

## SWEDEN

# Local development

**Location**  
Boliden

**Programming period**  
2014 – 2020

**Priority**  
P6 – Social inclusion & local  
development

**Measure**  
M19 – LEADER/CLLD

**Funding (EUR)**  
Total budget 9 780  
EAFRD 4 890  
National/Regional 1 663  
Other 3 227

**Project duration**  
2016 – 2018

**Project promoter**  
Mörkret och kylans glada  
vänner

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An association used RDP support to turn the ‘disadvantages’ of long periods of cold and darkness in northern Sweden, into a unique selling point for tourism.

### Summary

The winter in northern Sweden is dark and cold. This is often viewed as something negative and these elements are often overlooked when a place is to be marketed. However, these elements could be turned into a unique selling point.

This project helped to change that view and show that darkness and cold have positive effects on humans. The association called Föreningen för Mörkets och Kylans Glada Vänner (The happy friends of darkness and coldness), used RDP support to gather evidence, and put together research from different sources on the topic. This information was presented in a handbook that can be used by local tourist enterprises.



### Results

The project resulted in the production of a handbook, called ‘A traveller’s guide for winter climate’ which is published on their new website.

The project contacted the tourist enterprises ‘Visit Skellefteå’ and ‘Swedish Lapland’ who have showed great interest in the book. The enterprises are thinking about translating it into English and Chinese. They also aim to visually improve it, by working on the design and adding pictures, to make it more attractive for tourists.

The handbook is raising awareness of the potential advantages of cold and darkness. This knowledge provides the tourist sector with a unique selling point.

The project has kick started a new way of marketing northern areas through the promotion of cold and darkness.

### Context

The winter in northern Sweden is dark and cold, and this is often viewed as something negative. Darkness and cold are often overlooked when a place is to be marketed. However, these could be one of the most secure selling points as at this latitude, as darkness and cold arrive every year. Research on darkness and coldness has shown that there are positive impacts on people, but this not communicated enough when marketing the area.

This project wanted to change that view and show that darkness and cold have good effects on humans. The project is run by an association called Föreningen för Mörkets och Kylans Glada Vänner (The happy friends of darkness and coldness) and has its base in Skellefteå on the latitude 64°N. For several years the association has worked and developed activities which can be done during the darkest and coldest parts of the year, such as outdoor winter swimming in the river and winter activities for children.

### Objectives

The project was one of the first initiatives to promote the benefits of darkness and cold on human beings. The project's aim was to establish a bank of knowledge about the impact of darkness and cold, which can be used to strengthen the marketing as a tourist offer.

The overall approach was to gather and put together research from different sources, which will be presented in a handbook that can be used by local tourist enterprises.

### Activities

Knowledge about coldness and darkness impact on humans was gathered from several different sources. This knowledge was acquired through meetings, telephone calls, contacts through emails and desk studies.

The project established cooperation with researchers from different universities. For example, the project holders contacted a researcher from the University of Linköping and the Finnish Institute of Occupational

Health. The Finnish Institute had already created a book on how the cold affects humans working outdoors. This book has provided lots of guidance for the project owners' work on their handbook. The Finnish Institute have also supplied the project with other research material.

The Swedish military was also a useful source of information and the project holders undertook consultation with members and others.

After the material was gathered the project holders started the writing process.



### Main results

The project resulted in the production of a handbook called 'A traveller's guide for winter climate' which is published on their new website.

The project had contacts with the tourist enterprises 'Visit Skellefteå' and 'Swedish Lapland' who have showed great interest in the book. The enterprises found it useful and are thinking about translating it into English and Chinese. They also aim to visually improve it, by working on the design and adding pictures to make it more attractive for tourists.

The handbook provided a valuable source of information on the positive effects of cold and darkness. This knowledge provides the tourist sector a unique selling point to increase its competitiveness by increasing the number of tourists and creating more job opportunities.

The project has kick started a new way of marketing northern areas by promoting cold and darkness. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2019, a seminar was held in Skellefteå where the book was presented and lectures were held.

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#### Additional sources of information

<http://coolastecentrum.com/>