

## Parallel Session 1 - Theme: Creating advantage through network relations

### Title

Beyond park boundaries: creating an integrated community to embed the benefits of innovation in science park localities

### Executive Summary

Science and Technology Parks are gaining in importance following the recent global economic turmoil, which is resulting in a further round of economic restructuring as places seek to innovate and compete within the so-called 'knowledge-based economy'. This paper examines how the North East Technology Park (NETPark) in the United Kingdom has proactively used the park to drive the development of strategic networks beyond the park boundaries via two principal delivery vehicles: NETPark Net, a virtual science park, and Project C, an outreach programme which connects with local communities to raise aspirations. NETPark should not be seen as an autonomous entity, or only a spatially anchored physical node, but rather a way of doing business that all interested in science, engineering and technology can connect with, becoming part of the NETPark community. This approach has begun to yield some particularly interesting results in terms of broad based support, building local supply chains, company collaborations and spin off activities. Thus, the paper identifies some important lessons that may have policy implications for other Science and Technology Parks across the globe.

### Introduction

The session theme asks two questions about Science and Technology Parks (STPs) in seeking to understand why STPs differ in performance:

- What is the role of network knowledge resources in influencing STP performance?
- Can STPs using similar models as competitors and adapting similar inputs achieve a competitive advantage through network relations?

The question raises assumptions about performance and models. There are many factors that influence STP models and performance: maturity, focus, ownership and governance, location, external economic circumstances, and objectives. Therefore this paper will explore NETPark's context and development to cover these factors before describing how network resources are used and what benefit this has on performance. The central finding of this paper is that the use of such network resources can add value to an STP but the data collection is at an early stage and therefore hard to quantify. Network resources are here defined as NETPark Net and Project C - both of which are formalisations of County Durham Development Company (CDDC)'s extensive knowledge of business support, companies, finance and government which had been built up for 15 years preceding the establishment of NETPark.

Competitive advantage is another term which perhaps needs defining:

*Competitive advantage grows out of value a firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating it. Value is what buyers are willing to pay, and superior value stems from offering lower prices than competitors for equivalent benefits or providing unique benefits that more than offset a higher price. There are two basic types of competitive advantage: cost leadership and differentiation.*

Michael Porter, *Competitive Advantage*, 1985, p.3

While Porter's classic definition applies to industry, there is no reason it cannot be applied to STPs although differentiation is perhaps the relevant type of competitive advantage for STPs in that they generally create superior value for their clients for which clients are willing to pay.

It remains to be seen whether using network resources can bestow competitive advantage between competing science parks, especially when parks are geographically disparate. Experience does not

lead us to believe network resources would currently influence the buying decision over which science park - perhaps more important factors are a skilled workforce and quality of facilities as identified by the Batelle Technology Partnership Practice<sup>1</sup>. It could, however, be said that network resources can be used to improve these two factors but this is a long term process. It is more likely at the present time that it would inform the decision to participate in a science park community as opposed to locating on standard industrial estate or business park: customers often describe NETPark as an innovation community so perhaps network resources can bestow more of a co-operative advantage than a competitive one, at least between different STPs.

### Economic circumstances of NETPark's locality

The economic circumstances of County Durham and North East England are persistently challenging: the County has a dispersed rural settlement pattern and is still recovering from the decline of traditional industries such as mining, ship building and agriculture. Every "pit" or coal mine had a village and, when the jobs disappeared (close on to 100,000 men out of work in County Durham in a few short years in the mid 1980s) the communities also reeled. Even today, some of the wards in the County rank amongst the most deprived in Europe. The GVA per head of population for County Durham is currently 61% of the UK average; unemployment and more particularly long term generation to generation unemployment remains high and total business stock remains below the national average. In addition, County Durham's dependency on the public sector and an under-represented 'knowledge economy' account for significant structural challenges in the County.

### Context and development

Conceived in 2000 and opened in 2004 near Sedgefield, County Durham (see fig 1) in North East England, NETPark is a very young STP but has already established a thriving community of science and technology companies and research groups, growing quickly to accommodate incubation, research institutes and expansion space. NETPark's focus is on the commercialisation of the physical sciences particularly electronics and electronic engineering and their application in the fields of energy, defence, and medical-related technologies. This focus was chosen based on the research strengths of Durham University as well as complementary strengths in the other 4 universities close to NETPark (see fig 2).



Figure 1: Location map of NETPark within County Durham and the UK

<sup>1</sup> *Characteristics and Trends In North American Research Parks: 21st Century Directions*, 2007

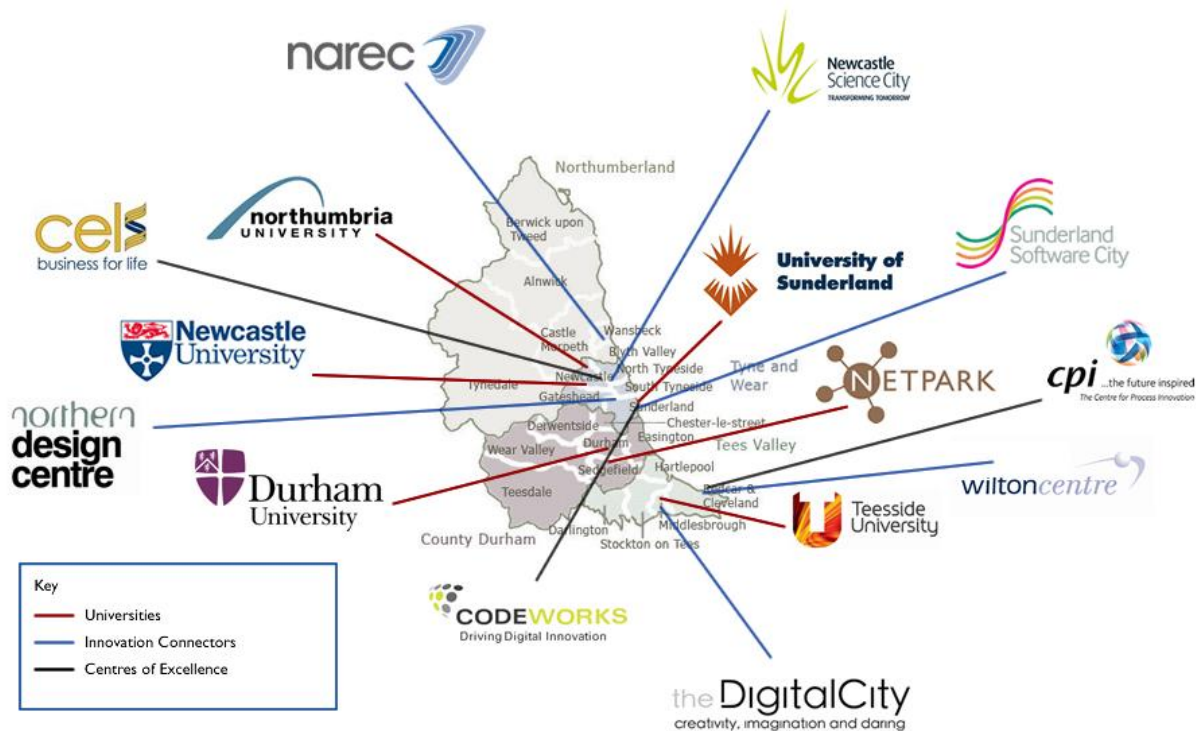


Figure 2: Map illustrating the location of NETPark and other innovation programmes and the Universities

In addition, it was based on the rationale that these technologies should be relatively close to market and would yield greater results sooner. Given the declining competitiveness of the County's economy, this was an important factor in technology focus - while it was always acknowledged that the greatest impact of NETPark would be in the long term creation of a sustainable innovation-based economy, it would have made little sense to choose a sector with long lead times such as drug discovery when the opportunity was there to use existing innovation strengths to create jobs in the short term as well.

The first building to open was the NETPark Research Institute which was leased to Durham University and is occupied by two research groups: the Centre for Advanced Instrumentation which designs and manufactures instruments for large ground based telescopes as well as for the James Webb telescope, and the Semiconductor Crystal Growth and Ceramics Group which researches the imaging properties of cadmium telluride. Research from this Group has been commercialised by a company called Kromek which was the first company to move into the NETPark Incubator which opened in 2005. Started with 2 people, Kromek now employs over 40 and occupies their own building on the park, transforming X-ray imagery into 3D and colour. The NETPark Incubator was doubled in size in 2008 to 4000 sq m and now houses a variety of companies commercialising products.

In the same year, the Printable Electronics Technology Centre (PETEC) was opened - this is the UK national flagship for organic electronics. Owned by the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI), it is operated much like the German Fraunhofer model<sup>2</sup>: i.e., the Centre is funded by private and public sector and has an extensive range of equipment and expertise for contract to enable companies to de-risk entry into this revolutionary technology market. Recently extended, PETEC focuses on solid state flexible lighting, organic photovoltaics and OLED displays.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.fraunhofer.de](http://www.fraunhofer.de)

## Objectives

The objectives of NETPark should be examined and they are as follows:

No	Hierarchy of objectives for NETPark
1	Increased GVA by occupants in NETPark
2	Increased employment
3	Increased GVA per head
4	Increased number of technology based companies in County/region
5	Attraction of firms from other parts of the UK and abroad
6	Increased exports
7	Exploitation of technologies
8	Attraction of investment funds (including bank and venture funding)
9	Technology exchange work with Universities in the North East and between companies
10	Retention of graduates from NE Universities
11	Employment of local people
12	Raising employment aspirations amongst pupils studying STEM subjects in schools

Given the economic circumstances of NETPark, these objectives should be self-evident - the overarching need to use innovation as a process to generate wealth and prosperity drives the first three or the “why”. Objectives 4 and 5 are the “what” - this is how 1-3 will happen; objectives 6-9 govern the success of 4-5 and therefore drive the support structures that have been put in place for innovation-based businesses; and objectives 10-12 are the reason behind the establishment of Project C outreach programme.

## Governance

NETPark is developed, managed and promoted by County Durham Development Company (CDDC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Durham County Council. Set up 25 years ago to address the severe economic decline of the County, CDDC’s mission is to encourage innovation and investment across the County. The land (600 ha in total with 90 ha defined for initial development) and assets of NETPark belong to Durham County Council (see Fig 3 for Masterplan) and so formal oversight of NETPark rests with Durham County Council Cabinet, the Council’s Executive body.





governance was therefore set up to win broad support from the North East region as a whole. Thus the Advisory Group, which provides policy and strategy guidance, consists of the Vice Chancellors of the North East Universities; the Member of Parliament for Sedgefield; a director of the Regional Development Agency, a director of Government Office for the North East; plus representation from Durham County Council. The Chair of the Group is a private sector representative.

Site and service development, including business support, is informed by the NETPark “MoU” Group: the Centre for Process Innovation, Durham University and CDDC. These three organisations are the primary investors on site at NETPark and have signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding which has the following objectives:

- the commercialisation of scientific, engineering and technology research, including the spin-out of companies and the transfer of technology into existing businesses;
- inward investment by established organisations, both national and international;
- public understanding of science and technology and promotion of scientific research and development as a career opportunity;
- an enhanced profile for NETPark, regionally, nationally and internationally
- securing external resource to further the aims of the NETPark

Finally, the NETPark Association consists of the tenants at NETPark and members of NETPark Net - meeting at least 4 times a year (informally much more often), the group assists CDDC to improve services.

To many STPs this governance may seem complicated and the interrelationships of the groups can be intricate. However, it is very clear that overall leadership is provided by Durham County Council: the Chief Executive and Leader sit on Durham County Council Cabinet, CDDC Board and the NETPark Advisory Group. This ensures that the lead organisation participates not only in different aspects of NETPark’s management and development but in different groups of people with different viewpoints. The strategy for NETPark is thus polished and honed. The different Groups have very different functions as outlined above and it is the role of CDDC to weave the input from the Groups together into a coherent operating plan (see Fig 4). In the current economic and political climate, it has been useful for NETPark to have already established this layered web of high level support.

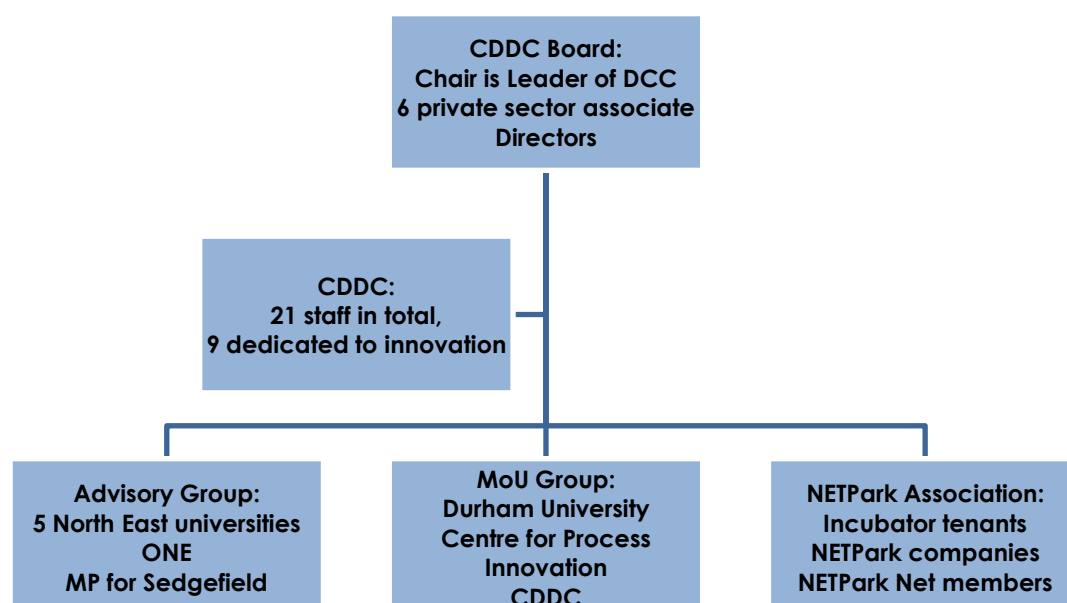


Figure 4: NETPark Governance

### NETPark ethos

Despite the present challenges, the North East of England and County Durham were essential parts of the Industrial Revolution and the birthplace of many inventions that changed the world: the incandescent light bulb, the safety match, the railway. The County (as does the whole of the North East England) still seems to combine severe deprivation with a resilient community spirit and it is this spirit of invention and community that gives NETPark its ethos and culture. The origin of CDDC is another clue as to why the concept of NETPark has been driven beyond the park boundaries - for the first 15 years of its existence, CDDC focused on attracting inward investment, working with the top few hundred companies in the County, connecting them with the business support network, supporting them, maintaining contact with them, working with them to improve their performance. A balance of encouraging the growth of locally founded companies and investors. So when the initial concept paper for NETPark was presented to the CDDC Board in 2000, CDDC had already been managing a “park” for advanced manufacturing - it was the whole of the County. NETPark provided a focal point specifically designed to engage with high tech, high growth companies, a symbol of what CDDC had been doing for many years.

### Why incorporate network resources as part of the strategy?

As should be obvious from the objectives, NETPark measures its success by how much positive economic impact it has on the locality. While these objectives could be achieved for the local area by focussing only on the actual park site itself, it was decided at a very early stage that it was important from the start to ensure “connectedness” with existing networks and companies, as this could only multiply the positive economic impact of the STP. Not only that but technology had emerged that supported this idea and so the concept paper for NETPark Net, as a virtual science park, was written in 2006, only 2 years after NETPark opened its first building. NETPark Net itself “opened” for business in 2007. The concept paper for the outreach programme Project C (for commercialisation, collaboration and community) was completed at CDDC in 2008 and work began in 2009. Figure 5 illustrates how NETPark is only the centre of a much broader community.

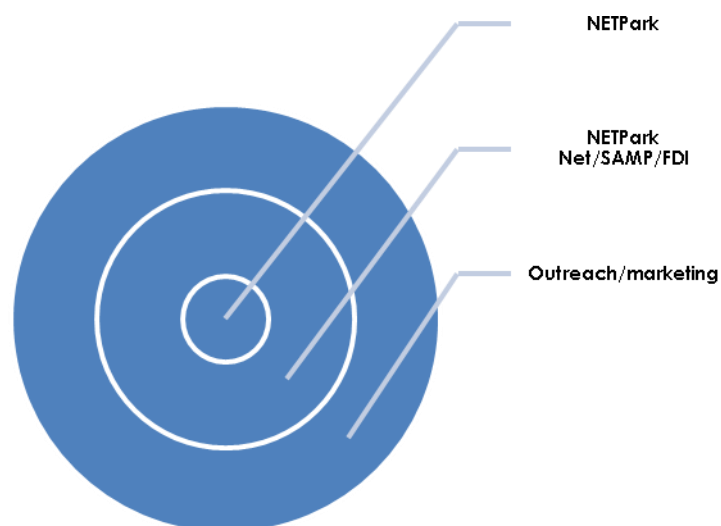


Figure 5: The CDDC business support community

The role of NETPark Net and Project C in the success of NETPark has many aspects:

- winning broad support for NETPark and creating ambassadors across the community, partners and stakeholders;
- enabling the companies at NETPark, especially during these early stages of the actual STP, to access support and seek partners from a much larger community than just the park itself
- enabling companies beyond NETPark to access an innovation ethos and move activities up the value chain by accessing useful and relevant information that would have a positive impact on their business
- capturing and retaining spin off activities
- acting as a marketing tool to add value to the NETPark communications strategy and plan

Revenue generation is not a reason for implementing the programmes - essentially NETPark Net and Project C allow CDDC to maximise the impact of NETPark at a fraction of the price of new buildings. Both programmes currently receive public funding. Project C is funded through 2009-12 by a combination of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), UK Single Programme delivered through the Regional Development Agency, Durham University and CDDC, and is unlikely ever to be self-sustaining. The funding for the initial three years was secured to achieve a high level of activity and some activity will be necessary to sustain the programme's impact.

NETPark Net has also received ERDF and Single Programme from 2007 to 2012: in addition there are 4 levels of membership, the first of which is free and the other three levels carry a different annual fee depending on customer requirements (tenants at the NETPark Incubator are automatically members at the highest level). Fees and sponsorship are unlikely to cover the full costs of providing the service as it is currently defined after 2012 and CDDC is currently carrying out a full service evaluation to inform what should be retained after this time. Much like Project C, the value of the public investment is to achieve impact more quickly and the continuing impact should be able to be sustained with less investment. The most important aim is to add real value to members which creates the good will and support for NETPark and its objectives.

### NETPark Net

The role of NETPark Net is to open up the NETPark community to other companies not located at the park but which could gain benefit from belonging to the community. As explained above, it was inspired by CDDC's existing work in this sector. There were companies across the County who would have been located at NETPark had it been open earlier or who had an element of R&D but were excluded from locating at NETPark because of commodotised manufacturing happening on the company's site. NETPark Net strongly overlaps with the Strategic Account Management Programme, a national support programme for companies which are strategically important to the economy which is managed in County Durham by CDDC. NETPark Net promotes open innovation (see Figure 6) across the community.

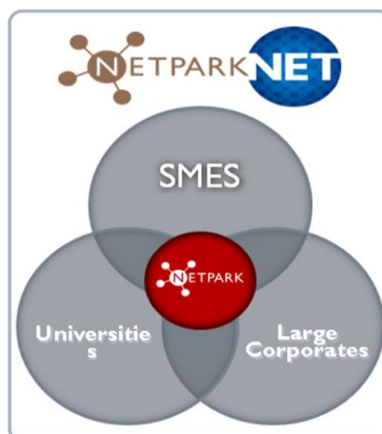


Figure 6: NETPark Net as open innovation vehicle



NETPark Net collects all the services that a company might get at NETPark (postal address, access to finance and market intelligence, connections to the business support networks, innovation management, being part of a like-minded community etc) under one brand and charges a small annual membership fee for companies off the park to join. Membership is open to all companies in science, engineering and technology of all sizes and at all stages of maturity. This assists the companies at NETPark by broadening their community and allows companies who would not necessarily be eligible to locate at NETPark<sup>3</sup>, to join an innovative, high tech community. There are no geographical restrictions but the majority of members are within the North East region with some national and international members. NETPark Net currently has 260 members - most of whom are within 50 miles of NETPark. Just over 10% of the membership consists of service providers such as lawyers and financiers, reflecting the strong focus on companies developing new products. Only service providers who provide content for NETPark Net in the form of events, expert advice, web content etc are permitted to join. More recently we have developed an Affinity membership for potential sponsors which allows sponsors to have more interaction with members including blogs, web banners, e-shots etc

The brand, as always, was also considered extremely important and the marketing of NETPark Net has evolved during the years. The initial name for the network was Virtual NETPark but was quickly discarded for sounding too “ethereal” rather than a real community where interaction and collaboration were the driving forces. It emphasised the website rather than the results of such interaction between the community members. Despite that, it was considered critical to retain the established NETPark brand within the name of the service as NETPark would be the tangible, visible heart of the community and the STP concept was well understood by the principal target market. NETPark Net became the working title during the writing of the concept paper and a marketing agency was hired to develop and test concepts for the brand. It was decided that NETPark Net captured the ideas of casting a net wider than the park itself and embodied the network nature of the community so it was retained. It was not altogether a smooth ride in the early days - there were many occasions of people instinctively writing NETPark.net (as in a URL) rather than NETPark Net but, as the messages established themselves, this disappeared. The familiarity of the NETPark brand was also a help in the early days - while initially it was decided to run different campaigns such as “Create Your Own Science Park” with supporting materials and websites, this was quickly discarded in favour of capitalising on the NETPark brand and the communications were simplified to emphasise the “one community” aspect. Despite this, it also became apparent that while NETPark and NETPark Net share target markets, the buying motivations behind joining NETPark Net or locating at NETPark were very different. While they shared the same website ([www.uknetpark.net](http://www.uknetpark.net)) the NETPark offering was being overshadowed. Thus in 2009, the websites were split with NETPark moving to [www.northeasttechnologypark.com](http://www.northeasttechnologypark.com). The result has been a higher ratio of qualified to general enquiries which means much lower level of lost enquiries and much more efficient marketing - the number of lost enquiries dropped by 70% comparing the year before the split and the year after the split so it is obviously important to keep the two offerings linked but separate.

In terms of service provision, the two major lessons of the first two years of operating NETPark Net were that:

- the network needed an animator
- the community preferred to network face to face.

In the first two years of the programme, CDDC attempted to automate as many services as possible, making everything available via the NETPark Net website:

- Searching for tenders
- Virtual address management
- Accessing and winning investment
- Accessing market intelligence
- Seeking expert advice from a range of professional service providers

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<sup>3</sup> The NETPark gateway policy is similar to most STPs: innovation based companies of all sizes and at stages of maturity with significant R&D, growth potential and potential to contribute to the wider NETPark community.

- Searching for other companies to partner with and maintaining contact online
- Keeping up with relevant news, policies and funding opportunities
- Seeking technical assistance and access to equipment at the North East universities
- Innovation management programmes, tips and techniques

Automation was not as successful as had been anticipated. For example the Expert Panel which included lawyers, financiers, universities and other service providers were rarely contacted via the website and gained most contact with members through the regular clinics that are held on site at NETPark. The most successful online service provision was the member directory and the newsfeeds, material that was information rather than interaction. In response to this, CDDC established a programme of e-shots to members with one newsletter a month and weekly e-shots highlighting funding opportunities, upcoming events, news, new members etc.

The online collaboration tools available on the website to aid project management were used minimally - members preferred to meet each other face to face and then maintain contact through traditional email/phone methods plus the fact that, in 2007, online collaboration tools had none of the intuitive flexibility and usability of those available today. In 2007, no platform offered all the functionality we needed for our community so the current website is an amalgamation of at least 4 different software programmes. The blending of these programmes was costly in terms of time and money to get right. The lack of use may also reflect the user demographics - while workers perhaps below 25 have grown up with Facebook and more recently Twitter, the majority of the workforce still remembers the days BC - before computers. The lack of use of this aspect of the website and the advances in this type of collaboration technology has led to a complete redevelopment of the website which is being designed at time of writing.

Another reason for the lack of success of the attempt at automation of service provision was the preference of members to network face to face, not only with each other but with professional service providers. In response to this, we stepped up the event programme to increase the chances of members meeting each other. This programme now includes:

- 1 or 2 major technology conferences a year
- Monthly breakfast briefings including new member introductions, technical briefing from one of the Universities and a featured NETPark Net service
- MD's lunch: the CDDC MD invites 4-6 different member companies to join him for lunch and informal networking every six weeks
- Clinics on sit at NETPark from service providers every two weeks where members can access advice free of charge
- Monthly workshops on different aspects of innovation businesses: leadership, finance, innovation management

Before the evaluation, only clinics and quarterly workshops had been in place. All events are free to members of NETPark Net at the second level of membership and above except the conferences. These are included in the highest level of membership. Take up of clinics and other events has also increased which has much to do with the recruitment of the NETPark Net Membership Executive.

This, the second major lesson from the first two years of the programme, was put in place in 2010. At time of writing, the Executive has facilitated interventions for 82 members in 8 months. These interventions include the full range of support: member to member; member to tenant; member to business support; member to financier; member to service provider and member to knowledge base. Having an animator has proved essential to NETPark Net, as essential as having an Incubation Manager in the Incubator.

Interestingly compared to a company such as Regus, a significant global provider of business centres including virtual office facilities, the take up of the NETPark Virtual Address facility is very low. Less than 10% of the membership of NETPark Net has a Virtual Address at NETPark - this

indicates that companies join NETPark Net to join the community, not necessarily for one particular service and that the membership is still relatively local to NETPark.

Despite these challenges, has NETPark Net achieved its purpose? Certainly it has achieved a much broader spectrum of political support for NETPark - now CDDC can speak to most Durham County Councillors and point to companies in their wards that are benefitting from belonging to the NETPark Net innovation community. Customer testimonials are regularly received indicating a high level of satisfaction from members themselves. Companies at NETPark have started to build local supply chains, sourcing expertise from local engineering companies located off the park. Other companies which are not located on NETPark have benefitted from NETPark Net activities and are working with the latest technologies: as an example, CDDC invited the Square Kilometre Array Telescope Programme Office to NETPark and three companies in County Durham are now working with the Programme. People who have left NETPark companies to set up in business for themselves are retained at NETPark by offering a low-cost option for Virtual Office and business support and because we already know them. Companies have been attracted back to the region from overseas for similar reasons. Having the brand built around a recognisable and tangible hub location means it is easily understood by the target markets. Member retention is very high: out of 260 current members, only 5 have left the network altogether, as it is high at NETPark, no companies have chosen to move out for any other reason except lack of finance.

As to the question asking if other STPs can achieve competitive advantage through similar networks? As above, NETPark Net is only really a formalisation and branding of CDDC's existing networks and contacts using NETPark as a focal point and/or lever so in that sense NETPark had a head start. Although described by an external consultant then working on the NETPark evaluation framework as innovative and pioneering, any existing STP should be able to formalise their networks in a similar way - whether STPs in development should do this is perhaps a question for someone else to answer. In the absence of a tangible and successful hub location it might prove difficult - the experience with the branding and communication of NETPark Net certainly bears this out.

It should be stressed that it is still early days for NETPark and NETPark Net and we have not yet begun to see the full impact of activities but we are well on our way - in October 2010, the NETPark Memorandum of Understanding Group of CDDC, CPI and Durham University were able to build further on NETPark Net by integrating the three organisations' innovation support into one business innovation gateway accessed by companies throughout North East England and including the following:

- Commercial Assessment and due diligence
- Business Plan/Project review including IP landscaping, market intelligence, marketing strategy and investment readiness
- Innovation academy, mentoring, technical assistance
- Space and equipment requirements
- Prototyping, development and scale up assistance

The three organisations also have a jointly agreed inward investment strategy focused on printable electronics.

Finally in January of 2011, CDDC worked with Durham County Council to create an Innovation Framework for the County which would further magnify the benefits of innovation by embedding this ethos in broader based business support activities and linking them to the investment at NETPark and NETPark Net.

## Project C

Project C (for community, commercialization and collaboration) is a sustained programme of communications and activities designed to raise aspirations and facilitate a better public understanding of science and innovation. Activities include Science Animators (PhD students at Durham University) in schools, junior incubation programmes, science festivals, commercialization challenges, reciprocal visits, and teams of ambassadors.

It is essential for NETPark to drive such activity as up to 25,000 job opportunities will be created by the park once the initial 90 ha is fully developed. NETPark has no fences or security barriers and is viewed as a source of pride by its community which is helpful politically and socially. Project C has been invaluable in creating support - there are many opportunities for Councillors and local businesses to get involved in the programmes that we run. There is also a good business case for outreach work - a recent visit by NASA astronauts helped CDDC to cement links with the Institute of Physics and begin to build links with NASA. It brought press coverage to NETPark which brought us £72 worth of profile-raising for every £1 that the event cost as evidenced by the coverage report.

Project C is also in early days and has only been going for 18 months. However, in that time lessons have been learned.

Timing is essential - it is vital to have success stories to tell as otherwise it only engenders cynicism about promises for the future. However, there are currently too few companies at NETPark to share the work of participating in outreach and we have to be very careful that they are not over-stretched with outreach work. This has led to a greater burden on the Science Animators and Co-ordinators at CDDC and Durham University.

Technology focus is also essential - in the UK there are many outreach projects and activities and it is important to keep the focus on the activities going on at NETPark. It also gives us clear differentiation in a very crowded marketplace: one example of this is the technology business plan - while there are many organisations that offer a business planning activity to schools, NETPark is the only that focuses on commercialisation of science. This helps establish the link between the science that is taught in schools and the products that students tend to own such as gaming consoles, phones etc.

Time to explore activities is very important - of the evaluation carried out to date the one consistent piece of feedback from schoolchildren is "more time to brainstorm ideas." The evaluation also illustrates that the activities work - another consistent piece of feedback is "I understand innovation now" and students are understanding the link between subjects at school and careers.

It is too early to tell whether the activities we are carrying out now will raise aspirations and begin to provide a skilled workforce for the NETPark and NETPark Net community of the future and help secure the positive economic impact of the STP. The initial evaluation suggests that the outlook is positive. At this stage perhaps a more pertinent question is what would happen if we did nothing. By doing something, we are at least making a contribution towards giving the STP the best chance of success.

To go back to the original questions asked by this session, the role of Project C is clearly defined in influencing STP performance - without a skilled, inspired, primarily local workforce, NETPark has no chance of success in the long term. Does Project C give NETPark a competitive advantage? Not in terms of differentiation to the potential client base - it may currently be viewed as a "nice to do" from their perspective but certainly not a reason to locate at NETPark right now although it is recognised that we are investing in the future workforce. Where it does give NETPark an advantage is in the intangible - it provides a broader community of support and contributes to our ethos of connected innovation.

## Conclusion

It is very early days for NETPark but the strategic focus on “connectedness”, which springs from CDDC’s ethos, established well before NETPark opened, as well as property and business support has proved invaluable. NETPark Net and Project C provide a grass roots level of support for NETPark which complements the strategic support for the STP at a time which has been one of significant change in UK government and policies. There have been significant challenges in establishing both programmes but there are a lot of people “on our side”, far more than there would have been had we only concentrated on the STP itself.

Without prejudging other STPs’ objectives, perhaps this is the real value to an STP. There can be no doubt that formalising and branding activity beyond park boundaries and allowing others to benefit can be of huge value to a park’s performance, accelerating the formation of critical mass and winning political support. STPs should be part of an integrated innovation system in their regions. While they are not necessarily dependent on embedding themselves in their localities for survival, building strategic networks to create an integrated web of support can only add to their critical mass, develop goodwill and help foster the collaborative ethos that is essential to help science parks flourish.

## Credits

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