



Future of manufacturing
**Innovation Centre Denmark –
Internationalisation policy measure**

[Born globals and their value chains](#)

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1. Context

1.1. Circumstances in which the measure was introduced, rationale, and relevance

During a diplomatic visit to China in 2004, the former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen was introduced to the opportunities globalisation brings to economic growth. Following this a national Strategy for Innovation was developed (The Danish Government, 2006), and a [Council for Globalisation](#) was established. The council presented 350 suggestions for policy measures aiming to accommodate globalisation and within these suggestions stated that Denmark was not represented enough in certain countries and regions that play an important role in the world economy. This applies to ‘traditional’/established export markets, such as the USA and Germany, and new high-growth countries, such as China and India, and the Middle East in general. In order for the Danish companies to have better opportunities to gain a foothold in new high-growth markets, it was suggested that Denmark should be more present. Later in 2006, the first ‘Innovation Centre Denmark’ (ICDK) was established in Palo Alto in Silicon Valley, California to build better market relations in the high-tech and start-up ecosystem in Silicon Valley.

1.2. The process of developing the measure

The overall process of developing the ICDKs in different locations around the world are embedded into the strategy of the Council of Globalisation to gain foothold in new high-growth markets.

In partnership with the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the Trade Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark developed the measure’s first operation in Silicon Valley in 2006. In 2007, ICDK Shanghai opened, while ICDK Munich opened in 2008. In 2013, three more ICDKs were established in São Paulo, Seoul and New Delhi/Bangalore. In 2016, one more ICDK was established in Tel Aviv. Consequently, in 2017, a total number of seven ICDKs exists. As of May 2017 there is no concrete plan for the location of the next ICDK.

1.3. Any changes in policy context over time

As any policy measure, the ICDK is avertedly affected by external socio-economic developments. The global financial crisis of 2008 and the following stagnation of Western economies in connection with the economic growth of the BRIC countries, has required an adjustment of the focus of the measure. The establishment of the centres in New Delhi, Sao Paulo and Seoul in 2013 is a direct result of the changed focus towards emerging markets and derives from the acknowledgment of the growing structural importance of emerging countries. This adjustment does not imply the negligence of traditional partners such as Germany and the USA, but rather an expansion of the scope and focus of the measure. Companies’ intention to gain foothold in emerging markets with a different culture and new barriers compared to traditional markets intensifies the need for consultancy and business support from the ICDK.

1.4. Evidence of complementarity and/or overlap between the measure and other policy measures

There are only a few examples of other complementary measures to the ICDK’s activities due to the quite unique setup and promotion measure in Denmark. ICDK focuses on entrepreneurship and R&D related activities and is reflected in the partnership of the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and the Trade Council.

The Trade Council is a governmental export and investment promotion organisation. They offer a network of foreign offices with in-market advisors who offer a number of specialised services to promote export. The ICDK offers similar support services but differs due to the specific focus on enabling their clients to have a presence in key technology and innovative clusters by supporting them

with a deep local knowledge and understanding of R&D and innovative processes as well as insights into technology and market trends. The close cooperation between the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation and the Trade Council is carried out in the daily work within each ICDK. The daily management of each ICDK is carried out by an executive director who is appointed by a contractual agreement with the Trade Council and at each ICDK, an innovation attaché is employed, who is appointed by the Agency. Furthermore, each ICDK has a number of local innovation officers who work closely together with the director and innovation attaché to help Danish companies as well as researchers, universities and educational institutions to gain access to local networks, technology and markets.

Moreover, the Enterprise Europe Network provides similar partnership opportunities and matchmaking events for Danish SMEs as the ICDK. However, the scope of the ICDK is especially for entrepreneurs who are looking to access leading innovative eco-systems in some of the world's hotspots of new technology and innovation.

Moreover, the ICDKs cooperate with the Danish Business Development Centres. These centres are regional initiatives in Denmark aiming at providing advice, consultancy and business development support to individual business needs. The business development centres do not have a specific international focus, but have a comprehensive regional network of SMEs in Denmark. The ICDKs collaborate with the regional centres in Denmark in order to find new clients and partners from Denmark, which is often a challenge due to the geographic distance to Denmark from the individual ICDKs in the hotspots of the world. The business development centre promotes the opportunities for SMEs in the Danish region through the services of ICDK.

2. Content

2.1. Objectives of the measure

The overall objective of the ICDK is to initiate contact and help Danish companies as well as researchers, universities and other educational institutions to gain access to local networks, knowledge, technology, capital and markets. The emphasis of the measure is on international partnerships, innovation and cooperation on knowledge and research between Denmark and the country where each centre is established.

The ICDKs also use the specific objectives set up in the performance contracts as general guidelines for the activities that they initiate. Each ICDK typically has 10 KPIs to fulfil such as the number of concrete cooperation projects, number of workshops and conferences held.

The ICDKs cover three thematic areas, which are: 'commercialisation of innovation', 'research, innovation and education' and 'investment promotion'. The objective is to create synergies between these areas and develop a unique policy measure acknowledging the interrelated nature of these themes and their significance in regards to increased internationalisation. The ICDKs therefore aim to support Danish SMEs or born globals through a regional and national assistance in the foreign country, which would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

2.2. General description of the measure

The ICDKs offer services and deliverables such as market analysis, partner search and matchmaking, review of business plans, arranging of contacts and customised visit programmes for delegations to help Danish companies as well as researchers and universities to gain access to local networks, knowledge, technology, capital and markets. Furthermore, the ICDKs also monitor new technology and trends in the local market in order to help Danish business to exploit the opportunities in the local market in order to develop their products and services – for example in Silicon Valley which is one of the world's leading place for innovation and high-tech solutions.

The ICDKs focus especially on assisting clients in the early R&D stage, identifying potential opportunities etc., while the traditional export promotion system within the Trade Council and other measures offers in-market advisors in foreign markets and a number of specialised services to promote export including growth funds and grants. The ICDKs focus on enabling their clients to have a presence in key technology and innovative clusters by supporting them with an in-depth local knowledge and understanding of R&D and innovation processes as well as technology and market trends.

In addition, some deliverables and services are unique to an individual ICDK. An example is [Top Talent Denmark](#), which was originally initiated by ICDK Shanghai, but also plays a role in the operations of ICDK São Paulo. It is an example of a project where the research institutions and the businesses have collaborated with the aim of attracting international students to Denmark. It focuses on bringing Danish companies and universities together with the Danish diplomatic missions to promote Danish study and career opportunities to international students and professionals. Top Talent Denmark is also an example of knowledge sharing between the ICDKs about these individual initiatives and in some occasions they are transferred to other ICDKs.

Another example of a unique activity is the SCALEit programme offered by ICDK Silicon Valley. The purpose of SCALEit is to teach start-ups how to scale their activities and consist of both events around Denmark to inform start-ups about Silicon Valley, and activities in Silicon Valley. The activities in Silicon Valley are through a bootcamp or a 12-week programme, where the participants receive an external mentor and are engaged in various events and conferences, feedback sessions with local entrepreneurs, advisors, and investors.

2.3. Available budget

In the period of 2017-2019 the total budget for existing ICDKs is approximately €4.42 million, including approximately five to seven normal work years (full time equivalents, FTE) that is financed from the responsible ministries.

Funding is divided as follows:

- Approximately €4.03 million are derived from the Danish fiscal budget ([Financial Act 2017](#)) for the period 2017-2019.
- The centres themselves in total are responsible for supplementing approximately € 390,000 in the period 2017-2019. The supplementing contribution varies due to the different sizes and amount of activities from each ICDK. This income is generated from advisory services, innovation camps, business development initiatives and other measures where a degree of user payment is required.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances additionally four to six work years (FTE) from the ministry's regular budget for the daily operation of the centres.
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Science also finances the daily operation related to the centres through one to three work years (FTE) in total from the ministry's regular budget.

2.4. Target groups of the measure

The ICDKs operate with Danish companies, research and educational institutions as well as establish partnerships with foreign research institutions, businesses and organisations. Among Danish companies, the target group is primarily small enterprises or entrepreneurs. Formally, the ICDKs apply the [SME criteria by the European Commission](#), where the main factors are determined by staff headcount (<250) and turnover (\leq €50 million) or balance sheet total (\leq €43 million). There are not any specific criteria for research and educational institutions that participate in the measure. For the commercial side, there has however been an internal wish to target especially smaller enterprises which would not be able to build new business relations and get foothold in the market by themselves.

According to the interview with Emil Linnet, Head of section, from the ICDK headquarters in Copenhagen, a significant target group they operate with is small enterprises with fewer than 100

employees and with a turnover under €20 million. However, the typical enterprise has a much lower turnover and fewer than 10 employees.

3. Relevance of the measure to SMEs/born globals and internationalisation

3.1. Relevance in relation to different types and stages of internationalisation

One of the main target groups for the ICDKs are start-ups and SMEs/born globals in their early phases of internationalisation. The ICDKs are therefore highly relevant for SMEs/born globals, since the services offered are targeted directly to their needs, such as an initial market survey to get a clearer outlook on the specific market and network activities in order to build new business relations and other relevant R&D relations with research institutions. This can be very difficult for born globals since they often do not have the necessary resources, knowledge and connections to identify and penetrate new markets.

3.2. Support for cooperation between SMEs/born globals and wider international collaboration (if any)

The ICDKs support the development of transnational networks through their geographical diversity, but also through their nature and physical location. The centres promote international networks and partnerships; they coordinate between each other and simultaneously raise awareness of national markets and local ecosystems. The employees of the ICDKs are all physically located within embassies or organisations which support the notion of ICDKs as active partners. The ICDKs support collaboration and networking between both Danish companies in the early phases on internationalisation and local actors and stakeholders. These local partners could be local companies, organisations or research institutions, for whom a collaboration with Danish SMEs/born globals could be beneficial. The ICDK therefore acts as a catalyst for such collaboration through its services, network and competences.

3.3. Contribution of the measure to tackle SMEs'/born globals' internationalisation support needs

The ICDKs support SMEs/born global by identifying their international options and needs. As such, a company might have the idea that they should go to 'traditional' internationalisation places such as Silicon Valley, without realising the potential of going to Seoul or Sao Paulo. The ICDKs offer consulting and tailored advice for the target companies in order to accommodate their individual needs. Further, they offer support for the challenges of understanding a specific local markets and effective marketing across both geographical and cultural distance.

4. The operation of the measure

4.1. Promotion of the measure to internationalising businesses

In 2016 the ICDKs appointed an employee to be responsible for marketing and communication. This person operates in Denmark, and is responsible for the overall external communication of the centres. This marketing and communication employee essentially works towards promoting the centres to companies located in Denmark. This provides a beneficial central entry point for communication, as well as a sense of proximity. Through direct communication with someone located in New Delhi or Shanghai, this sense of proximity would not exist.

In 2016 the ICDK also initiated a strategy to strengthen their presence among the target group and to better consolidate awareness of the centres within the Danish start-up environment. This is implemented by the new marketing employee, and an increased presence on social media. The increased promotion is also attempted through attending events, speaking at conferences, networking etc. As part of the promotion strategy, there has also been an increased emphasis to advertise the ICDKs in events and contact companies from the ministries in Denmark.

To increase awareness, the ICDKs also host a yearly conference for all ICDKs. In 2017, the conference is hosted in collaboration with partners such as the Confederation of Danish Industry and Copenhagen FinTech. The theme is ‘Data-driven innovation’ and can provide important insight into different areas of research and business opportunities and thereby provide a foundation for internationalisation.

An evaluation carried out by Oxford Research in 2015 (Oxford Research, 2015) showed that 34% of participants contacted the ICDKs on their own initiative. A further 22.2% state that they made contact through networks, and 12.3% state that they made contact through participation in conferences and workshops. These numbers indicate both a high degree of visibility and transparency of the ICDKs. The evaluation was carried out before the extensive strategy for increased communication and promotion was initiated. Therefore, it is likely that increased awareness has followed. The same evaluation showed that 23.8% of participants were contacted directly by the ICDKs. This indicates that the ICDKs also have a proactive role in identifying and contacting SMEs/born globals who might benefit from the services provided. Besides the employee responsible for marketing and the employees’ general network to Danish SMEs, the ICDK collaborates with the regional centres in Denmark to find new clients and partners from Denmark.

4.2. The process of application and assessment of applications

The ICDK is a public support measure, which means that all companies that are relevant according to SME criterion explained above can have access to the measure. However, there is an initial dialogue and assessment between the staff of the ICDKs and the SMEs with the aim of finding the relevant support to match the SME’s needs and wishes. This dialogue is important to ensure the participants are offered appropriate guidance and services.

Calls for proposals are only used for specific activities whose offer is limited, such as the [Innovation Camps](#) and the [Innovation Packages](#). Both measures have open calls. In these cases, the staff of the relevant ICDKs assess the applications and are responsible to balance the financial scheme for these activities. The main selection criteria relate to the fulfilment of the official SME criteria. Moreover, the staff also make an assessment to identify the most promising beneficiaries as regards their innovation and internationalisation capacities.

4.3. Delivery mechanism of the measure

Each ICDK is responsible for the delivery of the activities to the participating business, research institutions etc. Given the diversity of services provided, the tasks and methods used by the ICDK staff varies to meet the specific need. The centres follow the same approach to their work, though some extent of local adaption may be necessary.

The overall delivery mechanism of all the ICDKs is to assist clients in gaining access to knowledge and international research, create connections and develop business cases with an international perspective. Within this there are five main pillars, which describe some similarities and examples of the deliverables and services that the ICDKs offer:

- **Entrepreneurship**, including Innovation/Entrepreneurship Camps, knowledge about and access to funding possibilities and knowledge import to Denmark
- **Higher Education Collaboration**, including Student Innovation Camps, educational agreements and promoting Danish higher education and careers

- **Science and technology scouting, partnering and assessment**, including scientific workshops and partnering, technology scouting and partnering and science and technology–driven assessment
- **Business Development**, including business model development, product and technology assessment and strategy, partnerships and innovation policy development
- **Innovation projects**, aiming at cultivating and disseminating new thematic areas and networks in the respective local region and promoting Danish competencies, products and talent development through cooperation between ICDK staff from at least two of the three focus areas of the ICDKs. The joint innovation projects — of which a certain number have been implemented already — are an important component in creating the ICDK brand; therefore, innovation projects get special financial support.

The ICDK in Silicon Valley is the most well consolidated and also offers more services than the others, such as the innovation camps.

4.4. Administration of the measure

The ICDK is administrated from a headquarter in Copenhagen in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The main task of the headquarter is to administrate the budget and coordinate relevant information, meetings between the individual ICDKs around the world and with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

Each ICDK is administrated locally by an executive director who carries out the daily management of each of the ICDKs. The executive director is also a representative of the area ‘commercialisation of innovation’, emphasising that the ICDKs are not only concerned with exports or research, but a more inclusive approach to both business, research and innovation.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1. Monitoring of the implementation and take-up of the measure: method and contents

The objectives of the ICDKs are pursued through annual performance contracts with each ICDK, signed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. The contracts define priorities for the coming year based on the success criteria, such as number of specific types of activities as well as the opportunities that exist in the local area. The performance contracts contain a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) such as ‘number of innovation projects’, ‘number of workshops and conferences held between Danish research institutions/researchers and local research institutions/researchers’, ‘number of science and higher education related tasks solved for researchers and also science and higher education institutions’, ‘yearly earnings targets’ and ‘number of contacts in Denmark and locally’. The KPIs are monitored by the director of each ICDK and the administration of the measure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen.

5.2. Evaluation of the measure: methods and contents

The ICDKs have been evaluated in 2008, 2010 and 2015 (Oxford Research, 2015). The main sources of data in the evaluation in 2015 have been desk research, qualitative interviews (with management, employees, local foreign collaborators, consuls, ambassadors, key stakeholders and more) and surveys (with Danish clients). Combined, these methods constituted a methodological triangulation that had the benefit of minimising idiosyncratic opinions and views of the different data sources and strengthening the validity of the data. Moreover, as a key methodological element, Oxford Research personally visited the ICDKs and therefore gained a deeper understanding of the ICDKs, their activities, context and internal dynamics.

5.3. Any changes to the content or delivery of the measure following monitoring and evaluation

Even if the findings in the 2015 evaluation are overall positive, the evaluation found that there was room for improvement and that the value creation of the ICDKs could be increased. The main challenge highlighted in the evaluation was a ‘grey zone’ between the ICDKs and the Trade Council (which offers a more specific export support). The Trade Council provides in-market advisors who offer a number of specialised services to promote export. The ICDK offers similar support services but differs due to the specific focus on enabling their clients to have a presence in key technology and innovative clusters by supporting them with a deep local knowledge and understanding of R&D and innovative processes as well as insights into technology and market trends. According to the interviewee, the ICDKs have subsequently increased the collaboration and emphasis on a stronger relationship with the Trade Council, for example a stronger focus on the specific projects with a genuine innovative-related service.

Another key finding in the evaluation was a lack of home-based support and visibility of the ICDKs in Denmark. The evaluation was carried out in 2015. According to the interviewee, there has afterwards been an increased emphasis to promote the ICDKs, advertise events and contact companies from the ministries in Denmark (see section 4.1).

6. Evidence of outcomes and impact

6.1. Evolution of the measure’s spending

Due to the decisions to establish six new ICDKs since the first was initiated in 2006, the total measure’s spending has increased in terms of the money derived from the Danish fiscal budget for the period from 2006-2017 and in terms of the number of employees financed by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Moreover, some specific activities such as Innovation Camps and the Innovation Package, whose offer is limited, are very popular with the clients. According to the interviewee, it means that it can be difficult to balance the measure’s spending for these specific activities and to make sure that the activities are available over the year and not just in the beginning of the new financial year.

6.2. The quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the measure

In terms of qualitative outcomes, the evaluation in 2015 shows that the ICDKs especially create value by:

- bridging the geographical distance from Denmark to foreign markets, R&D and innovation systems, and manage to create cross-national links;
- playing an important role in incentivising Danish businesses, research and educational institutions to explore foreign markets, R&D and innovation systems.

In terms of quantitative outcomes on how many clients and cases the ICDKs has supported and completed, the evaluation of ICDK by Oxford Research in 2015 found the following overview across the ICDKs:

Table 1: Number of commercial clients in 2014

ICDK	No. of clients	No. of cases for clients in total
Silicon Valley	52	87
Shanghai	107	171

München	36	48
New Delhi/ Bangalore	12	21
São Paulo	9	17
Seoul	37	53
Total	253	397

Source: Oxford Research, 2015

Note: Cases refers to the number of concrete tasks solved for companies and researchers.

6.3. Impact of the measure on its beneficiaries and other actors

The 2015 evaluation by Oxford Research indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the ICDKs and also a high degree of tangible results through particularly increased networks and knowledge development. From the qualitative data and survey results in the evaluation, it is clear that the ICDKs act as a vital links for Danish businesses for new partners, cutting-edge research or R&D resources in foreign markets.

The evaluation also highlights that the additionality of the ICDKs is high, as the ICDKs have been successful in making use of alliances and partnerships, as well as relationships that are more informal with Danish clusters, organisations, and networks that support R&D and innovation process. Abroad, the ICDKs have established partnerships and collaborations with different types of actors in the markets and R&D and innovation systems. These include national and regional governments, research and educational institutions, cluster organisations, start-ups, SMEs, multinational companies, business associations and investors.

6.4 Evidence of economic and employment impact

N/a.

7. Strengths and weaknesses of the measure

7.1. Strengths of the measure

The greatest strength of the measure is the physical presence in various locations and the local networks of the seven ICDKs. The ICDK has the benefit of simultaneously being geographically widely distributed and locally consolidated. The second strength is the connection between business, innovation and research, which allows for new synergies and partnerships.

7.2. Weaknesses of the measure

Even though the ICDKs have increased their efforts to gain visibility, a weakness of the ICDKs is still the lack of consolidation and visibility in Denmark. For a public policy measure to support the international growth of SMEs/born globals, it is important to be visible to this target group. Another challenge for the ICDKs is the synchronisation of the internal organisation in regards to being agile enough to operate within business and research simultaneously. In addition, while the emphasis on the centre in Silicon Valley can be an asset, it simultaneously represents a weakness as it distracts from the synergy of breadth and depth of services provided. This so, as companies might have an idea of ‘going to Silicon Valley’, which might prevent them from discovering their potentials in Seoul or other places.

7.3. Evidence of policy learning over time

There is no clear evidence that the measure has been transferred to other countries, but according to the interviewee the set-up of ICDKs in new high-growth markets have generated positive publicity from ambassadors and other diplomats and other policymakers within foreign affairs due to the political success stories.

Moreover, an important condition for the success of the measure is the establishment of the partnership between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science, which enable the ICDK to bridge between business and research – globally. The partnerships are a unique construction in Denmark and require a strong commitment and collaboration from both partners as well as a shared ownership and shared economic responsibilities. In this respect, such a collaborative environment and commitment represents an important precondition for the measure to be successfully transferred to other contexts or countries.

8. Recommendations

8.1. Overall recommendations regarding the measure

As indicated in the interview, an important learning in relation to SMEs/born globals is that these companies often have a clear outlook to some of the most high-growth markets such as Silicon Valley or Munich. However, it can be very useful for the SMEs to explore the opportunities to export to other emerging markets such as Sao Paulo, Shanghai and New Delhi. According to the interviewee, many of these companies can be more successful in emerging markets than in traditional markets such as Germany and the USA even though the level of consolidation of the ICDK is lower in these locations due to the fact that these ICDKs are younger and less established. However, their local presence provides valuable knowledge to the enterprises because many are not aware of the opportunities in the emerging markets due to the culture and language barriers.

8.2. Recommendations on the national support system for SME/BG internationalisation

N/a.

8.3. Any gaps in the provision of policy support and suggestions

N/a.

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All Eurofound publications are available at www.eurofound.europa.eu

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