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Technological cooperation

Brainport Eindhoven is a top technology region of international importance. By fostering an unprecedented level of cooperation between regional stakeholders from the public and private sector, the Dutch city of Eindhoven has successfully developed into a centre for knowledge-intensive industry. The area is part of a larger cooperation structure of three complementary ecosystems with a strong knowledge base and technological industry, known as the 'Eindhoven-Leuven-Aachen triangle' (ELAt).

A new level of cooperation

The unique 'triple helix' cooperation fosters partnership between local government, industry and knowledge institutes. Brainport today has around 745,000 residents and 404,000 jobs.

Faced with a challenging economic climate and the decline of heavy industry which had previously defined the city, Eindhoven recognised in the early nineties the need to rejuvenate its reputation as a technological stronghold. Home to giant corporations such as Philips, the city capitalised on its industrial heritage by developing a foundation represented by industry, government and knowledge institutes with the main aim of strengthening the regional economy. Nowadays, the agency 'Brainport Development' executes the regional strategy defined by the Brainport Foundation.

Unlike other commercial services and consultancies, as a triple helix-governed development agency, Brainport Development is able to offer a series of services, free of charge, to new arrivals.

Support services include:

- practical assistance in areas such as tax structures, incentives and permit procedures;
- confidential and personalised support, such as insight and data on location and site selection;
- introducing corporate investors to networks and services suppliers in business, regional government, consultants, academic institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

“The Brainport Industries programme brings together small and medium enterprises. As part of a supply chain without cooperation businesses would be vulnerable and risk endangering the entire chain. As responsibilities within supply chains shift, we develop new business models and enjoy success due to cooperation, ultimately strengthening companies' individual positions.”

Marc Hendrikse, CEO NTS Group

cities in action

July 2013

where: Eindhoven, Netherlands
what: knowledge society
when: 2002+

Buffer to the economic crisis

The nature of the triple helix partnership means that the area is constantly developing to meet the challenges of the changing economic climate. In fact, Brainport proved to be an effective buffer when the economic crisis hit. By February 2009, the area had already delivered the building blocks of what would become the Dutch Recovery Plan to the Crisis, as well attracting the necessary financial resources to survive the crisis with minimum impact:

- 20,000 factory workers were able to take advantage of the new flexible labour market, allowing for part-time unemployment which safeguarded thousands of jobs and saved recruitment time and costs;
- 1,300 private R&D staff were temporarily seconded to Eindhoven university and other regionally-based R&D centres;
- regional organisations were major beneficiaries of the national economic crisis measures. No major company in the area went under and the unemployment rate was kept to a minimum, rising from 5% in 2008 to 7% in 2009.

Investing in the future

Brainport Eindhoven today is a hub of flourishing knowledge and manufacturing industries. The statistics speak for themselves: Brainport Eindhoven is home to 15% of all company-based research personnel in the Netherlands and attracts 10% of all foreign direct investments. Moreover, the region accounts for 24% of all national R&D spending, and for 37% of all Dutch patents. To ensure that the region continues in the same vein, Brainport's sights are firmly set on the future.

Several programmes and projects are in operation to ensure that Brainport Eindhoven remains a competitive industrial centre:

- the Brainport 2020 strategy, which aims to position the area as one of Europe's top three strong economic regions;

- awareness raising programmes to draw attention to the many innovative developments in the region: e.g. the second edition of the Dutch Technology Week in 2013; programmes aimed at attracting international workers from the sector
- measures to promote technical studies and professions among young people.

Brainport's success highlights the power of cooperation between stakeholders to achieve a common goal. This success can be measured through four factors: trust, shared and cooperative leadership, unlimited administrative or geographical borders, focus and continuity in strategy. Having already brought huge benefits to the Dutch economy, Brainport Eindhoven now aims to become a top technology region of European and global status.



The success of Brainport Eindhoven is based on cooperation between business life, public authorities and knowledge institutes. The EURO CITIES 'cooperation' award we won in 2010 recognises the importance of this cooperation. It is also an incentive to further invest in cooperation on a European scale. Our regional economic strategy, 'Brainport 2020 – Top Economy, Smart Society' aims for a smart and sustainable economy, within an inclusive society. Its close alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy will prove to be a winning combination.

Elies Lemkes, Brainport Development

