

Much more than research

From innovation gap to competitiveness boost

How can research and innovation build Denmark's technological and industrial capacity, while also strengthening our competitiveness and security in a new, technology-driven world order? This is the central question addressed in this new report from PÒMUS and Deloitte.

A changing world brings new opportunities for Denmark

Denmark and the rest of Europe are in a time of upheaval. Geopolitical rivalry, military threats and global megatrends are creating far-reaching societal challenges. These require foresight, risk tolerance, and a new understanding of competitiveness to secure national prosperity and security.

Against this background, the report presents a new definition of what constitutes a future-ready Denmark. A definition where competitiveness and security are seen as integrated strategic goals and the key to Denmark remaining one of the world's most prosperous, well-functioning, inclusive and sustainable societies, which can continuously attract talent and capital.

The report describes how a targeted focus on research and innovation in combination with Denmark's strengths; from climate technology and life science to strong democratic values, is the prerequisite for future-proofing Danish competitiveness and security. Through the prism of research and innovation, the report identifies the new opportunities that have arisen in the wake of global changes, and analyses what is needed to realise them.

The starting point is a long-term strategic framework; a 2040 strategy that integrates research, innovation, technology, and security. The strategy must ensure systemic integration of research and innovation in policy making and contribute to closer integration with other policy areas such as entrepreneurship, technology, and industrial policy.

It is not only about investing more, but about spending the money smarter by working strategically to reduce the numerous gaps that exist in the innovation system on the path from knowledge to market. By mapping Denmark's research and innovation capacity and especially the ability to disseminate and absorb new knowledge in society, the systemic factors (e.g. human capital and infrastructure) are uncovered, which, with the right measures, can become drivers for strengthening Danish competitiveness, prosperity, and security.

This requires closer European cooperation, but also political willingness, innovative thinking, and action. There is a need to take new measures, including a mission-driven industrial policy. The technological battle for the economies of the future is already underway, and Denmark can take leadership in Europe.

It is therefore about much more than research. It is about how research and groundbreaking innovation can drive new technology and industrial capacity to strengthen Denmark's future competitiveness, prosperity, and security.

Strategy2040 is not just a strategic proposal – it is a call to action to develop our social model and secure our strategic autonomy, resilience, and values.

Strategy2040 consists of 10 recommendations, which are substantiated in the report.



Innovation Tripartite between the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs and the Ministry of Defence: Create a strategic partnership that coordinates the implementation of Strategy2040 with a focus on research and development, testing and commercialisation of dual-use solutions, as well as defence and digital technologies.



Long-term R&I strategy with links to entrepreneurship, technology, production, and industrial policy: Create a research and innovation strategy that integrates and accelerates the dissemination of innovation, technology, and industrial know-how, particularly through mission-driven innovation and industrial policy – aligned with the EU.



Strengthen science in policy development and strategic foresight: Establish a science council and/or chief scientific advisor that ensures demand-driven scientific advice and strategic foresight to address geopolitical uncertainty, the climate crisis, and disruptive technologies.



More "MIT" and strengthen hubs: Create a coherent university landscape with better mobility and interdisciplinary opportunities, e.g. in Greater Copenhagen.



Rethink research support: Research reserve: Prioritise the foundation (basic funds/basic research) and flagships (competitive advantages) with the possibility of five-year investments.



Strengthen market development and financing: Introduce a 2.5% R&D target for defence spending and pension funds and leverage public procurement in a concerted effort to invest in startups, scaleups, and high-tech ventures.



Technological and digital focus: Position Denmark as the leading player in digitalisation, deep tech, and AI in the EU, e.g. through better use of historical data and technological capacity.



Willingness to take risks and make mistakes: Turn risk-taking and iterative learning into a competitive advantage through strong incentives and a DARPA culture.



National barometer for measuring R&I capacity and diffusion capacity: Create a national barometer and introduce annual measurement of Danish research and innovation capacity and diffusion capacity via a central analysis unit that quantifies economic, social, and environmental results, to strengthen sustainable policy development.



Metascience initiative for rethinking the R&I system and technology development: Undertake a focused metascience effort to analyse the governance and incentive structures for research, innovation, and technology development to promote breakthroughs solutions and commercialisation.

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