

NORDIC DEFENCE COOPERATION - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

The purpose of these Terms of Reference (ToR) is to describe the structure and working procedures for Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF) within the framework of the updated NORDEF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Rovaniemi on 6 May 2025.

2. Structure

These ToR apply to the political and military level organisation of NORDEF as outlined in Section 3 of the NORDEF MoU and are intended to support closer cooperation between the political and military levels.

The responsibility for chairing NORDEF rotates annually. At the highest political level are the Ministers of Defence. At the ministry level, the cooperation is steered by the Political Steering Committee (PSC).

The PSC consists of three branches: policy (POL), armaments (ARMA) and capabilities (CAPA). Each branch has experts that support the work of the senior staff and coordinate with the other branches. As a preparatory body to the Ministers of Defence, the PSC at large is supported by the PSC secretariat (PSC S).

The functions of the PSC include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Identifying and deciding on defence related strategic and policy issues of common interest,
- b. Ensuring coherence of the Nordic Defence Cooperation, including implementation of the Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation,
- c. Providing guidance to and tasking the Military Coordination Committee to prepare, recommend and implement decisions in line with the Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation.

At the military-strategic level, the Military Coordination Committee (MCC) is the overall governing body for Nordic Defence Cooperation. The MCC is formally governed by the Nordic Chiefs of Defence (CHODs). The CHODs appoint a national representative from the military-strategic level as their representative in the MCC. The Work Strands Operational Planning (OP), Joint Support & Enablement (JS&E) and Capability Development (CAPDEV) report to the MCC.

The functions of the MCC include, but are not limited to the following:

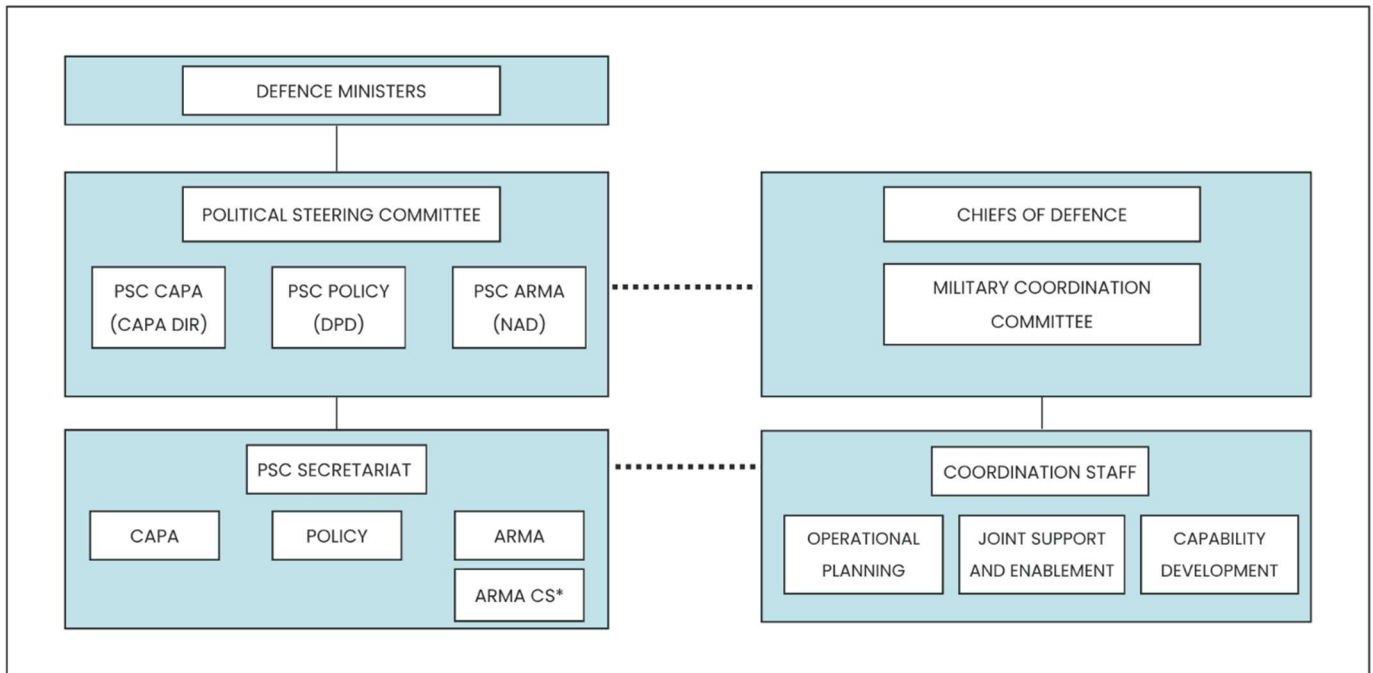
- a. As the representative of respective Chief of Defence, ensure the coordination, management and implementation of the military level cooperation,
- b. Establish required structures and processes for the cooperation on military level,
- c. Identify and forward policy related matters to the PSC,
- d. Provide military advice, implement tasks and inform about progress to the PSC.

The Coordination Staff (CS) is the executive body of the MCC. The MCC is the counterpart of the PSC, and the CS is the counterpart of the PSC S.

In order to enable a consolidated cooperation structure within armaments cooperation, the ARMA Coordination Staff (ARMA CS*) is under the direction of PSC ARMA, while the MCC can issue taskings in dialogue with PSC ARMA.

The responsibility for implementing agreed decisions lies with the national line organisations.

NORDEF political-military structure



**ARMA CS is under the direction of PSC ARMA, while the MCC can issue taskings in dialogue with PSC ARMA.*

3. Working Procedures

a. The NORDEFCO calendar year

The political priorities for NORDEFCO are defined in the Vision and its objectives. Based on the Vision, the incoming NORDEFCO Chair prepares the upcoming year, including a meeting calendar for approval by the PSC-MCC in the autumn meeting. The preparations should support reaching the objectives of the Vision and its implementing document i.e. the Roadmap.

The NORDEFCO calendar is divided into spring and autumn cycles. Defence ministerial meetings are held twice per year, in spring and autumn, with additional ad hoc meetings when needed. The Nordic Chiefs of Defence can be invited to ministerial meetings.

Biannual joint PSC-MCC meetings prepare the subsequent ministerial meetings and are used to take stock of ongoing progress on implementing the Vision and identifying issues to be forwarded to the ministerial level for decision-making, guidance and/or information.

The Chair is responsible for organising meetings. However, any nation may request an extra meeting if needed and is responsible for the arrangements of the meeting.

In the run-up to the spring and autumn meetings, the PSC and its secretariat serves as the preparatory body within NORDEFECO, including to help ensure that the agenda and the written input prepared by the PSC and the military level have been consolidated at the national level.

The Chair is responsible for preparing the draft agenda and circulating it for comments ahead of the joint PSC-MCC and ministerial meetings. The final agenda should be distributed no later than three weeks prior to the meeting.

The Chair ensures that all documents put forward for guidance and/or decision-making are shared at the latest two weeks ahead of the respective PSC-MCC or ministerial meeting. Written input from the PSC branches and the military level should be submitted to the PSC S two weeks prior to the meeting.

b. Political guidance and decision-making procedures

The Vision's objectives require both political and military efforts to be successfully achieved. The MCC is responsible for informing the political level about the measures that necessitate implementation at the political level to achieve the objectives.

At the military level, the CHODs' priorities form the basis for the MCC's Direction and Guidance to the Work Strands, which are formalised at least once per year. The PSC is kept informed of the priorities and the MCC's Direction and Guidance.

Prior to the autumn PSC-MCC meeting, a joint POL-MIL Autumn Report on the implementation of the Vision is prepared annually. At the military level, the MCC coordinates and reports on progress against the Roadmap, which forms the basis of the Autumn Report. The PSC provides input on relevant Vision objectives and prepares conclusions on the status of implementation of the Vision.

The report from the military level should reach the PSC two weeks prior to the joint PSC-MCC autumn meeting to ensure that it is shared nationally and circulated to all PSC branches. The report, including specific issues or challenges raised in the report, are discussed in the PSC-MCC meeting. At the ministerial meetings, the PSC Chair reports on the status on the Vision implementation, flagging any issues to the ministers. The MCC Chair provides an update from the military level on achievements of the effects of the Roadmap.

Decisions are made either in the meetings or out of meetings using a written procedure. Decisions are based on consensus. The PSC S Chair is responsible for circulating a decision sheet clearly stating the conclusions of each agenda item, and whether the participants at the meeting decided/discussed/took note/agreed/etc. on each particular agenda item, and any follow-up actions.

Draft decision sheets should be distributed no later than two weeks after the meeting took place. Comments are consolidated in the capitals through the PSC S. Any comments to the draft decision sheet should be submitted within three weeks after the meeting took place. The final and consolidated decision sheet should be distributed no later than four weeks after the meeting took place. Decision sheets must be approved by the PSC in order to be valid.

The decision sheets are a complementary source of political guidance within NORDEFECO, adding to the direction set by the Vision. When additional guidance is needed, a tasking can be issued, primarily drawing from the Vision. These are sent by the PSC to the MCC for further handling at military level. Taskings can be initiated by any branch (POL, CAPA, ARMA) and are coordinated

through the PSC S and the CS, to ensure inclusion in the Roadmap and follow-up. The MCC ensures that political guidance is implemented at the military level.

4. General conditions

These ToR can be amended, supplemented or revised at any time by the unanimous decision of the PSC and the MCC.

These ToR have been approved by the PSC and the MCC in their meeting in Helsinki on 23.10.2025.

Annex: MCC Structure and Working Methods