



The Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA) and synergies with the European Research Area (ERA)

Dan Andrée

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TemaNord 2008:597

© Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen 2008

ISBN 978-92-893-1779-5

Print: Ekspresen Tryk & Kopicenter

Cover photo:

Copies: 100

Printed on environmentally friendly paper

This publication can be ordered on www.norden.org/order. Other Nordic publications are available at www.norden.org/publications

Printed in Denmark



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This study has been carried out by Dan Andrée on behalf of the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers (project 70402). The views put forward in this study are the personal view of the author.

Nordic co-operation

Nordic cooperation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and three autonomous areas: the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

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

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Preface

The “Nordic Research and Innovation Area” (NORIA) concept was established in 2004 by a joint ministerial declaration from the Ministers of Education and Research and the Ministers of Industry. The aim is to make the Nordic region a leading region in research and innovation.

Since establishing the concept, important implementation steps have been taken. The two institutions NordForsk and Nordic InnovationCenter (NICE) are now operational and both have contributed to a renewed and intensified Nordic research and innovation collaboration. By now, nearly 10 000 researchers participate in the financing schemes of NordForsk and the two institutions have a project portfolio of around 200 projects each.

The Nordic collaboration has during the last couple of years taken a new direction. In the summer of 2007 in Punkaharju, Finland, the Nordic Prime Ministers established a new globalization agenda for Nordic collaboration. To focus on globalization and its inherent opportunities the Prime Ministers called upon joint Nordic activities in research and innovation, education, climate and energy, welfare and health issues.

At their meeting the Nordic Prime Ministers agreed on a:

‘new phase for Nordic partnership’ in particular on globalisation. The Prime Ministers agreed to launch ‘a new Nordic endeavour in globalisation’. It was stressed that ‘the synergy benefits of the work carried out at the European and regional level will be utilised in the implementation’.

14 concrete globalization projects are now being implemented. Education, research and innovation are at the core of this new agenda. The flagship initiative is the Top level research initiative. This initiative shall develop excellent research in close collaboration between research units and enterprises and promote innovation.

The Ministers of Education and Research decided in their meeting in Helsinki, on October 28th, to launch a top level research initiative in climate, energy and environment with a base funding of 480 MSEK (384 MDKK).

The initiative strengthens the knowledge base and competitiveness of the Nordic countries and it will be a major new step for NORIA. ” The initiative enables a critical mass on central areas unique to the Nordic countries, on a scale that the countries cannot achieve each on their own.

This study by Dan Andrée proposes 17 concrete actions to strengthen the synergies between the Nordic Region and the rest of the European Research Area. It will be widely discussed in the Nordic as well as the European research and innovation community.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Halldór Ásgrímsson', written in a cursive style.

Halldór Ásgrímsson
Secretary General

Summary

Objective

The objective of this study is to propose concrete actions in order to strengthen the synergies between the Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA) and the rest of the European Research Area (ERA).

It should be noted that this study does not look into issues and questions as the Nordic cooperation as such. The study takes the present structure and organisation at Nordic level as the basis. With regards to the Nordic top-level research initiative¹ the study does not comment on the initiative as such but looks at the possible synergies with the ERA if the initiative is implemented.

The findings in this study are drawn from a large number of interviews with key actors at Nordic and European level as well as written contributions through a questionnaire. Over 100 individuals from Nordic Ministries, Research Councils, Agencies, universities and other organisations have contributed with their personal views.

Background

ERA was launched in 2000 as a key concept to implement the Lisbon strategy (by 2010) and later followed up by the 3% (increase spending on R&D to 3% of GNP, whereof 2/3 from private investments) goal set in Barcelona 2002.

The ERA concept encompasses three inter-related aspects:

- a European 'internal market' for research, where researchers, technology and knowledge can freely circulate;
- effective European level coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies; and
- initiatives implemented and funded at European level.

The ERA Green Paper (spring 2007) reviewed progress made in realising ERA, where progress still needed to be made and raised a series of questions for debate. Following the public consultation results, the Commission and Member States are launching in 2008 new initiatives to develop

¹ A proposal was presented by a 'steering group' in March 2008 and an amended proposal together with a more limited 'test-programme' was presented in May 2008. A decision is expected in the autumn of 2008.

ERA, including an enhanced political governance of ERA, called the 'Ljubljana Process', and five initiatives on specific areas of the ERA Green Paper.

It should be noted that on EU level innovation-aspects are very much included in the concept of the ERA. One concrete example is the Framework Programme, which is the most important financial instrument to implement the ERA, where innovation activities are included in all themes as well as dedicated SMEs-actions and their innovation needs. The Framework Programme is complemented by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme where 'non-research' innovation aspects are covered.

The NORIA concept was established in a White Paper 2004 with the aim to 'make the Nordic Region to a leading region in research and innovation'. In parallel a proposal on Nordic Innovation Policy was presented. The Nordic Ministers responsible for Research and Industry/Trade responded to the initiatives and stressed that the Nordic cooperation in research and innovation is a good example of how regional cooperation can play an increasing role in EU. Nordic InnovationCenter and Nordforsk (the Nordic Research Board) were set up.

For the purpose of this study the Nordic cooperation in research is divided in 'formalised' cooperation and 'non-formalised' cooperation. The top-level research initiative, can be seen as the 'fruits' of a combination of the 'formalised' and 'non-formalised' cooperation.

- It is formalised through the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Together, these two institutions engage in one of the most ambitious comprehensive regional co-operation to be found in Europe.
- Further, it is also 'non-formalised' through numerous bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation initiatives between research councils and agencies in the Nordic countries.

Nordic instruments versus EU instruments

Although instruments to encourage Nordic cooperation can be motivated from different perspectives and the existing instruments on Nordic level seems to in particular emphasize the Nordic added value it is felt that there could be clearer linkages and more encouragement to use the Nordic instruments in order to link with the instruments used to implement the ERA. The bottom-up character of Nordic cooperation versus the more top-down at EU level has probably made this link difficult but this might change in the future.

It is felt that priority should be given to more structuring instruments rather than supporting individual projects in order to pool resources, achieve critical mass and impact. With a more top-down approach, such

as in the Nordic top-level research initiative, there should be more scope for interaction with the ERA instruments.

It should be noted that there are very few instruments on national level contributing to the implementation of ERA which of course is, according to the Commission the main problem in Europe. Even if instruments on Nordic level have their main goal to strengthen Nordic countries they will in general have much more impact in implementing ERA than most national instruments.

Nordic cooperation in the Framework Programme

Looking at statistics on the Nordic participation in the sixth Framework Programme it can be concluded that the most important partners for the Nordic countries, taking into account the total participation are in no doubt the Nordic countries.

The conclusion from these observations are that there should be further analysis in order to explain this 'over-representation' of Nordic partners and in particular how this fact could be used in a systematic way in order to support Nordic participation in the Framework Programme.

The political Vision and Governance of ERA

The 'Ljubljana Process' – has initiated a discussion on an enhanced governance based on a long term vision of ERA. At the same time new structuring instruments are proposed such as Joint Programming and the Nordic countries discuss the Nordic top-level research initiative. The Nordic countries could clearly gain and get more impact on EU-level from using the Nordic cooperation where there is a political commitment as there is a clear risk that the EU research agenda will be set by the larger countries. This is also a consequence of that the Framework Programme interact much more with the national programmes than in the past which means that Member States have to act together in 'variable' geometry in order to have an impact.

The Nordic top-level research initiative

A steering group appointed by the the Nordic countries presented a proposal in March 2008 on a Nordic top-level research initiative in the field of energy, environment and climate. A political discussion is taking place and a decision is expected during the autumn of 2008.

The proposal has a very strong connection to EU and in particular the Framework Programme. The potential synergies are probably larger than

indicated in the proposal. The proposal could act as a platform within the areas identified in order to make the Nordic cooperation more visible and could also be used to get experience on Joint Programming.

The initiative assumes substantial funds from participation in the Framework Programme but this will not happen automatically. The proposal in this study on influencing the Work Programmes is essential to achieve this goal.

Further, it is very important that the implementation structure of the top-level initiative take into account the needed ‘interface’ with ERA. The Advisory Group proposed in this study could be a useful link although far more planning and thinking would have to be done in order to ensure the ‘interface’ with ERA.

Proposals for increased synergies

One clear message from the interviews and in particular from the Commission, is that the Nordic region is not ‘visible’ in Brussels (like e.g. the Mediterranean cooperation). What has worked – what has not worked – what are the lesson for the rest of Europe and how can the Nordic countries learn from this?

As one official in the Commission expressed:

‘Nordic countries could make their views in different ways, either jointly as one region but one should also think of putting views forward together as a package but not necessarily all in agreement. The Nordic region could act as a test-bed for Europe. This builds on the ‘fact’ that it is easier to have an impact in Brussels if you are coordinated’.

The overall approach in this study is that the proposals put forward should be based on where added value could be gained by cooperation – they are based on ‘quality’ rather than ‘geographical’ criteria. Further, the proposals are in most cases related to the Framework Programme and as such they are most relevant for at least both the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research Affaires as well as the Committee of Senior Officials for Industry/Trade/Energy within the structure of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Further, most actions are also relevant for the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

The proposals (chapter 7) are divided into two categories. initiatives/actions for increased :

- Efficiency
- Impact

The Impact actions are more of ‘political nature’ in the sense that the implementation could require agreement to cooperate on ‘content’ / ‘sub-

stance' such as thematic content or horizontal issues. Such decisions are usually taken on ministerial level or in some cases delegated to council/agencies.

The Efficiency actions are of more 'non political nature' as they are of more facilitating and coordinating nature.

The proposals do not have any major budgetary implications. However, most of the initiatives would require human resources in order to be implemented or/and could require some re-prioritisation of existing resources.

In a limited number of cases there are indications that increased resources could have a very positive effect.

The three Nordic research and innovation organisations, Nordforsk, Nordic Innovation Centre and Nordic Energy Research, together with the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers are expected to play a very important role in the implementation as facilitator, coordinator and to ensure complementarities with national agencies/councils. Further, any political commitment will have to be firmly anchored within the national administrations. Close cooperation is also expected with Programme Committee Members and National Contacts Points of the Framework Programme (and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme) and the Liaison Offices in Brussels.

This study distinguishes between initiatives/actions on project, programme and policy level respectively. The figure below illustrates examples of the different levels as well as decision levels.

Figure 1: Actions on different levels

Level	Example of actions/-cooperation	National decision level(s)	Nordic level(s)
Policy	Influencing future Framework Programmes and other initiatives requiring Council decision	Political level in Ministries	senior Committees in the Nordic Council of Ministers
Programme	Influencing Work Programmes and content of JTIs, article 169 and ERA-NET actions	Officials in Ministries as well as Agencies/Councils	senior Committees in the Nordic Council of Ministers and the three Nordic organisations, the proposed Advisory Board
Project	Assisting potential Nordic applicants to take part in EU programmes	Agencies/Councils	The three Nordic organisations, Advisory Board.

All in all there are 17 proposals put forward in chapter 7 in order to achieve increased efficiency and impact. Both the efficiency and impact actions will underpin all three levels; the efficiency actions will make the Nordic region more visible and lessons will be learnt on both Nordic level as well as European level. In addition the increased efficiency will lead to 'more value for money'. The Impact actions will concretely lead

to impact on EU policy and programmes for the benefit of the Nordic countries, e.g. increased participation in the Framework Programme.

Two of the proposals (3 and 8) are considered to be particularly strategic and it is strongly recommended that these two, see below, are implemented urgently as they have the potential to give both shorter and longer-term results and they also underpin the other proposals.

Lessons learnt from Nordic research coordination in the context of ERA – NORDERA

There is a clear case to increase the visibility and awareness of the Nordic cooperation. In this context it is equally important to convey what has been achieved as well as what has not been achieved or what has not worked. It is important to stress that it is seldom of interest just to tell about a success story if it is not possible to see how it could be used or replicated in another region, i.e. one should talk about lessons learned and how it could be used at European level.

A comprehensive proposal for a Support Action, called NORDERA, under the seventh Framework Programme has been prepared as a part of this study and submitted in August 2008.

The general objective of NORDERA is to support the coordination of national research programmes and encourage joint programming by studying the experiences of the Nordic region in this field, associating it with relevant ERA experiences. It will assess how lessons learnt can be of value for the further development of the European Research Area (ERA) as well as the Nordic Research and Innovation Area as an integral part of ERA. Thus, the results of the project will be of value for the individual Nordic countries, for the Nordic regions as a whole and for the whole of ERA.

If approved, the project, which would be funded 100% by the European Commission, is expected to start in the beginning of 2009 and last for 18 months. Nordforsk will be the coordinator with Nordic Innovation Centre and one of the Joint Research Centre (JRC/IPTS) as partners. All the Nordic research agencies and councils, including Nordic Energy Research, have agreed to contribute to the project.

The project will end with an ambitious seminar/work shop in Brussels where the findings will be presented and discussed.

A very important and hopefully long term result of this project would be to form a lasting cooperation between the Nordic actors and corresponding actors on European level such as the JRC and experts invited to the seminar. These contacts should lead to further cooperation of mutual benefit. Finally, the Advisory Board set up for the project could form the basis for a longer term forum for discussions on EU research and innovation issues on Nordic level.

Proposal to influence the FP7 Work Programmes in areas covered by the Nordic top-level research initiative

If the Nordic top-level initiative is approved, or part of it, it could form a very good basis for identification of areas in the seventh Framework Programme where Nordic cooperation could be of added value. However, even if a decision is not taken on the initiative the identification and the discussion on political level in the areas of energy, environment and climate could still be used for cooperation on Nordic level in order to give input to the Commission.

This study proposes an action to give input to the FP7 Work Programmes in the areas covered by the top-level research initiatives.

An identification process has to be initiated in order to assess which areas are suited for FP7. Further, a strategy on Nordic level will have to be drawn up, including setting up a network through which the input to the Commission will be communicated. Work will have to start by the end of 2008 in order to have an impact on the FP7 Work Programmes from 2011 – 2013 and the first results should be ‘visible’ by the middle of 2010. The strategy for this work is described in some details in chapter 8.

If this activity is pursued it would increase the possibilities for Nordic organisations to apply and to get funding under FP7 in the areas covered by the Nordic top – level initiative. The proposal in this study also include optional assistance to potential applicants. The experience from this project could be the basis for further Nordic cooperation ahead of e.g. the next Framework Programme.

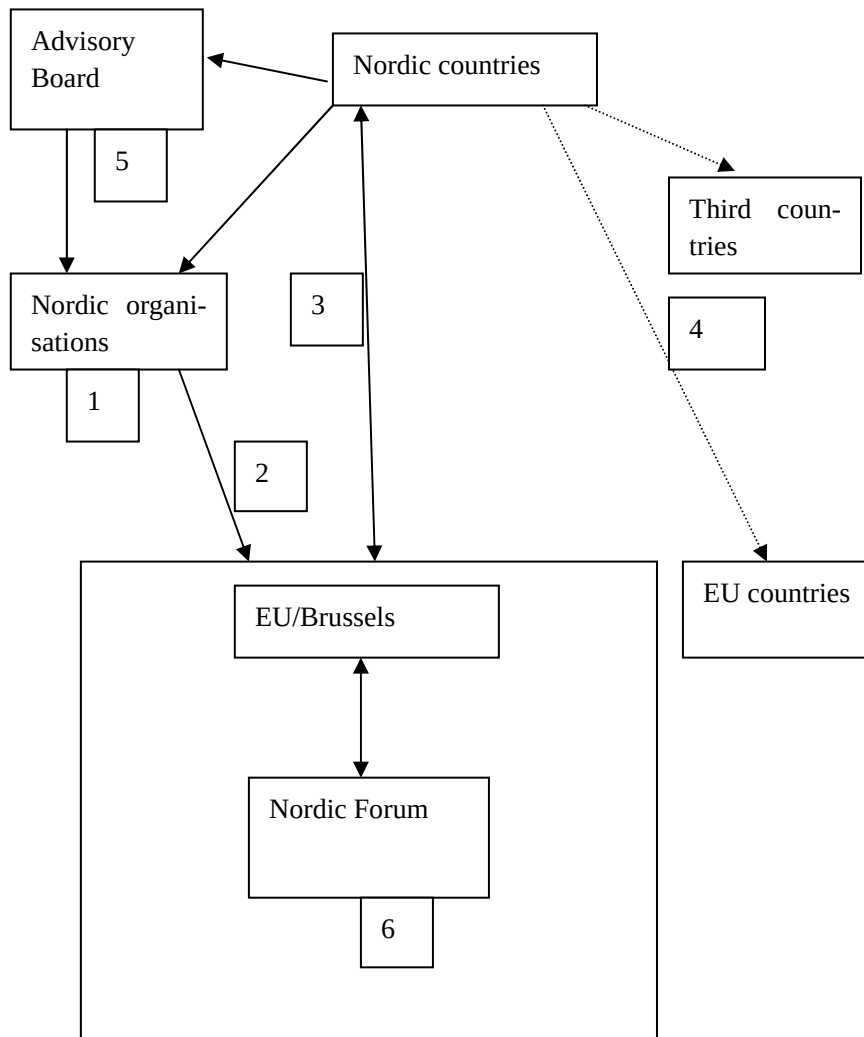


Figure 2: Interaction and synergies between ERA and NORIA

- 1. The Nordic organisations can act as catalysts, facilitators and coordinators. Actions should aim at avoiding duplication and to complement national actions. Close cooperation with national administration is necessary. The secretariats of the Nordic organisations should co-operate closer on EU related matters.
- 2. The Nordic organisations have a major role in making lessons and experiences of Nordic cooperation known in the Commission and the EU. Further, they have a role to contribute to increased efficiency. This will lead to more visibility of the Nordic countries and their joint efforts. The proposed ERANET Support Action, NORDERA will, if implemented make a major contribution to this aim.
- 3. The Nordic top-level research initiative could act as a pilot project to give input to the FP7 Work Programmes in order to increase the possibility for the Nordic countries to apply and to receive funding.

- 4. Actions proposed will lead to stronger Nordic countries and a stronger NORIA and as a consequence a strengthening of ERA. Lessons could be used in broader international cooperation.
- 5. An Advisory Board is proposed with representatives from the Nordic countries to give advice and to prepare for any ‘political’ decisions.
- 6. The Nordic Science Counsellors and Liaison Offices in Brussels are proposed to form a Brussels Forum utilising their different roles and mandate acting as catalysts and facilitators.

Proposals for increased Efficiency

- Exchange of views/-experiences
- More visibility
- ERANET Support Actions-NORDERA – to get lessons for NORIA and ERA
- Closer contacts between Liaison Offices/Science Counsellors in Brussels

Proposals for increased Impact

- Identification of thematic and horizontal areas
- Initiatives on project, programme and policy level.
- Pilot project to give input to the FP7 Work Programmes building on the top-level initiative.
- Nordic experts in EU Groups/Boards
- Closer cooperation between the Nordic organisations – Advisory Board – Brussels Forum
- Explore other areas such as the CIP and the EIT

1. Context

1.1 A new phase in Nordic cooperation

In June 2007, the Nordic Prime Ministers agreed on a:

'new phase for Nordic partnership' in particular on globalisation². The Prime Ministers agreed to launch 'a new Nordic endeavour in globalisation'. It was stressed that 'the synergy benefits of the work carried out at the European and regional level will be utilised in the implementation'.

The corner stone in this globalisation initiative is 'a more skilled Nordic Region' including:

- 1. Proposal for a Nordic top-level research initiative in close co-operation with industry and commerce. The following sectors were given a special emphasis: promotion of innovations; climate, energy and environmental issues; and welfare research and health.
- 2. Reinforcing research and innovations by co-ordinating an increasing number of national research and development projects and innovation programmes and by promoting co-operation between national bodies that finance research activities.
- 3. Investigate the possibility of establishing Nordic innovation agencies in Asian emerging economies.
- 4. An initiative on the establishment of a Nordic quality innovation prize in 2008.

As an input to this discussion the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers put forward some proposals³, e.g. on 'powerful synergies and impact of Nordic participation in EU Framework Programmes':

'The Nordic countries should strive to achieve powerful synergies and exert a major influence on the 7th framework programmes, as well as the EU's new framework programme for Competitiveness and Innovation (CIP). This work will contribute to new initiatives and Nordic leadership within the EU. It will also help the Nordic Region attract a larger share of the EU's research and innovation funding, and help localise and provide access to strategically important research and innovation infrastructure. The Nordic Research and Innovation Area, NORIA, should strengthen its position as an integral part of the European Research and Innovation Area (ERIA)'.

² Nordic Council of Ministers, Press Release 183/2007, 19.06.2000.

³ Input to the Nordic Globalisation Process, 18 June 2007

At the request of the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers a programme group presented a proposal: Nordic Excellence in research Programme in the areas of energy, environment and climate⁴, March 2008 see further chapters 3.3 and 6.

The proposal is a very ambitious initiatives combining and pooling existing and new funding, including strong connections to the EU and in particular the Framework Programme for research. The proposal comes very timely when the Commission urges Member States to take initiatives in order to tackle the fragmentation of research – through so called Joint Programming⁵ – see also chapter 6.2.

1.2 NORIA – The Nordic Research and Innovation Area

The NORIA concept was established in a White Paper 2004⁶ with the aim to ‘make the Nordic Region to a leading region in research and innovation’. In parallel a proposal on Nordic Innovation Policy⁷ was presented. The Nordic Ministers responsible for Research and Industry/Trade responded⁸ to the initiatives and stressed that the Nordic cooperation in research and innovation is a good example of how regional cooperation can play an increasing role in EU. Nordic InnovationCenter and Nordforsk (the Nordic Research Board) were set up.

As a part of the report series: The Nordic Region as a Winner in the Global Innovation Economy, one report⁹, elaborated upon the relationship between ERA and NORIA as well as experiences of EU cooperation. In particular it concluded that a strong implementation of NORIA ‘would in all cases produce the nest position for Nordic actors’ whether or not ERA is weak or strong.

In October 2006 a major conference was held in Copenhagen¹⁰: Investing in Research and Innovation, Exchanging European Experiences in a Nordic Context arrange by the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The conclusions recommended gradual opening of selected national programmes, to use instruments such as ERANET, article 169 European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives as well as making use of existing monitoring instruments such as ER-AWATCH.

The Nordic top-level research initiative and the concept of NORIA are based on a very long term cooperation between the Nordic countries which started already in 1952 with the formation of the Nordic Council -

4 See <http://www.norden.org/forskning/sk/topforskning.asp?lang=> for background documents

5 Towards Joint Programming in Research, COM(2008) 468, 15 July 2008.

6 NORIA, Vitbok om Nordisk forskning och innovation, TemaNord, 2004:502

7 Förslag till nordiskt innovationspolitiskt samarbetsprogram 2005 – 2010, ANP 2004:748

8 Nordiska Ministerrådet, Ministerdeklaration om forsknings- och näringsssamarbete, 22 september 2004

9 Building Nordic strength through more open R&D funding. TemaNord 2006:576

10 http://www.norden.org/forskning/konferenser/sk/index.asp?lang=&p_id=1075

a co-operation body for Nordic parliaments and followed up by the establishment of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1971.

1.3 The European Research Area

The European Research Area (ERA) was launched in 2000 as a key concept to implement the Lisbon strategy (by 2010) and later followed up by the 3% (increase spending on R&D to 3% of GNP, whereof 2/3 from private investments) goal set in Barcelona 2002.

The ERA concept encompasses three inter-related aspects:

- a European 'internal market' for research, where researchers, technology and knowledge can freely circulate;
- effective European level coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies; and
- initiatives implemented and funded at European level.

The Commission's Green Paper¹¹ on the ERA of April 2007 takes stock and also acknowledges that 2010 should not be seen as an end date and that ERA will be an ongoing process with a moving target. The Framework Programme¹² is the main financial instrument to implement the ERA at EU level but it is clear that many other EU initiatives and in particular initiatives on national and regional level will have to be undertaken. Member States as well as associated States work together in different forum, using, e.g. the Open Method of Coordination, n.b. through CREST (advisory body to the Commission and the European Council).

In the Communication on Competitive European Regions through research and Innovation¹³ the Commission invites actors on national and regional level to improve arrangements for coordinated use of Community instruments at national and regional instruments, such as the Framework programme for research, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme and Structural funds.

The latest 'effort' in the endeavour is the Communication from the European Commission on Joint Programming, referred to above and the proposal for a Council Regulation on the Community legal framework for Research Infrastructure¹⁴.

It should be noted that on EU level Innovation aspects are very much included in the concept of the ERA. One concrete example is the Framework Programme, which is the most important financial instrument to implement the ERA, where innovation activities are included in all

¹¹ COM (2007) 161 final, 4 April 2007.

¹² The current FP, FP7 runs from 2007 until 2013, see Appendix 2 for short summary.

¹³ COM (2007) 474, 16 August 2007.

¹⁴ COM (2008) 467, 16 July 2008.

themes as well as dedicated actions on SMEs and their innovation needs. The Framework Programme is complemented by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme where ‘non-research’ innovation aspects are covered.

2. Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to propose concrete actions in order to strengthen the synergies between the Nordic Region and the rest of the European Research Area. With concrete actions is meant proposal for actions which ‘easily’ could be implemented rather than more ‘abstract’ conclusions.

It should be noted that this study does not cover issues and questions such as coordination between Nordic (national) programmes, how various (research) bodies on Nordic level function or how NORIA in general could be strengthen as this would be beyond the scope of this study. This study is about ‘synergies with the ERA’ and focuses on practical advice and proposals. The study takes the present structure and organisation at Nordic level as the basis.

In some cases there are proposals for the implementation of the actions building on the existing structure but in a few cases the implementation it is left open as there could be several options, alternatives or lack of clear ‘candidates’.

In general the implementation of the proposed actions should be possible to do without any substantial new resources but might require some re-prioritisation. Depending on the level of ‘ambition’ new resources could be useful. In this context the resources are mainly human resources to implement actions and not resources to carry our research.

This study asks a number of questions which have been used in interviews and to get written input, but the main emphasise is not to find the answers themselves but rather to use the answers in order to propose concrete actions. Comments on the questions asked and answers to the questionnaire are summarised in appendix 4 and the full questionnaire and list of questions can be found in appendices 1 and 3.

3. Nordic Cooperation in Research and Innovation

For the purpose of this study the Nordic cooperation in research is divided in ‘formalised’ cooperation and ‘non-formalised’ cooperation. The top-level research initiative, can be seen as the ‘fruits’ of a combination of the ‘formalised’ and ‘non-formalised’ cooperation.

- It is formalised through the Nordic Council (established 1952) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (1971). Together, these two institutions engage in one of the most comprehensive regional co-operation to be found in Europe. The Nordic budget is in practice a common pot with no fair return and is calculated according to a sliding scale based on national GDP.
- Further, it is also ‘non-formalised’ through numerous bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation initiatives between research councils and agencies in the Nordic countries.

3.1 Formalised cooperation

Under the Nordic Council of Ministers there are two horizontal bodies and one sector body set up on Nordic level related to research and innovation. In addition there are a number of Nordic Institutes¹⁵.

Nordforsk

NordForsk is a Nordic research board operating under the Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research, responsible for Nordic collaboration in research and researcher training. It functions as an executive collaborative body for the national research financing bodies, offering for them a coordination arena for strategically important research priorities that have been identified as suitable for joint Nordic efforts. The focus is on research areas where several Nordic countries have an international position of strength.

The organisation’s three main roles are co-ordination, financing and policy advice. The objective of NordForsk’s activities is to develop the

¹⁵ Nordisk Institutt for Sjørett , Nordisk Institut for Teoretisk Fysik. Nordens Institut i Finland , Nordisk Samisk Institutt, Nordisk Sommeruniversitet, Nordisk Vulkanologisk Institut, Nordiska Asieninstituttet , NORUnet A/S

Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA) as a globally leading and attractive region for research and innovation.

The most important instrument of NordForsk is the Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoEs). NCoEs bring together excellent Nordic research groups in virtual research centres in order to increase the quality, efficiency, competitiveness and visibility of Nordic research through enhanced collaboration between Nordic countries. A NCoE Programme is based on existing research groups in the Nordic countries, not on creation of new units or institutions. The instrument is financed through a double common pot with no fair return, combining NordForsk budget funding with additional funding from the national research financing bodies. It builds on existing, significant national research investments. In this way the relatively modest Nordic glue money helps coordinate larger national investments in such a way as to create Nordic synergies.

NordForsk also operates a NORIANet programme, inspired by the ERANET programme, which aims to enhance co-operation between Nordic national research and innovation financiers and managers. The resulting coordination activities should lead to synergy effects, sustainable cooperation and joint investments within research funding and research policy. Seven projects were started in 2008, covering aspects such as the opening up of national research programmes, joint Nordic calls, as well as sharing of best practice.

The Nordic Innovation Centre

The Nordic Innovation Centre (NICE) is the Nordic Council of Ministers instrument for promoting an innovative and knowledge-intensive Nordic business sector.

Nordic Innovation Centre initiates and finances activities and projects that enhance innovation capabilities and that maintain and develop the Nordic countries as a single market. National innovation agencies, industries and research institutes are Nordic Innovation Centre's main cooperation partners in the Nordic countries.

Nordic Innovation Centre is an important player in building networks and knowledge platforms on a Nordic level within different areas such as innovation policy, creative industries, food, environmental technology, nanotechnology, tourism and innovative building and construction. A main focus is to create new and different platforms for academic disciplines and industry sectors to meet, communicate and cooperate. The initiation of cooperation activities with European groups and networks is another important focus area.

The Nordic Innovation Centre is coordinator of the European ERANET consortium SAFEFOODERA (2004-2011) within which Nordic Innovation Centre has facilitated and administrated two trans-national calls. Nordic Innovation Centre is also coordinating BSRINNO-NET

(2007-2009) and has participated in a coordinated call within MNT ERA-Net, the network of European funding programmes for micro- and nanotechnologies (MNT) in year 2007. Nordic Innovation Centre is furthermore involved in numerous other projects at EU level.

Nordic Energy Research

Nordic Energy Research has more than 20 years of trans-national experience. Its goal is to be conducive in maximising the results of energy-related research and development in the Nordic Region and their adjacent areas. Nordic Energy Research has experiences successful track-record in taking part in European projects from leading several ERANETs in the field of energy as well as the European Technology Platform on Hydrogen and Fuel Cells.

Although the three organisations works in slightly different ways they all have a central budget into which the member states contribute through the Council of Ministers and from which the organisations pay research grants. Under this ‘common pot’ arrangement, there is in principle no requirement for *juste retour*.

In addition there are three other Nordic bodies:

The Joint Committees of the Nordic Research Councils (NOS) within the three fields of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences are devoted to promoting their respective fields of research in the Nordic countries through collaboration and coordination. Their focus is on research strategy issues and they work in close collaboration with NordForsk.

Nordic University Cooperation (NUS) is a high-level initiative for university cooperation in the five Nordic countries. It aims to facilitate exchange of experience and promote cooperation among Nordic universities.

The Nordic Association of University Administrators (NUAS) aims to enhance contacts and to establish networks between the Nordic universities at all administrative levels in order to promote the Nordic educational community.

3.2 ‘Non-formalised’ cooperation

There is extensive cooperation on bi-lateral and multi-lateral levels between the national Nordic research funding and innovation councils and agencies. Numerous examples of Nordic cross-border R&D Programmes exist, with Finland having been one of the countries most active in setting up such programmes. For example, the Finnish TEKES and Swedish VINNOVA have cooperative programmes in telecommunications and in forest materials. The collaboration in telecommunication has also been extended to include the Research Council of Norway. Furthermore, the

Academy of Finland and the Swedish FORMAS are involved in the Finnish – Swedish Wood Materials Science and Engineering programme. Cross-border cooperation is also building up in the Swedish – Danish Öresund area, e.g., in biotechnology.

3.3. Nordic top-level research initiative

As described in chapter 1.1 a proposal was presented by the steering group in March 2008 and an amended proposal together with a more limited ‘test-programme’ was presented in May 2008. The amended proposal is in substance not so different but it is much more ‘realistic’ e.g. concerning the possible ‘contribution’ from FP7 in terms of funding.

The programme claims to cover the entire chain from causes over consequences to solutions. It covers climate research and policies, innovative energy sources, system solutions and clean fuels through 12 focused and interlinked projects which integrate top-level research and innovation.

A potential resource base of SEK 6.8 billion (EUR 680 million) has been identified of which 25% represent new funding and the rest is provided as a result of Nordic cooperation and the joining of forces, e.g. close ties between national research programmes.

The programme is proposed to be organised around the existing Nordic cooperation networks and subject to the existing hierarchy of responsibility. However, it is likely that the organisational discussion will be a delicate part of the political negotiations.

The programme aims to function as an important platform for enhanced international cooperation and intend to promote the mobility of competences and expertise. It is based on current national priorities and strengths. By way of this programme, the Nordic region aims, according to the proposal, to acquire a global leading position in terms of competence, innovation and industrial achievement within the chosen thematic fields.

The proposal could be seen as an early example of Joint Programming involving all five Nordic countries.

During the summer and autumn of 2008 a political discussion is taking place between the Nordic governments and a first phase could start in early 2009 if the proposal is approved during the autumn 2008.

Later, this first initiative is expected to be followed up by a second initiative in the areas of health and welfare research.

4. ERA instruments vs. NORIA instruments

Although there exist a ‘definition’ of ERA and there are several analysis/stock takings on where we are today with regards to the implementation¹⁶ it is actually very difficult to say exactly what ‘ERA is’. In fact, the French, Czech and Swedish ‘Trio’ in the EU have taken the initiative to discuss the Vision and Governance of ERA as a part of the Ljubljana process¹⁷ during their Presidencies. Most likely it would be equally difficult to say exactly what NORIA consists of.

The discussion so far in the EU has been about which instruments should be used to implement the ERA and, e.g. tackle the fragmentation of resources, to form critical mass, to overcome barriers for mobility, to easy knowledge transfer etc. One of the latest, and maybe one of the most novel ‘instrument’ is the establishment of the European Research Council within the seventh Framework Programme. At the moment the debate on EU level is focused on the Commission’s ‘five initiatives’ following the Green Paper and in particular the proposal for Joint Programming which could become the most important instrument to tackle the fragmentation of funding in Europe.

For the purpose of this study we will, with regards to ERA instruments, focus on the Framework Programme for Research and initiatives related to the ERA Green Paper. In fact, the Framework programme is the largest financial instrument on European Community level and considered as the most, or one of the most, important instrument to implement the ERA.

However, as clearly pointed out in the ERA Green Paper and in the Communication on Joint programming it is considered that the Framework Programme as ‘reached’ its limits and other instruments are needed.

¹⁶ One of the most comprehensive study is Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Green Paper: The ERA: New Perspectives, SEC(2007)412/2, 4.4.2007.

¹⁷ Council Conclusions on The Launch of the ‘Ljubljana process’ – towards full realisation of ERA, Council Document 10231/08

4.1 The Framework Programme as an instrument to implement the ERA

The EU's Framework Programme for research has a 25 years history and the instruments/tools used have been developed gradually but with a common denominator of supporting actions with European Added Value. However, it should be noted that the concept of ERA is less than 10 years old which means that the Framework Programme from the start had a much more limited objective.

The main aim of the Framework Programme was, and still is:

The Community shall have the objective of strengthening the scientific and technological basis of European industry and encouraging it to become more competitive at international level, while promoting all the research activities deemed necessary by virtue of other Chapters of this Treaty.

It is interesting to note that from the beginning of the Framework Programme the treaty has also included the possibility of coordination:

The Community and the Member States shall coordinate their research and technological development activities so as to ensure that national policies and Community policy are mutually consistent.

The 'instruments' in the Framework Programme are determined by the treaty:

- (a) implementation of research, technological development and demonstration programmes by promoting co-operation with undertakings, research centres and universities;
- (b) promotion of co-operation in the field of Community research, technological development and demonstration with third countries and international organizations;
- (c) dissemination and optimisation of the results of activities in Community research, technological development and demonstration;
- (d) stimulation of the training and mobility of researchers in the Community.

The core has been, and still is, the promotion of trans-national Cooperation – 'normally' consisting of minimum 3-6 partners from 3 or more countries. The structure, and instruments changed significantly in the sixth Framework Programme with a major shift from 'project intervention' to 'programme and policy interventions' involving policy administrators/managers from national and regional agencies, research council and ministries.

The concept of ERANET was introduced and the Open Method of Coordination was used for the first time in the sixth Framework Programme. Also, the article 169 in the treaty was used for the first time in the Clinical Trials Platform. In addition the Cooperation part of the

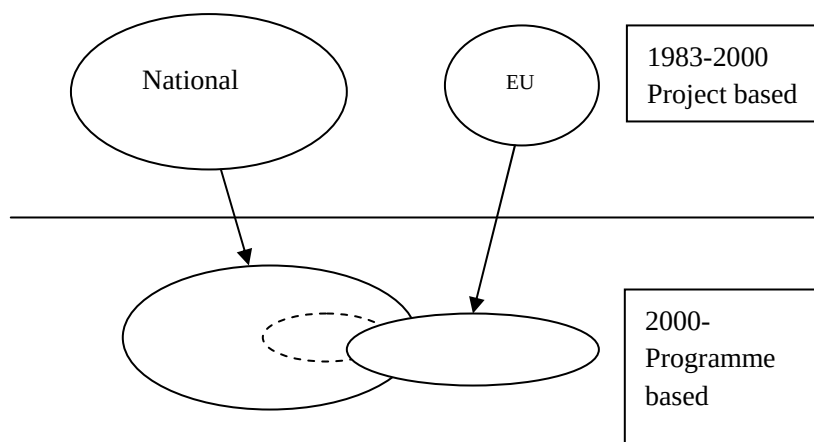
Framework Programme changed shape by introducing Integrating Projects and Networks of Excellence (NoE). The aim of the Integrated Projects were to encourage larger ‘more integrating’ projects with industry involved and the aim of the NoE were to foster more longer term cooperation, mainly between academic institutions. The sixth Framework Programme was the first Framework Programme to take the ERA concept into consideration. The sixth Framework Programme also saw the first real attempt to facilitate the creation of new research infrastructures, not only the use and access to existing research infrastructures.

The seventh Framework Programme saw a further development of the instruments where the European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives ‘replaced’ the Integrated projects, the ERANET scheme was expanded to also cover funding of joint calls (ERANET Plus) and last but not least of course the ‘flag ship’ in the shape of the European Research Council.

There was also a number of other initiatives related to the implementation of ERA such as the Regions of Knowledge and the Research Potential activities. The Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) was also introduced as an instrument to facilitate for companies to get access to new types of loans in order to fund research. Finally the approach to Research Infrastructures were more ambitious but the budget for this part was severely cut during the negotiations.

Although the seventh Framework Programme saw a radical change in the structure compared with its predecessor the instruments were ‘obsolete’ before its start! The ERA Green Paper which was published only a few months after the start of the seventh Framework Programme gave a devastating verdict and ‘ruled’ that instruments like ERANET was not sufficient.

This new phase in ERA makes synergies with NORIA even more important. This can be illustrated by figure 3 The EU programmes are much more integrated with national programmes and will influence them much more in the future. This means that Member States must be more proactive and cooperate in ‘variable geometry’ depending on the issue.



4.2 The ERA Green Paper and the five initiatives

The ERA Green Paper reviewed progress made in realising ERA, where progress still needed to be made and raised a series of questions for debate. The Commission sought answers to these questions and solicited further new ideas in a public consultation which lasted from 1 May 2007 until 31 August 2007. Following the public consultation results, the Commission and Member States are launching in 2008 new initiatives to develop ERA, including an enhanced political governance of ERA, called the 'Ljubljana Process', and five initiatives on specific areas of the ERA Green Paper.

The new initiatives address researchers' careers and mobility, research infrastructures, knowledge sharing, research programmes and international science and technology cooperation. They aim at establishing durable partnerships with Member States and stakeholders – including business, universities and research organisations – to develop the ERA jointly in their specific areas of focus.

Better careers and more mobility: a European Partnership for Researcher

The European Commission adopted the communication 'Better careers and more mobility: a European Partnership for Researchers' on 23 May 2008. The Commission proposal seeks to engage governments and research institutions in a set of joint priority actions which should make the EU a more attractive place for researchers, and allow researchers to be more mobile between countries, institutions, and between the academic and private sectors.

One of the key goals set out in the Communication is 'Enhancing the training, skills, and experience of European researchers'. In order to achieve this goal the communication proposes that Member States ensure

better links between academia and industry by supporting the placement of researchers in industry during their training and promoting industry financing of PhDs and involvement in curriculum development.

The set-up and funding of cross-border infrastructure

As one of the five initiatives following the ERA Green Paper, the Commission will provide a legal framework to assist Member States in developing and funding pan-European research infrastructures. The proposal for a regulation was presented in July 2008.

The Commission Recommendation on the management of Intellectual Property Rights

On 9 April 2008 the Commission adopted a Recommendation on the management of Intellectual Property Rights in knowledge transfer activities and a Code of Practice for universities and other public research organisations.

The objective is to facilitate and promote the optimal use of intellectual property created in public research organisations to increase both knowledge transfer to industry and the socio-economic benefits resulting from publicly funded research.

Towards Joint Programming in Research

On 15 July 2008 the Commission presented the Communication ‘Towards Joint Programming in Research: Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively’. The objective is to develop a more strategic and better structured approach to future joint programming between Member States, allowing groups of countries or regions to combine their efforts and build critical mass in areas of strategic importance for solving societal and environmental problems or improving competitiveness.

At its most ambitious, Joint Programming requires that Member States are prepared to move in the direction of the definition and implementation of common research agendas with multi-annual commonly decided activities (planning, launching, evaluating) and funding mechanisms. The Communication proposes a ‘timetable’ for implementation, involving the set-up of a high-level group of Member States representatives at the beginning of 2009. The group in turn should deliver its recommendations on areas of research suitable for joint programming to the Council by the end of 2009. The actual preparation for individual Joint Programming initiatives is proposed to start in early 2010.

It is interesting to note that in the Impact assessment of the Joint Programming Communication the Commission says: ‘the Nordic countries

have been very active in promoting bilateral cooperation involving Nordic research institutions, fixed-term research programmes, Nordic Centres of Excellence (NCoE), grant schemes and the co-ordination and planning of major infrastructure investments, with the recently created Nordic Research Board (NordForsk) as a central actor’.

International science and technology cooperation activities.

The objective is to develop a more strategic and better structured approach to future joint programming between Member States, allowing groups of countries or regions to combine their efforts and build critical mass that would not be possible for individual programmes in areas of strategic importance for solving societal problems or improving competitiveness. A Commission Communication will present an analysis of the framework conditions and criteria determining the success of joint programming taking into account the full life cycle of research programming (from foresight to evaluation), and propose a roadmap leading to agreement to specific joint programmes for participating countries and regions.

As the fifth and final initiative (expected to be adopted in the autumn 2008) following the ERA Green Paper, the Commission aims to bring forward a proposal on a policy framework for both the Community and Member States to foster and facilitate coherent international science and technology cooperation activities.

4.3 Other instruments outside the Framework Programme:

There are a number of other instruments which contributes to the implementation of the ERA such as the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), the European Charter and Code of Conduct, actions within the Structural Funds and n.b. the European Institute of Technology (EIT).

By ‘default’ these instrument complement each other and are not overlapping as this is ensured by the Commission.

It has been out of scope of this study to include these initiatives but the principle of proposals made in this study could be applied and easily adapted also to those instruments.

4.4 NORIA Instruments

An important aspect of the Nordic cooperation is the ‘political’ instrument which is provided for by the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Minister, including the groups mentioned in chapter 3.1.

As mentioned earlier, Nordforsk has developed the Nordic Centre of Excellence – instrument. NCoEs bring together excellent Nordic researcher groups in virtual research centres in order to increase the quality, efficiency, competitiveness and visibility of Nordic research through enhanced collaboration between Nordic countries. However, the main objective of a NCoE is to create added value through Nordic cooperation and further increase the scientific quality of Nordic research and has not ERA as a priority.

Another example is the NORIANet programme operated by Nordforsk and inspired by the ERAnet programme, which aims to enhance co-operation between Nordic national research and innovation financiers and managers.

In relation to the five initiatives stemming from the ERA Green Paper there are also instruments/activities on Nordic level:

Nordic research funders are planning the Nordic Private Public Partnership (PPP) PhD Programme, administered by NordForsk. The programme aims to:

- Offer Nordic PhD-students training in both sectors as well as the possibility to obtain a comprehensive set of complementary skills, such as entrepreneurship and IPR management
- Offer enterprises the opportunity to enhance the application of new research-based knowledge in innovation processes through strengthened research competence and collaboration with relevant academic communities
- Form a basis for future academia–industry collaboration in the region

Projects are carried out in collaboration between an enterprise, a PhD student and a university. The university must be located in a Nordic country different from the country in which the enterprise is located.

NordForsk launched in 2007 a new funding instrument - Joint Nordic Use of Research Infrastructure – which aims to optimize joint Nordic use of research infrastructures, to increase the interaction between existing infrastructures, and to share best practices in operations by making these more available to interested parties.

The Nordic countries have also started a policy initiative administered by NordForsk in the field of cross-border research infrastructures. The initiative aims to evaluate possible Nordic collaborative models for research infrastructures. A report on the issue will be finalised by autumn 2008 and a conference will be organised in Stockholm on 12-13 November 2008 to discuss future steps for increased Nordic research infrastructure cooperation.

In Nordic policy, research and innovation have for a long time been treated as ‘innovation systems’, a concept developed with strong contributions by Danish, Swedish and Norwegian researchers. This notion es-

essentially requires all actors involved in research and innovation to act in an interlinked environment and constitutes a break with the linear view of innovation, where inventions in a research laboratory are then ‘used’ by a company or a community. This systemic approach to innovation implies that innovation emerges from the quality of interactions between producers, users and mediators of knowledge in a region, including local authorities, companies, universities, coordination institutions and funding providers.

Smaller-scale Nordic initiatives similarly work towards the facilitation of coherent international science and technology cooperation activities. An ongoing NordForsk NORIA-net is dedicated to preparing a model for joint research funding activities for the Nordic countries and their international partner countries, focusing on China and India. The ultimate goal is to establish long-lasting international funding instruments and funding mechanisms coordinated and funded by NordForsk and the national research councils together.

The role of The Nordic Innovation Centre is to facilitate and strengthen inter-Nordic policy initiatives in order to promote and enhance more effective policy-making in the Nordic countries. They work closely with the European Union (EU) on several areas of importance to the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Innovation Centre gives general criteria in order to receive grants which typically include:

Nordic relevance, originality and innovation value, dissemination of results and basics requirements such as at least three (ideally, all five) Nordic countries.

Nordic Energy Research’s goal is to be conducive in maximising the results of energy-related research and development in the Nordic Region and their adjacent areas.

They numerous experiences of taking part in ERANETs as well as European technology Platforms. In their strategy for 2007-2010 they define the main instruments as:

- Capacity and competence building projects
- Business development and innovation projects
- Integrated capacity and innovation projects

Typically a minimum of 3-4 Nordic countries have to take part in each project and partners from the other Baltic States and Russia are welcome to take part.

4.5 ERA versus NORIA instruments

Looking at the instruments on Nordic level it seems that most of them are geared to encouraging Nordic cooperation as such with emphasise on Nordic added value. The requirement to have at least 3-4 and even 5 partners from different Nordic countries confirms this view. This is not in any way surprising as in the same way instruments on EU level are geared to European added value. However, one major difference is that the Nordic region is a part of ERA implying that there should be other needs on Nordic level and European level respectively.

In general there should be very little reason to develop new instruments on Nordic level as most of the researchers involved in Nordic Cooperation are also involved in European cooperation. But there might in some justified cases be a reason to see if there are instruments which could be tailored to Nordic level. Are there any gaps in the EU's instruments? Where have Europe failed? An important aspects is also to consider adapting EU instruments to better 'fit' Nordic cooperation, e.g. to introduce simplifications.

Another important aspect when designing any Nordic Instruments is to carefully think of the objective and aim of these instruments; Are they there to strengthen Nordic cooperation as such or are they there to strengthen the Nordic countries as a part of ERA?

One concrete example is the requirement where the minimum number of participants are 3-4 from different Nordic countries which should be compared with the rules in the Framework programme where only 5 out of the more than 30 countries need participate.

Another aspect of the Nordic instruments are that they are mainly bottom-up where as the EU instruments are mostly top-down. The Nordic top-level research initiatives is novel in that sense that it is much more top-down and this trend is likely to continue which makes linkages with the EU instruments probably far more important and more relevant in the future. In fact this is a win-win situation as there should also be scope for more targeted Nordic instruments if the approach is much more top-down.

The conclusion is:

Although instruments to encourage Nordic cooperation can be motivated from different perspectives and the existing instruments on Nordic level seems to in particular emphasize this aspects it is felt that there could be clearer linkages and more encouragement to use the Nordic instruments in order to link with the instruments used to implement the ERA.

Further, it is felt that priority should be on structuring instruments rather than supporting individual projects in order to pool resources, achieve critical mass and impact. However, as pointed out above, with a

more top-down approach there should be more scope for interaction with the ERA instruments.

It should be noted that there are very few instruments on national level contributing to the implementation of ERA which of course is, according to the Commission the main problem in Europe. Even if instruments on Nordic level have their main goal to strengthen Nordic countries they will in general have much more impact in implementing ERA than most national instruments.

5. Nordic cooperation in the EU's Framework Programme for Research

All Nordic countries have a strong participation in the EU's Framework Programme but the profile is different as it reflects national research excellence and the industrial profile which is heterogeneous. However, one very interesting fact is that a partner in a Nordic country is much more likely to cooperate with a partner in another Nordic country rather than with a partner from another European country, if the 'size' of the country is taken into account. In absolute number the larger countries such as the UK and Germany are the preferred countries, which is not a surprise.

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the individual Nordic countries' participation in the Framework programme but some general figures and observations are:

In a report from VINNOVA¹⁸ the Swedish participation in FP6 is analysed and it is pointed out that even if the total number of participations of other Nordic organisations in projects with Swedish participation is low compared with the larger countries such as Germany, UK and France, they account for a very large share of their total participation. As an example Germany has over 3500 participations in projects with Swedish participation and those projects represent around 38% of Germany participation. On the other hand, e.g. Denmark, Finland and Norway has around 500–700 participations but these projects represent more than 45% of their total. In some areas these figures are much higher, e.g. in IT it is nearly 60% for Denmark and in Food the percentages are between 55–65% for Denmark, Norway and Finland.

Using data from some recent publications^{19,20,21} the following conclusions can be made:

Partners from Germany and the UK are the most important partners for Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in absolute terms which is no surprise. However, if we use normalised data taking into account the total participation of each country we get a very different picture.

18 Svenskt deltagande i EU:s sjätte ramprogram för forskning och teknisk utveckling, Vinnova, Erica Tenevall, Dnr:2006:04079

19 Nytt om EU-forskning, N2 2/2007, Norges Forskningsråd

20 Tal om Danmarks deltagelse i EU:s 6. rammeprogram for forskning og teknologisk udvikling, Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen, augusti 2008;

21 Finnish participation in FP6- lessons to be learnt, Marja-Leena Tolonen, Tekes, 2007

The most important partners for the Nordic countries, taking into account the total participation is no doubt the Nordic countries.

There are some clear differences between the Nordic countries which indeed would be worth while studying separately, but the trend is very clear.

The reason for this phenomenon could be several or a combination of different factors such as:

- There is already established cooperation between these partners
- Because of 'cultural' background it is easier to cooperate with 'like-minded'
- The free movements in the Nordic countries make cooperation easy
- It is easy to get information on partners and their expertise in Nordic countries
- Nordic partners have a good track record and it is safer to include them rather than partners with unknown track record
- Some thematic areas are of common interest of the Nordic countries

The conclusion from these observations are that there should be further analysis in order to explain this 'over-representation' of Nordic partners and in particular how this fact could be used in a systematic way in order to support Nordic participation in the Framework Programme.

6. Comments on the ‘Nordic top-level research initiative’ from an EU perspective and towards Joint Programming and ERA Governance.

6.1 The Nordic top level research initiative

The Nordic Top-level research initiative was shortly described in chapter 3.3. The comments made in this study are only related to the ‘interaction’ with the Framework Programme and does neither comment on or judge the proposal nor comment on the budget as such.

The proposal.

The proposal states that ‘our (the Nordic) weight within EU and the international arena would increase’ if the proposal is implemented. A model based on the structure of the Joint Technology Initiatives is proposed as one possibility for the implementation. Several of the topics are very close to European initiatives and areas included in the Framework Programme. The proposal indicates the possibility to have an impact on present and future Framework Programmes.

It is concluded that several of the Nordic Institutions are already participating in ERANETs within these areas and that many countries outside the Nordic region take part in these projects. In fact all the 12 areas proposed areas coincides with the aim of the Framework Programme and ‘the proposal will strengthen the position of the Nordic countries within the EU’.

The proposal expects substantial funding via FP7, around 160 MEUR counting for 23% of the total expected budget needed. In fact, the Framework Programme is expected to be the largest single source of funding.

It is also concluded that the ‘added value’ of the proposal could not be achieved through only European collaboration as many of the areas have such a ‘strong Nordic character’.

Comments on the proposal from an 'EU-perspective'

The proposal has a very strong connection to EU and in particular the Framework Programme. The potential synergies are probably larger than indicated in the proposal. The proposal could act as a platform within the areas identified in order to make the Nordic cooperation more visible and also be used to get experience on Joint Programming in line with the Communication from the Commission – see chapter 6.2. Another aspect is that lesson learned from these initiatives could as such be very valuable on EU level. Even if parts of the proposal have a 'strong Nordic interest' the results should in general be valuable outside the Nordic Region.

There are some contradictions in the proposal such as the argument that the initiative has a 'strong Nordic character' but at the same time the Framework Programme is expected to be one of the major sources of funding. If the Framework Programme is going to be such an important funding source, this would imply that most of the projects will, or will have to, include partners from outside the Nordic region as it is not realistic to think that projects within the Framework Programme could consist entirely of Nordic partners. The selection of projects in the Framework Programme is based only on scientific and technological excellence as well as management and expected (European) impact. A realistic assumption would be that in each project there could be say 1–3 Nordic partners, complemented with other European partners in order to form the most competitive consortia.

A final observation is, and it is a very important one. Regardless of what is decided on Nordic level the proposal could still form a platform for the Nordic countries vis-à-vis the EU. The proposal has identified areas where there are common interests on Nordic level. However, more detailed analyses would be needed to see which areas in the proposal have relevance for the Framework Programme. If there are areas with very strong Nordic focus it is not likely that funding can be expected from the Framework Programme.

Further, it is very important that the implementation structure of the top-level initiative take into account the work which needs to be done, e.g. as indicated in this study. The Advisory Group proposed in this study could be a useful link with the top-level initiative although far more planning and thinking would have to be done in order to ensure the EU-link.

The proposal could also act as an inspiration for other countries and/or regions in Europe and could 'build bridges' between the Nordic region and the rest of Europe.

6.2 Joint programming.

The Commission presented on 15 July 2008 the Communication 'Towards Joint Programming in Research: Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively'. The objective is to develop a more strategic and better structured approach to future joint programming between Member States, allowing groups of countries or regions to combine their efforts and build critical mass in areas of strategic importance for solving societal and environmental problems or improving competitiveness. At its most ambitious, Joint Programming requires that Member States are prepared to move in the direction of the definition and implementation of common research agendas with multi-annual commonly decided activities (planning, launching, evaluating) and funding mechanisms. The Communication proposes a 'timetable' for the implementation where a high level group with Member States representatives are proposed to be set up by the summer of 2009 and by the end of 2009 recommendations on areas should be proposed to the Council. The real preparation for individual Joint Programming initiatives could start in early 2010.

The role of NORIA

The Nordic countries have significant experience with 'joint programming'. NordForsk's Nordic Centres of Excellence coordinate considerable national research investments through modest Nordic top-funding based on a common pot with no fair return.

In the area of Energy, the Nordic Energy Research has operated joint programmes since nearly 20 years with a true common pot.

The Nordic top-level research initiative in the area of Energy – Climate – Environment is an excellent example of Joint Programming. Further initiatives are planned in health and social welfare.

With new and powerful instruments like Joint Programming, there is a potential risk that the EU-research agenda will be set by the larger countries. The individual Nordic countries are far too small to have an impact on their own. In areas where there is a common Nordic interest there is clearly an advantage if there could be joint Nordic proposals and actions in order to have an impact.

The ERANET Support action, NORDERA mentioned in chapter 7.1.3 will make concrete contributions in this respect.

6.3 The Ljubljana Process and the Visions and Governance of ERA

The Competitiveness Council, 29–30 May 2008, adopted the Council Conclusions on the Launch of the ‘Ljubljana Process’ – of enhanced governance based on a long term vision on ERA. This Vision will be discussed mainly during the French Presidency where a first debate took place at the informal Council in Versailles, 17 July 2008. The Competitiveness Council is expected to conclude this debate in early December. The Czech presidency intends to launch a number of horizontal debates on relations between higher education, research, innovation and other related policy fields; the geographical coverage of ERA; and discussion with principle stakeholders. These debates will be followed up by a debate on complexity of the research instruments and at the end of the Swedish Presidency there should be guidelines for the development of a global Governance structure of ERA and this debate would have to continue after 2010 as well.

It is clearly stated that all these debates will include countries associated to the Framework programme which is already proven as they were invited to the Versailles Council.

Background on ERA Vision and Governance

The diversity of regional, national, intergovernmental and pan-European research programmes has both advantages and disadvantages. Many of the European countries, universities and companies are world leaders in many fields of research and innovation. At the same time many indicators point at the problems in Europe with fragmentation of research resources. In fact one aim of the Framework Programme is to overcome fragmentation of research resources. During the first 20 years of the Framework Programme this was mainly done by initiating collaborative projects in order to e.g. create critical mass as well as promoting mobility of researchers. The sixth Framework Programme saw the start of more ‘integrating’ instrument such as ERA NET, the use of article 169 and the application of the Open Method of Coordination on the ‘3% target’. This ‘trend’ was strengthen in the seventh Framework Programme with the introduction of ERANET Plus, JTI, discussion on joint research infrastructure and the ERC. But by creating all these new instruments we are also creating more fragmentation when it comes to governance of the ERA and research in Europe.

In addition, the last years we have concentrated our work in order to make more progress on the implementation of the ERA and the Lisbon process. In this context it is important to be clear what the vision of ERA is. One can see the vision as describing the ‘content’ of ERA and an ‘incentive’ to reach the goals set up by the Lisbon process. At the same time

we tend to discuss the governance of each new initiative separately and in this way we risk to ‘loose control’ of the Governance of the whole the ERA.

The vision and the governance of the ERA should be discussed and developed hand in hand. In this discussion we also have to take a broad view on the ERA and the different policies interlinked with ERA such as the structural funds, other intergovernmental organisations, higher education and innovation.

We need to be creative in the way we prepare for this discussion. The EU system is tailored to discuss and to negotiate formal proposals from the Commission resulting in legislation but the governance of the ERA is not about legislation, it is about involving Member States in a constructive debate and we have to find to new ways of facilitating such a debate.

For the first time in the history of the Framework Programme we now have a ‘window of opportunity’ to conduct such a debate as FP7 runs for seven years and we still have a couple of years before we have to embark on the preparation of the next Framework Programme.

The role of NORIA in the context of Ljubljana

As mentioned above all the Nordic countries are closely involved in the Ljubljana process. NORIA can make a contribution to the definition of the long term vision of the ERA through initiatives such as the Nordic top-level initiative and can also offer concrete recommendations for how the political governance of ERA can be improved through experiences of the ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ cooperation structures.

For the same reason as stated above under Joint Programming it is believed that the Nordic countries could have more impact if they make more use of the Nordic cooperation as a platform.

The ERANET Support action, NORDERA mentioned in chapter 7.1.3 will make concrete contributions in this respect.

7. Proposals for increased synergies between NORIA and ERA.

As set out in the objective of this study it aims at giving concrete proposals in order to achieve increased synergies between NORIA and ERA.

One relevant question is what is meant by increased synergies? For the context of this study the following ‘definition’ is used:

The actions/activities proposed in this study aim at increasing the impact of the Nordic region on ERA and in this way also contributing to the implementation of ERA. These actions/activities will increase the possibilities for Nordic researchers to make use of the possibilities within ERA, n.b. increased participation in the Framework Programme and other programmes/initiatives. As a result the Nordic countries and NORIA will be strengthened.

The overall approach in this study is that the proposals put forward are based on where added value could be gained by cooperation – they are based on ‘quality’ rather than ‘geographical’ criteria, i.e. not cooperation just for the sake of cooperation. Further, the proposals are in most cases related to the Framework Programme and as such they are most relevant for at least both the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research Affairs as well as the Committee of Senior Officials for Industry/Trade/Energy within the structure of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Most actions are also relevant for the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

The Nordic organisations (Nordforsk, Nordic Innovation Centre, Nordic Energy Research) including the secretariat of the Council of Nordic Minister should have a major role as facilitator and/or coordinator on Nordic level. They should not duplicate national councils/agencies but complement. National councils/agencies should use the Nordic organisation as ‘service/tool’ for ‘formal’ cooperation as well as ‘non-formal’ cooperation.

It is important to note that this study does not look into or propose any changes in the way the Nordic cooperation is organised. This means that most of the initiatives proposed could be carried out by an existing organisation or, in the case it is difficult to point at an existing organisation the question of implementation could be left open – e.g. there could be several options.

The proposals do not have any major budgetary implications, however, most of the initiatives would require human resources in order to be implemented or/and could require some re-prioritisation of existing resources.

In a limited number of cases there are indications that increased resources could have a very positive effect.

The proposals are divided into two categories, Initiatives/actions for increased :

- efficiency
- impact

The Impact actions tend to be more of ‘political nature’ in the sense that the implementation could require cooperation and agreement to cooperate on ‘content’ / substance such as thematic content or horizontal issues. Such decisions are usually taken on ministerial level or in some cases delegated to councils/agencies.

The Efficiency actions are of more ‘non political’ nature as they are of more facilitating and coordinating nature.

Actions to increase efficiency will help to make experiences of Nordic cooperation known and the lesson will be useful for the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe as well. The impact actions will lead to a higher degree of influence of the Nordic countries of EU policy and the ‘thematic’ content of the programmes which in turn will make it easier for Nordic participants to increase their participation.

It should be noted that there are of course already initiatives both on Nordic level and national levels (efficiency/impact) but it seems that these initiatives are more on an ad-hoc basis rather than as a consequence of a strategy.

In the following two chapters proposals are made in order to contribute to the efficiency of the Nordic cooperation and in order to increase their impact. The proposals are not exhaustive and for each proposal it would normally be necessary to further elaborate on strategy, goals and implementation. In the end it will be in the hands of the formal receiver of this study, the Nordic Council of Minister, to take any actions. However, the list of proposal could hopefully also act as an inspiration for the Nordic and national organisations to take initiatives together or separately.

In conjunction with each proposal a short comment is given on expected impact but it is not an exhausted list – it should be seen as examples.

7.1 Initiatives in order to increase ‘efficiency’.

There are many similarities between the Nordic countries apart from being small countries, neighbours, language and culture such as similarities in organisation of governmental organisation, the way to organise work etc. All five Nordic countries also have a strong research base and are all successful participants in the Framework Programme and do well in international score boards.

From the interviews and earlier studies it is clear that ‘no one’ is interested in having a ‘forced collaboration’ based only on the fact that we are Nordic countries. There must be some real benefits or added value from such collaboration otherwise the collaboration could easily become an obstacle.

At the same time it is observed, from the interviews and in particular from contacts with e.g. the Commission that the Nordic countries do not fully utilise the potential of their cooperation. This is also very much a question of visibility. Officials in the Commission are well aware of the strength of the individual Nordic countries but they are not aware of the Nordic countries as a region, except in some few (thematic) cases such as the ‘Baltic sea’ cooperation and in the field of energy. In contrast the Mediterranean region has been more successful in being ‘visible’ in Brussels.

In this context it is important to note that with visibility it is not meant that e.g. one Nordic organisation, such as Nordforsk, should represent the Nordic countries. This is not possible and in most cases not even desirable. The same ‘problem’ exists on EU level where most Member States do not wish the Commission to represent the Member States except when the Commission has a clear mandate to do so. But on the other hand, the Commission and equally the Nordic organisations, have a clear role as a catalyst, facilitator, coordinator and to implement actions.

7.1.1 Programme Committee Members and National Contacts Points (NCPs) of the Framework Programme

One should facilitate more exchange of views/experiences among Programme Committee Members and NCPs. When the EEA agreement came into force in 1993 there were frequent meetings and exchange of ideas in order to learn from each other. In the beginning these meetings were maybe of less use for the more experienced Danish colleagues but after a few years there was also an increased interest from Denmark to take part. The fact that we now all are more experienced does not mean that we cannot learn from each other, the contrary one could even say.

In this context it should be mentioned the possibility of for Programme Committee Members to have meetings before or after meetings in Brussels. If the members do not feel there is a need these kind of meet-

ings can often regarded as a ‘compulsion’. On the other hand, if there is a need it would certainly not be enough to meet only ahead of meetings in Brussels. This is the reason why this study do not propose meetings of this kind in general. However, it is concluded that cooperation in thematic and/or on horizontal issues would lead to such a need which is indicated in chapter 7.2

Proposal 1: Exchange of best practice

There should be at least one annual event, which could be focused (horizontal/thematic) in Brussels or, e.g. in the country holding the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, involving Programme Committee Members and/or NCPs.

Normally it is much easier to get qualified representatives from the Commission, Parliament etc for events where a whole region as the Nordic countries is represented rather than from one country or one research agency.

Further, the Brussels based research Liaison Offices could make an inventory of possible events and these offices could also facilitate meetings. The choice of topics and focus for these events should be decided taking into account to what is discussed at Nordic and EU level, such as Joint Programming, experiences of FP7, Work Programmes, ERA/Ljubljana issues etc.

However, the aim should not be to attract as many people as possible, it should be quality rather than quantity.

The Brussels based offices have a clear role in the implementation as they are present in Brussels and have the network in Brussels. Support should also be given by the secretariat of Nordic Council of Ministers and/or the Nordic organisations. The country holding the Nordic Presidency could have a leading role.

Examples of Expected impact

The expected impact of this proposal would be a deeper understanding by the key actors on Nordic level where there is a genuine need and potential for exchange of views and cooperation. It will have a positive effect in the Commission as coordinated activities is more efficient for the Commission.

7.1.2 Visibility of Nordic cooperation.

As pointed out in earlier chapters there is an expectation, from the Commission, that the Nordic region share its experiences and lesson learnt. This is very much about ‘visibility’.

Proposal 2: Nordic show-cases

It is proposed that the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordforsk, Nordic Innovation Centre and Nordic Energy Research develop a strategy on how to achieve more visibility. This could include collaboration with the Nordic Liaison Offices in Brussels and could result in arranging targeted events in Brussels. It should be noted that these event would be different from the events mentioned under proposal 1. Whereas proposal 1 aims at promoting exchange of views between Nordic key-actors, proposal 2 events would be show-cases of Nordic cooperation/lessons.

An inventory should also be made of important officials in 'Brussels' in order to form a network.

Contact could also be made with ERRIN – European Regions Research and innovation Network.

Examples of Expected impact

The Commission and other key actors in Brussels will be more aware of the Nordic region and the individual five Nordic countries as leaders in Europe. It will create new networks and contacts which each of the Nordic countries could use individually or together.

7.1.3 Lessons learnt from Nordic research coordination in the context of ERA – NORDERA

There is a case to increase the visibility and awareness of the Nordic cooperation. In this context it is equally important to convey what has been achieved as well as what has not been achieved or what has not worked. It is important to stress that it is seldom of interest just to tell about a success story if it is not possible to see how it could be used or replicated in another region, i.e. one should talk about lessons learned and how it could be used at European level.

Proposal 3: Lesson from NORIA

As a concrete output of this study an application for an ERANET Support Action has been written and submitted to the Commission in August 2008 – a summary of the project proposal can be found in appendix 6.

The objective of the project is to give concrete experiences from the Nordic region on aspects such as joint programming, opening-up of national programmes, joint calls, and common/distributed pots. An important output should be the lessons learned from the Nordic cooperation in a European context, what has been achieved and what has not been achieved.

An important aspect is that NORDERA also will give lessons on other important aspects of ERA such as: better careers and more mobility, developing and funding pan-European research infrastructures and to pro-

mote the optimal use of intellectual property created in public research organisations to increase both knowledge transfer to industry.

The project will be led by Nordforsk. To ensure coverage of all experiences on Nordic level an Advisory Board will be set up with representatives from all major Nordic funding agencies/council and the two other Nordic research funding bodies Nordic Innovation Centre and Nordic Energy Research. In addition, to make sure the findings are ‘embedded’ in Europe as a whole, the Joint Research Centre in Seville, IPTS, will be an important partner in the project.

If approved, the project is expected to start in the beginning of 2009 and last for around 18 months.

The project is proposed to arrange a final seminar in Brussels with invited experts in regional European research and innovation coordination to comment on preliminary project conclusions and contribute to the transferability of project recommendations. There is also a proposal to set up a more permanent Strategic Forum in order to ensure continuity of project findings and for further development.

Examples of Expected impact

The result of this project could be a milestone in documenting experiences and lessons from the Nordic cooperation and has the potential of giving enormous visibility and credit to all five Nordic countries. Equally important will be the possibilities to use the experiences gained to further develop the Nordic cooperation. This is anticipated to be discussed in the Advisory Group including a foreseen extended Advisory Group on European level – in the form of a Strategic Forum.

Proposal 4: Nordic participation in Support and coordination actions

There is a potential for increased participation of the Nordic organisations in Support and Coordination actions under the Framework Programme. These actions often aims at draw lesson from different kinds of European/regional cooperation.

In this context there is a potential for the Nordic organisation, in general, to act as coordinator and/or facilitator of ‘Nordic projects’ such as ERANETs and similar actions. In fact many of the national agencies/councils find it difficult to find human resources to coordinate such projects even if they have an interest to take part. This is often not a lack of money but lack of human resources.

Another aspect is that the Commission is more interested in consolidated experiences from several countries rather than ‘single country’ experiences. However, such cooperation must also be based on substance and there, the Nordic countries as an advantages.

For this proposal to be successful it is anticipated that additional human resources are made available in the secretariat of the Nordic organisations – see chapter 7.2.7 below. However, the major part of these addi-

tional resources would in any way be expected to be funded by the projects initiated.

To use the Nordic organisation in this way would be a good example of using them as catalyst, facilitator and coordinator which complement national organisations.

Examples of Expected impact

The impact is of the same nature as for proposal 3 but it can be extended to many other areas covered by the Framework Programme and other programmes and initiatives.

7.1.4 Sharing premises/tasks in Brussels

Even if it might not be relevant in the near future, when appropriate, the Nordic R&D Liaison-offices could consider sharing premises/tasks in Brussels. There are different philosophies as regards location of R&D Liaison offices in Brussels, own premises, together with EU representation/delegation, together with other national/regional organisation or together with other R&D Liaison offices. The option of sitting alone is often not an attractive solution for a small office. Sharing an office could lead to: lower cost through sharing facilities and/or cooperation and exchange of ideas etc. In this case we are not only talking about ‘physically’ sharing premises, there should also be sharing administrative services as well as tasks. Through the IGLO²² organisation there is already comprehensive collaboration between most offices in Brussels but it is still mostly concerned with sharing of information rather than work load.

Proposal 5: Sharing tasks in Brussels

The implementation of proposal 1 and 2 above would lead to closer contacts between the Nordic Liaison Offices in Brussels. This closer cooperation could in the first hand be extended to collaborative projects, sometime in the form of taking part in Coordination and Support Actions as indicated in proposal 4. Proposal 15 on a Discussion Forum is also connected to this proposal.

When one office is planning to move the option to move to a premises where already one Nordic country has its office could be considered.

Examples of Expected impact

This is expected to make the Nordic countries as a ‘key-player’ in Brussels in level with the larger offices operated by e.g the UK and Germany. It will also contributing in getting ‘more and better value for money’ through increased efficiency.

²²Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices

7.2 Initiatives in order to increase ‘impact’

The Nordic countries have very different industrial structure and as the Framework Programme in general aims at industrial competitiveness one should not expect a wide interest or advantage to cooperate or coordinate in all thematic areas covered by the Framework Programme. This is in particular true if the aim is to involve say three or more Nordic countries. However if one also include bi-lateral cooperation the possibilities increase significantly.

In the context of this report Nordic cooperation is ‘defined’ as any combination of the ‘non-formal’ bi-lateral or multi-lateral cooperation between the five Nordic countries and the more ‘formal’ cooperation through the Nordic Council of Ministers and their organisations (mainly Nordforsk, Nordic Innovation Centre and Nordic Energy Research). The cooperation includes cooperation between research teams and organisations but also between funding agencies and ministries.

Thus, ‘thematic’ cooperation should be focused on areas where there really is a true Nordic base or where opportunities are identified. Apart from thematic areas there are also a number of horizontal areas where cooperation could be more fruitful, such as participation of SMEs in the Framework Programme, simplifications, dissemination and transfer of knowledge, utilisation of results, IPR- issues and international cooperation. In this category one can include cooperation on European Technology Platforms/Joint Technology Initiatives, European Institute of Technology and last, but not least, the cooperation in ERANETs.

In this context it is useful to distinguish between cooperation on project, programme and policy level respectively²³, see also figure 1 in the summary.

- Project level

Example: Encourage teams from at least 2 Nordic countries to apply in the Framework Programme.

- Programme level

Example: Cooperation between funding agencies in order to influence the annual Work Programmes. The Programme Committees have members of all associated countries thus it makes sense to form a ‘Nordic block’ when appropriate. This would also include preparations of ERANETs.

- Policy level

²³ Depending on the country the final responsibility for e.g. position in Programme Committees is in the hand of the Ministries but in most cases the ‘practical’ work has to be done by an agency/council.

Example: Cooperation between Ministries in order to influence e.g. future Framework Programmes. In the case of that a Council decision has to be taken it concerns in the end of course only Member States which means that one would have to be 'careful'. In general the cooperation should be most intense before the Commission put forward a legal proposals as when the process starts in Council it is in practice difficult to liaise with non-member States. However with the ERA discussion this is not valid for all proposals. As mentioned earlier the Ljubljana process will clearly involve also associated states.

All three levels have in common that the basis for the cooperation must be an identification of either thematic areas or horizontal areas and that the decisions in most cases are political.

7.2.1 Identification of thematic areas

Proposal 6: Identification of thematic areas

Thematic areas with a potential for Nordic cooperation on EU level should be identified. The identification could also be combined with other types of cooperation covering also 'pure' Nordic cooperation and/or in other types of European and international cooperation such as EIT, COST and Eureka. In particular one should include the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

The aim would be to identify areas where there is scope to find synergies between NORIA and ERA on all three levels: project, programme and policy levels.

- The basis for this identification would, in a first step, be the Nordic participation in FP6/FP7. The criteria for this identification would have to be discussed further but could be based on projects where there are at least two partners from two different Nordic countries but other parameters would have to be added.
- In a second step, thematic areas covered by various programmes of the three Nordic organisations should also be an important input.
- The third step would be to include areas covered by the bi-lateral and other multilateral cooperation between agencies.

In this context the work planned for the NORDERA project could be used as an important input.

It is expected that the National Contacts Point as well as Programme Committee members would play an important role. In the end it is a question who has access to which databases. There is also a clear role for the secretariat of the Nordic organisations.

The first activity would be to set up a working group, the Advisory Board planned for NORDERA could be one candidate, in order to define the scope and objective of the identification.

Examples of Expected impact

This exercise will clearly identify thematic areas where there is a potential for Nordic countries to increase their participation in EU programmes and could also be the basis for Nordic cooperation as such.

7.2.2 Identification of horizontal areas

Proposal 7: Identification of horizontal areas

In the same way as described above for the identification of thematic areas there should be an identification of non- thematic areas such as international cooperation, SME-participation, mobility, IPR, dissemination, utilisation of results and simplifications.

The identification process would have many similarities with the identification process of the thematic areas but it is not so much based on project data bases but would also involve more policy oriented discussions.

One example could be in 'dissemination of results' where FP7 is supposed to have a much 'higher profile'. in practice this has not materialised and if not Member States take action it is not likely to happen (see further chapter 8 and how to give input to the Work Programmes).

Examples of Expected impact

This exercise will clearly identify horizontal areas where there the Nordic countries could have an influence on present and future direction of EU-policies

Using the result of the identification proposed in 6 and 7 above, proposals are made on Programme level, followed by Project level and finally Policy level below:

7.2.3 Programme level

Proposal 8 : Nordic top-level project for the FP7 Work Programmes

A project should be initiated in order to give input to the FP7 Work Programmes in the areas covered by the top-level research initiatives.

Based on the identification in proposal 6 above the results have to be combined with the areas covered by the Nordic top-level initiative. Work will have to start by the end of 2008 in order to have an impact on the FP7 Work Programmes from 2011–2013 and the first results should be 'visible' by the middle of 2010. The strategy for this work is described in some details in chapter 8.

The Nordic organisations should have key-role to fill in this work in collaboration with the national agencies/NCPs. The Advisory Board set up for the NORDERA project could be one useful forum for discussions and exchange of ideas.

As indicated in chapter 7.1. this cooperation should normally also lead to informal meetings of Nordic Programme Committee members ahead of meetings in Brussels.

Examples of Expected impact

The outcome of this action is crucial in order to ensure that areas relevant for the Nordic top-level initiatives are included in the FP7 Work programmes which in turn would make it possible for Nordic organisations to get a larger share of the FP7 funding.

Proposal 9: General approach to give input to the Work Programmes

Based on the experiences from Proposal 8 planning should start on a general strategy on how to give input to the Work programmes in areas identified through the process described in Proposal 6 and 7.

In this context the participation of industry and in particular SMEs could be targeted.

In the same ‘domain’ cooperation could include European Technology Platforms/Joint Technology Initiatives. One example could be the identification and setting up of relevant National/Nordic ‘mirror’ platforms.

It can be noted that in a recent report, Main features of an international strategy on Swedish research policy²⁴, it is proposed that Sweden should take the initiative and be positive to initiatives aiming at joint initiatives and standpoints at European level. In particular one should build on the Nordic top – level initiatives and cooperating in giving input to the FP7 Work programmes.

Examples of Expected impact

It is very difficult for a single country to have an impact on the Work Programmes and this action have the potential to give the Nordic countries a strong influence in selected areas in order to encourage increased Nordic participation in those areas.

²⁴ The Government Offices, U08.005, Bjarne Kirsebom, web site <http://www.sweden.gov.se/>

7.2.4 Project level

Proposal 10 – encourage Nordic participation in FP7 – areas covered by the Nordic top- level initiative

In order to make sure that the opportunities are taken in the areas covered by the Nordic top-level initiative it would make sense to facilitate preparation for Calls for proposals.

The Work Programmes are not ‘transparent’ enough in the sense that it would not be obvious that one topic fits into the Nordic top-level initiative. It is likely that a separate analysis will have to be made and there might be the need for additional information documents to be prepared on Nordic level to assist potential ‘Nordic’ applicants.

A further step would be to offer some financial incentive for at least coordinators.

The Nordic organisations could play an important role in this process.

Examples of Expected impact

This action will give a clear and strong signal and encouragement to potential Nordic proposers and assist them in preparing proposals in the areas covered by the Nordic top-level initiative.

Proposal 11: General approach to assist ‘Nordic’ consortia

In the same way as described in proposal 9 above a general strategy would be developed in order to assist ‘Nordic’ participation in and/or utilisation of FP7.

Examples of Expected impact

This action will give a clear and strong signal and encouragement to potential Nordic proposers and assist them in preparing proposals in areas with strong Nordic interest.

7.2.5 Policy level

Proposal 12: Setting priorities for future Framework Programmes

With the experience gained from giving input to the Work Programmes a strategy should be set up on how to cooperate in, e.g. areas covered by the Nordic top-level initiative and any follow up in other areas such as Health and welfare, ahead of the next Framework Programme.

The planning of ‘FP8’ should start during 2010 and the Commission should present a proposal around the end of 2011. Before there will also be a mid-term review where there is a potential for additional funds to FP7 in some selected areas.

As indicated earlier, the most pro-active period has to be before the Commission present any proposal as soon as a proposal is on the table it is a matter of negotiations mainly in Council/Parliament.

This strategy could also include cooperation on Nordic level in Research Infrastructure and Joint Programming, including the SET-plan and possible similar initiatives.

Examples of Expected impact

The Framework programme and other EU programmes get more and more into so called 'variable geometry' which makes regions more important. In clearly selected areas this action has the potential of influencing future priorities of the Framework Programme and the future development of ERA.

7.2.6 Nomination of board members etc

The implementation of the ERA leads to many new initiatives and instruments which in turn leads to new structure and governing bodies, such as the ERC, EIT, JTIs, article 169 etc. In most cases the various boards will consist of a mixture of expertise and also geographical coverage. One thing is evident, namely that most of these boards will have clearly less members than number of countries in EU or Europe. Further, in most cases it would be unrealistic that there could be a representative from all Nordic countries.

Proposal 13: Nomination of Board Members

The Nordic countries should cooperate more on supporting one or maybe two candidates for such 'Boards' rather than putting forward competing candidates. This cooperation could be expanded to other types of experts groups which are set up by the Commission such as Advisory Groups. It should be noted that this does not mean that national positions/candidates always should be given up – only that this could be an alternative in some cases. There are also different kinds of combination such as that each country put forward e.g. one national candidate and a second candidate put forward could be a joint Nordic candidate.

This would require an inventory of groups, boards etc where nominations are foreseen for say 1–2 years ahead. The final decision to put forward candidates would be in the hands of national ministries/administrations but organisations on Nordic level could facilitate the discussions.

Examples of Expected impact

This action should contribute to the Nordic countries having a more systematic approach to nominating members/experts to various EU bodies.

7.2.7 Proposal 14: *The Nordic organisations and the Advisory Board*

It is believed that the Nordic organisation in general should strive for a higher level of expertise in EU cooperation and the Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes in particular.

An efficient way to increase resources for the Nordic organisation would be through higher degree of cooperation between the three organisation through e.g. a joint EU secretariat for assisting in legal matters, writing applications and to some extent acting as coordinators in Support and coordination actions.

They should certainly strive for more competence and coverage of the EU programmes. Finally, there should be more contacts between the secretariats of the three Nordic organisations in Oslo.

The use of the Advisory Board.

Through the study and the interviews it is clear that a broader forum is lacking on Nordic level which could act as a discussion forum and also to prepare initiatives. One factor is that the Boards for the three Nordic organisations are very different in structure and none of the Boards has representatives from all funding bodies. The Advisory Board planned for the ERANET Support Action, NORDERA, has been mentioned in this study in the context of liaison with national administrations. It is proposed to use this Board (with representatives from all Nordic research councils and agencies) as a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and to identify areas for Nordic cooperation in the EU context. In addition the NORDERA project foresees setting up a Strategic Forum which would include some European key actors. In particular the follow-up discussion on ERA should give some further guidance on the synergies between NORIA and ERA with regards to mobility, research infrastructures and IPR issues.

However, it should be noted that this Advisory Board should continue be of 'non-political' character and any political decision should be prepared through the established channels. Further one should consider also including representatives from the senior committees of the Nordic Council of Ministers, at least representatives from the current Presidency to ensure an interface with the relevant ministries.

Examples of Expected impact

If implemented at an early stage this action would assist the implementation of most of the proposals in this study. Further, the experience from the Advisory Board should be very useful in order to assist in Nordic cooperation as such and to identify potential areas for further cooperation.

7.2.8 Discussion forum in Brussels

In earlier proposals the potential of the Liaison Offices in Brussels have been highlighted. The reason for this is that all Liaison Offices perform more or less the same tasks and have similar mandates from their 'Capitals'. The situation is a bit different concerning the Science Counsellors in Brussels. The Science Counsellors representing Member States have their main task to represent their country in the Council Research Working Group, preparing for Council meetings, i.e. the decision making process in the EU. It should also be noted that they act upon instruction from their Ministries. The Science Counsellors from the EFTA Countries do not formally take part in the decision making process and are not members of the Council groups. However, they have the possibility to participate in CREST and Programme Committee meetings. There are already regular informal luncheon meetings between the Nordic Counsellors and they have proven useful.

Considering the broad experience and wide network in Brussels these Science Counsellors have there is certainly a substantial potential for them to contribute to increased synergies between NORIA and ERA while respecting their different roles.

Proposal 15: Discussion forum in Brussels

The Nordic Science Counsellors and Liaison Offices should meet on a regular basis.

The Member States Science Counsellors could e.g. easily identify areas/issues in ongoing negotiations or foreseen negotiations where there could be scope for Nordic cooperation. The EFTA Science Counsellors have the potential to follow discussions in CREST and horizontal issues in e.g. programme Committees. Finally, the Liaison Offices have numerous contacts in the Commission and with other Liaison Offices and good overview of the actual implementation of the Framework Programme.

Together these representatives have a unique knowledge and network where they also can make different contributions.

This group could act as a catalyst for the implementation of the other proposals and they could also be asked to comments on activities proposed. However, one should probably not expect this group to do substantial work apart from some preparations and follow up from meetings

7.2.9 Other activities outside the Framework Programme

The scope of this study has not allowed an analysis of areas outside the Framework Programme. However many of the proposals put forward could be relevant for other programmes – as also indicated in a some cases.

Proposal 16: Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

Member States are still trying to adjust to this new programme and the national structures are still not fully developed in the same way as it is for the FP. This also means that there should be more possibilities and need for exchange of views and experience on Nordic level.

The Nordic CIP 'NCPs' should have an exchange of views/experiences in order to learn from each other and to explore areas of Nordic Cooperation. In particular one should explore the possibility to give input to the Work Programmes for the CIP programme in the same way as described in proposal 2.

Examples of Expected impact

The expected impact are of the same nature as for the actions proposed for the Framework Programme for Research. However, it is likely that the impact could be even larger as the CIP is in comparison a new initiative and most countries do not have a lot of experience in these types of activities.

Proposal 17: European Institute of Technology, funding of pan-European research infrastructures etc.

Several initiatives are now emerging outside the Framework Programme and/or as a further development of the Framework Programme such as the European Institute of Technology and the development of a framework for pan European Research infrastructure.

The common denominator is that one country cannot normally alone take the lead for such initiatives. In most cases cooperation is needed with several other countries, in the spirit of 'variable geometry'.

The Nordic countries have already experience in cooperation on higher education through the Nordic Master and discussion on Nordic PhD as well as the new Public Private Partnership scheme.

In the near future it is to be expected that there is a need to start a process on national levels in order to develop a strategy for the EIT. It is important that those national strategies are developed. In parallel one should consider having an exchange of views and experiences at Nordic level.

Equally, concerning Research Infrastructures, the Nordic countries have started a policy initiative administered by NordForsk in the field of cross-border research infrastructures. The initiative aims to evaluate possible Nordic collaborative models for research infrastructures. A report on the issue will be finalised by autumn 2008 and a conference will be organised in Stockholm on 12–13 November 2008 to discuss future steps for increased Nordic research infrastructure cooperation.

A little warning is called for: in general one should avoid so called 'tactical' cooperation e.g. 'if you support me in getting "A" I will support you in getting "B"'. This might work once or twice but when other coun-

tries discover that there is no ‘substance’ in the cooperation it will not have the desired impact.

Examples of Expected impact

If the Nordic countries use the advantage they have compared with other regions in Europe this kind of cooperation has an enormous potential.

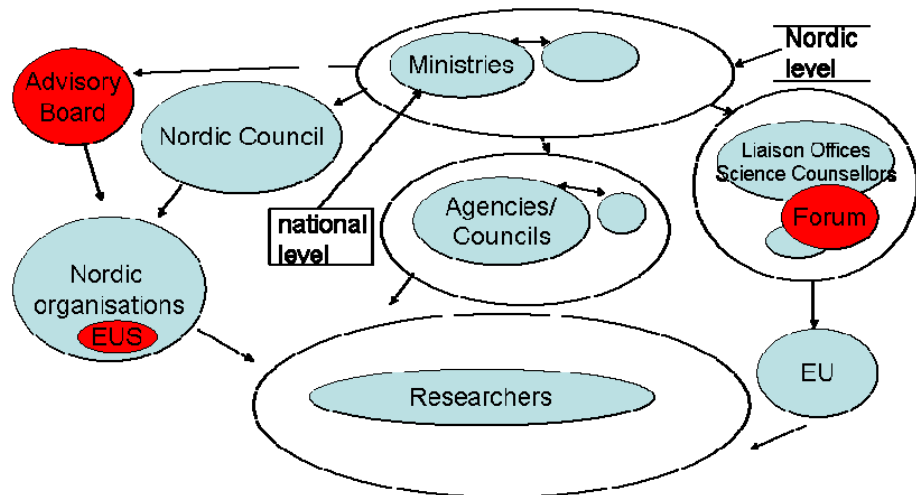


Figure 4: Actors and their interaction

All proposals draw on existing structure on National and Nordic level. Proposal 14 and 15 try to fill some ‘gaps’. The Advisory Board with representatives from all agencies/councils, closer cooperation between the secretariats of the Nordic organisations through combining resources and a ‘discussion’ Forum in Brussels utilising the enormous network which exists.

8. A strategy for the Nordic countries to give input to the FP7 Work Programmes.

The Framework Programme is the most single important instrument to implement the ERA even if instruments outside the Framework Programme are increasing and can be predicted to get more impact.

The Framework Programme

The Framework Programme (FP) and its Specific Programmes (SPs) are decided by Council and the Parliament and laid down for the whole period of the FP (FP7, 2007 – 2013). However, all funds are allocated through Calls in the Annual Work Programmes (WPs) which are decided by the Commission after opinion by the FP7 Programme Committees.

The following observations can be made:

- The FP and the SPs are negotiated and decided by the Member States with the European Parliament (FP is co-decision and the SPs are Council decisions but normally they are all a package – nothing is agreed until everything is agreed). This means that Associated States are formally not a part of the decision process but they are very much involved in the consultation before the proposal is presented by the Commission and through discussions in e.g. CREST..
- The WPs contains much more details than the SPs, in fact the WPs gives the Commission much freedom to interpret the SPs. Further, the Commission takes the decision but it is based on extensive consultations and interaction with the Programme Committees where both Member States and Associated States take part.

As pointed out in the Guide²⁵ there are many possibilities to give input to the Commission on the WPs.

First, it is important to understand the internal preparation of the WPs in the Commission, i.e. how the Commission takes internal and external advice. An important aspect is that DG Research takes advice from a number of policy DGs such as environment and health. The most impor-

²⁵ A rough Guide to the FP7 WPs, <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/104458>

tant external advice comes from the Advisory Groups and the Strategic Research Agendas of the European Technology Platforms. There are also numerous expert groups and of course intensive contacts with Programme Committee Members.

What is important is that the process is not a negotiations but providing the Commission with well justified input for, mainly topics to be included in the WPs. The justification must include issues such as:

- The research topic must address an issue which is important for competitiveness and/or for European policy objectives. The issue may be one of current importance or likely to become important in the medium to long term.
- The research topic must be one where there is a strong potential for excellent research, e.g. where Europe has developed a strong track record, or where it is realistic for Europe to become a world-leader in the short to medium term.

There must be a strong need for additional public funding and for such intervention to be at a European level.

- Additional public funding to be justified by the wider benefits from the research (including a wide range of applications of the knowledge created) and by the lack of current public and private investments.
- European level intervention to be justified by the need for European centres of excellence: to create critical mass, to overcome fragmentation, to enable the necessary multidisciplinary, to create visibility.

The Guide to the FP7 WPs elaborates on who can give input on what, when and how.

Who can give input to the Commission?

Everybody can give input! The most important thing for the Commission is that the input is useable and comes at the right moment – but it is also important to be realistic and not to have unrealistic expectations.

Programme Committee Members have the potential of having a major impact on the Work Programmes and the same is true for ‘well coordinated’ stakeholders.

Which parts could it be most useful to give input on?

The most important part of the Work Programmes to give input on is the actual description of the topics. Most of the funds from the Framework

Programme are allocated to these topics and the texts describing the topics are ‘completely’ new compared with the legal text. The expected impact connected to each topic is a new feature in FP7 and should also be of major interest to give input on. On the more political level there are also many horizontal aspects which are of interest, such as SME-participation, dissemination and international cooperation.

When is the best time to provide input to the Commission?

The input to the Work Programme for a specific year should be given as soon as the Work Programme for the previous year has been adopted, e.g. the consultation for the 2009 Work Programme started already in November 2007 and the consultation for the 2010 Work Programme is expected to start already in September 2008. The possibility to give input to the Work Programme gradually decreases and when the first drafts are available there is little possibility to propose new topics.

How do you do it?

Establish a longer-term strategy, articulating what you want to see covered in the Work programme. For Programme Committee members it is important to follow-up the positions put forward during the formal negotiations of FP7 and relate to national programmes. For more ‘non-political’ stakeholders it is important to be familiar with the legal text and it can be useful to be aware of the positions of the different Member States.

An important part of the longer-term strategy is to establish a network to be used to ‘communicate’ the input to the Commission. This network should include officials in the Commission, including own nationals, Programme Committee members, Advisory Groups and relevant European Technology Platforms. The long-term strategy should cover the whole life-time of FP7, also taking into account the budget profile.

It is very important to allocate adequate human resources to the implementation of the strategy.

For each year a shorter term strategy is needed including details on which topics and other aspects of the Work Programme to give input on.

The crucial point is how to communicate the input to the Commission – ‘the right input at the appropriate time’!

The strategy set up to give input to the Work Programmes and the experience gained should be very useful when it comes to the planning of future Framework Programmes.

The Nordic countries could have a significant impact on the WPs provided that they identify areas where there is a common view such as areas covered by the Nordic top-level initiative.

Resumé

Syfte

Syftet med denna studie är att ge konkreta förslag på insatser som kan stärka synergier mellan det Nordiska forsknings- och innovationsområdet (NORIA) samt det Europeiska forskningsområdet (ERA).

Det skall noteras att studien inte ger synpunkter på det nordiska samarbete som sådant. Studien utgår från den organisation som finns på nationell och nordisk nivå. Studien kommenterar inte heller det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet²⁶ som sådant men ser på de möjligheter som finns om initiativet genomförs.

Slutsatserna bygger på ett stort antal intervjuer med huvudaktörer på nordisk och europeisk nivå samt inkomna svar på en enkät. Över 100 individer har bidragit med sina personliga synpunkter från ministerier, forskningsråd, myndigheter och andra nationella/nordiska organisationer.

Bakgrund

ERA lanserades 2000 som en nyckelkomponent för att implementera Lissabonstrategin (till 2010) som senare kompletterades av det s.k. 3 % - målet i Barcelona.

ERA innebär att man vill skapa en inre marknad för forskning, där forskare, teknologi och kunskap fritt kan cirkulera; en effektivare europeisk samordning av nationella och regionala program samt initiativ implementerade och finansierade på europeisk nivå.

ERA-grönboken (våren 2007) noterade de framsteg som gjorts men noterar också att ytterligare framsteg måste göras och initierade en debatt. Under 2008 har ett flertal initiativ lanserats som följd av denna debatt, däribland s.k. gemensam programplanering. Dessutom har en debatt börjat om den övergripande visionen och styrningen av ERA, den s.k. Ljubljana processen.

I detta sammanhang kan noteras att innovationer i högst grad är inkluderat i ERA då det är en viktig del av ramprogrammet för forskning. Dessutom kompletteras ramprogrammet av det s.k. CIP-programmet inom innovationer.

NORIA etablerades genom vitboken 2004 med syfte att 'göra Norden till en ledande region inom forskning och innovationer' och 2005 sattes

²⁶ Ett förslag lades fram av en styrgrupp i mars 2008 och ett modifierat förslag i maj 2008. Ett beslut på politisk nivå kan komma under hösten 2008.

Nordforsk upp. Parallellt med vitboken presenterades ett förslag till nordisk innovationspolicy och Nordiskt Innovationscenter bildades. Den gemensamma deklARATIONEN av forsknings- och näringsministarna²⁷ MinisterdeklARATIONEN fastslog att det ”nya nordiska forsknings- och innovations-samarbetet är viktigt i sig självt och som ett exempel på hur regionalt samarbete kan spela en ökad roll i EU”.

I denna studie delas det nordiska samarbetet in i dels ’formaliserat’ samarbete samt dels ’icke-formaliserade’ samarbete.

- Det nordiska samarbetet är ’formaliserat’ genom nordiska rådet och nordiska ministerrådet samt
- ’icke-formaliserat’ genom många bilateral and multilateral samarbeten mellan nordiska råden och myndigheter.

Nordiska instrument jämfört med instrument på EU-nivå.

Först och främst kan noteras att det finns få instrument på nationell nivå som direkt bidrar till implementeringen av ERA – i själva verket är detta, enligt europeiska kommissionen, ett av de allvarligaste problemen när det gäller implementeringen av ERA. De instrument som finns på nordisk nivå har som syfte i första hand att stärka de nordiska länderna samt NORIA och inte att implementera ERA. Emellertid, eftersom NORIA är en del av ERA bidrar de nordiska instrumenten till implementeringen av ERA.

De nordiska instrumenten synes dock var koncentrerade på att ge stöd till enskilda projekt och är inte av strukturerande natur. En av orsakerna till detta är ’bottom-up’ naturen på det nordiska samarbetet till skillnad från det europeiska ’top-down’. Med mer ’top-down’ initiativ såsom det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet kan detta komma att ändras i framtiden. Under sådana omständigheter kan det finnas större förutsättningar för synergier mellan instrument på europeisk och nordisk nivå.

Framförallt borde insatser göras för att uppmuntra samverkan mellan instrument på nordisk och europeisk nivå.

Nordiskt samarbete inom ramprogrammet för forskning.

Det viktigast parterna för de nordiska länderna är inte oväntat de stora länderna med Tyskland i topp men om normerar med hänsyn till det totala antalet deltaganden blir utfallet mycket annorlunda. De viktigaste parterna blir då de nordiska länderna.

²⁷ Nordiska ministerrådet, 22 september 2004.

Det behövs ytterligare analyser för att dels förklara detta och framförallt hur man skulle kunna använda detta i mer pro-aktivt syfte än vad som görs i dagsläget.

Den politiska visionen och styrningen av ERA

Ljubljana-processen har initierat en diskussion om en förbättrad styrning av ERA baserad på en långsiktig vision. Samtidigt med detta föreslås nya strukturerande instrument som gemensam programplanering och på nordisk nivå diskuteras det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet. Eftersom ramprogrammet och de nationella programmen blir mer integrerade kommer det krävas att medlemsländerna blir mer pro-aktiva och systematiskt försöker påverka utvecklingen av ERA. För att göra detta måste medlemsländerna samverka i olika konstellationer och i detta sammanhang skulle man kunna utnyttja den långvariga erfarenhet som finns på nordisk nivå och inte minst genom det nya toppforskningsinitiativet.

Det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet

En styrgrupp utsedd av de nordiska länderna presenterade i mars 2008 det s.k. toppforskningsinitiativet inom energi, miljö och klimat. En politisk diskussion äger nu rum och ett beslut kan komma under hösten 2008.

Förslaget har en mycket stark EU-anknytning och i synnerhet till ramprogrammet. De potentiella synergier med ramprogrammet är förmodligen ännu större än vad som framkommer i förslaget. Förslaget skulle kunna, om det genomförs, utgöra en plattform inom de områden som man identifierat för att göra det nordiska samarbetet mer synligt och också för att få erfarenhet på t.ex. gemensam programplanering.

Det är mycket viktigt att man vid en eventuell implementering av toppforskningsinitiativet redan från början tar hänsyn till den starka EU-kopplingen. I detta sammanhang borde man kunna använda det förslag som förs fram i denna studie avseende en rådgivande grupp med representanter från alla forskningsråd/myndigheter i de nordiska länderna.

Förslag för ökade synergier

Ett klart budskap från intervjuerna, speciellt från kommissionen, är att Norden som region inte är 'synlig' i Bryssel (på samma sätt som t.ex. medelhavsregionen). Vad fungerar, vad fungerar inte, vilka lärdomar kan dras från samarbetet till nytta på såväl europeisk som på nordisk nivå? Som en kommissionsrepresentant uttryckte sig:

'De nordiska länderna skulle kunna föra fram sina synpunkter på olika sätt, antingen gemensamt som en region men det kan också vara bra att föra fram synpunkter i ett paket men det är inte nödvändigt att man är överens om alla delar. Norden skulle kunna utgöra ett 'försöksområde' i Europa. Detta bygger på det 'faktum' att det är lättare att påverka i Bryssel om man är samordnad'.

Utgångspunkten i denna studie är att de förslag som förs fram är baserade på att ett mervärde kan erhållas genom att de utförs på nordisk nivå och definitivt inte samverkan för dess 'egen skull' – det är således kvalitetskriterier snarare än geografiska kriterier. De flesta förslagen relateras till ramprogrammet för forskning men kan mer eller mindre direkt appliceras på innovationsprogrammet (CIP). Förslagen är relevanta åtminstone för ämbetsmannakommittéerna för utbildning/forskning, näringsliv och energi inom det nordiska ministerrådet.

Förslagen enligt kapitel 7 är indelade i två kategorier:

- Effektivitet
- Effekt

"Effektförslagen" är av mer "politisk" natur i den mening att man vid implementeringen oftast behöver komma överens om "substansinnehåll", såsom tematiskt innehåll. Sådana beslut tas ofta på departementsnivå men kan också vara delegerade till myndigheter.

"Effektivitetsförslagen" däremot är av mer "icke-politisk" natur då de avser främjande och/eller förslag av samordnande natur.

Vidare, förslagen har inte i egentlig mening några budgetmässiga konsekvenser. Emellertid, kräver de flesta förslagen personella resurser för att genomföras och det kan innebära att vissa omprioriteringar kan behövas göras om de skall genomföras. I vissa fall skulle ett resurstillskott ge en mycket positiv effekt när det gäller möjligheten att genomföra förslagen.

De tre nordiska organisationerna Nordforsk, Nordiskt Innovationscenter samt Nordisk Energiforskning tillsammans med nordiska ministerrådets sekretariat förväntas spela en avgörande roll vid implementeringen som främjare, katalysator och samordnare i samverkan med nationella myndigheter för att säkerställa komplementaritet. Alla eventuella åtaganden av mer politisk natur måste noggrant förankras inom de nationella administrationerna. Nära samverkan förutses också med de nationella delegaterna och experterna i kommissionens programkommittéer samt de nationella kontaktpersonerna (NCP) samt med "forskningskontoren" i Bryssel.

De flesta förslagen kan genomföras på olika nivåer:

Nivå	Exempel på aktivitet	Nationell beslutsnivå	Nordisk genomförande/beslutsnivå
Policy	Påverka kommande ramprogram som kräver rådsbeslut	Minister, departementsnivå	Ämbetsmannakommittéer
Program	Påverkan av de årliga arbetsprogrammen inom ramprogrammet	Departementsnivå eller delegerat till myndighetsnivå	Ämbetsmannakommittéer, de tre nordiska organisationerna
Projekt	Främjandet av nordiskt deltagande i ramprogrammet	Myndighetsnivå	De tre nordiska organisationerna

All som allt ges 17 förslag för att åstadkomma ökad effektivitet och effekt. Effektivitetsförslagen kommer att ge Norden mer synlighet och lärdomar från det nordiska samarbetet kommer att komma till nytta för att vidareutveckla det nordiska samarbetet, för de individuella nordiska länderna samt för Europa i sin helhet. Det kommer också att ge ”mervärde för varje satsad euro”. Effektförslagen kommer att leda till en påverkan av EU policy och program till nytta för de nordiska länderna, t.ex. ökat deltagande i ramprogrammet.

Två av förslagen är strategiskt mycket viktiga och det rekommenderas starkt att dessa initieras omgående (förslag 3 och 8). Dessa förslag kan ge resultat både på kortare och längre sikt och understödjer också de övriga förslagen.

NORDERA – Lärdomar från Nordisk forskningssamordning i relation till ERA

Man kan klart motivera en högre synlighet av det nordiska samarbetet. Detta bör innefatta såväl positiva som negativa erfarenheter, vad man har åstadkommit respektive vad man inte lyckats åstadkomma. Det räcker inte med att bara berätta ”succéer” utan man måste också kommunicera hur detta skulle kunna användas på europeisk nivå.

Ett omfattande förslag till en s.k. Support Action, kallad NORDERA, inom ramen för det sjunde ramprogrammet för forskning har som en del av denna studie tagits fram och inlämnats till kommissionen i augusti 2008.

Målsättningen med NORDERA är att ge stöd till samordningen av nationella forskningsprogram och uppmuntra till gemensam programplanering genom att studera erfarenheter på nordisk nivå. Projektet kommer att värdera hur dessa erfarenheter kan användas för att vidareutveckla såväl ERA som NORIA. Resultaten kommer att vara av intresse för Europa och Norden som helhet samt för de nordiska länderna separat.

Om projektet blir godkänt kommer det att finansieras till 100 % av kommissionen och beräknas starta i början av 2009 och pågå under 18 månader. Nordforsk är koordinator med Nordiskt Innovationscenter och Joint Research Centre i Sevilla som partners. Nordisk Energiforskning

samt alla de nordiska forskningsråden/myndigheterna kommer att ingå en rådgivande grupp.

Projektet kommer att avslutas med ett ambitiöst seminarium i Bryssel där resultaten kommer att presenteras och diskuteras.

Ett mycket viktigt och förhoppningsvis långsiktigt resultat av projektet skulle bli etablerandet av en varaktig samverkan av de nordiska aktörerna och motsvarande aktörer på europeisk nivå. Dessa kontakter kan förhoppningsvis leda till fördjupat och utvidgat samarbete. Slutligen, den rådgivande gruppen, eventuellt kompletterad, som kommer att sättas upp skulle kunna användas för genomförandet av flera av de övriga förslagen som finns i denna studie.

Förslag för att påverka sjunde ramprogrammets arbetsprogram (FP7 WPs) inom områden som täcks av det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet.

Om det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet genomförs, eller delar av det, skulle det kunna utgöra en mycket bra utgångspunkt för att identifiera tematiska områden inom FP7 där nordisk samverkan skulle ge ett mervärde. I själva verket skulle en sådan process kunna starta redan nu oberoende av beslut på nordisk nivå då områdena redan är utpekade.

En identifieringsprocess måste initieras för att bedöma vilka områden som kan vara lämpade för FP7. Vidare måste en strategi tas fram på nordisk nivå innefattande prioriteringar, identifiering av ett aktörsnätverk genom vilket man skall kommunicera med kommissionen. Arbetet bör starta redan under 2008 så att man kan få effekt till 2010/2011-års arbetsprogram. Strategin finns förklarad i kapitel 8.

Om detta förslag genomförs kommer det att öka möjligheten för nordiska organisationer att få stöd från FP7. Detta förslag kan sedan kompletteras med direkt stöd till potentiella deltagare. Erfarenheterna från detta projekt kan sedan användas som en bas för eventuell nordisk samverkan inför t.ex. det åttonde ramprogrammet.

Sammanfattning

- De nationella programmen och EU:s program blir mer och mer integrerade vilket gör att ERA får ökad betydelse både på nationell och nordisk nivå. Det behövs ett mer strategiskt angreppssätt när det gäller att påverka utvecklingen av ERA. För att göra detta måste medlemsländerna samverka i olika konstellationer för att kunna påverka. Nordisk samverkan skulle kunna användas som en plattform för en sådan samverkan inom utvalda områden.

- De tre nordiska organisationerna kan agera som katalysator, främjare och samordnare i syfte komplettera och undvika duplicering av nationella insatser. Nära samverkan behövs med de nationella administrationerna och myndigheterna. De tre nordiska sekretariaten bör samverka inom EU-relaterade verksamheter.
- De nordiska organisationerna har en viktig roll att förmedla lärdomar och erfarenhet och göra dessa kända i kommissionen. Detta kommer att leda till mer synlighet av såväl det nordiska samarbetet som de enskilda länderna. NORDERA-projektet, om det genomförs, kommer att spela en avgörande roll för detta.
- Det nordiska toppforskningsinitiativet skulle kunna utgöra ett pilotprojekt får att ge input till sjunde ramprogrammets arbetsprogram i syfte att öka möjligheten för nordiska deltagare att få medel.
- Den rådgivande gruppen som skall sättas upp för NORDERA med representanter från nationella myndigheter föreslås användas vid genomförandet av flera av förslagen
- De nordiska forskningsråden i Bryssel samt kontaktkontoren föreslås bilda ett Brysselforum där man utnyttjar dessa personers kunnande och nätverk som katalysatorer och främjare.
- De 17 förslagen i studien kommer, om de genomförs, leda till ett starkare NORIA och därmed också starkare ERA och denna samverkan kan också användas i samband med annat internationellt samarbete.

Appendix 1: Definition of the study

NORIA and synergies with the European Research Area (ERA)

1. Context

The Nordic Prime Ministers have agreed on a new ‘phase for Nordic partnership’ in particular on globalisation. Initiatives should be carried out in *synergy with European and regional initiatives*.

A strong Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA)²⁸

- A proposal to support ‘Nordic top-class research’ should be put forward by the summer 2008. In particular to promote innovation, climate, energy & environment and health and social welfare.
- Research and Innovation should be strengthened through increased coordination between national programmes and cooperation between national funding agencies.

As an input to this discussion the Secretary General has put forward some proposals²⁹, e.g. on ‘powerful synergies and impact of Nordic participation in EU framework programmes’. ‘The Nordic countries should strive to achieve powerful synergies and exert a major influence on the 7th framework programmes, as well as the EU's new framework programme for Competitiveness and Innovation (CIP). This work will contribute to new initiatives and Nordic leadership within the EU. It will also help the Nordic Region attract a larger share of the EU's research and innovation funding, and help localise and provide access to strategically important research and innovation infrastructure. The Nordic Research and Innovation Area, NORIA, should strengthen its position as an integral part of the European Research and Innovation Area (ERIA)’.

This study proposes to look at the aspect of how a NORIA could be strengthen in synergy with the European Research Area (ERA) and how NORIA could be used as a platform for wider European and international cooperation, in particular in relations to activities supported by the EU's Framework programme for research (FP7).

²⁸ Pressmeddelande 183/2007., 19.06.2007, Appendix 1.

²⁹ Input to the Nordic Globalisation Process, 18 June 2007

Background

The European Research Area (ERA) was launched in 2000 as a key concept to implement the Lisbon strategy (by 2010) and later followed up by the 3% (increase spending on R&D to 3% of GNP, whereof 2/3 from private investments) goal set in Barcelona 2002.

The ERA concept encompasses three inter-related aspects:

- a European 'internal market' for research, where researchers, technology and knowledge can freely circulate;
- effective European level coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies; and
- initiatives implemented and funded at European level.

The Commission's Green Paper³⁰ on the ERA of April 2007 takes stock and also acknowledges that 2010 should not be seen as an end date and that ERA will be an ongoing process with a moving target. The Framework Programme³¹ is the main financial instrument to implement the ERA on EU level but it is clear that many other EU initiatives and in particular initiatives on national and regional level will have to be undertaken. Member States as well as associated States work together in different fora, using, e.g. the Open Method of Coordination, n.b. through CREST (advisory body to the Commission and the European Council).

In the Communication on Competitive European Regions through research and Innovation³² the Commission invites actors on national and regional level to improve arrangements for coordinated use of Community instruments at national and regional instruments, such as the Framework programme for research, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme and Structural funds.

The NORIA concept was established in a White Paper 2004³³ with the aim to 'make the Nordic Region to a leading region in research and innovation' The White Paper proposed actions, e.g. the establishment of Nordic Centres of Excellence and co-funding of Nordic research and innovation initiatives. Nordforsk (the Nordic Research Board) was set up in 2005 in order to strengthen research cooperation. In addition the NICE (the Nordic Centre for Innovation) was also set up.

As a part of the report series: The Nordic Region as a Winner in the Global Innovation Economy, one report³⁴, touched upon the relationship between ERA and NORIA as well as experiences of EU co-operation.

³⁰ COM (2007) 161 final, 4 April 2007, summary in Appendix II.

³¹ The current FP, FP7 runs from 2007 until 2013, see Appendix III for short summary.

³² COM (2007) 474, 16 August 2007.

³³ NORIA, Vitbok om Nordisk forskning och innovation, TemaNord, 2004:502

³⁴ Building Nordic strength through more open R&D funding.

3. Questions to be asked, discussed and analysed.

The major part of this study will be to answer, discuss, analyse and elaborate around a number of questions:

- How can NORIA be strengthened through increased synergies with initiatives to implement the ERA, in particular the EU's Framework Programme for Research?
- Which instruments should be used to strengthen NORIA (ERA instruments, existing or new national/Nordic instruments)?
- Is there a risk that a NORIA and a ERA could be non-compatible?
- How can NORIA/Nordic countries influence/have a larger impact on EU programmes/policies in the longer term?
- How is NORIA perceived by the European Commission? What are the experiences from FP?
- Are there any 'good examples' on Nordic level (co-ordination, 'samordning',³⁵ joint positions, concrete actions/results) where the Nordic countries could take the lead on EU level (e.g. on horizontal issues such as SMEs, dissemination and knowledge transfer, research infrastructure, evaluation and impact assessment, globalisation/international cooperation)?
- Are there any concrete actions, in the short term, that could be undertaken in order to involve Nordic organisation in FP7, e.g. Nordforsk (e.g. in areas where there is a political commitment on Nordic level such as climate, energy, environment, health and social welfare)?

It should be noted that this study does not cover issues and questions such as coordination between Nordic (national) programmes, how various (research) bodies on Nordic level function or how NORIA in general could be strengthened as this would be beyond the scope of this study. This study is about 'synergies with the ERA' and focuses on practical advice.

4. Work schedule and deliverables

The work will be carried out during the period 15 October 2007 to 15 September 2008.

The main deliverable will be a report answering the questions set out in chapter 3 including a description of the background and progress so far, relevant to this study. A final version will be ready at the latest 15 September 2008. The report will be written mainly in English but some parts, in particular, annexes may be written in Swedish.

The work will entail interviews with key staff and experts in the secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordforsk, Nordic Ministries, actors from industry and academia on Nordic level, the European Commission and with other relevant actors in Brussels such as regional

³⁵ Note that the Swedish word "samordning" does not exist in English and can be seen as a 'weaker' form of co-ordination, on a 'voluntary' basis.

offices and Permanent Representations/delegations. The Nordic ministries and other relevant actors will also be given the possibility to provide written input to this study.

One ‘sub-deliverable’ is foreseen for the 1 March 2008:

- Which could be used as an input related to the preparation of the proposal mentioned under chapter 1.1 above. The scope of this report should be agreed upon before the end of November 2007.

In addition:

- Input should be given to Nordforsk taking into account the implementation of FP7 and its Work Programmes, in particular coordination with open and foreseen calls within FP7.

The Nordic Council of Ministers will be the formal commissioner of this study and will be the formal receiver of all reports. The study will be carried out by Dan Andrée and the Nordic Council of Ministers will provide contacts from their secretariat and Nordforsk respectively.

Stockholm 15 October 2007

Appendix 2: The Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7)

The 1 January 2007 saw the start of FP7, the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe, which will run from 2007–2013. It has been designed to be a cornerstone in the EU's knowledge and growth policy and will play a fundamental role in stimulating sustainable competitiveness and welfare in Europe.

For a large part, FP7 is based on continuity, notably in the drive to develop the European Research Area.

The budget for seven year's period is €50.521 billion and the Euratom budget for the next five years is € 2.7 billion. Overall, this represents a 41% increase from FP6 at 2004 prices and 63% at current prices.

Another new element is simple structure. FP7 is organised into four main programmes:

- Cooperation – Collaborative research
- Ideas – European Research Council - funding the best of European science
- People – Human potential, Marie Curie Actions (mobility actions)
- Capacities – Research Capacity

In addition there is a specific programme for EURATOM nuclear research and training activities and one for the Joint Research Centre (direct actions in Euratom and non-nuclear activities).

There are important changes in the way we intend to implement the Seventh Framework Programme. Here, the main issue is simplification of procedures and administration.

And for the first time, the management of an important part of the actions is externalised, particularly for those that involve a high number of small transactions such as Marie Curie actions and SME support. These actions will be managed in a dedicated Agency, separate from but reporting to the European Commission.

The Seventh Research Framework Programme was approved in the European Parliament on 30 November 2006 and by Council on 18 December 2006. The first calls of proposals were published on 22 December 2006. At the end of April 2007 the European Research Council closed its call and the total number of proposals received was 9167.

Other new elements in FP7 comparing to previous programmes:

- Focus on developing research that meets the needs of European industry, through the work of Technology Platforms and the new Joint Technology Initiatives
- Integration of International cooperation in all four programmes
- Development of Regions of Knowledge and Research Potential.
- Increased co-ordination of national/regional research programmes using article 169 and the ERA NET/ERA NET + schemes.
- A Risk-Sharing Finance Facility aimed at fostering private investment in research

Appendix 3: Questionnaire: NORIA och synergier med EU.

Till:

Ämbetsmannakommittén för utbildning och forskning (EU-K), Styrelseledamöter i Nordforsk, kontaktpersoner vid nordiska näringsdepartement, nordiska forskningsråd och forskningsfinansierande myndigheter, Nordforsk, Nordiskt Innovationscenter (NICE), Nordiska spetsforskningsenheter (NcoE), nordiska institutioner, universitets- och högskoleförbund, nationella koordinatörer för FP7 (NCP Koordinatörer) samt industriorganisationer.

De nordiska statsministrarna beslutade i Punkaharju i juni 2007 om insatser för ett kunnigare, synligare och mer välmående Norden³⁶.

Satsningarna 'skall ske i *synergi med det arbetet som görs i europeisk regi och regionalt*.' Vidare fastläggs att:

1. Satsningen inom den europeiska ramen på ett starkt nordiskt kunskaps- och innovationsområde ska intensifieras. Nordiska ministerrådet utarbetar tills sommaren år 2008, efter diskussioner bland närings-, utbildnings- och forskningsministrarna, ett förslag till samarbetsministrarna om främjande av nordisk toppforskning, i nära samarbete med näringsliv, med beaktande av möjligheter att stärka nätverkssamarbete mellan nordiska toppforskningsenheter och bland aktörer på innovationsområdet. Bland annat följande tyngdpunkter beaktas: främjandet av innovationer, frågor kring klimat, energi och miljö samt välfärdsforskning och hälsa.
2. Stärkning av samarbetet inom högre utbildning skall öka kontakten mellan nordiska läroanstalter och lyfta Norden som en attraktiv studieort. Forskning och innovation förstärks genom att i ökande grad koordinera nationella FoU program och innovationsprogram, samt genom att främja samarbetet mellan de nationella forskningsfinansiärerna.

På uppdrag av nordiska ministerrådet genomför undertecknad ett uppdrag med syftet att svara på frågan:

Hur kan det nordiska forsknings- och innovationsområdet (NORIA) stärkas genom synergier med det Europeiska forskningsområdet (ERA) och hur kan NORIA användas som en plattform för bredare europeiskt och internationellt samarbete, speciellt i relation till EU:s ramprogram för forskning (FP7)?

³⁶ Pressmeddelande 183/2007., 19.06.2007, <http://www.vn.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tiedote-/sv.jsp?toid=2213&c=0&moid=2216&oid=198735>

Studien skall resultera i en rapport som färdigställs i september 2008 men en delrapport skall tas fram under mars månad 2008 som kan användas som ett input inför förberedelserna för det förslag som skall bereds enligt ovan till statsministrarna om 'nordisk toppforskning'.

Inom ramen för studien förutses också input till exempel Nordforsk rörande möjligheter inom FP7.

Undertecknad ger härmed möjlighet att inkomma med synpunkter och skulle mycket uppskatta ett personligt bidrag från er.

Bidraget kan vara helt i 'fritt format' men dessutom skulle det vara värdefullt om frågeställningarna nedan kunde belysas. I detta sammanhang är vissa frågeställningar mer eller mindre relevanta för olika organisationer och det är naturligtvis möjligt att inte adressera alla frågor. Jag är naturligtvis tacksam om ni tittar på vilka som fått enkäten, se bifogad sändlista och med ledning av detta eventuellt ta kontakt med andra personer inom eller utanför din organisation för ytterligare input.

Frågeställningar

1. Generellt.

Hur kan det nordiska forsknings- och innovationsområdet (NORIA) stärkas genom synergier med det Europeiska forskningsområdet (ERA) och hur kan NORIA användas som en plattform för bredare europeiskt och internationellt samarbete, speciellt i relation till EU:s ramprogram för forskning (FP7)? Kan det nordiska samarbetet användas för att påverka EU:s policy/program?

2. Instrument

Vilka instrument kan användas för att uppnå dessa synergier?

Ett antal instrument finns inom EU för att implementera ERA. Frågan är om och hur vi kan använda dessa instrument på nordisk nivå, eventuellt i 'anpassad' form?

När det gäller ERA instrument är ramprogrammet för forskning det största finansiella instrumentet på EU nivå. Inom ramprogrammet, FP7, finns en rad 'del'-instrument som kan användas eller anpassas till nordisk nivå:

Samarbetsprojekt, ERA NET/ERA NET +, öppna samordningsmetodiken, artikel 169, europeiska teknikplattformar och JTI:s, mobilitetsprogrammet, forskningsinfrastruktur, ERC etc. Vidare finns andra instrument vid sidan av ramprogrammet som European Institute of Technology, Competitiveness and Innovation Programme samt inom diskussionen om ERA Green Paper. Vad är erfarenheterna av att använda dessa på nordisk nivå?

Finns det behov av speciella nordiska instrument, och om ja hur skulle dessa se ut?

3. Erfarenheter

Vad är erfarenheterna från tidigare program, n.b. FP6 (ta gärna upp projekt som ni deltagit i och om det funnits särskilda 'nordiska' motiv/intressen)? Finns det 'goda' exempel på hur Norden har kunnat göra sig gällande och där det har varit en fördel att agera på nordisk nivå? Har det nordiska samarbetet inneburit fördel inom EU samarbetet?

4. 'Goda' exempel

Finns det goda exempel på nordisk nivå där man i framtiden skulle kunna agera gemensamt exempelvis i horisontella frågor (e.g. SME, spridning och användning av resultat, samarbeta mellan industri och akademi, forskningsinfrastruktur, utvärderingar och effektmätningar, globaliseringsfrågor/internationellt samarbete) samt i tematiska områden (e.g. klimat, miljö, energi, hälsa och välfärd)?

5. Konkreta åtgärder

Finns det några konkreta åtgärder/insatser som skulle kunna hjälpa till att främja synergier mellan NORIA och ERA? Vem/vilken organisation skulle i så fall vara ansvarig för sådana åtgärder/insatser?

6. Övriga synpunkter.

Notera att denna studie inte avser att studera frågor som rör allmänt hur NORIA skulle kunna stärkas utan är begränsad till just synergier med EU:s initiativ.

Var vänlig skicka bidragen till

Dan Andree³⁷:

dan.andree@skynet.be

senast 15 december 2007.

Jag kan kontaktas på ovanstående e-post eller på mobil:

0032 477 500 707

0046 70 763 1408

För frågor om studien kan också följande personer kontaktas:

Kate Runeberg, Nordiska ministerrådet, telefon : +45 33960 383 eller e-post:

kr@norden.org eller

Kristin Oxley, Nordforsk, Mobil: +47 99 44 56 74 eller e-post:

Kristin.oxley@nordforsk.org

³⁷ Jag är för närvarande sakkunnig på Utbildningsdepartementet med placering i Bryssel. Har tidigare varit nationell expert på DG Forskning (2003-2007), forskningsråd vid svenska representationen i Bryssel (1997 – 2003) tidigare chef för EU/FoU-rådet (1992 – 1997).

Appendix 4: Views— survey/questionnaire/interviews

This chapter summarises views put forward during interviews and those put forward as a response to the questionnaire sent out. However, it should be noted that in most cases the views put forward is the personal view rather than a formal view from the organisation. Further, the summary below does not make any references to individual organisation or persons, except that there are some specific comments on Nordforsk. All in all around 100 persons have been interviewed or have contributed to the study. The organisations include most relevant Nordic Ministries, Research Councils and Agencies in the Nordic Countries.

Finally, the aim of this chapter is not to draw conclusions or to try to summarise the views put forward. The temptation to draw conclusions have been resisted as there is a real risk that the following discussion of this study would concentrate, and in the worst case ‘get stuck’, on a ‘fictitious’ discussion on such conclusions. This study uses the input from the interviews to put forward the proposals in chapter 7 and does not try to get a consensus on some specific issues. In this way it is hoped that the discussion will concentrate on the actual concrete proposals.

4.1. General

From discussions with officials in the European Commission it is evident that the Nordic countries are well known for their excellence in research and innovation individually but they are not known as a region and ‘we don’t really know what the lessons are’. The result of Nordic cooperation should be more visible. As one official said: ‘The Commission is interested in getting experiences from the Nordic countries but the Commission is not interested in that Finland and Sweden are in top of ranking lists they want to know why and what the implications for the EU are’.

Nordic cooperation is very important as a platform for broader international cooperation- but opportunities are sometimes lost. This is in particular valid in areas where the Nordic countries have a strong excellence but also in areas where we have historical longer term cooperation. The fact that we cannot and should not cooperate in all areas should not mean that we do not take opportunities where they exist.

Nordic cooperation should play a much larger role than it does today, we have not succeeded in taking advantage of Nordic cooperation. In selective areas this should mean that the Nordic countries should lead the

implementation of the ERA and we should aim for a long lasting and deep cooperation.

The Nordic countries could act as a test-bed for ERA. For this to happen the Nordic countries have to identify Nordic excellence in research and innovation and to make this known in the EU as a resource. The starting point for this identification has to be national priorities. We need long term commitments for the areas chosen. However one should also be aware of that there is also competition between Nordic centres and institutions. This competition is healthy and necessary. In practice a combination of top down and bottom up should be used. It should also be noted that Nordic cooperation does not need to mean that all five countries agree. Strategic alliances between research Councils/agencies are important as important are bilateral and multilateral cooperation. One should also, when relevant include other Baltic States. One should remember that cooperation could be on thematic areas but also other 'horizontal' areas such as peer-review, dissemination, IPR etc.

One should try to identify weak points in the Nordic countries and see how these areas, if appropriate, could be strengthen through Nordic cooperation.

One should also give incentives to make contacts/cooperate – today it is not 'natural' to seek Nordic cooperation.

Nordforsk should play an important role in this identification/facilitation, its role should be to create synergy and not to form policies. Nordforsk should not be visible but the Nordic cooperation should be made more visible. They cannot represent Nordic countries. Nordforsk should have more competence in EU programmes and concentrate on advice and exchange of ideas and experience. They should not duplicate what national agencies and councils do. A forum has to be created where such discussion could take place. Nordforsk can act as a catalyze, networking with seed money. Nordic cooperation should be more visible in Brussels thorough awareness. A strategy discussion is missing.

Areas chosen for cooperation should be based on 'added value' and not to support cooperation as such. Nordic cooperation should not in any way be an 'obstacle' for broader international cooperation, it should facilitate wider international cooperation not dictate. We also have to avoid that the Nordic countries act as a block which could be negative.

The EU Framework Programme is of course the most important instrument but there are other initiatives besides EU such as ESF, Eureka and COST where the Nordic cooperation could be used in the same way as indicated above

In agreed areas the cooperation can take many forms: give input to the annual Work programmes, positions with regards to future Framework Programmes.

The Nordic Top-level research initiative is a good example and it fits into ERA, for example joint programming and governance. We should

work on strategic issues – identify areas, important topics such as climate, energy and environment.

We should learn from the MEDA region, speak with one voice and support each other, pre-meetings, meetings of Programme Committee members and NCPs to have exchange of ideas. Further one should work together for nominations such as EIT and ERAB where each country cannot get one representative each. We have to show synergies.

The three Nordic research organisations (Nordic Innovation Centre, Nordic Energy Research and Nordforsk) need to cooperate more.

It is not realistic to form broad Nordic consortia as a platform for participation in the Framework Programme.

We lack a systematisation of the cooperation on longer term. It is important to use personal networks established on Nordic level, these networks take decades to build up and can be very useful.

You need a driving force to lead initiatives.

4.2 Instruments

We should carefully study instruments on EU level to see how they could, if necessary, be adapted and used on Nordic level. We should not develop our own instruments. However the use and experience of EU instrument, or the adapted ones, should be of great interest to the rest of Europe. A part if this adaptation could be e.g. simplification.

4.3 Experiences

The evaluation of EU projects does not give any preference to Nordic cooperation – which means that Nordic cooperation has to be built on excellence.

There are several examples of successful participation in the Framework programme by e.g. the Nordic Energy Research. They have been leading several ERANET projects. They have also taken the initiative to establish a Mirror Group of the European Technology Platform for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells. There are similar positive experiences from Nordic Innovation Centre's participation.

Further, there is also positive experience from the by Nordforsk initiated Nordic Centre of Excellence (NCoE) which in one example directly lead to a large Integrated Project with a Nordic partner as coordinator.

It has been seen as an advantage if the Nordic cooperation could include different components such as research, training, infrastructure and networking. In this way it is believed that the platform created could be powerful e.g. in attracting researchers from outside the Nordic countries.

4.4 ‘Good’ examples

We should concentrate on areas where the Nordic countries have a strong profile, e.g. social welfare and climate. Such focus could also act as a catalyser for cooperation in other fields.

In the field of energy there exists a formal process to develop a four-year-strategy for research on Nordic level. The first one was adopted for the period 2003–2006 which included renewable energy, energy efficiency, the hydrogen economy, integration of energy market and the impact of climate change on the energy sector. The strategy for 2007–2010 was adopted in 2006.

In the field of energy Nordic Energy Research has been coordinating viewpoints from Nordic participants in ERANETs. Further, they have good experience in administrating and designing ‘common calls with e.g. a distributed pot’. They have used the instrument Specific Support and Coordination actions’ from the Framework Programme.

One good example is the BONUS project³⁸ which also will be the first ERANET (+) - project to be extended to an article 169. The aim is to pool resources for a Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme.

ScanBalt is another example of initiatives around the Baltic Sea. ScanBalt has been founded with the aim of ensuring that North European Life Science and Biotechnology realises its potential for global competitiveness.

There is extensive cooperation, especially between Sweden and Finland in forestry and bio-refinery including within the Forest-based sector European Technology Platform.

Research Infrastructures

The Commission will consider providing a legal framework to assist Member States in developing and funding pan-European research infrastructures.

The Nordic countries already contribute to the development of pan-European research infrastructures, notably through their involvement in the ESFRI process. For example, the Nordic countries have many unique data/data bases on e.g. demographic data, which is reflected in the strong Nordic participation in the European Social Survey (ESS) project, included in the ESFRI list.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries have started a NordForsk- administered policy initiative aimed at evaluating possible strategies for achieving joint Nordic access to Nordic research infrastructures. A report on the issue will be finalised by autumn 2008 and a conference will be organised in Stockholm on 12–13 November 2008 to discuss future steps for in-

³⁸ BONUS ERA-NET – Bonus for the Baltic Sea Science- network of funding agencies, funded under FP6 with 13 partners.

creased Nordic research infrastructure cooperation. Conclusions are expected to be of relevance also for increased European research infrastructure cooperation and will be communicated to the Czech EU presidency, which plan to include a discussion on the Nordic conclusions at their planned infrastructure conference.

4.5 Concrete proposals

Areas for cooperation

Collect experiences on Nordic achievements in areas where our special conditions requires special solutions because of our climate, natural resources etc such as in climate research, forestry, social welfare, work environment, health, transport and research infrastructures, gender issues, culture and history. Other areas of long tradition of cooperation are in food/food safety

A very interesting field could be in ‘ethics and fraud’ as well as security research.

One interesting area is register, connect medical and social data

On more horizontal areas one could mention: the Nordic cooperation as a model in ‘joint programming’ and the NCoEs, Mobility in the Nordic Countries. Another area would be in Nordic benchmarking in policy (regional innovation, assessment, evaluation).

One interesting area air traffic control where the Nordic region could be a test bed – green landing.

Nordic Climate Cluster³⁹ initiated by industrial organisations is a new interesting initiative.

Nordunet could be a good example – Nordunet 3, infrastructure, storing capacity and large computers – involving Baltic countries.

Support/coordination

We should use the fact that we do have supra-national organisation in the Nordic region.

Nordic organisations such as Nordforsk and Nordic Innovation Centre should ‘establish themselves on the European scene as competent players. We should be more open and offer our experiences.

Common pot experience – what we have achieved and what we have not achieved.

There could be a case to support emerging groups on Nordic level not only the established ones – compare with ERC starting grant!

Nordforsk and the other Nordic organisations should offer pro-active and administrative support and help to strong ‘Nordic groups’ in order to

³⁹ <http://www.nordicclimatecluster.com/>

link them to European ones. In particular, support should be given to Nordic coordinators.

The Nordic Countries as a region should be active in Brussels through e.g. the organization ERRIN.

We should coordinate overseas offices in Asia and America - in Nordic Innovation Centres.

Meetings on Nordic level with Programme Committee members and /NCPs would be good as an exchange of views and also in areas where cooperation is foreseen. This could be a forum for exchange of ideas on issues such as peer review, assessment and evaluation and OMC.

Type of cooperation

Do not only start cooperation, think of how this cooperation could be sustained, create infrastructures for and facilitate such cooperation.

Any application for Nordic cooperation should, where applicable, state the potential for further international/EU cooperation.

Calls for proposal on Nordic level should be announced in the EU.

The Nordic Centres of Excellence should open-up to nationals outside the Nordic countries.

Appendix 5: Abbreviations

Article 169	Integration of national research programmes
CIP	Competitiveness and Innovation Programme
COST	European Co-operation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research
CREST	Scientific and Technical Research Committee
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Community
EIT	European Institute of Technology
ERA	European Research Area
ERAB	European Research Area Board
ERANET	Cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at national or regional level
ERC	European Research Council
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ETP	European Technology Platform
EU	European Union
EUREKA	a pan-European network for market-oriented, industrial R&D
FP	Framework Programme
FP7	seventh Framework Programme for Research
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
JRC/IPTS	Joint Research Centre/Institute of Prospective technology Studies
JTI	Joint Technology Initiatives
MEDA	Mediterranean Region
NCoE	Nordic Centre of Excellence
NCP	National Contact Point
NER	Nordic Energy Research
NF	Nordforsk (Nordic Research Board)
NICe	Nordic Innovation Centre
NORDERA	Proposal for an ERANET Support Action on Lessons learnt from Nordic research coordination in the context of ERA
NORIA	Nordic Research and Innovation Area
PC	Programme Committee
RSFF	Risk Sharing Finance Facility
SP	Specific Programme
WP	Work Programme

Appendix 6: Summary of the NORDERA proposal

The general objective of NORDERA is to support the coordination of national research programmes and encourage joint programming by studying the experiences of the Nordic region in this field, associating it with relevant ERA experiences. It will assess how lessons learnt can be of value for the further development of the European Research Area (ERA) as well as the Nordic Research and Innovation Area (NORIA) as an integral part of ERA.

In particular, NORDERA aims to contribute to the five initiatives launched by the Commission following the debate on the ERA Green Paper.

In order to contribute to this process, the following specific objectives will direct the NORDERA project:

- Produce an analysis of existing weaknesses as well as best practice regarding coordination in research and innovation in the Nordic region, formalised through the Nordic Council of Ministers structure.
- Produce an analysis of existing weaknesses as well as best practice regarding coordination in research and innovation as expressed through more ‘non-formalised’ bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation between national research and innovation agencies/councils in the Nordic countries.
- Based on 1 and 2, benchmark with and analyse existing European research coordination initiatives with a view of proposing concrete recommendations on how the Nordic experiences can serve to encourage the further development of the European Research Area, especially regarding coordination of national programmes and joint programming. The tools developed in ERAWATCH and NETWATCH will be used in the analysis. Equally, the analysis will look into how lessons learnt can be of value for the further development of NORIA.
- An important part of the project is dissemination activities, in particular through a dedicated conference on European level at the end of the project where the results will be discussed.