

# STRATEGY FOR NORDIC CO-OPERATION ON FISHERIES 2001 - 2004

## 1 Introduction

The Strategy for Nordic Co-operation on Fisheries 2001-2004 constitutes the overarching framework for joint Nordic activities in this policy area, covering all aspects of foodstuffs derived from fishing<sup>1</sup> and aquaculture.

The Nordic countries have won international recognition for their management of living marine resources and their capacity as a major supplier of fish and shellfish products. Some of the Nordic countries are among the world's largest fishing nations, and roughly half of the fish products consumed in Europe come from the Nordic region. Fisheries play a major role in the economies of some of the Nordic countries and the autonomous territories.

In the future, Nordic fisheries will play an increasingly important role as suppliers of healthy food, safe food.

The strategy presented here replaces the "Programme for Nordic Co-operation on Fisheries 1997-2000", and is based on the 3-pillar structure adopted for Nordic co-operation:

- Intra-Nordic co-operation,
- Co-operation with the Adjacent Areas (Baltic countries, Kaliningrad and Northwest Russia), and
- Co-operation with the EU/EEA.

Further, the strategy has been designed in accordance with developments in international processes that play a role in fisheries, and in compliance with the Nordic Prime Ministers' declaration on "A Sustainable Nordic Region".

## 2 Goals

The overarching goal adopted for Nordic co-operation on fisheries is to promote sustainable development in the Nordic countries' fisheries sectors, and (the conservation of) a sound marine to enable this development, thereby ensuring that consumers have an opportunity to choose healthy and safe food of high quality.

The adoption of this goal means that protection of the Nordic countries' ecosystems and sustainable utilisation of the sea's living resources are accorded a high priority in Nordic co-operation on fisheries.

In particular, it is important that – via this pattern of co-operation – activities are carried out that are of relevance to the areas most dependent on fisheries.

Nordic co-operation on fisheries is to be based on – and further develop – the fisheries policy of the single Nordic country, while at the same time promoting the development of common solutions in areas where such solutions offer advantages as compared with national measures.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway the term "fishing" also covers catching (i.e. marine mammals, etc.).

### **3 Background**

As stated above, the strategy complies with the Nordic Prime Ministers' declaration on "A Sustainable Nordic Region", which emphasises the following aspects:

- Present and future generations must be ensured a safe and healthy life.
- A sustainable society must be based on the principles of democracy, openness and participation.
- Biodiversity and the productivity of ecosystems must be conserved.
- Renewable resources must be utilised within the framework of their reproduction capacity.

The strategy also pays due attention to developments in the relevant international processes, which exert a growing influence on the conditions and prior requirements for the fishing industry. With a view to meeting future needs with regard to resource management and food production, the fisheries sector should play a more proactive role in the international processes.

In the future, a major emphasis in co-operation in this area will be placed on the consumer's right to healthy and safe food, and to information on an item's origin, production, nutritional contents and quality.

The Nordic region will continue to place a major emphasis on protection of the marine environment. A pollution-free marine environment is a prior requirement for the conservation or improvement of the sea's productivity, and thus also for sustainable utilisation of the sea's resources and the quality of such resources.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Fisheries Division has learned from experience that inter-sectoral co-operation (i.e. between the actual sectors and the Council of Ministers' administrative divisions responsible for one or more policy areas) is one of the prior requirements for the capacity to devise solutions that can be applied across several areas of responsibility. This implies that both the Fisheries Division and other divisions assume their responsibilities and work together to reach common solutions.

All activities carried out under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers must comply with the criteria adopted for the principle of Nordic Advantage. This means that:

- The activities would otherwise be carried out at national level, but a joint Nordic effort yields considerable positive effects.
- The activities manifest and develop the Nordic sense of solidarity.
- The activities increase the competences and competitiveness of the Nordic countries.

Moreover, Nordic initiative should aim at benefiting industry/trade in the Nordic countries and at promoting regional development. Nordic co-operation on fisheries must pay particular attention to areas where the fisheries sector plays a decisive socio-economic role.

## **4 Main areas of co-operation**

### **4.1 Co-operation on fisheries within the Nordic region**

The autonomous territories (Faroe Islands, Greenland, Åland) participate actively and independently in Nordic co-operation on fisheries.

The fisheries sectors in the Nordic countries have many common features, insofar as – to a large extent – the same species are caught in the same areas using the same technology. Even though in some cases the different nations' sectors compete on markets, the Nordic region has a long tradition of co-operation on management, research and development. This co-operation has won international respect, and in many areas has played a role in setting the international agenda. This pattern is to be maintained.

With a view to meeting future challenges, there is a growing need for an awareness on the part of the fisheries sector of socio-economic trends, and a willingness to become more closely involved in the political debate, including a discussion of issues related to the environment and consumers' rights. Among the tools that can be used in this process are more intensive information activities, aimed at the consumers, and the development and exploitation of new information- and communications technology.

#### **4.2 Co-operation on fisheries between the Nordic countries, EU/EEA and other international processes**

For the Nordic countries – irrespective of membership of the European Union – Nordic co-operation on fisheries serves as a forum for the exchange of information and consultation, which all five countries wish to retain and develop. This leads to improved possibilities of co-ordinating Nordic viewpoints at EU level and in the context of other international processes. Co-operation is to be extended and reinforced, especially in areas where the EU and the Nordic region have common interests.

#### **4.3 Co-operation on fisheries between the Nordic countries and the Adjacent Areas**

Nordic co-operation on fisheries can also cover co-operation with nearby areas and countries, i.e. in geographical terms. In addition to the Baltic region, the Arctic and the Barents region, other areas can participate in regional cooperation.

### **5 Areas targeted for measures**

#### **5.1 Co-operation on management**

The chief asset of Nordic co-operation on fisheries in the management field is the development of active networks for the exchange of experience and ideas on the sustainable development of the Nordic countries' fisheries sectors. In the management of resources, the greatest value of Nordic co-operation is the building of an active network for the exchange of data (on methods/results, etc.) and ideas on sustainable development in the Nordic countries' fisheries sectors. The integration of environmental considerations will continue to be prioritised. Joint initiatives and mutual briefing on topical fisheries policy subjects between the countries – and between the EU countries and the others – are implemented as required.

Nordic co-operation within the framework of the EEA is to be continued, with a view to exerting an influence on, inter alia, the EU's fisheries policy and its research and development programmes.

Within the framework of Nordic co-operation, projects and surveys have been conducted with a view to producing an improved basis for fisheries management. These activities should be

continued and further developed within the framework of the strategy. Sustainable development has three aspects:

- environmental aspects,
- economic and trade aspects, and
- social aspects.

In Nordic co-operation on fisheries there is an emphasis on the environmental and social aspects, and from now on there is to be an additional emphasis on economic and trade-related issues.

## **5.2 Co-operation with NGOs**

One of the goals is to promote co-operation with the industry's and other voluntary organisations, with a view to improving the basis for processes and initiatives adopted to achieve the overall goals adopted for the strategy for Nordic co-operation on fisheries.

## **5.3 Inter-divisional co-operation**

Inter-sectoral co-operation is of particular relevance in areas where the sectors involved can achieve greater progress in development and an increase in yield.

Since 1995, co-operation with the environment division has been enshrined in the Nordic Strategy for Co-operation on the Environment and Fisheries. The current strategy covers the period 1999-2002, specifying 28 areas for measures.

A sharper focus on consumer issues and food safety will promote further development of co-operation between the fisheries-, consumer- and foodstuffs divisions.

The experience gained from co-operation in these areas will form the basis for inter-divisional co-operation.

Co-operation with the education and culture divisions should be developed, with a view to raising the levels of competence, adapting the training courses in the fisheries division, ensuring recruitment to the industry and achieving a higher profile for the fisheries sector. There should be a particular emphasis on information and the application of new technology.

Co-operation on improved safety, welfare and the working environment in the fisheries sector should also be developed, including factors that will promote gender equality in access to jobs.

Co-operation with the research division should be developed, with a view to improved and more efficient utilisation of resources, also in relation to international co-operation on research.

## **5.4 Co-operation on Research and Development**

Co-operation on research and development within the framework of Nordic co-operation on fisheries is conducted under the aegis of the Nordic Working Group on Fisheries Research (NAF). Increased research and development are a prior requirement for utilisation of

fisheries' potential for value-added. During the strategy period, there is to be an emphasis on research and development in the following five prioritised areas:

#### **5.4.1 Healthy and safe food**

Fish is healthy food, safe food. It is important to document this claim. Research in areas that emphasise the positive nutritional and health aspects of fish must be reinforced.

Moreover, research must focus on identifying undesirable substances in fish and fish products, determining value limits for such substances.

It is important to keep abreast of developments in the production of fodder for aquaculture, partly with a view to identifying genetically modified components.

#### **5.4.2 Interaction between the environment and fisheries**

Marine climate processes have an impact on the ecosystem and thus also cause changes in the conditions for reproduction and rearing of the living marine resources. There is thus to be an emphasis on interdisciplinary research, which will increase our understanding of the link between – for example – meteorology, physics, chemistry and biology.

Development of selective and “non-injurious” fishing gear continues to have a priority as an area for measures.

#### **5.4.3 Management systems**

The “sustainable fisheries” concept should be further developed and put into operation. One of the prior requirements for long-term sustainable utilisation of the marine resources is a unified view, integrating biological, economic and social aspects.

#### **5.4.4 Ethics, quality and the environment**

Aspects of food production related to ethics, the environment and quality are factors that lead to changes in market conditions. These aspects are perceived as being of special value, so that documentation of the production sequence has become a competition parameter.

Research and development initiatives that contribute to greater transparency and traceability, and to the development of standardised quality assessment systems, should thus be reinforced.

#### **5.4.5 Improved utilisation of marine resources**

Research and development activities aimed at optimal utilisation and environmentally justifiable production of resources are to be prioritised, and steps are to be taken to ensure improved utilisation of non-commercial species and supplementary catches (by-catches).

There is a need for co-ordination of national priorities, i.e. the research activities/programmes in the Nordic region, with a view to making more efficient use of resources for specific research assignments.

## **6 Organisation of co-operation on fisheries**

### **6.1 Nordic Council of Ministers**

The ministers for fisheries in the Nordic countries meet – as circumstances require – to discuss current issues of common interest. They lay down the political guidelines for Nordic co-operation on fisheries, which is undertaken by the Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries (NEF).

## **6.2 Executive Committee**

The Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries (NEF) must implement the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers. Moreover, NEF can initiate and promote proposals of relevance to the Nordic fisheries sector. NEF appoints working groups as required. Please see the Terms of Reference (NEF).

## **6.3 Working Group for Fisheries Research**

The Nordic Working Group for Fisheries Research (NAF) provides advisory services and conducts studies, while initiating new measures in the field of research and development. Please see Terms of Reference (NAF).

## **6.4 Nordic Contact Committee**

The Nordic Contact Committee for Fisheries (NKO) is the forum where representatives from fisheries organisations and management/administrative bodies in the Nordic region meet. Please see Statutes (NKO).

## **7 Budget**

The fisheries sector is already – as emphasised above – a major supplier of foodstuffs, and has the potential to play an even more important role, as fish is healthy and safe food. This fact should be stressed when communicating with consumers. The sector must be more aware of the new demands that are being imposed. A special Nordic effort must thus be made in areas such as research and information activities, while there is also a need for increased inter-sectoral co-operation. Implementation of this very ambitious programme and the achievement of the expected results will require additional resources for co-operation: an estimated 25-35% of the current budget.

## **8 Implementation and evaluation**

### **8.1 Publishing the results**

There is a need for increased openness in and on the fisheries sector and its work. To meet this need the Nordic Council of Ministers has created a website with information on activities in committees and working groups under the aegis of the Council of Ministers and within the framework of the relevant international processes (<http://fisk.norden.org>). The Nordic Council of Ministers publishes a newsletter – *Nordfiskeri*. It compiles brochures on current issues for use at international level in the industry and also aimed at consumers, young adults and other target groups. The Council of Ministers also arranges seminars and conferences. Finally, the strategy will be followed up in the Council of Ministers' annual report.

### **8.2 Compliance with the Declaration issued by the Nordic Prime Ministers: 4<sup>th</sup> annual report**

The Nordic prime ministers' declaration on "A Sustainable Nordic Region" has led to the adoption of a 20-year Nordic strategy for sustainable development in the region. The strategy is divided into 4-year programmes. The first period runs concurrently with this strategy, so that reporting/evaluation of the strategy presented here will coincide with the interim report on the status of the 20-year strategy.

# **Terms of Reference for the Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries Policy (NEF) 2000 - 2004**

**Drawn up in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Council of Ministers (ministers for co-operation):  
Rules of Procedure for Executive Committees, amended 4<sup>th</sup> March 1993 and adopted by the Council of  
Ministers (ministers for fisheries) on 15th November 1999.**

## **§ 1. Goals**

### Section 1

The Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries Policy (NEF) has a creative role in Nordic co-operation, with a primary focus on the fisheries sector. In addition to implementing the Council of Ministers' decisions and carrying out its assignments, NEF must initiate and promote proposals of relevance to the Nordic fisheries sector.

### Section 2

NEF must work to promote sustainable fisheries, with a view to facilitating a dynamic development of the Nordic fishing industry, as an important asset in balance with society's requirements.

## **§ 2. Participation**

### Section 1

NEF consists of delegations from the fisheries administrations in the 5 Nordic sovereign states and the 3 autonomous territories, each of which – from its delegation – appoints a contact person.

### Section 2

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat is to be notified of the names of permanent representatives of a delegation.

### Section 3

Representatives can have deputies (substitutes) who can participate in the committee's meetings.

### Section 4

The Secretary General at the Council of Ministers' Secretariat and the head of the relevant division/department can participate in and express opinions at the meetings.

### Section 5

The adviser responsible for Nordic co-operation on fisheries at the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers participates in and can express opinions at the meetings of the committee.

### Section 6

All representatives can be assisted by experts.

## **§ 3. Assignments**

### Section 1

NEF treats issues pertaining to Nordic co-operation on fisheries, takes new initiatives and prepares the meetings held by the Council of Ministers.

#### Section 2

NEF draws up co-operation programmes covering a period of 3-5 years.

#### Section 3

NEF can appoint working groups to undertake assignments and draws up terms of reference for such groups.

#### Section 4

NEF can take initiatives to establish – and participate in – both inter-sectoral co-operation and co-operation with the fishing industry.

#### Section 5

NEF must aim at designing co-operation measures so that the results are measurable.

### **§ 4. Responsibility**

#### Section 1

NEF implements the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers.

#### Section 2

NEF works to ensure allocation of annual budgetary funding to co-operation on fisheries policy.

#### Section 3

NEF ensures that budgetary funding is spent on implementation of the co-operation programme.

#### Section 4

The chair submits its priorities in an annual working plan, and assumes active leadership of the co-operation.

#### Section 5

The chair and the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers prepare the meetings.

#### Section 6

The contact persons function as a Nordic network.

#### Section 7

The contact persons serve as a link between the committee and its working groups when they represent the committee (i.e. NEF).

### **§ 5. Procedure**

#### Section 1

NEF holds meetings as required and when a representative requests such a meeting.

#### Section 2

The chair leads the work and conducts the meetings.

#### Section 3

Each delegation has a vote in the committee (i.e. NEF).

#### Section 4

NEF's decisions are reached by consensus.

#### Section 5

In cases where consensus is not achieved, the case can be referred – upon the request of a delegation – to the Council of Ministers.

#### Section 6

When treating procedural issues, decisions can be reached by a simple voting majority. In the event of a tie, the country currently holding the chair has the casting vote. Blank votes do not preclude a decision.

#### Section 7

Minutes are taken at meetings of the NEF and are made available – following approval – to the general public.

# **Terms of Reference for the Nordic Working Group for Fisheries Research (NAF) 2000 - 2002**

**Adopted by the Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries Policy  
on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

## **§ 1. Goals**

The Nordic Working Group for Fisheries Research (NAF) is a working group under the Nordic Council of Ministers (ministers for fisheries).

NAF pursues the goal of contributing to well functioning and more extensive Nordic cooperation in the fisheries sector and in the context of related research and development in other sectors.

Naïf's functions are otherwise determined by the Nordic Executive Committee on Fisheries Policy (NEF).

## **§ 2. Functions**

NAF functions primarily as a consultative organ for the Nordic Council of Ministers on issues pertaining to fisheries-related research and development.

NAF must be well informed on research and development activities in other areas of relevance to the fisheries sector and Nordic co-operation in these fields.

- NAF's assignments are determined on the basis of annual current work plans, for which budgetary frameworks have been drawn up.
- In addition to these assignments, NAF can be instructed to undertake other assignments. These assignments can be implemented within the framework of NAF or through NAF's agency by another party. Special grants can be made available for assignments other than those specified in the working plan, or requested by NEF or the Nordic council of Ministers.
- Once a year, not later than the end of October, NEF submits its priorities for the subsequent year to NAF, with a view to having these incorporated in the working plan for such subsequent year.
- Additionally, the working plan at any given time is based on the current co-operation plan for Nordic co-operation on fisheries, and on the overarching priorities for overall Nordic co-operation.
- With a view to achieving the highest possible value-added by adopting a joint Nordic approach, when drawing up the annual current working plan NAF must – to the greatest extent possible – incorporate the priorities of national Nordic authorities with regard to research and development in the fisheries area.
- Similarly, NAF must submit a report on how co-ordination of the research and development areas prioritised in the EU system is to be carried out.

- The working plan and budgetary framework are to be submitted to NEF (Nordic Executive Committee) at NEF's February meeting, for approval and the granting of allocations.
- NAF can itself subsequently take decisions within the approved economic framework, and assumes responsibility for implementation of the approved working plan.
- NAF compiles an annual report on its activities, with an annexed report on expenditure of the funding placed at its disposal and on the results achieved. The annual report is to be addressed to the Nordic Council of Ministers and is to be submitted to NEF for approval.
- An operations allocation – covering costs, e.g. secretariat and travel expenses – is, following an annual application, placed at the disposal of NAF.

### **§ 3. NAF's primary assignments**

#### **I. To initiate and co-ordinate**

- To ensure that the annual working plans are (fully) implemented. This can be achieved by limited outsourcing of projects or other activities or – in single cases – by inviting applications.
- To take initiatives to – and contribute to the development and maintenance of – Nordic networks linking research and development environments in the areas prioritised in Nordic co-operation on fisheries and in other fisheries-related areas.
- NAF must ensure that Nordic work on research and development is firmly rooted at national level, partly by compiling information on national research and development funding and by paying due attention to national Nordic R&D programmes when initiating the working plan.
- To develop contacts and co-operation with European/international research and development environments working in fisheries-related areas. This includes steps to expedite the formulation of research and development projects, under the EU's programmes and co-funded by such programmes on research and development in currently relevant subjects. In this connection Nordic funding can be applied to initiate international/European networks/consortia with a view to gaining support from the EU.

#### **II. To follow up and evaluate**

- Via continuous follow-up and evaluation of the commissioned activities to ensure results of high quality and of relevance to Nordic co-operation. The evaluation must include an evaluation of the extent to which a value-added factor has been achieved via the co-operation (i.e. the so-called *Nordic Advantage*) and of the extent to which it is of relevance to the national Nordic prioritised areas.

#### **III. To establish contacts and disseminate information**

- NAF must serve as a contact organ for the Nordic environments working on research and development in areas related to fisheries.
- NAF must serve as a contact organ for the Nordic fisheries administrations.
- NAF must serve a contact organ linking the Nordic research and development environments, fisheries administrations and fisheries management bodies in the Nordic countries, and vis-à-vis the Nordic Research Policy Council (FPR).

- NAF must serve as a contact organ linking the fishing industry, researchers and administrators.
- NAF must serve as a contact organ linking the Nordic research and development environments, the Nordic research administrations and their European counterparts.
- Via contact work, NAF must contribute to identifying research and development preferences and needs, and to extending co-operation and ensuring dissemination of the results achieved.
- NAF itself selects the appropriate tools for establishing contacts and disseminating results, e.g. in the form of seminars/workshops, websites, newsletters and the like.

#### **§ 4. Composition**

- NAF is composed of up to 3 representatives from each of the five Nordic countries and the 3 autonomous areas: Denmark, Finland, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Åland.
- The representatives are appointed by the respective countries' fisheries administrations; NEF recommends a triple representation: one for research policy, one for fisheries biology/technology and one for economic/social science aspects.
- The Nordic countries themselves defray travel expenses for the national members of NAF.
- NAF can invite national/Nordic/international organs/state bodies/persons to participate with observer status in NAF's meetings.
- The Nordic Council of Ministers' fisheries adviser participates in NAF's meetings as an independent representative of the Council of Ministers and NEF(Nordic Executive Committee).

#### **§ 5. Rules of Procedure**

- The chair of NAF is for a period of 3 years, rotating between the Nordic countries.
- NAF itself elects its secretary.
- NAF convenes meetings as required, holding at least 2 annual meetings.
- On other matters, NAF itself draws up its own rules of procedure.

#### **§ 6. Other**

- This framework applies for a period of 3 years, after which an evaluation will be conducted with a view to effecting possible adjustments.

**Statutes for the Nordic Contact Committee for Fisheries Issues (NKO)**

Adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers (ministers for fisheries) in January 1992

**Goals**

The committee's goals are – via exchange of knowledge and co-operation on issues in relation to management of the sea's resources – to safeguard and reinforce the basis for the fishing industries in a Nordic and European context.

**The committee**

In accordance with an agreement concluded between the Nordic governments, the Nordic Contact Committee for Fisheries Issues consists of not more than 4 members from each of the Nordic countries.

**Members, etc.**

The members are appointed by the ministers in the respective countries responsible for the fisheries sector. It is a prior assumption that the members from each country are appointed so that two of them represent the fisheries administration and two represent the fishing industry.

The relevant minister can appoint deputies (substitutes) both for the representatives of the administration and those of the fishing industry, and in such cases allow one of the nominated deputies, who must be assumed to have special qualifications for participating in discussions of the items on the agenda, to replace one of the permanent members during discussion of the relevant item.

Each country appoints a person as secretary of its national delegation. The secretary can be either one of the country's members or a deputy appointed on a more permanent basis.

Each country's delegation is entitled to be accompanied by experts who will participate in the meetings insofar as this is required when submitting reports and the like. Such experts can otherwise not participate in the committee's deliberations or decision-making.

In addition to the appointed representatives or deputies, the ministers responsible for fisheries policy in the Nordic countries are at all times entitled to participate in the committee's meetings.

The Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers normally participates in the meetings.

The committee can approve the appointment of working groups which address issues of a more specific nature in relation to special management aspects and to regional interests.

**Leadership of the contact Committee**

The Contact Committee's chair and secretariat functions rotate every calendar year between the host countries for the meetings.

Once a year the secretariat must submit a report in writing to the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council.

**Meetings**

Unless otherwise decided, the Contact Committee meets once a year. Each of the Nordic ministers for fisheries can request that a meeting of the committee be held.

Minutes must be taken of the discussions held at the meetings. The secretariat is under an obligation to send copies of the minutes to the respective ministers.