

## Case Study // Round Table SDG 11: Promoting resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements: intersectoral cooperation and evidence-based policies

### Nordic Sustainable Cities – Promoting solutions for sustainable, liveable and smart cities

#### Nordic Council of Ministers

*Levels: national and local*

#### Summary

The rapid pace of urbanisation affects millions of people around the globe, posing challenges for health, safety and the environment. It also creates a growing global demand for solutions for the urban environment. The Nordic countries (Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Finland and Denmark) can offer high quality urban solutions based on joint strengths such as good governance, public-private partnerships, design tradition, environmental and social consciousness as well as robust technological solutions. This has been the base of the initiative ‘Nordic Sustainable Cities’, one of six flagship projects within the programme “Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges”, launched by the Nordic Prime Ministers in 2017, aiming to promote sustainability and progress towards the SDGs in a global context.

As the Nordic urban model is founded on the values of environment, equality, openness and efficiency, the initiative contributes to spreading Nordic approaches to good and sustainable urban development across the world, thereby contributing to the implementation of SDG11.

The project ‘Nordic Sustainable Cities’ consists of a number of activities aimed at promoting Nordic solutions for sustainable, liveable and smart cities on a global level. The goal is to share policy experiences, technical know-how and Nordic tools with interested international partners, while at the same time strengthening export opportunities for those Nordic businesses, which are able to provide solutions that promote sustainability in urban development.

The Prime Ministers’ Initiative “Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges” is headed and co-ordinated by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the formal co-operation organisation of the Nordic governments (located in Copenhagen, Denmark). The project ‘Nordic Sustainable Cities’ is led by Nordic Innovation (located in Oslo, Norway).

#### Situation

The Nordic region is home to some of the world’s most sustainable and resilient cities. The whitepaper on Sustainable Cities published by Nordregio, as part of the ‘Nordic Sustainable Cities’ initiative, has defined nine different components of inclusive, safe and sustainable cities – accompanied by good practices and relevant case examples from the entire Nordic Region, that can be spread and scaled-up globally.

### Strategy

The strategy of the Nordic Sustainable Cities project is to promote Nordic practices and solutions for challenges facing cities globally. The project has three main components:

- 1) Create awareness of existing Nordic solutions
- 2) Build a joint Nordic export platform
- 3) Establish political partnerships and networks

The project provides funding to activities that promote Nordic solutions for sustainable, smart and liveable cities to relevant stakeholders outside the Nordic Region. The 'Nordic Sustainable Cities' project therefore takes shape of a multi-case project, partnering with stakeholders from different cities outside the Nordic region. More specifically, partnerships are being explored with cities in North America, China and India.

### Results and impact

The overall impact of the 'Nordic Sustainable Cities' project is to stimulate the uptake of Nordic urban solutions globally, thereby addressing challenges facing cities in reaching SDG11. The project has produced a whitepaper that gives insight into practices and solutions of Nordic cities for creating sustainable urban futures. The paper is titled *What makes a sustainable city?*, and provides examples of the 1) inclusive city, 2) healthy city, 3) resilient city, 4) compact Green City, 5) mobility city, 6) low carbon city, 7) circular economy city, 8) smart city, and 9) design city.

As a multi-case project, the results and impacts of the Nordic Sustainable Cities projects are realised most concretely through the funding of activities in specific city-cases. A number of these are highlighted below (For a full list please visit the project website):

- Mumbai and Pune (India) and Beijing, Harbin and Wuhan (China): Information and branding of Nordic Waste to Energy Solutions followed by matchmaking sessions and pre-studies.
- City of Hamilton, Canada: Nordic Inspiration and Innovation for Affordable and Sustainable Housing through an Urban Lab in Hamilton, followed by setting up an open innovation challenges on affordable and sustainable housing.
- Panaji (India): India Urban Lab bringing together Nordic companies and experts with city officials, relevant companies and organisations in Panaji, a city in the Indian state of Goa. Panaji is part of the 100 Smart Cities program in India. The urban lab will be held in February 2018.
- Open Innovation Days (OID): Smart City Challenges for 100 Smart Cities program in India. Successful event concept from the Nordic region applied to five cities in India. The concept involves matching solution providers and customers, and will be held in spring 2018.

There is currently a new call for proposals promoting Nordic solutions for sustainable cities to stakeholders outside the Nordic region for a sum of NOK 1.5 million.

### Challenges and lessons learned

As the project is still in the implementation phase, an evaluation of the activities has not yet been carried out. However, as the project involves a number of cases from different cities in the world, it will be a good opportunity to gather lessons learned of attempting to implement Nordic urban solutions outside the Nordic region.

### Potential for replication

The aim of the 'Nordic Sustainable Cities' is to replicate Nordic urban solutions in relevant cities globally. Therefore the cases, described in more detail on the project website, offer inspiration for how to replicate solutions that address a variety of urban challenges. To strengthen the potential for replication of the selected Nordic urban solutions, the whitepaper mentioned above (*What makes a sustainable city?*) highlights a number of examples that other cities might implement in a different context.

### Contact

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