

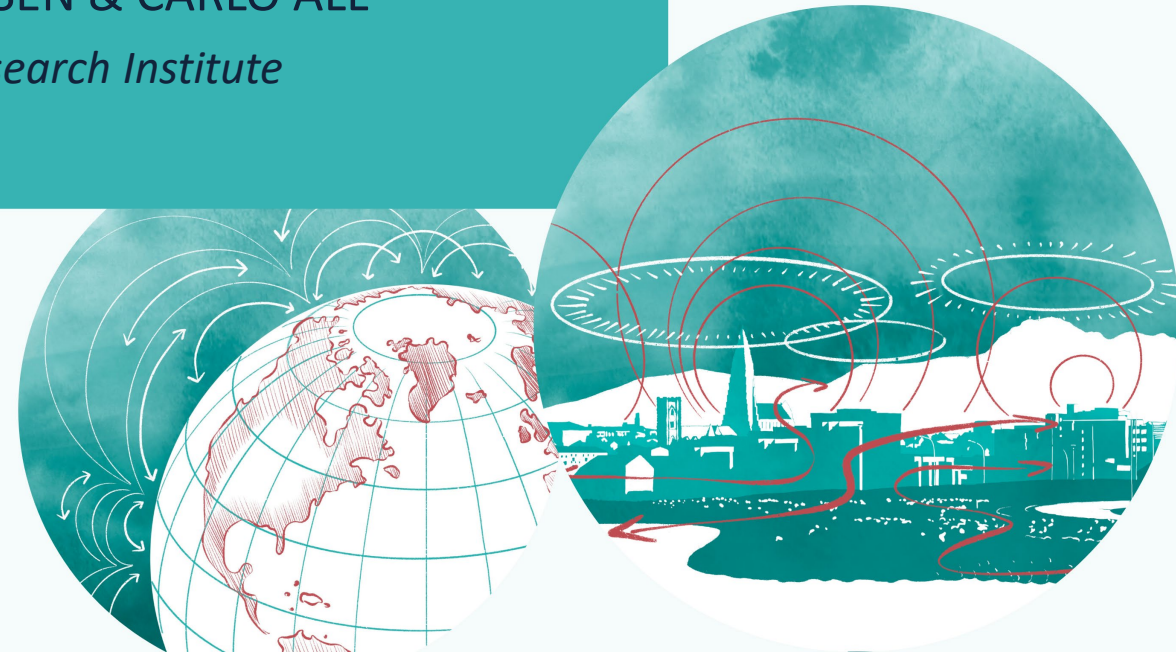
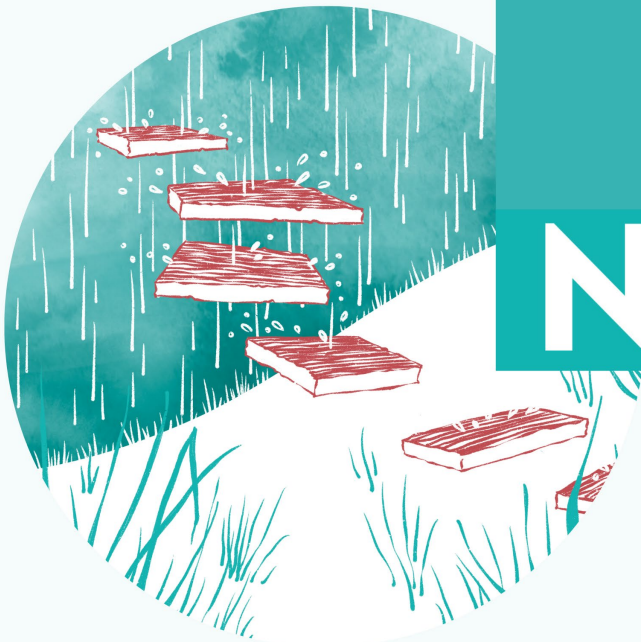
# ADAPTATION IN THE NORDICS AND BEYOND

Best practices, main challenges, and potentials

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# NOCCA



# BACKGROUND: TWO INTERRELATED PROJECTS

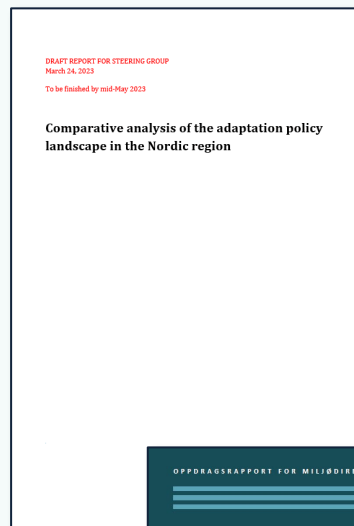
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*“Comparative analysis of the adaptation policy landscape in the Nordic region”  
(Expected May 2023)*

- Commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers
- December 2022 – May 2023
- WNRI lead, in collaboration with University of Helsinki, Stockholm Environment Institute and Technical University of Denmark
- Steering Group with representatives from all five countries

<https://www.vestforsk.no/en/project/comparative-analysis-adaption-policy-landscape-nordic-region>



*“Mapping of climate change adaptation in selected countries”  
(February 2023)*

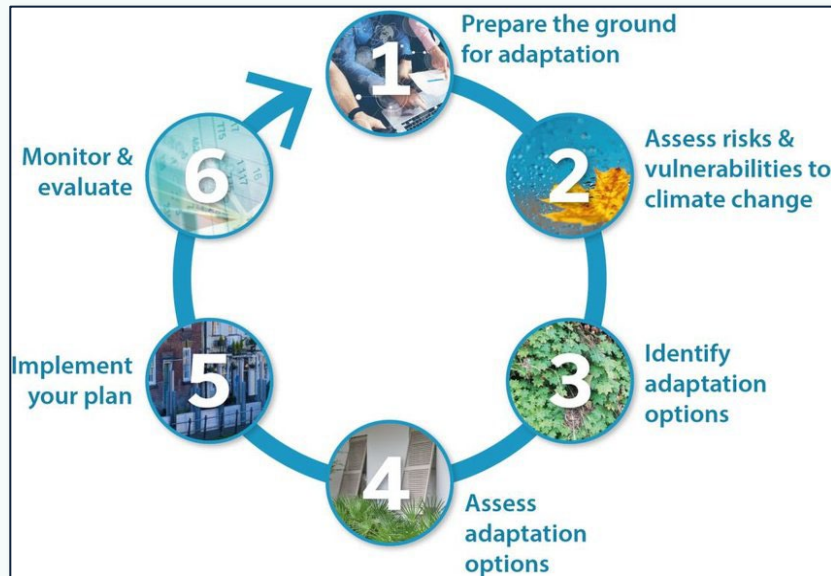
- Commissioned by the Norwegian Environment Agency
- Austria, Finland, Germany, Sweden, UK
- September 2022 – February 2023
- WNRI lead, in collaboration with Norce, University of Helsinki and Stockholm Environment Institute

<https://www.vestforsk.no/nn/publication/kartlegging-av-klimatilpasningsarbeid-i-utvalgte-europeiske-land-finland-storbritannia>

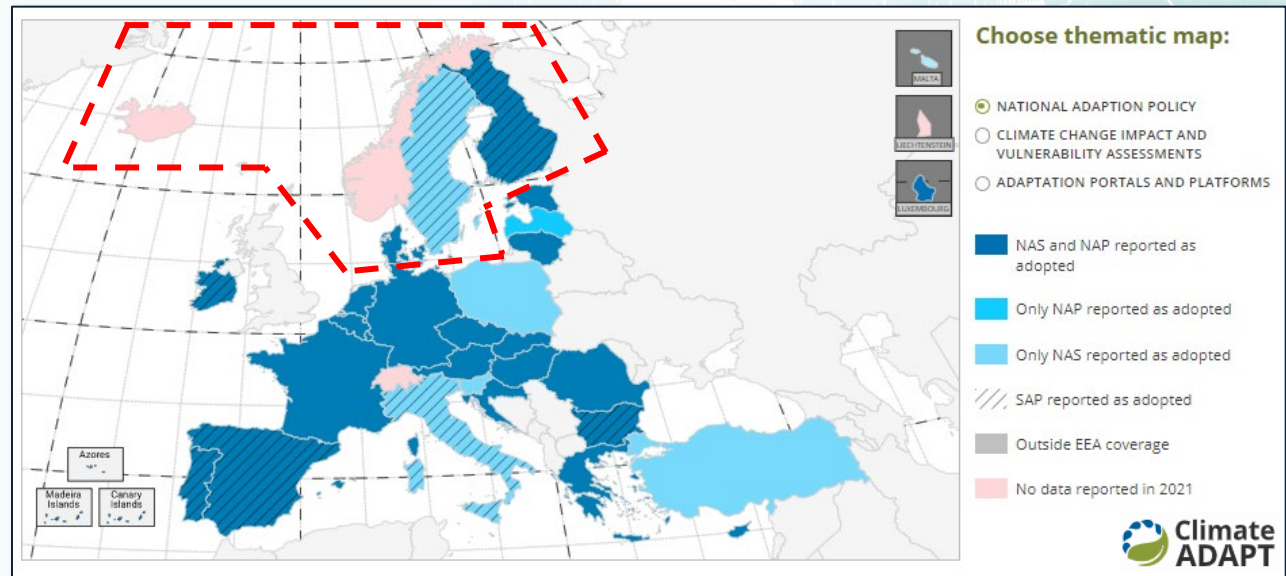


## CONTEXT

- Most of the Nordic countries have completed their first adaptation policy cycle
  - → time for evaluation!



From Mäkinen et al. 2018



<https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/countries-regions/countries>

# APPROACH & METHODS

## Three **aspects** to be assessed in individual **country profiles**:

1. Policies, systems, and tools
2. Responsibilities, coordination, and collaboration
3. Integration

## Evaluation of **best practices** and **challenges**

- Internal and external evaluations (nationally or sector-specific)
- Self-evaluation and perspectives from national and sub-national expert informants

## Estimation of **potential**

- In related to **EU strategy on adaptation & IPCC** and **IPBES** recommendations
  - Smarter adaptation – knowledge-based decision-making
  - More systemic adaptation - holistic and inclusive approaches
  - Faster adaptation – effective and accessible tools
  - More internationally oriented adaptation – responsibility and scaling
  - Approaching adaptation as transformation

## Sources of information:

- Analyze policy documents, official websites, and research literature & interview of 3-5 key-informants per country

## APPROACH & METHODS

### Three **aspects** to be assessed in individual **country profiles**:

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results

**Strengths versus weaknesses**

### Evaluation of best practices and challenges

- Internal and external evaluations (nationally or sector-specific)
- Self-evaluation and perspectives from national and sub-national expert informants

### Estimation of opportunities

- In **related to EU strategy on adaptation & IPCC and IPBES recommendations**
  - Smarter adaptation – knowledge-based decision-making
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# FINDINGS 1: POLICIES, SYSTEMS AND TOOLS

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## Strengths

### All have

- **official steering documents** (laws, White Papers, strategies etc.) that guide the work on adaptation and provide a common reference point for collaboration and strategic action.
- **well-established scientific communities** that can provide the scientific basis for risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation needs.
- **well-developed platforms and websites** for easy access to adaptation-related information.

## Weaknesses

### All lack

- **appropriate indicators and measures** to account for transboundary climate risks
- sufficient **financial incentives** for adaptation, resulting in a growing gap between adaptation needs and available finances
- financial incentives and **adaptation funding** mechanisms

### Most lack

- **systems for systematic knowledge generation** on climate change related risks and vulnerabilities, including the socio-economic costs and benefits of action and inaction.
- **systems for monitoring, reporting and evaluation**
- **clearly articulated policy cycle** where planning documents, knowledge generation, and monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MRE) procedures are situated in relation to one another and support the continuous development of adaptation work nationally and sub-nationally
- good systems for **translating knowledge on risks and vulnerabilities** to local adaptation measures.



## FINDINGS 2: RESPONSIBILITY, COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

### Strengths

#### Most have

- an **official government body** (e.g., ministry, council etc.) with the official responsibility for **coordinating** climate change adaptation at the national level
- **cross-ministerial working groups** that focus on cooperation and collaboration on issues pertaining to adaptation
- **clearly articulated role for the municipalities** in developing and adopting adaptation measures at the local level
- **highly proactive municipalities** when it comes to identifying needs for and developing measures to adapt to climate change

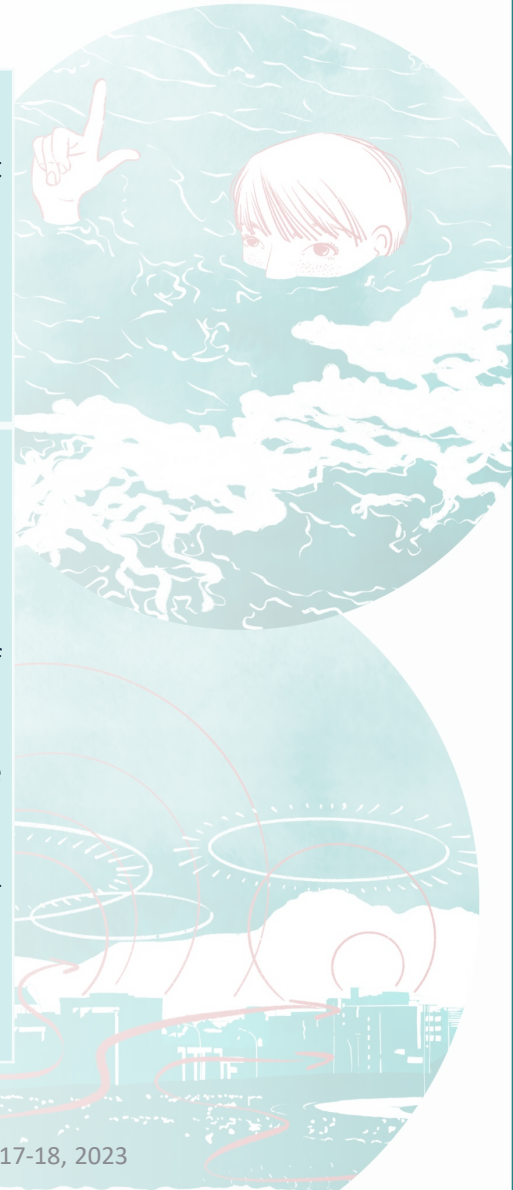
### Weaknesses

#### All

- Public administration is marked by a **'silo' structure**, which prevents effective cooperation and synergy across sectors and authorities.

#### Most lack

- **coordination and collaboration between adaptation and mitigation**, missing opportunities for synergies and enhancing the risk of goal-conflicts
- **political mandate** within the **leading government body** and the **cross-ministerial working groups** to be able to put adaptation on the political agenda nationally
- ...thus making it challenging for the leading government bodies to **embrace their responsibility** and to be accountable to the local-level actors working on adaptation measures.
- ..further disables public bodies from **accepting risk ownership** and ensure that all risks are accounted for in both planning and execution



## FINDINGS 3: INTEGRATION

### Strengths

#### All

- The **interviewees** are **aware** of the **benefits of taking an integrative approach** and seek to **create synergies** between their work and the work of others

#### Most

- take a **mainstreaming approach** to adaptation, which means that all public authorities engage with adaptation to some degree.

#### Some

- adaptation at the municipal level is approached **in relation** to other policy areas to enhance synergies.
- nature-based Solutions** are becoming more prominent (at least in theory, if not yet in practice)

### Weaknesses

#### All

- lack of knowledge** about how to align adaptation with goals for mitigation and the SDGs in a way that benefits from the synergies and mitigates the conflicts.
- integration is limited by a lack of **appropriate indicators** for measuring societal impact beyond reducing immediate risks

#### According to interviewees in some of the Nordic countries

- the **prioritization of economic growth undermines** the ability of adaptation work to sufficiently consider and integrate social and ecological concerns for the benefit of people and planet in a long-term perspective.
- the challenge of **mainstreaming** is that adaptation risks being the **responsibility of no one** and to be lost within the existing work of public authorities





# SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

*Is the institutionalisation of climate change adaptation – after 20 years – still in its infancy?*

*And why is that so?*

*Have we not yet experienced a formative periode, i.e. a periode in which (according to Rothstein, 1992):*

- existing political institutions becomes dysfunctional in the handling of environmental crises and emergencies, and at a crucial moment in the process (formative moment), participants manage to change the political agenda?*

*How bad must it become before we wake up to spend more political and institutional capital on adapting to climate change in addition to the ongoing battle of mitigating climate change?*

*Or, have we approached the topic of climate change adaptation in a completely inappropriate way that makes it a political non-issue?*

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