

A

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architecture
studio

Sustain —ability Report

2019 - 2020



United Nations Global Compact
Communication on Progress



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THIS COMMUNICATION
ON 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
UNGLOBALCOMPACT.ORG
AND OUR OWN WEBSITE
ALLARK.NO



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We want to
design the most
inclusive and
sustainable
ways to house
and connect
people

About Alliance

Alliance is a Norwegian architecture studio established in June 2005 with a strong focus on sustainability.

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 building projects. Our projects range from detailing a 50 m² boat house to developing 470 000 m² 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. We do development design from concept to completion.

Our studio is organized as a non-hierarchical/horizontal structure (horizontality is for design only) and we continuously seek to collaborate with groups and individuals from other disciplines. We believe that such collaboration contributes to a positive synergy effect as well as adding inspiration and learning to the work processes, resulting in creative methods and original results. We carefully assemble teams with the necessary requested experience in combination with innovative strategies. This

represents the energy and attitude that inspire us in our daily work. We also have a set of values that we strive to implement in all we do: reliability, curiosity, social engagement, design for urban biodiversity and circularity.

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

Our involvement 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 in 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. Our stated vision: we want to design inclusive and sustainable ways to house and connect people.



More about us on our website

<https://www.allark.no/studio>



United Nations
Global Compact

The world's largest corporate sustainability initiative



More about GC on the UN website
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org>

About Global Compact

The United Nations Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative for businesses committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

By doing so, business, as a primary driver of globalisation, can help markets, commerce, technology and finance advance in ways that benefit economies and societies everywhere.

As social, political and economic issues — at home or in other regions — increasingly affect business. Many companies recognise the need to collaborate with governments, civil society, labour and NGO's like the UN Global Compact. This ever-increasing understanding reflects

in the Global Compact's rapid growth. With almost 10 000 companies from 160 countries, it is the largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world. The Global Compact is a practical framework for the development, implementation, and disclosure of sustainability policies and practices. Offering participants a wide range of work streams, management tools and resources, the framework is designed to help advance sustainable business models and markets.



United Nations
Global Compact

The Principles



More about the Ten Principles
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>

Ten --- Principles



United Nations
Global Compact

Anti- corruption

1. Businesses should work against **corruption** in all its forms, including **extortion** and **bribery**.

Alliance is committed to working against corruption in all its forms.



Labour

2. Businesses should uphold the **freedom of association** and the effective recognition of the right to **collective bargaining**.
3. The elimination of all forms of **forced and compulsory labour**.
4. The effective **abolition of child labour**.
5. The elimination of **discrimination** in respect of employment and occupation.

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

Alliance fulfils all its responsibilities according to Norwegian law. Beyond the legislative demand, Alliance has appointed employee representatives as council and neutral support for employees on issues regarding salary negotiation and contractual dispute.

Alliance sees great value in geographical and ethnic diversity among its work force.



United Nations
Global Compact

Human Rights

6. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed **human rights**.
7. Make sure that they are not complicit in **human rights abuses**.

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

Alliance fulfils all its responsibilities according to Norwegian law, including implementing a health and safety management system. The company holds a third party certification as a "Sustainability lighthouse" (Miljøfyrtårn), with obligations on health and safety management beyond the legislative minimum. Progress is reported annually since 2012.

Environ- --- ment

8. **Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.**
9. **Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.**
10. **Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.**

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

We have decided to place environmental issues at the very core of our strategy, one of our main priorities is strengthening and sharing technical knowledge related to the design of more ecological buildings

We seek to involve users and stakeholders at an early project stage. We design for a healthy living, working and social environment, and believe this is key to 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 building and area planning certification systems, such as BREEAM, and recognized national standards like the passive house principle.

The O

of Sus

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The Architectural Industry of Norway has labelled us «the Office of Sustainability» and “the Challenger”. This motivates us to continue to contribute to an environmentally as well as financially sustainable architecture and urban development!



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We aim
for drastic
changes
in practice



More about our vision on our website
<https://www.allark.no/studio>

Statement of continued support

Over the past twelve months we have made a significant effort by devoting part of our resources to defining our strategic planning for the coming years. In the process we consulted our team and many of our colleagues expressed a desire to see us make a stronger and even more concrete social and environmental commitment.

We have therefore decided to base our entire strategy on corporate social responsibility, making it both a central and transversal objective. In terms of human and financial investment, our priority is strengthening and sharing technical knowledge related to the design of more ecological buildings and cities in line with the circular economy principles. The same applies to recruitment, partnerships and new clients' profiles.

We are also optimizing and standardizing our project management processes for architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture and zone planning. One of the aims is to facilitate and clarify dialogue with our stakeholders regarding the opportunities to implement circular and nature-based solutions. The main ones being: material recycling, energy production, waste

treatment, maximization of green structures and living systems in cities and also the consideration of the entire supply chain.

Another important aim is to create spaces that favour services based on sharing and less on ownership (equipment, vehicles), again in order to reduce the consumption of raw resources and energy, while creating more fulfilling living conditions for users.

In collaboration with our clients, the authorities, our suppliers, collaborators and partners, we aim for drastic changes in practice, in accordance with the urgency with which we are confronted and for which we are collectively responsible.

Asger Hedegaard Christensen
CEO & partner





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Following the GC principles for 12 years



More about our vision on our website
<https://www.allark.no/studio>

Living the principles

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

It is now more than ten years since we took on board The Global Compact in our office. The first years, we grew fast in both project volume and staff. Following the G.C. principles, we have put a lot of effort into developing both a good workplace and great projects. This has required a continuous process of defining, reaching for our goals and developing a framework of implementation. One of our main achievements to date has been achieving a third-party certification as an environmentally sound business practice that we continue to improve. We also regularly map staff priorities for the resources at hand and put them into life, such as a shorter workweek and a better pension scheme. We offer a Citybike subscription to our employees.

The office has developed a fixed salary system for the first fifteen years of practice, securing a fair salary development in the initial years of practice, regardless of gender, parental leave or negotiation skills. The office practices competence mapping of the staff in addition to obligatory annual individual talks to ensure that the competence at hand is used wisely, uncover needs and wishes for new skills and career directions. In terms of securing high standards for sustainability in our planning and building projects, the office has chosen BREEAM as the preferred platform for environmental implementation and assessment, and we are

a member of the Norwegian Green Building Council which manages BREEAM in Norway. We also work with other environmental standards such as the passive house standard or area specific sustainable programs. We seek to develop new areas of expertise through education and courses, strategic cooperation with other companies and by encouraging staff to enter the public arena through debates, lectures, and teaching. Now that we have settled as a medium size company with some years experience, we also have a growing understanding for diving deeper into the Global Compact and more resources at hand. We are committed to raising the bar on both the types and number of projects with high sustainable qualities, and in terms of developing skills in our organisation and a stronger management framework. We welcome the initiative from G.C. to take onboard emerging sustainable global issues through the Global opportunity report, where the five most significant global sustainable threats are identified.

We have participated in the Global Compact Nordic Network (GCNN) forum that facilitates outreach, learning, policy dialogue, collective action and partnerships. We hope to engage further in the network and explore opportunities for partnerships for concrete initiatives and projects in the current period.



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Achieve- ments in the report period



More about our vision on our website
<https://www.allark.no/studio>

In 2018 we set specific goals for the principles for the next year. Our goals and achievements are described in the following.

LABOUR

Inhouse

Goal

Measure the quality of the indoor climate regarding dust, humidity and oxygen levels. Also, increase the number of green plants in the office in order to improve the indoor climate. Have presentations of both ongoing and finished projects to inspire and share knowledge between co-workers. Encourage the use of public transport and bicycles to/from work and during the workday, and introduce yoga in the office for stress handling and reduction.

Result

We went through a recertification to keep our status as a Miljøfyrtårn-company ("environmental lighthouse"). Part of the compliance evaluation was to do with the indoor climate and the overall evaluation was very positive. Although we didn't get to measure the quality of the indoor climate, our yearly survey showed that the staff are mostly happy. We did increase the number of plants. We have had several presentations on projects in the office and continue to improve our routines of knowledge-sharing. All employees are offered a refund for using the city's bicycle scheme (Bysykkel). We did introduce Yoga in the office for our Stavanger department, but not in Oslo.

LABOUR

In building projects

Goal

Define at least one innovation factor in each project to promote learning and quality awareness. Share the knowledge obtained within the office, and where feasible, with our clients and the public.

Result

We have several projects where we have managed to implement innovation/learning factors but can improve both on the percentage of projects and on making these factors evident to the entire staff and to our clients.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Inhouse

Goal

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

Result

All staff have open access to our administrative materials not underlying any pledge of confidentiality. We keep an open dialogue with employees and will continue to do so. Information from the administration is usually given in regular office meetings. This year we have had several presentations to present the current work the administration is doing with our business strategy and encourage feedback and discussions from all employees.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

In building projects

Goal

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.

Result

We have achieved our goal for the last period and will pursue this goal further for the next report period.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Inhouse

Goal

Inhouse Establish a partnership relation for a specific project with a Norwegian or foreign NGO working with human rights. We have made some headway in this and will continue.

Result

We have become a member of the EGN Sustainability Network which also discusses Corporate Social Responsibility.

Goals & achievements

HUMAN RIGHTS

In building projects

Goal

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

Result

The company continues to disseminate knowledge on sustainable and responsibly sourced materials within its staff, and actively suggests such material alternatives in our projects, including awareness on recognized material certification.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Inhouse

Goal

Inhouse

Participate in at least four events on architectural issues related to the principles, and in particular on environmental sustainability.

We will start creating public lectures and/or workshops to share and strengthen our knowledge focusing on sustainability

Result

We have succeeded in participating in several activities related to the principles.

We have also hosted and been invited to speak at events. To mention a few: we held a speech at the Spanish seminar 'Together', which aim is to analyze how architecture can solve the problem of urban solitude through design that can promote the physical and psychological well-being of its users; with the Oslo School of Architecture and Design we co-hosted a screening of Tomorrow, a film that identifies initiatives and gives concrete examples of solutions to environmental and social challenges of the twenty-first century and accepted a few invitations to speak about one of our major projects where sustainability is a key feature.

In addition, we have attended seminars and lectures to learn more about sustainability and more specifically about circular economy.

ENVIRONMENT

Inhouse

Goal

Decrease the number of flights per year. We aim to reduce our flights with 10 % and to increase the number of video conferences or alternative communication by 10 %.

Make sure that most of our purchases are eco-labelled, organic or Fairtrade products. Reduce the amount of waste by 10 %.

Continue to use less electricity in the office.

Focus on reducing food waste and having meat-free lunches.

Result

We reduced the number of flights significantly, actually by more than 100 %. We continue to use Skype meetings whenever this is possible.

We continue to choose eco-labelled, organic and Fairtrade-products, and we have increased the number of suppliers that are environmentally certified (eg. ISO/EMAS, the Nordic "Svanen", the Norwegian Miljøfyrtårn (Eco-Lighthouse)).

We are also happy to say that our landlord now facilitates sorting of waste and, except for soft plastic, we now recycle most of our waste.

There is still a little food waste, but routines have been improved to reduce further.

Staff are encouraged to have meat-free lunches and more people have chosen this option.

All employees are encouraged to print as little as possible and every computer is set on 2-page printing to reduce paper waste.

ENVIRONMENT

In building projects

Goal

Increase our focus and mapping of results on sustainable development in area planning and building projects. Always offer BREEAM certification to our projects. Reduce the amount of waste on construction site by challenging the suppliers and contractors when it comes to material consumption and recycling. Also, consider recycling for the future when choosing materials. Investigating the possibility of binding CO2 in building projects, continue further to implement the use of wood (CLT) as construction method. Continue to focus on smart farming and urban food production in our projects. Aiming for projects focusing on sustainable development/research. Establish a partnership relation with consultants/a network who are leading in their field of knowledge regarding sustainable development.

Result

We have and are working on several area plan schemes, landscape architecture and building projects with strong sustainable profiles. We also continue to promote sustainable development in several public arenas and to our clients.

We continue to promote sustainable materials and energy efficient solutions where possible, including the use of wood (CLT). We have been invited as experts to speak about the use of CLT in our projects at a course this spring.

We have offered BREEAM certification to a large number of projects. We uphold this goal for the next period.

While creating zoning plans and early feasibility studies; energy, traffic and use of materials are important issues to achieve objectives of high urban and architectural quality and a low environmental strain and climate footprint in a life cycle perspective.

We emphasize aesthetics and quality building, beneficial urban spaces and quality of living supporting sustainable residential environments, simultaneously focusing on flexibility while considering development in mobility. For example, as a rule while creating zoning plans, we consequently reduce required space for car parking at the same time increasing space for bicycle parking - both to an increased extent

than required by overall guidelines. In our landscape projects we seek, for instance, innovative solutions on how to handle storm water locally and through open systems, both on roofs and on terrain, aiming to exceed the authority's lowest requirement. In our projects there is often a prerequisite for We promote the maximization of green roofs also as part of our storm water management strategies. We have developed high quality roof terraces containing planting beds that can hold enough soil to grow trees and lush vegetation, as well as edible roots, vegetables and herbs. The implementation of green roofs is an example of our interest in designing multifunctional systems to meet sustainable purposes: manage stormwater, increase urban biodiversity, proliferate urban food production and create a place for social interaction among others. In landscape architecture, we will strengthen our focus on Nature-Based Solutions in order not only to create more resilient cities through stormwater management strategies, but also to urban biodiversity, help to mitigate climate change, improve health and meet social needs

In our projects there is often a prerequisite for high quality roof terraces which proliferate urban food production. We have instigated work on building projects where emissions have been reduced by over 50 % in comparison with reference projects and we work with building sites that are fossil free.

We do our utmost in promoting sustainable energy solutions, i.e. use of energy wells.

To acquire projects that focus on sustainable development we seek out potential customers that have a strong green profile, but we also try to influence all our clients.

By invitation we became a member of the EGN Sustainability Network which aims to strengthen our knowledge about sustainability and corporate social responsibility and share ideas with other companies and organizations that have a strong interest in these matters. We are also in dialogue with consultants and companies to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with regards to environmentally and socially conscientious materials and design.

Goals for

next year



for the

report



United Nations
Global Compact

In order to track our progress on promoting the ten principles, we have set specific goals for the coming report period.

LABOUR

Inhouse

Measure the quality of the indoor climate regarding dust, humidity and oxygen levels. Also, increase the number of green plants in the office in order to improve the indoor climate.

Have presentations of both ongoing and finished projects to inspire and share knowledge between co-workers.

Encourage the use of public transport and bicycles to/from work and during the workday, and introduce yoga in the office for stress handling and reduction.

LABOUR

In building projects

Define at least one innovation factor in each project to promote learning and quality awareness. Share the knowledge obtained within the office, and where feasible, with our clients and the public.



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ENVIRONMENT

Inhouse

Decrease the number of flights per year. We aim to reduce our flights with 10 % and to increase the number of video conferences or alternative communication by 10 %.

Make sure that most of our purchases are eco-labelled, organic or Fairtrade products. Reduce the amount of waste by 10 %.

Continue to use less electricity in the office.

Focus on reducing food waste and having meat-free lunches.

ENVIRONMENT

In building projects

Increase our focus and mapping of results on sustainable development in area planning and building projects.

Always offer BREEAM certification to our projects.

Reduce the amount of waste on construction site by challenging the suppliers and contractors when it comes to material consumption and recycling. Also, consider recycling for the future when choosing materials.

Investigating the possibility of binding CO2 in building projects, continue further to implement the use of wood (CLT) as construction method.

Continue to focus on smart farming and urban food production in our projects. Aiming for projects focusing on sustainable development/research.

Establish a partnership relation with consultants/a network who are leading in their field of knowledge regarding sustainable development.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Inhouse

Establish a partnership relation for a specific project with a Norwegian or foreign NGO working with human rights. We have made some headway in this and will continue.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In building projects

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

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Inhouse

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

ANTI-CORRUPTION

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.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Inhouse

Participate in at least four events on architectural issues related to the principles, and in particular on environmental sustainability.

We will start creating public lectures and/or workshops to share and strengthen our knowledge focusing on sustainability.



In order to track our progress on promoting the ten principles, we have set specific goals for the coming report period.

ENVIRONMENT

Establish a sustainability group that aims to increase knowledge about sustainability and circularity both within the organization and in our projects.

Continue to make sure that most of our purchases are eco-labelled, organic or Fairtrade products.

Keep reducing food waste and having meat-free lunches.

Improve project processes to better include CSR and circularity principles.

Always offer BREEAM project certification to our clients.

Reduce the amount of waste on construction site by challenging the suppliers and contractors when it comes to material consumption and recycling. Also, consider recycling for the future when choosing materials.

Investigating the possibility of binding CO₂ in building projects, continue further to implement the use of wood (CLT) as construction method.

Start developing Nature-Based-Solutions (NBS) for landscape architecture; human constructed (or designed) systems inspired by nature that tackle socio-environmental challenges (increase of biodiversity in cities, mitigate climate change, improve health, define flexible water management). The European Union defines NBS as solutions «inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience”.

Continue to focus on smart farming and urban food production in our projects. Aiming for projects focusing on sustainable development/research.

Continue to promote sustainable materials and energy efficient solutions where possible, including the use of wood (CLT).

Establish more partnerships and join networks that are leading in their field of knowledge regarding sustainable development and circularity principles.

Continue to use less electricity in the office.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

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

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.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Participate in at least four events on architectural issues related to the principles, and in particular on environmental sustainability.

We will organize public lectures and/or workshops to share and strengthen our knowledge about circularity.

LABOUR

Have in place a good system for collective intelligence to better share ideas, initiatives and knowledge between co-workers.

Create career plans for all employees that include strengthening knowledge on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and circularity.

Encourage the use of public transport and bicycles to/from work by subsidizing the use of City bikes (Bysykkel) in Oslo.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Keep recommending materials where human rights are considered in the producing process.



**Thank you
for reading**

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