The Future of FM in the Nordic Countries and a Possible Common Research Agenda

Purpose: To identify trends and challenges in relation to the FM profession in the Nordic countries and to identify inputs to a common Nordic research agenda.

Theory: The study is based on theory from innovation systems and strategic foresight. Based on a literature review an innovation systems model of the FM sector was developed as a framework for the study.

Approach: The study contained four elements. First a review of literature on the future of FM was carried out. Secondly, four national workshops were held involving FM practitioners and researchers from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Third, the results of the workshops were presented and discussed at a joint Nordic workshop at a Nordic FM conference in August 2011. Finally, an adapted Delphi survey was carried out as a final data collection and validation of the findings.

Findings: The results of the study show that the main issues vary considerably between the four countries, both with regards to megatrends in the strategic environments, the current trends and challenges and the future needs for new competences and knowledge. Despite the large national differences the study is able to identify joint interest across the four countries. Based on the study a common Nordic research agenda is proposed with two headlines: a) Valuation and professionalization of FM and b) Sustainability in FM services. Emphasis is set on the former.

Originality/value: This is the first comprehensive foresight study aimed at developing a research agenda for FM across the Nordic countries.

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