

Nordic Health Technology Forum – Seminar Final Report

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Nordic Health Technology Forum – Seminar Final Report

Project number: 01057

Project name: Nordic Health Technology Forum - seminar

Section 1 Summary

The main task of this pre-project was to prepare and carry out Nordic Health Technology Seminar in cooperation with Nordic Industrial Fund to get an overview on State of Art in the field, indentify and analyse the needs of SMEs, define goals, projects and ideas for cooperation and deside on creation of Nordic Health Technology Forum. This forum is meant to meet the needs of SMEs in the field, to screen the current situation of support in the Nordic countries, open for flow of information and strengthen the field by creating new and exploiting existing Nordic networks of relevance.

In order to analyse the needs for such a forum and to gather the most important input to its definition, this pre-project to organise a seminar was started. The seminar was intended to get an overview of the State of the Art in the field, analyse the needs of SMEs in the field, and define the main objectives and create a work plan for the forum to address these company needs.

Progress of the pre-project, activities and technical results:

Meetings:

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| October 2001 - | The partners first met on October 5th and 6th in Reykjavik Iceland to construct a project proposal. |
| February 2002 - | After the application had been accepted by the Nordic Industrial Fund, the partners met again in Copenhagen on February 22nd to start the project formally. |
| April 2002 - | To discuss the status, a telephone conference was organised on April 22nd. |
| June 2002 - | The seminar was held on June 18th, and a post meeting on June 19th where the results of the seminar were analysed and the future of the Nordic Health Technology Forum planned. |

In addition to formal meetings, close contact between the partners was kept through email and telephone.

Activities:

To develop and prepare for the Nordic seminar, a mapping project, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), was conducted. In that project, existing networks, support organisations, projects and events going on in the field in the Nordic countries were mapped, and the results published in an online database on www.nhtf.net. The mapping project gave an overview of the existing networks, support systems and events. Currently 65 profiles have been entered into the database (see enclosed document).

The website was also used to prepare directly for the seminar workshops. Discussion forums were started on the workshop topics to collect ideas and project proposals, to be analysed and evaluated during the seminar.

A survey of SME needs was conducted, where companies from each Nordic country was interviewed. Based on these results, the topics for the seminar workshops were defined.

The seminar was held on June 18th 2002, Reykjavik Iceland. To ensure dynamic participation and representation of all relevant constituents, the 27 participants were from all of the Nordic countries, from the support system as well as health technology companies (see list of participants). During the seminar, the mapping and seminar projects were introduced, as well as the results of the SME needs' survey. One partner from each country presented the ongoing activities in his or her country with emphasis on the state of the art. 6 companies and networks also presented their success stories.

Finally, the group was divided into 3 working groups with the topics of: 1. Marketing and Agents, 2. Stronger Support System, and 3. Initiating Innovation Projects. The topics for the working groups were developed based on the results of the SME needs survey and the website was used to collect project ideas within the topic field. Ideas from the web site's discussion forums were collected, as well as other ideas from the seminar participants were discussed, analysed and evaluated within the groups, then presented to the whole group. After the whole group had rated all the proposals, the seminar was ended. A number of new project ideas for the NHTF were introduced (see appendix for project proposals)

On June 19th, the project partners met to evaluate the seminar results and decide on future form of the forum and its activities.

Conclusion:

The seminar turned out to be a fruitful event where many promising project ideas were reflected on and much information of what a forum needs to be doing and what it should avoid was gathered. It proved very effective to involve both companies and the support agents in the working groups and the project partners had a large sum of material to build on from the work conducted at the seminar. The main ideas collected during the seminar can be found in the enclosed documents.

An added value for the companies participating was that a brokerage event had been arranged the following two days. The visiting companies thus had a chance to meet with a number of Icelandic companies for short business-to-business meetings. The seminar was also held in connection with The 12th Nordic Baltic Conference on Biomedical Engineering and Medical Physics and a Health Technology and Science Exhibition 2002.

The success of the seminar is also partly due to the extensive and comprehensive preparation of the event. The SME survey, mapping project, set-up of discussion forums and careful choosing of the relevant participants for the event, enhanced the effectiveness of the seminar and made the event flow without any major disruptions.

The future

The project partners met again on June 19th to evaluate the results of the seminar and decide on future actions. The conclusion was to establish a Nordic Health Technology Forum with a base of 5-6 organisations involved in each country. The forum will aim at strengthening further the existing support system and define its priorities and actions. It will also use the

existing website and build it up to better serve SMEs in health technology. The list of tasks and project-ideas, already defined and prioritised during the seminar will be the natural starting point for NHTF to work on.

The benefits the project has generated for the Nordic Countries

By creating a Nordic Forum for Health Technology numerous benefits for the Nordic countries are generated.

Extended Nordic co-operation at company, institutional and political level will help create a strong Nordic brand in health technology.

Flow of information is enhanced, aiding companies in the field in their search for information on the system in the other Nordic countries

The forum can act as platform for strengthening the field of health technology in the Nordic countries

With a stronger united front, health technology in the Nordic countries can become more visible to the international community and increase Nordic competitiveness at a larger market.

With increased communication, networking and collaboration between the Nordic countries, new ideas will be created, common development of new solutions, or further applications of currently existing technology

The Nordic forum will contribute to a growing industry in Scandinavia

These benefits can already be detected from the seminar. The Nordic companies linked with each other and also with the government body/support organisations. New ideas were created and possible collaboration span out of the meeting of different people.

Section 2 Evaluation of results

Pioneering in the exploitation of synergistic networks through innovative systems

Each partner in the project is in close contact with the industry and the supporting organisations. By mapping existing regional, national and Nordic networks, an overview of the system in the field has been gained. Based on this knowledge, and the information and network of contacts generated at the seminar, the structure of the Nordic Health Technology Forum is well shaped. By linking better the key national actors in the field within each country and then connecting them with the other Nordic countries, SMEs in health technology are better served and the industry as a whole can grow.

Cutting-edge innovation in efficient infrastructure for small and medium-sized enterprises

The aim of the Nordic Health Technology Forum is to address the needs of SMEs in health technology. An important need is the need to find business partners, gain access to other markets and collaborate with other companies. By creating this forum, flow of information and access to the support system of the other Nordic countries has been opened further. A future project of the forum is in planning, and this project aims more directly at increasing the opportunities for SMEs to internationalise. The pre-project has contributed to a more clear picture of the needs of SME's in the field of Health Technology and what can be done to improve the business climate and the opportunities for internationalisation for small to medium-sized enterprises by effective networking.

Models for management issues and business culture

The concept of Nordic Health Technology Forum defined and discussed under this pre-project is new, but based on well grounded cluster theory and practise. Creation of such a forum can strengthen the development of new business models and form of cooperation across country boundaries. This can in longer run give the Nordic SMEs in this field new basis to stand on and improve their opportunities at the global market.

Strength in international prenormative work

A forum of this kind can strengthen the relationship between partnering countries. Once established and functioning smoothly, the network could easily be expanded to other small-scale forums. To bring together the companies and support agents from the Nordic countries, to discuss existing problems, availabilities and opportunities in a seminar is an effective method of linking the field and creating new ideas. This type of event could be applied in other fields and in an international forum.

Through cooperation, the Nordic countries can have a strong influence on international standardisation.

Pioneering in areas which have been identified as being of importance for the Nordic skills market

The health care system in the Nordic countries is in the forefront in effective use of technology in the world. By co-operating and networking and by providing common access to Nordic research institutes, information, support and know-how, health technology in the Nordic countries can strengthen the field even further.

Section 3 Dissemination of information and results

The seminar was an information activity within itself. Information on the Nordic Health Technology forum has been published on the www.nhtf.net website and the results of the mapping are available on the online database. The event and the project were promoted through newsletters, in Iceland's main newspaper and on the radio.

Included in this report are the activities and results of the project.

A new application for a continuing project to the Nordic Industrial Fund will include the group's future recommendations.

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