

STRING 2030 STRATEGY

STRING'S STRATEGIC FOCUS

The work of STRING is rooted in our vision to create a megaregion because there is strength in numbers. We strive to become a globally acknowledged Green Investment Hub and a leading implementer of sustainable infrastructure to combat climate change while improving the lives of our citizens. Through being showcased as a prosperous destination that people are drawn to visit, live and invest in, we will continue to be a key influencer for setting international and national agendas in Northern Europe. But creating a corridor where economic growth, job creation and sustainability go hand in hand for the benefit of our citizens is a long-term vision that requires a sharp focus embedded in our ambition to foster a clean, green economy, and the initiatives we need to implement to get there.

When the last STRING strategy – STRING 2040 – was approved in 2016, STRING was different to what it is now. In 2019, the construction start of the Fehmarn Belt link is imminent, and we have grown to 12 members, covering the entire corridor from Hamburg to Oslo. With this evolution of our network, now representing 12-6 million inhabitants and 9 regions, STRING has a renewed commitment to align ourselves with other region-building activities, and to redefine our important role to facilitate the delivery of cross-border infrastructure integral for economic growth and prosperity.

To reflect these changing priorities of STRING and the world around us, this revised strategy replaces the STRING 2040 Strategy. It presents a clearer, more defined focus for STRING in areas deemed most crucial to achieving our vision.

SETTING THE SCENE FOR 2030

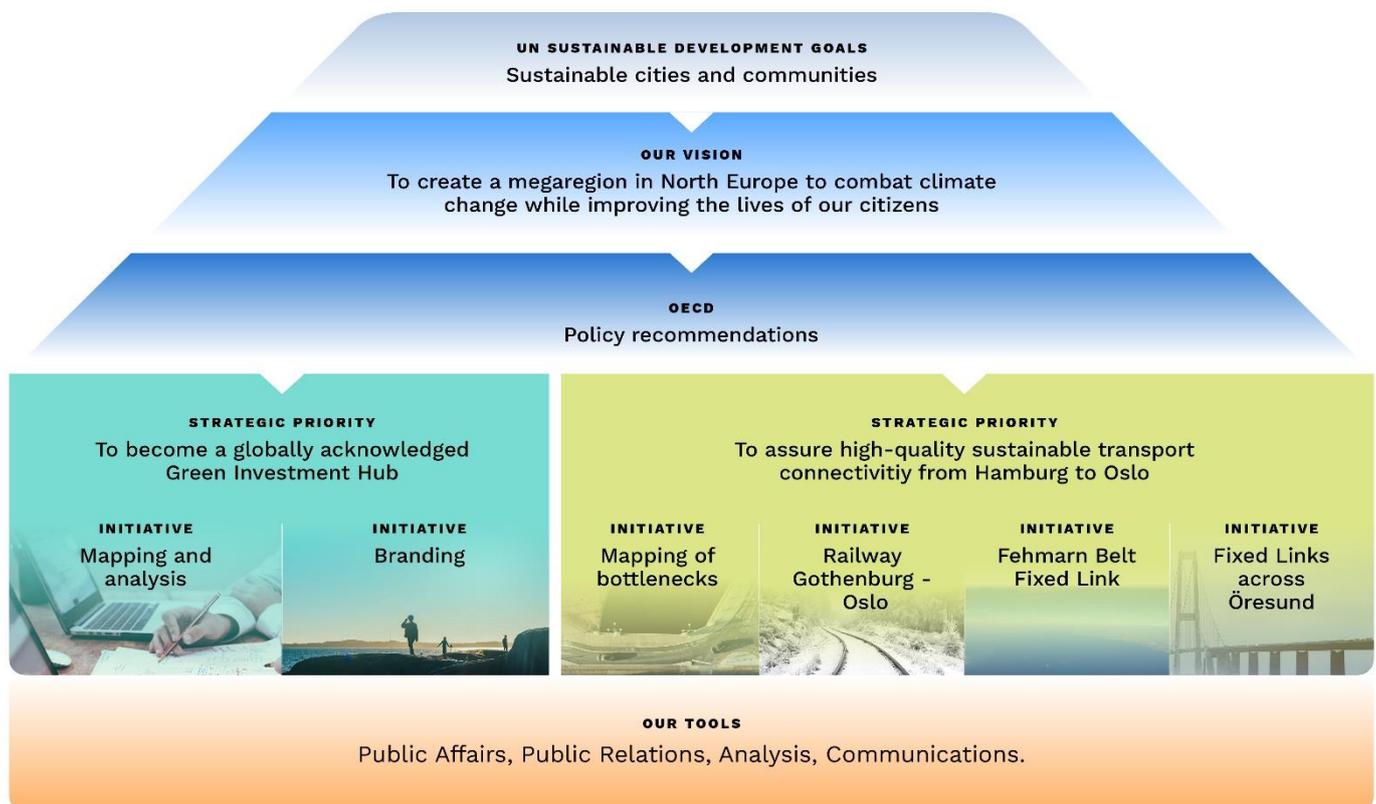
STRING has an important part to play in Northern Europe in the coming years. The continuous increase of vehicles on the road will place pressure on the EU's post 2020 CO₂ target of a 30% reduction in carbon emissions, making alternative transport modes and connected infrastructure more crucial than ever. Furthermore, in 2030 we are 20 years away from being measured against Europe's 2050 Climate Strategy for carbon neutrality, strengthening the needs for STRING's cross border mandate rooted in sustainable development and transport. Further the European Commission White paper 2011 states the EU aim that 30 percent of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport by 2030, and more than 50% by 2050, facilitated by efficient and green freight corridors.

Focused and tangible action is required in order to progress.

The STRING 2030 Strategy therefore presents a vision for STRING to position the region as a sustainable and forward thinker, a pragmatic doer and a pioneer driving forward the economy with green and sustainable technological solutions. This vision is an expression of our overall goal for the region – which is to be a strong European powerhouse, achieving the best quality of living for our inhabitants through free mobility and attracting competencies and investments. We believe that this can be done through leveraging on the vast

competencies we already have in the green sector, and through internationally profiling ourselves as the place to be and invest in for companies working within the green technological sector – in other words a Green Hub. In order for this to happen, some prerequisites are necessary - the backbone of these being sustainable transport and infrastructure connectivity. The removal of bottlenecks is crucial to creating an open, accessible and investor friendly society with free movement of people, making transport connectivity the core of the strategic work of STRING.

On the basis of this rationale, the strategy sets out **two strategic** priorities, which will be translated into concrete actions and initiatives by STRING, together with its cities and regions:



1) Clean, Green Economy: To become a globally acknowledged Green Investment Hub

We want to foster an excellent business and innovation environment for low carbon economy solutions in order to attract regional investments and create sustainable growth in Northern Europe.

Climate considerations and green growth are a key part of our approach to all aspects of STRING's activities from implementing sustainable infrastructure to foster a world-leading region for job creation and investment. The implementation of this approach is the unique selling point of our region in terms of our society, as well as our competitive industrial advantage.

To make this a reality, **two** initiative are of particular importance to STRING:

- **Mapping and analysis**

We believe that the STRING region is already leading the way internationally when it comes to green solutions, with an excellent track record of fostering solutions within smart cities, sustainable transport, lighting, and neutron research. We believe that we should leverage on these competencies and communicate these as our unique selling point – and sell the brand of STRING being the best place internationally to position yourself and your business in.

- **Branding the STRING region as a Green Investment Hub**

One way to market the STRING region as this green hub that we are, is to initially focus on the investment side of things. With a global lead in green and sustainable technological solutions, we believe that the STRING region should be the acknowledged place where exports of excellent innovative and practical solutions that improve green growth and quality of life are developed, manufactured and showcased. Through attracting investments and setting a global agenda for policymakers, business leaders and individual citizens we can draw on the strengths and unique selling propositions already in place in the region. We believe that we already have the credentials to make us an area that industries working with green technologies will want to work and invest in, in order to be close to the key competencies and sustainable developments we shall make the region known for. In other words, we have the foundation and the expertise, but are lacking the branding and story to tell the rest of the world.

The effects will lead to greater focus on Northern Europe's core competencies, more investment, more jobs, an attractive image and a better place to live and work for our citizens.

2) **Transport and infrastructure connectivity: To assure high-quality sustainable transport connectivity from Hamburg to Oslo**

We want to create a region where there are no barriers to the free movement of people, goods and competencies, making STRING one fully interconnected cross-border region.

Integrated, up-to-date and sustainable transport networks, not least across borders, are key drivers of economic growth, job creation and ensuring a good quality of life for all citizens. The STRING region is uniquely positioned as a nexus between the Scandinavian countries and Northern Germany and continental Europe. The transport infrastructure in the region should therefore form a corridor that enables both internal and external mobility and supports development of a more prosperous, liveable and sustainable society. As such, infrastructure should be the backbone in all of STRINGs activities – the prerequisite that needs to be in place in order for all other development to follow.

To make this a reality, **four** infrastructure initiatives are of particular importance to STRING:

- **The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link:**

The construction of the Fixed Link across the Fehmarn Belt will dramatically improve connectivity in the STRING region as well as the whole ScanMed TEN-T corridor, and improve accessibility and mobility following the completion of the road and rail corridor between Hamburg and Copenhagen

will lead to economic growth and jobs. Our overall target is reflected in a journey time of 2½ hours between Hamburg and Copenhagen. Until construction is assured, this remains the main infrastructure focus for STRING.

- **An improved and sustainable railway connection between Gothenburg- Oslo**

An improvement of the existing railway stretch between Gothenburg- Oslo to include double tracks and the potential for high-speed rail is essential in order to avoid this stretch becoming a bottleneck in the TEN-T ScandMed corridor once the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link is in place. It is also a necessary development in order to assure more freight on rail between Sweden and Norway. Once the final approval processes for the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link are in place, we need to make sure that we are geared for the next steps. Therefore, we will also work for the Gothenburg-Oslo railway as well as our regional business development to become an EU priority through increasing our presence at the EU level, as well as profiling ourselves towards national government in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo, and Berlin.

- **Fixed links across the Öresund**

The Öresund Bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen has led to increased and successful cross-border cooperation in the region. With the completion of the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link, traffic flows are expected to increase and capacity issues at the Öresund Bridge are anticipated in the future. New fixed links across the Öresund, between Helsingborg and Helsingör and an Öresund metro between Malmö and Copenhagen, are necessary in a future perspective and STRING will therefore work to ensure that new fixed links across the Öresund become reality as soon as possible.

- **Removal of bottlenecks**

Whilst communicating the importance of these two projects to governments, businesses and individuals is a key priority, these cannot be seen in isolation. For these projects to have maximum success, we also need to focus on eliminating all bottlenecks in the ScandMed TEN-T corridor between Hamburg and Oslo. This means that STRING also works to:

- Enable the full integration of sustainable transport infrastructure in the STRING region with European transport networks
- Enable a low emission transport infrastructure
- Get high speed train services
- Assure inclusive mobility
- Receive maximum EU funding for regional investments

The outcome will be the successful construction of the fixed link across Fehmarn Belt and its hinterland connections in Denmark and Germany, as well as an improved railway system between Gothenburg-Oslo. We will, by 2030, have a customer-friendly and efficient transport system linking Northern Europe to Central Europe and a system that paves the way for sustainable growth and integration between Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. This, in turn, will eliminate several of the practical barriers standing in the way of the STRING region claiming the title as the world leading Green Investment Hub.

Cross-border initiatives:

Whilst improved infrastructure and the creation of a Green Investment Hub will be at the heart of STRING, we will continue to work across sectors to support tangible cross-border projects and initiatives suggested and championed by our partners, such as the Fehmarnbelt Days, political festivals, and the cultivation of networks. We will also continue to facilitate interaction between projects and partners that will lead to more lighthouse projects within infrastructure and a green economy. Additionally, STRING will together with its cities and regions systemise our efforts and presence in Brussels.

In the ongoing process, there will be a focus on the development of other internal papers such as a work programme, handouts, and lobbying plans in relation to the strategy.

STRING

STRING is a cross-border political organisation that stretches from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, Region Zealand, the Capital Region and City of Copenhagen in Denmark, Region Skåne, Region Halland, Västra Götalandsregionen and City of Malmö in Sweden, City of Oslo, and the Viken County (consisting of previous Akershus County Council, Østfold County Council and Buskerud County Council) in Norway.

The STRING region covers:

- 8 Regions
- 5 Cities
- 4 Metropolitan areas
- 2 Capitals
- 75.000 Square kilometres
- 12.8 Million inhabitants

STRING began as an INTERREG collaboration to promote the Fixed Link across the Fehmarn Belt in 1999. In 2008, STRING shifted its focus towards developing the entire corridor from Hamburg to the Øresund area.

In 2018, five new members - Akershus and Østfold Counties (merged to Viken County, January 1, 2020), Region Västra Götaland, Region Halland and City of Malmö, as well as City of Oslo in 2019 - joined STRING, expanding the STRING corridor northwards following the Swedish west coast to Southern Norway and the Oslo area.

STRING sets and promotes a mutual political agenda on infrastructure and green development.