

INNOVATION
LAB
ASIA

A GUIDE TO

NORDIC INNOVATION

EUROPE'S UNICORN FACTORY

2021

INDUSTRIENS
FOND FREMME
DANSK
KONKURRENCEVNE
The Danish Industry Foundation



TECHBBQ

PREFACE

The Nordic startup ecosystem is one of the most dynamic in the world, with the highest number of unicorns per capita. Consequently, foreign investors from across the globe - and increasingly also Japan - are looking for new **opportunities in the Nordic region**, which now attracts the highest level of foreign investment per capita.

This report provides a brief introduction to the Nordic startup ecosystem, which includes Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, and Estonia. All these countries share a common history and culture, marking them out as a distinct region in Europe. This report aims to illuminate the most successful sectors, the most innovative hubs, the most important institutions, and the best events to visit, in order to explore the Nordics.

The publication has been produced by Innovation Lab Asia, a project partnership between Asia House Denmark and TechBBQ, backed by the Danish Industry Foundation. Partners for this enterprise include startup ecosystem organizations and investment funds from all of the Nordic countries, including NordicNinja VC, Nordic Venture Network, NordicBAN, Copenhagen Capacity, Startup Norway, Espoo Innovation Garden and Icelandic Startups.

We hope this report will inspire Japanese investors and stakeholders to explore new opportunities in the Nordics, and pave the way for mutually beneficial partnerships between our two regions.

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INTRODUCING THE NORDIC ECOSYSTEM

Skype, Spotify, Supercell... The Nordic region has the highest number of unicorns per capita after Silicon Valley. What is their secret sauce?

The Nordic nations consistently rank at the top of a range of global indexes, including competitiveness, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

The most interesting of these rankings is perhaps the Global Happiness index, which condenses a wide range of socio-economic parameters into one figure: life expectancy, social support, social networks, economic equality, perceptions of corruption, perceptions of the future, feelings of freedom, safety and trust. Ever since the index was launched in 2012, the Nordic countries have topped the list. Why?

It all boils down to the “Nordic model”, which combines market capitalism with a comprehensive welfare state that provides its citizens with free education, healthcare, and social security. This model is also the foundation for the strong Nordic innovation ecosystem. Free public education and strong social security lowers the fear of failure and nurtures a culture wherein trial and error are seen as beneficial, rather than a risk to be avoided. 90% of Nordic university students find it culturally accepted to become entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the public sector provides a strong framework for the ecosystem, including efficient e-governance, a streamlined bureaucracy, plentiful opportunities for funding and other support, and a strong focus on Research and Development. The Nordics have one of the highest levels of R&D investment by GDP in Europe. Add all of this to a general population that eagerly adopts new technology, and the Nordics have created a fertile ground for innovation and entrepreneurship.

A final characteristic of the Nordic ecosystem is the level of internationalization. All the Nordic economies are small and open. The Nordic countries need to collaborate both inside the region and beyond. Almost all Nordic people speak fluent English, and often other languages as well. Thus, the Nordics provide a great starting point for anyone looking to establish a foothold on the European continent.

THE NORDIC UNICORN FACTORY

- With 27 unicorns from 26 million people, the Nordics have generated the highest number of unicorns per capita in the world outside Silicon Valley.
- With 3.4 scaleups per 100,000 inhabitants, the Nordics have the highest density of scaleups in Europe (the European average is 1.0 per 100,000 inhabitants).
- With just 4% of the European population, the Nordics produce an impressive 9% of the world's total billion dollar exits (since 2005). In comparison, the remaining 96% of the Europe population generate only 8%.





FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Copenhagen
- Population: 5.8 million
- Official Language: Danish
- Currency: Danish Crown (DKK)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 51,212
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 3
- Global Innovation Index: # 7
- World Happiness Score: # 2
- International Corruption Index: # 1
- Total investment value 2019: EUR 809 million
- Total number of investments 2019: 162
- Startup Spaces: Matrikel1, Symbion

DENMARK

Denmark is the second largest Nordic country in terms of population, economy, and the startup ecosystem. It is also geographically the smallest and most densely populated.

The Danish ecosystem was first put on the map by Skype, a pan-Nordic company (Danish and Swedish founders, Estonian technology), that also helped boost the ecosystems in Estonian and Sweden. Since then, the Danish tech ecosystem has produced eight unicorns: Zendesk, Unity, Tradeshift, Just Eat, Sitecore, Trustpilot, Net Company and Chainalysis. However, the bulk of the Danish ecosystem is characterized by early stage startups.

The Danish startup ecosystem is primarily located in the capital region of Copenhagen and its surroundings, where numerous co-working spaces, accelerators, and incubators have sprung up within recent years. Innovation has become an integral part of the curriculum throughout the educational system, especially within the technical and scientific faculties. The Technical University of Denmark has churned out more than 2200 businesses between 1999-2017, more than two a week for the entire period.



The Copenhagen ecosystem is particularly strong within Fintech, Greentech, and Smart City-solutions. Western Denmark – especially around the city of Odense – is mainly focused on Robotics, the most famous member of the cluster being Universal Robotics, which was acquired by US based Teradyne for EUR 256 million in 2015.

Another Danish stronghold is found within Healthtech and Life Sciences. Denmark has a strong corporate tradition within pharmaceuticals, and the Novo Nordisk Foundation provides continuous funding for R&D. Europe's famous biotech cluster, Medicon Valley of Greater Copenhagen, has attracted corporates and researchers. The Japanese pharma giant Daiichi Sankyo recently set up their Nordic HQ in Copenhagen.

Finally, Copenhagen is an emerging hotbed for AI startups. With an abundance of machine learning research programs, a significant number of core AI companies, emerging in "stealth mode", are developing top solutions within fields like natural language processing, image recognition, and speech-to-text.

SWEDEN



Sweden is the largest of the Nordic countries in terms of area, population, and industrial strength. It also boasts the strongest startup ecosystem in the Nordics, with the largest number of unicorns, scaleups, and funding opportunities.

Household names such as Spotify, Klarna, and King (the creators of the mobile game Candy Crush) all come from Sweden, as do Mojang, Net Entertainment, iZettle, NorthVolt, MySQL, Bambora, and Evolution Gaming. Sweden is also considered to be a global leader in Greentech, Foodtech, Healthtech, and Life Sciences.

The main startup ecosystem is located around Stockholm, though smaller clusters exist in Southern Sweden, around Malmö and the university city of Lund. A new cluster is emerging around the industrial city of Gothenburg, home to Volvo as well as the upcoming startup Einride, now the EU leader within self-driving cars.

The success of the Swedish startup ecosystem is linked to a strong talent pool. 20% of Stockholm's workforce is connected to the tech sector, the highest share of any capital in Europe, and Stockholm enjoys a high concentration of elite universities, such as the Stockholm School of Economics, Karolinska Institutet, and Royal Institute of Technology (KTH).

The citizens of Stockholm are generally known for their progressive mindset (even compared to the rest of the Nordics) in relation to social and environmental issues, gender balance, and diversity. Greta Thunberg, a Stockholm native, is a global leader who is driving the new generation of environmental activism.



FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Stockholm
- Population: 10.1 million
- Official Language: Swedish
- Currency: Swedish Crown (SEK)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 48,410
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 12
- Global Innovation Index: # 2
- World Happiness Score: # 7
- International Corruption Index: # 4
- Total investment value 2019: EUR 1.9 billion
- Total number of investments 2019: 412
- Startup Spaces: SUP46, Mindpark



FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Oslo
- Population: 5.3 million
- Official Language: Norwegian
- Currency: Norwegian Crown (NOK)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 60,859
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 7
- Global Innovation Index: # 19
- World Happiness Score: # 3
- International Corruption Index: # 7
- Total investment value 2019: EUR 410 million
- Total number of investments 2019: 142
- Startup Spaces: MESH, Startup Lab



NORWAY

Norway is the wealthiest of the Nordic countries, largely due to its rich oil and gas reserves in the North Sea. However, Norway is rapidly diversifying its economy, and a new generation of investors, including business angels and family funds, are increasingly looking into new opportunities within tech, rather than traditional avenues such as real estate.

The prevalence of new funding opportunities has galvanized the Norwegian startup ecosystem and paved the way for a new generation of local startups. Today, Norway has the fastest growing tech scene in the Nordics and Oslo is emerging as a contender to become the next startup capital of Europe. For example, in 2019, four of the twelve largest Nordic funding rounds were closed by Norwegian startups.

The most famous Norwegian startup is Kahoot, which now has more than 50 million monthly subscribers. Other well-known companies include WeVideo, SafetyWing, WhereBy, and Kikora.

As in the other Nordic countries, the country is focused on finding ways to shift to smart city and sustainable solutions, providing new opportunities for Nordic Greentech solutions. To illustrate this, in 2019, the most actively invested sectors were Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and Hardware companies addressing the climate, construction, and financial industries. In addition, Oslo is home to the yearly impact technology event Katapult Future Fest, and in 2019 hosted the global Our Ocean conference.

FINLAND



Finland is the favorite destination for Japanese VC investors in the Nordics. Softbank paved the way in 2013, when it invested over one billion Euros in gaming startup Supercell. Since then, Japanese investors have funded 20 Finnish startups as of 2020. In 2018, Nordic Ninja VC became the first Japanese-backed fund to target Nordic companies. Nordic Ninja VC is a partnership between BaltCAP and the Japanese Bank of International Commerce and is headquartered in Finland's capital city of Helsinki.

Finland is a global leader within Gaming. Both of its unicorns – Supercell and Rovio – operate within this sector, and the entire ecosystem counts more than 250 gaming enterprises. In 2019, Japanese mobile operator giant Docomo invested an undisclosed amount in Hatch to bring 5G gaming to Japan. Now, Finland is moving into the fields of AI, big data, and analytics.

Today, the startup scene around Helsinki and nearby city Espoo has become one of the most dynamic innovation ecosystems in the Nordics. The annual event SLUSH, bringing together 25,000 investors, entrepreneurs and community builders from all over the world, is perhaps the strongest manifestation of this development.

The ecosystem is fuelled by ample funding and strong support mechanisms from the government, and The Aalto University, that facilitates easy collaboration between startups, international corporations and academia. Aalto University is now creating the largest startup ecosystem in Europe on its campus by converting old university buildings into co-working spaces.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Helsinki
- Population: 5.5 million
- Official Languages: Finnish and Swedish
- Currency: Euro (EUR)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 44,572
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 17
- Global Innovation Index: # 6
- World Happiness Score: # 1
- International Corruption Index: # 3
- Total investment value 2019: EUR 844 million
- Total number of investments 2019: 141
- Startup Spaces: Maria01, MOW





ICELAND

An island in the North Atlantic, Iceland is covered by volcanoes, geysers, and glacial landscapes, and has a minute population of 363,000 people. These two factors - remote location and small population - have instilled the Icelandic people with an international mindset, and deep appreciation for the value of collaboration.

This also applies to the startup community. Experienced entrepreneurs, investors, and leading experts engage as mentors, nurturing a new generation of entrepreneurs. The government has helped establish several private funds to help seed and pre-seed companies grow, and universities are encouraging students to focus on science and technology related subjects.

Within recent years, Iceland has experienced a tremendous boom in tourism, strengthening its international brand and helping the Icelandic startup community attract top international entrepreneurs and investors to their events, and ultimately foreign investments. In 2020 Iceland will be hosting the exclusive Summit-Summit investor event.

Leveraging this international attention, Iceland has managed to skillfully establish ties to leading startup communities across the world, and high-end co-working spaces and award winning accelerators have opened across the capital of Reykjavik.

Within recent years, Iceland has emerged as VR and Gaming hub. With Eve Online, the Icelandic startup CCP Games became the leaders within multiplayer gaming, as well as VR. Now other local startups are making their mark in this field, e.g. Sólfar and RVX, which recently secured Asian funding for Everest VR.

Icelandic Fintech companies are on the rise, as is Health and Biotech solutions, especially for the Maritime and Fishing industry. Startup Zymetech is now a global leader within marine-derived enzymes, and Kerecis is using fish skin to regenerate human tissue. A quick look at the Icelandic Ocean clusters website testifies to the global outlook of the Icelandic ecosystem, and its relevance for Japanese stakeholders.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Reykjavik
- Population: 0.36 million
- Official Language: Icelandic
- Currency: Icelandic Crown (ISK)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 52,268
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 21
- Global Innovation Index: # 20
- World Happiness Score: # 4
- International Corruption Index: # 11
- Total investment value 2019: EUR 72 million
- Total number of investments 2019: 24
- Startup Spaces: Startup Reykjavik

ESTONIA



Few countries punch above their weight as much as Estonia. With a population of just 1.3 million people, Estonia has produced five unicorns, the highest in the world per capita.

Estonia is also one of the main destinations for Japanese investors looking to the Nordics. As of 2020, Estonia had secured Japanese investment for 16 of their startups. Furthermore, Estonian VCs such as Maki.vc and Tera Ventures have Japanese investors as Limited Partners in their funds.

The collaboration between Japan and Estonia goes beyond investments. Many Japanese startups view Estonia as an ideal gateway to the EU, and Estonia's largest startup conference, Latitude59, sees solid Japanese participation. With 131 delegates registered in 2019, Japan was the third largest country represented at the conference after Estonia and Finland.

The Estonian success has to a large extent been driven by

visionary government policies like the e-Residency program and the Startup Visa-program, which has made it relatively easy for foreign entrepreneurs to start their businesses in Estonia, turning the country into a launchpad for startups looking to scale to the EU. Presently, more than 50,000 people from over 150 countries have established 7,000 new companies in Estonia. In 2015, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe became the first high-ranking foreign official to acquire an Estonian e-Residency card.

The e-Residency program has played an important role in the success of the Estonian startup ecosystem, both by acting as a driver for innovation and by creating a strong narrative internationally. Additionally, the Estonian government has made a concerted effort to grow their startup ecosystem for the past decade, by supporting community driven startup-support initiatives and ensuring startup-friendly legislation. Today, Estonia has a highly competitive startup scene, especially within Cybersecurity and Fintech.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Capital: Tallinn
- Population: 1.3 million
- Official Language: Estonian
- Currency: Euro (EUR)
- GDP Per Capita: EUR 32,797
- Ease of Doing Business Index: # 16
- Global Innovation Index: # 24
- World Happiness Score: # 50
- International Corruption Index: # 18
- Startup Spaces: Lift99



THE NORDIC UNICORNS

Bambora
Bolt
Chainalysis
Evolution Gaming
iZettle
Just Eat
Kahoot!
King
Klarna
Mojang
MySQL
Net Company
Net Entertainment
NorthVolt

Pipedrive
Playtech
Rovio
Sitecore
Skype
Spotify
Supercell
Tradeshift
Transferwise
Trustpilot
Unity
Wolt
Zendesk

*Unicorns are defined as private companies that have been valued at more than USD 1 billion. Unicorns does not include acquired startups.

INSTITUTES & RESEARCH PARKS

- Copenhagen Bio Science Park (Denmark)
- DTU Science Park (Denmark)
- Swedish Incubators & Science Parks (Sweden)
- Ideon Science Park (Sweden)
- Simula (Norway)
- Oslo Science Park (Norway)
- Turku Science Park (Finland)
- Aalto University Startup Center (Finland)
- Icelandic Institute for Intelligent Machines (Iceland)
- The University of Iceland Science Park (Iceland)
- Tallinn Science Park Tehnopol (Estonia)

MAIN NORDIC ACCELERATOR PROGRAMS

- Accelerace (Denmark)
- STING (Sweden)
- Katapult (Norway)
- Kiuas (Finland)
- Icelandic Startups (Iceland)
- Startup Wise Guys (Estonia)



KEY NORDIC STRONGHOLDS



GREENTECH

- The Nordic countries were early adopters of strict environmental policies and incentive programs that nurtured the growth of Greentech startups. Today, Nordic companies are global leaders within water and waste management, and sustainable energy solutions.
- According to the Global Cleantech Innovation Index, Denmark, Finland and Sweden ranks top three in terms of innovating, implementing and commercializing Greentech solutions.
- The Nordic governments actively promote the Greentech ecosystem through a wide range of support mechanisms: Tax breaks, funding, incubation, pilot testing etc.
- New funding models for green innovation are continuously being developed, e.g. The NPO Climate Bonds Initiative, that issues loans to find solutions to climate change.
- Access to public grants and funding is essential for the success of Nordic Greentech startups. They provide the means for innovation and reduce the risk for private investors, thus attracting venture capital. In 2018, Greentech investments in the Nordics reached EUR 831 million, an increase of 65% from the previous year. 73% of this growth came from private VC funds.



SMART CITIES

- The Nordics are global leaders in smart city development, leveraging on existing strongholds within waste and water management, sustainable energy, and IoT technologies.
- A large number of public/private Living Labs have been launched, making it possible for entrepreneurs to develop, test and implement cutting edge smart city solutions in real life conditions, e.g. Energy Lab Nordhavn, DOLL; Space10, Hammarby Sjöstad, Futurebuilt, Powerhouse alliance.
- The Nordic Smart City Network covers 14 major Nordic cities (including all the Nordic capitals and many second tier cities) that test smart city solutions, and share knowledge and experience amongst each other.
- Most of the cities participating in the Nordic Smart City Network have launched their own open-source data platform to generate awareness among citizens and to invite innovative businesses to further research and development of smart city projects.





HEALTHTECH

- The large public healthcare systems of the Nordic region provide efficient, high-quality healthcare to its entire population, often free of charge. By the same token, these healthcare systems have provided an ideal framework for Healthtech innovation.
- The Nordic healthcare systems have traditionally been quick to adopt new Healthtech and digital solutions, often to the benefit of local companies testing and developing their solutions in public-private partnerships. Today, Nordic Healthtech companies excel in e-health, ambient assisted living /care technology, personalized care, smart healthcare infrastructure, remote doctor-patient meetings and telemedicine solutions.
- The public healthcare system is characterized by a high level of trust and transparency, and medical institutions find it relatively easy to test new developments in personalized medicine (pilot projects between government and citizens)
- The public healthcare systems have developed a unique register of health data dating back to the 1960's, allowing for cross linkages between registers. The quality of the data is unparalleled among other regions, where data was mainly collected by private sector insurance companies for administrative purposes. Today, the accessibility of high quality data and biobanks provides the basis for AI-driven Healthtech solutions.



GAMING

- With over 800 companies, the Nordics have become the second largest game developer in the world. The developers of massively popular games like Minecraft, Battlefield, Angry Birds, Clash of Clans, Subway Surfer, and Candy Crush all come from the Nordic region.
- Nokia and Sony Ericsson laid the foundation for the Nordic Gaming stronghold. Both provided a fertile ground for local subcontractors within the mobile sector, and Nokia invested heavily into R&D, looking to become the leading mobile gaming platform of the 1990s.
- Nordic companies have been extremely agile in adapting new technologies into the Gaming industry, including the development of MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online) games, VR and AR, as well as the first companies to incorporate blockchain into gaming (Parsec frontiers, Reality Clash, GetGame).
- With a talented and engaged community of developers, it is very likely that the Nordic countries will continue to produce trend-setting game designs.
- Finland in particular has made its mark on the global Gaming industry. From 2005-15, the Finnish Gaming industry grew faster than anywhere in the world, and today Finland enjoys the highest revenue per capita in the world from this sector.
- Fun fact: Nintendo was introduced to Europe by a Swede, who opened the first ever computer gaming club in Gothenburg, Sweden. To this day, the Nintendo Club is the ONLY non-Nintendo owned distribution center.



FINTECH

- The Nordic financial sector is characterized by transparency, international focus, openness to new technology and a high level of trust in institutions. This provides fertile ground for new Fintech solutions, as the expenses to fight money laundering for the corporate Nordic banks increased in 2019 due to higher regulatory and compliance costs.
- The Nordic Fintech founders are amongst the most successful in Europe, and boast several unicorns: iZettle, Klarna, Transferwise, Tradeshift and Bambora. 16% of all Fintech scaleups are located in the Nordic region, including Kaching, Anyfin, Tink, Pleo and Billogram.
- Nordic countries were the first in Europe to setup real-time national payment infrastructures, laying the foundation for innovation in e- and m-commerce for the new generation of Nordic Fintech companies.
- The Nordic region is gearing up for further investments, with a growing ecosystem benefiting from skilled IT talent and consumers keen on using the newest tech to manage their finances. During the past couple of years, the large Nordic banks – Danske Bank, Nordea, and SEB Bank – have invested millions in promising Fintech startups.
- The Nordic society is moving quickly towards becoming cashless. In 2016, cash was used in less than 20% of all transactions, covering 1% percent of the total value of all payments. Mobile payment apps such as Swish, Vipps and MobilePay now serve half the region's population, and the Swedish National Bank is looking into replacing cash with a new digital alternative, called the e-krona.



DEEP TECH

- Deeptech companies are based on substantial scientific advances and high tech engineering innovation. With a highly educated population, the Nordics are a hotbed for Deeptech companies.
- An estimated 45% of all new European tech companies operate within Deeptech. Many companies begin their operations in stealth mode, originating as spin-offs by entrepreneurs and researchers from the region's technical universities. These companies are all characterized by high technical capacity, but little market reach.
- Top Nordic Deeptech companies include Mapillary, Peltarion, Biofiber Tech, Textual, Tailored Photons, Einride, Meeshkin, ATLANT 3D Nanosystems, and Immersal.
- Deeptech is the fastest growing tech sub-sector in the Nordics, and receives more funding than other sub-sectors. More than EUR 900 million was invested into Swed-

ish Deeptech companies from 2013-17, and in 2017 the Wallenberg Foundation allocated another EUR 150 million for AI research. The newly launched Helsinki-based Nordic Deeptech VC fund, Voima Ventures, has raised EUR 50 million, dedicated solely to investing in Nordic and Baltic Deeptech companies.

- The Nordic Deeptech VC fund, Voima Ventures, the first of its Nordic kind, foresees significant advances not only in the software based developments of the Nordic Deeptech, but also major progress in new materials, nanomaterials, hardware and process-oriented innovations.
- The Nordics are also leading in upskilling their populations in AI skills. For example, University of Helsinki and Reaktor Ventures recently launched The Elements AI Program, a free online course on the basics of AI. More than 320,000 people from over 170 countries have joined the course so far.





NORDIC TECH EVENTS 2021

SPRING:

TechChill (LV): 7-21st of May

Latvia's Nordic-oriented tech event, bringing together 300+ startups with more than 2,300 attendees.

www.techchill.co

Latitude59° (EST): 27-28th of May

Latitude59° is the flagship startup and tech event of Estonia, with a strong Japanese presence.

www.latitude59.ee

Arctic 15 (FIN): 1-2nd of June

A small, sharp and very internationalized startup event in Helsinki.

www.arctic15.com

Startup Iceland (ICE): usually held in May/June, date TBA

The main Icelandic startup since 2011, attracting both local and international stakeholders.

www.startupiceland.com

SUMMER:

Startup Extreme (NOR): 28-29th of June

Startup Extreme is a relatively small but very internationalized event, with some Japanese presence.

www.startupextreme.co

AUTUMN:

TechBBQ (DEN): 16-17th of September

Located in the city center of Copenhagen, this tech festival has become one of the best entry points to the Nordic startup scene.

www.techbbq.dk

Oslo Innovation Week (NOR): 27-30th of September

Oslo Innovation Week is another large Nordic focused event, with a strong international presence.

www.oiw.no

WINTER:

SLUSH (FIN): 19-20th November

With 25,000 participants gathering in the heart of Helsinki, SLUSH has become one of the most important and impressive startup events in the world.

www.slush.org/events/helsinki

EXPANDING TO THE NORDICS

Japanese investors are increasingly looking to the Nordics for new opportunities. In 2013, Softbank invested USD 1½ billion in Finnish Gaming startup Supercell. Since then, a total of 38 Nordic startups have either been funded or acquired by Japanese investors. More than 80% of these investments have taken place since 2017.

The six most important VC funds that have led the Japanese investments in Nordic startups are Mistletoe, NordicNinja VC, Rakuten, Docomo Innovation Village, Softbank and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group.

Though there does not seem to be an overall pattern in the Japanese investments - all verticals are represented in the 38 funded startups - the increased Japanese interest for Nordic startups is not surprising.

THE BIGGEST NORDIC INVESTMENT ROUNDS 2019 (EURO)

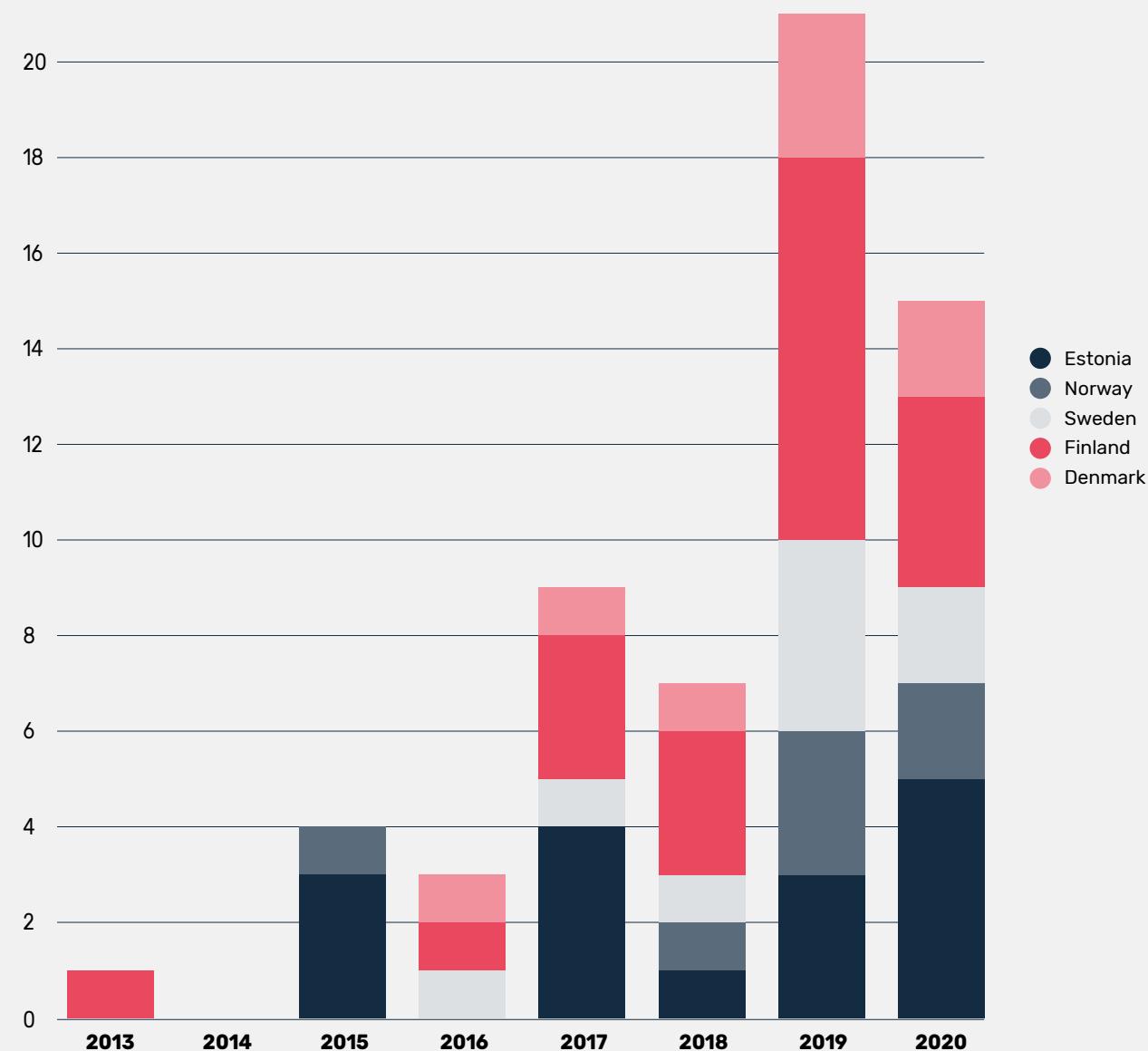
- # 1: Northvolt (Sweden) - 900 million
- # 2: Transferwise (Estonia) - 262 million
- # 3: Wolt (Finland) - 137 million
- # 4: Voi Technology (Sweden) - 76,5 million
- # 5: Pleo (Denmark) - 50 million
- # 6: Trustpilot (Denmark) - 49,5 million
- # 7: Bynk (Sweden) - 48 million
- # 8: ePassi Payments (Finland) - 41,5 million
- # 9: eSmart Systems (Norway) - 30 million
- # 10: Kolonial.no (Norway) - 30 million
- # 11: MaaS Global (Finland) - 29,5 million
- # 12: Spacemaker AI (Norway) - 22,5 million
- # 13: Kerecis (Iceland) - 14 million
- # 14: reMarkable (Norway) - 13,65 million

The Nordics have much in common with Japan. Both societies have a high standard of living and technologically advanced. Both have a well-educated - but aging - population. Both cultures have similar aesthetic preferences; many Japanese share the Nordic affinity for simplicity, craftsmanship, and premium materials, and Nordic products generally carry a strong brand value in Japan.

Perhaps most importantly, Nordic tech strongholds support the basic tenets of the Japanese government vision of Society 5.0. The focus of Nordic innovation on Greentech, Healthtech and Life science, as well as Robotics and automation, can help Japan achieve the goals of providing a better work-life balance, increasing social safety and trust, introducing less stressful work environments and ensuring greater economic equality.

For an updated status on Japanese investments to the Nordics, see www.japanesestartupinvestments.com,

NORDIC STARTUPS WITH JAPANESE INVESTMENTS: WHEN & WHERE



JAPANESE INVESTMENTS TO THE NORDICS (2013-2018)

NORWAY

- **Exabel** Sanden (Investment)

SWEDEN

- **EINS Consulting** NTT Data (Acquisition)
- **FishBrain** Recruit Holdings (Investment)
- **Outfox Intelligence** Dentsu (Acquisition)
- **Symfoni Software** Fujitsu (Acquisition)

DENMARK

- **Magnetix** Dentsu (Acquisition)
- **Nodes** Monstar Lab (Acquisition)
- **Pie System** DG Incubation (Investment)

FINLAND

- **3rd Eye Studios Oy Ltd** ColopINext (Investment)
- **Broadbit** Yaskawa Electric (Investment)
- **IndoorAtlas** Yahoo! Japan (Investment)
- **Inkron** Nagase Group (Acquisition)
- **KIDE Clinical Systems** Topcon (Acquisition)
- **Medfiles** WDB Holdings (Acquisition)
- **Supercell** Softbank, GungHo (Acquisition)
- **Teraloop** Yaskawa Electric (Acquisition)

ESTONIA

- **Fits Me** Rakuten (Acquisition)
- **Funderbeam** Mistletoe (Investment)
- **Jobbatical** Mistletoe (Investment)
- **Lift99** Mistletoe (Investment)
- **Lingvist** Rakuten (Investment)
- **Planetway** Mistletoe, Tokusui, Sakura Internet (Investment)
- **Transferwise** Mitsui, World Innovation Lab (Investment)
- **Xolo** Mistletoe (Investment)

JAPANESE INVESTMENTS TO THE NORDICS (2019-2020)

NORWAY

- **Brandpad** Thorgate Ventures III (Investment)
- **Girff Aviation** Dronefund VC (Investment)
- **Kahoot** Softbank (Investment)
- **Nevia** Sony Corporation (Investment)
- **Oncolmmunity** NEC (Acquisition)

SWEDEN

- **Einride** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **Exeger** Softbank (Investment)
- **Inkonova** Terra Drone (Investment)
- **Tracklib** Sony Innovation Fund (Investment)
- **Voi** NordicNinja VC (Investment)

DENMARK

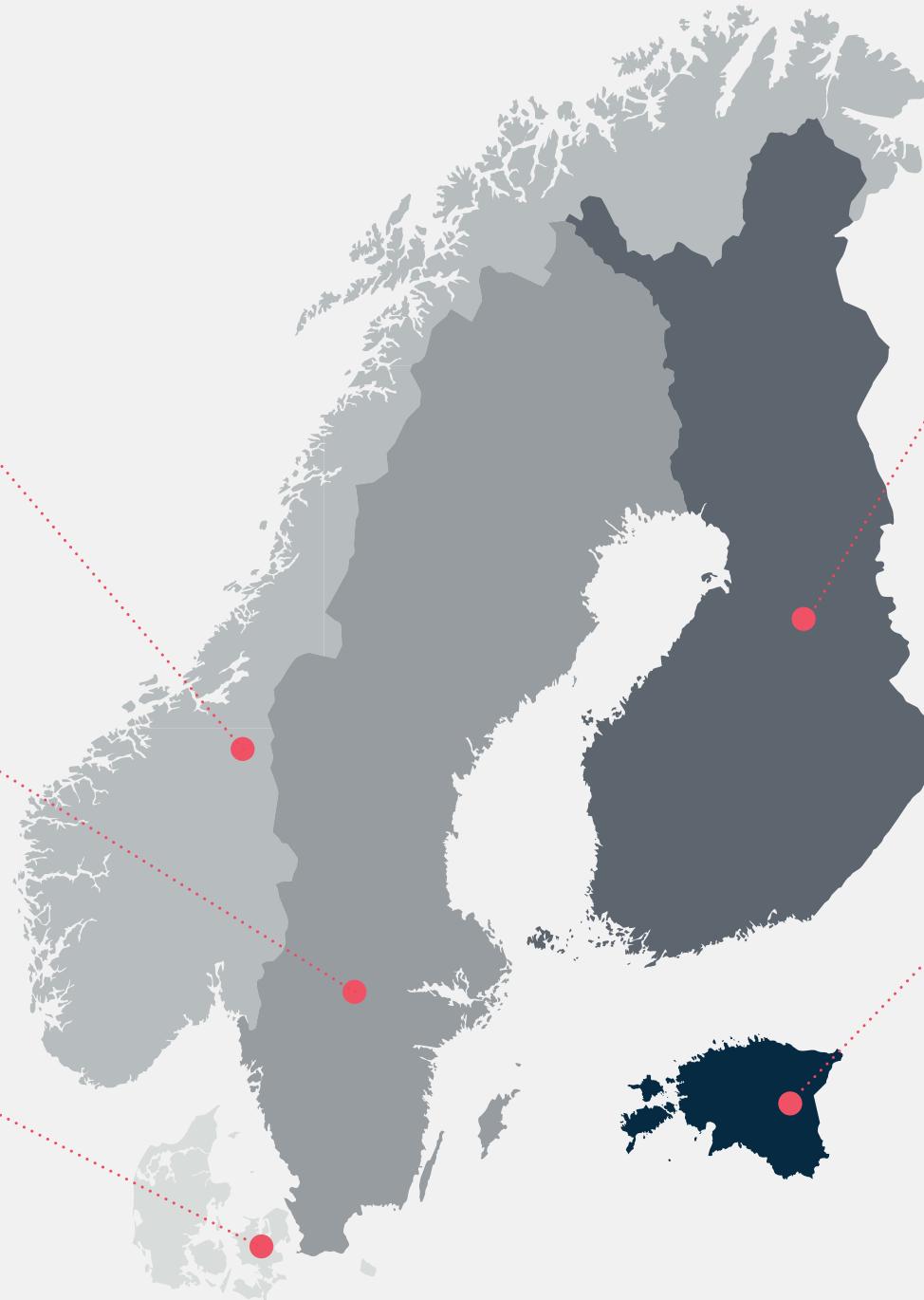
- **AddiFab** Mitsubishi Chemical (Investment)
- **Chainalysis** Mitsubishi UFJ (Investment)
- **Grazper** Yokogawa (Acquisition)
- **Unibio** Mitsubishi Corporation (Investment)
- **WARM** Sony Innovation Fund (Investment)

FINLAND

- **Attractive.ai** Keisuke Honda (Investment)
- **Canatu Oy** Denso (Investment)
- **Combinostics** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **Flexound** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **Hatch Entertainment** Docomo (Investment)
- **Logmore** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **MaaS Global** NordicNinja VC, Denso and others (Investment)
- **Meru Health** IT-Farm Corporation (Investment)
- **Nightingale Health** Kirin and Mitsui (Investment)
- **Sensible 4** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **Sensire** Yokogawa (Investment)
- **Varjo** NordicNinja VC (Investment)

ESTONIA

- **Bolt** NordicNinja VC (Investment)
- **Clanbeat** Mistletoe (Investment)
- **Cleveron** ITOCHU (MoU for R&D)
- **Realeyes** Docomo (Investment)
- **Startship Technologies** TDK ventures, Recruit (Investment)
- **Tera VC** ITOCHU (Limited Partner)
- **Thorgate Ventures III** Alesco ventures (Limited Partner)
- **Veriff** NordicNinja VC (Investment)



FURTHER READING

In this section, we have listed five links to interest organisations and companies, providing detailed reports and study regarding the Nordic ecosystem.

- **[Atomico: www.atomico.com](http://www.atomico.com)**
Atomico is a London-based VC firm that delivers comprehensive data and sharp analysis on the European ecosystem, including the Nordic region, and produces the report “The State of European Tech.”
- **[Dealroom: www.dealroom.co](http://www.dealroom.co)**
Dealroom delivers high-quality data on European companies and ecosystems, reporting on trends, research on companies and investor profiles.
- **[Nordic Innovation: www.nordicinnovation.org](http://www.nordicinnovation.org)**
Nordic Innovation is an intergovernmental body which promotes entrepreneurship and innovation in the Nordic region. Sector reports from Nordic Innovation are freely available and can be found under the “Publications” tab.
- **[Startup guide: www.startupguide.com](http://www.startupguide.com)**
Startup guide has published a comprehensive handbook on the Nordic ecosystem, covering hubs, companies, investor groups and relevant general information on each of the countries.
- **[Startup Heatmap Europe: www.startupheatmap.eu](http://www.startupheatmap.eu)**
Startup Heatmap Europe benchmarks the attractiveness of startup hubs and maps ecosystems in Europe, including the Nordics.



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