



More information on the Nordic Council of Ministers' environmental work can be found on [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org).

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Projects specifically dealing  
with biological diversity you will  
find in our brochure "Nordic effort  
to halt the loss of biodiversity".



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# Nordic landscapes – living heritage



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# Nordic landscapes – living heritage

Implementing international conventions on landscape and cultural heritage, such as the World Heritage Convention, the European Landscape Convention and the Granada Convention is an important issue in the Nordic environmental cooperation. This brochure highlights a number of projects dealing with landscape and cultural heritage, as well as the interlinkages between nature and cultural heritage.

The Nordic cooperation is deeply rooted in centuries of shared history, shared cultural traditions, shared geography, similar living conditions and similar societies. Man's dependence on and interrelation with nature expresses itself clearly in the Nordic landscapes. Man has left its print on nature, and natural resources have been the foundation for human culture, lifestyle and identity in the Nordic countries. The Nordic region is with 25 million people rather scarcely populated, although there are significant differences of population density in different areas.

The Nordic region consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and the self-governed regions within Denmark and Finland, The Faroe Islands and Greenland (Denmark), and Åland (Finland). There are established programs for cooperation with the Baltic States, North-west Russia and neighbors in the Western region. The Nordic cooperation is implemented through the Nordic Council (members of Parliament) and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The environmental sector in the Nordic Council of Ministers has expressed its priorities in a new Environmental Action Plan for 2009–2012. One of these priorities is cooperation to help implement the European Landscape Convention. Another priority is to increase knowledge about and to make visible the significance of landscapes and cultural heritage for a good quality of life. It is the task of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Working group on Terrestrial Ecosystems to follow up these priorities.

The Working Group has initiated or contributed to several projects dealing with landscape, cultural heritage and the interlinkages between nature and cultural heritage. In this folder we present some of these projects. We hope that these may be useful examples for other regions to consider.



### For a richer future – 13 conventions on the natural and cultural environment

Conventions are an important tool for conserving the world's natural and cultural heritage. The Nordic countries have a long tradition of participating in this type of international collaboration. In the booklet "For a Richer future" 13 international conventions on nature protection and cultural heritage are presented. These conventions are: Biodiversity Convention – CITES Convention – Ramsar Convention – Bern Convention – Bonn Convention – Whaling Convention – Helsinki Convention – OSPAR Convention – World Heritage Convention – European Landscape Convention – Granada Convention – Malta Convention and – Aarhus Convention. The booklet gives a short introduction to each of these conventions as well as their relevance to the Nordic countries. The booklet is published in TemaNord 2006:565 in 7 languages including English, and can be downloaded from [www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org).

### Effects of climate change on cultural heritage and cultural environments

A warmer and wetter climate in the Nordic countries will affect historic buildings, archaeology and landscapes. On the other hand have many of our historic buildings proved their ability to withstand the wear and tear of time and weather throughout numerous years. Our cultural heritage can thus provide us with knowledge on how man coped with varying climate circumstances. In the first phase the Nordic project has made a survey of the various effects of climate change on the different types of cultural heritage and cultural environments in the Nordic countries. In the second phase one will look at consequences for management and possible preventive actions.



### Guide to historically valuable installations and sites from the cold war period in countries around the Baltic Sea

This cold war history project has both Nordic, Baltic and Russian participants. The main objective of the initiative is to strengthen the mutual understanding between the countries around the Baltic Sea through exchange of information concerning recent history. A guide will be published, containing information about the cold war period told from sites where events took place.

### The Nordic Viking Age on a Digital map

The aim of this project is to create a visitor-friendly and interactive multimedia product presenting sixteen important central Nordic sites from the Viking / Late Iron Age. In addition the project shows in a playful manner the inter-Nordic connections that existed between them. At the same time the project aims to strengthen the collaborative links between Nordic visitor venues / museums and create a cooperative network and exchange of ideas related to the interpretation of our common Nordic cultural heritage. The project is presented at each of the partners' website and the prototype of the product can be seen at [www.raa.se/vikingaresan](http://www.raa.se/vikingaresan).

### Nature and cultural heritage as a resource for sustainable development and growth

How can natural and cultural values be a resource for sustainable development in the Nordic countries? That is the question this project tries to answer, by providing case-studies of regional or local success stories. The possible synergy effect of working cross-sectoral with both nature and cultural heritage will be assessed. The project will



therefore highlight examples where a combination of natural and cultural heritage has been the foundation of social, economic and environmentally sound development. The project will concentrate on three themes: Nature and cultural heritage tourism, Business development, and a Good living environment.

### Nordic Blue Parks

This innovating project combines – for the first time – nature, cultural heritage and recreation – under water! Our underwater cultural heritage has been exceptionally well preserved throughout centuries. These underwater secrets have so far been revealed and accessible only to a small group of sports divers with archaeological knowledge. A similar situation appears for the Nordic underwater nature, where habitats and key species are still rather unknown to the large public. The project's idea of Nordic Blue Parks is a new concept that combines underwater nature trails and underwater cultural trails (wreck trails and trails at other anthropogenic sites and constructions under water). This is a one year pilot project, trying to formulate criteria and guidelines for sustainable blue trails, and to set up trails to test the concept.

### Follow-up of the European Landscape Convention

A network has been established to facilitate the Nordic countries' follow-up of the European Landscape Convention. The co-operation started with an initiating study on how landscape issues are dealt with in each of the Nordic countries, seen from the perspective of the European Landscape Convention. As a follow-up, two workshops have been held, in 2004 and 2007. Further cooperation in this network is foreseen.



### Outdoor recreation and mental health

The close relationship between man and nature expresses itself not only through man's economic activities based on natural resources, but also through man's enjoyment of nature as a recreational activity. One of our projects focuses on this relationship by compiling knowledge on the effect on humans' mental health of outdoor recreation. Aim of the project is to create an overview of relevant public and voluntary sector institutions, research, key individuals, projects and reports and to establish a network in the Nordic countries of people and organizations working in this field. Being physically active in natural surroundings triggers positive feelings. Cultural heritage forming a part of these surroundings can strengthen such positive experiences even more.

### Bioenergy and landscape

There is a vast variety of activities on bioenergy going on in the different sectors within the Nordic Council of Ministers. Two projects deal more specifically with questions related to increased use of biomass and its effects on nature and cultural heritage. A Swedish/ Nordic project looked into synergies by merging together experts within a broad variety of disciplines, i.a. environment, art, engineering and social history. Another project has recently started, and aims at making a survey of knowledge available on effects (negative or positive) of increased production of biomass for bioenergy on biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage.