

Case Study

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Knowledge management in regional contexts

Period or publishing date

Organisation and Author

PP1 – ProArbeit, Osterholz
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1. Summary

Construct of organisation models that interlock to promote a subject at all levels– broadband competence centre, advisers’ network, competence circle broadband (suppliers’ circle) and institutionalisation of the “spider in the web” at all levels, e.g. by ticketing systems and application of new data bases.

2. Background and conditions

Broadband and innovation belong together and meanwhile have also reached the understanding of regional decision makers. For a long-term implementation particularly when it comes to strengthening the competition in the market, practical regional attempts as well as interregional strategic developments are to be considered.

Within the meaning of the BIRD project it was important to strategically accompany the Broadband Competence Center of the county of Osterholz from the project idea all the way to the implementation.

The broadband competence center of county of Osterholz, today known as the “Lower Saxony broadband competence center”, was at the beginning just an idea. Today it stands not only for a wide coverage of broadband but also for the adjustment of regional competition to technological advancements. There were several initiatives necessary to realise a complete concept to create a recognised broadband region – a region of broadband excellency.

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3. Methodology

The launch of the broadband competence centre is based on a variety of negotiations and discussions ultimately realised through political pressure. However, the background idea of networking was the crucial element for the successful implementation.

The idea of a broadband competence center was discussed with local, regional and national decision makers under the scope of solving the problem of the last mile for the economy. At this stage in Germany the topic was only discussed in a few municipalities. However, in the federal-wide discussion there was already established an awareness of this issue, and it was predictable that this discussion would be going on much longer.

4. Model of financing

Process oriented, Broadband Competence centre for Lower Saxony 1 Mio. Euro per year. Financed by ERDF priority 1 grants.

5. Work process (implementation)

The county of Osterholz could strengthen its role as a pioneer in an interregional context by initiating the conference for which experts from all over Europe and from all over Germany could be won as speakers. Because such a conference was the first of its kind in Germany and, what is even more, was held in a rural area the regional actors could gain recognition (please also see best practices “Open Space – Conferences”). After the successful conference and the resulting press work the rural area of Osterholz was able to strengthen its role as a know-how holder which was accompanied by political lobby work.

The implementation of a competence circle “broadband” to work out and establish a broadband competence centre (neutral expert mediator between municipality and internet service providers) was another big milestone. (www.bcc-ohz.de).

The competence circle broadband technology should be a working group of internet service providers and consultants from the state of Lower Saxony, which are committed to an open information policy and develop solutions for the rural area through cooperation (see also the best practice “task force building”)

Through this circle of competence and the addressing of potential members it was in exchange possible to gain membership in different working groups

at federal level. In addition to the European Think Tank which supported this project with new ideas as well as the competence circle broadband technology which contributed with a solution on expert level, it was also possible to initiate a strategic management. For this the federal plans were incorporated. To make the gathered information usable it was necessary to implement a knowledge management because it was quickly evident that the personnel needs for the coordination function otherwise would have been too high.

Especially the following tools were used:

1. An information portal with the ability to clearly sort information into user groups and make them accessible through Web 2.0 services. The system was not fully used – a partial version is now available under www.bcc-ohz.de
2. A geographic information system to identify the needs and infrastructure plans (see best practice GIS-system, as well as LOGIn-Project.net)
3. A ticketing system. A ticketing system was already used in the project ICTsforSMEs (Interreg IIIB - North Sea Region) which allowed problem reporting via e-mail and sorting out these problems in different stages of escalation. The advantage here is a transparency for the users, and for the ones posing a question as well as for the problem solver, which also could be an external. Further information is available at www.ictsmes.net (ICT Support Centre- available only in a German version)

The implementation of a process visualisation customer relationship management system failed for financial reasons. The idea to solve this through a document management system failed as well. The advantage of the applied systems was mainly the ability to combine everything and make it accessible through a web-based system. Such a system makes the highest degree of flexibility possible as well as it considers sustainability and maintenance issues.

After the implementation was successfully achieved the thematic competence of the rural area of Osterholz was once more underlined through the application in the T-City competition. The German Telekom was looking for a “future city” in Germany where a maximum of 114 million € for broadband infrastructure and services could have been invested. The BIRD project acted as the project manager on behalf of the county of Osterholz for the strategic development as the T-City (www.t-city-osterholz-scharmbeck.de).

Supported by the BIRD think tank a participation process was started in the city of Osterholz-Scharmbeck, which generated ideas and visions and led to a regional strategy. The application for T-City was a mixture of know-how and innovative ideas and business models to develop a regional strategy, not only in the urban area, but in the whole region. Already at the beginning



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of the process it quickly became clear that the city of Osterholz-Scharmbeck could be the only candidate in Lower Saxony to reach the finals among other applicants (best 10).

This also contributed to a positive external view of competence and acceptance of the broadband competence center which not only acted as a mediator, but also as a future agency.

With the support of the prime minister of Lower Saxony and other important stakeholders in Osterholz that accompanied the process, the county of Osterholz gained nationwide recognition. At the same time, the county took over the examination of funding for the removal of broadband gaps in rural areas on behalf of the Lower Saxony Ministry for Economy. The broadband competence center is now an expert institution in Germany on the relevant topics and.

In particular, the discussion on the minimum bandwidth in working groups at national level is being held in the year 2008. The results of the BIRD project respectively the recommendations for a bandwidth definition are already being expected.

6. Highlights

The presentation of the rural area of Osterholz at the Annual Congress of the initiative D21 and the mentioning as a best practice within the meaning of the German-wide strategies by the German Association of Towns and Municipalities, the German council of regions and the German Ministry for Economics during a press conference.

The invitation to national working groups and taking up the idea of a broadband centre, and further realising BIRD project ideas and strategies at national level.

7. Numbers

In Lower Saxony there are 804 municipalities. In the broadband atlas you can find detailed information about the availability of broadband and the techniques used.

<http://www.zukunft-breitband.de/BBA/Navigation/breitbandatlas.html>

8. Recommendations

Whether it is a broadband competence centre or a 'clearing agent (department)' (<http://www.clearingstelle-bw.de>) is not a matter of concern. It is important to implement a "spider in the web", which collects information and uses it target oriented. The basic idea is the continuous pursuit of an aim and the associated increase in the regional profile by means of



nationwide acceptance. This makes it not only possible claim one technical issue but especially in the medium to long term to gain indirect economic and structural benefits. Broadband is not merely infrastructure but economic infrastructure. And in order to abolish the digital divide it is also necessary to effectively examine the topic – because broadband connections are already being installed for providing services of public interest, and this is presumably just the beginning of the digital development. It is important to recognise that the planning and structuring of information is a responsibility on official local and regional level. The e-society or knowledge-society in its genuine meaning can only be achieved through respective cooperation on all levels of development.

9. Additional information

<http://www.initiaved21.de/N-ONLINER-Atlas.309.0.html>
<http://www.breitband.bayern.de>
<http://www.dslnachpankow.de>
<http://www.hamburg-media.net>
<http://www.hessen-it.de/dynasite.cfm?dssid=55&dsmid=3837>
<http://www.bcc-ohz.de>
<http://www.breitband-nrw.de/>
<http://www.breitband-ruhr.de>
<http://www.zukunft.rlp.de>
<http://www.saxxess.com>
<http://www.smwa.sachsen.de>
<http://www.breedband3n.nl>
<http://www.geteilt.de>
<http://www.kein-DSL.de>

10. Attachments

Press Release Dr. Mielke – eSociety
Report of the yearly congress of the Initiative D21