Nordic Council of Ministers

Nordic Knowledge Hub

A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region – How it works in practice



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This publication is also available online in a web-accessible version at:
https://pub.norden.org/genderclimate



Photo: freepik

A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region – How it works in practice

In the Nordic region we are good at coming up with climate-smart solutions, but for quite some time now we've been relatively unaware of how these solutions are affecting gender equality.

In 2022, the Nordic ministers for gender equality and LGBTI decided to acquire more knowledge about the link between gender equality and climate in the Nordic Region.

They began by consulting businesses, trade unions, civil society, and experts in the field of gender equality and climate. The main question was: What should a gender-equal green transition look like in the Nordic Region?

A few months later, the ministers for gender equality received broad political support from the Nordic governments for the ambitions in *A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region*, namely that Nordic co-operation must develop knowledge in order to integrate gender equality into climate policy.

We've now made progress. This knowledge bank is for those of you who work

nationally, regionally, or in a municipality. Here you'll find knowledge about how climate action affect gender equality and vice versa, and which gender equality measures that are needed in order to make climate solutions more effective.

The Nordic Region aims to become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030. On our shared journey towards that goal, the gender equality perspective needs to be embedded in every step.

"Widespread political support from the Nordic governments."

Nordic Council of Ministers

A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region

Commitment by the Nordic Council of Ministers under Generation Equality's Action Coalition: Feminist Action for Climate Justice

Towards a Nordic Alliance for Gender Equality and Climate Justice

22 Takeaways from the Nordic Roundtable in Oslo, January 2022





Photo: Plattform/Scandinav/imagebank.sweden.se

Sustainable Consumption – A matter of gender norms

Travel, shop, and eat like a woman to reduce climate emissions!

Women are more engaged in climate issues than men – and usually have a smaller carbon footprint, according to several research reports.

In a new Nordic research overview from the University of Gothenburg, the conclusion is expressed differently:

Individuals who take greater responsibility for care work – regardless of sex – tend to be more engaged in sustainability and climate issues.

Being climate friendly has of course nothing to do with sex as a statistical variable per se, but is linked to gender norms about what women and men should be interested in and work with.

This different approach opens the door to change, and change is what's needed if

we're to achieve our climate goals.

We need to reduce our overconsumption, eat less meat, and travel more sustainably.

According to the UN climate panel IPCCC, such lifestyle changes can reduce global emissions between 40 and 70 percent by 2050, as long as the necessary policies, infrastructure, and technology are in place. The greatest potential lies in regions such as the Nordic Region, where overconsumption is a major issue.

The research overview shows that men as a group have a greater carbon footprint than women, especially when it comes to food consumption and transport.

The same gender norms that, for example, make women primarily responsible for unpaid care work at home have consequences for individuals' carbon footprint and impact on the climate.

Promoting men's responsibility and care for the home, children, and the elderly would likely have an effect on their carbon footprint!

Learn more in the research overview below, to solve the climate crisis quicker!

"Individuals who take a greater responsibility for care work, regardless of sex, tend to be more engaged in sustainability and climate issues."

SUSTAINABLE | LIVING

Climate, Gender and Consumption

A research overview of gender perspectives on sustainable lifestyles



Explainer: Gender Norms and Consumption





Photo: Unsplash.com

Transition to fossil-free energy requires power women

Fossil-powered energy is the single biggest contributor to global warming, both in the Nordics and worldwide.

At the same time, the energy sector sustains societies, which is why it plays such a key role in solving the climate crisis.

Right now, the entire Nordic Region is making huge investments in smart solutions for renewable and fossil-free energy.

New Nordic research shows that in this crucial transformation of society, women

and men are participating on different terms.

Only five percent of leadership positions in Nordic energy companies are held by women, and women have only 16 percent of seats on boards, according to a report from Nordic Energy Research.

Women account for a third of energy companies' full-time employees. This uneven distribution is due in part to fewer women studying STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

The transition to sustainable energy systems is a growth engine in the green economy.

A strong underrepresentation of women in the energy sector not only risks widening the gender pay gap, but also risks reducing efficiency when it comes to achieving climate goals.

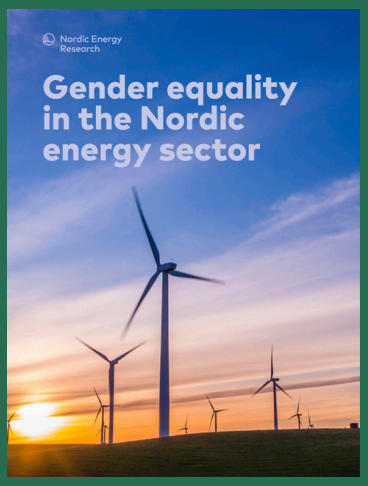
A lack of diversity and gender equality results in fewer perspectives, less innovation, and a narrower spectrum of solutions and results.

Put differently, the Nordic countries have so far mobilised only a fraction of their innovation power in the energy transition.

We can change that.

Read more below about how the Nordics can accelerate the energy transition by investing in gender equality.

"In this crucial transformation of society, women and men are participating on different terms."


Nordic Energy Research
Gender equality in the Nordic energy sector

A Gender-Equal Energy Sector



Photo: Mammut Media / norden.org



Photo: Gorm Just

New female leadership in the blue-green economy

Women are more engaged in climate issues than men - but men have greater influence in the industries where climate issues have to be solved.

Greenland blue industries are good examples of this paradox, two giant industries with a major impact on the climate. They are hugely important to our economy and self-sufficiency, but at the same time, also deeply gender segregated.

Seas and forests are crucial for solving both the climate crisis and biodiversity crisis. They absorb substantial amounts of the carbon dioxide we emit and provide renewable raw materials that can replace fossil fuels and materials.

In the Nordic Region world-renowned for its gender-equal societies access to natural resources and influence in marine and forest management are unequally

distributed between women and men.

Just like in all other parts of society and the economy, a systemic shift is needed in these industries to stop the climate crisis. Here, offshore wind power is now being established, wave power utilised, seaweed cultivated, forests replanted, and renewable fuel extracted.

The climate crisis requires the blue economy to be a source of new, more sustainable ways of fishing, maritime transport, biotechnology, tourism, fish farming, and extracting renewable energy from the sea.

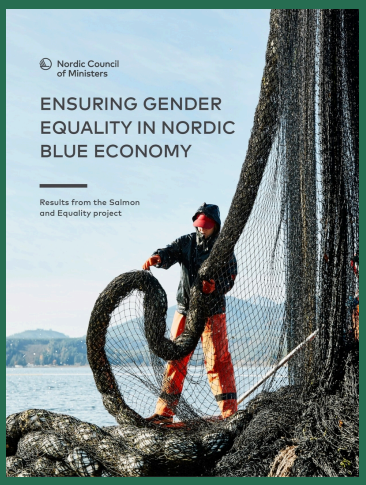
This often requires a more educated workforce, and here lies a great potential to increase diversity and innovation by recruiting more women.

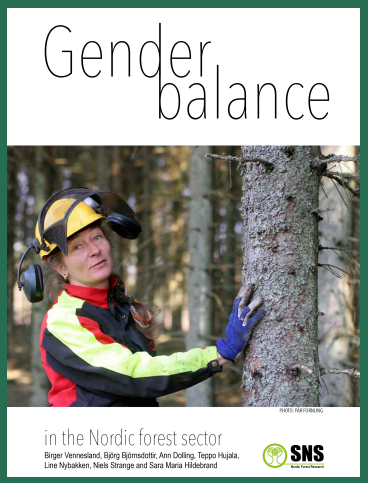
A new Nordic research overview shows that Nordic policy for the marine industries has so far been largely gender-blind and that gender equality has therefore lagged behind.

Nordic co-operation supports both the accumulation of knowledge and strengthened collaboration to promote change.

"Women are more engaged in climate issues than men - but men have greater influence in the industries where climate issues have to be solved."


Nordic Council of Ministers
Gender in Nordic Blue Economies
Initial networking results and future academic research


Nordic Council of Ministers
ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN NORDIC BLUE ECONOMY
Results from the Salmon and Equality project


Gender balance
in the Nordic forest sector
Birger Vennesland, Björg Björnsdottir, Ann Dolling, Teppo Hujala, Line Nybakken, Niels Strange and Sara Maria Hildebrand
SNS


Redefining digital bioeconomy
Reviewing how the digital transformation affects gender inequalities in the Nordic bioeconomy
SNS
Nordiska ministerrådet

Explainer: Sustainable Green and Blue Economies





Photo: Sofia Sabel/imagebank.sweden.se

Why green jobs also need to be gender-equal

Green jobs are key to achieving the climate goals. We now need to produce goods and services in a completely new way that replaces our outdated dependence on fossil fuels.

Right now, 25 percent of people in the Nordics are employed in green jobs, a good figure compared to the rest of the OECD.

But only one in three green workers in the Nordic region is a woman.

So far, "green jobs" have referred to tasks requiring technical expertise – building energy-efficient homes, mining metals for EV batteries, installing solar panels, and building wind farms. In these jobs, men make up 70 percent of the workforce.

Women are thus underrepresented in the professional jobs that are crucial for the

Nordic region to deliver on the climate goals.

For this reason, new Nordic research is therefore highlighting that the green transition will widen the gender pay gap. But does it really have to come at the expense of gender equality?

Something is happening right now with how we view green jobs. More companies are calling for green skills that can change people's habits and behaviours. Research shows that women have adapted their lifestyles more quickly towards becoming sustainable.

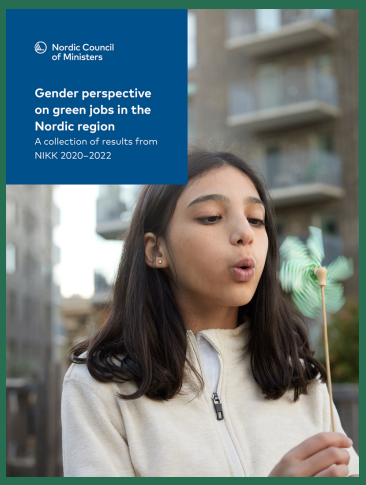
The Nordic region is striving to become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world. This vision also covers sustainable schools, education, and healthcare. Women make up the majority of the workforce in these sectors.

What would happen if healthcare and care jobs were also considered green jobs?

Read more in the publications below about how green jobs can become gender-equal.

"Only one in three green workers in the Nordic region is a woman."


BRIDGING
THE GREEN
JOBS DIVIDE
Nordic Council of Ministers
Nordic gender barriers and opportunities in the spotlight


Nordic Council of Ministers
Gender perspective on green jobs in the Nordic region
A collection of results from NIKK 2020–2022

Green and Gender-Equal Jobs





Photo: Andreas Omvik

Youth Voices in the Green Transition

Since the UN climate conference Stockholm +50, the cooperation between Baltic and Nordic youth organisations on climate, gender equality and rights issues has grown progressively stronger.

The cooperation is the way of becoming a powerful voice to put pressure on governments' climate policies and ensure that international climate negotiations benefit also gender equality and justice.

At a youth conference on 27 October 2023 at UN City in Copenhagen, organised in partnership with UN Women and The National Council of Swedish Children and Youth Organisations (LSU), over 100 youth representatives from 59 youth organisations gathered to discuss how to ensure a gender-equal and just green transition.

Vid konferensens slut hade 10 krav för en jämställd och rättvis klimatomställning till beslutsfattare i Norden och förhandlare vid klimatkonferensen COP28 tagits fram.

By the end of the conference, 10 demands for a gender-equal and just green transition to Nordic decision-makers and negotiators at COP28 had been formulated.

These are demands for carbon-free societies that make greater use of indigenous knowledge, are gender-equal and include young people in decision-making.

"The first thing is to recognize that there is a gender equality problem that needs to be addressed in everything we do"

Read the 10 policy demands here.

Disclaimer

This publication was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. However, the content reflects the views, opinions, attitudes and recommendations of Nordic, Baltic and international youth and does not necessarily reflect that of the Nordic Council of Ministers.



Youth Voices in the Green Transition





Climate Policy in Practice

Although the Nordic countries are considered to be among the most gender-equal in the world, Nordic climate policy has, until recently, been gender-blind.

A new report from May 2024 called *A review of the Nordic implementation of the UNFCCC Gender action plan* reveals how institutional mechanisms and national measures differ between the 5 Nordic countries. While there is progress, particularly in Sweden, Iceland and Finland, challenges remain such as inadequate resource allocation for gender analyses, lack of training or tools for policy makers. We also need more knowledge about the gendered impact of climate policies. (Find the report and recommendations belowor or see the webinar.)

An older Nordic report shows that there's a lack of knowledge about the interconnections between gender equality and climate in the Nordics.

Women and men in the Nordic Region are affected differently by climate policy. In industries where climate solutions are being developed, women and men have a different level of influence and there are also differences in women's and men's carbon footprint.

An example: The most carbon dioxide-heavy industries such as transport, energy, agriculture, and construction are male-dominated.

A green transition of these industries will thus have the greatest impact on men's working lives. This is not something that has been addressed directly in the political debate, with the exception of Finland, which conducted a gender impact assessment of their 2021 Climate and Energy strategy.

With greater political awareness, the green transition could be an opportunity for employers to leverage more out of innovation by focusing on encouraging more women – often both highly educated and climate-aware – into these industries, while also breaking down the heavily gender-segregated labour market.

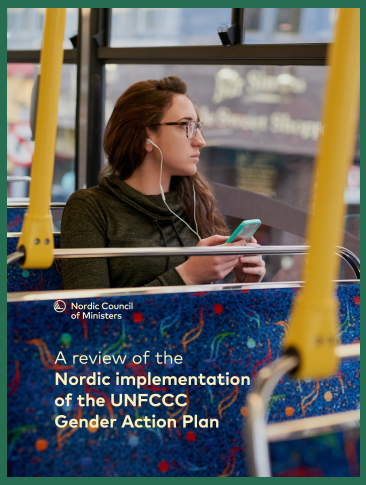
If we miss this opportunity, the green transition risks widening the gender pay gap.

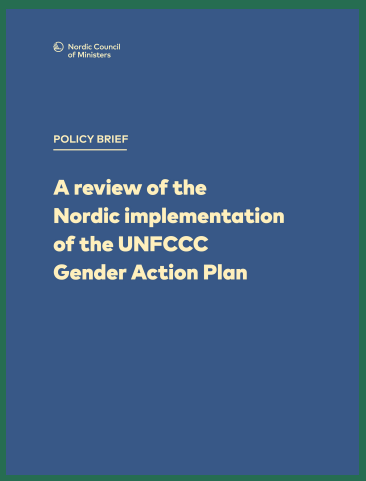
Another example: Men as a group drive more and eat more meat, while women as a group are more climate-conscious, travel more using public transport, buy more second-hand items, and eat more vegetarian food.

A gender-equal and effective climate policy therefore needs to take account of differences in lifestyles by, for example, promoting lifestyle changes in men, and ensuring that transport solutions cater for women, men, and children on equal terms.

Read more below.

"The Nordic countries are considered to be among the most gender-equal in the world, but Nordic climate policy has, until recently, been gender-blind."


Nordic Council of Ministers
A review of the
Nordic implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan


Nordic Council of Ministers
POLICY BRIEF
A review of the Nordic implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan

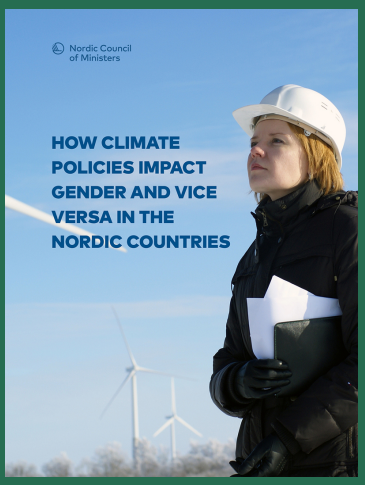

Nordic Council of Ministers
HOW CLIMATE POLICIES IMPACT GENDER AND VICE VERSA IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES



Photo: Hülya Ehres

Events highlighting the connection between gender and climate

The green transition will cover every part of society, requiring leadership that ensures gender equality in every area, from agriculture to higher education, and from transport to fishery.

Since 2022, the Nordic Council of Ministers has invited to debate this topic at various international events, such as CSW66, COP27 and COP28. A series of seminars, on the launch of a report on the implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan in the Nordics is also available.

The report can be found here :
A review of the Nordic implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan

"We must talk about gender equality when we talk about the climate crisis."

Henriette Laursen

WATCH YOUTUBE →

COP 28: Nordic Pavilion: Let's bridge the gender divide in green jobs

COP 27: Why gender is key to the green transition and what this transition might look like

Cop 27: Placing gender equality at the heart of green jobs

COP 27: African countries realised early on that climate and gender equality policies must be closely linked

WEBINAR IN DANISH

I dette webinar præsenteres resultaterne af rapporten "En undersøgelse af den nordiske implementering af FN's Klimakonventions handleplan for ligestilling (UNFCCC GAP)" i en dansk kontekst.

DK: https://www.veed.io/view/ac667897-42f5-4c4d-99dd-65c00d7a62b7?panel=share

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WEBINAR IN FINNISH

I dette webinar præsenteres resultaterne af rapporten "En undersøgelse af den nordiske implementering af FN's Klimakonventions handleplan for ligestilling (UNFCCC GAP)" i en dansk kontekst.

FI: https://www.veed.io/view/16d3316a-2fce-4134-8432-207a08adafda?panel=share

WEBINAR IN NORWEIGAN

Et webinar om integrering av kjønn og likestillingsperspektiver i norsk klimapolitikk. Webinaret presenterer resultatene fra rapporten "En gjennomgang av den nordiske gjennomføringen av UNFCCC Gender Action Plan i klimapolitikken", samt deler kunnskap om aktuelle initiativer, erfaringer, utfordringer og beste praksis i Norge.

NO: https://www.veed.io/view/08dde765-9612-45a1-8950-c4c10c06d0cd?panel=share

WEBINAR IN SWEDISH

I det här webbinariet presenteras resultaten från rapporten "A review of the Nordic implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan" med fokus på svensk klimatpolitik. Webbinariet framlägger de fem fokusområden som finns utpekade under FN:s klimatkonventions åtgärdsplan för jämställdhet och klimat och hur dessa har implementerats i Sverige.

SE: https://www.veed.io/view/a955ec69-b7b4-423e-80d8-46daccb128fb?panel=share

WEBINAR IN ENGLISH

In this webinar, the findings of the report "A Review of the Nordic Implementation of the UNFCCC GAP" is presented. The efforts and examples of mainstreaming work in climate policies from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden is examined in relation to the GAP's five priority areas: A: Capacity-building, knowledge management and communication; B: Gender balance, participation and women's leadership, C: Coherence', D: Gender-responsive implementation and means of implementation and E: Monitoring and reporting. There are considerable differences in the extent of gender mainstreaming in climate policies across the countries.

ENG: https://veed.io/view/ecfa1772-cd6e-4c96-96d9-597d3ca3800c

Swedish version

pub.norden.org/genderclimate-svensk

About this publication

Nordic Knowledge Hub: A Green and Gender-Equal Nordic Region – How it works in practice

Think knowledge hub is a collaboration between the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and LGBTI (MR-JÄM) and Nordic Working Group for Climate and Air (NKL). It collects publications and contributions from Nordic Information on Gender (NIKK), Nordic Energy Research, The Sisters in the Arctic Blue (SAB), Nordic Forest Research (SNS), Iselin Løvslett Danbolt and Norion.

The Knowledge Hub has been developed by Mikaela Thuresson and Anna Rosenberg.

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Shared Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

Nordic Council of Ministers
Nordens Hus
Ved Stranden 18
DK-1061 Köpenhamn
pub@norden.org

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