

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

- 1. Norwegian Artificial Intelligence Research Consortium (NORA).** NORA is a research consortium between 18 Norwegian universities, university colleges and research institutes (hereafter referred to as NORA-partners). NORA is located in Norway and hosted by the University of Oslo.
- 2. Pioneer Centre for Artificial Intelligence (P1),** based in Denmark. With a focus on fundamental AI research and positive societal impact, P1 coordinates activities across five Danish universities. P1 is headquartered at the University of Copenhagen and is supported by the Danish National Research Foundation and four private foundations.
- 3. Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Program (WASP).** WASP is a research program between Chalmers (Gothenburg), KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm), Linköping University, Lund University, and Umeå University (hereafter referred to as WASP-partners). WASP is located in Sweden and hosted by Linköping University (hereafter referred to as LiU). LiU is a university located in Linköping, Sweden.
- 4. Finnish Center for Artificial Intelligence (FCAI)** focuses on advancing fundamental AI research and fostering its practical applications. Headquartered at Aalto University, FCAI's founding members also include the University of Helsinki and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. As part of the Research Council of Finland's Flagship Program, FCAI serves as a hub for top-level research and societal impact, and creates a nationwide network that brings together expertise from various institutions to enhance Finland's AI ecosystem.

5. The Center for Analysis and Design of Intelligent Agents (CADIA) was founded in 2005 and is Iceland's interdisciplinary research center in artificial intelligence spanning multiple departments at Reykjavik University. It comprises research activities in diverse areas, including Artificial-General Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Game-Playing Agents, Computer Vision, Cognitive Science, Explainable AI, and Natural Language Processing.

Whereas, NORA, P1, WASP, FCAI and CADIA are jointly hereinafter referred to as “Parties”.

Background

The Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—share deep cultural, historical, and political ties which have fostered strong inter-country relationships. Together, they form a region with a high standard of living, comprehensive welfare systems, and a solid commitment to democracy and human rights. Economically, the Nordics punch above their weight on the global stage thanks to highly developed and innovative economies.

If considered a single entity, the Nordic region would rank as the 11th-largest economy in the world, with a combined GDP nearing \$1.6 trillion. The region consistently excels in global rankings on innovation, education, and quality of life, frequently landing in the top 10 lists for innovation capability, environmental sustainability, and human development. Regarding innovation, Nordic companies and startups are known for their cutting-edge work in renewable energy, digital technologies, and healthcare.

AI stands out as one of the few transformative technologies in history, much like electricity and the internet, with the potential to reshape entire industries and societies. It can revolutionise fields as diverse as healthcare,

manufacturing, and public administration, driving productivity and innovation at unprecedented levels. By collaborating on AI research, education and innovation, the Nordic countries will foster an ecosystem where knowledge diffusion propels economic vitality, societal advancement and cultural development, enhancing both their economies and the well-being of their citizens.

Each of the five Nordic countries is home to thriving AI ecosystems, comprising activities such as entrepreneurship, education, capacity building, and applied and theoretical research. Within these landscapes, NORA, P1, WASP, FCAI and CADIA distinguish themselves as research-anchored, internationally-facing initiatives, producing research (papers and code) at top tier venues in Machine Learning, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing, and other subareas of AI.

Purpose of the Memorandum

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to advance cooperation between the Parties to advance AI research, education and innovation in the Nordic region and beyond. The Parties aim to enhance research collaboration, promote knowledge exchange, and drive innovation by building on the strengths of existing mechanisms and creating new mechanisms and initiatives when needed.

Subject to the availability of funds and resources, the Parties intend to develop collaborative activities in areas of mutual interest. These may include, but are not limited to, the various activities such as described below in this MoU.

These collaborative activities aim to explore the possibility of creating a unified Nordic AI ecosystem that leverages each country's unique strengths, enabling the region to compete more effectively on the global stage, both in science and innovation.

The Parties' goal is to welcome all the national AI societies to participate in these collaborative activities.

Guiding Principles

1. **Focus on the unique Nordic advantages:** The Parties aim to focus on the unique advantages the Nordic region brings to the global AI landscape, such as digitalisation, trust in institutions, strong democracies and social systems, and a strong public-private collaboration culture.
2. **More edges, rather than more nodes:** The Parties have strong regional research efforts in the Nordics. The Parties aim to strengthen productive communication channels between these nodes and towards strong European Initiatives such as ELLIS, CLAIRE, Adra and EurAI.
3. **A visible collaboration:** The Parties strive for the cooperation to be visible and branded under its name *Nordic AI Research, Education, and Innovation Partnership*, shorthand *Nordic AIR or NAIR* or *nordicpartnership.ai*. The latter is also the domain name for the partnership.
4. **Navigating the different interests between industry and academia to prevent talent drain from the region:** Acknowledging the different time horizons between industry and academia, the Parties will aim to bridge the gap between academia, the public sector and industry to prevent talent drain from the region.

Activities

Activities in line with the purpose and the guiding principles may include, but are not restricted to:

1. **Nordic AI Ecosystem Advocacy:** The Parties plan to raise awareness of the unique advantages the Nordic region brings to the global AI

landscape, such as digitalisation, trust in institutions, strong democracies and social systems, and a strong public-private collaboration culture.

2. **Joint Research Projects:** The Parties intend to cooperate on AI research projects that address key scientific challenges, particularly those relevant to the Nordic region. These could include, for example, navigating the promise and perils of Generative AI methods in the public sector (e.g., primary education, municipalities, hospitals), or the development of large language/vision models for Earth Observation and Climate Studies.
3. **Mobility and Exchange:** The Parties will aim to facilitate researcher mobility between institutions, increasing the visibility and accessibility of existing funding sources to support this.
4. **Workshops and Conferences:** The Parties will aim to co-organize annual workshops, seminars, and conferences to exchange research findings and share knowledge.
5. **Supercomputing Resources:** The Parties will strive to explore opportunities to share supercomputing resources, strengthening computational capabilities within the consortium.
6. **Industrial and Applied AI Collaborations:** The Parties will aspire to act as a unified interface to academia for applied AI networks and industry and public entity stakeholders, offering insights and guidance on AI research that aligns with academic and applied industrial goals.
7. **Expert Lists:** The Parties aim to create lists of experts across the subfields of AI, streamlining access to these resources within the Nordics.

Primary Meeting Venue

The Parties aspire to arrange The *Nordic AI Meet*, which shall be the primary annual venue for meetings to reinforce collaboration and coordinating

activities. The Parties strive to make the journal *Nordic Machine Intelligence* to be a key platform for disseminating research outcomes and opinions.

Implementation

All programs or activities under the terms of this MoU will be considered and carried out on a case-by case basis. They shall be mutually agreed upon in writing, including the necessary budget for the program of activity as the need may arise.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Parties agree that this MoU does not give rise to any legal relationship, rights or duties of the Parties in relation to each other or third parties and nothing contained herein shall be construed as legally binding. This MoU should not be interpreted as the Parties having agreed on collaboration in the form of a company. The Swedish Act on Partnership and Non-registered Partnership (1980:1102) shall thus not be applicable.

Duration

This MoU is effective from December 1st or upon signature by the Parties. The Parties intend to review their cooperation under this Memorandum annually, and the Memorandum may be modified at any time by the Parties' mutual written decision.

The Parties may discontinue their collaboration under this Memorandum at any time by mutual written decision. Alternatively, a Party who wishes to discontinue their participation in this Memorandum may do so at any time. Unless otherwise specified in writing, cooperative activities not completed upon the discontinuation of this Memorandum may be continued to their completion under the provisions of this Memorandum.

Dispute Resolution

Should any disagreement arise out of the application, interpretation or implementation of this MoU, the Parties shall endeavor to exercise best efforts to negotiate their differences.

Signatories

For NORA:

Klas Pettersen, CEO

Date:

Signature: _____

For Pioneer Centre for AI:

Serge Belongie, Director

Date:

Signature: _____

For Linköping University:

Jan-Ingvar Jönsson, Vice-Chancellor,

Date:

Signature: _____

For WASP:

Anders Ynnerman, Chair WASP

Date:

Signature: _____

For FCAI:

Samuel Kaski, Director FCAI

Date:

Signature: _____

Stefán Ólafsson, Director CADIA

Date:

Signature: _____