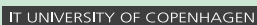


START

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE
AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

STRATEGY PAPER

2022-2024

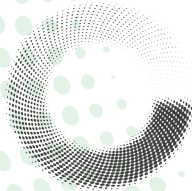


PARTNERS:



IT UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN





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START STRATEGY PAPER

Preface

The Center for Sustainable Agrifood Systems - START - has been established as a unique platform for collaboration between Danish universities for strategic research related to the green transition of agrifood systems. The fact that all eight universities in Denmark participate in START gives optimal opportunities for defining common goals and collaborations in which we share capacity and facilities.

START was initiated by the leadership (deans, directors and alike) of the eight universities. However, it was evident from the beginning that START would only be a success if scientists took the opportunity to meet and work across disciplines on integrative, inclusive and interdisciplinary topics and challenges.

In addition, START would only be successful if partners, institutions, and foundations nationally and internationally appreciated the objective and strategy of START as highly relevant, outstanding and differentiated from the many other centres and single initiatives. Fortunately, START has received a lot of positive recognition and support externally as well as from Danish scientists since the launch in March 2022. During the first year, START has been presented to, and well-received by, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark, Directorate-Generals and representatives from the European Commission, and by foundations such as the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Likewise, more than 200 researchers have demonstrated a keen interest in forming new collaborations.

This strategy has been prepared by the START Steering Committee, and it is based on feedback and experience from the first year of START, including perspectives on future possibilities. The Steering Committee would like to extend its thanks for all the contributions to the genesis of the strategy.

We hope that the strategy will be fruitful for the further development of START, and that it provides the backdrop for integrative, inclusive and interdisciplinary collaboration among Danish research excellence within the green transition of Agrifood Systems.

We all wish the best for START, and we hope the project receives extensive scientific recognition and achieves all it sets out to do.

On behalf of the Steering Committee,

Christine Nellemann

Chair of the START Steering Committee

ABOUT START - AN ACADEMIC POWERHOUSE

Introduction

START is a unique collaboration between the united Danish Universities with the overarching purpose to deliver future research solutions to unlock the green transition of Agrifood Systems.

START is on a mission to identify and develop systemic transition of the agrifood system in order to meet the 2050 sustainable development goals to secure healthy food and biomass sufficiency within the planetary boundaries.

With strong focus on an integrated and inclusive approach based on interdisciplinarity, START aims to gear and provide optimal conditions for extended academic collaborations that support researchers to work together to develop and unfold tools and strategies for future solutions. When we collaborate across disciplines all the way from natural, technical and digital sciences to social sciences, humanities and arts, and when we share knowledge, expertise, and ideas, we create more impact even faster.

START strives to pursue any opportunity to become an attractive lead partner in international research consortia. START enters the European arena as an academic powerhouse in the top-three European knowledge institutions in the green domain, with a substantial participation record in EU Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes. A recognised and acknowledged position in the European research arena opens new opportunities for leading roles in consortia with propositions for funding and societal impact.

Denmark is an exploratory country. The agrifood system is cultured by tradition, innovative by character, and has a compassion for sustainability at its heart. Denmark aims to become an integrated European living lab – a showcase for all of Europe that envisions the green transition of European agrifood systems. START aims to further showcase and exploit Danish innovative leadership.

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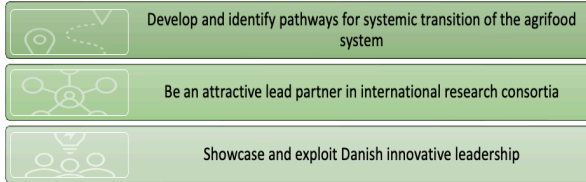
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ABOUT START - AN ACADEMIC POWERHOUSE

Goals

The goals of START can be summarised in a brief overview:



The goals will be achieved by supporting researchers' bottom-up initiatives to establish collaboration on selected challenges in the agrifood transition in an integrative, inclusive and interdisciplinary approach with proposals to relevant calls.

Furthermore, START will establish strategic partnerships with key research institutions and partnerships, with politicians, businesses, society, and funding organisations in Denmark and internationally.

START strives to facilitate cooperation on the use of research facilities and living labs, in recruiting talented human resources from outside Denmark, and to promote START as a thoughtleading institution from science to policy.

Triple I-approach – the heart of START

A successful green transition of agriculture and food systems in general is paramount to addressing the various worldwide green challenge to secure nutritious food and other biomass for the biobased society through resource sufficiency within the planetary boundaries.

This transformation can solely be achieved by disruptive changes in our society and economy with evidence based on best co-creative science. The unique assets of the START community favour a setting for co-creating in which researchers can generate realistic future solutions, together. Such a setting requires:

- an Integrative approach to technical innovation and societal transformation for the various interlinked green challenges related to climate, environment, biodiversity, food, health, society, biobased economy, etc.
- an Inclusive approach, with all stakeholders and actors in science, society and businesses by means of novel methodologies such as living labs and citizen sciences.
- an Interdisciplinary approach by further enhancing the cooperation of scientific researchers from a wide diversity of disciplines from natural, technical and digital sciences to social sciences, humanities and arts.

ABOUT START - AN ACADEMIC POWERHOUSE

Strategic framework - OGSM

With the basic framework, mission definition and goals in place, it is now time to agree on the future strategy and development of START. The various discussions on START's objective, goals and expected achievements have been summarized in an Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures (OGSM) framework. With this key tool START is ready to take the next step towards unlocking the green transition of agrifood systems.

Objective, goals, strategies and measures (OGSM)

Objective		
The united action of the Danish Universities' 'START' accelerates scientific impact on the green transition of the agrifood system by targeting strategic research in an integrative, inclusive, and interdisciplinary approach		
Goals	Strategies	Measures
Goal 1 Identify and develop pathways for systemic transition of the agrifood system towards the SDG objectives in terms of climate, environment, biodiversity, food, health, energy, land use, inclusive society and resource sufficiency.	Strategy 1 Develop an academic platform to mobilize and develop competent capacity for strategic research with an integrative, inclusive and interdisciplinary approach.	Facilitate and orchestrate this cooperation in START by engaging researchers to enable them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a challenging agenda • Create strong consortia • Conduct triple-I research • Meet ambitions with the right funding • Showcase successes
Goal 2 Be an attractive lead partner in international research consortia to contribute to high-impact transition programmes and public-private partnerships.	Strategy 2 Develop a strategic research agenda with selected partners to create more and faster impact together and become a voice in a science-to-policy dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and broaden strategic partnerships with key research organizations in other countries, as well as with European institutions, funding organizations and public-private partnerships • Create impact by thought leadership in science-policy-society-business interfaces with (inter)national stakeholders.
Goal 3 Showcase and exploit Danish innovative leadership cultured by tradition and compassion, with allied expertise, in a range of living labs and shared infrastructures.	Strategy 3 Empower Danish scientific excellence aimed at the green transition of the agrifood system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and submit competitive bids for integrative, inclusive, interdisciplinary strategic research. • Develop human capacity and expand and renew scientific competences in Denmark by attracting talent (students and researchers). • Develop living labs and shared infrastructure with concepts at various scales to become truly interdisciplinary, unique and world class.

VALUE PROPOSITION - INTERNAL INCENTIVES AND EXTERNAL UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

Current incentives

The obvious initial benefits and incentives for researchers to engage in START are:

1. A network: A chance to get into contact with researchers you do not know yet across universities and disciplines interested in working with green transition
2. A chance to work integratively, inclusively and interdisciplinarily and to develop innovative ideas for proposals in one of the START hubs
3. New funding opportunities aimed at strategic calls in Horizon Europe are discussed in the START hubs, and this may lead to joint proposals
4. Trailblazer: Be among the first START researchers and be part of START to become a more attractive partner in EU proposals
5. Professional assistance for designated START hubs

Future value propositions

The potential incentives for the academics within START are based on the unique selling points for the external partners of START.

	UNIQUE SELLING POINTS - External	INCENTIVES - The START Research Community
Brand	The academic association START is one of the top three European powerhouses in the domain of research within the green transition	A recognized and acknowledged position in the European research arena opens new opportunities for leading roles in consortia with propositions for funding, societal impact and professional support.
Concept	START provides a triple-I approach (Integrative, Inclusive, Interdisciplinary) that is essential for the green transition	This triple-I approach leads to new scientific challenges and methodologies, resulting in high-ranked papers and it is attractive for calls for "big fish" proposals.
Promotion	START promotes Denmark as an explorative country that is agrifood cultured by tradition, innovative by character and has compassion for sustainability at heart, providing a unique living lab for European research and innovation.	Denmark provides a sound basis for the further development of infrastructures and practices at excellent and internationally qualified living-lab scale and holds an increased potential for sharing and gaining access to data, analyses, and models.

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