1. Preface

The Nordic countries have a longstanding track record of working closely and well together on genetic resources and the Nordic Council of Ministers considers this whole issue an increasingly important priority. Nordic co-operation is closely interwoven with international co-operation on genetic resources, especially within the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity and in connection with development aid. Nordic work on genetic resources and biodiversity has attracted international attention. The work on access and rights to genetic resources is worthy of special mention. The Nordic Gene Bank’s (NGB) active role in establishing a regional gene bank in the SADC area in South Africa and the highly successful co-operation on genetic resource questions in the Adjacent Areas and North-West Russia is also praiseworthy.

In recognition of the importance of genetic resources and of the amount of attention paid to them, the Nordic Council of Ministers published a *Strategy for Conservation of Genetic Resources in the Nordic Region 2001-2004* (ANP 2002:704), which sets out goals and activities for work on the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture and forestry.

A number of evaluations of Nordic co-operation on genetic resources have been conducted over the last 25 years. All of them applaud and acknowledge the value of co-operation and call for further studies to make sure that the work continues to be organised in the most efficient manner possible. Evaluations of the action plans for the conservation of genetic resources and for agriculture and forestry 2001-2004 were presented in autumn 2004. They contain specific recommendations for organisational and scientific aspects of the work from 2005-2008.

The revised joint strategy for the management of genetic resources in fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food 2005-2008 presented in this document builds on the Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development - A New Course for the Nordic Region, the Action Plan for Fisheries, Agriculture, Forestry and Food 2005-2008, the strategy for genetic resources for the preceding programme period and the above mentioned evaluations. The strategy is based on the twin pillars of maintaining and building upon the highly successful formal co-operation on diversity in Nordic agriculture and forestry and continuing to develop technology and expertise in the management of genetic resources in the wild.

*Thorsteinn Tomasson*
2. Vision

To manage Nordic genetic resources in a sustainable manner. To prioritise programmes with particular potential for value generation and Nordic synergy. To promote Nordic co-operation as an international model, especially for access and rights to the use of genetic resources and the fair allocation of the benefits.

3. Introduction

Genetic resources are a hugely important part of our cultural heritage, identity, natural resources and food chain. Co-operation on genetic resources is a very wide field involving a broad range of stakeholders, fora, action plans and strategies, each of which generates Nordic synergies. One of the main challenges is to adopt a holistic approach and continue to strengthen the role of the Nordic Region by more closely integrating co-operation between the various stakeholders at Nordic and international levels.

Nordic co-operation on genetic resources is a success story with a long pedigree. Efforts to conserve and use the genetic resources in the Nordic Region in a sustainable manner have generated, and continue to generate, major Nordic synergy effects. The Nordic countries have developed a strong system for managing these resources, consisting of the Nordic Gene Bank (NGB), the Nordic Gene Bank Farm Animals (NGH) and the Nordic Council for Forest Reproductive Material (NSFP).

The countries made a joint decision that the plant genetic resources contained in the Nordic Gene Bank should be covered by joint Nordic rights and that collective responsibility for them should be maintained and refined. Access, the right to use the resources and the fair allocation of the benefits will be high priorities in the future. Nordic co-operation will also play a role in identifying global solutions.

In several ways, genetic resources from farm animals are treated differently from plant resources, e.g. the technical processing, ownership and international regulations. Exchange of genetic material from farm animals is still regulated by civil law. The Nordic Gene Bank Farm Animals (NGH) is not a bank for genetic material, as the individual countries have their own national bodies that organise conservation work in compliance with the recommendations contained in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which stresses that genetic resources are a national responsibility.

Genetic resources form the foundation for the diversity of species and for the maintenance of viable environments and ecosystems. They are also needed to help preserve some of the positive natural processes that are so important for production in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. Marine and forest resources are priorities in this context. Genetic resources in the wild are conserved by a combination of protecting species and habitats. The Biodiversity Convention differentiates between in situ conservation of species in their natural breeding grounds or habitats and ex situ conservation, e.g. in botanical gardens, zoos or gene banks.

The purpose of this strategy is to point Nordic co-operation on genetic resources in the right overall direction for the next few years. The strategy will be implemented by Nordic bodies such as NGB, NGH and NSFP. In addition to the current successful co-operation, the Nordic bodies will also prioritise dialogue about new challenges, e.g. the management of populations in the wild and subjects of general political interest, e.g. GMOs and how they relate to the sustainable management of genetic resources. The role played by business, its commitment to the sustainable management of genetic resources and the benefits business derives from them are other important dimensions.
The Nordic Council of Ministers set up a joint ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food in 2001. This holistic thinking is followed up in the strategy, which prioritises a multi-sectoral approach. For the first time, fish-genetic resources are covered by the new strategy and guidelines for the next few years. Common challenges worth mentioning, which involve identifying and exploiting the potential for greater efficiency and Nordic synergy across all of the sectors concerned, include following up on relevant international agreements, treaties and conventions, disseminating information, providing education and training and guaranteeing access and rights to genetic resources. Of equally crucial significance is the interrelationship between genetic resources and food supplies on the one hand and the safety, quality and range of food on the other. Consumers have a right to safe, high-quality food. Since they form the basis for food production, genetic resources play an important role in food safety and can improve it, e.g. sustainable breeding programmes help improve the health and welfare of farm animals.

4. Goals for co-operation on Genetic Resources in the Nordic Region

Nordic co-operation on genetic resources revolves around particular sector-specific challenges associated with the conservation, registration and use of genetic resources by the Nordic gene banks and networks and co-operation with national programmes. This strategy develops a holistic approach to the environment, food sources and their path to the consumer. Another crucial aspect is the role played by business, and the benefits it gains from sustainable management of genetic resources, including value generation and village and rural development.

Close co-operation on genetic resources has allowed the Nordic Region to manifest itself as a competent and proactive international partner. The Nordic model for regional co-operation on genetic resources has attracted international interest. This role must be continued and refined.

The Nordic countries co-operate on international agreements and treaties (CBD, the FAO Treaty, the Cartagena Protocol, EU, etc.) whenever obvious Nordic synergies are attainable. Nordic participation in international co-operation on genetic resources must focus on the practical implementation of rules, conventions, treaties, etc. Enlargement of the EU from 15 members to 25 increases the need for Nordic regional co-operation and the challenge will be to maintain and extend Nordic influence on European co-operation.

One important Nordic role is to procure and disseminate information to business, organisations that process genetic resources, administrative and regulative bodies, researchers, politicians, interest groups (e.g. in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food and environment sectors), museums and other cultural organisations and, last but not least, the general public. There is a pressing need for a channel of communications between researchers and those involved in the practical work.

Activities financed at national level that follow up on the goals and priorities defined in this strategy will play an important role in its implementation. Nationally financed activities within joint Nordic structures may be based on national targets and report back to the appropriate country in accordance with the principles it stipulates. However, it is generally accepted that national activities financed at national level also provide a boost to the joint Nordic work and help ensure a more effective overall use of resources. A clear distinction between national and Nordic responsibilities and work, and national and Nordic action plans and strategies, is important. Nordic activities must supplement or provide support to national activities in a way that generates Nordic synergy.

The overall goals for 2005-2008 are to:
- reinforce and refine work on the conservation and sustainable use of the diverse genetic resources that are of importance to the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food sectors.

- follow up the ministerial declaration on access and rights to genetic resources in an effective manner and participate actively in the drafting and implementation of relevant international agreements.

- carry on the system of joint management of Nordic genetic material based on coordinated Nordic implementation of the principles in the Biodiversity Convention (CBD), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA), the Bonn Guidelines and other relevant international treaties and agreements.

- refine interaction with stakeholders in the Adjacent Areas, the EU and the rest of the world, e.g. continuing to develop co-operation with North-West Russia and the Adjacent Areas for the mutual benefit of all parties. Nordic co-operation must be a platform from which an active contribution is made towards international solutions.

- develop organisational structures and co-operation between Nordic stakeholders. Greater efforts must be made to include Nordic co-operation on genetic resources in education, training and the dissemination of information in the Nordic Region.

- promote closer integration between national programmes and Nordic stakeholders in order to derive greater mutual benefits from exchanges of experiences, expertise, knowledge, efficiency measures, etc., including a clear distinction between Nordic and national work, responsibilities, action plans and strategies. Nordic activities must supplement or provide support to national activities, thus generating Nordic synergy.

- strive to ensure that Nordic institutions and forms of co-operation in the genetic-resources sector continue to play an active role in the development of Nordic researcher training through NOVA and other Nordic research bodies. This type of activity means that joint Nordic efforts help build critical mass and generate Nordic synergy despite the small size of the research environments in the individual countries.

- consolidate competences in Nordic organisations, national institutions and organisations involved with farm animals, cultigens and forestry. The focus must be on multisectoral co-operation. Research projects must be allocated to existing and relevant research environments.

- publicise the importance of genetic resources, e.g. by informing and making the population feel part of the considerable potential inherent in the use of genetic resources, i.e. their value to production, food quality, food safety, the environment and cultural history, as well as the importance of conserving genetic resources and exploiting them in a sustainable manner. The Communications Strategy for the Sustainable Administration of Genetic Resources in the Nordic Region 2005-2008 deals with these issues.

- continue to develop the debate about politically relevant issues in Nordic fora.

- make more use of knowledge about the qualities inherent in genetic resources, including knowledge of possibly unique characteristics associated with special breeds/lines of farm animals/plants and exploitation of their specific qualities.

---

- evaluate the need to set up working parties to develop indicators for genetic diversity in agriculture and forestry and evaluate the need to prioritise genetic resources in the wild.

- study the preconditions for Nordic co-operation on questions regarding the co-existence of conventional and ecological crops when cultivating GMOs, which are produced by biotechnological methods.
5. Priorities 2005-2008

Plants

The Nordic Council of Ministers approved the so-called Kalmar Declaration on access and rights to plant-genetic resources in 2003. It states that the genetic resources conserved and managed by the Nordic Gene Bank are a joint Nordic administrative responsibility and are to be considered joint Nordic material and freely accessible. The Declaration is an important statement of intent, which will hopefully serve as a source of inspiration to other countries and regions.

The Nordic work is strongly influenced by its involvement in international activities. The way NGB is organised and works has created a Nordic model for co-operation, which has served as an example for the development of regional co-operation in southern Africa, for example. NGB will continue to work on its four mandates with particular focus on the conservation of Nordic plants covered by them. The gene bank must be developed still further as the central Nordic body for the registration, conservation and use of plant-genetic resources.

Priorities 2005-2008
- The forms of co-operation between Nordic business, plant breeders and researchers must be reinforced and refined.
- Within Nordic co-operation on genetic resources, submissions will be prepared for negotiations about the biodiversity convention (CBD), the FAO treaty about plant-genetic resources, the Cartagena Protocol about GMOs and EU decisions about access to genetic resources and the fair allocation of the benefits.
- Studies need to be conducted of how relevant material managed by NGB can be made to fit into the multilateral system for plant-genetic resources under IT-PGRFA, despite the fact that not all of the Nordic countries have ratified the agreement.
- NGB will co-ordinate its work closely with national action plans.
- NGB’s role as a centre of excellence will be publicised and exploited in national and international work.
- NGB will initiate and co-ordinate activities and co-operate with relevant national and Nordic organisations in order to increase knowledge about plant-genetic resources, including their cultural history value.<0>

Farm animals

Sustainable use and conservation are necessary preconditions for the future availability of farm-animal products that meet the requisite quality standards. Sustainable development must cover breeds that are exploited commercially as well as those that enjoy protected status.

All of the Nordic countries have launched initiatives to conserve traditional breeds of farm animals but it is not just the old “country breeds” that need to be conserved, it is also the modern, commercial breeds. The future of genetic diversity is dependent on guidelines and incentives to maintain genetic breadth in the various breeds and populations, i.e. implementation of a sustainable development policy. Organisations involved in breeding and conservation also need to integrate new knowledge and expertise into their work that will ensure sustainable management of farm-animal genetic resources.

Based on the sustainability concept, Nordic co-operation on genetic resources in the next few years must maintain its focus on identifying, using and protecting the different types of values (economic, cultural, etc.), associated with genetic resources. The Nordic Gene Bank Farm Animals must continue to develop its central role in order to promote sustainable management of farm-animal genetic resources in the Nordic Region.
Priorities 2005-2008
- Develop the use of Nordic farm-animal breeds and the role of farm animals in village and rural development and, in particular, make sure that farm animal genetic resources generate value.
- NGH will work closely with organisations involved in breeding and conservation to create sustainable development and appropriate management of farm animal genetic resources.
- To make sure farm animals are naturally healthy and to facilitate safe and more ethical food production, NGH will encourage breeding organisations to develop breeding programmes, which also promote immunity to disease.
- NGB will initiate and co-ordinate activities and co-operate with relevant national and Nordic organisations. This will increase knowledge of farm-animal genetic resources, including their value in terms of cultural history.
- Closer co-operation will be developed between national and Nordic programmes and strategies.
- NGH will act as an information and knowledge centre for value generation based on sustainable development and the conservation of farm-animal genetic resources.
- NGH will study whether indicators can be defined to demonstrate progress and outcomes for the sustainable management of farm-animal genetic resources. The indicators must be able to serve as parameters for reporting back to the national organisations responsible for these genetic resources.
- NGH will develop expertise about the links between the management of farm-animal genetic resources and food safety.

Forestry

In 2002, NSFP (the Nordic Council for Forest Reproductive Material) established the Nordic Network for the Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources (the Forest Network). The challenge for the Forest Network is to define the role of the pivotal point for Nordic co-operation on forest-genetic resources.

Essentially, genetic conservation of forest resources is only possible in actual forests because adaptation to the location, the life span of the seeds and the whole issue of generational changes mean that the time perspectives are entirely different than they are for agriculture. An overlapping zone does exist between plants/crops and forest trees, however, mainly in the form of ornamental bushes and trees, etc. used in parks and gardens. Genetic conservation is basically dynamic, as climate changes, damage, etc. constitute ongoing challenges to genetic conservation in forests.

Forests are also important in economic terms in the Nordic countries. Sustainable production creates the foundations for lasting development, so it is important to make sure that genetically modified forest-regeneration materials are available in the changed climate of the future. Forests also play an important leisure and recreational role and fulfil important environmental roles, e.g. protecting, and in certain cases developing, biological diversity, protecting subsoil water, halting erosion, binding CO$_2$ – and generally having a positive effect on the climate.

As a result, guaranteeing simultaneous development, use and protection of forest-genetic resources represents a particular challenge. In addition, changes in the way forests operate and their importance in a climate context - including bio-energy and following up the Kyoto Protocol – are expected to raise new questions about both the use and protection of forest-genetic resources.

Priorities 2005-2008
- Focus on commercial forestry’s need for a suitable basis for cultivation.
- Closer co-ordination with national action plans and other activities in the Nordic groups that deal with plants, farm animals and forestry in order to achieve greater Nordic synergy.
- Reinforce and refine forms of co-operation between Nordic business, processors and researchers in close conjunction with national action plans.

**Fisheries and fish farming**

The conservation and sustainable exploitation of genetic resources within fisheries and fish farming is a new addition to the Nordic strategy for genetic resources. In the start-up phase, the emphasis ought to be on identifying possible priorities where co-operation would help establish/develop national and Nordic genetic-resource activities in fisheries and fish farming.

Living marine resources are one of the Nordic Region’s big sources of riches and a major area of joint responsibility. Developments in sea fishing necessitate studies of their possible effects on marine biodiversity. The use of selective tools and the heavy fishing of certain species may have a long-term effect on the genetic composition of fish stocks.

In the last 30-40 years, fish farming and farming of other aquatic species has become a rapidly growing business. Salmon in particular are bred intensively but other species, including cod, are also on their way to being bred commercially.

Recreational angling in freshwater and coastal areas is of major value to the quality of life in the Nordic Region. Many indigenous strains of fish, which migrate between fresh water and the sea, e.g. salmon, sea trout and eels, have disappeared or are threatened with extinction because of the destruction of suitable habitats, barriers in the waterways and intensive fishing. It is also well-known that anglers have released alien strains/species into the waterways and lakes, which have more or less driven out the indigenous strains/species. This situation should be examined so that the indigenous genetic resources can be conserved.

Developments in fisheries and fishing farming necessitate active commitment to the following:
- Clarification of the recommendations in the Kalmar Declaration about the legal status of wild genetic resources as they relate to fish stocks.
- A study of the genetic diversity of the wild strains and the potential of conserving them as genetic resources.
- Joint Nordic initiatives to study the human effects of genetic diversity in wild fish, e.g. through selective fishing and global warming.
- Study of the potential for Nordic co-operation on fish-genetic resources and co-ordination with other genetic resource activities in the Nordic working parties. Fish-genetic work must be incorporated into existing Nordic co-operation on genetic resources.
- Joint Nordic (and where appropriate also involving Scotland and Ireland) activities to hinder/reduce genetic pollution by fish farming of the wild strains of the same species.
- Reinforce and refine forms of co-operation between Nordic business, processors and researchers in relation to other genetic resource activities.

6. The place of co-operation on genetic resources in the Nordic Council of Ministers

In 2001, the Nordic Council of Ministers set up a joint ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food in order to guarantee full coverage of the whole food/value chain. Since then, the three committees of senior officials - EK-Livs (food), NEF (fisheries) and NEJS (agriculture and forestry) – have concentrated on developing their co-operation in order
to promote co-ordination between the sectors and ensure coverage of the ministerial council’s policy areas and a holistic view of the food chain.

The ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food covers all politically relevant questions throughout the food chain from the land/sea to the table, i.e. all aspects of food production and consumption that are related to diet policy and consumer policy. That kind of holistic perspective is an extremely important part of the follow-up work on this strategy.

NEJS is responsible for processing the two evaluations of the strategy for conservation of genetic resources in the Nordic Region and the action plan for Nordic agriculture and forestry co-operation for the latest programme period. NEJS will then decide on any initiatives that are needed. For that reason, this strategy has not adopted a stance on detailed realisation of the proposed organisational changes and their budget consequences.

The way Nordic genetic-resource co-operation works at the moment involves very strong in-built synergies for the various sectors, which it is desirable to maintain. It is, however, also desirable to look at new areas, e.g. fish, and to achieve rationalisation through closer co-operation and multi-sectoral activities in administration and information.

In 2001, the Nordic Genetic Resources Council replaced the Strategy Group for Genetic Resources, which dealt with matters of organisational and strategic/political importance that arose quite naturally from widespread Nordic co-operation over a prolonged period. The Nordic Genetic Resources Council is a policy-oriented body that continually assesses developments in the genetic resources sector, including the need for joint Nordic approaches to new multi-sectoral challenges.

The way the work will be organised in the future, and the overall role of the Nordic Genetic Resource Council in it, will emphasise combining scientific/specific genetic conservation activities with work of a strategic/political nature. In order to achieve this, the Nordic Genetic Resource Council, the relevant sectors and the institutions involved in Nordic genetic-resource activities need to work more closely together.

Reinforcement and refinement of Nordic co-operation on genetic resources must fulfil the following goals:

- Overall follow up on the strategy for genetic resources for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food 2005-2008.
- Closer contact between the various sectors: plants, farm animals, forestry, fish, food and wild genetic resources.
- Closer contact and links to the specialist units (NGB, NGH and NSFP). In order to achieve this, the Nordic Genetic Resource Council will be developed/reorganised to include direct participation by the directors of the bodies involved in genetic-resource co-operation (NGB, NGH, NSFP or similar) in order to achieve greater synergies.
- Closer co-ordination with national action plans and Nordic genetic resource activities in the plant, farm-animal, forestry, fish and wild-resources sectors to achieve greater Nordic synergy effects.
- Nordic co-operation on genetic resources in fish and fish farming will commence through a working party under the Nordic Genetic Resource Council. NGR is authorised to discuss the extent of the work, its costs and its future position, e.g. under NGH.
- The Genetic Resource Council should continue to oversee multi-sectoral strategy/policy activities and advise the ministerial council on them. It should also continue to oversee information activities, the secretariat, IT and other areas where closer co-operation can lead to greater synergy effects.
Enclosure: The members and mandate of the working party

Members

**Iceland**
Thorsteinn Tómasson, Chairperson
The Agricultural Research Institute

**Denmark**
Anders Christiansen
The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

Einar Eg Nielsen
Danish Institute of Fisheries Research

Gunnar Friis Proschowsky
Danish Forest and Nature Agency

**Finland**
Mikko Peltonen
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

**Norway**
Oluf Aalde
Ministry of Agriculture and Food

**Sweden**
Ulrika Tjälldén,
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs

Lennart Pettersson
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs

**Secretary:**
Helga Grønnegaard
Denmark

**Observers:**

**The Nordic Council of Ministers**
Lise Lykke Steffensen
Advisor for agriculture and forestry

Ásmundur Guðjónsson
Advisor for fisheries
Mandate and terms of reference for the working party charged with drawing up a revised joint strategy for genetic resources for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food.

1. The working party has been charged with drawing up proposals for a revised joint Nordic strategy 2005-2008 for genetic resources for the ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food. NEJS and NEF decided to set up the working party at a hearing on 23 January 2004, and stipulated that its work should be based upon and co-ordinated with:

- the Strategy for Sustainable Development – a New Course for the Nordic Region and the latest revision of it.
- the drawing up of the joint action plan for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food 2005-2008.
- evaluations of current action plans and strategies for the three sectors.
- the priorities previously defined by the Council of Ministers.
- Nordic Council recommendations.
- the Nordic Council of Ministers' overall policies concerning co-operation with other regional and international fora as well as the current and future Adjacent Areas.

2. The revised strategy for genetic resources must contain the Nordic frameworks for cooperation on the ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food for the period 2005-2008. It must also reflect a holistic approach to the whole food chain, from land/sea to table, and the importance of forestry in Nordic co-operation. In particular, the strategy must focus on areas where the Nordic countries have joint interests and where Nordic co-operation generates added value. The strategy must reinforce the impact of Nordic influence on international processes. It must also be multisectoral and policy-oriented.

3. The new action plan ought to contain:

- a vision for continued work on genetic resources by the ministerial council for fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food
- an introduction describing the overall political frame of reference
- goals for the work with genetic resources, including the overall political goals
- priorities for 2005-2008 in the following areas: fisheries, plants, farm animals, forestry, the interrelationships between food and genetic resources, legal issues, education/training and co-operation with other sectors (the environment, sustainable development, consumer affairs, etc.)
- the co-operation with the West Nordic Region, the Baltic States, the new Adjacent Areas, the EU/EEA and other international fora
- organisational frameworks for co-operation, including opportunities to optimise the organisational structure and multisectoral co-operation.
- follow-up and funding

4. The working party must define specific goals and proposals to optimise co-ordination and co-operation between the Nordic Gene Bank, Nordic Forestry, the Seed and Plant Council and the Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee's (SNS) forest-genetic network groups. The working party must also define goals for fish-genetic resources and, if possible, set goals for the interrelationship between genetic resources and food.

5. The working party must draw up proposals for where the Nordic Genetic Resource Council should fit into the Nordic Council of Ministers' organisational structure. The Environmental Sector must also be involved in this work.
6. The working party ought to consider the budgetary consequences of its proposals to guarantee a realistic link between budget level and implementation of activities described in the strategy.

7. The working party has the overall responsibility for drawing up the final proposal for the new strategy for genetic resources and submitting it to the relevant committees of senior officials and to the Co-ordination Group.

8. The working party may choose its own way of working. Experts may be consulted. The working party will be responsible for securing support in the appropriate sectors and countries and for involving the voluntary sector through hearings, etc.

9. Each country will appoint one or two representatives to the working party with relevant expert knowledge of the subject areas. The autonomous territories will appoint one representative each. The working party must be composed in such a way that it covers all four subject areas. Each country has one vote in the group. The working party’s representatives will be nominated by the respective countries and consist of high-ranking civil servants responsible for formulating national policy in appropriate areas.

10. When nominating members to the working party, the countries must also take into account the gender composition of the group in order to ensure equal representation.

11. The chairpersonship of the group will rotate according to the same system as the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

12. The draft action plan must be submitted by 15 May 2004 so that it can be debated at the ministerial council (fisheries, agriculture, forestry and food) in August 2004 and then submitted to the Nordic Council in October 2004.

13. The Nordic Council of Ministers’ Secretariat will take part in the work to keep the Group informed of overarching Nordic policies and make sure the work is linked to current and ongoing strategy work related to the sectors and to co-operation bodies/institutions. The Secretariat will also assist with proposals for procedures and, when needed, with administrative and practical assistance.

14. DKK 175,000 will be earmarked for writing up and printing the strategy. A secretary will be appointed to help the working party draw up the strategy. The countries and autonomous territories will pay the travel costs, etc. for their own representatives.

15. This mandate is valid from 23 January 2004 to 1 September 2004.