

Framework Programme 2013–2016

Nordic Co-operation on Fisheries and Aquaculture,
Agriculture, Food and Forestry



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Nordic co-operation

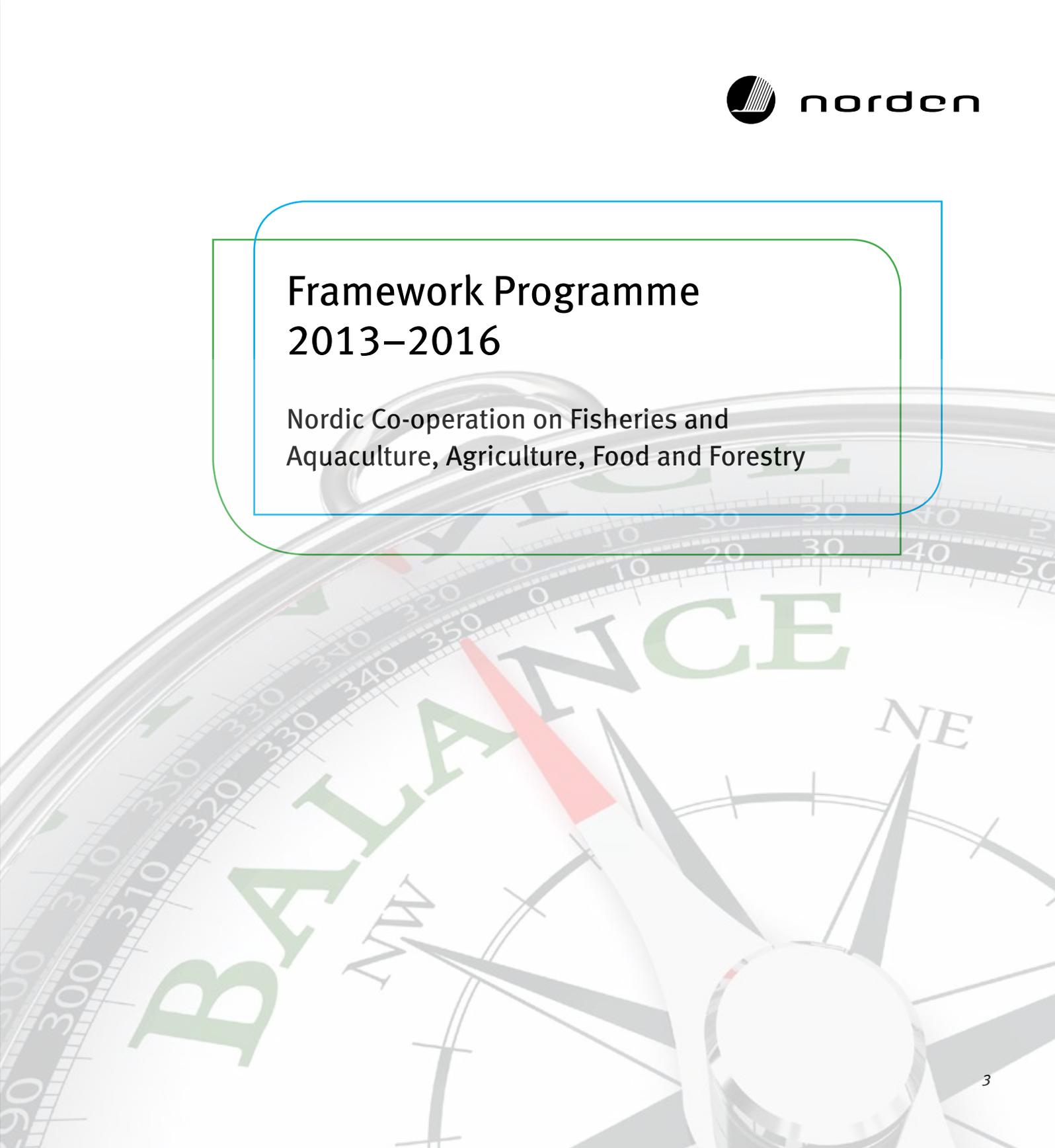
Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

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

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

Framework Programme 2013–2016

Nordic Co-operation on Fisheries and
Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry



BALANCE



VISION for the Nordic Co-operation within the Council of Ministers for MR-FJLS

Natural resources

Sustainability

Competitiveness

Welfare development

Sustainable and competitive production, in the green and blue sectors, of goods and services based on Nordic biological natural resources – to benefit sustainable development of welfare in the Nordic region



Framework Programme 2013–2016 Nordic Co-operation on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry

The framework programme states the orientation of the Nordic political co-operation in fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry in the period 2013–2016 within the Nordic Council of Ministers. The framework programme presents opportunities and describes the main challenges in the area.

The programme for the Presidency in each year will specify and supplement the framework programme. Together, the two programmes comprise the plan of action for the co-operation.

The framework programme also observes the priorities and strategies in the Nordic Council of Ministers that are established by the prime ministers, ministers for co-operation and other councils of ministers when working with themes and issues within which MR-FJLS can contribute.

The objective of the work within MR-FJLS is to promote sustainable

development in the four sectors – fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry.

The objective is to enable economic growth and welfare development, while helping to ensure better environmental, health and social/regional development.

The basic principle of the co-operation is to add value for the countries and to generate Nordic benefit. The Nordic countries co-operate to find solutions and identify opportunities for development in the MR-FJLS area, where the ministers are responsible for business enterprises that use natural resources and also for consumer protection.

The Nordic benefit arises when the co-operation extends beyond the individual country's abilities to identify and find solutions to given challenges. This mobilises supplementary expertise and resources to find solutions to common challenges.



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In recent years, the political and social development has increased focus on climate change, challenges regarding obesity and global food security, resistance to antibiotics, sustainable development, ideas about green growth, and the bio-based society. These are circumstances that, in various ways, affect the work in MR-FJLS. The MR-FJLS sectors may cause some problems, but they also come with solutions, which cannot be identified and put into practice without the active participation of the MR-FJLS sectors – the FJLS sectors are therefore part of the solution.

The co-operation will therefore focus on three overall challenges. All three cut across Nordic borders and are therefore part of the global agenda facing the Nordic region and the MR-FJLS sectors:

- Competitive production
- Sustainable management of natural resources
- Maintaining and developing the Nordic welfare societies

For each of the challenges, the basic principle is sustainable development – economic, environmental and social. The three challenges reflect that the MR-FJLS area is based on use of biological natural resources for human consumption. This use of natural resources results in production, which also entails a responsibility for managing the natural resources sustainably, and provides basic support to maintaining and developing the Nordic welfare societies.

The work in MR-FJLS draws attention to how the Nordic countries can adapt to global challenges and, where relevant, how the Nordic countries can use common inputs to influence international trends in a direction that is positive for the Nordic region.

Competitive production

The basic principle of the MR-FJLS sectors is that, by using biological natural resources, they produce goods and services, such as food, wood products, biomass, energy, outdoor activities and recreation.

The challenges associated with this are to secure and maintain sustainable production that is economically viable, that protects the environment, and that promotes the socially cohesive force throughout the Nordic region.

A major challenge is to ensure and strengthen the development of competitive and profitable production in

The issue of resource scarcity and use also presents new opportunities: what is waste today becomes valuable resources tomorrow.

the primary sector and food production. The competitive advantages this brings today become standard solutions tomorrow, so the continual work to improve competitiveness and profitability must always be based on converting political priorities into competitive advantages.

The focus of the concept *green growth* is on securing sustainable development in production that gives both environmental benefits and strong competitiveness. For MR-FJLS, green growth is an important item on the agenda, and the MR-FJLS sectors are central in applying green growth as an instrument for sustainable development.

The MR-FJLS sectors are based on production using renewable biological natural resources. The sectors thereby occupy a central position in the societal development that now, in some situations, is regarded as green growth and in others as the bio-based society.

It is a constant challenge to ensure sustainable development in production in view of current challenges.

In addition to well-known problem areas like globalisation, climate, food security, and animal health and welfare, new requirements, expectations and opportunities are constantly arising for various types of production. These can generate increased revenues while raising the issue of what the resources can and should be used for, for example food or energy.

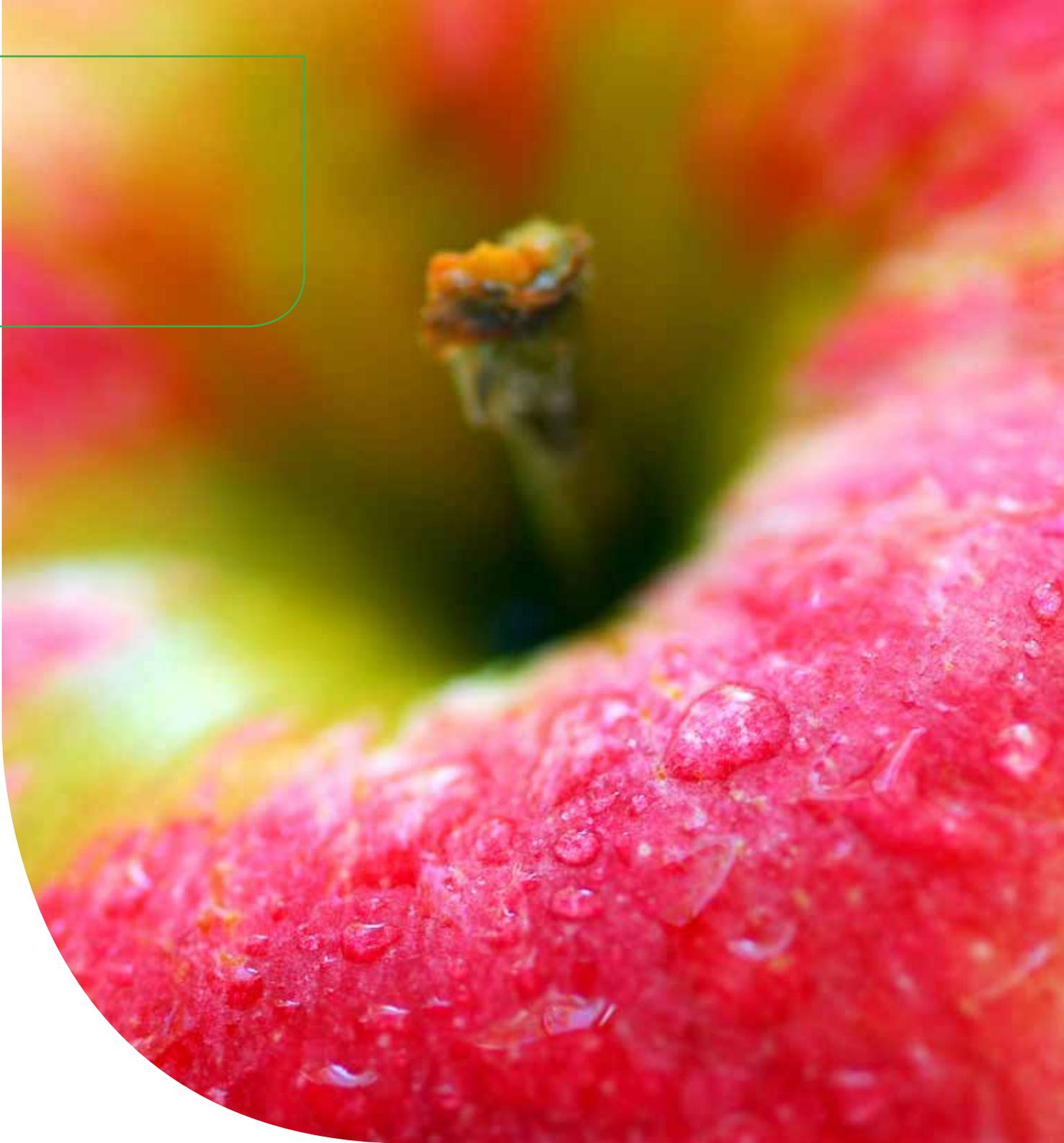
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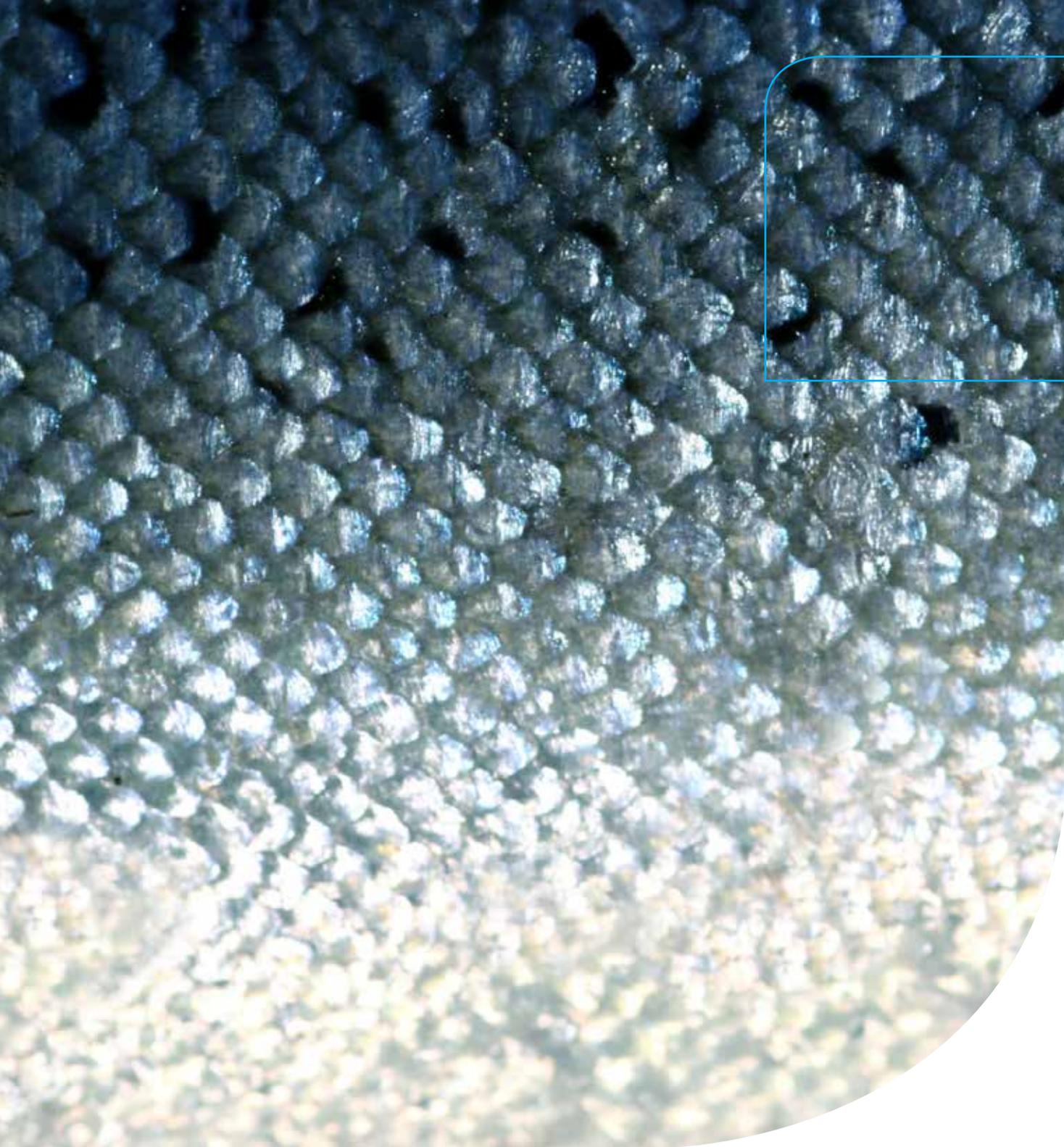
In a world with a rapidly increasing population, there is a basic need to produce more, but use fewer resources. This also highlights resource wastage in the form of unused biomass, a great wastage of food, and lack of realisation of the potential in the total resources

as a result of structural, technical or other obstacles. The potential in the bio-based society gives new perspectives and motivates Nordic reactions to how these trends will lead to adaptations in management and production, and how Nordic strengths can influence developments on a European and global scale.

MR-FJLS will contribute to the above by supplying bio-based solutions to industry and society. Demand for bio-based solutions has never been greater. During the programme period, MR-FJLS will help to meet the major challenges.

The frameworks for development at national level are set by the individual countries. At Nordic level, the co-operation will use dialogue and networks to enable the Nordic countries to tackle climate change and the development of the bio-based society, as well as the associated challenges and opportunities.





Responsible management of marine and freshwater resources is very important for the Nordic countries. For fisheries management, a scientific basis and application of the precautionary principle are key elements.

Sustainable management of natural resources

All development of society and production is based on ecosystems producing goods and services and providing life-sustaining functions. The green sector and its sustainable management is therefore the platform for sustainable development of a bio-based society.

The functions of the ecosystems are the basis of all human life. The ecosystems provide several types of services to society; these include supply services in the form of crops, animals, wood and fibre, support and modulation services through climate regulation and water purification, and cultural services through improved quality of life and health. Research and development based on this principle produces knowledge that can be converted to innovations and private enterprise in the primary sector and in the rest of society. In this way, the green sector supplies many services to society.

Production in the MR-FJLS sectors is based on the use of biological natural resources. This use must be sustainable, and the sectors must also take responsibility for management of the natural resources.

This is central for MR-FJLS. Sustainability involves responsible use and production of natural resources that secure biological diversity, reproduction and important ecosystem functions, now and in the future. Management of natural resources is a significant challenge for commercial production in the MR-FJLS sectors, and applies to both the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Responsible management of marine and freshwater resources is very important for the Nordic countries. For fisheries management, a scientific basis and application of the precautionary principle are key elements. Implementation of sustainable management strategies for the marine and freshwater resources

will be based on considering the entire ecosystem.

All the Nordic countries must comply with international requirements regarding conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and genetic resources. To a certain extent, the countries have chosen to highlight this as an area of Nordic co-operation.

For many years, the Nordic countries have been active supporters of international co-operation on genetic resources and biological diversity. Examples are the FAO's Commission on Genetic Resources, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the international TRIPS agreements.

The constant challenge for Nordic co-operation, and also at national level, is to secure a basis for conservation. This is done by developing strategies for conserving genetic variation, either in a natural state

Some of the major challenges in welfare are unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and obesity, which comprise a threat to health in the Nordic region and much of the rest of the world.

(in-situ conservation) or in, for example, a frozen state (ex-situ conservation).

Sustainable use of genetic resources is a challenge that involves ensuring use of the genetic variation in production. This is done, for example, through plant breeding initiatives and developing and strengthening sustainable use of genetic resources. This requires further initiatives through the Nordic Council of Ministers.

In the MR-FJLS sectors, production based on biological natural resources interacts closely with soil and water. The FJLS sectors use and influence both soil and water simultaneously.

Water quality is linked to the ability of primary and food production to produce healthy and safe foodstuffs. This is a challenge not confined to the Nordic countries; it is a global challenge emphasising that water, if not managed properly, will become a strategic resource accessible to too few people.

Maintaining and developing the Nordic welfare societies

The Nordic welfare model is currently undergoing a change. The MR-FJLS sectors create a platform for maintenance and development of the welfare societies in the Nordic region through, for example, food security, food safety and bioenergy. The sectors also help to ensure access to clean drinking water in several important ways. Promotion of a healthy diet and good quality of life, for example through access to outdoor activities in stimulating natural environments and a vibrant food culture, are also important parts of the Nordic welfare model.

Some of the major challenges in welfare are unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and obesity, which comprise a threat to health in the Nordic region and much of the rest of the world. The co-operation is conducted through the framework of the Nordic Plan of Action on Better Health and Quality of Life through Diet and Physical Activity,

which will support the national initiatives. Good and simple dietary advice is supported by co-operation through the *Nordic Nutrition Recommendations* and by converting these to direct information to consumers, for example through the use of the *keyhole* nutrition labelling.

Through the work with New Nordic Food, MR-FJLS is focusing on developing more multifunctional production – in terms of both methods and scale. One significant result of the Nordic Cuisine Manifesto is greater focus on local sustainable production and, not least, adding value locally with potentially great effects on the development of coastal and rural areas.

Increasing world trade increases pressure on food production. The challenge will be met by strengthening the Nordic values, i.e. focus on safe foods and healthy animals that are reared in an ethically justifiable way. In these areas, the Nordic countries already





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have a high standard but it is important to maintain this standard. The Nordic region is managing challenges in the food area by increasingly adopting a holistic, risk-based approach, and by using resources in the best possible way through, for example, preventative measures.

The Nordic voice

The Nordic dialogue will help to identify where there is consensus on given challenges and solutions, and where there is disagreement. This identification is a good starting point for deciding where and when the Nordic voice can be raised, and where and when it is relevant to do so.

The co-operation will help to promote the impact of the common Nordic positions and interests in international processes and forums, regionally and globally, wherever relevant.

The co-operation focuses, for example, on producing background mate-

rial and, when appropriate, initiating measures within the framework of international processes that help to strengthen the objectives in this framework programme. Awareness of how international processes influence administration in the Nordic countries also comprises a basis for action. The Nordic countries can learn from each other and share experiences, also with other parts of Europe.

Many of the challenges facing MR-FJLS cross borders, and can be best solved through broader international co-operation – within the Nordic region, with neighbouring regions, within Europe or globally, where the countries deem it relevant and where it benefits the Nordic region. Increasing internationalisation and the increased competition this brings, and the respective relationships of the Nordic countries with the EU and other international organisations, comprise both challenges and opportunities in the Nordic co-operation. The undertakings of the

Nordic EU countries in relation to the common agriculture and fisheries policies will be observed and respected.

Co-operation with the immediate surroundings of the Nordic region, the Baltic States, north-west Russia and the Arctic, is governed by special programmes and guidelines. The EU macroregional strategy for the Baltic Sea region enables the Nordic voice to be heard in a regional north European perspective.

International conventions, agreements and processes influence the conditions for management and use of natural resources, from primary production in the sea and on land to consumption.

Implementation

In addition to the framework programme, the programmes for the Presidency comprise a necessary and flexible supplement that can be adapted annually according to external changes that require new priorities.

Consequently, the programme for the Presidency is designed so that it expresses both the special priorities of the country holding the presidency and other joint-Nordic needs – and also to specify the contents of, and supplement, the framework programme. The presidency should co-operate with the previous and subsequent presidencies to ensure continuity.

The success criteria will be measured in the ability of the co-operation to initiate and implement initiatives and processes that help to tackle the three challenges and attain political results.

Co-operation within MR-FJLS is based on an extensive network. This network is an important instrument for implementation of the framework programme and is based on the Nordic governmental co-operation with ministers and officials and onward to researchers, practitioners, business organisations and representatives. The objective is to be the leading political network in northern Europe, with relationships to research and industry.

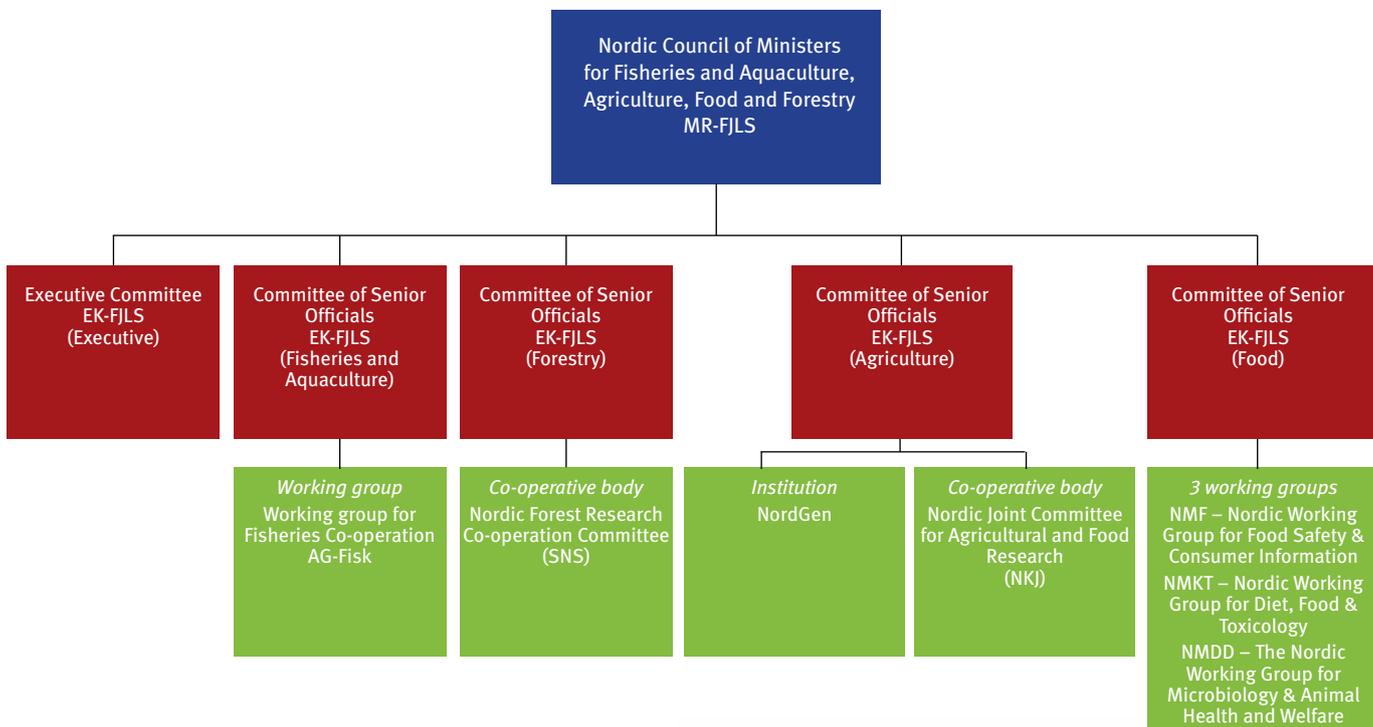
Research and innovation are very important for the implementation of the framework programme. The research landscape at national, Nordic and European level is constantly changing, which is reflected in MR-FJLS through a general trend of greater focus on research policy and tackling the major challenges instead of financing basic research.

This involves continual development of co-operation between the Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee, the Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research, the Working Group for Fisheries, with possible involvement of NordGen and the other working groups. At the same time, there is increased focus on co-operation between MR-FJLS and the other Nordic players in research and innovation, such as the Council of Ministers for Education and Research, the Council of Ministers for Business, Energy and Regional Policy, NordForsk, Nordic Innovation and Nordic Energy Research. Co-operation with other relevant players in the north European research community – such as EFINORD – is important for creating contacts and extending networks in Europe.

Communication is an important part of the implementation and will involve co-operation with the Nordic Council of Ministers Communications Department and relevant national commu-

nication bodies. Communication and dialogue are important instruments for the co-operation, and help to disseminate knowledge and ideas about how the Nordic co-operation can develop solutions for the Nordic countries. Solutions that lead to successful and acceptable adaptations to international trends, or that, with the help of the co-operation and countries' own contributions, influence international developments and trends in a direction that is positive for the Nordic region.

The plan of action will be evaluated at the end of the programme period.





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