



# Sustainable Regional Development in the Nordic Arctic

## Policy recommendations

The Nordic Arctic Working Group on sustainable regional development.  
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*The regional sector of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) wishes to initiate a thematically broad and in-depth study of the future development of the Arctic using possible scenarios. The objective of this work is to provide input to the further development of the NCM Arctic Co-operation Programme by collecting, reviewing and analysing existing information, assessing different preconditions for future development in the area and developing future scenarios. This will contribute to the political debate and give a more holistic overview of the scientific knowledge.*

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# Background and objectives

In 2013, the Nordic Working Group on Sustainable Development in the Arctic initiated a foresight analysis to assess opportunities and challenges for sustainable regional development in the Nordic Arctic and identify future development perspectives. Foresight analysis is a facilitated, participative process for systematically obtaining relevant knowledge and visions for the medium- to long-term future, which is aimed at improving current policymaking and mobilizing joint actions. Thus, this project provides new knowledge and input to advance the Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) Arctic Co-operation Programme and contributes to the development of Nordic Arctic policy.

The Nordic Arctic is multifaceted. This observation is often not considered during the debate on sustainable development in the Arctic. Actors outside the Arctic are mostly concerned about environmental issues, while peoples living in the Arctic experience the situation differently. Therefore, the ambition of this project has been to obtain perspectives from the peoples living in the Nordic Arctic. Based on the specific challenges and rich opportunities, the Nordic Working Group agreed that exploration of sustainable opportunities for socio-economic development would be the main focus of the project. A bottom-up approach was adopted, which directly involved people living in the Arctic. Special attention was given to youth perspectives by involving young people in the foresight process.

The Nordic Working Group wishes to highlight the general need for more regional and local perspectives in Arctic development policy. The relevant stakeholders, including state, regional authority, municipality and strategic stakeholders, intergovernmental forums like the Arctic Council, West Nordic Council, North Calotte Council, Barents Co-operation, Northern Dimension and European Union, and even the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Arctic, can benefit from the results of the foresight project and its focus on a broader societal perspective.

This publication presents the foresight project's main conclusions and policy recommendations, which are based on existing knowledge, new analyses and the three-year process. The foresight project included foresight workshops in 12 local communities in the Nordic Arctic, six workshops with national, regional and local representatives, and two transnational workshops, one for the West Nordic countries and one for the North Calotte region. Background studies on the topics of sustainable business development, demography and youth perspectives on their future in the Nordic Arctic have been performed. Based on their experiences from each of the Nordic Arctic regions, the Nordic Working Group members have prioritised policy recommenda-

tions within the overall themes that have been identified. In the initiation of the project, three key questions were identified for the foresight process:

1. What social and resource conditions can be expected to have a decisive influence on regional development in the Arctic over the next 10, 20 and 30 years?
2. How will the management of these conditions affect the living standards and future prospects for the regions?
3. What are the implications of the identified challenges and opportunities for future planning and regional policy?

Citizens and representatives from business associations, education institutions and local, regional and national authorities have discussed and contributed their experiences at the foresight workshops. The bottom-up approach adopted in this process was particularly focused on bringing together a range of citizens with different ages and occupations from local Arctic communities to discuss future development opportunities. The bottom-up process can be seen as being in line with the contemporary notion of citizen consultations as part of planning activities.

Attention has also been given to the indigenous Sami population in the Arctic; three local workshops were organised in communities with reindeer herding districts and a Sami population. Particular consultation with Sami stakeholders continues to be important wherever there are development and planning projects that may affect Sami interests directly, such as reindeer herding, the use of Sami symbols in destination marketing and other ways in which Sami stakeholders are impacted.

# Conclusions and policy recommendations

The diversity of the social, environmental and economic characteristics of rural communities, towns and cities in the Nordic Arctic is remarkable. Most Arctic regions have particular challenges related to their remote locations and sparse populations, demographics, cold climate, remote communities and long distances from markets, lack of venture capital and connectivity. However, the Nordic Arctic also features development opportunities, vibrant Arctic towns and cities with high-tech universities, research and innovation organisations, and a rich cultural life. Business activities range from tourism, large-scale industrial operations based on forestry, mining and oil, and from fishing businesses and aqua farming to science and innovation in energy, blue growth, information and communication technologies (ICT) and the creative industries.

The Nordic Arctic regions are characterised by their wealth of natural resources. While this is a strength of the region, it is also a challenge, particularly for large-scale industries where multinational corporations extract the natural resources and the developed skills and turnover seldom stay in the region. These raw materials are also the most sensitive to global price fluctuations, which can have ‘boom and bust’ effects and negatively impact communities that have come to depend on large-scale industries.

The Nordic Working Group encourages Nordic Arctic stakeholders to explore and take advantage of the different funding schemes and programmes that are available to support co-operation on regional development, research, technological development and innovation projects, and investments and operation subsidises for large-scale projects. These possibilities are numerous and include: Nordic Investment Bank, European Advisory Hub and Project Portal, European Structural and Investment Funds, European Regional Development Funds, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Arctic Investment Protocol, and Arctic Development Bank.

The following recommendations and conclusions are structured around the four main themes that emerged at the local workshops: I. infrastructure; II. job creation and business development; III. education and skills development; and IV. culture and social activities. Finally, policy recommendations are introduced to consider V. demographic development and VI. youth perspectives on future developments in the Nordic Arctic.

Some of the overall challenges that were identified by the study involve securing a qualified labour force for general interest services and advanced business sectors, and promoting a diversified labour market, including more entrepreneurship, interconnectivity and favourable conditions for future local development. Key opportunities are initiatives to build human capital, promote interconnectivity or improve broadband con-

nections and a diversified business structure to take advantage of new opportunities in bioeconomy and natural resources. This would also build on improving actors’ cross-border connections to take advantage of both different and complementary skills, knowledge, experiences and opportunities.

The policy recommendations prioritised by the Nordic Working Group largely aim to develop and better adapt and co-ordinate public policy to meet the specific challenges and opportunities of the Nordic Arctic. The NCM and national governments can play an important role in providing framework conditions for the local and regional levels of governance concerning infrastructure, job creation and business development, education and skills development, and culture and social activities through the Nordic Arctic Co-operation Programme and Nordic sector programmes and networks. This work also highlights the need for regional and local societies to take an active role in the policy-development process and take the lead in developing their regions and societies.

## I. Infrastructure

**A well-functioning infrastructure can be seen as the main precondition for regional development: connection to markets, business development, research and development (R&D), education, social life, commuting, energy supplies and attractiveness of the local society.**

The remote and sparsely populated areas of the Arctic imply specific infrastructural challenges. Building physical infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports, harbours, energy supply systems and telecommunications are all high-cost long-term investments. ICT is essential for business development, education and communities. The more densely populated areas in the Nordic Arctic also needs well-functioning infrastructure that connects them to markets. The Nordic Working Group wishes to highlight the need to develop more effective and affordable collective transportation networks (air, sea and land) for the local population. New partnerships and business models need to be developed to investigate solutions.

The Nordic countries are at the forefront in using ICT during everyday life, i.e., broadband and internet connections, knowledge of ICT and ICT investments. This extensive use of ICT has created a good basis for Nordic countries to make better use of ICT for development in a number of areas. The Nordic region has been profiled for its high ICT skill levels. NordUnet and similar Nordic initiatives working on research infrastructure have already been operating for a number of years in the Nor-

dic co-operation. However, the smaller Arctic economies vary in their levels of broadband connection and ICT skills. Consideration should be given to national prioritisation and co-ordinated efforts to realise regional collaboration aims across governance levels and across borders to improve ICT and transportation infrastructure in the Nordic Arctic.

The foresight project confirmed the need to improve the physical infrastructure connecting the North Calotte region and the West Nordic countries, including more variety of transportation connections, increased frequency and reduced travel times. These initiatives can work together in various ways; one opportunity could be to establish a service contract with private and/or public companies operating in these areas. Some INTERREG projects are piloting different service delivery models for remote areas, health and social services. The state authorities and Norrbotten, Lapland and the three northernmost county councils in Norway should consider the benefits from including Finland, Sweden, and Norway in Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) because it would substantially facilitate investments with the effect of connecting population hubs and spokes across national boundaries through improved infrastructure.

Future planning and regional policy will be faced with new possibilities in energy provision (in distant places) cause by technology development, more extensive grid networks and more decentralised energy solutions. Regional policies will inevitably have to consider energy and digital infrastructure as the precondition for any community to build their businesses, populations and future perspectives. Therefore, planning perspectives need to envision energy and digital infrastructure as the basic condition for regional and local development.

#### Recommendations for the Nordic Council of Ministers/ transnational collaboration:

- Joint promotion of the development of Nordic Arctic infrastructure priorities for digital and transport networks to strengthen the digital and transport infrastructure in the Nordic Arctic.
- Enhance cross-border connections (east/west) and improve the main infrastructure for flights, trains, roads, and broadband networks.
- New partnerships and business models for concrete infrastructure solutions should be developed.
- NCM and the North Calotte council can build further on the Joint Barents transport plan. NCM and/or the North Calotte and West Nordic Council could emphasise the need for higher capacity high-speed internet infrastructure, which is also enabled by the EU joint strategy for Arctic development through new funding schemes.
- With the increased complexity of new financing possibilities for development, there is a need for co-ordinating information, helping actors to benefit and maybe gain synergies from the many recently established possibilities. The provision of system-

atic exchanges of knowledge and experiences (including planning, implementation and financing) need to be developed.

#### Recommendations for national parliaments, governments and authorities:

- Regional authorities should aim to work together with the national authorities and regional (in some cases cross-border) associations to investigate joint model(s) and lay out a future-oriented plan, including follow-up and implementation models. New collaboration models and funding possibilities should be explored.
- Develop tools for rural regional development to promote SMART goals adapted to rural, sparsely populated, remote, harsh weather-conditioned Nordic Arctic areas to provide for efficient and well-connected infrastructure to secure the well-being and functionality of communities.

#### Recommendations for regional and local authorities:

- Municipalities and regional authorities with poor infrastructure should recognise and promote digital infrastructure development as crucial for creating conditions for distance learning, educational opportunities and also for entrepreneurs working to start new businesses, create new software programmes and apps, business parks, offices and hotels.

## II. Job creation and business development

**Natural resources form the basis for many of the more recent business development opportunities arising in the region. This includes opportunities in bioeconomy and the more knowledge-intensive side of research, development and innovation, a growing tourism industry, and developments in the field of creative industries, which are all largely based on the attraction and vast natural resources of the region.**

Primary industries have traditionally been the main foundation of the Nordic Arctic economy. Today, in comparison to the Nordic region as a whole, the importance of resource-extractive industries such as fishing, forestry, and mining is higher than the Nordic average for Nordic Arctic regional economies. The relative weight of primary industries varies between regions and between cities and their periphery areas. Overall challenges for the Nordic Arctic include a lack of diversity in economic activities, investments and educated/skilled human resources.

Local communities have faced severe consequences when global market fluctuations led to the closure or downsizing of large-scale industries on which they had become dependent.

Stakeholder discussions at foresight workshops centred on the need for supporting diversified labour markets, entrepreneurship, and measures to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and North Calotte/West Nordic exchanges of knowledge and experiences for business development. Better systems for local involvement in these projects need to be developed to safeguard and retain more of the developed skills and turnover from regional activities. One possibility could be to systematise the exchange of experiences between the Nordic countries and regions dealing with the consequences of large-scale operations.

To promote diversified job creation, the Nordic Working Group wishes to highlight two visions for future business development in the Nordic Arctic, which follow the visions and recommendations presented by stakeholders throughout the foresight process. These visions are also topics in which particular potential for Nordic collaboration can be identified, and which were included in the newly launched Nordic Co-operation Programme for Regional Policy 2017–2020.

#### **A) Sustainable bioeconomy: The Nordic Arctic region is internationally established as a forerunner for sustainable business development, innovation and research**

Because of the long coastlines of the Nordic Arctic and access to the sea, the marine sector naturally plays a crucial role in the bioeconomies of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the coastal regions of Norway. Arctic seafood is in high demand, particularly because of the clean Arctic waters and the high quality of the catch. In addition to fisheries and aquaculture, the Arctic blue economy includes a variety of activities, such as the development of an innovative marine industry, i.e., based on algae and bioprospecting, as well as whaling in Greenland, Iceland, and Norway, and seal hunting in Greenland. The potential for a land-based bioeconomy (especially forestry) is prevalent in northern Sweden and northern Finland. Other traditional subsistence activities, such as reindeer herding, gathering and family/small-scale local resource production also continue to play an important role in parts of the Nordic Arctic. If combined with R&D, technological change, an innovative approach and well-suited innovation and business development systems, the Nordic Arctic has the potential to benefit more from the valuable knowledge and experience accumulated from activities associated with primary industries (Olsen et al., 2016).

The NCM has become increasingly concerned with bioeconomy opportunities; therefore, the Icelandic Chairmanship chose the bioeconomy as one of its main focus areas in 2014. The circular bioeconomy based on marine resources was one of the themes for the Danish Presidency of the NCM in 2015, when the Faroe Islands were chairing the Nordic fisheries and aquaculture co-operation. In 2016, the Finnish Chairmanship similarly focused on the blue bioeconomy. In 2014, the Nordic Bioeconomy Panel was established, followed by the West Nordic Bioeconomy Panel in 2016. These panels comprise representatives of official

agencies, research bodies, private companies and civil society. The main purpose of the respective panels is to develop strategies to maintain and strengthen the bioeconomy.

Within the auspices of the NCM, separate studies have mapped the current status of the bioeconomy and identified potentials and obstacles, needs and opportunities in the Nordic region as a whole and in the West Nordic countries. Some of the main bioeconomic challenges include the few activities outside the designated Nordic programmes across the Nordic region. Framework conditions need to be improved for bio-based products, including regulatory and market stimulus (Lange et al., 2015; Smáradóttir et al., 2015). Actors represented in the Nordic Bioeconomy Panel and the West Nordic Bioeconomy Panel also addressed these challenges as part of co-ordinated national-level initiatives. The Nordic Working Group has the following recommendations.

#### **Recommendations for the Nordic Council of Ministers/transnational collaboration:**

- Nordic Arctic or West Nordic and North Calotte should promote their Arctic sustainable bioeconomy brands to enhance their attractiveness for actors establishing or investing in companies in the region. This branding should promote more processing and R&D activities, and attract educated/skilled human resources.
- Exchanges of knowledge and experiences in higher education and research between relevant national authorities to promote their R&D and education programmes to match bioeconomy related business developments.
- National authorities exchange experiences on issues concerning regulatory frameworks and collaborate on lobbying for improvements at the EU level.
- Strengthen the Nordic collaboration on developing and using suitable EU programmes and initiatives.

#### **Recommendations for national parliaments, governments and authorities:**

- Develop unique Arctic R&D and skills in areas with particular potential, such as bioenergy, blue-green resources and ice technologies.
- National R&D funds can largely be earmarked to address Arctic-specific socio-economic development issues.
- Regional levels may need a clearer mandate to develop their region, and also co-operate with neighbouring countries/regions.
- Develop models/tools to facilitate learning from and between actors, clusters and collaborative venues
- Promote structures for local food production, e.g., address regulative barriers for using all parts of the reindeer in slaughterhouses.

#### **Recommendations for regional and local authorities:**

- Facilitate the development of an innovative and entrepreneurial environment. Activate and support collaborations between education and knowledge institutions, incubator environments, business-support organisations, businesses and other relevant actors.

**B) Tourism, culture and food: The Nordic Arctic is an international destination recognised for its sustainable business approaches to nature and culture-based experiences and products**

Various types of tourism activities are available in the Nordic Arctic, ranging from mass tourism, e.g., cruise tourism, to niche tourism, e.g., Sami eco-tourism experiences, hunting and fishing tourism. The Northern Lights are a very popular attraction in the Arctic, and the number of international visitors has multiplied in recent years. The level of tourism development in terms of infrastructure and visitor numbers varies. In particular, Iceland has experienced a substantial increase in overnight stays in recent years. Maintaining sustainable development in tourism has great potential, but is simultaneously challenging, and should be considered in regional development and planning policy (Olsen et al., 2016). The experiences of the local populations in popular destinations may become negative because of the growing numbers of tourists visiting their region. Local communities should be involved as closely as possible in tourism infrastructure and strategy development, which would also better guarantee local employment and ownership of tourism enterprises, and might improve the products delivered. Some external operators are currently reaping the benefits from tourism without leaving much profit in the region, which is especially evident in Greenland.

The tourism industry has close links to cultural/creative industries and to local food/bioeconomy. For example, locally produced food, festivals and other events, handicrafts and art production, and the attractiveness of the Nordic Arctic for film production contribute to making the Nordic Arctic an attractive destination for international visitors.

Transnational collaboration in the Nordic Arctic is mostly in place concerning tourism. The North Atlantic Tourism Association (NATA) is an organization that promotes and supports tourism development for the West Nordic countries through collaboration between Visit Greenland, Visit Faroe Islands, Promote Iceland and the Icelandic Tourist Board. In 2015, an INTERREG co-funded project called Visit Arctic Europe was initiated between Visit Northern Norway, Swedish Lapland Visitors Board and the Finnish Lapland Tourist Board. The purpose of the project is to develop new cross-border 'product-packaging solutions' and approaches for more common marketing. For future sustainable tourism development in the Nordic Arctic, the Nordic Working Group recommends the following.

**Recommendations for the Nordic Council of Ministers/transnational collaboration:**

- Promote more permanent structures for exchanges of knowledge and experiences on tourist infrastructure and development, common destination branding and tourism development initiatives in the North Calotte and West Nordic regions.
- Consider the potential for supporting the expansion of quality

certifications for reindeer meat (e.g., Renlycka) and Sami eco-tourism businesses (e.g., Sápmi Experience) developed in Sweden to Norway and Finland. This expansion would be to support Sami eco-tourism development, and dialogues and learning between indigenous stakeholders and visitors to the region about traditional and contemporary Sami culture.

**Recommendations for national parliaments, governments and authorities:**

- Strategies to promote skills development, higher education and tourism research, and co-ordinate and exchange experiences in the Nordic Arctic region (as relevant). Digitalisation is a highly relevant tool for tourism development and in education and research.
- Address Arctic-specific issues in national R&D funds in collaboration with regional authorities.
- Securing sustainability and good conditions of the most visited natural attractions through maintenance and sustainable wildlife management, which needs to be incorporated into tourism strategies and practices to avoid any future deterioration of the attractions upon which the tourism economy depends.
- Activate and educate the regional/local planning departments to a relevant extent across the Nordic Arctic, to understand better the role of planning and the available tools to promote tourism development.
- Assess the potential support structures and schemes for creative and cultural industries, e.g., the Nordic Arctic is an attractive region for film production.

**Recommendations for regional and local authorities:**

- Plan and manage tourism development through strengthened collaborations between planning and business development departments.
- Promote regional and local awareness on the role of tourism in the local economy, e.g., the services sector, and the potential role of tourism for continued access to services of general interest. This should promote a positive attitude towards tourism and entrepreneurship.
- Promote structures for cross-border/Nordic and cross-sectoral collaboration, e.g., by supporting network initiatives and offering courses and seminars that demonstrate the potential benefits of collaboration between local food producers, restaurants and hotels, retail, and experience companies.



### III. Education and skills development

**A skilled workforce is a critical factor for Arctic economic development and competitiveness. Education and vocational training is central, and lifelong learning is necessary.**

Effective national, regional and local skills systems connect skills with jobs and productivity to deliver prosperity and social cohesion in communities. Sparsely populated areas and an ageing population are a major concern for a better match between the supply of skilled human resources and labour market demands. Access to vocational and higher education opportunities, as well as lifelong learning, is fundamental for individual development and for the competitiveness of companies. Although some opportunities are in place, distance education opportunities are lacking in many Nordic Arctic areas. The available education programmes are not sufficiently adapted to the needs of the labour market or the resource basis of the region. A related issue is the lack of good and systemic contact between youth who leave their local community to pursue educational opportunities and the local environment/local business community and the education system in their home region.

A challenge for the Nordic Arctic (with the exception of the urban centres) is that the general educational attainment is lower than the Nordic average. The potential for knowledge-intensive job creation are limited. Young people who have left their home region to pursue higher education elsewhere find limited reasons to return. More young women than men pursue higher education; thus, more women than men leave the Nordic Arctic. The opportunities to pursue distance education are limited. These issues were discussed at foresight workshops in the context of placing more focus on gender in the education system and introducing improved approaches to matching the education system with the needs of the local and regional labour markets. To support diversified job creation and use opportunities from the natural and cultural environment of the region, the implementation of these considerations in the education system were also highlighted.

Key initiatives to improve the skills system include more effective horizontal co-ordination between sectors, better vertical co-ordination across national, regional and municipal levels to ensure local flexibility and adaption to nationally designed policies, and lastly to build broad-based partnerships between stakeholders to develop common initiatives, goals and actions to meet skills challenges.

Based on the overall need to ensure a better match between educated human resources and the labour market needs for skilled workforce, the Nordic Working Group provide the following recommendations for future regional development in the Nordic Arctic.

**Skills-matching issues are addressed through organised stakeholder collaborations.**

#### **Recommendations for the Nordic Council of Ministers/transnational collaboration:**

- Education, vocational training and lifelong learning adjusted to regional needs and opportunities. Cross-border/Nordic Pilot project: **Step 1:** The NCM Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy organises a conference bringing together local, regional and national Nordic representatives from the relevant sectors such as education, labour market, business development and regional development to share their experiences and best practices in tackling skills challenges in the Arctic.

- Step 2:** Establish a Nordic network of representatives of local, regional and national officials to exchange their knowledge and experiences, and highlight relevant initiatives to Arctic skills issues concerning: a) distance education, b) matching education systems to needs in the labour markets and young people's interests, c) collaboration structures between education institutions (primary to tertiary) and the business community, and d) systems for training and skills development for adults that have left the school system without a degree.

- Promote initiatives like 'Nordjobb' to obtain more student and youth exchanges between the Arctic regions.

- Strengthen the Nordic collaboration on developing and using suitable EU programmes and initiatives

#### **Recommendations for national parliaments, governments and authorities:**

- Prepare and introduce study materials on Nordic Arctic themes in the school curriculum (distinguished between the North Calotte and West Nordic regions as appropriate).

- Give more autonomy to regional/local authorities to plan for education, entrepreneurship and try new methods for enhancing educational attainment and avoiding high drop-out rates.

- Give more autonomy to regional/local authorities and stakeholder partnerships to support the development of an organised transnational Arctic collaboration between secondary and tertiary level educational institutions to promote knowledge about education programmes and experiences from other countries, and promote teacher and student exchanges.

#### **Recommendations for regional and local authorities:**

- The high drop-out rates among young people, and especially boys/young men, require flexible solutions and co-ordination between actors, which can be difficult to plan from the national level. Educational supervision and individual follow-ups are measures that could possibly be introduced regionally and locally.

- Assess and introduce improved measures for distance learning opportunities. This requires good digital infrastructure, and can be facilitated by a physical study centre for individuals and companies to meet and study.



## IV. Culture and social activities

**Cultural and social activities are essential and should be considered as the ‘glue’ in local societies.**

Cultural events and a more diverse supply of local culture and leisure activities were particularly highlighted at foresight workshops as being important for community development and attractiveness. An active civil society largely depends on motivated individuals and active local sports and culture associations.

However, public policy initiatives can facilitate positive civil society development in a number of ways. The Nordic Working Group highlights the following recommendations, which should be of particular interest to the Committee of Senior Officials for Cultural Co-operation at the NCM level.

### Recommendations for the Nordic Council of Ministers/ transnational collaboration:

- The NCM provides substantive support for cultural events, but the conditions for obtaining financing do not favour sparsely populated areas such as the Nordic Arctic where distances are long and travelling requires both time and money. The region would benefit from a funding scheme that considers the special conditions of the Nordic Arctic. This would facilitate a more balanced geographical division of Nordic culture grants compared with the current situation.

### Recommendations for national parliaments, governments and authorities:

- Support flexible support systems for the organisation of culture and social activities considering the characteristics of sparsely populated and remote areas.

### Recommendations for regional and local authorities:

- Political engagement and measures to stimulate regional and local pride, identity and community.
- Local governments driving the focus on local co-operation.
- Facilitate young people's participation in local and regional development initiatives.
- Strengthen the collective image of the Nordic Arctic area as a region with great potential and common traits, where people co-operate on common opportunities and support each other.
- Consider allowing public buildings, such as schools and sports centres, to be used for multifunctional purposes, e.g., organising courses, handicrafts, painting, storytelling, theatre and other activities in places where spaces for leisure activities are limited.
- Use social media to improve communication about what is happening in the area in terms of events and other social activities. This should also allow young people who have moved away for educational and/or work purposes to keep up with what is happening in their home region and enhance its attractiveness

to encourage them to return.

- Work strategically and systematically to attract new inhabitants and businesses to the area. Collaborate with local associations and businesses for this purpose and communicate good examples of young people who have returned or moved to the area to enhance its attractiveness. Social media and other relevant communication platforms can be used as tools.

- Facilitate the establishment of active youth organisations that are defined and established on their own conditions, and ensure organised dialogue between young people, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders in the area. Thus, a fixed contact person at the local authority to work with issues related to young people would be useful.

## V. Demography

**Outmigration, ageing and female deficit is a challenge for the main regions in the Nordic Arctic.**

- Demographic dynamics and population composition will determine the economic possibilities and conditions for long-term planning.
- New economic opportunities in the Arctic should include women's interests and opportunities.
- Service provision and accessibility of services with support from modern technologies.
- Integrate new immigrants faster into the society.
- Good conditions for long-distance working.

## VI. Special attention to Nordic Arctic youth's perspectives on future developments

**Issues concerning how to retain and attract young people are essential in Nordic Arctic regional policy development.**

The Nordic Working Group stresses its focus on youth perspectives to gain a better understanding of how young people

perceive their own future and future developments in the Nordic Arctic. Knowledge gaps can be identified in this area; thus, generating knowledge about the perceptions of young people living in the Nordic Arctic using several case study regions has provided better knowledge on the conditions for youth and the factors that affect their perceptions of education, future occupations and settlement choices in the Nordic Arctic.

Key conclusions include: I. Education is seen as important to secure future prosperity, but often involves moving; II. Mobility has become a basic condition for youth when pursuing education and work opportunities; III. Traditional family ideas are expressed by many; IV. Faith in democratic processes are expressed to be in decline; and V. Social media/internet is a source for inspiration, but also challenges the available time for 'real-time' social life.

Studying Nordic Arctic youth's perspectives about future developments in the Nordic Arctic could be a stepping-stone in the Arctic Nordic context. The findings could be followed up using existing Nordic programmes and networks.



*Policy recommendations are based on the report*

*Future Regional Development Policy for the Nordic Arctic: Foresight Analysis 2013–2016*

*The report, a shorter Policy Brief along with this Policy Recommendations paper are available at the Nordregio's website on Nordic working group for Sustainable Regional Development in the Arctic: <http://www.nordregio.se/nwgarctic>*

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