



Nordic Council  
of Ministers

# Together for a Green Future in the Nordic Region and the World

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How the Nordic co-operation on the  
environment and climate works on  
solutions for a sustainable tomorrow



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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at:  
<https://pub.norden.org/nord2025-034>



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## A joint approach tackling inter-related crises

We are facing a triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. These three interlinked issues amplify each other and addressing one requires tackling all three.

The Nordic co-operation on the environment and climate therefore focuses on synergies and interdisciplinary perspectives in our 2025-2030 co-operation programme. We build on the strong collaboration between Nordic countries and our tradition of developing robust knowledge bases that inform policy development.

The Nordic countries have taken on leadership roles in many international processes and have been frontrunners on numerous environmental issues. However, we are also aware that our ecological footprint is among the highest in the world. That is why our co-operation programme sets bold ambitions on all levels – from local to national and international – and proactively seeks solutions that will yield Nordic added value and benefit citizens, countries and companies in the region and beyond.

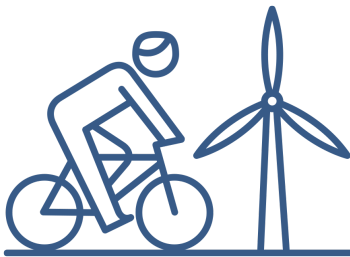


↑ Images: Silje Bergum Kinsten/norden.org, Unsplash and Andreas Omvik/norden.org

## Three goals – One vision

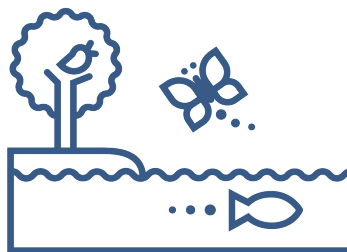
The Nordic Region aims to become the world's most sustainable and integrated region. Our Vision 2030 works toward a green, socially sustainable and competitive Nordic Region.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' environment and climate sector actively integrates these priorities, and we have outlined three overall and integrated goals to protect and develop resilient societies.



### **GOAL 1: Climate neutrality and climate resilience**

The Nordic Region will be a leading player in the transition to climate neutrality and resilience, and it will work towards an ambitious implementation of the long-term goals in the Paris Agreement.



### **GOAL 2: Biodiversity**

The Nordic Region will reverse biodiversity loss by bolstering and developing its co-operation with actors within the business and industry sector, civil society and academia.



### **GOAL 3: Circular economy and reduction of harmful chemicals**

The Nordic countries will reduce their ecological footprint through a circular economy and by contributing towards the reduction of harmful chemicals and pollutants both globally and locally.

From 2025 to 2027, we will implement 16 thematic programmes and a series of strategic projects. These initiatives will build momentum for existing priorities and introduce new measures to accelerate our transition towards a green future.

Our co-operation programme includes both area-specific and interdisciplinary perspectives. While many programmes explicitly contribute to one of the overarching goals, most will produce positive results beyond a singular goal – and some are specifically designed to integrate their perspectives across goals and programmes.

## Our vision 2030

### A **competitive** Nordic region

Together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility and digital integration.



**The Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world**

### A **green** Nordic region

Together, we will promote a green transition of our societies and work towards carbon neutrality and a sustainable circular and bio-based economy.

### A **socially sustainable** Nordic region

Together, we will promote an inclusive, equal and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchange and welfare.

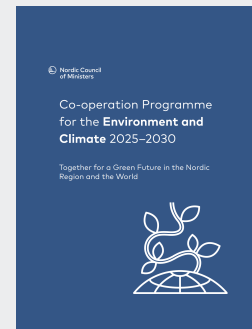
## The Nordic co-operation on the environment and climate – A part of the Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official co-operation body of the Nordic governments. The co-operation includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. The Nordic co-operation on the environment and climate supports and facilitates co-operation between the climate and environment ministries in the Nordic countries.

In 2019, the Nordic prime ministers presented a joint vision that the Nordic Region should be the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030. It is a vision that supports a green, competitive, and socially sustainable Nordic Region.

The goals of the environment and climate sector have been placed under the objective of a green Nordic Region. However, we have consciously designed our goals to ensure that they can also bring positive results for social sustainability and competitiveness. It is by broadening the focus of the sectors that we will be able to attain all three components of the vision.

Read the full Nordic Co-operation Programme for the Environment and Climate 2025-2030 [here](#)



# Programmes



- [Nordic Climate and Air Programme](#)
- [Climate Adaptation Programme](#)
- [Carbon Capture and Storage – European potentials in the Nordic Region](#)
- [Nordic Sustainable Construction](#)
- [Co-operation on Sustainable Freight Transport](#)
- [ChargeNordic – Heavy-Duty eTransport Alliance](#)
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- [Nordic Environment and Economy Programme](#)
- [Small Communities in the Nordic Region](#)

# Nordic Climate and Air Programme

Climate change and air pollution often share common causes, both stemming largely from fossil fuel combustion. Although the majority of emissions originate outside the Nordic Region, the Nordic countries have the opportunity to lead by example. By scaling up efforts to achieve climate neutrality and enhance air quality, they can make a significant impact both nationally and globally. Solutions addressing climate change and air pollution thereby often go hand in hand.

For many years, Nordic co-operation has provided a robust knowledge base to support decision-making, establishing the Nordic countries as driving force in international climate and air processes. The first international treaty to tackle air pollution for example is rooted in Nordic research and diplomacy.

The Nordic Climate and Air Programme builds on these efforts, aiming to further facilitate co-operation and increase knowledge to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and air pollution. The programme accelerates national climate and air quality initiatives and actively supports the transition towards climate neutrality, in line with the Paris Agreement and the UNECE Air Convention.

## **Focus areas:**

- Supporting the Nordic ambition on clean air and climate change, as well as strengthening the development of international efforts in these areas.
- Promoting green transition within high-emission sectors.
- Strengthening the Nordic environmental and climate resilience as part of a wider mission to increase the total resilience of societies.
- The programme strives to enable all actors in society to contribute to, and have the opportunity to participate in, the transition according to the principle that no one should be left behind.

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**COORDINATION:** Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 30 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Climate Adaptation Programme

The Nordic Region and other parts of Europe are experiencing increasing extreme weather events, from heatwaves and wildfires to heavy rainfall and flooding. With climate change, these events are expected to become more frequent and intense.

To strengthen societal preparedness and foster long-term resilience across sectors and borders, a coordinated response is essential. Adaptation must be integrated with related policy and spatial planning areas, such as mitigation, civil protection, and the Sustainable Development Goals, to avoid goal conflicts and maximize synergies.

The Climate Adaptation Programme marks a strategic shift, recognizing adaptation as a critical pillar of sustainable development. The programme serves as a platform for knowledge sharing, making it easier to tackle common challenges related to climate change and biodiversity loss in a Nordic context. Through collaborative approaches and joint actions, the Nordic countries can strengthen their ability to address shared challenges such as extreme weather, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem disruptions.

## Focus areas

- Enhancing the focus on transboundary climate risks to better understand the risks and strengthen co-operation on disaster preparedness and climate adaptation.
- Improving opportunities to finance climate adaptation by providing better access to information and creating incentives for more community actors.
- Strengthening the understanding of how climate change impacts Nordic ecosystems with a focus on decision-makers and those managing protected areas.
- Contributing to improved collection and increased sharing of data to evaluate the effects of climate change and adaptation measures.
- Strengthening the Nordic co-operation on climate adaptation by establishing a forum to facilitate dialogue, knowledge sharing, and networking.

The programme supports decision-makers at all levels -national, regional, and local- as well as private sector actors and community stakeholders. By focusing on common challenges and shared opportunities, the programme contributes directly to the vision of a climate-resilient Nordic Region by 2030.

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**COORDINATION:** Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 8 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Carbon Capture and Storage – European potentials in the Nordic Region

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) will be essential in achieving national and European climate targets from 2030 to 2050, and the Nordic countries can play a pivotal role. Currently, Nordic countries are at the forefront of European CCS development, as proven by several national initiatives, including CO<sub>2</sub> exploration and storage licenses, national CCS subsidy schemes, and a net-negative capture and storage facility.

However, the large-scale deployment of CCS technologies requires coordinated efforts, shared knowledge, and robust infrastructure. The Nordic Carbon Capture and Storage Programme supports the implementation of CCS in the region and develops collective Nordic knowledge and competencies for CCS-related issues to inform policy developments.

The purpose of the programme is to provide a strong analytical background to enable the further regional CCS development, while also laying the foundation for future Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU) efforts, which are essential for replacing fossil-based products with sustainable alternatives.

## **Focus areas:**

- Developing Nordic competence and collective knowledge on CCS.
- Supporting the development of competitive and cost-efficient cross-border CO<sub>2</sub> transport infrastructure.
- Analysing Nordic CO<sub>2</sub> storage potentials and financing mechanisms.
- Exploring environmental safety, public acceptance, and industrial carbon removal potentials.
- Assessing the costs and opportunities of direct CO<sub>2</sub> air capture technologies.
- Providing policy support and contributing to future EU regulatory frameworks.

These focus areas are designed to strengthen the Nordic Region's position as a European hub for carbon management and to contribute to both national and EU climate goals. The programme also serves as a foundation for informed policy development through collective Nordic insights and expertise.

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**COORDINATION:** The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 15 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Sustainable Construction

The construction sector is the second largest industrial ecosystem in the EU, accounting for 50% of resource extraction, 35% of the EU's waste generation, and significant land use and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, a fundamental transformation is essential to meet climate and environmental goals.

The Nordic Sustainable Construction Programme aims to accelerate the green, digital, and circular transition of the built environment. By uniting the efforts of the Nordic countries, the programme develops and implements solutions that minimize the negative climate and environmental impacts of construction while enhancing competitiveness and resilience.

Building on existing knowledge, established networks, and partnerships, the programme continues to drive the sector's transition by focusing on four interlinked strategic areas: climate, circularity, digitalisation, and new EU initiatives.

## Focus areas:

- Aligning Life Cycle Assessment methods across the Nordics and promoting innovation in low-carbon and nature-based solutions, while integrating climate adaptation and biodiversity into building regulations.
- Supporting more effective use of built square meters and materials, developing assessment methods for reused construction products, and continuing to build skills through [www.skills4reuse.com](http://www.skills4reuse.com).
- Promoting data-driven construction and enhancing digital infrastructure to support smarter, more efficient building processes.
- Analysing upcoming EU initiatives affecting the built environment, facilitating knowledge exchange among Nordic authorities, and developing joint Nordic input to contribute to future EU policy and regulation.

Through targeted collaboration and shared Nordic input, the programme aims to shape future EU frameworks and position the Nordic Region as a leader in sustainable construction.

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**COORDINATION:** Danish Authority of Social Affairs and Housing

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 25 Mio, co-funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers for Sustainable Growth

**FOLLOW THE PROGRAMME:** [Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](http://norden.org)

# Co-operation on Sustainable Freight Transport

The freight transport sector needs to reduce its climate impact, and intermodal transport can play a significant role in this effort. Intermodal transport involves moving goods using various types of transportation, such as trucks, trains, and ships, working together to deliver the goods to their destination. To achieve a more sustainable freight transport sector, each mode of transport must become more sustainable, and different modes of transportation should be used in combination.

However, based on previous work conducted by the Nordic co-operation, intermodal transport faces several challenges. While technology, infrastructure, and incentives need to be developed, changes in behaviour and increased collaboration also have the potential to enhance the use of intermodal transport.

The second phase of the Co-operation on Sustainable Freight Transport Programme addresses these challenges by creating a shared understanding of the obstacles and opportunities for achieving more sustainable transport solutions. The programme promotes collaboration among actors in the Nordic Region to increase transport efficiency and sustainability, as well as to support the development of sustainable freight transport.

## **Focus areas:**

- Establishing a co-operation group at the Nordic level that considers the conditions, perspectives, and interests of different countries.
- Conducting a survey to compare the performance of intermodal transport with pure road transport in selected corridors, describe the impact of existing and announced policy instruments and regulations on intermodal transport and assessing the extent of current and potential growth of intermodal transport flows.
- Implementing initiatives that promote co-operation among Nordic actors in intermodal transport.
- Carrying out pilot projects to facilitate, streamline, or increase the use of intermodal transport.
- Supporting the development of transport solutions among interested actors.

The programme will focus on what the transport industry itself can influence, specifically how the existing transport system can be utilized rather than relying on changes and development of infrastructure and policy instruments.

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**COORDINATION:** The Swedish Transport Administration

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 10 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# ChargeNordic – Heavy-Duty eTransport Alliance

In recent years, the Nordic countries have made significant progress in the electrification of light vehicles. In Norway alone, nearly 90% of new passenger car registrations are fully electric, showcasing the region's commitment to sustainable transport solutions. However, the electrification of heavy transport remains a developing market, facing more complex challenges.

Cross-border electric heavy-duty transport is crucial for the economic integration and connectivity of the Nordic region. Ensuring fit-for-purpose and sufficient charging infrastructure across Nordic borders along key routes can enhance the reliability of heavy-duty electrification, facilitate trade, reduce emissions, and improve the overall efficiency of the logistics network.

The ChargeNordic - Heavy-Duty eTransport Alliance is creating a collaborative network to pave the way for an electrified heavy-duty transport system. The programme focuses on establishing a Nordic platform for knowledge exchange on best practices, leveraging the collective experience of the Nordic countries from light vehicle electrification to address the imminent challenges of heavy-duty electrification roll-out. An important perspective to further explore will be the robustness and resilience of the electrified transport system.

## Focus areas

- Establishing a Nordic platform for knowledge exchange on heavy-duty electrification and resilience.
- Creating a strong network of stakeholders committed to advancing the electrification of road transport.
- Mapping relevant public and private stakeholders and leading demonstration projects in the electrification of heavy transport.
- Developing policy proposals and harmonising concepts that support faster and more coordinated deployment of charging infrastructure and vehicle roll-out.
- Increasing awareness of best practices and innovative solutions across borders and stakeholders.

This programme acts as a catalyst for knowledge exchange in the Nordics, ensuring that insights and best practices are effectively shared and implemented across the region. Furthermore, the network can nurture dialogue on European policy development and enable a more united and strong Nordic voice in relevant EU discussions.

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**COORDINATION:** Swedish Energy Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 5.2 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Roadmap for the introduction of sustainable zero-carbon fuels in shipping

In addition to their commitment to the global maritime emission reduction targets set by the International Maritime Organization, the Nordic countries have also pledged to meet ambitious regional climate targets for shipping. To achieve decarbonization, the shipping industry will need to transition to zero-emission technologies.

However, the Nordic co-operation has identified several key barriers to green shipping: the high costs of zero-emission fuels and technologies, the limited availability of these fuels and the necessary bunkering infrastructure, as well as the low maturity of fuel technologies and safety regulations. Overcoming these barriers requires coordinated efforts and consequently sustainable, zero-emission shipping has become a Nordic priority.

The second phase of the Nordic Roadmap for the introduction of sustainable zero-carbon fuels in shipping builds on the existing knowledge base and translates knowledge into action. It supports both vessel decarbonisation and the development of shore-side infrastructure for sustainable fuels. The programme involves stakeholders from across the Nordic Region, enhances maritime connectivity with neighbouring regions, and considers the unique Nordic circumstances, such as ice-covered waters during winter.

## **Focus Areas:**

- Supporting the realization and implementation of the first green shipping corridors in the Nordic Region.
- Ensuring safe port and bunkering operations for sustainable zero-carbon fuels.
- Continuing and strengthening the Nordic collaboration platform for green maritime transition.
- Developing a Nordic Green Transition Barometer for Shipping to track progress and guide decision-making.

With this programme the Nordic countries are taking concrete steps toward the decarbonization of Nordic shipping and ensure that the region's green maritime industry remains competitive and ready for the future.

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**COORDINATION:** Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 17.5 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Ocean Programme

Climate change, ocean acidification, environmental pollution, eutrophication, plastic waste, overfishing, and invasive species are significant challenges facing the Nordic marine environment. Addressing these issues requires collaboration and information exchange to drive positive development.

The Nordic Ocean Programme provides an integrated platform for Nordic co-operation, effectively tackling these challenges together. By building a robust knowledge base the programme supports decision-making and governance in the Nordic Region, while contributing to international commitments in biodiversity and sustainable development.

Nationally, the programme helps efforts to improve ocean governance and tackle environmental challenges. Regionally, it enhances Nordic co-operation through better policy coordination, monitoring, and finding joint solutions for areas like the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, the North-East Atlantic, and the Arctic. Internationally, the programme brings Nordic perspectives and expertise to global initiatives and conventions, such as the UN Convention on the Biodiversity and the Climate Agreement.

## **Focus areas:**

- Increasing the resilience of marine ecosystems and helping them to adapt to a changing climate.
- Protecting and restoring biodiversity in the Nordic seas, including targeted conservation and restoration efforts and addressing invasive species.
- Addressing various types of pollution to mitigate their negative impacts on marine ecosystems.
- Focusing on ecosystem-based and sustainable marine and coastal spatial planning.

The programme promotes collaboration between research, management, and different sectors such as fisheries and green energy, while contributing policy-relevant knowledge and tools for sustainable development. By generating insights and solutions, the goal is to support management that both protects the marine environment and enables sustainable development for future generations.

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**COORDINATION:** Norwegian Environment Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 20 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Nature Programme

Nordic ecosystems face both local and global challenges linked to biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution – collectively known as the triple planetary crisis. To address these issues, transformative changes are needed that integrate nature considerations into strategic decision-making processes and concrete solutions.

The Nordic Nature Programme tackles these crosscutting issues by developing measures that halt biodiversity loss and help the Nordic countries address societal issues through nature-based solutions. The programme furthermore supports the Nordic countries in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and following the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

The Nordic Nature Programme consists of two sub-programmes focused on biodiversity and nature-based solutions. Through these targeted sub-programmes, activities contribute to reversing biodiversity loss and help solve societal challenges by enhancing co-operation between authorities, actors in the business and industry sector, civil society, and academia.

## **Focus areas:**

- Supporting an ambitious implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in the Nordics.
- Increasing co-operation for sustainable area usage, ecosystem-based physical planning, and partnerships with industry, civil society, and academia.
- Scaling up nature-based solutions to address challenges posed by biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution.
- Enhancing co-operation between industry, civil society and academia as well as across sectors, to foster a more integrated approach to biodiversity in decision-making processes.
- Strengthening co-operation between municipalities and local societies in the whole Nordic Region.

The Nordic Nature Programme aims to ensure that both local and regional actors and sectors are involved and engaged in developing and implementing strategies, as well as scaling concrete solutions that support nature and the sustainable development of more resilient ecosystems and societies.

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**COORDINATION:** Faroese Environment Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 35 Mio

**FOLLOW THE PROGRAMME:** [Nature-based solutions in the Nordic Region](#)

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Programme to Reduce Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues affecting both the environment and human health. Without new and effective control measures, plastic production is projected to double within the next 20 years. However, with concerted and unified global actions, plastic pollution can be ended by 2040.

The Nordic Programme to Reduce Plastic Pollution enables the Nordic countries to collaborate in generating high-quality and valuable knowledge on plastic pollution. It also acts as a catalyst for exchanging experiences and developing effective and ambitious measures to combat plastic pollution at national, regional, and international levels. The programme will promote joint Nordic priorities and experiences in the efforts to prevent and reduce plastic pollution, including microplastics, through the promotion of sustainable consumption of plastics taking into account a life cycle approach.

The Nordic countries have been at the forefront of fighting plastic pollution, advocating for an ambitious international agreement to tackle this issue. Together, the Nordic countries have produced influential reports and policy recommendations, providing a robust knowledge base for ongoing negotiations. The Nordic Programme to Reduce Plastic Pollution sustains this momentum in the continuing negotiations.

## **Focus areas:**

- Promoting sustainable production and consumption of plastics.
- Developing policy reports, proposals, guidelines, and similar resources for plastic product design to foster a circular value chain for plastics.
- Targeting emissions and the release of plastics, including microplastics.
- Addressing plastic waste and existing plastic pollution.

The programme advocates for joint Nordic priorities and experiences by promoting sustainable plastic consumption through a life cycle approach, while safeguarding Nordic political positions and interests.

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**COORDINATION:** Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 15 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Circular Economy in the Nordics

The circular economy offers an alternative to the current linear model dominating the global economy. The approach promotes durable products designed for long-term use, repair, upgrading, reuse, and recycling. This allows the same resources to be used repeatedly, minimizing losses, resource depletion and waste.

For several years, Nordic co-operation has focused on circular economy and has been at the forefront of producing knowledge for policy development regionally and in the EU. The Circular Economy in the Nordics Programme builds on these experiences to further advance the transition to a circular economy in the Nordic Region. This involves changes in product design, production methods, business models, and consumer behaviour.

The programme contributes to the Nordic Region's circular economy goals by addressing material footprint and resource consumption, while contributing to European and international processes.

## **Focus areas:**

- Developing Nordic input for the European Commission's Ecodesign for Sustainable Product Regulation and standardizing life cycle assessments.
- Creating a long-term Nordic collaboration framework to support waste prevention policies, aligning with EU regulations and Nordic priorities.
- Increasing knowledge and data on critical raw material recycling and reuse, enhancing recovery potential from waste.
- Developing effective policy mixes for a circular economy through a deeper understanding of regulatory and financial instruments.
- Contributing to cross-cutting initiatives, such as Nordic collaboration on circular textiles and sustainable online shopping.

The transition to a circular economy requires systemic changes beyond the scope of a single programme. Therefore, the programme focuses on areas crucial for the Nordic Region, aiming to drive valuable systemic change and set an example for the world.

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**COORDINATION:** The Danish Environmental Protection Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 30 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Programme on Circular Procurement

Public procurement accounts for approximately 15% of the Nordic Region's GDP and up to 80% of a public entity's budget. In recent years, Nordic co-operation has harnessed this potential to advance circular procurement initiatives.

A notable example is Norway's first national framework agreement for ICT reuse, adopted by over 190 entities. This initiative has led to the collection of several kilos of gold, silver, palladium, and aluminium, highlighting the growing role of public procurement in driving sustainability and resource security, including the collection of critical raw materials.

The Nordic Programme on Circular Procurement aims to further scale and consolidate these efforts and established networks, which bring together municipalities and central government procurement centres. At the same time, the programme focuses Nordic collaboration on circular procurement in areas with the most potential to obtain circular effects, such as circular ICT and zero emission logistics. The programme also tackles behavioural barriers.

## **Focus areas:**

- Reducing environmental and carbon footprints by producing and piloting procurements that contribute to cutting emissions.
- Increasing resilience through greater independence of global supply chains, including reuse and collection of ICT containing critical raw materials.
- Advancing digital tools for circular procurement, including AI that analyse tender documents for alignment with circular criteria.
- Fostering innovation and identifying scalable circular business opportunities.

The Nordic Programme on Circular Procurement complements the EU Eco-Design Regulation by creating a clear demand for used and refurbished products and removing practical barriers to implementation and scaling.

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**COORDINATION:** The Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 12 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Programme on Sustainable Consumption

The Nordic countries are widely recognized as leaders in sustainability. However, they also face the challenge of having some of the highest consumption levels per capita. This disconnect, driven by various factors, risks being amplified unless decisive action is taken.

One significant challenge is the difficulty for circular solutions to establish themselves or scale up. Additionally, the rapid increase in e-commerce floods the market with new products, many of which have short lifespans and low compliance with EU regulations. These low-cost products often undermine the sustainability ambitions of Nordic citizens.

The Nordic Programme on Sustainable Consumption bridges this gap by aligning the region's high sustainability values with actual consumption behaviours. The programme focuses on educating consumers, supporting sustainable business models, and ensuring compliance with regulations.

## **Focus areas:**

- Leading consumers to more sustainable consumption patterns and minimizing the purchase of products containing harmful substances.
- Strengthening the enforcement, co-operation, and information sharing among public authorities to tackle the import of products non-compliant with EU legislation.
- Supporting business models that provide long life spans (repair, upgrading, renting etc.) and other circular solutions.

Given the fast-paced nature of consumption, the programme starts off with mapping current consumer behaviours, e-commerce environments, and sustainable business models. Based on this analysis, suitable initiatives will be decided upon.

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**COORDINATION:** Icelandic Environment and Energy Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 10 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Chemicals Programme

Chemical co-operation has a long tradition in the Nordic countries. It has enabled the region to influence the development of chemical regulations in Europe and globally, contributing to safer and more sustainable management of chemicals. Improving chemical safety is a slow process and new hazards emerge as knowledge about chemicals already in use increases. Therefore, continuous work for improved chemical management and chemical safety is crucial.

The Nordic Chemicals Programme contributes to the reduction of risks from hazardous chemicals and pollution locally and globally. It does so by enhancing knowledge exchange, producing new knowledge and building competence, as well as finding and utilizing synergies between Nordic chemical authorities.

## Focus areas:

- Developing and validating test methods that can have an impact on the OECD test guideline programme.
- Harmonizing, implementing, and enforcing EU legislation and international conventions on chemicals.
- Assessing impacts and screening of chemicals and pollutants, such as emerging hazardous chemicals and pollutants.
- Working towards sustainable chemicals and materials by building capacity among Nordic authorities and researchers.
- Improving access to information and communication.

The programme advances environmental sustainability and the green transition by directly addressing pollution, chemical safety, biodiversity, and climate impact. In addition, it strengthens competitiveness in Nordic innovation and entrepreneurship through harmonisation and knowledge-sharing and ensures that stakeholders stay informed and get empowered to act sustainably.

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**COORDINATION:** Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 20 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Nordic Environment and Economy Programme

Economic theory helps to understand how people use limited resources. This knowledge is important for figuring out which policy instruments can effectively address environmental issues. It involves exploring how different instruments can work together and their overall impact on solving specific environmental problems.

Environmental economics is an interdisciplinary field that helps to identify what it takes to achieve a sustainable transformation of societies. The Nordic Environment and Economy Programme brings the perspective of environmental economics into various policies, including those related to the environment, climate, finance, business, research, and innovation. This integration supports societal development.

The programme generates and evaluates analyses, surveys, and recommendations aimed at reducing the Nordic countries' consumption and production-based footprints. It also focuses on decoupling environmental impact from economic growth.

## **Focus areas:**

- Contributing to developing policy instruments that promote a just green transition.
- Identifying tools, instruments, and mechanisms that promote biodiversity.
- Enhancing the competitiveness of Nordic countries and companies in the green transition.
- Reducing the ecological footprint through a circular economy.
- Evaluating alternative welfare measures and their suitability for Nordic countries.

The programme focusses on economic regulation and the societal challenges and opportunities of sustainable transformation in Nordic societies.

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**COORDINATION:** Finnish Supervisory Authority

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 10 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)

# Small Communities in the Nordic Region

Small and remote communities in the Nordic Region often face unique challenges and opportunities that differ significantly from more densely populated and highly connected Nordic communities. Since the early nineties, small communities and regions in the Nordics have therefore collaborated to address common issues.

Building on these efforts, the Small Communities in the Nordic Regional Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of small communities to tackle environmental and climate-related challenges and promote sustainable development.

The programme focuses on nature tourism, biodiversity, invasive species, climate adaptation, natural and cultural landscapes, circular economy, and nature and environmental management. Through analyses, pilot projects, and networking activities, the programme promotes locally anchored solutions and knowledge sharing across small communities in the Nordic Region and the Arctic.

The programme represents Greenland, the Åland Islands, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Bornholm.

## **Focus areas:**

- Increasing knowledge and use of locally adapted solutions in nature tourism, biodiversity, environmental management, nature management, climate adaptation and circular economy.
- Developing and implementing specific pilot projects with the involvement of local actors.
- Improving access to data and analytics that can support local and national government.
- Strengthening Nordic knowledge sharing and co-operation between small communities with common challenges and needs.

The programme is implemented in close collaboration with authorities, researchers, civil society, businesses, and local communities. The goal is to create concrete results, new knowledge, and strengthened preparedness that contribute to a sustainable and climate-resilient Nordic Region.

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**COORDINATION:** Nordic Atlantic Cooperation ([NORA](#))

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 6 Mio

**READ MORE:** [norden.org](https://norden.org)



↑ Images: Unsplash and iStock

## Strategic partners

## Nordic Swan Ecolabel

The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is the official ecolabel for all the Nordic countries, and through strict requirements, it ensures a reduced environmental impact from ecolabelled goods and services. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is a holistic label that sets requirements for several environmental parameters throughout the whole life cycle of certified products and services.

The Ecolabel is well-established throughout the Nordic Region and enjoys a high level of knowledge and credibility among consumers and purchasers. The Nordic Swan Ecolabel is therefore an important strategic partner for contributing to the realisation of the goals and sub-goals within the Nordic co-operation programme for the environment and climate.

In addition to being a valued partner for the thematic programmes, Nordic Ecolabelling is developing two new product groups within the Nordic Swan Ecolabel portfolio with a clear circular economy profile. By this product development, Nordic Ecolabelling is clearly defining how two new business areas can produce their product or service in a way that limits the use of natural resources.

### **Focus area:**

- In spring 2025, Nordic Swan Ecolabel launched the first new product group: environmentally sustainable events. To be certified, events need to fulfil ambitious environmental standards and holistically approach their environmental work.

The new product groups follow Nordic Ecolabelling's development process based on environmental, market and brand insights, and are developed in an open process with consultations and stakeholder involvement.

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**COORDINATION:** Nordic Ecolabelling

**TOTAL BUDGET:** DKK 5 Mio

**FOLLOW THE PROGRAMME:** [Nordic Swan Ecolabel](#)

## Nefco

Nefco (Nordic Environment Finance Corporation) is an international financial institution owned by the Nordic countries. Nefco finances green initiatives using both its own capital and trust funds provided by various contributors. Nefco contributes to Nordic regional and global environmental and climate goals by taking concrete action, financing Nordic green solutions and enabling their international scale up.

Nefco finances only those activities that deliver direct or indirect environmental or climate-related benefits. Its objectives are aligned with the Nordic Vision 2030, the EU's sustainable finance goals, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, making it a valuable strategic partner. In addition to its own capital, Nefco manages funds on behalf of governmental and multilateral donors.

### **Focus areas:**

Under the Nordic co-operation on the environment and climate, Nefco contributes to environmental improvements and green transition measures through the following focus areas:

- In the Baltic Sea region, contributing to cross-border biodiversity and eutrophication-related projects via the Baltic Sea Action Plan Fund.
- Facilitating the internationalisation of Nordic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through Nopef, the Nordic Project Fund.
- Supporting Nordic SMEs in co-creating and testing concrete, scalable biodiversity solutions.
- In Ukraine, supporting energy efficiency, green recovery and capacity-building initiatives funded by the EU and Nordic countries and managed by Nefco.

Further initiatives for the 2025–2027 work period are currently being explored.

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**COORDINATION:** Nefco (Nordic Environment Finance Corporation)

**TOTAL BUDGET TO NEFCO (TO DATE IN 2025):** Via the Nordic Environmental Development Fund 5.095.000 DKK from the environment and climate sector, and to Nopef DKK 12.527.000 from the co-operation programme for the business sector.

**READ MORE ABOUT NEFCO:** [www.nefco.int](http://www.nefco.int)



↑ Images: Margareta Bloom/Imagebank.sweden.se and Niclas Jessen/Visit.dk

# Get involved

## Contribute to and keep up to date with our progress

The Nordic co-operation on the environment and climate is committed to driving progress towards Vision 2030 and achieving our sector's three overall and integrated goals.

To support this mission, our programmes regularly publish grants, invitations to tender, and calls for applications. Explore all the current opportunities and be part of the pathways to a green future in the Nordic Region and the world: [Funding opportunities](#)

Follow us for regular updates on our @Nordic Co-operation on the Environment and Climate [LinkedIn channel](#)

Learn more about the Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment and Climate (MR-MK) at [Environment and Climate | Nordic cooperation](#)

# About this publication

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### Nordic co-operation

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

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

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