



Self-assessment tool at a glance

Thematic Group (TG) self-assessment driven by TG members

Type of tool:	Thematic Group assessment
This tool is used in:	Sweden
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This tool is used for...

In Sweden, most of the network activities are performed by the network members. Therefore, the network is built through formal membership. Formal membership allows the network to finance specific costs related to network activities (including allowances and travel expenses of working group members). The members of the Swedish Network are regional and national organisations that are active in rural development (not direct beneficiaries of RDPs).

The network sees itself as “an intermediary helping and giving its organisations knowledge and tools so they can inform and motivate their members to use the RDP measures better”. The Swedish network operates thematic working groups with the involvement of its members. The work performed by these groups is aimed at tangible operational objectives, and the activities arranged are assessed based on their contribution to the objectives. The assessment is made by the thematic working group and, accordingly, the Network Support Unit also actively involves network members in the self-assessment process. The Swedish Network Activity Plan for 2015-2016 states that: “most of the results will be followed up by asking target groups how they assess that they have benefited from the efforts and if they can use the knowledge they gained.”

The main purposes of developing self-assessment tools in cooperation with members are:

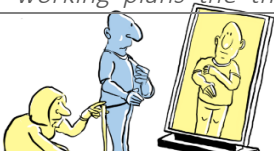
- to keep a partnership (such as TWG) on track towards common objectives,
- to investigate if it is worth the money and time efforts,
- to feed in to the yearly planning process that is conducted by the steering group consisting of network members,
- to ensure that the NRN works towards the achievement of the stated NRN objectives.

This is how it works...

Each focus area in the activity plan is described according to a certain intervention logic:

- 1) needs that should be address by the network
- 2) changes we want to achieve that meet prioritised needs in terms of specific objectives and expected results
- 3) description of how the expected results will contribute to the overall objectives.

In their working plans the thematic working groups elaborate the intervention logic. Operational objectives are



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determined, activities described and expected outputs listed. Furthermore, the thematic working groups should describe how the results will be assessed.

The actual outputs are reported once a year, using the indicators suggested by the ENRD Contact Point and some additional indicators developed by the Swedish Network Support Unit. The results are assessed continuously and will be used in the planning process for the thematic working groups as well as the steering group. The assessment of results will also be an input to the external evaluation of the network.

Figure 1. Illustration of the process of the thematic working groups



The Swedish Network Support Unit is planning to develop a tool to facilitate reporting of outputs.

The main advantages of using this method are...

Including network members in the self-assessment increases the understanding of both objectives and results. The contribution of activities to the overall objectives becomes clear to the members. Continuous assessments of results, and not only outputs, can provide better input to future activities and external evaluations.

We've been facing some challenges while using this tool...

It has been difficult to explain the intervention logic to members. There have been concerns that an increased focus on measurable objectives may result in the prioritisation of activities that provide easily measurable results rather than activities that are most needed.

Furthermore, it is difficult to assess the results of different activities. A survey, or other evaluation tools, may not give an accurate picture of the actual results, partly because it is difficult to ask the right questions and partly because some results are not apparent in the short run.

Attachment: Please attach any templates (the tool itself), or description, or database, etc.

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