

Strategy

for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013–2020



Nordic Council
of Ministers



The Nordic Council of Ministers Strategy for Cultural Co-operation was adopted by the Council of Ministers for Culture on 31 October 2012, and was revised on 2 November 2016

Cover photo:
Nordic Council Awards Ceremony 2016, Copenhagen.
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Nordic Council of Ministers Strategy for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020

The Nordic Council of Ministers is a central platform for cultural co-operation in the Nordic countries. The activities of the Council of Ministers in the field of culture interact with other areas of formal and informal Nordic co-operation, both in and outside the Nordic region. In a global context, the Nordic region will continue to lead the way as a creative and open region in terms of art and culture.

Nordic cultural co-operation will manage the historical, cultural and linguistic heritage and ensure continuity, but will also encourage new cultural expressions and impulses. Changes in circumstances relating to cultural life and art, demography and technology call for flexibility and renewal. It is important that cultural policy is developed and implemented on the basis of relevant and current facts, research and knowledge.

Fundamental to Nordic cultural co-operation is the principle of Nordic added value, i.e. that the collaboration involves areas where the Nordic countries have common interests and face common challenges. Exchange of experiences, skills, and formation of networks will enable efficiency and development.

The cultural co-operation will promote sustainable development. This involves joint efforts to stimulate inclusive, accessible and gender-equal culture and art that challenges norms and values, and that gives people a greater sense of purpose and belonging. Broad cultural co-operation will develop a sense of community and understanding between everyone living in the Nordic region, and will enhance cohesion.

The Nordic Model and Nordic art and culture are in great demand internationally. The Nordic cultural co-operation will communicate values such as democracy, freedom of expression and the importance of civil society in both international and regional contexts.



The five themes in the Strategy for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020 are:

- The sustainable Nordic region
- The creative Nordic region
- The intercultural Nordic region
- Young people in the Nordic region
- The digital Nordic region

The intention of the Council of Ministers for Culture is that these themes and associated goals will identify current challenges and opportunities in modern society in general, and more specifically in the field of culture and arts. The themes vary in character, but supplement and overlap each other.

The interaction between the Nordic and national levels will be strengthened, to maximise impact of Nordic cultural initiatives.

The strategy will serve as a policy document for institutions and co-operation bodies in the Nordic Council of Ministers, and will be reflected:

- in the institutions' strategic mandates, their own operational objectives, and notice of funding;
- in budget texts that specify priorities for subsequent years;
- in the strategic initiatives implemented by the Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture;
- in the presidency programmes;
- in greater collaboration between the national authorities for culture and arts and the Nordic cultural co-operation;
- in culture forums, where the Nordic institutions, co-operation bodies and programmes can discuss the opportunities and challenges involved in implementing the strategy at policy level.



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Photo: Norden.org/Yadid Levy.



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Five themes for Nordic cultural co-operation 2013-2020

The sustainable Nordic region

Objective: Nordic cultural life will strengthen sustainability in the Nordic societies by being accessible and inclusive.

The Nordic cultural co-operation supports the UN's global goals for sustainable development. Promoting sustainability within and through culture is an overall objective that will feature in all parts of the Nordic cultural co-operation. Cultural experiences and activities are important for social belonging, identity development and inclusion, they stimulate discussion and debate, and can help to enhance trust, respect and social bonding between everyone living in the Nordic region. Cultural co-operation will promote a diversity of art and cultural experiences that reflect, and are accessible to, people with different backgrounds, language, functional abilities, identity and life situations. Meeting future challenges in the Nordic welfare society calls for a holistic approach that embraces several policy areas, and where a focus on culture is very important for other societal goals.

The creative Nordic region

Objective: The Nordic region will distinguish itself as a vibrant, dynamic and creative cultural region.

Creativity is a key component in the Nordic cultural co-operation. The co-operation will strengthen the Nordic region as an attractive and stimulating place for creators or mediators of art and culture. Within the Nordic cultural co-operation, common positions will be protected, such as strong freedom of expression, artistic freedom, copyright, and the arm's length principle. The Council of Ministers for Culture and its institutions and programmes will stimulate and support the production of high-quality culture and art through everything from collective cultural expression to the work of individual artists. Creative and cultural industries in the Nordic region will be promoted. Long-term collaboration will increase the impact, both on the home arena and on a global market.

The intercultural Nordic region

Objective: Everyone living in the Nordic region will feel they belong and will participate in cultural life here.

An open Nordic region offers opportunities for renewal, creativity and dynamics in Nordic art and culture. The cultural sector offers arenas and meeting places for collaboration, dialogue and debate. In accordance with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Nordic cultural co-operation will promote the equitable interaction and existence of different cultures. The collaboration will also promote the understanding of language in the Nordic countries. An active and dynamic cultural life, manifested in a diversity of cultural expressions, plays a key role in an inclusive society, and must be protected. Here, civil society, public services, culture and arts institutions and other parties that create and disseminate art and culture play an important role.

Young people in the Nordic region

Objective: Children and young people in the Nordic region will create, access, and influence art and culture.

Children and young people play a key role in Nordic cultural co-operation, and art and culture are important arenas for meetings between children and young people in the Nordic region. In accordance with the Nordic Council of Ministers' cross-sectoral strategy for children and young people in the Nordic region, the culture sector will prioritise art and culture for, by, and with children and young people, for example through the different types of Nordic support schemes. The Council of Ministers for Culture will work to involve children and young people in decision-making processes that affect them. The Nordic cultural co-operation will be open in relation to children and young people's own cultural forms of expression and digital lives. Particular focus should be placed on children and young people in vulnerable positions. Different types of art and cultural experiences can help people understand language and its importance, and arouse curiosity about the different languages in the Nordic region. Literature, for example, plays an important role.



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The digital Nordic region

Objective: Nordic culture will maximise benefit from digital technology.

Technological development is constantly opening new opportunities for creativity and renewal in art and culture. Digital communication is an important part of the work to democratise access to cultural heritage and new art and culture in the Nordic region. Issues of accessibility, comparability, and media and information literacy in the increasing digitalisation of art and culture will be raised in the cultural co-operation. With a strong freedom of expression and an independent media in a digitalised world, issues of ethics and integrity, and the role of journalism in the public discourse, become relevant. The Nordic copyright model will be developed on democratic grounds, and will consider new technical opportunities and challenges. Nordic TV and film will be supported.



The Nordic co-operation

The Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

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

The Nordic co-operation 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.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture provides solutions and collaboration on joint, cross-sectoral initiatives within the Nordic inter-governmental co-operation

The Nordic Council of Ministers and cultural co-operation

The practical content of the Nordic cultural co-operation comprises a series of entities and activities:

The Nordic Houses and institutes are some of the most important tools for implementing the political priorities for the Nordic co-operation on culture, 2013-2020. One principal task of the Nordic Houses and institutes regarding culture is to ensure a broad collaboration that develops affinity and understanding between the inhabitants of the Nordic region, and thereby contributes to cohesion in the Nordic welfare societies. All the Nordic Houses and institutes work from a strategic mandate that describes their core activities.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture runs programmes that support culture and art projects of the highest quality, and that contribute to constant renewal of the Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cultural co-operation.

In terms of media collaboration, the Nordic Council of Ministers supports, for example, the Nordic Film and TV Fund, which promotes high-quality film and TV production in the five Nordic countries. Another priority is support to Nordicom, which collects, processes and disseminates research findings in the field of media and communication in the Nordic region.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture finances the Nordic Culture Fund.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture finances and administers the Nordic prizes for culture, the most famous of which is the Nordic Council Literature Prize. There are also prizes for music, film, and children and young people's literature.

The Nordic region in the world: With an aim to strengthen Nordic culture internationally, the Nordic Ministers for Culture have developed a model for joint Nordic culture initiatives outside the Nordic region. The objective is to strengthen the interplay between the Nordic culture sectors and the rest of the world, market Nordic culture internationally, and create added value for the participating actors and artists.

Through collaboration between the Nordic countries' culture and arts authorities, Nordic institutions and collaboration bodies, culture policy researchers and statistical agencies, the Council of Ministers for Culture acquires knowledge and facts.





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