

Case Study 9.1. IDEA++ program at Lund University

CRITICAL AREA OF FOCUS 1: "Scouting ideas/technologies from the PRO and incentivizing researchers to disclose IP"

BEST PRACTICE FOR: "Idea Competition and Prizes" and "Collaborative training programs"

AIMED AT: TTO/Researcher

UNIVERSITY: Lund University (Sweden)

TTO: LU Innovation System



The context:

Lund University is the second oldest university in Sweden, founded in 1666. With nearly 50,000 students and a staff of 7,500 it is also the biggest, covering every field of academic research.

The Lund University Innovation System (LUIS) was founded 1999 as the technology transfer office responsible for innovation and commercialization of Lund University with a staff of 25 people. It offers a complete range of business development, financing, patent support and legal services to students and researchers.

LU Innovation System is led by the board of the holding company and the steering group of the public authority section, both led by the Director of Innovation.

The problem:

One issue TTO's might face is a **passiveness in their immediate context**: no breakthrough research being produced, little to no entrepreneurship, few start-ups and/or innovative ideas. This results in a limited engagement of researchers in technology transfer activities.

The solution:

An important part of the work of **LU Innovation System** is providing commercialization support to individual researchers or students. It employs business developers with many years of experience from both research and business, as well as patent engineers, a communications officer and a lawyer who can help with the process.

LU Innovation is a great example of a pro-active approach in engaging researchers in technology transfer. They run multiple initiatives all aimed at promoting innovation by scouting ideas/technologies from the PRO and incentivizing researchers to disclose IP.

For instance, **LU Innovation organizes the IDEA ++ programme** in collaboration with the Lund University Master programme in Entrepreneurship. In this programme students are linked with researchers of the university and have a year to work on research from the university and convert it into products and eventually companies. For that work, LUIS provides funds for marketing activities and product refinement and it helps the teams with business planning activities, since they are encouraged to join the business plan competition of Venture Cup, where Scandinavian entrepreneurs compete for venture capital.

The Lund University Innovation System has also been organizing the **annual Innovation Prize** for ten years ongoing. The prize of 250.000 SEK (around 25.000 Euros) is aimed at inspiring the development of innovative ideas at the region of Skane and it is especially directed to researchers and students of regional academic institutions, but also other actors. It is awarded by a jury of representatives different companies and of the Lund University.



Alignment to PROGRESS-TT:

This case is a good illustration of the “Idea Competition and Prizes” and “Collaborative training programs”, Best Practice in PROGRESS-TT Critical Area of Focus 1 “Scouting ideas/technologies from the PRO and incentivising researchers to disclose IP”.

From 2009 to 2012, thanks to **the IDEA++ program** out of eleven ideas emerging from research performed at Lund, seven development projects were formed and eventually three companies created. One of them was able to attract venture capital. IDEA++ therefore has a double impact. First, it encourages students in entrepreneurship to collaborate with researchers to actually create new companies out of the university research base. Second, it also shows the potential for economical usage of research from the university. This allows the student and the researchers to test their ideas in a safe environment and it encourages for commercialization of academic research.

Together with the **Innovation Prize**, Lund University shows a strong **commitment to the commercialization of research and innovation** gotten out of the university. Since 1999, LU Innovation has invested in almost 70 new research companies that have generated over 2500 man-years of employment and over 72 million euros in tax revenue. Over 60 new companies, more than 2 300 manyears and over SEK 635 million in tax revenue since 1999 were created. They boast several success stories whom where supported from idea to realization by LUIS.

A company based on research that was picked up during an “outreach” activity by the TTO. Twelve years later, and two years after going public, it was sold to a Japanese pharma giant.

These initiatives do not hand out massive prizes, but they are varied and engage students/researchers to take the next step. While there is no direct causation between these events and LU Innovation’s success, its way of promoting innovation can be copied by most TTO’s.

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