



PLOUGMANN VINGTOFT®



# Sustainability Report 2017



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## Foreword by our CEO

Since the latest report on our sustainability progress in 2016, we have worked on executing our corporate strategy, and as a part thereof it is our ambition to launch a dedicated corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy in 2018 to further show our obligation to contribute to and to make a positive impact on society, locally as well as in a global context.

In this report, we have highlighted a few of the inventions that have proven to be groundbreaking for society and in which our employees have been involved in a strong belief that what we do is important to society and that we can make a difference in doing to.

Throughout 2017, Plougmann Vingtoft has marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and remarkably this year our company won one of the most prestigious awards within our line the IPR business: “IP Firm of the Year” for Denmark.



**FIRM OF THE YEAR  
2017**

Every year, the acknowledged British analysis and news media, Managing Intellectual Property, presents awards to the IP consultancy firms around the world that have performed outstanding throughout the past year. Winning an IP Global Award and the title “IP Firm of the Year” is indeed a special achievement since only one firm per country can win this Award.

Winning the Award and thereby being ranked in the absolute top of our line of business certainly is a boost to our skilled employees and it underlines our commitment to helping innovative startups or multinationals to develop, protect and commercialize their ideas, inventions and brands by means of intellectual property rights (IPR), from which society will benefit as knowledge and innovative solutions to world problems become available by means of new products deriving from the ideas.

***At Plougmann Vingtoft it is our vision to make a difference by strengthening knowledge, innovation and creativity.***

With our vision, we wish to inflict on our surroundings the deeper meaning of our function in society, and acknowledge our field of work as part of something greater.

By strengthening the knowledge, we help the community, the companies and the people to take advantage of the huge potential which is unfolded in and around the global IPR system. By strengthening innovation and creativity, we show that development and success is built on good ideas and the ability to think outside the box. We take pride in the fact that we are committed to helping our clients benefit from the global IP system and strengthening their competitive position in the market. We live and practice this ideal in our daily work.

The stories behind the innovative products we have helped to protect speak of our passion for ideas, innovation and new thinking which spans almost every industry you can think of, and they have matured into an exhibition that we call “Ideas that have changed the world” in celebration of our now more than 50 years’ experience in providing our services.

Going forward, our CSR policy will be embedded in the Plougmann Vingtoft brand with focus on promoting projects, cooperation and supporting universities conducting research within green and renewable energy, and we will continue to ensure a close link to our human resource strategy on the job satisfaction of our employees.

I am pleased to confirm that Plougmann Vingtoft reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

At Plougmann Vingtoft, we look forward to reporting on our progress on the social responsibility by living our vision, and we hope that you will enjoy reading this year's sustainability report.



*Annette Lindgreen*  
Annette Siewert Lindgreen  
CEO

## Human Rights and Labour

In Denmark, the labour market is governed by many laws ensuring human rights to a very high degree, and we experience very few violations of the laws. Therefore, it may seem irrelevant to report on human rights compliance since at our end of the world, human rights such as freedom of association, and the elimination of e.g. forced labour or child labour are regarded as obvious. However, we are well aware that this might not be the case in other countries, and consequently, we are devoted to monitoring our foreign cooperation partners with a view to assessing their compliance with human rights.

Our employee handbook covers policies concerning our employee rights, physical and mental health, compensation packages, including pension and retirement schemes.

### Physical environment

As part of our human resource policy we focus on ensuring that our employees are provided safe and suitable work facilities, e.g. smoking or drinking alcohol is not allowed at our offices.

To comply with an expressed wish for silence around the work place which some of our employees pointed out as an issue in our latest workplace assessment, we offer our employees to use one-man offices in our premises when they

feel the need to focus on a task without being disturbed by colleagues discussing a case or making telephone calls, etc. Furthermore, we have put up posters reminding people to consider to go someplace else if they need to discuss work in order not to disturb. This way we intend to convert good intentions into lasting behavioral changes for the benefit of all co-workers.

Our employees are covered by an extra health insurance as part of their employment contract which provides them with quick and competent treatment in case of physical or mental illness. As an extra feature we also offer the spouses and children of our employees also to benefit from the insurance. Each Autumn, we offer vaccination free of charge to our employees against influenza.

### Psychosocial environment

We aim at creating a mentally sound environment where all employees can communicate openly with their colleagues and/or managers. Our employees are with us because each and every one creates value to our company, regardless of their function or title, and consequently, we value the opinion of all employees and encourage everybody to speak up on matters of concern.

We dedicate resources to monitor, remedy and eliminate environmental and safety risks through our work environment committee, the members being elected by and among the employees for a three-year period during which they receive



mandatory work environment courses. The committee is chaired by our HR manager, and together this group is also responsible for carrying out our workplace assessments at regular intervals.

Our worklife committee also consists of employees elected among and by our employees, and they work to improve the job satisfaction in direct dialogue with the top management. Both committees meet at regular intervals and minutes of the meetings are published at our company intranet.

### **Internal communication and individual dialogues**

We support an open communication internally also view a view to avoiding harassment on the job.

Minimum once a year, we stage dialogue sessions between the employee and his/her manager on the performance and development of the employee, including the need for training, and also talk about what the employee can do to take responsibility for his/her contribution to the team and overall to the company. In addition, we apply a situational management principle in order to keep a close dialogue whenever needed with our employees to discuss topics such as workload, also with a view to preventing stress and enhancing job satisfaction.

### **Professional development always a focus area**

As a knowledge-based consultancy our employees are of course our greatest asset. To meet our employees' expressed need for new challenges, we constantly look for new ways to develop their skills.



We have a strong focus on the further development of our employees. All of our IPR specialists receive external as well as internal training

tailored to their individual function and level. In this way, all attorneys are introduced to processes that secure a consistent high level of quality in each single task.

We always have focus on having the highest qualified and skilled people among our employees and consequently, we keep on investing in providing our employees with relevant education.

This past year, we have increased our focus on training and preparing our attorneys and specialists for the important changes on the European scene of IPR, which is i.a. affected by the EU patent package comprising the Unitary Patent and the Unified Patent Court (UPC).

As soon as the new changes become effective, they will cause both challenges and opportunities that IPR owners need to consider, and it is a top priority for Plougmann Vingtoft to be able to provide the best counselling to our clients and associates on this topic at all times.

We invest in having a position on the market as trusted advisors to our clients in areas that are vital to their business.

Our IPR coordinators also participate in additional training and education, and many of them are QIPA - Qualified Intellectual Property Administrators - and QTMA - Qualified Trade Mark Administrators.

Furthermore, a number of our IPR attorneys also work as lecturers at educational institutions such as the University of Copenhagen and the three largest Danish universities outside Copenhagen: The University of Aarhus, The University of Aalborg and The University of Southern Denmark.

This year, it has been a key feature to ensure that the IT competences of our employees are up-to-date, and consequently, we offer relevant training and courses. The digitized age requires an open mind and the readiness to embrace changes, and it is our ambition that our employees will be able to navigate and work efficiently and confidently with new digital processes.

### **Offering students relevant job experience**

We continuously bring student workers into our company as a part of our social responsibility, since it is a great way of preparing young people for their work life after graduation.

Offering students part-time employments is a way of ensuring that our students also have time to study while working for us.

As for interns, we enter an agreement with their educational institution and offer students an internship, where they can practice their new skills, after they have completed their education/courses.

### Networking to create awareness about a career as an IPR attorney

The education of IPR attorneys in Denmark is solely provided by private IPR firms, and it is of great importance that companies take on the responsibility of investing in educating new IPR attorneys. At Plougmann Vingtoft, we take this very seriously. Thus, this year we are proud to announce that we have seven young IPR attorney trainees receiving IPR attorney training at our company.

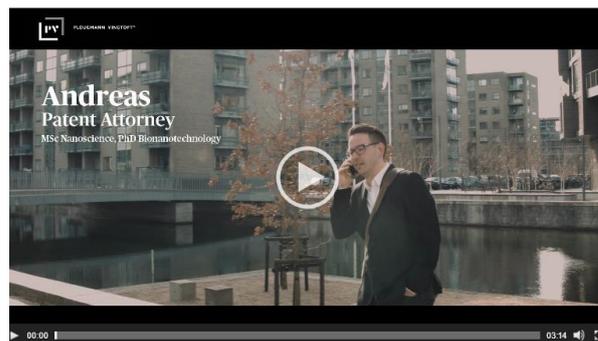
We also invest time in networking with students at universities, and provide lectures about career opportunities within the field of IPR.

### Diversity is one of our strengths

Being an internationally oriented company, we believe in employee diversity, which means that we set our team of experts independent of age/seniority, ethnicity, nationality and gender.

As an example, we employ both Japanese and US patent attorneys, and our staff holds many nationalities and different cultural backgrounds, which enables us to understand and communicate even better with our stakeholders and communities all over the world.

The male/female ratio of our company is close to being 42/58 which also contributes to providing gender diversity in our company.



In our recruitment process, we have been successful in using video portraits of employees sharing their stories about working for Plougmann Vingtoft: <http://www.pv.eu/about/job-career/>

### Taking the leap from scholar to patent advisor

We encourage our employees to work across the organization and to live their passions within their work life since we strongly believe that if you really want or enjoy something, you will accomplish your dreams.

*“Every day I embark on some new exciting project, that someone has put a lot of energy into. I think that’s a huge responsibility.”*

Andreas Lauge Christensen  
Patent Attorney

## Facts and figures

We have 81 employees (equal to 66 FTEs)  
34 male and 47 female

The average age at Plougmann Vingtoft is 42

43% of our employees have been at the company more than 8 years

16 of our 39 IP attorneys are qualified European Patent Attorneys

7 of our 16 European Patent Attorneys have been certified as European Patent Litigators

12 student workers are employed part-time



## Ethical standards

We highly value an open and transparent communication with our stakeholders and clients, and irrespective of the size of a client, we always organize a process tailored to the needs, budget and the goals of the specific client.

Our business terms that are available at our website, cement that our relationship with our clients are built on a healthy foundation of mutual trust and balancing of expectations.

In Denmark, the legislation concerning anti-money laundering has been enhanced during the past year, and even though as such we are not covered by the new rules, we have chosen to adapt those and to incorporate the essence into our business terms to show our firm commitment to avoid money laundering in connection with our business transactions.

We have also published articles on how to avoid CEO and/or email fraud to share our knowledge broadly with our stakeholders on this high risk issue.

Our business terms further includes a list of ethical standards describing that our main priority is to look after the interests of our clients and to safeguard their rights and retain our independency as professional advisors. We do so by operating within an ethical framework that is subject to codes of conduct of trade-related international organizations like ADIPA (Association of Danish Intellectual Property Attorneys), EPI (European Patent Institute), ECTA (European Communities Trade Mark Association), FICPI (International Federation of Intellectual Property Attorneys) and NPF (Norwegian Association of IP Attorneys).

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## Focus on innovation networks and clean technology

### Innovation with great societal impact

We have specialists in almost any industry sector. However, we have a particular strategic focus on sectors such as clean technology/renewable energy and food which are areas where Denmark has a strong reputation internationally. Also, we believe that these areas serve a higher societal purpose and benefit the world as a whole, e.g. by reducing carbon emissions and helping to eliminate child malnutrition in developing countries and so forth.

Our life science experts within food and agriculture have dedicated themselves to participating in several clusters which are working to improve and develop new foods and food technologies. This area is one of our top strategic priorities since we acknowledge the fact that food is rapidly becoming a scarce resource globally, and mankind needs to find new ways of preventing widespread famine. We strive to assist the R&D within foods for which Denmark is renowned throughout the world by introducing the world of IPR to the industry and helping companies gain from their innovations.

Furthermore, during the past year, our CEO has participated in a network within research and innovation focusing on the visions, possibilities and challenges related to Danish research politics. The network aims at strengthening the collaboration between universities and private companies, which in our opinion is extremely important in securing that knowledge and ideas

will mature into tangible products for the benefit of society.

### Working with clean technology

The world of intellectual property truly revolves around innovation and inventions. Many of the inventions we work with are smart solutions which contribute to making small or large changes in the environment and society.

The clean technology sector is one of our primary industries and an important strategic focus. Clean technology relates to products and services that improve operational performance, productivity or efficiency while reducing costs, inputs, energy consumption, waste or pollution.

Creators of clean technology need patent protection for their inventions and investments, as it secures their business and stimulates further innovation - for the common benefit of our society.

### Communication on sustainable inventions

Within our team of IPR attorneys we have a highly competent and innovative cleantech team that helps promote technological development, which can improve environmental conditions. Besides working with the technological aspects of cleantech, our experts are also keen on communicating the results and impacts of various inventions within this sector.

Through many channels, including online articles, case stories and blogs, we communicate the stories behind the different inventions. In our

magazine, we have told stories about using algae as a "green" form of aircraft fuel, the development of a special type of fish feed for sustainable fish farming, using ozone for efficient water purification, and a solution for environmental garbage sorting and recycling. Additionally, we share stories of the societal impact of inventions and the strategic importance of IPR for example as means for creating financial security and covering risk management.

## Learning by helping others

As one of the only IPR firm in Denmark, Plougmann Vingtoft offers in-house services relating to technology transfer services and commercialization of inventions. This is offered through our specific brand: [www.tto.eu](http://www.tto.eu).

We focus these services on helping companies and assisting universities in commercializing their inventions. Also, we help to improve the overall performance of their technology transfer units through implementation of innovation management processes.

Plougmann Vingtoft enjoys the cooperation with entrepreneurs and students, and the university sector is one of our most innovative and inspiring client bases.

Firstly, we help our clients obtain protection of their specific invention. Secondly, there are occasions where we choose to partly sponsor

such inventions of upcoming businesses, because we find it important to aid the good ideas and promote innovation that helps society as a whole.

This is a way for us to live our vision to make a difference by strengthening knowledge, innovation and creativity. We have previously supported creative entrepreneurs such as the people and projects behind the trademarks DROPBUCKET® and SITPACK®.

We did this because we found that both initiatives were innovative and true to our focus on sustainability. Read the exciting story behind SITPACK® here:

<http://www.pv.eu/clients/startups/monomono-kickstarter-success-through-tailored-trademark-consulting/>

We are currently in the process of finding a new project to support in line with our CSR strategy.

## Our environmental impact

As an office-based consultancy, the nature of our operations makes our direct environmental impact relatively small as compared to e.g. production plants. However, we are determined to stay focused on the minimum use of resources and materials at our premises, and we are constantly on the outlook for ways to act environmentally sound. As an example, we work almost paperless to minimize our consumption of resources and our impact on waste handling.



## Anti-corruption

### Denmark – still the world’s least corrupt country

Fortunately, administrative corruption, business corruption and other forms of corruption are very rare in Scandinavia. In 2016, Denmark received a score of 90 on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in a global study performed by the World Justice Project (WJP; no data for 2017 has been published). Thus, Denmark is the least corrupt country in the world for the third year in a row. See full country profile for Denmark on the WJP’s website: <http://data.worldjusticeproject.org/#/groups/DNK>

## CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2016

Q search

2016 Rank	Country	2016 Score	2015 Score	2014 Score	2013 Score	2012 Score	Region
1	Denmark	90	91	92	91	90	Europe and Central Asia
1	New Zealand	90	91	91	91	90	Asia Pacific
3	Finland	89	90	89	89	90	Europe and Central Asia
4	Sweden	88	89	87	89	88	Europe and Central Asia
5	Switzerland	86	86	86	85	86	Europe and Central Asia
6	Norway	85	88	86	86	85	Europe and Central Asia
7	Singapore	84	85	84	86	87	Asia Pacific
8	Netherlands	83	84	83	83	84	Europe and Central Asia
9	Canada	82	83	81	81	84	Americas
10	Germany	81	81	79	78	79	Europe and Central Asia
10	Luxembourg	81	85	82	80	80	Europe and Central Asia
10	United Kingdom	81	81	78	76	74	Europe and Central Asia
13	Australia	79	79	80	81	85	Asia Pacific
14	Iceland	78	79	79	78	82	Europe and Central Asia

Visit [www.transparency.org/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/cpi) for more information



### Our Commitment

Plougmann Vingtoft is committed to non-acceptance of all forms of bribery directly or indirectly, and we make an effort to ensure that all of our employees are aware of this policy.

As highlighted in the section dealing with our ethical standard, Plougmann Vingtoft complies with the guidelines of Danish legislation regarding the ban of insider trading of stocks.

Furthermore, we apply strict governance of e.g. financial approval procedures, and we keep our IT/IS and data security policies at a very high level to ensure the best possible protection of our clients’ data and information at all times.



## What we believe at Plougmann Vingtoft

It is our vision to make a difference by strengthening knowledge, innovation and creativity.

In accomplishing this, we help people and companies to take advantage of the huge potential, which is unfolded in and around the global IPR system, and we show that development and success is built on good ideas and the ability to think outside the box.

This ideal is reflected in our daily work and lived through our company's four core values:

**Commitment, Credibility, Creativity and Competence**



**Plougmann Vingtoft**

[www.pv.eu](http://www.pv.eu)

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