that successful projects address current problems and also offer solutions for the future.

The added value that projects can bring to rural areas can be grouped by their capacity building capability and their contribution to RDP objectives. In the first category, this includes inspiring and stimulating for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing as well as building both confidence and awareness of the availability of EU funding.

In the second category, components such as the promotion of social inclusion, job creation, positive impact on climate and environmental challenges and the long-term effectiveness of results were identified.



Communicating successful projects

Communication was the main focus of the afternoon session. Presentations from four finalists of the Rural Inspiration Awards from 2019 and 2020 opened the session.



The Czech project [Ekofarma Petra Marada](#) from Czechia is successful in implementing agri-environment-climate measures, fostering the adoption of ecosystem services and climate adaptation on-farm. This led to the promotion of wider uptake throughout the farming community. This was communicated through traditional published media (scientific, professional, and cultural journals) and directly through workshop and conference participation as well as student tutorials.



The Swedish project [Klimatkollen i Greppa Näringen](#) offers farmers free tailored advice on climate change. Success is measured using a range of evaluation tools such as farmer experiences from advisory visits and high levels of webpage and social media hits. Project success was achieved through regular interaction with project partners and social media use.



The Dutch project [Brickz](#) uses biomass residues from the dredging of rivers and water flows to produce a fertiliser, which is then used to grow trees, and will, over time, improve soil quality. This has led to significant financial savings for nature conservation organisations and tree nurseries. The components that contributed to its success were having real 'hands-on' products - not only a concept - focusing on tree planting, positive economic value and the development of long term contracts. The story is created by the product and the family behind it. *'Don't just have a unique selling point. You need a story – a unique telling point.'*



The Finnish project [Kuitua Pohjoiseen - Fibre to the North](#) attributed their success to providing simplified information, by taking information directly through door-to-door exchanges and establishing clear roles for stakeholders. There was short and long-term impact, illustrated through invitations to be a speaker at events (including this one), increased interest from the media, new funding possibilities and additional projects stimulating local revitalisation and migration to the region.

Finally, the [ENRD CP](#) presented a European perspective on communicating successful stories and its experience in disseminating projects through its website, case studies, publications, presentations and social media.



Lessons on communicating successful projects

In group discussions, participants shared lessons on valorising projects and how these successful experiences can best be communicated and transferred. The outcomes of the discussions were as follows:

- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are mainly used to generate website traffic, connecting stakeholders and sharing knowledge.
- Using social media effectively requires short visual (photo or video) content. It is of vital importance that the message is tailored to fit the intended channel. Using copy and paste across social media platforms reduces impact.
- The appropriate use of social media requires focused mapping of stakeholders and the platforms they use. Instagram is favoured by younger audiences whereas more mature social media users opt for Facebook. Twitter is most suitable for networking, establishing contacts, and reaching influencers.
- Videos are useful for giving credibility to rural development policy by showcasing real peoples' testimonials on how policies or projects perform at local level.
- Producing videos can be an expensive and resource-consuming process, costing both time and money. However, even the least experienced user, equipped with a smartphone, can make a good quality video, particularly when their NRN supports or guides them.
- Local radio and newspapers are still a useful resource which can provide access to broader local-level audiences.
- Newsletters can still be effective in providing a bridge between newspapers and e-news.
- Publications allow for the dissemination of in-depth information but do not generate effective audience engagement.
- Events (both online and offline) such as awards, presentations within events, fairs, roadshows, workshops and conferences are effective in promoting project results. But they can be time-consuming.

Through webinars, we can reach a larger audience and involve more stakeholders, but such networking is thought less effective than in physical face-to-face meetings.