

Revitalization of the Nordics

Outcome sketch, mission group 1: Design of a Nordic leadership development program

Background

The challenges and lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis have been discussed at a series of webinars during Fall 2020 with a combined total of 70 top leaders from all the Nordic countries supported by Mobilize Strategy Consulting. Top leader from universities, research institutes, private organizations, innovation agencies, private research-financing funds, public research councils, and ministries gathered in these webinars to explore how Nordic potentials may be unleashed to deal with societal challenges and global crises.

During the discussions, many valuable insights, experiences, reflections, ideas, and proposals were shared concerning how the Nordic countries can benefit from a strengthened Nordic collaboration to stand stronger in the handling of the pandemic. Even more important it was discussed how we in the future can develop a stronger ability to handle other crises and societal transformations – like the green transition – by mobilizing our joint potential.

To follow up on the conclusions from the webinar series it has been decided that the webinars should continue and that 4 mission groups are to be established (see more [here](#)). NordForsk decided to take responsibility for this and fund the activities. The 4 mission groups will revolve around the following themes:

1. *Leadership development program*

Develop and design a leadership development program that spans across the Nordic countries and can develop (young) top leaders both professionally and personally.

Chair: Nikolaj Malchow-Møller (President at Copenhagen Business School)

2. *Open Nordic University*

Create more cohesion across the Nordic countries and hereby bundle and utilize the collective skills and resources from the national universities and educational institutions.

Primary focus on continuing education as the driver for national competence development.

Chair: Anne Borg (Rector at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

3. *Nordic digital green transition program*

Contribute to the green transition agenda as a strong intersectoral and Nordic region instead of individual countries, sectors, and institutions.

Chair: Ingrid Petersson (Director General at FORMAS – A Swedish Research Council for sustainable development)

4. *Uncovering Nordic clusters of research & innovation*

Gain a better understanding of the current strengths and potentials in the Nordic region and mobilize innovation with and around the universities.

Chair: Nina Kopola (Director General of Business Finland)

Aim for mission group 1

The aim for mission group 1 is to design and develop a common Nordic leadership development program that spans across sectors and the Nordic countries. Until today, top-level leaders in the research-, education- and innovation-system are typically trained to lead their own organization and within their own sector. This leadership development program should be a tool to break down these barriers and silos. Instead, leaders should work with and be trained in how to lead from a system or ecosystem perspective. The leadership development program should also build and provide a network so the leaders will gain a Nordic and cross-national understanding.

Core topics for mission group 1

To unfold the potential of the group members and their insights and perspectives into the mission there will be a process with a kickoff meeting (online) and 3 online workshops during the spring 2021 to get and share inspiration and work with the topic. The workshops will be structured and facilitated by Mobilize Strategy Consulting appointed by NordForsk.

Topics that could be of focus are:

- An analysis of the AS-IS-situation. How are top-level leaders usually trained today?
- A description of a wanted TO-BE-situation. How do we think they should be trained in the future?
- What ideas do we have to the content of a development program? Some preliminary ideas could be:
 - Societal development – how do we together take responsibility?
 - Strategic development across organizations.
 - Mission-oriented research and innovation developments.
 - A focus on personal development – are a special mindset required?
 - A global view based on Nordic values.
- How can we construct a solid and interesting program based on these ideas? And how should the design of a program look like?
- How can the program be organized and financed?

Outcome sketch

By summer, the mission group is expected to deliver the following outcomes (first draft):

1. A short analysis of the AS-IS-situation and the TO-BE-situation for the leadership training for top-level leaders inside the Nordic research-, education- and innovation-system.
2. A design of a future leadership development program – content and form.
3. A suggestion to the steering committee for the Mobilizing the Nordics project and NordForsk (and other organizations) for how to organize and finance the leadership program.