Nordic climate leadership in progress

Climate leadership and management in the Barents region

Overview of the findings under the Barents climate support -project

Ulkoministeriö
Utrikesministeriet
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Ympäristöministeriö
Miljöministeriet
Ministry of the Environment

Support materials and tools for Barents climate collaboration

Overview and results of the Barents Climate Support project in 2023

This overview contains:

- A compilation of existing tools and materials for climate management
- Summary of perspectives to climate work and cooperation needs in the Barents region, based on discussions on the webinars and peer learning sessions of the ’Barents climate support’ project

The project ’Barents Climate Support’ -took place in June – December 2023. The project was commissioned by the Ministry of Environment and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Aim of the project was to support climate leadership and management work in the Barents region by sharing good practices and discussing with regional and municipal actors what would be needed for more impactful climate work.

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Barents Climate support -project

Tools & materials:
Existing climate management tools and materials were identified from Finland.
A selection was translated into English and Swedish.

Peer learning:
Six organizations signed up to a lightweight peer learning program.
The program included a kick-off workshop and peer learning sessions in 3 themes:

- Follow-up and monitoring of climate work
- Climate management overall view
- Climate management & Economic planning

Webinars
A workshop and three webinars were organized. They reached altogether approximately 60 participants. They involved:

- Identifying special features of the Barents region that need to be taken into account when planning and implementing climate management strategy and measures
- Sharing existing climate management tools and support materials that could be used within the region
- Sharing learnings from the climate work of different regions and municipalities
- Discussion about collaboration needs related to the climate work
- Sharing tools and good practices for low carbon public procurement

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Tools and materials for climate management

Climate management refers to practices and operating models that integrate the promotion of climate work into the municipality's everyday management processes and people's tasks and responsibilities. Climate work covers both mitigation and adaptation activities.

Next pages contain a compilation of climate management materials and tools for municipalities developed in Finland.

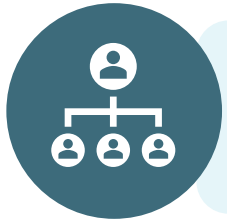
Motiva

Good practices of climate leadership & management: Five points of view

Committed leadership
Engagement of decisionmakers and top management

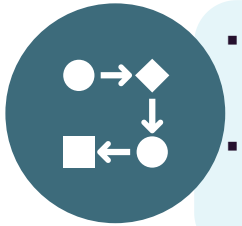
- Do our decisionmakers see the importance & benefits of climate action?
- Is climate action included in our strategic goals?

Roles and responsibilities
Organizing the work



- Are the roles and responsibilities of climate action clear and concrete?
- Do we communicate and cooperate int he climate efforts across functions, units, teams?

Processes from goals to measures and monitoring:
Building the processes from vision to implementation



- Is the implementation of climate goals integrated in our yearly budgeting and planning, procurement etc.?
- Do we measure and track the progress of our climate work?

Involving the entire municipality
Accelerating climate action of citizens, companies & stakeholders

- Do we involve and encourage citizens, companies and other stakeholders to participate in climate action?
- Do we cooperate regionally and learn from others?

Sustainable procurement

- How the municipality's procurement promotes climate goals?

Motiva

A compilation of climate management materials and tools for municipalities developed mainly in Finland. Circulated tools were translated into English and Swedish. They are further explained in the following pages.

Committed leadership

Climate management assessment model: Questions for 11 areas of management on how to link climate work into municipal management. A tool for identifying development points and intermunicipal peer review.

Climate management self-assessment and development plan: A streamlined version of the climate management assessment model. The areas of climate management are divided into four main themes.

'Climate Accelerators' operating model for democracy and climate education & for dialogue between young people and decision-makers: Support material for organizing discussions between young people and decision-makers on themes related to sustainability and climate work.

Building instructions for cost-effective climate work for municipalities: The guidelines are based on five steps towards a cost-effective climate work model.

Regional Adaptation Support Tool (RAST) by the EU: provides guidance of the six main steps need to be considered during the adaptation planning process.

Roles and responsibilities

Organisational models for climate management: Examples of models for organizing and coordinating climate work in municipalities based on municipal interviews, and perspectives from which the organisation of climate work can be examined.

Climate management operating model: An operating model for linking climate work to the strategic management and steering of municipalities.

Processes from goals to measures and monitoring

Structure model for climate programme: A guide to support the preparation of the municipality's climate programme and plan. Especially for smaller municipalities.

Info material & Assessment model for linking municipal economic and climate management: Perspectives on how to consider climate issues e.g. in the municipality's annual planning, financial monitoring and procurement. Assessment model contains a list of questions for a total of 23 sub-areas in the four main themes of economic and climate management. Includes instructions on how to implement the assessment structure in the municipality.

Climate impact assessment framework for investments: The evaluation framework contains a list of factors in six sub-areas from which the climate and circular economy aspects of investment projects can be evaluated.

Climate watch (Häme region)**:** A region-wide climate management monitoring system based on open data.

Indicators: A selection of indicators for the municipality's climate and environmental work and descriptions of calculation criteria. Contains perspectives on the use of indicators in the management of the municipality.

Tools that support climate-resistant land-use planning: A carbon map tool that facilitates the assessment of climate impacts of land use changes.

Involving the entire municipality

Climate communication guides:

- **Climate communication in municipalities:** Perspectives on the contents and approaches of climate communication, as well as implementation
- **The steps of climate communication:** Contains tips for the development process of climate communication
- **A small guide to municipalities' climate communication:** Contains justifications for the municipality's climate communication, tools for communication planning and tips for implementing communication

Information package on the climate cooperation of the municipality and companies: Contains perspectives on the municipality's role as an enabler and accelerator of companies' climate work, as well as tips for planning and implementing the operating model of the companies' climate network.

Workbook on the steps of corporate climate work: Workbook helps companies to start their climate work. It contains concrete questions that allow the company to consider different steps and find the most important measures.

Checklists for identifying the company's environmental aspects: A series of checklists, with which a company can go through the possible effects of different areas of operations, outline the most important changes and prepare the basis for an environmental plan

List of questions for the municipal decision-maker to support companies' climate work: A light set of questions prepared for municipal trustees to support the reflection related to the preparation of decisions.

Sustainable procurement

Low-carbon potential of product categories: Six product category cards, which contain a summary of possible emission reduction measures in the procurement of that product group, as well as the emission reduction potential of the measures.

The playbook for low-carbon procurement: Perspectives on managing and implementing low-carbon procurement in the role of manager, manager and expert.

Procurement future path workshop model: Model includes three workshops, and it helps the organization to lead the comprehensive development and change of procurement. Workshop frameworks and tasks to work on.

Basic information package for procurement management and development: Consists of six different themes, provides background information for actors leading and developing procurement.

Procurement market mapping guide: The purpose is to increase understanding of the planning of market dialogues and how to get the understanding of the market to be brought effectively into one's own procurement.

Guide and tools for evaluating the impact of procurement: The guide describes the process of pre-assessment of the effects and effectiveness of public procurement.

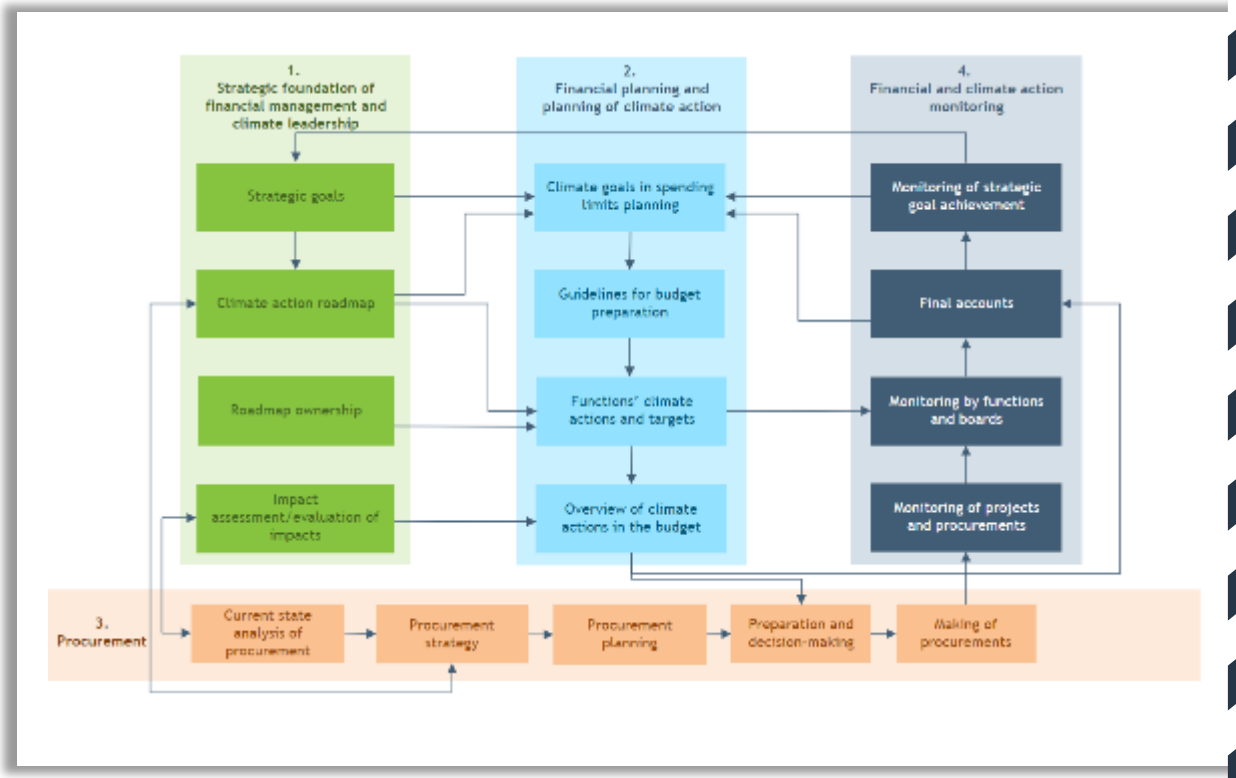
Good practices of climate leadership & management: Processes from goals to measures, and monitoring

Model for integrating climate leadership into financial management

Model provides perspectives on how to consider climate issues e.g. in the municipality's annual planning, financial monitoring and procurement. Translated version contains summary of the findings related to the four main themes:

1. Strategic foundation of financial management and climate leadership
2. Financial planning and planning of climate action
3. Procurement
4. Financial and climate action monitoring

Application: This model can be used as a background material for the self-assessment and/or when municipality wants to know how to integrate climate issues into their economic processes.

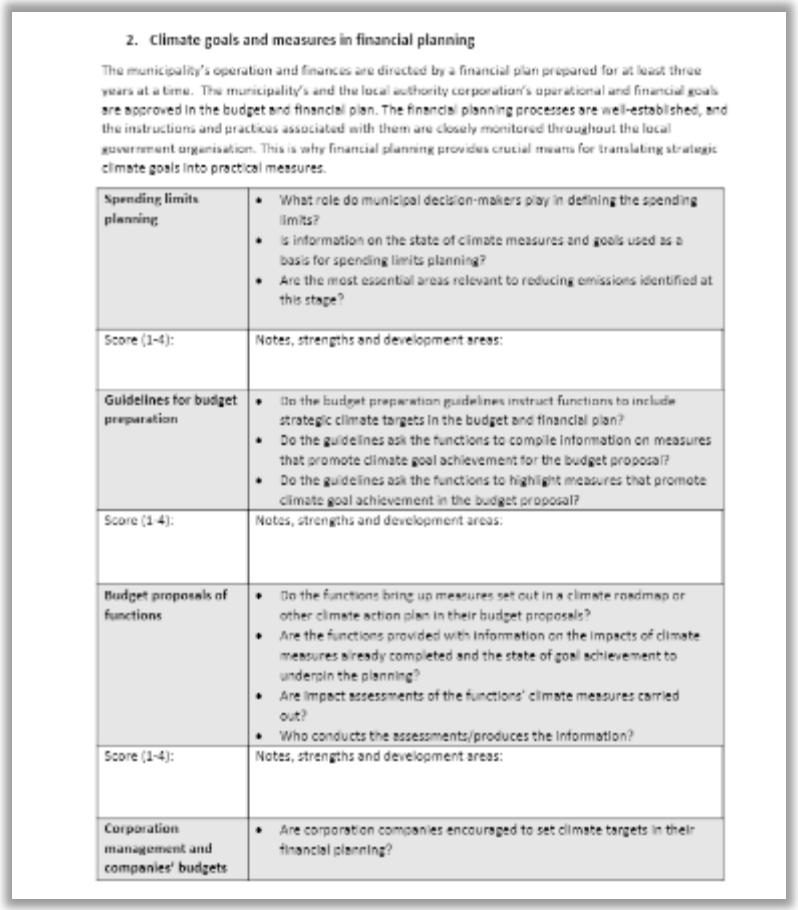


Good practices of climate leadership & management: Processes from goals to measures, and monitoring

Self-assessment tool for analysing the current state of the organisation and how climate perspectives are integrated into its financial management processes

Assessment tool contains a list of questions for a total of 23 sub-areas in the four main themes of economic and climate management described in the model (previous page) which can be assessed by a scale of 1–4 to assess how far the organisation has progressed in each sub-areas. Includes instructions on how to implement the assessment structure in the municipality.

Application: This template can be used for analysing the current stage of how municipality's climate work is/should be internalized into its economic management. Assessment template helps to conduct internal discussions on practices and their development needs and strengthen cross-administrative dialogue in the organisation.



2. Climate goals and measures in financial planning

The municipality's operation and finances are directed by a financial plan prepared for at least three years at a time. The municipality's and the local authority corporation's operational and financial goals are approved in the budget and financial plan. The financial planning processes are well-established, and the instructions and practices associated with them are closely monitored throughout the local government organisation. This is why financial planning provides crucial means for translating strategic climate goals into practical measures.

Spending limits planning	• What role do municipal decision-makers play in defining the spending limits? • Is information on the state of climate measures and goals used as a basis for spending limits planning? • Are the most essential areas relevant to reducing emissions identified at this stage?
Score (1-4):	Notes, strengths and development areas:
Guidelines for budget preparation	• Do the budget preparation guidelines instruct functions to include strategic climate targets in the budget and financial plan? • Do the guidelines ask the functions to compile information on measures that promote climate goal achievement for the budget proposal? • Do the guidelines ask the functions to highlight measures that promote climate goal achievement in the budget proposal?
Score (1-4):	Notes, strengths and development areas:
Budget proposals of functions	• Do the functions bring up measures set out in a climate roadmap or other climate action plan in their budget proposals? • Are the functions provided with information on the impacts of climate measures already completed and the state of goal achievement to underpin the planning? • Are impact assessments of the functions' climate measures carried out? • Who conducts the assessments/produces the information?
Score (1-4):	Notes, strengths and development areas:
Corporation management and companies' budgets	• Are corporation companies encouraged to set climate targets in their financial planning?

Good practices of climate leadership & management: Committed leadership

Guide to cost-effective climate work for municipalities

This guide provides one perspective on how to lay the foundations for the work and it's based on the observations, identified bottlenecks as well as successes and failures of the two small Finnish municipalities, Vihti and Kirkkonummi. This guide includes five different stages towards a cost-effective climate work:

1. Defining the target
2. Creating a plan
3. Monitoring
4. Impact assessment
5. Integration with budgeting

Each stage includes a list of questions that act as a checklist. Alongside the stages, the guide also presents sections on commitment, communication and cooperation that support cost-effective climate work.

Application: This guide is best suited for small and medium sized municipalities that are taking first steps in their climate work. However, municipalities that are further along in their climate work can also find useful insights.

Good practices of climate leadership & management: Sustainable procurement

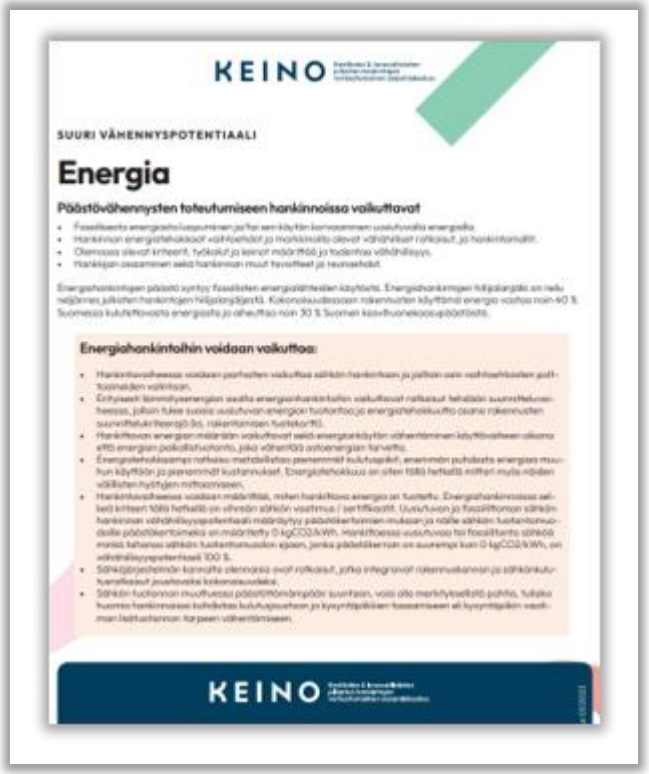
Low-carbon potential of procurement product categories

Six product category cards, which contain a summary of possible emission reduction measures in the procurement of that product group, as well as the emission reduction potential of the measures.

Product categories:

- Energy of buildings
- Construction
- Maintenance services of buildings and areas
- Food services
- Travelling and transportation
- Product

Application: Product category cards can be used e.g. as a checklist when defining procurement strategy and deciding which categories should be prioritized based onto their emission reduction potential.



Good practices of climate leadership & management: Sustainable procurement

Playbook for Low-Carbon Procurement

Low-Carbon Public Procurement Playbook provides concrete tools and examples for the implementation of low-carbon procurements, serving as a guide for management.

It includes three different paths for conducting procurements in the role of director, manager and expert: how to take into consideration low-carbon aspects in different stages of the procurement and what entails and/or hinders the success.

Application: Playbook is intended for everyone – executives, managers, experts, and businesses. No prior knowledge or background experience is required.

Collaboration needs

One of the goals for the Barents Climate Support -project was to identify opportunities or needs for further climate work collaboration across the Barents region. The collaboration needs and some special features of the Barents region were discussed in the webinars organized in the project.

Following pages describe the perspectives to special features of Barents climate work, the future of the Barents co-operation and collaboration needs identified in November 2023.

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Special features of the Barents region

The features and aspects that affect climate work in the region were identified in a workshop with Finnish regional actors.

Energy investments into wind and offshore wind (especially in Norway and Bothnian Bay), and solar power

Forest industry vs. alternative needs/pressures for forest use (forestry, green transition investments, bioeconomy, recreational use, sinks, biodiversity

Heterogeneous population structure (big cities encounter different challenges than sparsely populated areas)

Pressure for land-use and raw materials exploitation due to the security of supply

Accessibility, transport connections

Impacts of green transition into regions' livelihoods, investments and employment

Large concentrations of peatland

Reindeer herding

Tourism

Just transition

Indigenous peoples and cultures

Ageing population

Attractiveness of the region

Silent and untouched areas

Changes in the national security and geopolitical environment

Peer learning sessions

Perspectives to the state of climate management in Barents region

In the peer learning, six municipalities and regional actors from Norway, Sweden and Finland signed up. In the end, one Swedish and two Norwegian regions were the most active participants in the thematic peer learning sessions.

Different stages of the whole climate management process

- For the participants, roadmaps already existed, or they were at least in the process of creating actions for the plans/roadmaps
- Measuring the impact and getting people committed have proven to be difficult. Role of motivated leaders and colleagues and networks for peer support for successful planning and implementation of climate work are important.

Follow-up and monitoring of climate work

- Monitoring considered one of the most difficult areas in each of the participants' work. Setting up suitable standards and indicators and measuring actual impact of climate actions is difficult.
- Top-down, politically set goals that might work in bigger cities and with different types of infrastructure, but may be hard to fit to the actual operating environments in the northern, sparsely populated regions where distances are long, conditions are harsher, and infrastructure might not be sufficient for low-emission technologies etc.

Climate management and its integration into economic planning,

- Climate budgeting has been widely recognized as a tool to integrate climate work in management processes and highlight climate related investments and yearly emission targets, but there is still work to be done in municipalities and regions to implement the budgeting in practice.
- Some of the peer learning participants had climate accounting already in use and were planning to implement climate budgeting. Some hadn't thought about the economic integration yet as they were still in the middle of finding suitable indicators or setting goals for their plans.

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Collaboration needs: Common themes and challenges

- **Just transition and sustainable and equitable use of northern natural resources** for the needs of green transition – attention to impacts on local livelihoods, land-use, ecosystems and infrastructure
- **Transportation of waste as a common topic of interest.** Transportation is organized by private sector. Smaller municipalities face similar challenges finding partners.
- **Adaptation is local but the northern regions face similar risks.** Climate change will be more radical in the northern regions than on the global level. This will mean increased risks on land-use and for the built environment.
- **Identifying potential to proactive & positive adaptation**. All of the impacts of climate change are not necessarily negative (e.g. forests will grow faster). Role of proactive adaptation is crucial. Regions should identify highest risk areas locally, prepare to reduce these risks, and identify the possible benefits and how to take advantage of them (e.g. by using nature-based solutions).
- **Change resistance** was also discussed – the use of tools from behavioural studies could be one solution.

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Collaboration needs: More networking

- A lack of knowledge exchange between the people involved in climate work from different municipalities, regions and countries was seen to prevent collaboration.

- To tackle this, **could there be meetings e.g. bi-annually in different regions where climate experts could meet and share knowledge? A forum for peer-learning for the Nordic climate management and adaptation?**

- **Sometimes the best solutions are person-driven.** The most concrete result of the importance of knowing right people came from onepeer learning participant: *"From now on, if I'm wondering what is going on in Sweden with their climate issues, I will just email [this person I met in the peer learning.]"*

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Collaboration needs: Funding

- It came up in the discussion that funding bodies do not seem to recognize neighbouring funding organs, nor projects that have been funded before. This leads into overlapping projects, which in turn means that the potential of shared knowledge is not optimized.
- **Board for funding bodies was suggested.** The board could support the Nordic climate work more coherently when discussions on the needs would be more systematic and money would be channelled into projects that are novel, take place in new areas or need added resources for further development or implementation.
- In the best case, there would be funding to make long-term, maintained tools that serve for many years and can be updated regularly, instead of short-term tools that exist only during the lifetime of a single project.
- **Good example to test this kind of funding and implementation project could be combining mitigation and adaptation measures.** These are still handled very separately, meaning that some municipalities and regions have not prepared at all. Joining forces in this could offer innovative and cost-effective solutions that could be suited for local needs, but which would have a pool of examples and expertise available.

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What are the future needs of Barents co-operation in climate work?

- Operating environment for the Barents co-operation took a turn when Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia decided to leave the co-operation in September 2023.
- Action plan on climate change on the Barents region was published in 2021. Co-operation on mitigation and adaptation will continue trilaterally (Finland, Norway and Sweden).
- Goal is to share further knowledge on climate leadership and sustainable procurements even though no targeted funding for Barents co-operation exist at the moment, ERDF and EU funding will be used.
- Due to the changes, a transition period is taking place. Council's Working Group on Environment will meet in March 2024 where previous projects / experiences / needs are being discussed.
- This project has pinpointed that similar challenges within the climate work exist cross-borderly, and that the region shares specific features geographically and socio-economically that need to take into consideration. Projects like this enable people working with similar issues to find contacts, and come up with ideas for tackling challenges.

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