Center Denmark: The Neutral Digital Backbone Powering the Green Transition

In interview with:

Søren Skov Jakobsen
CEO of Center Denmark

As electrification, sector coupling, and renewable expansion accelerate, a silent obstacle threatens progress: fragmented, inaccessible, and inconsistent energy data. In Denmark, one organisation has taken on this structural challenge head-on: Center Denmark, a non-profit digital hub building the data infrastructure needed to make the future energy system work.

Between ambition and implementation lies a growing recognition that the green transition is as much a data challenge as it is an energy one. As power systems become more complex and interconnected, the ability to share, analyse, and trust data across sectors has emerged as a critical enabler that requires new forms of collaboration, governance, and digital infrastructure built for the long term.

“We’re a foundation so no one can buy us, not Microsoft, not Google. That neutrality is our DNA. It lets companies and universities lower their guard and collaborate without fear of commercial lock-in,” says CEO Søren Skov Jakobsen.

Center Denmark now serves as the national nexus where energy, water, heat, weather, and market data converge, are cleaned, standardised, enriched, and made usable for innovators, utilities, and researchers working to modernise the energy system.

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Turning Raw Utility Data Into a National Asset

The core of Center Denmark’s work is deceptively simple: make messy, mismatched data useful. Utilities across electricity, district heating, gas, and water send data in wildly different formats, some highly digital, others practically analogue.

“We take care of 90–95% of the work companies hate: cleaning, structuring, and enriching data, so they can spend their time actually building solutions, including AI,” Jakobsen explains.

The organisation’s platform processes consumption and production data through what Jakobsen calls “the bronze, silver, and gold layers”, a transformation pipeline that standardises the data, enriches it with building information, weather, market prices, and demographics, and finally makes it accessible under strict legal and security controls.

The impact is immediate: innovators can work with usable, high-quality data from day one, instead of waiting months to wrangle datasets.

One example shows the stakes clearly. With EV adoption surging, transformer stations began to overload. Traditionally, this would require costly physical upgrades. Instead, Center Denmark launched an innovation sprint.

“In 16 weeks, six companies produced three operational solutions. That has never happened before. Normally you get a report after three years,” Jakobsen says.

These kinds of digital solutions delay or even avoid the need for physical reinforcements, saving society enormous sums.

“If we can shift consumption digitally instead of digging new cables, the savings are massive,” he emphasises.

A Neutral, Sovereign Platform Built on European Values

Center Denmark’s governance model is as important as its technology. Established as a self-owned foundation, it cannot be sold, pay out profits, or serve private interests.

“We are 100% non-profit and 100% economically sealed. No one can buy us, and our data infrastructure stays in Europe,” Jakobsen notes.

The entire platform is built from European open-source components, a deliberate move to ensure technological sovereignty. Data is hosted securely on European servers to comply with GDPR and protect critical infrastructure.
This neutrality has made Center Denmark a trusted partner across the sector—working with utilities, municipalities, startups, and universities that otherwise might compete or hesitate to share information.

It also positions Denmark as a frontrunner in the EU’s emerging “data spaces” paradigm, where cross-sector, cross-border, privacy-preserving data sharing becomes foundational for energy optimisation.

“We’re already delivering what Europe is only beginning to design,” Jakobsen says.

A Blueprint for the Next Energy System

The data infrastructure that transformed Denmark’s electricity sector in 2014, when the Energy DataHub was launched, is now expanding toward heating and water. Center Denmark is at the centre of this shift.

A flagship example is varmeoverblik.dk, a new national interface that enables organisations to access their district heating data across hundreds of utilities through a single login.

The efficiency gains are extraordinary. Jakobsen notes that a company like Matas, with 264 stores, previously required approximately 14,500 emails per year to request heating data.
With varmeoverblik, the same task takes one click.

“There is enormous potential in making data easy to access in a consistent, high-quality format. We remove thousands of manual processes overnight,” he says.

Beyond convenience, this unified data layer is essential for sector coupling and flexibility—the ability to shift consumption, use thermal storage, optimise heat pumps, absorb excess wind, and reduce grid strain.

“We need digital tools that automatically move consumption to the right moments. Not behavioural change, automation. That’s how we extend the life of the grid without constant upgrades,” Jakobsen explains.

This data-driven flexibility can unlock the equivalent of two offshore wind farms’ worth of unused capacity, simply by using the grid more intelligently.

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Europe’s Future Runs on Data, Denmark Is Showing How

Why can Denmark do what others can’t yet? Jakobsen points to culture, trust, and decades of digital investments.

“Smart meters, a trusted digital identity, and a societal willingness to share data when it serves a public purpose, these things sound simple, but they are foundational,” he says.

GDPR is in this context an enabler, providing the rules that enable safe data use. Center Denmark works with advanced anonymisation techniques and strict legal models to always ensure privacy and data sovereignty.

This combination, trust, governance, and technical capability, forms a model other countries are now studying as they design their own energy data frameworks.

“Digital solutions are what will let us use our wind and solar properly, reduce our vulnerabilities, and avoid unnecessary physical expansion. We’re building the foundation for that system,” Jakobsen concludes.

Center Denmark is not just another digital initiative. It is becoming the underlying operating system for the green transition—a platform where Europe’s future energy system can finally be understood, optimised, and transformed.