

“National Rural Networks: How to show their benefits”

Case Study Sweden

Sofia Palmér

Markör Marknad och Kommunikation



Presentation outline

- The Swedish NRN – Structure of the network
- Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN
- Evaluation methods
- Conclusions and lessons
- Lessons learned entering the new programme

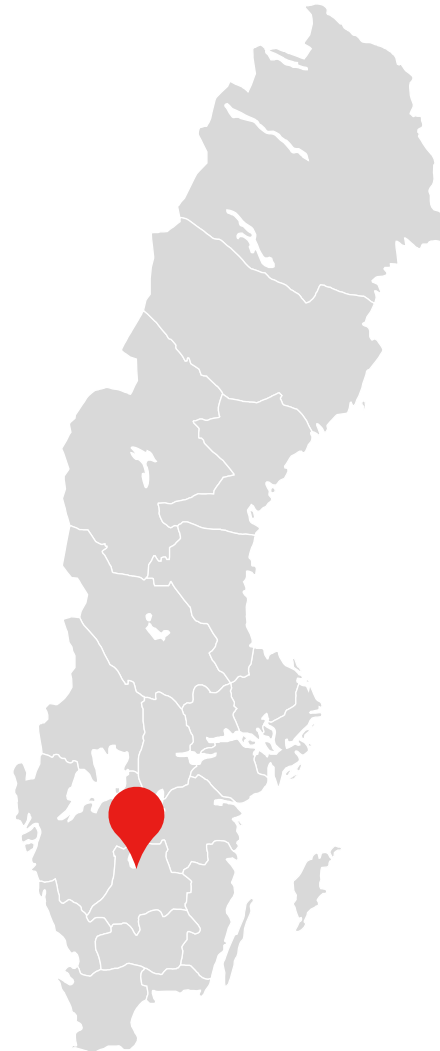


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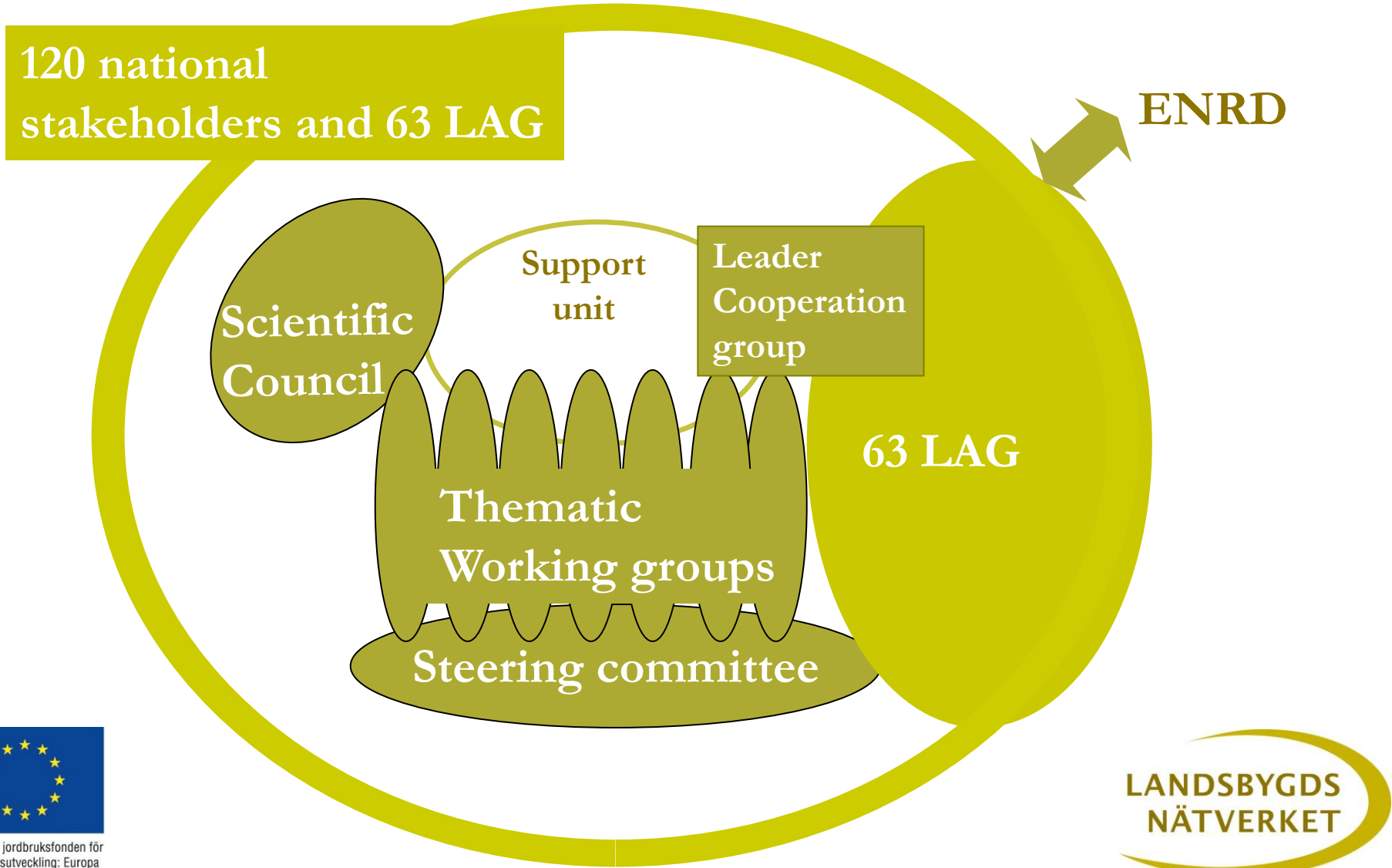
The Swedish NRN

– Structure of the network

- As a part of the Rural Development Programme a formal network has been constituted.
- All actors who operate at the national level and whose activities contribute to the success of the Rural Development Programme, are welcome to join the Rural Network.



The Swedish NRN – Structure of the network



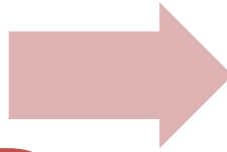
Europeiska jordbruksfonden för landsbygdsutveckling: Europa investerar i landsbygdsområden



The Swedish NRN

Started with

- Broad scope
- Network cheques
 - Cheques that fund employment of people to provide information and inspire new ideas, in order to increase the involvement of their own organisation
- Animate
- Creating contacts
- Enhance dialogue

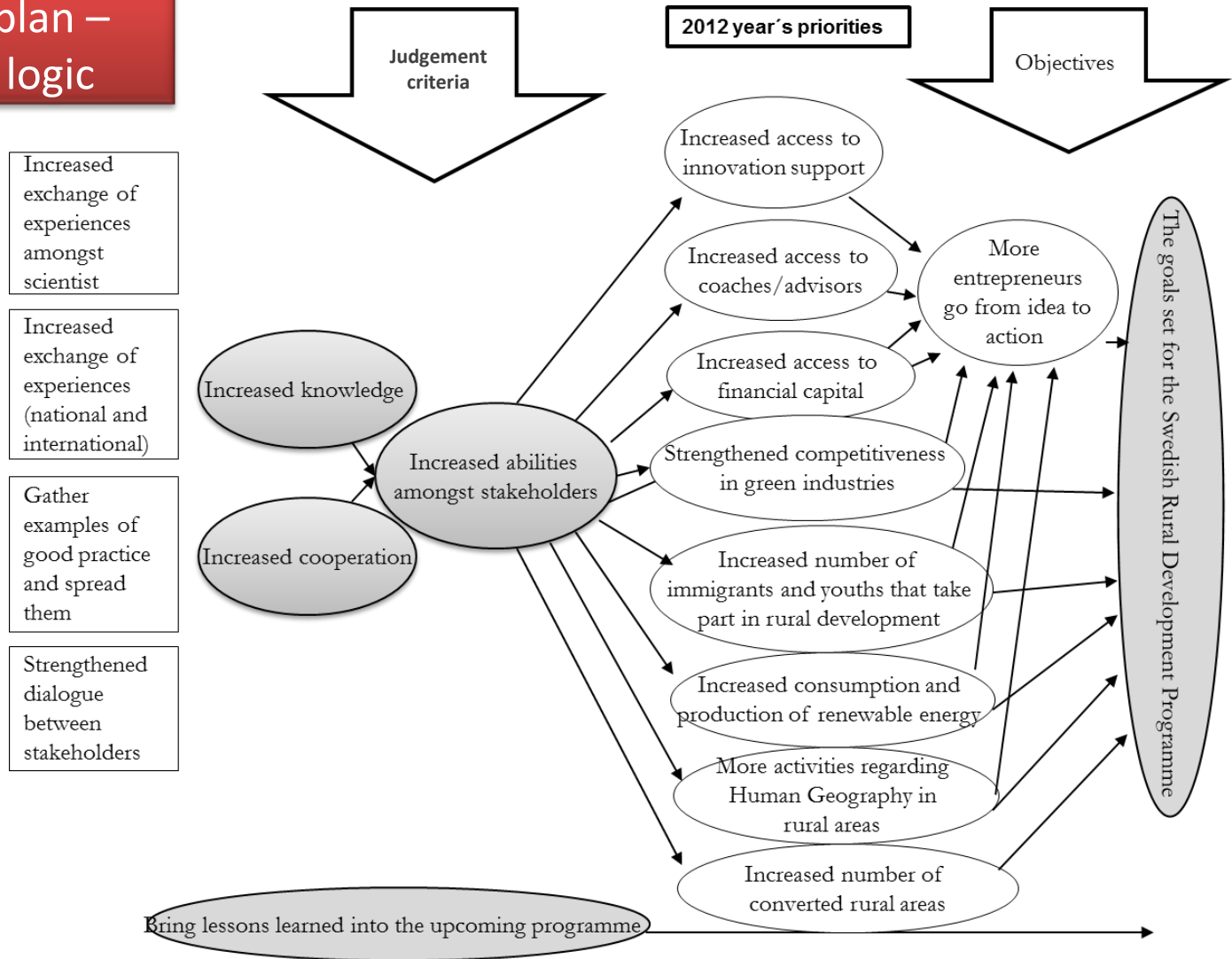


Developed to

- More focused activities
- Thematic working groups
- Collect and disseminate learning examples
- Enhance Cooperation
- Continue enhance dialogue

The Swedish NRN – programme logic

The Activity plan – programme logic



Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN

The evaluation of the Swedish Rural Network was done during 2012.

Main focus of the evaluation has been on the methods used and the stakeholders' experiences.

The evaluation questions are:

- To what extent chosen methods are used by the stakeholders?
 - The workgroups
 - The Swedish Rural Gala (an gala where the wool-ram awards are given in seven different categories)
 - The Network cheques
- To what extent do they contribute to the objectives of the Rural Network?
- Do the stakeholders find the methods useful and relevant and do they impact on the organisations of the stakeholders?



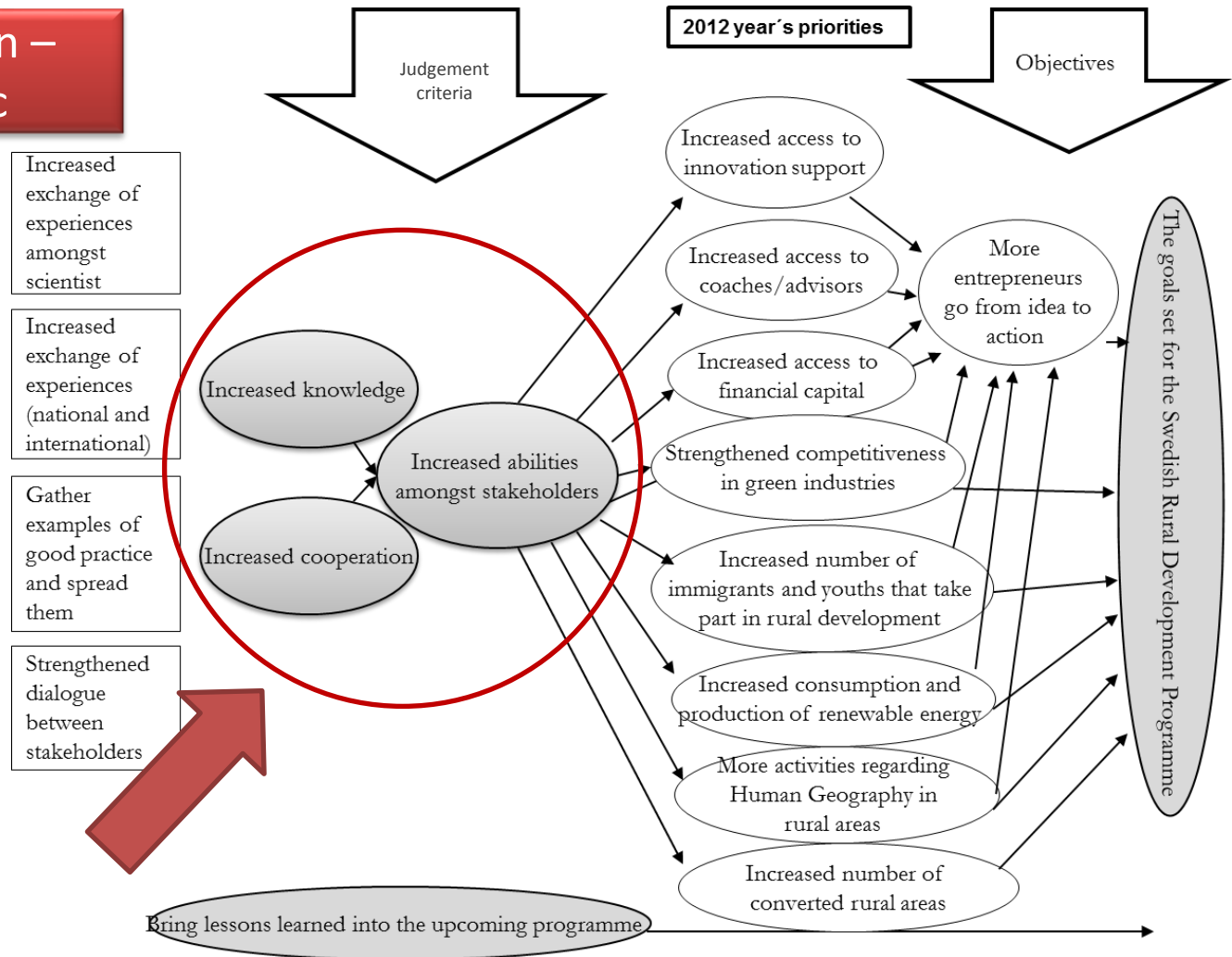
Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN

- The judgement criteria chosen for the evaluation:
 - Increased knowledge amongst the stakeholders
 - Increased cooperation amongst stakeholders
 - Increased abilities (An increased ability is defined by the ability to transform knowledge to actions.)

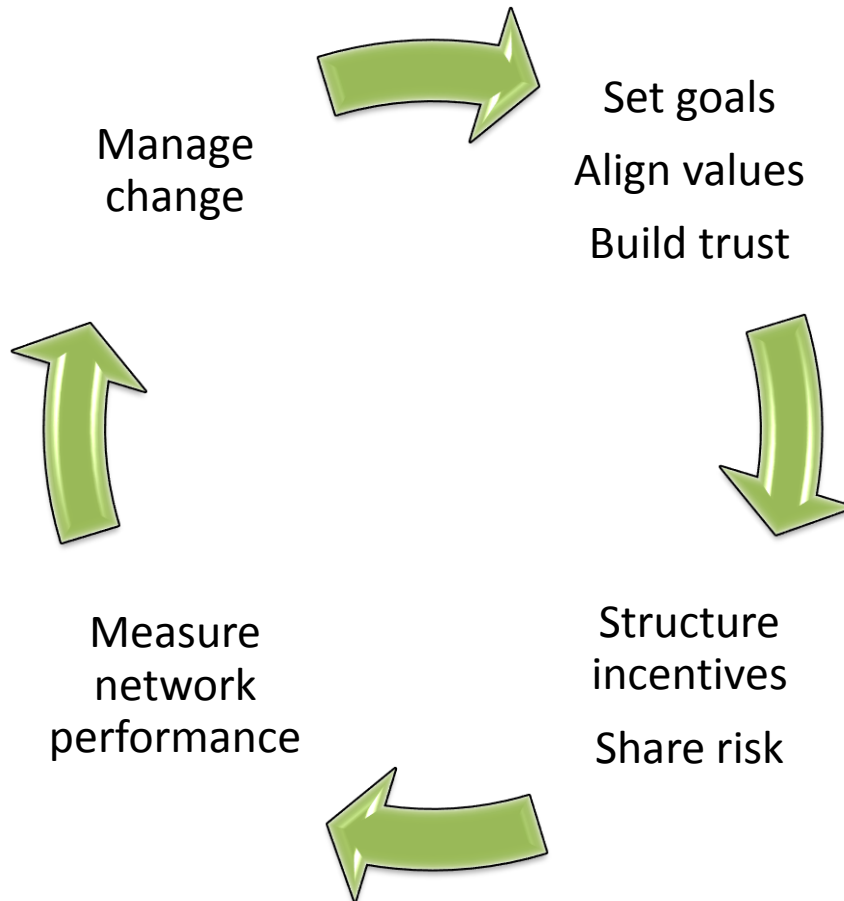
- In the analysis of the collected data the evaluation framework being used has been:
 - The activity plan for The Swedish Rural Network, 2012
 - The Framework of Networks (Goldsmith, Stephen & Eggers, William D. (2004), Governing by Network, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press)
 - The growth and maturity of networks (Redman, Mark Connecting rural Europe, ENRD Contact Point, PowerPoint, 2012.)

Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN

The Activity plan – program logic



Monitoring and evaluation framework of the NRN



Goldsmith and Eggers framework for networks where used in the analysis of the results from the data. The main lessons learned is based upon the framework and the steps necessary for the growth of a fully functional network.

The integrator (Secretariat) has to see to the fulfilment of the components in the framework:

1. Set goals
2. Align values
3. Build trust
4. Structure incentives
5. Share risk
6. Measure network performance
7. Manage change

Evaluation methods

- The methods used are:
 - A web survey to all stakeholders within the network
 - Case studies through focus groups and interviews with members from three chosen working groups:
 - The groups was chosen to represent different
 - Capital
 - Planning
 - Youth
- Qualitative interviews with stakeholders regarding the Swedish Rural Gala and the Network cheques

Evaluation results

- The methods chosen are being used, the use varies between methods and stakeholders
- The judgement criteria show that those that are active, increase their:
 - knowledge about the possibilities of the NRP
 - knowledge about each other
 - Number of contacts in their professional network

However...

- Those active experience a larger exchange
- The individual that is learning, not the organisation
- Difficult to spread knowledge back into the organisations mainly because of lack of readiness
- Representatives lack authority or a deeper knowledge regarding the network

Evaluation results

Workgroups:

- The work within the workgroups witness about on-going processes towards a greater consensus and understanding for the various point of views
- Shorter way in to each others organisations
 - It is limited to within the specific groups and not between
- More open to new ideas
- More cooperation
- New collaborations and activities such as the Youth conference "Ungagemang"

The Network cheques:

- Increased cooperation
- Change of work method within the own organisation
- New areas of business in the organisation

The Swedish Rural Gala:

- Members in contact with media to get a larger impact.
- Members use Good Practise examples in their work.
- Young Swedish Rural Gala "ung-Ullbagge"

Conclusions and lessons

- The Swedish Rural Network has come a long way concerning the growth of the network
 - There are actions that prove that there are stakeholders that are an active party in a fully functional network
 - The impact on the organisations are limited
- New questions springs from the results of the evaluation...
 - Move to an organisational commitment?
 - What will it take for an organisation to take part in the network with the ambition to learn and develop?
 - Can inactive stakeholders become more active and thereby initiate more cooperation?
 - Clarifying goals, targets, expectations, incentives and risks...?

Conclusions and lessons

According to Goldsmith and Eggers framework for networks the roles and the expectations that lies on the stakeholders must be defined when they enter the network. Hence...

- The effects will become greater...
 - By clarifying the expectations and the commitment that comes with being a stakeholder the effects of the network will become greater.
 - By creating incentives for the various stakeholders, especially for those that are identified as key concerning the growth of the network and the RDP.
 - When “key-stakeholders” understand their role.

Conclusions and lessons

Recommending...

- To move from an individual learning to an organisational learning.
 - Organisations need to develop and validate those questions that are a priority for the RDP and for the network
- To strive for a stronger understanding
 - concerning the purpose
 - concerning the direct and concrete use with the network
- That organisations key for the growth of the network take an active part.
 - agreements must be made between the network and the stakeholder
- Ensure that representatives have mandate to take decisions
- In greater extent distribute the material produced within the network.

Lessons learned entering the new programme

Lessons learned when entering the new programme 2014-2020.

- Membership agreement on:
 - Level of activity
 - Commitment to collect knowledge and information from the membership organisation
 - Commitment to disseminate knowledge and information back to the member organisation

- Fewer working groups, but more operational and targeted
- The working groups should have a clear communication plan
- Annual activity plans with clear intervention logic

Thank you for your attention!

Sofia Palmér

Markör Marknad och Kommunikation AB

Sofia.palmer@markor.se

+46761011918

www.markor.se