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| Programme: | Europe for Citizens Programme - 3.2.2 Measure Networks of Towns |
| Deadline: | 1st of March 2017 |
| Contact person: | Name: Mrs Helena Torsell Title/profession: Head of International Affairs E-mail: helena.torsell@vara.se Telephone: +46 51231837 Address: Stora Torget 8, 53481 Vara, Sweden Website: www.vara.se |
| Organisation: | <p>The applying organization is a cooperation between six municipalities in the western part of Sweden, within the Region of Västra Götaland. The cooperation is called V6 and the participating municipalities are Essunga, Grästorp, Götene, Lidköping, Skara and Vara. The V6 area consist of approximately 82 000 inhabitants.</p> <p>The V6 municipalities are located between the two large lakes, Vänern and Vättern, north-east of the greater Göteborg region. With its closeness to Gothenburg (90 km), Stockholm and Oslo (both approximately 330 km) it is situated in the center of Scandinavia.</p> <p>The V6 municipalities have a strong agricultural and industrial tradition which is experiencing dynamic development. Established industries such as agriculture, food, furniture and industrial production are combined with the regeneration of the corporate structure and a growing number of employees within service and knowledge-based companies. Interest in sustainable development, locally produced and ecological food is also growing. Today, the area has a low unemployment rate and in the future foresee an increased demand for skilled competence and labour.</p> <p>Swedish municipalities are unique in the scope of their competencies and their constitutional power of taxation. In Sweden, local authorities traditionally have a strong role in society with a high degree of self-government and responsibility for different sectors and activities. Each of the 290 municipalities in Sweden is responsible for providing a significant proportion of public services like schools, emergency services and city planning. They also have a considerable degree of autonomy and have independent powers of taxation. According to law, the municipalities are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare and pre-school • Primary and secondary schools |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services • Elderly care • Support to people with disabilities • Health and environmental issues • Emergency services • Urban planning • Sanitation (waste, sewage) <p>Other responsibilities may be voluntarily undertaken, such as culture and leisure activities and business/enterprise development.</p> |
| <p>Project idea: (Aim/objectives/ activities)</p> | <p>Innovative Sustainable housing solutions stimulating integration in rural areas</p> <p>The V6 Municipalities are searching for European partners who are interested in participating in a project under the Europe for Citizen Programme. The project aims at exchanging experiences and knowledge on innovative sustainable housing solutions stimulating integration in rural areas.</p> <p>Rural municipalities have a huge untapped potential in terms of providing good living conditions and at the same time a socially sustainable integration. One of the major obstacles to fully exploit the potential is the lack of housing.</p> <p>The exchange in the project will therefore focus on finding new solutions on how to create flexible housing that stimulate integration and address other demands in rural areas.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>High costs for construction of new residential areas result in high housing costs for their inhabitants compared to those who live in older buildings. This applies primarily to rental apartments and condominiums, but also single-family houses. Because of the high housing costs for new housing, there is a very low movement in the market and building prospectors are very reluctant to start new development projects. This low mobility and flexibility in the housing market makes it difficult for many groups, such as newly arrived immigrants, young people, elderly and other vulnerable groups to enter the market and to adapt their housing situations to their real needs. Young people who would like to move away from home but stay in the same geographical area, are having difficulties in finding a suitable place of their own. Elderly who wants a smaller apartment choose to stay in their big single-family homes.</p> <p>This problem has a major impact on local opportunities to maintain attractiveness on several levels, both as a possible place to live but also in terms of accommodation for tourism. This also has a negative impact on population growth and to attract labour.</p> |

In conjunction with the recent increased flow of refugees to the area, it has also become clear that the lack of flexibility in the housing market prevented effective solutions. Both on the short term for refugees, but also in a longer integrational aspect, possibilities to convince a greater number to stay in the area has been lost. Mostly due to a lack of knowledge and strategies on how to deal with both these question. There is a need for strategies on a long term perspective and innovative solutions to handle a fast increased need of housing on a short term perspective.

The project will focus on exchanging experiences on solutions to create a more effective and socially sustainable housing through flexible, innovative and creative solutions to this problem. This would be done primarily by discussions within a series of workshops with similar European municipalities and at the same time invite actors from the surrounding society. Experts and researchers in the field could also be invited to the workshops. It is important that the project strengthen the possibility of promoting an open society where diversity is welcomed both in rural and urban areas, and where women and men have the same opportunities for development and a rich life.

Possible areas to be raised in the project are:

- The credibility of investments, innovative financial solutions and methods to produce homes with lower housing costs
- How to eliminate social disparities and creating an inclusive and socially sustainable society
- Urban-Rural Dimension– the potential in rural areas versus bigger cities
- Integration in rural areas to increase growth

Activities in the project could be:

Studies

Creation of a guide, recommendations and plan

Workshops

Lectures by scientists/experts

Seminars

The project would consist of x transnational meetings where the above mentioned areas would be discussed. Most partners in the project would organize such a transnational meeting.

Results:

The project will result in a shorter guide with good examples on innovative sustainable flexible housing solutions that could stimulate integration and growth in rural areas. Based on partner feedback and experience, the partnership will also try to develop recommendations on what steps that need to be taken in order to create a successful result. Beside the manual and recommendations, the partnership will, at the end of the project, also have a plan for how to continue, develop and deepen their future cooperation.

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| | If you find this proposal interesting, please do not hesitate to make contact for further details at latest the 3 February . |
| Partners searched: | <p>The V6 municipalities are seeking collaboration with partners in Europe who have extensive experience working with housing solutions in a rural context. The V6 municipalities are particularly interested to collaborate and share knowledge with other local authorities in Europe who are or have been in the same situation and have experience in developing innovative ideas to stimulate functional and flexible housing. An important part of the project will also be to find ways to unlock the potential for integration in rural areas, not only through good housing but also through social inclusion.</p> <p>The project will also focus on the creation of long-term and structured partnerships between municipalities and other stakeholders, and to encourage active citizenship and help to engage citizens in matters relating to the EU's political agenda, and experience of this is thus also desirable.</p> <p>The partnership is also intended to be the basis for future initiatives and interventions between the participating towns, of the areas addressed in the project, but possibly and hopefully also in other fields of common interest. The potential of the network that is formed should be used to develop a thematic and sustainable cooperation between the participating organizations.</p> |
| Project period: | September 1, 2017 - March 31, 2019 (18 months) |

Budget

The budget in Europe for Citizens are based on lump sums and are calculated on number of international meetings and the number of international participants attending these meetings. Therefore, a budget would not be relevant until at least a number of partners and meetings could be defined and agreed upon. However, it is probable that the project will have a total budget around 100 000€ with 6-8 partners. Partners will receive a contribution to travel costs for transnational meetings as well as logistics when hosting a transnational workshop.

More information regarding the budget will be provided later in the process