



Nordic Council of Ministers Communication Strategy for 2020–2024

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Foreword

Given the Nordic countries' interest and involvement in Nordic co-operation, it is essential that those living in the Nordic Region understand what this means. There must be an increased level of insight into the objectives of this co-operation and what has been achieved, not just among decision-makers but also among everyone living in the Nordic Region, in all areas of society, and in all age groups.

Communication serves to show how and where co-operation is yielding concrete returns for the region. Similarly, communication anchors Nordic co-operation and puts it in context.

In August 2019, the Nordic prime ministers adopted [Vision2030](#), which is the central governing document for Nordic co-operation through to 2030. The vision sets out that *the Nordic Region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world*. All work within the Nordic Council of Ministers must be guided by this vision as well as by the objectives for co-operation and specific action plans drawn up on the basis of these.

This, of course, also affects communication. This communication strategy is an updated version of the strategy that came into effect at the start of 2019. This version is effective from 1 June 2020.

The strategy will serve as a framework and as guidance for all those working within the Nordic Council of Ministers' communications network.

Introduction

The communication strategy is general in nature and designed to guide and steer communication activities within the Nordic network, consisting of: the Secretariat to the Nordic Council of Ministers; the Nordic Council of Ministers' institutions and co-operation agencies; and the Nordic Council of Ministers' offices in the Baltic countries and Russia.

The strategy is supplemented with separate communication strategies or plans for the council of ministers' institutions and co-operation agencies and for its offices in the Baltic countries and Russia, as well as for the various councils of ministers. Separate communication plans are also to be made for individual projects and programmes. All strategies and plans relating to political co-operation are to be drawn up in line with the general guidelines defined here for communication activities both *within* the Nordic Region and *outside* the Nordic Region.

[The strategy for the international branding and positioning of the Nordic Region](#) defines the framework of "brand Norden".

Interactive, proactive, and clearly linked to the vision

All major communication ventures and projects conducted within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers must contribute to the strategic priorities and thus to achieving the objectives of co-operation and realising the vision.

Communication must be identifiable, cohesive, and consistent when seen from the outside, despite conveying content that spans a very broad field. Communication takes place in the form of text, images, and video, as well as attendance at relevant events. In addition, the Nordic Council of Ministers publishes more than 200 publications per year, the majority of these only digitally. The first interactive digital publications were launched in 2019, the development of which provides completely new opportunities for disseminating information.

The strong emphasis on civil society in the Nordic Council of Ministers' communication means it is essential that it be addressed to those living in the region and their needs and views. The Nordic Council of Ministers must be a proactive and flexible organisation. Interactivity is a central element in a communication landscape where social media plays an important role.

Information and services that facilitate mobility and freedom of movement within the region, and which support the countries' shared values, are key elements of communication.



Vision2030 sets out that the Nordic Region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. Photo: Unsplash.com

The Nordic Council of Ministers has had offices in the three Baltic countries for more than 25 years. Photo: Mary Gestrin



The border between Sweden and Norway – information that facilitates freedom of movement within the Nordic Region is a central element of communication. Photo: Karin Beate Nøsterud



Communication objectives and target groups

The target groups for communication are people of all ages who live in the Nordic Region, politicians in governments and parliaments, civil servants, business representatives, and those in the public sector.

The primary target group is those *within* the Nordic Region, and the secondary group is those *outside* the region. Political communication targeted at those outside the region must highlight Nordic values, the results of Nordic co-operation, and how Nordic solutions can be applied by others.

Integrated communication

Communication is a central element of all of the Nordic Council of Ministers' activities. More specifically, this means that communication efforts form a central element of political work.

Communication advisors are involved in processes early on in the planning stage to ensure that the objectives and strategies are formulated clearly and communicatively, and that information and communication measures and timetables are planned strategically.

Sufficient resources in terms of both finances and time are set aside for communication activities within the units and agencies requiring communication.

The communications department of the Secretariat to the Nordic Council of Ministers provides strategic advice and is responsible for all communication initiatives related to activities linked to the Secretariat. This includes the production of news items and press material, as well as factual content, digital content, publications, and event production.

In addition, the communications department works closely with the communications units of the various ministries in the Nordic countries, especially those of the country holding the presidency of the council of ministers. The head of communications at the Secretariat to the Nordic Council of Ministers is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring this strategy.

Vision and objectives for co-operation and communication

Communication within the Nordic Council of Ministers is based on the vision of the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation – [Vision2030: The Nordic Region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world](#)

The vision has three strategic focus areas:

- **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 competitive Nordic Region**
Together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic Region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility, and digital integration.
- **A socially sustainable Nordic Region**
Together, we will promote an inclusive, equal and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchanges and welfare.

Emphasis on the three strategic focus areas will continue until 2024. In February 2020, the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation agreed on 12 objectives for the period 2021 to 2024.

All major communication ventures and projects conducted within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers must contribute to the strategic priorities and thus to achieving the objectives of co-operation and realising the vision.

During the period 2021 to 2024, the Nordic Council of Ministers will focus in particular on:

1. bolstering research and development and the promotion of solutions that support carbon neutrality and climate adaptation, including in relation to transport, construction, food, and energy;
2. contributing to the safeguarding of biodiversity and the sustainable use of the Nordic Region's nature and seas;
3. promoting a circular and bio-based economy, sustainable and competitive production, sustainable food systems, and resource-efficient and non-toxic cycles in the Nordic Region;
4. making it much easier and more attractive for Nordic consumers to prioritise healthy and environmentally and climate-friendly choices, with a joint investment in sustainable consumption;

5. contributing to the positive development of international co-operation on the environment and climate, such as by promoting Nordic green solutions in the rest of the world;
6. supporting knowledge and innovation, and making it easier for companies throughout the Nordic Region to take full advantage of the development opportunities created by the green, technological, and digital transformation and the growing bioeconomy;
7. developing skills and well-functioning labour markets that match the requirements of the green transition and digital developments, and that support freedom of movement in the Nordic Region;
8. leveraging digitalisation and education to bind the Nordic countries even closer together;
9. contributing to good, equal, and secure health and welfare for all;
10. working to involve everyone living in the Nordic Region in the green transition and digital developments, utilising the potential of this transition, and counteracting the widening of gaps in society as a result of this transition;
11. giving Nordic civil society, and especially children and young people, a louder voice and greater participation in Nordic co-operation, as well as increasing their knowledge of the languages and cultures of neighbouring countries; and
12. maintaining trust and cohesion in the Nordic Region, its shared values, and the Nordic community, with an emphasis on culture, democracy, equality, inclusion, non-discrimination, and freedom of expression.

Nordic core values

The fundamental Nordic perspective and Nordic values highlighted in the [Strategy for the international branding of the Nordic Region](#) serves, alongside the vision of its objectives, as a basis for communication on co-operation.

Openness, trust, innovation, compassion, an express belief in the equal value of all people, and the sustainable management of nature are the guiding values of communication activities.

Communication objectives – what do we want communication to achieve?

The Nordic Council of Ministers is a transparent and open organisation whose policies are shaped by events and developments in society.

Communication must demonstrate consistency and logic in co-operation, that we practise what we preach, and that our actions conform to our policies.

Communication must reflect Vision2030 and its objectives, as well as signal sustainability in terms of both content and form. It must be equal, accessible, and gender-sensitive, as well as take a children and young people's perspective into account. If fundamental Nordic values change, so should communication. The benefits of co-operation for the Nordic Region and its inhabitants must permeate communication.

The overall strategic results of communication initiatives must be maximised by streamlining the co-ordination between all parts of the Nordic Council of Ministers' communication network.

In addition, the strategy will define the purpose and role of communication for those in Nordic co-operation who do *not* work with communication on a daily basis.

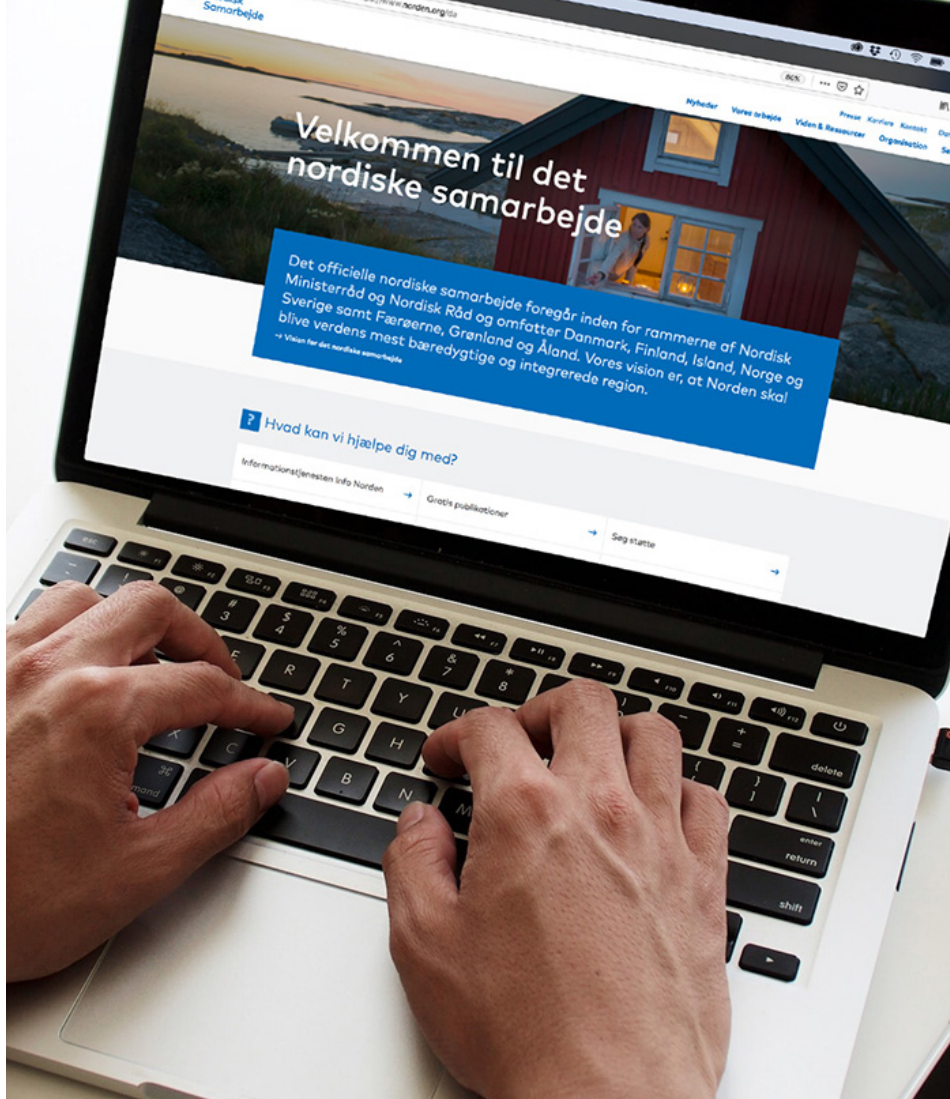
Measurable communication objectives

Communication initiatives can be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative assessments are made regularly, on an annual basis and in conjunction with major individual communication initiatives.

Quantitative communication indicators include webpage view counts, number of followers, reach and influence on social media, number of downloads of reports, and visibility in traditional media.

The qualitative assessment of communication activities will best be carried out by way of a familiarity survey at the end of the period of this strategy in 2021, preferably in combination with an opinion poll on Nordic co-operation.



The quantitative indicators can be, for example, the number of page views on norden.org. Photo: [Unsplash.com/norden.org](https://unsplash.com/photos/norden.org)

Communication must, among other things, take into account a young people's perspective, like here at a biodiversity workshop at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency in Stockholm. Photo: Moa Karlberg, norden.org



The equal value of all people and the sustainable management of nature are central values in Nordic co-operation. Photo: [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)



Communication tools and channels

Communication takes place in the form of text, images, and video, as well as attendance at relevant events.

This strategy document does not govern the details of operational communication activities. For this, the communication tool [COMMUNICATION PLANNING](#) has been drafted. COMMUNICATION PLANNING is intended for all parts of the Nordic Council of Ministers' communication network. The tool defines seven key steps in the planning and operationalisation of strategy communication initiatives and serves as a practical backbone for all communication planning within Nordic co-operation. COMMUNICATION PLANNING supports both communication advisors and employees of the Secretariat's specialist departments.

The communication channels used are [Norden.org](#) and social media in the form of *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*, and *Instagram*, at least during the launch phase of the strategy period. New relevant channels may be added during the strategy period.

The head of communications at the Secretariat is responsible for the publishing of all content on Norden.org. Other employees in the communication network cannot publish content on Norden.org without the prior approval of the head of communications.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' communications department is responsible for all content published on Norden.org, as well as for all publishing decisions. Sectoral priorities are planned in consultation with the Secretariat's specialist departments, which are also responsible for providing the communications department with up-to-date information for Norden.org.

Responsibility for other content on Norden.org may be delegated to other units, including the Secretariat's specialist departments.

The publication of text, images, and video on social media is based on principles corresponding to good publishing practice and complies with the adopted [Guidelines for social media](#). The official Nordic channels on social media are managed by the unit for digital media in the communications department of the Secretariat to the council of ministers.

Communication channels are chosen based on an analysis and assessment of the target group's composition and the aims of the communication initiative.

The [Design Manual](#) defines the design language of all communication products within Nordic co-operation and provides clear guidelines on the use of the official logo of Nordic co-operation, the Swan.

Nordic publications

The planning and publication of digital and printed publications with Nordic content form part of communication activities. The publications unit of the communications department is responsible for this. The head of communications at the Secretariat is responsible for the publications.

With the exception of publications defined as working papers, all publications within the context of Nordic co-operation follow the guidelines for visual expression as stated in the [Design Manual](#) for Nordic co-operation.

Nordic publications are primarily digital and are printed only in exceptional cases. The objective is that all publications produced during the strategy period be platform neutral so that they can be read on mobile devices. Accessibility is a key factor in the planning of the Nordic Council of Ministers' publications.

The size of printed versions must be minimised.

Co-ordination of communication activities

The Nordic communication network includes communication advisors from the Secretariat to the council of ministers, its institutions and co-operation agencies, as well as the Nordic Council of Ministers' Baltic and Russian offices. This strategy covers the entire network.

The network gathers twice a year for seminars that provide a basis for co-ordination and skills development and to share information. In addition to Vision2030 and the defined strategic focus areas, the Nordic Council of Ministers' annual presidency programme is also a joint focus area for the entire network. Co-operation and the division of work regarding these are co-ordinated by the Nordic Council of Ministers' head of communications as required.



Nordic publications are designed to be suitable for reading on mobile phones.
Photo: Louise Jeppesen

The Nordic Council of Ministers Design Manual defines the design language for all communication products for Nordic co-operation.
Photo: norden.org



Photo: Lars Dareberg / norden.org



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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, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

Nordic Council of Ministers

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