

Danish investors go for reuse of wastewater

By Vibeke Lyngklip Svansø

After years of development work in the United States, the Danish founders of Sunstone Water Group are now established in Denmark. The small business will compete with, among others, the pump manufacturing giant Grundfos.

Breweries use millions of liters of water to clean bottles and then pay millions to get rid of wastewater, as do other food industries with similarly high water consumption.

As the price of water and effluent charges for wastewater increase, companies that use large amounts of water in production are increasingly interested in reusing more of their purchased water, and returning it as clean as possible.

This is one of the trends out of which the pioneering company Sunstone Water Group hopes to grow business. The company was founded in 2007 by the enterprising Danish chemical engineer Elo Nielsen, who has developed a high-technology, mobile water treatment plant. Elo Nielsen has previously developed the patented cooling units for Maersk's ships. They are produced today at Elo Nielsen's own factory in China.

"Since 2007, Sunstone Water Group worked in the US to develop a finished and tested 'plug & play' concept. Last year we got so far that two of the investors behind the American company decided to establish a European sister company in Denmark," says Sune Lieknins Neve, who recently was appointed Sales



Director at Sunstone Water Group, after years working as an engineer in the consulting engineering company Krüger and at the pump manufacturer Grundfos. Both companies are specialists in water and wastewater. Sunstone Water Group is headquartered in Vejle, Denmark.

In the United States, we primarily focus on the oil and gas industry as well as drinking water production, while in Denmark and the rest of Europe we aim to deliver local solutions to industries which have a high water consumption in their production processes

Sunstone Water Group enters a market that is growing rapidly. The global market for products and solutions for water supply and treatment is expected to grow by six percent per year, while the market for some new technologies is

expected to grow up to 20 percent per year, as shown in a report prepared for the sustainable investment fund RobecoSam in 2010.

Denmark – world leaders

The company is far from alone in seeing the possibilities. Denmark is in many ways a pioneer, with strict regulation of the water industry and with a number of companies leading the way in providing solutions and products for water supply and treatment. This is true for small entrepreneurial companies, consulting engineering companies and major production companies like Grundfos in Bjerringbro. These are Sunstone Water Group's competitors, however they are also potential partners, if this makes good business sense.

"We plan to explore opportunities for partnerships with a few selected competitors, but we believe we are in a good position to take some of the huge market available in Europe and Denmark," says Sune Lieknins Neve with reference to the modular solution developed by Sunstone Water Group, which can either be supplied in a container or

or integrated into a company's production processes.

Sunstone Water Group operates with seven different modules or technologies which can be used depending on the type of wastewater to be cleaned. This means that the company does not have to start from scratch each time it starts a new project, but can combine off-the-shelf technologies to build the right solution.

According to Sune Lieknins Neve, this provides a competitive advantage over the large consulting engineering companies. At the same time, the solution is different from other solutions, such as the Grundfos BioBooster decentralised treatment solution promoted by Grundfos, used for membrane cleaning of, for example, wastewater from hospitals.

"We also have a membrane filtration unit, but this is just one out of seven

treatment modules we offer. Therefore, we believe we can reach out and satisfy requirements for many more types of project than, for example, Grundfos BioBooster," says Sune Lieknins Neve.

Grundfos also offers a variety of other solutions for water treatment. So far Sunstone Water Group, which was established in Denmark in September 2014, has no orders in Denmark.



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Sunstone Water Group Europe

Sunstone Water Group was founded in 2007 by the Danish inventor and chemical engineer Elo Nielsen, who is Managing Director of the US company.

The company headquarters are formally in Switzerland, and development work is carried out in Youngsville, North Carolina, USA.

Elo Nielsen, who previously invented the patented cooling elements used in Maersk container ships, has developed a patented modular solution to clean wastewater at source. The solution can also be used to clean particularly polluted water in municipal treatment plants.

In September last year, Sunstone Water Group was established as a sister company in Denmark, based in Vejle. The American and Danish parts of Sunstone Water Group are economically separate entities.

Investors in the Danish part of Sunstone Water Group are Karsten Lorentzen, former co-owner of Aarhus Contingo Print Group, and Mads Schytz Haaning, who is also CEO of the Danish company. They have also invested in the USA company.