

MASTER THESIS

Course code:

BE328E

Candidate name:

Inki Roald Brown

Greener together?

A study of the Climate Partners network in
Hordaland, Norway

Date: May 19, 2017

Total number of pages: 63

Abstract

Greener together? A study of the Climate Partners network in Hordaland, Norway

Inki Roald Brown, May 19, 2017, Nord University

This MBA thesis investigates how membership in the Climate Partners network in Hordaland, Norway helps medium- to large-size organizations reach their environmental goals.

Climate Partners is a network of public and private organizations which is currently established in three areas in Norway. For this study, representatives from eight of these organizations, all affiliated with the Hordaland chapter, were interviewed regarding main success factors contributing to their sustainability targets, as well as how they perceived the role of their Climate Partners membership in reaching their goals.

The results show that participation in the network was indeed of assistance in the organizations' sustainability work, particularly in building knowledge and providing inspiration for further improvements. Being required to submit yearly environmental reports was also seen as a contributing factor towards reaching goals, as was the leadership engagement which is enhanced through meetings twice a year.

In conclusion, this thesis provides support for the idea that belonging to an environmental learning network can enhance an organization's sustainability performance.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the concluding chapter to a three-year MBA in Ecological Economics at Nord university in Bodø. These three years have been inspirational, thought-provoking, challenging, and full of learning, and it is a study that I would recommend to anyone interested in combining some core MBA topics with different perspectives on how to build a better future.

I would like to thank those who have made the study possible:

My advisor, Ove Jakobsen, as well as the other faculty and my fellow MBA students, who turned lectures and gatherings into interesting discussions.

My interviewees who willingly provided their perspectives and shared their experiences.

My employer, Emisoft AS, who provided me with a flexible work schedule so that I could travel to seminars several times each semester.

And last, but certainly not least, my family who have been supportive and understanding of the requirements of combining studies with a full-time job. A great thank you to Robert, Ella, and Maia, as well as Andor, Ingvild, Signe, and Peter who have all contributed when needed.

Index

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Climate change as a global challenge.....	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Thesis structure.....	3
1.4 Intended audience	4
2 Theoretical background: Regional environmental learning networks.....	5
2.1 Regional environmental networks.....	5
2.2 Learning networks	6
2.3 Examples of similar networks.....	7
2.4 Conclusion.....	8
3 Methodology	10
3.1 Study design	10
3.2 Structure for information gathering.....	11
3.3 Types of data	12
3.4 Interview technique.....	12
3.5 Privacy issues	13
3.6 Validity.....	14
3.7 Reliability.....	14
3.8 Potential risks related to the role of the researcher.....	15
3.9 Potential unintended consequences of this study	15
3.10 Scope of the study.....	16
4 Situational description of Climate Partners	17
4.1 Regional chapters	17
4.2 Membership criteria.....	18
4.3 Services provided by Climate Partners.....	19
4.4 Results achieved	22
4.4.1 Membership growth	22
4.4.2 GHG emissions reductions	23
5 Success factors for environmental work: Introduction.....	27
6 Leadership commitment	28
7 Employee engagement.....	30
8 Knowledge sharing and building.....	33
9 Quantifiable reporting and targets.....	36
9.1 Theoretical background.....	36
9.2 How quantifiable reporting and targets contribute to success.....	38
9.3 Climate Partners contribution.....	40
10 Environmental management systems	43
10.1 Theoretical background.....	43
10.1.1 Eco-Lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn)	44
10.1.2 ISO 14001.....	44
10.2 Environmental management systems as success factor	45
10.3 Climate Partners contribution.....	46

11 External factors.....48

12 Conclusions.....49

 12.1 Potential areas for further research.....51

13 Annexes.....52

 13.1 Literature.....52

 13.2 Interview guide.....56

Table of figures

Figure 1: Climate Partners logo 17

Figure 2: Top management meeting in Climate Partners Hordaland 2017 19

Figure 3: Climate Partners membership 22

Figure 4: Total GHG emissions Climate Partners Hordaland since 2013 24

Figure 5: Companies with GHG emissions < 1000 t CO2e per year 25

Figure 6: Companies with GHG emissions between 1000 and 10000 t CO2e per year 25

Figure 7: Companies with GHG emissions > 10000 t CO2e per year 26

Figure 8: Scopes of greenhouse gas emissions 37

1 Introduction

1.1 *Climate change as a global challenge*

Climate change is one of our time's greatest challenges. An overwhelming scientific consensus says human activities are contributing to flooding, droughts, and the spread of disease by increasing the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014, pp 48-65).

The Paris agreement, reached on December 12, 2015, commits 195 signatory parties to take ambitious action to keep the rise of average global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius by 2099 (United Nations, 2015). This continues the push from the 2005 Kyoto Protocol to commit countries to take action against climate change. However, tackling climate change will require efforts not only by governments, but also by private citizens as well as businesses and organizations.

This thesis specifically considers the part to be played by organizations and businesses. According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Davis et al., 2010, p. 5), "there will be a new agenda for business leaders," one where these challenges can be used "as an impetus for investments that open up the search for solutions and the realization of opportunities." (ibid.) The actions taken by organizations to reduce their impact on the climate will be a key part of the necessary way forward.

However, knowing what to do and how to go about it is not necessarily easy. One way to facilitate this process is by creating networks where organizations can work together toward common goals. Research done by Giest, S. and Howlett, M. (2013) shows that cooperation like this is especially beneficial when these networks "target a specific region and are supported by government" (p. 341).

Klimapartnere ("Climate Partners") are "regional Private Public Partnership networks in Norway focusing on how a region can reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and develop a green economy" (klimapartnere.no). Founded in Agder in southern Norway, the network has existed since 2009 and has since expanded to both Hordaland in western Norway and Troms in the northern part of the country.

I have myself been an active participant in Climate Partners Hordaland and have seen the organization in action, as I am my employer's representative in the network. This has allowed me insight into the benefits that such a network can bring, the motivation that can result from working toward a common goal, and how one organization can serve as inspiration to others. That has been my motivation for exploring this topic further and to hopefully contribute knowledge that might make Climate Partners, and other networks like it, even more effective in their sustainability efforts. It is worth noting, however, that this personal involvement also has its weaknesses, as discussed in chapter 3.8.

1.2 Problem statement

This thesis explores how members in Climate Partners Hordaland work with sustainability issues, as well as how the network contributes to their success.

The main issue this study will examine is the following:

What are some main success factors in environmental work for medium to large member organizations in Climate Partners Hordaland, and how does their membership in the network help them achieve these?

To define "success", we look to John Elkington's "Triple bottom line". According to Hubbard (2006, p. 180), this "is based on the idea that a firm should measure its performance in relation to stakeholders including local communities and governments" and "implies that the firm's responsibilities are much wider than simply those related to the economic aspects of producing products and services that customers want, to regulatory standards, at a profit." In other words, it is not only financial aspects, but also social and environmental ones, that play a part in a company's success (Savitz, 2013, p. 5).

In this study, we will focus mostly on the environmental part of the triple bottom line, which Hubbard (ibid.) describes thusly: "Environmental performance generally refers to the amount of resources a firm uses in its operations (e.g. energy, land, water) and the by-products its activities create (e.g. waste, air emissions, chemical residues etc.)."

For this study, then, when referring to "success" we mean a company's reaching or approaching its goals within environmental performance. By "success factor" we mean

an element that contributes to or enables this success. In line with the definition above, these are elements that may contribute to or enable the reduction of resource consumption or by-products emitted by the organization.

This paper will investigate the success factors identified by the member organizations studied, and further describe how the interviewees see their membership in Climate Partners contributing to these success factors, and therefore aiding the companies in reaching their environmental goals.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis is structured in the following main sections:

- **Chapter 2: Theoretical background on environmental learning networks**

This section explores the theory and earlier research into this kind of network in order to find relevant information about how cooperation between organizations can assist in sustainability work. The chapter also includes some examples of other environmental learning networks.

- **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The chapter about methodology explains how the study has been conducted and also describes potential issues related to the study.

- **Chapter 4: Situational description of the Climate Partners network**

To provide an understanding of the work done in the network, this section describes the structure and the core commitments of Climate Partners, as well as some notes on the role of the project coordinator.

- **Chapters 5-11: Success factors for environmental work**

For each of the main success factors identified, a chapter presents relevant theoretical background, gives the interviewees' perspectives on why the factor is important, and finally discusses how participation in the Climate Partners network is contributing to achieving success, as described by the study participants.

- **Chapter 12: Conclusions**

This final chapter draws conclusions based on the previously presented information, and also suggests some areas for further studies.

1.4 Intended audience

The results of this study may be interesting for several groups:

- **Climate Partners management, members, and other stakeholders**

Several stakeholders have expressed their interest in learning about the results the network has achieved so far and how the network can positively influence the member organizations, as well as potential areas for improvement.

- **Others who wish to start up similar networks in Norway or abroad**

The Climate Partners network has received inquiries from within Norway and from abroad about how it works, the benefits of membership, and how to get started. The results of this study should be of help for others who are considering establishing similar networks of their own.

- **Other organizations that want to improve their environmental management**

In addition to serving as inspiration and sources of information for network members, the knowledge gained in this study may also help other organizations identify steps that they themselves can take to reduce their emissions, as well as key success factors as identified in the study.

2 Theoretical background: Regional environmental learning networks

Climate Partners is not the only network of organizations working together to improve their environmental performance, and several benefits have been found from this kind of collaboration. This section will explore the theory and practice behind similar collaborative networks, using Akiyama's (2010) definition of a network as "a form of organization where various actors, on an autonomous basis, can interact with others freely and exchange unique and creative communications." (p. 226).

Collaboration and networking between organizations is a topic of interest to a great many researchers. There may be many reasons for this, but Bessant and Tsekouras (2001) sum up a common observation when they state that "there is extensive evidence to support the view that some form of cooperation represents a viable alternative to more traditional confrontational models" (p. 83).

According to Dybvig, Ingebrigtsen, Jakobsen & Nystad (2013), a network perspective, where the goals of a company are "harmonized with the norms and values of external actors" (p. 14, my translation) provides a contrast to the atomistic world view traditionally promoted in economics. They go on to say that "competition should in many cases be supplemented by, and in some cases replaced by, co-operation. The reason is that it is easier to reach common goals if the actors work together to find reasonable solutions to the most serious challenges" (ibid.) The network way of thinking can find solutions that promote the "triple bottom line" (as briefly explained in chapter 1) of social, environmental, and economic benefits.

2.1 *Regional environmental networks*

Dybvig, Ingebrigtsen, Jakobsen & Nystad (2013) state that voluntary bottom-up networks centered around sustainability have become more common in recent years (p. 100), and that these, among other initiatives, have contributed substantially to integrating corporate responsibility in companies (p. 102). They also say that establishing arenas for dialog is essential for finding solutions for challenging situations (p. 185).

Giest and Howlett (2013) have done research on networks of municipal governments in the same region, and have found that "regional and in-depth networks...hold members

responsible in the area of climate change, due to the tighter connections among members and the defined guidelines” (p. 351). They were speaking of networks of municipal governments in the same region, but much the same can be assumed to be true of networks such as Climate Partners which combine public and privately owned organizations.

Hultmann et al. (2015, p. 163) also endorse the virtues of providing regional connections: “It is only at the local level that overarching principles can be turned into concrete action, making progress in line with national priorities”. They state that the ties to other organizations in the same region help provide a common goal to work towards together.

2.2 *Learning networks*

Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2013) define learning as “a process where people and organizations acquire new knowledge and change their behavior on the basis of this knowledge” (p. 353, my translation). According to them, it is not enough to simply be told something new; there is also a component of changing one’s behavior based on this new information. They go on to state that learning can happen by observing others and glean wisdom from their experiences, and that this effect is greatest when the information comes from someone the learners trust and deem relevant to their own situation (p. 359).

A learning network, consisting of “persons and groups that gather across a certain type of organizations, and that exchange knowledge concerning special phenomena or technologies” (ibid., 2013, p. 229, my translation) is thus a way to distribute relevant information from trusted parties in order to facilitate a change in someone’s behavior. Bessant and Tsekouras (2001) say that learning networks can bring in new perspectives, shared experimentation can reduce risks, and shared experiences can provide support (p. 88). These aspects of learning together are all of benefit to organizations that participate.

Pietri, Stevenson & Christie (2015) studied several regional learning networks within the field of conservation and marine and land management and found that such networks, through “repeated interactions, sharing of ideas, and development of collective knowledge lead not only to learning, but also to the development of social

capital: goodwill generated through repeated interactions among members of a social network” (p. 166). In turn, this goodwill generates trust, which makes it more likely that the members of the network can work together towards common goals.

They also warn, however, that in practice this kind of network requires “substantial investment of time and resources from network organizers and participants” (ibid.). They advocate for a local coordinating body to organize activities and initiatives to achieve the greatest possible effect of such a network (p. 175). Bessant and Tsekouras (2001) agree that “networking as a process may not happen without some assistance, both in terms of arranging relevant mechanisms (running workshops, editing newsletters, etc.) and also in energising and motivating learning and in enabling effective interchange of experience to take place” (p. 93). This coordinating assistance is highly relevant to the case of Climate Partners. As we shall see, the project coordinators play an important role in the network as they organize meetings, follow up with individual members, and promote the network and its activities.

2.3 *Examples of similar networks*

Several networks exist with the aims of enabling organizations to cooperate to reduce their environmental impact. Some examples will be briefly described in this section. As we shall see, several of the features of these examples are also important parts of the Climate Partners structure.

- **United Nations Global Compact Local Networks**

Hultmann et al. (2015) describe the impact the United Nations Global Compact has had on sustainability in the period 2000 – 2015, within the fields of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption. In their report, they identify the Global Compact Local Networks as important drivers to “bring local communities together to carry out meaningful change” (p. 152). These country-wide networks assist Global Compact signatories in advancing sustainability issues relevant to their region by offering “workshops for education and training, building partnerships, or giving a voice to small stakeholders in policy debates” (ibid.). Some of the network activities echo those of the Climate Partners network as further described in chapter 4: regular networking and knowledge-sharing workshops, tools to assist in sustainability

reporting, CEO roundtable forums, reports showing the participants' progress, and publications highlighting best practices within a range of areas.

- **World Business Council for Sustainable Development**

According to wbcSD.org, “WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses and partners working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world.” WBCSD members, who come from various sectors, work together in clusters for Climate & Energy, Ecosystems & Landscape Management, Social Impact, Sustainable Lifestyles, Sustainable Materials, and Water. The network provides learning opportunities and tools to help their members work towards fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals set forth by the UN. By enabling collaboration across the network, they “help (...) deliver business solutions that could never be realized by a single company alone” (ibid.).

- **GreenBiz Executive Network**

The GreenBiz Executive Network webpage (greenbiz.org) describes it as “a membership-based, peer-to-peer learning forum for sustainability executives from the world’s largest companies.” A key feature of the network is regular events which “focus on a specific departmental theme such as purchasing, supply chain, energy management, financial risk, HR, marketing and other functions (ibid.)” and where members can bring colleagues to the relevant teleconferences.

2.4 Conclusion

As we have seen, networks which promote co-operation rather than competition can benefit the members of such networks. Providing networks specifically for organizations to learn from each other and pull together towards a common goal is one strategy for contributing to sustainability work. The effect can be expected to be especially large when the network is regionally based.

A common feature of such networks is the organization of regular events where members can share experiences and draw inspiration from others. This frequent interaction builds trust between the participants and can lay the groundwork for co-operation. In addition, being part of a larger group can build “peer pressure” and push companies in the direction of sustainability. As we shall see, such events are also central to the structure of Climate Partners.

The next chapter will explain the methodology used in this study, to explore how the theory is operationalized in the Climate Partners network, before chapters 5-11 delve into the main success factors of environmental work as identified by the study participants.

3 Methodology

3.1 Study design

Merriam (2014, p. 4) states that “in its broadest sense, research is a systematic process by which we know more about something than we did before engaging in the process”. In this study, the goal is to know more about the impact of the Climate Partners network. As stated earlier, the central problem statement is as follows:

What are some main success factors in environmental work for medium to large member organizations in Climate Partners Hordaland, and how does their membership in the network help them achieve these?

The research will be guided by descriptive methodology; the main content of the study will be describing the perceived impact of membership from the perspective of eight of the medium to large size organizations in the Hordaland chapter of the Climate Partners network. In addition, chapter 4 describes the operations of the network as given by the project coordinators.

The study relies heavily on qualitative research where, in the words of Merriam (2014, pp. 15-16) “bits and pieces of information from interviews, observations, or documents are combined and ordered into larger themes as the researcher works from the particular to the general.” The study will be inspired by evaluation research based on multicase study design.

According to Johannesen, Christoffersen, & Tufte (2011, p. 90), a case study entails that “the researcher collects a large amount of information from a small number of cases... through detailed and extensive data collection” (my translation). Merriam (2014) states that the case can be anything from a single person to a program or a group, as long as it can be delineated and separated from other groups (p. 40). She goes on to say that studies with multiple cases within the same group are commonly used to find general themes and “enhance the external validity” of the study’s findings (p. 49-50).

Thus, the multicase design corresponds well to how this research is planned, in that the number of units to be studied is relatively small (eight organizations within the same

network), and the data collected will go into a number of details concerning the organization's environmental management practices and experiences.

According to Merriam (2014): "evaluation research collects data or evidence on the worth or value of a program, process, or technique" (p. 4). Merriam also singles out case study research as being a particularly appealing design for evaluating programs and to "bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice" (p. 51). In this case, the program to be evaluated is the operation of the Climate Partners network in Hordaland, and hopefully, the new knowledge gained will be useful for stakeholders striving to make future improvements to the network and for others seeking to set up similar networks elsewhere.

3.2 *Structure for information gathering*

Information has been gathered in the following ways:

- **Theoretical framework**

Relevant concepts within environmental work have been researched and included in this paper to provide background to the elements that are explored. Firstly, this concerns concepts related to regional environmental learning networks, as discussed in chapter 2. Secondly, success criteria outlined by the interviewed parties have also been explored further so as to provide information relevant to the understanding of these criteria; this is included in chapters 5-11.

- **Background on Climate Partners**

Sources of information on Climate Partners (and in particular Climate Partners Hordaland) include the klimapartnere.no website and publications such as their annual reports. In addition, I have conducted interviews with the project managers of Climate Partners Hordaland (in person) and Climate Partners Agder (on Skype) about the structure of Climate Partners, the role they perform, and their experiences of the member organizations' feedback. The results of these interviews are part of the situational description of Climate Partners in chapter 4.

- **Information from a sample of the members of Climate Partners Hordaland**

Based on the information in the aforementioned annual reports from Climate Partners Hordaland, I selected a sample to interview. Among other things, the annual reports

include greenhouse gas (GHG) disclosure from the members. These numbers have been used to identify the organizations most relevant for interviews; i.e. the ones of medium to large size. According to Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, p. 110), this kind of purposeful sampling will allow information gathering in as effective a way as possible to identify the "extreme, special, or extraordinary" cases; in this case the focus was on medium to large organizations in the Hordaland chapter.

The most relevant organizations were contacted and invited to the study, and eight out of nine accepted. Interviews were then conducted using the interview guide found in the appendix. The participants were a mix of public and private companies.

Topics discussed included the organization's participation in the Climate Partners network, and the benefits that they feel they have received from being a member, achieving or maintaining an environmental certification, the practice of GHG reporting, and the management's involvement in environmental management. Key success factors to their environmental work were an overarching theme of each conversation.

3.3 *Types of data*

Data is a combination of existing information published in the Climate Partners network's annual reports and new information gathered through interviews with the project coordinators and the companies. The former is mainly quantitative data (i.e. climate impacts and size of the company), while the latter is mostly qualitative (e.g., the perceived impact of belonging to the partnership, the leadership team's buy-in into environmental management, and specific steps taken by each organization).

3.4 *Interview technique*

The semi-structured interviews guided by the questions listed in the appendix ensured that all relevant topics were covered, while allowing informants to spend the most time on what they felt have been the most relevant success factors and benefits for their organizations.

Interviewees have in most cases been the contact persons for the organizations in the Climate Partners network. These are often environmental managers or work within communications. In some cases, the interviewee has also been from the organization's

management team. Five of the interviews were conducted with one representative from the organization, while three of the companies provided two participants who could give different viewpoints and experiences.

The interviews were scheduled to last one hour, and they were held in the interviewees' work places. They were recorded using a smartphone app (Smart Voice Recorder) and relevant parts were transcribed shortly after the interviews.

Once transcribed, the data was categorized to interpret the results and find common threads. Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, pp. 188-189) emphasize the importance of establishing categories that can be used consistently throughout the data set. This can be done using coding to end up with sets of categories and sub-categories. In this case, Excel was used to structure the information gathered using a set of codes that evolved as the categorization progressed.

3.5 *Privacy issues*

There are no obvious privacy issues in this study. This thesis does not describe the actions of individuals, but rather how organizations take steps to combat climate change. These steps are driven by individuals, but are not tied to personal information.

There are three categories of data to be considered:

- **Data gathered from public sources**

The information gathered from the annual reports published by Climate Partners is considered public information that can be freely used, as these reports are readily available at klimapartnere.no

- **Data gathered from interviews with the project coordinators**

The project coordinators from Climate Partners Hordaland and Agder were interviewed to give background information about how the network is run. No personal information was given, nor anything that would compromise any organization.

- **Data gathered from interviews with member organizations**

No identifying information about the study participants from member organizations is included. All informants have signed a consent form before the interview to ensure that they realize how the data will be used, and the data has been anonymized. This

approach has been approved by Personvernombudet (personal correspondence, March 2017).

3.6 *Validity*

According to Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, p. 73), validity concerns itself with the relationship between the phenomenon to be researched and the data gathered, asking the question: “will the data be relevant to the problem at hand?”

To ensure internal validity, the interview guide was created to ensure that the questions are relevant to the problem, and a main task while conducting the interviews has been to remain focused upon the main questions.

External validity is, according to Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, p. 411), the question of whether the results found can be generalized enough that they can be said to be valid for a larger group. That is a difficult question to answer; as the interviewed organizations all belong to the same chapter of the same network, the success factors that they bring up are not necessarily the same as other organizations might, and participation in a different network might not have had the same effect as what they are currently experiencing as members of Climate Partners Hordaland. However, it is to be hoped that the findings in this study may be of some use to others seeking to set up similar networks, or to improve the workings of the Climate Partners network itself.

3.7 *Reliability*

Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, p. 44) describe reliability as the accuracy of the collected data; the types of data as well as methods used to gather and process them. As one way of testing the reliability of the data, they say that “if many researchers reach the same result, it is an indicator of high reliability” (interreliability).

There have been no previous studies done on the Climate Partners network. However, descriptions of similar networks (as described in chapter 2) show the effects of learning networks. There is therefore precedent for the results presented here.

3.8 *Potential risks related to the role of the researcher*

The fact that I am personally involved in the Climate Partners network brings with it several potential challenges. One is a bias towards wanting to see benefits where there may be few or none. However, while I do think that this kind of network is a good way to approach climate leadership, I have seven years' experience as an environmental consultant which helps me be objective and judge achievement on its own merits.

Another is the personal acquaintance I have with several of the interviewees. This can be either a drawback or a benefit. In some cases, the interviewees may have been more likely to be honest with someone they know; in some, they may be used to seeing me as a representative of my employer rather than as a researcher. Being aware of this challenge and separating my roles as employee and interviewer was important while conducting the interviews; all participants were explicitly told that I was doing this work as a student on my own private initiative.

3.9 *Potential unintended consequences of this study*

Interviewing subjects about a particular matter may have the effect of making that matter feel more important and relevant to them. As Johannesen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2011, p. 94, my translation) say, "Another way research can influence people is through the perceptions of reality and the knowledge it communicates". However, they go on to say that "this is not necessarily problematic; sometimes this is desired both by the interviewer and the interviewees." (ibid.)

In this case, asking environmental managers about the efforts that their companies make to reduce their negative footprint might very well prod them into increasing those efforts. However, this effect would not be undesirable, neither for the specific employees, their companies, or the world at large.

In fact, several interviewees pointed out that they felt they had benefitted from the interview, because it forced them to reflect on the benefits they received from their membership, and prodded them into considering how they might take even more advantage of the possibilities offered by the network.

3.10 Scope of the study

The scope of any study is necessarily limited. In this case, some of the facets that are not included are:

- **Smaller organizations**

This study focuses on organizations of medium to large size, and companies smaller than 100 employees were not considered for inclusion. The reason for this is to focus on the companies that have the larger direct environmental impact.

- **Organizations that are members of other chapters of Climate Partners**

As will be described in chapter 4, Climate Partners is present in three regions of Norway. While the project managers from both Agder and Hordaland have provided information, all the member organizations interviewed belong to the Hordaland chapter. This selection enables a deeper understanding of how that particular chapter functions, and it has also allowed me to conduct the interviews in the participants' places of work while being physically present, which may have contributed to them being comfortable expressing their opinions.

- **Organizations that are not members of the Climate Partners network**

It is probable that there is some self-selection in who joins Climate Partners; an organization that does not practice any kind of environmental management will likely not seek out this kind of network as a member. The experiences of member organizations may therefore differ a bit from those that are not members. However, the success factors identified might well be applicable elsewhere.

4 Situational description of Climate Partners

The Climate Partners approach has received attention internationally, and was presented as one of the inspiring examples of how to take action on climate change in “30 ways in 30 days”, a brochure published by the United Nations Environment Programme (Bindra, Morrell & Roberts, 2011, p. 38).

This section will provide background information about the Climate Partners network in order to enable a better understanding of how the work is organized and how this helps enhance the members’ environmental efforts. This information is collected from interviews performed with the project coordinators for both Climate Partners Agder and Climate Partners Hordaland, as well as from the klimapartnere.no website and the annual reports published by the network.



Figure 1: Climate Partners logo

4.1 Regional chapters

Klimapartnere (“Climate Partners”) are “regional Private Public Partnership networks in Norway focusing on how a region can reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and develop a green economy” (klimapartnere.no). The idea of keeping membership regional to ease communication and promote a common understanding between members is central to the network, but it is important to note that the basic structure and criteria for membership are the same across all chapters.

Currently, the organization consists of three chapters, while this study focuses only on the Hordaland chapter.

- **Klimapartnere Agder**

Founded in Agder in southern Norway, the original network has existed since 2009 and today consists of 48 organizations with an average of 520 employees, mainly based in one of three different municipal areas: Arendal, Grimstad, and Kristiansand.

- **Klimapartnere Hordaland**

The Hordaland chapter in western Norway was established in 2014 based on the Agder model and today has 24 member organizations with an average number of around 1700 employees. Until recently, all members were based in Bergen, the largest city in Hordaland.

- **Klimapartnere Troms**

The newest chapter, in northern Norway, was established in February 2017 with 15 charter members.

Some countrywide organizations have joined several chapters of Climate Partners based on where they have offices, but most members only belong to one chapter.

4.2 Membership criteria

A Climate Partners membership includes commitments related to sustainability (klimapartnere.no). This includes annual greenhouse gas reporting, environmental certification, management commitment, and an annual fee, all of which are described further below. Several of these tie in to the success factors which will be explored in chapters 5-11.

Each chapter of Climate Partners publishes an annual report showing the GHG emissions from each of their members, as well as trends in these emissions. These reports include emissions from fuel use, electricity use, travel and transportation etc., which are calculated based on raw data provided by the members. The methodology is explained in more detail in chapter 9.1. According to the Climate Partners Hordaland project coordinator, this serves as a way to enhance the members' understanding of their environmental impact and to provide knowledge for how they might reduce it.

Implementing an environmental management system in the company is a way to include sustainability in the general management. A membership criterion in Climate Partners is implementation of an environmental management system which is certified by a third party, such as Eco-Lighthouse or ISO 14001. These are described further in chapter 10.1.

To ensure that commitment to sustainability work in the member organizations is rooted in top management, Climate Partners arranges events twice a year for the executive managers. At these meetings, achievements from the previous year are presented, and targets are set for the upcoming year. Attendance is good, and these events are seen as networking opportunities as well as a way to update managers on what is happening in the network.



Figure 2: Top management meeting in Climate Partners Hordaland 2017

To spur their members on to strive for sustainable targets, Climate Partners asks that they work towards developing products or services focused on reducing emissions. Some examples of this (given by the project coordinator at Climate Partners Agder) are “green” conferences provided by a hotel, park benches with solar charging stations for cell phones (provided by several Climate Partners members working together), and a soccer field kept ice-free by geothermal heating.

To pay for the project coordinator, meetings, etc., Climate Partners charges an annual membership fee ranging from NOK 10.000 to NOK 50.000, determined by the size of the member organization.

4.3 *Services provided by Climate Partners*

To aid their members on the path to sustainability, the Climate Partners organization provides services such as providing information about topics relevant to the members, follow-up related to GHG reporting and environmental management, and promoting members and their products and services. These are described further below.

Each chapter has a full-time project manager to facilitate the processes, arrange and set up meetings, handle recruitment of new organizations etc. According to the Hordaland and Agder project coordinators, part of their role is to find out which topics are the most relevant to members at any given time and to provide arenas in which to discuss these.

One of the key functions of the network as described by the interviewed member organizations is knowledge sharing. This is done through regular meetings for all members, newsletters, and arranging meetings and workshops for smaller groups or single member organizations. These are described in more detail in chapter 8, but a brief introduction of the first item is in order here.

Meetings where all members are invited are held on a regular basis (approximately every month). These meetings are mostly topic-based to keep them relevant, with subjects such as how to reduce energy consumption and switch to renewable energy sources, how to reduce fossil fuels usage for transportation, how to promote sustainable procurement, and how to achieve carbon neutrality. Outsiders are often invited to come speak about their area of expertise, such as communications or the environmental impact of food production and distribution. The project manager also frequently draws on experience within the network, inviting organizations to speak about their activities and best practices that they use.

The Climate Partners Hordaland project manager says participation rates are at the level she would like them to be; the most relevant organizations usually participate in the meetings, especially after a bit of follow-up from her side.

She goes on to say that the feedback on the meetings has so far been very positive. Several members have said these meetings fulfill a need to gather knowledge and contacts. Larger conferences arranged by others may provide a wealth of useful information, but not all of it may be relevant and it may be difficult to network with others in a similar situation in a conference hall full of strangers.

Getting to know representatives from other member organizations in similar situations means that the threshold for contacting them or asking for advice is lowered. The smaller meetings (typically with ten-fifteen organizations participating) mean that members can easily follow up with someone who said something in a meeting that is relevant to their particular situation. This has happened several times, according to the Climate Partners Hordaland project manager. As an example, several of the member

organizations own or operate large trucks or heavy machinery. When one participant presented their experiences with alternative transportation fuels such as hydrogen, biofuels, and electricity at a meeting, others followed up with questions and suggestions for potential collaborations.

Several of the organizations have contact persons for specific topics, and as these meetings are typically held in a series of several, the attendees can build up a considerable amount of knowledge about the topic, even if they have not considered it from an environmental angle before. In addition, this creates a separate “network within the network” where professionals from the same area of expertise can discuss relevant aspects of their work.

Greenhouse gas reporting is a topic of special interest due to the mandatory annual reports published by Climate Partners. The project managers follow up each organization to ensure they submit their yearly GHG numbers, and then provide informational sessions to ensure everyone follows the same methodology. In addition, they provide encouragement and challenge the organizations towards continual improvement in regards to sustainability. They give advice and provide relevant examples from organizations with similar challenges.

To promote members and their “green” products and services, the project managers actively use the internet. Both the Klimapartnere.no website and the network’s Facebook page are arenas used to provide information about their members’ sustainability initiatives as well as other relevant information. Some examples include members that have transitioned to electric vehicles, set ambitious environmental criteria in their purchasing decisions, and installed solar panels. The Climate Partners organization also promote the network and its members in various other arenas nationally.

As can be gathered, the project coordinator role is a crucial one, where they investigate their members’ areas of interest, provide relevant information and examples, and coordinate speakers at meetings. A large part of their job consists of individual follow-up to help each member organization work on their sustainability initiatives. It is worth noting that during the interviews with member organizations from Climate Partners Hordaland, all participants emphasized the important role played by the project manager and expressed their appreciation for her follow-up and encouragement.

4.4 Results achieved

Since its start in 2009, the Climate Partners network has achieved results in various areas. As mentioned in chapter 4.2.4, “green” initiatives have been put in place by several members. The annual reports published by the network also highlights results in terms of network growth and reductions in GHG emissions, for this study given for the Hordaland chapter only. These are described below.

4.4.1 Membership growth

According to the project manager for Climate Partners Hordaland, recruitment has not been a challenge. Since starting up, the network has grown consistently, as can be seen in the figure below (numbers from the annual reports found at Klimapartnere.no).

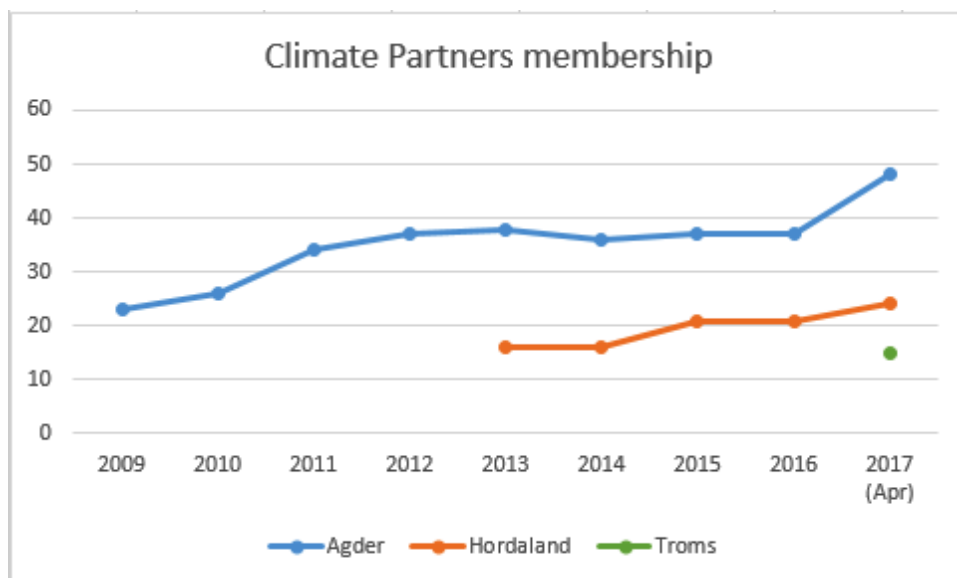


Figure 3: Climate Partners membership

According to the Hordaland Climate Partners project manager, the goal is not for the network to grow as large as possible; a local presence and groups of manageable size is more important than the involvement of a great number of organizations.

The first two years, the project manager in Climate Partners Hordaland would go out and spread the word to recruit new organizations. As the network became better known, the recruitment started to shift to a point where more organizations contacted the project manager than the other way around, and the membership continued to swell on its own.

When asked about reasons for joining, the interviewees from member organizations gave various answers; some private companies are eager to have an arena for dialoguing with public organizations regarding procurement, others see participation as inspiration to explore opportunities within sustainable products and services, such as “green conferences” with local organic food. Opportunities for learning from others and chances for co-operation are also given as reasons. Executives in some companies have a strong personal passion for a more sustainable future for the area, as witnessed by other initiatives taken by participants without a motive of financial gain. Several interviewees said simply “it fits with who we are as a company”, and “it felt natural to join”.

At the time of this writing, Climate Partners Hordaland had recently acquired its first member from outside Bergen; time will show what effect the expansion outside the metropolitan area will have.

4.4.2 *GHG emissions reductions*

Each of the network chapters publish an annual disclosure report consisting of input from each of the members. For each member organization, there is a brief description of what they do, their visions and plans for their environmental work, potential “green” products or services offered, and actions they have taken as part of their work to reduce emissions. The report also includes environmental certifications held and whether the organization purchases offsets for their emissions or guarantees of origin for their electricity use.

A major part of the report consists of a simplified greenhouse gas emission report based on sixteen indicators, such as fuel consumption, electricity use, number of flights, waste amounts, etc.

The Climate Partners’ report follows the structure set by the GHG Protocol, one of the world’s most widely used methodologies for calculating climate impact (World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2004, p. 5). Greenhouse gas emissions are measured in CO₂-equivalents (“CO₂e”). This means that emissions from other greenhouse gases, such as methane, nitrous oxide, and various coolants, are converted to their CO₂-equivalent values.

Based on these reports, I looked at the trends of the emissions from the organizations that have been members in Climate Partners Hordaland since the start and have reported numbers for 2013, 2014, and 2015. These reported numbers show a downward trend from the first year to the last. The first chart below shows the development of the total GHG emissions reported by these organizations:

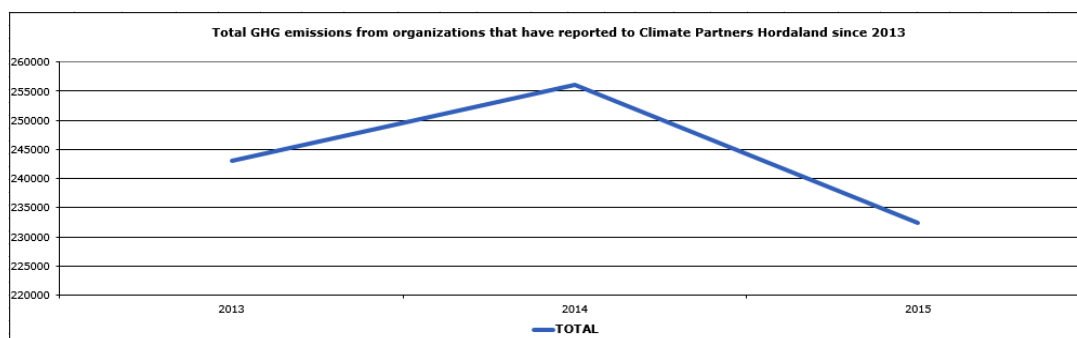


Figure 4: Total GHG emissions Climate Partners Hordaland since 2013

There is uncertainty connected both with the cause of this reduction and with the quality of the numbers reported (as we will see in chapter 9.2.2). The apparent peak in 2014 could be caused by better reporting including more parts of the member organizations, differences in weather leading to a greater need to heat buildings, or other factors. It is therefore difficult to judge specific years based on these data, without going into detail and discussing them with the reporting companies, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Another complicating factor is that the scale of emissions varies greatly from organization to organization. Smaller companies that are office-based naturally have far lower emissions than larger companies with direct emissions and furnaces, and so a few members dominate the numbers and have a much greater influence on the trends.

However, the downward trend was repeated when the member organizations were divided up into groups based on the size of their emissions. The following charts show the emissions reported, divided into groups by size of their emissions for clarity:

- **GHG emissions < 1000 t CO2e per year**

There are eight organizations that have been members since 2013 that fall into this category; two are office-based companies with fewer than 30 employees. From the report, it appears that this reduction is, to a large extent, caused by the purchase of offsets and guarantees of origin for electricity (see chapter 9.1.3 for further information on these mechanisms), although there are clearly efforts in place to reduce emissions from other sources as well.

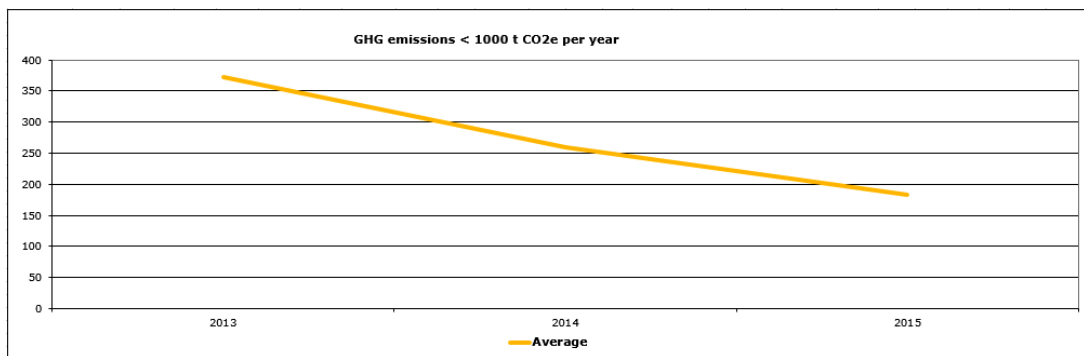


Figure 5: Companies with GHG emissions < 1000 t CO2e per year

- **GHG emissions between 1000 and 10000 t CO2e per year**

Two organizations fall into this category, and while we see that there is a downward trend here as well, it is not so pronounced. Given the information in the annual reports, it appears that these reductions have been caused by efforts within energy management and travel.

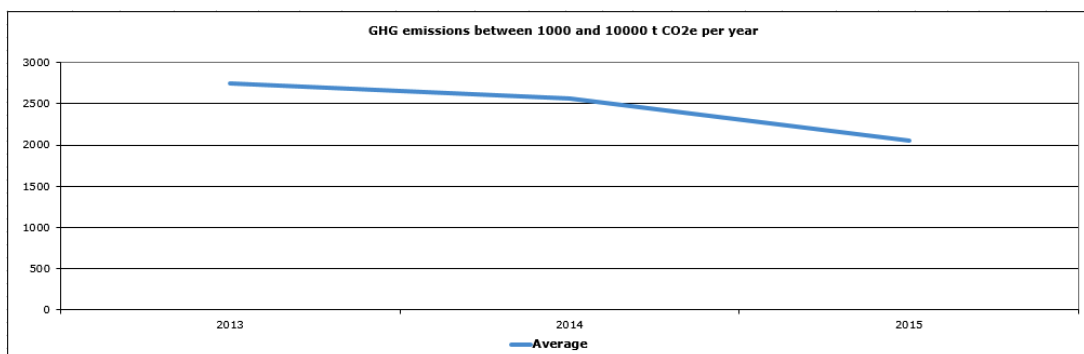


Figure 6: Companies with GHG emissions between 1000 and 10000 t CO2e per year

- **GHG emissions > 10000 t CO2e per year**

The five organizations in this group are large and complex with several buildings and/or processing industry with furnaces. The trends here are therefore too complex to go into in this study, but again we see that the 2015 numbers are lower than those in 2013 and 2014, and the apparent peak in total numbers in 2014 is caused by members of this group.

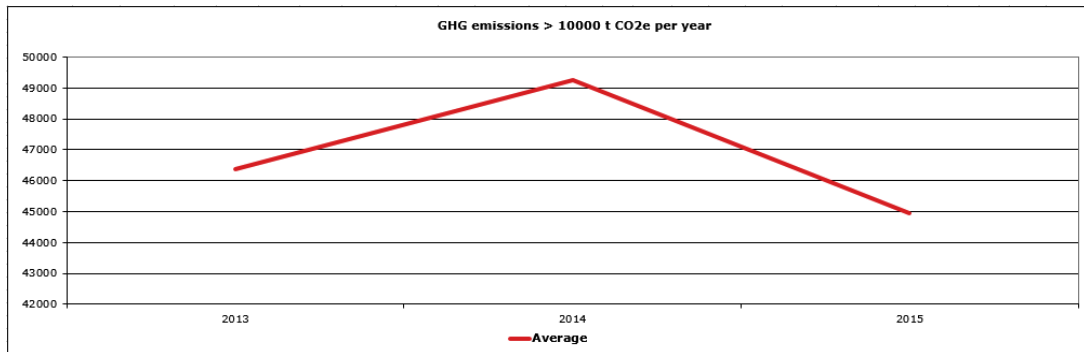


Figure 7: Companies with GHG emissions > 10000 t CO2e per year

Given these numbers, it appears that the organizations that have been part of Climate Partners Hordaland since 2013 have reduced their GHG emissions in the years since joining. Whether that is a direct effect of their membership is difficult to establish, but as we shall see in the following chapters, representatives from the interviewed organizations feel that their membership has contributed in a positive way to their environmental work.

5 Success factors for environmental work: Introduction

The rest of the thesis will concern itself with the information gathered from interviewing representatives from eight organizations that are members of Climate Partners Hordaland. In these interviews, some themes distinguished themselves as important success factors for the environmental work performed in their organizations. That is, the informants expressed their belief that these subjects were important contributing factors to their companies' improving in the area of sustainability.

The following chapters will discuss the main ones:

- Leadership commitment
- Employee engagement
- Knowledge sharing and building
- Quantifiable reporting and targets
- Environmental management systems
- External factors

Each of these will be presented with a background for why this is an important success factor, how it was described by interviewees, and finally, how the Climate Partners membership helps the organization achieve these success factors, thereby contributing to the organizations' sustainability efforts. As we shall see, the participants felt that their membership contributed positively in each of these areas.

All interviews were conducted in Norwegian; quotes included from the participants have been translated to English.

6 Leadership commitment

It is important that the management team is behind and supports sustainability strategies and initiatives. As Wisner, Epstein, & Bagozzi (2010, p. 108) point out, commitment from top-level management and adequate resources set aside for environmental management programs are crucial to the success of such programs. Hunt and Auster (1990, p. 9) assert that “a mandate from the top can make a dramatic difference”.

When asked about the most important success factor for sustainability work, all the interviewees brought up the significance of having management buy-in. If the leaders of the organization do not stake out a course towards sustainability, it is hard for the employees to get initiatives started, no matter how engaged they are. A quote from one study participant was typical of all responses: “If it is not a top management decision, it won’t happen”.

There is also a need for decision-makers to allocate capital. Although some initiatives are free or cost little, others require initial or on-going investments, often to save costs in the longer run (such as energy-saving activities). Several informants stressed the importance of having a financial budget to implement initiatives.

Several of the respondents from public organizations also pointed out that if the political leadership did not request environmental action and reporting from the organizations, that sent a signal to the company management that sustainability might not be the top priority. The policies and mandates coming from the central government thus become a vital part of ensuring sustainability in local organizations.

The Climate Partners project manager organizes semiannual top management meetings for the organizations in the network. These meetings are viewed by the study participants as important arenas for ensuring that the management group and sustainability personnel are working in concert, and it can enhance the communication between them. According to the project manager, the meetings have been very well received and attended with high participation rates. Top executives also participate in other topic-based Climate Partners meetings from time to time. Several of the managers interviewed stressed the importance of the meetings being local, as that means attending does not consume a whole workday. This makes it easier for them to prioritize participation at the Climate Partners meetings.

Being part of the network can also help contribute to the process of determining goals and strategies, as the network organizations focus on specific areas or set common targets for a particular year. One manager pointed out that he appreciated being able to benchmark his organization against others, to use this knowledge as a gauge for determining which targets to aim for.

All interviewees agreed that their management team wanted their organization to work in a sustainable fashion, but some expressed their concern that the focus might be difficult to maintain given a busy schedule, so participating in the management meetings at Climate Partners provides a way to keep their leaders informed and lays the groundwork for further discussions between managers and sustainability professionals.

An important note here is that, presumably, these organizations would not have joined Climate Partners if their management had not already been working towards sustainability to some extent, so the findings that membership in Climate Partners can help managers stay engaged may not be applicable to organizations where leadership is indifferent to environmental issues.

7 Employee engagement

Another critical success factor is engaging employees across the whole organization. Langeland (2005, p. 146) says a business will achieve better environmental results if sustainability is an integrated part of the organization, like “adding sugar to tea” (p. 147). To achieve this, it is important to involve employees from various parts of the company, not just a cohort within the management team or the sustainability department.

This was echoed by the interviewees; several of them said that employee engagement is a crucial success factor. One respondent said they had created focus groups from various parts of the organization to ensure sustainability initiatives include each part of the business and enhance the ownership felt by them; “If the employees have been part of the decision-making process, it is much more important for them to work towards that goal, than if strategies come from the top down.”

This wide support for environmental strategies helps ensure their implementation. If different departments such as Procurement, Communications, Maintenance, and the management team are all taking actions towards making the organization more sustainable, it will enable a greater degree of “saturation” than if all pressure to “go green” comes from one department.

The number one way interviewees said their Climate Partners membership contributed to employee engagement was through the regular meetings held within the network. The fact that meetings are topic-specific was stated by several interviewees as a key advantage: it allows them to bring their colleagues working with a particular subject to meetings concerned with that topic, and for those colleagues to feel that the information is relevant. As an example, building managers can attend workshops centered around energy consumption and alternatives to fossil-fuel heating, procurement staffers can learn more about green purchases and environmental requirements in the supply chain, and organizations serving large amounts of food to their staff or guests can learn about which types of food have a smaller environmental impact and how to reduce food waste.

Creating an arena for people with similar backgrounds to discuss topics relevant to their day-to-day tasks was seen as highly beneficial by all interviewees. The discussions often get quite detailed, which makes the takeaways highly relevant and actionable for the participants. As an example, one interviewee pointed out that their communication staff had not necessarily included the organization's environmental work in their internal and external publications, but after attending a workshop regarding climate communications, this was seen as a more relevant subject to cover.

As one study participant stated: "It gives a different entry point than me as a sustainability person saying we have to fix this problem. It is repetitive, hearing the same thing from the same person again and again. But hearing it from a different organization, maybe in a different way, makes something go "click". This is not just something our sustainability department keeps nagging about, it is something that many people are interested in."

In addition to providing input from external actors, the meetings also create an arena for the environmental professionals to discuss sustainability and generate ideas with their colleagues away from their regular offices. One study participant said, "The meetings give me time to talk to my colleagues from other departments about environmental issues, when they set aside the time. So that might be the most important thing, that they have time to talk to me and we keep in touch afterwards".

The meetings also bring inspiration to people who work with sustainability on a daily basis. One interviewee said, "It's so much fun to meet someone else who combines the environment with my particular area of expertise, it gives me a lot of energy". Others stated that attending provided "a spark" and "motivation in my daily work".

Participating in the meetings let the members learn from others' experiences and initiatives and become inspired by them, which in turn can energize the speakers, making them feel valued and listened to and producing a positive feedback loop.

The feeling of having a common sense of purpose that was shared with others also turned out to be perceived as highly important. Most of the study participants said having a common goal and working alongside other organizations towards "a greener future" was a key benefit of participating in the network. Being part of a network where everyone has a common interest in developing a more sustainable region was said by several interviewees to "energize" the people who work with sustainability on a day-to-

day basis. One key quote from an informant: “I think it is very positive, it gives energy (...) That someone else does this too, that we are a lot of people working on this, I believe that is important”. Another said “[The project coordinator] has made me feel that I am a part of the region”. The format of the meetings, where presentations by the members are a large part of these meetings, with time set aside for questions and discussion, facilitates this networking and the building of a community.

Several of the interviewed sustainability professionals also participate in other national or international environmental networks particular to their industry; in some cases, these were said to provide more relevant information to their specific situation. However, the interviewees said they still felt they benefitted from being part of the local Climate Partners network, and that participation in several networks could provide different perspectives.

8 Knowledge sharing and building

As mentioned in chapter 2, learning involves both acquiring new knowledge and adapting to this knowledge by changing ones' behavior (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2013, p. 353). The acquisition of relevant knowledge is thus highly significant to an organization that seeks to operate in a more sustainable manner. An important source of this information is the peer group of others we trust.

Peer influence is widely researched; for example, from studies on "green" decision making among consumers, both Gleim, Smith, Andrews & Cronin (2013, p. 46) and Tsarenko, Ferraro, Sands & McLeod (2013, p. 304) conclude that peer groups are influential and that they cultivate and reinforce a standard for environmental behavior. It is not unreasonable to suggest that this effect is also at play when looking at environmental managers and other company representatives; if they are members of a group that expresses beliefs that sustainable actions are important, they are more likely to feel and act that way themselves.

Giest and Howlett (2013) say that "collaborative efforts initiated and managed properly are able to develop solutions tailored to local contexts while offering information and best practice models for others" (p. 341). In other words, there is inspiration to be drawn from concrete actions. If someone hears that another organization has had success with some activity, it may make this particular activity seem relevant to them. Therefore, participating in a network where such initiatives are shared and discussed can be beneficial.

Knowledge building was one of the main reasons for organizations to join the Climate Partners network. One person said "The way we see it, the participants are the best and the brightest. You are not just in a partnership; you are among the very best. So we have learned very fast, we wouldn't have been able to do that on our own."

The interviewees felt that seeing how other organizations work with sustainability gives more knowledge of specific actions that can be started. It gives them the opportunity to learn from each other and gain experience second hand instead of having to "reinvent the wheel" every time. As an example, several organizations in the Climate Partners have many employees that commute to their job site every day. One of the Climate Partners members conducted a survey among their employees to determine how they

travel to work (public transportation, ridesharing, driving etc.) in order to put effective measures in place to reduce the impact of this daily commute. This survey has now been made available to the other members with suggestions for how to use it efficiently.

Several said the knowledge that they had gained from the others in the network and from separate sessions with the project coordinator had been a catalyst for sustainability initiatives. Examples include a cafeteria/restaurant which now offers food with lower environmental impact and companies exploring the conversion of boilers in their buildings from fossil fuel to bio-fuel.

The regular meetings and workshops discussed earlier were identified by all informants as important arenas, where members are asked to speak about their experiences and thereby inspire others or help them along the way. In addition to pooling and distributing organizational knowledge, the meetings thus serve as a powerful inspiration to lead by example.

Several interviewees said they had used the network to gather expertise from others with more experience in specific areas. Having met people at meetings makes it easier to follow up with them to discuss relevant topics at a later stage. One participant said that the meetings put focus on environmental aspects and related initiatives that they might not themselves have had in their sights if Climate Partners had not invited them to meetings and workshops.

Seeking out new and relevant information was considered by several to be an important part of their job as sustainability professionals. To fulfill this obligation, some of them participate in industry-specific networks in addition to Climate Partners.

In addition to arranging meetings, the project coordinator for Climate Partners Hordaland sends out newsletters four times a year, highlighting the network's activities and relevant information from members and other sources. In addition, presentations from meetings are sent out via email to all members and are available from the website.

One interviewee suggested this could be taken further: If members were invited to share examples of action plans and best practices, presentations and procurement criteria etc. on a website accessible only to members, that could provide a valuable knowledge base which could be readily available and would ensure that information did not get lost in the email inbox.

On request, the project coordinator also offers workshops specific to one organization's needs, focused on topics such as how to set environmental requirements in procurement processes, the environmental impact of food, how to improve one's climate communications, and waste handling and reduction. This is perceived as helpful by the receiving organizations, and has been beneficial in their progress on these topics.

However, it seemed that not all organizations were aware that this was an option, and it might be something that could benefit more of them. Better communication about what is available as services from the Climate Partners organization could help members realize the potential and encourage more of them to make use of this possibility to have workshops and internal meetings centered around relevant topics.

9 Quantifiable reporting and targets

As discussed in chapter 4, each Climate Partners chapter publishes an annual report disclosing greenhouse gas emissions from their members. A tool is provided to the members for calculating emissions based on raw data, such as fuel consumption, electricity usage, flights taken, etc. This enables the member organizations to quantify their climate impact and to compare their numbers against their previous years' performance and benchmark themselves against other organizations.

The following section will provide a deeper background into the theory and mechanisms connected to GHG reporting, before going into how the interviewees saw this as a key success factor in their environmental work and how they perceived their membership in Climate Partners Hordaland was helpful in establishing and improving their reporting.

9.1 *Theoretical background*

Wisner, Epstein & Bagozzi (2010) have defined seven “managerial control actions that manifest environmental proactivity” (pp. 109 – 112), where “Performance measurement” and “Public disclosure” are two of those. They state that performance measurements are important both for their signaling effect about what is important to the company, and for their effect in enabling employees and managers to take corrective actions as needed. Public disclosure is also said to be a “key component of the proactive, accountable organization” (p. 112). According to them, this kind of external reporting of has become more common in recent years, and it is positively correlated with improved environmental performance.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the Climate Partners network follow the GHG Protocol, which divides greenhouse gas emissions into three scopes (World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2004, p. 25):

- **Scope 1**

Direct GHG emissions from “sources owned or controlled by the company” (ibid.), such as emissions from cars or trucks owned by the organization, or from process equipment or oil furnaces.

- **Scope 2**

Electricity indirect GHG emissions from purchased electricity or district heating.

- **Scope 3**

Other indirect GHG emissions “are a consequence of the activities of the company, but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the company” (ibid.). This includes handling of waste from the organization, air travel, employee commutes, business travel in employee-owned cars, production of purchased materials, etc.

The various scopes are shown in the figure below, from ghgprotocol.org:

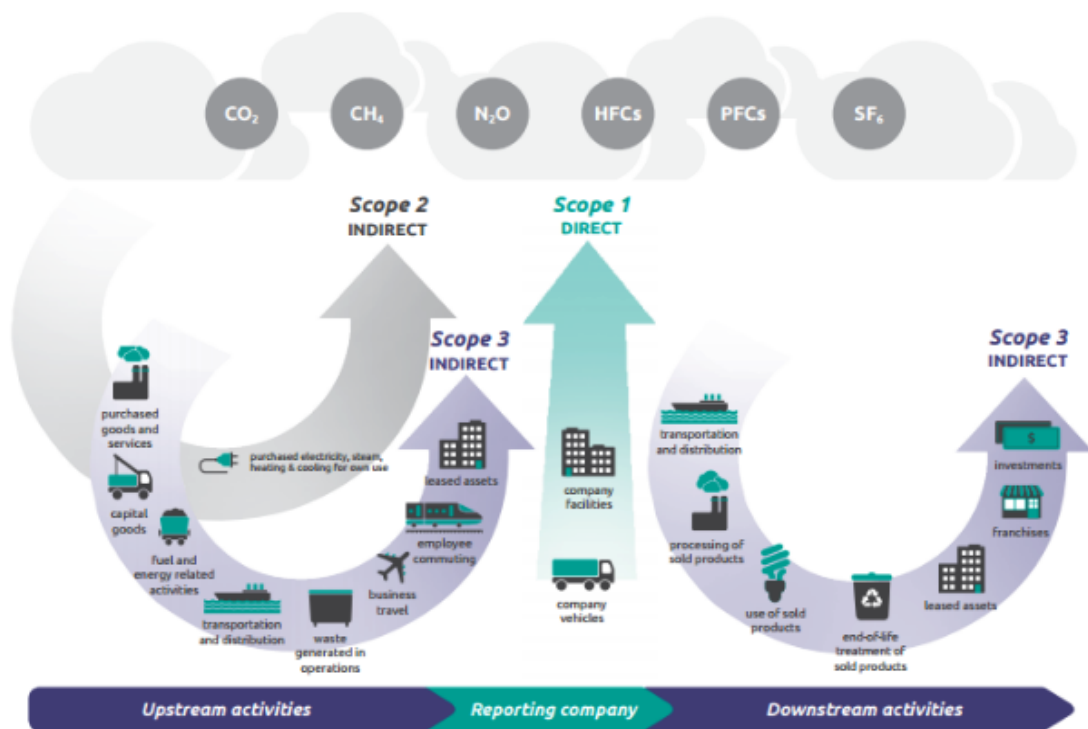


Figure 8: Scopes of greenhouse gas emissions

According to World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2011), scope 3 emissions can “represent the largest source of emissions for companies and present the most significant opportunities to influence GHG reductions” (p. 5). However, it is often the most complicated scope to calculate, as full accounting requires in-depth knowledge about the value chain and suppliers. Reporting done by the Climate Partner network therefore includes only partial numbers for this scope, including waste management and business travel.

In addition to taking steps to reducing actual emissions by driving less, reducing their electricity consumption etc., there are other ways organizations can reduce their reported numbers. Two of the ones used among some of the Climate Partners members are purchase of carbon offsets and of renewable energy credits.

Carbon offsets can be purchased to “make up for” some or all of an organization’s greenhouse gas footprint, and fund projects that reduce GHG emissions elsewhere in the world, such as protecting rain forests, installing solar panels, or electrifying truck stops (carbonfund.org). These may be appropriate to use when “the cost of internal reductions is high, opportunities for reductions limited, or the company is unable to meet its target because of unexpected circumstances” (World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2004, p. 82). In other words, “Reduce what you can, offset what you can’t” (carbonfund.org).

Scope 2 (indirect emissions from energy use) can be mitigated by purchasing credits for renewable energy (NVE, 2017). These “act as a tool to convey claims and influence market dynamics by allowing the expression and aggregation of consumer preferences for specific low-carbon energy products, which would not otherwise be possible” (World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2015, p. 7). Having purchased such credits, the company can disregard the climate impact of its power consumption, as it will be calculated with a factor of zero instead of using higher factors based on the grid in the location of the company. However, the cost of the credits, in conjunction with the cost of energy, should still incentivize the company to reduce their energy consumption in the longer run.

9.2 *How quantifiable reporting and targets contribute to success*

All eight organizations participating in this study said that the annual process of collecting and calculating numbers related to their climate impact was something that helped them understand the impact and the operations of their organization better. Correct background information enables the management team to make good decisions, and the use of GHG reports and annual environmental reports can be an important part of this.

Having environmental targets and results available for each business unit was stressed by several interviewees as a success factor in their work; without knowing where you

are and where you are going, it is hard to get there. One person said: “The GHG reporting lets us see where we need to put in effort to reduce our footprint”, and another: “Before you have the account, you have no clue where your emissions come from”.

Several said that their organization had performed some greenhouse gas reporting for several years because they are useful for communicating with stakeholders. For some, their management team is interested in the numbers and requests them on a regular basis. In addition, private companies are often requested to provide GHG numbers in procurement processes, so having a good understanding of this impact as well as plans to reduce it is seen as a competitive advantage. However, a few of the interviewees readily admitted that the quality of their GHG data might be sub-optimal, especially when they were just starting out in their reporting.

Collecting data is not always easy, especially if the people providing them do not have it as a priority or do not see the use of the numbers. A few of the interviewees said they had to spend a significant amount of time following up the reporting and remind their colleagues to provide input. This was also seen by one interviewee as having a positive effect; “I think the fact that we ask about this data makes them pay more attention to the numbers”.

While most feel that their numbers are fairly accurate, some acknowledge that they might not know the whole truth, and one said the process required by Climate Partners had been an eye-opener to them that helped them see the gaps in their knowledge. In particular, several mentioned that data related to air travel (part of scope 3) was hard to collect as their systems did not necessarily provide the data in a format that made it easy to analyze.

The organizations that had come furthest understood how their scope 3 emissions may dwarf their scope 1 and 2 emissions. Several of the organizations have started calculating scope 3 impact on their own, where three ask their key suppliers to provide data and others estimate them based on the cost of various types of goods. This may also be done for particular areas such as building projects.

One said “I think the better we become, the higher our emissions will be”, referring to the fact that they are still struggling to get the desired quality on their data. As they receive better quality numbers from various parts of their organizations, those numbers

may be higher than the previously reported numbers, making it appear that the organization had emitted more greenhouse gases, while in reality the quality of their reporting had improved. However, the general feeling was that even though the numbers may not be completely accurate, there is a lot of value related to seeing trends where numbers are collected every year, and in creating key performance indicators to measure CO₂e per full time employee, by revenue etc.

Once the numbers are in place, the reports help the organizations see where their greatest potential for impact reduction is. One interviewee said that going through the numbers he had found an overlooked potential source of greenhouse gas emissions from cooling gases, which can have an impact several hundred times that of CO₂ per gram. This realization made the organization even more vigilant in ensuring they had routines in place to reduce the risks of leaks.

Real numbers are also used to set targets to help the organizations develop. Concrete target-setting within an organization was described as “motivational”; the ability to see where you are in relation to your targets helps keep focus on the task ahead.

Having a clear target (such as “fossil free within 2030”) made it easier for sustainability managers and others to know what was expected and to work with initiatives that will help reach that target. Grounding suggested initiatives in a stated strategy and goal was also mentioned as something that made it easier for them to get approved.

A few of the interviewed organizations use offsets and guarantees of origin to “make up for” their impact. One informant said about renewable energy credits: “When you see that different factors can have such an impact on the GHG report, and that just a small change can have extreme consequences, the easiest way to deal with it is just to stop discussing the factor to use and instead make use of the opportunity to purchase renewable energy. Then you can set the factor to zero and end the discussion.”

9.3 *Climate Partners contribution*

One of the criteria for joining the network is to report annual numbers related to GHG accounting; fuel consumption, electricity use, waste generated etc. Several of the members were already doing GHG reporting prior to joining Climate Partners, often as part of other certifications or reporting regimes. However, this was not always consistent and sometimes only encompassed part of the organization. Climate Partners

membership entails reporting from across the organization. Representatives from two companies said this was a useful exercise which led to a better understanding of their company as well as a greater involvement of all departments.

A meeting series on how to start with GHG calculation was held in 2014 as the Climate Partners Hordaland network prepared their first annual report. In addition, there are meetings held every spring as a refresher and a resource to new members. These meetings were brought up by several interviewees as useful and a great help in getting started. Where organizations have specific questions, the project coordinator has been available to assist.

Following a joint process felt useful also to the organizations that had performed GHG reporting earlier. This ensured that factors were quality assured and that everyone followed the same standards.

Climate Partners Hordaland has worked on setting targets together, and has also encouraged individual members to set their own measurable targets. This is mentioned by several as a key benefit, as having something concrete to work towards is helping several of the environmental managers bring the rest of the organization on board in the cause of reaching the target.

Revisiting the goals yearly and focusing on continual improvement is also something that was specified by interviewees as a driving force which they might have missed out on had they not been members of the network.

Knowing that the targets are shared between the organizations in the network helps foster both accountability and a sense of solidarity; several said that when you know others are also working on annual goals related to a topic such as transportation, it helps bring a sense of urgency to your own work in this field.

While the work done by the network was highly appreciated by the interviewees, they also offered some suggestions for improvement:

- One interviewee would have appreciated more quality assurance of the numbers reported, as an additional review would reduce the risk of errors.
- One organization said that because the system provided by Climate Partners does not provide the factors, only the calculated numbers, they felt they had to do their own reporting in parallel.

- Several commented on the fact that the requirement from Climate Partners is limited to scopes 1 and 2 and a small part of scope 3. Procurement (part of scope 3) was seen as especially relevant for future inclusion; it can count for a large part of the GHG impact, but it can be difficult to calculate and is not part of what Climate Partners currently asks for in their annual report.
- Some targets may not be relevant to everyone. For instance, a target for 2016 of going “fossil free” has more significance to the organizations that own vehicles or machinery than those that do not.
- One interviewee also said the targets should be stricter, but acknowledged that it might be a challenge for the network if the criteria were too strict. However, making the criteria stricter as an organization had been a member for several years was raised as an option.

As GHG reporting is something that was already done by several (and is required by those that are certified as Eco-Lighthouse, as will be seen in the next chapter), the effect of membership in Climate Partners may be limited for this success factor. However, as stated above, being part of a joint process and having a resource to ask should the need arise were still seen as beneficial by those who already had a reporting regime in place.

10 Environmental management systems

The Climate Partners network asks member organizations to achieve an environmental certification; this is a third-party verification of the environmental management system used in the organization. In this chapter, the first part will provide a deeper background into the relevant certifications, before going into how this is seen as a key success factor.

10.1 Theoretical background

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency website (2017), “an Environmental Management System (EMS) is a set of processes and practices that enable an organization to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency”. They go on to state that “the EMS itself does not dictate a level of environmental performance that must be achieved; each organization's EMS is tailored to its own individual objectives and targets.”

Kirk (1998) states that environmental management programs, in addition to their impacts on surrounding nature, can “reduce costs through greater resource efficiency” (p. 36) and “have a positive impact on public opinion and public relations” (p. 37).

Gallagher (2005) states that benefits also include “increased employee involvement, improved document control, reduced regulatory surveillance and improved customer satisfaction” (p. 61).

But not all environmental management systems are created equal. Wagner (2005, pp. 46-47) found that strategic choices made in a company’s environmental management processes are crucial in determining which benefits the company will realize from reducing their environmental impact. Specifically, integrating pollution prevention and efficiency improvements into daily routines is more likely to result in improved profit margins than “end-of-pipe” environmental strategies to remove contaminants produced. While both may have the same impact on the environment, the former may have the greater likelihood of producing other benefits to the company.

One of the conditions for becoming a member of the Climate Partners network is that the organization must be, or intend to become, environmentally certified according to Eco-Lighthouse (“Miljøfyrtårn”), ISO 14001, EMAS, or the Nordic Swan (klimapartnere.no). All these certifications require the organization to implement an environmental management system to ensure processes are in place to reduce impacts

on climate and the local environment. Of these, the ones chosen by organizations in Climate Partners are ISO 14001 and Eco-Lighthouse (some companies use both), these are described further on in this chapter.

Both Eco-Lighthouse and ISO 14001 stress the importance of including sustainability in regular management processes, rather than having it be an “add-on” (Miljøfyrtårn, 2017; International Organization for Standardization, 2015, p. 3).

10.1.1 Eco-Lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn)

Eco-Lighthouse is a Norwegian certification which is currently in use in over 5000 Norwegian organizations (Miljøfyrtårn, 2017). It lists concrete environmental performance criteria based on type of organization (for example, the criteria for a hotel differ from those for a hairdresser), and to achieve certification, all criteria must be met. Criteria are listed within topics such as work environment, waste management, transportation and travel, purchasing, and energy management. After the initial certification, the organization must go through a re-certification every three years (ibid).

In addition, there is a requirement to report annual numbers on fuel usage, waste generation, electricity consumption etc. to the Eco-Lighthouse web portal. These numbers are used for benchmarking organizations using the same sets of criteria, and can be published wider if the organization so chooses (ibid).

Of the current members of Climate Partners Hordaland, eleven are fully or partially certified as Eco-Lighthouse (Frihammer, 2016).

10.1.2 ISO 14001

The International Organization for Standardization has created several standards that organizations can achieve certification in, and ISO 14001 is one of these. They describe ISO 14001 as “an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system.” (2015, p. 2).

ISO 14001 does not include specific criteria, but requires the organization itself to consider the negative environmental impact of its processes and to create targets and

plans related to reducing these. This makes the standard a general one which can be used by all types of organizations (ibid., p. 3).

ISO 14001 can be used as a standard also without certification, but according to the International Organization for Standardization; “third-party certification – where an independent certification body audits your practices against the requirements of the standard – is a way of signaling to your buyers, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders that you have implemented the standard properly” (ibid, p. 8).

According to the KvaLex website, as of January 15, 2017, there are 1009 organizations in Norway that are certified using the ISO 14001 standard. Of these, nine belong to Klimapartnere Hordaland (Frihammer, 2016).

10.2 Environmental management systems as success factor

All the interviewed organizations have some ongoing initiatives within sustainability and a way to follow these up. These included, among others, activities within energy consumption, procurement processes, and fuel use. All but one also have a certification related to their environmental management system, such as Eco-Lighthouse, ISO 14001 or other standards specific to their industry. The last one is working towards such a certification.

Some stated that getting certified was a strategic choice given the organization’s environmental ambitions, that it would help them with their sustainability work and put routines in place to ensure they were following up on initiatives. For some, certification was seen as an important advantage when marketing their company, particularly in the business-to-business segment.

In line with the research carried out by Wagner (2005), the respondents also felt integration of the environmental management system was critical. The recurring theme in how to get a good effect out of a certification was to ensure that the system that is being certified fits into the company’s own routines and is followed up on a daily, or at least monthly basis. If the certification and its processes are in parallel to regular operations, rather than integrated into them, there seems a higher risk of the certification not having a significant impact on the organization and having too little effect, as stated by one interviewee where they felt their certification had not brought great benefits. At

one organization that had their environmental routines integrated, the interviewee said, “I think the most important thing is that we have some regular checkpoints for everything that is to be done. It goes through our management system. So it comes up at regular intervals, and we don’t have to fight to get a seat at the table”.

External audits were also brought up as a benefit of certification, both because it provides a third-party verification, and because it ensures that the management team is aware of what is going on.

In addition, the certification gives additional “ammunition” to the environmental managers; because the organization is certified, it makes sense to pursue initiatives that are in line with the certification’s targets.

One person said “The certification has been a great benefit, because it has pointed to the important items”. This was said in referring to an Eco-Lighthouse certification, which specifies criteria to be met within various areas. These are the areas that are also mentioned most frequently when the interviewees were asked about their specific environmental initiatives, such as activities within the categories procurement, energy consumption, transportation and travel, and waste generation. Others discussed the importance of communication to ensure that everyone was “pulling in the same direction”. Overall, the reactions among the organizations’ own employees to their environmental initiatives have been positive, although some may balk initially at efforts that require them to e.g. sort their waste instead of throwing everything into one trash can in their office, or where the number of parking spaces is reduced to encourage biking or the use of public transportation.

10.3 Climate Partners contribution

One criterion for joining the Climate Partners network is to work towards an environmental certification; this has added pressure to organizations that do not have formal sustainability processes in place and has helped structure others’ work in putting initiatives in place.

Of the organizations interviewed, most had achieved certification before joining Climate Partners. This indicates that membership in Climate Partners may, in these cases, have less of an impact on the organizations’ EMS, as these were already in place.

However, both Eco-Lighthouse and ISO 14001 emphasize continual improvement, and participating in the network was said to provide learning and inspiration for “raising the bar”. In addition, the respondents’ feedback is still interesting for its implications on whether having certification as a criteria will benefit new members and whether it should be considered for similar networks.

The same topics mentioned by the interviewees as relevant for their environmental work (procurement, energy consumption, transportation and travel, and waste generation) are topics that Climate Partners have held meetings on, and the impression among the interviewees is that being part of a group that emphasizes the same things is helpful. It gives them new ideas and pushes them to do even better.

The Climate Partners Hordaland project manager states that being environmentally certified is a source of pride to many members, and that knowing that everyone has an environmental management system in place eases communication and cooperation, as it ensures that everyone has “the basics” in place.

11 External factors

In addition to internal processes, there are external factors that play a large role as success factors to the companies' environmental work. While this is not the main purpose of this study, a short description of these is in order. The items mentioned most frequently were public procurement rules and public policies.

The requirements for public procurement have been strengthened recently (Viken, 2017), which led one of the interviewees to say that "you don't win bids today if your environmental house is not in order". This kind of requirement for participating in public bids was seen by several respondents as a driver for sustainability initiatives. For those members that are public organizations, the new rules mean that their procurement departments must be knowledgeable and decide what the requirements will be for their suppliers to bid on contracts.

Additionally, being climate neutral (i.e. using renewable energy credits for electricity consumption and carbon offsets for remaining GHG emissions) is something that has been part of competitive bids for contracts for a while (although not necessarily a criterion for public procurement). As one interviewee said "For the largest organizations, you can be disqualified from bids if you don't have [climate neutrality]. That is one of the reasons why we have been climate neutral for so long".

Public policy was also mentioned by several. The City of Bergen has set a target to have a "fossil free city 2030" (Andersland, 2016, p. 9) and this was quoted by several interviewees as a motivational source. If the public discourse is such that the organizations feel they must participate in this as a joint project, they start thinking about how they can contribute so as to be allowed to continue running their businesses in the downtown Bergen area.

Climate Partners Hordaland consists of both public and private companies, and this mix was pointed out by several as a useful combination. In the case of public procurement rules, Climate Partners has held several meetings to address these new criteria and how public companies can comply with them. These are also an arena where private companies can learn what they should do to ensure their products and services fulfill the criteria. By providing a meeting place for public and private companies, the Climate Partners network also offers opportunities for private organizations to influence public ones on including sustainability in their procurement processes and policies.

12 Conclusions

As shown in this paper, participating in a regional environmental learning network can be beneficial to organizations looking to improve their sustainability performance.

In the case of Climate Partners Hordaland, interviewees from eight medium to large size companies provided six key success factors, and in their opinion, their membership in Climate Partners contributed positively to all of them:

- **Leadership commitment**

By engaging top management in annual meetings and asking them to commit to a common cause, Climate Partners influences managers to include sustainability in their organizations' strategies.

- **Employee engagement**

Climate Partners provides topic-based meetings which involve resources from various parts of the organizations, thereby making sustainability relevant to a broad base within the organization.

- **Knowledge sharing and building**

The aforementioned meetings and communications provide members with relevant information and examples of initiatives taken by others that they might consider implementing themselves.

- **Quantifiable reporting and targets**

As all members are obliged to provide annual GHG emissions, this ensures that they gain an understanding of their company's climate impact and can identify areas for improvement.

- **Environmental management systems**

While most of the interviewed organizations already had an environmental management system and certification in place when they joined Climate Partners, a majority of the study

participants were positive to this kind of certification and felt the membership criterion was relevant.

- **External factors**

By connecting public and private organizations, Climate Partners provides an arena for them to discuss sustainability issues as well as requirements for bids in public contracts.

Based on these interviews, it seems clear that the interviewed organizations, at least, find their membership in Climate Partners beneficial. The network supports them in their endeavors to improve their performance with regards to environmental impact, and participation creates engagement among both managers, sustainability professionals, and other colleagues.

One thing to note, however, is that this does not come by itself. The role of the project coordinator is crucial, and if the networks are to expand, that role may also have to involve more resources to get the same effect. The project managers are now very involved and follow up their members diligently, plan meetings to ensure they will include topics of interest, and promote the network both on- and offline. Bessant and Tsekouras (2001) stress that “the importance of these roles, particularly in helping networks with more advanced forms of learning, is considerable but the skills involved may not be familiar and there may be a need to provide support” (p. 93).

This matches what Pietri, Stevenson & Christie (2015) found in their research on regional environmental learning networks; to get the greatest gain out of them, there is a need to invest both time and resources from both the network organizers and the members. That will enable a trust and cooperation to be built up between the participants that will help build up long-term strategies for environmental success. This is worth noting for those who may wish to start similar networks in other regions; any such effort may have a greater chance of succeeding and making a positive impact when the project coordinators have the necessary skills and support to follow up the network members. In addition, it is important to ensure that the participating organizations set aside time to participate and give their representatives into the network a mandate to share experiences and to co-operate with others.

12.1 Potential areas for further research

Like any study, this one is necessarily limited, and the same effects may not be in place for all Climate Partners members. For example, while the interviews suggest that the membership has benefitted these medium to large size companies, I have not explored the effect of membership on smaller organizations. This is a potential area for further study.

In addition, this study has only included organizations that are members of the Climate Partners network. There is probably a process of self-selection determining who joins a network such as this, and organizations with lower interest in sustainability-related issues may not receive the same kind of gain from membership. Again, this is something that could be further explored by other researchers.

13 Annexes

13.1 Literature

- Akiyama, T. (2010). CSR and inter-organisational network management of corporate groups: Case study of environmental management of Sekisui House Corporation Group. *Asian Business & Management*, 9, 223-243.
- Andersland, J. (2016). *Grønn strategi: Klima- og energihandlingsplan for Bergen*. Bergen Kommune.
- Bessant, J., & Tsekouras, G. (2001). Developing Learning Networks. *AI & Society*, 15, 82-98.
- Bindra, S., Morrell, S., & Roberts, S. (2011). 30 Ways in 30 Days. In U. N. E. P. (UNEP) (Ed.). Nairobi.
- Carbonfund. (2017). Go carbon neutral, fight climate change. Retrieved from <https://carbonfund.org/>
- Davis, G., Wilkinson, A., Fisher, B., Timberlake, L., & Horn, R. (2010). Vision 2050: The new agenda for business: World Business Council for Sustainable Development.
- Dybvig, D. D., Ingebrigtsen, S., Jakobsen, O., & Nystad, Ø. (2013). *Etikk for økonomifag*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Frihammer, H. (2016). Klimapartnere Hordaland: Klimaregnskap 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.klimapartnere.no/publikasjoner/>
- Gallagher, D. R. (2005). Building environmental management systems focused on sustainability: The influence of employees, company leaders and external stakeholders. In M. Starik, S. Sharma, & C. Egri (Eds.), *New Horizons in Research on Sustainable Organisations: Emerging Ideas, Approaches and Tools for Practitioners and Researchers* (pp. 60-78). Sheffield, South Yorkshire, GBR: Greenleaf Publishing.
- Giest, S. & Howlett, M. (2013). Comparative Climate Change Governance: Lessons from European Transnational Municipal Network Management Efforts. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 23, 341-353.
- Gleim, M. R., Smith, J. S., Andrews, D., & Cronin Jr., J. J. (2013). Against the Green: A Multi-method Examination of the Barriers to Green Consumption. *Journal of Retailing*, 89, 44-61.

- GreenBiz Executive Network. Retrieved from <https://www.greenbiz.com/executive-network>
- Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Retrieved from <http://ghgprotocol.org/>
- Hubbard, G. (2006). Measuring Organizational Performance: Beyond the Triple Bottom Line. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 18, 177-191. Hultmann, C., Aalbu, K., Brown, L., Bruintjes, K., Davidsson, S., Line, M., & Koefoed, A. L. (2015). IMPACT: Transforming Business, Changing the World: DNV GL.
- Hunt, C. B., & Auster, E. R. (1990). Proactive Environmental Management: Avoiding the Toxic Trap. *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Winter 1990).
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2014). Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. (pp. 151). Geneva, Switzerland: IPCC.
- International Organization for Standardization. (2015). Introduction to ISO 14001:2015. Geneva.
- Jacobsen, D. I., & Thorsvik, J. (2013). *Hvordan organisasjoner fungerer* (4 ed.). Bergen: Fagbokforlaget Vigmostad & Bjørke AS.
- Johannesen, A., Christoffersen, L. & Tufte, P.A. (2011). *Forskningsmetode for økonomisk-administrative fag*. Oslo: Abstrakt forlag
- Kirk, D. (1998). Attitudes to environmental management held by a group of hotel managers in Edinburgh. *Hospitality Management*, 17, 33-47.
- Klimapartnere. (2017). Climate Partners: About us. Retrieved from <http://www.klimapartnere.no/english/>
- KvaLex, ISO-guiden over sertifisering i Norge. Retrieved from <http://www.kvalex.no/bedrifter/iso+14001/> on January 15, 2017.
- Langeland, L. (2005). Cultivating the sustainable corporation. In M. Starik, S. Sharma, & C. Egri (Eds.), *New Horizons in Research on Sustainable Organisations: Emerging Ideas, Approaches and Tools for Practitioners and Researchers* (pp. 146-165). Sheffield, South Yorkshire, GBR: Greenleaf Publishing.
- Merriam, S. B. (2014). *Qualitative Research*. Somerset, US, Jossey-Bass, 2014.

- Miljøfyrtårn. (2017). Slik blir du Miljøfyrtårn. Retrieved from <http://www.miljofyrtarn.no>
- NVE. (2017). Opprinnelsesgarantier. Retrieved from <https://www.nve.no/energiforsyning-og-konsesjon/opprinnelsesgarantier>
- Pietri, D. M., Stevenson, T. C., & Christie, P. (2015). The Coral Triangle Initiative and regional exchanges: Strengthening capacity through a regional learning network. *Global Environmental Change*, 33, 165-176.
- Savitz, A. (2013). *The Triple Bottom Line*. Somerset: John Wiley & sons, Incorporated.
- Tsarenko, Y., Ferraro, C., Sands, S., & McLeod, C. (2013). Environmentally conscious consumption: The role of retailers and peers as external influences. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 20, 302-310.
- United Nations News Centre (2015) UN chief hails new climate change agreement as monumental triumph. Retrieved from Sustainable Development Goals website: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/12/un-chief-hails-new-climate-change-agreement-as-monumental-triumph/>
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (2017). Learn About Environmental Management Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/ems/learn-about-environmental-management-systems#what-is-an-EMS>
- Viken, T. (2017). Nytt anskaffelsesregelverk. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/naringsliv/konkurransopolitikk/offentlige-anskaffelser-/forste-kolonne/nytt-anskaffelsesregelverk/id2518659/>
- Wagner, M. (2005). Sustainability and Competitive Advantage: Empirical Evidence on the Influence of Strategic Choices between Environmental Management Approaches. *Environmental Quality Management* (Spring 2005), 31-48.
- Wisner, P. S., Epstein, M., & Bagozzi, R. (2010). Environmental Proactivity and Performance. *Advances in Environmental Accounting and Management*, 4, 105-127.
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Retrieved from <http://www.wbcsd.org/Overview/Our-approach>
- World Resources Institute and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2004). *The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard* Washington DC: WRI.

World Resources Institute and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2011).
Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard. Washington
DC: WRI

World Resources Institute and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2015).
GHG Protocol Scope 2 Guidance Washington DC: WRI

13.2 Interview guide

The following list of questions has been used as a rough guide for the semi-structured interviews with Climate Partner members. All the general areas were covered in all interviews, although the specific questions may not have been asked, depending on previous responses.

Climate Partner project managers were interviewed using different questions specifically adapted for them.

1. General questions about participation in Climate Partners
 - a. Why did your organization join Climate Partners?
 - b. Which benefits have you achieved by being members in Climate Partners?
 - c. Have you taken any specific climate actions due to your membership in Climate Partners?
 - d. Do you cooperate with any of the other members around climate issues?
 - e. How important is the local connection with Climate Partners?
2. Network meetings
 - a. Do you usually participate in the meetings that are held in Climate Partners?
 - b. Do you feel the meetings are useful?
 - c. What are potential improvements for the meetings?
 - d. What is the effect on the people who participate in the meetings?
3. Environmental certification
 - a. Are you environmentally certified? If yes, did that happen before or after you joined Climate Partners?
 - b. Why did you choose to become environmentally certified?
 - c. What has been the impact of the certification internally and externally with customers, suppliers etc.?
4. Climate inventory
 - a. When did you start tracking your GHG emissions?

- b. Do you go beyond what is required for Climate Partners?
 - c. Do you use your climate inventory as a management tool?
 - d. How do you follow up your climate inventory between annual reporting?
 - e. What has been the impact of your climate inventory internally and externally with customers, suppliers etc.?
 - f. What has been hard about doing your climate accounting? Could Climate Partners have helped more?
5. Actions to reduce environmental negative impacts
- a. Do you have any success stories or actions that did not have the expected effect?
 - b. What has been the impact of these actions internally and externally with customers, suppliers etc.?
 - c. Have you had any actions related to “green business development”?
6. Environmental strategy
- a. What do you consider success factors for the environmental work within the organization?
 - b. To what extent is the management team engaged in the environmental work of the organization?
 - c. Which challenges do you see for your environmental work?
 - d. How can Climate Partners help assist you in environmental work?
7. Do you have any other comments or suggested improvements?