

The background of the entire slide is a dense, intricate mosaic of tiny, overlapping images in various colors (green, blue, red, yellow, black). The main title is rendered in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font, where each letter is filled with a different, colorful mosaic pattern. The text is arranged in two lines: the top line contains the words 'THOUGHTS ON AN INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION STRATEGY FOR SKÅNE' and the bottom line contains the word 'SKÅNE' in a larger font size.

THOUGHTS ON AN INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION STRATEGY FOR SKÅNE

SKÅNE

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

“An idea is an innovation,” someone says.

“Innovation is turning knowledge into money,” says someone else.

“Innovation is an attitude,” says a third.

Defining what innovation means is important. Without a definition, the innovation strategy is toothless, insignificant and even misleading. So let's get something straight here: An idea is not an innovation and that's that. Innovation can be new services, products, ways of working, things that improve society and lots more besides. But an innovation always has to create new value and produce growth. In most cases this means that the last part of an innovation process is commercialisation. Our shared definition is: innovation is the entrepreneurial process that gives a new idea a value. The end.

But something has changed. The journey from an idea to a value that produces growth rarely starts and ends in the head of one person, in one place or in one country. An increasingly complex world, facing global challenges, almost always demands that knowledge is shared and combined. Skåne is too small, so is Öresund. And the Baltic isn't big enough either.



TEXT: LENNART SVENSSON

Sometimes even Europe is too small. It's the new knowledge that matters, not where it comes from. Political levels – regional, national, European – have to switch from steering to supporting. We must – and we will – turn Skåne into an international, knowledge-driven innovation environment. A place that gets talked about. But to access knowledge, we have to have something to contribute. We need to be seen as open, interesting, trustworthy – and maybe even fun.

We can't initiate contact with the world around us by putting ourselves in the centre. We need to put the challenge in the centre, e.g. Personal Health or Smart Sustainable Cities and Regions. Do this and goals are created – A fossil-free Region Skåne by 2020 – which in turn encourage innovation. Innovation-led procurement becomes a driving force. But we can't force the knowledge to come to us. We have to attract it. So let's make Skåne the most attractive dance floor for innovation in Europe. And let's have fun while we're at it.

“Innovation Skåne – thoughts on an international innovation strategy for Skåne”

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Contents Innovation Skåne

PIA KINHULT AND PER ERIKSSON

Pia Kinhult and Per Eriksson discuss why Skåne needs an innovation strategy. | **pages 4–7**

THE SIX INNOVATION STRATEGIES

One spread per innovation strategy. | **pages 8–19**

#1 SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP

Development happens through interaction. About Mobile Heights Business Center.

#2 A BROADER VIEW OF INNOVATION

Towards new ways of working. Say hello to Apokalyps Labotek.

#3 A MORE EFFICIENT SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Several paths to one goal. Meet Bodil Rosvall Jönsson.

#4 NEW AREAS AND ENVIRONMENTS

Two examples of something very special.

#5 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The world is becoming decentralised – and globalised. Jens Sörvik explains.

#6 BOOST INNOVATION

Shooting an air rifle in the dark – and hitting the target.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Health, environment and growth – three crucial factors for the world and for Skåne | **pages 20–21**

NEW INNOVATION ARENAS

Meet two visionaries who have put their hats in the ring. | **pages 22–23**



STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

with Pia and Per

Holding a cup of coffee and a draft of Skåne's innovation strategy covered in notes, Per Eriksson, Vice-Chancellor of Lund University, sits himself down on the sofa. He's in a good mood but gives the two cameras a long, hard stare.

"Are you really going to film this? Hmm, I'm not quite prepared for this," he says, breaking into a smile that could mean "OK" or "not on your life".

"Is there going to be filming?" asks Pia Kinhult, chair of the Regional Assembly and thus Skåne's highest politician. She comes in five minutes after Per and it is immediately obvious that they know each other well – and in the main share a similar outlook on innovation. Pia sits on the sofa opposite, folds up her glasses and brushes a stray hair from her jacket.

"So let's go," she says. "Shoot!"

Straight to the point: Why does Skåne need an innovation strategy?

"We're going to be the best in Europe at a way of working that finds, develops and commercialises innovations. This means we have to have a strategy and an action plan that points the way."

The strategy talks a lot about open innovation arenas. What are they – and do we need them?

"These are arenas where people with different backgrounds and experiences can come together. I don't think we can ever have too many of them. Diversity is incredibly important – everyone has to feel that they can find an arena where they fit, feel secure and can build trust."

Is collaboration the be all and end all?

"Absolutely. But I prefer to call it interplay; every actor works to be the best in their field, while building optimum interaction between the different actors and so making our 'team' leading in Europe," says Per.

"I think we are slowly but surely building up this interplay," he continues. "The forming of FIRS, the Skåne Research and Innovation Council, is a clear example of this. It was FIRS, for example, that took the initiative and coordination responsibility for turning AstraZeneca's decision to shut down its facilities in Lund into a major investment in Ideon Medicin Village."

How is Skåne to tackle increased internationalisation?

"However strong you may build a region, you have to assume that most things will be happening somewhere else. Skåne must therefore increase its links with the world and both import and export knowledge and ideas across borders. We also need to attract more foreigners here, who will enrich Skåne with new thoughts, ideas and influences."

"We're going to be the best in Europe."

"It is only once we dare to fail that we are able to succeed."

"It is obviously a problem that intolerance is increasing at the same time as we are dependent on people and ideas from outside."

“If we get more people encompassed by the innovation concept, we will get more people involved in the work,” says Per.”

How does this fit in with increasing intolerance in Skåne for people from different backgrounds? Since 2010 there have been representatives of xenophobic parties with seats in all 33 of Skåne’s municipalities.

“It is obviously a major problem that intolerance is increasing in Skåne at the same time as we are dependent on people and ideas from outside. I’m convinced that we have more to gain from embracing different cultures than the reverse,” says Pia.

“These are forces that can threaten the development of the whole of Sweden,” continues Per. “In the prevailing global competitive situation, isolating ourselves won’t get us anywhere. We are far too small a country for that. The world is global and we need this immigration. It’s this way that we boost our competitiveness for the future.”

How do we translate this strategy from words into action?

“The main thing is that we have to do our homework. Region Skåne has a major responsibility for driving the pace of innovation in health care and public transport, for example.

“Another important step is creating more arenas where people with different backgrounds and experience can meet each other, test their ideas and experiment. We must also be better at closing those arenas which aren’t actually working, along the lines of: ‘It was a really good idea. We tried it out and it didn’t work. Now we’re shutting that down and putting our resources into something else’. ”Here we’re not exactly top of the class.

How do we get more people involved in working towards innovation?

“Innovation is so much more than just new products and services. An ‘innovation’ could, for example, also be new processes, ways of working, or things that improve society. If we get more people encompassed by the innovation concept, we will get more people involved in the work,” says Per.

“Another aspect is letting the concept of innovation cover more than research and academia. About 75 percent of all new products and services come about somewhere else, in industry, in the social sector or through developing services.



PER ERIKSSON

PIA KINHULT

We have to be better at recognising the spread and seizing on all the things that move within and between these sectors. We have to be better at finding ways of commercialising this and so creating growth and social improvements,” says Pia. “A third way of getting more people involved is to change Swedish corporate culture. We have to work in a much more structured way with constant improvements, daring to try and fail.

See more of the interview on the web: innovationsbloggen.blogspot.com

It is only once we dare to fail that we are able to succeed. If we can change these three things, we will be a giant step nearer to the vision of ‘Europe’s most innovative region 2020’.” ■

Ask four

WHY SKÅNE NEEDS AN INNOVATION STRATEGY

An innovation strategy for Skåne would place the innovation environments in a clear context where activities and investments can work in synergy with others. **Carlotte Lorentz-Hjorth, CEO Krinova Science Park**



To become Europe’s most innovative region, the vision must be translated from idea into action. This is ultimately what strategies are all about. Firmly setting out the targets. **Fredrika Gullfot, CEO Simris Alg**

Bearing in mind the way things look at the moment with a large number of players who are more or less publicly funded, it is necessary to have a clear co-ordinated approach for the future. The risk is otherwise an unclear and confusing picture for those of us looking to stimulate and support companies and innovators. **Torbjörn Lindh, CEO Göinge Näringsliv**



With a clear strategy we will be able to exploit what we already have in a more purposeful and structured way, so getting more “bang for our buck”. **Claes Malmberg, Director, Helsingborg Business Region**

Develop *systemic* leadership

Development happens through interaction. To strengthen innovation in Skåne and become trailblazers, systemic leadership needs to be planted and developed. An important element in this is creating greater understanding for a systemic perspective and formulating common goals.

Marianne Larsson is project manager for the pilot project Mobile Heights Business Center (MHBC) at Teknopol. She is also something of a performer. She spends much of our conversation standing up, sketching on the whiteboard, quickly but clearly.

“For me an innovation system has three parts: research & development, business development and growth. This is a system that demands that there is something at the end, something that generate income and grows. This is the way we have worked for 25 years with excellent advice, helpful incubators and fantastic programmes, but it hasn't really produced corresponding growth.

These communities work on a short best before date. Innovators have better things to spend their time on than scrambling the money together.

MANY COOKS IMPROVE THE BROTH

At Teknopol we have also noticed that the majority of the capital collected is spent on technical development when really there ought to be a sales heading in the picture. A fact which has resulted in a high focus on technology but a slow rate of development.

“Often people try to turn innovators INTO entrepreneurs. If they want to go out on the market and see whether anyone is interested in their solution, they have to do it themselves. We identify innovative people who are business minded and focus on building a team around them.”

For two years MHBC has been focusing on putting together a good team and getting everybody face to face early on in the process, including the investors.

“To reach out far enough, fast enough you need capital that can provide the team with what they need on top of any income. We invite all the investors in at the same time, those who are involved at an early stage and those who usually come in later on. That puts things on a much firmer footing for establishing trust and building relationships – in both directions.”
The demands are high. Everyone taken on must have the potential to turn over in excess of SEK 100 million and be profitable within two years.

SYSTEMATIC:

Systemic leadership builds on the idea that a person who acts in a system is involved in and shapes its pattern. There is a shared picture of what is to be achieved, even if all those involved have their own individual goals.

Nevertheless, the results look good. Of 26 members (several of whom didn't exist a few months ago) eight have market income and four are actually profitable.



I get the feeling that if we told everyone involved that they were part of systemic leadership, they would stare at us blankly.

“Most of them would, it's true! But it's enough if a few of them are aware of the concept and can be the ones who see the bigger picture. It's about putting the right people together. After all, everyone has their own agenda in what they take on and that's OK as long as you open about that. That's what systemic leadership is. It's the culture, the principle that's important. “For example, we've created a project that is about working together with other clusters to solve the diabetes question. The goals are incredibly high, like putting someone on the moon, but in this context it's the end that is the means. If you put together people who have a shared interest in the vision, the work is suddenly led by many people at the same time. The idea isn't what matters, it's being able to make something out of it.” ■

Read more at teknopol.se and mhbc.se



DEADLY SERIOUS

A conversation about backwards mentoring and fabulous meetings.



Read more at apocalypselab.net

APOKALYPS LABOTEK

“A broader view of innovation”. To the uninitiated it might sound like asking where space ends... Where do you start?

“One suggestion is to broaden the view by looking forwards, literally. Let the effects take their time in other words. Abstract things can be extremely innovative.” This is the view of Jenny Nordberg and Petra Lilja at Apokalyps Labotek.

How do you mean?

“An engine that is more efficient is generally thought to be innovative. Compare that with the process for a pair of trousers: They are made of cotton from Turkey, which is dyed in India and sewn in China. If you sew them in Sweden instead, from linen grown sustainably in Sweden, you get the same product but a new production chain. That is not thought of as innovative, despite a greater environmental saving than in the combustion engine example.

“The point is that something that generates a behaviour is part of a cycle and in the long run, for example, reduces carbon dioxide emissions, is seen as something different, the way we look at things today.

One starts, the other fills in the gaps. This is the short version of a long answer. Jenny (or it might be Petra...) points to a 30-litre aquarium. The water is thick and muddy with algae. Part of a project that is still a bit too secret for public consumption. But they still draw parallels with the engine example.

“We usually talk about hi-tech and low-tech. It can be hi-tech in thinking but low-tech in execution. Or the other way round!

“Innovation is happening in lots of places in society. But the concept feels incredibly linked to technology and academia. Look at Vinnova, to apply with them you ideally have to be linked to a university – and run a limited company! I mean, really... Innovativeness isn’t measured by whether or not you’re a company.”

The concept needs to be broader, but what then? What do you do? Travel round giving presentations to managing directors?

“We’ve definitely got lots of proposals and ideas but to sum it up in a couple of actual examples: Have an experiment fund! Earmark some money for outreach. One doesn’t have to exclude the other. Traditional and new arenas, give them time and they will come together.”

If you pipe water from two directions, don’t they find each other’s route somehow?

“That kind of thing.”
“It’s quite simple. These platforms and arenas are made up of people after all. But who sometimes happen to be on different levels. This is where backwards mentoring comes in. Instead of older people with experience coaching the younger ones, the newcomers update the experienced ones. Both generations possess expertise and knowledge which the other doesn’t always have. Bring them together!”

These platforms... It’s easy to think of them as a meeting in a room.

“The meeting places don’t have to be physical. The main thing is that there is an opportunity to bring together unexpected areas of expertise. It is there in the intersections that really exciting things happen!

“We used to run a nightclub and cross-fertilised cocktails with handicrafts. Honestly. Several groups met there with completely different backgrounds but still with a common interest. The meetings were fabulous!”

Hampus from TAT is also in this magazine and he compares the role of the region with that of a party planner. Now you’re thinking along the same lines. Interesting.

“Yes, but what is it they say? Great minds think alike.”

We’ve talked about academia and industry but how do you see what you yourselves do?

“We usually say that we’re somewhere between design, research and industry. If the groups work together, that’s when fantastic things can happen!”

So in which direction should a venture capitalist be looking? Where are the new investments?

“Everything that involves thinking in a broader perspective. I mean, if you have to choose between money and money that brings something good with it, what do you choose?” ■

#2

A broader view of innovation

Strong innovation demands an inclusive approach, nationally and internationally.

This is the only way to involve more people and exploit new dynamism.



#3

A more efficient support structure for innovation

There must be several paths to the same goal. This means that Skåne should strive to be open to new ideas. That might mean replacing old ways of working, developing financing, management and follow-up work and actually daring to question what we are doing.

OPEN YOUR DOOR

“As a rule, it’s better to have than not to have. And that goes for strategies too.”

Bodil Rosvall Jönsson’s philosophy is simple but apposite: choose the right path. In 2006 she took over as managing director of Minc. The plan was to get a bit more rock ‘n’ roll into the building, a sense of This Is Where It’s At. We wanted people queuing round the block. Today Minc has 30 start-ups and is one of Europe’s most successful incubators. The survival rate is an impressive 90%. Success has also led to the provision of workspace for an additional 55 businesses and a generally bubbling meeting place.

“Our job is to be a nursery and to develop entrepreneurial talent. For two years the people taken on attend a tailor-made programme. The emphasis is on sales, we take the companies to the market.”

As Bodil sees it, it’s important to have an innovation strategy capable of meeting different needs. “The smaller players easily get overlooked. Small companies can have a high export rate at an early stage. Every company at Minc has international sales, so for us this strategy is particularly relevant.”

Meeting everyone’s needs sounds like quite a challenge, isn’t there a huge risk that you won’t achieve anything at all?

“Of course at some point you do have to decide where the investments are going to go, but the whole idea is about having an open mind. A healthy innovation system has to be flexible to meet the needs of different entrepreneurs.”

BODIL ROSVALL JÖNSSON

If we were to apply this strategy at Minc, what would it look like?

“I hope it will put the spotlight on growing sectors, which in turn can open up increased funding. For me, capital at early stages would be a concrete example of an improved support structure.” ■



A letterbox is also a way in. Minc has 85 of them. At least.

Read more at minc.se

A NEW SORT OF TRAINING



If more people are pulling in the same direction with their respective interests, it can turn into something really good. And more often than not, something new. That, more or less, is the essence of Training Regions. Magnus Qvant is CEO of the Malmö-based initiative, barely a year young.

“The aim is to work as a neutral platform for developing new knowledge that strengthens cities and regions in terms of civil security. Often there are six flows that have to work together: goods, services, money, people, energy and information. If there’s a shipwreck somewhere along the way, the waves will threaten everyone. Magnus sees the stakeholders as a four-leafed clover. The people with needs, the people with solutions, the people with the R&D and the people who create the policies. Together they can



identify and develop solutions for greater civil security. All situations have to be seen from a before, during and after perspective. “For two separate companies that exchange services with each other, it might be hard to see the benefit of Training Regions. But if you can get them to see the bigger picture, the broader context, it suddenly becomes relevant. And that is what we want to highlight. It’s about separate interests coming together to lead to something big.” ■

”But if you can get them to see the bigger picture, the broader context, it suddenly becomes relevant.”

Read more at trainingregions.com

Training Regions

... is a non-profit organisation based in Malmö. The initiative behind it comes from Saab, E.ON, If, the Swedish Armed Forces, Lund University and Region Skåne.

#4

Develop new innovative areas and new creative environments

Identifying and developing “empty fields” is one of the success factors for system innovation, in other words innovation carried out through collaboration. Skåne is to be a place where things are done that no one person can do on their own.

Hövding is the Swedish word for a chieftain, or holder of high office. It’s also a fashionable airbag collar for cyclists. This Hövding was developed by Anna Haupt and Terese Alstin. The journey started out as an industrial design masters thesis at Lund University in 2005. Along the way they developed a concept which won an ideas grant from Innovationsbron. In 2006 Hövding won the Venture Cup – and started the company

Hövding Sverige AB. Since then, awards, patents and capital have rained down on the company. Today the company has 14 employees and in autumn 2011 will finally be launching its long-awaited brainwave.

Read more at hovding.com

HATS OFF!



#1 SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP

#2 A BROADER VIEW OF INNOVATION

#3 A MORE EFFICIENT SUPPORT STRUCTURE

#4 NEW AREAS AND ENVIRONMENTS

#5 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

#6 BOOST INNOVATION



39 minutes into the conversation there's a glint in the eye behind Jens Sörvik's glasses.

EXTREMELY OFF-TREND

"The Swedish paradox is exaggerated!"

"There is quite simply a warped view of what can be expected from research in terms of effects. Just look at the move from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the thing where they want to abolish education grants for some arts subjects... Jens laughs up his sleeve. He's pulling our leg but we see his point: Innovation rests on knowledge. And in a world that transcends boundaries, knowledge has to be able to glide across borders. "Complex questions demand complex understanding, which unavoidably comes down to collaboration." We wind back the tape 39 minutes. Jens Sörvik is a cluster researcher who has become a consultant in Ramböll's growth analysis department. And he welcomes the regional strategy.

"There is a worldwide trend towards talking more about regions. It's here that the dynamism happens, it's here that the links between decision-makers and citizens are forged."

The world is being decentralised – as it is being globalised. Jens explains the paradox:

"Fundamentally there is an assumption that it is knowledge that increases our productivity and efficiency. Whether we are talking about goods or services. This assumption is based on two basic theses: The first is that knowledge is the key to economic success and innovation. This is why we have stakeholders who invest in new knowledge; companies, colleges, universities, local government and so on. The second thesis is that there are a number of different trends running in parallel. We are increasingly working on international markets with greater competition, which leads to people specialising. And specialising increases the need to work together."



You make it sound like a hygiene factor, but don't you have to be above a certain size to benefit or even be able to participate in this kind of development?

"Quite the opposite. Compared with giants such as Tetra Pak or Coca-Cola, small players have a smaller share of the whole and that means they have a greater need to work together in order to access part of the distribution chain. It's more about ambitions for growth than number of employees."

Despite the world shaking on its foundations as he expresses it, Jens' opinion is clear: Internationalisation is not a trend. It's a general condition and is affected neither by the Arab spring nor the Greek crisis. It is the collaborative model

that matters: globalisation increases competition but at the same time it also increases the need to work together regionally and internationally. "Shutting yourself off at national level just isn't on the map. If you want to be in the game, public initiatives and investments are going to be essential. One interesting thing is that Region Skåne is quite young, just ten years old. That means it's got its future ahead of it!" ■

Read more at ramboll.se and circle.lu.se



Develop *international* cooperation

Access to international knowledge is essential to creating a unique ability to innovate. Skåne must therefore work to develop stronger and larger international networks. Skåne's knowledge production must be carried out in partnership with the best in the world.



#1 SYSTEMIC LEADERSHIP

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#6

Strengthen innovativeness in existing businesses and the public sector

In a fast moving world, it is essential to constantly develop partnerships between business and academia. Skåne must work to create and stimulate new models and new types of collaboration. Partly in its role as a client for services and partly in taking the initiative to create meeting places and initiate collaboration."

PARTY TIME?

"How do you get entrepreneurs and clients together? They operate in two different worlds. And this is where the region can come in, as a party planner."



HAMPUS JAKOBSSON

900 000 000

TAT was founded in 2002 and develops mobile user interfaces. In 2010 the company was sold to Blackberry manufacturer RIM for just over SEK 900 million. Hampus still works for the company.

Read more at tat.se



In 30 seconds

"One thing I think is really important is innovation-led procurement. The most important thing for a start-up is their first customer."

Hampus Jakobsson has thought about this before. He's been there himself. A few years ago he was sitting in his office thinking there was something missing. The company TAT he started in 2002 with five friends had grown at an astonishing pace. It had reached 175 employees and had then started to stagnate. The solution was a separate department in the company for innovation processes. *The aim? To fail at most of its projects – and learn from that.*

"A region is huge on many levels, as an employer, as a transport organisation and so on. This is why the best way of contributing in terms of innovation is to go out and be a customer. The first customer, the test dummy."

But isn't there a risk of chickening out if you can put it like that?

"You mustn't chicken out. It's a responsibility you have to take, but it also means you get first pick of the things that really do work." Because there are lots of things that will really work." Hampus is convinced of that. It's just about staking out the path: "I believe in a new behaviour in the form of innovation-led procurement. And interaction." The latter might sound banal but he chooses his words carefully.

"How do you get entrepreneurs and clients together? They operate in two different worlds. And this is where the region can come in, as a party planner. A party isn't automatically fun, but you can make sure the conditions are right. A good venue, good people, the right mix – get that right and you've got a good party."

The region as a party planner? Might that not come across as a bit too simple and trivial?

"But it is simple! Everything is about putting everything in place and somebody doing that. Supporting small, simple interaction between people. What is needed is someone to act as a bridge and an interpreter. An innovation-led procurement person who can speak both languages."

Which leads to the follow-up question: Can it be done?

"Yes, undoubtedly. With the right people pulling the levers – and we've got them here in Skåne."

Meetings have happened, innovation-led procurement officers have been appointed. What do you do next? Or more?

"In a normal contract award process you have already decided how the problem is going to be solved. Call it needs procurement or needs exposure instead. That gives you an incentive to come up with something innovative. Other instruments and triggers can be rewards for suggestions or setting a target for yourself within the region of testing a number of new things every year." ■

"A region shouldn't act as an innovator itself. But it must stimulate, say what's missing and in which direction we should be heading.

"It's like shooting an air rifle in the dark, you get closer to the target with every shot even if you can't aim. So set your sights and look into the future – that's what the innovation culture is all about!"

THE RED THREAD



Europe

Health, environment and growth – in its development strategy, Europe 2020, the EU has identified seven areas that are crucial to resolving these questions. One of these areas is about Europe needing to be better at finding new products, services and processes that are both smarter and more sustainable in the long term than today's solutions. Europe 2020 also describes how the EU's regions will gain in importance as places for innovation, but also as engines for work on a global scale.



Skåne

Skåne has decided to become Europe's most innovative region. An International Innovation Strategy for Skåne shows the way towards an attractive, international innovation environment. With national support in the form of an innovation strategy for Sweden and international support in Europe 2020, Skåne will become a place where people from other parts of Sweden and other parts of the world come together to innovate. Those of us who live and work in Skåne need to be stimulated to be active in other national and international innovation environments.



Sweden

The national innovation strategy serves as a link between Europe 2020 and Skåne's innovation strategy. This is where European and regional perspectives interlink, forming the basis for Sweden's future work on smart and sustainable growth. ■

REPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF ENTERPRISE, ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sara Modig, project manager, tells us that work is progressing as planned:

“Here at the project management of the national innovation strategy, we have a busy time ahead. One key ambition is to make the most of all the processes and discussions on innovation issues and policies going on around the country. Skåne's strategy therefore constitutes an important element in the national strategy, as our work, like that in Skåne, is based on the need to broaden the concept of innovation. Under the current schedule a new strategy document will be presented in autumn 2012.”

Links

Read more about Sweden's work on innovation:
sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2026/a/32551

Follow the progress of work on Sweden's innovation strategy:
innovationsbloggen.se

Keep up with work on Skåne's innovation strategy:
innovationsbloggen.blogspot.com

Read more about Europe 2020:
ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

Read more about the EU's Innovation Region:
ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=intro

THIS IS EUROPE 2020

Smart growth – develop an economy based on knowledge and innovation

Sustainable growth – promote a resource-efficient, greener and more competitive economy

Growth for all – stimulate an economy with high employment and economic, social and territorial cohesion

We need new routes to get where we want to be, new innovation arenas and a broader perspective. But what exactly does that mean? When are they coming? And where? What if you don't notice there is anything happening... In fact we don't need to look particularly far to find people who have got their eye on the ball.

Meet two visionaries who have put their hats in the ring

The more the merrier

"Today it's popular to be against copyright but I'm in favour of it, I think it's interesting to try and see how we can protect the interests of creative people and artists in an increasingly difficult time." Andreas Ekström is a culture journalist and author of the first Swedish language book about Google. His book was entirely financed by crowdfunding. "As a blogger and journalist I have a group of faithful readers, so I decided I would ask them. And that was that."

Andreas set an amount: SEK 800 was one working day. About 20 people signed up, one of whom went the extra mile: At the end of the project, Leif Alsheimer, business lawyer and culture enthusiast, phoned up and asked how much SEK 30,000 would help. "A lot," said Andreas. The next day it was in his bank account.

Why a book about Google?

"I'm extremely interested in the sociological effects of the digital revolution. The Google book is about behaviour rather than technology. And about power: For example 20,000 Google searches are made every second! And everything is recorded. That's as close to exact knowledge as you can get. Google has a knowledge about the world that no one else has. And they get it first."

"30,000 dollars is the biggest single contribution."

Crowdfunding

... is a way of funding projects or ideas by approaching a large number of investors.

Google's response to the book which has currently sold 18,000 copies, has been muted. "The Nordic press officer gave some brief, polite praise. However no one has objected to the factual content, which I take as a compliment."

Can crowdfunding be developed further?

"Definitely, but it's tricky to say how. The whole thing about digital development is that it's hard to predict... But in Sweden I think it could lead to a tax exemption for donations. Maybe during this mandate period. Politics is the area I would keep an eye on." ■

More from Andreas at andreasekstrom.se

WHAT IS THE SIMPLEST SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM? *Do something!*

How it works

The foundation offers one year of backup free of charge including an interest-free loan. If the investment fails, the loan is written off. If it succeeds, the company can receive additional resources to stimulate growth.

"Help to self-help – squared."

The principle is a simple one. But no one has done it before.

"As far as I know there is no initiative of this kind anywhere else in Sweden. But if it goes well, the aim is to take it to more cities. And it is looking good. Since February 2011 just over 170 entrepreneurs have signed up. About 40 were weeded out and 10 are ready for investment.

"The selection process is mostly to make sure that the idea could provide jobs for more people than just the entrepreneur themselves. Help to self-help – squared.



At the moment of writing 15 investors have contributed SEK 30 million. Like to see who they are? uppstartmalmo.se

Have you got a project?

Tell us about it on the Swedish site fundedbyme.com

INNOVATION SKÅNE

We have a vision: Skåne is to be the most innovative region in Europe in 2020. We have drawn up a shared strategy for this: an International Innovation Strategy for Skåne, which will be complete this autumn. What you are holding in your hand is a document containing the thoughts that came out of this process.

In this document we briefly describe in six steps what is required to reach the goal. The points are embedded in stories about and by people who think a little bit differently. Who sometimes don't follow the beaten track. The aim is to inspire, to show the value of not taking the well trodden path, of new encounters and new ways of thinking. Because it's true, just by opening this booklet you become part of the strategy.

So whether you live and work in Skåne, Sweden, Europe or the world. And whether you work for a government agency, are an interested member of the public, an entrepreneur, an academic or even a member of the government: come on in and share our vision for innovation!