



*SUSTAINABILITY*  
REPORT 2012

01 About Alliance arkitekter

02 About Global Compact

03 The Principles

04 Statement of Continued Support

05 Achievements in the report period

06 Living the principles

07 Sustainable design in planning

08 Our Goals for 2013/2014

# 01 About Alliance arkitekter

Alliance arkitekter AS is a Norwegian architectural studio established in June 2005, with headquarters in Oslo and a local branch in Stavanger. The studio collaborates with various offices and disciplines, and we frequently participate in architectural competitions.

The scope of our work spans from case studies and area planning to the development and completion of various building projects. Our projects range from detailing a 50 m<sup>2</sup> boat house to developing 220 000 m<sup>2</sup> area plans. We primarily work with new construction, but are also involved in renovation, restoring and extensions to existing structures. The majority of our commissions consist of residential and commercial developments.

Our studio is organized as a non-hierarchical/horizontal structure and we continuously seek to collaborate with groups and individuals from other disciplines. We believe that this collaboration will contribute to a positive synergy effect as well as add positive and diverse energy to the work processes, resulting in creative methods and original results. We carefully assemble teams that possess the necessary experience requested in combination with innovative strategies. This represents the energy and an attitude that inspire us in our daily work. We also have a set of values that we strive to implement in all we do: **CURIOS, RESPONSIBLE and CHALLENGING.**

In the spring of 2007, as the first architectural office in Norway, we became members of the UN's Global Compact, where members commit themselves to aligning their operations with ten principles concerning environment, anti-corruption, human rights and labour.

**OUR STATED VISION:  
WE MAKE  
ARCHITECTURE  
FOR A BETTER WORLD**

Our involvement so far is mainly concerned with environmental sustainability and labour standards. Furthermore, we promote the role of architecture as a trigger in encouraging the public to participate on environmental and social issues. As architects we aspire to encourage the discourse on our current and future urban development, where the interests of private developers may diverge from the needs of the society.

# 02 About Global compact

The **UN Global Compact** is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. By doing so, business, as a primary driver of globalization, can help ensure that markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit economies and societies everywhere.

As social, political and economic challenges (and opportunities) – whether occurring at home or in other regions – affect business more than ever before, many companies recognize the need to collaborate and partner with governments, civil society,

labour and the United Nations.

This ever-increasing understanding is reflected in the Global Compact's rapid growth. With over 8700 corporate participants and other stakeholders from over 130 countries, it is the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world.

Endorsed by chief executives, the Global Compact is a practical framework for the development, implementation, and disclosure of sustainability policies and practices, offering participants a wide spectrum of work streams, management tools and resources – all designed to help advance sustainable business models and markets.

# 03 The Principles

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Alliance arkitekter is committed to the protection of international human rights within our sphere of influence.

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Alliance arkitekter fulfils all its responsibilities according to Norwegian law, including implementing a health and safety management system.

## LABOUR

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Alliance arkitekter is committed to protecting labour rights, including freedom of association, abolition of forced- and child labour, and the elimination of any type of discrimination.

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Alliance arkitekter fulfils all its responsibilities according to Norwegian law. Beyond the legislative demand, Alliance arkitekter has appointed an employee representative as negotiator on employee demands to salaries and contractual issues and as neutral support to employees in case of disputes between employees and management.

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Alliance arkitekter sees great value in geographical and ethnic diversity among its work force. At the end of 2012, 35 % of our employees is of foreign origin and 73 % has worked or studied abroad. Furthermore, the office focuses on maintaining a good gender balance, currently 59 % female and 41 % male employees.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

Alliance arkitekter is committed to work against corruption in all its forms.

## ENVIRONMENT

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Alliance arkitekter is committed to the promotion of greater environmental responsibility and precautionary approaches to environmental challenges in our sphere of influence.

Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

We seek to involve users on an early stage of our projects. We design for a healthy living-, working- and social environment, and believe that this is a key for a sustainable society.

We make an effort to reduce our resource- and energy use in our running of the office and the project development.

We aim to achieve best practice for our projects through the use of international measurement- and certification system, such as BREEAM - the world's leading design and assessment method for sustainable buildings. (<http://www.breeam.org/>)

“Due to the type and small size of our business, our biggest impact is via our clients, various connections to collaborators and the media. We are committed to raise awareness around The Global Compact and The ten principles, and proactively encourage them to take actions”

Founder & Creative Director Harald M. Gjøvaag



# 04 Statement of continued support

Architecture, as a part of the building industry, is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Every time we design a building, we project its energy consumption and its greenhouse gas footprint for the next 50-100 years. This emphasizes why the building industry and architecture is so critical, and why our membership in The Global Compact is a vital and relevant tool for our practice.

Since the office was launched in June 2005, we have been focusing on how to utilize the ten principles within our sphere of influence and how to encourage other companies, partners and collaborators to act likewise. After five years of Global Compact activities, it's clear to us that even a small architectural office can make a considerable contribution in our common efforts to improve the world.

During the last two years, our most successful strategy towards the principles has been through changing our client's attitude on environmental design. Parallel to this, we have increased our

knowledge on sustainable design, offering a broader range of services to our clients. This has led to a more environmentally sound project portfolio.

The past two years, we have implemented different internal measures to improve our social impact. Furthermore, we have attended different network meetings and seminars on sustainable design. We participate in the public debate concerning the architect's social responsibility and role in society and strive for an innovative architecture.

We believe that the social and environmental components are crucial in the development of long term profits and competitive advantages, and we plan to continue and further develop our commitment to the Global Compact principles.

Additionally we continue to seek ways to develop our work and proficiency through workshops, courses, a wide range of interdisciplinary collaborations, study trips, literature as well as the constant exchange of ideas and experience.

Oslo, April 2013



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Harald Martin Gjøvaag  
Founder & Creative Director  
Alliance arkitekter

# 05 Achievements in the report period

In 2011 we set goals for the future, trying to translate the principles to quantifiable tasks in our daily work. Our goals and achievements are described in the following.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN-HOUSE

### Goal

Use Fairtrade products where this is an alternative.

### Result

As part of being certified with the Norwegian standard Miljøfyrtårn we set up guidelines for all purchases. For example we changed from regular coffee to Fairtrade organic coffee, Fairtrade and organic food whenever this is an option, and office supplies made from recycled material.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN BUILDING PROJECTS

### Goal

Establish a partnership relation for a specific project with a Norwegian or foreign NGO working with human rights.

### Result

We have not yet achieved this goal.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION IN-HOUSE

### Goal

Continue with a transparent economy and company administration to all employees.

### Result

Yes, we still involve all employees in decision making when it comes to economy and company administration. In November 2012 both the Stavanger and the Oslo office met in Reykjavik Iceland along with members of the board, to discuss the strategy and future of Alliance arkitektur. This was an excellent opportunity for everyone to state

their opinion. We also have office meetings every third week where important issues are stated and discussed.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION IN BUILDING PROJECTS

### Goal

Continue to promote the principles by implementing our ethical standard in contracts, in dialogue with our project groups and through our publications and social media activities.

### Result

We've published the sustainability report on our web page to show our vision and opinion on these important principles. Our contracts in building projects are fair and according to Norwegian law, and the staff is encouraged to update themselves on new standards and laws.

## LABOUR IN-HOUSE

### Goal

Complete second round of competence mapping of the office, including mapping employee learning motivation. Make an individual competence development plan for all employees.

### Result

Through the annual employee review competence mapping and a competence development plan is made for each individual.

### Goal

Further develop opportunities for study leaves and company assisted learning curricula.

#### Result

Courses, training and education are done continuous due to the necessity for each member of the staff and for what the office needs as a whole. When one of our co-workers has completed a course, he/she is considered a resource on the matter and is obliged to share this knowledge through in any way possible. We also cooperate with other architect offices and had two study trips in 2012, to boost the competence and inspiration for the projects.

#### Goal

Extend employee welfare and benefit schemes beyond what is defined by Norwegian law, ex. pension and insurance.

#### Result

We have increased the amount of pension savings for all employees from 2 % to 4 %. Also we signed a new health insurance that guarantees quick treatment free of charge in case of any illness. In addition we have travel insurance.

#### Goal

Hire a Managing Director to give the office and the staff better support in organizing and planning the day to day running of the office, including developing better long term strategies that reduce the need for extraordinary work hours.

#### Result

In February 2012 we hired managing director Mirella Gullaksen. She is constantly working on business strategies in cooperation with the staff, human resource in projects, and staff welfare.

#### Goal

Uphold a good gender balance.

#### Result

In 2012 we hired nine new employees. The gender balance is now 59 % women and 41 % men.

### LABOUR IN BUILDING PROJECTS

#### Goal

Define at least one innovation factor in each new project to promote learning. Implement innovation in our quality system.

#### Result

For every project a goal is set for environmental benefits. This could be encouraging the builder to consider densification to decrease CO<sub>2</sub>, or use environmental friendly materials, or even create energy-positive buildings.

### ENVIRONMENT IN-HOUSE

#### Goal

By the end of 2012 we will be certified with the Norwegian sustainability standard "Miljøfyrtårn", meaning we must meet environmental standards set by the foundation and be certified by an independent consultant. Issues include: Working, shopping, energy, transport, waste and emissions.

Further develop our waste recycling by making a detailed recycling plan.

#### Result

We were successfully certified with the Norwegian standard "Miljøfyrtårn" in December 2012. We have issued a report stating what we do today considering working, shopping, energy, transport, waste and emission. We also made an action plan for 2013, which will be controlled by an external representative.

### ENVIRONMENT IN BUILDING PROJECTS

#### Goal

Specify materials with certificate of origin for products used for in-house projects and encourage our clients and partners to use materials with certificate of origin for all main building components in projects.

#### Result

We always inspire our clients by recommending materials with certificate of origin. One of the staff is appointed responsible for updating and organizing our library of materials at all times. She also arranges presentations for sharing knowledge about the various ranges of materials.

#### Goal

Implement life circle analysis (LCA) in at least two projects.

#### Result

We have not yet achieved this goal.

#### Goal

Facilitate an open network workshop on the challenges architects face in regards to sustainable and environmentally friendly design and management, and how we face the barriers together.

#### Result

We have not yet achieved this goal.

#### Goal

Promote Breeam-certification to all projects. Implement the scheme in 30% of new projects.

#### Result

We offer BREEAM certification through our three educated assessors, in all contracts. We weren't able to implement BREEAM in any new projects in 2012, but continued the certification process for earlier projects such as 2020 Park.

#### Goal

Urban planning and development is among our major assignments, and we aim to contribute to an environmentally sound and sustainable transformation of an area a level higher than the individual project. We want to expand our project for the Ministry of the Environment where we have developed a 3D-model for Drammen municipality and FutureBuilt. This is a tool for a more informed and publicly available platform

to develop more sustainable cities. We aim at modelling at least three more cities.

#### Result

In 2012 we have done urban planning in four projects:

#### Bjørsvika west, Oslo

Sustainable urban planning for increased usage in cooperation with heritage authorities.

#### Sandnes harbour

Area outside Stavanger where there's a development potential for business and housing of 25 000 - 40 000 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### Beitostølen, skiing resort

Expansion of Beitostølen related to that bigger vision of an alpine village.

#### Tou Park, Stavanger

In Tou Park, we have strived to cultivate existing local qualities and to customize the site to the future setting.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

#### Goal

Publish at least three articles on architectural issues related to the principles, and in particular on environmental sustainability, such as the architects role and responsibility in society for a more sustainable community.

#### Result

We have been published in two articles concerning issues related to the principles.

1. Interview at [www.husbanken.no](http://www.husbanken.no) where architect Charlotte Helleland talk about our project Strømsø city development and densification, which take actions to reduce traffic in the city and increase the amount of green areas.
2. Article in Farsunds avis, a local newspaper in the south of Norway, where we presented our idea about how to let the architecture play alongside environment and the nature in the idyllic landscape of Lista.
3. Article in Rogalands avis, a local newspaper in Stavanger, where architect Harald Martin Gjølvaag states his view on urbanisation of the city centre alongside listed buildings.



# 06 Living the principles

As architects we have a remarkable opportunity to influence the building industry in areas considering design, methods and materials. We take advantage of this opportunity as often as we can.

It is now more than five years since Alliance arkitekter took on board **The Global Compact** in our office. Since the start, we have had a rapid growth in both project volume and staff, including the establishment of a department in Stavanger. Following the G.C. principles, we have put a lot of effort into developing both a good work place and great projects. This has required both an on-going process of defining goals for ourselves and to develop a framework to implement this.

In terms of in-house processes, we have come a long way on labour issues, considering our office is only seven years old. Establishing an office takes a lot of effort before it is running smoothly, particularly with the global financial unrest to complicate matters. The staff has invested a lot of effort and commitment, including a longer work week and adjusting salary expectations to the finances of the company.

Since the start up, the office has regularly used surveys to map the priorities of the staff for the resources at hand. Now that we are slowly settling in as a medium size company with some years' experience, we have started to put more of the priorities of the staff into life. This includes cutting the workweek from the legal

minimum to the recommended time from the architects union.

Furthermore, we have developed a salary ladder for the first eight years of experience, securing that the salary development in the early years of working remains fair, regardless of for instance gender, parental leave or negotiation skills.

We are currently doing another round of mapping staff skills and develop a new education program for staff to ensure that the office and the staff gets to use the skills at hand and to develop new skills that the office needs. In terms of sustainable design, we have committed ourselves to raise the bar, both on the types and number of projects that are given such an approach and in terms of developing skills and framework to manage this in the projects.

The office has chosen **BREEAM** as the preferred tool for managing sustainable issues in planning and building design, because the tool is an open standard that incorporates local legislation. At the same time, we work with sustainable issues in projects without using the BREEAM standard as an active tool, depending on the scope of the project and the client ambition.

# 07 Sustainable design in planning

A major part of our projects consists of area planning, master plans and feasibility studies that investigate and lay down framework for later building project development. Getting that framework right on the planning level is a key to optimizing the buildings to come. The framework for most of this work are municipal plans of varying detail and ambition, and we see a need for a broader and more holistic approach to sustainable planning that also provides a tool for managing the issues through the process.

Through the ideas competition entry [Look to Strømsø](#), we developed an approach for how to turn around large urban areas and we

have continued this work with the municipality of Drammen as our client. In the master plan ideas assignment in [Bromsjordet](#), we used Breeam as a tool in the concept development. In the master plan ideas assignment [2020 park](#), we worked a lot with ecological principles in the green area structure and with social sustainable issues. We are hoping to implement the new Breeam platforms for area planning in the next period, with the imminent release of the new tool ahead.

In the following is a short introduction to some of our planning projects and how we have implemented Global Compact principles in the work.

# TU SCHOOL

a passive house star

The school is shaped like a star, where the various arms meet in an open area of hall, canteen and library. One wing is lowered half a floor to reflect the sloping terrain, and provide the possibility for the stairs outside to flow through the building and form the amphitheatre on the inside. In that way good landscape adaption and contact between inside and outside is obtained.

Tu School is planned for a total of 350 students, and will be a passive house school.



# ØRA

sustainable business park

In the historical centre of Fredrikstad Norway, a master plan for a sustainable and innovative business park is in progress. Today the area attracts creative businesses through the Hydrogen factory - an art studio and gallery. There is an enormous potential for expansion of both offices and housing, and also further development as a local centre for cultural activities.

We focus on Øra as a sustainable and innovative park of industry and business, where creative and industrial enterprises can benefit from each other.

We are implementing the principles of BREEAM Communities in the planning process.





# TOU PARK

## low energy construction

This transformation area is a central part of the urban development project, *Urban Seafront* in Stavanger. The area includes the Tou brewery which is worthy of preservation, and today the old brewery houses the cultural institution Tou Scene.

Our planning has sought to cultivate existing site qualities and to customize the area to the future surroundings. The project is universally designed and planned as low-energy buildings. The buildings are designed with a compact shape, good isolation standard and deliberate insertion of glass. It is provided use of district heating in the project.

Tou Park is well connected to public networks and transport with walking- and cycling possibilities that connects, within a short distance, to the centre of Stavanger. The environment profile of the project is developed in collaboration with Enova, the Norwegian State Housing Bank and the Future cities - Stavanger.

## 2020 PARK

BREEAM excellent

2020 Park is the first building in the achievement of a quality and sustainable transformation of an area outside Stavanger Norway. The building process is almost done and we have an on-going evaluation for the BREEAM standard excellent certificate.

Our goal is that this development plan inspires the municipality and others to see new opportunities for urban development with high environmental ambitions.



# 08 Goals for the next report

In order to measure our progression and development of our work with the ten principles, we have set some specific goals for the coming year.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

In-house

Establish a partnership relation for a specific project with a Norwegian or foreign NGO working with human rights.

In building projects

Recommend materials where human rights are considered in the producing process.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

In-house

Continue with a transparent economy and company administration to all employees.

In building projects

Continue to promote the principles by implementing our ethical standard in contracts, in dialogue with our project groups and through our publications and social media activities.

## LABOUR

In-house

Improve office environment by adjusting lights, have occupational therapist to evaluate each working space, green plants, and small exercise breaks through the day.

Have presentations every other week to inspire and share knowledge between co-workers.

Open a Skype-line between Oslo and Stavanger office every weekday between 8:30 and 16:30, to make communication and sharing knowledge more accessible, and also reduce travelling.

In building projects

Define at least one innovation factor in each new project to promote learning.

## ENVIRONMENT

In-house

Decrease the number of flights per year. We aim to reduce our CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by 5 %.

Make sure that most of our purchases are eco-labelled products.

Reduce the amount of waste by 5 %.

Use less electricity in the office by taking actions such as: using the stairs instead of the elevator, adjusting lights and heat according to climate, and turn off computers at the end of the day.

In building projects

Through urban planning and local development we will make sure to contribute to a sustainable transformation of our projects, to reach for that higher level of environmental change.

Always offer BREEAM certification in every building project.

Reduce the amount of waste on construction site by challenging the suppliers and contractors when it comes to material consumption and recycling.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Publish at least three articles communicating the principles in connection with architecture.



This Communication of progress has been discussed, reviewed and approved by our board and all our employees.

This report is published on the United Nations Global Compact website

[WWW.UNGLOALCOMPACT.ORG](http://WWW.UNGLOALCOMPACT.ORG)

and our own website

[WWW.ALLARK.NO](http://WWW.ALLARK.NO)

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