



# THE NORDICS – a sustainable and integrated region?

Baseline report for Our Vision 2030

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# Foreword

The Nordic Council of Ministers has a vision of the Nordic Region being the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. It is an ambition that guides my work as Secretary General.

The Nordic countries may well be at the forefront of efforts to achieve sustainable development. They may well top international rankings for progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, we still need to work together to address several challenges, particularly how to promote ecologically sustainable development that avoids unsustainable production and consumption and addresses climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

The Nordic countries already comprise one of the most integrated regions in the world, but there is no room to ease up on our work to promote cross-border freedom of movement. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a timely reminder of just how easy it is to put barriers in the way of mobility during times of crisis.

How sustainable and integrated is the Nordic Region right now? What is the starting point for our work on the vision of becoming the world's most sustainable and integrated region? These are the questions addressed in this baseline report for Our Vision 2030, which builds on indicators designed to provide an overall picture of our progress.

We intend to use the report as a framework for discussions on how to realise our vision and guide our work. I am confident that it will prove useful not only for decision-makers and senior officials in the Nordic countries but also for anyone interested in the Region's progress towards becoming the most sustainable and integrated region in the world.

Together, we now have just under a decade to achieve the ambitious goals set out in Our Vision 2030. It may sound a long way off, but there is no time to lose.

**Paula Lehtomäki**

*Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers*



**Paula Lehtomäki**

Photo: Kristian Septimius Krogh/  
norden.org



Photos: Common Ground Media & Norden.org

# Introduction

In 2019, the Nordic prime ministers adopted an ambitious vision for co-operation between their countries. The goal, described in Our Vision 2030, is for the Nordic Region to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. Clearly, it is vital that progress toward the vision is closely and regularly monitored.

To this end, the Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned Rambøll Management Consulting to draw up a baseline for work on Our Vision. It is based on 45 Nordic indicators devised by the Council of Ministers. The idea was to develop a simple and easy-to-understand method for establishing a baseline and then monitoring status going forward. The baseline report will serve as a guide for the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on the action plan for the vision and for regular status reports.

As part of work on Our Vision 2030, the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation have also decided to set up a Nordic civil society network. The idea is to consult the organisations involved and for them to provide input. Various Nordic stakeholders were, therefore, involved in drawing up the baseline survey.

## Background

Our Vision 2030, which the Nordic prime ministers adopted in August 2019, has the ambitious goal of making the Nordic Region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.



**When we take big steps, it's easier to do it together. The transformation of the Nordic Region into the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030 will not be an easy feat. However, if the countries are prepared to work together, it will make the path easier for all of us.**

Una Hildardóttir, The Icelandic Youth Council (LUF), Iceland

Although Our Vision 2030 is based on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, the Nordic prime ministers wanted to see greater ambition and haste. As part of their vision, the Nordic Council of Ministers will focus on three strategic priorities: a green Nordic Region, a competitive Nordic Region and a socially sustainable Nordic Region.

In September 2020, the Nordic Ministers for Co-operation drew up a list of indicators to track progress on Our Vision 2030. Each of the three strategic priorities is subdivided into five focus areas, each of which has three indicators, making a total of 45. The Nordic indicators are clearly aligned with the UN SDGs set out in Agenda 2030. The baseline and status for the vision will be based on these 45 Nordic indicators (see Appendix 1).

## Baseline for Our Vision 2030

The baseline maps where the Nordic Region is starting from in its attempts to be the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. The 45 indicators are used to quantify progress.

The baseline measurement views the countries as a single region. The data for the 45 indicators reflects their *overall* status, not the status of the individual countries. It takes the form of a Nordic aggregate weighted according to national population. The countries perform differently on different indicators, but because Our Vision 2030 was drawn up for Nordic co-operation, the report does not dwell on national differences.

The baseline report describes the overall status of and progress of the 45 Nordic indicators, supplemented by perspectives from stakeholders who took part in a survey. Given that the Council of Ministers wanted a monitoring system to map out the baseline and monitor progress, no in-depth literature review was conducted, nor were outside experts drafted in to assess individual indicators.

The Council of Ministers will publish the baseline survey results on [norden.org](http://norden.org) and monitor trends for each indicator to make sure that progress stays on track.

## Methodology used to develop the baseline

Rambøll Management Consulting developed the method for calculating the baseline and monitoring the indicators. It is based on internationally recognised methodology for measuring sustainability developed for Agenda 2030 by the EU, the UN and the Bertelsmann Foundation. The model is described in brief below and in greater detail in section 6.

The model consists of four building blocks, which together make it possible to assess the Nordic indicators (see the box on the next page). The blocks are *A: Setting upper and lower reference points; B: Scaling and traffic-light scores; C: Benchmarks; and D: Inequality assessments*. The upper and lower reference points (building block A) were arrived at using a staircase model to quantify the Nordic starting point and status for each indicator. In other words, these are not politically determined goals set at Nordic level.



**Working together on a Nordic baseline and indicators puts us in a stronger position, not just because the countries can support and learn from each other but also because it will help us make progress towards the vision of the Nordic Region as the most sustainable and integrated region in the world.**

Eva Kirstine Fabricius, Danish Architecture Center (DAC), Denmark



**The baseline measurement is an interesting and concrete method for assessing long-term trends and identifying the biggest challenges and opportunities.**

Jari Lyytimäki, Environmental Policy Centre of the Finnish Environment

## Box 1. The four building blocks for the baseline model for Our Vision 2030

**A: Setting upper and lower reference points:** To make the status and progress of the 45 indicators quantifiable, we set upper and lower threshold values (Appendix 2). We based the method on a four-step staircase model supplemented by the principle that the measurements should be ambitious, realistic and meaningful in a Nordic context. The four steps were: 1) the Nordic countries' targets (weighted by population size); 2) SDGs or other international goals for which the Nordic countries have signed up; 3) best-performing EU or OECD countries or the historical peak for the Nordic Region; and 4) technical extremes on the scale.

**B: Scaling and traffic-light scores:** The model measures the status of and progress towards each ambition using a scaling and colour-coding method derived from the annual SDG Development Report (SDR). The distance between the upper and lower reference points for each indicator was plotted on a scale of 0–100 and a score assigned on one of four equal quartiles. These scores illustrate the status and progress of each indicator using a "traffic-light visualisation":

**Status:** Green corresponds to 75.1–100 on the scale; yellow corresponds to 50.1–75; orange to 25.1–50; and red to 0–25.









**Progress arrows:** We based the arrows on a simple historical trend projection, so they only provide a hint of what the future might bring. A green arrow means that the indicator for 2030 will be in the green status field (75.1–100); a yellow arrow that the projection is moving towards the upper reference point (> 0.5%) but not fast enough to reach green status by 2030; an orange arrow indicates stagnation (-0.5–0.0%); and a red arrow indicates that the trend is moving in the wrong direction, that is towards the lower reference point (> 0.5%).

**C: Benchmarks:** In order to establish a comparative basis for monitoring status and progress towards the ambitions for the individual indicators, data was collected for the top five performing and comparable OECD countries and a group of comparable countries was established for each of the three

strategic priorities.

**D: Inequality assessments:** Where data was available, gender, age and regional inequalities were assessed on the Theill index and supplementary data. The inequality assessment are purely descriptive.

The baseline survey uses colour coding for the status assessment and progress arrows<sup>1</sup> for each of the 45 indicators. The colours are:

Status		Progress arrows	
	The Nordic Region is currently fulfilling its ambitions		On track
	Still some challenges		Moderate improvements
	Still significant challenges		Stagnation
	Still major challenges		Moving in wrong direction

To assure the quality of the method, a workshop was held with an expert group assembled specifically for the project. It consisted of participants from Statistics Denmark, Statistics Sweden, Statistics Norway, the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Oslo Centre for Interdisciplinary Environmental and Social Research and Nordregio, and three experts from the Nordic Council of Ministers' Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development. The model and initial results were also presented to the Expert Group at a meeting and a follow-up workshop.

A number of social stakeholders also helped develop and provide input into the baseline measurement. They included representatives from civil society organisations, research and professional institutions and other relevant stakeholders from all of the Nordic countries. They provided input and perspective at three workshops, one for each strategic priority. They will

1. The progress arrows are based on a simple projection of the historical trend and do not include other variables. The arrows, therefore, give only a hint of the possible future trend.

also be involved in the ongoing work on Our Vision 2030. Five of these stakeholders were also asked to provide quotes for the baseline report.

The focus of the development work was to draw up the methodology and calculate the baseline for the status of the Nordic Region in relation to Our Vision 2030. It did not include other analyses or research intended to explain or posit knowledge-based hypotheses about the background to the results. The baseline measurement is, therefore, primarily a descriptive analysis of the Region's current position in relation to realising the vision on the basis of the 45 indicators.

The measurement is based on the latest available data for each of the indicators. Therefore, one consequence of this approach is that none of the indicators – neither status assessments nor progress arrows – reflects the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21.

## **The baseline as a guide to the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on Our Vision 2030**

The baseline report is an independent assessment by Rambøll Management Consulting, which will be used as a guide for the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on the action plan for Our Vision 2030. The starting point and trends are important pieces of information that will help the Nordic Council of Ministers encourage already positive trends and address challenges or negative trends.

It must be stressed, however, that several factors will influence progress towards the vision, including initiatives taken by the Council of Ministers, by the Nordic governments and by other Nordic stakeholders, as well as the impact of global trends. The baseline report is not, therefore, an evaluation of the work done by the Council of Ministers to realise its vision. It is an assessment of where the Nordic Region stands right now.





Photos: Common Ground Media & Norden.org

# Status of Our Vision 2030

## The Nordic Region is on its way to becoming a sustainable and integrated region, but there is still room for improvement

Overall, the baseline measurement for Our Vision 2030 indicates that the Nordic Region started from a solid base and, in general, is making good progress towards becoming the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. However, the survey also reveals challenges and room for improvement, particularly on the theme of *a green Nordic Region*, as well as the potential for improvement on *a competitive Nordic Region* and *a socially sustainable Nordic Region*.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the baseline measurements for the three strategic priorities. The colour coding reflects the status assessments for the 15 indicators for each strategic priority. Evaluations of the trends for the indicators are not included in this figure. They are contained in the next three sections of the report.

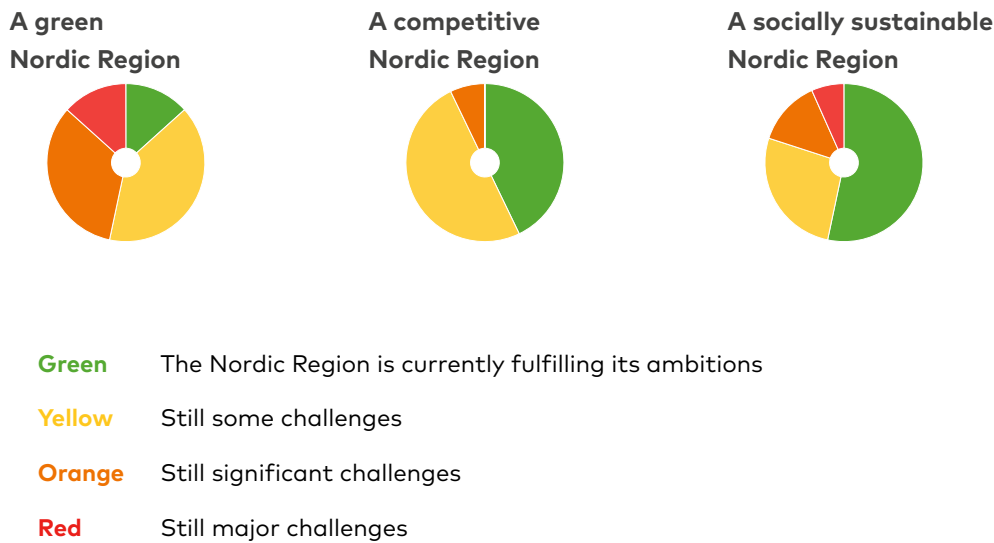
As the figure shows, the Nordic Region is doing particularly well on *competitiveness* and is well on its way to achieving its ambitions for this strategic priority. The greatest challenges and potential are in the *green transition*. Progress towards *social sustainability* has been good, with many of the ambitions fully or partially achieved, but significant or major challenges remain, and there is room for improvement between now and 2030.



**I have very mixed feelings about the current status. Young people are highly sceptical about us achieving our sustainability goals and doing what we can.**

Una Hildardóttir, The Icelandic Youth Council (LUF), Iceland

## Figure 1. Overall status of the three strategic priorities



Although the baseline measurement is sub-divided into three strategic priorities, it must be emphasised that overall trends for the Region need to be considered from an integrated sustainability perspective. From that point of view, the baseline measurement indicates a number of synergies between the three strategic priorities that will be key to realising the vision. For example, the ambition of being *a green Nordic Region* is bolstered by the Region's strong position in green innovation and the fact that it is highly competitive. The baseline measurement also shows that green growth and innovation must not undermine social sustainability. Growth and innovation must, in general, respect the sustainability of nature. These synergies are expanded upon later in the report.

The idea that everyone should be involved – *leave no one behind* – is a fundamental principle in Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. As far as possible, the baseline report highlights gender, age and regional inequalities. It has not been possible to obtain data for inequalities on all of the indicators, including for *a green Nordic Region*. This is one area in which improvements could be made.

The baseline for each of the three strategic priorities is summarised in brief below.

## The green transition poses a significant challenge

The biggest challenges relate to the strategic priority *a green Nordic Region*. The baseline survey leaves the impression that green transition may well be on the agenda in the Nordic Region but that there is a need to accelerate progress if the ambitions for a sustainable and integrated Nordic Region are to be achieved.

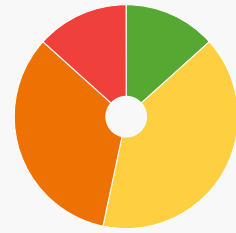
On a positive note, the baseline measurement reflects the fact that the Region has come a long way in terms of green innovation and green growth. For example, progress has been good on renewable energy and the amount of agricultural land used for organic farming. Progress on these points is so positive that it looks as if the ambitions for them will be achieved by 2030. Local authorities are already fulfilling the ambitions for recycling municipal waste.

In other areas, the Nordic Region has not yet realised its potential for green transition. For example, it is clear that greenhouse gas emissions and energy intensity (i.e. energy consumption in relation to economic or physical output and the material footprint) are not currently in line with Nordic ambitions. Emissions of consumption-based greenhouse gases and greenhouse gas intensity are moving in the right direction, which is positive, but movement on greenhouse gas emissions is stagnating and will not meet the ambitions by 2030 if the current trend continues. Of particular concern is the fact that the material footprint is moving in the wrong direction. In other words, it is getting bigger and at a faster rate than comparable countries.

The baseline measurement also indicates that the protection of nature and biodiversity is a challenge in some areas, particularly for the focus area *life below water*, in which eutrophication in the Baltic Sea is particularly problematic. If the current trend continues, there will be a moderate reduction in eutrophication in the Baltic; however, fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea will be reduced and not be on track. The Region also faced challenges in relation to the focus area *life on land*. The bird population in the agricultural landscape has fallen over the last two decades. On the other hand, it is positive that organic farming is gaining ground.

As mentioned previously, it has not been possible to assess inequalities in terms of *a green Nordic Region* because relevant data is not available. Going forward, it would be interesting to include an assessment of, in particular, regional inequalities and inequalities related to greenhouse gas emissions.

A green Nordic Region



## Strong starting point as a competitive region

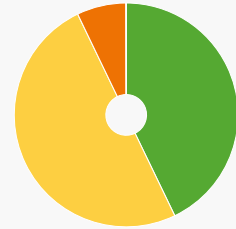
The strategic priority on which the Nordic Region is doing best is a *competitive Nordic Region*. The Region has already achieved its ambitions in a number of areas and, if current trends continue, it will be even more competitive in the future.

Overall, the baseline measurement paints a picture of a competitive and innovative Region with well-trained and educated populations and high employment rates. School drop-out rates mar the overall positive picture somewhat. Another key challenge is the education gap between men and women. Men obtain fewer qualifications than women and are at greater risk of dropping out of education. As the Nordic countries very much rely on well-trained and educated populations, it is important that this challenge is addressed.

There is also room for improvement if the ambition of being the most integrated region in the world by 2030 is to be achieved. At the moment, trade between the Nordic countries is on a par with the ambitions, but the numbers for cross-border commuting and migration to other Nordic countries are either stagnating or falling.

Four of the indicators for a *competitive Nordic Region* – employment in the circular economy, green patents, particulate pollution in cities and the use of public transport – underline the close links between it and a *green Nordic Region*. In other words, future growth must be green if it is to be sustainable. By and large, these four indicators are well on track to achieving the ambitions, and this presents a picture of a Nordic Region in which green innovation and research are positions of strength.

A competitive Nordic Region



## Solid starting point for social sustainability, but challenges remain

The Nordic Region is doing as well on the strategic priority *a socially sustainable Nordic Region* as it is on *a competitive Nordic Region*. The baseline paints a picture of societies with high levels of social trust and economic equality and healthy populations with long life expectancies.

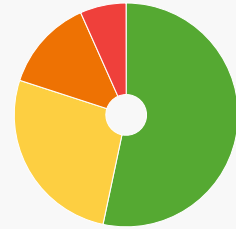
However, the baseline also reveals challenges. There is potential for greater gender equality at work; for example, the ambition of abolishing gender segregation in the labour market has not yet been met. The ambitions set for fathers' share of parental leave are not close to being achieved.

Considered along with the focus area *quality education* under the strategic priority *a competitive Nordic Region*, it is striking that although women are better qualified than men, gender inequality in the labour market is moving in the wrong direction. Challenges also remain in relation to integrating non-EU citizens, especially women, into the world of work.

These challenges also point to the link between the strategic priorities *social sustainability* and *competitiveness*. Without widespread social inclusion, i.e. everybody playing their part in society and the world of work, the Region's competitiveness and workforce will not realise their full potential by 2030.

The link between competitiveness and social inclusion applies in general, but it is a specific issue in relation to the green transition, on which there is a great deal of focus by politicians and business at the moment. A green transition without any social downside, in which everybody is involved and enjoys the benefits, is a crucial task on a global as well as a Nordic level. It would be a good idea for the ongoing status assessments to keep an eye on this.

A socially sustainable Nordic Region





Photos: Common Ground Media

# A green Nordic Region

**Together we will promote the green transition of our societies and strive for carbon neutrality and a sustainable, circular and bio-based economy.**

The baseline measurement indicates that the Nordic Region has a reasonable starting point in some areas, but in others, it still faces challenges in achieving the ambition of a green Nordic Region.

The current trend is in the right direction. However, for most of the indicators, the pace is too slow for the ambitions to be realised by 2030. Indeed, for five of them, the trend is either for stagnation or moving in the wrong direction.

Against this background, the stakeholders involved in the baseline measurement see a need for greater impetus towards the green transition and for more responsible consumption and production that takes into account the need to protect nature.

Figure 2 shows the status and trends for the 15 indicators for a *green Nordic Region*.

”

**The Nordic Region is naturally harsh, beautiful, brutal and demanding, but offers the world the perseverance, resilience and determination to overcome the challenges it faces, as well as the means needed to do so. The economic affluence of the Nordic Region means it has a responsibility to lead the way globally by implementing sustainable processes and solutions for the Earth and life on Earth.**

Chris McCormick, Design and Architecture (DOGA), Norway



Figure 2. Indicators for a green Nordic Region<sup>2</sup>

<b>Climate action</b>	Greenhouse gas emissions	Consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions	Extent of Arctic ice
<b>Affordable and clean energy</b>	Renewable energy	Energy intensity	Greenhouse-gas intensity
<b>Responsible consumption and production</b>	Material footprint	Recycling of municipal waste	Ecolabelling
<b>Life on land</b>	Protected land areas	Organic farming	Farmland birds
<b>Life below water</b>	Protected marine areas	Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea	Fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea

Status	Progress arrows
The Nordic Region is currently fulfilling its ambitions	On track
Still some challenges	Moderate improvements
Still significant challenges	Stagnation
Still major challenges	Moving in wrong direction

2. Find data in the Nordic Statistics Database: <https://indicators.nordicstatistics.org/ourvision2030>

## Greater effort needed on green transition

The baseline measurement indicates that green transition is high on the agenda, and the Nordic Region is progressing well towards the transition of energy production and agriculture. Progress towards reducing consumption and production and protecting natural resources and biodiversity, however, is less rapid.

On the positive side, it is striking that both the consumption of renewable energy and the proportion of agricultural land used for organic purposes are gaining ground. Indeed, if the current trend continues, the Nordic Region will have achieved its ambition for both of these indicators by 2030. Another position of strength is local authority recycling of waste, where it appears the ambitions have already been fulfilled.

The trends are also positive in other areas, but the baseline measurement clearly shows that efforts need to be intensified if the ambitions of *Our Vision 2030* are to be achieved.

In particular, attention needs to be paid to emissions of greenhouse gases, and the baseline measurement shows that this presents significant challenges on all parameters. Although the trend is moving in the right direction, greater momentum will be needed if the ambitions are to be realised by 2030.

The Nordic Region's material footprint and energy consumption are also too high; worryingly, the trend for the material footprint is moving in the wrong direction.

Closely associated with greenhouse gas emissions is the melting and shrinking of the Arctic ice. This is a major challenge that the Nordic Region cannot tackle alone, but one where it can demonstrate global leadership.

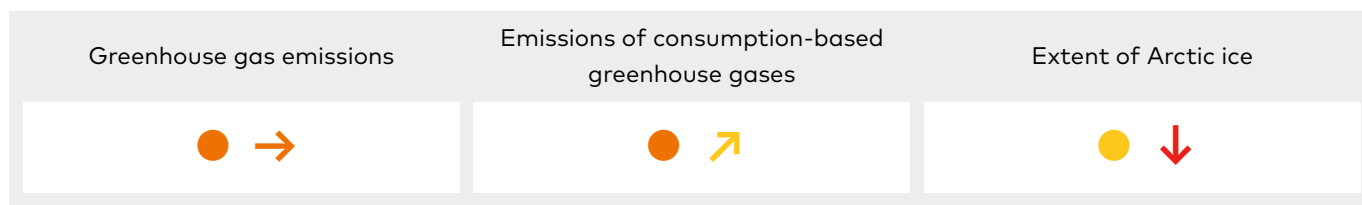
The baseline measurement sends both positive and negative signals about the protection of life and diversity at sea and on land. Organic farming is gaining ground to the extent that the ambition will be achieved by 2030 if the trend continues. In general, the current status of *life on land* is looking positive. More worrying is the fact that the bird population is declining, and the area covered by nature reserves is stagnating, both on land and at sea. The eutrophication of the Baltic Sea is another major challenge and, although levels have fallen and the trend is positive, it does not look as if the ambitions will be achieved by 2030.

The next section describes the status and trend in each focus area.



## Climate action

### Greenhouse gas emissions still too high



The Nordic Region faces challenges on all three indicators linked to the focus area *climate action*.

Nordic greenhouse gas emissions – from production in the Region<sup>3</sup> – are still above national targets, although they are still significantly lower than for the group of comparable countries. If this trend continues, the Nordic ambitions will not be met by 2030. However, the future prognoses are explicitly based on historical trends, so they do not take into account the Nordic countries' strategies or forward-looking measures to cut emissions.

Emissions of consumption-based greenhouse gases, i.e. emissions from the consumption of products produced in the Nordic Region as well as abroad, are currently only calculated for Sweden. As an indication of the Nordic situation, the current data for Sweden represents a significant challenge in relation to the ambitions in this area. Swedish emissions have fallen steadily since 2010, which is positive, but – based on the historical trend – not fast enough to achieve the Nordic ambition. It is hoped that other countries will make data available in future so that it will be possible to calculate a Nordic estimate for this indicator<sup>4</sup>.

The gradual melting of the Arctic ice cap – measured by the km<sup>2</sup> of the Arctic covered by ice (see Appendix 1) – is also a challenge. Most experts closely link this phenomenon with greenhouse gas emissions. The trend is moving in the wrong direction. Since 1990, the ice cap has shrunk from 11.7 to 10.2 million km<sup>2</sup> and, if current projections hold true, it will only be 9.5 million km<sup>2</sup> by 2030. Expert predictions about the future melting of the ice and its consequences vary considerably, but most see it as a challenge with potentially major negative implications for the climate and global society if current trends continue unabated.

Overall, the baseline measurement indicates that the Nordic Region faces challenges in terms of both greenhouse gas emissions and the melting of the Arctic ice sheet. The trends suggest that extra efforts need to be made if the ambitions are to be fulfilled. Stakeholders see an important role here for the Nordic Region: although its greenhouse gas emissions constitute a fraction of the global total, the Region can provide global leadership and show the way for the rest of the world, including in international climate

3. For a more detailed account of the difference between greenhouse gas emissions based on production within Nordic territorial boundaries and greenhouse gas emissions based on consumption, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenhouse\\_gas\\_inventory#Production-based\\_accounting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenhouse_gas_inventory#Production-based_accounting)

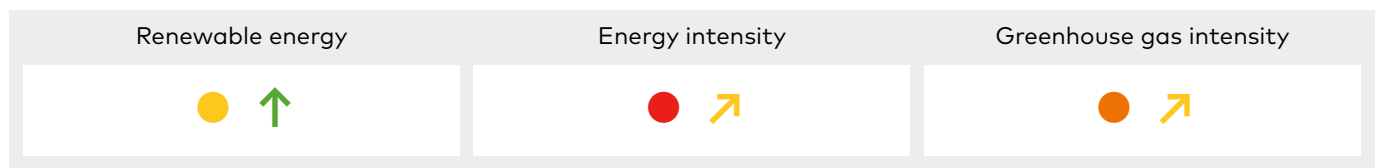
4. According to the model used in this report, data for the indicators must be based on at least 50% of the population of the Nordic Region. An exception has been made for indicator 1.1.2 because the baseline report needed to include an indication of the status for it.

negotiations.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Danmarks samlede forbrugsbaserede klimaaftryk (2021): [https://ens.dk/sites/ens.dk/files/Basisfremskrivning/delrapport\\_2\\_-\\_beregning\\_af\\_danmarks\\_samlede\\_forbrugsbaserede\\_klimaaftryk.pdf](https://ens.dk/sites/ens.dk/files/Basisfremskrivning/delrapport_2_-_beregning_af_danmarks_samlede_forbrugsbaserede_klimaaftryk.pdf)
- The Road Towards Carbon Neutrality in the Different Nordic Countries (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/road-towards-carbon-neutrality-different-nordic-countries>
- Democracy and climate engagement in the Nordic region (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/democracy-and-climate-engagement-nordic-region>
- Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic Summary for Policy-makers (2017): <https://swipa.amap.no/>

## Affordable and clean energy *Renewables gaining ground, but energy consumption still too high*



The indicators linked to the focus area *affordable and clean energy* show that the Nordic Region still faces challenges, even though progress has been made in some areas.

Just over half of the energy expended in the Nordic Region is from renewable sources. This means that the Region is well on its way to meeting the goals set by the Nordic countries for this area, and the trend is sufficiently positive to project that the ambitions can be achieved by 2030 if the current rate of progress is maintained.

The baseline measurement shows that energy intensity (consumption in relation to GDP) is a major challenge. This should be seen in the light of the fact that there is an overall EU target of an improvement of 32.5% on 2018. This target is for the EU as a whole and is not spread out among the

member states, but it can be used as a benchmark. Measured against this, the trend in the Nordic Region is moving in the right direction, although not quickly enough to achieve the ambitions for 2030.

The baseline measurement shows that greenhouse gas intensity is a significant challenge – this is the ratio between the energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and the gross consumption of energy (see also Appendix 1). This should be seen in the light of the fact that the ambition is for a full reduction of greenhouse gas intensity. The trend is for moderate improvement. However, greenhouse gas intensity has fallen steadily and been reduced by about a third since 1996. Although this is not fast enough to achieve the ambition for 2030, progress is more rapid than in the group of comparable countries.

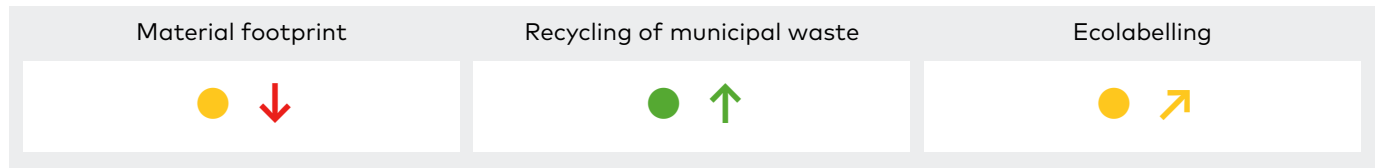
Overall, the Nordic Region is doing best in renewables, but energy intensity – the consumption of energy in relation to economic or physical output – needs to be reduced further if the ambitions are to be achieved by 2030. On the positive side, progress has been made on all the indicators for this focus area.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Nordics lead Europe in renewables (2021): [https://www.nordicenergy.org/article/nordics-lead-europe-in-renewables/?mc\\_cid=839dea502e&mc\\_eid=9d115a9781](https://www.nordicenergy.org/article/nordics-lead-europe-in-renewables/?mc_cid=839dea502e&mc_eid=9d115a9781)
- Progress Towards Nordic Carbon Neutrality – Tracking Nordic Clean Energy Progress 2020 (2020): <https://www.nordicenergy.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Tracking-Nordic-Clean-Energy-Progress-2020.pdf>
- Fit for Purpose? Toward trade rules that support fossil fuel subsidy reform and the clean energy transition (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/fit-purpose>
- Sustainable use of biomass for heating and transport fuel (2020): <https://www.nordicenergy.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Sustainable-use-of-biomass-for-heating-and-transport-fuel-1.pdf>

# Responsible consumption and production

## Material footprint too big



The indicators linked to the focus area *responsible consumption and production* are a mixed bag.

The material footprint in the Nordic Region in particular is a significant challenge. The Nordic countries are lagging behind both the best-performing OECD countries and the group of comparable nations, and the trend is moving in the wrong direction. The Region needs to reverse this trend if the ambitions are to be achieved by 2030.

The picture for recycling local authority waste is more positive. The Region is already fulfilling its ambitions for 2030. However, progress has been stagnant since 2015, and comparable countries are expected to overtake the Nordic Region if the historical trends continue. Stakeholders have noted that the indicator does not reflect the fact that the total waste generated in some of the Nordic countries is high compared to the EU<sup>5</sup>.

Ecolabelling with the Nordic Swan label has grown since measurements started in 2014. Although it is relatively good at the moment, there is still room for greater use of ecolabelling, and if it continues on its current trajectory, the ambitions will not be achieved by 2030.

Overall, the Nordic Region still faces challenges in terms of responsible consumption and production. In particular, the countries need to reduce their material footprint, which is a significant challenge, but ecolabelling is another area where there is room for improvement.

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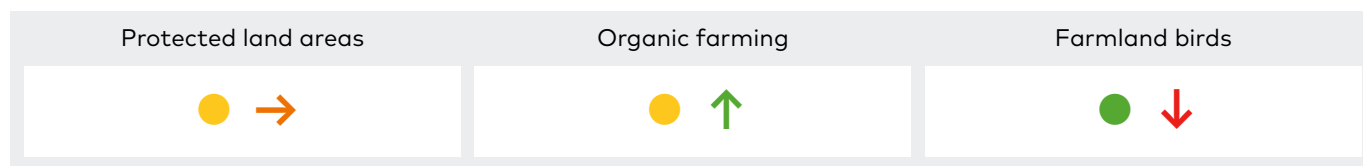
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- Nordic Youth As Sustainable Changemakers – In the transition to sustainable consumption and production (2019): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/nordic-youth-sustainable-changemakers>
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## Life on land

### ***Nature conservation and organic farming gaining ground, biodiversity under pressure***



The indicators for *life on land* reflect the Nordic Region's strengths in protecting nature and biodiversity on land but also show that challenges remain. At present, the status is relatively good for this focus area, but stagnant or negative trends for two of the three indicators should be addressed.

Just under 17% of the Nordic landmass consists of protected nature areas when national parks are included. As such, there is still potential for improvement on this indicator in relation to the EU target of 30%, even though the Nordic Region performs better than the group of comparable countries. The situation has not changed since 2012, and if this trend continues, the ambitions for this indicator will not be achieved in 2030.

More positive is the fact that the amount of organic agricultural land in the Nordic countries is growing. It contributes to biodiversity through more diversified farming without the use of pesticides and protects existing

nature. Just 15% of agricultural land is organic, however, so the Nordic Region is still some distance from the EU target of 25%, even though it is doing well in relation to the group of comparable countries. The most positive point is that if the current trend is maintained, the 2030 ambitions will be fulfilled.

Although the current assessment is that the bird population on agricultural land is living up to Nordic ambitions, significant challenges are looming on the horizon because the bird population has fallen significantly in recent years. This is a trend also seen in countries with which the Nordic Region compares itself, indicating that biodiversity is under pressure.

Overall, the baseline measurement for *life on land* based on the three indicators paints a relatively good picture of the Nordic Region, with particularly positive progress on the amount of agricultural land used for organic farming. The reduction of the bird population is worrying, as is the lack of progress on the proportion of land in protected areas. These are two areas in which improvements could be made. The experts who provided input into the baseline measurement stressed that broader coverage of the area with additional indicators, a literature review and expert involvement could provide a more nuanced picture of the situation.

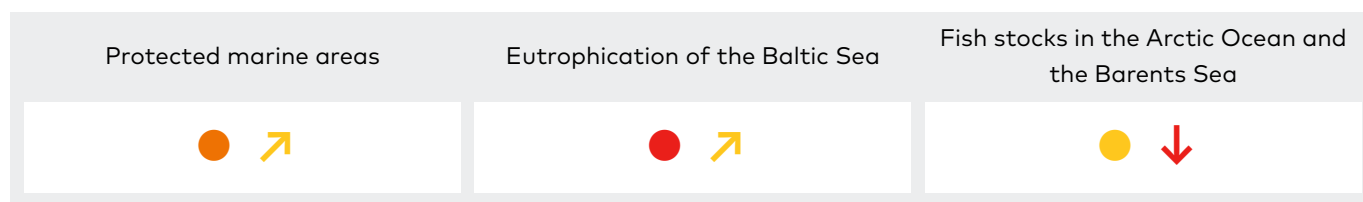
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- Ten trends for the sustainable bioeconomy in Nordic Arctic and Baltic Sea Region (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/ten-trends-sustainable-bioeconomy-nordic-arctic-and-baltic-sea-region>
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- Together Towards a Global Deal for Nature and People (2019): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/together->

[towards-global-deal-nature-and-people](#)

## Life below water

### *Eutrophication and over-fishing threaten marine biodiversity*



The indicators linked to *life below water* show that the Nordic Region faces challenges when it comes to protecting nature and biodiversity in the sea.

According to Natura 2000, the proportion of protected sea areas is currently some way from the EU target<sup>6</sup>. Although the current trend is positive, the 2030 ambitions do not look set to be achieved. It is also worth noting that the group of comparable countries has made progress since 2016 and is now overtaking the Nordic Region.

The eutrophication (over-fertilisation) of the Baltic Sea is another significant challenge because of the upper limit set by the Helsinki Commission. Although the level has been falling steadily since 1995, it does not look as if the 2030 ambitions will be realised if the pace of change does not pick up.

The assessment shows that fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea are under pressure: in 2019, fish stocks (cod, herring and blue whiting) amounted to almost 15 million tons. This is a significant reduction from just over 21 million tons in 2004, and this historical trend suggests that the Region is not on track to achieve its 2030 ambitions.

Overall, the protection of marine life and biodiversity are challenges in the Nordic Region. At present, the proportion of protected sea areas and eutrophication are particular problems, and at the current pace of progress, none of the 2030 ambitions will be achieved. The trend is even projected to move in the wrong direction for fish stocks in the Arctic Sea and the Barents Sea. It is worth mentioning that the Nordic Region does not have sole responsibility for the protection of biodiversity in the marine areas mentioned. However, in addition to setting a good example, the Region has an opportunity to raise issues in relevant international fora and

6. All EU member states have designated a number of "Natura 2000 areas", which are areas that the EU considers to be of importance and value. See here for details: [https://naturastyrelsen.dk/media/nst/Attachments/natura2000104119\\_ny\\_low.pdf](https://naturastyrelsen.dk/media/nst/Attachments/natura2000104119_ny_low.pdf)

environmental agreements.

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Photos: Common Ground Media, Unsplash.com & Norden.org

# A competitive Nordic Region

**Together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic Region, based on knowledge, innovation, mobility and digital integration.**

The baseline measurement shows that the Nordic Region is well on its way to achieving its ambition of a competitive Nordic Region based on green growth, innovation, mobility and a circular economy.

For a number of indicators, the ambitions have already been met. If the current trend continues, the Nordic Region will be even more competitive by 2030.

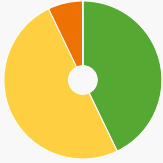
The stakeholders who contributed to work on the baseline stressed that well-trained and educated populations and a leading position on green innovation are two crucial prerequisites if this Nordic position of strength is to be maintained. The baseline measurement suggests potential for improvement in several areas.

Figure 3 shows the status and trends for the indicators for a competitive Nordic Region.



**A lower than average level of education and position in the labour market also suggests that individuals will not participate as much in education and training later in their working life.**

Pia Björkbacka, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), Finland



**Figure 3. Indicators for a competitive Nordic Region<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Quality education</b>	Educational attainment	Early school leavers	Adult participation in education
<b>Decent work and economic growth</b>	Employment	Employment in the circular economy	Economic growth
<b>Industry, innovation, infrastructure</b>	Research and development expenditure	Green patent applications	Digitalisation (DESI)
<b>Sustainable cities and communities</b>	Transport in buses and trains	Pollution in urban areas	Open public spaces in urban areas
			- -
<b>Freedom of movement</b>	Intra-Nordic immigration	Intra-Nordic trade	Cross-border commuting

Status	Progress arrows
The Nordic Region is currently fulfilling its ambitions	On track
Still some challenges	Moderate improvements
Still significant challenges	Stagnation
Still major challenges	Moving in wrong direction

7. Find data in the Nordic Statistics Database: <https://indicators.nordicstatistics.org/ourvision2030>

## Competition can drive sustainability and green growth

The baseline measurement paints a picture of a competitive Nordic Region, with well-trained and educated populations, high rates of employment and in-depth strengths in research and green innovation.

It also shows that people regularly shop in other Nordic countries. However, the numbers for migration and cross-border commuting have been falling, and the trend is either stagnating or moving in the wrong direction. The Region may appear well-integrated at the moment, but it needs to reverse this trend if its integration ambitions are to be achieved.

Nordic competitiveness is built on education and training. The peoples of the Region are generally well trained and educated, but two particular challenges stand out. The ambitions for school drop-out rates have not been achieved. The trend has been positive in recent years, but at the current rate of progress, the ambitions will not be achieved by 2030. It is well-known that boys are more at risk of dropping out of school than girls and that men are generally less well educated than women. This needs to be addressed because well-educated populations are fundamental to the Nordic welfare models.

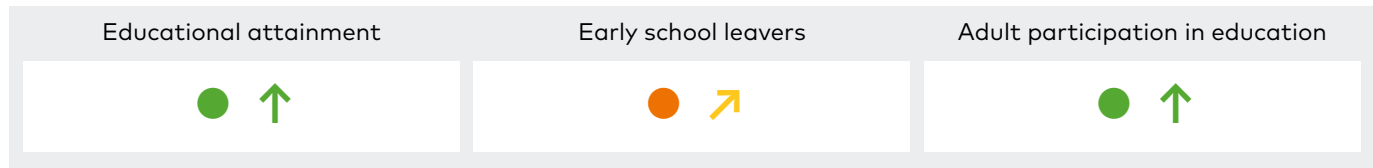
Our Vision 2030 emphasises that even stronger competitiveness must be based on green and inclusive growth. The same point was stressed by the stakeholders who helped draw up the baseline measurement. The measurement itself shows mixed results for the current status. On the one hand, it is positive that Nordic cities have clean air. On the other hand, neither the number of patent applications in green technology nor the share of green jobs is right at the top of the rankings, and the trend for green jobs is stagnating. The same applies to the use of public transport in Nordic cities.

This supports the impression given by the indicators for the strategic priority *a green Nordic Region* that progress is being made on the green transition but that the pace needs to be picked up.

The next section describes the status and development of each of the five focus areas.

## Quality education

### *Well-trained and educated populations, but school drop-out rates too high*



The baseline measurement for the focus area *quality education* paints a picture of generally well-trained and educated populations.

Half of people aged 30–34 have completed post-secondary education (2019). This is significantly better than the group of comparable countries, and the Nordic Region has already fulfilled its ambitions for this indicator. The trend has been steadily improving since 1999 when only one-third of 30–34-year-olds had higher education. Less positive is the fact that, while 58% of Nordic women have completed post-secondary education, the figure for men is only 42% (2019). Gender inequality would also appear to be growing if current trends continue. The baseline measurement also points to a certain degree of regional inequality in levels of education, although the model does not allow us to explain in greater detail what is driving these differences.

School drop-out rates are a challenge. The drop-out rate in 2019 was 8% (for 18–24-year-olds), meaning that the Nordic Region lags behind the best-presenting EU countries. More positive is the fact that the drop-out rate fell steadily from 11% in 2006 to 8% in 2019. However, progress is not fast enough to meet the 2030 ambitions. From an inequality perspective, it is again striking that men were more at risk of dropping out of school (9.7%) than women (6.6%) in 2019.

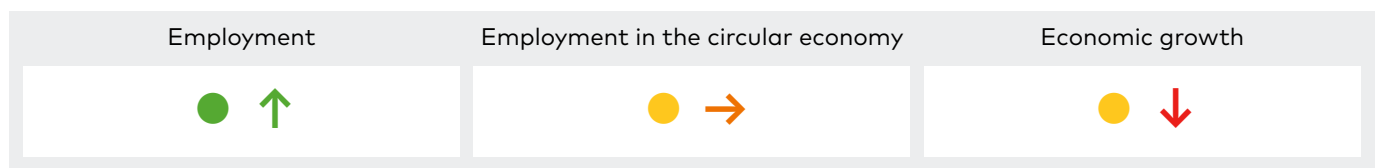
The situation for adult and continuing education is positive in the Nordic countries. The Region does significantly better than the group of comparable countries and fulfils the Nordic ambitions. Here, too, the situation for women is more positive than for men – with an education gap of more than 10% (2019). Participation in adult and continuing education decreases steadily with age. More than twice as many 18–24-year-olds are in adult and continuing education than 55–64-year-olds.

All in all, the baseline measurement paints a picture of a well-educated Nordic Region – one of the foundations for the Nordic welfare states according to Our Vision 2030. However, there is potential for cutting school drop-out rates and a need to pay attention to the education gap between men and women on all three indicators because men are more likely to drop out of school and less likely to enrol in further and higher education.

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- School achievement and health development in the Nordic countries – Knowledge gaps and concerns about school-age children (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/school-achievement-and-health-development-nordic-countries>
- Education at a Glance 2020 (2020): <https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>
- Basic digital skills for adults in the Nordic countries (2020): <https://nvl.org/content/basic-digital-skills-for-adults-in-the-nordic-countries>

## Decent work and economic growth *High employment rates, but not enough green jobs*



The baseline measurement for the focus area *decent work and economic growth* shows that Nordic employment levels and the economy are good, but that the proportion of green jobs, in particular, could be improved.

With an employment rate of 75% (2019), the Nordic Region tops the list of OECD countries – a trend that has remained stable for many years. The rate for men is slightly higher (almost 4%) than for women. Not surprisingly, the rate is highest for 35–54-year-olds, while 55–63-year-olds also have a high employment rate (73%), an increase of 10% over the last 15 years. This is a positive trend.

The share of private jobs in the circular economy is not nearly so positive, however, and the Nordic countries are not quite at the top in relation to the best-presenting EU countries, although they do better than the group of comparable countries. Since 2008, the trend has been stagnant, and the

Region will not meet its 2030 ambitions if the current trend continues.

Economic growth in the Nordic countries has generally been positive since 2000, with the exception of a significant dip after the 2008 financial crisis. Compared to the best-performing OECD countries, the baseline indicates that the Nordic Region may still have growth potential – but the stakeholders stressed that the goal is inclusive and green growth rather than the kind of growth seen in countries with the highest growth figures in the world.

The trend shown in the baseline measurement is based solely on a simple historical projection and should be treated with reservation. The red arrow indicates that the projections are for the rate of growth to be slower (declining) than in previous years, even though *growth* itself will be positive. The after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic or similar socioeconomic factors have not been included in the calculations but are expected to be reflected in future status updates.

All in all, the baseline paints a picture of high employment and positive economic growth in the Nordic Region but potential, in particular, for improvements when it comes to the share of green jobs and supporting the ambitions of a green economy based on innovation, job creation and competitiveness.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

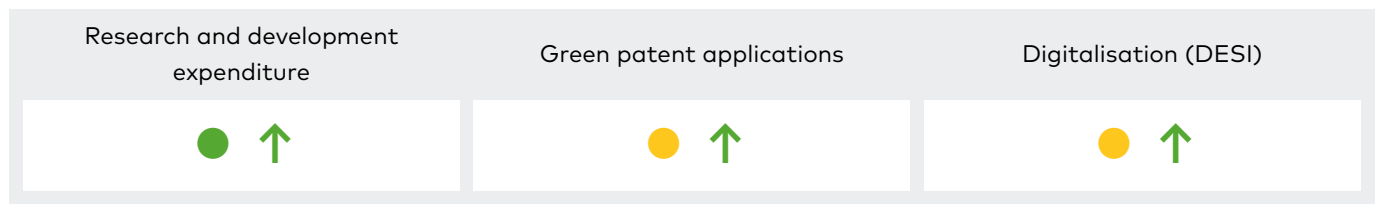
- The Future of Work in the Nordic countries – Opportunities and Challenges for the Nordic Life Models (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/future-work-nordic-countries>
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- Nordic Economic Policy Review 2020 – Financial regulation and macroeconomic stability in the Nordics (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/nordic-economic-policy-review-2020>

## Industry, innovation, infrastructure

### *Progress on green innovation and digitalisation*



The baseline measurement for *industry, innovation, infrastructure* shows that the Nordic Region does well in this focus area in general.

The 2030 ambitions for R&D investments have already been achieved. R&D investment levels have remained stable since 2003, and it looks as if the Nordic Region will achieve its ambitions in 2030. In the same period, investments have been higher than in the comparable countries, although the difference is now levelling off.

The number of green patent applications in the Nordic Region has almost doubled since 2003, generally outperforming the group of comparable countries. The figures do not top OECD rankings, however, and there is still thought to be room for improvement.

The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) trend, which measures the digital economy and the digital society, is also positive. The Region is again ahead of the group of comparable countries, with a positive trend since 2017. Since the 2030 ambitions are high and the Region is already a leader in digitalisation, it ranks towards the top of the DESI index. From this perspective, there is still room for improvement.

Overall, the baseline measurement for the focus area *industry, innovation and infrastructure* paints a positive picture. The Nordic Region invests in

research and development, and the degree of digitalisation is high. The most important potential for improvement lies in the number of green patents, where extra impetus is needed if the Region is to achieve its ambitions.

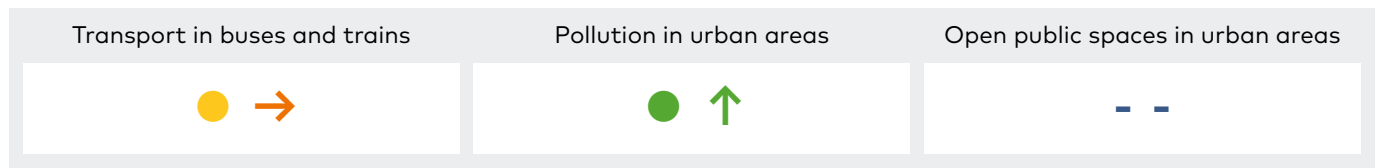
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## Sustainable cities and communities

### *More people need to use public transport in Nordic cities*



The indicators linked to *sustainable cities and communities* reveal a mixed picture.

The use of buses and trains in the Nordic Region does not yet match the ambitions for 2030. The Region lags behind the best-performing OECD countries and has not improved in the last two decades. It is striking that the trend is negative in the best-performing countries, which suggests that encouraging people to use public transport is a challenge for all of them.

On a positive note, particulate pollution is so low that the ambitions for it have already been achieved. The Nordic Region is also doing significantly better than the group of comparable countries. Unless the trend changes direction, the Region will also achieve its ambitions in this area in 2030.

Data is not currently available for the third indicator, open spaces in urban areas.

Together, the two indicators portray a mixed picture of sustainability in cities and communities: the air is cleaner, but it is difficult to persuade people to use public transport. As the stakeholders have pointed out, however, the two indicators only give a partial picture of the sustainability of cities and communities.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Sustainable Nordic cities with focus on climate smart mobility (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/sustainable-nordic-cities-focus-climate-smart-mobility>
- The right to access the city: Nordic urban planning from a disability perspective (2020): <https://nordregio.org/publications/the-right-to-access-the-city-nordic-urban-planning-from-a-disability-perspective/>
- Overcoming barriers to social inclusion in Nordic cities

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## Freedom of movement

### *Intra-Nordic imports high but migration and cross-border commuting down*



The baseline measurement for *freedom of movement* depicts a region in which the countries import large volumes of goods from each other but migration, and cross-border commuting could be higher. This indicates that the ambitions for an integrated Nordic Region have not yet been achieved.

According to the baseline, intra-Nordic migration is too low and not currently achieving ambitions. It reached a historic high in 2011 but has fallen back since then to its previous low in 1992. The model projects that the number will stagnate.

The baseline suggests that the ambitions for intra-Nordic trade (i.e. Nordic imports from other Nordic countries) will be achieved. They currently account for 21% of total imports in the Nordic Region. Since 2001, the figure has been stable at 21–24% but with a slight downward tendency. If the current trend continues, the Region will still meet its ambitions in this area in 2030.

Cross-border commuting numbers are currently good, but challenges

persist. Commuting has fallen steadily since its most recent peak in 2007, and it does not look as if the ambitions will be achieved.

Overall, this focus area paints a picture of a Nordic Region that is integrated in terms of trade but where the numbers for intra-Nordic migration and cross-border commuting are falling. If the ambitions for an integrated Nordic Region with widespread freedom of movement are to be achieved, this trend needs to be reversed.

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Photos: Common Ground Media

# A socially sustainable Nordic Region

**Together we will promote an inclusive, gender-equal and cohesive region with shared values, increased cultural exchanges and enhanced welfare provisions.**

The baseline shows that the Nordic Region is characterised by equality, health and social trust and that the trends are generally moving in the right direction. It also shows that there is still potential for improvement in the labour market, especially when it comes to gender equality and the integration of non-EU citizens. The ambitions for an integrated Nordic Region could also be higher in the field of culture.

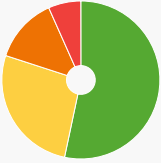
The stakeholders who contributed to the baseline survey point in particular to the importance of maintaining Nordic social values of inclusion, equality and social cohesion so that everyone participates and contributes, both to support the Nordic welfare states and to bolster the Region's strong position in global competition.

Figure 4 shows the status and trends for the indicators in this focus area.



**The egalitarian cultures in the Nordic countries combined with strong institutions and high levels of public trust mean that the Region can lead the way and show how to get the best out of people, teams and collaborations.**

Chris McCormick, Design and Architecture Norway (DOGA)



**Figure 4. Indicators for a socially sustainable Nordic Region<sup>8</sup>**

<b>Good health and well-being</b>	Life expectancy	Self-rated health	Preventable and treatable mortality
<b>Gender equality</b>	Gender-segregated labour market	Fathers' share of parental leave	Women MPs
<b>Reduced inequalities</b>	Economic inequality	Risk of poverty and social exclusion	Labour market integration of Non-EU citizens
<b>Peace, justice and strong institutions</b>	Social trust	Voter turnout	Crime, violence and vandalism
<b>Strong cultural scene</b>	Culture-related trade between the Nordic countries	Public spending on culture	Household spending on culture

Status	Progress arrows
The Nordic Region is currently fulfilling its ambitions	On track
Still some challenges	Moderate improvements
Still significant challenges	Stagnation
Still major challenges	Moving in wrong direction

8. Find data in the Nordic Statistics Database: <https://indicators.nordicstatistics.org/ourvision2030>

## Social sustainability must include everyone in the Nordics

The baseline generally paints a picture of a Region with high levels of economic equality and social trust, with healthy populations that enjoy long life expectancy. Voter turnouts are high, although the Nordic countries do not top the rankings for this indicator.

At the same time, the baseline measurement also points to problems in the overall positive picture. The Nordic Region is not currently achieving its ambitions for gender equality: it faces challenges related to gender segregation in the labour market and the proportion of parental leave. Moderate progress has been made on the fathers' share of parental leave, but the current rate of improvement would need to accelerate to achieve the 2030 ambitions.

The Nordic Region also faces major challenges concerning the integration of non-EU citizens into the labour market, especially women with non-EU backgrounds. The current trend suggests that these problems will not be solved by 2030.

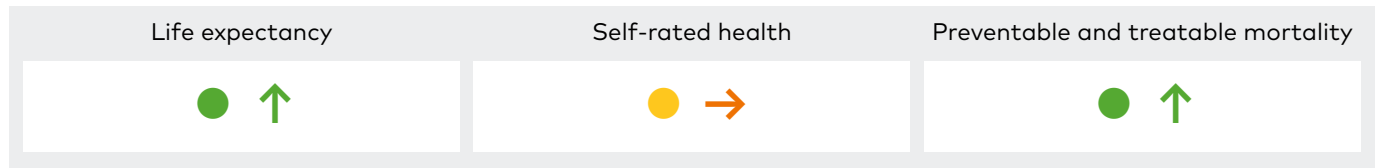
The baseline measurement clarifies not only the positions of strength and challenges for social inclusion but also the link between the competitive Nordic Region and the socially sustainable Nordic Region: the lack of participation and equality in the labour market can prevent the workforce from unleashing its full potential.

In the field of culture, the baseline measurement shows mixed results. Both public and private spending on culture are currently achieving ambitions. However, imports of cultural products from other Nordic countries have moved in the wrong direction in recent years – falling more than general imports from other Nordic countries (see the focus area *freedom of movement*). This poses a challenge to the ambitions for an integrated Nordic Region.

The five focus areas for this strategic priority, each with three indicators, are reviewed below.

## Good health and well-being

### *Life expectancy high but no improvement in self-rated health*



In general, the three indicators linked to the focus area *good health and well-being* paint a positive picture of the health of the Nordic populations.

In terms of average life expectancy, the Region has already achieved its ambitions for 2030. Average life expectancy is 82 years (2018), and women live almost four years longer than men, on average. This is very similar to the comparable countries. The trend is also positive. Life expectancy has increased steadily since 1990 from just over 76 and, if this trend continues, it will be almost 85 by 2030.

Self-rated health (physical and mental) is good, better than the group of comparable countries but not quite matching the best EU countries. The trend has been stagnant for the past decade. Self-rated health varies across gender and age. Men rate their health slightly better than women, even though, as we have seen, women's average life expectancy is higher. Self-rated health gradually deteriorates as people grow older, which is hardly surprising. The most obvious inequality is regional – with self-rated health in cities significantly better than in rural areas.

Mortality rates for preventable or curable diseases have been falling steadily in the Nordic Region since 2011. Again, the figures are slightly better than for the group of comparable countries, and the ambitions have already been met. Unless the trend changes, this will also be the case in 2030.

Overall, Nordic health and well-being are good – both now and in the projections. Positive progress needs to be maintained, and gender and regional inequalities addressed.

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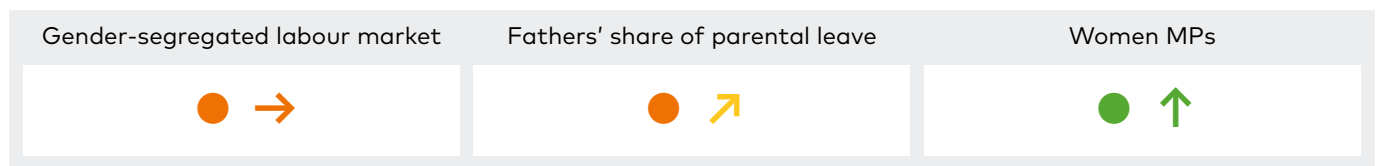
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- Policy briefs to increase equality in health (2019): <https://nordicwelfare.org/en/publikationer/policy-briefs-to-increase-equal-health-in-the-nordic-countries/>
- Education Policy for Health Equality – Lessons for the Nordic Region (2019): <https://nordicwelfare.org/publikationer/education-policy-for-health-equality-lessons-for-the-nordic-region/>
- Unga mäns hälsa i de nordiska länderna (2018): <https://nordicwelfare.org/publikationer/unga-mans-halsa-i-de-nordiska-landerna/>

## Gender equality

### *Improvements but equality not yet reached*



The indicators linked to *gender equality* show that progress is being made but that there are still challenges to be addressed in the Nordic Region.

The Nordic labour markets still have problems with gender segregation. This indicator is based on the Karmel and MacLachlan index (IP index), which can be interpreted as the proportion of those in work that would need to



change jobs in order to achieve an equal distribution between men and women in all sectors of the labour market. For 2019, the Nordic figure would be 18%. Progress is stagnating right now, which indicates that the ambitions for gender equality will not be achieved by 2030 if the current trend continues.

The share of parental leave taken up by fathers also poses a significant challenge to the Nordic ambitions for gender equality. Fathers still take only approximately 20% of paternity and parental leave (2017). This represents a considerable increase from 12% in 2006 but will not be enough to achieve an equal share between mothers and fathers by 2030.

More positively, just over 44% of MPs in the Nordic Region are women. The proportion of women in national parliaments has been 40–44% since 2003, significantly better than the group of comparable countries, and the ambitions have been achieved. Internationally and in the Nordic Region, equal gender distribution and representation is understood as being met when (min.) 40% of MPs are women.

Our Vision 2030 describes gender equality as a key prerequisite for sustainable societies, labour markets and dynamic economies in terms of rights and as a lever for economic growth. In that light, the baseline measurement presents a mixed picture of the situation in the Nordic countries. The share of seats held by women in national parliaments is positive, as is the upward trend in men's share of parental leave. However, the baseline measurement indicates that it would be good to give more impetus to the ambitions of an equal labour market in terms of the gender distribution of jobs and fathers' share of parental leave.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

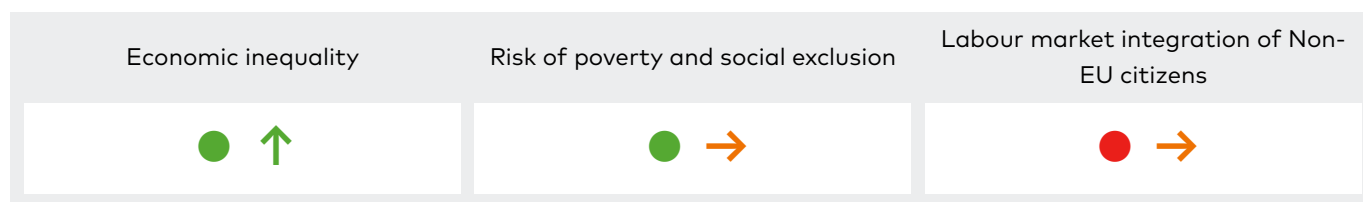
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- Livsvillkor i Nordens rurala områden ur ett genusperspektiv (2020): <https://nikk.no/publikationer/livsvillkor-i-nordens-rurala-omraden-ur-ett-genusperspektiv/>
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[comparing-gender-and-media-equality-across-globe](#)

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- Is the Last Mile the Longest? Economic Gains from Gender Equality in Nordic Countries (2018): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/summary-brief-last-mile-longest>

## Reduced inequalities

***Social equality not reflected at work where the employment gap between EU and non-EU citizens poses a challenge to inclusion***



The three indicators linked to *reduced inequalities* show that Nordic societies are generally based on a high degree of equality, although there are still challenges to address.

In terms of economic inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient, the Nordic Region is one of the most equal in the world, a few percentage points higher than the group of comparable countries. The current trend indicates a slight increase in economic inequality in the Nordic Region since 2004. This does not undermine the Region's general level of equality, and the indications are that the 2030 ambitions will be achieved.

The Nordic Region is also one of the parts of Europe with the lowest proportion of the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This is reflected in comparisons with the group of comparable countries<sup>9</sup>. The Nordic situation has not changed significantly since 2003. The ambitions have already been achieved, and unless the trend is reversed, the same will

be true in 2030.

From an inequality perspective, gender has no major bearing on the risk of living in poverty or social exclusion. Age, on the other hand, does seem to be an important parameter. The risk of poverty and social exclusion is more than three times greater for younger target groups (16–24-year-olds) than for those aged 55 and over. There are also regional variations in the proportion of the population living at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The integration of non-EU citizens in the labour market in the Nordic Region stands out as a major challenge. In 2019, the employment gap was almost 17%, a figure that has remained relatively stable over the last 15 years. The degree of gender inequality is noticeable, however, as the employment gap for women with non-EU backgrounds is 23% (2019) compared to 12% for men.

All in all, the baseline measurement indicates that even though the Nordic Region is relatively equal, there are still challenges to address if the ambitions of an inclusive society, in which all citizens participate, are to be fully achieved<sup>10</sup>. This applies in particular to the integration of non-EU citizens in the labour market. The stakeholders also point out that attention should be paid to the slight increase in economic inequality, although the baseline measurement indicates that the ambitions in this area are still expected to be fulfilled in 2030.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Nordic Children and Young People in Figures (2021): <https://pub.norden.org/nord2021-039/>
- Seven challenges for LGBTI equality – and how the Nordic cooperation can solve them (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/seven-challenges-lgbti-equality-and-how-nordic-cooperation-can-solve-them>
- Socialt bæredygtig grøn omstilling i Norden (2020): <https://www.norden.org/en/node/47952>
- Innvandring og innvandrere i Norden (2020): [https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/\\_attachment/435597?\\_ts=17574699570](https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/435597?_ts=17574699570)
- Veje til beskæftigelse for flygtninge-og indvandrerkvinder – En guide baseret på den aktuelt bedste viden fra de nordiske lande (2019): <https://www.norden.org/en/node/48372>

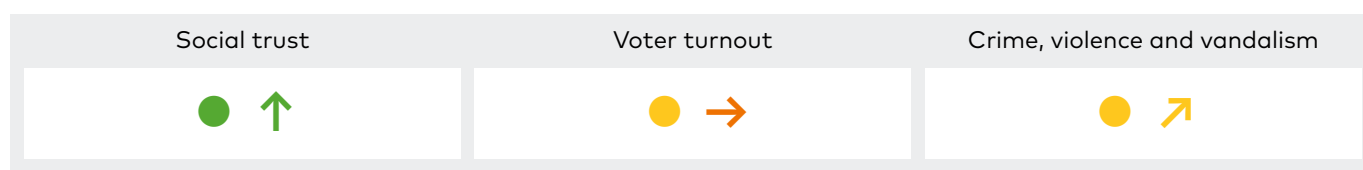
9. The Gini coefficient is measured at 27 for the Nordic Region on a scale from 0 to 100.

10. Our Vision 2030: <https://www.norden.org/da/deklaration/vores-vision-2030>

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## Peace, justice and strong institutions

### *High social trust but voter turnout stagnating*



The three indicators linked to *peace, justice and strong institutions* indicate that Nordic societies are peaceful and based on solid social trust.

Social trust, which is a cornerstone of the Nordic welfare model, is very high in the Nordic countries, which have the top five rankings in the EU (2018). Social trust has been stable for the past 15 years, and there is no sign of this changing. It is also stable across genders. If this situation is maintained, the ambitions will be fulfilled in 2030.

Turnout for parliamentary elections is high in the Nordic countries (almost 76% in 2019). Compared to the best-presenting countries in the EU, however, there is still potential for improvement. The trend has reversed slightly since 1990 (79%), and it is expected to stagnate in the coming years. It is striking that turnout for the group of comparable countries from 1990 to 2019 has fallen from almost 75% to 57%. This may suggest that the loss of trust in the political system seen in other countries has not penetrated the Nordic Region to the same extent.

Just under 9% of the Nordic population reported experiencing crime, violence or vandalism in 2019, down 2.5 percentage points since 2004. Although the Nordic Region is doing better than the group of comparable countries, it still does not have the best figures, and the baseline measurement indicates room for improvement.

Overall, the baseline measurement emphasises the image of Nordic welfare states founded on high levels of social trust and participation in democracy. If the ambitions are to be achieved, greater participation in democracy and

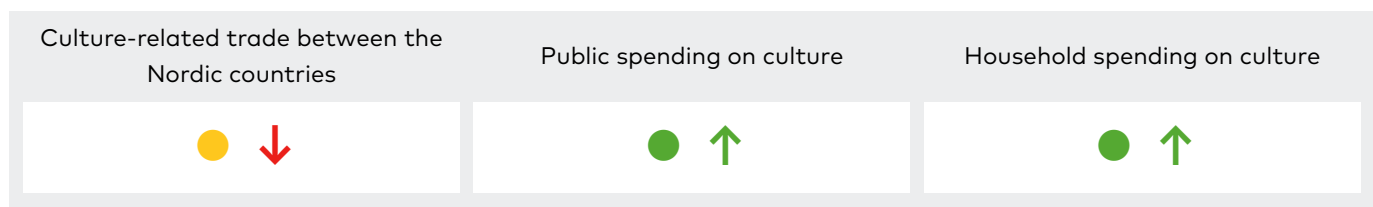
a greater sense of personal security will be needed. Falling voter turnout in the group of comparable countries may serve as a warning of the need to support the legitimacy of and trust in political systems.

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- NABO – Social Inclusion of Youth in the Nordic Region (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/nabo-social-inclusion-youth-nordic-region>
- The Media for Democracy Monitor 2021 (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/media-democracy-monitor-2021-0>
- Power, Communication, and Politics in the Nordic Countries (2021): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/power-communication-and-politics-nordic-countries>
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- Ett värdefullt samarbete – Den nordiska befolkningens syn på Norden (2017): <https://www.norden.org/en/node/7313>
- Trust – The Nordic Gold (2017): <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/trust-nordic-gold>

## Strong cultural scene

### *Fall in intra-Nordic cultural imports*



The three indicators linked to the goal of *a strong cultural scene* reveal a mixed picture.

*Imports of culture-related goods from Nordic countries* in 2019 amounted to almost 19% of total imports of cultural products in the Nordic Region. This is a relatively good starting point for the ambition of an integrated Nordic Region in the field of culture. However, it is worth noting that this represents a significant drop from the historical peak of 32% in 2004. If the ambitions are to be achieved, the Region needs to get the trend back on track. It is also noteworthy that falls in imports of cultural products since 2003 are greater than for overall imports of goods from other Nordic countries (indicator 2.5.2). This may suggest that the import of culture-related goods from other Nordic countries poses a particular challenge to the ambition of an integrated Nordic Region.

Public spending on culture in the Nordic Region has already achieved the 2030 ambitions and is higher than in the group of comparable countries. If the current trend continues, public spending on culture will increase further towards 2030. This indicates that the Nordic countries consider cultural life a high priority.

Household spending on culture, which is seen as an expression of participation in cultural life, also looks set to achieve the ambitions. The trend has been towards higher spending over a number of years, with individual households spending twice as much on culture in 2019 as they did in 1995. If the current trend continues, the ambitions for this indicator will be achieved in 2030.

Overall, the baseline measurement indicates that the Nordic countries invest and participate in cultural life. That is a good thing. However, the people of the Region seem to be increasingly less interested in cultural products from other Nordic countries, and this is a challenge for the ambitions for an integrated Nordic Region in the field of culture.

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- Folkbibliotek i Norden (2020): <https://kulturanalys.se/publikation/folkbibliotek-i-norden/>
- Making culture – Children's and young people's leisure cultures (2019): <https://kulturanalys.se/publikation/making-culture/>
- Museer i Norden (2018): <https://kulturanalys.se/publikation/museer-i-norden/>
- Kulturpolitisk styrning (2018): <https://kulturanalys.se/publikation/kulturpolitisk-styrning/>

# Methodology

To establish the baseline for Our Vision 2030, Rambøll Management Consulting developed a model based on internationally established methods for quantifying sustainability drawn up by the EU, the UN and the Bertelsmann Foundation as part of Agenda 2030.

A group of experts tested and validated a draft version of the model, and a stakeholder group provided input and contributions to a draft version of the baseline measurement.

This section describes the development process and the model in greater detail.

## The assessment model

The method for assessing the baseline was based on existing approaches in the field, and the final model was made up of four building blocks:

**A: Setting upper and lower reference points for each indicator:** Based on a four-step staircase model for prioritisation, quantitative upper and lower reference points were set for each of the 45 indicators in Our Vision 2030. This makes the status and progress of each indicator measurable.

**B: Scaling and traffic-light scores:** The model measures the status of and progress towards each ambition using a scaling and colour-coding method derived from the annual SDG Development Report<sup>11</sup> (SDR)<sup>12</sup>. The distance between the upper and lower reference points for each indicator was plotted on a scale of 0–100. The scores within this range illustrate the status and progress of each indicator using “traffic-light visualisation” (green, yellow, orange and red).

**C: Benchmarks:** In order to establish a comparative basis for monitoring status and progress towards the ambitions for the individual indicators, data was collected for the top five performing and comparable OECD countries.

**D: Inequality assessments:** Where data was available, gender, age and regional inequalities were assessed on the Theill index and supplementary tables.

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11. Previous SDG Index & Dashboard.

12. Sustainable Development Report 2020, SDSN & Bertelsmann Foundation (2020).

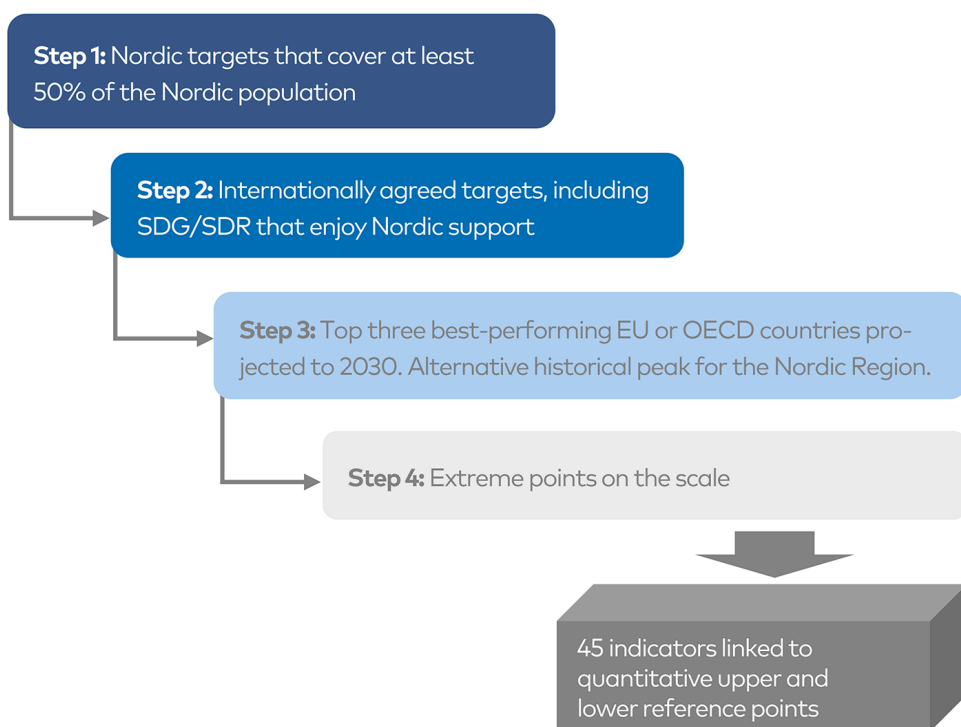


## **A: Setting of upper and lower limits for the Nordic Council of Ministers' indicators**

The model facilitates comparisons between the current status and future projections for tangible and quantifiable reference points for each of the 45 indicators. To make this work, quantitative upper and lower limits are needed for each one. Setting the upper limit involved a prioritisation staircase based on the method developed for the SDG Development Report (SDR). The staircase consists of four methods of setting the reference point. The assessors start on the top step and work their way down until they find one that works for the particular indicator concerned. These methods are used at Nordic and international level and mean that the baseline measurement is based on widely accepted targets.

Figure 5 below illustrates the prioritisation staircase for the upper reference points.

### **Figure 5. Prioritisation staircase for setting reference points for the 45 Our Vision 2030 indicators**

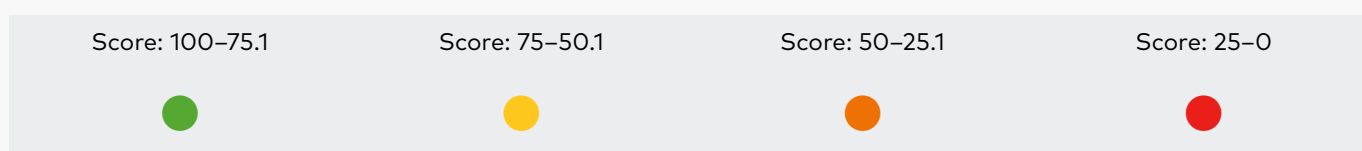


The lower reference points are based on a weighted mean value for the lowest-performing EU or OECD countries, a technical minimum for the indicator or a historical low point for the Nordic Region. They are gauged against the upper reference point and what is considered ambitious, realistic and useful in a Nordic context.

## **B: "Traffic light visualisation" of status and progress**

The next building block in the model involved a re-scaling (normalisation) of the lower and upper limits (from step A) for each indicator on a scale from 0–100. The status of the indicator in relation to achieving the goal (or ambition) and making progress towards the target was visualised on this scale using step-by-step colour coding (a traffic-light system). The colour indicates how "far" the Nordic countries are from reaching the aggregate upper reference point. The scaling method and colour-code subdivisions are based on the Sustainable Development Solutions Network<sup>13</sup> (SDSN) and Bertelsmann Foundation's annual SDG Development Report<sup>14</sup> (SDR)<sup>15</sup>.

The scale from 0–100 is divided into four equal quartiles:



**Progress arrows:** As well as describing the current status of individual indicators, the model generates simple projections based on historical trends. These projections are shown as trend lines and arrows, using direction and colour to indicate whether the trend for the indicator suggests the goal will be achieved by 2030. This helps show whether Nordic initiatives have had the desired effect and whether more needs to be done on particular indicators. The trend is assigned a colour according to the following criteria:

Green arrow = when projecting the indicator to 2030, the status is within the green field (75.1–100%). Progress is deemed to be on track.

Yellow arrow = when projecting the indicator to 2030, the trend is positive (i.e. over 0.5% improvement towards the upper reference point) but not positive enough to land in the green field (i.e. 75.1–100%) in 2030. Progress is moderately positive/moderate improvements have been made.

Orange arrow = when projecting the indicator to 2030, progress is stagnant within a range of -0.5–0.5%. The trend is stagnating.









Red arrow = when projecting the indicator to 2030, the trend is negative with movement of more than 0.5% towards the lower reference point. The trend is moving in the wrong direction.

Colour coding used in the baseline measurement:

13. SDSN was created under the auspices of the then UN Secretary-General in 2012 and has since brought together leading academics and scientists to promote the implementation of the SDGs (<https://www.unsdsn.org/about-us>). The SDR is recognised by the UN and the OECD and is a global assessment of the progress of regions (including the EU) and countries towards achieving the 2030 goals.

14. Formerly SDG Index & Dashboard.

15. In the same way as in SDR, the "Leave no one behind" principle is also used to set a Nordic-relevant upper limit in cases where the Nordic status has already achieved the objective set out in step A. Sustainable Development Report 2020, SDSN & Bertelsmann Stiftung (2020).

Status	Progress arrows
 The Nordic Region is currently fulfilling its ambitions	 On track
 Still some challenges	 Moderate improvements
 Still significant challenges	 Stagnation
 Still major challenges	 Moving in wrong direction

### **C: Setting benchmarks (benchmark countries)**

As well as status and trend reports for the 45 Nordic indicators, the model also presents a benchmark that allows total Nordic scores and trends to be compared with the level and direction of travel of a group of comparable countries. Based on the Nordic Council of Ministers' ambition to become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world, the benchmark countries consist of the top five performing OECD countries socio-economically comparable with the Nordic countries. "Comparable" is defined as relatively minor differences from the Nordic nations on a number of relevant and explanatory macroeconomic parameters. A group of comparable countries was identified for each of the three strategic priorities. Five relevant and meaningful comparator countries were selected based on macroeconomic parameters such as purchasing power parity, per capita GDP, per capita investment in health and education and inequality (Gini coefficient). The groups are:

**A green Nordic Region:** Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, UK and New Zealand

**A competitive Nordic Region:** Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Canada and New Zealand

**A socially sustainable Nordic Region:** Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

### **D: Gender, age and regional inequalities ("Leave no one behind")**

The final development step looked (where relevant and data was available) at whether any significant age, gender or regional differences were identified. This is in line with Agenda 2030's focus on "Leave No One Behind" and will clarify whether all social groups are equally involved in relation to the indicator in question.

The inequality analyses are based on a Theil index, which facilitates the quantification of inequalities. Theil is a special version of the Generalised Entropy Index and is calculated as follows:

$$T = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{y_i}{\bar{y}} \ln \left( \frac{y_i}{\bar{y}} \right), \quad \bar{y} \neq 0, y_i > 0, T \in (0, \infty)$$

$N$  is the number of categories (for example, the number of regions),  $y_i$  is the relevant variable for which we assess inequality in the  $i$ 'th category (for example, the employment rate in the  $i$ 'th region) and  $\bar{y}$  is the mean value across the categories.

At perfect equality, the index will be equal to zero,  $T = 0$ . In theory, the index is unbounded and can move towards infinity, but from a practical point of view, the upper limit will be given by  $LN(N)$ <sup>16</sup>, which we can use to define total inequality.

The OECD uses a similar approach, for example, to provide an indication of inequality between regions. One of the strengths of this index is that it provides an opportunity to compare the degree of inequality across multiple indicators.

The assessment is based on data submitted by the Nordic Council of Ministers and supplemented by data from recognised public databases (including Statistics Denmark, Statistics Norway, etc.).

## Testing and validation by expert groups and civil society

**Expert** groups acted as sounding boards, including at three workshops and meetings, and tested and validated the model.

A workshop was held with an expert group assembled specifically for the project. It consisted of participants from Statistics Denmark, Statistics Sweden, Statistics Norway, the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Oslo Centre for Interdisciplinary Environmental and Social Research and Nordregio, and three experts from the Nordic Council of Ministers' Nordic Expert Group for Sustainable Development.

The model and initial results were presented to the Expert Group at a meeting and follow-up workshop.

**Three stakeholder workshops** then tested and validated the initial results of the baseline survey, focusing on each of the three strategic priorities. At these workshops, civil society stakeholders provided input regarding 1) how they saw the strengths and weaknesses of the Nordic baseline measurement in relation to other measurements of sustainability; 2) whether they believed the initial results from the baseline measurement reflected their knowledge of the field; and 3) how the Nordic baseline could be used to create awareness of and support for Our Vision 2030.

Input from experts and civil society was integrated into the baseline

measurement and the methodology throughout the process of developing the model. The model, associated data and an appendix containing a detailed description of the methodology were submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers for further updating.

# Appendix 1 – Nordic Indicators for Our Vision 2030

Overview of indicators for the three strategic priorities.<sup>16</sup>

## A green Nordic Region

No.	Indicator	Description
<b>Climate action (SDG 13)</b>		
1.1.1	Emission of greenhouse gasses*13.2.2	The trend for total territorial greenhouse gas emissions (including international aviation).
1.1.2	Emission of consumptionbased GHGs*13.2.2 Data only available for Sweden at present.	The trend for total consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions.
1.1.3	Extent of Arctic ice	Number of km <sup>2</sup> of the Arctic covered by ice.
<b>Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7)</b>		
1.2.1	Proportion of gross energy consumption provided by renewable energy*7.2.1	The proportion of gross energy from renewables.
1.2.2	Energy use in relation to GDP*7.3.1	The relationship between energy supply and economic output (GDP). A lower ratio indicates that less energy is used to produce one unit of GDP. GDP is expressed at fixed prices.
1.2.3	Emission intensity from greenhouse gases from energy use	Progress since 2000 on the relationship between energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and gross domestic energy consumption (in tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalents).
<b>Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)</b>		
1.3.1	Material footprint per inhabitant*8.4.1/12.2.1	The material footprint is the amount of primary material required to cater for a country's total material demands. The per capita material footprint describes the average material use for a country's total material demand.
1.3.2	Degree of recycling of municipal waste*12.5.1	The proportion of total generated municipal waste that is recycled.
1.3.3	Number of registered ecolabel licences	The number of registered licenses for the Nordic Swan ecolabel on 31 December each year.
<b>Life on land (SDG 15)**</b>		
1.4.1	Renewable energy share of the gross energy use *15.1.2	The proportion of land protected in accordance with Natura 2000 (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden); national parks, nature reserves, and protected habitats (Iceland); and national parks, nature reserves, and protected landscape areas (Norway).
1.4.2	Proportion of organic agricultural land*2.4.1	The proportion of agricultural land used for organic farming (productive and sustainable).
1.4.3	Common birds in agricultural landscapes*15.5.1	Common farmland bird index. An index of the presence of common birds in agricultural landscapes, selected by the national ornithology organisations. Index 2000 = 100.
<b>Life below water (SDG 14)***</b>		

16. \*Denotes SDG sub-categories.

<b>1.5.1</b>	Protected marine areas (total area)* <sup>14.5.1</sup>	Marine areas protected in accordance with Natura 2000 (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden). Norway: Marine areas protected.
<b>1.5.2</b>	Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea* <sup>14.1.1</sup>	Tonnes of nitrogen and phosphorus added to the Baltic Sea p.a. The measurements are taken from seven areas, from the Gulf of Bothnia in the north to the Kattegat between Denmark and Sweden in the south. The measurement reflects the total added from the air and watercourses.
<b>1.5.3</b>	Fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea* <sup>14.4.1</sup>	Total stocks of cod, herring and blue whiting in the northeast Arctic and Barents Sea (thousands of tonnes).

\*\* Linked to Zero Hunger (SDG 2). \*\*\* Connected to Clean Water and Sanitation for All (SDG 6).

## A competitive Nordic Region

No.	Indicator	Description
<b>Quality education (SDG 4)</b>		
<b>2.1.1</b>	Level of education attained: college/university education* <sup>4.1.2</sup>	The proportion of the population aged 30–34 who have completed post-secondary school education.
<b>2.1.2</b>	People who leave education prematurely	The proportion of the population aged 18–24 who drop out of education.
<b>2.1.3</b>	Adult participation in continuing education* <sup>4.3.1</sup>	The proportion of adults aged 25–64 who have participated in continuing education during the past four weeks. Participation in education is a measure of lifelong learning.
<b>Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)</b>		
<b>2.2.1</b>	Employment rate	The proportion of the population aged 15–64 in employment.
<b>2.2.2</b>	Share of employment in private companies related to the circular economy (and bioeconomy)	The proportion of the total workforce employed in recycling, repair and reuse and rental and leasing.
<b>2.2.3</b>	Annual GDP growth* <sup>8.1.1</sup>	The percentage change in GDP p.a. in fixed prices. Fixed prices (instead of current prices) remove the effects of price fluctuations, and the series shows the change in GDP volume.
<b>Industry, innovation, infrastructure (SDG 9)</b>		
<b>2.3.1</b>	Expenditure on research and development as a share of GDP* <sup>9.5.1</sup>	Total "in-house expenditure" on research and development as a percentage of GDP. Intramural/"in-house" R&D expenditure consists of all current and fixed expenditure for research and development during a specific period, regardless of the source of the funding.
<b>2.3.2</b>	Number of patent applications in environmental technology	The number of patent applications to EPO in areas classified by the OECD as "Selected environmental-related technologies".
<b>2.3.3</b>	Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	Based on a weighting of 37 measures, DESI looks at countries' overall digital performance and progress in terms of digital competitiveness.
<b>Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)</b>		
<b>2.4.1</b>	Proportion of total passenger transport on buses and trains* <sup>11.2.1</sup>	The proportion of all passenger transport on public transport expressed in passenger kilometres (pkm). Public transport refers to buses and trains. Total passenger transport includes cars, buses, and trains.

<b>2.4.2</b>	Exposure to airborne particulate matter pollutants in urban areas* <sup>11.6.2</sup>	The annual average concentration of particles smaller than 2.5 µm in the air in urban areas. Weighted in proportion to population size.
<b>2.4.3</b>	Average proportion of public open spaces in cities in the built environment * <sup>11.7.1</sup>	No statistics are available for this indicator at the moment.
<b>Freedom of movement</b>		
<b>2.5.1</b>	Intra-Nordic immigration	Migration per 10,000 of the population from one Nordic country to another.
<b>2.5.2</b>	Imports of goods from Nordic countries	The proportion of total imports of goods that come from other Nordic countries.
<b>2.5.3</b>	Nordic region work-related commuting across Nordic national borders	The indicator measures the number of people who commute to work across the borders in the Öresund region – between Denmark and Sweden.

## A socially sustainable Nordic Region

No.	Indicator	Description
<b>Good health and well-being (SDG 3)</b>		
<b>3.1.1</b>	Average life expectancy at birth	The anticipated life expectancy at birth.
<b>3.1.2</b>	Self-rated health	The proportion of people who rate their health as good or very good.
<b>3.1.3</b>	Mortality before the age of 75 from diseases that can be prevented and cured	The number of deaths from specific diseases per 100,000 people aged 0–75. The age distribution is standardised to facilitate national comparisons. The diseases included are those deemed curable or preventable.
<b>Gender equality (SDG 5)</b>		
<b>3.2.1</b>	Gender-segregated labour market	Standardised index/the Karmel MacLachlan index (IP). Proportion of the workforce that would need to change jobs in order to achieve an equal share of men and women in their occupations.
<b>3.2.2</b>	Fathers' share of parental leave	Fathers' share of parental leave.
<b>3.2.3</b>	Proportion of women in national parliaments* <sup>5.5.1</sup>	The proportion of women MPs.
<b>Reduced inequalities (SDG 10) ****</b>		
<b>3.3.1</b>	Gini coefficient	The Gini coefficient is an economic measure of inequality (e.g. income distribution).
<b>3.3.2</b>	Proportion of people living at risk of poverty and social exclusion	A summary measurement based on the following criteria: (1) people below the poverty threshold (60% of national median disposable income after social transfers); (2) severe material poverty; and (3) households with very low labour intensity.
<b>3.3.3</b>	Difference in unemployment/inactivity between those born outside the EU and those born in the country	The difference between the proportion of unemployed or inactive people who were born outside the EU compared with those born in the country concerned.
<b>Peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)</b>		



<b>3.4.1</b>	Social trust	Ten-point scale showing the level of trust people have in other people in general. The scale goes from 0 (no trust) to 10 (belief that most people are trustworthy).
<b>3.4.2</b>	Electoral turnout in national parliaments	The proportion of the electorate that casts a vote (valid, blank and invalid votes).
<b>3.4.3</b>	Proportion of the population who experience problems with crime, violence, and vandalism*16.2.1	The proportion of the population who report experiencing problems with crime, violence or vandalism in their local area.
<b>Strong cultural scene</b>		
<b>3.5.1</b>	Imports of culture-related goods from Nordic countries	The proportion of culture-related goods imported from other Nordic countries.
<b>3.5.2</b>	Public expenditure on culture as a share of GDP	The share of public spending (by national, regional and local government) allocated to culture.
<b>3.5.3</b>	Household cultural expenditure, index (2015 = 100)	Household expenditure on recreation and culture in fixed prices compared with 2015. The spending is seen as an approximation of participation levels in cultural activities.

\*\*\*\* Linked to No Poverty (SDG 1).

# Appendix 2 – Reference points

## A green Nordic Region

Number	Indicator	Step	Upper boundary	Lower boundary	Method used to set the boundaries
<b>Climate action (SDG 13)</b>					
1.1.1	Greenhouse gas emissions	1	61% reduction compared to 1990-levels.	Emission volume as in 1990	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted average of the Nordic countries' national 2030 targets <b>Lower boundary:</b> Emissions as in the reference year used in the Paris Agreement
1.1.2	Consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions. Data only available for Sweden at present.	2	74,884 thousand tons	192,010 thousand tons	<b>Upper boundary:</b> 61% reduction of 2010 level (historical maximum since 2008) <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical maximum since 2008
1.1.3	Extent of Arctic ice	3	12 million km <sup>2</sup>	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The upper boundary has been at the historical maximum since 1979 with respect to the levels measured in March. The upper boundary is therefore not an average between March and September <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
<b>Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7)</b>					
1.2.1	Proportion of gross energy consumption provided by renewable energy	1	89.4%	3%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted national Nordic targets <b>Lower boundary:</b> As defined in the SDR report
1.2.2	Energy consumption in relation to GDP	2	32.5%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> EU-defined target for reduction in energy usage of 32.5% <b>Lower boundary:</b> 2018 levels, as this is the reference point from the reduction
1.2.3	Intensity of greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumption	2	0	Historical max.	<b>Upper boundary:</b> SDR-report, using a technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical maximum value
<b>Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)</b>					
1.3.1	Material footprint per inhabitant	4	14,538	47,07	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three OECD countries with the lowest footprint, forecast to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three OECD countries with the highest footprint, projected to 2030

1.3.2	Degree of recycling of municipal waste	2	60%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> EU-defined target <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
1.3.3	Number of registered ecolabel licences	4	Continued avg. historical growth rate	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> A continued historical growth, i.e. the number of licences in 2019, has been projected to 2030, assuming the same average yearly growth rate <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

#### Life on land (SDG 15)

1.4.1	Proportion of protected land areas (in relation to the country's total area)	2	30%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> EU-defined target, as no national targets have been found <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
1.4.2	Proportion of organic agricultural land	2	25%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> EU-defined target, as no national targets have been found <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
1.4.3	Common birds in agricultural landscapes	2/3	100	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Index of 100 (2,000 as historical maximum) <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

#### Life in the ocean (SDG 14)

1.5.1	Protected marine areas (total area)	2	30% (corresponding to an area of 126,268 km <sup>2</sup> )	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> EU-defined target, as no national targets have been found <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
1.5.2	Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea	3	Maximum discharge of 113,173 ton N/year and 3,102 ton P/year	Historic maximum discharge of N and P	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Maximum discharge (of N and P) to the area per year (MAI), defined by HELCOM <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical maximum discharge (of N and P both)
1.5.3	Fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean and the Barents Sea	3	TAC, per species: cod, herring, blue whiting	MSY, per species: cod, herring, blue whiting	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

## A competitive Nordic Region

Number	Indicator	Step	Upper boundary	Lower boundary	Method used to set the boundaries
<b>Quality education (SDG 4)</b>					
2.1.1	Level of education attained: college/university education	4	59.80%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average performance for the top three performing EU countries projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.1.2	People who leave education prematurely	4	0.60%	11%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average performance for the top three performing EU countries projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical maximum
2.1.3	Adult participation in continuing education	4	35.10%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average performance for the top three performing EU countries projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
<b>Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)</b>					
2.2.1	Employment rate	2	80.43%	57.4%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average for the top three performing OECD countries, projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> The weighted average for the lowest three performing OECD countries, projected to 2030
2.2.2	Share of employment in private companies related to the circular economy (and bioeconomy)	4	8.13%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted average of the top three EU performing countries, projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.2.3	Annual GDP growth	2	5.08%	4.60%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average for the top three performing OECD countries, projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical minimum for the Nordic Region in the period 2000–2017
<b>Industry, innovation, infrastructure (SDG 9)</b>					
2.3.1	Expenditure on research and development as a share of GDP	2	3.7% of GDP	0% of GDP	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Best performing OECD countries <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.3.2	Number of patent applications in environmental technology	4	5.43 per 100,000 inhabitants	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted share of environmental patent applications per country GDP, from the top three performing OECD countries, multiplied by the sum of the GDP of the Nordic countries, then scaled to patents per 100,000 people in the Nordic Region <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

2.3.3	Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	4	100	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)					
2.4.1	Proportion of passenger transport on buses and trains	4	28.80	0.00	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average performance for the top three performing EU countries projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.4.2	Exposure to airborne particulate matter pollutants in urban areas	2	6.3	87	<b>Upper boundary:</b> SDR report <b>Lower boundary:</b> SDR report
2.4.3	Average proportion of public open spaces in cities in built-up areas	3	15m <sup>2</sup> /indb.	0 m <sup>2</sup> /indb	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Target defined by the WHO case study report <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
Freedom of movement					
2.5.1	Intra-nordic immigration	4	Historical max.	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.5.2	Imports of goods from Nordic countries	4	Historical max.	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum value <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
2.5.3	Intra-Nordic cross-border commuting for work	4	Historical max.	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum value <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

## A socially sustainable Nordic Region

Number	Indicator	Step	Upper boundary	Lower boundary	Method used to set the boundaries
<b>Good health and well-being (SDG 3)</b>					
3.1.1	Average life expectancy at birth	2	83	54	<b>Upper boundary:</b> SDR report <b>Lower boundary:</b> SDR report
3.1.2	Self-rated health	4	100%	53%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average performance for the three top-performing EU countries projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> The weighted average for the three lowest-performing OECD countries, forecast to 2030
3.1.3	Mortality before the age of 75 from diseases that can be prevented and cured	4	138	401	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted average of national targets from Denmark and Sweden, forecast to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three lowest-performing EU countries, projected to 2030
<b>Gender equality (SDG 5)</b>					
3.2.1	Gender-segregated labour market	4	13.16	20.22	<b>Upper boundary:</b> The weighted average for the three top-performing EU countries, projected to 2030 <b>Lower boundary:</b> The weighted average for the three lowest-performing EU countries, projected to 2030
3.2.2	Fathers' share of parental leave	4	50%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
3.2.3	Proportion of women in national parliaments	4	50%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
<b>Reduced inequalities (SDG 10)</b>					
3.3.1	Gini coefficient	2	27.5	63	<b>Upper boundary:</b> SDR report <b>Lower boundary:</b> SDR report
3.3.2	Proportion of people living at risk of poverty and social exclusion	2/4	50% reduction	20.5%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
3.3.3	Difference in unemployment/-inactivity between those born outside the EU and those born in the country	4	0%	Historical max.	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical minimum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Historical maximum

## Peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16)

<b>3.4.1</b>	Social trust	4	10	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three lowest-performing EU countries, forecast to 2030
<b>3.4.2</b>	Electoral turnout in national parliaments	4	100%	46%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three best performing OECD countries <b>Lower boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three poorest performing OECD countries
<b>3.4.3</b>	Share of population who report problems with crime, violence, or vandalism	4	0%	17%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Technical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Weighted average of the three lowest-performing EU countries, forecast to 2030

## Strong cultural scene

<b>3.5.1</b>	Imports of culture-related goods from Nordic countries	4	Historical max.	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
<b>3.5.2</b>	Public expenditure on culture as a share of GDP	4	5.07%	0%	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum
<b>3.5.3</b>	Household cultural expenditure, index (2015 = 100)	4	325	0	<b>Upper boundary:</b> Historical maximum <b>Lower boundary:</b> Technical minimum

# About this publication

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