

STRATEGY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2020-2023

THE NORTH DENMARK OF OPPORTUNI- TIES >>



NORTH DENMARK REGION

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PREFACE

Developing North Denmark together!

Collaboration has paved the road to success in North Denmark. Over the years, we have successfully moved the region in the right direction through a number of important parameters. Together, we have generated development and growth that benefit the whole of North Denmark, based on a common understanding of the region's challenges and opportunities.

We want to continue this targeted work in a new Strategy for Regional Development (RUS) for the 2020-2023 period.

This strategy differs significantly from our previous Regional Strategy for Growth and Development (REVUS), as business development will no longer be one of the Regional Council's focuses, in accordance with national policy. Instead, there are plenty of other areas and potential to address, such as education, developing the skills of the future workforce, the green transition, climate change adaptation, the environment and international collaboration. We are also working with public transport and infrastructure, as well as initiatives for North Denmark's rural areas, nature and culture.

However, the Regional Council has not developed the RUS all by itself; it is a strategy for the whole region – a common starting point that we have all agreed on, which integrates well with the municipal planning strategies and forms the basis of a wide collaboration on growth and development.

We particularly need this common starting point in order to continue the positive development of the region. Our goal is to create a strong North Denmark characterised by dynamism and growth. A North Denmark that will prove attractive to enterprises, citizens and visitors. And not least, a North Denmark known for its social cohesion and collaboration.

Collaboration has even been a key word in this strategy's development. The Regional Council has entered into dialogues with the North Danish municipalities, educational institutions, business organisations, and trade union organisations. The Regional Council and the municipal councils have had joint discussions, and a diverse steering committee has closely monitored this process. This wide engagement has made the strategy a solid tool for North Denmark's future strategic development work.

This applies to areas for which the Regional Council has the right of initiative, such as public transport, cultural events, education and the environment, as well as development related to infrastructure, rural areas, nature, recreational facilities, the green transition, climate change adaptation and international collaboration.

This also applies to areas that we and other authorities and organisations, such as the municipalities, Business Region North Denmark (BRN), the Danish Executive Board for Business Development and Growth, the new Business Hub, etc., can all pull together on to guarantee the success of development throughout the entire region.

The Regional Council will therefore continue our targeted work and close dialogue on a coordinated effort for regional development – because, regardless of the new roles and tasks, we are developing North Denmark together!

Ulla Astman
Chairman of the Regional Council



THE STRATEGY'S BACKGROUND AND SECTIONS

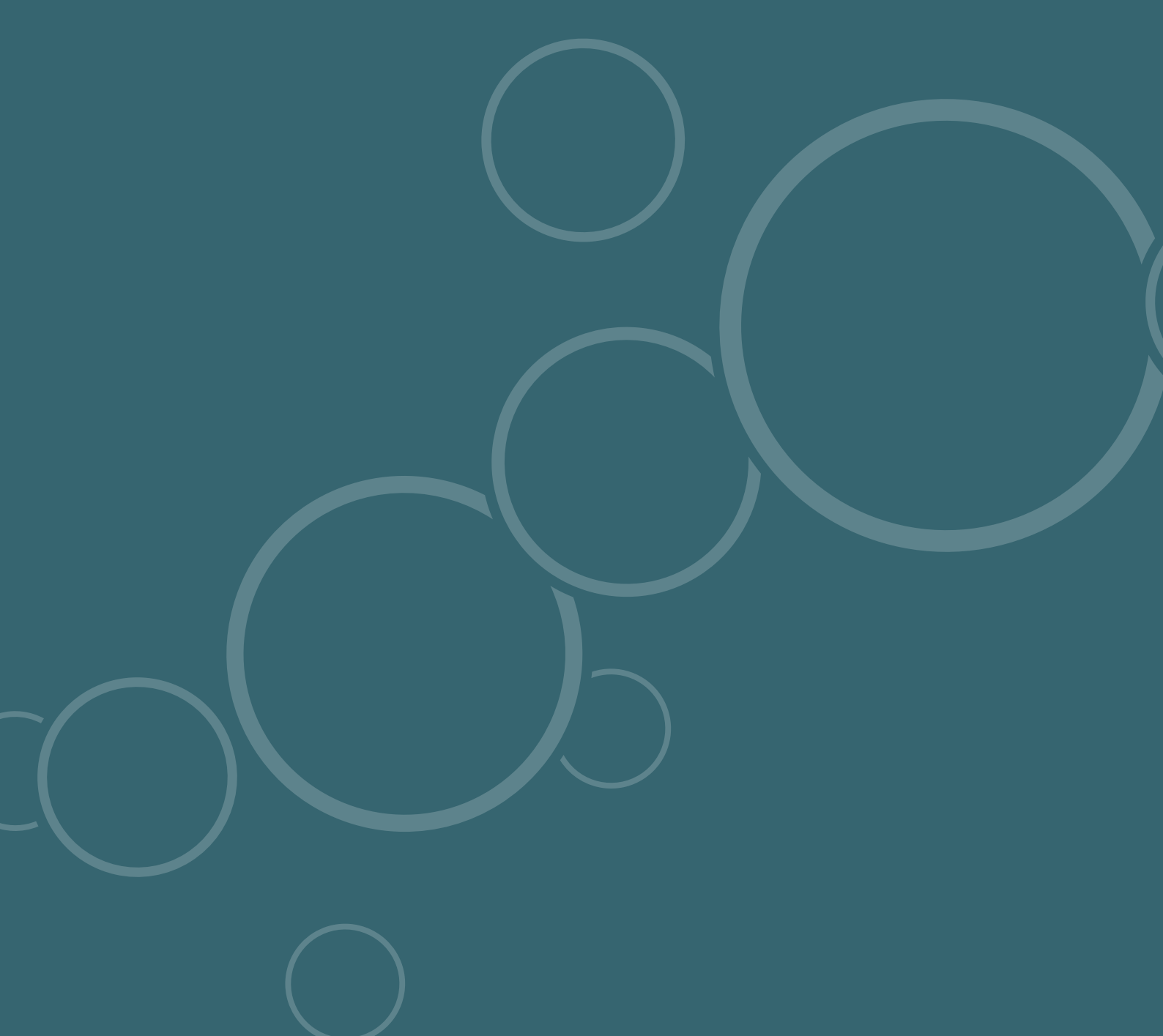
The development strategy's background and sections in the healthcare and industrial sector.

Work on developing the Strategy for Regional Development (RUS) started as early as 2017. At the time, the intention was to update and further develop what was then the Regional Strategy for Growth and Development (REVUS). On that basis, discussions were quickly entered into with regional business organisations, municipal councils, larger education institutions, citizens, and the region's young people through youth events such as Nordpol18.

The new strategy was essentially finished and ready to be submitted to a public consultation. Then, in May 2018, a political agreement was reached about the future organisation of the entire business sector. One of the key features of the agreement was that the regions' former skills and workspaces within business development should be centralised and moved under the management of a new, central organisation – the Danish Executive Board for Business Development and Growth.

This political agreement meant that the entire hearing and approval process had to be put on hold and, in particular, that everything concerning business and tourism development had to be removed from the strategy, as the Regional Council no longer had to be involved with these matters.

However, a number of other legislative tasks that were also covered by REVUS, such as public transport, upper secondary education, the environment and culture, were not impacted by the changes described in the revised Danish Business Promotion Act. The Danish Business Promotion Act also regulates the development of RUS, which (quote) *may cover the regions' legislative tasks within region development, as well as the future development in the region, development in remote areas, nature and recreational facilities, the green transition and climate change adaptation, as well as any international collaborations.*



This legal framework also means that the healthcare sector is not directly included in the RUS. Healthcare has its own legislation and four-year strategy plan. However, there is naturally a link between the healthcare sector and regional development, as both focus on creating conditions for a good daily life. In addition, health technology and innovation in particular is a substantial part of both plans/strategies.

The regional politicians firmly believed that the many qualifying viewpoints and recommendations that had been provided in connection with the extensive work on REVUS should not be lost, but should instead be included in the new RUS. The work with rewriting and redeveloping the original material was started as early as autumn 2018, and the new Business Promotion Act was adopted in December 2018.

Legally, the draft of the RUS must be approved by the Danish Executive Board for Business Development and Growth, and this happened on 24 September 2019. The draft has been continuously discussed in the regional political committees and most recently in a public consultation that lasted from November 2019 until the end of January 2020, during which three public hearings were held, and all interested parties had the opportunity to submit their comments in writing. On this basis, the final draft was developed, which was then approved by the Regional Council in May 2020. The strategy is valid for four years.

TODAY'S NORTH DENMARK

North Denmark has undergone a positive development in recent years. It has managed to move from the lower end of the statistics to the very top in a number of fields. Despite having historically had an excess of unskilled workers and few highly educated ones, the region is now approaching the national average. The current challenges are ensuring that citizens have the sufficient and correct skills, and proper broadband coverage.

Demographic Development

In general, Europe is experiencing a decrease in citizens of a working age, an aging population and increasing urbanisation. This is also the case in North Denmark, which has a low population growth combined with a high average age. In this respect, North Denmark is facing a challenge, which is also emphasised by the region's deficit in terms of birth rates and newcomers to the area. However, the population has increased slightly due to the number of immigrants exceeding the number of emigrants. Furthermore, young people in many rural and remote areas are moving away towards the bigger cities – particularly Aalborg. This has resulted in a demographic centralisation happening internally within the region.

Education and Skills

In a time when Denmark cannot or must not compete






with the rest of the world on the price of products, the people of North Denmark are a key commodity. Never before have so many North Danish citizens completed upper secondary or higher education, or upgraded their skills and qualifications. While the region has historically had more unskilled workers than the rest of the country, there has been a significant development in recent years, and the region is now approaching the national average.

Qualified Workforce

After many years of rising unemployment, the tables have now turned, and the number of employees in North Danish enterprises has generally been rising since 2013. The employment growth has been – and is – broadly grounded in the business sector's various types of enterprises and industries.

Enterprises are increasingly seeking employees with

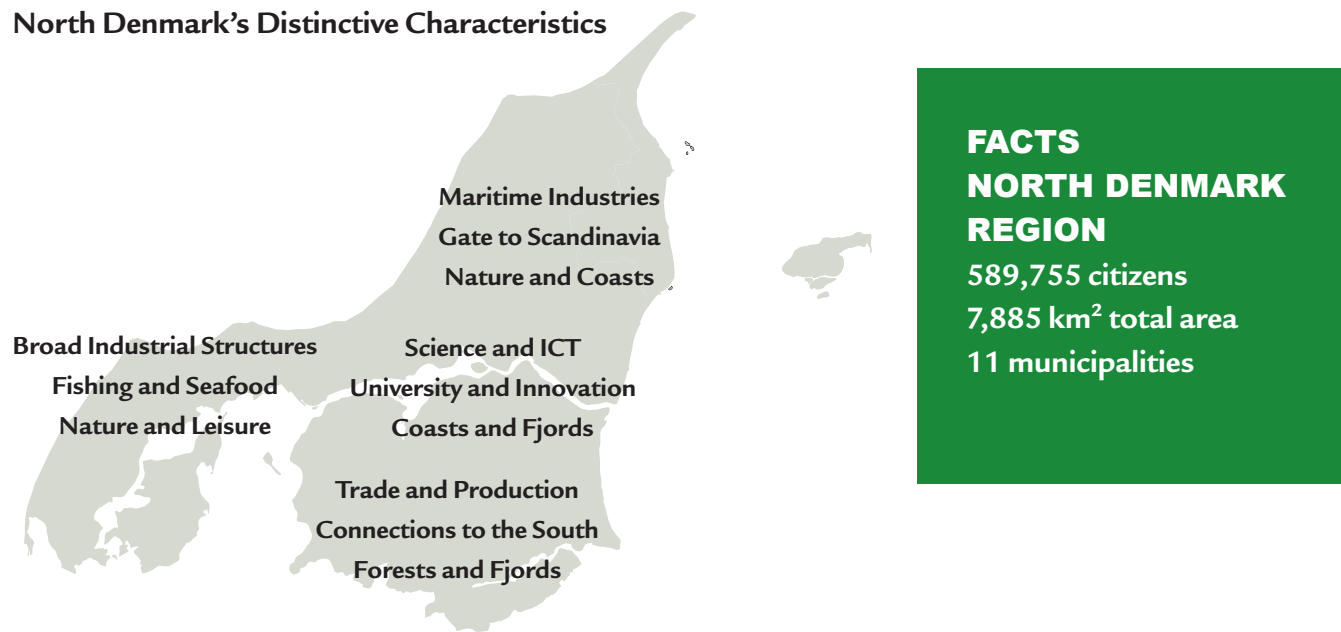
The Highest Completed Education by the Population (aged 25-64) in 2019

		North Denmark Region	Country Total
Unskilled		26 %	25 %
Vocational		41 %	35 %
Short-cycle Higher Education		5 %	6 %
Medium-cycle Higher Education		19 %	21 %
Long-cycle Higher Education		9 %	13 %

Industrial structure (percentage employed) in 2017

Primary Trades (Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing)	Industry	Building and Con- struction	Trade and Transport	Private Service	Public Service
5% North Denmark Region	15% North Denmark Region	7% North Denmark Region	23% North Denmark Region	18% North Denmark Region	32% North Denmark Region
2% Country Total	12% Country Total	6% Country Total	24% Country Total	25% Country Total	31% Country Total

North Denmark's Distinctive Characteristics



technical expertise and an education in IT. Half of all North Danish enterprises have particular difficulty with, or have had to give up, filling an IT specialist position – and industry has been hit especially hard. Another challenge is that many on long-cycle higher educational programmes leave the region either during or after their studies because they feel that the enterprises do not require their skills.

Industrial Structure

The North Danish industrial structure is slightly different from the rest of the country. The region has a relatively high number of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and few large ones. While the traditional occupations, such as agriculture, industry, and building and construction are slightly overrepresented, the opposite can be said of the private services.

Climate and the Environment

Danes today consume globally as if we had 4.2 Earths available, and Denmark is far from meeting the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) in terms of responsible consumption and production. This produces

climate-related and environmental challenges that are gradually becoming more severe as our footprints in the form of CO₂, pesticides and waste accumulate. North Denmark is responsible for the country's largest production of renewable energy in relation to the size of the region, but other regions are catching up. However, the region has a high level of energy and fossil fuel consumption, and therefore also has a high level of CO₂ emissions.

Nature, Culture and Recreation

In terms of landscape, North Danish citizens have more access to nature and recreational areas than the average Dane, and the natural resources of the region have attracted international attention. The nature has formed the basis of a wealth of cultural environments, and the region is home to almost a fourth of all listed historical monuments in Denmark. North Denmark is well represented by every type of cultural activity, including performing arts, painting, music, literature, film, cultural heritage and cultural exchange, as well as larger cultural events and festivals. However, the region also has the fewest registered artists in Denmark relative to its size.

VISION

– NORTH DENMARK'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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By 2025, North Denmark will be recognised for its unique ability to drive sustainable growth, development, and balance across the entire region, and having greatly utilised the potentials of globalisation and the regional positions of strength.

North Denmark will achieve these goals through an international outlook, openness and collaboration, and will show its willingness to adopt new approaches and try out innovative ideas and solutions that will benefit the citizens and enterprises of the region.

Fields of Effort:

The central focus of the Strategy for Regional Development consists of three fields of effort, which each address the particular challenges and potentials of North Denmark. The selection of these fields was based partly on a number of analyses, cf. the list of appendices, and partly on a wide range of elements that proved themselves to be a robust framework for action in the fields of effort for the Regional Strategy for Growth and Development in 2015.

The three fields of effort are:

- A Coherent North Denmark
- A Capable North Denmark
- An Attractive and Sustainable North Denmark

Initiatives in these three fields will help to realise the vision of growth and development in North Denmark. This applies to both initiatives from the Regional Council and not least to initiatives that have been developed and launched in close cooperation between the relevant stakeholders in North Denmark.

For each field of effort, core initiatives are identified, which are initiatives that are considered to be particularly essential for collaboration and partnerships on

growth and development in North Denmark in the upcoming period. These core initiatives are identified through dialogue with the key collaboration partners and concern the following:

- Establishing a third Limfjord crossing
- Strengthening the North Danish railway
- Improving the Hanstholm-Skive-Herning traffic connection (route 26/34)
- The Technology Pact on strong technological expertise
- Strengthening education opportunities and skills development in all areas of North Denmark
- Strategic energy planning
- A circular economy

Founding Principles

The vision builds on a number of principles that describe how the Regional Council will transform words into reality.

The founding principles are:

- Sustainable Growth
- Cohesion and Balance
- The Potentials of Globalisation
- Openness and Collaboration
- Innovative Thinking



Sustainable Growth

Growth should create permanent results and the efforts should be launched on a financially and environmentally sustainable and evidenced-based foundation. Simultaneously, the efforts should be socially sustainable, and create equal opportunities for everyone throughout the region.



The Potentials of Globalisation

Globalisation is an opportunity for growth across the entire region, which North Denmark should make the most of. We should adopt an international outlook that will enable us to get inspired and establish new collaborations.



Cohesion and Balance

North Denmark should also be unified by strong mobility and enhanced digital infrastructure, which will enable us to make the most of opportunities and potential in all parts of the region. In particular, location-specific potential of the rural areas should be utilised, enabling them to develop as vibrant and active local communities.



Openness and Collaboration

North Denmark has a long and strong tradition of collaboration that we should develop further. In order to achieve the best effect and results possible, we must establish strong strategic collaborations and partnerships.



Innovative Thinking

We should dare to think outside the box and be innovative in all fields. Innovation and digitalisation produce better solutions.



THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are key focal points that are integrated in the five founding principles for North Denmark's vision.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN's 17 SDGs set targets for how the world can achieve environmental, economic and social sustainability, and have been ratified by every country in the world. It is now up to nations, regions, municipalities, enterprises and organisations to focus their efforts on achieving these goals. However, not all parties can or should contribute to achieving all these goals, as some will be more relevant depending on the party's activities and capacity for action.

The Strategy for Regional Development primarily offers the potential to influence social and economic sustainability in North Denmark through efforts for a balanced development through the entire region, as well as focusing on education and continuing professional development, broadband access, and public transport. Environmental sustainability is affected more indirectly through efforts to lower energy and resource consumption, and the conversion to circular business models.

However, the Regional Council also has an opportunity to directly affect environmental sustainability by collaborating with the municipalities on a comprehensive plan for supplying North Denmark with 100 % renewable energy.

This strategy enables the regional partnership to reclaim the RUS' responsibility for the region's development and a shared responsibility for a sustainable development globally.

The SDGs are interdependent and interconnected.

As a framework for the Strategy for Regional Development, the SDGs help ensure consideration and cohesion across the strategy, thereby ensuring that an effort, for example with the purpose of solving mobility challenges, does not put unnecessary strain on the environment or climate.

THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



A nighttime photograph of a multi-lane highway. Several cars and a large truck are visible, their headlights and taillights creating a sense of motion. Road signs for 'E45 Århus' and 'Aalborg' are visible above the road. The scene is illuminated by streetlights and vehicle lights, creating a high-contrast, slightly blurred effect.

FIELD OF EFFORT

A COHERENT NORTH DENMARK

Good infrastructure is a prerequisite for growth

A good infrastructure of roads for transporting people and goods is a prerequisite for mobility, as well as for growth and employment. The motorway crossing of the Limfjord at Aalborg is a bottleneck for mobility, and there are calls for a third Limfjord crossing to be constructed as soon as possible. There is also a need for good connections to the motorway grid from the western part of North Denmark, and for road axes across the region that can better bind the areas together. Motorway and railway connections through North Denmark are part of the Jutland Corridor, making the region a valuable part of the main European transport network.

The seaports are also an important part of North Danish infrastructure. The large amounts of goods, fish and passengers moving through the North Danish ports form the basis for growth and employment. The five largest ports of North Denmark are all in the process of being expanded in order to create even more activities within areas such as the offshore sector, maritime services, energy and tourism. Aalborg Airport also plays a vital part in connecting North Denmark to the rest of the world.

Furthermore, digital infrastructure also plays an important role. Access to proper broadband connections and a well-deployed wireless IT infrastructure plays an important role in terms of settlements, providing a service to the citizens, and development – particularly in the region's rural areas.



The goal is to create mobility, growth and social cohesion throughout the entire North Denmark.

Strong transport and communication connections are required both within and outside the region. Transport infrastructure, such as roads, railways, seaports and airports, forms the foundation for public transport, for enterprises transporting goods, and for the private traffic in and through North Denmark. In addition, digital infrastructure is also required as a prerequisite for both settlement and localising businesses.



Digital Transport Solutions

The transport of people and goods is a rising global trend. This creates a need for solutions that ensure sustainable transportation, a sound operation of traffic, intelligent logistics, and information on the journey. North Denmark has a long-standing reputation for its expertise and growth within IT, including Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and Intelligent Logistics. The current ITS solutions can be regarded as the first step towards an integrated use (Smart Region).

North Denmark's Transport has been at the forefront of developing the "MinRejseplan" (My Travel Plan) initiative, which has the goal of providing an overview of all existing routes from A to B in Denmark. This means that in addition to busses, trains, metro, light rail and ferries, the initiative will also show long-distance busses, domestic flights, and car- and bike-sharing availability in the near future.

Digital Health Solutions

Digital solutions should also contribute to adapting healthcare and strengthening the citizens' opportunities to master their own health, thereby stimulating preventative measures and interactions with health professionals. It is an extension of the North Danish Health Agreement, which has the goal of developing a healthcare sector that is based on both citizens' needs and regional experiences with telehealth.

North Denmark was the first region to introduce telehomecare on a large scale. The Telemedicine Service Function was established in January 2015 as part of a collaboration between 11 North Denmark municipalities and the Regional Council. This public service function supports the operation of the North Danish telemedicine home-monitoring services for citizens with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

New healthcare technology, including the virtualisation of healthcare services, is a prioritised effort in the North Danish healthcare sector, i.e. it is a specific focus area to promote digital healthcare solutions among patients with chronic health conditions.



Public transport bind the region together

Public transport is a crucial element in supporting the commute between places of residence, work and education. Simultaneously, public transport is vital in sustaining rural areas by ensuring adequate mobility options.

Meeting mobility needs requires alternate ways of thinking. North Denmark's Traffic Company will work in the future with integrating traditional public transport with carpooling, car sharing, bike sharing, taxis and ferries, etc. A pilot project has already been established, which consists of a main bus network with a fixed guaranteed frequency based on the regional bus routes and a so-called "plusbus", which means that all North Danes who don't live near the main network can still be transported to a focal point (station) on the network for a fixed, low payment.

Rapid and comfortable buses (the X Bus) ensures citizens' mobility by providing transport between the major cities and the less populated areas, as well as serving local routes and flex systems. In the coming years, a high-class bus system, BRT, will be established, which will run from Vestbyen in Aalborg, through the city centre, to places such as Aalborg University and the new University Hospital in the East.

In 2017, North Denmark assumed responsibility for the operation of the regional trains. This has led to increased train departures, improved coherence between trains and buses, and a marked passenger increase on the acquired routes. In 2020, the railway line to the airport will open, which will make it necessary to consider the regional Vendsyssel Railway, including possibly opening new stations. The opening of the new signalling system in Himmerland provides opportunities for a possible expansion of the regional train service to Hobro.

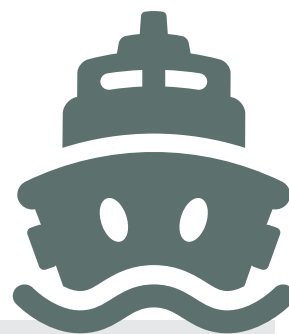
Climate change and environmental concerns mean that we need to use new and more environmentally friendly fuel. As part of this, hydrogen buses are being tested in public transport, and biogas shall be selected for new tendering procedures in the future where technically and economically possible. In addition, certain city busses are expected to switch to electricity.

300,000

lorries pass through the ferry ports of North Denmark annually.

116,000

cars cross the Limfjord at Aalborg daily.



Contributing to a region in balance

Good infrastructure – in terms of roads, public transport and digital infrastructure – is a crucial prerequisite for social cohesion within a region, and helps facilitate settlement and development in all areas of North Denmark. There is also a need to examine the east-west coherence in public transport, as well as to consider new transport solutions in the areas with few passengers. Just as North Danish ports are dynamos for development and are significant for their surrounding areas, location-specific qualities help to generate activity. The ferry connection to Læsø has experienced increasing numbers of passengers since the State contributed to reducing the prices.





CORE INITIATIVES



Establishing a third Limfjord crossing as a state-financed connection to the West across Egholm. It is crucial that the Danish Parliament adopts a construction act as fast as possible and allocates funding to initiate the establishment of the Limfjord crossing. Total construction will take 6-8 years and the two fjord crossings at Aalborg have already reached capacity. Together with municipalities, business communities, and trade union organisations on the 3.Limfjordsforbindelse.nu (Third Limfjord Crossing Now) committee and in Business Region North Denmark, the Regional Council will continue to strengthen its work to implement the 2014 traffic agreement for a third Limfjord crossing as soon as possible.

Improving the North Danish Railway

Since North Denmark took over regional train operations in 2017, there are approx. 30% more trains running on the main railway. The plan is to gradually expand this to approx. 75% more in line with the establishment of the new signalling system. However, due to delays, this cannot be achieved until 2023. In 2020, the Aalborg Airport Line will open, and it is in the interests of North Denmark that the airport be permanently serviced by two long-distance trains per hour. In the long term, the railway lines in North Denmark should be electrified and have increased rail capacity. This will facilitate a more modern, stable and environmentally friendly railway. Electrification south of Aalborg Airport has been planned, but it is necessary to expand further north and, ideally, west, in order to ensure future freight and long-distance servicing of North Denmark.

Improving the Hanstholm-Skive-Herning Road Connection (Route 26/34)

Thy and Mors is home to many export enterprises, while the Port of Hanstholm is more dependent on an upgrade of road connections between Hanstholm-Skive-Herning and the motorway grid. The Danish Road Directorate is building a bypass west of Haderup on route 34 between Skive and Herning as a 2+1 road. This road is expected to open in autumn 2020. However, the goal is a continued upgrade of the route to a 2+1 system, which connects to the existing motorway grid at Herning. This improves both accessibility and road safety.

OTHER INITIATIVES



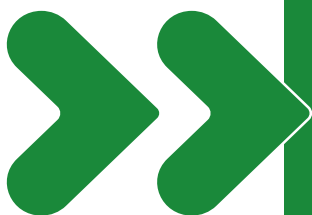
- // Improving the road connections between Thisted-Aalborg and the Aggersund bridge.
- // Reinforcing social cohesion and mobility through a sound digital infrastructure that is both cabled and wireless.
- // Supporting the development of the North Danish ports and Aalborg Airport.
- // Supporting the Jutland Corridor, including the establishment of a Haervej motorway and supporting a fixed Kattegat link.
- // Enhancing public transportation routes for the benefit of commuters and a coherent region.
- // Working to reduce the environmental footprint and energy consumption of transportation.
- // Deploying Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and Smart Region solutions.
- // Enhancing the collective skills to develop and implement digital health solutions, which support coherent processes.
- // Working to implement the North Danish Master Plan for Sustainable Mobility together with municipalities and other stakeholders.

Initiatives will be implemented in partnerships of a changing nature and composition wherein each participant contributes based on their own resources, area of responsibility and skills.

A photograph of two men in a factory or workshop. The man on the right, wearing a white shirt and an orange safety vest with a 'DCE' logo, is using a power drill on a wooden structure. The man on the left, wearing a dark polo shirt, is observing. The background shows industrial equipment, including a blue coiled hose and metal frames.

FIELD OF EFFORT

A CAPABLE NORTH DENMARK



The goal is to stimulate development in North Denmark by focusing on an increased balance between the citizens' skills and the labour market's demands. North Denmark should be a region where both current and future enterprises are able to find a relevant, capable and innovative workforce, as well as where new entrepreneurs are supported. We should educate young people, who have strong digital skills and who dare to lead in a changing world.



A Region with the Right Skills

The right skills should be present throughout the entire region to ensure that the enterprises have access to a qualified workforce and the citizens have access to jobs. It is a prerequisite for all regions in Denmark to be a potential and attractive place to live, work and get an education. However, the private and public sector do not seek the same skills throughout North Denmark. Furthermore, citizens of the region do not have nor want the same jobs and work functions. This is a reflection of the differences in the industrial structure, educational opportunities and existing skills in the North Danish labour market. Therefore, knowledge is required on the regional conditions in order to ensure a match and to find sound, sustainable solutions to the challenge of securing a qualified workforce in North Denmark.





Securing an Adequately Qualified Workforce

Predictions indicate that North Danish citizens will be better educated in the future, but more initiatives and activities are still needed. One of the challenges is that the demand for unskilled labour is decreasing, and will only continue to do so in the future, yet almost a fourth of the North Danish workforce is unskilled. Simultaneously, analyses generally indicate a growing need in certain areas for more skilled workers as well as specialists and highly-educated workers, such as IT in the private sector and welfare and caregiving in the public sector.

To ensure development and innovation in both the public and private sector, the general skills level in North Denmark needs to be raised, thereby securing a qualified workforce that matches the labour market's needs. This can be achieved by providing more young people with vocational training and more unskilled workers with qualifying courses. In this context, it is important that education is inclusive and flexible, so that it can be quickly adapted to new situations and simultaneously apply to a wide group of young people. Furthermore, the skills level may be raised by the act of more enterprises employing highly educated workers. Therefore, it is also important to provide incentives for young people to either remain in North Denmark or to return following their education.



At 25.7%

North Denmark is the region in Denmark with the largest proportion of young people who choose vocational training, compared to the national level of 20%.

However, this proportion differs significantly from municipality to municipality within North Denmark. For example, it is at 21% in Aalborg and 33% in Morsø Municipality. Furthermore, in 2025, North Denmark is expected to have a need for a further 8,700 skilled workers.

Life-Long Learning for All Citizens

All North Danish citizens should have access to continuous education, so that they can continuously upgrade their skills. It is crucial that all citizens are active in the community and qualified for work. On a more individual level, it is important that the citizens develop personally and work well in social environments. Therefore, life-long learning does not solely happen in the formal education system. There needs to be a focus on renewing knowledge in relation to more personal needs in order to thrive in "the good life" and to be able to participate in democratic decision-making processes.



Contributing to a Region in Balance

It is essential for development that all citizens in North Denmark have a good work-life balance and the opportunity to receive an education, regardless of whether they live in Aalborg or Ålbæk. Special action is particularly required in recruiting a qualified workforce in all areas of the region and finding alternatives to the urbanisation process of migrating from the countryside to cities. North Denmark shall exploit its opportunities and potentials for education throughout the entire region. Access to life-long learning, vocational training and programmes that lead to a qualification in rural areas should be guaranteed to ensure that North Denmark has a wide and geographically comprehensive provision of training and education at all levels.



CORE INITIATIVES



The Technology Pact

The Regional Council has collaborated with representatives of the North Danish education institutions, enterprises and municipalities to develop a North Danish Technology Pact as part of the National Danish Technology Pact. The Technology Pact was approved by the Regional Council on 24 September 2019, and will be implemented through a number of specific initiatives until 2021. The Technology Pact has the purpose of getting more people interested and qualified in STEM subjects, which is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. This can happen through many different initiatives, such as events, role models, laboratories, skills development courses and inter-sectional collaboration. The objectives, which are the same in the national technology pact, are to have:

- 20% more people completing a higher education in STEM in North Denmark by 2028
- 20% more people completing a vocational education in STEM in North Denmark by 2028

Strengthening Educational Opportunities and Skills Development in All Areas of North Denmark

Citizens should have access to education regardless of where they live, and we will work to preserve the decentralised nature of our education system. While it is not possible to offer the same education opportunities in all areas of the region, existing institutions shall work on the best collaborations and solutions possible, so that the right opportunities for education and training can be offered in the right places. It will increase the chance of young people starting their upper secondary education close to their residence. This will strengthen the recruitment opportunities for enterprises/businesses, and simultaneously maintain a wide selection of opportunities in the local area. Simultaneously, it will also strengthen the opportunities for training within areas that have a great need for it, such as IT. A greater availability of education and attractive study environments in the rural areas of North Denmark may happen through the development of education communities, including administrative communities. This will maintain access to education in less populated areas. This will also facilitate work to increase the use of remote and flexible forms of teaching, which will support increased accessibility to education as well as develop flexible teaching and learning environments.

OTHER INITIATIVES



- // Innovation and entrepreneurship should be strengthened throughout education levels, from primary and lower secondary school to higher education. This will contribute to a focus on both entrepreneurship (more starting their own enterprise) and intrapreneurship (more employees create innovation in existing enterprises).
- // Contributing to upskilling and retraining, including converting unskilled workers to skilled workers through shorter and targeted courses in areas with a significant lack of a workforce.
- // Increasing applications to vocational secondary education and implementing measures that may reduce dropout from these courses.
- // Upgrading the current workforce's IT skills in accordance with technological developments, which change the skills needed and set requirements for continuous upskilling.
- // Expanding the workforce by, for example, attracting qualified foreign talent and motivating those currently working to remain part of the labour market for longer.
- // Continuing with monitoring work in regard to the demand and supply of a qualified workforce, skills and education.

Initiatives will be implemented in partnerships of a changing nature and composition where each participant contributes based on their own resources, area of responsibility and skills.

FIELD OF EFFORT

AN ATTRACTIVE AND SUSTAIN- ABLE NORTH DENMARK



The goal is to enhance the position of North Denmark as a sustainable region that is attractive to citizens, visitors and business. North Danish residents want to live in attractive areas with an abundant nature, clean environment and active cultural life. These same qualities also attract tourists, and we must therefore make the most of this potential. North Denmark is said to be an attractive, green and clean region. We are collaborating on a wide scale to address accelerating climate change and to utilise the potentials of new energy sources and systems.



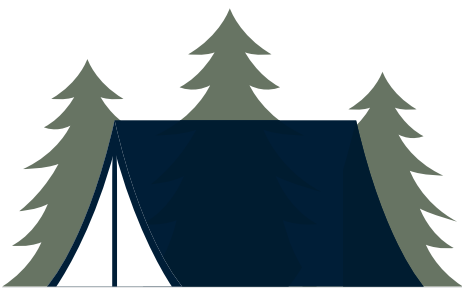
The Good Life in North Denmark

A green and attractive region is a region that has large areas of nature, with plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities and recreation in a clean environment, and a thriving cultural life. These are all qualities that North Denmark already has, which we need to continue to strengthen and develop. The quality and variety of North Danish nature also helps form the basis of food and energy production, quality of life, and recreation for both residents and visitors. North Denmark has so much to offer, but we must focus on enhancing quality and promoting information on and access to the region's nature and culture.

When it comes to a clean environment, the state, region and municipalities have the important task of tracing and mapping the places in the region where there is suspected pollution. The goal is to ensure that citizens' health, surface water and the environment are not exposed to harmful side effects resulting from pollution. A clean environment is absolutely essential for citizens, visitors and enterprises.

The North Denmark Region wishes to increase its collaboration with the municipalities on areas such as ensuring clean subsoil water that is suitable for drinking, climate change adaptation and proofing, and efforts to avoid floods in vulnerable areas.





Location-Specific Qualities and Resources

Attractiveness and development potential often go hand in hand with local resources and strengths. Location-specific qualities and resources can consist of specific types of nature, various opportunities for activity depending on geography, urban environments that can be re-used, and not least local people who understand seeing and realising these potentials. Focusing on a place's qualities can help to better combine nature, culture, experiences and development, as well as create new opportunities for innovation and strengthen local environments. Through these combined efforts, the Regional Council will contribute to the basis of good settlement opportunities in local environments with excellent opportunities for people to establish themselves, live, get an education and work.



More than a third of North Denmark's energy consumption originates from renewable energy.

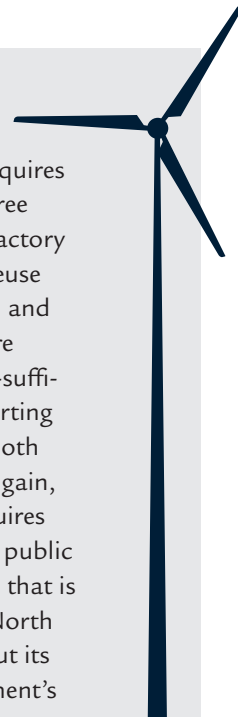
North Denmark produces more renewable energy per resident than any other region in Denmark.

A Region with Nature and Biodiversity

North Denmark has great natural qualities to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors. However, in the countryside and in the cities, biodiversity – diversity and variation in animals and plant life – is coming under increasing pressure. For activities in both urban and rural areas – e.g. projects within climate change adaptation – measures can be considered that create better conditions for increasing biodiversity. For example, flower meadows and stretches of plant life both enhance the natural value and create a more beautiful landscape.

A Sustainable Region

A good daily life should also facilitate sustainable living. This requires a low energy consumption, fossil-free energy, green transport, and satisfactory options for the recirculation and reuse of resources. The Regional Council and the North Danish municipalities are collaborating to achieve 100% self-sufficiency on renewable energy. Converting the energy system should be a smooth transition and be experienced as a gain, not a loss, for quality of life. It requires focus and collaboration with both public and private stakeholders on a plan that is both strategic and practical. The North Denmark Region is ambitious about its goals to live up to the Paris Agreement's reduction targets.



Contributing to a Region in Balance

Culture is an important contributor to human growth and creativity, understanding democracy, settlement, business localisation, and developing the local community. It is therefore crucial for the whole of North Denmark that there is a certain geographical balance in the cultural activities on offer. Culture should be seen in the context of quality of life and urban development, and therefore as a co-creator of social and geographical balance.



More North Danish citizens should have access to cultural experiences and the potential to express themselves creatively. There are also many opportunities to examine culture in the context of other areas, such as healthcare. For example, culture may play a role in the treatment of psychiatric disorders, integration of new people to the area, organisation of hospitals and schools, etc. Art may also be a means of conflict resolution, generating cohesion between cultures, or providing a creative space for common activities.

North Denmark has the most nature per resident in Denmark:
In total, natural areas comprise more than 3,300 m² per resident – including forests, moors, dunes, meadows and bogs.

CORE INITIATIVES



Strategic Energy Planning in North Denmark (SEP NORD)

There are considerable gains to be made through converting North Denmark to be 100% self-sufficient on renewable energy. The ability to plan and use energy as efficiently as possible requires close cooperation, and therefore the 11 North Danish municipalities and the Regional Council have joined forces as part of the initiative Strategic Energy Planning in North Denmark (SEP NORD). This strategy facilitates a collaboration on visions and milestones in order to turn the idea of North Denmark's future energy consumption being based entirely on renewable resources into reality. The plan should aim to minimise energy consumption and utilise North Denmark's knowledge and development in this area through practical solutions and specific initiatives that citizens and enterprises can get involved with.

Circular economy

Increasing problems related to pollution, fewer and more expensive commodity products, and more consumers is putting pressure on our nature and environment. In order to tackle these issues, transforming production and consumption from the traditional linear economy to a circular one is necessary. This will therefore minimise the consumption of energy and resources, increase the reuse of materials, and motivate new patterns of consumption and collaborative economies. Measures within circular economy will form an important basis for sustainable growth in the region and should help ensure that citizens as well as enterprises are geared towards the green transition.

OTHER INITIATIVES



- // Enhancing the options for outdoor life, cultural life and experiences in North Denmark, thereby enabling its continued positive contribution to settlement, industrial development, cohesion and quality of life.
- // Supporting collaborations for innovation between knowledge institutions, enterprises and consultants in order to develop better and more efficient green solutions within the fields of transport and energy as well as energy renovation.
- // Continuing developing North Denmark as a climate region and the further development of the work covering sustainability in a wider context, including participation as a partner in the Aalborg Sustainability Festival and contributor to the annual Danish Nature Meeting.
- // Helping to put culture on the agenda through the further development and continued implementation of the annual cultural assembly on Mors.
- // Multidisciplinary collaboration within the cultural and healthcare sector that can contribute to physical and mental health, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and well-being and quality of life for the citizens.
- // Conducting investigations into pollution and clean-ups of soil contamination that threatens human health, subsoil or surface water supplies, or nature.

Initiatives will be implemented in partnerships of a changing nature and composition where each participant contributes based on their own resources, area of responsibility and skills.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

Collaboration in North Denmark

Collaboration on regional development happens in various contexts. The North Danish municipalities and the Regional Council are collaborating on healthcare and infrastructure, etc. through the Contact Committee, which consists of the North Danish mayors, the First Vice Chairman of the Regional Council and the Chairman of the Regional Council.

These two parties have also collaborated since 2015 as part of Business Region North Denmark (BRN), which is a platform for action-oriented collaboration on enterprise policy. Through a common effort, BRN seeks to generate growth and development in North Denmark in close cooperation with the business sector and North Danish education institutions. This is done by identifying common challenges, working together to develop solutions and taking advantage of each other's strengths when tackling these challenges. The parties have agreed to continue their collaboration in 2019 and beyond in regards to general regional development, particularly when it comes to safeguarding North Danish interests in relation to the Danish Parliament and the State Administration.

The Regional Council has a close and strategic formal cooperation with Aalborg University in regards to positions of strength and communities of interest within healthcare innovation and technology. These collaborations, as well as similar collaborations with UCN, SOSU Nord and private stakeholders are important, as they are significant for the development of the North Danish healthcare sector, and increase the amount of collaborative research and number of qualified healthcare professionals.

Moreover, the Regional Council maintains close relationships with Aalborg University, University College of

North Denmark, the North Danish vocational colleges and the regional labour council, RAR North Denmark, which help ensure a qualified workforce for the private and public labour market – thereby ensuring a balanced development throughout the whole of North Denmark.

Interregional and National Collaboration

The Regional Council will take advantage of the potential to collaborate with other Danish regions on matters such as developing the healthcare sector, wherein the regions can also contribute to creating strong partnerships between the healthcare sector, research units, enterprises, etc.

There is also room for collaboration with the State and state-sponsored companies on areas such as cohesive transport solutions. Furthermore, the Regional Council will contribute to North Danish development by participating in the national context, allowing the region's work, such as the new Danish Executive Board for Business Development and Growth's work on upskilling the workforce and the management board of the new Business Hub, to be seen in relation to other regional and national efforts.

International Collaboration

There are a number of development opportunities for international collaboration, particularly in relation to the Jutland Corridor, which stretches from Sweden and Norway in the north to Slesvig-Holsten and Hamburg in the South, but also in relation to Greenland and the Arctic region. International collaboration is supported by a number of EU programmes, and the independent association North Denmark EU Office helps attract important resources to the region, municipalities, education institutions, etc. in the areas that are significant for North Denmark's growth and development.





“Stronger together” is a joint chapter developed by the North Danish municipalities and the Regional Council under the BRN, which was to be included in the municipal planning strategies and the REVUS. The joint chapter has since been transferred from the REVUS over to the RUS. The business and tourism-oriented section only impacts the municipalities’ efforts, while the general part applies to the municipalities and the region.

STRONGER TOGETHER

With a strong and innovative business and education environment and good frameworks for the citizens’ daily life, North Denmark has a great potential to be able to compete on a national and international level. Achieving this requires a targeted collaboration throughout the entire region – growth and development do not happen by themselves.

In North Denmark, we are stronger together and together, we can create solutions of the future. We will do this in many ways, such as through Business Region North Denmark (BRN), wherein the North Danish municipalities and the Regional Council work together on a common growth agenda. By identifying common challenges, developing solutions and benefitting from each other’s strengths, we can increase social cohesion and, by extension, the prerequisites for growth, development and job creation throughout North Denmark.

Common Conditions for Growth and Development

Just as North Denmark’s development is impacted by common and global conditions, it is also affected by North Denmark’s location:

Globalisation and new technological development, especially in digitalisation, have opened up new solutions to societal challenges and provided new fields of activity for the business sector, but resources and the right skills are required if these opportunities are to be optimally utilised.

Climate change is happening quicker than ever and provides an opportunity to turn to sustainability as well as new and greener business models. Simultaneously, there

is still a need for conversion to renewable energy sources in order to reduce CO2 emissions.

Sustainability will be ensured through an active collaboration to find flexible and long-term innovative solutions across the region, thereby achieving lasting results for sustainable social, economic and environmental development.

The demographic development of an aging population combined with the high number of young people exiting the region has resulted in more old people and fewer young people in North Denmark. Simultaneously, urbanisation means that settlement is concentrated in the larger cities. Therefore there are fewer people to secure enterprises’ growth and meet the need for an educated and qualified workforce.

Positions of Strength and Potential for Growth

North Denmark shall be strengthened through strategic collaboration targeted at location-specific qualities, positions of strength and potentials for growth in the region:



A Coherent North Denmark:

North Denmark is part of a national and international interplay between cities and regions. The university town of Aalborg is a dynamo for the region, just as larger cities in the municipalities are for their surrounding areas. One third of the region's citizens and significant parts of the North Danish business sector are gathered in and around Aalborg, making the city a powerhouse for business development in the region. Positive development in North Denmark depends strongly on close relationships and cooperation between the business sector, education institutions and authorities both in Aalborg and the region's other municipalities.

The North Danish cities are catalysts for culture, innovation, business and city life. Since the cities have different strengths and roles within settlement, business, education, nature and culture, different development strategies should be implemented depending on the individual city's advantages and identity as part of a cohesive North Denmark. Positive development requires close relations and cooperation across the region and internationally. We are each other's necessary prerequisites for development and are all dependent on a network of attractive and viable cities and their hinterlands.

The Operational and Entrepreneurial North Denmark:

North Denmark has a robust and diverse business sector where industry is extremely significant and which has particular strengths in sustainable energy, ICT, raw commodities, tourism and logistics. Proximity to Skagerrak, Kattegat and the Limfjord ensure the strength of the maritime industries, and the five major North Danish seaports provide important transport routes for both goods and people. A strong entrepreneurial effort means that there is a solid foundation that ensures the supply chain for new enterprises and growth initiatives throughout the whole of North Denmark.

The Capable North Denmark:

Aalborg University's multitude of international positions of strength and expertise provides North Denmark with a particular advantage that is decisive for the region's development. Together with university colleges and a network of vocational and medium-cycle higher education institutions, the university helps supply the business sector with a well-educated and innovative workforce. A common effort in primary and lower secondary school is already in place, and securing decentralised education opportunities is particularly important for future societal and business development, including access to a qualified workforce.

The Green and Energetic North Denmark:

There is a lot of potential to strengthen efforts within sustainability, use of green technology and new green forms of business and collaboration. North Denmark's strength within energy technology may be supported, for example, through common, strategic energy planning that promotes technological solutions and systems within renewable energy.

The Connected and Mobile North Denmark:

A strong North Danish infrastructure is a prerequisite for strengthening mobility and creating growth and employment. Infrastructure binds North Denmark together and connects the region to the rest of Denmark. If the growth potentials in North Denmark are to be optimally exploited, it is important to make it easier to move people, goods, knowledge, ideas and data around the region. Therefore, we should work in a targeted manner to strengthen both the physical and digital ties within and between North Denmark and the rest of Denmark.

The Attractive North Denmark:



North Denmark distinguishes itself in several areas – even in an international context. These areas include the many North Danish tourist attractions, the fantastic stretches of coast, nature experiences, cultural highlights, all of which form the basis for experiences, settlement and recreation, and contribute to raising the entire region.

EFFECTS, INITIATIVES AND FOLLOW-UP






It is important to follow up on the strategy's effects and initiatives.

The strategy contains a number of goals, which can be seen on the following pages. These have been selected to enable us to more concretely say whether the strategy will achieve its goals. In connection with this, an annual regional growth report will be prepared for the political system that will partly track the development of the goals, and partly identify new challenges and needs that may emerge in the next four years.

The growth report will also contain an implementation status of the strategy's initiatives. The region will take the initiative to implement as many of the initiatives mentioned in the strategy as possible within the regional partnership that is behind the RUS. Some initiatives will be headed by the Regional Council itself, while other partners will take the lead on other initiatives. The leading party will not be agreed beforehand, but decided upon on an ongoing basis.

GOAL	BASIS FOR CALCULATION
A Coherent North Denmark	
By 2025, a minimum of 95% of all North Danish citizens will have access to a 1 Gigabit/s broadband connection, and everyone will have access to at least a 100 Megabit/s download speed and 30 Megabit/s upload speed.	In 2019, 75% of North Danish citizens gained access to a 1 Gigabit/s broadband connection, and 92% gained access to a 100 Megabit/s download speed and 30 Megabit/s upload speed.
By 2025, financing will be secured for the third Limfjord crossing and construction will be well underway.	The route over Egholm has been politically determined and the building line has been secured. Land acquisitions and updates to the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) have been initiated.
The three traffic connections between Hanstholm-Skive-Herning, Thisted-Aalborg and Fjerritslev-Hobro are to be extended.	The accessibility challenges of these traffic connections have been identified in a 2017 analysis.
By 2025, there will be an 8% increase in passengers on public transport.	In 2018, 33.6 million passengers travelled by public transport.
By 2025, the population decline in the rural areas will have ceased.	In 2018, the population decline was at 1,200 people.
Activities in this field of effort have a particular impact on these Sustainable Development Goals: <div> <div> 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  </div> <div> 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  </div> <div> 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS  </div> </div>	
The effort's goals are not ranked in order of priority. For a more detailed definition of the individual goals, as well as a description of the measurement methods and sources, please see Appendix 2.	

GOAL	BASIS FOR CALCULATION
A Capable North Denmark	
By 2025, 85% of the workforce in North Denmark will have a vocational qualification.	In 2018, 76.7% of the workforce in North Denmark had a vocational qualification.
By 2025, at least 33% of students will choose to undertake vocational training immediately after 9th or 10th grade.	In 2019, 25.7% of school leavers enrolled on vocational training courses as their first priority.
By 2025, students enrolled in formal continuing/higher education will make up 55% of the workforce.	In 2017, these students made up 45.5% of the workforce.
By 2025, 20% more people will begin a higher education STEM course in North Denmark.	In 2018, 3,600 students embarked on higher education STEM courses, comprising 34% of all higher education students.
By 2025, investments in research and development will have risen to 2% of North Denmark's GDP.	In 2017, investments in research and development made up 1.6% of North Denmark's GDP.
Activities in this field of effort have a particular impact on these Sustainable Development Goals: <div> <div> 4 QUALITY EDUCATION  </div> <div> 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH  </div> <div> 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS  </div> </div>	
The effort's goals are not ranked in order of priority. For a more detailed definition of the individual goals, as well as a description of the measurement methods and sources, please see Appendix 2.	

GOAL	BASIS FOR CALCULATION
An Attractive and Sustainable North Denmark	
<p>a) By 2025, greenhouse gas emissions will have been reduced by 50% compared to emissions in 1990, which is equivalent to a reduction of 5.5 million tons of CO₂.</p> <p>b) By 2030, greenhouse gas emissions will have been reduced by 70% compared to emissions in 1990, which is equivalent to a reduction of 7.7 million tons of CO₂.</p>	<p>In 2018, greenhouse gas emissions were at 8 million tons of CO₂. That is a reduction of 27% (3 million tons of CO₂) compared to emissions in 1990.</p>
By 2025, 45% of energy consumption will originate from renewable energy sources.	In 2018, 34.5% of energy consumption originated from renewable energy sources.
By 2025, an investigation into the pollution of subsoil water will have been conducted in the remaining 400 areas.	In the beginning of 2019, 1,100 areas in the region were investigated in response to the pollution of subsoil water.
By 2025, at least 89% of North Danish citizens will be participating in at least three cultural activities.	In 2018, at least 81% of North Danish citizens participated in at least three cultural activities.
By 2025, 95% of regional buses will be operating fossil free.	In 2019, 12% of regional buses were fossil free (35,000 routes out of 282,000).
<p>Activities in this field of effort have a particular impact on these Sustainable Development Goals:</p> <div> <div> 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION  </div> <div> 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY  </div> <div> 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES  </div> <div> 13 CLIMATE ACTION  </div> <div> 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS  </div> </div>	
<p>The effort's goals are not ranked in order of priority. For a more detailed definition of the individual goals, as well as a description of the measurement methods and sources, please see Appendix 2.</p>	

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Today's North Denmark

Appendix 2: Effects and Methodologies of Measurement

Appendices are available in Danish only.



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