Internationalization Strategy

SISP’s internationalization strategy, created in cooperation with our members
Introduction

- This is the initial strategy for internationalization that will continued to be developed over time.

- This is the first time Swedish Incubators and Science Parks (SISP) has created a systematic strategy for internationalization.

- It is based on the needs of the members.

- It is a living document that we aim to revise every two years in cooperation with our members.

- We developed a survey to better understand the issues and needs with SISP’s members and their companies.

- This document aims to set a clear time frame and prioritize activities.
Context and Objectives

• Context
  • SISP has recently identified the need for a clear plan for their work within internationalization, that will link local and regional actors with national and international ones. SISP has therefore created this strategy to enhance its work within this area.

• Strategic Objectives
  • Support the implementation of SISP’s operational goals and clearly define SISP’s international work based on the needs of its members.
  • Strengthen SISP and their members position at the international level and disseminate information about their work.
  • Provide leadership and guidance on how to achieve strategic and long-term goals together with the members.
Overview of interviews and surveys

Questions to the members
Current Status

Surveys

• When answering the surveys, the majority of members expressed a need for internationalization and for SISP to take a coordinating role within:
  • International markets
  • Ongoing national and international initiatives
  • Knowledge exchange between incubators and science parks
  • Collecting and disseminating best practice information
  • International networking

• Note: A limited number of members believed that SISP should not play a role in international markets because they see SISP as a national organization that should focus solely on the national market.
Current Status

Interviews

• Most members agree that SISP should offer external monitoring, coordinate the national soft-landing concept and national competence, expand resources in order to act as national and international coordinators and offer experience sharing sessions (ERFA).

• The majority of members mostly agree that SISP should offer national and international coordinated visits, map international relations, track and record ongoing international projects, offer a storytelling concept and ensure resources for expanding EU representation.
Type of organization

- 37.7% Incubator
- 32.1% Both incubator och Science Park
- 30.2% Science Park
Part 1: Do you help startups and scaleups to reach international markets today?

- Yes: 81.1%
- No, but we would like to: 13.2%
- No, no intention to begin: 5.7%
- We do not work directly with startups or scaleups: 0%
If yes, in what way?

- Assistance identifying relevant countries for market entry (competition, compatibility, culture etc): 59.1%
- Introduction to and/or identification of potential customers: 59.1%
- Introduction to and/or identification of potential investors: 56.8%
- Introduction to or identification of support, intermediaries or soft landings: 68.2%

Other Answers:
- Competitive analysis of the current markets
- Research
- We have international cases in our processes
- Find potential partners
- Through a common initiative
- Capital collection (e.g. venture capital)
- Increase company visibility internationally
- In cooperation with regional actors, Almi and Business Sweden
- International marketing expertise and branch specific knowledge of current market
- Work with needs outside of the company
- Match Swedish companies with international investors via parent companies (investment actors)
Are you a part of, or running any projects / initiatives that aim to strengthen your international work?

- Yes: 81.1%
- No: 18.9%
Which of the following countries do you (or have previously) work(ed) with?

- Canada: 30.2%
- USA: 56.6%
- Brazil: 17%
- Germany: 43.4%
- France: 37.7%
- Israel: 15.1%
- India: 22.6%
- South Korea: 9.4%
- Japan: 20.8%
- China: 24.5%
- We do not work internationally: 9.4%

Other Countries*:
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- Indonesia
- Iceland
- Italy
- Hong Kong
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Singapore
- Great Britain
- Taiwan
- Germany
- Austria

*Additional answers from our respondents
Part 2 – Questions about activities and interests in specific countries

**Interviews**

- Highest interest: USA, China, Germany
- Lowest interest: South Korea, Japan, India
- Activities that strengthen internationalization:
  - Collaboration partner contacts/exchange programs
  - Matchmaking projects
- Biggest challenges for internationalization:
  - Funding
  - Physically gathering
  - Branding
  - Prioritization of current markets

**Surveys (weighted responses)**

- Highest interest: USA, Germany, France, Scandinavia and the UK
- Lowest interest: South Korea, Japan, India
- 43 out of 53 work with international projects – primarily within startup and networking support
  - Mainly towards USA, EU (including UK) and Scandinavia
- Activities that contribute to strengthening international work:
  - VINK
  - Ignite Sweden
  - Swedish Scaleups
  - Scandinavian Startup Week (Bizmarker)
How interested are you in the following countries?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1: Completely uninterested</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4: Very Interested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>15.09%</td>
<td>15.09%</td>
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<td>32.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>7.55%</td>
<td>24.53%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>28.3%</td>
<td>26.42%</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>15.09%</td>
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</table>
Which of these organizations (if any) do you currently cooperate with internationally?

- Business Sweden: 67.9%
- EEN: 30.2%
- Swedish Energy Agency: 26.4%
- EKN - Swedish Export Credit Agency: 11.3%
- RISE: 15.1%
- The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth: 34%
- Vinnova - Sweden's Innovation Agency: 22.6%
- None of the above: 18.9%
Part 3 – Stakeholder Mapping

Interviews

• Overall government agencies have a positive dialogue with SISP’s members

• The majority said their collaboration with government agencies had been beneficial and included value-creating activities for their members

• Members were divided over whether the current business models are effective and if these collaborations contribute to their success.

• Representation at the regional level is low

• On average, the members rated their relationship with Vinnova highest.

Surveys

• The surveys showed that members collaborated with all the relevant government authorities internationally, notably Business Sweden, EEN, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and Vinnova (Sweden’s Innovation Agency).

• The regions and municipalities were also mentioned

• The members showed interest in deepening their cooperation within internationalization with government agencies
Rate the following types of support in terms of interest level

1. Not interested
   - Help create the conditions for, or strengthen the existing work within, international talent attraction
     - 3.8%
     - 24.5%
     - 24.5%
     - 47.2%

2. Interested
   - External monitoring as a tool to keep up to date with relevant activities and news regarding selected markets
     - 3.8%
     - 20.8%
     - 34%
     - 41.5%

3. Peer reviews with international innovation hubs to develop new and improved business development processes
   - 18.9%
   - 26.4%
   - 54.7%
   - 100%
Part 4 – SISP’s Activities

During the interviews, members were asked to rank the following services, based on what they considered the most important ways for SISP to support their activities. In the survey, members were also asked which proposals sounded the most interesting. Some of the proposals included:

1. Support with international talent attraction strategies
2. Monitoring as a tool from SISP
3. Support in conducting peer reviews with international innovation hubs
Part 4 – SISP’s Activities

Interviews (14)

- Support to improve international talent attraction (proposal 1) was ranked the most important
- The second most important was monitoring as a tool from SISP (proposal 2)
- Support with peer reviews with international innovation hubs (proposal 3) was deemed the least important of the three options.

Surveys (53)

- Support from SISP regarding peer reviews with international innovation hubs (proposal 3) was seen as the most interesting
- The second most interesting was support to improve international talent attraction (proposal 1)
- Monitoring as a tool from SISP was considered the least interesting (proposal 2)
Part 5 – Members' connection to the region’s smart specialization strategy

• For context, answers from member interviews have been used. One key question was the incubators' connection to the region’s smart specialization strategy.

• Many of incubators & Science Parks are linked to the region’s smart specialization strategy.

• Members said they had a good dialogue with the regions regarding the strategy. They also saw themselves as helping to implement the strategy.

• From a broad perspective, the strategy addresses topics including industry, business, technology, environment, sustainability and health.

• The majority of the incubators & Science Parks don’t think that SISP needs to support them with regional dialogue.

• This situation analysis also consists of questionnaire responses from the incubators & Science Parks. However, the survey responses did not include any specific questions about the incubators & Science Parks' connection to the region’s smart specialization strategy.
Target Groups

Which actors should SISP collaborate with for their international activities?
Four target groups for SISP’s international work

Primary target groups

• Members – incubators and science parks
• Innovative companies

Secondary target groups

• Government agencies and relevant organizations
• International partners and other relevant organizations
Challenges

What overall challenges should this international strategy help to solve?
Problem analysis

• Today, there is no coordinated innovation support system for internationalization in Sweden.

• A cohesive branding of Sweden’s innovation excellence is needed to sell “Sverige AB.”

• Actors within the ecosystem need support and resources to continue working on this long-term.

• SISP needs a long-term and clear strategy on how internationalization will be implemented effectively. Together with its members, SISP needs to clarify its role and mission regarding internationalization.
Target Groups’ Needs

What needs do SISP's target groups have regarding internationalization?
Advocacy

• *The members* need a common vision for lobbying and strategic advocacy - primarily at a national level and secondly at the EU level - in order to drive and influence both the direction and type of investment into internationalization.
Learnings, education, development

- The members need to exchange best practices and systematically learn from each other as well as other international actors. A structured network, with coordination and support from SISP is also requested by the members, as is financial support to develop members’ own international activities.
External analysis

- *The members* need analysis from an external actor in order to understand important trends, events and gather knowledge that can strengthen their internationalization strategies.
Coordinated analysis and a strategic foundation

- *Government agencies and other relevant actors* need a coordinated analysis of how members are affected by their decisions and activities.
Matchmaking for commercial pilots

• *Innovative companies* need to reach international customers and partners to develop their businesses. Many companies today lack these types of networks.
Matchmaking for strategic collaboration

- *Members* need to find contacts and build relationships within international innovation systems. They are looking for ways to meet global companies and other partners. They also seek support to progress and maintain these international relations over time.
Attracting individual talent and companies to Sweden

- *The members* need a well-defined, long-term strategy to attract individual and companies to the Swedish innovation ecosystem within the framework of talent attraction. This mission should include funding that can be prioritized by the members.
National coordination and resource facilitation

• **Members** need to expand their dialogue with Business Sweden, Ignite Sweden and others to better define assignments, roles, division of responsibilities and conditions within the innovation system. They also need support in creating an inventory of ongoing development projects, a validation model for the value of projects, and support the scaling up of successful projects nationally.

• **Innovative companies** require concrete investment and support for internationalization, but today the process is unclear and there are many offers given simultaneously from several actors. Additionally, companies also need funding in the form of international checks.

• **Government authorities, and other relevant actors** within the innovation ecosystem, need consistent structure, coordination (including offers), and better definition of roles, organizations and commitments for internationalization work. They also require expertise on how Sweden can work with startups, scaleups and the Swedish innovation ecosystem.

• **International partners** who prioritize collaborations with Sweden at an operational and strategic level need to be connected with (inspiration, records, collaborations) the Swedish innovation system, just as when Sweden prioritizes other countries, it needs to be connected to their innovation ecosystems.
SISP's overall internationalization goals

What should SISP have achieved through their internationalization strategy by 2024?
SISP’s vision for internationalization

SISP's vision for internationalization is to contribute operationally to a world-class, strong and coordinated Swedish innovation system.
**Key focus for activities**

- Adovacy
- Learnings, education, development
- External analysis
- Coordinated analysis & strategic foundation
- Matchmaking (commercial pilots & strategic collaborations)
- Talent Attraction (individual & commercial)
- National coordination & resource facilitation

**Goals within key focus**

- **SISP will influence the direction of strategic, international innovation initiatives and be a natural partner for target groups to consult with.**
- **SISP will contribute to a world-class Swedish innovation ecosystem by making the best international methods, processes and business/innovation development tools available to its members and companies.**
- **SISP will be a logical option to assist target groups with information about international innovative collaborations.**
- **Members and government agencies will see SISP as an obvious choice to both conduct analysis and contribute analytically to the strategic direction.**
- **SISP and Ignite Sweden will help Swedish companies succeed in an international market through commercial business and connecting Swedish innovation hubs to international ones.**
- **SISP will coordinate members and government agencies for a strategic, long-term, value-creating talent attraction strategy at both an individual and commercial level.**
- **Government agencies see SISP as an obvious choice for intermediary within the innovation ecosystem to coordinate national and international efforts.**

**Overall goals**

- **SISP will coordinate national assignments and government funding for international projects in cooperation with its members and their companies, in order to become the intermediary between these groups for internationalization issues.**
- **SISP will act as national coordinator for various international initiatives (including those in collaboration with the innovation ecosystem), while a large part of the implementation is done by the members themselves.**
- **SISP has a strategically smart, coordinated and needs-driven approach to internationalization with a focus on state and public actors, members, companies and international stakeholders.**
SISP's vision and goals for internationalization – 2024

*SISP's vision is that their international work contributes to a world-class, strong and coordinated Swedish innovation ecosystem.*

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- SISP has a strategically smart, coordinated and needs-driven approach to international work with a focus on state and public actors, members, companies and international stakeholders.
Goals within key focus areas

Which performance targets should SISP hit before 2024?
SISP’s goals within specific focus areas

**Advocacy**
- SISP will influence the direction of strategic, international innovation initiatives and be a natural partner for target groups to consult with.

**Learnings, education and development**
- SISP will contribute to a world-class Swedish innovation ecosystem by making the best international methods, processes and business/innovation development tools available to its members and companies.

**External analysis**
- SISP will be a logical option to assist target groups with information about international innovative collaborations.

**Coordinated analysis and a strategic foundation**
- Members and government agencies will see SISP as an obvious choice to both conduct analysis and contribute analytically to the strategic direction.

**Matchmaking (commercial pilots & strategic collaborations)**
- SISP and Ignite Sweden will help Swedish companies succeed in an international market through commercial business and connecting Swedish innovation hubs to international ones.

**Talent Attraction (individual & commercial)**
- SISP will coordinate members and government agencies for a strategic, long-term, value-creating talent attraction strategy at both an individual and commercial level.

**National coordination & resource facilitation**
- Government agencies see SISP as an obvious choice for intermediary within the innovation ecosystem to coordinate national and international efforts.
Activities

What does SISP need to do to meet members’ needs, and achieve positive results?
Advocacy

- Conduct advocacy work on behalf of the members at strategically important levels
- Contribute to policy development for the internationalization of startups, scaleups and established companies on behalf of the members
- Communicate best practice examples of innovation leaders, innovation environments and interesting companies’ successes and challenges

“I would like to see SISP take on the role of informing the previously mentioned organizations, while members throughout the country then implement these activities or carry out joint projects.”
Learnings, education & development

- Provide a platform for members to conduct international peer reviews & exchange experiences
- Share international business development and internationalization methods with members
- Discuss with IASP how SISP and its members can create a more active and valuable collaboration with them.
- Examine the peer-review concept and make SISP’s methods available on IASP

"think it is important that SISP is active in IASP and understands the international context to be able to establish contacts between Swedish and international innovation hubs. Additionally, there should be more facilitated learning between us with much of the operational work done within these innovation hubs.”
External analysis

- Provide target groups with information about international innovation collaborations
- Utilize members' analysis from their international collaborations and disseminate their knowledge to other members
- Discover and share new successful methods and tools to help SISP members engage internationally

"We want to see SISP as a supporter and resource for its members. For example, monitoring the international context, identifying interesting project opportunities and new partners."

"There needs to be cohesion between various innovation networks. Although they should maybe be run by individual members and have SISP as an umbrella organization."
Coordinated analysis and a strategic foundation

Using analysis conducted by SISP’s members, provide feedback on how operational employees within innovation are affected by various government agencies’ decisions and work, and advise how SISP’s members can improve conditions for their companies to grow internationally.

"We as a system need to understand the barriers our companies face when working towards internationalization and help them deal with them. That knowledge is gained only by aggregating data and analyzing patterns. When we understand what challenges exist, it becomes easier for us as incubators to help companies identify and overcome them. The challenge for us is to not overload the companies, but instead help them break down these challenges into manageable parts."
**Matchmaking – Commercial Pilots**

- Conduct international matchmaking between corporates and startups for commercial pilots
- Carry out discovery tours with international corporates, the Swedish innovation system and Swedish startups / scaleups.
- Develop & export Ignite Sweden's methodology and process internationally

"Networking opportunities similar to those offered by Ignite but with an international focus would be interesting."
Matchmaking – Strategic Collaboration

- Verify stakeholders within innovation hubs that want to participate in knowledge-sharing & learning programs internationally
- Strategic collaborations with counterpart SISP organizations in other priority countries
- Initiate strategic MoUs with selected countries with concrete/operational initiatives that strengthen Sweden’s position as a leading innovative country
- Establish relations with other Nordic actors for collective projects
- Help international stakeholders discover the Swedish innovation ecosystem, regardless of whether it is intermediaries or companies

- Guide members to connect with the right international actors based on their needs, and concrete initiatives that can lead to commercial collaborations and help scale companies internationally
- Actively work to connect the innovation ecosystem internationally (projects / initiatives / delegations, etc.)
- Inform SISP's incubators and science parks, and their companies, which organization / government authority they should work with in a specific country
Talent Attraction – Individual Level

- Assist members to identify a business model for talent attraction and establishment so they can offer this as an incentive for talent to join their ecosystems.
- Coordinate national member-run talent attraction programs.
- Coordinate points of contact for talent looking for jobs within SISP’s members’ companies.

"We planned to work with external monitoring within Sweden ICT, but this is very interesting. Peer Reviews are also valuable and should be coordinated with IASP, and this is already underway. It is vital to have good matchmaking there. The soft-landing concept for innovation hubs is also interesting "We need to think of skills as more mobile, for example, talent can come here and strengthen the innovation hubs."
Talent Attraction – Organizational level

- Establish SISP’s Incubators and Science parks as the obvious choice for establishing international companies in Sweden.
- Establish SISP’s Incubators and Science parks as obvious places to work with investment promotion.

"We planned to work with external monitoring within Sweden ICT, but this is very interesting. Peer Reviews are also valuable and should be coordinated with IASP, and this is already underway. It is vital to have good matchmaking there. The soft-landing concept for innovation hubs is also interesting "We need to think of skills as more mobile, for example, talent can come here and strengthen the innovation hubs."
National Coordination & Resource Facilitation

- Coordinate and project manage investments together with the innovation ecosystem
- Foster ongoing dialogues with actors in the system to find better synchronization and boundaries
- Coordinate information and communicate to members
- Guide the members to meet the right international player based on their needs
- Provide funding opportunities and points of contact to members
- Systematically announce new internationalization checks and coordinate their distribution through SISP’s innovation hubs

"I think coordination at the national level would be valuable, especially if it goes with the existing strategies at the governmental level. Here, SISP should play a role, with the help of the existing infrastructure within science parks around the country. Perhaps SISP can formulate a national mission and find suitable local contractors.”
SWEDISH INCUBATORS & SCIENCE PARKS