

TG2 Innovative and Resilient Nordic Regions Roadshow report

NORDREGIO REPORT 2021:5

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Foreword

When we first started planning the Roadshow for the Nordic Thematic Group for Innovative and Resilient Regions (TG2), our motivation was to share knowledge, bring people together and generate new ideas. The TG2 group has produced high-quality research on innovative and resilient regions in the Nordic countries in 2017–2020 and contributed to public policy with the latest knowledge on innovative and resilient regions across the Nordic countries, with a focus on smart specialisation, digitalisation, regional resilience, and skills policies.

The TG2 Roadshow report was planned to summarize the discussion and feedback gathered from the physical Roadshow events in 2018–2020 with the Nordic and international stakeholders. The years 2019–2020 were marked by extensive outreach activities including participation in external events and giving lectures based on the results of the thematic group's projects, including not only Nordic events but also international events. Fortunately, a large majority of the TG2 Roadshow events could be organised as physical events before the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020, after which the dissemination activities in 2020 were organised as webinar series and web conferences.

As we visited Nordic and international stakeholders, either physically or via webinars, sharing this work, it became clear that the TG2 programme attracted significant interest. The major research themes of smart specialisation, digitalisation, regional resilience, and skills policies were discussed intensively at the Roadshow events.

Thank you, regional, national, and international stakeholders who took part in the TG2 Roadshow events! Particular thanks to our co-operation partners who helped out with organising the Roadshow events and without whom the Roadshow programme would not have been such a success.

Jukka Teräs

Senior Research Fellow Nordregio

Roadshow in brief

This document reports on the Nordic TG2 Roadshow, which was commissioned by the Nordic Thematic Group for Innovative and Resilient Regions. The Nordic Thematic Group for Innovative and Resilient Regions 2017–2020 (TG2) was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers as a part of the Nordic Co-operation Programme for Regional Development and Planning 2017–2020. The TG2 group was organised under the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee of Civil Servants for Regional Affairs, and Nordregio has acted as Secretariat for the thematic groups.

The Roadshow events of TG2 were attended by regional, national, Nordic, and international stakeholders in 2018–2020. The events provided insights into the latest knowledge on innovative and resilient regions, with a focus on smart specialisation, digitalisation, regional resilience, and skills policies. Moreover, many Roadshow events tackled the research themes from a cross-border perspective.

The feedback from the regional Roadshow events suggests that dissemination of research results and constant dialogue with stakeholders are highly appreciated by the stakeholders.

Moreover, the TG2 Roadshow programme was the opportunity to bring together a range of actors and, in doing so, initiate and support processes that may not have occurred otherwise.

Introduction

The Thematic Group for Innovative and Resilient Regions (TG2) 2017–2020 focused on four major research themes: Regional Resilience, Smart Specialisation, Digitalisation, and Skills Policies. In addition, additional sub-projects of the major TG research themes were implemented in the cross-border areas of the Bothnian Arc between Finland and Sweden and Svinesund between Sweden and Norway. The contents and major results of the TG2 work in 2017–2020 are presented in [the TG2's final report](#).

The TG2 Roadshow activity was organised to share and discuss, and to receive feedback, regarding the major TG2 studies implemented in 2017–2020. The major aims of the TG2 Roadshow activity were set as:

- Share the outputs, in the form of knowledge and policy recommendations, of the Thematic Group for Innovative and Resilient Regions with a strong focus on how Nordic regions can better equip themselves to create more inclusive and sustainable societies.
- Bring together a network of actors from the public, private, and academic sectors who are interested in the development of resilient and innovative regions to enhance Nordic co-operation.
- Gather feedback from regional actors on resilience, innovation, and smart specialisation on the most current issues to inform final reporting for the period 2017–2020 and to shape the work programme for the Nordic Co-operation Programme 2021–2024 with an emphasis on Vision 2030.

The Roadshow events in 2018–2020 with the Nordic and international stakeholders included organising our own dissemination events, contributing to events organised by external parties by giving lectures based on the results of the thematic group's projects, and facilitating discussion with stakeholders on research themes and study results. Fortunately, a large majority of the planned TG2 Roadshow events could be organised as physical events before the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020. In 2020, the majority of dissemination activities were organised as webinars and web conferences.

As we visited Nordic and international stakeholders, either physically or via webinars, sharing the research results of the TG2 work, it became clear that the major themes of the TG2 programme raised significant interest. Latest knowledge on Nordic smart specialisation, digitalisation, regional resilience, and skills policies, were discussed intensively at the Roadshow events.

Table 1 summarizes the TG2 Roadshow events in 2018–2020, which will be presented in more detail in this report.

City (Country)	Date	Theme	Participants
Brussels, Belgium	March 14–15, 2018	TG2 meeting at the EU Office for North and East Finland. Visitors from the Committee of the Regions and DG Regio	18
Dalvík and Vestmannaeyjar (Iceland)	April 18–20, 2018	Hela Norden ska leva—Nordic Co-operation With digitalisation and resilience	25
Mariehamn (Åland)	August 30, 2018	Attractive and Resilient Nordic Regions	20
Tornio (Finland)	February 26, 2019	Regional, Economic, and Social Resilience in the Bothnian Arc Cross-border Region	18
Dalsland (Sweden)	April 4, 2019	Thematic Groups: Findings from research on smart specialisation, resilience, and digitalisation	35
Barranquilla (Colombia)	May 7–9, 2019	Forum on Local Economic Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	13
Örnsköldsvik (Sweden)	May 9, 2019	Nordic Green Growth and Regional Development	20
Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (Norway)	May 14, 2019	Thematic Groups: Findings from research on smart specialisation, resilience, and digitalisation	12
Bol (Croatia)	May 22–24, 2019	Regional Economic and Social Resilience	26
Santiago de Compostela (Spain)	June 5–7, 2019	Bioeconomy: Nordic lessons and the role of regions	15
Split (Croatia)	June 13–14 and Dec 3–6, 2019	Resilience lectures, University of Split	40
Trondheim (Norway)	August 29, 2019	Annual conference on Transition	Appr. 100
Örnsköldsvik (Sweden)	September 18, 2019	Cross-Border Regional Forum: Nordic Cross-Border Regions as future Growth Regions	Appr. 130
Moscow (Russia)	October 2, 2019	Smart specialisation, Skolkovo School of Management	75
Brussels, Belgium	October 10, 2019	EU Master Class on Cohesion Policy	Appr. 30

Island of Gozo (Malta)	October 24–25, 2019	Digitalisation of European Islands	Appr. 70
Helsinki (Finland)	October 29, 2019	Thematic Group and Resilience	10
Reykjavík (Iceland)	November 27–28, 2019	Nordregio Forum 2019: Skills for resilient regions	Appr. 150
Ísafjörður (Iceland)	November 29, 2019	Digitalisation and digitalisation for blue growth	20 + 29 online
ERSA Annual Conference (online)	August 25–27, 2020	Skills Regional Ecosystems	Appr. 400
Stockholm (Sweden)	September 30, 2020	Skills and Resilience, Tillväxtverket	Appr. 30
Croatian WIRE conference (online)	November 5–6, 2020	Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE). Two sessions: Resilience in remote regions and bioeconomy	Appr. 150
Cross-border Nordregio (online conference)	November 12, 2020	Socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis in border communities	81
Nordregio Forum 2020 (online)	November 23, 2020	Session on Skills in a Nordic context	Appr. 60

Table 1: Summary of the major TG2 Roadshow events 2018–2020

Events

TG2 meeting in Brussels with external experts

Place and Date: East & North Finland Offices, Brussels, Belgium, March 14–15, 2018

Aim, focus, and participants

The thematic group TG2 visited Brussels in March 2018 to present the Nordic research work to the EU and to learn more about TG2 major themes from a broader European perspective. The majority of the TG2 members were able to travel to Brussels and were joined by representatives from different Nordic EU Offices. The hosts for the Brussels meeting were East & North Finland Offices, the Mid-Sweden and North Sweden Offices, and the North Norway EU Office, who presented their journey since Sweden and Finland joined the EU in the 90s.



Snapshot

Having been present on the EU map since the late 90s, the offices have been the voice of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas and the Arctic in matters relating to regional challenges, ERDF, and ESF, and innovation-related issues. Shedding light on the challenges in these areas is best done when present on the EU stage.

The group was also joined by the Head of Unit for Smart and Sustainable Growth in DG Regio, Mr Peter Berkowitz and the Director for the C. Legislative Work in the Committee of the Regions, Mr Thomas Wobben on TG2's first day in Brussels.

Mr Berkowitz highlighted four areas of potential improvement in the S3 policy 'experiment': 1) establishing well-functioning ecosystems for innovation in 'catch up' countries, 2) Less one-size-fits-all policy approaches, 3) An increased focus on the regions and the outward dimension of S3, and 4) Drawing on inspiration from e.g., the Vanguard Initiative as a model of co-operation.

Mr Wobben focused on the importance of the cohesion policy framework: its outreach, and its

future. Furthermore, it was pointed out that stronger synergies must be allowed to flourish between cohesion policy objectives and the structural fund, using the following analogy: one pays for the teacher, the other pays for the building.

The second day was spent presenting the first findings from the pilot case studies on social and economic resilience, digitalisation, and smart specialisation, with a subsequent discussion of our findings.



Key emerging issues

The meeting was concluded with final remarks regarding the three pilot case studies for the research and direction ahead. There was widespread agreement that the two days in Brussels had been a positive injection of ideas and food for thought, stimulating discussions while also building the TG2 dynamics.

Nordic added value

The visit to Brussels was highly important for the TG2 work. First, it provided the group with an excellent opportunity to share and discuss the major TG2 research themes and preliminary results with high-level EU experts, as well as with the Nordic office representatives. Second, the event was an important means of increasing the visibility and impact of the Nordic Thematic Group at the EU level. Taking the TG2 out of the Nordics to the EU Brussels offices provided an additional international lens to the TG2 work.

TG2 study presentation at Dalvik, Iceland

In collaboration with: Hela Norden ska leva

Place and date: Dalvik, Iceland, April 18–20, 2018

Snapshot

TG2 and TG1 combined forces to support the annual event of the *Hela Norden ska leva* organisation, held in Dalvik, Iceland. Presentations were given by Nordregio researchers—from integrating women into the labour market, to re-engaging youth, digitalisation, resilience, and rural attractiveness.

Hela Norden ska leva is an umbrella organisation that brings together civil society organisations across the Nordic countries who are working to strengthen rural communities.

Aim, focus, and participants

The aim of the conference was to discuss Nordic co-operation and learn about local initiatives in the town of Dalvik, north of Akureyri. Participants included the Norwegian trade union Fellesorganisasjonen (FO), the Finnish National Village Association (SYTY), the Social Democrats party, the University of Akureyri, the Icelandic Regional Development Institute (Byggðastofnun), Framfarafélag Dalvíkur, and the Stefansson Arctic Institute.

Nordregio participants: Alberto Giacometti, Alex Cuadrado, Hjördís Sigurjonsdóttir, Linda Randall, Anna Karlsdóttir

Key emerging issues

‘Money makes the world go round’, according to the cabaret musical, and the seminar participants seemed to agree, repeatedly emphasising money, or the lack of it, as a key factor hindering their work to support the well-being of rural communities.

In addition to living among active volcanoes and heavily dependent on a single industry (fisheries), the Vestmannaeyjar community is quite isolated. The obvious challenge of being islands separated from the mainland is exacerbated by unpredictable weather conditions and a lack of reliable transportation to the mainland.

The Dalvik event was followed by various field studies by the Nordregio researchers in Vestmannaeyjar (Westman Islands) to learn more about how resilient they are, and how prepared in case of emergencies.

Nordic added value

Discussion on the adaptability of Nordic research results in the context of Iceland.

Towards Smart, Attractive, and Resilient Nordic Regions: a dialogue among researchers and practitioners in Åland

Place and date: Mariehamn, Finland, August 30, 2018

Snapshot

Together with Ålands Utbildningsförbund, Nordregio organised a one-day seminar/workshop in Mariehamn on 'Regional development "hot-topics" in the Nordic Countries and Åland'.

This seminar had presentations and round-table discussions on global and local trends in rural development policy, the attractiveness of rural areas, and potential threats to their economic and social resilience.

Aim, focus, and participants

The purpose of this seminar was to share the latest research results from the work of Nordic Thematic Groups on *1) Sustainable Regional Development* and *2) Innovative and Resilient Regions, with a broad focus on the diversity of Nordic regions*.

Experts, practitioners, and other relevant professionals from Åland provided their insights on these topics from their perspective during the round-table discussions.

Nordregio participant: Alberto Giacometti

Key emerging issues

- Impact of LEADER Åland: from its foundation in 2006—up until today
- Rural Regional Attractiveness: Nordic trends in migration, population change, and employment development. Spiced up with initial insights from Åland.
- Sustainable rural development without borders—transboundary collaboration across Finland–Åland–Sweden and beyond.
- Resilient Nordic Regions: What threats do Nordic Communities face and how can they absorb change and strengthen their development paths?
- Digitalisation as a tool for sustainable Nordic Regional Development.
- Feedback from the Regional Resilience workshop in Tornio in February 2020.

Nordic added value

Discussion on the adaptability of Nordic research results in the context of Åland.

The Bothnian Arc Cross-Border Resilience Seminar

Place and date: Tornio, Finland, February 26, 2019

Snapshot

The Bothnian Arc cross-border committee together with Nordregio conducted a half-day seminar on regional economic and social resilience in the Bothnian Arc cross-border region between Finland and Sweden.

Aim, focus, and participants

The event had a double purpose. First, to share the results of a two-year TG2 study on Nordic Regional Resilience commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Second, to engage experts from the Bothnian Arc region in a workshop to discuss the relevance of cross-border collaboration in strengthening resilience on both sides of the border.

Nordregio participants: Alberto Giacometti, Jukka Teräs

Key emerging issues

The workshop focused on the following key questions:

- I. What risks, threats, and long-term challenges can be identified in the Bothnian Arc?
- II. What are the drivers of resilience in the Bothnian Arc?
- III. How can cross-border co-operation strengthen resilience in the Bothnian Arc?

The Workshop Results

The workshop resulted in a resilience mapping of potential risks and measured results, to be applied in the Bothnian Arc region.

Nordic added value

A novel approach to identify and analyse resilience in a Nordic cross-border setting.

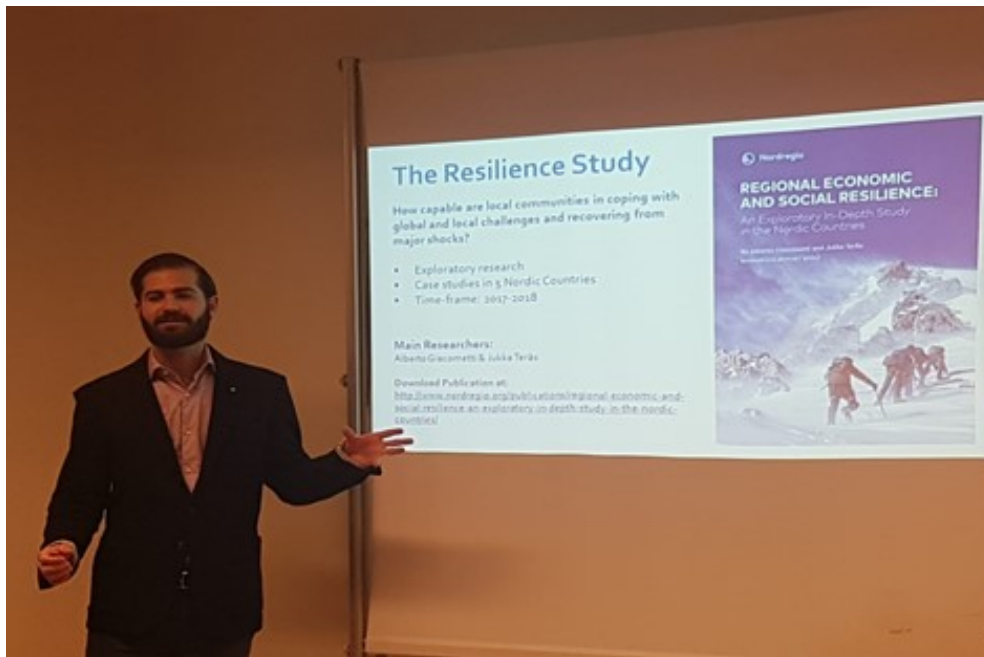


Figure: Alberto Giacometti presenting the Resilience Study

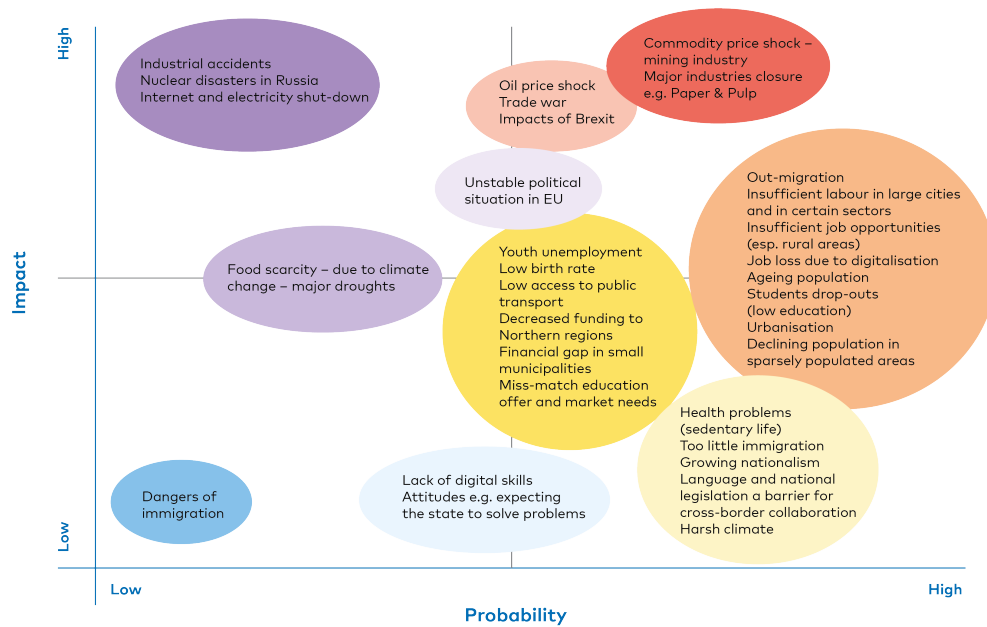


Figure: Risk landscape in the Bothnian Arc. Results from the workshop in Tornio.

Annual General Meeting in Svinesundskommittén

Place and date: Dalsland, Sweden, April 5, 2019

Snapshot

Annual General Meeting of the cross-border committee Svinesundskommittén

Aim, focus, and participants

The presentation was to give an overview of the status and major research themes of TG2 undertaken in 2017–2019 because Svinesundskommittén is represented at the TG2 thematic working group. The meeting gathered members of the Svinesundskommittén from across the Norwegian and Swedish border.

Nordregio participant: Mari Wøien Meijer



Key emerging issues

The presentation focused on resilience, smart specialisation, and digitalisation, as well as digitalisation in SMEs in the Svinesund border region, and placed these in a cross-border context. The presentation furthermore connected these reports to the State of the Nordic Region 2018 by the Nordic Council of Ministers/Nordregio on request from the committee and encouraged interaction with the audience and discussions after the presentation.

Nordic added value

Several of the representatives in the border committee expressed the value of having learned from the TG2 report findings, not only in relation to the cross-border area but in relation to their work in their municipalities.

Learn more: <https://svinesundskommitten.com/>



Forum on Local Economic Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Place and time: Barranquilla, Colombia, May 7–9, 2019

Snapshot

The 3rd Forum for Local Economic Development in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Barranquilla, Colombia, between the 7th and 9th of May, 2019.

Aim, focus, and participants

This event brought together leaders and practitioners from national and subnational governments, the private sector, academia, civil society, and others. It aimed at providing a platform for promoting international dialogue, sharing experiences, and for developing new partnerships across countries and local levels.

Nordregio participant: Alberto Giacometti

Key emerging issues

Under invitation from the UNDP, Alberto Giacometti, Research Fellow at Nordregio, gave a presentation on the in-depth study carried out on Regional Economic and Social Resilience: An Exploratory In-Depth Study in the Nordic Countries. This session introduced an external perspective to that of Latin America and the Caribbean. First, pointing out different types of 'risks' and 'stresses' that threaten resilience in local communities in the Nordic regions. Second, addressing experiences of these communities in responding to such threats. Far from bringing a recipe ready to 'copy-and-paste', the intention was to generate debate about the role of the human factor for structural change. In particular, how bottom-up initiatives in accordance with the characteristics and competitive advantages of each territory strengthen the 'adaptive capacity' of their local communities.

Nordic added value

I'm in Barranquilla, in the Caribbean region of Colombia at the 3rd regional forum for Local Economic Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. I was invited by the UNDP, one of the organising partners, to present an external perspective based on the freshly released report from our study on Social and Economic Resilience in communities in the Nordic countries. While the territorial policy is well established in Europe and the biggest portion of the EU budget is destined for counterbalancing territorial disparities, territoriality and the focus on the specific policy needs in different territories is at a very young stage. Not only that, but local levels are also in a continuous fight to gain a certain level of decentralisation. Quite symbolically, the law of decentralisation was approved by the Colombian senate on the first day of the Forum. The Nordic study added to the table the discussion of asymmetric effects of global and local threats and some examples of resilience-generating factors in Nordic regions.

Learn more: innovation and resilience in Barranquilla: <http://ledworldforum.org/>



Learning Seminar on Skills and Resilience by Mittnorden

Place and date: Örnsköldsvik, Sweden May 9, 2019.

Snapshot

The Mittnorden Committee spring 2019 meeting was held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden May 9, 2019, with a learning seminar hosted by Nordregio.

Aim, focus, and participants

The annual Mittnorden Committee meeting was entitled 'Regional development from a rural perspective (urban and rural)—To create a regional leadership and support for economic growth and innovation', and the objective was to discuss driving forces and preconditions for innovation and economic growth with a balanced development between urban and rural areas in Mittnorden. The participants in the meeting represented politicians and civil servants from the four regions in Mittnorden: Trøndelag (Norway), Jämtland Härjedalen (Sweden), Region Västernorrland (Sweden), and Österbotten (Finland).

Nordregio participants: Anna Lundgren, Jukka Teräs

Key emerging issues

The programme consisted of presentations from Nordregio senior researchers Jukka Teräs and Anna Lundgren on resilience, smart specialisation, and skills, a presentation on urban–rural dynamics and place-based regional development from senior researcher Katrina Rønningen, Ruralis, and a workshop. The objective of the workshop was to analyse the individual regions' work with resilience, smart specialisation, and skills and to discuss the potentials for added value this may create for the development of the Mittnorden cross-border region.

All regions in Mittnorden work with smart specialisation to enhance regional competitiveness through the analysis of regional strengths and prioritising new areas for economic growth. The challenge of finding the right balance between formerly prioritised regional areas of economic strengths on one side and open for the development of new areas on the other was identified as a common challenge among the regions.

Nordic added value

The Mittnorden cross-border region shares many similar challenges: climate change, demography, de-population, economic challenges, industrial conversion and skills development, and the influence of the mental maps going in a north–south direction. But also similar challenges when it comes to the need for elaborating processes and mobilising resources for resilience to be able to act, both in a short-term and in a long-term perspective. Nordic learning and Nordic added value can be found in further exploring analyses, strategies, and processes for stakeholder involvement in regard to both smart specialisation and resilience across the Nordic territory.

Learn more: <http://www.nordregio.org/publications/regional-economic-and-social-resilience-an-exploratory-in-depth-study-in-the-nordic-countries/> and <https://mittnorden.org>

Presentation of TG2 studies at the KMD Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation

Place and date: Oslo, Norway, May 14, 2019

Snapshot

Presentation of key findings of the TG2 studies & discussion

Aim, focus, and participants

Civil servants at the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, representatives from Innovation Norway.

Jukka Teräs and Mari Wøien Meijer presented key findings from the TG2 reports on Digitalisation, smart specialisation, and social and economic resilience, as well as provided an overview of the work and purpose of the thematic group on innovative and resilient regions, and the next steps with the skills policy research project. The presentation was well received and attracted useful comments and questions for further consideration.

Nordregio participants: Jukka Teräs, Mari Wøien Meijer

Nordic added value

Presenting the findings from the regional cases allowed for an added lens with which the actors in the audience may contrast and compare their realities. Being able to present Nordregio's TG2 results at Nordic ministries such as the KMD furthermore supports the added value of the work conducted in the TG2 thematic working group.



International Conference 'Challenges of Europe' with Special Session: Regional Economic and Social Resilience: Empirical Research Results from the Nordic Regions and Croatian Islands, Bol, Croatia

Place and date: Bol, Croatia, May 22–24, 2019

Snapshot

The 13th edition of the Challenges of Europe Conference, organised by the faculty of economics at Split University in Croatia, took place in Bol, Croatia between the 22nd and 24th of May, 2019, with a special session on 'Regional Economic and Social Resilience: Empirical Research Results from the Nordic Regions and Croatian Islands', hosted by Jukka Teräs and Alberto Giacometti.

Aim, focus, and participants

The Challenges of Europe conference gathers important figures in the fields of economics and regional development. That year, two Nobel Laureates participated, namely, Eric Maskin and Oliver Hart, both professors at Harvard University. Edward Glaeser, influential economic geographer gave a keynote speech. The aim of this session was to broaden the debate about place-based approaches to regional resilience and explore what matters local communities should consider preparing for exogenous and endogenous shocks. The key questions addressed included: what types of risks are regions threatened by? Which actors and institutions are vulnerable? What factors and measures boost regional resilience?

Nordregio participants: Jukka Teräs and Alberto Giacometti



Key emerging issues

Recognising the need for place-based approaches to economic and social resilience, this session built on the results of empirical research conducted in the Nordic Countries and the Croatian islands, in three related studies:

1. Comparative overview of regional resilience in a diverse selection of Nordic case-study regions (Nordregio, 2017–2018).
2. Industrial transformation of Oulu, Finland—an in-depth longitudinal analysis from the Resilience perspective (Nordregio, 2017–2018).
3. Regional economic resilience in remote regions—Empirical findings from Croatian islands (University of Split, Faculty of economics, business and tourism, ongoing research).

Nordic added value

Sharing knowledge and experiences from the Nordic context may contribute to learning and development beyond the Nordic countries. Nordic examples are well received in other parts of Europe.

Regional Studies Association: Pushing regions beyond their borders

Place and date: Santiago de Compostela Spain, June 5–7, 2019

Snapshot

The Regional Studies Association's Annual Conference was held from the 5th to the 7th of June 2019 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Aim, focus, and participants

The presentation on smart specialisation by Mari Wøien Meijer was given in *session SS22 II. Smart Specialisation from Theory to Practice: Implementation Experiences across Europe*. The parallel session included researchers from across European universities as well as the Joint Research Centre at the European Commission.

Nordregio participant: Mari Wøien Meijer

Nordic added value

What emerged from this presentation, given in a largely academic setting, is the benefit of the thematic group work and the value Nordic co-operation brings to examining and sharing transnational and transregional knowledge. The translation of academic findings to policy-relevant language was highlighted as one of the main challenges during the conference, furthermore, enhancing the added value of Nordic collaboration in the policy–academic interface in the Nordic thematic working groups. As for the presentation itself, the added value could be seen in the identification of de facto-S3 cases and the various forms S3 took across Nordic regions, demonstrating the importance of context and stakeholder involvement.

Learn more: <https://www.regionalstudies.org/events/pushing-regions-beyond-their-borders/#>



University of Split Winter and Summer School Seminars on Resilience, Bioeconomy, and Nordic Approach

Place and time: Faculty of Economics, University of Split, Croatia, June 13–14, 2019 and December 3–6, 2019.

Snapshot

Jukka Teräs and Alberto Giacometti visited Split, Croatia, in 2019 to lecture at the 'winter school' on '*Perspectives on sustainable urban and regional development*' and at the 'summer school' on '*Regional Development in Post-Crisis and Post-Global World*' organised by the faculty of economics at Split University in Croatia.

Students from different faculties registered in these courses to learn about resilience, bioeconomy, and gain some hints from Nordic regions on how to address both global and place-based challenges. The lectures were well received by the students.

Aim, focus, and participants

The summer and winter schools organised by the Faculty of Economics, University of Split, are open to students in all disciplines who wish to learn more about economic geography, and various other topics around regional development across Europe. This special course gathers scholars from across Europe to provide students with a wide set of perspectives and state-of-the-art research results from research and practice from across Europe. Some renowned lecturers included Andrés Rodríguez Posé (London School of Economics), Peter Nijkamp (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), and Roberta Capello (Politecnico di Milano).



Key emerging issues

Jukka Teräs and Alberto Giacometti, Nordregio researchers, delivered lectures based on empirical research carried out in the Nordic countries around regional resilience and bioeconomy. From the Croatian perspective, a key interest was how to address risks connected to the tourism industry, with a rapid boom experienced in the past decades, but fragile to swift changes. In addition, remote islands of Croatia experience negative demographic trends and brain drain. Similar examples in the Nordic countries served to provide good examples of how regional resilience can be addressed.



Omstillingskonferansen 2019: Annual Conference on Transition

Place and date: Trondheim, Norway, August 29, 2019

Snapshot

How prepared are local municipalities in Norway for regional and global adaptations? What are the most important challenges facing Norwegian businesses and local communities in the near future, and what measures need to be considered? As part of Innovation Norway's annual conference on Regional Transition, Senior Research Fellow Jukka Teräs presented comparative perspectives based on the findings from the TG2 study on economic and social resilience in the Nordic countries.

Aim, focus, and participants

The year 2019 theme at the 'Omstilling' conference was 'Norway in 2019—a society in transition.' Topics included regional digitalisation, globalization, urbanization, and resilience—and how these processes bring along challenges but also offer opportunities for innovation and growth for Norwegian stakeholders at all levels of governance and industrial activity. The conference gathered a range of participants from private, research, and public sectors, including e.g. NTNU and SINTEF.

Nordregio participant: Jukka Teräs

Key emerging issues

Considering Norway's recent regional reform, with several county and municipal mergers, the business and local communities want to be better prepared for short- and long-term transitions considering economic, industrial, and social sustainability across the country.

With the support of the KMD Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development, Innovation Norway co-ordinated the programme supporting municipalities for regional adaptation and transition to ensure that economic growth and local value creation are sustained.

Nordic added value

The presentation of Nordic economic and social resilience, with respective Nordic cases, provided the conference with benchmark information about Nordic economic and social resilience.

Learn more: innovation and resilience in Norway:

<https://www.innovasjon Norge.no/no/regional-omstilling/arrangementer/omstillingskonferansen-2019/>

<https://www.innovasjon Norge.no/no/regional-omstilling/om-omstilling2/>

Cross-Border Regional Forum: Nordic Cross-Border Regions as future Growth Regions

In collaboration with: Region Mittnorden

Place and date: Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, September 18, 2019.

Snapshot

The forum highlighted the importance of evidence-based and qualitative decision-making as a prerequisite for cross-border infrastructure planning and regional development. Functional infrastructure solutions in the border regions are a prerequisite for successful collaboration and for growth and innovations. At the same time, digitalisation is reshaping the border regions' conditions for growth. The forum focused on the following questions: How can we utilize and implement the research and project results presented during the forum in regional development work to create growth? What common challenges and opportunities do we have?



Aim, focus, and participants

The forum aimed to share the learnings of recent Nordic research around the topic of digitalisation and infrastructure development. Participants were representatives from the cross-border committees from across the Nordic Region. TG2 was invited to share the results of the report 'Governing the digital Transition in Nordic Regions: The human element' and 'Is the coast clear? The role of digitalisation for enabling blue growth in the cross-border region of Svinesund'.

Key emerging issues

A common opinion is that cross-border regions are lagging compared with similar regions situated elsewhere. Another perspective is that being 'part of' two countries should rather be considered an asset. Take, for example, the boost of the Greater Copenhagen region after the construction of the Øresund Bridge, and the IKEA warehouse in Haparanda, whose location was highly motivated by the customer base on the Finnish side of the border, is another example.

Many cross-border regions are so-called inner peripheries with all the demographic challenges that characterize these areas. The forum included many examples where cross-border co-operation may help the local and regional authorities to meet these challenges. All presentations from the event can be found here: <https://mittnorden.org/kalender/gransregionalt-forum-hosten-2019/>



Nordic added value

Presenters and participants were from across the Nordic Region with all countries, except Iceland, represented. There was clear evidence of shared Nordic learning, particularly in the panels, where questions generally came from someone representing a different country than that of the panellist.



Smart Specialisation presentation, Skolkovo School of Management

Place and time: Skolkovo School of Management in Moscow, Russia on October 1, 2019.

Snapshot

The *Education program for the regional team of Khanty Mansiysk (Ugra) for the implementation of development projects* was held at the Skolkovo School of Management in Moscow, Russia on the 1st of October 2019. The lecture by Mari Wøien Meijer, Nordregio, in this program event focused on lessons learned from the application of smart specialisation strategies in Norway.

Aim, focus, and participants

Khanty Mansiysk (Ugra) region is a Siberian oil and gas region in Russia. One of the main challenges of the region is to discover new pathways and opportunities for economic diversification, drawing on innovation and enhanced attractiveness for investors. The lecture took place with 70 participants from the public and private sector in the Khanty Mansiysk region with expertise in areas such as enhanced oil recovery methods, genomic research, sports medicine, advanced manufacturing technologies, tourism, digitalisation, bioeconomy, creative industry, and accelerator/technoparks.

Nordregio participant: Mari Wøien Meijer

Key emerging issues

The lecture focused on lessons learned from the application of smart specialisation strategies in Norway. Looking at both the innovation system and the complementary nature of S3 as a tool for enhancing regional branding, the lecture focused on the nature and benefits of triple and quadruple helices, the nature of entrepreneurial discovery processes and the discovery of regional domains and strengths. The lecture was followed by 45 minutes of Q&A and a bonus tour of Moscow!

Nordic added value

Nordic S3 is coloured by its context. The nature of the innovation systems is reflected in the way and shape S3 takes on a regional basis. In this way, providing recommendations on the relevance of S3 to a context outside the Nordic necessitates careful reflection. The Nordic Model, based on trust, flat hierarchies, and co-operation becomes ever clearer when seeing it from an outsider's perspective. At the same time, the application and form of S3 are not uniform throughout the Nordic region, and there are plenty of opportunities to draw lessons from the different modes and forms of S3—also for regions outside the Nordics. Understanding that S3 is inherently a tool to unlock regional potential, rather than a process to be followed in detail, is what was conveyed during the lecture at Skolkovo School of Management in October 2019.

Learn more: Skolkovo School of Management: [On the follow up with representatives from Khanty Mansiysk's experience from the Skolkovo programme.](#) Information in Russian [here](#).

TG2 contributes to the 'Digital transformation of European islands', Island of Gozo (Malta)

In collaboration with: INSULEUR and Gozo Business Chamber

Place and date: Island of Gozo, Malta, October 24–25, 2019

Snapshot

This conference explored the Digital transformation of European Islands and was hosted by INSULEUR, a network of elected representatives from chambers of commerce and industry in island communities around the EU. The forum was hosted by the Gozo Business Chamber, which currently has the chairmanship of the group and TG2 was invited to share experiences of 'governing the digital transition' based on the TG2 digitalisation project.

Aim, focus, and participants

The aim of the event was to discuss the challenges and opportunities for businesses located in island communities across the EU. Participants were primarily from southern European countries, where islands make a vital contribution to their respective national economies. The focus of the event was on sharing good practice and discussing the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation for European islands. These discussions formed the basis for the development of a position paper which will inform the INSULEUR forum's ongoing work.

Nordregio participant: Linda Randall



Key emerging issues

Malta currently has the fastest growing economy in Europe, recording GDP growth of 6.7% in 2018 (compared with 1.9% in the EU as a whole). In her opening address, the Minister for Gozo credited much of this success to digitalisation referring us to their status as a '[Blockchain Island](#)'. Importantly, much of this growth is a result of foreign direct investment (FDI) from technology

companies, rather than stemming from the success of homegrown businesses. It will be interesting to see how this strategy affects the local population in the long-term—Will the presence of these companies promote local innovation, or will local benefits be limited to FDI spillover effects (e.g. service industry growth)? For other forum participants, the limits to growth were an important topic. Digitalisation in the tourism industry (low-cost flights, Airbnb, Instagram) is pushing infrastructure and the natural environment to breaking point on many islands. Using digital tools to promote the circular economy was seen as a response particularly well suited to the island context.

Nordic added value

Unfortunately, no Nordic islands are represented in this network. Membership to chambers of commerce is voluntary in the Nordic countries and, according to the hosts of the event, this means that for chambers representing small communities (like islands) the capacity to participate in such networks is quite limited.



Presentation of the Nordic Resilience study at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Place and date: Helsinki, Finland, October 29, 2019

Snapshot

By invitation of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, Jukka Teräs and Alberto Giacometti presented the Thematic Group TG2 and the Resilience in-depth study at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland in Helsinki.

Aim, focus, and participants

The presentation was targeted to a group of innovation and regional development experts within the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, working with innovation issues. The group, hosted by Mikko Huuskonen, the chair of TG2 in 2017–2018, appreciated the presentation and findings of the Nordic resilience study and raised several interesting questions. The discussion included e.g. the difference between acute shocks and so-called 'slow burn' that regions and cities may face.

Nordregio participants: Jukka Teräs, Alberto Giacometti

Key emerging issues

The major issues addressed in the presentation were:

- How does the resilience concept connect with other concepts in regional development and innovations?
- What role do innovation policies play in enabling regional resilience?
- What are the more detailed findings regarding 'slow-burn' regions? What specific characteristics do they face? What measures are needed to break the negative feedback loops resulting from accumulated stress?
- In what ways does the post-industrial era affect regional resilience? and how does 'secular stagnation' (long-term) in many Nordic regions explain this transition?

Nordic added value

The Nordic examples on regional economic and social resilience were well received by the Finnish participants.



Figure: Jukka Teräs (Nordregio) and Mikko Huuskonen (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, & the chair of TG2 in 2017–2018) presenting the Nordic Resilience Study

Nordregio Forum 2019 TG2 'Skills for Resilient Regions'

Place and date: Harpa, Reykjavík, Iceland, November 27–28, 2019

Snapshot

Nordregio Forum is an annual conference organised by Nordregio to present and discuss the latest research in the broad field of regional development. The 2019 Nordregio Forum focused on the role of skills for building resilient regions, tapping mainly the key research themes of TG2 but also including aspects from other Nordic thematic groups TG1 and TG3 with regard to tourism and housing. The Forum also welcomed external speakers from the EU Commission, Icelandic clusters and businesses, representatives from the tourism sector, as well as hosting a panel with representatives from municipalities in the Nordics presenting good practices from working with resilience questions. The Forum also hosted a youth panel.

Aim, focus, and participants

The Forum drew policy and decision-makers on local, regional, and national levels from across the Nordic region to the capital of Iceland, Reykjavík. A total of 150 researchers, policymakers, and practitioners participated in the Reykjavík event.

Nordregio hosted the event, with Director Kjell Nilsson chairing the Forum. The following Nordregio researchers from TG2 participated in the event: Jukka Teräs, Anna Lundgren, Alberto Giacometti, Mari Wøien Meijer, and Linda Randall.

TG2 Session on skills: The Right Skills?

In the session on skills, the results of the ongoing project 'Skills policies for innovative and resilient regions' was discussed. The session was chaired by Birgitte Wohl Sem, the chairperson of the TG2, assisted by Nordregio researchers Anna Lundgren and Alberto Giacometti. It invited Kathrin Jakobsen to share experiences from the skills ecosystem in Hordaland county council and Karl Friðriksson from Innovation Center Iceland talking about experiences from working with scenario technique.

TG2 Session on digitalisation: Working with digitalisation: A journey not a destination

Digitalisation is transforming industries at a pace that may feel daunting at times. From the public sector to manufacturing and even tourism, technology is fundamentally changing the nature of our work in ways we are yet to understand fully. With so much uncertainty, it is perhaps helpful to think of digitalisation as a journey—with our digital skills developing along the way. In this interactive session, we heard from Reykjavík Municipality about their digitalisation journey before working together to consider our next steps in keeping pace with technological change.

TG2 Session on resilience: How to build and strengthen regional resilience—keynote by Jukka Teräs, Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio

Building regional resilience is vital in an interconnected global economy. Resilience thinking gives regions the possibility to anticipate and respond to unexpected events. Jukka Teräs, Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio and co-ordinator of the Nordic thematic group on Innovative and Resilient Regions 2017–2020, opened the concept of economic and social resilience with concrete examples of resilience approaches in Nordic regions.

TG2 Session on Smart Specialisation: The session on smart specialisation invited two presentations from within the TG2 group, namely Jouko Kinnunen from Åland, Finland, and Anders Olsson from Region Värmland, Sweden, as well as a short presentation on smart specialisation and the lessons learned from the Nordic Region, linking this to the other studies conducted within TG2. The session also welcomed Peter Berkowitz from DG Regio in the European Commission.

Key emerging issues

For the TG2, Nordregio Forum 2019 provided an opportunity not only to present and discuss the major research themes on smart specialisation, resilience, skills and competence, and digitalisation, but it was also an opportunity to launch the TG2 Synergy Project in which synergies and interrelations between the key TG2 research themes were identified and analysed.

Nordic added value

Nordregio Forum is the flagship of Nordregio dissemination events, with an annual gathering of Nordic and international stakeholders. The Forum event in Reykjavík in 2019 acted as an excellent opportunity to share the Nordic experiences at a physical Nordic event, before the global pandemic Covid-19 hit.

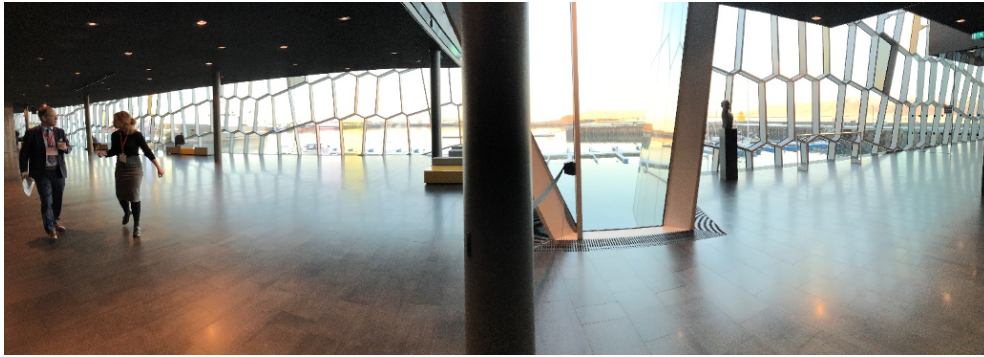


Photo: The Nordregio Forum 2019 was held at the Harpa Conference Centre in Reykjavík, Iceland

Digitalisation: From threat to opportunity at the Westfjords

Place and date: University Centre of the Westfjords, Ísafjörður, Iceland, November 29, 2019

Snapshot

The presentation by the Nordregio researchers Mari Wøien Meijer and Linda Randall tackled questions about threats and opportunities connected to digitalisation, drawing on examples from around the Nordic Region. The presentations were based on the findings of three Nordregio research projects. The first, *Governing the digital transition in Nordic regions: the human element*, is based on five in-depth Nordic case studies and highlights the key success factors in municipalities and regions that have been identified as 'digital front-runners'. The second, *Is the coast clear? The role of digitalisation for enabling blue growth in the cross-border region of Svinesund*, explores the role of digitalisation in the context of business development and growth in the marine sector in the Svinesund area (southern part of the border between Sweden and Norway). It highlights the different challenges and opportunities that surface in this context and explores the role the Svinesund mega-region may play for the future of blue growth.

The third presentation was the *Digital innovation in small and medium-sized rural enterprises—Joint Nordic–Baltic learning*, the precursor to the publication *Rural perspectives on digital innovation: Experiences from small enterprises in the Nordic countries and Latvia*, a work-in-progress. After the presentation, a workshop was organised to gather thoughts and experiences from rural digitalisation in Iceland.



Aim, focus, and participants

Students and course organisers at the University Centre of the Westfjords, and an online audience (29 viewers).

Nordregio participants: Linda Randall, Mari Wøien Meijer



Nordic added value

Raising awareness and sharing knowledge from case studies from across the Nordic Region may add new perspectives and lenses to local challenges, opportunities, and their specific areas.

Learn more: the lecture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA_UuDYvp4Y

7th Master class on EU cohesion policy

Place and time: Brussels, October 10, 2019

Snapshot

Anna Lundgren, Senior Research Fellow, participated and presented for Nordregio with a focus on resilience, digitalisation, smart specialisation, and skills to the European 7th masterclass on EU cohesion policy.

Aim, focus, and participants

The 7th masterclass on EU cohesion policy with some 30 PhD and early career students was held on October 6–11, 2019 in Brussels as part of the 17th European week for regions and cities organised and led by the European Commission, [DG for Regional and Urban Policy \(DG REGIO\)](#), the [European Committee of the Regions \(CoR\)](#), and the [Regional Studies Association European Foundation \(RSA Europe\)](#) in co-operation with the [European Regional Science Association \(ERSA\)](#) and the [Association of European Schools of Planning \(AESOP\)](#).

Nordregio participant: Anna Lundgren participated in the session 'Research and resources for EU cohesion policy: current practice and prospect at programme and project level' and presented Nordregio's work with a focus on resilience, digitalisation, smart specialisation, and skills.

7th Master Class on EU Cohesion Policy for PhD students and early career researchers



European
Commission

Regional and
Urban Policy



Nordic added value

Sharing knowledge and experiences from the Nordic context may contribute to learning and development beyond the Nordic countries. Nordic examples are well received in other parts of Europe.

Learn more: <https://rsaeurope.org/news/report-on-the-7th-master-class-on-eu-cohesion-policy/>

Spatial Challenges for the New World, ERSA Web Conference 2020

Place and date: Webinar August 27, 2020

Snapshot

Amid the Covid-19 crisis, the European Regional Science Association organised its yearly conference at a distance and invited participants to reflect on the spatial, social, and economic consequences of the pandemic, but most of all to think about the construction of the New Worlds to come and the future solutions for Regions and territories.

Aim, focus, and participants

The conference, organised as a webinar, had a wide range of themes including regional development, social innovation, and regional labour markets. Anna Lundgren presented *Skills Regional Ecosystems* at the session on Macroregional, Transregional, Regional, and Urban Policy and Governance with the aim to present the outcomes of TG2 Skills Policies and to gather feedback for a future scientific paper on the matter.

Nordregio participant: Anna Lundgren

Key emerging issues

The TG2 project 'Skills Policies for Resilient and Innovative Regions' takes the cross-sectoral and multilevel-governance perspective as the point of departure for studying how regions work with skills assessment and anticipation, skills development, and skills governance. Results from six Nordic case study regions show that enabling and hampering factors for working effectively with skills are to a large extent found in these institutional frameworks. This was also confirmed by researchers at ERSA 2020 working with skills development in Italy. The merits of producing policy recommendations on how collaboration with regard to regional skills development could be enhanced were brought forward.

Nordic added value

Nordic and international added value can be found from comparative studies and best practice, such as the 'Skills Policies for Resilient and Innovative Regions' project.

Learn more: <https://ersa.org/>



Skills and Resilience Seminar for Tillväxtverket

Place and date: Webinar September 30, 2020

Snapshot

The seminar contributed with fresh results and Nordic learning from TG2 studies to the business unit at Tillväxtverket (The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth) focusing on digitalisation and skills development.

Aim, focus, and participants

The business unit team in Tillväxtverket focusing on digitalisation and skills development asked for input from researchers at Nordregio on research themes within the TG2. The group was particularly interested in gaining new perspectives from around the Nordic region on policy responses to the post-Covid reality. Nordregio researchers organised a seminar session, followed by questions from participants, based on the TG2 projects on skills, digitalisation, and resilience.

Nordregio participants: Anna Lundgren, Linda Randall, Alberto Giacometti

The presentation opened up the concept of skills, referring to literature and policy. Subsequently, different policy approaches and regional examples from across the Nordic countries were addressed based on the empirical evidence analysed within the TG2 projects. In addition, the role of digitalisation in strengthening resilient societies was brought up, based on the study on *'Rural perspectives on digital innovation: Experiences from small enterprises in the Nordic countries and Latvia'*. Finally, skills development and the digital transition were discussed in a broader regional development context showing how they can be an integrative part of regional strategies to secure resilience and redirect economies into more sustainable development paths (see figure below).



Figure: Innovative and resilient regions in the global context (TG2 synergy study 2020)

Key emerging issues

As a result of a fast-changing economy and society driven by the digital era, the green transition, and global competition, skills development and digitalisation are key questions for countries and regions to address. The seminar addressed the following key questions:

1. How do regions work with skills? Who are the main actors? What are the enabling and hampering factors? What is the Nordic learning and best practice? What is the role of digitalisation in skills development?
2. How do we secure resilient societies in a post-Covid world?

Nordic added value

The presentation promoted Nordic learning through the discussion of different approaches in National policy and regional actions to address skills, digitalisation, and resilience.

WIRE conference on Innovative and Resilient Regions of Europe

Place and time: November 5–6, 2020—Web conference

Background

'Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE) is the main European policy forum for innovation and regional development. The conference provides a platform for policy makers, public authorities, knowledge centres and enterprises to discuss research and innovation (R&I) practices, challenges and opportunities throughout the European regions, with a direct view on the current and future EU funding programs' (Wire Website).

Snapshot

This session addressed different angles around skills development, governance in innovation ecosystems, and resilience in different regions of Europe. The key questions discussed were What are the challenges for securing resilient remote regions? What are the roles of skills and innovation in remote regions?

Aim, focus, and participants

Alberto Giacometti (Nordregio), session 'Skill supply for remote but resilient innovation ecosystem skills and resilient regions', based on the results of the TG2. Other speakers in the Skill supply session included Marija Roglič–University of Montpellier, France; Godfrey Baldacchino–University of Malta; Carlo Scatoli–European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.



Picture: Screenshot webinar

Jukka Teräs moderated the session 'Creating formal and informal entrepreneurial ecosystems—case of remote regions', with panellists Toni Trivković–Split Tech City, Rafael Ventura–University of Malaga, Anita Tregner-Mlinaric–META group, and Maja Jurišić–Island Movement.

Nordic added value

The presentation helped to share Nordic learning around skills and resilience in an important European conference with participants from policy, practice, and academia around regional development. The discussion also provided important insights from other parts of Europe that are worth considering in the Nordic countries.

Learn more: the Wire Conference: <https://wire2020.eu/programme/day-1> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1uqqqgvwcA&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=WIRE2020%3AWeekofinnovativeregionsinEurope

TG2 cross-border conference 'Strengthening cross-border communities: Lessons from Covid-19'

Place and Date: Webinar November 12, 2020

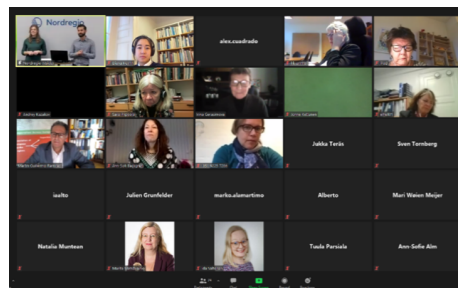
Snapshot

Cross-border regions across the Nordics and beyond are facing significant challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the web conference 'Can cross-border regions be truly resilient?', representatives from European and Nordic institutions discussed the short- and long-term impacts of Covid-19 in cross-border regions.

Aim, focus, and participants

Among others, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat were invited to provide a wider vision perspective on the challenges and opportunities for cross-border regions.

Nordregio participants: Alberto Giacometti, Mari Wøien Meijer, and Jukka Teräs



Key emerging issues

Cross-border activities came dramatically to a halt in the spring of 2020 because of measures adopted to limit the spread of the virus. On a macro level, the interruption of flows of people and goods added significant stress to every aspect of community life, as well as challenging the supply and accessibility to key goods and services. Binational communities, used to a borderless daily life, had suddenly experienced hard borders. These communities were divided by inward-looking national measures adopted by national governments individually without considering the special needs of border communities. Collaboration across borders is being tested but also the resilience, feasibility, and viability of true cross-border community living. This highlights the need for gaining more awareness of what the consequences and risks of hard borders are for these communities, and what instruments can be developed to ensure the long-term resilience of cross-border regions.

Nordic added value

We will be sharing our results from the research conducted on behalf of the Nordic thematic group of innovative and resilient regions. We aim to stimulate learning amongst stakeholders from across Nordic border regions, and we will be opening up a discussion on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in the short- and long-term perspectives.

The Thematic Group undertook four cross-border studies in the Bothnian Arc and Svinesund cross-border regions in 2017–2020. These cover themes around such areas as economic and social resilience, digitalisation, skills supply, and governance. Considering the global pandemic, the thematic group initiated a study on the effects resulting from the measures adopted. The preliminary findings of this study were presented in the event, and feedback from the sessions helped to strengthen the results.

Learn more: Webinar <https://youtu.be/6ncAu5KYaZs>

Nordregio Forum 2020: Skills, matching, and future workplaces

Place and date: Webinar November 23, 2020

Snapshot

Regions and regional labour markets are facing many challenges such as the ageing population and lack of skills, digitalisation, and automation of the economy along with the current Covid-19 crisis. Education and skills are cornerstones for contemporary societies in trying to deal with these changes. This was the topic of the third session of Nordregio Forum 2020 entitled Skills, matching, and future workplaces.

Aim, focus, and participants

The special session of Nordregio Forum 2020 on Skills focused on a topic that is becoming more and more important—acquiring the right skills for the future. One other important part of the discussion revolved around what the workplaces of the future will look like, taking into consideration changes in the labour market, such as automation of jobs and changes in working-age groups.

At the webinar, Oskar Penje, GIS expert at Nordregio illustrated labour market changes and forecasts in the Nordic Regions. Senior researcher Anna Karlsdóttir discussed *Youth, skills, and workplaces in the future*, and pointed to the regional variations in the situation of young people in the Nordic countries. Senior researcher Anna Lundgren presented the Skills Policies for Innovative and Resilient Regions study that had been conducted within the framework of the TG2, focusing on how regions can work with skills.

In the session, reflections were shared from Norway, both from Sveinung Skule, Director, Kompetanse Norge (Skills Norway) who explained how the national authorities collaborate with the regional and local levels to improve the provision of skills and reduce the mismatching problem and from Birgitte Wohl Sem, Senior Analyst at the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and chairperson of TG2 who shared her experiences and highlighted the benefits of Nordic learning in the fields of skills development and skills governance.

In the final panel, experiences were shared from Jouko Kinnunen Head of Research, Åland Statistics & Research, from Maria Edvardsson, Co-ordinator of Vocational SFI School, Karlstad Municipality, Sigurður Ólafsson, Secretary-General at the West Nordic Council, and Søren Melcher, Special Advisor at the Danish National Association of Municipalities (KL).

Nordic added value

As found in the Skills Policies for innovative and resilient regions report, there is a large potential for Nordic learning when it comes to skills development. Despite many commonalities between the Nordic countries, there are important differences when it comes to the educational system and how the vocational education and training system is organised in the respective countries. There are important differences regarding labour market policy. However, despite these differences, the Nordic countries also share many similarities when it comes to the challenges the regions are facing, such as lack of skilled labour, lack of interest in VET and science and technology education (STEM) among young people and the need for collaboration among different actors within the skills ecosystems.

Learn more: <https://nordregioevents.org/forum-2020/>



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