

THE NORDIC JOINT COMMITTEE  
FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (NKJ)  
**Strategy 1997–2000**



The Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural Research (NKJ) promotes and supports cooperation on agricultural research between the national research councils or similar research organisations in the five Nordic countries. In addition, the NKJ acts as an advisor to the Nordic Council of Ministers.



THE NORDIC JOINT COMMITTEE  
FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (NKJ)

---

**Strategy 1997–2000**

**The Nordic Joint Committee for  
Agricultural Research (NKJ)**

was established in 1965. The Committee promotes and supports cooperation on agricultural research between the national research councils or similar research organisations in the five Nordic countries. In addition, the NKJ acts as an advisor to the Nordic Council of Ministers. The present form of the NKJ dates back to 1987, and the Committee has three members from each of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, and at least one representative from Iceland. The NKJ takes the initiative to new R&D activities, partly by way of reporting and partly in response to proposals from organisations within the subject area as well as from individual researchers. The national research councils and the Nordic Council of Ministers makes the final decisions on the allocation of funds based on recommendations from the NKJ.

**The Nordic Council  
of Ministers**

was established in 1971. The Council submits proposals to the Nordic Council on cooperation between the governments of the five Nordic countries, implements the Council's recommendations and reports on results as well as directs the work carried out in the targeted areas. The prime ministers of the five Nordic countries assume the overall responsibility for the cooperation, which is coordinated by the ministers for cooperation and the Nordic Cooperation Committee. The composition of the Council of Ministers varies, depending on the nature of the issue to be treated.

## CONTENTS

|                                     | Page |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Framework                        | 4    |
| 2. Perspectives and challenges      | 7    |
| 3. Objectives and priorities        | 8    |
| 4. Collaboration methods and means  | 10   |
| 5. Target results and dissemination | 11   |
| 6. Revision of strategy             | 11   |
| 7. NKJ member organisations         | 12   |
| 8. Contact addresses                | 13   |

**THE NORDIC JOINT COMMITTEE  
FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (NKJ)  
Strategy 1997–2000**

**1. FRAMEWORK**

**The NKJ's bylaws**

The formal framework for the NKJ's activities is set out in the bylaws, which were last amended in January 1995. The bylaws define the following principal activities:

- to provide advice to the Nordic Council of Ministers, (the ministers of agriculture) on issues relating to agricultural research and development (R&D);
- to provide advice or coordinate agricultural R&D when requested by the Nordic Council of Ministers through its committee of senior officials, the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Agriculture and Forestry Affairs (NEJS), and subject to Nordic funds being made available for such activities;
- to act as a contact body for the national research councils or similar research organisations with responsibility for agricultural R&D.

The fact that the NKJ is to provide advice or coordination to the extent requested by the Nordic Council of Ministers could entail a responsibility for following up on R&D activities if funds are made available by the Council for such activities.

**The Nordic Council of Ministers' action programme**

The action programme for Nordic collaboration within agriculture and forestry in the period from 1996 to 2000 was adopted by the Council (the ministers of agriculture and forestry) in 1995. The programme includes objectives for a number of collaboration projects which are to be implemented before the end of the year 2000. In the action programme, the Nordic Council of Ministers has defined three main fields for the Nordic collaboration:

- Collaboration on issues of primary interest to the Nordic countries;
- Collaboration aimed at supporting the participation by the Nordic countries in international bodies;
- Collaboration in areas neighbouring the Nordic region.

These are the overall objectives set out in the action programme and it is considered important that collaboration on issues of general interest to the Nordic countries is based on our shared values and common culture as well as on our common background.

For the period covered by the strategy, the Nordic Council of Ministers delimits collaboration to the following four programme areas:

- Quality in agricultural production with special emphasis on the environment;
- Management of genetic resources;
- Development of regions dependent on agriculture and forestry;
- Sustainable forestry.

The Nordic Council of Ministers emphasises that Nordic R&D should not be a goal in itself, it should above all be an important tool. R&D will consequently not constitute an independent programme area during the programme period.

### **Member states' national strategies**

Collaboration within the NKJ must be based on activities of common interest to the member states. As a result, the collaboration must be carried out in accordance with national R&D objectives and the priorities set by national research bodies. Obviously, the existing national strategies reflect the differences in the agricultural policies of the Nordic countries. However, the strategies are generally in accordance with the priorities laid down in the action programme of the NEJS. The strategy for 1997 to 2000 has been developed on the basis of the strategies of each individual country.

### **European Union R&D programmes**

The R&D communities in the Nordic region are heavily involved in the R&D collaboration under the European Union framework programmes. The involvement differs somewhat from country to country, however. Today, Iceland and Norway, having signed the EEA agree-

ment, are subject to the same conditions as the EU member states. Naturally, the Nordic collaboration is influenced by the involvement of the member states in the EU R&D programmes, in particular the fifth framework programme.

### **Nordic institutions and collaborative bodies**

The NKJ interacts with a number of Nordic institutes and bodies, of which the following, organised under the Nordic Council of Ministers, are of primary importance to the NKJ:

- The Nordic Forest Research Cooperation Committee (SNS). As a result of the amendment to the bylaws which came into effect on 1 January 1997, the SNS now provides advice to the Nordic Council of Ministers on forestry issues. Accordingly, the SNS is now a body more on a level with the NKJ. The SNS participates in NKJ meetings as an observer and vice versa.
- The Nordic Gene Bank (NGB) is in charge of the coordination activities within plant breeding and the preservation of genetic resources within plant materials in the Nordic countries;
- The Nordic Gene Bank for Farm Animals (NGH) is in charge of the same type of co-ordination as the NGB, only for farm animals;
- The Nordic Committee for Agricultural Engineering (JTS);
- Nordic Council for Reindeer Research (NOR);
- The Nordic Training Academy for Advanced Study (NorFA). NorFA funds courses for Nordic and Baltic researchers and makes funds available for the establishment of networks of researchers. The NKJ has an important advisory

ry function in these areas during the phase before applications are submitted to the Executive Committee of NorFA for approval. NorFA also supports symposia and workshops for researchers as well the activities to increase the mobility of researchers.

The Nordic Agricultural University (NOVA) was formally established in 1995. NOVA was established as a collaboration project between the Nordic agricultural universities. NOVA has recently been extended to include the Baltic region in the collaboration under the name of NOVABA. NOVA's future development will be important for the collaboration with the NKJ.

The NKJ is involved in important collaboration projects with the following voluntary organisations:

- The Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF);
- The Nordic Committee for Veterinary Scientific Cooperation (NKVet). Both of these organisations are observers to the meetings of the NKJ.

In addition, the NKJ collaborates with the Baltic Joint Committee for Agricultural Research (BJC).

The NKJ focuses on ensuring that collaboration with other Nordic organisations and institutes is goal directed, active and constructive. In addition, the NKJ considers it important to avoid overlapping activities.

### **The overall financial scope of NKJ activities**

The NKJ's overall activities are handled within a budget of approximately DKK 20 million (1996), of which direct and indirect contributions from the Nordic Council of Ministers account for approximately DKK 3 million.

### **International agreements**

The focus on sustainable development in the primary industries means that international agreements and conventions on environmental protection will form the basis for Nordic collaboration. This includes agreements under the auspices of the United Nations as well as in connection with the North Sea Treaty and the Helsinki Convention. This has been given special emphasis in the action plan of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## 2. PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

The NKJ faces the challenges of making Nordic agricultural R&D meet several concurrent demands. Consumers demand improved food quality, healthy and nutritious foods and that ethical issues and animal welfare are taken into account. The general public makes demands with regard to the environment, and politicians make demands that the use of resources is minimised both in primary production and in the processing and distribution processes. In terms of R&D policy, this means more collaboration cutting across traditional scientific areas. During the period covered by the coming strategy, the NKJ will continue to follow up on national research policy issues of significance to the entire Nordic region and, at the same time, harmonise activities with the NEJS's action plans. The NKJ is paying particular attention to the special obligations of the Nordic countries and the contact to the neighbouring areas, primarily north-west Russia and the Baltic countries.

### **Development trends and challenges**

There is a trend towards fewer production units in primary production, larger units and, presumably, also greater specialisation. At the same time, a parallel development is seen by way of a large number of part-time farmers and a change in the use of land.

The likely challenges are found in primary production, the processing industry and in distribution as well as in relations with the market and society. This means that product quality is important and that consumer preferences must be taken into account, including health and nutritional values of food. Moreover, there will be a demand for lower cost levels in production and sales and demands for profitability within processing and for jobs — not least in rural districts.

We will see even greater focus than today on the environmental impact of agriculture, and there will be a demand that the agricultural sector seeks to minimise the environmental impact it causes. One effect of this will be the continued demand for new technology and different cultivation methods, e.g. organic farming, in order to promote sustainable agricultural production methods, paying the greatest possible attention to the environment.

In animal farming, large-scale farming will result in new challenges with respect to animal health and welfare, and ethics will attract growing attention.

Within certain fields, the Nordic region has only small research communities which have some structural and quality-related problems. Therefore, it is important that the overall resources are utilised as effectively as possible in order to get the best possible quality, efficiency and results of R&D activities as well as R&D-related activities. A coordinated effort will ensure added value as compared with a purely national approach.

### 3. OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

#### Nordic benefits

Achieving benefits to the Nordic region must be an overall goal of all kinds of collaboration supported by the NKJ, and the main area of priority will be R&D.

According to the Norwegian report "Nordisk samarbeid i en ny tid" (Nordic collaboration in a new age) "the basis for all Nordic activities must be that the activities meet some basic *demands* which may be summarised as follows:

- activities which would otherwise be handled on a national level but for which sustained positive effects can be achieved through joint Nordic solutions;
- activities which manifest and develop Nordic interdependence;
- activities which increase Nordic competence and competitive strength"

The Nordic collaboration must both support areas in which the Nordic region has a unique position and where there is a sufficient basis for R&D collaboration. In addition, attention should be directed towards areas in which the Nordic countries have special obligations and in which international R&D could otherwise not be expected.

In an active dialogue with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the NKJ will work to concretise R&D tasks which can be supported by the NEJS by way of initiatives which can be used to carry out the priority R&D in the Council's action programme.

In addition, it will be important to the NKJ in future to ensure a high quality of R&D and to give priority to collaborative tasks which ensure quality improvements or tasks in which the Nordic benefits are clearly visible and can be documented. In that connection, it will be a major challenge to utilise the common cultural and, to a great extent, language background in the Nordic region. The collaboration in the NKJ must take into account the great variation in climate and topography from the north to the south and, to some extent, from the west to the east of the region.

#### Priority R&D areas

Based on member states' strategies, the following R&D areas will form the basis for the NKJ's Nordic collaboration during the strategy period (the research areas are not ranked according to priority):

##### *Food quality and safety*

R&D in this area will be interpreted in a broad sense and will comprise issues related both to products and the use of resources as well as to production, both on a global and a Nordic level. The general philosophy of the programme comprises the chain leading from the consumer back to the producer. Raw material quality as well as health and nutritional aspects are of vital importance. Moreover, the programme could include market-directed and knowledge-based improvement as well as the development of products and processes in order to increase the added value and the competitiveness of agricultural production and the processing industry.

***Sustainable, environmentally friendly and organic agricultural production***

Research on organic agricultural production will be given higher priority.

The programme will provide increased knowledge on the management of land and resources in a long-term perspective, while maintaining production potential, the cultivated land and biological variability.

***Animal health, welfare and ethics***

The main objective of research in this area is to ensure the production of healthy and robust farm animals in an environment adapted as much as possible to the natural behaviour of the animals. There must be focus on increased competence and basic knowledge of farm animal biology in order to improve the environment and welfare of the animals. Issues such as animal health and ethics will be given high priority.

***Development in rural districts***

Research in this area includes the central issues of economy, social conditions and development potential, including tourism. The linkage and interaction between traditional resource-based trades and the protection of the natural environment pose a concrete problem which requires specific R&D attention.

***Circumpolar areas***

Research in this area is to give priority to programmes specific to the Nordic parts of the circumpolar area (Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands as well as to other areas in Norway, Sweden and

Finland facing similar issues). All Nordic countries have an interest in these areas. In addition, the international community is paying increased attention to these areas. The NKJ considers it important that these areas are given special attention.

These five subject areas are all very comprehensive; nevertheless, the NKJ believes that it is important to support a broad range of activities.

In the strategy for the period 1993 to 1996, the following three areas were given priority:

Alternative cultivation methods — non-food, sustainable production with special emphasis on soil as a biological ecosystem (soil biology) and agricultural/regional economy.

There are still some outstanding activities to be carried out in these areas. This will be done as part of the new strategy. Accordingly, there is a connection between the priorities in the old and the new strategies.

In the previous strategy period, the areas neighbouring the Nordic Region, in particular the Baltic region, were given priority. The neighbouring areas include north-west Russia and the Baltic countries. The NKJ will continue to give priority to these areas, based on financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Activities directed at these neighbouring areas must be co-ordinated with activities in other organisations and bodies.

#### 4. COLLABORATION METHODS AND MEANS

##### **Collaboration methods**

The NKJ finds it important to achieve a successful collaboration through an active dialogue between member organisations and the Nordic Council of Ministers, its institutions and the other Nordic organisations and bodies.

The contact among the member organisations of the respective countries and the collaboration between them must be developed to comprise more than the two regular annual meetings. A continued development of the organisation must be ensured so that the NKJ can be a dynamic body, able to make decisions in concrete cases outside the two regular meetings. In addition, the administrative routines must be reviewed, including the scientific evaluation of research projects. It is important that the NKJ is profiled more strongly and that the role of the secretariat in the collaboration with the chairman is clarified.

##### **Means**

The NKJ will initiate reporting and planning activities within the priority areas of the strategy.

The NKJ will take the initiative to map and evaluate research communities and projects in the Nordic region in order to achieve increased collaboration within activities which are too narrow to function satisfactorily on a national level.

The NKJ intends to stimulate coordination, primarily of basic research, by way of research projects and participation in the financing of programmes within priority programme areas. The NKJ will also support the submission of applications to the EU.

The NKJ will give higher priority to the establishment of networks of researchers, including concerted actions. In addition, networks of researchers can form the basis for subsequent implementation of joint R&D projects.

The NKJ intends to stimulate the holding of seminars and symposia within the areas given priority in the strategy.

## 5. TARGET RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The strategy is the instrument with which the NKJ governs its activities. Factors relating to quality, relevance, efficiency and ethics will be the governing criteria for the NKJ's activities. Scientific quality must be an overall criterion. The relevance criterion is to a great extent linked to the Nordic dimension and to Nordic benefits. The research communities have an important responsibility of ensuring high-quality research while at the same time having a special responsibility for the dissemination of research results. This goes for primary scientific publications as well as other kinds of dissemination of results to various user groups. The NKJ considers it important that the results are given a follow-up in the form of evaluation and that the dissemination of results actually works.

Research projects, seminars etc. will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. The NKJ intends to contribute to an evaluation of results in such a way that they can be used as a basis for legislation enacted by the Nordic parliaments, including environmental legislation. The NKJ's overall activities will be evaluated at the end of the strategy period.

## 6. REVISION OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy will remain in force through the year 2000 and a revision will be initiated prior to the next strategy period, i.e. from 1999. In addition, the strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis in connection with reporting to the Nordic Council of Ministers in order to evaluate whether adjustments are needed. Deviations from the strategy must be commented on in the annual report. If necessary, brief additions to the strategy can be prepared.

## 7. NKJ MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- DENMARK:      • The Advisory Committee for Research of the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries  
                    • The Danish Agricultural and Veterinary Research Council
- FINLAND:      • The Agricultural Research Delegation  
                    • The Research Council for the Environment and Natural Resources
- ICELAND:      • The Agricultural Research Institute
- NORWAY:      • The Research Council of Norway
- SWEDEN:      • The Forestry and Agricultural Research Council

The Ministries of Agriculture of the Nordic countries have each appointed one representative to the NKJ. The members of the NKJ for 1999 are the following:

***Denmark:***

Merete Fredholm      The Danish Agricultural and Veterinary Research Council  
Otto Friis              The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

***Finland:***

Erkki Kempainen      The Agricultural Research Delegation  
Juha Tuomi             The Research Council for the Environment and Natural Resources  
Mirja Suurnäkki      The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

***Iceland:***

Thorstein Tómasson   The Agricultural Research Institute

***Norway:***

Ole Waehre             The Research Council of Norway  
Viggo Mohr             The Research Council of Norway  
Thomas Hansteen      The Ministry of Agriculture

***Sweden:***

Jan-Erik Hällgren      The Swedish Council for Forestry and Agricultural Research  
Roland von Bothmer   The Swedish Council for Forestry and Agricultural Research  
Carl Johan Lidén      The Swedish Agricultural Board

***Observers:***

The Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF) represented by Niels Kolstad (N).  
The Nordic Committee for Veterinary Scientific Cooperation (NKVet) represented by Hans Kindahl (S).  
The Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), represented by Ylva Tilander/Per Ofstad.

***NKJ Secretariat:***

Lennart Åberg (S)      The Swedish Council for Forestry and Agricultural Research

## 8. CONTACT ADDRESSES

### Denmark:

**Statens Jordbrugs- og Veterinaer-videnskabelige Forskningsråd**  
(The Danish Agricultural and Veterinary Research Council)

Cecilie Tornøe  
Randersgade 60  
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ö  
Tel: +45-35 44 63 53  
Fax: +45-35 44 62 04  
E-mail: ct@forskraad.dk

**Födevareministeriets rådgivende forskningsudvalg**

Lars Diernes  
Strukturdirektoratet  
Toldbodgade 29  
DK-1253 Copenhagen K  
Tel: +45-33 63 73 00  
Fax: +45-33 63 73 33  
E-mail: ld@strukdir.dk

### Sweden (inclusive NKJ-secretariat):

**Skogs- och jordbrukets forskningsråd**  
(The Forestry and Agricultural Research Council)

Lennart Åberg  
Odengatan 61  
P.O. Box 6488  
S-113 82 Stockholm  
Tel: +46-8 54 54 12 77  
Fax: +46-8 33 29 15  
E-mail: lennart.berg@sjfr.se

### Iceland:

**Rannsóknastofnun Landbunadarins**  
(The Agricultural Research Institute)

Thorsteinn Tomasson  
Keldnaholt  
IS-112 Reykjavik  
Tel: +354-5 77 10 10  
Fax: +354-5 77 10 20  
E-mail: tomasson@rala.is

### Finland:

**Finlands akademi**  
**Enheten för miljö- och naturresursforskning**

(The Research Council for the Environment and Natural Resources)  
Kerstin Stendahl-Rechardt  
Vilhonvuorenkatu 6  
P.O. Box 99  
FIN-00501 Helsinki  
Tel: +358-97 74 88 325  
Fax: +358-97 74 88 395  
E-mail: ksl@aka.fi

### Norway:

**Norges forskningsråd**  
(The Research Council of Norway)

Roald Sörland  
Stensberggata 26  
Postboks 2700  
St. Hanshaugen  
N-0131 Oslo  
Tel: +47-22 03 71 07  
Fax: +47-22 03 71 04  
E-mail: ros@forskningsradet.no

### The Nordic Council of Ministers:

**Nordiska Ministerrådet**  
(The Nordic Council of Ministers)

Ylva Tilander/Per Ofstad  
Store Strandstraede 18  
DK-1255 Copenhagen K  
Tel: +45-33 96 02 00  
Fax: +45-33 93 20 47  
E-mail: yti@nmr.dk

### Internet:

[www.sjfr.se/nkj/](http://www.sjfr.se/nkj/)