

Work Report no. 202

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**Mid-term Evaluation on Project Level of
Projects funded during the 2nd call within the RFO
“ENABLE - ENABLing European Entrepreneurship”**



2007

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1. Executive Summary

The ENABLE programme is meant to promote collaboration between European regions and we believe that the projects funded under the second call will contribute to this. A number of projects will lead to enduring partnerships, offering the potential of significant success.

The intent of the review was to undertake a systematic examination and review of the ENABLE projects addressing the following:

- 1) Project results compared to planned results/outputs
 - Generally project results compared favourably to planned results and outputs. Some projects were partly behind schedule due to unforeseen problems, but all of these projects are addressing the problems efficiently and will probably be able to finish the project within the project period.
- 2) Project progress compared to planned timing
 - Generally most projects are either on time, or effectively addressing delays.
- 3) Involvement of project partners in project operations
 - There has generally been good cooperation and involvement in the projects.
- 4) Trans-regional activities and intensity of collaboration
 - This has generally been good.
- 5) Contribution to ENABLE programme priorities
 - As in the previous section, the ENABLE programme priorities were met.
- 6) Efficiency of management structures and processes
 - Generally the application process was straightforward in terms of what had to be done.
 - There were some concerns expressed by some participants about the short application time frame, but this was not a universal concern, and seemed to be less frequent than in the first review of ENABLE projects.
 - Reporting was considered to be onerous (especially given the relatively small size of the projects) by a number of participants, and while not as frequent a concern as in the first major review, it still is a serious issue.
- 7) Relation to and interaction with ENABLE lead partner
 - Project management was generally good.
 - Some projects have faced significant, undeserved problems due to job turnover and illness of key personnel, but have addressed these problems in an impressive manner.

Preface

This is the second report from the evaluation of the projects founded within the RFO-*ENABLE - ENABLING European Entrepreneurship*. The ENABLE programme is a part of the European INTERREG IIIc Programme. The evaluation is commissioned by Hordaland and Sogn & Fjordane County Municipalities on behalf of the Regional Framework Organization.

The report is limited to those projects funded under the second and last of the ENABLE project calls. The report succeeds a prior report from the combined mid-term evaluation of the projects funded under the first project call and the pilot project call (Mitchell-Banks 2006). The two mid term evaluations will be followed up by a final evaluation of all projects founded within the ENABLE programme. This is scheduled to be completed by 19 January 2007.

The empirical basis for this report is an e-mail survey amongst the projects partners. The survey, which the report is based upon, is conducted by Dr. Mitchell-Banks. When Mitchell-Banks left his employment at Møre Research, the project management was taken over by Lars J. Halvorsen. The report is based upon the report draft and surveys conducted by Mitchell-Banks, while Halvorsen has analyzed the surveys and finished the report.

The report is mainly based on a survey conducted in the fall 2006. A total of 26 respondents have taken their time to answer the questionnaire. The evaluator wants to thank everyone for their help, and further, to thank Hordaland and Sogn & Fjordane County Municipalities, and WNRI represented by Ivar Petter Grøtte and Ingjerd Skogseid for helpful assistance during the evaluation.

Lars J. Halvorsen

Volda , January 2007

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2. Purpose of the Review of the ENABLE Projects

Møre Research was commissioned by Hordaland and Sogn og Fjordane County Councils on behalf of the Regional Management Group (RFO) to undertake an evaluation of the projects funded within the ENABLE Programme. The ENABLE Programme is part of the European INTERREG IIIc Programme.

There are four regions involved in the ENABLE Programme:

- Hordaland and Sogn of Fjordane counties (Western Norway)
- Kaunas County, (Lithuania)
- State of Carinthia, (Austria)
- State of Thüringen, (Germany)

Funding challenges for Lithuania eventually led to that country not funding any projects and instead using the ENABLE programme to take on a role in a Regional Management Unit, and using the project as a learning process on Regional Framework Operations.

The partners involved in the ENABLE Programme are as follows:

- LEG – Erfurt, Germany
- STIFT – Erfurt, Germany
- KWF – Klagenfurt, Austria
- Sogn og Fjordane County, Norway
- Hordaland County, Norway
- Kaunas County, Lithuania

The overall intention of the ENABLE Programme was to:

- Improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments for SMEs
- Increase the basis for entrepreneurship and innovation in the regions
- Create vibrant, self-confident and competitive regions with a strong internationalised SME basis
- Promote the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, experiences and regional policy instruments
- Create and strengthen an innovative regional network

The intent of the review was to undertake a systematic examination and review of the ENABLE projects addressing the following:

- 1) Project results compared to planned results/outputs
- 2) Project progress compared to planned timing
- 3) Involvement of project partners in project operations
- 4) Trans-regional activities and intensity of collaboration
- 5) Contribution to ENABLE programme priorities
- 6) Efficiency of management structures and processes
- 7) Relation and interaction with each RMU structure
- 8) Relation and interaction with ENABLE lead partner

3. Conducting the survey and analysing the data

The main empirical basis for this report is an e-mail survey conducted among the persons representing each project partner in the seven ENABLE projects that received support during the 2nd project call. The evaluator received a total of 26 replies, representing 3-5 respondents per project. The total numbers of potential respondents in the 2nd call were 32. Five of the six persons who failed to reply are members of the TOURHEAL project group. In this project five out of ten participants found time to answer the questionnaire, which still provides the evaluator with an adequate overview over that project. Compared to similar studies, the feedback rate can be considered to be very good.

The questionnaire contained a total of nine questions. Not every person who participated in the survey answered every one of these. However, our analysis shows that in total the replies provide a reasonably good overview over the ENABLE 2nd call in total, as well as each project.

In addition to the questionnaire, each project application has been used to compare objectives with actual outputs. The latter has also served as a supplement to the survey, providing valuable background information about each project.

The data analysis has been utilized in the evaluation of the activities related to the 2nd project call on two levels; the projects under the 2nd call in total, and each project. The findings on these levels are presented in chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

Chapter four will discuss the overall results of the projects receiving support during the 2nd call with regard to the five following questions:

- Have the project participants done what they were committed to in the proposal and the funding agreement?
- What kind of (if any) troubles were encountered?
- If and how does the project contribute to the overall ENABLE goals?
- What has been learned by the various parties and the ENABLE programme as a whole by the project (firm, partners, project, programme, policy)?
- How can learning from this project contribute to improving the existing and potential ENABLE programme and activities

Chapter five focuses on the performance of each project receiving funding under the ENABLE 2nd call, and will address ten topics. The first topic is the *Project Partnership*. The second topic is the *Intent of the Project*. The third topic evaluates the *Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, and Indicators* of each project. Under the fourth topic the *Coordination and Management* of each project is analyzed, while the budgets are examined under the fifth topic. The sixth and seventh topics regard *Corporate Future* and *Public Awareness, respectively*. *Lessons for improving the Project Level* and the relationship between the *Project and ENABLE Goals* are then analyzed, before finally giving the *Researcher General Comments* on the project.

4. An overall evaluation of the ENABLE-projects, 2nd call

4.1 Have the project participants done what they were committed to in the proposal and the funding agreement?

The overall picture is that the project partners have done what they were committed to in the project proposals. All projects with minor exceptions were conducted within the limits of their budgets. Among the seven projects receiving funding in the 2nd call, four projects (DeMonTools, InMicro, Promot-Grow, and R.O.A.D.S.) were either completed as scheduled or on schedule to be completed according to plan. Two projects have faced difficulties that have caused delays, but have efficiently addressed these and are on schedule to fulfil their obligations during the project period (UTTS and TourHeal). The project ManageSME has also faced difficulties. These have been addressed with support from the RMU-level, but not in time to give the evaluator a basis to draw a clear conclusion about the result. However, discussions with Norwegian RMU-members indicate that also this project will be mostly, if not fully accomplished.

4.2 What kind of troubles have the projects faced?

The survey shows that four out of seven projects faced none or only small difficulties during the project period. Out of the three projects facing larger problems, UTTS and ManageSME were burdened with shift or illness among key personnel, and TourHeal was facing typical large group cooperation problems (Olson 1965; Hardin 1993). Examples of minor difficulties are short time delays in deliveries of important inputs, and short application- and project periods.

It is worth noticing that, even if some problems have caused delays, the project partners were able to handle most of them efficiently. It is plausible to assume that the project partners addressing the problems at an early stage were a necessary condition for positive outcomes in these cases.

4.3 How do the projects contribute to the overall ENABLE goals?

The overall objectives of ENABLE as presented in the application form are:

- improvement of the effectiveness of regional development policies and instruments for SMEs
- increase of the basis for entrepreneurship and innovation
- creation of vibrant, self-confident and competitive regions with a strong internationalised SME basis
- exchange of knowledge and experiences
- development of new instruments for dynamic regional leadership
- furthermore, one additional objective in the ENABLE programme presented in the brochure is to improve the impact of spending of EU structural funds.

The ENABLE programme finances three different project components. Even if each of these emphasizes different parts of the overall objectives, and apply different approaches, they are all aiming at the same overall objective, namely regional economic development by empowering SMEs. When approaching the question *How do the projects contribute to the*

overall ENABLE goals?, I will emphasize the sub-projects contribution to this overall objective with respect to two central criteria.

The first criteria, whether the projects produced results that contribute to regional economic development through by SMEs, concerns the direct effect from the projects.

The second criteria, whether one can expect the project to result in prolonged cooperation after the project period, relates to the lasting effects from the cooperation. It is well documented that successful cooperation can produce social relations characterized by reciprocity and trust, which in turn stimulate further cooperation (Putnam 1990; Granovetter and Swedberg 1992). Whether the participation in the ENABLE-projects has produced this kind of “social capital” (Coleman 1990; Putnam 1990), is thus an important and highly relevant question.

4.3.1 Did the projects produce results that contribute to regional economic development by empowering SMEs?

Out of the seven projects receiving funding during the 2nd project call, five projects seem to have produced results (products, new technology, systems for administrative support, etc.) that contribute to regional economic development by empowering SMEs in different ways.

Among the two remaining projects, ManageSME could very well contribute to the defined objectives, but at the time of the survey there were not enough results for the evaluator to draw a conclusion in this matter. The second of these projects; Promot-Grow produced some promising results. On the other hand the project was connected to parallel national activities. This makes it hard to separate effects from national undertakings from those caused by activities financed through the ENABLE project.

4.3.2 Can we expect the projects to result in prolonged cooperation after the project period?

The survey clearly indicates that the participation in the ENABLE-project has created social relations, which can last after the project period. Further, the survey strongly indicates that some of the project partners will establish new, cooperative activities after the projects are completed. There are however, large differences between the respective project groups in this matter.

All project participants expressed intentions to stay in touch with their respective project partners after the completion of the project.

Four projects groups had intentions to prolong or further develop their cooperation. Among these, DeMonTools and InMicro had specific and, as far as the evaluator can tell realistic plans for this. The other two (R.O.A.D.S. and Manage SME) had less defined intentions, but can be expected to continue the cooperation if they find a good topic and preferably some financing.

The largest project group (TourHeal) also harboured intentions to establish new cooperative activities, but these will most probably take place between some of the project partners, and will most likely take place within each region.

The two remaining project groups; UTTS AND PROMOT-GROW had intentions to stay in touch after the project and will possibly cooperate at a later point of time, but they had no specific plans for continued cooperation.

4.4 What have the various parties and the ENABLE programme as a whole learned from the project?

From the survey it is possible to deduce three major lessons: Firstly and in my opinion most importantly, there were widespread positive experiences with cooperation and exchange of knowledge among the project participants. As many as nine out of 26 respondents explicitly stated that the sharing and common use of information between the project partners has been their most positive experience in the project period. In some projects the combination of different knowledge and skills had produced significant obvious synergies. In these cases, the cooperation can be expected to continue after the project period. To conclude shortly, under the right circumstances, cooperation clearly has the potential to improve regional economical development by empowering SMEs.

The second lesson from the 2nd call is that it's often difficult as well as time consuming to establish efficient intra-regional cooperation, and that some of the projects clearly would benefit from a longer project period. This would also reduce each project's vulnerability, when facing challenges like delayed deliverances of key inputs, or illness, or maternity leaves, or loss of key personnel.

Thirdly, the surveys indicate only sporadic public attention to the projects. If public attention is considered important, a common PR-strategy for the programme should be developed.

4.5 How can learning from this project contribute to improving the existing and potential ENABLE programmes and activities

There are three major lessons to be drawn from this survey regarding the topic improving existing and potential ENABLE-programme and activities.

Firstly, cooperation, in addition to possibilities, poses major challenges for the project partners. The most frequently mentioned challenges in the 2nd call were:

- Short project time
- Too much bureaucracy compared to the size of the projects
- Vulnerability towards loss of personnel etc.
- Organising cooperation is challenging. The challenges increase with the number of partners and differences between them.

Secondly, the survey indicates some factors that enhance the chances of successful cooperation. These are:

- The project partners dealing with each other prior to the projects increases the chances of success. If the potential project partners have no prior relations, the amount of time available for preparing and embedding the project with the project partners is of great importance
- The administrative support the project group receives during the project is of great importance, especially if a project faces significant problems.

Thirdly, an important lesson on the project level is that the probability for solving problems increases significantly if the problem is addressed quickly and wholeheartedly (i.e. UTTS).

5. Review of Each Project

5.1 DeMon Tools

Project Partnership

There are three partners in this project. Carinthia Tech Institute (*CTI*) with the University of Applied Sciences, School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Spittal/Drau is the Project leader, with the *IB-Weimar*- Ingenieurüro für Bauwerkshaltung GmbH, Weimar Thuringen, and the Bergen University College (*BUC*), Faculty of Engineering as project partners.

The idea for this project started with *IB-Weimar*, and the *CTI* joined in the early discussions about participation in the ENABLE program. After deciding to apply for the program, the German and Austrian partners were assisted by the RMUs in finding a Norwegian partner. This process resulted in *BUC* joining the partnership. The partnership has worked well, especially between the German and Austrian partners.

Objectives of the Project

There is an increasing interest in the restoration and rehabilitation of buildings and structures. This project focuses on the potential to monitor the dynamic or static behaviour of structures to determine their status. Currently available monitoring systems are either manual or industry specific for particular applications, and as such are both inflexible and expensive. The objective of this project is to define basic and open specifications for a building monitoring system that uses sensors to provide different information that in turn can be coordinated and employed for each field of application.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

In the three regions involved in this project there are public and private owners of buildings and structures concerned with maintenance, restoration and a strong interest in energy efficient buildings. This project aims at developing tools for the monitoring of health data of a structure, monitoring corrosion data of steel reinforced structures, monitoring energy relevant data of buildings, and finally performing a laboratory test for corrosion measurement and corrosion protection of steel in concrete.

The project application contains six work packages (WPs). All of these are met or will be met during the project period. Work package one has been completed. Work packages two to four are underway, while work package five (the laboratory test) is delayed approximately one month due to delays in obtaining reference electrodes. The WPs included seminars and workshops, study visits at all locations, a laboratory pilot project and documents. All milestones are being met and all the meetings described in the project plan have been held as anticipated. In addition a number of unofficial meetings have been held. It is anticipated that the project will be completed on time.

Coordination and Management

The surveys indicate that the project has been managed and coordinated effectively. There do not appear to be any concerns about the project management.

Budget

The project partners have stayed within the budget laid out in the project proposal.

Corporate Future

The participation in ENABLE has allowed the partners to develop a good basis for further cooperation. The partners want to continue to cooperate in the field of monitoring as well as in the field of teaching in the two universities. It is anticipated that this cooperation may extend into commercial applications.

Public Awareness

There were the interregional ENABLE meetings and the final meeting of the project, which is open to the public. Other than this, the general public is largely unaware of the project.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

The project participants all experienced a lack of time and funding, arguing for a project period lasting at least two years with better funding and reduced demands for administration and documentation on the financial audit.

Project and ENABLE Goals

This project clearly meets the ENABLE goals and holds high promise for future development.

Researchers' General Comments

DeMon Tools appears to be a successful project on all levels. All objectives are or will soon be met, and equally important, the project partners have clear intentions and what seems to be realistic plans for future cooperation in commercial projects.

5.2 IN-MICRO

Project Partnership

This project has four partners: Carinthia Tech Institute (*CTI*) with the University of Applied Sciences, School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Spittal/Drau is the project leader. Carinthia Tech Research AG (*CTR*), Institute for Microsensor (*CiS*), and Haukeland University Hospital (*HUH*) are the project partners.

In 2004 *CTI*, *CTR*, and *CiS* agreed to collaborate in the field of applied machine vision and optical measuring technique based on sensors previously developed by the *CiS*. In a brainstorming meeting at the Sensor 2005 fair in Nuremberg, it was decided to extend the consortium by including the Norwegian partner *HUH*.

Objectives of the Project

Increasing automation in the field of manufacturing and assembling of micro systems requires improved quality monitoring at every stage. This is closely connected to contactless measurement of completeness and system set-up, surfaces, caves, internal spaces and gaps, etc. Measurement systems targeting these specific areas usually consist of complex image acquisition and analysis systems, which tend to require large investments and specialist competences.

With the new MORES sensor developed by *CiS*, based on the remission/reflection technology, the simultaneous acquisition of three different kinds of information is easily possible:

- variations of the wavelengths,
- distance/length of run between sensor and surface of object and
- timing by triggering emitting light.

The key issue of the project is to analyse and test the feasibility of the MORES sensor family; respectively the MORES sensor technology for optical real-time measurements to solve specific inspections and other related tasks in the micro-world. If successful, the MORES technology could replace image acquisition and analysis systems, thus reducing the need for specialist competencies and investment cost for SMEs in the microsystems manufacturing industry. Each of these gains has the potential to increase the SMEs' competitiveness, and thus contribute to regional development in the partner regions.

Project Activities and Outputs, Benefits and Indicators

The project application contains six WPs with connected milestones. These are WP 1) a feasibility study, WP 2) development of demonstrator I, WP 3) development of demonstrator II, WP 4) dissemination of results, WP 5) concluding the project, WP 6) project management. All of these seem to be successful and all milestones have been met.

The main outputs include: extensive research documents, demonstrator I, demonstrator II, manuals, and meeting minutes. All are considered successful.

It appears that MORES is a very promising application for both selected application cases and therefore product development is realistic. *CTR* carried out the work package specification of sensors and application, market survey, first business plan. Based on this work, *CTR* is actively contemplating a continuation of the work for both applications, especially a near-time commercial realisation of application 1 and further research and development on application 2. For the region as a whole, there was collaboration with a local agency regarding a market survey. As for collaboration with local businesses, some SMEs will be involved in the prototyping, which could lead to an increase in production. The market for both applications will be worldwide, collaboration with current partners and experts from their regions are essential. With respect to SME entrepreneurs, application 1 has immediate product potential that could be realised as a start-up SME by *CTR* or with a local SME.

Coordination and Management

Coordination and management has been good and there are no major concerns among the project partners. However, some concern about *CiS*'s engagement in dissemination activities was voiced.

Budget

The costs were within budget limits except for travel and accommodation.

Corporate Future

The project partners have had good experiences with the cooperation. These relations provide a good basis for further cooperation. Furthermore, the project results are promising, thus giving the project partners an incentive to further develop the existing project. Especially worth mentioning is a specific plan for a new project in the field of ophthalmology. This plan involves defining markets for the new product as well as establishing contacts with new partners.

Public Awareness

There has been some awareness regarding the anticipated results of the project, especially concerning the envisaged project results.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

None mentioned with respect to the ENABLE project approach. One partner suggested a longer project period and a desire for more time with respect to the project call.

Project and ENABLE Goals

This project clearly meets ENABLE goals.

Researchers' General Comments

This seems to be a very good project that clearly meets the ENABLE goals. All milestones have been met, and the project has brought about promising results with great potential for regional economic development through increased competitiveness for SMEs. There are also good reasons to expect that the project partnership will be continued and even expanded after the project period.

5.3 ManageSME

Project Partnership

The project group consists of three partners: NyKunnskap AS has the project leadership. The other partners are Technische Universität Ilmenau (*TUI*), Department of Civil Law; and Kärntner Wirtschaftsförderungs Fonds (*KWF*). LEG took an initiative for the partners to meet and discuss the possibilities of developing project cooperation. Representatives of the three

project partners met in Klagenfurt in September 2005 to discuss the possibilities to establish a partnership. In this meeting the three partners discovered similar interests in SMEs, and were able to find a common ground for cooperation.

The three partners have all been occupied with relevant topics for this project, although through different approaches. NyKunnskap works with innovation for SMEs on a county level in Norway, KWF is the sole economic promotion institution in the province of Carinthia, and TUI has a strong tradition in interdisciplinary approaches to entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Project

ManageSME intends to extend the lifecycle of young companies in the growth and consolidation phase by providing customized management developments based on applicable tools. To do so, the project will improve existing tools as well as develop new ones to handle important tasks that the start ups are confronted with.

To begin with, the specific management challenges had to be identified and analysed. Based on analytical results the main objective was to provide assistance to improve the effectiveness of their business management. There has been a major focus on developing these tools in close accordance with the management and leadership challenges for young firms. Thus, an important part of the project was a) to identify and analyse the most important needs in the start-up phase, b) to define the regional differences in such needs, and c) to develop tools that are adjusted in accordance with regional differences when it comes to start-up challenges.

The objective of the project can be divided into seven sub-goals:

- Strengthen business management capabilities and effectiveness of SMEs in a sustainable way.
- Stabilize the business operation by improving management skills and leadership.
- Map leadership challenges as a base for case study-oriented management training
- Develop sensibility and understanding among management consultants for the special needs of SMEs, as far as training and management consultancy are concerned.
- Stimulate consultants' competences through providing practical and sustainable assistance for SMEs.
- Involve regional authorities to improve management competences through their networks.
- Presentation of best practice examples through successful management.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

The project application for ManageSME contains the following five WPs:

- Identifying, mapping and analysing the leadership and management of SME
- Exchange workshops
- Development of content for customized management developments
- Implementation of the developed program
- Final evaluation of the project results

At the time of the survey, four meetings had taken place in Norway and Carinthia, in addition, another meeting in Thuringia was under preparation. The meetings held appear to have been successful.

Publications were produced, surveys and evaluations have taken place, and two successful workshops all of which would support an effective exchange of experience and the transfer of information. There have been management development planning activities in five enterprises, two upper secondary schools and two municipalities. Mini-seminars and educational programs have been carried out. There is ongoing work on improving management development practice, a systematisation of information and common experiences to create a competence base, and some articles concerning ManageSMEs as learning organisations.

Coordination and Management

The project was well coordinated until July 2006, when it faced serious challenges due to simultaneous shifts in key personnel at all the three project partners. There is now a concerted effort to get things back on track and to complete all of the project requirements on time. Discussions with members of the Norwegian RMU indicate that these measures have been successful, and that the project will to a large degree reach its objectives.

Budget

The project has stayed within budget.

Corporate Future

It is anticipated that each partner will develop new projects in related fields based upon the experiences from the participation in the ENABLE programme. In addition the project partners will contribute to the establishment of an international network of entrepreneurs.

Public Awareness

Because of the ManageSME project, there has been a larger and more positive regional focus on the ENABLE partnership. There are also tendencies to public awareness on SME websites, in newspapers, mini-articles in regional publications, regional conferences and meetings. There exist plans to disseminate publications after the project is completed.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

There is one important lesson to be learned from this project: the significance of prior dealings with potential project partners. This project was built upon earlier cooperation between the partners. This enabled them to efficiently find a common basis for cooperation in a short time, and has also contributed to making the cooperation work.

Project and ENABLE Goals

The project started quite promising, but faced serious setbacks after the loss of key personnel. As a result, the project had not yet produced convincing results at the time of the survey. As

stated earlier, there are reasons to believe that the project is back on the track again. If this project does in fact develop SME support to a significant degree, then this project would support ENABLE goals, but given the limited nature of this review and the uncertainty mentioned above, this is not possible to assess at this time.

Researchers' General Comments

The project has objectives that clearly lie within the core of the ENABLE-programme. It had a promising start, but faced seriously, undeserved, problems. These problems are addressed by the project partners, but not in time to give the evaluator a basis to draw any clear conclusion about the results.

5.4 PROMOT-GROW

Project Partnership

There are three project partners. The lead partner was Technologie- und Innovationspark Jena (*TIP*). The other partners were Kärntner Betriebsansiedlungsgesellschaft mbH (*BABEG*), and *Innovation Norway*.

All three participants were involved in the project development and application, but they have worked relatively autonomously in developing the project activities in their own regions. The latter is partly due to the fact that the organisation of the cooperative activities in each country was to a large degree bound to national guidelines. This limited the partner's flexibility in this project.

Objectives of the Project

The project focuses on SMEs in the growth phase, particularly after being in business for a few years and having to relocate to a larger space and potentially leaving a place where the business was supported – such as incubators. It is well documented that this transition period is a critical phase for the survival of young firms. The objective of this project has been to improve the survival rate by systematically gathering and analysing experiences from such transition periods, documenting and disseminating best practices, and finally establishing tools for supporting SMEs in this phase.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

As mentioned above, there are three main objectives for the project. These are:

Objective 1: Exchange of experiences and knowledge

- Existing methods of solution, approaches shall be compiled and assessed
- Experiences the partners have made in this field should be merged

Objective 2: Collecting best practices

- Problems regarding the business location and concerning the contents/ strategic orientation of young enterprises on their way to consolidated enterprises between the third and eighth year after the start-up (growth phase) should be filtered out

- Existing methods of solution shall be tested in view of their feasibility and effectiveness
- Applicability of existing approaches / programs for other countries should be assessed

Objective 3: Development of new supporting possibilities for SMEs

- Alternatives (new approaches) shall be developed and tested
- Document with measures for new programs in the fields of strategy and location
- Catalogue/guide for the SMEs: helping institutions, methods, programs, general guidelines for the fields of location and strategy for the SMEs
- General guidelines for the carriers of business development

The project application contains six WPs. One of these was successfully completed at the time of the survey, while the other five are scheduled to be completed during the project period.

Outputs include the completion of the project document, creation of a project flyer, information about the project on the websites of all the participants, regional workshops and seminars and interviews held with companies. Benefits include the interregional exchange of experience, testing and documentation of new approaches, and greater understanding of different regions and situations.

Coordination and Management

The survey results show no concerns about coordination and management.

Budget

The project has stayed within budget.

Corporate Future

This project has contributed to ENABLE goals by producing and disseminating important knowledge among the project partners. This knowledge will be applied by strengthening the role of the regions in future business developments.

Public Awareness

There has been little public awareness about the project.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

There were complaints about too much bureaucracy given the amount of the funding, and frustration about a funding decision being made in February when the call was in September. It was also stated that the first reporting period was far too short.

Project and ENABLE Goals

There are thematic overlaps between this project and ongoing national projects. As a result PROMOT-GROW was bound to national organizational guidelines. This has significantly

limited the flexibility of the project partners. Still, the project itself is clearly within the core of the ENABLE programme and the survey indicates some promising results.

Researchers' General Comments.

The project management and coordination has been generally good and the project shows some promising results.

5.5 R.O.A.D.S.

Project Partnership

There are five partners to this project. Carinthian Tech Institute (*CTI*), Department of Geoinformation, Villach, Carinthia is the project leader, while University of Applied Science (*UPS*), Willach, Carinthia; *Asplan Viak*, Leikanger Western Norway; *RKIT* Consulting, Sogndal, Western Norway; and Entwicklungsgesellschaft Südwest-Thüringen mbH (*ESW*), Eisensach Thüringen were project partners.

The first contact between the partners was established by the regional management units of the ENABLE program in November 2004. From this time on, intensive discussions started on that topic using email and telephone conferences. The selection of partners was very important for the project. Each partner brought special expertise into the project, which together produced clear synergies on the project level.

- Western Norway (*Asplan Viak* and *RKIT*): Sensor Networks and analysis of acquired data is a key area of expertise for Avinet and sensor technologies and the further use of outputs from analysis is of great interest to the partner
- Carinthia (*CTI*): GIS and Decision Support Systems are among the main competences of the department Geoinformation at *CTI*. Sensor Networks in the field of GI Science is an interesting field for getting real time information for decision support.
- Thüringen (*ESW*): For Thüringen the development of a framework for the planning, extension and maintenance of road networks is of main interest. Within the scope of the project the expertise of the involved partners can be utilized for sustainable regional planning and testing in selected show cases.

Objectives of the Project

A wide range of environment related planning tasks would greatly benefit from the use of real-time monitoring data from sensors and sensor networks. However, today sensor technologies are mainly applied in non-systematic ways and hence the output data are unavailable to the planning and servicing authorities and entrepreneurs who could have benefited from them.

In Western Norway a complex sensor network for the collection of climatic data related to mountain passes and strategic infrastructure elements exists for the purpose of monitoring driving conditions. These data would greatly benefit their end-users by being integrated through geographical information systems and decision support systems. This would improve the quality of public services such as clearing the roads of snow or adding salt or sand to improve driving conditions on icy surfaces.

Carinthia could also benefit from the use of real time data from sensors for planning and servicing road networks. Digital maps combined with the environmental situation of certain regions can thus be used for planning and thus support the process in decision making.

In Thuringia the exchange of experience to improve sustainable regional planning and the quality supported by GIS are very important factors for the region. A lot of roads and tracks are already defined but they are not yet available in electronic form to be used in a decision supporting environment.

The project seeks to address the above problems with the objective of developing market potential for the participating SMEs and improving the knowledge and experience across the regions.

Data are of outmost importance throughout an institution or company. But the quality of data sometimes turns out to be a problem. Good decisions can best be made by using real-time environmental data from sensors. The results of planning and servicing activities can be visualized by means of GIS functions. The exchange of the expertise of the entire partnership will strengthen the project. The objectives are defined as follows:

- *Sensor network*: Exploring standardized methods for retrieving real-time data from sensors.
- *Spatial temporal data storage*: A flexible, open data structure has to be implemented for storing spatial temporal data (time series data)
- *Spatial representation techniques*: Techniques for visualization of certain situations on roads are defined
- *Spatial decision support system (ROADS.SDSS)*
- *Spatial analysis techniques*: Definition of analysis techniques using GIS for road networks using real-time information from the sensors
- *Framework for Roads.SDSS*: Design of a framework for a decision supporting environment
- *Roads show cases*: Selected show cases for different regional problems on decision support using real time monitoring data in order to show a broad spectrum of simulation results.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

The project activities have been organized into two subsequent WPs. The first of these, with the overall topic *Environmental Monitoring* was scheduled to take place within the period January 2006 – June 2006. The main activities in this WP were:

- Kick off meeting (video conference)
- Discussion on state of the art (telephone conference)
- Selection of sensors for the project (*AviNET*, *RKIT*)
- Working group on spatial temporal data storage (*CTI*, *AVINET*, *RKIT*)
- Working group on representation techniques for roads (*CTI*, *AVINET*)

The expected main outputs from WP 1 were:

- Report and presentation documents
- Description of a test scenario

- Documentation on the conceptual design of spatial temporal data storage and spatial representation techniques
- Workshop on the working packages and discussion (all partners)

The second WP *ROADS.SDSS* was scheduled to take place within the period July 2006 – December 2006. The planned main activities in this WP were:

- Working group on spatial analysis techniques for road planning
- Creation of test maps for road visualization
- Working group on conceptual design of a framework for SDSS (all partners)
- Working group on applicable case studies for *ROADS.SDSS* (all partners)

The main outputs from *ROADS.SDSS* were:

- Workshop on the framework for *ROADS.SDSS*
- Documentation and examples on *ROADS* show cases
- Final workshop on the results

At the time of the survey WP 1 was completed as scheduled, while WP 2 was on schedule to be finished within the project period.

Coordination and Management

Coordination and management, as well as the cooperation between the parties, seems to have worked very well. This is very impressive, considering that the project is a very complex one with quite different kinds of partners involved, including consultants, research institutes, universities and a regional development agency.

Budget

The spending during the project stayed within the frame of the budget.

Corporate Future

Through the project period the partners to the project have developed a good basis for future cooperation. Plans exist to expand the partnership into a larger scale R&D project.

Public Awareness

Several industry partners have expressed interest in future programs and working opportunities. A public workshop, in which industry and representatives from the public sectors will be invited to attend and discuss further development, is planned.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

There were some concerns about the level of administration required considering the size of the project.

Project and ENABLE Goals

This project is very promising and clearly meets ENABLE goals.

Researchers' General Comments

This is a first class project. The partners have been able to organize the contributions from five different partners from three countries in a way that created clear synergies. The results from the project no doubt meet ENABLE goals. Equally important, there is good reason to expect that the partners will expand the partnership established through ENABLE into a larger scale project.

5.6 TOURHEAL

Project Partnership

A total of ten partners from three countries participated in the TOURHEAL project. All partners have been selected because of their deep involvement in the development of the health tourist industry in their respective regions. The regions experience similar trends and can benefit from cooperating in a network, exploiting the different experiences and resources.

Bergen University College was selected as lead participant because of its competence within the fields of health and physical activity and strategic focus on Knowledge-based practice.

The other partners were:

- Hordaland County Municipality (*HCM*)
- Hordaland Reiseliv, which is the tourist board of Hordaland and coordinates tourism in the county. Hordaland Reiseliv represents an active link between the regional authority and the industry, and participates, along with tourist associations, destination companies, etc., in adapting and developing the tourist industry's common product
- Vossafjell AS: This is a small service firm located at the ski resort Voss. The manager, Ingjerd Dymbe Anda, contributed to the ideas behind the project.
- Idrettssenteret AS is a resource and sports centre with activities directed towards the public in general, offering advice, prophylactic and therapeutic services. Key issues are health, nutrition, physical activities and sports on all levels.
- Hagahugen Rehabiliteringssenter AS is a rehabilitation centre working with patients post-operatively, mainly suffering from heart and lung conditions.
- Erfurter Gastro Berufsbildungswerk e.V.
- Thüringer Hotel und Gaststättenverband
- Thüringer Tourismus GmbH
- Industrie- und Handelskammer Erfurt (*IHK*)

The project partnership has been reasonably good. However, some challenges have occurred due to the large number of partners and because the group harboured diverging interests. One result is that not all partners have participated fully in every part of the project.

Objectives of the Project

The service providers within the tourist industry find themselves in a market situation where physical activities, training, rehabilitation and nutrition are becoming important aspects of customer demands. A part of the scene is that different service providers jointly represent the total "service package" that individuals and/or groups or companies seek. Since the demands

transgress the traditional borders between the tourism industry and the health sector, development of new products requires new competencies. It also has implications for the product mix offered. Many service providers are SMEs with limited resources in the field of staff and product development. For SMEs to develop competitive and reliable services, a network that includes SMEs as well as educational and public service institutions could provide synergy effects, both locally and between the regions.

Tourism is an international industry and synergy effects for the SMEs within health and tourism can be strengthened by extending the cooperation about product development on an international level. Project objectives include:

- To establish a health tourism industry network with partners from Thuringia and Western Norway.
- To identify and address the needs and interests of the SMEs, relevant local and regional public service institutions and R&D.
- Through a triple helix network approach, the project will focus on strengthening the competitiveness of the SMEs.
- To strengthen the partners' and participants' capabilities to apply research based knowledge and methods for product development.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

The main project activities can be summed up as follows:

- Meetings
- Development of concepts
- Development of the network
- Build up new contacts between local SME`s
- Workshops in Germany and Norway
- FFF (food, fun, fitness) under utilization of nine SMEs
- Seminar for cooks on healthy nutrition in Germany
- Round table session during the INOGA fair, theme slow food
- Q-Siegel (quality seal) as a possibility to set common standards in tourism and seminars about that in Germany
- Beginning of individual contacts/cooperation with SME in canoeing, sport activities, wine farmers, restaurants and wellness
- Common projects in exchange of trainees and employees
- Concept and evaluation content: finding out which enterprises in tourism/hotels/restaurants use slow food and healthy nutrition in Thuringia

The project application contained five WPs, with WP 1 representing the general project management. WP 2 concerned the identification of SMEs competence needs, WP 3 addressed the topic health issues, WP 4's concern was activities, while the topic of WP 5 was nutrition. All but WP 5 was finished at the time of the survey. A workshop in relation to WP 5 was scheduled to be held October 15th to 18th, 2006 in Thuringia.

Coordination and Management

TourHeal is a large project with as many as ten partners in two regions. The partners have a common goal in their involvement in the development of the health tourism industry, but their role in this as well as their approaches differ a lot. The surveys indicate that this has imposed some challenges to the project management, and that the intra-regional networking and

cooperation have worked better than the inter-regional ones. Nevertheless, the surveys also indicate that the project coordination has worked pretty well.

Budget

The project has stayed within the budget.

Corporate Future

The surveys indicate that the probability for post project intra-regional cooperation is greater than for post project inter-regional ones. Still there are reasons to expect both kinds of continued cooperation after the project. It is anticipated that the partners will stay in touch with each other. There is a desire to establish a network to connect the various interested parties in the member countries.

The two main impediments to continued cooperation are firstly, different partners wanting the network to focus on different issues, and secondly, concerns whether all partners are able to meet the necessary quality standards.

Public Awareness

The project has received little public attention.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

The partners were able to cooperate quite well, but the project faced serious challenges related to the large number of participants. There are reasons to assume that it would have been easier to coordinate and manage a project involving fewer partners. Another possibility would be organizing the project differently, for instance by dividing parts of the project into sub-projects, each involving fewer partners.

Project and ENABLE Goals

The project meets ENABLE goals.

Researcher General Comments

Even if the project faced some challenges related to the large number of partners, the objectives in the application were met. There are reasons to assume that the project will result in continued cooperation, especially between the project partners within each region.

5.7 UTTS

Project Partnership

There are four project partners. These can be divided into two groups: firstly partners interested to apply the research as users, and secondly partners facilitating the technology transfer by providing contacts, networks, strategies etc. In this way “both sides” of technology

transfer (technology development and transfer) were integrated into the project consortium. More specific reasons behind the selection of the participants follow below.

LST- Lakeside Science & Technology Park GmbH has been the project leader and as such, responsible for the overall preparation of the project. The organisation has provided an overview about measures, activities, experiences and know-how about different ways and methods to organize technology transfer in order to develop and establish technology transfer instruments.

TI- Thüringen Innovativ GmbH is promoting the technology and innovation oriented business development in Thuringia to increase and strengthen regional competitiveness and innovation by initiating and supporting cooperation as well as technology and knowledge transfer. As partner in the project UTTS *TI* has contributed with know-how and experience for a fruitful cross-border information exchange on the one hand, and to get access to new and approved methods and technology transfer instruments of other regions on the other hand.

CMR- Christian Michelsen Research AG contributed as project partner to the project objectives and work packages definition. *CMR* is providing the link between academic institutions and SMEs and has therefore provided insight into efficient strategies and models for technology transfer on the national and the European level. In addition they could offer established contacts to the *University of Bergen* and the *BUC* (Bergen University College) due to the regional networking project “*Competence Transfer*”.

NCRI- the Norwegian Crop Research Institute division Njøs is an applied research institute for innovation in production, processing and commercialisation of products related to top and soft fruits in the region of Sogn & Fjordane and also at a national level in certain fields. They have experienced that there is a lack of innovation, technology and knowledge transfer, especially among and towards SMEs. The institute has contributed extensive knowledge about efficient methods of technology transfer to increase competitiveness for all SMEs in the involved regions.

Objective of the Project

SMEs competing in international markets need to use the existing state-of-the-art knowledge in the most efficient way. This depends heavily on their ability to get access to the best technology, sort out the relevant part of it, find a way to implement it, and finally transfer it into marketable products.

This project has addressed unsolved problems concerning the production of cheap printing pastes containing finer electro luminescent pigments. The goal of UTTS has been to unify the best technology transfer network strategies. The objective has been to investigate and compare strategies of three different regions and adopt them for the market sectors relevant in the regions for technology transfer into the SME sector.

UTTS has tried to foster the transfer of knowledge from research and technology entities to companies, service providers and industry, with a special focus on the SME sector as recipient.

The project has expanded across three major tasks, regional analysis, interregional correlation, and unified strategy. The objective in the first part was to investigate best practices in the

regions of the project partners. In the second part the aim was to analyze strategies, processes and special approaches. The third part was dedicated to the definition of unified strategies for the different regions and finding a correlation in technology transfer between the participating regions.

Project Activities, Project Outputs, Benefits, Indicators

The work has addressed the following subjects: 1) The methodology of the transfer process. Organization of the transfer of research results into new products and services. 2) Methods to define commercialization strategies for R&D organizations. 3) Methods to support their realization together with the scientists (prepare and negotiate contracts, know how about financial support and how inventions can be protected and commercially exploited)

The project aim was to analyze processes on how an innovation circle could be run through networking of the different organizations directly or indirectly involved in the SME activity. Are there possible overlaps with other organizations; what kinds of obstacles hinder the technology transfer processes? There has been a special focus on innovations and how R&D results have been and could be utilized for a higher competitiveness.

The project is divided into four WPs:

- WP 1 contained an analysis of status-quo of technology transfer instruments in the participating regions, identification of best practice models for each region, and an analysis report including strengths and weaknesses of models.
- WP 2 focuses on the correlation of the best practice models identified in WP1, through a comparison of regional differences and common approaches. The main focus in WP 2 was on the process itself.
- In WP 3 each partner should determine a strategy for the improvement of the technology transfer in its region and centre of gravity based on the output of the two other WPs. Furthermore a strategy to improve the technology transfer between the participating countries will be elaborated.
- WP 4 represented project management. The responsibility lay with the lead partner.

At the time of the survey, WP 1 was completed as scheduled. WP 2 the project was delayed because of illness and job turnover with the project partners. This forced the lead partner to apply for a three month extension of the project, which was approved by ENABLE. All milestones in the revised project plan have later been met. WP 3 represents the creation of a unified strategy and had just commenced at the time of the survey. However, the survey indicates that this WP will be completed as planned.

Coordination and Management

The coordination and management has generally been very good. The project leader has worked hard to keep the project on time and within the budget framework, but has faced serious challenges due to illness and job turnover at some of the project partners. The most important reason for the project getting back on tracks is that these difficulties were taken seriously and were addressed efficiently at an early stage.

Budget

The project has stayed within budget.

Corporate Future

The results of the project are assumed to be of importance for both the SMEs and R&D in the regions. There are also reasons to assume that the project partners will stay in contact with each other after the project, and that this can bring about new cooperation.

Public Awareness

The project has received little public attention, but some publicity is expected before the end of the project.

Lessons for Improving the Project Level

There are at least two lessons to be learned from this project.

The call period was too short, and this led to a hectic application process. If the project call period had been a little longer there would have been better time for discussing the content of the project.

The other lesson to be learned is that addressing problems wholehearted and at an early stage, as has been done in this project, is important in overcoming them successfully.

Project and ENABLE Goals

This project seems to be one of the most successful ones in the whole ENABLE programme. Despite the unforeseen difficulties mentioned above, the project partners have been able to create synergies from including partner organizations from “both sides” of technology transfer into the project consortium.

Researchers' General Comments

This is a very good project at all levels.

Appendix

Literature

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Questionnaire

1) The Project Partnerships

- a) Partner involvement during the preparation phase.
 - i) Who and how were they involved?
(1)
 - ii) Reasons behind the partnership selection?
(1)

2) Project Description

- a) Key issues addressed.
 - i) How are the initial needs or problems in the partner areas being addressed?
(1)
- b) Objectives of the project
 - i) How are these being addressed?
(1)

3) Activity Plan of the Project

- a) Summary description of project activity plan (for use in classification/statistics)
 - i) How successful is the project participant cooperation?
(1)
 - ii) What work packages have been completed or are underway?
(1) If work packages are delayed or not able to be completed, why is this the case?
(a)
 - iii) Are milestones being met?
(1) If milestones are not being met, why is this the case?
(a)

- b) Description of main activities of the project by phases (for use in classification/statistics)
 - i) What are these activities?
 - (1)
 - ii) Have they been successful?
 - (1) If not successful, why is this the case?
 - (a)
- c) Main activities ensuring communication, information and publicity (for use in classification/statistics)
 - i) What are these main activities?
 - (1)
 - ii) Have they been successful?
 - (1) If not successful, why is this the case?
 - (a)

4) Outputs, Benefits and Indicators of the Project

- a) Outputs
 - i) What have been the main outputs? (Seminars, workshops, study visits, staff exchanges, pilot projects, manuals, documents, etc.)
 - (1)
 - ii) Have they been successful?
 - (1) If not successful, why is this the case?
 - (a)
- b) Benefits and their indicators
 - i) What are the main benefits?
 - (1) For the project as a whole?
 - (a)
 - (2) For each participant?
 - (a)
 - (3) For the region as a whole?
 - (a)
 - (4) For interregional cooperation?
 - (a)
 - (5) Entrepreneurs of SMEs?
 - (a)

5) Coordination and Management

- a) Project Manager
 - i) How has the project coordination and management been carried out?
 - (1) Administrative management
 - (a)
 - (2) Responsibilities
 - (a)
 - (3) Auditing
 - (a)
 - (4) Reporting
 - (a)
 - (5) Progress control
 - (a)
 - (6) Have project coordination and management had to have been changed?

(a) Are there any concerns?

6) Budget

- a) Has the project partner kept within limits of the budget for costs
 - i) Staff
 - ii) Administration
 - iii) External expertise
 - iv) Travel and Accommodation
 - v) Meetings and Events
 - vi) Promotion
 - vii) Investments

7) Corporate Future

- a) What is the future of the project after the ENABLE funding
 - i)
- b) What role does ENABLE play in the corporation's existence and future activities
 - i)

8) Public Awareness

- a) Has there been any public interest and awareness about the ENABLE project?
 - i)

9) Lessons for improving the Project level

- a) What aspects of the project level have worked well?
 - i)
- b) What aspects of the project level have not worked well?
 - i)
- c) How would you recommend the project level be altered to improve it?
 - i)
- d) Concerns about timing of the call and information flow?
 - i)
- e) How was the decision which partner should take over project leadership taken?
 - i)
- f) What was the level of satisfaction with choice of project leaders?
 - i)