



- The Bio-broker program “plays the matchmaker” for Danish companies. Providing them with personnel on the ground in China, helping them access the existing community and its shared resources, says Claus Lønborg, director of Innovation Center Denmark

Danish and Chinese biotech and contract research companies.  
 - Working with China now might give access to the market later, and issues might be solved at a lower cost but still at a high professional level. The bottom line is high-quality throughput at a low cost. Lønborg doesn't worry about a flood of work going to China, but sees an expanding pool of

# The New Silk Road: Resources

By Chris Tachibana

**China has 20% of the world's consumers. How can Scandinavia engage in this market?**

In the physical world, Beijing, China, is 7,300 kilometers from Copenhagen, Denmark, but in the life sciences world, the two capital cities are closer than ever. At least 350 Danish companies are engaged in a partnership with China, according to the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Development. Resources for making business and academic connections to China are explored here. For advice from people with experience travelling the new Chinese-Scandinavian trade routes, see “The New Silk Road: Experiences”, in the next issue of Medicin Valley Magazine.

**Innovation Center Denmark: Matchmaking and Incubation**

Innovation centers provide support services, networking, and incubator office space to Scandinavian companies getting started in China. Claus Lønborg is director of Innovation Center Denmark in Shanghai, a joint effort between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He explains that the center acts as a consultant, charging an hourly fee, with the

possibility of government subsidies for small companies.

-For selected companies with research, development and innovation projects, we have office space with access to the consulting services of 14 Chinese and Danish employees, including a native Chinese life sciences specialist. The Center gives access to the existing community, allows resource sharing, and helps with initiating programs and projects. It functions in matchmaking to universities and professors, and gives access to research that might otherwise be difficult to find, and contacts for getting into the network in China. We provide recruiting support to companies, with talent development programs that attract people from universities and educate them in the high-performance expectations of Danish R&D departments, says Director Lønborg.

-To run a successful company today and really drive innovation, you must think globally about where to find the best talent, and the best and least expensive solutions, even if you're a small company with limited resources and staff.

Director Lønborg is confident that companies will find what they need in China. The Center launched a Bio-broker program to match

talent on both sides of the New Silk Road. Both Shanghai and Beijing have established science and technology communities, he notes, and Shanghai alone has research centers for eight of the ten largest global pharmaceutical companies.

- The Bio-broker program just plays the matchmaker for Danish companies, providing support, building relationships, auditing companies, and functioning as a project manager to give Danish companies a start in China, says Director Lønborg.

- What works well is respecting the Chinese employees and investing the time to understand how things work in China, creating a mutual partnership, and hiring staff carefully that fit the project and can solve the task.

**A groundbreaking Innovation Center**

Finland was one of the first countries to establish innovation centers, creating Tekes Shanghai and Tekes Beijing in 2005 to support government-funded collaborations. Tekes Shanghai is housed in the Finland-China Innovation Center, or FinChi.

-FinChi contains the Finnish trade promotion office, several government centers, and companies that are looking for opportunities

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in the Chinese market. Tekes brings new projects there to incubate while they are deciding where in China they want to set up, says Jaani Heinonen, director of Tekes Shanghai.

-FinChi is a base for Tekes companies. It started as a government initiative and now runs as a non-profit, renting out facilities at a market rate. It's like a business hotel, but totally geared for Finnish agencies.

-Nordic players are appreciated in China, with a good reputation for high-tech. There's no need to convince the Chinese about the value of a collaboration, but the best projects have an equal commitment from both sides. Also, face-to-face meetings are important, especially in the early stages, advises Director Heinonen.

He senses an appetite for growth, and a feeling that China will be one of the first countries to bounce back from the global economic downturn. Tekes funds both long-term programs and qualified academic or industry projects that are selected by application. For projects with Chinese partners, Tekes provides on-site assistance with project management and expertise in market trends. This year begins an international mobility program to promote student and researcher exchange.

#### A Road That Goes In Both Directions

Scandinavia can expect to see increasing numbers of Chinese students. More than

100,000 study in a foreign country each year, twice as many as in the 1990s. In the other direction, students who want to experience China can contact the Nordic Centre of Fudan University. Since 1995, it has worked with its 26 Nordic member universities, to foster collaborations and student and teacher exchanges, and activities for Nordic companies in Shanghai.

-We offer courses and workshops for Chinese employees and managers of Nordic-based companies, mostly organized by business schools. The Centre is maturing into more comprehensive activities, including in biosciences, where Fudan University is quite strong. Travel grants for researcher exchanges are beginning to focus on younger researchers and students, hoping to develop relationships earlier in scientists' careers, says Martin Bech, Director of the Nordic Centre.

An internship program is available for business research students, and the Centre can work with Nordic life science companies to train students from Chinese or Nordic universities. Currently, the Centre specializes in cultural training, and channeling the knowledge and resources of Nordic universities to companies in China.

-In spring or summer of 2010, we will host a conference on "user-centric design and applications", addressing bioinformatics and remote healthcare, so we are opening up to that area, and will be recruiting lots of

#### Resource websites

*Innovation Center Denmark:*  
[www.innovationcenterdenmark.cn](http://www.innovationcenterdenmark.cn)

*Finnish Innovation Center:*  
[www.tekes.fi/china](http://www.tekes.fi/china)

*Nordic Centre Fudan University:*  
[www.nordiccentre.org](http://www.nordiccentre.org)

*University Center in Beijing:*  
[www.en.vtu.dk/press/2008/denmark-to-have-university-centre-in-beijing](http://www.en.vtu.dk/press/2008/denmark-to-have-university-centre-in-beijing)

Ph.D students to attend, says Martin Bech. (Contact the Nordic Centre for more details).

The Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Development plans to open a university centre in Beijing in 2013. The planned building at will house business and science students from all eight Danish universities and the Graduate University of Chinese Academy of Sciences. Without a doubt, the world is getting smaller, and on the science and technology globe, Scandinavia and China will soon share a common border.



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