Integration of environmental considerations into other policy areas
Contents

Foreword 3
The Swedish political and administrative system and the Swedish EPA 4
Environmental policy integration 7
The responsibility of central authorities 8
Special responsibility for some central authorities 8
Environmental policy integration at EU level 9
Work in the sectors of IPP, Transport, Forestry and Agriculture 11
Integrated Product Policy 12
Agriculture 13
Forestry 14
Transport 16
Further information 18
Contacts 19
Foreword

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (The Swedish EPA) promotes sustainable development in a number of different ways. The integration of environmental considerations into other policy areas is of great importance to success in efforts aimed at ecologically sustainable development.

In publishing this brochure we wish to share information on the process of sectoral integration in Sweden and some of the Swedish EPA’s experiences of these matters with others. The brochure is intended primarily for people involved in efforts to integrate environmental considerations into different sectors in society: in government authorities as well as in the private sector, at the level of international cooperation and at the EU, national, regional and local levels.

By way of introduction, some key aspects of the Swedish political and administrative system are outlined. This is followed by a brief survey of policies related to environmental integration in different sectors and the Swedish EPA’s work on the general issues associated with this. Finally, we present examples from four policy areas where we have some experience of environmental integration.

We believe that similar processes for environmental policy integration are in progress in many countries, within and outside the EU. We hope that greater exchange of information will enable us to gain inspiration and learn from one another so that we can together make progress towards better integration of environmental aspects. This brochure was edited by Maria Daléus at the Swedish EPA.
The Swedish political and administrative system and the Swedish EPA
Sweden has three democratically elected levels of government: the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) at the national level, county councils at the regional level and municipalities at the local level.

The Riksdag enacts legislation and decides on taxes and State expenditure. It scrutinises the work of the Government and authorities and decides on foreign policy. Members of Parliament are elected by secret ballot in direct general elections held every four years. The Riksdag appoints the Prime Minister.

The Government is composed of ministers appointed by the Prime Minister. The ministries are largely engaged in preparing business for the Government, in the form of draft legislation (government bills). When the Government has finished working on a bill, the bill is put before the Riksdag, which votes on it. When Parliament has passed legislation and decided on an issue, it is up to the Government to implement that decision. The Government also represents Sweden in the European Union’s Council of Ministers by attending Council meetings. Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1995.

Elected bodies running local and regional government are known as municipal and county council executives. They comprise politicians who are directly elected every four years. County councils and municipalities have their own powers to levy taxes and their own decision-making powers. At regional level, the State is represented by county administrative boards, which may be said to extend the reach of central government throughout the country.

Sweden has some 300 central authorities, agencies, committees and state-owned companies, acting in different sectors in society, accountable to the Government and answerable to various ministries. Their duties are to implement the decisions of Parliament and the Government. However, the government authorities are independent. This means that they act on their own initiative within the guidelines drawn up by the Government through appropriation directions.

THE SWEDISH EPA

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is a central environmental authority under the Swedish Government. According to its instructions, laid down by the Government, its main tasks are to coordinate and promote environmental work at both national and international levels. The Agency’s most important tasks are to:

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS INTO OTHER POLICY AREAS
• propose targets, measures and instruments for environmental policy and environmental protection activities. (Development of environmental work)
• carry out environmental policy decisions on government grants, application of law etc. (Implementation of environmental policy)
• follow up and assess the environmental situation and environmental efforts. (Follow-up and assessment)

The Swedish EPA has some 500 employees representing various skills and types of professional expertise (information officers, technicians, lawyers, scientists, social scientists etc).
Environmental policy integration
The overall goal of Swedish environmental policy is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems currently facing the country have been solved. In 1999, the Swedish Parliament adopted 15 national environmental quality objectives, to be attained by the year 2020 (2050 in the case of the ‘Reduced Climate Impact’ objective). A number of national authorities have been given overall responsibility for the environmental quality objectives. This includes proposing and implementing measures as well as monitoring, evaluating and reporting progress.

In this more decentralised, goal-oriented way of working, integration of environmental considerations into other policy areas is essential to success. Important parts of the work with environmental integration are sectoral responsibility and environmental management systems. Sectoral responsibility means that government authorities, companies and other organisations in different sectors of society are given clear responsibility for environmental issues in their particular area of activity. Environmental management systems are a tool for structuring the environmental work in an organisation. Close to 240 central government authorities are now using environmental management systems. Environmental integration is not, however, a new concept in Swedish environmental policy. This process has been an established way of working in Swedish environmental politics for the last fifteen years and has been refined over that period. In a Bill from 2001, the Swedish Government states that to be able to face up to the significant environmental challenges of today, there is a need for everyone to participate, at all levels and in different sectors of society. Government, authorities, municipalities, companies, organisations and individuals are all important elements in the solutions needed. This clearly indicates that the environmental challenges cannot be overcome solely through legislation and the work of government authorities.

**THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CENTRAL AUTHORITIES**

The responsibility of the authorities for the ecological dimension of sustainable development is a very important element in the concept of sectoral responsibility.

It is stated in a regulation applicable to government authorities that the agencies are to observe requirements for environmental consideration in their operation. In addition, in several bills the Government has underscored and developed its views on environmental responsibility in policy areas with a particularly great impact on the environment, such as forestry, energy, fisheries and agriculture, as well as transport. It is stated in the appropriation directions of some of the authorities that environmental goals are an explicit element in their terms of reference. One example of this is the forestry sector, where the Government made it clear in the 1994 Forestry Act that the sector has two parallel objectives: production and the environment.

**SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOME CENTRAL AUTHORITIES**

In 1998, the authorities’ responsibility for environmental issues was taken a step further. Twenty-four government authorities were then specifically instructed to take responsibility for the ecological dimension of sustainable development.
The 24 authorities:

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the National Social Insurance Board, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish National Railway Administration, the Swedish National Road Administration, the Swedish Maritime Administration, the Swedish Civil Aviation Administration, the National Agency for Education, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the National Board of Fisheries, the Swedish National Labour Market Administration, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the National Heritage Board, the Swedish Business Development Agency, the Geological Survey of Sweden, the National Board of Forestry, the National Board of Trade, the Swedish Energy Agency, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the Swedish Consumer Agency, the Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Armed Forces, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency.

The special responsibility given to these 24 authorities means that they have responsibility for pushing work on ecological sustainability forward in their particular sector. According to a governmental bill on the environment in 2001, their responsibility includes identifying the role of the authority in relation to these matters and how the activities in the sector affect the ecological dimension of sustainable development. The task also includes developing a proposal on possible environmental quality objectives for the sector, ensuring that measures are taken, continuously following up development in the sector and cooperating with and informing other actors in the sector about work done. The authorities reported on their work in 1999 and in 2003. On the last occasion they did not report just on their work on sector responsibility but also on integration and coordination with other environmental assignments i.e. environmental management systems and the environmental quality objectives.

Under the appropriation directions for 2003, the Swedish EPA was tasked with supporting the government authorities in their work on sector responsibility. The Swedish EPA also has to collate the reports submitted by the authorities and perform an analysis. In addition, the Agency has to submit proposals on how to develop sectoral responsibility and if necessary suggest possible clarification. The Swedish EPA presented its report in February 2004. However the work on sectoral integration will continue and the Agency will coordinate, promote and support the work of the sectors on environmental policy integration.

The EU has wide-ranging legislation in the environmental field. Most of the initiatives emanate from the Environment Directorate-General. However, over the course of time the various sectors have become increasingly preoccupied with the environmental aspects of their activities.

Integration of environmental aspects into other policy areas has been a priority for the EU since the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Article 6 of the EC Treaty states that environmental considerations should be integrated into Community policy, with the aim of promoting sustainable development. To put this Article into effect, the ‘Cardiff Process’ for environmental integration into sector policies was initiated in 1998. Nine sectors have so far been included in the Cardiff Process: transport, energy, agriculture, industry, internal market, development, ecofin, fisheries and general affairs.

Since the start of the Cardiff process, Sweden has stressed the importance of
environmental integration, and the Swedish EPA’s opinion is that work on environmental integration at EU level is an important element in promoting sustainable development, i.e. a tool with which to attain the objectives set by the Council of Europe at its meetings in Lisbon and Gothenburg.

It is also important for the Swedish EPA, where possible, to act simultaneously with the ongoing process at EU and national levels. If it is possible to coordinate processes at different levels, the benefits of coordination can be reaped.
Work in the sectors of IPP, Transport, Forestry and Agriculture
Environmental policy integration is widespread in Sweden, and environmental considerations are to some extent integrated into all sectors. The Swedish EPA endeavours to promote and extend this integration. Here we present the work done in four different areas: integrated product policy (IPP), agriculture, forestry and transport.

INTEGRATED PRODUCT POLICY

The environmental problems of today are to a great extent associated with production and consumption of products in the industrialised world. Integrated Product Policy (IPP) is a policy aimed at improving the environmental performance of products during their entire lifecycle. The policy is based on five key principles: Life-cycle Thinking, Working with the Market, Stakeholder Involvement, Continuous Improvement and a Variety of Policy Instruments. IPP comprises all kinds of products (both goods and services), and the actors involved are manufacturers, retailers, recyclers etc., as well as consumers.

In 2000, the Swedish Government presented a Strategy for an Environmentally Sound Product Policy, an overall view of how the Government intended to drive the IPP process forward. In Sweden, Integrated Product Policy forms part of the national strategies towards fulfilling the National Environmental Quality Objectives.

An informal European IPP network with other Member States has been established on the initiative of a former Swedish minister of the environment. The Commission has recently also established a formal IPP group. The Swedish EPA coordinates a national IPP network comprising representatives from business, affected authorities and researchers. The network from time to time holds larger seminars and workshops on a variety of topics.

The Swedish EPA, commissioned by the Government, has continued to develop Integrated Product Policy in Sweden. This task was undertaken in co-operation with other authorities and researchers. Contacts were also made with business and other stakeholders. A number of proposals on how to continue the development of IPP were laid down in the strategy. Some examples of Swedish IPP work are presented below:

Two dialogues in which the Swedish EPA participates, with the building and construction sector and the trade in convenience goods, have been in progress for a number of years. In 2003, agreements were reached with the Swedish Ministry of the Environment. The main focus is on efficient energy and resource use. Work is now in progress to fulfil the agreements. Another dialogue has been conducted with concerned parties in order to analyse how IT solutions can be used to reduce environmental impact. Dialogues have also taken place with the rubber, textile and chemical industries in order to reduce the use of hazardous substances and energy and the generating of waste.

Work is in progress to improve the flow of environmental information along product chains. This requires coordination at international level, and is also being looked at closely in European IPP activity.

2) Towards Greener Products, Report from Swedish EPA no 5296.
Two cross-disciplinary research programmes were launched in 2003 with funding from the Swedish EPA. One programme focuses on the parties involved in the product chain, and the authorities’ prospects for directing/controlling environmental impact in the product chain. The other has a consumer focus, with an economic-policy perspective.

An Internet-based tool aimed at supporting greener public procurement in Sweden already exists, and some educational programmes have been carried out. The Swedish EPA has recently developed new educational material.

An Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption is now being developed by the Government, aimed at analysing what they and other parties involved can do in order to make it easier for consumers to act in a more sustainable manner. To take an example, the Swedish EPA has carried out a project on Sustainable Transport in conjunction with three municipalities. The aim was to allow citizens and other parties concerned to participate in developing new ideas for transportation. The results are now undergoing further development.

Contact: Ylva Reinhard, Swedish EPA, ylva.reinhard@naturvardsverket.se

Agriculture accounts for about seven per cent of Sweden’s total land area of 41.1 million hectares. Agriculture is far more prominent in the southern parts of Sweden for climatic reasons. The predominant crops in Sweden are cereals, particularly wheat, oats and grains, together with ley.

The number of agricultural enterprises has sharply declined over the last three decades, and fewer than 80 000 enterprises now remain. The changes in the agricultural sector have resulted in fewer but larger enterprises. This development is continuing, and the number of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises is decreasing, particularly in the central and northern parts of Sweden. This structural change is a threat to political objectives such as conservation of biodiversity and flourishing rural areas throughout the country.

Since Sweden joined the EU, subsidies and financial payments to farmers have increased, particularly payment schemes for environmental services under the EU’s Rural Development Programme. These payment schemes have led to increased integration of environmental concerns in the agricultural sector, as well as boosting the prospects of attaining the environmental objectives established by the Swedish Parliament.

These subsidies, together with clear and far-reaching environmental legislation, have resulted in a sharp reduction in the use of chemicals and fertilisers. Sweden also has a special tax on fertilisers and agricultural pesticides that has led to a decrease in use. It should, however, be noted that the sector itself, in particular the Federation of Swedish farmers (LRF), has taken its responsibility for environmental integration seriously. A number of different educational campaigns have been conducted on environmental aspects of agriculture by the LRF. Education and information to the individual farmers is pivotal in attaining ecologically sustainable agriculture.

Two of the 15 national Environmental Quality Objectives (EQOs) adopted by the Parliament in 1998 are directly linked to agriculture: Zero Eutrophication and
A Varied Landscape. A number of stakeholders are involved in meeting these objectives. The key players are the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Swedish EPA, the 21 county administrative boards, the National Food Administration, the Federation of Swedish Farmers and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The EPA has overall responsibility for Zero Eutrophication while the Board of Agriculture is the main instigator for A Varied Landscape. These objectives are the guiding principles for environmental integration in the agricultural sector for the farmers themselves as well as for the authorities. Most of the regulations and laws affecting agriculture are based on these and some of the other 15 objectives. The county administrations are adapting these national objectives to suit their own regions.

Given the sectoral responsibility, the principal task for the Swedish EPA is to evaluate and monitor development in this sector, in order to promote and find new measures and steps to increase and ensure environmental integration at all times. This is done primarily in a dialogue with the other stakeholders.

The collaboration between the EPA and the Board of Agriculture towards attaining the EQOs and thus sustainable agriculture has come about under a detailed evaluation and monitoring project known as Evaluation of EU Common Agriculture Policy. This project closely follows and analyses the effects on the environment of agricultural policy, which is an important platform for developing new policy-implementing measures. Another form of cooperation that the EPA has initiated with the Board of Agriculture is paying increased attention to endangered species and the development of action plans for such species.

The Swedish Federation of Farmers, together with a majority of the agricultural industries, has presented a number of visions for the sector. Some of these visions are closely related to environmental aspects such as having 550 000 calves a year from 2010 on. This could be an important factor in attaining the environmental quality objective of A Varied Landscape, which is heavily dependent on sufficient animals grazing our countryside.

Contact: Robert Andrén, Swedish EPA, Robert.andren@naturvardsverket.se

Sweden is a heavily forested country. More than half the country’s surface area is covered in trees. The nature of the forest varies, from taiga in the north to the broadleaf woods of the south, from coastal forest in the east to the mountain forests in the west. Forests provide the habitat for more than half of the 58 000 species in Sweden, and are also important elements of the nation’s cultural heritage.

In 1994 the Government made it clear in the Forestry Act that the environmental objective of forestry was on a par with the aim of production, since forests are ’a national resource that must be managed in such a way as to produce a good yield on a sustainable basis, while conserving their biological diversity’. The main responsibility for ensuring that timber production and conservation goals are on an equal footing falls on the industry and private forest owners, but also on the forest administration, i.e., the National Board of Forestry and the ten county forestry boards. This obviously assumes that private forest owners and the forestry industry raise their
levels of expertise on ecology matters as well as implementing ecological forestry methods.

In order to fulfil its dual commitment, the industry and the forestry administration have developed some tools for the conservation of biodiversity that complement the initiation of nature reserves and national parks (i.e. legal protection), namely general conservation considerations, voluntary conservation areas and flexible management. These tools embrace measures such as retention of snags and clumps of trees in clear-cut areas, establishment of buffer zones along watercourses and larger stands to serve as set-asides and conservation sites.

Two other types of protection tools have been successfully introduced into the forestry sector. These are habitat protection areas, which are applicable in perpetuity, and nature conservation agreements, which are more voluntary in nature and usually have a period of application of 50 years.

Another tool used to improve environmental consideration in the forestry sector is environmental certification schemes such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Pan-European Forest Certification), which also commit forest owners to certain practical environmental measures in timber production.

One of the 15 environmental quality objectives that the Swedish Parliament established in 1999 is Sustainable Forests. This objective is composed of four interim targets aimed at securing long-term protection of forest land, enhancing biodiversity in forest for instance through dead wood and protecting cultural heritage and endangered species in the forest landscape. These too form part of the sectoral responsibility of the forest sector following the concept of sectoral integration. The main responsibility of the EPA is to ensure the long-term protection of forest land by buying land essential for the conservation of species and habitats.

The EPA has also evaluated and monitored the impact of forestry on biological diversity for a number of years. This analysis has been done in collaboration with the National Board of Forestry, and parts of the evaluation have been published. It clearly shows that consideration is not always given to the environment, as is required by law. For instance, no or very few buffer zones have been provided in tree-felling areas. The analysis raised awareness on many of these issues and has led to improvements. Between 1998-2001, the EPA directed an EU/Life project known as “Demonstration of Methods to Monitor Sustainable Forestry”. The project was run in conjunction with six other partners and was aimed at improving monitoring capabilities by new and refined methods.

The sector has also launched several initiatives to enhance the knowledge and expertise of forest owners, small and large, on environmental aspects. Among such campaigns, mention can be made of Greener Forests, Woodland Key Habitats and My Forest.

Contact: Robert Andrén, Swedish EPA, Robert.andren@naturvardsverket.se
In Sweden there are several distinct authorities in the transport sector; the National Road Administration, the Swedish National Railway Administration, the Swedish Civil Aviation Administration and the Swedish Maritime Administration. In addition, the Swedish Institute for Transport and Communications Analysis has the role of coordinating common tasks for transport in general. A broader definition of the transport sector includes transport services which carry both people and goods. According to this definition the sector will also include those using and trading in transport services, such as local authorities and private individuals. Ultimately, all of us can be said to be part of the transport sector.

The transport sector, like many other sectors, is involved in the work relating to the 15 Swedish environmental quality objectives. The objectives most relevant to the transport sector are Reduced Climate Impact, Clean Air and Zero Eutrophication. Three ‘strategies’ have been established to deal effectively with measures to counter environmental degradation and move towards meeting these 15 environmental quality objectives. One of these deals with measures in energy production and the transport sector. The strategy implies that different stakeholders in the transport sector have to become involved with a view to taking coordinated action to make transport more efficient and to reduce its environmental impact. This to be done by developing new policies and measures, extending information etc. It includes making the legal and technical instruments more demanding on, and linked together with, the environmental properties of vehicles and fuels. The responsible authorities are also to take action themselves. This could include demanding good environmental performance from contractors, in transport or when building roads or bridges etc. For example the National Road Administration has identified environmental objectives for its part of the sector and has integrated many routines based on environmental consideration into its daily practices.

The responsible actors in the sector also have to strive actively to fulfil the goals outlined in the national transport policy, focusing particularly on accessibility, high transport quality, safe traffic, a good environment and positive regional development.

The EU “Cardiff Process” has played an important role in implementing environmental aspects into the transport decisions in Europe. It has raised general awareness of how policies interconnect. Specifically, it has played a role in backing better and more informed decisions on the fuel consumption of cars. In addition, it has helped pave the way for policies and programmes that may lead to more effective use of fiscal incentives, pricing policies and instruments within the European Community in order to promote more environmentally sound transport.

At national level in Sweden, the four transport authorities are among the authorities that have special sector responsibility for the ecological dimension of sustainable development. In cooperation with other authorities, they have to make the sector more effective and support environmentally friendly transport. They also have to assist towards improved measures being implemented nationally as well as at EU level.

The authorities in the transport sector are also engaged in environmental man-
agement systems and have started projects in common or on their own initiative. For example, the National Road Administration has proposed its own carbon dioxide policy, in cooperation with the Swedish EPA.

According to the instructions for the Agency, outlined by the Government, the main tasks for the Swedish EPA are to coordinate and promote environmental work at national, EU and international levels, including follow-up and assessment. The role played by the EPA in work towards sectoral integration in the transport sector has shifted slightly from a supporting role to now being concerned more with evaluation and assessment. A recent project has been to develop environmental quality standards for air pollution in urban areas. The Swedish EPA has an agreement with each of the transport authorities governing common activities for the next year. These includes common activities for environmental integration into the transport sector.

Contact: Kjell Andersson, Swedish EPA kjell.andersson@naturvardsverket.se
The environmental policy integration described in this brochure is focused on integration in different sectors, i.e. horizontal integration. The Swedish EPA also works actively on the integration of sustainable development aspects at regional level. A methodology and strategic advice for the integration of sustainable development aspects into the regional growth programs has been developed. A brochure on this subject can be found on our website.

The vast majority of the central government authorities, including the 24 mentioned above, have established environmental management systems (EMS) within their organisations. There are obvious links between the EMS and work on sectoral integration. For further information on EMS in central government authorities, please see the brochure on our website.

For further information, please visit our website www.naturvardsverket.se

Contacts

Maria Daléus
Swedish EPA
Blekhomberrassen. 36
106 48 Stockholm
SWEDEN
Tel + 46 8 698 11 53
Maria.daleus@naturvardsverket.se