

CASE STUDY
"THE CENTRE OF COMPETENCE FOR SMALL CRAFT BUILDING"

**The College of Kuressaare of the Tallinn University of Technology
 & partners**

Information about the project

Duration: 1 Feb 2011- 31 Dec 2014
 Project performer: Tallinn University of Technology (TUT)
 Project financier: Estonian Enterprise
 Project partners: Estonian Maritime Academy, Regional Training Centre of Kuressaare, Association of Estonian Boatyards, local governments of Saaremaa, Development Centre of Saaremaa and others

What is your suggestion to other universities who are interested in initiating a regional co-operation project in the field of university LLL?

Anni Hartikainen, project manager (Director of the Small Craft Excellence Competence Centre of the College of Kuressaare)

"Think about the need based on your mission, "from university to society" and try to connect it with your need not the reverse."

Aim of the project	To create the facilities for small craft building as an internationally competitive industrial sector and support its development process.
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The project outline	<p>The project started as the close collaboration between enterprises and educational institutions in 2000, when the Estonian small craft building had been revived from the crisis of the soviet times, shifting its goals from the traditional wooden shipbuilding to industrial small craft building, thus a shortage of skilled labour came up. One of the first achievements was the launch of the vocational curriculum of small craft building in the Vocational School in Kuressaare.</p>
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In 2007/08 the small craft building cluster initiative¹ was started by the College of Kuressaare of the TUT. During the elaboration of the cluster strategy, enterprises defined the deficiency of skilled labour as one of the most important matters in their development – the development of the sector had reached the point where in addition to the skills of the floor workers, also the skills of small craft designers and engineers were badly needed, however, the opportunities to learn such specialities in the Baltic countries had been missing for 60 years. The second idea emerging from the cluster strategy was the creating of the science and development centre in Saaremaa, however, the idea was assessed quite unrealistic at the time.

The College of Kuressaare carried out a survey on the training needs of

	<p>the Estonian small craft building enterprises. The survey was based on the national professional standard. The Survey ascertained the shortage of engineering skills and the results were used in 2006 to improve the curriculum of the small craft building, which was developed in collaboration with the Estonian Maritime Academy (EMA). In 2008 the College of Kuressaare submitted the development project of the small craft building curriculum, which was planned as a joint curriculum with EMA and TUT but did not receive financing during the first call for proposals. The main criticisms were the expected small scale of the sector and a lack of skills when offering high-level training. However, the College of Kuressaare decided to welcome the project group and start the training.</p> <p>In 2009 it was possible to apply for investment support through the Regional Centre of Competence in Action¹ in order to establish the above mentioned insufficient platform. In 2010 the curriculum also received accreditation, without which it could not meet the objectives of the Competence Centre.</p> <p>In 2009, a conceptual design of the Competence Centre¹ was created, which took into account the needs of the two main target groups: small craft building enterprises and learners of the small craft building. The project turned out to be quite ambitious, e.g. consisting of the Estonian first small craft model test pool and the marine climate laboratory. In 2010 the main activities involved the verification of the conceptual design of the project, its preparation for implementation, establishing contacts of international collaboration. In cooperation with the Institute of Professional Higher Education of Kymenlaakso, several further education training programmes were organised and conducted to develop knowledge and skills of engineers (basics of boat design; basic naval architecture software etc).</p> <p>At the beginning of 2011 TUT, the local government of Kuressaare and also the Association of Estonian Boatyards decided to co-finance the basic application of the Competence Centre to a remarkable extent. The roles of the project partners will depend on their main objectives that are associated with the project aims.</p> <p>In principle, the aim of the project is achieved through 3 wider goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bringing know-how into the regions - providing them with a proper working environment and tools - developing intersectoral cooperation.
<p>Assessment and evaluation of the outcomes of the project</p>	<p>The performance of the Small Craft Building Excellence Centre is primarily assessed by the success of small craft building enterprises: growth in the value added, emergence of new enterprises and jobs and investments in the small craft building sector. Displaying the instruments and indicators as well as creating the strategy of the Competence Centre were all developed in the preparatory stage of the project.</p>

<p>How did you measure the success?</p> <p>Anni Hartikainen, project manager</p> <p><i>"We have worked out the success factors of competence centre, but the main indicator of assessing the success is the approval of the project by financier and partners."</i></p>	
<p>The essential results and positive outcomes</p>	<p>Only tentative predictions can be made on the effectiveness and productivity of the project now as the project has not been implemented yet. The essential criteria for success are clearly the popularity and scientific value of the small craft building curriculum and the time and the involvement of the senior experts – the lack of knowledge of naval architecture and hydrodynamics characterizes Estonia, but this kind of knowledge has to be introduced over the period of 3 years.</p>
<p>What factors supported the success of the project?</p> <p>Anni Hartikainen, project manager</p> <p><i>"It is too early to say if it was a successful project, but I can say that it is very important to focus on the aim and idea, not finances in the phase of preparation. Crucial aspect is also the contribution of head of partner organisations. Experience says that the co-operation between them is very difficult because of the limited time factor – it's a challenge to get them around the same table at the same time. It means a lot of individual work and discussions with partners.</i></p> <p><i>Important factors are also (shared and common) mission and philosophy – why we are doing this and how does it affect us? What is the purpose and perspective? It is necessary to engage all the partners' philosophy with the common target. Project manager should be able to stand in his/her own and the partners' shoes at the same time and to keep the common philosophy on the horizon all the time.</i></p> <p><i>I think that the more ambitious the project is, the bigger is need for a more charismatic leader. Authoritarianism is out of question – there is no room and platform for this."</i></p>	
<p>Problems and failures</p>	<p>When developing small craft building, many of the projects are closely related and linked to one another as the critical success factors, e.g. without the essential volume of know-how gathered in the Excellence Centre, it would be impossible to offer study programmes for small craft building at a high level and at the same time it would also be impossible to transfer the know-how through the Excellence Centre without learning; without the Cluster Initiative, there would hardly be any good inputs to the development of the both nor a good practical link for transferring know-how into a company. In many cases this has created a situation where many risks are related to the initial start-up operation, e.g. to the curriculum.</p> <p>The workshops of the Competence Centre's project failed at the preparatory stage due to the fact that the partners were too occupied. It was necessary to discuss the vision and other issues with the associates individually. .</p>
<p>What kind of risks should be taken into account to avoid the failure of co-operation?</p>	

Anni Hartikainen, project manager

Most of the big risks are connected with people.

"Homeblindness" – danger to close yourself in to your inner ‘home’ world which leads to the danger of misunderstanding and making mistakes

Not being able to find top-experts to work in competence centre or if it's possible then the range is too narrow and it's not possible to take account of personal characteristics

Other competence centres in the region of The Baltic Sea are not interested in co-operation

Too little local need for services of competence centre

Possible conflicts of interests between project partners

Inertia of university that affects the response to very rapidly emerging and changing needs

Not enough time to educate the whole generation of Estonian experts during the project period

Small Craft Building companies can get a setback in the market and economic performance, or internationalization of their business this way and at a rate that leads of interest away from international to domestic services

Contacts of the presenter of the case

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Note:

1. A cluster is a geographic concentration of interconnected [businesses](#), suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field to increase productivity and the ability to compete, nationally and globally.

In the context of this case study in Finland, the 'regional centre for competence in action' and the 'competence centre' are locations which concentrate expertise and skills in a specific field of knowledge improvement. Usually they are created by universities to support regional development. Among the activities are training courses, applied research and other development projects.