

# Supporting sustainable project management

Social, ecological and economic sustainable development is an overarching goal in the Interreg Aurora Programme - this is a requirement from the European Commission.

All Interreg Aurora projects contribute to sustainable development, but you could also make impact in the way you implement the project.



## Interreg Aurora Requirements

The project staff in a regular Interreg Aurora projects shall perform a mandatory workshop to concretize the work with sustainable development in the project and define which of the UN Sustainable Development goals the project will contribute to. Your project specific goals will be highlighted in the project bank on the Interreg Aurora Programme website.

When you write the progress reports to Interreg Aurora you also shall describe how the sustainable thinking has been considered in your project management and activities.

**With this checklist, we hope to give you some guidance and inspiration!**

# Sustainable Interreg Aurora Projects

The Interreg Aurora Programme wants to challenge and inspire project partners to discuss, think and implement sustainable measures.

Which level does your project reach?

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## Level 1 - MANDATORY FOR ALL PROJECTS!

### Doing the basics

- You have organised the project specific workshop regarding sustainable development and the UN Sustainable Development goals (for regular projects).
- You describe in your progress reports how sustainable development has been considered in connection to the project management and activities.
- You use the symbols of the UN Sustainable development goals when you communicate your project. You can highlight the symbols that your project contributes to on your website, social media channels, in your reports and videos. The Interreg Aurora Programme highlights the specific goals in the project bank on our official website.

## Level 2

### Going further

- You have made sustainable development a recurring item on your meeting agendas (in example Project Management Group meetings, Work package activities, Steering Group meetings). Maybe you could even appoint one of your project members to be an ambassador for your sustainability work?
- Sustainability is considered for all decisions taken during the project time – and is also considered when planning for the project exit and afterlife.
- All project personnel are to be made aware of the purpose and benefits of this and the importance of communicating social, ecological and economic sustainability, both internal and external.
- All project members have been made aware of this document and participated in the workshop about the UN Sustainable development goals.

## Level 3

### Frontrunner

- You give tangible examples on how you are working with sustainable development and you highlight all the specific activities that you are doing to contribute to the goals, both in internal and external communication.
- You have invited experts and arranged activities to highlight and raise awareness of sustainable development.

## Interreg Aurora made you a checklist!

We want to strengthen your project organisation with a practical checklist.

# Ecological Sustainability

Projects should strive to reduce consumption and the impact on the earth's ecosystems. It is important to make more efficient use of resources for all daily activities through electronic management, paperless communication, more on-line trainings and events and use of in-house equipment.

What else can your project do to limit the negative environmental effects and reduce climate impact?

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## Guidelines and management systems

- ☐ Find out if the organisations in your project partnership have environmental guidelines or an environmental management system you can implement in your project.

## Meetings and travel

- ☐ Discuss your approach to meetings and travels with your project partners early on in the project to minimize your environmental impact and at the same time safeguard a sustainable working life for the project personnel. It is always important to plan travels that feels safe for the project personnel, long distance driving, late flights and transports from accommodations far from event sites can be stressful.

## Calculate the carbon footprint of your activities:

- ☐ There are many tools available online for free, for example [MyClimate tool](#).

## Reflect before booking a meeting:

- ☐ Can the possibility of travel-free meetings be considered as a first alternative? Can we have an online meeting?

## Reflect when you get a meeting request:

- ☐ Do I need to participate physically or can I participate digitally?
- ☐ - Maybe you need to participate physically, but do you need to fly? Can you fly one way? Can you take public transportation? Can you share car with another participant? If you are many participants, could it be better to rent a bus?
- ☐ Solutions with online meetings are practical, timesaving, give the possibility for more people to join the meeting and can reduce your projects environmental impact. It is important to agree about a tool for online meetings that works for all project partners.

## Equipment

- ☐ Do you need specific equipment in the project? Before you order new equipment consider if you can:
  - Re-use?
  - Rent?
  - Lend?
  - Swap? Rather than looking to buy a specific product, investigate what kind of function you are looking for.
- ☐ Maybe your organisations have in-house equipment you can use.

### Dissemination of projects results

- ☐ Your project results will have a better chance of a sustainable long-term effect after the project closure if the public is aware of your projects accomplishments. It is important that you have a clear plan for how and where you will make your results public.

### Publications and dissemination products

- ☐ Publications can be disseminated mainly electronically on websites, social media and other media channels. Printing of publications should only be made if it is strictly necessary and with a clear dissemination plan.
- ☐ Publications should be printed for external communication purposes (if needed only) on both sides and on recycled paper or ecolabel paper.
- ☐ Short, clear and “to-the-point” publications should be preferred to long ones and images should be reduced to save printing space, maximizing the use of space.
- ☐ Publications should be printed where they are going to be distributed to minimize transportation distances. Can you use an ecofriendly labeled printing company?
- ☐ Banners and posters should be designed for reuse. Avoid tailormade banners and posters with fixed date/place/name of event.

### Giveaways, promoting materials

- ☐ Reflect upon if you really need giveaways? Only useful products can be produced. Recycled or natural material should be preferred to produce promotional products.

### Procurement

- ☐ The environmental effects should always be considered in the procurement procedure. Is it possible to systematically using green or circular public procurement, or applying greening principles in event organisation?

### Meetings and events

- ☐ Applying greening principles for the organisation of meetings and events provides high visibility for sustainable development. It is important to communicate effectively what kind of greening measures is applied, so that the event participants are made aware of the green efforts.

Some countries offer a green meeting certification for venues and event organization companies. Certified service providers should be preferred in the meeting.

# Interreg Aurora have prepared a checklist for organising meetings and events.

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## Venue and Catering

- ☐ Include sustainability in your procurement.
- ☐ Accessibility-adapted premises.
- ☐ Choose a venue close to public transport.
- ☐ The start and end of meeting are adjusted to the schedule of environmentally sound transportation.
- ☐ Choose accommodation located near public transportation, preferably within walking distance from venue.
- ☐ Ask for tap water or glass bottles.
- ☐ Ask for reusable tableware, avoid disposable items.
- ☐ Limit the meat options (if possible).
- ☐ Ask for a menu with fresh, organic, local and seasonal food.
- ☐ If fish, marine or aquaculture food is served, make sure it is not endangered and certified as caught or produced using sustainable methods.
- ☐ Ask how the venue tackles food waste.
- ☐ Ask how the venue works with reducing their CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and energy consumption.

## Waste Reduction

- ☐ Aim for designing a waste free event. Recycle the waste you can't avoid.
- ☐ Download the agenda and other documents on your phone or laptop instead of printing it.
- ☐ Bring a reusable bottle of water, coffee mug and bag.
- ☐ Avoid promotional gifts.
- ☐ Choose recycled materials or reuse materials.
- ☐ Consider a paperless event, provide materials online.
- ☐ A dedicated area is provided for return of materials that can be reused, such as badges.

## Purchasing, use and minimize waste

- ☐ Buy from ethical sources.
- ☐ Look for fair trade products, especially important for imported products like sugar, chocolates and coffee.

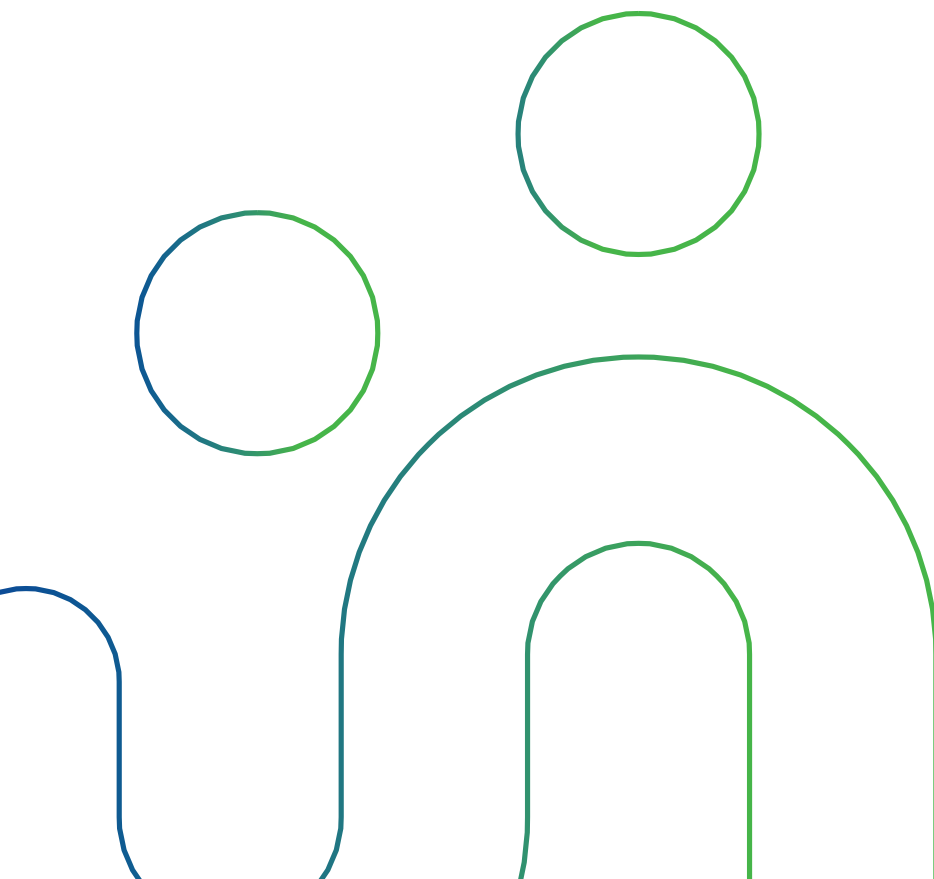
**Fairtrade International**  
**Fairtrade Sverige**  
**Fairtrade Finland**  
**Fairtrade Norge**

### Transportation

- ☐ Provide instructions to participants on appropriate public transportation and walking distances from arrival and departure points to venue, accommodation, town Centre etc. Help them to arrange car-pooling if that is a suitable option.

### Communication

- ☐ Communicate about the greening efforts. Tell your participants about your sustainability goals on the event, send them a checklist how they can contribute to your goals!
- ☐ Send a checklist to your participants before your event where you highlight the sustainability efforts, that the participants also can contribute to a more sustainable event.



# Social Sustainability

**Social sustainability means promoting a society that respects the fundamental rights of all people and fostering a fair, equal, and inclusive society.**

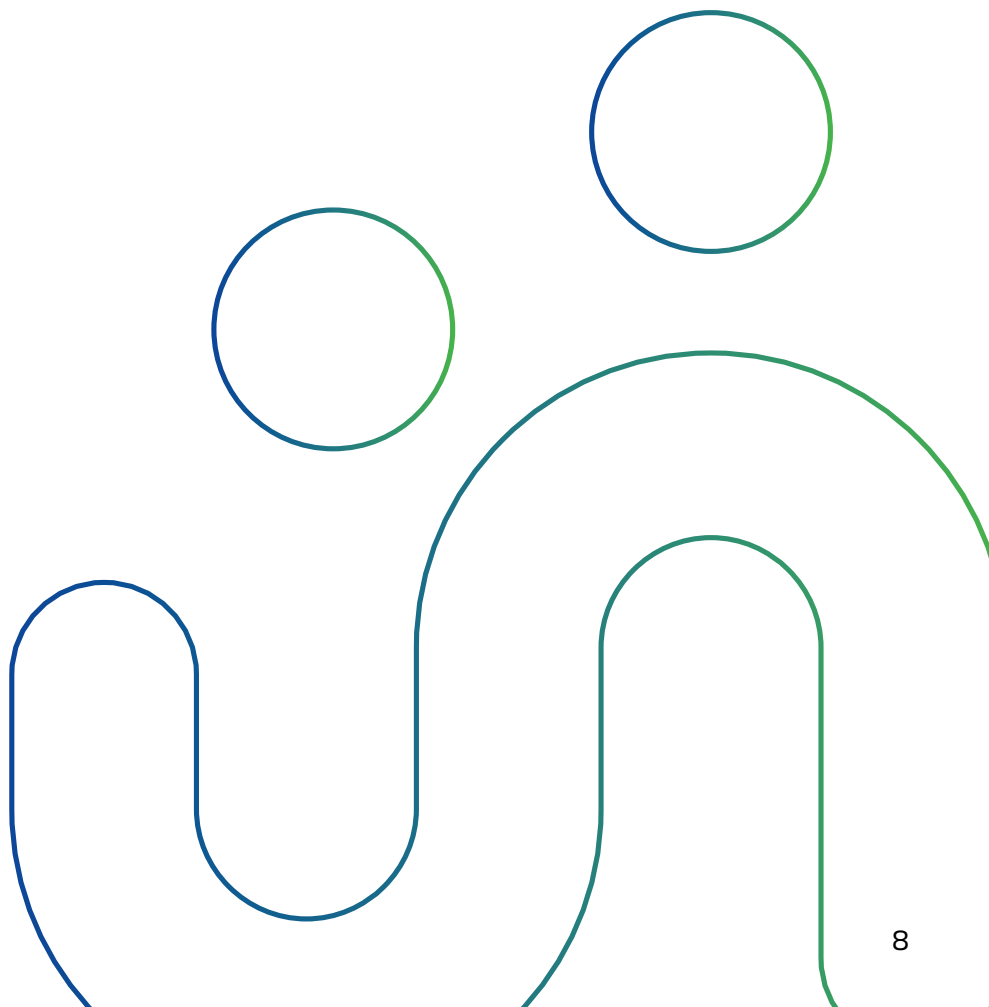
**Your project must contribute to gender equality and non-discrimination.**

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- ☐ Do you have an open discussion climate where everyone is welcome to express their opinion? Is everyone's opinion respected? What kind of atmosphere do you have in your project organisation?
- ☐ Consider which language you are using in your events and in your project communication. Although English is the programme language of Interreg Aurora, it is possible to use local languages when communicating with your target groups.
- ☐ Is there a need for translation services? Make sure to budget for translation services where you see a need for it. Translation is seen as an eligible cost under External Expertise.
- ☐ Do you have knowledge about equal opportunities and non-discrimination? Does everyone in the project organisation know the discrimination laws?  
Gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion etc. Many organisations have discovered that diversity among the staff is an asset that gives an increased attractiveness.
- ☐ Take the opportunity to hire a youth volunteer to your project. Interreg Volunteer Youth programme can give financial contribution to the volunteers to cover part of their expenses. [Read more in the guidelines.](#)
- ☐ If your project activities include support to participating companies, make sure that you form your offer in an inclusive way. Also be aware of what kind of companies you are supporting, in terms of sustainability and quality.
- ☐ How is the gender equality in your project organisation? Often the easiest way to handle the question of gender equality is to count the number of men and women. But it is also important to consider which roles the persons have. Who has power over the agenda? Who gets what and on what terms?
- ☐ There are female-dominated and male-dominated professions. Can your project contribute to break these stereotypes in any way? To break traditional stereotypes is one of the most important things to reach equality between genders.
- ☐ If there are available statistics on men and women in the field of your project, it might be a good idea to compare the statistics and aim at arranging specific activities to enhance equality.
- ☐ When arranging conferences and seminars, try to find both male and female speakers and give them equal amount of speaking time and importance on the agenda. If you don't find speakers of both genders locally, widen the search.

- ☐ When planning conferences and such, do you make sure that everyone can participate? Are the facilities accessible? Is it possible to order special meals? Remember to communicate your efforts in the invitation.
- ☐ What kind of photos and illustrations are you using? Symbolism is important. Who is active in the picture? Who is represented on the photos and illustrations?
- ☐ Remember to write your texts in a plain, easy-to-understand language.
- ☐ Read about the rules that apply to your organisation regarding accessibility. You can find more information on:

[www.digg.se](http://www.digg.se)  
[www.saavutettavuusvaatimukset.fi](http://www.saavutettavuusvaatimukset.fi)  
[www.digdir.no](http://www.digdir.no)





# Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability means using, caring for and maintaining resources to create long-term sustainable economic value in society.

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- ☐ The project is managing and developing human and material resources and supporting long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community.
- ☐ The project must be characterized by cost efficiency. This means that all costs must be in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. The purpose of cost-effectiveness is to increase the focus on results and to ensure the correct use of EU funds.

## Finally

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Communicate what you do so that others can get inspired!

Please contact [interregaurora@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:interregaurora@lansstyrelsen.se) if you have more suggestions on how to implement your project in a sustainable way.