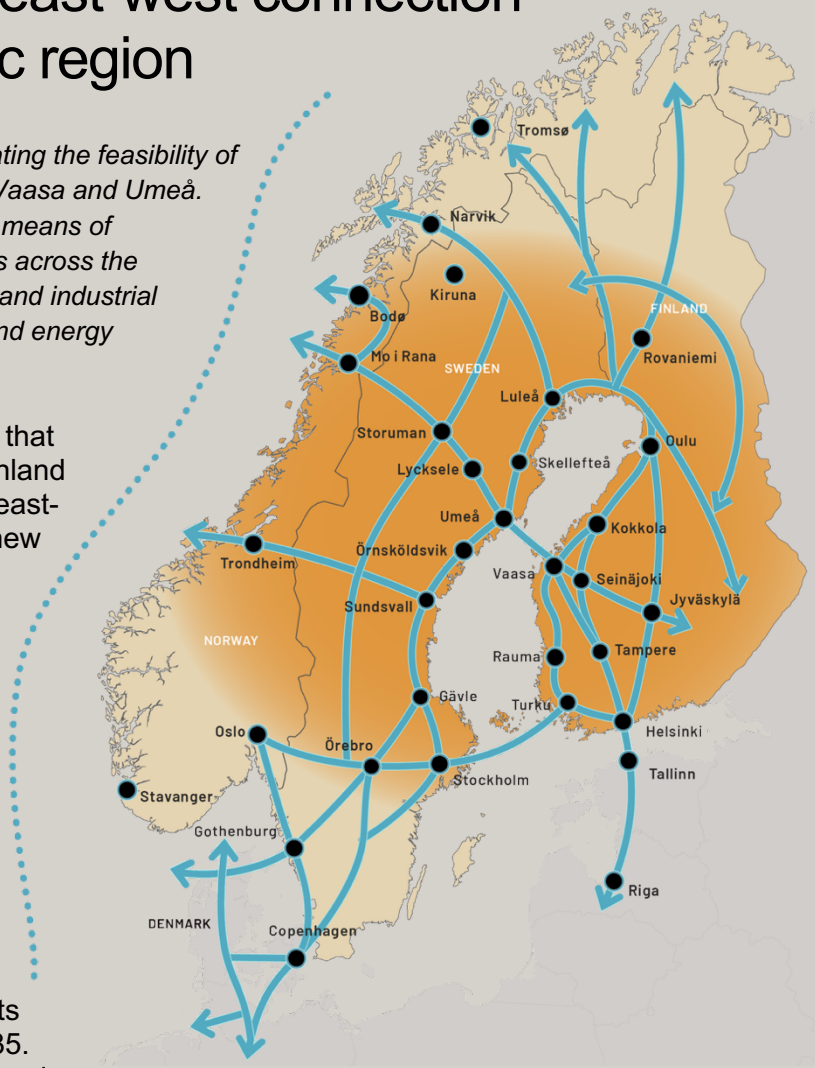
Nordic Connector – an east-west connection for a more robust Nordic region

The Nordic Connector is an initiative for investigating the feasibility of a fixed connection across the Kvarken between Vaasa and Umeå. The fixed connection is not an end in itself, but a means of achieving a wide range of positive societal effects across the northern Nordic region – from improved logistics and industrial growth to strengthened preparedness, mobility and energy transition.



The Nordic Connector is a strategic initiative that strengthens the transport chains between Finland and Sweden and creates a robust, two-way east-west axis across the northern Nordics. The new security policy environment, major industrial investments and growing Nordic supply needs make the initiative relevant at national, Nordic and European levels.

The work with the Nordic Connector is now being intensified through ongoing investigations and increased national attention.

Why a Nordic Connector?

- The northern Nordic region is undergoing a major industrial and energy-driven transition, with investments forecasted to exceed €200 billion by 2035. Such a transformation requires feasible and secure transport chains.
- East-West connections need to be reinforced. The Nordic Connector would link Finland, Sweden, and Norway through a seamless, two-way transport corridor stretching from the Atlantic coast to southeastern Finland.
- The Defence Committee of the Finnish Parliament has highlighted the need for stronger east-west connections to safeguard security of supply and military mobility — a position endorsed by Parliament.
- In 2025, the Nordic Council recommended that Norway, Sweden and Finland examine a fixed logistics connection from the Atlantic coast to south-eastern Finland. The recommendation highlights the strategic importance of the initiative at the Nordic level.
- The Nordic connector and the Kvarken Council cooperation platform are included in Finland's 12-year transport system plan (Liikenne 12, 2021–2032)
- EU supply chains are becoming increasingly reliant on alternative northern routes, especially if there are disruptions in the southern Baltic Sea.

What previous analyses have shown – and what is now being verified through the FLINC project

- Shorter transport routes to ice-free ports in Norway would reduce transport times from the northern Nordics, decrease the need for transshipments, and strengthen the EU's logistical resilience. The ice-free ports referenced in this context are Mo i Rana, Narvik and Trondheim. The Northern Sea Route is also of strategic interest.
- Reducing transshipments could save the industry more than €1 billion annually.

- Shorter transport routes would lead to lower emissions, with savings comparable to the total emissions of a larger European country.
- A fixed connection across the Kvarken could substantially enhance cross-border commuting and educational cooperation between Finland and Sweden, potentially involving up to 70,000 students in the Kvarken region.
- Finland's current Government Programme mandated an investigation of a fixed Kvarken connection. The Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency completed this preliminary study in spring 2025. The study confirmed that it is technically feasible to build a fixed connection across the Kvarken and highlighted the need for in-depth analyses of, among other things, the wider benefits of a fixed connection. These analyses are being conducted within the FLINC project, in which the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency and the Swedish Transport Administration are participating.

Work in progress – complementary analyses within FLINC
The FLINC project, funded by Interreg Aurora, conducts analysis to complement the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency's preliminary study and support the decision-making on the Nordic Connector. The project uses the Nordic Connector as a case study for large-scale infrastructure investments in sparsely populated areas regarding:

- **positive effects on business and society**: industrial competitiveness and investment potential, logistical impact, competence provision and energy transition
- **military mobility and preparedness**: identification of bottlenecks, capacity requirements and two-way mobility for civilian and military transport as well as scenario work where Baltic Sea traffic or southern transport routes are disrupted
- **financial analysis and financing models regarding large-scale cross-border infrastructure**

FLINC provides scientifically established documentation to support future political decision-making in Finland, Sweden and Norway. The results are integrated into national and Nordic policy discussions for future decisions in this matter. The methods and results developed within FLINC will also be used in other large cross-border infrastructure projects in the Nordic region and within the EU.

The Nordic Connector is a strategic issue at national, Nordic, and European levels, contributing to enhanced security, preparedness, and long-term competitiveness.

The role of the Kvarken Council EGTC is a key actor in advancing the Nordic Connector through the following roles:
As a platform to facilitate cross-border cooperation
As a provider of strong regional, national and European support
As a facilitator of dialogue with industry, policy makers and authorities
As a coordinator of the Nordic Connector initiative
As a beneficiary of the FLINC project

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