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Nordic Council of Ministers

Focus on Sustainable Development

Nordic Key Indicators 2006





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Edition containing Nordic Key indicators for sustainable development

This edition is a short version of the set of indicators “Focus on Sustainable Development, Nordic Indicators 2006” which was endorsed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Ministers for Co-operation on 14 June 2006. This compilation contains the key indicators related to the Nordic strategy on sustainable development “Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries”, revised edition with goals and initiatives for 2005 – 2008. The Nordic strategy on sustainable development and the total set of indicators can be found on the web-site www.norden.org/baeredygtig_udvikling/uk

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Focus on Sustainable Development
Nordic key indicators 2006

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation, one of the oldest and most wide-ranging regional partnerships in the world, involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Co-operation reinforces the sense of Nordic community while respecting national differences and similarities, makes it possible to uphold Nordic interests in the world at large and promotes positive relations between neighbouring peoples.

Co-operation was formalised in 1952 when the Nordic Council was set up as a forum for parliamentarians and governments. The Helsinki Treaty of 1962 has formed the framework for Nordic partnership ever since. The Nordic Council of Ministers was set up in 1971 as the formal forum for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic countries and the political leadership of the autonomous areas, i.e. the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

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Introduction

The indicator report "Focus on Sustainable Development, Nordic Indicators 2006" is linked to the Nordic Strategy "Sustainable Development - New Bearings for the Nordic Countries" which contains a number of goals and initiatives for 2005-2008. It is important to ensure that the Nordic countries and self-governing areas are heading in the right direction towards sustainable development. Therefore we need to monitor efforts on an ongoing basis and adjust our course whenever necessary.

The indicators presented in this report are tools which decision makers and citizens throughout the Nordic countries can use when assessing whether a certain trend in the Nordic region is sustainable, or when following up with concrete actions on the goals of the Nordic Strategy.

To choose the indicators which will be used to measure sustainable development is in itself a political process. You chose where to put your focus. It is therefore important that there is broad support for the indicators in the Nordic countries and self-governing areas. The indicators should reflect Nordic values and should inspire other international sets of indicators to make more use of the Nordic model.

The work to select indicators was carried out in a working group comprising representatives from the relevant policy areas in the Nordic Council of Ministers. A steering group consisting of national sustainability experts ensured a link to the national level. Both groups were set up by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Ministers for Co-operation have approved the indicators.

It was important that all indicators were based on already existing data.

The current set of indicators in this report has been significantly expanded in comparison to the 2003 edition. This is due to the fact that the Nordic Strategy contains new goals for 2005-2008 and has been expanded with chapters on two new focus areas: a chapter on production and consumption and a chapter on the social dimension. The set of indicators is relatively fixed; however it will be improved when new and more accurate international indicators for the goals are developed. In particular improved data together with new goals and new focus areas will reinforce the set of indicators.

How are the indicators linked to the Strategy?

The Nordic Strategy "Sustainable Development - New Bearings for the Nordic Countries" contains a number of goals and initiatives for 2005-2008.

Not all of the goals of the Nordic Strategy can be included in this report. The indicators therefore focus on selected goals of the Strategy. Emphasis is on showing the trend for the most important goals and concentrating on data which are already being collected and are easy to find. It is not a static set of indicators. Improving the indicators will be part of the ongoing work in the sectors and in the Nordic Council of Ministers and will be based on the work going on in the individual Nordic countries and self-governing areas.

This indicator set is divided into the same chapters as the revised Nordic Strategy. Each chapter repeats the goal of the Strategy and the initiatives for 2005-2008, so that there is a clear linkage between the indicator set and the Strategy. Furthermore, the indicator set contains a set of key indicators which provide a quick overview of trends in the Nordic region in relation to our ambition of achieving sustainable development.

Why indicators?

Because we need the information

Indicators serve several functions. The authorities and decision makers need concise and precise knowledge before setting priorities. Those in charge of enterprises must know about the consequences of previous efforts before deciding on future measures. Citizens and voluntary organisations want to be kept informed about developments in society. This forms the basis for democracy.

Indicators are an important element in the work on strategies for sustainable development. They serve as tools for:

- letting the public know whether society is moving in the direction of sustainable development
- monitoring the implementation of specific goals and initiatives set out in the strategies
- making international comparisons, both mutually between the Nordic countries and in a broader context (benchmarking).

Indicators – a partial view of reality

Indicators should not be confused with reality. Many of the initiatives in the Nordic Strategy are difficult to measure and weigh, or to describe graphically. Therefore, the indicators in this report focus on only part of the Nordic goals and initiatives. Moreover, indicators are like binoculars. When you look through a pair of binoculars, you see things much more clearly than before, but your vision is at the same time restricted. Since a set of indicators in this way fixes your attention to a small part of the development in society, there is a risk of overlooking important development processes in other areas. It is therefore paramount that we keep alert to the needs for new indicators in specific areas. When we have the relevant data we can add these new indicators to future editions of this indicator report. At the same time it is important to keep to a manageable number of indicators relative to the knowledge you require. In this way the Nordic Council of Ministers is working continuously to improve the indicator set.

Key indicators

Sustainable development includes three interdependent dimensions: an economic, a social and an ecological dimension. Sustainable development requires establishing a better mutual integration of the three dimensions, a process ultimately defined and delimited by the ecology dimension. Integrating environmental considerations in the individual sectors continues to be a great challenge for the Nordic countries. The Declaration on a Sustainable Nordic Region, which was adopted by the Nordic Prime Ministers on 9 November 1998, therefore focuses on the environment. In addition, the Prime Ministers stress that sustainable development should be integrated into all sectors of society and across sectors.

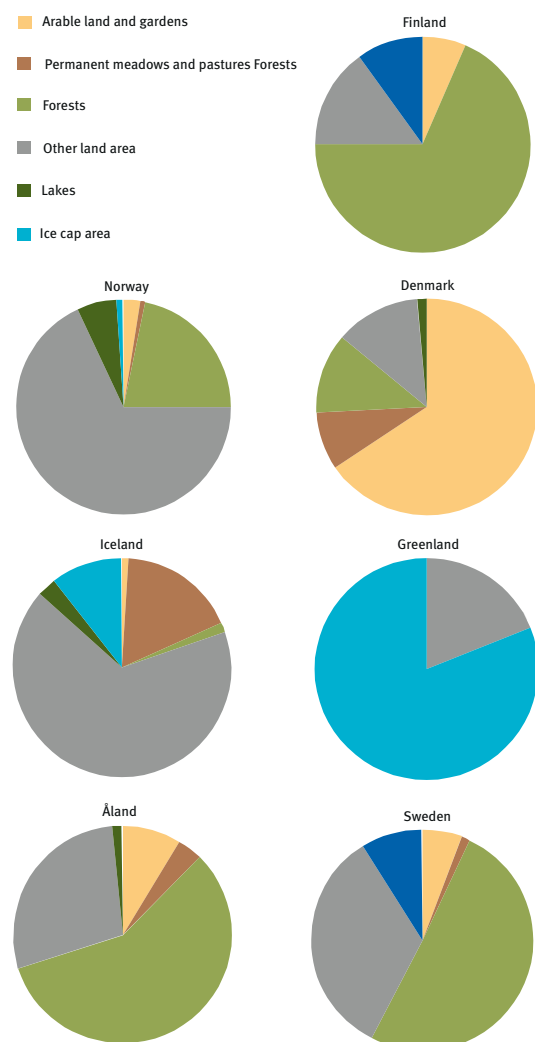
The Nordic Strategy on Sustainable Development addresses the sectors: energy, transport, agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The aim is that the selected sectors will integrate environmental considerations as part of efforts to achieve sustainable development, so that present and future

generations will be ensured a healthy and secure life. Environmental factors (e.g. air pollution and chemicals) must not lead to negative health effects.

The role of the authorities in the Nordic countries is to lead the way forward. They must include environmental and ethical considerations in activities and funding, and they must work to enhance the social responsibility of enterprises. The Nordic countries must increase the use of economic policy instruments and reinforce their collaborative efforts on such tools, including assessing possibilities for coordinating economic instruments in a Nordic context. Subsidies that are affecting the environment in a negative way must be assessed and should be reallocated or discontinued. At the same time, the Nordic countries must work together on methods to put a price on nature and the 'service' it provides us with.

Land use in the Nordic region

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005



Land use as a percentage of the total national land area, 2004.

Sweden and Finland have the largest forest area in the Nordic region with 51 % and 68 % respectively. In comparison, the forest area in Denmark and Iceland is only 12 % and 1.4 % respectively. Sweden and Finland are also the two countries in the Nordic region which have the largest area of lakes: 9 % and 10 % respectively.

Land use in the Nordic region reveals large differences among the Nordic countries. In densely populated Denmark, there is almost no original nature left. Most of the country's forested area is planted forest, and 65 % of Denmark is arable land. In the other Nordic countries, this is the case for less than 10 % of the area. About 17 % of the area of Iceland is in permanent use for meadows or grazing. However, a large part of the land could be characterised as uninhabited highland areas, or wilderness areas.

Economic growth

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005: GDP at constant prices. Index 1995=100

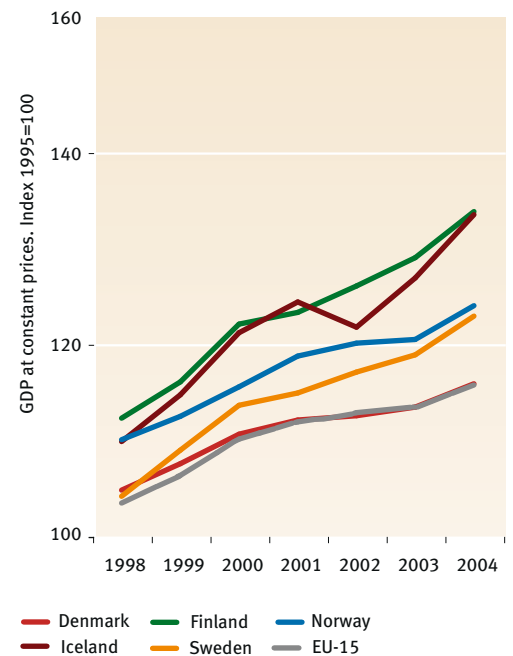
Gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure of the value creation in a country. Stated per capita, it can be considered an expression of a country's general level of wealth.

On the basis of information from the OECD, GDP per capita of the Nordic countries expressed in purchasing power standards (PPS) is calculated at USD 31,000 for 2004. The figures for the USA, the UK and Japan are approx. USD 37,000, USD 28,000, and USD 27,000, respectively. The combined production and economy of the Nordic region are of the same order as Canada's despite the fact that Canada has 31 million inhabitants whereas the Nordic region has only 24.7 million inhabitants.

In the period 1995 to 2004, economic growth was greater in the Nordic region than in other countries using the euro as currency (Euro-12 Member States). This trend also applies to 2005.

The Nordic countries have developed social systems and business models which have proven so competitive that this region today represents not only one of the most wealthy regions in the world but also scores high on several other lists; higher than many of the world's most competitive nations.

One of the greatest challenges of our time is to establish a foundation for wealth without causing deterioration of the Earth's climate, ecosystems and human health. The Nordic countries are investing increasingly in environmentally friendly growth and welfare in order to meet this challenge. Through consistent efforts in favour of sustainable growth, and by developing additional competences in this field, the Nordic region can gain a favourable position in new markets. These efforts could also lead to better workplaces.



Decoupling environmental impacts from economic growth

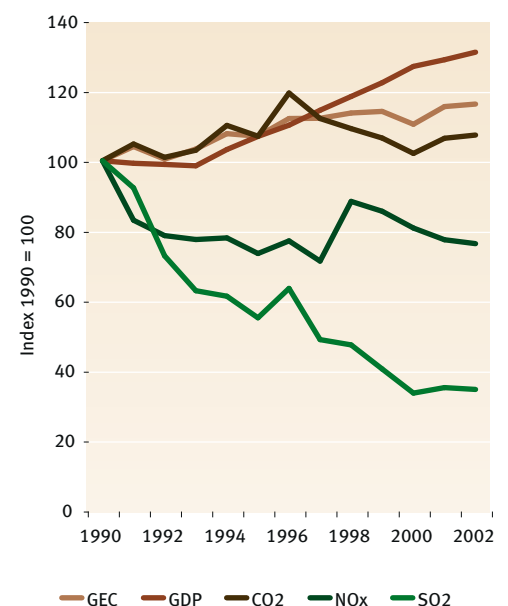
Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005

Emissions of greenhouse gases and acidifying substances relative to gross energy consumption (GEC) and trends within gross domestic product (GDP).

Energy consumption is a significant source of emissions of greenhouse gases (CO₂) and acidifying substances such as NO_x and SO₂. Since 1990 the gross inland energy consumption (GEC) of the Nordic countries has increased slightly. Iceland differs from the other Nordic countries with somewhat greater energy consumption, a trend which has however stabilised and shows a slight downward trend from 2000.

Since 1990, total energy consumption in the Nordic countries has increased at a slower pace than economic activity. This also applies to emissions of CO₂, which have been falling since 1996. Emissions of SO₂ have dropped since 1990, whereas emissions of NO_x have remained constant following a significant fall between 1990 and 1992.

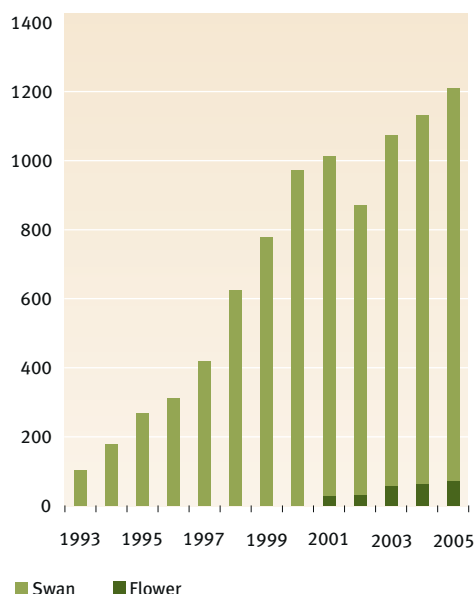
In other words, we have been successful in achieving relative decoupling of energy consumption and CO₂ emissions from economic growth. Furthermore, we have succeeded in creating an absolute decoupling of energy consumption from the emissions of acidifying substances. The aim is to decouple negative environmental impacts from economic growth, including developing a sustainable energy sector and reducing environmental impacts from energy consumption in the Nordic region.



Number of licences to manufacture eco-labelled products

Source: Eco-labelling Denmark

Number of licences to manufacture eco-labelled products



The number of licences issued under the Nordic eco-label “The Swan”, and the number of licences issued under the European eco-label “The Flower” to Nordic manufacturers.

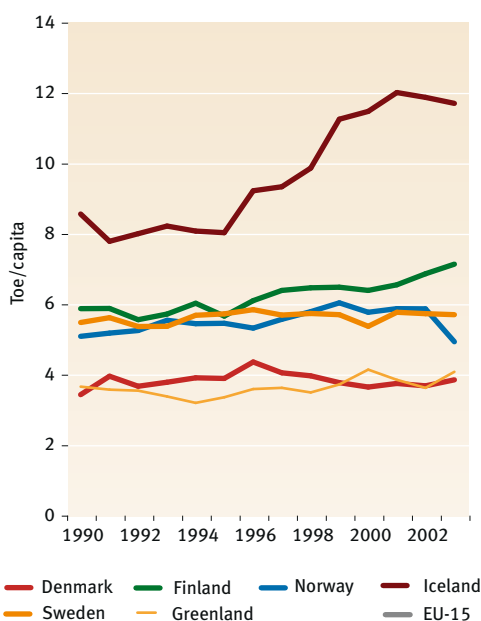
The number of product groups covered by the two eco-labels as per 1 January 2006 is 70. Sixteen of these are covered by both labelling schemes.

For both eco-labels, the licence must be renewed every 3-5 years as the criteria are adjusted continuously. The efforts manufacturers have to make on new documentation in relation to new requirements are time-consuming, and the number of licences therefore varies. The licences for printed matter and for printing paper were revised for 2002. A number of manufacturers did not make the requirements or chose not to reapply for a Swan-label licence. Products labelled with the Flower also enter the Nordic market from other countries, however the Swan label is indisputably the most widely spread eco-label. Consumer awareness studies of the labels in the Nordic countries reveal the same picture.

The aim is to have products within the best 25 % - 33 % of the market eco-labelled. This would contribute to a market underpinned by sustainable development.

Gross energy consumption per capita

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005



Gross energy consumption shows how much energy is required to meet inland energy consumption (including transport).

Gross inland energy consumption per capita in the Nordic region includes relatively large differences from country to country. Some factors causing this include differences in climate and company structure.

Except from Iceland, this indicator remained at around the same level from 1990 to 2003. The steep increase in Iceland is related to the country's major investments in the expansion of power-intensive industries. At the same time, an increasing share of the country's electricity is generated from geothermal energy, which has an efficiency rate of only 10-15 %. Iceland's net energy consumption per capita therefore does not show the same steep growth.

The Nordic countries share a goal of making substantial progress in energy efficiency and energy conservation. The Nordic countries do not use significantly more in gross energy per capita today than in 1990, with the exception of Iceland.

Renewables' share of gross energy consumption

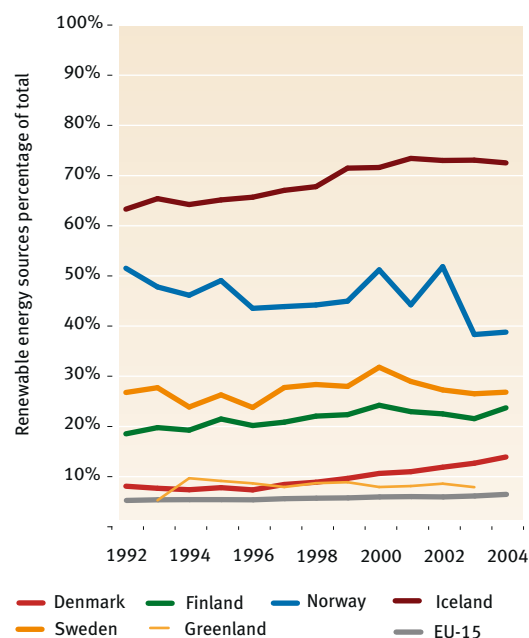
Source: Eurostat

This indicator is the ratio between the energy produced from renewable energy sources and the gross inland energy consumption for a given calendar year. Renewable energy sources include hydropower, bioenergy (wood, waste, etc.), and wind and solar energy.

This indicator reveals major difference in the share of renewables in the Nordic countries. Iceland has the highest share. Since 1996 this share has been more than 70 %, which is the highest in the OECD region. Denmark, which does not have any significant hydropower resources, has gained an increasing share of renewables through investments in new energy sources such as wind power.

The EU-15 Member States have an aim of increasing renewables' share of the primary energy consumption to 12 % by 2010, compared to 6 % 2003. The Nordic countries have a goal of increasing the use of renewables, and all the Nordic countries have a higher share of renewable energy generation relative to their gross energy consumption than the average for the EU-15 Member States.

Renewables etc. are responsible for an increasing share of gross energy consumption in the Nordic countries. In 2003 the generation of renewable energy etc. accounted for 13.6 % of gross energy consumption, adjusted for climate differences. This figure was 6.4 % in 1990. Since 1995 the share has increased by an average of 0.5 - 1 percentage point per year.



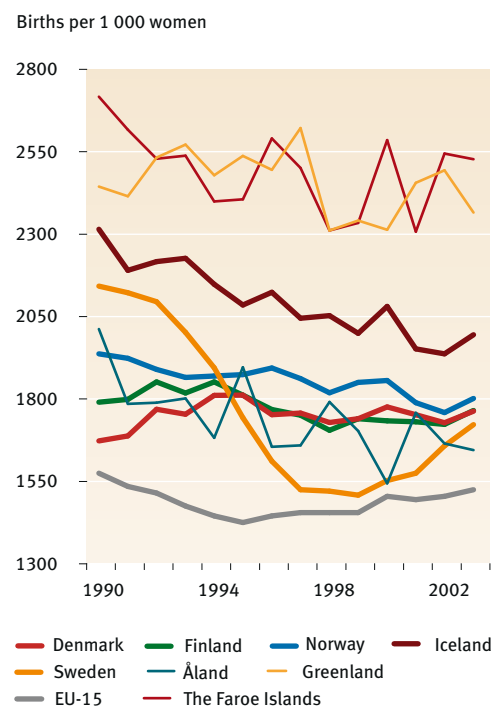
Fertility rate

Source: NOMESKO and Eurostat

Average number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age in the Nordic region and in the EU-15 Member States in the period 1990 to 2003.

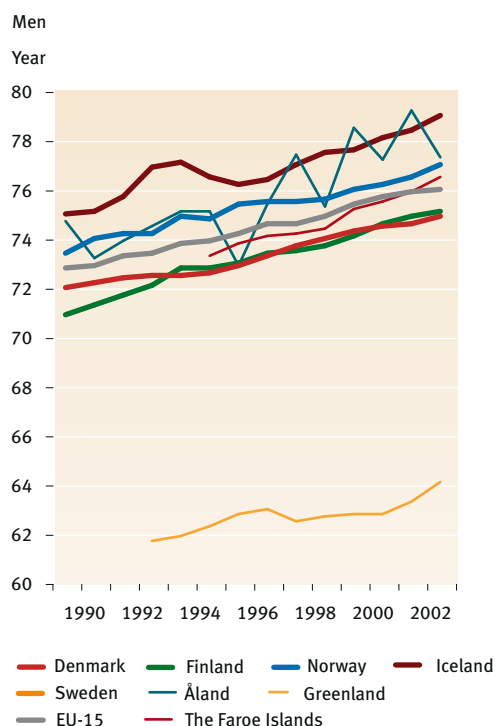
For a population to be in balance, the number of births per 1,000 women must be at least 2100. This means an average birth rate of 2.1 children per woman.

Denmark had the lowest birth rate in the Nordic countries in 1990 but today the level is more or less the same in Denmark, Finland and Norway. During the entire period, Iceland had the highest birth rate, apart from the two self-governing areas, the Faeroe Islands and Greenland. For Iceland, recent years have shown a fall, which means that the country is heading toward a level corresponding to that of the other Nordic countries. Sweden has had the lowest birth rate among the Nordic countries since 1996, although the rate has increased over the last two years. The birth rates in the Nordic region are significantly higher than the average birth rate among the EU-15 Member States.



Life expectancy at birth

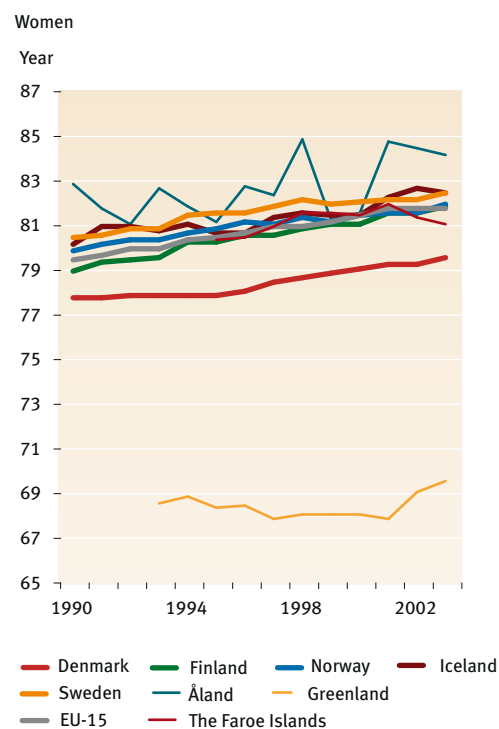
Source: NOMESKO and Eurostat



The life expectancy at birth for men and women in the Nordic region and in the EU-15 Member States.

In all of the Nordic countries, women's life expectancy is significantly longer than men's. In 1990 Finnish men had the shortest life expectancy, while in 2003 Danish men had the shortest life expectancy. Throughout the period, Danish women had the shortest life expectancy compared to women in the other Nordic countries. However, the average expected life span has increased for both women and men in all the Nordic countries, except from Greenland which has a special status with significantly shorter life expectancy. Furthermore, life expectancy in Denmark is slightly lower than the average among the EU-15 Member States.

All Nordic countries have preventive programmes to encourage healthier lifestyles among their populations. The ongoing improvement and expansion of treatment options for diseases have also contributed significantly to people living longer. This trend is expected to continue in the future.



Unemployment

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005

The share of people of working age (16-66 years old) who are not in employment, 1993-2003.

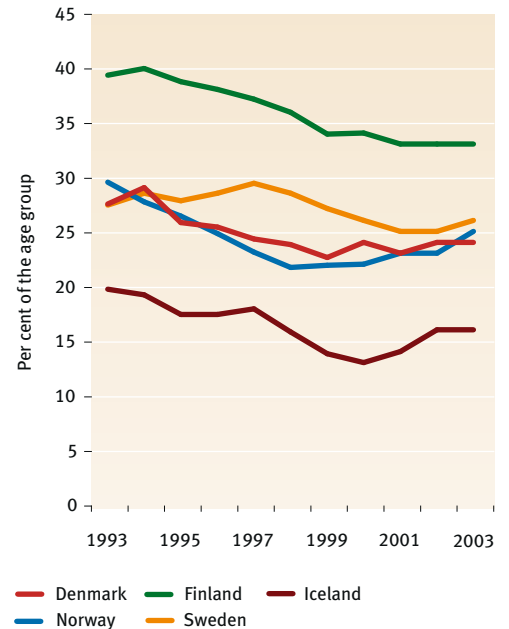
The figure includes people outside the labour force (i.e. students, early retired, non-working, etc.) as well as jobseekers.

Throughout the entire period, Finland had the greatest number of 16-66 year olds not active on the labour market, whereas Iceland had fewest. This is explained by differences in the labour force participation rate for women, but educational opportunities and retirement from the labour market also play a significant role. Other conditions apply to the labour market in Iceland than in the other Nordic countries. Because of a labour force that is too small, employers in Iceland have traditionally employed labour that would not be in employment to the same extent in the other Nordic countries. For example, it is common that students in Iceland work concurrently with their studies because they do not receive education grants but can only take out student loans. At the same time, many students choose to study abroad for a period of time.

The proportion of people of working age not active on the labour market also fell in the self-governing areas. However from around 2001 to 2004 unemployment went up slightly.

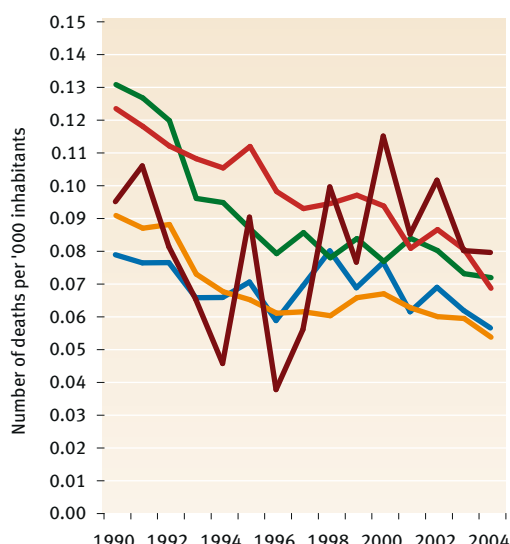
Due to the low birth rates and the longer average life expectancy, there is a general realisation throughout the Nordic countries of the need to boost and encourage the general labour force participation rate for the sake of the social welfare budgets. Thus, there are a number of initiatives to promote this, including efforts to reduce sickness absence and increase the labour market integration of marginalised groups (the physically disabled, immigrants and refugees, etc.), as well as encouraging people to stay longer in the labour market.

The participation rate and the employment rate will fall in future, partly because the next generation to withdraw from the labour market is relatively large and partly because the average life expectancy is increasing.



People killed in road accidents

Source: Sweden: SIKI - Swedish Institute for Transport and Communications Analysis; Norway: Statistics Norway; Denmark: Statistics Denmark; Iceland: Statistics Iceland



The trend in the number of road fatalities per 1,000 inhabitants in the Nordic countries in the period 1990 to 2004.

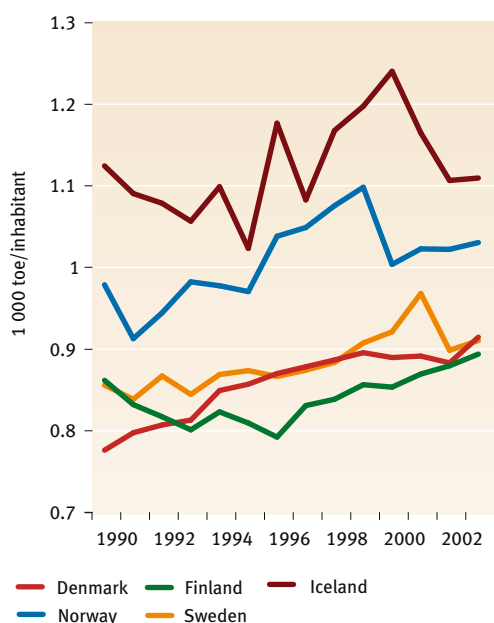
When stated per capita, the number of road fatalities is almost the same throughout the Nordic countries. For Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark the trend in the number of road fatalities per capita is falling. The apparent deviation seen for Iceland is because it is difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of the relatively few observations contained in the data. The relatively small number of accidents causes large year to year variation.

All five Nordic countries have set goals and prepared and realised plans that have contributed positively to the trend in road safety.

The indicator therefore illustrates an aspect of the overall goal of the Strategy to ensure sustainable transport, including the efficient, flexible and safe transportation of people, goods and services. The indicators point to a positive trend with regard to the long-term strategy of building a sustainable transport system which makes it possible to cater for the need for mobility of individuals, businesses and society in a way that is safe and healthy for humans and ecosystems.

Energy consumption in the transport sector

Source: Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005



The average amount of energy used for transport per inhabitant in each Nordic country. This includes energy for passenger and freight transport and all forms of transport (road, rail, sea and air).

Iceland has the largest energy consumption per inhabitant in the transport sector. The reason for this is the country's comprehensive transatlantic air traffic. There is a significant drop in the curve from 2000 to 2002 which is due to a fall in air traffic activities during this period. Norway has the second highest consumption, while consumption is lower in Sweden, Finland and Denmark, which have about the same level of consumption. All the Nordic countries experience increasing energy consumption for transport per inhabitant - when examined over a longer period.

The main part of energy consumption is used for road transport. In 2003 for example, just over 90 % of the transport sector's energy consumption in Denmark was used for road transport. In Norway, this figure was just under 70 %. Sea transport and air transport used approx. 16 % and 14 % of energy consumption in Norway respectively. So within the Nordic countries, consumption for the different transport forms is different, and this means that the Nordic countries face an array of different challenges.

The transport sector's energy consumption is on the rise in the Nordic countries. This does not mean that the transport sector is polluting more, since fuels have become cleaner and technologies are being improved. Energy consumption is merely an indirect measurement of the sector's environmental impacts.

Cases of infection with *Campylobacter*

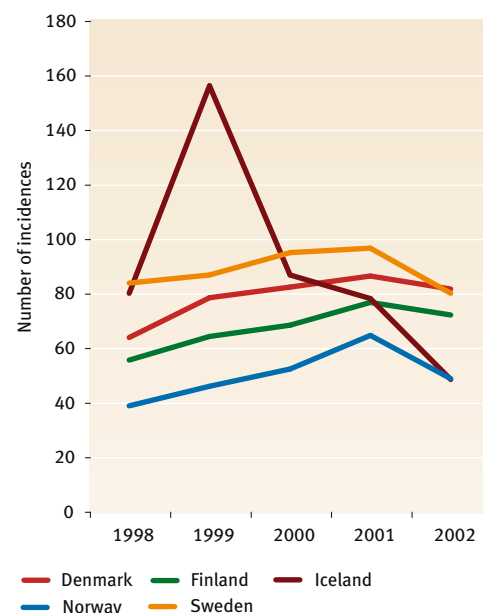
Source: Denmark: Gastro-Enteritis Monitor, Statens Serum Institut; Sweden: Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control; Finland: Public Health Institute (www.ktl.fi); Iceland: Landspítali University Hospital (www.landspitali.is)

The development in the total number of *Campylobacter* infections per 100,000 inhabitants in the Nordic countries.

From June 1998 to March 2000, the number of human cases of *Campylobacteriosis* in Iceland reached epidemiologic heights. The cases could be almost unequivocally linked to cooking of fresh chicken. Until 1996, it was only possible to buy frozen chicken meat in Iceland, but that year, sale of fresh chicken was permitted, and sales went up significantly. Campaigns were carried out and, as the figure shows, Iceland soon gained control of the problem.

Several of the Nordic countries have implemented action plans against *Campylobacter* in food. Efforts aim at consumers as well as industry. Many factors influence the number of *Campylobacter*, e.g. drinking-water resources.

This indicator is related to the objective to “intensify efforts to promote animal health and welfare. Efforts to improve the knowledge of all players involved in the process from ‘field and fjord to fare’ combined with increased supervision will help strengthen measures in primary production aimed at preventing diseases, zoonoses or other conditions that could threaten animal health and food safety.”



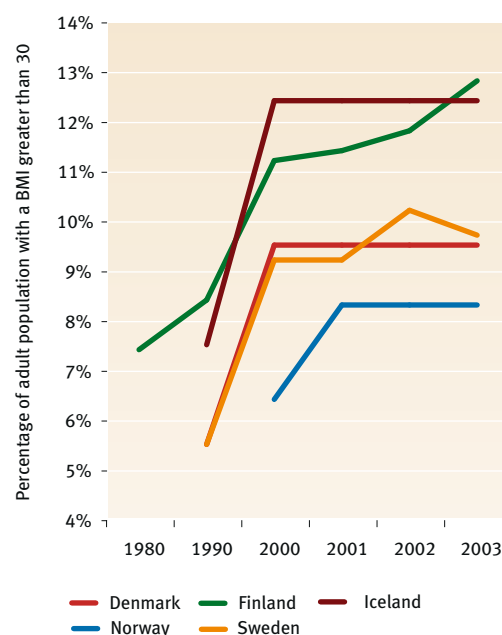
Overweight

Source: OECD HEALTH DATA 2005, October 2005

Percentage of adult population with a Body Mass Index of over 30, measured from 1980 to 2003. For Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, some data have been projected to subsequent years.

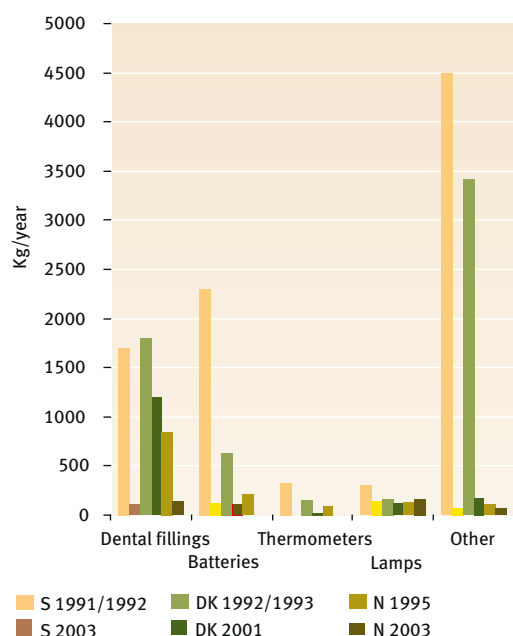
“Body Mass Index” (BMI) is a method for measuring obesity. Obesity is an increasing problem in the entire western world - and thus also in the Nordic countries. The problem is not due to lack of information, as this negative trend is also seen in countries where populations are expected to have the required theoretical knowledge of the importance of a healthy diet and exercise.

This indicator is related to the objective of enhancing knowledge on the connection between diet, nutrition and health.



Use of mercury

Sources: Denmark: Danish EPA (1996; 2003) Mass flow analyses of mercury; Sweden: Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate (2004) Chemicals report 2004/02. Norway: Norwegian Pollution Control Authority (2005) "Miljøgifter i produkter" (Environmental toxins in products)



Use of mercury in selected processes and products in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, namely as dental filling (amalgam), for batteries, in thermometers, and in lamps (e.g. neon lamps).

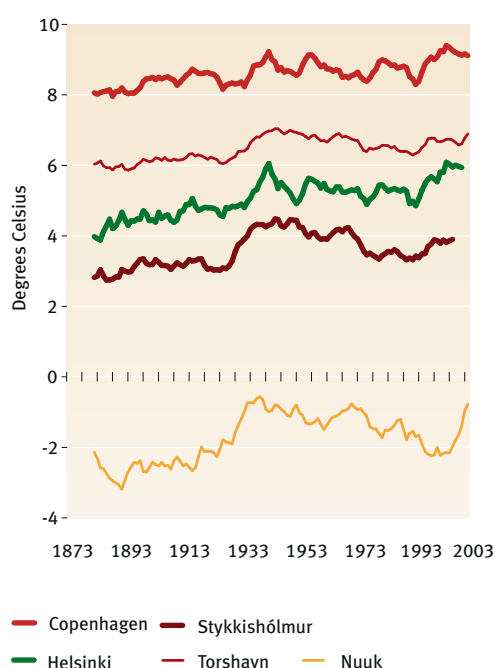
This indicator covers most uses because it contains the group "other uses" which includes industrial use for electrolysis, use in electrical components etc. For each country, the level in the first part of the 1990s is compared with the situation after 2000, based on national mass-flow analyses.

The trend shows a steep drop in consumption of mercury for all types of use and all countries, except mercury for lamps in Norway which has been slightly increasing. Thus, there are significant drops in consumption for dental filling (amalgam), batteries and thermometers.

Mercury is one of the single most dangerous environmental toxins and a threat to both the environment and human health. Therefore, there is a specific objective in the sustainability Strategy stating that the Nordic countries must "seek to bring about a sizable reduction in mercury use by being pro-active in developing the EU regulatory framework in this sphere and by leading the way with national initiatives".

Temperature trends

Source: Danish Meteorological Institute Annual Climate Data Collection 1873-2004, Denmark, The Faroe Islands and Greenland, John Cappelen, Copenhagen 2005. Åland: Statistics and Research Åland. Finland: Finland's sustainable development indicators



Temperature trends for selected stations in Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands from 1873 to 2004.

This figure shows the trend in average temperatures, and there is an upward trend for the period. The curve shows a ten-year running average. The curves show that the average temperature has increased by approx. 1° C since 1873 in the Nordic countries.

This indicator is particularly relevant for the Strategy's objective of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

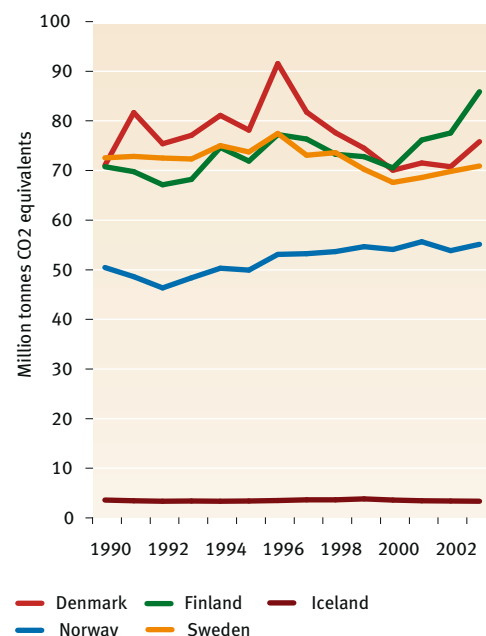
Emissions of greenhouse gases

Source: UNFCCC

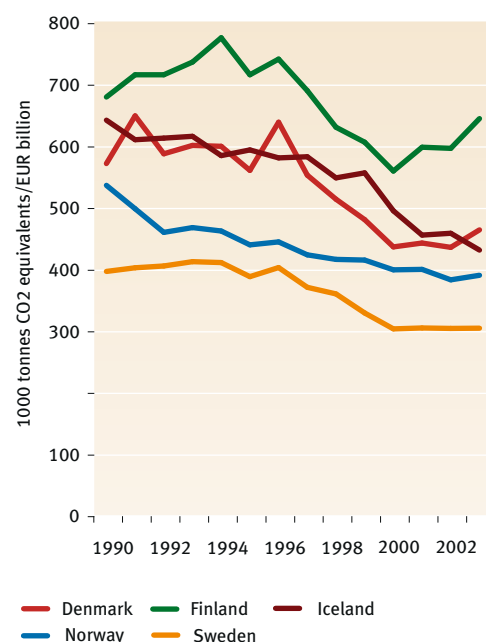
Emissions of greenhouse gases in the period 1990 to 2003 in the Nordic countries in absolute figures and relative to gross domestic product (GDP) in constant 1995 prices and exchange rates.

The figure on the left shows the trend in emissions of the greenhouse gases CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs and SF₆ in CO₂ equivalents for the Nordic countries in the period 1990-2003. The figure on the right shows emissions relative to each country's GDP.

The figure on the right shows that all Nordic countries have achieved a relative decoupling of greenhouse gas emissions from GDP, except from some stagnation or a small increase in the period 2000 to 2003. However, the first figure shows that this relative decoupling does not cover a fall in absolute greenhouse gas emissions. The explanation of the relative decoupling is to be found in a continuous increase in GDP for all the Nordic countries.

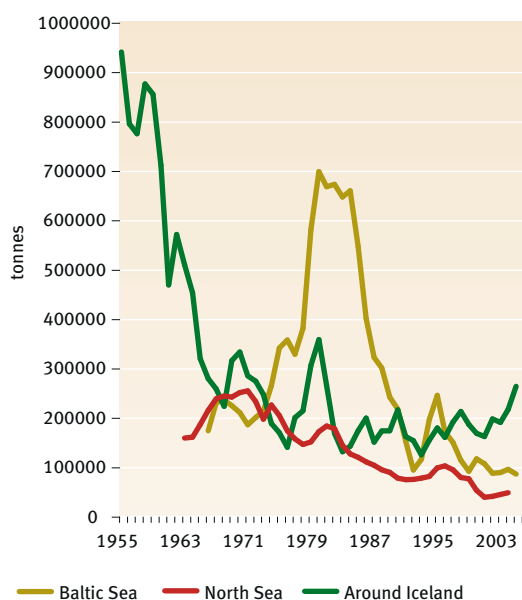


Emissions of greenhouse gases relative to GDP



Cod spawning stock biomass in Nordic waters

Cod spawning biomass



In the Baltic Sea, the cod spawning stock biomass is historically low, and there is nothing to indicate that the spawning stock biomass will rise. According to ICES, the stock is suffering from diminished reproductive capacities, and this means that fisheries are not sustainable.

Cod is the clearest example of a stock under severe pressure in the North Sea. The spawning stock biomass was at approx. 250,000 tonnes in the early 1970s, but now it is less than 50,000 tonnes.

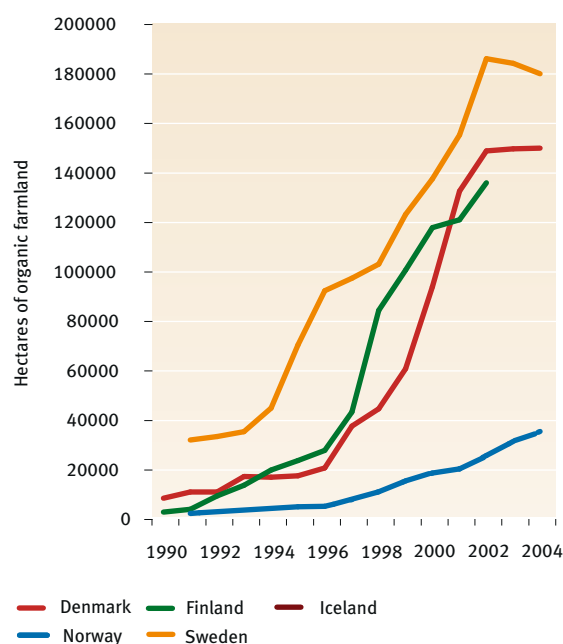
In 2005, the cod spawning stock biomass around Iceland was 262,000 tonnes which is above the historic low (123,000 tonnes in 1993) but a little below the desired long-term average of 304,000 tonnes.

The most recent ICES assessment based on estimates of the spawning stock biomass indicates that the cod stock around the Faroe Islands is at risk of diminished reproduction capacity (not shown on graph). In 2005, the spawning stock biomass was at the same level as before the collapse in 1990.

On the basis of the spawning stock biomass (SSB), ICES estimates that the stock of Northeast Arctic cod has full reproductive capacity (not shown on graph).

Organic farms

Source: National statements of organic farmland



This indicator shows the trend in the size of organic farmland in the Nordic countries. In 2003, the total organic farmland in Iceland was estimated at 6,000 ha.

All the Nordic countries have experienced a clear increase in the size of organic farmland in the past 15 years. In Sweden, where the increase has been greatest, the total area of organic farmland is 8 % of the total agricultural area, while in Denmark and Finland it is around 7 %. In Iceland and Norway, the organic area is 1 and 2 % respectively of the total agricultural area. In the old EU Member States (EU-15), the organic farmland constitutes 4 % of the total agricultural area.

At the Nordic Council of Ministers' meeting in Greenland in August 2002, it was decided to enhance Nordic cooperation on organic farming. The Nordic ministers adopted a declaration that states that organic farming is an important contribution to sustainable agriculture, a good environment and better choices for consumers. The goal is to develop Nordic collaboration of organic agricultural production based on life-cycle analyses, where work is targeted at all links in the chain from primary production through processing to sales.

Forest trees damaged by defoliation

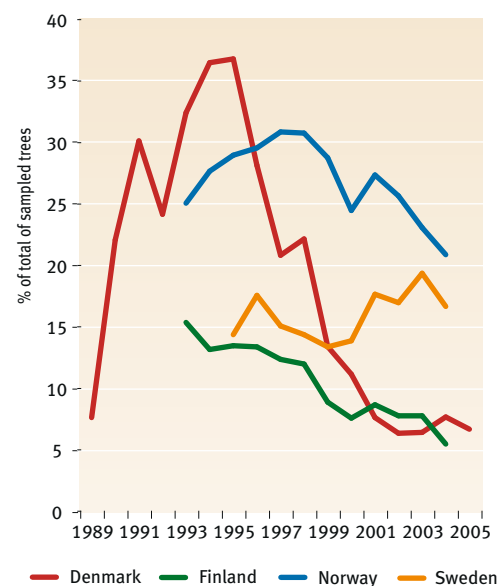
Source: MCPFE 2003. State of Europe's Forests 2003

Defoliation as a percentage of trees studied in classes 2-4 (moderate to serious defoliation or death) during the period 1990-2001.

Note: The curve for Sweden only shows the trend for conifers.

Defoliation is one of the best indicators of the state of health of forests. On the one hand, the state of health reflects the impact of pollutants on forests, and on the other hand, it reflects forestry's choice of tree species in relation to forest growth conditions. The state of health of forests in Sweden and Finland seems to be very constant, while in Norway defoliation increased slightly from 1990 to 2001.

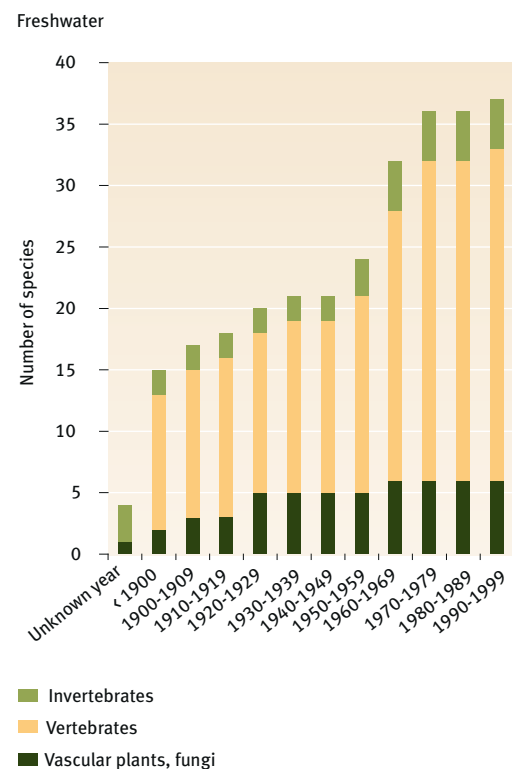
The curve for Denmark shows a significant upward slope from 1990 which peaked in 1994-1995 and then fell to the lowest level in the most recent measurements in 2001. If there is a connection between air pollution and defoliation, it is positive that defoliation of forests in Denmark, Sweden and Finland now seems to have stabilised at a low level, while defoliation in the Norwegian forests seems to be at a slightly higher level.



Introduced species

Source: EEA SEBI2010 indicators

National databases maintained by Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. Data compilation by Melanie Josefsson, Sweden, and Inger Weidema, Denmark, both members of 'Nordic/Baltic Network on Invasive Alien Species (NOBANIS)' supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, see <http://www.sns.dk/nobanis/default.htm>



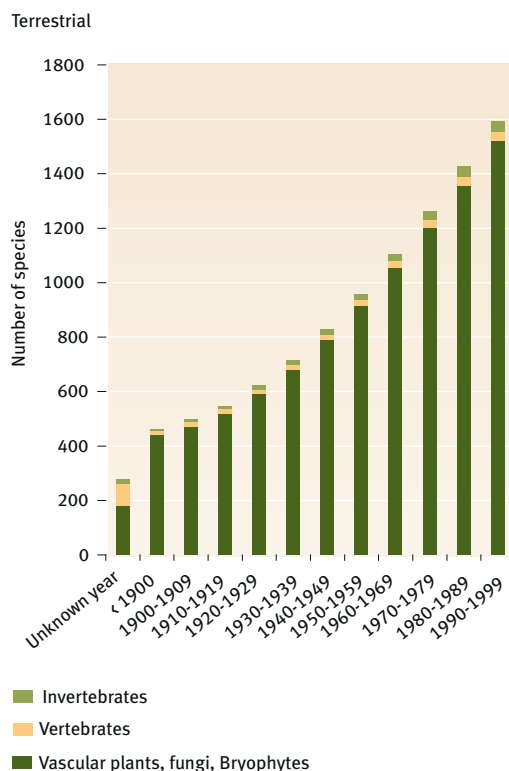
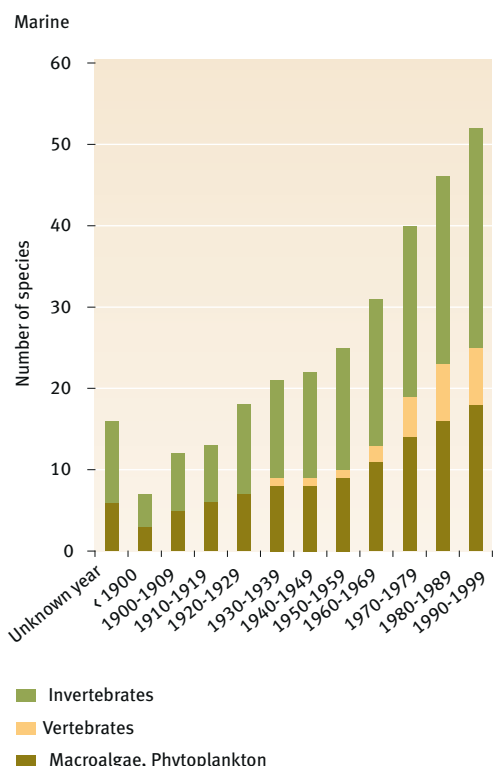
Accumulated number of introduced species in the Nordic countries until 1999, analysed by freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

This indicator shows that an ever-increasing number of new invasive species establish in the Nordic countries. This trend is particularly clear for the marine and terrestrial environments.

Introduced species are species of flora and fauna that are not native to the Nordic countries, but which have been brought to the Nordic countries by humans at some stage. For some species, this has been intentional, such as new crops. For other species, it has been unintentional, such as species that have arrived with imported goods, on ships or in ballast water. For some species, this introduction took place centuries ago, and for others it took place only a few years ago. Some of the species that are introduced will die immediately after introduction, others will live for a brief period or in protected locations, and a small number - the invasive species - will settle down and spread in the Nordic landscape and nature.

Examples of introduced species are the Iberian forest snail *Arion lusitanicus*, the signal crayfish, giant hogweed, the Eurasian minnow and the red king crab.

This indicator is relevant in relation to the Strategy's objective that the Nordic countries "...will contribute to European efforts to improve follow-up and assess the potential risks before non-native species are introduced, in accordance with Nordic recommendations".



The Nordic right of public access to nature

In Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, everyone has the right to be out in the countryside-- visitors from abroad as well as citizens. We call this "the right of public access". The right to move about and stay on uncultivated as well as cultivated land generally only applies when fields are frozen or covered by snow. The right of public access to nature does not apply to motor vehicle traffic.

The public is allowed to walk, ski and rest wherever they wish. Overnight stays in the open or in a tent are also permitted in natural areas, but no closer than 150 m from houses or cabins. If a person wishes to stay overnight more than two nights in the same place, he will need permission from the landowner. Overnight stays are permitted to stay overnight without the consent of the landowner when this is done far from houses and in mountains areas.

The right of public access to nature also implies obligations. People must act in a considerate and careful manner so as not to harm or disadvantage the owner, users or others. People must tidy up after themselves and take care of the environment. No matter where they go, people must be respectful and not harm or unnecessarily disturb domestic animals, nature or game.

Today, the right of public access to nature is threatened by various forms of commercialisation, privatisation and not least by illegally shut off areas in beach zones. Furthermore, a liberal practice of dispensations from planning and building legislation has led to increasing built-up areas in areas which used to be attractive for recreational activities.

In the EU and in other international contexts, the Nordic countries will work for better access to nature.

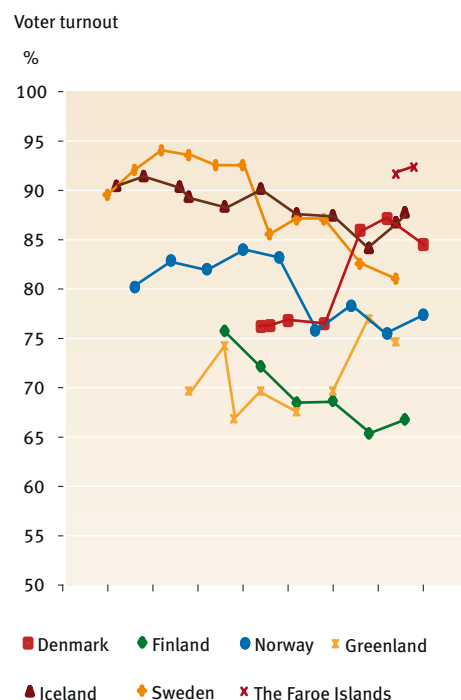
Voter turnout

Source: National statistics and Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2005

The figure shows the turnout of voters in national elections in the Nordic countries and self-governing areas. The turnout is calculated as the number of valid votes cast in relation to the number of persons entitled to vote.

The Faroe Islands has the highest turnout - 92.3 % of the persons entitled to vote cast valid votes in the most recent national election. Iceland is second with a turnout of valid votes of 86.7 %. Åland and Finland have the lowest turnout of valid votes in national elections - 66-68 %.

It is a precondition for sustainable development that Nordic societies build upon democracy, openness and participation in local, regional and national cooperation. The Nordic countries also have an overall ambition to build a high degree of awareness of the challenges and processes that lead to sustainable development. The turnout of voters is an expression of the population's commitment in relation to political decisions of general importance for society.



The Nordic Sami Parliaments

Today Norway, Sweden and Finland each have their own Sami Parliaments. This table shows an overview of the Sami Parliaments. Finland was the first country to establish a special organ for Sami issues in 1973. It was restructured in 1996 to an organisational model closer to the Swedish and Norwegian Sami Parliaments. The Norwegian Sami Parliament was inaugurated in 1989 and the Swedish one in 1993. The Russian Sami do not have a similar body.

Sami Parliaments in the Nordic countries	Inauguration of Sami Parliament	Number of members	Number of parties	Number of voters	Voter turnout
Norway	1989	39	6	12475	71 % (2005)
Sweden	1993	31	6	7180	66 % (2005)
Finland	1973	21	-	5155	55 % (2003)

Source: The Swedish Sami Parliament: <http://www.sametinget.se/sametinget/view.cfm?oid=1000>

The Norwegian constitution stipulates that the central government must organise society in such a manner that the Sami can safeguard their language, culture and society. The Norwegian Sami Parliament leads the way in this regard. The Norwegian state appropriates approx. NOK 200 million to the Sami Parliament and Sami culture. A Sami Parliament building in Kasjok was inaugurated in 2000. The Sami Parliament has more than 100 employees.

On 16 November 2005, a proposal for a Nordic Sami convention was submitted to the Nordic Sami Ministers and the Presidents of the Sami Parliaments. This was a milestone in Nordic Sami politics and in Nordic cooperation in general. The efforts to establish a Nordic Sami convention spanned a number of years, dating from the Nordic Sami Conference in 1986 to the initiation of a government initiative at the meeting of the Nordic Council in Reykjavik in February 1995. The Nordic Strategy on Sustainable Development pays special attention to the role of indigenous peoples in society's sustainable development processes.



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This edition is a short version of the set of indicators "Focus on Sustainable Development, Nordic Indicators 2006" which was endorsed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Ministers for Co-operation on 14 June 2006. This compilation contains the key indicators related to the Nordic strategy on sustainable development "Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries", revised edition with goals and initiatives for 2005 – 2008.

The Nordic strategy on sustainable development and the total set of indicators can be found on the web-site www.norden.org/baeredygtig_udvikling/uk

