

# Strategy 2023–2025



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



**T**he Nordic Joint Committee for Agriculture and Food Research (NKJ) was established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1965 and operates together with Nordic Forest Research (SNS) as a collaborative body, with one secretariat, under the Nordic Council of Ministers' Committee of Senior Officials for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MR-FJLS). NKJ promotes and supports research, innovation, and policy development in the agricultural and food sectors as well as in reindeer husbandry in the Nordic region (hereinafter referred to as NKJ's sectors), as a part of the Nordic bioeconomy.

### Vision

The NKJ vision is to contribute to sustainable, knowledge-based and innovation-oriented agricultural, food and reindeer husbandry sectors in the Nordic region, to strengthen Nordic research and innovation cooperation, to contribute to policy development and sustainable development within NKJ's sectors and to strengthen the Nordic region's position within the area of responsibility in the European research arena.

### Purpose

NKJ's main purpose is to promote, coordinate and strengthen joint Nordic agricultural and food research efforts to increase synergies at the Nordic level and to convey research to policy arenas by providing solid, evidence-based, policy-relevant information to the Nordic Council of Ministers and other decision makers.





**Figure 1:** Relevant goals for the NKJ strategy from UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



### Strategic framework

The strategic framework that lays a foundation for NKJ's strategy is based on four different guiding documents. The first is UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with goals 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15 considered particularly relevant. Goal 14: Oceans and marine resources also touches on NKJ's areas.

The second and third guiding documents are the Nordic Council of Ministers' Vision 2030, which in turn is concretised in the Action Plan 2021-2024 with three strategic priority areas: making the Nordic region green, competitive and socially sustainable. NKJ contributes directly to Vision 2030 and the Action Plan's goals 1, 2, 3 (a green Nordic region), 6 (a competitive Nordic region), 9, 10, 11 and 12 (a socially sustainable Nordic region) through financing and collaborative activities,

policy advice and knowledge dissemination. NKJ's annual operational plan, specifies the activities and their connection to Vision 2030 and the Action Plan. See Table 1 next page.

The fourth guiding document is the Nordic Council of Ministers' cooperation program 2021-2024 (MR-FJ-LS), in which 5 focus areas for the period 2021-2024 are defined:

- Comprehensive management of Nordic resources
- Sustainable bioeconomy as a driving force for growth and change
- Increased resistance and resilience and reduced climate impact
- Genetic resources
- Safe food, healthy diets, and enjoyment of food



**Table 1:** Relevant objectives for the NKJ strategy from Nordic Council o Minister’s Action Plan 2021-2024.

A green Nordic region	A competitive Nordic Region	A socially sustainable Nordic Region
<b>Objective 1:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will bolster research and development and the promotion of solutions that support carbon neutrality and climate adaptation, including in relation to transport, construction, food, and energy.	<b>Objective 6:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will support knowledge and innovation and make it easier for companies throughout the Nordic Region to take full advantage of the development opportunities created by the green, technological, and digital transformation and the growing bioeconomy.	<b>Objective 9:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will contribute to good, equal, and secure health and welfare for all.
<b>Objective 2:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will help to safeguard biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of the Nordic Region’s nature and seas.		<b>Objective 10:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will work to involve everyone living in the Nordic Region in the green transition and digital developments, utilise the potential of this transition, and counteract the widening of gaps in society because of this transition.
<b>Objective 3:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will promote a circular and bio-based economy, sustainable and competitive production, sustainable food systems, and resource-efficient and non-toxic cycles in the Nordic Region.		<b>Objective 11:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will give Nordic civil society, and especially children and young people, a louder voice and greater participation in Nordic cooperation, as well as increase their knowledge of the languages and cultures of neighbouring countries.
		<b>Objective 12:</b> The Nordic Council of Ministers will maintain trust and cohesion in the Nordic Region, its shared values, and the Nordic community, with an emphasis on culture, democracy, equality, inclusion, non- discrimination, and freedom of expression.

## Strategic focus areas 2023-2025

This section the specified focus areas for NKJ strategy 2023-2025 are presented.

### Future view

In addition to the framework defined above, we can also define challenges and opportunities for the future.

Agriculture in the Nordic region is facing global and regional challenges, which increases the need for new knowledge and innovative solutions and adaptations. Four trends and challenges appear to be central: climate and environmental change, globalization, digitalization, and the transition to a bioeconomy. All four can lead to radical economic, social, and technical changes within NKJ's sectors.

In addition to the global trends, certain challenges are more relevant for Nordic agricultural and food production, for example:

- Regional development/rural development – centralization
- land use in agricultural areas – national food security
- Reduced basic knowledge in the sector – reduced interest in education and in working in the sector.

Agriculture and food production and reindeer husbandry must adapt to new conditions as temperatures and precipitation change and extreme weather events such as floods, sudden temperature swings, droughts, warm winters and longer growing seasons become more common.

These developments require basing the Nordic agricultural, food and reindeer husbandry sectors on sustainable principles. This requires increased emphasis on research and innovation in each of the Nordic countries, but also increased cooperation to use resources and results effectively. In addition, the academic and economic importance of the agricultural and food sectors in Europe is constantly increasing. In many

cases, the Nordic countries benefit from having a common voice in this arena.

NKJ will continue the cooperation between the governments of Sweden, Norway, and Finland to develop and promote cooperation on reindeer husbandry research in the Nordic region.

Additionally, NKJ acts as the secretariat for the New Nordic Food project and the work continues in to promote Nordic food culture and sustainable food systems, in line with the Nordic nutritional recommendations.

Equality and social integration are challenges in the sector. Working with gender issues has yielded positive benefits in other aspects of equality and can thus serve as a model for work with basic human values and rights. Addressing gender equality and social integration is a high priority for NKJ and should therefore permeate all activities within the NKJ portfolio.

### Focus areas

With the strategic framework and this background as a basis, the strategic focus areas chosen to be focused for 2023-2025 are to:

- Increase sustainability and resilience in agriculture and food production in a growing bioeconomy
- Strengthen the Nordic region's position in agricultural and food research within Europe
- Use land resources as a basis for value creation and regional development as well as improved supply capacity, reduced environmental and climate impact and better adaptation to the climate
- Strengthen the knowledge base for sustainable reindeer husbandry
- Strengthen and develop the New Nordic Food project to promote Nordic food culture and strengthen the food system
- Strengthen equality within the bioeconomy with a particular focus on gender and the position of children and youth





## Operational goals for 2025

This section describes three operational goals that will be used to evaluate the impact of NKJ's support and operations, which in turn will guide annual planning and future strategic work.

### 1. Nordic participation

#### Projects initiated in the Nordic region

NKJ shall actively participate in Nordic cross-sectoral initiatives within EK-FJLS and the environmental sector, to promote sustainable economic growth in line with the SDGs. NKJ shall also initiate and maintain collaboration with other organizations by supporting networks and research projects.

#### Projects outside the Nordic countries

NKJ shall work to bridge gaps between relevant European and Nordic projects by actively participating in relevant European partnerships and cooperational initiatives, as well as maintaining contact with relevant European institutions and bodies.

### 2. Transfer of and dialogue around NKJ-based knowledge

#### Seminars, conferences, and workshops

NKJ shall facilitate knowledge transfer within the Nordic countries for issues within NKJ's sectors. This is mainly achieved through financing activities that strengthen the Nordic knowledge transfer infrastructure in the form of seminars, conferences, and workshops.

NKJ must therefore be a key partner for linking together projects that are initiated within the Nordic region.

### Dissemination of NKJ-funded research results and activities

Scientific results and publications in peer-reviewed papers from activities funded by NKJ must be available on NKJ's website. Results from funded activities are presented in a popular scientific manner. NKJ is present on relevant social media and work with communication through press releases, information dissemination and materials for seminars, conferences, etc.

### 3. Development of Nordic agricultural and food research

#### Strengthen the connection between research and practice

NKJ shall prioritize funding activities aimed at narrowing the gap between research and applied agriculture and food production, which facilitates the transfer of research results to practice.

#### Equality and social integration

NKJ must prioritize funding of activities that deal with various aspects of gender equality in agriculture and food production. Funded activities must have at least 40% of each gender among applicants and actively work with gender issues using NKJ's equality guidelines. NKJ shall increase the diversity of academic and stakeholder applicants in terms of nationality, discipline and experience.



## Tools

The following four main tools will continue to be used to address the strategic focus areas and to achieve the objectives: funding, collaboration, policy support and advice and communication.

### 1. Funding

The funding is primarily intended to:

- Promote Nordic advantages and synergies in agricultural and food related research areas
- Promote collaboration between agricultural and food scientists in interdisciplinary activities to strengthen a cross-sectoral approach to future challenges
- Stimulate activities that aim to reduce the gap between research and applied agriculture and food production and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to practice

### 2. Cooperation

NKJ shall work to strengthen collaborations producing results and synergies that cannot be achieved through national efforts alone by:

- Coordinating and actively participating in macro-regional and European projects within the strategic focus areas
- Being an initiator and stakeholder in Nordic cross-sectoral initiatives within EK-FJLS (among others EK-food, EK-regional and AG-fisk) and the environmental sector to influence the direction of important research initiatives
- Actively participating in European cooperation initiatives and partnerships and promote the development of NKJ-funded projects and networks to EU projects
- Collaborating with SNS to create and maintain cross-sectoral network activities (SNS-NKJ network) within forestry and agriculture in a Nordic environment
- Collaborating with NordGen to encourage education and knowledge exchange about genetic resources in the Nordic region

- Supporting cooperation between Nordic research funders with the aim of initiating Nordic research programs via Nordforsk
- Maintaining and developing cooperation with NJF (Nordic Association of Agricultural Sciences)

### 3. Policy support and advice

A large part of NKJ's mission is to connect research and policy and to:

- Provide sound, evidence-based, policy-relevant information to the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), and advise EK-FJLS and NMR and other decision makers on issues related to agriculture and food production
- Initiate policy relevant statements on strategic focus areas and new emerging themes
- Participate in hearings, strategic arenas, and agenda-setting forums for bioeconomy policy in the Nordic regions

### 4. Communication

There are two target groups for NKJ communication: knowledge providers, including researchers and networks, and knowledge demanders, such as decision makers. NKJ conveys knowledge about sustainable agriculture and food production in the Nordic region and facilitates communication between researchers and decision makers by:

- Providing multiple venues and information pipelines, including websites, newsletters, social media, and annual reports
- Developing existing and new communication venues.
- Disseminating information about NKJ activities and research results in appropriate formats to stakeholders in the research, industry and policy-making communities through conferences, websites, publications, and social media
- Arranging seminars, conferences, and similar forums to gather stakeholders, discuss trends and identify new values, products and a Nordic identity in agriculture and food



## Guidance documents

- [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)
- [The Nordic Council of Ministers' vision 2030](#)
- [The Nordic Council of Ministers' action plan 2021-2024, based on Vision 2030](#)
- [The Nordic Council of Ministers' cooperation program 2021-2024 \(MR-FJLS\)](#)
- [NKJ's statutes](#)