

SWEDEN

Inter-territorial cooperation

Location

Sweden

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (SEK)*

RDP support 1 046 143

Project duration

2017 – 2021

Project promoter

Lokalt Ledd Utveckling
Halland
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Piloting a tool that helps assess the impact potential and necessary points of improvement of LEADER projects, already during the project's application phase.

Summary

As part of an on-going research/evaluation project, two Swedish universities developed the LEADER 'Effektbarometer' (Impact Barometer). The tool helps assess the impact potential of LEADER projects and the necessary points of improvement already in the projects' application phase. The impact assessment criteria are based on the analysis of 70 LEADER granted projects with a large budget, in 14 LEADER areas in Sweden, as well as other EU funded projects.



Five LAGs implementing a cooperation project called 'Learning and innovation' decided to pilot the use of the tool. They used their staff as coaches in selected projects to review what the projects had written in their applications. With the help of the impact barometer the coaches helped the project applicants to think carefully about the assessment criteria, so that long-term effects can be created.

Results

Five Swedish LAGs are now using the tool to coach selected project holders to plan for stronger and longer-term impacts. The plan is to embed 'impact thinking' into future LEADER projects from the initial phases.

The impact barometer is also expected to be used when discussing CLLD project plans with project applicants in the future.

Context

LEADER funded projects need to be designed in line with Local Development Strategies. For this purpose, Swedish LAGs wanted to find ways to better assess project proposals and ensure a more coordinated approach in local areas.

The 'impact barometer' was developed in 2018, as part of an ongoing research / evaluation project on the impacts of LEADER which is carried out by Halmstad University and Gothenburg University (2017-2021). This research project is funded by the Swedish Board of Agriculture. This project examines the impact of previous EU funded projects and looks at how temporary project results can lead to permanent impacts. It is also based on the researchers' previous experience, including six years of work to support learning and strategic impacts within the 2007-2013 European Structural Funds.

Based on the findings of this on-going research project five Leader areas launched a cooperation project called 'Learning and innovation'. This cooperation aimed to help local projects to create longer-term impacts.

Objectives

The overall objective of this cooperation project is to develop the strategic and practical ability of the Leader method to create social benefits through the use of EU funds.

The project aimed to develop a tool that can be used to evaluate the potential for LEADER projects to have a positive impact at local level. This can be achieved by designing an impact chain where the objective of a project would be related to its impacts.

Activities

The researchers developed the 'impact barometer' to help assess a project's impact potential and necessary points of improvement during the project's application phase. The impact assessment criteria are based on analysis of 70 granted projects with a large budget, in 14 LEADER areas in Sweden. The tool consists of five indicators to be assessed in project proposals, which are:

- i. impact potential / development vision;
- ii. impact objective which should be SMART and long term - after the project's completion;
- iii. impact pathway meaning how do project results lead to long-term impacts;
- iv. impact organisation - how to match and integrate impact in collaboration with external stakeholders,

- local and regional authorities, policy, etc;
- v. impact financing - planning for after the end of the project's funding.

Each of the indicators is assessed against the extent to which it is covered the application. The indicators are scored from very high (4), to very low (1), or not at all (0).

The purpose of the tool is to make it easier for LAGs to effectively develop, assess and follow up projects. It aims to strengthen LAG's thinking about impacts and in the long term to improve their ability to make the implementation of LEADER more impact-driven.

How is it used?

During the 'Learning and innovation' project, staff from the five participating LAGs were used as coaches in selected projects to help create more, long-term impacts. The coaches looked at what the projects had written in their application and with the help of the impact barometer they helped build a perception of what impact thinking is and what impact planning is in the projects' proposals. Based on this and with help of the impact barometer, the coaches are in contact with the projects to help them think more about the assessment criteria, so that long-term effects can be created.

Main results

The input of the coaches who introduced the tool has been well received by the projects.

The LAGs working to promote the use of the tool, look ahead to see how it can be promoted after the project period is over, and start taking action early. It may be possible to rethink the way coaches are used in the future to decrease costs.

The five Swedish LAGs are now using the tool to coach selected project holders to plan for stronger longer-term impacts. The plan is to embed 'impact thinking' in future LEADER projects from the initial phases. However, they have not yet worked systematically on the implementation of the impact barometer in connection with the granting of projects.

The impact barometer is expected to also be used when discussing CLLD project plans with project applicants in the future.

Additional sources of information

<http://www.lluh.se/>