Europe’s Rural Futures -

The Nature of Rural Development II

Rural Development in an Enlarging European Union

The Swedish National Report

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Preface

Background
Sustainable rural development has increasingly been prioritised in EU policy over the last decade. The Cork declaration in 1996 set out the main principles for sustainable rural development and a suggested action plan for Europe’s policy-makers. By 1999 both the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Structural Funds of the European Union (EU) were reformed to further include sustainable rural development. A ‘Second Pillar’ was built into the CAP to support rural development through a specially tailored regulation. The aims of the Structural Funds were amended to include sustainable rural development. Further reforms of these policies are highly likely in the coming years, particularly given pressures from world trade negotiations and EU enlargement. There is, therefore, a need, as well as an important opportunity, to continue to develop new ways of promoting sustainable rural development in Europe that meet social, economic and environmental objectives.

This pan-European research project on the rural development instruments of the EU was undertaken to promote a European debate on policies needed to support sustainable rural development, and to inform and influence the mid-term review of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR), further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other policies relevant to sustainable rural development. The research aimed to explore implementation of rural development programmes supported under the EU’s Rural Development Regulation (RDR) 1257/1999 and the SAPARD pre-accession instrument (1268/1999). The study examined the extent to which these programmes are promoting integrated and sustainable rural development, the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the coherence of rural development policies with environmental legislation.

The research was sponsored by the Land Use Policy Group (LUPG) of Great Britain’s conservation, countryside and environment agencies and WWF Europe. The study was co-ordinated by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), the Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) at Newcastle University, Leeds University and IDRISI, working with a consortium of independent consultants in thirteen European countries. Research was carried out between September 2001 and August 2002. IEEP also co-ordinated the production of a separate comparative report, which analyses the combined findings and compares the various approaches to planning, implementation and monitoring of RDR and SAPARD programmes across Europe. The project builds upon a scoping project ‘The Nature of Rural Development’ which compared the meaning of rural development and the institutional structures for its implementation in ten European countries.

Aims
The principal aims of the project were to compare the approaches of various stakeholders to planning, implementation and monitoring of RDR and SAPARD programmes, and assess how...
far they can deliver a sustainable balance of economic, social and environmental benefits. Stakeholders included environmental, rural development and farming organisation and government authorities.

The project also aimed to promote examples of good practice (particularly in relation to creative approaches to implementing rural development measures, but also in planning and monitoring) in the countries selected. Case studies have been selected to illustrate issues raised during national research, examples of integrated rural development, and particularly creative use of RDR/SAPARD measures.

**Method**
The following national experts were commissioned to carry out in-depth national research, in co-operation with national WWF officers.

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The national research was carried out according to an agreed common framework. National researchers also undertook various national, regional and local case studies that are available from the WWF.

**Core countries within the study area**

![Map of Europe highlighting core countries within the study area](image)
Selected experts from other European countries were also invited to contribute to the study via participation in team meetings and seminars and comments on the draft comparative analysis.

A pan-European Roundtable was held in Brussels in April 2002 with the aim of validating emerging findings and gathering additional information and views from a wide range of stakeholders. Over 80 representatives of national and regional governments and agencies, environmental NGOs, farming NGOs, the European Commission and universities from across Europe attended this forum.

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1 The Context of Rural Development

1.1 The Geographical and Historical Context of Rural Development in Sweden

In Sweden rural development policy as outlined in the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) of the European Union (Regulation EC 1257/1999) is influenced by two sets of factors that characterise the specific geographical and historical context of rural policies:

(1) The geography and, in terms of ecological conditions, agriculture plays a less important role in Swedish economy (mainly due to climatic conditions in this northern country) and is characterised by special and specific cultures that can be seen as unique for the northern countries of Europe – mainly reindeer herding and combination of agriculture and forestry.

(2) The history and, in terms of the policies guiding rural development, rural areas in Sweden developed in the broader societal context of late industrialisation and early de-industrialisation of the country, with agricultural modernisation following in the period after the second World War, but before the later accession of the country to the EU.4 The dominant policy was national agricultural policy, accompanied by regional policy.

1.1.1 Geography, Climate and Demography

Sweden is the third largest country in the European Union (449,946 square kilometres, including lakes and other watercourses). Despite its size the country has only 8.8 millions inhabitants, which makes it one of the most sparsely populated Member States with about 21 inhabitants per square kilometre. The area covered by Sweden represents 14 percent of the total EU territory, but is only home to 2 percent of the population of the EU. The terms “rural area” and ”sparsely populated area” are not easily defined in Sweden, but often they are “used as synonymous” (Eckerberg & Wide 2000, 4). Comparison shows that 40% of the population in “Objective 1“- and “Objective 2”-areas (concentrated in Northern Sweden) live in rural areas. For the rest of the country the rural population accounts for only 20% of the area's total population.

Due to the long north-south length of the territory (1,600 kilometres) long distances and vast differences in climatic conditions are found. The average temperature during the summer season varies between 8°C in Northern Sweden and 17°C in the southern parts. During the winter season temperatures vary between -16°C in the north and 0°C in the south. The vegetation period (the period when the average temperature is above 5°C) varies between 220 days in the southern parts to less than 100 days in the northern parts of the country.

The special climatic conditions result in some restrictions for agriculture. Only 7.5 percent of the territory is cultivated and 1.5 percent is used as pasture. Forestry, on the other hand, has very good conditions, and forests cover 59.5 percent of the land. Only 2 percent of the population work within agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries. A comparison between Swedish regions shows that the population in Objective 1- and Objective 2-areas support themselves to a greater extent by agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing than in the rest of the country.

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Forestry is of significance in the northern regions of Sweden where the climate is not very favourable for agricultural production. The gross regional production (GRP) in the northern regions resulting from forestry is predominantly higher than in the southern regions (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 27-29). On account of this and the fact that 70% of all farmers in Sweden combine agriculture with forestry (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 13) the National Board of Forestry (“Skogsverket”) has stated that forestry plays an important role for rural development in Sweden.

Fishery (coastal and lake fishery) is of importance both socially and economically for many rural areas in Sweden. However, the sector-specific programmes from Common Fishery Policy at EU-level or from Swedish fishery policy are not integrated with the RDP – fishery is not even mentioned in the RDP. Although there is not necessarily a lack of coherence in the policy fields of agriculture and fishery, the traditional sector-specific specialisation and division of responsibility between governmental agencies is a hindrance on the way towards territorially integrated approaches to rural development.

Reindeer herding is of economic significance in Northern Sweden for the ethnic minority of the Sami population (about 2500 of 17 000 Sami altogether earn their living from reindeer herding), and it is included with one measure in the Swedish programme for rural development.

Even though not visible in employment statistics, agriculture and forestry, as well as hunting and fishing must be seen as important occupations in Swedish rural areas. These are socially important insofar as they help to keep the local identity of the rural population; economically important because they contribute to more occupation (for example, in the processing industries) than is indicated in the employment statistics of these sub-sectors; ecologically important because they are the main producers of the (agri-)cultural landscape where most of the biodiversity is found; and also important because furthermore these sub-sectors provide the food for the whole population. The activities of agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing are often combined within the household and with additional employment elsewhere. Due to the differences between rural areas in Southern and Central Sweden on one hand, and Northern Sweden on the other hand, the opportunities to commute vary. In the southern and central parts of Sweden most settlements are at a commuting distance, whereas the northern parts of Sweden present vast distances between communities, villages and single households.5

The national unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in March 2002 according to Statistics Sweden. This is a relatively low rate compared to European standards. In rural areas, especially the forest regions, the unemployment rate is higher than the national average. In March 2002 5.9 percent were unemployed in the county of Norrbotten, and the remaining forest regions had unemployment rates around 4.5 percent.6 Unemployment in the densely populated and metropolitan areas is lower than in the northern parts of Sweden, where the forest regions (Objective 1-area) always present higher unemployment rates than the national average.

5 “One example is the municipality of Jokkmokk in the county of Norrbotten, which has an area of 18,100 sq. km and a population of 6,305 inhabitants. The municipality of Sorsele in the county of Västerbotten has an area of 7,500 sq. km and a population of 3,281 inhabitants. This might be compared to for example Belgium, which has an area of 30,500 sq. km and 10.1 million inhabitants.” (Nord 1, Eckerberg & Wide, 2000, 7).

6 For further information on labour market in Sweden and statistics, go to: http://www.ams.se
The public sector is often a major employer in rural areas. Women in rural areas depend especially on public employment, and in some rural areas as much as 70 percent are employed by the public sector (statistics Sweden, 1999). Due to cutbacks this is a declining trend, which has serious consequences for the household economy in rural areas. Other important employment sectors are the manufacturing and service industries. The manufacturing industry was the backbone of the Swedish economy for many years, but has been in decline the last 20 years. Forestry is a major economic factor in the Swedish economy, but this is not visible in the employment statistics since the forestry sector is technologically advanced, mechanised and rationalised, with a low number of workplaces.

1.1.2 History and Policy of Rural Development in Sweden

For long time agriculture, forestry and fishery (often combined) have been the most important components of rural economy in Sweden. The economic and ecological significance of agriculture, agricultural development and its crises have been analysed and documented carefully in scientific literature (see for example Höijer 1924, Sonesson 1943, Osvald 1962, Svensson 1965). Swedish agriculture has undergone fast and dramatic changes throughout the 20th century. After the 2nd World War accelerated technical modernisation and rationalisation of Swedish agriculture happened (in the 1960s and 1970s mainly), with the consequence of a rapidly declining number of active farmers (approximately 90,000 persons earn their living today from agriculture, forestry or reindeer husbandry).

During the second half of the 20th century Swedish agriculture has gone through several policy-guided reforms. Among the important ones is the introduction of governmental food price subsidies in the 1970s. Their abolishment in 1984 caused steep rises in food prices thereafter and led to a major policy reform in 1990 with the aims to abolish domestic market regulation but maintain import protection. This reform, driven by the Ministry of Finance, was based on the following diagnostic arguments:

- The agricultural sector accumulates resources from the society because of the high price policy, but these resources could be used more efficiently elsewhere.
- The negative effects of market regulation, high food prices and inflation point at deregulation as a market-orientated solution. (Daugbjerg, 1997, 401).

The reform, more “market radical” than the parallel CAP-reform from 1992, was not successfully completed within the scheduled time frame until 1995. This was partly due to the fact that simultaneously with this reform Sweden began to apply and prepare for membership of the EU. The major consequence of EU-membership was then that agri-environmental policy, dating back to landscape conservation measures (existing since 1986) was reinforced and Sweden made the “ecological transformation” of agriculture a main component of agricultural policy. For the second half of the 1990s agri-environmental policy with the three components of landscape conservation, management of environmentally sensitive areas and organic farming was characterised by ambitious objectives and high levels of support and compensation payments for Swedish farmers. With regard to ecological farming the objective was to increase it to 10% of arable land until 2000 (Rundqvist 1996, 185).

At present Sweden can be seen as a “post-agricultural society” which implies that, despite its ecological significance for the maintenance of the cultural landscape and biodiversity, rural development can still less be guided only by farming and agricultural policy. A much broader set of objectives, measures and sectors would have to be included in a policy to support the development of rural areas - as indicated in the promising rhetoric of “integrated rural
development”. Furthermore, the low number of inhabitants in Swedish rural areas underlines the importance of integrated policies for rural development in the sense of a diversified rural economy to maintain a minimum level of economic activities and basic social services in the countryside that are required by a living rural society. “With as low population density, and relatively lower environmental pollution loading in rural areas, Swedish policy for sustainable rural development is not as much about decreasing chemical use and management intensity as it is about creating ways for survival in remote areas. Sweden has already moved to a ‘post-agricultural society’ with extremely few active farmers, in which other types of measures might be required to sustain the rural population than various subsidies to agriculture that are largely designed for a different kind of land use management situation.” (Eckerberg & Wide 2000, 35)

Although highlighting the specificity of Swedish agriculture and countryside, this diagnosis fits into a more general description of structural change of European agriculture in the past fifty years. A first and preliminary understanding of the nature of rural development results from a historical and comparative analysis for the period after the Second World War. In Sweden - as well as in continental Europe - rural development was driven by agricultural development, an economic sector that became subject to political control and guidance in the modernisation process and protected from the full and unrestricted functioning of market mechanisms. The first phase of agricultural modernisation in Europe, accelerated modernisation lasted from the 1960s to the 1980s. The CAP-reform in 1992 indicated a new course in rural development that can be called a second phase of modernisation, manifest in EU’s “Agenda 2000”, characterised by “ecological modernisation” and “integrated rural development”. The last concept, signalling territorially oriented and integrated approaches countervailing the prior approaches of specialisation and sector-specific development, is still in search of clear goals and approaches, in Sweden as well as in other EU Member States. Nevertheless, a change in the direction of the “development vector” in rural Europe has happened during the last decade under the influence of agri-environmental policy and the measures for the diversification of rural economy – the concept of “ecological modernisation” may reveal some of the meanings of this change of policy, although it has not been used much as a theoretical concept to analyse rural development.

The prior agricultural policy that supported specialisation, modernisation, high yields and economic efficiency in agriculture was first supplemented then gradually restructured through policies and practices under the name of integrated rural development. These policies, with all their national and regional variants, “represent a re-integration of tasks and activities that were externalised in the past, and the creation of multi-product farms in cases where farms had become oriented towards the production of just one commodity” (Ploeg & Renting 2000, 530).

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7 This concept arrived at the EU-level with two events, the meeting of European rural stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental organisations and groups, in Cork 1996 (resulting in the Cork declaration on rural development), and with the “Agenda 2000”-reform programme for European agriculture.

8 The Swedish programme for rural development is in this respect clear in its diagnostic and problem description: “Of great importance for occupation in rural areas outside of agriculture are producing and processing industry, building industry and the public and private service sector” (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 10). However, such orientation towards a strategy of integrated rural development does not reappear in the operational parts of the programme and in the single measures.

9 The core idea of “ecological modernisation” is synonymous with the guiding idea of EU policy striving for “reconciliation between economic, social and environmental goals” (Marx 2000, 311; see also Hajer 1995). One – however, critically discussed - assumption of “ecological modernisation” thinking is, that such reconciliation or integration of long term goals is possible within the existing political, economic and social framework (Hajer 1995, 25).

10 “... rural development also incorporates changing rules and patterns within the farm. Important here are the changing gender relations ... and, more generally the re-emergence of the family as an important limiting and
Seen from the point of view of institutional development the two phases of early CAP and subsequent rural development policy may be summarised as “first specialisation and functional differentiation – then new integration of agriculture into the rural and regional economy”.

1.2 The Main Environmental Issues Affecting Swedish Rural Areas

1.2.1 Environmental Issues in Rural Areas

The environmental issues that have been discussed most intensively with regard to agriculture and rural development at a European level during the past decades include the quality and pollution of water and soil, the conservation of habitats and species and biodiversity, the conservation of landscapes and air pollution that damaged forests (for a detailed description of the state of the environment in Sweden, rural areas included, see: Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000; with regard to nitrate pollution from agriculture see Johnsson & Hoffmann 1997). Similar environmental problems and damages (from agricultural and non-agricultural pollution sources) exist in Sweden as in other European countries. However, due to the geographic and demographic factors mentioned above, these environmental problems are not as serious in Sweden as they are in countries with high population density; and there are other, more country- and region-specific environmental problems in rural areas, such as

- increasing acidity of forest soils and inland lakes and waters;
- reforestation of arable land (forests are covering more and more land; since the 1920s Swedish forest area has grown approximately 800 000 ha to presently 23.4 million ha or nearly 60% of the territory: see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 40);
- a specific problem with agrochemicals (the use of agrochemicals has fallen drastically in the second half of the 1980s and is still at low level, however, since the mid of the 1990s the tendency is towards higher sales and higher doses of agrochemicals which has several reasons (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 63: after EU-membership the agricultural land used for cereal production has grown, areas under reforestation or change of production have again gone into intensive agricultural production, also the doses applied are increasing);
- erosion of agricultural land exists regionally (for example, in the intensive agricultural region of Skåne in Southern Sweden, where also the highest level of agriculturally used land at regional level is found, nearly 50%; see Statistiska centralbyran 1998, 17f).

Water extraction is not a major environmental problem, given the low population density in the country and the abundance of water through large surface waters, lakes and rivers, and high annual precipitation (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 131 and 144).11

enabling factor. Together with such modifications, other changes occur in the relations between the farm and ‘outside’ institutions. Rural development also concerns new networks, new dialogue and sometimes new institutional arrangements such as the rise of environmental co-operatives in the Netherlands ... or new consumer co-operatives in Andalucía. Rural development enables the actors involved to go beyond the narrow TATE boundaries that previously existed...” (Ploeg & Renting 2000, 530; TATE means “Technical Administrative Task Environment” and related to the “set of rules, prescriptions and artefacts that link farms with agro-industry and state-agencies through which the farm labour process is described and sanctioned”; ibid. 540).

11 “Agriculture in Sweden has ... generally no problems of large-scale wind- or water erosion or negative environmental consequences of water extraction for rainfed agriculture. However, such problems exist locally.” (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000: 32). Overuse of local ground- and surface water for purposes of human consumption is more a problem related to specific urban or metropolitan areas and a temporary problem during the summer months in large parts of the Swedish coasts and islands due to the high numbers of tourists and summer residents in coastal areas (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 36-38).
Water pollution through nitrates exists from agricultural as well as non-agricultural sources; as an agricultural problem of over-fertilisation it exists, as in most EU-countries. Water pollution is not a primary problem for groundwater, but for surface water in the Southern parts of Sweden and especially in the coastal waters where it contributes to the eutrophication of parts of the coastal waters, as, for example, in the larger environment of the archipelago coast around Stockholm.

Early in the second half of the 20th century Sweden has reported the problem of urban-industrial air pollution and acid rain contributing to the acidification of inland waters and lakes and damaging the large forest reserves of the country. The sources of acid rain have been identified as mainly non-Swedish ones from the more industrialised European countries – Sweden was an importer of environmental damages and this was one of the motives behind the early environmental movements in Sweden and the call for the first global conference on the state of the environment (UNCHE, in Stockholm 1972). During the past decades this issue has lost priority in terms of public and political attention, although, as an ecological problem it has not decreased significantly.12

Soil erosion and conservation of habitats, management of agricultural landscapes and maintenance of biodiversity have not been serious environmental issues in Swedish rural areas before the last decades. Agro-biodiversity has been reduced through modernised intensive agriculture, but also biodiversity in the forests is endangered through so-called “rational forestry” (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 252). Among the fifteen national goals for environmental quality no one is directly formulated with regard to maintenance of biodiversity. The environmental problems that can be found in Swedish rural areas include as well problems of urban-industrial origin as such caused by agriculture and forestry as the dominant forms of rural land use.13

There exist still types of older agricultural landscape (resulting from traditional agricultural practices) which are important for biodiversity. The Swedish agricultural landscape covers only a minor part of the land (7%), but is the habitat of half of all species, plants and mammals as well as all reptiles and amphibians. Birds, insects and bacteria depend on the agricultural landscape. The biotopes with most of the species in the agricultural landscape are meadows and grazing lands. Many of the species mentioned are endangered and therefore protected (Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen 2001: 4-5). The decline of cultivated land would threaten species that depend on human production such as cultivation and husbandry. Since the percentage of land that is used for agriculture in Sweden is so low, a specific argument for the maintenance of biodiversity can be found in the Swedish environmental debate: that it is important to preserve agricultural production as far as possible to ensure habitats for all species and, thereby, to maintain biodiversity. However, this argument evokes the question “What kinds of agricultural production systems do contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity?” The answers are controversial. The maintenance of traditional forms of land use and of specific types of agricultural landscapes (wetlands, pastures, meadows etc) contribute to the agriculture-bound biodiversity, although modestly. After one decade, the overall environmental impact of the agri-

12 For the present situation see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 17-18: Whereas the most widespread forest damages through acidification in the 1980s have been reported from the “black triangle” which comprises parts of Germany, Poland, and former Czechoslovakia, the situation after 1990 is characterised by rapidly increasing sulphur emissions from East Asian countries. Over 80% of the lakes damaged through acidification in Europe are found in Northern Europe – in Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.
13 For the first type of environmental problems (air pollution, industrial or urban water pollution etc.) no further discussion will follow here – as they are not covered by the agri-environmental measures of the EU.
environmental policy that includes such traditional forms of agricultural land use is not yet visible and gradually doubts are formulated in scientific literature. In a discussion of the environmental damages from agriculture and the requirements for a transition to sustainable agriculture Libert (1997, 473) summarises: “The specific objectives that need to be achieved in the development of sustainable agriculture in the western countries of the Baltic region are in particular:
- production of high-quality and healthy agricultural products;
- significant decreases in eutrophication and nitrate contamination of drinking water resulting from agriculture;
- decreasing the potential negative effects of pesticide runoff;
- decreasing air pollution from agriculture;
- preserving and increasing biodiversity of the agricultural landscape;
- preserving and increasing the amenity value of the agricultural landscape;
- improvement of the occupational health conditions of farmers;
- maintaining high soil fertility;
- maintaining healthy and high-productive animal breeds.”

The objectives of the Swedish rural development programme can be compared to this diagnosis of the problems in the region (see below, 2.1).

1.2.2 Environmental Impacts on the Baltic Sea

The environmental impacts of agriculture on the Baltic Sea are of great concern. Nitrogen and phosphorus pollute the Baltic Sea, mainly due to the use of fertilisers in the adjacent countries, including Sweden. This leads to pollution of drinking water and to eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. At first glance Sweden does not seem to be contributing to the pollution as much as other neighbouring countries (see table 2 below), but compared to its smaller population it has one of the highest levels of effluence (Jansson, 1997, 428). The effluence of 65.100 tons of Nitrate from Sweden in the late 1980s has been reduced to 48.200 tons until 1995 (The Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment 2001, 3). Southern Sweden, where most of the intensive agricultural production is located, contributes especially to this, but even forestry contributes to the pollution. Wetlands

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14 The publication of a critical study in the scientific journal “Nature” (Kleijn et al. 2001) symbolises the breakthrough of a critical voice in science arguing against the effectiveness of agri-environmental measures of EU as means to improve environmental quality. With regard to the biodiversity-debate it seems necessary to differentiate the rather unspecific debate (to avoid a fallback to prior concepts of nature conservation and species protection). In the scientific (natural scientific and biological) literature the argument has prevailed that the scope, dynamics and impacts of biodiversity and biodiversity-loss are still rather unknown (see, for example, Holdgate 1996). In the present political-scientific debate on the Convention for Biodiversity and its national implementation, different levels and forms of biodiversity are touched on. Because of the geographic and climatic location of Sweden, biodiversity in general is lower here than in countries more southward. Furthermore, causes of biodiversity loss and its impacts cannot be accounted for in ecological terms only – biodiversity maintenance is an intricate issue of ecological and cultural (including ethical and aesthetic) causes and values. Whereas this is acknowledged in the political and scientific discourse (see for example Bernes 1994, 10f), its consequences for the scientific analysis of biodiversity are not clear yet (beyond the requirement of interdisciplinary research). In the debate about maintenance of biodiversity a preliminary differentiation between wild biodiversity, agro-biodiversity and agriculture-related biodiversity seems to be useful. Whereas the first kind becomes a main topic of the global biodiversity debate in connection with the patenting of user rights in plants and genes, the latter ones are at the core of the European biodiversity debate in connection with the agri-environmental measures of the EU. A critical question is, how far agriculture (and: which systems of agriculture) contribute to the maintenance or loss of agro-biodiversity in terms of maintenance or reduction of plant and animal species and races cultivated and domesticated. The more complicated questions arise with the maintenance of biodiversity coupled with agriculture without being the object of agricultural production (for example, plants and animals with habitats in agricultural landscapes although they may also live in non-agricultural habitats).
and covering land during autumn and winter are important strategies in reducing the outlets to the Baltic Sea.

Table 2 Loads of Nitrogen and Phosphorus to the Baltic Proper, Country-wise in 1990 (21)

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Nitrogen (%)</th>
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<td>Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania And Russia</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Deposition Nitrogen fixation</td>
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| Source: Jansson 1997, 428

1.3 Implementation of Environmental and Rural Development Programmes

1.3.1 Environmental Directives of the European Union

Neither the Swedish Government nor the European Union have reported major difficulties or delays with the implementation of environmental directives relating to rural areas, especially for the Nitrates Directive from 1991 (EEC 676/91) and the Birds and Habitats Directives from 1979 and 1992 (EEC 409/79 and EEC 34/92). For the EU-directives the implementation needs to be seen in relation to Sweden's late membership in the EU from 1995. With regard to the Nitrate Directive the RDP-programme argues that with the implementation of the new Swedish environmental law since 1999 ("miljöbalken"; see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 208) Sweden is “more advanced” in environmental legislation than the EU requires, as it has not only regulated reduction of nitrate leaching (in specific environmentally sensitive areas, mostly close to the coast or coastal zones), but also issued measures for the reduction of losses of phosphor and ammoniac in agriculture (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 96).

The Habitats Directive as a community measure to maintain biodiversity was also designed to meet the requirements and obligations of European states in the Post-UNCED-process (after the Rio summit 1992) for the Convention on Biological Diversity. "Sweden has in the framework of

15 Recently Sweden has been confronted with EU’s criticism of deficits in the implementation of the European Directive for Bathing Water.
Natura 2000 designated and marked 1919 habitat and 301 bird protection areas. Beyond the completion and consecutive changes in legislation the measures of the rural development programme have high significance (for environmental measures for example) to implement the directive in important areas.” (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 96).

The environmental groups rarely assess the directives or the programmes for their implementation for formal compliance but for the ecological effects and impacts of measures or for the contribution of the programmes to the maintenance of traditional elements in the agricultural landscape. And this assessment is related to concepts of ecologically sustainable agriculture or the necessity of agriculture for the maintenance of productive and diverse landscapes or of rural society. The frameworks adopted for discussing and assessing agriculture, its role for rural development and its environmental impacts, differ between the governmental actors and the environmental groups; the environmental groups ask for the realisation of a broad dialogue within the society about the future of agriculture and rural areas and they are partially critical of the European and Swedish programmes for agriculture and rural development, although they support the new rural development programme (see for example: www.info@wwf.se and www.info@snf.se). From an environmental perspective the measures in the RDP can be criticised with arguments that could be and have been applied to the prior agricultural programme and environmental directives of the EU – as having been incomplete, insufficient or incoherent.

1.3.2 European and National Programmes for Rural Development in Sweden

Before Sweden became a member of the European Union, rural development was outlined by the Government Bill of Regional Policy as well as by the specific counties. Since accession, the Structural Funds have replaced the earlier local programmes. The Structural Funds Programmes in Sweden during the period 2000-2006 are described in box 1.

From the information given in box 1 it can be concluded that the programmes financed from the Structural Funds of the EU have rapidly become significant instruments for rural development in Sweden, both in terms of money spent and in number of programmes and projects implemented. The programmes partly overlap with the Swedish rural development plan (RDP) based on EU-Regulation EC 1257/1999, but there is no integrated management of the different programmes. As will be seen from the further discussion (see appendix, case study Jämtland), the relations between Objective 1-programmes and RDP are complicated because of the mechanisms for financing.

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16 From the environmental NGOs only WWF Sweden and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (“Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen”) are active on agricultural issues and rural development (for an overview of Swedish environmental organisations see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 214) – if the Association of Swedish Organic farmers is not counted among the environmental movements. For the orientation of WWF Sweden in its policy work to maintain traditional elements of agricultural landscape that should become components of future environmentally sustainable agriculture see www.info@wwf.se. For the approach of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SNF) which links landscape and protection elements with a holistic view of environmentally sustainable agriculture encompassing production and consumption see: Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen, 2001 and www.info@snf.se. As well WWF Sweden as SNF do not work with a simple definition of sustainable agriculture or sustainable rural development but follow “synthetic” perspectives in which different traditions and agricultural production forms can contribute to the larger goal of sustainable development.
Box 1: EU-Programmes in Sweden 2000-2006 (Structural Funds)

Objective 1-programmes:
Co-financed by EU with 772 million Euro during the period. Objective 1-programmes aim at developing local economy and industry, prevent depopulation and support local tradition in less favoured areas. They are carried out in two areas of Sweden: Northern Norrland and Southern Forest Region, and thus affecting 51 municipalities and about 970,000 inhabitants.

Objective 2-programmes:
Co-financed by EU with 354 million Euro during the period. Objective 2 programmes aim at stimulating economic development in exposed rural and industrial areas. These are divided into four programmes: Northern, Western, Southern and Islands, and thereby affecting 76 municipalities in 11 counties and 300 islands without any bridge to the mainland. The total population in Objective2-areas amounts to 1.2 million inhabitants.

INTERREG programmes:
Co-financed by EU with 154 million Euro during the period. INTERREG aims at developing co-operation across the national borders. INTERREG IIIA supports co-operation in border districts. (Six programmes which affect Sweden: The Sound, Sweden-Denmark; The Archipelago; The Kvarken Straits, Sweden-Finland; The Arctic area; Kolarctic in the Baltic Sea; and finally Sweden-Norway.) INTERREG IIB supports co-operation in trans-national areas to achieve better co-ordination to reach balanced and sustainable development. (Three programmes affect Sweden: The Baltic Sea, The Northern Periphery and the North Sea.) INTERREG IICC is to facilitate co-operation between regions in the EU and neighbouring countries.

LEADER+:
Co-financed by EU with 38 million Euro during the period. LEADER+ aims at supporting rural development based on local strategies with emphasis on innovative projects. Local Action Groups, consisting of partnerships of local stakeholders, implement rural development plans. The development plans aim at supporting various projects with an integrating structure. A nation-wide LEADER network has been established to spread knowledge and ideas and methods (for further information on LEADER in Sweden go to: http://www.leader.bygde.net).

Source: Eckerberg & Wide, 2001

Besides the programmes co-financed by the EU, and the different sector-specific policy programmes and strategies of the Swedish government that may have an impact on the development of rural areas (programmes such as the national environmental programmes that are presently unified under the umbrella if 15 national environmental goals, the programmes for coastal areas or other programmes from the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications that is formally responsible for regional policy and development measures also in rural areas), there are presently two important national programmes and components for rural development in Sweden:

- Regional Growth Contracts (RGC): RGCs (see box 2) are financed by local and regional means. The aim is to co-ordinate regional stakeholders in developing a plan for development on regional level. A network consisting of stakeholders evaluate potential for and threats to a sustainable economic and environmental development. Gender issues and environmental concerns should have priority in these Agreements. However, several NGOs consider the RGCs to be almost entirely focussed on economic aspects of business and technology. After comparing several RGCs (see case study 2 below) this view is confirmed, as specific
environmental or gender related targets and evaluation processes are rarely, if ever, set in the agreements.

- **Local development groups**: Such groups are financed from different sources (local, regional or EU funds that are available to applicants). They are not part of a political programme, however, they may become a supporting structure to different programmes for rural development. The development groups are often rooted in a specific village or municipality, and the groups focus on subjects and activities as widespread as festivities, culture, meeting-places, study-circles, roads, tourism, fairs and sales, environment and nature etc. The activities derive from local needs and interests, and since there are 4168 local development groups in Sweden, this is a development force to be taken into account.  

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**Box 2: The Regional Growth Contracts (RGC) in Sweden**

**History:** In spring 1998 the Swedish Parliament (“Riksdagen”) approved the government bill “Regional Growth - for Employment and Welfare” (1997/98:62) with a proposal for a regionalised and innovative industrial policy. All the Swedish regions were given the opportunity to create a RGC to increase local and regional influence on national policy and to make governmental resources earmarked for growth and employment more flexible. The RGCs are inspired by EU Structural Funds. After a test of the RGC a new Government Bill was approved in the Swedish Parliament in 2001 to continue the regional work with the contracts during the period 2004-2007. The regional growth contracts should continue until 2003. When a new programme period begins in 2004 the growth contracts should be renamed “Regional Growth Programmes”. The regional growth programme shall entail analysis, objectives and regional priorities as well as a plan on how to finance, implement and evaluate the measures.

**Objectives:** The RGC are part of a new regional development policy that aims to create new opportunities for sustainable economic growth in all regions through integration with other policy areas. The RGC-policy is based on the following assumptions (Näringsdepartementet, September 2001):
- The policy should entail all regions in Sweden.
- The state should be clear with regard to its role and responsibility.
- The state has a responsibility for the national perspective in all policy-areas and its transfer into regional and local development.
- It is necessary to realise regional influence and variation.
- The policy should contribute to sustainable development.
- The policy should contribute to equal opportunities for men and women.
- The policy should contribute to manifoldness and integration.
- The policy should contribute to well-functioning competition.
- The policy should build upon a learning-process.

The policy aims at creating “Well functioning and sustainable local labour market regions that have a good level of service in all parts of the country.” (Näringsdepartementet, September 2001) “Well functioning local labour market regions” implies that the regions should be attractive for both inhabitants and co-operations and that it is possible to make use of the endogenous development potential of the region. “Sustainable” implies that the policy should contribute to offer healthy economic, social and ecological conditions for present and future generations. “A good level of service” implies that both inhabitants and co-operations should have access to commercial and public service in all regions.

**Approach:** In the contract an analysis of the potential for and threats to economic growth and industrial development in the region should be conducted. The RGC is developed in partnership, that is, in co-operation between the municipalities in the region as well as representatives from trade and industry, regional administration and other local stakeholders. The government assesses that the partnership is a well-functioning process for facilitating regional development and has plans to further develop this method, hereby encouraging a cross-sectoral approach to regional growth and development that renders possibilities for multi-sectoral collaboration. The growth contracts have been

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17 For further informations on local development groups see **Folkrörelserådet Hela Sverige ska leva!**: [http://www.bygde.net](http://www.bygde.net). For environmental development groups see: [http://agenda21forum.org](http://agenda21forum.org), and for study-groups see: [http://folkbildning.se](http://folkbildning.se).
characterised by an emphasis on economic growth, but it is proposed by several authorities and stakeholders that the growth contracts could be an instrument for promoting integrated rural development with an emphasis on ecological and social sustainability as well as an economic dimension.

Relation to other programmes and projects: The RGCs are seen as the primary vehicle for regional development in the future. Since we are still in the midst of the first programme period there is not yet a total co-ordination of all other programmes and projects. At a national level the aim is to co-ordinate all state financed regional development within the regional growth contracts. It is intended that the national policy for regional development co-operations with the EU Structure and Regional Funds. The integration of regional growth contracts with EU funded programmes is not yet laid out on a national level. Some regions try to integrate Structural Funds actively in their regional growth contracts, others make no connection between these two. The RDP is not mentioned in any of the regional growth contracts analysed in this paper, nor is it emphasised that these two should be integrated on a national level.

Organisations involved in planning, delivery, monitoring: The regional growth contract should be planned, delivered and monitored by
- the regional administration in co-operation with local partnerships through
- a co-operation group based on administrations in municipalities ("kommunerna") and local partnerships.
During the first programme period it was not defined which stakeholders should be included in the local partnerships. For the programme period 2004-2007 clear demands will be set on which representatives should be included in the planning. In the practice, the partnerships are not yet fully developed and broadened to entail all stakeholders’ interests.

Funding: The funding of the measures planned in the RGCs is pre-determined in the partnership. The funding can consist of state finances to support regional development, EU Structural and Regional Funds, funds from regional administrations and municipalities as well as funds from trade and industry and other local stakeholders. Co-funding is the normal practice where the regional administration and municipalities finance 50% if the partnership is willing to finance the other 50%. According to accounts from 18 of the total 21 regions, 2585 million SEK have been found for funding of RGCs until September 2001. The structure of co-funding of RGC varies between the regions. Almost half of all measures in the growth contracts are financed by state means, private financiers account for 25%, municipalities for 8% and EU funds for only 6%. The share financed by EU is expected to grow since the planned programmes under Structural Funds are not yet implemented.

Impacts: The regional growth contracts have not yet been implemented for a full programme period. Still there are reports from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (Näringsdepartementet, Ds 2000:7 and Ds 2001:15) that indicate some impacts of the contracts at an early stage. It is noted that the partnership process is effective as a tool for planning regional development, but that the partnerships should be broadened. Secondly, it is concluded that the financing of growth contracts varies between regions; in some regions almost all measures are financed by public means, whereas other regions have succeeded in mobilising financiers from both public and private sectors. The regional growth contracts can be seen as innovative way of decentralising regional development policy and broadening participation, but this seems to be effective so far for economic growth and not so much for social and ecological sustainability.

The environmental aspects of the regional growth contracts are commented as follows: “In some areas shortcomings are detected. Therefore the Government would like to stress that it is important that the continued work with regional growth contracts highlights gender and environmental issues as vehicles for development and growth. The Government proceeds by financing the development of methods to further strengthen these areas.” (Ds 2000:7, authors own translation). The Swedish Board of Environmental Protection (Naturvårdsverket, 2001) supports this in the report "Broaden the Perspectives! – Environmental Integration in Regional Growth Contracts". Hardly any environmental integration has taken place and the environment has only been used marginally as a driving-force of growth (in spite of issued directives stating that the growth agreements should contribute to ecologically sustainable development). The Board of Environmental Protection recommends that the Swedish environmental objectives should be integrated in the regional growth contracts from the very beginning of the planning process. Not only would this result in more coherent growth contracts that take environmental as well as economical issues into account, but it also renders the possibility to broaden the knowledge on how to develop an economic growth through investments in the environmental sector.

Sources: Own inquiry; sources quoted
Both of these innovative components that fit well into an overall strategy of integrated rural development, are not integrated with the RDP, but are complementary in many respects. Whereas the RGCs could strengthen the economic component of sustainable rural development (practically seen: regional and local enterprises as important stakeholders of rural development), the local development groups could become the key actors anchoring rural development in the local communities and connecting it with projects for local “Agenda 21”.

1.4 The Preparation and Formulation of the Rural Development Plan (RDP)

The RDP is a national programme that is shaped by the centralised Swedish state and political system; the RDP is neither regionally organised nor does it account much for the regional differences of agriculture and rural development, although specific regionally limited measures are part of the programme. This “unitary” nature of the programme can be found throughout its formulation and implementation. In the phase of programme formulation the centralism is indicated by writing practice (the programme was elaborated by a small group of authors in the Ministry and Board of Agriculture); in the implementation phase it is indicated by the organisation of budget control (the budget is administered and controlled by the Board of Agriculture, with the exception of forestry measures). The centralism and top-down implementation of the programme does not exclude consultation and participation of rural stakeholders.

The public and political acceptance of the RDP in the phase of programme formulation has been created through two main consultative mechanisms that follow a tradition in Swedish policy process which is oriented to a maximum of public information: (a) a governmental report and (b) a consultation of stakeholders.

(a) In 1998 the Government appointed a committee to formulate a report about the future environmental program for the agricultural sector. The aim was to investigate how a future program could best attain the Swedish environmental objectives. Furthermore, the report aimed at simplifying the rules and bureaucracy for users as well as authorities. In the committee stakeholders from authorities as well as NGOs were represented, and a large number of experts were consulted during the process. The results were presented in the report "Jordbruk och miljönytta" (Agriculture and environmental advantages; SOU 1999:78). In consultation with stakeholders and following the national environmental objectives a new programme was put forward. The measures were reduced from 14 to 10 and the rules accompanying the measures were simplified. The report argues that the structure of the programme should be adjusted to obtain the national environmental objectives. This report is the foundation on which the Swedish RDP has been built.

(b) During the phase of preparation and formulation of the RDP intensive consultation has taken place with many stakeholders – governmental agencies, organisations, political and groups, environmental movements and NGOs, public administrations, experts etc. This intensive consultation included two formal procedures – a hearing (July 7 1999) and a debate procedure in which the stakeholders had an opportunity to articulate their ideas or objections concerning the proposal (“remissförfarande”; see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 201-204). The main arguments from the consulted stakeholders are summarised in the RDP: these are mainly detail arguments concerning single measures, their necessity or the level of compensation payments; only in some statements (for instance by the Swedish Authority for Audits, “Riksrevisionsverket”, and the Swedish Agricultural University), the argument was stressed that society should to a larger degree introduce the “polluter pays”-principle for agriculture with regard to nitrate leaching. The final RDP is said to
have “taken into account” the points of views of the stakeholders (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 201) – a statement which is not detailed to allow for an assessment of the degree of participation of stakeholders in the preparation of the programme.

From the procedure it can be seen that the forms of hearing and consulting have also been established in Swedish policy or public planning in general. Such consultation in the preparatory phase is not an intensive and systematic form of stakeholder participation (it works more on the base to give the potential stakeholders an opportunity to articulate their ideas). Furthermore, as is the case with most policy programmes in Sweden and other Member States of the EU, stakeholder participation is not foreseen to the same degree in the implementation phase of the programme. As well environmental authorities as environmental NGOs have been involved in the preparation of the RDP, but the kind of involvement is more specific and complex than to be described in quantitative terms (such as “not, partly, or fully involved”). Not all of these actors or organisations may be highly interested or see as formally (or with regard to the aims and contents) obliged to take co-responsibility in a programme which is dominated by the regulatory systems of the EU and the Swedish state.

The consultation with stakeholders indicates the willingness of the programme formulating instances in the agricultural administration to attain a broad consensus in the rural development community about the programme, its objectives and the measures. However, how effective such temporary consultation is as a form of participation of these actors in the process of decision-making is more difficult to assess - it is difficult to estimate the influence of the consultation process at all. Obviously it was seen by most of the actors involved as “following the routines of Swedish policy formulation” that includes consultation with the target groups, and this consultation is understood as a democratic mechanism for building of consensus. The reading of the RDP shows, that the consultation during programme formulation has made the programme more complex and complicated, but not necessarily more coherent and more consensus-based.

The broad consultation with stakeholders in the preparation phase is not continued in the implementation phase. An Advisory Council (“Rådgivande kommitté”; see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 186f) has been established during programme implementation - with functions in monitoring, adaptation and control of the programme and with the main actors of the rural development community as members. However, it cannot be estimated either, how effective this “representative participation” is. The Council is part of the centralised structure of programme management and is not intensively involved in the implementation process. In contrast to the importance imputed to the council in the programme, the council meets too rarely, and is too big and too passive to be seen as an active form of stakeholder participation. The Council has no formal influence on the operational decisions concerning the implementation of the programme (for example, the acceptance of applications and the decisions about payments). It may have more influence with regard to revisions and changes of the programme that have started with the proposals for modification by the Board of Agriculture in 2001. Other, more regional or local forms of participation of stakeholders, rural or environmental groups, are not formally planned in the RDP, however, not excluded either. At the level of implementing individual measures of the RDP there is some flexibility which allows for limited forms of co-ordination and co-management between the regional administrations or their different departments (for agriculture, nature protection, natural heritage management and fishery for example) and stakeholders (such as the farmers associations and environmental organisations) – however, because of its very informality and contingency, such practice of concerted action cannot be assessed at present with regard to its forms, extent and effects with the information available from the sources of this study.
In the implementation process the RDP does not foresee specific and detailed rules for co-
ordination of authorities involved (the short formulation is “Co-ordination between authorities
will happen”, Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 184). The concert of action between the
governmental or sector authorities – for agriculture, environment, and development – in the
formulation phase was part of a broader consultation with many stakeholders. As for the
implementation, it was clear throughout the preparation of the programme, that this happens
under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Board of Agriculture – the
agricultural administration is further on in control of the programme, as in the prior agri-
environmental programme for the second half of the 1990s.
Table 1: Indicative Overall Budget (Euro, million) of the RDP Plan for Sweden

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### Indicative Overall Budget for two measures included in priority I and II, (Euro, million)

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<td>Public costs</td>
<td>Public costs</td>
<td>Public costs</td>
<td>Public costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>19.65</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>21.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries, 2000
The main document for rural development in Sweden and for the implementation of Council Regulation EC 1257/99 and Commission Regulation EC 1750/99 is the “Miljö- och landsbygdsprogram för Sverige 2000 – 2006” (“Environmental and Rural Development Programme for Sweden 2000-2006”: in the Swedish discussion it is known under the acronym of LBU; in this text it is called the Swedish Rural Development Plan or RDP). This programme encompasses all national and regional measures derived from both EU-regulations for rural development. The RDP signals more continuity than change for Swedish rural development - a second phase of “ecological transformation” of Swedish agriculture that started after Swedish EU-membership in 1995 with a similar programme, the Swedish environmental programme for 1996-2000 (“Svenska miljöprogrammet 1996-2000”). An important difference to the first phase is a lower ambition of the programme because of the lower budget and lower levels of compensation payments to Swedish farmers (for the first agri-environmental programme see information in Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 181 and Stenseke 2001, 56ff; for the new RDP-programme see information below). Complementary national and regional programmes and measures for rural development exist, but are reported below as context factors only.

2.1 Environmental Issues and Priorities in Rural Areas

(1) The description of RDP’s environmental problem assessment

The RDP includes a summarising analysis of the environmental problems in Swedish rural areas. Serious environmental problems through agriculture have been identified as
- nitrate leaching which leads to eutrophication of coastal and sea waters and influences groundwater;
- losses from plant production causing eutrophication of lakes and rivers;
- losses of ammoniac from agriculture resulting in acidification and over-fertilisation of soils;
- risks for health and environment as a consequence of the use of agrochemicals;
- reduction of diversity of natural and agricultural environments through the present forms of agricultural land use or the termination of agriculture (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 32; more detailed figures follow in the report).

With regard to forestry (a much more widespread form of land use) the programme is less detailed in its analysis and refers mainly to the fact that the protection of forestland is not sufficient today. This is understood to be a consequence of the short time since the adoption of national environmental objectives for forests in 1993 (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 43f). The long-term changes of landscape and biodiversity through modern agriculture are mentioned in the programme (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 33ff), as these are important with regard to the overall goal of Swedish agri-environmental policy, that is, the maintenance of a rich and diverse agricultural landscape; however the attention paid and effort of analysis to such environmental impacts in the programme is not high.

(2) Discussion of RDP’s environmental problem assessment

This analysis of environmental problems shows similarities with rural environmental problems in most EU-Member States. The argument is clearly formulated in the RDP that serious environmental problems in the countryside are caused by modern agriculture (but also the negative environmental impacts on agriculture from urban and industrial pollution are mentioned briefly in the programme). The diagnosis given in the RDP is compatible with the more general
diagnosis and description of the “state of the environment” in Sweden, published every three or four years by the Swedish Board of Nature. The environmental diagnosis of the RDP is not very specific; it is similar to the one that justified the prior agri-environmental measures and signals more continuity with the earlier EU-policy programme and the reasons for this. The diagnosis is not based on an in-depth analysis and does
- not differentiate between different systems of agricultural production (such as traditional, conventional modernised, integrated or organic farming) and their specific environmental impacts,
- nor is an analysis of the complex causal interrelations between the agricultural production and environmental change included.

For both items the RDP relies heavily on the governmental report published earlier, “Jordbruk och miljönytta” (Agriculture and environmental advantages; SOU 1999).

The main arguments and causes given in the programme plan for environmental damages through modern agriculture justify specific agriculture-related measures to improve the environment – and the agri-environmental measures offered with the EU regulation for rural development and in the RDP deliver such measures that fit in this problem diagnosis. The RDP avoids a description, analysis or discussion of forms of agriculture that suffice the requirements of the general goal of ecological sustainability. The cautious discussion of forestry in the programme can also be seen as insufficient and allows for the conclusion that forestry is not adequately addressed in the programme – neither at the level of the predominance of land use through forestry, nor with regard to the environmental problems in forest areas, or the environmental problems caused through modern forestry. In Sweden forestry is a modernised and industrialised sector of the economy, and the problems of sustainable forest development may be much more difficult to manage through political programmes than in the case of agriculture.

In comparison to the environmental problems in rural areas reviewed above (see 1.2), the assessment of rural environmental problems and priorities in the RDP does not differ in principle. However, the assessment in the RDP is
- not based on in-depth analysis of environmental problems,
- not based on regionally differentiated analysis of environmental problems,
- does not set clear priorities, and
- the problems mentioned in the RDP are not sufficiently covered by the measures provided.

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18 In the recent report published 2000, at the beginning of the RDP, the following summary is formulated. “Growth of productivity during the past 40 years has led to different types of environmental problems. New forms of management and closing down of agricultural land and grassland have influenced the structure of the landscape and the conditions for many plants and animals. The input of fertiliser has caused leaching to surface waters. Concentration in animal husbandry and use of organic manure contributes to air pollution. Agrochemicals influence the ecosystems and biodiversity.” (Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyrån 2000, 54)

19 In the report on the state of Swedish environment there is a more detailed analysis of environmental problems and consequences of forestry. The high economic value of Swedish forests is not just indicated by the large part of the country covered by forests, but by the high percentage of “productive forest land”: “The total forest area in the country is approximately 30 million hectares. From this area more than 23 million hectares can be counted as productive forest land (soil and climatic conditions are sufficient to produce at least 1 cubic meter of wood per hectare and year). About 90% of the productive forest land is used for forestry, … about half of the Swedish forest land is owned by private foresters.” (Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 48).

20 With regard to methods and approaches practised in Swedish environmental policy Environmental Impact Assessment ("Miljökonskvensbeskrivningen": MKB) is of some importance. It has been introduced as an obligatory procedure with the Swedish Environmental Law in 1999, but has been practised before in many environment-related projects (see Boverket 1996). MKB may be seen as an operational instrument in planning and decision-making, however, it is not of strategic importance to set priorities or assess projects within the RDP.
In comparison to the diagnosis by Libert (see above, 1.2.1) of objectives to be achieved in the transition towards sustainable agriculture it can be concluded, that the problem assessment in RDP touches most of the issues, however, the measures in the programme do not address all problems systematically and intensively.

The conclusion that the measures in the RDP are insufficient to solve the environmental problems in Swedish rural areas must not primarily be seen as a deficit of the Swedish RDP, but more as a deficit of the European RDR which departs from a standard structure of measures that may not fit well to all national and regional circumstances in the Member States. To make full use of the RDR and the financing offers from EU in Sweden, it seems necessary to concentrate on the environmental problems that are in line with the European RDR and its focus on agri-environmental measures as these have been political consensus in the EU. That these problems are not of similar kind and significance in all countries of the EU is an issue that may be assessed differently – neglecting other problems that are not on the political agenda presently, or trying to adapt the programme to the specific environmental problems in a country or region. The concentration on agri-environmental measures as in the preceding environmental programme (1995-1999) can be understood to make sense as “applying as many measures from the European regulation as are applicable”. The strategic orientation for the Swedish RDP is to use the European programme for the transformation of Swedish agriculture towards environmentally sustainable forms of production, especially for transformation to organic farming – under neglect of the requirements that for the maintenance of “living rural areas” in Sweden other supporting measures would be more needed than agri-environmental measures. Such other measures are only offered to a limited degree under the priority II area of the RDP.

2.2 Environmental Objectives and Measures of the RDP

Table 3: Budgetary allocation for measures contained within the Swedish RDP, 2000-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public Costs</th>
<th>EU contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>308,49</td>
<td>150,65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>366,18</td>
<td>154,32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>360,92</td>
<td>157,82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>367,84</td>
<td>161,33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>375,93</td>
<td>164,94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>382,46</td>
<td>168,61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>389,81</td>
<td>172,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2000-2006</td>
<td>2551,63</td>
<td>1130,05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture Food and fisheries, 2000

(1) The structure of objectives and measures in the RDP

The RDP closely follows the structure of measures formulated in Regulation EC 1257/99. This demonstrates the administrative and legal perspective followed by the authors of the programme. Although EU-conformity and compliance with EU-rules is practised, there is some elbowroom to
adapt the programme to the situation in Swedish rural areas (for example, in the level of compensation payments).

The structure of the RDP-objectives is simple and short, concentrated in the formula "to support an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development of agriculture, food production, forestry and rural areas". From this formulation two priority areas are derived that characterise the programme and its measures:
- Priority I, organic farming and ecologically sustainable rural development
- Priority II, economically and socially sustainable rural development.

For a description of the measures in the two priority areas see table 1 above. The overall goal structure in priority I can be broken down further into three sub-programmes as follows: sub-programme 1 includes measures to maintain biodiversity and culturally important elements in the agricultural landscape; sub-programme 2 includes under the aim of an open and diverse production landscape only one measure (environmentally friendly management of grazing lands); sub-programme 3 includes measures for environmentally adapted agriculture (here included organic production and wetland management, reduced nitrate leaching, protection zones, and two special regional measures for Öland and Gotland island).

The budget allocation between the two priority areas in terms of budgets shows more the nature of the programme than the objectives formulated or the measures specified. The RDP is predominantly
- a programme for transformation of agriculture to environmentally friendly and organic farming and
- This transformation is mainly financed from budgets for the support of agriculture, not from budgets for environmental policy or measures.

From a total programme budget of 21.679 million SEK, two thirds (14.008 million SEK) are spent for priority I - measures, and among these the main part of money flows into support for adaptation of agriculture to the environment, altogether 8.840 million SEK (within three subprograms: maintenance of biodiversity and agricultural landscape, open and varied agricultural landscape, environmentally adapted agriculture). For priority II the budget is less than 10% of that for priority I, altogether 1.344 million SEK (the rest of the programme budget is spent for evaluation, 195 million SEK, and a large sum of 6.190 million SEK is for environmental support for agriculture as money bound through contracts from the prior programme period; for the figures see Jordbruksverket 2000, 6f).

Seen from the budget allocation, the Swedish RDP is
- predominantly a programme for agriculture and its adaptation to minimum environmental standards,
- only to a limited degree promoting rural development "beyond the farm gate", with a more integrated view of rural development (as it is expressed in the measures for priority II under the title of economically and socially sustainable rural development).

These later measures include the core of rural development measures in the residual category of "Article 33" of the EU-Regulation for Rural Development (marketing of quality products from agriculture, diversification of agriculture, development and improvement of infrastructure for agricultural development, rural tourism, village development and conservation of the cultural heritage in the countryside). In the RDP 470 million SEK are spent for this kind of activities, that is, about one third of the budget for priority II measures.

The "Article 33"-measures are not as well financed as the agri-environmental measures. Therefore it is stated in the Swedish RDP that further national financing will be spent on “Article
measures. The financing is allocated from regional and county administrations and should amount to 30.5 million EURO during the programme period (LBU 2000: 208). The terms for financing the “Article 33”-measures are not developed further in the programme. The quantified environmental targets of the RDP can be seen from the report by the Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket 2001) reviewed below (see 3.3).

(2) Environmental issues in Swedish rural areas that are not addressed in the RDP

The environmental problems mentioned above (see 1.2), as specific ones in Swedish rural areas are not addressed in the RDP, which thus demonstrates its limitation to the problems prioritised in the European RDR with its core of agri-environmental measures. Not addressed are such problems as

- the acidification of lakes and forests (which is controlled by spreading of calcium in lakes and forests: in 1997 230 000 tons of calcium have been sprayed over waters and wetlands, 10 000 tons in 1998 over forest soil; see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 233);
- reforestation of arable land (forests are covering more and more land; see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 40) but also specific measures to combat damaging of trees from acid rain are not foreseen in the RDP;
- problems with agrochemicals that go beyond the code for good farming practice (see above, 1.2.1: the use of agrochemicals has fallen drastically in the second half of the 1980s and is still at low level, however, since the mid of the 1990s the tendency is towards higher sales and higher doses of agrochemicals; see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 63);
- problems such as erosion of agricultural land that exist regionally (for example, in the intensive agricultural region of Skåne in Southern Sweden).

(3) Deficits of RDP-measures as seen by rural and environmental actors

The main arguments concerning deficits in the measures formulated in the RDP that came from the actors interviewed refer to the following factors:

- Insufficient attention for grasslands and wetlands in the programme. Grasslands and wetlands have been reduced in the course of agricultural modernisation for increasing areas for cultivation (during the second half of 20th century grassland has been reduced to the level of approximately 0.5 million ha, whereas cultivated land is at the level of approximately 3 million ha: see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 54), but grasslands are of specific importance for protection of soil, species and biodiversity.
- Insufficient discussion of the necessity and roles of agriculture and primary production for landscape development in rural areas. Although agriculture is the dominant theme in the RDP, there are no clear aims for the long term future of agriculture and no integration with other sectors of primary production in rural areas – forestry, fishery, reindeer herding, hunting.
- Unclear relations of the RDP-measures to measures in other policies and programmes for rural areas. It is supposed that there is a large degree of incoherence (and of blocking and limiting effects) in relation to other programmes (consequently, an isolated assessment of the rural development measures under the RDP may not reveal important obstacles in the attainment of the programme objectives).

(4) Discussion of the objectives and measures of RDP
The RDP shows a dominance of environmental measures for agriculture. This is not a new feature of the programme, but an expression of the continuity of Swedish agricultural policy since the prior period of agri-environmental measures after EU-membership. The requirement of stronger integration of agri-environmental measures with other policies and programmes influencing rural development has grown in the present programme period. Under the first agri-environmental programme (1996-2000) the aspiration level (expressed in the budget figures for agri-environmental measures) has been higher than under the present RDP. The lower ambition is explained in the programme with the lower funds presently available from EU. The RDP seems still an ambitious programme when, for instance, the objectives for conversion to organic farming are seen: within the programme period the percentage of land under organic cultivation from the total arable land should again be doubled from 10% (Objective of the prior programme) to 20%, thus completing an overall goal of EU agri-environmental policy at an early time. In the late 1990s Sweden was not among the EU-countries with a large “organic sector” of agriculture (Austria was most advanced in those years). However, as can be observed in Sweden, Finland, and to some degree in Denmark, the percentage of land under organic farming is rapidly growing under the influence of European agri-environmental policy (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 57). At the end of the RDP in 2006 it may well be that Sweden counts among the EU-members with the highest levels of agricultural land under organic production. What may be assessed differently by the political actors and groups is the relation between payments to farmers for environmentally sound production and the market value of the agricultural product; the latter already being lower than the support for organic agriculture (as is critically observed by the Ministry and Board of Agriculture).

A specific feature of the Swedish RDP – visible in the comparison of the budgeting of the RDPs in the different EU countries – is a relatively high amount of the budget that is spent for education and training programmes (984 million SEK under priority I measures, for environmentally sound agricultural production and 127 million SEK under priority II measures, for economically and socially sustainable rural development). This investment in the “human capital” and in the longer-term future of rural development may become effective in creating lasting effects of the programme beyond the time of its termination. For both priority areas the application of budget for capacity building seemed rather badly targeted in the early time of programme implementation – therefore the Board of Agriculture formulated some suggestions to modify these measures in the further implementation of the RDP. The suggestions include more target-group specific spending of the budget (to concentrate on advisory programmes for farmers who want to start or continue with complementary economic activities or advice for women to improve their chances of finding work in rural economy for priority II; to increase the budget for consulting of farmers with regard to reductions of nitrate leaching and losses of fertilisers under priority I; see Jordbruksverket 2001, 13 and 18).

2.3 Environmental Objectives of other Programmes and Strategies

The relations between the RDP and international and national programmes for agriculture, environment and rural development which Sweden has signed and is obliged to comply with is described in detail in the programme (see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 93ff). The main environmental programmes, which Sweden has to comply with and which may overlap with the RDP, include the following that are analysed in the programme plan:

(a) International level: The Convention on Biodiversity, the RAMSAR-Convention, the UNESCO-Convention for the protection of global cultural and environmental heritage,
the HELCOM-Convention for the Baltic Sea, the OSPAR-Convention for the protection of marine environments in the North Atlantic, the LRTAP-Convention of trans-boundary air pollution, the “Baltic 21” - Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea, the Conference of Ministers for the Protection of European Forests, the UNCED-Conference and “Agenda 21” especially with regard to the improvement of inter-state co-operation in forestry.

(b) International level - EU: the Species and Habitat Directive and the Birds Directive, the Nitrates Directive, the IPPC-Directive (EC 96&61) on environmentally dangerous facilities and health protection, the forest strategy of the European Union. Also the interaction between other EU programmes and Community Initiatives such as LEADER+ is analysed.

(c) National level: the fifteen Swedish national environmental quality objectives formulated by the Swedish Parliament and the parliament decision on Swedish forestry policy. The fifteen national objectives for environmental quality are to become the overall framework for Swedish environmental policy in the meaning of “objectives for this generation” – until 2020 significant, although not exactly quantified reductions of environmental pollution and degradation should be achieved (see Naturvårdsverket & Statistiska centralbyran 2000, 236).

The analysis of interaction and cross-impacts of the many international programmes touching the RDP is not done in the form of an in-depth analysis answering the question: How far are these programmes complementary or conflicting with each other? However, the statements in the programme plan are meant as general arguments that the objectives of all these programmes are coherent with that of the RDP (be it at more symbolic levels of general goals, be it at more operative levels of certain measures that overlap or reinforce each other). In no case this is based on more than illustrative analysis. With regard to the national environmental quality objectives it can be supposed that, in the long run, they unfold some directing and steering effects and contribute to the integration of policies and programmes from different sectors - as is the aim with the formulation of the objectives. The process proceeds slowly, the formulation of operational objectives und their underpinning through indicators and measurable effects has started, but it is too early to assume major integrating effects during the present programme period for the RDP.\textsuperscript{21} The question of synergies, contradictions or blocking effects between programmes and measures in the local practice of rural development remains unanswered and cannot be answered from an analysis of the RDP-text; it would be partly answerable from a comparative analysis of the different programmes mentioned. The argument is, that such synergies or contradictions become visible only through specific monitoring, control and evaluation methods that include complex analyses at the local level, in the farmers fields and in the rural landscape – methods which go far beyond the present practice of monitoring, control and evaluation demanded by the EU.

The listing of environmental programmes linked with the RDP leaves the impression that the programme is one of many in a rich agenda of environmental policy with similar intentions and objectives. The list demonstrates the high degree of internationalisation of Swedish environmental policy that has happened rapidly, within the five-year period of the first environmental programme after the 1995 EU-membership. The new environmental quality goals adopted by the Swedish Parliament seem to represent only a national complement to the mainly

\textsuperscript{21}The disadvantage with the general quality objectives is that they are vaguely formulated and the burden of formulating specific and measurable objectives is shifted over to the institutions monitoring and implementing the objectives; at this level emerges again the question of formulating methodologically sophisticated indicators for the progress of integration and improvement of the state of the environment - this will depend from scientific support and input for which the results and their availability in time cannot be predicted.
internationally formulated goals and standards for environmental policy that Sweden is implementing today. From the many international programmes the most important ones for which the RDP seeks coherence are the following ones. In 1992 Sweden signed the Convention on Biodiversity, and a national study on the state of bio-diversity was carried out from which a national programme was developed (Bernes 1994). The RDP is the main tool to achieve the goals in the biodiversity-programme. The RDP supports the maintenance and protection of wetlands (RAMSAR), which is also connected to Birds Directive (79/409/EEG), through measures "Support to wetlands and small watersheds" and (9.7.10 and indirectly 9.7.9 RDP) indirectly even the measure designed to reduce nitrate leaching.

**Discussion of cross-reference and integration of different environmental programmes**

With regard to the European and other international environmental programmes mentioned in the RDP the impression is that of complementary relations and coherence between the programmes (but there may be incoherence with economic and other political programmes of the EU that do not address environmental issues). The national and regional programmes in Sweden are difficult to assess in relation to the RDP and its environmental objectives. It is still rather simple to state coherence between the programme and the national environmental objectives formulated by the Swedish Parliament. The national environmental objectives are of vague and sometimes symbolic kind and not formulated in operational and measurable terms, so coherence can be easily achieved in terms of consensus about long-term goals. It is more difficult to assess the RDP in relation to other programmes for rural development that are not part of the RDP programme plan – among these count the regional growth agreements.

Regional growth contracts (see appendix, case study Västra Götaland) have become the main Swedish instruments for regional development during the last years and, in difference to the RDP, they show regional specificity and more co-operation of sectors as well in the funding as in the implementation processes. The RGC represent a kind of public-private partnership at regional and local levels. More than the governmentally controlled RDP the growth contracts are examples for the innovative type of development programme that the European RDR is striving for under the guiding idea of integrated rural development (the “concerted action”, the co-operation and the joint efforts of a plurality of rural actors at regional levels to formulate objectives for regional development and to provide diversified budgets for this purpose come close to the idea of new development partnerships that are discussed under integrated development).

In a conclusion about the co-existence of the RDP and RGCs – widely speculative at this early time of implementation of the RDP – it might be said: the RDP may not become an effective moving force for integrated rural development because of its internal coherence and the adequate targeting of measures, but more as a consequence of "enabling environments" in which other programmes and complementary measures exist (to relocate the agriculture-specific RDP in a wider policy and context of rural development). Another example for unclear interaction between the RDP and similarly targeted regional development programmes can be found in the programmes for coastal areas, for example, the “living archipelago”-programmes. They come closer to integrated approaches than the RDP. These programmes are, however, not integrated with the RDP, as they are not addressing agriculture but other economic sectors and target groups.
2.4 Relations between Objectives or Measures

Regarding synergies or contradictions between objectives and measures of the RDP three main problems can be mentioned: (1) The unsolved problem of simultaneously implementing partly incompatible goals of social, economic and ecological sustainability, (2) the specific problem of an unbalanced targeting between agriculture- and forestry related measures, and (3) the complicated financing mechanisms for the RDP-measures that make it difficult to assess the compatibility of some objectives, targets and measures.

(1) With regard to the compatibility of the three general goal dimensions of ecological, economic and social sustainability the RDP does not formulate operational objectives for these goals nor is there a trial to analyse the trade-offs between these goals in the complex approach of a “co-maximisation” of incompatible goals. The deficits of operationalisation can easily be seen from the fact that the programme itself does not include a formulation of indicators to monitor and measure the progress of goal attainment – beyond the simple level of quantifying targets and budgets for the different measures (see below, 3.3.1). What is written in the programme text about balancing of the measure and coherence and compatibility of measures (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, pp 205 ff., chapters 14 and 15) is not based on a systematic assessment of the relations between the measures in the program, but mainly a general discussion of compatibility between different EU-policies and programmes.

The responsibility for monitoring the programme, formulating indicators and reviewing the progress and success of the agri-environmental policy is delegated to the Board of Agriculture (that has done an ex-ante evaluation of the RDP which is not included in the programme, but, as the responses of the stakeholders, only added as separate report). The problems with such review of the programme will become more visible in the mid-term and ex-post evaluation. This evaluation is a task of experts, no longer of the agencies responsible for programme implementation and the stakeholders.

(2) A specific incoherence of the RDP for the Swedish situation, with much more of rural land covered by forest than used for agriculture, is the neglect of measures for forest development in relation to agricultural development. Forests cover about 60% of the area in Sweden, but measures related to forestry are not well represented in the RDP. The measure "ecological stability in forests" is not financed until 2004, and even then the total funding only amount to some 8 million Euro during the entire programme period. The poor financing of measures related to foresting can be explained by the fact that forestry is a profitable part of the Swedish production and represented 14.2% of the total export value for Sweden 1997. It is of great importance to the Swedish economy. 50% of the Swedish forests are privately owned, major corporations own 40% and municipalities and common interests own the rest. Informants state that the privately owned forests lend the producer the opportunity to continue with farming also when this is not as economically rewarding. Since the major parts of the forests are private, the lumbering areas are relatively small and the biodiversity relatively rich. Measures to protect biodiversity and enhance ecologically sustainable foresting are further developed in the Swedish national environmental goals (Prop. 1992/93:226, Natura 2000 and Agenda 21). Since the main programme for rural development in Sweden, the RDP, focuses on agri-environmental measures and not forestry, the issues in connection with environmentally sustainable forestry will not be dealt with in detail in this report. 22

(3) As part of the structures complicating the assessment of synergies or contradictions between objectives, targets and measures of the RDP the financing system should be mentioned. The Swedish RDP is complicated by the fact that the measures in the RDP are not financed by the same mechanisms all over Sweden. The Swedish territory is divided in areas for Objectives 1 and 2. Northern Sweden constitutes the Objective1-area and is furthermore divided into a northern forest-region and a southern forest-region. A special Objective2-area, which has been granted special privileges in other areas, is included in the RDP, whereas the Objective 1-area is not.23 Rural development is financed by the Guidance Section within the Objective 1-area, and by the Guarantee Section in the rest of the country. The only exception to this rule is made for the four accompanying measures of the CAP:
- early retirement
- compensation grants
- forestry
- agri-environmental measures.
These measures are always financed through the Guarantee Fund, even when it concerns the Objective 1-area (see: Newsletter from the EU Directorate-General of Agriculture, February 2001, no.31)

Discussion of the synergy issue

Regarding synergies, contradictions, blocking effects or trade-offs between objectives, between objectives and measures, or between different measures of the RDP, the programme itself and the available review (Jordbruksverket 2001) does not give sufficient information to allow for specified assessments and conclusions. The general assessment is similar to the argument formulated above with regard to the integration of RDP with other national and international programmes: the vagueness of goals of the programme would first require to formulate more specific indicators for goal attainment, quantitative as well as qualitative indicators. Moreover, the analysis of coherence and matching of goals still does not allow for the assessment of effects and impacts of goal attainment – this would require much more complex methods of monitoring, control and evaluation as are presently practised for EU-programmes.

2.5 Good Farming Practice

(1) Description of the definition

Good farming practice was integrated in the new environmental legislation as from January 1st 1999 ("miljöbalken"). Since good farming practice refers to different aspects of the environmental legislation the farmers were already forced to adjust to these rules before the implementation of RDP and under the former agri-environmental programme. Good farming practice includes the following aspects (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000: 133-134):
- limitation in number of livestock,
- caution regarding the use of fertilisers, including demand for storage capacity,

23 The special environmental and climatic circumstances that exist in northern Sweden (Objective 1) do not allow for the same opportunities for agriculture as in the rest of Sweden. Furthermore, the northern and north-western parts of Sweden are dominated by mountains with low density of population and settlements. When these factors are related to the very sparse population in the Objective 1-areas, the difficulties to maintain a dynamic rural community in such areas become evident.

27
- rules on how and when to spread fertilisers,
- rules for autumn- and winter coverage of land,
- caution regarding the spreading of biocides.

Since the definition of good farming practice is integrated in the environmental legislation it is generally seen as an acceptable level of environmental quality for which the authorities can take responsibility. The responsibility for controlling farmers for good farming practice lies firstly with the municipalities, secondly with the regional administration and thirdly and more on a higher level with the Board of Agriculture.

(2) Discussion of the definition

This definition of good farming practice, not specific for Sweden, does not refer to the differences between agricultural production systems, and such differences are not discussed in the RDP. The different production systems have different environmental impacts, and with regard to the impacts, the simple differentiation of conventional and organic farming is not sufficient. What the definition of good farming practice describes is the minimum of environmental adaptation of agriculture that can be achieved by the modernised and intensified forms of agriculture without far-reaching changes in the production systems. The definition is not referring to specific production systems such as organic farming (according to IFOAM rules), “integrated farming”, or traditional or extensive farming that could be used to define environmental quality standards which modern intensive agriculture should achieve again.

Good farming practice is no more than adherence to ordinary agri-environmental legislation in Sweden as defined in certain parts of Swedish environmental legislation. The requirements listed above are not developed to set new ambitious goals for the protection of the environment as much as to make sure that the conventional agricultural practice can be included in the standard set by good farming practice. In connection with control-visits from the regional authorities it is estimated whether good farming practice is fulfilled; when this is doubtful, the operative monitoring officials (in the municipality) are contacted for further investigation. If this investigation shows the suspicion to be correct, no funds can be granted. During the year 2001 approximately 100 farmers received critical comments from the regional administration with regard to the farming practice. This does not automatically mean that these farmers will be refused funding, since the local and regional authorities will have to investigate further the case. The Swedish Board of Agriculture expects that the number of farmers who are not complying with good farming practice will be much lower than the initial 100 farmers by the end of the investigations (Jordbruksverkets rapport 2001:19, 37).

2.6 Special Aspects of the Swedish RDP

The RDP is not sufficiently described with regard to its content when the points summarised above (under 2.2) are reviewed. Some other aspects can be found in the Swedish programme that may be of importance for an international comparison of rural development programmes too:

1. The RDP, as all other political programmes formulated and implemented by Swedish governmental agencies, underlines the importance of realising the goal of equal opportunity for men and women. Special measures to support women in agriculture and rural development are foreseen, for example in capacity building.
2. Capacity building or measures for training and qualification are an important component of the RDP in terms of the budget, as has been mentioned above. It is with regard to these measures that synergy-effects are expected when they are combined with other measures, for example with measures for environmentally sound agriculture. With regard to such synergy the programme plan talks about an “integrated strategy”, a formulation that is not used elsewhere (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 91).

3. The RDP includes in the general diagnosis of the situation in Swedish rural areas the following points which would require specific rural development policies and measures (that do not primarily aim to transform the agricultural sector into environmentally sound production forms as it is the aim of the agri-environmental measures, but a more encompassing system of measures that addresses the diversifying rural economy):
   a. Working places can be less and less in agriculture and forestry, but more and more in the manifold kinds of economic activities that start or are revitalised in rural areas. Here the programme builds on the assessment that Sweden is far advanced in this process of diversification of rural economy.
   b. The quality of buildings and the conditions of living in rural areas do not differ much from that of urban areas in Sweden.
   c. Part-time jobs and small-scale rural enterprises that are operated on part-time basis are widespread in the Swedish rural areas.
(All points: Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 10). Whereas these clear points fit well in the general picture given in the introduction about the specific context of Swedish rural development, they do not reappear as clearly in the single measures and the priorities set within the RDP-budget.

4. The Role of Forestry within the RDP is limited despite the fact that more than 50% of Sweden's total area is covered by forestland and despite the fact that the authorities involved in the formulation and implementation of the Swedish RDP are aware of the particularly important role of forestry for the northern regions of Sweden where the climate is not very favourable for agricultural production. The gross regional production (GRP) in the northern regions resulting from forestry is predominately higher than in the southern regions (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 27-29). On account of this and the fact that almost 75% of all farmers in Sweden combine agriculture with forestry (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 13) it has been established by the National Board of Forestry (“Skogsverket”) that forestry plays an important role for the rural development of Sweden. The measures regarding forestry in the RDP are primarily competence-development and the development of ecological stability in forestry through preservation of important natural- and cultural environments (“natur- och kulturvårdsåtgärder”: NOKÅS) and the protection of hardwood. The last two measures are prioritised by the Board of Forestry since the finances do not suffice to cover such measures as biotope-protection etc. effectively (Jordbruksverket, 2001, 19). Whereas the measures for capacity-building are co-financed from EU for the whole period 2000-2006, the programme does not start financing measures to develop ecological stability in forestry until 2004. The total budget for forestry related measures during the period 2000-2006 is relatively small compared to the agri-environmental measures in the programme. The measures for capacity-building and training add up to 32,7 million Euro (mind that this should be shared between agri-environmental training and forestry training), and for developing ecological stability in
forestry an amount is set aside that equals the investment-support from EU for one year: 1,62 million Euro (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 105).\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} For the long-term development of Swedish forestry until 2021 and in the framework of national environmental policy see: Naturvårdsverket 1997. In this future study a more sustainable forestry is assessed to be achievable until 2021.
3 Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the RDP

For the analysis of implementation of the RDP we use the following criteria: involvement of environmental authorities in the implementation process (responsibilities for delivering measures, other involvement), environmental targeting of measures, experience with environmental mechanisms from the past (EIA), co-ordination and integration between agricultural and environmental authorities, participation of environmental NGOs in implementation and monitoring, plans for environmental monitoring and evaluation, general characterisation of the system of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RDP.

3.1 Agricultural and Environmental Authorities

(1) The structure of responsibility

To understand better the structure of responsibility in the implementation of the RDP, we refer to the institutional structure of the Swedish State with three levels. On the central level of government there are ministries for all major policy fields, and to administer these areas for every one an administrative board has been established. On the regional level there are 21 counties with an administrative part (“länsstyrelse”) as well as a county council. At a local level there are 289 municipalities (“kommuner”). The councils act as implementers, co-ordinators and monitoring units, whereas the municipalities have a higher degree of autonomy, both legally and practically (a more detailed descriptive model of the Swedish institutional framework: see Eckerberg & Wide 2000).

With regard to the implementation process of the measures the responsibility is rather clear and simple: the responsibility for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RDP lies at the national level within the Ministry for Agriculture (“Jordbruksdepartementet”) and the Swedish Board of Agriculture (“Jordbruksverket”), a governmental agency under this ministry. At the regional levels responsibility is delegated to the regional administrations (“länsstyrelsen”), and within these the agricultural departments. No other or external institution is involved formally in the responsibility for the programme, although institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Board for Audits and the National Board of Forestry have special responsibility for parts of the programme or single measures in monitoring and implementation.

The Ministry of Agriculture has responsibility for the programme as a whole, for important changes of programme or budget, and for two important components (the Advisory Committee and the evaluation process). At the operative level, the responsibilities and tasks in the implementation process are divided between the Board of Agriculture and the regional administrations. Altogether the programme is managed by Agricultural Agencies at the national level and their regional outposts.

The Board of Agriculture is responsible for
- the planning and co-ordination of the measures,
- the information and training of the regional administrations,
- the formulation and the issuing of rules and prescriptions,
- the administrative handling of payments demanded and the payment of support to the farmers,
- the management of juridical conflicts,
- the reporting to the European Commission,
- the preparation of evaluation (however, the evaluation itself is done by independent experts) and follow-up of measures (see Jordbruksverket 2001, 28).

The regional administrations are responsible for
- the administrative handling of applications for support,
- the decision about the approval of the support to a farmer or addressee,
- the payment to individual receivers for all measures (with exception of the ones under responsibility of the Board of Agriculture, mentioned above),
- the information of target groups
- administrative and physical control measures (see Jordbruksverket 2001, 28).

The concentration of responsibilities for the RDP within the agricultural administration is still more visible when we describe the complex structure of Swedish governmental and administrative institutions that have formal responsibility and competence for rural development and the environment, the two policy areas covered by the RDP (the following description follows Eckerberg & Wide 2001, 9f):

- The Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications ("Näringsdepartementet") is responsible, among other tasks, for the regional development policy, regional economic policy and with regard to EU-policy for the application of measures supported from the Structural Funds. More than the Ministry of Agriculture this ministry should be responsible for a policy programme that aims at integrated rural development, since it has a general responsibility for development measures. However, neither this ministry, nor the National Rural Development Agency ("Glesbygdsverket") under its responsibility, is more deeply involved in the implementation of RDP. The task of this ministry - to co-ordinate and supervise the important initiatives and measures for rural development - does not become visible in the implementation process of RDP. It is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry that the National Board of Forestry ("Skogsstyrelsen") is working, and this institution is responsible for implementing national forest policy, for promoting principles of sustainable management of forests and conservation of biodiversity in forests. The Board of Forestry is responsible for the forestry related measures of RDP – this is the only significant exception from the responsibility concentrated within the agricultural administration.

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries ("Jordbruksdepartementet") is generally responsible for agriculture, horticulture, fishery, reindeer husbandry and food production and also for the environmental concerns within these sectors (this unspecific area of responsibility with regard to the environment may provide for a formal argument to give responsibility for the RDP to the agricultural administration). The Board of Agriculture under the control of this ministry is responsible for the promotion of competitive food production compatible with the protection of the environment and animal welfare – especially the national political objective of promoting ecologically sustainable agriculture in an open, rich and varied agricultural landscape maintaining the biodiversity in rural areas.

- The Ministry of Environment ("Miljödepartementet") is responsible for the implementation of Swedish environmental policy for which fifteen general national objectives have been adopted by the parliament. Environmental policy is targeted for promoting sustainable development and solving environmental problems in Sweden. The Environmental Protection Agency ("Naturvårdsverket") has the responsibility to co-ordinate and promote these objectives.
The implementation of the RDP would, formally seen and with regard to the policy fields touched, have to include at least these three national ministries (and with regard to some cultural aspects of the RDP also the Ministry for Culture), and their specialised administrative agencies, the boards for rural development, forestry, agriculture and nature protection. Although the division of responsibility for the RDP and the concentration of programme management within the agricultural administration may be agreed upon between the three ministries, it does not reflect a territorial and integrated approach in the implementation of the programme. When the main responsibility is concentrated in one sector-specific agency as that of agriculture the experience made with first trials of territorial and integrated approaches under EU-programmes such as LEADER seems to have faded out.

(2) Special problems resulting from the centralised structure and responsibility of the RDP

Regionalisation: The relation between the agencies at national and regional levels involved in the implementation of RDP is a critical issue for the Swedish RDP. The simple fact that the regions cannot formulate their own rural development plans that can be directly approved by the EU (as it is within federal states) explains partly the deficits in regional differentiation and adaptation of the measures in the Swedish RDP. To counteract these deficits causes complicated procedures, but not much is found in the programme about such procedures, thus, finally the responsibility for regional adaptation is shifted over in a general and unclear mandate to the regional agencies without defining the elbow-room in modifying the measures. In the RDP only few remarks can be found on the regional adaptation and differentiation of measures (two measures are of regional character in the sense of being limited to a specific area: production of brown beans in Öland and sugar beets in Gotland). With regard to the measures to combat nitrate leaching from agricultural land it is said that these will concentrate on regions where nitrate leaching is a serious problem. All measures with specific geographic limitation are listed in the programme plan (Jordbruksverket 2000, 100f). Measures to maintain an open and diverse agricultural landscape are concentrated to Northern Sweden and the less favoured areas in Southern Sweden, whereas the measures for reindeer herding can be applied only to Northern Sweden because this activity is found only there (Jordbruksverket 2000, 206). Such regional limitation of the application of specific measures is not a regionalisation in the sense of “delegation of responsibility to regional agencies” and “flexibility in the implementation process” as some actors have demanded to improve the programme.

Transparency of funding processes: Although a centralised structure of responsibility and implementation of tasks might be seen as a simplification (making the process of implementation, the funding and the application process for participation in individual measures more transparent and easy to understand, also more fulfilling the requirement of fairness and equal opportunity for all farmers and enterprises to participate in the programme), the opposite is the case in practice. The bureaucratic complications are partly due to the long chain of responsibility (where the administrators at central level are responsible for informing and training the regional level administrators), partly due to the complicated structure of funding and funds of the EU. The funding processes are difficult to understand for the citizen and target groups, and the different funding sources make the application-processes more intricate when several authorities are involved. In Objective 1-regions grants can be applied for at both regional authorities (specialised in agriculture, forestry, business) and structural funds. It is not always evident when the structural funds should be contacted and when the matter should be dealt with at another division within the regional administration.
Although the RDP covers the same measures and goals in the entire country, many officials in authorities who implement parts of the RDP in Objective 1-areas do not know the programme as a whole. This can be seen as a difficulty, blocking the progress towards the somewhat undefined "integrated rural development". Such a type of development and the special problems related to the rural community can hardly be attained when the stakeholders involved are not aware of the composition of different measures and goals which are in play. The fact that the Objective 1-areas suffer from socio-economic problems in rural communities (such as: depopulation, unemployment, difficult conditions for agriculture and small-scale business and problems in keeping up good quality in infrastructure and social services) makes the lack of integration of developmental actions even more severe.

(3) Discussion of the centralised structure and responsibility in the RDP

Altogether the process of implementation and monitoring is characterised by concentration and centralisation – large parts of responsibility are within the Ministry of Agriculture, the Board of Agriculture and the corresponding (agricultural) departments in the regional administrations. It is underlined by several informants that the structure within the regional administrations is sectored in a way that does not allow the integration of different perspectives in rural development planning. Responsibility is concentrated within one ministry and administrative sector which requires justification. From a formal administrative point of view this may be justified by the circumstances mentioned - that is, the Ministry and Board of Agriculture are also responsible to observe the objectives and criteria for ecological sustainability and environmental policy within their sector-specific responsibility. This indicates a general, although vague, function of the Ministry of Agriculture to integrate the agricultural with other policies. Furthermore, it can be argued, that the inclusion of other authorities relevant for rural development is - to some degree at least - provided for in the consulting committee for the RDP and in the specific tasks delegated to the National Board of Forestry and the Environmental Protection Agency. With the dominance of the agricultural authorities in the implementation of the RDP, the traditional dominance of the sector-specific governmental agencies is underlined once more, when it comes to integrated rural development – instead of seeking stronger horizontal integration between all ministries touched and broader participation of non-governmental stakeholders. Such formal-legal arguments as just mentioned do not cover the substantive requirements of broader participation of other authorities and actors in the implementation of the RDP. A “functional” argument for the establishment of broader and more substantive participation of stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental ones, in the implementation process would be that the local adaptation and flexibility of the measures could be better achieved in non-bureaucratic structures.

Environmental authorities are represented in the advisory committee, but not in the operational implementation process. The centralised and concentrated process of implementation is justified in the RDP with arguments concerning the coherence and unity of programme administration and control. The implementation of the programme seems to be a routine task for the agricultural administration that can be done with a minimum of consulting with the environmental authorities - the instruments that have been prepared from environmental authorities, for example environmental impact assessment (see Boverket 1997), are not of strategic importance in the implementation process of the RDP; although they have been established as a routine procedure with the new environmental law since 1999, the procedure for environmental impact assessment is too complex to be applied in the routine decisions about the RDP-measures; it is to be applied from a certain size of projects only.
The complicated and vague formulations in the programme concerning centralisation and top-down implementation do not address directly the problem that such centralisation may be in contradiction to the efforts for decentralisation, regionalisation and local implementation of EU policies aiming at integrated rural development. “For Sweden it has been judged as adequate that the planning for rural development with regard to the range of the Council's Regulation shall be concentrated at the national level. Experiences from the implementation of the present environmental programme and compensation payments show advantages to plan such measures of rural development at national level. The regional differences that can be found within the country can be taken into account sufficiently in the framework of programme planning which in its applied parts encompasses the whole country. The problem descriptions and the possibilities to influence - with different measures for rural development - the development process and also the demand for support vary between the regions. This variation can be taken into account in the objectives of measures, in the orientation and in the conditions for support and levels for support through variations within the framework of the national plan.” (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 8)

This statement in the RDP indicates several inherent problems that come out more clearly when asking, why this statement was made in the programme. The RDP seems to react to the demands of the EU to provide for a form of project management and control during the implementation process that excludes fraud and safeguards equal chances for participation and legal compliance. The formulation is also an indirect statement about the preferred policy style of the Swedish State, a centralised state that does not open easily for regionalisation and decentralisation or delegation of responsibility to regional or local institutions. The Swedish regional administrations (“länsstyrelser”) are not of the kind of autonomous regions or federal states, but regional departments for the implementation of central governmental decisions and policies. Both momentum's, centralised state and bureaucratic conformity with EU-management and control demands, however, stand in striking contrast to the basic idea of rural development programmes that should be characterised by regional and local differentiation, allow for the participation and involvement of the target groups, the activation of their capacities and competence, and for a reduction of the bureaucratic and top-down-control of policy that has characterised former policy styles (that have come under criticism with the present generation of policies for rural development).

3.2 Participation of Stakeholders and Environmental NGOs

At the time this report has been written no empirical studies have been available that allow to assess the consequences of the dominance of the Ministry and Board of Agriculture in the implementation of the RDP - does this in fact mean deficits in concerted action and participation of other institutions, especially a lack of presence of environmental institutions in the process? From our own observations and interviews we gain the impression that there is much more elbow room for informal co-operation and participation than can be seen from the formal definitions of responsibility and the symbolic representation of a variety of actors in the Advisory Council for the programme. It may also be worthwhile mentioning that there is a well-established and long-lasting routine in Swedish political decision-making, that democratic consensus is sought (or, at least, broad discussion stimulated) during the formulation of political programmes so that all actors and the political public are informed early and can articulate their objections in extensive consulting and debate processes (“samråd” and “remiss”). It may be seen as agreed upon by all stakeholders, that the implementation phase of a programme is more a formal-bureaucratic procedure which does not require the same extent of participation because it is not seen modifying the formulated programme for which consensus has been found to some degree. It
may also be in line with such a general attitude, that it is difficult (or does not work in practice), to maintain a broad level of participation throughout the whole process of programme implementation (for many obvious reasons: such broad participation would be costly, time and work-consuming, not easy to organise, exceed the willingness of many actors to participate continually in political-administrative decision-making processes etc.).

The establishment of the Advisory Committee in the formulation and implementation phase of the RDP illustrates these difficulties in practice: those who are interested in the programme had the opportunity to articulate their interests in the formulation phase, and they have been invited to participate in the advisory committee. In the present implementation phase, however, the committee with more than forty representatives is more or less reduced to an organ for symbolic participation – not being very active, not meeting often, not following closely the implementation and monitoring, more representing a board which is called periodically to renew consensus about the further implementation of the programme. With all such shortcomings the advisory committee still represents a broader spectrum of stakeholders, mainly the environmental movements and NGOs. This may also be important with regard to arguments of the kind that environmental programmes require mainly the participation of environmental NGOs and less that of all actors and stakeholders involved (a kind of new elitism). What would be necessary in the programme implementation, and what does not fit well into government-dependent programmes, is the “energy of the grassroots” to keep alive and make creative the local projects under the large RDP.

Another aspect of participation of stakeholders in programme implementation becomes visible when addressing the approach and perspective of analysis. If the co-operation between the governmental and non-governmental organisations in the preparation and implementation of the programme is not only seen in organisational terms (as inter-organisational co-ordination and co-operation), but more in policy terms of building arenas and networks between the actors interested in the programme, the distribution of responsibility, power and influence between the actors would probably be quite different from the “organisation diagram” of co-operation. It can be argued that the informal processes of decision-making, co-operation and participation are the ones that count and that these processes are quite different from the formal roles and responsibilities given to certain institutions and actors. However, to reconstruct such informal processes and networks would require extensive and methodologically sophisticated empirical studies (which are not available for the RDP).

A question concerning participation of stakeholders that may be touched on within the coming evaluation is: Why did the high participation in the formulation of the Swedish RDP not result in a more coherent and structured programme from the point of view of integrated rural development (which also takes more into account the specific requirements of rural development in Sweden, for example, the importance of non-agricultural measures)?

The simplest answer available from the actors interviewed is: the participation of many stakeholders with diverging interests leads quickly to a situation where consensus can be built only symbolically or verbally, but not in practice – it seems impossible to achieve consensus and coherence beyond a certain level of general support for the RDP by most stakeholders. This argument covers part of the deficits to be explained. Other arguments need to be added. Even though many stakeholders were involved in the formal procedure of developing the new RDP, the result does not echo this. The broad participation was restricted to the preparation of the programme, and often this involved nothing more than that the comments of the stakeholders were taken into consideration. After this, the stakeholders have been invited to comment on the
programme after the first year of implementation. Representatives of 30 stakeholders involved in the programme are formally participating in the Consultative Committee ("Rådgivande kommitté") that assembles once or twice a year. No further involvement from stakeholders is intended in the implementation and monitoring. Several representatives of NGOs express their discontent with the lack of opportunities given to influence preparation, implementation, monitoring and possible changes in the RDP. The participation in the RDP processes is often considered to be of a formal character rather than an opportunity to influence the programme. The following further explanations can be found on why the participation of stakeholders did not result in a more coherent and structured programme:

- The Swedish RDP reflects "continuity rather than change". The Swedish programme is, generally seen, a continuation of prior programmes with priority given to agri-environmental measures. This implies that the regional diversity in Sweden is not sufficiently visible in the programme. It is not directed to activities "beyond the farm gate".
- The financial resources are directed to priority area 1 in the RDP (organic farming and ecologically sustainable rural development). A total of 722.07 million Euro is directed towards priority area I during 2000-2006, whereas priority area 2 (economically and socially sustainable rural development) is given a total of 39.53 million Euros during the programme period. Hence, the financial resources set limits on how the programme can be of use to the stakeholders.
- The programme's implementation, monitoring and modification are controlled by the dominant agricultural administration, the Ministry and Board of Agriculture, and the stakeholders have limited opportunities to influence the process.

3.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

3.3.1 Monitoring

The monitoring process is not described in detail in the RDP (only control mechanisms to exclude double financing: see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 110f). The responsibility for monitoring is delegated to the Board of Agriculture for the agricultural measures and to the Board of Forestry for the forestry related measures (Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 184). The monitoring process includes three main components,

- an annual progress report produced for the European Commission under the responsibility of the Board of Agriculture,
- the establishment of an Advisory Council with the role of observing the progress of implementation, especially with regard to regional and sectorial differences,
- the establishment of a “control station” in 2002 to produce an assessment of the compatibility of the RDP with overarching goals of rural development and potential changes in the programme or the allocation of the budget (ibid., 185).

Estimation of goal achievement for the single RDP-measures

The information available from present monitoring and programme progress review includes an assessment of the degree of goal achievement with regard to the individual measures under the RDP. In the review of the programme by the Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket 2001) a detailed assessment of the foreseeable achievement of operational objectives (in terms of deviation from the number of participants and amount of budget planned) is formulated for every
measure. The general impression is that for most measures the level of goal achievement is relatively high. For the single measures the levels of goal attainment are reported below.

For measures in priority I (environmental measures) the following figures are reported (Jordbruksverket 2001, 7-13):

Sub-programme 1 - biodiversity:
1. Maintenance of grassland: 450 000 ha of grassland should be covered by the measure; 410 000 ha are already under contract (level of goal attainment 95%).
2. Conservation of natural and cultural landscapes of high value: 18,000 farms with 25-30% of the farmed area in Sweden should be covered by the measure; 13,300 farmers with 740,000 ha have asked for the measure in 2001, that is, with regard to farms the level of goal achievement is 75%, with regard to farmed area about 100%.
3. Maintenance of natural and cultural environments in reindeer areas: about 1700 ha of grassland and enclosed land for reindeer herding should be included in the measure – in 2000 only 48 applications for 232 ha for reindeer husbandry have come in; the level of goal attainment is about 15%. As a reason for the low level of interest for this measure was assumed that the level of compensation payments was too low and does not cover the actual costs for management – therefore the review foresees a higher level of compensation payment (from 4200 to 6300 SEK per ha).
4. Rare breeds: The planned objective was to cover 5000 livestock units. During 2001 compensation payment has been asked for 3600 livestock units, which is a level of about 72%.

Sub-programme 2 – production landscape:
5. Open and manifold agricultural landscape: The objective was to cover 600 000 ha; in 2001 payment is made for 590 000 ha: the level of goal attainment is nearly 100%.

Sub-programme 3 – environmentally friendly agriculture:
6. Organic farming: The objective is to include 540 000 ha (20% of Swedish farmland) and 10% of all milk cows and animals fed for meat production (beef and lamb). In 2001 369,000 ha are included (13.5% of the farmland which equals a level of goal attainment of 68%); for beef the level of goal achievement is up to the 10% of all beef, for sheep the goal attainment is higher (nearly one third of sheep).
7. Protected areas: 5500 ha should be covered by this measure; about 1850 ha are in the programme for the new compensation payments. The level of goal achievement will become worse, as the Board of Agriculture supposes that a certain part of farmers participating in the prior programme do not join the measure in the new programme.
8. Reduction of nitrate leaching: 50 000 ha should be covered, but already in 2001 applications for more than 150 000 ha have come in – the level of goal achievement is 300 %.
9. Environmentally adapted production of brown beans in Öland: about 1000 ha should be covered by the RDP; applications for 700 ha have come in, which equals goal achievement of 70%.
10. Environmentally adapted production of sugar beets in Gotland: 2200 ha have been planned, applications for 2950 ha have been reported, goal achievement is 134%.
11. Maintenance of wetlands and small ponds: 6000 ha have been planned, for 1750 ha applications have been reported; the level of goal achievement of 29% is expected to increase during the programme period.
12. *Restoration of meadows and grasslands*: about 7300 ha should be restored during the programme period, less than 700 ha have been applied for in 2001. The costs for restoration are high (average costs of 10 000 SEK; approximately 6 700 000 SEK have been budgeted for the measure).

13. *Capacity building for priority I measures*: 60 000 persons should participate in the training measures every year; in 2000 approximately 66 000 persons have participated.

14. *Compensatory allowances*: During 2000 and 2001 about 561 000 SEK for about 23 000 enterprises have been paid.

For measures in priority II (socially and economically sustainable rural development) the following figures are reported (Jordbruksverket 2001, 15-19):

1. *Investment aid*: the programme plan foresees support to about 10 000 enterprises, but it is assumed that this aim is not achieved (until October 2001 investment aid has been granted to about 950 enterprises).

2. *Setting-up aid for young farmers*: until October 2001 support has been granted for 364 enterprises (altogether 36 million SEK). The level of about 200 enterprises for every year should be maintained for the programme period.

3. *Support for refinement*: the programme plan foresees support to 1 billion SEK for the whole programme period which shall lead to creation of maintenance of 1500 workplaces – this level is estimated to be achieved during the programme.

4. *Capacity building for priority II measures*: about 8 million SEK have been spent for measures for capacity building until October 2001. However, the measures have not been sufficiently targeted and should be redefined to support specific target groups, among others for women.

5. *Project aid for rural development*: Until October 2001 99 projects have been supported, most of them for marketing, diversification and tourism. The aim of the programme is to double the number of complementary activities in agriculture. An assessment of the level of goal achievement cannot yet be given.

The figures regarding goal achievement of the measures in the RDP with regard to areas covered, participants or level of payments do not sum up to a similar picture for all measures. It can be estimated, that, from the point of view of programme-managers, the RDP will achieve most of its objectives with regard to measures in priority I or environmentally sound agriculture (the lowest level of attainment is with regard to reindeer herding, the highest level for reduced nitrate leaching: more than three times more demands than planned) and also for priority II. The general tendency is clear after the first two years of the RDP that for a large part of the measures the budget will be spent as planned – modifications and changes of the level of payments to individual receivers may happen, but not to the degree of changing the structure of the budget. The concentration of support for agri-environmental measures in relation to measures for rural development will not change (the latter remain at the level of 10\% of these).

### 3.3.2 Assessment of the Process of Implementation and Monitoring by the Actors Interviewed

Regarding the processes of implementation and monitoring the following critical arguments and specific points have been formulated by several persons interviewed:

- **Decentralisation**: The centralisation and sector-wise specialisation of the administrations makes an integrated perspective on rural development difficult. Decentralisation of the responsibilities from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the setting up of co-ordinating units for rural development within the regional administration is asked for.
- **Complexity of the programme:** The RDP cannot be assessed as a whole. It is a long and complicated compilation of conditions, measures, context factors; to some degree the programme can be seen only as an “exercise on paper”, and that does not say much about the practical problems existing for the addressee and in the local practice of rural development. The unity and coherence intended with the programme is mainly one of a bureaucratic perspective for rural development.

- **Incompatibility of goals:** The three goal components of the RDP, the ecological, social and economic sustainability, represent more symbolic consensus and acceptance, but not at all a coherent goal-set: the three goal dimensions are blocking and limiting each other, so that complicated solutions in the sense of “co-maximising incompatible goals” need to be found. However, for such a procedure there is no rationale and no operational form; the conditions for sustainable development become concrete at regional and local levels only, and they may vary greatly from region to region. There is no standardised formula for sustainable development that can be practised in the programme. This problem of incompatible goals touches furthermore the question of how significant the available generic definitions of sustainable (rural) development, especially the ones by the sponsors of the Nord 2-project, are in the practice of rural development and in the implementation of the RDP. These definitions, based on general normative criteria, are too vague and abstract to be applied as operational criteria measuring progress of rural development at regional and local levels – and the problems of defining indicators to solve this problem operationally, turn out to be more complicated (requiring sophisticated methods and interdisciplinary approaches) than expected.

- **Inflexibility:** The associations of Swedish farmers, as well the one for conventional as that for organic agriculture, find consensus in the criticism of the inflexibility and standardisation of the RDP.

- **Inadequate mechanism for payments:** The financing of projects behindhand makes initiatives difficult for small-scale farmers and producers since their financial situation is fragile. In line with this argument is the one formulated by the Swedish Society for Nature Protection (“Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen”) in its comment on the RDP: The programme should be formulated in a way that it is foreseeable for the farmers how much support they can receive through the programme and plan for this sum – “a certain number of animals must mean a certain amount of support” (http://snf.mondosearch.com).

- **Bureaucratic complications:** The persons involved in the regional and local implementation of the programme, be it the responsible administrators in the regional administrations (“länsstyrelsen”), the representatives of target groups, or non-governmental actors, easily find consensus about the bureaucratic complications of the process. The procedure of application, the filling in of forms, the collection of adequate information, the taking into account all circumstances, the cross-checking of all conditions required, are so complicated that they provide difficulties for the administrators as well as for the target groups. These difficulties may to a large degree account for a limited demand for certain measures. These bureaucratic barriers of the programme have quickly led to some emergency reactions soon after the programme started: in some regions advise and training for the responsible administrative staff in the regional administrations has been organised to give more qualified support to the interested farmers and enterprises so that applications can be successfully made.
An overall assessment of the system of implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the case of the Swedish RDP can only refer to some preliminary and basic points:

- The processes of implementation and evaluation are “top-down” organised, as is the organisation of the whole programme.
- After the initial phase of programme preparation the participation of stakeholders in implementation, monitoring or evaluation is limited; only concerted action between agricultural and environmental authorities happens to some degree (under the dominance and guidance of agricultural authorities).
- The programme plan shows some awareness of the problems that arise when trying to evaluate the environmental impacts of RDP-measures. No practical solutions or approaches are presently available to practically manage this complexity.
- The majority of actors and stakeholders interviewed (as can be presumed for all stakeholders) are interested in obtaining sufficient information about the environmental and other impacts of the programme, but they are not interested in the procedure of evaluation itself: this is seen as an “expert business”.
- If evaluation follows the questions and procedures proposed in the STAR-document by the European Commission, it can be predicted that evaluation will try to follow the complexity of the programme by including more and more dimensions in the evaluation. However, the ideas of participatory evaluation that might be adequate for rural development programmes that require active roles of target groups, is still a utopian idea. Such a participatory evaluation should not only include environmental stakeholders, even if these have an important role in the process.

3.3.3 The Evaluation Procedure Planned

Concerning the evaluation of the RDP no details are described in the programme plan (see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 185f) or in the recent review of the programme by the Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket 2001, 19). The programme plan informs about the evaluation procedures planned with the aspects enumerated below (see Jordbruksdepartementet 2000, 185f). However, these ideas are not actively discussed among the actors interviewed. It seems that evaluation of the programme is to become the work of closed expert circles.

- Mid-term and ex-post evaluation will be carried out by independent experts, however, the general responsibility for the implementation is within the Ministry of Agriculture.
- The basic model for both evaluations will be the one described in the STAR Working Document VI/12004/00. The questions to be answered in the evaluation should be programme specific; quantitative and qualitative indicators will be used.
- If the evaluation questions in the European Commissions' proposal are not sufficiently specific to evaluate the RDP, additional indicators will be formulated; indicators that do not fit into the Swedish context will be modified or omitted.
- “The environmental measures that Sweden has formulated comprise a large part of the programme and they require an evaluation specifically adapted to the conditions that influence and steer the different environmental measures. With regard to the methods and indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of environmental effects of policy instruments applied in agricultural policy there is extensive development work done presently, as well in single states, as in the EU and OECD. Sweden is actively involved in some of these works for monitoring and evaluation of agricultural policies. An example is the project on the environmental effects of CAP which is done, under mandate of the government, by the board
- The programme review from the Board of Agriculture has completed this information with the point that a recent review of the STAR document by the Institute for Food Economics ("Livsmedelekonomiska institutet": SLI) has resulted in a selection of questions and indicators that can be applied in the RDP-evaluation, altogether about 100 questions and indicators. The Board estimates that the EU-guidelines for the estimation of evaluation costs (saying that no evaluation cost of more than 1% of the total programme budget will be co-financed) are adequate for the RDP-programme too, although it will require complex and demanding evaluation – the total costs for the evaluation of the RDP-programme are planned to be 195 million SEK which equals about 0.85% of the total RDP budget (Jordbruksverket 2001, 30f).

These statements, although they show awareness of the problems and difficulties that come with the evaluation process, do not give sufficient information to identify main problems of evaluating the RDP. They do not allow to tackle a problem of evaluation in which several of the actors contacted are especially interested: How can the environmental impacts of the agri-environmental measures (that form the core of RDP) be evaluated? It seems that the interest in evaluation is limited among the stakeholders and political actors involved in the RDP-programme, and one obvious reason is the complicated methodology of evaluation. As far as the discussion has gone, no specific forms of participatory evaluation are planned, only consultation between agricultural and environmental authorities (as is also the case during the programme implementation). The advisory committee may become the only established forum where the stakeholders can discuss questions of evaluation. It cannot be predicted if the committee will take a more active role in the evaluation debate.

The actors interviewed are reluctant and cautious in discussing about evaluation and the potential effects of the programme. There is a prevailing attitude among the persons working with the programme “at the ground” to see a debate about programme evaluation as too early. Furthermore, the impression is given, that the evaluation procedure planned may not give sufficient response to the aspects, mainly the environmental effects of the programme, in which environmental movements are interested. The first aspect (seeing a debate about evaluation presently as too early, with too little experience available from the implementation process) shows the attitudes of stakeholders and actors that are not in the role and situation of professional evaluators. The sophisticated discussion and methodology of evaluation studies, with ex-ante and ex-post evaluation etc., does not trickle down to the stakeholders; these are often not interested to assess the complexity and wholeness of a programme, but they are interested in specific effects and impacts (following their aims). The second aspect (that the specific impacts of the programme, for example environmental impacts or the long-term impacts for the very process of integrated rural development, may not be assessed adequately even with sophisticated evaluation studies) may be a speculative argument at present. A look into the approach to evaluation proposed by the EU Commission reveals, that evaluation may find its limits in the inherent complexity of the methodology applied: the aspects that should be covered according to the evaluation document from the European Union – effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, utility, sustainability, and coherence (see European Commission 1999, 16; for further debate of evaluation see Tronquart 2001) - leave the impression that this framework is too complex to work, or it comes to be applied only as an additive assessment of each of these dimensions without analysing sufficiently their interaction. Evaluation attempts to model the complexity of rural development processes conceptually, but it does not come closer to the subjects and target groups of rural development; their participation is not intended. Despite its complexity, the
The aims of evaluation can be formulated more specifically (and not limited to the dominant aim of accountability and good use of resources), for instance, as these of learning and improving the management and implementation of the policy programme (to be able to achieve progress on the road towards rural sustainable development). Although the criteria foreseen in the planned evaluation support such broader and more ambitious aims, it is not sure that these aims can be achieved - unless the evaluation procedure is reviewed and methodologically redirected towards more interdisciplinary and participatory methods of evaluation.
4 Overall Estimation of the RDP

4.1 Previous Programmes and their Effects

The preceding environmental programme was the first Swedish attempt to integrate environment, agriculture and culture. Bills from each separate policy area were the building blocks on which the programme was formulated (SFS 1994:1708). The ambition was to create: "...a rich and varied agricultural landscape, that has historical continuity in the outer environment, biodiversity and reduced environmental strain from biocides and pesticides, at the same time as the agricultural landscape stays open and vibrant." (Stenseke, 2001, 56) Hence the aim was to support agricultural production to sustain biodiversity and protect the cultural and natural landscapes. The program was segmented (with 3 sub-programmes), and most of the measures were related to area objectives that should be obtained. The regional authorities ("Länsstyrelsen") administered the programme implementation, which was also responsible for monitoring the programme. Evaluation shows that almost all area-objectives were reached, but the field-controls show that the objects of value that should be protected were not (Stenseke, 2001, 59).

"Evaluation of the support showed that the targets formulated for size of areas included have been achieved rather well (Jordbruksverket 1997, Riksantikvarieämbetet 1997). With regard to support for the maintenance of valuable natural and cultural environments the number of applications exceeded the expectations largely (600 000 ha) (Jordbruksverket 1997:71). During field controls in 1996 it has become obvious, however, that half of the landscape elements for which cultural-environmental support was paid have been weakly or badly cared for or not cared for. There have been as well critical remarks with regard to compliance for 60% of the agricultural enterprises that have received support for grazing land (Jordbruksverket 1997: 15). Even if the measures to protect agricultural landscapes in the environmental programme were successful regarding the number of applications, has this first programme period in Sweden been caricaturised by some teething problems: small farms have been discriminated against, the interpretation of the directives has varied between regional administrations and parts of the measures have proven to be too complicated for farmers as well as administration. The Swedish environmental programme has resulted in a growing administration in landscape management for personnel as well as handling of papers. This comes down to the fact that the area has been granted more economic resources, but it is even a result of the interaction between two administrative systems: the Swedish and the European. The agricultural environmental programme has resulted in much more territory included in public landscape management, but also in less flexible planning of maintenance processes." (Stenseke, 2001, 59)

To sum up, the previous programme suffered from inflexible bureaucratic structures and an early phase of integration of rural policies.

4.2 Likely Outcomes of the RDP

Some of the deficits and bureaucratic complications monitored from the previous environmental programme seem to reappear in the present RDP again. However, in the second year of the RDP neither outcomes nor more long-term impacts can be sufficiently estimated. What is important for the programme management at present is to steer, monitor and revise the spending of the budget.
With minor revisions and restructuring the budget will be spent so that operational objectives of the measures can be achieved when the programme is terminated. If such formal compliance with the objectives indicates a progress towards another kind of rural development that appears with the formulation of integrated rural development, or only a longer period of support and payments to farms, enterprises and projects in rural areas is an open question. The context and the structural conditions to survive in the long run may be that bad for a large part of the farms and rural enterprises that compensation payments and support may be required in one or another form much longer. Also such policy-dependence of rural areas can be understood as an indicator of the difficulties or the impossibility that rural development can become a self-sustaining process.

At present it can be foreseen that the objectives formulated for the single measures of the RDP will be mostly achieved within the programme period, however not all to the same degree (as has been mentioned, a low level of goal achievement has become visible for the regional measure of supporting reindeer herding). The ambitious objective to double again the area for organic farming – that at the end of the RDP 20% of all arable land in Sweden will be farmed organically – will probably be reached (in some regions of the country there is already much more arable land converted to organic farming). A prognosis about the effects of the programmes for meeting the requirements of integrated rural development may not be so optimistic.

With regard to the structure and content of the measures under the RDP it can be seen that some measures are weak and may not unfold a transforming capacity in the sense of rural development. This can be said, for example, for environmental measures aiming at reductions of environmental pollution such as nitrate leaching: such measures may help to overcome main problems of conventional or intensive modern agriculture, but do not support more far-reaching changes. As can be seen from the practical demand, it is just this measure that finds most interest among the farming community.

With regard to the Swedish regions for which we have done regional case studies of the implementation of the RDP and individual projects or measures, it seems that one likely consequence of the programme may be a kind of split development:
- In regions where the measures are “appropriated” by active and interested rural stakeholders and actors, and where a supportive and enabling environment in form of complementary programmes exists that strengthens the tendencies of integrated rural development (such as the regional growth contracts for example), it is more likely that the RDP unfolds into a programme in support of rural development.
- In regions where the measures are dominated by the implementing governmental agencies and by programme bureaucracies as parts of sector-specific authorities, a – unintended – consequence may be the further dominance of the agricultural sector and the prolongation of agricultural policy through the RDP under the European regulation for rural development.

Regarding the agricultural map of Sweden it is more likely that the reduction of the RDP to a specific agricultural programme happens under circumstances of a dominant and specialised agriculture – that is, in the southern parts of Sweden which are more densely populated, with agriculture playing a larger role in rural economy and for the development of rural landscapes. In the northern, sparsely populated Objective 1-regions rural development may take more the character of integrated development because of the specific needs of such areas that are, for reasons of economic and social survival, dependent from a combination of measures that include diversified economic activities, where agriculture can no longer play a dominant role.

With regard to the Swedish style of adopting the EU-directive literally and seeking for legal compliance, it can be presumed that the RDP does not consequently unfold the transforming
capacity to initiate rural development that is formulated in its goals. If the programme “freezes” during implementation, it will remain a continuation of former agri-environmental policy. The centralised character of the RDP as part of Swedish governmental policy supports such bureaucratic formalisation of the programme. As a consequence of its conformity with the Rural Development Regulation of the EU, the RPD will not have the strong effect of integration and social and economic sustainability that is intended with the measures in priority II and the “Article 33”-measures – although such measures, especially support for investments in agriculture and for starting agriculture have found high interest among the farmers as is reported by the Board of Agriculture in its recent report (Jordbruksverket, 2001, 15 f; there it is also reported that one of the most widespread forms of investment support demanded is support for the building or rebuilding of stables).25

From a comparative perspective, referring to one of the few available early studies of the RDP (Primdahl et al., 2001), three points can be mentioned:
- “… the Swedish budget measured by costs per hectare agricultural land is considerably higher than the budgets in England, Schleswig-Holstein, the Netherlands and Denmark”.
- “Considering the transfer of jurisdictions and responsibility, that is organisational policy integration, competences have to varying degrees been moved from the environmental sector to the agricultural. Internally this has been evaluated as a positive development also by the environmental sectors.”
- “Finally, the members states have had different experiences with the spatial integration of objective and targets in the agricultural sector with the environmental ones. Of the four Member States studied, most spatial integration has been found in the Netherlands which has approved a plan for a national ecological network which functions as an overall framework for big land acquisitions programmes and AEP schemes. Also England and Schleswig-Holstein has some spatial integration of environmental and agricultural policies, whereas this is poorly developed in Sweden.” (Primdahl et al. 2001, 19)

It is difficult to assess these arguments before more in-depth studies and more detailed data are available from the participating countries. With regard to the first statement of Primdahl et al., the higher level of costs per hectare in Sweden, it may be speculated, that is not only coming to the argument “over-compensation of farmers”, but may be due to other reasons: the administrative costs may be higher; the unfavourable situation of Swedish agriculture with regard to geographic, climatic and demographic factors (as described in the introduction of this report) may explain higher costs and payment levels; and finally, the ambitious aims of the Swedish RDP with regard to specific agri-environmental measures such as subsidies for semi-natural habitats (often linked with training programmes and management plans) may also account for differing levels of costs.

Discussion of likely outcomes

The true environmental impacts of the agri-environmental measures in the RDP may not be sufficiently known through the information provided – neither through monitoring nor through the coming programme evaluation. This must not be seen as a deficit of the Swedish programme, but reflects the limits of the approaches and methods used for monitoring and evaluation that have been discussed and developed for EU-programmes. With regard to the evaluation of 25The European Commission concedes that the rural development measures are underfunded: “One result of the reform should be more funds for rural development: at present, they amount to only 10% of the total, while nearly one farmer out of every two only farms on part-time basis. Other sources of income must be found for them and their families, and employment in the countryside must be developed.” (Directorate-General of Agriculture, Newsletter no. 31, February 2001).
environmental impacts the RDP programme plan argues that the task is complex and presently the development of evaluation methodologies and indicators is not yet finished. Such approaches to evaluation would have to be based on interdisciplinary knowledge from natural and social scientific research about the agri-environmental measures; for such research exist few examples. Thus it remains doubtful if sufficiently sophisticated methodologies will be available for programme evaluation in the near future. The application of the evaluation questions and indicators foreseen by the evaluation procedure formulated by the European Commission for the Agenda 2000 measures do not include such sophisticated methods for environmental evaluation.

4.3 Future Improvements

The adaptive changes of the RDP during the programme period 2000-2006 will be limited. The review of the programme by the Board of Agriculture includes some suggestions for modification of the programme in future – mainly a reduction of the level of payments for several measures (see Jordbruksverket 2001, 147) which is motivated by the requirement of the EU to create equal conditions for the participation for all farmers. Basic improvements that would be required for a programme of integrated rural development can be identified, for example: more active participation of stakeholders, a more encompassing and more balanced system of measures, improved methodologies for implementation, monitoring and evaluation that reflect the complexity of integrated development. However, the realisation of such improvements does not seem to be achieved within the programme period.

With regard to the participation of stakeholders, environmental and others, in all phases of the programme cycle (not only in the preparatory phase), significant changes will be required which may not be realised easily under the conditions of a top-down implemented nation-wide programme as the Swedish RDP.

With regard to programme evaluation, the development of an integrated methodology that allows to assess the three goal dimensions of socially, economically and ecologically sustainable rural development (and their interrelations, incompatibility, or trade-offs) is required to come to an adequate assessment of the effects of the programme. Although the work is under way with regard to environmental evaluation methods, it cannot be estimated when an integrated approach to evaluation will be available, and when evaluation will become not only reflexive, but also participatory.

Ideas for future improvements of RDP resulting from the study

The improvements required to develop an integrated approach towards sustainable rural development relate to different levels and institutions (EU, national and regional levels mainly).

The following points can be part of a new common European rural development plan:

- Explicit and detailed assessment of the economic and environmental situation in all rural areas should be obligatory.
- Formulation of clear, coherent and specific targets and methods to address the problems identified should be obligatory.
- Formulation of national RDPs that include problem-identification, targets, methods, time-schedules, financing rules should be obligatory.
- The status of “Article 33”-measures in the RDP should be upgraded.
The following improvements can be done at national level in Sweden:

- The formulation of a national RDP that follows the criteria listed above should be driven by concerted action of national, regional and local, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.
- Broader discussion among stakeholders on the future of rural Sweden should be organised.
- Decentralisation of rural development policy: Rural development should be planned, implemented and monitored by local stakeholders in cooperation with relevant authorities. Now, the Board of Agriculture has a centralised position and this makes procedures bureaucratic and hard to affect by stakeholders.
- The budget for priority 2-measures (economically and socially sustainable development) should be increased to give opportunity for innovative projects that include further aspects but agri-environmental measures (gender-issues etc).

The following improvements can be done at regional level in Sweden:

- Regional administrations should be given opportunities to assess the social, environmental and economic situation in detail for each region. On account of this a plan can be drafted to attain the specific targets set.
- Planning, implementation and monitoring should be done in cooperation with local stakeholders, involving municipalities and local development groups as well as NGOs.
- Methods for local participation in all phases, planning as well as implementation and monitoring, should be developed to ensure democratic and locally based development.
- A special department for rural development should be set within the regional administration (“länsstyrelse”). This would facilitate the planning and implementation of the RDP in relation to regional needs and problems, and help bring together different kinds of knowledge. At present it is often in the hands of the Department for Agriculture to plan all rural development (and there issues, which affect gender and projects that go "beyond a farm gate", are easily forgotten).

The following scientific input is needed to develop an integrated approach to sustainable development:

- Methods to assess the environmental, economic and social situation locally: The methods should provide for an integrated assessment that is comparable with the assessment for regions.
- Improved methods to facilitate the participation of stakeholders in all aspects of the RDP processes (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) are required.
- Improved methods to evaluate the impacts of the RDP are required. The evaluation should contain evaluation of the specific sub-areas as well as an overall evaluation of the programme. The effects of the programme cannot only be evaluated from the number of applications for each measure, but more complex and qualitative analysis should be added. This is especially important since some of the objectives with the RDP are related to gender and participation, areas that are not easily evaluated with the present quantitative methods.

The following public – not only scientific – discussions are needed to develop an integrated approach to sustainable development:

- What are the expectations for the rural areas in Sweden in the future? How can economic, ecological and social requirements be integrated in a manner that proves to be sustainable?
• How can the rural development plans be regionally adapted and rooted in the local contexts (that may vary greatly) at the same time as democratic principles and demands for fairness and equality are upheld?
• How can programmes for rural development be designed to include all sectors of the rural economy and to allow for the active participation of the population and of local development groups?

4.4 Conclusions

The Swedish RDP, derived from the European Regulation for Rural Development, is characterised by an “orthodox approach” that tries to follow the measures defined in the regulation text to make sure that compliance is achieved, with only limited variation at the level of compensation payments for the agri-environmental measures.

The RDP shows continuity with the prior agri-environmental programme implemented in the second half of the 1990s: the agri-environmental measures dominate further on under the new rural development programme, whereas the measures aiming at integrated rural development (in the Swedish programme formulated as priority II, measures for economically and socially sustainable development) represent a weak and less-budgeted part of the programme. This imbalance between agri-environmental and rural development measures seems inadequate for the context of rural development in Sweden.

Although the diagnosis about the specific conditions for rural development in Sweden is clear in the RDP-document, the structure of measures provided by the programme does not cover sufficiently these requirements for integrated rural development: non-agricultural activities are neglected in the programme. This relates to three important economic sub-sectors that are of special significance for rural development in Sweden:
- forestry as a dominant form of land use is badly covered in the programme (for several reasons that have been discussed in this report),
- fishery as part of a specific sectorial policy both at EU- and national levels is not integrated within the RDP,
- reindeer herding, both ecologically (because of the limited geographic spreading of reindeers in Northern Sweden) and ethnically (reindeer herding is done by the ethnic minority of the Sami population) specific for Swedish rural economy, is badly covered in the programme and one of the measures least asked for by the target group.

The processes of implementation and, as far as it can be foreseen, of evaluation of the RDP are not yet sufficiently meeting the requirements of integrated rural development that has to be seen as a complex process of rural innovation and change with regard to social, economic and ecological dimensions.

The implementation of the RDP can be discussed from two incompatible approaches:
(1) The dominant understanding is that of “managing another EU-programme with given objectives and measures”, not to ask for the criteria and changes required for rural development.
(2) An alternative understanding of implementation of the RDP is that of “a process of managed change directed towards integrated rural development” as can be derived from the basic idea of the rural development regulation. Understanding the implementation of
the regulation as management of institutional, social, economic, environmental and attitudinal changes, would require more and different criteria that have hardly become visible in the present programme and the implementation procedure (except at the level of a few good examples of projects). The aims and conditions for management of change need to be specified; the agents of change need to be identified, as well as the barriers to change, the powerful actors, the winners and losers in the process, the conflicts arising and their mitigation; support for the change process needs to be mobilised; the resources need to be targeted for the process; finally the change process needs to be consolidated and maintained throughout the implementation phase of the programme (for such a general model of programme implementation as management of multidimensional changes see, for example, Sutton 1999, 23ff).

For the evaluation of a programme that aims to initiate integrated rural development, far reaching changes in the implementation procedure would be required to allow for the sufficient evaluation of impacts (not only environmental impacts). Such approaches to evaluation require interdisciplinary knowledge and preparation from the scientific-methodological side. Furthermore, they require a change in the understanding of evaluation – from an instrument of managerial control to an instrument of participatory evaluation of progress towards socio-ecological change that takes into account not only objectives of programmes, but the aims and ideas of the target groups.

As mentioned above (4.3) it is still too early to assess the full and detailed impacts of the Swedish RDP. The monitoring report presented by The Board of Agriculture (“Jordbruksverket”) describes the implementation of the RDP in operational objectives (the number of participants and amount of budget allocated), but a deeper and more qualitative analysis of implementation processes and of ”soft” objectives for development is required. Through the material presented above and interviews with stakeholders we find that the following points should be taken into consideration to improve the RDP:

- **Assessing the present situation.** The present social, economic and ecological situation in rural areas in Sweden needs to be carefully assessed with regard to the specific regional conditions and the respective problems for future rural development need to be identified to be able to address them.

- **Setting clear objectives.** Using the assessment as a starting-point, clear objectives should be set for integrated rural development. The objectives should include all three areas (ecology, economy and social sphere). Not only would this facilitate evaluation, but this would underline priorities and give room for debate on how to reach the objectives most efficiently.

- **Flexibility.** There is a need for flexibility in a RDP programme that encompasses the entire Sweden. Not only do the climatic preconditions vary much within Sweden, but also the demographic, economic, social and ecological conditions for production and public service. The rural areas depend on agriculture as well as on hunting, fishing, forestry, tourism, and other public and private working-places. The RDP should reflect this diversity and be flexible enough to encompass all sectors.

- **Regionalisation and localisation.** The RDP should be rooted in national and EU based objectives (environmental, economic and social sustainable development etc). However, from the preceding point follows that regional variations and needs should be reflected in the RDP. Several actors ask for decentralisation and further opportunities to influence all aspects of the RDP regionally and locally.

- **Cross-sectoral management of RDP.** The regionalisation mentioned above would entail more responsibility for the regions and municipalities. The administrative structure within
these administrations is sector-specific, and hence programmes and measures for rural development are often splintered as well. Cross-sectoral management is needed to promote integrated rural development and the competence that encompasses this.

- **Participation and democracy.** The participation of stakeholders is important at all levels and in all aspects of the RDP process. Not only should stakeholders (GO, regional, NGO and local action groups) be given the opportunity to influence the RDP, but it is equally important that this is possible during all phases and on all levels. If new structures are built (partnerships or other) it is of importance to follow democratic recruiting mechanisms, and also small local interest groups from marginalised areas should participate in the process.

- **Equality and diversity.** If the RDP should be rooted in local needs and preconditions this requires objectives and measures that are local. Still there is a need for clear and just rules that ensure equality and equal opportunity in participation in programmes and furthermore in the development process. To embrace variation and to meet regional needs clear and just rules and regulations at administrative and political levels are required.

- **Simplification and clarity.** The present rules, regulations, and application processes have been made easier regarding priority 1 measures in the Swedish RDP. However, the stakeholders still find the administrative process difficult and lengthy. The administrative processes should be easier to understand and application less time-consuming.

**Swedish Summary of the RDP**

Det svenska Miljö- och landsbygdsprogrammet 2000-2006 (LBU) fokuserar på:

- **Insatsområde I:** ett ekologiskt hållbart jordbruk
  - Stöden under detta området ska primärt bidra till att utveckla och bibehålla jordbruket samtidigt med att riksdagens miljömål eftersträvas. Åtgärderna ska stödja ett miljövänligt jord- och skogsbruk, underlätta övergången till ekologiska odling samt ersätta jordbrukare för kollektiva tjänster såsom öppethållande av odlingslandskap och bevarande av biologisk mångfald.

- **Insatsområde II:** ett ekonomiskt och socialt hållbar utveckling på landsbygden.
  - Stöden under detta området ska bidra till att stärka utvecklingen på landsbygden så att jordbruket blir konkurrenskraftigt samtidigt som att övrig utveckling på landsbygden stärks. Viss möjlighet för stöd till utveckling av icke-jordbruksrelaterade områden finns här.

Stöden i LBU finansieras av dels EU:s jordbruksfond, dels svenska staten. Andelen av EU:s medfinansiering varierar beroende på område och område. Andelen av EU:s medfinansiering av jordbruksstöd till jordbruket är 75% i mål 1 områden och 50% utanför mål 1. EU-andelen av jordbruksstödet är 25%.

Det svenska LBU-programmet komplicerar ytterligare av att åtgärder inom olika områden inte finansieras på samma sätt. Norra Sverige utgör ett mål 1-område med särskilda villkor eftersom klimatet och övriga naturgivna förutsättningar ger jordbruket i dessa trakter vissa merkostnader. EU:s delfinansiering av åtgärder inom mål 1 sker således genom Guidance Fund, medan möjligheterna för andra områden finansieras genom Guarantee Fund.

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Sektorer som inte har samband med de areella näringsklimatet prioriteras inte i programmet. Således ges inte mycket utrymme åt vare sig speciella regionala behov som finns i dessa områden, eller för stöd till utveckling av övriga sektorer som kan tänkas vara viktiga för landsbygdens utveckling t ex infrastruktur eller småskalig produktion.

Budgeten för åtgärder under insatsområde II är mindre än 10% av budgeten för insatsområde I, och fokus på jordbruksrelaterade åtgärder skärps ytterligare genom att stora delar av budgeten för insatsområde II går till investeringar och startstöd till unga jordbrukare. Det borde härav framgå att det inte finns mycket medel kvar att finansiera utveckling inom övriga sektorer på landsbygden.

Skogsektorn är en viktig faktor i den svenska landsbygdens utveckling. Runt 60% av arealen i Sverige täcks av skog, och skogen är en viktig inlättsskälla särskilt i nordliga delar av Sverige. Till detta kommer att runt 75% av alla jordbrukare även är skogsägare, vilket innebär att skogen utgör en viktig resurs för de enskilda jordbrukaren. I ljuset av detta verkar åtgärder som rör skogsbruket förvånansvärt få och finansierade med knappa medel: Stödet till skogsrelaterade åtgärder för hela programperioden utgör en mycket liten del av det samla stödet med knappt 10 miljoner Euro (LBU 2000:105).


Man kan inte utan vidare påstå att vissa fördelar har skapats av hur programmet har utvecklats. Även om aktörer på olika nivåer och med olika intressen i samhället har haft möjlighet att uttrycka sina åsikter i remissvar har processen styrt från det politisk/administrativa hålet, och ett underifrån-perspektiv har inte applicerats. Fördelarna av det svenska remissförfarandet är för det första att aktörer har en lagsäkrad rätt att uttrycka sin åsikt i ämnet, och för det andra att dessa remissvar står till offentlighetens förfogande vilket säkrar demokratiskt insyn.


Centraliseringen kritiseras även av aktörer inom länsstyrelserna, som uppfattar sina möjligheter för att påverka programmet som begränsade och sin roll bunden till administrativa svårigheter. Detta samtanget med den ogenomskickliga processen i samband med anmodningsförfarande i mål 1 områden, där anmodningar både behandlas av sektorsavdelningar under länsstyrelsen samt av tjänstemän från avdelningen för Strukturunderhåll, gör att programmet kan verka svårtillgängligt och tungt för den enskilde medborgaren. Enklare anmodningsförfarande samt en koordinatoriskt enhet för landsbygdsutveckling på länsstyrelsen eftersätter.

För att arbetet med LBU ansvarar Jordbruksverket, som även ansvarar för utbetalning. Jordbruksverket har efter programmets första år sammanfattat de första erfarenheter i en rapport som gavs ut vid årsskifte. Denna rapport bygger på verkets egna erfarenheter under implementeringen och administrationen, och baseras dessutom på 68 remisser till berörda aktörer och myndigheter (rapporten ska godkännas av riksdagen, för att kunna ge anledning till eventuella ändringar).

Förutom Jordbruksverket finns även en Rådgivande kommitté, vars uppgift är att följa arbetet med LBU, och i denna kommitté sittar alla myndigheter och aktörer som har konsulterat i remissarbetet. Rådgivande kommittén har inget ansvar för LBU som sådant utan ska säkra demokratisk insyn i processerna. Denna kommitté har även i uppdrag att varje år författa en rapport.

Arbetet med hur mid-term evaluation ska se ut har påbörjats, och man har gett konsulter i uppdrag att utforma ett förslag till hur en sådan utvärdering kan se ut. Intervjuade personer antar att denna utvärderingen kommer att ske genom att tillsätta en liten oberoende grupp som med Jordbruksverkets samlade data och erfarenhet till förfogande ska utvärdera programmets resultat.
De föreslagna ändringar som framkommit i Jordbruksverkets rapport rör mindre ändringar i hur stödet ges, men större ändringar i programmets struktur eller perspektiv är inte att vänta. Dessutom tillkommer ändringar i finansiering eftersom vissa åtgärder redan på nuvarande tidpunkt nästan har tömts (till exempel investeringsstöd) och eftersom man inte önskar att stänga programmet redan nu kommer ytterligare finansiering att behövas under programperioden.
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Persons and Institutions Contacted for Expert Interviews

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Häggenås interest group: Lennart Grundqvist
Eldrimner (Small Scale Refinement Centre): Bodil Cornell, Pelle Homström
Jämtspira kooperativ: Ulla Öhnstedt
Skärvångens Community-dairy: Tor Normman
Appendices

Map of Swedish regions ("län")
Regional Case Study Jämtland (Northern Sweden): Eldrimner - A Centre for Small-Scale Refinement (Rösta in Jämtland)

Eldrimner is a rural resource centre for small-scale refinement of agricultural products in the Jämtland region of Northern Sweden. This case study illustrates as well the integration of measures for rural development as environmental sustainability, strong community involvement (or bottom up-processes) and the active participation of women in the project – the last point is of importance as it is also a main objective of all Swedish public policies to support women. The project is targeted to meet the needs of local small-scale entrepreneurs in the food-refinement business and aims at creating the best conditions for small-scale production and distribution in the region.

The objectives of the Eldrimner project are that of a facilitator in small-scale systems of production and procession of rural products. For the functioning of small-scale enterprises a support system of knowledge and technologies is required; such support can be provided by the project for a limited time. A main purpose of the project is that of demonstrating that and how sustainable rural development can become possible by co-operation, networking, capacity building and mobilisation of local people.

Since Jämtland is part of the Swedish Objective 1 area that is granted a special status due to regional circumstances; the measures in the RDP are financed through the Guidance Funds (whereas the regions outside the objective 1 area are financed through the Guarantee Fund). Hence, Eldrimner receives 60% of the financing from the EU and 40% from national funds.

Area and site description

The Jämtland region is located in the Northern part of Sweden adjacent to the Norwegian boarder. The region measures 54 197 km² and is the third largest region in the country. Of the total area only 1% is used for agriculture, 1% is built-up area, 9% is covered by water. 49% of the area is covered by forest, 16% is swamp and 25% are mountains and other unused land. The length of the vegetation period in the region is about 170 days whereas it is 270 days in Southern Sweden.

The population is dispersed over a vast area and only one major city (Östersund) counts as a densely populated area in the statistics. Jämtland had a total population of 128 586 persons on December 31st 2001, more than one third of these persons are living in Östersund which is the major city in the region. The population has been diminishing for quite a long period. Jämtland is one of three thinly populated regions in Sweden with a high average of age of the population.

Public and private services, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and tourism are the main economic activities in Jämtland. About 2 200 farms support about 5% of the population (as compared to 2% as statistical average for Sweden). When all small-scale refinement and indirect employment is accounted for 10% of the population in Jämtland make their living from agriculture. Forestry is another important part of the economy in Jämtland - the region provides for 10% of the entire amount of felled trees in Sweden and 3% of the population are employed full-time in forestry. Most farmers in Jämtland combine forestry and agriculture as part of a distinctive pattern of life and work in the rural settlements in this region - people practice pluri-

activity to make a living. The region has also a small community of Sami people, who traditionally practice reindeer farming in the mountain area at the boarders between Norway, Sweden and Finland. The average size of farms in Jämtland is smaller than at the national level (21 ha in Jämtland, 34 ha national average) and the farms are dispersed over the landscape. Often there are several kilometres distance between the farms in the northern and western parts of the region. For the maintenance of infrastructure and basic services emerge special problems when the farms are not clustered together in larger villages that can support small business and shops.

Even though the population has been in decline over a long period, and despite the fact that it is not easy to make a living from one single economic activity, Jämtland is often considered to be special because of its strong regional identity and the close connections between local communities that are struggling to survive economically and socially. The strong tradition of local community life and the activity of the people in creating new ideas and projects in rural development, existing long before the EU formulated its policy for rural development, is described in the studies of Alf Ronnby who has worked as sociologist in regional and rural development in Jämtland (see especially Ronnby1995).

The project

- Objectives

Eldrimner\textsuperscript{27} is a resource centre for the transfer of applied and practical knowledge in small-scale production and refinement of food that follows from a tradition of local economy and handicraft. The project helps to start new enterprises and gives support to small-scale food-refinement in the Jämtland region. It does not have defined project membership for the target groups, but acts as a facilitator within the region for all persons interested in small-scale refinement. The administrative centre of Eldrimner is located in the village of Rösta, where the Rösta agricultural college can be found (Eldrimner co-operates to some degree with the agricultural college). The main objectives of the project can be described as follows:
1. to provide a forum and meeting place for small-scale food-producers;
2. to facilitate the start of new businesses and to support existing producers;
3. to mediate applied and practical knowledge between small-scale producers within the region as well as knowledge adapted from other regions (national as well as international);
4. to educate beginners in the business and help develop existing small enterprises;
5. to support small-scale production as one rooted in the local community and the local ecological conditions;
6. to support ecologically grown and produced food that does not involve substitutes.

The objectives are pursued in courses for small-scale refinement such as cheese making, pork butchering, and the refining of berries and vegetables. The courses even include marketing, economics and legislation on food-production. The knowledge dispersed from Eldrimner can be general as well as specialised and the aim is to blend local tradition with new input, ideas and technologies from other rural regions and countries. Hence, a co-operation with small-scale food-producers in France as well as Germany has been started, excursions to these regions have been done and experts from France and Germany have been teaching some courses.

\textsuperscript{2} The name "Eldrimner" is derived from old Nordic mythology: "Eldrimner" is the cooking pot in which the pig "Särirmer" was prepared. Särirmer had the special quality to resurrect every time it has been consumed. Therefore, the Asa-gods and the humans could always have food for a feast in Valhalla.
Besides the courses, Eldrimner provides help with the procedures involved in starting and managing small enterprises, and an inventory of techniques for small-scale refinement of rural products is made. The project helps rural people with interest in small-scale refinement to find an opportunity to try themselves production processes and the possibilities to sell the products on the market. Eldrimner provides several locations for production that are offered to interested small-scale producers. In the Rösta dairy (which is managed by Rösta agricultural college) courses in cheese making are offered. The dairy has a small shop in which the local products are sold. A production facility for pork butchering and other refinement is being built adjacent to the dairy, and here the producers will be able to attend courses and experiment with their own ideas. Finally, a mobile production-unit with approved equipment for all kinds of refinement (dairy, pork butchering and refinement of berries and vegetables) is for rent at a weekly basis at a low price. The unit can be transported to the producer's own farm, or can make use of at Eldrimners location in Rösta. An annual fair called Särinmer is organised to support the marketing of products and give producers and other actors an opportunity to meet and to communicate. The fair includes exhibitions, assessment of quality, seminars and discussions concerning the future of locally produced small-scale food-business.

The future plans for Eldrimner include liberation from governmental and EU funding through courses and knowledge mediation, and the development of a certification of small-scale products.

- **History of the project**

Eldrimner has evolved from another project (“Matora”), which was financed by regional and national rural development programmes for 6 years. The new project is supposed to last for 3 years, from 2001-2003. Eldrimner is connected to the various forms of agri-environmental measures in the Swedish RDP in a much more complex way than is visible at first sight. The farmers in Jämtland have a tradition to make their living from a mix of economic activities: agriculture, forestry and small-scale production. Goat farming has been a well-suited alternative to dairy farming with cows, since the mountains offers good opportunities for grazing. The return to small-scale production on the farm, of dairy or other refined products, can help the farmer to support himself and to keep the community vibrant. The farmers involved in small-scale production of food are very often supported with other funds from the RDP. It should be noticed that 53,3% of the agricultural production in Jämtland is now transformed to organic production (Jordbruk, skogsbruk och rennäring i Jämtlands län, 2001). All producers involved in the Eldrimner project are using ecological methods of production and most of them are approved of by KRAV (the Swedish certificate for organically grown products).

Eldrimner supplies an opportunity for the local producers to develop means to enhance small-scale production that is rooted in local needs and conditions. Not only the local conditions are met, also the national environmental aims are fulfilled with the focus on local production, organic production and strong community involvement. Hence, establishing a local production with environmental concern creates preconditions of success of the agri-environmental measures in the RDP in the sense that local development and socio-ecological transformation is initiated.

- **Organisations involved in planning, delivery, monitoring**

The authority responsible for Eldrimner is the regional administration in Jämtland (“Länsstyrelsen”) and the County Council in Jämtland (“Jämtlands läns Landsting”). A board consisting of 7 representatives of local producers, 2 representatives of the regional administration and the structural funds-officer, as well as the project manager controls the project. In interviews
with the persons involved in the project the point is stressed that it is of outmost importance that the local producers have a majority in deciding about Eldrimner's activities and the issues to be prioritised. The participation and engagement of local stakeholders is vital for the project, also their active participation in the board. The regional administration in Jämtland ("Länsstyrelsen") has the responsibility to administrate and monitor the project. The regional administration is monitored and controlled by the National Board of Audit ("Riksrevisionsverket") and the EU Audit.

- **Funding**

The project is financed through EU structural funds, but as Jämtland is part of an Objective 1 area (Southern forestry-region in Northern Sweden) that is given special status on account of the difficult climatic circumstances in Northern Sweden, it is at the same time part of the Swedish RDP. Rural development in Sweden is implemented according to the RDP and financed by the Guidance Section within the objective 1-area, and by the Guarantee Funds in the rest of the country. Eldrimner has a total budget of 6 075 000 SEK for the project, and the funds are granted according to measure 3.6 in the programme for objective 1 areas: 'Rural development.' The aims with this measure are: "To sustain and recreate traditional landscapes and cultural settings and to develop commercial activity in connection with this. The social economy and local development schemes are vital in this respect. They make use of a growing interest in small-scale solutions as participation in smaller communities and village development, and make way for the creation of new solutions in different areas which are required in the shift between industrial society and knowledge society." (see “Programkomplement, Mål 1 Södra skogslänsregionen 2000-2006 Sverige”, version 2001-06-25:102-106; quotation page 103). 60% of the budget for the measure 3.6 is EU-financed and 40% is financed by national means. The EU-fund used is the Development Section of the Agricultural Fund.

- **Impacts**

The Eldrimner-project has not yet created lasting impacts since the short time of its start. However, Eldrimner gives a practical example by demonstrating how sustainable rural development in the perspective of socio-ecological transformation of rural regions can be initiated through networking, co-operation, mobilisation of local people and capacity building. Giving such a practical example is already a positive effect of the project, as it is visible from the beginning of the project and in all phases, what are the preconditions for rural development to become effective in the long run. Such initiatives cannot become successful if they are only based on EU-regulations or policy programmes, and they may fall apart if they are only maintained by financing from political programmes. There are preconditions (such as local traditions, prior experience, active and interested population) that make rural development initiatives finally successful. Eldrimner is an “imbedded project” that shows how policy programmes and measures need to be “embedded” in socio-cultural traditions of rural development to become effective and cause lasting impacts.

- **Particular good practice points**

All four points mentioned above in the introduction can be seen as points of good practice in Eldrimner: the integration of measures for rural development, environmental sustainability, strong community involvement (through “bottom up”-processes), and the active participation of women in the project. Furthermore, the strength of Eldrimner is not only resulting from its local anchoring and the mobilisation of local people and human resources, but also from the ability of
the project and its activists to built an international “grassroots network” for rural development all over Europe which allows the project to use and distribute to the target groups special local knowledge from other countries that can be applied in local refinement of agricultural products.

- **Contribution to sustainable development**

Eldrimner illustrates in a practical and non-spectacular way, how local sustainable development can be initiated by local people and by connecting social, economic and ecological aspects in the local development process. At this level of practical local action no complicated analysis for the chances of “co-maximising” incompatible components of complex goal systems (as that of socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development) is necessary. Whereas such integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development is often seen as an unsolvable problem in the scientific and political debates at national or international levels, it can be found from the case of Eldrimner what creates the preconditions of workable sustainable development at local levels:

1. clear “project philosophy” that motivates participants (in the case of Eldrimner this is based on the conviction that small-scale rural production has chances to survive under the auspices of industrialising and globalising rural economies);
2. support from the local population – producers, consumers, public institutions;
3. socio-cultural embedding of projects and enterprises – these work and produce within the regional traditions of handicraft, using local knowledge;
4. networking of local and extra-local actors and institutions;
5. providing and transferring skills and local knowledge required for small-scale business.

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Regional Case Study Västra Götaland (Western Sweden): Complementary Approaches to Regional and Local Rural Development

The study of rural development in the region of Västra Götaland in Western Sweden (with regard to approaches and programmes for rural development outside the Swedish RDP) illustrates missed opportunities to co-ordinate and integrate different elements and structures for rural development, which altogether can help to fulfil the goals of rural development that the RDR is striving for. To see such lack of integration as a deficit of the Swedish RDP, its bureaucratic management, or its insufficient matching with other Swedish programmes and instruments for rural development, is only part of the truth. Further causes to the lack of integration result
- from the RDR itself (its unclear goals under the perspective of integrated rural development, its unbalanced measures for socio-economically and ecologically sustainable development);
- from the continuing approach of sector-specific and sector-driven rural development (reappearing in the dominant structure of policy and administration in the EU as well as in Swedish national policy); and
- from the slow and often halted progress in the institutional development from sectoral to territorial management in rural development at EU- as at national levels (the breakthrough that, for example, the European LEADER-programme signalled with its local and territorial approaches to rural development does not continually and consequently diffuse in policies for rural or regional development).

Area and site description

Västra Götaland is located in the South-west of Sweden. The region covers 23,940 km² and has 17% of the Swedish population (1.5 million people). The second largest city in Sweden, Göteborg, is located within the region and on account of this the region is much more densely populated than most other regions in the country. Of the total area almost 50% is covered by forest. Västra Götaland is an industrial region of Sweden. Industries include manufacturing of automobiles, textiles and medical products. Despite the fact that one fifth of the national food-production takes place in Västra Götaland and half of the industrial fishing is carried out from the region, only 1.6% of the population live from farming, forestry or fishing. Göteborg has the

28 For the statistics of Västra Götaland see: http://www.vastragotaland.se
largest harbour in the Nordic countries, and this fact, combined with the influential industries in
the region makes it an important centre for transport and trade. The sea is an influential factor in
the region, the coastal area is characterised as an archipelago, and these surroundings attract
many tourists in the summer.

The region has large-scale grain production as well as small-scale animal husbandry in the forest-
communities. As a result of the relatively close location to Göteborg, a large part of the
population in the surrounding rural communities commute to the city. This gives the rural
communities in Västra Götaland a somewhat more hopeful economic future than in Northern
regions of Sweden. New settlers replacing the diminishing population reduce the problems of a
rural exodus that threatens the Northern regions. Despite the new commuting pattern the overall
impression of the rural communities in the region is one of stagnation and a diminishing
significance of local production. Relative to the close surroundings of the metropolitan area of
Göteborg, the municipalities are small, often isolated rural communities on the archipelago
islands, along the coast and in the inland areas. This portrait is especially valid for the Bohuslän
area North of Göteborg. Along the coast and in the archipelago the population varies greatly
between seasons (during the summer seasons 10 times as many people live in some
municipalities as during the rest of the year) and the service and social structure hence is affected.

From the description of the region and its economic structure it can be derived that programmes
for rural development need to be integrated with the different sub-regional structures to be
effective. In such a metropolitan-dominated and coastal region the RDP should be co-ordinated
and integrated with policies and programmes for urban development, tourism development and
coastal zone development. Regional policy programmes for the different economic sectors exist.
Two important types of innovative approaches and regional programmes are the regional growth
contracts the “the living archipelago”-programmes.

The RDP in Västra Götaland

The RDP has been implemented for a year now and the administration and implementation of the
programme in Västra Götaland is separated between different administrative units within the
regional administration. The agricultural unit is responsible for RDP priority I-measures to
support organic farming. The project-unit is responsible for RDP priority II-measures to ensure
economically and socially sustainable rural development. The agri-environmental measures
managed by the agricultural unit have been demanded to an extent that the financing does not
suffice to accept all applications. Investment grants are especially popular among the farmers,
and, therefore, the administration prioritises projects according to the guidelines recommended
by the Board of Agriculture (“Jordbruksverket”). According to this recommendation investments in
environmentally sound restructuring of the agricultural production should have priority. As a
result of this situation, applications for financing of new livestock housing (in which the livestock
can walk around) are supported, as well as applications for new fertilisation-systems. The
fertilisation-systems are often modernised to reduce fertilisation outputs by more effective
systems. However the investments in new fertilisation-systems do not guarantee that the
fertilisation is environmentally friendly per se. The implementation of the agri-environmental
measures is described as relatively uncomplicated since this part of the programme has already
been applied through previous rural programmes.

The implementation of priority II-measures for economically and socially sustainable rural
development is more difficult. Even though information about the measures has been distributed,
there have been fewer applications than expected. The measures that were commonly applied for
were *processing and marketing* and *tourist and craft activities*. Officials blame the bureaucratic application form that is used. The form is complicated and designed in an incomprehensive manner that puts off the applicants and discourages them from making further inquiries into the possibilities of receiving financial support. To combat this problem, the regional administration in Västra Götaland has formed a project, to be financed through the measure for competence-development, in which 10 consultants are trained to help applicants with the application process. This seems to become a traditional bureaucratic solution to an administrative problem that will have the unintended consequence to further the gap between applicants and administrators rather than supplying the local users with opportunities to handle their own applications.

A different problem with the implementation of priority II-measures is that the financial support may not be used for "hard" investments, that is, for building infrastructure etc. The definition of what should be considered “hard” or “soft” investments is vague. The programme implies that systems for maintaining and strengthening infrastructure should be supported. Networks for communication should also be planned and developed according to this measure. The problem stems from difficulties in determining when the measure is used for new and direct investments in infrastructure (which is not allowed) and when it is used for the development of systems to modernise the rural infrastructure. The local municipalities, guided by a need-based approach to rural development, do not easily understand this rule. Since the maintenance of infrastructure is often a problem in the Swedish rural communities, where roads are often destroyed due to rainfall, snow and frost, it is not evident for the municipalities why building a new road or improving old ones is not part of the rural development plan. The fact that finances can be granted for "soft" investments, such as planning a new road, makes it even harder for the communities to get a grip on what kind of use the projects can be to them. Both aspects of slowing down the implementation of the socio-economic measures for rural development in the region of Västra Götaland – not only found in this region – coincide with the neglect of the non-environmental components and measures of rural development that can be traced back to the RDR itself with its neglect of such measures except for the residual component of “Article 33” (where all these measures enter the programme in an unbalanced compromise). Given this situation of neglect of socio-economic components of rural development in the RDR and the Swedish RDP it can be asked, if such deficits could be compensated through other approaches and programmes outside the RDP which are available for rural development in Sweden.

**Complementary programmes and initiatives: Regional Growth Contracts**

The “regional growth contracts” (RGC) are examples of innovative policy approaches with regard to the establishment of private-public partnerships for rural development. To make visible the differences and the dynamics of regional growth contracts, this case study is based upon the comparison Västra Götalands regional growth contract with others (Skåne län, Jämtlands län and Blekinge län). The regions were selected following the ecological and socio-economic variations within Sweden.  

**Västra Götalands län**

29 For information on the regional websites see [http://www.sverigedirekt.se](http://www.sverigedirekt.se). The regional growth contracts from the selected four regions above can be found at: Västra Götaland- [http://www.vgregion.se](http://www.vgregion.se), Skåne- [http://www.skane.se](http://www.skane.se), Jämtland- [http://www.z.lst.se](http://www.z.lst.se), Blekinge- [http://www.k.lst.se](http://www.k.lst.se).
**Geographical setting**: Västra Götalands län is located in the South-west of Sweden. The region has archipelago as well as agricultural landscapes and forests. The region is dominated by Göteborg, the second-largest city in Sweden.

**Vegetative period**: 190–210 days

**Socio-economic problems**: The region suffers from the effects of urbanisation as well as rural marginalisation.

**Environmental problems**: Industrial as well as rural.

**Inhabitants**: 149,464 persons (62 persons per km²)

**Area**: 23,942 km²

Distinctive features in the regional growth contract for Västra Götaland: The RGC in Västra Götaland encompasses eight separate growth contracts, one for each smaller region ("delregion"). This reflects the diversity of the region: major urbanisation surrounding Göteborg as well as archipelago and traditional agricultural landscape. The archipelago suffers from specific problems on account of its inaccessibility (the islands can only be reached by ferries), the declining possibilities for employment in fishery and maritime activities, and the seasonal tourism. The inland with its agricultural landscapes suffers from traditional rural problems such as sparse population and a declining agricultural sector and inaccessibility to service.

In the report "Samverkan för tillväxt i väst" (Näringslivsheten, 2001) the collected regional growth contracts for the region are presented with the following structure of measures:

- Business development (this contains helping to develop new business ideas and supporting small companies).
- Co-operation and mobilisation through development of new arenas for dialogue (the dialogue should be enhanced between trade and industry, universities and other stakeholders, as well as within trade and industry).
- Capacity building and development of centres to promote the use of local capacity.
- Support and financial aid for establishing technology- and research parks connected with the university.
- Joint efforts to create strategies for Information Technology and extension of broadband.

Västra Götaland presents RGCs that stress economic growth by networking in trade and industry. The aspects of ecological and social sustainability are not taken into account in the contracts, but referred to the Structural Funds for further development. The specific problems existing in the archipelago and in rural areas in the inland are not addressed in the regional growth contract as these are considered to be dealt with through the Structural Funds. It is stressed that the coordination between the regional growth contracts and Structural Funds facilitates efforts to promote rural development. However, it is pointed out that the co-operation is not yet fully developed. In some parts of the region the stakeholders have not yet been fully involved and the regional growth contracts have been developed by municipalities mainly. RGC contracts for the next period must include mobilisation of stakeholders from trade and industry as well as local interest groups.

**Conclusion - “cross-reference between programmes is not yet cross-compliance”**: From the specific features and deficits of Västra Götalands RGCs the impression is reinforced that the lack of integration and the various approaches, instruments, programmes and funds available for rural development is not prevented by cross-referencing between programmes. Such formal reference is more a way to exclude certain claims from one programme by referring to other existing programmes, but it is not as good as active integration, complementary effects or synergy.
between the programmes. It remains an open question, how far other programmes in practice and under the local circumstances given, can and do fill the gaps of problem-solving or funding. A comparison of the practice of RGC with other Swedish regions shows, furthermore, some remarkable differences in the regional policies.

Skåne län

Geographical setting: Skåne län is located in the Southern of Sweden. The region is dominated by agriculture.

Vegetative period: Skåne has the most favourable climate for agriculture in Sweden, the vegetative period is 210-240 days.

Socio-economic problems: Urban as well as rural.

Environmental problems: Due to the intensive agriculture Skåne is one of the few areas in Sweden that is affected by soil erosion. Furthermore, problems with pesticides and fertilisers exist. The eutrophication of the Baltic Sea is a major concern in Skåne since the nitrate loss from agriculture is one of the largest in Sweden.

Inhabitants: 1129 424 persons (102 persons per km2)

Area: 11 027 km2

Distinctive features in the regional growth contract for Skåne

The RGC for Skåne län aims at creating new business opportunities to create economic growth in co-operation with regional authorities, thereby trying to guarantee work places and incoming taxes. Economic growth should be ecologically as well as socially sustainable and should be rooted in the special local preconditions that exist in Skåne on account of its location close to the European continent. The strategy in this regional growth contract resembles that in Västra Götaland. The following distinctive features can be pointed out in the regional growth contract for Skåne:

• Focus on food production (45% of all Swedish provisions are produced in Skåne, and it is possible to render new opportunities in this area. The development of functional foods as well as fruit and berries are pointed out).

• Focus on agriculture (agriculture is the foundation that food production in Skåne rests upon. The need for further capacity building in the agricultural sector is addressed, as well as the need for investments in further modernisation of the agricultural production. The regional growth contract welcomes development of plant-based bio-technologies).

• Ecological production in agriculture should be supported through new production techniques, conversion from conventional agriculture to ecological production, and the creation of a market place ("Marknadscentrum") that will help ecological stakeholders to meet (producers, wholesale dealers and consumers).

• More emphasis on research and co-operation between universities in the region (This is further stressed since the accessibility to Universities in Denmark renders new opportunities for co-operation).

Jämtlands län
**Geographical setting:** Jämtland is located in the North-west of Sweden, adjacent to the Norwegian border. The region has forests, mountains and only 7% of the total area is used for agriculture.

**Climate:** Jämtland is one of the regions in Sweden, which is considered to be less favoured due to the climatic circumstances. The vegetative period varies between 120-180 days.

**Socio-economic problems:** The problems in Jämtland are a result of economic decline and the socio-economic problems that face rural areas such as declining population and unemployment.

**Environmental problems:** In Jämtland agriculture is managed in a small-scale and very often it is ecological. With 53.3% the region has the highest percentage of ecological production in Sweden. The environmental problem of greatest concern is that the forests will take over former agricultural landscapes if this is not prevented.

**Inhabitants:** 129,566 (3 persons per km²)

**Area:** 49,443 km²

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**Distinctive features in the regional growth contract for Jämtland:** The RGC in Jämtland is characterised by the fact that this region has suffered from rural decline, economically as well as socially, to a greater extent than the other regions mentioned in this case study. The RGCs were set out in 1998 by government, but in Jämtland efforts to coordinate stakeholders and regional authorities started as early as 1996 when a project was launched to promote strategies for integrated development in the region. Hence, the RGC built on the earlier project in the region and on earlier efforts to co-operate and formulate joint strategies for development in the region. The following distinctive features can be pointed out for the RGC in Jämtland:

- Emphasis on horizontal committees to discuss capacity building, rules and regulations, equal opportunities for women and men, social economics and environmental issues.
- Co-operation between regional growth contract and Structural Funds (It is stressed that this is of great importance for the success of the development plans. To emphasise this further, representatives for the Structural Funds Secretariat have taken an active part in the development of the regional growth contract).
- To facilitate administration and bureaucracy it is suggested that stakeholders meet to construct a plan that can be further developed into an application for financial support.
- To facilitate the handling of project applications it has been suggested to substitute single separate project applications for financial support from the EU Structural Funds in collaboration with other framework programmes. (Several interests - trade, geographic area or topic – are united in the draft of a plan of action resulting in an application for financial support. This procedure facilitates administration and ensures an overview, but more importantly does is give different interest groups more influence).
- Because of the weak position Jämtland has in industry and agriculture the growth contract accentuates the social resources of the inhabitants by virtue of competence, the many varied occupations, informal economy and interest in new ideas (In the growth contract the human resources in the rural areas are emphasised to an extent not seen in the two contracts mentioned above. However, it must be accentuated that also in the Jämtland growth contract the development is primarily seen as economic instrument).
Geographical setting: Blekinge län is located in the South of Sweden and has intensive agriculture as well as archipelago coasts.

Climate: The climate in Blekinge is favourable for agriculture, the vegetative period varies between 210-240 days.

Socio-economic problems: Due to its location at the Baltic Sea, Blekinge was dominated by shipyards and the Swedish navy for a long period. When the cold war ended the Swedish Navy suffered major cut-backs. This, and the fact that economic decline affected industrial production such as shipyards, has resulted in serious economic stagnation with high unemployment rates and depopulation.

Environmental problems: Though Blekinge enjoys good conditions for agriculture due to its southern location, it is one of the regions with the least precipitation. Hence, water supply is threatened during periods with no or sparse rain. Furthermore, Sölversborgs municipality in Blekinge has the densest population of beasts in Sweden, resulting in problems with fertilisers and eutrophication.

Inhabitants: 150 392 (51 persons per km2)
Area: 2941 km2

Distinctive features in the regional growth contract for Blekinge

The RGC in Blekinge can be divided into 4 target areas:

- The Baltic Sea perspective particularly includes economic and cultural Cupertino with countries in the Baltic Sea region. The environmental issues will be addressed under the point "ecologically sustainable society". (In this respect the regional growth contract is closely connected with the Structural Funds, where the Baltic Sea perspective will be further promoted in the period 2000-2006 due to the enlargement process).
- Enterprise and economic infrastructure. (This point is equal to similar issues in the growth contracts for the regions mentioned above).
- Know-how, competence and IT. (Similar to measures in the other regions).
- Ecologically sustainable society. (Reclamation of electronics is particularly emphasised as the leading company in Sweden within this field is domiciled in the region. Emphasised is also ecological agricultural production, horticulture and fishery. Even though the cultivation conditions are favoured by the southern position of the region, the precipitation is among the lowest in Sweden. In periods of low precipitation the water supplies are threatened. With the RGC sound development of resources with regard to water and the complex fertiliser problems should be managed).

Complementary programmes and initiatives: “Living Archipelago”- programmes

The regional programmes for integrated development in the archipelago areas (“regionala miljö- och hushållningsprogram för skärgårdsområdena”), resulting from a mandate of the Swedish government in December 1997, have been elaborated by the regional administrations (“länsstyrelser”) in Västra Götalands län and five other regions. The objectives of these programmes – one of these is the programme “Living Archipelago” for the West Coast Archipelago in Västra Götaland – are as follows:
(a) to formulate concrete measures for a regional environmental programme that meets the requirements for environmentally sound, job-creating and growth-supporting development;
(b) to analyse the preconditions for the application of legal norms regarding land- and water resources, environmental protection and protection of the values of the natural and cultural landscapes;
(c) to analyse the preconditions for supporting development measures to achieve environmentally sustainable solutions (among others: to find EU-support);
(d) to formulate a joint programme for managing “environment and development”-issues through regional and local planning, following the perspective of environmentally sustainable development (see: Miljö i Väst Skärgård 1999, 3).

Detailed measures for the following thematic areas have been designed by the project group “Environment in the Western Archipelago” (“Miljö i Väst Skärgård”): eutrophication, environmentally dangerous poisons, marine environment, nature protection and leisure life, cultural environment, fishery and water use, housing and economy (this area includes also measures for the management of agricultural landscapes), regional and local planning. It is important for this programme, that the notion of “archipelago” is not limited to islands without built connections to the mainland (as is in EU’s terminology) but includes the mainland coast as well and has thus a better approach to integrated development in the region. The measures are to be financed individually from different sources. The programme has no joint budget, and the measures cannot be financed from the municipal or regional administrations – that is one of the weaknesses of the programme. Financial support from the government is required if the programme should succeed. The value of the programme can be seen in its regional specific character, its integrated approach, and in the matching with the regional and local processes for territorial planning. As can be seen already from the objectives described, this type of programme and its regionally specified measures could be an instrument for the regional “fine-tuning” of the RDP. It may also be thought of in this way – as well by the authors of the living archipelago-programme as by the responsible governmental institutions for the RDP. However, the idea alone that both structures can be combined is not enough to let this happen.

Particular good practice points and lessons learned

(1) The RGC-example: One of the recommendations in the Nord 2 report that is presented above is that the local stakeholders should be involved further in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of rural development such as the RDP. This should be done at both regional and local levels. The RGCs create an opportunity for developing such an integrated strategy that is based on bottom-up methods. The partnership approach brings together state resources, regional administration and municipalities with trade and industry as well as other local stakeholders. However, the RGCs are not influenced by this approach when it comes to ecological and social sustainability.

The Government seems aware of this problem and the RGCs can be seen as a future possibility to create integrated rural development through the co-operation of stakeholders. If finances are coordinated and programmes are planned to ensure both ecological, social and environmental development and sustainability, the RGCs can become an innovative example for both participation and integration. If an integrative approach would be applied in the RGCs it would be possible to make use of priority 2-measures (socially and economically sustainable rural development) from the RDP within the contracts. This would render the possibility to supplement scarce financial means as well as to give priority to projects rooted in the local community. To ensure that it is not only economic interests that are represented in the partnerships it is of great importance that NGOs, local development groups, and citizens are represented. Therefore, the democratic aspects of such an integrative partnership group must be discussed further.

(2) The example of the “living archipelago”-programme: The main advantage of the “Living Archipelago”-programme in Västra Götaland is the regional and local focus of measures and the
integration in the system of physical planning at regional and municipal levels. More than the RDP and the RGCs (except for the economic dimensions) the “living archipelago”-programme unfolds the basic idea of a holistic approach to regional and rural development – the programme is no longer designed from a sector-specific and limited perspective but takes into account all economic, social, political and environmental activities in the region, production, service and consumption and it uses the institutionally anchored procedures of local planning to achieve this holistic approach. Important lessons learned from former planning and regional development are that holistic approaches are necessary but not sufficient – they must be supplemented by active participation of the regional and local stakeholders, by sufficient funding (which, within the Swedish system, cannot be provided by municipalities and regional administrations), and by deeper integration and more active co-ordination with other development programmes.

**Contribution to Sustainable Development**

The main effects of a deeper future integration of the RDP at regional and local levels with such regionally specified development programmes as RGCs and “Living Archipelago” would be to approach a transition to rural sustainable development as is formulated in the objectives of the RDP but cannot be achieved by this programme alone. The measures designed in the West Swedish “Living Archipelago”-programme give examples of how sustainable development can work (including the social, economic and ecological sustainability can function practically – instead of defining it on the basis of broad normative principles):

- every measure is designed and calculated for its potential impacts in terms of creating additional full-time jobs;
- the measures related to agriculture and fishery are designed to strengthen small-scale local producers and small-scale local processing enterprises, making use of products from the region – that is, the measures are derived from strategies for survival and economic development of primary producers;
- the measures are not only designed as single technical, organisational or economic measures in an undefined and unspecific social environment, but altogether contribute to the idea and concept of basing regionally and rural sustainable development on the core idea of sustainable livelihoods in coastal and rural communities (plus the strategies required to achieve or strengthen sustainable livelihoods);
- the measures build on and use already existing social and cultural capital in the region, for example, partnerships and networks from former development programmes and measures, the available capacities in territorial planning, and the traditions of participation in the planning processes.

The solution to the problem of how to proceed with socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development is not achieved by scientific contributions and methodologies alone, nor by scientific or normative definitions of sustainability, nor multilevel frameworks for policy and governance alone (including, for example, the ecosystems, the macro-economic systems, the sectoral policies, territorial integration, socio-economic change, institutional development to support democratisation of development). It requires also the translation of complex goals and institutional arrangements into specific local projects and measures that suffice this complexity without being blocked by the overwhelming tasks. The regional and local examples, programmes and projects that have been found in Swedish rural areas and reported in this case study, do not fully suffice to solve the problems, but they can become “workable” solutions when they are used to achieve the objectives of the RDP.
References


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For the “Living Archipelago”-programme in Västra Götaland: www.o.lst.se/projekt/skargard