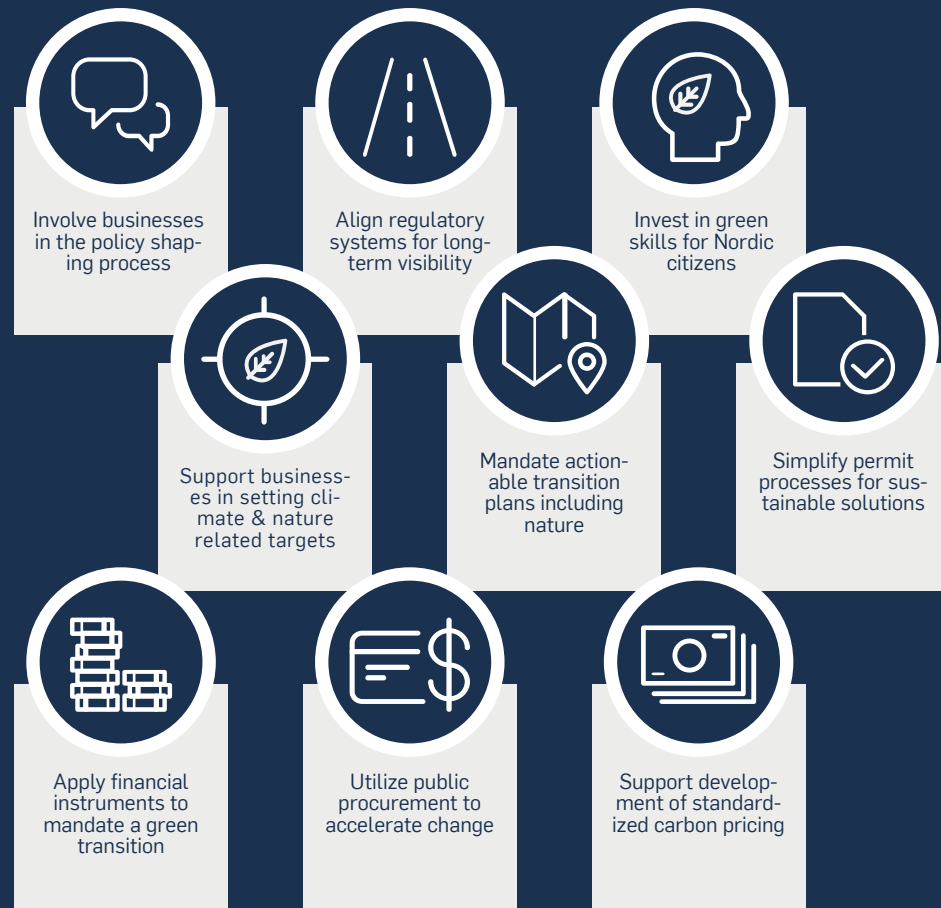


Key asks for policymakers



Engage your mind, and embark on a journey of discovery. Scan the QR code and explore the Global Compact and the UN Global Compact for the Nordic Countries in detail.



THE PATH TOWARDS 2030: NORDIC CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY STOCKTAKE



Global Compact
Network Denmark



Global Compact
Network Finland



Global Compact
Network Norway



Global Compact
Network Sweden

Executive summary

As the midpoint of the journey towards the SDGs by 2030 is reached, it is crucial to understand how to accelerate progress in the Nordic region.

This report uniquely aggregates a combination of existing and new data sources that have not previously been combined for the Nordics, thus revealing actionable insights for both businesses and policymakers.

The Nordic region has been at the forefront of progress on the sustainability agenda, but surprisingly, 72% of Nordic businesses are skeptical about the world's ability to meet the SDGs by 2030. Nevertheless, the Nordic private sector has great potential to create a significant impact by tackling the lagging Nordic SDGs, namely 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life Above Land).

Nordic businesses must transition from reactive to proactive approaches. The financial implications of not addressing climate change are significant, with the cost of carbon projected to become prohibitively expensive. Adopting climate strategies gives business value, particularly in attracting investors and customers who expect sustainability initiatives. However, companies often prioritize short-term ROI and lack leadership commitment. To be market leaders, companies must take risks and make bets on future transformation.

A key challenge for Nordic business is understanding the complex regulatory landscape. National policies and requirements tend to swing between elected national governments, creating instability. This instability affects companies' effective planning, increasing risk and capital costs. This holds true for the complex regulatory landscape at the EU level. As a result, 78% of companies express strong support for consistent sustainability reporting and disclosure standards.

Efforts to measure climate action, biodiversity, and nature are still evolving, with ongoing development needed in methodologies, frameworks, and regulations. Nordic companies are particularly lagging in their efforts to address nature and biodiversity, with a low proportion of companies disclosing nature-related risks and impacts or requiring suppliers to measure and report on these risks.

To become sustainability leaders, Nordic businesses need to integrate ownership, incentives, and upskill their workforce in sustainability and data. Nordic companies recognize the importance of leadership, with 89% citing it as the primary driver for taking sustainable action. Personal commitment and purpose from CEOs play a significant role, even if upfront investments are required. To ensure engagement throughout the organization, methods such as linking bonuses to sustainability performance or establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be applied. However, there is a shortage of sustainability and data experts due to high demand, presenting opportunities to upskill the existing workforce.

Businesses face the challenge of ensuring sustainability standards throughout the entire value chain, particularly beyond tier 1 suppliers. There has been an increasing trend for Nordic companies to outsource and offshore their production globally. This has raised challenges as sustainability requirements extend throughout the entire value chain. One challenge is companies' lack of influence and ability to drive behavioral changes across the value chain, reported by a staggering 89% of companies. This is necessary to respond to increasing pressure to provide responsible products and services.

The opportunities ahead for Nordic businesses are twofold: improving standards across Nordic business value chains and leveraging the region's inherent strengths for growth. The compact geography of the Nordic region allows for cross-sector collaboration and innovation within its value chains. To fully seize this potential, businesses should embrace ecosystem collaboration across the Nordics, elevating standards across sectors and value chains. Additionally, the Nordic private sector should accelerate efforts in emerging technologies such as ESG Intelligence, automation, and Artificial Intelligence. These technologies enable risk and scenario modeling, foster product innovation, and drive transformative organizational practices. Furthermore, the Nordic business landscape has a chance to shape the future of nature finance and can prioritize alternative fuels to revolutionize industries like steel production and manufacturing. These collective actions are vital for driving the necessary change to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Key findings on distinctive Nordic positions

