



NORDREGIO

Nordic Centre for Spatial Development



WORKING PROGRAMME 2010–2012

RESEARCH COMMUNICATION POLICY

Nordregio is a leading European research centre in the broad knowledge field known as regional studies. We specialize in international comparative and collaborative research, and through our leading-edge skills we carry out quantitative and qualitative analyses on many different geographical scales.

The main mission of Nordregio is to bridge the gap between research and policy-making. In our work we produce and communicate relevant research results to the policy sphere and we use the manifest knowledge needs of the public sector, NGOs and businesses as a launching point for our research projects. Nordregio also serves as a link between the Nordic collaboration and the broader European context in our fields of expertise. This leaflet is a short introduction to the broad research agenda that Nordregio will be working on during the period 2010–2012.

BALANCING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GROWTH OBJECTIVES: A POLICY CHALLENGE

Competitive regions and territorial cohesion

The Nordic countries share the policy goal that residents should be able to live and work in all kinds of environments and regions. However, this must be balanced with the goal of all regions contributing to national growth and development through the best possible use of each region's potential. Achieving this balance is one of the greatest challenges of regional policy. Sparsely populated areas, urban planning, border regions and the interaction between urban and rural areas are highlighted research topics in this theme, which Nordregio will be working with in the coming years.

Sparsely populated areas

Peripheral and sparsely populated areas in the Nordic countries are facing a demographic challenge where the population is growing increasingly older as young people move away. Another consideration is their small economies and how their labour markets stand up to global competition. Accessibility and mobility are key concepts. Can the location of peripheral regions be a strength — one that can lead to a more active role for these areas, in which their resources can be employed to benefit the rest of the Nordic countries and Europe?

Urban planning and development

In contrast to the sparsely populated areas, the Nordic urban regions are growing — especially the large ones — as are their labour markets. What are the consequences of this growth in relation to the goal of sustainable regional development? Can the Nordic countries compete with countries that have much larger cities and a geographically more favourable position? Nordregio aims to further strengthen its expertise and profile on urban issues, identifying robust strategies to develop urban regions in a more sustainable manner.

Rural–urban relations

Policy-makers face a challenge in trying to balance the growth of cities with the goal of cohesive territorial development. Since the late 1990s, the EU has had a goal of bolstering rural–urban relations, but has offered no concrete suggestions as to how to achieve this.

Nordregio will therefore analyse the relationships between different territories and particularly study the role of small towns in sparsely populated areas. An interesting question in this context is the economic importance of improved rural–urban relations for rural-based companies and industries. Another dimension will be to investigate individuals' opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Nordregio will focus on:

- Shaping the agenda for the thematic and policy debate on Nordic regional policies of the future
- Tracking regional development in the Nordic region and conducting relevant international comparisons
- Investigating the uniqueness and development of Nordic urban systems
- Interpreting and translating new international planning concepts such as *resilient cities* and *sustainable urban metabolism* into Nordic planning praxis
- Exploring how various types of territories, urban and rural, interact
- Developing Nordregio into a centre of excellence in border region collaboration, sparsely populated and peripheral areas



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Nordregio's research will provide new understanding of cross-border collaboration and will support these efforts in the Nordic border regions.

Cross-border collaboration

Cross-border collaboration between countries can promote regional growth and welfare in border regions. For several years now a priority of the policy agenda in the Nordic region and in the EU has been to promote a cross-border labour market. Other community issues, such as transport, environment and power supply, also require cross-border collaboration.

Read more about research in this field

Schmitt, Peter & Dubois, Alexandre (2008)

Exploring the Baltic Sea Region – On territorial capital and spatial integration
138pp. (Nordregio Report 2008:3) ISBN 978-91-89332-69-0

Ole Damsgaard, Maria Lindqvist, Johanna Roto & José Sterling (2009)

Territorial potentials in the European Union
50pp. (Nordregio WP 2009:6)

MAKING REGIONS ENTREPRENEURIAL, INNOVATIVE AND KNOWLEDGE INTENSIVE

Territorial knowledge dynamics

Regional economic growth is often heavily dependent on entrepreneurship and innovation, and a variety of factors promote or inhibit such growth. Nordregio sees innovation processes as non-linear; they can involve consumers and users as well as advanced research, and can result in new services or products. Gender and ethnicity

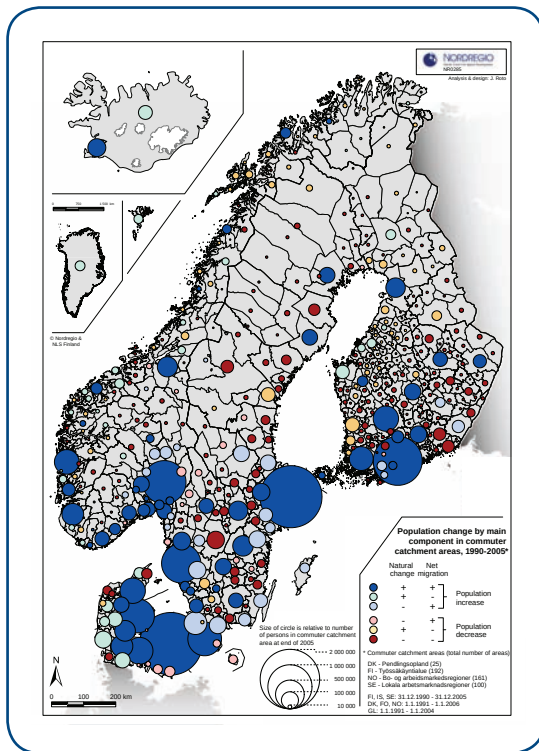
Nordregio will focus on:

- Generating new knowledge about the relationships between regional development, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Investigating the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation in regional development
- Developing new methods for promoting innovation
- Generating knowledge about gender, innovation and entrepreneurship in relation to regional development

are key issues with regards to the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation. An important task for Nordregio will for instance be to formulate a proposal on how to best support female entrepreneurship in sparsely populated areas.

In a globalized world, knowledge is the most important factor for regional competitiveness in advanced economies. Therefore Nordregio will also focus on the produc-

tion of knowledge in regional contexts by studying the interlinkages between higher education, the public sector and private companies. Policy-makers have expressed a desire for national universities that uphold an international level of academic quality. At the same time there is also a goal to promote development of a knowledge-



based economy in all regions. Regional education and research institutes can play a key role in this context. One emphasis of Nordregio will be to identify the potential for networking over regional borders to strengthen regional knowledge production.

Read more about research in this field

Margareta Dahlström, Sigrid Hedin, Lise Smed Olsen, with contributions from Sara Östberg, Christian Dymén and Anu Henriksson (2010)

Knowledge dynamics in moving media in Skåne – cross-sectoral innovations in game development and film tourism

(Nordregio report 2010:1)

Hedin, Sigrid (Editor) (2009)

Higher education institutions as drivers of regional development in the Nordic countries

46pp (Nordregio WP 2009:3)

A CRUCIAL ISSUE FOR THE FUTURE

Community and environment

How are cities and regions affected by climate change? How can they adapt to these changes and prevent further climate change? What new economic interests are activated in specific regions due to the effects of climate change? And what role do various political strategies and local and regional players have in adapting individual regions to a future situation? These are some of the most critical issues for community development and spatial planning in the future.

Nordregio will focus on:

- Investigating how climate change will affect the Nordic regions' development and future opportunities
- Exploring the impact of planning and local and regional development strategies
- Investigating the consequences of the use of renewable regional energy resources
- Examining the socioeconomic consequences of large-scale extraction of raw materials in sparsely populated areas
- Developing evaluation methods for green growth strategies

On this theme, Nordregio will also conduct research into the regional consequences of climate policy and green growth strategies based on specific regional resources.

Regional consequences of energy policy

In the future it will be necessary to use renewable energy to a greater degree, and also to use energy more efficiently than we do today. Nordic regions also have widely



**” What opportunities do sparsely
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ranging capacities to deal with such a development. The question is what the regional and local consequences will be of using new energy sources and striving to boost energy efficiency in the community. And how can natural resources, recreation and tourism be integrated into regional development strategies in a sustainable way?

Regional potential promotes green growth

The goals of reducing environmental impact and using energy more efficiently present challenges and opportunities for the Nordic regions. One of our goals is to investigate the opportunities each region has as regards renewable energy. We will locate and showcase good examples of regions with green growth strategies. What opportunities do sparsely populated areas have to formulate green growth strategies?

Read more about research in this field

Richard Langlais (editor) (2009)

Climate Change Emergencies and European Minicipalities: Guidelines for Adaptation and Response
31pp. (www.nordregio.se)

Janne Hukkinen, Klaus Georg Hansen, Richard Langlais, Rasmus Ole Rasmussen, Steen Jeppson, Jarkko Levänen, Freia Lund Sørensen, Peter Schmitt and Stefanie Lange (2009)

Knowledge-based tools for sustainable governance of energy and climate adaptation in the Nordic periphery

136pp. (*Nordic Research Programme 2005–2008. Report 7*) ISSN 1654-2290

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT

Interactive Communication

Recent years have seen a change in how Nordregio communicates knowledge and research. We've gone from presenting research results through academic courses and reports to a more interactive process involving both those who will be using the

Knowledge brokering

Bridging the gap between research and practice by facilitating communication between researchers and practitioners within the research process. Knowledge brokering helps researchers gain from practitioners' insights and knowledge and ensures that research results are relevant and useful.

knowledge and the researchers presenting the results. This is called *knowledge brokering* and leads to better, more user-friendly research results.

Our primary target group consists of policy-makers and officials, as well as fellow

researchers and in some cases business organisations and NGOs. In addition to this, Nordic collaborations through the Council of Ministers, secretariats, committees and institutions are central target groups for Nordregio's communication

Nordregio Academy

Our concept the *Nordregio Academy* is a vital instrument for achieving our goals of developing and communicating knowledge. In this concept, research is a needs-based process in which both researchers and users are part of the learning process. The Nordregio Academy arranges courses, seminars, workshops and conferences.

A man with a shaved head, wearing a red leather jacket, is sitting on a red wooden bench. He is smiling and looking down at a baby in a blue and white stroller. The baby is wrapped in a white blanket. In the background, other people are sitting on the same bench, including a woman with long blonde hair and a man with white hair. The scene is outdoors, likely at a park or a public event.

“ Communication is a key part of research. We always design the research process in cooperation with the client and we strive to communicate our knowledge in an interesting and user-friendly way.

PROMOTING COLLABORATION AND GROWTH IN THE NORDIC REGION

Policy

One of Nordregio's most important tasks is to work for the benefit of the Nordic region. In addition to contributing to the development of regional policy and growth in

the Nordic countries we also develop and improve the exchange of experience between countries.

Nordregio will focus on:

- Implementing the Nordic regional policy collaboration programme for 2009–2012.
- Serving as the secretariat for the work groups established by the Nordic Government Officials Committee on Regional Policy (EK-R). This means, for example, delivering studies and analyses that are necessary for the individual work groups.
- Developing structures and routines for continuous dialogue between relevant stakeholders in the Nordic collaboration and between national and regional authorities in the Nordic region.

Good policy decisions can only be made based on reliable knowledge. Nordregio meets these needs and delivers knowledge at the request of our clients, including the Nordic Council of Ministers. Therefore, Nordregio works closely with the ministries, authorities, boards and agencies relevant to policy development. Above all, we provide relevant,

useful information to the institutions, committees and work groups of the Nordic collaboration, as a basis for decision.



THIS IS NORDREGIO

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Nordregio is an international research environment with researchers from the whole world. Our staff has a broad intellectual background in fields such as human geography, business economics, spatial planning, biology, economic history, political science, regional studies, geo-informatics, economic geography, physical geography and human ecology.

As part of our research competence we produce high-quality maps and also own and develop state-of-the-art statistical databases. Policy relevance and international comparability are central to Nordregio's statistical activities and thematic mapping. Nordregio's databases gather the most commonly used harmonised spatial indicators for wide geographical areas including the EU and the Arctic, even with a 20-year time span. The main focus is on demographics, labour market, economy, regional and urban structures, and environment.

Nordregio was founded in 1997 under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Its operations are funded in part by the council and in part by assignments from national and regional authorities and national and international research programmes. In recent years, EU-funded research programmes have increasingly become Nordregio financiers.

READ MORE

- Journal of Nordregio
- nordregio.se, the Nordregio website.
You can download research reports here and much more.
- European Journal of Spatial Development: www.nordregio.se/EJSD

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