Nordic Council
of Ministers

Sustainable Development Action

– THE NORDIC WAY

Implementation of the Global 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development in Nordic Cooperation

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Development in Nordic Cooperation

*Mikko Halonen, Åsa Persson, Susanna Sepponen, Clarisse Kehler Siebert,
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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, 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. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

Contents

Executive Summary	5
Introduction	5
Background.....	7
Aims and objectives of the report	8
1. National implementation of the Agenda 2030 goals: An overview.....	11
1.1 The Nordic countries and Agenda 2030 – global overview	11
1.2 Denmark	16
1.3 Finland	23
1.4 Iceland.....	31
1.5 Norway.....	36
1.6 Sweden	46
1.7 Faroe Islands	54
1.8 Greenland.....	56
1.9 Åland.....	58
1.10 Synthesis of Nordic approaches	61
2. Nordic Cooperation and the SDGs	67
2.1 The Nordic strategy for Sustainable Development	67
2.2 Nordic indicator work for Sustainable Development	73
2.3 Nordic co-operation linked to the SDGs	81
2.4 Communicating the SDGs.....	89
2.5 Summing up the potential for Nordic co-operation on sustainable development.....	91
3. Conclusions and recommendations	95
3.1 Strong basis and commitment for Nordic SDG programme.....	95
3.2 Guiding principles for a Nordic SDG programme in response to the 2030 Agenda....	97
3.3 Proposal for Nordic SDG programme: Vision and components.....	102
List of references.....	111
Interviewees.....	117
Denmark	117
Finland	117
Iceland	118
Norway	118
Sweden	118
Faroe Islands	119
Åland	119
Sammenfatning	121

Annex 1: Recommendations on principles and tools for a communication strategy	123
Recommendations on principles and tools for a communication strategy.....	123
Annex 2: Priorities, themes and topics suggested for the new programme	133
Annex 3: Nordic Sectors of Co-operation and the SDGs	147
Annex 4: Preliminary stakeholder analysis	153
Annex 5: Summary of Dialogue meeting on Nordic Cooperation in response to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.....	157
Brief Summary	157
Annex to the Summary of the Dialogue meeting on Nordic Co-operation in response to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.....	159
1. Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Programme Concepts.....	166
2 Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Stakeholders.....	169
3 Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Communication.....	171

Executive Summary

This report for the Nordic Council of Ministers, prepared by Gaia Consulting Ltd and Stockholm Environment Institute, informs and supports the Nordic Expert Group on Sustainable Development in formulating a new Nordic programme in response to Agenda 2030.

The 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, outlines an ambitious and universal plan of action for people, planet and prosperity as it seeks to strengthen universal peace and freedom more broadly.

This report maps and reports ongoing national and Nordic sustainable development processes and initiatives, priorities and challenges, in order to identify, analyse and recommend elements of a new Nordic programme in response to Agenda 2030, including communication of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report is based on an extensive document study, 46 interviews with national stakeholders, dialogue with the senior officials' committees of all ten sectorial Nordic Councils of Ministers, and a major dialogue meeting with stakeholders from government, the private sector and civil society, held in Helsinki on 29 November 2016.

The mapping and analysis indicate that good foundations exist for the outlining of a joint, Nordic cooperation programme on the SDGs. All Nordic countries are engaged in serious work to implement Agenda 2030; collectively they top the charts in global sustainability rankings and the work they are undertaking is supported by a strong commitment from the highest political level. While noting differences in the eight country profiles on Agenda 2030 implementation, for example related to governance and implementation processes, there is nevertheless broad interest in joint Nordic action on Agenda 2030 from across a wide spectrum of stakeholders, covering representatives of government, the private sector and civil society. The Nordic region already has a sustainable development strategy in place (the first of its kind in the world), which naturally has close links to the SDGs. A set of sustainable development indicators is also already in place, which can be further developed and used to monitor joint Nordic progress on Agenda 2030.

Several current and planned actions within Nordic cooperation can contribute to the goals of Agenda 2030 and the forthcoming programme will build upon already existing and planned Nordic initiatives in a complementary and synergistic manner. The Nordic Prime Ministers' Initiative on Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges to be launched in 2017 is an example of such an initiative that will contribute to the overall Nordic response to the attainment of the SDGs.

The report outlines the main guiding principles and suggested aims, targets and focus areas for the forthcoming programme. The aim of the programmes is to launch joint Nordic activities, which add value to the national and international work done by the countries, providing a strong focus on the implementation, learning and harnessing of synergies. Hence a programme consisting of four main components is suggested including i) Pilot projects for accelerated SDG action, ii) Exchange of information on the national implementation of Agenda 2030, iii) Knowledge sharing on SDGs and Nordic SDG action; and iv) Communication. It is expected that the programme will fund concrete pilot actions with upscaling potential and launch a broad set of communication and knowledge sharing activities, as well as facilitating dialogue in support of policy development. While programme activities related to knowledge sharing, policy development and communication are envisioned to encompass all jointly agreed upon SDGs and Nordic SDG work in general, it is expected that the pilot projects will focus more specifically on themes prioritised during the mapping study, falling broadly under the umbrella of sustainable consumption and production.

The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development, which includes representatives, central to the national implementation of Agenda 2030, has been mandated to plan the new Nordic programme and the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation (MR-SAM) have allocated a budget for the implementation of the programme. A decision on the programme will be prepared by the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development during the spring of 2017. The process will include consultations with relevant committees within Nordic cooperation while the final decision will be made by the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation in September 2017. This report serves as a knowledge base for that decision.

Introduction

Background

The Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development was the first macro-regional strategy of its kind while sustainable development has been a core aspect of Nordic co-operation for many years.

When, in September 2015, the United Nations adopted the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Figure 1) and their 169 targets, the Nordic countries, along with many other countries, began reviewing and upgrading their own processes for implementing the ambitious goals by 2030.

Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030

Source: United Nations Department of Public Information 2016.

The 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 outlines an ambitious and universal plan of action for people, planet and prosperity as it seeks to strengthen universal peace and freedom more broadly. It sets an inspirational and targeted framework for eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as well as outlining a way in which to shift the world onto a more sustainable and resilient path while recognising the integrated and indivisible nature of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The concrete attainment of these goals is both a massive and inspiring challenge for mankind.

Against this backdrop, and acknowledging the urgency of the global Agenda, the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation decided to renew their co-operation on sustainable development. The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development¹ was tasked with developing a new programme in response to the SDGs.

Aims and objectives of the report

The overarching aim of this report, prepared by Gaia Consulting Ltd and Stockholm Environment Institute² for the Nordic Council of Ministers, is to inform and support the Nordic Expert Group on Sustainable Development in formulating a new Nordic programme in response to Agenda 2030. This was done by:

- Mapping and reporting ongoing national and Nordic sustainable development processes and initiatives to analyse the potential added value of Nordic co-operation on Agenda 2030.
- Identifying priorities, challenges and potential areas for co-operation, by interviewing 46 key stakeholders in Agenda 2030 implementation from government, the business sector and civil society.

¹ The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development consists of 1-2 members per Nordic country, in October 2016 the members were: Eeva Hellström (FI), Annika Lindblom (FI), Maria Ana Petrera (DK), Thomas Nicolai Pedersen (DK), Halla Nolsøe Poulsen (FO), Thomas Gaarde Madsen (GL), Rósa Guðrún Erlingsdóttir (IS), Danfríður Skarphéðinsdóttir (IS), Herbert Kristoffersen (NO), Inge Rydland (NO), Håkan Alfredsson (SE), Nannan Lundin (SE), Micke Larsson (ÅL).

² The mapping process was undertaken by Mikko Halonen, Åsa Persson, Susanna Sepponen, Clarisse Kehler Siebert, Shane Quinn, Marika Bröckl, Anu Vaahtera, Antti Isokangas and Caspar Trimmer.

- Linking these national overviews to key Nordic priorities and initiatives, collected from committees under the Nordic Councils of Ministers; identifying areas for co-operation.
- Organising a stakeholder dialogue meeting in Helsinki in November 2016 with 96 participants from all countries and sectors to discuss the preliminary outcomes.
- Recommending elements of a new Nordic programme in response to Agenda 2030, based on research, interview findings, dialogue with committees under the Nordic Council of Ministers and the stakeholder dialogue meeting.
- Providing recommendations on how to communicate the SDGs.

This report will serve as a basis for the Nordic Expert Group's decision regarding a new Nordic programme in response to Agenda 2030.

Chapter 2 of this report presents the results of the mapping process in respect of how the Nordic countries currently work with the implementation of Agenda 2030, set in a global framework.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the mapping of Nordic co-operation on sustainable development. It analyses the Nordic strategy for sustainable development and its indicators in relation to the SDGs, and presents current programmes and prioritised themes of relevance for the forthcoming programme.

Chapter 4 concludes on the suggested main principles for a forthcoming Nordic SDG programme, positions it in relation to other Nordic initiatives, and provides recommendations on the contents of the programme.

1. National implementation of the Agenda 2030 goals: An overview

1.1 The Nordic countries and Agenda 2030 – global overview

Agenda 2030 signals a shift to a more universal understanding of joint global challenges. This shift is echoed in the Paris Agreement reached at COP21 in December 2015 which recognises the need for all nations and all actors (including private, public and civil society actors) to jointly³ address the climate challenge. Several challenges however remain, in practice, to be tackled when working towards these universal goals. For example, the universality of Agenda 2030 is not always fully appreciated, with the result that it is seen as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and relevant to developing countries and development assistance programmes only. This despite the fact that the universal applicability of Agenda 2030 is clearly spelled out in UN Resolution adopting the goals.⁴

The Nordic countries, including autonomous regions, have a long tradition in advancing the goals of sustainable development at the national level as well as jointly internationally – including the 1972 launch of the UNEP in Stockholm, the formulation and launch of the already “classic” definition of sustainable development in the Brundtland report, as well as important Nordic input into the Rio summit in 1992, to the establishment of the MDGs in 2000, the launch of the first Nordic Strategy on Sustainable Development in 2001 and subsequently to the adoption of the SDGs in 2015. As such, it is no surprise that a majority of SDG targets are, in practice, relevant for the Nordic countries and are already expressed in the fourth and current *Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development*, adopted in 2013.

³ While still referring to “the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances”, e.g. the climate agreement explicitly notes the role of developing countries also providing climate finance.

⁴ Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015).

Figure 2: Country scores on the SDSN SDG index

Source: Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Durand-Delacre, D. and Teksoz, K. (2016): An SDG Index and Dashboards – Global Report. New York: Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

Further, the Nordic countries have been assessed as being among the top most “SDG-ready” countries in the world and were all ranked in the top ten in the *SDG index* presented in July 2016 by SDSN and the Bertelsmann Stiftung (see Figure 2).⁵ These results are echoed in the Yale Center’s *Environmental Performance Index*, where the Nordic countries have consistently scored in the top tier since it was first reported in 2000, due to ambitious environmental policies.⁶ Similar patterns are visible when also considering country indices capturing the various social and economic dimensions of this policy, such as the UNDP *Human Development Index*, the Cornell University *Global Innovation Index*, and the OECD *Better Life Index*. At the same time, several Nordic countries score well above the world average in terms of their *Ecological Footprint*,

⁵See the index website for methodology and results <http://www.sdindex.org/>

⁶ See <http://epi.yale.edu/>

which suggests that significant challenges remain in terms of the environmental sustainability of consumption in the region.

Despite progress, Agenda 2030 implementation and compliance will clearly still pose a challenge and require further work in the Nordic countries – and even more so globally. For example, a 2015 review of Sweden’s performance on the SDG targets undertaken by SEI suggested that around 80 of the 107 targets (excluding means of implementation from the 169 targets) could not be considered fully met (Weitz *et al.* 2015). This assessment is consistent with a pilot OECD indicator framework for the SDGs that reported results for six countries in July 2016. It was found that the four Nordic countries included in the sample had reached only 13 to 23 (18–26%) of the 73 SDG targets measured (OECD 2016b). Hence, understanding better how the Nordic countries and autonomous regions can improve their own attainment of the SDGs, as well as how best they can contribute to and help other countries to advance along this pathway, while mutually learning from each other, is of vital importance.

How far have other countries around the world been able to move forward in terms of implementing Agenda 2030? It is still early days, but reviews of the initial steps taken are being compiled by governments themselves, researchers and civil society – several of which cover the Nordic countries. At the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2016, the first round of Voluntary National Reviews were presented; 22 in total (including Norway and Finland). Several independent reviews have also been published, e.g., a review of Germany (Scholz *et al.* 2016); a comparative review of policy coherence initiatives for Agenda 2030 in Sweden, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Korea (O’Connor *et al.* 2016); an OECD survey compiling 18 country reports (including Denmark, Finland, Sweden) (OECD 2016a); and a civil society review of early national implementation in the nine countries participating in the High-Level Group on Agenda 2030 (including Sweden) (Hansson *et al.* 2016).

There is also ongoing work on Agenda 2030 implementation taking place in a range of inter-governmental organisations, and international/regional/Nordic networks of academia, civil society and business.

The EU was active in the SDG negotiation phase specifically in relation to Member State coordination issuing several policy papers on key priorities.⁷ Regarding implementation, the Commission presented a plan in November 2016, “Next steps for

⁷ “A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future” - 2013; A Decent Life for All: From Vision to Collective Action” – 2014; A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015” – 2015).

a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability”,⁸ formally launched at a high-level policy summit in December 2016.⁹ The plan was accompanied by three other documents: a mapping of existing EU policies and strategies under each SDG,¹⁰ an initial Eurostat baseline study reporting on a few indicators per SDG¹¹, and a revised European Consensus on Development establishing a set of principles designed to make development co-operation coherent with the 2030 Agenda.¹²

In relation to the 2030 Agenda, the EU is seeking to be a leader and trailblazer. Responsibility for sustainable development has been moved from the Environment Commissioner to First Vice President Frans Timmermans and the European Political Strategy Centre, which brings the SDGs into the centre of EU governance. The Commission will take implementation forward with the Council and European Parliament and establish a multi-stakeholder platform for follow-up and the exchange of best practices across sectors. Two separate implementation tracks are envisioned. The first is to mainstream Agenda 2030 into the European policy framework and current Commission priorities, guided by the November 2016 plan. The second is to launch reflection work on developing a longer term vision and a vision for sectoral policies after 2020 while also ensuring consistency with the new Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020.

The mapping of existing EU domestic and external dimension policy under each SDG, as well as how well the SDGs match the Commission’s ten priorities, shows that all SDGs are currently addressed, but further focused action in all areas will be required. To avoid the implementation of SDGs taking place in a political vacuum, the Commission is looking to exploit synergies with the Commission’s ten priorities. No specific or new focus areas or activities are proposed in the plan, but a mainstreaming approach is advocated. Specific tools mentioned for this purpose include better regulation tools (e.g., the impact assessment procedure) and continuing to address all

⁸ European Commission (2016) Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability. COM(2016) 739 final.

⁹ See https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/events/europes-response-to-sustainability-challenges_en

¹⁰ European Commission (2016) Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. SWD(2016) 390 final.

¹¹ Eurostat (2016) Sustainable development in the European Union: A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. 2016 edition.

¹² European Commission (2016) Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development: Our World, our Dignity, our Future. COM(2016) 740 final.

three dimensions of sustainable development in the EU budget and spending programmes.

Regarding follow-up, the Commission commits to regular reporting on progress to the UN HLPF, although no timetables are provided. Eurostat is to develop a reference indicator framework, drawing on the 2016 study that aimed to bridge the existing indicators for the previous EU Sustainable Development Strategies and the new indicator set, and start reporting on this from 2017 onwards.

The *OECD* has also been active in terms of developing approaches and synthesising lessons for Agenda 2030 implementation. Agenda 2030 has become a significant focus in its work on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, with publications and guidance, online dialogue, stakeholder partnership, and meetings for national focal points.¹³ In June 2016, an OECD Action Plan on the SDGs was presented, calling for specific actions and functions as well as the mainstreaming of the SDGs across the OECD's work (OECD 2016c). As noted above, the provision of data and indicators for gap analysis for the SDGs has already begun with a pilot indicator framework released earlier in 2016 (OECD 2016b). In addition, a conference on sharing experiences from the coordination of Agenda 2030 for central government officials took place in October 2016, organised by the Public Governance department.

The *UNECE* has a long-standing theme on sustainable development in Europe and Central Asia. It supports both individual countries and UN headquarters with implementation and monitoring. Dialogue meetings on SDG implementation were held earlier in 2016 and a survey, on implementation plans, covering all member countries has been conducted.¹⁴

With a basis in academia, the *Sustainable Development Solutions Network* (SDSN) has established a Northern Europe network, with a project office located in Gothenburg.¹⁵ It aims to connect academia, business, government and civil society to develop solutions in respect of attaining the SDGs. Thus far, it has some 35 members consisting mainly of universities and research institutes in the Nordic region and Baltic States while a series of Solutions Initiatives Forums are planned for 2017.

On the civil society side, *SDG Watch Europe* is a new, EU-level, cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from the development, environment, social, human rights and other

¹³ <http://www.oecd.org/pcd/>

¹⁴ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42256>

¹⁵ <http://www.unsdsn-ne.org/>

sectors, with the goal of holding governments to account as regards implementation of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁶ In Development-oriented NGOs in Europe gather together in the umbrella organisation CONCORD Europe which has actively campaigned in the SDG process.¹⁷

Within business, several international networks and organisations are active on the SDGs issue. The *World Business Council on Sustainable Development*, *UN Global Compact* and the *Global Reporting Initiative* have together developed the *SDG Compass* tool, to support companies measure and manage their contribution to the SDGs.¹⁸ WBCSD reports that in 2016 nearly a third of their member companies already report on the SDGs in their sustainability reporting.¹⁹

In parallel with the SDG negotiations in 2013–2015, a process on Financing for Development took place in the UN, culminating with the Addis Ababa conference in July 2015. The resulting Action Agenda restated the need to meet the Monterrey target for official development assistance (ODA), but also noted the role of the private sector and domestic public resources in respect of their financing of sustainable development. Thus far, the trend seems to be that funding for SDG attainment and supporting implementation work is mainstreamed into the general government budget and ODA budgets, rather than specific SDG funds being set up.

1.2 Denmark

1.2.1 Introduction and background

Denmark has a strong track record in development co-operation and international engagement. It secured a first place ranking in the 2015 Commitment to Development Index. Denmark's official development assistance (ODA) is above its international commitment of providing 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) as ODA. Provisional figures for 2015 show that Danish ODA stood at USD 2.6 billion, making Denmark the thirteenth largest donor by volume.

¹⁶ See <http://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/>

¹⁷ See <https://concordeurope.org/who-we-are/our-members/>

¹⁸ <http://sdgcompass.org/>

¹⁹ <http://www.wbcsd.org/Clusters/Social-Impact/News/New-research-shows-SDGs-matter-to-leading-global-businesses>

As a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Denmark has played a strong leadership role in the development of Agenda 2030. Key areas here have been the promotion of human rights and support for peacebuilding and stabilisation. Denmark's high level of political engagement on gender equality, and on sexual and reproductive health and rights has contributed to more progressive language being incorporated into the global goals (OECD 2016d).

1.2.2 Timeline

The past, present and future activities and milestones of Denmark's national implementation are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Activities and milestones for national SDG implementation in Denmark

Schedule	Milestone
2015	Member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.
2016	Development strategy draft published in public hearing from 18 June to 5 August, which integrates the SDG goals into Denmark's development strategy.
2017	The action plan draft on the follow-up on Agenda 2030 is currently a work in progress and is estimated to be ready by the beginning of 2017.
2017-	Follow-up and reporting to the parliament every four years.

The action plans for the follow-up on Agenda 2030 are currently a work in progress. In Denmark the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently developing a single, strategic action plan for follow-up at national and international level (Permanent mission of Denmark to UN, 2016). The plan is expected to be ready by the beginning of 2017.

A draft strategy – *Verden 2030, Udkast Danmarks udviklingspolitiske og humanitære strategi* – on development goals has already been published (Danida, 2016). It includes some prioritised areas for Denmark's development co-operation and outlines which SDGs lie within the Danish priority areas.

1.2.3 Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation

The action plan for Agenda 2030 follow up is currently being developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in co-operation with all other ministries and with input from civil society, the private sector and academia. The goal is to achieve a broad adoption of the action plan in the Danish parliament. The action plan aims to establish the framework for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships in both the national and the international dimension of follow-up. The coordination of the implementation of the action plan will be anchored in the Ministry of Finance to underline the universality of the Agenda (Permanent mission of Denmark to UN, 2016). The established inter-ministerial working group will continue to function as a cross-governmental coordination forum and coordinate implementation and actions on SDGs.

Civil society

Many NGOs have identified the main priorities in respect of SDG implementation and have plans to follow-up on these actions. NGOs are working on building broader awareness of the SDGs and related issues. In Denmark, World's Best News (Verdens Bedste Nyheder), in co-operation with NGO's like Oxfam IBIS, MS Action Aid and Save the Children initiated Verdenstimen²⁰, which is a national campaign targeted at primary and high school students and part of "World's Largest Lesson" produced by the UN.

NGOs have been calling for greater opportunities for dialogue on the Action Plan for the Agenda 2030 follow-up. A key issue raised by some NGOs here is that the government should increase its focus on domestic issues and potential weaknesses and gaps, in addition to leveraging strengths and focusing primarily on development issues, which is perceived as the current focus. The NGOs foresee active independent monitoring of the Action Plan for sectors relevant to different NGOs.

Private sector

The larger global companies in particular are currently working towards incorporating the SDGs into their business operations. Some are involved in the UN Global Compact LEAD and have previously been actively involved in the work of identifying the SDGs. Awareness of these issues is good in the largest global companies. The Danish Confederation of Industry is working to enable smaller and medium companies to work

²⁰ <http://verdenstimen.dk/>

actively with the SDGs. Awareness of the SDGs and how the goals may be relevant for their business is still however quite low in smaller companies.

1.2.4 Existing and planned action plans

The follow-up *action plan on Agenda 2030* will identify a limited number of national and international key priorities while respecting the universality and interdependence of the goals. The priorities will build upon the core strengths of Danish society – sustainable growth, a strong welfare system, and solid development co-operation. Areas will also be identified where extra effort is required. The action plan aims to establish the framework for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships in both the national and the international dimension of follow-up.

One central principle for Denmark's external follow up in respect of the SDGs is that Denmark is committed to supporting developing countries in the implementation of the SDGs. The Agenda 2030 process and the SDGs constitute the central platform for Denmark's development policy. Agenda 2030 goals will be integrated into Denmark's development co-operation strategy, which will be aligned with the SDGs (Permanent mission of Denmark to the UN, 2016). The action plan will refer to the development strategy regarding external actions in the field of development co-operation. Follow-up within the EU will likewise play a central role.

Regarding the domestic focus on Denmark, the action plan will describe key priorities for domestic implementation. The action plan will be the primary umbrella document describing the framework for these activities.

In June 2016, the Danish Government launched *a draft for a new development co-operation strategy*, which had a public hearing during the summer 2016. The aim is to focus on a selected number of SDGs based on Danish key competencies, opportunities for partnerships and the possibility to create interesting results. The areas of strength identified are sustainable growth and development, a strong welfare society, gender equality and a strong commitment to development co-operation.

Statistics Denmark will establish yearly statistical reporting to the UN. Statistics Denmark is currently engaged in work on developing indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs. A number of indicators will be chosen, some of which may be comparable with indicators used in the other Nordic countries.

It is suggested that the Danish government will report every four years on the status of the activities outlined in the action plan to the Danish Parliament. This will form the basis for the reporting to the UN.²¹ It is expected that Danish NGOs will conduct independent monitoring of progress across the different sectors relevant to them.

1.2.5 *International engagement*

The Danish development strategy draft states that Denmark aims to focus its international development co-operation efforts on the following SDGs: 3 (good health and well-being), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (sustainable energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 13 (climate). Supporting the development of institutions (SDG 16) is also seen as fundamental as it is a necessary support in respect of efforts to attain the other SDG goals. (Danida, 2016) The strong commitment to the 0.7 % ODA-target is also confirmed.

The level of effort will however differ for different categories of countries. Countries have been divided into three different categories, each with a different type of focus in respect of SDGs.

Both the climate agreement in Paris and the Sustainable Development Goals steer investments and development efforts towards resource-efficient water and energy solutions, where Denmark has strong competencies. The participation of the private sector is also regarded as essential in the efforts to reach the SDGs in developing nations (Danida 2016).

Denmark states that Official Development Assistance (ODA) continues to be very important for driving sustainable development, especially as it increasingly plays a catalytic role in generating diversified investments for sustainable development. A new initiative that aims to contribute to achieving the SDGs is a new financing institution, Verdensmålfonden (SDG fund) which will provide public seed funding to projects linked to the SDGs. The financing scheme aims to leverage the already provided public financing with private funds.

²¹ Handlingsplan vedr. Danmarks opfølgning på 2030 dagsordenen for bæredygtig udvikling og FNs verdensmål (in progress).

Denmark, represented by Statistics Denmark, is also a member of The High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG), established by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2015. The HLG is responsible for establishing and supporting a Member State-led reporting process at the global level and developing a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, expected to be published in January 2017.

1.2.6 *Communication strategy*

Thus far, no formal governmental communication plan for the SDGs has been put in place, but from 2017 and onwards, the government has, in the Finance Bill, appointed *World's Best News* ²² to handle a communication platform for SDG communication.

The Agenda 2030 follow-up Action plan aims to establish the framework for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships in both the national and the international dimension of follow-up. The Dialogue Forum for Growth and Corporate Responsibility has been tasked with providing private sector input into SDG implementation and thus securing ownership by and engagement with private sector, civil society, academia and others. The Forum will play a key role in driving implementation both domestically and abroad. The foreign ministry in particular is actively engaging in dialogue with different stakeholders in Denmark and internationally.

The Global Green Growth Forum (3GF), which has an international focus, is also mentioned as being another forum for engagement. Fora for EU engagement are also mentioned as being important.²³

1.2.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

Denmark will, based on its healthy point of departure in respect of SDG attainment, contribute to the broader implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

From a Danish perspective the Agenda 2030 follow up process presents many possibilities. Denmark is one of the countries that is best positioned to contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs. Denmark is known for its sustainable growth, equality between men and women, an open democracy which respects human rights, a high level of social

²² Based on information provided by the World's Best News <http://verdensbedstenyheder.dk/verdensmaal/>

²³ Handlingsplan vedr. Danmarks opfølgning på 2030 dagsordenen for bæredygtig udvikling og FNs verdensmål.

welfare and a continuing commitment to development aid. Additionally, many Danish companies display a high level of expertise and have already demonstrated a commitment to sustainable practices as well as being involved in the Global Compact.

Both the climate agreement in Paris and the Sustainable Development Goals steer investments and development efforts towards resource-efficient water and energy solutions, where Denmark already displays strong competencies. Private sector participation is considered essential in the efforts to help developing nations move towards SDG attainment. The integration of the private sector into development co-operation and financing presents good opportunities for Denmark, which may enable further leveraging of the ODA allocations. One such example here is the new fund that provides seed financing to projects that are connected to SDGs. This seed money is leveraged by investments from the private sector.

A number of challenges have also been identified in respect of Denmark's development co-operation, these include being better able to prioritise and focus the development co-operation effort and being able to choose key countries with which to cooperate. Denmark's funding arrangements and ODA allocations have not always been perceived as being consistent with its strategic objectives (OECD, 2016d).

An additional potential challenge emerging from the Agenda 2030 follow-up process relates to the current political situation in Denmark. Namely, it is currently not clear just how deep the level of national commitment is to development issues or to those domestic issues connected with SDGs. Implementation of the plans will be dependent on the relevant ministries' priorities and their levels of commitment. The fact that the finance ministry will be in charge of the implementation phase creates the potential to increase the possibility of coordinated efforts and may lead to an increased focus on domestic matters in addition to the external focus on development aid and foreign policy, something which has hitherto been a key strength for Denmark.

1.3 Finland

1.3.1 *Introduction and background*

Finland has had a sustainable development policy since early 1990s. The first national strategy for sustainable development was prepared in 2006 and reformed in 2013. The new strategy is called, Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development "The Finland we want 2050"²⁴ and also includes a multi-stakeholder implementation tool. Over 300 actors have signed operational commitments thus contributing to Finnish Society's Commitment to the SDG process, including enterprises, schools, cities, administration, non-governmental and other organisations, communities, political parties and private individuals (Government of Finland (2016b), Finnish Government (2016b)).

The SD work in Finland aims at continuity and long-term planning rather than planning in terms of governmental cycles. The follow-up, reporting and evaluation all look further than one government term. The current national SD strategy provides a framework up to 2050.

Nationally, the eight objectives of Finnish Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development constitute the basis for national focus areas: equal prospects of wellbeing; a participatory society for all; work in a sustainable way; sustainable society and local communities; a carbon-neutral society; a resource-wise economy; lifestyles respectful of the carrying capacity of nature; and decision-making respectful of nature.

1.3.2 *Timeline*

The past, present and future activities and milestones of the national implementation process are presented in the table below.

²⁴ <https://commitment2050.fi/>

Table 2: Activities and milestones for national SDG implementation in Finland

Schedule	Milestone (Finnish Government 2016b)
2016	February: Government Report on Development Policy approved with strong emphasis on Agenda 2030. March: Government request to ministries and agencies to chart policy actions to Agenda 2030. March–June: Independent Gap analysis undertaken. July: National report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Finland presents its first VNR to the UN HLPF. October: Expert panel for sustainable development provided proposal for topics of the implementation plan. October–November: Stakeholder consultations and workshops. October–December: Work for follow-up mechanism, incl. indicators for Agenda 2030 under way. December: Proposal for the Government’s implementation plan for Agenda 2030 available.
2017	February: Government approval of the implementation plan for Agenda 2030 and report to the Parliament.
2017–2019	During its Arctic Council presidency, Finland will emphasise Agenda 2030 implementation (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2016b).
Annual	Government reporting to the Parliament on the implementation as part of the Government Annual Report. A high-level multi-stakeholder annual event “The state and future of sustainable development in Finland”.
Every fourth year	Reporting to the UN on Finland’s progress.

1.3.3 Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation

Figure 3 illustrates the governance structure for Agenda 2030 implementation in Finland. The coordination mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030, and key actors in Finland are as follows (Prime Minister’s Office 2016a).

- The government has primary responsibility for integrating the SDGs into all national policies. A coordination secretariat at the Prime Minister’s Office coordinates the national implementation of Agenda 2030 and the national sustainable development policy. The Prime Minister’s Office also functions as Secretariat General for the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development in co-operation with the Ministry of Environment.

- A sustainable development coordination network, comprised of representatives of key ministries, supports and guides the work of the coordination secretariat. Members of the coordination network provide contact points with those in charge of sustainable development within their respective branches of Government.
- The National Commission on Sustainable Development, led by the Prime Minister, brings together a broad range of stakeholders including civil society organisations, the business community and trade unions, as well as representatives from the regions and municipalities. One of the main tasks of the Commission is to follow-up and review the progress made in respect of the national implementation of Agenda 2030.
- The Commission is assisted by an expert panel for sustainable development,²⁵ comprised of eight professors from various scientific disciplines, and hosted by the Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra. The expert panel informs the work of the National Commission on Sustainable Development.
- The Development Policy Committee monitors and assesses the implementation of Finland's development policy guidelines and international commitments generally, and Agenda 2030 implementation in particular. Members of the Development Policy Committee include representatives of the political parties, the NGOs engaged in development co-operation as well as representatives from business, research, agriculture and the trade unions.
- The Development Policy Committee and the National Commission on Sustainable Development have a common "Enterprises and sustainable development" working group for Finnish companies engaged with Agenda 2030 at home and abroad.
- A broad-based network on Agenda 2030 follow-up and review was established by the Prime Minister's Office to advise on national follow-up mechanisms and to update the existing national sustainable development indicators.
- Members of Parliament and Parliament itself play a key role in national Agenda 2030 implementation, particularly in respect of progress monitoring. It has been decided that in the Parliament it is the Committee of Future that will take overall responsibility for the follow-up of the national Agenda 2030 implementation.

²⁵ <http://www.sitra.fi/en/future/expert-panel-sustainable-development>

Additionally, the Coordination secretariat within the PMO engages in regular dialogue with interested parliamentarians. To increase participation and ownership of the Finnish Parliament, the government has proposed a Government Report to the Parliament on the national implementation of Agenda 2030 (Government of Finland, 2016a). On the regional level, the PMO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have organised Agenda 2030 events in co-operation with Finnish cities and other sustainable development actors.²⁶

Civil society

NGOs have also engaged in an active ongoing dialogue with the government; opportunities provide input into SD-related processes and to participate in multi-stakeholder workshops are provided in a number of fora. The National Commission on Sustainable Development provides an institutionalized framework for dialogue and fosters common understanding between the Government and NGOs on issues related to sustainable development.

Significant variance nevertheless occurs in how NGOs have incorporated the SDG into their operations. Some have mapped their operations against the relevant SDGs while others have reflected that the SDGs have, through the idea of comprehensiveness and universality, raised awareness about sustainability issues outside of, but connected to, their core activities.

²⁶ The first events will be held in Tampere and Oulu. More events will follow in 2017. More information (in Finnish) at: http://kestavakehitys.fi/ajankohtaista/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/tule-mukaan-tampereen-12-10-ja-oulun-8-11-agenda2030-ja-suomi-paivaan- and <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=351378&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

Figure 3: Governance structure for Agenda 2030 in Finland

Source: Gaia Consulting (based on image by the Agenda 2030 coordination office in Finland).

Development co-operation NGOs have been among the most engaged with Agenda 2030. Kepa²⁷ has organised a coalition to gather together NGOs and labour market organisations under SD themes.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development is also undertaking co-operation with Allianssi, Finnish Youth Cooperation, to promote SD to children and young people. Representatives of minorities and of children and young people, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children in Finland have all been consulted during the preparation of the national implementation plan.

²⁷ Kepa is the umbrella organisation for Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs) who work with development co-operation or are otherwise interested in global affairs. www.kepa.fi

Private sector

The Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is the most important means to integrate business into national SD work. The Commitment tool is the concrete way to involve companies in contributing to SD and to the implementation of Agenda 2030. The National Commission on Sustainable Development is a key forum for business organisations to participate in SD work.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Confederation of Finnish Industries; FIBS, Finland's corporate responsibility network; and the Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra, have all been active in promoting and discussing the SDGs from a business perspective.

1.3.4 Existing and planned action plans

The Government's key focus areas and means of implementation, as well as follow-up and review framework for the Agenda 2030 are being defined in the Government's implementation plan, adopted by the Government in February 2017.

Finland emphasises policy coherence for sustainable development. One of the key projects of the current Government, "Towards carbon-free, clean and renewable energy cost efficiently," is an example of mainstreaming Agenda 2030 into national plans and strategies (Finnish Government, 2016a).

The national sustainable development indicators²⁸ were identified in 2014 to measure the progress of the eight strategic objectives outlined in the Finnish Society Commitment. These indicators will be revised and updated to better meet the requirements for Agenda 2030 follow-up (Finnish Government, 2016a). The national network for follow-up and review, set up by the PMO, started their work in October. The network gathers together members from various ministries, research institutions and other stakeholder organisations. In addition to the statistical indicators, the objective is also to consider other means for follow-up – such as process indicators or other means for evaluation (e.g. annual dialogue meetings). The network aims to propose an updated set of national SD indicators to the National Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2017.

²⁸ <http://findikaattori.fi/en/kestavakehitys>

1.3.5 *International engagement*

The most important sustainable development goals from the perspective of Finland's foreign and security policy are: gender equality and empowering women and girls; reduction of inequality; fighting against climate change and its impacts; promoting peaceful societies; guaranteeing legal services for everyone; and accountable institutions. From the perspective of international influence other global objectives important to Finland are: safe living conditions; human rights and the possibility for people to make a difference in their own affairs; sufficient livelihoods and safe living environments (Prime Minister's Office, 2016a).

The priority areas for development policy in respect of SDGs particularly in relation to how they will benefit other countries and societies and promote global sustainability are: rights of women and girls; reinforcing developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, improve livelihoods and enhance wellbeing; democratic and well-functioning societies, including taxation capacity; food security, access to water and energy; sustainable use of natural resources (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2016a).

One of the objectives of Finland's Nordic Council of Ministers presidency 2016 is to launch a process for the preparation of a Nordic sustainable development co-operation plan/programme to support Agenda 2030 implementation.

1.3.6 *Communication strategy*

General information about the SDGs has been offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-operation with the PMO, ministries, and NGOs. A government Agenda 2030 communications strategy will evolve in parallel with the national implementation plan. Currently, Agenda 2030 is communicated through events with NGOs and companies, in bilateral negotiations in Finland, and through the aforementioned Commitment tool. Print and social media have also been used. NGOs have been active in organising communication campaigns.

1.3.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

Finland is ranked the fourth most sustainable country in the world on the SDSN SDG Index. Based on the gap analysis conducted by a research group in spring 2016, Finland is doing extremely well in education and in the stability and functioning of society (Prime Minister's Office, 2016b). However, looking especially at goals 8 and 13, where

Finland did not score so well, there are issues here that need to be urgently addressed: climate change and high unemployment, but also overconsumption of natural resources and increasing social inequality.

The risks identified in the context of the implementation process relate to political will and the inclusion of the regions and municipalities in decision-making. The implementation plan includes two types of activities: Politically relevant and nationally critical thematic focus areas for urgent implementation, (2) Longer term policy principles and framework for follow-up, review and reporting. Many things that are relevant from the Agenda 2030 perspective require municipal activity and commitment in order to have a real impact. The role of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities should also be strengthened in this context.

One such risk relates to the impact of future activities; can Finland move beyond the current raft of sustainability-related activities and provide real content and impact? If concrete results do not emerge in the short or medium term, interest in Agenda 2030 issues may fade. Few parliamentarians have been active in raising discussion in the Parliament. The first plenary discussion on the Agenda 2030 and the role of the Parliament was conducted in December 2016 in the Finnish Parliament. In February 2017 the Parliament discussed on the basis of the Government report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (the implementation plan).

From the citizens' point of view however, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs do not seem to have penetrated deeply into the public consciousness. As such, there is a real challenge here to better activate the citizenry in respect of the SDGs.

When it comes to public R&D funding and other support, the SDGs have thus far not been taken into account. The activities of Team Finland and Cleantech Finland provide Finnish companies with opportunities to sell and export cleantech solutions on world markets (Finnish Government, 2016b). Responsible businesses or the SDGs have however not yet been integrated into the plans of these activities. A further question here concerns how to involve SMEs more directly in SDG-related work.

One final aspect of note here relates to the EU's influence on national implementation: national implementation can really only have an impact on policies where Finland has its own mandate to decide. When it e.g. comes to trade policy, agricultural policy and emissions trading, the EU is the primary decision-maker.

1.4 Iceland

1.4.1 *Introduction and background*

Iceland ranks among the top five most sustainable countries in the world on the SDSN SDG Index (together with the other Nordic countries).

Sustainable development has been a long-time national priority, the first national strategy – “Welfare for the Future” – being adopted back in 2002, shortly before the World Summit in Johannesburg. The strategy set forth 17 objectives for environmental protection and resource utilisation, together with ancillary goals, and created a framework for Iceland’s policy on sustainable development through 2020. The top-priority tasks for the achievement of the 17 objectives were reviewed in 2005 and again in 2009.²⁹

The Iceland 2020 – governmental policy statement for the economy and community – Knowledge, sustainability, and welfare – from 2011 contains 20 objectives targeted at improving e.g. well-being, gender equality, education and the climate and environment friendliness. It has formed the basis for the Icelandic government’s policy-making and planning in specific areas in recent years.³⁰

In the preparation phase for Agenda 2030 Iceland actively promoted key areas such as the sustainable utilisation of land and marine resources, gender equality, renewable energy, co-operation around migration, and health issues.³¹

1.4.2 *Timeline*

The past, present and future activities and the milestones of national implementation are presented in the table below.

²⁹ Welfare for the Future. Iceland’s National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Priorities 2010-2013.

³⁰ Iceland 2020 – governmental policy statement for the economy and community. Knowledge, sustainability, welfare (2011); interviews.

³¹ Statement by Iceland at the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015; Statement of the Permanent Mission of Iceland to the UN during the General debate at the 17th session of the General Assembly of the UN, 1 Oct 2015.

Table 3: Activities and milestones for national SDG implementation in Iceland³²

Schedule	Milestone
2016	February: Agreement on memorandum outlining the Icelandic governance setup for analysing and developing an SDG implementation strategy for Iceland.
2017-	March: Political status report ready for the government April: Decision on a new governance structure and a national implementation plan.
2018	Iceland plans to present first VNR to the UN HLPF.

1.4.3 Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation

The Icelandic model builds on the involvement of the whole Government in the implementation of the SDGs. Analyses and implementation will be led by *the Prime Minister's Office, in close co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*.

To attain policy coherence regarding the 17 goals and the 169 targets, the Prime Minister's office in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has decided to use the *Policy Profession Board*, where all Ministries are represented, as a venue to maximize policy coherence. Furthermore, the team from the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will regularly have status meetings with a ministerial committee for policy coherence where the ministers will be briefed and political decisions taken on how to proceed with the national work on the SDGs.

Civil Society

There is in Iceland, as yet, no formal structure in terms of involving other stakeholders outside the governmental offices, but these bodies will be considered and given a role in the implementation plan and review process.

The Prime minister's Office has a co-operation agreement with the national UN organisations in Iceland with e.g. campaigns raising public awareness while other ministries have co-operation agreements with NGO's in their respective policy areas.

³² All information based on interviews.

Iceland is a part of the United Nations University with the following training programmes for experts from developing countries: Fisheries, Land Degradation and Sustainable Land use, Geothermal Energy and Gender Equality.³³ These areas are all highly relevant for the implementation of the SDGs.

Private Sector

The private sector has been closely involved in the bioeconomy development field, particularly in blue bioeconomy research and in the SDG work related to life in water and sustainable consumption and production.

1.4.4 Existing and planned action plans

Iceland is currently at the stage of gathering and analysing information to use as a basis upon which to decide on its priorities for both the national and international developmental implementation of the SDGs. The political status report prepared during the autumn 2016, has included extensive work on the analysis and the prioritising of goals, targets and indicators in respect of Agenda 2030 to form the base for Iceland's action plan. All the ministries and the Icelandic Statistical Bureau have provided information that has been pivotal in order to draw certain baselines for all 169 targets.

Work on the status report will be finalised in March 2017, after which the country's priorities will be decided. With the means of governance coordination heightening the probability of favourable outcome Iceland will attempt to integrate the implementation of Agenda 2030 into our 100 policies for expenditure areas in the nation's fiscal policy. This connection provides, it is hoped, the required level of international and national coordination and perspective by linking SDG implementation to the national policy framework.

Other relevant policies which link to the SDGs are:³⁴

³³ <https://unu.edu/about/unu-system/ftp-gtp-lrt#location>

³⁴ <http://www.government.is/> ; interviews

- New legislation on public finances.
- A revised Development Cooperation Policy, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will integrate the SDGs into Iceland's development co-operation policy.
- Revised action plan on immigration, including a section on refugees coming to Iceland.
- Revised action plan on gender equality (September 2016).
- National action plan for climate initiatives.
- New legislation on nature conservation.
- Equal Pay standard.³⁵
- Iceland's bioeconomy policy has recently been finalised and discussed in government and with stakeholders, industries, educational sectors, association of fishermen etc., putting a strong emphasis both on international co-operation (e.g. in marine resources) and sustainable development of the domestic regions.
- On the municipal level, the City of Reykjavik's climate policy³⁶ has been used internationally as a best practice case.

The Prime Minister's Office works in close collaboration with Statistics Iceland³⁷ on indicators for following up SDG attainment.

1.4.5 *International engagement*

Iceland is an active member of the UN and participates in both UN and OECD meetings on the SDGs. Iceland aims to present a national review to the UN in 2018.

Iceland is committed to contributing to the work done by developing countries on the SDGs, especially the Least Developed countries, SIDS (Small Islands Developing States), and other countries defined by the OECD DAC as those countries most in need. The new draft Policy on International Development Cooperation 2017–

³⁵ The Equal-Pay-Management System - Requirements and guidance published in 2012 and in the 2014 regulation 929/2014 was set by the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing on the Equal-Pay-System Certification for companies and institutions, modelled on international standards. (The Icelandic Equal Pay Management System [ST 85:2012]).

³⁶ City of Reykjavik, <http://reykjavik.is/en>

³⁷ Statistics Iceland, www.hagstofa.is

2021, to be presented to Parliament for adoption in the autumn 2016, is strongly guided by the SDGs.³⁸

Iceland is also actively engaged in Nordic Cooperation, Baltic Sea Cooperation and Arctic Cooperation, promoting issues related to Agenda 2030.

1.4.6 *Communication strategy*

Although the Icelandic model ultimately places responsibility for SDG implementation on the national government, there is broad consensus that it will take all of the society working together to attain the goals set. There is as yet no communication strategy in development, though the Ministry of Foreign affairs does have an agreement with the UN association in Iceland which will probably be one of the channels for public engagement.

Although no formal strategy or channels for communicating the SDGs currently exist Iceland can however boast a number of examples of successful campaigns of relevance in respect of SDG implementation. One such example here relates to the association of UN women, particularly strong in Iceland, and its Iceland HeforShe campaign³⁹ which has gained vast national and international visibility.

One example of awareness-raising is the translation to Icelandic of the UNDP electronic book “Verður heimurinn betri?” (Is the world turning better?), which was published in 2012 (on the Millennium goals) for use in all primary and secondary schools.⁴⁰ Similar campaigns can be implemented through the co-operation with the National UN organisations in Iceland.

1.4.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

The main challenge identified by the governmental stakeholders is the lack of governance networks combined with the small resources for coordinating the work, which makes the organisation very dependent on a few persons and thus vulnerable to losing key personnel. A more general challenge, which is common to all of the Nordic countries, was seen in the sector-oriented governmental structure, which makes it

³⁸ Based on the interviews with government officials.

³⁹ HeforShe campaign, report 28 June 2016.

⁴⁰ The national UN organisations <http://un.is>

challenging to implement horizontal priorities like the SDGs. Potential value was seen in the possibility of looking at the solutions that have been adopted in the neighbouring Nordic countries when building an implementation structure.

Opportunities were also to be found in the small size of the administration as it promotes greater flexibility and the smooth implementation of fast-track activities. Most importantly, the political will to be an active part of the global society and implement joint obligations in accordance with international goals creates a good grounding for the work in the coming years.

As the government has not yet prioritised the goals and actions to be implemented, it is still quite early in terms of defining Iceland's national priorities. However, according to existing policy documents and issues raised by non-governmental organisations, potential themes of interest are likely to be found in the utilisation of marine resources, in renewable energy, in gender equality (where Iceland already scores positively in international comparisons), in enhancing living conditions and the well-being of functionally disabled and elderly people and in ensuring quality education, particularly for immigrant children.

1.5 Norway

1.5.1 *Introduction and background*

Norway is ranked as the third most sustainable country in the world on the SDSN SDG Index, with the same ranking on the SDG Index specifically for OECD countries (Sachs *et al.*, 2016). With a key role in the Brundtland Commission and Rio Summit in 1992, a national sustainable strategy was launched in 2002 and was followed up by an action plan in 2003.

Norway was one of the first countries to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the UN HLPF in July 2016. The Government of Norway considers the SDGs and Agenda 2030 to be a new global framework for international politics, requiring further work to identify measures in various policy areas (Government of Norway, 2016a:6). In starting to implement the SDGs, the Norwegian government has undertaken a gap analysis exercise to map those targets it will find challenging to meet and has chosen to work with these specifically.

1.5.2 *Timeline*

The past, present and future activities and milestones of the national implementation process are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Activities and milestones for national SDG implementation in Norway

Schedule	Milestone
2014–15	Ministry for Foreign Affairs led an inter-ministerial contact group which analysed the proposed SDGs and their consequences and challenges for foreign and domestic policies.
2015	Nov: Parliament debates Agenda 2030.
2016	July: Norway presents its first VNR to the UN HLPF. October: First draft budget proposition that included Agenda 2030 reporting.
2017	First budget bill that will include follow-up on Agenda 2030.
...	Annual reporting through the budget thereafter.

Norway presented a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the HLPF in July 2016 (Government of Norway, 2016a), with Prime Minister Erna Solberg leading the delegation and delivering a speech on 19 July (Government of Norway, 2016b). This speech was billed as representing the “launch pad for Norway’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda” (p. 34).

1.5.3 *Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation*

Before the SDGs were adopted in September 2015, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs led an inter-ministerial contact group which analysed the proposed SDGs and their consequences and challenges for foreign and domestic policies (Government of Norway, 2016a).

After their adoption by the UN General Assembly, the government allocated responsibility for the 17 SDGs to 12 ministries; each ministry is fully responsible for the goal(s) assigned to it (Government of Norway, 2016a) (see Figure 4). It is to consult with other ministries involved in the follow-up on various targets under the goal concerned. Furthermore, within ministries, targets are assigned to individual units thereby spreading “ownership” of the SDGs very broadly within the government. Each ministry reports on the follow-up status for its respective goal(s) through its budget proposition,

the first draft round of which were available in October 2016 for the 2017 budget. The Ministry of Finance summarises the main points in the annual national budget bill. This procedure will ensure regular (annual) reporting, embedded in a well-established institutional framework and process that involves the ministries, the government and the parliament. Including SDG follow-up in the government budget process is seen as accountable, effective and transparent.

Mainstreaming the SDGs in national policies, plans and strategies is seen as crucial, though details were not provided at the time of the VNR (p. 34). Since then however the government has commissioned a White Paper on forward-looking international development policies and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is the platform on which this White Paper will stand.

It is expected that the system of ownership of goals within the ministries and targets within operational units will ensure that the SDGs are taken up broadly throughout government policies, plans and strategies (interviews).

Figure 4: Organisation structure for national implementation in Norway

National budget
SDG reporting happens through the annual budget process. Each ministry reports on its goal(s) through its own budget reporting, while the Ministry of Finance provides a synthesis of all SDG reporting in its budget chapter.

Figure 4: "Ownership" of the SDGs is divided among the ministries. The Ministry of Finance has responsibility for domestic follow-up through coordinating SDG reporting in the annual budget, as well as ownership of two goals. Coordination among ministries happens through existing formal policy channels as well as informally.

Source: Stockholm Environment Institute.

Civil society

On stakeholder engagement, the VNR states that civil society, representatives from the business community and academia are “clearly speaking with one voice” on key aspects of the Agenda (p. 34). The sum of interviews conducted with civil society actors and companies for this report however suggest a slightly more nuanced picture: while the Agenda and taking up the SDGs is widely regarded as important, there is some disagreement, notably on the relative importance of working with domestic versus international implementation of the global goals. As for future consultation and interaction, the Sámi Parliament will be involved through formal consultation mechanisms and dialogue with the line ministries, in accordance with the general agreement from 2005 (Government of Norway, 2016a). Existing mechanisms for co-operation with local and regional authorities (represented in the KS association), agreed in 2000, will be used. These mechanisms include discussion of financial issues and assessment of the cost of policy reforms. The government further states that it will continue to benefit from consultations with stakeholders in the SDG follow-up process, though there is no formal consultation process planned – this is currently pursued through individual ministries with respect to the goals for which they have responsibility. Specific examples of stakeholder interaction mentioned in the VNR include an SDG leadership seminar organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Yara, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and the civil society umbrella organisation, ForUM in June 2016 attended by the business community and civil society. ForUM issued a report in May 2016 on how Norway can attain the SDGs which will be updated annually with a focus on the priority goals of the HLPF for that year.

Private sector

A number of information exchanges have also been established between the ministries and the Norwegian private sector – notably there was corporate representation on the Norwegian delegation to the HLPF. As for collaboration between individual ministries and the private sector, this happens on a sector-by-sector and issue-by-issue basis. For instance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has long coordinated the corporate social responsibility agenda, while the Ministry for Health hosts a round table together with relevant companies to create, monitor and maintain standards for health and nutrition.

1.5.4 *Existing and planned action plans*

Recognising its high ranking on various international SDG indices, Norway has identified a number of challenges for domestic implementation (Government of Norway, 2016a). A list of targets identified as especially challenging for Norway was compiled. Each coordinating ministry provided input on its respective goal(s) to the VNR presented at HLPF 2016. A summary and discussion around challenging targets under each SDG is provided in the VNR.

Targets that are seen as a likely focus of policy development and political attention relate to: sustainable consumption and production, health and education, equality, employment and migration. The government is prioritising quality education and employment, especially for young people and those at risk of marginalisation. Challenges that have been identified at the national level include:

- Reducing non-communicable diseases and promoting mental health.
- Increasing high-school completion rates.
- Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Reducing the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training.
- Ensuring sustainable infrastructure.
- Sustaining income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average.
- Improving urban air quality.
- Halving food waste and reducing waste generation.
- Reducing the impact of invasive alien species.
- Reducing all forms of violence and related death rates and combating organised crime.

In the VNR, Norway discusses the targets under each SDG and the extent to which they are met or pose challenges. Existing policies and measures are mentioned, both those that are part of the current government's core political platform (e.g., welfare policies that aim to reduce income inequality) and those that are more specific initiatives (e.g., a three-year strategy for child poverty).

Under each goal, Norway reports both on the domestic setting and its international engagement in the goal area.

New actions that are mentioned in the VNR build on existing work but are linked to the Agenda 2030 framing:

- An action plan on healthy diets (target 2.2).
- A white paper on agricultural policy in 2017, including climate policy aspects (target 2.4).
- The Directorate of Health has been given a coordinating role in respect of SDG follow-up including coordination with other policy areas.
- Present a new action plan for reduced violence in close relationships and addressing the needs of children who have been subjected to violence and abuse (under goal 5).
- Sign an agreement to reduce food waste in the food supply chain with partners, in 2016 (under goal 12).

Regarding indicators for Agenda 2030 follow-up, Norway welcomes the IEAG proposal and will be part of the continued development process (Government of Norway, 2016a, p. 34). It will start to adapt the indicators that are most relevant for the national context in Norway, as well as defining indicators of its own. It already has a system for environmental indicators in place that is linked to various international initiatives and organisations (including the Nordic Council of Ministers). Norway collects substantial relevant data already and this will be built upon further (interviews). Statistics Norway is engaged with IAEG-SDGs through the Swedish representation on behalf of the Nordic countries. A closer contact with OECD statistical resources has also been initiated to look into possible further use of the methodology in the pilot study (OECD, 2016b). The SDGs present challenges for measurability in accordance with sound methods for official statistics. It will be a cumbersome process to ascertain to what extent viable data can be extracted for the global reporting.

Action is also being taken beyond government. The Norwegian Children and Youth Council has published a report that aims to make the SDGs relevant to the work of youth organisations and has requested national funds to develop this work further both domestically and internationally (LNU 2016). The umbrella organisation for a large number of NGOs, ForUM, has also worked on making the goals relevant to the Norwegian

NGO sector (ForUM 2016). Many larger corporations in Norway are approaching the SDGs through the Global Compact's Nordic Network as well as through sector associations. Examples of the integration of the SDGs into business plan can also be found – for instance, the Norwegian multinational Orkla joined other Global Compact companies to map its existing sustainability strategy onto the SDGs in order to understand and pursue its business activities in an SDG-supportive manner (Orkla, 2016).

1.5.5 *International engagement*

Examples of Norwegian priorities and partnerships in its international work on Agenda 2030 include (Government of Norway, 2016a):

- Increasing ODA for education, with a special focus on girls' education, education in emergencies and education quality.
- Maintaining a high level of investments in global health, in particular efforts to improve maternal health and reduce child mortality.
- Working in partnerships, including with the private sector, Every Woman Every Child, the vaccine alliance GAVI, and the Global Partnership on Education (GPE).
- Engaging in partnerships under the UN, World Bank and other organisations to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in economic, social and political life, which is crucial for economic development and growth.

Further priority areas mentioned in the VNR include climate change mitigation and adaptation, oceans and the marine environment, and peace and conflict prevention (SDG 16) (Government of Norway, 2016a).

Human rights and non-discrimination is another priority area. As stated in the VNR, Norway looks forward to seeing how the Universal Periodic Review, under the UN Human Rights Council, can complement and reinforce reporting under Agenda 2030 (Government of Norway, 2016a).

Numerous international initiatives and alliances, of which Norway either leads or is a part, and which directly or indirectly support the implementation of Agenda 2030, are also mentioned in the VNR.

Norway is home to many development co-operation NGOs which are starting to understand their operations and mandate in the context of the SDGs. Furthermore, in

its report *1,8 milliarder grunner* (1.8 million reasons), the LNU has made a request for a budget line in the budget to allow youth organisations in Norway to collaborate internationally (as well as domestically) on youth as drivers of the SDGs (LNU 2016).

1.5.6 *Communication strategy*

In order to maintain a high level of popular engagement with the SDGs, Norway intends to continue to promote informed debates and information sharing across all available platforms (Government of Norway, 2016a). The Ministry of Education has recommended that the SDGs shall be included in school curricula while several state-supported NGOs already make SDG tools available for the classroom.

Prime Minister Erna Solberg is Co-Chair of the SDG Advocates group, appointed by the UN Secretary General in January 2016 and mandated to be the 17 public faces of the UN campaign to deliver the SDGs.

In Norway, progress on the SDGs is reported through the annual budget. Starting with the 2017 budget, presented first in draft form on 6 October 2016 (Nasjonalbudsjettet 2017, 2016), each ministry reports progress on the goal(s) for which it has responsibility, while the Ministry of Finance has responsibility to summarise them (Nasjonalbudsjettet 2017, chapter 7).

Additionally, umbrella civil society organisations such as ForUM and the Norwegian Children's and Youth Council (LNU) are placing emphasis on awareness-raising among their members. LNU has a staff person dedicated to Agenda 2030 while the ForUM report mentioned above will be updated each year.

1.5.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

Civil society's view on the 2016 HLPF reporting undertaken by Norway was that, while the process was open to civil society dialogue and feedback, the actual period for consultation was very brief due to the limited time frame. As a result, the report mainly reported on already ongoing activities, and not new activities spurred by Agenda 2030 (Halkjaer, 2016). So while Norway saw an opportunity to report early, the process was more about translating current activities into the "shape" of Agenda 2030 than about featuring Agenda 2030-specific action. Future reporting to the HLPF will focus on the subset of individual goals on the HLPF agenda, thereby offering opportunities for the

ministries, civil society and the private sector concerned with those goals to concentrate their efforts further.

While from a global perspective, Norway is comparatively advanced in implementing the SDGs and their targets, it shares with the other Nordic countries the challenge of understanding the goals in its national context. Whether a goal or target is achieved will always bear an element of subjectivity. How, for instance, is the target “climate concerns shall be incorporated in the sectors” to be understood in the context of large agricultural, forestry, mineral and oil sectors? An opportunity therefore exists for experience sharing to occur in respect of these challenges with a view to better addressing them. Finding the balance between “we’ve come a long way” and “we can still do more” is a potential Nordic and/or OECD conversation that still needs to be had. Co-developing indicators, benchmarks or incentives for assessing and pursuing “achievement” on these types of issues where a country is a global leader but can still raise the bar even higher presents something of a related opportunity here.

Various actors in Norway observed that a national challenge had been set in the need to rethink and recalibrate the North-South dichotomy when approaching the SDGs. As the successors to the Millennium Development Goals, it is not surprising that the SDGs were initially approached in the same manner; namely, with a development co-operation mindset. For instance, the initial Norwegian SDG priorities in the negotiation phase aligned with issues high on Norway’s development agenda such as education and health. Since then however, the universality of the goals appears to have been better understood on an institutional level in Norway. This could provide an opportunity for new types of partnership such as collaboration between the private sector and government in the form of Public Private Partnerships in countries that are not currently prioritised in the development co-operation agenda as has conventionally been the case.

Civil society, the private sector and government itself have all expressed support for the Norwegian model of goal ownership within different ministries: it is effective and pragmatic to build on existing work and to spread SDG responsibility broadly throughout the government. The flip side is, of course, is the challenge this poses when working at the nexus of multiple sustainability topics that are “housed” in different ministries. Multiple interviewees thus viewed the SDGs as an opportunity to form a bridge between ministries in order to increase communication and collaboration and ultimately to draw a more complete picture in terms of sustainable development policy in Norway.

1.6 Sweden

1.6.1 *Introduction and background*

Sweden is ranked the most sustainable country in the world on the SDSN SDG Index, with the same ranking on the SDG Index specifically for OECD countries (Sachs *et al.*, 2016). After the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, work on Local Agenda 21 was actively conducted in Sweden and left a lasting legacy of sustainable development initiatives and strategies at the local level. For the Johannesburg summit ten years later, Sweden produced its first national sustainable development strategy. A revised version was produced in 2004. An effort was then made to reorganise government ministries, with a Ministry of Sustainable Development ("Miljö- och samhällsbyggnadsdepartementet") created in 2005. It was later dissolved, but commitment to sustainable development was clear in the sixteen national environmental quality objectives for Sweden, the policy for global development, in mainstreaming the climate policy agenda, and in other policy areas – particularly in the field of gender equality.

Specific Swedish priorities during the SDG negotiations included sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality (Weitz, 2016). The issue of climate change has also been highlighted in this respect on various occasions. During the negotiations, a group of major Swedish companies (see SLSD below) collaborated with the Swedish government to reflect their collective priorities for the goals: decent work, environment and climate change, and anti-corruption. In March 2016, the Swedish government confirmed that its primary ambition is "for Sweden to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda" (Government of Sweden, 2016a).

1.6.2 *Timeline*

The past, present and future activities and milestones of national SDG implementation are presented in the table below.

Table 5: Activities and milestones for national SDG implementation in Sweden

Schedule	Milestones
2014–15	Ministry of Foreign Affairs led an inter-ministerial contact group which analysed the proposed SDGs, their consequences and the challenges they pose for foreign and domestic policies.
2016	January: the Agenda was launched by the government with a major stakeholder event. March: a Delegation to prepare an implementation action plan was announced. May: 86 government agencies instructed to review Agenda 2030 implications. August: government agencies reported. June: the Secretariat for the Delegation was established. November: the Delegation presented a first report.
2017	May: the Delegation is to present an overarching national action plan. July: Sweden plans to present a VNR to the HLPF.
2019	March: The Delegation's mandate comes to an end.

To date, the focus has been on internal organisation and designing structures and processes for the government's implementation of Agenda 2030. A guiding principle here is policy integration and coherence in order to ensure that follow-up is embedded in existing policy areas and sectoral ministries. As for priority issues, opportunities and challenges relating to the SDGs and their targets, it is to be expected that the Delegation (see below) will address those later this year and early next year.

Sweden plans to present a Voluntary National Review to the UN HLPF in 2017.

1.6.3 Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation

When Agenda 2030 was adopted in 2015, the government announced that the Agenda is the responsibility of the whole of government and the cabinet in particular. However, two ministers were given special responsibility: the Minister for Public Administration (located at the Ministry of Finance) for national implementation, and the Minister for Development Cooperation and Climate (located at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; currently also Deputy Prime Minister) for international aspects. Until May 2016 and before the government was restructured, the Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation (located at the Prime Minister's Office) was the third minister with such a special responsibility.

Agenda 2030 has tapped into and further strengthened inter-ministerial collaboration. An interdepartmental working group (IDA) has been set up for Agenda 2030. In addition, a smaller working group led by the state secretaries from the two ministries with special responsibility the SDG, as well as from the Ministry of Environment and Energy, has also been set up.

Agenda 2030 has also become the key topic for the inter-ministerial working group responsible for global development. The Policy for Global Development, adopted in 2003, led to a structured process ensuring policy coherence and involving other ministries in the taking of responsibility for global development outcomes. This process was re-launched by the current government, in parallel with revising the Policy for Global Development and Development Cooperation. In 2015 and 2016, participating ministries prepared their own action plans for policy coherence for development, which focused on various targets under the SDGs. The government provided a synthesis to Parliament in May 2016 in its biannual report on the policy for global development (Regeringens skrivelse 2015/16:182).

As a specific initiative to implement Agenda 2030, in March 2016 the government appointed an independent national committee for the implementation of Agenda 2030 (the Delegation) (Government of Sweden, 2016a; Regeringen, 2016). The Delegation consists of seven individuals representing different areas of expertise and different stakeholder communities (business, academia, civil society, public sector), supported by a secretariat outside the government's offices. It is tasked with producing a proposal for an overarching action plan for Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including national and international perspectives and commitments, to the government. The action plan is expected to build, to the extent possible, on already adopted objectives, strategies and action plans of relevance (interviews). The Delegation's work and government work on the SDG Agenda are taking place in parallel, with formal coordination happening between the Delegation's secretariat and the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs, as well as frequent, "less formal" communication. In November 2016, the Delegation proposed a revised time plan, in order to increase the time available for consultation with sectors and stakeholders. It suggested that an initial overview action plan should be presented by 31 May 2017, and that this should be followed up with more detailed versions in 2018 and 2019.

In April 2016, 86 central government agencies were instructed by the government to assess how their operations affect Agenda 2030 and what additional measures may

be required (Finansdepartementet, 2016). These were reported at the end of August 2016 and will inform both the government's and the Delegation's work.

The Scientific Council for Sustainable Development, established and appointed by the government in 2015 to provide scientific assessment and advice, has also engaged with Agenda 2030, by organising seminars and synthesising knowledge.

Civil society

During the SDG negotiation phase the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was in charge and led the inter-ministerial work and dialogue. It also ran several consultations in early 2015, organised by SDGs (individual or clustered) with invited stakeholders, representing business, civil society and academia.

In January 2016, a major "kick-off" event was held for and with stakeholders where ministers laid out some visions. Non-government stakeholders were also included in the official government delegation to the UN negotiations (Bexell & Jönsson, 2016). These individuals represented the private sector, civil society, and academia.

Since the advent of the SDGs, CSOs in Sweden have been more active on the international rather than on the domestic level in terms of advocacy. Smaller educational CSOs at the grassroots level have not however begun to align their work and do not as yet see it as a priority. For instance, there is no comparable SDG Watch set up (as is the case in Finland).

Concord Sweden is a prominent Swedish actor in the SDG advocacy and implementation field with significant outreach through their member organisations throughout the country. It provides a platform for 59 CSOs in Sweden, and is one of 28 national platforms in Concord Europe bringing together 2400 CSOs across Europe. A number of its partners have already integrated the SDGs into their work and the intention here is that they can work to inspire other CSOs to follow suit. During October 2016, Concord Sweden prepared a response to the government on using the Policy for Global Development as an instrument to assess and measure SDG implementation and facilitated a seminar attended by government representatives and civil society actors.

The report, *Champions to Be*, outlines the level of international engagement on the civil society level in the same grouping of countries as in the informal High Level Group initiated by Sweden in 2015. The emphasis here is on assessing what countries have achieved thus far and what they need to do to make progress towards SDG attainment. On the sub-national level within the municipalities, Concord Sweden – as well as the Swedish UN Association – collaborates closely with the Swedish Association of Local

Authorities and Regions (SKL) through the organising of seminars and information sharing on Agenda 2030.

Private sector

The Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development (SLSD) group is comprised of just over 20 of Sweden's largest companies, a few research entities and is convened by Sida. The SLSD formed in 2013 when the SDGs were still being negotiated. The companies saw Agenda 2030 as an opportunity to further their own sustainability plans and guard against future risk. These companies have prioritised sustainability issues which they see as essential for the resilience of their own work in a global context including, decent work, climate change and corruption. The SLSD continues to work together on information sharing and best practices, implementing projects and engaging in Public Private Partnerships in line with stated global goals. Moreover, it aims to potentially be an inspiration to private sector peers and other development agencies interested in comparable partnerships.

1.6.4 Existing and planned action plans

As noted above, the Delegation's work is currently ongoing and is designed to result in the production of overarching national action plan to be proposed in March 2017 and considered by the government at that time. The Delegation will reach out to umbrella organisations in many sectors, serving both an awareness-raising and idea-collecting purpose (interviews).

Among the government's priorities, agreed in September 2016 in the lead up to COP21 in Paris and with clear relevance for the 2030 Agenda, is to deliver on its commitment to become one of the "the first fossil-free welfare states".

An independent, external assessment of Sweden's domestic implementation challenges was presented in September 2015 by the Stockholm Environment Institute (Weitz *et al.*, 2015). It suggested that over 70 of the SDG targets could not be considered fully achieved within or by Sweden. A strong message of the report was that the SDGs and targets are so vaguely defined that a national interpretation and redefinition process is essential, in all countries. This work is being followed up in 2016 and 2017 with a study on how SDG targets interact (in both positive and negative ways), with Sweden as a case study.

In Sweden, much of the existing implementation work on the environment is undertaken at the local level – and this will also be true for domestic action on Agenda 2030. In part through SKL, counties and municipalities are beginning to look at ways in which to better understand their own activities in an SDG context. Pending the results of an application made for funds, SKL and the UN Association in Sweden plan an awareness-raising tour to inform and engage municipalities in mapping their work to the SDGs (interviews).

With respect to indicators and reporting, Sweden and Norway share similar challenges. One such challenge being how to manage the indicators: *how* and *what* to measure, distilling and amending the information available and determining what next steps to take. Sweden, through Statistics Sweden, is a member of the Inter Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG), which proposed global SDG indicators to the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016 and will refine this proposal in 2017. It is yet unclear if and how complementary national indicators for Sweden are to be developed.

1.6.5 *International engagement*

Regarding the global development dimension of Agenda 2030, the government has developed several areas of focus, among them: peace, democracy and human rights; gender equality, empowerment and sexual and reproductive rights; decent work; and climate change mitigation and adaptation. According to Sida, other Swedish priority issues include the green economy and illicit financial flows (Sida, 2016).

Since the adoption of the Agenda in September 2015, Sweden has been one of the driving forces behind the informal “High-Level Group in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”, together with countries such as Germany, Brazil, Liberia, and South Africa (Government of Sweden, 2016b). This High-Level Group has not however been particularly visible since it issued a joint-statement (High-Level Group, 2016) in April, 2016.

Three further specific international initiatives can be mentioned in the SDG context:

- Sweden and Fiji have launched an initiative to protect the oceans and achieve SDG 14.

- Sweden has initiated a Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth, a multi-stakeholder partnership to achieve SDG 8.
- Sweden is a “pathfinder country” in the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, focusing on SDG 16.2.

Further, in 2016 Sweden was elected onto the UN Security Council. Much of its campaign platform centred on 2030.

1.6.6 *Communication strategy*

At the international level, Sweden, led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Embassies, has launched an international awareness and engagement campaign around Agenda 2030, #FirstGeneration (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2017). It targets young people specifically and employs digital diplomacy tools. Further, Crown Princess Victoria is a member of the UN SDG Advocates group.

Domestically, Sida is responsible for communicating the SDGs to the Swedish public. It has announced competitive grants for communication projects around the SDGs on its website (Sida, 2016),⁴¹ and also hosts seminars on Agenda 2030. The Delegation also has an outreach mandate and implicitly communicates Agenda 2030 through its engagement with the broader public. Furthermore, the Delegation secretariat plans a communication function once the Delegation has completed more of its work.

SKL’s work to engage its member municipalities and counties is described above. The Swedish Youth Council, LSU, has organised two events for its members called Unga och Agenda 2030 to help youth in Sweden understand Agenda 2030, discuss what links can be made to the existing work of youth organisations in Sweden and how to encourage youth engagement with the SDGs globally.⁴²

⁴¹ <http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Samarbetspartner/resurser/utlysningar/utlysningar-sverige/ansokan-globala-malen/>

⁴² See <http://lsu.se/youth-agenda-2030/>

1.6.7 Opportunities and challenges

Sweden and its Nordic peers are in good company in facing the challenge of understanding the SDGs in a national context. This means both mapping existing national sustainable development plans, measurements and other aspiration onto the SDG Agenda and finding appropriate levels of ambition when establishing baselines and goals relating to what SDG attainment and targets means for Sweden.

Beyond MPs with a personal interest in Agenda 2030, the Swedish process has not thus far involved the Parliament to any great extent (Bexell and Jönsson, 2016). Civil society has also called for deeper engagement with the Parliament (Halkjaer, 2016), so this is an obvious venue for increased engagement on Agenda 2030.

The unique mandate and role of the Delegation to pursue implementation of Agenda 2030 in close contact with, yet at arm's length to and in parallel with the government, presents both opportunities and challenges. In terms of mandate, the Delegation has a tall order with a large workload, tight schedule, and high pressure with the direction of the national implementation plan hinging on the Delegation's report. At the same time, the broad consultation process planned to achieve the goals outlined in this report will ensure the involvement of and, hopefully, therefore the uptake of implementation work, by a broad group of actors. The composition of the Delegation – high profile individuals from many sectors – also facilitates robust outreach to different sets of actors across the country, but also opens the door to critique: the Delegation's representativeness has been questioned by both civil society and the private sector for their perceived insufficient focus on international development, their excessive representation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and the lack of emphasis on private sector interests. This makes it all the more important that the Delegation's consultation process be as broad and as engaging as possible as regards the various relevant sectors. Logistically, the model used here, with the Delegation's work being carried out in parallel to ongoing government implementation activities, is pragmatic, but this makes the work of those with coordination functions – namely in the Delegation secretariat and the government offices – all the more important.

Since substantial work on sustainable development in Sweden has been ongoing with some success for many years it is clearly a challenge to help actors at all levels to understand their existing work as *part of* and not *in addition to* the SDGs. Some interviewees noted the risk that Agenda 2030 will be pushed aside by those sectors, organisations and individuals who are actually leading in sustainable development as

“yet another thing on the to-do list”. Agenda 2030 as a framework in which to understand ongoing work is, in this way, a communication and mapping challenge. To illustrate, at the national level, Sweden’s existing sustainable development goals must be mapped to the SDGs. As such, local actors like the municipalities are extremely important in terms of domestic implementation and must also be facilitated in understanding their work as it relates to the SDGs – while at the same time they should not, by convention and notions of subsidiarity be overly “steered” from the national level. Creating the right dialogue and support for and between different levels of implementation is part of Sweden’s domestic challenge.

Through the SLSD, the SDGs have been an opportunity for Swedish companies from diverse sectors to collaborate. In addition to finding learning and implementation activities in common in the pursuit of the SDGs, a level of trust has been built between these companies that transcends their sustainability work. The SLSD model is unique and opportunities exist to export this flavour of collaboration – as some Norwegian and Danish actors are already contemplating.

1.7 Faroe Islands

1.7.1 *Introduction and background*

The Faroe Islands recognise sustainable development to be a responsibility shared with its neighbours and the rest of the world. The UN sustainable development goals as well as other international agreements on sustainable development are today an integral part of Faroese domestic and international policies.⁴³

1.7.2 *Timeline*

The coalition programme of the Faroese government, adopted in September 2015, underlines the responsibility to engage and take an active part in global development⁴⁴

⁴³ In the UN, the Faroe Islands is covered by the Danish representation.

⁴⁴ The Coalition Agreement Sept 2015: <http://www.government.fo/the-government/coalition-agreement/>

in close co-operation with the various international fora of which the Faroes are a part and particularly within the context of Nordic co-operation.

1.7.3 *Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation*

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently investigating the various possibilities for a governance structure as well as stakeholder participation in a national implementation action plan for Agenda 2030.

1.7.4 *Existing and planned action plans*

The national implementation action plan will rely on a mapping and gaps analysis but the initial suggestion is that the implementation of the SDGs will be integrated with existing and planned action plans for sustainable development within prioritised policy areas.

1.7.5 *International engagement*

The ODA budget has been substantially increased to its highest level thus far. In line with the UN development goals the priorities are education with a particular focus on girls' education and health with reference to maternal health and to reducing child mortality. Being an island nation with a great dependency on the sea and its resources and with expertise accumulated over many decades, programmes to support the sustainable use of the sea and its resources represent a natural priority for Faroese development co-operation, both current and ongoing (SDG 14).

The Faroe Islands work in close co-operation with both governmental and non-governmental partners on sustainable development. In terms of humanitarian aid, international organisations are partners of great importance to the Faroese engagement in sustainable development work abroad.

1.7.6 *Communication strategy*

See section 2, no specific communication strategy is currently in place.

1.7.7 Opportunities and challenges

In the coalition programme from September 2015 the government has highlighted the central sustainable development challenges that will be addressed in its term in office. Tackling inequality and uneven demographic age structures, presenting a new sustainable fisheries reform and investing in the environment with revised climate and green energy policies to make the Faroes energy self-sufficient with renewables is highly prioritised “work in progress” as is the promotion of sustainable tourism.

For the Faroe Islands, co-operation and the exchange of experiences with the other Nordic countries is considered highly valuable both on the national and the municipal levels.

1.8 Greenland

1.8.1 Introduction and background

Greenland is actively involved in various international fora at the UN and EU levels as well playing an important role in Arctic co-operation and in the Nordic co-operation effort on sustainable development.⁴⁵ A specific priority for Greenland however is the cultural dimension, which in national level policies has been added to the three traditional sustainable development dimensions: economic, environmental, and social.

1.8.2 Timeline

In September 2016 Greenland’s government adopted a new national plan for sustainability and growth. Its main vision is gradually to develop the economic independence and sustainability of Greenlandic society. Although it is not as such a plan for implementing the 2030 Agenda, it is closely linked to several SDGs and direct references are made in the comprehensive document to the 2030 Agenda and to specific SDGs, as well as to Nordic co-operation.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ In the UN, Greenland is covered by the Danish representation.

⁴⁶ The Greenland National Plan for Sustainability and Growth:
<http://naalakkersuisut.gl/da/Naalakkersuisut/Departementer/Finansdepartementet/Oekonomisk-politik/Holdbarheds-og-vaekstplan>

Greenland's implementation of Agenda 2030 will include a systematic mapping on the national level of the work being done in a number of different sectors. The sustainability and growth plan is intended to be implemented in connection with the work with sector plans in Greenland (Government of Greenland 2016b) and will be closely linked to the allocation and follow up of state finances (interviews).

1.8.3 *Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation*

Responsibility for following up on the sustainability and growth plan has recently been moved to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance will thus have primary responsibility for leading both the implementation itself and the follow-up of the plan.

1.8.4 *Existing and planned action plans*

The National sustainability and growth plan consists of four major areas of reform: 1) raising the level of education; 2) developing Greenland into a more diversified economy (e.g. sustainable tourism); 3) modernising the public sector; and 4) securing the welfare society of the future. The cross cutting aspects of the plan are sustainability, increased self-sustainability, creating stable frameworks for private investments, taking a holistic and efficient approach, and developing the attractiveness of Greenland as a place for living and societal engagement.

The indicator work will be done in close collaboration with Greenland Statistics,⁴⁷ organised under the Ministry of Finance.

1.8.5 *International engagement*

Greenland is actively participating in several UN fora (such as CBD, UNFCCC and UNESCO) as well as in European co-operation e.g., through a fisheries agreement with the EU and co-operation agreement with the European Environment Agency. Greenland also plays a central role in Arctic co-operation and in work for the sustainable development of the Arctic. Greenland also actively participates in all sectors of Nordic co-operation.

⁴⁷ Grönlands Statistik: <http://www.stat.gl>

1.8.6 *Communication strategy*

There are, currently, no specific channels or fora for communicating sustainable development goals in Greenland.

The Government is working on a mapping of Greenland's implementation of the SDGs, visualised in fact sheets on each SDG and its status in Greenland.⁴⁸ The mapping exercise will be the main tool for knowledge sharing within the government and for dissemination across the various societal sectors in Greenland. Mapping could also be used for international communication purposes (if translated).

1.8.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

According to the interviews, one of the main internal challenges is simply raising awareness of the SDGs within Greenlandic society. In external co-operation, the growing role of Greenland as a central Arctic community on the global scene, is one of the main challenges faced but also represents something of an opportunity to promote the greater visibility of Greenland's specific views on these matters.

1.9 **Åland**

1.9.1 *Introduction and background*

Sustainable development has played an important role in the development of business and entrepreneurship in Åland as well as in civil society engagement more broadly. Åland has been particularly active in implementing the Agenda 2030 goals on both the municipal and the government level.

In the UN, Åland is covered by the Finnish representation and has a representative in Finland's national commission for sustainable development.

⁴⁸ Draft mapping of SDGs: Goal 4. Education (forthcoming).

In 2014, the government decided to develop a strategy for a sustainable Åland 2015.⁴⁹ In the wake of the UN adoption of Agenda 2030, it was decided to directly connect the Agenda for development and sustainability to the global goals and targets. The Agenda for development and sustainability was thus developed into Åland's own SDG implementation plan.

1.9.2 *Timeline*

Åland organised an Open Forum for Societal Development in February 2016, where the vision and targets of the Agenda for development and sustainability were first discussed by both experts and the general public. Extensive analysis work and hearings followed the workshop with the final vision and seven targets endorsed by the Council for Development and Sustainability in June 2016. The final agenda was revealed at the second forum for societal development in September 2016, enabling the work on indicator definition to begin.

1.9.3 *Governance structure for Agenda 2030 and stakeholder participation*

The network *bärkraft.ax* is the central coordinating forum for the implementation of Åland's agenda for development and sustainability.⁵⁰ The network was established at the beginning of 2016 on the initiative of key players from the public sector, business, civil society and the educational sector. The open network facilitates dialogue and knowledge exchange within and between societal sectors. It operates on flexible principles and rests on the engagement of the participating people.

A Council for Development and Sustainability (*utvecklings- och hållbarhetsrådet*) was appointed at the beginning of 2016 with responsibility to promote the continuity and stability of the network and to follow up the implementation of the agenda. The council consists of 8–12 opinion leaders from different sectors of society, appointed by the Government of Åland for a 2-year period. The Council meets twice a year, in April/May and November/December.

⁴⁹ Following the report "Omställning Åland – Strategisk planering för en hållbar framtid 2013-2051".

⁵⁰ Nätverket *bärkraft.ax*. web site: [www. barkraft.ax](http://www.barkraft.ax), facebook of *bärkraft.ax*: <https://www.facebook.com/barkraft.ax/>

The Open Forum for all of the residents of the Åland Islands will remain one of the main tools for strategy development and implementation and will be organised in May/June each year.

1.9.4 *Existing and planned action plans*

The Åland agenda for development and sustainability is the main document guiding future action.

The Åland agenda has seven targets, directly linked to the SDGs, including the well-being of people (SDGs 3–4), their involvement in society (SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 10,16), clean waters (SDGs 6, 14), a balanced ecosystem (SDGs 14,15), appealing to residents, visitors and entrepreneurs (8, 9, 11, 13), energy efficiency (7, 13), and sustainable consumption and production (12).

Work on defining target indicators is currently in progress and is being undertaken in co-operation with the statistical bureau of Åland.

1.9.5 *International engagement*

Åland has no representation of its own in global fora as it has no foreign policy or development policy of its own. In the Nordic co-operation context, Åland is however an active member within all sectors of co-operation including sustainability issues.

1.9.6 *Communication strategy*

The website barkraft.ax contains all the background to, and the contents of, the vision, in a more popular format. The website is the main information channel for the dissemination of information on Åland's specific agenda.

The open Facebook page of barkraft.ax is the main channel for public involvement (currently with >600 followers).

1.9.7 *Opportunities and challenges*

According to the interviews, work on the agenda has proceeded at a good pace while the biggest challenge currently foreseen is the need to secure the continuity and persistence of the good work already begun across all sectors of society.

1.10 *Synthesis of Nordic approaches*

The Nordic countries collectively top the charts in terms of all global sustainability rankings. The region is looked to as leading by example, sending strong signals on human rights, social and welfare levels, and continued commitments to development aid, while making important contributions to evaluation and learning methods. The Nordic countries have also led by example when it comes to processes identifying those goals and targets that will be challenging to meet.

The Nordic countries are however, perhaps with some justification seen as being fairly homogenous in how they go about pursuing these relatively aligned policies and priorities. Despite the aggregate similarities however, the eight country profiles in this chapter also demonstrate differences in governance approaches and thus also in respect of SDG implementation. Some of the main variance issues in terms of priorities and approach are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Nordic approaches to SDG prioritisation and implementation

Country	Priority issues	Lead coordination	SDG-specific structures for implementation	Process for identifying implementation gaps?
Denmark	Human rights; peace-building and stabilisation; gender equality; sexual and reproductive health and rights (domestic and international balance to be confirmed)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ownership of the actions will be in the ministries -The draft Development Strategy is aligned with and references to the SDG - Consultation process was undertaken to develop new development co-operation strategy focused on select SDGs -An informal dialogue forum has been established to discuss the Action Plan - Verdensmålonden, a financing institution providing public seed funding to leverage private funds for projects linked to SDGs 	-Gap analysis not done or as yet planned
Faroe Islands	Domestic: Poverty; work and education; marine resources; health and wellbeing; renewable energy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade together with Prime Minister's Office	n/a	n/a
Finland	Domestic: Carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland; equal, equitable and competent Finland; sustainable economy International: gender equality; reduction of inequality; fighting against climate change; human rights; sufficient livelihoods; democratic and well-functioning societies	Prime Minister's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The National Commission on Sustainable Development - An inter-ministerial sustainable development coordination network - The expert panel for sustainable development - Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, which is the main policy implementation tool, first approved in 2013, has been updated to better correspond to Agenda 2030 - Follow-up and review network 	- Independent gap analysis of Finland's readiness to implement Agenda 2030, of its strengths and weaknesses and of the initial situation in the country has been completed
Country	Priority issues	Lead coordination	SDG-specific structures for implementation	Process for identifying implementation gaps?

Greenland	Domestic: Education; economic diversification; public sector reform; securing welfare society structure. International: Fisheries, Arctic sustainability	Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are responsible for the sustainability and growth plan	- 2016 National Plan for Sustainability and Growth references to Agenda 2030	- Systematic mapping of relevant SDG work in different sectors underway; mapping of stakeholders already complete
Iceland	Domestic: Sustainable use of land and marine resources; gender equality; renewable energy; migration; health (domestic and international balance to be confirmed)	Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	- Policy Profession Board used for coordination with the other ministries - Co-operation with Iceland's UN organisation	- Political status report (autumn 2016) includes analysis and prioritising of goals, targets and indicators
Norway	Domestic: Sustainable consumption and production; Health and education; Equality, Employment and Migration. International: Climate change mitigation and adaptation; Oceans and the marine environment; Peace and conflict prevention	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance	- SDG "ownership" within ministries - Annual reporting on SDG progress to parliament is part of the budget bill	- Gap analysis was conducted by the government to identify targets that will challenge Norway
Sweden	Domestic: Sweden as "a leader in the implementation of Agenda 2030". International: Sexual and reproductive health and rights; Gender equality; Rights perspective; Decent work.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance	- Government-appointed Delegation for Agenda 2030 Implementation comprised of individuals representing varied expertise to consult a broad public, undertake a gap analysis of Swedish implementation and develop a proposal for Sweden's action plan; supported by a secretariat at arm's length of government - Interdepartmental working group for government SDG coordination	- Gap analysis to be undertaken by the Delegation for implementation; input to this process begun by state agencies and authorities identifying how their operations affect Agenda 2030.
Åland	Domestic: Peoples' well-being, their involvement in the society; clean waters; a balanced ecosystem; appealing to residents, visitors and entrepreneurs; energy efficiency; and sustainable consumption and production	Government of Åland (Landskapsregeringen)	Council for Development and Sustainability Sustainability network Public Forum	Work with developing indicators starting autumn 2016

1.10.1 Joint challenges and priorities

The Nordic countries' position of global leadership in sustainability presents an opportunity to lead by example, both on priorities that are uncompromisingly Nordic – Nordic “trademarks” like human rights, equality, welfare society – as well as on several, if not all, of the explicit 17 goals. This Nordic leadership position results at the same time in a host of common challenges. Some of these are distilled here as candidate categories for joint work on Agenda 2030 implementation. Elaborated opportunities for collaboration are developed in greater detail in chapter 4 of this report.

A broad shared challenge facing all of the Nordic countries is to develop and understand the SDGs in a Nordic context. Starting from a comparatively high baseline and with goals and targets that often leave broad scope for interpretation, Nordic countries must decide when a target is met or not met in a global but also in a domestic context (checking against domestic priorities and expectations). This is done against the backdrop of the universal goals which require both domestic and global action: how much can and should be done at home, and what can and should be done abroad? In a globalised and highly interconnected world for example ecological and social footprints are easily “exported” to be carried by other countries and regions while climate risks are imported (Benzie, Hedlund & Carlsen 2016, and Hildén *et al.* 2016). An alternative framing of the same issue might raise the question whether and how “parallel” sustainable development and development co-operation agendas should be merged, managed and/or kept distinct?

A common communications and political challenge might be found in articulating priorities and accomplishments in respect of the SDGs. On the one hand, the Nordic countries are approaching the SDGs with a long tradition behind them of the pursuit of, and progress on, sustainability, onto which the SDGs can be mapped. At the same time, they must also demonstrate to a domestic constituency and to international peers that the SDGs are a policy focus and priority *per se*. “Bringing home” Agenda 2030 as a continuation of existing policy while at the same time demonstrating genuine and significant new efforts in respect of Agenda 2030 is thus a clear challenge for the Nordic countries.

Although, to varying degrees, most Nordic governments have already made efforts to engage broader society in the ownership of SDG implementation, while those that have not yet done so nevertheless acknowledge that the SDGs require input from all

sectors of society. The Nordic model of consultation and civil society engagement can serve as a model for partnership in the SDG context. Indeed, the sharing of practices and tools between Nordic governments and non-government actors (NGOs, the private sector, local level actors) may represent a concrete area of Nordic co-operation with a high benefit-to-resources invested ratio.

2. Nordic Cooperation and the SDGs

2.1 The Nordic strategy for Sustainable Development

The Nordic countries launched their first joint SD strategy in 2001. The fourth and current strategy, *A Good Life in a Sustainable Nordic Region: Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development*, was adopted in 2013 and has a timeframe until 2025 (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). The overall objective is “for the Nordic countries to gradually develop into more sustainable welfare societies and to bring about positive changes within the foreseeable future” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2013). Three guiding principles are identified (precautionary, polluter-pays, and substitution), emphasising the importance of indigenous peoples and the internalisation of external costs. The strategy defines five *goal areas*, with specific *objectives* and *indicators* under each (see Table 7; indicators analysed in the next section). The five goals and 16 objectives are expressed in a qualitative and aspirational way, rather than as quantified and measurable performance targets. This means that a comparison with the SDGs and their targets cannot include a quantified comparison of the level of ambition in different issue areas.

Table 7 below identifies which SDGs and targets are relevant to the five Nordic goal areas. This analysis concerns only the document *Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development*, whereas other SD priorities may be addressed in other Nordic strategy and priority papers. “Relevant” refers to targets that address similar issues. It ranges from near verbatim formulations (e.g., both sets of goals refer to the implementation of the 10-year framework programme (10YFP) on sustainable consumption and production for enhancing resource efficiency) to issues being explicitly or implicitly mentioned in both documents. For the Nordic strategy, issues and aspirations referred to in the introductory text under each of the five goal areas are also included, not just those explicitly mentioned under the “Objectives”. For this reason, it was not meaningful to compare SDG targets to the 16 objectives individually.

Table 7: The SDGs and the Nordic SD goal areas

Sustainable Development Goals 2015–2030 17 goals, 169 targets and means of implementation	Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development 2013–2025 5 goals, 16 objectives	SDGs and targets relevant to the Nordic five goals
No poverty	The Nordic welfare model	1 – 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 (poverty, social protection, rights to economic resources)
Zero hunger		3 – 3.4 (non-communicable diseases)
Good health and well-being	Long-term sustainable economic growth	4 – 4.3, 4.4., 4.5 (equal access to tertiary education and vocational skills)
Quality education	Work and diversity	5 – 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5 (gender equality)
Gender equality	Health and social security	8 – 8.1, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 (sustained economic growth, full and productive employment, end trafficking)
Clean water and sanitation	Equality, democracy and human rights	9 – 9.1 (develop regional infrastructure)
Affordable and clean energy	Culture	10 – 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 (socio-economic and political inclusion, equal opportunity, social protection)
Decent work and economic growth		16 – 16.7 (inclusive and representative decision-making)
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Viable ecosystems	2 – 2.4 (sustainable food production)
Reduced inequalities	Sustainable management of natural resources	11 – 11.4, 11.6, 11.7 (natural heritage, urban air quality and waste, access to green space)
Sustainable cities and communities	Marine ecosystems	12 – 12.1, 12.2, 12.4 (sustainable consumption and use of natural resources, chemicals)
Responsible consumption and production	Land-based ecosystems	14 – 14.1, 14.2, 14.4, 14.6 (marine pollution including nutrients, marine ecosystems, fishery)
Climate action	Air	15 – 15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.9 (terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity, forests)
Life below water		
Life on land	Changing climate	7 – 7.2, 7.3, 7a, 7b (renewable energy, energy efficiency, international support and finance)
Peace, justice and strong institutions	Energy	11 – 11.b (resilient cities)
Partnerships for the goals	Climate	13 – 13.1, 13.a (climate resilience, climate finance)
		14 – 14.3 (ocean acidification)
		17 – 17.7 (transfer of environmentally sound technologies)
	Sustainable use of the earth's resources	2 – 2.4 (sustainable food production)
	Sustainable consumption and production	8 – 8.4 (resource efficiency and decoupling)
	Resource efficiency and waste	9 – 9.4 (upgrade infrastructure and industry with clean technology)
		11 – 11.6 (urban environmental impact)
		12 – all 8 targets (sustainable consumption and use of natural resources, food waste, chemicals, waste, corporate sustainability reporting, public procurement, public awareness)
		15 – 15.1, 15.2 (sustainable use of ecosystem services, sustainable forest management)
	Education, research and innovation	4 – 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7 (equal access to tertiary education, vocational skills, education on SD)
	Education	8 – 8.2, 8.3 (innovation)
	Research	9 – 9.5 (science and innovation)
	Innovation	17 – 17.7 (transfer of environmentally sound technologies)

2.1.1 A general comparison

A general comparison shows that the SDGs, through their much greater comprehensiveness and breadth, address almost all of the goals and objectives of the Nordic Council of Ministers' strategy for sustainable development. Being a shorter document, the Nordic strategy has fewer focus areas and is less detailed. The SDGs and the Nordic strategy both consider the economic, social and ecological dimensions to be intricately interlinked and mutually reinforcing. A major difference, though, is the character of goals. Whereas the 17 SDG goals are similar to the Nordic goal areas and objectives, they are also expressed in a qualitative and aspirational way, many (but far from all) of the 169 targets and means of implementation are outcome-oriented, quantified, and thus provide clearer benchmarks for measurement of progress (e.g., target 10.1 "by 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average"). Even the SDG targets that express ambitious zero visions (e.g., target 5.2 "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation") provide – theoretical, if not realistic – benchmarks for measurement. The Nordic objectives generally however express a vision and do not specify clear targets or benchmarks (e.g., "The level of employment and the labour supply in the Nordic countries will increase").

It should be noted here that nationally specific targets are foreseen and encouraged in the UN Resolution adopting the SDGs. For those targets that are not quantified, are very broad in their scope, and/or are ambiguously formulated, national interpretation exercises are required (Weitz, Persson *et al.*, 2015). For an example of how qualitative targets can be quantified and converted into clear benchmarks, see the pilot OECD SDG indicator framework (OECD, 2016b).

In Figure 5, a simpler illustration of key overlap and differences in the two sets of SD goals is provided. Several observations can be made here. First, there is considerable overlap between the two strategies, suggesting a largely common understanding of issues critical to the pursuit of sustainable development. These issues range from the more value-based (e.g., equal opportunities) to more technical and instrumental (e.g., innovation and research). Both strategies emphasise the need for sustained economic growth, but also share a large focus on environmental and social dimensions.

Second, given that the SDGs are more comprehensive in scope, it is not surprising that they address a greater number of issues than are reflected in the Nordic strategy, rather than vice versa. On most of these issues, the Nordic region has reached an

advanced stage of development, rendering them less relevant. For example, many of the goals and targets relating to basic livelihoods and infrastructure have already been reached: food security, poverty reduction, safe human settlements, primary education, water and sanitation, basic health, and energy access. Similarly, on many of the issues related to good governance, human rights and equality, the Nordic region can be considered significantly more advanced. However, as illustrated by the OECD pilot indicator assessment of four Nordic countries, i) there is significant variation in performance on individual targets under a particular SDG and ii) the assessment ultimately depends on the level of ambition and benchmark value chosen.

Figure 5: Comparing the issues addressed by the SDGs vis-à-vis the Nordic strategy

Source: Stockholm Environment Institute.

2.1.2 Comparing specific issue areas

A number of key differences between the SDGs and the goals and objectives contained in the Nordic SD strategy can be highlighted.

A focus on *human settlements* (SDG 11) is not a specific objective in the Nordic strategy, although the urban dimension is referred to in some places, particularly in relation to viable ecosystems, urban demographics or municipal waste management. SDG 11 is more focused on safety and security and emphasises community cohesion, perhaps showing that this is largely taken for granted as a central pillar of the welfare state and not perceived to be a priority in the Nordic strategy. The focus of SDG 9 on developing safe and sustainable *infrastructure* (including in urban areas, many of which are rapidly growing in the developing world) cannot be found in the Nordic strategy, although the latter points to the need for increasing energy efficiency in transport and housing. Transport is explicitly excluded from the Nordic strategy because it is not an area of Nordic co-operation.

Regarding *health*, SDG 3 addresses a lot of basic health issues, such as maternal and child mortality, epidemics (AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria), and healthcare access, as well as sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (SRH-RR). The Nordic strategy instead addresses public health and preventive measures more generally, as well as concerns related to an ageing population. Both address non-communicable and chronic diseases.

Environmental quality and natural resources provide a strong focus for both strategies. The SDGs tend to cover more aspects though, such as ecosystem conservation, forest management, desertification and habitat loss, benefit sharing from genetic diversity, poaching, and alien species under SDG 15. The Nordic strategy addresses fewer aspects, but applies an ecosystem services perspective more consistently. In contrast with the SDGs, it also includes, as an objective, the use of specific environmental policy instruments, such as eco-labelling, environmental taxes and public procurement guidelines. This reflects a generally progressive and advanced environmental policy portfolio across the Nordic countries, as well as a shared perspective on the merits of such instruments.

Culture, linked to multiculturalism and openness, is a core element for promoting and facilitating sustainability in the Nordic strategy. The SDGs are not specifically cognisant of culture or cultural diversity as a driver of development and social cohesion. SDG 16, although coming close to promoting cultural diversity still falls short of

underscoring its potential as a contributory factor in ensuring economic growth and peaceful and inclusive societies, as set out in the Nordic welfare model.

Regarding *inclusion and inequality*, SDG 10 recognises three dimensions of inclusion (social, economic and political). The Nordic strategy specifically highlights the need for the better inclusion of immigrants in employment and political life, which can be seen in the light of problems with societal alienation. Unlike the SDGs, the Nordic strategy does not however address migration and the need for a “well-managed policy”. Further, the Nordic strategy does not explicitly address income inequality, although it is arguably a core underlying element of the Nordic welfare model, which is strongly promoted in the strategy. SDG 10 is more explicit and specifies a quantified target for income inequality. Both strategies address the need for functioning social protection nets. Probing deeper into social cohesion, the Nordic strategy explicitly identifies social trust (between generations) as an important factor and “social solidarity and security for everyone” as a core value, whereas the SDGs do not generally include such “soft” characteristics. The two strategies do however share statements about equal opportunities and no discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and disability.

Another area where the scope and aim of the SDGs differ significantly from the Nordic strategy is in their emphasis on *development assistance* from higher-income to less developed nations. This is explicitly stated in a range of SDGs and their means of implementation (4b, 4c, 6a, 7a, 7b, 8.4, 8a, 9a, 9b, 10b, 11c, 12.1, 12a, 13a, 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.9), reflecting the long road that lower-income countries (and even middle-income countries) will have to travel to attain moderate levels of progress in the medium-term. SDG 17 on global partnership specifically addresses the relationship between low-income and high-income countries and the changes required in terms of the global trade and financial systems. In this way, the SDGs are a step forward from the development assistance-oriented MDGs and embrace a more systematic approach to addressing the global disparities in opportunity, wealth and power whilst putting responsibility for implementation firmly on governments. This international dimension does not figure so strongly in the Nordic strategy, which has more of a regional and domestic perspective. However, under the climate and energy goal, commitments are made to integrate climate and the environment in development assistance and promote the role of Nordic green investment and financing institutions. Under the Nordic strategy, clear commitments are made to use development assistance to

support the adaptation to climate change in vulnerable and less developed countries, though more general commitments are absent.

Finally, a clear difference between the strategies can be seen in the absence of objectives related to *peace, justice and accountable institutions* in the Nordic strategy. Presumably, accountable institutions is a given in the Nordic region, where the welfare system has been founded on the principles of good administration and its emphasis on accountability, responsiveness and openness. The Nordic strategy does not set objectives for these issues but recognises in the introductory section that “respect for human rights, justice, equality, good administration, low level of corruption, democracy” are all a basis of the Nordic welfare model. SDG 16, on the other hand, sets clear targets for a range of aspects related to governance and institutions (although it does not mention democracy). The necessity of incorporating access to justice, fair trials and societies based on the rule of law shows the depth of the divide between Nordic goals and the SDGs. Further, the inbuilt trust between generations linked to a policy of cultural diversity, openness and access to services maintains that the Nordic region is a role model for aspiring countries. In a number of other countries – particularly those that fall into the bracket of conflict ridden or fragile states as well as a number of high-income countries that want to measure up to the Nordic model – they will have to address and bolster the tenets of good administration as the cornerstone of a functioning state and ensure a process by which laws are enacted, administered and enforced in an accessible, fair and efficient way.

2.2 Nordic indicator work for Sustainable Development

The indicators selected to measure progress on the SDGs and the Nordic SD strategy, respectively, are widely different in scope and selection logic. The Nordic strategy specified 23 indicators in the 2013 strategy document and they are easily accessible and reported on a website (frequency of updates unknown).⁵¹ For the SDGs, the follow-up system comprises both nationally determined country-specific indicator sets and a set of global indicators. In this section, we compare the Nordic indicators with the global SDG indicators. After much deliberation by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG

⁵¹ See <http://www.norden.org/sv/nordiska-ministerraadet/samarbetsministrarna-mr-sam/haallbar-utveckling/indikatorer-foer-haallbar-utveckling-1>

Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and the UN member states in the Statistical Commission, 230 global indicators were proposed in March 2016 (ECOSOC, 2016a). It was noted that several required further refinement and that data were lacking. The indicators are now reported on in an online SDG Indicator Global Database hosted by the UN Statistics Division.⁵² Currently, 123 indicators are reported as “SDG indicators”. For the countries in the Nordic region, from 47 up to 86 “additional indicators” are reported in this database. The IEAG-SDGs will propose further refinement, by suggesting a tier system capturing data availability and methodological robustness.

Seemingly in both the Nordic strategy and the SDG framework, the ambition was to find indicators that matched the objectives/targets, hence the large difference in the number of indicators included. Clearly, the SDG indicators will require more resources for regular reporting. However, the decision by the Statistical Commission clearly states that “the global indicators proposed are intended for global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are not necessarily applicable to all national contexts, and that indicators for regional, national and subnational levels of monitoring will be developed at the regional and national levels” (ECOSOC, 2016b). The responsibility for reporting on the 123 indicators currently in the database is not entirely clear, i.e. whether it is up to national statistical offices or to the international organisations involved. The need for capacity-building and support for developing countries in order to help them develop standardised, high-quality and reliable data is strongly emphasised. The decision of the UN Statistical Commission, in line with earlier Secretary-General reports, suggests that the Nordic countries are welcome to report their own national indicator sets and the Nordic region its regional SD indicators, should it choose to do so.

2.2.1 A general comparison

Table 8 shows our comparison between Nordic indicators and the global SDG indicators (i.e., the 123 indicators currently reported on in the global database as of 23 October 2016). Normal text denotes a more or less exactly corresponding SDG indicator to the equivalent Nordic indicator. Text in *italics* denotes SDG indicators that implicitly or partially address the issue addressed by the Nordic indicator.

⁵² See <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

Table 8: Nordic indicators for sustainable development

Goal area and objectives	Indicators	Comparable global SDG indicators*
The Nordic welfare model Long-term sustainable economic growth Work and diversity Health and social security Equality, democracy and human rights Culture	Demographic trend	
	Gross domestic product (GDP)	8.1.1 – Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita 8.2.1 – Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person
	Public debt	
	Urbanisation	
	Employment and unemployment rate	8.5.2 – Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities 8.6.1 – Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training
	Life expectancy at birth	
	Gini-coefficient	10.1.1 – Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population
	Risk of poverty amongst families with children	1.2.1 – Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age
	Gender pay gap	
Viable ecosystems Sustainable management of natural resources Marine ecosystems Land-based ecosystems Air	Sustainability of fish stocks	14.4.1 – Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels
	Discharge of nitrogen and phosphorus to the Baltic Sea	
	Changes in the Common Bird Index	15.5.1 – Red List Index
	Developments in annual felling and increment in forests	15.1.1 – Forest area as a proportion of total land area
Changing climate Energy Climate	Urban population exposure to air pollution by ozone and particulates	11.6.2 – Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM _{2.5} and PM ₁₀) in cities (population weighted)
	Share of renewable energy in gross energy supply	7.2.1 – Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption 7.1.2 – Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
	Developments in greenhouse gas emissions by sector Emissions and land use, land use change and forestry	

Goal area and objectives	Indicators	Comparable global SDG indicators*
Sustainable use of the earth's resources Sustainable consumption and production Resource efficiency and waste	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	8.4.1 – Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP 8.4.2 – Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP <i>9.4.1 – CO₂ emission per unit of value added</i>
Education, research and innovation Education Research Innovation	Upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education attainment in total population Research and development expenditure as a percentage of GDP, by sectors of performance	<i>4.3.1 – Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex</i> 9.5.1 – Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP <i>9.5.2 – Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants</i>

Note: *Indicators reported by 23 October 2016 in the UN Statistics Division's SDG Indicators Global Database were screened. Normal text denotes more or less exactly corresponding indicator. Text in italics denotes SDG indicators that implicitly or partially address the issue addressed by the Nordic indicator. Table 8 shows that there is significantly less overlap between the SDGs and Nordic strategy when looking at the indicators currently in use for follow-up, compared with the objectives and targets (see Table 7 and Figure 5). Only about one third (7 out of 23) of the Nordic indicators are also used for following up on the SDGs. Four additional Nordic indicators correspond to comparable (implicit or partial) SDG indicators, but this still leaves almost half of the Nordic indicators without corresponding indicators in the SDG global database.

This smaller overlap may have several explanations. First, there may be more corresponding indicators in the set of 230 indicators originally proposed, than the 123 currently reported on. Second, the highest number of SDG indicators is measured under goals that are not at all or not strongly addressed in the Nordic strategy: SDG 3 on health and well-being (20), SDG 17 on the global partnership (12), and SDG 4 on quality education (10). Third, a key difference between the two indicator sets is that the SDG indicators are more specific. They correspond quite closely to the specific 169

targets, rather than providing background data on issues like urbanisation, life expectancy and demographic trends.

Another difference is that many of the SDG indicators are rather action-oriented (e.g., number of action plans adopted to implement multilateral environmental agreements), whereas the Nordic indicators tend to measure outcomes of policy and societal change (e.g., proportion of environmental taxes to total tax revenue).

2.2.2 Comparing specific issue areas

A few comments can be made on the substantive focus of the SDG and Nordic indicators respectively. First, the Nordic indicators feature many *environment-related indicators*. Several of these are not found within the SDG set. This reflects the fact that the Nordic countries are already quite advanced in environmental policy terms, including the monitoring of outcomes. The Nordic countries could however help to build capacity so that these indicators could be tracked in more countries, by addressing both technical feasibility and political acceptability.

Second, the Nordic set address indicators for *GHG emissions*. SDG 13 on climate change does not address issues and indicators regulated under the UNFCCC, however, and therefore no such indicators are included in the SDG set. This does not mean however that GHG emission tracking is not central to meeting the broader aspirations of Agenda 2030.

Third, having public debt as an indicator is a cornerstone of the Nordic model in general but it is not explicitly referred to in the SDGs. It is intimated in target 17.4.1 albeit on a track related more to the external debt of highly indebted poor countries. Servicing the public debt provides a periodical and concrete means of budgeting for SDG implementation but there are no viable indicators to support this. Initially, under target 17.13, “enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence”, the proposed indicator 17.13.1 was changed from “GDP” to “Macroeconomic dashboard”, thus only including budget allocation for social protection and education.

Given that the SDGs are non-compliant, public debt as an indicator is even further out of reach as it is sovereign and hence a large number of countries are unwilling to include it. In general, forays into inherently domestic political processes are not common across the SDGs. This clearly illustrates why certain member states are seemingly unwilling to embrace cultural diversity in their own

backyard amidst claims of self-determination and in certain cases, ongoing repression of minorities and civil war.

On the Nordic indicator for education, the SDG indicators are largely restricted to primary and secondary school education. Indicators for SDG 9 and 17 go some way towards addressing the scope for innovation, with an emphasis on medium and high-tech industry and ensuring the creation of a conducive policy environment for industrial diversification and value addition to commodities. The Nordic region is often associated with this particular goal and has a global reputation for being a centre of mutual learning and attracting qualified global talent to complement its own highly educated workforce. Additionally, education from primary through to tertiary level is subsidised by the state compared to SDG target 4.1 which only envisages that “all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education” by 2030.

One final area where the Nordic indicators differ from the SDGs is the entry point for implementation. The former outlines clear indicators for action at the municipal level, reflecting each country’s much advanced decentralised models. In the Nordic region, this decentralised model is an important mechanism ensuring broad popular participation, responsiveness to patient and citizen needs and efficient care production, all while still preserving equity among the different groups in the citizenry. Moreover, these four health care systems, built on decentralised models (though with varied structures) attract broad acceptance among their citizenry, regularly garnering high levels of support in national opinion surveys. In countries such as Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, health, waste management and education systems have been based on local political control over most policy and administrative decisions, with locally elected representatives setting their own tax rates in order to finance those decisions. Given that the SDGs are non-compliant, public debt as an indicator is even further out of reach as it is sovereign and hence a large number of countries are unwilling to include it. In general, forays into inherently domestic political processes are not common across the SDGs. This clearly illustrates why certain member states are seemingly unwilling to embrace cultural diversity in their own backyard amidst claims of self-determination and in certain cases, ongoing repression of minorities and civil war.

On the Nordic indicator for education, the SDG indicators are largely restricted to primary and secondary school education. Indicators for SDG 9 and 17 go some way towards addressing the scope for innovation, with an emphasis on medium and high-tech industry and ensuring the creation of a conducive policy environment for industrial diversification and value addition to commodities. The Nordic region is often associated with this particular goal and has a global reputation for being a centre of mutual learning and attracting qualified global talent to complement its own highly educated workforce. Additionally, education from primary through to tertiary level is subsidised by the state compared to SDG target 4.1 which only envisages that “all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education” by 2030.

One final area where the Nordic indicators differ from the SDGs is the entry point for implementation. The former outlines clear indicators for action at the municipal level, reflecting each country’s much advanced decentralised models. In the Nordic region, this decentralised model is an important mechanism ensuring broad popular participation, responsiveness to patient and citizen needs and efficient care production, all while still preserving equity among the different groups in the citizenry. Moreover, these four health care systems, built on decentralised models (though with varied structures) attract broad acceptance among their citizenry, regularly garnering high levels of support in national opinion surveys. In countries such as Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, health, waste management and education systems have been based on local political control over most policy and administrative decisions, with locally elected representatives setting their own tax rates in order to finance those decisions.

In sum, many SDG indicators are more relevant in a developing country context, not least the large number of indicators under SDG 3 on health (e.g., maternal health, malaria, density of healthcare). The same goes for SDG 2 on ending hunger and SDG 4 on education.

2.2.3 Comparison with other relevant indicator sets

As noted above, Eurostat will develop an indicator set to monitor progress in relation to the SDGs in 2017 and released an *ad-hoc* set of some 45 indicators in 2016.⁵³ For the earlier EU Sustainable Development Strategies, the EU adopted 130 indicators for monitoring and ten headline indicators were selected.⁵⁴ Eurostat reported on the headline indicators most recently in 2015, see Table 9.

Table 9: EU SD headline indicators

Theme	Headline Indicator
Socio-economic development	Real GDP per capita, growth rate and totals
Sustainable consumption and production	Resource productivity
Social Inclusion	Persons at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion
Demographic changes	Employment rate of older workers
Public health	Healthy life years and life expectancy at birth, by sex
Climate change and energy	Greenhouse gas emissions. Primary energy consumption
Sustainable transport	Energy consumption of transport relative to GDP
Natural resources	Common bird index
Global partnership	Official development assistance as share of gross national income
Good governance	No headline indicator

Source: Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators>).

Comparing the EU headline indicators with the Nordic ones, there is clearly a high level of overlap. Six out of ten EU indicators can also be found in the Nordic set. The following issues are tracked by the EU but not the Nordic indicators: employment rate of older workers, primary energy consumption, energy consumption of transport relative to GDP, and official development assistance.

When comparing the Nordic and global SDG indicators, it is also instructive to look at the 2016 pilot indicator-based OECD assessment framework (OECD, 2016b). In this set of 73 SDG indicators, a couple of the Nordic indicators lacking global SDG indicator counterparts are indeed matched: nutrient balance of nitrogen and phosphorus, gender wage gap. Furthermore, this assessment interpreted the SDG targets to better fit an OECD country context, by including indicators on e.g., obesity, pension adequacy,

⁵³ Eurostat (2016) Sustainable development in the European Union: A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. 2016 edition.

⁵⁴ See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/indicators>

earning quality and difference in unemployment between migrants and natives. This includes SDG 16 on governance, where indicators such as the use of Regulatory Impact Assessment and ex-post evaluation, trust in public institutions and stakeholder engagement are used to measure progress on SDG targets.

2.3 Nordic co-operation linked to the SDGs

The Nordic countries have a strong tradition of co-operation, based on historic, cultural and societal similarities, trust and common principles promoting co-operation, and organised through various formal and informal fora.

The formal Nordic co-operation between Nordic parliaments (the Nordic Council, formed in 1952) and governments (the Nordic Council of Ministers, formed in 1971) extends today to almost all sectors of society.

The long-term strategic work towards implementing the Agenda spans over multiple years, sectors and governmental shifts. Therefore, the parliaments – and their co-operation body the Nordic Council – have a specific role in the implementation process. Agenda 2030 was also one of the key themes of discussion at the Nordic Council's Session this autumn (29 Oct–1 Nov 2016).

A new programme in response to the 2030 Agenda, will be decided upon and forwarded for implementation by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and will rely heavily on the support of Nordic ministries in different sectors. Further, it will also rely on the engagement of key public and private players across the Nordic societies.

This chapter provides an overview of the current priorities and initiatives under the Nordic Council of Ministers, relating to the 2030 Agenda. Together with the analysis of the Nordic strategy for Sustainable Development and its indicators, the overview highlights the main opportunities for Nordic co-operation on the SDGs. In order to diversify the picture, some examples are also given of Nordic co-operation taking place outside the formal ministerial structures, for instance, between private sector actors, academia and civil society organisations.

2.3.1 Co-operation under the Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers governs a multitude of activities related directly or indirectly to all of the SDGs.

Nordic co-operation is realised primarily under the Ministers for Cooperation and the 10 “thematic” Councils of Ministers, which actually include 13 sectors of co-operation.⁵⁵ These councils engage the national ministries in co-operation that *adds value to work done nationally*. Today, this co-operation covers almost all government sectors except defence, foreign affairs and development co-operation.

A survey among members of the committees of senior officials under the Councils of Ministers, asking about SDG priorities in their work,⁵⁶ shows that all of the SDGs are targeted within Nordic co-operation. More importantly, the survey shows that most of the 17 SDG goals are prioritised within the work of more than one Council of Ministers, and approached from an economic, social and environmental dimension. Thus, the opportunities to initiate Nordic SDG co-operation on a broad and inclusive scale are quite promising.

⁵⁵ Business, energy and regional policy are handled by one Council of Ministers, and the children and youth committee NORDBUK is coordinated under the Council of Ministers for Culture.

⁵⁶ The respondents were asked “Which of the SDGs do you work most within your sector of Nordic cooperation?” The results are based on a survey, produced by Gaia Consulting in September/October 2016. The voluntary survey was performed through a facilitated online platform and had very few respondents.” The results of the survey should be used only as an indication of co-operation and do not necessarily give a reliable and full picture of the committees’ work with SDGs.

Figure 6: SDG priorities within sectors of Nordic co-operation, in reply to the question: “Which of the SDGs do you work most with in your sector of Nordic co-operation?”

Source: Survey by Gaia Consulting and Stockholm Environment Institute, October 2016.⁵⁷

The survey shows that SDG 8 *decent work and economic growth* is prioritised in the activities of at least seven Councils of Ministers.⁵⁸ Other broadly prioritised themes are *sustainable consumption and production* (SDG 12),⁵⁹ *gender equality* (SDG 5),⁶⁰ and *reduced inequality* (SDG 10).⁶¹ Among the SDGs mentioned by more than two sectors are, in addition, *good health and well-being* (SDG 3), *quality education* (SDG 4), *industry, innovation and infrastructure* (SDG 9), and *sustainable cities and communities* (SDG 11). Most of the themes are closely related to the *Nordic welfare state*. Figure 6 shows that the priorities of the sectorial Councils of Ministers are quite thinly spread and that it

⁵⁷ See above on the implementation of the survey.

⁵⁸ Business, culture, education & research, finance, fisheries, agriculture, food and forestry, labour, regional policy, primary industries, and education & research.

⁵⁹ Business, culture, education & research, environment, fisheries, agriculture, food and forestry.

⁶⁰ Children & youth, culture, gender, labour.

⁶¹ Children & youth, culture, education, legislative affairs.

might be easier to find broad support for themes that unite several of the SDG goals and targets, rather than focusing on a few specific SDGs.

An overview of the co-operation programmes and action plans of the Councils of Ministers confirms the results of the survey presented above, both the existence of themes prioritised by several ministries, but also the high level of diversity as regards Nordic co-operation.⁶² This richness is a definite strength of Nordic co-operation more generally, but at the same time indicates that investments are rather scattered and that it can be difficult to actually define joint priorities that most sectorial committees would be willing to invest in.

In addition to activity under the sectoral Councils of Ministers however, Nordic co-operation has a track record of creating larger joint programmes and of pooling resources from different sectors into larger entities. These programmes have addressed global challenges such as climate change, smart energy solutions, the environment, green growth, health and welfare, urbanisation, gender equality and migration and have usually been initiated at the highest political level (Prime Ministers or Ministers for Nordic Cooperation).

2.3.2 *Nordic countries joining forces for sustainable development*

The Nordic countries have not only created the first macro-regional sustainable development strategy. They have also, over the past 10 years, gained experience of joining forces to battle global challenges. Back in 2007, the Nordic Prime Ministers decided to launch a number of so called *Globalisation Initiatives*, addressing some of the most crucial joint challenges to the Nordic region. The largest among these initiatives was the *Top-level Research Initiative on Climate, Energy and the Environment*. The initiative gathered governmental stakeholders and funding agencies, business and academia in vast networks, working on research, innovation and education related to climate actions and clean energy, with a special focus on Northern and Arctic conditions.⁶³

⁶² Annex 3 ("Nordic Sectors of Cooperation and the SDGs") summarises the priorities of the Councils of Ministers and their ministerial committees and their relation to the SDGs. The table also shows the institutional capacities of each sectoral Council of ministers i.e. joint Nordic co-operation bodies and institutions, which can be used when implementing activities. Specific suggestions that have been put forward by the sectoral committees for a new programme on SDGs are given at the end of this chapter.

⁶³ For further information see e.g. the publication "Solving the Climate Crisis – A Nordic Contribution" A. Riiser (ed.), NordForsk, 2015.

In 2011, the Prime Ministers endorsed a joint strategy for the *Nordic Region – Leading in Green Growth*, giving birth to a multi-year programme joining the majority of Nordic ministries under the aim of connecting the countries’ economic goals with their environmental goals and targeting e.g. bioeconomy, waste treatment, energy efficiency, fossil fuel subsidy reform, and investment in innovation and research. Each of these issues is highlighted in the Nordic sustainable development strategy and all are relevant to the global 2030 Agenda.⁶⁴

In addition to climate and environment issues, the Nordic welfare society has also remained in focus in recent years. The programme on *Sustainable Nordic welfare* 2013–2015 also stemmed from an intention declaration by the Nordic prime ministers, to work for joint solutions that provide better welfare for all in the Nordic Region, and a better knowledge base for welfare-policy decisions on health, education and labour market issues. The initiative was led by the Ministries for Health and Social Affairs and the Ministries for Education and Research.⁶⁵

In 2015, the Nordic prime ministers decided to start planning for a new programme on *Nordic solutions to global societal challenges*. This programme will focus on the international promotion and branding of Nordic positions of strength within the themes of “Nordic Green” (with a focus on sustainable cities and climate and energy solutions); “Nordic Food and Welfare” (with a focus on food and nutrition, and welfare solutions) and “Nordic Gender Effect” (with a focus on gender, business and work).

In addition, a priority programme on *integration* is currently being developed in response to the growing numbers of refugees coming to the Nordic region during the period 2015–2016.

⁶⁴ The results of the programme are available in the newly released publication “The Nordic Region – leading the way in Green Growth. Outcomes of the Nordic prime ministers’ green growth initiative 2011–2015” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2016a).

⁶⁵ The results are presented in the recent publication, “Nordic welfare alliances. Experiences of working together on sustainable Nordic welfare” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2016b).

2.3.3 *Nordic presidency countries taking the lead*

Another important line of development in recent Nordic co-operation is the growing role of the countries holding the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Since the Swedish presidency in 2013, the presidency country has been allocated a part of the Nordic co-operation budget to kick-start 3-year priority programmes within their themes of choice.

Thus, in the autumn of 2016 Iceland was finalising the *NordBio* bioeconomy initiative, which brought together education, research and innovation, industry and policy makers to promote sustainable production and the use of living natural resources.⁶⁶ *The Nordic welfare watch* was created on Iceland's initiative to strengthen and promote due diligence in the Nordic welfare systems, by knowledge building and exchange.⁶⁷

The Danish Presidency of 2015 promoted, among other things, the branding of the Nordic region and joint Nordic values, realised e.g. through the *New Nordic Climate Solutions* pavilion, which was first arranged at COP21 in Paris and followed up at COP22 in Marrakech, among other events.⁶⁸

In 2016, the Finnish Presidency launched a programme for *An Open and Innovative Nordic Region with Healthy People 2020 – Equal Opportunities for Welfare, Culture, Education and Work*. The programme aims at stronger welfare policy co-operation and the greater visibility of the Nordic welfare model, with a specific focus on well-being, diversity, equality, gender equality, culturally sustainable development, and children and young people. The programme is implemented cooperatively by the ministries of social affairs and health, employment and economy, and education and culture.

Finally, the priorities of the Norwegian presidency in 2017 can also be seen to be of particular relevance for Nordic co-operation on sustainable development as this particular programme aims to promote *green transition, integration, and health, a stronger Nordic voice in Europe within* energy, climate, environment, and digitisation,

⁶⁶ One of the concrete outcomes of the programme is a Nordic Bioeconomy Panel, which will develop a Nordic bioeconomy strategy in 2017.

⁶⁷ Currently discussions are being held on the possibility of following up the project with a biannual Nordic Welfare Forum and Nordic welfare indicators.

⁶⁸ See the Facebook site *Sustainable development the Nordic way*.

and the development of a strategic Nordic partnership in *foreign policy* in order to meet the major new global challenges.⁶⁹

2.3.4 *Nordic co-operation with the private sector on sustainable development*

Apart from what may be termed, “formal” Nordic co-operation under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers, a different approach has been tried with the creation of a new programme which will rely heavily on co-operation taking place on the initiative of other players, particularly from the private sector. The Nordic region is for many companies a strategic business area and companies cooperate on e.g. environmental issues. Much of this co-operation is coordinated through well-functioning groups, such as the Nordic Global Compact Network, the Baltic Sea Action Group, HELCOM projects, the Nordic Working Group for Aviation Environment and the Nordic Initiative for Sustainable aviation.⁷⁰

The mapping results show that the private sector is interested in public-private partnerships on SDGs and would like to see the SDGs connected to agendas and policy areas outside what could be termed “traditional development policies”. Public private partnerships need to be created where there is an opportunity to improve things and thus not only within the current development co-operation priorities of the Nordic countries. International trade negotiations and financial incentives (such as fossil fuel subsidies, tax regimes etc.) should be included when talking about the SDGs in order to achieve real impact. At home in the Nordics, public procurement needs to be considered to encourage good corporate behaviour, otherwise the companies with the most demanding codes of conduct and high sustainability standards will be less competitive.

⁶⁹ The Norwegian Presidency 2017. <https://doi.org/10.6027/ANP2016-766>

⁷⁰ Nordic Working Group for Aviation Environmental Issues

http://www.trafi.fi/en/aviation/aviation_and_the_environment/n-alm, the Nordic Initiative for Sustainable Aviation (NISA) <http://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/GFAAF/Pages/Project.aspx?ProjectID=25>, the Nordic Global Compact Network <http://gcnordic.net/>, the Baltic Sea Action Group <http://www.bsag.fi/index.html> and HELCOM-projects <http://www.helcom.fi/>

2.3.5 *Nordic co-operation on sustainable development within academia and civil society*

Researchers cooperate across Nordic borders in the context of Nordic Council of Ministers' programmes and on a self-organised basis. Nordic research co-operation has an impact on societies both within and beyond the Nordic region.⁷¹ Mapping confirms that academia is one of the most important parties in networks fostering actions on the SDGs as well as in the area of awareness-raising. To facilitate change, intensified dialogue is called for, both across sectors of society (politicians, the private sector, the cultural sector and civil society) and sectors of research (natural/environmental sciences and human/social sciences).

Non-governmental and civil society organisations cooperate on a voluntary basis, one such example being the *New Nordic Aid Narrative*, an initiative by CSO's in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden to "promote Nordic leadership to the full implementation of the SDGs".⁷² Children and youth organisations cooperate both through the NORDBUK committee of the Nordic Council of Ministers and through other more self-organized fora.

The results of the mapping suggest that the Nordic region would benefit from supporting and harnessing the asset that these kind of fora provide in raising awareness and knowledge on SDGs both within the Nordic societies and internationally.

⁷¹ Examples being e.g. Nordic co-operation within larger European programmes, or co-operation with developing countries, one specific example being e.g. "football for health projects" (which have been successful both in developing countries and domestically in the Faroes, ref. interview with Magni Mohr, University of Faroe Islands).

⁷² Draft commitment statement of the initiative.

2.4 Communicating the SDGs

The importance of communicating the SDGs more broadly is highlighted by all of the Nordic countries. Communication should take place not only after actions have been taken, but also before and during programmes, in order to include and motivate all stakeholders.

The results of the mapping exercise however show that the availability of strategies and action plans for communication, as well as of communication channels, differs often quite markedly between the countries.

One good example here is Finland, which maintains a website on sustainable development,⁷³ and a platform for society's commitment that provides national channels for communicating SDGs and the global Agenda.⁷⁴ The Åland Islands maintain a central website⁷⁵ and a Facebook forum.⁷⁶ The Danish Government has allocated 3 MDKK to the company *World's Best News* for the handling of a national Communication Platform for the SDGs,⁷⁷ while in Sweden, SIDA has allocated funds for communication projects submitted by *CSOs, businesses and municipalities*.⁷⁸

The other countries do not have similar nationwide communication channels, but some best practice examples from each country are listed below (table 10)

Table 10: Examples of SDG communication efforts in the Nordic countries

Countries	
Denmark	World's Best News http://verdensbedstenyheder.dk/verdensmaal/ Dialogue forum for sustainable development and CSR. http://www.socialenterprisebsr.net/2016/02/new-danish-dialogue-forum-on-corporate-social-responsibility-and-growth/ Verdenstimen (by 12 NGOs) http://verdenstimen.dk/ Communication concept to high school students about the SDGs. Hele Verden I Skole: http://heleverdeniskole.dk/bibliotek/verdensmalene/ Bliver verden bedre? http://www.verdensmaalene.dk/
Faroe Islands	Using public media campaigns in smaller societies to reach out to the public, such as the local broadcasting media, and local transport.

⁷³ kestavakehitys.fi

⁷⁴ <https://commitment2050.fi>

⁷⁵ <http://barkraft.ax/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/barkraft.ax/#>

⁷⁷ Information provided by the World's Best News.

⁷⁸ <http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Samarbetsparter/resurser/utlysningar/utlysningar-sverige/ansokan-globala-malen/>

Countries

Finland	<p>Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is a long-term, shared objective for the future of Finland. The idea is simple – concrete actions, measurable results. More information at: https://commitment2050.fi/</p> <p>Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organising Agenda 2030 events in co-operation with Finnish cities and other sustainable development actors. The first event was held in Tampere on Wednesday, 12.10 and the second in Oulu 8.11. http://kestavakehitys.fi/ajankohtaista/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/tule-mukaan-tampereen-12-10-ja-oulun-8-11-agenda2030-ja-suomi-paivaan- and http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=351378&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI</p> <p>Agenda 2030 discussion forums on the SDGs organised by Kepa which is the umbrella organisation for Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs). More information (in Finnish) at: http://www.kepa.fi/teemat/agenda-2030/agenda-2030-tapahtumat</p>
Greenland	Producing Information material on each SDG visualising the status in Greenland
Iceland	<p>Iceland UN organisations campaigns and Facebook site on www.un.is</p> <p>Icelandic He-for-She campaign (see e.g. https://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2015/jun/01/heforshe-do-men-in-iceland-lead-the-way)</p>
Norway	<p>Mega food company, Orkla, maps its own sustainability plan onto the SDGs http://www.orkla.com/Sustainability/Orkla-s-corporate-responsibility/UN-s-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Awareness-raising-SDG-night-hike-from-NORAD! https://www.norad.no/aktuelt/nyheter/2016/vi-gjor-det-umulige-mulig/</p>
Sweden	<p>Sida has allocated more than 4 MSEK in total to innovative communication projects on the SDGs, designed by CSOs, businesses and municipalities. http://www.sida.se/Svenska/Samarbetsparter/resurser/utlysningar/utlysningar-sverige/ansokan-globala-malen/</p> <p>Business and Sida co-operation on implementing and integrating the SDGs http://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/approaches-and-methods/funding/financing-for-development/swedish-leadership-for-sustainable-development/</p> <p>Swedish Youth Council outreach to youth: http://lsu.se/youth-agenda-2030/</p> <p>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions: https://skl.se/demokratiledningstyrning/euinternationellt/agenda2030.9610.html</p>
Åland	<p>Organising a public inclusive forum for strategy development and debate on sustainable development</p> <p>The website and the Facebook profile barkraft.ax</p>

On the *Nordic level*, good communication examples include the Norden website and Facebook profile *New Nordic Climate Solutions*: <http://www.norden.org/en/theme/new-nordic-climate-solutions> and the *Nordic Council of Ministers' sustainability portal GRO*: <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/ministers-for-co-operation-mr-sam/sustainable-development/gro>

A new Nordic SDG programme will however require a comprehensive strategy for outreach. The results of a survey undertaken in November/December 2016,⁷⁹ emphasise the need to identify best practices in communication on both the local and national levels, which can be adopted in other Nordic countries and on a Nordic level (some of the suggestions for instance included, the Society's Commitment to a Sustainable Development programme and platform in Finland as well as the Grønt Flag Grøn Skole eco-school programme in Denmark). Responses to the survey also emphasized the need for increased communication on existing Nordic success in SDGs, particularly in explaining how they contribute to sustainable development globally.⁸⁰

The results indicate the need for a Nordic SDG communication strategy to support joint SDG actions, both in the Nordic region and in international fora. Within the Nordic region, there is a need to engage key stakeholders, including sections of the Nordic public, in action and debate focused on how to advance Agenda 2030 in the region. In European and global fora, the Nordic region could be more strongly profiled as a centre of leadership in thought and action on Agenda 2030.

2.5 Summing up the potential for Nordic co-operation on sustainable development

There are a number of strengths to build on when implementing joint Nordic SDG activities. In addition to a wealth of Nordic activities promoting sustainable development from various perspectives, a Nordic programme can also build on a strong Nordic political commitment to sustainable development, the existence of a co-operation structure, the willingness of existing structures to engage in the new programme and the strong potential for alignment with national priorities including the harnessing of existing synergies.

⁷⁹ The survey was produced as a consultative pilot project, included in the consultants' mapping (and undertaken by Ali Consulting/Gaia Consulting). The survey enquired about the success of the countries' communication on SDGs. It was published in Finland across multiple channels in Finnish, Swedish and English (through e.g. the national website on sustainable development) in a format that can be easily adapted to other countries. Although most of the people providing responses to the survey chose to remain anonymous, the channels chosen indicate that most respondents are professionally involved with Nordic sustainability and SDG issues.

⁸⁰ Survey responses are reported in Annex 2 to the report.

The new Nordic programme developed in response to Agenda 2030 will build on the existing Nordic strategy for sustainable development, but should ensure strong links to the global 2030 Agenda. The current Nordic strategy for sustainable development and its related indicators are still up to date and have many points of reference to the SDGs.

The decision to establish a renewed programme for sustainable development in response to Agenda 2030 was made by the Nordic Ministers for Cooperation. Nordic co-operation has experience of previous large-scale priority programmes with elements of Sustainable Development, established by the highest political level (Prime Ministers or Ministers for Cooperation).

The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development has already been established and consolidated and is in an excellent position to take the lead on formulating a programme for joint activities, based on the national expertise of the members and on the input given by the different ministries involved in Nordic co-operation. There is also a multitude of national and Nordic organisations and co-operation bodies that can implement the activities.

The mapping process confirms that sustainable development is indeed a crosscutting theme underpinning all co-operation under the Nordic Council of Ministers, ranging from fisheries, forestry, agriculture and food, business and innovation, research and education, to health and wellbeing, legislative affairs, finances, gender and culture, regional policies, energy, environment, and the labour market.

All sectors work with SDGs either as an explicit part of their work programmes or implicitly through the set priorities. All sectors in respect of Nordic co-operation have confirmed interest in working with issues related to the SDGs and with the new programme. This mapping also shows that the sectors covered within Nordic collaboration, jointly target all SDG goals and a multitude of targets. The action plans and budgets of the Nordic Council of Ministers show that there are already plenty of activities which could serve as a starting point for a new programme.⁸¹ Linked to the ambitions and ideas arising from key national and Nordic stakeholders within the

⁸¹ See Annex 3 for more details on SDG targets of relevance for co-operation within the Nordic region, and Annex 2 for priorities and examples of already ongoing activities, forwarded by the the Councils of Ministers (through their committees of senior officials) as well as from national key stakeholders interviewed in the mapping exercise.

public, private and civil society sectors, there is already a good basis to formulate common ambitions for Nordic SDG co-operation.

While each Nordic country is sovereignly responsible for national implementation of Agenda 2030, as well as for the country's policies and standings in the UN and other international fora, there is a strong indication that the Nordic countries could gain from enhanced information exchange and knowledge sharing both on SDG implementation as such, and on work with specific SDGs. As chapter 2.10 shows, the different models for SDG implementation in the respective Nordic countries all include specific elements that can serve as an inspiration for the other countries. As top performers on a global scale, the Nordic countries could also gain from using each other as frames of reference when assessing their own country's performance on specific SDGs.

Several stakeholders consulted during the study also suggested that the Nordic countries acting together could strive for a clearer leadership role in the global arena, based on a strong political will, a common sense of urgency and the potential for leverage by relying on a joint Nordic brand.

While the potential for a new programme is undoubtedly strong, there are a number of issues that need to be promptly addressed in order to formulate an ambitious, inclusive but focused programme. These include finding a balance between competing priorities in terms of the sectoral co-operation, pooling the somewhat scattered and already allocated resources, and promoting the opportunities for the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development – and the Nordic co-operation as such – to initiate large-scale action.

The multitude of sustainable development—supporting activities within the Nordic sectors of co-operation inevitably means that a new programme will either have to be all-inclusive or to make (also unpopular) choices between what areas and goals of co-operation to prioritise. This challenge is particularly acute when dealing with a broad and inclusive framework such as the global 2030 Agenda. There might also be a competition between national priorities and those most suitable for Nordic co-operation (based on the added value of cooperating as opposed to only doing national work).

The challenge of competing priorities also connects with the availability of resources for SD co-operation. While the allocation of a major part of the available budget of the Ministers for Cooperation⁸² under this new programme is a promising first step, the programme will need to attract additional stakeholders to invest resources in programme activities, as well as nurturing close synergies with the ongoing and forthcoming presidencies of Nordic co-operation, the new Prime Ministers' initiative and other major joint Nordic programmes.

A new programme for Sustainable Development is *a priori* limited to actions within the remit of the Nordic Council of Ministers (basically excluding Nordic actions in the outside world), actions which can be funded through already decided budget plans, and actions which do not contradict or overlap with national work and priorities. At the same time, many national stakeholders, particularly within the private and civil society sectors, would like to see an ambitious programme with real possibilities to enforce action and promote transformative change. The crucial factor in terms of programme success will be the ability of already existing structures for co-operation to mobilise the Nordic societies in agile and influential action towards 2030.

⁸² Currently DKK 10-12 million per year for three consecutive years

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Strong basis and commitment for Nordic SDG programme

The mapping and analysis of ongoing national and Nordic processes indicates that a good foundation already exists for the outlining of a joint Nordic co-operation programme on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the global 2030 Agenda and that this will add value to the national and international work of already carried on by the Nordic countries.

The Nordic countries, including the autonomous regions, have a long tradition of advancing the goals of sustainable development at the national level (as well as jointly internationally) and have also been assessed as being among the top most “SDG-ready” countries in the world. The country profiles relating to Agenda 2030 implementation presented in this report show that all of the Nordic countries⁸³ are engaged in serious work with a view to implementing Agenda 2030 and that this work is supported by a strong commitment from the highest political level. While noting differences in the eight country profiles in respect of Agenda 2030 implementation, for example related to governance and implementation processes, the countries also face a number of shared challenges, which would best be met through the exchange of experiences and joint action. Such actions would include defining when a target is met, especially in domestic contexts, balancing actions at home with actions abroad in a globalised and highly interconnected world and communicating the priorities and accomplishments of the SDGs in domestic political settings and more broadly across society.

A new co-operation programme will thus be built upon a strong foundation. The Nordic region has a sustainable development strategy in place (the first of its kind in the world), which naturally has close links to the SDGs. There is also a set of sustainable development indicators in place, which can be further developed and used to monitor

⁸³ Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, Finland and the Åland Islands, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

joint Nordic progress on Agenda 2030. The form⁸⁴ Nordic co-operation between Nordic parliaments (the Nordic Council, formed in 1952) and governments (the Nordic Council of Ministers, formed in 1971) extends today to almost all sectors of society. The Nordic co-operation system offers established governance models for enforcing and implementing joint actions. A multitude of current and planned actions within Nordic co-operation already contribute to the goals of Agenda 2030 and SDGs are targeted in the co-operation of all 10 thematic Councils of Ministers (Business, Energy and Regional Policy, Culture and Youth, Education and Research, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Forestry, Food and Agriculture, Environment, Health and Social Affairs, Gender Equality, Finances, Labour, Legislative Affairs).⁸⁴ This richness is a definite strength of Nordic co-operation, but at the same time indicates that investments are rather scattered and that, as such, it can be difficult to identify joint priorities in which most sectoral committees would be willing to invest. Nordic co-operation does however have a track record in creating larger joint programmes and in pooling resources from different sectors into larger entities. The Nordic Prime Ministers' Initiative on Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges to be launched in 2017 is an example of such an initiative that will contribute to the overall Nordic response to the attainment of the SDGs. Furthermore, the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development, which includes representatives, central to the national implementation of Agenda 2030, has already been mandated to plan a new Nordic programme and the Nordic governments have allocated some resources (through the Ministers for Cooperation).

The mapping also shows considerable interest in and readiness for Nordic co-operation, including political will and an interest in joint Nordic action on SDGs among a wide spectrum of stakeholders, covering representatives of government, the private sector and civic society. This conclusion is based on the results of extensive stakeholder consultations and interviews undertaken during the mapping process.⁸⁵ The understanding formed through this process, is that there is a general appreciation of

⁸⁴ These initiatives are further described in chapter 3 and in Annex 2 to the report.

⁸⁵ The consultation process has included: A total of 46 interviews with government officials, private companies and NGOs/CSOs in all Nordic countries and self-governing entities (August-October 2016), assisting the Nordic Council of Ministers' secretariat in planning SDG discussions at the formal meetings of the Nordic committees of senior officials (August-November 2016), a facilitated electronic platform for receiving informal input from the Nordic committees (October-November 2016), a communication survey (November 2016), and a stakeholder dialogue meeting with nearly 100 participants 29 November 2016. The outcomes of the stakeholder dialogue process are presented in detail in Annexes 2 and 5 to the report.

existing Nordic co-operation on sustainable development. Stakeholders also recognise Nordic potential and value-added in contributing to the effective implementation of the Global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development through a new Nordic programme. A broad level of understanding already exists that the SDGs require input from all sectors of society. The Nordic model of consultation and civil society engagement is thus viewed as a useful model for partnership in the SDG context, while the sharing of practices and tools between Nordic governments and non-government actors (NGOs, the private sector and local level actors) is seen as an important area of Nordic co-operation with a high benefit-to-resources invested ratio.

A renewed Nordic co-operation programme targeting the 2030 Agenda has the potential to help the Nordic countries become even more successful and effective and to bring added value to the work done nationally and in the various international fora. The main challenge will be to ensure that the programme has a lasting impact by selecting activities that add most value to work already done by the various governments and by the private and civil society sectors.

3.2 Guiding principles for a Nordic SDG programme in response to the 2030 Agenda

The following guiding principles have been used to outline a suggestion for priorities for a new programme in response to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter called the *Nordic SDG programme*). The guiding principles are based on the results of the mapping and the stakeholder dialogue.

3.2.1 *Added value of the programme*

The aim of the Nordic SDG Programme to be prepared in response to the 2030 Agenda is *to add value and give effect to the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Nordic countries by facilitating mutual learning and joint actions on topics of shared Nordic priority and global relevance.*

In particular:

- *The programme should support concrete action* on the SDGs by raising the overall level of investment in SD work and adding value, through Nordic co-operation, to work already being done at the national level. This can be done by providing a platform for pooling resources and piloting joint Nordic activities in response to Agenda 2030 on specific jointly agreed themes and by providing financial incentives in relation to these joint actions.
- *The programme should support policy development* targeted at creating a common sense of urgency on what needs to be done before 2030 and enabling accelerated progress towards the SDGs. This can be done by sharing knowledge on national work and standards and by facilitating policy dialogue on how to tackle the future challenges facing the Nordic region and on identifying the long-term goals for Nordic SD co-operation.
- *The programme should support communication and knowledge sharing on SDGs and SDG action* targeted at raising awareness of Agenda 2030 in the Nordic countries, raising the profile of the Nordic region internationally, and increasing the level of knowledge about SDG action and sustainable solutions. This will be done by communicating about Nordic ideas and actions regarding Agenda 2030 implementation in national, Nordic and international fora, and by convening dialogue across countries and stakeholder groups.

While the programme will have a three-year timespan, it is key here that the 2030 timeframe is borne in mind and that long-term change can be advocated in parallel with short-term programme outputs. To maintain momentum and a sense of urgency, as well as to enable effective programme management, the programme planning phase should define immediate (short-term) targets with respective indicators for measuring outputs and the outcome of the programme period 2017–2020, as well as outlining relevant (longer-term) milestones for the attainment of the SDGs by 2030 (e.g., 2025).⁸⁶

These programmatic targets and indicators should not however be considered as Nordic regional SDG targets or indicators, as such. The comparison between Agenda 2030 and the existing Nordic SD strategy and indicators in section 2.1 and 2.2 above shows that there is already significant overlap in terms of focus areas and objectives

⁸⁶ For reference, UN member states have been invited to submit voluntary national reviews of progress towards the SDGs twice during the 2016–2030 period.

between the documents. This means that there is already a shared understanding of sustainable development in place and that the SDGs are not “new” in the sense of requiring ambitious fact-finding or strategizing efforts. The added value of the Nordic SDG programme will be to facilitate and speed up national implementation as well as communicate Nordic approaches to the rest of the world, rather than to develop its own set of regionalised SDG targets.

Regarding indicators, there is less overlap between the existing Nordic set of SD indicators and the global SDG indicators proposed within the UN. Interest in Nordic collaboration on Nordic SDG indicators has been expressed by the national statistics offices in the Nordic region,⁸⁷ as well as by various stakeholders consulted for this report. There are two reasons why we should however consider carefully the added value of a new, “Nordic” set of indicators. First, as long as the Nordic Council of Ministers does not plan on reporting progress to the UN, there is no formal accountability requirement. Nordic indicators could of course have other target audiences; with some of which there may be strong accountability relationships (e.g., informing the public). Other less data-intensive means of communication than a set of regularly updated indicators could also be considered, e.g., visualisations and infographics. Second, Eurostat and the OECD have both started looking into indicators adapted for their member state country contexts. The added value of Nordic initiatives in addition to these efforts should be carefully considered. The current set of Nordic sustainability indicators could be complemented with descriptions of which SDGs and targets they (implicitly) address or measure.

3.2.2 *Key stakeholders – agents and targets of change*

In order to have sufficient impact, the Nordic Expert Group on Sustainable Development should have a strong mandate and role in both designing and implementing the Nordic SDG programme. It is further suggested that specific actions will be led by Nordic or national organisations, by appointment or awarded through open calls.

⁸⁷ Nordic Statistical Offices, Measuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, 27 October 2016.

To be successful, the Nordic SDG programme must involve representatives from a broad set of stakeholders, being both drivers of the required action as well as being themselves part of the required transformation to attain the SDGs:

National coordinators and governmental key stakeholders to the national SDG process can help ensure the impact of the programme and its alignment with national priorities (although the programme will not coordinate national work).

Ministries involved in Nordic co-operation have decision making power and budgets for SD activities; hence strong ownership within relevant ministries is a key success factor for the programme.

Nordic institutions and cooperating bodies form the key, already existing asset in the Nordic co-operation context and provide the implementation structure required for a new programme.

Children and youth as game changers have an important role to play. Children and youth associations should be actively involved in the programme, engaging a new generation of Nordic citizens working for sustainable development at home and in collaboration with youth abroad. The voice of children and youth could become stronger by working cooperatively on a Nordic level rather than working separately at the national level.

Private sector stakeholder engagement in responsible and sustainable business development is central if the programme is to have a high level of impact, and become transformative in the longer term. Numerous private sector representatives have indicated their readiness to participate and interest in partnerships with the public sector (PPP) to advance sustainable development.

The municipal level is responsible for much of the activities related to SDG implementation, especially in the Nordic countries where regions and municipalities have high autonomy (including financial autonomy, resources and expertise) and multiple partnerships at their disposal.

Civil society and non-governmental organisations have a crucial role in raising awareness and voicing the needs of the society at large – nationally and internationally – and highlighting the urgency of moving concertedly on SDG action. The role of empowered citizens as change agents cannot be overestimated.

Academia has a critical role in knowledge building, sharing of best practices and lessons learned, innovations and knowledge-based policy development and in facilitating partnerships for sustainable development.

Culture, both the production and the consumption of culture and creative industries, is strong in the Nordic countries, and has the potential to support sustainable development, awareness raising and education. Design is a central and competitive element of many Nordic sustainable solutions.

Funding agencies and private foundations will be needed in the programme, depending on the themes and topics selected. Additional funds will need to be sought from both national and international funding agencies and from private foundations in the Nordic countries.

Media is important in communicating SDG topics and raising the level of awareness required for the building of joint ownership of the programme and also for supporting the presence of a critical voice in the discussion and as a primary proponent of the basic freedom of speech norm.

3.2.3 *Criteria for designing programme activities*

For the Nordic SDG programme to have relevance, impact and scale, all programme activities should:

- address cross-cutting Nordic strengths or challenges in sustainable development, which are reflected both in the SDGs and in the Nordic strategy on sustainable development. These can include:
 - topics where Nordic countries jointly have most work to do (e.g. reduction of emissions, gender equality)
 - topics where Nordic countries are seen as forerunners (e.g. bioeconomy, energy efficiency, gender equality)
 - areas of traditional Nordic strength that are currently encountering new challenges (e.g. decent work and economic growth, the Nordic welfare model).
- relate to one or several SDG goals and targets *and* to the Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development
- preferably address linkages/synergies between goals and targets (e.g. gender equality *and* climate change adaptation)
- reflect key principles behind Agenda 2030 (transformative, integrative, universal)

- support goals that require co-operation across countries and sectors (Nordic added value)
- have strong national, regional or institutional commitment and be well in line with national, regional or municipal Agenda 2030 priorities in the countries, *reflected by funding allocated for a substantial part of the activity budget (e.g. at least 50%) from national, Nordic, or international sources, preferably from both the public and private sector*
- be able to communicate clearly the added value of Nordic co-operation for the activity
- involve participatory methods for securing the engagement of children and youth in all actions
- consider gender equality and address gender perspectives in all actions
- focus on the Nordic region but show clear relevance for broader international development.

3.3 Proposal for Nordic SDG programme: Vision and components

The recommendations in terms of the prospective content of the Nordic SDG programme are based on the guiding principles outlined above and the results of extensive stakeholder consultations during the mapping project. The recommendations are presented below.

3.3.1 Vision

As noted above, a number of joint Nordic activities address various aspects of the SDGs. In order to accelerate effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the new Nordic SDG programme should be guided by a vision statement, which:

- *calls for concrete action and leadership* by countries and stakeholder groups (including “SDG champions”)
- *supports a joint understanding* of the aims and scope of the Nordic SDG programme

- *embraces an understanding of urgency*, setting clear milestones for required action (and back tracking from 2030).

A suggested vision statement⁸⁸ is:

“A Nordic region where Agenda 2030 – with its universality, its integrated approach, and its ambition to stimulate transformative solutions– is known and accepted throughout society as an underlying rationale, benchmark and driver for sustainable development, and as an important context for the Nordic region’s relationship with the rest of the world. The Nordic region is seen, both internally and internationally, as a hub of ideas and practical, scalable solutions to sustainability challenges.”

The proposed vision is a “working vision” for consideration and potential further elaboration by the Nordic Expert Group.

Importantly, the recommendation based on the mapping results and stakeholder discussions on this study is to adopt a relatively brief vision statement of the kind of above, rather than developing a Nordic SDG strategy, SDG targets adapted for the Nordic region or a new set of Nordic indicators to monitor Nordic progress towards the SDGs.

3.3.2 *Programme components and focus themes*

To support the vision and the guiding principles presented above, a Nordic SDG Programme consisting of four mutually reinforcing components has been outlined. While the Nordic SDG programme will provide a forum to address all SDGs to some extent, a number of flagship actions on specific themes considered to be of the highest relevance for the Nordic countries are proposed, taking note of the criteria listed above (3.2.) The programme components and main stakeholder groups are visualised in figure 7.

⁸⁸ Note that this vision is reproduced in Annex 1 which outlines guiding principles for communication. For effective communication work, a vision is also required.

Figure 7: The Nordic SDG programme concept: components and key stakeholders

Source: Gaia Consulting & Stockholm Environment Institute, 2016.

The objectives, as well as suggestions for an implementation structure and key themes/topics for each programme component are briefly presented below.

Programme component I: Pilot projects for accelerated SDG action

Objective: To pool resources and join forces in concrete SDG action, co-funded by national, Nordic and international sources, incl. funding incentive from the programme budget.

Implementation structure: The Nordic Expert Group will decide on pilot projects based on project proposals, and award them partial funding, with up-scaling and replication potential being an important award-criteria. Activities will be governed by different Nordic and national lead organisations and reported back to the Nordic Expert Group. Sharing of lessons learned, best practices and communication will be an integral part of all pilot projects, hence feeding into programme components III and in particular IV (see below).

Themes/topics: Within programme component I, it is suggested that the pilot projects have a specific thematic focus to ensure tangible outcomes within the 2017–2020 period. With regards to potential themes (cf. Annexes 2 and 5), based on the

Guiding principles (section 3.2.)), and noting significant challenges with the environmental sustainability of consumption in the Nordic region, broad stakeholder support for accelerated action under the theme of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) exists. In a globalised and highly interconnected world ecological and social footprints as well as climate risks are easily exported/imported, through daily consumption and production based choices. Under this broad SCP umbrella, two potential sub-themes for pilot initiatives have been identified related to sustainable lifestyles and SDGs in value chains. The themes provide ample opportunities to make use of Nordic strengths and engage a broad set of stakeholders for accelerated action with Nordic and international impacts.

The Sustainable lifestyles sub-theme has potential to engage and empower all Nordic citizens and, in line with the programme vision, help all citizens become part of the solution. With a Nordic scope, it would showcase lifestyles across the Nordic regions, provide a critical mass of innovative examples, and contribute towards shaping a future Nordic identity in consumption behaviour. This sub-theme could include pilot initiatives addressing.

- Empowerment of people to choose, supporting sustainable consumption choices e.g. through targeted information and (financial) policy measures, thus ensuring that inclusiveness is a central part of the Nordic welfare model.
- Competence and awareness of sustainable lifestyles, through education and by engaging children and youth as game changers.
- New ways of consuming, e.g. through replacing material consumption by services and/or through a sharing economy in various sectors of the society.

The *SDGs in value chains* sub-theme has the potential to address sustainability and responsibility issues on a global scale. It can encourage the Nordic private sector (including its expertise and financial resources) to become a solutions provider in terms of the SDGs and a transparent communicator of sustainability issues in value chains. This sub-theme could include pilot initiatives addressing:

- Sustainable food production and value-chains.
- Responsible sourcing and value-chain management in textiles & clothing, furniture, minerals, metals and telecommunication sectors.

- New partnerships between private and public sector as well as consumers in addressing SDGs in value chains.

Programme component II: Exchange of information on national implementation of Agenda 2030

Objective: To support knowledge sharing between national Agenda 2030 implementation coordinators and support Nordic policy development with international foresight.

Implementation structure: It is suggested that a knowledge sharing forum for national Agenda 2030 coordination offices will be established as an integral part of the activities of the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development. This can be done by extending the membership of the group to include at least one representative of the coordination office from each country (supplemented by other experts central to the national implementation).

Themes/topics: Within programme component II Nordic SDG initiatives could address the following topics:

- Investigating in which areas Nordic co-operation could enhance national performance. This will enable accelerating progress towards SDGs by building on each other's strengths.
- Peer review for policy coherence. This action of knowledge sharing will enable long-term development of more streamlined policies, making co-operation and joint action easier and strengthening the global impact of the Nordic region
- Indicator co-operation between Statistical Bureaus. This knowledge sharing action will enable more comparable data to be gathered in the long-term and increase opportunities for mutual learning, review, and more efficient indicator work in the Nordic countries.⁸⁹
- Forward-looking analyses of international SDG development. Topics should be chosen from a list of those of greatest mutual interest to the Nordic countries, the action builds on a shared knowledge base which can be used by each country when making their own policy decisions.

⁸⁹ Note that Nordic Statistical Offices have already collaborated by submitting a report to the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers, Measuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, 27 October 2016.

Programme component III: Knowledge sharing on SDGs and Nordic SDG action

Objective: To increase knowledge about SDG action and sustainable solutions and support mutual learning within the Nordic region and between the Nordic region and others.

Implementation structure: Key topics for knowledge sharing could be decided by the Nordic Expert Group, either in accordance with an annual work plan or as a result of a lightly administered open call. The knowledge sharing activities should actively take note of and harness synergies with other Nordic events and platforms for SDG relevant knowledge sharing, with potential event organisers including a wide variety of different national, Nordic and international organisations. Major Nordic SDG events could be organised e.g. 1–2 times / year and can be open or closed, physical or virtual. Events could be organised back-to-back or integrated with existing “events considered to be of SDG relevance”, thus boosting Nordic SDG action in connection with related events. School campaigns and various cultural events may provide interesting opportunities for impactful knowledge sharing. Target groups will vary with respect to the event, but should always involve several of the main stakeholder groups (see section 3.2.2).

Programme component III is closely interlinked with component IV (Communication, see below), and will provide important input into and opportunities for successful Nordic SDG communication.

Themes/topics: Within programme component III, Nordic SDG initiatives could address SDGs more broadly, or thematically focus on specific SDGs (SDG 12 or others) where timely and targeted knowledge sharing is considered of high value-added (making use of criteria outlined in section 3.2.3). Potential priority themes for knowledge sharing can include:

- Topics related to the Nordic model and its role in SDG implementation and to current and future challenges of the Nordic societies:
 - Youth and employment, youth and health e.g.
 - How to preserve and further develop Inclusive societies in light of the SDGs (different inequality issues and Nordic best practice in reducing inequalities).
 - The role of culture in SDG implementation.
 - The green transition and the Nordic societies (bioeconomy, energy issues, societal issues).

- Topics related to the global development and the role of the Nordic countries e.g.:
 - Nordic solutions to global energy, climate, welfare challenges.
 - Best practice in SDG implementation: Dialogue with other regions.

More example topics can be found in Annex 2 (topics for the programme suggested by Nordic sectoral committees and by national and Nordic stakeholders to the programme) and Annex 5 (summary of the stakeholder dialogue meeting).

Programme component IV: Communication

Objective: The communication component will address communication within the Nordic region:

- Support national efforts to mobilise Nordic societies for Agenda 2030.
- Support cross-fertilization of good ideas and practices between Nordic countries.
- It will also address communication with the rest of the world and the international level.
- Help Nordic actors to showcase their sustainability solutions.
- Reinforce the Nordic region's global brand around sustainability and innovation – including by initiating a Nordic SDG programme.
- Reinforce the Nordic region's profile as a co-operation partner.

Implementation structure: The communication part includes communication coordinated by the Nordic Council of Ministers' communication department, in collaboration with the main national stakeholders.

Themes/topics: The baseline, underlying principles, and main components of a comprehensive communication strategy have been outlined as a sub-project to this study. *The communication strategy paper is presented in Annex 1.*

3.3.3 Synergies with other major themes within Nordic co-operation

The formulation of this Nordic SDG programme has taken careful note of existing and planned Nordic initiatives in order to avoid overlap while ensuring that it is able to harness potential synergies (see also section 2.3). In addition to the criteria presented

above (section 3.2.3), such interlinkages with other Nordic initiatives has also been taken into account, e.g. when suggesting a narrower SDG thematic focus for Programme component I (Pilot projects for accelerated SDG action 2017–2020, with a thematic focus on sustainable consumption and production) whereas leaving more flexibility and room for manoeuvre for other projects components.

For example, the new *Prime Ministers' Initiative addressing Nordic solutions to global societal challenges* is being launched in 2017, something which can effectively be seen as a “twinning programme” to the forthcoming Nordic SDG programme. These two programmes will form the core of joint Nordic efforts to promote SDG attainment. While the Prime Ministers' initiative focuses on the Nordic countries' contribution with tested, replicable and scalable solutions to SDG challenges globally, this Nordic SDG programme has a strong focus on what needs to be done in the Nordic countries as part of Agenda 2030 implementation. Active dialogue and mutual sharing of lessons learned and best practices should be ensured with the prime ministers' initiative.

Internally, in the Nordic region, the programme also has strong links with ongoing efforts to battle current challenges related to the *Nordic welfare model* in a broad perspective, with a focus on the inclusion of all three dimensions of sustainable development, a commitment of the different regions and municipalities, and the inclusion of particularly vulnerable groups (children, elderly people, people with disabilities, immigrants, unemployed youth etc.).

Evidently, the Nordic SDG programme also has strong links to ongoing Nordic efforts promoting *Green Growth*, including Nordic bioeconomy and cleaner energy and food solutions. Results from these initiatives should also be “SDG labelled” and should be included, in particular in the programme's knowledge sharing and communication components.

Figure 8 highlights some of the interlinkages between the presently developed Nordic SDG programme and other joint Nordic efforts that have been taken into account in outlining this programme proposal, and which should be carefully noted and made use of during the actual implementation of the Nordic SDG programme.

This proposal has been prepared to serve as a knowledge base for the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development when preparing a decision on the scope and contents of a new Nordic SDG programme during the spring of 2017. The final decision on a Nordic SDG programme will be made by the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation in September 2017.

Figure 8: Interlinkages and positioning of the Nordic SDG programme with other Nordic programmes and themes

Source: Gaia Consulting & Stockholm Environment Institute, 2016.

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Interviewees

Denmark

- Troels Dam Christensen, g2 Gruppen, 14 September 2016.
- Toke Lago von Kappelgaard, Ministry of Finance, 17 October 2016.
- Flemming Lyng Nielsen, Danfoss, 13 September 2016.
- Maria Ana Petrera, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 September 2016.
- Sarah Kristine Rasmussen Johansen, Globalt Fokus, 23 September 2016.
- Susanne Stormer, Novo Nordisk, 12 October 2016.
- Maciej Truszczynski, Statistics Denmark, September 2016.

Finland

- Minna Andersson, Martela Oyj, 29 September 2016.
- Thomas Biström, Kemira Oyj, 15 September 2016.
- Nina Elomaa, Oy Karl Fazer Ab, 12 September 2016.
- Kati Ihamäki, Finnair Oyj, 22 September 2016.
- Marja Innanen, Prime Minister's Office, 15 September 2016 (e-mail).
- Jussi Kanner, Kehys – The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU, 21 September 2016.
- Annika Lindblom, Ministry of the Environment, 21 September 2016.
- Outi Mikkonen, Tokmanni, 19 September 2016.
- Jouni Nissinen, The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC), 12 October 2016.
- Sami Pirkkala, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 September 2016.
- Sanna Vesikansa, Pelastakaa Lapset – Rädda Barnen, 10 September 2016.

Iceland

- Rósa Guðrún Erlingsdóttir, Ministry of Welfare, 4 October 2016.
- Siv Friðleifsdóttir, Ministry of Welfare, 11 October 2016.
- Sveinn Margeirsson, Matis, 18 October 2016.
- Margrét Steinarsdóttir, Icelandic Human Rights Centre, 3 October 2016.
- Hedinn Unnsteinsson. Prime Minister's Office, 12 October 2016.

Norway

- Ellen Behrens, Orkla Foods, 14 October 2016.
- Herbert Kristoffersen, Ministry of Finance, 9 September 2016.
- Hanne Sofie Lindahl, LNU (Norwegian Youth Council), 29 September 2016.
- Live Rognerud, Statistics Norway, 12 October 2016.
- Inge Rydland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 September 2016.
- Guri Sandborg, Ministry of Climate and Environment, 12 October 2016.
- Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Pure CSR, 11 September 2016.
- Ingvild Hancke Øgstad, ForUM (Norwegian Forum for Development and Environment), 30 September.

Sweden

- Romiana Bikasha, The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU), 10 October 2016.
- Matilda Gustafsson and Camilla Goldbeck-Löwe, Ericsson, 12 October 2016.
- Annika Lindberg, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 27 September 2016.
- Nannan Lundin, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 6 September 2016.
- Viveka Palm, Statistics Sweden, 5 October 2016.

- Ylva Reinhard and Johanna Bengston-Ryberg, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 13 September 2016.
- Katarina Sundberg, Ministry of Finance (Secretariat for the Swedish Delegation on the Implementation of Agenda 2030), 13 October 2016.
- Ida Texell, Member of the Swedish Delegation for Implementing Agenda 2030, 29 September 2016.
- Ylva Tilander, Ministry of Finance, 11 October 2016.
- Christina Wedekull, Sida (Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development), 3 October 2016.

Faroe Islands

- Magni Mohr, Chair of the National Public Health Board, 19 October 2016.
- Halla Nolsøe Poulsen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 6 October 2016.

Greenland

- Thomas Gaarde Madsen, Department of Finance, 5 October 2016.

Åland

- Micke Larsson, Ålands landskapsregering, 29 September 2016.

International

- Mark Halle. IISD Vice-President, Strategy & Executive Director, IISD-Europe. 15.9.2016.
- Kate Raworth, Senior Visiting Research Associate, Environmental Change Institute, Oxford University and Senior Associate at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. 7.10.2016.
- George C. Varughese, President, Development Alternatives 2.11.2016.

Sammenfatning

Denna rapport för Nordiska ministerrådet, utarbetad av Gaia Consulting Ltd och Stockholm Environment Institute, informerar och stödjer den nordiska expertgruppen för hållbar utveckling i att formulera ett nytt nordiskt program som svar på Agenda 2030.

2030-agendan, som antogs av FN:s generalförsamling i september 2015, beskriver en ambitiös och universell handlingsplan för människor, planeten och välbefinnande och ska stärka fred och frihet i vid bemärkelse.

Rapporten kartlägger och rapporterar pågående nationella och nordiska hållbara utvecklingsprocesser och initiativ, prioriteringar och utmaningar i syfte att identifiera, analysera och rekommendera delar av ett nytt nordiskt program som svar på Agenda 2030, inklusive kommunikation av de globala hållbarhetsmålen. Rapporten bygger på en omfattande dokumentstudie, 46 intervjuer med nationella aktörer, dialog med alla de tio nordiska fackministerrådens ämbetsmannakommittéer och ett stort dialogmöte med aktörer från regeringar, den privata sektorn och civilsamhället som hölls i Helsingfors den 29 november 2016.

Kartläggningen och analysen visar att det finns goda grunder för att utarbeta ett gemensamt nordiskt samarbetsprogram om de globala hållbarhetsmålen. Alla de nordiska länderna arbetar engagerat och seriöst för att genomföra Agenda 2030. Tillsammans toppar de globala hållbarhetsrankningar och det arbete de bedriver stöds av ett starkt engagemang från högsta politiska nivå. Även om skillnader kan noteras i de åtta landsprofilerna i Agenda 2030-genomförandet, till exempel i samband med styrnings- och genomförandeprocesser, finns det ett brett intresse för gemensamma nordiska åtgärder inom Agenda 2030 från ett brett spektrum av aktörer med företrädare från regeringen, den privata sektorn och det civila samhället. Norden har redan en strategi för hållbar utveckling på plats (den första i sitt slag i världen), vilken naturligtvis har nära kopplingar till de globala hållbarhetsmålen. En uppsättning indikatorer för hållbar utveckling är också redan på plats som ytterligare kan vidareutvecklas och användas för att övervaka gemensamma nordiska framsteg inom Agenda 2030.

Flera nuvarande och planerade åtgärder inom det nordiska samarbetet kan bidra till målen för Agenda 2030 och det kommande programmet kommer att bygga på redan befintliga och planerade nordiska initiativ på ett kompletterande och samverkande sätt. De nordiska statsministrarnas initiativ om nordiska lösningar på globala utmaningar som ska lanseras år 2017 är ett exempel på ett initiativ som kommer att bidra till det övergripande nordiska svaret på hur de hållbara utvecklingsmålen kan uppnås.

I rapporten beskrivs de viktigaste riktlinjerna och föreslagna syftena, målen och fokusområdena för det kommande programmet. Syftet med programmen är att lansera gemensamma nordiska aktiviteter som ger ett mervärde till det nationella och internationella arbetet i länderna, vilket sätter ett starkt fokus på genomförande, lärande och utnyttjande av synergier. Därför föreslås ett program bestående av fyra huvudkomponenter, däribland i) pilotprojekt för snabbare åtgärder för hållbara utvecklingsmål, ii) utbyte av information om det nationella genomförandet av Agenda 2030, iii) kunskapsdelning om de globala hållbarhetsmålen och nordiska åtgärder för de globala hållbarhetsmålen och iv) kommunikation. Programmet förväntas finansiera konkreta pilotåtgärder med uppskalningspotential och sätta i gång en bred uppsättning kommunikations- och kunskapsdelningsaktiviteter samt underlätta dialog för att stödja policyutveckling. Medan det är tänkt att programaktiviteter med anknytning till kunskapsdelning, policyutveckling och kommunikation ska omfatta alla de gemensamt överenskomna globala hållbarhetsmålen och nordiskt arbete för hållbara utvecklingsmål i allmänhet, förväntas pilotprojekten fokusera mer specifikt på teman prioriterade under kartläggningsstudien som i stort sett hör hemma under den övergripande beteckningen hållbar konsumtion och produktion.

Den nordiska expertgruppen för hållbar utveckling, som omfattar representanter som är centrala för det nationella genomförandet av Agenda 2030, har fått i uppdrag att planera det nya nordiska programmet och de nordiska samarbetsministrarna (MR-SAM) har avsatt en budget för genomförandet av programmet. Ett beslut om programmet kommer att utarbetas av den nordiska expertgruppen för hållbar utveckling under våren 2017. Processen kommer att omfatta samråd med berörda utskott inom det nordiska samarbetet medan det slutliga beslutet kommer att fattas av de nordiska samarbetsministrarna i september 2017. Denna rapport fungerar som en kunskapsbas för det beslutet.

Annex 1: Recommendations on principles and tools for a communication strategy

Nordic implementation of the Global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Recommendations on principles and tools for a communication strategy

Introduction

These recommendations relate to how the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) can raise awareness about Agenda 2030, as well as to raise the profile of the Nordic region by communicating about Nordic ideas and action regarding Agenda 2030 implementation in international forums. Note that there is also an important role for the NCM to *facilitate* communication and convene dialogues, taking place directly between member countries and between stakeholders. This role is outlined in programme component II in section 3.2.2 in the main report.

Given that the final form and priorities of the programme are not yet settled, these recommendations cannot be too specific, and largely offer directions and principles for design of a final communications strategy, as well as some suggestions for concrete tools.

The recommendations are based on our expertise and experience in communicating sustainability challenges and solutions, ideas and suggestions gathered from institutions and stakeholders interviewed for the mapping exercise, ideas and suggestions made by participants at the stakeholder dialogue meeting in Helsinki on 29 November, inputs to an online survey published in several professional

channels in Finnish, Swedish and English, and conversations with communications staff at the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Background and context

A potential Nordic programme would be launched in a time of political uncertainty, where the consensus around globalism and global norms is looking fragile. Suspicion of supranational processes and organizations as threats to national sovereignty has moved into the mainstream of political discourse. At the same time, sustainability challenges, such as climate change, have become increasingly visible. However, developments in, for example, the US and Syria (and the UN Security Council) contribute to a sense of powerlessness to make positive, forceful and large-scale contributions to sustainability.

This has several implications for communicating Agenda 2030 in the Nordic region. One is that institutions must be careful to avoid any sense that Agenda 2030 is being imposed from the top down, particularly by the UN. Instead, the emphasis in communications within a Nordic programme should be on providing fora and platforms for Nordic actors to tell their own stories and share their solutions with their peers.

Another implication is that Agenda 2030 can be a rallying point for hope and action. Fulfilling the SDGs is not just box ticking, not just something our governments should be doing to meet some distant, rather bureaucratic obligation, but a way to be part of the solution. A compelling vision of a 2030 future should be complemented with empowering messaging focused on practical action, on what different target audiences can do, and demand, in order to help realize that vision. Four ways Nordic citizens can help in achieving global sustainable development could be summarized as:

1. By what we do within the Nordic region (e.g. production, waste management, respect for environment).
2. By what we consume (e.g. sustainability through our supply chains).
3. By what we share (development co-operation, knowledge and technology, listening).
4. By what we stand up for (Nordic countries as international actors in forums such as the EU, UN).

Added value of Nordic communication on Agenda 2030

Nordic co-operation on Agenda 2030 can add real value to support national efforts. The Nordic countries generally have similar development and wealth status, face similar challenges, and take similar approaches to problem solving. This means that many of the same messages are likely to resonate in different Nordic countries. Also, the problems and solutions of one Nordic country will be recognizable to others, so peer effects will operate relatively well in mobilizing action.

On the international stage, Nordic co-operation on communicating under and Agenda 2030 programme could add value in practical terms by providing spaces to present Nordic best practices related to Agenda 2030 implementation. The Nordic region's international brand can also reinforce the credibility and outreach potential of Nordic solutions to sustainability challenges.

Proposed vision and objectives

To facilitate effective communication, we recommend a vision to guide the design, implementation and communication Nordic programme. An example of a vision statement could be:

A Nordic region where Agenda 2030 – with its universality, its integrated approach, and its ambition to stimulate transformative solutions– is known and accepted throughout society as an underlying rationale, benchmark and driver for sustainable development, and as an important context for the Nordic region's relationship with the rest of the world. The Nordic region is seen, both internally and internationally, as a hub of ideas and practical, scalable solutions to sustainability challenges.

A communication strategy should address communication within the Nordic region, with objectives such as to:

- Support national efforts to mobilize Nordic societies for Agenda 2030.
- Support cross-fertilization of good ideas and practices between Nordic countries.

It should also address communication with the rest of the world and the international level, with objectives such as to:

- Help Nordic actors to showcase their sustainability solutions.
- Reinforce the Nordic region's global brand around sustainability and innovation – including by initiating a Nordic Agenda 2030 programme.
- Reinforce the Nordic region's profile as a co-operation partner.

Overarching principles

Framing the SDGs

When building narratives, the SDGs can be presented as the tools *not* the task, or an end in and of themselves. Agenda 2030 is about a vision of a sustainable future. The SDGs and their targets are a checklist of the many diverse changes that need to happen in human interactions with the planet in order to achieve that vision. They help us to identify challenges, spot interactions, and (with indicators) check that we are on the right track. But the task is sustainable development.

The added value of Agenda 2030 in light of existing SD strategies

One key question is how to understand and communicate the added value that an Agenda 2030 approach brings to ongoing processes in the many areas touched on by the SDGs. This question is particularly relevant in the Nordic region, where there was a pre-existing Nordic SD strategy and also national-level SD strategies or efforts. Two of the underlying principles of Agenda 2030 could be picked up here, integration and universality, as well as 2030 as an endpoint year.

A Nordic Agenda 2030 programme should emphasize *integration and interactions* between challenges and processes in different areas of policy (or other activities, depending on the target audience). The SDGs and their targets can be used as a way to characterize challenges and processes, place them within the larger integrated framework, and highlight interactions.

On *universality*, messaging could focus on the how the Nordic region and the rest of the world are interdependent. Therefore, messaging relating to a Nordic programme should not only focus on domestic achievements or efforts, but explain how this work

contributes to sustainable development globally. Universality in egalitarian societies can also be interpreted as reaching the so far unreachable.

Finally, Agenda 2030 has a *clear endpoint* – 2030 – which can be used as a mobilizing device. It provides a both a “deadline” and a specific timepoint for a future vision. Given that it is in fact a very short time in which to achieve the kind of transformation implied by Agenda 2030, it can be used to put pressure on actors to present their plans and start taking action. Messaging could be tied into existing timelines that actors operate with; e.g. three terms of office for politicians and policy officials, or 14 annual reports in which companies can demonstrate actions and results to shareholders, or when one Nordic child born today will complete primary education – hopefully in a sustainable future. Constructing visions around a sustainable Nordic region in 2030 could also help to identify aspirations and the new social practices, technologies etc. we need to start developing now.

Communication as mobilization

Agenda 2030 is about change – and this change requires action from all levels of society – especially true in the Nordic region with its high per capita consumption footprints and low levels of poverty. This means that everyone we communicate to about Agenda 2030 should be *part of the solution* – and communications should aim to mobilize sustainable change. It is particularly important to make communications a part of the process starting from the very beginning in all sustainable development programmes in order to involve and motivate all stakeholders.

Use the power of social norms and peer inspiration

Programme communications should aim to support peer-to-peer inspiration regarding sustainability solutions and choices, leading to gradual formation of more sustainable social norms. This aim to give citizens opportunities to talk about their own actions and ideas – a proven way of inspiring behaviour change. Research on communicating issues like climate change also points to the role of social networks, i.e. that communication is more likely to lead to behaviour change if it comes from closer nodes in an individual's network than distant ones.

Build on creative energy – set challenges to inspire and reward innovation.

The Nordic region is known as a hub of creativity and innovation. Challenges and competitions, with good ideas rewarded by public recognition, can help to mobilize creative solutions at all levels, as well as helping Nordic citizens to internalize Agenda 2030.

Focus on goal interactions

When communicating about the SDGs, setting challenges and helping stakeholders tell their stories, there should be a focus on interactions between goals and targets: on addressing trade-offs and on identifying solutions that “kill two (or more) birds with one stone”.

Partnering and networking

Agenda 2030 touches on nearly every aspect of life. Successful implementation will be more likely if it becomes internalized into existing processes, ideas and debates, rather than being perceived as a new, separate agenda. From a communication perspective it therefore makes sense for a Nordic Agenda 2030 programme to partner with existing initiatives and events. Their networks could greatly add to the outreach and visibility of the programme for minimal investment, and add value to the events and initiatives by locating them within the larger sustainability effort and the Nordic sustainability brand.

Target groups

While Agenda 2030 essentially involves and affects actors across society, a Nordic communications programme could consider prioritizing the following:

- Nordic children of school age.
- Nordic young people, particularly those active on social media.
- Nordic innovators, including students and entrepreneurs.
- Nordic municipalities.
- Nordic businesses whose value chains are associated with significant sustainability risks (e.g. those sourcing commodities from areas vulnerable to deforestation or climate change; those using potentially hazardous chemicals).
- European and international policymakers.

Common tools

These are some suggestions for tools and activities that could support communications to several target groups.

A dedicated online platform

The programme could set up a website or possibly social media platform that would include:

- basic information materials based on the Nordic narrative on Agenda 2030 (see below)
- Information about challenges, competitions and entries
- space for “own stories” – for example videos by Nordic stakeholders about their Agenda 2030-related projects.

Nordic 2030 branding

The New Nordic Climate Solutions campaign offers a good model for how a Nordic 2030 brand could work. A visual brand, a phrase like “Nordic sustainability solution” or “Nordic 2030 solution”, and a related hashtag could be used to endorse and highlight Nordic best practices, both domestically and internationally. There should also be a consistent visual way of presenting goal interactions in challenges, solutions etc.

Useful in this could be the new set of icons and “short” versions of SDG targets being developed by the Swedish company New Division, which should make it possible to express these interactions in a visually attractive way. (New Division is founded by Jakob Trollbäck, who was behind the design of the SDG icons and created the Global Goals term that were donated to the UN, and thus provide a direct link to the UN and global level of Agenda 2030 implementation.)

A common Nordic narrative on Agenda 2030

There have been many attempts to explain and present Agenda 2030 for various stakeholder groups, including in the Nordic region. Building on what is available, A Nordic programme could usefully try to compile a narrative and information materials that are appropriate to the Nordic region (e.g. on sustainable consumption) and the aims of the programme (mobilizing change).

This could be rolled out via the dedicated online platform, presented in different formats aimed at different age and target groups (with appropriate emphasis), and made available for download or streaming.

And important element of this could be to go below the level of goals to the targets – which have so far rarely been communicated in non-technical ways.

Sample messages

- “Agenda 2030 is about solving today’s problems for a sustainable future”.
- “You are part of the solution”.
- “With Nordic creativity we can find sustainable solutions”.

Tools for specific target groups

This section presents some ideas for tools and approaches that could be considered in relation to specific target groups. However, Agenda 2030 communications for specific target groups could also be an area for sharing ideas and best practices between Nordic countries, as there are several promising efforts across the region.

Children and youth

Children and youth have the biggest stake in sustainable development. In the medium term they will also be the ones who need to respond to changing and unanticipated sustainable challenges. The knowledge and values they bring home from school are also known to influence the behaviours of the adults around them. For all these reasons, children and youth should be a priority target audience for communications under an NCM Agenda 2030 programme.

Given the very high school attendance rates in the Nordic countries, schools and school classes provide an ideal forum for reaching children up to and including secondary school age. Taking a “learning-by-doing” approach, schools and classes could be encouraged to make joint commitments related to an SDG target, devise solutions together, and measure (and celebrate) results together. The commitments, progress reports and stories could be located on a common Nordic platform (website, complemented by social media channels).

Competitions, joint Nordic-produced TV/online programmes, celebrity endorsements and visits could be used to provide extra incentives to participate.

The NCM could work with NORDBUK or another appropriate partner to develop modules for educators on how to work with their children on such projects. The commitments website and storytelling (e.g. video clips by the classes posted to social media) could help to inspire and incentivize other classes. To maximize sharing between Nordic countries it would be important to highlight at least key points of the commitments and solutions into other Nordic languages. Ideally – particularly for older children – there would be some element of integration in the challenges (e.g. “Improve X without harming Y or Z”, or make progress towards several targets with one action).

Youth are a more diverse target group. As well as targeting them in schools, a Nordic programme could consider other fora in which young people across the Nordic region gather and form peer groups for targeting with communication activities.

The Nordic region has several youth movements and networks that could be valuable partners in outreach about and under the programme. However, these still represent a small proportion of youth and often identify with a narrow set of interests or causes. In order to embed sustainability thinking and sustainable choices into young people’s everyday lives, it is necessary to access a wide variety of channels associated with different aspects of young people’s lives.

Nordic innovators

Given the array of areas in which the Nordic region is a recognized leader in technological innovation, mobilizing Nordic innovators – in ICT, gaming, entertainment etc. – around Agenda 2030 could be a very valuable contribution to global sustainability efforts.

Nordic Innovation would be a natural partner for a Nordic Agenda 2030 programme. The challenge for the annual Hack4Norden competition could be related to creating solutions that lead to (profitable) progress towards several SDG targets at once.

At the same time, the project could consider competitions between college-level courses. An interesting current example in Sweden saw students of Berghs communication school in Stockholm set the challenge of working with a chosen business to develop a sustainable business or communication idea. The project counted towards their academic score.

Best practices from Nordic innovators could be highlighted in, for example, Nordic presences in international events.

Municipalities

To support sharing between municipalities, the NCM could explore making the Nordic Built Cities Challenge to more explicitly incorporate SDG target areas – and especially solutions that address several target areas at once.

Businesses

Many forward-looking businesses are becoming aware that sustainability in their value chains is not only a matter of corporate social responsibility or public image, but also vital for reducing business risk. At the same time, their responses, while sharing many common goals, tend to be fragmented.

A Nordic Agenda 2030 programme could add value by providing visibility, especially in international forums, for Nordic businesses that have made significant commitments or practical efforts to reduce sustainability risks in their value chains. Another important function could be to provide spaces for other actors along the same value chains (for example traders, producers and produce country governments, investors, financiers) to present and discuss their own sustainability efforts.

The programme could also communicate some other business-focused Nordic sustainability initiatives such as the City of Helsinki's Climate Partners network (<http://www.hel.fi/www/Helsinki/en/housing/environmental/enterprises-events/climate-partners/>)

Tools for the international stage

Approaches here will need to take into account the new Nordic branding strategy that is currently being developed.

Nordic pavilions in major events such as COP23 and CSW would be a key way to meet the objectives. An approach could be taken similar to that for New Nordic Climate Solutions – events, use of a hashtag, publications highlighting selected projects.

Nordic pavilion events should include a dialogue element – inviting representatives from other countries to comment on Nordic ideas and present their own. The choice of partner countries should take into account national development co-operation priorities, the nature and theme of the event, and – especially when it comes to sustainable consumption and production – countries along Sweden's value chains.

Events to consider for a joint Nordic present include the UN High Level Political Forum (in June/July every year).

Annex 2: Priorities, themes and topics suggested for the new programme

All Committees of Senior Officials under the Nordic Council of Ministers have during August–November 2016 discussed the SDGs and their priorities for a new programme. All committees have communicated positive interest in a new programme in response to Agenda 2030. Some committees have also suggested specific priorities for the programme, while others have made reference to existing priorities of SDG relevance in their working programmes. Some committees are still in process with formulating priorities. All suggested priorities and activities will be forwarded to the Nordic Expert Group on Sustainable Development for due consideration, by the end of 2016.

Table 11: Suggested priorities forwarded by sectorial committees for the new SDG programme – Status by the End of December 2016⁹⁰

Suggested priorities from sectorial committees for the new SDG programme	Supported by the following sectors	Support from following sectors to be investigated	SDG's targeted
Benchmarking/ exchange of experience on how the Nordic countries implement the 2030 Agenda, and on specific SDG's and contents; workshops and dialogue)	Environment	All sectors interested in the programme	1–17
Children and youth as game changers connected to sustainable consumption and production (education; chemicals, textiles, CE, footprint etc.)	Environment	NORDBUK, Education, Culture, Business	12
Sustainable cities (green transformation, green competitiveness, sustainable urban development, sustainable public procurement)	Environment	Business, regional policy Synergies to the Prime Ministers' initiative on Nordic solutions to global societal challenges	11, 9

⁹⁰ All sectors of Nordic co-operation have discussed the SDG's and the forthcoming programme. In the table, priorities are given for those committees, which have put forward suggestions by the End of December 2016. Priorities from the remaining committees will be communicated directly to the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Suggested priorities from sectorial committees for the new SDG programme	Supported by the following sectors	Support from following sectors to be investigated	SDG's targeted
Battle unemployment among vulnerable groups and long-term unemployed, hereunder functionally disabled and young people.	Labour	Health and Social Affairs	8, 10
Strengthen the workplace environments, hereunder security, physical and mental health, and welfare.	Labour		3, 8
Strengthen the inclusion and battle discrimination of marginalised groups.	Labour	Health and Social Affairs Synergies with the NCM priority programme on integration	5, 8, 10
Upgrading the competence and broadening the base of the working force	Labour	Education	4, 8
Support life-long learning targeted at the needs of the labour market, including both the education of the young people and the further development of the competence of the adult population, to preserving the older generations on the labour market.	Labour	Education Health and Social Affairs Synergies with NCM priority on Nordic Welfare	4, 8, 10
Equality on the labour market	Labour	Synergies with the Prime Ministers' initiative on Nordic solutions to global societal challenges	5, 8, 10
Migration and integration into working life, and challenges related to that.	Labour	Synergies with the NCM priority programme on integration	8, 10
CO ₂ neutral societies: Strengthen the Nordic labour markets' capability to transfer into a more CO ₂ -neutral economy.	Labour	Environment Synergies with NCM priority on Green Growth and Nordic Climate Solutions	13
Nordic co-operation in international fora: Strengthening the Nordic co-operation, hereunder sharing of knowledge and dividing of work in relation to international fora such as the EU and ILO.	Labour		17
Universal design, equality and sustainable development – bring in the rights perspective ("leaving no one behind")	Health and Social Affairs: The Disability Council	Education & Research Labour Business Regional Policy	4, 8, 10, 11
Network of national youth organisations: Create a network of national youth organisations to work with the SDG's.	Children and Youth		1–17

Suggested priorities from sectorial committees for the new SDG programme	Supported by the following sectors	Support from following sectors to be investigated	SDG's targeted
Monitoring, mapping and follow-up of the implementation of Agenda 2030 on Nordic level Nordregio, as an expert on maps and statistics could be given a specific role	Regional policy		1–17
Educational research: Gather and exchange knowledge on Nordic educational research, utilise research results and promote research based education)	Education&Research		
Nordic Network for Adult Learning: support	Education&Research		
Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Education Competences of children and youth in controversial issues	Education&Research Education&Research		
Digital competencies of children and youth	Education&Research		
Sustainable Development competencies of children & youth	Education&Research		
International competencies of children and youth	Education&Research		
Labour market mobility	Education&Research		
Integration	Education&Research		

This table includes project ideas forwarded by members of sectorial committees taking part on a virtual SDG platform during September–November 2016.

Table 12: Suggested priorities and project ideas forwarded by stakeholders in Nordic co-operation through the virtual platform September–November 2016⁹¹

Theme/ Project idea	Brief description	Sectors that should be involved	SDG's targeted
Food composition data collection	Accurate nutrition data is a basis for all nutrition and food based decision making. Since this work has to be done in each country anyway, doing it as a Nordic Project is more resource efficient and promotes broader use of data.	Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	12

⁹¹ All sectorial committees within Nordic co-operation were invited to take part on a virtual platform discussing the new programme during September–November 2016. These suggestions are not formal priorities of any given committee, rather ideas of individual members of committees which could be further discussed.

Theme/ Project idea	Brief description	Sectors that should be involved	SDG's targeted
Nordic sustainable food system	<p>Data on the Nordic sustainable food system (science based and validated) should be compiled in a compact written form to be shared with the rest of the world as an example of regional collaboration.</p> <p>Building a framework for exchanging knowledge of resource efficient food production – and thus enabling all Nordic countries to learn from each other and strengthen their food production systems</p> <p>Showcasing Nordic strengths abroad – and thus influence international discussions on sustainable food production systems + sell Nordic food solutions to the World. See a need for Nordic co-operation in this field and we feel that there is a will among the Nordic governments to work together towards the rest of the world to improve exports.</p>	Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	12
Sustainable genetic variation in the Nordic countries	<p>Integrating the fundamental basis for agro-diversity into the new SDG program. It will provide sustainable variation of genetic resources within Ecosystem services in the Nordic countries. Genetic variation is the cornerstone of adaption of all organisms to altered conditions, including climate change, new growing conditions, novel diseases, increased production and new environmental and consumer demands. Use of and access to genetic diversity is therefore an important component for solving future challenges regarding food security, climate change and sustainable environmental friendly agriculture.</p>	Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry Environmental, Health, Business, Regional policy, Nordic companies and universities within agriculture and forestry	12, 13, 14, 15
Precision farming	<p>The possibilities in precision farming for reducing costs and reduce negative impact on environment and climate through reducing emissions and greenhouse gases. Also how to implement new technology to farmers and the effect of precision farming for farm business management. This goes for all agriculture both arable and animal farming and forestry.</p>	Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	12, 14, 15
Resource efficient food production	<p>Showcasing Nordic strengths abroad – and thus influence international discussions on sustainable food production systems + sell Nordic food solutions to the World. See a need for Nordic co-operation in this field and we feel that there is a will among the Nordic governments to work together towards the rest of the world to improve exports.</p>	Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	7, 12

The table does not include *all* relevant ongoing Nordic programmes and projects, only a representative selection of different kinds of ongoing or upcoming activities, which might have synergies with a new programme on SDG's.

Table 13: Selection of ongoing/planned Nordic co-operation on SDG's with potential synergies with the new programme⁹²

Ongoing or planned Nordic activities with synergies	Brief description	Sectors involved	SDG's targeted
An Open and Innovative Nordic Region with Healthy People 2020 – Equal Opportunities for Welfare, Culture, Education, and Work	<p>Priority project of the Finnish Presidency of the NCM. The objectives of the 3-year project is to: gather, communicate and market internationally the knowledge and experience related to the Nordic welfare model, and its strength in promoting the socially and culturally sustainable development; and strengthen the organizational foundations resources of the Nordic social policy co-operation.</p> <p>The project highlights the selected Nordic welfare society success factors and promote actions to strengthen them through various sub-projects. A Feasibility study will be published during 2016. The project will plan To plan and implement the "Team Nordic" network (2017) and "Nordic Centre of Competence" (2018-)</p> <p>Pervading themes are well-being, diversity, equality, gender equality and culturally sustainable development. Key priority area is children and young people. The project is a co-operation between Ministries for Education and Culture, Social Affairs and Health, Employment and the Economy</p>	Education and Culture, Health & Social Affairs, Labour	3,4,5,1
Nordic Solutions to Global Societal Challenges	<p>Prime Ministers' Initiative with themes within sustainable cities and climate and energy solutions) "<i>Nordic Food and Welfare</i>" (with focus on food and nutrition, and welfare solutions) and "<i>Nordic Gender Effect</i>" with focus on gender, business and work).</p>	Business, Energy, Health & Social Affairs, Agriculture, Fisheries, Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Gender, Labour	2,3,5,7,8,9,10,11,12,13
Integration of immigrants and refugees	<p>Priority programme of the Nordic Ministers for Cooperation, decided in 2016, supporting the Nordic countries' work with integration of immigrants and refugees through increased Nordic co-operation and knowledge sharing. The programme includes establishing a knowledge platform at the NVC and Nordregio as well as a research programme.</p>	Health&Social Affairs, Research, Regional policy	1,4,5,8,10,16
New Nordic Climate Solutions	<p>Multiyear campaign showcasing Nordic climate and energy solutions at COP and other large events, next in turn a joint Nordic pavilion at COP22 in Marrakech, where main themes will be cities and urban planning, green growth, energy, the Arctic, water and financing, and young people (in co-operation with UNFCCC).</p>	Environment, Energy, Business, Research, Regional policy, Children and Youth	6,7,8,9,11,13

⁹² The table of activities is continuously updated until the end of 2016 based on input from key players within Nordic co-operation. To update the table, please contact susanna.sepponen@gaia.fi

Ongoing or planned Nordic activities with synergies	Brief description	Sectors involved	SDG's targeted
Human Trafficking	Cross-sectorial programme of continuing the actions of NCM to further the work against human trafficking.	Health&Social Affairs, Gender Equality	10,16
Mental Health of Youth	Various events and projects	Health & Social Affairs, Education, Children&Youth	3, 10
Nordic Welfare Watch	Originally an Icelandic Presidency project and part of the Sustainable Nordic Welfare programme. Aims to develop indicators to follow the development of the welfare systems in the Nordic countries; examine the preparedness of the Nordic countries to meet crises and what response is missing; examine the effect of the financial crises and their consequences for the welfare system	Health & Social Affairs	3, 8, 10
Public Health Platform	New co-operation platform governed by the NVC	Health & Social Affairs, Labour	3, 4, 10
OneHealth	Co-operation on antimicrobial resistance (food and feed). The project evaluates ongoing initiatives/systems for sustainable food production and provides input on how animal health, animal welfare and OneHealth can be incorporated into these systems/concepts/ideas.	Health & Social Affairs, Fisheries, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	3,12
Disability perspective, gender and diversity	Priority of the Council for Nordic Co-operation on Disability (together with the gender equality sector)	Health&Social Affairs, Gender Equality	3, 4, 5, 10
Nordic Built Cities	Lighthouse project within priority area green growth	Business, Environment	9, 11
Innovative Nordic Welfare Solutions	Lighthouse project within welfare and health technologies, including e.g. the competition "The Nordic Independent Living Challenge"	Business, Health&Social Affairs	3, 9
Innovative Nordic digital solutions	Lighthouse project within focus are entrepreneurship and financing	Business	9,
Nordic Green Growth research and innovation programme 2016	Co-operation programme to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable Nordic society. Builds on the results of the globalisation initiative on climate, energy and the environment 2007-2014.	Business, Energy, Research	7,9,13

Ongoing or planned Nordic activities with synergies	Brief description	Sectors involved	SDG's targeted
Culturability BSR – Culture and Sustainability in the Baltic Sea	One of the flagships under the EU Action Plan for the Baltic Sea Region. The purpose of CULTURABILITY Phase 2 is to build, test and scale prototypes for good practices for culture and sustainability in the Baltic Sea Region. The project organises a set of meetings and workshops around the Baltic Sea Region. It will focus on three topical areas: Urban Social Inclusion – Cultural and creative industries (CCI) and Cultural Tourism – Digital Tools and Gaming. – The project is supported by the Culture sector and the NSK committee.	Culture	4, 8,9,11
SUSTAINORDIC	A Nordic platform on design and sustainability between Nordic design organisations focusing on sustainable production and consumption. The project is led by Statens Centrum för Arkitektur och design and a collaboration between Danish Design Centre, Iceland Design Centre, DOGA and Aalto University, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers through a grant from the sustainable development strategy. It involves the arts, enterprise and export policy.	Culture, Business	12
Konnect	Konnect brings together art students and environmental scientists to discuss some of the major environmental challenges that the world faces. Konnect is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers Sustainability initiative, the Culture and the Agricultural sector, and the Nordic Culture Point.	Culture	4
Nordic Partnership for Expansion of Cultural and Creative Industries	Strengthening the competitiveness of the Nordic cultural and creative industries in a global perspective. Lighthouse project decided by the Ministries for Economy and Employment as part of their new strategy for sustainable growth. Project coordinated by Nordic Innovation.	Culture, Business	9
Culture for Health	The Culture for Health project is part of a co-operation programme between North-Western Russia and Scandinavian countries aimed at developing health care through the integration of cultural events in the healthcare system. The project seeks to create a qualified interdisciplinary platform for collaboration between interested parties in Nordic and Russian regions. The project will offer opportunities to exchange knowledge, take part in network events, and develop ideas and tools to promote the role of culture in improving people's health. Culture for Health be a joint effort involving government bodies and other interested parties.	Culture, Health&Social affairs	3, 10

Ongoing or planned Nordic activities with synergies	Brief description	Sectors involved	SDG's targeted
Societal Security	Research programme of NordForsk with close links to societal preparedness.	Research	4, 13,16
Education for Tomorrow	Research programme on NordForsk within educational research, with links to health and welfare and integration. Includes also components of entrepreneurship education.	Education & Research	4, 10
Sustainable Development of the Arctic	Co-operation programme of the Arctic committee of the NCM Activities coordinated by Nordregio Research programme of NordForsk within climate, health and social aspects	Environment, Health&Social Affairs, Research, Regional policy	3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16
Gender balance in academia	Research programme of NordForsk promoting gender equality in research and innovation.	Research, Gender equality	4,5,9
Cooperation on Registers and Biobanks	One of the priorities in Sustainable Nordic Welfare programme, research and infrastructure programme of NordForsk	Research, Health&Social Affairs	3,9
Sustainable Energy Systems 2050	Research programme of NEF, focusing on renewable energy, markets and networks, and transport with low emissions.	Energy, environment	7,11
NordBio	Bioeconomy programme focusing especially on blue bioeconomy and marine resources	Fisheries, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	7, 8, 9, 14
Public Private Partnership in Plant Pre-breeding	Project coordinated by NordGen to secure conservation of plant material adapted to the Nordic region.	Fisheries, Agriculture, Food and Forestry	15
Disability perspective, gender and diversity	tbc	Health&Social Affairs, Gender	4,5,10
Future of Work	Co-operation with ILO to identify Nordic and global challenges and policy responses from the Nordic perspective concerning the future of work and new forms of work, and how to promote social justice and decent work at the global level, e.g. Conference at NIVA Sept 2016, with participation of Gender Equality sector.		5, 8
Youth Employment	One main priority of e.g. NordJobb, the Danish Presidency in 2015 and the forthcoming Norwegian Presidency 2017.	Labour, Education, Children&Youth	4,8
Organisation and status of courts in the Nordic region	Priority theme for 2017 as an input to human rights perspective in the NCM strategy for Sustainable development.	Legislative Affairs	16

Ongoing or planned Nordic activities with synergies	Brief description	Sectors involved	SDG's targeted
Cooperation between Nordic statistical bureaus	<p>www.nowbase.org: Co-operation between Nordic Medico-statistical (NOMESCO) and social statistical (NOSOSCO) committees on a toll for enabling knowledge informed decisions of the NCM related to the sustainability of the Nordic societies.</p> <p>StatNord: Co-operation of the Nordic countries' statistical authorities participate by producing and analysing cross-border statistics.</p>	Health&Social Affairs Regional policy	1–17
World Circular Economy Forum 5–6.6.2017	Themes: How the circular economy presents new and unprecedented opportunities to create wealth and wellbeing, as well as how it is the essential engine to achieve the ambitious UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. Main organiser: Sitra, in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers, and a range of Finnish and global organisations, https://www.sitra.fi/en/events/circular-economy/world-circular-economy-forum-2017	Environment, Business & Labour	9
Sustainable cities	<p>A theme in the planned Prime Ministers' Initiative</p> <p>A thematic working group of ÅK-R/Nordregio from 2017 on.</p> <p>A potential sub-project of Nordregio under the European project Social Green (sustainable renovation of social housing areas) and contribute with learnings from TIPTOP on inclusive city planning.</p>	Regional Policy	11
Forthcoming working groups under the Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (ÅK-R)	<p>Working group 1 sustainable rural areas, can work with SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries e.g. integration of refugees in smaller/peripheral municipalities / local labour markets; also synergies with the new programme on integration (in co-operation with the NVC)</p> <p>Working group 2 resilient and innovative regions, will work on building resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; also the ongoing HIGHER-project on smart specialization. Also SDG 8 promote sustainable and inclusive growth could be included as a central aspect.</p>		8, 9, 10, 11
BASMATI and Baltic Scope 2	Projects which Nordregio participates in and that can contribute to SDG 14 sustainable use of oceans, lakes and maritime resources.		14

Table 14: Suggested priorities for Nordic activities forwarded by national stakeholders interviewed for the mapping⁹³

Suggested priorities from national stakeholders for the new SDG programme	Brief description
Arena for the national implementation in the Nordic countries	<p>The Nordic countries are all in the top of implementing the SDG's and need each other as a frame of reference/mirror</p> <p>How to show Nordic leadership to the international community while still striving to do more at home? (benchmarks, baseline, and measurements and indicators, profiling Nordic achievements as best practice etc.)</p> <p>Sharing experience on SDG implementation gaps in each Nordic country, through sharing of the mapping and measuring.</p> <p>Sharing Nordic best practice to the outside world on environmental indicators (which are next to impossible to measure in the SDGs and are not comparable to the Nordic region).</p> <p>Explore greater alignment possibilities when using data for designing policies (from parental leaves to domestic violence)</p> <p>Develop exchange on experiences on the indicators work, in co-operation with the statistical bureaus</p>
Open international forum for exchanging experience and ideas on Nordic SDG work	<p>Modelling the Åland experience or events like the Arctic Circle, where people come together, mix and test ideas. For example an annual very visible event.</p> <p>Strengthen the communication between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the non-governmental "informal" Nordic co-operation</p>
Topics of specific relevance for the Nordic countries	<p>Pick out a few targets, where the Nordics can achieve something through joint action; harness Nordic funding and public-private partnerships towards a common goal</p>
Involving the regional level and municipalities in sharing best practices and common challenges in working with the SDGs at county/ municipal level	<p>Nordic co-operation adds value when connecting regions and municipalities with similar challenges or strengths. Good examples from e.g. the co-operation between the West Nordic societies on twinning cities etc.</p>
PPP for government and business joining forces on specific challenges. Also toward the outside world	<p>Sharing best practice of fora for working on the SDG's, modelling the Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development "experiment" of company collaboration with Sida as convener. (Denmark and Norway have already shown interest in different ways.). Industrial umbrella organizations in Nordic countries could be more active in bringing together Nordic companies, maybe in collaboration with the ministries. PPP collaboration needed to encourage and incentivize change also in other parts of the world (companies can engage their suppliers and sub-suppliers, but need the Nordic governments to help their government-counterparts on the governance issues like maps for logging concessions and to reach further down in the supply chain) . Start discussion at home on difficult topics (like organic farming debate) with the long-term aim to go global. Creating multi-stakeholder partnerships "at home" in the Nordics which can act also in the outside world. Developing financing instruments for initiatives linked to SDGs that require investments that have a public and private element.</p>

⁹³ Suggestions collected through interviews made by Gaia Consulting and Stockholm Environment Institute August-October 2016.

Suggested priorities from national stakeholders for the new SDG programme	Brief description
Children and Youth	Increased co-operation between children and youth associations in broad SDG work inside the Nordic and abroad. Use the NORDBUK committee efficiently, and contacts between youth alliances.
Awareness raising measures	Develop a communication package on SDGs focused on different types of stakeholders. For instance for SMEs materials that could be translated for different countries on how to easily incorporate SDGs in their business operations. Aim is to save resources and money if common materials are developed (Denmark). Webinars on the SDGs for companies have been mentioned as a potentially cost effective way to reach large numbers of companies. Presenting good cases on company initiatives linked to SDGs for peers. Training on how to incorporate SDGs into business strategies and activities. (Denmark). Awareness raising activities/communication, using for instance sporting events to spread information about SDGs and company, country and Nordic commitments to answer to SDG challenges. Can be an effective way to raise public awareness and to get commitment from different stakeholders and public (one example that was mentioned was commitments made during Rio Olympics). Nordic countries could cooperate on communication when it comes to implementing Agenda 2030. This could be e.g. done at the same time with the European Sustainable Development Week, or with the anniversary of Agenda 2030. Communication not only to public, but also to investors: Why to invest in sustainable development? Networking of scientists, media and business on how to communicate appealingly to politicians and the public. Nordic "He-for-She" campaign on gender equality.
Show Nordic Leadership in international networks	The main positive impact of the Nordic strategy on sustainable development has been on the international fora where the strategy has been presented as the first regional SD strategy. Finding common voice and message on communicating towards UN and EU as well as other forums. The stellar reputation and brand of Nordic countries (regarding sustainable development and society, human rights and development co-operation) should be leveraged in different fora. Today messages are not coordinated, but because of similar societies and values are quite aligned anyway the messages come out pretty similarly. Common message could be more effective and be used for branding the Nordics and increased influence as well as tools for companies seeking business on the global arena. The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) could possibly be used more by Nordic countries. ESDN is an informal network of public administrators and other experts dealing with sustainable development (SD) strategies in Europe. It may not be necessary to build new networks for Nordic SD operation but to use more the existing ones. Global Compact and the Global Compact Nordic Network of Nordic companies. Nordics should act together with their neighbours, the Baltics on the SDGs. Collectively there's a powerful purchasing power. Regional SDG-related policies can be pursued as collaborative effort and embody Goal 17. Help each other to rethink and recalibrate the North-South thinking that characterized the MDGs to the universality of partnerships needed to implement the SDGs.
Use the existing Nordic cooperation to promote SDG's	Use the existing organisations, groups and fora, instead of creating new ones: There exists a multitude of Nordic organisations, committees, working groups etc. that could be harnessed with the responsibility to bring forward specific SDG topics, for example the environmental working groups under the NCM on environment-specific SDGs. Build on priorities already embedded and funded in the Nordic co-operation, in the sectorial action plans, and synergies on existing multi-sectorial large programmes. Build on best practice and success stories such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Collect a calendar of the biggest Nordic events and use these as an active forum for promoting the SDG programme.

Suggested priorities from national stakeholders for the new SDG programme	Brief description
Cooperation suggested on specific themes or topics (long list, in alphabetic order)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon tax and common Nordic regulation on this Child right governance towards the international agenda Children in conflicts; how to save money in the future with child protection? Circular economy and climate change Combating against the tax paradises Consumer behaviour change and nudging Cultural co-operation and cultural heritage Decoupling – reducing environmental impacts when increasing the economy Education Equality in a broad sense; to make sure that no one lives in poverty and are able to a life with human dignity Expert work and challenges related to this, e.g. well-being at work, combining work and family, combining work and free time, office capacity utilization rate Human rights Gender equality Governance Improving the state of the Baltic Sea Increasing the use of vegetables Peace building Policy Coherence (Nordic countries have been very active in this) Principle of leaving no one behind; how to bring out in the open the (hidden) marginal? Providing equal opportunities (aging population, immigration etc.) Security Showing that welfare is possible without using excessive natural resources Solutions regarding diabetes Sustainable agriculture including engaging the conventional v. organic farming debate both in Nordic or global context Sustainable energy Sustainable production and consumption The use of resources, circular economy Water Welfare state model

Table 15: Local and national programmes, platforms and topics mentioned as best practice in the online survey November 2016⁹⁴

Baltic TRAM project related to the UN SDG #9	Hinku and Flsu networks in Finland	The Climate Partners programme run by the city of Helsinki in co-operation with local businesses
Carbon-neutrality programmes in Oslo and their successful communication to the public	HVO, carbon-free diesel (Sweden)	The war against poverty
Different, inclusive platforms for the planning of sustainable development in Sweden, such as one co-ordinated by Boverket	Programmes run by Göteborgs mikjövetenskapliga centrum, bringing together businesses, NGOs, officials and the scientific community	Waste sorting and recycling programmes in Sweden
Eco-schools programmes, such as Grønt Flag Grøn Skole in Denmark	Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development in Finland (several mentions)	
Green city planning in Denmark	SOx and Nox reduction in the maritime industry	

⁹⁴ Suggestions collected through a survey made by the consultant's communication team (Ali Consulting/Gaia Consulting, November 2016)

Annex 3: Nordic Sectors of Co-operation and the SDGs

Table 16: SDGs in Nordic Cooperation

Sector of Co-operation	Main priorities in current strategy/co-operation programme	Relation to SDG's	Capacities (co-operation bodies and organisations)
Agriculture, Fishery, Food and Forestry	The new co-operation programme 2017–2020 focuses on a) development of the Nordic bioeconomy and b) Sustainable food production.	Zero hunger (2) Good health and well-being (3) Clean water and sanitation (6) Decent work and economic growth (8) Sustainable consumption and production (12) Climate action (13) Life below water (14) Life on land (15)	Steering Group for New Nordic Food The Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee (SNS) The Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ) Working Group for Fisheries (AG-Fisk) Nordic Working Group for Diet, Food & Toxicology (NKMT) Nordic Working Group for Food Safety & Consumer Information (NMF) The Nordic Working Group for Microbiology & Animal Health and Welfare (NMDD) Nordic Committee on Food Analysis (NMKL)
Business	The Nordic Cooperation Programme for Innovation and Economic Policy 2014–2017 has the vision of the "Nordic Region – in the forefront of sustainable growth" and focuses on priority areas of "entrepreneurship and financing", "green growth", "new welfare solutions" and "culture and creativity for growth". A new co-operation programme will be developed during 2017.	Good health and well-being (3) Industry, innovation and infrastructure (9) Sustainable cities and communities (11)	Nordic Innovation

Sector of Co-operation	Main priorities in current strategy/co-operation programme	Relation to SDG's	Capacities (co-operation bodies and organisations)
Culture	The strategy for Nordic cultural co-operation 2013–2020 has five themes: Sustainable Norden, Creative Norden, Inter-cultural Norden, Young Norden, Digital Norden. The goal is that Nordic cultural life supports the sustainability of the Nordic societies, by being accessible and inclusive.	Gender equality (5) Reduced inequalities (10)	Nordic Culture Point Nordic Film & TV Fund NORDICOM Nordic House in Reykjavik Nordic House in Torshavn Nordic Institute on Åland Nordic Institute in Greenland (NAPA)
Education & Research	The Co-operation programme effective from 2015 "Quality and relevance in education and research" targets among other things Education for all, and the establishment of large cross-sectorial research programmes raising knowledge in globally important areas.	Quality Education (4) Gender Equality (5) Decent work and economic growth (8) Industry, innovation and infrastructure (9) Reduced Inequality (10) Sustainable consumption and production (12) Climate Action (13)	NordForsk
Energy	The Action Programme for Nordic Cooperation in Energy Policy 2014–2017 supports the development of environmentally and climate friendly energy solutions, and climate neutral or low emission societies in the Nordic region and globally. The programme is structured around the themes of electricity market, energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy research and horizontal energy related questions (transport, international co-operation, sparsely populated regions). A new Action Programme will be developed in 2017, in light of the EU Energy Union and the ongoing review of Nordic energy co-operation (J. Ollila).	Affordable and clean energy (7) Sustainable cities and communities (11)	Nordic Energy Research

Sector of Co-operation	Main priorities in current strategy/co-operation programme	Relation to SDG's	Capacities (co-operation bodies and organisations)
Environment	<p>The Nordic Environmental Action Plan 2013–2018 contains e.g. the following SDG themes: Inclusive green development, incl. sustainable production and consumption, resource efficiency and waste; Climate change and air pollution, short-lived climate forcers; Biological diversity and ecosystems (both land-based and marine); Chemicals with adverse impact on human health and the environment.</p> <p>Budget priorities 2017 of the sector include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting resource efficiency and circular economy (incl. eco-design and new business models) • Supporting the development of product related environmental information and sustainable consumption • Working for the abandonment of environmentally hazardous subsidies • Work for the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity on land and in the seas, with a specific focus on the Arctic and Barents region • Support the ambitious follow up of climate negotiations at COP21, visibility at coming COPs. • Work to promote ecosystems in the Baltic Sea, North East Atlantic and Arctic, battle marine waste and marine intoxication • Promote the development of regulations concerning hazardous chemicals 	<p>Clean water and sanitation (6)</p> <p>Sustainable cities and communities (11)</p> <p>Sustainable consumption and production (12)</p> <p>Climate action (13)</p> <p>Life below water (14)</p> <p>Life on land (15)</p>	<p>Working groups:</p> <p>The marine group (HAV)</p> <p>The working group for sustainable consumption and production (HKP)</p> <p>Climate and air pollution group (KoL)</p> <p>The environment and economy group (MEG)</p> <p>Nordic waste group (NAG/NWG)</p> <p>Nordic working group for global climate negotiations (NOAK)</p> <p>Nordic chemical group (NKG)</p> <p>Institutions:</p> <p>Nordic environment finance corporation (NEFCO)</p> <p>Nordic development fund (NDF)</p>
Finance	<p>Main priorities of the Finance sector are to work for stable and sustainable economic growth, the development of the Nordic welfare model, economic integration and promotion of joint Nordic interests in international fora. One of the main points in the action plan is to work towards a clearer incorporation of economic aspects into the Nordic strategy for Sustainable Development.</p>	<p>Decent work and economic growth (8)</p> <p>Reduced inequalities (10)</p> <p>Partnerships for the goals (17)</p>	<p>Nordic Economic Group</p> <p>Nordic Taxation Authorities Group</p> <p>The environment and economy group (MEG)</p> <p>Organisations (formally not attached the sector)</p> <p>Nordic Investment Bank NIB</p> <p>Nordic Environment Finance Corporation NEFCO</p> <p>Nordic Development Fund NDF</p>
Gender Equality	<p>The 2015–2018 programme for co-operation (which is supplemented by annual action plans) has two overarching themes: the public sphere, and welfare and innovation. There are also two horizontal themes, sustainable development with a focus on diversity being one. The other is participation by men and boys in gender-equality work. Gender mainstreaming is also part of the strategy to implement the program.</p> <p>Gender equality is also a cross-sectorial theme in all sectors of the Nordic co-operation, and central in the work for sustainable development.</p>	<p>Gender equality (5)</p> <p>Reduced inequalities (10)</p>	<p>Nordic Information on Gender (NIKK)</p>

Sector of Co-operation	Main priorities in current strategy/co-operation programme	Relation to SDG's	Capacities (co-operation bodies and organisations)
Health & Social Affairs	<p>The Strategy of the Health and Social Affairs Sector from 2013 aims to promote sustainable welfare and health in the Nordic region through actions on social secureness in the Nordic region, work on prevention, increased quality and security in the social and health sector, and promoting innovation and research. It is accompanied by an Action plan.</p> <p>The Future Nordic Co-operation on Health-report by Bo Könberg 2014 gives 14 proposals, many of which have been brought forward in recent programme and projects including e.g. battling antibiotic resistance, co-operation on highly-specialised treatment and rare diagnoses, register-based research, public health, psychiatry, pharmaceuticals, patient mobility, welfare technology, eHealth, and health security.</p> <p>The Action Plan for Nordic Co-operation on Disability 2015–2017: Human rights • Diversity • Freedom of Movement, outlines actions for implementation of the UN convention UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to strengthen the inclusion and equality of persons with disabilities in Nordic societies and to remove barriers of free movement in the Nordic region.</p>	<p>No poverty (1)</p> <p>Good health and well-being (3)</p> <p>Sustainable Cities and communities (11)</p>	<p>Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC)</p> <p>The Council for Nordic Co-operation on Disability</p> <p>Nordic Medico-Statistical Committee (NOMESCO)</p> <p>Nordic Social Statistical Committee (NOSOSCO)</p> <p>eHealth group</p> <p>Svalbard Group on Health preparedness</p> <p>Nordic network on rare diseases</p> <p>Nordic review group on highly specialised treatment</p> <p>Nordic working group on psychiatry</p> <p>Nordic group on civil servants exchange</p> <p>Review group on Nordic convention on social aid</p>
Labour	<p>The programme for co-operation on labour and employment issues 2013–17 ("Fælles udfordringer og nordisk nytte") focuses on the long-term challenges posed by globalisation and demographic trends as well as the challenges posed by the economy.</p> <p>Priorities are: extending and upgrading the qualifications of the workforce to meet the needs of the labour market; combating unemployment among vulnerable groups and reducing long-term unemployment, especially among young people; encouraging a positive working environment; promoting the sustainable use of wage-earners' resources; preventing social dumping and discrimination in the labour market; ensuring a good balance between employee rights and flexibility, and closer Nordic collaboration on international regulation.</p> <p>The strategic examination of Nordic co-operation in the field of working life (Working life in the Nordic region – Challenges and proposals, P. Nielson) contains 14 proposals for future Nordic co-operation in working life with the overall goals of promoting e.g. life-long learning opportunities, integration of immigrants, gender equality, productive employment and decent work for all.</p>	<p>Gender equality (5)</p> <p>Decent work and economic growth (8)</p> <p>Reduced inequality (10)</p>	<p>The Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health (NIVA)</p> <p>Nordjobb (Nordic Work Exchange Programme)</p> <p>The Labour Market Committee</p> <p>Industrial Relations Committee</p> <p>Working Environment Committee</p> <p>EU Information Group</p>

Sector of Co-operation	Main priorities in current strategy/co-operation programme	Relation to SDG's	Capacities (co-operation bodies and organisations)
Legislative Affairs	<p>The objective of the co-operation is to promote protection under the law, including removing unnecessary obstacles to cross-border freedom of movement and facilitating contact between the inhabitants of the Nordic countries.</p> <p>Co-operation on legislative affairs is also designed to promote uniform implementation of EU and EEA regulations, and make an effective contribution to the development of rules in international forums.</p>	<p>Peace, justice and strong institutions (16)</p> <p>Reduced inequality (10)</p>	Nordic-Baltic Legal Contact Group
Regional Policy	<p>The Nordic co-operation programme for regional development and planning 2013–2016 has had the overall goals of contributing to regionally sustainable welfare development, promoting sustainable regional development in the Arctic, and stimulating green growth in all regions.</p> <p>The new co-operation programme for 2017-2020 will focus on 1) sustainable rural development, 2) innovative and resilient regions 3) sustainable cities and urban development. Co-operation programmes are implemented through dedicated working groups under the sector (served by Nordregio) and new working groups will be established for the new co-operation programme.</p>	<p>Decent work and economic growth (8)</p> <p>Industry, innovation and infrastructure (9)</p> <p>Sustainable Cities and communities (11)</p>	<p>Working groups for the programme focus areas</p> <p>Arctic Cooperation Committee</p> <p>Nordregio – Nordic Centre for Regional Development</p> <p>StatNord: Cooperation of the Nordic countries' statistical authorities</p> <p>participate by producing and analysing cross-border statistics</p> <p>The Nordic Atlantic Cooperation (NORA)</p>

Annex 4: Preliminary stakeholder analysis

Table 17: Preliminary Stakeholder Overview

Stakeholder group	Strategic Importance	Current Commitment	Type of involvement	Goals/needs
Nordic Ministers for Cooperation / NSK	Communicate the political will	Decision to develop the programme	Promote the programme on the highest political level.	Information Branding
Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development	Define and prioritise contents of programme and use of resources	Committed to taking the lead for developing and monitoring the programme.	Steering committee for the programme (make major programme decisions and follow up the programme)	Information and tools for decision making Confirmation on committed funds
Ministries involved in Nordic cooperation (MR/ÅK-committees)	Impact on contents of programme by decision-making power over their own activities and budgets.	All sectors have confirmed interest for the programme; formal commitments are still in progress (see overview in annex 2).	Suggest those priorities and topics that have most direct links to SDG's into the programme Investigate possibilities for co-operation with other sectorial ministries on these activities	Shared ownership of the programme Agreement on cross-sectorial priorities Confirmation on committed funds
Secretariat of Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Cooperation Bodies and Institutions	Put priorities into action	To be investigated pending prioritised programme contents	Formulate priorities into concrete projects and take the lead in implementing these, in co-operation with national stakeholders.	Mandate to drive action Understanding of priorities Committed funds
Lead agencies for national implementation of SDG's	Coordinate national priorities, which Nordic co-operation should link to	Confirmed interest for information exchange	Use the Nordic strategy for sustainable development and the programme to define topics of specific interest for Nordic co-operation. Utilise the co-operation between Nordic statistical bureaux	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme

Stakeholder group	Strategic Importance	Current Commitment	Type of involvement	Goals/needs
National governments	Make the national priorities, which the programme will link to	Commitment documented	Promote the programme on the political level.	Information
National parliaments and the Nordic Council	Secure the long-term prioritisation of Agenda 2030 and the political will	Commitment documented	Promote the programme on the political level.	Information
Regional and municipal authorities	Implement SDG work on the regional and local levels	No information	Share best practices and common challenges in working with the SDG's Invest time and resources in activities under the programme, include SDGs in activities and communication	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
National Environmental and Food agencies	Coordinate activities under the programme	No information	Invest time and resources in specific activities under the programme,	Information Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
Business	Drive the economic development and the inclusion of SDG's as part of profitable entrepreneurship. Act also in the outside world on SDG issues.	Interest communicated, to be further investigated	Invest time and resources in specific activities under the programme, Include SDGs in activities and communication, within and outside Norden.	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
Academia	Build the knowledge base and enforce action in collaboration with policy makers and industry	Interest communicated, to be further investigated	Invest time in specific activities under the programme, communicate SDGs	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
NGO's/CSO's	Impact public awareness and empowerment	Interest communicated, to be further investigated	Invest time in specific activities under the programme, communicate SDGs	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
Children & Youth Associations	Drive the awareness and empowerment of young generations and impact the future. Nordic youth are comparatively well organized.	Interest communicated, to be further investigated	Invest time in specific activities under the programme, communicate SDGs	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme

Stakeholder group	Strategic Importance	Current Commitment	Type of involvement	Goals/needs
National RDI funding agencies	Fund activities under the programme	No information	Invest in specific activities under the programme	Information Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
Public and private foundations	Possess financial means to implement more and bigger action	No information	Invest in specific activities under the programme	Information Funding proposals
Media	Promote the awareness raising and securing the diversity of voices in the debate	Interest of specific SD channels reported	Provide arenas for information exchange and knowledge sharing, raise awareness in the societies, put topics on the political agenda	Information Channels for interaction with Nordic programme
International networks	Offer arenas for interaction between Nordic region and the world	No information	Provide arenas for knowledge sharing, information exchange and co-creation	Information Arena for knowledge sharing Channels for interaction with Nordic programme

Annex 5: Summary of Dialogue meeting on Nordic Cooperation in response to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Time and place: Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 9 am to 4 pm in Helsinki.

Brief Summary

The aim of the meeting was to seek guidance on how the Nordic Council of Ministers can best contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meeting allowed a broad and diversified group of stakeholders come together to discuss, debate and outline a future joint Nordic initiative in response to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the Nordic Council of Ministers expects to launch during 2017.

The meeting was opened by a keynote provided by Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Member of Finnish Parliament, who outlined the importance of action towards implementing the SDGs and how Nordic countries can act together.

Ms. Annika Rosing, Head of Department of Growth and Climate at the Nordic Council of Ministers introduced the aim of the meeting and the process with planning a new Nordic Initiative on Sustainable Development in response to the 2030 Agenda. The initiative will not aim to coordinate national measures for implementing the Agenda, but rather identify areas, where Nordic co-operation could be meaningful.

Mr. Mikko Halonen (Gaia Consulting) and Dr. Åsa Persson (Stockholm Environment Institute) presented preliminary findings from the mapping of Nordic implementation of the 2030 Agenda that Gaia and SEI have prepared during the past months and which

served as background material for the discussions at the dialogue meeting (presentation enclosed).

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the mapping and this feedback will be considered when finalising the mapping report for the Nordic Council of Ministers.

For the working sessions, participants were divided into working groups, which worked on the following topics:

Session 1

Nordic Cooperation on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – bringing the good ideas together (plenum). Participants were invited to suggest topics for the new programme and these were further prioritized and discussed in groups.

Session 2

Defining the added value of Nordic implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (in groups). The participants were encouraged to use the suggested topics and themes in order to outline the main aims and features of a Nordic programme in response to the SDGs.

The input from sessions 1 and 2 was brought forward in.

Session 3

Participants discussing and defining main stakeholders for the Nordic programme they had suggested as well as key messages for those stakeholders. In conclusion, participants discussed how to communicate the Nordic programme and the SDGs in the Nordic countries.

Subsequently the main results of the group sessions were briefly presented and discussed in plenum. A synthesis of the main outcomes of sessions 1–3 is enclosed.

Ms. Annika Rosing concluded the meeting by thanking all participants for their engagement and valuable input in outlining the further process. She noted that the meeting had raised many important topics, including:

- possible thematic focus areas and themes for the programme (sustainable consumption and production, energy efficiency and climate, gender equality, integration and inclusion, democracy)
- the importance of clearly and broadly communicating the 2030 Agenda and involving all key stakeholders
- the need for fora and networks for concretely implementing the 2030 Agenda;
- the importance to focus on all policy levels (national, regional , local)
- the need to focus both on Nordic gaps and on Nordic strengths
- the potential to use Nordic co-operation as a tool to push difficult agendas and find new methods and solutions.

The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development will discuss a programme proposal early 2017, which will thereafter be circulated for agreement in relevant sectors of co-operation. The Nordic Ministers for Cooperation will take a decision on the final programme in the summer of 2017.

The Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development will also look into the question how the process could best benefit from the engagement of the participants of the dialogue meeting. Conclusions from the dialogue meeting will be sent out to the participants for information and for possible comments and suggestions.

Annex to the Summary of the Dialogue meeting on Nordic Co-operation in response to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Outputs of the working sessions

This Annex contains direct output of the work group sessions of the dialogue meeting and will serve as one of the input materials for the programme to be developed by the Nordic Council of Ministers Expert Group on Sustainable Development.

Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Initial ideas for Nordic Co-operation Projects

The following ideas resulted from the workshop's first-round synthesis, when discussing potential topics to be addressed by a Nordic co-operation project on the 2030 Agenda implementation. One of the recurrent themes was sustainable consumption and production, and the various equity implications of consumption and production patterns – and with major cross border implications (e.g. the question of what is consumed at “home” can have increasingly global implications).

1. Sustainable consumption and production

In brief, the project links directly to SDG 12, 16, 17 and indirectly to most SDGs.

Potential components & themes:

- Risk has to be at the core (to use terminology understood by the private sector).
- There is a need for innovative tools and disruptive partnerships linking governments, businesses and consumers.
- Only in this manner can major finance flows and investment decisions by the private sector (production/consumption) be turned sustainable, “SDG-aligned”.
- Governments have a role with policy instruments and funding.
- Through value chain impacts (including raw material use, among other) sustainability impacts of many companies are international/global, hence consumer decisions have global impacts.

2. Sustainable consumption and production

In brief, the project proposals relates to SDGs 8, 12, 17.

Potential components & themes:

- Sustainable value chains (both consumers and producers).
- Circular economy / circular bioeconomy.
- Communication.

3. Sustainable consumption

In brief, the project shall address responsibility of regulation, responsibility of service-offering companies (producers), and responsibility of individuals (consumers as active citizens).

Potential components & themes:

- Creating alternatives to current definitions to economic growth (a sustainable alternative to GDP?).
- Finding new definitions for sustainable growth and well-being.
- Creating a new sense of citizenship (new identity replacing a consumer identity).

4. Food production and consumption

In brief, the project links to SDG 12 and others, and targets both producers and consumers.

Potential components & themes:

- Life cycle assessment.
- Ecological foot print.
- Food security.
- Creating tools for making sustainable choices.
- Ecolabels: tools for sustainable consumption (Example: link Svanen to SDGs).
- Using tools like “nudging” to promote sustainable lifestyles and a sustainable society.

5. Sustainable living

In brief, the idea is for Nordic co-operation to become a driver for sustainable living.

Potential components & themes:

- Empowerment of people to choose (we often do not choose sustainability).

- Incentivise positive competition (it's more efficient for people-to-people than from government-to-government), with a proposed slogan: "Do it better than your Nordic neighbour".
- "Sharing and caring" life – a sharing economy, think Über, share a car, make policies that facilitate these kinds of behaviour/ set-ups
- Also, don't just look at ourselves but also look at others; be humble (Nordic is not the only way). *Then* these ideas (knowledge and services) can be exported.
- Circular economy and sustainable production and consumption.
- Communication is important around all of this – partnering "Nordically".

6. *How to create a climate friendly society*

In brief, the idea is to design a programme or programme component to guide Nordics towards a climate friendly society, by creating incentives.

Potential components & themes:

- Reduce dependency on fossil fuels.
- Adapt to fossil-neutrality.
- Aim to understand and modify consumer behaviour.

7. *Human rights, rule of law and democracy*

In brief, there should be high-level political discussion on priorities for the future of the Nordic welfare model. In sum, *to believe and uphold the inclusive and resilient Nordic model in our changing world.*

Potential components & themes:

- Reviving the discussion conducted in the 50s and 60s when the foundations of the Nordic model was outlined and developed.
- Emphasis is on multi-stakeholder engagement including the grassroots level / local discussion.
- Implementation to be decided by topical experts.

8. Nordic welfare model

In brief, the concept is “bottom-up” engaging civil society, business, and municipalities.

Potential components & themes:

- Company role models for integrating Agenda 2030.
- Awareness-raising – communication platform (participation / social inclusion/ economic growth) – benefits.
- Emphasise gender equality.

9. Inclusive society

In brief, this idea is for a Nordic “Whole of society” approach to designing an implementation programme: *How* can this be done?

Potential components & themes:

- Translate the SDGs and reach out to target groups.
- Facilitate engagement in SD.
- Measure progress.
- Exchange best practices.
- Create business opportunities.
- The Nordic Whole of Society approach is for inclusion, engagement, empowerment.
- Concrete *tools* this programme can finance include: a Nordic platform for knowledge exchange / action/ find partners, and joint projects: funds for knowledge exchange, etc.

10. Integration

In brief, noting that many of the solutions for the global challenge of integration are solved on local level, the project/initiative focuses on establishing a network for municipalities for exchange of best practices.

Potential components & themes:

- Resilient cities and country sides at the focus.
- Open public spaces provided and nurtured.
- Information and education for locals.
- Information and education for immigrants.
- Dialogue and interaction.
- Links with forthcoming Prime Minister's Initiative with one theme focus "Sustainable cities".
- Role of businesses to be understood and harnessed e.g. through local employment opportunities.

11. Gender and inequality

In brief, the idea is to address gender and other inequities that exist in the Nordic countries – despite that Nordic countries are seen as leaders.

Potential components & themes:

- Cross-national, cross-SDG.
- Establish an ambitious set of indicators -> joint Nordic monitoring of inequality/gender.
- Cross-councils / ministries.
- Multi-stakeholder platform (include CSO, Business, Academia).
- Gap-analysis – identify crucial areas for joint efforts.
- MR-SAM (co-operation) – decision maker / lead coordinators MR-JÄM (gender equality).
- Timeline: Gap Analysis -> action plan -> monitoring -> reporting regularly.
- Emphasis on leaving no one behind.

12. Communication and education

In brief, governments should communicate SDGs through schools.

Potential components & themes:

- Make use of EU – SD week: e.g. with children and youth preparing SDG activities during the school year.
- Government reform in education /curriculum development.
- Making sure SDGs are communicated in a way addressing all aspects of life (not only environment).
- Communication & education to ensure that the interconnections between SDGs are understood.

13. Communicating the SDGs in and to the Nordics – Communication concepts project

In brief, the project aims at mapping existing SDG-relevant activities and useful communication concepts.

Potential components & themes:

- Integrating SDS awareness building activities in all education activities and including SDG teaching in curriculum. Prepare the next generation for awareness.
- Sharing best practices regarding communication across the Nordic countries (e.g. “World’s Best News” in Denmark).
- Developing web platforms with existing and new communication concepts (cost effective sharing) that can be used by other Nordic stakeholders/countries.
- Nordic SDG Ambassadors that could bring attention to Agenda 2030 and Nordic actions.
- Using existing Nordic Council meetings and events to include SDG /reflection and challenges.
- Cross-cutting initiative regarding SDGs.

14. A Project on common principles for Nordic Implementation of SDGs implementation

In brief, the project aims at a plan how we can help realise the ministers’ intents.

Potential components & themes:

- Market Nordic strengths globally.
- Improve global economic competitiveness & safeguard welfare state.
- Plan principles for implementation.
- Cross border synergies identification.
- Recognise and confront paradigm shift.
- Synthesis thinking.
- Walk the talk (e.g. gender).
- Take a point of departure on what we need to do better and why.
- Issue a competitiveness report on what the Nordics do together.
- Pool Nordic strengths.
- Identify common denominators.
- Use active green competition as an asset.

1. Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Programme Concepts

The following ideas were synthesized outputs of the group session 2 of the dialogue meeting, as presented by the groups in the plenary session.

Table 18: Sustainable Development – Programme

A	<p>The programme should have a twofold aim of</p> <p>a) Global policy strengthening through national-level co-operation, and</p> <p>b) Strengthening the knowledge sharing on the local level</p> <p>On the national-global level the programme should focus on:</p> <p>Nordic strengths and where we are advanced</p> <p>Building Nordic-global partnerships and macro-regional (Nordic-Baltic region) co-operation</p> <p>Activities such as HLPF side events, policy consensus, sharing best practice</p> <p>On the local level, the programme should focus on:</p> <p>Gaps and where we are lagging behind</p> <p>Strengthening the knowledge sharing of municipal/regional actors</p> <p>Activities such as IT-platforms, projects, seminars, documenting/showcasing examples</p> <p>For both aims, there is a need to choose among activities and focus the limited resources, in order to have impact.</p>
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- B The programme should aim at enhancing Nordic leadership and redefining Nordic identity and welfare model.
 The programme should have two main themes:
 Sustainable consumption and production
 Rethinking the Nordic welfare model
 The main instrument would be facilitating an international platform for the “sensitive” SDGs e.g. 5/16/10/12 (where 5, 16, 10 are Nordic strengths and 12 is Nordic weakness)
 Actions:
 Need for measuring, reporting and verifying actions
 Suggesting legal SDG framework for municipalities (like Agenda 21 did)
 Like commitment 2050 in Finland, but more ambitious
 Public-private partnerships: Using public money to leverage more private funds
 OECD: policies policy coherence (Nordics have strong role)
 Carrot and stick in governance
 Empower the citizens
 Message of the programme: Through Nordic co-operation, things can be lifted a level up
- C The programme should aim at:
 Relevance: the programme has to be relevant and tangible for all: “Make it easy!”
 Civil society
 Business/firms
 Government
 Flexibility: The Programme needs flexibility
 Partnerships: Use the power of partnerships
 Indicators: Create/use relevant indicators
 Values: Use the “Nordic values” and “Nordic way”
 Identity: Create a “Sustainable Identity”
 Youth: include and involve the youth
 “Power of personal example”
 Main message: Do it yourself first – Then you can be an example
- D The programme should aim at supporting the national coordinators for implementing Agenda 2030 – share good practice on national implementation through e.g. meetings
 Main components:
 Common Nordic voice for Agenda 2030 in EU and UN
 Mainstream gender/inclusion in all goals
 Peer to peer learning and stakeholder networking, incl. regions, municipalities etc.
 Funding pilots + transfer and scale-up of good practices
 Prizes for most inclusive employer etc., sustainable municipalities etc.
 Prioritize some targets: Sustainable consumption/living, sustainable welfare state, integration
 Focus on civil society’s role – engaging bottom-up
 Coordinate with existing Nordic programmes (on integration for example)
 Goal oriented, stimulate national governments and cross-sectorial co-operation
- E The programme should aim at:
 Pinpointing the added value of Nordic work
 What is not addressed by/on a national level
 Getting the local level involved
 Bringing local knowledge to Nordic level and share best practices
 Focus on one topic and show interrelation of all goals (e.g. consumption)
 Empowerment, awareness raising, influence policy making

- F The programme should aim to solve: How can we help realise the ministers' intent
 Market Nordic strengths globally
 Improve global economic competitiveness & safeguard welfare state
 Nordic voice already strong but can be leveraged – the Nordics and our welfare model "define" the SDGs.
 Principles for implementation:
 Cross-border co-operation → synergy (seize opportunities for maximal impact)
 Recognise/confront paradigm shift
 Synthesis thinking → all in (mindset)
 Walk the talk (eg. gender)
 Take point of departure in have to be better & why, quality – resilience – risk
 Program should be value based with humans in the center – aim for prosperity instead of just profitability (people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnerships...)
 Integrate communication (both in Nordics and globally)
 Issue a competitiveness report on what the Nordics do together
 Identify common denominators
 Pool our strengths
 Active green competition as an asset
- G The programme should aim at the main message: "Responsible, engaging, challenges opportunities across sectors and borders for all."
 Many frameworks for implementation: What does it mean for the Nordic countries?
 Nordic co-operation = building on strengths, realising opportunities
 Need for policy coherence
 Need to prioritise among the SDGs
 Greatest challenges = greatest opportunities
 Communication to engage citizens
 Programme should require engagement from several sectors as well as Nordic countries
 Added value of the programme:
 Engaged population
 Sharing solutions and benefit from shared Nordic approach
 Raising awareness and responsibility
 Making each other responsible
 Health competition (borrowed from another session: what would my Nordic neighbour do?)
- H The programme should aim at the main message: "Up-scaling frontrunning local #Agenda2030 solutions by #Nordic co-operation. "living lab"
 Key: pinpoint the added value of Nordic work
 Approach: What is not addressed by/ on a national level?
 Get the local level involved by bringing the local knowledge to Nordic level and share best practices
 Focus on one topic and show interrelation of all goals – e.g. consumption
 Aim: empowerment, awareness-raising, influence policy-making
- I The programme should aim at the main message: "Thematic PCSD (policy coherence for sustainable development) peer review for national and Nordic policy recommendations on Agenda 2030 implementation."
 Nordic programme should focus on policy coherence in the field of specific SDGs (e.g. sustainable production and consumption, immigration).
 It should do this through national peer-review and policy recommendations
 Policy coherence: What to do and why?
 Cross-cutting in nature; catalyse ambitious leadership; not a coordinating role but rather to assure quality; an instrument for Nordic countries to make Agenda 2030 more concrete/ operational; gap analysis targeting SDGs where we are lagging behind.
 Implementation: How to do it?
 Ensure political communication – allocate responsibility and change mindset; peer-review; open dialogue to share experiences for next steps; identify where there are Nordic synergies; "Better policies for coherence for sustainable development" – showcase these.

- J The programme should aim at concentrating on what we do well together (shared values/ agreement areas like energy, green tech) and on what we don't do well (communication)
Benefits: prosperity not only for profits, joint actions to strengthen the Nordic approach
How can you contribute?: Need a driver (leader) + finance
- K The programme should aim at exchange of knowledge regarding national implementation of SDG policy
Are there shared goals?
Agreement on Nordic SDG gaps and strengths (Nordic level gaps and strengths)
Main activities:
Create strategic partnerships (business, civil society, government) on selected issues – e.g. main gaps (consumption?) and main strengths (equality?)
Approach: avoid the “what” and focus on the “how” (partnership, etc.) – Nordic understanding of the goals (not Nordic implementation of the goals)
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2 Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Stakeholders

This section consists of synthesized output of the group session 3 of the dialogue meeting, as collected from the work sheets.

Several groups recommended to focus mainly on:

- Developing global partnerships for policy influence.
- Develop Nordic public-private strategic partnerships involving public and private money (redirecting, mobilising and pooling existing resources), public sector actors (especially on the local level i.e. cities and municipalities, civil society), and empowered citizens, especially the youth (as the future consumers and the recipients of legacy of the here and now).

Table 19: Sustainable Development – Stakeholders

Nordic Council of Ministers	Supporting/facilitating global partnerships Supporting/facilitating strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
National Governments	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Cities and Municipalities	Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production
Policy makers	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production Key stakeholders for Rethinking the Nordic Model

Nordic Council of Ministers	Supporting/facilitating global partnerships Supporting/facilitating strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Private companies	Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production Both company level and employers are needed Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production
NGO/CSOs	E.g. Sports, pensioners, unions Support NGO meetings, mobilizing people locally, also marginalised groups Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Youth	Key stakeholders as the future consumers and as recipients of legacy of the here and now
Academia	Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production Key stakeholders for Rethinking the Nordic Model
Think tanks	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Educational sector	On the local level, the municipalities and the educational sector are key stakeholders
Cultural sector	E.g. Sports, pensioners, unions Support NGO meetings, mobilizing people locally, also marginalised groups
Citizens	All citizens to be included Key stakeholders for Sustainable Consumption and Production Key stakeholders for Rethinking the Nordic Model
Media Parliamentarians	Was missing in the mapping, important for raising the awareness Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Nordic Council	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships
Baltic Council	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic-Baltic public-private partnerships
UN organisations	Supporting global partnerships
EU	Supporting global partnerships Supporting strategic Nordic public-private partnerships

3 Nordic Programme for Sustainable Development – Communication

This section consists of synthesized output of the group session 3 of the dialogue meeting, as collected from the work sheets.

Key messages – Examples

- SDGs = progress in the world.
- We can only do this together.
- All steps in the right direction matter.
- Nordic Sustainable Identity – The Nordic Way.
- Focus on opportunities, sharing solutions, why joint Nordic action works.
- Prosperity instead of just profitability.

Key target groups – Examples

- Define Nordic added value ; connect to existing priorities; do stuff (action leads to communication); common challenges to gather around; school curriculum.
- Involve public and private stakeholders together (like Society's commitment in Finland).
- Approach sustainability as growth and business opportunities.
- Disseminate information to policy makers.
- Communication to international organisations to strengthen Nordic message.
- Formal education.

Communication channels and actions – Examples

- Matchmaking across borders: solution labs, creative launches.
- Communicating the SDGs through teaching materials.
- Funding instruments for communication (participation in meetings etc.)
- Association of municipalities promoting policies for global developments and sustainability.

- Creating a Nordic sustainability council / network for information, policy dialogue.
- Building ICT and social media platforms.
- Building platforms such as the Finnish Society's Commitment 2050
- Using the media (model after e.g. World's best news).
- New year's speeches by PM or queens, kings, presidents, on the importance of SDGs and the next 14 years.
- Social media e.g. tweets on #Nordic co-operation.
- Health competition (borrowed from another session: what would my Nordic neighbour do?).
- Need for participation → Nordic champions.
- Annual celebration of SDGs (like Global Goals week).
- Nordic sustainability prizes to companies, civil society, other actors.
- Nordic SDG Ambassadors.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION – THE NORDIC WAY

The 2030 Agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, outlines an ambitious and universal plan of action for people, planet and prosperity as it seeks to strengthen universal peace and freedom. This report presents national and Nordic action on Agenda 2030 with the aim to inform and support the Nordic Council of Ministers in formulating a new Nordic Sustainable Development Programme.

All Nordic countries are engaged and strongly committed to implementing Agenda 2030 and there is a broad societal interest in joint Nordic action. The existing Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development and several other key initiatives within Nordic cooperation already contribute to the goals of Agenda 2030. A new Nordic Sustainable Development Programme can build upon a strong foundation and add further value to the national and international work done by the Nordic countries.

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