

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE INNOVATION CIRCLE FINAL REPORT	2
THE INNOVATION CIRCLE GOALS	5
AN EXCITING PROJECT WITH POTENTIAL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.	6
WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT INNOVATION.	9
THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL JURY.	11
INNOVATION CIRCLE IS CLOSED DOWN, FROM THE ACHES INNOVATION CIRCLE NETWORK ARISES	13
INNOVATION CIRCLE PROJECT RESULTS.	14
PSKOV AND INNOVATION CIRCLE.	16
INNOVATION CIRCLE – ØSTFOLD.	17
SUWALKI AND INNOVATION CIRCLE	18
53 LOCAL PROJECTS - NOMINATED FOR THE INNOVATION CIRCLE EXPO.	19





INTRODUCTION TO THE INNOVATION CIRCLE FINAL REPORT

By Alf S. Johansen, project manager.

The first part of the Innovation Circle project came to an end the 31 October 2007. This part included 12 partners funded from EU and Norway through the INTERREG IIIB program for the Baltic Sea Region. These partners were:

- Alytus City Municipality, Lithuania
- Public Institution Baltic Innovation Group, Lithuania
- Druskininkai Educational Center, Lithuania
- Cesis District Council, Latvia
- Turi Municipality, Estonia
- Robertsfors Municipality, Sweden
- Tranemo Municipality, Sweden
- Suwalki City Municipality, Poland
- Finnmark County Council, Norway
- Notodden Municipality, Norway
- Spydeberg Municipality, Norway
- Østfold County Council, Norway

During the project, which was launched 2nd February 2005, more than 100 workshops and conferences were implemented. The activities were organized in 3 work packages; an innovation academy which included training of about 300 professionals and students, a learning by doing part which delivered 53 local/transnational actions and an innovation forum which included 3 larger conferences and a final exhibition where the 53 actions were put on display and best practices were awarded.

The Innovation Circle project targeted the measure 3; “Transnational promotion of institution building, strengthening the capacity for spatial development activities”. One of the outputs was the creation of 5 training packs which can be downloaded from the website www.innovationcircle.net

In this report we are giving the readers an overview to the goals, implemented innovative actions, other outputs, more long term achievements and lessons learned. We also include a report from Bjørn Opjordsmoen, the chairman of the expo jury.

Cliff Hague and Visvaldis Valtensbergs, are two of the external academic experts who have followed our work most closely. They are giving their reflections on the project achievements.

The Innovation Circle project created the Innovation Circle Network. This was one of the most important results as the partners decided to create and run a network targeted to the development of smaller places and medium sized cities in the Northern Europe. The network was formally established in Warsaw the 21 September 2007 and is organized as an association open for all interested authorities, public institutions, NGOs, private companies and individuals.

The first chairman of the board is Mrs. Rita Merca from Cesis District Council in Latvia. In the board there are also representatives from all countries with members in the network. The network will organize new projects and will also organize minimum one annual

general event and one summer event for students every year. The network will also run a common website.

The second part of the Innovation Circle project will be running until May 2008. That part is funded from the TACIS program and includes mainly partners from Pskov region and Murmansk region in Russia. The project is managed by the Baltic Innovation Group in Lithuania and there will still be a couple of international events coming up next spring.

One of the aims of the Innovation Circle project was to train a significant numbers of “agents of change”. This aim was reached and we can clearly see already that many of the persons are working for local changes, networking locally, regionally and transnationally. The Innovation Circle applied a definition of innovation which included both private and public spheres. This was deliberately because innovation traditionally is mainly connected to the private sphere. However, innovation is not only about technological development or money making. Without a dynamic environment within communities and cities there will also be difficult to develop competitive businesses. The local and regional governance should be in line with contemporary and future challenges and give adequate answers to these. Labor market, physical environment, public health, education and culture are all spheres which needs innovation.

The key question for many smaller and medium sized places is how to keep up the population and attract competent labor. A too narrow and traditional focus on economic development will not give the expected results. A city or a community need to be attractive as a whole in order to be sustainable. It's important to become attractive for young people, for the driving forces / the “creative class”. The post industrial society is more than ever challenging the governance systems. A single corner stone factory can't be a sleeping pillow for any place any more. Globalization opens up for many new opportunities even for smaller places but is also a real threat. The heavy and fast escalating global trend is urbanization. People are searching for multicultural environment with more opportunities. We see creation of large cities and even “megapolis” which can be described as heavy urbanized areas where many big cities are melting together. East coast of China is probably the most extreme example, where about 100 millions are living in one urbanized zone. In North-East Europe we see that cities like Moscow, Berlin, Riga, Malmø/Copenhagen and other places are still growing even if the population as a whole in these countries are not increasing. Monocultural smaller communities and even medium sized cities will most likely loose and shrink gradually if they are not able to promote innovation and a more multicultural society.

We see clearly that the winners are places where it's easy to establish new businesses and initiatives, where there is a diversity within commercial life and labor market, creativity within the cultural sector and where life long educational services can be offered. Multicultural societies are stronger because they are more inclusive and can play on several strings. Can it simply be that young and creative people find such societies more interesting for living and working ?

Another challenge is of course to work with the physical structures, to provide modern infrastructure, to offer attractive houses, a living city center, a diversity within shopping, restaurants, cafes, entertainments, galleries etc. During the PIPE project and the Innovation Circle project we have implemented many workshops





focusing on the overall development in cities like Pskov, Murmansk, Suwalki and Alytus and we have worked with smaller places like Spydeberg, Kirkenes, Turi and Tranemo. We have launched new visions and scenarios and we have even triggered off investments in youth centers. Both in Turi and in Kirkenes we can find concrete results as the projects have initiated reorganization and reconstruction of old industrial buildings and brought dynamic activities into the city centers. We can clearly say that the PIPE and IC projects made a difference at these places.

Another outstanding and direct result from the IC is the creation of transnational cooperation between Notodden and Suwalki, 2 cities where the love for blues music are binding them together. Now they are exploring cooperation within many other fields and also initiating a “European Blues Trail”.

The IC project has also widened and strengthened the regional cooperation between Østfold and Cesis. A whole range of municipalities are now involved and cooperation is created within fields like education, medieval festivals, health and young entrepreneurship.

The project has focused on concepts for “New Governance” and several workshops have been undertaken. In Robertsfors they have focused on creating a sustainable strategy for development of the municipality. In Druskininkai they have established a visionary strategy for making their city the SPA capital of Lithuania and undertaken heavy investments. The project has compared and discussed the use of public and private partnerships and discussed both the opportunities and threats by establishing such partnerships. Dr Niklas Eklund pointed out the need for a more entrepreneurial political leadership but he also warned about the democratic aspects of bringing decisions from transparent public meeting rooms into closed board rooms.

Another important part of the Innovation Circle was the involvement of youths. Even if we didn’t focus on youth so strongly as in the PIPE project we still involved youth participation in the project, through community generator groups, at summer camps and in some transnational and local actions. Some actions were even initiated and implemented by young people.

The external evaluation was carried out by Telemark Research Institution in Norway. They made a survey among participants and they also observed the project by taking part in some events. The conclusion was that the IC project was conducted in a good manner and that the level of success was even higher than average, compared to other evaluated projects.

My own conclusion is that we carried out the mission according to the plan and we delivered at some places better results and more outputs than we had planned. New initiatives will be launched in the future through the Innovation Circle Network.

THE INNOVATION CIRCLE GOALS



The project plan described following project mission:

“The overall aim is to stimulate innovation and sustainable development in rural districts and smaller and medium sized towns in the Baltic Sea Region, to enhance competence about innovation strategies and EU policies through a transnational professional network and a tailored training program, which will serve as a common inter - sectorial platform for changing culture of governance, promote innovation and contribution to a polycentric development.”

These were the Central objectives:

1. To elaborate and deliver a problem based training through an “Innovation Academy” in order to improve competence for working with strategic development projects, innovation and stimulation of entrepreneurship
2. To train and encourage a significant number of professionals and decision makers from local and regional authorities, schools, NGOs or other institutions as well as students to take active part in innovative actions, to become “agents of change”.
3. To give the central participants a good understanding about European strategies, common challenges and opportunities within the Baltic Sea Region and how EU programs and policies can be used for the benefit of transnational cooperation and innovations
4. To form community generators as local arenas for generating and promoting of innovative ideas and initiatives
5. To plan and implement approximately 50 innovative actions for change and improvements of the participating communities and regions
6. To foster and build a viable transnational cooperation network through an “Innovation Forum” between local and regional authorities in the Baltic Sea Region.





AN EXCITING PROJECT WITH POTENTIAL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Professor Cliff Hague
Herriot Watt University, Scotland

IC was an exciting project. It began soon after the Baltic States and Poland joined the EU, so it was a new beginning, not only for the IC Partners but for the EU itself. It grappled with the future of small towns in rural regions in Europe's periphery, one of the most challenging long-term problems facing the continent. Innovation was not just a fancy title for the project: innovation defined the way the project worked.

Research by the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) has explored some of the dimensions of change in peripheral rural regions. Population ageing is a long-term process. It affects Europe as a whole, but is especially a problem in rural areas. The drift of younger people to the larger urban regions strips the life out of a rural community. The risk is that the aging population becomes less and less able to sustain essential services, and that farms and other businesses close as they struggle to find successors when their owners reach retirement age. The risk of a downward spiral is compounded by the tendency of older people to resist, rather than embrace, innovation. Yet innovation is needed - from businesses and from local and regional governments, to mitigate these powerful trends towards regional decline.

The problems are broadly similar across all of the Baltic region, but one consequence of EU membership has been particularly high levels of international migration from Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Within these countries, the capital city regions have experienced strong growth, but the rural areas have seen key workers drain away.

Working together

I have worked on a number of INTERREG and INTERACT projects in recent years. It is evident that many of them find that it is very hard to develop a shared understanding of aims and concepts, especially in the early stages. Some projects move slowly, as partners who thought they had a common set of concerns become bemused by differences in national and institutional outlooks and practices. The more abstract the concepts, the greater the risk that the project will have such difficulties. Similarly, the worlds of academics and practicing governmental officers are very different. Academics tend to be rigorous but obstinate as they pursue their own version of scientific "truth"; practitioners are more pragmatic and better at finding compromise solutions, though such solutions may mask misunderstandings and important differences.

IC was remarkably successful in steering a course between these potential hazards. This owed a lot to the project management and also to the experience that many partners had of working together on the PIPE INTERREG project. It is also greatly to everyone's credit that new partners brought a positive frame of mind and were quickly accepted. The result was a rare balance with all partners, new or old, large or small, Scandinavian or more recent EU members, making a positive a contribution.

Innovation Academy

My own work in the IC was tied to the Innovation Academy. I was co-author and editor of four of the work packs and facilitator at the first three workshops. Explaining theories of innovation to an audience whose first language is not English, and who came from different countries and backgrounds was not easy. However, the commitment of the readers and participants in the workshops made it a rewarding experience.

The workshops were the highlights for me. We began in Cesis at the end of the summer of 2005, with some anxiety. Would it work? Could we manage to create a sense of excitement that would fire enthusiasm amongst participants faced with a demanding work schedule? Thanks in particular to the then local organizer, Inese Suija, the event went better than we had dared to imagine. Inese proved an excellent organizer and workshop leader. She repeated this role in the second IA workshop three months later. She then moved on to further her career elsewhere. IC had been fortunate to have the benefit of her talents.

The Robertsfors workshop was memorable. The deep winter snow, the short daylight hours, the twinkling lights at the windows of the cottages, the sheer sense of the magic of the northern winter is something to treasure. However, I also remember that I lost my voice here, and by the end of the first performance of the Governance Rap, I was really struggling to speak, let alone to rap! Nevertheless, the strong experience of European work and of sustainable development in Robertsfors gave the workshop a strong foundation. Angéla Ekman-Nätt played an invaluable role in making everything work well.

Suwalki in the spring of 2006 was another great experience. My role this time was to lead a group working on the town's identity. We had only 2 days to do the kind of work that could take a consultant 2 months. This was daunting enough, but, this being IC, the challenge was then to present our findings in an innovative way. A hastily assembled script was performed by a cast, every one of whom turned in a star performance. Swedes and Poles re-enacted ancient battles, Alfred Wierusz Kowalski the town's most famous artist painted an instant masterpiece, the cavalry galloped, trains and lorries careered across the stage, fish from the nearby lakes swam by, young stars showed how empty buildings might become dance clubs.

Learning and teaching is easier if you are having fun. The Innovation Academy was fun. There was a definite buzz at every workshop. Some activities worked better than others. Experimentation is about failures as well as successes. The important thing is to try out new approaches and to learn. I was pleased to include the IC as a case study in the book *Making Planning Work: A guide to approaches and skills* which I wrote with others as a UK input to the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in 2006. What has been done in IC is well worth sharing with a global audience. In a rapidly urbanizing world, IC shows the potential for mobilizing talented people to think creatively about the challenges facing small towns





and rural areas that are distant from a major metropolis.

Where next?

The literature on innovation stresses the importance of trust, tacit knowledge and iterative processes in which knowledge is exchanged and re-worked between diverse actors such as researchers, designers, marketing people, customers, production workers and so on. IC has built mutual understanding and trust amongst people from different countries in the Baltic Sea Region who also come from quite diverse professional and political backgrounds. This is a significant asset. The seeds have been sown for continuing co-operation.

The hope must now be that a culture of innovation becomes embedded in the partner authorities. The evaluation studies show that members of those partners who have been active participants in IC have gained significantly from the project in terms of understanding and confidence. However, these activists now need to become agents for change within their own organization. They need to spread the message to colleagues with whom they work. Perhaps some materials from the IA can be translated to make this sharing easier. Could local workshops be run to “de-brief” about the lessons from IC and to explore how they might be developed locally?

Hopefully IC can continue after the project has ended. Certainly innovative actions by local authorities in the rural regions around the Baltic Sea will still be needed. Nowhere stands still.

WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT INNOVATION

Visvaldis Valtensbergs
Vidzeme University College, Latvia.



When I first learnt about the Innovation Circle project my understanding of innovation was shaped by sterile academic debates in economics, public administration, and political science. I had read about innovation but I had never seen how innovations were actually produced. That's why I decided to stay in touch with the IC by attending Innovation

academies and follow the whole process by watching and listening carefully. To find out how partners used the opportunities offered by the IC to promote local and regional innovation and development in their own communities I interviewed 27 community members, and I reflect on some of my observations in this article.

In the beginning of the project I assumed that innovation was a product. I thought that innovation was something progressive, something that would bring concrete results. An example of this kind of innovation would be new, effective, and transferable practice, project, or local policy-making approach that would help to solve social problems in rural communities. I had to modify my assumption pretty soon. Most people I interviewed saw the innovation as process in which participants learned about “innovative ways of thinking.” For them the beauty of innovation was actually in the process of it's making. This process took place in formal and informal get-togethers where people mingled, shared their stories, and got to know each other better. In fact, this process also took place in people's minds, once they started to organize things in their municipalities. Ideas for projects resulted from interaction between people with overlapping aims and different types of background and experience. It is possible that for some innovation-in-process might be seen as a waste of time and money, however even the biggest skeptics today agree that there have been concrete results: 53 projects in 13 nomination categories!

One advantage of the process-oriented innovation is that it increases the possibilities of learning for larger number of people. IC was a laboratory where ingredients of experiment were mixed together by participants themselves not by some crazy genius professor. This allowed participants to recreate the experiments they learned in IC in other labs under different conditions.

In reality pure replication of innovation is impossible. Adaptation is always needed. Organizations have different cultures, their legal mandates and regulatory constraints are different, not to mention difference in political cultures and contexts. According to Bob Behn from John F Kennedy School of Government in Harvard who writes his monthly Public Management Report, says that successful innovators always should “stick to the core idea of the innovation, and always ask themselves what features of the original innovation they need to replicate from other municipalities and what features should they adapt to their unique circumstances.”¹

Many participants thought they had learned how to be innovative by taking “something that works” and adapting it to “local conditions.” My impression was that some local actions were designed to deal with thought-out development problems, like in the project “World Class Community” by Robertsfors, while in other municipalities local actions went into strategic drift - a process of muddling through problems, solutions, approaches, tactics and experiences, that did not add up to coherent strategy, but was more like going with the best practice. True, that “muddling through” can also be seen as achievement of the project, because learning from other municipalities became “a way of life,” and a “standard practice” for some municipalities. IC project did not bring immediate results but it helped some municipalities like Murmansk and Suwalki to generate the concept of future changes in entrepreneurship, which would hopefully bring more certainty into their organizational and political environment.

Consumer society offers us quick fixes for everything, starting from clogged toilets to personal relations, therefore it is tempting to reach in the shelf of best practices and grab something that seems to fit. There is a problem with this kind of approach in public management. Managers who are obsessed with adopting the “best practice” almost never contemplate about how this practice actually works. They fail to explain it to their colleagues, superiors and constituents. All they say that they have adopted the best practice, hoping that everyone will be impressed. Here is where all the workshops, excursions and interactive seminars paid off! IC helped partners to understand new concepts, elaborate their ideas and sell their projects to friendly insider audience, before going out and introducing the project to local politicians and people in their community. In the Expo, which took place in Druskininkai I felt strong sense of project-ownership among the IC activists,

¹ Behan, R. (2006). The Imperative of Adaptation. Bob Behan's Public Management Report. 3(12), August. Available at <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/thebehnreport/>.



and I take it as a sign of success. Norwegian local election results show that being innovative can also help in winning the election. This has been true for Stein Haaland in Spydeberg, and Knut Herland in Eidsberg municipality. Politicians should take up innovation agenda. It works!

It is, of course, difficult to think about innovation in abstract terms - outside social, historical, geographical and cultural context. Partners in the IC represented a complex mosaic of modernization and quality of life indicators, and they each brought their experience and expertise to the project. Some municipalities, like Mysen, had already developed a rich practice of youth entrepreneurship, and there the development of entrepreneurial competence were already an integral part education on all levels, while others like Cesis and Druskininkai were learning from them. Some municipalities were advanced in other areas, such as urban planning, tourism development and heritage management. There were also interesting projects within the field of art, culture, leisure and event management. How do we encourage learning across cultures, areas and disciplines? What benchmarks do we choose for our projects in future?

Researchers Bigoness and Perreault once wrote about three dimensions of innovation, namely the degree of innovativeness, the content of innovation, as well as the references to other innovations in particular social system.² The first dimension assesses the level of innovativeness. The second dimension – the content of innovation helps to explain why organization are successful in creating specific innovations such as single product or technology, while less successful in creating innovation across broad spectrum of content areas, such as introduction of innovative governance principles in local government. Moreover, taking into consideration different social systems of the IC partners, the third dimension – reference domain, can help us to identify the boundaries within which partner's innovativeness can be compared or contrasted. For example, a municipality which introduces youth Council in local municipality may be viewed as highly innovative in Baltic States and Russia, but not so innovative in Scandinavian municipalities where youth have been involved in local governance for quiet some time. Innovations are beautiful in their particular social, economic and cultural contexts, but they need to be a part of a systematic effort. Innovations are like children – they need care, attention and recognition to survive. Single spark of creativity is not enough to change the world in a longer run. Sooner or later in every part of the world people will have to cooperate more, and take actions to face big challenges, such as global warming, degradation of environment, decline in traditional energy sources, out-migration, and diminishing trust into institutions and politics.

On 21st of September, 2007 IC partners established the Innovation Circle Network, which is more diffuse version of the Innovation Circle. The network will continue to bring together activists from different countries into development projects and events. I think that success of such network will depend on it's political support, openness, partner resources, and circulation of ideas. IC created a shared identity among partnering municipalities. This will improve the quality of future exchanges among the partners and I am sure we will see some interesting projects very soon!

² Bygoness, W.J. and Perreault, W.D. (1981) A paradigm and approach for the study of innovators" *Academy of Management Journal*, 24(1), 68-82.

THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL JURY IC – EXPO, ALYTUS – DRUSKININKAI 10 – 12 MAY 2007.



Bjørn Ring Opjordsmoen
Head of the IC jury

Introduction:

The IC steering committee meeting of May 12, 2006, decided upon the 12 award criteria for the projects, which were to be submitted for a jury evaluation.

The participating projects were to be presented in written form as stated by the document – “Description of Project Idea”, to enable the jury to get some preliminary ideas as to which projects were to be studied more closely at the expo itself, to find the right decision for the gold and silver awards.

The jury was set up by nominating one representative from each of the 7 participating countries plus one head of the jury, who came from Norway. The nominated Norwegian member of the jury was granted sick leave, thus reducing the number of jurors from 7 to 6. As the head of the jury also came from Norway, it was decided not to replace the Norwegian juror. Consequently a total of 7 voting members - including the head of the jury - convened in Lithuania for the first meeting of the jury on May 10 at the IC headquarters in Alytus.

It must be noted that all the presented projects were put on display at the IC website, giving each of the jury members the opportunity to download the submitted project descriptions and read them through before the first meeting of the jury.

The work of the jury:

The agenda for the first meeting in Alytus on May 10 was as follows:

- How to organize the work of the jury.
- Allocation of the projects according to the 12 award criteria.
- Timetable for the study of the presentations of all projects.
- Setting a deadline for the final decision of the jury.
- Other matters concerning the work of the jury.

The jury accepted a total of 53 projects, although some of them were submitted after the announced deadline. Some of the projects were not fully described as required by the “Description of Project idea”, and this could be to these particular project’s disadvantage when the jurors started their final evaluations.

The jury took part in the opening ceremonies of the expo, eventually visiting all the stands and raising questions about the projects which were on display. Many of the stands with presentations were of a very high quality and they were manned by responsible persons who were more than willing to answer questions.

That same day the jury convened one more time to discuss the outcome of the visual presentations.

The next day there were parallel presentations in both Druskininkai and Alytus, and the jury split between these two events to allow for more input from as many of the participating projects as possible.

The jury convened at a meeting in the afternoon of this day to discuss a preliminary list of awards. The final discussions took place on Saturday, May 12, to finalize the decision of the jury. Results and experiences from these discussions will be seen in the [Results](#) and [Summary](#) section of this paper.



Results:

As stated before there were 12 award criteria. The jury decided to award an extra prize for the most outstanding project. This prize was given to the city of Suwalki, Poland, for the project “Academy of cultural activity, Suwalki”.

The distribution of awards is as follows:

Country	Golden awards	Silver awards
Estonia	1	1
Latvia	2	1
Lithuania	2	2
Norway	3	4
Poland	2	1
Russia	2	1
Sweden	1	2
Total	13	12

Summary:

As head of the jury I noted that some of the jurors had taken an active part in developing their various national projects. Consequently one had to take into consideration that these jurors might be quite biased towards their own projects. The final discussions in the jury proved this to be quite right as one of the jury members argued very strongly for a particular project which he had been an active participant in developing, obviously failing to note that this was not a project worthy of a prize. However, the majority of the jurors agreed upon the final list of prizes.

For future events, one should take into consideration that any national representative in a jury, should not be a person who has taken an active part in developing a project. The jurors should be quite independent of the submitted projects. I would also suggest that the head of the jury, as was the case of the IC jury, should be totally independent of the project as a whole, to safeguard neutrality as to which projects should be given awards.

It should also be stressed that in future competitions, the participants should adhere strongly to the “Description of Project Idea” and not skip any part of the description, as was done in many cases in the IC projects. Any overdue submission in future projects should be dismissed and not be allowed to take part in the competition.

Modern technology, like websites and blogs, are useful tools for a first hand evaluation of projects. In the case of the IC projects, the website enabled all the jurors to download the submitted projects beforehand. This gave all of us the opportunity to look for prize-winners, even before we convened our first meeting of the jury.

As a whole, the experience of being the head of an international jury evaluating more than 50 projects, was rewarding and a very interesting task to complete.

INNOVATION CIRCLE IS CLOSED DOWN, FROM THE ACHES INNOVATION CIRCLE NETWORK ARISES

Bjørn Frode Moen
Notodden Municipality, Norway



It has been a long and interesting journey through new landscapes. Innovation Academy and the youth camps have definitely been a success. Apart from the training program, these events have also contributed to the transcultural dialogue that has come to be of great significance in newly launched projects from the European Union. The Academies were also an important contribution for the realization of the Innovation Circle Network.

The local actions have been very diverse, and have been changed during the project period. The changing of coordinators several times is probably responsible for this fact. Even though, at the EXPO, our project came out quite well. Our local actions would probably be even more elaborated if we already in the beginning of the project have been clearer about: What to do?

The most important part as for local actions in an international project is to make the actions sustainable transnational. We have only partly managed to do that. However, bandmap is an example that shows a real transcultural output that starts when Innovation Circle as a project ends.

If Innovation Hunting is going to be transnational sustainable we don't know yet. However, even if it has come to and end Training the Trainees was transnational.

It is also important to be a copartner for other projects that want to be transnational. In the Circle of Blues in Suwalki we were together with others happy to be a partner. This cooperation is also made sustainable through the establishment of cooperation between Notodden Blues Festival and the newly established Suwalki Blues Festival, when proposing the project Blues Trail. In this project also together with Pistoia in Italy and Åmål in Sweden.

Innovation Forum is perhaps, even more than the Academy, a forum for transcultural dialogue. We hope that the newly established Innovation Circle Network will be as intended a continuation of that forum. The webpage has been useful, but even more important for Notodden municipality is the branding of our city together with Suwalki in the Baltic Times in April this year under the title "Blues Brothers". The added pages in the same newspaper at the EXPO also managed to focus our local communities in a positive way.

The evaluation reports has been interesting as for putting our activities into a theoretic frame, but even more inspiring has the workshops been with a lot of interesting lectures and a fantastic EXPO in Alytus.



INNOVATION CIRCLE PROJECT RESULTS



Innovation Circle project was the one claiming that a good life to live is possible in small and medium sized cities. The project working for this vision with a great network of 14 partners produced a number of outputs during three years.

- The following development concepts were elaborated during the project: "Murmansk 2016 - the Capital of Arctic"; "Alytus 2020", "Plan for Sustainable Development of Robertsfors", "Strategy for Entrepreneurship Support in Suwalki municipality". It is a common result by the use of good experts, transnational exchange of politicians, specialists and youth.
- "BASEN" in Kirkenes was based on ideas from an international PIPE workshop in 2003 and completed through the IC in 2007. The youth center and skatepark in Turi was based on ideas from the PIPE workshop in 2004 and completed in 2007 through IC. Both are regenerated industrial premises. The common transnational strategy is to enhance the activities in the city centers by getting youth activities there. Its a way of promoting development of more compact, vibrant and attractive towns.
- Feasibility studies for the "Vidzeme Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship" in Cesis district and "Innovation Center in Østfold" were elaborated during the IC project. As the next step, both municipalities have developed a joint project application about practical establishment of the innovation centers and submitted to the Norwegian Financial Instrument.
- During the project, several transnational workshops were conducted to promote youth entrepreneurship and enhance business skills of young people. This has resulted in at least 3 business plans which are going to be implemented into practice. 2 companies were established in Murmansk (the one dealing with environmental technologies has even been taken into the Norwegian Business Incubator); Østfold county has elaborated the business plan for establishment of the Innovation Center.
- "Alytus 2020" gives a comprehensive approach to the development of the city and its surroundings. The same is possible to say about the "Spydeberg center structure plan". Both projects were developed by architects/architect students in cooperation with the municipalities. In other cities like Murmansk, Pskov and Suwalki we carried out analysis. However, not in such detailed and comprehensive way.
- Modern cities and towns are "products," and those that will grow and survive must be willing to accept this fact. Therefore, the IC project addressed issues on how to brand and market small communities. Strategy for attraction of young people for years 2005 - 2017 was elaborated by Suwalki municipality; the concepts "Murmansk - the Capital of Arctic" was developed in Murmansk" and "Alytus - the City of White Rose" were developed for promotion of the two municipalities.

- Suwalki and Notodden cooperation has resulted in a concept for a new transnational tourism product - "Blues trail". It links up municipalities which host international blues festivals. Pistoia in Italy and Åmål in Sweden have also been invited to joint the "blues trail". The historical and cultural heritage of Cesis district in Latvia gave a strong impulse to Østfold County as a result of which, a new tradition to organize an annual international Medieval Festival was started in Østfold.
- Cultural festivals as a means for marketing of small places received a great attention by the communities involved in the IC project. As a result, Suwalki in cooperation with Notodden elaborated a manual "How to organize a music festival".
- 2 training programs were developed during the IC project:
 1. The learning program of the Innovation Academy (it will be further elaborated and offered in the market by a newly established Innovation Circle Network), and
 2. Introduction of Young Enterprise program in schools (the learning program was developed during the transnational exchange workshops in the frame of WP2 and is coordinated by the partners in Østfold, Norway).
- 5 workshops of the Innovation Academy and 3 Youth Summer Camps were organized with the purpose to train people from different sectors within the region/ municipality about how to work together, share good experiences and overcome the challenges in small and medium sized places. Topics of innovation, spatial and sustainable development, competitiveness, culture of governance and design, entrepreneurship and business development, management of innovative projects were covered.
- The city hall of Alytus municipality was turned into a modern conference place with appropriate equipment including sound and remote speaking system and equipment for simultaneous translation. The smaller equipment (PCs, laptops, printers, video projectors, web cameras, digital and video cameras) which was allocated to other project partners was needed in order to carry out local, transnational activities and disseminate results. All 12 INTERREG partners made some investments.
- More than one thousand people were directly involved in IC project events like youth summer camps, training sessions of the Innovation Academy, annual conferences of the Innovation Forum and a number of local and international workshops organized as part of WP2. The project involved about 300 youth in seven countries of the BSR. In general, the IC stimulated cooperation between different generations, different sectors and areas of activities and different levels of authority.
- The IC project has its own web-site - www.innovationcircle.net. The popularity of the website increased continuously and reached 2,5 million hits in the last year of the project. The number of visitors per month varied from 40 to 50 thousands. The project publicity was also widely ensured through existing partner websites. Additionally, several websites were developed for concrete local actions which were carried out by partners in the frame of WP2.
- One of the goals of the IC project was to establish a transnational network for the development of small and medium sized places and rural areas around the Baltic Sea. The Network was established on 21 September 2007.



PSKOV AND INNOVATION CIRCLE

By Elena Kolosova



The city of Pskov and the Pskov region have joined the Innovation Circle project as a partner supporting the objectives and aims of the project.

Pskov is situated between two huge centers – Moscow and St.Petersburg that attracted young people and professionals from the city. Moreover weak innovation capacity led to out-migration of young people and down-sizing of population.

That's why challenges addressed in the IC project were very relevant for our city. It was essential and crucial to establish an initiative group – so called Generator Group – that has become a loadstone for those who are committed to development, positive changes and innovations in the city.

Meetings with stakeholders, politicians, professionals, youth and entrepreneurs resulted in establishment of the Generator Group.

Generator Group included representatives from different layers of social stratification – local and regional authorities, architecture companies, NGO's, higher education establishments, schools who became “agents of change” for the region. One of the main targets for the Generator group was discussion of novel ideas, choosing the most appropriate for development of the city and lobbying them for positive changes in the city.

One of the most vivid results so far (as Russian part of the IC project will be finished in mid 2008) is creation of this recommendatory body that influences the process of working out the development strategy for the city of Pskov.

Monthly Generator Group meetings resulted in pinpointing two directions to be developed further that are of high importance for Pskov:

- city planning,
- tourism development.

This work emphasizes the importance of city development, creation of a living city, tourism sector development and involvement of youth in participation in local development, planning and implementation of community innovative projects.

Other results that have been achieved while implementing the project are as follows:

- the analysis of the local needs carried out, the SWOT analysis prepared,
- identification of important directions and related bottlenecks to be solved for future development of the community,
- development of a common Pskov region strategy in the framework of the Innovation Circle project
- establishment of networks with local and regional authorities and private business stakeholders aiming at follow up activities implementation of the IC findings.
- Elaborated action plan supposes participation of youth, young leaders as well as professionals in implementation of activities targeted at development of the above-mentioned prioritized spheres. In order to stimulate innovation and sustainable development the following actions have been implemented:
- monthly (more often if required) Generator Group meetings that became an arena for engaged fire souls to elaborate an action plan, generate and promote innovative ideas and initiatives.
- motivation workshop was hold in order to build common understanding among the key stakeholders about the IC concept and importance of community involvement in local development and planning processes.
- Youth Summer Camps hold in Druskininkai, Sigulda, and Pskov. Youth took part in the processes of working out plans for city development and got experience and confidence in transnational regional cooperation. 25 students took part in these Youth Summer Camps.
- Participation in Innovation Academies gave an opportunity to train 15 persons totally who continue to work as “agents of change” in the community. They disseminated a set of training materials among local partners.
- Participation in transnational actions together with other partners gave an opportunity to share experience among all the IC partners participating in joint events.

As a result of these actions Generator Group gathered fire souls – people with innovative ideas, eager to implement them and having knowledge and experience to do that.

INNOVATION CIRCLE – ØSTFOLD

By Christin Arnesen

Outcomes of the project

The organization within Østfold in the IC project:

- Østfold is located south of Oslo, Norway, with the Oslo Fjord to the west and Sweden to the east.
- Østfold is the gateway to Norway from the European continent.
- Østfold County was a partner in the IC-project together with five municipalities in “Indre Østfold region”. They were Rømskog, Aremark, Marker, Eidsberg and Askim municipalities.
 - Rømskog, Aremark and Marker developed a common project
 - Askim and Eidsberg municipalities developed a common project.



Outcomes for Østfold:

- Involved people from both public and private sector – holistic approach (politicians, administration staff from the municipalities, teachers, private businessmen, youths..)
- Developed strong municipalities with complementary roles and functions
- Developed a basis for interaction, collaboration and partnership
- Involved and motivated young people in the municipality to take part in local and regional development – reached out to the next generation
- Improved language skills for the participants in the project
- Build an international network within different sectors
- Developed international cultural understanding
- Improved knowledge about the balance between the planning process and the implementation of the projects – political decisions takes time!
- Arranged a medieval festival in Eidsberg Municipality
- Established youth councils in Rømskog, Marker and Aremark
- Developed cultural network in the region
- Started the process to establish an innovation center in the region – a working group are still working with the implementation
- Focused on nature and environment through conferences – new projects will be elaborated



SUWALKI AND INNOVATION CIRCLE

By coordinator Ewelina Suchocka



Within the local actions of the Innovation Circle project 3 local projects were implemented in Suwałki:

1. "Academy of Cultural Activity", by Regional Art and Culture Centre (ROKiS),
2. "Here is our place", by Teachers' Training and Continuing Centre, including an informal group of youth called SOWA,
3. "Strategy of Supporting Entrepreneurship", by Science and Technology Park.

Main results of their implementation were:

- increase of the competency level, exchange of information and experiences concerning the innovative activities for the regional development during workshops seminars and conferences within the local activities;
- development of public life democratization process, including youth participation in the decision taking mechanism;
- increasing the competencies within the international projects' implementation;
- organization of cultural international events in Suwałki city: music festival "In the circle of blues" and a conference titled: "Cultural pathways" – from theory into practice";
- elaboration of 2 strategies titled: "Innovation Strategy for Promoting the Youth for years 2007-2015" and "Strategy of Supporting Entrepreneurship",
- informational and promotional materials development (in paper and CD/ DVD form) concerning the results of 3 local projects in Suwałki in Polish and English, e.g.: (leaflets, abstracts of both above mentioned strategies, DVD films: promotional film: "Suwałki Collage" made by youth and film coverage from the music festival, guidebooks on: "Cultural Pathways in Suwałki" and "Blue book – how to organize a concert or a music festival". Moreover on the 1 common CD – were issued presentations of 3 local projects' implementation, as well as the "Chronicle" of the IC project in Suwałki and special paper bags;
- engagement and support of authorities in the project implementation period and their participation in organized events;
- representatives of Suwałki took part in the activities organized by the foreign partners: Notodden (Norway), Cesis (Latvia), Alytus and Druskininkai (Lithuania), Alta (Norway), Pskov (Russia), Turi (Estonia), Robertsfors (Sweden). Settled contacts will be maintain and developed within the future planned projects like: "TRANS-IN-FORM", "BLUES TRAIL" and the others;
- an additional result of cooperation within IC project is a partnership agreement between Suwałki and Notodden municipalities concerning future cooperation in several fields like: education, sport, culture, entrepreneurship; .

53 LOCAL PROJECTS - NOMINATED FOR THE INNOVATION CIRCLE EXPO - PARTNERWISE

1#	White Rose	Alytus
2#	We Know the Way	Alytus
3#	Dzukija's Tourism	Alytus
4#	Japanese Garden	Alytus
17#	Future Scenario - Alytus 2020	Alytus
53#	Alytus Information Technologies in Practice (ITP)	Alytus
5#	InDeMo	Cesis
6#	"Spooks, Ghosts and Haunted Houses: Castles and Baronial Estates in the Cēsis District"	Cesis
7#	You are not Alone	Cesis
8#	Telecast	Cesis
9#	First Step	Cesis
10#	Business data in our hands	Druskininkai
11#	Active Generation!	Druskininkai
12#	E-citizen	Druskininkai
13#	Innovative Governance	Druskininkai
14#	Breaking stereotypes	Finnmark
21#	Basen	Finnmark
50#	Gigant	Finnmark
21#	Basen	Finnmark
15#	Murmansk - 2016	Murmansk
16#	International Youth Theatre Festival	Murmansk
52#	From ART.MURMANOUT.RU to ARTBARENTS.NET	Murmansk
18#	training the trainers	Notodden
19#	Joint Centre for Career Guidance and Competence Building	Notodden
20#	Innovation Hunting	Notodden
22#	Event production and band exchange for youth	Notodden
23#	Medieval festival	Østfold
24#	Askim Eidsberg centre for young entrepreneur and students	Østfold
25#	Askim Eidsberg - Culture Network	Østfold
26#	Youth and Participation	Østfold
27#	Nature and Environment	Østfold
28#	Pskov Treasures	Pskov
29#	«We Study to Do Good» – «Revival of a Relic»	Pskov
30#	Expanding Borders	Pskov
31#	New Bike Routes in Pskov	Pskov
51#	Healthy PlatForm	Pskov
32#	WCC Democracy and Governance	Robertsfors
33#	WCC Entrepreneurship in schools	Robertsfors
34#	WCC Environment	Robertsfors
35#	WCC Youth Demo and Local Development	Robertsfors
36#	WCC Migration	Robertsfors

37#	WCC Participation	Robertsfors
38#	WCC Tourism	Robertsfors
39#	City centre plan in Spydeberg municipality	Spydeberg
40#	Entrepreneurship in schools	Spydeberg
41#	School lunches	Spydeberg
42#	Academy of Cultural Activity	Suwalki
43#	Here is our place	Suwalki
44#	Strategy of supporting entrepreneurship	Suwalki
45#	Bicycle	Tranemo
46#	Idea, innovation and aesthetics	Tranemo
47#	Service Team	Tranemo
48#	To Türi By Train	Türi
49#	Youth Center	Türi

