WE ARE THE NORTH.
THE RIGHT DIRECTION. NORTH.

The Northern Dimension (ND) is a joint policy of four equal partners: the European Union (EU), the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland. It was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006.

The ND policy aims at supporting stability, wellbeing and sustainable development in the region through practical cooperation. The Northern Dimension operates through four partnerships on the environment, public health and wellbeing, transport and logistics, and culture.

This book provides the reader with an insight into the history, key accomplishments and future of the Northern Dimension. The implementation of the book was made possible by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and it was prepared by European Movement Finland.

The authors of this book would like to thank everyone who participated in the creation of this book.

We wish you pleasant moments with the Northern Dimension.

INITIATED 22 YEARS AGO. STILL GROWING AND DEVELOPING.
When Finland and Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, the Union gained a geographical Northern Dimension. Finland’s aspiration to create a northern policy for the European Union meant that Russia and the entire Arctic Region had to be considered. From these points of view, Finland launched an initiative in 1997 for the EU’s Northern Dimension policy. Gradually, it has developed into a multifaceted and equal partnership between the European Union, the Russian Federation, Norway, and Iceland.

The strength of the Northern Dimension is its pragmatism. The four Northern Dimension partnerships cooperate in areas in which collaboration is in the interest of all parties. The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership has resulted in significant financial investments in the water treatment plants of Russia and Belarus, as well as in nuclear waste treatment in northwestern Russia. The Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being brings authorities together to prevent communicable diseases. The Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics addresses the development of northern and Eurasian networks. The Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture promotes entrepreneurship and cultural awareness.

Climate change and nuclear safety are major challenges in Northern Dimension cooperation. Furthermore, a project aiming to reduce black carbon emissions in the Arctic region, initiated by President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö, is also advanced through Northern Dimension policy. Finland is active in all four partnerships, and we are happy to see that the Northern Dimension has become an established part of Europe’s main cooperation structures.

PAAVO LIPPONEN
Former Prime Minister of Finland

Northern Dimension cooperation extends from north to east—Rovaniemi, Greenland, and from the North Pole in the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea. It complements the work of the Council of Baltic Sea States and the Arctic Council and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Funding comes from the European Union, the Russian Federation and EU Member States, as well as from international financial institutions. The Northern Dimension is one of the most significant concrete achievements in northern cooperation.
The European Union’s Northern Dimension policy, adopted 20 years ago on the initiative of Finland and Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, is a tool for promoting transnational regional stability and security, and its value has only increased, especially with the tension in EU–Russia relations. The strength andraison d’être of the Northern Dimension lies in the equal partnership between the European Union, Russia, Norway and Iceland.

The value of regional cooperation has further increased as a result of recent events. It is even more important to work in such a way that cooperation in the region is shared in order to ensure stability and predictability while maintaining our own values and principles.

In regional cooperation, despite higher-level tensions, the focus can be on concrete cooperation and action at the practical level. These formations, such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension policy, were created in the post-Cold War decade of easing in the 1990s and very often on Finland’s initiative or with its contribution. Now these regional structures are showing that they are sustainable tools in all circumstances and especially necessary during tensions.

As you can read in this book, environmental issues are still at the heart of our Northern Dimension. The Northern Dimension area is a kind of laboratory for the earth’s changing climate, but for all the effects on the greatest. President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö has said, quite rightly: “If we lose the nature of the north, we lose the world.”

We should be pleased that, a few decades ago, such a model and structure of cooperation was wisely created, the value and importance of which are growing again. Today, the emergence of some structures would hardly be possible. We should treasure this sometimes hidden gem of our cooperation and let it grow and flourish in our common interest.

Jari Vilén
Finnish Ambassador for Barents and the Northern Dimension
The Northern Dimension is a common policy of the European Union, Russia, Norway and Iceland that provides proven instruments and platforms to tackle common global and regional challenges jointly.

It is a very potent tool that covers the European North, including the Arctic, Barents and Baltic regions and northwest Russia. During its 20 years of operation, the Northern Dimension has provided concrete solutions to many of the acute problems the European North is facing. Now it is time to talk about the future.

The world is changing rapidly. Climate, technology and demography are transforming societies in the world and in the European North. European Movement Finland regards the Northern Dimension as a way to address these new challenges and opportunities emerging in areas such as environment, health, transport and global networks. We must cooperate across national and regional boundaries if we are to tackle these challenges.

Global warming and the loss of environmental diversity are amongst the most pressing threats affecting the fragile nature of the European North. The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership has an impressive track record of funding projects such as the wastewater treatment plants in northwest Russia and in Belarus that have significantly reduced pollution of the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, the nuclear and hazardous waste treatment projects at Andreeva Bay in Russia have reduced radiological and environmental risks in the Arctic. These concrete projects have produced outstanding results in just one partnership.

Past achievements are a proof of concept, but there is much work ahead of us if we are to develop the European North sustainably. That is why European Movement Finland took part in the creation of this book and urges the four equal Northern Dimension partners to commit to the partnerships and the ongoing and future projects.

In these trying times, practical ground-level cooperation is truly called for.

Aku Aarva
Executive Director
European Movement Finland
HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

The significance of the Northern and Baltic regions in the European Union increased after the Baltic States regained their independence in 1991, Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995, and Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland joined the EU in 2004. The length of the common border between the European Union and the Russian Federation increased considerably and it became evident that the region’s challenges and opportunities should be faced together in a constructive and positive manner.

The solution was presented by Finland in 1997 through the Northern Dimension initiative, which aimed to advance partnership between the European Union, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland. First made public by the then Prime Minister of Finland, Paavo Lipponen, the initiative highlighted the importance of EU-external relations and the peace, stability and development of the European North. The Northern Dimension initiative provided the future partners with a pathway towards European cooperation in a post-Cold War era.
In December 1997, the Northern Dimension Initiative was presented in the Luxembourg European Council.

In December 1998, the Vienna European Council adopted a Commission Communication on a Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union.

In spring 1999, the Cologne European Council adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the Northern Dimension.

In November 1999, the Finnish EU Presidency held a Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension. An inventory of current activities under the Northern Dimension was adopted.

In December 1999, the Helsinki European Council invited the Commission to prepare a Northern Dimension Action Plan (NDAP).

In June 2000, the Feira European Council adopted the first Action Plan for the Northern Dimension.

In June 2003, the European Commission proposed the second NDAP, which was adopted at the European Council meeting in Brussels in October 2003.

The second NDAP covered the period 2004–2006.

The first Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was held in Brussels in October 2004.

On 21 November 2005, the Northern Dimension Ministerial Meeting held in Brussels unanimously approved the Guidelines for the Development of a Political Declaration and Policy Framework for Northern Dimension policy. These guidelines acted as the basis for the new Northern Dimension policy. The parties agreed that the Northern Dimension is a shared policy and that it will be the regional expression in the North of Europe.

The political declaration and the policy framework document became the basis for the Northern Dimension from 2007 onward.

The European Union, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland adopted the new Northern Dimension policy Framework and Political Declaration for a permanent Northern Dimension policy.
WHAT IS THE NORTHERN DIMENSION?

The Northern Dimension (ND) is a joint policy of four equal partners: the European Union (EU), the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland. It was initiated in 1999, during Finland’s first EU Presidency, and renewed in 2006. The Northern Dimension was designed as a joint policy of the whole European Union, not only of its northern Member States, and the support it has received throughout the EU Member States is a testament to the commitment of the whole Union.

The ND policy supports stability, wellbeing and sustainable development in the region by means of practical cooperation. It covers a wide range of sectors, such as the environment, nuclear safety, health, energy, transport, logistics, promotion of trade and investment, research, education and culture.

The Northern Dimension builds on and strengthens the existing regional cooperation in the European North. It includes the Arctic, Barents and Baltic Sea regions, and northeast Russia.

COMBINING FORCES FROM REYKJAVIK TO ST. PETERSBURG.

The Partnerships flexibly respond to their thematic focus on new emerging challenges and opportunities according to priorities on the Partners’ agendas.

- The ND Environment Partnership (NDEP) initiates projects on minimising black carbon emissions.
- The ND Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) works on healthy ageing and the societal implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The ND Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) focuses on the digitisation of transport and maritime transportation.
- The ND Partnership on Culture (NDPC) analyses core business opportunities at the crossroads of creative industries and other sectors of the economy.
- The ND Business Council (NDBC) fosters cooperation in emerging business areas such as the circular economy.
- The ND Institute (NDI) strengthens the connection with decision-making and provides multi-stakeholder platforms for the co-creation of solutions to acute societal challenges.

The success of the ND is based on its pragmatic approach, which:

- Builds on existing cooperation and people-to-people networks.
- Focuses on concrete projects that address global challenges through local and regional action.

The ND is a truly common policy that builds on equal cooperation between its partners, in which the receiving countries cover most of the costs of ND projects. The ND is an efficient instrument for financing large-scale projects. ND partner donations are raising funding from international institutions.

THE NORTHERN DIMENSION STRUCTURE

Four ND Partners
EU, Russia, Norway, Iceland

Ministerial Meetings
Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)
Steering Group

Four Partnerships
NDI, NDBC, NDPC, NDPTL

ND Institute
ND Business Council
ND Parliamentary Forum

International Financial Institutions
EBRD, EIB, NEFCO, NIB, KFW

Regional Councils as Participants
AC, BEAC, CBSS, NCM
NORTHERN DIMENSION BUSINESS COUNCIL (NDBC) | EST. 2009

Connects business in the ND area with each other and with governmental decision-makers via annual Business Forums in St. Petersburg and thematic working groups. The NDBC Business Council’s Working Group for ecology initiated the establishment of the Water Excellency Center network.

NORTHERN DIMENSION INSTITUTE (NDI) | EST. 2009

The Northern Dimension Institute is a university network and think tank that serves the thematic partnerships and policy-making with evidence-based knowledge and raises awareness about the ND in the wider society. The NDI’s tasks are knowledge exchange, and dissemination platforms include annual ND Future Forums, NDI Policy Briefs and NDI Background Papers.
THE PARTNERSHIPS OF THE NORTHERN DIMENSION
FOUR PARTNERSHIPS

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PARTNERSHIP IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELLBEING (NDPHS) | EST. 2003
PARTNERSHIP ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (NDPTL) | EST. 2009
ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP (NDEP) | EST. 2001
PARTNERSHIP ON CULTURE (NDPC) | EST. 2010
The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) was conceptualised in the Gothenburg EU Summit in 2001, after which the established Steering Group defined 12 priority projects in northwest Russia and a strategic approach to finance such projects. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was charged with administrating the funds and principles for cooperation both with stakeholders, like the Russian authorities, including the Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom).

By January 2002, the rules of the NDEP Support Fund were agreed by the EBRD Board of Directors and the Fund became operational. The work of NDEP was further endorsed in November 2006 when the European Union, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland adopted the new Northern Dimension policy Framework and Political Declaration for a permanent Northern Dimension policy.
ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Northern Dimension area boasts vast natural resources, unique biodiversity in its seas and rivers, and some of the last untouched European forests. However, environmental degradation is causing increasing concern. The low temperatures of two of the region’s seas, the Baltic and the Barents, make them particularly sensitive to environmental degradation and this is exacerbated further by low salinity and shallow waters in the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic is heavily stratified, which results in the water mixing and undermines the health and diversity of marine life and animal populations. Phytoplankton and macroalgae form dense patches of green and brown algae in the summer, which deplete oxygen from the water, which deprives other living organisms of oxygen to decompose, producing marine dead zones. The Baltic Sea has changed over the years from a clear-water marine environment to a sea with dense algal growth in certain parts. The narrow strait of water of the Gulf of Finland – shared by Finland, Estonia and Russia - has been particularly affected.

For projects concerning the Baltic Sea, the NDEP cooperates with the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and its Baltic Sea Action Plan aimed at eliminating the remaining hot spots that have cross-border effects. The NDEP closely follows the activities of the Northern Dimension initiative established in 2006 by the European Commission, Russia, Norway and Iceland and complements the new EU Baltic Sea Strategy. For projects regarding the Barents Sea, the NDEP works in cooperation with the Barents River Arctic Council.
Pollution flowing into the Baltic Sea has increased dramatically in the last hundred years, due to wastewater discharges from fast-growing cities, industry and agriculture. Due to the nature of the Baltic Sea, with limited water flow in and out of the Sea, the nutrient load in the water body has increased to unsustainable levels.

At the mouth of the River Neva, the beautiful city of St. Petersburg, with over five million inhabitants, was the main source of pollution of the Baltic Sea for decades. The rapidly growing city was struggling with wastewater treatment – in the 1970s, the wastewater was flowing freely through the Neva into the Baltic Sea. In the 1990s, 33 per cent of the wastewater was flowing untreated into the sea.

The opening of the Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant of St. Petersburg (SWWWTP) in 2005 was a massive step forward in solving the wastewater treatment difficulties of the large city. Since then, the wastewater was treated on the way into the Baltic Sea from the treatment plant and has decreased significantly.

The SWWWTP is the first plant of the national intentional effort to improve the environmental situation in the Gulf of Finland by investing in wastewater treatment plants. This has been the highest priority project of the NDEP, as it aimed to cut the nutrient load by 12,000 m³ per day from the wastewater of the Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant into the Baltic Sea. The SWWWTP has contributed to the breakdown of the NEFW and, with good results and transparency, it managed to attract over EUR 80 million in donor funding from Finland, Sweden, the European Commission and NDEP.

The NDEP was part of the concerted international effort to improve the environmental situation in the Gulf of Finland by investing in the SWWWTP. This project was the first project to be completed within the framework of the NDEP and, with good results and transparency, it managed to attract over EUR 50 million in donor funding from Finland, Sweden, the European Commission and NDEP.

The SWWWTP represents a unique case for unprecedented international cooperation and dedication that delivered excellent results for the local population and the environment of the Baltic Sea. The plant now complies with HELCOM standards and treats 330,000 cubic metres of wastewater per day, previously discharged untreated into the River Neva. It removes 80 per cent of total phosphorus and 70–80 per cent of nitrogen from the wastewater load. The city's capacity for treating wastewater has increased to 99 per cent, which has resulted in improved water quality in the Gulf of Finland.

The project has received international awards such as the Swedish Baltic Sea Award in 2005, the EU European Business Award for the Environment in 2006 and the Russian Federation Quality Prize in 2006. The positive results have led to further investments in the St. Petersburg wastewater treatment system, and after the Southwest Wastewater Treatment Plant was opened, over EUR 1 billion has been invested in further improvements.

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Spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste in northern Russia, mainly generated by the Russian Northern Fleet, present a legacy of dangerous environmental hazards on an international scale. The threat to the area is the largest repository of nuclear waste in the world. Existing facilities for the management of nuclear waste are obsolete and fully utilized, while some plant reduces the materials in the environment. Current facilities were not designed to support the gigantic tasks of decommissioning the aging Russian nuclear fleet and the efforts must be directed towards efficiently managing the vast accumulated waste as well as facilitating the present and future decommissioning of the fueling of nuclear propulsion vessels.

The Russian Federation has 250 submarines, warships and icebreakers containing over 450 naval nuclear reactors. The size of the nuclear fleet has been reduced, and around 140 submarines and several support and maintenance vessels were withdrawn from service in the northwestern region of Russia. The result is significant amounts of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste accumulation in poor storage conditions in the region. This causes considerable concern about risk to workers, local populations and the environment.

The Partnership’s nuclear activities have become a major multilateral initiative in dealing with nuclear waste management in northern Russia. In focus is the Kola Peninsula, Archangelsk and Murmansk regions, which contains the largest repository of nuclear waste in the world. The Network carries forward the work of the Contact Expert Group of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), established in 1996, the Contact Expert Group is an international specialist forum for consultation on principles and practice for nuclear waste management in Russia.
DECOMMISSIONING OF THE LEPSE FTB

The dry cargo ship Lepse was built in 1934 and converted into a floating technical base in 1961. Until 1981, it supported the refuelling of Russia’s nuclear icebreakers. Since 1981, Lepse has been used for storing used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. In 1988 Lepse was decommissioned.

The vessel, laid up in Kola Bay near Murmansk, contained two storage tanks for spent nuclear fuel (SNF) from icebreakers, with 639 spent fuel assemblies (SFAs) on board. A considerable amount of high and intermediate-level liquid radwaste (LRW) is stored in the SNF storage tank tubes, in a special tank and in the cooling circuit.

The decommissioning of Lepse was identified as an important task 20 years ago and the work was initiated by the Murmansk Shipping Company (MSCo), but it was abandoned in 1994 when funds ran out. Lepse was then brought to the attention of the international community and received great support from the European Commission, NEFCO and the governments of Norway and France.

In 1996, the project to deal with Lepse was included in the European Union’s TACIS programme (the CIS technical assistance programme), with funding allocated for the inspection of the used fuel.

In 1998, the project deal with Lepse was included in the European Union’s EDF programme (the European Direct Assistance programme), with funding allocated for the inspection of the used fuel.

In 2008, the initial executive grant agreement (GIS) was concluded for the disposal of the Lepse, the recipient of which was LC NFC, with the EBRD as the administrator. The aim of the project was to improve the radiation situation and eliminate serious environmental hazards in the region by removing used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste from the Lepse and sending it for reprocessing or temporary storage.

After 2011, with funding from Russia’s federal target programme (Ensuring Nuclear and Radiation Safety for 2008 and for the Period until 2015), a comprehensive radiation survey of the vessel was undertaken, and preparatory work began. This included docking, partial dismounting of the ship’s hull, commissioning some radiometric material, demounting and installation of additional equipment. Lepse was then towed to the Nerpa Shipyard in 2012.

All spent nuclear fuel from the Lepse has been safely and successfully removed. The last of six shipments funded through NDEP was completed in July 2020 and the final spent fuel with held in the contours of the facility were removed with Russian Federation Funding in May 2021.

The total cost of decommissioning the Lepse was over €53m financed through the Nuclear Window of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund, an international fund with contributions from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK, and managed by the EBRD.

The NDEP project built on the extensive cooperation of the international community and Russian experts from Rosatom, Nerpa Shipyard, Atomflot and MSCo. The successful completion of the projects was the culmination of a decade of international collaboration to address the environmental hazard caused by Lepse. Its successful completion advances nuclear and radiological safety in the region, achieving a significant change to the people and the environment of the Barents Sea region.

AT A GLANCE

Sector: Nuclear safety
Client: FCNRS
Grant agreement signed: 11 May 2011
Project status: Completed
Implementing IFI: EBRD

NDEP GRANT EUR 53,000,000

WITH ADDITIONAL BILATERAL RUSSIAN FUNDS
The Northern Dimension Partnership on Transportation and Logistics (NDPTL) aims to improve the most important transport and logistics connections in the Northern Dimension region in order to stimulate sustainable economic growth at the local, regional and global level.

The NDPTL was conceptualised in the first Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of the revised Northern Dimension in St. Petersburg in 2008. The major principles of the NDPTL were defined in the Naples High-Level Meeting in 2009. The emphasis in the future will be on digitalisation, automation and robotics as well as logistic solutions and acquisition of relevant research data.

In addition, green transport and the reduction of maritime transport emissions, as well as connecting Europe and Asia, are also priorities of the NDPTL.

Since its inception in 2012, the NDPTL Support Fund has funded nine projects with an average grant size of EUR 300,000. By providing funding for studies, planning and preparatory stages, these projects have accelerated the implementation of transport projects in the NDPTL area. The projects include developments in ports, sections of road and facilitating border crossings. Particularly successful examples include the Gdansk DCT project, comprising planning an extension of the Gdansk Deepwater Container Terminal which enabled the raising of EUR 290 million in financing for the investment. The NDPTL also serves as a regional forum for transport and logistics issues.

The ND Partnership on Transport and Logistics facilitated the planning phase of an extension of the Gdansk Deepwater Container Terminal (Gdansk DCT). Gdansk DCT has seen spectacular growth in traffic, fuelled by the fast growth of the Polish economy during the 21st century. A small NDPTL project developed the initial concepts, with which the consortium managed to obtain co-financing for the entire investment amounting EUR 290 million from a group of commercial and pro-development banks, including the EBRD.

Construction began in January 2015 and was completed in 2016. The extension of Gdansk DCT has resulted in a significant increase of the terminal’s capacity. The NDPTL also serves as a regional forum for transport and logistics issues.

SIGNATURE ACHIEVEMENTS

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE LULEÅ IRON ORE PORT, SWEDEN

The project accomplished preparatory hydrographic surveys of the Malmporten (Swedish for ‘iron ore port’) project. This will consist of renewing the port infrastructure at the Port of Luleå, a key port for iron and steel industry raw materials in Europe, as well as a massive dredging operation in the fairways leading to the port. This includes deepening and modernising the main fairway and constructing an alternative, more sheltered, winter route. Combined, these investments will allow substantially larger ships to use the Port of Luleå, including during severe ice winters.

As a whole, Malmporten is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Swedish history. The project will secure a flow of iron ore from mines in northern Sweden to steel industries elsewhere in Europe and worldwide. The results of the global project will dramatically reduce unit costs. It also serves the environmental needs of the ND region, as the use of larger ships will lead to a reduction of the environmental impact per ton transported.

WWW.NDPTL.ORG

AT A GLANCE
Grant beneficiary: Luleå Hamn AB
Country: Sweden
Grant award decision: 2014
Grant from NDPTL Support Fund: up to EUR 700,000

Project description: The investment financed preparatory hydrographic surveys of the global project which will consist of major improvements at the Port of Luleå as well as massive dredging of the fairways to the port to enable passage of substantially larger ships.

Total project costs: (ongoing)
IMPROVEMENT OF THE SAIMAA CANAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Saimaa Canal, an essential part of the traffic system in Eastern Finland, connects 3500 km of inland waterways to the Baltic Sea, serving transportation between Helsinki and Hanuș, but also transportation between northern parts of Finland and the entire Baltic Sea area.

The project included plans and detailed designs of the Saimaa Canal’s electrical distribution and lighting systems, mechanical structures and machine rooms. The main objective of the project was to improve the canal, creating a safe and modern waterway connecting Finland, Russia, and the Baltic region.

WWW.NDPTL.ORG

AT A GLANCE

Grant beneficiary: Finnish Transport Agency
Country: Finland
Grant award decision: November 2013
Grant from NDPTL Support Fund: EUR 109,000

Project description: The project covered a study of the technical requirements for the modernisation of the Saimaa Canal infrastructure in eastern Finland. The investment financed the planning and design of the canal’s electrical distribution, lighting, mechanical structures and machine rooms.

FINANCING

Total project cost: EUR 248,000
NORTHERN DIMENSION PARTNERSHIP IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS) is a networking platform for strengthening professional connections, sharing and co-creating knowledge, and developing joint activities in public health and social wellbeing.

The NDPHS was conceived at the Oslo Summit in 2003, and it operates in accordance with the Oslo declaration, with a mission to promote sustainable development of the European North by improving people’s health and social wellbeing. It operates through seven Expert Groups, addressing the following themes: HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and associated infections, antimicrobial resistance, alcohol and substance use, non-communicable diseases, occupational health and safety, primary healthcare, prison health.

Overarching horizontal themes include active and healthy ageing, integrated care, mental health and digitalisation. Engagement, reactions to the biggest health crisis of our time, the COVID-19 pandemic, falls outside the mandate of the partnership. At the same time, the negative long-term effects of the pandemic on public health, which are starting to resemble climate change and HIV/AIDS, cannot be in the longer term will be addressed by the NDPHS.

Promotion of the Health in All Policies and One Health approach is the third driving force of the partnership. This strategy is highly relevant and a strong potential tool to address public health challenges and the wider determinants of health and social wellbeing. One of the success stories within the NDPHS is collaboration across health and social sectors. In the context of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Care (NDPC), the NDPHS is currently implementing projects. The use of learning healthy is working to develop collaboration between the public and social health sectors and to public sector employees [such as nurses, doctors, social workers] to create arts and design – aimed at mental health and wellbeing.

A well-established network of experts

The most precious asset of the partnership is the network of like-minded public health enthusiasts who facilitate mutual understanding, exchange of experience and best practices, and policy learning. The NDPHS values a practical and agile approach to working where sharing of partner countries’ experiences is equal footing based on trust and respect. The NDPHS set-up and working methods are user-friendly, aiming to create both experts’ – through its across-organisations – and policy makers and politicians, diverse expertise has a shared channel of communication with policy makers.

Creating and sharing knowledge

The NDPHS projects are producing a wealth of information that underpins national policy-making. Some of the recent examples include a scientific project called the Northern Dimension Antimicrobial Resistance (NoDARS) study, which examined the levels of antimicrobial resistance among healthy individuals. The outcomes of the project are used to inform national policies and the development of guidelines within the participating countries. Another example is a study on potential years of life loss (PYLL) and causes of regional workshop on progress and analysis of the main causes of premature deaths in the Northern Dimension countries.

The Art of Staying Healthy

The NDPHS Task Force on Active and Healthy Ageing facilitates knowledge exchange about unmet needs among older populations, with a focus on the needs of older people living in rural areas. Understanding the health and social care needs of older people based on their life paths is long overdue. The partnership will contribute to filling this gap. Several workshops have already taken place. These include the promotion of cross-generational dialogue, incorporating positive public attitudes and reducing ageism and self-ageism, as well as promotion of inclusivity and the participation of older people in policy-making.

The Task Force is a result of the Swedish Institute-funded AgeFLAG project, which mapped the needs of older people in the field of active and healthy ageing.
More impact together by empowering Northern stakeholders (MITTENS)

The European Union co-funded MITTENS project comprises a comprehensive set of activities that addresses all the NDPHS Expert Groups, and contributes to the implementation of the NDPHS objectives in the strategic focus areas. The activities undertaken and planned include:

- Strengthening the knowledge base on the occurrence and consequences of antibiotic treatment among older adults.
- Establishing a network of local municipalities focused on preventive work to reduce harmful use of alcohol and drugs among youth (PALETT project), so that they can exchange experiences and learn from one another's approaches, activities and outcomes.
- This activity builds on the previously implemented NDPHS project Child and Drug Prevention among Youth (NAP).
- Exploring the issues related to the variations in legislative debates and the challenges of novel e-cigarettes and tobacco products.
- Inventory of approaches to Latent Tuberculosis Infection in the ND countries – epidemiology, strategies, approaches and treatment options.
- Identifying the gaps and updating the core competency of occupational safety and health professionals in the changing world of work.
- Identification of best practices on organisational health literacy in the Northern Dimension area.

Promoting co-creation and inclusivity

The NDPHS strives to fundamentally and systematically re-orient its work from a thinking and approach the ongoing set of discussions and innovations that inform current research and society. Having close ties with several regional networks and organisations, the NDPHS is well positioned for such work. We put particular attention on organizations practicing what we preach, so in being inclusive in our own work and when discussing and preparing solutions aimed at strengthening health systems. We give the floor to patient and civil society representatives to learn from their voices. It is essential for the users, engaging and understanding them and co-design the solutions together aligning extra effort to empower and involve people from marginalized and vulnerable groups in a meaningful way. As an example, NDPHS experts have embarked in a study aiming to identify and analyze the barriers to providing remote health and social services in our countries. Digitalization of health and social services must be inclusive and not lead to more inequalities.

WWW.NDPHS.ORG
The Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) is the most recent of the partnerships, established in May 2010. The mission of the NDPC is to contribute to social and economic sustainable development and innovation in the Northern Dimension area by focusing on the operating conditions for cultural and creative industries (CCI). The Partnership works towards a stronger, more competitive and more resilient CCI sector that contributes significantly to the sustainable development of the European North.

Culture and creativity is a driving force in international, regional and local sustainable development and a cornerstone for cooperation in the ND area. The NDPC and culture are on the rise. There is a collaboration framework in various spheres of society and the development of culture and creativity.

The Northern Dimension area has a rich cultural heritage, as well as national and linguistic diversity and strong cultural production. The region has a great deal of experience in cultural cooperation and exchange, as well as numerous professional networks which play a valuable role in knowledge exchange and collaboration.

The NDPC aims to develop the Northern Dimension as a thriving cultural and creative hub. The Partnership promotes the area as a global front runner in value creation of CCI and emphasises the role of this sector in sustainable development. CCI play a key role in the enhancement of social wellbeing, societal and economic stability and peace. This added value is crucial for the area.

The NDPC gives special attention to cooperation within the Northern Dimension area, including cross-border initiatives and cross-innovation within CCI. The Partnership promotes cross-border cooperation and highlights the impact of the innovation capacity of CCI. The Partnership’s approach to cross-innovation is based on the premise that CCI can create value by integrating different sectors and disciplines, including arts and health.

The Partnership brings together cultural and creative operators with policymakers and other stakeholders, including national authorities and regional and local actors. The Partnership focuses on developing new collaborative initiatives and partnerships in order to create value and foster innovation.

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through peer workshops and mentoring. One of the outcomes of the project is a practical toolkit to enhance collaboration between the CCI sector and the health and social sector. The project enhances community building to facilitate knowledge sharing and dialogue between arts and wellbeing professionals.

3. A mapping study (co-funded by EU) on CCI professional mobility within the region, examining the gaps within already existing cultural mobility funding schemes in the Northern Dimension area. The study analyses the needs and expectations of CCI stakeholders for cross-border cooperation and the need for mobility funding. The new Northern Dimension mobility programme for Cultural and Creative Industries professionals will be based on the findings and recommendations elaborated within the study.

4. The NDPC’s online hackathon, Hack Creative: An Industry Transformed, brought together more than 300 participants from 30 countries around the world to develop ideas on how to support the industry during the COVID-19 crisis. From 26 ideas developed during the hackathon, three were selected to share a cash prize fund of EUR 10,000 provided by Swedbank.
AN ONGOING MISSION.

THE NORTHERN DIMENSION OF TOMORROW.

The Northern Dimension became part of the European Union’s foreign policy in 1999 on Finland’s initiative. It aims to promote stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the European North, from the Arctic to the Baltic Sea. Diverse cooperation has developed into four partnerships in the fields of environment, health, transport and culture. The activities are complemented by the Northern Dimension Institute, the Northern Dimension Business Council and the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum.

A lot has been accomplished in the past 20 years, but much work is still ahead. The value of regional cooperation has increased and cooperation between the four equal partners is still necessary if we are to tackle the common challenges the European North is facing. Despite higher-level tensions, the Northern Dimension offers an opportunity to continue concrete cooperation and action at a practical level.

The future of the Northern Dimension relies on the commitment of the four equal partners. Using this well-established tool to solve the common challenges that the European North is facing can produce practical solutions to be utilized throughout the world. In particular, cooperation in environmental protection and tackling the challenges of climate change in the fragile northern, Arctic environment will be even more important in the future.

NORTHERN DIMENSION FUTURE