

Denmark To Set Up World-Class National Biobank

A research grant to the Danish State Serum Institute (SSI) of DKK 121 million from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Novo Nordisk Foundation is to strengthen Danish health research.

The initiative aims to benefit research into the causes of diseases, their prevention and treatment.

– In establishing a national biobank, Denmark will be at the very forefront in yet another area of research, says Helge Sander, Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation.

Denmark is already an international leader in terms of register research, having a population already thoroughly registered. In addition, the population and the researchers now get a biobank of international format. The biobank will be a place where surplus material from sources such as blood and tissue samples drawn from patients in the healthcare sector will be stored.

The purpose of the initiative is to give Danish and foreign researchers a unique overview of and access to more than 15 million biological samples in existing and future collections. Researchers will be able to link biological material from an individual with the large quantity of additional data available in national registers, for instance within the healthcare sector.

The biobank now established will be one of the world's largest, offering, by international standards, a quite unique resource which will be of great benefit to Danish research.

The overall initiative consists of three parts:

1. A Danish biobank register with detailed information on what samples are available in the Danish healthcare system and the largest research biobanks.
2. A large national biobank.
3. A coordinating centre for the national biobank.

The total budget is DKK 121 million, DKK 36 million being contributed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and DKK 85 million by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. Part of the grant from the Novo Nordisk Foundation is reserved for development projects in the biobank.

– The national biobank is a good example of a new infrastructure offering great advantages to Danish research. This is the kind of initiative that will give Denmark a position at the very forefront of international biomedical research. I am convinced that the biobank will contribute to making Denmark an attractive collaborative partner for international research communities, says Science Minister Helge Sander.

– It is gratifying to see that Denmark will now be able to utilise the full potential offered by the many biological samples collected by the healthcare sector. There is no doubt that the national biobank project will be of great benefit to future research, both in terms of disease prevention and treatment, says Gert Almind, Director of the Novo Nordisk Foundation.

The project will be placed at the SSI, which has been Denmark's national laboratory for more than 100 years. The project has been established in cooperation with hospitals, universities and other public institutions that collect or make use of biological material.

– This is an important initiative, not only for the institute but for the entire population. It is being launched at exactly the right time. We look forward to embarking on the task and cooperating with the many researchers and institutions, says Nils Strandberg Pedersen, President & CEO of SSI.

For further information on the biobank, please contact Gert Almind, Director of the Novo Nordisk Foundation, phone +45 30 75 90 35 or gea@novo.dk, or Mads Melbye, Executive Vice President of SSI, phone +45 32 68 31 63 or mme@ssi.dk.

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