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Nordic Council of Ministers

For a richer future

13 conventions on the natural and cultural environment

Biodiversity Convention

CITES Convention

Ramsar Convention

Bern Convention

Bonn Convention

Whaling Convention

Helsinki Convention

OSPAR Convention

World Heritage Convention

European Landscape Convention

Granada Convention

Malta Convention

Aarhus Convention

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation, one of the oldest and most wide-ranging regional partnerships in the world, involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Co-operation reinforces the sense of Nordic community while respecting national differences and similarities, makes it possible to uphold Nordic interests in the world at large and promotes positive relations between neighbouring peoples.

Co-operation was formalised in 1952 when the Nordic Council was set up as a forum for parliamentarians and governments. The Helsinki Treaty of 1962 has formed the framework for Nordic partnership ever since. The Nordic Council of Ministers was set up in 1971 as the formal forum for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic countries and the political leadership of the autonomous areas, i.e. the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

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Foreword

The Nordic region has contributed to a large number of conventions that aim at protecting the world's common natural and cultural heritage.

These conventions help ensure that we have a natural environment that is rich in habitats and species. A rich natural environment has a legitimacy in itself and is of great importance for better social and economic development around the world. In addition, a well-preserved nature and a clean environment help ensure that people have good health, prosperity and quality of life.

Increased focus on the importance of conserving the world's cultural heritage has also resulted from the work with the conventions. This focus includes buildings with special architectural traits, places with rich archaeological remains and ancient monuments, and areas where living cultural environments with a well-preserved connection between past and present are still found. Cultural heritage gives us historical awareness and is an important basis for our feeling of identity - no matter where we come from in the world.

The Nordic countries put great emphasis on conserving the common natural and cultural heritage. The conventions are important tools in this work, as we get the best results by making joint efforts across national borders.

This booklet gives a short presentation of 13 of the most important conventions covering the natural and cultural heritage which the Nordic countries have joined and, in many cases, have helped set up.

We hope that this booklet will provide greater insight into the conventions - among politicians, managers, teachers and others interested in our natural and cultural heritage.

The joint publication of this booklet illustrates the long tradition for Nordic collaboration on matters of international importance. Good co-operation in the conventions can give increased influence globally - for the benefit of both present and future generations - while strengthening the Nordic collaboration at the same time.

Helen Bjørnøy

Minister of the Environment
Norway

On behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers,
The ministers responsible for protecting the environment and conserving
the cultural heritage

Gjende, Jotunheimen Nationalpark, Norway (photo: Jens Muff Hansen)

For a richer future

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of protecting the natural and cultural environment. Protecting natural and cultural resources was a national matter for many years, but conservation has since become more international in character.

International organisations

The world's oldest international organisation for protecting and conserving nature was founded in 1922. It was the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), which was a forerunner of BirdLife International. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) was formed in 1948, and the international collaboration to stop the global environmental crisis

really started to take off. Since then, many organisations large and small have been formed, and they have all played a part in getting a number of countries to sign agreements for jointly strengthening the efforts to preserve natural and cultural resources. In several cases this has led to the establishment of conventions.

What are conventions?

Conventions are agreements between countries or international organisations that bind the signatories in international law.

Many conventions apply to the whole world, while others are limited - for example to Europe or parts of Europe. The members meet regularly and discuss the commitments to which they are bound by the

convention. They also discuss the need for changes to the lists of animals, plants, areas etc. covered by the convention.

13 conventions - in a Nordic perspective

All of the Nordic countries have joined conventions on the natural and cultural environment. This booklet describes the 13 most comprehensive agreements that involve the Nordic countries. These are the conventions shown in the table to the right.

The booklet provides a short summary of the conventions and references to sources of further information.

Hammershus, Denmark (photo: Jørgen Schytte/Scanpix).

	City where convention was established	Year convention was adopted	Denmark	Faroe Islands	Greenland	Finland	Åland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Conventions on the natural environment										
Biodiversity Convention (The Convention on Biological Diversity)	Rio De Janeiro	1992	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
CITES Convention (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)	Washington	1973	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat)	Ramsar	1971	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
Bern Convention (The Convention of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats)	Bern	1979	+	-	-	+		+	+	+
Bonn Convention (Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals)	Bonn	1979	+	+	+	+		-	+	+
Whaling Convention (International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling)	Washington	1946	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
Regional conventions on the marine environment										
Helsinki Convention (Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area)	Helsinki	1992	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
OSPAR Convention (Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North-east Atlantic)	Paris	1992	+	+	+	+		+	+	+
Conventions on the cultural environment and landscape										
World Heritage Convention (Convention Concerning the Protection Of The Cultural and Natural Heritage)	Paris	1972	+	-	+	+		+	+	+
European Landscape Convention (the European Landscape Convention)	Florence	2000	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+
Granada Convention (Convention for the Protection of Architectural Heritage in Europe)	Granada	1985	+	-	-	+		-	+	+
Malta Convention (Convention on the Projection of Archaeological Heritage in Europe)	Valletta	1992	+	-	-	+		-	+	+
General										
Aarhus Convention (The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters)	Århus	1998	+	-	-	+	+	-	+	+

Legend:

- + The country is bound by the convention
- The country is not bound by the convention

Convention on Biological Diversity

Biodiversity Convention

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Government leaders from more than 150 countries confirmed at the world summit in Johannesburg 10 years later that the convention is the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources.

The convention is the result of the world's concern over the loss of biological diversity. It emphasises the need for counteracting the loss of biological diversity through conservation and sustainable development.

To date, 188 countries have adopted the convention, including all the Nordic countries.

What does 'biological diversity' mean?

The term 'biological diversity' - or 'biodiversity' - means the variety of life in the form of plants, animals and microorganisms and the

environments that these species are a part of. Genetic variations within the species, for example in the populations of the same species spread over a large area, are also covered by the term. Biological diversity has arisen through evolution over millions of years.

The goal of the convention

The goal of the Biodiversity Convention is to conserve biological diversity while at the same time ensuring sustainable use of the biological resources and ensuring that the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources are distributed in an equitable way.

The UN's Millennium Ecosystem Assessment from 2005 tells us that mankind has caused greater changes to the ecosystem during the most recent 50 years than at any other time in the history of mankind. The speed with which species become extinct today has risen by a factor of 50-100. The disappearance of habitats, the introduction of new species, over-exploitation, climate changes and pollution are among the most important causes of this

development. This has consequences for the possible choices of action that we have today. At the same time, the UN's assessment underlines the dependence of mankind on biological diversity for its survival, generation of wealth, welfare and prosperity.

Most genetic resources are found in the developing countries, but it is the industrialised countries that have the technology to exploit the resources commercially.

The convention urges the development of mechanisms that ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits.

Target year 2010

At the world summit in 2002, the countries decided to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010. At the Environment for Europe conference in Kiev in 2003, the European environment ministers agreed to set a more ambitious target for Europe. According to this target, the objective is to halt the loss of biological diversity at all levels by the year 2010. This will be achieved through the creation of

*In the Nordic region, the flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*) is found only in Finland, where the species is in decline. It is believed that the cause of the decline of the species is more intensive forestry (photo: Jussi Murtosaari).*

an ecological network of protected natural areas and by other means.

How does the convention work?

The member countries must develop national strategies and action plans to ensure biological diversity at the national level and through collaboration across national borders and economic barriers. The rich countries also have a responsibility for contributing environmental aid to poor countries to ensure that they can implement the convention.

The convention is further developed through the adoption of working programmes, guidelines and legally binding protocols.

*Some insects are dependent on certain host plants. The larvae of the Cranberry fritillary (*Boloria aquilonaris*) live on cranberries. If the raised bogs, where the cranberries grow, disappear, the basis for life of the Cranberry fritillary also disappears (photo: Andis Liepa/ Naturplan).*

*A Nordic-Baltic collaboration, NOBANIS, has been established with the purpose of preventing the spread of invasive species such as giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) (photo: Jens Muff Hansen, Naturplan).*

A varied landscape with many types of nature gives good living conditions for several species (A stretch of road called Indlandsvägen, Sweden) (photo: Carsten Brandt).

The convention builds on the view that mankind is a part of nature and that we can use the biological resources available - but we must at the same time be aware of how this affects the ecosystems.

Information and understanding

It is vital that as many people as possible understand why it is necessary to conserve biological diversity. By ratifying the convention, the member countries assume a responsibility for informing their citizens about the importance of species and habitats.

Genetic resources

The convention says that every country has the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies.

Genetic resources have great economic importance as raw materials for biotechnology, medicine, cosmetics, farming and food processing etc. It is estimated that about 40% of the world's economy is based on biological products and processes.

A question that is discussed internationally is how to deal with ownership rights to the use of the genetic resources. Industry's arguments for using patents are that research is necessary for the development of new medicines agricultural produce and foods, among other things - which will benefit the whole of mankind. However, patents have a disadvantage - they can result in genetic resources only being available to those with the economic resources to pay for the results of the patents.

Indigenous peoples and traditional ways of living

The Convention on Biological Diversity has a special working programme for indigenous and local communities with a focus on traditional knowledge for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Nordic collaboration

Under the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic countries have developed a strategy for genetic resources. The Nordic countries will sustainably maintain and use genetic resources, and promote the fair sharing of the benefits derived from genetic resources". The aim of the Nordic collaboration is to strengthen the work of conserving and ensuring sustainable use of the genetic diversity in farming and forestry, fishing and agricultural

produce. At the same time, the collaboration also contributes to meeting the goals of the convention for access and benefitsharing related to genetic resources.

A Nordic-Baltic collaboration on invasive and alien species has also been established (NOBANIS).

Cartagena Protocol

In January 2002, the member countries adopted an additional agreement on the development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Cartagena Protocol. The agreement ensures sufficient protection of the environment when GMOs are used and transferred internationally.

All of the Nordic countries have signed the Cartagena Protocol. Denmark's participation does not apply to the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

Biodiversity includes all groups of organisms and their habitats (photo: Carsten Brandt).

CITES Convention

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

Hunting wild animals in nature to keep them in captivity or to use products from them is regarded as one of the reasons why many animal species are threatened. Similarly, cultivation and felling are reasons why numerous plant species are threatened. There is widespread international trade in many of the threatened species and it was on this background that the CITES Convention (Washington Convention) was adopted in 1973.

Goal

The CITES convention aims at protecting species that are threatened as a result of international trade. The target is that all trade shall be sustainable, in other words that no more animals or plants are removed than the stocks of them can bear. The convention's provisions apply to the living species included in the convention's lists (the CITES species), and to products from these species. The CITES Convention names about 5,000 animal species and 28,000 plant species, including at least 20,000 orchids. Tropical species are primarily protected by the convention, but several Nordic species - for example owls, birds of

prey, otters, wolves and polar bears - are also included.

How does the convention work?

The member states shall limit trade in threatened animals and plants by banning imports and exports when they believe the trade will increase the risk that the species will become extinct. In trade in less-threatened species it is possible to apply for special permission to import and export them.

The species covered by the CITES Convention are included on three lists, depending on how seriously they are threatened (Box 1).

Over 1,000 species are so threatened by extinction that trade in them is totally banned (list I). Special export licences are required for the other species (list II and III). Some countries also require import licences.

Special restrictions for EU

The European Union (EU) has introduced stricter rules for importing and exporting threatened

species. In some cases, there are also special restrictions for trade within the EU. The species that are covered by the EU's rules are listed in four annexes to the EU-regulation on the CITES Convention (Box 2).

Box 1:

List I: Species subject to a trade ban. These species are considered to be the most endangered.

List II: Species subject to controlled import and export to ensure their future.

List III: Species subject to controlled import and export if they originate from certain countries.

*The polar bear is one of the Nordic species that are covered by the CITES Convention. Polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) have been hunted for many years, partly to get their hides (photo: John Frikke).*

Box 2:

Annex A: Species on list I and species on list II or III, which the EU believes should be placed on list I. The annex also covers species that are not protected by the convention but which are covered by other EU legislation. Apart from the provisions that apply to list I species, there are special restrictions related to trade within the EU.

Annex B: Primarily species on list II and some species on list III. This annex also includes species that are not covered by the convention, but which are considered to be an ecological threat to species that occur naturally in the EU. Trade can be permitted under stricter guidelines.

Annex C: Species on list III. The same guidelines apply as for list III, but, in addition, a licence is required when the species are imported into the EU.

Annex D: Species on list III, where EU members have made reservations. The annex also includes species that are not on the convention's list but where it is desired to monitor import quantities. Imports into the EU require import licences.

Every year, millions of living animals and plants are traded around the world to meet the demand for pets and ornamental plants (photo: Skov- og Naturstyrelsen).

Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat - normally simply called the Ramsar Convention - was adopted in 1971.

The convention came into force in 1975, and to date 152 countries, including all of the Nordic countries, have joined it. A total of 1,629 wetland sites have been designated as having international importance for waterfowl.

Goal

The goal of the convention is to protect wetlands as habitats for waterfowl in particular. All areas that are internationally important for waterfowl must be protected. An area is considered to be of international importance if more than 20,000 individuals of a species are regularly found there, or if there is at least 1% of a species or sub-species in the area.

It is not just waterfowl that must be taken into consideration. All of the animals and plants in the area must be protected against exploitation in order to conserve the natural environment.

Ramsar areas

Wetlands are various types of nature that form the 'frontier zone' between land and water. The Ramsar Convention's definition of wetlands is very broad. Among other things, it covers salt and fresh marshes, fjords, fens and lakes, as well as brackish or salty localities that are less than 6 m deep.

The areas are not only important for birds but also for other organisms. They can, for example, be important spawning and growing areas for fish.

Obligations

The countries that have joined the convention must designate at least one Ramsar area and work towards a general protection for wetlands. The wetlands must be used on a sustainable basis. This means that the wetlands' qualities must be taken into account in their management, which must also ensure that the use of the areas for recreation possibilities does not reduce the value of the wetlands. The member states must also promote the protection of wetlands and waterfowl by creating reserves and neigh-

bouring countries must collaborate on conserving the habitats and species in the wetlands that they share.

Ramsar areas in the Nordic countries

The Nordic countries have very large areas containing wetlands. This applies particularly to Finland and Sweden, where there are large areas of marsh and many shallow lakes. Under the Ramsar Convention's definitions, almost 25% of Finland and Sweden is wetlands.

As of 24 April 2006, the Nordic countries had designated 178 wetlands with a total area of 35,682 km². The number and area of the wetlands shows that the Nordic countries' wetlands are of great importance for many waterfowl.

The countries that have joined the Ramsar Convention must designate at least one Ramsar area and promote the protection of wetlands by creating reserves. The boggy area called Tipperne in Ringkøbing fjord is one of the reserves that have been set up in Denmark (photo: Jens Muff Hansen/Naturplan).

Myvatn on Iceland has been designated as an area of international importance for water-birds (photo: Arni Einarsson).

Bern Convention

The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

The Bern Convention, which was adopted in 1979, aims at protecting European wild animals, plants and their habitats. The EU and 45 European and African states have joined the convention. In addition, there are a few states with observer status.

All of the Nordic countries except Greenland and the Faroe Islands have joined the convention.

Goal

The goal of the Bern Convention is to conserve animals and plants and their habitats. Many species and their habitats are threatened or vulnerable, and special consideration must be given to them to ensure that they do not disappear. Special protection for migratory species is also required.

In addition to conserving species and habitats, the convention also promotes collaboration and co-ordination among the individual countries, as it is easier to reach the convention's goals when countries work together.

How the convention works

The plant and animal species covered by the convention are included on three lists (Box 1). The lists distinguish between the species' levels of threat and vulnerability.

A fourth list names capture methods and equipment that must not be used.

List I primarily covers south European plant species, but several Nordic species are also included. Yellow marsh saxifrage is among those included.

List II also includes many Nordic species, for instance kingfishers, common porpoises, wolves, brown bears, birds of prey and owls.

List III includes nearly all European mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and some fish species not on list II. The European beaver is among the species on list III.

Management

The convention is managed by a committee comprising representatives of the member states and of

the countries with observer status. The committee ensures that the countries observe the convention's provisions. It can also recommend how the provisions can be included in the countries' legislation.

Some non-government organisations (NGOs) are also represented on the committee. They play an important role, as they are often the first to react in connection with cases about protection or monitoring.

The Bern Convention has contributed to the preservation of the majority of the amphibians and reptiles in the Nordic region.

The common toad (Bufo bufo) is one of the species included on the convention's list III, which requires control of capturing and hunting activities. If they are not already found on list II, all amphibians are included on list III (photo: Birthe Overgaard/Naturplan).

Box 1:

List I: Strictly protected plant species. These species are so threatened that the member states have obligated themselves to give them and their habitats a special protective status.

List II: Strictly protected animal species. The members must protect these animals and their habitats from e.g. hunting, collecting, disturbance and trade in the species, if these activities can have a negative impact on their preservation.

List III: Species where capture and hunting must be controlled. Almost all of the species not on list II are covered by list III. This requires control of the exploitation of the species, so the stocks of the species are protected against threat.

List IV: Prohibited equipment and methods for capture and hunting. Among other things, the ban covers semi- and fully-automatic weapons for hunting, traps for capturing mammals and poisoned bait.

Some species are so threatened that the member states must make a special effort to protect them and their habitats. One of these species is the wolf (Canis lupus) (photo: Baard Næss/NN/Samfoto).

www.conventions.coe.int
CETS No.: 104

Bonn Convention

The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Many animals regularly cross national borders in connection with journeys between their breeding grounds and their winter quarters or when they are looking for food. This applies to migratory birds, whales, fish and other groups of animals.

Goal

The goal of the convention is to conserve wild species of animals that regularly cross the borders between countries. The member countries must protect the threatened species and adopt collaborative agreements that ensure better protection for the animals during their migration or other travels. The aim is to provide the species with a beneficial conservation status.

Lists

Two lists of migratory animal species have been drawn up (Box 1).

Special effort for list I species

The member countries are obligated to make a special effort for the list I species. The countries must protect the species' living environments and restore or recreate the species' habitats. In practice, the conserva-

tion efforts will often result in a species and/or its habitat being preserved.

In addition, the member countries must try to take measures under circumstances that causes threat to the species. This applies for instance to hunting and fishing.

Collaboration on list II species

There are two types of collaboration agreement for species on list II. The first type aims to cover all countries in the area where a species is found - including countries that have not themselves joined the Bonn Convention.

The second type of agreement applies to animals that only cross national borders occasionally. These agreements do not necessarily have to cover all countries where the species is found.

Examples of species included on the lists

More than 100 species have been included on list I, while list II covers more than 1,000 species. Examples of species on list I are corncrake,

white-tailed eagle, humpback whale and bowhead whale.

Sperm whale, common seal and red-throated diver are among the species on list II.

The Nordic countries with the exception of Iceland are among the 92 countries that have joined the convention.

Box 1

List I: Species that are threatened with extinction in the whole or parts of the area where they are found.

List II: Species that need or would benefit from agreements between countries.

www.cms.int

The corncrake (Crex crex) is threatened with extinction in the whole of the area where it is found; it has therefore been included on the Bonn Convention's list I. Projects have been initiated in several places with the aim of creating or restoring habitats for the species (photo: Aivars Petrins/Naturplan).

International collaboration agreements

AEWA, EUROBATS and ASCOBANS are among the most comprehensive collaboration agreements under the Bonn Convention.

AEWA (African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement)

AEWA aims at protecting waterbirds that migrate between Africa, Europe and Asia.

Waterbirds often migrate over large distance and cross many national boundaries on their journeys. There is therefore a need for an international collaboration agreement to ensure that the birds are protected in the best possible in their breeding areas and habitats and in the countries they pass during migration. The countries that have joined the agreement obligate themselves, among other things, to conserve and restore or recreate the species' habitats and to start research projects that can help create better conditions for the birds.

The agreement covers 235 waterbird species that spend the whole or part of the year in wetlands.

Denmark, Finland and Sweden are among the 53 countries that have joined the agreement, which covers the whole of Africa and Europe, parts of Asia and some Arctic areas.

EUROBATS (The Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats)

The agreement aims to protect bats in Europe. By signing the agreement, the countries obligate themselves to educate and legislate about bats and to collaborate with the countries that have not signed the Bonn Convention.

Several species of bat are threatened as a result of loss of suitable habitats. The poorer living conditions result from, among other things, the use of pesticides and insufficient knowledge about the biology and habitats of bats.

The agreement covers all 45 species of European bats.

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden are among the 48 countries that have joined the agreement.

ASCOBANS (The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas)

ASCOBANS aims at protecting small toothed whales in the Baltic and North Seas. All toothed whales with the exception of the sperm whale are covered by the agreement.

The countries that have joined the agreement are obligated to protect their whales through various research and administrative projects.

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom are currently bound by the agreement.

A similar agreement, ACCOBAMS, has been set up for small toothed whales in the Mediterranean and adjoining waters.

For further information about these three agreements:

www.unep-aewa.org

www.eurobats.org

www.ascobans.org

The common seal (Phoca vitulina) is included on the convention's list II. Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark have reached an agreement to protect the seal in the wetland area called Vadehavet. The goal of the agreement is to create so good living conditions that seals can maintain a sound and viable population (photo: Stig Bachmann Nielsen/Naturplan).

The dunlin (Calidris alpina) is among the 235 bird species that are covered by the collaboration agreement on waterbirds that migrate between Africa, Asia and Europe (photo: Klaus Mortensen/Naturplan).

EUROBATS is a collaboration agreement between 48 countries. The aim of the agreement is to improve the living conditions for bats generally (photo: Andis Liepa/Naturplan).

Whaling Convention

The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling

In the 1930s, several nations hunted whales intensively. As a result, there was a great risk that whales would become extinct. To conserve the stocks, Norway and Britain agreed as early as 1931 to limit whaling. More countries joined the agreement in 1937, but it was not very effective, as new whaling nations continued to arise. There was a need for new regulations, and that was the reason why 15 whaling nations adopted the Whaling Convention in 1946. At the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s, several new countries joined the Whaling Convention.

Most of the new member states worked primarily to stop whaling completely or place considerable limits on it.

Goal

The goal of the convention is to manage and conserve the stock of large whales. Among other things, this is achieved by regulating the catch of large whales.

Managing the convention

The Whaling Convention is managed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which sets catch quo-

tas on the basis of scientific data. The criteria include assessments of the size of the stocks and reproduction of the whales, the health of the whales, environmental pollution, by-catch in connection with fishing, climate changes, disturbances and shipping.

Ban on whaling

In 1986, the Whaling Commission banned all commercial capture of large whale species unless they were to be used for scientific purposes. The intention was that the ban should only apply for five years while the commission prepared a comprehensive assessment of the whale stocks.

The ban has since been extended and is still in force. Norway lodged an objection to the ban and continues to catch minke whales.

Traditional whaling nations

Whaling in Greenland is considered as a traditional way of living of the indigenous people and Greenlanders are still permitted to catch a certain number of large whales.

Preservation of species or areas

Under to the Whaling Convention, there are two possible forms of preservation. Either whale species can be preserved, or a geographic area can be designated where whaling is not allowed. In 1979, for instance, there was a ban on whaling in the Indian Ocean and whales in the ocean around Antarctica were preserved in 1994.

Small whales

The convention does not include small whales. These are covered by the CITES, Bern and Bonn Conventions.

Members

Today, the Whaling Convention has 70 members. Most of them do not carry out whaling themselves. All of the Nordic countries are members of the Whaling Convention.

*As a result of decades of whaling, the population of large whales has become so small that the Whaling Commission has issued a ban on commercial whaling. The humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) is covered by the whaling ban (photo: Jens Muff Hansen/Naturplan).*

Whaling ships at the quay in Reykjavik (photo: Torben Christensen/Scanpix).

www.iwcoffice.org

Helsinki Convention

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area

The environment of the Baltic Sea is increasingly threatened by the discharge of nutrients and substances alien to the environment, overfishing and a rise in shipping. Several species in the area have either disappeared or are threatened as a result of pollution and overfishing.

Because of the poor condition of the Baltic Sea, the then seven Baltic coastal states adopted the Helsinki Convention in 1974. The agreement was the first international convention that covered all types of pollution sources, including the outflow of nutrients and substances alien to the environment from the Baltic Sea catchment area and dumping from ships and aircraft.

In 1992, the nine states bordering the Baltic Sea and the European Community adopted a new convention to replace the convention from 1974. The new convention added the conservation of biological diversity to its responsibilities. Since 1999 the convention has also included the management of the coastal zones and water courses that cross national boundaries.

Goal

The goal of the convention is to stop all pollution of the area and create better conditions for the Baltic Sea in general. Today, the convention covers the sea, the seabed and the whole of the Baltic Sea catchment area - an area totalling about 415,000 km².

Helsinki Commission

The Helsinki Commission, which comprises representatives of the member states, ensures that the agreement is carried out. The commission is responsible for monitoring the environmental conditions and contributes to decisions and recommendations that can lead to a reduction in pollution and to conservation of the biological diversity. Since the start of the 1980s, the Helsinki Commission has made more than 200 recommendations.

The individual countries are each responsible for incorporating the recommendations into their legislation. The commission can only adopt a resolution or agreement if all members are in agreement.

Obligations

The member states must prevent all types of pollution that can harm the Baltic Sea.

If a member pollutes the sea, the country must pay for clearing up the pollution. This 'polluter must pay' principle means that there are no financial gains from discharging waste products into the marine environment. On the contrary, each country will have an interest in avoiding pollution, as pollution will result in financial consequences in connection with the work to clean up the pollution.

As well as reducing the pollution of the Baltic Sea, the member states must also monitor the environmental condition of the catchment area.

Although overfishing has partly resulted in threats to the existence of several species in the Baltic Sea, fishing is not covered by the convention. However, the convention's provisions do cover the impact of fishing on the marine environment.

In addition to the EU, nine countries have joined the convention. They

*Several species in the Baltic Sea are threatened as a result of pollution and over-fishing. The sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*), which was once widely found in the area, has now disappeared completely (photo: Lars Laursen/Scanpix).*

are Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Germany.

One of the causes of the poor condition of the Baltic Sea is the discharge of nutrients and substances alien to the environment. The Helsinki Convention ensures that there is no economic gain for getting rid of substances alien to the environment by discharging them into the sea (photo: Stig Bachmann Nielsen/Naturplan).

OSPAR Convention

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

The OSPAR Convention aims at protecting the North-East Atlantic Ocean, including the Kattegat and the North Sea.

The convention combines the Paris Convention and the Oslo Convention, which covered pollution from land-based sources and dumping waste from ships and aircraft. The countries bordering the North-East Atlantic did not feel that the two older conventions gave sufficient protection to the ocean from all sources of pollution.

In 1992 they decided to adopt a new convention that covers all human activities that contribute to pollution of the North-East Atlantic.

Goal

For many years, various forms of waste products have polluted the North-East Atlantic, and this pollution has had unfortunate consequences for the ocean's plant and animal life.

The OSPAR Convention aims at stopping all discharge and dumping of waste products with the goal of conserving and recreating the biological diversity of the marine area.

OSPAR Commission

The OSPAR Convention is administered by the OSPAR Commission, which is made up of representatives of each member country. The commission makes suggestions and recommendations to the member states - among other things it has banned oil dumping from drilling rigs and introduced limits to the discharge of radioactive materials. The commission also places great weight on increased monitoring of both the environment and sources of pollution.

The commission does not have powers to regulate fishing.

Particularly threatened habitats and species

To date, the OSPAR Commission has listed 14 habitat types and a number of threatened species that the member states have a special responsibility for. Mammals, fish, invertebrates, reptiles and birds are included on the list.

Examples of particularly threatened habitats found in the Nordic countries and in need of special protection are: intertidal mudflats,

beds with eel-grass (*Zostera marina*) and oyster beds.

Dog-whelk, sturgeon, blue whale and roseate tern are among the species found in the North Sea requiring special protection.

One of the OSPAR Commission's targets is to set up a network of protected areas in the North-East Atlantic. The commission has laid down criteria for the selection and administration of areas that need special protection.

Members states

In addition to the EU, 15 countries, including all the Nordic countries, have joined the convention.

Dumping rubbish from oil platforms was allowed once, but the OSPAR Commission has now introduced a total ban on dumping (photo: Steen Jacobsen/Scanpix).

Every year, many waterbirds die as a result of oil pollution. Here, a common heron (Ardea cinerea) is covered in oil (photo: Søren Steffen/Scanpix).

World Heritage Convention

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

The member states of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the convention protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage in 1972. The background was the risk that pollution, tourism, war or general decay would destroy natural areas, archaeological monuments and cultural resources.

Goal

The goal of the World Heritage Convention is first and foremost to designate and conserve cultural and natural heritage sites that are important to the whole of mankind.

The desire is to place greater focus on the world's cultural and natural heritage and encourage the member states to include conservation of the natural and cultural resources in their legislation. The target is also to create an effective international collaboration for protecting these resources for coming generations.

Definition

UNESCO's definition of natural and cultural heritage is broad. For instance it covers historical buildings,

a natural phenomenon of aesthetic, geological or scientific importance, or a habitat for threatened plant or animal species.

According to UNESCO's definition, these resources can be naturally occurring, made by man, or made in interplay between man and nature.

World Heritage List

The localities designated as the world's cultural and natural heritage are included on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Every country that has adopted the convention is responsible for nominating new additions to the list.

The World Heritage Committee, which consists of representatives from 21 member states, approves nominations for locations or natural monuments to be included on the list. Before the committee deals with the nominations, specialist non-government organisations (NGOs) assess them thoroughly to ensure that the convention's requirements to quality, boundaries and administration are met. The NGOs are the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and

Natural Resources (IUCN) for natural resources and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural resources.

Including a site on the World Heritage List does not automatically protect the site. It means that the relevant country must commit itself to conserving the resources over a long term. The areas are monitored every sixth year to see whether the resources have deteriorated and whether changes are required in their management.

Inclusion on the World Heritage List is regarded as a particularly prestigious recognition and often contributes to increased tourism. Additional tourists can mean increased revenues, but at the same time the tourists can have a negative impact on the resources - for example through wear and tear. The member states must be aware of these problems when they nominate areas that they would like included on the World Heritage List.

Nordic collaboration

The Nordic countries have established a Nordic centre (Nordic

Þingvellir on Island is designated as a site of world heritage, partly because of its history and partly because of its landscape. Althing, Iceland's general assembly, met at Þingvellir between 930 and 1798 (photo: Morten Lund Overgaard).

Ilulissat Icefjord is so far the only landscape in Greenland to be designated as a world heritage site. Every year, the glaciers in the area calve more than 35 km³ of ice. By studying the glaciers, researchers have gained greater insight into the climatic conditions since the last ice age (photo: Slim Allagui/Scanpix).

World Heritage Foundation, NWHF) to strengthen their joint efforts to conserve the world's natural and cultural heritage. The foundation aims at ensuring that the Nordic countries observe the convention's provisions.

NWHF co-ordinates the efforts of the Nordic countries and works together with UNESCO to support those parts of the world that are under-represented on the World Heritage List.

All the Nordic countries are among the 182 countries that have joined the convention.

The Sammallahdenmäki Bronze Age mounds in Finland are included on the World Heritage List. The bronze age mounds give a unique insight into the social and religious structure of northern Europe more than 3,000 years ago (photo: Teija Tiitinen).

whc.unesco.org
www.nwhf.no

European Landscape Convention

Landscapes impact on the identity of mankind and reflect the diversity of a common cultural and natural heritage. The landscape is a result of the interaction between nature's own processes and/or the interaction between nature and man. All types of landscape are important for our welfare and prosperity.

At the same time, the landscape changes all the time as a result of the way society develops in agriculture, industry, town planning, tourism and so on.

Goal

The convention aims to ensure that we have landscapes of high quality in Europe. It contributes to protecting and managing the landscape in a good way and can be used to improve damaged landscapes. The convention also forms a basis for European collaboration on landscapes.

What is a landscape?

The convention's definition of a landscape is broad and covers both urban areas, agricultural areas, marine areas and natural areas - in other words, all types of landscape, no matter their condition or quality.

Better understanding of the landscape

To promote a better understanding of how important it is to protect the landscape, the member countries must increase awareness of the great value that landscapes have for our welfare and identity.

Landscape policy

Every member country is responsible for protecting, managing and planning the landscape. The countries must assess their landscapes and the circumstances that affect them. On the basis of these assessments, the countries must set quality targets for the landscapes. People and the authorities must have an opportunity to participate in setting these quality targets and to have a voice in the decision-making processes that have direct or indirect influence on how the landscape develops.

International collaboration

The member countries must collaborate across national boundaries and, where necessary, prepare and implement landscape programmes together.

Management

The European Landscape Convention is administered by the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage (CD-PAT) and the Biodiversity Committee (CODBP).

The convention has been joined by 20 countries, including Denmark, Norway and Finland.

According to the convention, a landscape is defined as an area whose character is the result of the impact of natural and/or human factors (Orkdal, Norway) (photo: Carsten Brandt).

The landscape convention ensures a diversity of landscapes and covers all types of landscape. Both cultivated areas and areas that develop without human intervention are protected under the convention (photo: Stig Bachmann Nielsen/Naturplan).

Granada Convention

The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe

Europe's architectural heritage is uniquely rich and varied. A picture of Europe's past and present is hidden in the architecture, which is a part of our common history and identity and an important basis for our experiences and life quality.

Goal

The goal of the Granada Convention is to strengthen the conservation of the European cultural heritage and to promote collaboration on this task among the European countries.

What is architectural heritage?

By architectural heritage we understand buildings and monuments that have an historic, archaeological or artistic value. It can also mean areas that are partly built and created in interplay between people and nature, or areas that are a part of the historical context surrounding the buildings and monuments.

Demands on member countries

The Granada Convention obligates the member countries to adopt targets for conserving houses and monuments that have an

architectural value. The convention's targets shall become part of urban and rural planning activities and shall form the basis for preserving and restoring the architectural resources.

The countries must also inform their people of the value of the historical or artistic resources found in the form of buildings and monuments, and to promote increased interest in conserving them. In addition, the member countries shall increase their collaboration on conserving the architectural resources.

Preservation

Preservation or scheduling is an important tool in meeting the convention's goal. Preservation can either occur voluntarily or - if the owner opposes this - through expropriation. The authorities in the member countries shall also have the power to direct owners to maintain preserved properties and to give subsidies for implementing preservation.

Education of professionals

Under the convention, the member countries must train architects, urban planners, craftsmen and

other skilled workers so they can assume responsibility for planning, preserving and restoring the architectural resources.

Administering the convention

The Council of Europe has set up a committee, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT), which is responsible for following up the Granada Convention. The committee also proposes ways of improving the implementation of the convention's provisions and proposes changes to the content of the convention.

Who has signed?

All of the Nordic countries with the exception of Iceland have joined the convention. Denmark's participation does not apply to the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

The Granada Convention protects European architectural heritage of both older and newer date. The Norwegian stave churches, such as the stave church at Vågåmo, are examples of older architecture (photo: Jan Djenner/Scanpix).

Ærøskøbing is an older Danish town with about 40 buildings dating from the 1700s, and which are preserved (photo: Stig Bachmann Nielsen/Naturplan).

www.conventions.coe.int
CETS No.: 121

Malta Convention

The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage

The Malta Convention was adopted in the Maltese capital, Valletta, in 1992. The convention was set up because it was thought that a more targeted effort to ensure the archaeological heritage was necessary. The cultural heritage includes constructions, buildings, landscapes and objects that are a remains of earlier ages and that express the history and identity of mankind.

Goal

The convention's goal is to safeguard the archaeological heritage as a source of the common European history and identity and as a tool for scientific and historical studies. All remains of earlier ages are regarded as being elements in the archaeological heritage when:

1. Conserving and studying them contributes to our understanding of the history of mankind and mankind's relationship with the cultural environment;
2. Finds, excavations or other research methods form the main source of knowledge about mankind and its environment; and

3. They are found within the territories of the member nations

To meet the goals of the convention, the member nations must register the sites of archaeological finds and ancient monuments, ensure there are possibilities for preserving or acquiring areas of special archaeological importance and introduce a duty to report archaeological finds to public authorities. The countries must give consideration to archaeological resources in connection with local, regional or national planning and in building and construction work. Among other things, the countries must stop illegal excavations and collaborate across national boundaries to prevent illegal export of archaeological items. The authorities must also be able to give economic support to preserve the archaeological resources.

Experience and greater awareness

Under to the convention, the populations of the member countries shall have access to a broad range of sites of archaeological importance. The convention also requires the countries to inform people about

the importance of the archaeological resources as a basis for society. The information can also be used to increase people's awareness of activities than can destroy ancient monuments and other archaeological remains.

Following up the convention

The Council of Europe has set up a committee, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT), which is responsible for following up the Malta Convention. The committee also proposes ways of improving the implementation of the convention's provisions and proposes changes to the content of the convention.

Who has signed?

The convention has been joined by 39 countries, among them Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Denmark's membership does not apply to the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

The Norwegian rock carvings at Alta are among the archaeological resources that are covered by the Malta Convention (photo: Sven Halling/Scanpix).

The Inuit settlement on Akia island illustrates a part of the history of the Greenland peoples (photo: Anders Tvevad/Scanpix).

Under the convention, people should have access to a varied selection of archaeological elements, including burial mounds (photo: Stig Bachmann/Naturplan).

The Malta Convention ensures that consideration is given to archaeological finds during building and construction work (photo: Jens Nørgaard Larsen/Scanpix).

Aarhus Convention

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

In 1998, the ministers for the environment from more than 150 countries held a meeting in Aarhus in Denmark. Here they adopted the Aarhus Convention, which aims at giving people and organisations greater influence on decisions about nature and the environment.

Goal

As its goal, the convention aims at strengthening three basic principles of democracy:

- Right to information
- Right to participate in decision-making processes
- Right to appeal and have decisions tried in courts or boards of appeal

The convention applies only to decisions that are important for nature and the environment.

Right to information

The first principle ensures the public's right to information in matters about the environment and the living conditions of people. The right to information is an important condition for the public's ability to be heard in the decisions that the

authorities make - and under the convention this shall apply to everyone, irrespective of their nationality, citizenship or place of residence.

Right to participate in decision-making processes

It is not enough that the public has good access to information. It must also be possible for the public to influence what is decided. The member states must therefore involve the public when decisions are to be made on environmental matters, for example through public consultations and public meetings. Among other things, the public shall have influence on decisions about new enterprises that can pollute and other activities that affect the environment.

Right to appeal

The convention ensures that people, enterprises and organisations that are affected by decisions about the environment have a right to appeal decisions about access to documents and about activities that can impact on the environment. The convention also includes a broader provision about the public being able to start

legal proceedings about or appeal decisions under the legislation covering nature, the environment and planning.

The individual countries themselves decide who in the concrete cases has sufficient interest to appeal.

At the current time, 40 countries have joined the convention, including the Nordic countries with the exception of Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

The Aarhus Convention ensures citizens the right to obtain information, participate in decision-making processes and appeal decisions about activities that can have a negative impact on the environment (photo: Jens Muff Hansen/Naturplan).

Among other things, the right of appeal applies to construction work, such as the construction of the hydro-electric power station at Kárahnjúkar on Iceland (photo: Magnea I. Kristinsdóttir).

www.unece.org/env/pp

International secretariats

Biodiversity Convention:

(The Convention on Biological Diversity)
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
413 St-Jacques Street, 8th floor, Office 800
Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2Y 1N9
Tel: +1-514-288-2220 Fax: +1-514-288-6588
Email: secretariat@biodiv.org
Web: www.biodiv.org

CITES Convention:

(The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
UNEP/Regional Office for Europe - International Environment House
15, chemin des Anémones CH-1219 - Châtelaine, Geneva Switzerland
Tel: +41-22-917 82 79
Fax: +41-22-917 80 24
Email: roe@unep.ch
Web: www.cites.org

Ramsar Convention:

(The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat)
Ramsar Convention Secretariat,
Rue Mauverney 28,
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0170, +41 22 999 0169,
Email ramsar@ramsar.org
Web: www.ramsar.org

Bern Convention:

(The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats)
Council of Europe
Avenue de l'Europe
67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 20 00
Web: <http://www.conventions.coe.int>

Bonn Convention:

(The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals)
UNEP / CMS Secretariat
United Nations Premises
Martin-Luther-King-Str. 8
D-53175 Bonn, Germany
Tel: (+49 228) 815 2401 / 02
Fax: (+49 228) 815 2449
Email: secretariat@cms.int
Web: www.cms.int

Whaling Convention:

(The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling)
The International Whaling Commission
The Red House,
135 Station Road,
Impington,
Cambridge,
Cambridgeshire CB4 9NP, UK.
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Fax: +44 (0) 1223 232 876
Email: secretariat@iwcoffice.org
Web: www.iwcoffice.org

Helsinki Convention:

(The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area)
Helsinki Commission
(The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission)
Katajanokanlaituri 6 B
FI-00160 Helsinki, Finland
Tel: +358 9 6220 220
Fax: +358 9 6220 2239
Web: www.helcom.fi

OSPAR Convention:

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OSPAR Secretariat
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World Heritage Convention:

(The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage)
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E-mail: nwhf@nwhf.no
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European Landscape Convention

Granada Convention

(The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe)

Malta Convention

(The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage)
Council of Europe
Avenue de l'Europe
67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 20 00
Web: www.conventions.coe.int

Aarhus Convention:

(The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters)
Aarhus Convention Secretariat
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Environment and Land Management Division
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 917 4226 / 917 1502
Fax: + 41 22 907 0107
Email: public.participation@unece.org
Web: www.unece.org/env/pp/

Denmark

Biodiversity Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
CITES Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Ramsar Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Bern Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Bonn Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Whaling convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Helsinki Convention	www.mst.dk
OSPAR Convention	www.mst.dk
World Heritage Convention	www.unesco.dk
European Landscape Convention	www.skovognatur.dk
Granada Convention	www.kuas.dk
Malta Convention	www.kuas.dk
Aarhus Convention	www.mst.dk

Faroe Islands

Biodiversity Convention	www.imr.fo
Ramsar Convention	www.imr.fo
Bonn Convention	www.imr.fo
Whaling convention	www.fisk.fo
OSPAR Convention	www.imr.fo

Finland

Biodiversity Convention	www.ymparisto.fi
CITES Convention	www.ymparisto.fi
Ramsar Convention	www.ymparisto.fi
World Heritage Convention	www.nba.fi/en/whf
European Landscape Convention	www.ymparisto.fi
Aarhus Convention	www.ymparisto.fi

Iceland

Biodiversity Convention	www.umhverfisraduneyti.is
CITES Convention	www.ust.is
Ramsar Convention	www.ust.is
Bern Convention	www.ni.is
Whaling convention	www.sjararutvegsraduneyti.is
OSPAR Convention	www.umhverfisraduneyti.is
World Heritage Convention	www.menntamalaraduneyti.is
Aarhus Convention	www.umhverfisraduneyti.is

Norway

Biodiversity Convention	www.miljo.no
CITES Convention	www.miljo.no
Ramsar Convention	www.miljo.no
Bern Convention	www.miljo.no
Bonn Convention	www.miljo.no
Whaling convention	www.miljo.no
OSPAR Convention	www.miljo.no
World Heritage Convention	www.miljo.no
European Landscape Convention	www.miljo.no
Granada Convention	www.miljo.no
Malta Convention	www.miljo.no
Aarhus Convention	www.miljo.no

Sweden

Biodiversity Convention	www.regeringen.se
CITES Convention	www.sjv.se
Ramsar Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se
Bern Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se
Bonn Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se
Helsinki Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se
OSPAR Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se
World Heritage Convention	www.unesco-sweden.org
European Landscape Convention	www.raa.se
Granada Co	
nvention	www.raa.se
Malta Convention	www.naturvardsverket.se

For a richer future

13 conventions on the natural and cultural environment

The Nordic countries have a long tradition for participating in the international collaboration for conserving the world's natural and cultural heritage. Conventions are an important tool in connection with this collaboration.

This booklet describes 13 of the most important conventions that involve the Nordic countries in different ways - and which the Nordic countries in many cases have helped prepare. These conventions are:

- Biodiversity Convention
- CITES Convention
- Ramsar Convention
- Bern Convention
- Bonn Convention
- Whaling Convention
- Helsinki Convention
- OSPAR Convention
- World Heritage Convention
- European Landscape Convention
- Granada Convention
- Malta Convention
- Aarhus Convention

There is a short description of the historical background for the conventions. The most important provisions and their relevance to the Nordic countries are also described.

In addition, the booklet contains a summary of which Nordic countries have adopted the individual conventions and references to sources of further information.

The target group comprises politicians, civil servants, administrators, teachers, interest organisations and others who are interested in the natural and cultural heritage.