
IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 12 IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

ACCORDING TO CIVIL SOCIETY

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



A COMPILATION OF NORDIC CSO REPORTS

BY



92-gruppen
Forum for Bæredygtig Udvikling

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fingo



Norwegian Forum
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INTRODUCTION

This report is produced for the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Expert Committee, as an overview of the analysis and recommendations around SDG 12 produced by civil society networks and organisations (CSO) in the Nordic countries.

The overall objective of the document is to present the views of Nordic countries' CSOs with regards to their countries' progress towards SDG 12 in 2018 and 2019, drawing on reports from CSOs in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

The report is, therefore, a compilation of already existing analyses that were produced separately, in the respective countries. These reports vary in their scope, aim and target audience. The texts were not originally written to be compiled in this way. The idea, however, is to present the work that has been done in the countries, which clearly shows that civil society is concerned with similar problems and propose similar recommendations. This enhances the idea that it makes sense to work with SDG 12 – and the other SDGs where Nordic countries are performing weakly - in a joint Nordic effort of analysis and action, looking at common challenges and common Nordic solutions.

It is important to stress that this report has been compiled exclusively from previously published material focusing on the broader 2030 Agenda, rather than on SDG 12 specifically. Besides, the reports have focused on different targets under SDG 12. Some targets are therefore highlighted more than others, and a few are absent. *See table 1, page 3, for an overview.* Some of the notions and recommendations are presented under other SDGs in the used sources but are included in this report when relevant to the SDG 12 targets.

The report is produced by the coalition of the following organisations:

Denmark: The Danish 92-group

Finland: Finnish Development NGOs - Fingo

Sweden: Concord Sweden

Norway: Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development.

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PERSPECTIVES

The recommendations in this document are country-specific, as they were presented in the respective countries. However, there are recommendations on a number of targets which are echoed amongst CSOs across the Nordic region. These have the potential to be compiled into Nordic level recommendations to the NCM on how to ensure Nordic leadership and an internal race to the top among Nordic countries.

WHY DOES SDG 12 NEED NORDIC ATTENTION?

Nordic countries are making *overall* progress towards the 17 SDGs. This has given rise to a notion, both within Nordic countries and abroad, that Nordic countries are pioneers on green/sustainability issues. However, CSOs across the Nordic region countries emphasise that the countries have very high per capita material footprints. If everyone were to consume like Nordic countries do, we would need between 2.7 and 4.2 planets.¹ Nordic countries use natural resources far beyond our global share and beyond what is environmentally sustainable. Hence, urgent action is required on SDG 12 where all Nordic countries score poorly, compared to the other SDGs. There is a need for bold policies and allocating sufficient resources for implementation.

SDG 12 has eleven wide-ranging targets. Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) spans in scope from environmental safeguards to social factors and human rights. Arguably, it is the goal most interconnected with the other SDGs, which makes it all the more important to ensure progress on targets. As success on SDG 12 will have a ripple effect towards succeeding in other SDGs - both in the Nordic countries and beyond.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF CSO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SDG 12

Target under SDG 12	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Finland
12.1	x	x	x	x
12.2		x	x	x
12.3		x	x	
12.4		x	x	
12.5		x	x	
12.6	x	x	x	x
12.7	x		x	x
12.8			x	x
12.A			x	x
12.B				
12.C		x	x	x

¹ If everyone consumed as much as the Nordic people, we would need: Finland, 4 planets. Norway, 2.7 planets. Denmark, 4.2 planets. Sweden, 3 planets.



12.1 NATIONAL PROGRAMMES ON SCP

Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries.

FOCUS: NEED FOR NATIONAL ACTION PLANS AND POLICY COHERENCE

While all Nordic countries have some type of regulation on the area, policy responses do not always respect the interconnectedness of challenges, resulting in **fragmented approaches**.

CSOs call for **consolidated and updated action plans**.

Contributing factors include the difficulty of addressing SCP issues and weak institutional anchoring due to the systemic and cross-cutting nature of SCP; and the lack of integration of SCP considerations into policies in other sectors. An adaptive, interconnected and responsive institutional framework, including policies, laws, financing, technology, and involving stakeholders, should help connect the dots between various sustainable development challenges, including the international aspects of Nordic countries' activities worldwide.

FOCUS: SWEDEN'S "WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH"

The Swedish government stresses that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs a 'whole of government' approach. Two ministers have been given specific responsibilities (Minister of Climate at the Ministry of Environment is responsible for the national implementation, and the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the international aspects of the implementation). In 2016, both a **national Strategy for Sustainable Consumption** (12.2 and 12.8) and a **national public procurement strategy** (12.7) were adopted, the latter as a catalyst for green innovation in the public sector and in business. In the same year, **tax breaks and VAT reductions** were adopted for rental, repair and second-hand services for clothing, bicycles and white goods as a first step in encouraging circular business models and circular consumption (12.6).²

FOCUS: NO NATIONAL ACTION PLAN IN NORWAY

In contrast to Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, **Norway does not have a national action plan for all SDGs**. While there are national action plans on a number of issues, there is currently no action plan on SDG 12. The most relevant would be the recently launched action plan on sustainable food systems³, which addresses the reduction of food waste as the primary target but is limited to Norway's foreign and development policy abroad. Norway Launched a Sustainability Strategy as early as in 2004, concerning the Millennium Development Goals and with a series of SCP-related considerations and efforts, including sustainable public procurement, ecolabelling, consumer awareness, increased resource productivity and environmental taxes.

In addition, the Bioeconomy Strategy from 2016 has an explicit circular economy approach, with cross-sectorial focus on renewable biobased products and sustainable production. On the 21st of June, 2017, the Norwegian government presented a whitepaper on waste policies in a circular economy, with an emphasis on increasing reuse and recycling.

The primary tool for reporting on the SDGs in Norway is the state budget. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) has pointed out that this format makes it challenging to

² Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD), is also said to be one of the key tools for achieving the 2030 Agenda. It is a policy for global development with a common objective for all policy areas, aiming to ensure policy coherence and to contribute to global development, while balancing conflicts of interest between different policy areas and the guiding principles of PGD. The policy states that three perspectives must permeate all parts of the government's policies: a rights perspective based on international human rights conventions, the perspective of the deprived and socially vulnerable, and gender equality.
³https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/matsystemer_handlingsplan_2019.pdf

identify and explore dilemmas, challenges, and inconsistencies out in Norwegian policies.⁴⁵ Weak and inefficient SDG reporting was also an issue in the OECD/DAC peer review in Norway, launched in 2019.

A national action plan, national indicators, more thorough reporting, and a national statistics platform would be an efficient tool to identify challenges, measure progress and hold the government accountable.⁶

FOCUS: KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM CSOs CONCERNING 12.1

The Swedish government has declared that the 2030 Agenda will be an integrated part of the existing decision-making bodies. However, there is no national institutional mechanism that draws together and coordinates the three dimensions of sustainable development. Moreover, there is no parliamentary oversight committee for the 2030 Agenda. In conclusion, Sweden has a strong commitment to the local, national and global level. However, it is yet to be seen how the government will handle the recommendation delivered by the Swedish Delegation for the 2030 Agenda. Swedish CSOs call on to the government to ensure that there is policy coherence for sustainable development. The COSs also ask for a concrete roadmap towards 2030.

Denmark's current sustainable development strategy from 2014 is limited in its inclusion of SCP elements. Relevant elements are a goal for 50% recycling of household waste (which is in any case required under the EU Waste Framework Directive), a 40% reduction in the use of pesticides and regulation of other hazardous substances (12.4). The waste prevention strategy from 2015 focuses on more resource-efficient business, greener goods and services, and food and packaging waste reduction. These objectives have been implemented via soft measures, and the area has had less focus during recent years.

In Finland, the economic reviews that govern the state budget negotiations have usually been focused on the growth outlook for GDP only and CSOs have demanded that economic growth should not be the goal of society. They argue that the consumption and investments of the state should be steered by development indicators that depict the wellbeing of people and nature; and that human rights, the pursuit of welfare, and ecological boundaries should direct national politics and budgeting. For many CSOs, the Genuine Progress Indicator, GPI, is a promising option as the principal development indicator. Higher education, household work and consumption contribute to a higher GPI, while unequal income distribution, underemployment, the use of natural resources, and accidents decreased GPI. Similar to GDP, the GPI value should be used in public discussions and for international comparisons. However, more detailed indicators on the various dimensions of sustainable development should also be followed. The new government (June 2019) has not responded to CS actors' demand that the national indicators should be used as the government's strategic indicators, but it is positive that the government programme welcomes that indicators describing e.g. economic, ecological and social wellbeing can be used as support for decision-making and will be adopted for a circular economy programme.

The UN 10-Year Framework of Programs (10YFP) is a framework for developing sustainable consumption and production patterns run by the UN agency UNEP. 10YFP has the potential to become an important driver for stimulating commitment to sustainable production and consumption. However, in order to create more than just visions, 10YFP's governance should be more clearly focused on the task of encouraging public and private decisions that promote SCP.

⁴ <https://norad.no/contentassets/4ac3de36fbdd4229811a423f4b00acf7/8.18-evaluation-of-norwegian-efforts-to-ensure-policy-coherence-for-development.pdf>

⁵ This is intimately tied to the lack of a comprehensive national action plan for sustainable development plan, as well as a lack of national and relevant SDG indicators, coordinating mechanism for monitoring, reporting and follow-up of the SDGs and policy coherence.

⁶ <http://www.forumfor.no/assets/docs/Diskusjonsnotat-01-2019-Nasjonal-handlingsplan.pdf>

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

➔ The government must provide a **framework through legislation and an action plan** that ensures sustainable consumption and production throughout the value chain - not just regulate isolated areas of action.

FINLAND

➔ The government should **update the national 2030 Agenda** implementation plan so that it sets out both long-term goals and clear steps for the government term.

➔ **Search for indicators that challenge Finland** to pursue ambitious goals, and to designate sufficient resources for gathering new types of information.

➔ Raise **comprehensive indicators** on par with the GDP. Human well-being and ecological sustainability should define state policies and budgets. Inaccurate indicators steer erroneous action.

➔ Fully acknowledge the **global dimension** of sustainable development and develop methods for monitoring the human rights and environmental impacts of Finland's consumption outside of the country.

➔ Ensure that conflicts of interest between actors would not lead to decisions where a short-term economic advantage eclipses long-term sustainability.

➔ Support civic activities and civil society organisations that enhance responsible business and consumption.

NORWAY

➔ On the overall level, Norway should **draw up operational plans for all targets**. These plans must specify what these targets imply in a Norwegian context, how ambitious Norway should be in determining its target levels for each of these goals, which indicators will be used to measure the achievements, and what additional measures will be needed in the future. Plans should also include cross-sectoral measures to reduce the overall social and environmental burden of consumption. A goal for reduced Norwegian material consumption, measured in terms of Norway's global footprint should be established.

➔ **Norway should draw up a national action plan**. The plan should be the result of a broad and continuous input process that includes civil society, academia, researchers and business. It must address all of the main themes of the current ten-year framework plan (public procurement, tourism, consumer information, buildings, food, sustainable living, and education) and map what has been achieved and what remains to be done. All ministries should participate in the formulation of the plan, and should contribute to implementation through their own budgets. Two main areas should be given special attention: Information dissemination and education.

SWEDEN

➔ The civil society in Sweden is calling for a concrete roadmap to guide Sweden to 2030.

➔ The Ten-Year Framework of Programs (10YFP) implementation should encourage public and private decisions that promote SCP in Sweden.

➔ Sweden's resource productivity is below the EU average, while domestic material consumption is above that. In other words, Sweden is a resource-intensive economy with high material flows, even in absolute terms. This underlines the importance of clear goals and powerful means of strengthening Swedish consumer policy.

➔ A gender perspective in the development and implementation of the strategy for sustainable consumption must be applied.



12.2 SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

FOCUS: HIGH MATERIAL FOOTPRINTS - EXTERNALITIES AND SPILL-OVER

Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources is a fundamental premise of achieving Agenda 2030, including minimising the use of non-renewable resources in the production of ordinary consumer goods. The Nordic countries are all significantly far behind on this target.

Nordic productivity is largely based on having outsourced most resource-intensive industries to countries abroad.⁷ This means indirect emissions and environmental strain from, e.g.: soy imported from South America, electronic equipment from China and flights across the world. The Nordic countries hence have among **the highest material footprints in Europe**.⁸ Despite environmental taxes and other legislative matters, **externalities are not included in global material prices**.

Nordic responsibilities do not end at the border. The SDG Index includes estimates of the spill-over effect, assessing to what extent countries have adverse effects on the environment, economic development or security outside their national borders, **thus undermining the ability of other countries to reach SDG targets**. All Nordic countries are responsible for a significant negative spill-over effect. Environmental footprints and CO2 emissions owing to **imports for consumption and production** are increasing and not following the general positive domestic trend in the countries.⁹ For example, it is estimated that almost half of Finland's water footprint is made up of production chains that take place outside of the country. Urgent political action is needed to reverse this negative trend of increasingly living beyond the Earth's capacity and **outsourcing environmental externalities**.

FOCUS: DENMARK'S RESPONSIBILITY AS A MAJOR IMPORTER AND TRADER

Danish CSOs have consistently reported on the effects of Denmark's production, consumption, and trade, including **palm oil, soy and timber**, which have far-reaching consequences globally. Each year, 1.7 million tonnes of feed soy is imported to feed production animals **without any regulation ensuring any kind of responsibility**, with risk of tropical deforestation, wildfires, forced displacement of locals and disrespect for human rights. Soybean production occupies vast areas in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, where tropical forest is cleared and burned to make room for the soybean fields. This is **contrary to the intentions in the declarations that Denmark has signed** to minimise global pressure on forests. Denmark is far from achieving the Amsterdam Declaration of 100 per cent deforestation-free value chains in 2020.

As a major importer and trader of **seafood**, Denmark should be a pioneer at the forefront of responsible trade in seafood. Among the global challenges are massive overfishing, illegal fishing and critical working conditions in the seafood industry. In 2019, 2/3 of the world's fish stocks are overfished or on their way to becoming so. Internationally, illegal, unregulated and undocumented (IUU) fishing is still extensive, threatening both marine biodiversity and poor coastal fishing communities in developing countries.

Denmark's solution to some of these challenges can be found in the Development Policy and Humanitarian Strategy of 2017. However, CSOs call for real action in the face of the urgency illustrated, e.g. by catastrophic burning of the Amazon.

⁷ Countries such as Sweden, Finland and Norway have retained heavy extractive industries, such as timber, iron and oil. Sweden's metal ore extraction, for example, nearly doubled between 2009 and 2014 and now constitutes more than 25% of the country's material footprint.

⁸ Material footprints are amongst the highest in Europe, with Finland and Norway topping the European tables and Denmark and Sweden not far behind in 6th and 7th places

⁹ Even though Sweden's output of greenhouse gases decreased by 14% between 2008-2014, Sweden is nonetheless contributing to an increase of greenhouse gases globally.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

- ➔ Denmark must commit to ensuring sustainability in import for production and consumption.

FINLAND

- ➔ Finland must ban fossil energy production at the latest by 2030 and stop the use of coal and peat by 2025.
- ➔ Protect at least 17 per cent of Finland's forest area so that it is done geographically encompassing and representatively in relation to nature types. Protect all forests that are categorised as pristine.
- ➔ Stop support for peatland draining, subject draining to licensing, and protect those areas that were recognised valuable in preparation the supplemental programme of the peatland conservation. Implement the supplemental programme in its original scope.
- ➔ Guide municipalities to shift in the management of their commercial forests to forestry without using clear-cutting and to protect their valuable natural areas.

NORWAY

- ➔ Ban the extraction, sale, and use of peat in soil products.¹⁰ A specific objective should be set to phase out these materials by a particular date, allowing businesses time to develop other types of soil mixtures.
- ➔ Adopt a law on good trade practices following recommendations from *NOU 2011:4 Food, power, and powerlessness*.

SWEDEN

- ➔ Sweden should implement sustainable forest management. The Nature Conservation Association proposes several measures to achieve this, e.g. to set up an inquiry with the task of developing a new forest policy that considers all the values of the forest. State-owned forests should be managed toward sustainable development and sustainable use¹¹.
- ➔ In line with the existing "waste hierarchy" for waste management¹², a hierarchy of minerals needs to be designed. It is well in line with existing legislation to promote recycling.¹³ Legislation on minerals should be reviewed and incorporated into the Environmental Code¹⁴, and a socio-economic balance should be made when examining mines of origin.
- ➔ Act for a global initiative to strengthen the joint use right of genetic resources, strengthen the right to own seed and to hold seed banks, and to remove seed patents.
- ➔ Trade and agricultural policy and development cooperation should work together so that the focus on support for the conversion of agriculture, both in Sweden and globally, goes to organic farming with agroecological production systems with a clear rights perspective.

¹⁰ A high percentage of the world's peat mosses are found in northern permafrost areas, and covers large areas of land in both Norway and Finland. Peat is recognized as the most important plant genus for Earth's carbon balance, and releasing the carbon stored in them could potentially have very grave consequences for the climate. Source: <https://norwegianscitechnews.com/2015/05/peat-moss-the-bane-for-our-existence/>

¹¹ Source: For an elaboration on this issue, and the proposed new forest policy, see *Naturskyddsforeningen* (2019 p. 4)

¹² The Swedish "waste hierarchy" prioritises management elements s flows: 1.waste prevention, 2. reuse, 3. material recycling and biological treatment, 4. other recycling, e.g. energy recovery, 5. disposal. Source: <https://www.avfallsverige.se/in-english/swedish-waste-management/>

¹³ The Nature Conservation Association has elaborated a proposal within the "Mineral Policy".

¹⁴ The Swedish Environmental Code was adopted in 1998 and entered into force 1 January 1999. The rules contained within 15 acts have been amalgamated in the Code. The Code contains 33 chapters comprising almost 500 sections. However, it is only the fundamental environmental rules that are included in the Environmental Code. More detailed provisions are laid down in ordinances made by the Government. Source: <https://www.government.se/legal-documents/2000/08/ds-200061/>



12.3 REDUCING FOOD WASTE

By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

FOCUS: INITIATIVES IN NORWAY

There has been an increase in the availability of food waste data across the Nordic countries. CSOs have been especially influential in creating and accelerating awareness on this topic. **Attitude-shifting** and knowledge dissemination initiatives have been essential.¹⁵ Actors from all stages of the food industry have entered into a collaboration with the government to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. Despite this increase in both CSO and food industry initiatives, there is a need for more effective and enforceable policies in order to reach the 2030 target of decreasing food waste by 50% by 2030. **A third of all food produced in the world is never eaten**, and in Norway alone, grocery and food industries together throw away approximately 135,000 tons of edible food every year. The legislation is hence necessary to reduce food waste, including regulations to ensure that superfluous food is donated, and that food industries are required to report on key figures related to food waste.¹⁶

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

NORWAY

- ➔ Implement an **industry agreement** on food waste and promote proposals for a **food law** that will ensure further food waste reduction.
- ➔ Implement effective **information measures** aimed at multiple segments of the population, with the intention of making people aware of their own food waste and simple ways of reducing it.
- ➔ Explore how food centres can be established in multiple locations around the country, and other measures to strengthen the organisations and facilities that redistribute food to the needy. Ensure predictable financing for the establishment and operation of **food centres** around Norway.

SWEDEN

- ➔ The Swedish Food Agency has, together with the Swedish Agricultural Agency and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, been given the task by the Government to develop an **action plan to reduce food waste**. It is positive and a reinforcement to their previous mission. **The food waste needs to cease at all stages** and resources need to be put into reducing losses during production and storage.

¹⁵ Example from Norway: **Campaign for a food waste bill (Goal 12.3, Future in Our Hands)** In 2016, Future in Our Hands (FIVH) campaigned for a food waste bill, asking food retailers and the food industry to donate edible food that has not been sold to charities. The campaign had broad media coverage and strong support from public and politicians. As a result, in January 2017, a unanimous parliament decided to assess the need for a food waste bill.

¹⁶<https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qid=74906>



12.4 SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS AND WASTES

By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

FOCUS: URGENT NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE ACTION ABROAD

The Nordic countries are amongst the largest generators of hazardous waste in Europe. Denmark, Finland, and Norway are amongst the top five generators of hazardous waste at over 300 kg/year/capita.

In Denmark, CSOs highlight that although all the Nordic countries have advanced systems to control the use and release of chemicals at national level. However, Danish companies' handling of hazardous waste and toxic chemicals abroad is strongly criticized by the UN's Special Rapporteur on the implications of environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, Baskut Tuncak. He emphasises Danish companies' production of pesticides, which are banned in the EU but sold to countries with more lenient legislation. Another issue is the shipbreaking practice by Danish shipping companies in Asia.

Norway has a priority list containing 33 substances and substance groups which are targeted for a complete end to emissions by 2020. For many of these substances, the methods are far too weak for this target to be reached by 2020. Introducing a specifically Norwegian ban on pollutants is legally complicated, but imposing a high fee on all products containing the prioritised pollutants will stimulate consumers to choose the most environmentally friendly options. Product groups that contain prioritised environmental substances include electronics, textiles, detergents, construction products, and cosmetics.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

➔ Danish companies should show international corporate responsibility, with respect to the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and the OECD guidelines for multinational companies. The government should produce legislation accordingly.

NORWAY

➔ CSOs call on Norway's government to introduce a special tax on products containing prioritised pollutants.

SWEDEN

➔ Full transparency is required regarding the chemical content of all components of the product. National substitution centres should be established to guide companies to safer alternatives.

➔ All major chemical conventions need to be implemented as soon as possible. Legislation and the administrative systems needed to fulfill the 11 core elements of the SAICM's Overall Orientation Guidance Document for the 2020 goal of sustainable chemical management need to be in place. Sweden needs to be a driving force in the development of what will replace SAICM after 2020, e.g. a continued voluntary framework with a legally binding protocol for particularly important chemical safety issues that cannot be captured by existing conventions.

➔ Trade and agricultural policy and development cooperation should work together to contribute to a phasing-out plan of toxic chemicals in agriculture.

➔ Investigate how Sweden and the EU can prohibit the import of food and food industry products produced with chemicals banned in the EU.



12.5 REDUCE WASTE GENERATION

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

FOCUS: NORDIC COUNTRIES SHOULD LEAD THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The Nordic countries should be in an ideal position to set an example of **enhancing socio-economic development without unsustainable resource use**. Sustainable production must be understood as considering people's rights and social needs as well as environmental impacts. It includes the product's total life cycle both inside and outside a given country.

In a **circular economy**, economic benefits can be achieved without the raw material extraction exceeding the planetary boundaries. However, efficiency gains in production must not create room for increased consumption. Measures and incentives at all stages, from extraction and production to consumption and recycling are a prerequisite for the circular economy to be able to lead to reduced resource consumption in absolute terms.

FOCUS: CSOs HIGHLIGHT NATIONAL WASTE ISSUES

Danish CSOs highlight concerns about the **lock-in** caused by heavy investments in waste incinerators. The EU's demand for increased recycling of waste is a challenge for Denmark, especially when the future will focus on actual recycling and the quality of recycling, not just waste collection. In addition, over 200,000 tonnes of waste are imported because investments have been made in central **incinerators with overcapacity**. There is no strategy for phasing out the plants.

Each Dane produced 781 kilos of garbage in 2017; that is 294 kilos more than an average EU citizen. According to the government, efforts are being made to "promote more circular economy" and recycling, for example through eco-labels. However, eco-labels are not only a guarantee of a circular economy, which should also involve new business models and changing consumption patterns. **There is not a sufficiently coherent agenda to promote circular economy.**

Swedish CSOs raise concerns that development with regards to waste is going in the wrong direction. The amount of waste is increasing, and the proportion of material recycling decreases. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is currently working on both a new national waste plan and a new waste prevention program. Swedish CSOs emphasise that this work needs to review the taxation structures.

Norway highlights the role of CSOs in creating awareness and shifting attitudes about sharing and renting utility items, thereby reducing resource pressure away from consumption.¹⁷ Also, by encouraging people to maintain and repair items such as electronics, clothes, furniture, rather than replacing them with new ones. CSOs do this by, for instance, providing an overview of locations where Norwegians can meet to repair things together and by advocating for tax reductions on making repairs and extending warranties on new products. The current government platform expresses a strong ambition from the Norwegian government to become a **model country for a circular economy**, and that the government will develop a national strategy to achieve this goal. A white paper on waste policies and the circular economy was presented by the Ministry of Climate and the Environment in 2017, which is also responsible for developing this strategy.¹⁸

¹⁷ See for instance --- **Take care of what you have (Goal 12.5, Friends of the Earth Norway)**

The disposable society creates major problems: waste, resource consumption, pollution and purchasing pressure. This is the background for the Friends of the Earth Norway project *Take Care of What You Have* (www.tavarepadetduhar.no), which provides an overview of locations where you can repair furniture, clothes, bicycles and other products. The website also provides a number of tips on how to repair things yourself. In a parallel effort, Friends of the Earth Norway is advocating to make it more profitable to take care of the things you have instead of buying new ones.

¹⁸<https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/4c45f38bddee47a7b7847af108894c0c/no/pdfs/stm201620170045000dddpdfs.pdf>

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

➔ The government must live up to existing international, EU and national conventions, directives, and laws and the related objectives, and be far more ambitious in establishing a green transition and a real circular economy.

NORWAY

➔ Propose comprehensive measures that help consumers make choices and align business with sustainable consumption and circular economy in the notified Consumer Policy Report.

➔ Introduce VAT cuts on repairs, rental of clothing, shoes, sports and hiking equipment, electronics and tools.

➔ Extend the right of complaint and make targeted efforts to the EU for a minimum of 2 years rather than the norm.

➔ The government announced a Report to the Parliament on the circular economy and waste in spring 2017. Many of the targets can be operationalized here. The Report should contain clear goals for injunctions on food waste and plastics recycling, reduced combustion and a “zero waste for landfills” vision. A directive on the collection and composting of garden waste from industry and in municipalities should be included. All of these measures will be key for more of the resources that are being thrown away today to return to the circular flow.

➔ Norway has an ethical responsibility to ensure that the resources we consume re-enter the circular flow. Products must be designed to have long product life cycles and to be easily repaired or upgraded. After disposal, the product must be easy to recycle. Many consumer products have short product life cycles and, in many cases, are not economically profitable to repair. This leads to over-consumption. Therefore, it must become easier and more cost-effective to repair things.

➔ Introduce stringent requirements for product life cycles.

➔ Invite all municipalities to facilitate repair and reuse.

SWEDEN

➔ Municipalities are an essential player and should be given greater opportunities to use the cleaning fee/duty (*renhållningsavgiften*) as a policy instrument to promote reuse and recycling. Besides, municipal responsibility should be expanded so that more types of waste can be collected locally. The waste incineration itself should not be carried out by the municipal organisation responsible for recycling and recycling as it could counteract circular purposes. A reasonable material recycling target for all goods is 95%, that is the same goal as for cars.

➔ At EU level, Sweden needs to work to strengthen the Ecodesign Directive, which places demands on the energy use of products and that requirements for reparability and recycling are included in various product regulations. Sweden should also work to ensure that all products are reported and that environmentally hazardous substances are phased out.

➔ Sweden should be the driving force for EU-coordinated research as well as for innovation measures that coordinate materials and waste flows.

➔ Sweden should introduce a tax on waste incineration to generate revenue that strengthens circular initiatives. The Nature Conservation Association also proposes stricter rules for mining waste. This waste represents more than 80 per cent of Sweden's total waste and in many cases poses significant risks to the environment and health.

➔ The Nature Conservation Association also sees a need for a general tax deduction to be introduced to stimulate repairs and promote reuse, reduce material turnover and contribute to a changed approach to the value of goods.



12.6 COMPANIES' SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

FOCUS: NORDIC RESPONSIBILITIES ABROAD AND IN THE EU

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, cooperation between governments, the private sector, and civil society is necessary. However, people and the environment must be respected.¹⁹ The lack of regulation on this topic has led to a situation where **prices often do not reflect the true resource, environmental and social costs of a given product.**

Some improvements have been achieved in responsible consumption and production, as some companies are taking the initiative towards more sustainable practices and also integrated sustainability information into their reporting cycle. Pioneering companies cooperate with trade unions and NGOs, publish and audit their suppliers and use certified materials. Across the Nordic countries, a growing number of consumers pursue more responsible consumption.²⁰

In Norway, civil society organisations have also worked to establish an **ethics information act** to ensure that consumers, organisations, the media, and others have the right to learn where and how products are produced. In 2018, the government established an expert group to consider the potential usefulness and effect of such legislation.²¹

During 2019, the Norwegian Parliament will also consider a proposal to request the government to develop legislation to prevent slavery in the production chain. Norwegian CSOs are, however, advocating a **broader perspective that would include all human rights and subsequently also target environmental concerns in the production chain.**²²

Nordic countries have also been influential in setting **EU policy standard**, spearheading policy and regulation that promote more sustainable business practices. Concrete examples of this are the Danish Financial Statements Act and the Norwegian Accounting Act (*Regnskapsloven*) that were inspirational in the development of EU Directive 2014/95/EU on corporate non-financial reporting. **However, the need for legislation instead of voluntarism is highlighted.**

¹⁹ The UN's Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights are not binding, but through the Norwegian action plan for implementing these principles, the government has called for the principles to be followed by all Norwegian companies.

²⁰ For instance last year the sales of Fairtrade and organic products grew 23 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. By comparison, the total sales of daily consumer goods grew less than 5 per cent.

²¹ <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Sporsmal/Skriftlige-sporsmal-og-svar/Skriftlig-sporsmal/?qid=71496>

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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

- ➔ Companies in all sectors must produce responsibly so that consumers can consume responsibly. VAT and taxes must be lowered on the green, sustainable products, as well as increased on products that are harmful to the environment and health. The Danish ecological footprint must be significantly reduced.
- ➔ The government should ensure that our ecological footprint is sustainable, not only in Denmark but also Denmark's footprint abroad, and increase efforts to ensure control and sustainability requirements for Danish and international market players.
- ➔ The government should ensure responsible corporate behaviour outside the borders of the country by introducing statutory due diligence in the fields of environment, human rights, and labour rights, etc.
- ➔ In general, stricter framework conditions for Danish business are needed to ensure a responsible and sustainable business practice across sectors based on the United Nations Human Rights and Business Guidelines and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Statutory due diligence is central, as is access to legal remedies for victims of severe breaches of UN and OECD guidelines.
- ➔ The government must work to ensure that companies in all sectors are obliged to produce responsibly - among other things by making public procurement an important driver.

FINLAND

- ➔ Pass a law that obliges companies to map and reduce their adverse human rights impacts.
- ➔ Promote the international binding treaty on corporate human rights responsibilities by making constructive proposals in the EU and by continuing an open dialogue with CSOs.
- ➔ Strengthen tax justice in Finland and the EU by requiring public, country-specific tax reporting from multinational corporations.
- ➔ Strengthen the evaluation of development impacts in private sector instruments.
- ➔ Ensure that all activities financed by development co-operation funds are in line with the Paris Climate Agreement and the 1,5-degree target.

NORWAY

- ➔ Extend the reporting requirements for companies that benefit from national public support schemes to ensure that they are operating responsibly. The reporting must include broad, non-financial reporting, including how the companies' business supports human rights goals and sustainable development. The reports should be designed so that the results are comparable and can demonstrate development over time within each company and between different companies. Furthermore, country-by-country reporting should be integrated.
- ➔ Require a thorough diligence assessment from the companies, based on the UN's guiding principles for business and human rights, and of the relevant projects when companies apply for support to establish themselves in developing countries. The gender perspective must be explicitly included. The diligence assessment will form part of the basis for awarding support and for annual performance reporting. There must be consequences for the companies if the targets are not met.
- ➔ Ensure that state-owned companies are instructed to safeguard that sustainability considerations are taken into account throughout the value chain and that they regularly report on progress in this area.

SWEDEN

- ➔ Recommendations on sustainability reporting for larger companies should become a mandatory requirement, similar to financial reporting. It should apply to companies of all sizes, not just larger companies. Companies must stop investing in fossil energy and other environmentally damaging activities, and active loan capital shall contribute to sustainable development. This applies not least to the financial sector that manages and invests large sums of private and public capital.
- ➔ There is also a need for companies in the financial sector to offer customers standardised sustainability information on their financial products. Increased transparency regarding climate and environment in banking operations is required to enable consumers to make conscious decisions. This means that the Act on Financial Advising to Consumers needs to be revised and supplemented with sustainability information.
- ➔ Ensure that Sweden's and EU's trade, investment and agricultural policies and development cooperation in relation to land issues and land grabbing issues promote human rights and promote a policy in line with the voluntary guidelines for responsible land, fisheries and forest management.
- ➔ Immediately review legislation on mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) for companies.
- ➔ Introduce mandatory HRDD requirements into the state directives of state-owned companies and conduct a review of the companies' actual compliance with UN guiding principles.
- ➔ Clarify the responsibility for contracting authorities to impose requirements on their suppliers to respect human rights, and through the procurement authority, strengthen support for contracting authorities regarding the application of social requirements.
- ➔ Mandate Business Sweden to strengthen its sustainability follow-up by, among other things, developing sustainability indicators and increasing the transparency for more effective follow-up and third-party review.
- ➔ Strengthen the function and efficiency of the National Contact Point (a tripartite collaboration between the State, the business community and the workers' organisations) so that it can better deal with and compensate Swedish companies' human rights violations.
- ➔ Strengthen the proposal for a new regulatory framework for the AP Funds (Swedish National Pension Funds) so that the legislative text clearly states that the AP Funds must fulfil their mission without counteracting climate goals, Sweden's international law obligations, and other international commitments and promoting sustainable development. Actively support the UN process for a binding international instrument on entrepreneurship and human rights.



12.7 SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.

FOCUS: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CRITERIA MUST BE MANDATORY

Municipalities and regional governments' procurement criteria have a wide impact on corporate practices, much beyond a single service or product. Most public procurement acts offer the *opportunity* to claim environmental and social responsibility from suppliers. When it is *not mandatory* to make demands, *the price is usually weighted highest*.

FOCUS: FINNISH COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT UNITS

Procurement law reform in 2017 in Finland clarified that *public organisations can include labour rights, human rights and environmental conditions in their procurement criteria*. CSOs asked public institutions to utilise their economic power to enhance responsible production and consumption. In 2017, fifteen CSOs published a guide "Tips for responsible procuring from developing countries" for procurement specialists and politicians. It provides ideas on how corporate responsibility can be encouraged in procurement process. The CSOs will continue the campaign until 2020. It aims at encouraging procurers to pilot labour and human rights criteria and publishing their results to generate a positive snowball effect. *Municipalities and regional governments will share the work related to advancing on responsible procurement among them* (like in Sweden): one municipality learns about responsible electronic procurement, another focuses on textiles, etc. and then exchange.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DENMARK

➔ Public procurement amounts to approximately DKK 300 billion annually and should be an important driver. The 2016 Offering Act provides an opportunity to demand environmental and social responsibility from suppliers, but this is rarely used. *Corporate social responsibility must be mandatory for public authorities, including risk assessments*. Companies must be required to enforce due diligence. Reporting on the effort should also be mandatory.

FINLAND

➔ Advance responsible production by making responsible procurement decisions in public institutions.

➔ Elaborate *a national strategy*, indicators, and monitoring to advance socially responsible public procurement.

➔ Municipalities and regional governments must eradicate the exploitation of child labour and forced labour from their procurement chains. Social and environmental sustainability must be taken into account in all purchases, including sustainable targets in procurement strategies, sufficient funding for procurement units and educating staff to make responsible purchases.

SWEDEN

➔ Public procurement is an important tool for sustainable consumption and production. The Swedish procurement strategy presented in 2016 is a step on the road. The procurement authority plays a vital role for procurers in terms of clarifying, not least to municipalities and county councils. As an aid in fulfilling this strategy they can also refer to eco-labelling.



12.8 INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

FOCUS: TRANSPARENCY

Low wages, the pressure to work overtime, inadequate social security and the suppression of trade unions are prevalent factors throughout the production of goods in the Global South that supply the world market. The problems are structural and persistent. Although the problems have been known for many years, brand-name companies and importers operating in Nordic countries have initiated relatively few effective measures to meet these challenges. To ensure transparency, some clothing companies have chosen to publish information about which subcontractors they use, but **they are not required to do so**, and few actors choose to participate. Conscious consumers, therefore, do not have the right to demand access to information about where and how garments are made.

In Norway, The Act on the Right to Environmental Information (*Lov om Rett til Miljøinformasjon*), which is based on the Aarhus Convention²³, aims at ensuring the public's right to environmental information. A similar law for ethics is under consideration. The ethics act will be able to provide the public with information about, for example, where a product is manufactured and under what kind of working conditions it is produced.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FINLAND

- ➔ Collaborate with civil society organisations, for example, in the initiatives of Child-friendly municipality and Fairtrade municipality.
- ➔ Implement global education according to the national education plan at all school grades and ensure teachers' access to related continuing training.

NORWAY

- ➔ Introduce an ethics act: take on a leading international role in efforts to establish a binding framework for multinational companies and financial institutions in order to protect the environment and respect human rights. For example, Norway should support the ongoing process of investigating the possibility of establishing a binding international treaty on business and human rights.

SWEDEN:

- ➔ The Aarhus Convention is based on three core pillars: the right to information, the possibility of participation and the possibility of judicial review. Information on environmental impact should always be available. In order to stimulate commitment and active choices that promote sustainable lifestyles, school and civil society play important roles. Swedish schools need to strengthen their work with the Learning for Sustainable Development network (LHU).
- ➔ Sweden should do more to strengthen the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in some areas where the Convention is not complied with fully. There should also be ways to strengthen the financing of civil society's examination of environmentally hazardous activities, similar to the model used for the examination of spent nuclear fuel repositories. Sweden should also do more to meet the ambition of being a pioneering country within the 10-Year Framework of Programs and the Sustainable Lifestyle and Education program.

²³ The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted on 25 June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus (Århus).



12.A SUPPORT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN SCP

Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

FOCUS: COHERENCE BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND NATIONAL CONSUMPTION POLICIES

CSOs in all Nordic countries emphasise the importance of sustainable technology transfer as an instrument to strengthen the ability of low-income countries to invest in more sustainable solutions, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

However, the outcome of the transfer is not optimal if the national consumption policies and patterns are counterproductive, and continue to support an old production system.

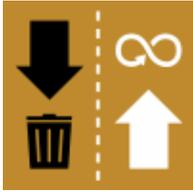
NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FINLAND

- Take part in the **international development of sustainable welfare indicators** parallel to GDP, and support the involvement and statistics gathering capacity of developing countries, through Finland's development cooperation and by other means.
- Support the **development of energy systems** for poor countries to become sustainable and useful for all by e.g. sharing know-how and support investments on infrastructure.

SWEDEN

- Sweden, through the Sida authority, also needs to ensure **that bilateral development assistance agreements are in line with the Swedish national strategy for sustainable consumption**. Assistance within the framework of "Business for development" should place demands on technology transfer and sustainable production. The Export Credit Committee should also set sustainability requirements in its credit terms.



12.C RATIONALIZE FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES

Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities.

FOCUS: ELIMINATION OF SUBSIDIES TO THE OIL INDUSTRY IN NORWAY

If Norway and the world are to reach the goal of keeping the temperature rise below two degrees Celsius – and preferably below 1.5 degrees – Norway must let large parts of its fossil fuels remain in the ground. Norway indirectly subsidises oil extraction through, among other programs, the exploration merger scheme. Granting money to map petroleum deposits sends a clear signal that Norway does not intend to accept its share of the responsibility for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. Given that we know that we cannot extract this oil and still comply with international climate commitments, it is inappropriate to set aside these grants. CSO's call on Norway to eliminate the indirect subsidies to the oil industry.

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FINLAND

- Abandon the use of peat and fossil energy and the subsidies allocated for them in the near future and make a strategy for ending all environmentally harmful subsidies.
- Draw up a timetable in municipalities for ending the use of fossil fuels and peat extraction. End the use of coal and peat by 2025 at the latest.

NORWAY

- The government of Norway must eliminate indirect subsidies to the petroleum industry.

SWEDEN

- For a long time, Swedish tax legislation has had a large number of tax exemptions and discounts for climate-damaging businesses. Fossil subsidies cost the state multi-billion amounts annually and reduce the driving force for emissions reductions. **In addition, it violates the polluter pays principle. These subsidies must be phased out as soon as possible.**
- Ensure that no public funds, nationally or internationally, through, for example, export credits and international development cooperation, go to investments in fossil energy or fossil subsidies.

NORDIC OPPORTUNITIES & POTENTIAL

The CSO networks behind this compilation report see a great potential in the possibilities of creating true political commitment and real change through the Nordic cooperation.

There is a range of possibilities and opportunities for civil society organisations and the political level, in terms of influencing the global sustainability agenda, as well as in supporting each other towards successfully reaching a just and sustainable transition. A closer Nordic collaboration on the challenging SDGs could even lead to a unified strong voice in the EU and the UN.

The scope of this report was to put together the already existing recommendations, as well as highlighting some of the areas that civil society have chosen to focus on at national level.

As such, the overview provided by the report could perfectly serve as point of departure for an expansion and for a Nordic level of recommendations and ideas from civil society to the Nordic governments, through the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Examples of challenges and policy recommendations, as well as a “positive list” of best policies and practices in the Nordic countries on specific areas and goals, could serve as inspiration for the other countries and expanded across the region. Another potential could be that Nordic countries support each other to develop ambitious common policies, e.g. on feed soy import and just energy transition.

A Nordic exchange as well as a political “race to the top” on political frameworks and actions are very positive scenarios.

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