

Development strategy for the innovation environment (RIS) of Seinäjoki region

Abstract

Seinäjoki is the capital town of the region of South Ostrobothnia with a population of 37255 (30th Sept. 2007). Seinäjoki has been among the fastest developing city regions in Finland since Finland joined the EU in 1995. Despite of having strong tradition in primary production, severe lack of an own university and relatively low level of education, Seinäjoki has managed to find ways of increasing the level of research activities in the region and transforming the course of past development towards more knowledge-driven economy.

The strongest business clusters in the region are food industry, agrotechnology and construction sector. These business areas have also been nationally recognized. The actors with most role in the development of the regional innovation activities are Seinäjoki city, University Consortium of Seinäjoki, Seinäjoki university of applied sciences, Seinäjoki Technology Centre Ltd, Foodwest Ltd and the regional council of South Ostrobothnia. These organisations also form the core of Seinäjoki science park.

During the RIS process 8 key challenges were identified from the points of view of customer, renewal, resource and processes. These challenges can be summarized as follows:

CUSTOMER	Well-defined services Recognizing the real needs of companies
RENEWAL	Internationalisation
RESOURCE	Successful recruiting Strategic use of land Stable finance
PROCESS	RIS governance RIS actors' capabilities

Based on the analysis of the key challenges three strategic objectives were set for the strategy until the year 2012. These objectives include:

1. Continuous development of regional innovation environment.
2. Actively renewing local businesses.
3. Fastest growing international connections among other regional capitals of Finland.



Specific actions are planned yearly. For the evaluation of the development strategy Seinäjoki city council sets up a regional innovation council with representatives of both local businesses, research institutes and development organisations. This council will first be gathering in the end of 2008.

The development strategy of the regional innovation environment of Seinäjoki region has been presented to the city board of Seinäjoki.