

Broadband on industrial sites

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A best practice by Intercommunale leiedal

1. Description

Since 1960 the inter-municipal organization Leiedal is developing industrial sites in the region of Kortrijk, Belgium. During the last 5 decades Leiedal achieved to realize many new industrial and business sites. One of the main focuses of Leiedal is to guard the quality of those sites by for instance by determining the quality of architecture, facilitating the maintenance of green areas and implement a long-term and durable strategy for the site.

The Evolis business park is a new 80 ha industrial site which is now being developed. The focus of this business park is to attract high quality new businesses to the region. The park is being developed with respect to the surroundings and to the environment. Four wind turbines will be placed.

Because Leiedal is always looking at extra benefits for the businesses who settle in the industrial sites, we investigated the possibilities to implement a government owned broadband network on Evolis.

2. Evolis

Evolis business park is being developed as a new standard for sustainability. The new park is adjacent tot the motorway E17, which connects Amsterdam and Antwerp with Paris, and lies in the cross-border metropolis Lille.

The park wants to attract innovation-driven companies that create a significant added value. These businesses should clearly be internationally oriented and represent a substantial high-quality employment.

Evolis business park has been acknowledged by the Flemish Government as the reference for business parks (top quality project award).

3. Why invest in broadband?

Leiedal had three main reasons to invest in a public owned broadband network on Evolis.

The main reason is the extra benefit that companies get because they can use this network to connect to the provider of their choice.

We also wanted to give businesses the possibility to use a high bandwidth and redundant network. Companies such as datacenters need redundant connections to different networks.

The third reason is that we want to avoid telecom providers to dig each time they had to connect a new company. Only the main provider in Belgium, Belgacom, invests in their own fiber network. All other providers start digging as soon as they have a customer who wants to connect to them.

By offering a broadband network, these providers do not need to dig themselves.

4. Scenarios for offering broadband on industrial sites

Leiedal investigated different possible scenarios to implement broadband networks on the industrial site of Evolis. Each scenario has been discussed with different stakeholders such as other business sites (Port of Ostend), broadband providers (Belgacom and Telenet) and field specialists (eg. Hans Witdouck, director market management EMEA for Cisco, video technology group).

Active model.

In this model the developer of the industrial site offers infrastructure and services on this infrastructure. The developer thus acts as a telecom provider who offers both the 'hardware' and the applications that use this infrastructure. For Leiedal this model had too many disadvantages because we had to ask for a Telecom permit to act as a telecom provider and we should have to set-up a private or public-private partnership to follow-up the technological evolutions. The business model that had to be used was too difficult to complement our existing models.

Passive model.

This model makes it possible to only provide the infrastructure and allow providers to determine the application services. This model offers advantages to all partners in such a project. The companies can still choose their own provider, without having to dig. The providers do not need to invest in a full broadband network.

Evolis Case – mixed model.

For the Evolis Business Park, Leiedal used a mixed model to offer as much possibilities to the providers as to the companies.

The main Telecom provider Belgacom will invest in their own fiber network. Leiedal will implement a fiber network as well, which will be made available to the other providers at a low price.

Both networks will be placed at the same time. Initially, Leiedal will place waiting tubes and inflate fiber as soon as other providers want to use fiber connections.

The Leiedal network will be made fully redundant so companies can use different connection points and different providers.

5. Business model

This approach for the implementation of broadband on Evolis is being transferred into a business model. The funding of the network has been covered, but this new approach still needs to be communicated with the businesses that want to settle at Evolis. Together with those companies, Leiedal will investigate what other possible applications can be used on the broadband network, such as internet access, CCTV and Telepresence. We will investigate whether it is possible to implement new shared services as data centers or shared telepresence facilities for video conferencing.

This broadband network is an extra advantage of the Evolis business park and is included in the marketing strategy. The new network will help to attract new businesses that need a high capacity network.

6. Lessons learnt

By investigating the existing broadband models on industrial sites and the possibilities for a government owned network, the board of Leiedal got convinced that the implementation of a broadband network on an industrial area needs to be done.

The main lessons we learnt:

- The implementation of the network is an extra benefit and helps to attract new businesses that need a high quality broadband connection and the possibility to connect to different providers on a redundant network.
- Not all businesses see the advantages, but once they here about the different possibilities, they see this as a necessity.
- Which model to be used depends on the existing infrastructure and service providers. For each business park, this situation has to be investigated. Sometimes it might be better to offer both infrastructure and services. Technical and business consultants will need to be consulted.
- The conclusions of this study were not the result of an intensive and costly study, but was mainly result of conversations with different stakeholders.

Preparational workshops

- 18/6/2008: Regional broadband workshop



- 30/4/2008: workshop with Hans Witdouck (director market management EMEA for Cisco, video technology group) and Leiedal (development of industrial sites).
- 28/4/2008: meeting with Port of Oostende.
- 26/3/2007: meeting with Jan Pszeniczko, Telenet.
- 26/6/2006: internal preparational workshop

Consulted studies:

'Draaiboek parkmanagement breedband', 2006, Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij Oost Nederland NV. (in dutch)

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