

Recipients : Employees in DCA's and DCE's centre units

Organisational development in the national centres

The Tech Dean's Office is now initiating an analysis process to examine how DCA and DCE can best be organised in the future. The analysis will create a solid basis for a decision, including whether there are advantages to an organisational merger of the two centre units under one director. The analysis process will run until the beginning of 2026, and the Dean's Office will then decide on the future organisation before Easter.

Immediate opportunities for analysis of the organisational structure

Since the end of 2024, the position of director of DCA has been vacant, and it has not been possible to recruit a new director for the position. This is the current starting point for thinking more broadly and investigating whether it can prove to be an advantage to have a new organisation with one director and one unified centre unit, both in terms of management and organisation.

- **Tech as a unified faculty:** There is increasing interdisciplinary collaboration across the departments in DCA and DCE. This gives rise to consideration of whether a single entry and exit for science-based advisory at Tech can strengthen collaboration and make it easier for the outside world to navigate.
- **The ministries of the framework agreement:** The Government has gathered a large part of the civil service that DCA and DCE advise in one ministry with the Ministry of Green Transition. From time to time, the ministries have expressed surprise at the internal division at AU, and on a few occasions, they have expressed that they have experienced contradictions in the advice provided by DCA and DCE. This gives us the opportunity to look at how we best organise ourselves in the light of the new reality.
- **Robustness in task solving:** A single centre unit allows for greater robustness in task solving, where employees across the two current centre units can support each other in stressful periods.
- There are still differences in both culture and workflows between DCA and DCE. However, we have already been successfully working for several years on a **rap-prochement between DCA and DCE** on work processes and better mutual knowledge of each other, which puts us in a good position for this analysis. The Dean's Office is aware of the differences and that it still takes time to further approximate the culture and workflows.

The analysis process will have several focus areas

The analysis process should not only look at structure. It must also consider the conditions that are important for the employees' everyday lives, the collaboration with the



outside world and the overall performance of tasks. We focus in particular on the following areas:

- It is crucial that the future organisation supports **present management and good well-being** at all places of service. The management structure must ensure that employees experience support, clarity and accessibility – regardless of organisational model and workplace.
- **Robustness in task performance:** An important part of the analysis is to assess how the organisation can support flexibility and capacity, especially during periods of high work pressure. We want a structure that makes it easier to support each other across the board and ensure quality in the performance of tasks.
- **The outside world's experience of us** (the "customer picture"): We will look at how the organisation affects collaborative relationships with ministries and other customers. It is about ensuring a clear and professional approach to advice and about strengthening trust and cooperation externally.
- **Branding and identity:** We will examine how DCA and DCE as names and national centres contribute to our overall profile and how they interact with Aarhus University's brand. It is about finding a balance that both preserves professional identity and strengthens overall visibility.

We know that change can create uncertainty. Therefore, it is a priority in the process to ensure psychological safety, open communication and the opportunity to ask questions and share concerns.

Framework for the analysis process

- **Finances and personnel:** The analysis process is based on the employees who are already employed and on the current economy.
- **Task portfolio:** The analysis will look at the current portfolio in the centres with a focus on how the centres' core tasks can be strengthened; among other things, whether increased collaboration across units can strengthen the solution of core tasks.
- **Place of employment:** Employees retain their current geographical place of employment, even if the results of the analysis show that a merger makes sense.
- **Continued one entrance - one exit:** The function of the centre units as a single entrance - one output for consultancy tasks will be maintained.
- **Directors part of the faculty management team:** Regardless of whether there are one or two directors, the centre units will continue to be represented in the faculty management team on a par with head of departments.

Participatory process with close dialogue

We will initiate the analysis process with the recent meeting and this memo.

The analysis process is led by Vice-Dean Ole Hertel and is carried out in close collaboration with AU HR, Tech HR and an external consultant with solid experience from academia on the recommendation of AU HR.

From the very beginning, employees in the centre units, the two directors and the heads of department from AGRO, ECOS and FOOD are actively involved in the design of the analysis process. We invite you to an ongoing dialogue and provide the opportunity to contribute along the way, so that we ensure that the analysis is based on knowledge, experiences and perspectives from those who know the tasks and everyday life best.

In the first phase, we will focus on the design of the process, where we convene employees and managers. Information will be sent out about participation opportunities and schedule. The first joint meeting is expected to be held at the end of October or beginning of November 2025.

Additional background

The service check of the science-based advisory area in 2022-2023 examined, among other things, the organisation of the area. At the time, the conclusion was that the existing structure with two centre units and associated institutes was appropriate and should be maintained. There was a natural division, as DCE had the Ministry of the Environment as the primary client with three service agreements within nature and the environment, while DCA had the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries as the primary client with three service agreements within food, livestock and plant production.

The strategy that followed the service check in 2023 had as a benchmark to strengthen internal collaboration, among other things through the exchange of knowledge of *best practice* between DCA and DCE with a view to more uniform practice. The benchmark was concretised in actions such as simpler and more uniform task management across DCA and DCE and closer coordination of incoming tasks, set-up and solution approach. Targeted work has been done on this since 2023.

In June 2024, the green tripartite was adopted, and the Ministry of Green Transition was established in August 2024 by merging significant parts of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. As of the Framework Agreement 2025-2028, both DCE and DCA have the Ministry of Green Transition as the primary client, while the affiliation with the Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries has been retained for smaller parts of the agreements.