



# INCREASING NORDIC HANDPRINT AND REDUCING ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT IS OUR GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

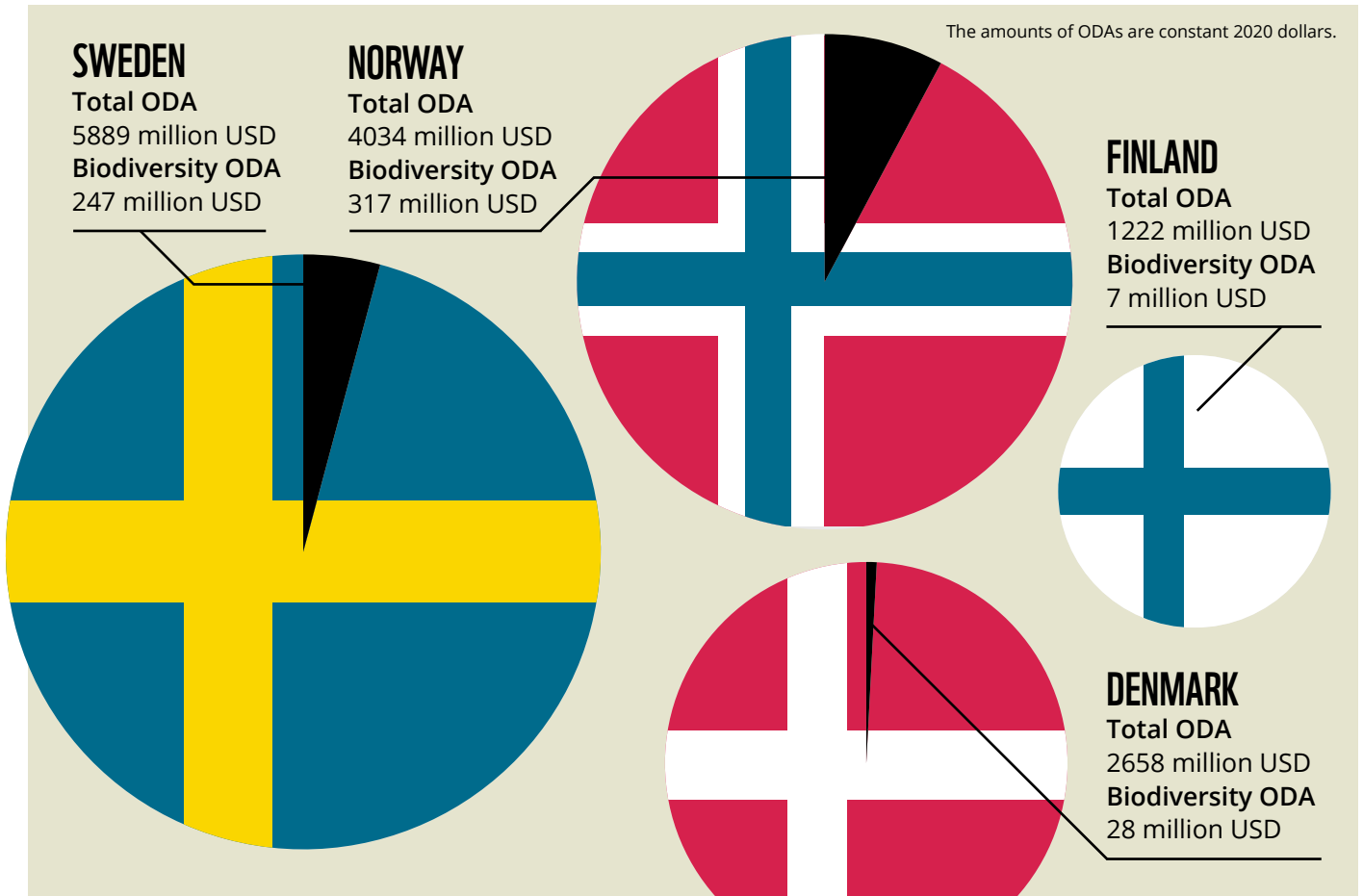
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Financial flows to date have been insufficient to meet biodiversity conservation needs in developing countries. However, there is evidence that the biodiversity-related **official development aid (ODA)** has been an important mechanism to catalyse additional financial resources for biodiversity in developing countries. In addition, increased development assistance can support capacity and enforcement and the application of property rights (including intellectual property) to ensure that developing countries are able to protect their natural resources and benefit from them.<sup>1</sup>

## NORDIC COUNTRIES SHOULD

- significantly increase their financial support for the implementation of global biodiversity objectives, in synergy with financing for climate action and sustainable development, to ensure equal progress on transformative change across the globe. The financial support needs to be increased with appropriation that is additional to the current development cooperation funding.
- ensure that their biodiversity-related funding is consistent, reliable, transparent, and timely accessible.
- ensure that all public financing, including incentives and otherwise targeted development assistance, is positive or at least neutral to biodiversity.
- actively promote the targeting of EU development cooperation funding at the preservation of biodiversity.
- ensure adequate resources and competences in the development agencies to support and monitor biodiversity conservation as a part of the development agenda.
- reduce ambitiously their ecological footprint to ensure that the global footprint of production and consumption is halved by 2030 and we return within planetary boundaries through targeted measures in all economic systems that are acting as drivers of biodiversity loss, such as agriculture, fisheries.

**Nordic countries should significantly increase their financial support for biodiversity conservation.**



## COMPARING NORDIC COUNTRIES

There were big differences between Nordic countries in their total amount of official development aid as well as in biodiversity-related official development aid. The amount of total-ODA and biodiversity-ODA were calculated as an average for the years 2019–2020.

The biodiversity-related ODA formed a small share of the total ODA in the Nordic region. In case of Norway, the funding for biodiversity was the highest, 7,9% of the total ODA as an average for the years 2019–2020. Sweden’s biodiversity funding formed 4,2%, Denmark’s 1% and Finland’s biodiversity funding 0,5% of the total ODA as an average for the years 2019–2020.

The big differences between countries in biodiversity-related ODA are not limited only to the years 2019–2020 but have occurred already several years previously (see Figure 2). Although Norway’s and Sweden’s contributions to biodiversity have been in general clearly higher than in Denmark and Finland, also their biodiversity-related ODA has varied considerably between the years.

Figure 1. The average amount of total official development assistance (grant equivalent) and biodiversity-related official development assistance for years 2019–2020 in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

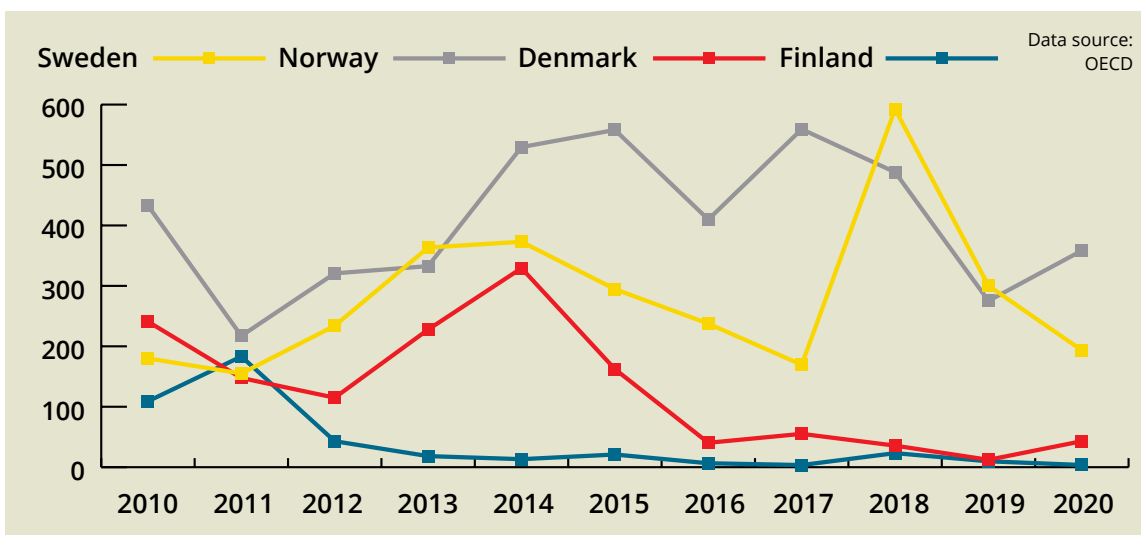
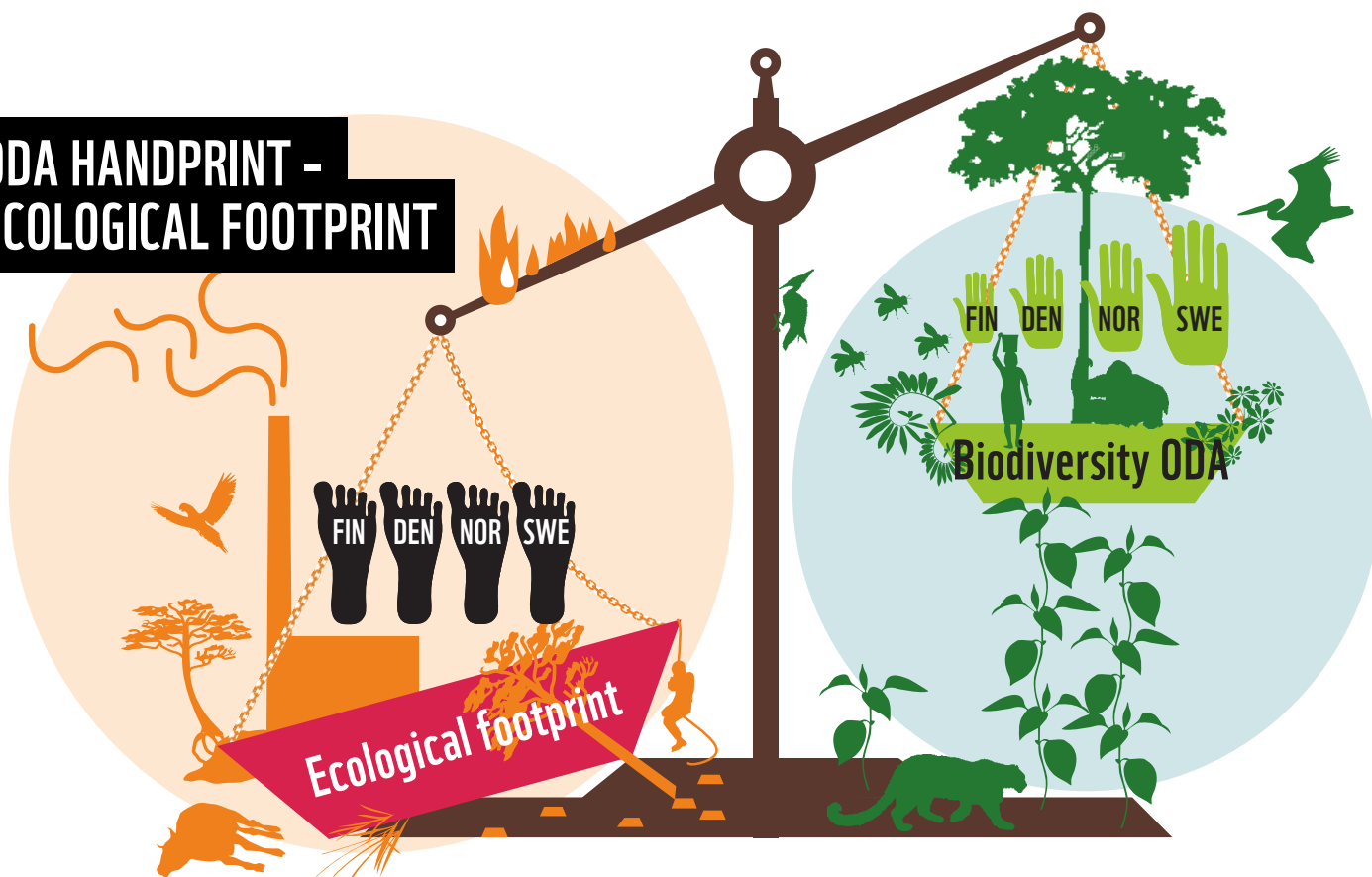


Figure 2. Bilateral biodiversity-related ODA including earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in the years 2010–2020.

## ODA HANDPRINT - ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT



The biodiversity-related official development assistance provided by Nordic countries can be considered as their handprint, i.e. providing benefits and creating positive impact in developing countries. But Nordic countries also have ecological footprints. The ecological footprint means the impact of human activities measured in terms of area of biologically productive land and water required to produce the goods consumed and to assimilate the waste generated.

The ecological footprints of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Denmark are close to each other, varying from 5,67 global hectares per person (Norway) to 6,65 global hectares per person (Denmark) in 2018. The ecological footprint per person is a nation's total ecological footprint divided by the total population of the nation.

Compared to other countries, the ecological footprints of Nordic countries are at a high level. To live within the means of our planet's resources, the world's ecological footprint would have to equal the available biocapacity per person on our planet, which is currently 1,6 global hectares. If a nation's ecological footprint per person is e.g. 6,4 global hectares (like in Finland), its citizens are demanding four times the resources that our planet can regenerate and absorb in the atmosphere. This also means that currently we do not leave room for our biosphere to recover.<sup>3</sup> The high footprints of Nordic countries are reflected also in the ranking of countries according to their ecological footprint per person. Denmark is the 15th, Finland 16th, Sweden 20th and Norway 26th. The ranking includes 185 countries.<sup>4</sup>

The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2020 was quite a similar level in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, varying from 50 925 USD (in Finland) to 62 650 USD (in Norway).

In summary, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden are quite close to each other when comparing national economies (measured as GDP) and their ecological footprints. However, big differences between countries are found when comparing the official development assistance provided, Sweden and Norway providing the most and Finland the least. There are also clear differences between countries in aid activities targeting biodiversity, Norway and Sweden providing clearly more than Denmark and Finland. However, the share of biodiversity-related official development assistance is at the low level in all countries when comparing it to the total amount of official development assistance and considering needs to combat the biodiversity loss.



## WHY BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

### Ecosystem services

Biodiversity is fundamental to human life on Earth. We all depend on other species, their habitats and their interactive relationships for our survival and wellbeing. Diverse nature provides us with food and feed, energy, medicines, genetic resources, and a variety of materials as well as maintains good air quality, clean water and fertile soil and produces a climate that supports life. These tangible and intangible benefits that nature provides for us are called ecosystem services.<sup>5</sup>

The nature, and ecosystem services it provides, directly contributes to the wellbeing of billions of people globally on day-to-day basis. It is estimated that one in five people, particularly women, children, indigenous peoples and local communities rely on wild species for their food, nutritional diversity and income. An estimated 70% of the world's poor depend directly on wild species and businesses fostered by them.<sup>6</sup> People in vulnerable situations are often the most reliant on the products and services of nature for their daily subsistence, but also the hardest hit by the main impacts of reduction or loss of biodiversity.

### Economical value

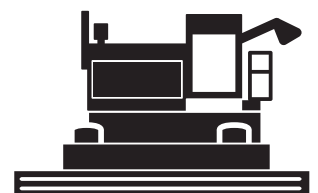
It has been estimated that some 1.2 billion jobs, or 40 per cent of total world employment, depend directly on ecosystem services (in agriculture, forestry and fisheries as an example).<sup>7</sup> There are also different estimations on the economic value of ecosystem services, for example USD 44 trillion of economic value creation is either moderately or highly dependent on nature and the services it provides, and consequently also exposed to the risks and impacts of the degradation of nature.<sup>8</sup> Another estimation of the economic benefits of the ecosystem services (such as fertile soil, regulation of climate, genetic resources for medicinal use etc.) is as high as \$170–190 trillion annually, equivalent to double the value of global GDP. It is important to remember that not all ecosystem services can be translated to economic terms, indicating that different estimations are probably too low. Without biodiversity and ecosystem services there is no economic system as we know it. In addition, healthy nature holds enormous, intrinsic value and deserves to be protected for its own sake and for future generations.<sup>9</sup>

### Drivers of biodiversity loss

Despite of the importance of biodiversity, the current state of biodiversity loss is a major concern. The main direct reasons for the biodiversity loss are **a) land and sea use and its changes** (e.g. large-scale food production) and **b) direct exploitation of plant, animal, and other species** (overfishing, overhunting, overharvesting). **Climate change, pollution and invasive alien species** are the other significant drivers for biodiversity loss. Behind these direct drivers are several indirect factors operating in the background. The demand for natural resources has grown due to the increasing human population, more rapidly increasing per capita consumption and changing consumption patterns (e.g. more meat-based food, higher rates of turnover in consumption including fashion, computers and communication devices, the longevity of many goods such as electronic appliances, buildings, and cars has become shorter over time). This has meant that even more natural habitat is being used for agriculture, mining, infrastructure and urban areas. Shorter lives and faster replacement of consumer products also require more resources to manufacture and generate more pollutants and waste.<sup>10</sup>



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# WHY NORDIC COUNTRIES NEED TO TAKE GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

The UN Human Rights Council adopted in October 2021 a resolution, which declares access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a universal human right. The resolution was also adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2022. This means that states should implement their environmental and human rights obligations and commitments and scale up their efforts to realise the right.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the integrated nature of the many challenges that humanity faces from gender inequality to inadequate infrastructure, from youth unemployment to environmental degradation. The main theme of the Agenda is that no one should be left behind in development. We know that Sustainable Development Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation), 13 (combating climate change), 14 (conservation and sustainable use of marine resources) and 15 (conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems) form a vital foundation for achieving the social and economic Sustainable Development Goals. If biodiversity loss continues, the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals included in the Agenda, is not possible.<sup>11</sup>

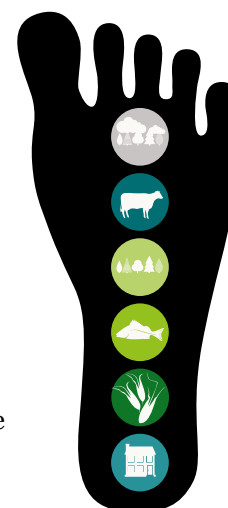
## Ecological footprint stretches far

The Agenda 2030 includes the commitment to make fundamental changes in the way that our societies produce and consume goods and services. About a third of environmental and social impacts from consumption in wealthy nations is displaced to developing countries, and the trend in outsourcing responsibility is increasing.<sup>12</sup> Poor countries satisfy the increasing demand in rich countries by producing goods, often with lower environmental standards and poorer working conditions.<sup>13</sup> European consumption has a high ecological footprint outside Europe as supply chains put pressure on biodiversity where commodities are produced. Timber, metals and non-metallic minerals, fisheries, soy, palm oil, cocoa and coffee are examples of everyday goods the production of which is connected to biodiversity loss. Their production is associated with land use changes, deforestation, and specialized, monoculture-based agricultural systems.<sup>14</sup>

## Finance for our one planet

The Agenda 2030 recognises that financial and technical assistance (mobilizing resources from all sources) to strengthen developing countries' scientific, technological and innovative capacities to move more sustainable patterns of consumption and production is needed. In addition, the Agenda emphasises the important role of international public finance in complementing the efforts of countries to mobilize public resources domestically, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable countries with limited domestic resources.<sup>15</sup>

Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden are all signatory parties of the Convention of Biological Diversity. In Under Article 20 of the CBD, developed country parties have committed to support developing country parties with financial and non-financial resources, to implement the measures which fulfil the obligations of the Convention. Different financial flows are needed to achieve the goal of the CBD, but official development assistance has a crucial role for developing countries to implement the convention and to access the other financial instruments.<sup>16</sup> The Nordic countries all have also committed to achieve the Agenda and its SDGs, both nationally and globally. In accordance with this global responsibility, it is necessary that they reduce their consumption and waste and improve production methods. These actions are essential for reversing the current trend, where biodiversity is declining at an alarming pace, and for achieving not only sustainability but also social justice. At the same time, as a part of their global responsibility, they need to support financially the developing countries in actions which foster transformative change towards sustainability. The developing countries' challenges are also Nordic countries' challenges.



**Developed country parties have committed to support developing country parties with financial and non-financial resources.**

## TECHNICAL NOTES OF THE ANALYSIS

All the graphs, tables and analyses are based on publicly available information. The numbers concerning the official development aid (ODA) and biodiversity-related official development aid are from OECD's data sources.<sup>17</sup> OECD provides the annual figures on ODA for its member countries as well as figures concerning financial commitments related to the Rio Conventions (see the annex providing more information on the used data). OECD also provides data on its member states' gross domestic product.<sup>18</sup> The numbers concerning the ecological footprint are produced by the Ecological Footprint Initiative of York University in collaboration with Global Footprint Network.<sup>19</sup>

It is noted that the biodiversity-related ODA numbers used here include all bilateral ODA and earmarked

multilateral projects, but not e.g. core funding of a multilateral organisation. The biodiversity-related funding includes projects and programmes where biodiversity has been categorised either as principal objective or as significant objective. For collecting information on financial commitments related to the three Rio conventions (biodiversity, climate change, desertification) OECD Development Assistance Committee uses a scoring system. Using so called Rio markers means that projects and programmes are marked as pursuing e.g. biodiversity as either their principal objective or as significant objective. Activities marked as "principal" related to biodiversity means that they have been funded due to that objective. In case of "significant", activities have other prime objectives, but have been formulated or adjusted to also help bio-

diversity issues.<sup>20</sup> When looking the biodiversity funding during the years 2010-2020 allocated by the Nordic countries, major part of the funding has been granted to the projects and programmes where biodiversity has been a significant objective, not the principal one.

It is also important to note that there is no international consensus on how to calculate biodiversity's financial contributions (same concerns apply also to other environmental contributions like climate), and thus, countries use different calculation methods. OECD has started a process concerning the modernisation of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) statistical system, but it seems that it does not yet include unification of calculations related to environmental financial contributions.

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