# Final report from Norwegian Water's working group for climate adaptation and surface water

## The working group's remit and members

The working group for climate adaptation and surface water held its first meeting on 13 December 2011 and its concluding meeting on 18 December 2013.

The board of directors of Norwegian Water had given the working group the following remit:

* Discuss a strategy for the work on climate adaptation and surface water vis-à-vis the authorities and across disciplinary boundaries in the municipalities.
* Serve as a resource group for the secretariat in the work on stimulating prompt clarifications of responsibility and suitable legal and financial framework conditions in the surface water field.
* Assist the secretariat in its work on influencing the authorities' work on the white paper on climate adaptation that is scheduled for 2012.
* Ensure that experience relating to specific adaptation measures in the surface water area is communicated to the municipalities through established information channels.

At its first meeting, the working group decided to change the final bullet point to the following:

* Provide input to the secretariat regarding the municipalities' need for information about specific adaptation measures and pilot projects in the surface water field.

The working group has consisted of the following members:

* Jan Stenersen, the City of Tromsø (chair)
* Knut Bjarne Sætre, Bærum municipality
* Ann Janette Hansen, Fredrikstad municipality
* Eva Britt Isager, the City of Bergen
* Anton Bø, Askøy municipality
* Elin Riise, Norwegian Water (secretary)

Toril Hofshagen followed the work on a continuous basis, participated in meetings, provided input and communicated the working group's recommendations to the relevant authorities.

Throughout the period, the working group has had regular contact with and discussions about the climate adaptation work under the auspices of the Climate Adaptation Secretariat and the Cities of the Future via Gry Backe of the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB). In autumn 2013, the working group also had a meeting with Ole Jørgen Grann, who works on climate adaption in the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

## White paper on climate adaptation

As a follow-up to Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2010: 10: *Adapting to a changing climate*, the Ministry of the Environment initiated work on a white paper on climate adaptation, Report No 33 to the Storting (2012–2013). The working group helped to refine and quality assure Norwegian Water's input to the Ministry's work on the white paper. The input was presented in the form of a memo at a meeting with the Ministry of the Environment on 26 January 2012.

The working group also decided that Norwegian Water should communicate the following three messages from the memo in its further advocacy work:

* The need for a national surface water authority
* Clarify the municipalities' responsibility in relation to surface water as the owner of wastewater mains, as the pollution control authority pursuant to the Pollution Control Act, as the watercourse authority pursuant to the Water Resources Act, as the planning and building authority pursuant to the Planning and Building Act, and what the landowners'/ house owners' responsibility is.
* Clarify how to fund necessary measures to deal with surface water that is not piped.

## Water damage and recourse claims

In spring 2012, the working group prepared a proposal for how the insurance industry's water damage claims statistics can become more nuanced and provide a better basis for decisions on improvement measures for both house owners and municipalities. In addition, the working group specified what information the municipalities need when the insurance companies file recourse claims. These proposals were submitted by letter to Finance Norway (FNO).

As a follow-up to the letter, the working group had a meeting with FNO's reference group for climate in August 2012, at which FNO expressed its intention to follow up the input for improved claims statistics. It also wanted to follow up the joint wish for better training of valuers in water and wastewater issues. The possibility of making it mandatory to provide information about the elevation of the lowest drain outlet in relation to the wastewater mains in real estate transactions was also discussed. The working group pointed out that such information should also be considered in connection with change-of-ownership insurance. Norwegian Water will propose that the elevation of the lowest drain outlet in relation to the wastewater mains be mentioned specifically in the new standard 'Technical Surveyor's report on dwellings in preparation for sales', NS 3600.

FNO and Norwegian Water also agreed to consider the possibility of a joint project for handling recourse claims. So far, this has resulted in a draft joint memo about improved recourse claims processes, which FNO will continue working on.

The working group assisted FNO and its consultant in quality assuring their pilot project on how municipalities can benefit from increased access to insurance claims data. Jan represented the working group at the kick-off meeting on 22 May 2013, and several members of the working group are from municipalities represented in the survey.

On behalf of the working group, Jan presented the work on climate adaptation and surface water at a meeting with SINTEF's water damage council in autumn 2012, focusing on:

* Increase in sea level
* Expected increase in water damage caused by backflow
* The quality of the valuers' assessments of the causes of damage with a view to obtaining better documentation of what actually causes water damage.

## Brochure on flooding in cellars

Together with FNO, the National Federation of House Owners and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Norway, the working group updated and relaunched the brochure that accompanied the surface water guide in 2005 about flooding in cellars.

## Handling water run-off from roads

In spring 2012, the working group had a meeting with Gordana Petcovic of the Directorate of Public Roads with a view to achieving closer collaboration on the handling of water run-off from roads. The working group followed this up with a formal enquiry and a proposal for a collaboration project. This resulted in the project proposal (Appendix 5) Handling Water Run-off from Roads, which is being carried out in cooperation with the Directorate of Public Roads and Vegforum for byer og tettsteder (roads forum for cities/towns and peri-urban areas) / the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. The project will be reported in February 2014.

## The Norwegian Climate Service Centre and rain gauges

At a meeting with the group, Eirik Førland of the Norwegian Climate   
Service Centre / the Norwegian Meteorological Institute expressed the institutions' wish for closer collaboration with the municipalities. Short-term precipitation is an important focus area, and the Norwegian Meteorological Institute can give the municipalities advice on procurement and operation, as well as quality assure data and make IDF (intensity-duration-frequency) curves generally available. The working group was of the opinion that the procurement and operation of rain gauges can be funded by water/wastewater funds. The municipalities must find specific locations, which could entail a lot of work in connection with earmarking the areas surrounding the gauges.

At a meeting with Ingunn Lindeman of the Norwegian Environment Agency, which is responsible for the Service Centre's budget, the working group stated that the municipalities must be given access to the stored data at no extra cost. It is also important that the municipalities receive sufficient help with interpreting the data. The working group emphasised that a 'service centre' is required for the municipalities' planning work. It is especially important that the municipalities receive sufficient information to be able to decide on a forward-looking dimensioning of the wastewater pipes. Furthermore, the centre should give the municipalities guidance on how to handle rain gauges, for example in relation to the choice of gauges and their placement.

## Articles for Norsk Vann Bulletin

Everyone in the working group was encouraged to write an article about local experiences to Norwegian Water's bulletin. In winter 2013, Eva Britt wrote about Bergen's plans of opening a canal between the Lille Lungegårdsvannet and Store Lungegårdsvannet lakes; in spring, Jan wrote about the installation of frost protection for a surface water pipe along a mountainside in Tromsø; in autumn, Knut Bjarne wrote about the separation and opening of streams in Bærum; Ann Janette will write about the disconnection of downpipes in Fredrikstad, and Anton will write about the inspection of areas in which surface water has been removed from sewage pipes.

## Proposals for further work:

Input to the law committee should be the most important focus area in the climate adaptation and surface water fields in the coming year. Everyone in the working group is available as reference persons for Norwegian Water.

The brochure to be prepared about house owners' handling of surface water should be designed as an easily understood 'inspiration folder' with good illustrations. In addition, it should include information about how people can obtain further information, as in Bærum municipality's brochure. This can be carried out by Norwegian Water's secretariat, for example with the help of the newly employed communications adviser.

The memo on improved recourse processes should be followed up in the form of checklists for municipalities and insurance companies.