

# Added Value of Networking



## *Provision of networking activities for advisors & innovation support services:*

### *“24 hour race”*

Basic information	
NRN:	Swedish NSU
Keywords:	Innovation, RIKA, entrepreneurs
Coordinator:	n.a.
Partners:	Go Enterprise
Resources:	n.a.
Period:	Spring 2011

#### Background to the networking/innovation support activities

The Swedish Rural Network established a thematic working group called “Supporting Entrepreneurs”. The group identified a need to better assist rural entrepreneurs and in spring 2011 was responsible for running six regional 24h races focusing on how organisations, LEADER groups, authorities etc. at a regional level could improve their support to local entrepreneurs.

#### Purpose and description of the networking/innovation support activities

A total of 181 people were involved across the six events, brought together in facilitated workshops to think creatively about how entrepreneurial support in rural areas could be improved with a focus on implementable ideas. The 24h race workshops used the RIKA method, a four stage innovative process which develops actions and results as outputs. The first **Research** phase encourages participants to use their knowledge to analyse the current situation and any obstacles, to develop a shared understanding of what is needed. Phase two focuses on **Ideas**, exploring innovative opportunities by collecting participant’s creative ideas. During the **Concept** phase participants work together to prioritise the ideas to develop a robust, effective concept. The final **Action** phase enables participants to create an Action Plan to implement the concept developed.

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## Who benefited from the activities and how

The participants benefited as the 24hr races gave them the opportunity to network and work creatively together with peers in their field. Rural entrepreneurs have also benefited from the implementation of the concepts developed in these workshops, receiving more effective support to help develop, launch and grow their businesses.

## Main results of the networking/innovation support activities & added value of the chosen delivery approach

The six regional 24hr races came up with 38 suggestions on how local entrepreneurs could receive better support. Some of these solutions have been developed further and delivered at a regional level. The Swedish Network Unit has also supported three of these concepts. The first is in Örebro County where small fairs have been established for entrepreneurs and where coaches and consultants came together to provide most of the information and support contractors may need - all under one roof at the same time. The 'Enterprising Bolme Countryside' project is funded by three LEADER areas and is collaboration between government, industry, and volunteers across four municipalities. As part of this project, eleven contractors and nine experts gathered in Gislaved in a "Dragons Den" where entrepreneurs presented their ideas and received immediate feedback. In Norrbotten five meetings were arranged where best practice examples, speakers, advisors and financiers gathered for an afternoon to inspire people to realise the opportunities that exist in their county. At a national level the 24hr races also identified an Action to develop Verksam.se, a national website which is a collaboration between several Swedish Government Agencies to improve the information available to entrepreneurs.

## Success factors

The RIKA process used during the 24hr races enabled participants to think really creatively about how they could best overcome the challenges within their regions. This led to a series of practical solutions that could be implemented successfully and provide additional support to entrepreneurs in rural areas.

## Description of NSU and other partners contribution

The Thematic Working Group of the NSU identified the need for the workshops and was responsible for its delivery. Go Enterprise devised, delivered and facilitated the 24hr race workshops.



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## Additional information and useful resources

Information on the workshops:

<http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=sv&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=sv&ie=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fentreprenorsspelet.se%2F%3F%3DLANDSBYGDSN%25C3%2584TVERKET>

Information on the solutions delivered by the Swedish Rural Network:

<http://translate.google.com/translate?sl=sv&tl=en&js=n&prev=t&hl=sv&ie=UTF-8&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.landsbygdsnatverket.se%2Fhuvudomraden%2Fomnatverket%2Farbetsgrupp%2Fgruppstodjaentreprenorer.4.510b667f12d3729f91d80004164.html>

## Pictures

n.a.

## Last Update

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