



# Nordic Centre at Fudan University Strategy, 2020-2023



Nordic Centre at Fudan University was **established in 1995** through a collaborative effort between 14 Nordic universities and Fudan University. Today (2019) the network consists of **28 member institutions** in China, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Nordic Centre is a bridge between universities in the Nordic countries and their counterparts in China based on academic **knowledge and partnership**, and it shall continue to cultivate and develop such relations.

Through targeted actions, Nordic Centre seeks to be an essential hub for cutting-edge Sino-Nordic **research, research-based education and outreach activities**. The new strategy will take initiatives within these three fields.

Nordic Centre shall remain a **relevant actor in Sino-Nordic relations** and contribute to the **construction of knowledge-based societies**, by way of scientific rigor, academic curiosity and long-term collaboration among trusted friends. The long-standing relationship with Fudan University is essential to this pursuit.

## Our strategic priorities 2020–2023

The strategy consists of **three strategic pillars** for the period 2020–2023:

- ✓ Offering priority to new collaborative educational partnerships with a focus on innovation and groupwork between Chinese and Nordic students
- ✓ Developing Nordic Centre as a facilitator for new research- and innovation-based partnerships between Nordic members and Chinese institutions
- ✓ Reaching out to businesses and other societal stakeholders for interaction with researchers and students

To ensure a successful implementation and outcome of this strategy, a status report will be made in 2021.

## Educational partnerships

The rapid and complex societal changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century entail a range of local, regional and global challenges . Educational programs orient themselves to these challenges that future generations will have to respond to. International collaboration within education is of vital importance for this reorientation.

This holds particular true for China, which remains the world's primary economic growth engine and has become a hotbed for innovation. Also for the Nordic region, known for its welfare state, multilateral approach to world affairs, and likewise, innovation. Both sides are equipped with a highly educated young generation yet also faced with common challenges of tremendous importance, from climate change to aging societies to technology-driven disruption, and are behooved to learn from each other and collaborate.

Even though our societies differ in size, history, and economic systems, China and the Nordic countries share common goals of meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century's challenges, and both sides wish to do so based on exchange of knowledge.

Therefore, a primary aim of Nordic Centre is to strengthen teaching development through courses where students from China and from the Nordic region exchange knowledge and develop mutual understandings about their respective regions. Beyond that, to organize courses with students from both regions, especially ones that involve close group work and engagement with businesses and other kinds of external stakeholders.

We believe that the relatively long history of the Nordic Centre, our longstanding partnership and friendship with Fudan University, in combination with the context of the times we live in, call for all the member institutions of the Nordic Centre to reap the rewards of knowledge, insights and academic exchange that the Nordic Centre offers.

Our aim in the strategy period is twofold:

To increase educational activity geared towards interaction with business and public institutions, and with close teamwork between Nordic and Chinese students, including within the Demola platform

To launch new courses within prioritized research areas (see below).

### **Sub-goals**

- In close cooperation with Fudan University in Shanghai and other Chinese institutions, the Nordic Centre will make an even stronger effort to consolidate its numerous activities into a forceful focus on research-based education on key issues of Sino-Nordic challenges.
- Nordic Centre will coordinate (and provide) research-based education *for credit* in China and/or the Nordic Countries

### **Activities**

- Nordic Centre will continue to run its present courses for Nordic students about China and for Chinese students about the Nordic Region
- Nordic Centre member institutions will collaborate to launch new courses within prioritized research fields
- Nordic Centre will prioritize courses with innovation facilitators, such as Demola, and new initiatives geared at a) interaction with business and with public institutions and b) close group work between Chinese and Nordic students
- Nordic Centre will facilitate a pilot project on a dual degree between Fudan University and one of the Nordic member institutions within an identified strategic area by 2023

## Develop strong and strategic research and innovation partnerships

China's economic growth in the past few decades has been astonishing. Its investments in research and higher education through the same period have reflected both this growth and a strategic interest in becoming a knowledge society. Research collaboration with China in order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become ever more important.

Within this broad perspective, there are any number of paths to engagement within both research and education. Nordic Centre must prioritize certain key areas for engagement in order to deepen collaboration among researchers from the two regions.

### Sub-goals

- A Nordic Centre working group will identify key interdisciplinary thematic areas that are especially advantageous for Nordic–Chinese research collaborations. Suggested fields include the Arctic, sustainable development, climate research, food culture and security, comparative welfare systems, and heritage studies
- Nordic Centre will reach out to connect with top researchers from Fudan University and other Chinese member universities in their work with establishing, facilitating and coordinating a minimum of three major research projects (including projects funded by Horizon Europe) by 2023
- Nordic Centre will facilitate contact between researchers at Fudan University and their partners at the Nordic member institutions in order to establish new research and educational projects on the identified research areas
- Nordic Centre will actively invite other Chinese member institutions to join the new research initiatives as project partners

### Activities

- Nordic Centre will establish a working group for the identification of the research themes, and the identification of key research leaders
- Nordic Centre will thematically map relevant research of strategic importance in the various departments at Fudan University and Chinese affiliates and make an electronic overview available to the member institutions
- Nordic Centre will dedicate additional investment in a research fund (seed money) that participating institutions can make use of, geared towards joint applications to Horizon Europe
- Nordic Centre will make collaborative research projects with Chinese partners, such as for example the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)
- Nordic Centre will strengthen contact between research support offices at Fudan and the Nordic member universities with the goal of strengthening access to joint Chinese-European research funds

## Outreach

Nordic Centre is uniquely positioned for focusing on Sino-Nordic collaboration in research and education. It is the only center of higher education in China that organizes universities from all the Nordic countries in one single consortium. Further, by focusing on selected themes, Nordic Centre can provide expert knowledge to relevant stakeholders in China and the Nordic countries. Being situated in Shanghai, Nordic Centre has a unique location reaching out to major Nordic companies and innovation offices in the Shanghai area.

### Sub-goals

- Nordic Centre will work as a strategic university alliance based on its thematic focus
- Nordic Centre will organize thematic academic workshops, events and talks aligned with the prioritized themes, both locally and at other institutions in China and the Nordic countries
- Nordic Centre will focus on promoting the results of research and education sponsored by the Nordic Centre to the academic community and society at large

### Activities

- Nordic Center will develop its newsletter and include research themes and relevant trends in Sino-Nordic scientific research, particularly research undertaken by researchers at the Nordic Centre member institutions
- Nordic Centre will streamline the presentation of its work and consolidate the communication efforts into a message that presents the Nordic Centre as an essential hub for cutting-edge Sino-Nordic research and education
- Nordic Centre will strengthen coordination between the international offices of Fudan and Nordic member universities with the purpose of creating a better overview of China oriented research.
- Nordic Centre will invest more in and put greater focus on outreach to businesses in Shanghai, with the aim of having researchers collaborate with larger companies that fund such collaboration. Nordic Centre will dedicate a part of its budget to initially fund such outreach by, for instance, hiring a part-time staff member.

*Detailed internal plans of action for the various activities suggested to support the three overall strategic priorities will be developed on a continuous basis by Nordic Centre and approved by the Nordic Centre Council.*

Nordic Centre Council  
Shanghai  
October 2019

