



**Strategy for  
International Branding  
of the Nordic Region**

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**2019-2021**

## Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region 2019-2021

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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.

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# **Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region**

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# Preface



With this revised strategy for branding of the Nordic region, the project is now entering its third phase. The first phase, developed in the slipstream of the successful cultural initiative in Washington's Kennedy Center, involved gathering the Nordic countries around a common vision: ***Together we are stronger***. The goal was to agree on the advantages of a brand as a unified region on the international arena. This resulted in the preparation of a common strategy – the Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region 2015-2018. The strategy formulated a set of common Nordic values and strategic focus areas that formed the basis for the subsequent work in Phase 2: Implementation of the Strategy. In the subsequent three years, the work on branding has really taken off. We have a new brand name, The Nordics, and a branding concept has been drawn up that complements the existing branding initiatives of the individual countries. The concept, Traces of North, involves showing The Nordics *in* the world, not *to* the world. It concerns building relationships between Nordic actors, and creating dialogue with the world around us.

To support all the many positive forces engaged in the everyday work on branding The Nordics, a website and a toolbox filled with stories and materials have been developed. These are all actions that will help to strengthen the Nordic narrative and make it easier to act Nordic on the international arena.

The branding project has actively contributed to the UN climate negotiations (COP) in the past three years and, through Open Calls, the project has provided support, both financially and in terms of content, to 82 projects in 34 different countries. The projects, which have involved more than 300 Nordic actors, including 100 embassies and consulates, have ranged from gender equality and green Nordic solutions to tourism and cuisine. The Open Calls approach has proved to be a successful catalyst in bringing Nordic forces together and putting Nordic items on the international agendas.

But branding The Nordics does not end here. Branding is a long, arduous journey, requiring the commitment and involvement of many parties. With this revised strategy, we are getting Phase 3 underway, which we are calling the 'activation phase'. We will be developing more tools that will facilitate the work of those parties engaged in everyday activities relating to branding of The Nordics. We will be developing new concepts that put us in a position to engage in dialogue with the world around us, and we will be working specifically to communicate and anchor the project even more firmly in the Nordic countries and with Nordic actors.

Strategic branding requires continuity and consistency. This is why it has not been important to draw up a completely new strategy and, instead, to build on the existing strategy from 2015. Consequently, several elements have been retained from the preceding strategy that have proved to be vital in branding, including the common set of Nordic values and the strategic focus areas. In addition, the revised strategy includes a description of the branding concept, selected by the reference group in the project and approved by the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation.

# Background

The Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region was developed in response to an explicit request from the Nordic Prime Ministers and the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation. The aim was to showcase the Nordic region globally, and thereby increase the competitiveness and international influence of the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Ministers for Co-operation approved the strategy at their meeting in October 2014, and the first strategy ran until the end of 2018. The strategy and the results were evaluated (Appendix 1), and the experiences formed the basis of a revised and more detailed strategy, with a clearer attempt to link the branding project to current Nordic political agendas.

The basic Nordic values and strategic focus areas forming the basis of the first strategy remain unchanged, and the original goal will continue to apply:

**The strategy for branding the Nordic region will increase the visibility of the Nordic region and its influence in the world, and improve the region's competitiveness.**



# Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region



The world around us essentially defines the Nordic region as a single unit. The image is overwhelmingly positive, largely because we in the Nordic region seem to have found solutions to economic and political challenges that both we and others are grappling with. The Nordic Model has become a concept. Every Nordic country has built its own model, parallel with extensive and robust co-operation within the Nordic region. If we in the Nordic region are to experience a positive development, we are dependent on what is happening around us and on other countries being interested in us. It is in our interest to contribute to our own future and that of others by sharing ideas, competencies, experiences, services and goods.

Competition for a place on the international arena is tough, and small countries like ours can work together to generate greater visibility and influence. By coordinating branding activities in a joint initiative, we can generate synergies in the public and/or private sectors in each country.

The strategy sets out strategic guidelines for how to brand The Nordics and their stakeholders internationally. This is part of a long-term initiative to systematize and ensure consistent branding of the Nordic region, an offer that supports the ability to work together toward a common goal when this generates added value for the respective actors. Apart from branding, there are many good reasons for acting internationally, such as diplomacy and sharing experiences, but these aspects are not considered in this strategy.

## **Aim of the strategy**

The positive international attention regarding the Nordic region and countries will be utilized and strengthened by increasingly presenting The Nordics as a unified region, not least in markets where awareness of the region is greater than awareness of each individual country. The strategy defines the values that bind the Nordic countries together. The branding will give them global exposure, support Nordic competencies and solutions, and thereby improve the region's competitiveness.

A greater number of coordinated activities will also strengthen existing relationships in immediately adjacent geographical areas. The strategy will simplify and improve the work on branding The Nordics at international level. It will explain the purpose of branding, provide support, and refer to practical tools that will be made available to all parties.

## **The Nordic Perspective**

A common Nordic concept enables each country or actor to refer to characteristics that do not apply specifically and individually to Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Åland, the Faroe Islands or Greenland. For example, branding can emphasize being part of a strong region with a population of 27 million and a large and diverse range of industries and culture, not to mention a varied and fascinating natural landscape.

In this particular context, The Nordics can be described as a trademark, i.e. the overall package of associations, emotions, experiences and expectations aroused in the recipient.

Nothing, neither a country nor a region, can dictate its own image, especially in today's transparent, fast-moving and increasingly digital communication landscape. The image is something that is earned. For long-term and sustainable relations with other countries, what you offer must be genuine. You have to be what you claim to be and want to be.

What binds the Nordic countries together is what creates sufficient strength to attract the interest of the world around us. What is the explanation for the high positions of the Nordic countries in global rankings of competitiveness, quality of life and equality? And why is it that interest in Nordic creativity and culture is so great just now? The outside world is curious about the Nordic countries, and about how we have managed to develop and achieve strong results even in tough times. What are the underlying factors? What is it that we do?

During the first three years of the branding project, the value of the clearly defined Nordic perspective on the world has proved to be crucial. In the following illustration, we have compiled the common Nordic values that characterize and bind together our region.

The values can also be seen as a checklist of the perspectives we want to express in our communication and in our relations with the world around us. Individually, they are neither unique nor revolutionary, but together they show a Nordic way of thinking that we call the Nordic Perspective.

# The Nordic Perspective



**Openness and a belief  
in everyone's right to  
express their opinions**

**Trust in each other  
and also, because of  
proximity to power,  
trust in leaders in  
society**

**Compassion, tolerance,  
and conviction about  
the equal value of  
all people**

**New ways of  
thinking, focusing  
on creativity and  
innovations**

**Sustainable management of  
the environment and development  
of natural resources**

The Nordic Perspective, our common set of values, forms the foundation of the Nordic brand. It is precisely this perspective that positions The Nordics in relation to the rest of the world, and the values can be used in all contexts as a common tool and framework for presenting who we are and what we stand for.

In practice, the values are applied in a simplified English version. This gives them more impact and makes them easier to use as drivers in communication initiatives.

**Our common values:**

- **Trust**
- **Equality**
- **Sustainability**
- **Innovation**
- **Openness**

In order to support the common Nordic narrative and create synergy between various branding activities and initiatives, all future branding activities should be linked to, and actively apply, the values in both communication and the organization of the activity itself. The more Nordic actors 'live the brand' in practice, and show the world around us that there is truth behind the words, the greater the synergies and the Nordic benefits achieved.



# Strategic Areas for Branding



The strategic areas for branding have been formulated on the basis of the overarching political priorities within the Nordic co-operation. The prioritizations, which will highlight areas that, from a Nordic perspective, can be developed in dialogue with the outside world, are based on two key questions:

- 1. What can the Nordic region offer the world around us?**
- 2. How can relationships with the world around us benefit the Nordic region?**

Certain branding activities may only concern one or possibly more of the prioritized branding areas, while others will concern all of them.

## The Nordic Model

Since the financial crisis in 2008, international interest in the Nordic Model has grown considerably. Briefly, the model is based on using healthy state finances to enable a high and equal standard of living, distributing welfare and social insurance in the name of equality, a labor market that is largely regulated by collective agreements between labor market parties, and considerable investments in education and research.

The Nordic Model shows that gender equality leads to a high level of employment and produces working conditions that offer a good life at the end of the working day. The model also shows

that an open and trusting society promotes innovative and creative thinking. The strength of the Nordic Model lies in its proven ability to proactively reform itself to meet prevailing challenges. The model has a pragmatic ability to renew itself. The model is also based on actively relating to the world around us, and on a conviction that stability promotes trade, greater knowledge, mutual cultural understanding, and sustainable development.

### **The Nordic region as a knowledge society**

A high level of knowledge is an important explanation for the high rankings of the Nordic region in international contexts. Free access to education allows the individual to develop, which benefits the competitiveness of business. Researchers and others in the knowledge sector are given great opportunities to develop in their specialist areas, since they are able to work in all Nordic countries, not just one. Research in the Nordic region maintains a high international class in many areas, such as within new technology and infrastructure, health, environment and climate, not least the conditions in the Arctic.

The Nordic knowledge society can provide solutions that ensure basic education for more people in the world and also participate in world-leading research.

### **Nordic creativity and innovation**

The high rankings of the Nordic countries in international surveys of creativity and innovative power stem from the Nordic Model. In addition to investments in education and research, a social insurance system allows people to take risks,

to dare to fail. The business sector is largely specialized and high-tech, and there are great opportunities to develop and be developed in industry.

Striving for environmentally, economically and socially sustainable development requires international collaboration. Some areas of strength where the Nordic region can contribute are green/clean technology, bioeconomy, digital technology, entrepreneurship, and health and welfare.

The place of culture throughout the population, and its close links to Nordic values, has helped develop the industries that are often called creative, such as literature, film, music, design, architecture, cuisine, and computer games. Culture can be regarded as an instrument for growth, as shown by many years of Nordic success in the area.

### **Nordic culture and nature**

We look at the world from a Nordic horizon. This gives us our perspective. A largely common culture is the basis of the Nordic co-operation and of the Nordic Region as a concept.

Values such as openness, popular participation, and proximity to power are building blocks of the Nordic Model. The model gives the Nordic cultural expressions a special image, which is currently and increasingly fascinating the outside world, and is reflected in concepts like Nordic Noir, Nordic Design, New Nordic Food, and The Nordic Music Wonder. The historically strong bond between the Nordic people and nature, and the attitude to the environment that this has generated, permeates not only the culture, but also the relationship to





nature itself. In an interplay between culture, nature, and societal responsibility, we strive to manage our heritage in a good way. The common responsibility for natural and human resources permeates decision-making in both business and politics.

There is plenty of space in the Nordic region. There are vast plains, high mountains, dense forests, and large oceans, and people are free to spend a lot of their recreational time there, because of a labor market model that allows time for both work and leisure. Although the magnificent landscapes are important for Nordic inhabitants and for how the outside world perceives the region, most Nordic citizens today live in urban environments. Planning, management and adaptation of towns and cities to climate change are other characteristics of the Nordic Model. A sustainable approach focused on people has a major impact on politics.

### **Other activities**

Selecting a few major initiatives does not preclude other activities in the countries, in the sectors, or within the Nordic collaboration. As described earlier, the strategy will not limit the work of the individual countries or actors on branding. The aim of a joint Nordic branding strategy is to supplement and strengthen each country's individual trademark, while also helping to present a clearer and more consistent image of our common region.



# The Branding Model



All the Nordic countries work separately with national branding and public diplomacy initiatives. Each country also promotes its own brand through its tourist and business organizations, educational institutions, culture institutions, etc. The common denominator for these initiatives is that they showcase, to the world, the best of the country. This concerns business, culture and nature, but also the countries' positions of strength in areas such as sustainability, equality and design.

The aim of a common platform for branding The Nordics is to add value to the countries' own branding initiatives, not only when the branding involves a joint Nordic initiative but equally when the countries brand themselves as individual nations. Consequently, it has been important to develop a communications model that does not create communicative interference and cannibalize the initiatives the countries are already implementing. In other words, redefining the common perception of how place branding is planned and implemented, so that the Nordic brand will make a positive contribution to the common Nordic storytelling.

A basic character trait of humans is that, in order to understand and relate to a given situation, people try to connect the situation with the context from which they come. In business, politics and cultural exchanges of all kinds, the encounter between people and cultures is based on this mechanism. And it is precisely this mechanism that we will

strengthen and develop when we are branding The Nordics in other parts of the world. For example, it is far easier for a Chinese delegation to understand Nordic competencies in elderly care and health care if we can refer to a Nordic-inspired elderly care home in Guangdong Province. Such examples or traces of our region and our competencies can be found all over the world. It is perhaps not possible to connect a certain area in Pakistan specifically with, for example, Åland, but it can certainly be connected with traces that link to other parts of the Nordic region. And because we in the Nordic region have a common set of values, these traces can be used to tell a common story about The Nordics.

We are eight different countries, but when we consider each other, we are often regarded as one unit by the rest of the world. And if we change the perspective in the common branding initiative, from trying to get the world to see us as individual countries to instead show that we are already present in the world, it will suddenly become obvious that we all have a better chance of getting our messages across, and starting collaborations and dialogues, when we stand together as one region.

The strategy is simple. By looking at ourselves outside our own region, we have a better chance of branding ourselves as a single entity.

The model is quite simple:

**We will *not* be showing The Nordics *to* the world.**

**We will be showing The Nordics *in* the world.**

## **Traces of North**

We are turning traditional place branding upside down, by focusing the branding initiative on all the traces that the Nordics have left in the world. For these traces, the actual manifestations of the Nordic brand are our common values. We call the concept Traces of North.

Traces of North can be large or small. They can be a feeling, a concept or a mindset, a building, a person or a product. Anything that has made its way from the Nordics out into the world and that has made a difference, brought about change, or affected some people.

The concept will help to make The Nordics, our competencies, and our values relevant to the world around us, and make it easier to engage in dialogue with companies, opinion shapers, politicians, etc. With our values as the focal point for branding initiatives, actors will also think more across sectors and across themes in branding initiatives.

### **Definition of Traces of North**

A 'trace' has a geographical anchor in the world outside the Nordic region, and can be a big concept that helps a country, or a small product, or an individual person – the size is irrelevant here. But a trace will have more than just a geographical link – it will relate to and be a carrier of the common Nordic values:

- **Trust**
- **Equality**
- **Sustainability**
- **Innovation**
- **Openness**





In other words, a trace will be the catalyst that can help to promote dialogue with people, businesses and organizations outside our own region, and thereby help to build up preferences for The Nordics.

### Summary of the branding model

- WHY** We want to inspire other people to see life in a Nordic perspective, based on the values of openness, trust, creativity, sustainability and equality.
- HOW** Our products, services, culture, mindset and politics are rooted in the Nordic perspective. They are the physical and mental manifestations of the Nordic brand, our values. Traces of these can be found throughout the world as Traces of North.
- WHAT** We want to start conversations based on Traces of North, using stories, videos, facts, Open Calls, creative collaborations, SoMe, and a toolbox that all parties interested in The Nordics can use.

# Target Groups

Branding of The Nordics concerns creating preferences for the Nordic region, including our positions of strength, businesses and solutions to global challenges, but also attracting talents, tourists and businesses to the Nordic region.

Consequently, branding of The Nordics has many different target groups, and the messages that work in China are not necessarily the same as those that work in Mexico. Branding therefore requires a combined effort by many different actors, including embassies and consulates, but also business organizations, companies and creative Nordic talents. These different actors are already active in their respective markets, and therefore know the end target groups better than we do here in the Nordic region. They also know what it takes to get the target groups to engage in conversations.

Therefore, the primary target groups for the project to brand The Nordics are initially the actors mentioned above. Secondary target groups are everyone who can be defined in the broadest sense as being interested in 'something Nordic', for example in culture, business, politics or innovation. Naturally, this group

is enormous, but the primary target group is crucial, as its commitment will determine the potential to reach the secondary target groups.

This does not mean that we should not be working in the project to reach the secondary target groups, but we will be focusing our efforts on the people who can use a Nordic brand and Nordic storytelling in their everyday work.

### **Target groups**

1. Nordic embassies and consulates
  - Business and tourist organizations
  - Nordic businesses
  - Creative industries and entrepreneurs
  - Nordic Council of Ministers
  - Nordic organizations and associations
2. International media
  - Nordic media and PR
  - First movers
3. Previous project partners
  - Everyone with an interest in the Nordic region



# Strategic Initiatives



The Nordics will be branded within the framework of the Traces of North concept. The Nordic Council of Ministers has initiated a number of initiatives that will support the actions of different actors within these frames, to ensure that the common branding initiatives live up to the vision of 'Together We Are Stronger'.

## **Connector role**

One of the main aims of branding The Nordics is to promote increased Nordic collaboration on branding activities. The branding project must therefore work strategically to act as a connector between different Nordic actors. The project should aim to include all relevant partners in the process of branding activities, thereby bringing a wider range of Nordic actors/competencies into play and ensuring that actors think across sectors in their initiatives.

This involvement will also help to ensure the common Nordic narrative, and that the initiatives will be linked to ongoing political initiatives, such as presidency programs and prime ministers' initiatives.

## **Open Calls for Nordic projects**

In order to activate the Nordic brand out in the world, and thereby reach the end target groups for the branding initiative, input and commitment is required from many different actors. Consequently, Open Calls for Nordic projects are given a high

priority. Through Open Calls, Nordic actors can apply for financial and content-related assistance for projects that can help to tell the Nordic story, place a focus on our values, and promote the strategic focus areas.

Open Calls will help to engage different actors with a Nordic agenda and create new Nordic collaborations across countries.

The branding project prioritizes applications with a strong Nordic narrative that can help bring about change and attract attention. Applications can be made for funding for the following two types of projects:

- Strategic Collaborations: Projects that help set new standards and brand The Nordics and our common values. The maximum grant is DKK 250,000. Co-financing of 66% of the total project budget is required.
- Creative Talents: Projects that change the perception of how The Nordics are to be branded. A high level of creativity, with a focus on new actors and ideas. The maximum grant is DKK 50,000.

Obligatory application criteria for Open Calls:

- Emphasis on Nordic values and strategic focus areas
- A strong Nordic narrative
- Cross-sectoral collaborations/themes
- Level of co-financing (does not apply to Creative Talents)
- Documented collaboration partners (does not apply to Creative Talents)
- Minimum of three partners with at least two from different Nordic countries (does not apply to Creative Talents)

In the future, Open Calls will be more closely linked to other Nordic initiatives (such as presidency programs, Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges, etc.), so that the branding project plays a greater part in and supports the strategic decisions made in a Nordic context.

As a result of the feedback received in the evaluation, the application procedure will be simplified and made less time-consuming, and the criteria for allocation of funding will be made clearer.

### **Toolbox and [www.thenordics.com](http://www.thenordics.com)**

To make it easier for parties who will be representing The Nordics out in the world in their everyday activities, a digital toolbox has been produced with an associated website.

The website is aimed at the general public and disseminates information about The Nordics through the Traces of North concept. The website also contains an events calendar where everyone can see which Nordic events and activities are taking place all over the world. Embassies and other Nordic actors may themselves enter events and arrangements in the calendar. The branding project can thereby keep track of what activities are taking place, and the project can help to market selected events through the project's own channels. The website is also used to promote Open Calls, and Open Call applications are submitted via an online form.

From the toolbox, Nordic actors can download graphic materials, guidelines, videos, facts, pictures, etc., to facilitate their work on implementing branding activities. The contents





of the toolbox will be continually developed and updated, thereby ensuring it is up to date in relation to the prevailing themes on the agendas in the Nordic region. Themed pages with information, guidelines, facts and prepared tweets in various subjects are under development, which again will make it easier for Nordic actors to act Nordic and thereby contribute to the coordinated branding of The Nordics.

Similarly, in the future, more ready-to-use products will be developed for the toolbox. Examples are print-on-demand exhibitions, so embassies and other Nordic actors can quickly and simply implement branding activities.

### **Social media**

Branding The Nordics involves entering into a dialogue with the world around us on who we are and what we stand for, sharing our experiences, and giving us new perspectives. For this, social media is an essential communication platform, in that it enables The Nordics to enter into a dialogue with the rest of the world and initiate new conversations based on our common set of values and strategic focus areas. Consequently, strategic work is used to select channels and the types of messages presented in the different channels.

The social media used in the branding project serves both as independent channels with their own communicative purposes, and as general media to generate traffic to the

toolbox and the website. The overall mission for the social channels is to be the channels that people follow if they are interested in the international branding of The Nordics.

The social channels are used as communication channels direct to Nordic actors, but equally as channels to increase knowledge about and increase preferences for The Nordics. In addition, social media are the primary forms of communication to support ongoing Nordic branding projects by disseminating their messages.

In this revised strategy, the work primarily involves the following social media:

- **Twitter**
- **Facebook**
- **Instagram**

The media image is constantly changing, so the composition of the social channels will be continually evaluated.

### **Hashtags**

To support the brand and increase the relevance of The Nordics in different forums and debates on social media, a number of different hashtags are used that help to thematize communication and target the message to relevant stakeholders. Nordic actors are encouraged to use these hashtags, as they can help achieve the synergy effects deriving from being part of the overall Nordic branding, while helping to support the overall strategic initiatives.

The branding project continually monitors the hashtags #TheNordics, #TracesOfNorth and #StartingConversations for activity and use, as this allows the project to share relevant content from Nordic actors and thereby strengthen the dialogue on social media.

### **Newsletters**

A newsletter has been produced for the branding project, and contains information about, for example, features in the toolbox, invitations to Open Calls, latest news from the branding project, and sharing of experiences. The ambition is for the newsletter to be sent six times a year.

### **Knowledge sharing**

In the evaluation carried out before the revision of this strategy, a clear wish was expressed for better opportunities to share knowledge and best practice concerning Nordic branding activities. Attempts will be made to find a solution that addresses this need, which will generate added value and synergy between different initiatives.

### **Nordic Talks**

In line with the Nordic value set, the Traces of North concept, and the ambition for the branding of The Nordics to involve inspiring dialogue and collaboration with the world around us, the opportunities to develop a format for Nordic Talks will be investigated.

Nordic Talks is planned as a concept that all Nordic actors can use out in the world. The format will be a type of plug-and-play, where guidelines and materials can be retrieved directly from





the toolbox. The aim is to make a concept/tool available for Nordic actors that will make it easier for them to brand The Nordics while reaping the communicative benefits afforded by being part of something bigger.

Nordic Talks will help to initiate conversations about the Nordic region, our values and strategic focus areas. The concept will therefore be able to contribute with content and debates that are relevant for more parties than just the target groups participating in an individual physical event.

The concept 'talk' is already established in the form of TED Talks and others but, in line with the Nordic values, Nordic Talks will be more democratic and dialogue-promoting. Nordic Talks will be documented on video or in a sound recording, thereby lengthening their lifespan, and they will be easy to share through digital media.

### **Larger branding initiatives and events**

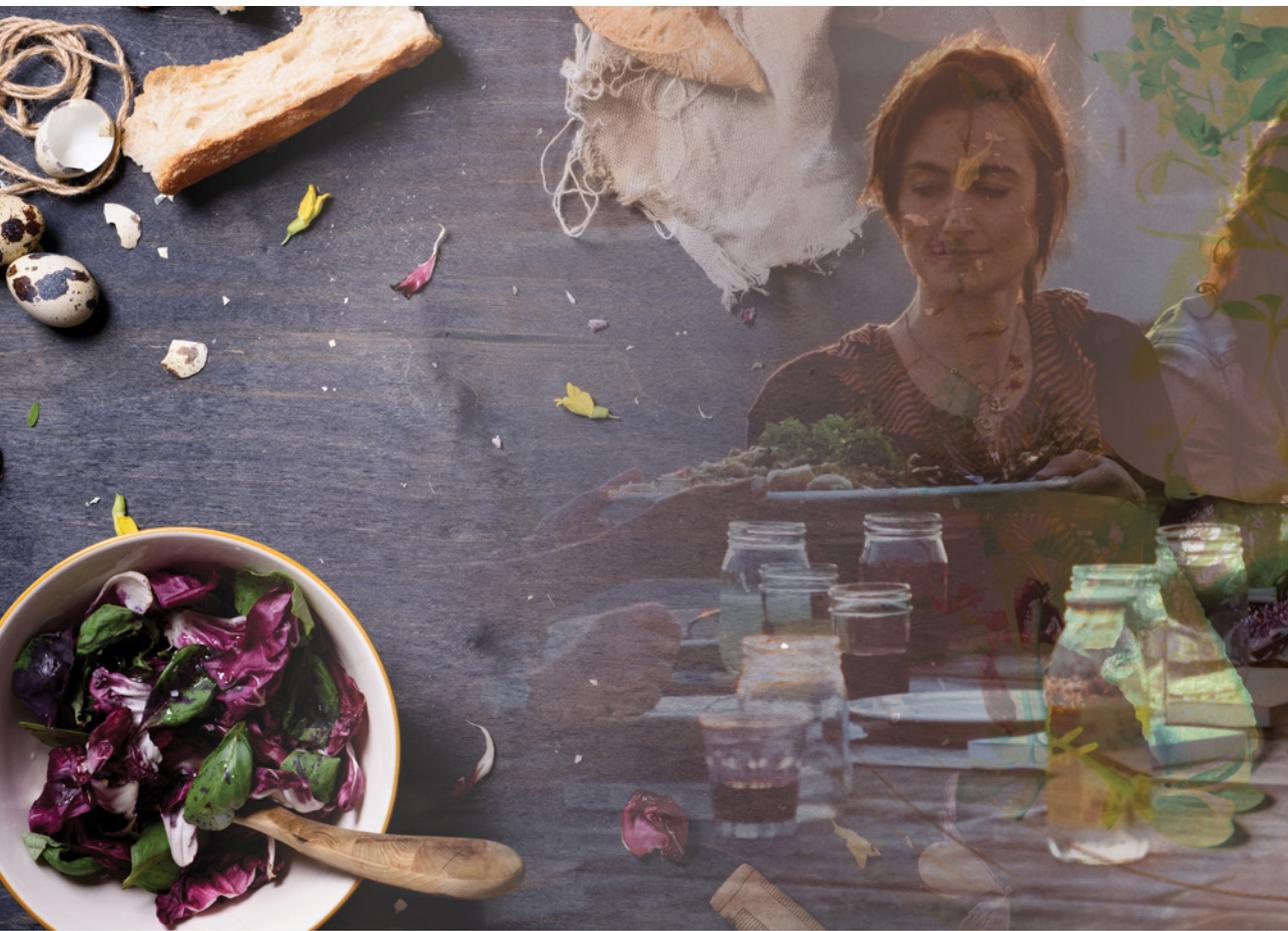
Larger Nordic branding initiatives and events outside the Nordic region, such as joint Nordic cultural initiatives abroad or joint Nordic initiatives at international conferences, should be arranged in interaction with this strategy. Larger international branding initiatives often have cross-sectoral synergies. For example, joint Nordic cultural initiatives can mediate and brand The Nordics as a unified whole, including the Nordic values, so that the initiatives generate Nordic value for many sectors.



# Evaluation



Before the duration of this strategy ends in 2021, the project will be the subject of a thorough evaluation. Based on this evaluation, an assessment will be made as to whether and, if so, in which form, the project will be continued.



# Starting conversations

## #TheNordics

Twitter: @The\_Nordics

Facebook: @NordicTraces

Instagram: @The.Nordics

Sign up for The Nordics newsletter:

[thenordicsnl.presscloud.com](https://thenordicsnl.presscloud.com)

Go explore and share your events and

Traces of North at: [thenordics.com](https://thenordics.com)

Get access to The Nordics toolbox:

[thenordics.com/toolbox](https://thenordics.com/toolbox)





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### **Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region**

The Nordic region is attractive. For a long time, the Nordic region has been attracting international recognition, thanks to unique achievements in cuisine, design, films, music and literature. We find success stories like these in all the Nordic countries, and many of them have a common Nordic format – a Nordic trademark.

However, the Nordic region first started to distinguish itself on the international stage in the aftermath of the financial crisis. It showed that the Nordic welfare and political model was once again capable of renewing itself. Countries around the world then began to discuss whether our model could serve as a possible buffering and stabilizing factor in an increasingly uncertain global economy.

We in the Nordic region are also facing a number of serious challenges. We are far from perfect, but it is perhaps this imperfection that makes us fascinating.