

# Partnering for Sustainable Health Innovation

Discussion paper





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# Preface

Healthcare Denmark is pleased to invite high-level officials from government authorities and public institutions tasked with health and economic development to the conference Tour de Health '24: Partnering for Sustainable Health Innovation. The conference is scheduled for Sep 30–Oct 2, 2024. This invitation is extended on behalf of Healthcare Denmark, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and Health, and the Ministry of Industry, Business, and Financial Affairs.

In 2022, following the COVID-19 pandemic, Denmark initiated the first Tour de Health for high-level stakeholders from 10 countries to provide an international platform for dialogue and cooperation on health challenges and solutions to overcome them. This year's Tour de Health addresses the current health challenges through multi-stakeholder and cross-sector collaboration.

Selected high-level representatives from Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada, the United States, Japan, South Korea, India, China, Vietnam, Mexico, and Brazil are invited to Denmark. It is hoped that through presentations, panel debates, and site visits the delegates will gain new insights on the potential value of and opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaboration in healthcare. The delegates are furthermore encouraged to network, share experiences, and exchange ideas with international peers to lay the foundation for future collaboration.

This discussion paper summarizes the participating countries' shared health challenges. Touching on the visions and merits of the Danish experience with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector collaboration, it also considers the challenges inherent to such partnerships. The function of the discussion paper is to serve as a common starting point for the discussions at Tour de Health '24. It is further intended to catalyse a dialogue on pre-conference activities facilitated by the Danish embassies to ensure that the conference will profit from delegates' valuable insights and experiences.

# Introduction

Health systems worldwide are facing critical challenges posed by the increasing proportion of older persons (+60) and the rising incidence of people living with chronic diseases and/or multi-morbidity (the co-existence of two or more diseases). These issues are further complicated by workforce shortages and inequality in access to and benefit from health services.

Strong health systems are essential to achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 3, Target 4 (SDG 3.4); that is, *"to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being"*<sup>1</sup>. Minimizing social inequality in health and promoting equity in access to health services are steps towards the goal of ensuring health for all. This can be addressed by adjusting health services to the individual citizen's life situation and resources<sup>2</sup>.

WHO states that achieving SDG 3.4 and all other SDGs depends on strong multi-stakeholder and multi-sector partnerships. SDG 17, target 17, recommends to *"encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships"*<sup>3</sup>. The increasing complexity of health challenges calls for health systems to consider the use of multi-sector collaboration and partnerships.

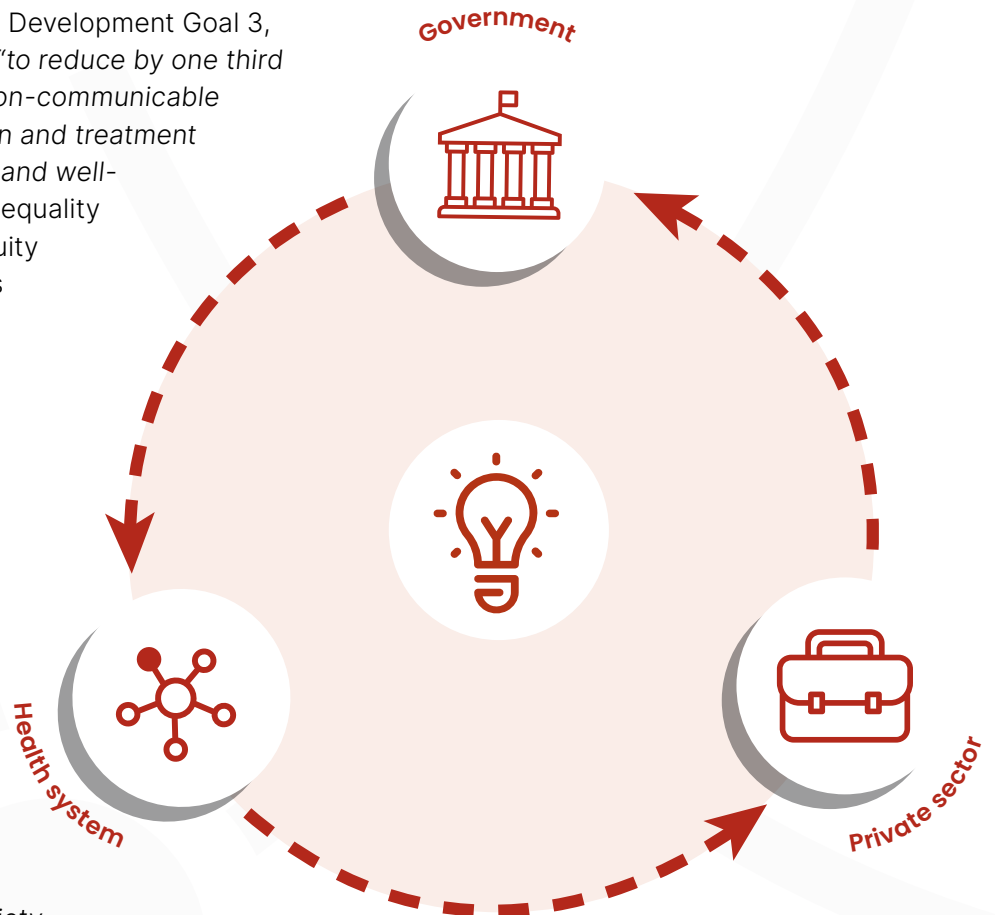


Figure 1: Multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-sector collaboration

While the organization of health systems and collaboration among sectors vary across the globe, all countries share the desire to ensure Health for All<sup>4,5</sup>. Multi-stakeholder partnerships based on strategic collaboration across sectors have the potential to contribute to achieving this mission while fostering economic growth. Their strength lies in developing innovative and scalable solutions based on the multitude of perspectives offered by the various stakeholders<sup>6</sup>.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-sector collaboration are envisaged as formalized structures of cooperation between relevant stakeholders, including health providers, universities, businesses, and civil society organizations as illustrated in Figure 1. Such partnerships bring together expertise, resources, and innovation aiming to leverage synergy from diverse sectors to create more effective and implementable solutions for the benefit of citizens, health systems, and society as a whole<sup>7</sup>.

**While multi-stakeholder partnerships hold great potential for solving complex societal challenges in the healthcare field, a number of barriers for unlocking their full potential can be indicated.**

## Barriers<sup>6,9</sup>

**A lack of inclusive and strategic approach to forming and leading partnerships, spanning across different perspectives and organisational settings may challenge buy-in**

**Short time horizons and limited funding negatively affect the scope and scale of impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships**

**Insufficient focus on real-life implementation of innovative solutions, partly due to the lack of emphasis on user-centred design and contextual adaptation in the innovation phases, is a well-known barrier for upscaling and impact.**

According to WHO, equity is the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically or by other dimensions of inequality (e.g. sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation). **Health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being<sup>8</sup>.**

# Multi-stakeholder and multi-sector collaboration in Denmark

Denmark's vision for addressing the current health challenges encourages broader involvement of stakeholders, support of innovation, and implementation in the health system. Stakeholders from both public and private sectors and universities are invited to contribute through multi-stakeholder and multi-sector collaboration.

Health associations, patient organizations, unions, alongside Denmark's regional and municipal authorities play an important role. They are often involved in policy discussions and the development of health strategies by advocating for the interests of the people they represent.

The Danish life science industry likewise contributes to the development of new solutions in collaboration with Denmark's strong research environments and highly trained health workers. While adding value to the individual and the health system, the industry creates significant value for society through job creation, exports, and attracting foreign investment.

Today, the life science industry is one of Denmark's biggest exports successes, accounting for approximately 20% of total export value in 2022<sup>10</sup>.

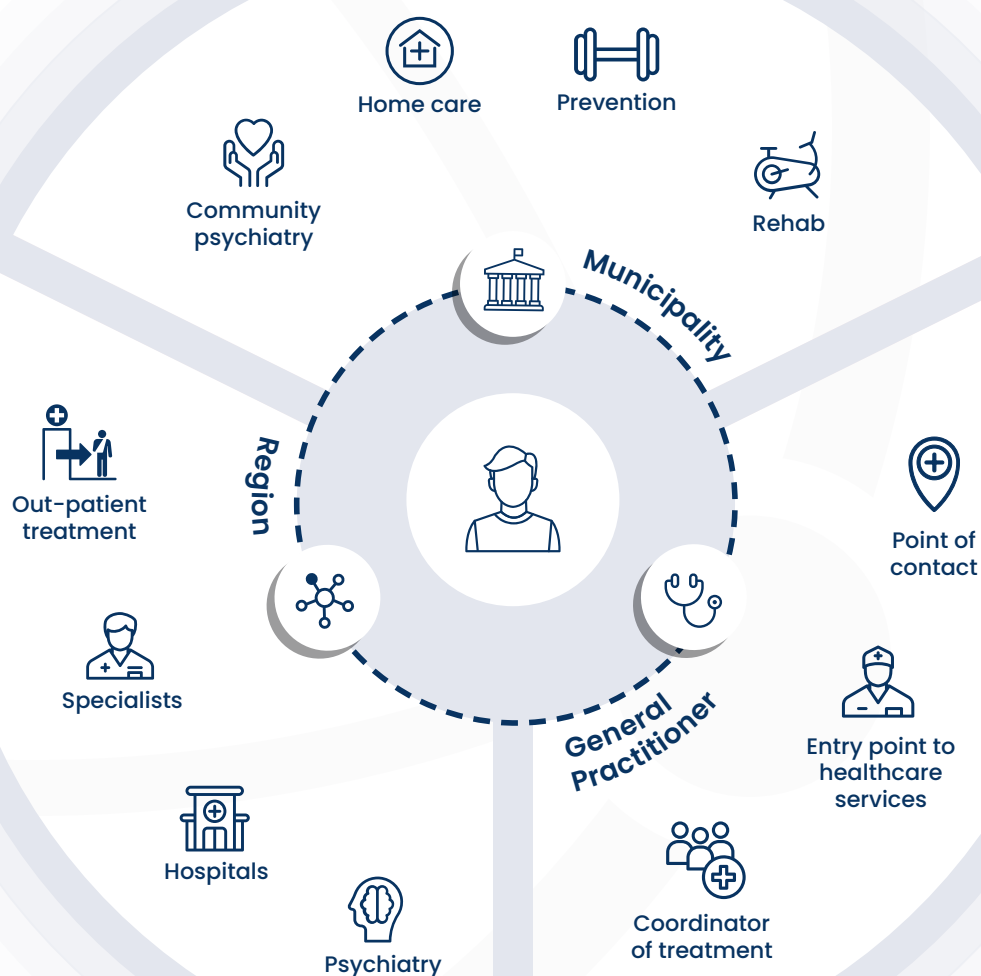
The structured cross-sector collaboration between multiple stakeholders is a well-established tradition in Denmark, reinforced by the significant level of trust and transparency as facilitated by the right to submit freedom of information requests.

In conclusion, concerted action between sectors and stakeholders is an essential building block in the Danish mindset, as illustrated by the following three examples.

**The Danish health system** offers universal health coverage with free and equal access to health services, including psychiatric care. The largely decentralized system, operated by 5 regions and 98 municipal authorities, is financed mainly by tax revenue **(84%)** with some out-of-pocket payments, such as dental services and medicines co-payment.



*Read more about the Danish health system [here](#)*



# Life Science Strategies

The life science sector holds a strong position with its critical importance to Danish wealth and public health. This is not incidental but a result of strategic and long-term initiatives in an environment that nurtures scientific progress and innovation. The sustained political focus on the sector is evidenced by the formulation of national life science strategies in 2018 (for 2018–2021) and again in 2021 (for 2021–2024) to maintain and strengthen this international stronghold<sup>11,12</sup>. The strategies ensure the necessary balance between health and industry, resulting from the joint efforts of three government departments (the Ministry of Industry, Business, and Financial Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of the Interior and Health).

Establishing a Life Science Council was a key outcome of the 2021 Life Science Strategy. Tasked with strengthening collaboration between public and private entities in the health and life sciences, the council's 20 members represent a broad spectrum of the life science ecosystem in Denmark, including industry, academia, health providers, and patient associations. Meeting several times year, this formalized platform for ongoing dialogue and collaboration aims to create synergy between industry, research, and health systems for the benefit of patients.

In December 2023, the Life Science Council presented 12 recommendations for a third strategy covering the next four years. The recommendations serve as input to the government, whose policy decision is expected by late 2024<sup>13,14</sup>.

## Learnings from previous Life Science Strategies

- Early involvement of all relevant stakeholders ensures that challenges are identified and addressed.
- Involvement of a wide array of stakeholders stimulates ownership and secures effective implementation of initiatives.
- The Life Science Council helps create closer ties and trust building among all stakeholders, and between stakeholders and government.
- Transparency concerning stakeholders, recommendations, results, and evaluations ensures that experience gained in earlier strategy periods is fruitfully exploited.



# Timeline of Danish Life Science strategies

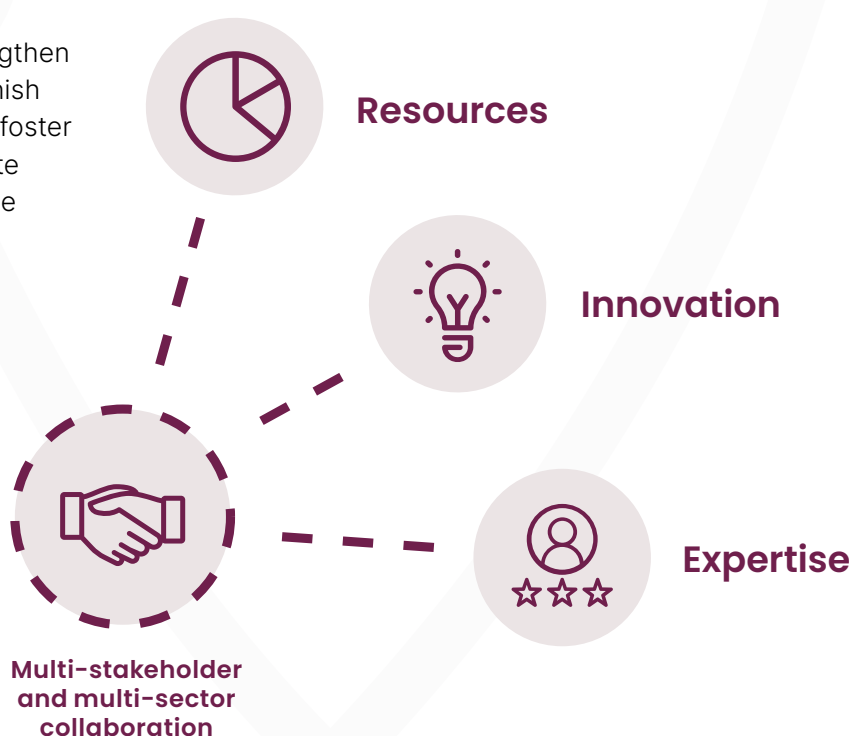


# Lighthouse Life Science

Initiated by the Ministry of Industry, Business, and Financial Affairs in 2022, Lighthouse Life Science is one of eight lighthouse initiatives designed to strengthen growth and employment in various Danish strongholds post-COVID-19. Aiming to foster health innovation through public-private partnerships, the Lighthouse is a unique example of collaboration between the Ministry of Industry, Business, and Financial Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior and Health alongside other ministries, public authorities on regional and local level, research institutions, hospitals, and private actors such as large corporates, SMEs, foundations, and pension funds. More than 400 public and private Danish stakeholders are represented in the Lighthouse partnership.

United by shared objectives, the Lighthouse partnership actors have jointly contributed to the Lighthouse's dual mission of enhancing health and fostering growth.

The Lighthouse is primarily publicly funded by the Danish government and the Danish Board of Business Development, co-funded by the European Union, and supplemented by (mostly in-kind) support from private and other public actors. The facilitation of the partnership lies with the Danish Life Science Cluster, a national organization for life science and welfare technology tasked with converting Danish research and knowledge into new and improved commercial solutions.

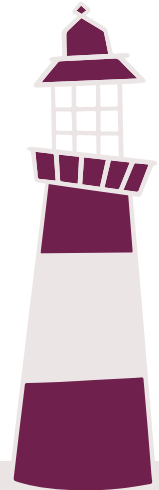


The Danish Life Science Cluster facilitates matchmaking among public and private stakeholders, establishes strategic partnerships and pilot projects to develop innovative solutions through new technologies and knowledge. Stakeholders from the health system are invited to seek funding for pilot projects exploring scalable solutions for national implementation and global export.

The Lighthouse was first chaired by the CEO of Novo Nordisk. In August 2023 the leadership role was handed over to Lundbeck. Initially focused on promoting “healthy weight” as part of Denmark’s response to the growing obesity trend, Lighthouse Life Science has now expanded its focus to include mental health issues. Aiming to support the implementation of national strategies and political priorities, the Lighthouse’s current emphasis on mental health aligns with the Danish Government’s ambitious 10-year plan for psychiatry and mental health.

The Lighthouse consequently prioritizes initiatives supporting the goals of the plan.

## Emerging Learnings from Lighthouse Life Science



**Synergy and coherence across multiple initiatives are important to ensure a unified direction in addressing complex challenges and ultimately achieving impact – both in terms of health and growth.**

**Trust between partners in a partnership is crucial for ensuring value in a long-term perspective to achieve a common goal.**

**Long-term funding models are essential for collaboratively generating knowledge and learning about complex issues to ensure evidence is obtained and impact can be demonstrated.**



For more information on the Life Science Lighthouse and its projects, scan the QR-code

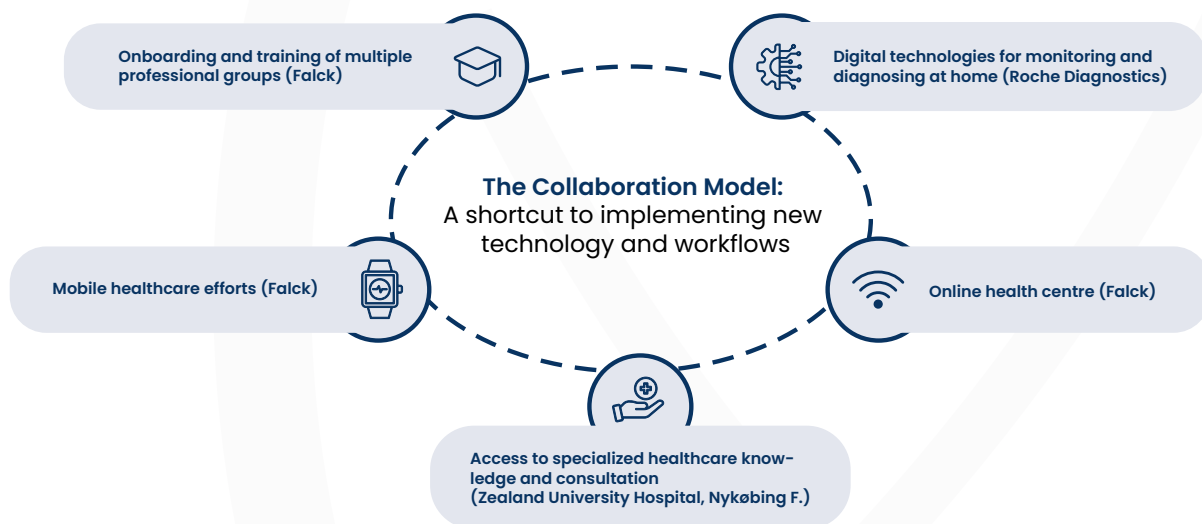
Diana Arsovic Nielsen, CEO, Danish Life Science Cluster

# AcuCare: treatment in own home

The AcuCare initiative is a concrete example of how public–private partnerships can contribute to transforming health systems, allowing more people to experience cohesive care and safe treatment in their homes rather than in often busy hospital wards. The initiative involves Nykøbing Falster Hospital, the Foundation for Life Science Innovation in Region Zealand (FIERS), Falck, and Roche Diagnostics. Aiming to ensure safer daily lives for patients and free up hospital resources, AcuCare offers home-based monitoring and

treatment to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

AcuCare uses advanced technologies such as AI and remote devices for continuous distance monitoring of chronic patients with heart disease and COPD. For patients who are deemed to be able to complete their treatment just as well or better in their own home, this is offered based on the hospital's treatment plan, with services delivered by Falck.



## Learnings from the AcuCare initiative include:

- **Patient-centred Care Beyond Location:** Patients prioritize quality care over location. Using advanced technology to ensure that patients with chronic conditions receive high-quality care at home, we meet their primary expectation of being well taken care of.
- **Integrated and Seamless Care:** Patients' needs vary from individual to individual while health systems focus on optimizing clinical outcomes. Private–public collaboration ensures continuous, personalized care, bridging the gap between patients' expectations and health system objectives.
- **Optimized Health Resources:** By treating patients at home, we can free up hospital resources for critical cases, improving healthcare efficiency and reducing strain on hospitals, aligning with both patient needs and health system goals.

Jacob Riis, CEO, Falck

# Exploring potentials and best practices at Tour de Health'24

From a Danish perspective, collaborations involving multiple stakeholders and sectors in strategic partnerships can serve as a catalyst for change, improve health outcomes in the population and create economic growth.

However, such collaborative efforts come with challenges, often revealing structural and procedural gaps and weaknesses that require careful navigation to ensure success and sustainability. These challenges will provide focal points at the coming Tour de Health'24 conference to ensure a fruitful discussion of practices to overcome them.



Photo from Tour de Health 2022, Copenhagen, Denmark



# References & credits

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Tour de Health'24 is a dialogue-based conference aimed at inspiring and actively engaging international delegates to collaborate through innovative partnerships in order to address and mitigate the health challenges that many countries across the globe are facing.

Tour de Health'24 is an initiative closely tied to Denmark's health diplomacy efforts and brings together high-level decision-makers from 13 countries involved in the health diplomacy. The purpose of the conference is to create an international platform where delegates from Germany, France, Norway, the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, Mexico, India, Vietnam, and Brazil can meet and interact with key Danish stakeholders – both private and public – within the healthcare sector.

Tour de Health'24 is expected to host approximately 150-200 guests, including the international delegates as well as leading public and private stakeholders from the Danish Life Science ecosystem, alongside national and international press.



***Tour de Health'24 is hosted in collaboration with:***  
*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark,  
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