

## NOTAT

Nordisk Ministerråd

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Til Arbeidsgruppene under Ministerrådet for Næring, Energi og Regionalpolitikk

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Arbeidsprogram 2013-2014 – Arbeidsgrupper under EK-NER

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Working Group 3 – Green Growth: Innovation and entrepreneurship  
Work Programme 2013-2016

### **1. Formålet med gruppens arbeid / the purpose of the group's work**

*The Working Group's understanding of the mandate*

- To present an overview of instruments and their importance and explore "good practice" case studies of national, regional and local governance to support innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth. This will be presented as a handbook, with regional policymakers as the main target group.
- To examine factors that hinders and promotes green growth.
- To disseminate and discuss results with national, regional and local stakeholders in the Nordic countries.
- To contribute to public policy development to support innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth at regional level in the Nordic countries.

The EK-R's Programme presents its objectives as follows (translated from Norwegian):

*"The objective of the regional sector of the Nordic Council of Ministers is to contribute to growth in green business communities, and employment that includes participation of both men and women. More knowledge on the preconditions for environmentally driven entrepreneurship and innovation is needed. New instruments and measures to promote green innovation regionally and locally will be tested. Good examples will be discussed and spread to other areas. In order to achieve this, initiatives will be taken to promote more systematic learning and knowledge transfer."*

#### *Definitions*

The understanding of green growth varies between individuals, professions, political parties, etc. Our work is based on the following definition by the OECD (2011), and adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2011):

*"Green growth means fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. To do this it must catalyse investment and innovation which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities".*

The working group will apply a broad definition of entrepreneurship and innovation which in relation with green growth is closely associated with the concept of eco-innovation. We adopt the definition of the Eco-innovation Observatory (EIO), run by the European Commission's Director General of the Environment (2011):

*"Eco-innovation is the introduction of any new or significantly improved product (good or service), process, organisational change or marketing solution that reduces the use of natural resources (including materials, energy, water and land) and decreases the release of harmful substances across the whole life-cycle".*

### *Policy instruments*

The work will be limited to policy instruments stimulating green growth in industries, not in consumer behaviour (what to buy, how to manage waste, etc.). We will carry out in-depth studies in business sectors where the interest of at least two, normally three participating counties, are represented. Public procurement policy and local production for local use (like locally produced food), etc. are included.

New measures will not be tested or tried out in practice. However, examples of good practice will be disseminated and discussed at seminars organised within the framework of the working group in order to promote learning and knowledge transfer on the issue of green growth and eco-innovation.

### *Regional dimension*

The working group will be focused on the regional policy dimension of green growth. We may include policy instruments with an intended regional purpose and/or study nationwide measures with different regional impacts. We will primarily explore economic instruments: i) that stimulate production of goods and services in more eco-friendly ways (materials, energy), ii) that promote the production of goods and services with more eco-friendly impact when used in other sectors or when consumed. With the policy and governance perspectives on potentials for green growth, innovation and entrepreneurship, we will involve different types of regions.

### *Gender*

The issue of gender, introduced as employment that includes participation of both men and women, will be taken into consideration in the work carried out within the framework of the working group. This is placed in a wider context of demographic characteristics and dominating business sectors of given regions and the relative weight of women or male dominated business sectors. Policy measures at regional or local level dealing with gender equality may be identified. The working group will not implement studies concerned only with gender, but will integrate this consideration into the studies that are carried out.

## **2. Activities in 2013-2014**

### ***Generate an overview of good examples of public policy initiatives in regions to support innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth***

#### *Background*

Initial work has been carried out at Nordregio within the framework of the NCM Working Group on Third Generation Regional Policy during 2011-2012 to clarify concepts and the nature of public policy on green growth in the context of the OECD, EU, and NCM as well as national and regional level policy in the Nordic countries. Key concepts in the study of green growth and innovation involve eco-innovation and environmental technology. The distinction between the two is that environmental technology refers to businesses that work specifically to develop environmental technology solutions, whereas eco-innovation has a broader coverage and involves all economic sectors, not least the ones that have been identified as having the highest environmental impacts. Both examples of regional and local support for the development of environmental technology (which is often referred to as cleantech, comprising a number of sub-sectors) and other aspects of eco-innovation are considered relevant to study closer within the framework of the Working Group. In parallel, NCM and Nordic national agencies have during the last years initiated various activities (programs, analysis, and research) in this area.

#### *Overview of existing analyses, policy measures and good examples*

Nordregio prepared in late 2013 and early 2014 an overview of recent studies/analyses, on-going programs and good examples of national, regional (and local) governance to support eco-innovation and environmental technology. The overview included a mapping of recent analyses of relevance for green growth innovation and entrepreneurship, e.g. from the OECD, Nordic, and national authorities. The mapping included a short summary of existing knowledge concerning potentials and barriers for different sectors. A review was prepared of existing national and regional policy instruments and case studies on the topic which have already been produced in the Nordic countries and that the members of the Working Group know of. The prepared documentation of the knowledge overview is being used in the in-depth studies of the WG where appropriate. Moreover, the outcome of the overview is available at the WG Handbook.

#### *In-depth study on the bio-economy*

The first in-depth study focused on the bio-economy and its influence on regional development in the Nordic countries. The study included the current "state of play" in the Nordic countries, in terms of bioeconomy activities already taking place. Case studies have been implemented in all Nordic countries. The outcome of the study was presented, as a contribution from the Working Group for Green Growth – Innovation and Entrepreneurship, at a Nordregio Forum conference, back-to-back with the ministerial meeting in Iceland in 2014.

#### *Dissemination activities related to the bioeconomy project*

The dissemination activities of the bioeconomy in-depth study has included e.g. presentations at Nordic and Baltic bioeconomy meetings in 2014 as follows:

Nordic Bioeconomy conference, January 2014, Stockholm  
NordBio kickoff conference, February 2014, Reykjavik  
Realizing the Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea region, March 2014, Tallinn  
Debate on Bioeconomy, Folkemodet, June 2014, Bornholmen,  
Bioekonomin- den nya tillväxtbranschen, Almedalen, Visby June 2014  
Bioeconomy and rural development, September 2014, Rohevik, Tartu  
Bioeconomy and regional development, Nordregio Forum, Keflavik November 2014

Moreover, the final report of the bioeconomy study has been published (Nordregio Working Paper 2014:4) as well as the Nordregio News Special Issue on Bioeconomy.

The Nordic Bioeconomy study report 2014, see:

<http://www.nordregio.se/en/Publications/Publications-2014/Bioeconomy-in-the-Nordic->

[region-Regional-case-studies/](#)

The Nordregio News special Issue on Bioeconomy 2014 , see:

<http://www.nordregio.se/en/Publications/Publications-2014/Bioeconomy-and-Regional-Economic-Development/>

#### *In-depth study on industrial symbiosis*

Based on the work with the knowledge overview and discussions at a working group meeting in May 2014, it was decided at the May 2014 WG meeting that the second in-depth study will focus on different approaches to develop industrial symbiosis and its implications for regional development. This study is initiated in autumn 2014 and will be completed in September 2015. The Industrial Symbiosis in-depth study includes literature overview, Nordic good practice case studies, and analysis including policy evaluation.

#### *Working group meetings*

The working group had three meetings in 2013. The first meeting took place in connection with the kick-off meeting in Kiruna in February. A follow-up meeting to finalise the working plan took place in May. The third meeting was held in September, where among other issues, the project plan drafted by Nordregio on the in-depth study on bio-economy was discussed.

Four working group meetings were held in 2014. The first meeting took place in January followed by a Nordic workshop on bioeconomy organised by Nordregio, with key note presentations on Bioeconomy, by James Philp from the OECD and Damien Plan from the European Bioeconomy Observatory. The second meeting took place in Helsinki in May. It was a two day meeting, starting with a seminar with presentations from representatives of national institutions in Finland on bioeconomy-related strategies and initiatives. The Finnish national bioeconomy strategy was discussed, too, at the Helsinki meeting. The second day, the working group had its meeting. A third meeting was held in September 2014 where a key issue on the agenda was the draft report for the Nordic bioeconomy in-depth study. In November 2014, back-to-back with the Nordregio Forum in Iceland, the fourth working group meeting was organised with e.g. discussion on project plan for the second in-depth study on Nordic industrial symbiosis, to be implemented in 2014-15.

### **Planned activities in 2015-2016**

#### *Second and third in-depth study*

The second in-depth study on industrial symbiosis will be completed by September 2015. The topic of the third in-depth study will be decided during spring 2015. This study will be implemented in 2015-16. As it has been the case with the other selected in-depth studies, the choice of topic has to be synchronized with earlier and on-going work of this WG and other NCM committees. Societal analysis may for example include a more in-depth survey of barriers and incentives for implementing green growth initiatives and disparities between different sectors and regions. The ambition is to identify "good practice" of regional (and local) governance in the Nordic countries to support innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth. The studies will be based on a combination of methods, for example quantitative studies, document studies and qualitative interviews. The studies will be published as separate Nordregio Working Papers.

#### *Dissemination*

In 2015 a workshop is planned to disseminate the results of the industrial symbiosis in-depth study. It is expected that other opportunities to disseminate this project will appear during the project period, and the project manager or team members will actively engage in relevant forums to present on-going progress of the project on industrial symbiosis. Similar dissemination activity will also take place in relation with the third and final in-depth study. The comments and input provided during seminars/workshops will be used for further development of the in-depth studies and to identify needs for future programmes or policy initiatives.

Popular synthesis report based on project material is delivered during the programme period of the working group, e.g. as Nordregio policy briefs and/or issues of Nordregio News. An issue of Nordregio News was published in November 2014 in relation to the in-depth study on bioeconomy, and a policy brief is planned to be produced by the end of 2015 in relation with the in-depth study on industrial symbiosis.

#### *Handbook*

The outcome of the overview, findings from the three in-depth studies, and the results of the dissemination process will be presented in the form of a "Handbook" for policy makers and practitioners on supporting innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth. The Handbook will be developed in 2015-2016, including also a selection of Nordic good practice descriptions/factsheets. Moreover, the Handbook provides a tool for policy development in Nordic regional green growth policy.

In order to disseminate and facilitate the use of the handbook, a series of regional dissemination workshops and/or visits during 2016 will be organized in the Nordic countries. .

#### *Synthesis report for the EK-R*

A synthesis report will be prepared as a summary of the results of the WG activities in 2013-2016.

#### *Working group meetings*

The working group will continue to meet 3-4 times per year during 2015 and 2016. It is planned to combine the working group meeting in spring 2015 with a study visit to one of Industrial Symbiosis case study regions.

### **Politiske målsætninger / Political objectives**

The objective of the group's work is to support the development of public policy and support measures for innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve green growth with a focus on the national and regional level, but which will be of relevance for national, regional, and local authorities in the Nordic countries.

### **3. Informasjonsvirksomhet / dissemination activities**

The objective of the work carried out within the framework of the Working Group will be achieved through an on-going dialogue with national, regional and local stakeholders in the production of case studies, and in the dissemination and discussion of results, which will bring together actors from different regions.

### **4. Samarbeid med andre grupper og sektorer / collaboration with other groups and sectors**

With regard to the other working groups with secretariat at Nordregio, it will be especially relevant for the Working Group to keep a close dialogue with the Working Group on green growth and planning in order to take into consideration the links between physical planning and business development and be aware of opportunities to develop synergies between the works of the two groups. Also the work within the Working Groups on demography and the Arctic will be relevant to follow. Demography is a relevant issue in the development and implementation of innovation and entrepreneurship policy, and it may be relevant to carry out case studies in Arctic regions of Norden.

It is also significant to monitor and ensure coordination with the work carried out concerning other committees of senior officials on agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture, food and forestry industries, and other parts of the committee on business and energy policies.

## **5. Gruppens sammensetning / the composition of the group**

Finland: Kaisu Annala (chair), Ministry of Employment and the Economy  
Liisa Saarenmaa, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Faroe Islands: Oyvindur av Skarði, Ministry of Trade and Industry  
Iceland: Sigrídur Kristjansdóttir, Innovation Iceland  
Norway: Pål Erik Holte, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development  
Sweden: Örjan Hag, Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications  
Åland: Robert Mansén, Åland Technology Center

### **Secretariat:**

Jukka Teräs, Nordregio  
Lise Smed Olsen, Nordregio