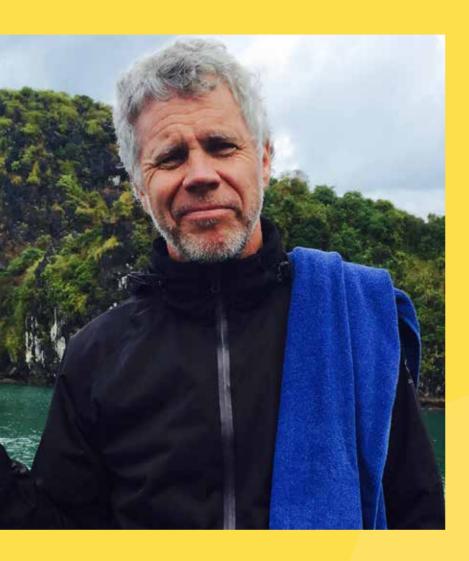# Community Talk with:
Anders Sixtensson

Anders Sixtensson is about to embark on a timeout, a six-month preview of what life could be like in retirement, exploring the options in advance. It's an approach to life that is not too different from what he does in his job on a daily basis – preparing the ground for the future. "We need to know what level we can live at. How far the money goes. Do we switch to idle and then reboot? We're fortunate to have the opportunity to do this." But before he goes, he took time out to talk about his experience and relationship with the ITEA Community.

Can you dip into the past and tell us how your career journey began?

"I graduated as a Master of Science in electrical engineering and since then I have been a consultant for the past thirty years. With one break. I went back to university for a two-year stint and took a degree that, in Sweden, is somewhere between a Master and Doctor. You could call it a Master of Philosophy, I guess. And then I went back to consulting. I've always been in the business of software process improvement, helping companies be more productive, cut lead times, boost effectiveness. Initially I worked with the big telecom companies in Scandinavia, like Nokia and Ericsson, before I joined three other guys to start our own consultancy company in a time when everything seemed possible, around the turn of the millennium. It was called Kipling Consulting (after Rudyard Kipling) and was also floated on the stock exchange. Then I branched off on my own in the field of supply chain analysis. In 2005 I got a call from the owner of Softhouse Consulting who was looking for a new impulse in their software process field. I joined as a partner and set up the software business improvement sector. Once that was up and running I became a member of the management team at Softhouse Consulting and continued working as a senior consultant on a 50% basis. Which is what I do now. So that's my career to date in a nutshell."

What's your view on 'seizing the high ground'? What does this imply in your view?
"Difficult to say – there are so many ways of interpreting this. I understand the ambitions of helping boost the competitiveness of European industry. I think it's up to the participants to take the opportunities that ITEA projects present. So I think we have to help people seize the high ground. We cannot push technology for the sake of technology. It must not become some kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. We see our role as getting the focus on the user. How can technology support society and the human beings that are the component parts? For me, if we can do that, then we really will seize the high ground."

How do you think technology can have an impact on our lives? Can we benefit, become happy?
"We live in a very uncertain world in many ways. Politically volatile, the threat of terrorism, changing demographics. Security is one big issue that technology has to try to resolve. If we are secure, we are happier. Looking specifically at the SCALARE project, for example, I think that the users of the results will be happier having the benefits in their business processes, making them more agile and able to add more value. And this should give people a better feeling at work. They should be able to derive more satisfaction from what they do. The lean and agile message that is part of the Softhouse philosophy is that a sustainable working pace is allied to job satisfaction and, therefore, a happier workforce. And through my involvement, I have become happier. I've extended my network, my contacts. Feel part of a broader community. Proud of what has been achieved. Softhouse has benefited and so have I. And I'm keen to continue. That's not something you commit to if you don't feel happy doing it."

So how and when did you become involved in ITEA?
"Well, a few of the guys I know in my network had an idea a few years ago for the SCALARE project and they asked me and Softhouse if we were interested in becoming a partner in the project. So that's how I became involved in co-writing the project proposal and was the Softhouse representative. Of course, twenty or so years ago I did have some experience with various consortia in funded projects. Even then I saw the value of working with other people from different companies, countries and cultures. You could grow your network, get some interesting business opportunities and, essential, it was fun to work together on challenges. I must admit that I haven't followed the trends in ITEA over the past couple of decades but what I can say is that I find the approach today more applied and practical than twenty years ago. Then it

was more research oriented. As consultants we can offer something extra to ITEA projects. We come up with business ideas for the project research and results. As a consultant, we cannot survive if we cannot communicate the benefit of these results. That's how we earn our living. So in SCALARE we were the partner that was responsible for promoting the results in a way that decision-makers are able to 'consume' – not a white paper but concise material that is actually read and understood. Like the SCALARE magazine (http://scalare.org/scalare-magazine-issue-1-is-out/), which is a nice example of how we communicate the results in a management-friendly way. It's also a way of telling the world that we are involved in a successful project. Win-win. We are now preparing to become involved in a new project that we hope will begin next September, when I return from my sojourn."