

## Networking Success Stories

The open space discussions centred around 3 main themes:

### What are networking "success stories"?

It was stressed from the start of the discussion that it is important to be 100 % clear about the relationship / difference between the following key terms / concepts:

*Good Practice - Relevant Experience - Success Story - Case Study*

These are all linked to the process of learning-by-doing – but they are different! "Good practice" is not the same as a "success story"

You can **follow** a "good practice" in the hope that it clearly achieves a specified result / outcome / impact – whereas a "success story" goes further and **describes** what result / outcome / impact (real or perceived) was actually achieved – notably the "added value" of the networking activity

And "Relevant experience" is something different again since it implies the reflection upon both success and failures – and the lessons to be learnt from them

It is also important to be clear (again!) about the difference between:

*Network Support Unit - Network - Networking*

Networking success stories may be collected from different points in this chain depending upon the maturity and stage of development of the network. It's important to note also that "success" is a relative term and must first and foremost be interpreted in the local context – it may not be appropriate, for example, to compare a success story from a new Member State that is still in the process of setting up its NSU with an old Member State where networking is already a well-established principle (e.g. after many years of networking under LEADER)

### Why collect and disseminate networking "success stories"?

Lots of good reasons -> supporting the process of learning-by-doing, promotion of networking, demonstrating the added value of networking

And also under certain circumstances -> supporting more targeted advocacy and lobbying

### How to collect and disseminate networking "success stories"?

It is obvious that in order to continue collecting networking success stories it is necessary for the ENRD Contact Point to provide much clearer guidance to the network support units. In order to develop this guidance the Contact Point is advised to carefully analyse the 98 success stories already collected – possibly including some form of ranking / scoring leading to the selection of the best examples as 'indicative success stories' to help guide the identification and preparation of other success stories

Finally, the dissemination of success stories was discussed and it was agreed that they need to be clustered in some way to make them more easily accessible. It might also be useful to think "outside of the RDP box" and consider linking to networking success stories from other funds.

**Overall Conclusion:** Much clearer definition and guidance is needed on what a networking "success story" is – and how they should be collected. This should take into account the need to clarify further the distinction between "good practice" and "added value"