

SWEDEN

Local development

Location

Hio

Programming period

2014 - 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 108 093

EAFRD 54 046

National/regional 18 377

Other 35670

Project duration

2016 – 2019

Project promoter

Leader Östra Skaraborg LLU

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In order to take advantage of the enormous potential of outdoor tourism, fostering cooperation and networking among the local actors is essential.

Summary

Great possibilities for outdoors tourism abound in the area of Skaraborg, along with the potential for small enterprises to expand their business to include tourism activities. But not all small businesses are able to take advantage of these possibilities. Along with LAG’s in connected areas, the Leader Östra Skaraborg wants to develop such outdoor tourism in the area by helping entrepreneurs and other actors to cooperate and create new products.



They are doing this by organising networking and educational meetings, and by offering help on developing new products and packaging for already existing tourism products.

Results

One of the participants’ meeting for kayaking businesses led to a new concept: fixed departures of kayaking tours.

A biking-package for international visitors was created in Skaraborg that includes a couple of potential accommodation options on a certain route.

The concept of biking-packages is about to be introduced to other connected areas.

A boat route with fixed departures on the largest lake in Sweden, Vänern, was developed with support from the project.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is essential to bring together municipalities, tourist agencies and regional tourism companies. The success of such projects relies on engaging all the actors.
- ❑ According to the workers at the Leader office of Östra Skaraborg, it is important to have an experienced project leader in a broad and established network.
- ❑ Working on a large area has pros and cons. The project of Östra Skaraborg, together with projects in Värmland, reaches over a large area where a great number of entrepreneurs and other actors operate, but it might also be difficult to keep the project together.

Context

Nature and outdoors tourism are the parts of the Swedish tourism industry that are growing the fastest. According to a national strategy, the tourism industry in Sweden is on course to double by 2020. In order to support this growth the project aims to foster innovative entrepreneurship and cooperation between existing enterprises.

There are many small enterprises in the rural areas which are active in tourism, but the problem is that small entrepreneurs, or potential entrepreneurs, are often not included in large promotional campaigns on a regional scale. Small entrepreneurs therefore might miss the opportunity to reach out to the international market and here's where the Leader project fits in.

The project focused on the area of Skaraborg and Värmland, which has an attractive countryside and can offer most kinds of outdoor tourism. Attractions include streams, lakes, national parks and nature reserves, plains and forests. The project is lead by the Leader area of Östra Skaraborg, but it cooperates with leader projects in other parts of Skaraborg, and Värmland.

Objectives

The purpose of this project is to create new, and develop already existing, networks for actors in the tourism industry. Enterprises and other actors (such as municipalities, the region etc.) will be supported through cooperation to create and develop new products.

Specific quantified objectives include:

- 1.5 new job opportunities (4.5 together with the other connected leader projects);
- A new enterprise established;
- 10 existing enterprises actively participating in the project;
- 500 new overnight stays (in hotels and other accommodation);
- A new virtual venue;
- 100 persons trained;
- 1 000 new day visitors;
- 14 new products or packages; and
- 10 new joint actions by participants.

Activities

Activities carried out as part of the project include:

A series of networking and education meetings were organised. One of them focused on digitalisation, aiming to help local entrepreneurs to better reach out to their customers through social media. Another networking meeting was devoted to existing and potential new kayaking businesses. Participants had the opportunity to exchange experiences and through the interaction to develop and create new products.

The project team is also actively seeking and meeting actors in the industry and helping them to develop their businesses and cooperate with each other.

“When you first called me, I was sitting in the kitchen with a tourism entrepreneur and the regional destination company ‘Visit Värmland’. These kinds of meetings are important; I have the ‘local’ perspective while Visit Värmland brings the broader regional perspective.”

John Zafaradi, Project leader

Main results

The meeting for kayaking businesses had an immediate result. One of the participants started a new concept: fixed departures of kayaking tours. The project team underlined that such results are mainly due to the engagement of the involved actors. Nevertheless the project helped to facilitate and inspire new ideas.

A biking-package for international visitors has been created in Skaraborg. The package includes a couple of potential accommodation options on a certain route.

The concept of biking-packages is about to be introduced to other areas in the connected projects

A boat route with fixed departures on the largest lake of Sweden, Vänern, was developed with support from the project. An entrepreneur contacted the project leader and asked for advice on what to do with his newly purchased boat. After some brainstorming and help in establishing contacts with the head of tourism in the municipality, the entrepreneur launched a new product.

Main Results

“Synchronise!” John emphasises. “It might sound like a cliché, but the synergy is what has made this whole project. You need to bring in the municipalities, the tourist agencies, and the regional tourism companies. And I have to be humble. If something has been successful in this project it is not because of me alone, but because of all of the actors that have been engaged in it”.

Other workers at the Leader office of “Östra Skaraborg” highlight the importance of engaging an experienced project leader with a broad and established network of contacts.

Working on a large area has pros and cons. The project of Östra Skarborg, together with projects in Värmland, reaches over a large area where a great number of entrepreneurs and other actors operate, but it might also be difficult to keep the project together.

Additional sources of information

n/a