Nødnett i norske kommuner

SUMMARY

This report is the result of a study conducted by NTNU Social Research and Institute for Energy Technology on behalf of KS, The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

Nødnett is a nationwide shared digital communication network for police, health services and fire and rescue services. The study documents experiences from the implementation of Nødnett in municipal sector, stage 1. Our focus is on the operative users and their experiences in terms of information, education, early stage practice, in addition to administrative topics such as costs and finance. In addition to interviewing personnel in the fire and rescue services, health services and municipal rescue services, we also did interviews with Directorate for Emergency Communication (DNK), Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) and Directorate of Health (Hdir). The report is in total based on 21 interviews in 7 municipalities and three interviews with central authorities.

The *Nødnett project* is the largest public ICT project conducted in Norway. It will be implemented in all emergency services in the country by the end of 2015. We did a brief document study that shows the complexity of the project organization. It involves two ministries, three directorates, service organizations affiliated with the different disciplines, in addition to local and regional projects. Consequently, the implementation process has been complex, in particular due to the heterogeneity between municipalities. There are several differences between big and small municipalities, between districts and urban areas, and in terms of industry structure and risks.

The relevant agencies, municipal health services and municipal fire and rescue services, have different starting points and experiences, especially in terms of practice and knowledge about communication, which makes their perception of *Nødnett* different. The fire and rescue services are generally more positive to the new digital network than health care professionals. BAPS (a shared communication group between fire, health and police) is highlighted as one of the most successful and useful procedures.

The end users of *Nødnett* regard the information they have received in the implementation stages as good, especially the information they got through the local project organizations. In spite of this, some comment on the volume of the information as too big and too little specific at times, and many are calling for more continuity in the information flow. These shortcomings were particularly discussed with regards to questions about costs and finances linked to operating *Nødnett*, where there are different understandings of what is included and not included in costs and expenses. The training and the structuring of the courses in the use of *Nødnett* received a positive feedback. In particular the fire and rescue services regarded the training positively. We think this can be at least partly explained by the fact that they have more experience with radio communications and use it more extensively than municipal health professional. These, on the other hand, have less experience and found the training more challenging, and they may need more time to train and refresh their new skills as many use *Nødnett* only occasionally in their daily work.

There are different understandings about the costs and finance among health personnel and the fire and rescue services. The latter consider the cost model as unfair between municipalities due to the organizational structure in their sector, while municipal health are having problems with training costs due to frequent replacements of personnel in the health sector.

Our informants have given a lot of feedback on the design and use of the equipment they have received. The feedback is often related to functionality (i.e. battery capacity and size), but some have questioned new procedures and work methods as a result of the *Nødnett* implementation. We foresee a need for further information and clarification especially in the start-up phases.

Overall many of the end users of *Nødnett* are positive to the new opportunities for a better emergency preparedness, such as interdisciplinary collaboration between emergency services (police, fire, ambulance), and a shorter response time when incidents occur. At this time the municipal emergency coordinators are not users of *Nødnett*, but they are positive to the idea of receiving their own terminal at later stages. A possible challenge here is, like for the health services, that these coordinators will be occasional users particularly in small municipalities.

A general observation is that *Nødnett* has been well received in all municipalities. The challenges observed thus far are likely to be solved after some time when they have gained more experience. It is important that the project organizations and the central agencies work seriously with collecting and responding to experiences from the end users. Failing to do so might lead to unofficial work-abounds and even that alternative means of communication replaces the role of *Nødnett* equipment in some situations.

The first stages of the project are focusing on getting the key end user groups to use *Nødnett*. We consider this as a successful strategy. With time there are is a potential for innovation around Nødnett both in terms of new usages, new coordination practices, and in terms of involving new user groups.