

Improving Learning Capabilities: A Case Study of an *Independent Research Unit* in Interaction with the Local Community

Casten von Otter

The focus of this study is on interaction between local public administration, businesses and universities in a Triple Helix. The paper presents experiences from an independent research organization set up to further regional development, where doctoral students worked with a local community. The paper also draws on experience from other similar independent research units in Sweden. It is suggested that a major reason for the lack of rapport between the parties is that researchers and entrepreneurs tend to stress different parts of the research process. While orthodox science emphasizes verification, entrepreneurs are more interested in theoretically informed creativity and innovation, especially when they gain from saving time. They see uncertainty and risk management as unavoidable components of doing business, and often mistrust scientific proofs and abstract modelling.

Key words: regional development, Triple Helix, interactive research, innovation systems, organization of PhD studies, Mode 2

Background

The Independent Research Unit (IRU) is a new arrangement for regional interactive research, to support the capitalisation of knowledge for the benefit of the community. Many PhD students appreciate a more interactive and so-