

Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E)
Actions by Sweden

Country: Sweden, Ministry of the Environment and Energy

Title:

Making the values of ecosystem services visible

Focus area 1, 2, 3: Improve the measurement and valuation of natural capital; Promote the internalization of negative externalities and the sustainable use of natural capital and Enhance ecosystems and ecosystem services as part of ecological infrastructure

Description of the action: The Swedish government in 2014 adopted a national milestone target on the importance of biodiversity and the value of ecosystem services. The target stipulates that, by 2018, the importance of biodiversity and the value of ecosystem services are to be generally known and integrated into economic positions, political considerations and other decisions in society where it is relevant and reasonable to do so. This target is part of the updated national strategy and action plan on biological diversity, which is embedded in the system of Environmental Quality Objectives adopted by Parliament. The target contributes to the global Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi targets that were adopted by the Convention on biological diversity in 2010, in particular Aichi target 1, 2, 3, 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20.

This initiative contains a number of assignments for national authorities as well as a political declaration on the importance of applying knowledge on the values of ecosystem services in political decision making, as it becomes available and improves through the assignments in question.

The government has commissioned the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency to co-operate with central authorities in strategic communication of ecosystem services. Through this project, running from 2014-2018, a network is being established representing key sectors. A guide for valuation of ecosystem services, and other requested tools, are being produced. Sectoral agencies are identifying processes where integrating ecosystem services is most relevant. Regional planning of so called green infrastructure is being developed, employing stakeholder participatory approaches at the local level, and involving improved consideration of ecosystem services.

Research programmes are carried out as well as cooperation through the EU Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services. Key research needs and ways of improving interaction between research and society are being identified.

Statistics Sweden has been commissioned to develop methods for including the value of ecosystem services in environmental accounting, through linking data on land use in economic sectors with knowledge of habitat types.

Economic and legal instruments will be improved, to reflect values of ecosystem services that become known through the pursuit of the milestone target. For example, a public inquiry has been initiated to develop ecological compensation

measures in order to contribute to mitigating net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services caused by exploitation activities.

The need for enhanced consideration of ecosystem services in policy for corporate social responsibility, innovation and public procurement is being highlighted by the government.

Action's time frame/milestones, as appropriate: The time frame for the milestone target is 2018.

Type of action: The initiative employs policy instruments primarily, but aims to improve regulatory, economic as well as information instruments through building capacity and understanding of the importance of biological diversity and secured delivery of ecosystem services that contribute to well-being.

Economic sectors: Economy-wide.

Reference instruments and sources, as appropriate: See for example guides and assessments produced by The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (www.teebweb.org).

Expected co-benefits and impact of the outcome: The expected long term effect of the mile stone target is the creation of mechanisms that secure the capacity of ecosystems and provides incentives for a sustainable management of biological diversity. It is clear however, that work in this area needs to progress in a step-wise manner in order to make efficient use of knowledge that emerges along the way.

SDGs target(s) that the action may contribute to implement: Biodiversity and ecosystem services contribute to most of the SDG:s. In the national Swedish context, the initiative may contribute in particular to SGD 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Implementation of Environmental Performance Review (EPR) recommendations, as appropriate:

Objectively verifiable indicators, as appropriate: The development of robust data on ecosystem services is part of the initiative.

Partners: International collaboration is prominent with EU Member States, the European Commission, and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Cooperation also takes place within the Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biological Diversity.

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