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Nordic Council
of Ministers

Strategy plan 2022–2025

Nordic Forest Research (SNS)



Nordic Forest Research (SNS) Strategy Plan 2022-2025

Nordic Forest Research (SNS) is a co-operating body under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) and has been a unifying factor in Nordic forest research since its establishment in 1972.

Vision

The vision of SNS is to advance research across the Nordic region in multiple, sustainable uses of forests to increase benefits for the Nordic region and contribute to a sustainable society.

Mission

The mission of SNS is to promote, coordinate and enhance joint Nordic forest research efforts to increase synergy at a Nordic level and to link research with policy by providing sound, evidence based, policy relevant information to the Nordic Council of Ministers and other policy-makers.

Strategic focus areas 2022-2025

SNS will provide the knowledge base for meeting the demands of sustainable forest management in a growing bioeconomy, including:

- Forest resources as a base for value creation and rural development
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Safeguarding of forest biodiversity

SNS highlights focus areas that address the development of sustainable forest management adapted to meeting the demands in a growing bioeconomy. The forests deliver a great variety of products and services, some of which are in conflict with each other. As the amount of biomass extracted from forests is limited, a high priority is given to increase the added value of extracted forest resources. There is a need for research and analyses of where and how these resources will be of greatest benefit to the society.

Under the influence of climate change, smart solutions to mitigate the negative effects and adapt to changed environmental conditions will be of great importance. Other global challenges that will be increasingly important include increased consumption, urbanisation, migration, and loss of biodiversity. Forest utilisation must be developed to preserve or increase forest biodiversity, and to increase social benefits in rural areas.

Tools

The four main tools, which are (and will be) used to address the strategic focus areas and to achieve the goals are funding, collaboration, policy support and advice, and communication.



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1. VISION AND MISSION

Nordic Forest Research (SNS) is a co-operating body under the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) and has been a unifying factor in Nordic forest research since its establishment in 1972.

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2. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

2.1 Strategic framework

The strategic framework for identifying SNS's strategy is based on the 2021-2024 Cooperation Programme of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture and Forestry (MR-FJLS), and the Vision 2030 of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which outlines three strategic priority areas: a green, competitive and socially sustainable Nordic region. SNS contributes directly to the Vision 2030 and the Action Plan's goals G1, G2, G3 (a green Nordic region), K6 (a competitive Nordic region), S9, S10 and S12 (a socially sustainable Nordic region) through funding and collaboration activities, policy advice and dissemination of knowledge. In the SNS business plan for each year, the activities and their link to the Vision 2030 and the Action Plan are specified.

In addition, the strategy of SNS is formulated to contribute to achieving the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where goals 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 15 are regarded as being particularly relevant.



Furthermore, the Nordic Forest Solutions (NFS) have been used to identify the focus areas of SNS. In 2016, NMR established the NFS as a strategy for the region and for their forthcoming work. The NFS highlight the important challenges and promotes the solutions that forests can provide. The NFS emphasise the following policy areas as especially important for Nordic collaboration within forestry:

- (1) increased use of sustainably-produced wood and a drive toward bioeconomy
- (2) reinforced social values
- (3) increased use and conservation of biodiversity.

2.2 Strategic focus areas of SNS for 2022-2025

The NFS, the FJLS cooperation programme and the SDGs are used as frameworks for the activities of SNS during 2022-2025. However, the following focus areas are especially important for SNS's activities.

SNS will provide the knowledge base for meeting the demands of sustainable forest management in a growing bioeconomy, including:

- **Forest resources as a base for value creation and rural development**
- **Climate change adaptation and mitigation**
- **Safeguarding forest biodiversity**



SNS highlights focus areas that address the development of sustainable forest management adapted to meeting the demands of a growing bioeconomy. Forests deliver a great variety of products and services, some of which are in conflict with each other. As the amount of biomass extracted from forests is limited, a high priority is given to increasing the added value of extracted forest resources. There is a need for research and analyses on where and how these resources will be of greatest benefit to society.

Smart solutions to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and adapt to changed environmental conditions will be of great importance. Other global challenges that will be increasingly important include increased consumption, urbanisation, migration, and loss of biodiversity. Forest utilisation must be developed to preserve or increase forest biodiversity, and to increase social benefits in rural areas.





3 RESULTS BY 2025

This section describes indicators that will be used to evaluate the impact of SNS's support and activities, which in turn will help guide annual planning and future strategic work. To evaluate the impact of SNS, the following three indicators have been identified:

3.1 Nordic participation

■ Projects initiated in the Nordic countries

Developing the Nordic bioeconomy through cooperation is one of the main goals of the EK-FJLS Cooperation Programme and should therefore permeate all activities within SNS.

Goal: SNS will actively take part in Nordic inter-sectoral initiatives within EK-FJLS and the environmental sector, to promote sustainable economic growth in line with the SDGs.

Goal: SNS will initiate and maintain cooperation with other organisations through supporting networks and research projects.

■ Projects outside the Nordic region

SNS will promote joint Nordic forestry projects on relevant European and international levels to increase Nordic involvement and impact in international arenas.

Goal: SNS will work to bridge gaps between relevant European and Nordic projects by actively taking part in relevant European partnerships, maintaining contact with IUFRO and EFI, and continuing to work actively within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUS-BSR) framework.

3.2 Transfer of and dialogue about SNS-based knowledge

■ Seminars, conferences and workshops held by researchers in the Nordic countries

SNS aims to be a key facilitator of knowledge transfer within the Nordic countries for forests and cross-sectoral forestry-related issues, with an emphasis on SNS's focus areas. This is primarily achieved through funding of activities that strengthen the Nordic knowledge transfer infrastructure in the form of seminars, conferences and workshops.

Goal: SNS will be a key partner for interlinking projects initiated in the Nordic region.

Goal: SNS will promote funding of networks aimed to integrate Nordic forest research with its European counterparts.

■ Improved dissemination of SNS-funded research results and activities

Goal: All scientific results and publications in peer-reviewed papers from activities funded by SNS will be accessible on the SNS website. The SNS website will also present results from funded activities in a popular scientific manner.

Goal: SNS will be present in relevant social media and continuously work to disseminate SNS-funded results and integrate people outside of the forest sector with information related to the focus areas.

Goal: SNS will work to increase media attention to SNS activities by supporting projects with infrastructure such as press releases, dissemination of information and information material for seminars, conferences etc.



3.3 Development of Nordic Forest Research

■ Strengthening the link between research and practice

Goal: SNS will prioritize funding of activities aiming to shrink the gap between research and applied forestry, facilitating the transfer of research results into practice.

■ Educating and connecting PhD students with SNS funding

Goal: At least 40% of the participants in all funded activities should be PhD students or young researchers within their first 10 years of research activity.

Goal: SNS will fund at least two PhD courses per year.

■ Equality and social inclusion

Equality and social inclusion are challenges in the forest sector. The forest sector is generally conservative and traditional with an obvious male domination and a great equality improvement potential. Innovative and well-functioning organisations able to recruit workers from the entire labour market are essential for current

and future competitiveness and attractiveness. Competitive forestry in the Nordic countries is of utmost importance for the development of a sustainable bioeconomy, and will inevitably enhance green growth. Gender aspects are a special issue within the field of equality. Dealing with gender issues has shown positive benefits in other facets of equality, and can thus serve as a model for work with basic human values and rights.

Addressing equality and social inclusion is a high priority for SNS and should therefore permeate all activities within the SNS portfolio.

Goal: SNS will prioritize funding of activities dealing with different aspects of equality within forestry.

Goal: Funded activities should meet the requirement of at least 40% of each gender and actively work with gender issues using SNS's gender equality guidelines.

Goal: SNS will increase the diversity of academic and stakeholder applicants regarding nationality, discipline and experience.



4 TOOLBOX

Strategic initiatives are essential for meeting the challenges faced by, and emerging opportunities for, the Nordic forest sector. These initiatives should build on research networks in the forest sector and both Nordic and European interdisciplinary cooperative activities. For these purposes, SNS will extend its position as a network-based organisation with a highly scientific profile, and enhance connections among researchers, developers, compilers of information and policymakers within the forest sector. In addition, SNS will strive to consolidate its position through interactions with other stakeholders within the FJLS sector. The following four main tools are (and will be) used to address the strategic focus areas and to achieve these goals: funding, collaboration, policy support and advice and communication. See Table 1, page 11, for further details.

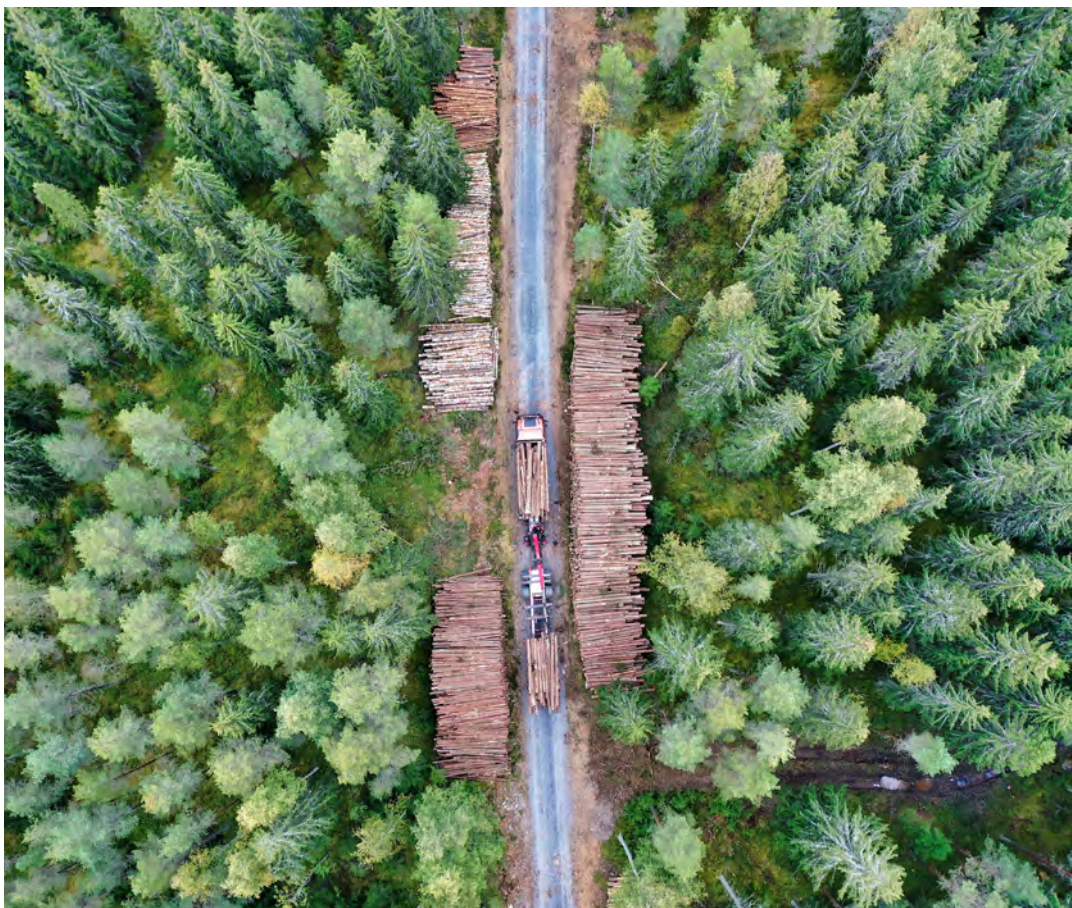
4.1 Funding

Funding annual research networks, research projects and the Nordic Forest Research Network (NordForNet) is a core activity of SNS's mission.

The funding is primarily intended to:

- foster Nordic benefits and synergies within forest-related research fields.
- promote cooperation between forest researchers in interdisciplinary activities for strengthening a cross-sectoral approach to future challenges.
- stimulate activities aiming to shrink the gap between research and applied forestry, and facilitate the transfer of knowledge into practice.

Furthermore, SNS will continue to support and coordinate research-based education in forests and forestry in the Nordic region by funding PhD-level education.



4.2 Collaboration

SNS will work to strengthen collaborations that generate results and synergies which cannot be obtained solely by national efforts. An important goal is to maintain and enhance key characteristics, which include flexibility, coordination, and long-term continuity. SNS will strive to maintain its effectiveness as a non-bureaucratic, highly professional organisation.

SNS will also increase dialogue between different sectors. SNS will extend collaboration with a number of Nordic and Northern European research stakeholders and institutions, including EFI and its Forest Bioeconomy Network (ForBioeconomy), Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research (NKJ) and Nordic Genetic Resource Centre (NordGen). SNS will also continue to work actively within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) framework, advance Nordic and Baltic forest research, and enhance collaboration with neighbours of the Nordic region to the west, northeast, and in the Arctic region. On European and international levels, SNS will continue to coordinate Nordic interests in EU framework programs, participate in relevant European partnerships, and maintain continuous contact with relevant international organisations, such as the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP).

4.3 Policy support and advice

A major part of the SNS mission is to link research and policy and to provide sound, evidence-based, policy-relevant information to the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) and other policymakers based on results from SNS-supported research, thus contributing to the development and implementation of policies, declarations, and other initiatives concerning sustainable forest management.

Maintaining visibility to officials and politicians, for example by arranging meetings and excursions, is essential. SNS also provides an arena for researchers and politicians to exchange views and ideas. Furthermore, SNS assists EK-FJLS and NMR by providing advice regarding issues related to forests and forest research; it creates awareness about current forestry issues, and suggests new priority areas for Nordic cooperation.

4.4 Communication

There are two target groups for SNS communication: knowledge providers, including researchers and networks, and those who request knowledge, such as decision makers.

SNS promotes knowledge about sustainable forest management in the Nordic region, and facilitates communication between researchers and policymakers by providing numerous meeting places and information pipelines, including its website, newsletter, social media, and its annual report. Furthermore, SNS actively communicates the importance of different aspects of equality within forestry.

In addition, SNS has strong communication platforms in its two internationally-established scientific journals, the Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research (SJFR) and Wood Material Science and Engineering (WMSE), which provide high-profile publishing outlets for Nordic researchers.

For more details on communication, please see the specific [SNS communication strategy](#).



Table 1 . Plan for addressing SNS's strategic focus areas



TOOLS USED TO ADDRESS THE SNS STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ FOREST RESOURCES AS A BASE FOR VALUE CREATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ■ CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION ■ SAFEGUARDING FOREST BIODIVERSITY 	
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding annual research networks (in collaboration with the Forest Bioeconomy Network), research projects and NordForNet with emphasis on the strategic focus areas • Funding PhD-level education within the overall area of responsibility • Supporting collaborations in strategic research with the Nordic region's neighbouring areas, around the Baltic Sea and countries to the west and northeast
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating and actively participating in macro-regional and European projects within the strategic focus areas • Being an initiator and stakeholder in Nordic inter-sectoral initiatives within EK-FJLS and the environmental sector, influencing orientations of important research initiatives • Initiating and engaging in collaborative activities with the Nordic region's neighbours to the west and northeast, the Arctic, and within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) • Actively participating in cooperative European research initiatives and partnerships and promoting the development of SNS-financed projects and networks into EU projects • Collaborating with the Forest Bioeconomy Network (ForBioeconomy) in the establishment and maintenance of northern European research networks (ForBioeconomy/SNS networks) and projects within the EUSBSR • Collaborating with NKJ in creating and maintaining cross-sectoral networking activities (SNS-NKJ networks) within forestry and agriculture in a Nordic setting • Collaborating with NordGen Forest to encourage education and knowledge exchange about forest genetic resources in the Nordic countries (NordGen Forest/SNS scholarships)
Policy Support/Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing sound, evidence-based, policy-relevant information to the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), and advice regarding issues related to forests to EK-FJLS and NMR and other policymakers • Initiating politically-relevant statements regarding strategic focus areas and new emerging themes • Participating in hearings, strategic arenas and agenda-setting fora for forest policy in the Nordic region
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing existing and new meeting points for online communication, making SNS more widely known • Disseminating information about SNS activities and research results in appropriate formats for stakeholders within research, industry and policymaking communities through conferences, websites, publications and social media • Organising seminars, conferences and similar fora for gathering stakeholders, discussing trends and identifying new values, products and a Nordic identity within forestry • Developing the collaboration with, and dissemination of, the two SNS-supported scientific journals, SJFR and WMSE



5. SUPPORTING MATERIAL

[FJLS Cooperation Programme 2021-2024](#)

[NMR's Action Plan 2021-2024](#)

[Nordic Forest Solutions Roadmap](#)

[United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)



6. ABBREVIATIONS

EFI	European Forest Institute
EK-FJLS	Committee of Senior Officials for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
ForBioeconomy	Forest Bioeconomy Network
FTP	Forest-based Sector Technology Platform
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
MR-FJLS	Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry
NFS	Nordic Forest Solutions
NKJ	Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research
NMR	Nordic Council of Ministers
NordForNet	Nordic Forest Research Network
NordGen	Nordic Genetic Resource Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SJFR	Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research
SNS	Nordic Forest Research
WMSE	Wood Material Science and Engineering

