

Unlocking the potential of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society

Mobilising the Nordics
Mission Group 4
Spring 2021



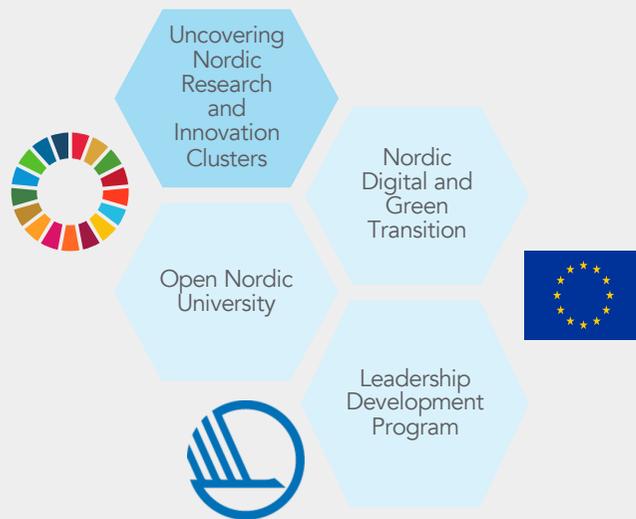
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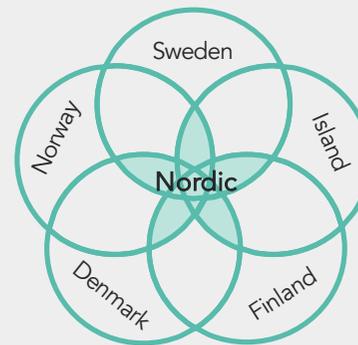
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Reader's guide

This report represents the work of one in four mission groups from NordForsk's "Mobilising the Nordics"-process.



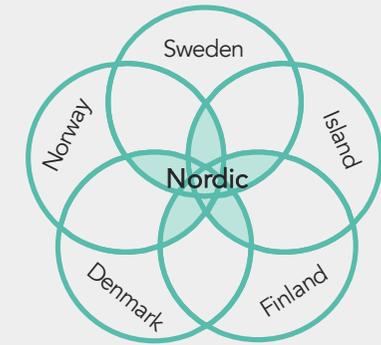
We believe, that through Nordic collaboration we can unlock ground-breaking potentials.



This report clarifies the ambition, outlays the need for a common analytic framework, suggests missions and states calls-to-action.



Unlocking the potentials



We must unlock the potentials of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society.

There is a great impact to be realized, not just to people and societies in the Nordics but to Europe and the world. It is therefore time to take the relevant steps towards a common Nordic region that continually delivers a socially sustainable, green, and globally competitive frame for people, businesses, and societies.

It is our mission to contribute to this development. Therefore, we have joined forces in a mission group within the “Mobilizing the Nordics”-platform during spring 2021. Our purpose is to formulate a common Nordic ambition directed at strengthening the Nordic collaboration within research and innovation systems and thereby making it able to serve society better. Moreover, we have identified the need for a common Nordic analysis of each countries research-, innovation- and cluster system based on missions and a demand-based set-up. Finally, we have worked within the scope of the Nordic missions that we believe must be adopted at the highest possible political level in the Nordic region and be anchored in the national strategies. We believe this will unlock the potentials of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society.

The group that has collaborated on this mission and the subsequent presentation, is a group of professional individuals with great experience within relevant great experience within national innovation and research clusters, ensuring a certain validity to the outcome. We are engaged across the Nordic countries and sectors and bring different professions and perspectives to the mission group. As this group consists of professional individuals, we take shared responsibility for the outcomes and the recommendations presented in this report. It is important to underline that we have volunteered for the work in the mission group and that the organisations we represent are not obligated to act on the outcomes.

This report should be viewed as inspiration and a call-for-action. The members of the mission group are all happy to contribute to the further realization of our proposal as we are all supporters of Nordic cooperation and see significant untapped potential for further Nordic cooperation.

4 outcomes that needs to unlocked



Who are we

Nina Kopola (chair)	Finland	Director General	Business Finland
Antti Vasara	Finland	President and CEO	VTT
Mari Walls	Finland	President	Tampere University
Tuula Teeri	Sweden	President	The Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences
Håkon Haugli	Norway	CEO	Innovation Norge
Tore Ulstein	Norway	Chairman	Ulstein Group & NORCE
Svein Berg	Norway	Managing Director	Nordic Innovation
Dag Rune Olsen	Norway	Rector	University of Tromsø
Jenny Elfsberg	Sweden	Head of Innovation	Vinnova
Jørgen Bardenfleth	Denmark	Chairman of Boards	Lyngsoe Systems, Dubex, Symbion, etc.
Ragnheiður Magnusdóttir	Island	Chair	Innovation committee of the Science and Technology Policy Council

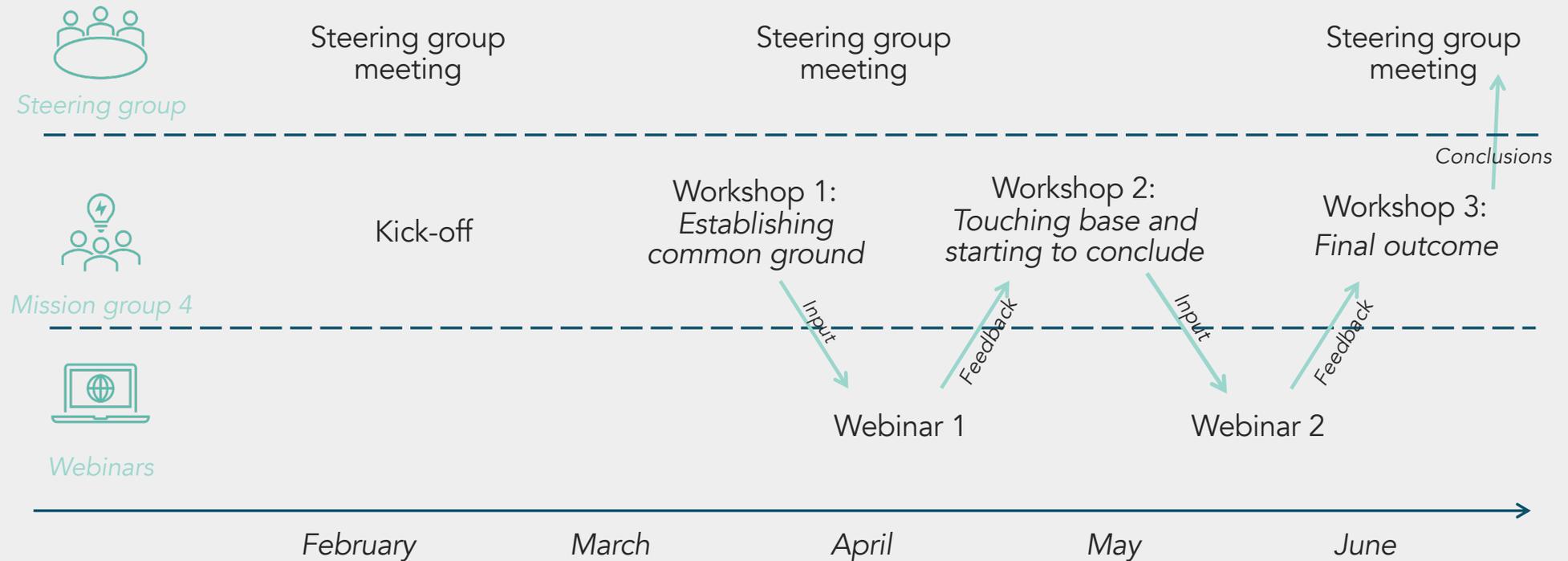
Individuals who have contributed strategically to the process:

Stine Jørgensen, Deputy Director General, Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education

Support team from Mobilize Strategy Consulting:

Claus Bjørn Billehøj (partner), Stine Amalie Marholt (consultant), Ellen Marie Sønderris (project assistant) and Elisabeth Grüner Petersen (project assistant).

Our process during spring 2021



We are part of the “Mobilising the Nordics”-process

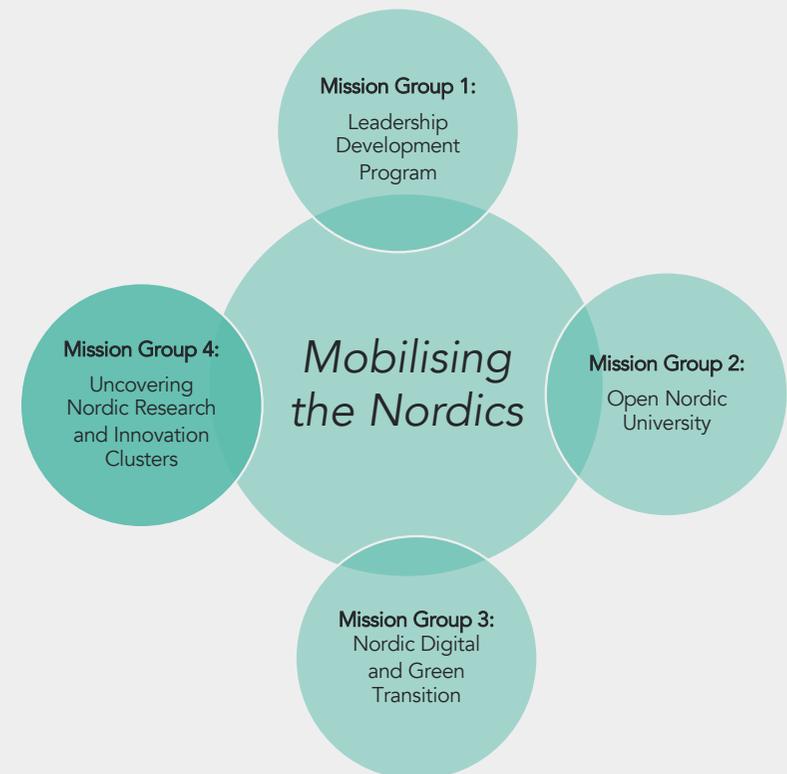
We are part of the “Mobilising the Nordics”-process taking place in the spring of 2021.

We as a group are established as “Mission Group 4” with the predefined aim to gain a better understanding of the current strengths and potentials of research and innovation clusters across the Nordic region.

This knowledge lays the groundwork for our statement about the four outcomes that are needed to unlock the potentials of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society.

“Mobilising the Nordics” is initiated by NordForsk and is led by a steering committee consisting of top management from universities, innovation institutions, and government agencies across the Nordics.

See more about the process at <https://www.nordforsk.org/mobilising-Nordics>



Our strategic framework

We have worked within the strategic framework of:

- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call-for-action to all countries worldwide.
- The EU missions which are commitments to solve some of the greatest challenges facing our world and are an integral part of the Horizon Europe framework program beginning in 2021.
- The Nordic Council of Ministers' Vision 2030: The Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030 and the three strategic priorities:
 1. 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
 2. A competitive Nordic Region – together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic Region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility, and digital integration
 3. A socially sustainable Nordic Region – together we will promote an inclusive, equal and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchange and welfare



Our theses starting the mission

#1

We need to make the Nordic system more demand-driven and focus on the needs of citizens and society and also what is competitive at the same time.

#2

We need to work more mission-oriented as this is a good way to raise common awareness and focus on the needs of citizens and society as a whole.

#3

We need to work more and better together in the Nordics and therefore joined governance are must-have organizational capabilities.

#4

We must ensure that top-down political prioritization and financing takes place across the countries in the Nordics.

#5

We can all benefit by building a common Nordic research and innovation system.

#6

We can start by taking advantage of the common strongholds.

#7

We must build a common Nordic home market.

#8

Through Mobilizing the Nordics, we can create a first joint Nordic proposal on how to get started with a common mission.

From theses to the AS-IS perspective



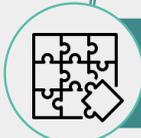
It would be relevant and beneficial with a strengthening of the dialogue and learning between the Nordic countries.



It would be beneficial to create a pan-Nordic framework, which entails incentives to push joint work and concrete collaborations between Nordic players including national financial incentive structures to support this.



It would be beneficial to create and ensure active commitment to a mutual brand across the Nordics.



It is important to prioritize carefully which areas could be meaningful for the Nordic joint missions on the basis of the common strongholds – and then create concrete operational structures around this.



A joint Nordic mechanism is needed to support the points above. It should be based on private sector demands and linked to the public sector's obligation to reply to this demand.

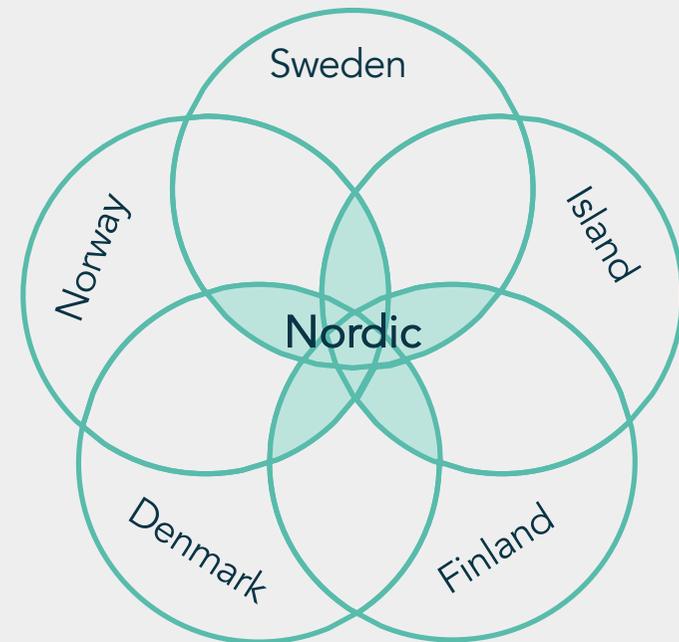
The potential of the gaps: Nordic added value

We fully acknowledge all the valuable regional and national initiatives in the Nordic countries, which are initiated to strengthen innovation capabilities across the Nordics.

However, it is our ambition to identify initiatives that creates added value on a Nordic scale by taking steps and identifying actions that only can be brought to life within and across the Nordics supported by the strongholds in the different countries.

These steps must be verified by the fact that businesses across the Nordics will engage and invest in delivering. We believe that it will create value in each of the Nordic countries if we mobilize across the Nordics. Therefore, we must unlock the potentials of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society.

There is great impact to be achieved - not just to people and societies in the Nordics but to Europe and the world. But to get there, it is time to take the relevant steps towards a common Nordic region that continues to thrive and can deliver a socially sustainable, green and competitive structure for people, business and societies in the future.



Ambition: We need a research- and innovation system that can deliver to society



We need a research and innovation system that can cater to society and create Nordic added value.

We are convinced that it is crucial to formulate and adopt a common Nordic ambition targeted at strengthening the Nordic collaboration and research and innovation system.

The ambition must be adopted at the highest possible political level in the Nordic region and then anchored in the individual national strategies and investment plans.

It is also crucial that the ambition is based on the needs experienced by companies in the Nordic countries, both large international companies and national/Nordic-anchored SMEs. Companies must experience the ambition and follow-up actions as being relevant and value-creating and thus, representatives of the companies must be involved in the production of the ambition and subsequent execution. The ambition should highlight the potentials that can be unlocked if funding to research, innovation, and business development would be set up in a framework that is Nordic instead of national bound.

The group has not formulated the ambition but has defined a framework of six core elements that the ambition must consist of.

Six core ambition elements



#1

We must establish a common strategic policy and investment plan for research and innovation in the Nordics based on mission-oriented thinking – including that we must define common Nordic missions.

#2

We must involve all relevant universities, research organizations, innovation agents and representatives from the private sector in the Nordics on the highest managerial level in the creation and in the effort to execute the ambition.

#3

We must create a common Nordic best practice regarding a demand-based structure of each countries' research, innovation and cluster systems.

#4

We must create a Nordic legal, financial and governance set-up for Nordic partnering between universities and the private sector.

#5

We must find ways to increase private and public financing and investments in research and innovation in the Nordics, including financing from private foundations. This also includes financing strengthening networks across the Nordics.

#6

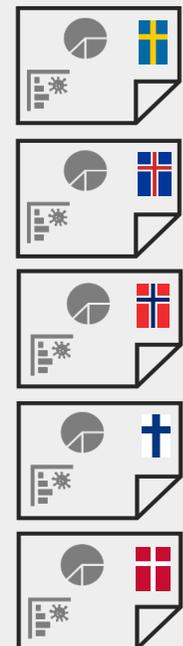
We must strengthen the common infrastructure in relation to EU's strategic goals within research and innovation.

We need a common Nordic analysis

We are convinced that there must be produced a common Nordic analysis of each countries research, innovation, and cluster system based on partly the chosen missions by this group, partly a demand-based set-up.

The analysis must cover the following:

- Each country's strategic strongholds for realizing the Vision 2030 and the incentives for their realization on a Nordic and global scale
- Each country's economic and industrial structures, strategic threats, and potentials developing in a mission-driven framework and a resilient society
- Each country's competence base and strategic threats and potentials, including an assessment of what competencies are needed in the future to strengthen innovation
- The financial framework, primarily the ability to foster investments in the right scale and support in strengthening the national and Nordic impact eco-system including the right mix of public, private, and philanthropic funds plus EU-funds
- Incentive structures encouraging collaboration between research institutions and companies, including each countries' legal and financial framework for IP rights and TTO
- Barriers to strategic coordination of innovation collaboration between the Nordic countries
- Barriers for public and private collaboration, nationally and across the Nordics, focused on businesses that operate across the Nordics



Our perspectives on the analytical framework



The mission group has the following perspectives on the analysis:

- The analysis should have concrete instructions for action and an obligation to act from The Nordic Council of Ministers as well as the national governments and relevant agencies
- The analysis should be based on interviews with all relevant stakeholders across the Nordics
- The analysis should be conducted already in autumn 2021 and with a deadline at the end of 2021
- The analysis should be delivered to The Nordic Council of Ministers as well as the national governments and relevant agencies
- We are happy to serve as an advisory board for the analysis

Missions: We need to deliver to society



We are convinced that Nordic Missions is needed in order to develop and strengthen the Nordic research and innovation system and to create societal value. That is what you could call “grand challenges” which are complex, global problems that are impeding sustainable development.

These missions must be adopted at the highest political level possible in the Nordic region and anchored in individual national strategies and efforts.

We have defined four grand challenges, set up specific criteria for establishing and defining the missions, and illustrated a way forward to the concrete Nordic Missions.

The Nordic Missions must meet these criteria



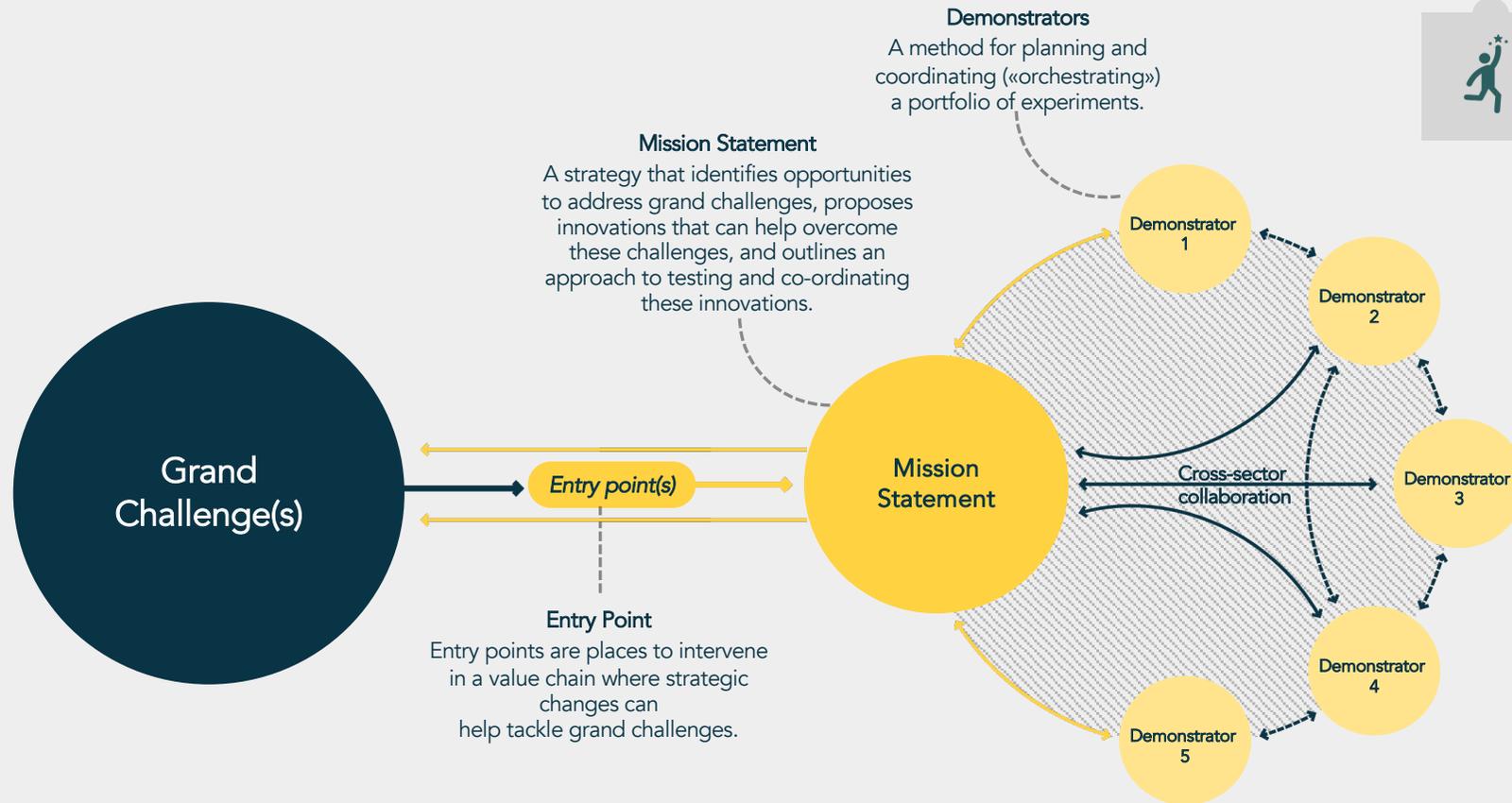
Missions must have this overall scope:

- Be a “grand challenge” which are complex, global problems that are impeding sustainable development
- Contribute to sustainable development within the SDG-framework
- Be something that can only be solved on a Nordic level and therefore not can be solved at a national level
- Based on Nordic strongholds within research, innovation, and business
- Be transformative and create value for societies and individuals in the Nordics

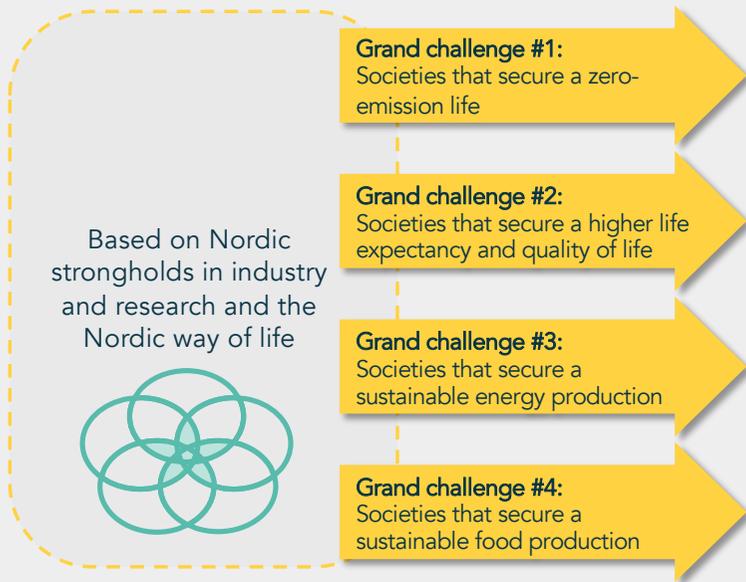
Missions must create markets:

- Be framed in a way that companies need to be involved, not only public actors
- Strengthening the overall competitiveness and productivity of the Nordic countries
- Create added value for all stakeholders taking part in delivering on the missions

What is a Nordic Mission?

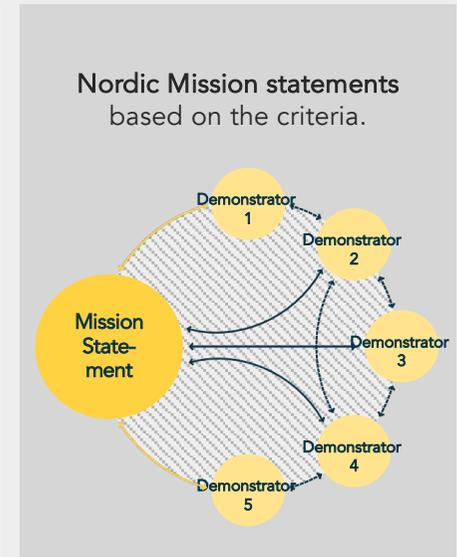


The way forward to Nordic Missions



Political decisions
at the highest political level possible in the Nordic region.

Nordic Mission boards
with the task to define the missions in an open bottom up process through challenge competitions and open calls etc.



Call to action



We must unlock the potential of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to create value in society.

There is great impact to be achieved - not just to people and societies in the Nordics but to Europe and the world. But to get there, it is now time to take the relevant steps towards a common Nordic region that continues to thrive and can deliver a socially sustainable, green, and competitive structure for people, business, and societies in the future.

But we must take action now. The Nordic Council of Ministers adopting our outcomes and the relevant agencies establishing arenas and meeting places for all relevant stakeholders is the first step. These actions have the possibility of taking us all to the next level by unlocking the potentials of the Nordic research and innovation capabilities to society.

Mobilising the Nordics - NordForsk

Mission Group 4



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Or read more at [NordForsk – Mobilising the Nordics](#)



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