



# Evaluations of brokering competence *-a successful Norwegian innovation instrument?*

Stig-Erik Jakobsen  
and  
Alf Slinning  
Bergen University College

Rebasing Tallin 11. June 2012

# The history of competence brokering in Norway

- In competence brokering a **broker** assists a firm to develop its own **R&D project**.
- A **researcher** from an R&D institution are involved in the accomplishment of the project.
- The process is heavily dependent on the broker's personal ability and established networks, the activities are mostly conducted by brokers from **R&D institutions**
- A **pro-active working method**; it is the broker that makes contact with the firm

These working methods has been developed through several programs founded by the Research Council of Norway

# The history, cont.



## TEFT-programme (1994-2004)

- The historical roots of these **pro active working methods** could be traced back to the old TEFT programme (“Technology transfer from R & D institution to small and medium sized enterprises”)

## The Competence Brokering Programme (2004-2007)

- Succeeded the second version of the TEFT programme in 2004
- Routines and procedures from TEFT was continued with some adjustment

## The VRI-programme (2007 →)

- The competence brokering programme merged into the new VRI-programme in 2007 (Programme for regional R&D and innovation)
- Became one of the three main innovation instruments in VRI

# Structural characteristics of competence brokering



## Funding

-**Competence brokering programme (2005)**: 1,1 mill EUR from the Research Council of Norway and 1,2 mill EUR from regional partners (the county).

-**VRI-programme (2008)**: 10 mill EUR from the Research council and approx 10 mill EUR from regional partner

→ competence brokering only one of several innovation instruments within VRI

→ the programme also founded a number of innovation research projects

## Organisation

-**VRI-programme**: 15 regional initiatives

→ each initiatives with their own strategy and priorities (selected industries etc)

→ managed by research institutions, the county etc

# Characteristics of CB, cont



The content of a competence brokering projects:

- Small projects (approx 10-20 000 EUR)
- Emphasise on preliminary operation
  - testing and documentation of a technology
  - small step changes
  - market research
  - investigate possibilities for larger projects
  - developing network
  - competence upgrading
  - *early phase results, increase firms ability to innovate*

# Findings from evaluation of the competence brokering program

(Survey 2007, 68 responses, response rate 41%)



**Table 1: To what extent has the firm projects given the following results for the firm? The alternatives are ranked based on an average score from 1 (not at all) to 4 (to a high extent), the % that record 3 or 4 are presented in parentheses.**

	Firms with some R&D experience (N=31) <sup>1</sup>	Firms with little R&D experience (N=29/31) <sup>2</sup>	All (N=60-62)
Increased knowledge about R&D environment	2,81 (78 %)	3,00 (78 %)	2,91 (78 %)
Increased competence on product and process development	2,50 (59 %)	2,70 (67 %)	2,60 (63 %)
Improve the firm's network	2,55 (61 %)	2,42 (48 %)	2,48 (55 %)
Increased competence on planning and conduct of projects	2,31 (50 %)	2,47 (43 %)	2,39 (47 %)
Improved production process	2,03 (42 %)	2,28 (48 %)	2,15 (45 %)
Improved profitability	2,03 (39 %)	2,21 (38 %)	2,12 (38 %)
Improved organization and leadership (management)	1,87 (27 %)	2,10 (38 %)	1,98 (32 %)
Cost reduction	1,68 (19 %)	1,97 (27 %)	1,82 (23 %)

<sup>1</sup> Includes firms that have purchased R&D services over the last three years.

<sup>2</sup> Includes firms that not have purchased R&D services over the last three years.

# CB-programme, cont.



## R& D Network

**Table 1: In what way has the conduct of the firm project contributed to the improvement of the firm's relationship to R&D institutions? The respondents have answered on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (to a high extent), average score from 1 to 4, the % that record 3 or 4 are presented in parentheses.**

	Firms with some R&D experience (N=30-32) <sup>1</sup>	Firms with little R&D experience (N=30-31) <sup>2</sup>	All (N=60-62)
<b>The firm project has linked the firm with researchers and R&amp;D networks in the <u>county</u></b>	2,44 (56 %)	2,68 (61 %)	2,56 (58 %)
<b>The firm project has linked the firm with researchers and R&amp;D networks <u>nationally</u></b>	2,48 (51 %)	2,32 (32 %)	2,41 (42 %)
<b>The firm project has linked the firm with researchers and R&amp;D networks <u>internationally</u></b>	1,80 (17 %)	1,60 (10 %)	1,70 (13 %)