Ladok Consortium
– for Universities, by Universities

EUNIS, Umeå 2014-06-12

Gunnar Backelin, CEO Ladok Consortium
Consortia: Stages, phases?
’Life cycle’??
To deal with today:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>Questions at issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Some Ladok Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establishment Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mature Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aging Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Planning for Renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total Makeover: Project Startup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Impatience, Distrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Re-gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other Aspects of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Risky Phase for Coop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10 | Migration finished. Then what?  
    | Turning-points; Options; What is indispensable |
Questions at issue
Reflexions on a handful of issues:

- Well-being of the Consortium
  - when does cooperation stand strong?
- Over time, what phases in a life-cycle can be identified?
- Something to indicate some ”normal course”??
  - Ladok as an example
- Advice on The Right Time to Re-consider?
Some Ladok Characteristics
Ladok - what’s so special?

✓ HE in Sweden: - A uniform set of rules &
   - Highly independent authorities

✓ Ladok: A consortium – not a corporate body

✓ A coverage of 99.5% of Swedish students

✓ Influence for all univ important;
   genuine participation from as many as possible

✓ Participants geographically spread-out all over the country

✓ Same application for univ with 500 - 50 000 students
Phases 1-10
1 Establishment Phase

1994, between two authorities:
Historic chance for universities to seize control

Took over an existing
national application, Ladok

Many partners from start

Modernization in sight
1994, between two authorities: Historic chance for universities to seize control
2 Mature Application

New system platform introduced (not too fast)
Application stable enough.

The Consortium delivers!
Member univ satisfied.
Member-fees rising over time - considered OK.

Application grows function-wise,
as does number of members:
Ladok industry standard, coop ”success story”!
=> Agreed standards, definitions etc

Major management roles professionalized
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Major management roles professionalized
3 Aging Application

After 10 yrs: Application aging; increasing complexity, quality at stake.

Rising cost for maintenance; relatively less new functionality

Vague dissatisfaction, murmur
- mostly for economic reasons…

…but ”of course”
members stay and pay!
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Rising cost for maintenance; relatively less new functionality

Vague dissatisfaction - mostly for economic reasons...

...but members stay and pay!
Something must be done!
Good timing for renewal?

Partial technological modernization (OS, dbms…)

Planning for major change;
Feasibility studies

Expectations arouse,
new energy mobilized
Planning for Renewal

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1 2 3 4
Owners decide on a total makeover, long project, home-grown system – ’Ladok3’

Enthusiasm, many take active part. ”We do this together!”

Eager financiers & expert users; ”Why take so long time?”
But willing to start a costly project (peak in 2015)
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6 Impatience, distrust

Impatience over extensive investigating activity

Some CIOs question technological choices made by the project

New estimations indicate higher total cost for the project

Distrust to the board exposed:
”Better basics for decision!”
Registrars, even some vice-chancellors engage

Still, no threat to leave us
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7 Re-gathering

- New Project manager;
- firm total time-and-cost estimate;
- OK from independent external technical review;
- first tangible results shown;
- commitment to re-consider form for cooperation:

Confidence restored!
(but with more balanced expectations)
Budget & time-table nailed.

Even more people engaged in the project:
(now from 22 universities)
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8 Other Aspects of Change

Receiving the new system generation has impact on many aspects of Ladok life:

A parallel project suggests & prepares a new, model-suited application management organisation:

Separation of strategic consortium governance from operational system management

Still a slim organisation, but new set of roles to be implemented
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9 Days ahead: Risky Phase for Coop

*Prediction*: Towards end-of-project, new risks:
- delay, running cost etc
- many realize that they won’t get A, B & C…

=> Coop as such under pressure:
- some big and resourceful univ might want to move ahead on their own with what’s missing
- we must arrange for supplementary models for funding and availability etc

i.e. the Consortium coop as a whole will remain, but in a more complex and segregated structure.
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New system implemented towards late 2017 with 37 univ, a patience-challenging process. Some excited/satisfied, some not so.

Ladok coop prevails, but with tighter boundaries, no widened scope for Ladok as such.

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I identify two major turning-points:

I. When we took the decision to clear the table and make a complete new start.
   - Affects every aspect of ongoing Ladok coop.

II. When we – after implementation of new system – sit down and reason: How do we best take care of this common investment?
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II. When we – after implementation of new system – sit down and reason: How do we best take care of this common investment?
   - Affects the future for Swedish HE coop on administrative systems support.
   - ...don’t trust Consortium management
   - ...are not satisfied with what they got
   - ...are truly bored with coop form

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
Then what? (2)

The promise to re-consider, un-prejudiced, in 2015-16 the form for future national coop on Ladok:

- What are our options?
  - Set up a company, univ-owned,
  - Give away to an appropriate public authority,
  - Leave to a single univ to take over,
  - Sell to a commercial actor,
  - Go into coop with international peer/s  
  - Continue as a consortium, more or less reformed
What is indispensable? What should endure?

- To my opinion, whatever type of coop we choose, we should not let go:
  - A principle of voluntarity
  - Universities’ self-determination over its own data
  - Actual influence for universities over further development
  - A durable model for cooperation
  - A cooperation organization with decision power
  - Secure availability of the right competence at all times
  - Cooperation based on solidarity/equitability
  - An efficient set of financing/pricing models, able to fit all
  - Open for continued coop on different arenas simultaneously