



# TALENT ATTRACTION TO CENTRAL DENMARK

**HEADSTART**

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

The HEADSTART project's strategic purpose is to attract highly qualified professionals from abroad to improve recruitment possibilities in local companies in Central Denmark.

The project is planned and developed in continuation of, and in collaboration with already existing initiatives, including local business networks, municipal and voluntary activities aimed at recruiting and retaining international talent. HEADSTART is a strategic effort led across companies in Central Denmark. By joining forces, we increase the visibility of local companies, business ecosystems and, not the least, potential career paths, so that international candidates discover a destination with many job opportunities. HEADSTART complements corporate profiling activities by showing an attractive ca-

reer destination and profiling the area as an attractive place to live, packed with opportunities both during and after work hours.

The initial grant for HEADSTART extends over a three-year project period (2019-2022) with Business Region Aarhus as project owner, Business Region MidtVest and Copenhagen Capacity as partners, as well as a number of collaborating partners.



# BACKGROUND

Both locally in Central Denmark and internationally, companies face a big challenge.

There are nearly 70,000 companies in Central Denmark with approx. 670,000 full-time employees. The number of full-time employees has increased by nearly 20,000 since 2010 and turnover in the region's companies has increased by more than 37% during the same period [Statistics Denmark]. The unemployment rate in the region is very low, at 3.1% - and in some municipalities even down to 2%. The gross national unemployment rate is 3.9% [Statistics Denmark].

53% of companies in Central Denmark state that access to the right skills is crucial for the company's growth and development. At the same time, an increasing proportion of companies say they struggle to attract the right skills. In Central and Western Jutland, about 32% of companies report having experienced unsuccessful recruitment in their search for highly educated employees, while almost 60% experienced unsuccessful recruitment of skilled workers [Dansk Industri, 2018]. The region's companies lack and will increasingly lack manpower. Therefore, they need to be able to attract the right competence groups for their business. Attracting talent can be part of ensuring the continued growth and development of the region, by providing companies with access to the necessary manpower.

## In European competition

With rising growth and employment, the demand for labor is growing in Eastern European countries, in the Nordic countries and especially in Germany. Several of these countries also report that shortages in labor limit production [Danish Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Interior, 2018]. These circumstances intensify competition for labor

in Europe, and it may be more difficult for Denmark to attract enough qualified employees. Moreover, Denmark only ranks 13th among OECD countries, when it comes to the country's attractiveness for highly educated foreign professionals [OECD Indicators of Talent Attractiveness, 2019]. An active effort to continue attracting and retaining international labor is therefore necessary.

## How does an international contribute?

Since 2003, a total of 15,900 highly educated foreigners have come to Denmark. At the start of 2017, 10,200 still resided in Denmark [DI analysis 2019]. On average, a highly educated foreign national contributes an annual DKK 140,000 to public finances. This takes into consideration tax payments, as well as public transfer income and welfare services in the health, day care and education fields for both the highly educated individual and any family members [DI analysis 2019]. International employees also contribute greatly to the companies' growth. Reports show a strong correlation between the employment of highly educated internationals and an increase in productivity and innovation in companies [ATV 2019]. Highly educated international employees are both in demand in the local companies, and also contribute to the Danish economy as a whole.

# OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY 1: CAREER PORTAL AND CANDIDATE MANAGEMENT

### 1.1. Job overview

Gathering open job postings that are relevant to an international target group

### 1.2. Company pages

Relevant information about companies targeted to candidates

### 1.3. Candidate management - Contact database

Continuous exposure of information about jobs and lifestyle

## ACTIVITY 3: ATTRACTION AND ONBOARDING

### 3.1. Implementation of digital attraction campaigns

Increasing international visibility and knowledge of Central Denmark and attraction of international employees directly to open positions in Central Denmark

### 3.2. Peer to peer marketing through ambassadors

Communicating positive stories about work and life in Central Denmark directly to the target group, as well as presenting relevant candidates with open positions

### 3.3 Reception and onboarding process for international employees

Collecting and mapping best practice from previously developed activities and briefing companies on available initiatives for newcomers

### 3.4 Matchmaking between companies and international graduates

The activities build a connection between residing international graduates and the business community by motivating participating companies to see the potential in graduates and by exploiting the possible synergies between HEADSTART's ambassador network and existing activities targeted towards graduates

## ACTIVITY 2: COMPANY PARTICIPATION

### 2.1 Company network

A group of companies providing input on the branding efforts in order to ensure that activities are in line with the companies' needs

### 2.2 Editorial group

Supports ambassador activities, with the participation of HR and communication staff from companies in the company network

### 2.3 Ambassador network

Activates all residing international employees in a field of expertise to help convey messages about Central Denmark. The network is activated in connection with the implementation of work package 3.2

## ACTIVITY 4: PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### 4.2 Communication and knowledge sharing

Continuous communication on results and the impact of ambassadors

### 4.3 Program management

Recruitment / distribution of employees and mobilization of stakeholders

### 4.4 Project management

Continuous dialogue with partners regarding single projects that are part of the overall project

### 4.5 Network management

Facilitating several networks, each contributing to the overall purpose of the project

### 4.6 International cooperation and knowledge sharing

Seek and capitalize on international experiences and partners that can help achieve the project's goals

# PROJECT OUTCOME

The project supports the region's companies in their recruitment efforts towards well-qualified international labor through several initiatives and activities.



All activities in the project are to be carried out with a data-driven approach based on the companies' needs. Data collection, analysis and evaluation are therefore included in all activities to ensure that they remain needs-driven and continuously contribute to new methods for attracting international employees.

## Specific objectives for the project:

Company involvement: The project aims for 100 companies with a recruitment need to display their open positions on the career portal over 3 years, as well as to gradually include more of the region's companies on the portal, as an ongoing process..

→ Is reached through activity 1  
Career portal and candidate management

Digital attraction campaigns: The project aims for 500,000 potential candidates to be exposed to messages about career opportunities in Central Denmark and for 5,000 of them to subscribe for more information about career opportunities in the region. This aims to result in 160 applications and ensuing new hires in the region's companies.

→ Is reached through activity 3.1  
Implementation of digital attraction campaigns

Reception and onboarding: The project aims to offer the 160 new international employees an onboarding process during the project period (the last session starts no later than six months before the end of the project, to make it possible to collect the final surveys before the end of the project).

→ Is reached through activity 3.3  
Reception and onboarding process for international employees

Matchmaking: The project aims to offer matchmaking to 150 graduates, of which 45% are expected to find permanent employment in a company based in Central Denmark.

→ Is reached through activity 3.4  
Matchmaking between companies and international graduates

# HOW DO WE REACH OUR GOALS?

We will reach our goals with a focus on company involvement, digital campaigns, amassador network, reception, onboarding and matchmaking

## Company involvement

The participation of companies in Central Denmark is a prerequisite for the project to be successful. Companies can get involved via the HEADSTART career portal as well as in the project's network groups.

### Career portal:

The career portal should allow to gather open job postings relevant to an international target group. The participating companies' vacancies are automatically crawled directly from their own career pages and into the career portal. The prerequisite for the career portal is a strong and close collaboration with the region's companies who have a recruitment need and want to display their open positions on the portal. Targeted digital attraction campaigns will allow to boost the international exposure of companies and their vacancies, thereby generating a growing traffic of qualified and experienced candidates towards the positions displayed on the career portal.

Call-to-Action elements to support conversion from interest to application:

1. Sign-up feature for multiple career news, which collects name, email and focus area. This feature can either be fully automated (through advanced re-targeting) or be a simple filtering solution. This feature is associated with a marketing automation software system.
2. Conversion generated by clicking directly on corporate job postings

Companies get their own company profile on the career portal, with relevant information targeted to candidates.

### Company network

A group of companies will be established to provide input to the branding efforts in order to ensure that the activities are in line with the companies' needs. The network ensures the strategic aim of the editorial team's work and can exchange knowledge about receiving international employees in each company. The network meets four times a year and ad hoc, as needed.

### Editorial team

An editorial team will be established to support the ambassadors' activities. The editorial team is run by program and project managers and has the participation of HR and communication staff from companies in the company network as well as relevant municipal and regional communication staff. The editorial team will ensure that the project is strategically rooted in the local companies, as well as provide access to employees, collect, edit and process stories, assist the ambassadors with relevant material, etc. The editorial team meets as needed, though at least four times a year.



*“The local companies in Central Denmark are ambitious both in terms of growth and development of services. International specialists can contribute with highly requested skills, and help secure growth.”*

STINNE BILLE



### **Ambassador network**

Ambassadors provide an international impact through known employee advocacy techniques. The ambassador network is established across companies with international employees in Central Denmark. The ambassadors are introduced on an ongoing basis and are invited to relevant events and activities in the region.

An additional ambassador network is established, with relevant Danes who work abroad and thereby have built an international network. The primary focus should be to share messages from the two ambassador networks in the region, as well as the sharing of vacancies, articles, etc.

### **Campaign work / digital attraction campaigns**

Branding Central Denmark as an attractive career destination for qualified international candidates must, among other things, happen through targeted digital campaigns.

The digital attraction campaigns will increase international visibility and knowledge of Central Denmark's business strengths and attractiveness as a career destination, as well as attract international employees directly towards the open positions in Central Denmark. The project requires a collaboration with the region's municipalities and others in order to develop special material with focus on Central Denmark's strengths and opportunities.

#### Integration of regional digital attraction campaigns into the strategic national efforts

The overall attraction campaigns will be connected to the national talent initiative 'State of Denmark', which draws on positive experiences and material from previous social fund projects around the country. Candidates exposed to the 'State of Denmark' campaign can apply for specific positions and, with the integration of the regional career platforms, it becomes possible to apply for specific regional jobs. Candidates who apply for open positions in Denmark as a result of the campaign

are pre-screened based on criteria agreed on with the participating companies and only the most qualified candidates are passed on to them. This saves the participating companies a lot of time on screening, which means they only have to deal with suitably qualified candidates.

The end users of the digital attraction campaigns are companies in Central Denmark employing well-qualified workers. The project will continuously be in dialogue with start-ups, SMEs, growth businesses, as well as larger companies about their recruitment needs. The target group for the digital campaigns are candidates in selected fields based on companies' needs with at least 3-5 years of experience.

Candidates who sign up for more information will receive a number of newsletters tailored to their profile. Experience shows that candidates often have to be presented with targeted communication 9-13 times before they are ready to apply for a job.

#### Local digital campaign work

In addition to the 'State of Denmark' campaigns, HEAD-START will also implement campaign activities locally.

The effect of the project's attraction activities can be measured through the number of well-qualified candidates who apply for and get jobs in companies in Central Denmark. This is documented through a combination of three methods:

1. Company surveys (did they hire candidates through the project's attraction activities?)
2. Candidate surveys (has the project helped applicants get jobs in Central Denmark?)
3. Digital registration (did the candidates who have registered from abroad change to a Danish business address, changed status on e.g. LinkedIn as having a job in DK or similar).

## Ambassador network

As described, an ambassador network is established, drawing on employee advocacy techniques. This network is established in collaboration with HR and communication staff from companies in Central Denmark who have international employees.

The target group is present on many different platforms, making it costly to exclusively advertise in order to get into contact with them. This is enhanced when seeking to reach an international target group. The goal of the employee advocacy approach is to make potential candidates become employees in the region's companies through durable, continuous communication. This is done by focusing on the entire decision-making journey, where the candidate is continuously made aware of opportunities in Central Denmark.

The ambassadors will communicate positive stories about working and living in Central Denmark directly to the target group, while current open positions are presented to relevant candidates. The stories must, to a great extent, come from international staff already living here, thereby acting as ambassadors for the city, for the region and for the companies, and creating the credibility needed for a potential candidate to consider moving here.

## Reception and onboarding

A prerequisite for the successful attraction of highly skilled employees, as well as their potential families, is to establish from the very start the best possible understanding for the new daily life they will encounter. It is therefore important that the HEADSTART project coordinates the many pre-existing activities in the field, as well as to share these activities with the companies so they are ready to support their new employees.

In previous Social Fund programs, several players in the region have worked on activities for reception and soft landing. The activities that can be activated as a marketing asset within the attraction agenda will be collected and mapped. HEADSTART will use the strong initiatives from previous projects to brand the region as

welcoming to well-qualified international employees.

The activities in this project focus on spreading awareness of the high level of service the region's municipalities offer to local companies. This will be done through dialogue in the company network. These activities are carried out in collaboration with the municipal citizen service centers, the International Community in Aarhus and, for example, the Herning Business Council and the strong volunteer forces behind initiatives in the region.

### Course of action:

A reception process is developed and established based on experience from previous initiatives, which have delivered positive results in reinforcing well-being and inclusion of the target group in order to support the retention of the employee. They are presented with a number of activities in the local area, getting greater and better connection to the area. This includes the following activities:

- Offer to join the ambassador network
- Public welcome (e.g. welcome events)
- Introduction to the local area (including leisure activities, cultural institutions, etc.)
- Cultural understanding (e.g. Sunday coffee in a Danish home and professional networking events)
- Understanding of and introduction to the Danish system

## Matchmaking

We know that recruiting happens largely through networks. HEADSTART will help companies expand their networks so that they can establish contact with more potentially attractive candidates by focusing on international students and graduates.

International graduates from a Danish educational institution present the advantage to have settled, gained a basic cultural understanding and built a social network during their studies, which we know are crucial factors for retaining international candidates in jobs. The activities aim to get students in student jobs, internships, project employment and ordinary employment - the first three increasing the chances of ordinary employment.

### Course of action:

- Defining and enrolling companies and students (the project is in dialogue with both companies and students to motivate them to participate)
- Preparation and screening (the project only deals with candidates who match the needs of the companies)
- Students are introduced to the ambassador network (creating a bridge between students and companies)
- Professional social activities with meeting possibilities between company representatives and students
- Matchmaking (students are continuously presented with relevant positions in the participating companies and helped to get closer to a job in one of the companies)
- Follow-up and documentation



# LET'S TALK

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