

Nordic Kennel Union

Framework for Cooperation

Preamble

The Nordic Kennel Union (NKU) is a cooperation platform established to strengthen collaboration among the national kennel clubs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Through this Framework, the Members set out the principles, aims, and procedures for their joint work in promoting responsible dog breeding, safeguarding welfare, preserving Nordic breeds, and representing a unified Nordic voice in cynology.

Article 1 - Name and Nature

1.1. Nordic Kennel Union (hereinafter referred to as the “NKU”) is a cooperation platform of the national kennel clubs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. NKU is strictly non-profit and has no legal personality and does not bind member clubs.

Article 2 - Aim and Object

2.1. The principal aim of NKU is to strengthen Nordic cooperation and support each other in order to pursue the following common purposes in accordance with the rules and legislation of each member country:

- a) to preserve, promote and safeguard the native Nordic dog breeds as part of the cultural and historical heritage of the region
- b) to encourage and promote responsible breeding, registration, and use of pedigree dogs in the Nordic countries, ensuring that their health, welfare, and breed characteristics are safeguarded
- c) to protect and promote dog welfare and dogdom in the Nordic region, ensuring that practices reflect the highest standards of health, soundness, and responsible ownership
- d) to strengthen the Nordic voice in cynology by presenting unified positions in international matters of common interest, in particular towards the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI), the European Union and national governments.
- e) to facilitate the exchange of information, experience, and expertise between member kennel clubs.

2.2. To achieve its aim, NKU provides a platform where the national kennel clubs of the Nordic countries cooperate and support each other:

- a) to develop and harmonise Nordic health initiatives, including joint approaches to hereditary diseases, x-ray protocols, genetic testing and breeding guidelines
- b) to establish and maintain common Nordic regulations where appropriate, including dog shows, championships and dog sports, and to coordinate the scheduling of major Nordic

events such as the Nordic Winner Show and the Nordic Championships, including designating the host country and rotation, where applicable

- c) to promote high standards in the education, training and recognition of show judges, and to encourage the exchange of knowledge and expertise among the member countries
- d) to prepare joint Nordic positions and recommendations on matters of shared interest, and to submit these to the FCI, EU, governments and other relevant stakeholders
- e) to support cooperation in scientific, educational and public information initiatives, including the organisation of seminars, conferences and publications, and to encourage knowledge-sharing on special uses of dogs, such as rescue, therapy and assistance work.

2.3. The work of NKU shall always respect the sovereignty of each national kennel club. Recommendations and initiatives adopted within NKU are implemented by the member clubs through their own governance systems and in line with their respective legal frameworks.

Article 3 - Membership

3.1. The members of the NKU are the national kennel clubs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (hereinafter referred to collectively as the “Members”).

3.2. Membership in the NKU is based on equality. All Members enjoy the same rights and bear the same responsibilities within the cooperation.

3.3. Each Member shall appoint representatives to the NKU bodies. The rules governing representation in the Executive Committee, Commissions are set out in Article 4.

3.4. Each Member shall ensure that its appointed representatives participate actively in the work of NKU and communicate NKU matters to their respective national boards.

3.5. Additional kennel clubs from the Nordic region may be admitted as members of the NKU if all existing Member Clubs unanimously approve the application. Conditions of admission, including the scope of participation and financial responsibilities, shall be agreed at the time of admission.

3.6. Membership is continuous. A Member may withdraw from the NKU by giving written notice three months in advance. Withdrawal does not exempt the withdrawing Member from its obligation or any joint costs already approved at the time of withdrawal.

Article 4 - Governance (Bodies)

4.1. Executive Committee

4.1.1. The Executive Committee is the strategic and political body of NKU. It provides coordination and develops joint positions on matters of common interest, including but not limited to external representation towards the FCI, the European Union, and national authorities.

4.1.2. Each Member may appoint up to three representatives to the Executive Committee. Traditionally, this includes the President, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and one additional representative from each Member. A Member may adjust its representation within this limit to ensure effective participation.

4.1.3. The Executive Committee shall normally meet once annually. Additional meetings may be held online as required. The CEOs of the Member Clubs shall meet online once per quarter to enhance cooperation on ongoing projects and matters relating to the daily management of the clubs.

At the annual Executive Committee meeting, the following shall be presented for information and follow-up:

- (i) the minutes from the last Executive Committee meeting
- (ii) the minutes from the quarterly CEO meetings
- (iii) the annual written reports from each standing Commission; and
- (iv) a yearly statistical report from each Member, to be presented in a comparable format. At minimum, the report shall include the number of members, the number of pedigrees registered, the number of shows held and the total number of entries, as well as figures for trials and competitions. Additional data may be included as relevant to support cooperation and benchmarking.

4.1.4. The Executive Committee may appoint time-limited working groups with a written mandate and specific deliverables.

4.2. CEOs

4.2.1. The CEOs of the Member kennel clubs shall meet online once per quarter to enhance cooperation on ongoing projects and matters relating to the daily management of the clubs.

4.2.2. Minutes of the CEO meetings shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for information at the annual Executive Committee meeting.

4.2.3. The Secretariat shall participate in the quarterly CEO meetings to ensure coordination and continuity.

4.3. Commissions

4.3.1. *General Provisions*

4.3.1.1. The Executive Committee shall establish both mandatory and non-mandatory Commissions for advisory and cooperative purposes (hereinafter both referred to as the "Commissions").

4.3.1.2 All Commissions shall submit an annual written report of their activities to the Executive Committee, in accordance with Article 4.1.3, except the Disciplinary Commission, which is independent and may submit information or recommendations to the Executive Committee or directly to the Members on its own initiative.

4.3.1.3 The Executive Committee determines the tasks of the mandatory Commissions.

4.3.1.4. Any Commission may invite external experts to assist in its work, where the particular nature of the subject requires such support. The costs relating to such experts shall be borne by the inviting Member unless the Executive Committee has approved in advance that the costs shall be treated as a joint NKU expense in accordance with Article 8.

4.3.1.5 Meetings of the Commissions shall normally be held online. Each Commission shall meet at least once per year. In-person meetings may be held only if all Members represented in the Commission agree in advance and the related costs are borne in accordance with Article 8.

4.3.1.6. Commissions shall provide their outputs in writing (recommendations, proposals, or reports) using Secretariat templates. Narrative minutes are not required unless specified in a mandate from the Executive Committee. Each Commission shall maintain a brief action log (owner, action, due date, status) for oversight by the CEOs and the Secretariat.

4.3.2. *Mandatory Commissions*

4.3.2.1. NKU shall have the following mandatory Commissions:

A. Scientific Commission

The Scientific Commission consists of experts nominated by the Members in fields such as genetics, veterinary medicine, and related sciences. Its purpose is to harmonise regulations, health evaluations, and other key aspects of the work of the Nordic kennel clubs. An important function of the Commission is also to improve communication and the exchange of information between the scientific and veterinary departments of the Members.

B. Health and Welfare Commission

The Health and Welfare Commission addresses health and welfare matters of common Nordic interest. It coordinates joint initiatives – including the Breed-Specific Instructions (BSI) and works to harmonise approaches to welfare assessment and develops common strategies to promote responsible breeding and dog welfare across the region. It may propose recommendations and updates to shared tools (e.g., BSI) for Executive Committee consideration and/or direct to Members.

4.3.3. *Non-Mandatory Commissions*

4.3.3.1. In addition to the Mandatory Commissions, NKU may establish Non-Mandatory Commissions to address specialised areas of cooperation or sport. These include, but are not limited to:

A. Show Commission

The Show Commission serves as the forum for cooperation on show-related matters in the Nordic countries. Dog shows play an important role in evaluating breeding stock and

preserving breed type and soundness and the Commission's work supports this purpose through the harmonisation and ongoing development of show rules, as well as cooperation on the Nordic Winner Show. The Commission meets at least once annually and submits its minutes and proposals to the Executive Committee.

B. Show Judges' Commission

The Judges' Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on all matters relating to show judges, including education, training and continuing development as well as appointment, duties, behavior and recognition of dog show judges in the Nordic countries. Its purpose is to develop common guidance on judging procedures as well as strategies for judge education, to organise joint conferences, and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience among judges. The Commission may prepare common Nordic positions on judges' education for submission to the Executive Committee, or directly to the Members if appropriate.

C. Hunting Commission

The Hunting Commission develops common strategies for the use, training, and trials of hunting dogs in the Nordic countries, and promotes high standards of hunting ethics in line with NKU's welfare objectives. It submits proposals on hunting-related issues to the Executive Committee.

D. Obedience Commission

The Obedience Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on obedience. It oversees the rules of the Nordic Championships, submits proposals for changes to the Executive Committee, and develops joint Nordic standpoints on issues raised within the FCI.

E. Rally Obedience Commission

The Rally Obedience Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on rally obedience. It oversees the rules of the Nordic Championships, submits proposals for changes to the Executive Committee, and develops joint Nordic standpoints on issues raised within the FCI.

F. Agility Commission

The Agility Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on agility. It oversees the rules of the Nordic Championships, submits proposals for changes to the Executive Committee, and develops joint Nordic standpoints on issues raised within the FCI.

G. Freestyle/HTM Commission

The Freestyle/HTM Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on Freestyle and Heelwork to Music. It oversees the rules of the Nordic Championships, submits proposals for changes to the Executive Committee, and develops joint Nordic standpoints on issues raised within the FCI.

H. Youth Commission

The Youth Commission develops common strategies for youth activities in the Nordic countries and oversees the rules for the Nordic Junior Handling Championships and may propose changes to the Executive Committee. It meets annually and serves as a platform for inspiration and exchange of experience. It reports its conclusions to the Executive Committee.

I. Sled Dog Commission

The Sled Dog Commission coordinates Nordic cooperation on sled dog sports and activities. It oversees the rules of the Nordic Championships, submits proposals for changes to the Executive Committee, and develops joint Nordic standpoints on issues raised within the FCI.

J. Disciplinary Commission

The Disciplinary Commission is an independent forum for exchange of information and experience among the Members' national disciplinary or ethics bodies. It has no decision-making authority and does not replace national competence. Any exchange of information must comply with applicable data-protection law (including GDPR) and avoid sharing personal data unless there is a clear lawful basis. The Commission may submit information or recommendations to the Executive Committee or directly to the Members, on its own initiative.

4.3.3.2 Non-Mandatory Commissions are established and dissolved by decision of the Executive Committee.

4.3.3.3 They shall remain in operation for as long as there is a recognised need and interest.

4.3.3.4. Each Non-Mandatory Commission shall submit minutes and, where relevant, proposals to the Executive Committee.

4.4. Secretariat

4.4.1. The Secretariat of NKU shall rotate every three years among Members.

4.4.2. The Secretariat is responsible for the practical organisation of Executive Committee meetings. This includes, in particular, the preparation and distribution of agendas, the keeping of minutes, and the circulation of relevant documents.

4.4.3. The Secretariat shall support the Executive Committee and the Commissions, coordinate the work of the CEOs, and ensure continuity across meetings and chairmanships.

4.4.4. The Secretariat shall oversee and maintain the NKU website, ensuring that information published on behalf of NKU is accurate, up to date, and consistent with the decisions of the Executive Committee.

Article 5 - Procedures

5.1. Working language

5.1.1. The working language of NKU shall be English. All official documents, agendas, minutes, and reports shall be prepared in English.

5.1.2. Supporting materials and data may be submitted in the national languages of the Members. Where necessary, a summary in English shall accompany such material to enable common understanding.

5.2. Proposals to and from the Executive Committee

5.2.1. Proposals may be submitted to the Executive Committee by any Member, any Commission, or by the Executive Committee itself.

5.2.2. Proposals submitted to the Executive Committee shall be presented in writing and include sufficient background information, relevant options, and a clear indication of the intended purpose — whether for Executive Committee recommendation, for referral back to the national kennel clubs, or for information only.

5.2.3. The Executive Committee may refer matters to the Commissions for preparation, analysis, or development, where these matters fall outside the ordinary scope of the Commission's mandate. In such cases, the Executive Committee shall provide a written mandate outlining the task, scope and expected deliverables.

5.3 Overview of Issues

5.3.1. The Secretariat shall participate in the quarterly meetings of the CEOs (Article 4.2) to ensure coordination and continuity.

5.3.2. Based on these meetings, the Secretariat shall prepare an overview of ongoing and upcoming issues across the Commissions and Members.

5.3.3. In addition to the items listed in Article 4.1.4, the Secretariat shall circulate this overview to the Members in advance of the annual Executive Committee meeting, where it will serve as a basis for discussion and prioritisation. The Secretariat's overview shall also highlight the status of Commissions tasks and action log, as reviewed at the quarterly CEO's meetings.

5.4 Agenda and Circulation of Materials

5.4.1. Each Member has the right to request items be placed on the Executive Committee agenda. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Secretariat not less than six weeks before the meeting.

5.4.2. The Secretariat shall circulate draft agendas and relevant documentation not less than four weeks before the Executive Committee meeting.

5.4.3. Materials shall be prepared and circulated in sufficient time to enable informed discussion and decision-making within one Executive Committee cycle. This includes the annual statistical reports referred to in Article 4.1.3 (iv), which shall be compiled by the Secretariat into a common format before circulation to the Executive Committee.

5.5 Meeting Procedures

5.5.1. Meetings shall normally be held online, unless otherwise agreed by all Members in accordance with Article 7 on Financial Provisions.

5.5.2. Each Commission and the Executive Committee shall use common templates (issue note (background + options), recommendation form (proposed decision), and action log (follow-up) to ensure comparability of information.

5.5.3. Where Commissions are mandated by the Executive Committee to prepare specific tasks, the scope and expected deliverables shall be clearly set out. Each Commissions shall maintain an action log (owner, task, deadline, status) for follow-up. Commissions may be invited to present progress directly at a meeting of the Executive Committee. The quarterly meetings of the CEOs shall include an overview of Commissions activities to strengthen oversight and coordination.

Article 6 - Decision-Making and Recommendations

6.1 Principle of Consensus

6.1.1. NKU seeks to reach decisions by consensus in all its bodies.

6.1.2. Where consensus cannot be reached in the Executive Committee, a recommendation shall pass if at least four out of five Members support it.

6.2 Nature of Executive Committee Decisions

6.2.1. Executive Committee decisions are recommendations only. They do not bind the Member kennel clubs as a matter of law.

6.2.2. Recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee shall take effect through the governance processes of each Member kennel club and shall be communicated back to the Executive Committee once acted upon, in accordance with Article 6.4.

6.3 Role of Commissions

6.3.1. Commissions seek to reach consensus in their deliberations.

6.3.2. Commissions may issue joint recommendations to the Executive Committee or directly to the Members, or they may report divergent views where consensus has not been possible.

6.3.3. Matters of information or knowledge-sharing may remain within the Commissions without referral to the Executive Committee.

6.4 National Endorsement

6.4.1. Where an Executive Committee recommendation requires endorsement or decision by the national kennel clubs, each Member shall place the matter before its board in accordance with its own procedures.

6.4.2. The outcome of such national consideration shall be reported back to the Executive Committee at the next meeting.

Article 7 - Communication and Transparency

7.1. NKU shall conduct its work in a transparent and cooperative manner. Information shall be shared openly between the Executive Committee, the CEOs, the Commissions, and the Member kennel clubs.

7.2. The Executive Committee shall focus on strategic matters and joint positions. Technical or specialist items shall normally remain at Commission level unless escalation is requested by a Member or by the Executive Committee.

7.3. The requirements for the circulation of agendas, materials, minutes, and reports are set out in Article 5.

Article 8 - Financial Provisions

8.1. Each Member shall bear its own costs relating to participation in NKU activities, including attendance at Executive Committee meetings, CEO meetings, Commissions, Working Groups, and other cooperative activities.

8.2. Joint costs, including but not limited to the NKU website, breed recognition and registry work, and any other services or projects explicitly approved by the Executive Committee, shall be shared equally among the Members unless the Executive Committee decides otherwise in advance.

8.3. The CEOs, in cooperation with the Secretariat, shall prepare an overview of expected joint costs and present it to the Executive Committee for confirmation.

8.4. Commissions and Working Groups may not incur joint costs without prior Executive Committee approval, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4.3 on Commissions. Where a Commission or Working Group wishes to engage an external expert or undertake an activity involving costs beyond the responsibility of the appointing Member, a proposal must be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

8.5. Any outstanding joint costs shall remain the responsibility of all Members in equal shares, including in the event of withdrawal or dissolution.

Article 9 - Amendments

9.1. Proposals to amend this Framework may be submitted by any Member. Proposed amendments shall first be reviewed at a CEOs' meeting (Article 4.2) before being tabled for consideration at the Executive Committee meeting.

9.2. The Secretariat shall circulate the text of any proposed amendment to all Members not less than two months before the Executive Committee meeting at which it will be considered.

9.3. An amendment is adopted if approved by at least four out of the five Members (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). If additional Members are admitted in accordance with Article 3, amendments shall require the support of at least four-fifths (4/5) of all Members.

9.4. Amendments adopted by the Executive Committee shall take effect only once they have been confirmed through the governance processes of each Member kennel club, in accordance with Article 6.

Article 10 – Duration and Withdrawal

10.1. This Framework shall remain in force indefinitely unless replaced or terminated by decision of the Members in accordance with Article 9.

10.2. A Member may withdraw from the NKU by giving at least three months' written notice to the Secretariat.

10.3. Withdrawal shall not release the Member from responsibility for its share of any joint costs already approved under Article 8, which must be settled in full prior to the effective date of withdrawal.

Article 11 – Dissolution

11.1. The NKU is a cooperation platform and holds no financial assets.

11.2. If the Members unanimously agree to cease cooperation, the NKU shall be considered dissolved.

11.3. Upon dissolution, any outstanding joint obligations approved under Article 8 shall be shared equally among the Members, unless the Members have unanimously agreed on a different allocation.

11.4. The collection of line drawings by the Davidsson sisters (the Davidsson Drawings), held in joint NKU ownership and used by Members in breed standards and official publications, shall

remain in joint ownership by the Members after dissolution. The Members shall ensure their continued preservation and non-commercial use in accordance with existing practice.

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