

Axis 4 Factsheet: SWEDEN

Geographical map: Sweden



1. Context in which Axis 4 is being developed and main challenges faced.

Sweden's coasts border the Baltic Sea to the East, and Kattegatt and Skagerrak to the South-West, stretching a distance of approximately 13 570 km. The country has more than 90 000 lakes of over 1 ha and 300 000 km of watercourses providing significant potential for inland fisheries. 40% of Sweden's population of 9.3 million lives within 5 km of the coast. Together with Finland, Sweden is the most sparsely populated EU Member State with an average population density of just 22 inhabitants per km². The whole country, with the exception of large urban centres, is classified as rural. The population in Sweden is primarily located in the southern parts of the country, with northern parts composed of large and very sparsely populated areas. Conditions for fishing and aquaculture differ significantly from one region to another. Sweden's northerly location means that large parts of the coast and many of the lakes are covered by ice during the winter half of the year.

The Swedish fisheries sector (catch, aquaculture and processing) employs slightly more than 4 000 people in FTE¹ and accounts for just under 0.1% of Swedish GDP. The processing and aquaculture subsectors accounts for 1 800 and 200 persons respectively. Most activities in the fisheries sector are located outside large urban areas and have a significant impact on rural development and local employment in remote communities.

Professional fisheries in Sweden include marine and inland activities. In 2007, its total production was 244 000 tonnes, accounting for a value of €137 million.² Marine fisheries represent the major segment of activities with 97% of total production and 88% of total value. The main targeted marine species are herring and sprat (together accounting for approximately 200 000 tonnes in 2006³) while aquaculture production (around 5 300 tonnes) is structured nearly exclusively around the production of rainbow trout. Inland fisheries (1 500 tonnes) is based primarily in four major lakes in the south: Vänern, Hjälmaren, Mälaren and Vättern.

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management handles the management of commercial fishing in Sweden. In addition, the Swedish Fishermen's Federation can impose supplementary regulations for its members (eg. for deep-water prawns in the North Sea and Skagerrak). The Lapp population in northern Sweden has special aboriginal fishing rights in the areas allocated to them for reindeer breeding.

Swedish commercial fishing shows a general reduction in the number of vessels and commercial fishermen, as well as greater concentration on the west coast. On the east coast, efforts are being made to support the small-scale coastal fishing fleet and preserve activities in small-scale processing, as well as social and commercial services and infrastructure which are facing increasing difficulties to remain viable.

Competition for space on the water front makes it difficult for companies in aquaculture, processing and fisheries to develop. Among the growing activities, fishing tourism constitutes a thriving industry and holds possibilities of diversification for the traditional fishing sector. Marine recreation and tourism is a major source of income in small coastal communities along the coast where it is estimated to generate 18 000 jobs⁴.

¹ FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Employment in the fisheries sector (FISH/2004/4)

² Eurostat 2008

³ Figures of PCP

⁴ EC-DG MARE: The Role of Maritime Clusters to enhance the strength and development on European maritime sector. 2008

2. The national response in terms of Axis 4

In Sweden, 15% of the EFF budget has been allocated to Axis 4 for the "Sustainable development of fisheries areas" and focuses particularly on socio-economic measures and the creation of new jobs through local support and integrated strategies. It will also focus on diversification towards fishing tourism. It is seen as a financial tool to be integrated with others, used as a complement with other priority axes in the EFF and with measures in other funds. A national objective is to use Axis 4 to create around twenty new companies mostly linked with fishing tourism. Furthermore, Axis 4 is seen as a good opportunity to promote collaboration between different types of stakeholders and create new and viable partnerships. Since July 2011 the EFF is managed by the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

3. The areas and their key characteristics

Areas were selected according to the strategies of the groups. There was no preselection process and areas with inland fishing or aquaculture were also eligible. Along a number of coastal stretches, particularly on the east coast, the number of fishermen has declined dramatically in recent years as have related activities such as processing.

Although most of the areas are sparsely populated with few professional fishermen left, general conditions are still very different between areas. Bohuslän for example has a high proportion of large boats and many workers in the industry, on the other hand 50% of employment in both coastal tourism and fisheries activities is concentrated in the Southern and South western regions of Sweden. Similarly, the Stockholm archipelago is home to only few fishermen and experiences increasing pressure from tourism and recreational fishing.

Within the Vindelälvens (north) area, one of the challenges faced is to properly manage the rapid increase of fishing tourism activities developed by new entrepreneurs in an area where this activity was previously extremely limited.. This is only one of the challenges of this area which has less than 2 inhabitants per km² in an area spanning more than 300 km.

Hydraulic energy, which represents 50% of Swedish energy production, and wind energy, facing a favorable growth forecast in offshore activities, are also important aspects in the development of fisheries areas.

<u>Fishery area</u>	<u>Area km²</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Pop. Density inhab/km²</u>
1. Vindelälvens	13000	25000	1,9
2. Södra Bottenhavet	8320	194000	23,3
3. Stockholms skärgård i Stockholms län	658	13000	19,7
4. Norra Bohuslän	2393	58000	24,2
5. Södra Bohuslän	2216	645000	291,1
6. Vänerskärgården with Kinnekulle	1036	59500	57,4
7. Vättern	5196	127000	24,4
8. Kustlandet	11129	56000	5,0
9. Gotland	3151	58000	18,4
10. Sydusten	2278	142000	62,3
11. Tornedalen & Haparanda	25000	25000	1,0
12. Kustlinjen	3506	45000	12,8
13. Halland	-	-	-
14. Blekinge	-	-	-



4. The selection process

Selection was carried out according to the EFF regulation, with no additional criteria introduced. Groups were encouraged to use existing structures available, for example, through LEADER groups, but that was not formalized into a selection criterion. By January 2010, the Managing Authority had approved the local development strategies of 10 fisheries local action groups (FLAGs), as planned in the Operational Programme. It is foreseen that a further four groups will be selected in a second round, bringing the total number of groups in Sweden to 14 for the current period.

5. The groups

The 10 groups selected are widely distributed geographically with 1 group in the North, 2 groups on the west coast, 1 group on the south coast, and 3 groups on the east coast. Two groups are associated to lakes, with lake Vattern being at the heart of a selected area. Finally, one group will develop a strategy for Gotland Island in the Baltic Sea.

The Axis 4 budget was distributed evenly among FLAGs meaning €1.26 million of public funding per group for the current programming period. Most groups are organized as associations (NGOs). All groups fall within or overlap with the Leader areas and a range of different levels of cooperation exists - from looking at possible projects to co-operate on, to being geographically and administratively coordinated.

The number of partners varies within each FLAG but all enjoy significant participation by the public and private sectors. On the other hand, while NGOs participate in all the Swedish FLAG partnerships, the extent to which a cross-section of NGOs has been able to join the decision-making bodies is a bit more uneven. NGO participation is fairly low in some of the groups but others count on a strong involvement from the NGO sector. The Kustlandet FLAG, for example, has the explicit support of some 50 NGOs. Moreover, there is a clear awareness on the part of the FLAGs of the need to cooperate with new actors and this is also expressed in the strategies.

Each FLAG has a secretariat which acts as the selection committee and varies significantly in size from approximately 8 - 20 members. The relatively low budgets that the groups have mean that the Manager employed to run the FLAG on a daily basis is often just part time. In some cases, the Manager may also work in the local LEADER office.

6. The strategies

Diversification and environmental management are among the essential priorities for Swedish FLAGs, followed by improving the competitiveness of the fisheries sector and developing fishing tourism. By addressing these priorities through the constitution of FLAGs, one of the main goals is to attract investment partners to develop private incentives around sustainable fisheries practices.

The FLAG Kustlandet, among other Swedish FLAGs, developed its strategy around the principle of "preserving by using", following a philosophy of balance between the need for development and natural and cultural interests: living and working should go hand in hand with the care, survival, and long-term development of the area. The strategy has been centered on the empowerment of the local community, promotion of innovation, and ensuring long-term results. The fact that the FLAG and the Leader area share a common vision enables a coordinated and effective implementation of the two parallel development plans.

Other strategies involve more traditional approaches such as the one developed by the Sydkusten FLAG. This FLAG geared its strategy towards education and entrepreneurship training, promoting diversification in industries related to fisheries and oceans, and building partnerships between actors in the region through joint investments. Education, aimed at enhancing public awareness on environmental issues and jobs related to fisheries, also encompasses cooperation between businesses, governments, schools and scientists as a way of providing companies and organizations with additional credit which will enhance the value of their product.

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7. Key features of administrative and financial systems

EFF budget 2007-2013 and funding from national level

% of EFF funding on Axis 4	EFF funding on Axis 4 /€	National funding /€	Total funding/€	Average budget per group/€	Number of Groups
15%	8 199 720	8 199 720	16 400 000	1 260 000	14

- Potential beneficiaries present projects to the FLAG
- The secretariat of the FLAG receives applications for projects within the geographic area of the Fisheries Area and selects projects for funding.
- The decision proposal and documentation are then sent to the county's administrative board which takes the formal decision on support.
- The paying agency, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, executes the payment directly to the final beneficiary.

8. Networking and capacity building.

No formal network has been set up in Sweden for the FLAGs. However, the FLAGs have been informally networking between themselves since their work on strategy development. This cooperation and direct contact between the FLAGs continues in these initial phases of strategy implementation.

Furthermore, there is a wide range of formal and informal contacts between regions and with LEADER local action groups and other organisations. The Swedish Board of Agriculture encourages such networking, with at least one meeting per year for the FLAGs since July 2011. Also the Swedish Board of Agriculture offers support for the fisheries areas through a support team coordinating information, technical and legal support. Contacts have also been established with the Swedish Rural Network.

9. Any resource or idea that may be of interest to other countries

Several areas have already included options for participating in transnational cooperation projects in their strategies. Something that distinguishes Sweden is its long coastline in relation to its population. This, combined with an often very low population density is of great potential for ecotourism and nature-oriented activities which come up frequently in strategies proposed by Swedish FLAGs.

There is also a long tradition in Sweden of local co-operation and participation in activities that benefit the local community and area as a whole, without necessarily being of direct benefit for the individuals involved. This tradition of community action is a resource worth tapping into by countries seeking to boost local participation.

10. Contacts

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