

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme 2009–2011





Introduction

All activity in which the Nordic Council of Ministers participates shall be in line with the Nordic Council of Ministers' and the Nordic countries' over-arching strategies. The Arctic Co-operation Programme supplements the Nordic Council of Ministers' other programmes, strategies and action plans that can, in the same way, include relevant Arctic elements.

This Arctic co-operation programme is the Nordic Council of Ministers' platform for co-operation on Arctic questions with the countries in the Arctic Council, with the EU, including on the development of the Arctic Window in the EU's Northern Dimension, and with the Nordic Region's Arctic neighbours in the period 2009–2011.

The political objectives of the Council of Ministers' Arctic co-operation

The following over-arching objectives shall guide the planning and implementation of the Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation activities in relation to the Arctic:

- Contribute to increased knowledge of and efforts to combat climate change, pollutants and heavy metals in the Arctic and their consequences for human and animal living conditions, globally as well as in the Arctic Region.
- Contribute to the development and improvement of the quality of life of the Arctic population and the ecological and economic prerequisites for continued human settlement in the Arctic, with special responsibility for the situation of the Saami and Inuit populations.
- Contribute to and support the Arctic population's social and cultural development, with due deference to the challenges that increased globalisation poses, including the promotion of understanding of multilateral and international processes.
- Contribute to preserving Arctic nature, natural qualities, biological diversity and sustainable use of the region's resources as far as both renewable and non-renewable resources are concerned.

In the political sphere, it is particularly important to continue to develop rational forms of co-operation and co-operation forums between the Arctic states in such a way that we mutually and collectively live up to our responsibility to implement the joint projects that are necessary in order to turn the overall objectives for the co-operation into reality.

Normally, initiatives and activities shall be taken by the Nordic countries within the Arctic Council. Other initiatives are, however, possible if the Arctic Council is judged not to be the right forum.

The Council of Ministers' activities in the Arctic in 2009–2011

Within the overall objectives mentioned above, the following will be prioritised in the period 2009–2011:

- Nordic activities and Nordic participation within the frameworks of the Arctic Council, including following up on the conclusions reached by the Arctic Council's Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, continued initiatives aimed at preventing the spread of pollutants and heavy metals in the Arctic, and following up on the conclusions reached by the Arctic Council's Arctic Human Development Report.
- Follow-up and publicity work of the results of Nordic research into development in the Arctic regarding climate change in the Arctic and indigenous peoples' living conditions and economic and cultural development opportunities.
- Nordic activities that contribute to guaranteeing a long-term legacy from the International Polar Year 2007–2008 (IPY).

This Arctic Co-operation Programme is valid for all of the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on Arctic questions. The prioritised activities mentioned can be supplemented in the separate ministerial councils' sector programmes and strategies, which can include:

- Work to preserve Arctic nature and biodiversity, as well as tracing, monitoring and combating pollutants.
- Strengthening of networks and competencies for participation in democratic international processes, prioritisation of indigenous peoples' competency development, and capacity building in association with the local and regional administration of and participation in international processes.
- Promoting economic development through business development, innovation and competence building in sparsely populated areas, incl. alternative energy supplies, development of the service and culture sectors, and local production and processing.
- Research focusing on the Arctic area that underpins the common policy on the climate, energy, nature and environment, and which contributes to guaranteeing and further developing the results achieved during IPY.
- Co-operation on health-promoting initiatives, including in particular combating contagious and man-made illnesses, as well as the development of indicators for living conditions on the Arctic populations' own premises.
- Co-operation between institutes of higher education in the Nordic Region.

Instruments

Specific work under the Arctic Co-operation Programme will be conducted as individual projects as per applications from countries, organisations or institutions in the Nordic Region or neighbouring countries, and as initiatives that emanate from the separate ministerial councils' need to support political processes.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' activities in the Arctic are funded by the respective councils of ministers and by a special overall budget line under the Ministers for Nordic co-operation (MR-SAM), or through co-funding. The overall Council of Ministers' budget line is allocated to the implementation of this programme.

The Nordic Council of Ministers can contribute financially to co-operation in the Arctic Council's working groups and instruments. The Nordic Council of Ministers' other scholarship and mobility programmes can also fund activities in the Arctic.



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Administration

The Nordic Council of Ministers communicates information about the programme, e.g. through the website. The existing Nordic institutional structures are used for the contact activities.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' administrative guidelines for the processing of project applications, incl. travel costs, consultancy services, wages and conditions, etc., as well as for financial reports and evaluating the outcomes of projects shall be complied with.

The Nordic Committee for Co-operation (NSK) has set up an Arctic Expert Committee (ASK) to advise on the Arctic co-operation. ASK will continue to be the Nordic Senior Arctic Officials, as well as representatives of the Faroe Islands and Greenland. ASK will have an advisory role in devising, implementing and in following up of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic activities. ASK can invite ICC Greenland and the Saami Council to take part in the work in accordance with the Council of Ministers' guidelines for co-operation with voluntary organisations. NSK and MR-SAM are the decision-making organs in relation to the Arctic Co-operation Programme.

The Nordic Council of Ministers Secretariat provides the secretariat function for ASK, while project and budget administration, project reports and the updating of the Arctic database are the responsibility of an administrative body outside the NCM Secretariat.

The Nordic Centre for Spatial Development, Nordregio, has the administrative responsibility for the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation Programme 2009–2011. For more information, please see website <http://www.nordregio.se/>

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