

SWEDEN

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Challenges and opportunities in Sweden on horizontal and vertical co-ordination

The European Landscape Convention entered into force in Sweden 1 May 2011. In Sweden official landscape policy is organised under the Government in different Governmental ministries. Each ministry is responsible for a number of national State Agencies responsible for sector administration under sector laws.

There is no specific Swedish landscape policy or landscape law, but there are a number of sector policies or laws for wider aspects of the landscape. The most important sector laws on landscape concern Forestry policy, Regional policy, Transport policy, and Heritage conservation. More wide laws regulate Environment and Nature conservation, Urban planning and Environment related Public Health etc, In most cases 21 different County Administrative Boards are responsibility for management of the sector policies and sector integration. Thus the official landscape management and landscape perspectives are a task for the 21 County Administrative Boards under the Swedish Government.

A general “horizontal” challenge in Sweden is to establish and implement landscape policies according to the European Landscape Convention’s article 5b since there is no landscape law or landscape agency, only sector management. In many practical cases Landscape is a cross-sectorial issue, similar other issues such as Heritage. However, the convention’s article 5a, in order to recognise landscapes in law, is well fulfilled through the sector policies and sector legislation. The state mission on landscape issues to the concerned state agencies is that all have equal responsibility to implement the convention. In the years 2010-2014 a Swedish co-ordinating group for the convention’s implementation was established among the State Agencies: National Heritage Board (Riksantikvarieämbetet, chair), Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket), National Board of Housing (Boverket), Building and Planning, Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket), Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket), Forestry Agency (Skogsstyrelsen), Transport Administration (Trafikverket), County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen). After that period the group was disused, mainly because of other priorities within each sector. “Vertical” co-ordination of the convention has certain challenges, for instance that planning is a monopoly for municipalities, where the State is one part among others.

However there are opportunities to implement the landscape perspectives of the European Landscape Convention. A strong awareness has evolved, that sector policies must become more cross sectorial. Even if management in the agencies is performed according to sector legislation, there are other means than laws to promote holistic landscape perspectives, such as information, sector-co-operation, research, education, regional development etc. A certain opportunity is also that landscape issues in many cases are decentralised to the County Administrative Boards and to the Municipalities. Many

measures are decided within the 290 municipalities in co-operation with the Regions and the County Administrative Boards under the Swedish Government.

New methods for infrastructure-planning based on a holistic landscape perspective have been developed by the Swedish National Transport Administration (Trafikverket). Integrated landscape character assessment (ILCA) is a method for establishing the landscape as regional platform for co-operation between national and regional authorities. The project “Including landscape in long-term spatial planning” (Landskap i långsiktig planering) has developed a method for an integrated landscape character assessment which comprises aspects such as the perceived landscape, the historical landscape and landscape ecology. It creates a common arena where regional and national authorities can meet and discuss the impact of an infrastructure-plan. By understanding and explaining how the landscape is composed and functions, the method presents a multi-disciplinary tool for finding the sensitivity and potential in every landscape. This has made it possible to assess what effect new infrastructure and the plurality of management activities may have on the landscape.

With the knowledge from the integrated landscape character assessment it is possible to initiate and manage activities that can enhance landscape qualities early in the planning process. These are questions that may not usually be addressed, but have a great potential in both planning and maintaining infrastructure. The analysis has been carried out in the Region of Västra Götaland (Västra Götalandsregionen), including the second largest city in Sweden, Gothenburg. It has also been applied in two other regions, Västmanland and Västernorrland. Results from other applied studies and demonstrations are presented on the website:

www.trafikverket.se/en/startpage/planning/Landscape-planning