ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
IN SWEDISH AGENCIES
HIGH TIME TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

We face great challenges in the environmental and climate field. The IPCC has shown that greenhouse gas emissions are changing the conditions for human life and impacting biodiversity.

Since all human activity impacts the climate and the environment, it is important that various organisations adopt a systematic approach to improving their environmental performance. This means that the Swedish State, which formulates and implements environmental policy, also has taken active steps to reduce its own environmental impact.

Sweden has therefore been involved in implementing environmental management systems at government agencies for more than ten years. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been responsible for supporting this process. This has given us a great deal of experience in ways of encouraging public organisations to assume greater responsibility for the environment in their operations – experience we are happy to share.

This brochure describes the Swedish approach to environmental management in government administration. It is primarily intended for those engaged in developing environmental policy instruments.
Environmental management systems are used to systematise and rationalise the environmental performance of an organisation. This yields constant improvements and gradually reduces the overall environmental impact of the organisation.

The Swedish Government decided in 1996 that government agencies were to implement an environmental management system, with annual reports on progress made.

Environmental management systems are intended to help Sweden to achieve its national environmental quality objectives by integrating environmental consideration in all government activities:
- Government proposals, decisions and action;
- in conjunction with procurement and other exercise of government authority;
- in the government administration’s own activities.

10 steps towards an Environmental Management System

1. Identify roles and responsibilities
2. Carry out an environmental review to identify impact on the environment
3. Draw up an environmental policy
4. Set operational environmental objectives and produce an action plan showing how the environmental objectives are to be achieved
5. Implement procedures to ensure that operations move towards sustainability
6. Communicate internally and externally
7. Educate staff in environmental consideration
8. Monitor the results
9. Conduct environmental audits
10. Continuously improve performance
Many conditions must be met when an environmental management system is implemented by a government administration. It is particularly important to take account of the following:

**Involvement**
Management must be involved in work on improving environmental performance if it is to have a real impact. Workshops and seminars for managers, tailor-made information for public body management, and visits to management teams are ways of increasing involvement.

**Follow-up**
Environmental management presupposes that impacts and improvements are continuously monitored. It is a good idea to produce some key figures that are compulsory for all agencies and that must be reported to the Government.

**Feedback**
If environmental management is to have a real impact, agencies must receive feedback on their work and their annual reports. One approach is to draw up league tables, which agencies can use to compare their performance with each other.

**Support**
It is important to allocate resources and responsibility so that agencies receive answers to their questions about environmental management. The Swedish EPA produces guides and best practice, administers a network, answers questions, and arranges seminars and workshops. If necessary, the Agency also submits proposals to the Government on ways of improving the Government’s environmental management.

**FACT** The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, created in 1967, is the national agency for environmental protection and nature conservation. Its key tasks are to present proposals for environmental policy and legislation to the Swedish Government and ensure that environmental policy decisions are implemented. The Agency complies with the ISO 14001 environmental management standard and EMAS.
STEP-BY-STEP ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Over 200 Swedish government agencies have now implemented environmental management systems. The systems are implemented in stages and are governed by an ordinance that provides that the agencies should:

• carry out an environmental study to survey the impact of internal and external operations on the environment;
• draw up an environmental policy;
• set operational environmental objectives;
• produce an action plan showing how the environmental objectives are to be achieved;
• implement procedures to ensure that operations move towards sustainability;
• document, report, follow up, revise and continuously improve performance;
• improve the ability of staff to incorporate environmental consideration in their own work;
• make particular efforts to green their procurement.

Voluntary certification

Around twenty agencies have voluntarily elected to obtain ISO certification, or have registered under EMAS. The ordinance does not make certification or registration compulsory, but these steps do lend continuity and stability to environmental management. Moreover, having an external party review the environmental management system enhances its credibility.
Compulsory reports
Agencies are obliged to report to the Government once a year. The reports include everything mentioned above, as well as information about the environmental impact of travel, energy use and procurement. Reports are examined by the Swedish EPA and the ministry under which the reporting agency operates. Agencies receive feedback in the form of dialogue with the ministries and a summary compiled by the Swedish EPA. A league table is also produced on the basis of the reports.

Support and feedback
The Swedish EPA supports the agencies in their environmental management via a network for environmental coordinators, by arranging seminars and by disseminating best practice.

The ministries at the Government Offices give the agencies feedback on their environmental management in conjunction with the annual reports.

ANNUAL REPORTS
As from 2009 all agencies must annually monitor the environmental impact of their official journeys, energy consumption and procurement. The following factors are to be reported:

Official journeys and other fuel consumption
- Carbon dioxide emissions from all official journeys
- Proportion of green cars purchased or leased
- Proportion of renewable fuels

Energy consumption
- Total energy consumption in kWh, per person-year and per square metre
- Renewable energy as a proportion of total energy consumption

Environmental requirements specified in procurement
- Proportion of procurement processes where environmental requirements are specified
- The economic value of procurement processes with environmental requirements in relation to the value of all procurement processes
Environmental management systems not only improve environmental performance; they produce other positive effects. Here are some examples:

**Environmentally aware decisions**
Account is taken of environmental issues in proposals and decisions made by government agencies and the measures they take. This is particularly important in decisions with major environmental implications, concerning infrastructure, for example.

**Better resource management**
Environmental management improves resource management, reduces emissions and results in lower waste quantities owing to reduced use of energy, paper, fuel and water.

**Increased environmental awareness**
Environmental management increases environmental awareness and commitment among staff. The knowledge and behaviour acquired by staff also accompanies them outside the workplace.

**More efficient operations**
An environmental management system helps to structure and systematise environmental performance and follow-up. It creates order, provides easily accessible information and a clearer approach and division of responsibilities. The planning of other operations also benefits.

**Lower costs**
Environmental management systems cut costs by saving energy and reducing consumption, for example.

**FACT** The Swedish State has 230,000 employees. If all of them activated the energy saver function on their computers and switched them off at nights and weekends, carbon dioxide emissions would fall by up to 96,000 tonnes a year, and we would save €2 million.
Environmental management systems in Sweden have stimulated measures in many fields such as environmental considerations in decisions and reduced use of resources. Some examples are given below.

**Environmental consideration in decisions and exercise of public authority**

- Environmental consideration in decisions, letters of opinion, permit application and regulatory procedures
- Development of online services (e-applications, e-tax returns)
- Electronic processing of referrals and applications

**Environmental consideration in research and development**

- Integration of environmental issues in research and development
- Dissemination of knowledge and information about environmental issues, production of materials for other actors

**Green Public Procurement**

- Environmental requirements specified in procurement and order placement
- Environmentally certified suppliers
**Reduced emissions from travel and transport**
- Use of video and telephone conferences
- Travel by train instead of by air
- Green cars, car pools and eco driving
- Coordinated transport
- Climate compensation for air travel

**Reduced energy consumption**
- Renewable electricity and environmental friendly heating
- Low-energy light bulbs and movement-controlled lighting
- Energy-efficient technology and energy-saving functions, virtual servers
- Time and climate-controlled ventilation

**Reduced paper consumption**
- Double-sided printing and copying standard
- Ecolabelled paper and environmentally certified printers

**Reduced use of chemicals**
- Environmentally friendly cleaning
- Substitution of chemicals
- Organic foods
- Material choice in buildings

**Reduced waste**
- Increased recycling
- Ban on disposable materials
FACTS ABOUT SWEDEN

**AREA:** 174,000 sq mi (450,000 km²), the third largest country in Western Europe

**FORESTS:** 53%

**MOUNTAINS:** 11%

**CULTIVATED LAND:** 8%

**LAKES AND RIVERS:** 9%

**CAPITAL:** Stockholm

**POPULATION:** 9.3 million inhabitants

**LANGUAGE:** Swedish

**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:** Constitutional monarchy, parliamentary democracy

**PARLIAMENT:** The Riksdag, with 349 members in one chamber

**MOST IMPORTANT EXPORT GOODS:** Electronic and telecom equipment, machinery, passenger cars, paper, pharmaceuticals, iron and steel

**MOST IMPORTANT Imported GOODS:** Electronic and telecom equipment, machinery, foodstuffs, crude oil, textile products, footwear and passenger cars