Regional Development Strategy for a Sustainable Future in Norrbotten 2020
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Introduction – The Choices of Norrbotten

The Regional Development Strategy for a Sustainable Future in Norrbotten 2020 (RUS) is the overall strategic document for sustainable growth in Norrbotten. RUS has been prepared through a wide cooperation of representatives from municipalities: County Council of Norrbotten, Luleå University of Technology, the County Administrative Board, the Sami Parliament, authorities, organizations and individuals. The County Administrative Board has coordinated the project.

The regional growth project was determined in 2007 and during 2011 a review was carried out. The revision has been under way for a year and a variety of activities have been organized to collect contributions and opinions. Amongst other things, the discussion meetings were carried out with different themes and specialisations. Great emphasis was placed upon inviting and attracting a wide range of participants who could contribute knowledge and new perspectives to stimulate the regional growth work. Four hearings were also carried out in different areas of the county to collate contributions to the county's most important prioritisation questions leading up to 2020.

The regional growth plan is included in the strategies of the EU and Sweden for sustainable development and is managing the project in the county, for example the county's development programme, the EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund. RUS ties together the significant planning processes for sustainable growth and can thus facilitate cooperation within and between counties. The strategy represents a basis of negotiations between the county, the nation, and also discussions at an EU level.

The title 'Regional Development Strategy for a Sustainable Future in Norrbotten 2020' indicates that high priority is given to working on sustainable growth. The starting point is the vision of Norrbotten - For attractive living environments and sustainable growth in Sweden and Europe. The EU's future strategy 'Europe 2020' is the basis for the quantitative aims underlined in the strategy. The analysis of Norrbotten's preconditions for development and potential for growth has resulted in five strategic areas outlining a number of priority measures.

The Regional Growth Strategy is the county agreement for cooperation and prioritization in order to develop Norrbotten. The strategy was set on 2 December 2011 by the Regional Partnership.

Signatures Regional Partnership
Regional Development Strategy for a Sustainable Future in Norrbotten 2020

The Regional Growth Strategy (RUS) is a comprehensive strategic document for building a sustainable future in Norrbotten. RUS shall contribute to the increase in harmonization of coordination between plans and strategies from different administrative levels and sectors. The goal is to improve planning conditions and clarify how different strategies, plans, programmes and ventures relate to one another and how the development work can be coordinated. RUS focuses upon the realization of prioritized measures and is a collective strategy for the development of Norrbotten.

RUS is based upon the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Swedish National Reform Programme, and the National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment 2007-2013. RUS also touches upon other areas of policy.

Each county shall, in accordance with Regulation 2007:713 of the Regional Development Work produce an RUS through the monitoring and reporting of results. Regional Growth Strategy for Sustainable Future in Norrbotten 2020 provides options for future sustainable growth. The strategy, based on a SWOT analysis of the county's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats answers the question of what should be achieved in the county and what are the most important priorities. In order to realize the vision and goals in this strategy, a long term and strategic development programme is needed. The regional growth strategy is the starting point for everyone working with the development of the county. This is a document that provides choices for sustainable growth.

1. From Vision to Action

With the strategic direction of both the European Union (EU) and Sweden as its point of departure, Norrbotten has created a vision and set in place comprehensible goals for development work towards 2020. The strategy builds on the county's strategic conditions and developmental potential.

The future of Norrbotten is dependent upon the choices and capability of developing the county's strengths and how new possibilities for sustainable growth can be envisaged. Norrbotten has to follow global developments and strengthen its competitive edge. The foundation is the county's attractive living environment, creative power, entrepreneurship, infrastructure and competence plus knowledge of the value of sustainable development work. The implementation of RUS gives Norrbotten the means to move toward a collective vision.

1.1 Vision

Norrbotten – For attractive living environments and sustainable growth in Sweden and Europe
Sustainable growth is an encompassing strategic goal for all. From the county’s point of view, the progression is made **to meet today’s needs without compromising those of the future generation**. As Norrbotten strives for a sustainable future, this forms the basis for how Norrbotten shall work and act. This means creating a society where economic growth and social welfare combine to create a good environment. Society should be formed upon what the environment and population’s health can stand and the county should place long term investments into these resources. Therefore one challenge is to conduct further development work to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and collective action. All measures carried out should survive in the long term.

The three sustainable perspectives of economic growth, social welfare and a good environment can, under the execution of the regional development strategies, be described as important approaches. This means that special consideration should be given to when investments, initiatives or projects within the strategy’s framework are planned, implemented and followed up. Investments should contribute to positive development with respect to the horizontal criteria of equality, integration and diversity, environment and young people. The horizontal criteria form the basis for development initiatives.

The government growth policies focus on, amongst other things, equality, environment, population health and integration and diversity in regional growth projects. In Norrbotten there is also one special criterion with specific focus on young people. For most of these horizontal criteria, there are certain specific national and in certain cases, regional goals, plus specific national and/or regional support documents or strategies.

/A matrix/graphic illustration outlining the horizontal criteria distribution (horizontally) through the development areas and/or measures of the RUS. /

/ The section below should be written with the aim of "helping the reader" to piece together the criteria in context (national strategy, business development, growth policy etc.) and partly to clarify the county’s approach to the criteria, a type of "RTP/RUS guide" – how the horizontal criteria should be understood/interpreted/used in the political growth’s work and implementation. 

The horizontal criteria are about how in the applicable parts, regional competition, entrepreneurship and initiative are stimulated, especially through:

- **Equality**
  - Strong local and regional competitiveness where both women and men have the opportunity to develop, influence and bring forward their ideas from their own resources.
Equality increases growth, attractiveness and innovation possibilities, whilst deepening democracy and increasing social capital. A region’s attractiveness is strengthened by the fact that regardless of gender, opportunities for development are seen and acknowledged and therefore contribute to regional development. The goal for the equality policy is for women and men to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Equality also contributes to economic growth by safeguarding and promoting each person’s competence and creativity.

In order to break down traditional gender patterns and reduce gender differences on the job market and in the business sector, equality must penetrate the entire educational system, from primary school to higher education. Changes must also occur in other business-related, political and organizational contexts.

Businesses should be an equally natural choice and appointment. Women and men’s potential for entrepreneurship and business should be utilized by creating better opportunities to start and run businesses. As there are fewer women than men who start and run their own companies, special measures are needed to bring forward women’s businesses. Business and entrepreneurship within health and social care should be encouraged and facilitated.

Women take more sick leave and have worse self-perceived health than men. It is therefore important to examine the connection between health, work, and the work’s properties. Women, in comparison to men, are often subject to a higher extent of violence or threat of violence in the workplace.

Women and men should have the same opportunities and conditions for paid work. This way, equality is promoted and isolation reduced.

- Integration and Diversity
  - Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all.

The aim for integration policy is to provide equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic or cultural background. Those born outside of Sweden should have the chance to work, start and run businesses, take part in and contribute to leisure and cultural activities, educate themselves and deepen their knowledge and experience. Integration is a method to encourage people to take part in the development of their society.

Diversity deals with the idea that people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds enrich their surrounding society - if not at least affirming their experience, rather than marginalizing it. Norrbotten will take advantage of the possibilities that a growing diversity has to offer.

A considerable amount of the working population in Sweden comes from foreign backgrounds and this number will steadily increase. Approximately one third of people moving to the county come from other countries, which offers new resources to the county such as new skills, perspectives and experiences. In this respect, the county needs a sustainable and competent way of strengthening integration and social participation. Integration and diversity are growth issues for Norrbotten.
- **Environment, Climate and Energy**
  - Increased energy efficiency, development of renewable energy.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time and the government's highest priority is the environmental issue. At the same time, environmental, climatic and energy challenges constitute a driving force for the development of technology, products, and service within all branches. The business sector must improve and seize growth potential for the growing demand for green and resource-effective solutions.

The EU, countries, regions, companies, organizations and individuals must convert to a greener economy. Strong competitiveness and growth should be achieved along with sustainable energy sources, effective use of resources and compliance with our climate and environmental quality objectives. Society should be more efficient, both ecologically and economically.

By converting to a greener economy, significant competitive advantages are created; global demand has generated an increased need for solutions to effective use of energy and natural resources, plus generally increased demand for sound environmental standards within all industries.

Renewable energy, environmental technology, environmental efficiency, planning of society and buildings, sustainable transportation and vehicles, tourism and agriculture are some examples of the areas where conversion is required. Small and medium-sized companies play an important role in this conversion and creation of new jobs. A greener economy can create more new jobs and replace an amount of those jobs lost by other social transformations.

To be able to continue to run operations that create long-term growth within the county, it is important to carefully and resourcefully take advantage of natural resources. It is important to realize that this, amongst other things, is a success factor.

- **Young People**
  - Youth participation in local and regional development work with a specific focus on business and entrepreneurship.

The participation, influence, business and entrepreneurship of youths should be strengthened in Norrbotten. Young women and men are the future, which is why everybody has an obligation to give them alternatives and knowledge about the unique possibilities available in the county. It is important that the possibilities are given to: contribute to regional development and practice within businesses, work with innovations, be offered different career paths, take part in higher education and contribute to develop tomorrow's job market.

Society must be accessible to young people and give them hope for the future. Far too many leave secondary school without qualifications and risk a worse start and platform on the job market, which can affect health, income and welfare in the long run. The "right" education, knowledge and experience are requirements from many employers. Young people must be given more opportunities to show what they can do, what they want and what they think.
Many young people come from a foreign background and are on their way into Swedish society. There are differences between the conditions for young girls and boys. Many municipalities in the county have a deficit of young women, which has a negative effect on the growth conditions. Growth happens where young women choose to live. Different measures are therefore needed to make the county an attractive place to work and live.

Model

The diagram will be updated, incorrect vision

The above model shows the comprehensive context behind the basis for a sustainable future. It takes its starting point from the county’s assets as they are described in Chapter 2. Starting Points and Opportunities. Entrepreneurship and innovativeness explain the creative ability that must exist to speed up the county’s accessibility and growth potential. It concerns people’s basic evaluations and attitudes towards change and development, alongside how we think, implement and integrate these new modifications, as well as women and men’s ability to work together in groups.

1.2 Direction

The regional growth plan is included in the strategies of the EU and Sweden for sustainable development, and leads the project in the county, for example, the county’s development programme and the various Structural and Cohesion Funds of the EU.

The European Union (EU) has created a new future strategy – Smart and sustainable inclusive growth – The Europe 2020 Strategy – that will prepare the EU’s economy for the forthcoming decade. It is about a strategy for high employment, low carbon economy, productivity and social togetherness. One of the most important tools for the EU in implementing the strategy is the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund.

Europe 2020 is based upon three, all of which strengthen each other.

- **Smart growth**: To develop an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- **Sustainable growth**: To promote a resource-effective, greener and a stronger competitive economy.
- **Inclusive Growth**: To stimulate an economy with high employment and social and territorial unity.

To speed up progress there are also seven key initiatives linked to each prioritized area. See the picture below for an overview.

Each year the government develops a Swedish reform programme that designates how the strategy will be put into action in Sweden and how Sweden contributes to achieving the goals in the strategy.

The government has developed the National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment 2007-2013, which builds upon the regional development policy, the Swedish Labour Market Policy and the EU Cohesion Policy. The national strategy will be reviewed so it is up-to-date prior to the forthcoming Structural Funds period 2014-2020.

Norrbotten consists largely of agricultural and rural areas, which means that a large portion of growth and development ongoing in the county takes place in these areas. Therefore, in many cases, contributions to regional growth within Norrbotten can be compared to contributions for agricultural development. So as we can create additional values and sustainable growth within the whole county, interaction between rural areas and their neighbouring areas is an important factor. A lively rural area and open countryside are essential for sustainable growth within the whole county.

**1.3 Comprehensive Measurable Goals.**

To achieve the targets set by the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU has defined five comprehensive and measurable goals. In the Swedish National Reform Programme
2011, Sweden has responded with corresponding goals. For some of the goals, the ambition is higher for Sweden than the EU average, for example, in the amount of Research and Development in relation to GNP. The goals have been broken down to a regional level for Norrbotten and have been supplemented with certain regional goals, for example goals for occupancy, the amount of young women/men and more new companies.

All statistics shall be reported and analysed from a gender perspective, and if needed, clear cut goals will be implemented for women and men. The goals should be achieved no later than 2020. A local and regional anchoring of the goals is essential to be able to achieve the goals in the strategy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>EU goals</th>
<th>National Goals</th>
<th>Goals for Norrbotten.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employment</td>
<td>75% of 20–64-year-olds shall have a job. Through larger participation from women and older people, and better integration from EU migrant workers, this will happen.</td>
<td>The aim is an increase in employment of well over 80% of people between the ages of 20–64. The increase will initially begin with more employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Research and Development (R&amp;D) and Innovation.</td>
<td>3% of EU GNP will be invested in R&amp;D.</td>
<td>Investment in research and development shall increase to approximately 4% of the GNP.</td>
<td>a) Revenue for university research as a proportion of GNP will be in line with the government average. b) R&amp;D investment in the business sector as a proportion of GNP in line with the national average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Climate and Energy</td>
<td>a) Greenhouse gas emissions should be 20% lower than in 1990. b) 20% of energy should come from renewable resources. C) Energy efficiency should have risen by 20%.</td>
<td>a) Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17% compared to 2005. b) Sweden has also committed to a 49% increase of renewable energy sources c) Reduced energy intensity by 20% compared to 2008.</td>
<td>a) Energy consumption per area should be reduced by 25%. b) The industry sector should become more energy efficient by 20% GDP/SEK. c) The use of electrical heating systems should cease. d) Energy consumption within the transportation sector should be 20% more efficient. e) The amount of renewable energy should increase by 20%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Education</td>
<td>a) The total of students who leave school early should be less than 10%. b) At least 40% of 30 to 34 year-olds should have higher education.</td>
<td>a)The total of 18 to 24 year-olds who have not completed secondary school education and who are not studying should be less than 10% b) The total of 30 to 34 year-olds who have at least two years of post-secondary education should increase to 40-45%.</td>
<td>a)The total of 18 to 24 year-olds who have not completed secondary school education and who are not studying should be less than 10% b) The total of 30 to 34 year-olds who have at least two years of post-secondary education should increase to 40-45%.</td>
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<td>5. Poverty and Social Exclusion (Isolation)</td>
<td>The number of people who live, or risk living in poverty and social isolation should be</td>
<td>To increase social participation by reducing the total of isolated work forces to well under 14%.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
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<td>6. Occupancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>At least 8,000 people should move to Norrbotten every year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Net Occupancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Occupancy surplus should increase to at least 500 people per year, with even gender division.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Young People</td>
<td></td>
<td>The amount of young women and men aged 20-34 should be in line with the national average.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. New Businesses</td>
<td>a) At least 1,700 new businesses per year</td>
<td>b) At least 75% business survival rates after 3 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Total Salary</td>
<td></td>
<td>The total salary for women and men should grow more than the national average.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Broadband</td>
<td>90% of the population should have 100Mbit/s by 2020 at the latest.</td>
<td>Everyone in the county should have access to high capacity broadband, with the aim of 100Mbit/s by 2020 at the latest.</td>
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2. Challenges and Possibilities

The title *Regional Development Strategy for a Sustainable Future in Norrbotten* indicates that high priority should be given to work that takes advantage of the county's resources in a way that secures living quality both now and forth coming generations. Everything that is done should be done with an eye to the future.

An analysis of the county's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the threats and possibilities that exist in the environment shall form the base for the county's future strategy. The aim is to identify success factors and create an understanding of how the county can take advantage of surrounding changes.

2.1 The Geographical Situation

*A Part of the Barents Region*

The county's strengths are about genuine advantages in relation to other regions in Europe and the rest of the world. Norrbotten is the only county in Sweden bordered by two countries - Finland and Norway - and has developed functional cooperation over the borders. The county forms part of the Barents Region, a European cooperation region with six million inhabitants. Its strategic situation is strengthened as the world's interests in the region increase, especially regarding oil and gas. The geographical situation should be utilised more to strengthen Norrbotten as a part of the Barents Region and to develop functional cross-border cooperation. Norrbotten also belongs to part of the Sami region, which spreads across the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. Norrbotten is a county with many national minorities and minority
languages. The history and industry of the Sami, Europe's only indigenous peoples, are an important part of the Norrbotten history and development.

**Sparseness and Climate**
The geographical situation means that the region holds a peripheral position in relation to the global market. The distance leads to higher transportation costs, reduced knowledge transfer and lower dynamic.

A climate with clear seasonal changes, magnificent scenery, high alpine mountain ranges, the Northern Lights, three of the four untouched national rivers, vast forests and marshes, and an archipelago with thousands of islands also contribute to the county's individual character.

The county has experience of transforming disadvantages such as the cold, dark, distance and sparseness into advantages. The sparseness has provided strength and possibilities. Norrbotten's inland offers unique possibilities for testing activities and industrial experience. Access to widespread areas, cold, ice and snow and darkness in combination with modern information technology make the sparseness a competitive advantage and growth factor.

The county has more sparse and rural areas than most of the other regions. The county makes up around 25 per cent of the country's area, but only hosts 2.8 per cent of its population. This relationship has driven the development of, for example, distance healthcare and has resulted in Norrbotten being ahead in the work towards the healthcare system of the future - a technological development that can also be used in larger city areas.

**Natural and Cultural Environment**
In Norrbotten, there are national parks and internationally famous world heritage sites as well as natural and cultural heritage sites that are not only refined but also used by the people. Together with the county's cultural heritage and growing cultural environments, natural and climate advantages are valuable not only for the county's tourism, but also for creating attractive living environments. The climate and natural conditions mean that the county has unique possibilities for forestry and growing ingredients to produce local food.

Large amounts of national natural resources such as minerals, forests, and water energy are found in Norrbotten and make up a large proportion of the region's gross regional product (GRP). Processing of these large natural resources explains the county's high growth.

**The Brands of the County**
In the county there are many known brand names. These are partly tourist attractions, such as the Arctic Circle and the ICEHOTEL, and partly cultural personalities; sportsmen and women and others who contribute to the county’s profile. It is possible to take advantage of the county’s well-known brands, while developing the county’s industrial experience through sustainable trade and industry developments in combination with preserving natural and cultural values.
2.2 Demographics and Employment

**Demographics**
The population of Norrbotten is ageing, just as in most other regions. This is a result of increased life expectancy and lower birth rates, and also a large amount of people leaving the county between the 1980s and 1990s. Age distribution means that fewer children are born in the county, which leads to a reduced population. The basis for tax contributions deteriorates and the dependency ratio increases. Statistics show that young people move away from the county, with girls leaving earlier than boys. Both a continuing strong urbanisation and globalisation has a negative impact on the county from an external population perspective. These factors result in increased competition between municipalities, between coastal and inland areas and also with other regions. In many of the county municipalities there is a surplus of men and deficit of women of varying age groups. The imbalance is especially noticeable in smaller, inland municipalities but can also be seen in the Luleå region.

The demographic development with increasing older people and low birth rate is a large challenge. A workforce shortage brings forward serious consequences, both for the public sector and for the expansion possibilities of the private sector. The right expertise is important for well-functioning business and public sectors.

Increasing numbers of the ageing population place demands on well-functioning welfare establishments with good access to community services, which in turn places high demands for innovative solutions in the sparser areas where access to service is worse.

**Occupancy**
The occupancy of a county indicates its attractiveness. During recent years, occupancy of Norrbotten has increased. The main explanation is increased immigration. Despite the increase, the county's occupancy is weak in comparison to that of other regions; however, there is a positive tendency especially for some of the smaller inland municipalities.

Possibilities exist to stimulate the occupancy of the whole county, especially by young and foreign-born people by offering high-quality study environments, work, housing, meeting places, experiences, leisure activities, cultural scenes, and society life and development possibilities – all reasons for young people to move their studies.

**Employment and Education**
In Norrbotten there are good opportunities for qualified basic and higher education, alongside research in various areas (technology, economics, health sciences, teaching, media, music, theatre and social sciences). The county's university campuses create attractive places to study, especially for young people. Distance-bridging technology and local education centres also make studying possible for women and men of varying ages.

The county's employment rate is in line with that of the country. However, large variations exist within the county. Employment is high in Malmfälten [mining areas] but lower in eastern Norrbotten. The employment rate is higher amongst men than women, yet at the same time, women in the county are at a higher educational level than the
men. The number of young people who do not finish secondary education is alarmingly high, especially for boys within the smaller inland municipalities.

Large-scale investment within sectors such as mining, plus the ongoing generational shift leads to labour and skills shortages in many areas.

**Public Health**

Public health is an expression for the state of health of the population, and for the patterns of larger or smaller differences in health that exist between different population groups. Health is a resource for the individual whilst good public health is a goal for society. The county has a high rate of poor health in comparison with other counties. Access to work and the chance to contribute to working life is an important factor for good public health.

2.3 Infrastructure and Living Environment

Norrbotten has expansive urban areas, a growing town and university life, and a selection of culture and sports activities, whilst at the same time being more sparse and rural than most other regions in Europe. The county's agricultural environment offers many secure, solid and favourable housing opportunities with access to good public services.

The Luleå region is the largest functional labour market region north of the Stockholm region. The population is around 167,000 inhabitants. A large region works as a magnet whilst at the same time providing critical mass that is important for growth. Malmfälten is an expansive industrial region with great potential to develop into an attractive labour market area in the county. At the same time, Arvdsjaur and Arjeplog municipalities have every chance to combine testing areas and tourism for increased growth and employment. The county’s eastern parts have growing trade and other parts of its business sector can be further strengthened by investments from the mining industry.

The range of culture in the form of music, dance, film, theatre, art and crafts is wide and important for attractive living environments. The local and regional level of strategic cooperation within programmes, plans and strategies create opportunities to develop culture even more. The distance and population structure constitute special challenges for access to culture.

The power structure in the county has traditionally been male dominated, a hindrance to change as well as to openness and new ways of thinking. Young people’s participation and influence must increase to develop a more equal society.

Moving to an area is strongly related to attractive living environments in good locations. A county that offers multifaceted, tolerant and innovative environments is attractive to others. One opportunity is to take advantage of the county’s large area and possibility for housing close to nature.

In the county, there is an increasing housing deficit in wake of the large investments. After many years of restricted construction, there is great need to stimulate the building
of housing in many municipalities. The housing deficit and lack of sufficiently attractive living areas risk creating a commuter based workforce, rather than a locally based one.

One consequence of depopulation in these rural areas is depletion of public and commercial services/care. The basis and provisions for service deteriorate.

From the county's strategic position of long-distance, intra-regional and rural economic structure, the transportation infrastructure is not sufficiently developed. The East-to-West transport system is not sufficiently developed to achieve effective cooperation over international borders and towards the growing Asian markets. Long distances and reduced population means - in certain instances - an all too small critical mass. Regional expansion with train is made difficult and the tourism industry is not given the chance to grow. The whole region ends up in a difficult situation.

The inland area is dependent upon effective flight connections due to its geographical location, accessibility and catchment area. Air traffic is a very important factor for increased processing and a diverse business sector.

One threat to the county's development is if national infrastructure ventures do not take place or become delayed. The lack of investment in infrastructure reduces the competitiveness of the business sector when the possibility to conduct international business is compromised, thus negatively impacting employment. The current rail network has an acute lack of capacity and efficiency that threatens both the transport of cargo and passengers. In order for the rail network to no longer be a hindrance to the county's development, the North Bothnia Line needs to be built as part of the Bothnian Corridor, in combination with the expansion of the double track railway on the Iron Ore Line as part of the Northern Axis.

These sparse, low traffic roads are significant for citizens and businesses. For the most part, there are no alternatives to road transport. This applies especially to the forestry industry, tourism and quarrying.

An effective and competitive shipping line is a condition for the county's core industries. The harbours must be retained and developed. There is a lack of shipping lanes and terminals that must be secured for long term, competitive shipping as well as ice-breaking which is a national concern.

Investment in transportation infrastructure is therefore of great importance for regional development and international competition. Due to its strategic geographical location, Norrbotten is an important node in the European transport system.

Norrbotten has one of the country's most secure and extensive broadband networks. This creates good preconditions for an advanced range of services within the business and public sectors, for example within eHealth (a way for healthcare to be provided over a vast distance). Information and communication technology are basic opportunity tools to strengthen competition and welfare in Norrbotten, in the areas that are short of labour forces, as in other parts of Europe. The county has high information technology competence and internationally established IT companies.
2.4 Business and Enterprise

**Business Sector**
The structure of the business sector is traditional in nature and historically characterized by large core industries. Norrbotten needs to change in the same way as other Swedish regions: towards more company-orientated services. The public sector is important to the county and is often the largest employer in the different municipalities. Due to the business history and structure, there are too few entrepreneurs and not enough private capital, as well as too few private companies or individuals with a high net worth.

The structure of the county business sector needs to be diversified and the labour market widened to increase opportunities for inter-trade learning. A regionally diversified business sector can lead to less noticeable cyclical fluctuations. Rationalization within core business and industry, a reduced public sector, and private services that have not expanded quickly enough provide a challenge for the county. Furthermore, the labour market is to a high extent divided by gender into the traditional education, trade, and career choices.

Sustainable economic growth depends upon a large range of factors. Access to raw materials, entrepreneurship, a competent and/or well-educated labour force and access to capital are a few factors. Furthermore, sound infrastructure is needed, along with good transportation solutions for cargo and passengers that has the lowest possible environmental impact for goods and people, as well as a well-built IT infrastructure and the skills and knowledge to use it.

Billions have been invested by the business sector in recent years. Further investments are still expected in conjunction with the opening of, amongst other things, new mines, data centres, establishment of wind power and bio-fuel plants. If all goes to plan, the coming years will be part of an investment volume in the billions.

Small and medium-sized businesses do not export to a sufficient degree; they are, by and large, far too active in local, regional and national markets. Sustainable growth requires a holistic view, cooperation and participation. It is essential to identify synergies for trade-offs between different interests at an early phase. This can, for example, apply to the creation of nature reserves, beach protection and the refinement of natural resources and growth. Perspectives and goals that are apparently different can often be a source of innovative solutions.

**Growth Area**
Strong businesses in the county are testing and training operations, the leisure industry, energy and environmental technology, base industry (processing) as well as knowledge-intensive businesses. These areas have been indicated as being strategically important for the county's growth development and strong research areas at Luleå University of Technology.

Large global challenges, such as those within the climate and energy sectors influence the county now and will do so in the future; these are excellent driving forces behind development in both technology and society. For example, large energy-consuming
industries are directly affected by the demands for reduced emissions, increased energy prices or energy transition and therefore the county's operators must be prepared and one step ahead. Opportunities can be transformed into threats via actions and decisions in the surrounding world.

Norrbotten has great knowledge and experience within the energy sector. This applies to both the production and the consumption of energy. New businesses and ideas linked to climate smart solutions have strong opportunities to achieve international success. Work with energy efficiency and development of renewable energy is a high priority area.

New businesses that grow from within the cultural and creative sector are important for the county and contribute to the development of the wider service sector. They include businesses originating from individual creativity and talent that create general welfare and employment, for example within advertising, architecture, craft, design, fashion, art, dance, writing, film, video, software and music. With regional specialisation within different trades, clusters can be built by businesses in similar trades which can lead to inter-company learning. Regions with clusters of growing trades can experience fast growth of the regional income. Large regions have a more diverse business sector and are less dependent upon large, isolated workplaces, which gives credence to the cluster-theory.

**Luleå University of Technology**

Luleå University of Technology is central to the region's business sector and there is a large amount of research put into practice within the regional business sector. The university's areas of expertise are mirrored in the regional business sector. Luleå University of Technology has world class research within areas such as mining technology and energy/environment. The county's university and college courses are of great importance for culture and cultural development. The education at Luleå University of Technology is profiled by strong research connections and an entrepreneurial approach.

The county's competitive strength will be increased by investments in innovation and entrepreneurship. There are successful investments within the county that can work as learning tools. One of these is the innovation system 'Process-IT', a concentration of processing and increased knowledge content through cooperation. Process-IT is linked to the raw produce-based industry that functions as a motor in the county economy, with access to world-leading research and regional development.

**Internationalisation**

Increased internationalisation gives increased export potential as well as company cooperation over political borders. For Norrbotten, openness to the surrounding world increases cooperation and collaboration with different regions and countries. It is an increasingly competitive tool to broaden perspectives and deepen the innovative use of the county’s resources.
2.5 Summary of Important Challenges and Success Factors

Demographic development and future supply of expertise are the largest challenges. It is essential to the region’s growth that there is a work force and skills that meet company and public sector needs. Increased levels of expertise in the labour market and company access to the labour force are essential elements for the competitiveness of the business sector.

Since the end of the 1990s, the population has declined, despite large investments in the business sector. With an ageing population, the dependency ratio increases and it becomes increasingly harder to maintain welfare with lower taxes. Young people, most of all girls, move away from the county and the imbalance between women and men increases. Another challenge is the rate of youth unemployment.

Functioning communication, a well-developed infrastructure alongside accessible and basic IT infrastructure is essential for the region’s development and growth. The county’s geographical conditions create special demands for a sustainable transportation system.

An increasing housing deficit in many parts of the county negatively affects development and growth and can, in the long term, hinder people from moving to the county and its individual municipalities. Access to attractive housing is one success factor.

To attract more people to the county and increase the life quality for the residents of Norrbotten, the work on attractive living environments, equality and diversity is important. Conscious efforts regarding openness, breaking down traditional patterns and stimulating contributions to new ways of thinking and creativity are required. The business sector benefits from people’s differences since equality and diversity are success factors and driving forces for economic development. Diversity is, furthermore, a basis for a democratic society.

The county is in a strong competitive place regarding research and development at university and other research locations. There is relatively good potential for renewal and innovation within the county’s business sector, which can be strengthened through more R&D investing in the business sector. The market capacity must be strengthened and the trade between the academic and business sectors increased. A diversified business sector and a broad labour market create good conditions for the development of the county.

The large, global challenges within the climate and energy sectors, for example, contribute to the momentum of development within both technology and society. The county holds much knowledge and experience within the energy sector.

Internationalisation and cross-border cooperation are success factors for Norrbotten with its geographical location, partly in terms of an increased critical mass but also of increased markets for the companies.

The county has a relatively high proportion of pupils who leave school early, mainly boys who do not complete their secondary school education. There is a vast difference
between municipalities. The education level of the county is lower than the national average. There are also large differences between women and men.

The county has a high rate of poor health compared with other regions. A simple explanation is the isolation that follows unemployment, i.e., individuals who are excluded from the labour force. Access to employment is important for good and equal public health.

2.6 Development Initiatives

An overriding priority is investment in the county’s appeal. Norrbotten shall build a sustainable society with a good living environment. Norrbotten shall further develop good living conditions and welfare for all people. Priority areas:
- Living environment
- Innovation and Renewability
- Accessibility
- Skills and Labour Supply
- Strategic Cross-Border Cooperation
**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT-table)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The geographical location, climate and sparse areas are unique aspects to the Barents Region and Europe.</td>
<td>- Too few people moving to the county and a negative birth rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Magnificent scenery, three world heritage sites and eight national parks.</td>
<td>- Deficit of women in various age groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A varied cultural environment</td>
<td>- Ageing population</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A varied and rich culture scene</td>
<td>- Peripheral position in relation to large markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sami culture and industry</td>
<td>- Too few export companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Multicultural county with five national minorities</td>
<td>- Business sector structure and large dependency on the public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access to nature (minerals, forest and water power)</td>
<td>- Long distances and small critical mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Known brands and profiles - space technology and advanced technology</td>
<td>- Lack of diversity, one-sided view of immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Investment of billions into the business sector - a nourished county</td>
<td>- Lack of cooperation between businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increasing amount of small companies</td>
<td>- Lack of infrastructure (communications, housing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A university that is central to the regional business sector</td>
<td>- Low turnover of products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education system with centres in the municipalities</td>
<td>- Gender-divided labour market</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identifiable and anchored growth areas</td>
<td>- High rate of poor health compared to other counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access to nature (minerals, forest and water power)</td>
<td>- Missing broadband and telephone networks in certain geographical locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The Luleå Region - a strong labour market region in the country</td>
<td>- The forest - a renewable resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Malmfälten - a growing labour market region</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Well-developed broadband network - the largest in Europe.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Close cross-border cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The forest - a renewable resource</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Strengthen attractiveness to increase amount of people moving to the county</td>
<td>- Increased commuting to the area, rather than a locally based workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase cooperation and collective action between decision makers</td>
<td>- Women prefer large cities, a low number of people moving to the area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Improve integration and increase equality for better diversity</td>
<td>- Immigrants do not stay, but move on to the larger cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop growth areas and new services</td>
<td>- Continued focus and prioritisation on traditional services, rather than new ones</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Transform the &quot;disadvantages&quot;, i.e., the cold, the darkness, the distances and sparse population into &quot;benefits&quot; through technical development</td>
<td>- Continued low critical mass</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase internationalisation</td>
<td>- Male and traditional power structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Take advantage of the county's well-known brands</td>
<td>- Housing deficit continues to increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase competition by investing in innovation and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>- Shortages in the work force and lack of expertise accelerates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Invest in young people's creativity and participation in the community development</td>
<td>- Coastal and inland competition increases - in close regions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Create attractive agricultural environments in good locations</td>
<td>- The threat to the climate may have a negative impact on the business sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase measures for energy efficiency</td>
<td>- National investment in transportation infrastructure becomes delayed or does not take place at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Development of renewable energy sources</td>
<td>- Cooperation decreases and territorial interests and prestige dominate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Invest in better communication, strategic methods within the Northern Axis and the Bothnian Corridor</td>
<td>- Ignorance and prejudice create an impression of Norrbotten with no nuances</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Access to venture capital</td>
<td>- Continually strong urbanisation and globalisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Increase usage of the county’s broadband network</td>
<td>- Too few entrepreneurs and not enough private capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop more digital services, both public and commercial</td>
<td>- Increased transportation costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Better cooperation between nature conservation and forest industries.</td>
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3 Development Initiatives

3.1 Five Priority Areas

The regional development work should have its point of departure in Europe 2020 - The EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as Sweden's National strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment.

The national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007-2013 is a guide for regional development work in Sweden. In this strategy, national priorities have been clarified for regional development work that relates to strategic cross-border cooperation, accessibility, innovation and renewability alongside skills and increased labour supply.

Together, the actors in the county will work systematically on development initiatives within the following five priority areas:

- Living Environments
- Innovation and Renewability
- Accessibility
- Skills and Labour Supply
- Strategic Cross-Border Cooperation

PICTURE/ILLUSTRATION

The priority development initiatives of Norrbotten are based in five areas. They are all connected and dependent on each other. If people have the skills that the county needs in an equal, attractive community - with diverse trades and access to markets both local and international - innovative power will be created in Norrbotten.

A good living environment, attractive housing and a good cultural environment are some important factors to increase the attractiveness of the region. Increasing the potential of the region to attract new residents and offer existing ones a high quality of life is important work that should saturate all priority areas. This involves offering a wide range of housing environments, increasing the culture and leisure selection, strengthen the business climate, creating opportunities for various types of education and giving access to good service and infrastructure.

Under the respective area headings, there is a short summary of how Europe 2020 and the Swedish National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment describe the priority areas followed by an account of Norrbotten’s strategies and priority measures within each area.
3.2 Living Environments

Europe 2020

The EU strategy focuses on growth issues, knowledge and innovations and emphasises that to succeed, the EU must rely on its residents’ talents, creativity, values, democratic institutions, consideration of economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity, environmental respect, cultural diversity and equality.

National Strategies

The main task for the Swedish economic policy is to create as high a standard of permanent welfare as possible, through sustained growth, employment, welfare that benefits all and economic stability. Economic growth must also be in line with good environment and health.

Set targets for sustainable growth will only be fulfilled if there are decent living conditions for everybody. In order for people to feel as though they are personally developing, adequate provisions for entrepreneurship and employment are needed, as well as for good agricultural environment and high welfare standards. It is important that everyone can find interesting business, study and employment opportunities in a local labour market region.

Measures that lead to decent access to services are essential for creating attractive environments for citizens and businesses in all parts of the country.

Norrbotten’s strategies

It should be desirable for anyone to live and work in Norrbotten. The county should be a well sought-after destination. Norrbotten offers a good environment for children and young people to grow up in. Long term investment and the establishment of new workplaces will be introduced into the local regional community services. To succeed, desirable housing and town and country development is needed. Development close to the beach increases desirability.

Attractive environments offer access to a rich and varied selection of culture and entertainment, social networks, welfare and good housing, qualified and rewarding work opportunities as well as good communication and a well-developed information and communication infrastructure.

The image of Norrbotten as a desirable living and investment area will be highlighted for students, people moving to the county, visitors, financiers and companies. It will be easy to travel - both physically and virtually – to, within, and from Norrbotten.
The county will offer multifaceted, tolerant and innovative environments for residents of Norrbotten and those who wish to move here. It is important to maintain and improve culture and cultural heritage, such as Sami industry, cultural enterprise and preserve the national minority languages, nature and environment now and for generations to come. By creating good living conditions, poor health and isolation will be prevented. Varied citizens, those who live and work both in the town and in the country and think outside the box, are required for a continually strong regional development. Young people’s view of enterprise and the future of business is not always the same as that of the adult world. This is why the success and progression of young people alongside their willingness to work and live in the county are key factors for developing Norrbotten. Positive self-perception is a requisite for a long-lasting development.

Working practically towards good public health involves finding forms, methods and strategies contributing to the labour market. It also involves creating sound and secure environments for children and young people, in order to prevent poor health from an early age. Leisure activities are important for good and equal health.

The migration of foreign-born people into the county is very important. The county and municipalities should be attractive for people born outside of Sweden.

To further develop public and private service in rural and sparsely populated areas, innovative solutions and participation on local and regional levels are needed, especially when focusing on the needs of young men and women.

**Priority Measures** (answer the government mandate regarding the most prioritised measures in the period 2014-2020)

- Bring forward **good, equal public health and quality of life**, so people feel good, which leads to long term growth and welfare. Improve integration and view people **born outside of Sweden** as a resource that enriches our society.
- Further develop the living environments of Norrbotten so that greater investments and establishments are drawn to the county. Stimulate production of energy-efficient housing that supports an attractive living environment, so both women and men are able and want to live in different places within the county, at the same time as making it a desirable place to visit.
- Prioritise initiatives to introduce establishments in the regional and local economy, in order to strengthen community services, skills supply, and tax base.

**Measures**

- Perform systematic work with the **environmental quality objectives** to create a good living environment for the residents of Norrbotten.
- Promote positive conditions for **personal development** and career possibilities, regardless of age, gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, sexual orientation or disability.
- Offer a diverse, **tolerant** and innovative environment for all.
- Create opportunities for **collaboration** to enhance social confidence, entrepreneurship and leadership.
• Stimulate further development of new, innovative solutions to support basic public and private services in the sparsely populated areas.
• Share knowledge and stories about Norrbotten and the county’s varied living environments, strong economic living conditions, in order to stimulate movement towards the county, investment and creation of new jobs and companies.
• Increase equality, a driving force for sustainable growth.
• Initiative for participation and people moving to the county is applicable over all age groups, but special attention should be paid to young people’s creativity and participation in the community development.
• Maintain and improve culture and cultural heritage, such as the Sami industry, cultural enterprise and preserve the national minority languages, nature and environment now and for generations to come.
• Initiatives to strengthen cultural infrastructure through deepened cooperation between regions, municipalities and civil communities.
• Stimulate activities to support children and young people’s experience of growing up.
• Widen local labour markets by increasing commuting possibilities.

3.3 Innovation and Renewability

Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 Strategy emphasises that knowledge and innovation should strengthen the driving force for future growth. In order to do this, better quality of education is needed, stronger research results, as well as promotion of innovation and knowledge-sharing within the EU. Europe 2020 points to smart specialisation, which means that the region should pay special attention to the areas where the region excels. The course of action should include analysis of assets, involvement of key interests, cross-border contacts, clusters, networks and the ability to make strategic decisions. It is not about choosing the winners but rather about effectively coordinating resources. It is also important to fully take advantage of all that information and communication technology has to offer and to make sure that innovative ideas can be transformed into new products and services that create growth, high quality work situations and help to tackle the sociological challenges on both a European and a global level.

Connection to National Strategies

The national strategy emphasises research, development and innovation as central concepts in creating growth. In a globalised world, Swedish competitiveness must first build upon high knowledge and skills in its exports. Sweden's profile as a research nation strengthens competitiveness and contributes to sustainable economic growth and welfare. Thanks to increased emphasis on service innovation, Sweden can renew and improve the country's opportunities. The national strategy also points toward the idea that regional growth is important to fulfil Sweden’s ambitions for innovative development.

The national reform programme highlights trade of goods and services, direct company investment and cross-border movement for the workforce. Free markets with well-functioning competition are the foundation of a lively and a dynamic business sector,
and consequently of increased employment. In order to make use of globalisation advantages, demands are simultaneously placed upon the economy’s continual adaptability to new conditions. An innovative and dynamic industry with good adaptive qualities is therefore central to growth and employment.

**Norrbotten’s Strategies**

The innovation system consists of operators, networks and institutions that are mutually dependent during the innovation process. Operators may include businesses, universities, public and non-profit organisations that are involved in a complex web of formal and informal networks. Entrepreneurs are often the key figures within the innovation system. Strengthening innovative environments and bringing forth cooperation within and between information systems is important for innovative power, the competitiveness of the business sector and sustainable regional growth. It is important that all provisions for innovation continually develop and improve, especially in increasing the understanding of conditions and driving forces that motivate innovation and renewability. Creativity and innovation power are amongst some of the most valuable resources in the county and must always be maintained and rewarded.

Sustainable growth presupposes an equal community. For positive growth in the region, entrepreneurship and enterprise need to be stimulated from an early stage. By taking charge of the creativity that each person represents, a base of new perspectives, renewability and a more entrepreneurial climate is created. When different perceptions and reactions meet, a success factor is created. Norrbotten needs to utilise the creativity, fortitude and motivation of all, to make changes in everyday life.

The concept of innovation has expanded from previously just concerning technological products and processes to including services, experiences, organisational practices, marketing and ways to tackle social challenges together. Innovations therefore consist of different actors working together and integrating. Both women and men develop innovation in the public and private sectors. Innovation can be (but not necessarily) based upon research. This places special demands on the ability of public operators to quickly adapt their support systems based on an altered environment, with a more inclusive and wider perspective of what constitutes innovation. Strong research and development within companies and universities also require business models and systems in order to deliver research results and innovations to the market. Innovations can also be created through developing business models for existing products or services.

Social innovation and community entrepreneurship are vital initiatives to improve matter that are non-existent or do not work in building the community. These initiatives are often taken at the cross-section between private, public and non-profit sectors. Responsible enterprise results in an increased and more long-term sustainable
development. Social companies are companies that set up social goals for their enterprise.

Like the rest of the country, Norrbotten has a clearly gender-divided labour market in which men primarily work within primary industry, manufacturing industry and new technology and women mainly work within the public and service sectors. When different perspectives combine, development happens. Increased differentiation of the county business sector is needed and major investments must be made, for example, in cluster and innovation systems, which strengthen both industries where women are over-represented and the connection between male and female dominated industries. At the same time, investments are needed in the entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise of women. More opportunities for products, services and solutions become apparent when the development process is not directed by gender-stereotypical norms.

The public sector, not least within the healthcare sector, is faced with specific challenges. The introduction of eHealth is an important aim on the European digital agenda. There is great potential to develop eHealth further in the future; an area where Norrbotten is already far ahead, from an international perspective.

The county’s large expansion of companies within tourism and the cultural and creative industries provides great growth potential. Many women, young people and people born outside of Sweden work within these industries. The regional tourism brand ‘Swedish Lapland’ generates a great deal of business. Furthermore, certain tourist areas in the region consistently display their high innovative skills, in that some of the world’s most famous tourist areas can be found here. Young people’s entrepreneurship and enterprise offer great opportunities for development as the cultural and creative industries grow. In this context, the cultural scene is a vital arena. The ongoing generation change within the county’s companies creates a challenge, yet at the same time it is a great opportunity to create a place for young people’s enterprise.

By continually reinforcing business and market knowledge within small and medium-sized companies, they are given a chance to develop attractive and valuable products and services. A well-functioning credit market is essential in order to provide good access to loan, venture and private capital. To support company opportunities for renewal and expansion, the importance of export is particularly valuable for sustainable growth. Whether it is about creating more investment and capital for the region, attracting new establishments or increasing tourism potential, the region, destinations, places and companies’ ability to package their selling points is the key to success. The region must also improve when it comes to ‘designing’ itself, its products and its places. With space being the concurrent factor, new industry will develop where space and tourism form the backbone. To take advantage of the real potential that this future industry will create, various corresponding services and experiences will need to be developed.

The local countryside forms a good basis for tourism, as the range of cultural and natural surroundings can contribute many unique experiences. It is essential that interaction exists between the countryside and the urban areas, in order to create greater value and sustainable development throughout the county. Sami industries have their own specific development conditions and also contribute to increasing diversity and differentiation.
of the local business sector. Reindeer herding can be combined with tourism and business within the service and education sectors.

In many ways, the primary industries are crucial for the entire Norrbotten business sector. Not only do they employ many people and account for large investments, they are also often completely responsible for creating local and regional markets for all other trades. In order for Norrbotten to survive the continually growing competition created by internationalisation, it is important to remain a leading productivity developer in many different trades. Luleå University of Technology’s activities are closely integrated with the primary industry that is based to a great extent upon the region’s natural resources.

University research is realised within competitive research environments, and is carried out in collaboration with the business sector and the community. The major part of research is intended and aimed at developing new products or services. It is important that the companies in the region can benefit from research results, through collaboration with academics and researchers. Student thesis work constitutes an important part of this collaboration.

On the one hand, in order to realise the potential for growth and contribute to new entrepreneurship within the areas, (climate, environment and energy) regional growth efforts need to promote the development of renewable energy and technology that is environmentally friendly, resource and energy-efficient. On the other hand, there needs to be focus on the development of innovative environments within the area with particular attention to small and medium-sized companies. Procurement of ecosystem services as well as optimization of material and energy usage is needed for a long term sustainable economy.

There are many important strategies and documents with more specific details about the county’s investments. Norrbotten prioritises five development areas:

- Knowledge intensive service industry
- Experience industry
- Test and practising activities
- Energy and environmental technology
- Primary industry - processing

**Priority Measures** (responses to the government mandate regarding the most prioritised measures in the period 2014-2020)

- Continue to develop innovative environments and commercialisation, entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial environment as well as create **more and growing companies** to place Norrbotten as an innovative region in Europe.
- Create a regional innovation strategy to contribute to further development of research and innovation systems, encourage cutting-edge expertise, smart specialisation as well as strengthen cooperation between universities, research, companies, society and the non-profit sector.
- Continually work to promote **young people’s entrepreneurship and enterprises**, as well as to stimulate initiative for increased equality and diversity within the business sector.
Measures

- Increase collaboration between the actors of the business sector and other interested parties.
- Work towards stimulating private and public sector work places, encourage an innovative approach and way of thinking. Increase the emphasis on innovation within the public sector.
- Work strategically to further strengthen the research areas of Luleå University of Technology with greater opportunities for the development of: energy, raw materials, infrastructure, IT, eHealth, tourism, event production, material, service development/design and product development.
- Encourage small and medium-sized companies to commercialise their development ideas, build innovation systems tailored to their needs, involve students and further develop collaboration with Luleå University of Technology.
- Develop business models for the commercialisation of research results.
- Continue to develop the tourism industry through strategic marketing of the region and continue to refine high quality tourism products.
- Increase provisions for the development of environmental technology and energy-efficient solutions. At the same time, promote business development measures with climate change as a starting point.
- Create formats to facilitate the generation shift in companies.
- Encourage small and medium-sized businesses to create more and better business for the international market.
- Work strategically and systematically to attract greater investment and establishments to the county.
- Strive to have basic investments lead to new technology being introduced in the region, which can lead to the development of new trades and products.
- Emphasise the development of cultural and creative industries.
- Focus on achieving an increased differentiation of the county business sector.
- Special support should be given to female entrepreneurship, innovations and enterprise.
- Special support for entrepreneurship, innovations and enterprise amongst persons born outside of Sweden.
- Special support for entrepreneurship, innovations and enterprise amongst the Sami population.
- Develop ways for businesses in all trades to have the same opportunities to take a part of loan, venture and development capital so as to develop and grow within the county.
- Encourage new services to develop.

3.4 Accessibility

Europe 2020

A chief initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy is integrated industry politics in a globalised age, where ten measures are in place to increase the industrial competitiveness of Europe. In addition to the ambitions to simplify and improve company access to various types of capital, the European systems for transport and
communication are intended to be strengthened to fit the needs of the industry. It is a matter of eliminating bottle-necks and integrating the different types of transport and thereby achieving an efficient transportation system.

The Digital Agenda for Europe is one of seven main initiatives within the Europe 2020 strategy framework. It describes the key role that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays in being able to create a knowledge-based society for all. The EU should make full use of the potential that ICT offers to strengthen the economy and the society. High speed internet has a large impact on the potential for sustainable growth in rural areas.

National Strategies

The government highlights the need for an increase in regional size and a developed 'information-society' as especially important areas. Well-functioning cargo and passenger transport improves access and is important for women and men as well as the competitiveness of the business sector.

Broadband with high data transfer capacity is important for a developed 'information-society' and to meet challenges faced in the form of globalisation, climate change and demographic challenges of a sparsely populated country. The aim is that by 2020, 90 per cent of all households and businesses should have access to broadband with a minimum capacity of 100 Mbit/s. Even in 2015, 40 per cent should have access to broadband of such capacity.

Norrbotten's Strategies

Access to work, education, community services and culture/leisure activities create a basic ground for the county’s growth and appeal. The county’s geographical aspects and distance to important emerging markets, inside and outside the country, should place large demands on a long-sighted, sustainable transportation system for both cargo and passengers. Good flight connections for long journeys are a deciding factor in quality of life and growth. Improved rail transport gives opportunities for regional growth. It is also a condition for women and men to have access to a wider labour market, education and service whilst companies can secure their skills provision. The commuter patterns of men and women differ. This impacts the formation of traffic and infrastructure.

A strategic, sustainable transportation system is a factor in the competitiveness between other counties and willingness to invest of the business sector. This applies in particular for the continual investment in the county by the primary industry. These investments make up a large portion if the national export worth and contribute to the GNP.

In order for the region to carry out its intentions within local, national and EU strategies/policies, some directions have been formulated for the efforts within the area of accessibility.
The overall direction is to strengthen a long-term, sustainable transportation system that creates conditions for secure and effective transports by land, air and sea. A long-term sustainable transportation system is also expected to be socio-economically effective, contributory to environmental quality objectives as well as reliable, safe and secure for all citizen and business sector transports.

To support the encompassing direction whilst increasing global competitiveness for the business sector it is essential to work to create flexible and efficient transport networks where transport companies work together. Through functional terminal points, conditions are created for cooperation and competition between transport companies. Most important of all is supporting incentives that have connections to the EU Commission prioritised rail corridors, the Bothnian Corridor and Northern Axis, within TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Network) whilst at the same time developing "greener" transportation options within this area. North Sweden Seaport, with Luleå harbour as one of five selected strategic harbours in TEN-T, is part of a cohesive transportation system.

The need for large, inter-connected labour market regions that contribute to a more flexible workforce and consequently to stronger skills provision for the long-term competitiveness of the business sector requires a better infrastructure that allows for good traffic solutions. Through an extended Bothnian Corridor and including the Iron Ore Line, the whole of the Norrland coast, with connections to the inland area, can be provided with better commuter possibilities, which would facilitate regional growth. For the inland areas that lack alternative transportation with reasonable travel times, good flight connections are essential for business development.

The importance of achieving regional growth and better access within the county and to the surrounding areas cannot be over-emphasised. In addition to investments in transport infrastructure, a success factor is that all planning has a "journey-as-a-whole perspective" at the same time as increasing the cooperation between the traditional sector boundaries. Increased cooperation between state, regional and communal parties, in areas including transport infrastructures, public transportation and physical planning, creates better preconditions for the achievement of improved availability for all citizens in a sustainable manner. Consequently, the foundation for a successful journey, with effective connection points between the various transportation types is laid, with public transport playing a very important role in the sustainable transportation system. A good information system and use of ICT is also an important part of "the journey as a whole".

The influx of new knowledge and new people are defining factors for development and renewal when creating an economically sound and attractive region. Regional growth and investment in public transportation solutions increase the potential to make the most of culture and leisure activities in neighbouring towns, both for visitors and residents.

The vital role of the universities as sources of knowledge, competence and research results is significantly reinforced through increased access. The influx of new knowledge and new people is a decisive factor for development and renewal when creating an
economically sound and attractive region. Furthermore, regional growth contributes to securing the democratic perspective as well as equal conditions for women and men.

Norrbotten has access to Europe’s largest public broadband network. The county should use this to its advantage and further build upon it through continued development and, above all, the usage of high-speed internet. Through intelligent solutions, 'accessibility' to community services and education can be increased, especially for those living in sparsely populated and rural areas. A well-developed IT infrastructure creates the same conditions for enterprise, social activities and personal independence, regardless of where a person lives. For Norrbotten, access to a good broadband network is just as important as access to electricity and road networks. The national aim for high-speed broadband is a high priority for Norrbotten as well.

**Priority measures** (answer the government mandate regarding the most prioritised measures in the period 2014-2020)

- Goal-orientated work in the near-future to create major investment in rail infrastructure. The North Bothnia Line, a highly important link for the Bothnian Corridor and The Iron Ore Line (double-track) as a connection to Northern Axis. The stretch is part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).
- Create a **regional digital agenda** to secure accessible and basic IT infrastructure in the county and work towards connecting broadband infrastructure across international borders. Introduce measures for better usage of the county broadband network and stimulate development of a wide range of eServices.
- Ensure that **air travel** to and from the county is prioritised for regional competitiveness. This is essential for inland areas and their development.

**Measures**

- Implement strategic measures for increased traffic safety, accessibility and increased payloads on the **road networks**. This is not only meant to meet the demands created by the establishment of new mines and industries - such as wind power.
- Develop terminals between road and rail, as well as between their connections the county ports.
- **North Sweden Seaport** will be strengthened. Secure and develop a preserved harbour structure of high quality as a part of Motorways of the Sea.
- Focus on increased **public transportation** for larger amount of commuters. Measures to increase the market share of public transportation by investments in functional travel centres and stops for road and rail traffic.
- Secure a maintained **airport structure** with state and municipal airports that retain a high quality.
- Secure finely meshed road networks' standards and **capacity** for the long term.
- Improvement measures in strategic **highways** such as the E4 and E10. Densely trafficked stretches of road with high incident frequency should, from a safety point of view, be expanded and divided.
- Ensure that the whole county has access to basic **telephone services** with the possibility to connect to services such as safety alarms.
3.5 Skills Provision and Increased Labour Supply

Europe 2020

Amongst other things, the Europe 2020 priority is "Inclusive Growth". Inclusive Growth entails that more people within the EU enter the labour market, more and better jobs are created, especially for women, young people and older people. It also entails helping people of all ages to prepare for changes through investments in skills development, modernising the labour market and welfare systems as well as ensuring that growth profit reaches all areas of the EU.

The EU faces a number of challenges that have been accentuated as a result of the economic crises. The EU strategy will boost the EU countries’ economies and create more jobs and a higher growth level through life long skills development, in order to increase labour market participation.

National Strategies

The national strategy brings forward skills provision and an increased labour force supply as especially important priority areas. Access to a labour force with the appropriate skills is a must for the development of businesses. The importance of life-long learning increases through constant renewal of production, technology and knowledge. Sweden must have a labour market that works for all, where everyone can feel as they contribute, regardless of ethnic background, gender or age and where everyone’s work experiences and skills are utilised. The government reform plan of 2011 states the progression toward full employment as their main, political goal. All who are capable to work, should be able to participate in working life.

Norrbotten’s Strategies

Good skills development is important for regional development. Access to a labour force with the appropriate skills is a must for continual development of the Norrbotten business sector. Education, life-long learning and a functioning labour market are the keys to the region’s competitiveness, growth and attractiveness. Access to education and skill-improving initiatives are important for continual development and contribute to the region's appeal.

Global competition and new technological opportunities change the demands for knowledge and competence. Both organisations and individuals must increasingly redirect, change jobs, learn something new and learn more. It has become even more difficult to go through working life and manage with the education obtained

Cooperation with the business sector
Life-long learning - career changes
Integration, diversity and participation
LUT - qualified education
Labour market - equality
Young people's introduction to the labour market
Public health - a success factor
back in the day. The openness to change has in itself become an important skill for both individuals and for organisations/companies.

The overall goals are to increase the amount of people moving into the area and the rate of employment. They also aim to increase education levels and create newer, more equal businesses in Norrbotten. For the individual, work is about support, independence, skill development and the chance to change life for the better. For the community, work means a well-functioning labour market, in order to increase employment, increase competitiveness and increase equality and diversity in the workplace.

A well-functioning labour market determines how Norrbotten should prepare for the future, face a demographic challenge, where fewer people will have to support greater numbers, and be a strong global competitor. Sustainable growth and business development is dependent upon a workforce with the appropriate skills. The accessible workforce requires the skills sought by employers.

Participation and employment are factors that are important for good public health. Despite an increased request for labour, there are many, especially young people, who remain outside the labour market. The county needs more new companies and more jobs. Collaboration between research, business sector, public sector, political institutions and civilian society is especially important in this context. The county must continue to work with attitudes towards business and entrepreneurship with specific focus upon the notion that more women in the county start or run companies. Children and young people must constantly be prioritised through the whole educational system when taking business skills and entrepreneurship into consideration. Life-long learning and higher education pays off for the individual and strengthens regional competitiveness. In this context, Luleå University of Technology has an important role to play as a strategic actor.

All people should have the opportunity to participate in the work place according to their own abilities. Large challenges remain when it comes to helping people get work who have a less firm footing in the labour market. Isolation should be broken down and changed to inclusion. The path to a job and social workplaces are important steps. Norrbotten has a relatively high level of poor public health. Through reinforcing public health work and good healthcare, the amount of people on sick leave in the county should be reduced. This way, more people will become employable and can participate in the labour market.

The county’s educational level is lower than the national average and it is more common for men to be educated to a lesser degree. To succeed in work conditions and achieve continual growth in the county, it is important to encourage both women and men to get education. The importance of life-long learning is central to rejuvenating the current labour market.

Consultation and close dialogue between the business sector, educational institutions, authorities and organisations have great importance for ensuring the appropriate skills in the labour market. This leads to increased knowledge and insight, coordination of needs analysis within skills development and the educational sector, an increased cooperation between skills development and educational planning and increased knowledge of the range and requirements of various educational programmes.
All signs indicate that in the future, higher demands will be placed on having a broad skill set. More and more well-educated people will be able to support themselves within completely new careers and trades. During their time in school, it is important that young people receive broad information about the opportunities within the education system and about what is in demand on the labour market. Today, many young people lack a complete upper secondary education. An important challenge is therefore to work towards young people succeeding in their studies, leaving secondary school with complete grades and having good future prospects.

It is important that workplaces develop and make themselves more appealing to women and men the whole country over by creating nice working environments and good development opportunities. It is important for companies to have a high understanding of attitudes and values towards men and women at the workplace. It is also important that people from different backgrounds with different knowledge and personalities are valued, given the fact that mixed groups lead to increased productivity, creativity, profitability and new client groups. The county has the highest rate of retired people out of all counties. To be able to survive the upcoming generation shift in the labour market, the entire workforce potential must be made visible. One example is to offer older people the opportunity to work longer.

**Priority measures** (answer to the government mandate regarding the most prioritised measures in the period 2014-2020)

- Increase the amount of pupils leaving upper secondary school with **complete** grades and encourage **life-long learning** for the labour market of tomorrow.
- Develop strategic **coordination** between the educational institutions, business sectors, and society in order to secure a high quality education system and to identify strategic career areas. Clearly identify **bottle-necks** and workforce deficits in the labour market.
- Encourage women and especially men to aim for **higher education**. Market future jobs, career opportunities and enterprise within the county to attract more people to come to live and work in Norrbotten.

**Measures**

- Work actively and encourage young people who have ended up outside of the school system to **continue studying**.
- Ease the **transition between studies and work**.
- Strive to have employers utilise the **entire workforce** potential and employ young people, people from foreign backgrounds and handicapped people.
- Strive to have **more senior people** in the workplace. The amount of time spent within the workforce varies between professions, between men and women, and between those foreign born and Swedish nationals.
- Strive to have **entrepreneurship** be a natural part of all educational disciplines. Businesses should be equally a natural choice and appointment.
- Strive to have **accessible** education on all levels in the whole county for all of those with need for skills development.
• Increase opportunities for women in traditionally male trades/professions and for men in traditionally female trades/professions, in order to create equal workplaces as well as contribute to sharing of knowledge between trades.
• Ensure that cutting-edge expertise is available and utilised by the county in strategic areas.
• Support the migration of workers and integration to the labour market.
• Strive to make the workforce of Norrbotten choose to live in the county, so that sustainable communities can be built.
• Encourage more vocational orientation within different types of schools and within higher vocational education (YH) to be carried out in the county, in both female and male dominated trades.
• Support a sustainable workforce by finding ways to transfer the knowledge and skills of older people to the younger generations, for example by using a trainee system.
• Prioritise tailored education and competency increasing measures within companies.
• Targeted national and international recruitment measures to conduct market research for access to interesting and well-paid jobs for women and men.
• Use validation as a tool to highlight knowledge, thereby simplifying the process for an individual to find the right job and for the employers to assess the qualifications of an applicant.
• Increase the number of full-time positions to increase equality and opportunities for self-sufficiency.
• Strive to break the pattern of gender-related choices of education

3.6 Strategic Cross-Border Cooperation

Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 Strategy outlines the direction of long-term development work within the EU. Many member countries and regions face similar challenges and as part of the Cohesion Policy the EU wish to encourage member countries, especially border regions, to work together to find common solutions. The European grouping of territorial cooperation is divided into three types of programme that support cooperation within the whole of the EU. The programmes are expected to be in line with the EU’s political prioritisations and have a clear connection to regional and county strategies. One example of the organisation of cooperation on a macro-regional level is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The macro-regional strategy provides the framework for cooperation and makes clearer focus upon regional problems possible.

National Strategies

In the national strategy, cooperation with other countries and regions is identified as strategically important for regional development. Cross-border cooperation should both complement and contribute to the fulfilment of the national strategy’s priorities. Through strategic cross-border cooperation, regional players can achieve a critical mass and complement skills within vital development areas: labour market, research, education, and innovation environments. Another important goal is to develop long-
term cooperation structures that are able to cope with challenges of a cross-border nature. The cross-border measures should be strategically connected to both regional and national measures carried out in the various prioritised areas in order for clear value to be achieved.

**Norrbotten’s Strategies**

The county’s strategic position in the centre of the Barents area, surrounded by two neighbouring countries, gives good opportunities to further secure cooperation with nearby countries. Norrbotten has a long tradition of cooperation with not only Norway and Finland, but also with Russia. With the onset of the EU, international cooperation has widened, thus introducing many transitional development projects, networks and other cross-border meeting places. It is important that the county continues to actively participate in international cooperation within and outside the EU, thus taking advantage of its opportunities. Alongside other places around the Baltic Sea, Norrbotten can contribute to the realization of a Baltic Sea regional strategy. Through international and borderless cooperation, Norrbotten will assume the role of an exciting and interesting growth region and influence global growth markets.

New knowledge and ways of thinking are valuable for the dynamics of all development work. So is the ability to cross boundaries regardless of trade or organisation. With global competition it is increasingly important for companies to share their perspectives and think innovatively. It is therefore important that the county business sector displays commitment and continues to develop cross-border cooperation with other countries and regions. An open and curious attitude combined with strategic thinking provides good conditions to make the growth potential that is added through cooperation available. Thanks to cross-border cooperation, Norrbotten companies can achieve added value that further strengthens their competitiveness both nationally and internationally. A competitive business sector is also dependent on access to a workforce with the appropriate skills. Here, the development of cross-border methods and strategies for migration of workers and long-term skills can be one way to secure skills for the county labour market in the long term.

The county’s researchers are currently active participants in the international cooperation and over the years they have built up a high level of expertise within a number of research areas. It is also important that research institutes continue to be active in the European/international arena for research cooperation. The existing potential for research and innovation can be utilised more effectively if strategic cross-border cooperation with research institutes in other countries and regions are created. Strategic cooperation does not only strengthen the county business sector, but also the competitiveness of the research institutions on a national and international level.
It is important that the private and public sectors within the county actively strive to find ways of cooperation that stimulate and ease cooperation with other countries and regions. Increased knowledge of the other countries’ organisational structures and central regulations contributes to the development of administrative routines and support systems that ease and increase efficiency of cross-border cooperation. In the border regions especially, development of different forms of public service can be created. These offer long-term support to those living in border communities, thus enabling them to live in a prosperous region with a satisfactory level of service. Openness to the surroundings and increased international cooperation and exchange of experiences create opportunities for learning and development as well as new solutions within the public sector. Political and economic decisions in other parts of the world affect us. To be able to manage this effect, openness and increased adaptability to change is needed. At the same time, a globalised world offers great opportunities. By taking part in strategic alliances, decision makers can influence and act so that Norrbotten can strengthen its appeal and competitiveness.

Cross-border cooperation is also important to discuss solutions to common challenges and to create a consensus around areas such as environmental and equality questions.

The county’s commitment in the Barents Region cooperation means that it is partly responsible for cross-border cooperation between the Barents countries on a regional level. It is also partly responsible to bring forward the county internationally and contribute to its development. The focus lies on measures that strengthen the position of Norrbotten and the entire Barents Region as a key deliverer of raw materials within the EU. Focus is also placed on the potential for further development of the processing industry alongside research and education within areas such as the mining industry. Furthermore, Norrbotten wishes to contribute to making the region more attractive for young people, by securing wider participation of young people within all Barents Region activities. It is important that young people are involved in on-going discussions about future challenges and solutions.

There is a long tradition of cultural exchange within the Barents Region. In addition to the cultural wealth of the region, there is also unique cultural heritage where the Sami are the only indigenous people of the European Union. The Sami language, culture, industry and trade routines are a natural and necessary aspect in cross-border cooperation.

Priority measures (answer to the government mandate regarding the most prioritised measures in the period 2014-2020)

- Actively participate in international cooperation - primarily within the EU, the Barents region and the Cap of the North. Cooperation increases the chances for a diversified and competitive business sector.
- To bring forward company market development, globalisation, product and service development and/or business collaboration.
- Develop strategic cooperation over international borders to strengthen the county's research, education and innovation environments as well as its cutting-edge expertise and smart specialisation.

Measures
Develop cross-border methods and strategies for the migration of workforces and long-term skills development.

Increase the region’s research budget through combined activities that position the region as a strategic part in European research programmes.

Develop the exchange of experiences and strategic cooperation over international borders; between authorities, municipalities and other public organisations.

Increase and develop cross-border experience exchanges and learning within business development, entrepreneurship and education (i.e., vocational training)

Carry out joint measures within the Baltic Sea Regional Strategy (flagship project).

Encourage international exchanges for/amongst young people.

Stimulate cross-border development within cultural and creative industries with special emphasis on the cross-border Sami culture and language.

Actively participate in international networks

Develop a strategic system for analysing surrounding areas

4. Strategy Actualisation

4.1 A System of Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The regional development strategy that has its starting point both on a European and national level is a driving force for other programmes and strategies on a regional and local level. These more operative programmes and strategies give a more concrete account of how the regions should achieve the set goals and ambitions within various sectors in society. Some programmes also indicate how the development objectives can be financed.

Physical Planning and Regional Matters

With the new Planning and Building Act that came into effect 2 May 2011, the municipal outlines are given a clearer strategic function. It should be clear from the outline how the municipality should consider and realise the physical plans according to national and regional aims. The plans and programmes are important for sustainable development of the municipality. The purpose is that the outline needs to be based upon strategic analysis and overall development goals both from both national and regional perspectives.

Examples of this are regional strategies, growth programmes, environmental quality objectives, regional climate and energy strategies and municipal plans for transportation infrastructure and transport policy goals.

4.2 Realization

The parties involved in bringing forward the regional development strategies should also continue to set the direction by monitoring, supporting and initiating the sustainable growth and development efforts within Norrbotten County. It is a matter of cooperation, consensus and collaboration on common priorities to attain success.
The decision makers and leaders are essential in the achievement of real change. Sustainable development requires a cross-sector perspective to manage conflicts of interest, utilize synergies and develop a strategic working method. Coordination, effective ways of working, continual monitoring and evaluation of a learning process is needed to be successful.

The regional development strategy is implemented through:
- County parties taking an active responsibility to prioritize and carry out the development incentives within the framework for regular activates within their respective areas.
- Parties securing and spreading knowledge about the regional development strategy on local, regional national and international levels.
- Parties utilizing the operative plans, programmes and strategies that exist on a regional and local level - for example the Regional Growth Programme and the EU Structural Funds.

Strategic development questions will continually be brought up during partnership meetings, especially questions that require collaboration between various community sectors.

5 Learning and Follow-Up

5.1 Learning

The county's authorities will monitor the development in the county through methods such as analysis and follow-up. Based on the results, various methods can be established and tailored to the specific needs of county. The results of these follow-ups will be regularly distributed to everyone working on the county development and made accessible through various information channels.

The Government has given all regions/counties the task to bring forward a learning plan. The aim is to create a more systematic follow-up and evaluation and thereby contribute to increased learning within the development measures implemented within the framework of regional growth. The intention is for knowledge and experience to translate into updating and renewing of strategies, action programmes, activities and projects.

The learning plan for Norrbotten is an integrated part of the RUS process and regional growth work in general. Learning is associated with the concrete activities that are carried out and the way results and experiences are spread and re-used. Work should be systematic and regulated according to a uniform plan for operators within the Regional Partnership. However, a significant part of the learning should also be more or less spontaneous in the daily work, where actors exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences of the regional growth issues.
5.2 Follow-Up of the Goals

Follow-up of national and regional goals should be on-going so that changes can be noted promptly. A more standard review of the "county pulse" should be carried out once per year. Follow-up and analysis is an important part of learning.
5.3 From Strategy to Programme and Financing

The table below is a schematic overview of how strategies, programmes and financing combine from an EU-level to a municipal level (for the period 2006-2007). The table will be updated.

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