

## Nordplus 2012–2016

### PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

#### 1. Introduction

This *Programme Document for Nordplus*:

- Consists of the decision governing Nordplus for the period 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2016, and contains general goals and regulations for Nordplus;
- Was adopted by MR-U on 2 November 2011, following consultation with the Nordic Council and the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania);
- Builds further upon the intentions contained in the “Nordplus decision” about the Nordplus Framework Programme for the period 2008–2011 and replaces the previous joint programme document for the Nordplus Framework Programme, and the programme document for the Nordplus Nordic Languages and Culture Programme;
- Addresses the goals adopted for Nordplus and the five sub-programmes, which consist of the inter-sectoral *Nordplus Horizontal* and the four sectoral programmes *Nordplus Junior*, *Nordplus Higher Education*, *Nordplus Adult* and *Nordplus Nordic Language*;
- Describes the target groups and who is eligible to take part in Nordplus, the programme activities, guidelines for the Nordplus Programme Committee, regulations for the Nordplus administration and the general regulations for monitoring and evaluating the programme;
- Describes the management structure and allocation of responsibilities for Nordplus between the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), the Programme Committee for Nordplus, the Nordplus administration, including the main co-ordinator and other administrative staff, and the Nordic Council of Ministers’ Secretariat;
- Describes the basis and frameworks for the annual call for applications for programme funding.

This *Programme Document for Nordplus* was written in 2011 and is owned by the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U), which delegates responsibility for the document to the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U).

#### 2. Nordplus general objectives

Nordplus 2012–2016 consists of a set of adopted general objectives and five sub-programmes, which consist of the inter-sectoral Nordplus Horizontal and the four sectoral programmes Nordplus Junior, Nordplus Higher Education, Nordplus Adult and Nordplus Nordic Language.

The general objectives for Nordplus 2012–2016 are to:

- strengthen and develop Nordic co-operation on education and help to create a Nordic–Baltic educational area;
- support, build on, reap the benefits of and promote innovative products and processes in education through the systematic exchange of experiences and good practice;
- contribute to the development of quality and innovation in the educational systems for lifelong learning in the participating countries through co-operation in education and training, as well as co-operation with the labour market on development projects, exchange programmes and networking;
- promote Nordic language and culture and mutual Nordic-Baltic linguistic and cultural understanding;

- Improve understanding of Nordic languages (primarily Danish, Swedish and Norwegian), especially among children and young people;
- Stimulating interest in and knowledge and understanding of the Nordic languages.

The Programme Committee for Nordplus (see item 5) sets separate targets for each sub-programme. These must be consistent with the general objectives for the programme as a whole, and must not be too wide-ranging or detailed<sup>1</sup>.

The specific programme objectives will, as a rule, cover the whole of the programme period, but the Programme Committee for Nordplus is empowered to adapt them if necessary to comply with new political or strategic priorities. The specific programme objectives must be stated in the call for applications, on the Nordplus website and in the Nordplus Handbook (see 5).

### **3. Target groups and participation in the programme**

- The eight countries participating in Nordplus 2012–2016 are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. Greenland, the Faroe Islands (Denmark) and Åland (Finland) are eligible to take part in all Nordplus activities related to mobility-, project- and networking activities involving Denmark, Finland and the other participating countries.
- The programme targets all individuals, institutions, organisations and groups in the participating countries that have education and lifelong learning as their primary objectives or who work with education and lifelong learning.
- Only participants from the above-mentioned eight Nordic and Baltic countries, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands (Denmark) and Åland (Finland), are eligible for funding from the programme. However, the programme activities may also include participants from other countries if they provide their own funding for their part of the activity and comply with the rest of the programme regulations.
- Only activities that take place in the eight participating countries, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands (Denmark) and Åland (Finland) are eligible for funding from the programme.

### **4. Programme activities**

- Throughout the whole of the Nordplus programme, activities will be prioritised that support and promote co-operation on education between the participating countries, and therefore aim to generate, develop and disseminate results and products that are of interest to the participating countries.
- Throughout the entire Nordplus programme, high-quality activities will be prioritised, i.e. quality will be the overall selection and evaluation criterion in the programme.
- Nordplus funds the following main categories of activity:
  - Mobility activities
  - Project activities
  - Network activities.
- In accordance with this Programme Document, as adopted by the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U), the Programme Committee for Nordplus can define more detailed rules concerning applications to, and participation in, each Nordplus sub-programme as long as these are in line with the general regulations contained in the Programme Document for Nordplus and the activities of the Nordic Council of Ministers.
- The Programme Committee is urged, to the fullest extent possible, to make sure that the programme activities in the sub-programmes are standardised where appropriate, but also adapted to the needs of each sub-programme from a user perspective.

<sup>1</sup> The current programme committees have simplified the objectives and priorities for each programme in advance of the call for applications for funding in 2012, the first year of the new programme period.

## **5. Management structure and allocation of responsibilities**

Nordplus is owned by the Nordic Council of Ministers, more specifically the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U). The overall objectives and organisation of the programme are stipulated in this *Programme Document for Nordplus*. Implementation of the document is delegated to the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U).

Separate, but identical, agreements on participation in the programme have been entered into with each of the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). As per the "Agreed Minutes from the joint meeting between Nordic and Baltic Ministers of Education and Research" of 8 November 2010, annual Nordic-Baltic meetings to report back on programme activity will be held at senior-official level.

*The Programme Committee for Nordplus* has special responsibility for the choice of projects and awards of funding within the programme, has a responsibility to contribute to the realisation of the programme's general objectives, and has an important role in the strategic development of the programme.

The Programme Committee for Nordplus operates according to the following main principles:

Committee has been constituted for the period 01.01.2012 – 31.12.2016. During this period, the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/the Committee of Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), in consultation with the Baltic countries, can decide to evaluate and, if appropriate, amend the structure of the committee.

- The Programme Committee for Nordplus is responsible for the Nordplus programme and decides on the choice of projects and awards of funding within the programme. Special provisions apply to Nordplus Nordic Language, see item 6.
- The Programme Committee for Nordplus has a responsibility to contribute to the realisation of the programme's general objectives and to help profile the programme and disseminate knowledge of its positive results. Every year, the best Nordplus projects must be selected for profiling, with a view to supporting the transfer of best practices from the programme and thereby helping to develop the educational systems in the participating countries. The Nordplus Programme Committee represents all of the sub-programmes.
- With the help of co-operation and contact with the Nordic and Baltic education ministries, the Nordplus administration in general and the main co-ordinator in particular, the Programme Committee must monitor and keep itself informed about Nordplus activities.
- Each participating country will appoint two members to the committee: one freely elected, the other possessing specific competences in the area represented by the sub-programmes.<sup>2</sup> An alternate member of the Committee is also appointed. Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland each appoint two observers and an alternate to the Committee. A list of members, observers and alternate members must be posted on the Nordplus website.
- Representatives of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat will follow the work of the Programme Committee as observers. The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat is responsible for submitting an annual report on Nordplus activities, based on reports from the main co-ordinator, to the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U) and the education and research ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- The Nordplus Main Co-ordinator has overall responsibility for servicing the Nordplus Programme Committee, and co-ordinates contributions from the other main

<sup>2</sup> Each country appoints a member who must possess competences in the area covered by a particular sub-programme. The Baltic states agree between them in which area/programme their three members must possess the requisite competences. The five Nordic countries reach a similar agreement.

administrators responsible for the sub-programmes.

- The Nordplus administration takes minutes of committee meetings and makes sure that documents and other forms of information from the committee are accessible to all members and observers. Alternate members receive copies of documents and information about the committee from the Nordplus administration.
- The Programme Committee can delegate decisions to the Nordplus administration.
- If a committee member or an observer is unable to attend a committee meeting or is in some other way unable to carry out tasks related to the committee, the individual concerned is responsible for calling in the alternate member and informing the Nordplus administration.
- As a rule, Nordplus co-operation takes place in the Scandinavian languages. However, some of the co-operation and work of the Programme Committee and some parts of the formal meetings are conducted in English. Materials for use by all are available in English. The exception to this is Nordplus Nordic Language, which is conducted exclusively in the Scandinavian languages.
- The Programme Committee elects a chair and a deputy chair for one year at a time. The Programme Committee decides whether it wants to follow the rotation system of the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, or whether it prefers another method of selecting the chair.
- The Programme Committee meets twice a year.
- If it is necessary and appropriate, further rules can be defined and adopted for procedures for the work of the Programme Committee. This is decided by the committee itself, and the Nordplus administration and Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat are advised accordingly.

## **6. Special provisions for Nordplus Nordic Language**

The purpose of Nordplus Nordic Language, as per the overall objectives in this programme document (see item 2) are;

- Improving understanding of Nordic languages (primarily Danish, Swedish and Norwegian), especially among children and young people;
- Stimulating interest in and knowledge and understanding of the Nordic languages.

All work within the framework of Nordplus Nordic Language is conducted exclusively in the Scandinavian languages.

The Baltic members (from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) of the Programme Committee do not take part in decisions concerning Nordplus Nordic Language, but are allowed to participate in the committee's general processing and evaluation of activities linked to Nordplus Nordic Language.

## **7. Programme administration – the Nordplus administration**

The administration for Nordplus 2012–2016 must ensure responsible management, implementation and co-ordination of all Nordplus activities.

The Nordplus administration is based on a consortium appointed by the Nordic Council of Ministers, consisting of five national programme offices in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, each of which appoints a main administrator (HA) for a specific Nordplus sub-programme. The Nordplus administration includes the three national programme offices, which are appointed by the education and research ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as the national information offices (NIK) for Nordplus. The information points (InfoP) appointed for Nordplus in Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland are affiliated to the national programme offices appointed in Denmark and Finland, respectively, and as such are part of the Nordplus administration. The Nordic Council of Ministers has appointed one of the five Nordic main administrators, The Norwegian Centre for International Co-operation in Higher Education (SIU), as main co-ordinator (HK) for the Nordplus administration for the period 1 January 2012 –31 December 2013.

The roles and responsibilities of the appointed main co-ordinator for Nordplus (HK), the appointed main administrators for Nordplus (HA), the appointed national Nordplus information offices (NIK) and the appointed Nordplus information points (InfoP), are specified in appendix 1.

*The Nordplus Handbook* is a tool for applicants and participants. The Handbook is available on the Nordplus website, and provides practical information to users about applying to the programme and implementation of the projects. The Nordplus administration writes the Handbook, which is owned by the Programme Committee.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat is responsible for following up on the Nordplus administration's work via contracts and annual reporting meetings, the latter primarily with the Nordplus main co-ordinator on behalf of the consortium.

## **8. General principles for implementation of the programme**

The following general principles are valid for the implementation of Nordplus 2012–2016.

### About Nordplus in general

- The annual call for applications to Nordplus for funding is published simultaneously by the Nordplus administration in each of the participating countries.
- The joint and annual deadline for applications to Nordplus is 1 February<sup>3</sup>.
- In addition, the Nordplus administration can, in the course of the programme year, issue further calls for applications with appropriate deadlines.
- Annual co-ordinating information campaigns are held for Nordplus in each of the participating countries.
- Applications and reports are submitted and treated identically in the joint Nordplus application and reporting system.
- The Nordplus administration can use external experts to evaluate applications. If it is considered desirable, the Nordplus Programme Committee can draw up guidelines for the selection and use of external experts in the programmes.
- The Nordplus administration's evaluation of applications and reports, and the subsequent decisions of the Nordplus Programme Committee, must be in accordance with the agreed and transparent quality criteria stipulated in the Nordplus Handbook.
- For certain defined programme activities, the authority to make decisions can, if necessary, be delegated to the Nordplus administration, allowing for less complicated applications to be received and processed in a flexible manner. The Nordplus Programme Committee must draw up the guidelines for any such delegation.
- The criteria and procedures used for the receipt, processing, evaluation, selection and follow-up of applications must be described and publicly accessible on the Nordplus website and in the Nordplus Handbook.
- Information about successful applications must be published on the Nordplus website.
- Results, statistics, experiences and best practice from Nordplus must be profiled and be publicly available and easily accessible. Every year, the best Nordplus projects must be selected for profiling, with a view to supporting the transfer of best practices from the programme and thereby helping to develop the educational systems in the participating countries. The Programme Committee is responsible for this, based on input from the main co-ordinator (in collaboration with the other administrators).

<sup>3</sup> For the first year of the new programme period, the old deadline for applications will be retained, i.e the first deadline for applications for the period will be 1 March 2012. From 2013, the application deadline will be 1 February.

The following general principles are valid for the implementation of programme activities (i.e. mobility, projects and network activities) in Nordplus 2012–2016:

#### Regarding the mobility activities

- Funding for mobility activities is only granted by the three sectoral programmes Nordplus Junior, Nordplus Adult and Nordplus Higher Education. Nordplus Horizontal and Nordplus Nordic Language only fund project and network activities.
- Applications for funding for mobility activities cannot be submitted by individuals. They must be submitted by an institution or organisation and be based on an agreement between a minimum of one submitting institution/organisation and one host institution/organisation from the various participating countries.
- The permitted duration of the different Nordplus mobility activities within the three sectoral programmes (e.g. pupil-exchange programmes, teacher-exchange programmes, class-exchange programmes, etc.) is normally between one week and 12 months.
- Mobility funding consists of a contribution based on fixed rates for travel and accommodation. These rates vary depending on which countries the journey passes through. Extensive changes to these rates, which have budget implications and/or entail major economic consequences for the programme, are the responsibility of the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), in consultation with the education and research ministries in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The detailed administrative and financial rules for the different mobility activities are specified in the Nordplus Handbook.

#### Regarding project and network activities

- Applications for funding for both networking and project activities must be submitted by a co-ordinating institution or organisation, and must be based on an agreement between a minimum of three institutions or organisations from three different participating countries.
- An application for the funding of network activities will normally be submitted by a co-ordinator on behalf of a network, i.e. a group of institutions or organisations that works with a certain area or subject within education or lifelong learning.
- An application for funding for project activities may be submitted by a co-ordinator on behalf of a network or a partnership between institutions or organisations formed for the purpose of co-operation on specific activities or projects with defined outcomes.
- Applications for Nordplus funding for network- and project activities can, if necessary, cover periods of 1–3 years.
- The maximum duration of Nordplus funding for network- and project activities is three years.
- The detailed rules for the various project- and network activities are specified in greater detail in the Nordplus Handbook.

#### Regarding Nordplus funding

- Nordplus funding is defined as a contribution to real expenses incurred in connection with the participants' mobility activities, project activities and network activities in the eight participating countries. Thus, in their application, Nordplus applicants must define and stipulate their own contribution to the real expenses.
- Nordplus funding for expenses in relation to mobility activities that transcend programmes can be granted in accordance with the fixed standard amount for accommodation and travel expenses.
- Funding from Nordplus for other expenses in connection with joint project- and network activities may make up max. 50% of the total funding. Funding from Nordplus for other expenses in connection with project- and network activities within Nordplus Adult and Nordplus Junior may make up max. 75% of the expenses eligible to be covered.
- The estimated budget for the activities must show how the remaining expenses will

be covered. Contributions in cash and in kind (in the form of working hours directly linked to the Nordplus project) can be included in the overall budget.

- Proposals for extensive changes to Nordplus funding, which have budget implications and/or entail major economic consequences for the programme, are the responsibility of the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), in consultation with the education and research ministries in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In accordance with the above general principles for the implementation of Nordplus, the Programme Committee defines the specific principles for implementation for each of the Nordplus sub-programmes.

These detailed principles and rules for implementation of Nordplus are included in the *Nordplus Handbook*. The Nordplus main co-ordinator, in collaboration with other main administrators, is responsible for updating the Handbook.

### **9. Programme results – profiling and dissemination**

The Nordplus Programme Committee, in collaboration with the Nordplus administration in general and the Nordplus main co-ordinator in particular, must monitor activities in the programme in relation to its objectives, and ensure and verify that the results, statistics, experiences and best practices from the programme are systematically and widely profiled and disseminated.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat is responsible for submitting an annual report on Nordplus activities, based on reports from the main co-ordinator, to the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U) and the education and research ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

### **10. Programme budget**

The contribution to Nordplus from each of the Nordic and Baltic countries is calculated on the basis of each country's share of total Nordic/Baltic gross national product (GNP) for the last two available years – using exchange rates for the same year(s). This is the same principle used to calculate the Nordic countries' contributions to the total budget for the Nordic Council of Ministers.

DKK 2 million has been transferred from the "old" Nordplus Nordic Language and Culture to Nordplus Junior and earmarked for mobility projects linked to language.

The budget for Nordplus 2012-2016 will be allocated according to the following main guidelines:

- Nordplus Horizontal will receive approximately 8-10% of the total annual Nordplus budget;
- The sectoral programme Nordplus Junior will receive approximately 21-23% of the total annual Nordplus budget;
- The sectoral programme Nordplus Higher Education will receive approximately 38-40% of the total annual Nordplus budget;
- The sectoral programme Nordplus Adult will receive approximately 10-12% of the total annual Nordplus budget;
- The sectoral programme Nordplus Nordic Language will receive approximately 5-7% of the total annual Nordplus budget;
- Approximately 12% of the total annual Nordplus budget can be allocated to administration.

The Nordplus Programme Committee determines the actual annual amounts for each sub-programme within the framework set by this model.

	<p><b>11. Evaluation of the programme</b></p> <p>The Nordic Council of Ministers must present a plan for independent evaluation of the Nordplus programme. The evaluation plan must be presented to and approved by the Council of Ministers for Education and Research (MR-U)/Senior Officials for Education and Research (EK-U), following input from the Nordplus Programme Committee.</p>
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