

# Rural perspectives on digital innovation

NordVest Smart Production (NVSP)

- Industry 4.0 in SMEs in Vesthimmerland and Jammerbugt (Denmark)

March 17, 2020

By Julie Ringgaard Jensen

Vesthimmerland Municipality



# Agenda

1. Vesthimmerland Municipality
2. Why did we launch the NVSP project?
3. The purpose of the project and facts about NVSP
4. Status and the strenght in our partner set-up
5. NVSP from a municipal perspective and lessons learned
6. Questions



# Vesthimmerlands Municipality

Vesthimmerland Municipality is located in the north-western part of Jutland in Denmark (Population of approx 38.000)

Strong roots in agriculture. The agriculture has for many years been a driver for innovation and development in Vesthimmerland - an entrepreneurial culture has led to:

- New companies, new industries and manufacturing

The Municipality is inspired of this entrepreneurial culture:

- Allocating resources (a development department)
- Courage and willpower (political and organisational)
- Involved in different types of innovation projects (school toilets, exo-skeleton)

# Why did we launch the project?

It started with the idea to implement autonomous vehicles in our home care fleet:

- User cases was developed, The Danish Traffic Law was transformed and the Foundation Autonomous was established
- Unfortunately, we didn't succeed.

The beginning of NVSP:

- How can we support and assist our SMEs? Technology as a driver for innovation and development – first movers?
- The local business support went on a SME-tour together with Autonomous (positive feedback from the SMEs)
- The right mix of expertise
- The project design started to take form
- Specific regional funding opportunities ("Porsche version")
- In Summer 2017 a grant was awarded

# The purpose of NVSP

Based on the **Industry 4.0** strategy, the aim of this project is to maintain and create jobs through a targeted **innovation approach** that take into account the concrete technological needs and competencies of the participating companies.

Based on an overview of the company's technological level, a **technology agreement** is concluded, which provides instructions for innovative upgrades and activities on how to implement them.

The SME choose which upgrades they are interested working with and will get support from the experts/partners to implement them (free manpower).

## Project facts

**Target group:** manufacturing SMEs

**Partners:** Aalborg University, Foundation Autonomous, Local business support, Jammerbugt Kommune and Vesthimmerlands Kommune (Coordinator).

**Project budget:** 25 mio Danish kroners (3.4 mio EUR)

**Project period:** 2017-2022

Funded by the Regional Development Fund and national means.

# Status today – March 2020

## Results and outcome:

- 32 Technology Agreements has been conducted
- 100+ innovation activities has been identified and implemented
- Developed a method to engage the SMEs
- Created 10 jobs
- Expanded the partnership: Mariagerfjord and Thisted Municipality

## The strenght in the partnership:

- The local business support – (door opener)
- The technology experts (practical and strategical knowledge)
- The municipalities (all the administration and project management)
- The SMEs

# Lessons Learned

## Innovation:

- Important that the innovation activities is based on the terms of the SME – we shall bring the knowledge to them – not bring the SME to the University
- Bottom-up approach on innovation + approach on how to open the doors
- We have many innovative, curious and committed SMEs in our area
- High degree of flexibility – possible to change course
- Patience is important – trust, NDA and "maturing"

## Project and administration:

- A clear distribution of roles is important
- The right mix of competencies is crucial
- "If it isn't easy for the SME they won't participate" (time sheets)
- Don't underestimate the administrative "burden" – allocate resources

# What's in it for us?

- NVSP is a great opportunity for our SMEs to grow, develop and mature their business
- A flourishing business community is vital for our municipality (employment and settlement)
- Launched a new project about skilled workforce to assist our SMEs in their transformation (*GO VEST* coordinator)
- Implemented two projects focusing on digital transformation
- Expanded our network internal and external
- Developed a new business strategy for the area with a strong focus on digital transformation
- ....





# Thank you

## Questions?

