

**Developing new
innovative
areas and *creative*
environments**



Identifying and developing as yet undiscovered opportunities.

Making the most of opportunities to collaborate across boundaries.

Transforming Skåne into a region where things happen which no one could achieve working alone.

“Strategy 4 – developing new innovative areas and creative environments”

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In September 2011 the document *An International Innovation Strategy for Skåne (IIFS)* was published, containing six strategies each of which lay the foundations for making the Skåne region more attractive and which together represent a tool for shaping Europe's most innovative region. A vital part of this process is strengthening growth. And in order to achieve growth, it is essential to be able to identify and develop new areas for innovation. Skåne is working towards creating the necessary conditions, among other things by promoting the development of open innovation arenas.

As an active entrepreneur in Skåne, you will certainly be familiar with the concept of clusters: a geographically defined environment where companies within similar industries focus on a specific end product through competition and collaboration. Silicon Valley is probably the most well-known example. The cluster phenomenon is based on focusing knowledge within individual categories. Clusters have many benefits, including cost savings resulting from collaborative purchasing, but clusters can only achieve their objectives when companies begin creating value for each other by collaborating. The cluster theory is a smart idea and over the years Skåne has been involved in and invested in a number of cluster initiatives.

But this strategy is about something different. Why is that?

YOU ARE HERE

“If you refuse to look back and don't dare to look forward, you'd better look out.”

Tage Danielsson

OPEN INNOVATION ARENAS

Boundaries are breaking down, industries are moving closer together and people are changing jobs increasingly often and, in many cases, moving to competitors. Smaller players, such as subcontractors and customers, have access to new knowledge and the opportunity to make use of it. All of these things mean that big is no longer always best. In a rapidly changing world, there is a demand for short lead times and this quite simply results in a need for closer links between the players involved in turning an idea into a finished product. Clusters have to become something new, something more. This is why it's time

for a new concept. We call this an open innovation arena.

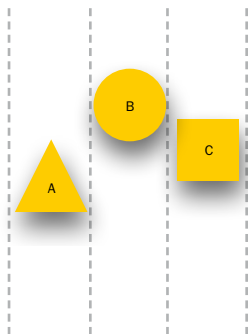
The ideas behind open innovation areas are closely connected to the concept of open innovation. One of the starting points for open innovation is that knowledge develops when different players collaborate and make an active contribution to acquiring knowledge. This is a process which calls for interaction between players who may come from a wide variety of different areas, each of whom is knowledgeable in their own field.

In principle, open innovation arenas have all the benefits of clusters even if the concept itself now has a different name.

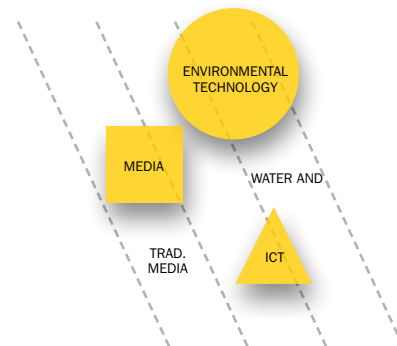
It will still be about identifying, developing and making use of different types of expertise. It will still be about encouraging innovation and developing and sharing knowledge, but in the open arena there is scope for an approach which is quite different from that of a cluster.

It's the attitude that is important here: understanding, accepting and, as a result, exploiting the fact that boundaries are breaking down.

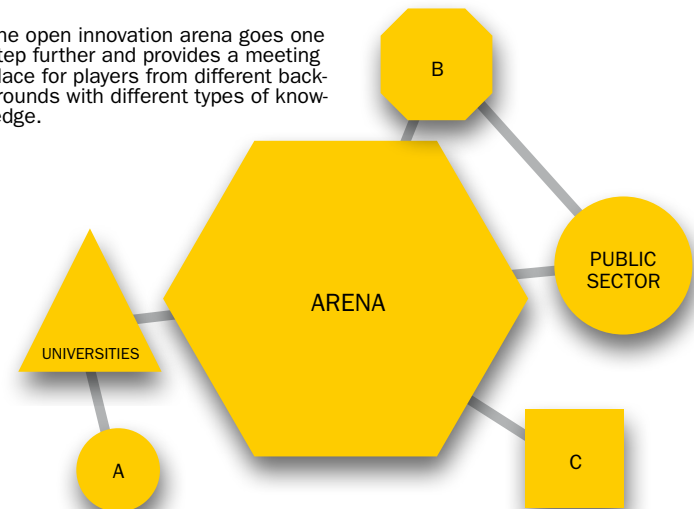
Traditionally, cluster theory was based on sectoral logic.



However, over time the boundaries have changed. Different industries have moved closer together naturally.



The open innovation arena goes one step further and provides a meeting place for players from different backgrounds with different types of knowledge.





Writer Henrik O. Jansson talks over coffee to Per-Stefan Gersbro, CEO of Packbridge, an open innovation arena in the packaging industry. The conversation revolves around one question: When does a cluster become an arena?

On the packbridge.se website it says: "The idea behind Packbridge is to create a meeting place which naturally brings together industry and the academic world, research and commercial applications, and, perhaps most importantly, different people." That sounds good, but it seems to me to be like a 'normal' cluster. What makes it into an open innovation arena?

– The definition of a cluster depends on who you talk to. Some people believe that clusters have geographic boundaries, while others think that they are restricted to a specific industry association or that the members are simply based close to one another and can meet over a coffee and then take things further. For me, many of these definitions

border on the description of an open innovation arena. I like the idea of comparing it to a dance floor: you can make sure that the music is good, the lighting is right and there's a great atmosphere. Then it's up to everyone to choose a dancing partner and see what comes out of it. In an open innovation arena, it's important that there aren't too many controls. There must be scope for vision.

The word 'vision' keeps cropping up when people talk about open innovation arenas.

– It's important to aim high. One objective of open innovation arenas is that it must be possible for things to happen en route. The journey itself is the goal: the interface which is created when different perspectives come together.

Clusters tend to share knowledge and expertise with other clusters. I assume that the same thing applies to open innovation arenas?

– Very much so. There are three Swedish cluster initiatives in the packaging industry: The Packaging Arena in Karlstad, Packaging Mid Sweden in Sundsvall and Packbridge. We knew that our aims were similar, so we decided to meet, but without any preconceptions. And now we and Packaging Mid Sweden have set up a joint organisation. I don't think that geographic borders are generally an obstacle. For example, Packbridge is collaborating with the South Korean national food cluster, Foodpolis, which is investing in the food of the future.

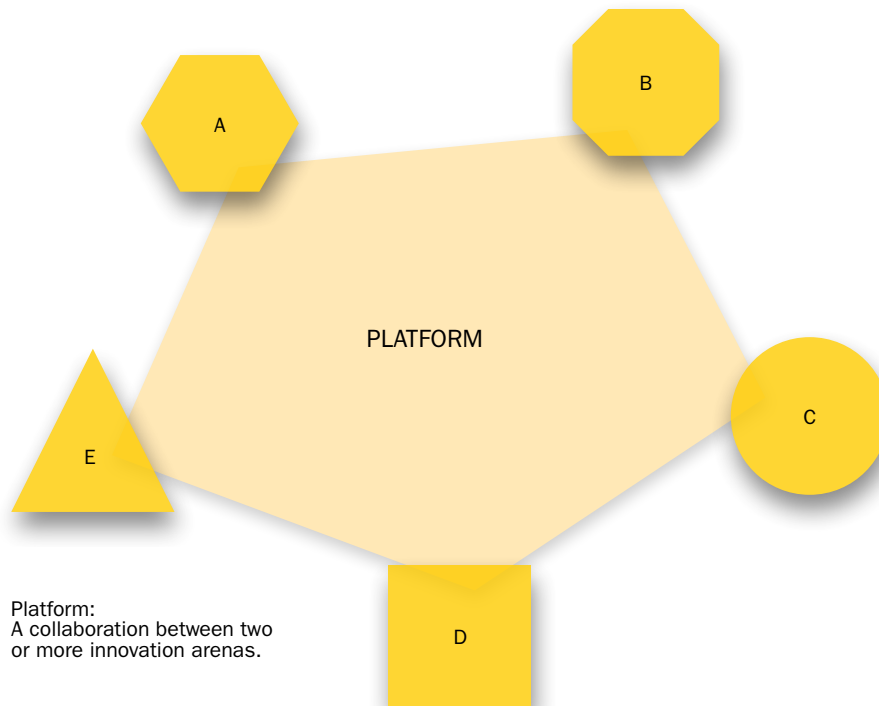
You, the people in Sundsvall and the Koreans are a long way apart in geographic terms, but it must feel as if you have the same outlook. Would it be possible to bring together all three organisations?

– I think so. It's curiosity and interest that unite us and, as long as someone is coordinating the whole thing, the distance between us is not an obstacle. For example, it should be about highlighting common issues and encouraging people to come together without forcing them to do so. We are only using a small fraction of the total sum of human expertise. If we could double that and use twice the amount in each area, imagine what sort of solutions we might be able to come up with! But to get to that point we need to find new routes – like open innovation arenas.

PLATFORMS

A collaboration between two or more innovation arenas forms an open innovation platform. Open innovation arenas put the emphasis on broadening the definition of the players who can become involved in a collaboration. Innovation platforms look for opportunities to join

together with other initiatives and players who can help arena members to develop. In simple terms, this means laying the organisational foundations.



Welcome aboard

Combating diabetes was the unifying force when six very different players established a totally new way of working towards a common goal. Helena Tillborg is project manager of the Zirro project.

About the project:

– Zirro isn't a cluster. It's much more than that. It's an open innovation platform consisting of six very different players and each of them has their own arena: SLI, Teknopol, Mobile Heights, Future Position X (FPX), Printed Electronics Arena and Hålsans nya verktyg (New tools for health). They are united by the vision that no one should need to suffer from diabetes in future and that the route towards achieving this goal should involve innovations that create growth.

Together they form the foundations for an innovation platform.



ZIRRO DIABETES

About the platform:

– Zirro was set up in the summer of 2011 with a single objective: finding a cure for diabetes. The platform has set its sights high, which is exactly the point. The individual arenas act as coordinators and they are responsible for promoting, initiating and developing meetings at the platform level. We will be holding a meeting soon to bring together some players we believe are very close to one another, therefore, we'll put them in the same room.

About sharing:

– The basic approach to this type of collaboration must involve trusting each other. This isn't a guarantee that you'll always get something definite in exchange, but it is a possibility and when it happens, it will definitely be something that wouldn't have arisen in a normal cluster. FPX works with geographic information technology, which some people

might think is quite far-removed from diabetes research, but they have a very clear idea of why they are involved. They've asked themselves what they can contribute and what they can discover. Everyone has their own reason for being there. Together they create an amazing atmosphere of curiosity and openness.

About seizing the opportunity:

– My colleague Marianne went to a workshop on cluster development. The participants had to choose between two challenges: sustainable cities or personal health. She opted for health and the members of her group had to decide whether they wanted to be involved at policy level or take part in a workshop. Marianne went to the workshop with the others who wanted to play a more active role.

All the players I mentioned earlier were represented and together they asked themselves what challenges were out there. Someone mentioned diabetes and the rest is history.

About the challenge:

– I believe that the challenge is important when you are working in organisations of this kind. The whole point is that everyone decides what constitutes the challenge. In this case, it was diabetes that sparked our interest. Other arenas might find a challenge on a completely different level, but the important thing is to identify what it is.

About the concept:

– It's important not to get bogged down with the words. We mustn't exclude people because they don't know what 'cluster' and 'arena' mean. It must be all about what people do and what they want to do. It's important to remember that there is no one correct answer. The structures are theoretical; it's the people who actually make things happen. It's important that everyone involved agrees on what they have in common.





white space

Imagine a double-page spread in a book. The text can be about almost anything, but the important thing is that it's static. You can't change it, delete it or add to it unless you use the margins, in other words, the white space. This is a space where something new can occur.

Laying the foundations for unexpected meetings between different spheres of competence is an important way of increasing the capacity for innovation and renewal in Skåne. One way of achieving this is to promote collaboration between innovation arenas in Skåne and between arenas and other initiatives both inside and outside the region.

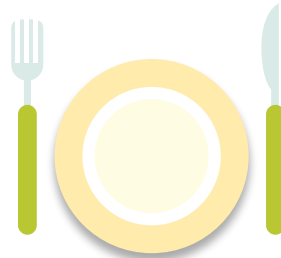
The term 'white space' was coined to describe the development opportunities which arise when two or more industries or knowledge areas come together. Products, services and processes are increasingly based on knowledge from different areas of expertise.

Translated into policy terms, the ability to work with white space is about making collaboration between traditional areas of industry and knowledge easier. This will not necessarily result in innovations which are completely new to the market. They may equally consist of new combinations of existing solutions.

Healthy yogurt with active bacteria is one example of a product that was developed at the interface between two industries: food and medicine.



From 'food'...



...via 'cooking'...



... to 'an enjoyable meal'.





It is said that Darwin once stood on one of the Galapagos Islands gazing down at a coral reef which was teeming with life. Then he looked up at the island which was covered mainly in palm trees and grass with very few different species. Darwin realised that biodiversity occurs as a result of meetings. This insight is reflected in the region of Skåne's method of working towards innovation.

The Skåne Food Innovation Network has been given responsibility for creating the hospital meals of the future by Skåne regional council. The project is called 'Måltidsglädje' (Enjoyable meals) and involves ensuring that patients who eat hospital food have an excellent overall experience, while keeping costs low.

The assignment is wide-ranging and is not based on any preconceived ideas. Many players are involved and they come from very different areas. Together they have gained an insight into the situation. The new approach is not about teaching kitchen staff to manage waste, season the food differently or work more efficiently. That would be like asking them to do what they do now, but slightly better. Instead it is about redefining the whole business. Meals must no longer be seen as a collection of food on a plate, but as an important and human part of patient

care. A social activity rather than a nutritionally balanced portion. It's about working with people's conceptions of existing situations.


How did this insight arise? And why? The answer is simple: because somebody challenged the existing system and was allowed to do so. Different people with different experiences, but with a common goal.

We can talk about clusters which have developed into open innovation arenas. We can talk about white space. We can use all the relevant terms, but none of them mean anything without relationships.

Open innovation arenas do not consist of organisations, but of individuals who must want to meet one another, collaborate and grow. Only when we identify forces of this kind, which have different backgrounds but the same aims, will the world be open to us. Like a white space.

**FROM
WORDS
TO
ACTIONS**





What does a cluster have to do to become an arena?

The organisations involved have to work together to develop and agree on suitable objectives both from an overall perspective and within each initiative. A long-term approach is needed to the various ventures in order to achieve the expected results. In practice, this means that the players commit to long-term involvement with clear goals which go beyond the framework of a three-year project.

In addition, working with open innovations requires a new attitude to developing innovations. In purely operational terms, this means attracting and involving partners from a wide range of sectors at a project level, but also inviting competitors of existing cluster members to become involved in the collaboration. In addition, new work processes must be established for new types of collaboration and physical environments must be set up which make innovation and renewal possible in cooperation with different types of players.

Geographic borders are becoming less and less important in the context of collaboration within clusters and the open innovation arenas of the future must therefore play an active role in encouraging their members to take a more international approach. Cluster initiatives in Skåne are already developing their international contacts. In some cases, the emphasis is on promoting the development of new business between companies in Skåne and outside Sweden. In others, the aim is to connect cluster initiatives with equivalent clusters in other countries.

Once they are fully developed, the innovation arenas in Skåne will be highly attractive in terms of innovation from an international perspective. In order for this to happen, each initiative needs a clear profile which defines and characterises it for marketing purposes. Profiling must not be confused with technological specialisation in different sectors. Instead the purpose is to highlight the initiative's unique brand and offering.

In order to develop the knowledge and expertise needed to establish an internationally attractive innovation arena, a wide-ranging knowledge of the arena's environment is needed. This is the environment where all the players from Skåne who have been tasked with promoting innovation will need to make a contribution. It is essential for the open innovation arenas to keep up-to-date with the latest trends in their specific profile areas, such as marketing and technological development. In order to be able to tackle global social challenges, it is also important to follow political changes, because they play a significant role in laying the foundations for the future potential development of the market.



TOWARDS A NEW FUTURE

The open innovation arena is a development of existing cluster models and a means of meeting the changing requirements for long-term competitiveness. If they are correctly implemented, arenas can promote open collaboration across different industries. Therefore, open innovation does not necessarily involve buying and selling knowledge. Instead it is about an attitude to collaboration.

If an arena forges links with other cluster initiatives or with another arena, it creates a platform where players can meet. The development opportunities which can arise when new industries or areas of knowledge come together within a platform are called white space.



The vision:

Europe's most innovative region by 2020

Skåne's international innovation programme is made up of six strategies which together form a powerful tool for shaping Europe's most innovative region. This is strategy number four.

1. Developing systemic leadership.
2. Broadening the sense of what innovation is.
3. Streamlining the support structure for innovation.



4. Developing new innovative areas and creative environments – promoting innovation activities which take place at the interface between different industries in order to exploit unexpected opportunities.

5. Developing international cooperation.
6. Strengthening innovation capacity in our existing industry and public-sector activities.

CONTACTS

Open innovation arenas and cluster initiatives based in Skåne:

- SKÅNE FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK
livsmedelsakademin.se
- MOBILE HEIGHTS
mobileheights.org
- MEDIA EVOLUTION
mediaevolution.se
- SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HUB
sbhub.se
- PACKBRIDGE
packbridge.se
- TRAINING REGIONS
trainingregions.com

GLOSSARY

- INNOVATION ARENA:**
An approach which enables a broader range of players to take part in a collaborative project.
- INNOVATION PLATFORM:**
A collaboration between two or more innovation arenas.
- WHITE SPACE:**
A symbolic description of the opportunities that can arise when new industries or areas of knowledge come together.
- INNOVATION:**
A process which gives value to a new idea and generates growth.
- CLUSTER:**
A geographically defined environment where companies within similar industries focus on a specific end product through competition and collaboration.
- INITIATIVE:**
A group of clusters organised with the aim of increasing their joint impact.