

Report from the Climate Arena workshop on Profiling climate efforts in businesses and organisations

May 31th 2021

The Bolin Centre Climate Arena is a meeting place for researchers, companies, the public sector and other organisations which aims to facilitate collaboration and exchange of knowledge, experience and creative ideas, so that we together can increase our society's resilience to climate change. By gathering organisations with different needs and a wide range of expertise, the arena can lay the foundation for joint efforts and sustainable societal change. The Climate Arena was founded in May 2018 at Stockholm University.

The Bolin Centre for Climate Research is an umbrella organisation with more than 400 people who conduct research in areas related to the Earth's climate. The centre was established by Stockholm University, KTH and SMHI, and is named after Professor Bert Bolin, a pioneer in climate research and founder of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The Climate Arena is an initiative for thematic collaboration in arena format. It has been established within the framework of the project Methodology for the Development of Collaboration Arenas (Metodik för Utveckling av Samverkansarenor, MUSA).

For further information:

www.bolin.su.se

www.bolin.su.se/bolin-centre-climate-arena

www.su.se/k3-projekten/musa

On May 31, 2021, the Climate Arena at Stockholm University conducted a digital workshop on profiling climate efforts in businesses and organisations. In total, 26 participants from 15 different organisations joined the meeting (see Annex A for an overview of participating organisations).

Two presentations were given during the first part of the workshop:

- **Alasdair Skelton, Stockholm University** – *Introduction to climate profiling from the perspective of climate research*
- **Matilda Ågren Hernvald, Stockholm University** - *Research findings from her bachelor's thesis about climate profiling from the perspective of climate research*

The presentations were followed by five invited speakers, who gave industry perspectives responses on approaches to profiling climate work. The speakers were:

- **Magnus Persson, Swedavia**
- **Gofi Aldstam, SVOA**
- **Mia Edofsson, Akademiska hus**
- **Magnus Breitholtz, Stockholm University**
- **Kaj Török, Max Burgers**
- **Karin Amnå, ICA**

Please see Annex B, Workshop program, for an overview. The presentations are available on request.

Following the aforementioned presentations, group discussions were carried out around three main questions:

- How can businesses and organizations profile their climate work in a manner that is in line with climate research?
- Given the lack of clarity of the many terms describing climate neutrality, net zero, etc., would a term such as “climate responsible” be a useful way to describe your organization, or would it simply add to the forest of concepts without making any positive impact?
- Is it possible to have one single uniform standard for corporate emissions, or is the utilization of more branch specific models and standards necessary?

Below is a summary of some of the main points that were highlighted during the discussions.

Summary of group discussions

How can businesses and organizations profile their climate work in a manner that is in line with climate research?

The participating organizations and companies found this to sometimes be difficult and hence feel the need for more concrete collaborations with academia to "interpret" research results and set science-based targets and working methods. This is what we aim for at the Climate Arena, but there is also a need for new, upcoming projects, with concrete goals.

Given the lack of clarity of the many terms describing climate neutrality, net zero, etc., would a term such as “climate responsible” be a useful way to describe your organization, or would it simply add to the forest of concepts without making any positive impact?

The Climate responsibility concept was perceived as a bit fuzzy by the workshop participants. However, there was consensus about the need for as few concepts as possible since too many concepts is confusing, both for consumers and producers.

It was also mentioned that there is a fear of “Green hushing” being more adopted. “Green hushing” is essentially the opposite to “Green washing”. The rise in greenwashing has led to increased demand for investigation and certification, but acquiring the research and data needed for certifications is costly and hence might lead to organizations choosing to not declare their sustainability work. Another issue is that declaring the sustainability work sometimes fuel harsh criticism from engaged environmentalists since it can be perceived as not enough or faulty.

Is it possible to have one single uniform standard for corporate emissions, or is the utilization of more branch specific models and standards necessary?

There is a risk that a general standard will be too weak. Instead of universal definition, transparency should be at the forefront. Also, we can't lose sight of human beings, which are the very ones we need to inspire to make a change. Whatever method we use, it *must* be inspiring - and we can't wait for "perfect" actions!

Annex A - Participating organisations

Akademiska Hus

God el

Husstanability

Hagainitiativet

ICA

Jernkontoret

Klimatriksdagen

Linde Gas AB

Max Burgers

Sigill Kvalitetssystem AB

Stockholm Vatten och Avfall

Stockholm University

SVOA

Swedavia

Zeromission

Annex B – Workshop Program

Program: Bolin Centre Climate Arena Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to find ways for businesses and organisations to profile their climate work that are in line with climate research.

Time: 13.00–16.15 May 31, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Profiling climate efforts in businesses and organisations	
13.00-13.20	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Climate profiling from the perspective of climate research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alasdair Skelton, <i>Stockholm University</i>
13.20-13.40	<p>Research findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matilda Ågren Hernvald, <i>Stockholm University</i>
5 min. leg stretcher	

13.45-14:45

Industry perspectives

Moderator: *Kevin Noone*, Stockholm University. 5-min. responses on approaches to profiling climate work followed by a panel discussion.

Speakers:

- **Magnus Persson, Swedavia**
- **Gofi Aldstam, SVOA**
- **Mia Edofsson, Akademiska hus**
- **Magnus Breitholtz, Stockholm University**
- **Kaj Török, Max Burgers**
- **Karin Amnå, ICA**

15 min Break

15.00-15.30

Outbreak room discussions

Suggested discussion questions:

- How can businesses and organizations profile their climate work in a manner that is in line with climate research?
- Given the lack of clarity of the many terms describing climate neutrality, net zero, etc., would a term such as “climate responsible” be a useful way to describe your organization, or would it simply add to the forest of concepts without making any positive impact?
- Is it possible to have one single uniform standard for corporate emissions, or is the utilization of more branch specific models and standards necessary?

15.30-16.00

Reports from break out rooms and joint discussion

- **Moderator: Kevin Noone, Stockholm University**

16.00-16.15

Wrap-up

16.15

End of workshop