AI Vision for the Nordic region

Recommendations from the
NORDIC AND BALTIC HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON AI READINESS
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Nordic-Baltic High-Level Forum on AI Readiness

The Nordic region's deep-rooted democratic and liberal values, combined with our open and robust welfare systems, provide a unique foundation for leading the AI transformation. How can we harness these strengths to not just keep up but lead the world in the new AI economy?

On August 30th, 2024, more than 100 leaders from Nordic governments, businesses, academia, foundations, and public institutions gathered in Copenhagen for the Nordic-Baltic High-Level Forum on AI Readiness. Their goal was to formulate a Nordic vision for AI development and adoption, identify concrete opportunities and challenges, and provide proposals for joint priorities to propel AI readiness in both the public and private spheres.

This outcome document has been prepared by the organizing committee, which includes DI Digital, Digital Dogme, and the ADD Project, with input from partners across several Nordic countries. It summarizes the specific recommendations developed and discussed at the High-Level Forum in Copenhagen. In doing so, it builds directly on the earlier work of the Nordic Ethical AI Expert Group and its policy recommendations for Ethical and Responsible AI. The outcome document has two main parts:

PART 1 reflects on the uniqueness of the Nordic-Baltic region, sets forward a Nordic AI vision for 2030, discusses preconditions, and ends with several cross-cutting recommendations to promote stronger Nordic collaboration and coordination on AI.

PART 2 deep dives and provides more specific recommendations in four key areas:

- Leading AI through trust
- Unleashing the value of data
- Accelerating talent and skills
- Scaling AI from pilot to production

As organizers, we are grateful to the members of the Ethical Expert Group and to the ministers, panellists, keynote speakers, breakout leads, and all other participants who contributed actively to the vibrant discussions in Copenhagen. While this outcome document attempts to summarize and reflect those deliberations loyally and comprehensively, the specific recommendations are solely under the responsibility of the organizers. The organizing committee will be continuously available to the Nordic Council of Ministers and will ensure that the presented recommendations have the best possible conditions for future implementation.

LOOKING AHEAD: DELIVER THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

These recommendations will now be presented to the Nordic Council of Ministers as input for the Council's 2025-2030 strategy for digitalisation including AI. We hope that it will serve to raise the level of ambition around Nordic AI collaboration, while also inspiring many concrete steps and initiatives that could be supported going forward. We are grateful to the Secretary-General of the Nordic Council of Ministers for her promise to bring these recommendations forward to the relevant Council bodies.

Yet the responsibility to bring forward this important agenda does not rest only with one organization: It rests with all of us. The High-Level meeting in Copenhagen showed support for a strengthened Nordic collaboration on AI between public, private, and political stakeholders. While generative AI is already becoming a day-to-day tool for organizations across the Nordics, we are still only in 'year two' of what will be a decade-long transition to an AI economy. No single sector, public nor private, can achieve all the visions and initiatives alone; it requires active contributions of all parties:

- **The Nordic Council of Ministers** is uniquely positioned to coordinate dialogues and flagship initiatives across the Nordic countries to promote the responsible development and adoption of AI as a future Nordic stronghold. This includes bringing the proposals to discussion at its autumn ministerial sessions and prioritizing resources to continue the work starting already in 2024.

• **The governments of the Nordic and Baltic countries** can demonstrate political resolve by setting a political vision that prioritizes the ambitious development and adoption of AI both nationally and regionally. This includes intensified cross-border political dialogue, providing early and clear regulatory guidance, setting national AI strategies, and contributing funding for implementing the proposed initiatives in the coming months and years.

• **Private and public enterprises** must commit to adopting AI in a prioritized and responsible manner to enhance the digital competitiveness of Nordic societies in general. Enterprises should commit to workforce upskilling and closer collaboration with research institutions to bring new Nordic innovations to the market.

• **Educational and research institutions** are crucial for fostering innovation, talent, and knowledge-sharing in AI. To fulfil our vision, it is paramount that also Nordic and Baltic research institutions collaborate closely across the region and with the Nordic business community. This requires prioritizing new types of partnerships and focusing on enhancing digital skills for the Nordic labour market.

If we leverage our Nordic tradition of public-private partnerships, the Nordic and Baltic countries collectively hold the potential to expedite the development and implementation of AI across various sectors in society. Despite the inherent differences across our region, the High-Level Forum demonstrated that substantial alignment in mindset and ambitions exist already today, and there is broad support for stronger cross-border collaborations. We hope that all actors will come together to promote the vision and recommendations outlined in this document.

In this document, references are made to the 'Nordic Region.' When mentioning the 'Nordic Region' or the 'North,' it pertains to the following countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland.

Part I: A Nordic Vision for Harnessing the Region's AI Potential

THE NORDIC 'DNA'

Like other general-purpose technologies of the past, AI presents both huge opportunities and legitimate challenges for the Nordic and Baltic countries. As leaders representing businesses, the public sector, and civil society, we firmly believe that **the Nordic region is uniquely positioned to lead Europe and the world in advancing AI responsibly while being among the countries that can benefit the most from this technological breakthrough.**

Among the world's digital frontrunners, the Nordic and Baltic states share common starting points that are favorable for turning AI into a competitive edge. The region is characterized by strong digital infrastructure, well-educated and reflective citizens, innovative and export-oriented economies, a highly digitalized public sector, world-leading commitments to sustainability, and a tradition of trusted public-private partnerships. All these common traits will be critical for success in the age of AI and when combined make the Nordic region one of the best equipped to lead the path into the new AI economy in a responsible, human-centric, sustainable, and prosperous way.

The Nordic and Baltic countries also face similar societal challenges where accelerated use of technology and innovation must be an important part of the solution. This includes productivity challenges, aging populations, inadequate access to qualified labor, and challenges in scaling startups and companies at home rather than abroad. As we zoom out, **Nordic and Baltic business leaders are concerned with Europe's declining competitiveness on the global scene. While the Nordic countries are in a good position individually, it is a bleak outlook to become winning nations in a losing region.**

The Nordic region cannot afford a further decline in our competitiveness. It is therefore imperative to act now and enhance our capabilities in adopting new AI technology, scaling innovative startups, and simplifying and harmonizing our adoption of EU regulations within the digital domain. If we succeed in accelerating the EU's internal market, the Nordic region has all the opportunities to thrive.

"Today, we have reaffirmed our common vision that the Nordic region will become the world's most sustainable and integrated region by 2030. This will support the economic competitiveness of our region"

Joint Statement by the Prime Ministers of the Nordic countries,
May 13th, 2024.

NORDIC AI VISION FOR 2030

We are witnessing perfect momentum to elevate political and industry collaboration across the Nordic and Baltic countries. All Nordic countries are now members of NATO and the Prime Ministers recently announced a joint ambition to improve the Nordic regions' competitiveness to become a global frontrunner in the digital and green technologies of tomorrow, highlighting collaboration on emerging and critical technologies as an area that deserve special attention. On this backdrop, we propose an ambitious **Nordic AI vision for 2030** that should serve as our joint North Star:

In 2030, the Nordic region will lead the world in adopting AI at scale with tangible benefits for our citizens and companies.

We will be second to none in applying trustworthy and secure AI to enhance the global competitiveness of our enterprises, improve public service, drive new scientific breakthroughs, accelerate the green transition, and uphold the cybersecurity and resilience of our democratic societies.

As we navigate this new AI wave, governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia are taking steps together across the region and with our international partners to lead the way in responsible innovation and ensure coherent and effective AI governance at both the European and global levels.

For this vision to materialize by 2030, we need to address several **opportunities and basic conditions** for the adoption of AI today:

• The Nordics should be recognized globally for developing and deploying AI responsibly by leveraging our unique Nordic traditions for trusted public-private partnerships and societal responsibility. This means identifying further opportunities and avenues for exchanges between public and private decision-makers and institutions grounded in our democratic values.

• The benefits of AI must be tangible and proven to citizens and employees. The Nordic and Baltic countries' role in the new AI economy is dependent on access to talent and skilled labor of which there is already today a shortage. This demands a considerable focus on AI upskilling across society.

• The readiness of our countries to adopt AI is dependent on developing a deeper understanding of the depth and components of the new AI economy. While the Nordic countries are highly digitalized, the structure of strategy – e.g. across the industry, infrastructure, and energy policy - is not always properly aligned and challenges our ability to keep up with 'the fast-moving train' that is the emerging global AI economy.

• The ability of our companies and public institutions to adopt AI, innovate, and compete globally will depend on ensuring clarity and predictability in the regulatory landscape, both as regards the implementation of the EU AI Act, EU data protection rules, and other regulations. For the outward-looking Nordic region, it will be particularly important to ensure that regulations at the EU and global levels are coherent and interoperable to avoid fragmentation and barriers to export and trade.

• The potential hinges on our ability and willingness to leverage one of the Nordic region's strongest assets: Data. The Nordic and Baltic countries are rich in high-quality datasets across both the public sector and private industry but today sharing and utilization of data are hindered by both technical and legal barriers. While Nordic enterprises have been early adopters of modern cloud infrastructure, the uptake of cloud in the public sector and other regulated sectors is uneven and slowed by different interpretations of policy and regulation.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES AT THE NORDIC LEVEL

As highlighted at the High-Level Forum in Copenhagen, there is both strong interest and significant opportunity to enhance coordination and the exchange of best practices in these areas. After thorough reflection and deliberation, it has been concluded that three strategic flagship initiatives hold substantial potential to benefit the Nordic region. In support of the 2030 Vision, we propose that the Nordic Council of Ministers consider the following cross-cutting strategic initiatives for near-term implementation. These initiatives should be viewed as part of a collective effort to strengthen Nordic AI readiness and foster greater regional collaboration. To advance this effectively, the Nordic Council of Ministers, in partnership with the business community and close cooperation with local governments, should lead the way in prioritizing and coordinating these initiatives. This will require the allocation of dedicated resources to ensure comprehensive follow-up and robust support for successful implementation, working in close alignment with the designated project owners.

Initiative 1:

1. Establish the Nordic Center for Applied AI

The Nordic Center, which was already announced at the High-Level Forum in Copenhagen, will drive co-investment in strategic resources, increase AI usage, and enhance international competitiveness and attractiveness for the region. The ambition is to create real excellence and relevance for leading Nordic companies and organizations. The Center will be open to partnerships with relevant stakeholders from the Nordic and Baltic regions. It will promote innovation in AI across the Nordic countries, serving as a platform for public-private partnerships, support cross-border alliances and collaboration, encourage knowledge-sharing, and strengthen innovation ecosystems. The Center will focus on driving large-scale investments in AI, while data-sharing initiatives will help accelerate AI development and testing across the region.

Initiative 2:

2. Create a Hub for Evidence-Based AI Upskilling and Education

For the Nordic region to thrive in the AI economy, it is essential to ensure access to talent and equip Nordic citizens with the necessary skills. To achieve this, we propose the establishment of a Nordic knowledge hub for AI skills. Anchored within an existing organization to minimize overhead, the hub will provide regular, evidence-based insight on AI skill demand and supply, its economic and labor market impacts, and best practices for digital upskilling. This will include a strong focus on lifelong learning and on-the-job training to ensure that the current workforce remains competitive as AI technologies evolve. By integrating data sources on AI and labor market trends, the hub will help guide skilling strategies across the Nordic region. Special emphasis will be placed on fostering a diverse AI talent pool, particularly encouraging the participation of women. Key outputs will include updates on AI skilling trends, roundtables, events, training programs, and an annual 'Nordic AI Skills' report.

Initiative 3:

3. Repeat the Nordic-Baltic High-Level Forum on AI Readiness

The Forum will gather public and private sector stakeholders, including policymakers, business leaders, and AI experts, to discuss AI development, share best practices, and identify opportunities, with a focus on influencing European AI policy. It will also follow up on previous recommendations and flagship initiatives to ensure continuous progress. The forum's goal is to strengthen the Nordics and Baltics as leaders in responsible AI development and key players in the European AI debate, ensuring that regional priorities are reflected in EU AI legislation. Key activities will include identifying and driving milestones for progress, supporting business leaders in navigating AI challenges, and fostering public-private partnerships to drive innovation. Outputs will include recommendations and policy documents, with roundtable discussions serving as a platform for deeper engagement on AI topics.

TOPIC 1. Leading AI through trust

Nordic societies are characterized by high trust between citizens and in our public institutions. AI can only be successful if trusted by employees, users, and consumers. This means not only having responsible and democratic guardrails in place to guide and regulate the development and deployment of AI.AI technologies must also live up to the hype and promise to the citizens and employees. Advancing balanced AI regulation and responsible standards for competitive innovation should become a Nordic comparative stronghold in years to come. However, while responsible AI standards and regulations are crucial, extensive regulation could hinder the spread of AI benefits and add to an already burdensome compliance regime, further hurting Nordic and European companies' global competitiveness. This would be the wrong path at a time when Europe is falling further behind the US and China. With the new EU AI Act Europe has moved first to regulate AI comprehensively. **Now it is up to the Nordic region, together with our partners in the EU and globally, to ensure that the AI Act and other regulations work to unleash rather than slow innovation based on our democratic values.**

Proposed specific initiatives:

4. Build AI sandboxes to propel Nordic and Baltic Tech development
The Nordic countries have experience with sandboxes; however, their objectives have been too narrow, thereby limiting innovation within the Nordic and Baltic regions. To better engage companies from these areas, we propose the establishment of multiple regulatory sandboxes across the Nordic and Baltic regions. Rather than having a purely regulatory focus, these sandboxes should serve as a meeting place between legal and technological expertise to foster mutual learning to promote AI innovation within the boundaries of the AI Act and other regulations. These sandboxes should vary in scope, thereby allowing companies to test their products in environments that fully comprehend the complexity of their specific contexts. This initiative would provide optimal opportunities for these companies, enabling them to identify and address potential challenges before bringing their products to market.

Now it is up to the Nordic region, together with our partners in the EU and globally, to ensure that the AI Act and other regulations work to unleash rather than slow innovation based on our democratic values.

5. Ensure Nordic and Baltic coordination on AIA implementation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is subject to stringent regulations within the European Union (EU), but the enforcement and support to comply with regulations can vary widely across different member states. . This variation creates an uneven playing field, placing companies in some countries at a disadvantage due to the need to navigate more less practice-oriented regulatory environments. To address this challenge and create a more cohesive and supportive landscape for AI innovation, we propose a coordinated approach across the Nordic and Baltic countries. This approach would provide clear implementation guidelines and guidance , particularly for SMEs, outlining the distinct roles and responsibilities AI provides and AI deployers, and promoting equal conditions for the responsible development and deployment of AI. To achieve this, working groups and relevant authorities should collaborate toexchange best practices and ensure that companies across the region face consistent regulatory requirements and receive the necessary. This would help reducing barriers to innovation and enhancing competition. Beyond regional collaboration, we also recommend that the Nordic region brings this discussion to Brussels, actively work to influence the EU agenda through joint events, workshops, and other collaborative efforts.

6. Promote Nordic collaboration on Codes of Conduct on AI trust

The Nordic region holds significant potential to become a global leader in establishing trust in AI. To realize this potential, it is proposed to launch a regional initiative to foster a collaborative framework across the Nordic countries. This initiative would focus on developing codes of conduct that promote trust and transparency in AI systems. These codes would provide guidelines for the responsible use of AI, including mechanisms for assessing and minimizing the environmental impact of AI technologies, promoting AI literacy, and ensuring trustworthy practices.

The initiative would offer considerable benefits to SMEs within the Nordic region by providing them with clear frameworks for AI deployment. The initiative will bring together public and private organizations to develop and implement codes of conduct for AI deployment that align with Nordic values of trust, transparency, and responsibility.

7. Push for coherent AI governance at global scale

As smaller, export-oriented economies, the Nordic region has a strong interest in not only predictable EU rules but also coherent AI governance and regulation at a global scale. This is particularly true when it comes to our main trade and economic partners across the Atlantic and within the G7 but also emerging economies in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere. The Nordic-Baltic countries should push within the EU and in other fora like the OECD and the G7/Hiroshima Process for the creation of a globally coherent framework, avoiding fragmentation and aligning domestic policies to international initiatives in a way that ensures regulatory interoperability.

TOPIC 2. Unleashing the value of data

Effective data management across the entire value chain is crucial for maximizing AI potential in the Nordic region. Despite robust data environments built on shared values of security and responsibility, several barriers hinder data utilization for AI. Variation in organizational structures and data collection methods across Nordic countries complicates the data integration necessary for reliable AI models. Organizations often struggle with data preparation, cleaning, and integration from diverse sources. Furthermore, a lack of formal data governance frameworks impedes effective data management and integrity. Enhanced data management will allow Nordic companies to scale AI solutions effectively.

Proposed specific initiatives

8. Establish Nordic and Baltic Data Hub

The Nordic Council of Ministers should initiate a cross-border collaboration to leverage the potential of data spaces across the region. This collaboration can enhance data sharing, innovation, and digital transformation, driving sustainable growth and competitiveness in key sectors like healthcare, energy, and public services.

9. Foster an executive network around better sharing of data

Open discussion and collective learning can be instrumental in showing the benefits of robust data-sharing policies and how they can improve public welfare. Inspired by the Swedish initiative 'Bättre Delat', we propose establishing a Nordic-level executive network that brings together leaders from both the public and private sectors to promote cross-border and cross-sector data sharing. With support from the Nordic Council, this network could facilitate a cross-regional sharing of insights gained through collective experiences, demonstrating the power of real-world cases in addressing policy and leadership challenges. Using concrete and exemplary cases as materials in communications, roundtable discussions etc. can help inform policy and decision-makers on how digital transformation can create an AI-ready society while strengthening democratic values.

10. Accelerate the use of the Nordic National HPC Competence Centers

Computing power is a vital resource for companies engaged in handling large datasets and complex algorithms. To capitalize on the latest technological advancements and ensure enhanced access to computing power in the Nordic Region, we propose to accelerate the coordination and use of the Nordic National HPC Competence Centers through the establishment of a joint secretariat for the Nordic National HPC competence centers. The coordination aims to ensure that SMEs possess the requisite tools and resources to stay competitive and spearhead the technological advancements of the future.

11. Promote green, energy-efficient, and scalable AI infrastructure

Datacenters, compute and connectivity are the backbone of our digital societies, underpinning everything from businesses and innovation to remote work, public service, education and healthcare. Data centers use a substantial amount of energy, and this is set to increase with the use of data and AI across society. **As green frontrunners, the Nordic region should promote investments in scalable AI and cloud infrastructure that guarantees use of new and renewable energy and the highest standards for energy efficiency.** Data centers should minimize water usage and other environmental impacts, and where feasible reuse the waste heat from the servers and channel it back to society.

In particular, the countries should work together with the datacenter industry to make these requirements explicit in their broader digitalization and AI strategies, and also encourage further collaboration between the datacentre industry, researchers, and Nordic companies to advance green innovation, such as RISE – Research Institutes of Sweden, LUMI in Finland, Sintef in Norway and the Net Zero Innovation Hub for Data Centres in Denmark.

To further drive the Twin Transition, the Nordic-Baltic countries could adopt a common approach to implementation of the EU Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria and other regulatory schemes, while also encouraging new AI-led innovation in energy and climate sectors. When we apply AI to our existing strongholds in green energy production and innovation, the Nordic region can become global leaders in driving clean tech and digital solutions of tomorrow.

Last but not least, to enable the full digitalization of enterprises and society, mobile connectivity will be critical. In the same way that the frontrunners/ winners on consumer digitalization were the companies that were 'mobile first' in their thinking, the future winners in the AI race will be the companies and societies that understand that mobile connectivity provides flexibility not available through other techniques. If it can go mobile, it will go mobile.

TOPIC 3. Accelerate Talents and Skills for AI

Investing in education, up- and reskilling, and training is essential for building a skilled workforce capable of utilizing and advancing AI technologies. Nordic countries are recognized for their high levels of digital literacy and strong educational systems, which provide a solid foundation for AI utilization. The region benefits from a collaborative culture and low-hierarchy workplace environments, which facilitate innovation and the rapid adoption of new technologies.

There are also significant barriers to address: The shortage of AI specialists and the need for more sophisticated data practices are ongoing challenges. Many organizations struggle with integrating AI into their existing systems and upskilling their workforce to meet the

demands of AI technologies. Nordic and Baltic decision-makers must support initiatives that enhance AI talent and skills, ensuring individuals can thrive in a digital economy. This includes creating and funding programs that focus on AI-relevant education, reskilling and upskilling current professionals, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

Proposed specific initiatives

12. Set ambitious Nordic targets for AI upskilling
For the Nordic region to adopt AI at scale with tangible benefits for our citizens and companies, it all starts with acquiring the necessary skills and competencies. **AI upskilling will be critical not only for achieving a full return on investments in AI but also for maintaining trust and avoiding untended harm.** The Norwegian government has set an ambitious target that 80 percent of public employees should use AI by 2025, and Finland has long worked with national targets for AI upskilling of the population. It is recommended that all Nordic-Baltic countries set and compare concrete targets for the upskilling of AI to drive a level of ambition and urgency. The work to achieve these targets should be anchored in public-private partnerships involving both industry, education institutions, unions, and other societal actors.

13. Promote equal digital opportunity and diversity in Nordic basic education
The basis for acquiring AI skills later in life starts with the adoption of basic digital skills in schools. This will allow children the opportunity to develop their creativity and curiosity, while also laying the foundation for youth and children to be able to navigate the online world safely and securely. As we know boys gravitate more to digital and STEM courses than girls, this approach should strive for equal opportunity (digital equality) to learning digital skills in basic education. We thus strongly recommend that digital understanding and skills be made mandatory in basic education in the Nordic region to promote equal participation and diversity in the it sector.

14. Ensure true AI readiness through broad skills and competencies
The Nordic region should adopt a holistic approach to its education system reflecting a new AI reality. This approach should not be limited to IT-related disciplines but should encompass all fields of study, integrating an AI perspective where relevant. Whether it pertains to teachers, nurses, or electricians, we must rethink our educational models and incorporate as much IT-related knowledge as possible across all educational programs. Nordic education institutions and agencies should work together – with inputs from industry - to develop principles and guidelines to facilitate the integration of IT-related knowledge and AI perspectives into the Nordic education system.

15. Attract talent from outside the region
There is a shortage of IT specialists, which already today is threatening the growth prospects of the Nordic it sector, and if the Nordic region is to harness the potential of artificial intelligence, the demand for specialists will only increase in the coming years. In the global competition for international talent, international IT specialists and their families must find the Nordic region an attractive place to settle.

Therefore, initiatives are needed to make the Nordic region a more attractive destination for IT specialists and their families. Therefore, it is recommended that we establish a pilot scheme that allows IT specialists from selected countries and their families to move to the Nordic region for 90 days, with all necessary paperwork completed in advance, ensuring that the foreign IT specialists and their families encounter minimal administrative challenges. Ninety days corresponds to the duration of a Schengen visa. The proposal is based on a Finnish pilot, which received 5,300 applications. The Finnish scheme has succeeded in putting Finland on the world map and making it attractive to foreign talents.

Topic 4. Scaling AI from Pilot to Production

While Nordic countries have strong academic research outputs in AI, these advancements are not always seamlessly translated into business solutions. Nordic companies often face challenges in accessing larger markets and securing substantial levels of skills and investments needed for global scaling. The limited size of the domestic market pushes many companies to seek opportunities abroad. To overcome these challenges, Nordic and Baltic decision-makers must secure stronger Nordic ecosystems for growing and scaling AI solutions and businesses.

Proposed specific initiatives

16. Bridge the gap from pilot to production through a Nordic-Baltic strategy
The Nordic and Baltic countries have a rich history of technological research. However, one of the challenges faced is the lack of commercialization of this research. Therefore, we propose the establishment of a Nordic and Baltic council to help bridge the gap in scaling AI from pilot projects to market-ready products. The aim of the council is to present a unified Nordic and Baltic strategy that supports researchers in scaling their unique findings, thereby positioning the region at the forefront of technological development once again. This initiative will provide researchers across borders with valuable knowledge, ultimately helping the Nordic and Baltic regions regain their competitive edge.

17. Scale adoption of AI Assistants through a common template
To scale responsible adoption of AI, we propose to develop a common template for implementation of 'AI Assistants' across the Nordic region. Building on existing efforts in Denmark, this project could demonstrate practical steps that public sector and financial institutions should take to implement AI in a way that complies with legal obligations, including GDPR, AI Act and security obligations. Developed in a close public-private partnership, the template should help organizations ask the right questions and structure their implementation work related to AI Assistants. Furthermore, this approach would ensure that public sector entities and financial companies adhere to uniform rules and standards, facilitating closer cooperation across the Nordic and Baltic countries.

18. Enhance Nordic collaboration on AI and quantum
The combination of AI, high-performance computing and quantum brings whole new opportunities for accelerating scientific breakthroughs in material sciences and other areas. The Nordic region would benefit from stronger collaboration and from pooling resources around experimentation and adoption of emerging quantum technologies. This could include access to quantum computing infrastructure and development of future quantum AI algorithms with relevance for our strongholds in the life sciences, chemistry, materials, finance, logistics, and energy.

Quantum computing, sensors, and communication represent a great potential but are still in their early stages, which require further investments in basic research, material science, applications, and infrastructure across different research disciplines and industries. One area that is seeing rising quantum tech maternity is quantum algorithms. The region is experiencing a growing interest in research and industry to develop quantum-ready AI algorithms. One way to explore this could be through a joint quantum algorithm center across academia and industry which could be anchored in, for example, the existing EURO HPC program or other relevant places with cross-border functions and access to HPCs.

19. Improve access to foundation models in the European Union
The Nordics have an opportunity to lead the EU in fostering access to trustworthy and interoperable AI ecosystems. Ensuring EU companies' access to state-of-the-art foundation models requires a strategic and proactive approach. Failure to achieve this

could lead to decreased competitiveness and a significant innovation gap between the EU and the rest of the world. Therefore, the Nordics could collaborate with other EU countries to push for a dedicated AI Access Task Force. The taskforce should act as a liaison between tech providers, policymakers, and businesses to preemptively identify and resolve concerns and ensure smoother, faster integration of AI technologies into the European market.

20. Create an efficient market for AI procurement
The Nordics could appoint relevant stakeholders to analyze possibilities for a common market for public procurement of AI services. By coordinating critical tenders across the Nordic region, we could foster collaboration on shared challenges, achieving "scaling by design" and expanding the market. The substantial, combined purchasing power in the Nordic and Baltic countries should drive efforts to create an efficient market to support the demand for commercial and responsible AI solutions, benefiting the entire area.

21. Make the Nordic region the most investment-friendly area in the EU
The Nordic Region is currently lagging in terms of investments in digital innovation. We propose a dedicated working group be established to thoroughly analyze and develop strategies to enhance the investment ecosystems within the Nordic-Baltic region. The formation of this working group is anticipated to foster a more conducive environment for startups, thereby enabling them to take greater risks in their pursuit of digital innovations. This would significantly bolster the overall AI landscape within the Nordic region, contributing to a more robust and innovative economic framework.


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