

# Knowledge for green growth and welfare

The Council of Ministers for Education and  
Research's Strategy for Education and  
Research 2011–2013



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## Knowledge for green growth and welfare

The Council of Ministers for Education and Research's  
Strategy for Education and Research 2011–2013

ANP 2010:795

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ISBN 978-92-893-2182-2

Layout: Jette Koefoed

Fotos: ImageSelect

Copies: 500

Print: Arco Grafisk A/S Skive

Printed on environmentally friendly paper

This publication can be ordered on [www.norden.org/](http://www.norden.org/)  
order. Other Nordic publications are available at [www.norden.org/publications](http://www.norden.org/publications)

This publication has been published with financial support by the Nordic Council of Ministers. But the contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or recommendations of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Printed in Denmark



### **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 three autonomous areas: the Faroe Islands, Green-land, 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.

### **Nordic Council of Ministers**

Ved Stranden 18  
DK-1061 Copenhagen K  
Phone (+45) 3396 0200

### **Nordic Council**

Ved Stranden 18  
DK-1061 Copenhagen K  
Phone (+45) 3396 0400

[www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)



Knowledge for green growth and welfare

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# Introduction



The Nordic countries possess significant human and economic resources, and draw particular strength from the Nordic welfare model and their sense of linguistic and cultural community.

Globalisation opens up new opportunities for the Nordic countries, but at the same time, demographic changes and the fall-out from the global economic crisis present a challenge to the Region's prosperity and welfare. The level of unemployment among young people and graduates is high, and employers face fierce competition from countries outside the Region. Globalisation presents challenges to the education systems, research, the labour market and society in general – not only in the Nordic countries, but all over the world.

Long-term, prioritised investment in knowledge and research, combined with the ability to convert this into innovation and sustainable growth,

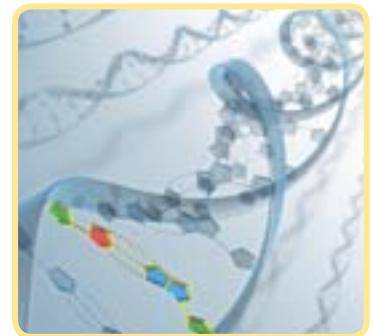
will be key if the Nordic Region is to remain a leading knowledge and welfare region. New political paths, e.g. a green growth strategy, and the ability to collaborate both globally and across sectors are prerequisites for dealing with global challenges such as climate change, resource shortages and poverty.

In 2007, the Nordic prime ministers launched their globalisation initiative, which was aimed at making the Nordic countries work more closely together and raise the level of skills, visibility and prosperity in the Region. The initiative has led to a series of globalisation projects under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). In addition to setting policy and technical priorities, these projects also constitute new platforms for Nordic co-operation. Many of the priorities laid out in this strategy will be realised through globalisation projects that involve other relevant Councils of Ministers and other Nordic and national stakeholders.

## Vision

The strategy will form the framework for the work of the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U) in the period 2011–2013 and make an overall contribution to:

- The development of effective, cross-border Nordic partnerships on education, training, research and innovation so that the Region remains at the forefront of skills enhancement and high-quality research
- The further development of the comparative advantage of a highly educated workforce
- Providing an effective and flexible joint Nordic labour market that guarantees access to skilled labour
- The promotion of Nordic competitiveness, including the long-term promotion of green growth
- The promotion of Nordic participation and influence in global arenas
- The further development of the shared values that underpin the Nordic languages, cultural identity and social models.





# Education, research and innovation in the Nordic Region

New knowledge and opportunities are created via effective interaction between education, research and innovation – the so-called Knowledge Triangle. New partnerships and other strategic and co-operative relationships can enable the Nordic countries to make great leaps in terms of knowledge, green growth and welfare. By making the most of these opportunities, the Region can serve as a role model for the rest of Europe.

New knowledge about the ways in which children, young people, students and adults relate to education and the learning process may help to develop and consolidate new and existing Nordic positions of strength.

Research partnerships are becoming increasingly international. In order to derive the maximum benefit from research resources, there is a growing need for flexible interaction between national, regional and international research bodies. Closer co-ordination between national, Nordic and EU research priorities can produce more large-scale research initiatives.

Higher education is now part of a global market for training and knowledge. This generates national, regional and international competition for the best students and researchers. Internationalisation means that it is essential to be able to document Nordic positions of strength in the knowledge area.

Basic education is fundamental in achieving the overarching political objectives, including breaking the vicious circle of social disadvantage. Children's experience of primary school is a key factor in their ongoing education at secondary and higher level. Schooling and vocational training that promote quality and inclusion contribute to future welfare and prosperity for both the individual and society.

Within adult education, there is a need to develop strategies to ensure lifelong learning. There must also be an emphasis on informal education and efforts to enhance employees' basic skills. Lifelong learning, including adult education, helps to enhance the individual's skills and security, and at the same time promotes value-generation and flexibility in the workplace.

MR-U has responsibility for co-ordinating the overall efforts of the NCM on language matters. The aim of this broad co-operation is to encourage the Nordic countries to retain and develop their comparative linguistic advantage. Children and young people are the priority target group for this work.

The MR-U also co-ordinates the overall efforts of the NCM in information and communications technology (ICT) policy. An effective and comprehensive ICT policy is vitally important. Positive experiences, including "lighthouse" initiatives, will be further developed.

## Education, research and innovation in the Nordic Region

### **In the strategy period 2011–2013, the MR-U will:**

#### *Research, innovation and education*

- develop the Nordic research and innovation area (NORIA) as part of the corresponding European Research Area (ERA), which aims to promote the “fifth freedom” – free movement of knowledge
- support co-operation between national and Nordic research funding bodies on flexible interaction between research funding, research priorities and research infrastructure
- facilitate co-operation in fields of research that give participants greater opportunities and provide the countries with synergies
- support joint Nordic initiatives in research infrastructure
- promote eScience and e-Infrastructure
- contribute to an increased focus on research, innovation and application in the development of green technologies, including green ICT
- promote freedom of movement for students, researchers and knowledge in the Nordic Region

- stimulate the creation of innovative networks and partnerships between the public and private sectors and educational institutions
- develop Nordic Master’s programmes
- follow up on the education, research and outreach initiative as a unifying initiative for the entire education sector
- develop new ways of sharing knowledge about the ways that higher education institutions share knowledge with the rest of society, including commercialisation initiatives
- profile Nordic positions of strength in higher education, including via the promotion of co-operation on quality assurance
- improve completion rates in further education and reduce youth unemployment
- improve knowledge about young people across education systems, labour markets and societies
- develop good models to promote improved educational outcomes and the efficient use of resources in special education within primary schools
- promote creativity, innovation

and enterprise in education, from the kindergarten to university

- develop effective strategies for lifelong learning in order to promote flexibility and mobility
- further develop the workplace as a learning arena, use more eLearning in adult education, and support skills-validation partnerships between the public and private sectors and educational institutions
- develop the Nordplus framework programme as a unifying instrument for the Nordic and Nordic–Baltic focus on educational co-operation and a common educational area

#### *Language and language comprehension*

- improve children’s and young people’s mutual understanding of Danish, Swedish and Norwegian
- boost national implementation of the Declaration on Nordic Language Policy
- contribute to exchanges of experience on the future need for foreign-language skills



*Information and Communications Technology (ICT)*

- stimulate exchanges of experience and policy discussions on potential areas of Nordic co-operation in the ICT field, and promote joint ventures where there is a basis for doing so in national and inter-sectoral relationships, e.g. in standardisation and e-Learning
- work to promote public-private partnerships in order to develop ICT skills in the population and workforce.

## The Nordic Region in the world

Globalisation and the prime ministers' initiative for stronger and closer co-operation on globalisation puts global and international issues on the agenda for Nordic co-operation in a new way. It also highlights the need to find new forms of co-operation that are capable of generating synergies for the Nordic countries and help to raise the Region's international profile.

The NCM prioritises co-operation with the EU and the Region's adjacent areas. Co-operation on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy will be continued, as will research and educational co-operation with the

three Baltic states. Co-operation with Russia is currently under development. The need and opportunities for co-operation in the Arctic require consideration, and the current priorities in this area must be regularly re-evaluated. The NCM is also considering the need and opportunities for co-operation in Asia, partly based on experiences of existing Nordic networking in the area. Other initiatives will be evaluated in relation to need, potential synergies, priorities and available resources.



## How Nordic co-operation works

The global economic crisis has had an impact on both international relations and the national and Nordic political agendas. The Nordic globalisation projects, as well as increased co-operation on research and innovation between the countries, have created a need for greater cross-sectoral Nordic co-operation. The globalisation projects and the Top-Level Research Initiative have allocated new roles to Nordic participants and institutions. Co-operation – not only between the Nordic institutions but also involving a number of other agencies, including research-funding bodies in the Nordic countries and the EU – is essential for achieving research results of a high international standard.

If Nordic co-operation is to be successful and generate added value for the countries, it must carefully balance and co-ordinate the individual countries' needs and contributions. This requires awareness and further development of effective processes that combine the national with the Nordic. All Nordic initiatives must be based on solid national foundations. It is also vital to be aware of and focus on the degree of co-operation that will optimise the generation of added value for the Nordic countries in any given context.

Nordic co-operation can work on three levels:

- through the exchange of experiences
- through joint initiatives
- through joint approaches to global issues.

In the strategy period 2011–2013, the MR-U will develop Nordic co-operation via:

- clarification of the decision-making process and division of responsibilities
- strengthening interaction and the exchange of experiences between the advisory and expert groups and the work of the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Education & Research (EK-U)
- strengthening political interaction between the MR-U, the Council of Ministers for Co-operation (MR-SAM) and the Nordic Council on tasks of common interest
- consideration of new forms of co-operation, such as networking and “leading country” responsibility, where this may be relevant

- preparation of an overview of research co-operation and the Nordic Research and Innovation Area
- implementation of the recommendations of the governance project on research collaboration
- establishment and development of effective co-operation at official level, in order to ensure good governance in the research area
- strengthening co-operation between the EK-U and the Nordic institutions NordForsk, Nordic Innovation Centre (NICE) and Nordic Energy Research (NEF), as well as between higher education and research
- improving communications, e.g. by using social-networking media.

## Follow-up and evaluation

To make sure that the priorities and long-term follow-up work are closely connected to the strategy, the annual programme of the Presidency and the Secretariat's action plan, an annual meeting will be held involving the current Presidency and the next two countries to hold it.

The MR-U Strategy 2011–2013 will be evaluated internally to quantify the extent to which goals have been reached according to the success criteria: perceived synergies for the Nordic countries and autonomous territories.







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Ved Stranden 18  
DK-1061 Copenhagen K  
[www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org)

**Knowledge for green growth and welfare**

Knowledge for Green Growth and Welfare is the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research's (MR-U) strategy for 2011–2013. It provides an overview of the priorities and targets for Nordic co-operation on research and education.

ANP 2010:795  
ISBN 978-92-893-2182-2

