

The Station in Sorø – hotspot for co-working

Danish heritage site transformed by LEADER into a successful smart co-working space.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Sorø, Denmark

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 – LEADER CLLD

Funding:

Total budget	~ 803 000 (DKK)
RDP support	~ 330 000 (DKK)
Private/own	~ 473 000 (DKK)

Timeframe: 08/2017 - 12/2021

Project promoter: Stationen CO

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Summary

An old railway station was revitalised as a community development resource providing dynamic co-working spaces that transformed the rural heritage asset. This Station in Sorø project was funded by LEADER and is now a key player in the local economy, supporting business development, job creation and innovation in Sorø. It represents a good practice for similar projects aiming to smartly regenerate historical spaces while contributing to regional development and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity in local business sectors.

A range of office solutions, from permanent spaces to flexible, membership-based options, are available and the building serves as a hub for entrepreneurs, small businesses, freelancers or creative professionals. This inspirational blend of heritage and modern functionality exemplifies how LEADER can help historical buildings be repurposed to meet current economic and social demands.

Project results

The Station in Sorø has:

- delivered remarkable results revitalising a historic building to nurture both business innovation and personal well-being;

- been transformed into a hub of creativity and productivity, attracting a diverse community of entrepreneurs, freelancers and small businesses.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Cultural buildings can provide unique and inspiring environments that attract creative professionals.
- Integrating nature into the workspace can help enhance the well-being and productivity of a co-working community.
- Other LEADER projects can consider the importance of community buildings and creating spaces that encourage collaboration and innovation in community-led local development.

Context

The Station in Sorø is located in a former train station in Sorø, Denmark. This station has been repurposed to create a dynamic co-working space that serves entrepreneurs, small businesses and freelancers. The need for such a project arose from the desire to use the historically significant yet underused building in a way that supports local economic development.





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The building and its surrounding natural environment serve as the foundation for rethinking network and innovation-promoting measures within a business context. The initiative provides a new dimension to existing examples of office communities, maker spaces and business development offers, focusing on fostering creativity, innovation and well-being among knowledge workers.

Objectives

- To create a vibrant co-working community that supports innovation and business development.
- To repurpose the historic train station into a productive space for entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- To foster collaboration and networking among professionals across various industries.
- To contribute to the local economy by attracting and retaining businesses and talent in Sorø.

Activities

Renovation of the historic building - The former train station was renovated to create a modern co-working space while preserving its historical architecture.

Creation of office spaces - The project established both permanent office spaces and flexible workspaces for project members, catering to different needs.

Networking and collaboration opportunities - Regular events, workshops and networking opportunities were organised to foster collaboration among the co-working community.

Integration with nature - The surrounding natural environment was leveraged to enhance the well-being and creativity of workers.

Community building - Initiatives to build a supportive and collaborative community among entrepreneurs, researchers and artists were a key focus.

Main results

- The Station in Sorø has delivered remarkable results, not only in revitalising a historic building but also in creating an environment that nurtures both business innovation and personal well-being. Central to its success is the thoughtful integration of the building's surroundings into the overall project. The old train station, with its historical charm, has been transformed into a hub of creativity and productivity, attracting a diverse community of entrepreneurs, freelancers and small businesses.
- A key feature of the station's surroundings is the establishment of a cosy courtyard garden, which serves as an oasis for the co-working community. This outdoor space has been meticulously designed to provide a peaceful retreat, allowing users to step away from their desks and recharge in a natural, serene setting. The garden, with its greenery and inviting atmosphere, complements the station's historical architecture, creating a unique blend of old-world charm and modern functionality.
- Project proximity to the train station also adds a layer of convenience and connectivity, making it easy for members to commute or receive visitors. This combination of accessible location, historical significance and a thoughtfully designed garden space not only enhances the well-being of the workers but also fosters a creative environment where innovation can thrive.
- Overall, the Station in Sorø LEADER project is a successful example of how the thoughtful use of indoor and outdoor spaces can contribute to a productive and inspiring co-working environment.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Leveraging historical buildings can provide unique and inspiring environments that attract creative professionals.
- Integrating nature into the workspace can significantly enhance the well-being and productivity of the co-working community.
- Future projects should consider the importance of community building and creating spaces that encourage collaboration and innovation.

Quote

"At the Station in Sorø, we have created a unique environment where historical heritage meets modern innovation. Our cosy courtyard garden and inspiring surroundings are not just a retreat for our users but also a source of creativity and new thinking. It's incredible to see how an old train station can become a powerhouse for entrepreneurship and collaboration".

Susanne Eiler, Project Leader, the Station in Sorø

Additional information:

Website:

www.stationen.co

