

1. Short description of the initial situation

- a) Oslo Teknopols main tasks: facilitate innovation, through a technopole strategy for the Oslo region.
- b) Economic context: About 1 mill inhabitants. Knowledge economy, driven by petroleum activities and income generated from petroleum industries. Tendency towards “Kuwait-economy” (consumer/leisure economy). High level of education and a strong R&D base (50% of the Norwegian total).
- c) Existing or potential networks: Very fragmented. More than 30 public or semi public development agencies. Many of these are competing, and using most of their resources to secure own economic survival.

2. The intra-regional activities during STRATINC: Problems encountered while implementing STRATINC activities.

First response: “why another programme (STRATINC), and agency (OT) trying to organise us”.

After the working group had been established they made it a very clear; “look for synergies, use the existing tools (PSIPs) and existing surveys (Norwegian Research Councils foresight project) instead of making new ones”.

3. The selection of solutions (of PSIP).

A short survey revealed that there were three PSIPs project all ready in progress before STRATINC came along. OT chose to work with the best/most promising project, where we also were represented/partners; MedCoast and the Scandinavian Life Science Database (SLCD).

Diffusion of information was done through OT newsletter (Oslo Business Update).

The profile/design of SLCD was at first ambitious about degrees of information, but soon had to scale down, since companies turned out to be reluctant to share sensitive business information about core ideas/knowledge base.

The SLCD positive side is that it is easily maintained (mostly by the companies) and its large numbers of entries (more than 1.100) shows its popularity. It also serves as a marketing tool for the whole cluster (braking down the national borders in the Scandinavian countries).

4. The main output of the STRATINC-project

STRATINC has not played a major role in the cluster as far as strategic intelligence is concerned. It is still too early to say if the foresight project set up by Norwegian Research Council will have any long term strategic effects. The SLCD has limited strategic purposes.

STRATINC has however played an important role in creating the meeting place, the arena for establishing a regional network of the key stakeholders in the cluster. This has been lacking (only national organisations have played this role), and this has also made it possible to start the process of identifying the cluster, and thus creating a common understanding of its strong and weak sides, its challenges and threats (SWOT). The project created a common understanding that the regional borders of the cluster should be extended south towards Sweden and Denmark (Scandinavia) and it has in general exposed the clusters weaknesses (among this on the public support side), and therefore also increased the motivation for change and better organisation.

STRATINC has not provided the tools for structural change (innovation system governance), which can not be handled by internet tools and PSIPs but has to do with classical powergames and to a certain degree feudal politics. This has however been developed along the way, by necessity and by studying other sources of knowledge management literature (and applying previous experience from this field).

5. Main results of the project

The general organisation of STRATINC at first used on the life science cluster in the Oslo Region has also turned out to be useful for other clusters in the region. During 2005 four other clusters have been identified; Maritime, Energy and Environment, ICT and Culture. OT has taken a leading role in networking and cluster building due to successful and effective cluster building tools from the “tool kit” of STRATINC and other cluster literature provided through the project. These methods turned out to be more related to “face to face” methods, trust building, alliances and foresight methodologies and less use of PSIPs.

The Blueprint: Too early to assess its quality and value.

Changes in the cluster is occurring: The will and capability to make changes has increased visibility and the trust and willingness to cooperate between OT and other stakeholders.

OT have changed its organisation according to the experiences from STRATINC and are systematically transferring knowledge, ideas, management techniques between the different five clusters in the Oslo region (see model in the Blueprint).

6. Main lessons learned

Clusters are different, regions are different (and thus we need to have a context sensitive approach), but the essence is the same for all: It is about people who basically are pursuing their (and their organisations) self interest. People who do not have a clear agenda are also difficult and unpredictable to work with. This must be taken into consideration. If self interests are colliding – one must be prepared for negotiations, compromises and in some cases conflict. Information tools can not always solve this.

7. Conclusion

A very useful project, all though the results were more on the unintended side, than on the intended.