

# Kista Science City, Stockholm

## Engaging with the public to test new ideas

The district of Kista is a major information and communication technology (ICT) cluster, second only to Silicon Valley in size. Established in late 2016, the Urban ICT Arena within Kista includes a 2km stretch through the district's center that has been wired with fiber infrastructure and all kinds of wireless networks, to act as a testbed for new technologies. The area provides an opportunity to learn from both successes and failures while projects are still in their early phases.

## Building innovation: A triple helix collaboration

### Industry, academic institutions, and the public sector

The Urban ICT Arena was inaugurated three years ago, but the idea of creating a space that would house industry, academics, and the public sector wasn't new. "The idea of triple helix collaboration—industry, academics, and public sector working together—has been [around] for over 30 years," says Petra Dalunde, the COO of Kista Science City.

The area originally was planned as an industrial hub until ASEA and Ericsson relocated their headquarters in the early 80s. Stockholm then opted to try something new: a microcosm of a city where people could live, innovate, and work. By the late 80s, the KTH Royal Institute of Technology,

Stockholm University, and the City of Stockholm formed the Electrum Building, which included office space, lecture halls, and laboratories. "They systematically began to develop ICT technology, together," says Dalunde. By the early 2000s, Stockholm opened its first incubator for ICT startups; it now produces 10-15 new startups on average per year.

As ICT was becoming more connected, Kista was ready to embrace the change. Dalunde says, "We asked our stakeholders, 'How would you like to proceed when digitalization and digital infrastructure has come and disrupted the old way of doing things?'. The answer was the Urban ICT Area."



18,108 employees  
working in ICT

10-15 new technology  
start-ups per year

15 fiber and IoT testing hotspots along a  
2-kilometer corridor

# Kista Science City, Stockholm

## Understanding and engagement before action

Besides being on the cutting edge of innovation, Kista takes into account inclusion, access, and data privacy for all residents.

### The Stockholm UAM (Drone) Lab

The Stockholm UAM Lab, a project to test the use of drones in urban areas, is currently underway in the Urban ICT Arena. Prior to the lab's launch, Kista wanted to include all perspectives, not just those from large firms and stakeholders. Dalunde explains, "We asked the citizens in the pre-study: How would you react if we started to fly drones? What do we need to think about? What do you need to feel safe and secure, with drones over your head? The same for small and medium-sized enterprises: How do we need to design this for

you to access it easily?" By asking such questions beforehand, the Urban ICT Arena mitigates "tech backlash," which is often seen when the public is not engaged in decision-making. Dalunde says, "It's a question of building relationships to create trust."

The Urban ICT Arena understands that the goal of smart cities is to improve the lives of citizens, and for Dalunde this means communication—the old-fashioned kind. "We need to start talking together, to each other, in order to make a smart city for the citizens, not a smart city for the sake of being a smart city. Because that is not smart."

### Piloting ideas before scaling up

Rather than seeking full funding from a project's start, the Urban ICT Arena first ensures that a project works on a small scale before expanding it. Says Dalunde, "We need to understand how it works and what we're actually going to accomplish. If it doesn't work on a small scale, it will definitely not work on a large scale. We need to stay here and live it out and understand completely, what works and what doesn't. If we're not successful, we should have no funding and the money should go somewhere else."

Through this approach, Kista has actually refused funding for some projects. Dalunde explains, "We have said no to a lot of money. We have had really, really little money to do things with because when we have been offered money, it was too early."



Drones in urban environments are a new infrastructure. We have to write the social contract between the citizens and society concerning this infrastructure. The more we digitalize, the more society will be about inclusion, enabling, co-creation.

—Petra Dalunde, COO, Urban ICT Arena