



NORDIC ACTION ON AGENDA 2030

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*Introduction by Dagfinn Høybråten,
Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers*

If global consumption patterns were the same as those of the Nordic countries, we would need up to four planets to provide the resources we need. Although we are home to some of the largest ecological footprints in the world, the good news is that the Nordic countries are working hard to change this.

In this edition of Green Growth the Nordic Way, you can find out more about the sustainable development goals that the Nordic countries are finding the most challenging, and how we're intending to tackle the bumps on the road to 2030. The latest measure is the Nordic Council of Ministers' Generation 2030 programme, which puts sustainable consumption and production under the microscope.

The Nordic Region has proven that sustainable development is also economically viable. Let this issue of Green Growth the Nordic Way inspire you by providing examples of the leverage that our regional co-operation offers on our way to 2030.

Happy reading!



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Dagfinn Høybråten
*Secretary-General,
Nordic Council of Ministers*

Who are we?

The Nordic Council of Ministers constitutes the official cooperation between the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, along with the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

This magazine follows the activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers in the areas of green growth, circular economy and sustainable development, especially in connection with the Nordic prime ministers' initiative Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges, addressing themes such as sustainable climate and energy solutions and sustainable urban planning.

Apart from current projects, the magazine also documents a wide range of other activities connected with greening the economy, as well as highlighting new reports from the Nordic Council of Ministers in this field.





"Our objective with Generation 2030 is to support the realisation of the SDGs and continue our strong national and regional focus on sustainable development."

Inge Herman Rydland
Special Envoy for the 2030 Agenda at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Chair of the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development.

Generation 2030 – Nordic co-operation puts focus on the most challenging SDGs

The UN's Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will serve as the most important compass for global development and sustainability efforts leading up to 2030. The Nordic countries have adopted a joint programme, Generation 2030, which will ensure that Nordic co-operation contributes to the implementation of the SDGs across the region. Special emphasis is placed on sustainable consumption and production.

By Páll Tómas Finnsson

Universal agenda for sustainable development

On 5 September 2017, the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation approved a joint Nordic programme to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – the UN's plan of action for people, planet and prosperity – which was unanimously adopted by all member states in 2015.

Generation 2030 builds on the current Nordic Sustainable Development Strategy, A Good Life in a Sustainable Nordic Region. The objective is to ensure that Nordic co-operation actively pursues the realisation of the SDGs. As the name indicates, the decision makers of the future – children and young people – are a key target group.

"What's unique about Agenda 2030 is that all 193 UN member states have agreed that this should be our key priority and shared vision leading up to 2030," says Inge Herman Rydland, Special Envoy for the 2030 Agenda at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Chair of the Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development.

"Agenda 2030 therefore has more legitimacy than any previous international development agenda," Rydland says. "Our objective with Generation 2030 is to support the realisation of the SDGs and continue our strong regional focus on sustainable development."

All countries must take action

"Agenda 2030 is indivisible and integrated, meaning that all 17 SDGs are interconnected," Rydland explains. "In addition, and most importantly, all countries – including the Nordic countries – must play an active role in their implementation. The context will dictate the necessary actions for each country, but the key thing is that no country is exempt from committing to the SDGs."



"Decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental impact should be essential to any modern environmental and economic policy"

Janez Potočnik
Co-Chair of the International
Resource Panel

Each of the Nordic countries has already achieved many of the SDGs and embarked upon national initiatives to ensure the implementation of those yet to be fully realised. Generation 2030 was developed through broad stakeholder engagement with the aim of defining areas in which Nordic co-operation could add value to these efforts.

An independent evaluation by Gaia Consulting and the Stockholm Environment Institute – the results of which were published in the report Sustainable Development Action – the Nordic Way – pointed out that further collaboration would be particularly meaningful in achieving more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Rich countries must transform their consumption

The Nordic Region is one of the wealthiest regions of the world with a GDP per capita of between 9 and 49 per cent above the EU-28 average, according to Eurostat. A new discussion paper from think tank Sustainia, *Bumps on the Road to 2030*, provides an overview of the region's primary shared challenges to achieving the SDGs, including action on climate change, improved ecosystem conservation, more sustainable agricultural practices, and economic growth for all. The paper points out that the Nordic countries, like most other OECD countries, must reduce their material consumption and waste generation in order to achieve the SDGs.

"Sustainable consumption and production is our most prominent challenge and a key focus of the Generation 2030 programme," says Rydland. "The region is challenged by the overexploitation of natural resources and excess consumption of products, the production of which requires energy, puts strain on the climate, and contributes to global economic inequality."

According to Janez Potočnik, Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel, the panel's research identifies sustainable consumption and production as the most efficient strategy for avoiding trade-offs between the SDGs and for the creation of synergies in overcoming the development and environmental challenges articulated in the goals.

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"Our biggest challenge is going to be to rethink our consumption habits and adapt our industries and production methods, whether it's in energy, agriculture, fisheries or forestry"

Martin Larsen
Project Manager at Sustainia

Nordic countries challenged on sustainable consumption, production and energy

In a new paper commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers, *Bumps on the Road to 2030*, think tank Sustainia highlights the need for a green transition in the region's agricultural systems, more low-carbon energy, economic growth for all, and improved ecosystem conservation. Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns remains a key concern across the region. According to Sustainia, these are the primary common challenges that the Nordic countries face in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030.

By Páll Tómas Finnsson

Are the Nordic countries ready for Agenda 2030?

Bumps on the Road to 2030 provides a clear overview of the Nordic countries' shared challenges with regards to achieving the 17 SDGs by 2030. Based on international comparisons on the sustainability performance of the countries around the world, the paper highlights seven SDGs that pose a particular challenge for the Nordic Region. One of the most pressing issues is to change consumption and production patterns and to reduce the region's material footprint (SDG 12).

"Our biggest challenge is going to be to rethink our consumption habits and adapt our industries and production methods, whether it's in energy, agriculture, fisheries or forestry," says Martin Larsen, Project Manager at Sustainia, who authored the paper together with Esben Alsund-Lanthén. "Our high standard of living means that we consume too much and produce too much waste, and we haven't been able to manage the waste that we've generated successfully enough."

The data shows that domestic material consumption in the region is very high. Norway and Finland consume 35.6 and 34.3 tonnes per capita respectively – close to double the OECD average – while Denmark, Sweden and Iceland score close to the average. According to the paper, achieving SDG 12 calls for "new efforts to create economies where economic growth is less bound to material consumption and where resources are circulated to higher extent than today."

Four Nordic countries top the 2017 SDG Index

The two major sources of data on the progress of individual countries towards achieving the SDGs are the SDG Index and Dashboards report and Sustainable Development Goals: Are the rich countries ready? Both these reports were developed by Bertelsmann Stiftung and the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).



The former covers 157 of the 193 UN member states, while the latter focuses solely on the OECD countries. Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway top the 2017 SDG Index, and Iceland is ranked 14th. While this indicates that the Nordic countries are better prepared to meet the goals than most, the data shows that all OECD countries have some deficiencies with regard to achieving the SDGs.

"On a general level, the Nordic Region performs very well in terms of achieving the SDGs, but we definitely have our challenges, too," says Larsen. "The SDGs are a complex agenda. The aim of our analysis was to reduce the complexity by establishing an overview of the available data on how the Nordic countries are performing, identifying key challenges and assessing the countries' chances of achieving the SDGs by 2030."

Need to accelerate transition to low-carbon energy

According to the two reports, the Nordic countries are challenged by high levels of CO₂ emissions per capita from energy generation (SDG 7 and 13). Despite having been quite successful in integrating renewable energy sources into their energy systems, the 2016 SDG Index states that all five Nordic countries are still "seriously far from" achieving SDG 13 on Climate Action.

"The challenge here is related to energy intensity and energy efficiency," says Larsen. "An explanation for this could be found in the region's cold climate and prevalence of energy-intensive industry. It's important to note that there are significant differences in how the respective countries rate in these international reports, but it's clear that we need a continued and consolidated commitment to low-carbon energy and increased energy efficiency."

Other issues raised in *Bumps on the Road to 2030* are the need to tackle unsustainable nitrogen levels in agricultural production (SDG 2) and to improve ecosystem conservation efforts below water and on land (SDG 14 and 15) such as through the protection of marine sites, more sustainable exploitation of fish stocks, and by preventing deforestation. Furthermore, the Nordic countries, along with most other OECD countries, are challenged by increasing economic inequality and, in some cases, relatively high unemployment rates (SDG 8).

SDGs show the way towards green growth

Larsen emphasises that achieving the SDGs is not only about addressing the challenges the Nordic Region is facing, but also about the many opportunities that Agenda 2030 creates.

"Other regions are challenged on a lot more of the SDGs than the Nordic Region," he explains. "Achieving all 17 SDGs, especially if we succeed

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in solving the challenges related to our consumption and production, would provide a great platform for creating sustainable and profitable business opportunities for the Nordic countries."

Bumps on the Road to 2030 can be downloaded here:

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The seven SDGs in the spotlight

Zero Hunger (SDG 2)

Affordable and Clean Energy and Climate Action (SDG 7 and 13)

Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)

Life below Water (SDG 14) and Life on Land (SDG 15).



“Essential that small countries work together in the green transition”

Former CEO of Nokia Jorma Ollila is calling on the Nordic Region to maximise its synergies in energy co-operation. “Competition in the field of green energy is getting fiercer at an unprecedented rate, and the Nordic countries need to work together to remain at the top,” Ollila says in a report outlining 14 proposals for closer Nordic energy co-operation.

The Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned Ollila to conduct a strategic review of how Nordic energy co-operation might develop over the next five to ten years. The report is based on the transition to green energy, the Paris climate agreement, trends in the energy sector in the EU and the national energy strategies in the Nordic countries.

One of the main messages in the report is that the most difficult challenges in the green transition are yet to come, especially in the transport sector. “This means it is essential that small countries work together to assert themselves in the face of global competition. The next decade will be particularly challenging. Major players are investing massive resources into the green transition, and competition is getting fiercer at an unprecedented rate,” Ollila explains.

Ollila encourages the Nordic countries to maximise their synergies, citing the unique and successful collaboration in the electricity market as a prime example.

“It’s living proof of what open and trusting partnerships can achieve. The whole region has benefited from the synergistic effects and the whole of the energy sector would benefit from working together in a similar way.”

Read the full story and download the report on <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/201c-closer-co-operation-on-energy-will-keep-the-nordic-region-on-top201d>



From ghost fishing to fishing gear recycling

Networking and the development of new knowledge are key factors in the Nordic Council of Ministers' funding of a three-year project (2017-2019) on reducing the impact of ghost fishing and littering of the oceans, and promoting increased recycling from both commercial and recreational fishing.

Marine litter is a high national and international priority for the Nordic countries. One of the many different sources of marine litter is the loss of fishing gear and components from lost gear. All the Nordic countries are engaged in commercial and recreational fishing to varying degrees, and the CNO project is focusing on lost fishing gear.

"I'm impressed by the interest from both the industry itself and from fishing organisations. In addition, innovators and entrepreneurs from the recycling sector are involved in the project. Finally, civil society is heavily involved, making this a good example of a triple helix between industry, the public sector and civil society," says Geir Oddsson, senior advisor on fisheries at the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The project has been initiated by the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. All knowledge and experience generated from the project will be made available at its conclusion.

Read more at the project web site <http://cnogear.org/>



Commitment to halving food waste by 2030

Every year, Nordic citizens throw away more than 3.5 million tonnes of food in the Nordic Region. Globally, a third of the food produced is thrown away. The UN sustainable development goals call for a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030 – a quest now officially supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

The statement, issued at the ministers' summer meeting, also proposes new recommendations that have been generated from working together on the Nordic food waste project for four years.

"The Nordic Region can demonstrate how to work together to achieve the sustainable development goal and halve food waste by 2030. The food waste project is a prime example of a Nordic synergy and the policy recommendations that have come out of it identify areas worth focusing on as we move forward," said Sven-Erik Bucht, Swedish Minister for Rural Affairs.

The Nordic food waste project has focused on three areas: primary production, date labelling and the redistribution of food by food banks and via direct distribution.

The ministers decided to continue to work together at a Nordic level to reduce food waste and reaffirmed their ambition of halving it by 2030. The nature of the co-operation will be defined based on the recommendations presented by the Nordic Stop Wasting Food Group and by the international sustainability agenda.

Read the full story at

<http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/halving-food-waste-by-2030>



Putting Nordic trust in the spotlight

The level of trust people have in one another in the Nordic Region is globally unique. A new report by the Nordic Council of Ministers outlining the importance of trust for good economics, low levels of crime, and happiness is currently the subject of considerable attention both in our region and in Europe.

"Many parts of the world simply don't understand that trust is society's most valuable and most vulnerable resource. The Nordic countries understand that trust is a currency, and one which can prove to be incredibly profitable economically, politically, and socially," says researcher Rachel Botsman, an Australian researcher and expert on the sharing economy at Oxford University in the UK.

The whole of the Nordic model is built on mutual trust between authorities and citizens. Political co-operation in the Nordic Region has a unique degree of transparency and has helped to forge close ties between our countries.

"Trust is a goldmine for the Nordic societies. If we didn't have this level of social trust, we would have far greater levels of control and bureaucracy in the Nordic Region than is currently the case," said the Secretary General to the Nordic Council of Ministers Dagfinn Høybråten.

EU Observer notes that Nordic trust gives the Nordic countries a competitive edge in an increasingly digitalised age. The Nordic model has helped to give the region one of the strongest economies in the world. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, it has created an economy that is especially resilient to economic crises and fluctuations.

Read the full story and download the report on <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/putting-nordic-trust-in-the-spotlight>



Equity investment to support Baltic renewables

The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) has signed a subscription agreement with AS BaltCap for an equity investment in a new infrastructure fund for the Baltic states.

NEFCO will invest EUR 3 million in the BaltCap Infrastructure Fund, which is a EUR 100 million fund. The fund will focus primarily on investments related to renewable energy, energy efficiency and transport, as well as social infrastructure projects.

The anchor investor of the fund is the European Investment Bank (EIB), with a EUR 20 million commitment. Other investors in the fund are SEB, Swedbank, LHV, as well as Baltic institutional investors. The maturity of the fund is 20 years.

"Infrastructure development is a priority area for the region to improve its competitiveness and independency. However, the Baltic countries face an infrastructure funding gap of EUR 6 billion over the next five years, which is expected to become even greater beyond the 2014-2020 EU funding programme," says BaltCap Infrastructure Fund partner Šarūnas Stepukonis.

"We're honoured to be able to contribute to this important infrastructure fund, which will benefit the economic and environmental development of the whole region. This equity investment is our first project in the Baltic states after our recent re-entry into the market, and we're especially pleased that the project involves all three countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania," says NEFCO's Executive Vice President Kari Homanen.

Read the full story at nefco.org

Green growth reports

Food waste and Date labelling

Factors determining the durability of refrigerated foods

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4930>

Preventing Food Waste - better use of resources

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4894>

Nordic Energy Co-operation

Strong today – Stronger tomorrow

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4876>

Critical metals in end-of-life products

Recovery potential and opportunities for removal of bottlenecks of recycling

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4866>

Climate related reports:

Ecosystem Restoration for Mitigation of Natural Disasters

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4953>

CO2 emissions and economic incentives

Recent developments in CO2 emissions from passenger cars in the Nordic countries and potential economic incentives to regulate them

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4851>

Carbon footprint calculators for citizens

Recommendations and implications in the Nordic Context

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4952>

Others reports:

Nordic heating and cooling Nordic approach to EU's Heating and Cooling Strategy

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:norden:org:diva-4857>



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New Flashes

Tailwind propels Nordic-Baltic co-operation
<http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/tailwind-propels-nordic-baltic-co-operation>

Embla – Nordic Food Awards 2017
<http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/embla-2013-nordic-food-awards-2017>

11 nominations for the Environment Prize 2017
<http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/11-nominations-for-the-environment-prize-2017>

More efficient co-operation on digitalisation
Boosting The Nordics – 23 new projects
<http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/boosting-the-nordics-2013-23-new-projects>

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Events

When Smart Meets Human – The Nordic Model in Urban Development – Stavanger, 26/9 2017
<http://nordicbuiltcities.org/smartmeetshuman/>

Nordic Seaweed - From Research to Innovative Business Opportunities – Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, 27/9 2017
<http://www.nordicinnovation.org/events/nordic-seaweed/>

Zero carbon land freight – Brussels, 27/9 2017
<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/council-of-ministers/the-nordic-council-of-ministers-for-the-environment-mr-m/events/nordic-seminar-on-zero-carbon-land-freight>

Nordregio Forum 2017: Nordic Cities – Connecting the Urban and the Rural; Oslo, 29-30 November
<http://www.nordregio.se/en/Events/Nordregio-Forum-2017-Nordic-Cities-Connecting-the-Urban-and-the-Rural/>

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