

GUIDE

Sustainable and Accessible Events



Nordic Council
of Ministers

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Photo: [Andreas Omvik/norden.org](https://norden.org)

About this guide

The Nordic Region has a vision of being the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030, but a great deal will have to change to make that vision a reality. Consumption patterns need to be more sustainable; we need to continue progress toward the target of carbon neutrality by 2050, and we need to make it easier for everybody to play a role in a cohesive society, by focusing on welfare for all, trust, language and accessibility.

[Nordic Council of Ministers policy for mainstreaming, sustainable development, gender equality, and a child rights and youth perspective](#) was adopted on 23 June 2020. Integrating these three perspectives into all of our activities ensures the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers is sustainable, equal, inclusive, representative and accessible, all of which are prerequisites for realising [Our Vision 2030](#).



The principles and advice in the guide are founded upon the [Nordic Council of Ministers' guidance for mainstreaming sustainable development, gender equality, and a child rights and youth perspective](#), the [Climate and Environmental Action Plan for the Nordic House 2022-2024](#), and the Nordic Welfare Centre's [Meetings for All](#). The aim of the following guide is to provide a one-point entry that will make it easier to hold more sustainable *and* accessible physical and digital Nordic events.

The guide is relevant for those involved in making decisions about, planning or holding **conferences, seminars and meetings involving more than 30 people** on behalf of and with the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The principles are applicable to all large events funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. **The advice** consists of ideas and suggestions designed to provide inspiration for ways of putting the principles into practice.

Use the guide to inspire you and the people attending your event to act responsibly by adhering to the principles and following as much of the advice as possible.

What does it mean that an event is sustainable and accessible?

It means putting significant effort into reducing the impact on the environment and climate, making well-considered choices that promote inclusion and accessibility, and doing all of that within a financially acceptable budget.





Photo: [Andreas Omvik/norden.org](https://norden.org)

Our Principles

The principles in this guide shall be applied to all large events funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

By adhering to these principles, you help make the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers sustainable, equal, inclusive, representative and accessible. Everybody who works for or on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers, regardless of policy area, has a responsibility to take these perspectives into account.



1. Accessibility and sustainability must be incorporated into every aspect of the event – from initial idea to evaluation.
2. We promote diversity and strive to include all on an equal footing in every event.
3. If children and young people are affected by or are a target group for the event, they must be involved in a meaningful way.
4. Encourage and promote online events.
5. Physical events must be held in a central location with good public transport options.
6. Choose environmentally certified premises, services and products as far as possible (Nordic Swan ecolabel, ecology, Green Key etc.).
7. Communicate clearly about what can be done in terms of accessibility and motivate your participants to make sustainable choices for transport and accommodation at physical events.
8. When drawing up the programme and list of speakers, aim for at least 40% of the underrepresented sex and strive to include of people of all ages, experiences and backgrounds.
9. Event catering must comply with the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2023, which means it shall be predominantly plant-based.
10. Minimise the use of all physical materials and insist that suppliers and participants aid with the reduction and recycling of all waste.



Photo: Marie Hald/norden.org

Good advice

The following advices are designed to provide inspiration for the practical implementation of the principles mentioned above. Remember that it is not always relevant or possible to follow every piece of good advice, but let them inspire you to strive in making your Nordic event even more sustainable and accessible.



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Photo: Maria Louise Reichardt/norden.org

1. Decision and form of meeting

Bear in mind that it requires careful planning to create good and inclusive interaction at meetings and events, whether online or in person. Interaction is sometimes easier in person, but not always. Video conferencing software is getting better at facilitating interaction with functions such as chats, breakout rooms, polls and digital bulletin boards. Online meetings are also more cost-effective and better for the climate because they involve using less energy, food and drink, paper, flights, transport and hotel accommodation.

Choose a **format for the event** that clearly supports its purpose *and* takes sustainability into account.

- Choose **online formats** for short meetings and events (under two hours) and use **streaming** if the purpose of the event is solely to share information and the participants are expected to just listen/be passive throughout.
- Choose **in-person formats** for longer events and when the purpose is interaction and when participants are expected to provide input.
- Choose **hybrid formats** to make physical events accessible to more people.
- We all lead different lives and online formats allow more people to take part without being a burden on the climate, environment or our finances.

Choose a **date and time** for your event that suits as many people as possible, e.g.

- by using calendars that specify different religious and Nordic holidays, and by taking the participants' work/life-balance into account when selecting the time of day.

Check out prices and allocate **time and resources** to make sure sustainability and accessibility are not just thought about but actually integrated into the whole event.

Online meetings and streaming emit greenhouse gases, but very little compared to in-person events that involve road or air travel. A one-hour video conference uses up to 1 kg CO² the equivalent of driving 8.5 kilometres in a relatively new car using petrol. You can save up to 94% on CO² emissions by livestreaming an event instead of people meeting in person. Source:

DR & Samvirke



Photo: Tam Vibberstoft/norden.org

2. Venue

Physical events

- **Visit the venue** before entering into any agreement and discuss your needs, wishes and requirements in advance.

Choose a **central location near public transport**. Provide information about public transport options and encourage participants to use them. Provide information

- about options for disabled parking or pick-up and drop-off points (up to 25 metres from the entrance), but not about parking in general.

Prioritise conference facilities/hotels with **environmental certification** (Nordic Swan Ecolabel, Green Key or similar) and which use renewable energy. If the venue

- does not use renewable energy, an option is to calculate the electricity needed for the event and buy wind certificates (or similar).

Level access, i.e. without steps or stairs or perhaps with ramps

- Large elevator (at least 1.1 x 1.4 metres)
- Alarm systems that are visible, audible and vibrate
- Good signage, including in Braille
- Contrast marking of stairs and obstacles
- Wide automatic doors (at least 90 cm) without doorsteps (or with a slight incline of max. 2 cm)
- Unscented cleaning and products
- Accessible and gender-neutral toilets
- No carpets in the rooms
- Good light and sound systems with microphone and speakers
- Opportunities to use assistive devices (see the section "Interpreting and assistive devices")

If you do not have the budget or possibility to do all of the above, remember that multiple small initiatives make a big difference.

- Make sure that **every room is accessible to all** of the participants, including the audience space, stage, group rooms and dining facilities. Physical access and technical equipment must work equally well throughout the venue so that all of the participants can take part in every part of the programme on equal terms.

- Make sure the **sound system, microphone and speakers** work well. Think in particular about the acoustics when choosing rooms. Make sure there is no echo or background noise. This is a necessity for people with hearing impairments and is good for everybody involved in the event.

- Make sure the **light system** is adequate and that the light in the rooms is adjustable. Make sure there is sufficient light on the speakers. If sign language interpreters are working, the light must be adjustable, so they are visible even when videos are shown or the lighting is dimmed.

- Designate a person responsible for **safety**. Map the emergency exits and assembly points in case of evacuation and fire and find out whether there are other emergency exits for people in wheelchairs. Find out whether it is safe to be on the premises, e.g. for people with impaired vision, and whether contrast marking should be used on stairs, ramps, wiring or other obstacles, e.g., with neon-coloured tape.

- Make sure that **the entrance** is marked with clear signs and accessible by all. Make sure any information tables are low, so everyone can reach them, and that the **cloakroom** has staff to hang up things or that people can do it themselves, whether in a wheelchair or standing up.

Online events and livestreaming

- Choose a **digital platform** that supports the purpose of the event *and* supports various types of interpreting, including in writing and other assistive devices. Zoom is recommended as one of the most accessible platforms, followed by Teams.

- When **purchasing technical support/selecting partners**, choose a company that uses renewable energy or focuses on reducing emissions from its servers.

- Make it attractive to participate online by arranging for **digital interaction**, e.g. chat, breakout rooms, polls and digital bulletin boards. A high level of interaction places higher demands on functionality and the organiser's management of the event.

- Hold a **test meeting** or conduct some other **test of technical solutions**, connections, equipment and presentations in advance of the event. Ask for presentations to be sent in advance and check whether they are visually accessible (see the section "Information and presentations").

- Think about how best to **share material** with the participants. It is a good idea to use cloud-based services such as WeTransfer or OneDrive when sharing large files such as videos, audio files and PDFs. The participants can then choose what information to download, and the process is more climate-friendly. Always remember to compress large files and limit the period they are available for download.

Think about ways of improving the **digital skills** of organisers, speakers and participants to make the event effective and inclusive. Draw up a guide to **digital meeting etiquette** and share it with all the participants in advance. Examples of what such a guide might include:

- Requirements placed on the participants' equipment, e.g. computers, webcams, headsets with microphones, stable internet connections, mobile phones or tablets with access to specific apps and other physical materials
- Requirements placed on the physical environment, e.g., a bright room with good acoustics in which the participants are close to any camera and microphone so interpreters and other participants can see and hear them
- Information about how participants should start the meeting, ask to speak and turn mute on/off
- Information about how participants will interact, e.g. in chat, breakout rooms, polls and digital bulletin boards
- Information about interpreting and how it works.

- When, and if it makes sense, encourage participants who are not playing an active role in the meeting to turn off their cameras: 90% of the CO² emissions from online meetings are due to the use of video.

Hybrid events

- Follow the relevant advice for both physical and digital events.
Clarify your needs. It can be a physical event where all or just part of the programme needs to be livestreamed to participants who are not active or interacting, or it could be an event at which the physical and digital participants have to be able to participate and interact on equal terms. Plan this carefully.
Select a **technical partner** with experience in hybrid solutions and support. If equipment is not available on-site, the supplier may need to set up their own cameras, microphones and other equipment. Make sure the provider offers access to a digital platform that supports interpreting and other tools that work well together.
- Facilitate **inclusive hybrid participation**. For example, give remote participants the opportunity to interact, remind the moderator and speakers to address them equally and to stick to the timetable, including for breaks.



Photo: Martin Thaulow/norden.org

3. Programme and representation

- Draw up a **programme** that starts and ends in good time. Include **breaks** every 60–90 minutes and take a long meal break to give interpreters and participants who need it the time to rest or move about. This will also give participants a chance to network. For online events, allow time for the participants to sign in and make sure their audio and/or video is working.
- Make the **programme varied** with different types of content, e.g. keynote talks, panel discussions, videos, interaction via apps, performances, group work and conversations. Remember to notify people who use assistive technology, e.g. hearing loops, of the types of content at the event so they can change devices, as needed.
- When choosing the **moderator**, stipulate requirements for tone, time management and knowledge. Explain to the moderator how to communicate (positively and in an inspiring tone) about the sustainability and accessibility of the event.
- Think about **representation in the programme**: who will speak, be seen and heard. Thinking about the diversity of the programme and list of speakers, e.g. equal gender distribution, different ages, experiences and backgrounds, increases the likelihood of there being someone with whom the participants can identify.
- Think about ways of using a **wider range of speakers**. Spend time finding new experts who are not *the usual suspects*. For example, invite keynote speakers to address the event online. This can give you access to people who would otherwise not have the time or opportunity to travel, and make your programme more diverse.



Photo: Andreas Omvik/norden.org

4. Information and presentations

Communicate **clearly and concisely** in all of the materials about the event. Use **plain language** and avoid abbreviations and in-house jargon. This will benefit

- everyone involved and takes account of issues such as language skills, dyslexia and age.

If possible, involve people of different genders, ages, experiences, backgrounds and functional capacities in the planning of the event. This may bring to light new perspectives on the event that you might not have noticed and allow you to make changes, so that the event is relevant to more people.

- Offer to send participants information about the event and presentations in **various formats**, e.g. accessible pdf, other file types, larger fonts, hard copy or in Braille.

Make sure **presentations** are easy to read and accessible on screen and in print. For example:

- Font size for headings are min. 32
- Font size for texts are min. 24
- Fonts should be sans serif (ex. Arial, Verdana and Helvetica) and clearly legible)
- Avoid writing whole words or sentences in capitals, italics or underlined
- Use contrast, e.g. dark text (black, blue, green) on a light background (white)
- Avoid negative text (light text on a dark background), as it can be difficult to read if the lines are too thin
- Avoid text on patterned backgrounds, images or graphics
- Graphics and images should take up at least half of the presentation slide
- Make sure that **visual materials** like videos always have **subtitles**.

Plain language is a way to express yourself directly and unambiguously and to make yourself easily understood. Many public agencies in the Nordic Region use plain language when communicating with people.



Photo: Lars Dareberg/norden.org

5. Interpreting and assistive devices

Choose solutions that have a high level of availability as default. Find out what **forms of interpreting and assistive devices** you can offer, and which suppliers provide various solutions. For example:

- Simultaneous interpretation in multiple languages
- Live captions
- Sign language interpreting
- Audio description
- Hearing loops
- Alternative chairs without armrests or with extra cushions
- Quiet space in which to take breaks
- Option of bringing a guide dog or service animal
- Option of bringing a companion or assistant
- Disabled parking
- Presentations in various formats, e.g. accessible pdf, other file types, larger fonts, hard copy or in Braille
- Special provisions for infectious diseases (COVID-19 or similar) and requirements for masks, vaccination or testing

- In the **invitation** to the event, provide details of accessibility and how you will deal with any **needs notified in advance**. For in-person events, describe the physical access, the accessibility of the rooms and the food and drink options.

- If needed, book **interpreters** in good time. Send materials to them in advance so they can prepare and improve the quality of their service. For physical events, make sure that the interpreters can see the presentations and the speakers. If sign language interpreters are working, the light must be adjustable, so they are visible even when videos are shown or the lighting is dimmed.

- Always order **live captions** for big events and online ones. Subtitles can be manual or automatic, depending on the platform and software. They make it easier to understand what is being said, even for people with good hearing.




Photo: Ricky John Molloy/norden.org

6. Registration

Send a **save the date and mention the time** as far in advance as possible. This lets people who do not have much flexibility in their everyday or working life plan around the event, e.g. those who have to travel far or have limited access to certain modes of transport, people with changing shift patterns, parents of young children or people with care responsibilities.

Send a follow-up **invitation providing greater detail**, making it easier for people to plan ahead. For example:

- Programme (describe the subject matter and the social programme)
- Target audience
- The accessibility of the event (describe the physical access, the accessibility of the rooms, food and drink and how you will deal with any needs notified in advance)
- Efforts to make the event more sustainable and accessible
- Processing of personal data.

Use a **registration form** that invites participants to share information about specific needs in advance. This way, you always have the information you need to customise the event and make it accessible based on the participants' specific needs. For example:

- Name and contact details (and emergency contact if applicable)
- Allergies and dietary considerations (optional food choices)
- Need for interpreters
- Need for assistance, assistive devices or for somebody to accompany them
- Need for information in other formats, e.g. accessible pdf, other file types, larger fonts, hard copy or Braille.

Consider what **information** you need from the participants to make the event good, safe and accessible. You can increase participants' sensation of being included in the event by providing them with the opportunity to report specific personal needs and make it clear how you will accommodate this

- For example, if you have to book transport or accommodation for the participants, it is relevant to ask for the full name on their passport or ID card, preferred mode of transport, transport times and whether they need accessible, gender-appropriate or gender-neutral facilities at the accommodation.

Contact the people who have **notified you of their needs in advance**. Informing them how you plan to take account of their specific needs will let them better plan for the event. If you are not sure how best to cater for their needs, it is never wrong to ask directly!

- Process **personal data** anonymously and securely. Personal data consists of ID-related information such as name, address, age and photographs. Think about how you will deal with parental consent if children under 18 are involved.



Photo: Andreas Omvik/norden.org

7. Support during the event

Designate an individual who will be **responsible for support** during the event. It is impossible to take everything into account in advance. This makes it important to inform people that support will be available during the event if they have special needs or questions about accessibility or menu, have problems with sound and light, lack equipment for interpreting or need help to find their way.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is an internationally recognised symbol. People who wear the Sunflower wish to show they have an invisible disability or a diagnosis that may call for additional support, time or patience.





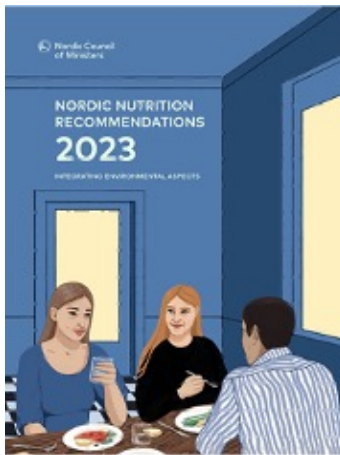
Photo: Lars Dareberg/norden.org

8. Food and drink

- Follow the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2023 when ordering catering, i.e. a mainly **plant-based menu** featuring vegetables, fruits, berries, nuts, legumes, potatoes and whole grains.
- As far as possible, order food and beverages that are **seasonal**, organic and have a **certification label**. Choose **local produce**, take into account local conditions and opt for **the most sustainable products available** where you are holding the event.
- Give participants the opportunity to **notify you in advance of any allergies or dietary requirements**. Share this information with suppliers and ask them to provide details of ingredients and take it into consideration when planning buffets, tables with refreshments, etc.
- Make sure the form chosen for delivering and serving food is **sustainable**. Place strict demands on suppliers and actively seek to minimise the use of all materials and insist that suppliers and participants reduce waste and treat it efficiently. For example:
 - Insist on using only tap water and serving it in jugs rather than using bottled water or cartons, cans, etc.
 - Always use recyclable plates, not disposable ones and avoid using plastic
 - Serve on smaller plates to avoid food waste
 - Avoid food waste by looking into whether your food and drink order can be customised to match the exact needs and number of participants on the day
 - Put up clear signs about waste management
 - Choose delivery by eco-friendly modes of transport, e.g. bicycle or electric or biogas vehicles
 - Make a plan to reduce food waste and perhaps partner up with an organisation that collects leftover food
 - Consider introducing a *no-show* fee to avoid food waste.

Guarantee **accessibility** during the serving. For example:

- As far as possible, arrange it so everyone eats the same food in the same place
- Make sure everyone can reach the tables when serving and eating, so avoid bar-height tables
- Choose a place with good acoustics and no echo



[The Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2023](#) are the result of extensive and scientific work mapping how best to eat for the good of both our own health and the planet.

Certification labels such as the **Nordic Swan Ecolabel**, the **Fairtrade Mark** and the **Marine Stewardship Council Mark** for fish make it easy for you to set requirements for a certain minimum level of sustainability and environmental consideration. No labelling scheme is errorless, but they are a good place to start.





Photo: Andreas Omvik/norden.org

9. Materials

- Only send out the programme and other materials in **digital form**. This limits the unnecessary use of paper and allows people who need it to use assistive digital devices for reading or magnification.

Do not put **publications and flyers** out on tables. Only use **pop-up displays** and reusable visual materials. Encourage participants to share materials with each other, e.g. with QR codes. All LinkedIn profiles have a unique code that can be used as a business card.
- Look into whether **decorations** can be borrowed, rented or otherwise reused.
- Avoid all kinds of **merchandise and notebooks**. They often have a short lifespan and end up as waste.

Decide whether to make **name badges**. If so, use standard paper and holders that can be reused for other events. Ask the participants to return them at the end of the event. Give participants the opportunity
- either to write their own **pronouns** on the name badge when they arrive at the event or prepare small stickers for them in advance (e.g. she/he/ them/all pronouns).



Photo: Ida-Lina Strang/norden.org

10. Waste

To avoid generating waste, use as little material as possible. For example:

- Avoid disposable materials, printed matter and packaging
- Use only materials that can be reused and have a long life
- Avoid food waste by using smaller plates and by finding out whether you can customise your food order to the exact needs on the day.

Demand that suppliers and participants reduce waste and treat it efficiently.

- Reach agreements with suppliers to make it easy for the participants to recycle their waste in clearly marked containers, e.g. paper, cardboard, food, metal, plastic, glass and residual waste. Inform participants how important it is that they help.

Meetings and events held in settings people are not used to generate large amounts of waste. Remind participants of good habits and make it easy for them to **Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**.





Photo: Sigurður Ólafsson/norden.org

11. Transport

Think about ways that you, as the organisers, might influence transport choices to and from the event. **Study the transport options** and **share information** with

- participants about how to emit the fewest CO² emissions in the easiest way possible. Always encourage the use of public transport.

You can set **targets for transport**, e.g. CO² emissions per participant or percentage who travel by train. The participants are not obliged to accept your suggestions or to inform you of their choices, but telling them about your targets and the transport options may have a positive influence on what they opt to do. Remember to make it clear that the information will be processed anonymously.

- If the venue is not centrally located or near a transport hub, you can offer a **shuttle bus** that runs on electricity or biogas.

- When **transporting materials**, demand environmentally-friendly delivery and CO² reporting. Send as few materials and in as few shipments as possible.

- When **booking transport for participants**, ask for their full name, date of birth or ID number and other needs, e.g. restrictions on means of transport, accessibility considerations, extra seat or baggage, early or late arrival. Process personal data securely and delete it afterwards. This makes participants with special needs feel safe, and they do not have to worry or feel they are being difficult.

The way people and materials are **transported** to and from meetings and events is a **crucial aspect of making environmentally conscious choices**. Air travel emits the most CO², followed by ferries, cars, buses, trains and bikes.

Source: COWI



Photo: Arisa Chattasa/Unsplash

12. Hotels

Send information about 2-3 **hotels in different price categories** close to public transport and the venue that participants can book themselves. Ask the hotels in

- advance about potential discounts and place requirements on accessibility and sustainability.
- Choose hotels that are **environmentally certified** (Swan, Green Key or similar).

Choose hotels that offer **accessible rooms** and/or are **universally designed**. For example:

- Alarm systems that can be seen and heard
- Signs in Braille
- Wide automatic doors (at least 80 cm)
- Unscented cleaning and products
- Rooms without carpets and with plenty of space
- Larger beds
- Bath or customisation of the bathroom for guests in wheelchairs.

When **booking accommodation for participants**, ask for their full name, date of birth or ID number and other needs, e.g. restrictions on means of transport, accessibility considerations, extra seat or baggage, early or late arrival. Process

- personal data securely and delete it afterwards. This makes participants with special needs feel safe, and they do not have to worry or feel they are being difficult.

The **Green Key** and **Swan labels** are recognised forms of environmental certification. Green Key focuses on sustainability in facilities such as hotels and restaurants, while the Swan has a wider range, covering everything from cleaning products to construction projects. Both labels set strict requirements for energy saving, waste management and the use of sustainable materials.





Photo: Eyþór Árnason/norden.org

13. Climate accounting and compensation

- Assess whether it makes sense to do a **climate account** for the event and decide in advance what you want to use it for.

Choose which categories to include in the account and start **collecting data** from suppliers and participants early on. Different types of resource usage and emissions are often converted into a common unit of measurement, typically CO². Make it a requirement in agreements with suppliers that they submit data on CO² emissions for the services or products they provide. Examples of categories:

- Electricity
- Water
- Participants' transport
- Participants' accommodation
- Waste
- Cleaning
- Shipping and delivery
- Food and drink
- Materials and equipment purchased
- Materials and equipment rented.

Choose whether to pay **climate compensation** for the event's emissions and allocate funds for that purpose. The market for climate compensation is large and not all options are equally efficient. Be sure to learn how the scheme works and

- make sure it has a real positive effect on the climate. If you have advertised that the event will pay climate compensation, then it *must* be done as soon as the climate account has been drawn up.

- Remember that even if compensation is paid, the event is **not CO²-neutral**. It is *greenwashing* to suggest that, because it implies the environmental impact has been "annulled". Compensation schemes such as tree planting can take decades to absorb the CO² emitted today and do not address the actual emissions that are the root of the problem.

Climate accounting helps you **identify where the CO² emissions are highest** and **where you can cut** consumption and emissions at future events. Climate accounts can be divided into three *scopes* according to the *Greenhouse Gas Protocol*. This is all about allocating and calculating emissions for which the company or organisation is responsible.

- *Scope 1*: Direct emissions from things your organisation owns or controls, such as vehicles or buildings.
- *Scope 2*: Indirect emissions from energy, electricity and heating that the organisation buys.
- *Scope 3*: Other indirect discharges emissions from things that the company affects but does not own. *Scope 3* is comprehensive and covers 15 categories, such as procurement of goods and services, waste and transport.



Photo: Ricky John Molloy/norden.org

14. Evaluation

- Use a single digital questionnaire to involve participants, speakers and suppliers in an **evaluation of the event**.
Evaluate the event based on **the principles in this guide** and note what you have learned and will do differently next time. Remember to share your experiences with colleagues, so they also learn and feel inspired.
- Send a single **digital questionnaire** to all speakers, participants and any companions/assistants **within 24 hours** of the event (or in the morning of the following day of the week). Ask for views on the overall impression, the subject covered, the social programme, information for the climate accounts, an assessment of whether the event was accessible and inclusive enough for them, and whether they thought it was sustainable.
- Send a single **digital questionnaire** to all suppliers **within one week** of the event. Request the specific information you need for the climate accounts and about how they felt about sustainability and accessibility.



Photo: Karl Vilhjálmsson/norden.org

15. Involving children and young people

It is relevant to involve children and/or young people in your event if they are directly or indirectly affected by the subject concerned. When they are involved, you are responsible for them, and all organisers must adhere to the same principles, to minimum requirements for participation and, above all, protect and guarantee the safety of children under 18.

- Map how the involvement of children and young people will enhance the event and lead to better or more relevant outcomes. Think about what they would get out of it and what they would add to your event.

Map how children and young people are directly or indirectly affected by the event and its programme (e.g. themes, examples, research/studies, policies or legislation). Use the tool [Rights-based analysis related to children and young people in the Nordic Council of Ministers](#) to conduct an analysis of your activity from their perspective.
- If children and young people are affected by or are a target group for the event, they must be involved, e.g. participating in the actual event or drawing up the programme, speaking at it or being part of the audience. Be clear about what you expect and demand of them, and adapt your expectations to their prerequisites.

Use the guide [When involving children and young people in the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers: Principles and approaches](#) when inviting children and young people to attend or be involved. Follow the guidelines, minimum requirements and advice on how to select participants.
- Focus on good and age-specific communication for children and young people before, during and after the event.

All children and young people are important here and now – not just in the future. Involving children and young people in events helps develop an inclusive society and accords with their right to be heard and involved in matters that affect them. The Nordic Council of Ministers defines children and young people as aged 0–25.



Photo: Lars Dareberg/norden.org

16. Equality and diversity

Equality is one of the three horizontal perspectives that the Nordic Council of Ministers integrates into everything it does. The idea is to create better conditions for inclusion, participation and cohesion in our society and region, which sends a signal to the world that respect for the contribution of every individual has been, and remains, crucial to the development of the Nordic Region.

- Strive for gender balance with at least 40% of the underrepresented sex on the speaker list and programme, and involve people of different ages, experiences and backgrounds.

- Think about ways of using a **wider range of speakers**. Spend time finding new experts who are not *the usual suspects*. For example, draw up lists of potential speakers with equal numbers of men and women.

Draw up a *code of conduct* that promotes an inclusive environment and language use and prevents discrimination and other unwanted behaviour. Make sure it is easily accessible to all participants and integrated into the planning of the event. For example, a *code of conduct* may include information about:

- - Principles for behaviour and respectful discussion
 - What constitutes unacceptable behaviour
 - How to report unacceptable behaviour.

- Use neutral and inclusive language throughout the event, both in written materials and speeches. Language can help maintain stereotyped notions about gender, age and other personal characteristics. Make sure the moderator uses inclusive language. For example, the moderator can ask speakers about their pronouns to avoid any misrepresentation and hurt when introducing them.

- Share invitations and information about the event across different networks and platforms that appeal to diverse target groups. This will increase the chances of attracting a diverse audience.

Events that adopt a thoughtful approach to equality and diversity not only make for more inclusive conversations, they are also more innovative and better at problem-solving. Research shows that equal and diverse groups deliver better results than ones made up of people from the same background or with the same gender. Diversity can increase the level of satisfaction with the event, both because more of those involved feel included and appreciated, and because it becomes more interesting when you draw on a wider and deeper pool of experience and understanding of the problem at hand.

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***Diversity** is being invited to the party: **Inclusion** is being invited to dance.*

Vernā Myers



Photo: Ricky John Molloy/norden.org

17. Green Procurement

Green procurement means taking environmental impact and durability into account when purchasing goods and services, e.g. when investing in or purchasing furniture, IT equipment, cloud solutions, cleaning products and cleaning services. When planning an event, you can make green choices and purchases when choosing suppliers, facilities and other services.

- Be clear about the purpose and need for the purchase. Examine whether it is really necessary to buy new this time and whether you can achieve the same purpose in other ways, e.g. through recycling. Is there material left over from a previous event you can use, e.g. pens and pop-up displays? Can you rent, borrow or lease equipment
- If you repeatedly rent the same things, e.g. equipment for interpreting or for making events more accessible, work out whether it would be more sustainable, economically viable and affordable to invest in permanent solutions at the venue.
- Be clear about the organisation's ambitions and set targets for objectives like CO² reduction and environmental impact. Check if your organisation has a procurement policy that sets requirements for the climate, environment and energy, or for ecolabelling, such as the Swan or other ecolabels.
- Assess whether the purchase is of a scale and volume that makes it relevant to impose green requirements on the seller.
- Use the total cost of ownership (TCO) to evaluate quotes because it covers the lifetime of a product or service – from purchase to maintenance, support, upgrades, energy and disposal.
- Assess whether it is appropriate to impose transport requirements on the supplier. (See the "Transport" section).
- Set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for green procurement to monitor and reduce climate and environmental footprint. This involves the continuous collection of data and monitoring of progress towards the organisation's main goals.

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Nordic co-operation

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

Nordic co-operation has firm traditions in politics, economics and culture and plays an important role in European and international forums. The Nordic community strives for a strong Nordic Region in a strong Europe.

Nordic co-operation promotes regional interests and values in a global world. The values shared by the Nordic countries help make the region one of the most innovative and competitive in the world.

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