

Nordic Connector

**A strategic east–west
connection shaping
Northern Europe**



**KVARKENRÅDET
MERENKURKUN
NEUVOSTO**



The Kvarken Council EGTC

European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

Main members of the Kvarken Council (with voting rights)

Region Västerbotten
Umeå Municipality
Örnsköldsvik Municipality
The Regional Council of Ostrobothnia
The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia
The Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia
City of Vaasa
City of Kokkola
City of Seinäjoki
City of Jakobstad
City of Kurikka
Korsholm Municipality
Storuman Municipality
Lycksele Municipality
Skellefteå Municipality
Region Västernorrland

Other municipal members

Vindeln Municipality
City of Nykarleby
City of Närpes
Nordmaling Municipality
Vännäs Municipality
Larsmo Municipality
Kronoby Municipality
Sundsvall Municipality
City of Kauhava
Lappajärvi Municipality
Robbersfors Municipality
Pedersöre Municipality

Organisational members

Vaasa Region Development Company VASEK
Vaasa University of Applied Sciences
University of Vaasa
Jakobstad Region Development Company Concordia
Into Seinäjoki
Kristinestads näringslivscentral/
Kristiinankaupungin elinkeinokeskus
Hanken School of Economics
Umeå University
Mid Sweden University
Novia University of Applied Sciences
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
Åbo Akademi
Federation of Swedish Municipalities
in Ostrobothnia for Education and
Culture (SÖFUK)
Metsähallitus
Centria

A total of 43 members

A cross-border
platform

The size of our region
compared to Belgium



Current context

What if the Baltic Sea routes were blocked?

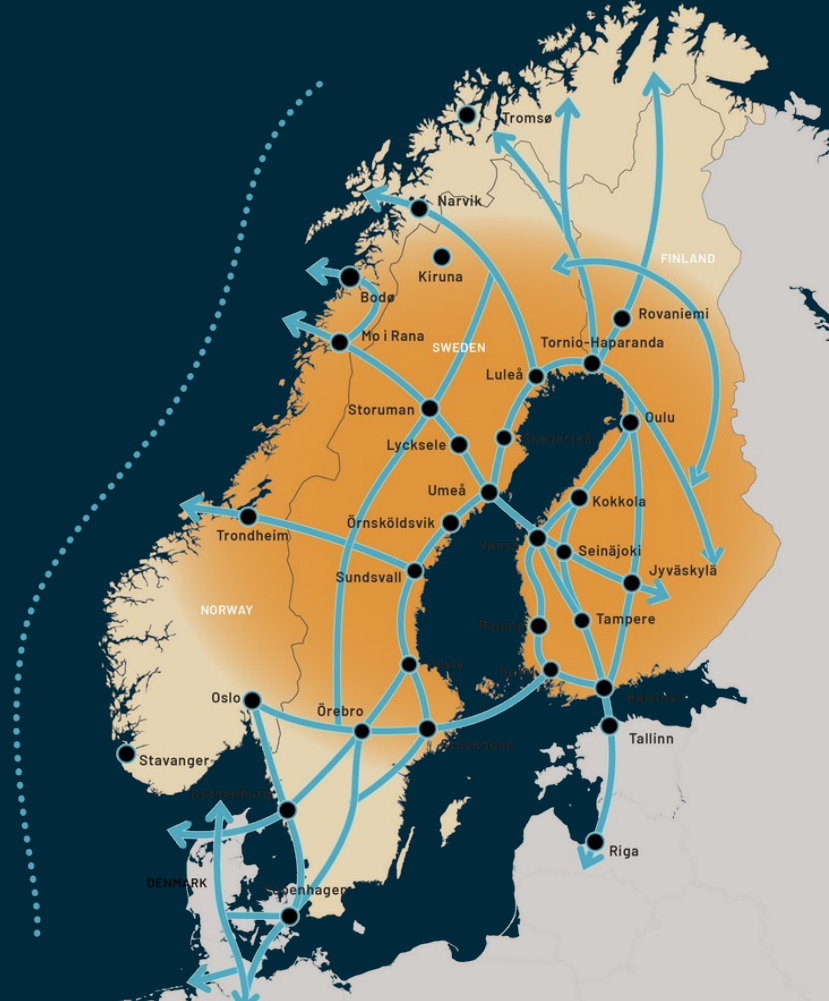
- 90% of Finnish and Swedish trade goes by sea
- Shared border with Russia: 1,340 km
- Limited east–west capacity
- Disruptions expose critical vulnerabilities



Nordic Connector

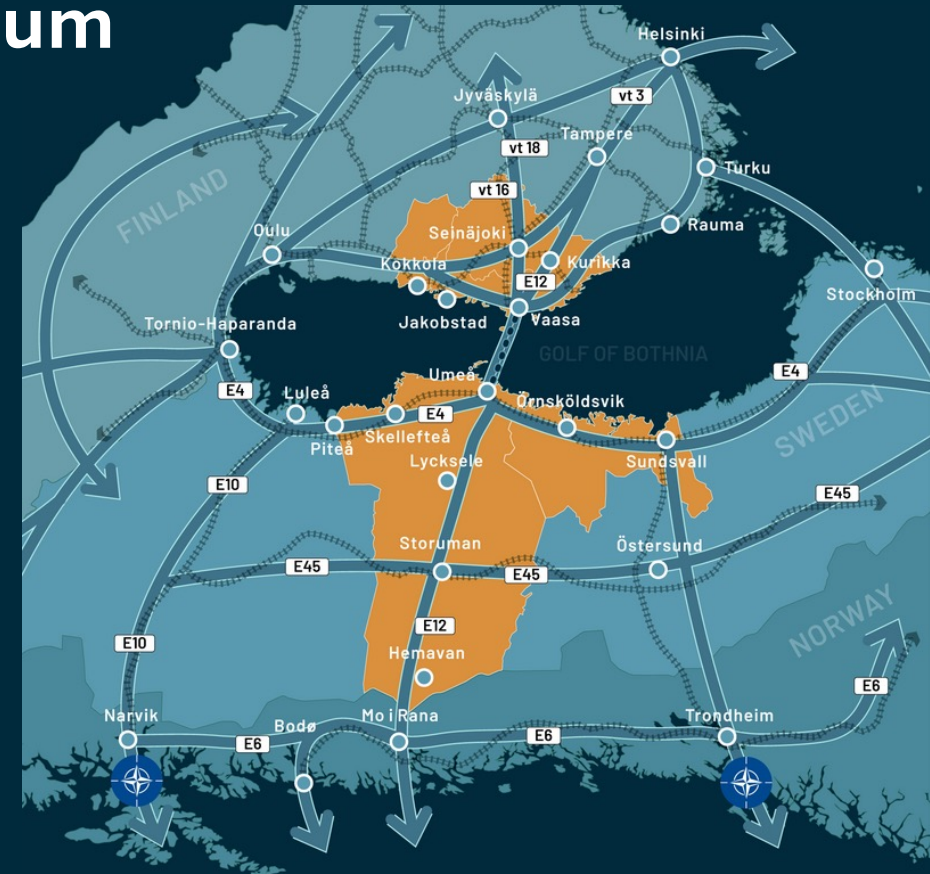
- A strategic east–west connection for a stronger Northern Europe
- Connecting northern Norway, Sweden and Finland
- A fixed link across the Kvarken as a key component
 - Strengthening resilience, security of supply and competitiveness
 - Connecting Northern Europe to Atlantic ports and wider markets
 - Strengthening connections between Nordic and European transport systems

Not an end in itself – a tool for wider societal benefits



Progress and political momentum

- Included in the Finnish Government Programme
- Included in Finland's national transport plan (Liikenne 12, 2021–2032)
- Feasibility confirmed by the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency
- Highlighted by the Finnish Defence Committee and approved by the Finnish Parliament
- Nordic Council (2025): recommendation to work on east–west connections
- Presented in the Swedish Parliament
- Growing interest at Nordic and European levels



Source: MidtSkandia

Technical and financial perspective

A fixed link across the Kvarken

- Combination of road sections, causeways, bridges and tunnels
- Estimated cost range: €5–29 billion

Feasibility confirmed – financing under analysis

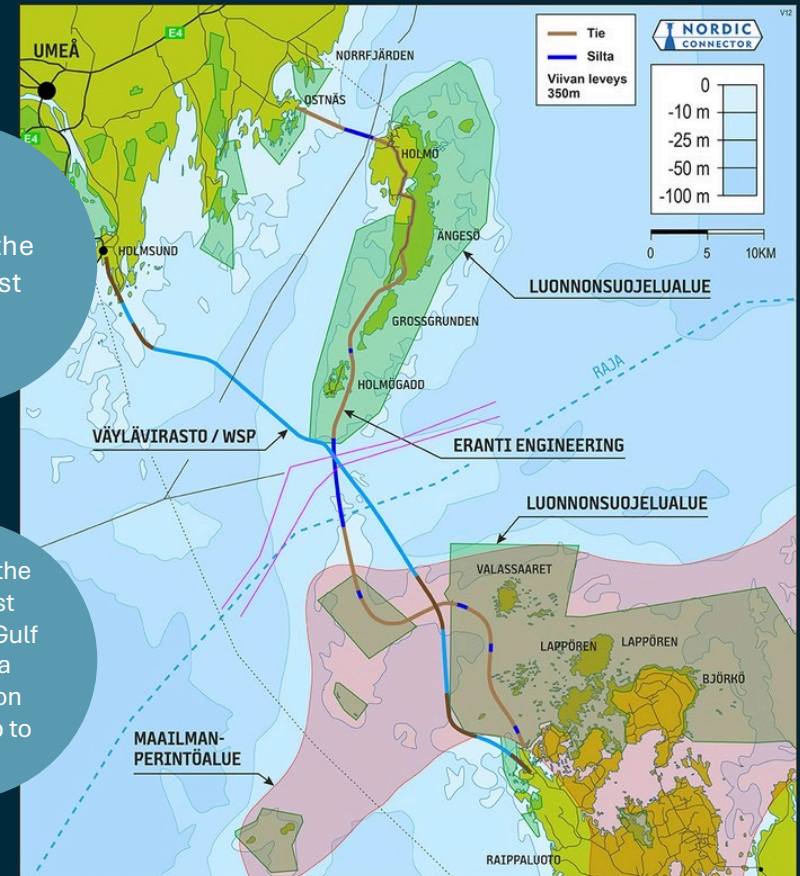
- Financing models under analysis, including cross-border approaches, wider societal benefits and security and military mobility (FLINC project)

Interreg



Co-funded by
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Aurora



25 km
between the
outermost
islands

Kvarken is the
shallowest
part of the Gulf
of Bothnia
(20–25 m on
average, up to
~100 m)

Source: Esa Eranti and Antti Tavitie, www.erantiengineering.fi

FLINC – Analysis of financing and societal benefits

Financing large-scale cross-border infrastructure - Case Nordic Connector

- Develops methodologies for financing large-scale cross-border infrastructure
- Analyses wider societal impacts beyond traditional cost–benefit frameworks
- Conducts in-depth analysis of military mobility
 - Objective: support future political decision-making

Interreg



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Funding: Interreg Aurora (EU), Lapland Regional Council, Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency, City of Vaasa, Umeå Municipality

The reference group includes representatives from, among others, the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency, Traficom, and the Swedish Transport Administration.

Lead partner: Kvarken Council EGTC



Key messages

- Not only a regional project
- A strategic investment for Finland, Sweden and Europe
- Strengthens resilience and security of supply
- Supports military mobility
- Strengthens Nordic and European transport networks through new east–west connections
- Enhances competitiveness
- Technically feasible
- Initial estimates suggest the project could fully or partly pay for itself
- Wider benefits analyses confirm a sound investment despite high costs
- Clear strategic value for military mobility, preparedness and food security



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Thank you!

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