



Climate Budget

Step by step guidelines to climate budgeting for municipalities

Campus Kristiansund Internship program



Kristiansund
kommune



Møre og Romsdal
fylkeskommune

NEAS SpareBank **1**
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Introduction

Climate budgeting is a crucial approach to addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, municipalities face challenges in creating and improving their climate budgets. Despite the existence of various tools and guidelines, there is no standardized way to structure and design climate budgets. This lack of consistency makes it difficult to compare budgets and learn from each other. The goal of this project was to streamline the process of developing climate budgets. The project mainly aimed to simplify the climate budgeting process and provide municipalities with easy-to-use tools to create more effective climate budgets. The project was developed through a collaboration between the Campus Kristiansund Internship Program (CKIP), Møre og Romsdal County Council, and Statsforvalteren.

The project covered the interests of multiple stakeholders. However, among those that were in specific focus one can highlight:

- Municipalities: These are the primary actors responsible for implementing climate budgeting practices. We interacted with them since they needed guidance and

tools to create effective climate budgets. Particularly, Smaller Municipalities: They face challenges due to limited resources and high turnover rates within their organizations. They are key stakeholders who need simplified approaches to climate budgeting.

- **Statsforvalteren:** It is an important body since it represents the state at the regional level, influences climate policies and funding, collaborates with local authorities, monitors progress, and provides guidance.
- **Local Climate Advisors:** The process involved engaging with climate advisors from municipalities in Møre og Romsdal and Trøndelag. These advisors provided insights into local contexts, emissions, and challenges they come across.

Methods

The whole process of the work on this project – from defining the deliverables to presenting the final results, was quite complex and demanding. Nevertheless, there should be mentioned several actions that were undertaken to facilitate effective project implementation:

Stakeholder Engagement: Extensive collaboration occurred with various stakeholders, including municipalities, local climate advisors, Statsforvalteren, and the fylkeskommune. Stakeholder consultations helped identify needs, challenges, and opportunities specific to the region.

Handbook and Template Development: A comprehensive handbook and a ready-to-use template were created. The handbook provides step-by-step guidance for municipalities in Møre og Romsdal, emphasizing practical approaches to climate budgeting. The template demonstrates the structure of the potential document that any county can publish, as well as recommendations on how to present the information properly and understandably in both text and visual formats.

Capacity Building: Efforts were made to enhance the capacity of municipalities in Møre og Romsdal. Simplified approaches were developed to address resource constraints and turnover rates.

By combining these actions, the project aimed to empower local governments, streamline climate budgeting processes, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

The project was a collaborative effort involving several parties from multiple organizations. We, sustainability consultants from the Campus Kristiansund Internship Program, were the main actors developing the final deliverables, as we contributed sustainability expertise to create the climate budget handbook and template.

Our project owners were representatives of Møre og Romsdal County Council and Statsforvalteren – Ingeborg Simonsen, Climate and Environment Coordinator, and Anne Melbø, Senior Engineer, with the help of Maria Laingen, Senior Advisor. These professionals offered guidance, advice, and support throughout the project, ensuring alignment with regional objectives and connecting the project team with local climate advisors. They also offered expertise and assistance, facilitating access to resources and providing feedback on the project's development. We also drew upon their network to get in touch with local climate advisers from different municipalities across Møre and Romsdal County. Our close engagement and collaboration with these advisors have been vital to the success of this project. In particular, Jørgen Stenset Restad, the former sustainability adviser in Kristiansund Municipality, has been crucial for us. Through multiple meetings with him throughout the year he has provided us with guidance and helped us gain valuable insights into how the climate budget work is organized in Kristiansund Municipality.

Results

Møre og Romsdal Fylkeskommune and Statsforvalteren i Møre og Romsdal published our handbook and template for climate budgeting. We have also finished an English version of the two documents, which we will distribute to the Norwegian Environment Agency and our partners in Latvia.

Among our most significant accomplishments are the following:

- We attended the regional climate conference “Klimasnu” in Ålesund in November 2023.

- In December 2023, we presented our work at the international conference "Development of Regional Climate Change Indicators and their Application" in Latvia together with the Norwegian Environment Agency.
- In the end of April 2024, we also presented our two documents to municipalities across Møre and Romsdal.

A handbook and template have been developed based on best practices from Norway and existing tools and guidelines provided by the Association of Norwegian Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Norwegian Environment Agency (Miljødirektoratet). These documents offer guidance to municipalities on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and learn from one another.

Discussion

Initially, we were asked to create a tool that could help municipalities calculate their carbon emissions, but we did not have the finances or knowledge within our team to create such a tool. We, therefore, agreed with our project owners to develop a handbook and template for climate budgeting instead. Given that municipalities face a diverse range of challenges related to climate budgeting, a major challenge we met in this project was creating a one-size-fits-all solution. Yet, through close collaboration and engagement with different municipal advisors, we developed two documents that municipalities with different needs and challenges can utilize.

Future Recommendations

- Create a list of examples of indicators municipalities can use to measure their progress towards environmental goals.
- Create a list of suggestive climate actions that municipalities can implement and provide an estimate of how effective these actions are (i.e. the amount of CO₂ they would save and the economic costs of implementing these).

- Continue to update the two documents to avoid them becoming outdated when there are new restrictions and guidelines related to environmental reporting and climate budgeting.
- Continue raising awareness of the handbook and template outside Møre and Romsdal.