



Europeiska jordbruksfonden för  
landsbygdsutveckling: Europa  
investerar i landsbygdsområden



2017-2021

# Learning and Innovation

## Final report

A LOCAL COOPERATION BETWEEN:

Community-led Local Development (CLLD) Halland, LEADER Bohuskust and its bordering area, LEADER Linné Småland, LEADER Västra Småland (Western Småland), LEADER Sjuhärad and the University of Halmstad.

# Summary

Learning and innovation, LIN, was a cooperation project between five LEADER areas in southwestern Sweden and the University of Halmstad, which took place over the years 2017 to 2021. LIN was based on research about learning processes, sustainable project work and impact thinking. The purpose of LIN was to develop LEADER methods' societal benefits by increasing the LEADER areas' learning and strategic ability in order to work with local development both in the long term and sustainably.

Several theoretical methods and tools were created during the course of the project. These were tested in practice by the LEADER offices and developed into useable instruments in LEADER work. In this report, we describe the theories behind the methods, the tools, working with the methods, as well as the learning processes over time. We also include practical instructions and references to more in-depth information.

We hope this report can serve to disseminate our experiences, knowledge and results to other LEADER areas that would like to increase the benefits of their activities in order to create greater and more sustainable development.

/The project group, June 2021:

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# Background

The project Learning and Innovation (LIN) was initiated at the end of 2016 by Marion Eckardt at Community-led Local Development Halland (CLLD-H/LLUH), after several years of collaboration with Mats Holmquist at the University of Halmstad on the assessment and impact of LEADER actions. LLUH, together with the University, had explored the possibilities of developing models for external learning and sustainable impacts, but it soon became apparent that the organisation did not have the resources for developing a model. Thereby the idea of a cooperation project was born. LLUH formed a project with LEADER Linné Småland, LEADER Western Småland, LEADER Sjuhärad as well as LEADER Bohuskust and its bordering area.

Learning was connected to development processes, both internal and external, in the forms of local development. The research also makes the connection to working for change and working for improvement (Granberg & Ohlsson, 2018, Ellström & Hultman, 2004). Innovation was, in the first instance, connected to local benefits and long-term development in rural areas, and that the projects involved should become more innovative - both process and content-wise.

Innovation means bringing something into general use. In order for short-term project results to be taken into general use, they need to lead to long-term impacts. For temporary LEADER actions to provide permanent rural development, the results need to be implemented and bring about sustainable structural changes. Each project in itself does not necessarily lead to impacts and innovation, however many put together form a joint effort - in the best of scenarios - as an innovation system where local associations, companies and the public sector can all collaborate. Innovation was also connected to new ways of working and innovative methods and tools that were developed within the project.

## Purpose and goal

The purpose of the project was designed to:

- develop the LEADER method's strategic and practical ability to create further societal benefits
- increase internal learning to bolster the LEADER areas' strategic capacity
- increase external learning to implement and exploit valuable project results, organise change processes, as well as achieve sustainable innovations that are not dependent on project funds.

The goals were mainly specified to:

- develop a model with tools for increasing learning and innovation from the LEADER method's results, which can be utilised in other regions in Sweden and in the EU.
- ensure that each LEADER area involved improves on its own work, in relation to long-term impacts
- improve working methods pertaining to learning and innovation among project owners and their organisations in the LEADER areas involved.
- create changes in the structures for working with impacts in projects.

## Execution of the project

Based on research on sustainable project work (Svensson, Aronsson, Randle & Eklund, 2007) projectification (Hodgson, Fred, Bailey & Hall, 2019) and effects of projects (Svensson, Brulin, Jansson & Sjöberg, 2013) as well as practical experiences from project work, a common model was developed over the course of the project period for how learning and innovation can be enhanced in LEADER. One point of departure was Mats Holmquist's theoretical diagrams of the connection between permanent and temporary operations (diagram 1). One of the built-in challenges in all types of project-work is the risk that they can be temporary, just a flash in the pan that fizzles out as soon there is no more project funding, and the project leader has moved on to other projects.

The LIN-project was carried out at a steady pace for quite some time - from 2017 to 2021. Joint, physical, two-day meetings every six months were followed up with two digital meetings biannually. During the pandemic, the physical meetings were replaced by digital ones. In the meantime, each LEADER area worked with its own local learning processes, sometimes with support and input from the University in the shape of training and workshops. The LAG (Local Action Group) staff members and boards in the LEADER areas involved, the project owners and leaders, have adapted and developed their ways of working and their priorities to be able to contribute towards a long-term approach to impacts.

## Theory

The research-based knowledge and theory that was the foundation for the LIN-project and impact thinking can be described with two theoretical models (diagrams 1 and 2 below) and a number of terms defined below. More information

can be found in the assessment report from the Swedish Board of Agriculture - Jordbruksverkets utvärderingsrapport 2020:1 (Holmquist & Johansson, 2020).

## Definition of Terms part 1

### LEADER funding

Temporary project funding from LEADER.

### Results

Achieved project goals that are reported on at the end of the project period.

### Impacts

Permanent changes in the local community resulting from the project, which are often attained a number of years after the completion of the project.

### Internal learning

Occurs with the project organisations are financed by temporary project funding. The purpose of the learning is to develop own support structures and project operations.

### External learning

Takes place in the part of society that lies outside of project funding. The purpose of the learning is to implement and make use of the project results in order to develop sustainable impacts. External learning is started up during the planning stages of the project and is embedded into the project work itself.

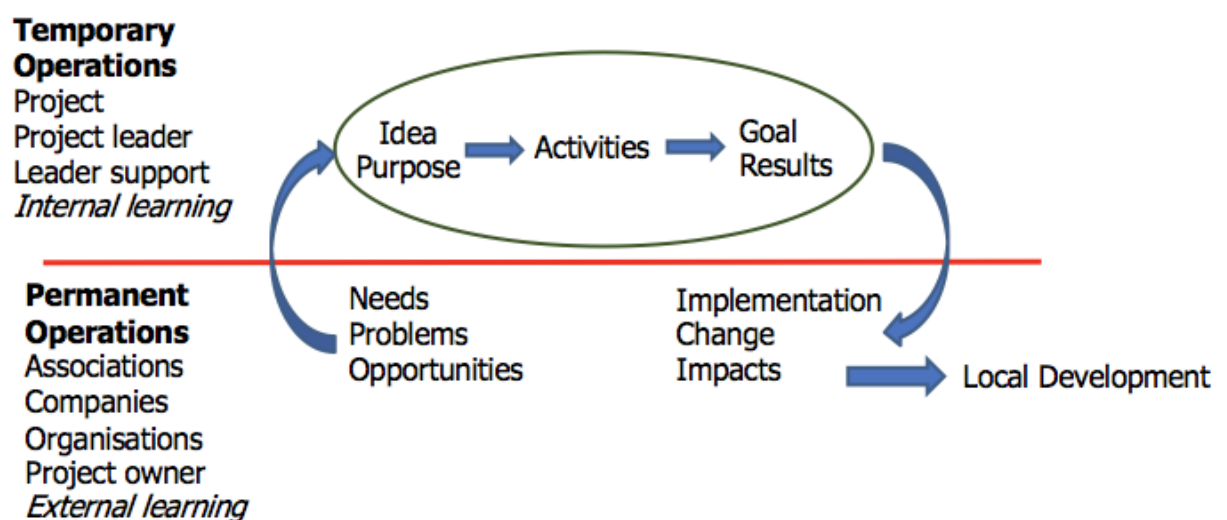


Diagram 1: Permanent local development through the use of temporary actions

There are permanent operators in local society such as associations, companies and public sector organisations. These operate in the long term and exist before and after the project; others are temporary operations with a limited time span. The permanent organisations are crucial in order to take the temporary project results on board and convert them into sustainable impacts in the form of local development.

Local development needs display as opportunities or problems, which are then shaped into an idea with a local development purpose that in turn becomes an application for a project and receives support from LEADER. Project activities are carried out, and the goals of the project are reached, to varying degrees. The learning is often internal in the sense that it relates to the temporary project operations and knowledge that is not carried over to the permanent side.

At the end of the project period the activities reach a result that has been created with the help of LEADER support. The purpose of the activity is long-term sustainable local development. In order to achieve this, valuable project results need to be implemented into the permanent operations. The results need to lead to structural changes in order to provide long-term impacts in the form of local development. This calls for an external learning process with permanent actors and processes that need to be organized, the learning does not happen by itself.

Project owners need to identify on the one hand, which recipients should be engaged and involved for the project results to live on, and on the other, which ones can one disseminate the results to? The purpose of this is to harness the impact potential and preferably also have the results contribute towards inspiring other local communities. The project owner formulates and plans for impacts, an impact pathway including activities and impact objectives in the long and short term. What is needed is a sustainable plan for the results to endure economically without project funding, as well as a plan for impact financing. In order to carry impacts forward, all of these activities need to be included in the impact organisation of the project and they need to be allocated resources.

## **Definition of Terms part 2**

### **Impact potential**

Which impacts the project can lead to and how this can make its imprint on local society

### **Impact pathway**

How the project is intended to lead to long-term local development.



### Impact objective

Long-term development goals in local society.

### Impact organisation

How the impact pathway should be organised in order to attain the impact objectives, as well as which recipients and stakeholders should be involved.

### Impact financing

How are continued operations to be financed without project funding after the completion of the project.

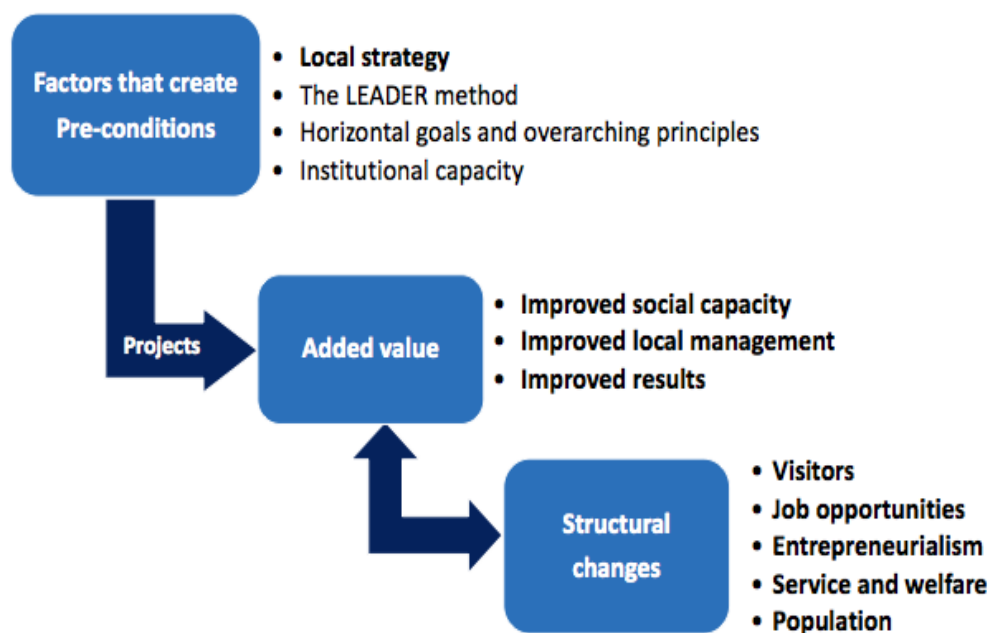


Diagram 2: Rural development with the support of LEADER actions according to the EU, as depicted by Holmquist & Johansson, 2020

## Definition of terms part 3

### Institutional capacity

Organised development potential through fixed collaborations and supportive structures

### Social capital

Trust, knowledge, quality of life, health, attraction etc.

### Local guidance

Networks, meeting venues, communication, plans etc.

### Improved results

Facilities, infrastructures etc.



Diagram 2 depicts a schematic picture of how the EU (2018) views rural programme activity contributions towards structural impacts. The added value elements are vital steps along the way, but not sufficient to give rise to structural changes - additional steps are needed for this. A meeting venue and public footpath/hiking trail can enhance quality of life for people who live in an area and perhaps even the attraction of the area, but that does not mean they will provide any quantifiable, structural improvement - that requires more. For instance, arranging regular events at the meeting venue that attract visitors and entrepreneurs, or linking a hiking trail to local lodging and food providers - and then creating tourist packages that are marketed in Sweden and Europe. More visitors and increased entrepreneurialism can lead to new jobs and people moving into the community. By expanding impact thinking beyond the end of the project, beyond the small local context, one can grow the impact potential.

## Methods and tools

A number of methods and tools were developed in the project for learning and innovation based on research and practical experience:

### METHODS

- Impact training
- Impact workshop with question cards
- Development coaches

### TOOLS

- Impact barometer
- Impact survey
- Introduction film

Each LEADER area developed and tried out their own variations of models, with points of departure and input from the University, which included all the methods and tools (see below). Even local variations of the methods and tools were developed. Those that are presented in this report are a synthesis of all the variations that are backed by research - and ones we recommend other LEADER areas to use. Areas are free to adapt and develop their own versions - with a view to increasing impact thinking and creating more impact through LEADER actions.

## Impact training

Training was at the core of impact thinking for the LAG board, the LEADER staff, project owners and project leaders. The training went through the theory and the process mentioned here and included an overview of the methods and tools. We often used one, or several, local projects as examples in a workshop format, with the project owner taking the stage.

Experience showed that the concepts and words have an impact. One of the keys to getting these to stick is to have recurring sessions for providing training and information. The board and staff need to have experience and knowledge before they can execute training with project owners and project leaders. It is difficult to convey the message and inspire participants without these.

## Impact workshop

(See also attachments)

The workshops were carried out with project owners and project groups for one project, or project owners for several projects that worked in tandem during the workshop. The methodology was process-oriented and based on the project plan for the granted project application. We produced a process chart with accompanying question cards as support and working materials. We also used a PowerPoint with and without recorded instructions, created to be used in an impact workshop.

The material is intended to be used as a tool for executing the workshop in an organisation and facilitating planning in the long-term, as well as being connected to the project that is underway. By working gradually through the various steps, brainstorming in smaller groups and documenting the most relevant conclusions reached together, you are given the possibility of carrying out a step-by-step plan for the long-term impacts of the project, and working out how the results the project creates should be administrated. The tool is so simple and the instructions so clear, that carrying out the workshop is possible without any previous knowledge.

Experience has shown that the workshops are very effective and lead to reflection within the project. This is where experience and knowledge are required to be able to run the workshops and convey the benefits to the recipients. Using the tool makes it easy for just about anyone to carry out the activity. It is a good idea to do this in several stages as time for reflection in the project as has proven to provide better results.

Furthermore, experience has shown that impact workshops have developed learning in both the approach to working and working in practice for the project and staff at the LEADER offices. The arrangement does work and has been improved upon over time. There are also clear synergies in having several projects in a group, partly for organisational and efficiency reasons, but also because they can learn from each

other and gain a better understanding of the impact workshop processes. However, it calls for the process leaders in each group to be experienced and prepared.

## Development coaches

One method that we tested was 'development coaches'. We called this model the coach model. We almost exclusively used LAG board members as the coaches, but one LEADER area tested using outsourced coaching providers.

The coaches have been given an impact-driven role in certain chosen projects. Parallel to coaching in a project, the coaches were also trained in guiding and supporting project owners in impact thinking – this was the responsibility of Mats Holmquist and the operations office. In Halland, coaches have even assisted with developing and improving the tools (working material) that the coaches can then use when they meet with project holders. It is important for the coaches to feel comfortable in their roles and to know what they are talking about when they meet the project holders. It has been evident during the course of projects that it is easy to muddle up activities, results, added value and impacts. It is therefore important that the coaches have clear and explanatory supporting material.

Buying external coaching services proved to be less successful. The biggest advantage in using LAG board members as coaches is that it facilitates an exchange of internal and external learning within the LAG board. This has happened through coaches giving feedback at the LAG board meetings about their work. Through their participation in LIN-projects, coaches have even become better at analysing projects from the impact angle, which they have been able to apply to boardroom work. This has meant that in conjunction with the assessment of projects the issue of what long-term impacts in projects are has been defined much more clearly.

A number of project holders that have been assigned a coach have been asked what their views on that were. Most were happy to have had a coach for the project. The coach had been able to look at the project with a fresh outlook and been able to provide important input. It has been deemed good to have someone with knowledge involved, someone who could assist, be a supportive resource.

Some coaches, too, have been asked what they thought about the coaching. All of them felt it was difficult at first to grasp the concept of impact thinking. However, with training and better tools that were developed over the course of the projects, it got easier. It has, at times, been challenging to reach out to project holders and get them to understand the concept of impacts. The coaches feel they have been able to get a deeper knowledge of the projects, and feel their knowledge base was of use to the projects.

One experience has been that it is good to choose a coach for a project that the

coach can benefit from. At the same time, the operations office must take chief responsibility for training of coaches and projects in impact thinking.

To bear in mind:

- The coaches' task is to push for the impacts of the project
- Coaches are trained for guiding and supporting project owners in impact thinking
- Coaches can be chosen from among the LAG's board members

## Impact barometer

(See also appendices)

The barometer is a tool for evaluating the strength of impact in a project. The assessment is carried out on five impact indicators: Impact potential, impact pathway, impact objective, impact organisation and impact financing (see descriptions above). Each area is evaluated on a five-scale rating as to which degree the project has a well-reasoned and written plan. 4 – to a very high degree, 3 – to a high degree, 2 – to a low degree, 1 – to a very low degree or 0 – none at all.

The barometer can be used in various contexts:

- During project development with the project owner
- For assessment and prioritising project applications
- For follow-ups and assessments

Experience has shown that it takes a relatively long preparatory period for the LAG to use the tool in their assessment. The points given are a subjective assessment that can differ from person to person and thus not provide definitive knowledge, but it is a good tool for supporting impact thinking.

## Impact survey

(See also appendices)

The survey was produced by the University of Halmstad together with The School of Public Administration at the University of Gothenburg including insights from several LEADER areas. The survey is comprised of 17 questions put to project owners about

impacts. The answers constitute self-assessments, giving a subjective picture of what the outcomes of the project were. The idea is that it should be carried out at the end of, or preferably, sometime after a programme period. When it was sent out to all the project owners in a LEADER area and then compiled, it provided an interesting result which could be used - when seen through a critical lens, as it is somewhat biased - for follow-ups, learning and assessment.

LEADER Bohuskust has assessed the impacts of all the reported-on projects in the period 2014-2020, as of the middle of 2020. This was done using an impact survey. Compilation and analysis were carried out by two students at the end of their studies in agronomy at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The survey was a good tool for assessment, but certain fundamental sources for error remain:

- The causal link between actions and impacts are difficult to deduce and part of the complex context of events.
- Certain projects were terminated several years before investigation into them, which further renders correct assessment difficult.
- The survey is aimed at project owners and project leaders who, to a certain extent, are defending their own positions and can therefore not be expected to be fully objective.
- The answers include the respondents' subjective views/estimations of the impacts generated within each respective project, not the actual measured, or determined, impacts.

Nevertheless, we do generally find that the survey works well and gives valuable knowledge on the impacts of the project.

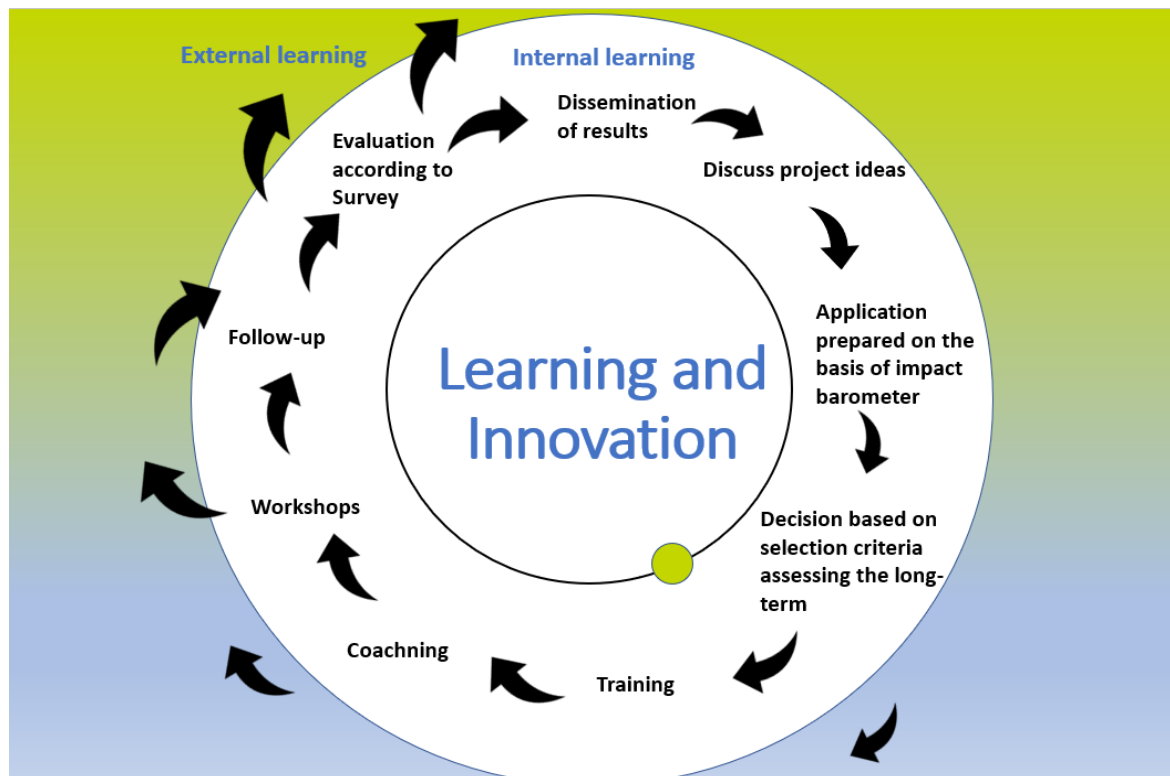
## Introduction film

[Leaderprojekt ger effekter - youtube](#)

We produced an infographic film at the end of the project the purpose of which was to, in a simple way, explain how one can work with impacts related to LEADER projects. With the use of humour and animated figures, enhanced with words, sounds and texts, we created an information tool that can be used in many contexts. The tool is suited to new LAG members, new project owners and project leaders. It is meant to encourage the partnerships behind LEADER to think further ahead. It is a good way of connecting long-term impacts, development strategies and the impact barometer. The film speaks for itself as an independent tool, but is naturally only an

introduction to be able to work with the issues. It can be used in workshops and training, as a basis for discussion, or as informational material.

## Working method



*Diagram 3: The various stages of the development process*

We have formulated various methods and tools in the LIN-project and they can be seen in the development process for the project (diagram 3). The common thread throughout the process is impact thinking. The purpose of describing the process is to increase awareness about how LEADER areas can implement this type of thinking, with long-term impacts in an operation and not as a manual describing how everything should be done in a certain order. Each project is unique, and each LEADER area is specific in its own way, which means that the tools and methods will be used in different ways and at different times.

The process is designed to commence already when the project owner contacts the LEADER office to discuss project ideas. Questions about impact thinking and long-term thinking are brought up. These can be: who will handle the results and are more activities needed to involve the recipients of the project results? The introduction film is a tool that can be used in this work to increase understanding. When the application for project support is received by the LEADER office it is handled in the usual manner, but also using the impact barometer as a tool for

assessing the impact potential, impact pathway and impact organisation of the project. When it comes to the decision on funding, the board makes its assessment of long-term impacts in the project on the basis of absolute conditions and/or selection criteria. The approved projects are offered training and workshops on impact thinking. Here, too, the film can be used as a tool to facilitate understanding of the process. In some cases, a coach is also offered to work with an individual project. The project will be followed up in various ways by the office and the board - through for instance visits and reports. During assessment, the impact survey that has been produced by this LIN-project will be used at least once. At the end of the process, the results will be disseminated to the recipients of the project results and other stakeholders.

### **Example: LEADER Linné Småland**

During the course of the project, we decided that long-term thinking has to permeate all of the various work steps of the operation. To make this clear, we made a diagram of the process that includes the following parts:

- The question of how the project's results shall be managed and developed is brought up already when the project owner contacts the LEADER office to discuss the project idea. Then the project owner can develop the project idea and include activities and possible costs in order to ensure that the project leads to long-term impacts.
- The application is processed using the impact barometer. The staff at the LEADER office go through the application with the impact barometer, giving points to the impacts of the project.
- When it comes to decision on support, the board assesses the project's long-term potential, which is a factor taken into account in the selection criteria, or in the absolute conditions.
- A coach, or guide, is offered to certain projects when it is deemed that they could be of value, and there is a willingness from the project owner to receive coaching. Reporting to the office is done using a report template. We appoint board members as coaches - matching competencies and experiences that fit individual projects.
- Project training is offered to approved projects, after decisions on support have been taken. One part of the training is a shorter impact workshop to introduce project owners to impact thinking and to formulate plans to achieve long-term impacts.
- LEADER staff make visits to the project and carry out follow-ups of the project once a year to discuss outcomes, lessons learned and possibly a plan



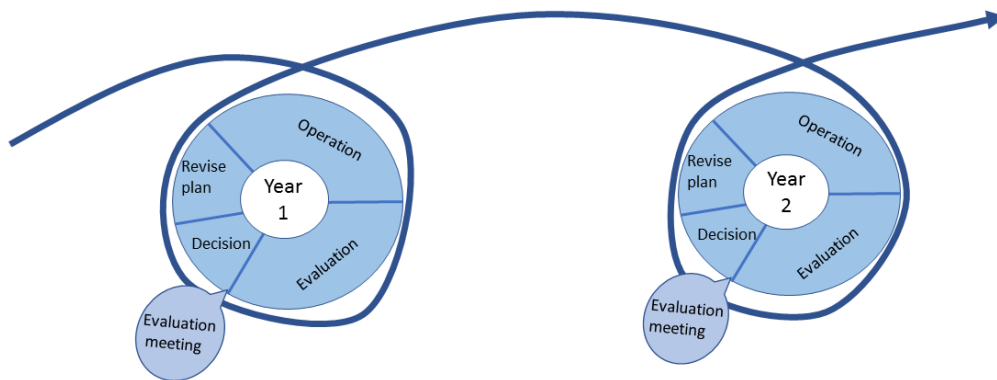
for how the results should manage by themselves after the project period. An opportunity is provided here for noting what needs the project may still have, and for possibly offering coaching and impact workshops.

- In conjunction with a two-day board meeting, the project holders are visited or invited in to discuss progress. This is an opportunity for the board to meet with the participants of the project and to be updated on project development.
- We form 'rural area clusters' that are comprised of the project participants from various projects, LEADER staff and the LAG board representatives, to bring together the project as a group. These can vary depending on the needs of the project such as, for instance, an impact workshop. We usually consider that these can be formed a couple of times a year, and we also invite parties from umbrella projects to participate.
  - Some project owners are invited to impact workshops and these meetings are arranged by the LEADER office. Workshops are carried out early in the process in order to gain a rough picture of the provision of results, defining of the organisation and the names of strategically relevant people. They are then invited to join the learning process through, for example, learning meetings in order to get people involved. In this way, their perspective is taken into consideration and provides for more realistic results that are easier to implement.
- Following up of results is executed through the reporting of the project to the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the respective LEADER area. Some projects can even be followed up via video recording. The questions that the board want answers to are:
  - What are the outcomes of the project?
  - Which goals were met?
  - Have you identified any unexpected results?
  - Which lessons have you gleaned from the project?
  - Have you forged any new collaborations?
  - What is running a LEADER project like?
  - How will the results live on after the completion of the project?
  - Who are the recipients of the project's results? Who will take it forward?
  - What about financing afterwards?
- The follow-up will be carried out on different occasions with the use of various tools. It would be best if the follow-up is carried out some time after the completion of the project in order to measure the long-term impacts in the

form of structural changes: population, jobs, service and welfare, entrepreneurialism and visitors. In the preparatory work for the next period, it seems the Swedish Board of Agriculture will include a follow-up. There will be a continual implementation of the assessment of projects, working methods and processes from the perspective of learning and innovation.

## The learning process

Learning has been at the core of project development work. Each LEADER area has organised its learning process based on their own preconditions. Bohuskust and its border area formed a learning cycle which we have below as an example. .



*Diagram 4: The learning cycle in Bohuskust and the bordering area*

(The work is described in a separate report - [www.LEADERbohuskust.se](http://www.LEADERbohuskust.se))

The model for LEADER Bohuskust and the border area is based on a cyclical assessment procedure and learning related to social networks. The idea was to use discussion fora through our social platform to create interactive learning. The work involved four separate steps:

- The assessment and production of a learning cycle including a learning model.
- Learning assessment through a social platform.
- The assessment of results from the three cycles of the learning model using a survey procedure.
- A comprehensive report on the learning cycle model.

A third cycle assessment was carried out in the summer of 2019. We have followed up on three cycles, but have not worked with our discussion forum as we had intended. The social platform [www.lingon.se](http://www.lingon.se) exists and works after some minor development problems, but it is not in use at the moment. The timeline for digital discussions is difficult to master. The benefits of each respective arena needs to be made very clear.

Thanks to the LIN-project, perspectives on and understanding for impact thinking has been embedded in our organisation at the board, staff and project levels. Annual surveys have been a valuable tool for enhancing focus in the projects. We have gradually worked more with the projects in the end stages and after the projects have been completed, to provide added value and impact. We have continuously been able to see how application and preparatory work should have been organized. We have learned about the importance of different roles on impact, have used the impact barometer on our projects in order for us to be able to learn from it, and we have worked continuously with impact workshops.

### **The advantages to our learning cycle**

- It is relatively simple.
- It is a qualitative tool which affords several ways of making an impact.
- It has recurring focus on learning.
- The assessment becomes a basis for discussion.

### **Drawbacks**

- It is a little cumbersome to produce questions and different surveys for different groups.
- It is far too complicated to have five annual surveys with groups that sometimes include several roles.
- The division of LEADER staff, financiers, project owners, project leaders and the LAG board members has been difficult.
- The discussion forum calls for continuous activities. The value analysis of the Lingon forum may have failed.

### **Lessons learned**

- An early agreement should be in place with the projects on participation in meetings and taking into account time and resources needed for the project.
- It is not always easy to act after assessments that can at times be difficult to interpret.
- Staff and the LAG board too need to set aside time for the implementation of changes.

## The evaluation of the LIN project

An assessment based on eight points was carried out at the end of the LIN-project. The evaluation method was based on intentional self-assessments in each respective LEADER area, followed by a joint learning seminar. The self-assessments were made by two to eight people from each respective LEADER area. People from LUS (Lokal Utveckling Sverige - Local Development Sweden) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture carried out self-assessment, but only on points six and seven. The questions were to which degree the goals had been met, and which viewpoints the LEADER areas put forward.

1. *An increase in internal learning and an improvement in own work with long-term impacts.*

According to the answers this was achieved to a high degree. The viewpoints put forward were that there were insights and awareness about the meaning of project ownership. Impact thinking has become even more established within the LAG board and a natural part of the office's daily operations. The ability to work with long-term impacts has been developed. Impact thinking is taken into account at the office and by the board in project assessments. This mode of thinking has increased internal learning, changed lines of reasoning concerning working in the long-term and improved our own ways of working with long-term impacts. The operations offices have been able to reach out to the project holders through activities, workshops, and new working methods. The LAG's board has had a more systematic way of thinking and has a logical flow throughout its work – which is something they will carry through to the next programme period.

2. *Increase in external learning and improvement in working methods for innovation among project owners and their organisations.*

This has been partially achieved. It was a great deal harder to reach out to project holders and their organisations, and this will only be able to be measured in the

longer term. Coaching has enabled learning to be transferred to the projects and that will be useful in their regular operations. The coaches and the LAG's board have also gained experience which they can use in their everyday work. The projects that have had a coach felt that had been useful. The LAG's board has learned about and increased awareness of impacts. The new way of working and the new material will continue to be used. Impact training has raised project owners' awareness of this way of thinking.

3. *Developed a model/method with tools, from the LEADER method results, to increase learning and innovation.*

This has been achieved to a high degree. The model with methods and tools is more or less developed. It is used in slightly different ways in the various LEADER areas, which will continue to work on it in the next period. It is important to invest time and resources in this. The LEADER staff have become clearer in their approach, take more responsibility and benefits have increased.

4. *Developed a model/method that can be transferred from included LEADER areas to other LEADER areas in Sweden and the EU.*

This was achieved to a high degree. A toolkit exists and will be posted on an open platform where others can have access to it and use it. Parts of it have already been transferred to other areas, nationally and internationally.

5. *Achieved changes in structure to be able to work with projects in LEADER.*

This was partially achieved. Several LEADER areas are well on their way, although the work only just started and has not yet hit its stride. There are thoughts and ideas, routines have started to be changed and new structures are being set in place. It will take more time for things to fall into place.

6. *Disseminated learning and results at the policy level in LEADER Sweden and in the Swedish Board of Agriculture.*

This was achieved to a high degree. More attention is paid to this today as the topic is brought up in various contexts. The project has impacted the Board of Agriculture with various kinds of input. This has also occurred via LUS (Lokal Utveckling Sverige - Local Development Sweden), the Swedish Rural Network, national LEADER meetings, LEADER in the EU and through the project

continuously providing information about results via email and at various meetings.

*7. Contributed towards the EU 2020 goal concerning innovation and sustainable growth within the EU.*

This has been partially achieved. By designing a model where we work more actively with projects to create more impacts, we have contributed to the EU 2020 goals relating to innovation and sustainable growth in the EU. The results of the project can be directly applied to LEADER project applications, to support more sustainable effects. The project is innovative because there are today no sufficiently developed processes, or tools, for this work.

*8. The University of Halmstad has had a supporting function in the development work.*

This has been achieved to a very high degree. We would not have been able to get anywhere without this support that included: interesting discussions, eye-openers and troubleshooting.

Among the other points of view mentioned were:

- During the course of the project it became clear that impacts do not necessarily arise from all projects. In some cases the added-value of the project is quite sufficient, it depends to a great extent on what kind of project it is.
- Progress has been a little sluggish. It is difficult to change ways of working and takes time. Much of the work is self-evident, but can be difficult when it needs to be put into practice.
- It is extraordinarily evolving to think and act structurally in a different way - when someone else has said that we should test it this way, and we have to adapt. Academic theory is put into practice and the practical challenges the theories. There are benefits to both sides!

## Concluding remarks

These years of involvement in the collaborative project “Learning and Innovation” have been productive. We have shaped the project through many discussions and

assessed our own practical experiences under the leadership of researcher Mats Holmqvist from the University of Halmstad. It has increased our competence in long-term impacts and helped us to find methods and tools that feel right for the individual LEADER area and that can be adapted to separate projects/actions.

LEADER is a working method for fulfilling the EU's goals and it is therefore important that the benefits and impacts that LEADER generates are displayed more clearly. We can achieve this through working in a structured manner, by making what impacts are more visible, through the coaching and training of project owners, as well as carrying out follow-ups of results and impacts over time. At the core of it all is the learning.

The cooperation project 'Learning and Innovation' has led to valuable experiences, networks and contacts that have been useful to our continued work in looking ahead to the next programme period. Cooperation between the LEADER areas has been crucial to the work's progress. It is our hope that other areas will be inspired and take on board the methods and tools that are presented in this final report.

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## Appendices

### Project material to be found here:

<https://lluh.se> under the title “Driva projekt”- “Leaderprojek ger effekter”

- Impact training ppt (Swedish)
- Impact survey pdf (Swedish)
- Impact barometer pdf – Swedish and English versions
- Impact workshop - instructions and questions cards - ppt with voice (Swedish)
- Impact workshop ppt (Swedish)
- Case impact workshop pdf (Swedish)
- Reporting system coaches pdf (Swedish)
- Introduction film - “Leader projects have effects” (Swedish)