

Sectoral Programme for **Culture**

The Norwegian Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers 2017



Norwegian Ministry of Culture



Nordic Council
of Ministers

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Foreword

The objective underlying the programme of the Norwegian Presidency is to maximise the relevance and usefulness of the Nordic cultural co-operation – to policymakers in the cultural field, Nordic cultural institutions and residents of the region, as well as in responding to the challenges facing the Nordic region in a changing world.

Nordic art and culture are popular. Throughout 2017, the Nordic region will be the focus of the *Nordic Matters* joint cultural initiative at the Southbank Centre in London, which is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Collaboration on the promotion of Nordic art and culture abroad is important, natural and makes perfect sense. It is my hope that *Nordic Matters* will boost international interest in and awareness of Nordic cultural expressions and artists.

Many residents of the Nordic region are involved in cultural cooperation, as participants and beneficiaries. The aim for the Norwegian Presidency is to expand the Nordic audience. That is why we have launched a three-year project – *The role of the cultural and voluntary sectors in integration and inclusion*. How can we help new Nordic residents settle in and begin enriching society with their resources? In my view, cultural and voluntary initiatives, and not least cultural activities organised by the non-governmental and non-profit sector, have a role to play in this regard.

During the Norwegian Presidency, I hope to strengthen the cultural policy platform and agenda of the Nordic Council of Ministers. We need to find shared solutions to shared challenges. Media pluralism and media financing is under pressure in the Nordics, in part due to competition from global media players. This threatens to undermine the important civic function of the media and, as a result, media pluralism and democracy. Moreover, in all of the Nordic countries there is a search for new business models for the promotion and financing of national films.

Good governance is crucial for the protection of core values in sports. The Nordic cooperation initiatives I have launched in this regard will be followed up on during the Norwegian Presidency.

More than ever, the world's eyes are turned to the Arctic and the High North. The Arctic region is undergoing rapid change, and the associated challenges are becoming increasingly apparent. I intend to concentrate on and highlight the value and potential of cultural activity as an instrument for positive, sustainable Arctic development.

Nordic cooperation is founded on mutual language comprehension, and the maintenance and promotion of such understanding, not least among children and young people, is vital.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is also engaged in an important reform process designed to reinforce the relevance of the Council as a collaborative body. The objective is to make the Nordics the world's most integrated region.

I hope that the Norwegian Presidency in 2017 will demonstrate the relevance of Nordic cooperation to residents of the Nordic region.



Photo: Vegard Wivestad Grøtt/NTB Scanpix

Strategies and priorities for the Norwegian Presidency

The Nordic Council of Ministers is active in numerous areas and sectors, from culture, education and health to gender equality. The Norwegian Presidency in 2017 is a chance to leave our own mark on these efforts, to identify opportunities and address challenges and topics common to the Nordic countries.

Norway has adopted three cross-sectoral priorities for the Norwegian Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017: *the Nordic Region in Transition, the Nordic Region in Europe and the Nordic Region in the World*. While clearly interrelated, these focus areas are each significant. They shine a bright light on factors that matter and that shape societal development both within the Nordic countries and beyond them. It is important that cultural policy addresses these, and all three priorities feature in the initiatives that form part of this sectoral programme.

The Strategy of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Nordic Cultural Co-operation 2013-2020, which was drawn up during the last Norwegian Presidency in 2012, has held up well. The strategy identifies five topics for Nordic cultural co-operation: *the Sustainable Nordic Region, the Creative Nordic Region, the Inter-cultural Nordic Region, the Young Nordic Region and the Digital Nordic Region*.

The strategy serves to remind us of the visions for the future of the Nordic region, and highlights important societal areas where cultural policy plays a vital role.

In the Norwegian Presidency's sectoral programme for culture, these topics cross each other. If we are to realise our strategy of the *Sustainable Nordic Region*, the region must be vibrant and creative culturally and fully exploit the potential that lies in digital culture. The objective for *the Inter-cultural Nordic Region* is that everybody living in the Nordic region feels at home here and participates in cultural life, not least children and young people in the Nordic countries.

Our Nordic cultural co-operation is built on the principle of Nordic advantage. The Nordic countries will work actively with each other in those areas where the Nordic countries have shared interests and challenges, and where co-operation brings Nordic added value.



Principal initiatives

- The role of the cultural and voluntary sector in integration and inclusion
- Creative industries – *Nordic Matters*
- Media economics
- Nordic film in the digital market
- Culture and cultural policy in the Arctic
- Nordic language comprehension
- Good governance and women in sports
- The illicit trade in cultural objects

The role of the cultural and voluntary sectors in integration and inclusion

How can cultural policy create conditions that help new inhabitants of the Nordics settle in? How can we ensure that they are given a chance to share their competencies, thus enriching the Nordics? How can we open our community to include people from different backgrounds?

Here, both cultural life and the voluntary sector – and not least cultural activities put on by the voluntary sector – can play a pivotal role. Through the three-year project *The role of the cultural and voluntary sectors in integration and inclusion*, Norway will work on this at the Nordic level. The project will follow up the Nordic co-operation programme for the integration of refugees and migrants which was launched in 2016 under the auspices of the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation.

The project will focus on art and cultural activities as arenas and meeting places for inclusion and integration. In marching bands, museums, libraries, theatres and across the entire range of art and cultural activities there is tremendous involvement and much good work is being done. Our hope is that this project can help shift the conversation from being about *accessibility* to addressing *involvement*. How can we make use of the capabilities the new arrivals are bringing with them, many of whom worked as artists and cultural workers in their home countries, and how can our art and cultural sector include them among their ranks so that they can share their knowledge and skills?

Arts Council Norway will be responsible for directing the project and act as its secretariat.



Media economics

Media pluralism in the Nordic region is under pressure. Increased competition from global companies such as Facebook and Google impact the advertising market, and thus affect the financial situation of Nordic media outlets. The drop in ad revenues could weaken the media's ability to perform their role in society at large, with consequences for the range and variety of media outlets and for democracy. Together, we must therefore work to create conditions that can continue to promote a sustainable and vibrant media sector in the Nordics.

In response to a Norwegian initiative, the Nordic Ministers of Culture have initiated a survey of the current situation in the advertising market. The goal is to learn more about the global challenges facing the Nordic media businesses. NORDICOM – the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research – has been commissioned with conducting the study.

The results will be analysed and debated in a media summit that will be held on 11 May during the Nordic Media Festival in Bergen.



Nordic film in the digital market

The film industry in the Nordic countries face the same challenges- there is an ongoing search to identify new business models, both to ensure the promotion of and access to domestic films, and to expand the number of sources of funding for nationally produced films. This is a question of providing varied and high-quality Norwegian and Nordic content for the consumers, and ensuring that revenues are channelled back to help fund new productions.

In most European countries, the film policy has been governed by the principle that all parts of the value chain that profit from the distribution of films and other audiovisual content – thus benefiting financially from the viewers’ consumption of these products – should also contribute financially to the production of new films, and to measures to promote film interest. The players in question make money from film distribution and benefit financially from the increasing consumer demand for films and series. We must therefore continue the ongoing discussion on how providers of VOD and OTT services and other key players should contribute.

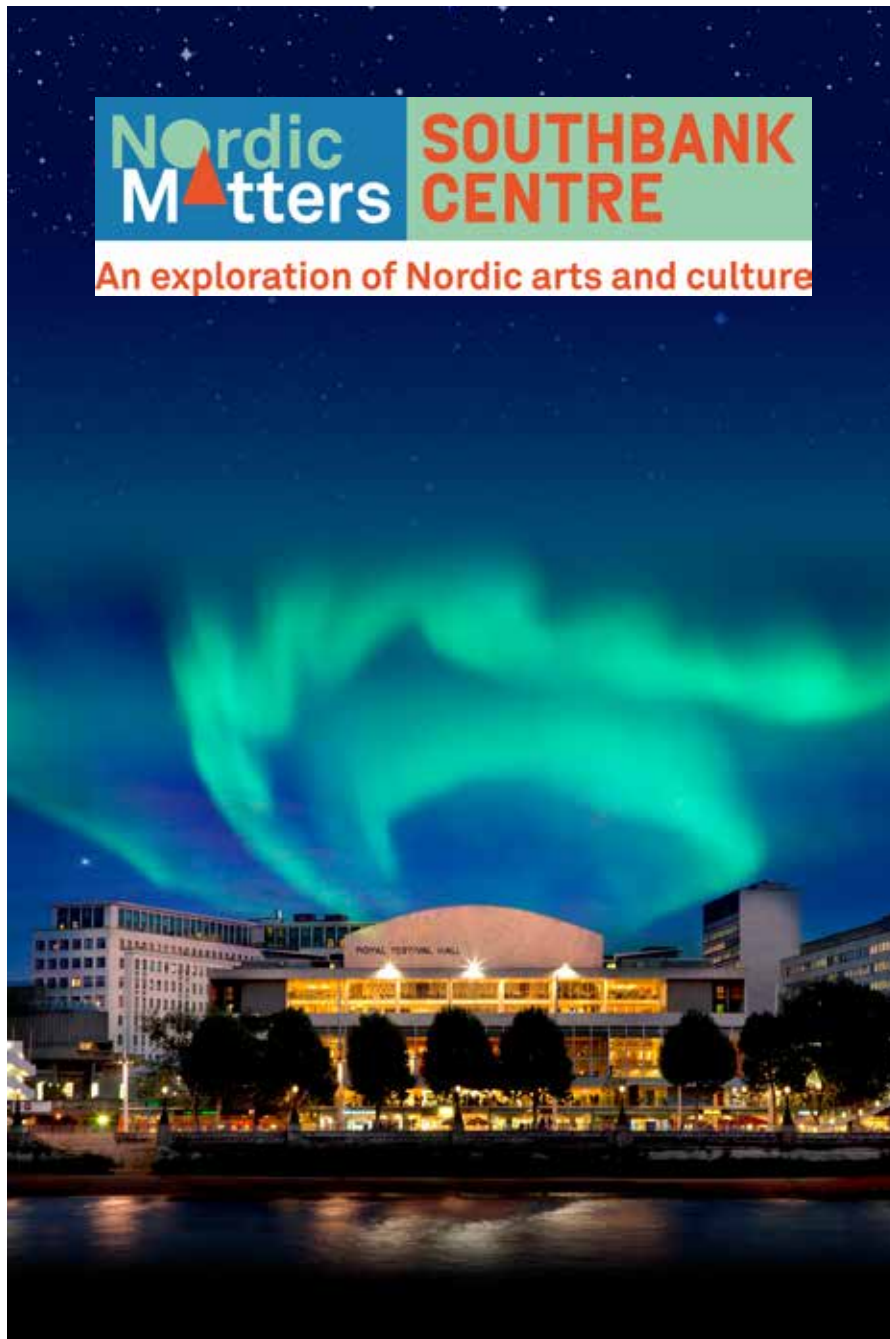
In 2016, the Norwegian Ministry of Culture awarded grants to pilot projects testing new business- and distribution models in the digital market. These grants are targeted at the cultural sector. Their objective is to foster new insights and understanding, as well as maximising revenue in the Norwegian cultural and creative industries. Most of the funds have been allocated to “Nettkino” (a “catch-up cinema” service), a project testing a new business model to help films reach out to a larger audience, thus increasing its revenue. The aim of the project is to propose a solution to the “black window” phenomenon. The term refers to the period from a film’s theatrical release until it becomes available on other viewing platforms, in which films are not available to consumers.

Individually, the Nordic countries are small markets, making it difficult to build business models that are financially viable for domestic content only. A cross-Nordic collaboration may well be the answer to this dilemma.

These issues will be discussed at a ministerial seminar on film policy to be held on 21 August 2017 at the Norwegian International Film Festival in Haugesund.



The nominees for the 2016 Nordic Council's Film Prize
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Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre.
Photo: Morley von Sternberg

Nordic Matters at the Southbank Centre

The cultural initiative *Nordic Matters* at the Southbank Centre in London in 2017 is a unique opportunity to focus international attention on the breadth of Nordic art and culture. Working internationally comes natural to Nordic artists and cultural workers. Now that there is a considerable – and growing interest – in all things Nordic, it is essential that we make full use of this opportunity. We hope that *Nordic Matters* will further enhance international interest in and focus on our cultural expressions and our artists.

Cultural and creative industries

Never has demand for art and cultural products and services been greater. A UNESCO report from March 2016 shows that the global trade in cultural products and services doubled between 2004 and 2013 – in spite of the global economic downturn in the same period. Furthermore, the report reveals a pronounced shift from physical cultural products, such as CDs, DVDs and printed publications, to digital services. The rise of digitalisation brings with it a raft of new opportunities.

The question is how Nordic players in the fields of art and culture can realise this potential optimally; how can we help fuel growth and development? And how can we make use of the increased interest in all things Nordic and our digital advantage to help promote Nordic arts and cultural products, both in the Nordic market and globally?

Each Nordic country has made its own experiences in its work with the cultural and creative industries, and we all stand to gain from sharing these experiences with one another. In connection with the opening of *Nordic Matters*, an informal meeting of the Nordic Ministers of Culture was held in London on 13 January.

Culture and cultural policy in the Arctic

More than ever, the world is looking to the Arctic and the High North. In the North, changes are swift and the challenges we are facing becoming ever more visible. Global climate change is exerting tremendous pressure on the people living in the Arctic, and on Arctic nature. It is important that the Nordic countries unite in the efforts for a responsible future development. Sustainable development, including sustainable business development, in the Arctic are the primary objectives of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Co-operation.

Climate change creates challenges; abundant natural resources bring opportunity. The need to protect, conserve and respect the past must be balanced against the need for a healthy development benefiting all the inhabitants of the North.

The Arctic is more than ice, sea and natural resources – the region is also about people and culture. Responsible development in the High North should be achieved with the people living in the High North and their cultures in mind, and should put to use the vigour and capabilities provided by the people working in the cultural sector. Art and cultural life hold the key to promoting awareness of sustainability in the broadest sense.

For the people living in and visiting the Arctic, art and culture are vital resources. They help promote development in a variety of societal areas: as a factor in local and regional development, and as a meeting place and arena for contact, exchanges and co-operation across national boundaries. We seek to highlight and discuss the value of art and culture and their potential in the work to achieve sound, sustainable development in the Arctic.

Norway will raise these issues during the Arctic Arts Summit in Harstad on 21 and 22 June. For the first time, politicians and other stakeholders from all circumpolar countries are invited to discuss the role of arts and culture and culture policy in the development of the High North.



Svalbard's global seed vault, with the glittering facade designed by artist Dyveke Sanne.
Photo: Pål Hermansen/NTB Scanpix



The youth series "SKAM" which was awarded the Nordic Language Prize 2016.
Photo: NRK

Nordic language comprehension

The Nordic language co-operation and Nordic language comprehension lie at the very heart of Nordic collaboration. In fact, linguistic understanding among the Nordic countries is the area's primary competitive advantage. Should the day ever come when we are obliged to speak English with our Nordic neighbours, much will have been lost. Understanding each other's language is also a prerequisite if we are to reach the Nordic prime ministers' objective to turn the Nordics into the world's most integrated region.

The means of safeguarding and promoting mutual comprehension of each other's languages lie in the field of culture, with literature being key. The Nordic Council Literature Prize and the Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize are important and powerful means of growing interest in Nordic language and literature across the national boundaries that separate the Nordic countries. The Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize was created following a Norwegian proposal when Norway last held the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2012. At the Norwegian Festival of Literature in Lillehammer – the Sigrid Undset Days at the end of May and beginning of June 2017 – Nordic literature will be discussed at an array of events.

However, the art and cultural sector have several effective means of promoting Nordic linguistic comprehension; one example is the tremendous interest generated by series such as *Skam* both in the Nordics and internationally. The primary target group for this work are children and young people. Reinforcing children's and young people's understanding of Nordic languages helps ensure that Nordic co-operation continues to be sustainable in the future.

The Nordic Ministers of Culture have decided to establish a culture and language programme for children and young people. This programme will be launched in 2017, and key emphasis will be given to Nordic language comprehension, giving the Nordic Council of Ministers a new and important means of reinforcing linguistic comprehension.

The programme will be launched during the Norwegian Presidency.



Photo: Vidar Alfarnes

Good governance and women in sports

Good governance is vital for keeping up the core values and integrity of sports. The role of governance was discussed at the Nordic meeting of sports ministers, which was held in connection with the 2016 Youth Olympic Games at Lillehammer. The meeting resulted in a joint Nordic statement to encourage good governance in sports, including improving the gender balance in sports organisations.

During the Youth Olympic Games at Lillehammer, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) invited Norway to help raise the profile of women in sports. The backdrop to this is the relatively low number of top level female leaders in sports organisations. Following up on the invitation from the IOC, the Norwegian Minister of Culture has hosted a number of meetings during which government officials and sports representatives have discussed and advised on potential initiatives to include more women at all levels of sports.

As part of the meeting of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Culture at Svalbard 24 to 26 April, the Norwegian Minister of Culture is organising a Nordic sports summit aiming to present a new Nordic declaration on good governance and an improved gender balance in sport.

As a next step, the Norwegian Minister of Culture will produce a list of recommendations to be presented to the IOC during the Lima 2017 session.

Illicit trade in cultural objects

The Nordic Ministers of Culture were among the first to take action after the UN's Security Council adopted Resolution 2199 in February 2015, acknowledging the connection between the illicit trade in cultural objects and the financing of the activities of extremist groups. The Nordic ministers' joint ministerial declaration was followed up by a Nordic expert conference in Oslo in December 2015. The main objective of the conference was to explore the potential for more extensive Nordic collaboration and come up with specific recommendations on how to leverage the Nordic countries' aggregated resources more effectively than could be achieved through individual action. The conference gathered attendants from a range of public bodies and professional communities across the Nordics. The final conference document recommends implementation of 13 joint measures. The Nordic countries have already begun their work to implement some of these actions, and efforts will continue undiminished in 2017.

Both UNESCO and other international bodies have expressed great interest in the outcome of this Nordic collaboration to combat illicit trade. The overall ambition is to achieve smoothly working collaborative operations that could generate added value through better utilisation of our joint resources in implementing effective measures to stop the illicit import of cultural objects from vulnerable areas to the Nordic countries. Also, envisaging collaboration to prevent the illicit export and trade in cultural objects forms part of this strategy.



Bust from Palmyra exhibited at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo.
Photo: Bjørn Egil Halvorsen/Aftenposten/NTB Scanpix

Published by:
Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Nordic Council of Ministers

Public institutions may order additional copies from:
Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation
E-mail: publikasjonsbestilling@dss.dep.no
Internet: www.publikasjoner.dep.no
Telephone: + 47 222 40 000

Publication number: V-0999 E

Coverphoto: Tromsø Library and City Archive
Photo: Mark Ledingham/Tromsø municipality

Print: Norwegian Government Security
and Service Organisation 06/2017

