

Case Study 15.2. The ENP Programme at Linköping University

CRITICAL AREA OF FOCUS 2: “Assessing IP potential, validating technologies and incentivizing for commercialisation”

BEST PRACTICE FOR: “Proof of Concept Programs” and “Technology Accelerators”

AIMED AT: TTO/PRO/Researchers/Industry

UNIVERSITY: Linköping University (Sweden) **TTO:** Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship



The context:

Linköping University is one of the biggest universities in Sweden with 27,000 students and 3,200 staff, founded in 1975. It provides teaching and research in all major areas. The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is part of the Linköping Department of Management and Engineering.

The problem:

Fostering entrepreneurship and the growth of commercialization in university environments is often limited by the **lack of adequate managerial and commercial skills** and competences by researchers. Even when researchers develop a great idea/technology, they often lack business competences to be able to handle the transition from the initial idea to the final product

The solution:

The **Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Linköping University** has designed several programmes for incentivizing commercialization and helping the maturation of new technologies mainly by supporting the activities via courses and training. The most known programme in this respect is the **Entrepreneurship and New Business Development Programme (ENP)**, launched to solve the issues of commercialization. Within the field of entrepreneurship, the **Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE)** manages a number of other programmes besides ENP designed to support knowledge-intensive firms at the local, national and international arena.

CIE is also linked with SMIL - a regional network of hundreds of firms which all have a background at Linköping university. Today the network contains over around 150 firms, of which more than half are ‘academic’ firms, created by postgraduate or doctoral students. The network is self-funded (through annual membership fees of approx. 20,000€).

The ENP Programme is oriented to students and researchers at Linköping University and to the employees of corporations in the region. Individuals having an idea with the intention to start a firm or are in the start-up process are welcome to apply. In the programme, workshops on business development, marketing and sales and finance are mixed with practical hand-on work on business plan development. One of the goals of participants of the programme is to create a business plan where they have to evaluate the IP and perform a technology assessment and come up with a commercialization plan and a set of marketing activities for the idea, which is the decision basis for starting or not the commercialization phase.

The Entrepreneurship and New Business Development Programme is free of charge for the participants. Therefore the programme expects great efforts from the participants and of course very motivated participants. Every participant have access to two personal mentors, which bring a natural connection to the business world. After having finished the programme it is possible having access to favourable conditions to join the Mjärdevi Science Park or ProNova Science Park. The programme is managed by the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Linköping University in close co-operation with SMIL (Business Development in Linköping) and KIN (Knowledge-based companies in Norrköping).



These various programmes and networks at Linköping are an excellent example of promoting commercialization via knowledge creation for PROs students, researchers and professors. TTO staff can participate in the courses for free and learn about technology validation and commercialization via 2 tutors from industry or via the courses offered by Linköping University.

Alignment to PROGRESS-TT:

This case is a good illustration of the “Proof of Concept programs” and “Technology Accelerators”, Best Practice in PROGRESS-TT Critical Area of Focus 2 “Assessing IP potential, validating technologies and incentivizing for commercialisation”.

Since SMIL’s inception (1984), over 16,000 entrepreneurs have participated in various networking activities for bringing technologies together on the market.

Over 500 firms/projects were involved in the ENP programme – including programmes that CIE has executed at different academic environments in Sweden. Of those, 75% ended up as companies and 20% ended up having more than 5 employees. 250 firms were in the development programme and 210 firms in the management groups. The two last programmes are aimed for post-start-ups. These 250 firms have created at least 10,000 jobs since the start of these programmes by having the right process for IP assessment, technology analyses and commercialization support.

The success factors of the Linköping entrepreneurship model can be summarized as a close relationship of the entrepreneurship activities of the university (CIE) with the region and especially with the network of high-tech companies (SMIL) helping the TTOs to commercialize their technologies. This close relationship is a key condition to address the real user needs for creating new technologies and it strongly support the assessment of the potential. The ENP program has been successfully implemented in several universities. Most are Swedish and it is likely that it can be emulated in other countries as well, making it an excellent BP.

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