

About T2M Nordic

As one initiative to sustain economic growth, the Nordic countries share the same vision; to excel at ICT innovation and create new, knowledge-intensive jobs. Commercialising ideas conceived by Nordic scientists can help bring that vision to fruition. Nordic scientists are known for being creative innovators, but their entrepreneurial skills and ability to build new organisations or to bring their ideas beyond publications either from the research institutes or from the corporate research department in the industry, are still to be improved. Although the generation of new ideas to fuel the process of innovation is one of the most important drivers behind the growth and prosperity of today's global economy, it is also one of the least understood. A crucial challenge is to master the fuzzy phases of the very front end where ideas are fragile and immature but, also, contain the seeds of the next big market success.

In the ICT industry, speed and time to market are amongst the two key success factors. A common challenge within the Nordic region is to strengthen the ability to identify, evaluate, and transform ICT research based ideas into ideas that lead to commercialisation and new sustainable workplaces. This level of the innovation chain, the front end, before creation of business plans and incubation, "precubation", is a premature stage lacking best-practices.

Compared to the US, the commercialisation of research is a relatively new phenomenon in the Nordic countries, but has over the past few years grown wide attention in the political and early stage venture environments (i.e., establishment of TTOs, Technology Transfer Offices at the Universities, increase in the OECD percentage of industry research). However, the Nordic environments have not established a common Nordic culture for this task. In contrast, it appears rather fragmented, "closed" and lacks "best-practice" sharing.

This matter faces the challenges outlined in the call for proposals regarding regional innovation actors of tomorrow. "More effective ways to promote the transfer and commercialisation of knowledge, such as shared development platforms and large-scale test beds for new services and products". The T2M Nordic project consists of participants whose mission is to explore, share and deliver "thought leadership" and practical tools in this high-potential area of value creation.

The project takes its point of departure in an existing tool for commercialisation, Simula T2M. T2M was developed as a pilot in 2005 by Simula Innovation AS. The main purpose of T2M is to improve the ability of researchers at Simula to communicate and commercialise their results and ideas to the market as effective and early as possible.

After presenting T2M for the industry, we learned that the tool can be used by corporations to capture innovative ideas from employees. Therefore, we believe the T2M concept is generic and applicable for both research institutions (T2M Research©) as well

as corporate research departments were the company business areas act as the marketplace (T2M Industry©).

The hypothesis of this project is that it is possible to improve the capitalization of research based ideas and capturing of innovative ideas from employees through increased focus on the precubation phase of innovation. This can help bring the common Nordic vision of ICT innovation to fruition.

Benefit for society

We believe that there are unleashed potentials in the earliest stage of the innovation process. This level, the very beginning, before creation of business plans and incubation, “precubation”, is a poorly explored stage in the Nordic countries currently lacking shared best-practices, scientific evidence, political focus and financial tools.

The question for the Nordic society at large could be: Can we develop our own ability to capture and recognise new ideas that will turn into new regional knowledge intensive jobs and competitive advantages for existing industry?

This project seeks to enhance the Nordic ability to:

1. Improve and implement the precubation process in Nordic research organisations and hence improve the capitalisation of research and knowledge in the Nordic region
2. Capture ideas from employees in existing industry with the purpose of improving the knowledge base of Nordic businesses
3. Create Nordic innovation policies for precubation and develop a shared knowledge platform for next practice in the commercialising and capturing of ideas

Thus, the potential value added delivery to society and the Nordic business sector from the project will be:

- Operative (already piloted) tools further tested and made available for research institutions and businesses in the Nordic region
- New knowledge and further development of an unexplored area (precubation) of the innovation chain
- New web-based technology; The T2M tools and methods will be made available for the end users by using web 2.0 (or semantic web) technology
- Tools practically tested on high branded industry and research pilots
- Academic results by publishing research and experience papers
- Establishment of a new Nordic Think-tank for precubation/commercialisation of research ideas
- Place the Nordic region in a stronger position towards the innovation and commercialisation environments in Europe, Asia and the US

Relevance for Nordic business sector

This project and the results could be relevant for the following categories:

Nordic ICT focused research institutions

- Training of researchers
- Market input and inspiration for researchers towards commercialisation of ideas
- Technology Transfer Offices can use the concept to improve commercialisation processes
- Improving the precubation phase of commercialisation

Nordic research intensive or innovative industry

- Training of researchers/employees
- Improved communication between research and other departments
- Improved time to market for research based ideas
- Improved idea screening, evaluation, and selection
- Capture innovative ideas from a widespread organisation

Nordic venture investors

- Increased accessibility to researchers, research based ideas and investment opportunities
- Improved communication and quality

Research councils and policy makers

- Increased understanding of the research process and how one idea can be disseminated across one or more commercial areas
- Insight and practical knowledge in developing Nordic Innovation policies with increased emphasis on the precubation phase of commercialisation
- Policy recommendations from the project and think tank related to precubation, innovation and commercialisation

Nordic entrepreneurs

- Increased understanding in the early stage of the innovation process
- Enhanced ability to communicate and visualise the business potential before writing business plans
- Rapidly bring their ideas to a possible market
- Easy access to a relevant network of business and financial partners

Global companies with representation in the Nordic countries:

- Increased possibility of investment in research departments located in the Nordic countries by understanding and using T2M as tool to get ideas faster to the market due to technology maturity in the Nordic market
- Enhanced ability to communicate and visualise the business potential of a research project before writing business development plans