ATTRACTIVE

NORDIC TOWNS

STRATEGIES TOWARDS

A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

SWECO

Attractive Nordic towns

The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for Nordic intergovernmental cooperation. The Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which is held for a period of one year, rotates between the five Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland). The country holding the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers draws up a programme to guide Nordic co-operation during the year. Matters are prepared and followed up by the various committees of senior officials, which consist of civil servants from the member countries according to Nordic Cooperation (2019). The project "Attractive towns: Green redevelopment and competitiveness in Nordic urban regions. Towns that provide a good life for all" was launched in 2017 during Norway's presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers The presidency project is one of several initiatives promoting Nordic competitiveness, green redevelopment, transition to a low-emission society, integration, and environments that promote public health. It is led by the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

During the Norwegian presidency, small and medium-sized Nordic towns were invited to apply to participate in a Nordic project network. Eighteen small and medium-sized Nordic towns that applied were chosen to participate; Sønderborg, Middelfart and Viborg (Denmark), Pori, Salo and Vasa (Finland), Akranes, Hornafjørdur, Mosfellsbær and Fljotsdalsherad (Iceland), Hamar, Narvik, Levanger, Steinkjer and Vedal (Norway), Växjö, Lund and Ystad (Sweden).

This report[1] is a guide to those who aim at building attractive small and medium-sized Nordic towns. It is not a "how to" handbook. For the urban planners or politicians who are aiming at making their town more attractive, it gives inspiration on the road to achieving that goal. The report firstly explains the background, underlying framework and the challenges facing the small and medium-sized Nordic towns. Secondly, its describes five suggested strategies to consider towards creating attractive and sustainable towns in the Nordic region.

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[1] *Attractive Nordic towns - Strategies Towards a Sustainable* Future provides an overview of the results from; "A common Nordic strategy for attractive and inclusive urban environments" (subproject 4), "Mapping, development and use of methods to measure urban qualities and sustainability" (subproject 1) and "Contribution to handling complex decision-making challenges in urban regions" (subproject 3). The report is based on work done during the previous stages of this project, a review of literature, empirical knowledge and a dialogue with the towns and ministries involved, several approaches have been described.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a guide to those who aim at building attractive small and medium-sized Nordic towns. It is not a "how to" handbook. For the urban planners or politicians who are aiming at making their town more attractive, it gives inspiration on the road to achieving that goal. Towns in the Nordic countries have very different geographical settings, they are characterised by a wide variety of socio-economic conditions, and they represent different types of small and medium-sized towns. So, which strategies to choose depends on the local context. The choice of actions and the stakeholders involved can vary from town to town. One size does not fit all but to be successful some common approaches need to be considered in all towns.

First and foremost, to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), a **holistic approach** is vital. To successfully make towns more attractive, efforts are needed across administrative boundaries and simultaneously on different territorial scales. This means that different stakeholders need to be mobilised and the town cannot only concentrate on managing issues under its own control. Towns also need to lead others in the quest for sustainability and attractivity. Local government departments need to get out of their traditional "comfort zone" and work closely together towards joint goals.

Second, **empowering the local society** is vital, since change affects their lives. There is a long tradition of citizen participation in Nordic urban planning. In fact, it is required by planning legislation. Here, it is important to realise that "empowerment" and "citizen participation" are not necessarily the same. Consulting inhabitants is not automatically the same as empowering them.

At the core of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. The possibility of empowerment depends on two things. First, empowerment requires that power can change. If power cannot change, if it is inherent in positions or people, then empowerment is not possible, nor is empowerment conceivable in any meaningful way.

In other words, if power can change, then empowerment is possible. Second, the concept of empowerment depends upon the idea that power can expand. [2]

As illustrated in figure 1, empowering means delegating certain authorities to the citizens. Empowerment can also take place on an individual level and research shows that it can be an important health promoting factor. [3]

Third, creating sustainable and attractive towns means **change**. In change management theory, one of the strongest resistance factors could be described as "fear of change" or "going back to the old". To achieve real change, it is vital to have a strong political vision combined with brave leadership. To avoid "going back to the old" it is important to ensure that an organisational memory is established ("Why are we doing this?").

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation

[2] Staples, L.H. (1990) *Powerful Ideas About Empowerment*, Administration in Social Work, 14:2, 29-42, MSW. DOI: 10.1300/J147v14n02_03

[3] Arnstein, Sherry R., (1969) *A Ladder Of Citizen Participation*, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35: 4, 216-224, DOI: 10.1080/01944366908977225

Fourth, **resilience** is at the core of sustainability. This means that while striving towards the long-term goals, the everyday work needs to ensure that implementation is robust and that redundancy is safeguarded. In a time of digitalisation, connectivity and information concentration, local societies' sensitivity to disruption is perhaps larger than ever.

Fifth, **using and linking local strategies and actions to the Sustainable Development Goals** creates a solid base from which to build. The SDGs "offer a set of integrated objectives which can help to bring about a more sustainable vision of urban development, one that provides equal opportunities to all inhabitants, promotes healthy living environments with access to green spaces, and is resilient in the face of everyday disasters and climate risks". [4] When aligned with existing planning frameworks and development priorities, they can strengthen development outcomes and provide additional resources for local governments. The indicators proposed during earlier stages of this project can come in handy and function as a guide for making priorities.

According to SDG Cities Guide, there are four basic steps for getting started with SDG implementation in cities:

[4] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3

[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf

[6] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments et al. How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post-2015 Agenda. 2014. Available at: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf

4 BASIC STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) IMPLEMENTATION[5 6]

(1) INITIATE AN INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS:
RAISING AWARENESS OF THE SDGS AND ENGAGING
STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND TARGETS.

(2) SET THE LOCAL SDG AGENDA:
TRANSLATING THE GLOBAL SDGS INTO AN AMBITIOUS YET REALISTIC AGENDA
THAT IS TAILORED TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT.

(3) PLANNING FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION:
DEPLOYING GOAL-BASED PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND MECHANISMS
FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES.

(4) MONITORING AND EVALUATION:
ENSURING THAT SDG IMPLEMENTATION REMAINS ON TRACK AND DEVELOPING
LOCAL CAPACITY FOR MORE RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE.

SAMANTEKT

Ýmsum aðferðum hefur verið lýst, á grundvelli vinnu sem unnin var á fyrri stigum verkefnisins (Viðauki 1)[2], skoðun á rituðum heimildum, reynsluþekkingu og samtölum við sveitarstjórnir og ráðuneyti sem tóku þátt í verkefninu. Skýrslan byrjar á því að lýsa bakgrunni og undirliggjandi umgjörð ásamt áskorunum sem snúa að litlum og meðalstórum norrænum bæjum, áður en hún lýsir fyrirhuguðum áætlunum fyrir þemasvæðin fimm.

Skýrslan er leiðarvísir fyrir þá sem stefna að því að byggja upp aðlaðandi litla og meðalstóra norræna bæi. Hér er ekki um að ræða neina leiðbeiningahandbók. Skýrslunni er ætlað að færa þeim skipuleggjendum og stjórnmálamönnum þéttbýlissvæða, sem stefna að því að gera bæi sína meira aðlaðandi, innblástur við starfið að því markmiði. Bæir á Norðurlöndum hafa mjög mismunandi landfræðilega stöðu, einkennast af afar fjölbreyttum félags- og efnahagslegum aðstæðum, og eru fulltrúar mismunandi afbrigða af litlum og meðalstórum bæjum. Það ræðst því af staðbundnum aðstæðum hvaða stefna er tekin á hverjum stað. Það er mjög breytilegt frá einum bæ til annars, hver viðfangsefnin eru og hvaða hagsmunaaðilar koma að þeim. Ein aðferð hentar alls ekki öllum. Þó þurfa alstaðar að vera til staðar ákveðnir sameiginlegir þættir svo góður árangur náist.

Heildstæð nálgun er lykilatriði, eigi að ná markmiðum SÞ um sjálfbæra þróun (SDG). Vinna þarf þvert á öll stjórnsýsluleg mörk og samtímis á mörgum stigum, til að ná því markmiði að gera bæina meira aðlaðandi. Þetta þýðir að virkja þarf mismunandi hagsmunaaðila og að hver og einn bær getur ekki eingöngu einbeitt sér að stjórnun málefna sem hann hefur sjálfur lögsögu yfir. Bæirnir verða einnig að vera í fararbroddi við að auka sjálfbærni og aðdráttarafl sitt. Staðbundin stjórnsýsla þarf að fara út fyrir þægindasvið sitt og vinna saman, þvert á deildir, að sameiginlegum markmiðum.

Í öðru lagi er fyrir öllu **að valdefla samfélagið á hverjum stað**, því breytingarnar hafa áhrif á lífið allt. Það er löng hefð fyrir þátttöku borgara í skipulagsstörfum við norrænt þéttbýli, raunar er þess krafist í skipulagslögum.

Í því samhengi er mikilvægt að gera sér grein fyrir að valdefling og borgaraleg þátttaka er ekki endilega sami hluturinn. Samráð við íbúa er ekki endilega það sama og að valdefla þá.

Kjarni hugtaksins valdefling er hugmyndin um völd. Möguleikinn til valdeflingar veltur á tveimur þáttum. Í fyrsta lagi krefst valdefling þess að völd geti tekið breytingum. Ef völdin geta ekki breyst, ef þau eru innbyggð í ákveðnar stöður eða einstaklinga, er valdefling ekki möguleg og það er heldur ekki mögulegt að sjá hana fyrir sér á neinn skynsamlegan hátt. Með öðrum orðum, geti völdin breyst er valdefling möguleg. Í öðru lagi byggist hugtakið valdefling á þeirri hugmynd að hægt sé að útfæra völdin nánar. [2]

Eins og myndin sýnir felur valdefling það í sér að framselja borgurunum ákveðnar valdheimildir. Valdefling getur einnig átt sér stað hjá einstaklingnum sjálfum og rannsóknir sýna að hún getur verið mikilvægur þáttur heilsueflingar. [3]

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation

Í þriðja lagi þýðir það **breytingu** að búa til sjálfbæra og aðlaðandi bæi. Samkvæmt kenningum um breytingastjórnun, má lýsa einum öflugasta

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[1] Skýrslan veitir yfirlit yfir niðurstöður úr „Sameiginlegri Norrænni stefnu um aðlaðandi þéttbýlisumhverfi fyrir alla" (undirverkefni 4), „Kortlagningu, þróun og beitingu aðferða til að mæla þéttbýlisgæði og sjálfbærni" (undirverkefni 1) og „Framlagi til meðferðar flókinna viðfangsefna við ákvarðanatöku á þéttbýlissvæðum" (undirverkefni 3).

[2] Staples LH. (1990). Powerful ideas about empowerment, Administration on Social Work, 14, 29-42

[3] Arnstein, Sherry R., (1969) A Ladder Of Citizen Participation, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35: 4, 216-224

andstöðuþættinum, sem „ótta við breytingar". Eigi að ná fram raunverulegum breytingum er mikilvægt að hafa sterka pólitíska framtíðarsýn og hugrekki í forystu ásamt því að tryggja að til staðar sé stofnanaminni („Hvers vegna erum við að þessu?").

Í fjórða lagi er **úthald** kjarninn í sjálfbærni. Þetta þýðir að þegar leitast er við að ná langtímamarkmiðum, þurfa dagleg störf að tryggja að framkvæmdin sé öflug og í samræmi við þarfir hverju sinni. Á tímum tölvuvæðingar, tengsla og samþjöppunar á upplýsingaflæði, er næmi staðbundinna samfélaga fyrir truflunum ef til vill meira en nokkru sinni fyrr.

Í fimmta lagi er það **að nota og tengja saman staðbundnar aðferðir og aðgerðir vegna sjálfbærra þróunarmarkmiða (SDG)** traustur grunnur sem hægt er að byggja á. Sjálfbæru þróunarmarkmiðin „fela í sér samþættingu markmiða sem geta stuðlað að sjálfbærari sýn á þéttbýlisþróun, sýn sem færir öllum íbúum jöfn tækifæri, stuðlar að heilbrigðu lífsumhverfi með aðgengi að grænum svæðum, og er úthaldsgott gagnvart daglegri vá og loftslagsógnum". [4] Þegar þau eru borin saman við fyrirliggjandi rammaáætlun og forgangsröðun þróunarverkefna, geta þau styrkt árangur þróunarinnar og fært staðbundnum yfirvöldum aukin úrræði. Þeir vísar sem lagðir voru til á fyrri stigum verkefnisins geta komið sér vel og nýst sem leiðarvísar við forgangsröðun.

Samkvæmt leiðbeiningunum um sjálfbær þróunarmarkmið borga þarf fjögur grundvallaratriði til að geta hafist handa við framkvæmd sjálfbærra þróunarmarkmiða í borgum:

4FJÖGUR GRUNDVALLARATRIÐI TIL AÐ GETA HAFIST HANDA VIÐ FRAMKVÆMD SJÁLFBÆRRA ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐA (SDG) Í BORGUM[5 6]

1 AÐ HEFJA ÞÁTTTÖKUFERLI ÞAR SEM GERT ER RÁÐ FYRIR ÖLLUM:
AÐ AUKA VITUND UM SJÁLFBÆR ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐ (SDG) OG EFLA SAMSTARF HAGSMUNAAÐILA UM AÐ LJÚKA ÆTLUNARVERKUM OG NÁ MARKMIÐUM.

2 AÐ SETJA SJÁLFBÆR ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐ Á DAGSKRÁ:
AÐ STAÐFÆRA HNATTRÆN ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐ FYRIR SJÁLFBÆRA ÞRÓUN Á METNAÐARFULLAN, EN ÞÓ RAUNHÆFAN HÁTT OG SEM SNIÐIN ERU AÐ ÞRÓUNARSAMHENGI Á HVERJUM STAÐ.

3 AÐ SKIPULEGGJA FRAMKVÆMD SJÁLFBÆRRA ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐA:
AÐ KOMA Á MARKMIÐABUNDNUM MEGINREGLUM Í SKIPULAGSMÁLUM, OG AÐFERÐUM TIL AUKINNAR SJÁLFBÆRNI Í FÉLAGS-, EFNAHAGS- OG UMHVERFISMÁLUM.

4 EFTIRLIT OG MAT:
TRYGGJA AÐ STEFNAN HALDIST VIÐ FRAMKVÆMD SJÁLFBÆRRA ÞRÓUNARMARKMIÐA OG AÐ ÞRÓA STAÐBUNDNA FÆRNI FYRIR MÓTTÆKILEGA OG ÁBYRGA STJÓRNSÝSLU.

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[4] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3

[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf

[6] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments et al. How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post-2015 Agenda. 2014. Available at: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf

KORTFATTET SAMMENDRAG

Basert på arbeidet som er gjort i de tidligere stadiene av dette prosjektet (Vedlegg 1) , litteraturgjennomgang, empirisk kunnskap og dialog med departementene og byene som er involvert, har flere ulike tilnærminger blitt beskrevet. Rapporten forklarer innledningsvis bakgrunnen og om det underliggende rammeverket samt utfordringene de små og mellomstore byene i Norden står overfor. Deretter beskrives fem foreslåtte strategier for å skape attraktive og bærekraftige byer i Norden.

Denne rapporten gir en retningsgivende pekepinn for dem som tar sikte på å bygge attraktive små og mellomstore byer i Norden. Det er ikke en instruksjonsmanual. For byplanleggerne eller politikerne som ønsker å gjøre sin egen by mer attraktiv, kan rapporten gi inspirasjon på veien mot realisering av dette målet. Byer i de nordiske landene har svært ulike geografiske beliggenheter og kjennetegnes av ulike sosioøkonomiske forhold, og de representerer ulike typer små og mellomstore byer. Hvilken strategi man må velge, avhenger derfor av den lokale konteksten. Aktuelle tiltak og aktørene som er involvert, kan variere fra by til by. Derfor finnes det ikke én tilnærming som passer for alle. For å lykkes er det imidlertid noen vanlige hensyn som må tas i de aller fleste tilfeller.

Først og fremst er det avgjørende å ha en **helhetlig tilnærming** for å kunne nå FNs bærekraftsmål. For å kunne gjøre byene mer attraktive, må man fokusere innsatsen på tvers av administrative grenser og samtidig på ulike territorielle skalaer. Dette innebærer at man må mobilisere ulike aktører, og byen kan ikke kun fokusere på å håndtere interne forhold, men også ta en lederrolle i å hjelpe andre i arbeidet med bærekraft og attraktivitet. Lokale myndigheter må gå ut av komfortsonen og jobbe tett sammen mot felles mål.

For det andre er det avgjørende å **styrke lokalsamfunnet,** ettersom endringer påvirker livene til dem som bor der. Det finnes lange tradisjoner for å involvere befolkningen i prosesser for byplanlegging i de nordiske landene, og dette er nå lovpålagt. Her er det viktig å anerkjenne at slik styrking eller bemyndigelse («empowerment»)

og involvering av lokalsamfunnet ikke nødvendigvis er en og samme sak. Det å ta innbyggerne med på råd innebærer ikke automatisk at deres stilling styrkes.

Ideen om makt står sentralt i begrepet bemyndigelse. Muligheten for å kunne myndiggjøre lokalbefolkningen avhenger av to ting: For det første må maktbalansen kunne endres. Dersom dette ikke er mulig, og makten ligger fast i bestemte stillinger eller hos bestemte personer, er det ikke mulig å myndiggjøre lokalbefolkningen på en meningsfull måte. Med andre ord betyr dette at dersom makten kan endres, blir myndiggjøring mulig. For det andre avhenger konseptet myndiggjøring av ideen om at makten kan utvides. [2]

Som figur 1 viser, innebærer bemyndigelse av lokalbefolkningen at man må delegere visse mandater til innbyggerne. Bemyndigelse kan også finne sted på individnivå, og forskning viser at dette også kan være en betydelig helsefremmende faktor. [3]
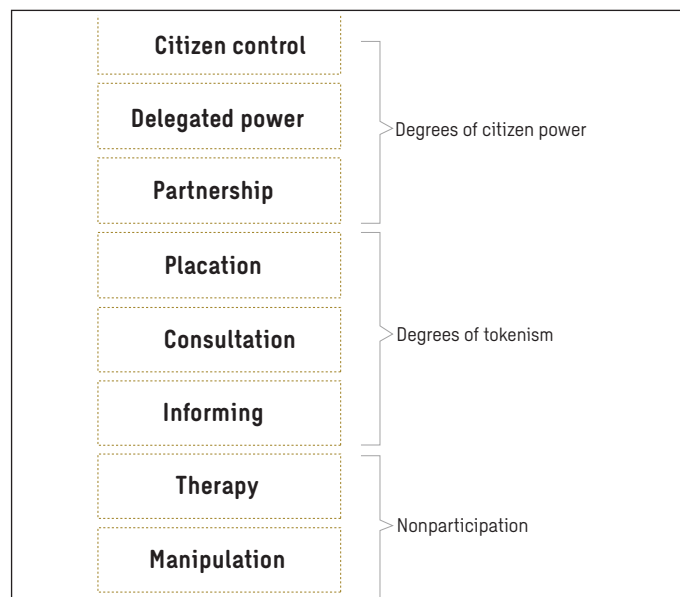

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation

For det tredje er **endring** et sentralt element i det å skape bærekraftige og attraktive byer . Innen endringsledelsesteori kan en av de sterkeste

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[1] Denne rapporten gir en oversikt over resultatene fra delprosjektene «A common Nordic Strategy for attractive and inclusive urban environments» (delprosjekt 4), «Mapping, development and use of methods to measure urban qualities and sustainability» (underprosjekt 1) og «Contribution to handling complex decision-making challenges in urban regions» (underprosjekt 3).

[2] Staples LH. (1990). Powerful ideas about empowerment, Administration on Social Work, 14, 29-42

[3] Arnstein, Sherry R., (1969) A Ladder Of Citizen Participation, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35: 4, 216-224

motstandsfaktorene beskrives som «endringsfrykt». For å oppnå reell endring er det avgjørende å ha en robust politisk visjon kombinert med modig lederskap samt å sikre at en «organisatorisk hukommelse» etableres («hvorfor gjør vi dette?»).

For det fjerde er **motstandsdyktighet** eller resiliens en sentral faktor for å oppnå bærekraft. Dette betyr at samtidig som man strekker seg mot de langsiktige målene, må man også påse i det daglige arbeidet at implementeringen er robust og smidig i møtet med utfordringer. I en tid der digitalisering, konnektivitet og konsentrasjon av informasjon står sentralt, er lokalsamfunnets følsomhet overfor forstyrrelser kanskje større enn noensinne.

For det femte vil det å **bruke og knytte lokale strategier og tiltak opp mot bærekraftsmålene** skape et solid grunnlag man kan bygge videre fra. Bærekraftsmålene «tilbyr et sett med integrerte mål som kan bidra til å utvikle en mer bærekraftig visjon om byutvikling, en som gir alle innbyggerne like muligheter, fremmer sunne bomiljøer med tilgang til grønne områder og er robust og motstandsdyktig i møtet med klimarisikoer samt miljøutfordringer og -ulykker».[4] Når disse målene integreres i eksisterende rammeverk for planlegging og utvikling, kan de styrke resultatene og gi lokale myndigheter ekstra ressurser. Indikatorene som er foreslått i tidligere stadier av dette prosjektet, kan være nyttige og fungere som en veiledning for å gjøre prioriteringer.

Ifølge dokumentet Sustainable Development Goals Cities Guide, en veiledning til byplanlegging i henhold til bærekraftsmålene, er det fire grunnleggende trinn man må gjennom for å implementere bærekraftsmålene i byer:

4 GRUNNLEGGENDE TRINN FOR Å KOMME I GANG MED IMPLEMENTERING AV BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE[5][6]

1 LANSER EN INKLUDERENDE OG DELTAKENDE PROSESS:
BEVISSTGJØRING RUNDT BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE OG FÅ SENTRALE AKTØRER MED PÅ LAGET FOR Å OPPNÅ MÅLENE.

2 ETABLER EN LOKAL AGENDA FOR BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE:
OVERSETT DE GLOBALE BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE TIL EN AMBISIØS, MEN REALISTISK AGENDA SKREDDERSYDD FOR DEN LOKALE UTVIKLINGSKONTEKSTEN.

3 PLANLEGG FOR IMPLEMENTERING AV BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE:
IVERKSETT MÅLBASERTE PLANLEGGINGSPRINSIPPER OG -MEKANISMER FOR MER BÆREKRAFTIGE SOSIALE, ØKONOMISKE OG MILJØMESSIGE RESULTATER.

4 OVERVÅKING OG EVALUERING:
SIKRE AT IMPLEMENTERINGEN AV BÆREKRAFTSMÅLENE GJENNOMFØRES ETTER PLANEN, OG ETABLER LOKALE INSTANSER SOM IVARETAR MER RESPONSIVE OG ANSVARLIGE STYRINGSMEKANISMER.

[4] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3

[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). *Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice?* Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf

[6] Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments et al (2014). *How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post-2015 Agenda.* Available at: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämän hankkeen edellisissä vaiheissa tehdyn työn (liite 1) [1], kirjallisuuskatsauksen, empiirisen tiedon ja hankkeessa mukana olevien kaupunkien ja ministeriöiden kanssa käydyn keskustelun pohjalta on päädytty useampaan lähestymistapaan. Raportissa käydään ensin läpi taustalla olevat olosuhteet sekä pienten ja keskisuurten pohjoismaisten kaupunkien kohtaamat haasteet ennen kuin kuvataan strategiaehdotukset viidelle aihealueelle.

Raportti antaa ohjeita niille, jotka pyrkivät rakentamaan houkuttelevia pieniä ja keskisuuria pohjoismaisia kaupunkeja. Tämä ei ole kuitenkaan käyttöopas. Kaupunkisuunnittelijoille tai poliitikoille, jotka pyrkivät tekemään kaupungistaan entistä houkuttelevamman, se antaa inspiraatiota tavoitteen saavuttamiseen.

Pohjoismaisilla kaupungeilla on hyvin erilaiset maantieteelliset olot, niiden sosioekonomiset olosuhteet vaihtelevat ja ne edustavat erityyppisiä pieniä ja keskisuuria kaupunkeja. Strategioiden valinta riippuu näin ollen paikallisesta kontekstista. Toimenpiteiden ja mukaan otettavien sidosryhmien valinta voi vaihdella kaupungista toiseen. Yksi koko ei sovi kaikille. Onnistuminen edellyttää kuitenkin kaikissa tapauksissa yleisten näkökohtien huomioimista.

Kokonaisvaltainen lähestymistapa on tärkeä ennen kaikkea YK:n kestävän kehityksen tavoitteiden (SDG) saavuttamiseksi. Jotta kaupungit olisivat houkuttelevampia, on työskenneltävä hallinnollisten ja maantieteellisten rajojen yli. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että eri sidosryhmiä on otettava mukaan eikä kaupunki voi keskittyä ainoastaan omaan määräysvaltaansa kuuluvien asioiden hoitoon. Kaupunkien on myös ohjattava muita pyrkimään kestävään toimintatapaan ja houkuttelevuuteen. Paikallishallinnon toimialojen on poistuttava "mukavuusalueeltaan" ja tehtävä tiivistä yhteistyötä yhteisten tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi.

Toiseksi paikallisen yhteisön voimaantuminen on elintärkeää, koska muutos vaikuttaa yhteisöjen elämään. Pohjoismaissa kansalaisten osallistumisella kaupunkisuunnitteluun on pitkä perinne. Itse asiassa kaavoituslainsäädäntö edellyttää tätä. Tässä on tärkeää huomata, että "voimaantuminen" ja "kansalaisten osallistuminen" eivät välttämättä tarkoita samaa. Ihmisten mielipiteen kysyminen ei ole automaattisesti sama kuin heidän voimaantuminen.

Voimaantumisessa on kyse vallasta. Mahdollisuus voimaantumiseen riippuu kahdesta seikasta. Ensinnäkin voimaantuminen edellyttää, että valta voi vaihtua. Jos valta ei voi vaihtua tai jos se kuuluu olennaisesti tietylle toimenkuvalle tai ihmiselle, voimaantuminen ei ole mahdollista eikä millään tavalla mielekästä. Toisin sanoen, jos valta voi vaihtua, voimaantuminen on mahdollista. Toiseksi voimaantuminen perustuu siihen, että valta voi levitä. [2]

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation

Kuten kuvassa on esitetty, voimaantuminen merkitsee tiettyjen vaikutusmahdollisuuksien siirtämistä kansalaisille. Voimaantuminen voi tapahtua myös yksilötasolla, ja tutkimus osoittaa, että se voi olla tärkeä terveyttä edistävä tekijä. [3]

Kolmanneksi kestävien ja houkuttelevien kaupunkien aikaansaaminen merkitsee muutosta.

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[1] Raportissa on yhteenveto seuraavista tuloksista:; "A common Nordic strategy for attractive and inclusive urban environments" (osaprojekti 4), "Mapping, development and use of methods to measure urban qualities and sustainability" (osaprojekti 1) ja "Contribution to handling complex decision-making challenges in urban regions" (osaprojekti 3).

[2] Staples LH. (1990). Powerful ideas about empowerment, Administration on Social Work, 14, 29-42

[3] Arnstein, Sherry R., (1969) A Ladder Of Citizen Participation, Journal of the American Planning Association, 35: 4, 216-224

Muutoksenhallintateoriassa yhtä voimakkaimmista vastustustekijöistä voidaan kuvata "muutoksen peloksi". Todellisen muutoksen aikaansaamiseksi on tärkeää yhdistää vahva poliittinen näkemys rohkeaan johtajuuteen ja varmistaa, että organisatorinen muisti on olemassa ("Miksi me teemme tämän?").

Neljänneksi resilienssi on kestävän kehityksen ydin. Tämä tarkoittaa, että samalla kun pyrimme kohti pitkän aikavälin tavoitteita, jokapäiväisessä työssä on varmistettava, että toteutus on määrätietoista ja että päällekkäisyydet varmistetaan. Koska digitalisaatio, yhteydet ja tieto keskittyvät, paikalliset yhteisöt suhtautuvat häiriöihin herkemmin kuin koskaan.

Viidenneksi paikallisten strategioiden ja toimien käyttö ja yhdistäminen kestävän kehityksen tavoitteisiin luovat vakaan perustan, jolle rakentaa. Kestävän

kehityksen tavoitteet "ovat yhteisiä tavoitteita, jotka voivat auttaa saavuttamaan kestävämmän vision kaupunkikehityksestä, jotka tarjoavat yhtäläiset mahdollisuudet kaikille asukkaille, edistävät terveellistä elinympäristöä, takaavat pääsyn vihreisiin julkisiin tiloihin ja vähentävät katastrofeja ja ilmastoriskejä." [4] Kun tavoitteet ovat linjassa nykyisten kaavoituskehysten ja kehitysprioriteettien kanssa, ne voivat vahvistaa lopputulosta ja tarjota lisäresursseja paikallisviranomaisille. Tämän hankkeen edellisten vaiheiden aikana ehdotetuista indikaattoreista voi olla apua ja hyötyä prioriteettien määrittämiseen.

Kestävän kehityksen tavoitteiden kaupunkioppaan mukaan on neljä perusvaihetta, joiden avulla kestävän kehityksen tavoitteet otetaan käyttöön:

4 PERUSVAIHETTA KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN TAVOITTEIDEN KÄYTTÖÖNOTTOON[5][6]

1 OSALLISTAVAN YHTEISTYÖPROSESSIN KÄYNNISTÄMINEN:
LISÄTÄÄN TIETOISUUTTA KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN TAVOITTEISTA JA KANNUSTETAAN SIDOSRYHMIÄ YHTEISTYÖHÖN TAVOITTEIDEN JA PÄÄMÄÄRIEN SAAVUTTAMISEKSI.

2 PAIKALLISEN KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN OHJELMAN LAATIMINEN TAVOITTEIDEN SAAVUTTAMISEKSI:
KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN GLOBAALIEN TAVOITTEIDEN MUOKKAAMINEN KUNNIANHIMOISEKSI MUTTA REALISTISEKSI OHJELMAKSI, JOKA ON RÄÄTÄLÖITY PAIKALLISEEN KEHITYSKONTEKSTIIN.

3 KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN TAVOITTEIDEN TOTEUTUSSUUNNITELMA:
TAVOITEPOHJAISTEN SUUNNITTELUPERIAATTEIDEN JA -MEKANISMIEN KÄYTTÖÖNOTTO SOSIAALISESTI, TALOUDELLISESTI JA YMPÄRISTÖN KANNALTA KESTÄVIEN TULOSTEN SAAVUTTAMISEKSI.

4 SEURANTA JA ARVIOINTI:
VARMISTETAAN, ETTÄ KESTÄVÄN KEHITYKSEN TAVOITTEIDEN TOTEUTTAMINEN TOTEUTUU SUUNNITELMIEN MUKAAN JA KEHITETÄÄN PAIKALLISTA KAPASITEETTIA, JOTTA OSATTAISIIN REAGOIDA NOPEAMMIN JA TOIMIA VASTUULLISEMMIN.

[4] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3

[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf[5] Lucci, Paula (2015). Localising the post-2015 agenda: what does it mean in practice? Available online at: http://www.delog.org/cms/upload/teaser/ODI_Localising_Post-2015_What_does_it_mean_in_practice.pdf

[6] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments et al. How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post-2015 Agenda. 2014. Available at: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf

PREFACE

CONCENTRATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN CITIES IS NOT ONLY A PRACTICAL IMPERATIVE,
IT IS ALSO A STRATEGIC CHOICE. [7]

Small and medium-sized towns play an important role in regional development. Their challenges and opportunities are often different from those of larger metropolitan areas. While their geographical location, regional context, demography and economic development is specific, their contribution as leaders of sustainable development in their regional setting is common. Their future depends on their ability to be attractive to people and businesses in a world where "big is beautiful".

This report is meant to inspire local and regional urban planners towards more comprehensive and sustainable urban development in the Nordic countries. It addresses how small and medium-sized towns in the Nordic region can maintain and develop their attractiveness through urban environments and inclusiveness. To satisfy the global goals described in the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, small and medium-sized towns need to be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. This includes striving for climate and environmentally-friendly solutions, social balance and equal opportunity, good welfare and cultural offerings, facilitation of public health, living town centres, preservation of historical environments and cultural monuments, good blue-green structures, urban space and architecture, coordinated land and transport solutions, and attractive jobs. [8]

This report was prepared by a multidisciplinary team from Sweco Norway and Sweco Society Sweden AB. We want to thank the involved ministries and the networking towns for their valuable input and discussions during the project.

The strategies described in this report are accompanied by examples of concrete actions that can help urban planners in small and medium-sized Nordic towns reach their goals. We hope that the readers will find material for their professional development and work inspiration.

Oslo, October 2019
Sweco Norway and Sweco Society Sweden AB

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[7] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3?source=collection_home---5------3---------------------

[8] Kommunal- og moderniseringsdepartementet: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/kommuner-og-regioner/by--og-stedsutvikling/attraktive-nordiske-byer-/id2614588/.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT IS A GUIDE TO THOSE WHO AIM AT BUILDING ATTRACTIVE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED NORDIC TOWNS. IT IS NOT A "HOW TO" HANDBOOK. FOR THE URBAN PLANNERS OR POLITICIANS WHO ARE AIMING AT MAKING THEIR TOWN MORE ATTRACTIVE, IT GIVES INSPIRATION ON THE ROAD TO ACHIEVING THAT GOAL.

Nordic countries are often at the top of the list when the UN or other international bodies rank nations on various parameters. People are comparatively happy, healthy and well-educated compared to the rest of the world. The Nordic economies are both open and competitive and the Nordic countries are at the forefront of sustainable development.

The Nordic Region as such comprises the 12th largest economy in the world, with a population that is growing faster than the EU average, a labour market that receives global praise, and a welfare system that has proved resilient both in times of boom and bust. But the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden along with Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland also make up a macro-region of very different internal regions, both geographically and administratively. [9]

However, the Nordic countries still come up short when it comes to reaching some of the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[10] Achieving those goals depends on finding sustainable solutions to predominant trends, such as urbanisation, climate adaption and demographic change. Sustainable urban development should meet the needs and desires of today's residents without compromising the opportunities for future generations. The future challenges are common to all countries, but solutions need to be adapted to the local context. While a joint Nordic strategy can point out common long-term goals and pathways towards achieving a sustainable future, it cannot (and should not) be regarded as a blueprint for success. It provides a contribution to the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and can be used as a guide to create attractive, sustainable towns in the Nordic countries in the future.

This report has two main aims. The first is to describe strategies that increase the attractiveness of urban regions and ensure sustainable development. The second is to highlight ways for politicians and urban planners to ensure sustainable development and make their town attractive. The primary target group for this report is local and regional planners in small and medium-sized Nordic towns but also other public and private actors working with urban planning. Other target groups are local authorities and private stakeholders involved in urban development.

The joint Nordic strategy is based on three main principles:

1) Strategies need to address specific challenges of small and medium-sized Nordic towns
2) Strategies need to be scalable and applicable to different local contexts and provide a basis for local adaption followed by action plans and implementation
3) Governance is the primary driver for change

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11:

MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Key business themes addressed by this goal

- Access to affordable housing
- Infrastructure investments
- Sustainable transportation
- Access to public spaces

For further information: https://sdgcompass.org/sdgs/sdg-11/

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[9] Grunfelder J., Rispling L., Norlèn G., (eds.) (2018) *State of the Nordic Region 2018*, Nordic Council of Ministers

[10] Larsen, M., Alsund-Lanthén E. (2017), Bumps on the road to 2030, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. https://doi.org/10.6027/ANP2017-738

WHAT DEFINES A GOOD STRATEGY?

A *strategy* describes how to get things done. A good strategy helps to define which priorities to set, and which steps and measures to take to meet the objectives. Developing a strategy for small and medium-sized Nordic towns should start by agreeing on the criteria that the strategy should be based on. It requires involvement from stakeholders and experts based on a structured dialogue between the towns involved, public authorities and external experts. In this case it should address the objective of making small and medium-sized towns more attractive relative to their current situation. Sustainability solutions for small and medium-sized towns should make it easy for inhabitants, businesses and visitors to make "the right" choices. Hence, strategies for making Nordic towns attractive should aim at urban environments that are organised so that people can live their everyday life in a way that imposes less burden on the environment, is practically geared both for families and the single elderly, and allows for good health, quality of life and well-being.[11] It should provide paths to answering to the question; *"How can towns and their surrounding areas enhance their attractivity by ensuring an urban environment that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable?"*[12]

DEFINING A SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED NORDIC TOWN

In an attempt to define small and medium-sized towns, you will realize that there is in fact no universal definition. A small town in China would be regarded as a megacity in Iceland. This illustrates that, in addition to population numbers, a town's political, geographical, functional and historical relationship to the larger regional and national context plays a role in whether a town is defined as a small and medium-sized town. The context usually defines the opportunities and threats for future development.

From a Nordic point of view, two contexts of small and medium-sized towns can be distinguished. One context is where is a small and medium-sized town close to a larger urban agglomeration. Such towns are part of a functional labour market and are well integrated into a regional transport system offering ample commuting options. These towns benefit from the critical mass factor described earlier and are likely to see continued spillover effects from their larger neighbour.

The other type of small and medium-sized town context is found in rural and often remote locations. While such towns are centres for the surrounding region, they are often characterised by a declining and ageing population. They cannot create critical mass and cannot take growth for granted. Their main challenge is to ensure a balanced labour market and maintain their role as public services provider within their own territory.

Rather than dividing two small and medium-sized Nordic towns by size only, one relatively larger Swedish town can face the same challenges as a much smaller town in Iceland due to their role and context within a larger urban system. In the same way, a small Finnish town near Helsinki can have more in common with a larger town outside Oslo or Copenhagen.

THE JOINT NORDIC STRATEGY

The joint Nordic strategy presented here focuses on issues that have been identified as the most urgent and important during the project. It addresses the specific challenges of small and medium-sized Nordic towns and aims to contribute on several levels, by:

- Strengthening the competitiveness of Nordic small and medium-sized towns in a global/regional perspective
- Ensuring good and equal opportunities for all

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[11] Kommunal og Moderniseringsdepartementet og Miljøverndepartementet (2013), *Sluttrapport Fagrådet for bærekraftig bypolitikk*

[12] "*The Nordic region in transition*" - description of the presidency project, https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/kommuner-og-regioner/by--og-stedsutvikling/attraktive-nordiske-byer-/engelsk-versjon-attractive-nordic-towns-and-regions/id2622464/

citizens independent of their place of residence in the Nordic countries, specifically by reducing inequalities between small and medium-sized towns, and larger cities

- Developing towns in a sustainable way based on the guidelines drawn up in the Sustainable Development Goals

Just as larger metropolitan areas are usually the national engines of economic growth, small and medium-sized towns play an important regional role for development. However, while all urban areas in the Nordics share the aim of being attractive and sustainable, the challenges and opportunities for small and medium-sized towns often differ from those of larger metropolitan areas. For both large or small, the point of departure needs to be the regional/local context and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A strategy to increase attractivity for a larger metropolitan area can be built around the advantage of critical mass (population, economy, knowledge base, diversity, cultural scenes etc.) that has been the driver behind urbanisation for 8000 years. Globalisation drives this development even further, with talent and capital increasingly moving to the larger urban agglomerations. If current trends prevail, the global population living in cities will have increased to 70% by 2050. [13] Today, just 600 cities contribute to more than 60% of global GDP. [14] In the Nordics, the Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö urban regions account for 60% of Sweden's GDP and the majority share of national population growth. [15] While global megacities as well as the largest Nordic cities have many aspects of attractiveness, they are facing serious sustainability challenges as a consequence of their quick expansion.

Contrary to the larger cities, the attractivity challenges of small and medium-sized Nordic towns in more remote locations are often based on the lack of critical mass. They have a relatively small population and little or no population growth. Their economy is less diversified, their population is getting older and they often have a lack of public transport and less accessibility than larger cities. Finding attractive jobs in a smaller town can also be a challenge for couples where both are highly educated experts or for couples with children. Furthermore, we know that in some cities there are overweight jobs for either women or men. However, being a smaller town also has its advantages. One is that it is easier to organise daily life since time spent traveling is usually shorter and more predictable. Small and medium-sized towns offer the advantages of both closeness to nature and urban life. And sustainable solutions can be easier to implement due to their smaller scale and reduced bureaucracy. Thus, these towns can provide the testing ground for new ideas, as they can more easily remove barriers and innovate changing practices. For these reasons, and since the sustainability challenges and advantages for small towns are somewhat different, the strategies for increasing attractivity need to be different from those of the larger cities. As will be described later, in some cases small and medium-sized towns can benefit from the critical mass from a larger urban conglomeration.

> *"Urbanisation is a clear trend throughout the Nordic Region. Projections toward 2030 indicate that the regions around Copenhagen/Malmö, Stockholm, Oslo and Helsinki will grow by more than 10%. The areas around the capital cities already account for approximately 20% of the total Nordic population. In Denmark and Norway, some of the medium-size cities are growing even faster than their capitals."* [16]

[13] United Nations (2018). *Revision of World Urbanization Prospects.* Department of Economic and Social Affairs. https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

[14] Richard Dobbs, et. al. (2011). *Urban world: Mapping the economic power of cities McKinsey Global Institute*

[15] Statistics Sweden (2016). *Regional Accounts 2016. https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/national-accounts/national-accounts/regional-accounts/pong/statistical-news/regional-accounts-2016/*

[16] Nordisk Ministerråd (2018) *Growth in the Nordic Region.* https://www.norden.org/en/news/growth-nordic-region

TOWARDS A COMMON FRAMEWORK

"ATTRACTIVE" AND "SUSTAINABLE" ARE TWO KEY TERMS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS. THIS CHAPTER CONTEXTUALIZES THE MOST IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS AND PROVIDES A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERMS AS A BASIS FOR FURTHER STRATEGIC WORK.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF ATTRACTIVENESS

In dictionaries, attractiveness is defined in terms as "the quality of being pleasing", the quality of seeming interesting or worth having, "appealing to the senses" or "the possession of qualities or features that arouse interest". Urban attractiveness does not have a universal definition. It is often described from three perspectives: for visitors, for citizens and for businesses.[17] As illustrated in figure 2, these three dimensions are closely connected. Attractive towns have qualities that make them desirable to live and do business in and to visit.

An attractive living environment arises from the interaction between what could be summarised as the emotional environment (e.g., safety, identity, sense of place, nature, culture and democracy) and the functional environment (e.g., supply of public and private services, job opportunities, accessibility).

These different dimensions indicate that attractiveness cannot be achieved with aesthetic features alone. They are closely linked to *The three dimensions of sustainability* (figure 3), as well as to the spatial and governance dimensions. As illustrated in the figure 4, attractive Nordic towns can only be achieved if all those dimensions are addressed in a balanced, holistic way and linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.
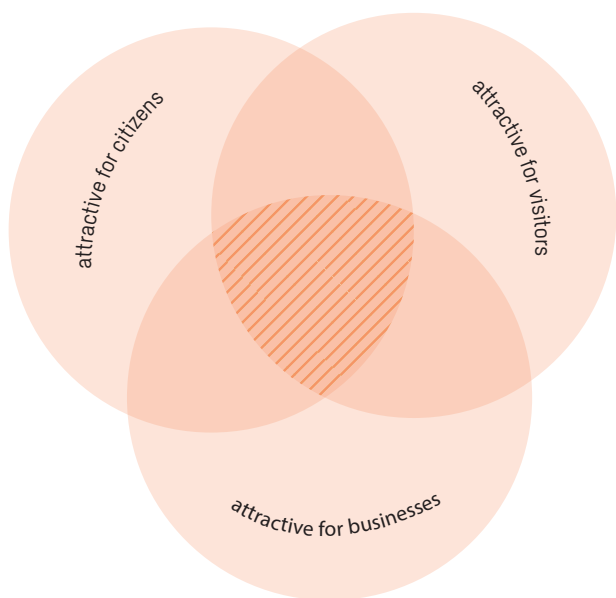

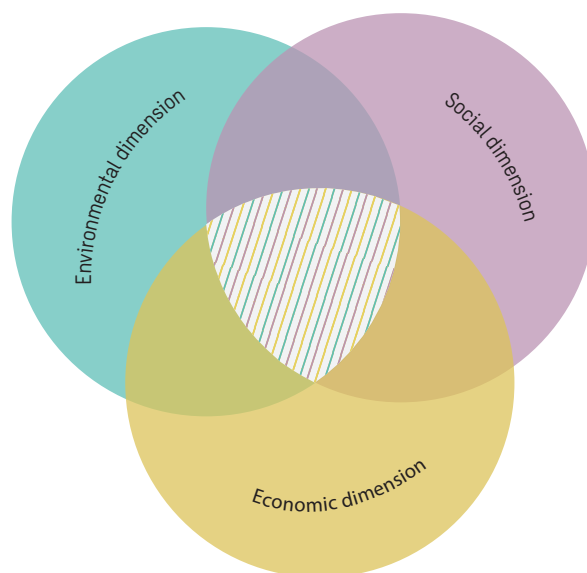Figure 2: The three dimensions of attractiveness (Telemarksforskning)

Figure 3: The three dimensions of classic sustainability, (sustainabledevelopment.un.org)

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17 Knut Vareide, (2013). *Programteori for attraktivitet. Sluttrapport*, Telemarksforskning

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of sustainable development was first used in the Brundtland Report from 1987.[18] The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[19] also contains indicators that are suggested for monitoring and reporting on progress. It is supported by all Nordic countries. Sustainable development consists of three overall dimensions: economy, environment and social conditions. It is the interconnection between these three dimensions that determines whether development can be regarded as sustainable.

Towns cannot achieve the 17 goals on their own - the whole society needs to be involved. Through good governance, towns can themselves significantly
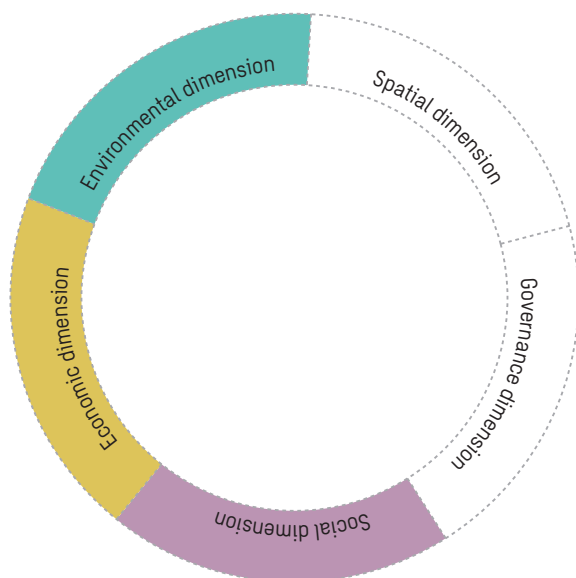

Figure 4: The five dimensions of urban sustainability

contribute, as well as enable contribution from a multitude of stakeholders. It is on the ground, in the urban space, that the three overall sustainability dimensions meet and where they are materialised. Since towns in Nordic countries manage their own land use, they are also the guardians of the spatial dimension of sustainability. Hence, strategies for sustainable urban development need to address two additional dimensions: the spatial and governance dimensions, giving a total of 5 dimensions of urban sustainability. Another element is secure fair distribution of opportunities, services and goods.

The **economic dimension** addresses the creation and management of resources. A good economic environment creates new job opportunities, diversifies the local economy, promotes a diversified offer of public and private services, and supplies employers with skilled labour. One element of the economic dimension is a good management of the municipal budget to provide stability for the delivery of services as well as creating room for investments in the future.

The **environmental dimension** addresses the need to consider the impact on natural resources and ecosystem services. Climate change and biodiversity are among the most pressing issues and they both demand an increasing attention from an urban planning and management perspective. For existing as well as new urban areas resilience needs to emphasize more than ever before.

The **social dimension** addresses the distribution of resources and opportunities. That is, facilitating a good

[18] World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press

[19] United Nations (2018). *Work of the statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development A/RES/71/313*. Annex Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

social everyday life. The urban structure and access to services are tightly linked to public health and well-being. Access to housing, public and private services, transport, education and employment opportunities as well as access to public and semi-private spaces that facilitates meetings and social interaction are crucial elements of the social dimension. An increasingly important aspect of the social dimension is to avoid social exclusion and to minimise gentrification or the creation of areas for singular social groups.

The **spatial dimension** addresses land use and other issues that have a spatial influence. Land use, and architectural and cultural heritage are important elements that influence the way we live, meet and perceive towns. It is in the urban space that sustainability conflicts emerge and where strategies and actions to solve such conflicts can be applied.

The **governance dimension** addresses the way towns are planned, built and managed. Planning, transparency and human capacity, including the empowerment of citizens and businesses, are considered as important prerequisites for good governance.
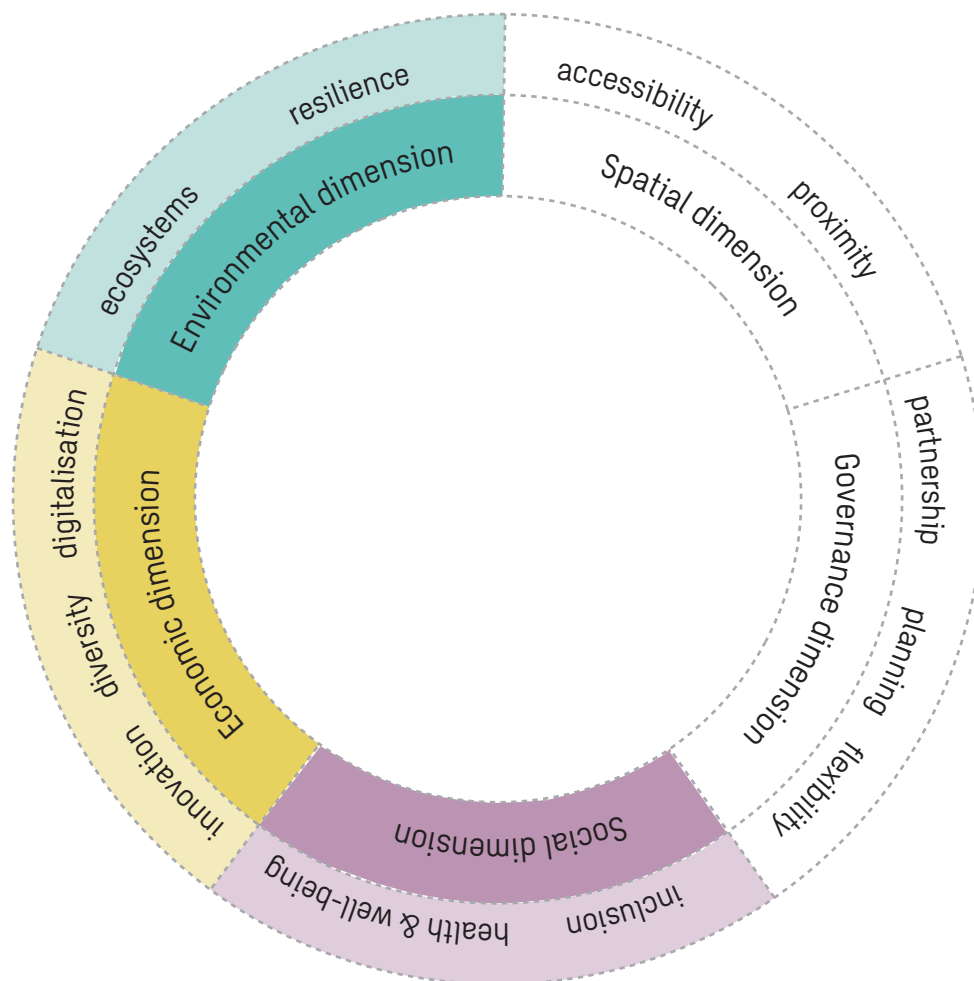

Figure 5: The five dimensions and main themes of urban sustainability

Picture 2: Group meeting, Pori, Finland. Photo: Daniel Nagy

Picture 3: Johannes Minsaas plass, Verdal. Photo: City of Verdal, Norway

Picture 4: Evening marked, Salo. Photo: City of Salo, Finland

Picture 5: Waterstreet, Søndergade in Middelfart, Denmark. Photo: Brian Jensen

TRENDS THAT SHAPE THE FUTURE

GENERAL TRENDS THAT AFFECT THE NORDIC REGION PROVIDE A BACKGROUND FOR THE ELABORATION OF THIS STRATEGY. WHAT FACTORS ARE DRIVING CHANGE IN THE NORDICS? HOW CAN THESE TRENDS INFLUENCE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS? WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES THAT THEY POSE?

A Nordic strategy for attractive small and medium-sized towns needs to relate to what is often described as the Nordic Model. Briefly, "the model involves using healthy state finances to enable a high and equal standard of living, distributing welfare and social protection in the name of equality, a labour market that is greatly regulated by collective agreements between labour market parties, and extensive investments in education and research." [20] The Nordic Model is acknowledged in academic discourse, political debate and media. It is related to the Nordic countries' strong performance on global rankings, shared common ambitions, nordic qualities and a set of common values. [21]

"These values have shaped the relationship between the state and the people and between the state and corporations, and they have influenced individual and collective behaviour. For this reason, they lie at the centre of the common "Nordic story". [22]

The five values illustrated below are the foundation of the narrative of the Nordic Sustainable Town. They can be regarded as "positive fundamentals" and they are important assets when tackling the sustainability challenges that Nordic small and medium-sized towns face.

Strong Nordic values include openness and a belief in everyone's right to express opinions, mutual trust, and, because of proximity to power and equality, trust in leaders ofsociety. In addition, new ways of thinking that focus on creativity and innovation, and sustainable management of the environment and development of natural resources are highlighted as important elements of the Nordic identity.[23]
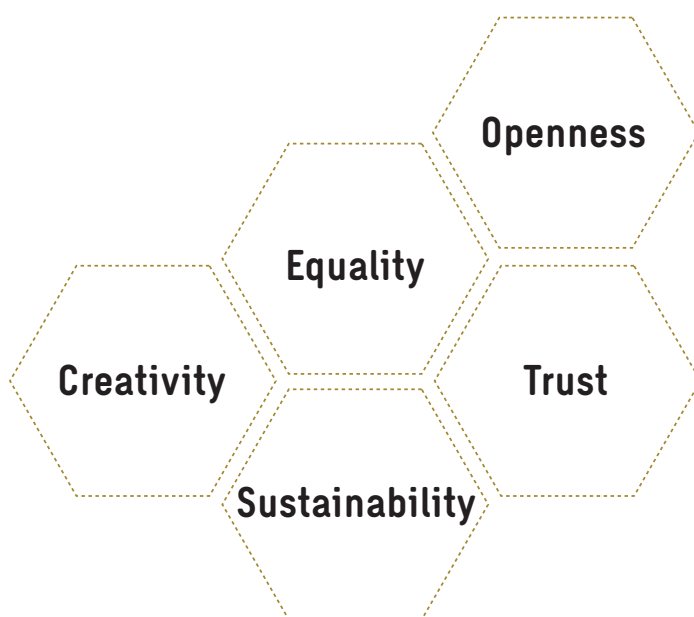

Figure 6: Values that shape the future

[20] Nordic Council of Ministers (2016:16). Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region 2015-2018. Available online at: http://norden. diva-portal.org/smash/get/ diva2:783406/FULLTEXT01.pdf. Retrieved on 18 December 2016

[21] Nordic Council of Ministers (2016). Strategy for International Branding of the Nordic Region 2015-2018. Available online at: http://norden. diva-portal.org/smash/get/ diva2:783406/FULLTEXT01.pdf. Retrieved on 18 December 2016

[22] Borges, L.A., Nilsson, K., Tunstrøm, M., Dis, A.T., Perjo, L., Berlina, A., Costa, S.O.; Fredricsson, C., Grunfelder, J., Johnsen, I.; Kristensen, I.; Randall, L. Smas, L.; Weber, R. (2017), White paper on Sustainable Cities, Nordregio

[23] Borges, L.A., Nilsson, K., Tunstrøm, M., Dis, A.T., Perjo, L., Berlina, A., Costa, S.O.; Fredricsson, C., Grunfelder, J., Johnsen, I.; Kristensen, I.; Randall, L. Smas, L.; Weber, R. (2017:12), White paper on Sustainable Cities, Nordregio

WHICH FUTURE DO WE NEED TO PLAN FOR?

WHAT ISSUES ARE THE DRIVING CHANGE IN THE NORDICS? WHAT ISSUES AND TRENDS INFLUENCE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS TODAY AND IN THE YEARS TO COME?

GLOBALISATION

The production of goods and services is increasingly dispersed across countries as multi-national enterprises (MNEs) pursue offshore, reshore, and outsource activities. Globalisation is expected to continue, and rural regions will need to continue to specialise and focus on core areas of advantage to compete in the global economy. Its effects need to be addressed by small and medium-sized towns. In a connected and interdependent world, towns are also affected by events on the global stage. The structural transition to a more knowledge-based economy and the creation of global value chains have generally been handled well in the Nordic countries. But while globalisation offers many opportunities, it also poses a threat to small and medium-sized towns. Technological breakthroughs such as automation and artificial intelligence, decentralised energy generation, and cloud computing will open up new production possibilities and transform how we access goods and services. This is likely to result in labour saving technologies and product innovations in forestry, agriculture and so on. [24]

URBANISATION

In 2018, 25 % of the Nordic population lived in the five largest urban areas.[25] As this concentration trend continues there is a risk of increased disparities between the large city regions and the more remote and sparsely populated areas. The socio-economic gap between those small and medium-sized towns that are ''disconnected», and the major cities are already widening, as young and educated people leave their home towns to seek better opportunities in the big city. As a result, the local labour markets can fail to support the economy and basic services proximity may be at risk in many small and medium-sized towns.
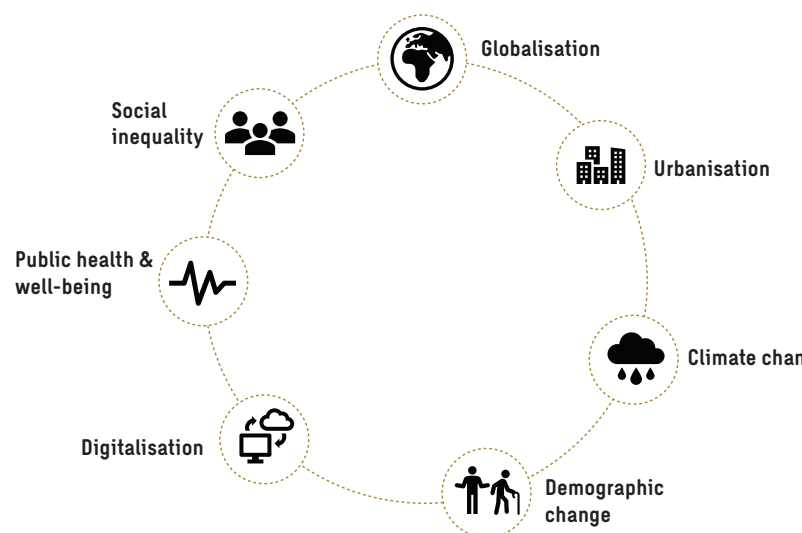

Figure 7: Trends that shape the future

CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Nordic countries need to adapt to and mitigate consequences of climate change. It is now widely recognized that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected. Biodiversity is affected by climate change, with negative consequences for human well-being, but biodiversity, through the ecosystem services it supports, also makes an important contribution to both climate-change mitigation and adaptation. Consequently, conserving and sustainably managing biodiversity is critical to addressing climate change. [26]

While climate change is not restricted to municipal boundaries and requires cooperation on international, national and regional levels, many of these efforts need to be done at local level. The sustainable management of natural resources, energy, water and waste is key to the transition towards a greener economy. Challenges for small and medium-sized towns include the promotion of a more circular economy, sustainable modes of transport

[24] OECD (2018). Rural 3.0. A framwork for rural development: https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/Rural-3.0-Policy-Note.pdf:p.8

[25] Grunfelder J., Rispling L., Norlèn G., (eds.) (2018) *State of the Nordic Region 2018*, Nordic Council of Ministers

[26] Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: https://www.cbd.int/climate/

and increased energy efficiency. The towns also need to adapt to the direct impacts of climate change, such as flooding, higher sea levels or more frequent heat waves.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

The population in Europe is increasing and ageing. Yet small and medium-sized Nordic towns distinguish themselves as they often face population decline and have a larger share of the ageing population. These towns must figure out how to attract and keep young people, as well as adapt to the needs of an older population. Labour immigration has gradually slowed down since 2012, and the decline continued in 2016. Immigration increased sharply this year. Numbers from 2017 show that immigration from countries with conflicts has been significantly reduced from the previous year, while immigration from the Nordic and Eastern Europe is at the same relatively low level as in 2016. Migration of people on the run is unstable, it went up greatly in 2015, but since then it has declined sharply. The UN says there have been no more refugees in the world since World War II. How this will affect the Nordic region is uncertain.[27] If efforts to integrate newcomers into the local societies are successful, this offers an opportunity for small and medium-sized towns. Should integration efforts fail, it can lead to more divided societies and increased tensions between different groups.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Nordic countries perform very well with respect to life expectancy, health and well-being.[28] However, social inequalities in health is a challenge. Ensuring all citizens equal conditions to develop and maintain good health and well-being is one of the main future challenges. Access to affordable housing, transport, education, jobs, public spaces and services is important including access to health hospitals, doctors and local health clinics. Local governments have a vital role

among others in promoting physical activity in the daily life of citizens. Active living is a way of life integrating physical activity into daily routines such as walking and bicycling for transportation and using recreational facilities. Urbanization combined with a decreasing and ageing population in more remote locations leads to a potential mismatch between the population's needs and the community's ability to provide high quality services in many small and medium-sized towns.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Social and economic factors are closely linked to a population's health and well-being. The risk of exclusion and poverty is especially high in regions where structural economic change leads to unemployment among less-educated workers with low salaries or on part-time work.[29] Other groups at risk are immigrants and people without a high school diploma. Due to the income gap, excluded groups are often destined to live in areas that are segregated from areas where people take full part in society. In small and medium-sized towns, such spatial segregation is often less prominent compared to larger cities, but it still exists. Such social exclusion and increasing inequalities are common challenges.

DIGITALISATION

The Nordic countries are already among the most connected in the world and their societies have greatly benefitted from digitalisation. Yet there is still a need for increased access to digital infra-structure and for the further development of digital skills. For small and medium-sized towns, digital inclusion is an upcoming challenge and in towns dominated by labour-intensive industries, continued digitalisation and automation (i.e., robots taking over physical labour jobs) will lead to decreased employment opportunities. At the same time, digitalisation offers opportunities to increase public services' efficiency and tackle a declining work force.[30]

[27] Regjeringen (2018). Regionale utviklingstrekk 2018. https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/regionale-utviklinstrekk-rut-2018/id2596450/sec1

[28] Helliwell, J., Layard, R., Sachs, J. (2019). *World Happiness Report 2019*, New York: Sustainable Development Solution Networks

[29] Hallonen M., Persson Å., Siebert C., Bröckl M., Vaahtera A., Quinn S., Trimmer C., Isokangas A. (2017), *Sustainable Development Action — The Nordic way,* Nordic Council of Ministers, Tema Nord 2017: 178

[30] Eurostat (2018). Sustainable development in the European Union, *Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context,* European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9237449/KS-01-18-656-EN-N.pdf/2b2a096b-3bd6-4939-8ef3-11cfc14b9329

2

STRATEGY

THE WAY FORWARD
FIVE DIMENSIONS TO CONSIDER TOWARDS ATTRACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE NORDIC TOWNS

THE OVERALL GOAL OF THIS PROJECT IS TO FIND WAYS TO CREATE ATTRACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TOWNS. AS PREVIOUSLY ILLUSTRATED, THERE ARE A LOT OF CHALLENGES THAT NEED TO BE SOLVED TO REACH THAT GOAL. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT A HOLISTIC AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IS NEEDED, SINCE A TOWN IS NOT A MACHINE BUT A SYSTEM FULL OF COMPLEXITY AND INTERDEPENDENCIES. THE FIVE URBAN SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS DESCRIBED EARLIER ILLUSTRATE THAT STRATEGIES NEED TO RELATE TO THIS COMPLEXITY AND SOMETIMES CONFLICTING GOALS.

With the adoption of the SDGs, countries, cities and smaller towns around the world are turning to the question of SDG implementation. How can a Nordic town approach the task of becoming both attractive and sustainable? For mayors and local leaders who are working to improve the quality of life in urban environments, the SDGs provide a roadmap for more balanced and equitable urban development.[31] However, achieving this is not easy, in light of the different and mutually important dimensions of sustainability and future challenges. Based on work done during the previous stages of the project project (Attractive Nordic Towns), a review of literature, empirical knowledge and a dialogue with the towns and ministries involved, several approaches have been described. Yet it is hard to find an approach that is complete when keeping "a model that can be useful for the urban planner" in mind. Nor is it straightforward to sort challenges into distinct categories. The approach chosen in this project builds on **five urban sustainability dimensions** inspired by the recognised "Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities" (RFSC) [32] : Spatial, governance, social, economic and environmental dimension strategies.

The chosen dimensions in the approach guide politicians and the urban planner in ensuring that all relevant aspects are considered when working with the most important challenges of a town. It is not exhaustive, but it is a roadmap to assist planners in creating more attractive and sustainable Nordic towns. The strategies suggested are based on the set of values previously described as the Nordic Model and are applicable to both types of small and medium-sized towns.

It is important to be aware that urban development is not finite. It is an ongoing process where both focus and goals for the development can change over time. It takes place in a specific local context. While local strategies should be clearly related to the overall goals and adapted to a local context, they also need to be flexible enough to deal with uncertainty and embrace new opportunities.

Accompanying the strategies in this chapter are guiding questions, relevant SDG indicators based on the report *"Suggested indicators and toolbox for attractive and sustainable Nordic towns and regions"* in Appendix 1, and relevant examples of actions from small and medium-sized Nordic towns.

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[31] The SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-1-cities-and-a-territorial-approach-to-the-sdgs-22c2660644e3?source=collection_home---5------3--------------------

[32] The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) is an online toolkit (www.rfsc.eu) for local European authorities that are involved in or are willing to start a process of integrated and sustainable urban development. The main objective of the toolkit is to enhance the dialogue within a city and with peer cities tackling the same issues all across Europe.

SPATIAL DIMENSION STRATEGIES
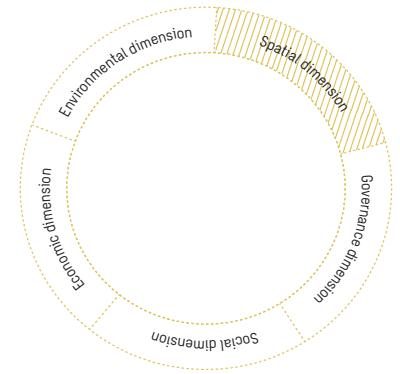
◉ APPLY A HOLISTIC AND MULTI-SCALE APPROACH

The attractivity of a town is closely linked to its spatial dimension. Effective planning ensures long-term coordination of land use for infrastructure, social activities, businesses and amenities. The holistic integration of strategies across different territorial scales — regional, district, town, and building — is an important success factor. Applying a mixed-use approach on all levels increases the flexibility and creates more liveable urban environments.

◉ STRIVE FOR SPATIAL EQUITY

The economic gap between different groups, and large disparities between property prices in different parts of a town are major contributors to social segregation. To counteract segregation, mixed land use and a mix of different housing types and tenure can meet the needs of people from different walks of life and social groups. Ensuring easy access to services across a town further improves living conditions. The ability to obtain a good education, regardless of where you live, improves opportunities for the young generation.

◉ ENCOURAGE TERRITORIAL RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to cope and uphold vital functions when disruptions occur. While natural disasters are the most common cause of disruption and might occur more often in the future, there are many other scenarios. The resilience of a town's spatial structures can be improved by ensuring the continuity of the functions of a town's blue and green structures during a crisis (e.g., sponge city principles). Crisis management plans, education programmes, training, and prioritising actions are other measures that serve to pre-empt or minimize the risks of disruption.

RESILIENCE

More generally, resilience refers to the "capacity of a system to deal with change and continue to develop; withstanding shocks and disturbances and using such events to catalyze renewal and innovation. [33]

◉ DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY SYSTEM

To tackle climate change, the transport sector needs to be re-engineered. Together with industry, domestic road transport is a main source of CO_2 emissions as well as air and noise pollution in the Nordic countries. Life in small and medium-sized towns is very car dependent since their scale often cannot sustain a public transport network or park-and-ride solutions. While the frequency, availability and CO_2 emissions of public transport can sometimes be improved for towns that do have a public transport network, promoting slow traffic conditions and car sharing can be ways to develop a more sustainable urban mobility system without reducing accessibility for certain areas, social groups, or demographical changes (i.e. aging population).

◉ PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY AND MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY OF PUBLIC SPACES

Diversity and community. Public spaces are the heart of town life. They facilitate "the life between the buildings"[34] with people-friendly meeting places that are open and accessible to all. It is essential that these spaces are multi-functional, safe, flexible and adaptable to different seasons. During planning, it is important to ensure that public spaces are part of an overarching network of urban spaces and are interconnected with important urban functions (e.g., services, transport hubs). This further increases the urban qualities.

◉ PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Architectural and cultural heritage is an important marker of a town's identity and communicates a sense of place. Rather than seeing preservation and development as opposing concepts those are now seen as one where the built heritage and cultural environments are increasingly seen as a resource and a driver for urban development.[35] Preserving architectural and cultural heritage, while allowing careful use and transformation, contributes to a continuous and active engagement with site-specific solutions. Ensuring that towns are developed with high architectural qualities in mind needs to be one of the main concerns.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ☐ **Have relevant SDG targets been integrated into existing development plans and programs?**
- ☐ **Does the urban structure reduce the need for car-based mobility?**
- ☐ **Which areas are not considered safe and healthy, and need improvement?**
- ☐ **Is the town's land-use plan integrated at the regional scale?**
- ☐ **Can architectural and cultural heritage be used as a driver for urban change and strengthen the identity (and attractiveness) of the town?**
- ☐ **Do you have a cultural heritage plan?**
- ☐ **How do you make tourism more sustainable?**
- ☐ **Do you have a municipal strategy?**
- ☐ **How do you adapt to climate change?**

KEY- AND SURVEY INDICATORS

- Green zones and proximity to recreational areas (p.21 in Appendix 1)
- Basic services proximity (p.22 in Appendix 1)
- Cultural diversity (p. 23 in Appendix 1)
- Evolution of tourist frequency (p.24 in Appendix 1)
- Climate change adaption (p.36 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: quality of housing (p.38 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: feeling of safety (p.40 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: satisfaction with public spaces (p.44 in Appendix 1)

For further information, please look at p.18 in Appendix 1: How to use the indicators (p.18) and The indicator registry (p. 20).

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS
CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A DRIVER FOR URBAN CHANGE

Buildings and the activities that take place in the spaces between them make up an important element of a town's identity. In particular, buildings that are recognised as significant markers of a town's history may contribute to a unique sense of place. These cultural-historical backyards and buildings are resources for creating renewed activity, especially in areas where buildings are empty. The town of Levanger, with its rich timber architecture, has gained status as an important protected national heritage. The town plans to experiment with pop-up activities that help to find the right sustainable solutions for central areas of the city in close cooperation with relevant owners and stakeholders.

INDICATORS EXPLAINED
KEY INDICATOR

is any group of instruments that together give an indication of the state of the social, economical and/or environmental aspects of a town

SURVEY INDICATORS

can target specific local issues and can be customized to each town's goals. The result is often, but not necessarily, qualitative data.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

can help you to identify your organizational prerequisites for working on attractiveness and sustainability in a holistic way. The guiding questions are not indicators per se, nor part of a survey. They can help identify in which areas a town and/or municipality have made strategic and organizational efforts to support the work on sustainable development within important subjects which require attention.

[33] Stockholm Resilience Center (2014) *What is Resilience?* https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-videos/2011-12-01-what-is-resilience.html

[34] Gehl J. (1996). *Livet mellem husene; udeaktiviteter og udemiljøer*, Arkitektens Forlag

[35] Riksantikvaren. (2017). *Strategy for Management of Norwegian Urban Cultural Heritage 2017-2020.* Available online at: https://ra.brage.unit.no/ra-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2568021/Riksantikvarens_bystrategi_engelsk.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y .

GOVERNANCE DIMENSION STRATEGIES
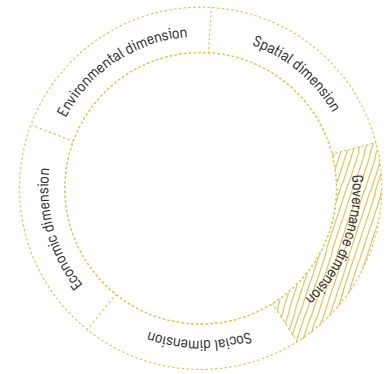
⦿ FOSTER SUSTAINABLE ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Municipalities have multiple roles in the development of a town. Their actions are regulated by legislation and their procedures have legal consequences, especially with respect to zoning plans and building permits, and the fact that they are employers for those working in public services. In addition, most towns directly or indirectly invest money in real estate, through ownership of land, schools, social housing and other public buildings. Issuing guidelines for sustainable management, including acquisition of goods and services, helps to increase the demand for sustainable products and promote change over time. Beyond their legal obligations, municipalities have a fundamental role for community development. As the usually largest local employer, the municipality can actively mobilise the society for development purposes. As a partner the municipality can create, foster and/or participate in partnerships for change and development. Together with other stakeholders, the municipality can make a big difference for the development.

⦿ INCREASE THE CAPACITY TO ASSESS PROGRESS

To increase the sustainability and attractivity of a town, it is important to identify critical issues and have the capacity to monitor progress in order to resolve or counteract such issues. Without knowing the facts at the point of departure, it is difficult to assess which direction development is heading. Only through awareness of the town's CO_2 emissions can follow-up measures be taken to bring down emissions. The same holds true for issues such as demographic and social change and efforts to reduce segregation. To make this possible, it is valuable to have a comprehensive set of statistics and municipalities need to have the expertise to interpret it.

⦿ INCREASE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The transformational change needed to achieve both the SDGs and attractivity requires broad-based public support and engagement, and a long-term shift in policy priorities towards sustainable development.[36] Involving relevant stakeholders in the planning and development is therefore a key to ensuring that desired changes are well anchored in the community. To address challenges of spatial inequality and inclusion, it is important that neighborhoods and localities are represented at the local and regional level. Co-creation projects of public spaces are good examples of this approach. Sensibly using digital tools increases engagement in youth.

⦿ STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKS

Improving the attractivity and sustainability of a town demands a holistic approach and working across sector boundaries. Partnerships that include both public and private stakeholders increase engagement and capacity. Academic institutions, private investors, and representatives of the civil society can help to implement solutions and broaden the impact of measurements. This requires disseminating knowledge on the common goals that need to be achieved, including the planned implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals on a municipal level. Here sustainability programs and training can help. Not least, a very good start is to coordinate the municipality's own activities to achieve internal synergies and to provide efficient services and support to citizens, businesses and partners.

As Machiavelli once wrote; «And let it be noted that there is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful in its success, than to set up as a leader in the introduction of changes. For he who innovates will have for his enemies all those who are well off under the existing order of things, and only the lukewarm supporters in those who might be better off under the new. [37]

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[36] SDG Cities Guide: https://sdgcities.guide/chapter-2-practical-tools-for-getting-started-with-the-sdgs-4b7598170ebf?source=collection_home---5------4-----------------------

[37] Machiavelli N. and Tim Parks (1512), *The Prince*, Penguin Books Australia

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ☐ Have relevant SDG targets been integrated into existing development plans and programs?
- ☐ How can the capacity for implementing prioritized actions be increased in the town?
- ☐ Is there systematic involvement and participation of citizens, and have marginalized demographic groups and communities been included, allowing them to have a voice in development processes?
- ☐ Are processes transparent and is important information available for the public and relevant stakeholders?
- ☐ Is there systematic involvementand participation of private stakeholders?

KEY- AND SURVEY INDICATORS

- Gender equality — the gender wage gap (p.29 in Appendix 1)
- Share of population *"not in education, employment or training"* (p.31 in Appendix 1)
- Voter turnout at municipal elections (p.31 in Appendix 1)
- Green public procurement (p.33 in Appendix 1)
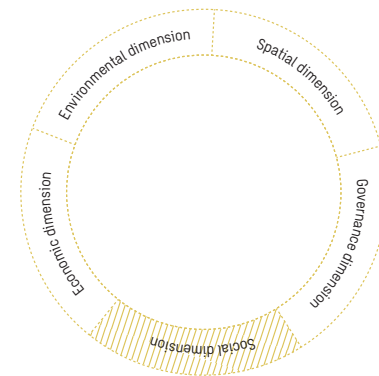- Survey: citizen satisfaction with municipal services (p.41 in Appendix 1)

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS
NORDIC TOOLBOX

In close collaboration with The Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment, The Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Service and The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, four Nordic towns (Akranes, Middelfart, Salo and Växjö) have decided to develop a Nordic toolbox that will support and give ideas how small- and medium sized cities can transform existing, expired business areas into new attractive urban areas and thus creating added value to the town to ensure liveability and urban life. [38]

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS
POWER OF YOUTH - EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Many small and medium-sized towns strive to attract and keep young people. Many towns lose their young citizens to larger cities. Sønderborg and Narvik are no exceptions. Both towns include participative processes as an essential part of stimulating population growth, increasing the student population and workforce, as well as stimulating innovation and creating more jobs within green businesses. Sønderborg and Narvik have understood that encouraging young people to take an active role in the urban transition towards sustainability based on the Sustainable Development Goals also requires active involvement from the part of the town. They have therefore started developing a methodology on how to empower young people in their communities. Scaling up participation of young people by using the Sustainable Development Goals as a common global platform creates the framework for co-creating the urban transition and stimulating green business creation. Strengthening the work of youth councils through inviting them into the project and working in cooperation with existing youth engagement and young entrepreneurship networks helps to build a stronger cooperation between youth and local businesses. This ultimately creates potential for stimulating local job creation that is beneficial for all. The methodology will be tested, refined, replicated and ultimately scaled up to all Nordic countries. The result will be the creation of a Nordic Charter for Youth Empowerment that will be handed over to the United Nations Youth conference late 2019 in New York.

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38 Regjeringen (2018). *Statusrapportering fra prosjekter i attraktive nordiske byer.* https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/kommuner-og-regioner/by--og-stedsutvikling/attraktive-nordiske-byer-/statusrapportering/id2614599/

SOCIAL DIMENSION STRATEGIES

⊙ STRATEGIC LOCALIZATION OF HOUSING, PUBLIC SPACES AND BUILDING

Ensuring a good social mix in neighbourhoods through an active housing policy and planning can contribute to improved social inclusion and facilitate to a good social everyday life. Public space plays a key role in this context. Providing affordable housing, particularly in attractive areas such as harbour areas or inner towns, enable residents regardless of their socio-economic background, age or life situation which may contribute to social mix. Examples of such measures are the provision of housing and public services that meet the needs of people entering the housing market or the growing group of elderly in all areas of a town.

⊙ PLAN AHEAD TO PROVIDE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR EVERYONE

Housing strategies need to be based on overarching plans that have a holistic, resource-effective and future-oriented approach. In recent years it has become obvious that in small and medium-sized towns, the public sector cannot afford to abdicate and leave housing up to the "invisible hand of the market". Brownfield redevelopment and urban regeneration, including infill projects, should be preferred over greenfield development. Ensuring long-term affordability for housing and mobility are among issues at the core of housing policies.

⊙ PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Health is unevenly distributed among social groups in the population and vary systematically according to the level of education, occupation and income. Everybody is responsible for their own health. However, lifestyle choices such as physical activity and diet are greatly influenced by socioeconomic factors not chosen by the individual. Proximity to e.g. green spaces is shown to be particularly important to children, pregnant, elderly and people with limited resources. [39]

Research has shown that promoting slow traffic and public transport has positive effects on general health. When towns become less car dependent they become more attractive, safer, kid friendly and more equal. [40]

⊙ IMPROVED SYSTEM FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Matching skills with job opportunities is considered one of the main challenges in small and medium-sized towns. A town that provides relevant and quality education, integration and lifelong learning opportunities increases its attractiveness as a business destination. Cooperation with academic institutions especially combined with a targeted approach to establishing knowledge and business clusters, has proven successful as a first step to triggering development within the creation of green jobs.

⊙ PROMOTE CULTURE AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

Culture is a strong contributor to the identity of a city. It provides meeting opportunities for different social groups and fosters a sense of place. Hence, culture should be promoted through integrated cultural policies. Leisure activities provide opportunities for human interaction, where cooperation between sport, leisure and education can contribute to a wide range of activities that generate a vibrant atmosphere in small and medium-sized towns.

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[39] WHO Europe (2016). Urban green spaces and health. A review of evidence. WHO Europa, Copenhagen

[40] Eckersley R, Dixon J, Matheson Douglas R. (2001), The Social Origins of Health and Well-being, Australian National University

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ☐ Have relevant SDG targets been integrated into existing development plans and programs?
- ☐ Are major barriers for health and well-being identified?
- ☐ What can be done to nurture the values of being welcoming and inclusive?
- ☐ Does the housing supply provide enough affordable housing for all groups?
- ☐ Are your citizens satisfied?

KEY- AND SURVEY INDICATORS

- Green zones and recreational areas proximity (p.21 in Appendix 1)
- Cultural diversity (p.23 in Appendix 1)
- Evolution of tourist frequency (p.24 in Appendix 1)
- Life expectancy (p.25 in Appendix 1)
- Gender equality — the gender pay gap (p.30 in Appendix 1)
- NEET share of population (p.30 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: Quality of housing (p.38 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: Self-assessed general state of health (p.39 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: Feeling of safety (p.40 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: Satisfaction with cultural activities (p.43 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: Satisfaction with public spaces (p.44 in Appendix 1)

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

OPEN SPACE – NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Hamar is situated along the banks of Lake Mjøsa. Current challenges include the (re)generation of a vibrant city centre. This requires cooperation between business owners, real estate developers, public authorities and the civil society. Giving these groups a place to meet - either a virtual or physical space - can be very effective. SmallTownLabs like Hamar's "Bylab" (2018) establish temporary meeting points, in this case a corner store in the central area of town, that provide office space and gathering spaces for smaller and larger audiences. Most importantly, a town lab like ByLab, is a display of ongoing urban development processes and a physical place where different stakeholders can meet, discuss and turn to questions. Access to key personnel, as well as good and open information is seen as a key component in improving the dialogue between stakeholders. ByLab hosts the manager for the inner-city district as well as the municipal project manager and a representative from the planning authority.[41] Bringing these actors together in a physical space improves cooperation and access to stakeholders and is expected to improve coordination between stakeholders and allow for a high degree of citizen participation in urban planning.

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[41] Bylab Hamar: https://www.bylabhamar.no/

ECONOMIC DIMENSION STRATEGIES
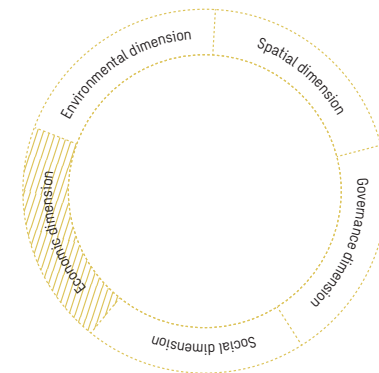
◉ STIMULATE GREEN GROWTH AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Current consumption practices lead to a large amount of waste and an inefficient use of resources. A shift to a circular economy is thus necessary to successfully implement the shift towards green growth. Towns have a key role in achieving this shift through green procurement and setting clear targets for their community through fiscal and knowledge-based incentives.

◉ PROMOTE INNOVATION AND SMART CITIES' SOLUTIONS

"Smart" urban development means to use the available resources more efficiently. Smart" does not necessarily mean technology, but new technologies and data can facilitate good decision making, which can result in reduced use of energy, more optimised mobility systems etc.

"Smart" in many cases requires a good deal of innovation. Building capacity through partnerships with local stakeholders is thus one of the main tasks that small and medium-sized towns need to invest in.

◉ ENSURE CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity, either through physical communication or personal networks, is key to the economic success of small and medium-sized towns. Transport infrastructure, especially long-distance rail systems, creates links to regional and global markets. Access to high-speed internet is not only a factor in the digital age but a prerequisite to reduction of physical travel and the establishment of networks that can foster the exchange of ideas and information.

◉ DEVELOP EMPLOYMENT AND A RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY

Small and medium-sized towns face with the risk of local economic shocks, especially when dependent on a small number of employers. Although a difficult challenge in many places, developing a more resilient local economy is necessary to secure long-term stability. Policies for supporting local entrepreneurship and start-ups can be a good starting point.

◉ ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Many products and services are unsustainable as their manner of production harms the local environment and sometimes even entire communities. Green procurement and the promotion of environmentally sustainable food, products and services are necessary steps to ensure the long-term attractivity and sustainability of small and medium-sized towns. Here, the role of the building industry, which is one of the main CO_2 sources should not be forgotten.

◉ FOSTER COOPERATION AND INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Cooperation beyond administrative and sector boundaries is needed to ensure a wider and more positive impact on the economic system of a town. Private-public partnerships and the participation of civil society ensures that stakeholders in urban development can benefit from cooperation, co-creation and innovation.

◉ STRIVE FOR AN EXCELLENT BUSINESS CLIMATE

All business is local. Close interaction and dialogue between the public and private sectors improve mutual understanding of both opportunities and challenges. Such communication and understanding is the foundation of a good business climate. It makes a place more attractive to invest in and encourages businesses to participate in community development.

◉ INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH SMART SPECIALIZATION

Just as business is local, so are the preconditions for business development. Hence, "one size fits all" types of policies for business development cannot be applied in all small and medium sized towns. Local business development policies need to be "place based" and founded on a solid analysis of the local context. The aim should be to build on local strengths with focus on innovation and value chain creation to enhance smart specialisation.

◎ OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

On the labour market, and often further emphasised in medium-sized and small towns, there is a risk for a mismatch between the labour force and the needs of businesses. In times of change and with a more knowledgebased economy, this risk increases. One remedy is to make sure that the entire labour force can be utilised. This inclusion of "vulnerable groups" such as immigrants, young people without adequate education or making it possibly for pensioners to continue to work according to their ability is very important. It is also important to tackle parts of the labour market that are usually employing almost exclusively men or women. In that case efforts towards a more gender equality are important. A high employment rate contributes not only to opportunities for all but also to lower costs for social services and unemployment support.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

☐ **Have relevant SDG targets been integrated into existing development plans and programs?**

☐ **Do you listen to, and have an active dialogue with the business community in the town?**

☐ **Is the town a business-friendly municipality? Are a range of businesses encouraged?**

☐ **How can knowledge transfers between different business sectors be encouraged?**

☐ **Who can be a strong partner that helps to innovate and improve performance?**

☐ **How do you implement SDGs goals in your local town?**

☐ **Do you have sustainable tourism?**

☐ **How do you adapt to climate change?**

KEY- AND SURVEY INDICATORS

• Basic services proximity (p.22 in Appendix 1)
• Evolution of tourist frequency (p.24 in Appendix 1)
• Gender equality -the gender pay gap (p.30 in Appendix 1)
• NEET share of population (p.31 in Appendix 1)
• Gross regional product – GRP/Capita (p.32 in Appendix 1)
• Share of green public procurement (p.34 in Appendix 1)
• Employment rate (p.34 in Appendix 1)
• Knowledge intensive activities (p.35 in Appendix 1)
• Net migration rate (p.37 in Appendix 1)
• Survey: citizen satisfaction with cultural activities (p.43 in Appendix 1)

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS
NEW JOBS - NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS - NEW IDENTITY

Like many small and medium-sized towns, the Finnish town of Salo has largely been dependent on one industry: the production of mobile phones. The rapid decline of the industry, due to relocalisation and technological changes, forced the town to confront new challenges. It was necessary to transform and reinvent parts of the city and connect them to the existing city centre. In this respect Salo is representative of many small and medium-sized towns that thrive by decreasing their vulnerability to a non-diversified job market, while simultaneously building a more livable town. Working holistically on these issues to use the upgrade of the built environment as an opportunity to attract the right people and business is seen as an important strategic move.

ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION STRATEGIES
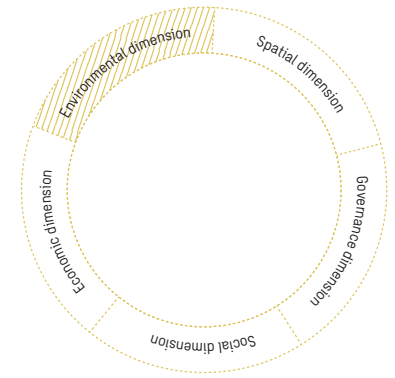
◉ MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

Promote energy efficient buildings and other measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in different sectors.

◉ PROTECT, RESTORE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

Pollution and "land grab" endanger ecosystems and habitats. Increased use of environmental impact assessments and active restoration of habitats are two ways forward. Ensuring a good blue and green structure that also plays different functions in the urban environment is a prerequisite when planning attractive towns.

◉ REDUCE POLLUTION

Pollution is a threat to health and well-being, even in the Nordic countries with their strict requirements, monitoring systems and enforcement. Lately, the use of plastics has become a matter of concern. It will likely become important to monitor plastics use.

◉ ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising sea levels and more common extreme weather conditions will put existing urban structures under pressure. Raising awareness of climate change and taking appropriate measures based on a strategic plan for climate change, as well as developing an integrated crisis management plan are important measures.

◉ MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES SUSTAINABLY AND PREVENT WASTE

Too often, natural resources in products that could be put to new uses at the end of the product's life end up as waste. Measures to sort, reuse, recycle and upcycle contribute to a more effective management of natural resources. Introducing sustainable practices with a lifecycle perspective in all industries is an important step in small and medium-sized towns, in cooperation with the private sector.

◉ PROTECT, PRESERVE AND MANAGE WATER RESOURCES

Ensuring good water quality is one of the prerequisites for healthy environments. The Nordic countries have a very high standard in this area. Protecting wetlands, river basins and shore landscapes is part of the overall integrated land use plan for small and medium-sized towns.

Extreme weather conditions increase the need to handle large volumes of surface water in a short span of time. Designing surface water retention (sponge city) as part of landscaping and infrastructure is an effective approach

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ☐ **Have relevant SDG targets been integrated into existing development plans and programs**
- ☐ **Does the town have an integrated plan for climate adaption?**
- ☐ **Are hazardous zones mapped and is the information easily available for planning processes?**
- ☐ **Does the town have clear requirements for water management?**
- ☐ **Is biodiversity considered in all cases?**
- ☐ **Are important natural resources protected?**
- ☐ **Do you have sustainable tourism?**
- ☐ **Is your town energy efficient?**
- ☐ **How do you adapt to climate change?**

KEY- AND SURVEY INDICATORS

- Green zones and recreational areas proximity (p.21 in Appendix 1)
- Municipal waste (p.28 in Appendix 1)
- Ecosystems services (p.29 in Appendix 1)
- Green public procurement (p.33 in Appendix 1)
- Climate change adaption (p.36 in Appendix 1)
- Survey: satisfaction with public spaces (p.44 in Appendix 1)

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS
WATER AS THE WAY TO GO

The coming consequences of climate change require that towns quickly adapt their built environment, and that we generally move to a more sustainable approach to building and using cities. The Danish town of Middelfart has implemented in their city. One of many actions is the introduction of rain water retention systems, which have the double benefit of reducing flooding, and providing water to maintain the town's green areas. Concrete design proposals are made for different areas of the town depending on their potential. These measures have contributed to increasing the town's blue-green structures and thus contribute to the overall well-being of the inhabitants. Middelfart leads the way for other small and medium-sized towns, showing how to successfully act for climate adaption.

4
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PICTURES

Picture 1: Idea platform. Photo: City of Pori, Finland

Picture 2: Group meeting, Pori, Finland. Photo: Daniel Nagy

Picture 3: Johannes Minsaas plass, Verdal. Photo: City of Verdal, Norway

Picture 4: Evening marked, Salo. Photo: City of Salo, Finland

Picture 5: Waterstreet, Søndergade in Middelfart, Denmark. Photo: Brian Jensen

FIGURES

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation, Illustrated by Sweco, original: Sherry S. Arnstein (1969)

Figure 2: The three dimensions of attractiveness, Knut Vareide, (2013). Programteori for attraktivitet. Sluttrapport, Telemarksforskning

Figure 3: The three dimensions of classic sustainability, (sustainabledevelopment.un.org)

Figure 4: The five dimensions of urban sustainability, Illustration: Sweco

Figure 5: The five dimensions and main themes of urban sustainability, Illustration: Sweco

Figure 6: Values that shape the future, Illustration: Sweco

Figure 7: Trends that shape the future, Illustration: Sweco

APPENDIX

Suggested indicators and toolbox - attractive and sustainable nordic towns and regions (pdf)