

**FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN
FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS
IN
THE NORDIC REGION'S
ADJACENT AREAS**

ACTION PLAN 2002

NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, COPENHAGEN, JUNE 2001

1. INTRODUCTION

The drafting of the Action Plan for Children and Young Adults in the Areas Adjacent to the Nordic Region is based on Recommendation 8/97, issued by the Nordic Council. In this context the term *adjacent areas* is defined as the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and northwest Russia (i.e. the city of St. Petersburg, and the oblasts of Leningrad, Karelia, Arkhangelsk and Murmansk). The term also covers Kaliningrad. Following the session of the Nordic Council held in November 1998, the requirements for continued implementation of the Action Plan were stipulated in Recommendation 13/98:

“The Nordic Council recommends that:

- the Nordic Council of Ministers adopt its proposal as a framework programme, with a view to improving the situation of children and young adults in the areas adjacent to the Nordic region;
- the Nordic Council present an Annual Action Plan for implementation, including the allocation of responsibility and budgetary provisions. The first Annual Action Plan should be delivered to the Nordic Council not later than May 1999;
- the Nordic Council report annually on progress and difficulties in connection with implementation of the Annual Action Plan;
- steps be taken, via the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation, to co-ordinate the measures implemented by the Nordic countries to improve conditions for children and young adults in the adjacent areas; and
- the budget for the year 2000 drawn up by the Nordic Council of Ministers should, to a greater extent, meet the need for the resources required to implement the Action Plan”.

In future, the original plan submitted to the Nordic Council (*handlingsplan*) will be referred to as the *Framework Action Plan*, while the plans devised for specific years (*aksjonsplan*) will be referred to as *Action Plans*.

The target group for the Council of Ministers' Framework Plan - and thus for Action Plan 2002 - is children and young adults. The Nordic Council places a particular emphasis on the plight of children who are especially vulnerable, e.g. orphans, street children, disabled children and others in need of special care.

Children and young adults need reinforcement of their cultural identity and self-worth, e.g. by being given an opportunity to express themselves and by meeting their counterparts from the Nordic countries. The action plan also includes these children.

The Framework Plan adopted in 1998 identified several specific areas in which measures are to be implemented:

- co-ordination of measures;
- competence transfer;
- assistance in developing schemes focusing on children's rights, etc;

- preventive health-care, especially for mothers/children, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, vaccination programmes and measures to combat lifestyle-related diseases; and
- cultural initiatives, e.g. setting up local youth councils and providing support for maintaining and developing public libraries.

Work on the Framework Plan for Children and Young Adults in the Adjacent Areas has been carried out as an interdivisional project by the Executive Committee on Social Security and Health Care (EK-S Nær), the Management Group for Child & Youth Culture in the Nordic Region (BUK) and Nordic School Cooperation (NSS) as well as the Council of Ministers' Secretariat - co-ordinated by the adviser for social policy. The Framework Action Plan and the Action Plans are coordinated with the cross-sectorial action plan "Norden inn i et nytt årtusen" (The Nordic Region in a New Millennium), concerning Nordic cooperation on policies for children and adolescents in the period 2001–2005.

2. STATUS

Against the background of the Framework Plan presented at the Session of the Nordic Council held in November 1998 and the Annual Action Plans since then, an infrastructure for the implementation of projects has been established. Key to this implementation are the Nordic information offices in the Baltic nations and in St. Petersburg, and it is through collaboration with these offices that a system has been established to process applications and follow up on projects. In the year 2000, two rounds of applications were arranged, and by the end of the year, no less than 119 different projects had been initiated under the auspices of the Action Plan. Through frequent communication between the contact officers of the information offices and the Council of Ministers' Secretariat, routines are developed and improved so that we now have a system which is viewed as flexible, fair and non-bureaucratic.

2.1. ECONOMY

In last year's action plan it was shown that many of the Council of Ministers' activities are carried out in the area covered by the framework plan. This means that it is important to co-ordinate these activities and that the level of activity is higher than might be assumed if only the budget for the framework plan were to be taken into consideration.

BUDGET 2002

2.1.1. Funding specifically allocated to the Framework Plan: TDKK = DKK 1,000

Year		2001	2002 (preliminary figures)	2003 (preliminary figures)
From the Programme for the Adjacent Areas	TDKK	2,100	2,100	2,100
From the Management Group for Child & Youth Culture in the Nordic Region (BUK)	TDKK	*250	500	500
From NSS	TDKK	**700	500	500
From the Executive Committee on Social Security and Health Care (EK-S Nær)	TDKK	500	500	500

Total	TDKK	3,550	3,600	4,000
--------------	-------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

*BUK has also allocated DKK 250,000 to the project "Moderne Cirkus - et annorlunde språk" (Modern Circus – a different language), covering Latvia, Estonia and northwest Russia.

**The figure includes DKK 200,000 from the year 2000, which has been transferred in 2001.

Budget figures for 2002 will not be available until November 2001.

The budget figures for 2001 exceeded the expectations significantly because the Nordic Council changed its priorities in connection with the November 2000 session, and because the Council of Ministers (ministers for co-operation) (MR-SAM) finalised the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget.

2.1.2. Divisional funding 2002 - for planned or ongoing projects in areas covered by the Framework Plan: (preliminary figures)

BRIMHEALTH, education programme from NHV - Public Health	TDKK	1,000
Anti-infection project	TDKK	1,000
Valhalla network for Child- and Youth Culture in the Nordic Region and the Baltic states	TDKK	1,250
"A School for All" - A Baltic/Nordic project on education of children with special needs	TDKK	2,100

As compared with previous action plans, these figures represent a significant increase in the funding of the BRIMHEALTH-programme, and that the programme has now been limited in time to the end of 2003. The anti-infection project, which has included several smaller projects for the inoculation of children and adolescents, funded by the Framework Action Plan, will gradually be phased out by the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM).

2.2 NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' INFORMATION OFFICES

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Information Offices in Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn and St. Petersburg play a very important role in the implementation of the Framework Plan for Children and Young Adults, and have thus been given a central role in the implementation of the action plan. With a view to ensuring local anchorage for Nordic co-operation activities, national reference groups have been appointed at all the information offices. The composition of the groups varies, but they all have representatives both from public authorities and NGOs. The national reference groups have been requested to: a) take decisions on funding applications at national level, i.e. applications funded via the framework plan resources made available to the information offices; and b) express their opinion on the applications that are determined at central level.

The experience gained hitherto shows that in emphasising local anchorage we have adopted the right approach to the implementation of the framework plan. It is proposed that the fund which the information offices have at their disposal be increased to TDKK 300 per office, and that the St. Petersburg office furthermore be allocated TDKK 50 for each of the offices in Arkhangelsk, Petrozavodsk and Murmansk. The reason for this is partly that the offices play an increased role in the projects, partly that the financial needs are very high in these areas

and, finally, that the Nordic Council of Ministers' new strategy for the adjacent areas calls for a focusing on this geographic area within the scope of the Framework Action Plan. For 2003, it is proposed that TDKK 50 be granted to a possible new office in Kaliningrad.

The scheme whereby contact persons are appointed at each of the information offices has also functioned satisfactorily. This, combined with the employment of a 20% project staffer in the Council of Ministers' Secretariat, means that the implementation of the action plan can take place in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

2.3 CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

Many of the existing projects under the aegis of the Council of Ministers are – for obvious reasons – co-operation partners. The most relevant projects in this context appear to be:

- Measures to combat infectious diseases in the adjacent areas
- BRIMHEALTH (Nordic School of Public Health's training programmes)
- “A School for All” - Baltic/Nordic measures to promote special education/training
- Grants and Exchange Schemes
- Cultural institutions
- Youth organisations
- VALHALLA (website)

Information activities have also been conducted for the benefit of several external co-operation partners, including representatives of public authorities in the adjacent areas (who have participated in meetings of the Executive Committee); the Expert Group appointed to draw up the health care plan for the Barents region; the WHO Regional Office for Europe; representatives of USAID; SIDA (Sweden); UNICEF Russia and other parties.

Furthermore, extensive efforts are made to communicate information about the Action Plan and the coordination of efforts and activities, both originating with the local Information Offices in the Adjacent Areas and in the Nordic countries through the ministries' representatives in BUK, NSS and the EK-S' adjacent area group. Contact is also maintained with other partners, such as the Barents Sea Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, SIDA, WHO, USAID and UNICEF.

3. ACTION PLAN 2002

3.1 Objectives

“The Framework Plan must implement, adjust and provide funding for projects, and improve social, health-related and cultural conditions for children and young adults in the adjacent areas, applying a long-term perspective, by:

- Co-ordinating measures
- Transferring and developing competencies
- Contributing to the establishing and development of local democracy, based on local involvement and anchorage.”

The goals must stress the importance both of local anchorage and a long-term perspective, i.e. at least three years. The three main points refer to: a) the proposals outlined in the Framework Plan submitted at the Nordic Council's Session in November 1998; and b) the goals adopted for the Nordic region's co-operation with the adjacent areas.

3.2 PRIORITISED MEASURES

During the plan-period, priorities will be accorded to the following measures:

- Implementation of new measures within the framework of existing projects, e.g. measures to combat infectious diseases, certain cultural projects, competence transfers and co-ordination;
- Preventive measures related to health care, in particular with regard to reproductive health and primary health care services;
- Establishing contacts, establishing/developing networks;
- Measures for disabled children, street children and children at risk of marginalisation, along with measures for children in public care (institutions and foster home schemes);
- Measures for children and young adults with drug-related problems;
- Further development of the VALHALLA (website) project, *inter alia* by improving access to the site from the Nordic Information Offices;
- Increased focus on cross-sectorial cooperation; and
- Increased focus on the Barents Sea region.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION

The system established to implement the Framework Action Plan appears to be functioning well. There is a continued need for regular contact between the local information offices and the Council of Ministers' Secretariat, and a resulting adjustment and improvement of the work routines. The system of two yearly rounds of application is satisfactory.

Even though activity varies from one country to the next, the Framework Action Plan and the efforts carried out in relation to the Plan is viewed as a success. To date, the work completed has contributed to an increased focus on the situation of children and adolescents at risk in a very concrete manner; it has made our local information offices visible to new groups in the countries; and it has contributed to a national commitment through the efforts of the reference groups.

A central contribution to the implementation is the preparation of a project catalogue. The Nordic Council's Adjacent Areas Committee in their report on Action Plan 2000–2001 requested such a catalogue, and a catalogue of the projects of 2000 has now been prepared. The catalogue is to be updated biannually by the Secretariat, and will be put on the internet so that potential applicants as well as other interested parties can access the information they need about the activities in a simple manner. The internet is also used actively to disseminate information on the Action Plans, and guideline, demands as well as an application form can be found at the Nordic homepage and on the homepages of the local information offices.

3.4 CONCRETE MEASURES FOR ACTION PLANS 2002 and 2003 (preliminary)

(In DKK 1,000 (TDKK))

	MEASURES	2002	2003 (Prel.)
1.	Funding placed at the disposal of the information offices	1,350	1,400
2.	Projects including major projects	1,950	1,950
3.	Secretariat expenses	250	250
	Total	3,550	3,600

Notes:

- a) The proposal covers allocation of the funding set aside for direct follow-up of the Framework Plan in 2002, and does not take into account any funding transferred from one year to the next.
- b) Measure no. 1 covers the projects in which the information offices themselves take the decisions along with the national reference groups, while measure no. 2 includes the projects covered by the central working group. With regard to the amount placed at the disposal of the information offices, we suggest an increase, from TDKK 250 to TDKK 300 per office. Furthermore, it is suggested that the St. Petersburg Office be granted an extra TDKK 50 for each of the offices: in Arkhangelsk, Petrozavodsk and Murmansk. A preliminary suggestion for 2003 is an allocation of TDKK 50 to a possible office in Kainegrad.
- c) The secretariat's expenses cover an amount corresponding to 20% of a full-time position, along with running and travel expenses.

4. FURTHER STEPS

In compliance with Recommendation 13/98, this plan document is to be submitted to the Nordic Council following treatment by the Nordic Executive Committee on Social Security and Health-care (EK-S Nær) in late May and the beginning of June 2001. Parallel with this, the document will be sent to the Nordic Committee for Co-operation (NSK) and to the Council of Ministers (ministers for co-operation) so as to ensure the anchorage and co-ordination called for in the Recommendation.

Against this background, the Nordic Council of Ministers submit this action plan to the Nordic Council.

Copenhagen, May 2001

Viveca Arrhenius (signatory)

Chairman of the Nordic Executive Committee on Social Security and Health Care (EK-S Nær)