

THE GENDER EQUALITY SITUATION WITHIN KVARKEN'S CLEANTECH COMPANIES 2021

A survey commissioned by the
project Future Cleantech Solutions



EUROPEAN UNION

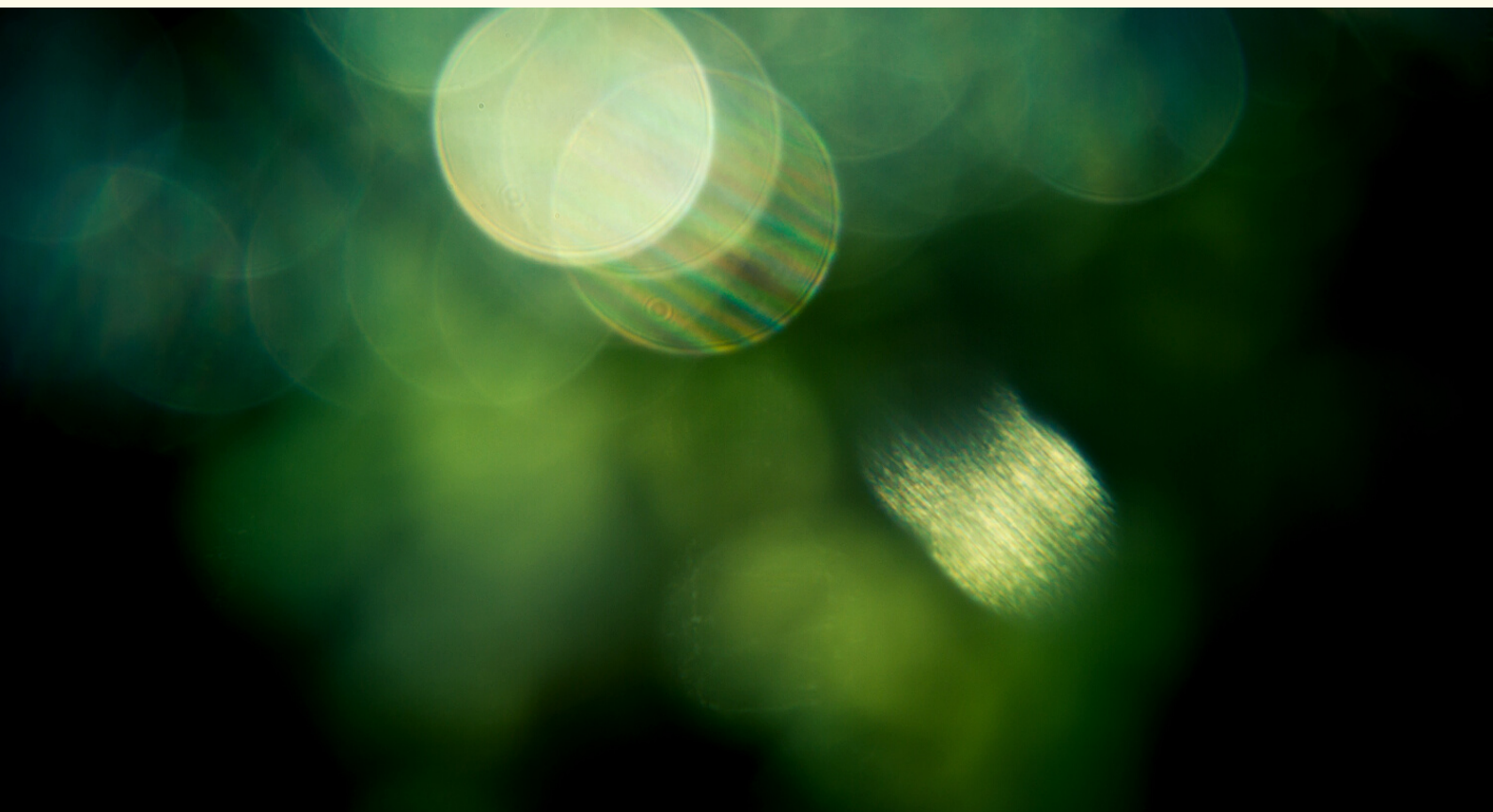
Interreg
Botnia-Atlantica

European Regional Development Fund



EKVALITA

vkna!



1. Introduction

1.1. About the report

Ekvalita and Varna

October 2021

This report aims to work as a follow-up of the gender equality action plan of the project Future Cleantech Solutions (FCS). The current state of gender equality in the Kvarken area's cleantech companies was analysed for the report.

The purpose of the assignment was to make different needs and possibilities visible regarding gender equality within cleantech. The assignment also included gathering examples from companies that have succeeded in gender equality initiatives and activities. The aim of these stories was to share them through this report to inspire and help other companies to follow their example.

This assignment is a collaboration between Ekvalita (Finland) and Varna (Sweden), responsible for data collection in respective countries. Both companies have broad experience working with gender equality and diversity in workplaces.

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Content



1. Introduction

- 1.1. About the report
- 1.2. The client

2. Summary

3. Background

- 3.1. Concepts
- 3.2. Benefits of equality work in organisations

4. Method

5. Results

5.1. Survey

- 5.1.1. Gender division and work with gender equality and gender equity
- 5.1.2. Gender division within cleantech in Kvarken

5.2. Web pages

- 5.2.1. The gender division of the images in cleantech web pages
- 5.2.2. Gender differences between the Finnish and the Swedish side
- 5.2.3. Analyses of cleantech web pages
- 5.2.4. Pictures on websites – inspiration examples

5.3. Interviews

- 5.3.1. Interviews about gender equality work in cleantech
- 5.3.2. Collected reflections on the interviews

6. Inspiring examples

7. The outspoken needs of companies

8. Additional studies

- 8.1. Lack of gender equality facts in cleantech
- 8.2. Gender equality in the energy sector
- 8.3. Gender equality in technology in Finland
- 8.4. The gender equality situation in technology in Sweden


9. Turning the gaze towards the future

- 9.1. A need for innovation in gender equality work
- 9.2. Ways forward – Ekvälita and VKNA recommends
 - 9.2.1. Recommendations for projects and support functions
 - 9.2.2. Recommendations to companies in cleantech
 - 9.2.3. Recommendations for more gender equal images and websites

10. Sources

11. Appendices

- Appendix 1



**»The more people
with different
backgrounds involved,
the better the end
product.«**

From an interview with Adopticum

1.2.The client

Future Cleantech Solutions (FCS) is the client of the report. The project Future Cleantech Solutions is funded by Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, Österbottens förbund, Region Västerbotten, Region Västernorrland, Merinova Technology Center, Vasaregionens Utveckling Ab (VASEK), the City of Vaasa, Karlebynejdens Utveckling Ab (KOSEK), the City of Karleby, Skellefteå Municipality, Umeå Municipality, Örnsköldsvik Municipality, Umeå Energi and Skellefteå Kraft.

FCS is a Kvarken-based Interreg Botnia-Atlantica project that aims to identify and communicate the opportunities that establishments and investments bring for small and medium-sized companies, increase cooperation across the regional border, and contribute to sustainable growth in the region's business.

The project has also sought to include a gender aspect in all its activities (2019-2021) because of the importance of gender-equal workplaces for the development and attractiveness of the companies and industry.





2. Summary

This report was commissioned by the Future Cleantech Solutions project and is based on a gender equality survey of cleantech companies in the Kvarken area.

The purpose was to investigate the gender equality situation in terms of gender distribution in management and among employees, how gender equality work looks like in the companies and their external marketing through their websites. Data was collected through surveys, interviews, analysis of companies' websites and external monitoring.

Results

The response rate to our survey was low. On the Finnish side of Kvarken, it was so low that this report will not account for any answers for Finland. From the responses we received from the Swedish side of Kvarken, with the help of other actors' surveys, we estimate that 75 percent of the employees in cleantech are men. This number also corresponds to the percentage of men on the surveyed companies' boards.

The companies' gender equality work on the Swedish side of Kvarken mainly consisted of marketing, recruitment and active value-based work.

The companies on the Swedish side of Kvarken had actively worked towards gender equality in various ways. Many also wanted to do more than they do today. Many companies emphasised that gender is not essential in their activities on the Finnish side.

Most of the interviewees from Kvarken were women, and so were those responsible for the gender equality work within the companies. One of the report's conclusions is that more companies need to clarify their driving forces, measure and communicate the effects of the work.

In the report, company examples are highlighted as inspiration for work with gender equality.

Our analysis of the cleantech companies' websites showed that the websites on the Swedish side of Kvarken had a more even gender distribution. This also applied to how women were portrayed on the websites. A clear pattern on websites of cleantech companies in Kvarken was to portray men were more active than women. For example, male hands controlled technology or women working in customer service.

The report's results correspond with how gender equality is described in the energy and technology sectors.

3. Background

3.1. Concepts



An essential aspect of working with change is a need for a common understanding of the key concepts. In this report, important concepts have been cleantech, Kvarken and gender equality, and concepts connected to these.

Operational perspectives

cleantech

The focus of the report has been cleantech companies. The FCS-project group's definition of a cleantech company has functioned as the starting point for the survey:

»Companies, whose processes, products and services decrease environmental effects through e.g. energy- and material efficiency and environmentally friendly activities and/or companies, that uses ecological values and sustainable views in their marketing and communication.«

Furthermore, the FCS project group had beforehand listed cleantech companies in Kvarken. These lists have formed the framework for the questionnaire mailing and the website analyses included in the report.

Region

Kvarken

The cleantech companies are located in the Kvarken area. Kvarken is an 80 km long strait that reaches from the northern Baltic Sea to the Bothnian Sea between Finland and Sweden. Cities connecting to this aquatic region are: Örnsköldsvik, Umeå, Skellefteå, Vaasa and Karleby.

Cross-border cooperation

The advantage of working across the borders of Sweden and Finland is that different experiences and practices can be shared, and the understanding of various phenomena can be deepened. From the perspective of gender equality, there are national differences in laws, investments and the understanding of the work with gender equality. Companies that work internationally, or have international employees, also affect the company's understanding of what gender equality is.

Gender equality

In the Nordic languages there is no division between equity and equality, but both concepts are understood in one word (i.e. sv: jämlikhet, fi: yhdenvertaisuus). There is also one unique term for gender equality and gender equity (i.e. sv: jämställdhet, fi: sukupuolten tasa-arvo).

Working with gender equality is often understood as equity and equality between men and women. Questions regarding masculinity and femininity can help us understand for example how activities and tasks are symbolised and valued.

Gender equality does not always include a wider understanding of sex that contains questions of trans and non-binary individuals. In this report, we have sometimes used the binary understanding of gender and sometimes also looked outside this framework of gender and sex.

The reason is, we did not want to assign genders or sexes incorrectly, or being forced to make a choice when the gender or sex is unclear. Furthermore, we wanted to make gender minorities visible and incorporated in change management that puts gender equality work on front.

Assumed woman and assumed man are not used as expressions in Sweden (nor in English) but are becoming increasingly common in gender equality and gender equity work in Finland. The expression is derived from the Finnish expression 'mies- ja naisoletettu'.

Why these wordings exist in Finland, but not in Sweden, can be due to many factors. One reason, in Finland there is a law regarding gender equality that affects not only men and women, but also gender minorities – individuals with other gender identities and expressions. Traditional work with gender equality that focuses on two sexes, is therefore being challenged to include a broader understanding of sex and gender, and to include gender-minorities. The term gender-minority is used in Finland, while the terms non-binary and trans individuals are used in Sweden.

Assumed women and men

In our review of visual material, we have used the terms assumed women and assumed men to categorise individuals in images, videos or animations.



3.2. Benefits of equality work in companies

When diversity increases in companies, more knowledge, experience and perspectives are accumulated; it results in better decision making and leadership, increased quality, less staff turnover and sick leaves, as well as an increase in significant innovation.

According to the Nordic Gender Equality Report, 64 percent of the most efficient businesses reported that they have equality based decision making, compared to 43 percent of the least effective businesses. Already an increased awareness of equality in businesses is a success, as it affects its performance and profitability.

Achieving equal boardrooms is not about having quotas for women; rather it is about making it possible in the company to work with these questions (more equal profiling of the business, recruiting, career development etc.), and therefore creating possibilities for an increased representation in the board.

Research shows that equity and diversity:

- **Strengthens social sustainability:** A work culture that makes people stay consists of a diverse workforce that mirrors society and the clientele. It is also a place where everyone can be themselves.
- **Increases economic profitability:** Businesses with an equal board have a 20 percent lower risk to go bankrupt. The businesses with the least equality and diversity in the decision making branches have a 29 percent higher risk of decreasing their profitability.
- **Better decisions in everyday life:** A homogenous group leads to less quality in decision making.
- **Strengthens the businesses profitability:** Diversity in representation and inclusive practises affect businesses' possibilities to drive innovation.
- **Increases co-worker engagement:** A deficiency in inclusive practises can affect employees well-being, the number of sick leave, and increase staff turnover.



4. Method

We've mapped the equality situation for Kvarken area's cleantech companies through surveys, interviews, and analyses.

The assignment consisted of two parts:

- To implement a simple evaluation of the present situation regarding equality and equity in cleantech-/industry businesses in Kvarken focusing on the gender division of the employees in the companies and the division and representation of women and men in the imagery of the trade.
- To highlight good cleantech business examples, both locally and nationally from Finland and Sweden, where gender equality efforts have been successful.

We sent out a survey to get answers for the first part of the assignment, mapping the equality situation regarding gender equality. We also conducted interviews with cleantech companies that worked with these questions.

The survey was sent all together to 174 businesses: 28 businesses in Kokkola, 62 in

Vaasa, 29 in Övik, 34 in Umeå and 20 in Skellefteå. We received 15 out of 83 responses on the Swedish side and only 2 out of 91 on the Finnish side. We sent out the survey in Finnish and Swedish on the Finnish side as the area is bilingual with a slight majority of Swedish speakers.

The survey (Appendix 1) was used to chart the gender division within management and employees in the cleantech businesses listed by the FCS-project group. How the companies work with equality was also included in the questionnaire.

We collected concrete examples of gender equality work through structured interviews. The interview selection consisted of companies that handed in their contact information in the survey, trips from the FCS project group or related networks where companies were highlighted as possible examples. In the analyses, we have complemented our material with other relevant mapping and research of the issue at hand.

We researched gender division and how gender is portrayed within cleantech by analysing a random selection of pictures and videos on the companies' web pages.

A blurred background image of a person working at a desk. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and is writing on a yellow sticky note with a black pen. Their other hand is on a laptop keyboard. On the desk, there is a black coffee cup, several papers with charts and graphs, and a wooden clipboard. A teal semi-circle is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

5. Results



5.1. Survey

5.1.1. Gender division and work with gender equality and gender equity

What does gender equality work look like in the companies that completed the survey? What is the gender division in the companies?

64%

were men in Swedish companies that completed the survey

36%

were women in Swedish companies that completed the survey

Our results should be interpreted as indicators of the situation in the cleantech field in Kvarken, rather than as fact. This is due to a low response rate in the survey.

We have complemented our results with other research and studies later in the report to draw parallels to our mapping and to deepen our understanding of the results in our report.

Survey answers on the Swedish side

In these companies, you find 771 women and 1390 men; men then constituted 64 percent of the workforce. If we only include the companies with a maximum of 250 employed (small and middle-sized businesses, SMF) the percentage of men is 72.

There are 57 men and 19 women on the boards in these companies, which amounts to a 75 percent representation of men.

Most businesses in our survey (13 out of 15) have worked with equality and equity in their marketing. 11 out of 15 have worked with equality also in recruiting. 10 out of 15 companies state that they have active value-based work. Some companies (6) have invested in education in gender equality, and some (5) have a gender equality plan. Concrete examples of this work are presented later in the report.

Survey answers on the Finnish side

Because of a low answer rate, we have decided to not present any specific numbers or answers from the Finnish side.



5.1.2. Gender division within cleantech in Kvarken

16%

the surveys
response rate on
the Swedish side

2%

the surveys
response rate on
the Finnish side

Low answer rate

The answer rate for the Swedish businesses was 16 per cent, and 2 per cent for the Finnish, compared to the Nordic Council of Ministers survey of equality in the Nordic energy sector, where the answer rate was 15 per cent.

One of the reasons for the low answer rate may have been a lack of time, as the informants only had one week to answer during the first mailing. Thus, we sent the survey again with an additional two weeks of answering time, which raised the answer rate slightly.

In addition to a short answering time, it is possible that the mailing did not reach the “right” person in the company. Or those who received it did not identify their business as cleantech. Another reason may be that questions regarding equality are not prioritised and that most businesses that found these issues important answered.

Conclusions of gender division within cleantech on the Swedish side of Kvarken

When complementing the responses retained from the survey to other branch statistics, we can give a reliable estimate that more men than women work in cleantech. Exactly how many more, we can not conclude. The energy sector is an example of other industries that can be viewed as included in cleantech and has available statistics. Within this industry, 75 percent are men in Sweden and 76 percent in Finland.

An assumption could also be that amongst those who completed the survey, the subject matter was viewed as essential and, therefore, may work more actively with it than the ones that did not respond. This could even explain the more equal gender distribution in these companies compared to national averages.



5.2. Web pages

5.2.1. The gender division of the images in cleantech web pages

We have randomly selected and analysed 30 percent of the web pages of the cleantech businesses in Kvarken that we've listed included in this study.

3%

individuals with indefinable gender identity in the web pages we analysed

34%

assumed women in the web pages we analysed

64%

assumed men in the web pages we analysed

Web pages with more than 25 clicking options were left out to keep the research percentage high.

On the Finnish and Swedish web pages, the images and banners with moving pictures, 34 percent pictured assumed women, 62 percent pictured assumed men. Undetermined gender identity was found in 3 percent of the images.

Videos found on the web pages were very different, for example, company presentations, product/s or educational and manual videos. Most videos included people and had a narrator's voice. The gender division in the videos on the web pages was 31 percent assumed women, and 69 percent assumed men. The animated videos describe processes, present digital tools or views of industrial scenery, mounting or functions of a product. The majority of the animated videos in our material did not include people.

The animated videos consisted of 46 percent assumed women and 53 percent assumed men. Unclear gender identities did not often occur, as the animated figures are traditionally gendered as women and men by looks or name.



5.2.2. Gender differences between the Finnish and the Swedish side

The analysed web pages are proportionally relatively evenly divided between the different cities in Kvarken (approx. 30 percent per city), even though more companies can be found on the Finnish side. Of the analysed web pages, 58 per cent are on the Finnish side, and 42 per cent on the Swedish side.

There were more images of people on the Swedish web pages than on the Finnish ones. Of all the images of people we mapped 63 percent are found in the Swedish web pages and only 37 per cent in the Finnish. In the material, there are some web pages, mainly on the Finnish side, with few pictures of people, no images or no videos at all.

In the Finnish companies web pages, the total number of assumed women in images, video or animation is 26 percent. The percentage for assumed men are 72 percent, and 3 percent for indeterminable gender identities. The image material for the Swedish companies consist of 39 percent assumed women, 56 percent assumed men and 4 percent indeterminable gender identities. Thus, the Swedish web pages have a better gender representation than the Finnish web pages.

Web page images

In the images (including moving banners), there are 26 percent assumed women, 72 percent assumed men and 3 percent indeterminable gender identities on the Finnish side. Corresponding results on the Swedish side is 39 percent assumed women, 56 percent assumed men, and 4 percent indeterminable gender identities.

Web page videos

The videos on the web pages on the Finnish side, consisted of 14 percent assumed women, 86 percent assumed men. In Swedish videos, there are 36 percent assumed women, and 64 percent assumed men.

Animations

In the animated videos on the web pages, 47 percent were assumed women, and 52 percent assumed men on the Finnish side. On the Swedish side, the assumed women dominate with 71 percent, whereas 29 percent are assumed men.



5.2.3. Analyses of cleantech web pages

The web page is a digital business card for clients and potential job-seekers.

The analysis has focused on pictures (even moving images), where we have not only mapped the gender distribution, but also analysed whether or not these images enhance gender stereotypes within the industry. There are clear differences between the web pages on the Finnish and the Swedish side of Kvarken, which is also mirrored in our interviews.

The Swedish web pages did not only have more assumed women represented, but they also had a wider representation of these women.

On the Finnish side an executive recruiting video with an assumed male narrator, a (white) assumed man as the main character, and 12 other (white) assumed men. We can even find other videos of companies where assumed women are not at all portrayed, even though they can be found in the workforce of that company.

These kinds of videos reinforce the idea that gender is linked with certain types of professions or particular competence, assumed for certain

job applications or consumers of the companies products. Do we know what kind of a message we are sending out about our company, and are we satisfied with that message?

In the images of the different analysed web pages from both countries, we could identify gendered patterns:

- Men were dominant on the web pages, and they were white and heterosexual (for example, images of couples)
- Men were more often portrayed outdoors, in vehicles or different industrial premises
- Women were more often found on customer service pages
- There were a significant amount male hands that handled various types of technology, most apps and computers
- If the companies target group was retail customers private people, the imagery was dominated by women, whereas men dominated corporate customer imagery
- Women appeared more often with children than men did
- The same women appeared in more pictures on the same web page or video, while there was a more diverse representation of men.
- Some of the animated videos were dominated completely, or to a greater degree by men



5.2.4. Pictures on websites - inspiration examples

Part of gender equality work is gender-sensitive marketing. Most of our informants from Sweden, said that they stress to strengthen marketing from a gender equality perspective. We could see results from this on the websites from Sweden. We still want to point out an overall impression, where two views must be taken into account when we want to promote more equal websites:

Representation

- Who can be seen in our pictures; do women, men and gender minorities / non-binary appear?
- Do we want to show what the gender distribution in the company looks like now? Or do we want to show what development we are aiming for?

Inclusion

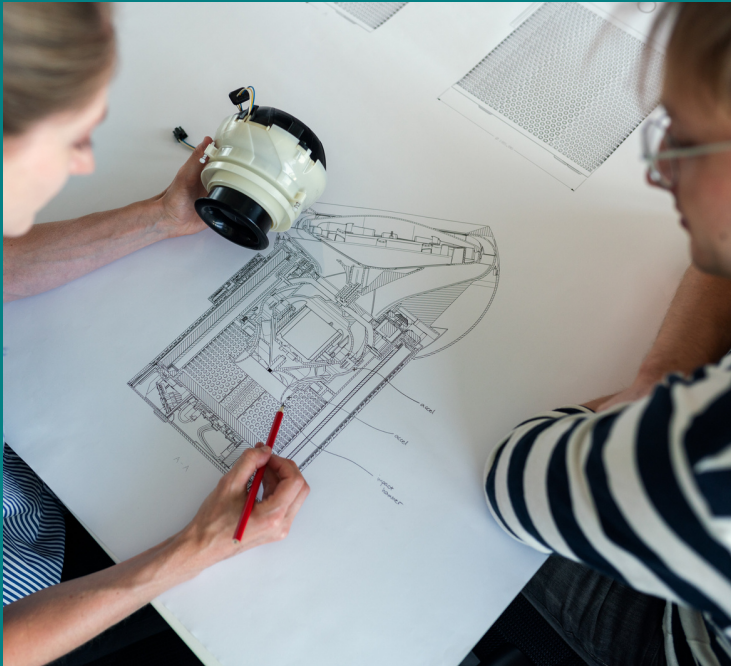
- What message are we sending out?
- What do our pictures tell us about our expectations of who should do what and how?

The goal is images that do not portray gender stereotypes nor exclude any gender. Instead, an overall impression where people, regardless of gender, feel that this workplace or product is something for me and that I would be welcome as I am. We, therefore, recommend that you keep this in focus when choosing images, not only for the website but also for marketing in general. Most image banks reflect outdated notions about gender and different minority groups.

The bullet list on the previous page describes challenges in both representation and inclusion that we arrived at through the analysis of the websites. We have tried to give inspiring examples of how these challenges can be met on the following page. We also hope that the remaining images that illustrated this report can inspire you in your upcoming image choices.

*Assumed women and assumed men
work and are active on equal terms*

Together



*Different types of
men and*
masculinities

*Different hands
handling technology*
hands





5.3. Interviews

5.3.1. Interviews about gender equality work in cleantech

To deepen the picture of the gender equality situation in the industry, we interviewed representatives from various companies.

14
interviews

10
companies

Our goal was to gain a deeper understanding of specific challenges and working methods for gender equality in the cleantech industry and find companies to stand out as role models for others. The ambition was to find two role models from each city (Skellefteå, Umeå, Örnsköldsvik, Vaasa and Kokkola).

We initially collected suggestions for companies that could serve as inspiring examples. We took a closer look at the companies that could be counted as SMEs (small-medium-sized companies), which was our clients' wish. As it was not entirely easy to reach all the companies we wanted, we have partly gone beyond the scope of SMEs. The interviews aimed to examine the motivation for the company working with gender equality, how they proceed concretely, and whether they have encountered any obstacles or challenges. It was also essential to find out what kinds of effects the possible work led to in the company.



5.3. Interviews

5.3.2. Collected reflections on the interviews

Which common denominators unite the companies included in the interview study?

Common to all informants on the Swedish side is that they, in one way or another, had an active gender equality work in progress. Taking measures, conducting plans and following them up, recurring activities and more – is a prerequisite for successful work. Several companies also had people in charge of the work and an evident commitment from the management. This was not always the case on the Finnish side.

The question, why? *why gender equality is vital in our company* is not always communicated and anchored among all staff (or in management). This issue is an essential part of progressing with the work, as lack of motivation or drive are obstacles for change. We must also communicate the effects of the work. It is also essential to measure and keep track of what the work leads to and communicate it to spread commitment and pride.

Most companies we talked to have a desire to do more and demonstrate this through ideas on things they would like to focus on in the work. We describe some of these under the heading Companies' stated needs.

The majority of our informants were women. Among the companies we were in contact with, it was also mostly women who were the driving force in gender equality work. A sign the company has come a long way in gender equality work is when the work is not automatically or casually placed on the women in the company – but instead actively and consciously distributed between both men and women. Some of our informants had arrived at this stage. The next step is also to include questions about trans inclusion.

Most companies asked us for good examples, tips, and ideas on how to work and conduct the work. We hope and believe that this report can contribute to this.

Inspirational examples

We know role models and inspiration are essential. Therefore, it is valuable to highlight five companies from Kvarken that have active gender equality work.

A glass bottle with a silver cap and a small plant inside, sitting on grass with a blurred background.

6. Inspiring examples



SK Protect in Kokkola believes in transparency in the organisation's processes regarding gender equality, equity and justice in the workplace. Five years ago, the management team consisted only of men. Today, there are women in the management team - and a female co-owner.

➤ **WHY DO YOU PRIORITISE THESE ISSUES?**

- We want to be at the forefront of the industry and attract the best employees. Both equality and the feeling of justice are essential.

➤ **WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?**

- We work to maintain a very respectful work culture.

- Our work is about developing other companies' structures. There we have an opportunity to question embarrassing ideas such as the value of lifting heavy, or that it is always the one with production knowledge that should always lead the work.

- The company does not offer much career development for people with cutting-edge skills, as the leadership positions are few. Even if employees move on, we see it as a good rating as they become our customers.

➤ **WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE?**

- It is difficult to find employees in our industry at all, which means that it is crucial not only to show that we are a good employer but also to be one in practice.

- We also find gender segregation in the company, where men work to a greater extent with practicalities such as fire protection and safety plans. At the same time, women develop quality, job security and leadership. Our common goal is nevertheless to increase all our employees' competence in all areas. We strive to take this into account already in the recruitment phase.

- In the most recent recruitment of managerial and expert positions, we had several female applicants. For the managerial position, the only female applicant was selected based on her competence. She then declined and accepted another job. We know those good workers can choose between workplaces. There was also a woman who was chosen based on her competence among many men for the expert position.

- We are a very age-homogeneous company with an average age of 38 years.



HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THESE ISSUES TODAY?

- Our starting point and core in the company is transparency. We work to have transparency in all our processes, in the business and our internal material. Everything is gathered on the intranet, where everyone has the same opportunity to take in the information and can question whether we deviate from what has been agreed.

- In the latest gender equality and diversity survey, it turned out that the staff felt that there were uncertainties about wage setting. We are now expanding transparency and posting the various salary groups and their requirement levels on the intranet.

- We use "easy" work rotation to create the opportunity to gain insight into each other's work tasks and processes. We believe that by understanding what others do, we understand how dependent we are on each other and each other's competence.

- There are women on proposals for management and managerial positions.



WHAT EFFECTS HAVE YOU SEEN, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED?

- We have reflected on what makes a good manager, the balance between substantive knowledge and leadership skills. It is a discussion that has contributed to changes in manager recruitment.

ADOPTICUM

Although gender equality is a highly topical and priority issue at Adopticum in Skellefteå, they always want to do more. The work takes place internally, but above all, when the company supports its development partners. A success factor is to see gender equality as part of the ongoing work and to set aside time for discussions, concretisation and follow-up.



WHY DO YOU PRIORITISE THESE ISSUES?

- It is partly about a human aspect. All people are equal. The result will be better if both women and men are involved because we get diverse perspectives from a technical view. It is also crucial for usability that we do not exclude groups, as then we risk losing large customer groups.



WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE?

- Sometimes, we meet companies that think the issue is unimportant and do not understand it at all. We then continue to promote gender equality in different ways.

- Picking up the questions in a natural way can also be a challenge; some get provoked and we are constantly working to find ways that are tactful.



WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

- We are proud that we work with these issues in (often) unisexual environments, in short, technically focused projects and that we make a difference in these as well. We have also come to a situation where it is evident to us that gender equality is an integral part of our work; even if it is challenging and difficult, it is never a question of whether we should continue to work with the issue, but just how to do it.

- The fact that we are a committed team makes it easy to pursue the issue with us; we support each other. Someone else steps in if a problematic situation arises, which creates a sense of security.

➤ HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THESE ISSUES TODAY?

- In collaborations, we always try to include gender equality, for example, how a group is put together or when they do a storyboard about who should use the product. We try to promote gender equality in all meetings and highlight how it can positively affect the result.
- We need to meet the companies at the level they are at and not give lessons, but instead have a dialogue. We are also humbled not knowing everything pointing out we can learn a lot from the companies.
- We try to work with the issues at all levels in the organisation. We want to give everyone a feeling of ownership of the issue. It is not someone else who should "fix" gender equality. It is also vital that it is part of the ongoing work, not a parallel track, and time set aside for working with the issues and for follow-up. Internally, we talk a lot about gender equality and how it can be developed in general. It is a constant dialogue, both in particular moments and in the coffee room.
- When we recruit, we ask for people's interests to work with gender equality and diversity. We have a good level of knowledge within the company, but we want to learn more. Everyone's commitment makes it easier for us to spread the message.
- We are trying to make sure everyone speaks during meetings and invites those who do not take the space.

➤ WHAT EFFECTS HAVE YOU SEEN, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED?

- To dare to continue to raise the issue even when it feels like companies are not listening or think it is unimportant. We have seen through external evaluations that we made a difference even where we thought we did not make it.
- Many companies have not thought along these lines. So many have had eye-openers that have led to better processes and/or products.
- When we see the success, we become even more committed to working with these issues. Want to make an even more significant difference! It's fun and rewarding to see when thoughts are set in motion.



Rototilt is a company with roots in Vindeln and the world as a market. For Rototilt, gender equality and diversity is about everyone's equal opportunities in life - but also about competitiveness. A gender-equal employer is a more attractive employer and Rototilt is constantly striving to advance its positions.

A success factor is that gender equality is included in the ownership directive and in the overall business goals. Another great advantage is good knowledge and a genuine commitment to the issue.

➤ WHY DO YOU PRIORITISE THESE ISSUES?

strong growth ambitions, and to cope with them, we must be an outstanding workplace.

Gender equality is also linked to results and competition. We can't all be cast in the same shape but need different ideas and thoughts to distinguish ourselves.

In addition, it is essential for our customers that we have a good set of values to stand on.

➤ HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THESE ISSUES TODAY?

- Great place to work is one of our four overall business goals.

- Gender equality is also included in the ownership directive. That means that the work is in demand from the highest place and becomes a priority area.

- We work in a structured way with the Great place to work process, which means that we measure, review the results and create an action plan. We do this regularly every year.

There is excellent knowledge and a commitment within HR that drives the work forward and supports managers in gender equality work.

- For Rototilt, collaborations with schools are an essential part of the gender equality work. We accept prao and study visits. We also participate in projects such as Pepp and Vera, focusing on supporting women to apply for technical education.

- In the cases of visibility, for example, in recruitment photos and videos, we always have a gender equality perspective. One of the focuses is showing both women and men.

- We have had a dialogue about workwear with our clothing supplier and bought new pants with stretch and adapted clothes for pregnant women.

- We have a large ongoing project connected to our values, where we reviewed our core values and had discussions in groups of employees.

WHAT EFFECTS HAVE YOU SEEN, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED?

- We have many applicants for our advertised positions – and several who are women. According to our partner in recruitment, we have a higher proportion of women applying to us than other similar companies.

- Internally, women are now also applying for group coordinator positions where we previously only had male applicants.

- Indicators show that we are perceived as a good workplace with a lot of commitment and community. More people in general know about Rototilt because of our investments for more visibility.



WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE?

- It is a challenge to bring the work to life in everyday situations and remember that this is a journey that never ends.

- It is vital that leaders have conviction and feel secure in their work. They should dare to talk about these issues and have that conversation on gender equality. Implementing gender equality work is both the key and the challenge. The work with Great place to work has helped us to clarify the process around gender equality work.

- We work a lot with employer branding, where we also try to bring gender equality and diversity into focus. We are constantly working on the challenge of getting more people to apply for our vacancies (women and foreign-born, for example).



Algoryx in Umeå is a relatively small company that has structured work on equality issues. The work is seen as an ongoing process within the company, based on an action plan and with recurring conversations and knowledge replenishment. They also have an expert who supports the management, which encourages the work. Algoryx has also managed to create an openness to bring in new ideas that allow good discussions.



WHY DO YOU PRIORITISE THESE ISSUES?

- Everyone should feel welcome in our company. We try to strive for diversity in the working group because, in general, diversity provides a broader perspective.



WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

- We have a culture of fairness with a lot of joy and community. We also have high grades in the employee survey.

- The fact that we are working with gender equality issues means that we are prepared for different situations, should something happen in the future. It is important, not least since we are growing and bringing in new employees.



WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE?

- Our challenge is that too few girls are educated as computer scientists or technical physicists. It is challenging to balance the gender balance in recruitment.

- We are a relatively homogeneous group and this can be a challenge because we want to have many perspectives in our decisions and our development.



HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THESE ISSUES TODAY?

- We have an expert within the company who has the role of responsible for gender equality work.
- We have two workplace meetings per year on the theme of gender equality, with discussions about, e.g. treatment and privileges.
- We have an active plan that is followed up every year. We also follow statistics on women and men and set goals and activities.
- Clarity about whom to turn to if you experience something that does not feel good. We are aware of the wage process that women's wages should not be lower than men's wages.
- We conduct employee surveys every year – including questions concerning well-being and attitudes.
- We have an activity group with two women and two men bringing in fun things to do together within the company. We put much care into making sure that everyone could participate.
- We work with job advertisements to get more women to apply.
- We visit schools and tell them about our work. We are aware of our gender representation when making visits.
- We think about how we are seen externally, in marketing and social media and keep track of gender equality.



WHAT EFFECTS HAVE YOU SEEN, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED?

- Our discussion meetings have turned into new insights among employees and contributed to our positive culture. Everyone agrees that this is important, which means that we work in the same direction.
- We need to put even more energy into recruitment to see the effects there. This applies to the recruitment of trainees because it is a common way into our company.



Övik Energi works actively to solve gender imbalance in various professional categories and within the company as a whole. They also engage in external projects intending to attract young people to take an interest in their professions. Övik Energi is not content with believing that, for example, women, who are a minority group within the company, are doing well - they are investigating how it actually is.

➤ WHY DO YOU PRIORITISE THESE ISSUES?

- We believe that there will be a better working climate with a mixed working group. We also get more aspects, both in terms of solutions and innovations and how to meet customers in better ways.

➤ WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE?

- A challenge today is that we are located in different offices. Through the work with "One Övik Energi" we believe and hope that we will have better conditions in 2022 when we move together so that the majority of our employees have the same address. We think it will create even greater community and collaboration across departmental boundaries.

➤ WHAT EFFECTS HAVE YOU SEEN, AND WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED?

- Our discussions and workshops have increased awareness which has also partly changed and developed leadership.

- We have also managed to get more men into administrative positions within the company.

- We see no violations in the answers from our employee surveys.

- Our work with gender equality became more apparent when we switched from an internal focus to focus on the customer and product development.



HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THESE ISSUES TODAY?

- Recurring conversations about gender equality and diversity at workplace meetings. Sometimes we have external conversation leaders, occasionally internal.
- We have a guideline for equal treatment with an action plan that we communicate at each new employment.
- We work actively with our recruitment, how we design ads, what language is used. We will also train in objective recruitment to focus on skills.
- We have employee surveys to capture employees' well-being. As a complement, we now also conduct an in-depth survey of women within the company to capture any indirect discrimination and the experience of being in the minority.
- We are involved in various school projects to ensure that we support ensurement of technical competence in the future and to get more, not least girls, interested in our professions.
- We work with active measures in gender equality. Every year we follow up on our action plan. Among other things, we keep statistics on the proportion of men and women in our recruitments.
- We work actively to even out the gender imbalance in the working groups and reduce gender segregation in different professions.
- We bring in aids and tools that everyone, regardless of gender, can perform tasks in our more physical positions.
- We have a clear set of values with four words, including respect. Gender equality is part of this. We also have the ambition that leaders will regularly raise these values in conversations with employees in both the development interviews and at the department's operational meetings.
- We have worked with introductory years, similar to an apprenticeship period, and specifically targeted initiatives to bring more women into our technical professions. The "Technology Bus" has been a fantastic feature.
- We encourage both men and women to take parental leave, and perceive it as leadership development. We also provide increased compensation during parental leave.

More inspiring ways of working among cleantech companies in Kvarken

HOW DO OTHERS DO?



We work closely with the university to directly recruit young people. We are active in associations in our area. Women visit schools such as mathematics classes and share career stories with young people.



As leaders, we repeatedly take the conversation about gender equality.



We make both women and men in management visible, and it should be evident that you can make a career here regardless of gender.



Discussions and conversations around the coffee tables with the help of questions.



Developed the recruitment process, especially with the ads, to appeal to wider audiences.



Evaluate the recruitment process to improve for the next time.



Gender equality training is compulsory for staff.



If customers have behaved in a sexist way, we share the experiences afterwards with staff and clarify that we do not accept such customers.



Work with active measures regarding gender equality (also a law in Sweden) that is followed up annually.



We have goals that we follow up regarding the number of women and men and the distribution of tasks between the genders.








Frequent conversations with the manager to capture well-being and capture early negative signals.






Managers are trained/coached on an ongoing basis e.g. in understanding and contesting strategies of social manipulation at the workplace

HOW DO OTHERS DO? (CONTINUATION)

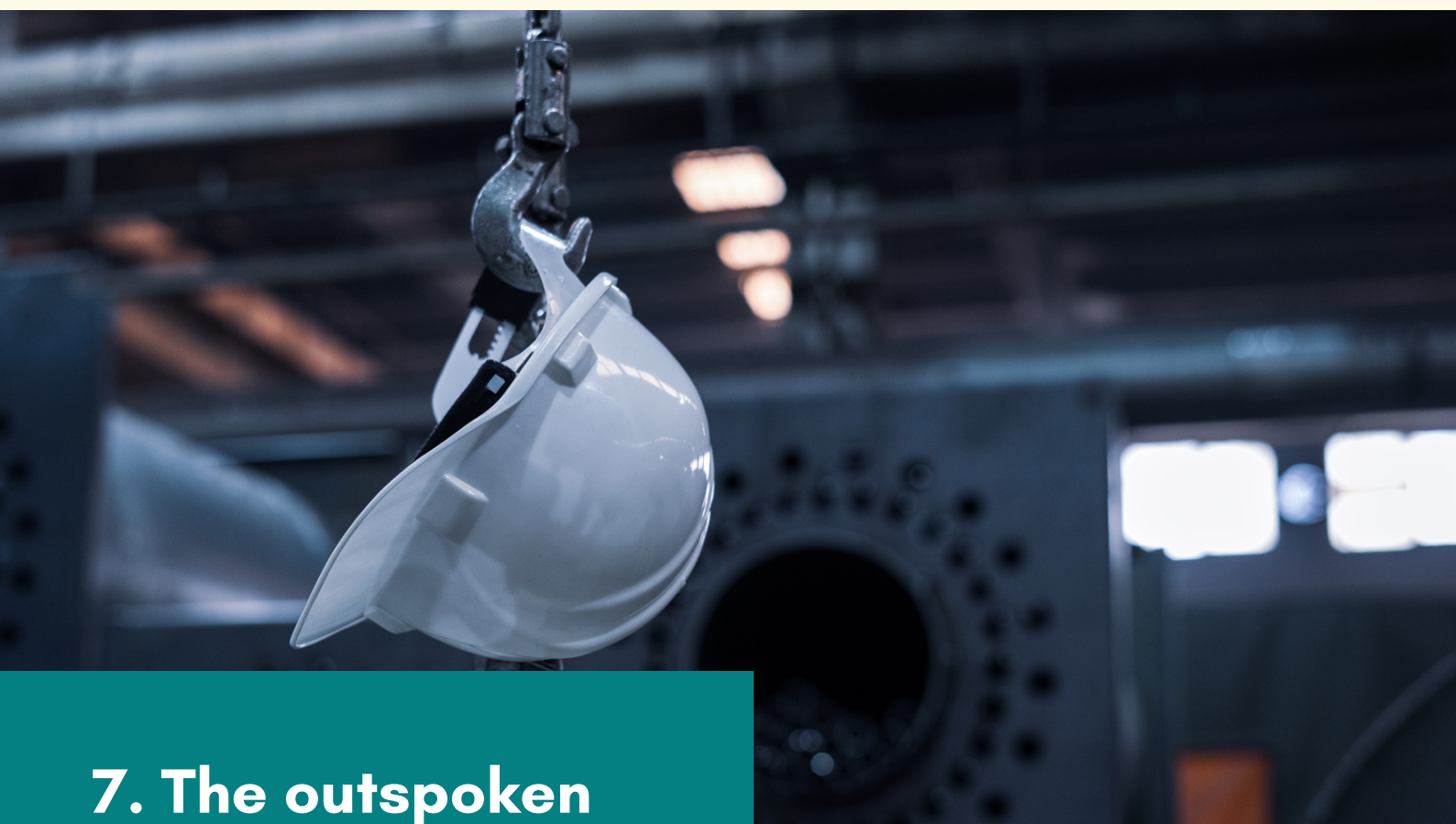
-  Adding questions about gender equality and inclusion in the employee survey.
-  Work on a standardised process connected to the gender equality action plan.
-  The management requests an Equal Treatment Plan.
-  Made the work environment more inclusive, for example, looking over changing rooms and machines.
-  Whistleblower function to reveal unequal treatment

WHAT CHALLENGES DO COMPANIES SEE?

-  During our interviews, it becomes apparent that specific positions are more challenging to combine with family life/leisure. Especially positions that require very early mornings or assignments where you are out in the field for several days in a row, without the opportunity to get home in between.
-  Maintaining a commitment to gender equality work over time and throughout the year is another challenge.
-  To incorporate gender equality into the company's overall strategy.

»We believe that there will be a better working climate with a mixed working group. We also bring in more aspects, both in terms of solutions and innovations, and that we meet customers better«

From an interview with Övik Energi



7. The outspoken needs of companies

An essential purpose of this report is to create conversations about future gender equality activities and initiatives. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight the needs identified by the interviewed companies.

»We need to make things happen in everyday life and remove fears of making mistakes; these feelings counteract action«

From interview

The companies' needs pertain to strengthening their work with gender equality, creating cultures of community where many thrive, and finding good structure and working methods – not least to create continuity and sustainability.

The needs are also about the supply of skills. Many feel that they need to become better at reaching out to under-represented groups and young people to showcase the "new" modern image of their company.

On the following pages, we have gathered these needs.

develop

the work environment

- Update machines to suit more people.
- More tools and aids.
- Communicate our work environment to question stereotypes about the industry.

external

support

- An external sounding board, someone who asks questions, reviews what we do and gives tips.
- Customise communication and make services more attractive to wider audiences.

reach out to

young people

- Collaborations with universities, for example being active in the final stages of education to get in touch with and reach more young women, also through trainee programs.
- Collaboration with schools to get more girls to apply for engineering education.
- Change the image of the industry and the company through marketing.

make use of the

good examples from others

- How to introduce gender equality aspects linked to technical solutions.
- Tips and ideas on how to put gender equality in practise.
- Gathered knowledge to not invent the wheel every time.
- Information on financial results from companies that have succeeded in gender equality work.

focus on

leadership

- Understand why gender equality is essential and knowledge to be able to drive and demand results.
- Bring the work to life and update it by providing space for discussions about the work environment at each management group and department meeting.

make use of

competency

- Improve the utilisation of skills that exist, for example, in foreign-born people.
- Increase the number of internships and apprenticeships to get people into the business.

develop the

culture

- Work actively with inclusion, well-being and commitment to create participation among all employees.
- Broaden the conversations in everyday life.
- Continuous business-related measures give a sense of progression. Lower the threshold for what it means to "make a mistake", and the fear of making mistakes is inhibiting.

more

activities

- Prioritise time for work and its activities
- Increase knowledge through education and start more conversations about gender equality.
- Create a good structure and form for the internal work.
- Create continuity in (more) activities distributed throughout the year to not forget the work 51 weeks out of 52.



8. Additional studies



8.1. Lack of gender equality facts in cleantech

As part of the work on the report, we have searched for international surveys on gender equality in the cleantech industry, a challenging task that extended beyond the scope of this assignment.

None of the 20 public and private actors we contacted could refer to figures, reports or inspired examples of gender equality in cleantech.

As cleantech is not specified as a separate industry, these companies have no register. Government statistical institutions or industry and business organisations can not identify or follow the development of gender equality among cleantech companies.

When climate measures are high on the agenda, we see a need to identify better companies that reduce the environmental footprint through their products and services.

Cleantech actors would benefit from presenting a more precise framework and requirements for the concept of cleantech that would include social sustainability.

The possibility of registering companies under this designation would create a database for following up the sector from many different perspectives. The industry could play a key role in presenting how different solutions can reduce the burden on the environment and gender equality work in achieving these goals.

Cleantech companies are found in energy, technology, industry, transport, and various support functions in other industries that contribute to sustainability from an environmental perspective.

On the pages that follow, we have collected results from research and surveys on gender equality in the industries that many of Kvarken's cleantech companies belong to.



8.2. Gender equality in the energy sector

The Nordic countries are usually at the forefront of gender equality, but the same global inequalities in the energy sector are also found in the Nordic countries, according to the Nordic Council of Ministers' report "Gender Equality in the Energy Sector". That also applies to renewable energy. The information is based on a survey directed at the Nordic energy companies, but due to the low response rate, the responses should be interpreted as indicators rather than facts.

According to the survey results, men represent 72 percent of the employees in the energy companies in the Nordic region. Of these, 84 percent men are found as chairman of the board, 84 percent as CEO and 68 percent in a board member position. 63 percent of men are located at a higher managerial level, while 69 percent are in other decision-making positions, such as department heads.

The majority of women in managerial positions are found in support functions such as HR, finance and administration.

Positions within HR provide limited opportunities for advancement in the organisation, as these jobs have limited or lack of power to make decisions and be involved in strategic issues.

The report states that gender equality is crucial to stimulate more inclusive and innovative solutions in the transition to green energy.

A review by Kraftkvinnorna of 268 companies in the Swedish energy industry shows that in the average Swedish energy company, both the chairman and CEO are named Anders. The average board consists of 7 men and 2 women, the board's average age is 57 years and 75 percent of the employees are men. In the top list of the ten most common names of chairman of the board, not a single name is female.

The energy sector's figures regarding gender division in the company and managerial positions are in good agreement with our results.



8.3. Gender equality in technology in Finland

The Finnish TEK's report, Should we choose someone competent or a woman? (Valitaanko pätevä vai nainen?) raises three main questions about gender equality in the industry.

Firstly, gender equality is perceived as important, but not something that is needed to work on or follow up. At the same time gender equality is perceived that gender does not matter, or there is a notion that gender equality has already been realized in the workplace. At the same time, the report shows that 21 percent of the female members and 10 percent of the male have experienced discrimination.

Secondly, the male-dominated culture, combined with a reduction in the importance of gender in technical workplaces, contributes to the status quo in these workplaces.

Thirdly, the report shows that companies that have set different goals for gender equality are also seeing a change, albeit a slow one. At the same time, some companies have not set goals and yet more quickly come to a situation where women have more equal opportunities, for example, where more women are found in leading positions. Common to these companies is that there are already gender equality support structures such as follow-up of the gender equality situation and concrete measures to change the situation. The report states that every fifth person is a woman at the middle manager level, but in management, only every tenth.

The report also lists general advice for change. These three main issues are recognisable in our interviews with cleantech companies on the Finnish side.



8.4. The gender equality situation in technology in Sweden

In the Technology Women's Network (Sweden), a survey conducted in 2020 showed that less than one in ten women experience their workplace as equal. 37 percent feel that their employers are doing nothing to improve the situation. Seven out of ten also stated that poor involvement in gender equality issues was a reason to apply to another employer. More than half planned to change jobs within the following year.

A majority of the survey participants believed that gender equality issues should be driven by the companies' management, not just by the HR departments, which are often responsible today.

»Positions within personnel responsibility provide limited opportunities for advancement in the organisation«


The survey also breaks the prejudice that women mostly want career development in leadership and project management.

As many as 56 percent of the women in the survey stated that they want to develop in technical excellence.

A common perception is that women do not have the sharpest skills in the technical field. Women are good as project managers, but men know the technology. This perception was disproved by the Swedish report.


We recognise some of the challenges and the fact that women want to develop in technical excellence from our interviews on the Swedish side.

In the survey conducted by Tjejer Kodar (Girls Coding) in 2021, 53 percent women stated their skills are questioned more often than men. One in three said that promotions are not based on merit.

A photograph of a man and a young child sitting on a wooden bench. The man is on the right, wearing a red shirt, and the child is on the left, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. They are both looking towards the left. A large, dark, semi-transparent overlay covers the upper and middle portions of the image, containing white text. The text is a quote from an interview with SK Protect.

»We want to be at the forefront of the industry and attract the best employees. For that equality, equity, and the feeling of justice are essential«

From an interview with SK Protect



9. Turning the gaze towards the future



9.1. A need for innovation in gender equality work

Innovation researcher Malin Lindberg believes that we need more innovation in gender equality initiatives in male-dominated industries.

She advocates the following:

- **Innovation** in goals, target group, choice of method and systematics.
- **Idea development** in design teams, creative workshops.
- **Focus on norms** related to men and masculinity.
- Cooperation between companies, industries, sectors.
- **Change** of individuals, relationships, symbols, structures.

For the cleantech industry, it is about raising questions about norms around men and masculinity. Is there an expectation that one should be in a "certain way" in the workplace linked to "a certain way of being a man"? By broadening our notions of men, we bring in several different types of men and other minority groups in the organisation, such as women.

Lindberg's research shows that innovation in gender equality work leads to:

- **Better decisions** through diversity in people and competencies in management teams.
- **Increased efficiency** by utilising all competence.
- **Increased motivation and innovation** through fewer obstacles.
- **More efficient product development** through experiences from the use and needs of many different groups. Larger areas of contact with other parts of society through diversity in staff.
- **New markets and customer groups** through innovative design.

What other topic would the cleantech industry not tackle with a correspondingly compelling list? By tackling gender equality and diversity from an innovative perspective, we can create new opportunities to grow sustainably.

9.2. WAYS FORWARD

EKVALITA AND VKNA RECOMMEND

9.2.1 Recommendations for projects and support functions

To continue to drive gender equality work forward and make smart choices about what the next steps should be, it is crucial to know where we stand today. That's the starting point. Therefore, we must continue to **continuously collect data and knowledge** about the gender equality situation in cleantech. Facts also help us minimise the risk of the work getting stuck in personal opinions.

Various projects and supporting functions need to **be at the forefront** of formulating **how the technical and environmental sustainability work is linked to social sustainability and gender equality**. Technological development can recreate inequality and increase the environmental impact. With knowledge, it can challenge and change unequal conditions and drive innovation that promotes the environment.

The companies are asking for business-related examples to anchor the work in everyday life better. We need to continue **spreading knowledge and sharing inspiring examples**, promoting gender equality in various collaborative bodies, at seminars and other platforms for meetings between cleantech companies.

We can also support companies by **highlighting the effects** that gender equality work can lead to. Some companies get stuck or do not get started because the issue is not prioritised, often because there is a lack of sufficient driving forces. Showing the effects that both research and companies can testify to can help strengthen the drive needed in gender equality work.

In this report, we have also highlighted the **companies' perceived needs**. These could be used as a **basis for future projects or initiatives** at cleantech companies in Kvarken.

9.2.2 Recommendations to companies in cleantech

For most people, if we are ready to start, it can be valuable to start focusing on our **why**. This “why” needs to be anchored on a management level, then communicated clearly and in a business-like way throughout the organisation. Otherwise, there is a risk that the work will never come to fruition.

We also need the **driving force that comes from an accurate understanding of the effects that gender equality can lead to**. But also insight into the consequences of not working with gender equality.

Once we have our “why” in place, we need to plan **tangible everyday activities**. These are discussions about our values, workshops on gender norms or an inclusive recruitment policy. This report contains many suggestions for actions. A crucial part of the work is to focus on making things happen or to develop; after that, we can develop and understand what routines we need to implement this approach and work in the organisation.

Management must drive the work as an **integral part of the company's strategy and goals**, which requires that the work is built into the structure to guarantee long-term sustainability.

To approach gender equality, we must repeatedly **replenish knowledge** and act, in the same way as when we work with a strong environmental approach within the organisation. Gender equality does not come by itself. Can these themes go hand in hand?

An important step that is easily forgotten, to keep the torch burning, is to **become aware** and **communicate** the effects that our work has led to. Especially internally to continue to build pride and commitment. For the same reason, we must also celebrate our successes.

Three things to help us keep track of our progress:

1. **Analysis of the current status** as a point of comparison in recurring follow-ups. It helps us to see change.
2. **Measuring instruments**, for example, regular employee surveys
3. **Goals for the future** are created from the current situation. As in other business – important areas, goals help us stay focused and make it easier to communicate progress.

9.2.3 Recommendations for more gender equal images and websites

The website is a **business card for both customers and potential job seekers**. In comparison to social media, a website is a limited and manageable part of the marketing and the company's identity. A company can make a **substantial effort to promote gender equality in the company's marketing on the website**. It is an effort that lasts if the company has thoroughly reflected on which of its goals the images on the website should support. A plan to recruit more women should be visible in the pictures.

Many people choose pictures from free online image banks. They are often not only gender-stereotyped but lack minority representation. Therefore one should **ask for assistance** in the process of selecting images. Unsplash is a stereotypical but popular image bank from which the majority of the photos in this report are that could inspire what type of images we want to see more of. A video or a website that sets the direction for the future should not paint an unrealistic picture of what the company looks like. The images should be somewhere between how it is now and the company's future goals.

The guide by Tillväxtverket (only in Swedish) helps us rethink images and inclusive communication choices. A link to it can be found in the sources at the end of the report. This, together with other material can be shared with the person in charge of designing the website, the video or the animation.

Engage several people with different backgrounds and experiences in choosing images to get all the critical questions asked. The same applies when we select a company that supports producing a video. Critical questions are needed about the script and realisation to avoid gender stereotyping.

Images in the form of photos can easily be exchanged, in comparison to a few minutes video that describes the company, recruits new personnel or is produced to strengthen the participation in the company is a significant investment. Ask yourself if the **video should be relevant in a year** or three years. It is important to reflect who form the staff involved, how much time and space they get, what roles they are given (active/passive) and how the company can concretely visualise the importance of gender equality in the company.

Suppose our goal is to secure staff supply. In that case, the **representation in pictures** is a simple but essential part of the work to attract a diversity of applicants. The other important factor is the **message in these images** and videos. It is not enough to think that women and minorities are visible if they are only found in certain positions, such as customer service, communication and HR. Therefore, communication is important that gives an understanding that all positions and tasks are possible to hold in the workplace, regardless of gender or minority background.

Feel free to use this checklist for more equal images on the website:

- Representation
 - Count assumed women and assumed men. Examine the location and size of the images. People in larger photos or photos on the front page show who and what we value.
- Message – Inclusion
 - Who does what in the pictures?
- Are men in meetings and women on the phone?
- How can we ensure that women, men and non-binaries are versatile?
- Active and passive in the picture.
 - Who talks, gives instructions, moves or acts?
 - Who listens, stands still, receives instructions?
 - Do men handle technology, and women are portrayed as silhouettes or listening?

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1

Gender equality survey for cleantech companies in the Kvarken area

In September, the consulting companies Ekvalita (www.ekvalita.fi) and Vkna (www.vkna.se) will map the gender equality situation within cleantech companies in the Kvarken area, on the Finnish and Swedish sides, on behalf of Future Cleantech Solutions.

The purpose of the survey is to create a picture of the current gender equality and work situation and collect good examples. We would be grateful if you could answer four short questions by Tuesday 14 September.

The Future Cleantech Solutions project is financed 2019-2021 by Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, the Association of Ostrobothnia, the Västerbotten Region, the Västernorrland Region, the Merinova Technology Centre, the Vasa Region Development Ltd (VASEK), the City of Vaasa, the Kokkola Region (KOSEK), the City of Kokkola, Skellefteå Municipality, Umeå municipality, Örnsköldsvik municipality, Umeå Energi and Skellefteå Kraft.

The name of the company

1. How many women and men work full time in the company?
2. How many women and men are on the company's board
3. In what ways have you worked with gender equality (questions about equal conditions in the workplace between women and men)

Answer options: Yes, No, Do not know

- We have a gender equality plan
- We have attended training in gender equality
- We take gender equality into account in our marketing
- We have worked with gender equality in recruitment
- We have an active work on basic values

4. What are you proud of when it comes to gender equality in your company?

We are also looking for inspiring examples of companies that in one way or another work with gender equality. May we contact you, please leave your name and telephone number or e-mail.



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