A coherent Swedish maritime policy

November 2009

International cooperation and concrete action for healthier seas

Swedish maritime policy is based on the view that our seas are an indispensable resource. Preserving this resource will require a holistic approach to how we use the seas and action to preserve or restore marine ecosystems. This statement forms the foundation for a coherent Swedish maritime policy.

Direction of Swedish maritime policy

The resources of the sea and coastal areas are to be used in a sustainable way so that ecosystems are maintained and restored, while enabling sea-related industries to develop, grow and contribute to strengthening Sweden’s competitiveness.

Some of the starting points are:

- Regional cooperation on marine issues will be strengthened through cooperation in the EU. Sweden will press for active contributions by the EU to living seas. This policy integrates several sectors, such as fishing and shipping, and is based on a holistic perspective on resource use and preservation. It engages and includes a range of stakeholders.
- Sea-related industrial policy will place a special focus on environmental issues. The climate change and environmental challenges that society is facing can be used as a lever for greater sustainable growth, new jobs and more exports.
- Sustainable development is an overarching goal that means that all political decisions have to take account of long-term economic, social and environmental impacts. This is also particularly applicable to maritime policy. The sea-related national environmental quality objectives are given starting points for Swedish maritime policy.

An action plan for international cooperation

Sweden will be proactive and work strategically to strengthen international cooperation on marine resource issues. This way of working will be developed further by drafting a special Swedish action plan for the full range of international cooperation. It will have a particular focus on the Baltic and the North Sea. An evaluation should be undertaken of how efforts and negotiation processes are proceeding at national, regional and international level.

The Baltic Sea as a pilot project

The EU Marine Directive forms the basis for the Swedish action plan for international cooperation on the marine environment. Sweden is an active advocate of making the Baltic Sea a pilot project under the EU Marine Directive. Sweden is working for this to be implemented as part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region, in close cooperation with HELCOM.
Our seas are a major resource. Many associate them with recreation, boat trips, sunbathing and swimming. For others they are essential for transport or a source of income through fishing or tourism.

At the same time, there is a steady flow of reports about dead seabeds and a worsening environmental status. Too little has been done about eutrophication and high levels of toxins. Today, in one of the world’s richest areas, we have one of the world’s most polluted inland seas.

For the Swedish Government, the marine environment is the highest-priority environmental issue, next to climate change. Our seas need new life. This is why the Government made an immediate start on its marine environment initiative in autumn 2006. Our first action was to establish a special marine environment appropriation in the Government budget. More than SEK 1.3 billion has been made available for the period 2007–2012 for restoration, research and measures for environmental improvement. We have initiated projects to produce quick results, such as oxygenation of seabeds and preventing depletion of sprat stocks. We have also taken action to address eutrophication by creating wetlands, for example. Phosphates in detergents have been banned.

The sea is something we share. This is why international cooperation is crucial for the future of the seas. The Government is giving priority to international cooperation as part of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, the EU Marine Directive and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The sea is a strategic area for environmental research. The Government has therefore started a Marine Environment Institute. Now we are taking the next step and setting up a marine environment agency to ensure the coherent management of marine and water environment issues using an ecosystem approach.

The Government is working for a new vision for our seas. Sea-related industries will develop, grow and help to strengthen Sweden’s competitiveness, while achieving our environmental objectives. The Government’s maritime policy means that environmental policy will impact on other important policy areas such as industrial policy, shipping, fisheries and agriculture. This is necessary to enable us to make use of our seas while maintaining their ability to provide the ecosystem services that are so valuable to us.

Andreas Carlgren, Minister for the Environment

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, adopted during the Swedish Presidency of the EU in 2009, is an opportunity to increase EU commitment in the region in the long term and to use EU resources to reduce pressure on the Baltic Sea. The strategy will lead to broad and coordinated action on the part of regional actors (including the European Commission) for a better marine environment and stronger economic growth in the region.

Regional cooperation to be strengthened

Sweden is working in the longer term to strengthen HELCOM as an intergovernmental actor for the marine environment in the Baltic Sea region. Work on the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan will be coordinated with equivalent processes at EU level, and close cooperation with Russia is important. The implementation of the Action Plan is a priority action in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Sweden believes that OSPAR and HELCOM will continue to have an important role in the implementation of the EU Marine Directive. Sweden participates actively in OSPAR activities and will also work to ensure that cooperation between HELCOM and OSPAR is deepened. Sweden plays a proactive role in strengthening Nordic cooperation with regard to marine planning and management.

More finance for intergovernmental fund

Sweden is providing financial support for an intergovernmental fund intended to develop and help to finance projects and action to improve the marine environment in the Baltic Sea. Sweden also contributes financially to the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP), which is intended to implement major investment projects, mainly in Russia, to improve the Baltic Sea environment.

Agency responsible for marine and water environment issues

The Government has appointed an inquiry to recommend what activities from, primarily, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Board of Fisheries and the five water authorities to be included in a new agency for marine and water environment issues. The aim is to establish effective and coherent Swedish marine and water environment management that will create the conditions for sustainable and optimal use of these natural resources and will be suited to maintaining and, where necessary, improving the environmental status of Swedish water environments. The agency is expected to start operations on 1 January 2011.

Planning of Swedish marine areas

The implementation of Swedish maritime policy requires the appropriate planning of coastal and marine areas. The planning of marine areas should be developed and cooperation between land-use planning and maritime spatial planning should be strengthened. An inquiry has been appointed to propose new legislation. Responsibility for planning the territorial sea will probably be shared by the state and the municipalities. A government agency will be given responsibility for planning in the exclusive economic zone and the inquiry will propose legislation for this planning. Sweden should con-
Maritime policy – background

As a resource, the sea offers us a large quantity of products and services, called ecosystem services. Food products, experiences of various kinds and transport opportunities are examples of these services. The sea also acts as a supply base for the fishing industry, shipping, the tourism industry and sea-based energy production.

Ecosystem services

A flourishing sea where environmental disturbances are minimised or preferably end altogether forms the basis for the ecosystem services provided by the seas. Even though it has not been possible to put an economic value on these ecosystem services, all the evidence is that their value is so high that we cannot afford to lose them. That would cost much more than preserving them and managing them well.

A coherent maritime policy

In the past, policies for sea-related activities such as shipping, fisheries, energy, tourism, agriculture, marine environment and marine research have each developed separately. This has led to fragmented decision-making with sometimes contradicting objectives.

A new coherent maritime policy means focusing on using the potential for cooperation between all the sectors of society that have an interest in the seas. A holistic policy will provide more potential for the sustainable use of the sea and generate synergies between different activities, while making it possible to reduce conflicts of interest. This will also create better conditions for adaption and change to remedy environmental problems. A coherent maritime policy benefits the environment while creating sustainable growth and jobs.

Broad involvement on the part of both various actors and the public increases the prospect of maintaining and restoring ecosystems while at the same time developing marine industries. Stakeholders affected, such as industry or interest organisations, will therefore be engaged and included more in maritime policy work.

The EU of central importance for Swedish maritime policy

EU maritime policy is a central point of departure for Swedish maritime policy. The European Commission has produced an Action Plan that is intended to show how different policy areas can work together using common policy tools. A lack of coordination between various areas in the past has had negative impacts on the marine environment and sea-related activities. The new integrated maritime policy is now changing this.

Swedish maritime policy is also affected by EU agricultural and fisheries policies. Major changes are under way in these two areas in connection with the comprehensive EU budget review. This review is intended to bring about reforms and that will lead to sustainable development.

The basis for EU maritime policy is that all issues relating to Europe's oceans and seas are interdependent and that regional cooperation on maritime issues should be strengthened. One consequence is that Sweden's participation in regional cooperation like HELCOM (Convention on Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea, or the Helsinki Commission) and OSPAR (the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) will be strengthened further. Sweden gives priority to regional cooperation and has played a proactive role in work on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

Higher appropriations

Action to improve the marine environment has high priority. A special marine environment appropriation was already established in the 2007 Spring Fiscal Policy Bill, and more money was provided in the Budget for 2009. A total of more than SEK 1.3 billion has been made available for the period 2007–2012.

Knowledge and monitoring to support management

Less is known about the marine environment than about other ecosystems. There are still major gaps in knowledge of, for example, the structure of ecosystems and how they work, how land-based processes affect the marine environment and how fisheries affect ecosystems and water quality. Research is very important, both to learn more about the marine environment and to be able to choose the right measures to improve the marine environment. Knowledge about the marine environment is also crucial for the appropriate planning of coastal and marine areas.

The Government has reinforced the appropriation for marine environment research by a further SEK 40 million per year.

Marine Environment Institute – a coordinating role for research

In spring 2008 the Government decided to create a new Marine Environment Institute in the form of cooperation between the universities of Umeå, Stockholm, Göteborg and Kalmar. The Marine Environment Institute has a coordinating role for research. One important task is to compile scientific input, conduct syntheses and analyses and disseminate information about the marine environment to support work by the Government, agencies and other stakeholders to improve the marine environment.
**Monitoring of the environment**

The vessels used by the Swedish Board of Fisheries, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and universities for marine research, environmental monitoring and surveys should be brought together in a single organisation. The Government has therefore instructed the Swedish Maritime Administration to investigate, together with the authorities affected, how this change can be implemented.

**Access to information**

Work in the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) is very important for the standardisation of the production and development of bathymetric data. In cooperation with the relevant authorities, the Swedish Maritime Administration has been instructed to review how the present IHO structure can be used to improve the standard of different kinds of marine data. A digital bathymetric database should also be established and models developed for the Baltic Sea. It should also be possible to make much of the bathymetric data freely accessible. The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute should be responsible for coordinating how data relevant to marine environmental work and marine spatial planning are stored and made available.

**Development of maritime surveillance**

Maritime surveillance is of key importance in enabling states to maintain the safe and long-term sustainable use of the sea. It is needed to counter illegal discharges and to support maritime safety, police operations and fisheries controls and to secure Europe's maritime borders. Maritime surveillance systems are to be developed and integrated to make them more effective and also to simplify matters for maritime industries, such as notification procedures for shipping.

**Development of a sustainable fisheries sector**

Fishing has a major impact on marine ecosystems. This is why extensive initiatives are being undertaken to develop a sustainable fisheries sector, including measures to improve the conditions for natural fish stocks and the restoration of habitats. These initiatives also receive additional support from the EU Operational Programme for Fisheries, which provides funds over and above national investments.
The following are some starting points for progress towards a sustainable fisheries sector:

- Developing lower-impact fishing gears to minimise by-catches and fish discards. The Swedish Board of Fisheries will be the agency responsible for this work.
- The national stock recovery plan for European eel will be made more effective through improved stock monitoring, restoration measures in water environments and the assumption of increased responsibility by stakeholders outside the fisheries sector for the survival of the European eel.
- To achieve a sustainable fisheries sector, it is important to adapt the size of the fishing fleet in relation to fish stocks and to change the EU common fisheries policy.

A competitive and vigorous shipping industry

Sweden has one of the longest coastlines in Europe and has a broad port network. Shipping accounts for the great bulk of transport for foreign trade. In the future, shipping will have to continue to maintain high quality and a high standard regarding environment and safety, while being an attractive option for different kinds of transport.

The following are some starting points for the development of a competitive and vigorous shipping industry while reducing environmental impacts and creating jobs:

- Facilitating more short sea shipping in and around Sweden that helps reduce emissions from the transport sector.
- Promoting more projects for motorways of the sea, through work on both infrastructure projects in specific corridors and projects that facilitate winter shipping in order to develop and improve the conditions for short sea shipping. Investigating the options with regard to a tax exemption for electricity supplied to vessels in port.
- Increasing coordination between the Swedish Road Administration, the Swedish Rail Administration and the Swedish Maritime Administration on central government-funded infrastructure to Swedish ports to enable them to be used more effectively both land-side and water-side.
- Drafting a new Pilotage Act to increase maritime safety and to enable more actors to enter the pilotage area.
- Increasing cooperation between the state and industry to maintain and strengthen positive developments through regulatory simplification, lower administrative costs, support for new entrepreneurs in the form of training and investments in recruitment to the industry.

Sustainable development of coastal and archipelago-based industries

There is major interest among small and medium-sized enterprises in increasing their visibility and strengthening their international competitiveness through increased cooperation in joint networks. This applies particularly to companies in the environmental area that focus on the marine environment, where a similar interest exists among relevant actors in other Baltic Sea countries.

Measures and instruments for a better marine environment

The North Sea and the Baltic Sea, especially, are severely affected by eutrophication, overfishing and environmental toxins. Long-term action is required to reduce these environmental problems and improve the serious state of the environment in our seas. This means that, over and above sectoral measures, additional specific initiatives are required to restore and protect marine environments, address eutrophication, minimise the impacts of environmental toxins and reduce marine litter and emissions to the air. These measures will especially strengthen work to achieve the environmental quality objectives of A Balanced Marine Environment and Flourishing Coastal Areas and Archipelagos, A Non-Toxic Environment, Zero Eutrophication and Clean Air. The measures are also an important part of Sweden’s action to fulfil the requirements of the EU Marine Directive and HELCOM’s Baltic Sea Action Plan.

EUTROPHICATION

Government grants to local water management initiatives

Sweden’s marine environment policy focuses on concrete measures to improve the marine environment. This approach is being reinforced through government grants to local water management initiatives (‘LOVA grants’) that are available from 1 August 2009. The intention is that most of the support will be used for measures that help reduce eutrophication, i.e. reduce the quantity of phosphorus and nitrogen load to the Baltic or North Sea. Grants can also be given to measures to restore valuable and degraded habitats. The Government believes that it is important to utilise and stimulate creative and cost-effective initiatives at local level. Municipalities and non-profit organisations can therefore receive grants covering up to 50 percent of costs. Government funding amounts to around SEK 120 million per year.

System of emission charges for phosphorus and nitrogen

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

Limits on farmyard manure

To reduce leaching of nitrogen and phosphorus from agriculture, further limits are being introduced on the application of farmyard manure. These include a new limit of 170 kg of nitrogen per hectare and extended restrictions on the application of manure in the autumn and winter. Requirements for protective zones will also be introduced with regard to manure applied close to watercourses and on steeply sloping land close to watercourses. These new regulations will be applicable from 2010 at the earliest.

The Rural Development Programme

In rural policy, the Rural Development Programme, action to improve water quality has high priority. The Rural Develop-
ment Programme makes the agricultural sector better able to contribute to achieving the targets set in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the relevant environmental quality objectives.

Developing mussel farming

The use of mussel farms as a measure to reduce levels of phosphorus and nitrogen along the coast will be stimulated. Methods will be developed (in both commercial and environmental terms) for the west, south and east coasts.

Tax credits for conversion of private waste water systems

The opportunity to benefit from tax deductions for private household repair and renovation work now also includes improvements to private waste water systems. Currently 700 000 properties across the country have private waste water systems, 300 000 of which do not meet statutory water treatment requirements. These tax credits are expected to accelerate action to tackle the problem of phosphorus emissions from private waste water systems.

Ban on phosphates in detergents and cleaning agents

The use of phosphates in detergents and cleaning agents should be reduced and eventually replaced altogether with more environment-friendly alternatives. In addition to the recently introduced ban on phosphates in laundry detergents, phosphates in dishwasher detergents for private use will also be banned from 2011. This can reduce phosphorus emissions by a further 20 tonnes per year. Sweden will also act within the EU and HELCOM so that all EU Member States and Russia introduce restrictions on the phosphate content of detergents and cleaning agents.

Discharge of toilet wastewater from leisure craft and merchant ships

The feasibility of introducing a ban on the discharge of wastewater from leisure craft is now being reviewed. Government financial support (LOVA grant) will be given to extend port reception facilities for wastewater from boats. An equivalent ban should be introduced for cruise vessels and passenger ferries in the Baltic Sea area. The Government has also instructed the Swedish Transport Agency to take the initiative for a joint study by the Baltic Sea States of the feasibility of including cargo ships in such a ban.

CHEMICALS

Reducing the use of hazardous substances in antifouling paints

Further action is required to reduce the need for, and to ban, hazardous substances in antifouling paints. These paints contain environmental toxins that prevent the growth of algae on the hulls of boats and ships. Therefore shipyards and marinas, for example, will be able to apply for financial support (LOVA grants) to establish hull wash stations that can replace the hazardous hull paints. Ahead of the upcoming review of the Biocidal Products Directive, Sweden is working for more stringent biocide approval criteria in the EU.

Inventory of unowned wrecks

Unowned wrecks can pose environmental problems due to leaching of oils or metals, for example. The Swedish Maritime Administration has been instructed to draw up an initial inventory to clarify the number of unowned wrecks and the environmental hazards associated with them. After this a responsible agency will be designated for further work.

Reducing emissions of hazardous substances and pharmaceutical residues

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

Read more:

- Swedish Environmental Quality Objectives
  www.miljomal.nu/Environmental-Objectives-Portal
- Swedish Environment Protection Agency
  www.swedishepa.se
- Baltic Sea Action Plan
  www.helcom.fi/BSAP/en_GB/intro