The **Nordic** design resource
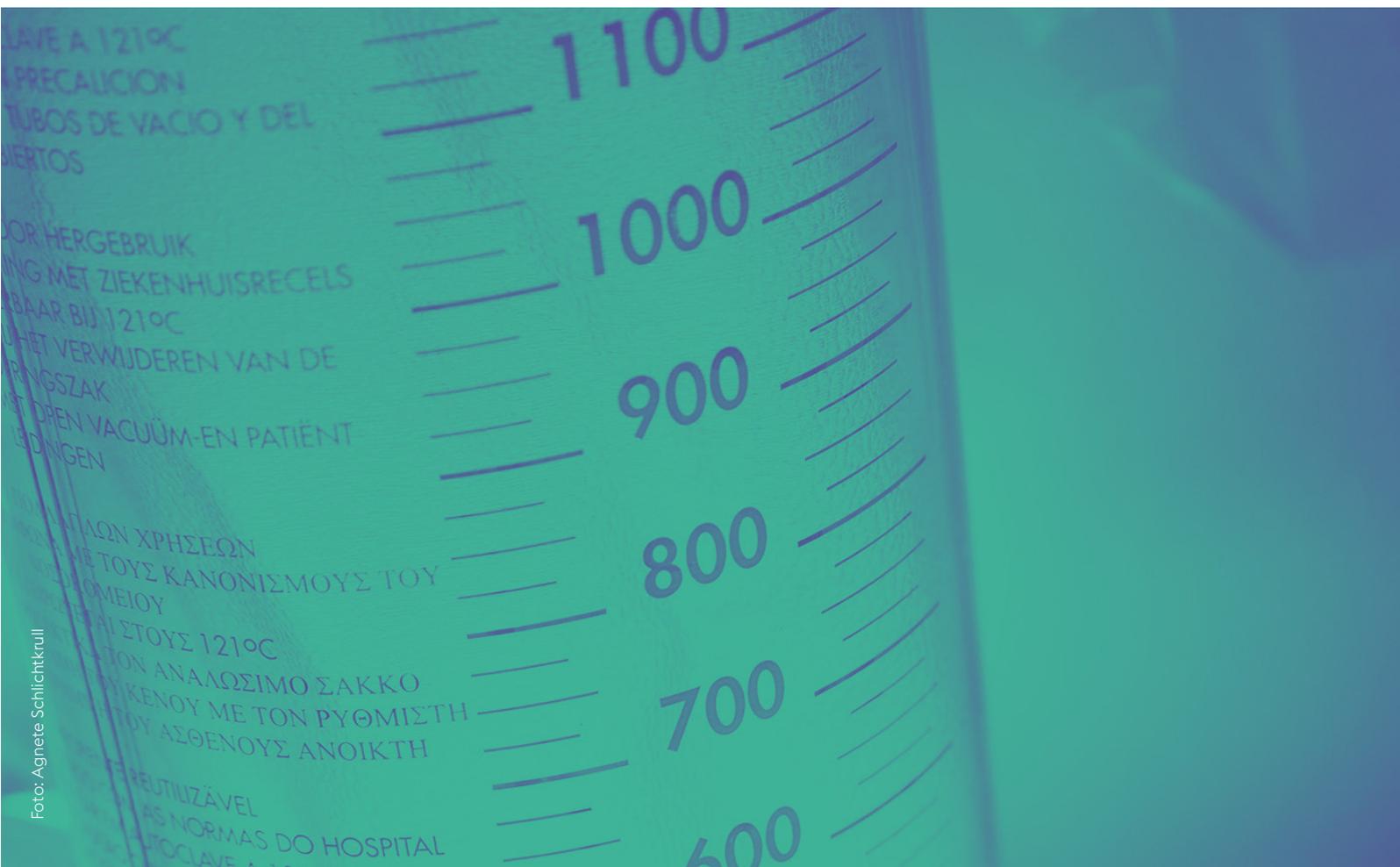
Outlining the
Nordic design resource

Danish
Design Centre

Background

Over the past 10 years design has gone through a comprehensive transformation in the Nordic countries and internationally. Design is no longer just a creation process that results in new products and service solutions. Design includes disciplines such as design thinking, service design and strategic design, and increasingly also involve skills from other professions. With this broadening of the design field, design resources create value in an increasing number of fields in business and society.

The Nordic countries build on a long design tradition – a tradition where design is fully embedded in everyday life. Globally, the Nordic countries are recognised for their design.

It can be argued, that there's a distinct Nordic design DNA behind the success, whether we speak of furniture, fashion or the way Nordic countries design breast cancer treatment in hospitals, how female designers design VOLVO concepts cars for women, how VELUX develop better living environment by well-designed and user friendly skylights, or how Ponsses design forest machines perfect for harvesting timber around the world in extreme conditions . The Nordic design DNA is so prevalent that we have come to take it for granted, and thus failed the opportunity to stand out in the global competition in the new era of design.

That makes us a less obvious choice in the future when high-volume industries look for design talent (the sale of Danish Designit for close to a hundred million US dollars to the IT giant Wipro last summer is the exception that proves the rule). We believe that the Nordic Design DNA is a significant contributor to growth and job creation in the years to come, and the Nordic countries have the design resources to utilize this potential.

However, there is no up-to-date overview of the design industry as a resource across the Nordic countries. This makes it very difficult for businesses (Nordic or global) trying to find the relevant design resources and for stakeholders in the designers eco system (e.g. policy makers, industry associations and educational institutions) to ensure that the design resource fits the demand for design challenges.

This is due, in part, to the fact that there is no commonly agreed upon definition of what design resources are, making it difficult to gather relevant data and to analyse developments within the field of design. Further, there is no such thing as a service for private businesses to navigate, understand and search for design resources that match their demand and support their innovation potential, nor a platform for branding the Nordic design DNA.

Initial steps

SCOPING WORKSHOP

In September 2016 the Danish Design Centre invited representatives of the Danish design ecosystem to a workshop exploring the current understanding of the Danish design resource. The participants came from industry, design companies, education, design associations, design intermediary organisations, and ministries. Common to all, they believe employees and consultancies with strong competencies within design are a crucial resource for Danish businesses and public organisations. A need for a new design typology were expressed as crucial to increase the awareness of what design is and how design can add value to businesses. Further the workshop participants provided a wide range of input to hypothesis on the impact of mapping the design resource (page 5).

**APPROACHING THE DANISH/
NORDIC DESIGN DNA**

The Danish Design Centre is very keen on rediscovering the Danish/Nordic design DNA to improve our competitiveness. In 2016, the Danish Design Centre has moderated debates on this matter at SXSW in Texas US, the lifestyle fair Northmodern in Copenhagen, and at the Royal Danish Academy of Design in Copenhagen as well as joined the project Danish Design DNA initiated by the Danish Design Council. The purpose of Danish Design DNA project is to place focus on the value design creates for our society at large, and to communicate the competitive positions that Danish design is for Denmark.

DESIGN DELIVERS

In 2016, Danish Design Centre in collaboration with the Confederation of Danish Industries launched Design Delivers, a survey on the use of the design among Danish businesses (805 companies) and the value of how design contribute to growth. Companies using design to a large extend experience that design has a positive impact on the bottom line. Still, 40 percent of Danish companies do not use design. In addition, survey data uncovers that many companies have not adopted the extended design concept, and among the many companies with subcontractor profile there's a widespread understanding that design is not relevant to them, as they are rarely part of decisions on the final look of the products. Overall, Design Delivers map the demand side to design and results urge the need for mapping the supply side – the design DNA and the design resource - in order to unleash the growth potential.

EXPLORING NORDIC PARTNERSHIPS

Based on the opportunity to expand the project to include the Nordic counties, the Danish Design Centre have reached out to the Nordic sister organisations (DOGA - Design and Architecture Norway, Design Forum Finland, SVID - Swedish Industrial design and Iceland Design Centre) to explore interest and potential commitment.

A new study from The Confederation of Danish Industry and the Danish Design Center shows that **90 percent of the companies that use design** in processes and strategically, clarify that design **has a positive impact on the bottom line.**

The study also shows that **40 percent of Danish companies do not use design.** The vast majority of them - 80 percent - state the reason for this, is that design is not relevant to them and their business.

The hypothesis of the project

▶ Systematized data of the Nordic design resource enables the design industry to **adapt to the market demand.**

▶ If data is made available in **a userfriendly format,** businesses will find it easier to navigate in the design industry.

▶ If the Nordic businesses have a better overview of the design resource they will be **more likely to invest in design.**

▶ Available data will make it easier to understand design, to get started with using design and **ultimately result in more advanced design users**.

▶ A Nordic commonly agreed upon design definition and design typology will increase the **awareness of what design is and can do.**

Objective

This project aims to map the Nordic design resource. The purpose is to make data on the design resource available based on a new design typology and to create a foundation for branding and promoting the Nordic Design DNA internationally.

Usage of results to different target groups:

NORDIC COMPANIES
The aim is to develop a design identification tool 1.0 that contains data on the Nordic design resource. Companies that seek to utilize their innovation potential by design will benefit from a tool that makes it transparent and efficient to locate potential partners in the Nordic design industry. Today, no such tool exists.
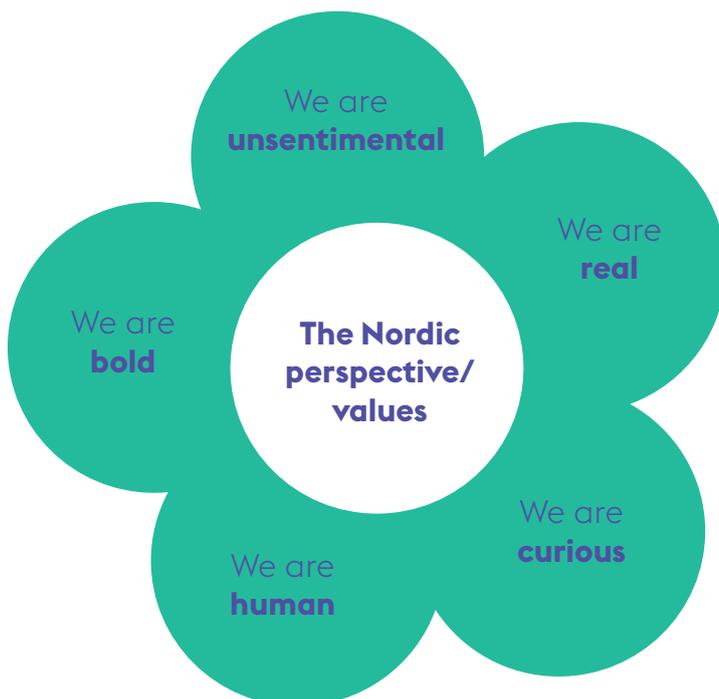
NORDIC DESIGN ECOSYSTEM
The aim is to develop a Nordic visual design data monitor to understand the collective resource and to benchmark the Nordic

countries. This will give stakeholders such as governmental bodies, educational institutions and promotion organisations easy access to information on the design resource and the opportunity to cross data. This type of data is crucial foundation for developing design-, education- and innovation policy.

NORDIC INNOVATION CENTER AND NORDIC INNOVATION PROJECT
The aim is to rediscover the characteristics of the Nordic design resource and the Nordic Design DNA. A small collection of case stories that exemplify the Nordic Design DNA will be created and presented together with the Design Identification Tool 1.0. Accordingly, the aim is to select case studies from other Nordic position of strengths like Healthcare, Smart Cities and Nordic Living. Finally, the aim is to make sure this work is connected to the overall Nordic Brand Values.

We are **unsentimental**

We are **real**

We are **bold**

The Nordic perspective/ values

We are **curious**

We are **human**

Source: The nordic Councils of Ministers/ Nordic Innovation - Nordic Brand project

Methodology

Today, comprehensive data on the Nordic design resource does not exist. Existing data, especially statistical data, concerning design only covers small extracts of the total design resource (from classic design disciplines like graphic design and product design to new design disciplines such as design thinking, UX and service design). In order to map the Nordic design resource, we need to pioneer new ways of measuring by exploring new ways of looking into existing data and by generating new data sources, and not least new practi-
ces of combining different methods to provide the most accurate picture.

In the process of exploring and determining new methodology for mapping and measuring we strive to build on and utilize synergies with existing projects and initiatives in the field of mapping and measuring the value of intangibles, such as;

• Danish Construction Authority: Mapping the Danish Creative Industries based on DISCO (employment codes) instead of NACE (industry codes)
• Design Council, UK: The Design Economy report. The Report looks at design roles across all sectors — from design of the built environment to user-experience design in cutting-edge web agencies to engineering design in manufacturing companies.
• Towards Creative Iceland: building local, going global. This mapping exercise is based on the UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics Domains (UNESCO, 2010).
• Creative industries Iceland - vision for the future, 2012. Researching and comparing the support and governmental initiatives in the field of creative industries.
• Design Diagnose, DOGA (Norsk Designråd) 2009. Mapping of impact of design between companies using design, and companies not using design.

In the process of pioneering new methodologies and mapping a set of emerging practices such as the Nordic design resource and the Nordic design DNA we believe the project should be based on design thinking principles. This means that the process is:

Exploring Throughout the whole process the project focuses on the demand from businesses (qualitative needs) and maintains an open and inquisitive approach. This ensures that mapping is based on real needs and behaviors of companies and not dictated by existing conceptions and segmentations.

Iterative In order to bridge the explorative and qualitative approach with a quantitative overview the project will include both an explorative phase focusing on defining hypotheses for a new typology of the Nordic Design Resource. This might be coupled with a systematic survey of the market demands, this typology is covered by partly existing data (DISCO / NACE) and partly by newly collected data.

Visual To uncover the real needs of businesses, concrete and visual tools will be used throughout the process. Tangible scenarios, hypothesis and prototypes will provoke approaches and insights of their behavior. This ensures a rapid testing of the typology and the effect of the tools that will make the data available.

User centered The typologies will be mapped in collaboration with companies and designers to ensure that the typology and the tools are developed and designed to meet their needs. User studies, workshops and knowledge sharing contributes to the Nordic countries meeting on a common objective and create ambassadors for the Nordic design resource and the Nordic design DNA.

Process

As our approach is explorative we strive to keep an open mind-set and process that allows us to be responsive to user needs. Thus, the activities addressed in phase 2 and 3 may be adjusted as the project develops.

1

Scoping the project

- **Desk research and case studies** Explore existing projects in the Nordic countries and internationally dealing with similar objectives

- **Scoping workshop** Agreing on initial hypotheses of user needs in order to scope and design the process and test the project objectives with relevant users and stakeholders

- **Process design** Outlining the project phases, designing the activities, determining timelines and outcomes

SEP 17 - NOV 17

2

Development of typology

- **User need workshop** Engaging users and stakeholders across the Nordic countries exploring user needs

- **Typology workshop** Involvement of Nordic stakeholders and international advisory board in developing new design resource typology

- **Qualification (fieldwork)** Challenge and test of design resources typologies and demarcation with businesses and design ecosystem

OCT 17 - FEB 18

3

Data collection and analysis

- **Analytic set-up** Determine the set of methodologies needed in order to map and analyse the design resource using both existing data sources (i.e. NACE and DISCO-codes) as well as new ones defined within the project

- **National data collection and analysis** Quantative and qualitative collection of data in each participating country

- **Nordic analysis** Pattern recognition across the national analyses

JAN 18 - JUN 18

4

Launch of results

- **Prototyping and testing** Design identification tool 1.0: An online database with a set of simple search features that makes it easy to locate designers

- **Launching monitor** Macro data will be presented on-line with the option for users to monitor data.

MAY 18 - SEP 18

Organised team and project plan

Defined typologies and analysis setup

Collected and structured data

Identification tool 1.0

Organisation

We suggest forming a consortium of the national design institutions – or similar institutions across the Nordic countries. The partners in the consortium will collaborate on establishing a working definition of design resources in the Nordic countries, map design resources in the respective countries and develop tools that enable companies find the appropriate design ressources. In this, the partners will act as facilitators, involving other actors in the fields of design, business and government when relevant.

STEERING COMMITTEE
The steering group consists of representatives from the project group and Nordic Innovation.

PROJECT GROUP
The project group will consist of representatives from the partner organisations. The project group may draw upon subcontractors – universities, consultancies or other – to carry out specific tasks such as data gathering and analysis.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE
The program committee will consist of executives or board members from partner orgnisations. The newly formed international Advisory Board to Empower Danish Design may serve as an inspiration.
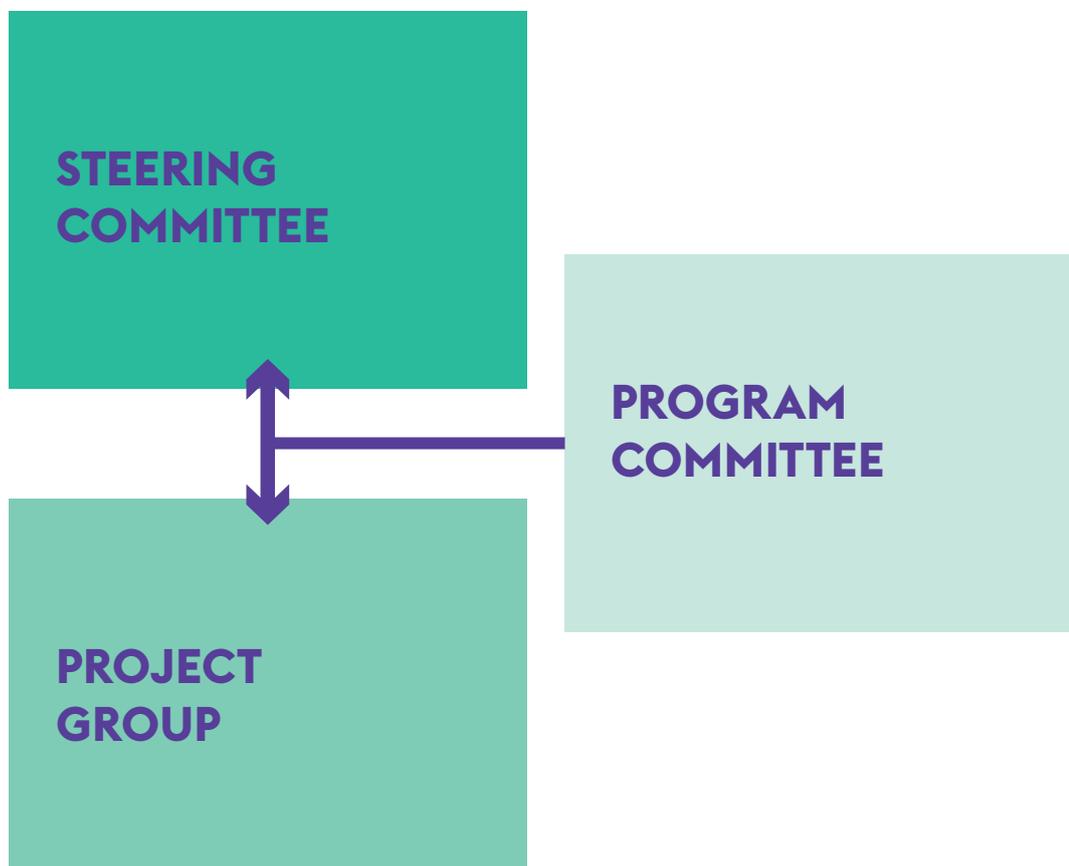
STEERING COMMITTEE

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

PROJECT GROUP

Photo: Agnete Schlichtkrull

FROM CONCEPT TO PROJECT

The Danish Design Centre is already developing a project on mapping the Danish Design Resource – funded in part by the Danish Ministry of Business. We at the Danish Design Centre are very keen on scaling across the Nordic Countries.

Do you want to join?

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