



# Nordic Innovation Annual Report 2019

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Sustainable Nordic  
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## About Us

**Nordic Innovation aims to make the Nordics a pioneering region for sustainable growth and works to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness in Nordic businesses.**

We support programs and projects which contribute in fulfilling the goals of the Cooperation Program for Innovation and Business 2018–2021 which is decided by the Nordic Ministers for Business and Innovation.

Building on strongholds identified by the national innovation and trade promotion organizations and where the Nordic countries have complementary advantages, Nordic Innovation has developed three comprehensive programs which are our main priorities for the period 2018–2021:

- › **Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity**
- › **Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation**
- › **Health, Demography and Quality of Life**

Nordic Innovation is implementing the Nordic prime Ministers 2030 vision for the Nordic cooperation. The vision is to be the world's most sustainable and integrated region, and to integrate the 17 sustainable development Goals with emphasis and making the Nordics a carbon neutral region.

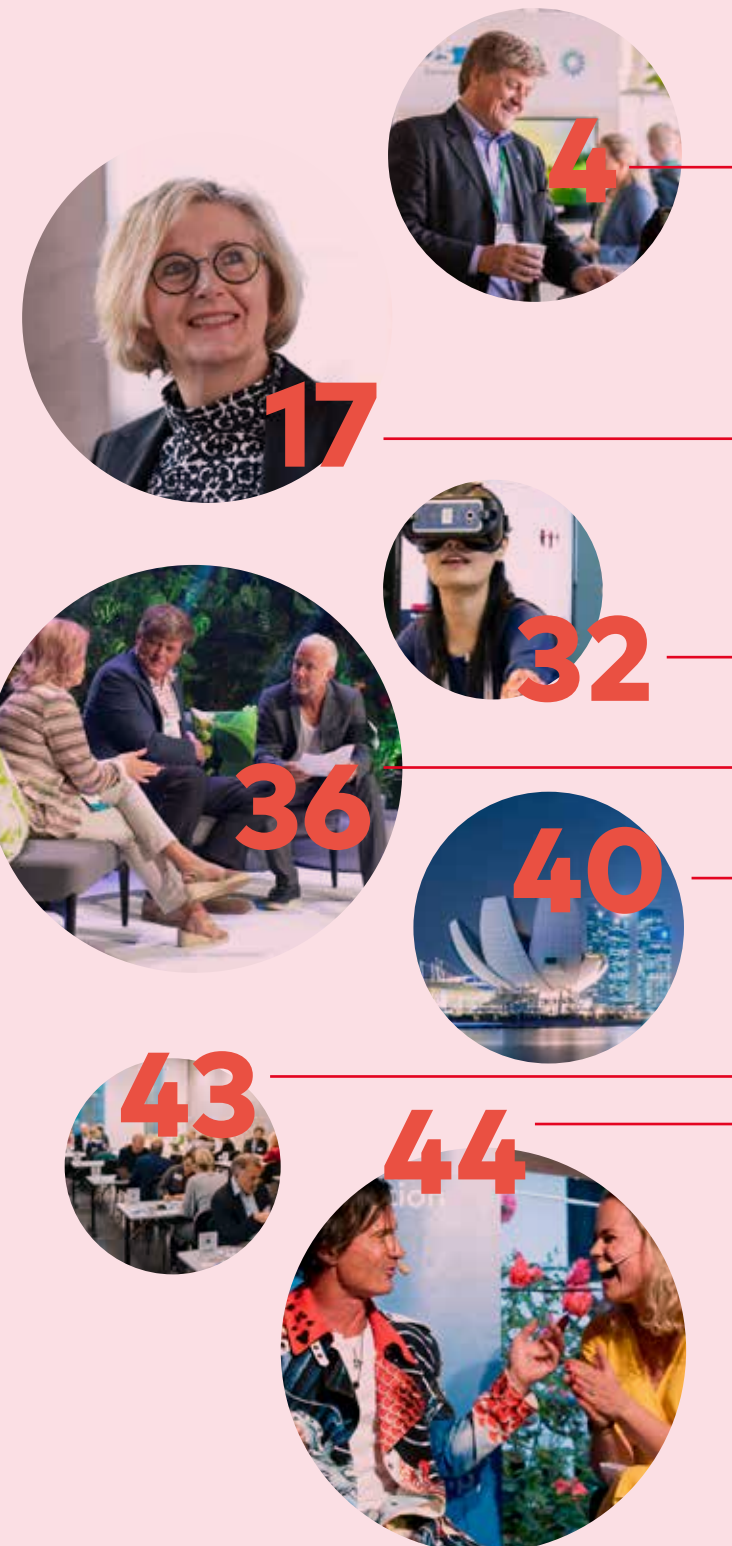
Our office is situated in Oslo, Norway, with 22 highly qualified employees from all the Nordic countries and with expertise from different business areas and industries. Nordic Innovation's annual budget is approximately NOK 90 million. The office is co-located with NordForsk and Nordic Energy Research, also organisations under the Nordic Council of Ministers.

### Contributors:

Lena Henriksson  
Magnus Buer  
Iiris Tarvonen  
Frigg Harlung-Jensen

Design: Miksmaster Creative / miksmaster.no  
Cover Photo: Finn Ståle Felberg

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# A Year of Deliveries

## We entered 2019 with high expectations for implementing and delivering on the Nordic Co-operation Program for Business and Innovation Policy 2018–2021.

Our efforts have been ambitious and are closely aligned with the strategic development process carried out in 2018, which laid the foundation for our three cross-sectoral programs:

Health, Demography and Quality of Life

Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity

Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation

Two of the programs, Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity and Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation was launched by the Ministers for Economic Affairs in their meeting in Reykjavik on 27 June 2019.

"We are on track – full throttle ahead and now it is time for us to deliver" I said at the end of 2018. And 2019 was a busy and challenging year with a high level of activity. We have initiated and supported various projects and new business initiatives across the Nordics.

In June the five Nordic prime ministers decided on a new vision and new overall priorities for the Nordic co-operation – **The Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world.** We have been busy working to integrate and implement the new vision and key goals and at the same time worked with strategical priorities and new action plans for the coming programs that we will launch in 2022.

In 2019 Nordic Innovation entered a number of collaborative efforts, including with the national innovation agencies and the Nordic trade promotion organizations. In addition, there has been cooperation with NordForsk and Nordic Energy Research on activities relating to the circular economy. Nordic Innovation has also initiated cooperation towards increasing female entrepreneurship in the Nordic region.

During the year Nordic Innovation successfully concluded the Nordic Welfare Solutions initiative. This initiative was one of two flagship projects run by Nordic Innovation under the Nordic prime ministers' initiative Nordic Solutions to Global



←  
Svein Berg at  
WCEF2019 in Helsinki.  
Photo: 2019 Saara  
Malmström.

Challenges. More than 200 Nordic companies have been connected with stakeholders in global markets and there has been developed branding and information material available for free to support Nordic export to global markets. The other flagship project, Nordic Sustainable Cities, is decided prolonged with an additional year to build upon the fruitful Nordic collaboration that has been established. Nordic Innovation also concluded the Nordic Scalers Initiative, which was evaluated as being well designed for meeting the needs of enterprises in the development and growth phase.

Three projects have been developed during the year under the special initiative Tourism in the Nordics, in cooperation with external actors. The Nordic Smart Government program, launched in 2016 to simplify the lives of SMEs in Nordic countries, was further developed in 2019, and has attracted widespread interest and support from stakeholders. The project is run by the Nordic business registers.

A Nordic Innovation House in Hong Kong was inaugurated in January 2019 and funding for a fifth Nordic Innovation House to be established in Tokyo

in 2020 was allocated at the end of the year. The Nordic Innovation House concept is designed to provide a "soft landing" for Nordic entrepreneurs and SMEs new to the market in a specific region.

The high expertise and professional staff of 23 persons from all five Nordic countries ensure the quality and impact of Nordic Innovations work.

We are a small and agile organisation and during 2019 we showed that by bringing people and organisations together we reached an impact on many levels and contributed to make the Nordic region become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.

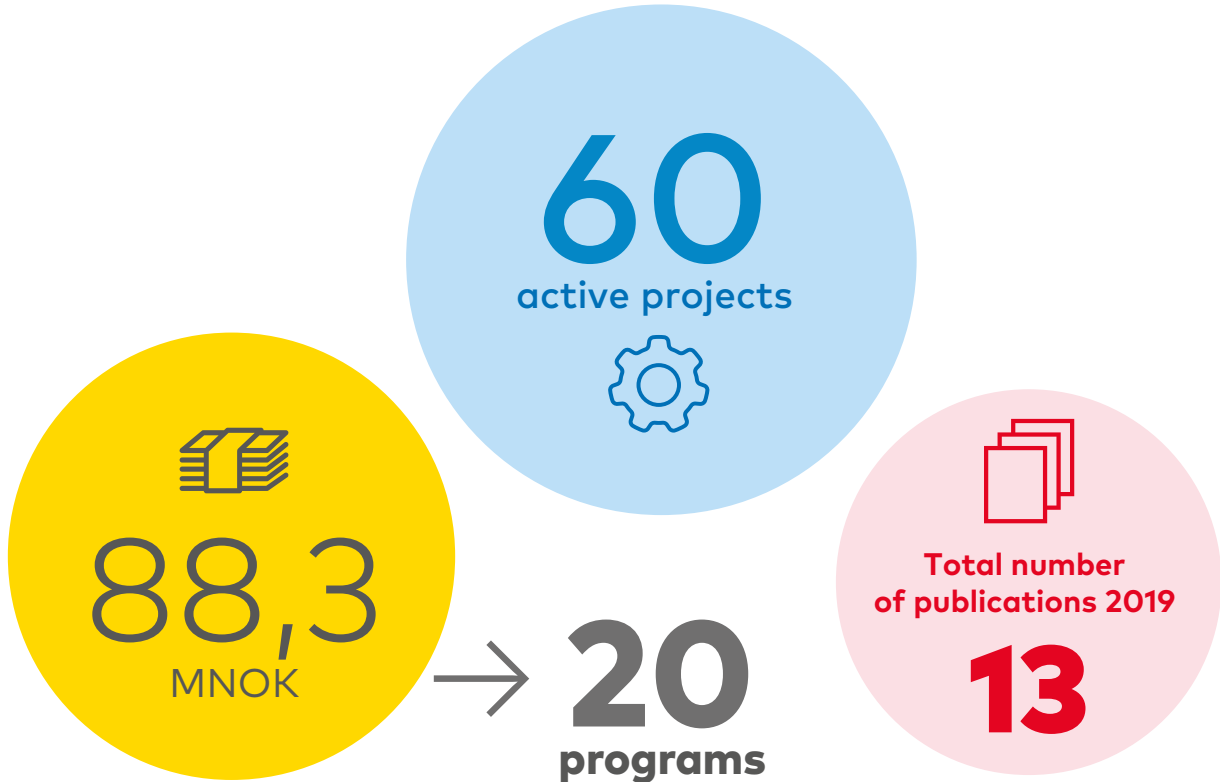
The ongoing development of administrative cooperation between Nordic Innovation, NordForsk and Nordic Energy Research continued in 2019. The three organisations were co-located in common office premises.

We are looking forward to 2020 and our new projects with innovative solutions on health, mobility and circular economy. We promise to be an active partner and deliver joint co-operative Nordic results that make a green impact for the future.

Oslo March 2020  
Svein Berg, Managing Director

# Facts and Figures

In 2019, Nordic Innovation has allocated NOK 88.3 million to 20 programs. During 2019 there were a total of 60 active projects under Nordic Innovation. Of these, 40 were active at the end of 2019.



## Followers on social media

| Media    | Number of followers<br>1 Jan. 2019 | Number of followers<br>1 Jan. 2020 | Increase |
|----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Twitter  | 4550                               | 5310                               | 17 %     |
| Facebook | 2012                               | 2624                               | 30 %     |
| LinkedIn | 2397                               | 3710                               | 55 %     |

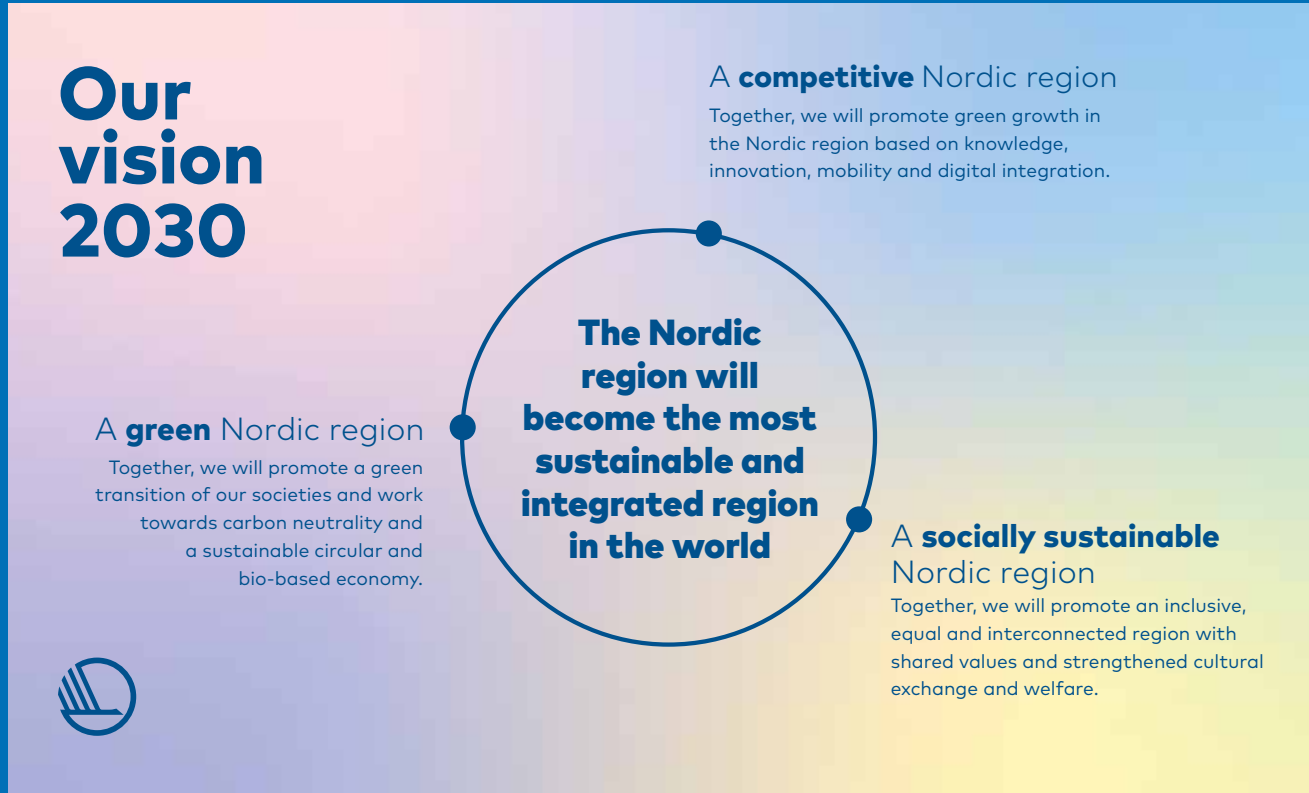
Subscribers  
to the newsletter:

1200

## Stay up-to-date!

Sign up and be among the first to receive news and updates about Nordic Innovation activities:  
[nordicinnovation.org/subscribe](https://nordicinnovation.org/subscribe)

# New Vision for Nordic Co-operation



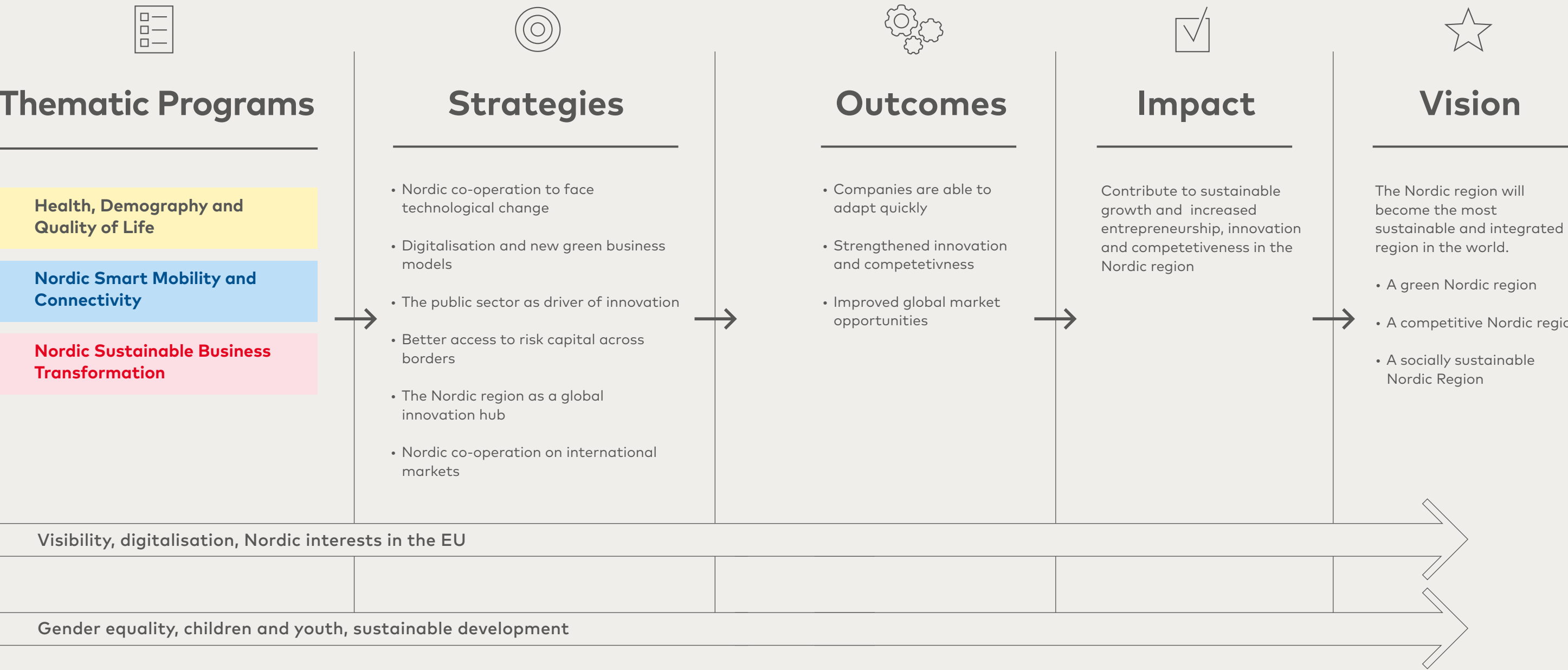
Our vision is that the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. To achieve our vision, we will prioritise:

**A green Nordic region** – together, we will promote a green transition of our societies and work towards carbon neutrality and a sustainable circular and bio-based economy.

**A competitive Nordic region** – together, we will promote green growth in the Nordic region based on knowledge, innovation, mobility and digital integration.

**A socially sustainable Nordic Region** – together, we will promote an inclusive, equal and interconnected region with shared values and strengthened cultural exchange and welfare.

# Co-operation Program 2018–2021



Health, Demography and  
Quality of Life

# Together towards Sustainable Nordic Health Care Systems

We believe Nordic cooperation is the key to meeting the challenges facing the Nordic health care system. Together we can make our health care systems sustainable and improve quality of life for all citizens in the Nordic region.

The Nordic health care systems are coming under increasing pressure due to a growing proportion of elderly people and an increased prevalence of lifestyle and chronic diseases. These challenges will only continue to grow, forcing us to look at how we can continue providing world-class health and welfare services to our citizens in a sustainable way.

*Our vision:*

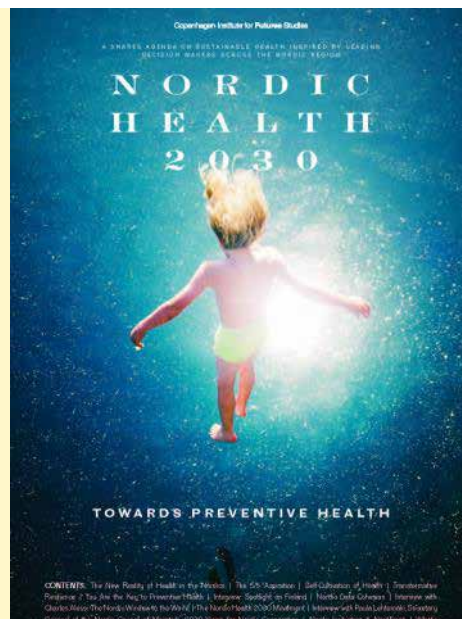
***In 2030, the Nordics will be the most sustainable and integrated health region in the world, providing the best possible personalised health care for all its citizens.***



←  
Senior Innovation  
Adviser Rasmus  
Malmberg speaking  
about how Nordic  
cooperation can drive  
innovation in the health  
sector. Photo: Kristian  
Ridder-Nielsen.

In this second year of the **Health, Demography and Quality of Life** program, Nordic Innovation has initiated and supported several projects and activities to meet these challenges and bring us closer to our vision of the Nordic region as the most the most sustainable and integrated health region in the world in 2030.

On the next pages we have highlighted a few of our projects and activities from 2019. Other projects and initiatives this year worth mentioning include looking at **legal barriers and possibilities for sharing health Nordic data**, investigating how Nordic cities can drive health innovation in the **Nordic Healthy Cities** project, exploring possible **value chain collaboration within health care** and how to grow the Nordic social impact economy with the **Impact StartUp Nordic** project.



←  
*Nordic Health 2030 Magazine outlines a visionary transition towards a truly sustainable Nordic health care system with an increased focus on prevention rather than treatment. Download publication at [nordicinnovation.org](http://nordicinnovation.org)*

### Transitioning from Treatment to Prevention

Today, the Nordic countries spend most of their health care costs on sick care. Rapid demographic changes and new demands from citizens and the private and public sectors are placing pressure on this system. The future requires us to rethink how we can ensure that the Nordic health care systems continue to deliver the best possible services to Nordic citizens.

Together with the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies, Nordic Innovation gathered 30 Nordic health care experts in a series of workshops in 2019 to discuss and explore how best to shape the future of health in the Nordic.

The workshop series sparked the emergence of the **Nordic Health 2030 Movement**. The Movement in turn created the **Nordic Health 2030 Magazine**, outlining the call for a transition towards a truly sustainable Nordic health care system with an increased focus on prevention rather than treatment. This can be achieved by increasing health care expenditure towards preventive measures.

Today, the Nordic countries generally allocate around 10 % of their GDP to health care. Out of this, some 0.5 % is directed towards prevention while the rest is spent on treatment measures. Shifting some of the expenditures on treatment towards prevention could be an important step towards a sustainable health care system for all Nordic citizens.

### Using Nordic Health Data to Improve Lives

Health data will play a crucial role in fulfilling our vision of the Nordic health region and successfully making the transition from treatment to prevention.

All five Nordic countries are renowned for their registry data. Sharing those data in a secure and smart way – also across borders – opens possibilities to develop new solutions and business opportunities to improve quality of life for Nordic citizens.

To showcase how data can be used, Nordic Innovation ran three **Nordic Health Hackathons** in 2019 in Reykjavik, Helsinki and Copenhagen. The hackathons were executed by Dattaca Labs and were open for people from all disciplines, ages, genders and skill levels to carry out rapid prototyping and innovation using already available Nordic health data sets.

The three hackathons attracted more than 1,000 applications combined and resulted in several identified solutions. The Icelandic team that won the main prize in the Reykjavik hackathon also participated in the Helsinki hackathon with a different solution called **trackehr** – a digital communication platform for doctors, patients and relatives. The team has since been accepted in an Icelandic accelerator program and secured a NOK 1.5 million investment to develop the solution further.

Nordic Innovation also supported the **Nordic Interoperability Project**, where a consortium of Nordic businesses demonstrated how data sharing can make it possible for Nordic patients with a chronic disease to move freely across the Nordic borders. The project presented its results at several conferences and events in 2019, including HIMSS in Finland.

## Health, Demography and Quality of Life 2018–2021

### ACTION AREAS:

**Bridging Nordic Data Initiative** – Innovation through data sharing.

**Preventive Health** – Shifting focus from treatment to prevention.

**Healthy Cities** – Healthy living and sustainability in Nordic cities.

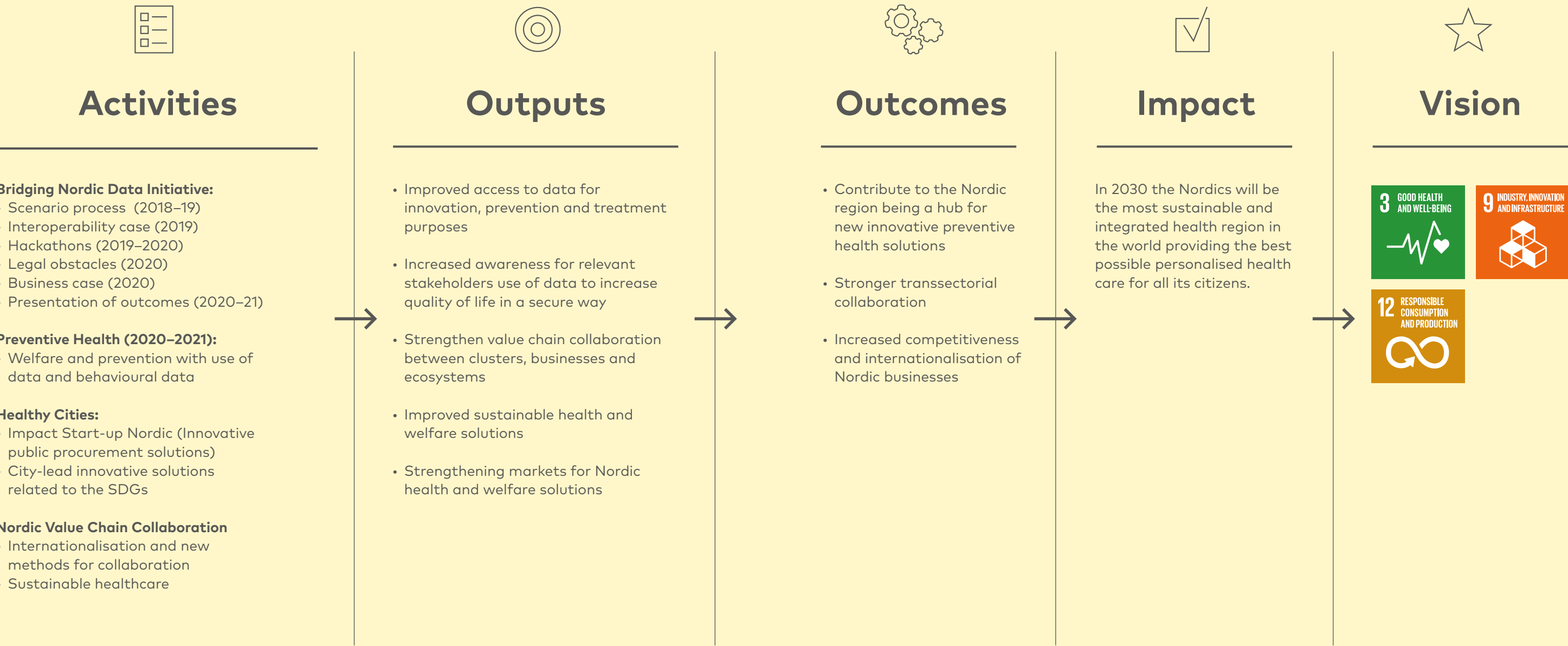
**Value Chain Collaboration** – utilising the full innovation potential for the Nordics and beyond.

[nordicinnovation.org/health](http://nordicinnovation.org/health)



←  
*Young participants using open health data to create new solutions at the Nordic Health Hackathon in Helsinki.*

# Health, Demography and Quality of Life





**"We have similar social and structural systems and focus on the same challenges and because of that we can form more tailored initiatives in the Nordic region."**

# Health Challenges Call for Innovative and Smart Nordic Solutions

**The Nordic countries are facing challenges with regard to a growing population with an extended lifespan, and a rising number of senior citizens, patients with chronic diseases and people with lifestyle diseases. But there are effective and sustainable solutions that can increase quality of life for Nordic citizens.**

Mona Truelsen, Senior Innovation Adviser at Nordic Innovation, has worked with innovation and health issues for many years, and has a deep understanding of the full importance of Nordic collaboration. We meet for a short talk at one of her favorite spots in Oslo, the Oslo City Hall. She has widespread experience in developing collaboration between different Nordic stakeholders, companies and the public sector within the field of health and welfare.

## ***Why is this Nordic collaboration important?***

"We have so much to learn from each other in the Nordic region. We have to a large extent similar social and structural systems and we have focus on the same challenges and because of that we can form more tailored initiatives in the Nordic region. It is important to us to be transparent and develop our solutions together with our citizens. By working together, we benefit from each other's experience and skills," says Mona Truelsen.

In recent years, she and her colleagues have been designing the Health, Demography and Quality of Life program, which is one of the three comprehensive programs given main priority by Nordic Innovation during the 2018–2021 period. Health, Demography and Quality of Life seeks to connect people, data and innovation for a better life. The goal is to shift the focus to prevention and use of health data. If we want to continue to provide excellent healthcare in the Nordics, there is an urgency for a radical redesign of our healthcare systems where a shift to focusing on prevention and use of health data is clue.

←  
Mona Truelsen, Senior Innovation Adviser at Nordic Innovation, at the Oslo City Hall.  
Photo: Jarle Nytingnes.



**What makes it so valuable to work together with representatives of the Nordic countries?**

"It is exciting to develop solutions that can be used in different areas as well as research and welfare activities. The Nordic countries have a population of more than 27 million people combined. Together we can contribute to progress in this field, work with the long-term solutions and shape the vision for the future. I really do believe that by 2030 the Nordics will be the most sustainable and integrated health region in the world," says Mona Truelsen.

**Mona has worked with a number of health-related innovation programs at Nordic Innovation since 2011. What does an innovation adviser at Nordic Innovation do?**

"We evaluate and initiate projects that might not otherwise have been able to get started at a Nordic level. We support new ideas, we challenge and support companies and organisations to think in new ways, and we work with organisations, networks and clusters in all five Nordic countries. We have an agile approach and are willing to take chances and experiment and sometimes take a chance on failing to achieving success together," explains Mona Truelsen.

After nearly eight years at the organisation she understands the importance of working long-term. Of not letting go of the goal when everyone is looking for a short-term solution. The work is inspiring, and she is especially proud of the outcome when new collaborative constellations emerges as a result of gathering different parties to solve present challenges. As was done in the Nordic prime ministers' initiative Nordic Welfare Solutions, where joint Nordic welfare products and services have been introduced, tested and attracted interest in the German, US and Canadian markets. Mona also highlights the overall success in creating a needs-driven innovation tool, a challenge prize competition called the Nordic Independent Living Challenge together with the five Nordic capital cities where Nordic startups, environment for testing and new business models were developed. She is proud of projects that reaches the goal of encouraging cooperation, supporting networks and enhancing Nordic co-creation.

## Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity

# Changing the Way People and Goods Move

Changing frameworks such as the climate crisis and technological advancements are creating both a great need and new possibilities for innovation. The aim of the Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity program is to help develop a more sustainable and connected transport system in the Nordic region while generating opportunities for Nordic businesses.

Nina Egeli, Senior Innovation Adviser, presented Nordic opportunities for collaboration at the Nordic Pavilion at the ITS World Congress in Singapore. Photo: Iiris Tarvonen.  
↓



↑  
Mikael Von Dorrien presented the Nordic Smart and Mobility program at the Swoosh conference in Stockholm. Photo: Dennis Erixon.

In 2019 Nordic Innovation announced two calls for proposals and a mobility mission, funded several high impact projects and finalised a game developed to gather Nordic cities to plan for joint visions for 2050. Between the calls and the development work we were profiling the Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity program in relevant arenas, such as the ITS World Congress and Nordic EV Summit.

It was a busy year, with many glimpses of coming results. A wide number of new partnerships were established and already existing partners were able to start realising their efforts. Nordic collaboration within mobility has received a great deal of public attention.

The funded projects NOMAD – Nordic Open Mobility and Digitalisation (previously NMIP) and Nordic Network for Electric Aviation (NEA) have already attracted global interest and put the Nordic countries on the world map.

### Moving on Land, Sea and in the Air

In May 2019 Nordic Innovation announced a call for proposals on Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity seeking a strong Nordic consortium. Nordic Innovation received 12 applications in response to the call, four of which were awarded support.

"All the projects have the potential to have a major impact. We are talking about, amongst others, quality of life, sustainability, accessibility, as well as a huge potential for Nordic business, says Nina Egeli, Senior Innovation Adviser at Nordic Innovation.

The projects represent geographical variation, as well as a range of partners and project activities, in addition to the various transport modes.

"When we combine the best of what the Nordic countries can deliver on mobility, the Nordic region and Nordic businesses can really make their mark and strengthen their position at a global level significantly," Egeli says.

### Sea Meets Land

To bring shipping in line with the Paris Climate Agreement, the maritime sector needs to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 50 % by 2050. This requires major advancements in technology as well as shifts in business models and in the ways of operating, including in the interface between land and sea.

To support innovation and collaboration in this interface, Nordic Innovation invited experts and stakeholders within the maritime and land-based transport sectors to a series of workshops in Reykjavik, Turku and Gothenburg to explore opportunities for potential joint Nordic mobility missions. Based on inputs from the workshops, we formulated a NOK 8 million Nordic Innovation Mobility Mission with the aim of decarbonising Nordic ports, transport of people and goods – on and between sea and land. The mission was soft-launched at the Nor-Shipping conference in June 2019 and has an application deadline of 14 January 2020.



↑

The Nordic Urban Mobility 2050 Future Game lets you take a sneak peek into the future and imagine how people will live in 2050 and suggests that even if you cannot predict the future, you can shape it. Photo: Dorde Tomic OASC. Illustration: Hellon.



### Creating visions for urban mobility

In 2019 Nordic Innovation finalised the development of the Nordic Urban Mobility 2050 Futures Game which was initiated in 2018 together with the Finnish service design company Hellon.

The game was developed as part of our aim to bring together various Nordic cities to form joint visions for 2050.

"We believe that the future of mobility is created in cities and facilitating this process is where Nordic Innovation can make a difference", says Håkan Lind, Senior Innovation Adviser.

The aim of the game itself is to be used as a discussion starter and to generate future mobility scenarios.

During the past year we have conducted a series of workshops for mobility experts and providers to test the game. Feedback from the workshop participants has been positive and the game has received a great deal of attention and attracted interest in cities and among students and mobility providers. Next year it will be used for workshops with representatives from the Nordic Smart City Network to ideate areas for Nordic collaboration. In the final phase of the process Nordic Innovation aims to facilitate collaboration among Nordic cities and fund projects initiated by the cities.



**The Nordic Network for Electric Aviation** will accelerate and standardise electric aviation in the Nordic region. "Our goal is to develop fossil-free regional air aviation in the Nordics. To achieve that, we need to gather knowledge and people from many different sectors", says Maria Fiskerud, project manager for the Nordic Network for Electric Aviation (NEA). Photo: Heart Aerospace



**NOMAD – Nordic Open Mobility and Digitalisation** (previously Nordic Mobility Innovation platform) will develop and test how to roam between Mobility-as-a-Service solution across borders, as well as explore how mobility data should be shared to support tomorrow's mobility services. Photo: Markus Winkle / Unsplash



**Next Nordic Green Transport Wave – Large Vehicles** aims to facilitate the very first hydrogen infrastructure for larger vehicles in the Nordic countries. Photo: Pxhere



**The Connected Ship** will support a more sustainable, digitalised and connected maritime industry by creating collaboration and combining existing technologies and knowledge from the Nordic ICT and cleantech industries. Photo: Sergio Souza / Unsplash

## Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity 2018–2021

### ACTION AREAS:

**Quality of Life Through Mobility and Connectivity** – Innovative solutions and concepts.

**Clusters as Drivers** – Connecting know-how.

**Nordic Urban Mobility 2050** – Future cities.

**Sea Meets Land** – Emerging solutions for ports, people and goods transport.

[nordicinnovation.org/mobility](https://nordicinnovation.org/mobility)

# Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity



## Activities

### Co-creation processes

- Workshops series – “Sea Meets Land” – creating a joint mission
- Nordic cluster meet-ups to identify areas of collaboration
- Game session/events with Nordic Smart Cities Network – to identify areas for joint innovation projects

### Calls for proposals and project outlines

- Clusters
- Nordic businesses
- Other stakeholders

### Discussion starter

- “Nordic Urban Mobility 2050 Futures Game” for developing joint scenarios and visions for the future

### Nordic cluster collaboration

- Working group of national experts
- Awareness of Nordic level opportunities and mobilising action

### “The Nordic Way”

- Export programme/Nordic branding
- Nordic Innovation Houses
- Nordic Scalars programme



## Outputs

- A joint Nordic Mobility Mission: Sea Meets Land. Nordic partnerships and projects established across maritime industries and land based transport and logistics
- Increased cluster/value chain collaboration in concrete projects on mobility and connectivity
- Nordic cities agree on joint visions – as frontrunners in implementing the future of mobility
- Building Nordic concepts/holistic solutions for international markets



## Outcomes

- New Nordic sustainable business models and solutions within mobility and connectivity
- Impact and value creation for Nordic businesses
- Visibility for Nordic solutions, establishing a Nordic Smart Mobility brand
- Nordic cities have teamed up to implement innovative mobility and connectivity solutions
- Improved global market opportunities for Nordic mobility and connectivity solutions and business models



## Impact

Speedier transition to more sustainable and connected Nordic mobility solutions for enhanced quality of life



## Vision

- Changing the way people and goods move towards a sustainable future through innovative Nordic mobility solutions
- Making the Nordic region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world within a decade
- Nordic solutions to global challenges



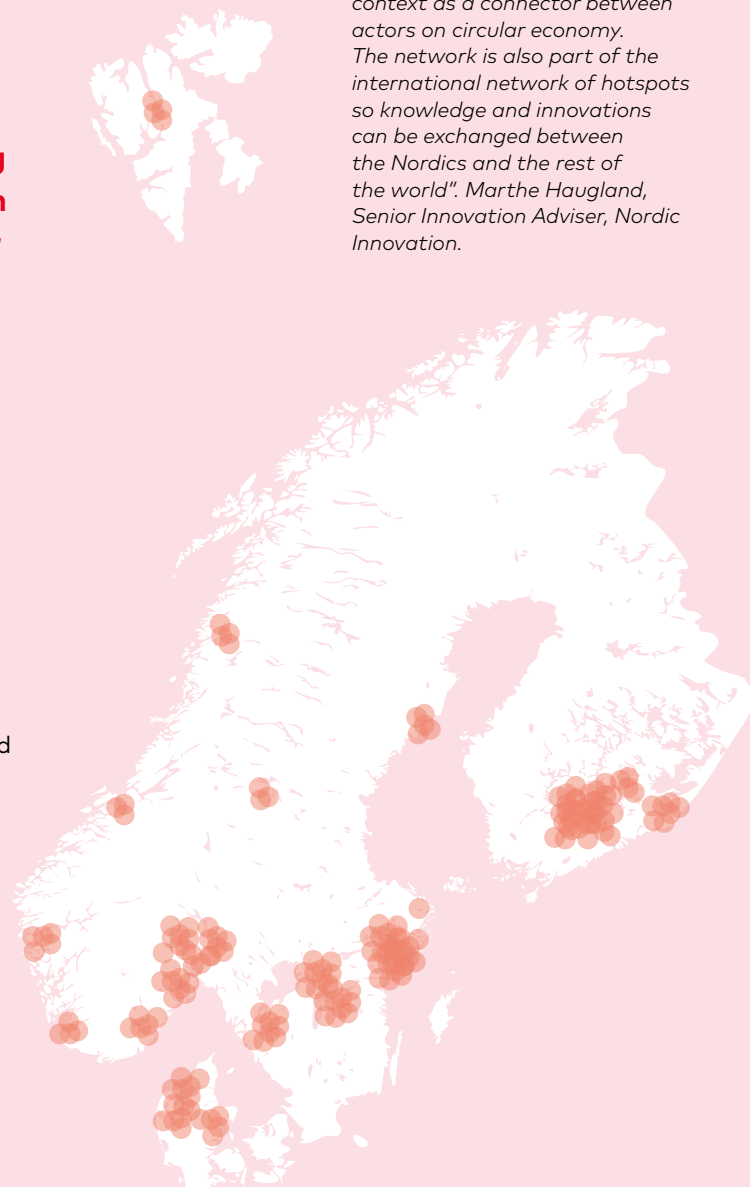
# Challenging Industries for a Circular Future

The aim of the program is to kickstart the circular transition and support companies' ability to adapt to a circular economy in the Nordic countries. This will be achieved by exploring new business models, piloting ideas and strengthening ecosystems. In 2019 cross-border cooperation, circular cities and initiating new projects were main priorities.

## A Nordic circular network

With inspiration from the Netherlands, Nordic Circular Hotspot was launched in June 2019. The pre-project was initiated to map stakeholders working with circular economy in order to establish a Nordic network. The project group consists of members from Denmark, Sweden and Norway who came together to develop a Nordic network for circular economy stakeholders. Even though the project is early-stage, the group has already mapped around 230 Nordic actors based on interests and competences within circular economy.

*"The Nordic Circular Hotspot can be very valuable in a Nordic context as a connector between actors on circular economy. The network is also part of the international network of hotspots so knowledge and innovations can be exchanged between the Nordics and the rest of the world". Marthe Haugland, Senior Innovation Adviser, Nordic Innovation.*



**"We want to take part in the shift from linear to circular economy and these workshops provide insights and tools and access to a brilliant network."**

*Workshop participant, on why they chose to participate in the circular economy workshops.*

The launch of the Nordic Innovation projects **Nordic Circular Hotspot** and **Circular Business Models in the Nordic Manufacturing Industry** were both packed with participants eager to know more and join in on the new projects.

## The Biggest Circular Economy Event of the Year

In the beginning of summer, one of the most important circular economy events took place in Helsinki, Finland: World's Circular Economy Forum 2019 (WCEF2019). Nordic Innovation was a key partner at the event, where we launched two projects, invited several partners and stakeholders to present their work at our key partner stand and held the session **Acceleration of Circular Business** on the main stage.

## WCEF2019

Nordic Innovation was a key partner at WCEF2019.

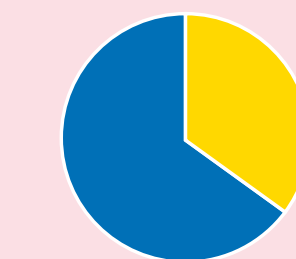
The WCEF2019 gathered 2200 key circular economy stakeholders from all over the world, 1541 people from the Nordic countries attended.

Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Paula Lehtomäki spoke at the closing event.

WCEF2020 will be held in Canada.

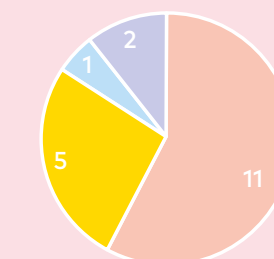
## Circular Business Models in the Nordic Manufacturing Industry – Ecosystem Perspective

How helpful were the workshops in creating contacts for your company in other Nordic countries?



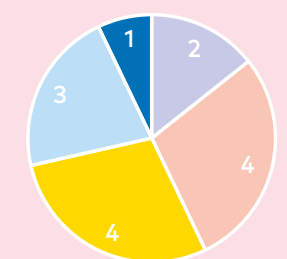
Very helpful  
Somewhat helpful  
Not helpful

Pilot ideas developed with help from the program (i.e. independent ideas as well as signed collaborations for piloting)  
If yes, how many?



1 2 3 4 5 More

Number of new collaborations/cross border partnerships were generated for your company by the programme?



1 2 3 4 5 More

## Facts and figures Circular Business Models in the Nordic Manufacturing Industry – Ecosystem Perspective 2019

60 companies

16 workshops

Workshops in Denmark, Sweden,  
Norway and Finland

36+ piloting ideas

37+ new collaborations generated  
through the workshops

### Piloting for a Circular Manufacturing Industry

Based on the Sitra playbook Circular Business Models for the Manufacturing Industry, Nordic Innovation aimed to go Nordic. We invited four ecosystems within the manufacturing industry to take part in a series of workshops around the Nordics. The aim: competence-building in manufacturing ecosystems through exploring new business models and strengthening collaboration between the Nordic companies.

### Venturing for Impact

After a successful launch of the LOOP Ventures pilot in 2018, the project launched nationally in Norway, Finland and Iceland during 2019. The pilot showed great promise and by the end of 2019 new Nordic partners joined LOOP to scale the project faster to the Nordics, share learning and accelerate the transition to a circular economy. With LOOP Ventures the goal is to push new, circular ventures to market.

"We now have a database with over 500 companies, offering a variety of services to larger companies that wish to move towards circular business models. We have run successful pilots and now it's time to scale up the project. I look forward to continuing our support in 2020, where we will strengthen project impacts and cross-border cooperation even further by adding additional partners with local knowledge and networks", says Elís Benediktsson, Senior Innovation Adviser at Nordic Innovation.

←  
Senior Innovation Adviser Elís  
Benediktsson speaking at the  
Nordic Council of Ministers'  
circular economy conference  
in Latvia. Photo: Ansis  
Vegners, NORDEN.LV



↑  
Senior Innovation Adviser  
Marthe Haugland at WCEF2019.  
Photo: 2019 Saara Malmström.

## Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation 2018–2021

### ACTION AREAS:

**Competence** – driving change through competence and new business models.

**New Solutions** – accelerating business through innovation.

**Circular Cities** – public private collaboration.

**Ecosystems** – building networks and connecting competences and people.

[nordicinnovation.org/circularnordic](http://nordicinnovation.org/circularnordic)

### The Future Nordic Cities

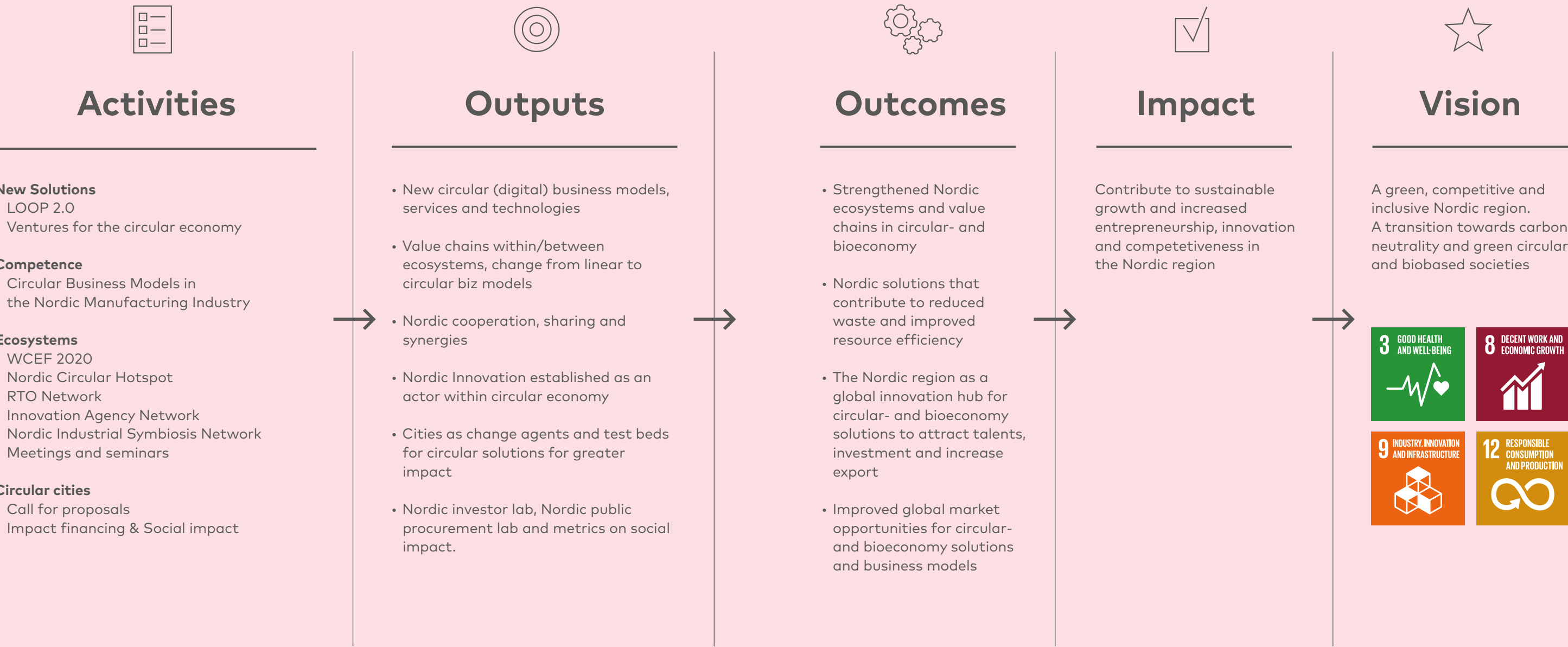
Two exciting news items on circular economy were published in December. The first was the collaboration with the OECD. Nordic Innovation was approached by the OECD to partner up on a roundtable in Oslo. The theme: Circular Economy in Cities and Regions. The event will be hosted by the City of Oslo and take place at Oslo City Hall.

In December we also published a call for proposals on circular cities and new circular solutions. The call was a culmination of a year where the focus on circular economy started to spread throughout the Nordic countries. Nordic Innovation saw a gap and a need for new public-private actors to run circular economy projects and is therefore seeking projects that have the potential to generate high-impact, clear and scalable results and substantial Nordic added value. The deadline for the call is 26 March 2020.



↑  
Secretary General of the Nordic  
Council of Ministers Paula Lehtomäki  
and Managing Director of Nordic  
Innovation Svein Berg at WCEF2019.  
Photo: 2019 Saara Malmström.

# Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation



Nordic Smart Government

# Making Life Easier for SMEs Using Real-time Data

The five Nordic countries are working together to simplify the lives of small and medium-sized enterprises and to create new business opportunities and growth based on economic data.

In 2016, the five Nordic prime ministers stated their ambition to make the Nordic region the most integrated region in the world. Nordic Smart Government supports this vision by aiming to simplify the lives of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to create new business opportunities and growth based on economic data – thereby supporting a more competitive region.

Today, despite being located a highly digitised region, Nordic businesses experience challenges when reporting to authorities because different systems do not speak to each other. A business case drawn up by EY in 2018 estimates the effects of sharing B2B financial information in real time to be in the range of NOK 250 to 270 billion.

Nordic Smart Government participants:

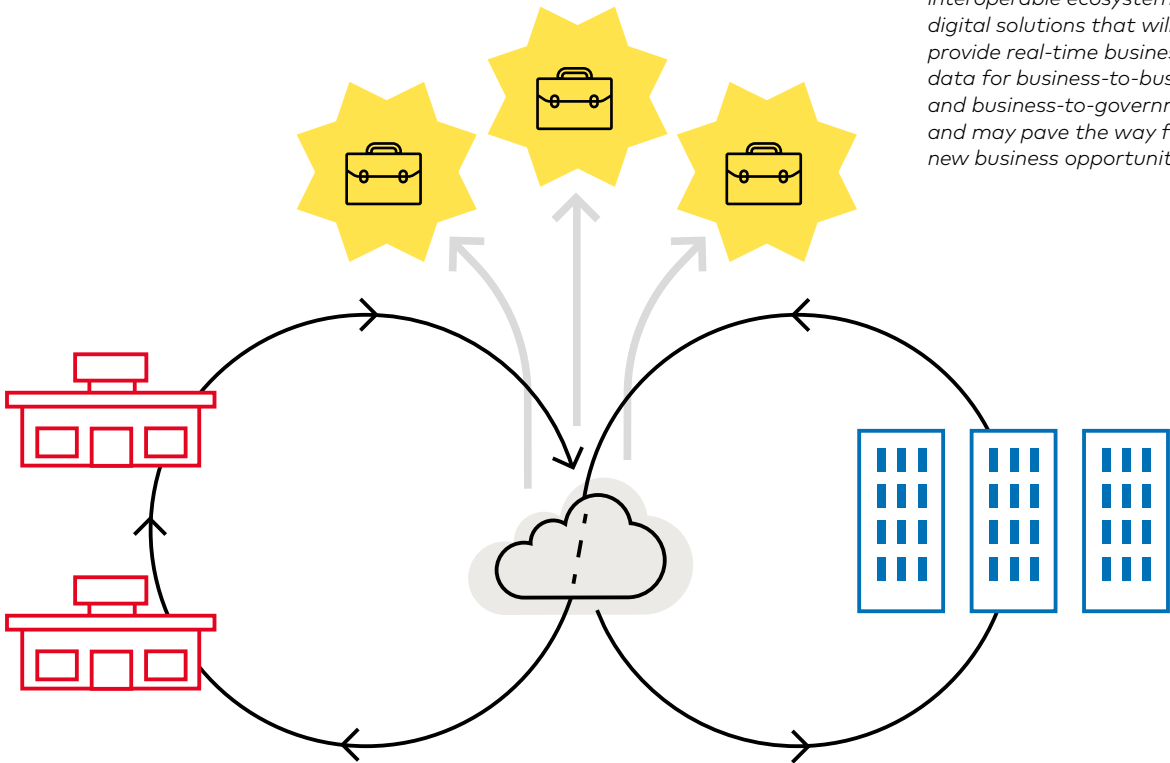
| NO                                                                                  | SE                                                                                  | FI                                                                                  | IS                                                                                  | DK                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Brønnøysunds-registrene                                                             | Bolagsverket                                                                        | Patent and Registration Office (PRH)                                                | Directorate of Internal Revenue                                                     | Erhvervsstyrelsen                                                                     |
| Skatteetaten                                                                        | Skatteverket                                                                        | Vero (Finnish Tax Agency)                                                           | Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs                                            | Udviklings- og Forenklings-styrelsen                                                  |
| Statistisk Sentralbyrå                                                              | Statistisk Centralbyrå                                                              | Finnish State Treasury                                                              | Ministry of Industries and Innovation                                               | Skattestyrelsen                                                                       |
|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     | Statistics Iceland                                                                  |                                                                                       |

The five Nordic business registries authorities, together with several tax authorities and statistical authorities, are making a roadmap for creating an interoperable ecosystem of digital solutions that will provide real-time business data for business-to-business and business-to-government.

The program has now established a network with diverse expertise across the Nordic region to cooperate and exchange ideas. The groundwork for developing technological solutions to realise the program goals is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2020.

**Nordic Smart Government**  
**2016–2020**  
[nordicinnovation.org/smartgovernment](http://nordicinnovation.org/smartgovernment)

The main outcome of Nordic Smart Government will be a roadmap for creating an interoperable ecosystem of digital solutions that will provide real-time business data for business-to-business and business-to-government and may pave the way for new business opportunities.



# Nordic Sustainable Cities

## Bringing Nordic Solutions for Sustainable, Smart and Liveable Cities to the World

Targeted export efforts in global markets bear fruits in 2019. Nordic cooperation opens doors for businesses in North America, India and China.

Urbanisation continues to be a global megatrend, meaning cities will play an important role in driving sustainability. There is and will be a global demand for solutions to develop sustainable, smart and liveable cities – and the Nordic region is uniquely positioned to deliver some of those solutions.

Nordic Sustainable Cities started in 2017 as as part of the five Nordic prime ministers' initiative Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges. The initiative is a response to finding solutions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Early in the program, North America, India and China were identified as the most important export markets for such solutions. Three to six cities were singled out in each market. A well-functioning Nordic cooperation between the national trade promotion agencies has resulted in good connections with decision makers in the selected cities. In 2019, the North American cooperation has come the furthest in recruiting businesses.



← Managing Director Svein Berg (second from the right) discussing Nordic activities in North America with Mayor of Seattle Jenny Durkan (middle left) at the C40 Mayors' Summit in Copenhagen. Also present is Senior Innovation Adviser Rasmus Malmberg (far left) from Nordic Innovation and Program Manager North America Pamela Tiller (far right) from the Danish Trade Council. Photo: Iiris Tarvonen.

"The work done towards Canadian cities in 2019 has resulted in a collaboration between both a Swedish and a Danish architecture firm, and a Swedish and a Finnish company, to bid for contracts in the North American market", explains Innovation Adviser Ivar Josefsson, who runs Nordic Sustainable Cities together with Senior Innovation Advisers Rasmus Malmberg and Håkan Lind.

Nordic Innovation also financed nine projects in 2019 all aimed at branding Nordic solutions for sustainable, smart and liveable cities to global stakeholders. Among these were a Nordic Sustainable Cities Travel Exhibition designed by five Nordic architecture centres. The exhibition is available for free online and can be produced locally by Nordic embassies and consulates around the world to promote Nordic solutions to urban challenges. The exhibition has already travelled to Latvia and there is continued dialogue in other markets as well.

The five Nordic prime ministers have decided to continue Nordic Sustainable Cities for an additional year to build on the progress made in the North American and Chinese markets.

### Nordic Sustainable Cities 2017–2020

[nordicinnovation.org/sustainablecities](http://nordicinnovation.org/sustainablecities)



← The Nordic Sustainable Cities travel exhibition is available for free digital download online.



↑ Nordic companies visit an urban redevelopment site in Brampton, Canada during a Nordic Urban Lab workshop. Photo: Nordic City Solutions.



← Nordic Innovation co-funded the Nordic pavilion at the 2019 ITS World Congress in Singapore. Photo: Iiris Tarvonen.

Nordic Welfare Solutions

# Nordic Cooperation Brings Nordic Health and Welfare Solutions to the Global Market

Three years of Nordic cooperation on branding and targeted export initiatives have opened doors for Nordic businesses.

The initiative Nordic Welfare Solutions started in 2017 as part of the five Nordic prime ministers' initiative Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges – to offer Nordic solutions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Early on, USA, Canada and Germany were identified as promising export markets for Nordic health and welfare solutions.



Three years on, Nordic Innovation has supported branding and export initiatives in all three markets. In 2019, we supported projects in both the US and in Germany. The latter, called **Krankenhaus Karawane**, brought 15 Nordic businesses delivering hospital solutions to Germany to meet with about 100 German stakeholders. The Danish Minister of Health, Magnus Heunicke, participated as well, and the participating businesses reported that they received valuable knowledge as well as business leads in the German market.

The **Digital Health & Care 4.0** project, connecting Nordic health tech clusters with a cluster in Hamburg, Germany, has now seen more than 150 Nordic businesses involved in its activities and given the opportunity to matchmake and pursue business leads in Germany.

Our co-funded **export platform in Canada** has seen 15 Nordic businesses become connected to stakeholders in the Canadian market in 2019. More than half of them are expected to have tangible business in Canada in the first quarter of 2020. Additionally, the Nordic national trade promotion agencies running the project have found significant value in working together, emphasising wider reach of opportunities offered to businesses,

←  
Nordic health and welfare solutions are attractive in global markets. Photo: Yadid Levy / norden.org



↑  
Norwegian businesses met with German stakeholders in the Krankenhaus Karawane project. Photo: Danish Trade Council.

knowledge sharing, increased receptiveness of Canadian stakeholders and cost-effectiveness as positives.

Throughout the program period, Nordic Innovation has produced a catalogue of branding material including analyses, booklets and films. In 2019 we added to the selection with three white papers and one film outlining various strongholds for the Nordic health tech ecosystem that have all been used in conferences and events in global markets.

All material is available online at [www.nordicinnovation.org/welfaresolutions](http://www.nordicinnovation.org/welfaresolutions) and will hopefully continue to bring value to anyone working with exporting Nordic health and welfare solutions in the future. All remaining activities in Nordic Welfare Solution will be concluded in 2020.

Nordic Welfare Solutions 2017–2019

[nordicinnovation.org/welfaresolutions](http://nordicinnovation.org/welfaresolutions)



Three white papers about Nordic health sector strongholds are available for free digital download for anyone working with export of Nordic solutions.



# Nordic Scalers

Nordic Scalers is a Nordic Innovation initiative focused on helping Nordic scale-ups reach their full potential and on raising awareness about the importance of scale-ups. The vision: to make the Nordics the leading region in the world for scaling up businesses.

2019 saw the conclusion of the Nordic Scalers pilot with the last of the four batches of companies running from April to June 2019. In November an evaluation of the initiative was published.

## Main goals

Test and pilot new tools and services at the Nordic level to improve high-growth companies' access to high-growth competences, networks and capital.

Contribute to the scale-up community building at the Nordic level and branding Nordics as a scale-up hub, including raising awareness about the importance of scale-ups.

Contribute to shared learning and adding value to national efforts.

In addition to the four batches of Nordic companies, the Nordic Scalers' initiative also focused on raising awareness and collecting data on the Nordic scale-up landscape. Three publications were issued in 2019, two on statistical data and one study of growth and barriers to scaling in the Nordics.

## Key lessons and the launch of the Nordic Scalers alumni network

During the two-year pilot, Nordic Innovation received feedback from the 33 participating companies, the overall feedback was positive with 80 % rating the labs as being successful in creating competencies and skills.

As the last batch went through the pilot, Nordic Innovation launched the Nordic Scalers Alumni network in Helsinki in connection with the **Nordic Scale-up Summit 2019**. Here the participating companies had the opportunity to meet each other and network across batches.

## The first Nordic scale-up statistics

Another aspect of the Nordic Scalers initiative was increasing the knowledge base on the Nordic scale-up landscape and raising awareness. These efforts resulted in a statistical report, published in May 2019. "Scale-ups in the Nordics – Statistical Portrait 2008–2016" garnered a great deal of interest from scale-up ecosystems around the world, in particular the OECD and the EU. It was decided to compile a follow-up report, which was published in October 2019.

***"Nordic scale-ups constitute only 0.19% of all enterprises but account for 5.2% of all employment in the non-financial business economy".***

*Scale-ups in the Nordics  
– Statistical Portrait 2008–2016*

**Scale-ups in the Nordics 2017** was presented during Nordic Innovation's European Scale-up Workshop in Brussels on 16 October. The follow-up report focused on the differences between turnover and employment scale-ups and incorporated a lot of positive feedback from the 45 invited actors working with scale-up programs, data collection or research.



↑  
Senior Innovation Adviser Anna-Majja Sunnanmark, Managing Director Svein Berg and moderator Ola Ahlvarsson at the Nordic Scale-up Summit 2019 in Helsinki. Photo: 2019 Saara Malmström.

The Scale-up Workshop emerged from a wish to share lessons learnt, gain insight into other scale-up initiatives in the EU and discuss benefits of future collaboration. "[With the workshop] we wanted to provide a networking platform for actors who run scale-up programs or collect scale-up data in Europe. The number of scale-up actors whom we have gotten to know during the last few years is still limited", says Anna-Maija Sunnanmark, Senior Innovation Adviser at Nordic Innovation.

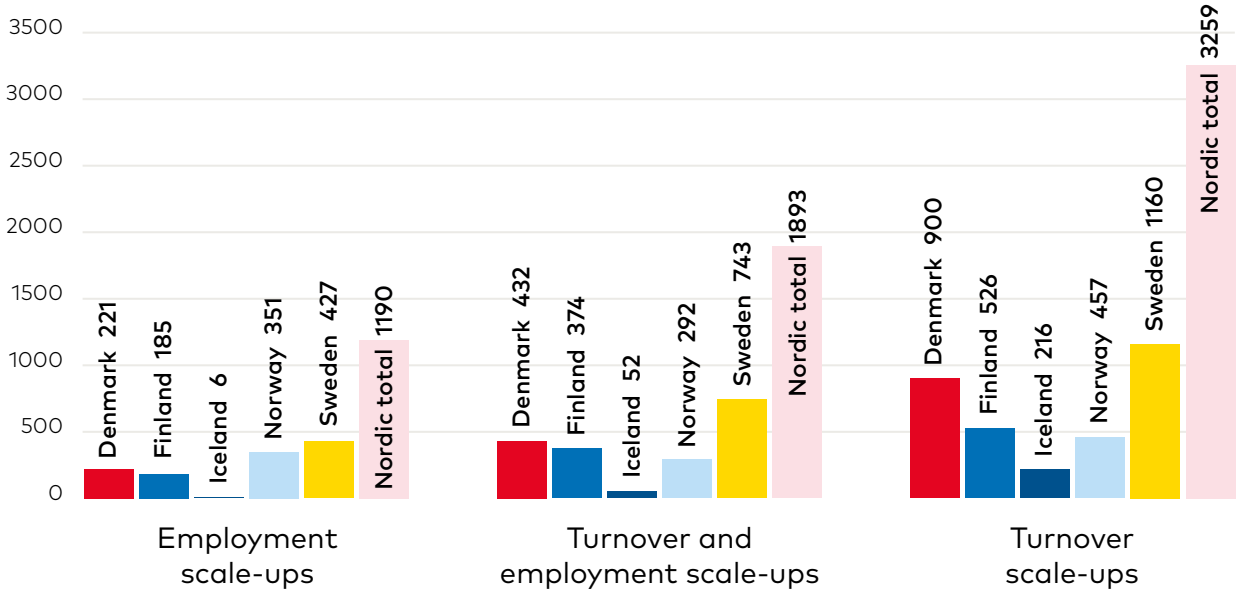


←  
Jeffrey D. Abbott  
speaking at the  
Nordic Scale-up  
Summit 2019 in  
Helsinki. Photo:  
2019 Saara  
Malmström.

→  
Nordic Innovation  
Scale-up  
Workshop in  
Brussels 2019.  
Photo: Frigg  
Harlung-Jensen



Number of scale-ups by type, 2017  
Scale-ups in the Nordics 2017



Tourism in the Nordics

# Sustainable Solutions for the Tourism Industry

**Nordic Innovation has a special task of prioritising new and innovative digital and sustainable solutions for the tourism industry.**

Tourism is an important and growing industry in the Nordic region, and has the potential to contribute to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental awareness.

Three projects were started under the Tourism in the Nordics initiative in 2019:

**Mobile Positioning Data for Tourism Statistics**  
Nordic Innovation entered into an agreement on a pre-project called Mobile Positioning Data for Tourism Statistics with the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The overall aim of the project is to create understanding about the legal framework for mobile positioning data as a basis for the development of tourism statistics.

**Sustainable Tourism in Nordic Harbor**  
Based on the priorities of the Icelandic Presidency of Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Innovation launched a pre-project on Sustainable Tourism in Nordic Harbour Towns. The overall aim of the project is to provide and test innovative solutions that can scale across the Nordic countries, and thereby help develop a more socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable tourism.

**Towns and Nordic Travel Tech Network**  
This project aims to create a virtual network that brings together national hubs, startups, public organisations and investors to accelerate the development of travel tech solutions in the Nordics.

Tourists on a catamaran boat in Flam, Norway. Photo: Sverre Hjørnevik.  
↓



# Nordic Innovation Houses

The Nordic Innovation Houses are a popular, unique Nordic initiative. The concept is based on close collaboration with the Nordic national trade promotion and innovation organisations. At present, the Nordic countries have established four Nordic Innovation Houses in North America and Asia. The first house opened in Silicon Valley in 2014, with the second opening in New York in 2017. 2018 was a busy year with two more houses opening in Singapore and Hong Kong.

***We give Nordic companies, from startups to corporations, a head start in the most relevant global innovation hubs by providing a strong community and connections to the local ecosystem.***

At the end of 2019, funding was allocated for a fifth house to open in Tokyo, Japan. The official inauguration will be in late spring 2020.

The purpose of the Nordic Innovation House is to bring Nordic entrepreneurship, values and methods of doing business into the global innovation ecosystem.

All Nordic Innovation Houses must offer clear added value for the Nordic innovation ecosystem and complement the services offered by the local Nordic trade promotion organisations.

Services offered at each house supplement the trade promotion organisation's services and reflect the actual demands and needs of the companies:

- Incubator
- Community building
- Networking activities and events

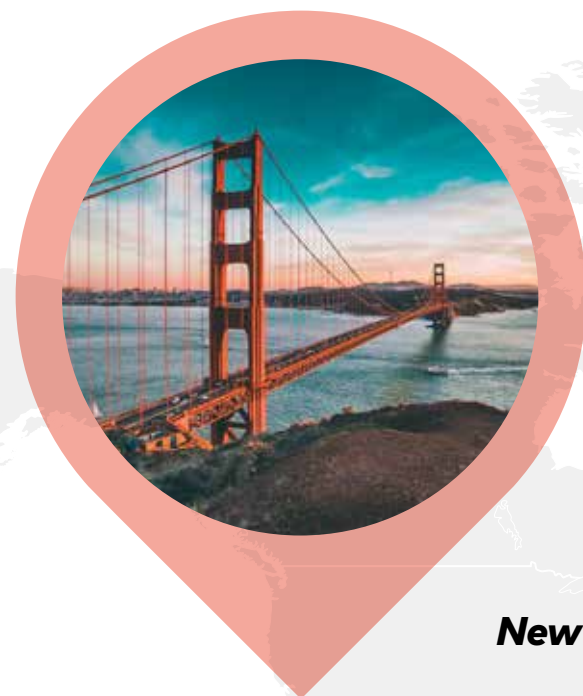
During 2019 Nordic Innovation facilitated a process together with the Nordic trade promotion organisations to introduce a new concept and future model for collaboration between the partners. The new governance model sets out key roles and responsibilities, and Nordic Innovation owns, manages and develops the trademark, the concept and the communication platform.

→  
Managing Director at Nordic Innovation, Svein Berg, speaking at the opening of Nordic Innovation House Singapore. Photo: Nordic Innovation House Singapore.



Nordic Innovation finances each Nordic Innovation House with up to 50 % for a startup period of the first three years.

The Nordic trade promotion organisations run the Nordic Innovation House issues relating to their respective organisations. A local community manager at each house is in charge of the day-to-day operations.



**Silicon Valley**

**New York**



**Singapore**



**Hong Kong**

# The Nordic Impact on Cities

## – a Nordic Innovation Partner Event



How can Nordic cities become greener and more socially responsible and boost innovation and competitiveness? In October 2019, in conjunction with the C40 World Mayors' Summit in Copenhagen, we invited our partners to meet and discuss. We heard some enlightening presentations and launched the Nordic Sustainable Cities traveling exhibition. The event was well attended and provided a basis for fruitful discussions.

***"Without our partner organisations we would not be able to make the impact that we do."***

*Niina Aagaard, Chief Operating Officer, Nordic Innovation.*

# Data Security Related to Energy and Health Data

On 31 October 2019 we organised a partner event at the DTU High Tech Summit together with our sister organisation Nordic Energy Research to discuss data security related to energy and health data. Nordic Energy Research set the scene by framing the digitalisation of the energy system, after which we had the pleasure of welcoming back the winners of the three Nordic Innovation-powered Nordic Health Hackathons to present their cases.

→  
*Winners of the Nordic Health Hackathon presenting their case. Photo: Kristian Ridder-Nilsen.*



# Nordic Cluster Meet Up 2019

Clusters are important players for innovation because they represent and connect businesses, academia, finance and government to deliver relevant and international projects of high quality. In November 2019 we arranged a Nordic Cluster Meet Up in Malmö in collaboration with Cluster Excellence Denmark and Region Skåne, and in close coordination with Enterprise Europe Network. The Meet Up focused on the three thematic areas underlying Nordic Innovation's three programmes: Health, Demography and Quality of Life, Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity, and Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation.

Over 50 clusters, 70 participants, met to matchmake, co-create, get inspired and learn about opportunities for Nordic cooperation. According to an evaluation carried out after the event, 91 % of the participants found the event to be either excellent or good and 96 % would like to participate in a similar event again. As a result of the matchmaking, cluster-to-cluster collaboration partnerships and connections were established.

→  
*Niina Aagaard, Chief Operating Officer Nordic Innovation, at the Nordic Cluster Meet Up in Malmö. Photo: Jesper Berg.*



# Almedalsveckan and Arendalsuka Democracy Festivals

In 2019 Nordic Innovation took part in two of the Nordic democracy festivals, Almedalsveckan in Sweden and Arendalsuka in Norway. The purpose was to host events and present our programs and projects, share experience and take part at discussions.

In Almedalen, Nordic Innovation hosted an afternoon in an open tent with the theme "From scale-up to unicorn". The event featured interesting panel debates and up close interviews with well-known entrepreneurs such as Petter Stordalen, founder of Nordic Choice Hotels, and Sara Berg, COO of Trustly. The event attracted a large audience who, undeterred by the heavy rain, chose to join in and listen to good stories, great examples and inspiring people.

Over 300 people joined the two panel discussions about Nordic unicorn and tech companies. Svein Berg, Managing Director of Nordic Innovation, took part in the panel discussion "How to build a Nordic Unicorn – is there a secret recipe?" He presented experience and results from the Nordic Scalars project. "We need more Nordic scale-ups and we need our startups to grow fast to become larger companies, that is value creation that will benefit the whole of society," he said.

During Arendalsuka, Nordic Innovation was part of the Nordic Council of Ministers' tent and gave a seminar on the circular. Nordic Innovation's work with circular economy was presented by Senior Innovation Adviser Marthe Haugland. Ambassador Tom van Oorschot from the Embassy of the Netherlands for Norway and Iceland, presented the Dutch approach to circular economy, and Jyri Arponen from Sitra spoke about Finland's work with circular economy, with their roadmap and the aim to scale to a Nordic level.



↑  
*Blood, sweat and rock'n roll – how do you build a sustainable hotel empire? Camilla Björkman, Moderator, Breakit Petter Stordalen, Founder, Nordic Choice Hotels.*



*Creating a Nordic unicorn – is there a secret recipe? Jarno Vanhatapio, CEO and Founder, NA-KD, Svein Berg, Director, Nordic Innovation, Lena Apler, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Collector Bank, Tobias Niemi, Sweden Manager, Kry, Katarina Andersson, moderator, Breakit.*



→  
*Senior Innovation Adviser Marthe Haugland participating in a debate in the Accenture tent.*



↑  
*Speakers and panelists at the Nordic Innovation event 'Slik kan Norden bli en av verdens mest sirkulære økonomier'.*



←  
*The Nordic Innovation team at Arendalsuka 2019. From left: Marthe Haugland, Svein Berg, Lena Henriksson, Frigg Harlung-Jensen and Elis Benediktsson.*

→  
Team Nordic Innovation,  
Iiris Tarvonen,  
Communication Adviser  
and Niina Aagaard, Chief  
Operating Officer at the  
Nordic Climate Actions  
Weeks in Stockholm.  
Photo: Nordic Innovation.



# COP 25 – Nordic Climate Action Weeks in Stockholm

December 2019 was all about climate action. Nordic Innovation organised two events at the Nordic Climate Action Weeks in Stockholm. The weeks gathered the Nordic countries and had a mission to open a back door into the United Nation's climate negotiations in Madrid for everyone interested, especially Nordic youth.

On 4 December the focus was on fossil-free communities and we talked about renewable energy, electric aviation, and MaaS (Mobility as a service) with amazing speakers and an engaged audience.

The theme of the day on 12 December was Carbon Neutrality and Green Transition. Together with NordForsk we facilitated a discussion on circular economy and its potential to increase competitiveness and promote sustainability.

The events and the weeks attracted widespread interest and generated a buzz on our social media channels. The message from both the audience and speakers was clear: we need to act now!

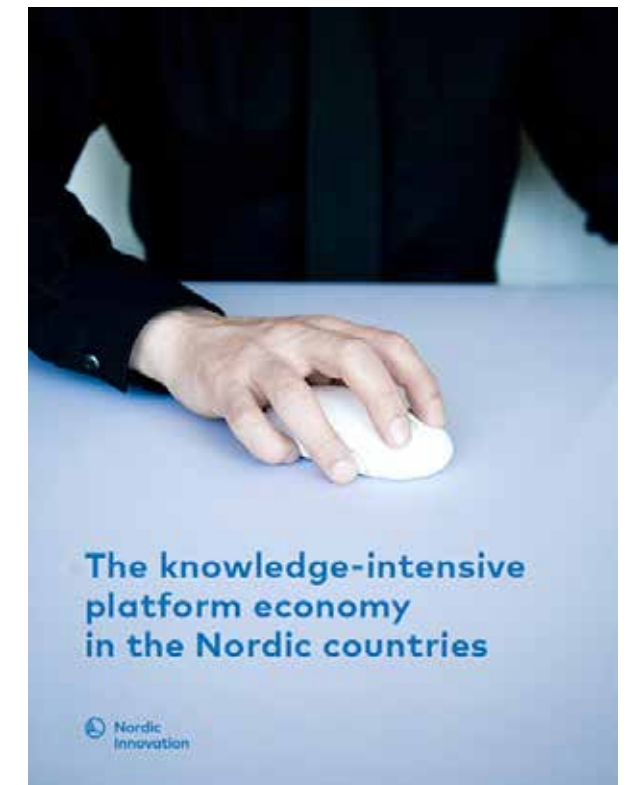


←  
Mikael Bergmark, Maria  
Fiskerud and Søren Børn  
discussed fossil-free  
solutions on 4 December at  
Nordic Innovation's event  
Innovative Steps for a  
Sustainable Future.

↑  
Elis Benediktsson  
from Nordic Innovation  
moderated a panel  
discussion on circular  
economy driven innovation  
on 12 December at  
Norrskén.

## Platform Economy

In 2019, Nordic Innovation commissioned an analysis to be carried out aimed at identifying future opportunities for and obstacles to growth, innovation and new ways of organising work through digital platforms the Nordic countries. The analysis was published in August 2019 and demonstrated that the differences between the Nordic labour markets means different opportunities and challenges for employers and employees in relation to the platform economy in the Nordics.



## Nordic Female Entrepreneurship

Starting in 2018, Nordic Innovation initiated the Nordic Female Entrepreneurship initiative to focus on women entrepreneurs. The main objectives of the initiative are to create Nordic synergies and promote learning. In 2019 the national Nordic innovation agencies and Nordic Innovation initiated a collaboration to increase the number of women entrepreneurs in the Nordic countries.

An analysis of the women entrepreneurial landscape began in 2019 and a report will be published in the beginning of 2020. The analysis will form the basis for the development of potential joint Nordic initiatives. The aim of the initiatives would be to increase the number of female entrepreneurs in the Nordics, and to expand investment in female entrepreneurs, as well as female-owned companies.

# Employees

**Anna-Maija Sunnanmark**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Scalers  
+47 469 31 967  
a.sunnanmark@nordicinnovation.org

**Elís Benediktsson**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation  
Nordic Innovation House  
+47 947 81 243  
e.benediktsson@nordicinnovation.org

**Frigg Harlung-Jensen**

Communication Adviser  
+47 948 66 242  
f.harlung-jensen@nordicinnovation.org

**Hanna Törmänen**

Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation  
+47 901 53 739  
h.tormanen@nordicinnovation.org

**Håkan Lind**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity  
Nordic Sustainable Cities  
+47 907 24 533  
h.lind@nordicinnovation.org

**Iiris Tarvonen**

Communication Adviser  
+47 906 14 815  
i.tarvonen@nordicinnovation.org

**Ivar Josefsson**

Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity  
Nordic Sustainable Cities  
+47 906 98 099  
i.josefsson@nordicinnovation.org

**Lena Henriksson**

Head of Communication  
+4791138654  
l.henriksson@nordicinnovation.org

**Linda Valestrand**

Administration Consultant  
+47 928 08 151  
l.valestrand@nordicinnovation.org

**Magnus Buer**

Senior Communication Adviser  
+47 994 80 456  
m.buer@nordicinnovation.org

**Marthe Haugland**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Sustainable Business Transformation  
+47 971 35 126  
m.haugland@nordicinnovation.org

**Mikael von Dorrien**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity  
Nordic Innovation House  
+47 903 64 785  
m.dorrien@nordicinnovation.org

**Mona Truelsen**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Health, Demography and Quality of Life  
Nordic Welfare Solutions  
+47 902 10 822  
m.truelsen@nordicinnovation.org

**Niina Aagaard**

Chief Operating Officer  
+47 915 76 578  
n.aagaard@nordicinnovation.org

**Nina Egeli**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Nordic Smart Mobility and Connectivity  
Nordic Scalers  
+47 975 20 537  
n.egeli@nordicinnovation.org

**Rasmus Malmborg**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Health, Demography and Quality of Life  
Nordic Sustainable Cities  
+47 951 21 480  
r.malmborg@nordicinnovation.org

**Svein Berg**

Managing Director  
svein.berg@nordicinnovation.org

**Trine Moa**

Senior Administration Adviser  
+47 924 10 277  
t.moa@nordicinnovation.org

**Pórður Reynisson**

Senior Innovation Adviser  
Health, Demography and Quality of Life  
+47 915 76 579  
t.reynisson@nordicinnovation.org

**Administration**

**Haukur Stefánsson**

Senior Administration Adviser  
+47 930 55 131  
h.stefansson@nordicinnovation.org

**Skule Storheil**

Financial Manager  
+47 909 82 760  
s.storheil@nordicinnovation.org

**Interns 2019**

**Natasja Qvist Flavet**

University of Tromsø

**Rola Yazbeck**

University of Copenhagen

# Nordic Innovation Board of Directors 2019:



**Iceland:**  
Berglind  
Hallgrímsdóttir,  
Managing Director  
at Innovation  
Center Iceland  
(Chair)



**Norway:**  
Kjerstin Spjøtvoll,  
Senior Vice  
President, Siva\*



**Denmark:**  
Andreas Rahlf  
Hauptmann,  
Office Manager,  
EU & International  
relations at the  
Danish Business  
Authority



**Sweden:**  
Margareta  
Groth, Head of  
Department  
Industrial  
Technologies at  
Vinnova\*



**Finland:**  
Jukka Häyrynen,  
Director, Business  
Finland

*\* Kjerstin Spjøtvoll (N) and Margareta Groth (S) are new 2019 and replace Hans Martin Vikdal (Innovasjon Norway) and Jenni Nordborg (Vinnova).*

**Representative from the  
Nordic Council of Ministers:**  
Kristian Henriksen,  
Senior Adviser, Business,  
Energy & Regional Development  
(observer)

**Representative from  
Nordic Innovation:** Trine Moa,  
Senior Administrative Adviser  
(observer)

**Representative from Vinnuframí**  
(the Faroese trade promotion  
authority): Mathea Hilduberg,  
Director (observer)

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Nordic  
Innovation

Stensbergsgata 27  
NO-0170 Oslo  
+47 47 61 44 00  
[nordicinnovation.org](http://nordicinnovation.org)