



norden

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**Ministerrådsforslag retningslinjer for samarbejdet med naboerne i Vest**

Nordisk Ministerråd for samarbejdsministrene (MR-SAM) oversender hermed ministerrådsforslag vedrørende retningslinjer for samarbejdet med naboerne i Vest.

Ministerrådet beder om Rådets synspunkter til forslaget.

Med venlig hilsen  
Nordisk Ministerråd

Anne Berner  
Minister for nordisk samarbejde

Dagfinn Høybråten  
Generalsekretær



**GUIDELINES  
NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS'  
COOPERATION WITH NEIGHBORS TO THE WEST  
2017-2020**

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**BACKGROUND FOR THE CO-OPERATION**

The Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) current cooperation with its "neighbors to the west" has grown closer during the last decade. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Aaland face many of the same challenges and opportunities as regions in Canada, USA, UK, Scotland, Shetland Islands, Ireland and more. Common conditions and challenges are e.g. dispersed and small populations; large geographical areas; long distances; infrastructure challenges; cold North Atlantic and Arctic climates; and a widespread dependency on the sea and maritime resources. These challenges all demand development in a cooperative spirit. New opportunities and potential threats posed by e.g. climate change and maritime traffic in the North Atlantic and the Arctic increase the general interest for the area and give a sense to the strategic significance of the area.

This development calls upon a deeper understanding and a deeper cooperation between the Nordic region and neighbors in the west. It is an objective of the Nordic region to cooperate with neighbors to the west on subjects of common interest and, in doing so, to strengthen affinities between the regions. Cooperation must therefore be of mutual benefit to all parties involved. These guidelines are meant as a supporting and guiding tool for achieving this objective.

The cooperation is by nature regional and/or multilateral and shall take place between the Nordic countries, within the framework of the various Nordic Minister Councils and various Nordic programs, and relevant partners in the west. This cooperation is designed to complement and support on areas where cooperation generates Nordic synergy and mutual added value.

In February 2014 the Ministers of Nordic Cooperation (MR-SAM) agreed on a vision with four developing goals: 1) A borderless Nordic region; 2) An innovative Nordic region; 3) A visible Nordic region and 4) An extrovert Nordic region. In late 2014 the Ministers of Nordic Cooperation also agreed on a Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region. The Nordic vision and the International Branding Strategy will assist in giving strategic guidance in the cooperation with neighbors to the west. Cooperation between the Nordic region and neighbors to the west will be done in coherence with the overall international cooperation conducted in the Nordic Council of Ministers and other relevant existing and cross-sectoral strategies and programs.

**GUIDELINES**

With an increasing interest for cooperation with neighbors to the west, the purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for the cooperation.

The guidelines shall secure and achieve:

- Active involvement from minimum three of the members of the Nordic cooperation (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Greenland, Faroe Islands and Aaland).
- Mutual benefit between NCM and the partners in the west.
- Added value for all parties and avoidance of duplication.

- Incorporation of cross-sectorial strategies of the NCM (e.g. sustainable development, children and young peoples' involvement; and gender equality).
- Mutual and deeper understanding between the Nordic region and neighbors to the west.

MR-SAM and its senior official level Nordic Committee for Cooperation (NSK) are responsible for international cooperation extending beyond the geographic area covered by official Nordic cooperation under the Helsinki Treaty and thus have the overarching responsibility for cooperation with neighbors to the west.

Other entities, such as other minister councils and associated Nordic institutions, could be responsible for concrete implementation of projects within cooperation with neighbors to the west. The minister councils can cooperate with different parts of the geographic area covered by these guidelines depending on identification of Nordic synergy. The guidelines govern NCM's activities in relation to the cooperation and are seen as a starting point for the development of joint objectives and activities.

### **PRIORITIES**

Broader Nordic cooperation with neighbors to the west must build on shared interests, experiences gained from previous cooperation projects, Nordic and reciprocal added value and feedback from discussions with existing and potential partners.

The NCM is interested in creating, supporting and contributing to overall sustainable development and the "2030 agenda" through certain priorities on the following themes:

- Maritime issues
- Trade and economic development
- The environment, climate and energy
- Research, innovation, education and training
- Culture
- Health
- Gender equality
- Children and youth involvement

### **INSTRUMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATION**

Cooperation can be developed and achieved through the following instruments:

- Cooperation with neighbors to the west.
- Cooperation in and through the Nordic institutions and organs of co-operation.
- Relevant programs run by the ministerial councils, Nordic institutions and Nordic organs of cooperation.
- Different types of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU).
- Exchanging information and comparing experiences (benchmarking).
- External partner instruments, budget lines and cooperation mechanism.

The existing ten Nordic ministerial councils can develop cooperation based on respective priorities. Relevant official representatives (such as the embassies of the Nordic countries) will also play an important support function in the cooperation.

The Nordic regional intergovernmental body "Nordic Atlantic Cooperation" (NORA) can, in particular, via its expertise in relation to the North Atlantic region, play a role as a consultative and facilitative body in conjunction with the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat. NORA can also play a part as an

implementing organization and its function as a consultative body will be decided individually in each tangible situation.

### **FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES**

Since 2009, MR-SAM has had a separate budget for cooperation with neighbors to the west which is the backbone of this cooperation. This budget should be seen as seed funding, not operational funding. 50 percent of a project's budget must be financed by the project manager or owner(s) of a given project.

### **TIME PERSPECTIVE**

These guidelines apply to the period 2017–2020 (calendar years).

### **EVALUATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

The cooperation will be continuously evaluated. An in-depth evaluation shall be conducted in 2019, with a view to discussing continuation or refinement of the guidelines. MR-SAM will henceforth hold an annual general discussion on the cooperation and its progress based on reports on the cooperation. The individual initiatives and concrete projects will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, and the experiences will be referred to when developing the ongoing cooperation.

### **PROFILING THE COOPERATION**

Communication and profiling must be taken into consideration and must be done in a given project or initiative. The profiling of the cooperation shall be done in accordance with the NCM's profiling and communication strategies.

MR-SAM and other ministerial councils shall help increase the attention paid to and the volume of information about Nordic cooperation with neighbors to the west. This task must be undertaken in collaboration with the Nordic countries' official representatives, embassies, and relevant official Nordic bodies and institutions. The profiling of the cooperation will be extended and coordinated with relevant partners, who, on all levels and to the greatest possible extent, ought to be involved in making the cooperation visible.