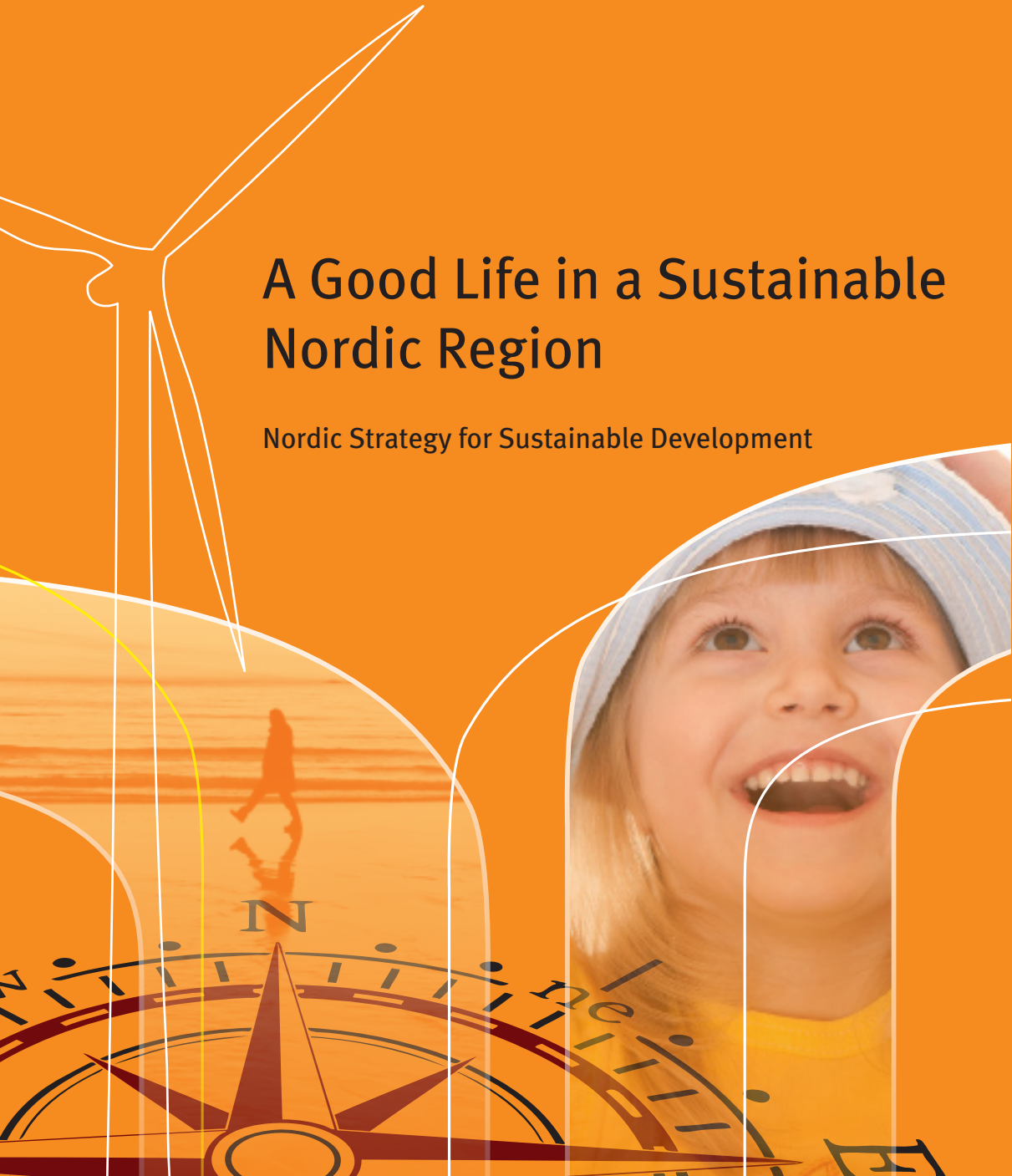


A Good Life in a Sustainable Nordic Region

Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development



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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Common Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

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Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development

 1. A Nordic perspective on sustainable development	5
 2. The Nordic welfare model	11
 3. Viable ecosystems	15
 4. Changing climate	19
 5. Sustainable use of the earth's resources	23
 6. Education, research and innovation	27
 7. Anchoring, implementation and follow-up	31



Foreword

In the past year, I have had the pleasure of leading the co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers. One of the tasks has been to revise the Council of Ministers strategy for sustainable development.

The Council of Ministers adopted its first strategy 12 years ago. This new strategy, like previous ones, has been approved by all the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The Nordic Council has approved the strategy for sustainable development.

The Nordic Council of Ministers strategy for sustainable development provides general guidelines for the coming years. Sustainable development involves meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Nordic countries have consistently common views on key social issues, and the countries agree that social development must be sustainable.

The Nordic countries have well-developed welfare services, relatively small differences in income, and effective public institutions. The Nordic Council of Ministers will help the Nordic countries to further develop their societies by increasing welfare and improving quality of life. An efficient business community and strong public administration are important elements in this. Preservation and conservation of the environment is also vital for sustainable development. Green growth will help to secure this. Another objective of the Nordic countries is to promote the principles of sustainable development in a global perspective.

The Nordic region has a long tradition of working together to develop common solutions to common challenges. The co-operation has brought good results. I am therefore pleased that, with this strategy, the Nordic Council of Ministers has laid a solid foundation for continued close co-operation in the work to attain a sustainable society.

Rigmor Aasrud
Minister for Nordic Co-operation
Norway

*The strategy for sustainable development
is the overriding and cross-sectoral
framework for the work of the Nordic
Council of Ministers.*



A Nordic perspective on sustainable development

1.

The strategy for sustainable development is the overriding and cross-sectoral framework for the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers. There are three interdependent dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, the social and the ecological. One of these dimensions must not undermine the conditions for development in the others. Culture is also very important for the Nordic values. Culture concerns, for example, choice of lifestyle, consumption patterns, relationship to the environment and acceptance of the processes of change in society. Consequently, it is important to include cultural issues in the work on sustainable development.

The Nordic countries took a position in sustainable development of society from an early stage. The Nordic welfare model is based on all people having equal value, respect for human rights, justice, equality, good administration, low level of corruption, democracy, and promotion of health and wellbeing. Gender equality, openness and commitment are other important pillars. The success of the Nordic countries is also a result of affirming, from an early stage, economic openness and free trade. Decades of targeted environmental initiatives have improved the status of the environment in many areas. The Nordic region is rich in natural resources and environment-based sectors such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries and mining. This is important for ensuring vibrant rural areas. To strengthen the economy and sustainable development, it is important that these resources are used

but not depleted. Sustainable administration strengthens the economies of the Nordic countries. Stringent requirements on environmental consideration have boosted knowledge and technological development, which in turn have stimulated growing exports of environmental technology.

People's health and wellbeing are associated with a healthy living environment. The ability to enjoy rewarding leisure time and access to green areas are important ingredients for human wellbeing. It also increases understanding of the measures and changes in behavioural patterns that are needed to make development more sustainable.

At the same time, the Nordic countries face more challenges that require cross-sectoral measures, where the principle of sustainable development must be integrated. The total ecological footprint of Nordic activities has increased because of greater consumption. Demographic change is also a key challenge for the Nordic welfare model.

Definition of sustainable development

according to the Bruntland Commission:
"Sustainable development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.



The definition of green economy is that used by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): “A green economy results in improved human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Practically speaking, a green economy is one whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalyzed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes. This development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and source of public benefits, especially for poor people whose livelihoods and security depend strongly on nature.”

Other challenges include the factors that result from changes in the general economic climate in Europe and the world.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will help the Nordic countries successively continue to improve welfare and quality of life for present and future generations, by protecting and using the earth’s ability to sustain life in all its diversity, and thereby develop a more sustainable welfare model. To attain this objective, the Nordic region needs to gradually transform to a green economy. The activities and facilities of the Nordic Council of Ministers and its secretariat will also be sustainable. One option is to obtain environmental certification for the entire organisation, and this could also apply to the Nordic Council and the Nordic Culture Fund.

Green growth has become a key objective that many countries and regions have set up to meet the major environmental, climatic and energy challenges while maintaining good economic growth. The market for green solutions is growing, and there is potential for the Nordic region to strengthen its market position. The initiative of the Nordic prime ministers for green growth plays an important role in this context. Greater competitiveness and growth will be attained through more effective use of resources, more sustainable use and supply of energy, and more precise legislation about and pricing of natural resources.

1.1 Purpose and applicability of the strategy

The Nordic co-operation on sustainable development was initiated by a prime ministers declaration in 1998. The first Nordic strategy for sustainable development came into effect in 2001 and has been revised regularly. A new prime ministers declaration was adopted in 2008, and this is now the fourth Nordic strategy for sustainable development. It applies until further notice and will be revised as necessary.

The strategy focuses on areas in which the Nordic countries have common interests and common challenges, and that offer good potential for promoting sustainable development. The Nordic co-operation will also generate added value, and promote greater knowledge and more efficient use of resources. The strategy provides long-term guidelines for the activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers as far as 2025, and is aimed at promoting the cross-sectoral work of the Nordic Council of Ministers in the following focus areas: the Nordic welfare model, viable ecosystems, changing climate, sustainable use of the Earth's resources, and education, research and innovation. The development will be monitored using indicators in each area.

The common values and objectives of the strategy will be integrated in the sector programmes of the ministerial councils, and will be converted into concrete

measures with measurable goals. The ministerial councils will jointly organise the implementation of the strategy, monitor progress, and assist with reporting and assessment of the implementation. The Nordic strategy can also serve as a basis for joint contributions to international forums on sustainable development.



1.2 Overall objectives and principles of the Nordic work on sustainability

All work done within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers will integrate a sustainability perspective. Through Nordic co-operation, the Nordic Council of Ministers will prioritise themes, processes and projects that promote sustainable development. By doing so, the Nordic Council of Ministers can inspire the Nordic countries and other countries and regions to set their own concrete objectives and implement initiatives.

The overall objective of the strategy is for the Nordic countries to gradually develop into more sustainable welfare societies and

Precautionary principle: If a threat of serious or irreversible damage exists, a lack of full scientific knowledge about the situation may not be used as an excuse to delay cost-effective measures to prevent environmental damage.

Polluter pays principle: The polluter pays the cost of pollution.

Substitution principle: When choosing between a product that is better or worse for the environment, the better product will be chosen. In other words, if there is an environmentally better substitute for a product, this must be chosen.

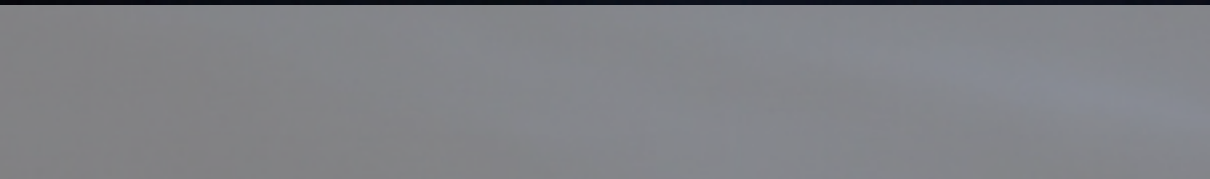



to bring about positive changes within the foreseeable future. By 2025, significant results will have been achieved in the prioritised areas. Present and future generations will be assured a safe, healthy and dignified life. A high degree of awareness will be created in society about the measures and processes that lead to sustainable development.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will promote Nordic co-operation for high employment, green growth and increased competitiveness. The work will be guided by the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, producer responsibility, and the substitution principle. In addition, external costs will be increasingly incorporated in the price of products. Indigenous peoples have a special role in sustainable development. These objectives and principles will continue to be integrated in the sector programmes of the ministerial councils and in relevant international contexts.



The overall objective of the strategy is for the Nordic countries to gradually develop into more sustainable welfare societies and to bring about positive changes within the foreseeable future.





*Sustainable development and
development of the Nordic welfare
model go hand in hand.*

Sustainable development and development of the Nordic welfare model go hand in hand. The Nordic countries have largely succeeded in reconciling ambitious environmental objectives, a high level of income, economic growth, stable national economies and social wellbeing. The social cohesion, public health, effective social insurance, healthy work environment, agreements that regulate salaries and terms of employment, social services, health care, high level of participation on the labour market, and environmental protection, serve as drivers for development, quality of life and security. The Nordic countries have built their welfare models on a common political intention that has created strong cohesion in society. The Nordic model is characterised by a strong relationship between welfare policy and labour market policy. Even if the welfare systems in the Nordic countries are not structured in exactly the same way, the similarities have made *the Nordic welfare model* a concept.

The Nordic social model is known for universal welfare systems. The core values are equal opportunities, social solidarity and security for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, conviction, functional capacity, age and sexual orientation. It concerns social rights and the principle that everyone has equal rights to social and health services, education and culture. It also concerns care for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. The welfare model is based on diversity, where all groups are integrated in society. The



diversity issue is relevant to most areas in the strategy and should be included in the work on sustainable development. The ability of everyone to participate in society and its decision-making processes comprises a key role in the Nordic welfare model. An equal society enables utilisation of all resources in society and, in turn, contributes to better welfare.

The Nordic countries have built their welfare models on a common political intention that has created strong cohesion in society.



The Nordic welfare model is based on a social structure with good administration, where trust between generations is central. Demographic change in the future is a key challenge, mainly because of the shift in the age structure. One of the most important challenges is to work to ensure that a greater proportion of the working population participate in working life. This means, for example, that the immigrant population needs to be better integrated in social and working life. The transition period from school to work needs to be shortened, and the opportunity to extend working life needs to be improved.

A healthy population is crucial to a sustainable welfare model. The social and demographic challenges make it necessary to strengthen the measures in public health, including prevention of chronic diseases and injuries. Measures are also required to promote active ageing so that more people

can maintain functional capacity and look after themselves for as long as possible. A healthy population has a positive influence on the countries' competitiveness, growth and innovative capacity.

Despite relatively strong socio-economic development, poverty also occurs in the Nordic countries. Immigrants, long-term unemployed, people on long-term sick leave, disabled people, and single-parent families are at greatest risk of poverty. Long periods of unemployment among young people are a particularly serious problem, because they risk long-term exclusion from working and social life. Consequently, measures to increase employment among young people are vital.

Another challenge is trafficking in human beings and comparable exploitation that violates the individual's dignity and integrity. In order to be able to stop this development, common knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon are needed. This requires national, regional and international co-operation.



The core values are equal opportunities, social solidarity and security for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, conviction, functional capacity, age and sexual orientation.

Objectives up to 2025

Long-term sustainable economic growth

The Nordic region will have stable, sustainable and healthy economic growth. Sustainability in the financing of the Nordic welfare model will be secured in the light of the demographic development. The Nordic countries will focus on sustainable social planning, based on regional development circumstances.

Work and diversity

The level of employment and the labour supply in the Nordic countries will increase. The structural unemployment will be reduced, with particular emphasis on unemployment of young people. Inclusion and diversity will be increased in Nordic societies and working life. The level of security, health and welfare in working life will be raised.

Health and social security

Health and welfare policy will be developed so that the countries retain the social safety net that protects vulnerable groups from exclusion, while securing the competitiveness of the Nordic countries. Quality and security in the social and health sectors will be strengthened. Public health will be improved throughout the population. Preventative measures will be prioritised.

Equality, democracy and human rights

Equality and social cohesion will be promoted with consideration to gender,



ethnicity, religion, conviction, functional capacity, age and sexual orientation.

Preventative measures will be implemented to promote human rights, for example to eliminate poverty and trafficking in human beings.

Culture

The significance and role of culture will be identified and strengthened in the work on sustainable development in the Nordic countries.

Indicators

- Demographic trend
- Gross domestic product (GDP)
- Public debt
- Urbanisation
- Employment and unemployment rate
- Life expectancy at birth
- Gini-coefficient
- Risk of poverty amongst families with children
- Gender pay gap



In order to prevent contamination of the marine environment and coastal areas, it is important to solve the problems at source.

Viable ecosystems



The earth's ecosystems provide mankind with a number of vital products and services that enable sustainability and green growth, and human wellbeing. Examples of these ecosystem services are food and other biological raw materials, fresh water, natural water purification, climate regulation, carbon dioxide sequestration, natural protection from environmental disasters, and pollination. Research shows that the status of many ecosystem services has deteriorated considerably. This jeopardises the international community's ability to attain the Millennium Goals set up by the United Nations, and has significant effect on industry and human wellbeing.

In 2011–2012, the Nordic Council of Ministers initiated a study¹ with particular focus on the Nordic countries. The study is based on the international report *The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity* (TEEB). This identifies the cost incurred when

biodiversity and ecosystem services are lost compared with the cost of preserving them. This research emphasises the importance of evaluating ecosystem services and natural resources correctly, and that these costs are integrated in national accounting and in decision-making.

Even if the Nordic region can be regarded as a pioneer in terms of sustainable use of both renewable and non-renewable natural resources, there is great potential for improvement. A key challenge is to develop

The concept of **ecosystem service** is based on human needs and wellbeing and so includes the products and services that ecosystems provide. An ecosystem is a collection of plants, animals, and microorganisms that interact with each other and the non-living environment. Ecosystem services can sometimes be confused with biological diversity (biodiversity). Biodiversity concerns the diversity of all living species on earth, i.e. variations within species, and between species and ecosystems. Diversity of species, or biodiversity, is not an ecosystem service. Instead, biodiversity is vital to all ecosystem services. Ecosystem services in turn contribute to biodiversity.

¹*Socio-economic importance of ecosystem services in the Nordic countries* (TN 2012:559), read more on www.norden.org.



sustainable operational forms in the various natural and climatic conditions in the Nordic region, while meeting the needs of a growing global population. The biggest ecosystem-related challenges in the Nordic region are that soils and forest are being damaged by pollution and short-sighted management, and that the marine environment is being damaged by discharges from land-based sources of pollution.

In order to prevent contamination of the marine environment and coastal areas, it is important to solve the problems at source. For example, the Baltic Sea, a virtually land-locked, shallow and cold saline basin, is very vulnerable. It is affected greatly by the massive loading caused by human activities in the countries around its shores. The most serious problem is eutrophication. In addition, high concentrations of hazardous substances, including heavy metals, have been measured. The greatly increased and ever increasing oil and chemical transports, particularly in the Bay of Finland, also increases the risk of damage to the environment through oil and chemicals. The activity in the Arctic region, with more shipping and transports of oil and gas, means that the Nordic areas in the North Atlantic are exposed to greater environmental risks. Increased work on safety and civil protection policy should therefore be prioritised highly.

A key challenge is to develop sustainable operational forms in the various natural and climatic conditions in the Nordic region, while meeting the needs of a growing global population.

Objectives up to 2025

Sustainable management of natural resources

Biodiversity in the Nordic region will be strengthened so that ecosystems remain robust and continue to provide vital ecosystem services to create welfare. There will be greater knowledge and awareness of the value of ecosystem services, which can help to develop instruments that, in turn, can stimulate sustainable use and preservation of the biodiversity.

Marine ecosystems

The Nordic marine areas will have a good environmental status and will be used sustainably. Management of the marine areas will be based on knowledge and coherent, ecosystem-based management. Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea will be reduced, and the status of the environment and water areas in the Baltic Sea will be improved.

Land-based ecosystems

The environmental status of the Nordic land-based ecosystems will be good. An effective balance will be secured between protection and sustainable use of these ecosystems. Sustainable forestry will be secured through protection and management, and consideration will be taken to the diverse functions and ecosystem services of the forest.

Air

Damage to the environment and harm to people caused by air pollution will be reduced. Pollutants will not exceed the permitted limits and international specifications regarding air quality, or the limits that the environment can tolerate. There will be greater knowledge about the association between air pollutants and climate change.

Indicators

- Sustainability of fish stocks
- Discharge of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Baltic Sea
- Changes in the Common Bird Index
- Developments in annual fellings and increment in forests
- Urban population exposure to air pollution by ozone and particulants





Climate change is an important challenge that has already had major consequences for mankind and the environment. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere will be doubled compared with pre-industrial times. This, in turn, is estimated to lead to an increase in average temperatures of 1.1–6.4 degrees Celsius within a hundred years.

Climate change is expected to have major economic and human consequences, including increased water shortages in certain regions, raised sea levels, more frequent heat waves, more storms, and marine pollution. The risk of disruptions in natural ecosystems and accelerated loss of biodiversity is great, and welfare of many people will suffer as a result. Within the Nordic region, the effect of climate change is greatest in the Arctic region, which is particularly sensitive.

Climate change has a major effect on the marine ecosystem and the marine resources. The challenges are exacerbated by climate-related ocean acidification, which many researchers believe to be the greatest threat to marine ecosystems. Altered migration patterns of fish stocks can cause economic, political and management problems. In turn,

The Nordic countries have an important role as drivers in the international climate negotiations.



this requires greater regional co-operation. Climate change also has a negative impact on cities and infrastructure, for example through damage caused by intense rainfall and other extreme weather phenomena – which are expected to increase in the future.

The Nordic countries have an important role as drivers in the international climate negotiations. The target is to limit the global temperature increase to no more than 2 degrees Celsius in relation to the pre-industrial level in order to avoid the most damaging effects of global warming. This ambitious climate target requires comprehensive and immediate measures in all countries.



The link between the use of fossil fuel and economic growth must be broken at global level. Communities and cities need to be adapted to current and anticipated effects of climate change. Adaptation to climate change involves changes in farming methods and land use, including the development of crops and tree species that are more resistant to new types of infectious agents in agriculture and forestry.

The transport sector is important in this context, but because transport is no longer a separate area of co-operation within the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the role of the transport sector in sustainable development is not considered in this strategy.

But adaptation strategies and mitigation of climate change are not just matters of technology. The social dimension and gender perspective should also be included and considered wherever relevant. In this way, the adaptation strategies can be made more effective and provide better support to the work to mitigate climate change and bring about sustainable development.

Improvements in efficiency in areas such as transport, housing/construction, product development and a transition to a greater proportion of renewable energy are examples of important measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. At the same time, fossil sources of energy are expected to continue to be important in the future. Consequently, support is also necessary for measures that help to reduce the use of fossil energy sources and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, not only within the Nordic region but also beyond its borders. Measures for adaptations to the effects of climate change in vulnerable and less developed countries will also be supported. The need for new technological and social innovations can also create opportunities for Nordic businesses.

The link between the use of fossil fuel and economic growth must be broken at global level. Communities and cities need to be adapted to current and anticipated effects of climate change.

Objectives up to 2025

Energy

Nordic energy supply will be made more sustainable. This will be done through greater focus on renewable energy and more efficient use of energy in the Nordic region. The link between economic growth and consumption of non-renewable energy will be broken. There will be more flexible use of electricity in the Nordic electricity market.


Climate

The Nordic countries are working for the production of a global climate agreement by 2015, to come into effect in 2020. The agreement will limit global warming to a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius, with binding undertakings for all countries. The Nordic countries will have ambitious national goals for emission reduction. The role of the Nordic financial institutions in the work on climate and in green investments will be promoted. The Nordic region will strive to integrate environment and climate issues in development co-operation, and to include welfare and employment aspects in the work on climate.

Indicators

- Share of renewable energy in gross energy supply
- Developments in greenhouse gas emissions by sector
- Emissions and land use, land use change and forestry

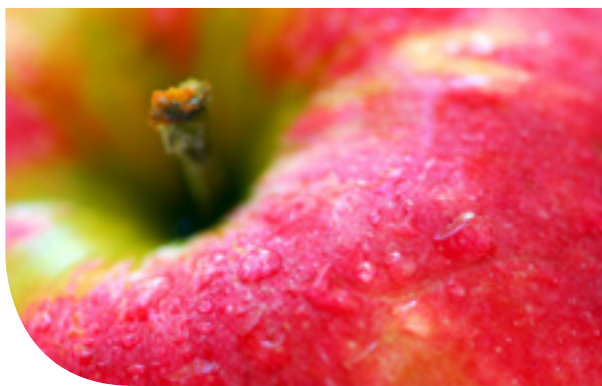




The Nordic countries need to reduce the environmental, social and health problems that are associated with unsustainable consumption and production of goods and services.

Economic growth has enabled high material welfare. At the same time, growth creates significant social and environmental challenges. In many areas, the environmental gains attained through efficient technology have been cancelled out by increased and unsustainable consumption. The problems can often be attributed to lifestyle issues, particularly among the world's wealthier people, where household consumption accounts for approximately half of the environmental impact.

At the global Rio+20 Conference on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro 2012, a global 10-year framework of programmes was adopted for sustainable consumption and production. This will be very important for future work in this field. Decisions were also taken to start initiatives on global sustainable development goals, where natural resource issues and sustainable consumption and production will probably be important themes. Rio+20 also



decided to develop indicators that supplement gross domestic product as a measure of development.

Even if the Nordic countries have strengthened their environment initiatives, for example through legislation, economic instruments, ecolabelling, and more efficient environment technology, the total ecological footprint has increased. This also applies outside the Nordic borders. Food, housing and transport are areas that particularly influence the environment because they use large amounts of energy and water resources. The Nordic countries need to reduce the environmental, social and health problems that are associated with unsustainable consumption and production of goods and services.

The environmental loading from various foods caused by, for example, animal husbandry, transport and wastage in the food supply chain, varies according to product, and may also affect food safety and animal health. Sustainable dietary habits involve observing a





number of different perspectives. It concerns, for example, choosing foods with as little negative environmental impact as possible, but that also promote social development and public health. It involves eating safe and nutritious food that reduces overweight, obesity or other lifestyle diseases. It also involves ensuring that production is sustainable. Feeding the world's growing population is a tremendous challenge that the Nordic region should help to resolve.

Demand for and choice of accommodation is affected by the trend in the Nordic countries towards more single-person households and larger living spaces. Sustainable living assumes efficient use of energy and other natural resources, and also includes health and private economic aspects, safety and accessibility. Sustainable living also requires proximity to workplaces, shops, waste

collection, a comprehensive public transport system, pedestrian and cycle networks and other things on which consumers are dependent in everyday life to make sustainable choices.

In order to promote green growth, it is important to increase the efficiency of resource use, to be economical with finite resources, and to create a new attitude and solution to the waste problem. Waste should increasingly be regarded as a valuable raw material, while waste that contains environmental toxins should be removed from the cycle. Environmental impact from production, goods and waste should be minimised from a life-cycle perspective.

If the Nordic countries act together, initiatives in green growth can attain a greater mass, create a larger market and gain greater political impact in ongoing international processes. Public, private and individual consumers affect the product range through demand, and help to stimulate sustainable products and services. The public sector has a strategic function by ordering sustainable products and services. The business sector also has an important role, for example through greater co-operation with supplier chains in terms of environmental and social aspects, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmental labelling.

Environmental impact from production, goods and waste should be minimised from a life-cycle perspective.

Objectives up to 2025

Sustainable consumption and production

The Nordic countries will replace a culture of unsustainable consumption and disposability with a more sustainable re-use culture based on production and consumption adapted to the environment. Sustainable consumption and production will be increased through legislation, economic instruments, information and education, and through infrastructural measures that enable consumers to act in a sustainable way. The work on the Nordic Ecolabel ('the Swan') will be developed and strengthened. Nordic co-operation in green technical norms and standards will be extended, including public procurement standards. The Nordic Council of Ministers and its secretariat will have integrated a sustainability perspective throughout its activities.

Resource efficiency and waste

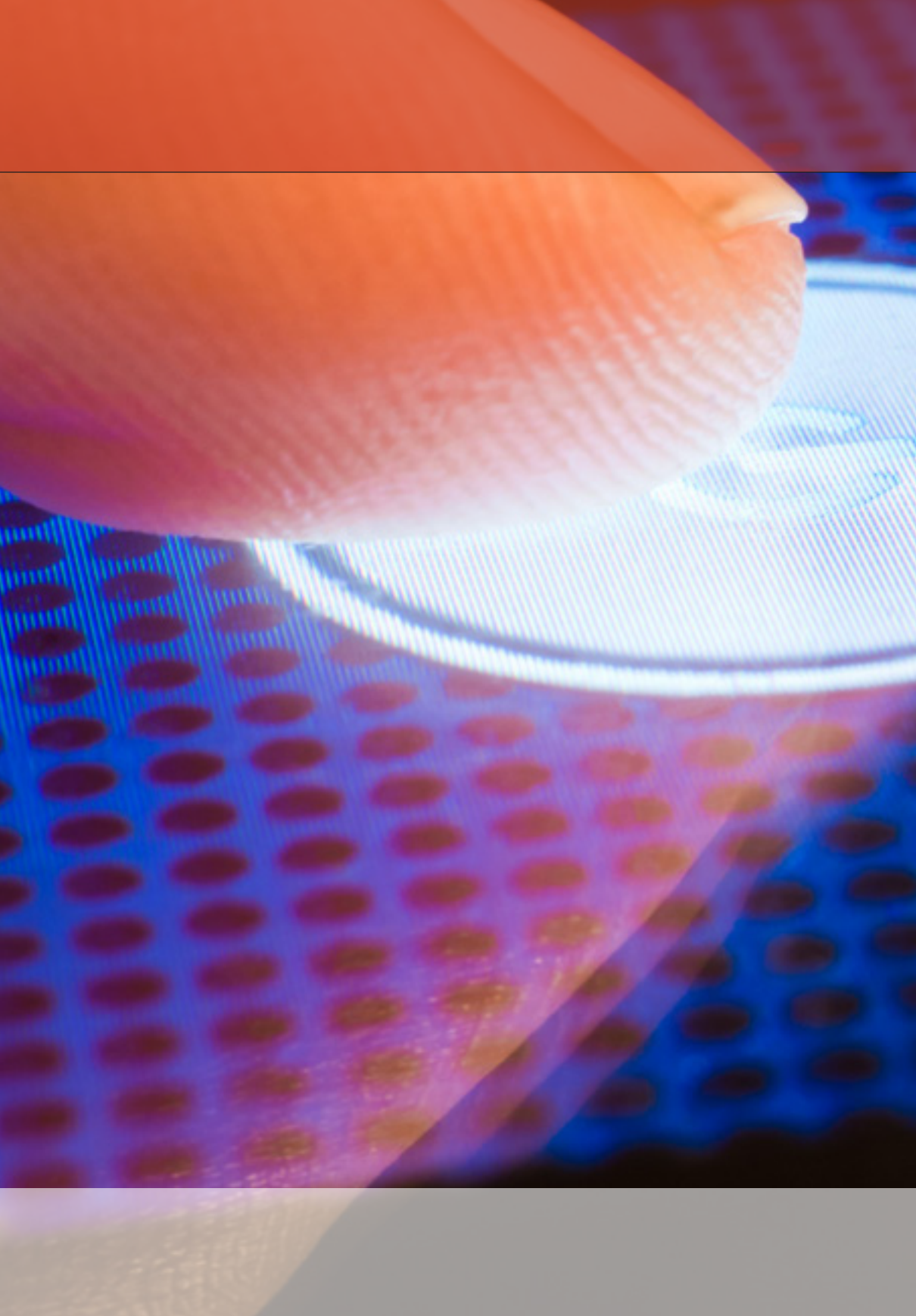
The Nordic region will break the link between unsustainable use of resources and economic growth through more efficient use of resources, re-use and sustainable waste management. Negative effects on the environment and health from production, goods and waste in a life-cycle perspective (even in other countries) will have been minimised. Prevention and recovery of waste will be made more efficient, while waste will be increasingly regarded as a valuable raw material. Development of new common technologies

and methods will promote more sustainable waste management in the Nordic countries.

Indicators

- Decoupling of environmental pressures, gross energy consumption, resource use and generation of non-mineral waste from economic growth
- Nordic Ecolabel ('the Swan') and the EU Ecolabel
- Proportion of environmental taxes in total tax revenues
- Development in municipal waste generation and in municipal waste management by treatment method





Good bases for education, research and innovation are important components for a green economy. Greater knowledge about sustainable development forms the basis for changing attitudes and behaviour in individuals, companies and organisations. Knowledge is required to find solutions to future challenges in the work to attain sustainable development. Knowledge and new technology, but also the ability to use people's competencies, are pillars of Nordic competitiveness and have helped to create internationally successful companies.


A key requirement for developing technology more adapted to the environment is the authorities' possibilities to put a price on and regulate the emissions and discharges of environmentally hazardous substances. This will increase the potential profitability of research and development.

Research and innovation environments should be mobilised through investments, and the entire population will have equal access to learning and education of high quality. The levels of investment in research and innovation will vary between the Nordic countries. The goals that are set up for



education about sustainable development will be based on each country's culture and the local social, economic and environmental conditions. Research and innovation environments should be mobilised to address problems of particular relevance for the use of the earth's resources.

Research and innovation environments should be mobilised through investments, and the entire population will have equal access to learning and education of high quality.



Greater knowledge about sustainable development forms the basis for changing attitudes and behaviour in individuals, companies and organisations.

Objectives up to 2025

Education

Knowledge about sustainable development will be included in education at all levels. More young people in Nordic countries will study on educational programmes that provide the competencies required by the business community.

Research

Inter-disciplinary Nordic research and education initiatives will promote sustainable development. This will be carried out in collaboration with similar national and European initiatives, for example in the field of bioeconomy. Nordic co-operation will be extended in research and education for green growth, welfare and health. Scientific results will be used more often as the basis of decisions relating to formulation of policies.

Innovation

The Nordic region will be a leader in terms of development of environmental technology and social innovations to support green growth and sustainable development. Nordic co-operation will be developed in the testing and development of energy technology and the potential for common Nordic test and demonstration facilities will be examined. Financing of green investments and companies will be coordinated and strengthened.

Indicators

- Upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education attainment in total population
- Research and development expenditure as a percentage of GDP, by sectors of performance





Anchoring, implementation and follow-up

All work done within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers will have an integrated sustainability perspective. The strategy will form the basis of the budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers and its long-term work on sustainable development. The Nordic ministers of co-operation, through their coordinating and assisting role in relation to the prime ministers, have overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the strategy. The ministers of co-operation are responsible for information, reporting, evaluation and revision of the strategy. The Nordic Council of Ministers expert group for sustainable development assists the ministers of co-operation in the work on sustainable development.

The strategy will be realised within the various co-operation areas of the Council of Ministers. The objectives of the strategy will be integrated in the sector programmes of the ministerial councils, and will be converted to concrete measures with measurable goals. Coordinating with relevant sectors, the ministerial councils will jointly organise the implementation of the strategy, monitor progress, and assist with reporting and assessment of the implementation. Sustainable development will also be

The objectives of the strategy will be integrated in the sector programmes of the ministerial councils, and will be converted to concrete measures with measurable goals.



promoted in collaboration with Nordic institutions and co-operation bodies.

The implementation of the strategy will be financed within the budget framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The ministerial councils are responsible, within their sector budgets, for financing the implementation, with emphasis on the objectives and prioritised areas of the strategy.

The allocation of the ministers of co-operation for sustainable development will be used for activities that support the implementation of the Nordic strategy for sustainable development. These initiatives

will meet the criteria for Nordic added value, will be cross-sectoral and innovative, and will integrate the three aspects of sustainable development. The funding will also be used to strengthen communication initiatives relating to the Council of Ministers activities in sustainable development, including the use of the Nordic indicators of sustainable development. The activities will be directed towards the Nordic region, its adjacent areas, and internationally. The Nordic Council of Ministers will also follow-up and implement the results of the Rio+20 Conference.

The cross-sectoral co-operation within the Council of Ministers will be supported, for example, by promoting dialogue and exchange of experiences between the sectors relating to the strategy and its objectives, and their importance for each sector. In order to facilitate good communication throughout the Council of Ministers organisation,

and to support more consistent anchoring of sustainability issues, specific contact points will be appointed for each sector. Furthermore, development of new instruments for evaluation, reporting and communication about the results of activities relevant to sustainable development will be considered.

The Nordic indicators of sustainable development will be continually updated. In addition, annual indicator reports will be produced in order to monitor the development in the Nordic region in conjunction with reporting on the implementation of the Nordic sustainability strategy.

All work done within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers will have an integrated sustainability perspective.







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A Good Life in a Sustainable Nordic Region – Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development is the overriding and cross-sectoral framework for the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers. All work carried out within the Council of Ministers will incorporate a sustainability perspective.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will help the Nordic countries successively continue to improve welfare and quality of life for present and future generations, by protecting and using the earth's ability to sustain life in all its diversity.

The strategy provides long-term guidelines as far as 2025 in the following focus areas: the Nordic welfare model, viable ecosystems, changing climate, sustainable use of the earth's resources, and education, research and innovation. The sectoral ministerial councils within the Nordic Council of Ministers will supplement the strategy with concrete measures, and development in the Nordic region will be monitored using indicators.

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