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Entrepreneurship and Innovation: The Practitioners' Perspectives (1)

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A SWEDISH PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATION AND GROWTH FOR SPACE

**Abstract**

Luleå University of Technology (LTU) is the northernmost university in Sweden. LTU has set up two regional projects funded by EU in order to strengthen its position as the leading space university in Sweden and its role as an important catalyst for regional growth. The first project "RIT" (an abbreviation of space for innovation and growth in Swedish) was performed between 2015 and 2018, the second project "RIT 2021" will be implemented during 2019 to 2021.

The project is run by Luleå University of Technology in collaboration with the Institute of Space Physics (IRF), the space industry (SSC, GKN Aerospace, OHB Sweden), actors within innovation support (LTU Business and Arctic Business Incubator, ESA-BIC Sweden etc) and regional investors and financiers such as the Kiruna and Luleå municipalities, the County of Norrbotten and a regional bank.

The objective of these projects is to strengthen the regional space ecosystem by encouraging collaboration between industry, academia, regional SME's and actors within the innovation support system. After three years there are mechanisms in place to stimulate not only collaboration between the projects partners but even additional interesting activities which occurred as a result of the activities of RIT.

The paper will detail activities within the three work packages, the results and the lessons learned during the RIT project. It will also present the work packages within the next phase, RIT 2021, and the reason to why this path was chosen.

The author gives examples of RD projects were PhD students focus on technical challenges within the Swedish space industry, how the regional space ecosystem was strengthened and how it connects to the national and European system, how new start-ups were established, how a new forum for space innovation was initiated and how a Centre of Excellence started to take shape at the university. Furthermore, new objectives and goals within "RIT 2021" will be presented, including plans for a new testbed for space, a cluster within aerospace for SME's and other new activities to stimulate innovation within the space business.