

DeRC 2012 – Panel

„eSociety Bodensee 2020: Cross-border Cooperation in the Lake Constance Greater Region“

Summary and Outlook

In our panel we presented the background and main ideas as well as concrete project activities of the research project eSociety Bodensee 2020. The project is being conducted by a consortium of three universities from the Lake Constance area and started off in July 2012. Its main goal is to prepare a strategy for open societal innovation in the Lake Constance region. The project addresses the main question of how open innovation is able to contribute to the solution of societal challenges in the Lake Constance region.

Open societal innovation refers to the adaptation and sustainable utilization of appropriate open innovation approaches known from business to solve societal challenges by state and society. As a first result the project consortium prepared a paper presenting the Lake Constance Alemannic definition of Open Societal Innovation.

In the Lake Constance region there is a rather long standing history of regional cross-border activities in order to further develop the region beyond national borders. The region comprises 10 cantons and federal states in four different countries.

Already in 1971 the International Lake Constance Conference (IBK) was founded, a political organization representing the 10 regional governments focusing on the region's development since then. In 1994/95 the project Electronic Mall Bodensee, which was initiated by the IBK and two universities from the region, utilized the emerging Web to support the region's development based on new media through developing a cross-border electronic agora. In 2000 the Intl. Lake Constance University (IBH) was established: a virtual organization comprising 29 universities and colleges within the region in order to support cross-border cooperation in terms of education and research. The project eSociety Bodensee 2020 is being supported by the IBH.

As planned, the project will work on defined work packages during the 24 month project duration. Based on the developed understanding of Open Societal Innovation the project team will conduct a cross-border requirements analysis within the region in order to determine the region's and people's needs. Furthermore, it is planned to provide a concrete toolbox comprising a collection of tools applicable to Open Societal Innovation projects.

During the course of the project concrete open innovation pilot projects will be conducted and, where they already exist, supported. Most of the projects will be not cross-border due to still existing legal and other boundaries. Based on the experiences from the various pilot projects which will be analyzed and evaluated in detail respective insights will be drawn. These results will be presented and discussed with various stakeholder groups within the region, for example, with the different working groups of the Intl. Lake Constance Conference (IBK). The final project's outcomes shall result in a strategy for open societal innovation in the Lake Constance region and thus will contribute to the region's further development.

In order to be able to cooperate and collaborate during the course of the project the project team will make use of existing new media platforms and tools. One of the tools will be MeetingSphere which was presented at the panel. The tool supports, among others, Online and synchronous as well as asynchronous idea collection and evaluation tasks.

It is planned to disseminate the ongoing project activities and results in different formats such as the project's website esocietybodensee2020.org as well conference presentations, panels, and workshops.

Hans-Dieter Zimmermann, October 2012