

Enabling Infrastructure for Innovations

Business Development Hamm



1. Starting point:

Hamm, a city of 180,000 inhabitants, is situated at the north-east corner of the Ruhr Region

The whole region faces a nearly 200-yrs old history of coal mining, a not diversified industry and only a small number of colleges

So after the decline of the coal mining in the Ruhr region, also Hamm was confronted by massive unemployment

New companies had to be attracted

New jobs had to be generated

Universities had to be founded



2. Institutional setting:

Beginning with the late sixties, it became policy of the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia to found universities in the formerly neglected Ruhr Region

Answering the challenges of the necessary restructuring of the economy in the Ruhr Region, several federal and European funds were engaged (e.g., EFRD and ESF)

Since Hamm is a relatively small town in the Ruhr region, it was not in the focus of these stakeholders, so the municipality and engaged people founded associations to support the structural transformation

3. Approach:

European like EFRD and ESF funds were engaged to support founders, innovations of companies (SME) and public institutions to train unemployed people

In 1991, the municipality of Hamm founded the Hamm Technology Center to attract founders

The academic society of Hamm, founded in the 1990s, managed to attract a private university of applied sciences in 2005



In 2008, the state of North-Rhine Westphalia founded a public university in Hamm

In 2010, a business idea competition for students started initiated by the academic society and a private foundation

4. Outputs:

The Hamm technology center has no empty space left since 2010. About 310 founders settled here and generated 1,100 new jobs.



The private university has now about 700 students.

The public university has now about 3,500 students in Hamm.



A private investor bought properties to develop a science quarter including a new (public) technology center, students' apartments and a housing complex opposite the private university. Public fundings for the technology center have been already granted.

5. Lessons: What are the main lessons learnt in the course of implementation of the good practice? Are there any open questions that need to be dealt with?

Firstly, all key players and stakeholders worked together: municipality, private investors, politicians, the general public.

Secondly, the state helped with regional developing programs.

Thirdly, the local deputies applied for the right fundings.

Fourthly, one has to be patient – the process began in 1991 is still in progress.....

6. Transfer: What are the necessary preconditions to transfer this practice to another place? What would be the first steps to take?

1. Don't look back and try to save old industries
2. Define goals
3. Let all relevant stakeholders participate in a round table
4. Send the deputies out to apply for fundings

