

# NordForsk Strategy 2011-2014



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NordForsk



The Swan ecolabel was established in 1989 by the consumer sector of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

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## Introduction

NordForsk is a platform for joint Nordic research and research policy development. The aim of the organization is to facilitate cooperation in all fields of research and research-driven innovation when this *adds value* to work being conducted in the five Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and in the autonomous areas the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. To accomplish this, priority is given to *policy advice* based on thorough analysis, and to *funding* of research that is judged to have considerable potential to result in long-term knowledge-based progress.

NordForsk was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2005. Its main stakeholders are the national research-financing bodies of the five Nordic countries. NordForsk's board consists of one representative from each of these countries' national research councils, three representatives for higher education institutions and one representative from industry. In addition, there are observers from each of the autonomous areas, the research councils in the Baltic countries, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Innovation Centre (NICE), and the NordForsk secretariat in Oslo.

NordForsk's board is tasked with making strategic decisions on joint Nordic research and research-driven innovation. Basic funding and funding for specific assignments are provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Co-funding is provided by the main stakeholders as well as to some extent by other financing bodies.

## Vision

NordForsk contributes to excellence in research and thereby to economic progress and increased quality of life in the Nordic region, in Europe and worldwide.

# 1. Overall Goal

NordForsk's overall goal is to strengthen research<sup>1</sup> in the Nordic region, and thereby to contribute to the establishment of a globally competitive European Research Area (ERA).

The *issue* is to make the Nordic region strong and influential both within the European Research Area and globally.

Within Nordic research and political arenas, NordForsk should take *action* aimed at:

- 1.1 creating forums for broad debate and dialogue on Nordic research and research policy;<sup>2</sup>
- 1.2 developing processes that will aid the national research-financing bodies and the Nordic Council of Ministers to develop common research strategies and priorities;
- 1.3 increasing the visibility of joint Nordic research programmes, their activities and their results;
- 1.4 influencing the development of European research policy.

The envisaged effects of the above *actions* are:

- to increase the quality of Nordic research and research policy (as a result of actions 1.1 and 1.2);
- to strengthen Nordic contributions to European research and research policy (as a result of actions 1.3 and 1.4);
- to establish NordForsk as a respected and visible platform for joint Nordic research and research policy development (as a result of all four actions listed above).

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<sup>1</sup> In the following text the term research is used to include research-driven innovation.

<sup>2</sup> Such forums might involve governmental actors, politicians, research-financing bodies, universities, research institutes, NGOs, industry and public service providers.

## 2. Issues and Strategic Actions in the Nordic Research Arena

In relation to the Nordic research arena, the *issue* is to identify research fields in which the main stakeholders<sup>3</sup> and institutions of higher education anticipate that cooperation will *add value* to present and future research.

NordForsk should take *action* aimed at:

- 2.1 strengthening and increasing the use of Nordic research infrastructure and, when relevant, linking this to European and global infrastructure;
- 2.2 accessing the potential for Nordic Centres of Excellence and facilitating their establishment when appropriate;
- 2.3 stimulating efforts to initiate and participate in long-term, multidisciplinary research programmes formulated in response to “grand challenges”;
- 2.4 creating critical mass in small or scattered research fields that are judged to have considerable importance and future potential;
- 2.5 facilitating Nordic-European research collaboration, when appropriate.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The main stakeholders are the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, the Academy of Finland, the Research Council of Norway, the Swedish Research Council, and the Icelandic Centre for Research; RANNIS.

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<sup>4</sup> Decisions regarding Nordic-European research collaboration, including when this involves European links to parts of the world outside the European Research Area (ERA), should be based on the criterion that NordForsk’s main stakeholders anticipate that such collaboration would add value either to ongoing Nordic research activities or to future ones.

### 3. Research Issues and Strategic Actions in the Nordic Political Arena

Within the Nordic political arena, the *issue* is to provide the Nordic Council of Ministers with the best possible policy advice and to carry out the Council's assignments.

NordForsk should take *action* aimed at:

- 3.1 analysing the Nordic research and research policy landscape – that is the state of the art and trends within Nordic research and research policy;<sup>5</sup>
- 3.2 informing broad groups of policymakers about the state of the art and trends within Nordic research and research policy, and initiating discussions regarding the implications of these findings;

- 3.3 proactively entering into dialogue with the Nordic Council of Ministers regarding Nordic research priorities;<sup>6</sup>
- 3.4 establishing Nordic research and research policy partnerships between the research- and higher education sector and other sectors;
- 3.5 consolidating and developing cooperation between Nordic organisations – particularly between NICE and NordForsk.

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<sup>5</sup> Such an analysis should be carried out yearly and include a thorough overview of (i) how research is financed and organized, (ii) performance indicators, and (iii) priorities made by national governments, national financing bodies and when feasible also by higher education institutions. The focus should be on comparisons between the five Nordic countries as well as on European and global comparisons where relevant and feasible.

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<sup>6</sup> Such priorities might include facilitation of cooperation within certain research fields or between the countries of the Nordic region and countries in neighbouring regions.



