

IMPLEMENTATION

This framework programme is a flexible instrument capable of adaptation at any point as circumstances change and new priorities arise. The programme sets the framework for co-operation within the Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry, while the annual programmes for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers will provide any essential complementary elements.

Presidency programmes reflect the priorities of the country holding the annual Presidency, as well as other general Nordic requirements, and they flesh out and complement framework programmes. In order to ensure continuity, the annual Presidency collaborates with its predecessor and successor.

Nordic networks will be strengthened to facilitate achievement of the objectives set out by the framework programme and the annual programmes for the Presidency.

Research and innovation are of vital importance to the implementation of the programme. Collaboration and co-ordination with other sectors will also be strengthened in order to generate greater synergies in relation to national research. Follow-up work will be done on the design and structure of research within the framework of Nordic co-operation in fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry as well as on collaboration with NordForsk and NICE.

Information management will be made more efficient to ensure that information about the way co-operation is organised, its results and the follow-up work done is directed to where it will have the maximum impact.

Adequate funding by the Nordic Council of Ministers is a prerequisite for the implementation of the action programme.

The programme will be evaluated towards the end of the period.



Photo: Ingram

V. WELFARE, FOOD AND HEALTH

The availability of sufficient quantities of safe, healthy food is central to individual health and social security. The promotion of health and well-being is an important element in the Nordic welfare model, e.g. through a varied and exciting food culture as well as through access to the great outdoors and nature. As is the case in many places around the world, unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity and obesity all present a threat to welfare in the Nordic Region.

Co-operation is designed to refine the Nordic welfare model, emphasising good animal and human health, as well as animal welfare. Joint Nordic positions provide an important platform for input into international forums on issues such as ethical animal husbandry and healthy livestock.

By producing safe, healthy food, the Nordic Region is in a position to improve public health, e.g. by introducing better risk assessment and management as well as effective inspection and control systems.

Co-operation is built upon research, consumer information, knowledge transfer, labelling, emergency response provisions and the framework laid down by the Nordic action plan for better health and quality of life through nutrition and physical activity.

VI. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Since many of the challenges faced by fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry are cross-border issues, they are best dealt with in the context of wider international co-operation at regional, European or global level. Co-operation with the Adjacent Areas – the Baltic States and North-West Russia – is governed by separate programmes and guidelines.

International conventions, agreements and processes impact on the preconditions for the management and exploitation of natural resources. Increasing internationalisation and the stronger competition to which it has led, combined with the fact that the Nordic countries have established different relationships with the European Union, all present Nordic co-operation with both challenges and opportunities.

Due to its abundance of lakes and other waterways, the Region is characterised by its dependence on the sea and the need to co-operate with neighbouring countries.

Co-operation is designed to promote joint Nordic values and interests in international processes as well as in regional and global forums. It is also organised in such a way that it provides the basis for taking appropriate initiatives in international processes that promote the objectives of this framework programme. Work also needs to be done to build knowledge about the ways in which international processes impact on the administrations in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries can learn from each other and share experiences from elsewhere in Europe.

Framework Programme 2009–2012

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

VISION

A competitive and sustainable Nordic Region will make the most of biological natural resources to meet the demand for good quality of life, safe food and positive global development.



Photo: PhotoDisc

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A GUIDING MECHANISM FOR NORDIC CO-OPERATION

This framework programme represents the guiding mechanism for Nordic co-operation on fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry 2009–2012. It applies to the Nordic Council of Ministers and its agencies, targets other stakeholders and can also be used for information purposes.

The programmes for the Presidency of the Nordic Council each year from 2009 to 2012 will flesh out and complement the framework. Collectively, these programmes will constitute an action programme for co-operation in the sector.

Co-operation will focus on areas where Nordic synergies will be generated, with particular emphasis on areas in which the Region excels, areas that provide the greatest return on resources and make the maximum impact on international processes.

Diversity is valued by the Nordic countries. Flexible models for action are sought, based on openness, participation and dialogue with both regional and local levels.

The Nordic co-operation is designed to:

- support the development of competitive production
- assist the Nordic countries in meeting the challenges of climate change
- safeguard genetic diversity for the future
- support the sustainable development of coastal and rural areas and their cultures
- refine the Nordic welfare model, promoting public health and animal welfare
- facilitate in the effort to influence international processes with Nordic values.

The Nordic prime ministers have delegated to the Council of Ministers the task of profiling the Region as a global player in the drive to meet the major challenges posed by globalisation and climate change. This is the basic position underpinning all co-operation in this sector.

The Nordic countries have adopted a sustainable development strategy for the period 2009–2012 called 'Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries'. It specifies that the principle of sustainable development should continue to be integrated into the work of all sectors. The Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry seeks to implement the objectives of the sustainable development strategy within the framework for its activities.

Photo: Grete Kodi



Photo: Photodisc

I. NORDIC COMPETITIVENESS

Globalisation is characterised by an internationalised market economy and increased interdependency between countries. It has an impact on the competitiveness of the primary industries and the production of foodstuffs in the Region. A prominent Nordic position in international markets must be based on good raw materials, safe food, biological diversity, openness and the responsible use of natural resources and production.

Co-operation is designed to promote competitive production. It seeks to exploit the competitive advantages derived from safe food, logistics and flexibility, as well as the taste and diversity of food from the Region. It can also help develop systems for labelling and certification that will satisfy consumer demand for information on ethical, environmental and nutritional issues.

Research, innovation and skills enhancement will improve the competitiveness of Nordic producers. New markets and opportunities to add value are of particular importance. New skills and better use of resources will put the Region in a better position to promote added Nordic value in the global arena.

II. CLIMATE

Climate change will have consequences for fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry in the Nordic countries. It will also impact on public health, living environments and supply systems.

Co-operation is designed to improve the capacity of the Nordic countries to meet the challenges posed by climate change and to exploit the opportunities it offers.

The Nordic countries must work more closely together on climate change within the framework of the Council of Ministers' Programme on the Consequences of Climate Change for Natural Resources in the Nordic Region 2009-2011. The programme presupposes the co-ordination of Nordic and national resources.

Research is needed into the impact of climate change on sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry. There is also a need for research into ways in which primary industries and the foodstuffs sector can adapt to climate change. Further important issues arise in relation to the use, production and processing of produce, and in relation to provisions for coping with new plant and animal diseases, new food risks and new organisms.

Biological resources are important weapons in the drive to alleviate climate change; for example, forests and green areas have a role to play in binding carbon dioxide. Sustainable, energy-efficient production and processing methods that minimise emissions of greenhouse gases are needed. The focus will be on the development of bio-energy and renewable raw materials.



Photo: Lennart Berntsson

III. GENETIC RESOURCES

Genetic resources are the basis on which animals and plants adapt to changed conditions such as climate change, new growing conditions, new plant and animal diseases, increased production and new environmental and consumer requirements. The focus here is on the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources.

Preservation and sustainable use depend on whether the genetic resources in question are land-based or aquatic, domesticated or wild, as well as their cultural and nutritional context. Co-operation is designed to safeguard for future generations the genetic diversity in food production, in forestry products and in the common Nordic cultural heritage.

The majority of the Nordic co-operation on cultivated plants, domesticated animals and forestry is done within the framework of the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre (NordGen) and its strategic programme for 2008–2012. Other agencies deal with co-operation on aquatic resources.

The good, effective management of genetic resources, both land-based and aquatic, will provide the foundation for future processing, development and innovation. Better dissemination of information, e.g. about intellectual rights, skills enhancement and international commitment will also be needed to facilitate the use of genetic resources.

Photo: Photodisc

IV. COASTAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Nordic countries, fisheries and aquaculture, agriculture, food and forestry constitute an important basis for communities and businesses in coastal and rural areas, as well as for the landscape. In many locations, business rationalisation has greatly reduced the proportion of the population working in primary industries and related sectors. These sectors now have great difficulty recruiting people.

Co-operation is designed to support the economic, social and environmentally sustainable development of coastal and rural areas and to sustain their cultural identity.

The level of development that is pursued and the ability of local inhabitants to contribute to a thriving countryside, are both extremely important in maintaining the value of coastal and rural areas and using their resources.

The rural economy needs to be strengthened by new business concepts in enterprises based in the primary sector. Encouraging innovative entrepreneurship and new companies under the umbrella of an extended business concept that incorporates 'green care', multi-functionalism and tourism, will present both opportunities and challenges for business development.