

# TRAMI USE CASE - REGION BLEKINGE

Strategically establishing a Mission oriented approach  
– experience and learnings from Region Blekinge

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Expedition Mondial – 2022



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# BACKGROUND

The overarching aim of the TRAMI project is to **strengthen the capabilities** at national, regional, and local levels to implement the EU-missions and reaching the goals that are set within these missions.

The aim of this project more specifically was to support Vinnova in **following and guiding** Region Blekinge with the implementation of missions-oriented policies, and to **learn** from the process.

The desired result was an increased **understanding of which instruments and approaches are useful and efficient** for implementing missions at regional level. Furthermore, these learnings should be summarized, organized, and shared with the European community.



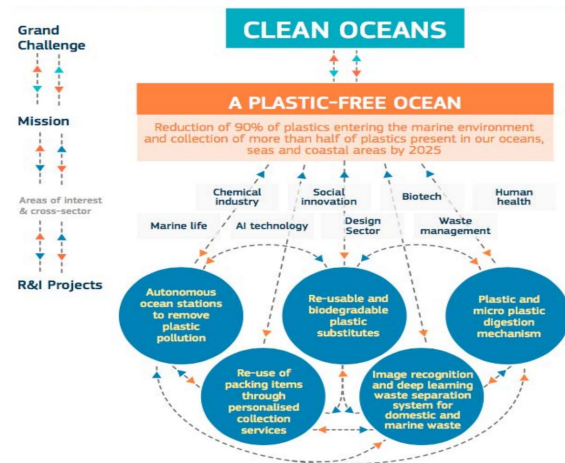
# **ABOUT MISSIONS**

# ABOUT MISSION ORIENTED WAYS OF WORKING

In the preparation of Horizon Europe, **five mission areas** have been proposed for implementation: Cancer, Adaptation to climate change, Healthy oceans, Climate-neutral and smart cities, and Soil health and food.

These missions now face the **challenge of being implemented** in the best possible manner, at the same time capitalizing on the recent progress in conceptualising mission-oriented policy and drawing on experiences from current processes across the mission areas as well as countries and regions.

Currently many activities at European and national level **are underway to make the implementation** of the five EU missions successful: the first mission work programme was launched, Mission Boards are active, and member states have started to design and implement corresponding national, regional and local governance processes.

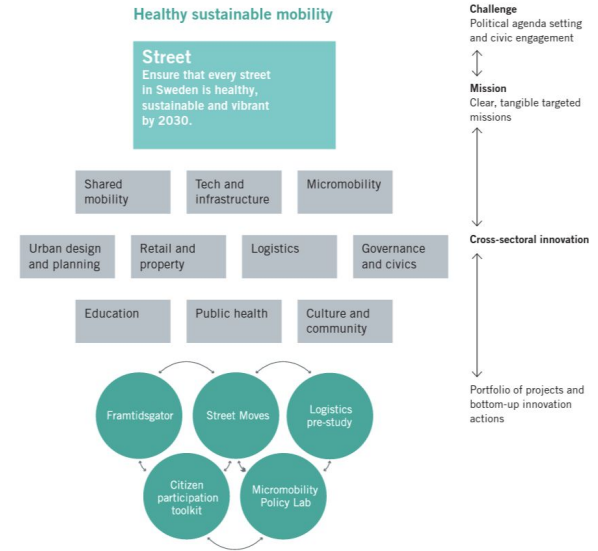


# ABOUT MISSION ORIENTED WAYS OF WORKING

At national and regional level the **analysis** of existing funding initiatives regarding their mission potential **has been started** and more mission-oriented calls are launched or in preparation.

Experience shows there is **no** universally applicable, **one size-fit-all implementation model**. Characteristics of challenges, goal definitions, actors, and policy instruments differ between the mission areas. In addition, each country has its own institutional frames that define its policy approaches.

These have to be taking into account when proposing implementation frameworks and strategies.



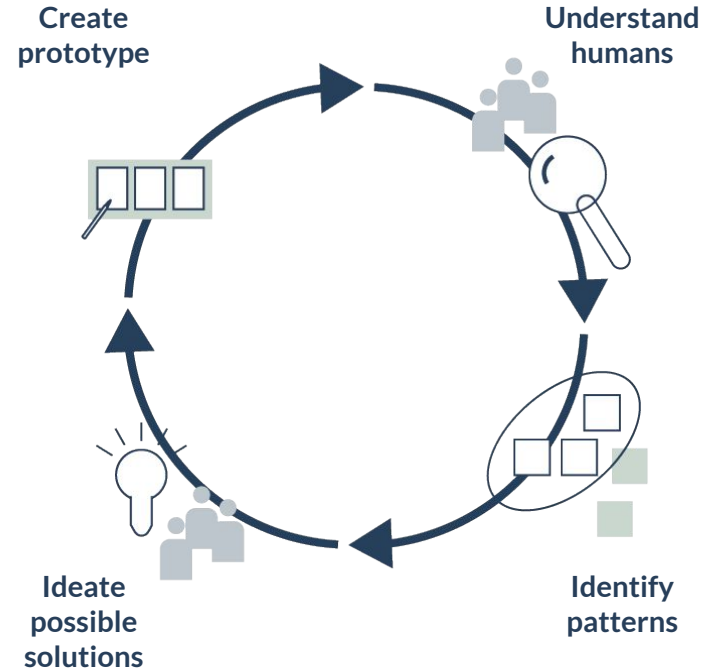
# ABOUT SERVICE DESIGN

**Service Design** is an **iterative methodology** that helps us develop systems, organizations and services by showing empathy for humans and together co-create possible solutions.

Qualitative research methods are used to listen and **understand human needs**, behaviour and driving forces through for instance in-depth interviews. Based on these insights we **identify patterns** and ideate possible solutions to meet actual needs.

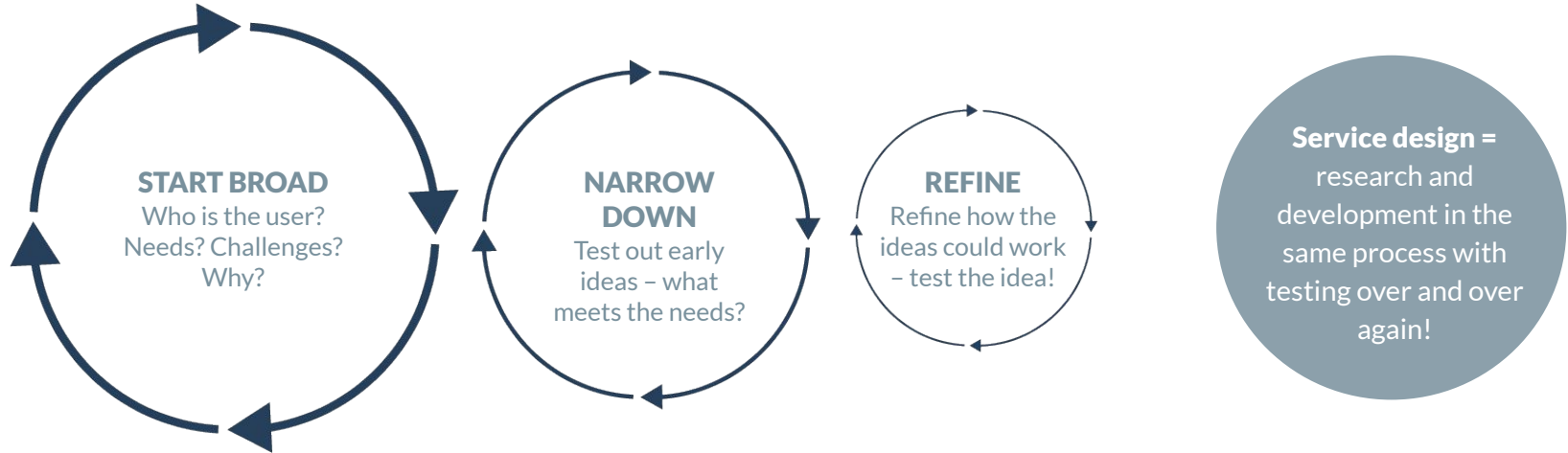
**Prototypes** are **created** in order to test and evaluate possible solutions together with users and continue into the “understand human” phase again.

With the help of this method systems, services, and strategies are developed that creates value for both the users and the organization.



# RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAME PROCESS

Service design is based on **continuous development**. Starting with testing early sketches of ideas with users to understanding what meet their needs. Co-creation with actors in the system is used to further develop ideas.



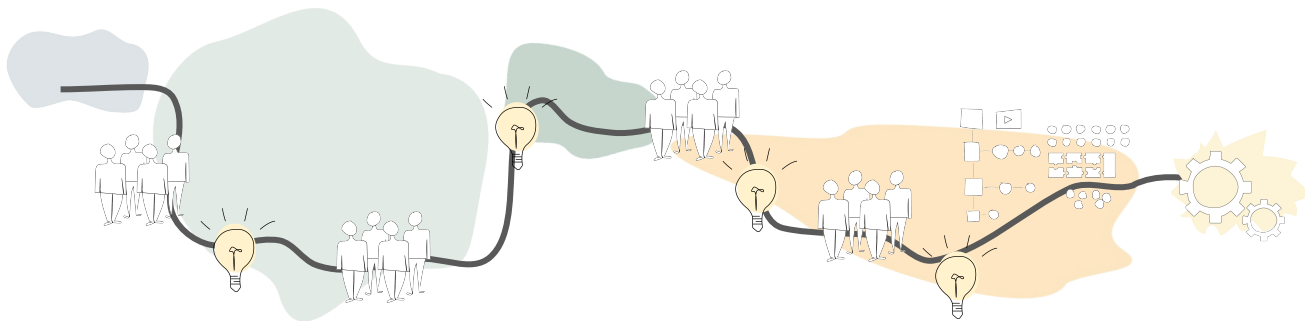


# ABOUT THE PROJECT

# APPROACH

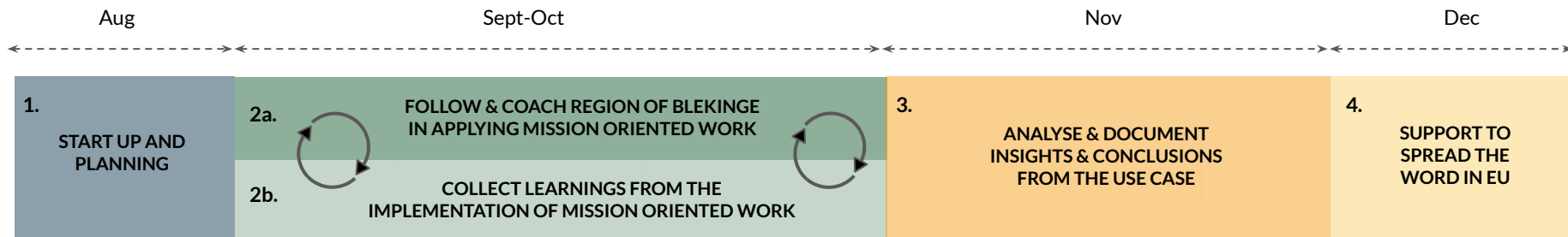
As part of the TRAMI project, “use cases” will be applied as an instrument to further **understand processes and structures that facilitates or hinders the implementation of missions**. The use cases might tell us something about the various users and actors involved; the needs of users to be able to achieve a Mission; the different pathways users can take to achieve the Mission; and the innovation system in which users and actors operate. Use cases can help to further the understanding of successful development and implementation of missions. By working with a number of ongoing or planned cases of missions or complementary actions, the use cases allow to **strengthen the implementation whilst it’s ongoing** as well as **identify learnings that help scale up** these approaches.

One of the identified use cases is the region of Blekinge in the south of Sweden. **This region’s smart specialization strategy (S3) includes missions as a method**, and also includes links to two of the EU missions (“climate adaptation” and “restore our oceans and waters”). To the best of our knowledge, Blekinge is the first region in Europe that tests this approach.



# PROJECT PLAN

This was the original proposed plan. It was then detailed and adapted together with the project team to fit the purpose and needs.



## Purpose phase 1.

- To get an understanding of what work have been done in the Region of Blekinge use case
- To get to know each other, understand and set the expectations
- Form a tight inter-disciplinary work team

## Purpose phase 2.

- To follow and guide Region Blekinge in the process of mission based development and implementation
- To support and coach Region Blekinge with methods of mission oriented development and implementation
- Process lead together with Vinnova
- Collect data/insights on how mission oriented work is implemented in the use case

## Purpose phase 3.

- To analyse and document the learnings, experiences, and conclusions from the use case
- To support Vinnova to structure learnings and experiences from the use case, for them to feed in to other learning events within TRAMI

## Purpose phase 4.

- To support Vinnova to spread the word - regional and national by insights, learnings and conclusions from the use case of Region of Blekinge

# OVERVIEW – PHASE 2

The core team early realized that they needed start a pilot to learn more about a Mission based approach in practice the context of Region Blekinge. The pilot would be carried out with system actors within Region Blekinge. The coaching was adapted accordingly to focus on supporting the core team to prepare and set-up the pilot.

## WS 1: DEFINE SCOPE

### ACTIVITIES

- Define scope
- Choose the pilot
- Identify who should be included
- Understand the target audience
- Set the process for the pilot

## WS 2: NEEDS ANALYSIS (Theory)

### ACTIVITIES

- Theory – Needs analysis
- Hypothetical mission
- Plan ahead for interviews
- Gather insights

## WS 3: NEEDS ANALYSIS (Practice)

### ACTIVITIES

- Analyze the needs of the target group
- Plan for the start-up workshop
- Send out invitations to the start-up workshop
- Gather insights (meta)

## WS 4: MISSION & PILOT

### ACTIVITIES

- Review of process proposal for a pilot
- Planning of how the pilot would be carried out



# THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS

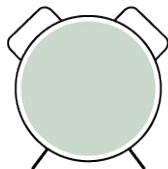
During four months seven workshops and three in-depth interviews were done to coach the team and to capture insights & learnings

# 4

## MONTHS

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From kick-off to the last workshop



# 7

## WORKSHOPS

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- 1 Start-up workshop with Vinnova
- 1 Kick-off workshop with Region Blekinge & Vinnova
- 1 Knowledge sharing workshop with with core team at Region Blekinge
- 4 Reflective Process Workshops with core team at Region Blekinge

# 3

## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

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with key core team members to understand their individual experiences and perspectives



# **“BLEKINGE IS ON A MISSION”**

What does a mission-oriented way of working mean for  
Region Blekinge?

# WHY MISSIONS?

The core team were asked about why mission are important to them and these are what their answers:

For us it's a way to:

- test new and innovative ways of working
- be more sustainable and impactful
- create a learning process for Region Blekinge
- contribute to collective learning together with other ecosystem actors
- be frontrunners

...and a conviction that this is the next generation methodology for successful innovation work

***“I thought that for your part and VINNOVA's part and the EU's part to pick out a little...if there is any good example from what we have done, it is great to spread of course. For our own part, it is also to be seen in that context, but also to get help in the process of how to implement.”***

***- Project team member***



# CHARACTERISTICS OF MISSION ORIENTED WAYS OF WORKING

The core team was also asked about what is characteristic with a mission-oriented way of working and they answered that it is:



## **Goal oriented**

Formulating a clear goal, well defined and specific.



## **Cross sectoral**

Working across sectoral boundaries around a larger intractable issue both top-down bottom-up.



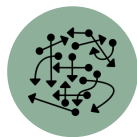
## **Innovative process/method**

Applying an innovative process/ method for working with society's challenges which requires trusting the flexibility of the process.



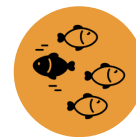
## **Inclusive of diverse system actors**

Using novel methods to involve and include more people and organisations in problem solving and innovation processes.



## **Complex**

Taking the overall perspective makes it incredibly exciting but also difficult as complexity can give rise to conflicts.



## **Variable**

Accepting that processes and outcomes will be different given differing national, regional and local contexts as well as (organisational) logics.



# UNDERSTANDING OF MISSIONS

The core teams opinion was that Missions should both be seen both as a Framework and as an Innovation Method

	Missions as a Framework	Missions as an Innovation Method
<i>Description</i>	A flexible but incomplete structure that allows for creativity and can guide strategy.	A set of practices and tools that are more prescriptive, repeatable and can guide processes to achieve specific goals.
<i>Concerns</i>	Where to go	How to get there
<i>Level</i>	Strategic level	Operational level
<i>Focus</i>	Actors are concerned with strategy, innovation, policy, seeking collaborations, sourcing funds and development.	Actors are concerned with processes, methods, allocation of resources and organisation of internal and external functions.
<i>Critical to success because it:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– facilitates a proactive approach rather than strategizing in an additive way</li><li>– helps synchronise with policy at different system levels</li><li>– mobilizes actors and resources</li><li>– provides a frame and direction to work with pressing issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– seeks to include multiple actors spread across system levels including civil society</li><li>– can be tested in different contexts across sectors and problem areas</li><li>– spurs innovation in the process</li><li>– makes it easier to understand application in practice.</li></ul>

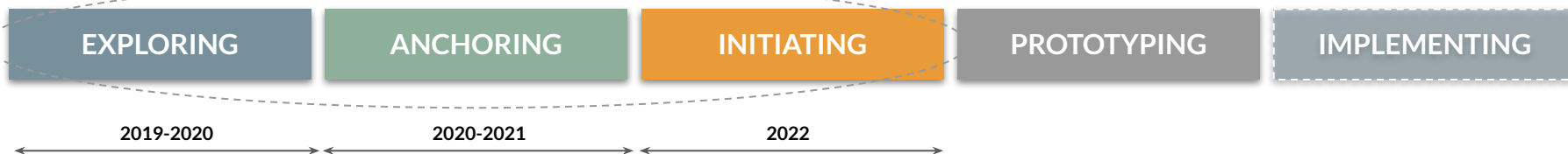
# THE TRANSITION JOURNEY

Laying the groundwork for a mission-based approach

# TRANSITION JOURNEY PHASES

To describe the Transition journey we have divided it into five phases

*phases studied  
in this assignment*



This phase refers to the early stages when Region Blekinge was **exploring new innovation methods**. During this phase they mainly were in contact with EU office and began exploring how this approach could benefit Region Blekinge.

This phase refers to the **long anchoring stage** undertaken by Region Blekinge through lobbying at regional level, creating awareness at national level and establishing an Innovation Council.

This is the currently ongoing phase where Region Blekinge is **setting a direction**, studying local and regional **challenges** with relevant actors to define the impact initiatives related to EU missions.

In this phase, Region Blekinge will undertake a **pilot to test and learn** more about how missions can be used as a method on a regional and local level. The main aim is to collaboratively establish a process with key actors and civil society to work with EU missions.

In this phase, Region Blekinge will utilise a portfolio approach **to roll out multiple initiatives** based on the lessons learnt from their test pilot.



**INSIGHTS**

# EXPLORING – EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE

**INSIGHT:** External perspective had a cascade effect on the process by giving it legitimacy and credibility.

While the project manager's background and interest in new innovation methods started the process, the formation of the Innovation Council was a crucial aspect that gave the idea of missions much needed power. The Innovation Council consisted of presidents in the local government board and politicians. In addition, the core project team invited strategically selected external actors who had some specialised knowledge of Region Blekinge as well as those who are experts or knowledgeable in the areas they wanted to work within.

**LEARNING:** Recruit persons with varied/new perspectives and experiences that complement your own perspectives.

Bringing in different perspectives early on into the process is vital not only to gain credibility but also to question and challenge assumptions that might be hindering the process.

***“The Innovation Council was positive as our politicians gained more power through external people confirming our thoughts. It was a good forum.”***

*– Project team member*



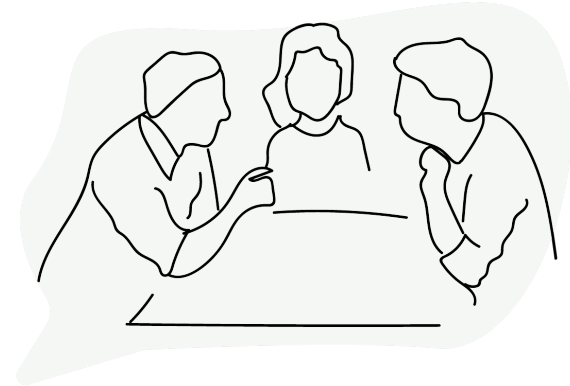
# EXPLORING – LOBBYING

**INSIGHT:** Getting missions accepted as a way of working required lobbying at the regional and local level.

To get acceptance for the new way of working an extensive lobbying were done towards managers and politicians. The main driving force for this group were that they liked when Blekinge is seen and put on the map as well as to be in the frontline as a region compared to others. The acceptance in this top layer opened doors internally later on in the process.

**LEARNING:** Advocate for new ways of working to address societal challenges and drive change.

It is crucial to have persons that are very active with lobbying and networking with management and politicians to create a space and momentum in the organisation for change and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the new way of working.



# EXPLORING – CONCRETE EXAMPLES

**INSIGHT:** Concrete examples of work in progress or implementation can create understanding, support local establishment and inspire.

Region Blekinge was positive towards working with a missions oriented approach. To improve their understanding and assess examples, they started looking for other actors who were already working with Missions. They reached out to the EU office in Brussels to connect with others. However, they found that there were few (if any) regions at the EU level actively pursuing missions at the time. Instead, they have become the very example they were looking for to others wanting to work with a missions oriented approach.

**LEARNING:** Search for other actors working in the same space to garner support, learn from and share experiences with.

Starting or being part of a support network can really aid contextual learning through sharing of experiences, including challenges faced, opportunities, tools and methods, and testing in your own context.



# EXPLORING – DIFFICULT TO FIND SUPPORT ON A NATIONAL LEVEL & EXAMPLES FROM OTHER REGIONS

**INSIGHT:** Difficult to find support from a national level & examples from other regions working with a mission approach.

When Region Blekinge started exploring a missions approach no other government organisation or agency within Sweden were working on EU Missions with a mission oriented approach. Some organisations at the national level were cautious and sometimes also critical. Region Blekinge contacted officials at the EU and started collaborating with them. Vinnova had experience from the mission oriented approach within other areas and has supported the region with experience, networks as well as funding.

**LEARNING:** Leading by example can be effective in showing what is needed & why. Coherence from supporting actors will facilitate the process.

Region Blekinge has come a long way in advocating for a missions approach. Taking a proactive approach and leading by example, while cumbersome and demanding, can work towards shifting mindsets, being more open to alternatives and lay the groundwork for future initiatives. To have coherent and prepared supporting actors would facilitate the process.

***“When we started working with missions, the national level was very invisible.”***

***– Project team member***





# ANCHORING – COLLABORATORS' MOTIVATION

**INSIGHT:** Clear understanding of collaborators motivations and driving forces can be obscured when the process is rushed.

The collaborators did not always fully grasp what their motivations were for participating and how they can contribute. Several rounds of discussions were needed with potential participants before they had a motivated and suitable team of actors onboard. The core team had several dialogues to get an in-depth understanding of the motivating factors and driving forces of the actors in the system.

**LEARNING:** Allocate time understand motivation factors

It takes some time to reach the right collaborators and understand their needs, expectations and driving forces. It is valuable to spend time on getting a deeper understanding of the needs, driving forces and expectations of the different actors in the system. This will facilitate the process to build close and long lasting relationships.

***“To create a powerful execution/ implementation: Put a lot of effort into consensus. The projection for Kickstart S3 went a bit quickly where not all parties were fully on board with what they had taken in hand at all. There was a certain lack of transparency in the driving forces of collaborative parties.”***

*- Workshop excerpt from digital canvas*



# ANCHORING – THE REGION'S ADVANTAGES

**INSIGHT:** The small region facilitates cooperation between the actors in the system

There are pros and cons in being a small Region. In the beginning some thought were focusing on the disadvantages for a small region like Blekinge. It is for example difficult to allocate enough resources for this kind of initiative within the organisation. But there are also advantages of being small: it creates closeness and an understanding that they needed to help each other in the process. It was also easier to see common challenges in Blekinge as a small region. The actors were used to work cross-sector/silos and were used to look for financing/funding for other actors.

**LEARNING:** Reframe perceived weaknesses to potential

What as first seems to be weaknesses could also be a potential strength. Always try to look at you weaknesses with a different perspective – they might also be important possibilities.



# ANCHORING – KEY STAKEHOLDERS

**INSIGHT:** Creating common ground with key stakeholders (e.g. politicians) was vital for embedding the missions approach

While people were part of the Innovation Council and S3 they sometimes had difficulty understanding what a missions approach meant. The project team then conducted workshops to create shared understanding and managed to get most actors on board. They started with a preliminary study and then developed a strategy, which they worked on collaboratively with their ecosystem partners. The project team, with the help of their analyst, have analysed Region Blekinge's strengths which has grounded their work and set the focus. Through a digital platform they were invited to review and edit drafts, thereby allowing project actors to contribute and own their shared creation.

**LEARNING:** Identify key stakeholders and work towards creating alignment to ensure longevity of the work

Alignment of actors can benefit collaboration over longer time horizons by creating a sense of ownership.

***“Before that, we had a very long anchoring process, both in the form of having innovation councils and within S3 Entrepreneurial Discovery Process.”***

***– Project team member***



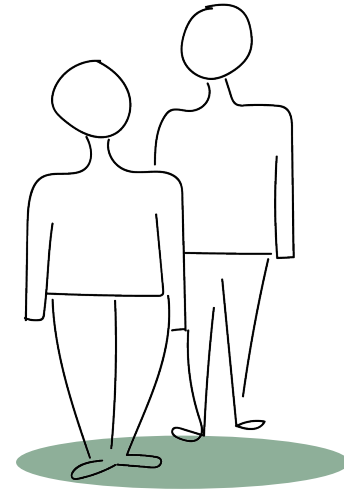
# ANCHORING – EMBRACE DIFFERENCES

**INSIGHT:** Core team composition, differences in perspectives and disposition can impact the process.

Even if the core team member had different background and different perspectives they grew together during the process and became even stronger. This also made them more aligned in the way they related to missions as a method. The conversations in the core team also played an essential part in calibrating expectations and clarifying focus for the work ahead.

**LEARNING:** Communicating and syncing between core team members is essential to overcome individual differences

An ongoing team building process is important both to anchor expectations and focus ahead but also to give the core team strength and motivation to proceed in the change process even when they run into problems or obstacles on the way. The individual differences usually becomes a strength in the long run.



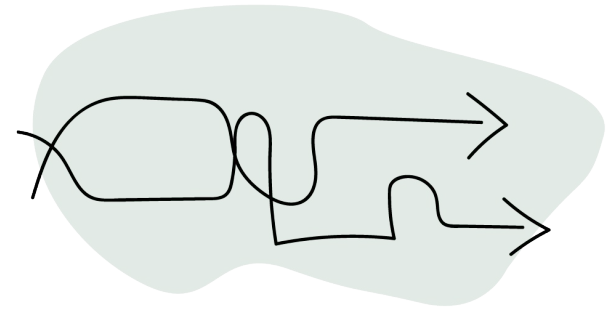
# ANCHORING – FROM THEORY TO ACTION

**INSIGHT:** Constant discussions, disinterest and resistance can delay or hinder initiation of process.

The core team sometimes found it difficult to go from theory to action. It became even more challenging when they met people who didn't understand what Missions should be good for and didn't show much interest in the initiative. They decided anyhow that next step in the process should be to create a concrete showcase, a pilot, together with actors in the system within Region Blekinge to be able show actual value by using the new innovation approach and to learn more about the Mission based approach in practice.

**LEARNING:** To move from talking to doing.

It is vital to have the courage to take the step from theory to action. It is easy to get delayed by endless discussions instead of start doing it in practise. Starting a pilot to show concrete effects and activate the actors in the system can be an important way to get to the next level in your implementation journey and get more people onboard.



# INITIATING – LACK OF RESOURCES

**INSIGHT:** Lack of resources risks hampering continuity of work.

During these first phases in the process the core team have struggled to have enough time and resources to keep up the pace in the process. Several of the core team member just worked part time with this initiative. To proceed the team has also tried to allocate resources and money on different levels: locally, regionally, nationally and on the EU level. That in itself required special skills and took a lot of time. Lack of dedicated resources is certainly a risk for the continuity of the work.

**LEARNING:** Secure resources for the different phases and continued engagement.

If possible it is advisable to invest in a dedicated core team at least in the initial implementation period of mission-oriented ways of working. It takes a lot of time and effort and the workload can be too heavy if this is something you as a coworker have to do on the side of your original role in your organization.

***“It needs people who can run it. That's where we land all the time, I feel. I work part time, D works part time but then there is a lot of other stuff too. How to prioritize among other different things to be done. A bit difficult for us to catch up, during this period the 4 of us have done so much stuff from our side.”***

***– Project team member***



# INITIATING – EXECUTION CHALLENGING

**INSIGHT:** Missions as a framework was incorporated into the strategy but execution as methodology has been challenging.

There was a certain understanding about missions as a framework and it's potential to be used as a methodology. While missions as a framework has been incorporated into the strategy, practical experience and/or competence to test missions as a method in practice was lacking. Region Blekinge were strategic in connecting Missions with the S3 strategy work. However, to implement a mission-oriented way of working they need to develop and/or add practical competence and experience.

**LEARNING:** Seek strategic collaborations that can contribute with the required competence and experience to support implementation

To speed up the implementation process it is advisable to establish collaboration with actors that can contribute with practical experience and/or competence to test and implement missions as a method in practice.

***“We have succeeded in collaborating with regional universities. They have skills that allow them to understand the importance of working with missions, not least that they have a sustainability focus, which is important in this context.”***

***– Project team member***



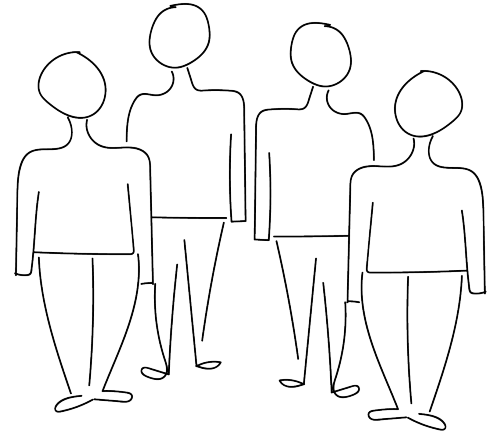
# INITIATING – CORE TEAM SKILLS ESSENTIAL

**INSIGHT:** A core team that understands new approaches and is willing to test out new things gives the project power.

The core team in Region Blekinge had the right mindset and skills to understand and explore new approaches. They were also willing and had the courage to test new approaches and methods to improve and build the innovation capability in the region. The higher education institution also played an important role in supporting the process. The core team had the wisdom not to focus so much on those who said no to change. Instead they focused ahead and showed they had persistence to move on in the process.

**LEARNING:** Involve a mix of courageous people with an experimental mindset in the core team to move forward

The importance of the skills and mindset for the core team is crucial to be able to drive the change process over time with persistence. Care should also to have the right competence and skills to meet the different challenges in the phases in the Transition journey.





# INITIATING – EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS

**INSIGHT:** Existing initiatives and relationship were used to get in contact with the actors in the system.

From the start it was a bit difficult to get in contact with the actors in the system. The team had chosen small and mid-sized businesses as the target group for the first pilot. After a while they realized that they could use existing relationships to get in contact with the target group. They used Tech Tank, an ongoing innovation initiative in the region. This made it much easier to get initial contact and also reach a system with small businesses to approach. The combined S3 and Mission approach gave also synergies and an access to an extensive network of people with valuable competence.

**LEARNING:** Build on existing initiatives and relationships that are already established to find synergies.

Identify which actors you already have relationships with in your organisation. These could be ongoing or previous initiatives within innovation or other areas relevant for your missions.

*“Existing innovation initiatives, as Tech Tank, were used to get in contact with the small business actors in the system. We could build on existing relations to get in contact with the actors in the system.”*

*– Project team member*



# INITIATING – MISMATCH BETWEEN ACTORS

**INSIGHT:** Mismatch in driving forces, culture, time perspective and scope.

The core team decided they wanted to set up a pilot to get more practical experience of using a mission based approach. The target group for this pilot was SME businesses in the region. After some interviews with the target group the team realized that they were more engaged in local challenges that was relevant for their own business than global climate goals like the EU missions. An attractive purpose for the pilot could be to identify local risks and business opportunities as a consequence of climate changes. An important finding was that it was important to use a simple and not academic language in the communication with this target group.

**LEARNING:** Carry out a needs analysis to understand the actors driving forces, attractive scope/challenge and what creates value

It is advisable to do a Needs analysis for your target group before you decide on scope, goal and participants for your initiative.

***“The actors in the system have different driving forces and time perspectives”***

***– Project team member***



# **SUMMARY & KEY LEARNINGS**

# INSIGHTS – EXPLORING

To summarize the key insights for each phase. In the EXPLORING phase the key insights were:



EXTERNAL  
PERSPECTIVES

LOBBYING

CONCRETE  
EXAMPLES

DIFFICULT TO  
FIND SUPPORT &  
EXAMPLES ON A  
NATIONAL LEVEL

# INSIGHTS – ANCHORING

In the Anchoring phase the key insights were:

COLLABORATORS  
MOTIVATION

THE REGION'S  
ADVANTAGES

KEY  
STAKEHOLDERS

EMBRACE  
DIFFERENCES

FROM THEORY  
TO ACTION



# INSIGHTS – INITIATING

In the Initiating phase the key insights were:

LACK OF  
RESOURCES

EXECUTION  
CHALLENGING

CORE TEAM  
SKILLS ESSENTIAL

EXISTING  
RELATIONSHIPS

MISMATCH  
BETWEEN  
ACTORS

# TRANSITION JOURNEY & KEY LEARNINGS

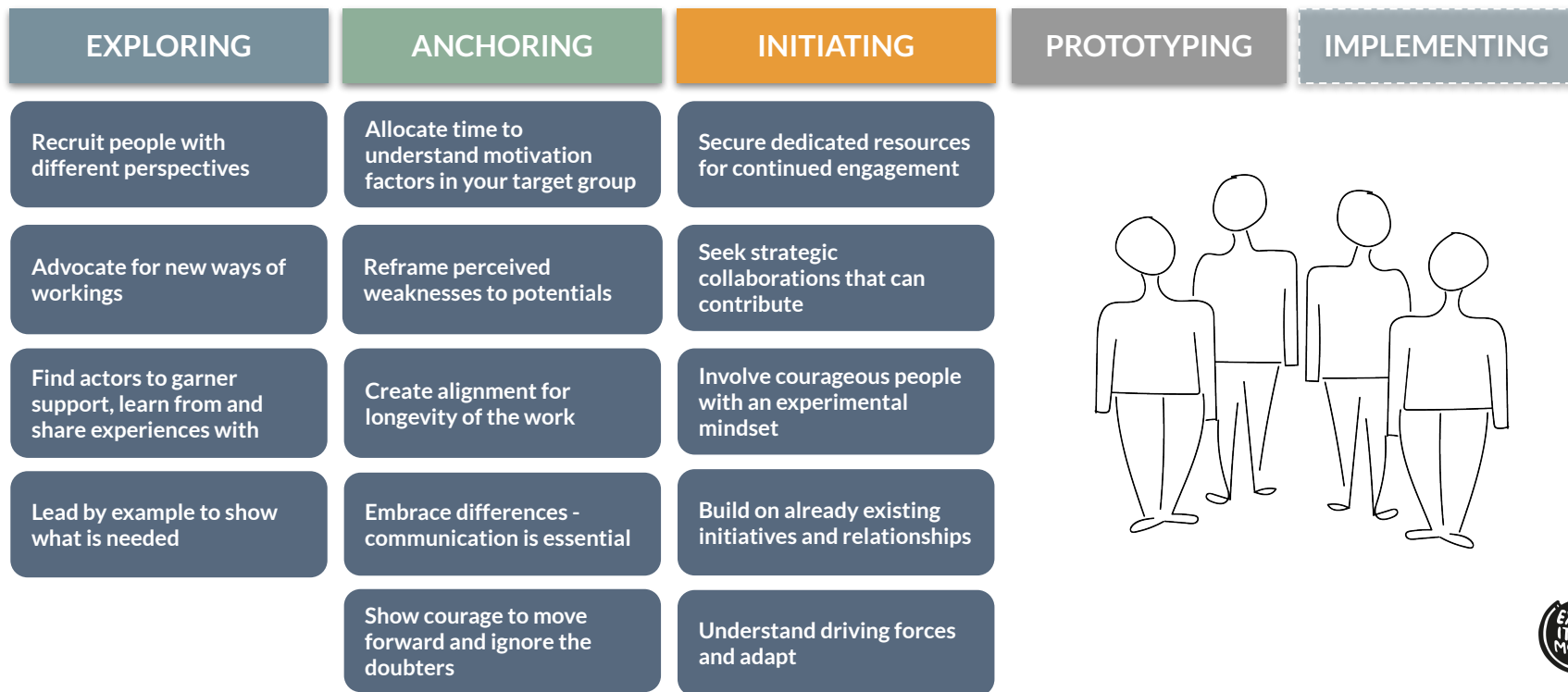
And to summarize the key learnings for each phase, they were:

EXPLORING	ANCHORING	INITIATING
Recruit people with different perspectives	Allocate time to understand motivation factors in your target group	Secure dedicated resources for continued engagement
Advocate for new ways of workings	Reframe perceived weaknesses to potentials	Seek strategic collaborations that can contribute
Find actors to garner support, learn from and share experiences with	Create alignment for longevity of the work	Involve courageous people with an experimental mindset
Lead by example to show what is needed	Embrace differences - communication is essential	Build on already existing initiatives and relationships
	Show courage to move forward and ignore the doubters	Understand driving forces and adapt



# THE TRANSITION JOURNEY & KEY LEARNINGS

And we hope to later on come back with learnings after the phases Prototyping and Implementing





# THANK YOU!



## PROJECT TEAM

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**December - 2022**