

START annual meeting 2023 focused on integrative, interdisciplinary and inclusive research

About the meeting

Seventy researchers from all the Danish universities participated together with the START Steering Committee and the administrative team in the annual meeting in START. The programme focused on the triple-I approach; how to work integrative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive in research. Read about the highlights here.

START have come far since last year's kick-off meeting

The annual START meeting was held in Rebild Bakker and was initiated by Mogens Rysholt Poulsen, the current chair of START, who presented the last year's activities. It has been a productive year in START, with both establishment of current HUBs, adoption of a joined START Strategy, as well as writing and presenting a white paper for the European Commission. The HUBs are also busy, thanks to dedicated academic HUB coordinators, who has written the HUB acceleration plans and participated in an EU Callfinder workshop in January at University of Copenhagen. In the coming year, there will be special attention on getting funding according to Mogens Rysholt Poulsen, who emphasised that this is also a priority of the START Steering Committee to focus on. The Steering Committee is also focusing on that a sustainable transition of the agrifood systems is a systemic transition that requires knowledge from research combined with industry, consumers and governments, and the transition can therefore be accelerated through collaboration.

Focus on collaboration with AgriFoodTure

After the welcome speech, Annette Engelund Friis, the Mission Director for AgriFoodTure, talked about the differences and more importantly the complementarities between START and AgriFoodTure. She sees unique opportunities in future collaborations between AgriFoodTure, START and Food & Bio Cluster Denmark, and she also describes the new model for matchmaking based on a quadruple helix model where universities, companies, governments and citizens work together on research and innovation to succeed with a sustainable transition of the Danish agrifood system.

Wageningen Masterclass

The second part of the first day's program was a masterclass and training session moderated in collaboration between Wageningen University and Research and academic START HUB coordinators. The title of the masterclass was "How to improve your impact and establish European collaboration and to how get success in the Horizon Europe programs". The masterclass focused on the importance of collaboration between natural sciences, social sciences and humanities and the subsequent training session demonstrated how interdisciplinarity increases the value creation and impact of research applications and research in general across scientific disciplines.

After the more scientific part of the programme followed a networking session with a get-to-know-your-neighbour exercise before the evening ended with dinner and social gathering.

Networking and HUB Day

Day two was dedicated to HUB time and here the academic HUB coordinators pitched their HUBs on stage, followed by an inspiring presentation called "*Opportunities and challenges of the transition towards healthy and sustainable food systems*" by Olivier Joliet from Technical University of Denmark. Afterwards, it was time for HUB workshops where the researchers worked with the triple-I approach, how to conduct integrative, interdisciplinary and inclusive research to reach the Danish 2025 and 2030-goals. This was followed by a plenum discussion moderated by Wageningen University and Research

Panel debate: Making START a top-level Danish powerhouse for sustainable agrifood systems

The annual meeting ended with a panel debate with members of the START Steering Committee presenting their views on what the triple-I approach of START means to them and how they can incentive the participation of your academic staff in HUBs, transformative proposals, agenda setting actions, thereby initiating mission-based thinking and collaborations. The triple-I approach is starting to gain momentum in many contexts and settings, but it does not come without every discipline making an effort and it only through learning by doing, according to the members of the START Steering Committee. It is going to take time to understand each other's differences and challenges – and how we approach issues. Only by partnering up can we span the breath of competencies needed and this requires competence and commitment.

There is also a limit to how long researchers can run on an empty stomach, meaning without funding and this needs to be addressed hence forward in START. Therefore, the START Steering

Committee acknowledge that this is an issue here and that it is a priority to solve in START from now on. The steering committee is also highly aware that START only exists thanks to the researchers and it is up to us [the steering committee] to work on the value creation of START. This is already initiated through the strategic narrative of START and the ongoing activities in START.

As chairperson, Mogens Rysholt Poulsen could therefore sum the last couple of days up by repeating the fact that START have come far during the last year and that the Triple-I approach is the START approach to conduct mission driven research. START exists owing to the researchers, and therefore the coming year will focus on funding opportunities.

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The START Steering Committee and the administrative team would like to thank all participants, HUB coordinators and speakers for your contribution to a couple of inspiring and exciting days in Rebild Bakker with focus on networking and future solutions. It was a pleasure to see and feel the big interest and commitment from the participating researchers to support STARTs work for accelerating the future sustainable agrifood systems.

We look forward to seeing you again next year!

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