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# Balancing climate rights and a just transition in oil-reliant Northern Norway

Entry points and road blocks through SDG localization and  
municipal planning

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I want to conclude with the final statement of the Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC Working Group II report, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*: *“The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all. (very high confidence).”*

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## Abbreviations

AP	Labour Party ( <i>Arbeiderpartiet</i> )
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
DIN	Document identification number
EU	European Union
FrP	Progress Party ( <i>Fremskrittspartiet</i> )
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIFT	Geographic Islands FlexibiliTy
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
INT	Interview
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
MDG	Green Party ( <i>Miljøpartiet De Grønne</i> )
NMSK	Business and environmental measures in forestry ( <i>Nærings- og miljøtiltak i skogbruket</i> )
PBA	Planning and Building Act
RAV	Risk and vulnerability
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMIL	Special environmental measures in agriculture ( <i>Spesielle miljøtiltak i jordbruket</i> )
SP	Center Party ( <i>Senterpartiet</i> )
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

# 1 Introduction

“Beneath its green veneer, Norway remains the most fossil fuel-dependent industrialized democracy in the world,” reads a *Time* article from September 2021 about the Norwegian parliamentary election (Bremmer, 2021). This reflects the paradox wherein Norway prides itself on having low emissions for a developed country while remaining one of the top oil and gas exporters in the world (Norsk Petroleum, 2020a). Given the increased international attention to climate change, it is unsurprising that there has been increased debate about the oil and gas industry in Norway. Human rights entered the debate due to the 2020 *People v. Arctic Oil* decision, wherein the Norwegian Supreme Court found that the right to a healthy environment for present and future generations in article 112 of the Norwegian Constitution is merely a guiding and interpretive principle. Thus, the petroleum licenses issued by the Norwegian government do not violate the Constitution (Supreme Court of Norway, 2020, para. 88-92). Despite this decision, human rights remain at high stake in the context of climate change and the oil and gas industry in Norway. On one hand, oil and gas exports maintain the welfare state, which allows Norway to better fulfill socioeconomic rights, such the rights to social security and an adequate standard of living, and the oil and gas industry employs around 200,000 people, which relates to the right to work (Norsk Petroleum, 2022b). On the other hand, and as the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report warns, climate change is caused by anthropogenic emissions and will impact many rights in a “long-lasting or irreversible” way if it continues at the current rate (IPCC, 2018, p. 5).

Between the *People v. Arctic Oil* decision and the policy of successive Norwegian governments to offer production licenses in the Arctic, the prospect of ensuring the rights of future generations, who are among the most vulnerable in this context, via the national level is unfavorable (Fisher, 2014, p. 8, 12). The prospect of ensuring a just transition for current generations, especially workers and communities whose socioeconomic rights rely on wealth from oil and gas exports, is also unfavorable. This problematique underscores the need to identify other opportunities for structural change in Norway, and this project investigates the potential of the local level for doing so. While most of the policy discourse and academic literature about the local level focuses on impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability, the aim of this project is to additionally explore the opportunities for mitigation measures at this level. Based on this aim, I developed the following research question:

## What are the entry points and road blocks for ensuring climate rights and a just transition at the local level?

I use a case study of Harstad, a municipality (*kommune*) in Northern Norway, to answer this question because its sociopolitical conditions reflect those of Norway generally but its economic interests and environmental concerns are amplified. On one hand, Harstad's municipal plans incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a strategic level and state an ambition to become "The Environmental City" (Document identification number [DIN] 2, p. 43). This is important given that the aforementioned IPCC report states that Arctic ecosystems, in which Harstad is located, are at "disproportionately higher risk" of adverse impacts of global warming over 1.5°C (IPCC, 2018, p. 9). On the other hand, the municipality endeavors to be "Northern Norway's most attractive municipality for the establishment of petroleum activities" (DIN6, p. 7). The oil and gas industry employs 900 people in the municipality, with companies including Equinor, Aibel, and Aker BP present, and predictably produces the highest value creation of any industry (Jensen, 2021; Angelsen, 2020). Furthermore, the operations for five petroleum fields are or will be located there (Isachsen, 2022). These circumstances show that, like Norway generally, the municipality's plans are marked by conflicting economic, social, and environmental interests. These conflicting interests raise the question of whether sustainable development – specifically, a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to sustainable development – can balance these interests to ensure climate rights and a just transition to the local level.

This project proceeds as follow. In chapter 2, I review the existing literature on (1) the relationship between human rights and climate change, (2) balancing conflicting rights in mitigation measures, and (3) the use of SDG localization and municipal planning. Based on this literature review, I define climate rights as the rights to life, health, subsistence, physical security, and a healthy environment and define a just transition as the framework for ensuring labor rights during the shift to a green economy. In chapter 3, I present my research design and methodology. This includes an elaboration of my research objectives and questions, hypothesis, and methods as well as reflections on the justification, limitations, and blind spots of my research. My methods include document analyses of relevant municipal plans, minutes of municipal council meetings, and the municipality's consultations with the oil and gas industry, (2) semi-structured interviews with municipal council members, and (3) a closed-question survey delivered to municipal council members and deputy members. In chapter 4, I outline the relevant legal and political contexts in Norway regarding climate change, the oil

and gas industry, and sustainable development. In chapter 5, I present the findings of the document analysis, including the key themes uncovered. In chapter 6, I present the interview and survey results, again including the key themes. In chapter 7, I apply the theoretical framework developed in the literature review to my findings in order to elucidate the prospects for substantive climate rights, procedural rights, and a just transition at the local level. In chapter 8, I provide concluding remarks, including the implications of this research for a HRBA and structural transformation at the local level.

## **2 Literature review**

### **2.1 Human rights and climate change: Obligation and impacts**

Despite the interlinkages between human rights and climate change, some scholars highlight the drawbacks of international human rights law for addressing climate change. John H. Knox (2009), the former Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, states that it is “difficult to argue” that international human rights law obligates a State to significantly reduce its emissions to ensure its citizens’ human rights (p. 197). This is because it is “virtually impossible” to prove the causality between a State’s emissions and a specific climate or human rights impact and because climate change is an “accumulative harm” in which many disparate and asynchronous actors are responsible (Pillay in Cameron, 2010, p. 705; Bell, 2011, p. 112). Furthermore, the doctrine of margin of appreciation<sup>1</sup> allows States to balance conflicting interests while still meeting their human rights obligations. As such, States can permit heavy greenhouse gas (GHG)-emitting activities as long as they contribute to a legitimate societal interest, such as economic growth, and do not interfere with human rights enjoyment “beyond certain minimum standards” (Knox, 2016, p. 221). In fact, the principle of “progressive realization” recognizes that “resources,” presumably amassed through economic growth or development aid, are necessary to fulfill socioeconomic rights (Humphreys, 2010a, p. 23).

Nevertheless, emissions anywhere, including those from Norwegian oil and gas exports, contribute to climate change and adversely impact human rights in Norway, especially the rights of future generations (Fisher, 2014, p. 13; Voigt, 2021, p. 10). The rights of future generations are linked to the principle of intergenerational equity. Identified by Edith Brown Weiss (2021), intergenerational equity maintains that “the present generation... must pass the Earth on to future generations in a condition no worse than that in which it was

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<sup>1</sup> Developed in European Court of Human Rights case law.



received so that future generations may meet their own needs” (para. 6). However, intergenerational equity still abides by the principle of sustainable development, as it recognizes the rights of the current generation to “use the Earth and its natural resources to meet its own needs” (Brown Weiss, 2021, para. 6). Henry Shue (2014) also discusses the rights of future generations but focuses on vulnerability rather than equitable access to the Earth and its natural resources. He writes, “The members of future generations of humans are completely vulnerable to the choices made by earlier generations, including ours” (Shue, 2014, p. 299). Shue therefore draws attention to the fact that future generations are unlikely to share the fruits of the current economic growth causing climate change.

Although future generations are necessarily excluded from decision-making, the obligation to ensure their human rights should not be. Derek Bell and Shue separately argue that, future generations are “barring catastrophe, virtually certain” and will be entitled to the same human rights (Bell, 2011, p. 106; Shue, 2014, p. 298). Since the activities that adversely impact their human rights occur in the present, the State has an obligation of means in the present to “take all reasonable measures to prevent a human rights violation” “to the maximum of its available resources” (Bantekas and Oette, 2020, p. 79; UN General Assembly [UNGA], 1966, art. 2(1)). Shue’s understanding of the rights of future generations introduces this duty of due diligence. He states, “[Ours] is the very first generation in human history to have acquired the knowledge necessary to understand either the problem of climate change or possible solutions to the danger of excessively rapid change” (Shue, 2014, p. 299). There are two generally types of solutions States and other actors can adopt. The first is mitigation, which involves reducing emissions and preserving or enhancing sinks (Bodansky, 2017, p. 12). The second is adaptation, which involves preventing or minimizing damage resulting from the adverse impacts of climate change that are possible or likely (Bodansky, 2017, p. 14).

While there are no references to climate change in binding human rights treaties, international human rights law can still be used to respond to climate change (Limon, 2009, p. 13). Simon Caney (2010) argues that climate change adversely impacts “minimal conceptions” of the human rights to (1) life due to an increase in natural disasters, (2) health due to an increase in the risk of malaria, dengue, cardiopulmonary disease, etc., and (3) subsistence due to food insecurity, water shortages, etc. (p. 76-81). Bell (2011) claims that, in addition to the human rights that Caney identifies, climate change adversely impacts the “basic” human right to physical security due to forced displacement (p. 100). Finally, Stephen

Humphreys (2010b) makes four justice claims about climate change: (1) corrective, (2) substantive, (3) procedural, and (4) formal (p. 41-42). The third justice claim, “constructing mechanisms that will ensure that a just solution can be reached, that the concerns and interests of different stakeholders are heard fairly, and that steps are taken as a result,” is the most relevant to the human rights-based approach (HRBA). The HRBA ensures that the norms of participation, accountability, transparency, and non-discrimination are observed in both the ends and means of climate action (Sengupta, 2000, p. 568). Therefore, the HRBA introduces good governance and civil and political rights into the context of climate change. Good governance increases state responsibility and responsiveness and thus makes state policy a key entry point to change (Hickey and Mitlin, 2009, p. 212; Gready with Vandenhoe, 2014, p. 3; Hydén, 2011, p. 20). On the other side of the same coin, civil and political rights empower individuals and communities to be “active claimants” who can safely participate in decision-making regarding issues that affect the quality of their lives (Sen, 1999, p. 38, 148; Hickey and Mitlin, 2009, p. 212). Alan Boyle (2012) draws attention to the Economic Commission for Europe’s Aarhus Convention to highlight the importance of procedural rights, namely public participation in decision-making, access to information, and access to justice in environmental matters, as “a means of legitimizing decisions about sustainable development” (p. 616-617, 622).

In addition to arguing that climate rights are derivative of existing human rights and highlighting the importance of procedural rights to climate action, the existing literature focuses on the adverse impacts of climate change on the right to a healthy environment, which is not internationally binding. This approach acknowledges that a healthy environment is a precondition for the realization of the human rights mentioned above but builds on that by claiming that a standalone right to a healthy environment should exist. In terms of climate change, this means an environment that is “neither radically inhospitable nor radically unpredictable” (Shue, 2014, p. 298). Sumudu Atapattu (2002) states that, with the standalone right, a human rights violation occurs as soon as a national or international environmental threshold limit is crossed (p. 111). In terms of climate change, this means that remedial action should occur before the environmental degradation is “irreversible” (Atapattu, 2002, p. 99; IPCC, 2018, p. 5). For example, a rights-holder need not wait until their life or housing is at risk due to more frequent and severe extreme weather events. Therefore, a standalone right to a healthy environment overcomes – to some degree – the common criticism that human rights are insufficient for addressing future harms because they do not establish a violation until after the harm occurs (Cameron, 2010, p. 708; Humphreys, 2010a, p. 11). Relatedly, Boyle

(2012) conceives of the right to a healthy environment as (1) a public good, (2) a derivative of existing human rights to water, food, and environmental hygiene, and (3) related to the principle of sustainable development (p. 617, 628). The relationship between the right to a healthy environment and the principle of sustainable development is useful for understanding this case study given the role of the economic pillar (i.e., the oil and gas industry) in Norway. In summary, climate change adversely impacts the basic human rights of future generations as well as the right to a healthy environment of current and future generations. The means for ensuring these rights are both substantive and procedural, as they require adopting adaptation and mitigation measures and facilitating a structural transformation of society and systems as well as a HRBA that includes public participation in decision-making and access to information.

## **2.2 Balancing conflicting human rights in mitigation measures**

As previously argued, climate change adversely impacts human rights and requires mitigation measures, namely halting oil and gas production, to address these impacts. However, wealth from oil and gas exports has allowed Norway to fulfill the rights to social security, an adequate standard of living, etc., and many people and communities rely on employment in the oil and gas industry, which relates to the right to work. Therefore, Sean Stephenson (2010) states that there is a potential for normative conflict – defined as the “impossibility” of meeting all of the obligations of two norms – between these sets of human rights (p. 166). In order to reduce this potential, Norway must endeavor to drastically reduce its economic dependency on oil and gas exports without sacrificing the widespread domestic enjoyment of socioeconomic rights (Stephenson, 2010, p. 160). This requires Norway to ensure a just transition during the green shift.

Instead, Norway’s current approach is what Aled Dilwyn Fisher describes as a “short-termist cost-benefit” approach and Shue describes as a “least-cost-first” or “cherry picking” approach (Cameron, 2020, p. 708; Fisher, 2014, p. 14-15; Shue, 2014, p. 211). These approaches entail simultaneous yet counteractive spending on GHG-reducing and GHG-intensive activities and do not seek to transform society and systems (Fisher, 2014, p. 15; IPCC, 2018, p. 22). For example, Norway has significantly reduced domestic GHG emissions by decarbonizing its power sector and by introducing carbon capture and storage in some of its oil and gas operations. As a result of these GHG-reducing processes, Norway is able to continue other GHG-intensive oil and gas operations inside of its jurisdiction. Also, per the polluter pays principle of the international climate change regime, Norway need not account

for emissions created through the combustion Norwegian oil and gas exports outside of its jurisdiction (Fisher, 2014, p. 15; Voigt, 2021, p. 6). As such, the legal impetus for structural transition does not exist for Norway. Still, many scholars maintain that this is incompatible with human rights (Caney, 2009, p. 69). This is because human rights allow for balancing conflicting rights but not outright trade-offs between them (Cameron, 2010, p. 708). In other words, continuing oil and gas production because the *benefits* of economic growth (and the resulting welfare rights) outweigh the *costs* of mitigation measures (and the related climate rights) is impermissible. Scholars similarly argue that this approach is incompatible with intergenerational equity because spending and doing less now means that the majority of costs fall on future generations (Shue, 2014, p. 211).

Therefore, how can Norway halt oil and gas production without sacrificing the widespread domestic enjoyment of socioeconomic rights (Stephenson, 2010, p. 174)? Simon Nicholson and Daniel Chong (2011) argue that using a HRBA can help overcome the conflict between mitigation measures and socioeconomic rights by “point[ing] the way to policies that address both human needs in tandem” and by prioritizing the most vulnerable as the “primary subjects and beneficiaries” (p. 142). In the Norwegian context, the most vulnerable are future generations, so current mitigation measures should prioritize their rights. That said, individuals and communities that rely on the oil and gas industry for employment and household income are also vulnerable. For this reason, Fisher and Stephenson, respectively, apply a HRBA that focuses on the right to work (Fisher, 2014, p. 267; Stephenson, 2010, p. 173). Fisher, whose analysis focuses on Norway specifically, notes that the normative content of the right to work includes an obligation to “take positive measures to enable and assist individuals to enjoy” the right (UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 2006, art. 27). He concludes that Norway is not meeting its obligations in this regard because it lacks a social protection policy for workers in the oil and gas industry whose jobs will be lost during the green shift or a green jobs program (Fisher, 2014, p. 268-269). Stephenson (2010) similarly calls for a “progressive legal approach” to account for the socioeconomic context in the State where the green shift will take place (p. 175). He focuses on the unemployment and employment insecurity created by the green shift (Stephenson, 2010, p. 160). Some jobs, especially in the oil and gas industry, will be lost, and these workers’ skillsets may become obsolete, making them unemployable (Stephenson, 2010, p. 170). Using a HRBA, Stephenson (2010) maintains, should lead the State to adopt measures for quality job training and transition assistance to facilitate reemployment and compensation/adjustment allowance for workers whose skills have become obsolete (p. 176, 178).

In addition to balancing conflicting human rights in mitigation measures, the notion of a just transition may resonate with more sectors of Norwegian society given that it encourages continued but differently-generated economic growth. It also adds another avenue for structural transformation besides obligations under the international climate change regime that apply primarily to States. This is because all levels of government can enable a just transition, all levels of society will be affected by the green shift, and all levels of government and society can impact climate rights, both positively and negatively. The IPCC (2018), among others, have acknowledged the importance of this “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach, stating that “collective efforts at all levels... can facilitate strengthening the global response to climate change” (p. 23). Despite this acknowledgement, the literature generally revolves around law and policy at the global and national levels. Therefore, and a deeper understanding of how the local level can simultaneously ensure climate rights and a just transition, including a deeper understanding of the factors at varying levels that facilitate and hinder local action, is necessary.

### **2.3 Ensuring both through SDG localization and municipal planning**

International human rights law recognizes numerous entry points for human rights promotion and protection at the local level. Local authorities are often responsible for service delivery, making them crucial to the fulfillment of socioeconomic rights, such as water and housing, that climate change will affect (Bachelet, 2019, art. 11). They are also responsible for infrastructure and zoning regulations that can be rights-protective in terms of adaptation to climate change. Moreover, because of the smaller scale, local authorities are often better situated than the national government to facilitate participation from citizens and civil society organizations, establishing an entry point for a HRBA (Bardal et al., 2021, p. 2). Philippe Cullet also establishes an entry point through the right to a healthy environment. He argues that this right should be viewed as a solidarity right that requires collective action at all levels to ensure (Cullet, 2016, p. 514). He notes that local policymaking often addresses specific environmental issues and dismisses climate change as a global issue (Cullet, 2016, p. 498). Cullet (2016) refutes this, arguing in favor of addressing specific climate impacts in local contexts while still considering the interlinkages between the global and local levels (p. 504, 513). The entry point that this project focuses on is SDG localization and municipal planning, with a HRBA as the driving force for both.

The SDGs provide the most agreed-upon framework for balancing economic growth, human rights, and environmental protection. This balance may enable a “comprehensive

approach” to social and economic planning that is key to ensuring a just transition, especially regarding the right to work (Siegel in Stephenson, 2010, p. 165). Moreover, the SDGs include some actions that public authorities at all levels are expected to take. Agenda 2030 encourages “work[ing] closely on implementation with regional and local authorities,” and numerous guides<sup>2</sup> for best practices argue that local action is necessary to meet many of the SDGs (UNGA, 2015, art. 45). Many scholars argue that this implementation requires “localization.” Localization is the process of translating global goals into local action by making them relevant to synergies and trade-offs in a specific context (Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 263). The existing literature identifies financial, knowledge/competence, legal, organizational/institutional, political, and technological factors that affect localization (Bardal et al., 2021, p. 5). In the context of human rights and climate change, the most relevant road blocks are insufficient (1) funding and resources from the national government, (2) knowledge about human rights promotion and protection and about SDG implementation and monitoring, (3) political will to challenge the status quo and thus insufficient “political anchoring,” (4) organizational/institutional implementation across all units, levels, and documents, and (5) time and capacity for sustainable development and climate action (Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 272; Bardal et al., 2021, p. 5).

The outcome of the localization process, Nicole L. Immler and Hans Sakkers (2022) argue, should be a mix of top-down policy implementation in which the local authorities are passive actors and bottom-up policy making in which they are active agents (p. 269). As a result of bottom-up policy making, some local authorities have been able to adopt more ambitious SDG schemes and climate action than their national governments (Vedeld et al., 2021, p. 347; Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 272). For example, Carlo Aall, Kyrre Groven, and Gard Lindseth (2007) maintain that, by taking independent measures, local authorities can send “upward signals” to the national government regarding climate action (p. 85). The authors also highlight the potential for a “broad perspective” on climate action wherein local authorities seek to reduce all local sources of emissions, not only emissions from municipal services and units (Aall, Groven, & Lindseth, 2007, p. 83). An even broader perspective, I argue, is possible if local authorities use municipal planning and other tools that can influence national climate policy and reduce emissions nationally.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments’ Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: Implementation and monitoring at subnational level.

The above paragraph shows that SDG localization can be an entry point for rights-protective climate action. However, some scholars point out that making the SDGs relevant to local realities combined with the process of political prioritization can oversimplify the goals and diminish their transformative elements (Zinkernagel, Evans, & Nij, 2018, p. 2; Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 271). For this reason, Immler and Sakkers (2022) differentiate between local SDG schemes that are guided by a “vision of the future” versus “present-day action and programmes” and that treat the SDGs primarily as a “municipal project” versus as a “societal project” (p. 273). Of course, a “vision of the future” best ensures the rights of future generations in the context of climate change, and a societal project most aligns with a HRBA. Regarding the SDGs being a municipal versus societal project, Barbara Ascher, Anja Husa Halvorsen, and Ulf Johansson (2019) emphasize the importance not only of public participation but also of empowerment (p. 5). They differentiate between these two norms, as empowerment additionally involves increased citizen control over the factors that affect their lives and livelihoods and is necessary for transformative change (Ascher, Halvorsen, & Johansson, 2019, p. 5; Broberg and Sano, 2018, p. 668). Focusing too much on public participation rather than empowerment, they argue, can make procedures “tokenistic” and limit them to placation, consultation, and informing (Ascher, Halvorsen, and Johansson, 2019, p. 5). This reflects one of Malcolm Langford’s (2018) main critiques of human rights generally – although international human rights law provides for macrolevel participation, this does not guarantee genuine participation or transformed power relations (p. 80).

This often occurs in the Norwegian context, where procedures at the local level only ensure the minimum amount of public participation that the law requires (Jones & Ruud, 2021, p. 35). In fact, Aase Kristine Lundberg et al. (2020) found that more than half of the municipalities surveyed use the SDGs to create engagement “to a small or very small degree” (p. 33). Finally, although public participation in decision-making is crucial to a HRBA, Peris S. Jones and Jørgen Ruud (2021) found that the local level frames this instead as “social inclusion” (p. 3). This leaves human rights “relatively silent” at the local level and signifies that rights discourse may not resonate with local authorities or communities (Jones & Ruud, 2021, p. 39). Despite a lack of specific references to human rights, scholars have observed public participation in climate decision-making in the Norwegian context. For example, Trond Vedeld et al. (2020) describe “polycentric urban climate governance” in Oslo that fosters co-creation and interaction between public and private actors, including civil society organizations and citizens (p. 351, 358).

Regarding the SDGs being guided by a “vision of the future” versus “present-day action and programmes,” Immler and Sakkers (2022) observe that the SDGs can be reduced to a “rhetorical device” to reframe existing policies and enable local authorities to continue with “business as usual” (p. 271). In the Norwegian context specifically, Lundberg et al. found that many municipalities have a “limited and specified approach” to SDG implementation wherein they focus on the three pillars generally or on a few specific goals, and these are often the goals that they were already working toward or can excel at (Lunberg et al., 2020, p. 7, 123, 125; Jones & Ruud, 2021, p. 15). The SDGs can also be used to “pick the low-hanging fruit,” which aligns with Shue’s “least-cost-first” approach (Aall, Grove, and Lindseth, 2007, p. 93). Lundberg et al. also found that the SDGs remain “an early phase” and “at a strategic level” in most municipalities and that municipalities need to implement the SDGs across all units and documents and focus on “concrete action” to achieve transformation (Lundberg et al. 2020, p. 120, 140). In conclusion, the SDGs may be useful for ensuring climate rights and a just transition if they are localized in a way that promotes structural transformation and fosters public participation and empowerment in the process, as the next section shows.

### **2.3.1 Taking advantage of positive synergies**

Without a “vision of the future,” SDG implementation at all levels often favors short-term economic growth over human rights and environmental protection, which is the most common critique of the SDGs generally. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development report “The future is now” suggests that, despite this shortcoming, transformation is still possible by “tak[ing] advantage of positive synergies with other targets while resolving or ameliorating the negative trade-offs with yet [sic] others” (Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, 2019, p. xxi). It is possible to take advantage of these positive synergies at the local level in order to simultaneously ensure climate rights and a just transition. First, the SDGs encourage policies and practices that local authorities can take. Target 13.2 includes the integration of climate change measures into planning, target 11.b includes “the number of cities... adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards... resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters...,” and indicators 1.5.4, 11.b.2, and 13.1.3 include the adoption and implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies (UNGA, 2017, p. 5, 16-17). Related to local mitigation measures is targets 12.7 regarding sustainable public procurement practices and 15.2 regarding increased afforestation for sustainable forest management. Related to local



adaptation measures is targets 2.4 regarding resilient agricultural practices and 9.1 regarding resilient infrastructure (UNGA, 2017, p. 5, 13, 17, 19).

The SDGs also have entry points for an HRBA, although they are somewhat few. SDG 16 includes “build[ing] effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UNGA, 2015, p. 25). That said, many human rights scholars and practitioners note that the norms of participation, accountability, transparency, and equality/non-discrimination are not sufficiently integrated across the SDGs. For the aforementioned climate change-related goals (SDGs 2, 11, 12, and 13, and 15), “participation” and “transparency” are mentioned once each, and “inclusive” is mentioned six times (UNGA, 2017, p. 5-6, 15-20). That said, the mention of participation and half of the mentions of inclusion concern the local level, and indicator 11.3.2 involves the “proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management” (UNGA, 2017, p. 15). This suggests that the SDG drafters viewed the local level as a key entry point for public participation in decision-making.

Despite the entry points for human rights and climate action discussed above, the entry points for structural transformation, particularly regarding oil and gas production, are not as clear at the local level. Of course, the SDGs themselves do not explicitly encourage halting or drastically phasing down oil and gas production despite the fact that this is among the most effective and transformative mitigation strategies. This is a key road block with using the SDGs as a framework for rights-protective climate action at any level, not just the local. Indicator 8.4.2 measures domestic material consumption, which accounts for the resources extracted in the State but then subtracts the materials exported, meaning that Norway’s oil and gas exports improve its score on this indicator (UNGA, 2017, p. 12). Moreover, target 9.4 allows for “greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes” rather than phasing down/out unsustainable industries, and target 12.c includes “restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful [fossil fuel] subsidies... to reflect their environmental impacts,” rather than passing legislation to phase down/out fossil fuel production itself (UNGA, 2017, p. 13, 17). Lastly, SDG 8 focuses on “economic growth” and uses gross domestic (GDP) per capita and per employed person, respectively, in indicators 8.1.1 and 8.2.1 (UNGA, 2017, p. 11-12). Many scholars, most famously Amartya Sen (1999) in *Development as Freedom*, argue that GDP is not a proxy for development or human rights enjoyment (p. 51). Finally, per SDG target 8.2, this economic growth includes “a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors” (UNGA, 2015, p. 19). In Norway, “high-value

added” means the oil and gas industry. Another road block is that local authorities have little influence, for the most part, over the SDGs mentioned in this paragraph. For instance, local authorities do not adopt measures regarding fossil fuel subsidies and, most importantly, cannot transform society and systems on their own.

Despite these road blocks, it is still possible to take advantage of positive synergies in the SDGs for a just transition at the local level. Specifically, through municipal planning, local authorities can ensure “full and productive employment” via SDG 8 as well as “inclusive and sustainable industrialization and... innovation” via SDG 9 (UNGA, 2015, p. 19-20). Through municipal business plans, local authorities determine what industries to attract and partner with and seek to maintain and create local employment opportunities. In the Norwegian context, local authorities acknowledge that oil and gas production will decline in the future due to existing climate commitments. Therefore, to progressively promote employment, local authorities can attract sustainable industries. Many politicians and energy experts claim that workers’ skills from the oil and gas industry are transferrable to the renewable energy industry (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 8). This creates synergy with SDG target 7.2 to significantly increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, assuming that Norway will export a great deal of this renewable energy (UNGA, 2017, p. 11). Lastly, target 17.17 encourages multi-stakeholder partnerships. Local authorities can leverage existing relationships with energy companies – especially Equinor in the Harstad case – and enter into partnerships with renewable energy companies as well as civil society organizations, namely labor unions, to work toward SDGs 7, 8, and 9 and a just transition for affected workers and the community generally (UNGA, 2017, p. 24). In brief, SDG localization does not intrinsically guarantee climate rights or a just transition because many of the targets and indicators do not seriously endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and because a HRBA is not integrated throughout Agenda 2030. However, taking advantage of positive synergies that strive for climate action, public participation, good governance, employment security, and multi-stakeholder partnerships is a potential pathway for achieving both.

### **3 Research design**

#### **3.1 Research objectives and questions**

The objective of this project is to determine whether and how local authorities are balancing climate rights and a just transition as well as the extent to which the local level can contribute to the structural transformation that the IPCC urges. Since the focus of the case

study is Northern Norway, the project focuses on structural transformation by way of halting or drastically phasing down oil and gas exploration and production and a just transition by way of ensuring employment opportunity and security for workers in the oil and gas industry. Since the focus is on “rights-protective measures” and “local authorities,” the project examines planning priorities and outcomes, decision-making processes, and the opportunities for public participation and the accessibility of information. Furthermore, the project focuses on local authorities’ implementation of the SDGs and their understanding of the role of human rights at the local level. Based on these research objectives, and as previously stated, the main research question is:

What are the entry points and road blocks for ensuring climate rights and a just transition at the local level?

The sub-questions that flow from this main question are:

- a. To what extent are and can SDG localization and municipal planning balance climate rights, both procedural and substantive, as well as a just transition?
- b. How do local authorities view climate rights and the concept of a just transition and their obligations to ensure either?

The mention of “procedural” in sub-question “a” is intended to determine the extent to which the local authorities adopt a HRBA.

### **3.2 Hypotheses**

The following are my hypotheses:

- a. While adaptation measures are rights-protective, mitigation measures lack a transformative element because they are seen as impeding economic growth. Procedures for public participation in decision-making and access to information related meet the minimum requirements, and local authorities do not take steps to include local environmental/climate activists in decision-making.
- b. The SDGs provide an overarching framework for municipal planning but not a “vision of the future.” The SDGs are omitted from business planning and are not specifically implemented or referenced during decision-making.
- c. Local authorities and municipal plans acknowledge the opportunities for and importance of climate action and the green shift but are not taking steps to achieve either, believe they are beholden to national policies/that it is the responsibility of

the national authorities to take steps, and are not thinking in terms of human rights or a just transition.

Finally, a note regarding scope: this project does not focus on Norway's extraterritorial obligations under international human rights law or Norway's obligations as an Annex II Party under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or apply a business and human rights approach to the State or the oil and gas industry.

### **3.3 Methods**

I used an interpretive case study, with the unit of analysis being the municipality's decision-making body, the municipal council (*kommunestyre*), and the theory being a HRBA to sustainable development in the context of climate change (Andreassen, 2017, p. 226, 247). Furthermore, I used qualitative methods, namely document analysis of (1) municipal plans, (2) minutes of municipal council meetings, and (3) consultations with the oil and gas industry, for a total of 23 documents, as well as semi-structured interviews<sup>3</sup> and surveys.

#### **3.3.1 Document analysis**

I conducted a document analysis<sup>4</sup> of the following six municipal plans:

**DIN1:** Environmental, Climate, And Energy Plan (2018-2021), including the Environmental Action Program (hereinafter referred to as the Environmental Plan)

**DIN2:** Business Plan (*Virksomhetsplan*) 2020-2023

**DIN3:** Social Element of the Municipal Plan (*Kommuneplanens samfunnsdel*) 2019-2031 (hereinafter referred to as the Social Element)

**DIN4:** Land Use Plan (*Kommuneplanens arealdel*) 2020-2030

**DIN5:** Municipal Master Plan (*Kommunal planstrategi*) 2020-2023

**DIN6:** Harstad Petroleum Strategy (*Harstad Petroleumsstrategi*)

I selected these documents because of their relevance to the research questions and sub-questions. DIN1-DIN3 relate to the three pillars of sustainable development, and DIN6 of course relates to the oil and gas industry and is mentioned in DIN2. Moreover, I presumed that DIN4 would contain information about adaptation measures, and DIN5 provides the framework for all of the other plans. Because the documents are in Norwegian, I began my

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<sup>3</sup> See pages 75-76 in for the interview guide and pages 77-80 for the survey.

<sup>4</sup> The results of this document analysis are presented in chapter 5.1.

translating them to English on Google Translate. Next, I conducted a keyword search for the following nine topics:

- (1) climate change, adaptation, mitigation
- (2) environment
- (3) sustainability, SDG, sustainable development
- (4) green shift
- (5) rights, future generations
- (6) participation, information
- (7) energy, emissions
- (8) petroleum, oil and gas
- (9) value creation, ripple effect, jobs, employment, business development

(1) corresponds to the acknowledgement of climate impacts in the municipality and the establishment of measures to address these impacts. (2) focuses on impacts on natural/ecological systems that are likely shorter-term. (3) addresses an overarching framework for decision-making. (4) looks for actions toward structural transformation. (5) addresses substantive rights and thus seeks to identify measures that ensure the rights to life, health, subsistence, physical security, and a healthy environment. (6) addresses procedural rights. (7) is related to mitigation measures in (1) but focuses specifically on energy use. (8) relates to the oil and gas industry. (9) identifies measures for promoting economic growth. The keyword search allowed for a quantification of the issues that the municipal plans address and a clarification of how they frame these issues (for example, as sustainability-related versus value-creating). To allow for more a qualitative analysis, I asked the following questions, which allowed me to more systematically organize the content into predetermined categories (Bryman, 2012, p. 290):

- (1) How do the plans implement sustainable development/the SDGs?
- (2) What are the plans' adaptation measures?
- (3) What are the plans' mitigation measures?
- (3) What are the plans' procedures for public participation in decision-making?
- (4) What are the plans' procedures for access to information?
- (5) What human rights do the plans acknowledge?
- (6) What do the plans say about the green shift?

(7) What do the plans say about the oil and gas industry?

Regarding the minutes of municipal council meetings, I searched 80 meetings/991 agenda items from 23 April 2020 through 31 March 2022 for climate, sustainability, and oil and gas industry-related topics (**DIN9-DIN17**). The municipality makes video recordings of the meetings publicly available, but it was necessary to transcribe 203 minutes of these recordings for this project. Twenty-six agenda items, or 2.62 percent of all agenda items, related to these topics. I then generated transcripts<sup>5</sup> from these meetings and identified several themes that clarify how decision-making regarding these topics occurs in practice (Bryman, 2012, p. 579-580).

Regarding consultations with the oil and gas industry, I analyzed the following six documents.<sup>6</sup> The first four documents concern the Johan Castberg field (operational in 2023) and the final two documents concern the Wisting field (operational in 2028). Harstad hosts or will host the operations for both:

**DIN18:** the September 2016 proposed program impact assessment

**DIN19:** the February 2017 summary of consultation statements and responses

**DIN20:** the June 2017 plan for development operation part II impact assessment

**DIN21:** the December 2017 summary of consultation statements and responses

**DIN22:** the March 2021 proposed program for impact assessment

**DIN23:** the June 2021 summary of consultation statements and responses

### **3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews**

I conducted in-person interviews in March 2022 in Harstad with the following four municipal council members:

**INT1:** Labor Party (*Arbeiderpartiet/AP*) and the Committee for administration and gender equality

**INT2:** Center Party (*Senterpartiet/SP*) and the Committee for planning and industry

**INT3:** Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet/FrP*) and the Committee for economy, climate, and environment

**INT4:** Green Party (*Miljøpartiet De Grønne/MDG*) and the Committee for upbringing and culture

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<sup>5</sup> The results of this transcription analysis are presented in chapter 5.2.

<sup>6</sup> The results of this document analysis are presented in chapter 5.3.

I selected these municipal council members based on (1) level of authority and (2) political party. Regarding level of authority, two interviewees are members of the municipality's Presidency (*Formannskapet*) and are responsible financial plan proposals, annual budgets, and tax decisions. Therefore, their responses reveal whether the SDGs and considerations for climate rights and a just transition are integrated into higher-level decision-making. Regarding political party, I invited municipal council members from across the political spectrum so that the sample reflected various perspectives and possibly the average perspective of the municipal council.

After transcribing the interviews, I broke down each interview into shorter fragments for a total of 98 fragments. I then coded these 98 fragments using the same nine topics<sup>7</sup> as the document analysis. Based on these fragments, I removed the “energy/emissions,” code as the interviewees only mentioned electricity prices, which is not particularly relevant to the project, and added “vulnerable people” to the “participation, information” code. The latter code therefore encompasses human right norms generally rather than procedural rights specifically. The coded fragments allowed me to perform a thematic analysis,<sup>8</sup> wherein I identified nine themes. The thematic analysis clarified the municipal council members' decision-making considerations and priorities as well as how they view their obligations.

### **3.3.3 Surveys**

I delivered Norwegian language surveys to 30 municipal council members (i.e., all members who were not interviewed) and all 53 deputy members, and the respondents completed the surveys in March and April 2022. I received 5 responses (6.02 percent response rate). One respondent was a member of the Committee for upbringing and culture, one was member of the Committee for planning and industry, one was a member of the Committee for health and care, one was a member of the Control committee, and one did not identify themselves as a member of a committee. The majority of questions use the five-point Likert scale to measure how municipal council members and deputy members view the impact of and the human rights related to climate change, the green shift, and oil and gas industry as well as the members' related obligations (Bryman, 2012, p. 166). To maximize internal reliability, I designed the survey so that the response “1” (strongly disagree) reflects opposition to stronger climate action or lack of concern about climate impacts on the human rights of Harstad citizens while the response “5” (strongly agree) reflects the opposite

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<sup>7</sup> See page 18 for the topics.

<sup>8</sup> The results of this thematic analysis are presented in chapter 6.1.

(Bryman, 2012, p. 170). The final two questions differ in that they reflect the respondents' attitude about the sufficiency of procedures for public participation in decision-making and access to information. Still, the response "1" reflects satisfaction with current procedures while the response "5" reflects a belief in the need for stronger procedures. The remaining questions are multiple response questions that allow the respondent to select all of the human rights they believe are impacted in the given situation. After collecting the survey responses, I input them into Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) in order to perform frequency analysis.<sup>9</sup>

### **3.4 Justification**

As Bård A. Andreassen (2017) notes, case studies allow for "thicker" contextual descriptions of, for this project, planning priorities and outcomes and decision-making processes (p. 232). This may be useful for theory-building, as the entry points and road blocks are likely similar to other municipalities in the Global North that rely on heavy GHG-emitting activities for economic growth and employment (Andreassen, 2017, p. 247). Furthermore, as Glenn Bowen (2009) highlights, document analysis suits this project in terms of efficiency, availability, and cost-effectiveness and scientifically in terms of stability and lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity (p. 31). Relatedly, the municipal plans are the clearest manifestation of the municipality's ambitions and the methods they use to realize these ambitions. Semi-structured interviews with open questions allowed me to collect data about the interviewees' perspectives and what they view as relevant or important (Bryman, 2012, p. 470). Conversely, the survey, which was a self-completion questionnaire built and hosted on Nettskjema, allowed me to quickly collect data from a larger number of municipal council members and deputy members, and the use of primarily closed questions facilitated data processing (Bryman, 2012, p. 211, 233, 249). The survey also included more explicit references to human rights than the interviewees included during the semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012, p. 470). This allowed me to better understand how they view the role of and impact on human rights at the local level.

### **3.5 Limitations, ethical considerations, and blind spots**

The main limitations of my methods are (1) what Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson call "documentary reality" and (2) non-response to interview and survey invitations (Bryman, 2012, p. 555). Regarding (1), the municipal plans were drafted to reflect positively on the

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<sup>9</sup> The results of this frequency analysis are presented in chapter 6.2.



municipality. Specifically, because Norway presents itself as a frontrunner in climate action and sustainable development, I expect that its municipalities attempt to do the same. For example, even if the documents discuss the SDGs with high frequency, this does not necessarily prove that Harstad has fully localized the SDGs. For this reason, Bowen (2009) cautions against merely “lifting” words from the documents (p. 33). These concerns highlight the limitations of the keyword search, but I corrected for this by additionally performing the qualitative analysis described on page 18. Regarding (2), it is likely that those who agreed to participate in the interviews and survey feel more strongly, positively or negatively, about climate change (Bryman, 2012, p. 188). Therefore, the responses of the interviewees and survey respondents may not reflect the perspective of the municipal council and its decision-making overall.

The main ethical consideration of this project is that I conducted the interviews in English despite the fact that the interviewees’ native language is Norwegian. For this reason, there are concerns that the interviewees were unable to express their perspectives to the fullest extent. I sometimes encountered misunderstandings about or lack of familiarity with academic and technical terms. Therefore, in terms of communication, it was important to respect the interviewee’s language abilities by speaking slowly and explaining or translating terms (Ulrich, 2017, p. 214). Finally, I did not have concerns about causing harm not only because the research topic is not particularly sensitive but also because I was interviewing and surveying public authorities, not private persons or victims (Ulrich, 2017, p. 197).

However, I do have concerns that interviewing and surveying public authorities created a blind spot in my findings. First, in the interest of voluntary informed consent, and as the Norwegian Centre for Research Data requires, I notified the interviewees and respondents that I was a human rights master’s student. As a result, I have concerns that their responses were more favorable toward human rights than if I were an economics or public administration student. Second, I excluded the perspectives of private persons, activists, and civil society organizations who likely have different opinions about the sufficiency of the municipality’s climate action, procedures regarding public participation, etc. This is difficult to square away with the ethos of human rights, especially regarding amplifying citizen voices. With more time, I would have interviewed and surveyed “both sides,” especially environmental/climate groups in the Harstad region. However, given that my research objective was to identify entry points and roadblocks through SDG localization and municipal

planning, which public officials are responsible for, the final choice of interviewees and respondents suits best.

## **4 Relevant legal and political contexts**

### **4.1 Petroleum activities continue largely unchallenged**

While this project focuses on the local level, this level is necessarily influenced by law and policy at the international and national levels. Globally and rhetorically, Norway presents itself as a proponent of stronger climate action (Office of the Prime Minister, 2021a). Norway is a Party to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and participates in the European Union (EU) Emissions Trading System as well as the EU's Effort Sharing Regulation under the Paris Agreement. Under the Paris Agreement's national determined contribution mechanism and the 2018 Climate Change Act, Norway seeks to reduce its emissions by "at least 50% and towards 55%... compared to 1990 levels" by 2030 and to become a "low-emission society" by 2050 (Government of Norway, 2021, p. 1).

The national political economy complicates this rosy picture. Since the discovery of petroleum on the Norwegian shelf about 50 years ago, the oil and gas industry has become the country's largest industry, with the partly State-owned company Equinor responsible for nearly three-fourths of production (Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, n.d.; Equinor, n.d.). Emissions from this production accounted for more than one-fourth of Norway's emissions in 2020, the most of any source (Norwegian Environmental Agency, 2021). But, as a result of revenue from the oil and gas industry, Norway ranks in the top 10 countries in the world for GDP per capita (The World Bank, 2020). The country exported 333 billion Norwegian kroner of oil and gas in 2020, which accounted for nearly half of its exports that year, and the Oil Fund, the sovereign wealth fund for investing surplus revenue from the oil and gas industry, is worth 11.5 trillion NOK (Norsk Petroleum, 2022b; Norges Bank Investment Management, 2022). The largely petroleum-funded welfare state has also resulted in the widespread enjoyment of socioeconomic rights. Specifically, the country ranks first on the 2020 Human Development Index, which roughly measures health, education, and an adequate standard of living (UN Development Programme, 2020).

Norway continues to "develop, not phase out the petroleum sector" despite the fact that (1) emissions from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes account for more than three-fourths of global GHG emissions, (2) limiting global warming to 1.5°C requires "rapid and far-reaching" energy transitions that are "unprecedented in terms of scale," and (3) the projected emissions from existing and planned fossil fuel infrastructure without abatement

will cause global warming to exceed 1.5°C (Office of the Prime Minister, 2021b, p. 26; IPCC, 2014, p. 15; IPCC, 2019, p. 15; IPCC, 2022, p. 19). The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy offered four production licenses in “frontier parts” of the Norwegian shelf in the 25<sup>th</sup> licensing round and 53 production licenses in the Awards in Predefined Areas 2021 (Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, 2021; Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, 2022). Under the 2021-2025 Hurdal Platform, Norway’s current government, which consists of a coalition between AP and SP, seeks to “facilitate a continued high level of activity on the Norwegian shelf” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2021b). Since oil and gas exploration and production occurs in the Norwegian and Barents Seas, the industry is particularly important to the High North. Meld. St. 9 (2020-2021) “People, opportunities and Norwegian interests in the North” reflects this. The “overriding national policy goal” in the region is “job and value creation,” and the employment effects of the oil and gas industry in the region exceeds 8,000 people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], 2020, p. 93).

#### **4.2 Domestic and local SDG implementation as a potential challenger**

Chapter 4.1 suggests that the international climate change regime has left Norway’s petroleum activities largely unchallenged. Therefore, this project seeks another entry point for transformation in this regard. One entry point is the political debate about Norwegian society undergoing *det grønne skiftet* (the green shift). For example, Meld. St. 14 (2019-2020) “Competence reform – Learning throughout life” acknowledges that the oil and gas industry is likely to shrink and claims that expertise, technology, etc. from this industry can be used to create new green industries, such as offshore wind (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020, p. 8). Despite this acknowledgement, there has been little progress toward a just transition. An example of such progress in another country is the Task Force on a Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities (Task Force, 2018, p. vii-ix). In the absence of such progress, this project explores whether domestic SDG implementation, which local authorities are largely responsible for, can spur a just transition (MLGM, 2021, p. 28).

Several national legal and policy instruments explicitly seek to promote sustainable development or integrate the SDGs through the local level. For this reason, many municipalities, including Harstad, reference the SDGs as a strategic guideline or decision-making framework in municipal plans. One legal instrument at the national level is the 2008 Planning and Building Act (PBA). The act seeks to facilitate coordination between different levels of government and to guide administrative and planning decisions regarding resource

use and conservation. The goal of the PBA (2008) is to “promote sustainable development in the best interests of individuals, society and future generations” (sec. 1-1). Moreover, the PBA (2008) requires each municipality to have a “social element” of the municipal plan that “determine[s] long-term challenges, goals and strategies” and that “shall be circulated for comment and presented for public scrutiny” (sec 11-2, 11-14). In many municipalities, this document is most likely to implement the SDGs and/or address human rights concerns and to involve public participation in its drafting. Regarding rights-protective climate action, the PBA (2008) includes several potentially conflicting planning functions and considerations, including “facilitate[ing] value creation and industrial and commercial development” and “promot[ing] societal safety by preventing the risk of loss of life, injury to health, and damage to the environment and important infrastructure, material assets, etc. (sec. 3-1d, h). The only provision regarding climate in the PBA (2008) requires plans to “take the climate into account in energy supply and transport solutions” (sec. 3-1g). The State Planning Guidelines for Climate and Energy Planning and Climate Adaptation (2018) elaborates on the obligations that flow from this provision, such as adopting a climate plan that accounts and sets reduction targets for the municipality’s emissions and assessing whether and how climate change impacts or will impact society in the municipality (sec. 3.1, 4.3). Related to the PBA is a policy instrument, National Expectations regarding Regional and Municipal Planning 2019–2023. With this instrument, government set the expectation that municipalities will use the SDGs as the “basis” for “sustainable social development and land use” and includes “proactive climate change policy” as a necessary step to address “major challenges” (National expectations, 2019, p. 3). The national government also put forth a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach to domestic SDG implementation that includes local authorities and civil society organizations (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation [MLGM] and MFA, 2021, p. 23-24).

Aside from the sustainable development-specific instruments, there are national legal instruments that provide for procedural rights at the local level. One instrument is the Local Government Act (2008), which seeks to facilitate “active inhabitation participation,” by establishing procedural rules, such as right of access to public meetings, as well as the “Inhabitant Initiative,” which will be discussed later in the analysis (sec. 1-1, 12-1). The other instrument is the Environmental Information Act (2003), which establishes the right to receive environmental information held by a public authority as well as information about “undertakings” both public and private “which may have an appreciable effect on the environment” (art. 9). The Environmental Information Act (2003) also establishes the right to

public participation in decision-making, including administrative decisions, related to the environment (art. 2b). This Act applies to all levels of government in Norway. This section shows that the legal and political frameworks for climate, energy, and sustainable development at the national level have established conflicting and largely separate processes. Nevertheless, these frameworks require local authorities to incorporate climate action and sustainable development into municipal planning and ensure procedural rights, showing there is a potential for substantive climate rights, a HRBA, and a just transition at the local level.

## **5 Document analysis**

### **5.1 Municipal plans**

#### **How do the plans implement sustainable development/the SDGs?**

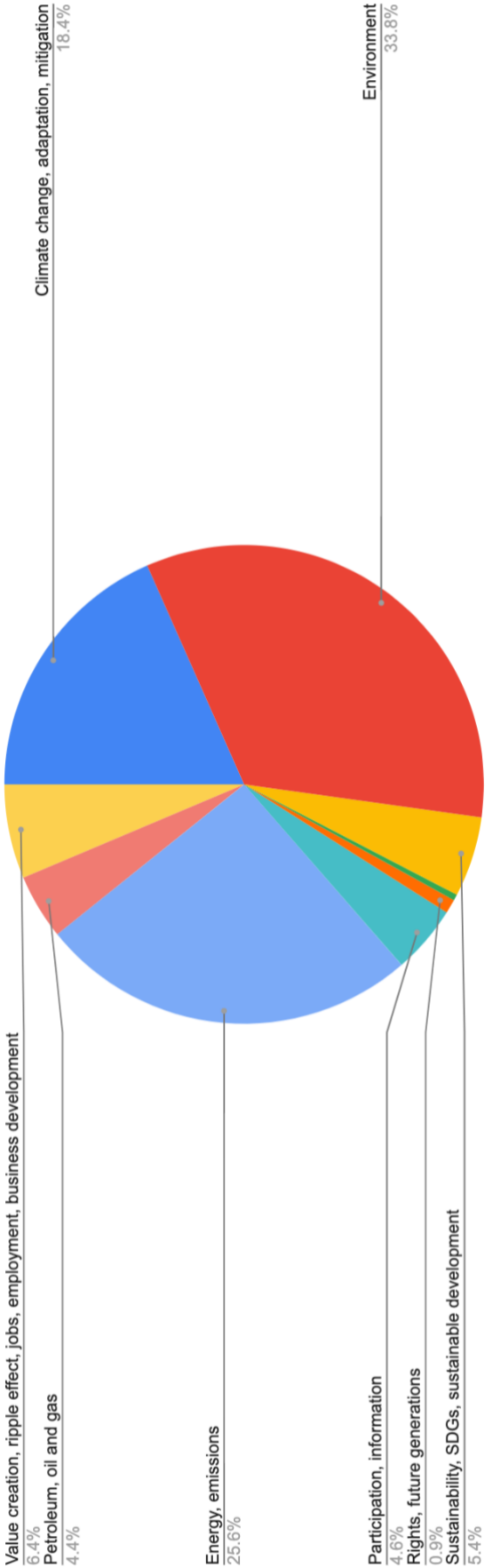
The Environmental Plan, Business Plan, and the Social Element mention sustainable development. The Environmental Plan points to national-level instruments, such as the PBA, that require local planning to incorporate sustainable development as a goal (DIN1, p. 11). Sustainable development generally and the SDGs specifically are most prominent in the Social Element, which outlines the municipality's own implementation of the SDGs, the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* (Attractive throughout life) vision. The vision corresponds to the social, environmental, and economic pillars, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Another aspect of this vision is the strategy “from cradle to grave,” which focuses on children (DIN2, p. 43). The plan pictures ten of the SDGs but does not clarify how these SDGs were selected, how they are incorporated into the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* vision, and how or when they are implemented. Each of the three pillars includes three goals (nine total), and each of the nine goals has four to seven strategies (DIN3, p. 10-12). The strategies are more similar to targets in the SDGs than indicators, so it is unclear how the municipality intends to measure progress.

The Business Plan includes sustainable development as a performance target for all municipal services and units but with a focus on “renovation and waste” and “physical planning, cultural monuments, nature, and the local environment” (DIN2, p. 120, 122). The latter is most relevant for addressing climate change, and the plan includes “local reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions” as a strategy as well as seven indicators, including energy consumption per meter square per kilowatt hour (DIN2, p. 122). Emissions from industrial activity is noticeably absent from these strategies and indicators, with the closest indicator being “number of environmentally certified companies per 1,000

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<sup>10</sup> See table 1 on pages 28-32 for a translation of the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* framework.

**Figure 1. Keyword search results**



inhabitants” (DINC, p. 122). Regarding the inclusion of climate-related issues in financial-decision-making, the Environmental Plan sets increased municipal investment in environmental tasks as an objective (DIN1, p. 49). Furthermore, the Social Element states that the Business Plan is responsible for establishing the measures to achieve the goals of the Master Municipal Plan (DIN3, p. 16). Despite this, the Business Plan only includes one operational measure that is climate-related, financing an energy advisor position (DIN2, p. 148, 152). The investment measures most-related to climate are road projects and electric vehicle (EV) purchases, and there are no earmarked grants for climate-related measures (DIN2, p. 20).

**Table 1. Attraktiv Hele Livet vision**

Inclusive municipality with a big and beating heart	
SDGs: 3, 4, 8, 9 10, 11, 13, 17	
Goal	Strategies
Harstad is a safe and inclusive municipality with room for everyone, and where everyone has the opportunity to get information and actively participate in matters that concern them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop the Harstad community through participation and dialogue with residents and businesses</li> <li>- Provide up-to-date and coordinated information on service and activity offerings - for satisfied residents and a good reputation</li> <li>- Ensure safe communities and prioritize residential areas with living conditions challenges</li> <li>- Gender equality and equality should be a matter of course, and Pride is an annual folk festival in Harstad</li> <li>- Facilitate Sámi language and cultural practice</li> <li>- Create security for the inhabitants through good work with social security and emergency preparedness</li> </ul>
In Harstad, all residents live a life under conditions that promote dignity, health and coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prevent and identify early on all those who are at risk of falling outside and provide close, systematic and long-term follow-up to children, young people and families with special challenges</li> <li>- Work to ensure that children and young people experience being included in kindergarten and school, and facilitate good mental health in children and youth</li> <li>- Contribute to children and young people developing skills and strategies for mastering their own lives, and make a special effort to ensure that as many</li> </ul>

	<p>people as possible complete upper secondary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work continuously with drug prevention work</li> <li>- Counteract social inequality and contribute to equalizing differences in living conditions, with a focus on work, living conditions and cultural and leisure activities</li> <li>- Develop Harstad as an age-friendly society and give as many people as possible the opportunity to live safely in their own home for as long as possible</li> </ul>
<p>Harstad has developed its urban qualities as a compact city with attractive districts and safe and diverse local environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take care of Harstad's advantages of being a small town with short distances between daily chores</li> <li>- Strengthen the center structure in accordance with the area strategy with the right activities in the right place</li> <li>- Reduce the use of cars, make public transport, walking and cycling more attractive all year round, and help make it easy to choose environmentally-friendly solutions</li> <li>- Facilitate industries in the district and location development in local centers</li> <li>- Use variation in housing types as a tool for diverse local environments</li> <li>- Support volunteering and development teams for well-being and activity-creating measures in the local communities</li> <li>- Towns must be developed with respect for the uniqueness of the place and focus on good meeting places</li> </ul>

<p><b>Attractive experience city close to nature</b></p>	
<p><b>SDGs: 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17</b></p>	
<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p>
<p>Harstad has an attractive and vibrant center, known for access to experiences, and with meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize good cooperation between the public, private and volunteers for coordination and benefit maximization of activity in the center</li> <li>- Ensure diversity of jobs, housing, as well as trade, service and services in the city center</li> <li>- Create a center adapted for play and recreation, cultural and food experiences, indoors and outdoors</li> <li>- Maintain the city's connection to the sea and develop the seafront with good urban spaces, art and attractions, activities and dining</li> </ul>



<p>places and activity all year round</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preserve and make visible cultural-historical identity and aesthetics in urban development</li> <li>- Arrange the city in such a way that children and young people, the elderly and tourists find it attractive</li> <li>- Develop the city with a focus on attractiveness and safety, accessibility and reach for people with reduced mobility, pedestrians and cyclists</li> </ul>
<p>Harstad has a wide range of cultural and sports facilities, as well as surroundings that are accessible to everyone and which are adapted for health-promoting activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure attractiveness, accessibility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists all year round and throughout the municipality</li> <li>- Develop meeting places and activities that contribute to community, commitment and participation both in the city center and the local communities</li> <li>- Facilitate and secure outdoor areas, parks and local environmental facilities for accessibility and activity throughout the municipality</li> <li>- Provide facilities and areas that inspire and provide opportunities for varied activity, culture, sports and outdoor life for all residents, regardless of economic, social and physical conditions</li> <li>- Build up under a strong volunteer culture</li> <li>- Ensure that the beach zone and the skerries are accessible to the public and ensure the completion of the Path Along the Sea</li> <li>- Equip Harstad for the implementation of small and large events; physically, cognitively and with a good culture for cooperation and sharing</li> </ul>
<p>Harstad is an attractive destination for visitors, with good access to nature and cultural experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work strategically for the development of information, transport services and infrastructure that makes Harstad accessible locally, regionally, nationally and internationally</li> <li>- Communicate place identity as a regional trade and culture city, national and international nature experience destination with city offerings</li> <li>- Visibility and coordination of the tourism offer, as well as facilitating a sustainable visitor management Promoting Harstad's Viking history and cultural heritage through marking the Harstad region and Bjarkøy's role in the National Anniversary 2030 - Norway for 1000 years with the project Tore Hunds Rike</li> <li>- Facilitate the preservation of Harstad's cultural monuments and the dissemination of cultural heritage</li> </ul>

City of innovation and regional driving force with diversity and quality in education and jobs	
SDGs: 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17	
Goal	Strategies
Harstad is an attractive university town that offers education at all levels, adapted to the needs of society and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure high quality in kindergarten and primary school and make Harstad an attractive upbringing municipality</li> <li>- Facilitate a good learning environment and that relevant apprenticeships, internships and rotation places are offered in Harstad, both in the private and public sector</li> <li>- Ensure that as many people as possible complete upper secondary education</li> <li>- Actively contribute to the further development of Campus Harstad in the city center in line with the Campus Development Plan</li> <li>- Market Harstad as an educational, working and residential place, and provide up-to-date and coordinated information for newcomers</li> <li>- Offer future-oriented education, relevant to business and the public sector</li> </ul>
Harstad has a sustainable and future-oriented business community, with good access to expertise for tomorrow's challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work to establish more attractive jobs in the Harstad region</li> <li>- Facilitate and market Harstad as an attractive municipality for the establishment of new businesses and an active driving force for entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Strengthen its position as a host municipality for blue industries and their suppliers</li> <li>- Further develop Arctic agriculture, with a focus on sustainable resource utilization, conservation of nature and landscape, as well as quality in products and product development.</li> <li>- Ensure good local and regional collaboration platforms for strategic interest promotion, experience sharing and as a basis for innovative processes</li> <li>- Arrange infrastructure adapted to the future needs of the business community</li> </ul>
Harstad municipality is an attractive employer and an active promoter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harstad Municipality shall contribute to promoting development, innovation and entrepreneurship in education and in local business and community life</li> <li>- Develop Harstad as a smart city, i.e. ensure competitive technical, social</li> </ul>

of innovation and co-creation	and digital infrastructure and good quality in the service offering - Harstad municipality will, through interaction with the users, offer adapted and efficient services of high quality - Always consider opportunities for joint use and meeting places, as well as environmentally and climate-friendly material selection, for all new construction and maintenance of existing buildings
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### What are the plans' adaptation measures?

There are two instruments for climate adaptation: the 2018-2028 risk and vulnerability (RAV) analysis and the 2021 Contingency Plan, the latter of which includes plans for flood, water supply, and sewage (DIN4, p. 13; DIN7, p. 11). These align with the PBA requirement to conduct a RAV analysis and with SDG indicator 13.1.3 regarding the implementation of a local disaster risk reduction strategy (MLGM, 2008, sec. 4-3; UNGA, 2017, p. 14). Although the RAV does not specifically mention adaptation, it makes numerous recommendations, such as using the precautionary principle when planning and designing municipal sewers to protect against storm surges, that result in adaptation (DIN8, p. 14). The plans recognize adaptation to climate change as a “long-term financial challenge and mention the need for a climate adaptation plan for land use strategy, but no such plan exists yet (DIN1, p. 6; DIN3, p. 14).

The plans acknowledge the adverse impacts of climate change on (1) water management, (2) sewage, (3) buildings, (4) agriculture, (5) forestry, and (6) fishing. The plans introduce the corresponding adaptation measures: (1) comprehensive ecosystem-based water management according to the EU Water Framework Directive, (2) mapping vulnerable coastal areas where stricter requirements should be set for sewage systems, and (3) stricter regulations for constructing buildings vulnerable to storm surges in the beach zone and “consideration zones”<sup>11</sup> for flooding, avalanches, rockfalls, landslides, and landslides (DIN1, p. 20, 53; DIN4, p. 18). The measures for (3) are particularly crucial because the municipality’s RAV analysis shows a risk value of 15 out of 25 for sea level rise and storm surge, and the risk is greatest in the city center (*sentrum*) (DIN4, p. 39). That said, the measures are for future buildings, not existing buildings (DIN4, p. 18). Regarding (4)-(6), the municipality is “in the process of developing a primary business plan” (DIN1, p. 23). In the meantime, regarding (4), the municipality rejected the recommendation to reduce tillage and sow perennial climate-adapted plants and is instead limiting the reduction of cultivated and

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<sup>11</sup> From the PBA

arable land (DIN1, p. 64). Regarding (4)-(5), the municipality provides grants to individual citizens for special environmental measures in agriculture (SMIL) and business and environmental measures in forestry (NMSK), and these grants are provided by the Norwegian Directorate of Agriculture (Arvola, 2021).

### **What are the plans' mitigation measures?**

The plans' strongest mitigation instruments are the Climate Account and Budget, which are part of the Business Plan. The Climate Budget seeks to reduce emissions by at least 40 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2030, which is not as ambitious as the national NDC, and the measures to achieve this goal focus mainly on road traffic and building projects (DIN2, p. 40-42). Another mitigation instrument is public procurement, wherein the municipality uses its purchasing power to reduce emissions. The "environmentally-friendly purchasing" regulations align with SDG target 12.7 to promote sustainable public procurement practices (DIN1, p. 47; UNGA, 2017, p. 14). For example, the municipality applies climate accounting to municipal construction projects, specifically regarding methods and materials and requires all units to consider the purchase of EVs for the municipal car fleet (DIN1, p. 32; DIN2, p. 41). In terms of land use, the plans' strategies are (1) spatial planning, especially densification in the city center, (2) transportation, especially enabling walking, cycling, and public transportation and increasing the number of EV charging stations, and (3) afforestation and reforestation (DIN5, p. 14-15; DIN1, p. 32). Mitigation measures for (2) are made possible by the Harstad Package, which is funded by the county and the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, and the plans acknowledge the municipality has "not worked systematically" with (3), and no plan exists for afforestation, reforestation, or even preservation (DIN1, p. 63).

### **What are the plans' procedures for public participation in decision-making?**

One of the sub-goals of the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision is "Harstad is a safe and inclusive municipality with room for everyone, and where everyone has the opportunity to get information and actively participate in matters that concern them" (DIN3, p. 11). This aligns with SDG target 16.7 to "ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels" (UNGA, 2017, p. 19). There are three key formal mechanisms for public participation in decision-making: (1) "Inhabitants' Question Time," (2) the "Inhabitant Initiative," and (3) during the planning process. (1) allows inhabitants to submit questions to be considered at municipal council meetings, which occur once per month. (2)

was established by the Local Government Act and allows citizens to propose cases for political consideration after a proposal reaches 300 signatures (MLGM, 2018, sec. 12-1). Regarding (3), three out of six of the plans provided for public participation. The Social Element procedure for public participation included an online survey, three open meetings (including one for industry, innovation, knowledge, and competence), a separate program for children and young people, and an open planning office (DIN2, p. 45). The plan states that 430 inhabitants participated in this scheme, which accounts for less than two percent of the population (DIN2, p. 45). The Environmental Plan also provided for public participation, which included six weeks of open consultation (i.e., emailing or mailing consultation statement to the municipality), a hearing, and an invitation for national and regional authorities, businesses, environmental organizations, the Youth Council, and political parties to provide input (DIN2, p. 5). The public, including these groups, submitted six consultation statements and no objections (DIN2, p. 5). Finally, the Land Use Plan provided for public participation as well as input from government agencies, businesses, landowners, and civil society organizations (DIN4, p. 8). These included meeting invitations for reindeer owners and local representatives from the Norwegian Sámi National Association, but these individuals did not attend the meeting or provide input on the impact assessment (DIN4, p. 8). Overall, the plan received and assessed 129 public inputs but only included seven “new purposes” from this process in the final plan (DIN4, p. 8).

### **What are the plans’ procedures for access to information?**

“Environmental information” is one of four focus areas in the Environmental Plan. One of the municipality’s strategies for this focus area is “Environmental information shall be easily accessible and up-to-date... via municipal websites, social media, etc.” (DIN1, p. 49). One of the measures for the environmental information focus area is publishing news on the Facebook page “Green (*Grønn*) Harstad” (DIN1, p. 49). However, as of May 2022, this page does not exist. Furthermore, the municipality has an environmental advisor who is “the citizens’ contact person in environmental matters,” but this person only works 50 percent (DIN1, p. 46). The municipality website has an environment web page that includes an environmental information section, but the section reflects a misunderstanding of this term, as it includes regulations and advice rather than information about measures that “may have an appreciable effect on the environment,” to use the wording of the Environmental Information Act (Meininger Saudland, n.d.). For example, the Harstad Petroleum Strategy is not accessible through the environment web page or searchable on the municipality website. Instead, it must

be accessed through a search engine. Similarly, the municipality's statements submitted for Equinor's Johan Castberg and Wisting impact assessments are not available on the municipality website and instead must be accessed on the Equinor website. Additionally, the Harstad Petroleum Strategy states, "information work must be carried out to control these processes as much as possible in the direction of what will give increased ripple effects in northern Norway," revealing an intentional strategy to manipulate environmental information (DIN6, p. 5).

### **What human rights do the plans acknowledge?**

Aside from the right to environmental information discussed above, the plans only mention one substantive human right and otherwise only draw attention to human rights concerns once. The Environmental Plan mentions the right to a healthy environment in article 112 of the Norwegian Constitution, and the Social Element states, "Social conditions describe how people feel in a society, whether they get their rights fulfilled, and whether they have the opportunity to influence their own lives and the society they live in" (DIN1, p. 8; DIN3, p. 8). Furthermore, reflecting the human rights norm of prioritizing the most vulnerable, the impact assessment in the Land Use Plan includes "Sámi natural and cultural infrastructure," and the Social Element includes "protect[ing] Sámi interests in spatial planning" as a strategy (DIN4, p. 36; DIN3, p. 14). While the plans frequently reference children and young people in environmental contexts, the references concern the availability of green areas and opportunities for outdoor recreation rather than mitigating or adapting to climate change. Lastly, the plans mention "future generations" five times, but only to define the principle of sustainable development (DIN1, p. 3, 11, 30; DIN4, p. 122; DIN3, p. 8).

### **What do the plans say about the green shift?**

The plans reference the need for Norwegian society to undergo a green shift seven times (DIN1, p. 3, 12, 46; DIN2, p. 122-123, DIN5, p. 6). The Municipal Master Plan recognizes the need to create growth in other industries due to the projected decrease in oil and gas exploration and production and to meet climate obligations (DIN5, p. 5). Despite this recognition, the plans' actions are limited. The Business Plan states that the municipality must "follow up on" opportunities in the development and production of renewable energy sources and seeks to "strengthen dialogue" with "future industries" (DIN2, p. 65). It even uses the terms "value creation," which is often used to describe the oil and gas industry, and "innovation," which aligns these efforts with SDG 9 (DIN2, p. 65). One example of how the

municipality has made strides toward the renewable energy industry is the Geographic Islands FlexibiliTy (GIFT) project on Hinnøya, the island that Harstad is located on. The GIFT project, which is funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program and lasts for four years, aims to decarbonize the energy mix of European islands by developing solutions for factory energy management systems, EV chargers, e-ferries, and hydrogen-bromine batteries (GIFT, n.d.). With this project, the municipality entered into a partnership with private sector actors, such as the energy companies Hålogaland Kraft and Hafenstrom, which aligns with SDG target 17.17. Regarding full and productive employment in SDG 8, the Environmental Plan includes “green innovation and restructuring to create sustainable jobs” as a strategy for the focus area “sustainable social development and resource management” (DIN1, p 21). This connection between employment and the green shift is not made in any of the other plans. Instead, they focus on a “diversity of jobs” and “local attractiveness,” especially in the economic pillar of the Attractive Hele Livet vision and as a performance target for “business and social development” in the Business Plan (DIN3, p. 13; DIN2, p. 62).

### **What do the plans say about the oil and gas industry?**

The plans state that “the blue industries,” namely petroleum, seafood, maritime transport, are “the main industries for development in Harstad” (DIN2, p. 64). Most notably, the Business Plan seeks to advance the Harstad Petroleum Strategy developed in 2012 (DIN2, p. 64). There is also a difference in how each plan addresses the oil and gas industry, further reflecting the contradiction. The Environmental Plan only refers to the oil and gas industry or production once. Conversely, the Business Plan mentions the oil and gas industry or production 10 times and the oil and gas industry three times. The Social Element avoids using the term “petroleum” and instead has a strategy to “strengthen [the municipality’s] position as a host for the blue industries and their suppliers” (DIN3, p. 13). Still, the Business Plan frames the oil and gas industry in terms of sustainable development, using terms like “knowledge development” and “innovation” (DIN2, p. 64, 66). The same or similar terms appear frequently in Agenda 2030, especially SDGs 8 and 9. Finally, the Harstad Petroleum Strategy does not mention climate, mitigation, or emissions at all and only mentions “environmental challenges” once (DIN6, p. 7). Conversely, it mentions “ripple effects” 15 times and “jobs” four times, highlighting the economic benefits for the municipality and region.

**Table 2. Summary of municipal plans analysis**

Keyword	Plans, with number of mentions	Description and/or measures
Sustainable development/ SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (5)</li> <li>- Business Plan (5)</li> <li>- Municipal Master Plan (3)</li> <li>- Social Element (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social Element establishes the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision, a localized version of the SDGs</li> <li>- The Business Plan uses sustainable development as a target for some measures that apply to municipal services and units, and most measures focus on reducing emissions and energy consumption</li> </ul>
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (4)</li> <li>- Business Plan (2)</li> <li>- Municipal Master Plan (2)</li> <li>- Social Element (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruments: RAV analysis, Contingency Plan</li> <li>- Only adopt measures for water management, sewage, and buildings, and most measures are related to zoning</li> <li>- Acknowledge the adverse impacts on agriculture, forestry, and fishing but do not adopt measures</li> </ul>
Mitigation	<p>0 mentions of mitigation, but the following mentions of emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (51)</li> <li>- Business Plan (22)</li> <li>- Social Element (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruments: Climate Account and Budget, public procurement</li> <li>- Strategies: Spatial planning (densification), transportation, and afforestation</li> </ul>
Public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (3)</li> <li>- Business Plan (6, but 3 are in reference to the Social Element)</li> <li>- Land Use Plan (4)</li> <li>- Municipal Master Plan (1)</li> <li>- Social Element (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruments: Inhabitants' Question Time, Inhabitant Initiative, and some planning processes</li> <li>- Environmental Plan, Social Element, and Land Use Plan provided for public participation</li> <li>- Instruments are not much used by the public, especially to communicate climate-related concerns, and the extent to which municipal planning integrates these concerns is not promising</li> </ul>
Access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (34)</li> <li>- Business Plan (2)</li> <li>- Land Use Plan (4)</li> <li>- Municipal Master Plan (2)</li> <li>- Harstad Petroleum Strategy (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasize environmental information, especially in the Environmental Plan, likely due to the Environmental Information Act</li> <li>- Misunderstanding of environmental information (for example, "Tips for a greener everyday life")</li> <li>- Notion that the municipal website contains all of the necessary information, despite the fact that key information, such as the municipality's statements submitted for Equinor impact assessments, are not available</li> <li>- Harstad Petroleum Strategy suggests need to manipulate information processes</li> </ul>
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Plan (7)</li> <li>- Business Plan (0, though</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus mainly on the right to environmental information, but also one reference to the right to a healthy environment in the</li> </ul>



	there are mentions of statutory rights, such as a right to a kindergarten place) - Social Element (1)	Environmental Plan and to human rights generally in the Social Element - In terms of vulnerable groups, the Sámi people and future generations are mentioned
Green shift	- Environmental Plan (3) - Business Plan (2) - Municipal Master Plan (1) - Social Element (1)	- Acknowledge need for green shift but take little action - Offer GIFT project as example of how municipality is embracing “future industries” - Establish job growth as a priority but barely link this to the green shift
Petroleum/oil and gas industry	- Environmental Plan (1) - Business Plan (13) - Harstad Petroleum Strategy (83)	- Identify “the blue industries” as key to economic growth - Frame the oil and gas industry in terms of sustainable development and highlight its economic benefits - Do not offer phasing down/out oil and gas industry as a mitigation measure

## 5.2 Minutes of municipal council meetings

As the document analysis shows, the municipal plans often reference sustainable development, the Municipal Master Plan and Social Element establish the SDGs as an overarching framework, and the latter plan even references human rights. To determine whether these plans lead to SDG implementation and a HRBA in practice, I performed a thematic analysis on the 26 potentially climate, sustainability, and oil and gas industry-related agenda items of municipal council meetings<sup>12</sup> that are presented in table 3 below. The most common agenda items are present in figure 2 below.

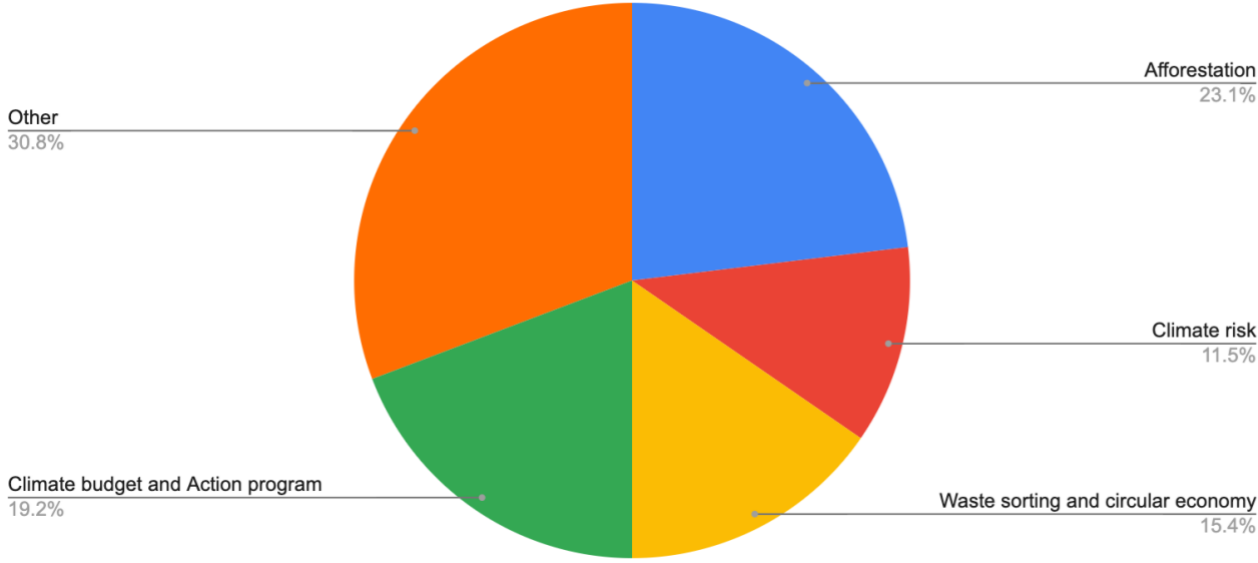
**Table 3. Agenda items of municipal council meetings**

No.	Item	Committee	Date
1	Afforestation/carbon sequestration	Municipal council	30 September 2021
2	Afforestation/carbon sequestration	Committee for planning and industry	20 September 2021
3	Climate risk	Municipal council	24 June 2021
4	Climate risk	Committee for economy, climate, and environment	18 May 2021

<sup>12</sup> See page 19 for methods.

5	Waste sorting and circular economy	Committee for planning and industry	10 May 2021
6	Climate risk	Committee for planning and industry	10 May 2021
7	Afforestation/carbon sequestration	Municipal council	29 April 2021
8	Interpellation - Environment/ climate requirements in public procurement	Municipal council	25 March 2021
9	Statement for Wisting impact assessment	Municipal council	25 March 2021
10	Question - landslide superstructure or tunnel on Auneveien	Municipal board meeting	25 March 2021
11	Afforestation	Committee for planning and industry	8 March 2021
12	Waste sorting and circular economy	Municipal council	25 February 2021
13	Waste sorting and circular economy	Presidency	23 February 2021
14	Afforestation/ carbon sequestration	Presidency	23 February 2021
15	Waste sorting and circular economy	Committee for economy, climate, and environment	23 February 2021
16	Afforestation	Committee for economy, climate, and environment	21 February 2021
17	Environment/climate requirements in public procurement	Committee for planning and industry	8 February 2021
18	Letter from the national government regarding soil protection and the SDGs in the municipalities	Committee for planning and industry	8 February 2021
19	Coastal Plan	Committee for planning and industry	8 February 2021
20	Clearance of forests	Presidency	19 January 2021
21	Climate Budget	Municipal council	5 November 2020
22	Climate Budget	Presidency	27 October 2020
23	Coastal Plan	Municipal council	28 May 2020
24	Climate Budget	Municipal council	30 April 2020
25	Action program for environment, climate and energy 2020-2023	Municipal council	30 April 2020
26	Action program for environment, climate and energy 2020-2023	Committee for economy, climate, and environment	28 April 2020

**Figure 2. Prevalence of agenda items**



First, it is important to note that there was no mention of human rights or vulnerable populations in the meetings. There was one mention of the need to abide by the environmental/climate goals in the Social Element, four mentions of global/national climate commitments, two mentions of sustainability, and one mention of the green shift. Besides agenda item 18, there was no reference to the SDGs. There were 19 references to the “future,” mainly acknowledging the occurrence of and need to plan for the adverse impacts of climate change. None of these references mentioned future generations themselves. Regarding public participation, the only mention of civil society was resource management cooperation with the Forest Owners’ Association. Lastly, because of lack of time, there was no deliberation about the impact assessment for the Wisting oil field, and the mayor issued a statement on the municipality’s behalf. The fact that this decision-making about the oil and gas industry was ultimately confined to the highest level reflects poorly on the democratic process and procedural rights at the local level.

Despite few explicit references to the topics of this research in the meetings, my analysis uncovered two themes: (1) an emphasis on financial/liability and economic impacts over human/social impacts and (2) an emphasis on cost-effectiveness and “the business case” for climate action. Regarding (1), the municipal council members recognized that climate change will affect human health and safety as well as critical societal functions and that the green shift, specifically “rapid technological development” will affect people’s lives and livelihoods in a way that necessitates a just transition. However, the municipal council members expressed far more concern about high costs due to infrastructure and property

damage from climate-induced disasters and the need to adopt adaptation measures to attract businesses to the municipality. As such, it is unsurprising that the final decision of the climate risk cases was “The municipal council and the municipal director are tasked with applying for state funding for climate adaptation measures” (DIN14, 2:07:45).

Regarding (2), the deliberation about afforestation focused on the cost-effectiveness of this mitigation measure. Municipal council members said, “We are very positive about measures in the climate area that can be both cheap and effective” and “it is a sensible measure, it does not cost much money, it is photosynthesis.” (DIN11, 5:21:45; DIN13, 3:33:20). This aligns with the approach of the Environmental Plan, which prioritizes “cost-effective measures with major environmental and climate benefits” and “measures that receive external financing (DIN1, p. 51). Some municipal council members attempted to counter this focus, saying “We cannot just jump on the simplest and cheapest. We have to look at the bigger picture,” and “Is it really true that planting spruce, especially here in the North, is somehow the major focus area in relation to climate?” (DIN11, 5:24:40; DIN12, 1:41:30). Relatedly, municipal council members opposed disruptions to and costs for society. For example, one municipal council member highlighted the importance of not “impos[ing] on the inhabitants a lot of new taxes and prohibitions and injunctions” (DIN11, 5:21:55). Finally, municipal council members questioned whether afforestation should be viewed as a climate issue or a business issue, drawing attention to felling costs and potential profits from timber. The outcome of the afforestation cases was “The municipal council asks the municipal director to prepare an overall strategy for afforestation as a climate measure, including expected costs in Harstad municipality” (DIN16, 2:19:30).

### **5.3 Consultations with the oil and gas industry**

To further determine whether municipal plans lead to SDG implementation in practice to ensure climate rights and a just transition, I analyzed the municipality’s most recent consultations with Equinor.<sup>13</sup> For the Johan Castberg field, Harstad submitted statements for the themes of (a) “climate, emissions to air, electrification, and best available techniques” twice, (b) “safety, environmental risk, and oil spill preparedness” twice, (c) “fisheries and other business interests” once, and (d) “social effects and location of operating organization and basic services” twice (DIN19, p. 7; DIN21, p. 6). For (a), the municipality advised against the parliament (*Stortinget*) mandating the electrification of the Johan Castberg platform from land. Equinor proposed using gas turbines for power generation, which will result in 270,000

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<sup>13</sup> See page 19 for the titles of the documents analyzed.

tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, and the parliament and Ministry of Petroleum and Energy approved this proposal (DIN21, p. 17). The municipality did not include concerns about these emissions in its statement. That said, the municipality expressed concern about environmental impact in its statements for (b) regarding a lack of oil spill preparedness south of Hammerfest and urged the implementation of a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan along the entire coast of Northern Norway (DIN19, p. 36; DIN21, p. 37).

For Wisting, Harstad submitted statements for (e) “environmental risk and oil spill preparedness,” (f) “social effects,” (g) “operations support,” and (h) “power from land” (DIN23, p. 5). For Johan Castberg and Wisting together, the municipality’s statements for (d), (f), and (g) were the most thorough, with a significant focus on “sustainability through regional and local ripple effects” for (d) and (f) and quite assertive reasoning for why the operations should be located in Harstad for (d) and (g), such as, “The municipality is very aware of its role as a facilitator [for the oil and gas industry] and has a daily focus on this task” (DIN22, p. 16-17). Although Harstad frames its statement in terms of sustainability, any balance between economic, social, and environmental (especially climate) interests is absent. The municipality selectively focuses on the economic pillar of sustainable development by opposing the electrification of the Johan Castberg platform from land, which would delay the operation and thus its revenues, highlighting ripple effects, and omitting any concerns about climate or human impacts. Furthermore, the “daily focus” on the municipality’s “role as a facilitator” suggests that it is economic growth, not sustainable development, that guides decision-making. Finally, comparing Harstad’s (and many other municipality’s) statements to Greenpeace’s statement is telling but unsurprising, as Greenpeace called for an assessment of how oil and gas production from the Wisting field is compatible with the Paris Agreement given that more oil and gas production is planned than the carbon budget allows for (DIN22, p. 10). In conclusion, these impact assessments are an opportunity to influence external emissions, introduce human rights concerns through “social effects,” and establish a public-private partnership in accordance with SDG 17, but Harstad is not taking this opportunity.

## **6 Interview and survey results**

### **6.1 Interview themes**

Through the content analysis of interview transcripts, I identified the following nine themes:

- (1) agreed-upon adaptation obligations
- (2) rhetorical commitment to the SDGs

- (3) future employment opportunities in the renewable energy industry
- (4) limited mitigation obligations
- (5) narrow decision-making priorities
- (6) disagreement about/irrelevance of human rights, future generations, and local climate impact
- (7) equivocation toward the oil and gas industry
- (8) political constraints
- (9) financial constraints

I argue that (1)-(3) are entry points for ensuring climate rights and a just transition at the local level whereas (4)-(9) are road blocks. (1) Agreed-upon adaptation obligations: The majority of interviewees agreed that adaptation measures are the municipality's responsibility given its control over infrastructure and land use. Specifically, they pointed to the need to increase the capacity of sewage infrastructure due to increased rainfall and surface runoff, faster snow melt, etc. and to mandate stricter zoning laws near bodies of water. Only one interviewee believed that the municipality is not adopting enough adaptation measures, pointing to the risk of floods in the city center due to sea level rise (INT4).

(2) Rhetorical commitment to the SDGs: Every interviewee was familiar with the SDGs, and the high-ranking municipal council members demonstrated a rhetorical commitment to the SDGs (INT1-INT4). One interviewee referred to the Social Element as "the [municipality's] top document for planning for the future" and stated that the municipal council "tr[ies] to connect everything we do to the SDGs" and is "good, but slow at it" (INT2). The most common understanding of sustainable development was the integration of environmental concerns into planning and financial decisions; none of the interviewees expressed an understanding that includes the role of or impacts on the community. When asked to give an example of implementing the SDGs, several interviewees pointed to BREEAM, a third-party assessment and certification scheme for the sustainability performance of buildings and projects, for a new health center being built in the municipality (INT1, INT2, INT3).

(3) Future employment opportunities in the renewable energy industry: The majority of interviewees recognized the necessity of society undergoing a green shift and spoke positively about its potential economic benefits for and employment opportunities in Harstad (INT1, INT2, INT4). They noted that the competence from workers in the oil and gas industry

should attract renewable energy, engineering, and other companies to the municipality. When asked to give an example, one interviewee mentioned a Nordkraft and Stolt-Nielsen Holding partnership agreement signed last year to build a battery factory in nearby Narvik, and another interviewee pointed to the EU-funded GIFT project (INT4, INT2).

(4) Limited mitigation obligations: The majority of interviewees pointed to the Climate Account and Budget as the main instrument for reducing emissions (INT1, INT2, INT3). The majority of interviewees also pointed to reducing emissions from municipal services and units, such as purchasing EVs for the municipal car fleet, as the municipality's responsibility (INT1, INT2). While one interviewee described the municipality's mitigation measures as "small things working together to make a difference," another interviewee described them as having a very narrow understanding of environmental impact (INT1, INT4).

(5) Narrow decision-making priorities is closely related to (2) rhetorical commitment to sustainable development. On one hand, every interviewee was familiar with the three pillars of sustainable development (INT1-INT4). On the other hand, when asked if they prioritize one pillar over the others during decision-making, every interviewee agreed that economy is most important in general (INT1-INT4). They also seemed to understand the conflict between the environmental and economic pillars in terms of available finances and cost-savings rather than the need to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. Regarding the conflict between the pillars, one interviewee said "the economy is the basis for everything else," and another interviewee emphasized the importance of "finding the overlap between the economy and the environment without citizens having to pay more" (INT3, INT2).

(6) Disagreement about/irrelevance of human rights, future generations, and local climate impact is arguably the most important theme to emerge from the interviews. First, there was significant variation between the interviewees' viewpoints on the role of human rights. One interviewee said that human rights are relevant to social planning and pointed to the right to housing as an example of a right the municipal council is obliged to fulfill (INT2). The majority of interviewees viewed human rights generally as either an external issue or a higher-level issue and thus not necessary to consider within the municipal council (INT1, INT3). One of these interviewees perceived human rights at the local level as limited to the democratic process, such as the right to vote and to freedom of expression, and otherwise perceived human rights as only relevant to legal (not political) processes, referring to the

People v. Arctic Oil case (INT1). The other interviewees said that it is difficult to “drag planet and people’s rights from the other side of the globe” into decision-making at the local level and that “we should focus on the people in this town” (INT3, INT4).

Regarding public participation in decision-making, the majority of interviewees did not point to formal procedures, such as Inhabitants’ Question Time or the Inhabitant Initiative, but rather to informal or ad hoc ways of influencing decision-making, such as walking into the mayor’s office (INT1). When asked about the issues that citizens bring forward during Inhabitants’ question time, every interviewee mentioned current events, such as receiving Ukrainian refugees in the municipality, or local concerns, such as building a new school, and stressed that members of the public “rarely” bring forward climate-related issues (INT1-INT4). Regarding the oil and gas industry, none of the interviewees could point to formal procedures for public participation in decision-making (INT1-INT4). That said, the majority of interviewees pointed to the youth globally and the Youth Council in the municipality as the main group bringing forward climate-related issues (INT1, INT2, INT4).

While one interviewee spoke positively about public participation in drafting the Social Element and the Land Use Plan, they relented that the municipality “could have done a lot more community decision-making” regarding the oil and gas industry (INT2). Conversely, another interviewee questioned the need for public participation in this regard given that citizens elected municipal council members to address these issues (INT1). Regarding access to information about environmental matters, the majority of interviewees pointed to the news media (i.e., the local newspaper, *Harstad Tidende*) or the municipality website (INT2, INT3). Regarding the rights of vulnerable people in current generations, only one interviewee expressed concern. They mentioned the subsistence rights of Sámi people and farmers due to increasing temperatures (INT2).

Furthermore, the majority of interviewees said they do not consider the rights of future generations during decision-making (INT1, INT2, INT3). One interviewee said, “here, we talk about building and schools, not people 30 or 50 years from now [because] politicians only last for four years at a time” (INT2). Relatedly, the majority of interviewees emphasized the importance of using the municipality’s capacity to address immediate threats, such as Covid-19 (INT1, INT4). Lastly, there was significant variation between the interviewees’ perceptions of local climate impact. Only one interviewee was “frightened” about local climate impacts in the future (INT4). Other interviewees said that “climate is more of a



concern in the [Global] South” and that they are not concerned about the cost or occurrence of climate-induced disasters in Harstad (INT1, INT3).

(7) Equivocation toward the oil and gas industry relates to (2) regarding mitigation measures. When asked about mitigation measures, none of the interviewees mentioned the oil and gas industry (INT1-INT4). When asked about the Harstad Petroleum Strategy, every interviewee said that were unfamiliar with the strategy or that the strategy was no longer used (INT1-INT4). However, every interviewee also referred to Harstad as the “oil capital/city of the North,” which is the main goal of the Harstad Petroleum Strategy (INT1-INT4). The majority of interviewees emphasized that Norwegian oil and gas production is the “most environmental” in the world (INT1, INT2, INT3). One of these interviewees additionally raised the concept of carbon leakage, saying that, “Saudi Arabia and Russia will scale up if [Norway] scales down” (INT3). All the interviewees noted that one benefit of the oil and gas industry is that it attracts skilled workers and brings high-paying jobs to Harstad and therefore generates money for the municipality (INT1-INT4). When asked about Equinor’s future in Harstad, the majority of interviewees expressed hope that the company remains or expands (INT1, INT2, INT3). Two interviewees envisioned a “different role” for Equinor in the municipality not only because oil and gas production is likely to decrease but also based on employment opportunities with technology development, research, and innovation (INT1, INT2). That said, all of the interviewees confirmed that there are “no plans” to attract green jobs to the municipality, with one interviewee saying the municipality is putting “too many eggs in the same basket” by prioritizing the development of the blue industries (INT1, INT2, INT4). Finally, the interviewees shared conflicting information about their cooperation with companies in the oil and gas industry. One interviewee said that the municipal council used to meet with Equinor representatives monthly, whereas the “distance” the company and the municipal council is greater now (INT2). However, this interviewee added that Harstad needs to “make changes based on what [oil and gas companies] say” (INT2). Conversely, another interviewee claimed that the municipality sets expectations for climate-friendly projects in the North when cooperating with Equinor (INT1). Despite this claim, the document analysis in chapter 5.3 does not show that Harstad has set these expectations in the recent past.

(8) Political constraints and (9) Financial constraints are closely related and reflect the impact of the national level on the local level. Regarding political constraints, all of the interviewees stated that a national policy, such a green jobs plan, is necessary before Harstad can initiate changes (INT1-INT4). Regarding financial constraints, two interviewees stated

that the municipality does not have enough available finances to adopt more measures to address climate change or that the municipality must receive funding from the national government before it is able to adopt these measures, (INT2, INT4). In this regard, one interviewee said, “[Harstad] cannot do anything alone” (INT2). For example, one interviewee pointed to the SMIL/NMSK grants as evidence that the municipality only takes environmental/climate action when funding for an initiative is made available by the national government (INT2). Although the interviews raised many important themes, the key take-aways of this section are that considerations for substantive climate rights are largely absent from decision-making and that, from the viewpoint of local authorities, a conflict does not necessarily exist between the municipality’s implementation of the SDGs and its ambitions to develop the oil and gas industry.

**6.2 Survey**

**Table 4. Frequency analysis results**

Q2. The Attraktiv Hele Livet vision obliges me to ensure the climate rights of Harstad citizens.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0
Agree	80
Strongly agree	20

Q3. Which human rights, if any, do you think are or will be adversely impacted for Harstad citizens as a result of climate change? Check all that apply.	
Life	13.30%
Health	20
Food/water	13.3
Work	13.3
Social security	0

Adequate standard of living	6.7
Development	13.3
Healthy environment	13.3
All of the above	0
None of the above	6.7

Q4. The Harstad Petroleum Strategy conflicts with the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	0
Neither agree nor disagree	60
Agree	40
Strongly agree	0

Q5. The oil and gas industry only accounts for around one percent of greenhouse gas emissions in Harstad. Despite this, the municipality is not ensuring its residents' climate rights in this regard.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	20
Neither agree nor disagree	40
Agree	40
Strongly agree	0

Q6. Harstad citizens will be vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change sooner because of the municipality's location in the Arctic circle and on the coast.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	40
Neither agree nor disagree	0
Agree	40
Strongly agree	20

Q7. Young and future generations of Harstad citizens are very vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, and we should act now to mitigate these effects.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0
Agree	60
Strongly agree	40

Q8. The green shift helps human rights realization for Harstad citizens overall.	
Strongly disagree	0%
Disagree	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0
Agree	80
Strongly agree	20

<p>Q9. Which human rights, if any, do you think are adversely impacted for Harstad citizens as a result of the green shift? Check all that apply.</p>	
Life	0.00%
Health	0
Food/water	0
Work	0
Social security	0
Adequate standard of living	40
Development	0
Healthy environment	0
All of the above	20
None of the above	40

<p>Q10. Harstad municipality's procedures for public participation in decision-making on issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry are insufficient.</p>	
Strongly disagree	20%
Disagree	40
Neither agree nor disagree	40
Agree	0
Strongly agree	0

Q11. Harstad municipality's procedures for access to information about issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry are insufficient.	
Strongly disagree	20%
Disagree	40
Neither agree nor disagree	40
Agree	0
Strongly agree	0

Q2 and Q7 of the survey reveal how local authorities view their obligations in the context of climate change. All of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they are responsible for ensuring the climate rights of Harstad citizens, and all of the respondents agree or strongly agree that the local authorities should act now to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on young and future generations of Harstad citizens. Q3 and Q6 of the survey reveal how local authorities view the human rights at stake in the context of climate change. The results show that most respondents are concerned that climate change will adversely impact the right of health of Harstad citizens, which is interestingly the right that local authorities can have the least impact on through their responsibility for infrastructure and zoning regulations. Relatedly, only one respondent indicates the belief that climate change will not adversely impact any human rights. Furthermore, a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that the municipality's location makes its residents more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. These results suggest that political constraints, such as climate denialism, a lack of scientific knowledge, such as a belief in the Global North's immunity from the adverse impacts of climate change, and the belief that only the national government is responsible for climate rights should not be road blocks at the local level.

However, Q4 and Q5 raise questions about the how far respondents believe their obligations in the context of climate change go. The results show that the respondents are ambivalent overall about their obligation to adopt mitigation measures for the oil and gas industry. For Q4, the majority of respondents neither agree nor disagree that the Harstad Petroleum Strategy conflicts with the Attractive Hele Livet vision. For Q5, there is a split on whether the municipality is ensuring its citizens climate rights in view of its relationship with

the oil and gas industry. Altogether, these results suggest that local authorities believe that obligations to ensure climate rights exist at the local level but do not confirm whether they are willing to take the transformative action necessary to ensure these rights.

Q8 of the survey reveals that local authorities view the green shift positively, with all of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the green shift helps to ensure the human rights of Harstad citizens. As such, opposition to the green shift should not be a political constraint in this context. That said, for Q9, 40 percent of respondents indicate the belief that the green shift adversely impacts the right to an adequate standard of living, which suggests that some local authorities view the green shift as leading to reduced household income for many citizens. Furthermore, no respondents indicate the belief that it adversely impacts the right to work, which suggests that local authorities are not using this a just transition as a lens.

Q10 and Q11 address the insufficiency of procedures for public participation in decision-making and access to information, respectively, on issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry. For both questions, the majority of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that these procedures are insufficient. These results suggest that local authorities are satisfied with the current democratic process and amount of transparency regarding climate-related issues at the local level. Overall, the survey shows that local authorities recognize the relationship between local climate impact and human rights but are not thinking transformatively about their obligations or about the role of procedural rights in ensuring climate rights and a just transition.

## **7 Discussion**

### **7.1 On substantive climate rights**

The document analyses, interviews, and survey suggest that municipal plans and local authorities are adopting measures that ensure the physical aspects of the right to a healthy environment of current generations. These measures are often related to the infrastructure that local authorities are responsible for, such as waste management, sewage treatment, and air pollution from road traffic. Although adopting measures to ensure this right is crucial, these measures reveal that, like the national government, local authorities employ a “short-termist” approach that alleviates more immediate adverse impacts but that fails to address structural issues that will create adverse impacts in the future (Fisher, 2014, p. 14). The keyword search results<sup>14</sup> reflect this focus on the short-term, as the environment is the top issue among the six

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<sup>14</sup> See figure 1 on page 27.

plans. One interviewee further reflected this focus, as they said that citizens express more concern about the aquaculture industry than the oil and gas industry because they currently experience the negative effects on biodiversity “on their bodies” (INT2). Altogether, this confirms Cullet’s (2016) observation that the local level has a regard for environmental impacts but disregard for climate impacts (p. 498).

Despite this focus on the environment, the environmental pillar of the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision, “Attractive experience city close to nature,” does not quite align with the principle of sustainable development. Although sustainable development can be a nebulous concept in international law, it is generally understood to mean reconciling economic growth with human rights and environmental protection. However, the municipality’s goals and strategies for the environmental pillar focus on increasing access to nature and building green spaces. On one hand, these do result in a certain amount of environmental protection and emissions reduction, align with SDG target 11.4 regarding protecting natural heritage and target 11.7 regarding access to green spaces in cities, and improve the quality of life of current generations in the municipality. On the other hand, the municipal plans do not clarify or set expectations for the relationship between the environment and the economy or establish the role of human rights in mediating this relationship. The environmental pillar also does not include climate-related goals or strategies despite the fact that SDG 13 is one of the goals that the Social Element highlights. This confirms previous findings that, in practice, localization often makes the SDGs less ambitious (Zinkernagel, Evans, & Nij, 2018, p. 2; Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 271).

The second-most common keyword search result was “energy” and “emissions.” This reflects the municipality’s “CO<sub>2</sub>-fixation” on reducing energy consumption and emissions, especially from municipal services and units, road traffic, and building projects (Vedeld et al. 2021, p. 351). This fixation results in continuing current practices but making them as harmless as possible rather than spurring the structural transformation of society and systems. For example, the municipality has prioritized measures from the Harstad Package that facilitate car traffic, such as a relief tunnel and roundabouts. This has left much fewer remaining funds for more climate-friendly measures, such as increasing the availability and accessibility of walking and cycling paths and public transportation (The Red Party, n.d.).

The plan’s adaptation measures enhance the municipality’s ability to prepare for or respond to the adverse impacts of climate change, which is crucial to ensuring the rights to life, subsistence, physical security, and a healthy environment of future generations of Harstad



citizens. Again, these rights are closely connected to local authorities' responsibilities. Specifically, water management, sewage, and buildings are closely connected to service delivery, infrastructure, and zoning regulations. Furthermore, agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which support the rights to subsistence and food, are closely connected to zoning regulations. The measures connected to service delivery and infrastructure are strong, which is unsurprising given the wealth and involvement of the welfare state. While the plans acknowledge the adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture, forestry, fishing, they take little action to adapt. For example, the plans acknowledge that increased temperatures have already altered the growing season in Northern Norway, but local authorities rejected the recommendation to reduce tillage and sow perennial climate-adapted plants (DIN1, p. 22, 63). This makes it more difficult for local farmers to gain the necessary knowledge and skills or to maintain their livelihood if the land is too eroded. As such, the current action is insufficient to ensure a just transition for farmers.

The implementation of transformative mitigation measures, which are crucial to ensure the aforementioned rights as well as the right to health not only of Harstad citizens but of all people, is even more limited than the implementation of adaptation measures. The plan's adaptation and mitigation measures have the following characteristics: (1) they are measures required by national or EU law, such as keeping a climate account and conducting a RAV analysis, (2) they are measures that receive funding from the national government, and (3) they do not conflict with economic growth in the municipality. (1) shows that the municipality is not adopting more ambitious climate action than or sending upward signals to the national government (Vedeld et al., 2021, p. 347; Aall, Groven, and Lindseth, 2007, p. 85). Regarding (2), it is unclear whether climate action at the local level is limited by the amount of funding granted by the national government or whether local authorities are only willing to take climate action when it is enabled by state funds. Regardless, (2) indicates that the local level favors "least-cost-first" solutions, such as afforestation, that are less effective but largely unintrusive and appealing to the public (Shue, 2014, p. 208). Favoring these solutions puts future generations at risk because, as the IPCC argues, transformative action must be taken now to reduce adverse impacts and protect human rights. (3) is the clearest road block for climate rights. For example, despite the existence of the Contingency Plan and the RAV analysis' finding that the great risk of climate impacts is in the city center, the municipality has a plan to continue developing the city center, including apartment and shopping complexes on the quay. This increases the vulnerability of future generations living and working there and thus risks their rights to life and physical security for the sake of urban

development that fosters economic growth in the short-term. A rights-protective adaptation measure would instead be building a sea wall to protect against sea level rise and storm surges (Bodansky, 2017, p. 14).

Also regarding (3), the plans are quite contradictory regarding the oil and gas industry. On one hand, they state that Norway generally and the municipality specifically must “become less oil-dependent in order to meet climate challenges,” showing that they acknowledge the adverse impacts of the oil and gas industry on climate change as well as the need for structural transformation (DIN5, p. 6). On the other hand, the oil and gas industry, including the Harstad Petroleum Strategy, remains a key part of the Business Plan. This shows that the municipality is not adopting a “broad perspective” on local climate action (Aall, Groven, Lindseth, 2007, p. 83). Instead, it reflects the notion that only emissions generated in the municipality matter and confirms previous findings that local authorities struggle to address “out of boundary challenges and externalities” in the process of SDG localization (Zinkernagel, Evans, & Nij, 2018, p. 2). The inability or unwillingness to address these challenges and externalities means that local authorities do not conceive the right to healthy environment and other climate rights as solidarity rights, as Cullet (2016) urges as necessary for long-term human rights enjoyment (p. 514). The reality is that the local authorities can, to a certain extent, affect emissions that occur outside of the municipality and that the municipality benefits from economically. For example, Equinor’s oil fields are not located in the municipality, but the municipality benefits from the value creation, ripple effects, and employment of these fields. Moreover, the oil and gas extracted from these fields but combusted outside the municipality contributes to climate change, and climate change will affect the rights of everyone, including Harstad citizens. Thus, a broad perspective requires a revision of the municipal plans, especially the Harstad Petroleum Strategy and Business Plan, to phase down the oil and gas industry in the municipality to better ensure climate rights everywhere.

## **7.2 On procedural rights**

This section concerns the extent to which the municipality uses a HRBA to sustainable development in the context of climate change. The keyword search shows that, although the plans largely omit explicit mentions of human rights, the plans do provide for procedural rights and have a particular focus on access to environmental information. The fact that the procedures for public participation in decision-making and access to information at the local level are sound is largely due to provisions in national legal framework. For example, the

PBA (2008) requires municipalities to allow for public comments and objections on the Social Element (sec. 11-14). However, as previous findings show, the municipality's procedures do not exceed the minimum required by law (Jones & Ruud, 2021, p. 35). Only the Environmental Plan, the Social Element, and the Land Use Plan provided for public participation. There are no provisions obliging public participation in municipal planning for business in the national legal framework, so this is noticeably absent from the Business Plan and Harstad Petroleum Strategy, and there were no consultations or hearings for the municipality's statement for the Wisting impact assessment.

This is an obvious road block for several reasons. First, in terms of sustainable development, it suggests that citizens and civil society are excluded from the economy pillar and thus a lack of integration of the three pillars. The need for public participation and access to information is particularly acute in the economy pillar not only because the SDGs already prioritize economic growth but also because economic actors are least obliged to be accountable and transparent to the public. Municipal planning can close this gap by providing for public participation in the Business Plan and regarding the oil and gas industry, but Harstad is not doing so. Second, it shows that local authorities in Norway may take procedural rights for granted. One interviewees' response reflects this, as they suggested that procedural rights are not a concern because representative democracy already provides for these rights (INT1). It is likely that the survey results reflect a similar sentiment, as the majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the municipality's procedures for public participation in decision-making and access to information. Lastly, one of the strategies for the social pillar of the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision, "Inclusive municipality with a big and beating heart," is to "develop the Harstad community through participation and dialogue with residents and businesses." Nevertheless, this pillar does not anchor this strategy in SDG 16. This reflects a lack of attention to how the institutional structure enables or disables public participation. Moreover, this "strategy," is more like a goal and does not offer an indicator for measuring or new or improved procedures for encouraging public participation.

Given the "taken-for-grantedness" of procedural rights by local authorities, the low level of participation in planning processes, and the low level of objections to the planning priorities,<sup>15</sup> it is likely that these rights are not viewed or used as a transformative tool by local authorities or even citizens and civil society, which reflects Langford's (2018) critique that

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<sup>15</sup> Identifying the cause(s) for this low level of participation and low number of objections is beyond the scope of this project.

legalized human rights are not enough on their own (p. 79). Although Langford's critique focuses on distributive inequality, this critique also applies to the potential of human rights to challenge environmentally degrading industrial activities that the global system continues to uphold. Thus, for human rights to create positive change, the institutional structure must provide for public participation and access to information in economic affairs as well. This road block also reflects Ascher, Halvorsen, and Johansson's (2019) point about consultation being different than empowerment. In this view, the minimum procedures required by law, such as the opportunity to provide input during some planning process every few years, amount to macrolevel participation or "tokenism" rather than the institutionalization of cooperation between local authorities and individual citizens and civil society groups (Ascher, Halvorsen, and Johansson, 2019, p. 5). In this regard, ongoing stakeholder consultation with youth groups, especially the municipality's Youth Council, to better represent the interests of future generations, environmental groups, such as the local Friends of the Earth Norway group, and indigenous groups, especially the Norwegian Sámi Association, is necessary to increase empowerment and the procedural aspects of climate rights. This empowerment would also transform the process of SDG localization from a municipal project into a societal project in a way that enlivens procedures for public participation that are currently underused by the public and underappreciated by local authorities (Immler and Sakkers, 2022, p. 273).

### **On a just transition**

My main research question is "What are the entry points and road blocks for ensuring climate rights and a just transition at the local level?," and my analysis pays particular attention to the oil and gas industry. The question stems from the fact that most of the existing literature explores ensuring and balancing these rights at the global and national levels. Of course, local authorities have limited influence to stop the national government from offering oil and gas production licenses. However, they do have influence over businesses in the petroleum and renewable energy industries and thus can pave the way for a just transition for its own citizens and others in Northern Norway. This just transition, as Fisher and Stephenson argue separately, uses the normative content of the right to work to create structural transformation. While the State is the primary duty-bearer for this right, local authorities can also fulfill this right and use SDG localization and municipal planning to do so.

In practice, however, Harstad is using SDG localization and municipal planning to take divergent action by continuing to bolster the oil and gas industry on one hand and beginning to expand the renewable energy industry on the other hand. The document analysis,

interviews, and survey made it clear that local authorities do not believe that bolstering the oil and gas industry conflicts with sustainable development. The SDGs allow themselves to be localized in this way because they do not explicitly discourage oil and gas production and, through SDGs 8 and 9, encourage the growth of “high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.” As such, SDG localization in Harstad enables a more positive reframing of existing strategies regarding the oil and gas industry and has not been used to establish “vision of the future” (Immler & Sakkers, 2022, p. 271, 273). Specifically, the economic pillar of the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision, “City of innovation and regional driving force with diversity and quality in education and jobs,” seeks to establish new jobs and businesses in the municipality but does not include a specific strategy for “future industries” or mention SDG 7. This shows that the municipality, like Norway generally, is not taking positive measures or using a progressive legal approach to the right to work to reduce unemployment and employment insecurity despite the fact that its plans acknowledge that society needs to undergo a green shift and that oil and gas production will decline in the future. Therefore, this case study confirms the common critique that the SDGs, through their implication that economic growth is the primary means to eradicating poverty, leave profitable but harmful industries unchallenged.

Although the municipality’s efforts to begin expanding the renewable energy industry have been weak overall, there are entry points through SDGs 8, 9, and 17. The Social Element includes all of these SDGs, and the clearest manifestation of the positive synergies between these goals thus far in the municipality is the GIFT project for decarbonization solutions. These solutions require the technical competence that workers in the oil and gas industry possess, and this project has resulted in partnerships with companies, both of which should reduce unemployment and employment insecurity and thus better ensure the right to work. The GIFT project highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local level not only for overcoming financial constraints (the project is EU-funded) but also as the “engine” for other SDGs, such as full and productive employment in SDG 8 and sustainable industrialization an innovation in SDG 9. It also highlights the untapped potential for the municipality to partner with or leverage its existing relationship with private sector actors, especially Equinor, to encourage them to establish similar renewable energy projects in the region.

That said, the GIFT project, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and, to a certain extent, SDG localization are insufficient to ensure a just transition in the municipality. On one hand,

SDG 1.3 includes “national appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors,” and the Norwegian welfare provides such a floor for all workers who experience unemployment to prevent them from falling into poverty, not just workers in the oil and gas industry affected by the green shift. On the other hand, as Sen (1999) argues, income loss is often not the only adverse impacts of unemployment (p. 95). Specifically, he argues that unemployment can undermine human dignity in a way that amounts to capability deprivation (Sen, 1999, p. 95). Although SDG indicator 8.5.2 includes the unemployment rate, this SDG excludes any targets or indicators for proactive policies for employment security or a just transition, such as a national green jobs program. In terms of SDG localization, the economic pillar of the Attraktiv Hele Livet vision focuses on future economic growth (for example, “arrange infrastructure adapted to the future needs of the business community” is one strategy) rather than present or future decent work. The Business Plan details Jobbhuset (The Work House), a “work-oriented measure” for young people, long-term unemployed people, and people with an immigrant background offered by the municipality’s Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration office. In this regard, the municipality is ensuring the availability and accessibility of the right to work of the most vulnerable. The existence of this rights-protective institution is an important entry point. However, accounting for the relevant circumstances, namely the occurrence of the green shift, is necessary for the State and local authorities to facilitate the right to work (Stephenson, 2010, p. 175). As such, initiatives for quality job training and transition assistance for workers in the oil and gas industry are additionally necessary to ensure a just transition, and the interviewees indicated that there are no plans for such initiatives.

A final road block for a just transition relates to chapter 6.2 on procedural rights. As previously mentioned, the Business Plan does not provide for any public participation and instead focuses on “close contact with the municipality’s business community.” Although this reflects SDG 17, it is weak on SDGs 11 and 16, which provide for a HRBA at the local level. In this regard, the participation of workers and labor unions in the Business Plan and the Social Element as well as their ongoing stakeholder consultation beyond the planning stage is necessary to truly integrate the social and economic pillars of sustainable development and to ensure a just transition at the local level.

## **8 Conclusion**

Despite climate commitments and human rights protections at the national level and a sustainable development strategy at the local level, this project uncovered many road blocks

for ensuring climate rights and a just transition in Harstad. The interviews and survey revealed that one of the biggest road blocks is the belief that Norway generally and Harstad specifically can “have its cake and eat it too” – a safe climate as well as continued oil and gas production – and that continued oil and gas production does not conflict with its climate commitments or sustainable development. This belief results in a lack of transformative action, namely mitigation measures that “address society’s addition to fossil fuels,” and has serious implications for substantive climate rights (Boyd, 2019, p. 20). It means that duty-bearers adopt less effective “least-cost-first” solutions and measures that prioritize economic growth. In doing so, they knowingly jeopardize the rights of future generations to life, subsistence, etc. as well as the rights of workers and communities of current generations whose livelihoods rely on the oil and gas industry.

This project also has implications for the role of human rights at the local level, as the document analyses and interviews confirmed previous findings about the absence of any human rights discourse. The Business Plan and Harstad Petroleum Strategy are cut off from public participation and access to information and, for the most part, operate independently of the acknowledgements made and goals and strategies established in the other plans. Furthermore, the municipal plans used SDG localization to present existing priorities in prettier packaging, and municipal council meetings and consultations with the oil and gas industry did not reference the SDGs, human rights, or even social interests. That said, a lack of funding, knowledge/competence, etc. from the national level creates additional barriers and must be addressed to overcome road blocks at the local level. Additional research is necessary to determine whether other frameworks besides the HRBA, such as polycentric governance, enables public participation in economic and energy decision-making at the local level. Equally as important, additional political will is needed from all levels of government decouple economic growth from environmental degradation to ensure the rights of future generations.

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## Appendix 1: List of documents

Document identification number	Source	Date	Type	Title	Link
DIN1	Harstad municipal council	2018	Plan	Miljø-, klima- og energiplan for Harstad kommune 2018-2021 (Environment, climate, and energy plan)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00904.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00904.pdf</a>
DIN2	Harstad municipal council	2019	Plan	Virksomhetsplan 2020-2023 (Business plan)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK02882.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK02882.pdf</a>
DIN3	Harstad municipal council	2020	Plan	Kommuneplan 2019-2031: Samfunnsdel med langsiktig arealstrategi (Social element of the municipal plan with long-term land use strategy)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00017.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00017.pdf</a>
DIN4	Harstad municipal council	2020	Plan	Kommuneplanens arealdel 2020-2030: Planbeskrivelse (Land use plan: Plan Description)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/dok03009.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/dok03009.pdf</a>
DIN5	Harstad municipal council	2020	Plan	Kommunal planstrategi 2020-2023 (Municipal master plan)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK01568.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK01568.pdf</a>
DIN6	Harstad municipal council	2012	Plan	Harstad petroleumsstrategi (Petroleum strategy)	<a href="https://www.harstad.kommune.no/getfile.php/2092065.1878.cbcvxcwdrw/harstad_">https://www.harstad.kommune.no/getfile.php/2092065.1878.cbcvxcwdrw/harstad_</a>

					<a href="#">petroleumsstrategi.pdf</a>
DIN7	Harstad municipal council	2021	Plan	Beredskapsplan Harstad kommune – Hoveddel (Contingency plan Harstad municipality – Main part)	<a href="https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00064.pdf">https://harstad.kommune.no/eknet/docs/pub/DOK00064.pdf</a>
DIN8	Harstad municipal council	2013	Plan	Kommuneplanens arealdel 2018-2028: ROS-analyse (Land use plan: RAV analysis)	<a href="https://www.harstad.kommune.no/getfile.php/4951693.1878.tmb7kjqbiluazm/KPA+++ROS.PDF">https://www.harstad.kommune.no/getfile.php/4951693.1878.tmb7kjqbiluazm/KPA+++ROS.PDF</a>
DIN9	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Kommunestyret 24. juni 2021 (Municipal council 24 June 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/562739990">https://vimeo.com/562739990</a>
DIN10	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Kommunestyremøte - 25. mars 2021 (Municipal council meeting – 25 March 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/527769419">https://vimeo.com/527769419</a>
DIN11	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Kommunestyremøte 29. april 2021 (Municipal council meeting 29 April 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/539676202">https://vimeo.com/539676202</a>
DIN12	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Formannskapet - 23. februar 2021 (The presidency – 23 February 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/515709745">https://vimeo.com/515709745</a>
DIN13	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Økonomi-, klima- og miljøutvalget - 23. februar 2021 (Committee for economy, climate, and	<a href="https://vimeo.com/515206443">https://vimeo.com/515206443</a>

				environment – 23 February 2021)	
DIN14	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Utvalg for økonomi, klima og miljø 18. mai 2021 (Committee for economy, climate, and environment 18 May 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/547962269">https://vimeo.com/547962269</a>
DIN15	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Utvalg for plan- og næring 8. februar 2021 (Committee for planning and industry 8 February 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/507992471">https://vimeo.com/507992471</a>
DIN16	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Utvalg for plan- og næring 8 mars 2021 (Committee for planning and industry March 8 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/519509280">https://vimeo.com/519509280</a>
DIN17	Harstad municipality	2021	Video	Utvalg for plan- og næring 10. mai 2021 (Committee for planning and industry 10 May 2021)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/543221823">https://vimeo.com/543221823</a>
DIN18	Equinor	2016	Impact assessment	PL532 Johan Castberg Forslag til program for konsekvensutredning (Proposed program for impact assessment)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e5c794a9f6b08a049c1bebcf558c4fac98a7ff6c.pdf?johan-castberg-pl532-forslag-program-">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e5c794a9f6b08a049c1bebcf558c4fac98a7ff6c.pdf?johan-castberg-pl532-forslag-program-</a>

					<a href="#">konsekvensutredning.pdf</a>
DIN19	Equinor	2017	Consultation statements	PL532 Johan Castberg forslag til program for konsekvensutredning: Oppsummering av høringsuttalelser og tilsvaer (Proposed program for impact assessment: Summary of consultation statements and responses)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e316490471a36b35103d742719228faef1283e2f.pdf?johan-castberg-pl-532-fpk-oppsummering-hoeringsuttalelser-tilsvaer.pdf">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e316490471a36b35103d742719228faef1283e2f.pdf?johan-castberg-pl-532-fpk-oppsummering-hoeringsuttalelser-tilsvaer.pdf</a>
DIN20	Equinor	2017	Impact assessment	PL532 Johan Castberg PUD del II – Konsekvensutredning (PDO part II – Impact assessment)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/fb60d157de933d2c35010d721a7826d8ef438a60.pdf?pl532-johan-castberg-pud-del-ii-konsekvensutredning-30-juni-2017.pdf">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/fb60d157de933d2c35010d721a7826d8ef438a60.pdf?pl532-johan-castberg-pud-del-ii-konsekvensutredning-30-juni-2017.pdf</a>
DIN21	Equinor	2017	Consultation statements	PL532 Johan Castberg PUD del II - Konsekvensutredning Oppsummering av høringsuttalelser og tilsvaer (PDO part II – Impact assessment: Summary of consultation statements and responses)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/1357c86c2c97ec8cc306663d504ce264fdeb8241.pdf?statoil-pl532-johan-castberg-ku-oppsummering-av-hoeringsuttalelser-og-tilsvaer.pdf">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/1357c86c2c97ec8cc306663d504ce264fdeb8241.pdf?statoil-pl532-johan-castberg-ku-oppsummering-av-hoeringsuttalelser-og-tilsvaer.pdf</a>
DIN22	Equinor	2021	Consultation statements	Høringskommentarer (Consultation statements)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/</a>

					<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e461ad2b7ff3ade60ebd964090dd688db19b2a41.pdf?wisting-oppsummering-av-hoeringsuttalelser-og-tilsvar-equinor.pdf">29b45c3a96d662f91b1c735358ae379cbd c7a4cd.pdf?vedlegg- hoeringskommentare r-wisting-equinor.pdf</a>
DIN23	Equinor	2021	Consultation statements	PL537/PL537B Wisting Forslag til program for konsekvensutredning: Oppsummering av høringsuttalelser og tilsvær (Proposed program for impact assessment: Summary of consultation statements and responses)	<a href="https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e461ad2b7ff3ade60ebd964090dd688db19b2a41.pdf?wisting-oppsummering-av-hoeringsuttalelser-og-tilsvar-equinor.pdf">https://cdn.sanity.io/files/h61q9gi9/global/e461ad2b7ff3ade60ebd964090dd688db19b2a41.pdf?wisting-oppsummering-av-hoeringsuttalelser-og-tilsvar-equinor.pdf</a>

## Appendix 2: Interview guide and participants

### Guide

1. Do you think the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* plan obliges you to consider the climate-related human rights of Harstad residents?
  - a. Why do you think that?
  - b. (If yes) What about young and future generations of Harstad residents?
  - c. (If yes) Do you think about climate-related human rights in your day-to-day work?
  - d. (If no) Who is obligated to ensure the climate-related human rights of Harstad resident?
  
2. What is the role of the Sustainable Development Goals in municipal planning?
  - a. Can you give an example of how the Sustainable Development Goals have guided your decision-making?
  
3. How can residents participate in decision-making on issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry?
  - a. How frequently do you formally engage with Harstad residents on issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry?
    - i. Can you give an example (when and what was it)?
  
4. Do you think the kommune makes information about issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry accessible enough?
  - a. Where can residents find the latest information?
  
5. How do you see the relationship between the *Harstad Petroleumsstrategi* and the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* vision?
  - a. What are the advantages of the *Harstad Petroleumsstrategi* for Harstad residents?

- b. What are the disadvantages of the *Harstad Petroleumsstrategi* for Harstad residents?
  
6. What are your thoughts on *det grønne skiftet*?
  - a. What are the advantages of *det grønne skiftet* for Harstad residents?
  - b. What are the disadvantages of *det grønne skiftet* for Harstad residents?
  
7. What are the plans for attracting renewable energy companies to Harstad?
  
8. What are the plans for helping workers in the oil and gas industry?
  
9. Is there anything you want to add about the human rights, climate change, or the oil and gas industry in the municipality?

### Participants

Interview number	Political party	Committee	Date of interview
INT1	Labor Party (AP)	Committee for administration and gender equality	18 March 2022
INT2	Center Party (SP)	Committee for planning and industry	21 March 2022
INT3	Progress Party (FrP)	Committee for economy, climate, and environment	21 March 2022
INT4	Green Party (MDG)	Committee for upbringing and culture	22 March 2022

### Appendix 3: Survey (English version)

1. If you are a committee member, please type the committee's name.
  
2. The *Attraktiv Hele Livet* vision obliges me to consider the climate rights of Harstad residents.  
  
1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neither agree nor disagree  
4 = Agree  
5 = Strong agree
  
3. Which human rights, if any, do you think are or will be negatively affected for Harstad residents as a result of climate change? Check all those that apply.
  - Life
  - Health
  - Food/water
  - Work
  - Social security
  - Adequate standard of living
  - Development
  - Healthy environment
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
  
4. The *Harstad Petroleumsstrategi* conflicts with the *Attraktiv Hele Livet* vision.  
  
1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neither agree nor disagree  
4 = Agree



5 = Strongly agree

5. The oil and gas industry only accounts for around one percent of greenhouse gas emissions in Harstad. Despite this, the municipality is not fulfilling its residents' climate rights in this regard.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

6. Harstad residents will be vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change sooner because of the municipality's location in the Arctic circle and on the coast.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

7. Young and future generations of Harstad residents are very vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, and we should act now to mitigate these effects.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

8. *Det grønne skiftet* helps human rights realization for Harstad residents overall.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

9. Which human rights, if any, do you think are negatively affected for Harstad residents as a result of *det grønne skiftet*? (Check all those that apply)

- Life
- Health
- Food/water
- Work
- Social security
- Adequate standard of living
- Development
- Healthy environment
- All of the above
- None of the above

10. Harstad municipality's procedures for public participation in decision-making on issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry are insufficient.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

11. Harstad municipality's procedures for access to information about issues related to climate change and the oil and gas industry are insufficient.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

12. Is there anything more you want to add about the relationship between climate change, human rights, and the oil and gas industry in Harstad municipality?