

VINNVÄXT

A programme to get Sweden moving!

Regional growth through dynamic innovation systems



WHY VINNVÄXT?

Maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-based economy requires rapid renewal. Growth is founded on innovations based on cutting-edge competence, the exchange of knowledge, mutual learning and the interplay between companies, researchers and the political/public sector, the so-called Triple Helix.

Sweden's capacity for innovation is a decisive factor for the nation's economic growth and prosperity. Developing internationally-competitive research and innovation environments is therefore a vital task.

This is why, in 2001, VINNOVA started a programme called "VINNVÄXT – Regional Growth through Dynamic Innovation Systems". Since then, the programme has issued two calls for applications for funds (a third will run until 2008).

PROXIMITY BETWEEN PLAYERS

Geographical proximity between many different players creates competitive advantages in terms of co-operation, learning, access to know-how and expertise and development and business collaboration. Regions that realise this and that have a capacity for renewal can radically develop their competitive advantages. However, this also requires that companies, researchers, and the political/public sector collaborate and work actively towards realising a joint strategic idea.

INNOVATION SYSTEM

The term "innovation system" refers to the system of organisations, individuals and rules and regulations within which the creation, dissemination and innovative exploitation of technology and other branches of knowledge takes place. When the interaction between the different players works well, new, valuable knowledge is generated which is quickly put to practical use. This creates the foundations for innovations and attracts investment.



ABOUT VINNVÄXT

VINNVÄXT aims to promote sustainable regional growth by developing internationally-competitive research and innovation environments in specific growth fields. This is done by funding needs-driven R&D to strengthen the cutting-edge competence of the respective environments and by means of strategic efforts for the development of innovation systems.

As a result of the first two calls, some 70 projects have applied for funds from VINNVÄXT. Of these, eight regions have been declared winners. These regions share a number of common features, i.e. the regional players share the same strategic idea, there is a strong research and innovation environment and strong regional leadership and there is active participation on the part of the research, private and public sectors. Perhaps the most important factor, however, is that they are all believed to have excellent growth potential. The objective is that the winners will become internationally competitive in their respective fields within 10 years.

A unique aspect of VINNVÄXT is the long time horizon. VINNOVA will provide the winners with funds of up to 1.1 million euro per year for a period of 10 years. The regions must contribute at least the same amount themselves. The winners are also offered so-called process support in the form of seminars, coaching, follow-up and the exchange of experience. The winners will be evaluated every third year in order to determine whether they are complying with the demands set by VINNOVA.

VINNVÄXT in brief

- VINNVÄXT is a competition in which the best submissions win.
- A limited number of growth initiatives receive up to 1.1 million euro per year.
- The focus is on a field in which a region is particularly strong.
- Active participation of companies, researchers and political/public sector (Triple Helix).
- Funding will be provided for 10 years.
- A number of support activities (seminars, coaching, networking, the exchange of experience etc.).



ABOUT THE WINNERS

ProcessIT Innovations, Luleå/Umeå

ProcessIT Innovations is working to satisfy the future needs of the mining, steel, paper and pulp and manufacturing industries for new services and products based on Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The project involves collaboration between the processing and manufacturing industries, the universities of Umeå and Luleå and ICT product companies in Västerbotten and Norrbotten. The activities aim to create significant growth by means of extensive and co-ordinated efforts on the part of all the stakeholders, including the public players in the region. ¹

www.processitinnovations.se

Biomedical Development in Western Sweden

The aim of this project is to create a good basis for long-term growth in the biomedical field in the Gothenburg region by converting academic, cutting-edge research into innovations and practical applications in the private and healthcare sectors. The project strengthens the commercial exchange of R&D in fields such as biomaterials, cellular therapy and cardiovascular and metabolic diseases; trains future leaders for advanced business development; reinforces and develops the commercialisation infrastructure and attracts expertise and capital to the region. ²

www.goteborgbio.se

Triple Steelix, Bergslagen

The steel industry in Bergslagen leads the world in its niche. With the steel industry as a base, a cluster of companies has developed in the region in the fields of steelmaking, manufacturing, processing and knowledge-based services. Together with the universities and colleges, the focus is on developing expertise regarding materials, steel processing, nanotechnology, industrial IT, the environment and energy efficiency. Triple Steelix involves major companies such as Sandvik, Outokumpu and SSAB. ³

www.triplesteelix.se

Fiber Optic Valley, Hudiksvall

Fiber Optic Valley is an arena for the development and testing of products and services based on fiber optics. Together with the university and representatives of the public and private sectors, Fiber Optic Valley is developing the broadband society of the future in the region between Gävle and Sundsvall, with the centre in Hudiksvall. Among other things, they offer a test bed with contracted test pilots, qualified evaluators, research, training, business models, behavioural analysis, statistical models and an advanced fiber laboratory. ⁴

www.fiberopticvalley.com

Hälsans Nya Verktyg (New Tools for Health), Östergötland

Hälsans Nya Verktyg is a project that is driving the development of individually-adapted solutions for the best possible health. Growth is being generated in the areas of distributed care, personal care and sports. The project involves some 60 companies, the municipalities in the county, the county council, the regional association Östsam, NGOs, Linköping University and research companies. ⁵

www.halsansnyaverktyg.se

Uppsala BIO

The long-term objective of Uppsala BIO is to promote the growth of the biotechnology sector in the region. A long history of successful research and close co-operation with industry has led to the emergence of a number of products and companies in the fields of diagnostics, tools for biotechnological research and pharmaceuticals. The market is worldwide. Uppsala BIO is an initiative that involves the local biotechnology industry, the university and the public sector in the County of Uppsala with the aim of strengthening the competitiveness of the biotechnology sector in the future. ⁶

www.uppsalabio.com

Robotdalen (Robot Valley), Mälardalen

The vision of the Robotdalen project is to take the lead in the research, development and manufacture of industrial, field, and medical robotics. The key to success has been an environment in which players in the fields of advanced research, higher education and industry have collaborated and where innovations and new enterprises have been encouraged. The project has succeeded in mobilising stakeholders from throughout the region, including major companies such as ABB, Atlas Copco and Volvo. Sweden's first university course in robotics is located here. ⁷

www.robotdalen.se

Food Innovation at Interfaces, Skåne

Food Innovation at Interfaces is an innovation system for foodstuffs in Skåne. The strategic idea is to increase the return on investments in the food industry and to "create the health food of the future" with a high degree of value added. The creativity and innovation value is based on interdisciplinary and cross-border research. The areas of highest priority include health food and good, nutritious food in schools and hospitals. ⁸

Photograph: Kimmo Rumpunen

www.innovationigransland.se

For more information on VINNVÄXT see www.VINNOVA.se/vinnvaxt



Early-stage innovation systems

Sweden has many initiatives with great potential for growth. To discover these and help them become internationally competitive, a third announcement was made under “VINNVÄXT – Early-stage innovation systems”. The aim was to find fresh initiatives with major growth potential which were not yet fully established in their regions. This is where VINNOVA's confidence and support can make a huge difference concerning partners and financial backers. Due to the difficulty of determining which initiatives have the best international competitive chance, the announcement was made in three stages. A programme council and three assessment panels, plus officials and experts from VINNOVA, selected five growth initiatives (from 86 applicants) to receive SEK 2 million each for two years. In June 2008, the top two of these five will be upgraded to VINNVÄXT winners, receiving SEK 6 million per year for eight years. The five selected growth initiatives are:

Biorefinery of the future, Örnsköldsvik/Umeå

Processum Biorefinery Initiative operates a venture in future biorefinery from forest raw materials and energy crops. Biorefinery is a comprehensive process industry aimed at obtaining the greatest possible added value from raw materials. New products, fuels and energy solutions are being developed from raw materials and industrial process streams.
www.processum.se

Peak of Tech Adventure, Östersund/Åre

This initiative runs product and service development within the tourism, sport and adventure industries, chiefly in regard to

tourism and manufacturing in the sport and leisure sector. Region Jämtland's profile in winter sports, adventure tourism and so on, is opening up to future new markets and growth.
www.peakoftechadventure.se

Smart Textiles, Borås

Sjuhärad in Västra Götaland is focusing on the development of an innovation system for future trade, production and development of advanced textiles. In addition to fabric and garments, the textile field currently incorporates everything from quilted material and airbags to composites in aircraft and soundproof walls.
www.smarttextiles.se

Printed Electronics Arena, Norrköping

The strategic concept behind this initiative is to safeguard the potential within paper electronics – also a strong field regionally. Amongst other things, the initiative will develop the existing paper, printing and packaging industries, start up new companies and draw new industries to the region.
www.printedelectronicsarena.com

RobustIQ, Jönköping/Kronoberg

R&D within robust electronics will cross-fertilise small and medium-sized engineering companies with R&D-intensive players in electronic systems. The investment is being run at the interface between modern IT/electronics and traditional manufacturing.
www.robustiq.se



VINNOVA's mission is to promote sustainable growth
by developing effective innovation systems
and funding needs-driven research.

VINNOVA – SWEDISH GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY FOR INNOVATION SYSTEMS

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