



VITUS – Internationalisation policy measure (Denmark)

[Born globals and their value chains](#)

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1. Context

VITUS is a programme under the [Danish Trade Council](#) for Danish companies who have the potential and desire to internationalise.

1.1. Circumstances in which the measure was introduced, rationale, and relevance

Analysis of company creation and fast growing companies by the Danish government in the early 2000s showed that Denmark had a high start-up rate but only a low share of these became high growth companies compared to the US.¹ Further, analysis showed that the fast growing companies were the ones that created the majority of new jobs and drove productivity growth.

Consequently, Denmark launched a number of policy measures – starting with the Globalisation Strategy from 2006 - to increase the share of high growth companies. The [Globalisation Strategy](#) launched a number of new initiatives to support research, development, education, innovation, entrepreneurship etc. and contained an official explicit goal to become one of the leading entrepreneurship countries in the world, measured by the start-up rate and share of high-growth start-ups. The main focus was on improving entrepreneurship education, access to finance and advice and revising the Danish bankruptcy legislation, but a couple of initiatives, such as the launch of the Danish Innovation Center in Silicon Valley to help Danish companies tap into the unique entrepreneurship ecosystem, focused on fostering growth through internationalisation. At the same time, it has also been an underlying assumption that Denmark is a small market and companies need to grow internationally to achieve continued high growth.

1.2. The process of developing the measure

In 2006, the Danish government – Ministry of Higher Education and Science - provided € 4.3 million for developing and launching the country's first accelerator programme – Gazelle Growth – providing training, advice and market access to potential high growth SMEs. The programme was run by [Symbion](#) – a science park based in Copenhagen – and initially had a focus on helping companies enter the US market, but later expanded to include Europe. Gazelle Growth ran from 2007 to 2009.

In 2007, Symbion won a tender by the Danish Business Authority – a government agency - to develop and launch another accelerator called Accelerace. Like Gazelle Growth, Accelerace focused on helping start-ups commercialise their products and services and gain market traction, but it abandoned the specific focus on helping companies enter the international markets and focused on start-ups at an earlier stage of development than the ones targeted by Gazelle Growth. The shift in focus was due to the experience of working with later stage start-ups. In order to be selected by Gazelle Growth the companies needed to have achieved a certain success in their home market. However, the experience was that often the success in the home market did not translate to success abroad as often the cost of and knowledge about customer acquisition was particularly problematic. It was concluded that working with earlier stage companies would allow companies to get a better strategy and business model from the start rather than experimenting on a global stage.

The VITUS programme was launched in 2010 by the Danish Trade Council and incorporated many of the successful elements and learnings from Gazelle Growth and Accelerace to accelerate business development but it has a more explicit focus on helping companies internationalise than Accelerace (as mentioned Gazelle Growth also had an explicit focus on internationalisation). Unlike Accelerace and Gazelle Growth, VITUS has local market advisers to work with the companies rather than business advisors in the home market. This followed naturally from the mission of the Trade Council

¹ See for example the 2006 Entrepreneurship Index, https://boligejer.dk/file/8263/index_entrepreneurship_2006.pdf

to help Danish companies export and the employment of local business advisors on key markets around the world.

Gazelle Growth is no longer operational but Accelerace continues to this day and is the largest accelerator in the Nordics. It has since expanded to include a financing arm - Accelerace Invest, which aims to solve both the funding gap in early stage financing in Denmark, but also to help incentivise start-ups that have participated in their programme to achieve key milestones that have been identified as important to their (domestic and international) market success. Accelerace has also expanded to include a sector focus – healthcare, cleantech, food, and design, etc. - which has allowed them to make international links for their companies to key clients, leading industry clusters, mentors, growth financing.

Often, Danish companies participate in one or more of these programmes. For example, they may graduate from VITUS and enter Accelerace or vice versa, as these programmes each have a specific value proposition that propels start-ups on growth inflection points and provide essential resources to early stage companies.

1.3. Any changes in policy context over time

Denmark still focuses on increasing the share of high-growth start-ups and SMEs but the context has changed slightly over time:

- **From entrepreneurship to SMEs.** From 2006 onwards, there was a strong focus on start-ups, which for many years dominated the Danish SME policy. Lately, however, the focus has widened to include all SMEs with growth potential and not only promising start-ups.
- **Decreasing political attention and funds.** The funding available at government level to support policy measures to stimulate high-growth entrepreneurship has been cut significantly recently and the economic means available today (2017) are well below the level assigned by the Globalisation Strategy, which was launched in 2006. The cuts are both due to a general decrease of funds overall – among others caused by the financial crisis – and shifting government priorities.

In April 2017, the Danish Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, Brian Mikkelsen, launched a new Entrepreneurship Panel to advise the Danish government on how it can become easier and more attractive to start a company in Denmark. He also (re)launched an ambition to make Denmark one of the best entrepreneurship countries in Europe. The panel includes a number of high profile Danish entrepreneurs. This might signify that entrepreneurship is on the rise in the political agenda.

1.4. Evidence of complementarity and/or overlap between the measure and other policy measures

Denmark has launched a number of accelerator programmes and some have similar features to VITUS. As already mentioned VITUS built on the success of Gazelle Growth and Accelerace and contains some of the same elements.

Other Danish programmes that aim at accelerating growth and supporting internationalisation include:

- [Accelerace](#), see description above.
- [Startupbootcamp](#), a three-month programme for 8-11 companies, was founded in Copenhagen in 2010. It supports entrepreneurs with high-growth potential through all stages of growth by providing the entrepreneurs access to their network of mentors, partners, investors, etc. At the time of writing (April 2017), Startupbootcamp has accelerators in a range of countries. They differ from VITUS by having more narrow accelerator programmes focused on particular industries.
- [SCALEit](#) is run by the Danish Innovation Center in Silicon Valley, depending, like VITUS, on the Danish Trade Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SCALEit differs from

VITUS by having a particular focus on Silicon Valley and introducing the companies to the Silicon Valley ecosystem.

- [Start-up Denmark](#) is a start-up visa scheme for talented entrepreneurs who want to grow high-impact start-ups in Denmark. Besides access to various programmes and subsidy schemes, the programme includes free tailored counselling in public business development centres (Væksthuse – see below). Start-up Denmark is co-led by the Ministry of Business and Growth and the Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing. The private company YouNoodle handles applications. Start-up Denmark differs from VITUS by being focused on attracting foreigners to Denmark to launch their business.
- [SCALE-UP Denmark](#) is a training concept for entrepreneurs and small enterprises who want to establish high growth companies in Denmark. The programme provides access to seed capital and venture capital, engage market leading firms from the regional ecosystem and involve leading universities, research institutions and science parks. SCALE-UP Denmark is funded by the five Danish Regions in partnership with the Danish Ministry of Business and Growth. SCALE-UP Denmark differs from VITUS by providing access to Denmark and by partnering closely with the regional business advice centres.
- [Next Step Challenge](#), funded by a number of private companies and economic development organisations, is Europe’s largest start-up competition and specialises in scale and growth for start-ups and scale-ups. Next Step Challenge offers ambitious start-ups the chance to access a business development programme which lasts five months and takes each company through an intensive development programme. The competition has two tracks: 1. Energy efficient technologies and offshore industry and grants access to the expertise and know-how of SE, one of Denmark’s largest energy and telecom companies. 2. Access & insights into the Danish Offshore Industry via the competition organiser’s network. Next Step Challenge amongst others differs from VITUS by being a competition.
- [Danish Tech Challenge](#), funded by the Danish Industry Foundation, focuses on manufacturing of hardware and the challenges which entrepreneurs within science face. The Danish Tech Challenge amongst others consists of four-months intensive programme, first prize of DKK 500,000 (€ 67,000), collaboration with advisers and mentors and office space at Scion DTU Science Park. Tech Challenge amongst others differs from VITUS by being a competition and focused on hardware.
- The services offered by the so-called [Væksthuse](#). The Væksthuse offers guidance to start-ups and businesses with growth ambitions. The target group for the Væksthuse is start-ups and businesses wishing to enter new international markets, to develop new products and to increase profit. The Væksthuse identifies the businesses’ need for development and offers targeted counselling on the next steps of development, including internationalisation. The services offered by the Væksthuse are free of charge and open to all SMEs with growth ambitions. The free services offered is different from VITUS, where companies pay for their participation. Also, the Væksthuse cannot dedicate as many hours to each company as VITUS but must refer the companies to private advisors after having provided the initial counselling.

While clear overlaps between the programmes exist, they are all competitive programmes, and only a small number of companies are selected for each round. All these programmes seem to experience a higher demand for each round than they can accommodate.

It varies to what degree the programmes have an explicit focus on internationalisation but for all of them it is an assumption that companies need to internationalise to keep growing due to the small size of the Danish market. Some focus on getting the strategy, value proposition, go to market strategy etc. right in order to optimise the foundation for internationalisation and chances for success, and others focus on helping the companies internationalise directly.

The Væksthuse serves a much larger number of companies but work less intensively with each company.

2. Content

2.1. Objectives of the measure

The objective of the measure is to promote Danish SMEs’ internationalisation process to maximise the commercial potential on the export markets.

The primary goal of the programme is that each company achieves a concrete order on the market it targets within 12 months from the company is approved to the programme.

2.2. General description of the measure

The programme helps approximately 10-15 companies per round achieve a concrete order to a new market. The programme runs two to three times a year. 35 to 40 companies take part yearly.

The programme focuses on specific **sales activities** to help companies secure export orders and a solid foothold on the relevant market within 12 months.

The core of the programme is the development and execution of a tailored export strategy leading to concrete orders on a new market. The programme is structured around three main phases. The selection, the strategy and the execution phase. The process for the last round of VITUS is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Process and time line for VITUS



Source: [VITUS](#)

The companies are selected based on a call for applications and a competitive process for the companies to access the programme. See more in section 4.2.

The selected companies start by participating in a **strategy phase** aimed at developing a go-to-market-strategy for the particular market they wish to enter. The strategy phase is composed of two workshops, hosted by professors from the Copenhagen Business School, consultants or similar experts, where the companies learn about important concepts such as a go-to-market-strategy and then work on applying the concepts to their own company. The workshops focus on sales, strategy, cultural awareness etc. The experts are paid by the VITUS programmes for running the workshop.

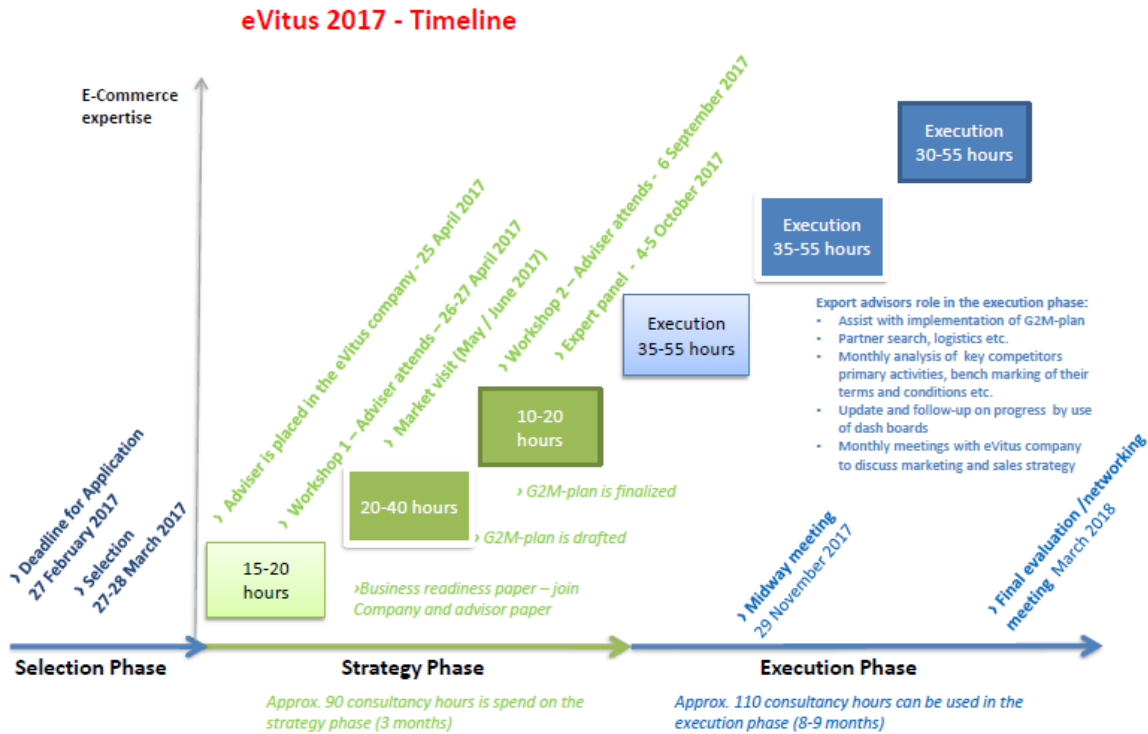
The companies also go on a fact-finding tour to the export market in question, where they gather relevant market information about such aspects as costs, competitors, potential locations, customers, etc. At the end of the strategy phase they present the go-to-market-strategy to an expert panel, most often made up of experienced business leaders from large corporations. By the end of the strategy phase all companies have an export plan on how to enter their chosen markets, including aspects such as overall strategy, value proposition, description of competitors, sales strategy, customers, etc. At the workshops the companies also get to know each other and have the possibility to share experiences and help each other solve relevant challenges. The strategy phase has an approximate duration of three to four months. VITUS only helps companies enter one market but through their participation in VITUS, the companies are taught relevant tools to develop plans which can be applied to subsequent markets.

The companies then enter the **execution phase**, focused on concrete sales activities and with the goal of securing at least one concrete export order. During the execution phase the company works closely with a commercial advisor from the Danish Trade Council based in the relevant target country. The commercial advisor is assigned by the Trade Council and provides 265 hours of consulting services - some in the strategy phase but most in the execution phase. During the strategy phase, he/she often sits in the company to get to know it. Concretely the commercial advisor can help with the implementation of the go-to-market-strategy, competitor analysis, partner search, logistics, update on progress as well as discussion of the marketing and sales strategy and – if relevant – revisions and adjustments.

The VITUS programme requires extensive commitment from the companies both in terms of financing and resources. The Trade Council provides a subsidy of 65% of the costs of the commercial advisor. The commercial advisor normally charges 935 DKK/hour (€ 125) and the price for the companies to participate in VITUS is therefore approximately DKK 86,700, which equals €11,500 (full price without the 65% subsidy would be DKK 248,000, corresponding to €33,000). Travel, accommodation, costs to establish a company, etc. are in addition to the DKK 86,700.

VITUS generally does not have a sector-specific focus. However, there have been three rounds with sector-specific focus, of which 'E-VITUS' (focused on ecommerce) ran twice and 'FOOD-VITUS' ran once. The sector-specific rounds have many of the elements of the VITUS standard rounds but are adjusted to the specific sector in question. E-VITUS helps a selected group of 10-15 companies accelerate their online export on a specific market. The main difference between E-VITUS and standard VITUS is that ecommerce companies already have an online platform they can adapt to international markets and do not need to establish the same physical presence in the export market due to the online focus of the business. Therefore they also receive fewer hours of advice from the advisor on the local market. The figure below shows the process for the second E-VITUS cohort.

Figure 2. Process and time line for E-VITUS



Source: [VITUS](#)

Note: G2M stands for go-to-market

2.3. Available budget

VITUS receives its funding from the general budget of Denmark, which earmarks about DKK 40 million (€ 5.3 million) in both 2016 and 2017 to SMEs, innovative growth companies and start-ups in general. A significant part of the funding is used for VITUS, which receives about DKK 6 (€0.8) million yearly – 15% of the total budget for SMEs, innovative growth companies and start-ups (Ministry of Finance, 2016). Each round costs about DKK 3 million (€ 0.4 million) to run.

As mentioned, each company also pays €11.500 for Trade Council provides a subsidy of 65% of the costs of the commercial advisor to participate in the standard VITUS programme. The E-VITUS programme is slightly cheaper for the companies since it only involves 200 consultancy hours provided by the commercial advisors.

2.4. Target groups of the measure

The VITUS programme targets small and medium-sized Danish companies with a particularly high export growth potential. In addition, the following criteria generally apply to the target group:

- The company must have the potential to internationalise but lacks the resources and/or competencies.
- The company must have a developed product with a realisable sales potential on the chosen export market.
- The company must be determined and have the financial funds and the human resources to expand globally.
- The company must have no or low levels of export prior to entering the programme (but SMEs that have exported to very different international markets than the ones they would target through the programme can still be accepted).

- The company must have between 5-100 employees.
- The company must have a yearly turnover of DKK 150 (€20) million or lower.

The criteria are applied by the Selection Committee when selecting the cohort of companies for each round.

There is no pre-defined geographical focus of the programme or criteria for the age of participating companies. However, the rounds can for example have a focus on exporting to traditional or emerging markets.

The focus on SMEs is similar to many other policy measures which also target SMEs since they often have limited resources – both in terms of financial and human resources – to dedicate to innovation and internationalisation. SMEs experience larger market failures (defined as potential for internationalisation and growth, which is not automatically exploited by the companies/market forces) compared to large companies, which generally have more resources and are often capable of dedicating substantial resources to internationalisation themselves.

3. Relevance of the measure to SMEs/born globals and internationalisation

3.1. Relevance in relation to different types and stages of internationalisation

The programme is mainly relevant for the initial market introduction and helps companies secure the first order on the selected market. Thus, the programme focuses explicitly on export. In total, a VITUS programme takes one year. After that, the companies no longer receive assistance from VITUS to enter and expand on the market.

3.2. Support for cooperation between SMEs/born globals and wider international collaboration (if any)

VITUS encourages collaboration between the companies in each group. Further, the commercial advisors help plug the companies into the foreign market, which includes opening their network for the companies. Through the introductions the companies can potentially develop cooperation with other companies but otherwise VITUS does not have any tools to directly support international cooperation.

3.3. Contribution of the measure to tackle SMEs'/born globals' internationalisation support needs

Tackling SMEs' internationalisation support needs is at the centre of VITUS' mission. Examples of how it contributes to address their support needs include:

- Many SMEs and born globals assume they can target the same markets and customers with the same business model as the one they developed with the home market in mind. However, export markets are often structured differently, which might require the company to rethink the overall strategy, value proposition, go-to-market strategy and target customers. VITUS contributes to tackle this challenge.
- SMEs and born globals often develop a strategy for a new market and stick to it even if things are not going as planned. VITUS gives the companies a chance to validate the go-to-market-strategy and revise it if necessary, thus reducing the risk to spend unnecessary resources on the wrong market approach.
- When trying to enter a new market the company generally has limited knowledge of the market and no or limited networks. VITUS helps the SMEs and born globals overcome these challenges by pairing them with an advisor on the local market.

4. The operation of the measure

4.1. Promotion of the measure to internationalising businesses

VITUS is promoted by the Trade Council through their website² and advertising material as well as through the commercial advisors at the Danish Embassies, Consulate Generals and other institutions, which help Danish companies internationalise.

Thus, companies can approach the Trade Council to learn more about VITUS and/or apply for VITUS but the Trade Council's commercial advisors can also suggest to companies they are in contact with to apply for VITUS.

It is difficult to estimate how many companies the promotion reaches but the Trade Council feel they have a strong group of applicants for each round and that all the participating companies have a high potential for export and fulfil the selection criteria.

4.2. The process of application and assessment of applications

In order to participate in VITUS companies must apply following a call for applications. Normally VITUS has about 20-30 companies applying and accepts about 10-15 companies. Thus, about half of the applicants are selected into the programme. Based on the selection criteria the Trade Council is in charge of shortlisting the best qualified applicants. The companies on the shortlist then pitch to a selection committee, which makes the final selection of the beneficiaries. The decision is made about one month after the deadline for application. In their application, the companies must state which market they would like to export to and why. The exact selection criteria can vary from round to round but in general the selection committee selects the companies that they assess can gain the most from participating in VITUS. They can look at parameters such as:

- Is the product scalable?
- Is the company and product ready for internationalisation?
- Does the company have the necessary financial and human resources to participate in VITUS?
- Could the company enter the relevant market without support from VITUS?

The selection committee also tries to select a group that will benefit from going through the programme together and which can have valuable discussions and learn from each other.

The application process is fairly straightforward. The application form can be downloaded online at vitus.um.dk and is two pages long. It contains four sections:

- Company information
- Accounts for the last three years
- Information about the company's products, customers, etc.
- The project the company wants to work on if selected to participate.

4.3. Delivery mechanism of the measure

As explained above VITUS is made up of two distinct phases: a *strategy phase*, delivered in Denmark to the companies, and an *execution phase* where the companies receive substantial advice from a commercial advisor based in the relevant market.

VITUS is delivered by the Trade Council. Because the Trade Council has commercial advisors employed in local markets in all major Danish export markets VITUS can offer advice from locally based advisors, which know the local market. The commercial advisor uses his/her network on the relevant market to plug the company into the local ecosystem.

² <http://um.dk/da/eksporttraadet/eksporttraadet-tilbyder/saadan-samarbejder-vi/tilskud/vitus/>

The interaction between the company and the commercial advisor can be in person – the commercial advisor will come to Denmark a couple of times and the company will go on the fact-finding mission – and via e-mails and phone.

VITUS uses external experts, mainly Danish academics and/or consultants, to deliver the two workshops in the strategy phase.

4.4. Administration of the measure

VITUS is managed by the Trade Council under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1. Monitoring of the implementation and take-up of the measure: method and contents

The VITUS secretariat conducts both monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment activities, with the main focus on evaluation.

The secretariat keeps track of the number of applicants and participants in each round of VITUS. The information is used to assess whether VITUS has a good number of applicants or if they need to increase marketing of the programme. VITUS does not have a specific target for the number of applicants or similar.

5.2. Evaluation of the measure: methods and contents

The VITUS secretariat collects feedback from the participants in each round via four electronic surveys distributed to the participants after the two workshops, at the end of the strategy phase and at the end of the programme. The main purpose of the questionnaires is to collect information about the participants' satisfaction with different elements of the workshops and programme and their output.

VITUS has two central goals it evaluates through the questionnaires:

- At least 80 % of the participants must achieve specific orders on the relevant market and build a solid foothold on the market in the course of the programme.
- At least 80 % of the companies that participate in VITUS must indicate that they are satisfied with their participation and that the programme has been crucial and provided great value for the participants.

The VITUS secretariat keeps track of whether VITUS achieves the goals. The results are not publicly available but according to the secretariat the companies are highly satisfied with their participation and output.

An [impact assessment](#) of the programme has also been conducted by an external consultant. The impact assessment compares the economic performance of the participants in six rounds of VITUS from 2010-2013 (60 companies) with a control group of Danish SMEs with export in general, which did not take part in VITUS.

5.3. Any changes to the content or delivery of the measure following monitoring and evaluation

Based on the replies to the questionnaires the VITUS secretariat also adjusts the programme to fit the needs of the companies. Most changes are minor, such as the timing of the workshops and/or the fact-finding mission, the importance assigned to each topic of the workshop and/or the experts delivering the workshop.

In addition to the minor adjustments, VITUS has introduced a number of changes to the second round of E-VITUS following input from the participating companies in the first round of E-VITUS. The second round of E-VITUS is not yet completed at the time of writing but VITUS expects to have

addressed the criticism through the changes they have made. The changes have mainly been made to the execution phase, including training of the commercial advisors to improve their understanding of e-commerce. The SME definition applied to assess what companies are eligible for the programme was also adjusted. Since ecommerce companies often have a relatively high turnover the maximum turnover allowed was increased from DKK 150 million (€20 million) to DKK 375 million (€ 50 million).

6. Evidence of outcomes and impact

6.1. Evolution of the measure's spending

The [total financing](#) reserved for VITUS – as part of the SME-account on the general budget – has remained constant at approximately DKK 6 million (€0.8 million) since 2010. The general budget for 2016 proposes a significant cut of VITUS in 2018 and 2019 allowing only approximately 20 and 12 companies to go through VITUS in 2018 and 2019 (Ministry of Finance, 2016).

6.2. The quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the measure

The secretariat highlights that the companies generally are highly satisfied with the outcomes of their participation in the programme. While exact data are not publicly available they highlight that most of the participants achieve specific orders on the relevant market in the course of the programme or within 6-12 months after the programme.

6.3. Impact of the measure on its beneficiaries and other actors

According to the impact assessment the companies that have gone through VITUS perform significantly better than Danish exporting SMEs in general. This is true for growth in turnover, export and number of employees. Also, [value-added per employee](#) has gone up significantly for the VITUS companies.

6.4 Evidence of economic and employment impact

According to the impact assessment of VITUS, the companies that took part in the first six rounds of VITUS had 3,289 full time employees in 2013. This is 392 full employees more than they had when they entered VITUS. If the participants had followed the same development as exporting SMEs in general their combined employment would have decreased by 83 full time equivalents. Thus, the [net effect](#) can be estimated at 475 full time equivalents.

The impact assessment also concludes that:

The total export contribution by the VITUS companies amounts to approximately DKK 603 million (€80 million). The VITUS companies have increased their export from when they started their participation in VITUS to 2013 by DKK 579 million (€ 77 million) whereas the exports of the general group of exporting SMEs have decreased by DKK 24 million (€3 million).

The total value added by the VITUS companies compared to similar SMEs is DKK 833 million (€111 million). About half is estimated to be due to VITUS. Thus, Denmark has received a return on investment of about DKK 24 for each Danish Crown invested.

The accumulated employment effect for the Danish society is 681 full time equivalents according to the evaluation. About half of the effect is estimated to derive directly from the participation in VITUS. Since VITUS received about DKK 18.3 million (€ 2.44) to run the six rounds, the public sector has a cost of about DKK 54,000 (€ 7,200) for each new full time equivalent created.

There is no indication that the programme could not be transferred and a similar programme could not have the same impact in another country. However, for the programme to be directly transferable

another country must have the same or a similar system with the Trade Council having local commercial market advisors and being able to offer their services for a significantly reduced price.

7. Strengths and weaknesses of the measure

7.1. Strengths of the measure

The feedback provided by the companies through the surveys is very positive and is taken as a sign of the relevance of the programme.

The programme shows a number of strengths, such as:

- The workshops, which are exclusive and not open to non-VITUS participants;
- The number of hours the SME has with the local commercial advisor. Although companies could buy assistance from the commercial advisors independently, many do not have the means to buy as many hours as they can do through VITUS.
- The network created between the participants – who generally are in the same situation trying to kick-start internationalisation; and
- The very practical approach to building a go-to-market-strategy – including two workshops facilitated by leading experts.

All in all the measure seems relevant and has high impact on the participating companies. The combination of a strategy phase, where the companies get ready to approach a specific market, and an execution phase, where they work with local commercial advisors, is a strength of the programme. Not many other accelerator programmes can offer this service and the programme seems to support other accelerator and internationalisation programmes well.

7.2. Weaknesses of the measure

VITUS is a one year programme and after year one the companies are on their own. In some instances, one year could be a short time and the companies could benefit from further assistance to break into a market. However, this is not possible.

It also seems that the selection criteria applied by the selection Committee are not always clear nor transparent (for instance, they are not well-described online) and can change from time to time. While this flexibility is positive, it also makes it difficult for the companies to assess their chances of becoming part of the VITUS programme.

7.3. Evidence of policy learning over time

As mentioned VITUS builds on the success and learnings from Accelerace and Gazelle Growth and adapts the programme as a reaction to replies to the questionnaires..

VITUS has also learned to scrutinise the companies' choice of export markets better since the initial choices might not always be sound. Thus, many would like to export to the US and enter the US market but for many this is not the most obvious next step.

Also, VITUS has learned that it is key that the participating companies have the necessary resources to participate in VITUS and therefore collects more information on this from the applicants in the application process.

8. Recommendations

8.1. Overall recommendations regarding the measure

As mentioned VITUS can only assist companies for one year. In some markets this is a relatively short time and it often takes longer to enter these markets. A more flexible approach would help VITUS to

be able to keep working with the companies if the prospects of export to the given markets are still promising.

Also, the programme could benefit from clearer selection criteria, ensuring higher transparency and accountability in the selection process.

However, overall the programme seems relevant and has high impact of the export of the participating companies.

8.2. Recommendations on the national support system for SME/born global internationalisation

The case has not included an analysis of the entire national support system for SME/born global internationalisation.

8.3. Any gaps in the provision of policy support and suggestions

The case has not included an analysis of gaps in the provision of policy support system for SME/BG internationalisation.

References

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