

An Innovation support system in periphery - Business Garden Oulunkaari

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Abstract

In recent years, several rural areas have undergone a rapid decrease in population with the result that their population structure has been considerably distorted. In addition, local companies are not investing enough to develop their businesses, which both heighten the sense of insecurity in these areas, and reduces the number of work places in areas where unemployment rate is already very high.

In order to sustain or improve the economic performance of an area it is seen that innovation support system is the key to do it (Boekholt & van der Weele 1998). In the national system of innovation the public decision makers have the ability to interact in the opening process of the innovation system and emphasize development on different fields. But they do not act alone because the private sector actors, especially enterprises, are involved in a versatile manner. Good co-operation is the major part of the national system of innovation. (Science and Technology Policy Council of Finland, 2003) The same development path is seen also in the regional level.

Since the regional development actors in rural areas can not have experts on all fields, it is important to find good cooperative partners to increase their limited resources. Therefore, rural municipalities of Utajärvi, Ii and the city of Pudasjärvi decided to join their forces on enterprise supporting actions. The joint action and cooperation model is called Business Garden Oulunkaari.