

Best Practice

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Task Force development

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1. Summary

Task Force Development is an appendage to combine knowledge from different areas. This results in a team that is able to act much more efficient in developing and permuting projects.

2. Background and conditions

Implementing new strategies always raises the question about the practical realisation and the continuous work process for reaching the target. Often not all parties concerned are sure what the target of a project is or there is a general lack of acceptance. Especially concerning the implementation of broadband several topics are involved.

Here administration, economy, private households, regional planning, local affairs, investment, services and also last but not least appropriation are concerned. One single person can neither overlook all areas at large nor know about all regional background information. In this context the implementation of broadband networks is a very good example.

3. Methodology

The county of Osterholz build a steering committee including all areas of public administration. The idea was not only to find solutions to open up broadband connections but also to allow for sustainability. At the same time an expert group was founded consisting of members of the economy and/or business development. These two groups, the steering committee and the expert group, also had common members and thus could interchange easily. This was complemented by the think tank of the BIRD project, whose ideas were brought back into the expert group.

This method basically includes three approaches for workgroups:

1. Steering group
 - a) Defines the target concerning quantity and quality

- b) Takes responsibility for project planning and steering
2. Expert group
- a) contributes expert knowledge
 - b) contributes background knowledge, e.g. at special issues or regional topography
 - c) has multiplier functions for the citizens
3. Think Tank
- a) discusses the future approach
 - b) estimates the basic development
 - c) creates innovative ideas
 - d) gives advices to the steering group

These or similar ways of organising the work in a project are typical. However, the implementation of all three approaches for work groups, for example in context of land accommodation, is atypical. The three mentioned work groups can be extended by a task force. This task force consists of single members of all three work groups. They have to have practical knowledge concerning the problem. Furthermore they have to work methodically to reach the target, to solve the problem. Through this a powerful project group is founded that is able to act and react interdisciplinary.

4. Model of financing

The costs of the task force should not exceed the costs for the regular work of the individual members. Costs for travelling, housing, conferences etc. should be covered by the project budget.

5. Work process (implementation)

Implementing the different workgroups caused the risk that the aims get unclear. With regard to the definition of the aim it was necessary to initiate the steering group. Recognizing that being a decision-maker does not necessarily mean to be an expert was important to be able to activate the think tank. During the discussions between regional actors and external service providers the expert group acts as a mediator. At last the decision was to choose a hybrid made of studies and regional experts who are ought to produce the wanted result. It became clear that such workgroups always have to be borne by persons and organisations and that the belief of individuals can tip the scales of strategic decisions.

During the initiation and the ongoing work of the groups it was important to keep the transparency of the information up. Using this information the Task Force is able to realise the given tasks.

6. Highlights

A very special highlight of this Best Practice is that the German federal government and relevant ministries picked up the idea to found a Task Force. This federal Task Force fortunately still is focussed on the issue “area-wide Broadband access”.

By being a member of this Task Force the BIRD-Project is able to exert influence on the national strategy of the mentioned issues. Furthermore the BIRD-Project can forward information in this context to the committee and the superior steering group. The “Initiative D21” meanwhile established the “Deutsche Breitbandinitiative” (German Broadband-Initiative) and is now forming the think tank for this consortium of task force and the steering group.

An expert group does not exist at the moment. Anyhow, the strategic development of the broadband competence center by the BIRD-Project is currently under discussion on federal level and it is very probable that it will be established. The achievement will be that the BIRD-Project and its European project partners can take influence on national strategies and decisions.

7. Recommendations

Although is not necessary to employ all workgroups in all situations it still is a powerful resource of know-how. The Task Force is able to act beyond the political field and to light up the different layers of a problem from a neutral position.

Especially in terms of implementing broadband heterogenic Task Forces, consisting of service providers, local government, end users and other interested parties, seem to be well suited to reach the set goals. Nevertheless it is very important that all parties agree to work together.

8. Additional information

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Links to press releases:

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