

From Regional Cluster to Knowledge Hub:

The Experience of Northern Netherlands Provinces Alliance

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Policy and regional context

- Northern part of the Netherlands:
- Three provinces: Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe
- Alliance since 1992: SNN
- Goal: strengthen economic position Northern Netherlands
- Four cities in the region: Groningen, Assen, Leeuwarden and Emmen



Regional HE landscape

- One University (of Groningen), University Hospital
- Four Universities of Applied Sciences
 - -Hanze University
 - -Stenden
 - -Van Hall
 - -Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden
- National context: 13 universities, open university, 8 university medical centers.



Key characteristics of cluster

- Five important regional economic clusters:
 - Water technology
 - Sensor technology
 - Healthy Ageing
 - Energy
 - AgriBusiness
- Campus development
Agreement of Groningen



Cluster vision & objectives

- **Energy Valley**: government, businesses and knowledge institutes cooperate to work on clean innovative energy
- **Sensor Universe**: network: facilitates initiatives in sensor technology
- **Healthy Ageing**: knowledge and development cluster: find innovative solutions to remain healthy for a longer period of life.
- **Water Technology** : center of excellence for sustainable water technology
- **Agribusiness**: regional roadmap: ambition to coordinate biobased economy in the Northern Netherlands



Governance arrangements

- Cluster approach
- Individual cluster responsibility for governance
- Common steering committee for subsidies, co-financing
- Common control authority
- Valorization organized in city setting
- Social-Economic Board (SER)



Stakeholder involvement

Consortium partners



Rabobank



Co-financing



FrieslandCampina



Forward-Look Forum



Achievements to date

- Clusters, based on regional strengths
- Campuses with clear focus
- Awareness of importance of entrepreneurship
- Sense of cooperation
- Different parties: Politics, Knowledge and Businesses
- (Inter)National exposure



How are success & impact being measured?

- Monitoring by indicators in general:
 - -spending in R&D, (un)employment rates, venture capital, amount of patents, amount of SME's with product innovation,/social innovation, share in international networks

Monitoring of valorisation: knowledge position of the knowledge institutes, progress campus development, SME's working with knowledge institutes, public private partnerships, output indicators of (European) programs, share of market introductions adding to societal challenges



How are key challenges being addressed?



What is working?

- Awareness of importance of cooperation for innovation
- Partnership University & University Medical Center
- Societal themes/challenges in University setting
- Successful public-private partnerships



What is not (always) working?

- Tension between Provincial authorities
- National versus regional goals
- Societal themes not always recognized by scientists
- Top down and bottom up approach



NEW Governance arrangements

- Common northern innovation agenda
- Common responsibility for governance
- Flexible steering committee (Innovation Forum Northern Netherlands) in a network setting
- IFFN directs within borders of content
- Easy access for SME's to valorisation infrastructure
- (Chamber of Commerce NN)



Next steps

- Synchronizing regional innovation with (inter)national policies
- New agenda and new governance arrangements (slide before)
- Guarantee scientific quality as decisive criterion, while added value to society increasingly becomes part of the reviewing process
- Organize interdisciplinary & multi-disciplinary cooperation

