

# Nordic Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008



# Contents

3	<b>Foreword</b>
4	<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction</b>
5	<b>Chapter 2 - Themes</b>
6	<b>1 - The environment and health</b>
7	1.1 - Chemicals
8	1.2 - Air quality
9	1.3 - Public health and experience of nature
9	1.4 - Strategy for the Nordic environmental effort in the Arctic
10	<b>2 - The sea</b>
11	2.1 - Substances harmful to the environment
11	2.2 - Eutrophication
12	2.3 - Ecosystem-based administration
13	2.4 - The influence of climate change on the sea environment
14	<b>3 - Nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life</b>
15	3.1 - Countryside and cultural environment
15	3.2 - Biological diversity
16	3.3 - Outdoor life and legal rights
17	3.4 - Genetic resources
17	3.5 - Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
17	3.6 - The influence of climate change on the natural and cultural environments
18	<b>4 - Sustainable consumption and production</b>
19	4.1 - Cleaner products and waste
20	4.2 - Green markets and public purchasing
21	4.3 - Environmental economics
21	4.4 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
23	<b>Chapter 3 - Information</b>
24	<b>Chapter 4 - Implementing the environmental action programme</b>
26	<b>Abbreviations used</b>



## Nordic cooperation gets results

The cooperation among the Nordic Ministers for the Environment builds on four-year action programmes for the environment.

This brochure contains the Nordic Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008. This plan forms the framework for the Nordic countries' environmental cooperation both within the Nordic area and in relation to the neighbouring areas, the Arctic, the EU and other international forums. The plan strongly emphasizes the need for integrating the various sectors and for collaboration among the various working groups in environmental matters.

The Environmental Action Plan focuses on four major themes: the environment and health; the sea; nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life; and sustainable consumption and production. These major themes were chosen because environmental matters should not be looked at in isolation but as part of a larger whole. Hazardous substances, for example, should be considered both on the background of how they affect peoples' health and on their effects on the environment.

Much weight is placed on protecting the marine environment, an area where the Nordic region has been an international leader for many years and which was given high priority in the programme for the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2004 under the Icelandic chairmanship.

The Environmental Action Plan is the framework for the cooperation in the coming four years and paves the way for results that will cement the position of the Nordic region as a frontrunner in environmental matters.

On behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment

*Sigridur Anna Þórháðadóttir*

Sigridur Anna Thordadottir

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Nordic countries have a long tradition for cooperation on nature and the environment. For years the region has been a frontrunner in this area. The many good results that we have achieved through the Nordic cooperation have their background in the common characteristics and values of the Nordic countries and their joint understanding of the importance of the environment and the priorities given to it. Despite the size of the Nordic region seen in an international perspective, we are convinced that we, through our cooperation, can help set the international environmental agenda.

The term "Nordic benefits" is a cornerstone in the Nordic cooperation. It means that we in the Nordic region - through our cooperation - aim to increase the solidarity, skills and competitive abilities of the Nordic countries and use our common resources better. In the Nordic cooperation we must always make priorities so we focus on areas where we can expect to achieve the best results. The Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008, which has been adopted by the Nordic Ministers for the Environment, is the overall strategic instrument for controlling the Nordic cooperation in environmental matters. The programme covers the cooperation in the Nordic region as well as the region's relations with the EU, other international areas and organizations, our neighbouring areas and the Arctic. The Nordic area plays an important role as pioneer when trying out new ideas and proposals that may be used later in a wider international context and in relations to the neighbouring areas.

The challenges presented by the environment have always been an international matter. The Nordic environmental cooperation is therefore also international in character. The world around the Nordic countries is continually changing. In a global context, the Nordic cooperation is influenced in particular by

the declaration of the world summit in Johannesburg on sustainable development. The Nordic countries wish to help strengthen the global conventions and institutions that deal with the environment and sustainable development - especially the UNEP.

The enlargement of the EU was an historic event that will impact on the Nordic countries' environmental cooperation in the coming years. In particular, there will be new opportunities and challenges in the work involving the EU and in other international collaboration. The Nordic countries have been a locomotive in the EU environmental work and they have had considerable influence on, for example, the development of the EU's environmental legislation, the EU's strategy for sustainable development and the strengthening of the sector integration. The ambition for the coming years is to maintain the Nordic area's strong influence on the development of the EU's environmental legislation. In this connection, high priority must be given to implementing the EU's 6th Environmental Action Plan and the thematic strategies. A Nordic initiative that aims at solving the environmental problems in our neighbouring areas also has high priority. This applies both to political influence and cooperation in relevant international processes and to influence through projects that improve the environment and increase capacity. Through dialogue with our neighbours we will prepare more detailed activities to make the cooperation with our neighbouring areas more concrete. The EU's "Neighbourhood Policy" opens new dimensions for the environmental cooperation with our neighbouring regions and for cross-border activities. This includes finance: the Nordic financial institutions NEFCO and NIB are important partners in this cooperation. Collaboration with other organizations in the neighbouring regions and the Arctic cooperation are crucially important and should be strengthened.

Four major themes have been chosen to concentrate

the environmental cooperation and to ensure that the Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008 includes input on the most important environmental matters. These four themes will ensure the necessary sector integration, promote cooperation among the working groups and lead to an understanding of the need for a holistic view - that solving environmental problems means that the problems should be seen in a broad perspective. The first theme covers the environment and health, with a focus on man's need for and right to live in clean and healthy surroundings. The second theme covers the sea, which is a very important resource for the Nordic region. Here, the emphasis is on using ecological system approximations to ensure sustainable use of the sea's resources and biological diversity in the marine environment. The third theme covers nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life, with priority given to biodiversity and access to nature. The fourth theme covers sustainable consumption and production, with focus on the term "life cycle" and how to break the link between economic growth and environmental stress.

In addition to the priorities of the environmental action programme, the Ministers for the Environment will decide on further areas of focus in accordance with the programme of the current chairman of the Nordic Council of Ministers, topical environmental questions on the Nordic or international agenda and other relevant matters. The environmental action programme also builds on an evaluation of the Nordic Environmental Action Plan 2001-2004, where environmental sector working groups and other important players contributed with valuable comments. Communicating the results of the Nordic environmental cooperation will be important. This will include promoting the interaction with both internal and external players in accordance with the Nordic Council of Ministers' guidelines for collaboration with NGOs. There will also be emphasis on including aspects of equality

policy in the work. The environmental action programme will further contribute to implementing the Nordic Council of Ministers' strategy for sustainable development in 2005-2008 in environmental matters. The principle of "Nordic benefits" covers the benefits of the Nordic collaboration both nationally in the Nordic countries and in the international context. An important characteristic of the Nordic countries is their common tradition in terms of legislation and the structure of their administrative systems. As legislation in the Nordic countries has many common elements, it is possible to achieve considerable "Nordic benefits" through the formulation of EU directives as well as by coordinating how these directives are implemented where this is relevant and possible. In themselves, the Nordic networks of experts and the authorities are a good starting point and a valuable resource in the countries' international environmental cooperation.

The concrete initiatives of the environmental action programme are described in the following chapter.

## Chapter 2 - Themes

This chapter describes the four themes: I - The environment and health; II - The sea; III - Nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life; and IV - Sustainable consumption and production in the Nordic area, the neighbouring areas and internationally. The overall objectives are described for each of the four themes and the working targets are described in boxes for each sub-theme. At the end there is a description of initiatives and results leading to the desired objectives.



## I - The environment and health

The Nordic countries are leaders in important and topical areas in the work covering the environment and health, also internationally. The environment and health are important elements in the Nordic environmental cooperation. As they also affect many other sectors, such as transport, agriculture, industry and social conditions, it is vital to ensure that work on the environment and health also takes these sectors into consideration.

At the global level, the Nordic countries have for many years contributed actively in matters concerning chemicals and they continue to contribute to the work involved in preparing the UN's global chemicals strategy under UNEP. They have also been active in following up the

world summit in Johannesburg, including work on the UN's Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD). In addition there is the joint work following up the international conventions on hazardous substances, including POPs.

In terms of the collaboration with the EU, the implementation of the EU's chemicals strategy, its framework directive on water resources and its strategy on clean air (CAFE) play a vital role in the Nordic cooperation. Other important issues are implementing the EU's mercury strategy and its directives on nitrate and waste, the EU's work with particles and its thematic strategy for the environment and health.

On the regional level, the Nordic countries have played a vital role in the work with the convention on long-range, cross-border air pollution (LRTAP). This work will also

be important in the future. So, too, will the work with regional environment and health matters under WHO/ UNECE.

### Overall objective

To strengthen the environmental and health aspects of the Nordic cooperation with the aim of meeting man's need to live in clean and healthy surroundings. The use of nature, countryside and cultural environments must occur in a sustainable way.

## 1.1 - Chemicals

**Target: To minimise the risks to the environment and public health from the production, consumption, handling and removal of chemicals. The aim of this target is to help ensure that, in 2020, no products on the market or discharges from production contain chemicals with properties that are questionable in health and environment terms.**

The Nordic countries will work towards ensuring that the international legislation for chemicals and the international strategies regarding chemicals are formulated so that fundamental knowledge about the hazardous properties of chemicals is made available for all chemical substances in use. Risks are to be minimised and chemical safety is to be increased. Broader knowledge about all chemicals in use must be generated to prevent damage to public health or to the environment resulting from a lack of knowledge. Further work must be carried out to develop methods and databases for monitoring purposes and to help assess risks. The results of the work must be used both in the Nordic region and in the collaboration with the neighbouring areas. The results must also form part of the groundwork for international

negotiations about chemicals. The increase in the amount of available information about the properties of chemical substances and their occurrence in society will be a vital result of this work.

The Nordic countries will work to ensure that goods and products are assessed for chemical risks throughout the whole of their life cycle. The chemicals legislation will be supported by joint comments to e.g. the global chemicals strategy (SAICM), the EU's chemicals regulation (REACH), the work of the EU and UNEP regarding mercury, and the EU's work with crop protecting agents and biocide directive. With regard to REACH, emphasis will be placed on the principle of substitution. The Nordic countries will cooperate in supervision and control activities to ensure that the business community observes the chemicals legislation.

Work will be done to reduce the risks to health and the environment of the use of pesticides in agriculture,



among other things by input to the EU's pesticide action plan.

## 1.2 - Air quality

**Target: To work towards ensuring that the amount of pollutants in the air does not exceed levels that damage the environment and public health.**

Nordic proposals must be prepared for the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol, the NEC directive for national limits for atmospheric pollutants, and for coming EU directives about particles and near-ground ozone (CAFE). This work shall contribute to the creation of a better foundation for assessing the effects on health of more stringent threshold values that take Nordic conditions into account.

The Nordic countries will work to achieve the emissions targets in the protocols under the LRTAP convention and to meet the NEC and air quality directives. Future agreements under the convention on long-range, cross-border air pollution (LRTAP) and EU directives shall contribute to a further reduction in damage resulting from acid rain.

With regard to particles, there is a need for more knowledge about pollution in urban air and in air transported over long distances, and about the importance of the



relationship between large and small particles. Analyses must be prepared to assess air pollution from particles and new means of reducing the pollution must be found (e.g. environmental zones, biofuels and vehicle tyres).

In the work with pollution (NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, VOC and NH<sub>3</sub>), the Nordic countries must prepare strategies that form part of an overall European strategy. The effectiveness of ways to reduce pollution must also be improved and more target-oriented, cost-efficient efforts to reduce pollution introduced. These efforts require better quality in emissions data and reliable emissions scenarios.

## 1.3 - Public health and experience of nature

**Target: To ensure that it is possible to have an outdoor life and experience nature as a way of improving and securing public health.**

Public health must be improved and secured by documenting the importance of the interplay between nature, cultural environments, outdoor life and health. Special emphasis will be placed on the younger generation. The work will include analyses of the connection between outdoor life and public health. Further, up-to-date knowledge from the Nordic areas about the relationships between the physical activities of children and young people, outdoor life, motor function, the ability to learn and health will be collated and published. This work shall result in proposals from the ministers for the environment to the EU's work with the environment and health.



Nordic proposals will also be prepared for the EU's work on fighting traffic noise, while noise nuisance in the largest Nordic urban areas will be mapped.

## 1.4 - Strategy for the Nordic environmental effort in the Arctic

**Target: To prepare a strategy that focuses on and gives priorities in the Nordic environmental effort in the Arctic regarding POPs, mercury and the climate.**

A strategy will be prepared for the Nordic environment effort in the Arctic as a follow-up to the ongoing "Nordic action plan for protecting the natural and cultural environment in the Arctic - Greenland, Iceland and

Svalbard"; this strategy will have particular reference to POPs, mercury and the climate. The strategy shall result in a special effort in the Arctic by the Nordic Council of Ministers. This Nordic effort shall be coordinated with the work of the Arctic Council and Barents Council.

It is expected that the consequences of climate change will be serious in the Arctic, not just for the environment and living resources, but also for health, buildings, roads and other infrastructure. In this connection, the Nordic countries will look more closely at the consequences of climate change in the Arctic region. The results of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) should be an important foundation for the further work.



## II - The sea

The sea is an important resource in the Nordic region. Preserving and, if possible, re-establishing the structure, function, diversity, productivity and natural purity of ecosystems is therefore important. In a Nordic context, it is vital that the administration of the living resources is carried out with an eye to preservation and sustainability, while the risk of a loss of the sea's biodiversity is minimised. The risk of introducing foreign organisms should be minimised, not least out of consideration to the sea's ecosystems and fishing and fish-farming activities. The Nordic area should also work actively to stop substances that are harmful to the environment entering the sea and to limit the effects on the environment of shipping. Efforts to reduce the effects of nutrients are necessary in areas with problems of eutrophication (an abundance of nutrients, which leads eventually to oxygen depletion). The Nordic countries will strengthen the available knowledge about the impor-

tance of climate change for the sea environment and fishing. The Nordic work will supplement the work of the EU, HELCOM and OSPAR. In addition, the Nordic area will cooperate on implementing the EU's framework directive for water resources and make proposals to the European marine strategy.

### Overall objective

To strengthen ecosystem approximation in the administration of the sea environment and to ensure sustainable use of the ecosystems' resources while maintaining the ecosystems' diversity, structure, operation, productivity and natural purity.

## 2.1 - Substances harmful to the environment

**Target: To contribute to a reduction, by 2020, in the admission of environmentally harmful substances to the Nordic sea areas, so the amount of harmful substances does not exceed background levels for natural substances and the occurrence of man-made substances is reduced to near zero.**

By helping develop methods, tools, monitoring methods and indicators, the Nordic region will work towards reducing the admission of environmentally harmful substances to the Nordic sea areas. In addition, the Nordic area will make contributions to the implementation of the EU's framework directive for water resources, the European marine strategy and the sea conventions OSPAR and HELCOM.



The Nordic countries will work actively to implement the decision in principle of the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO) of April 2004 about defining the Baltic Sea (except Russian waters) as a particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA).

In the work providing information about the sea and coastal zones the focus will be on the sea as an important "larder" for the Nordic countries. Environmental poisons in the marine environment will be mapped and the risks from them assessed. The Nordic area will work to establish forums for developing methods for collecting, collating and communicating data and information about the coastal zones.

Proposals will be prepared to strengthen the Stockholm Convention and the POP protocol. Models for the spread of heavy metals and POPs will also be prepared. In addition, proposals to annexe VI to MARPOL and the Anti-Fouling Convention will be prepared.

## 2.2 - Eutrophication

**Target: To help ensure that the necessary initiatives are adopted by 2010 to bring an end to damage to marine ecosystems.**

The Nordic countries will prepare input to the EU's framework directive for water resources for targets for good, ecological conditions in fresh water and waters near the coasts.

The importance of the biological accessibility of organic nitrogen will be assessed. The Nordic countries will work to determine the levels at which the stress on the sea areas close to the Nordic coasts becomes critical with regard to nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus. Knowledge about reference conditions and classification systems will be collated and models will be developed for links between sources, intake calculations and measurements of the condition of recipients.

## 2.3 - Ecosystem-based administration

**Target: To strengthen sustainable fishing and fish-farming activities while ensuring that threatened and vulnerable species and forms of natural environment are protected. To protect a representative selection of various types of marine natural environment and prevent the introduction and spread of damaging and foreign species. This shall be achieved through an ecosystem-based administration of the sea environment and the coastal zone with a view to stopping the loss of biological diversity by 2010.**

The Nordic region will achieve a sustainable use of the sea and its resources through an ecosystem-based administration while preserving the diversity, structure,



function and productivity of the ecosystems. Ecosystems that have suffered damage will be restored. Knowledge about ecosystem approximation to the sea environment and water administration will be improved. Joint Nordic interests regarding the development and implementation of regional and international agreements on the sea environment will be made visible and will be safeguarded on the basis of joint proposals and coordination. Emphasis will be placed on increased sustainability in fishing and aquaculture, including a focus on over-fishing, undesirable secondary catches and damage to the sea bottom. In addition, initiatives will be taken to reduce emissions from fish-breeding activities and to focus on possible regional pollution as a result of aquaculture activities.

The Nordic countries will counteract the release of foreign and genetically modified marine organisms into the marine environment and will consider initiatives to limit and prevent the spread of foreign marine organisms. The countries will work to ratify the UN's Ballast Water Convention.



The Nordic area will help map, classify, generate knowledge about and protect marine natural environments, including cold-water coral. Nordic proposals for implementing the COSPAR recommendation will also be prepared. Further, it is appropriate to focus on the development of national, regional and international initiatives for minimizing the risk of loss of marine biological diversity. These initiatives will also include the protection of threatened species and habitats.

## 2.4 - The influence of climate change on the sea environment

**Target: To secure increased knowledge about the consequences of climate change on the sea environment, including their influence on ocean currents, and ecosystems. To determine the consequences of climate change for biological diversity and fishing and aquaculture in the Nordic region with regard to the stress caused by pollution, and to ascertain the risks caused by the introduction of foreign and damaging organisms.**

The Nordic area will work to assess the biological consequences of climate change for the sea. In addition, scenarios will be prepared for the expected development and for the current preventive initiatives to reduce the effects of possible damage. See chapters 3.6 and 4.4.





### III - Nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life

There is a high level of consciousness in the Nordic countries about the values of biological diversity and cultural environments. The Nordic environmental cooperation has its roots in the work in the region with nature, biological diversity and the outdoor life. There will be continued focus on the preservation of the diversity of plant and animal species and their habitats as a necessary basis for sustainable use of the natural resources in the Nordic region and its neighbouring areas. The Nordic countries will preserve, for the future, the diversity, characteristics and recreative use of the Nordic countryside, together with the Nordic cultural environment in the whole of its diversity in terms of history, functions and regional characteristics.

The Nordic cooperation will result in proposals to the most important international agreements on nature, the cultural environment and outdoor life. It will also make proposals for the work with the Biodiversity Convention, the Countryside Convention and the EU's work with the habitat and the framework directive for water resources.

The Nordic nature is threatened because of climate change and knowledge will therefore be collected about changes in the nature.

#### **Overall objective**

The natural and cultural environments of the Nordic countries are a rich resource and the work to protect, preserve, restore and use them shall be a model for the international cooperation.

## 3.1 - Countryside and cultural environment

**Target: To implement the targets of the Countryside Convention for securing sustainable development of the countryside as a central element in Europe's total natural and cultural heritage. A Nordic perspective on the integration, preservation and administration of natural and cultural environments will be further developed.**

Nordic proposals for the implementation of the Countryside Convention will be prepared. These will describe, and make visible, the countryside and the cultural environment as important resources for society. This work will include the development of methods and indicators for toleration limits and changes to the countryside, and the development of skills regarding the administration of the countryside. The Nordic region will seek to pre-



serve, administer and develop the countryside, biodiversity, cultural environment and outdoor life through practical work in agriculture and forestry.

Among other things, this will be through analysis of the effects of afforestation on the cultural countryside. The work will take place in accordance with the EU's agricultural policy and relevant international agreements.

Further, a common attitude to the work of the Council of Europe and UNESCO on cultural diversity and sustainable development will also be prepared.

The Nordic region will work to demonstrate how the cultural environments - as important resources and central necessities - form part of the development of modern society. On the background of the implementation of the action plan of the Nordic Ministers for the Environment for the cultural environment in the countryside, the Nordic initiative for the protection and use of cultural environments will include both individual monuments and countryside characteristics.

## 3.2 - Biological diversity

**Target: The Nordic cooperation shall aim at ensuring that the negative development in terms of loss of species and populations, including their habitats, shall be stopped so the loss in biological diversity ends by 2010 at the latest.**

The work aimed at stopping the loss of biological diversity by 2010 at the latest will have high priority. The target will be reached by several routes, including preparing proposals for the ongoing work under conventions and agreements about biological diversity. The work includes developing joint databases and action plans, highlighting examples of restoration of nature and developing indicators that show the degree of achievement of the 2010 target. The initiative will be coordinated with, for instance, the work on ecosystems of the

Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU's directives for the administration of water and natural resources.

The work on mapping the status of selected species, groups of species and biotopes and the work on evaluating the development process and trends will be vital for describing how the 2010 target will be achieved. With special emphasis on the characteristic Nordic types of natural environment and species, a Nordic forum will be established for exchanging experience, in particular the development of suitable indicators and monitoring methods for special Nordic examples of species and natural types needing protection.

This work will include assessments of the importance of the various factors that affect biological diversity at the level of species, populations and ecosystems. The fac-



tors include eutrophication, other pollution, physical changes to habitats, direct catching, hunting and fishing and the importance of invasive species.

Campaigns will be used to involve national organizations

and especially children and young people in the protection, care and restoration of the biological diversity in the close environment, with focus on the various types of nature such as meadows, lakes, coasts and woods.

The Nordic region will work to implement the EU's framework directive for water resources, where a special Nordic task could be the development of monitoring methods and ways of identifying the water areas where monitoring will be carried out.

### 3.3 - Outdoor life and legal rights

**Target: The Nordic countries shall promote free access to nature with a view to safeguarding the traditional Nordic outdoor life, which builds on legal rights to access to open country.**

The importance of access to a rich and varied natural and cultural environment in and near urban societies is great. For this reason it is necessary to ascertain and document the benefits of safeguarding natural areas for the local societies.

Strategies and actions that have proven to be successful in stimulating children and young people to have an outdoor life shall be documented. This will include collating current knowledge from the whole of the Nordic region on the relationship between physical activity, outdoor life, motor function, learning ability and health of children and young people. Among the objectives is creating alliances in the health policy and educational policy areas.

The work on sustainable tourism on the terms set by the natural and cultural environment and for the benefit of the local development shall be given priority.

## 3.4 - Genetic resources

**Target: The Nordic countries will preserve and use the genetic resources in a sustainable way and promote a just global distribution of the benefits of the genetic resources.**

In the Nordic work on genetic resources, the focus will be on strengthening the implementation of international agreements and taking steps to spread information about these agreements. Proposals will be prepared for the negotiations on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the EU about access to and distribution of the benefits of genetic resources. The main emphasis lies on following up the 2003 declaration from the Nordic Council of Ministers on access to and rights to genetic resources.

A proposal will be prepared for indicators for genetic resources in agriculture, forestry and uncultivated nature.

## 3.5 - Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

**Target: Consideration shall be given to the special ecological, administrative and cultural characteristics of the Nordic region when developing and using rules for biological safety and risk assessment in connection with full-scale research and production of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).**

The Nordic countries aim at coordinating the work of the Nordic authorities on biological safety and risk assessment in connection with permitting and controlling

research and production of genetically modified organisms.

The Nordic region will contribute with proposals about cross-border use of living, modified organisms (GMOs) and through the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, which, among other things, covers labelling and identification of GMOs.

There will also be focus on problems involved in the side-by-side cultivation of GMOs and conventional species.

## 3.6 - The influence of climate change on the natural and cultural environments

**Target: To initiate a more rigorous effort to inform about the importance of global climate change for the natural and cultural environments in the Nordic region.**

The Nordic cooperation will give priority to better insight into and efforts related to assessing the importance of climate change for the natural and cultural environments in the Nordic region and the Arctic. Vulnerability, impact and possible adaptation to climate change, and the effects on biodiversity, national monuments and sustainable use of resources shall be highlighted. Priority will also be given to the development, in collaboration with regional forums, of monitoring methods and indicators that will make it possible to follow the effects of climate change on biological diversity. See Chapters 2.4 and 4.4.

## IV - Sustainable consumption and production

The Nordic efforts in sustainable production and consumption have been strengthened on the Nordic, EU and international plans. In the neighbouring areas the Nordic effort aims at developing resource-efficient and clean production and sustainable consumption. Throughout their whole life cycle, goods and services must not damage the environment and health. The Nordic area will focus on economic efficiency, environmental technology and new, alternative solutions, including solutions that support social innovation. The intention is to contribute to economic development without a simultaneous increase in society's environmental stress and use of resources. The region will work to adapt consumption and production to the environment.

As far as the climate is concerned, the Nordic cooperation aims at reducing the emission of greenhouse gases with a focus on the collaboration about the implementation of the Convention on the Climate and the Kyoto Protocol. In the production of goods and services, consideration must be given, throughout their whole life cycle, to sustainable use of natural resources with a view to reducing the production of waste and the emission of greenhouse gases. Resource efficiency, logistics and recycling of materials should also be improved.



## Overall objectives

To promote a development that builds on sustainable production and consumption and cuts the link between economic growth and environmental stress.

In addition, there will be Nordic proposals for developing and promoting the use of economic controls; for preventing large quantities of waste and emissions of greenhouse gases; for increased recycling of waste; for better knowledge of the environment among the population and in businesses; for better product information; and for promoting green markets and sustainable and cleaner technology.

## 4.1 - Cleaner products and waste

**Target: To work to prevent and reduce the negative effects on the environment of production and consumption, and to contribute to efficient use of the natural resources through the whole life cycle of products.**

The Nordic region will work to throw light on the links between economic growth and the production of waste, possibly exemplified in selected waste flows. At the same time, proposals will be prepared for the EU's work with a holistic strategy for preventing and recycling of waste and other waste-related EU regulations.

The Nordic cooperation aims at reducing the risks from chemicals in products and waste and stopping the use of problematic chemicals in products. See Chapter 1.1.

The collaboration among the Nordic authorities for monitoring cross-border waste transport shall be continued.

In product development, a Nordic network for life cycles (NorLCA) shall be established. This will be a physical and electronic network for multi-disciplinary knowledge and information about life cycles and which collects and provides information.

In the area covering the environment, consumer products and trade, there will be collaboration on an integrated product policy (IPP) and sustainable production and consumption at international and EU levels with a view to preparing proposals for the EU's IPP strategy.

In the work to change production and consumption patterns, the activities concerning Local Agenda 21, environmental management and best available technology in the Nordic and neighbouring regions will be strength-



ened and expanded by developing a joint knowledge base covering good Local Agenda 21 ideas. Work in progress includes generating capacity in neighbouring areas for sustainable production and consumption relevant to local needs. Promoting knowledge of emission standards and clean and more resource-efficient technologies and the further development of and information

about environmental management systems are important Nordic tasks. Work is ongoing to give priority to environmental technologies in relation to the EU's action plan for environmental technologies (ETAP).

In the work to develop good Nordic examples of sustainable production, and make them more visible, efforts will be made to integrate environmental knowledge in all sectors and in the whole production chain, including product development.

Proposals will be prepared for initiatives that will ensure that users, decision-makers and producers have greater environmental skills and access to environmental information about the content and use of products and the effects of products on the environment. The results of the work for cleaner production and products and the implications of the term "life cycle" will be used

in the collaboration with the neighbouring areas and Russia.

Nordic examples of sustainable production will be made more visible and alternative forms of production, such as organic farming, renewable energy and biogas production in agriculture, will be promoted.

To reduce the quantities of waste in the sea, the Nordic region will develop initiatives for dealing with shipping waste, including motivation for depositing waste at harbours. The work will include initiatives to help change attitudes and harmonise the set of Nordic regulations.

## 4.2 - Green markets and public purchasing

**Target: To stimulate innovation and new thinking with a view to reducing society's total environmental stress and consumption of resources, while promoting the competitive ability of trade, green markets and employment.**

The Nordic area will work to ensure that the public and private sectors take environmental aspects into consideration when purchasing. This work includes collating joint Nordic criteria, setting up a benchmarking system for green purchasing and preparing tools for integrating environmental aspects and life-cycle perspectives in standardization work. Examples of "best practices" in environmental technology, which have contributed to economic development, shall be prepared.

The Nordic countries shall continue to support, develop and provide information about "Swan", the joint Nordic environmental brand.



## 4.3 - Environmental economics

**Target: To create a situation where economic development and increases in value during production build on sustainable production and consumption patterns, where the link between economic growth and environmental stress is broken.**

Examples will be shown of how external social and environmental costs can be integrated into the price of a product (internalisation), and how this can be integrated into the EU's work on this subject.

The Nordic countries will develop greater knowledge about the mechanisms and contexts in which the link between economic growth and environmental stress is broken, so the available resources are used more efficiently. Other work will aim at ensuring a more cost-effective use of resources by combining various means (economic, legislative and other forms of regulation) governing e.g. air pollution, climate and the water environment and through the use of quota trading, duties and excises, administrative regulations etc. Alternative possibilities for using economic controls in areas such as waste, packaging and biological diversity will be prepared.

## 4.4 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

**Target: The Nordic countries will work to meet the overall and long-term goals of the Convention on the Climate for "achieving a stabilization of the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that can prevent hazardous, man-made impact on the climate system."**

The Nordic countries will work for a more ambitious future global climate regime after 2012. They will also strive for a broad process involving as many countries as possible.



The Nordic countries will work towards ensuring that the Testing Ground collaboration results in a successful implementation of the Testing Ground Agreement (TGA) and an environmentally and economically efficient development and use of the Testing Ground Facility (TGF). They also aim for an increase in skills and capacity in climate affairs in the Baltic Sea region, with special focus on Russia.

The Nordic countries will work to take a leading position in reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, including those used by industry, and in strengthening the foundation for this reduction. They will continue to tighten the regulations governing emissions of industrial greenhouse gases. The focus will be on reducing emissions related to transport and waste. The Nordic countries will work for increased use of renewable energy, including a follow-up to the Johannesburg summit in 2002 about renewable energy, and for a Nordic initiative that will, among other things, promote the use of bioenergy in the Nordic and neighbouring areas.

The Nordic countries will give priority to increased understanding and assessment of vulnerability, impacts and adaptations in connection with climate change. The problem covers the impact of climate change on both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and socio-economic and other consequences for society of climate change. See Chapters 2.4 and 3.6.



## Chapter 3 - Information

Information about the environmental action programme and its results shall be communicated widely. An information strategy, "Information strategy for the Nordic environmental cooperation", was adopted in 2001. This is based on the key words "benefits", "realism" and "target groups". Each time a project is started, the following questions must be asked: "Why is this of interest? What is the message? Who are the target groups? How do we provide information about it?" See <http://www.norden.org/miljoe/sk/Strategi.pdf>.

The following diagram shows how the messages of the environmental action plan will be communicated:



The Nordic cooperation will be made visible at all levels. Information will be made available so all target groups get an overview of the Nordic cooperation and easy access to the Nordic results.

Information about the environmental action programme shall be communicated widely and actively from the start of the programme. Information material about the results of the four themes will be prepared. The themes will be in focus at Nordic meetings, in the work of the working groups and with regard to relevant international forums during the whole of the period in which the environmental action programme is running. The Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008 will be assessed and the results of this will be published.

## Chapter 4 - Implementing the environmental action programme

The Nordic Ministers for the Environment (MR-M) have the overall political responsibility for the environmental action programme. Under MR-M there is a senior officials committee for environmental matters (EK-M), which is responsible for implementing the environmental action programme. EK-M is assisted in its work by a working party (AU).

MR-M has appointed a number of working groups and inter-sector groups that implement the environmental action programme. The programme's targets and results will be made concrete in annual working programmes and annual reports. This form of organization promotes and improves the sector coordination, including collaboration across the groups. The environmental sector collaborates with a number of other ministerial councils, including those for finance, energy, agriculture and forestry, fisheries, consumer affairs, commerce and transport.

The secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers is responsible for the activities of the environment sector, both internally and externally. The secretariat ensures coordination of the work of MR-M, EK-M, AU and the working groups' implementation of the environmental action plan in the working programmes and annual reports. In addition, it promotes the sector integration within the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

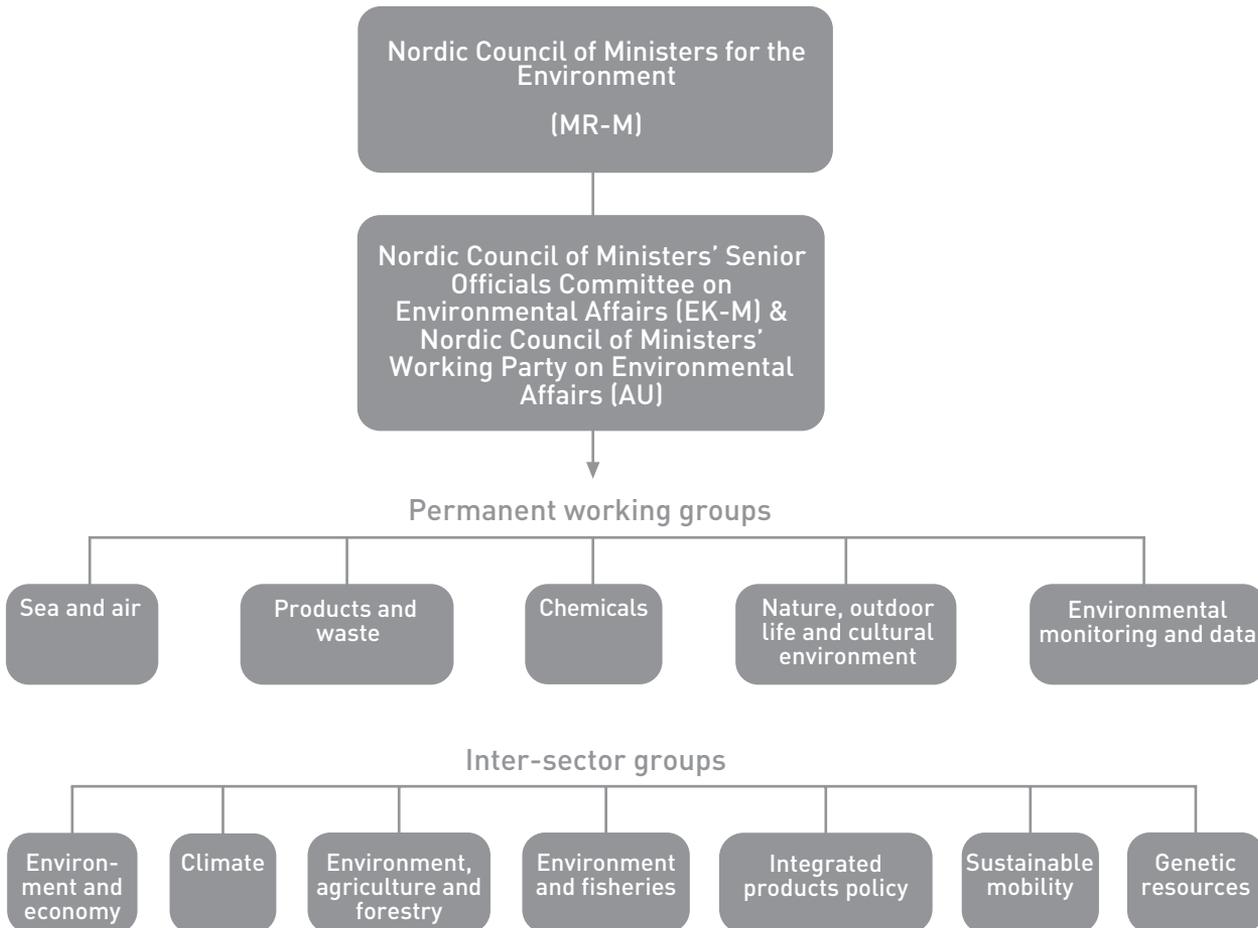
The programme is carried out within the framework budgets set each year by the Nordic Council of Ministers for the environmental work and which form the basis for the priorities of the environmental effort.

The results and the experiences obtained through the implementation of the environmental action plan will be evaluated towards the end of the operating period (2007-2008). In 2008, proposals will be prepared for a revision of the action plan with a basis in this evaluation.

The Environmental Action Plan 2005-2008 has been submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers for comments.

The Nordic Environmental Action Plan was approved by the Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment and takes effect on 1 January 2005.

The following diagram shows how the environment section of the Nordic Council of Ministers is organised (1 January 2005):



## Abbreviations used

ACIA	Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (Arctic Council)	NEFCO	Nordic Environment Finance Corporation
AU	Nordic Council of Ministers' Working Party on Environmental Affairs	NGO	Non-governmental organization
BAT	Best available technology	NH3	Ammonia
CAFE	Clean Air for Europe (EU)	NIB	Nordic Investment Bank
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NMR	Nordic Council of Ministers
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (UN)	NOx	Nitrogen dioxide
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe (UN)	OSPAR	Oslo Paris Convention
EK-M	Nordic Council of Ministers' Senior Officials Committee on Environmental Affairs	POP	Persistent organic pollutants
ETAP	Environmental Technologies Action Plan (EU)	PSSA	Particularly sensitive sea areas
EU	European Union	REACH	Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (EU's proposal for new chemicals legislation)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)	SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (UN)
GMO	Genetically modified organisms	SO2	Sulphur dioxide
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission	TGA	Testing Ground Agreement
IMO	International Maritime Organization (UN)	TGF	Testing Ground Facility
IPP	Integrated product policy	UN	United Nations
LA21	Local Agenda 21	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
LCA	Life-cycle analysis	UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
LRTAP	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (UN)	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MARPOL	Marine Pollution Convention	VOC	Volatile organic compounds
MR-M	Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment	WHO	World Health Organization
NEC	National Emissions Ceilings for Certain Atmospheric Pollutants (EU directive)		

### **Nordic Council of Ministers**

was formed in 1971 as an organ for cooperation among the governments of the Nordic countries. The Council of Ministers makes proposals to the sessions of the Nordic Council, carries out the council's recommendations, reports to the Nordic Council about the results of the cooperation and leads the work within the various theme areas.

The cooperation is coordinated by the cooperation ministers appointed by the governments of the individual countries.

The Council of Ministers meets in various circumstances, depending on the matters to be discussed.

### **Nordic Council**

was set up in 1952 as an organ for cooperation among the elected parliaments and governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Finland joined in 1955. The delegations from the Faroe Islands and Greenland form part of the Danish delegation, while the delegation from the Åland Islands forms part of Finland's delegation. The council comprises 87 members.

The Nordic Council is an initiative-taking and advisory body and has control tasks in the Nordic collaboration.

The organs of the Nordic Council are the plenary session, the presidium and the committees.

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

Store Strandstraede 18  
DK-1255 Copenhagen K  
Telephone (+45) 3396 0200  
Telefax (+45) 3396 0202  
www.norden.org

#### **Nordic Council**

Store Strandstraede 18  
DK-1255 Copenhagen K  
Telephone (+45) 3396 0400  
Telefax (+45) 3311 1870  
www.norden.org

#### **Drafting group**

##### **Iceland:**

Kristín L. Árnadóttir, (chair)

##### **Denmark**

Carl Bjørn Rasmussen

##### **Finland**

Ann-Britt Ylinen  
Magnus Nyström  
Hannele Nyroos

##### **Norway**

Jon Opem  
Karen Pinholt

#### **Sweden**

Ann Sofi Israelsson  
Jeanette Krantz

#### **Faroe Islands**

Rókur Tummasarson

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

Tine Utzon-Frank (project coordinator)  
Birgitte Wøhlk Laursen (environmental adviser)  
Danfríður Skarphéðinsdóttir  
(environmental adviser)

©Nordisk Ministerråd, Copenhagen  
ANP 2005:714  
ISBN 92-893-1137-1  
Printed by: Aka-Print A/S, Århus 2005  
Layout: Hvíta húsið  
Print run: 1,000

Printed on environmentally friendly paper meeting the requirements of the Nordic environmental branding scheme, Swan.  
Other publications from Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic Council can be found at [www.norden.org/publikationer](http://www.norden.org/publikationer).

#### Photos:

PhotoDisc TMVolume 44 (Pages: Front cover, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, back cover)  
Corel Stock Photo Library (Pages: Front cover, 11, 12, 18)  
Samfoto (Page: 16)  
Kristinn Ingvarsson (Page: 1)



norden

Nordic Council of Ministers

Store Strandstræde 18  
DK-1255 Copenhagen K  
[www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)



541

Tryksag

312