

# Better project management for Denmark's largest pension provider

The ATP Group manages Denmark's biggest institutional investment portfolio. When the company decided it needed to improve how it manages its projects and portfolio, it turned to NNIT. Now, with a new governance model for project management, and a new project portfolio management and reporting system, ATP is already feeling the difference.

For a pension provider like Denmark's ATP, good governance and visibility are crucial not only to protecting the company's portfolio of more than DKK 300 billion, but also to ensuring its consultancy projects are efficiently planned and executed. As well as administering the Danish Labour Market Supplementary Pension Fund, ATP also manages several special funds, and provides consultancy to many of the country's public sector institutions.

## The challenge

When ATP contacted NNIT to talk about project governance, the company had a list of issues it was looking to address. These included everything from unclear processes for securing project approval to a lack of visibility over the company's portfolio and resource needs and availability. In addition, the company had previously adopted the PRINCE2 system for managing projects, but felt that inconsistent use of the model was preventing ATP from realising its true value.

Kenny Østerberg, who was in charge of the project at ATP, says that the company was looking to improve efficiency through "more effective governance of strategic planning across the board at ATP". The company needed to define its processes for approving projects and project phases and to clarify roles and responsibilities. Along with achieving a more complete view of the company's portfolio and resource needs, it was hoped that this would take some of the guesswork out of project management at ATP.

Johann Gautier, who managed the project for NNIT, says that ATP was looking to "identify potential issues at an earlier stage, so they could take corrective action in time to prevent delays and other problems". ATP was also looking to become a more mature organisation, where processes, roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and procedures followed consistently.

## The solution

ATP was familiar with NNIT's expertise in the area of project governance, and after a presentation of the company's governance model, ATP was convinced it had found the right solution. "It was exactly what we were looking for", says Mr Østerberg, who was involved in the project from the start.

The specific deliverables included a preliminary business case – which helped identify ATP's needs – a governance model and set of process descriptions tailored to the company's exact requirements, a set of working templates, a process for uniform monthly reporting, and a function for carrying out approvals based on best practices. The governance model was adapted with a view to deepening ATP's implementation of the PRINCE2 project management model in order to help the company leverage its existing investments in project management.

The project took about nine months to complete, with the project team consisting of four consultants from NNIT and four from ATP. Team members worked on and off depending on the competences required for the different phases of the project. Speaking on behalf of ATP's staff, Mr Østerberg describes the process as very smooth indeed. He explains, "It was like a single team, and NNIT really became an integrated part of our organisation. There weren't a lot of problems. It was a very, very positive experience".

## The results

Although it is difficult to translate the benefits of improved project and portfolio governance directly into euros and cents, Mr Østerberg is certain that the solution has created a great deal of value for ATP. “We now have a really great process to follow when managing projects. We know what we need to base our decisions on, and we know the approval gates we have to pass through – from start to finish. And we have a much better view of our portfolio and our resource needs”, he explains.

NNIT’s Mr Gautier adds, “ATP has better knowledge about projects at an earlier phase, and this allows them to influence a project as it progresses”. When asked about any particular hurdles NNIT faced in carrying out the project, Mr Gautier jokes that “people who implement a governance model aren’t always universally popular – because governance models do mean that some employees have to change the way they work”.

Mr Østerberg replies, however, that while some ATP staff had concerns about the additional formalities a governance model always introduces, even those who were sceptical at first now see the value in the new processes. He explains, “Initially, some of our staff questioned why we needed the new formalities the model put in place. But now they are also seeing the benefits. They know that once they’ve followed the process, they’ll know exactly where they stand with respect to their project. And they can now more easily trace their portfolio and other information”.

Might NNIT be involved in the next stage of the project? “I feel certain that NNIT will be involved in the next phase of our work, and we are already holding regular meetings about the way forward today”, concludes ATP’s Kenny Østerberg.

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*Kenny Østerberg, IT afdelingschef*

## ABOUT ATP

The ATP Group – the Danish Labour Market Supplementary Pension Fund – is responsible for administrating Denmark’s largest pension scheme, ATP Lifelong Pension. The company also administrates several additional major pension schemes and other funds.

The group’s investment portfolio is Denmark’s largest institutional portfolio, totalling some DKK 300 billion. Its activities are divided into pension activities, hedging activities, investment activities and administration activities. ATP develops and manages its own highly advanced IT systems.

With headquarters in Hillerød, Denmark, the ATP Group has four separate subsidiaries and employs about 750 people.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, visit [www.atp.dk](http://www.atp.dk).