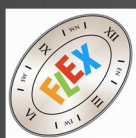


Flexible workspace solutions – Rethinking work, space and time – Telework locations, branch office, business hotel, hub, near office – Service concept: some recommendations – Ambiance matters – Advanced information is essential – No Razzmatazz of the big cities – Good results and well-being at work – Preparation – Execution – After the flexwork period – Interviewees' opinions – What is flexible working best suited for? – How often and for how long at a time? – Flexibel arbete: Nya tankar för arbetsgivare och arbetstagare – Många har blivit intresserade – Flexibla arbetssätt resulterar i goda resultat och god arbetshälsa – Förberedelse – Genomförande – Efter Flex-veckan – Vad de intervjuande har sagt – Vad lämpar sig bäst för? – Hur ofta och hur länge per gång? – Paindlikud töökohalahendused – Töö, koha ja aja ümberhindamine – Kaugtöökoht, harukontor, ettevõtتهotell, hub, lähibüroo – Teenusekontseptsioon: mõned soovitused – Meeleolu on oluline –



## FLEXIBLE WORKING CULTURE

### RETHINKING OF WORK, PLACE, TIME AND LIFE

Eelinfo on oluline – Praegu ei otsita suurlinna melu ega luksushotelli – Paindliku toga tulemused ja heaolu tool – Ettevalmistus – Teostus – Peale paindlikku tööperioodi – Arvamused intervjuudes paindliku töövormi kohta – Milleks paindlik töövorm sobib? – Kui sageli ja kui kaua korraka? – Joustavia työtilaratkaisuja – Työn, paikan ja ajan uudelleen ajattelua – Etätyötila, sivutoimipiste, yrityshotelli, hub, lähitoimisto – Palvelukonsepti: Muutamia suosituksia – Tunnelma on tärkeä – Etukäteistieto on oleellista – Nyt ei haeta suurkaupungin humua eikä loistohotellia – Joustotyöllä tuloksia ja hyvinvointia – Valmistautuminen –Toteutus – Joustotyöjakson jälkeen – Haastateltujen mielipiteitä – Mihin joustotyö sopii – Kuinka usein ja miten kauan kerrallaan – Flexible workspace solutions – Rethinking work, space and time – Telework locations, branch office, business hotel, hub, near office – Service concept: some recommendations – Ambiance matters – Advanced



## THE FINAL REPORT OF THE FLEX– FLEXIBLE WORKING CULTURE

INTERREG IV A PROGRAMME 2007-2013, ARCHIPELAGO AND ISLANDS SUB-PROGRAMME (A15), 1.1.2010 – 30.4.2012

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[www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi)

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## 1. A SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT BACKGROUD

### 1.1 BEHIND THE FLEX

*FLEX – Flexible working culture* -project was based on the experiences of *Distansarbetaren* -project (Interreg IIIA Archipelago, in 2007). It operated in the Åland, South-West Finland, and Western Uusimaa archipelago regions. Aim was to collect basic data on the present status and desired development in teleworking, its obstacles, possibilities, and practices (see results: [www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi)).

One small part of the *Distansarbetaren* was a simple teleworking experiment with two companies at the end of the duration. Very encouraging experiences of the trials proved that there really was something new in the field of tele-/remote working: a good potential for local development, new ways to think how to work, and different ways to examine the impacts of flexible working to employer, employee, municipality and own society. These discoveries, open questions and new untested possibilities were in the centre of the FLEX.

The development of attractive island communities requires competitiveness and innovation. It also requires the development and recognition of island communities and the archipelago as a whole, in regional, economical, and political terms. Because of the geographic heterogeneity of the islands as well as the regional inequality also within the Central Baltic archipelago, flexible work arrangements offered cross-border possibilities to shrink the distances and improving regional dynamics by flexible work arrangements.

Well and healthy people are needed in a well functioning society, and that's why testing and promoting work condition (incl. wellbeing, health, motivation of employee and work society) is significant. In the FLEX teleworking experiments ("flexperiments") were a basis for the trend to promote and test a new model of working, to create new local service concepts, built new interaction and networks, and to aim to get flexible working centers operating – even center network operating around Central Baltic archipelago in the wildest dreams.

Flexible work enables many ways of maintaining one's work capacity and promoting the wellbeing of one's work community without any sacrifice to the efficiency of one's work. Flexible work arrangements may give the employee the solitude that s/he has been longing for. It may also strengthen the work community or give rise to entirely new work communities. Flexible work arrangements provide the opportunity to get familiar with a new work environment, create a new kind of interaction, and promote the interaction of work, activity, corporate, and housing cultures.

Flexible work arrangements have to be supported by e.g. good and concrete examples. There is still a need for a courageous and wild piloting! Employers and employees need to be engaged in teleworking issues; occupational health care, mobile services, broadband issues, e-learning potential and e-services need to be developed; the challenges of data security have to be addressed, the impact on regional economy assessed. There is a demand for information, branding, and overall rethinking of the entity composed of work, place, time, and life in general.

## 1.2 WHY FLEXIBLE WORKING?

World has changed, working culture has changed and also ways of working has changed more flexible. Telework (or remote work, telecommute, distance work, remote work, outwork, e-work or smart work...) is still and also there, but just as a part of the wholeness. In some circumstances remote work might be already a tired cliché for many, because of it's long and quite fruitless development history. *That's why there is a place and a need to re-think work, place, time and life again more flexibly.*

Telework has been recorded in different documents from one decade to another as an eternal potential; it has been developed and revived many times, but the progress has been, and still is slow. The share of the ones doing the telecommuting officially in FLEX-target area has been around 10 per cent. But in practice, and occasional e-workers including, the number is certainly bigger. In any case, and at least in Finland, the flexible and/or remote working is always in the worker's wish list when it is asked. *That's why the belief in possibilities of flexibility also stays.*

Possibilities really exist if only employer and the work community permit it and employee wants it. Or more generally: if (even some) possibilities were given, offered and/or realized. Significant issue also is how the flexibilities of the work are generally adapted. Of course, depending on the duty all the work cannot be done outside of the ordinary work place, and everybody do not want to work elsewhere even it would be possible. Similarly home is still a home, or a cottage is only for a vacation. *That's why all alternative location solutions might come in.*

Preconditions for adding flexible work culture are (again) better than ever earlier. The mobility of work has increased, as well as information technology and information security. In other words: advanced new technology increases the possibilities of the livelihood and encourages working flexibly. A desire to try different approaches and to look at the result of the work instead of time and place can also be perceived. Furthermore the youngsters of the information society are naturally close to the world of flexible solutions. *That's why a vision of a near, flex, e- or information worker of the archipelago and/or countryside is quite justifiable optimism.*

So when thinking about flexible working solutions as an attraction for the rural living, or as a promotor of occupational well-being, it is important to focus

- on mobile telecommuting,
- to all new openings in inspiring working arrangements, and
- to a period-natured way to work flexibly elsewhere outside of office when necessary

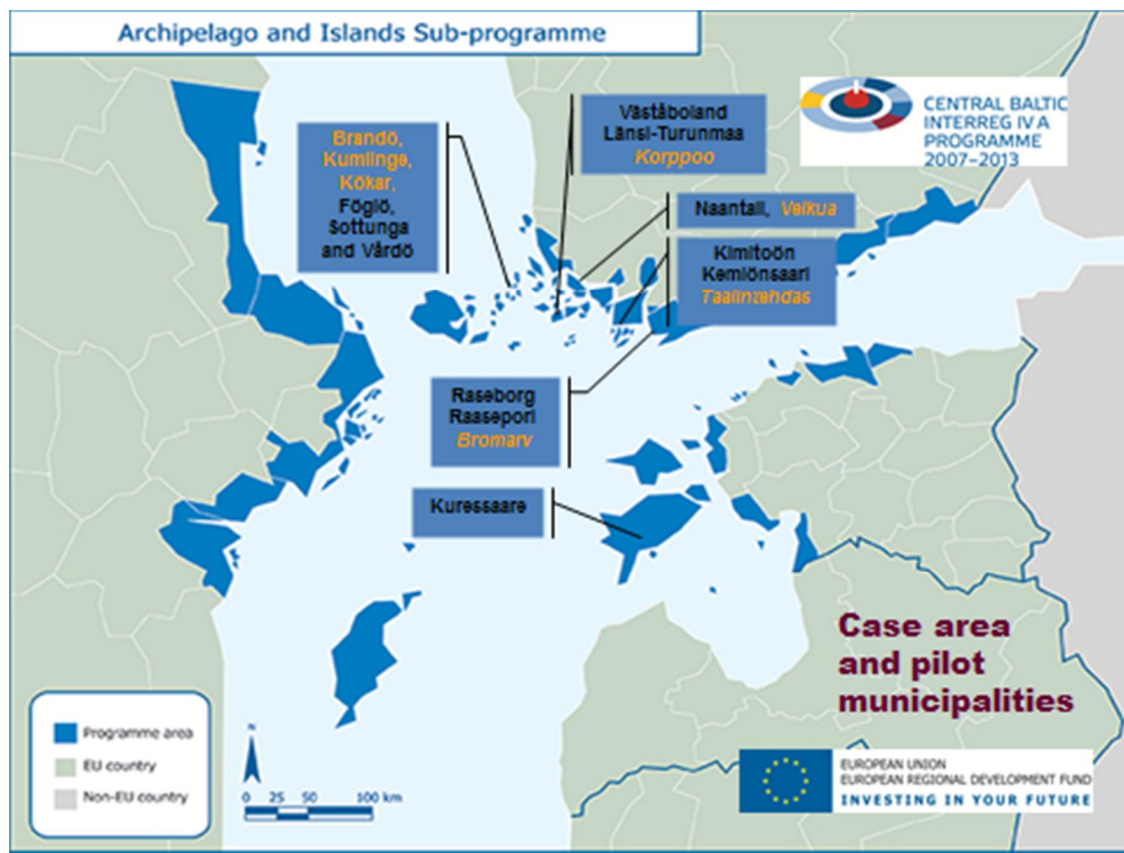
And to see that

- *THE ISSUE HERE IS THE AWARENESS of possibility to work flexibly when(ever) it is necessary*
- *NOT ONLY think about traditional home-based remote work*

*That's why flexible working.*



### 1.3 TARGET AREA



Target municipalities of the FLEX were Kuressaare/Saaremaa in Estonia, Pargas-Parainen (Länsi-Turunmaa until 2011), Naantali, and Kimitoön-Kemiönsaari in Finland, and all small archipelago municipalities in Åland: Brändö, Föglö, Kumlinge, Kökar, Sottunga and Vårdö.

Especially in archipelago and rural municipalities flexible work was seen, and still should be seen, as a real possibility and attraction to which investing is worthwhile. Locally every newcomer is important, and that is why in the archipelago area still remains a belief that together with flexible working, flexible work premise solutions and new service concept it is possible to induce new inhabitants, workers, entrepreneurs and tourists. It opens new working opportunities also for the local inhabitants and summer dwellers.

Changes in the municipality structure in Finland has had its effects on project work also. At the beginning of the FLEX-planning process (2007-) there were a group of small archipelago municipalities with a belief, needs and interest in that certain municipal viewpoint and scale. After the consolidation of municipalities in 2009 situation changed, and in the South-West Finland archipelago area all small island municipalities formulated a new bigger municipality units: Länsi -Turunmaa – Västaboland (Nauvo, Korppoo, Houtskar, Parainen; new Parainen-Pargas since 2012-), Kemiönsaari – Kimitoön (Kemiö, Västankfjärd, Dragsfjärd) and Naantali (Merimasku, Rymättylä, Naantali). Along this reform old municipality centers turned into local villages, and within this also development viewpoint changed more close to village level.

## 2. THE OBJECTIVES, WORKPACKAGES AND THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE PROJECT AS SUCH

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES AND WORK PACKAGES

The FLEX had three main objectives:

1. Archipelago area is going to be a more attractive and dynamic environment by means of flexible work (*Municipal/local viewpoint*)
2. Verify the health, wellbeing and motivating benefits generated by new flexible work arrangements (*Occupational health viewpoint*)
3. Examining the effects of flexible work in regional development and promoting the effects of telework agreement by EU in national level (*Regional development viewpoint*)

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And, based on these three objectives, the FLEX had a management WP 1 + 3 Work Packages:

WP 1) Project management and coordination (*main responsible UTU*)

WP 2) Flexible working centre, work experiment and local development actions (*main responsible UTU, Företagsam, Novia, Kuressaare*)

WP 3) Flexible work training and measurement of the benefits of it (*main responsible FIOH, ÅA*)

WP 4) Regional policy, economy and telework agreement by EU (*main responsible Nordregio*)

A list of all objectives and work packages implemented during the project's life-span will be introduced in next chapters (with a detailed analysis of the results and targets achieved). Objectives and Work Packages are combined, sorted and headed by using more describing and general themes *Municipal/local viewpoint*, *Occupational health viewpoint* and *Regional development viewpoint*. Work Package 1, Project management and coordination, was not separately opened here in the report.



## 2.2 MUNICIPAL/LOCAL VIEWPOINT

*OBJECTIVE 1: ARCHIPELAGO AREA IS GOING TO BE A MORE ATTRACTIVE AND DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT BY MEANS OF FLEXIBLE WORK - Municipal/local viewpoint*

*WORK PACKAGE 2: FLEXIBLE WORKING CENTRE, WORK EXPERIMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS*

*Main responsible UTU, Novia, Företagsam Skärgård & Kuressaare College.*

### 2.2.1 AIM(S) & ACTION

The purpose of the project was to tempt more recreational residents, workers, employees, employers, entrepreneurs or companies to the islands and the archipelago by means of flexible work, and by this way to create new innovativeness and interaction in local community.

Another purpose was to find out how flexible work arrangements increase the use of local services, encourage to develop a new service concepts, encourage to move permanently to the said municipality, promote corporate growth, and counteract the imbalance in employment. Aim was to find suitable locations near the villages, where to conduct the FLEXperiments, where accommodation and working places as well as access to food and other services was available also during off-season.

In action, by identifying suitable premises, marketing, looking for employees, entrepreneurs, companies/ organisations/ employers to try out flexible working, developing of local service concept. Also motivations and opportunities for flexible working was studied at very first time in Saare County, Estonia.

### 2.2.2 RESULTS

DURING THE PROJECT Flex-locations were located in

- Telehuset, Development center of the municipality, Village of Korpo-Korppoo (City of Pargas-Parainen)
- Sinervo munipal service point, Village of Velkua (City of Naantali)
- DIT-center, Village of Dalsbruk-Taalintehdas (Municipality of Kimitoön-Kemiönsaari)
- Villa Ida, Village of Bromarf (City of Raseborg-Raasepori)
- Aadu tourism farm, Village of Suure Rootsi (Municipality of Pihlta, Saarenmaa)
- Municipalities of Åland: Brändö, Föglö, Kumlinge, Kökar, Sottunga and Vårdö. It was found that the amount of possible locations were quite limited, as there was a need of close proximity between the accommodation, office and necessary services as availability for lunch. However, possible locations were found in all of the Åland Island archipelago municipalities, although not all locations had dedicated office-spaces readily available year-round.

*Telehuset, Korpo-Korppoo/City of Parainen*

Old telehouse is situated on a cliff top, close to the centre of Korpo village with good basic services nearby. Former telecommunications building now functions as the Development center of the city.



FLEX project coffered 2 furnished offices for 4 people. The package included an Internet connection, a set of keys, a mail box, and the right to use a copy machine and shared kitchen facilities. Meeting rooms with videoconferencing equipment were also available. Working in Telehuset also meant having the luxury of a beautiful sea view.

#### *Sinervo, Velkua/City of Naantali*

"Sinervo", as the building is called, is situated onshore, in the middle of the village Teersalo, surrounded by good services. Until 2009, the building functioned as the town hall of Velkua municipality. Now Sinervo functions as the common service point of the city of Naantali and as a project work space.

An old council hall had been reserved for the use of the FLEX project. There was plenty of room for a work desk as well as for a meeting table. The package included an Internet connection, a set of keys, a mail box and the possibility to use a copy machine.

#### *DitCenter, Dalsbruk – Taalintehdas/Municipality of Kemiönsaari*

DitCenter is situated on a clifftop, in the centre of Dalsbruk and surrounded by good basic services. DIT provided vacant work spaces, and already companies and organizations have their offices in this renovated office hotel, which originally served as an apartment building.

There were 2 furnished offices available for 4 people working on the FLEX project. The package included an Internet connection, a set of keys, and the possibility to use the copy and fax machines, and shared kitchen facilities. Meeting rooms (and videoconferencing equipment) were also available for use. Working in DitCenter also means having the luxury of a beautiful sea view.

#### *Villa Ida, Bromarv/City of Raseborg*

The activity house Villa Vera offers a number of work spaces. Villa Vera is situated in the centre of the scenic Bromarv and it has a gym, which is in daily use, but this should not affect working in Villa Vera in any way.

There were 2 offices available for the FLEX project: the other one was slightly bigger than the other. The building does not have an Internet connection or a copy machine. Workers were provided with their own set of keys.

#### *Aadu tourism farm, Village of Suure Rootsi/ Municipality of Pihlta*

The Aadu Tourist Farm provides guests an opportunity to relive the romanticism of courting couples from olden times. Farm is a peaceful, isolated, and unique place that allows you to rest up from noisy city life, to awake in the morning to birds singing, and to enjoy a pleasant Saaremaa summer with one's friends.

#### *Åland: Brändö, Föglö, Kumlinge, Kökar, Sottunga and Vårdö*

The services necessary for welcoming visitors to the archipelago, as FLEXworkers, are availability of restaurant that serve lunch, availability to a grocery store and leisure time activities. These are mostly readily available during the summer-time, but can sometimes be quite difficult to find during off-season and may require special arrangements.

The communication pre-requisites for telework, fulfilling the requirements for most people exist almost everywhere in the Åland Islands archipelago as the Internet connections are very well developed as availability of broadband as well as 3G-connection.

SERVICE PRODUCERS. Local service producers involved in flexperiment weeks were:

- *Korppoo*: Development center of the municipality as a work location, Hotel Nestor, Faffas b&b, The Archipelago Centre Korpoström, Hjalmar's (restaurant), Buffalo (restaurant), Seaside + bakery and local grocery shop
- *Velkua*: Sinervo -building as a work location (owned by the municipality), Meriharakka b&b, Kummeli sheltered home, Velkua game (by the supporters' association of the local school) + local grocery shop and restaurant(s)
- *Taalintehdas*: DIT-center as a work and a accommodation location, Kasnäs Spa, Strandhotellet, Seaport restaurant + local grocery shops, market place etc.
- *Bromarf*: Villa Ida b&b as a work and a accommodation location, local fisher- and a boatman Karl-Mikael Lindqvist + local grocery shop, restaurant
- *Kumlinge, Sottunga, Kökar, Vårdö*
- *Pihlta*: Aadu tourist farm as a work and a accommodation location

FLEXPERIMENTERS:

- 54 contacts = interested companies/organisations
- Mostly micro-size enterprises and SMC's
- 52 flexperimenters from 25 firms/ organisations visited in archipelago
- 2010: 28 persons from 15 org./firms
  - *Korppoo*: Viipurilainen bakery (week 21), SPYM advertising agency (week 21), Sunda Systems Oy (week 35), Antturi Design Oy (week 36)
  - *Velkua*: Graphic design Tuulamaria (week 33), Textile design Väänänen and an architect (week 36), DRG Medical Systems Oy (week 38)
  - *Taalintehdas*: Sanakunta/ Otava Media (week 21), Caressa Coaching Ky (week 34), Suomen Sinike Oy (management consulting, week 34), Service Park Provider (week 38)
  - *Bromarf*: Cake decoration Holopainen (week 37), Valonokia Oy (neon signs etc, week 37)
  - *Kökar*: TS Sana & Taide + Mr Illustrator (word&art, week 36)
  - *Kumlinge*: Agenda 21 agency (week 42), Fredsinstitut (week 42)
- 2011: 29 persons from 11 org./firms
  - *Korpo*: Roscon (personal coaching, week 23), Heijaste (personal coaching, week 23),
  - *Velkua*: Vesterra Ltd (spatial planning etc, week 23), Modifit (fitness, week 26)
  - *Dalsbruk*: Researchers and subeditor from the University of Lappeenranta, from the National Institute of Health and Welfare, and from the Village Action Association of Finland and (week 41)
  - *Bromarf*: Suomen Historiapelit (history games, week 36)
  - *Vårdö*: SiltaExpert Oy (bridge experts, week 36), Augur Kalastuspalvelut (fish tourism, week 45),
  - *Sottunga*?: Kainuun maakuntakuntayhtymä (health, social and welfare services, week 35)
  - *Saaremaa*: Speedway Oy (week 31)

- Line of business: bakery, media, social and health, wellbeing, medical, graphic, land-use planning, fitness, coaching, translating, publishing, lightning, advertising, researching, architecture
- From Lahti, Tampere, Jyväskylä, Nokia, Valkeakoski, Turku, Helsinki, Espoo, Kerava, Kainuu, Järvenpää, Tuusula, Lohja, Pornainen, Kerava, Rovaniemi, Joensuu, Suomensjärvi, Mariehamn (Ål), Laulasmaa (Est)
- Got info from the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (infoletter, web), newspapers, media, facebook, personal networks, grapevine

AFTER THE PROJECT available/possible Flex-locations in use are located:

- Munipal service point Sinervo, Village of Velkua (City of Naantali)
- DIT-center, Village of Dalsbruk-Taalintehdas (Municipality of Kimitoön-Kemiönsaari)
- Villa Ida, Village of Bromarf (City of Raseborg-Raasepori)
- Meriharakka b&b, Village of Velkua (City of Naantali)
- Folk high school in Houtskar, Village of Näsby, City of Pargas-Parainen
- The Archipelago Research Institute, Island of Seili, City of Pargas-Parainen
- Åland???
- Saaremaa???

11

## MOTIVATIONS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING IN SAAREMAA

*"Motivation and opportunities for Flexible work: A study among Saare County Estonia second homeowners"* report presents the results of the survey made in 2011. It is done by the students of the Kuressaare College of Tallinn University of Technology. The report is available from [www.ttykk.edu.ee/TTYKK\\_projektid.php](http://www.ttykk.edu.ee/TTYKK_projektid.php) and [www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi).

Purpose of the research was to examine Saare County second homeowners' motivations and opportunities for flexible work County has to offer. Survey questions were focused on following aspects:

- second homeowners' homeownership history and visitation profile
- reasons to have a second home in Saaremaa
- meaning of place
- valued attributes of local environment
- willingness to and current participation in local municipality activities
- importance ratings and satisfaction with attractions, activities, services
- current and participated involvement in flexible work interest in telecentres and its services
- most and least desired local development and demographics of second homeowners

Shortly about the results focusing on flexible working viewpoint, and especially on the highlights of the research question *"What is second homeowners' interest in flexible work opportunities?"*:

- Opportunities for flexible work are present in current jobs of second homeowners in about 50% of cases, but not all of them are using those opportunities actively
- Main reasons to be involved in the flexible work are stressed around flexibility and saving time money. Freedom of choice, personal comfort and better work conditions are listed as reasons as well. Some jobs require certain amount of flexibility, especially private entrepreneurship. Comments about flexible work from second homeowners' involved in flexible work are positive.

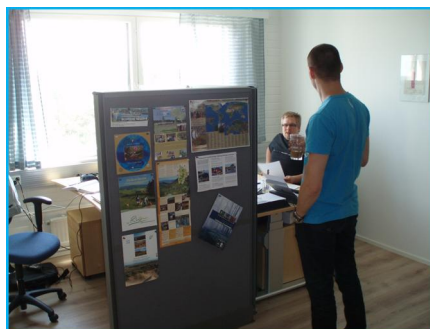
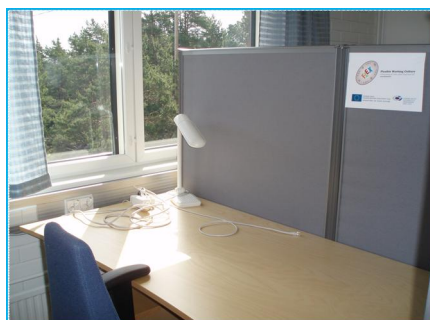
- Different forms of distant or flexible work are mainly used during vacation times and weekends. Distant work is mostly done from home, including second home. However, almost half of the respondents are not especially keen to use their second homes for flexible work in the future.
- Majority of second homeowners are not interested or unclear about the desire to work in telecentres, if those would be available near their second homes. Yet, there is high interest in fast and reliable internet services provided by telecentres, and willingness to pay for those services is relatively high.

Flexible work opportunities do interest second homeowners, and many of them are already involved in various forms of flexible work. Their interest to work in local telecentres is not very high; but, they are interested and willing to pay for fast internet connections provided by those centres. Increased use of telecentres by second homeowners has a potential to increase local's interest in flexible work opportunities, as these centres could serve as places of communication.

#### COMPARING TO RESULTS OF "DISTANSARBETAREN" – INTERREG IIIA ARCHIPELAGO

As a comparison some results of the survey made in the earlier *Distansarbetaren* –project (Interreg IIIA Archipelago, in 2007). It operated in the Åland, South-West Finland, and Western Uusimaa archipelago regions. Survey of the second homeowner/summer dwellers was implemented by asking same kind of questions, like "*willingness to work remote in second home/summer cottage municipality*", or "*interest to have a broadband connection in second home/summer cottage*".

According to that survey (over 8000 enquiries, about 2500 answers) less than one fifth worked at distance at the time. However, there were interest also among those who were not yet tried remote working. Like in Saaremaa survey, most important premise to start working flexibly in archipelago was broadband connection. In any case, internet access was in the wish list despite of working opportunity. Even though connections and interest would exist, flexible/remote working requires also both changing in daily work routines and attitudes; especially employers' permission to this. Interest against tele/flex centres were small. Results of the surveys are available in FLEX's web pages.



## 2.3 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH VIEWPOINT

### *OBJECTIVE 2: VERIFY THE HEALTH, WELLBEING AND MOTIVATING BENEFITS GENERATED BY NEW FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS*

#### *WORK PACKAGE 3) FLEXIBLE WORK TRAINING AND MEASUREMENTS OF THE BENEFITS OF IT*

*Main responsible FIOH and ÅA*

##### **2.3.1 AIM(S) & ACTION**

**AIMS.** Flexible work training of management and work community and concrete try-out of flexible working as well as measurement of the benefits generated by new arrangements. In practise: The training of management and personnel turned to marketing and dissemination of the information of consequences. The benefits of flexible work arrangements were measured in a study by evaluating the changes of well-being at work and the fulfillment of the expectations of the participants.

**FILMED INTERVIEWS.** At a very early stage of the project it became clear that WP3 activities in the way they were meant to be carried out, would not work. When the intention was to train companies in the benefits and principles of flexible working, above all those companies that would send out there staff, it turned out that none of companies contacted would have either time for this or interest.

Clearly the flexperiments were experiments and the companies accepted this. At the same time the interest to concentrate on the different aspects of flexible working was nonexistent. The idea of preparing those that would stay at the office for the experiment soon turned out to be a mission impossible. The interest just wasn't there, and the WP3 therefore had to re-think the whole concept.

So, instead of explaining things, mainly what they would be, the project decided to do the sort of opposite, to prove what had happened, how the organizations had experienced the results, what the staff had experienced, what the long term effects would be, and what unexpected results were found. This well motivated change of interpreting the task was approved by the Central Baltic Programme

This turned out to be a winning concept, because in a world crammed with information a good concrete message always finds its target when presented with the target groups conditions. The WP3 now concentrated on filming interviews (YouTube –videos, see [www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi)) with those that had either experienced the Flex work arrangements but also the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) about the results. The latter were also used as a mean of marketing the possibility to try Flex work, but also for marketing the seminars during the project.

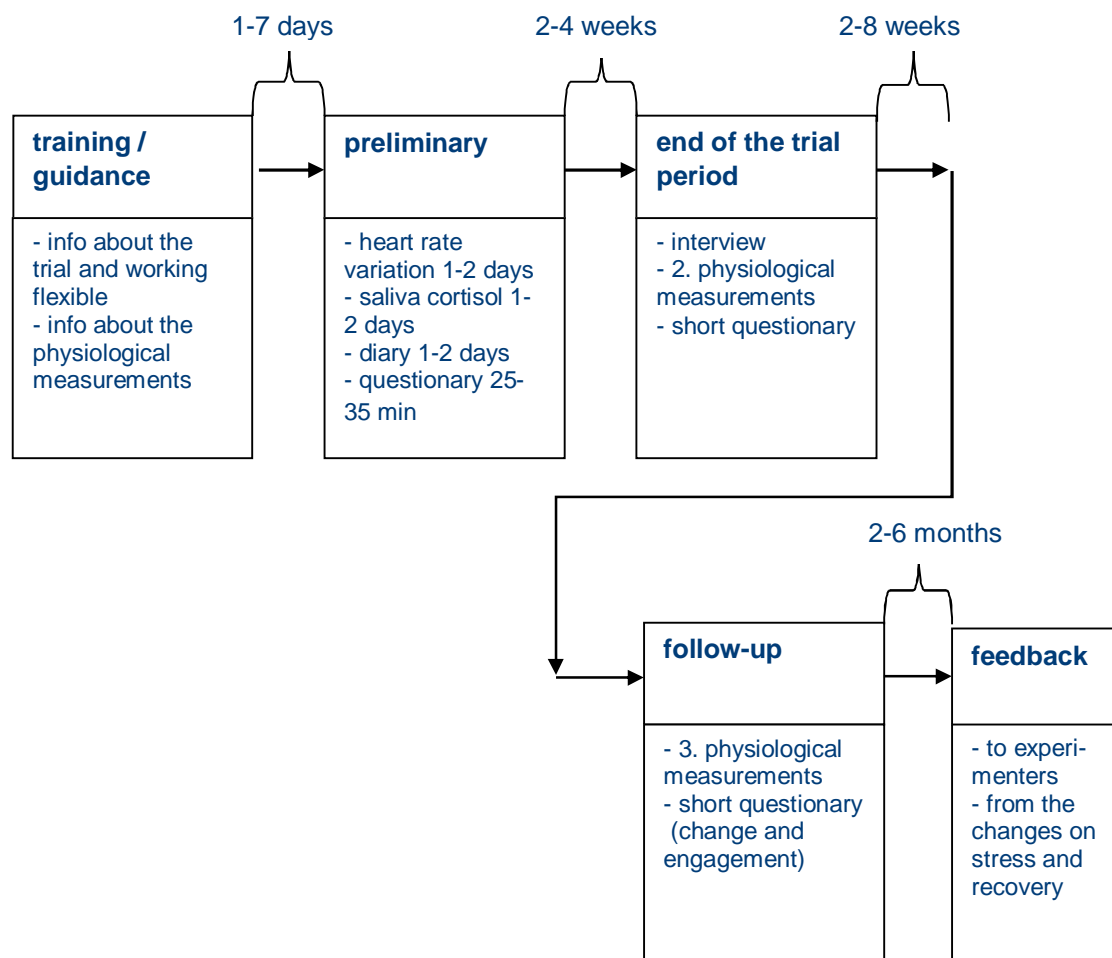
**EFFICIENCY AT WORK.** The purpose of the project was to examine to what extent flexible work arrangements promote work satisfaction and motivation, and increase efficiency at work. The project will contribute to employees and employers' recognition of flexible work as a natural and efficient way of carrying out productive work. In the study were asked the following questions:



- *What are the motivating factors in the flexible work arrangements?*
- *Why did people take part in the flexible working experiment?*
- *How did their work tasks performed during the flexible working week differ from those performed during normal working week?*
- *Does the wellbeing at work change while working in the flexible work settings?*
- *Are there any changes in the psychosocial work environment and the work load experiences when working in the flexible settings and after the trial period?*
- *Are there any changes in physiologically measured stress indicators when working in the flexible settings and after the trial period?*

The promotion of the flexible working arrangements to wellbeing at work was examined in a follow-up study. In the study the aim was to find out the motivation to take part in the experiment, and also what kind of consequences the flexible working experiment has on the wellbeing at work of the participants. For the purpose of that a follow-up system was planned and developed in order to evaluate changes in the well-being at work when working in ordinary and flexible working conditions.

The follow-up study consisted on three phases and multiple methods. The ways of collecting data have included a survey carried out before, during and after the trial period, physiological stress measurements implemented at those same points in time, and interviews carried out at the end of the trial period. The research data includes information about well-being and strain at work, and experiences of working in the flexible work settings compared with the ordinary working circumstances. The data is both qualitative and quantitative.



From 52 flexexperimenters 49 participants took part in the study as a whole:

- *There were 39 participants from whom the data is available in all three phases*
- *Some of the background factors of the participants are stated elsewhere in this document*
- *Half of them were women and the other half were men*
- *They have quite different circumstances regarding their career phases, as the youngest was 23 years old and the oldest 66 years old*
- *The mean age of the participants was 44 years*
- *Nearly four out of five was married or lived together with a partner*
- *And, only six of them have little children and one third of them have school aged children at home.*
- *The participants were highly educated (44% academic, 30% vocational high school)*
- *Two fifths came from micro enterprises (less than 10 employees) and one third was private entrepreneurs*

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The data was gathered up by survey, interviews and physiological measurements. The internet based survey included questions of psychosocial aspects of work, work engagement and work load. There were also questions of experienced efficiency at work. At the follow-up study changes on those aspects were enquired. The psychosocial variables concerning work, work place and work organization were related to the personal influence at work, the help from superiors, the flow of information, the conception of the aim of work, the spirit in the work group and the team work. The work engagement was investigated by Work & well-being survey (UWES, © Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003 and Työterveyslaitos/Hakanen 2009). Work load was enquired with a question concerning time shortage at work, amount of work, difficulty at work and stress experience (Elo, Leppänen and Jahkola 1999).

Total 40 participants were interviewed. The participants of the study were interviewed at the end of the trial period of working at archipelago. The interviews were carried out face to face or by phone and they were single or group interviews. The interviews were discussions with participants around themes like

- *Work flow and work tasks in ordinary settings,*
- *Demands of their work in general,*
- *Changes at work when moved to the flexible settings at archipelago,*
- *What were their expectations of the flexexperiment and*
- *What kinds of aims they focused on during that period,*
- *How their aims and expectations were met,*
- *How did they prepare themselves for the flexexperiment,*
- *How did they experience work efficiency at archipelago, free time at archipelago, surroundings and facilities they had at archipelago.*
- *Also themes of well-being at work and recovery were discussed.*

The changes in autonomous nervous system of the participants were monitored by two physiological indicators: the variations in heartbeat and changes in cortisol hormone secretion. The participants did themselves the data gathering in natural settings by the equipments which they got from researchers. They also got short training session by the specialist of FIOH. The samples were taken also before, at the end of and after the trial period. From the changes of cortisol hormone stress level was evaluated and the variations in heartbeat can be used to evaluate the capacity and the level of recovery. There was also short structured diary where wake up time, physical activities, sleeping time and so on were asked. The aim was to control the loading stage.

### 2.3.2 RESULTS

**OPEN MINDED.** The results of the study indicated that there are experienced benefits when working flexibly in this way at archipelago. Those benefits can be expressed through the fulfilment of expectations, changes on the work load and recovery. The things the participants were looking for from flexperiment were diverse but one connective aspect among the participants was open mindedness. They had quite general level plans of what to do at archipelago but they were also ready to accept new happenings not planned beforehand. However, the beforehand preparation for the trial varied from anticipatory thinking and planning to goal statement and concrete preparations. Many of the participants had experiences from telework and they were in some way working flexibly at their work already.

**FOCUS.** Some of them were looking for a possibility to focus on everyday working tasks, like those kinds of routine tasks that are not possible to do during ordinary workday or working week. Also they have been looking for an opportunity to take off from break ups and other disturbing factors to do tasks that need long lasting concentration. To break away from routines to make room for creativity, creation and development of ideas was the most general reason to change to flexible working at the archipelago. This is the reason for single participants as well those who took part to the flexperiment as a group.

**CO-OPERATION.** Those private enterprises/entrepreneurs worked in groups or in a couple were looking for time and an arena for interaction and co-operation with each other. They were willing to develop network co-operation or a new shared product with each other. There were also participants who liked to get free from social pressures and roles and to have time on recovery while doing necessary work tasks. Some of them had planned to use flexible work setting to recover after a long and heavy working period.

**CURIOSITY.** A couple of participants were just curious, for them the flexible working opportunity sounded an interesting trial or experiment. Also someone thought that flexible working at archipelago could be a good business idea and they were willing to acquaint themselves with the idea and possibly later will develop their own kind of flexible working product for their enterprise.

**CHANGES.** Nearly all of the participants thought they got the kind of working circumstances and working experience as they had looked for. They got peace, concentration, opportunity for creativity, time to do routines, time for intensive thinking, possibility for recreation and recovery, space, time and location for co-operation and network working, and chance to develop a new product. There were also changes on the psychosocial measures combined to work. Those changes on experiences were as follows.

**WELL-BEING.** Well-being at work was experienced remarkably better at archipelago trial section than before that. And to some extent there were changes in well-being experiences even after the trial section. However these effects are minor anyhow and need more detailed investigation in this data and also new studies at the field. Those changes in psychosocial well-being factors during the trial section show that the influence of flexible working arrangements were positive and clear. The participants experienced to be less forced to interrupt work tasks and less need to hurry to get work done at the archipelago than in the ordinary work setting before the trial section. There was also evidence that negative feelings in the work weren't experienced as often as in the ordinary work settings. At the trial section the need to yield in working times on the demand of work tasks or superiors were understandably less frequent than otherwise. So, it is obvious that the experience of work load would be lower also. Thereby the work was experienced less mentally exhausting during the trial and experienced stress in general was little lower during the trial than before it.

HOWEVER. However, the results of the physiological measurements are not as obvious and explicit as those results gathered up from the psychosocial survey measures concerning the work load and recovery from daily efforts. Although the results of the indicators of daily stress and recovery gave light backup for these psychosocial discoveries there weren't statistically significant differences between time periods in general. There were no changes on functioning of autonomous nervous system during sleep before, during and after measures over the data collected. That means that the recovery from daily stress did not differ during the follow-up. Also, the acute stress was at the same level before and during the trial in general.

However, among half of the participants the recovery from daily stress was somewhat or evidently better after the trial period. The preliminary conclusion is that for certain group of the participants the flexible working conditions were more recovering than for the others and that that kind of flexible working can be one way to prevent exhaustion and cut off the possible burn out process of an individual. More precise information and analysis of the circumstances and daily routines of the participants are needed to understand to whom and with what kinds of arrangements flexible working will function well.

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CONCLUSION. As a conclusion we can state that from the point of view of their work the participants got what they were after from the flexible work settings. That means in a general level peace, concentration, intensive and/or creative working sessions on their own or with their partner or group, recovery and recreation. The well-being at work was experienced to be better during the trial than before and after the trial when measured by psychosocial survey questions. So, in conscious level there were experiences that show the flexible work arrangements produced benefits. The flexperiment gave an opportunity for the participants to adapt their working circumstances in order to improve their well-being at work.

When observing the results of the physiological measures these conscious experiences connected to unconscious stress and recovery differently among the participants. Some flexperimenters then made more capital out of flexible arrangements than others. The most important question is in what way flexible working arrangements will be advantageous. In this project we got knowledge and some hints how to promote, plan and execute this kind of flexperiment from the point of view of well-being at work. Anyhow, we need more detailed analysis of this data to get understanding of those actions of subgroups during the trial and the background of their experiences. We also need new studies of this kind of flexible working because the data in this preliminary study is too restricted to give precise picture of those factors promoting well-being at work in flexible work at archipelago.



## 2.4 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VIEWPOINT

### OBJECTIVE 3: EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF FLEXIBLE WORK IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTING THE EFFECTS OF TELEWORK AGREEMENT BY EU INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

#### WORK PACKAGE 4) REGIONAL POLICY, ECONOMY AND TELEWORK AGREEMENT BY EU

*Main responsible Nordregio*

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#### 2.4.1 TELEWORK IN EU AND IN THE FLEX TARGET COUNTRIES

##### Incidence of telework

The European Framework Agreement on Telework, signed in July 2002, has been the first European agreement of the autonomous kind. These agreements had previously been described as 'voluntary' agreements. In both ways, this results in varied forms of implementation measures, and not on standard path (Eurofound 2010).

Article 2 of the European Framework Agreement on Telework (hereafter the EFA) defines that:

*Telework is a form of organising and/or performing work, using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/ relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis.*

In nine countries – Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom (UK) – the EU-level definition has been used to implement the agreement in the countries' respective guidelines or national-level collective agreements, while others created a more precise definition of their own.

According to the findings of the EWCS (European Working Conditions Survey) – which covers the 27 EU Member States (EU27) along with Norway – the highest percentage of employees involved in telework was observed in the Czech Republic, where 15.2% of employees were doing telework for a quarter of the time or more (see table). Bulgaria noted the lowest percentage, with only 1.6% of workers using telework (Eurofound 2012). The figures for teleworking 'at least a quarter of the time' vary significantly between the countries. However, the overall trend indicates that employment relationships involving 'part-time' telework are on average about four times more common than 'full-time' telework. This confirms other findings that telework is used to make employment relationships more flexible, while at the same time avoiding possible difficulties that arise when employees are constantly separated from the working environment at the employer's premises.



Incidence of telework in the EU27 and Norway, 2005 (%)		
	% involved in telework at least 'a quarter of the time' or more	% involved in telework 'almost all of the time'
Czech Republic (CZ)	15.2	9.0
Denmark (DK)	14.4	2.6
Belgium (BE)	13.0	2.2
Latvia (LV)	12.2	1.8
Netherlands (NL)	12.0	1.9
Estonia (EE)	11.8	1.4
Finland (FI)	10.6	1.6
Poland (PL)	10.3	2.3
Norway (NO)	9.7	1.3
Sweden (SE)	9.4	0.4
Austria (AT)	8.6	3.2
United Kingdom (UK)	8.1	2.5
Slovakia (SK)	7.2	3.4
Greece (EL)	7.2	1.4
Spain (ES)	6.9	1.5
Lithuania (LT)	6.8	0.7
Slovenia (SI)	6.7	1.9
Germany (DE)	6.7	1.2
France (FR)	5.7	1.6
Cyprus (CY)	5.7	0.0
Luxembourg (LU)	4.8	0.0
Ireland (IE)	4.2	0.5
Hungary (HU)	2.8	0.5
Romania (RO)	2.5	0.7
Italy (IT)	2.3	0.5
Portugal (PT)	1.8	0.4
Bulgaria (BG)	1.6	0.0
Malta (MT)	0.0	0.0
EU27	7.0	1.7

*Note: Results are based on responses to Q.11: 'Does your main paid job involve: telework from home with a PC? Source: EWCS, 2005*

#### Forms of implementation – 'hard law' and 'soft law' countries

One important differentiation with regard to the implementation of the European Framework Agreement on Telework is whether it creates 'hard' or 'soft' law in the respective Member States.

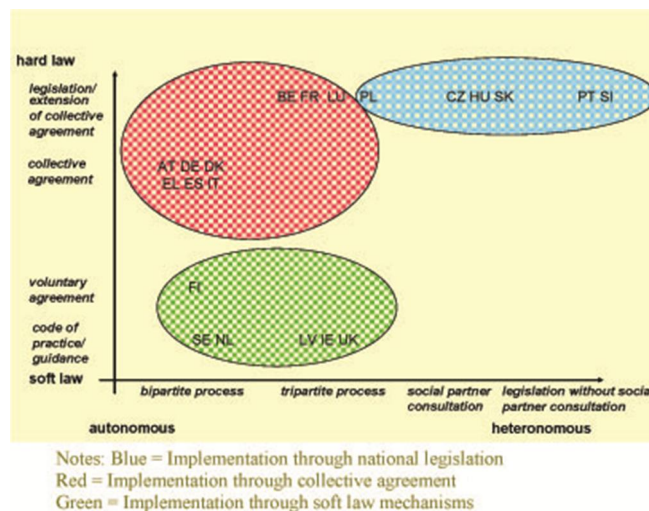
**SOFT LAW.** 'Soft law' is the term applied to EU measures such as guidelines, declarations and opinions. In contrast to 'hard law' instruments such as regulations, directives and decisions, soft law measures are not binding on those to whom they are addressed. However, soft law

can produce some legal effects and is sometimes presented as a more flexible instrument in achieving policy objectives.

The voluntary nature of telework implies that the employees and the employer may introduce telework only by mutual agreement. Accordingly, there is no right as such to telework and there is no obligation to do telework. The EFA also ensures that both the employee and the employer may discontinue telework at any time without prejudice to the employment relationship and working conditions. A negotiated agreement between the parties is necessary to arrange issues such as work organisation and the modalities for changing work from the employer's premises to telework and vice versa.

More about the equal treatment and collective rights, access to training, organization of work and working time, health and safety, privacy and data protection, views of governments and social partners, can be found and read from the European Framework Agreement (Eurofound

Figure 3: Forms of implementing telework agreement, by hard/soft law and autonomous/heteronomous scale (Eurofound 2010)



2010). However, shortly about the view of the governments and social partners (employer organisations, trade unions):

- *Governments* in the Member States are generally supportive of the development of telework. Telework is seen as a highly attractive option, since it offers certain improvements in the employee's work-life balance and personal development. A major benefit of telework can be its flexibility with regard to combining working life and childcare. While many correspondents mention that telework is seen as a way of enabling parents to take better care of their children, they also warn that telework should not be

a substitute for permanent childcare arrangements. Some governments also view telework as one option for limiting commuter traffic.

- *Employer organisations* generally expressed a positive view on telework, as it enables them to take full advantage of flexible work arrangements. One of the main difficulties that employers encounter in the use of telework relates to the costs involved in the initial set-up and management of telework. Nevertheless, in the longer term, according to the respondents, telework is viewed very positively, as it facilitates the flexible use of workers, irrespective of their place of residence. The use of telework is also associated with lower absenteeism.
- *The trade union* view on telework is generally one of cautious support. Trade unions acknowledge the creation of new opportunities for teleworkers in terms of their work-life balance and also see the potential to contribute to equal opportunities for men and women. However, not all of the trade unions' remarks concerning telework have been totally positive. For instance, it has been expressed concerns over isolation, working hours and schedules. Social isolation not only makes it harder to feel part of a

group, but is also associated with creating a career barrier since many teleworkers are 'out of sight and out of mind'.

In addition, teleworkers may experience further stress due to their work schedule. Since many employers do not establish a firm nine-to-five-hour programme, teleworkers have often encountered impossible deadlines and the tendency to become a 'workaholic'. This underlines the need for clearly defined benchmarks of productivity and desired production per unit of time. Many trade unions have also expressed concerns over the possibility that the separation of the workplace from the employer's premises may give rise to a tendency of offering freelance contracts rather than standard employment contracts.

As the 'autonomous route' of implementation gives actors in the Member States the choice of how to transpose the European Framework Agreement, a variety of instruments have been used. The most widespread way of implementing the EFA has been through collective agreements (Figure 3).

- *A group of six Member States* – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia – chose to implement the European Framework Agreement through legislation.
- *The majority of the countries* fall into the second group, where the principles of the European Framework Agreement have been implemented through bipartite collective agreements. The nine countries of this predominantly 'hard law' cluster – namely, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain – can be differentiated according to the level of scope and binding nature of collective bargaining at national, sectoral or company level.
- *The third group* identified comprises six countries – Finland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. In this particular group, the application of the European Framework Agreement was realised through means such as voluntary agreements, codes of conduct or guidance. The aim of these instruments – which are non-binding and voluntary in character – was to provide information about telework in light of the specific national work regulations in order to facilitate the application of the European Framework Agreement's stipulations.
- *Six Member States* have noted that, as at May 2009, there has been no implementation of the European Framework Agreement on Telework – the six countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta and Romania.

While European autonomous agreements can be classified as 'soft law' – that is, without direct, legally binding force – the European telework agreement has been particularly helpful in placing the issue of telework on the agenda of the social partners at lower levels. In many Member States, this has led to 'hard law' results in the form of (binding) collective agreements or national legislation – especially in the majority of new Member States (Eurofound 2010).

According to this quoted report by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound 2010), teleworking is both a relatively new form of work, reliable statistics about the use are still rare, and it is a growing phenomenon throughout the EU Member States. Maybe situation is this in general, and all member states included, but in countries like Finland teleworking has a long and bumpy development history.

As it is said above, Finland and Sweden are part of the "soft law" group, where the European Framework Agreement was realised through means such as voluntary agreements and codes of conduct or guidance. Estonia, in turn, is mentioned in a group of countries that has not yet implemented the European Framework Agreement on Telework.

SWEDEN have elaborated recommendations, codes of practice or guidance in order to implement the EU-level agreement. In Sweden, the social partners agreed on common guidelines for the implementation of the European Framework Agreement. Sectoral-level collective bargaining is then supposed to complement and refine these voluntary agreements. There is, or at least has been, also telework association in Sweden, called Svenska distansarbetarföreningen. Unfortunately, situation no information

FINLAND has opted for a national-level voluntary agreement on telework. While this national voluntary agreement is non-binding in legal terms, an effective application of the main principles of the agreement can be expected, given the strong structure of industrial relations in Finland. Regarding the differentiation within the soft law cluster on the hard/soft law scale, it can be argued that the national-level voluntary agreement in Finland has a strong 'moral' binding force on subsequent collective bargaining processes, since it was signed by the two sides of industry. This is not the case with guidelines, codes and recommendations, which were only jointly issued by the social partners (Eurofound 2010). Also national, already in 1990's established, "Joustotyöyhdistys" still exists, and is going to be more active in the flexwork field again in near future..

IN ESTONIA employment legislation does not contain direct obstacles to the regulation of the status of teleworkers. However, the Estonian employment legislation was being updated in order to allow for greater flexibility in the labour market. The Ministry of Social Affairs ([Sotsiaalministeerium](#)) was working on the draft version of a new Employment Contracts Act. The draft should be presented to parliament for discussion at the beginning of 2008 (Tavits 2000; Eurofound 2008).

Locational flexibility is achieved by telework arrangements, which are used by 5% of the employees in 2007. However, most of them (72%) use telework only up to a quarter of working time and only 6% all the time (LFS 2007). The incidence of telework has remained on the same level since 2003 when its use was first recorded in the Labour Force Survey (2003) (Eurofound Estonia 2010).

Despite the situation with legislation, there is a very active telework association in Estonia, called Estonian Smart Work Association – Targa Töö Ühing ([www.smartwork.ee](http://www.smartwork.ee)). It has operated since 2007. Mission of it is to promote smart work in Estonia so that people can choose their preferred work arrangement and work place, increase the productivity of businesses by way of flexible work arrangements, help risk groups enter the labour market and retain talents who prefer working flexibly, and to help generate more livelihoods in rural communities.

Our fields of activity are training and consultation to employers and employees, supporting and organising a network of telework/smart work centres and promotion of flexible work forms. We have various regional cooperation partners all around Estonia.

- Information service –one of the Association's most important tasks is to provide information and spread knowledge on smart work-related topics. We write and publish articles, and organise seminars and other public events.

- Training and consultation– consulting employers and employees on setting up smart work arrangements is a continuously developing service of the Association. We collect good examples and best practices, as well as lessons on where and why things have gone wrong in the past.
- Supporting (tele)work centres – the Association offers assistance and consultations to local governments and entrepreneurs in creating local work and training centres.

Like it is said in theses of Targa Töö Ühing:

- Telework is not the purpose itself
- The purposes are
  - more effective work arrangement
  - better life quality of employees
  - at community level : regional development, entrepreneurship, employment, education

#### 2.4.2 AIM(S) & ACTION

Concrete benefits generated by flexible work arrangements can be reached only when those actions are clear target-oriented part of the regional development, regional economy and regional policy. Voluntary telework agreement is already written EU level, but how it is implemented in national level?

The study tasks in the WP4 examined the effects of flexible work and the measures taken in the project, as well as opportunities to have an impact in regional policy, economy, and development. The approach was rather broad considering various groups involved in the regional and local development work. The intention was to survey not only the effects of flexible work but also the incidence and role of the telework/flexible work in local, regional and national strategies, programmes and regulations. The basic question in this sense was if telework/flexible work is at all taken into consideration in local and regional strategies. One crucial issue was also to find out, if there are possibilities to exchange information and experiences of practices.

The interviews in Turunmaa archipelago, Åland and Saarenmaa were directed to municipal and regional authorities, local village and business associations, municipal decision makers and local LEADER action groups. There were total of 25 interviews completed in Turunmaa archipelago, 13 interviews in Åland and 7 in Saaremaa. In all project regions the majority of the interviewed persons were municipal authorities or local municipal decision makers.

The activities in the WP4 did not include solely the field work in the project area but also presentation of the survey results in the project workshops and final seminar. Also the visits in the region and discussions with were important part of the overall survey work in the WP4. Survey work was partly extended to Stockholm archipelago where the project group visited the Möja island. The project group also decided to manage some interviews in Stockholm region in order to receive comparable information to other project regions.

#### 2.4.3 RESULTS

VITAL INPUT, NOT MAIN OBJECTIVE. Flexible/remote work is not particular objective in municipalities in the project region. Various municipal development plans include some indications to flexible/remote work but it has not been defined as main objective in any of the municipalities. Rather, development work concerning flexible/remote work has been managed through some separate projects in the municipalities. This, however, does not decrease the importance of the flexible/remote work in the municipalities.



Almost all interviewed persons in the municipalities regarded development of flexible/remote work as a vital input for overall development of municipalities. Instead, general development was emphasised in the municipalities. The interviewed persons in the municipalities considered infrastructure, services, delivering information etc. as crucial starting point for developing flexible/remote work. There is also a challenge to reinforce cooperation between various administrative sectors in the municipalities. The interviewed persons mentioned rather often that responsibilities within municipalities have not been divided clearly enough between authorities.

WHAT IS MEANT WITH IT? One basic problem is also the unfamiliarity of concepts like flexible/remote work. It is not absolutely clear what is meant with flexible/remote work and how flexible/remote work actually differs from the conventional type of working. This is also reflected in defining development objectives which normally emphasise migration and business related approach. The municipalities have intention to overlook the flexible/remote work in relation to migration and business related approach. Flexible/remote work is almost regularly dealt separately when it comes up as for instance interested people ask information about possibilities to do flexible/remote work in the municipality. There is also a clear tendency that local inhabitants are not interested in to develop flexible/remote work but rather they are more interested in creation of employment possibilities. In this sense, flexible/remote work is also considered abstract.

PART OF THE OTHER DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES. What can be done in the municipalities? The results of the survey in the municipalities show undoubtedly that there is a need for making flexible/remote work more concrete in the municipalities. Flexible/remote work does not have to be defined as a separate development objective. More important is to consider it as a vital part of other development objectives, such as above mentioned migration and sources of livelihood. There is also a need to clarify responsibilities between different authorities in the municipalities. However, it is obvious that the municipalities have less possibilities and measures to influence individual solutions and decisions in the enterprises. The municipalities have anyway important position as delivering information and generating possibilities for flexible/remote work

IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE EXAMPLES. Regional authorities were also emphasising the importance of the general development such as infrastructure, services, information etc. in developing flexible/remote work. Basic issue at the regional level is the question of scale in relation to other branches of economy. Flexible/remote work is not regarded so important because the added value is less important. However, this does not mean that the wide-ranging importance of flexible/remote work is ignored. Rather, the municipalities were considered as the most important level for the development work. This reflects partly the insufficient interaction between municipal and regional level. The interviewed persons at the regional level considered that flow of information is not adequate. Regional authorities underlined potentiality of the second home owners more than municipal authorities.

Regional authorities emphasised the importance of positive examples which may have a possibility to raise wider interest in the publicity and businesses. Positive examples are also important as the municipalities are implementing their marketing strategies. Interaction between various levels most challenging, and there is a need for a "total view" of development possibilities.

FINALLY. Finally we may say that flexible/remote work is considered by all interviewed persons as a potential in developing archipelago regions. Important basic foundations for development work infrastructure, services and other important facts are in order. The challenge is how to include flexible/remote work more thoroughly to development work and especially in various

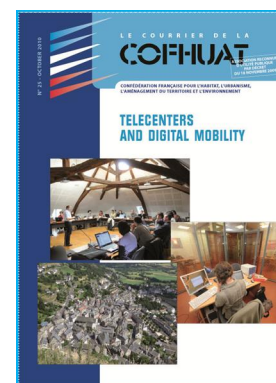
strategies in the municipalities. There is also important question of scale because flexible/remote work can be important for the smaller communities but necessarily not for regions or bigger municipalities. This does not mean that the authorities at regional and local level ignore the importance of flexible/remote work but they do not see it in connection to main development objectives.

COMPARING TO EU-AGREEMENT. In EU-level telework is predominantly viewed in positive terms by governments, employers and trade unions. Reaction was very much the same in surveys done by Nordregio and Kuressaare College. In both cases telework is (still) seen as a highly attractive opinion or as a potential for example in developing archipelago regions.

It sounds somewhat contradictory that telework is still seen as a relative new form of work in EU-level, although from the national point of view, like in Finland, telework has been recorded in the documents, strategies and papers from one decade to another, and also developed with countless projects again and again. But, like interviewed persons brought out, development work concerning flexible/remote work has been managed through some separate projects in the municipalities, remote/flexible work is still considered quite abstract to understand or internalize, responsibilities between different municipal authorities have to clarify, and a total view of development possibilities is still missing. In EU-level this "novelty" also shows in the way, that reliable national statistics about the use of the telework organisations are still rare.

However, and again somewhat contradictory, at the same time regional authorities in the case area emphasised the importance of positive examples. And as long as the development is based on voluntary non-binding nature of telework, without any total development view, those wanted examples are possibly only by implementing different projects and via all kind of "wild piloting".

And what is result: The rat race like system that uphold everlasting potential goes nowhere and achieves nothing permanent. It is pointed out in Eurofound (2010) report, that telework is growing phenomenon throughout the EU Member States, but to complement the overall picture, figures are also given for the incidence of telework that is carried out 'all or almost all of the time'. A slight deviation from the definition in the agreement appears: the EWCS measures only telework 'from home', while the European Framework Agreement covers workplaces away from the employer's premises other than home as well. However, this deviation can be considered negligible, since evidence from other national or sectoral statistics shows that home is the workplace for the large majority of teleworkers.



### 3. A SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES TO DISSIMINATE THE RESULTS ACHIEVED AND TARGET GROUPS REACHED DURING THE PROJECTS'S TOTAL LIFE SPAN

#### 3.1 IN GENERAL

The communication of the project has been very successful by any measures and the media coverage extensive. All this is mainly due to the fact that the project has achieved concrete results and that message has been confirmed by the participants (the target groups) and the project organisation. Also it has all the time been easy for the media to understand the value of the project. One of the main reasons for publicity is that the projects results concerns all the working force, actually worldwide. Above all the results from the research carried out by the Institution of Occupational health has been valuable, and leaves actually no alternative to the target groups except listen and get to know more.

This opinion is based on the experience from various and numerous contacts with the target groups nationally and internationally.

Much of the communication has been done personally not relying just on printed or emailed material. The project has contacted many of the organizations personally, by phone, and thus made certain that the message gets through and also awakens interest. Many of the organizations that could not participate in the flexperiments or take part in the seminars have expressed their sincere interest in getting to know more and wanting to get all the material in the future.

The communication concept has much been based on sharp target group analysis and also on specific messages for just this target group. Different target groups are among others:

- Trade unions and their publications
- Employer organizations and their publications
- Organisations working with well being at work and their publications
- Research institutes that inspects work and efficiency
- Working health related organizations
- Big employers: companies, cities and governmental offices as examples.

A key method to open, wide and successful flexible communication was a snowball effect. It is a figurative term for a process that starts from an initial state of small significance and builds upon itself and becoming larger and more serious.

The flexperiments were divided to two periods during the project implementation: first period from May to Oct (2010), and the second one from Apr to Nov (2011)(excluding summer season).

First flexperiment brought along first media contacts, which created more interest among other media and target groups, and towards following flexperiments , and so it went like rolling ball of snow down a hillside.

Aim was also to have some media company participating in experiment, but it not realized. However, one media house participated and these employees kept own blog-site during the week. Notable here is that it is possible to do successful communication with a small communication budget, when the theme or idea is catchy, casual and easy to adapt.

## 3.2 OUTPUTS

### INFOCARDS

The work with the infocards was based on a two-gate-concept. The infocard is kept very compact and concrete. The main task for the infocard is to wake interest and get the reader to go to the Internet site to get to know the results better. It is also easy to update in its e-version. The more specific material is gathered on the website and on YouTube, where short interviews act as proof of the effects of the Flexible Work concept.

The vast experience in project communication and communication has enabled more unconventional approaches, the small amount of text in the infocard as one example. This concept includes the principle "Different target groups – different messages ".All of the different texts concentrate on telling about the results, not that much about the project itself.

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### FINAL REPORT

#### ESTONIAN REPORT

Estonian report of Saare County Estonian 2<sup>nd</sup> homeowners

#### WEB

[www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi): material, locations, results, YouTube-interviews

#### MARKETING/PROMOTING

- Open announcement via Federation of Finnish Enterprises on Apr 2010 & 2011
- FLEX -flyer 2010 & 2011
- Press release 27.4.2011
- Through the grapewine

## 3.3 NEWS

### 2010

1. Ålands radio 12.2.2010
2. Ålands radio 7.4.2010
3. Suomen Yrittäjien Yrittäjä –lehdessä touko-kesäkuussa
4. Maaseudun Tulevaisuus 5.5.10
5. Sanakunnan Päivien blogi
6. YLE Åboland 25.5.10
7. YLE Uutiset 27.5.2010
8. Åbo Underrättelser 28.5.2010
9. YLE FST 30.5.2010
10. Turkulainen 2.6.2010
11. Helsingin yrittäjien sivuilla 10.6.2010
12. The Float Nr. 4, June 2010. Central Baltic Interreg IVA Programme newsletter
13. Europa –lehti 10.8.2010
14. Rannikkoseutu 13.8.2010
15. Åbo Underrättelser 25.8.2010
16. Suomenmaa 30.9.2010
17. Ålands radio 7.10.2010
18. Turun Sanomat 8.10.2010
19. Cofhuat – Le Courrier de la Cofhuat. Octobre 2010, Numéro 25.
20. Saarte Hääl 22.10.2010
21. Saarte Hääl 28.10.2010

2011

1. FLEX Brahean sivuilla, huhtikuu
2. FLEX-tiedote, 27.4.2011
3. TEK verkkolehti (net journal), 24.5.2011
4. Maaseudun Tulevaisuus, 17.8.2011
5. Ålands radio 7.9.2011,
6. [www.etatyopaiva.fi](http://www.etatyopaiva.fi), 16.9.12
7. NASTA Naantalin kaupungin tiedotuslehti 5/2011
8. Sisu, Ruotsinsuomalaisten omia uutisia aamusta iltaan/Sverigefinländarnas egna nyheter; 15.11.2011

2012

1. Saarte Hääl 25.1.2012
2. Flexibelt jobb ger kvalitet, Västra Nyland 7.3.2012

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### 3.4 EVENTS

#### STEERING GROUPS & WORK MEETINGS

- 4.2.2010 Steering group (SG), Bromarv
- 9.4.2010 Work meeting (WM), Turku
- 23.8.2010 SG, Brändö
- 23.9.2010 SG by e-mail
- 28.10.2010 WM, Kuressaare
- 10.1.2011 SG by e-mail
- 9.5.2011 WM, Naantali
- 18.10.2011 SG + WM, Stockholm
- 3.11.2011 SG by e-mail
- 20.9.2012 SG by e-mail

#### FLEX -SEMINARS

- "Flexible working culture and telework - Paindlik töökultuur ja kaugtöö" –seminar in Kuressaare 27.-28.10.2010
- "Ajasta paikasta joustamalla tehoa työhön ja elinvoimaa saaristoon/Effektivitet i arbetet och livskraftigare skärgård genom flexibla arbetsmodeller" –seminar in Länsi-Turunmaa/Parainen 3.3.2011
- FLEX –seminar/workshop in Stockholm 18.10.2011
- "Suveasukad - tulu või tüli – Second homeowners and flexible working?" in Kuressaare 25.1.2012
- "Quality to working life, fluency to workday and vitality to the regions" – final seminar in Raasepori 6.3.2012

#### PRESENTATIONS IN OTHER SEMINARS OR SESSIONS

- "From Priorities to Action" -seminar in Tallinn 10.3.2010
- Annual meeting of Finnish rural researchers in Karstula 26-27.8.2010
- "Tools for project implementation" -seminar in Tallinn 23.11.2010
- "Hemhamnen" -seminar on 26.11.2010 in Korpoström, Väståboland
- FLEX –presentation in docent (of construction economy) meeting in Turku 17.8.2011
- "Result, fluent workdays and vital villages by FLEXible working culture" –lecture in Novia, Raasepori 6.10.2011
- Rural at the Edge, 22.-23.5.12, Joensuu



## 4. RETHINKING WORK, TIME, SPACE AND LIFE

This chapter is also published as a three individual “FLEX-infocards” (available in [www.flexwork.fi](http://www.flexwork.fi)). Except a summary of the regional development point of view which is only here in this chapter.

### 4.1 LOCAL VIEWPOINT

#### FLEXIBLE WORKSPACE SOLUTIONS

RETHINKING WORK, SPACE AND TIME. Today's information systems and remote functions redefine the concept of accessibility. Many work-related issues are location independent and, therefore, free of any location-related restrictions.

A workspace solution which aims to reduce the need to commute and commuting expenses, promotes more efficient time management, allows better concentration on work and facilitates working and living arrangements. It brings the workplace to people, closer to home, for periodic or for permanent use.

TELEWORK LOCATION, BRANCH OFFICE, BUSINEES HOTEL, HUB, NERA OFFICE. A flexible workspace solution can be located in an office complex, commercial building, underutilized property, or in a residential area, within good transport connections. A well-equipped, intelligent working environment can be combined with other possible well-being at work supporting and/or recreational activities.

The FLEX workspace combines working, well-being at work and vitalising the region. In the country village model, the office space is packaged with accommodation and well-being at work and/or recreation supporting activities, offered by local service providers.

#### SERVICE CONCEPTS – SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

AMBIANCE MATTERS. The flexible working week should be spent on everyone's own terms. Silence and peacefulness also outside the work can be important to many people. Meeting locals and local entrepreneurs was requested too; local personalities bring added value. Of the services offered, especially the boat trips in the archipelago were popular. Most people are looking for a different kind of ambiance than what they are used to at home. Sitting on a cliff by the sea can therefore be quite rewarding. For many, the archipelago was a new experience.

ADVANCE INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL. Information on accommodation, services, destination commune and leisure time activities is very important. Photos on the accommodation options and workspace, and on the region in general are all part of good communication. The communes' websites are, therefore, the primary source of information, and the importance of image material should be underlined. Besides summer, photos can include images of the other seasons. Maps are good! Make sure to reply already in advance to all questions regarding the practical arrangements.

NO RAZZMATAZZ OF THE BIG CITIES NOR 5-STAR HOTELS ARE SOUGHT AFTER. Even modest accommodation will often do, but needs vary. Many of the people that tried flexible working were looking for variety to the everyday life. Requirements for the office space also varied. Not everyone wants an internet connection. The service concept rarely requires investments, the necessary often already exists.

## 4.2 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH VIEWPOINT

### FLEXIBLE WORKING: GOOD RESULTS AND WELL-BEING AT WORK

**QUIET RETREAT.** In flexible working, employees are relocated to work in a quiet retreat. The aim is to cut down on interruptions of a regular working day. In the Flex experiment, work was carried out from archipelago offices during one week.

Work tasks can involve creating new things and ideas, or, just as well, they can be routine tasks for which there is never enough time in the ordinary working environment. The benefits gained are well-being at work and higher productivity. When there are fewer interruptions, people have an opportunity to concentrate on tasks demanding creativity and innovation. In general, work becomes less burdensome and well-being at work increases. Time becomes plentiful.

**PREPARATION.** Keep an open mind. Set only loose goals. Ensure that the working tools, aids and connections are functioning and sufficient. Inform your work community and networks. Find out in advance about the possibilities for leisure time activities.

**EXECUTION.** Get enough rest. Limit your contacts to outside work-related parties, at least when carrying out tasks demanding tranquillity, concentration and creativity. Take advantage of the environment to advance the work/creative process. Take time off spontaneously, take advantage of the environment and get to know the locals, but on your own terms. Think about what would be the ideal duration of the flexible working period for you. Choose the place of work as you wish, on an impulse, perhaps breaking your habitual practices.

**AFTER THE FLEXIBLE WORKING PERIOD.** Back at your workplace, share your experiences with your superiors and colleagues and tell them about how you have progressed with your work. Make a mental note when your work, positive aspects and your progress is noticed. Give feedback to the service provider.

### INTERVIEWEES' OPINIONS ON FLEXIBLE WORKING

Most participants stated their interest in flexible working also in future. Experiences were mainly positive and the majority expressed willingness to make it a permanent practice. What is flexible working best suited for? According to the interviewees:

*"Major, concentration demanding tasks."*

*"A larger reform process at work which could be planned together with a team: "pondering and exchanging ideas together". A different environment promotes finding new approaches to things."*

*"Creating strategy or common alignments together with a team or a working group."*

*"Ideal working space for work to be carried out independently."*

*"For completing tasks that are long overdue."*

How often and for how long at a time?

*"Should be made a regular practice in order to maintain the mental agility. Otherwise, there is the risk that the good going reached during the week will be forgotten."*

*"Regular practice, but not forced on the schedules, according to the needs instead."*

*"A second week after the first one would have been even more restful and desirable."*

*"Even just a few days would be sufficient"*

*"Four days from the point of view that on Friday one could still, at the own office, handle the "emergencies", if necessary."*

### 4.3 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VIEWPOINT

#### FLEXIBLE WORK IS A PART OF THE OTHER DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

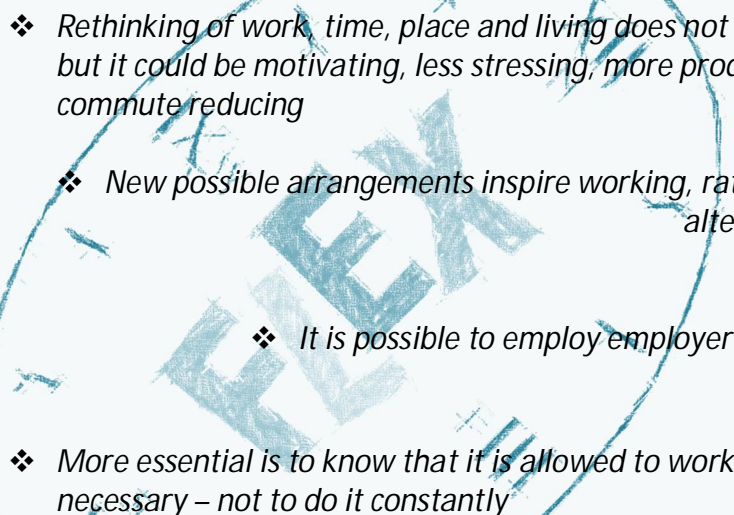
**POSITIVE EXAMPLES.** The results of the FLEX-survey in the municipalities showed undoubtedly that there is a need for making flexible/remote work more concrete in the municipalities. Positive examples are also important as the municipalities are implementing their marketing strategies.

**TOTAL VIEW.** Flexible/remote work does not have to be defined as a separate development objective. More important is to consider it as a vital part of other development objectives, such as above mentioned migration and sources of livelihood. There is also a challenge to reinforce cooperation between various administrative sectors in the municipalities. Interaction between various levels most challenging, and there is a need for a “total view” of development possibilities.

**QUESTION OF SCALE.** There is also important question of scale because flexible/remote work can be important for the smaller communities but necessarily not for regions or bigger municipalities. This does not mean that the authorities at regional and local level ignore the importance of flexible/remote work but they do not see it in connection to main development objectives.

**INFRA AND COOPERATION.** Infrastructure, services, delivering information etc. are crucial starting point for developing flexible/remote work.

#### 4.4. AS A SUMMARY

- 
- ❖ *Rethinking of work, time, place and living does not cause a rush from the jobs, but it could be motivating, less stressing, more productive, time-saving and commute reducing*
  - ❖ *New possible arrangements inspire working, rationalize daily life and open alternative living opportunities*
  - ❖ *It is possible to employ employer from there where one lives*
  - ❖ *More essential is to know that it is allowed to work flexibly when(ever) it is necessary – not to do it constantly*

## 5. A SPECIFIED LIST OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PROJECT WHICH COULD SERVE AS BEST PRACTISE EXAMPLES

### 5.1 FOUR MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

1. The whole FLEX was a highlight! Simple, practical and result producing project with clear objectives and functional cross-border partner coalition guaranteed fruitful realization from the very beginning.
2. A very impressive, important and rewarding thing has been that wide interest towards the project and its results all along.
3. All that positive feedback from the “flexperimenters” after the trial week in archipelago
4. It is possible to do successful communication with a small communication budget, when the theme is catchy, casual and easy to adapt.

## 6. SUSTAINABILITY

### 6.1 HOW THE FINAL OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT CAN SERVE AS A BEST-PRACTISE EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS IN THE FUTURE

Timing of the FLEX was perfect: A preconditions for adding flexible work culture are better than ever earlier; the mobility of work has increased, as well as information technology and information security. Furthermore, advanced new technology increases the possibilities of the livelihood and encourages working flexibly.

A desire to try different approaches and to look at the result of the work instead of time and place can also be perceived. The youngsters of the information society are naturally close to the world of flexible solutions, so a vision of a near, flex, e- or information worker of the archipelago and/or countryside is quite justifiable optimism also.

FLEX offered something that already had a demand, but unconsciously. It also became clear that it is possible to develop different kind of service concepts and solutions which both combine work, work welfare and refreshment, and also complete local services and/or premises. It is challenging, but this possibility must be seen in municipalities and among the local actors as well as widely in work places.

Re-thinking of work, time, place and living (quality) does not cause an escape from the jobs. Instead it will help to cope better in work and workday, to improve the results of the work, and to increase the sensibility of the work and work community. Flexible work enables many ways of maintaining one's work capacity and promoting the wellbeing of one's work community without any sacrifice to the efficiency of one's work. Well and healthy people are needed in a well-functioning society.

Flexiwork also open new possibilities for the work premise solutions, for the aims to reduce commuting, and for the living alternatives. Flexible work culture is connected with a wider discussion about managing in the work, about the raising the age of retirement and about the quality of the living.

The preconditions for the flexible working are better than ever earlier, which opens wider alternatives for the living. Notable point here is also the opportunity to employ an employee from there where he/she lives. Especially in archipelago and rural municipalities flexible work is still seen, and should be seen, as a real possibility and attraction to which investing is worthwhile. Together with flexible working, flexible work premise solutions and new service concept it is possible to induce new inhabitants, workers, entrepreneurs and tourists, and also to provide for the local inhabitants and summer dwellers an opportunity to work near the home or cottage. Locally every newcomer is important.

## *6.2 A PLAN OF ACTION BY THE PROJECT PARTNERS FOR THE FUTURE AFTER THE PROJECT HAS OFFICIALLY BEEN CLOSED*

The outcomes of the project can be easily served as a best-practice examples for others in the future. These good and concrete examples and results will give desired and important support for this acute issue of flexible working arrangements. It is also clear that every partner of the FLEX will continue operating (together and/or separately) in the developing field of flexible working culture.

Distribution of results, knowledge and experiences continues by other projects and daily duties focusing on regional development, occupational health, work life, education and so on. Also work and planning with new project ideas around flexibility of work has started, and most probably more is coming later - together with FLEX-partners also.

Aim is to keep also some FLEX-locations in use/available after the project are located. For now following premises has shown green light:

- Munipal service point Sinervo, Village of Velkua (City of Naantali)
- DIT-center, Village of Dalsbruk-Taalintehdas (Municipality of Kimitoön-Kemiönsaari)
- Villa Ida, Village of Bromarf (City of Raseborg-Raasepori)
- Meriharakka b&b, Village of Velkua (City of Naantali)
- Folk high school in Houtskar, Village of Näsby, City of Pargas-Parainen
- The Archipelago Research Institute, Island of Seili, City of Pargas-Parainen

FLEX –website will be open for now and co-operation with Finnish flexiwork association “Suomen joustotyöyhdistys” has started.



## 7. THE INVOLVED PROJECT PERSONNEL AND THE PROJECT'S ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

### *University of Turku, Lead Partner*

Sami Tantarimäki, Project coordinator

Katriina Lindfors, Project secretary (2011-12; Terhi Uttula 01-04/2010, Sanna Mustonen 05-12/2010)

Mika Elmeranta, Computer support

Peter Dahl, Computer support

### *Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (P2)*

Seppo Tuomivaara, Special researcher

Hanne Vesala, Researcher

Annikki Smolander, Project assistant

### *Novia University of Applied Sciences (P3)*

Ann-Louise Erlund, Project coordinator

Jill Karell, Financial assistant (2011-12; Camilla Björkvist, 2010)

### *Abo Akademi (P4)*

Nina Söderlund, Head of training

Pekka Tenhonen, Planner

Nina Rytönen, Financial secretary (2010-06/2011)

### *Företagsam Skärgård rf (P5)*

Kristian Packalen, Project coordinator

### *Kuressaare College of Tallinn University of Technology (P6)*

Anne Keerberg, Director

### *Nordregio (P7)*

Petri Kahila, Senior researcher

Liisa Perjo, Researcher

Veera Lehto, Researcher

Anita Kullen, Accountant

### *Steering group*

Magnus Johansson, Managing Director, Väst kustens Företagare rf (chair)

Sami Tantarimäki, Project Coordinator, University of Turku (secretary)

Anne Keerberg, Director, Kuressaare College

Ann-Louise Erlund, Project Coordinator, Novia University of Applied Sciences

Petri Kahila, Senior Research Fellow, Nordregio

John Wrede, Municipal Manager, Företagsam Skärgård rf

Irja Kandolin, Senior Researcher, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Jan-Åke Törnroos, Professor, Åbo Akademi

Jussi Jauhiainen, Professor, University of Turku

## 8. HOW THE PROJECT HAS CONTRIBUTED....

... to the Community and the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013 horizontal objectives (i.e. sustainable development, gender equality, anti-discrimination)

Perfectly. Related to chosen Priority 3 in Archipelago and Island Sub-programme, FLEX has based on the idea to create and test new models and methods to develop local services, networks and grass-root activities. Developing of local flexible working locations also support sustainable development by using local resources and services, supporting working near home, reducing traffic, and over all make archipelago communities a better place to invest, work and live in.

Besides developing of the FLEX -service concept put pressure and focus on sustainable, working infrastructure. Project has offered equal opportunities for everyone (men, women, young, old etc) both to participate to "flexperiments" and to be part of the whole implementation process.

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