



Nordic chemicals programme

PROGRAMME OUTLINE 2025–2027

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PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Context

The Nordic prime ministers share the vision that the Nordic region should be the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030. To this end, the Nordic Council of Ministers has identified 14 new sectoral policy cooperation programmes that together address the three strategic priorities of Vision 2030: making the Nordic region green, competitive and socially sustainable ([Nordiska ministerrådets politiska prioriteringar 2025–2030 | Nordiskt samarbete](#)).

One of these programmes is [the Environment and Climate Programme 2025-2030](#). Cooperation Programme for the Environment and Climate 2025–2030 addresses the 'triple crisis' of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, supports the region's goal of becoming the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030 and facilitates collaboration between the Nordic countries. The programme is divided into two three-year periods (2025–2027 and 2028–2030) allowing for evaluation and revision in between. The goals and sub-goals are designed to contribute to the three strategic priorities of Vision 2030. One of the cooperation areas within environment and climate, is for chemicals. The Nordic Chemicals Programme (NCP) details the activities within this area.

Nordic Chemicals Programme

Chemical co-operation has a long history in the Nordic countries. Co-operation in the chemicals sector among Nordic authorities has enabled the Nordic region to influence the development of chemical regulations in EU, EEA and globally, moving towards safer and more sustainable management. However, the progress and processes improving chemical safety are slow and new hazards emerge as we learn more about chemicals already in use. Therefore, continuous work to improve chemical management and chemical safety is crucial.

The main purpose of the Nordic Chemicals Programme is to contribute to the reduction of risks from hazardous chemicals and pollution globally, regionally, and locally **by enhancing knowledge exchange, producing new knowledge as well as finding and utilizing synergies between Nordic chemical authorities**. The Nordic Chemicals Programme primarily contributes to [Nordic Co-operation Programme for the Environment and Climate 2025–2030](#) subgoals [3.1](#) and [3.3](#):

- Contribute to high level of ambition to the negotiations and active implementation of international agreements concerning chemicals, waste, pollutants, plastic and similar.
- Reduce risks to humans and the environment from chemical substances and products by phasing out hazardous chemicals, developing new knowledge, and informing key target groups.

The new Nordic Chemicals Programme builds upon the continuous Nordic co-operation for chemicals, environment, and health. The results and achievements from the work of previous programme period 2019–2024 can be found in a summary report ([Nordic co-operation for chemicals, environment, and health](#)).



PROGRAMME OUTCOMES 2025–2027

To contribute to the sectoral goals of the co-operation programme, the programme has two main outcomes:

- Enhanced cooperation for safer chemical management of chemical substances.
- Enhanced competence by improving knowledge of chemical authorities for chemical regulation.

To reach the outcomes, the programme is divided into five different themes.

OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES
 <p>Theme 1. Development and validation of test methods.</p>	<p>Enhanced cooperation for safer chemical management of chemical substances</p>	
 <p>Theme 2. Co-operation in harmonization, implementation, development, and enforcement of EU legislation and international conventions on chemicals.</p>		
 <p>Theme 3. Impact and screening of chemicals and pollutants.</p>	<p>Enhanced competence by improving knowledge of chemical authorities for chemical regulation</p>	
 <p>Theme 4. Sustainable chemicals and materials.</p>		
 <p>Theme 5. Accessible information and communication.</p>		

Expected results



Theme 1. Development and validation of test methods

Theme 1 will focus on supporting the development of test methods through the OECD Test guideline programme and collaborating partners such as the EU.

Activities under this theme may include focus areas such as:

- endocrine disrupting properties of chemicals,
- New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) to, e.g., contributing to the EU Commission Roadmap for phasing out animal testing in chemical safety assessments,
- and enhancements of test guidelines in current use with new and sensitive endpoints.



Theme 2. Co-operation in harmonization, implementation, development and enforcement of EU legislation and international conventions on chemicals

Theme 2 focuses on improving collaboration between Nordic experts across different chemical legislations. The focus is on harmonization, implementation, development, and enforcement of EU legislation and international conventions on chemicals. Implementation will be achieved through sharing knowledge and practical implementation of new risk assessment methodologies, scientific contribution to the negotiations and implementation of international conventions within the field of chemicals management.



Theme 3. Impact and screening of chemicals and pollutants

Theme 3 focuses on sharing of knowledge, best practices and competences between Nordic countries by means of relevant activities, such as, but not limited to, screening of emerging hazardous chemicals and pollutants in the Nordic environment and assessing their environmental loads. The aim is to identify and address knowledge gaps and by e.g. conducting calls for project proposals.



Theme 4. Sustainable chemicals and materials

Theme 4 focuses on capacity building among Nordic authorities and researchers for new initiatives that are necessary for future chemical regulation. These initiatives may include but are not limited to the EU wide "One Substance One Assessment" - approach, new types of biopesticides, RNA interference technologies, eco-design for sustainable products regulation (ESPR), nanomaterial or advanced materials and other emerging new technologies. This theme is closely related to, can support and benefits from Theme 1.



Theme 5. Accessible information and communication

Effective communication is a joint focus for all activities and is a common theme that ties together other themes. It is increasingly important to communicate with professional users, workers, and the general public about the hazards and risks of chemicals. Development and maintenance of data platforms for knowledge sharing between Nordic experts is likewise valuable to enable effectively distribution of information about chemicals.

Nordic value

The programme contributes to the achievement of the goals of the Nordic Vision 2030 and its strategic priorities: a green, competitive, and socially sustainable Nordic region. The programme supports projects in the spirit of Our Vision 2030 contributing to the goal of the Nordics being the most sustainable and integrated region in the world.

A Green Nordic Region: The programme advances environmental sustainability and the green transition, directly addressing challenges such as pollution, chemical safety, biodiversity, and climate impact (Theme 3).



A Competitive Nordic Region: The programme strengthens the region's innovation and knowledge-sharing capacity by knowledge sharing and advanced testing methods and regulatory frameworks (Theme 1 and 4) which enhances global competitiveness in Nordic innovation and entrepreneurship.



A Socially Sustainable Nordic Region: The programme addresses social aspects of sustainability through training initiatives and communication (Themes 1, 2, and 5), enhances the competence of Nordic authorities and helps protecting civil society. Collaborative networks ensure inclusive practices and shared benefits across the region.





PROGRAMME ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Nordic Chemicals Programme 2025–2027 is overseen by the Nordic Council of Ministers for Environment and Climate (MR-MK) and the Nordic Co-operation Programme for the Environment and Climate 2025–2030. The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency acts as an administrative body and oversees daily operations of the programme.

Organizational structure of the Nordic Chemicals Programme:

- **Programme steering committee:** The steering committee is responsible for strategic guidance and decision-making.
- **Programme coordinator:** The programme coordinator is responsible for the programme's daily operations.
- **Network of expert groups:** Where relevant and necessary, expert groups will be established to support the aims of the chemicals programme and its themes. The groups will have an operational role in the implementing the programme's activities.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

From the start, the programme's strategic priorities included three initiatives as predefined projects:

1. OECD test method development and validation
2. Establishment of the Nordic Chemicals Fora
3. Development and maintenance of the database SPIN.

In addition, the programme develops its project portfolio through annual open calls for project proposals. These calls are aimed at relevant applicants seeking funding for projects that align with the programme's goals. The calls are opened for a selected theme and topics covered in the calls depend on the theme they address.

Open calls will be published on the Nordic Council of Ministers' website: [Nordic cooperation](#) The programme steering committee evaluates project funding proposals.

Criteria

Eligible entities to receive programme funding through a call for proposals may include municipal, regional, or national authorities, universities and colleges, research institutes and other non-profit organizations and consultancies. Business enterprises cannot be the main applicants or recipients of funding, but may be included as project participants, participate in the project steering, or work on the project on behalf of the project owner.

In addition, the Nordic countries must be involved in the initiative to get funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers. At least three of the following countries must be involved: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, or Åland.

One of the Nordic countries can be replaced by one or more countries from outside the Nordic region. 'Involvement' is defined as helping to run, implement, or steer the project.

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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, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

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