

Selection of Key Competencies – Danish Example

Selection of projects for intervention in the Jutland-Funen cooperation.

The selection of key competencies for assistance from the Ministry of Economics and Business, i.e a national initiative was developed through a work by consultancies using qualitative and quantitative data and interviews from a number of sources.

First a gross list was formed using information from existing reports, existing statistical surveys, media screening and statistical runs on two industry databases and a statistical run on data kept by the central bureau of statistics. This gross list contained every possible cluster of competence mentioned or indicated by statistical analysis. The total number for the region of Jutland and Funen was 222. Using a threshold based on localisation coefficients and industry specialisation indices and condensing wherever overlaps were identified, the number was reduced to 46. Next a check to avoid geographic double counting was performed. In a number of cases a cluster was present in more than one county. Some activities shared technology and competencies or shared a labour pool or specialised suppliers even if they were situated in different counties. It was then combined. Having done this the number of clusters was down to 34. These 34 clusters were then analysed and geographically pinned to one of the counties respectively. A balance within the regions Jutland Funen was an aim of the cooperation beside the general aim of reducing the gap between this region and the region containing the Capital. Therefore it was important to distribute and pin the clusters onto counties.

As a guide for the work on cluster identification a list of characteristics of clusters were used. The characteristics were sorted according to the following ten headlines:

- Network/ Cluster organisation,
- Performance
- Key competencies and technology
- Labour force
- Local competition
- Infrastructure
- International position
- Advanced demand in home market
- Growth perspectives: Opportunities
- Threats

Network/ Cluster organisation comprised indicators such as: Formal cooperation, social relations and sharing of visions, common values, cooperation and innovators.

Performance was measured by: Revenue, export, employment and survival rate.

For Key competencies indicators were: Specialised competencies and technology. Strong relations with research institutions, dispersion of knowledge, availability of resources for investment and larger enterprises or dynamic SMV's in networks.

Labour force indicators were: Access to well qualified labour and mobility of labour.

Local competition was measured by the number of companies in the same industry that can generate a sufficient level of competition and a mix of local and foreign companies for access to other markets.



Regional Key Competencies

- a way to manage structural changes [ATB]

Infrastructure indicators comprised: The relationship between authorities and organisations, both public and industry development related, financial institutions and local suppliers. Further hard infrastructure such as roads and harbours etc. and soft infrastructure such as schools and cultural facilities were included in the list.

Advanced demand on home market was shown by: A subset of advanced demanding customers, motivating companies to innovate. Local experts with an understanding of the quality of the product and marketing. Feedback and responsiveness of companies to feedback.

Growth potential was reflected in possibilities for the cluster to maintain comparative advantage and positive development opportunities in export markets.

Threats were mainly two considerations: The demand for quick action by engaged stakeholders. The second was significant and sudden loss of jobs.

As may be seen the list comprises both statistical and quantitative data and qualitative information. The list thus is a guide to help think broader than if a quantitative survey is performed. Since the process of selection of clusters is a national and regional policy process with a number of interrelated aims as well, the list was used only as a guideline in the selection process.

The clusters selected for the western part of the new region South in Denmark (the original project area) were:

- Off shore
- Plastics
- Network for Bio Energy, Resources and Waste treatment
- Industrial biotechnology
- Production and IT
- Aluminium

Later a centre for Research Contact was established with funding for support for other more project organised activities involving public and private researchers and practitioners. An example of the activity supported under this setting is "Foodture". - A combination of several words to express the need to associate products with narratives and cultural aspects. Thus new spin offs from the cooperation are continually generated.

