



Informal meeting places – here Ricco's Kaffebar at DTU Science Park – are just as important to modern innovation as are lab facilities.

# A Nordic dimension to Innovation Districts

The Greater Copenhagen Innovation Districts have established a Nordic partnership with Stockholm Science City, Oslo Science City and Oulu Innovation Alliance, Finland. The focus is to develop our physical locations into leading business and university hubs.

By CEO Marianna Lubanski, Lyngby-Taarbæk Vidensby

Cities compete globally to attract the best talent. Nordic locations have a lot to offer: Green, stable economies with attractive living conditions and interesting jobs. But we need to improve our physical locations to remain attractive.

Built 1962-1974, the DTU Lyngby campus is typical of the period where cities were organized according to functions: work, housing, shopping, studying, researching, etc. with little or no connection. Innovation took place behind locked doors with limited access for the few.

Today, the innovation system demands open doors, knowledge sharing, collaboration, co-working



spaces, flexibility and adaptability to ever changing demands of the researchers, large corporations and entrepreneurs.

Cities are trying to adapt

to the changing needs. Cities build innovation districts which offer a combination of housing, offices and retail mixed with meetings places such as restaurants, cafés

and co-working facilities. The modern work force prefers to live in a multifunctional city where all they need is within walking distance. Less time to commute, and thereby more time to innovate, study, research, work and live.

## The Nordic advantage

The desired turnaround involves all city stakeholders, the municipality and other public institutions, universities, investors, banks, the large corporations and the incubators and not least intense collaboration and dialogue between them.

Lyngby, DTU's city location, is in the middle of such a turnaround, and so are our sister science cities in Denmark and in the other Nordic countries. Therefore, we have established a Nordic partnership to exchange

experiences and learn from each other in the process of becoming improved business and university hubs.

In the Nordics, we share some characteristics, which differ from most other innovative locations globally: We have higher city and campus density and smaller distances in general, a long triple helix collaboration experience and 100+ years of experience with co-operative development models, a high level of trust between stakeholders including governmental institutions and welfare societies supporting the development of innovation districts through public funding and support.

## More than bricks and mortar

Creating an innovation district involves physical planning and a lot of bricks and

mortar. But it is people, close local collaboration and new partnership models, which are the real game changer. In Lyngby, we have established a private membership-based association, which represents the relational infrastructure in our city. Here all relevant stakeholders meet and collaborate to make things happen across sectors and industries, in private-public partnerships. This is a good foundation for further development towards a well-functioning innovation district. Well started but far from done.

In October, at DTU High Tech Summit, we would like to invite you to meet our Nordic partner cities and to discuss how triple helix partnerships can create innovative cities of the future.