Science and Technology Strategic Plan 2016–2020
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PREFACE

In spring 2015, the Faculty Management Team initiated an extensive process to form a visionary strategic plan for the Faculty of Science and Technology (ST) at Aarhus University. The ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020 aims to strengthen the faculty and to ensure a leading position in the global elite of science and technology faculties.

As a key element, the process involved the mobilisation and optimal utilisation of the strength and strategic ideas of our many accomplished researchers, teachers, advisers, and the administration, combined with an increased focus on systematic and strategic investments, internationalisation, the establishment of infrastructures, and the recruitment of excellent new academic staff to enhance ST’s performance in research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. The overall target is to place ST among the world’s 50 best faculties by 2025.

The mainspring of the strategy process is the ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020 as the sum of the strategies of all the ST departments and centres, and thus the strategies of the individuals at the faculty. Only by virtue of true commitment and ownership by the departments, centres, and staff employed at all levels and in all functions, is it possible to establish the strength to fulfil our vision and mission – not only in terms of achievements, but also with regard to having a faculty that provides knowledge transfer for the growth of our society by means of a strong ST identity and in a good working environment.

The Faculty Management Team involves all heads of departments and centres, and has been deeply committed to building up strategies based on a variety of inspirational activities within the team itself and, more importantly, also at the departments and centres. At faculty level, the process involved inspiration from experts, visits to universities abroad, and consolidating a team management to foster a true interdisciplinary vision among heads of departments and centres, vice-deans, and the dean. A key component was to increase our focus on grand challenges and societal growth by establishing world-class synergies between different areas of the faculty, and with strong national and international collaborators. Similar processes took place at departmental and centre level, including discussions in relevant forums and boards.

Based on tremendous efforts, the resulting strategies are highly ambitious and, with timely implementation and careful prioritisation of resources, will beyond doubt bring ST to another level in the global elite of science and technology faculties. This will require constant focus on the strategic goals and appropriate fulfilment of the milestones in the action plans. Hence, the strategies are intended to navigate the work of both the Faculty Management Team and the managements of the departments and centres, which calls for commitment and support from all ST staff members, who are the true owners of the vision, mission and the strategic plan.
VISION, MISSION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic development of ST during the period 2016–2020 is epitomised by the following statements:

VISION
The vision of the Faculty of Science and Technology is to be a global key player advancing excellence in science and technology to the benefit of society.

MISSION
The mission of the Faculty of Science and Technology is to contribute to society by virtue of excellent research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration.
With the ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020 we want to:

- Establish the foundation for positioning ST in the world’s top 50 league of faculties within the areas of science and technology by 2025
- Be recognised globally for high societal impact through excellence in our key activities: research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration
- Be the preferred Danish faculty for science and technology education
- Through research and consultancy of the highest quality, be the leading Danish provider of sector-oriented advice with increased focus on international activities
- Be recognised by industry as a key collaborator in developing reputable, knowledge-based solutions to grand challenges and the development of growth technologies

Executive summary

With the ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020, Science and Technology is paving the way for becoming a globally more competitive and stronger faculty within our academic disciplines, including our research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. This is accomplished through an ambitious strategy ensuring systematic, quality-driven development of our current activities to achieve a stronger global position with a focus on solid recruitment, strengthened internationalisation and industrial collaborations, frontline infrastructure, optimised administrative support, and a good working environment. With an international mindset, we will utilise the strong potential of ST to ensure delivery of excellence in all our endeavours.

Through well-educated Bachelors, Masters, and PhD graduates, we transfer front-edge knowledge to society, providing the basis for developing private and public sectors that can lead to higher growth and societal welfare. Excellence in research forms the basis for our educational activities, for our talent development, for our public sector consultancy, and for direct and close collaboration with the industry on a broad range of topics. With a unique potential for synergy, ST has great opportunities for global impact and attraction by means of its strong activities within classical natural science, sector-oriented research, and engineering – and the synergies between them. In short, we have the potential to identify core problems in society and to be a key driver in the development of knowledge-based solutions, both of which require an interdisciplinary setup. Achieving significant societal impact through quality and a strong global position is our ambition and our obligation to society.
ORGANISATION

Founded on Aarhus University’s science activities originally set up in 1954, Science and Technology was established on 1 January 2011 with the merging of three former faculties: the Faculty of Science (NAT), the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (DJF), and the National Environmental Research Institute (DMU). The last two merged as separate institutions with Aarhus University in 2007.

As of 1 January 2012, the Engineering College of Aarhus became part of the faculty as a school offering Bachelor of Engineering programmes and degrees. Aarhus University’s fusion in 2006 with the former Business and Engineering College of Herning also brought more activity to the faculty’s comprehensive engineering programmes. With the mergers, ST has doubled in size since 2011, and today accounts for 43% of the university’s turnover. ST’s activities are visible all over Denmark, with departments, field stations, and research sites located not only in Aarhus, including Katrinebjerg and Navitas, but also in Herning, Silkeborg, Foulum, Kale, Årslev, Flakkebjerg, and Roskilde, as well as in Nuuk, Zackenberg, and Station Nord in Greenland. The map below indicates the scope of the faculty.

Aarhus (Main Campus):
- Dept of Bioscience
- Dept of Chemistry
- Dept of Computer Science
- Dept of Engineering
- Dept of Geoscience
- Dept of Mathematics
- Dept of Molecular Biology and Genetics
- Dept of Physics and Astronomy
- Interdisciplinary Nanoscience Center (iNANO)
- Aarhus University School of Engineering (ASE)

Foulum:
- Dept of Agroecology
- Dept of Animal Science
- Dept of Engineering
- Dept of Food Science
- Dept of Molecular Biology and Genetics
- DCE

Herning:
- Aarhus University School of Engineering

Silkeborg:
- Dept of Bioscience
- DCE

Kale:
- Dept of Bioscience

Årslev:
- Dept of Food Science

Roskilde:
- Dept of Bioscience
- Dept of Environmental Science
- Dept of Geoscience
- DCE

Flakkebjerg:
- Dept of Agroecology
- Dept of Molecular Biology and Genetics

Greenland:
- Nuuk
- Villum Research Station, Station Nord
- Zackenberg Research Station

Research stations, activities, etc:
- Askov Research Station
- Engineering Centre Bygholm, Horsens
- Jyndevad Research Station
- Marine Research Station, Rønbjerg

Main Campus
- Permanent departments (research centres, staff)
- Research stations, activities etc.
Science and Technology is organised into twelve departments, three schools, one large interdisciplinary centre (iNANO), and two national centres (DCA and DCE). In addition, ST houses four of the university’s museums, which welcome more than 250,000 visitors every year.

The faculty and its departments, centres, and schools are managed by appointed leaders who conduct their management through teams handling all issues of central importance. They are supported by a number of committees addressing academic issues (Academic Council at faculty level, and departmental councils at departmental level), employee issues (Faculty Liaison Committee, and local liaison committees), and working environment issues (Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and local occupational health and safety committees). A strong research base is pivotal for all activities at ST and forms the foundation for education, talent development, including PhD and postdoctoral training, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. To bring into focus and support these activities, we have established five cross-departmental committees at
faculties, departmental, and centre level, respectively. Addressing our five core areas, the committees serve to engage our scientific staff vigorously, and they enable an efficient exchange of experience between the different organisational levels, as well as in interaction with the Committee for Research and External Cooperation and the Education Committee, both at university level.

The faculty’s activities are coordinated by the Dean’s Office and supported by the Administrative Centre at faculty level, in collaboration with the university’s Central Administration and the local secretariats of the departments and centres. The faculty wishes to maintain an adequate administrative standard of service at departmental level so that academic staff can concentrate on core business. The administrative support concerns matters on HR, finance, estates facilities, IT, communication, and studies administration.
The research at ST involves a full-fledged and comprehensive set of disciplines within classical science, a variety of disciplines within agricultural and environmental research, and to an increasing extent also engineering. Separately, and in synergy, these themes form an ideal foundation for taking up national and international leadership related to global challenges and the international growth agenda. Research is disseminated through scientific peer-reviewed publications and societal impact measures such as patents, spin-out, and industrial collaboration.

The Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes at ST are organised in three schools: Aarhus School of Science (ASOS) for the programmes in natural sciences, Aarhus University School of Engineering (ASE) for the programmes in engineering, and Aarhus Graduate School of Science (GSST) for the PhD programmes.

The faculty offers thirteen Bachelor’s degree (BSc) programmes, ten Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) programmes (professional Bachelor’s degree), and twenty-nine Master’s degree (MSc) programmes of which seven are Master of Science in Engineering degree programmes. A smaller number of programmes in continuing and further education are also offered. ST offers programmes in cooperation with Aarhus University’s Faculty of Health and Aarhus University’s School of Business and Social Sciences, as well as VIA University College. ST also offers supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level for the engineering programmes.

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<th>Science and Technology (2015)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Turnover: approx. DKK 2.75 billion</td>
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<td>External funding total: 1.02 billion</td>
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<td>Academic staff (full-time equivalent): 1,237</td>
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<td>Technical/administrative staff (full-time equivalent): 797</td>
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<td>PhD students (FTE): 509</td>
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<td>Total staff (full-time equivalent): 2,544</td>
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<td>Peer-reviewed publications (2014): 2,538</td>
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<td>Consultancy reports (2014): 292</td>
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<td>Other publications (2014): 1,518</td>
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<td>Impact (citation index): 1.42</td>
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<th>Students (2015)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Number of BSc and BEng students: 5,098</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of MSc students: 1,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of annual intake of BSc and BEng students: 1,866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of annual intake of MSc students: 772</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of BSc and BEng graduates: 999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of MSc graduates: 598</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student full-time equivalents (FTE): 4,778</td>
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ORGANISATION

National centres

DCA and DCE deliver research-based advice and solutions to national and regional policy makers within the fields of food and agriculture (DCA), and the fields of nature, environment, climate and energy (DCE).

The Departments of Bioscience and Environmental Science are the main research departments underpinning the activities of DCE.

DCA is primarily supported by the Departments of Agroecology, Animal Science, Food Science, Engineering, and Molecular Biology and Genetics.

Industrial collaboration

Innovation and Entrepreneurship (2012–15)
Total number of invention disclosures: 126
Total number of priority patent applications: 53
Total number of patent assignment agreements: 14

Private and public industry (2015)
Total number of new agreements with private and public industry: 340

Science Parks and incubator environments
- Agro Business Park (Foulum)
- Agro Food Park (Aarhus)
- Incuba A/S (Aarhus: Katrinebjerg, Navitas, and Skejby)
- Alexandra Institute
- Navitas Science and Innovation
- Hatch-IT

Research-based public sector consultancy concerning agriculture and food (former DJF) as well as environment (former DMU) is provided by several departments at ST with the activities coordinated through the two national centres, Danish Centre for Food and Agriculture (DCA) and Danish Centre for Environment and Energy (DCE). The activities involve fundamental research in relevant areas, direct policy advice, and industrial collaboration supported by contracts with the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark.

Industrial collaboration is an increasing activity at the faculty with focus on direct research collaboration and knowledge transfer through education and talent development. ST is strongly committed to strengthening relations and collaboration with the Danish private sector.
INTERNATIONAL POSITION AND STRENGTHS

The overall objective invoked by the ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020 is to set an agenda for systematic improvement of ST’s performance on all important parameters related to the faculty’s key activities within research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. The strategy is centred on a systematic improvement of the quality in our key activities, not increasing overall volume with the exception of our AU Engineering 2025 Plan. The focus of the Engineering 2025 Plan is a considerable expansion of our engineering activities, i.e. education of engineers at Bachelor’s and Master’s level, engineering research with impact on societal needs, and enhanced activities within areas of industrial relevance, all with reference to the global demand for engineers.

To improve quality, we are highly focused on priorities in current spending and future investments. This is facilitated by improving transparency in our economy and establishing clear measures on the required quality related to performance and investments including recruitment, establishment of infrastructure, administrative/technical services, building costs, etc. All income and expenses need to be accountable, which implies that all expenses can be justified in terms of our key activities and strategic goals.

Aarhus University is internationally recognised as a strong and comprehensive university with high quality in research and education. In most globally recognised rankings, the university is ranked within or close to the top 100 of all universities in the world. Competition is fierce, and the number of universities worldwide is increasing as well. Today’s ranking of at least 25,000 universities globally represents a total increase of 25–30% since 2000. Thus, being in the top 100 corresponds to being among the 0.04% best universities. In the leading rankings, such as the Shanghai and the National Taiwan University rankings, there is a direct connection between Aarhus University’s position and ST’s performance. Aarhus University’s position in selected rankings is shown below.

Aarhus University’s ranking

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<tr>
<td>Shanghai (ARWU)</td>
<td>102-151</td>
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<td>101-152</td>
<td>102-150</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>Times Higher Education</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>106</td>
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<td>QS</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>107</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Taiwan University</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leiden</td>
<td>55*</td>
<td>51*</td>
<td>77**</td>
<td>68**</td>
<td>81**</td>
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Aarhus University’s position in five different rankings: The Shanghai Ranking (ARWU), Times Higher Education, QS (Quacquarelli Symonds), National Taiwan University (NTU), and Leiden University. Source: www.au.dk

* The rankings indicate the university’s position among the world’s 100 largest universities.
** Ranking among the largest universities in the world. Universities with more than 5,000 publications are included (a total of 132 universities in 2013, 138 in 2014 and 154 in 2015).
composition, focus). In 2013, ST launched a number of KPIs to specify and be able to follow quality development and performance. The KPIs for ST in terms of fundraising, publication output, education, talent development, and industrial impact are well aligned with the central indicators in most of the significant rankings.

We want to maintain Aarhus University’s position in the world’s top 100 of universities, and we aim for ST to be among the top 50 faculties worldwide in the field of science and technology. Rather than using specific rankings as a benchmark, we focus on the value of good repute by being ranked in the right fraction of the scale and thereby recognised as a faculty in the top league. Such reputation will facilitate collaborations with strong universities and the industry, funding, and the attraction of good students and young researchers who want to develop their career at ST. To acquire a better global position, we have direct focus on improved performance and quality in research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. The direct measures will be through our KPIs, our measures in the strategy, and focus on quality in our key areas. We will use international rankings as an indirect barometer to measure our performance and level of quality.

Through careful attention to priority of resources, establishment of strategic initiatives, and focused recruitment of excellent staff, ST has the opportunity to improve its international position. We have a unique potential for establishing synergies, and combined with the faculty’s excellence in a variety of topics and its great infrastructure and laboratory facilities, ST is attractive when it comes to recruitment and external collaboration. The faculty covers all classical disciplines of fundamental and applied science, sector-oriented expertise in agriculture, food, and environment as well as increasing activities in engineering. Through improved focus on quality and priorities in our disciplines, strengthened internal collaboration with an eye for synergy in order to address societal challenges, and increasing focus on internationalisation and industrial collaboration, we have the potential to improve our global impact considerably.

A key asset of the ST research strategies is the establishment of Centres of Excellence at all scales, building up a frontline research infrastructure available for ST researchers as well as national and international collaborators. ST currently houses quite a number of large Centres of Excellence funded by the Danish National Research Foundation, various private foundations, and the European Research Council. This not only supports excellent research activities, but also initiates and nurtures new research areas and talents. Similarly, the availability of outstanding experimental facilities, spanning from research stations in the Arctic, through farming facilities in Foulum and Flakkebjerg, to particle accelerators in Aarhus, provides opportunities for researchers to pursue top-notch collaborative research projects based at Aarhus University.
The ST Strategic Plan 2016–2020 focuses on the systematic development of quality in our key areas – research, education, talent development, public sector consultancy, and industrial collaboration. All activities are based on a strong research foundation. Our primary focus is the development of solid activities in our departments and centres by building up new research areas that are internationally unique and have societal effect, systematic strengthening of existing high-profile research activities, and engaging the next generation of talented researchers through recruitment and talent development. In addition, we have a strong focus on forming the framework for activities at faculty level, in terms of buildings and infrastructures, and motivating and exploiting unique synergies between our departments and centres, across the university, and with external partners. The strategy serves to bring into focus and facilitate the development of quality in our key areas, including priority of resources for the strategic development of the entire ST.
BUILDING STRONG FACILITIES

ST continuously works on improving the facilities for our excellent research, education, and consultancy activities. In recent years, we have constructed 18,000 square metres of new buildings at Katrinebjerg for computer science and engineering activities making a strong cluster for ICT, computer science, and electronics. iNANO House (10,000 square metres) was inaugurated in 2013 encircling the interdisciplinary nanoscience research, education, and innovation activities between several ST departments. Navitas, Aarhus University’s latest and biggest facility (25,000 square metres) located at the Port of Aarhus, is the domicile for civil and structural, architectural, and mechanical engineering. Among other significant new facilities, are the Organic Animal Science Platform in Foulum and the Greenhouses in the Botanical Garden in Aarhus.

In the strategy period, and as part of the university’s academic development process, the food science research activities will move from Årslev and Foulum to be unified in Agro Food Park in Skejby. Here, our Department of Food Science will be located in the centre of the Danish Food Cluster with close access to the industry and easy transport to the university’s main campus via the new light rail. Similarly, the bioscience research activities in Silkeborg and Kalø are planned to be moved to Aarhus to be unified on the main campus. The current research and consultancy activities in Roskilde will be moved to the university’s Campus Emdrup in Copenhagen. The new location on Campus Emdrup will provide a great opportunity to develop new degree programmes and research within environment, energy, and biology. The university’s coming expansion involving the Aarhus University Hospital grounds adjacent to the main campus is also taken into consideration for ST activities beyond the strategy period.
AU ENGINEERING 2025

A new strategic venture is represented by the AU Engineering 2025 Plan, a large-scale initiative aiming to achieve an internationally competitive environment for research, education, and public sector consultancy in the field of engineering and technology. Our aim is to educate more and better engineering graduates (Bachelors, Masters, and PhDs) and conduct engineering research at the highest international level, thus creating visible and measurable societal impact regionally, nationally and globally.

We are in a unique position to contribute to solving the grand challenges as well as inventing and developing future growth technologies. Over the past decade, Aarhus University has built up activities in the engineering field at ST. Noticeable advances in technology are shaping today’s society with incredible opportunities for engineers from all disciplines. This is reflected directly in the increased focus and funding of the technical and industrially oriented sciences in Denmark and globally. Disruptive technologies have an accelerating influence on our global society. Exponential growth comes out of young innovative high-tech companies that are able to exploit the new technologies even in markets dominated by large well-established global companies. Global challenges with energy, climate change, and food supply, can only be overcome through disruptive advances in future technologies. This opens up undiscovered opportunities but it also challenges Aarhus and Denmark in a global competitive market.

The details, measures and activities are specified in the AU Engineering 2025 Plan and only mentioned in broad lines here.
Considerable efforts have been devoted to the establishment of strong activities connecting positions of strength at different departments to build up thematic centres across ST with the ambition and quality objective to be nationally leading and internationally strong – so as to truly take charge of the research agenda. The overall aim is to significantly increase the number of research areas in which ST can claim an internationally leading position and which have the potential to make societal impact. This facilitates fundraising and attracting strong national and international collaborations, and it is a key asset in recruitment of top talent for the next generation at ST.

At this stage, the Faculty Management Team has identified eight thematic areas with the potential to develop nationally leading and internationally strong research activities based on areas that cover several ST departments. This currently includes the establishment of ST thematic centres within Big Data and Data Analysis, and Functional Materials, in which areas ST has already agreed on expanding activities within the Strategic Plan 2016–2020. Furthermore, a number of activities are currently being discussed within areas related to green energy, water, food, environment, entrepreneurship, and modern approaches to teaching. Centres within these or similar areas will be developed within the strategy period. The aim of the thematic centres is to devote attention and priority to research activities with strong societal impact within areas where ST can make a difference by means of synergy across the faculty.

Inspiration comes from the Interdisciplinary Nanoscience Center (iNANO), which since 2002 has been running as a strong and internationally highly recognised activity at Aarhus University with a focus on excellent research, education, and innovation. It is not the aim to strictly mimic the iNANO model for all thematic centres. Rather, each centre will be developed to optimally fulfil its mission on a scale suited to the area. Examples of current centres that also serve as inspiration are the Bioinformatics Research Centre (BiRC) and the Arctic Research Centre (ARC), just to mention a couple of centres established on different models than iNANO.

A key element in the strategy is to develop flagships of international strength independent of the span of activities at ST. This implies that a majority of the flagships are developed and prioritised at the departmental and centre level. Examples of such centres could be: Biorefinery Technologies, Molecular Neurobiology, Life Chemistry, Nanomedicine, Climate-Smart Agri-Food Systems, Deep Earth Systems, and Space Science and Technologies just to mention a few.
PEOPLE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

ST is made up of accomplished and dedicated employees: academic (VIP), technical and administrative (TAP) staff. They are our most important resource and a fundamental asset. We strive to create job satisfaction and provide all employees with the best possible conditions for the professionally competent and efficient execution of the faculty’s assignments. We are committed to constantly improving the working conditions, and it is of utmost importance that our employees, independently of functions, professional, and geographical affiliations, find the faculty to be an exciting place to work.

We want to maintain and develop a common identity and a culture that promotes self-management, collaboration, dialogue, curiosity, trust, fairness, appreciative inquiry, and interpersonal skills at all levels. We will ensure professional opportunities and development for all, and we will respect and support freedom of expression and freedom of research.

We want to develop the best possible workplace renowned for our drive, mutual respect, recognition, responsibility, and a work-life balance. We will continuously improve the physical and psychological working environments with the involvement of managing teams, occupational health and safety committees, and liaison committees. By means of physical and psychological workplace assessments, the challenges revealed will be addressed with relevant action plans to be established and implemented. The annual staff development dialogue between employee and manager ensures agreement on capability development, expectations, working conditions, and priorities. A special effort will be put on activities to avoid stress symptoms and to keep an acceptable work-life balance. It is similarly crucial to ensure a good working environment for employees affected by planned relocations.

External factors also have an influence on our working environment, particularly increased competition to attract external research funding and new requirements on education imposed by the study progress reform. These have an impact on the faculty’s economy with the risk of affecting both individuals and their general well-being. The Faculty Management Team will strive to obtain the best possible financial and legal framework for ST’s activities and development, and recognises a challenge regarding the increased need for external funding. The faculty will ensure that the administrative and support services are modern, professional, coherent, and fit to contribute to the realisation of ST’s mission and vision. At departmental level, we will maintain an adequate administrative standard of service so that the academic staff can focus on core business.

Our goal is to attract the most skilled employees for all positions. Special attention will be paid to our foreign staff members and guests as they are faced with new circumstances regarding culture, practicalities and administrative matters, not only at the faculty but generally in Denmark. We strive to have a welcoming and open culture towards all new employees.
RESEARCH

Research is the basis for all our key activities. Our mission is to contribute to society through excellent research. Our vision to be a global key player advancing excellence in research will be pursued by the following three strategic objectives for the research activities at ST. The objectives are aligned with the overall goal to establish the foundation for positioning ST in the global top 50 league of faculties within the areas of science and technology. In addition to the objectives listed in the following, the research strategy is inseparably linked to our talent and recruitment strategies.
OBJECTIVE

Ensuring research of high scientific quality and impact internationally

A key element in our research-based activities is research of the highest possible quality, providing measurable impact in the international research community. This fosters close attention to optimising the performance of our researchers at all levels through the establishment of strong research environments and a focus on quality in an international perspective.

MEASURES

• Improved impact through peer-reviewed publications with increased focus on high-impact journals
• Increased number of research publications
• Increased proportion of highly cited researchers
• Increased number of prestigious national and international prizes given to ST researchers
• Recruitment and development of top-talent young researchers
• Establishment of more advanced research infrastructures

ACTIONS

• Strong focus will be devoted to stimulating high-impact publication of our research results with a strong focus on quality and academic position. High-quality research output is pivotal for attracting national/international public/private collaborations, students, and talent.
• We will instigate a principle of subsidiarity in all our actions to promote scientific quality and impact. We will ensure that new research initiatives originate from a dialogue-based culture between researchers, department, and faculty management, and we will move support closer to the individual researchers and research environments.
• ST will actively support the actions of our departments and centres using the newly established research committees of the departments to promote a common understanding and awareness of the concepts of scientific quality and impact throughout the faculty.
• An active and strong talent layer is fundamental to the delivery of excellent research. As addressed in more detail in the ‘talent’ section, we will be strongly devoted to the recruitment and development of a strong next generation of researchers with a focus on research impact.
• Strong focus will be devoted to ensuring infrastructures to facilitate the strategic goal, e.g. by maintaining international visibility and collaboration as well as access to frontline research equipment throughout the faculty. Attention will be given to the national (NUFI) and international (ESFRI) infrastructural programmes, and strengthening our engagement in the ESS/MAX IV facilities, as well as many of the existing unique research infrastructures and facilities at ST.
OBJECTIVE

Promoting research with high societal impact – regionally, nationally and internationally

Increasing attention is being devoted to the impact of science on global challenges, growth, and welfare. Through its strategies, ST is highly committed to stimulating increased attention to societal impact in our research programmes combined with high research quality. This may be stimulated through increased exploitation of ST’s unique position having classical science, public sector-related science, and engineering in our portfolio of activities.

MEASURES

• Establishment of cross-departmental thematic centres at ST in the top international league
• Establishment of strategic research partnerships with Danish and international private and public companies
• Development of stronger ties between classical science, public sector consultancy, and engineering

ACTIONS

• ST will take initiatives towards increasing awareness of societal impact among our researchers together with increased attention to the H2020 programmes Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership, the OECD ‘mega challenges’, and various national strategic research initiatives, including the processes involved in formulating the Forsk2025 national strategy. Internally, focus on these initiatives will be mediated through the newly established research committees at all departments and centres. Externally, ST will facilitate the strategic goal by establishing partnerships with public and private institutions addressing societal challenges.
• As a supplement to our centres at departmental/centre level, ST will establish a number of strategic, interdisciplinary thematic centres. With academic strength, such centres will focus on societal challenges and emerging technologies in strategically selected areas, specifically using potential synergy across departments and centres and possibly with strong industrial partners.
• We will look for deeper strategic partnerships with leading Danish and international industries in a coordinated effort to develop mutually beneficial research and education programmes. This action is closely linked to the following objective and the strategies for industrial collaboration and education.
• With attention to active participation in developing thematic research areas in the national/international funding landscape, we will increase the presence of ST’s academic staff in relevant national and international research councils and research policy organisations.
• Synergies between classical science, public sector research, and engineering to boost societal impact will be systematically established and developed to promote attention to knowledge-based solutions to societal challenges.
OBJECTIVE

Ensuring increased competitiveness in the changing landscape of public and private research funding

A unique opportunity and a challenge is the changing landscape of funding opportunities from public and private research foundations and the increased need for external funding to promote excellent research activities. As our abilities to conduct excellent research highly depend on our ability to attract external funding, and vice versa, our strategy addresses specific attention to our competitiveness relating to fundraising.

MEASURES

• Increased external funding
• Increased fraction of ST total budget from external sources
• Higher success rate and increased funding from national, international (including EU), and private funding bodies
• Increased number of large research grants (DKK 50 million+)
• Improved visibility of strong research activities and scientific breakthroughs

ACTIONS

• ST will take a number of initiatives with the aim of increasing our external research funding, continuously pursuing possibilities in the changing landscape of research funding, and with a focus on funding agencies with a yet untapped potential. We aim at strengthening the support activities close to the researcher and developing a dialogue-based infrastructure around the researcher to ensure an undivided focus on research excellence and impact.
• Specific initiatives will be taken towards private foundations and H2020 based on active involvement of researchers, and with a focus on increased international collaboration well in advance of specific international calls. We will support the establishment of local internal collegial review processes and information meetings at faculty level.
• Research funding support initiatives will be facilitated through the newly established network of fundraisers in all departments and centres in collaboration with the Aarhus University Research Support Office.
• Increased focus will be devoted to branding of strong research activities, leading infrastructures, and scientific breakthroughs to improve awareness of ST research activities and our role in society.
• We will continue to increase the quality of data and statistical resources available to researchers and heads of departments and provide them with better access to monitoring fundraising activities. This is a key action for having a better overview of performance and the quality of various measures undertaken to support fundraising.
EDUCATION

The graduates are ST’s most important contribution to society. We will continue our focus on offering challenging study programmes of the highest international standard, and recruiting talented and motivated students. Our aim is to provide society, business, and industry with competent and highly qualified science and engineering graduates.

Effective learning is a top priority. It is our aim that the learning environment should focus on more engaging activities, specifically targeting student-centred learning. Educational IT will serve as an important tool in pursuing this goal. We will continue and strengthen our focus on educational IT as a vehicle for moving our teaching into the realm of student-centred learning.
OBJECTIVE

To educate graduates for the 21st century with strong academic qualifications and strong employability skills

ST has a long tradition of educating highly skilled graduates in a broad range of science and engineering disciplines. Our primary goal is to educate even more internationally competitive graduates who are able to solve challenging, complex and practical problems requested by society. We aim to challenge our students to further improve their learning outcome by focusing on core academic skills combined with an interdisciplinary and application-oriented perspective.

MEASURES

• Increased number of graduates
• Positive feedback from employer panels on the relevance of competence profiles
• Further improvement of employment rate
• Integration of innovation and entrepreneurship in relevant degree programmes
• Positive accreditation of new degree programmes

ACTIONS

Continuous dialogue with external partners about the relevance of and call for ST’s degree programmes
• Focus on relevance of our degree programmes in the continuous dialogue with the programmes’ employer panels and the faculty’s Advisory Board
• An external expert will evaluate each degree programme every five years
• Closer link to ST alumni

Active use of student internship and other interactive student–employer activities
• We will strengthen collaboration with industry partners in order to assure mutual commitment to educational activities
• Development of talent tracks and nesting programmes in collaboration with industry partners

Ensure that innovation and entrepreneurship are an integrated element in all study programmes
• Innovation and entrepreneurial activities will be supported by the establishment of an innovation hub at the faculty
OBJECTIVE

To offer challenging study programmes of the highest international quality supported by an innovative learning environment

The educational activities at ST are firmly anchored in and shaped by research and development. The degree programmes are designed by researchers and teachers with a strong and relevant knowledge base, and the programmes aim to provide the graduates with the intellectual, practical, academic, and entrepreneurial skills needed to tackle complex challenges – now and in the future.

Education should be more engaging, compelling, challenging and motivating, and create a learning community that stimulates all students to perform at their highest possible level. We aim to challenge and inspire students, not just to educate the next generation firmly rooted in the status quo. We aim for a point in learning where students naturally question the material, think for themselves, and enter the mindset of budding researchers. Tomorrow's graduate will need to be not only excellent in the core science or engineering discipline, but also able to apply knowledge to solve incomplete and unstructured problems with changing and contradictory requirements and to act in a globally connected world. The learning environment will focus on the student as the key player in the learning process (student-centred learning) by the use of active learning.

MEASURES

• Improved student evaluations in the regular study environment surveys and course evaluations
• Improved scores in the Aarhus University quality system
• Positive and constructive programme evaluations
• Successful implementation of talent tracks

ACTIONS

Curriculum development

• As of September 2017, the faculty has decided to replace the term structure from the current quarter system (four 7-week terms annually) to a semester system (two 15-week terms). As part of this reorganisation, the curricula for all degree programmes will be rethought and modified.
• Relevant elements of the CDIO (Conceive – Design – Implement – Operate) concept will be implemented to ensure progression and coherence in the science programmes
• Student-centred teaching and learning methods will be developed and implemented to ensure optimal learning outcome and learning experiences.

Further improvement of study environment

• Provide an excellent study environment and the opportunity of dialogue among students, teachers and researchers.

Further improvement of quality assurance and development practice

• The faculty’s boards of studies and education committees have a strong focus on the quality of our degree programmes. They will continuously monitor quality indicators and use the gathered information to improve and develop the programmes.
• To secure and develop quality and relevance of the degree programmes, the faculty has a well-functioning quality assurance system. The system focuses on scope, learning outcome and relevance of our programmes, and involves central stakeholders such as students, teachers, researchers, and employers.

Establishment of talent track at Bachelor’s level

• To also challenge the most talented students, a range of degree programmes offer extracurricular talent tracks. These have so far been established in Physics, Nanoscience and Chemistry and will be implemented in a broad range of the faculty’s Bachelor’s degree programmes within the period of the strategic plan.
OBJECTIVE
To be a preferred faculty for the most skilled and talented science and technology students

A good match between student and degree programme is of vital importance to meet the ambition to educate highly qualified graduates. In order to attract and recruit a sufficient number of strong and motivated students, it is imperative that the faculty offers, and is known for offering, challenging degree programmes of high quality. This will be achieved through focused recruitment activities designed to inspire and attract potential students nationally and internationally, and also through new admission requirements designed to admit only the best-qualified and motivated applicants.

MEASURES
• Increased grade point average among students taking Bachelor’s degree programmes
• Increased number of applicants to Bachelor’s degree programmes
• Increased grade point average among international applicants to Master’s degree programmes

ACTIONS
Focused recruitment strategy
• A key challenge for ST and for the Danish society is to recruit an adequate amount of skilled and motivated students to science and technology degree programmes. The faculty plays – and will continue to play – a leading role in designing and driving innovative recruitment activities to make more young people interested in science and engineering.
• To facilitate a more focused effort, recruitment committees will be established at faculty level, with a focus on both national and international recruitment.

Strengthen recruitment of the best-qualified students by improving admission processes and criteria
• ST will take initiative to establish an alternative admission system to identify skilled and talented students based not only on upper secondary grade point averages, but also on non-academic achievements, personal skills and cognitive competences.
TALENT DEVELOPMENT

A key ingredient in fulfilling ST’s vision is to attract and develop top-level researchers in all areas and to provide ST’s scientific staff with the best possible opportunities to develop their ideas and potential in a global setting. Given the fierce international competition, this requires a focused effort in the recruitment process as well as in supporting career development at all stages from PhD fellows to full professors.

A more balanced gender distribution among researchers is desirable and will be given high priority in the coming years.
**OBJECTIVE**

Recruit and nourish top-level research staff

In order to increase ST’s national and international competitiveness, it is crucial to employ research staff of international high standing in all open, permanent positions. This requires a more thorough recruitment process, also focusing on gender balance, use of internationally recognised types of positions, e.g. tenure track, and an increased focus on issues such as start-up packages and support for accompanying family.

**MEASURES**

- Increased proportion of international top-level staff
- Improved gender balance

**ACTIONS**

New recruitment procedures implemented from 2016

- **Active use of search committees**: The best potential applicants – nationally as well as internationally – should be approached and encouraged to consider job opportunities at ST. Permanent research positions should only be filled by applicants with the potential to lead and obtain funding for major EU projects, Centres of Excellence from the Danish National Research Foundations, or similar.
- **Increased staff involvement in recruitment processes**: The future colleagues of new scientific staff should be involved in defining new positions and in interactions with top candidates to ensure faculty ownership and easier integration of new staff.
- **Involvement of a Faculty Tenure and Promotions Committee**: A committee with leading professors from all departments will advise the dean on the employment of tenured scientific staff, development of a common understanding of scientific quality, and requirements for different job categories across disciplines.

Provide research start-up packages

- **Utilise Aarhus University Research Foundation and ST strategic funds to kick-start activities of new scientific staff**: To make positions at ST internationally competitive, it is imperative to provide new scientific staff with start-up grants to support financing of equipment, postdoctoral fellows, and PhD students, etc. ST strategic funds will be prioritised to support this as a supplement to the programme initiated by the Aarhus University Research Foundation.
- **Provide active support to spouse and other family members of new scientific staff**: A major challenge in recruiting international top-level researchers is to provide accompanying families with attractive jobs and/or educational opportunities. Increased efforts will be done to solve this challenge – ideally in collaboration with the municipality, region, industries, etc. – as well as to provide information about the many attractive features of life in Denmark. This is important as early as the initial recruitment stage.
OBJECTIVE

Improve career paths at all levels

It is important for ST that staff are employed in the right type of position, given the opportunity to develop their skills, and given proper advice on career options. ST currently lacks a proper career ladder for both permanent research staff and for academic staff in research support functions.

MEASURES

• Implementation of ST policy for academic advancements with full professorships as target
• Implementation of ST policy for academic staff in research support functions and for technical and administrative staff

ACTIONS

• Advise young researchers about career options within as well as outside academia
• ST’s primary mission is to educate talented students for society at all levels. Only a small fraction of PhD students and postdoctoral fellows at ST will obtain a more permanent affiliation at Aarhus University. It is therefore very important that focus is devoted to guidance and training increasing strong career opportunities for our talented students and staff.

Set research talent free

• Being embedded in a strong research environment is important for young researchers but it is imperative that talented students and staff are allowed and encouraged to develop their own ideas and establish a strong independent research profile. This includes publishing major papers without previous supervisors or group leaders as co-authors.

Form an ST policy for full professorships

• ST should develop a policy for promotion from senior researcher/associate professor to full professor, without compromising on quality.

Form an ST policy for academic staff in research support functions

• ST should develop career paths for academic staff in important research support functions.
**OBJECTIVE**

Attract PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior staff of the highest quality

The number of new PhD students at ST is expected to remain constant or perhaps decline slightly in the coming years due to governmental cuts in research funding. Thus, it is important to ensure that only top-level students are admitted. There is room in particular for improvement in the screening of applicants who were previously educated outside Aarhus University. Similar considerations apply to postdoctoral fellows.

**MEASURES**

- Increased number of talented students and staff (PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior staff) per member of academic staff (VIP)
- Increased fraction of PhD students recruited from other top 100 universities
- Increased fraction of postdoctoral fellows recruited from other top 100 universities

**ACTIONS**

Systematic use of screening grants and short-term visits

- To ensure a proper alignment of expectations between potential PhD students and supervisors, there should be increased use of the graduate school screening grants sponsoring visits of up to three months in duration, or short-term visits by prospective non-local applicants.

Use collaboration nodes systematically in PhD student and postdoctoral recruitment

- Increased focus should be given to recruitment through international research networks to ensure assistance with quality assessments and to strengthen research collaborations.
OBJECTIVE
Increase number of industrial and industry-collaborating PhD students and postdoctoral fellows

Collaborative projects between ST research groups and industry are important for tackling a range of societal challenges, and they provide a direct link for the future employment of the young researchers involved. There is a significant potential for increasing the current number of industrial PhD students and industrial postdoctoral fellows at ST as well as a potential for further industrial co-funding of research and researchers outside these programmes.

MEASURES
• Increased number of industrial PhD students
• Increased number of industry-collaborating PhD students
• Increased number of industrial postdoctoral fellows
• Increased number of industry-collaborating postdoctoral fellows

ACTIONS
Strengthen contacts to relevant companies
• Meetings between companies, potential supervisors, and interested students/postdoctoral fellows should be facilitated to increase awareness of the industrial PhD and industrial postdoctoral programmes, as well as the possibilities for other joint projects of relevance for PhD students and postdoctoral fellows.
• Establishment of enhanced educational programmes in direct collaboration with selected leading Danish and foreign companies with a potential for large volume of collaborative projects and mutual talent development.
Conducting research and providing advisory service of the highest quality, ST will continue to be the leading Danish institution performing sector-oriented advice with increased focus on international activities. ST will provide public partners with solutions to current and future societal challenges both nationally and internationally. Research-based public sector consultancy is an important commitment of ST as the faculty is the main national partner for the Danish ministries. The ambition is to deliver excellent research-based public sector consultancy and to strengthen the societal impact of research-based policy advice. The aim is to strengthen the research base underpinning the public sector consultancy and thus increase competitiveness. Research and research-based advice including monitoring and research readiness are accomplished by several departments at ST with the activities coordinated through the national centres DCA and DCE.
OBJECTIVE

Excellent research-based public sector consultancy

ST has excellent opportunities for improving its position as the principal advisory partner for public authorities. The faculty covers all classical disciplines of fundamental and applied science, and has sector-oriented expertise in agriculture, food, and the environment, as well as increasing activities within engineering. The research base will be strengthened by an increased focus on the quality of research, the development of infrastructures, and collaboration between relevant departments. DCA and DCE will jointly deliver research-based public sector consultancy of the highest quality.

MEASURES

- Increased number of peer-reviewed publications underpinning public sector consultancy
- Increased quality in managing research-based advisory activities at Aarhus University
- Increased number of projects on public sector advice across ST departments

ACTIONS

- In order to increase competitiveness in the changing landscape for public sector consultancy, ST will strengthen the research base underpinning the policy advice by supporting research applications towards H2020 and other funding bodies, and thus increase focus on international collaborations.
- Increased collaboration within the relevant ST research groups can further contribute to a strong research base.
- Establishing public sector consultancy committees also at faculty level can facilitate involvement of new relevant research competences to support the policy advice.
- Ensuring high quality of advisory services that contain improved and streamlined planning and implementation of processes and procedures. This includes documented quality assurance procedures for the products relevant to the public partners. A common quality assurance procedure will be implemented at the level of the two national centres and the departments responsible for the advice to the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark.
- To ensure the long-term fundamentals for acknowledged research-based service and policy advice, it is crucial to safeguard a strong, sustained and engaging academic environment. Thus focus is on recruitment of highly qualified staff within the research areas relevant to public sector consultancy.
**OBJECTIVE**

Strengthen societal impact of research-based public sector consultancy

ST will offer research-based advice nationally and internationally within the relevant topics, and identify new public partners in need of research-based advice to develop their core areas. New partners and activities will contribute to increasing the financial robustness of the sector-oriented ST departments as the funding from the Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark has been decreasing for several years. With the delivery of high-quality publications through DCA and DCE – a unique set-up compared with other universities – ST will increase the visibility of public sector consultancy. To improve the overall efficiency of our advisory service, the processes between the national centres and the departments will be optimised.

**MEASURES**

- Increased number of public partners
- Increased funding from public partners
- Increased dialogue with stakeholders
- Increased number of publications targeted at the public sector
- Increased number of outreach activities on public sector consultancy

**ACTIONS**

- ST will focus on initiatives towards new public partners; ministries, municipalities, national and international organisations. Identification and utilisation of new opportunities can increase the volume of public sector consultancy offered by the faculty and create a new funding basis for the relevant research groups.
- The dialogue with the stakeholders will be increased to identify new knowledge areas needed for solving future societal challenges and consequently call for agility and prioritisation with stakeholders concerning current research areas on a long-term basis.
- Promotion and dissemination of products and services targeted at the public sector will be developed to increase the societal impact of research-based advice both nationally and internationally.
INDUSTRIAL COLLABORATION

An important element of the ST Strategic Plan is an ambition towards a significant increase in the collaborative interactions with society, including private and public institutions. ST wants to be a preferred partner for industry-university collaborations, spanning from direct research collaboration to joint student/talent development activities. Supported by external funding from Danish industrially oriented funds to EU strategic funds, ST aims to significantly enhance its research activities relating closely to growth technologies and topics of strong industrial interest. One target area will be the enhancement of engineering research and education activities through the AU Engineering 2025 Plan. Strong focus will also be devoted to more active and direct use of instruments, infrastructures, and laboratories as an element in collaborative projects with industry. Our ambitions will be pursued through the following strategic objectives:
OBJECTIVE

Paving the way for ST’s interaction with industry to the benefit of society

Through its diversity covering classical science, sector-oriented research, and engineering, ST has a unique set-up for expanding activities further into areas of great societal importance, spanning from global challenges to growth technologies with adaption to the relevant technology readiness level. Increased focus will address large national/international research programmes, and the implementation of innovation and entrepreneurship platforms to an increased number of student and faculty spinout/spinoff activities.

MEASURES

- Increased participation in and funding from Societal Challenges and Industrial Leadership programmes
- Increased proportion of funding from industrially oriented funding programmes at national and regional levels
- Establishment of an increased number of innovation and entrepreneurship activities at faculty and departmental/centre levels
- Increased number of spinout/spinoff companies originating from student and staff activities.
- Stronger interaction with ST alumni

ACTIONS

- ST will devote substantial efforts to be a key driver in setting up research programmes in collaboration with external private and public partners to promote development of knowledge-based solutions to grand challenges and bring our research excellence into play in relation to growth technologies and the needs from industry.
- To facilitate the establishment of excellent private–public partnerships, ST will have a significant focus on national and international (EU) research programmes with an industrial/societal focus.
- ST will work towards establishing an infrastructure for entrepreneurship and innovation throughout the faculty, building on the experience from some of its departments and centres. This will involve local initiatives based on strong topic-related activities to establish a cross-departmental innovation hub.
- ST lacks an important instrument in its efforts to open up activities towards society: a comprehensive alumni network. Hence a specific element of the Strategic Plan will be to build up and take advantage of such a network.
OBJECTIVE

Establishing strong partnerships with private companies

ST aims to be the preferred partner for industrial collaboration in the region, and substantially increase its activities with industries at a national and international level. This involves a change of our profile/visibility to external partners as well as the establishment of strong contacts and collaborative projects with industries ranging from SMVs to large international enterprises.

MEASURES

- Increased visibility of and access to collaboration with ST research environments
- Increased exploitation of unique infrastructures as entry point to external collaboration
- Increased number of matchmaking events with the industry
- Increased number of contracts with industry
- Substantial increase in university–industry talent development, through internships, industrial PhD programmes, and postdoctoral fellowships
- Increased number of external partnerships resulting in joint research publications

ACTIONS

- ST will establish an infrastructure for smooth contact between ST researchers and external partners by creating simple access points for private and public institutions close to individual research expertise and frontline research equipment, exploiting the newly established business committees at all departments and centres.
- ST will continue efforts in opening up its activities towards society. This will include setting up strong, attractive, and visible research groups with societal impact, specifically exploiting an expansion of engineering activities in close collaboration with existing science activities and external partners.
- ST will increase its efforts in opening up unique and expensive infrastructures for external users to facilitate frontline industrial research and development, and promote state-of-the-art knowledge dissemination. Such activities may be facilitated through industrial offices, etc.
- ST will form partnerships with external partners based on bottom-up commitments from individual research groups and institutions. This will be facilitated by a number of initiatives at faculty level, including a new series of thematic workshops (e.g. Brainnovation days) as meeting points between ST researchers and external potential partners, as well as a series of one-to-one meetings between ST researchers and individual private companies.
- Founding of external collaborations and activities will be facilitated by the newly established business committees at all departments and centres in collaboration with Aarhus University’s Technology Transfer Office (TTO).
- In collaboration with TTO, we will work to standardise and simplify collaborative agreements with industry and institutions concerning Standardised Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).
- ST will facilitate increased collaborations with industry concerning education through nesting programmes and internships, as well as striving to increase the number of industrial PhD students and postdoctoral fellows.