

Nordregio Strategy 2020



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Cover photo: Anna Lilius

Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. *Nordic co-operation* has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Common Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

The Nordic Council

is a forum for co-operation between the Nordic parliaments and governments. The Council consists of 87 parliamentarians from the Nordic countries. The Nordic Council takes policy initiatives and monitors Nordic co-operation. Founded in 1952.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

is a forum of co-operation between the Nordic governments. The Nordic Council of Ministers implements Nordic co-operation. The prime ministers have the overall responsibility. Its activities are co-ordinated by the Nordic ministers for co-operation, the Nordic Committee for co-operation and portfolio ministers. Founded in 1971.

Nordregio – Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

conducts strategic research in the fields of planning and regional policy. Nordregio is active in research and dissemination and provides policy relevant knowledge, particularly with a Nordic and European comparative perspective. Nordregio was established in 1997 by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and is built on over 40 years of collaboration.

Preface

Nordregio 2020 is primarily a strategy document *for* the staff, and *by* the staff. It has been written as a joint collaborative effort by institution staff members, and is designed to function as a compass for new and old employees over the coming four years. The strategy is a synthesis of our own ambitions and external expectations and has, therefore, been developed in close cooperation with Nordregio's Board of Directors, which represents important stakeholders in the Nordic countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland Islands. The Board finally approved the Nordregio 2020 Strategy on October 21st, 2016.

The strategy represents only one of several steering documents guiding Nordregio's future development. The relationship between Nordregio and the Nordic Council of Ministers is regulated in the Statutes of Nordregio and by an Annual Grant Letter. Another central document is the Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Development and Planning, developed by

the Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy and approved by the Nordic regional ministers on September 9th, 2016. The programme includes a Strategic Mandate, in which Nordregio's mission is described, as well as the strategic thematic areas and corresponding working programmes, which we play an important role in implementing.

The strategy has been developed through a process that has engaged the whole Nordregio staff. The editorial work has been coordinated by Research Fellow John Moodie. Lead authors for single chapters have been Kjell Nilsson (chap 1), Senior Research Fellow Timothy Heleniak (chap 2), Senior Research Fellow Moa Tunström (chap 3), Senior Research Fellow Jukka Teräs (chap 4), Senior Research Fellow Michael Kull (chap 5), Senior GIS Specialist/Cartographer Julien Grunfelder (chap 6), Head of Communications Åsa Hildestrand (chap 7) and Head of Administration Niklas Lindsay (chap 8).

Oslo/Stockholm, November 10, 2016



Erik Vieth Pedersen
Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet
Chairman of Nordregio's Board of Directors



Kjell Nilsson
Director
Nordregio

1 Nordregio's Mission and Vision

Global Challenges

The Nordic Region is among the richest in Europe, with vast amounts of natural resources and a prosperous welfare system built on social equality, but we are still facing challenges in all areas related to sustainable regional development. In recent years, regional development has been severely affected by economic crises and the impact of rapid demographic change, driven by urbanization, a shrinking and aging population and increasing refugee immigration. The environment also remains a vitally important issue. National policy and decision-makers across the Nordic and Baltic Sea Regions are fully committed to making the environment more resilient and less vulnerable, through enhanced collaboration in the management of global climate change goals, including a reduction in CO₂ emissions and the smooth transition to a greener economy.

The Nordic countries are in the process of developing and implementing strategies for promoting green growth and the bioeconomy, based on innovation and competence development, which are viewed as essential for sustainable local and regional economic growth and competitiveness. Social sustainability has historically been an important goal of Nordic cooperation and regional development. The social dimension is growing in significance due to growing disparities between rich and poor regions; ageing societies; and increasing refugee flows, causing regions to play a more central role in receiving and integrating new residents into society. These rapid demographic changes have placed additional pressure on public services and precipitated the need for the reform of regional and municipal organizational structures and greater divisions of responsibility.

Nordregio contributes to meeting these challenges, and future problems facing the Nordic countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands, by working closely with national, regional and local stakeholders to find sustainable policy solutions and promote Nordic added value. We research, analyze and evaluate the latest challenges and development trends in policy areas central to regional economic growth, competitiveness and development. Our main aim is to produce new knowledge, methods and tools to help develop effective policies that meet the needs and specificities of the

Nordic Region, and identify areas of growth potential in both dense urban spaces and sparsely populated rural areas.

About Nordregio

Nordregio is recognised and respected as a leading Nordic and European research institution within the broad research fields of urban and regional development studies. We primarily conduct solution-oriented and applied research, addressing current issues from both a research perspective and the viewpoint of policymakers and practitioners. Nordregio works on commissioned projects that help policymakers and practitioners to tackle economic, social, planning and governance challenges. This involves active participation in European, Nordic and national research programmes (e.g. ESPON, Horizon 2020, Interreg, NordForsk, Formas, The Research Council of Norway). We develop new knowledge and data, perform territorial analyses on a transnational and pan-European level, as well as conduct evaluations of various European and national support programmes.

Operating at the international, national, regional and local levels, Nordregio's research covers a wide geographic scope, with an emphasis on the Nordic and Baltic Sea Regions, Europe and the Arctic.

Research Focus and Competence Areas

As a strategic research institute, we are required to adjust our research competences to meet the needs of our main stakeholders, including the Nordic Council of Ministers and the national and regional authorities responsible for regional development in the Nordic countries, Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. Nordregio's primary research focus and competence areas are:

1. Regional Rural and Demographic Development
2. Urban Planning and Sustainable Development
3. Regional Innovation and Green Growth
4. Governance and Policy: Regional Reforms and Strategies

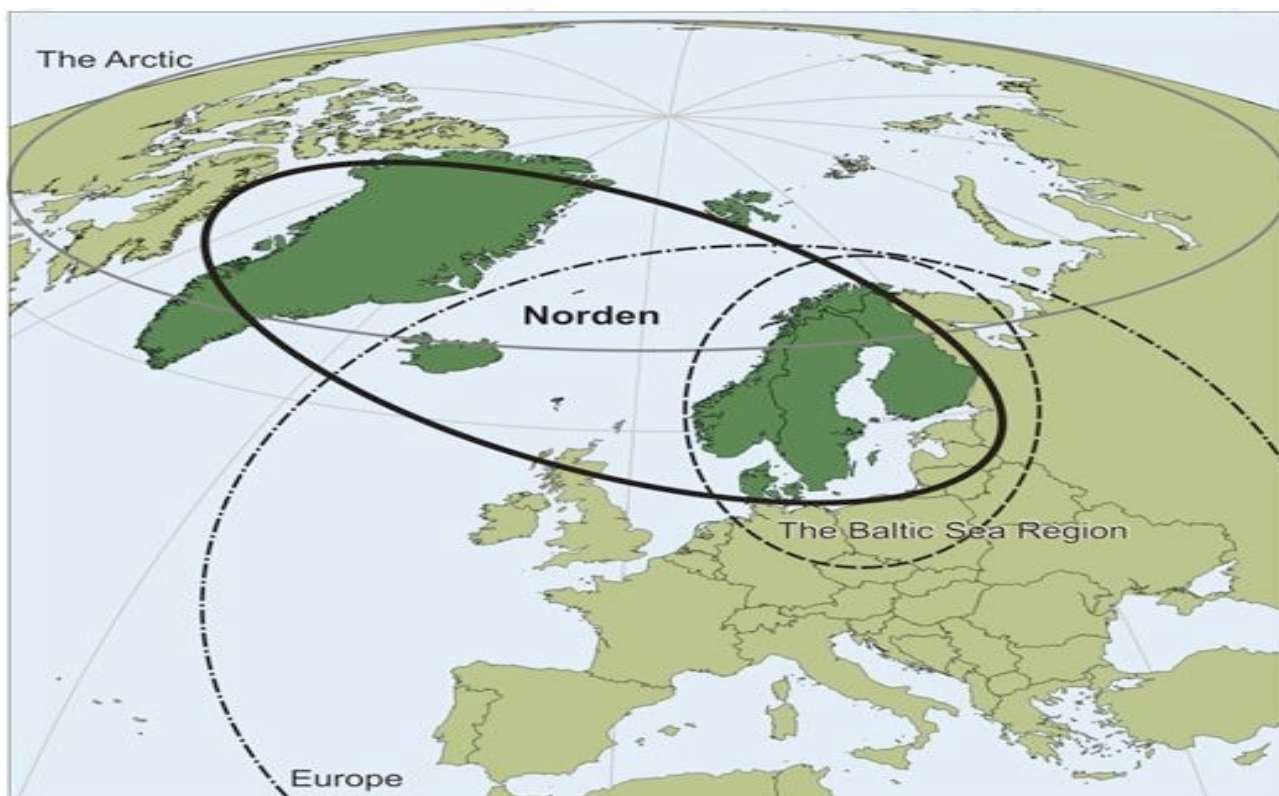


Diagram 1: Nordregio's Geographic Foci

Three of these research areas are closely connected to the prioritised themes of the Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Policy and Planning 2016–2020: *Sustainable Rural Development, Resilient and Innovative Regions, Sustainable Cities and Urban Development*. Nordregio is a central actor in the implementation of this programme. Building research competence and capacity is also a long-term process, therefore, generic cross-cutting research areas, such as governance and policy analysis, have been merged into a fourth pillar in our research profile.

Nordregio adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to its research. Our research team has a broad competence base in a range of sub-disciplines within the social sciences, including urban planning, human geography, political science, spatial planning, institutional economics, natural resource and environmental economics, business economics, sociology, anthropology, GIS/cartography. Our broad range of competences and the multi-disciplinary nature of our research team help us to meet the needs of our diverse client base. We are also able to approach research tasks from different perspectives, helping to foster a working environment built on deliberation and mutual learning.

Our Vision

Nordregio's main goal is to promote sustainable regional development and Nordic added value through the promotion and implementation of the following characteristics and values:

Scientific Excellence: Nordregio is committed to producing high quality scientific, evidence-based research that can be understood and used by policymakers and practitioners to solve practical policy problems. Our research contributes to broadening the scientific and political debate on key issues surrounding regional development in both a Nordic and global context.

Analytical Thinking: Nordregio has created an environment of equality and openness designed to facilitate deliberation and analytical thinking amongst highly trained researchers. Our research is based on integrity, self-reflexivity, cooperation, and a daring to challenge conventional thinking. We critically analyse and compare past and present data to find novel and innovative solutions to contemporary challenges and predict future trends.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Facilitation: Nordregio provides a forum where Nordic authorities and practitioners can collaborate and work together to share knowledge and seek solutions to common problems. We encourage and facilitate interaction and open and transparent cooperation between stakeholders. Among other research environments, we are also regarded as professional project managers and attractive project partners that deliver work on-time and to a high standard.

Visibility and Outreach: Nordregio is committed to promoting Nordic added value by acting as a knowledge broker between practitioners and researchers. We ensure that our research is made easily accessible to our target groups and stakeholders, using a wide range of dissemination techniques and social media. Our communication team works closely with Nordregio researchers to develop carefully tailored communication plans for each individual project.

Attractive Working Environment: Nordregio is a popular working environment where researchers undergo significant personal and professional development. Employment at Nordregio presents an excellent job opportunity and is a stepping stone for attractive future employment prospects.

Research Methods

Nordregio undertakes research using of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including:

Advanced quantitative analyses and GIS

Our main quantitative research methods include statistical analysis, register-based data series, surveys, questionnaires and GIS. Nordic countries are at the international forefront in the collection and compilation of data and statistics, including time series and panel data covering a wide range of issues, which is compatible with data from across Europe and around the world. Nordregio has the competencies to apply this data, not only in comparative studies, but also through the use of statistical and econometric methods that can

help identify significant relationships across time and between countries, regions and municipalities. Spatial econometrics and cluster analysis are examples of the techniques that may be applied and combined with our in-house GIS expertise.

Qualitative research methods – comparative case studies

Our qualitative research methods focus on policy analysis, expert and focus group interviews, action research, discourse analysis and literature studies. Nordregio's comparative research focus means that many of the research projects undertaken at the institute are built on the extensive use of case studies that can be prospective or retrospective and examine a variety of geographic scales. The use of individual and comparative case studies allows for a more in-depth analysis of an event or process. Where purely quantitative data falls short, the case study approach offers a complementary qualitative perspective through which the perceptions and views of stakeholders themselves can be examined in more detail.

Evaluations

Nordregio has long-term experience in performing ex ante, mid-term and ex post evaluations of European, national, regional and local programmes and projects. Every evaluation assignment is unique and we strive to find solutions that are well adapted to the project and based on sound scientific methods and evidence.

Future Studies

Nordregio uses different methods and techniques for predicting or capturing future outcomes, in order to provide planners and policy makers with reliable information on which decisions can be based. These methods include:

- **Forecasting:** primarily used to predict the future based on an analysis of past and present data.
- **Scenarios:** used to describe alternative images of the future by combining statistical modelling and descriptive narratives.
- **Foresight Analysis:** a qualitative method for identifying local socio-economic strategies based on a structured dialogue with relevant actors.

Nordregio's Steering

Nordregio is an institute under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM). Our obligations towards the NCM are delineated in a Strategic Mandate which is included in the Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Policy and Planning 2016-2020 and an Annual Grant Letter. NCM's steering model includes three annual meetings between the NCM's secretariat and Nordregio.

The Nordregio Board of Directors is responsible for content-related strategic planning based on the main goals of the institution outlined by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Board of Directors is a policymaking and advisory body that focuses on addressing issues of major importance concerning the institute's main objectives and future direction. The Board meets normally four times per year and represents stakeholders in each Nordic country, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands.

The Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (EK-R) is Nordregio's main stakeholder and client and is responsible for the implementation of the Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Policy and Planning and developing its thematic working groups. Nordregio's Director participates in the committee's meetings approximately four times per year.

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Business, Energy and Regional Policy (MR-NER) approves the Nordic Cooperation Programme and the budget for the regional sector, including Nordregio's basic funding. The Council normally meets once a year and is responsible for appointing members to Nordregio's Board.

The following chapters (chapters 2–5) provide a detailed overview of the work being conducted by Nordregio in our four main thematic research areas (see above) and by our GIS mapping team (chapter 6), with a particular focus on:

- A theme description and overview;
- The future research challenges in the area;
- Nordregio's research focus within the area;
- Our main competences in the area and research methods used;
- Target Groups and stakeholders;

- Sustainability issues;
- Nordregio's main research objectives in the area up to 2020.

Chapter 7 highlights Nordregio's communication activities, outlining the dissemination activities and techniques developed by our communication team in conjunction with our researchers. Finally, Chapter 8 provides an overview of the internal structures and working environment at Nordregio, describing our working processes and the benefits and opportunities available to our researchers.

2 Regional Rural and Demographic Development

Theme Description

Regional geographic shifts and growing demographic disparities between urban and rural areas within regions poses significant challenges to existing social structures and modes of service provision in the Nordic countries. The Nordic welfare state model is designed to provide equal opportunities and services for all citizens, regardless of their place of birth or residence; however, this goal has been made more difficult by rapid population growth or decline, increasing migration and constantly changing economic geography. Geographic and demographic disparities have been driven by a process of urbanisation, characterized by large scale population shifts from rural peripheries to urban areas, especially capital cities. Urbanization has led to increased regional economic disparities, which has been further exacerbated by significant regional differences in natural resources, economic structures, local human resources, transports and communication infrastructures. This has resulted in a disproportionate share of wealth and an uneven distribution of income, which contributes to growing inequalities in social outcomes, including levels of poverty, education and health. Nordregio is focused on mapping population, economic and social trends within the Nordic Region and analysing the consequences of growing geographic and demographic disparities at the regional and local levels.

Future Research Challenges

One of the main challenges for future research in this area is to examine the impact of foreign and domestic migration on geographic and demographic trends in the Nordic Region. As many migrants are entering Nordic countries as refugees, measuring levels of migrant integration into society will become increasingly important. More analysis is needed to understand the causes of migration and the implications for sending and receiving regions; in particular, the link between current patterns of population change and migration, and the effect this is having on welfare and service provision. The question of service provision is particularly

pertinent in peripheral areas where expenditure cuts have decreased the involvement of local authorities. Immigrants continue to play an important role in helping to meet labour market needs and maintain high levels of economic growth. Current patterns of immigration into Nordic countries, however, are not optimal and further research is required on how to match labour market needs with migration, particularly in economically underperforming regions.

Further important challenges are related to our understanding of how both demand-driven labour and supply-driven mobility impact on the demography and geography of urban and rural areas. Labour market needs, housing prices, second-home structures, service provisions for citizens and access to nature and culture are areas impacting quality of life and economic situations. Certain areas and groups also require further research, including issues relating to youth unemployment, an ageing population and concentration in certain types of settlement structures. There is also a need to focus on the Nordic Arctic regions that are influenced by particular challenges relating to harsh climate conditions, scarcity of human resources, lack of infrastructure and questions relating to the rights of indigenous groups. Changes in the spatial distribution of the population across the Nordic Region, and within each of the Nordic countries, could lead to geographic imbalances that need to be identified and highlighted through the development of effective socio-economic indicators.

Research Focus

Nordregio's team of human geographers have extensive background knowledge and specialize in areas of geo-economic developments and demographic change. Our competence in this area will expand further into newly emerging areas, including the integration of migrants. The Nordregio GIS team have the quantitative research competences required to conduct the complex mapping of demographic change and developments across the Nordic Region. Our research methods in this area will expand further if we proceed with the geo-visualization

of population patterns, settlement and job structure, and the application of participatory methods designed to involve regional stakeholders in discussions surrounding demographic issues.

Competences and Research Methods

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Sustainability Dimensions

Nordregio is currently conducting work in the area of social sustainability, but this could be extended to examine the integration of migrants into urban areas. The current project on labour migration into the Nordic Region focuses on both the quantitative analysis of current trends, and a qualitative analysis of the process of integration through case studies in selected regions. This project has given Nordregio a unique comparative insight into how integration is conceived and implemented across the Nordic countries and which government officials and researchers are involved in the process of integration at the national and local levels. Nordregio has produced a number of maps showing male-female population and migration differences. Such analysis could be expanded on to focus on rural areas and also include gender specific aspects including quality-of-life at regional and local levels.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Nordregio's major client in this area is the ministerial staff within the partner countries of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Target groups and stakeholder outreach could be developed to include the ministries of migration in each Nordic country and more emphasis placed on regional level authorities dealing with demographic and migration issues. Increasingly, authorities at the regional level are a major target group for the comparative research we are undertaking across Nordic countries. Academics and other researchers within the Nordic countries have also always been a target group for our research.

Objectives for 2020

In the period to 2020 and beyond, Nordregio will focus on the following objectives in the areas of regional territorial and demographic disparities:

Objective 1: An overarching objective of the Nordic states is to provide equal opportunities for all inhabitants, across socio-economic groups and among regions. To this end, Nordregio will contribute with knowledge and input into political strategies on more balanced standards of living in the Nordic countries and in settlement types of different sizes.

Objective 2: Nordregio will contribute new knowledge on the development of rural and remote areas, focusing on the Arctic and other peripheral regions, and the need for competence support, including improved accessibility.

Objective 3: Nordregio will continue to monitor and analyze different types of mobility and migration patterns, and the challenges they in relation to demand and supply-driven migration. We will continue to work on the important issue of integration of immigrants, and expand our quantitative and qualitative analysis on integration issues.

3 Urban Planning and Sustainable Development

Theme Description

The planning of the built environment is essential for sustainable urban development. Urban planning, therefore, remains a key policy area in the Nordic Region and a core research theme for Nordregio during the period 2017–2020. Ongoing urbanization in the Nordic countries creates both new challenges and opportunities for growing functional urban areas. Nordregio approaches urban planning and development issues primarily by investigating planning policies, processes and practices, actors, networks, and power-relations. We view the planning process from a social science research perspective, focusing on key issues relating to democracy and governance, public-private relations, social sustainability and integration.

Future Research Challenges

The main future research challenges within the area of urban planning and development are related to increasing global and local mobility of information, goods, services and people. There is a need to direct attention to social sustainability issues, such as urban integration and segregation, the role of public spaces in cities, everyday life and citizen participation in planning at different levels (European, Nordic, national, regional, local, urban and suburban). Another important research theme is related to the role of public and private actors in planning. The Nordic welfare model, characterised by social cohesion, is challenged by globalisation, re-regulation and changing governance structures. This has led to increasing privatisation of public services and places, and new forms of contractual policy instruments in urban planning, which has impacted directly on the relations both between and within public and private sectors. The tension between legitimacy and efficiency in planning processes, as well as between democratic and economically rational processes, needs to be highlighted, and further investigation into the role and influence of large companies and industries in urban development is required. For example, there are growing ambitions for ‘smart cities’, giving private actors more influence over both urban development and

urban life; furthermore, initiatives such as ‘urban living labs’, raise questions around democracy, efficiency and legitimacy. Other emerging themes to be mentioned are urban-suburban-rural relations, urban development in the Arctic, urban policies for small and medium sized cities, spatial analysis, and visualisations and representations of urban development.

Research Focus

Nordregio is engaged in four major research projects that provide the foundation of our 2017–2020 urban planning and development related activities. *The research project entitled The Impact of Participation (TIP-TOP)*, funded by the Swedish Research Council Formas, maps and analyses citizen dialogues in urban planning. The project develops knowledge on the relationship between the everyday life of citizens and planning, social sustainability and the implementation and impact of plans.

Nordregio’s involvement in the Interreg project *Baltic Urban Lab* involves both learning and knowledge communication on urban regeneration and brownfield development. In the project, partner cities (Riga, Tallinn, Turku and Norrköping) test new cooperation models, participatory methods and integrated planning approaches. Similarly, the Interreg project *Regional Policies Towards Greening the Social Housing Sector* focuses on urban regeneration and the renovation of social and public housing areas for energy efficiency purposes. This involves collaboration with local and regional planners throughout Europe, with a specific focus on delivering planning tools and strategic guidance.

Nordregio is the Nordic partner in the ESPON project *Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe (COMPASS)*. The project analyses changes in territorial governance, spatial planning systems and policies across Europe since 2000. This involves identifying good practices and providing recommendations on how national and regional spatial and territorial development policy perspectives can be more effectively reflected in EU Cohesion and other sectoral policies.

Competences and Research Methods

Nordregio researchers in the field of urban planning are primarily from a social science background, including human geographers, urban and regional planners, sociologists and political scientists. Our researchers are skilled in the qualitative analysis of policies, systems, discourses, actor relations and governance, as well as quantitative analysis, including GIS. Both in research and commissioned projects, we conduct comparative case-based research and use participatory methods, characterised by a high degree of stakeholder involvement, interactivity and the co-production of knowledge. In parallel to the aforementioned larger projects, we continue to develop our competences and knowledge in newly emerging key themes in urban development in the Nordic context, such as gentrification, digitalisation and suburbanisation. The research challenges mentioned above are also well suited to Nordregio's competence profile and, as a consequence of developing the theme of spatial analysis and visualization, more competencies related to urban form, architecture and the built environment might be needed in the future. By developing Nordregio competences in these fields, we are able to provide additional understandings of urban space with regard to morphology and accessibility.

Sustainability Dimensions

Sustainability issues have long been central to urban planning. There is, however, an increasing need to direct attention to implementation aspects of sustainability, particularly those regarding technical solutions and the implementation of policies and services of general interest. Furthermore, sustainability is now viewed less as ecological, social or economic, but as a nested concept where investigations should focus on the social-ecological interface, or the ecological, social and economic interrelations in areas, such as environmental technologies or policies for planning. Sustainability dimensions, gender and integration are inherent to this research area. Our projects directly investigate how planning policies, processes, and practices take sustainability into consideration; in particular, how sustainability is defined and implemented, how different public and private actors are involved in planning processes, and how different social groups are affected by, and included in, urban planning and development. In our research, we are interested in which urban planning

and development visions and policies are on the agenda in a certain context or point in time and who they belong to.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

In the field of urban planning and development, Nordregio's main target groups are public planning authorities, individual planners and policymakers at different administrative levels in all the Nordic countries, as well as in Europe as a whole. A secondary target group is planning consultancies, academic researchers and students. Through the Nordic Working Groups and their related projects, we cooperate closely with ministries and national and regional authorities in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. The representatives of the working groups are also an important contact point with local planning authorities, planners and policymakers. More specifically, during 2017–2020, we will be working in a few larger projects with and for the following stakeholders: a number of Swedish municipalities and government agencies, regional energy agencies in Spain, Portugal, Romania and Serbia, as well as the city administrations in Riga, Tallinn, Turku and Norrköping, Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainable Cities Commission and the University of Turku. Within the European ESPON network, we will cooperate with planning consultancies and research institutions from all over Europe. Our existing collaboration with Stockholm regional planning authority will be developed, and we will also aim at strengthening collaboration with other relevant local institutions in the Nordic countries. Furthermore, Nordregio's active role in the Prime Ministers' Initiative on Nordic Sustainable Cities will include close cooperation with the Nordic City Network, capital city planning authorities and export organisations in the Nordic countries.

Objectives for 2020

During 2017–2020, Nordregio will continue to develop research and collaborative projects in the field of urban planning and development oriented towards social sustainability. A particularly important partner in this endeavour is the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable urban development. This will result in new and comprehensive knowledge regarding public-private partnerships in planning, actor relations, participation and governance, planning practice and socio-economic consequences of urban development. It will also result in increased networks and opportunities for collabora-

tion with municipalities and other public authorities, planning consultancies, NGOs and developers. Furthermore, it is Nordregio's ambition that both our projects and our communication activities contribute to the dissemination of Nordic knowledge of good and sustainable urban development. This is in line with the Nordic Prime Ministers' initiative for the period of 2017-2020, promoting Nordic solutions to global sustainability challenges. More specifically, we will pursue the following research and policy objectives:

Objective 1: Increase knowledge on the potentials and challenges of participatory practices and public-private relations in urban planning processes, and our understanding of the implementation and impact of policies and plans.

Objective 2: Contribute to knowledge on urban planning systems and territorial governance in Europe, and develop our understanding of planning cultures in different policy contexts.

Objective 3: Enhance knowledge on how regional and municipal administrative reforms influence urban

planning and development and urban-regional interrelations in strategic planning.

Objective 4: Facilitate both democratic and efficient policymaking in urban regeneration projects, and contribute to sustainable urban transformation processes.

Objective 5: Facilitate the implementation of social sustainability policies in urban planning and development, and increase knowledge on the complexities of sustainability as an integrated and overarching development goal.

Objective 6: Increase knowledge on the specificities of urban growth in the Arctic, and strengthen the Nordic contribution to the field of sustainable urban development.

Objective 7: Maintain our well-established relations to regional and national planning authorities, and further develop our relationship with by developing our competencies in urban form related issues.

4 Regional Innovation and Green Growth

Theme Description

Scientific research and innovation are the cornerstones of the modern knowledge-based economy and essential for enhancing sustainable regional and local economic growth and competitiveness. Policy and decision-makers are increasingly adopting a 'place-based' approach to policymaking in this area, through the development of smart specialization strategies that identify and develop regional innovation strengths and promote regional stakeholder collaboration. The Nordic Region is leading the way in research and innovation, particularly in relation to green growth and the bioeconomy. The specific characteristics of the bioeconomy resource base make resources limited and sensitive to human misuse. Furthermore, the production of bio-materials from these resources is embedded in social systems. Altering these systems and their outputs has potentially large social and human implications, therefore, researchers and policy-makers must consider moral and ethical dimensions, particularly the impact of innovation on different societal groups. Nordregio is working directly with regional and local authorities to assist in the development of effective regional innovation strategies that can help maintain the Nordic Regions position as European innovation leaders.

Future Challenges

Future challenges in the field of regional development and innovation is in job creation and sustainable growth. In meeting these challenges, comprehensive analyses of structural changes in Nordic industries (re-industrialisation) is required, that focuses on highlighting areas of regional innovation strength and pattern matching these with labour demand and supply. The analysis of innovative research environments in the Nordic countries is closely linked to the concept of smart specialization (S3), which is being widely developed throughout Europe. Furthermore, the institutional and governance arrangements developed through green growth and bioeconomy initiatives are essential in promoting sustainable growth in rural

communities and regions; examples of such institutions include property rights systems, municipal powers in relation to processes and markets, and structures for cooperative action. Nordregio has the potential to take a leading role in such analyses and facilitate stakeholder learning across the Nordic Region, by providing relevant research data to policy and decision-makers in newly emerging innovation areas.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is focused on the challenge of promoting green growth and the bioeconomy. Bio-economy contributes to stimulating regional and local innovation and creating sustainable growth in urban, rural and sparsely populated areas. Nordregio contributes to these new topics through the development of new knowledge and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and learning between stakeholders. The development and implementation of regional and local innovation strategies, based on a place-based approach, will play an important role in exploiting the potential of green growth and the bioeconomy in the Nordic Region.

Research Focus

Nordregio's research in the area of regional innovation largely focuses on:

- Regional innovation and development strategies, e.g. Smart Specialisation;
- Regional innovation systems and innovative environments, e.g. industrial clusters, technology parks, and innovation centres;
- Grounded and inclusive innovation for rural and local economies;
- Innovation in public service and welfare provision;
- Green Growth and sustainable innovation;
- Business development and innovation in sparsely populated and peripheral regions, e.g. in the Nordic Arctic;
- The management and implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Working Group on Green Growth, Innovation and Entrepreneurship was an essential part of Nordregio's research portfolio between 2013–2016, including the themes, bio-economy, industrial symbiosis, and implementation/adoption of the green growth concept in the Nordic Region. The geographic scope of Nordregio's activities focuses on the Nordic Regions, ranging from metropolitan areas, to remote rural and sparsely populated areas. More recently, we have developed knowledge on regional development and innovation in the Arctic region, including large scale nature resource-based industries in the North. We have also developed the European perspective on regional innovation working on a number of European projects; including, the Interreg Europe Higher Project, that provides a comparative study of smart specialization strategies across Europe, and a research assignment on smart specialization in sparsely populated areas for the EU Joint Research Centre in Seville, Spain. In the TRIBORN project, the governance of bio-energy in rural areas is examined in relation to how systems and strategies for bio-energy innovation can be designed to promote Triple Bottom Line benefits in rural areas, and meet national bioenergy targets.

Competences and Research Methods

Nordregio's knowledge of the Nordic Region, interlinked with a strong tradition of networking with international partners in the field of regional development and innovation, places us at the forefront of research on regional innovation and green growth. We have the competitive advantage of possessing the necessary data, networks, and expertise on innovation in the Nordic countries. Nordregio's competences in this area include extensive experience and knowledge of performing policy and governance analysis on regional innovation, especially the analysis of regional development and innovation strategies. As Nordregio uses an applied research approach, it is able to operate at the intersection between research, policymaking and practical application. We have conducted several comparative studies on regional and rural development and innovation in the Nordic Region, based largely on qualitative research methods. We, therefore, need to increase our use of quantitative research methods in this area, particularly, enhancing our competences in survey and questionnaire analysis.

Sustainability Dimensions

Sustainability is an inherent element of Nordregio's research on regional and local innovation, particularly in relation to our work on Nordic green growth, the bio-economy and social and environmental sustainability. Gender and integration issues are also tackled as essential parts of Nordregio's innovation research agenda, including facilitating stakeholder involvement in the innovation process, bringing science closer to the citizen and a commitment to increasing the role of women in scientific research.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Nordregio's key clients (current and potential) in relation to regional innovation and green growth include:

- International clients (EU, Nordic, others) with regional approach/interest, often including comparative analyses between regions such as e.g. EU Interreg programmes, European Commission DG for Research & Innovation, assignments to Nordic Council of Ministers and its institutions
- National level clients with connections to regions e.g. Tillväxtverket, VINNOVA, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland, Innovasjon Norge, ENOVA
- Regional authorities and development organisation in the Nordic countries e.g. Regional Councils, regional and local development companies
- Local authorities, and local authority associations

Nordregio also collaborates with a wide group of stakeholders in the Nordic regions and across Europe, providing information, facilitating contacts and building networks between different actors.

Objectives for 2020

Nordregio is focused on strengthening its position and role as one of the leading European research institutions in the field of regional innovation and green growth. The major objectives of Nordregio for the period 2017–2020 include:

Objective 1: Increase in-house knowledge and competence in the area of regional and local development and innovation, utilizing accumulated experience and international networks.

Objective 2: Contribute to the development of new knowledge on Green Growth and Green Transition to produce policy-relevant knowledge at different levels on the Nordic transition to bioeconomy, with special focus on regional and local issues, and strategies for sustainable development.

Objective 3: Increase focus on policy-oriented research in key areas, including resilient and innovative Nordic regions and communities, innovative research environments, and capital support.

5 Governance and Policy: Regional Reforms and Strategies

Theme Description

The term ‘governance’ is widely used to capture the complexities of contemporary policy and decision-making. From a governance perspective, policymaking is no longer monopolised by state executives, but is viewed as an integrative and shared process, involving multiple interdependent public and private stakeholders across different levels of governance. The concept is particularly relevant to Nordregio’s work in the fields of rural and regional policy, urban development and spatial planning, where a wide range of actors are involved in policy formulation and implementation. Governance is an increasingly important theme within European and nationally funded research projects, as policymakers strive to advance their knowledge and understanding of “good” policymaking and implementation practices. Nordregio is ideally placed to help develop this concept and examine the changing nature of governance through regular interaction with policymakers and practitioners at the European, national, regional and local levels.

Future Challenges

The main future challenge in research on governance is to assess developments at the regional and local level, in particular, the increasing importance of “place-based” knowledge and expertise in policymaking. In addition, the concept of governance must become less theoretical and more applied and policy relevant. This can be achieved by ensuring that Nordregio’s research findings are strategically tailored to meet the needs of policymakers and practitioners through the provision of practical and workable examples of effective governance structures and best practice. It is important to remain up to date on the evolution of the concept of governance and the policy areas that are becoming the focus of attention. This will require monitoring the governance debate and assessing how newly emerging ideas are being interpreted by funding bodies.

Research Focus

Nordregio apply governance as both a conceptual and normative tool, with a particular focus on territorial governance at the regional and local levels. One of the main strengths of our multidisciplinary team is that they can apply the concept from different research backgrounds and perspectives. This diversity allows room for adaptation when meeting the requirements of funding bodies that define the term quite differently. Nordregio is not committed to one conceptual governance approach and can, therefore, remain flexible and open to the needs of funding sources and project partners.

Nordregio’s competence within the area is wide ranging, spanning multiple policy areas and different levels of governance. Recent and ongoing projects have focused on both regional and local governance issues in rural and regional development, and transnational/national governance problems in the development of pan-Baltic and Nordic strategies in Marine Spatial Planning (Baltic Scope). Nordregio’s main role in several projects is to observe, monitor and evaluate governance processes. The lessons learned from this research provide policymakers and practitioners with practical information regarding best practice on future collaborative efforts across different levels of governance and policy areas.

Competences and Research Methods

Nordregio’s competence in the area of governance covers a range of research disciplines, including human ecology, human geography, political science, public administration and spatial planning. In addition, our broad network of contacts and regular interaction with public and private stakeholders leaves us well placed to develop this competence further. There is a need, however, to develop our knowledge of governance processes in new and emerging policy areas that are of interest

to our main funding sources, including the European Commission and Nordic Council of Ministers. In examining, analysing and facilitating governance processes, Nordregio utilize a number of interactive research methods aimed at understanding the views and perceptions of stakeholders involved in the policy-making process, such as: participant observation; focus groups; qualitative interviews; Delphi surveys; world café and planning cells. Furthermore, Nordregio's in-house expertise in map development is an important tool when it comes to visualizing and communicating governance developments.

Sustainability Dimensions

Nordregio examine different governance processes and how they contribute towards the development of integrative policymaking structures and sustainable economic, social and environmental policies. In addition, we support participatory research developments by facilitating inclusive stakeholder participation in policy-making, based on gender equality, diversity and increased societal involvement.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Nordregio's main clients in relation to governance research include Nordic governments and authorities, and the European Commission who is committed to developing a 'place-based' approach to policymaking and enhancing collaboration across all levels of governance as part of their European Cohesion Policy. Through these EU projects, we have examined the role and perceptions of stakeholders actively involved in governance processes, including politicians, civil servants, business/industrial elites, higher education and scientific/research bodies, NGO's and civil society

groups. Our research findings are disseminated widely amongst stakeholders and are strategically targeted to meet the needs of both policy and decision-makers looking to develop effective governance structures, and public/private stakeholders seeking to understand and influence the policymaking process.

Objectives for 2020

Multi-level governance is a central theme in public policy-making and, therefore, remains an important focus of Nordregio's research agenda for the period 2017–2020. Nordregio has a number of core objectives and milestones in relation to the governance theme running up to 2020 and beyond, including:

Objective 1: Develop our in-house research competence in the area of governance

Objective 2: Enhance the knowledge and understanding of policymakers and practitioners on integrated, transparent, accountable and effective governance processes.

Objective 3: Targeted capacity building and the facilitation of participatory policymaking approaches and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

Objective 4: Becoming leading researchers on governance and stakeholder interaction in the main policy areas of maritime spatial planning, regional innovation and urban development.

Objective 5: Develop a governance theme in our approach to evaluating European and national policies, programmes and projects.

6 Mapping and Data Activities

Mapping the Nordic Region

Nordregio is leading the way in mapping past and current development trends across the Nordic Region, through the comparative statistical analysis of old and new data in three central areas: demography, labour force and economy. Nordregio's GIS team is highly skilled and experienced in gathering new statistical information and conducting detailed quantitative analysis of this data. This information provides the basis for comparative analysis across the Nordic Region, visualized in user-friendly maps and two of Nordregio's main outputs, the State of the Nordic Region Report and the easy access online mapping tool, NordMap. Nordregio's mapping skills are essential in helping to visualize research findings, which makes complex statistical data easily assessable and understandable for stakeholders working in the field of regional development.

Future Challenges

One of the central challenges in this area is the increasing amount of geo-data available from national and European authorities, as well as from open source platforms. This presents the dual problem of how to select relevant data and assess its quality before harmonizing it, and how to store this new data in a consistent way, ensuring enough storage space. Nordregio will investigate open data and will attempt to include new pieces of data to its core database when relevant. Another challenge is ensuring that Nordregio play an active role in discussions relating to the exchange of Nordic harmonized data and cross-border statistics. Further cooperation with other Nordic institutions is very welcome, but there is currently no budget being allocated to this task, which places a restriction on such collaboration. Tools in mapping and data work are constantly changing and it can be a challenge to keep up-to-date with the latest technological developments. At the same time, these changes have resulted in the development of a number of new mapping products, such as dynamic maps and other new ways of visualising geo-data, which could be an attractive tool for our target groups and stakeholders. Furthermore, Nordregio should explore the possibilities of using new pieces of software including open source software.

Research Focus

Nordregio's data gathering and mapping work focuses on harmonising and analysing geo-data for comparing municipalities and regions in the Nordic Region and beyond (e.g Baltic Sea Region, Europe, circumpolar Arctic). This important background research contributes to the production of thematic maps to illustrate aspects of regional development in the fields of demography, labour force and economy, and to the development of an interactive web-mapping tool. Nordregio's mapping database consists of two parallel systems: the core data database (including NordMap) and the project data database. The aim of both databases is to secure good quality data that is both usable and understandable for staff, clients and wider stakeholders.

Core Data Database

This database covers common socio-economic indicators (core data). The geographical focus of the data covers the entire Nordic Region and other parts of the world at municipal and regional levels. The core database is updated regularly and can be used as a support function for other database activities and projects. The data is saved in Excel files and can easily be joined to GIS-layers for map production.

The core datasets cover the areas of demography, labour force and the economy. Demography contains data on the general population structure, natural population change and net-migration. Labour force contains data on number of employed, unemployed and economically active persons, by both gender and age group, as well as data on educational attainment. Economy contains data on gross regional product, R&D investments, bankruptcies and overnight stay. Furthermore, some basic datasets are also collected, including area in square kilometres and elements of transport infrastructure.

The core datasets form the basis of two of Nordregio's main outputs: the State of the Nordic Region Report and NordMap. The former is a "continuation" of Nordregio's (and NCM's Basprojekt and NOGRAN's) Regional Development in the Nordic Countries series, started in 1981. The report summarises the central demographic and socio-economic development trends in the Nordic Countries. The aim is to publish the report

every other year and the latest version was published in February 2016. NordMap is a Nordic web-mapping tool using harmonized municipal and regional data that allows users to print and share customized maps on all types of social media. The tool can be used on desktop computers, laptops and tablets.

Project Data Database

The project data database is a collection of Excel, PC-Axis etc. files. The files are “flat”, meaning that they do not have a special connection to a strategic “database tool”, or connections to each other. These files are generated in connection with specific projects and are organized in order to serve the requirements of the projects. The geographical focus of the database varies, mainly covering the Nordic countries, but also extending to the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), EU members/ESPON countries and some neighbour countries (Russia, Belarus) and the circumpolar Arctic. Geographical units are mainly based on administrative divisions; for example, data for the Nordic countries varies from municipal to national level, and from regional (NUTS 3) to national level for European countries. Projects and associated data can also examine levels lower than the municipal level, including the grid level or neighbourhood level.

Competences and Research Methods

Nordregio’s GIS team is highly trained in quantitative research methods and possess the knowledge of statistical mapping required for effective data gathering and analysis. Data gathering is the first stage in the mapping process and Nordregio is experienced in developing indicators and harmonizing and processing multiple sources of data. The GIS team also have competences in developing guidelines for map layout and producing map templates in the development of customized maps for Nordregio colleagues and external clients. A number of competence needs can, however, be identified, especially in relation to external projects, where spatial analysis and a wider use of open source software might be required.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Nordregio’s main target groups in this area are civil servants, stakeholders working in the field of regional development and clients that have commissioned projects which require customized mapping, such as the European Commission (e.g. DG Regio and DG Mare) and national, regional and local authorities.

Objectives and Milestones for 2020

The collection, harmonisation and analysis of data and the production of maps have always been one of the core activities of Nordregio, and will continue to be important as new policy areas and indicators begin to emerge. The main objectives in this area up to 2020 are:

Objective 1: Develop maps with the latest data available

- Update Nordregio’s core data bases on an annual basis.
- Keep traditional analogue maps and NordMap up-to-date.
- Produce a new edition of State of the Nordic Region report, every other year.

Objective 2: Communicate our products

- Upload the maps on Nordregio’s map gallery.
- Participate in exhibitions and seminars.
- Usage of social media.

Objective 3: Monitor the use of maps

- Identify the most in demand and downloaded maps.
- Identify the users of our maps (geographical location mainly).
- Simplify access and use of our maps for our target group and stakeholders.

Objective 4: Contribute to current and potential research activities

- Support colleagues with data and mapping products.
- Strategic thinking based on current research activities, with a special interest in the Nordic Region (e.g. migration and rural areas).
- Be more visible to regions to enhance potential cooperation and commissioned projects (e.g. providing background analysis for regional strategy documents).

7 Communication and Outreach

Communication Aims

The aim of our communication activities is to contribute to fulfilling Nordregio's mission to be an active knowledge broker between practitioners and researchers in our field of research, and contribute to sustainable regional development in the Nordic Region. Nordregio's communication activities are based on five fundamental principles:

- To make Nordregio's research, maps and knowledge easily accessible to target groups and stakeholders;
- Ensure that Nordregio's outputs are strategically tailored to meet the needs of relevant target groups and stakeholders;
- Maintain a continuous dialogue with Nordregio's owners, clients and users;
- Work closely with Nordregio's researchers in the development of communication plans and to enhance the communication skills of Nordregio staff in relation to interaction with project partners;
- Work through other relevant organisations to disseminate policy-relevant knowledge.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Our main target groups and stakeholders include:

- Nordic Council of Ministers, EK-R, other Nordic institutions and working groups;
- Officials and policymakers at national, regional and local levels in the Nordic countries, within the fields of urban planning and regional or local development;
- Researchers and research programmes within our fields;
- Project specific target groups at Nordic, Arctic, Baltic and EU levels, including NGOs.

Dissemination Channels

- Publications – primarily working papers and policy briefs
- www.nordregio.se – Nordregio's website is our communications hub and has the same Google ranking as the leading universities in the Nordic region
- www.nordmap.se – The interactive webmapping tool
- www.norden.diva-portal.org – Open Access to Nord-

regio's publications

- Nordregio News –thematic magazine and e-newsletter with ca 1,800 subscribers
- Social media – Primarily FB and Twitter, for news, maps and updates from events etc.
- Nordregio Forum – Our annual, thematic conference for primary targets groups
- Partners with relevant networks on our themes in the Nordic countries – such as RegLab SE and DK, SIX. Nordic on Social Innovation and Plattform Hållbar Stad for sustainable cities in SE, etc.
- Participation at regional and national seminars on regional development and planning – for practitioners – as well as research conferences

Objective and Milestones for 2020

In the period 2016–2020, Nordregio will enhance focus on their outreach activities for relevant stakeholders and strategically target policy relevant knowledge directly at European, national, regional and local users. This will involve recognising potential language barriers and developing practical communications plans for individual research projects. Nordregio will explore new channels, and develop existing ones, to better serve their clients and stakeholders. Measuring web activity and increasing brand recognition through online tools will assist in this goal.

■ **Relevance for target groups:** Profile Nordregio as a Nordic centre of competence and resources of relevance for policy-makers and practitioners, by modernising the tools, channels and products we provide in line with users' needs. Emphasise sustainability dimensions and offer certain products, e.g. folders and Press Releases, translated into all Nordic languages.

■ **Communication planning:** Create a new model for integrating communications in projects from the start – including activities that continue beyond the final reports.

■ **Website:** More thematic sorting of information to profile Nordregio and our research results. Highlight sustainability dimensions and improve headlines and sub-headings.

■ **Social media:** Increase visibility by adding followers

and involving more staff.

■ **Publications:** Use new State of the Nordic Region template for reports. Improve the lay-out of policy briefs and working papers, based on user surveys. Create new innovative ways of sharing research results and policy implications, e.g. targeted newsletters and flyers.

■ **Maps:** Showcase and share them more strategically, e.g. “Map of the moment”.

■ **Presentations:** Improve our speaking skills and power points with images and thought provoking storytelling. Add new perspectives, ask questions, try podcasts and videos. Ensure that all staff members share the same image of Nordregio and our work and that this is reflected in presentations and other material.

■ **Events:** Explore a variety of formats for increased interactivity and relevance to attract the right audience: roundtables, talking circles, market places, speed-dating for speakers and participants, longer breaks for networking and reflection. Use engaging moderators and create an informal atmosphere. Collaborate with stake-

holders, relevant organizations and involve youth.

■ **Measuring:** The effectiveness of digital communication channels will be measured via Google analytics. Meltwater will be used for news monitoring and brand awareness among target groups. Events and projects will be evaluated more qualitatively to measure target group satisfaction, find out what to do differently next time, and learn from previous experiences.

■ **Nordic identity:** Be part of the new Nordic Statistics Portal, start using the new Nordic logo and participate in Nordic branding activities.

■ **Cross-sectorial collaboration:** Find new collaboration partners within the Nordic Council of Ministers and other Nordic institutions and policy sectors to broaden our visibility, increase relevance, and underline sustainability dimensions.



8 Organisation and Working Conditions

Organisational Structure

Nordregio offers an international and multi-disciplinary research environment with some 40 members of staff from the Nordic Region and around the globe. Nordregio's management team consists of a Director, Research Director, Head of Communications and Head of Administration. The core research team is made up of Senior Research Fellows, Senior Research Advisors, Research Fellows, Junior Research Fellows and Senior and Junior Cartographers/GIS Analysts. Nordregio's research team is supported by the Director and the Research Director in the development of research projects. Dissemination activities are coordinated by the communication team, and the administrative unit is responsible for accounting, financial reporting, HR, IT and other administrative tasks.

Working Approach

Nordregio is a flat organisation and work is carried out in project teams made up of junior and senior researchers, along with GIS experts and communications specialists. Team-work is a very important aspect of Nordregio's research activities and much of the responsibility for projects is delegated to project teams. Project team members are selected on the basis of their expertise in relation to the task at hand, so the main goals and objectives of the project are met. Project leaders are assigned to each team and they are responsible for managing the project and effectively delegating work amongst team members to ensure the smooth flow of the project and that deadlines are met.

Working Environment

Nordregio's office is situated in the heart of Stockholm, Sweden, on the beautiful and picturesque Island of Skeppsholmen. The premises are based in a house built in 1876 that was formerly the home of the Royal Naval Academy.

Nordregio is acknowledged as a popular and attractive working place.

The goal of Nordregio's HR policy is to create favourable working conditions through the development of a good physical and social working environment. We conduct annual working environment surveys to be able to identify areas for improvement. Nordregio has a zero tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment. We also recognize the importance of good physical health and, therefore, we offer regular health care examinations, weekly massages and funding for physical recreation, including gym cards.

Cooperation is an important part in creating the conditions for an active and collaborative working environment. Nordregio's cooperation agreement signed by the Director and the Local Union Club is designed to provide a structure for open dialogue between employer and employees. Cooperation helps build on mutual respect, openness, involvement, proactivity and efficiency, which requires good communication on all levels. Staff participation is an important aspect in the management of Nordregio and this is achieved through cooperation meetings with the Local Union Club, bi-weekly staff meetings and staff representation on the board.

Working at Nordregio can at times involve high workload, which leads to overtime and negative stress as a consequence. Stress prevention and how we handle issues related to work related stress are important to the management. We believe that working at Nordregio should be stimulating and give room for constant learning. Everyone has a right to feel that the work environment, and the nature of the work conducted, should not lead to damage with stress related symptoms. Work environment management is, therefore, integrated into Nordregio's operational systems to help prevent health issues and injuries related to work.

Staff Development

Nordregio offers significant personal and professional development and is a stepping stone for future attractive employment. We provide the opportunity for employees to develop their knowledge and research competences

through active participation in a range of diverse projects in different policy areas. We also offer employees the chance to study for a PhD, and provide additional support and training in the form of internal and external courses on research methods and article writing. Development talks, where individual goals are set and discussed, are held annually with all employees and viewed as essential for positive career development. Nordregio is also a popular destination for academics and practitioners wishing to develop and refine their scientific research skills. Guest researcher positions are available for established academics and internships are provided for junior researchers looking to develop their work experience and professional portfolios.

Organizational Objectives for 2020

Looking towards 2020 and beyond, Nordregio has a number of organisational objectives it hopes to meet, including:

Objective 1: Modernising Nordregio's premises to make it an open and fully functional meeting place for Nordic representatives and international project partners in Stockholm.

Objective 2: Promoting career development by offering the opportunity to study for a PhD to employees.

Objective 3: Encouraging staff to develop their research and professional competences through attendance at training seminars and project management courses.

Objective 4: Facilitating a good balance between work and free time for employees.

Objective 5: Helping to reduce employee stress levels caused by high workloads.



Annex: Milestones

Regional Rural and Demographic Development

Objective 1:

■ The research being done in the RELOCAL project (Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development) will include a focus on the Nordic countries and two regional case studies in Sweden, one in a rural region and the other in an urban region. The call text for RELOCAL states that location matters. This could hardly be truer than with regard to the place where people live, including neighborhood, city, region, and country. Where one is born and raised (still) determines to a considerable extent one's opportunities and constrictions and it also impacts on one's personality. The project focuses on Europe and will apply the experience of the Nordic states in regional development, i.e. Nordic value added.

■ The ageing populations in the Nordic countries are challenging the welfare systems. SEMPRES promotes empowerment in social service provision in rural areas of the Baltic Sea Region. Social service providers such as welfare and public sector organisations, NGOs and social enterprises are encouraged and enabled to involve end-users – namely members of disadvantaged groups such as single parents, the elderly, or migrants – in the development and delivery of social services.

■ SIMPACT advances understanding of social innovation's economic dimensions, creating new concepts, models and instruments for policy makers, innovators, investors and intermediaries. It systematically investigates how social innovations can enable the most vulnerable in society to become economic assets, integrating critical analysis of current and previous work with future-oriented methodologies, new actionable knowledge and continual stakeholder participation.

Objective 2:

■ The specific tasks and milestones under this objective will be further developed when the Nordic Cooperation Program is developed in Fall 2016 (see below).

■ The project *Polar Peoples* will examine development and population issues in the Arctic regions of the Nordic countries.

■ REGINA aims to make local authorities and communities in remote and sparsely populated areas better prepared for environmental management in relation to the impacts of new investments in exploitation of natural resources. It will achieve this by delivering new tools to support strategic environmental planning. These tools will be developed by research institutions in conjunction with local authorities, and by exchange of experiences and good practice.

■ The ultimate objective of ESPON PROFECY is to develop European level strategies for Inner Peripheries which can ameliorate their marginalisation.

Objective 3:

■ The project *From Migrants to Workers* will undertake two levels of analysis. The first will be a quantitative examination of broad trends of migration and integration into the Nordic countries disaggregating immigration by age, gender, level of education, reason for migration, country of origin and other characteristics. The second will be case studies of the actual process and mechanisms of integration at the local level in several regions within the Nordic countries. From that project, gaps in research and policy regarding concerning migration and integration will be identified and incorporated into the new Nordic Cooperation Program.

■ We will contribute to the establishment of a Nordic Clearing Central for dissemination of knowledge, best practice and experiences regarding social integration of refugees and immigrants in the Nordic society and labour market.

■ There are also new types of geo-visualization of population patterns and change in the Nordic region which we will expand into.

Urban Planning and Sustainable Development

Objective 1:

The TIPTOP research project will be mapping municipal participatory practices in Sweden, and in addition the ambition is to follow up on existing results of research on contractual policy in urban planning in Nordic and other European countries.

Objective 2:

This is the topic of the ESPON COMPASS project, which will be ongoing until 2018.

Objective 3:

This thematic is primarily addressed by the ESPON COMPASS project, but it is also a central theme for the work within the Nordic Working Group for Sustainable urban development.

Objective 4:

In both of the Interreg projects (*Baltic Urban Lab and Regional Policies Towards Greening the Social Housing Sector*) collecting and spreading knowledge on these themes are part of Nordregio's responsibilities. It is also relevant as an underlying thematic in both the TIPTOP and the ESPON COMPASS project.

Objective 5:

This objective should be present in different ways in all projects within this theme, e.g. by interacting with target groups and stakeholders in the projects and by communicating research results.

Objective 6:

This objective will be a central theme for the work within the Nordic Working Group on Sustainable urban development.

Objective 7:

The TIPTOP project involves extensive collaboration with a selection of Swedish municipalities and the Interreg projects both involve collaboration with local and regional planning and energy actors from Nordic, Baltic and European countries.

Regional Innovation and Green Growth

Objective 1:

■ Nordregio is a Partner of Consortium at the Interreg Europe HIGHER Project (2016–2018). The overall objective of the HIGHER project is to achieve innovative models of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) suitable to mobilise investment in related smart specialisation areas and fostering an entrepreneurial discovery process in driving innovation process of the policy instruments addressing RIS3. The research being done at the HIGHER project provides possibilities to further develop policy instruments for innovation projects in the Nordic Region, with an important benchmark to respective projects in other parts of the EU. The project provides additional knowledge and experience on the

implementation of smart specialisation strategy in European regions, too.

■ ESPON Global FDI Flows Project (2016–2017) provides inputs to the analysis of trends in EU inwards FDI flows by mapping and analyzing the distribution and the development in FDI flows across countries, regions and cities. This involves identifying examples of good practice in attracting FDI inflows and integrating the attraction of foreign firms into regional development strategies), and providing targeted recommendations explaining how FDI attraction can be integrated into regional development strategies.

Objective 2:

■ Research in this field in 2017–2020 includes EU level Commissioned projects, such as e.g. European-wide mapping of Bioeconomy related to Smart Specialisation for EU DG Research & Innovation in 2016–2017 (Nordregio as member of the Consortium led by SWECO). Moreover, Nordic, national and regional level assignments on green growth, green transition, blue bioeconomy /blue growth, and industrial symbiosis will take place in 2017–2020.

Objective 3:

■ The theme on resilient and innovative Nordic regions, highlighted by the Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Policy and Planning), will be high on the Nordregio research agenda in 2017–2020.

■ The research on smart specialisation in sparsely populated regions continues in 2017–2020. Moreover, the REGINA project by NPA Programme 2016–2018, in which Nordregio is the Lead partner, contributes to the research on resilient and innovative Nordic (sparsely populated) regions, including the preparation of Local Smart Specialisation strategies. In the TRIBORN project governance of bio-energy development in rural areas is finalised, reported and disseminated.

Governance and Policy: Regional Reforms and Strategies

Objective 1:

■ Targeting funding opportunities focused on the governance theme; in particular, opportunities arising in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme for 2016–17, the new Nordic Cooperation Programme for Regional Policy, ESPON, Interreg Programmes and EU Bonus.

■ Develop the concepts of regional and territorial governance through the dissemination of key governance related findings from ongoing and future projects.

Objective 2:

■ The Interreg Europe Higher Project focuses on providing policy, decision-makers and stakeholders with examples of best practice in the development and implementation of smart specialization strategies across European regions.

■ The Baltic Scope Project examines best practice in the governance of cross-border collaboration efforts, highlighting lessons learned and recommendations for effective transnational marine spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region.

■ The ESPON COMPASS Project provides an authoritative comparative report on territorial governance and spatial planning systems in Europe, improving the knowledge base on territorial governance and spatial planning, and identifying good practices for the cross-fertilisation of spatial and territorial development policies with EU Cohesion Policy.

Objective 3:

■ The Interreg Europe Higher Project brings together stakeholders in public-private partnerships and assesses their role in the development and implementation of regional smart specialization strategies.

■ The Baltic Scope Project actively facilitates the participation of key political, sectoral and societal actors in the development of cross-border marine spatial planning, through encouraging their involvement in conferences, working groups and survey/questionnaires to gauge their own perceptions on effective cross-border collaboration.

■ The RIM Platform complements and links to various initiatives bringing together the regional innovation community of policy makers, Structural Funds managers, experts and academics in the field of regional innovation policy.

■ The TIPTOP Project is about actively increasing citizen participation in planning and mapping municipal participatory practices.

Objective 4:

■ Analysing governance processes impacting on processes, features and cycles of inner peripheries in Europe within the ESPON PROFECY project.

■ The EU Bonus Basmati Project continues to develop our knowledge and understanding of transnational governance in the area of marine spatial planning.

■ The DG AGRI Framework Contract for the evaluation studies of CAP measures contributes to the general objectives of balanced territorial governance.

Objective 5:

■ Applying a governance theme in our evaluation process will provide policy and decision-makers with lessons learned and benchmarking for the development of more effective policymaking processes in the future.

■ Results and findings from evaluations will form the basis for the development of governance concept that can be utilized in future research projects and evaluations.

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