

A coherent Swedish maritime policy

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INFORMATION SHEET ON GOVERNMENT BILL 2008/09:170



A cohesive maritime policy with strong measures against eutrophication

The Government Bill *A coherent Swedish maritime policy* is based on the view that our seas are an indispensable resource for society. Preserving this resource will require a holistic approach to how we use the seas and efforts to maintain or restore marine ecosystems. This is the starting point for the Government's cohesive approach to marine issues.

Focus of Swedish maritime policy

- The resources of the sea and coastal areas are to be used in a sustainable way so as to ensure that the ecosystems are maintained and restored while allowing industries that are linked to the sea to develop, grow and contribute to strengthening Sweden's competitiveness.
- The maritime policy is to be integrated and cross-sectoral and based on a holistic approach to how resources are used and maintained.
- Regional cooperation on maritime issues is to be strengthened through cooperation in the EU.
- The maritime policy is to involve and encourage the participation of relevant stakeholders.

The Government prioritises the marine environment
Efforts towards improving the marine environment have a high priority. A special marine environment appropriation was introduced in the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill 2007.

Government action so far includes:

- initiating projects to achieve fast results, e.g. oxygenation of seabeds, reduction of sprat stocks.
- strengthening actions against eutrophication, e.g. establishing wetlands
- starting the Marine Environment Institute
- adopting an action plan for the Baltic Sea together with the other countries in the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM), including caps for phosphorus and nitrogen loads and emissions reduction targets distributed among the countries concerned.

The Government allocated additional funds in the 2009 Budget. One billion SEK has been allocated for the period up to 2011. These investments are addressed more specifically in the maritime policy bill.

Measures and instruments for a healthy marine environment

Government grants to local water management initiatives that improve the marine environment

The Government's marine environment policy focuses on tangible measures to improve the marine environment. This approach is being reinforced through Government grants to local water management initiatives ('LOVA

grants') that are presented in the maritime policy bill. The eutrophication of our seas is a major problem. The intention is therefore that the majority of support will be used for measures that help reduce loads of phosphorus and nitrogen, the elements that contribute substantially to the eutrophication of the Baltic and North Seas.

Grants can also be given to measures to restore valuable and eutrophied habitats. The Government believes that it is important to utilise and stimulate creative and cost-effective initiatives at local level. Grants covering a maximum of 50 per cent of costs can therefore be allocated to municipalities and non-profit organisations. Government grants amount to around SEK 120 billion per year.

Fee system for emissions of phosphorus and nitrogen

A pilot scheme should be developed to test an emissions allowance scheme for phosphorus and nitrogen marine pollution. This is a first step towards the long-term introduction of a more comprehensive system to reduce eutrophication of the Baltic and North Seas in a cost-effective manner.

Limits on farmyard manure

To reduce leaching of nitrogen and phosphorus from agriculture, the Government is introducing further limits on the application of farmyard manure. These include a new limit of 170 kg of nitrogen per hectare and extended restrictions on the application of manure in the autumn and winter. Requirements on protective zones are also to be introduced with regard to manure applied close to watercourses and on steeply sloping ground close to watercourses.

The Rural Development Programme

Measures taken within the Government's Rural Development Programme to improve water quality have high priority. Further possibilities are to be provided for the agricultural sector to contribute to achieving the targets set in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the relevant environmental quality objectives.

Developing mussel farming

The Government wants to stimulate increased use of mussel farms as a measure to reduce levels of eutrophication by phosphorus and nitrogen along Sweden's coast. Methods are to be developed (in both commercial and environmental terms) for the west, south and east coasts.

Tax credits for conversion of private waste water systems

The opportunity to benefit from tax deductions (tax credits) for private household repair and renovation work is also to include private waste water systems. There are currently 700 000 properties with private waste water systems across the country, 300 000 of which do not meet legal water treatment requirements. In the Government's assessment, tax credits can accelerate efforts to tackle the problem of phosphorus emissions from private waste water systems.

Ban on phosphates in detergents and cleaning agents

The use of phosphates in detergents and cleaning agents should be reduced and eventually has been replaced with

more environmentally-friendly alternatives. The Government wants to introduce a ban on phosphates in dishwasher detergents for private use from 2011. This will help reduce phosphorus emissions by 20 tonnes per year. Sweden will also act within the EU and HELCOM to ensure that all EU Member States and Russia introduce restrictions on the phosphate content of detergents and cleaning agents.

Discharge of human waste from leisure craft and merchant ships

The Government is to consider the feasibility of introducing a ban on the discharge of human waste from leisure craft. Public financial support (LOVA grants) is to be given to extend port reception facilities for waste from on board toilets. An equivalent ban should be introduced for cruise vessels and passenger ferries in the Baltic Sea area. The impact of including cargo vessels in this type of ban should be investigated.

Reducing the use of hazardous substances in anti-fouling paints

Continued efforts are required to reduce the need for, and to ban hazardous substances in anti-fouling paints. These paints contain environmentally hazardous biocides that prevent the growth of, for example, algae on the hulls of boats and ships. Economic support (LOVA grants) is being given to establish hull wash stations that can replace the hazardous anti-fouling paints. Ahead of the upcoming review of the Biocidal Products Directive, Sweden is working to gain approval for more stringent biocide criteria in the EU.

Inventory of unowned wrecks

Unowned wrecks can pose environmental problems due to leaching of oils or metals, for example. The Swedish Maritime Administration is being tasked with drawing up an initial inventory to clarify the number of unowned wrecks and the environmental hazards associated with them. The Government will then appoint an authority responsible for dealing with this issue.

Reducing emissions of hazardous substances and pharmaceutical residues

The identification of sources of hazardous substances in the marine environment and how they are dispersed is to be improved, and measures taken to reduce their impact on the marine environment. This applies to substances such as cadmium, mercury and nonylphenol. The dispersion of pharmaceutical residues and other hazardous substances via waste water treatment plants is also to be reduced using a variety of measures. EU legislation on pharmaceutical products should be supplemented to contain requirements for testing to establish the environmental hazard associated with active agents, in order to reduce the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals.

An action plan for international cooperation

Sweden is to be proactive and work strategically to strengthen international cooperation on marine resource issues. This working method is being developed further by drafting

a special Swedish action plan for concerted international cooperation, with particular focus on the Baltic and North Seas. An evaluation should be undertaken of how efforts and negotiation processes are proceeding at national, regional and international level.

The Baltic Sea as a pilot project

The EU marine directive is the basis for the Swedish action plan for international cooperation on the marine environment. Sweden is an active proponent of the Baltic Sea being designated a pilot project under the EU marine directive. Sweden is also working for HELCOM to be given responsibility for coordinating the establishment of such a pilot project and ensuring that it is implemented as part of the future EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region. The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region is one opportunity to increase EU commitment in the region in the long term. Sweden is a driving force in attempting to ensure that the strategy leads to broad and coordinated action on the part of regional actors (including the European Commission) for an improved marine environment and strengthened economic growth in the region.

Regional cooperation to be strengthened

Sweden is working in the longer term to strengthen HELCOM as an intergovernmental actor for the marine environment in the Baltic Sea region. Work on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan is to be coordinated with equivalent processes at EU level, and close cooperation with Russia is important. Sweden is working to ensure that the action plan is a priority measure within the future EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

Sweden believes that the Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) has an important role to play in the implementation of the EU marine directive. Sweden participates actively in OSPAR activities and will also work to ensure that cooperation between HELCOM and OSPAR is deepened. Sweden plays a proactive role in strengthening Nordic cooperation with regard to marine planning and management.

Increased resources to intergovernmental funds

Sweden is giving financial support to the establishment of an intergovernmental fund aiming to help finance projects and measures to improve the marine environment in the Baltic Sea. Sweden also contributes funds to the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP), which aims to implement larger investment projects, primarily in Russia, to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea.

Agency responsible for marine and water environment issues

Responsibility for marine and water environment issues should be given to a central administrative agency. The Government is appointing an organisational inquiry to complete the background material that will form the basis of the decision on the ultimate form of this agency. The starting point for the inquiry should be coherent water policy activities based on the ecosystem approach and concerted management of the entire marine environment.

Increased participation for stakeholders and interested parties

Broad involvement on the part of both various stakeholders and the public increases the prospect of maintaining and restoring the ecosystems while at the same time developing maritime industries. Interested parties, such as industry or stakeholder organisations, are therefore to be involved and be allowed to participate to a greater extent in maritime policy work.

Planning of Swedish marine areas

The municipalities should continue to be responsible for the planning of coastal marine areas. Planning is to be developed and cooperation between land planning and marine planning strengthened. Planning in Sweden's marine areas (territorial sea) should be investigated and the planning processes that are developed for territorial waters and for the exclusive economic zone are to be coordinated. A government agency should be given responsibility for planning in the exclusive economic zone and legislation should be produced for this planning. Sweden should continue to be active in efforts to develop EU cooperation on marine planning.

Knowledge and monitoring to support management

Less is known about the marine environment than about other ecosystems. There are serious gaps in knowledge of, for example, the structure of ecosystems and how they work, how land-based processes affect the marine environment and how fisheries affect ecosystems and water quality. Research is very important, both to obtain better knowledge of the marine environment and to enable us to choose the right measures to improve the marine environment.

Funding for marine environment research currently amounts to around SEK 135 million. In the research policy bill A Boost to Research and Innovation (Govt. Bill 2008/09:50) the Government proposed that research be strengthened using initiatives that included an annual strategic investment in marine environment research of SEK 40 million.

Marine Environment Institute

In spring 2008, the Government decided to create a new Marine Environment Institute through cooperation between the universities in Umeå, Stockholm, Göteborg and Kalmar. The role of the Marine Environment Institute as coordinator for research and environmental monitoring will be made even clearer. One important task consists in compiling scientific data, conducting syntheses and analyses and disseminating information about the marine environment to support efforts by the Government, agencies and other stakeholders to improve the marine environment.

Monitoring of the environment

The Government believes that the vessels used for marine research, environmental monitoring and surveying should be brought together within a single organisation. The maritime policy bill therefore designates the Swedish Maritime Administration to take responsibility for the vessels used

by the Swedish Board of Fisheries, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and universities and other higher education institutions. The Swedish Maritime Administration is therefore to be tasked, together with the agencies affected, with investigating how this change is to be implemented.

Access to information

Work within the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) is hugely important for the standardisation of efforts to produce and develop bathymetric data. The relevant authorities in Sweden are being tasked with reviewing how the structure within the IHO can be used to improve the standard of different kinds of marine data.

A digital bathymetric database should also be established and models developed for the Baltic Sea. Much of the bathymetric data should also be made freely accessible. The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute should be responsible for coordinating how data that is relevant to marine environmental efforts and physical marine planning is stored and made available.

Development of maritime surveillance

Maritime surveillance of marine areas is key for countries to be able to maintain the safe and long-term use of the sea. It is needed to counter illegal discharges and to support maritime safety, police operations and fisheries controls and to secure Europe's maritime borders. Maritime surveillance systems are to be developed and integrated to become more effective and also to simplify matters for maritime industries, for example notification procedures for shipping.

Sustainable development of the fisheries sector

Fishing has a major impact on marine ecosystems. This is why the Government is undertaking extensive initiatives to develop a sustainable fisheries sector. The maritime policy bill contains measures to improve the conditions for natural fish stocks, restoration and development efforts. These initiatives receive additional support from the Operative programme for fisheries sector in Sweden, which provides EU funds over and above national investments.

In order to achieve a sustainable fisheries sector, it is important to adapt the size of the fishing fleet in relation to fish resources and that Sweden participate actively in the review process of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The following are some starting points for development towards a sustainable fisheries sector:

- developing lower-impact fishing gears to minimise by-catches and the discards of fish. The Swedish Board of

Fisheries will be responsible for developing low-impact fishing methods.

- the national recovery plan for European eel is to be made more effective via improved stock monitoring, restoration measures in water environments and increased responsibility taken by stakeholders outside the fisheries sector for the survival of the European eel.

A competitive and vigorous shipping industry

Proposals are presented in the maritime policy bill to strengthen and advance the development of Swedish shipping, reduce environmental impact and create new jobs. The Government wants to:

- facilitate increased short sea shipping in and around Sweden that helps reduce emissions from the transport sector overall and promotes the transfer of goods transport from land to sea.
- promote more projects for motorways of the sea, through both infrastructure projects in specific corridors and ice-breaking with the aim of developing the conditions for short sea shipping.
- investigate the options with regard to a tax exemption for electricity supplied to vessels in port.
- increase coordination between the Swedish Road Administration, the Swedish National Rail Administration and the Swedish Maritime Administration on central government-funded infrastructure to Swedish ports to enable them to be used more effectively both land-side and water-side.
- develop new pilotage legislation to improve pilotage and thereby increase maritime safety.
- increase cooperation between the state and industry to maintain and strengthen positive developments through regulatory simplification, reduced administrative costs, support to new entrepreneurs in the form of training and investments in recruitment to the industry.

Sustainable development of coastal and archipelago-based industries

There is major interest among small and medium-sized enterprises in increasing their visibility and strengthening their international competitiveness through increased cooperation in networks. This particularly applies to companies in environmental sectors that focus on the marine environment, where a similar interest exists among relevant actors in other Baltic Sea countries. The Government allocates SEK 12 million in the marine policy bill to stimulate the creation of networks in the Baltic Sea region.

