



Just Transition Platform – Project fiche:

SÖDERTÄLJE SCIENCE PARK

Sweden, Stockholm County (SE11)

This document is part of a series presenting information and lessons learned on policy approaches at national, regional or local level supporting a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

Member State:

Sweden

Region:

Stockholm County (SE11)

Sector:

Sustainable manufacturing

Total project budget (€):

2 000 000 (yearly)

Financing conditions (co-financing rate in %):

N/A

Sources of funding (in €):

Funding is made available mostly by AstraZeneca and Scania. A smaller share is made available from the Municipality of Södertälje, the Region of Stockholm, and the Swedish Innovation Agency Vinnova. Some of the initiatives sponsored by the SScP also receive European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding.

EU Funding:

ERDF (2014-2020) / ERDF (2021-2027)

National funding:

N/A

Regional funding:

N/A

Duration:

2021 - Ongoing

Responsible managing authority / agency / company:

Södertälje Science Park

Summary

Södertälje Science Park (SScP) is an innovation district situated in the industrial city of Södertälje and operated by the homonymous agency. It was inaugurated in 2018, as the result of the close collaboration between the city's municipality, KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden's largest technical university), and the private companies AstraZeneca and Scania. SScP is thus a physical space functioning as an innovation arena. It operates as a hub that connects representatives of industry, academia,

and the public sector, fostering the creation of triple-helix alliances – at both the regional and national levels. It also promotes initiatives to assist both infant and settled businesses in the field of sustainable production. These programmes include business development, assistance in adopting, developing, or upscaling sustainable production solutions, and more.

Type of activities:

Södertälje Science Park offers a portfolio of initiatives in support of companies that adopt sustainable production processes or wish to do so, a core precept of Sweden's industrial strategy. Here we can highlight three projects that provide small and medium-sized enterprises with assistance and guidance:¹

1. SuPr: The Science Park coordinates SuPr, the national node for sustainable production. Through this network – which links representatives of industry, academia, and the public sector – the Science Park has proved effective in initiating and coordinating R&D efforts, engaging the right constellation of partners for each project, and catalysing investments. In a sense, SuPr represents the engine at the core of the Science Park's activities, as the network it coordinates – and the know-how therein – are used in support of other initiatives.
2. Produktionsänglar: Through this programme, startups with innovative ideas are assisted by Science Park and the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in taking their physical product from prototype to production, through coaching and skills development (often engaging members of SuPr with expert knowledge on the topic to be addressed).
3. Liften: Already established companies can apply for this programme, where they are assisted in identifying sustainability challenges in their production lines and developing tailored solutions (as above, often engaging members of SuPr with expert knowledge on the topic to be addressed).

Goals and approach:

By being an enclave for technology, SScP revitalises industry and thus economic development in the metropolitan area of Södertälje. It does so mostly by creating and stimulating synergies across innovation players, where synergies can be characterised as the generation of new and valuable information through human interaction. In particular, by focusing on the domain of sustainable production, SScP prioritises the following UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030:

Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth: SScP creates an environment ripe for innovation, where a favourable environment for investments converges with skills development, leading to economic growth in the area.

Goal 9 – Sustainable industry, innovations, and infrastructure: The core focus of projects sponsored by SScP is on sustainable production. Enabling a more efficient use of resources and developing environmentally friendly technologies are at the base of the Park's philosophy.

Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities: Through innovation and technological progress, Urban communities can become more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

Goal 12 – Sustainable production and consumption: The Park promotes the switch to more sustainable modes of production and pushes for a more circular economy.

Furthermore, as the recipient of ERDF funding in a more developed region, the Science Park contributes sensibly to the policy objectives of a more competitive and smarter Europe (PO1) and a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero economy (PO2).

Important outputs, results or achievements:

The first – and most significant – achievement that is worth emphasising is the gathering and engagement of many of the country's leading players in the field of sustainable production, which is extremely relevant in Sweden's industrial landscape. Indeed, SScP was highlighted as a good practice within the Interreg Europe project Cohes3ion, which aims to strengthen multi-level collaboration around prioritised research and innovation areas (note that sustainable production is one of four priorities for the Smart Specialisation of Stockholm's County).

Secondly, the individual initiatives sponsored by SScP should also be highlighted. For example, the Kickstart Circular Economy project, which helps SMEs start thinking about how to improve the circularity of their production; or the Competitive Sustainability for SMEs, which aids companies in drafting their first climate declarations, thus improving the visibility of sustainable practices within one's value chain.

Scalability² and transferability³:

One of the goals of SScP is indeed that of increasing in scale. This entails the further extension of its operations and the projects it champions to include more and more partners. As will be detailed in the Challenges section, one of the constraints of further growth is the availability of project officers with rich personal networks. For example, the success of the National Node for Sustainable Production (SuPr) – one of the SScP's core initiatives –, largely depends on connections with

key industry participants, which facilitate the somewhat diplomatic effort of establishing the correct constellations of partners for the given projects. Likewise, for this venture to be replicated elsewhere, similarly well-connected professionals should be engaged.

1 We invite the reader to consult the numerous initiatives spearheaded by SScP at the following webpage: <https://sscp.se/projekt/>.

2 Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

3 Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Tools for supporting economic diversification and reskilling/upskilling via projects:

- Supporting firms to become more innovative and adjust from “traditional sectors” to new technologies
- Providing workforce and start-ups with training and upskilling programmes
- Ensuring well-targeted financing and investment
- Building private and public sector capabilities for innovation
- Strengthening innovation financing and reducing barriers to investment
- Scaling business innovation networks and support clusters
- Capitalising on unique regional strengths for innovation
- Facilitating access to finance and broadening the range of financial instruments
- Strengthening entrepreneurial networks

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

A description of the SScP should encompass the following success factors. First, the collaboration between different sectors and types of actors, in particular the engagement of academia, the public sector, and private businesses. Second, the multi-level collaboration that saw input from the municipality of Södertälje, Stockholm County, cross-regional institutions (e.g. Vinnova), and also the EU (in the form of ERDF funding). Third, the choice of focusing on a domain – that of sustainable production – that was consistent with business logic and with the wider regional industrial priorities.

Key challenges:

Two main challenges are: First, as mentioned above, the momentum for collaborative projects is to an extent granted by personal knowledge and personal connections within the national industrial landscape. This implies that successful initiatives may be too dependent on single individuals with SScP. Second, a venture such as the SScP may find it harder to secure funding than it might be the case for a single technical project or initiative. While the benefits afforded by this type of collaborative approach can be large, they may equally be harder to measure and justify in the phase of monitoring.



Central framework conditions⁴:

Sweden is a global leader in the fight against climate change. With this respect, a key institutional achievement should be highlighted: the adoption of a climate policy framework in 2017. The framework is based on three dimensions. First, an ambitious, legally-binding, climate target to make Sweden carbon-neutral by 2045. Second, the Climate Act (entered into force in 2018) sets out the climate policy plan needed to achieve the climate target (to be revised and renewed every fourth year). Third, the institution of a climate policy council, to provide independent expert assessments on the progress made towards the climate targets.

At the regional level, while Stockholm is not covered by the Just Transition Fund (which is instead earmarked for use in the more industry-intensive counties of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, and Gotland), it nevertheless mobilises significant amounts of investments towards a climate-smart economy and sustainable production. This is also thanks to resources from the ERDF.

Outlook:

One of the key goals of the SScP is to further expand its network and its portfolio of projects to further advocate and develop sustainable manufacturing processes in Sweden.

⁴ Framework conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

Project partners:

Södertälje Science Park is a partnership between the following entities, who provide the majority of the financing:

- Scania (manufacturer of heavy trucks)
- AstraZeneca (manufacturer of pharmaceuticals)
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology (technical university)
- Södertälje Kommun (the city's municipality)

The project also receives funding from:

- Vinnova (Sweden's innovation agency)
- Region Stockholm
- Tillväxt verket (growth agency)
- European Union

Website / social media:

<https://sscp.se/>

Sources:

- Interreg Europe (2021) "Södertälje Science Park". Available at: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/sodertalje-science-park>
- Interreg Europe (2022) "Technology Parks to promote regional economic transformation". Available at: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/find-policy-solutions/stories/technology-parks-to-promote-regional-economic-transformation>
- Interview with Södertälje Science Park representative, 30 October 2023
- Södertälje Kommun (2022) "Södertälje Science Park receives attention within the EU". Available at: <https://www.sodertalje.se/foretagande/foretagande/nyheter/sodertalje-science-park-uppmarksammas-inom-eu/>
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- SuPr (2023) "Newsletter". Available at: <https://public.paloma.se/webversion?cid=27587&cmg=7a6b27e8-035d-4566-ab64-e6d9c61f9b44&g=90847473-f4f6-4015-9910-5804630fe4bf>
- Vinnova "Investments in Sustainable industry". Available at: <https://www.vinnova.se/en/m/sustainable-industry/investments-in-the-area>