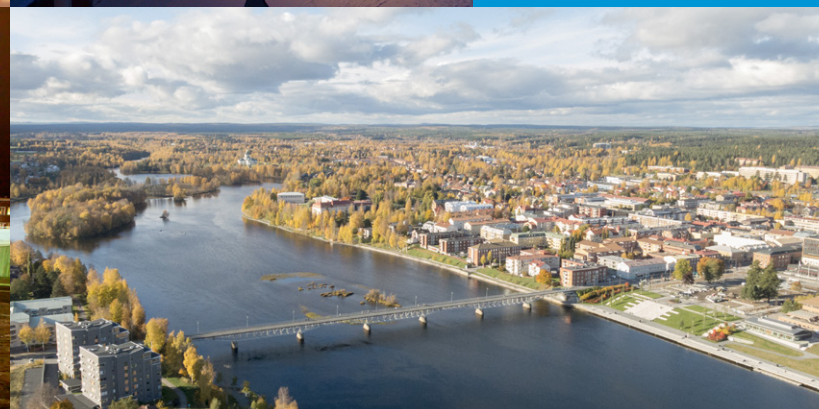
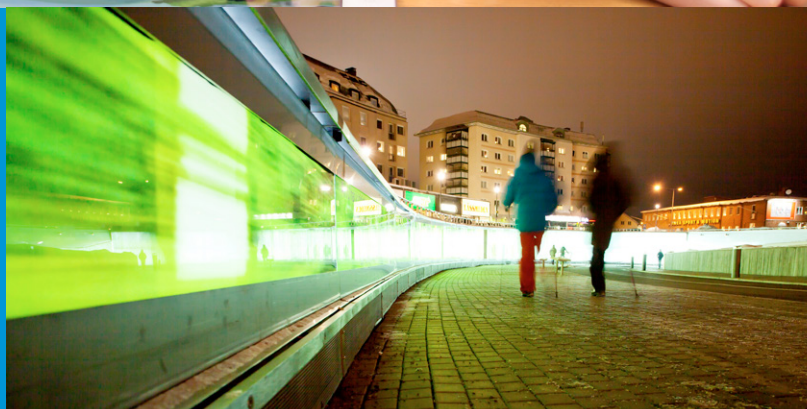




 REGION
VÄSTERBOTTEN



RDS 2014 -2020
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR VÄSTERBOTTEN COUNTY

FOREWORD

CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE REGION FROM THE COAST TO THE MOUNTAINS

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is designed to increase coherence between policy makers at different levels and in different sectors of society, a consensus that will enhance Västerbotten's opportunities for stable growth and sustainable development in a global economy. The goal of the strategy is simple to describe: Västerbotten is to be an even better place to live and work!

The key issue is, of course, how to work together to create the best possible conditions for stable growth and sustainable development. Basically, this requires working together to improve the prospects for the entire region's competitiveness by enhancing its attractiveness, increasing added value and developing services and service industries.

Both globally and locally, we see increasing urbanization, with its subsequent demographic changes. We can also see the threat of climate change to vital ecosystems and the shift toward a knowledge society. From this perspective, it is interesting to note that Västerbotten is heading towards its largest population ever. This is evidence of how the people of Västerbotten are able to live with and adapt to change.

Twelve of our 15 municipalities now have less than 10,000 residents and an ageing population. Movement away from these is fairly constant but, over the last 30 years, return migration has declined. Among those who leave, we note that young women are more prone to move than other groups, with education, cultural offerings and other major types of attractions, in particular, being the strong motivating forces. Far too few of them later choose to move back to start a family or for any other reason.

The most likely age group to move are the key group between 20 and 35 years of age. This is why it is so important to build a modern society in which gender equality is a priority. Västerbotten has come a long way in certain areas, compared to other counties, but much remains to be done.

We want to address these demographic changes in the strategic choices highlighted in the RDS. Behind the vision of "creating a sustainable, attractive region from the coast to the mountains" lie specific proposals for priority areas and initiatives that will create attractive living conditions, regardless of the municipality or town.

At the same time, there is a need for strong urban regions, as represented in Västerbotten by Umeå and Skellefteå. These urban regions are home to research centres and more comprehensive labour markets, which are of great importance for all of Västerbotten.

One of the reasons for Västerbotten's continued growth in a dynamic world is its ability to find solutions, to be innovative and to combine strong successful urban regions with the development of rural areas. The county's world-leading position in the provision of broadband is an example of successful, long-term investment. We can both stimulate and highlight this ability better in the future.

A sub-strategy in our development strategy is "Structures for innovation", aimed at creating a good breeding ground for innovation, but also at providing support and assistance in developing innovations that have already been made. If we can also stimulate innovations that will address the challenges we face, such as climate and health issues, we will also have great potential to contribute to world-leading products and services that are produced in our county.

We also need to protect our natural resources and our ability to process these in the county. The sub-strategy "Location-based business development" is an important piece of the puzzle for creating jobs throughout the county. Both companies and individuals are becoming more mobile, and fewer and fewer goods and services need to be produced in a specific location. That is why we will focus on developing expertise and industries that are strongly connected to our own conditions and strengths. Industries whose development is based on regional conditions are also those that have the greatest potential to be globally competitive in the long run.

The Regional Development Strategy encompasses all sectors of society. The strategy envisages that all residents of Västerbotten will be able to find support and guidance in their own area. This can help us identify challenges and navigable pathways towards sustainable development and growth.

In a common strategy, it is essential that its contents be defined through dialogue between development stakeholders at local, regional and national levels as well as between public organizations, industry, academia and civil society. For this reason, a variety of working groups have participated in the creation process, including hundreds of individuals from different backgrounds and different parts of society. The working groups have, in turn, communicated with an even greater number of people in workshops, meetings and through commenting processes. During this process, we have also strengthened the voice of youth our development work. This process has also considered in global perspectives, including Europe 2020, the EU's common strategy for sustainable growth and global trends.

The next step now will be to implement the Regional Develop-

ment Strategy jointly, thereby maximizing the impact of our collective development efforts. If we are to succeed, we must improve our ability to work together to take advantage of our common resources. This can be done through open communication that leads to coordinated decisions. If we are able to focus on our joint strengths locally, we will increase our ability to highlight our strengths nationally and globally. This is what will allow us to create an attractive region from the coast to the mountains.



Erik Bergkvist (S)
Chairman of the Regional Council, regional council member

Production and manuscript: Region Västerbotten

Ref. no.: 12RV0136-65

Layout and graphic design: Ord & Co i Umeå

Translation: Accent Språkservice AB

Cover photographs: Åsa Rudehäll, Linda Renman, Pia Engman and Jonas Westling

Published: 2013

ISBN 978-91-979678-7-7



Photo: Roine Magnusson/Johner.

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Photo: Sven Halling/Jchner



The Regional Development Strategy is an important tool in the creation of sustainable growth. This is why every Swedish county is obliged by law to develop and implement a strategy.

Regulation 2007:13 dealing with regional growth efforts specifies that regional development programmes are to form a coherent strategy for regional development by one or more counties. The strategy must be developed in consultation with local councils and regional councils, as well as with business and organizations.

The body responsible for regional development is responsible for developing, monitoring and coordinating implementation of the regional development strategies. In Västerbotten, this is Region Västerbotten.

INTRODUCTION

Västerbotten's Regional Development Strategy serves as a guide for everyone working towards Västerbotten becoming a region with good living conditions, prosperity and development opportunities for the region's residents. The county has identified common priorities for creating a sustainable, attractive region from the coast to the mountains. These priorities are based on the region's specific conditions and possibilities, the Europe 2020 strategy and global trends, and were developed through broad-ranging collaboration.

Six sub-strategies

The strategy's core is its six sub-strategies: 1) Communities that include and develop their residents, 2) structures for innovation, 3) environment-driven development, 4) investment in education and skills, 5) location-based business development, and 6) an accessible and outward-looking region.

Each strategy includes priorities identifying which issues the county's stakeholders are jointly focused on for creating sustainable growth. The overall vision for growth efforts is "creating a sustainable, attractive region from the coast to the mountains". Development will be measured by sixteen comprehensive indicators.

The priorities of the strategy have been devel-

oped in workshops where nearly one hundred men and women from different parts of society (e.g., municipalities, industry, government and the social economy) jointly analysed and prioritised the most important initiatives for sustainable growth in Västerbotten. Additional people have also participated through workshops, meetings and commenting processes.

Broad participation

The ambition for the process has been to create broad participation and consensus around a strategy with clear and specific priorities. More information about this process can be found on Region Västerbotten's website.

The efforts have been based on priorities of Västerbotten County's development strategy for 2007-2013, the Europe 2020 strategy and major global trends. The focus has prioritized areas where Västerbotten has special opportunities or challenges for integrating equality and diversity perspectives. During the process, efforts were initiated to increase participation by young people in working for regional growth.

The development and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy is a process of joint strategic choices, collaboration, and consensus between the various parties, but also of devel-

oping methods for working with regional development. While preparing the RDS and as the process progressed, a model was developed that was designed to strengthen regional growth through multi-level governance. This focuses on working on the area's unique conditions, creating regional collaboration, coordinating policies and strategies, and involving stakeholders at various levels in regional development efforts.

A strategy that unites and focuses

The Regional Development Strategy reinforces the county's ability to act by improving interaction between local, regional, national and European

Västerbotten County consists of 15 municipalities: Bjuholm, Dorotea, Lycksele, Malå, Norsjö, Nordmaling, Robertsfors, Skellefteå, Sorsele, Storuman, Umeå, Vilhelmina, Vindeln, Vännäs and Åsele.

In this document "Västerbotten" is used synonymously with Västerbotten County.

levels. By acting together and concentrating on the most important priorities for development in Västerbotten, we create a sustainable, attractive region.

Collaboration becoming increasingly important

County development is affected by the decisions and actions of the county’s organizations, companies and residents, but also by what is happening in the outside world. Co-dependency is becoming increasingly evident in the world. In essence, this means that local trends and developments are becoming ever more closely linked to global trends and developments.

To instigate change and influence development, stakeholders at different geographical levels and different sectors of society, including the private sector, civil society and public authorities must act jointly and interact.

Based on local conditions

Although the boundaries between the local and the global are blurring, the specific local and regional conditions are increasingly important for development. The same solutions and actions do not work in all regions. Development efforts must be based on the specific structures, opportunities and challenges that exist locally and regionally, in the area’s own particular character.

Regional development policy is increasingly characterized by multi-level governance, which means that national, regional and local stakeholders join with organizations and industry to shape and implement development policies.

RDS promotes interaction and coordination

In the process of creating the RDS, the various stakeholders discuss issues to create a picture of challenges and opportunities and ways of handling them. By deciding which actions should be prioritized and implemented, a consensus forms from which to base cooperative efforts, such as through joint projects. Cooperation can then evolve to al-

low the stakeholders to act jointly, where they work together in common development processes. When the common priorities are set, the strategy directs and coordinates sustainable growth efforts. This occurs because the RDS:

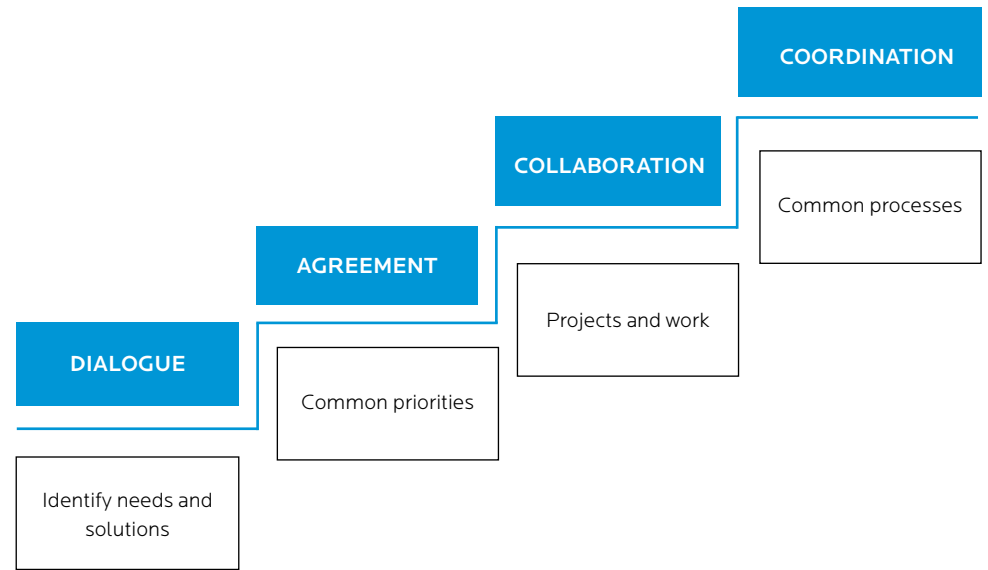
- serves as the basis for other regional strategies and programmes, such as regional EU programmes and the county infrastructure plan;
- provides guidelines for local policies, plans and programmes;
- links the county’s policies with national and European programmes and strategies;
- governs the use of regional development funds;
- is the county’s common starting point for regional development issues in dialogues at the national and European levels.

A system of programmes and strategies

The RDS is a part of a system of development programmes and strategies at different geographical levels. The strategies may be national or regional, and refer to specific sectors, such as the national strategy for the Swedish tourism industry. They can focus on geographical areas and cover several sectors and policy areas, such as the EU’s Baltic Sea strategy or Västerbotten’s energy and climate strategy. A list of some policies and programmes can be found in Annex 2.

Strategies for sustainable growth

Europe 2020 is the European Union’s overall strategy for sustainable growth. The strategy governs European growth initiatives and will be integrated into strategies at the national, regional and local levels. The European cohesion policy (and its associated funds and programmes) is an important tool for this implementation. Europe 2020’s objectives and priorities are aimed at the entire European Union, but because needs vary between the countries of the Union, the priorities and objectives need to be tailored to specific national conditions. This takes place in the national reform



programmes and in the national strategies that are subsequently integrated into regional and local strategies.

Although local and regional growth work takes its starting point in local and regional conditions and requirements, good coordination with national and European strategies makes it easier to create collaborative processes and funding opportunities.





Patric Degerman, Synk Bildbyrå

STARTING POINTS PROMOTING VÄSTERBOTTEN'S DEVELOPMENT

Many factors influence how we should and can act to achieve the county's development ambitions. We can directly affect some aspects by how we choose to act and what we give priority to, while others are largely governed by developments at the global level.

By deciding that equality, diversity, and the environment and climate should be integral parts of regional growth efforts, we help ensure our actions focus on long-term growth that is socially and ecologically sustainable.

Globalisation, demographic challenges and climate change are major global trends that impact all regions, but in different ways. Europe 2020 is the EU strategy to strengthen Europe as it confronts global trends and helps determine how local and regional levels work with sustainable growth.

EUROPE 2020

Europe 2020 is the EU's overall strategy for sustainable growth. Just as in Västerbotten's Regional Development Strategy, the strategy is based on the need for sustainable growth, where men, women and the environment are leveraged to strengthen Europe as it confronts globalisation, climate change and demographic challenges. Europe will face global challenges by creating a smart, sus-

tainable and inclusive economy, with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

The Europe 2020 strategy has three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth-developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- Sustainable growth-promoting a resource-efficient and carbon-efficient economy
- Inclusive growth-stimulating an economy with high employment and social and territorial cohesion

These priorities must be made tangible with numerical targets that indicate where Europe wants to be in 2020. Västerbotten uses the same indicators as Europe 2020 to monitor whether social developments are in line with the strategy's ambitions, but these are supplemented to more clearly reflect regional priorities. The strategy identifies seven areas, the flagship initiatives, within which the EU and the Member States intend joint action. The link between Västerbotten's priorities and the flagship initiative can be found in Annex 1.

INTEGRATED THEMES

Västerbotten is working towards sustainable growth to create a durable, attractive region. Sus-

tainable growth can be defined as long-term economic growth that has a positive impact or minimizes negative impact on the environment and climate and that helps to increase people's welfare and opportunities.

Europe 2020's three headline targets can also be seen as a definition. Västerbotten highlights three perspectives as crucial to sustainable growth: equality, diversity, and environment and climate. These perspectives are integral themes in the strategy, and should permeate all initiatives within the sub-strategies. If change is to be created, it will require integrated perspectives and also targeted initiatives. There are priorities and measures within the sub-strategies that aim directly at the strategy's integrated themes.

Equality

Equality contributes to regional development by giving everyone the same opportunities to contribute to the development of society. Studies show that women, as a group, today have less power and wield less influence over society than men. Among other things, men are over-represented in senior positions in businesses, women are often paid less for the same work and take more responsibility for domestic work.

As its starting point, Västerbotten has adopted

the Swedish equality policy goal that women and men should have the same power to shape society and their own lives. The overall goal is broken down into four sub-goals that interact with each other and that have to be individually achieved to attain the goal of an equal society:

- Distribution of power and influence: Men and women should have the same right and opportunity to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.
- Financial equality: Women and men should have the same opportunities and conditions for education and paid work that provides financial independence for life.
- Even distribution of unpaid domestic and care work: Women and men should take the same responsibility for domestic work, as well as having opportunities to provide and receive care on equal terms.
- Domestic violence must be abolished. Västerbotten has chosen to broaden the national objective, so that it does not focus exclusively on men's violence against women. Women and men, girls and boys should have the same right to bodily integrity.

To achieve equality, all implemented projects and

strategic initiatives for regional development must include analyses that illuminate their effects on women and men from a gender perspective, in the short- and long-term. All stakeholders working with the RDS must ensure a balanced representation of men and women in managerial functions, such as management groups, steering groups, partnerships and consultation. By ensuring that women and men have the same opportunity and power to shape society and their own lives, the region will become more democratic, more attractive and more competitive.

Diversity

Taking advantage of everyone's skills and experience can further contribute to regional development. In this strategy, working with diversity involves promoting equal rights and opportunities for all and seeing, understanding, appreciating and benefiting from the diversity of individuals, regardless of gender, transgender identity, transgender expression, disability, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic conditions. In practice, this means ensuring that the projects and strategic actions carried out contribute to safeguarding all human differences and that they do not contribute to discrimination.

Sweden also has seven forms of discrimination that clarify in which areas discrimination is specifically prohibited. These are: gender, gender identity or gender expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, and age.

The environment and climate

To create long-term sustainable development, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced and the loss of biodiversity decline. Environmental and climate issues are often separately handled, but both are affected by human activity. At the same time, environmental sustainability becomes an increasingly important way of attracting businesses and labour, and a source of innovations within a global marketplace.

A change in behaviour and priorities is re-

quired in all areas to meet these challenges. The question must remain high on the agenda and be integrated in a clear manner in the work of regional growth.

The generation target is Sweden's strategic target for its environment policy, and it provides guidance on what is to be protected and the societal transformation required to meet the environmental quality being pursued. The generation target is defined as handing over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental issues have been resolved, without causing increased environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders. Seven areas form the focus of this work:

- Ecosystems that have recovered or are in recovery. Their ability to generate ecosystem services in the long-term is secured.
- Biodiversity and the natural and cultural environments are preserved, promoted and used sustainably.
- Human health is exposed to minimal negative environmental impact, while the positive impact of the environment on human health is promoted.
- Life cycles of products are resource-efficient and, as far as possible, free from hazardous substances.
- Natural resources are conserved.
- The share of renewable energy is increasing, and energy is used efficiently, with a minimal impact on the environment.
- Consumption patterns for goods and services cause as few environmental and health problems as possible.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

When confronting global trends, the conditions inherent in Västerbotten offer both opportunities and challenges.

Globalisation, demographic challenges and climate change are major global trends that impact

upon all regions. Västerbotten represents about 13 per cent of Sweden's land area and 73 per cent of the county's more than 260,000 residents live in the county's two largest cities. Twelve of its 15 municipalities have less than 10,000 residents. The vastly different situations within the region mean that the impact of and challenges associated with global trends differ.

Västerbotten is the only county in northern Sweden that has had an almost uninterrupted positive population growth since the 1950s. Just as in the rest of Sweden, population growth mainly takes place in urban areas, with Umeå as one of Europe's fastest growing cities.

At the same time, many of the county's smaller towns face challenges, primarily in the form of young people, especially young women, moving out and not returning to the same extent as before. Giving women and men the same opportunities to develop, personally and professionally, is a prerequisite if more people are to live and work in the county.

The emergence of the knowledge society and the service-based economy is driving urbanization. Tougher global competition and the labour market's increasing demand for qualifications mean that businesses and individuals are attracted to places with good educational opportunities at all levels, expansive labour markets and dense networks of businesses, institutions and people. This means that cities play an important role in driving development. Regional expansion and local, regional, national and international partnerships and connections between cities and small towns, universities and companies are also increasingly becoming important factors for development.

At the same time, the rapid economic development of many countries means that demand is rising for raw materials, climate-smart solutions, and exclusive natural and cultural experiences. Major investments are currently being made in the county in such areas as the mining industry, vehicle testing, renewable energy and tourism. Developing the population's skills, creativity and

innovation and sustainably exploiting the region's resources will be key factors if we are to benefit from globalisation.

Climate change and threats to vital ecosystems are our era's major global challenges. Major changes throughout society are required if we are to limit negative impacts on the environment and climate. This means environmental sustainability will play an increasingly prominent part in developing society, entrepreneurship and research.

The transport sector is the largest source of emissions in Västerbotten, and the county's cold climate also results in increased relative energy consumption. Västerbotten's good access to expertise in sustainability, and its potential for producing renewable energy could play an important role in reducing global environmental and climate impact.

The demographic composition of Västerbotten has changed in many ways, just as it has throughout Sweden. Society is becoming more diverse and the proportion of the older population is increasing. This trend is more pronounced in smaller towns, which attract a relatively high proportion of immigrants, while the population figures as a whole are falling. Towns with population growth face significant numbers of those reaching retirement age, while large cohorts of young people are entering the housing and labour markets.

The demographic trends require efficient solutions for, among things, integration, welfare, providing the skills required by the labour market and access to services and amenities. The increasing digitization of society is creating new opportunities, but it requires access to connectivity, digital literacy and participation. Active diversity initiatives will be a prerequisite for taking advantage of a society that offers increasing individualization and multiculturalism, with new expressions, lifestyles and values.



Photo: Sam Hedman

STRATEGIC CHOICES

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE, ATTRACTIVE REGION FROM THE COAST TO THE MOUNTAINS

In 2020, Västerbotten will be a region where every part of the county will contribute to attracting more men, women and companies interested in developing in the region, and where people and the environment are cared for in the long term. The guiding vision for Västerbotten's regional growth work is "creating a sustainable, attractive region from the coast to the mountains".

Six strategic strategies stake out the direction for our 2014-2020 regional growth efforts. These sub-strategies allow the county to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges arising from global trends to achieve the county's vision. Each has priority areas and actions to direct the county's regional development efforts in achieving the goals of the strategies. Examples are included with some measures to provide specific suggestions for what can be developed. These examples should be viewed as proposals for activities, but do not exclude other types of actions that fit within the framework of the measure. The sub-strategies are monitored through indicators that show whether Västerbotten is moving towards sustainable growth.

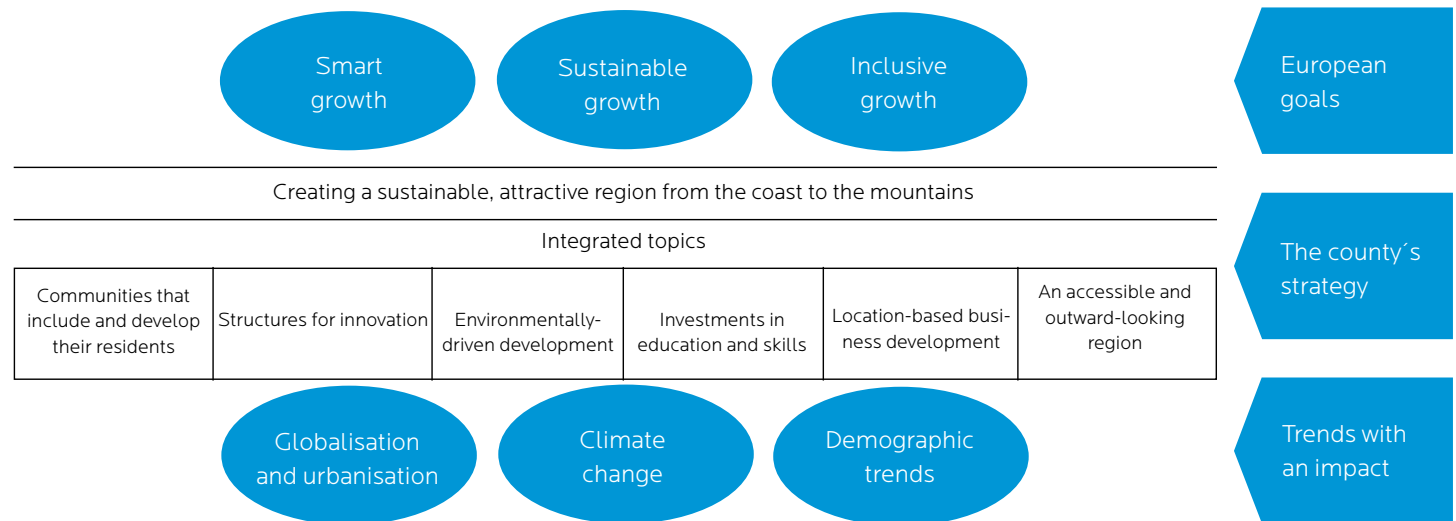




Photo: Henke Berg/Vybild

Communities that include and develop their residents emphasize the need for collaboration and create new solutions for service and welfare.

Joint efforts to actively promote diversity and equality are needed if we are to successfully develop the entire county. The Regional Development Strategy encourages communities that promote leisure, a social economy and culture. Focus should be given to opportunities for developing digital solutions that build greater prosperity, participation and democracy throughout the region.

The focus of the **structures for innovation** strategy addresses the need for coordinated innovation support systems with strong participants. The strategy will aim to establish more and stronger meeting places for innovation. An important part of the county's innovation work is the strengthening of collaboration between academia and industry and the creation of better access to risk capital and venture capital.

The **environmentally-driven development** strategy aims at increasing production and the use of renewable energy, and increasing the use of energy-efficient technologies and energy efficiency in buildings and premises. This strategy is also intended to promote initiatives that lead to sustainable production and consumption patterns, and entrepreneurship that is based on sustainable management of natural resources.

Investments in education and skills are intended to increase the proportion of 20-64 year-olds in employment. The strategy also intends to increase the proportion of students who graduate from upper-secondary school and to increase the share with tertiary education qualifications in the county's labour markets. The strategy also contains measures that are aimed at improving the match between supply and demand for labour. Increased use of digital aids for learning is encouraged within the framework of the strategy.

Location-based business development will increase the added value of the region's natural resources, promote resource-efficient technologies and enable the business potential to which, for example, the Sami culture can contribute. The

strategy will boost entrepreneurship and employment in the hospitality industry and boost entrepreneurship in information and communication technologies.

In addition to strengthening the conditions for new and growing businesses, priority will be placed on internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the development of digital services and business models.

Work on an **accessible and outward-looking region** aims at improving system performance and capacity through new investment in infrastructure and increasing use of the existing transport infrastructure. This is all about creating opportunities for sustainable and efficient passenger and freight services, as well as providing good access to digital connectivity. The strategy will also work to strengthen international cooperation in transport and strategic planning and focus on developing and expanding international cooperation.



1. COMMUNITIES THAT INCLUDE AND DEVELOP THEIR RESIDENTS

The Västerbotten sub-strategy “Communities that include and develop their residents” identifies priorities that help to create social sustainability, as well as opportunities for good quality of life and population growth in the county.

The region’s people are its most important resource. With the emergence of the knowledge society, in which the main drivers for growth are creativity and skills, the role of its residents will be central to regional development. As we shift toward a knowledge society, creativity and skills drive growth and county residents play an increasingly important role in regional development. This type of society requires good public health, where people from all backgrounds and genders are utilized, and where different perspectives and experiences are seen as an asset.

Freedom from violence and a sense of safety are fundamental to good health. Discussing and problematizing issues relating to men’s violence against women and domestic violence help us realize these ambitions.

Today, people move mainly to urban areas and to places with good public services, attractive living environments and good social structures, such as an active association and cultural life. Close proximity to major labour markets and good communications are other important aspects. Long distances within

the region, differing conditions between residents of large and small municipalities, and demographic challenges mean that new solutions will be required in organizing, providing and ensuring high quality services, commercial services and a well-functioning social welfare system.

Collaborations are now being developed not only between places within the county, but also across county lines, including between Region 8 and the Norrbotten municipalities Arvidsjaur, Arjeplog and Strömsund in Jämtland.

The county has seen positive population growth since 1968, but growth has been concentrated in the county’s largest cities. For the county as a whole, and especially for those areas where the population has declined, net inward migration of women is lower, which suggests that the county has primarily been attractive to men. The county needs to attract both men and women for future growth.

Västerbotten has many strengths on which it can build, including high levels of trust among the residents, its unique nature and cultural heritage and excellent opportunities for culture, leisure and social interaction. Västerbotten also has a diversity of communities, including rural locations, large and small communities, opportunities to live in the mountains and near the coast, and thriving urban environments with Umeå and Skellefteå as attractive alternatives to the big cities. The county’s smaller towns and villages are tight, safe communities near unique natural settings and tourist destinations.

Several places in the county serve as nodes for larger areas that provide access to services, labour markets and educational opportunities. They can also serve as nodes for certain industries, such as the hospitality industry in the mountains, mining and expertise related to natural resources.

The cities have critical mass that make possible a broader range of cultural events and strengthen labour markets a diverse range of employers. Regional expansions allows more people to benefit from the range of services offered by cities. This also bolsters the competitiveness of the county’s cities. Today, our cities can compete nationally and internationally. An example of this is the selection of Umeå as European Capital of Culture in 2014.

This sub-strategy contributes to smart growth and growth for everyone. Its priorities are linked to the flagship initiative “European Platform against Poverty” which stresses the importance of social and territorial cohesion, non-discrimination and the importance of social innovation. “The Innovation Union” points out the need for innovation associated with demographic challenges and health, and “A Digital Agenda for Europe” identifies, among other things, digital literacy and participation as key measures.

Priority areas

- 1.1 Collaboration and new solutions for services and services
- 1.2 Actively promote diversity and equality
- 1.3 A vibrant cultural life, social economy and leisure life
- 1.4 Digital solutions for increased welfare and efficiency

1.1 Collaboration and new solutions for services

In the light of demographic challenges, increased global mobility and urbanisation, cities, towns, rural areas and all sectors of society must work together to create attractive living environments and effective welfare solutions. Attractive cities with a wide range of amenities, services, cultural attractions and educational centres are a resource for the entire county, and when combined with an elaborate interplay between cities, towns and rural areas, they can increase accessibility, synergies and resource efficiency.

The challenges facing many places are a breeding ground for new and innovative solutions. New welfare solutions can be developed through collaboration between the social economy, industry, academia and public stakeholders. The challenges of availability and efficiency in health care and access to services also affect other regions, but the sparsely populated areas in Northern Europe confront them earlier than others. They have the need and the means to develop tomorrow's solutions today. Measures include:

- Develop functionality and collaboration between municipalities, between urban and rural areas, and with neighbouring regions and other countries to increase the availability and supply of services, culture and housing.
- Develop and strengthen sustainable city centre and urban environments.
- Produce and develop models and methods for providing services: e.g. co-location of companies/functions, e-services, digital solutions, social innovations, safety and vulnerability.
- Develop methods, models and partnerships to strengthen communities' capacity to work on long-term sustainable community development, growth and attractiveness.
- Create regional cooperation to attract new residents and profile-building events, and survey the needs of businesses that have moved into the region.
- Develop types of partnership between the pub-

lic sector, academia, businesses and the social economy to develop social capital, services and welfare.

- Create support structures to promote and develop involvement in society and local initiatives.
- Develop partnerships between the agriculture, culture, sport and tourism sectors to develop the natural environment, cultural environments and attractive places to visit.
- Develop methods that take advantage of part-time residents as a resource for local and regional development.
- Develop multi-functional meeting places.

1.2 Actively promote diversity and equality

The experience and perspectives of men and women are assets. A society that takes advantage of diversity and gender equality is more competitive, more innovative and healthier. Diversity tends to be highlighted as an important factor in fostering creativity and innovation, as new ideas often emerge from encounters between diversities. Greater integration of immigrants means that we are better able to take advantage of the immigrants' expertise and experience. Ultimately, though, everyone should have the same opportunities to develop and live their lives as independently as possible, even if support is needed. Increased knowledge of persons with physical or intellectual impairment and a well-functioning social care system mean that more people can take part in social and working life. There is a pressing need to work actively to promote equal rights and opportunities for all and to see, understand, appreciate and protect the diversity of individuals, regardless of gender, transgender identity or expression, disability, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, sexual orientation, age and socio-economic conditions.

Challenging and changing structures and attitudes that prevent equal access to development and resources can help us overcome many of the challenges facing the county.

Men's violence against women, domestic violence and the uneven distribution of unpaid do-

mestic and care work are structural barriers for women to quality of life and opportunities to develop. Gender equality is a key factor in the county's attractiveness. Measures include:

- Improve integration into society and the labour market through methodology development and strategic and long-term interaction between society's stakeholders and sectors.
- Promote diversity through provision of information and influence to prevent and combat stigmatization and discrimination.
- Promote increased understanding and highlight the problems and consequences of men's violence against women and domestic violence.
- Promote increased understanding and dissemination of knowledge of tools and methods that promote diversity.
- Develop opportunities for active and healthy ageing.
- Develop knowledge and methods/models to expose and change the structures and norms that limit opportunities for individuals.
- Develop cross-sector collaboration in practical gender equality work.

1.3 A vibrant cultural life, social economy and leisure life

Good opportunities to develop creativity, involvement and an active leisure life have many positive effects on social development. An important prerequisite for this is ensuring that both women and men are able and are encouraged to participate. Opportunities to create and experience culture, adult education, sport and leisure activities contribute to the creation of important basic conditions for the development of society, such as good public health, integration and social capital.

There are a wealth of active associations in Västerbotten, good access to recreation and green spaces, and a rich and diverse cultural life that need broadening, direction and opportunities if they are to be experienced and practised throughout the county. The county's Sami culture is a unique asset in a global context.

Cultural and sporting events are important showcases for the county, and their long-term effects need to be harnessed and expanded. The county has considerable social capital and a large proportion of residents take part in associations, clubs and adult education. It is a challenge to maintain an infrastructure for participation in this types of organizations, which often depend on active commitment from enthusiasts. Initiatives should focus on supporting this infrastructure for creativity and involvement, and they should create opportunities for young people to develop their leadership skills and participate in cultural and organizational activities. Measures include:

- Develop and create long-term regional added value from events and experiences in the fields of social economy and culture.
- Improve opportunities for creating and experiencing culture, no matter where you live in the county, by developing the county's cultural infrastructure.
- Promote good public health by developing partnerships between the public sector, the business community, civil society and individuals.
- Improve the links between research, training and the labour market in the social economy and the cultural sector.
- Develop local and regional infrastructure that helps for cultural creators to live and work in the county.
- Develop opportunities for all groups for an active leisure life.
- Develop methods and models that promote healthy habits in men and women.
- Improve opportunities for young people to participate in public life, international exchanges and youth leadership positions.

1.4 Digital solutions for welfare, involvement and efficiency

Västerbotten's widely-deployed digital infrastructure and experience developing ICT services make it well-positioned to lead the transition toward a



Photo: Jonas Westling

digital society. The long distances within the country and the challenges of availability of facilities and welfare services create a demand that drives innovation.

Public services for individuals and companies can be streamlined and made more accessible, and democratic processes can be made more open, transparent and effective if public sector stakeholders work together and collaborate on developing digital solutions and ensure interoperability by involving end-users in the development of these innovations.

Health care, in particular, offers great potential. Digital solutions expand opportunities for participation and empowerment for health and social care, reduce travel, improve opportunities for active ageing and offer the chance of decentralising some areas of health care. Many regions will have to confront these challenges, which means that there will be a global market for solutions and products within the area.

An important prerequisite for taking advantage of digital solutions is clear vision, strong leadership and increases in digital inclusion and skills. Measures include:

- Target measures at groups with a low digital use.
- Initiate competence-raising measures aimed at policy makers and public sector operations.
- Facilitate the introduction of digital systems and solutions, e.g. through process orientation of care flows.
- Develop an incentive structure for increased use of digital technologies among healthcare providers.
- Develop and increase the use of digital healthcare services, self-testing and distance-spanning technology.
- Increase the use of digital tools, so-called welfare technology, in care for the aged and disability care.
- Increase access to open public data for openness and transparency.
- Introduce digital services that allow residents

to participate in and influence political processes.

- Develop collaboration between healthcare providers for digital systems.
- Build a regional platform for public e-services.



Photo: Umeå universitet Andreas Nilsson

2. STRUCTURES FOR INNOVATION

Västerbotten's sub-strategy "Structures for innovation" builds and strengthens structures that contribute to society's ability for renewal, world-leading innovations with high knowledge content and new and emerging growth companies in the county. Priority is given to initiatives that strengthen the innovative impact within the county's designated focus areas.

The ability to innovate will be a key factor in the region's long-term development. Good innovation is important if we are to meet rapid changes in society and increase global competitiveness.

Innovation can be defined as a new way of doing something, a new product or service, or new business models. It may be a new product introduced onto the market, research that results in a benefit to society or a more efficient way of performing a social service. Västerbotten has a good capacity for innovation and has been highlighted as a leading innovative region in European comparisons. There is, however, limited opportunity to participate in the systems and settings that promote innovation in the sparsely populated areas and small municipalities. This means efforts must be directed towards developing methods and tools that strengthen innovation throughout the county.

Today, the county achieves both Europe's target of three per cent of GDP being invested in research and development (R&D) and Sweden's target of four per cent. Industry's share of R&D investment is,

however, lower in Västerbotten, than in Sweden as a whole, which may indicate that the emphasis is on research rather than development.

Västerbotten has many strengths it can build on. Västerbotten's specific structure and natural conditions, with long distances within the region, a cold climate and sparse population structure is a strong breeding ground for innovation in areas such as sustainable community development, vehicle testing operations, service solutions and distance-spanning technology.

The size of the county's cities makes them good, manageable pilot arenas for research and innovation. They have dense networks between companies, venture capital and so on, which creates good opportunities for innovative environments that can strengthen innovation throughout the county through functional connections.

The public sector and the county's strong tradition of organized labour and adult education can help to create innovative solutions for community challenges.

Västerbotten County hosts three universities: Umeå University, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Luleå University's engineering faculty in Skellefteå. It also has the University Hospital of Umeå and many innovative firms, clusters and networks. The county's knowledge-intensive environments are important engines and nodes that strengthen the county's global competitiveness and capacity for innovation. The county is able to create excellence in research and innovation through the

Focus areas for smart specialization

- Intersections between focus areas
- Sustainable energy and environmental technology
- Digital service companies for the smart region
- Life science
- Innovative healthcare
- Experience industries and cultural and creative industries
- Vehicle testing operations
- Technology and service development within industry

interaction between research, innovation and education (the so-called knowledge triangle) and through quadro-helix collaboration model.

Strong innovative settings and industries have been built from the county's resources and skills, particularly in knowledge-intensive and high-tech processing industries, the wood industry, energy and environmental technology, life sciences, ICT, and service industries related to these areas. There is particular potential for developing cooperation further in the intersections of these industries and digital industries.

Tourism and vehicle testing operations are strengths that take their starting point from the county's unique natural and cultural assets. Västerbotten is also an attractive partner for international collaboration in areas such as e-health.

One important factor for a favourable innovation climate is that it has a tolerant and open social climate with a diversity of people and cultures. It is often in the encounter between differences that new ideas are born. Innovation has often been associated with male-dominated sectors, and this has contributed to the overrepresentation of men as recipients of innovation support measures. To meet and, in the long term, grow with future challenges, Västerbotten must develop structures that promote and implement ideas from both women and men, for the benefit of society.

This sub-strategy contributes to smart growth. Priorities linked to the flagship initiative "Innovation

Union" aim at aligning innovation policy with the challenges that our society faces, such as climate change and health and demographic changes, and each link in the innovation chain must be strengthened.

Priority areas

- 2.1 A coordinated regional innovation support system with strong stakeholders
- 2.2 Meeting places for innovation
- 2.3 Increased collaboration between academia and industry
- 2.4 Easy access to risk capital and venture capital

2.1 A coordinated regional innovation support system with strong stakeholders

The innovation support system has an important part to play in innovation in the region. By innovation support system we mean the stakeholders who have a supportive effect somewhere in the chain from idea to innovation, such as incubators, venture capital firms, export promoting organisations and public players. Västerbotten's support system is well developed, but consists of many stakeholders, which could make it more difficult for innovators to navigate the system and this dilutes the resources. By more closely coordinating and concentrating advice, innovation and other innovation support tools with fewer stakeholders, the county's innovation capacity can be enhanced.

It is also important to improve opportunities for men and women throughout the county to take advantage of the innovation support system, even if the physical innovation communities are missing. Participation in national and international collaborations and programmes increases the capacity for innovation, but these are often resource-intensive processes, which means that support structures need to be developed for them. Men with a Swedish background are overrepresented as recipients of government innovation funding, among other things due to the fact that innovations are often defined as a phenomenon in male-dominated industries and areas. Particular priority should therefore be given to developing ideas from under-represented groups. As a group, young people have great potential for developing innovations. Their fresh perspectives and willingness to test new approaches are strong driving factors for innovation. Young people should have easy access to advice and guidance throughout the county. Measures include:

- Establish structures for joint competitive intelligence and benchmarking.
- Increase participation by under-represented groups in the innovation support system.
- Create educational initiatives in equality and diversity issues, targeted at the stakeholders

in the innovation support system and business promotion system.

- Create locally tailored support for innovation, including use of virtual and physical nodes.
- Improve access to innovation funding, for example, in the form of innovation vouchers.
- Make it easier for innovators to take their ideas to the market in various sectors, e.g. through mentoring.
- Develop and create long-term forms for incubator settings.
- Increase society's awareness of the importance of innovation development.
- Develop the ability of businesses, the public sector and the social economy to innovate, e.g. by using innovation funnels.
- Develop better methods for assessing the effects of innovation support development.
- Improve the conditions for national and international network building and innovation development work.
- Coordinate requests and promote cooperation around international research programmes and national and international calls for proposals and applications.
- Develop advisory capabilities and support structures to promote innovation by young people.

2.2 Meeting places for innovation

Innovation often occurs when different perspectives and innovative players meet and interact. Universities and other innovative environments, such as business clusters, platforms for cooperation between universities and industry, and multi-disciplinary research centres, are important ways of increasing society's innovation power and promoting a knowledge-driven economy.

This makes it important to develop more meeting places and creative forums that bring together innovative players and promote the participation of both men and women. These meeting places should gather players from different social spheres, academia, the public and private sectors and the social economy "(quadro-helix platforms)". To strengthen the county's capacity

for innovation, it is important to develop models and ways of working that strengthen innovative environments, such as local or regional clusters and networks, and to allow players to benefit from each other and the innovation promotion system, regardless of their geographic locations in the region. Measures include:

- Create and develop quadro-helix platforms, working models with collaboration platforms and distributed ways of working throughout the county.
- Develop science parks with local and/or virtual nodes throughout the region.
- Develop systems for using students and researchers to develop the region's businesses.
- Promote innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises, including internships and alliances with large companies that have connections to both academia and small businesses.
- Establish clusters, networks and cluster alliances. These alliances form a single portal to "society and universities" for all of the business-driven clusters in the region.

2.3 Increased collaboration between academia and industry

The interaction between academia and industry is an important factor in increasing knowledge content of produced goods and services. With three universities in the county, Västerbotten is well positioned to develop an economy with strong links to academia.

Today, cross-border meetings between businesses in the creative industries, universities and other companies are becoming increasingly important. It is crucial for the region to develop settings that can become leaders in developing new innovation and attracting researchers and partners. Cooperation between industry, academia and public stakeholders is crucial for the development of competitive communities. Measures include:

- Increase commercialization and utilization of university research.

- Develop cooperation between universities and industry around applied research, for example through adjunct professors.
- Increase the entrepreneurial aspect of university courses.
- Increase academia's presence in industry by developing and encouraging entrepreneurial activities and opportunities for students and researchers.
- Reinforce research and education linked to business needs, even outside university campuses, for example through distance and on-line education and research centres.
- Improve the ability to share research with companies and the public sector, such as through research centres outside the university.
- Work on strengthening incentives for cooperation between universities and companies at national and international levels.
- Stimulate formation of internationally competitive research and innovation settings.
- Promote collaboration on investment in research, education and demonstration of urban development and sustainable community building.

2.4 Easy access to risk capital and venture capital

There is good availability of capital for investment to develop a business today, but access to bank loans often requires companies to have reached a certain maturity. At present, there is only limited access to risk capital and venture capital at early stages and this is a bottleneck for developing ideas into mature companies.

Women receive less than 10 per cent of venture capital investment in Swedish companies. This is primarily due to women not being as involved in what is considered high-growth companies as men are. Women are also under-represented as angel investors and decision makers in venture capital firms, and experience to a greater degree than men that lack of access to venture capital is a barrier to growth. Measures include:



Photo: Henke Berg/Johner

- Enhance access to venture capital in the early stages, for example through regional seed capital funds and accelerator funds, as well as strengthening the effectiveness of funds and financing solutions in the whole innovation value chain.
- Increase coordination of the region's venture capital, risk capital and venture capitalists.
- Enhance opportunities for the region's businesses to reach national and international venture capital.
- Develop the capacity of companies to attract investors and venture capital.
- Bridge the gap in business financing, for example, through investment using public funding in the early stages of companies.
- Promote women's access to venture capital, participation in venture capital companies, and their role as investors.

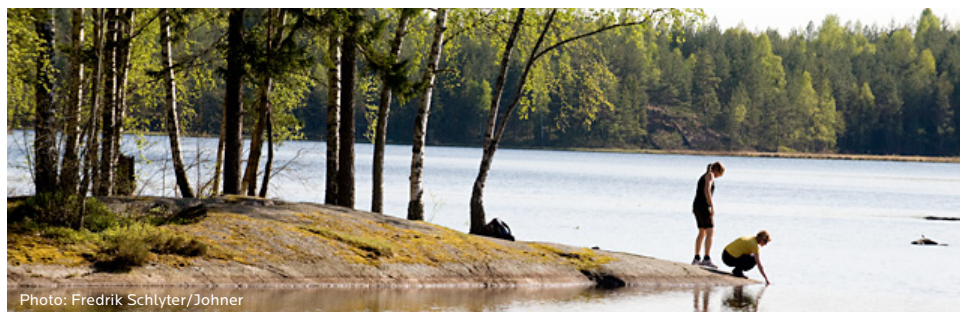


Photo: Fredrik Schlyter/Johner

3 ENVIRONMENTALLY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

Västerbotten's sub-strategy "Environmentally-driven development" highlights interventions that help to reduce the county's environmental and climate impact, and at the same time create opportunities for innovative solutions and products.

Efforts to reduce or limit the environmental impact of the transport sector and infrastructure investment are dealt with primarily within the framework of the strategy "an accessible and outward-looking region".

The climate threat is our age's major challenge. It is a global issue that requires all regions take responsibility for reducing their impact on the environment and climate. Efforts are required in several areas to ensure we can pass on to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems have been solved.

Our energy use has a major impact on the environment, as do emissions from industry, transport and consumption. Men and women have differing environmental impacts. This is due to different consumption patterns, travel patterns and willingness to make environmentally-related lifestyle changes, amongst other things.

Sweden's 16 environmental objectives specify the state of the environment that must be achieved by 2020. The overall goal of the environmental objectives and of Sweden's environmental policy is

known as the generation target: "We will hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental issues have been resolved, without causing increased environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders." In Västerbotten, it will be difficult to achieve 13 of the 16 national environmental objectives by 2020.

The county is a major producer of renewable energy, mainly from hydropower and bio-energy. If the renewable energy produced in Västerbotten is also assumed to be consumed in the county, the share of renewable energy in use would be 67 per cent, which means that we would meet the objectives that both Sweden and the EU set for 2020.

The Swedish target for energy efficiency by the year 2020 is to reduce energy intensity by 20 per cent. In the case of Västerbotten, this means that the reduction by 20 per cent between 1995 and 2008 must be repeated. Västerbotten has a relatively low energy intensity in a Swedish perspective, but the cold climate and a higher proportion of energy-intensive industries means that its energy use is high compared to regions in southern Sweden and the remaining regions that have a higher proportion of service industries.

Västerbotten is well positioned to create synergies through a reduced environmental and carbon footprint, entrepreneurship and the county's attractiveness. Increased demands on environmental sustainability and new ways of calculating the value of nature that is used or destroyed means that the demand for climate and resource-efficient solutions

and services will increase globally. Västerbotten's assets in the form of knowledge and expertise in sustainability, renewable energy resources and active efforts to build a sustainable community create good potential for exploiting growing global interest.

This sub-strategy contributes to achieving the goal of sustainable growth in Europe 2020. The priorities are linked to the flagship initiative "A resource-efficient Europe", which emphasizes the importance of supporting the transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy that uses all resources efficiently.

Priority areas

- 3.1 Increased production and relative use of renewable energy
- 3.2 Energy efficient technologies and energy efficiency in homes, buildings and holiday homes
- 3.3 Sustainable production and consumption
- 3.4 Entrepreneurship based on sustainable management of natural resources



Photo: Patrick Degerman

3.1 Increased production and relative use of renewable energy

Västerbotten is well positioned to reduce its carbon footprint and contribute to Sweden and Europe achieving their ambitions of a low-carbon economy. With leading edge knowledge in such areas as gasification and biorefining processes and with good access to raw materials and areas for wind power, Västerbotten has great potential for developing production and using several types of renewable energy resources.

One important area is to increase use of renewable fuels in the transport sector. At present, this is the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the county, including the county's long intra-regional distances and export-oriented industries with major transportation needs. Measures include:

- Develop and implement system solutions that minimize the carbon footprint of production, storage and distribution of renewable energy.
- Promote the micro-generation of electricity.
- Examine the existing environmental consequences of energy production and identify joint initiatives and funding opportunities that will improve biodiversity.
- Increase the degree of processing of energy produced and efficiency of existing production.
- Promote system solutions for production, storage and distribution of renewable fuels, including test fleets in public transport.
- Promote energy and environmental initiatives for ground operations at airports.
- Invest in electrification of railway lines that are now served by diesel locomotives.

3.2 Energy efficient technology and energy efficiency in homes, buildings and holiday homes

More efficient use of energy creates opportunities for both a reduced carbon footprint and reduced costs for businesses and society. There are several good examples of investment on sustainable construction and sustainable transport in the county,

The county's well-developed digital infrastructure and skills offer a huge potential to develop smart solutions that reduce energy consumption in buildings, that streamline industrial processes and that optimize logistics and the transport system. Measures include:

- Implement system solutions for snow cooling, solar cooling, solar heating or other renewable energy sources in homes and offices.
- Develop buffer systems for cooling and heating.
- Implement knowledge initiatives that raise awareness of energy efficiency.
- Stimulate investment in influencing behaviour and increasing awareness of energy efficiency.
- Develop and implement smart technology that supports and encourages reduced energy use in homes, offices and holiday homes.
- Develop sustainable city planning and sustainable community planning investments that create sustainable solutions for energy, waste, water and sewage systems in rural and urban areas.
- Develop operation of IT systems that reduces energy consumption.
- Optimize processes in basic industry that reduce its environmental footprint.

3.3 Sustainable production and consumption

Our lifestyles, housing and consumption have a big impact on our environment. Men and women have different consumption patterns. Studies, for example, have shown that women in general are better than men at making different types of environmentally-related lifestyle changes. Reducing the environmental impact of communities and managing, restoring and regenerating the natural environment are prerequisites for long-term sustainable social development. Västerbotten has vast resources in the form of natural environments that need to be protected and used carefully if they are to continue providing ecosystem services. The county's groundwater is a resource

that must be protected as a long-term source of drinking water. Several regional environmental objectives are affected by the standards that govern how we consume and how we plan our communities. More sustainable consumption patterns among men and women and sustainable procurement can promote more sustainable production and create more opportunities for locally-produced food.

The county faces challenges for creating a sustainable society, but also has examples of successful efforts that can be built on, including in energy-efficient construction, low-carbon transport systems and sustainable urban transport. There is also good potential for further development of the county as a test arena for sustainable community development in areas such as housing, infrastructure and smart digital solutions. In part, this is because the public sector often owns housing and infrastructure. Measures include:

- Support the study of environmental and energy-efficient products and services, together with procurement, with a focus on transportation and locally produced food.
- Develop collaboration between universities, industry, the social economy and public sector to translate research in sustainability into community benefit.
- Stimulate development and use of environmental and energy-efficient products and services.
- Promote initiatives that help to protect, preserve, develop and restore natural, cultural, and aquatic environments.
- Develop the use of digital technologies to reduce the environmental impact of activities in the public sector, businesses and organisations.
- Stimulate advocacy and study of sustainable consumption and consumption patterns, mainly linked to men's consumption.
- Strengthen the ability of residents to influence environmental development using digital technology, such as "consumer advocacy and support.

- Implement initiatives that improve the urban environment, such as air quality.
- Promote initiatives for climate adaptation.

3.4 Entrepreneurship based on sustainable management of natural resources

Environmental and social sustainability have grown in importance as part of the business models of companies. Västerbotten has great potential for developing entrepreneurship in cleantech and attracting companies with a clearly integrated sustainability concept. The county's good access to renewable energy should be highlighted to attract energy-intensive companies.

Increasing demands for environmental sustainability mean a growing demand for services and products that help restore ecosystems and natural environments. In addition, the demand for environmental technologies from both the public and private sectors will increase. An ambitious process aimed at achieving the regional environmental objectives, for example, by improving air quality and restoring the ecosystem, helps increase the value of our natural environment and create sustainable development. It can also serve as the basis of creating businesses, technologies and knowledge with a global market. Measures include:

- Focus on recovery/recycling/closed loop systems with a view to making materials, nutrients and so on more energy efficient and recyclable.
- Promote efforts to expand knowledge of cleantech growth potential.
- Develop entrepreneurship based on restoring ecosystem services and natural environments.
- Promote entrepreneurship based on pristine rivers, clean air, lakes, forests, nature, biodiversity, ecosystem services, renewable energy, a colder climate, housing and land use.
- Attract business ventures by promoting opportunities for sustainable businesses and cleantech in the county.
- Strengthen efforts to identify, validate and commercialize cleantech business ideas.



4. INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Västerbotten's sub-strategy "Investments in education and skills" identifies the areas that need to be prioritized to ensure the provision of skills, opportunities for personal development and empowerment through education.

In the long-term, education and skills will be central to the county's position as a competitive and innovative region. As global competition for labour increases while the proportion of the working-age population decreases, there is a need for strategies to ensure the supply of skills. Providing the right skills involves a complex system that depends on many factors.

The quality of the entire education system is important for providing young people with the skills they need to succeed in the labour market and in society. It also plays an important role in avoiding alienation, ensuring good health and promoting personal development. Today, far too many upper-secondary students in Västerbotten and Sweden end their studies prematurely. The Swedish target for 2020 is that 90 per cent of students should complete upper-secondary school with full credit. According to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the figure for Västerbotten is currently 80 per cent.

Strongly-entrenched gender norms give rise to gender-based educational choices and contribute to young women suffering more mental illness and

young men having poorer grades, which, in turn, ultimately contributes to gender-segregation in the labour market. Today, women continue their education longer than men, both in Västerbotten and in Sweden as a whole. Västerbotten currently has a more gender-segregated labour market than the national average. This is particularly evident in the construction industry and in healthcare.

The gender-segregated labour market contributes both to an uneven division of unpaid housework, to involuntary part-time work and to differences in health and finances between women and men. Gender equality influences how freely women and men can choose their professions, and this, in turn, influences the attractiveness and ability to match labour demand with labour supply. Places with many male- or female-dominated industries will have a harder time coping with labour shortages.

With three universities and vocational higher education offered in multiple locations, Västerbotten offers good opportunities for post-secondary education. This is also reflected in the county's high average level of education. The level of education and access to post-secondary education vary within the county, however. The Swedish target defined in Europe 2020 is for 40-45 per cent of 30-34 year olds to have completed a higher education programme. The county average is 50 per cent, with variations from 14 to 62 per cent between its municipalities.

To be able to meet demand for labour, more people must work. This means the unexploited potential of individuals currently outside the labour market

or those unable to find work must be better utilized. Amongst other things, many young people and foreign-born residents are unemployed despite labour shortages in many industries. The Swedish target for 2020 is that well over 80 per cent of 20-64 year olds should be employed. For Västerbotten, the proportion of 20-64 year olds employed was 77 per cent in 2010, with significant regional differences between its municipalities, where the employment rate varies between 72 and 80 per cent. More people will be needed to meet demand for labour in the long term. To meet this demand, the county needs more people to move to the region.

Government agencies located in the region are resources for regional development. They create jobs for graduates and can be important knowledge settings. They are also significant partners in regional development processes linked to innovation and meeting demand for labour, amongst others.

Rapid social developments make it difficult to predict the future structure of the labour market and its knowledge needs. This means that the system for supplying skills and labour must be open to innovative efforts, be flexible and enable men and women throughout the county to acquire and further develop their skills throughout their lives. In other words, life-long learning.

This sub-strategy contributes to smart growth and inclusive growth. Its priorities are linked to the "Youth on the Move" policy initiatives, which highlight the quality of education systems as a key

factor for combining cutting-edge expertise with justice and improving the employability of young people. "Agenda for new skills and new jobs" and the "European platform against poverty" emphasize the importance of being able to acquire new skills and reducing alienation to increase productivity and reduce unemployment.

Priority areas

- 4.1 Increase the proportion of students who graduate from upper-secondary school
- 4.2 Increase the proportion with post-secondary education in the county's labour markets
- 4.3 Develop the use of digital tools for learning
- 4.4 Increase the proportion of employed 20-64 year olds
- 4.5 Improve matching demand and supply on the labour market

4.1 Increase the proportion of students who graduate from upper-secondary school

School plays an important role in promoting around development of children and students into active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens. It is important that all levels of education enable the free choice of education and vocations and actively promote equality and diversity. A high quality education where students are supported at all levels is a prerequisite for completion of a secondary education basic education.

A completed upper-secondary education is now important for entrance onto the labour market and reduces the risk of alienation. Preventive measures are needed to reduce the risk of young people leaving school. This involves working with factors linked to the home, leisure time and school. Measures include:

- Develop methods and approaches for analysing and, at an early stage, preventing and responding to factors in the educational environment that affect children and young people at risk of failing to meet educational objectives.
- Develop sustainable approaches to supporting young people, families and relatives.
- Establish active and long-term drug prevention between authorities and other actors.
- Promote meaningful leisure activities for both girls and boys.
- Increase gender awareness in education and in the social support provided to young people.

4.2 Increase the proportion with post-secondary education in the county's labour markets

Västerbotten's labour market needs a well-educated workforce and employers tend to seek out higher formal education when filling positions. The proportion of workers with higher education in the labour market is influenced by many factors. Access to education is important, but so is the size of the labour market. A smaller labour market could require access to good communications to larger labour markets and to distance education.

Access to continuing education at the

post-secondary level also promotes personal development. Structures and norms on education and career choices affect how and whether women and men choose to continue their education. This results in more women than men continuing on to post-secondary studies. The difference is on average 12 per cent, which means that the level of education in the county would increase if men continued their studies as long as women. Measures include:

- Develop and maintain options for post-secondary studies in the entire county based on the skills needed in the labour market.
- Develop structures, models and forms of cooperation to increase the proportion with post-secondary education in all municipalities in the county.
- Collaborate between sectors and actors to change gender-based patterns of educational and career choices.

4.3 Develop the use of digital tools for learning

Using digital tools better could greatly enhance learning throughout the educational system in Västerbotten, from kindergarten through university, and in skills development. Digital tools increase opportunities for adapting learning based on individual circumstances, regardless of prior knowledge, learning styles and physical distance. Digital learning also helps prepare young people for life and work in a digital society.

The necessary technology is available and many schools are investing in IT. In Sweden as a whole, though, digital technology is not used as an educational tool as much as it could be. Measures include:

- Formulate a digital strategy for using digital tools to develop and improve learning in skills and for skills development.
- Create new forms and methods of learning that use digital technology and that are based on individual needs and possibilities.

- Increase access to digital devices for learning in county schools.
- Develop the physical education settings so that digital devices can be used easily and to their fullest potential.
- Develop access and use of digital learning settings for teaching, documentation and administration.

4.4 Increase the proportion of employed 20-64 year olds

Reduce alienation and give more people the opportunity to work by better utilizing the skills of the county's residents. Young, foreign-born and older residents are a potential that should be utilized.

A quality educational system is an important factor in giving men and women the opportunity to develop and gain the skills needed in work and society. Women, young people and foreign-born individuals have lower employment rates. The county's strategies need to focus on creating opportunities for increasing labour market participation by these groups. It is crucial to work with the structures that contribute to this difference. Measures include:

- Improve options for including individuals with foreign backgrounds and promoting diversity in the labour market, including through influencing attitudes.
- Work to improve the quality of the education system.
- Stimulate strategic and long-term sustainable cooperation between authorities and organisations that support youth at risk.
- Facilitate access to the labour market, e.g. through internships or other workplace initiatives, especially for young people, the foreign-born and people with disabilities.
- Develop flexible approaches to lifelong learning, for example through collaboration between workplaces and educational providers and between educational providers.
- Develop models and create opportunities for utilizing the skills of older people and enable a longer working life.

- Increase efforts for women's employment. This can relate to gender equality in housework and parenting and reducing missed work from illness for women.
- Develop methods and models for entrepreneurship for young women and men who interrupted their studies or who are at risk of failing to complete their education.
- Improve labour market mobility, for example through improved opportunities for daily commuting and moving between industries.
- Develop new forms of and arenas for counselling, social skills, coaching and advising for all ages.

4.5 Improve matching supply and demand on the labour market

Steps need to be taken in several areas to ensure access to necessary skills in Västerbotten. Today Västerbotten and Sweden as a whole are experiencing recruiting difficulties while unemployment, especially among young people, is high. At the same time, in most municipalities, more people are leaving the labour market due to retirement than there are workers to replace them.

A dialogue between educational providers and the labour market is important for better understanding and agreement on short- and long-term needs, where the regional competence platform is an important tool. Employers also need to invest in training their employees and reducing thresholds for entry into the labour market, for example, among young people. Västerbotten's gender segregated labour market means that men and women limit themselves to certain potential professions through gender-stereotyped career choices. Investing in communications and commuting options helps to expand the labour markets and improve matching of skills with jobs. Measures include:

- Develop dialogue and methods for implementing, offerings and cooperating between industry representatives, educational providers and

authorities relating to skills needs and educational opportunities.

- Enhance access to long-term and county-wide industry-specific forecasts of future skills requirements and educational opportunities.
- Increase business intelligence and knowledge of the labour market and the skills needed by industry in counselling and guidance services throughout the education system.
- Create models and structures for collaboration on recruitment and attracting new residents.
- Make it easier for employers in the county to recruit and reach labour and skills outside the county.
- Develop new forms for skills development by employees.
- Promote, support and facilitate skills development in the workplace in small and medium-sized enterprises and collaboration between companies in the analysis of needs and implementation of skills development.
- Increase the number of training courses in vocational schools.
- Encourage employers to take particular responsibility for development work, particularly with cooperation between the private sector, unions, the public sector and civil society.
- Increase the use of and develop methods for validation.
- Combat gender-based patterns in the labour market, including by increasing knowledge about gender equality in the workplace and among business representatives.



Photo: Yuri Arcurs, Johner



Photo: Patrick Degerman

5. LOCATION-BASED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Västerbotten's "Location-based business development" sub-strategy supports businesses and tools for business development which have particularly good potential within the county.

As its basis, Västerbotten's location-based business development is based on the county's assets in the form of knowledge and infrastructure for services and enterprise within ICT as well as its rich natural and cultural resources. As companies and individuals become ever-more mobile, geographic distances are reduced and few goods and services need to be produced in a specific location, regions need to focus on developing the knowledge and industries that have strong ties to the region's capabilities and strengths. The businesses that develop based on regional capabilities in the form of skills, strong research fields, natural resources and geographic and social structures are also those that have the greatest potential to become globally competitive in the long term.

An expanding hospitality industry has been created based on the county's diverse living settings and unique natural and cultural resources, and industry plays an important role in generating employment in sparsely-populated areas. Historically, entrepreneurship based on natural resources has been of great importance for the county's development. In recent years, major investments have been made in industries like mining and wind power.

Resource exploitation has a major impact on the environment, however, and it is important to minimize the negative environmental impact caused by business operations and investments. The focus should be on adding value to the resources and developing resource-efficient technologies. The county's manufacturing industry is often active on the global market and contributes to creating a breeding ground for other businesses within the goods and services sectors, which are responsible for close to 80 per cent of R&D investments within the private sector. Although the proportion of employees in industrial production is falling, due in part to increased productivity, new jobs are being created in related service industries.

One precondition for the renewal and development of the business community is a climate that promotes entrepreneurship and business creation. To create such a climate, everyone must have the same opportunities to start and develop businesses. Studies have shown that the conditions for conducting business are still based largely on a male norm. For example, fewer women than men start companies, industries in which women are active are assigned a lower priority and it is more difficult for women to secure financing. Amongst other things, it is important to create gender equality within the business-promotion system and to develop alternative forms for enterprise, but also to create good capital supply throughout the county.

Increasing globalisation and the limited nearby market mean that digital business models and inter-

nationalization provide good opportunities to bolster the business community's competitiveness. In Västerbotten, the proportion of internationalized small and medium-sized businesses is somewhat lower than the national figure, but the number of companies who sell to the international market is higher.

This sub-strategy contributes to smart and sustainable growth. The priorities align with the flagship initiative, "A resource-efficient Europe", which highlights the importance of creating resource-efficient processes and technologies that contribute to reducing climate changes. "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" stresses small and medium-sized enterprises' competitiveness and the promotion of investments in technology and production methods that reduce reliance on natural resources. Amongst others, "A Digital Agenda for Europe" emphasizes the importance of digital services and innovations within ICT.

Priority areas

- 5.1 More and growing companies
- 5.2 The internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises
- 5.3 Digital services and business models
- 5.4 Increased employment and entrepreneurship within the hospitality industry
- 5.5 Value-added natural resources and resource-efficient technologies
- 5.6 A robust reindeer husbandry industry based on cooperation
- 5.7 Enterprise within information and communications technologies



Photo: Patrick Degerman

5.1 More and growing companies

To ensure a long-term competitive business community, Companies in the county need to be built with a focus on sustainable growth. This means achieving economic growth, but not at the expense of the environment or social structures. Utilizing the differences, creativity, dedication and perspectives of residents makes possible renewal and allows more companies to contribute to improving the county's welfare.

In many ways, education determines the life choices of young people. As such, entrepreneurship should be integrated into all forms of education. Presently, new business creation in the county is somewhat lower than the national average.

As a group, men are over-represented in newly established companies and on of boards of directors. Men as a group also receive most of the support from the business support system. Better utilizing and supporting entrepreneurship among under-represented groups would help improve the business climate.

Poor access to loans is often an obstacle to growth for new and existing companies. It is even harder for the region's companies where property values are lower than in the cities. Initiatives to improve collateral options and credit guarantees for companies would improve access to financing through loans. Measures include:

- Improve opportunities to start companies based on individual circumstances.
- Initiatives aimed at under-represented groups to support establishing gender-neutral businesses focused on diversity and where ethnic and cultural diversity are a business advantage.
- Direct education initiatives for gender equality and diversity at those involved in the innovation support system and the business promotion system.
- Create long-term and value-added concepts and models that support entrepreneurship and innovation in the education system.
- Develop entrepreneurship in younger people,

i.e. for students in post-secondary education and within adult education.

- Develop forms and financial opportunities that allow combining full-time or part-time work with developing a business idea.
- Strengthen Sámi entrepreneurship and businesses centred around the Sámi culture.
- Develop methods and cooperation between actors to facilitate changes in ownership and generational shifts in companies.
- Promote social entrepreneurship and enterprise within the social economy.
- Work to implement reforms that will expand new business grants to individuals under 25 years old.
- Develop and refine tools and models that improve access to capital throughout the county.
- Develop enterprise within cultural and creative industries.
- Market the region both nationally and internationally as an attractive place to locate businesses and for investments.
- Promote, support and facilitate the development of efficient production systems for sustainable development within the county's businesses.
- Strengthen industrial structures based on regional capabilities and strengths in the form of skills, collaborations and R&D.

5.2 The internationalization of small and medium-sized companies

International enterprises are important for strengthening the competitiveness of county businesses. Being internationalized means that a company either imports, exports, is part of an international group, or has its own subsidiaries abroad.

For Västerbotten's companies, local and nearby markets are relatively small, meaning that they need to seek out new markets to grow. As part of the domestic market and the Baltic region, county businesses are well positioned to establish themselves on the European market. New cluster initiatives and work to strengthen existing businesses in the region open up opportunities for individual

companies to increase sales and employment and to expand their market presence both nationally and internationally. Improved cooperation on common areas, joint model development and joint training attest to the value of establishing what are known as cluster alliances. Measures include:

- Increase participation by companies in international networks and fairs.
- Develop and improve concepts for expanding the presence of companies in international markets and creating international networks.
- Increase participation in the Baltic Sea Area cooperation.
- Improve advisory services and knowledge concerning internationalization.
- Develop means of supporting companies that want to export.
- Develop cooperation between regional clusters, investment authorities and export authorities.
- Create expert advisory teams to help small and medium-sized companies launch their products and services on the international market.
- Work to ensure that efforts to revise regulations for investment support for service- and goods-producing companies with export ambitions are promoted at national and European levels.

5.3 Digital services and business models

Västerbotten's companies are well positioned to improve their competitiveness through use of digital resources.

Västerbotten has a well-developed digital infrastructure that offers opportunities for local businesses to increase their efficiency and strengthen their ties to markets and customers. The use of digital business models and e-commerce is particularly important in sparsely populated areas where the local market is limited.

Digital solutions make possible meeting places connecting the county's entrepreneurs, businesses and communities. This gives virtual clusters, geographic nodes and others the opportunity

to develop remote business advisory services and other support. Particular attention should be paid to the use of digital solutions in small and medium-sized companies because this group generally makes less use of these options. The use of digital solutions also varies depending on the industry and where the company is located. Measures include:

- Promote skills development related to digital business models and e-commerce in different industries, sectors and companies.
- Create a support structure to help entrepreneurs, start-ups and small companies develop their operations and business in the form of digital flows, business models and e-commerce.
- Create support and opportunities for companies to develop their internal/external processes and operations with the aid of digital technology, digital business models and e-commerce.
- Establish the county as a test bed for digital services.
- Create conditions that allow entrepreneurs and businesses to create digital services based on open public data.

5.4 Increased employment and entrepreneurship within the hospitality industry

The hospitality and tourism industry in Västerbotten has annual sales approximately seven billion kronor and employs around 5,000 people. The hospitality industry is active throughout the county and is an important employer in sparsely populated areas. According to UN agency UNWTO, international tourism is forecast to increase by nearly 50 per cent by 2020, which means that the demand for tourism products will increase.

Västerbotten is well positioned to become even more of a tourist attraction. There is a broad range of tourist attractions within the county, including both urban tourism and internationally unique natural settings. The hospitality industry requires good accessibility to the area and impacts the availability and capacity of all modes of transport. Measures include:

- Invest in accommodation facilities, accommodation capacity, tourist destinations and reasons to visit.
- Promote professional development initiatives (primarily within business and product development), sales, trend monitoring, strategic planning and quality and sustainability issues.
- Develop cooperation between industry stakeholders at the corporate, destination and regional levels and with other stakeholders important to the industry.
- Continue expanding cooperation with foreign travel agents.
- Invest in all modes of transport, such as ferry services and direct flights from international markets in the form of charter and scheduled services.
- Promote efforts to develop Sámi tourism.
- Promote efforts to extend seasons.

5.5 Value-added natural resources and resource-efficient technologies

Västerbotten has a rich complement of natural resources in the form of natural and cultural environments, forests, minerals and hydropower, giving it a comparative advantage from a global standpoint. These natural resources can be further developed to support the county's development with a focus on creating long-term sustainable growth.

The county has a good supply of renewable energy sources, including timber, wind power and hydropower, which could be utilized more. The county's universities and businesses possess expertise in production, energy and process engineering. This offers a good foundation on which to continue developing technologies and businesses within renewable energy and products and processes based on renewable raw materials. The same applies to sustainable construction and management, where local universities and businesses are at the forefront within Sweden.

Västerbotten's expertise and favourable position in cleantech need to be leveraged nationally and internationally by both new and established companies. Presently, northern Sweden is a lead-

er in the high-tech processing industry, within the mining and minerals industry, and in the forestry industry, which is based on the sustainable use of resources and cutting-edge research within ICT. Targeted initiatives aimed at increasing the proportion of women working in these natural resource-based industries are important given that men are over-represented in all these industries. Measures include:

- Develop businesses based on smarter and more sustainable new products, production techniques and methods within the forestry, timber, farming, mining and minerals, and energy industries and related industrial production.
- Promote, support and facilitate investments in technology, professional development, and production methods that promote sustainable development.
- Develop fossil-free products and system solutions and for the commercialization of biorefineries.
- Develop businesses based on natural local conditions, like cold weather and a cool climate, sparsely populated areas etc.
- Develop exclusive food production and design based on regional traditions.
- Create networks for knowledge transfer, experience sharing and benchmarking between businesspeople (KRAFT groups).
- Invest in smart and innovative energy infrastructure that enables better regional use and the export of renewable energy.
- Develop energy storage and the distribution of renewable energy.
- Reduce the gender imbalance within basic industries, e.g. through training initiatives.

5.6 A robust reindeer husbandry industry based on cooperation

Each EU region is to strive to develop its specific circumstances and strengths. The reindeer husbandry industry and the Sámi culture are a unique asset from a European standpoint, and Västerbotten County is home to Sámi commu-

nities with continuous grazing lands stretching from the mountains to the coast, something that is unique in Sweden.

Compared with other counties in Sweden, Västerbotten has few Sámi communities, although it has many profitable reindeer herding companies. These companies own the most reindeer per company and produce the most reindeer meat in Sweden, and they are well positioned to increase the added value of their products and other game products. Development in this direction would benefit from increased collaboration between Sámi, other Swedes and new residents in Västerbotten.

The reindeer husbandry industry and Sámi culture have the potential to strengthen regional development, but are also associated with challenges, such as conflicts with other forms of land use and cultural and historical conflicts. Good grazing conditions from the mountains to the coast and increased consensus amongst reindeer owners and other stakeholders are required to further develop the reindeer husbandry industry. Measures include:

- Develop synergies between reindeer herding, Sámi culture and other businesspeople and land users.
- Create forms of cooperation and consensus amongst the reindeer husbandry industry and other stakeholders.
- Promote research and education about reindeer herding and its impact on the local natural and cultural heritage, and work to establish biosphere reserves within Sámi territory.
- Promote knowledge about reindeer husbandry and gender equality.
- Integrate reindeer herding into planning processes that impact reindeer herding in Västerbotten.
- Support reindeer herding as it copes with climate change.
- Develop clear cutting-free management methods in cooperation with research and the forestry industry.

5.7 Enterprise within information and communications technologies

Västerbotten possesses expertise within ICT through its universities and competitive business clusters within the field, where many companies are competitive on the global market. This expertise includes knowledge about distance-spanning technologies and solutions and about digital media and digital experiences. This commercial field also plays an important role in developing the innovative capacity and competitiveness of other industries by, amongst other things, developing collaborations around common areas for ICT and digital media and between Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and basic industries.

Currently, men are over-represented within ICT, and targeted initiatives are needed to increase the proportion of women in the field. Measures include:

- Establish regional platforms for forums where industries, the rest of the business community, universities and other public actors can meet.
- Create and develop forums that connect the county's entrepreneurs, businesses and communities, e.g. virtual clusters and geographic nodes.
- Reduce the gender imbalance within ICT, e.g. through training and education.
- Develop collaborations linked to common areas between other industries and, for example, ICT, digital media, digital experiences and GIS.
- Strengthen the industry's marketing and sales capabilities.
- Establish a smart regional test bed for digital services that can be used based on a number of perspectives and fields.
- Stimulate innovation-promotion initiatives for youths within the digital field, together with the universities and in cooperation with the business community.
- Create the preconditions and structures for businesses and the public sector to participate in research about digitization.
- Introduce a regional project and idea bank for digital innovations and projects.



Photo: Johan Gunseus

6. AN ACCESSIBLE AND OUTWARD-LOOKING REGION

Västerbotten's sub-strategy "An accessible and outward-looking region" strengthens the systems and structures that bring the county's communities, businesses and residents closer together and closer to other places and cultures.

Västerbotten's geographic location relatively far from major markets and large population centres means that the county can benefit greatly from strengthening ties between communities, universities and companies in other counties, other countries and within the region. Sustainable transportation systems, digital infrastructure and international cooperation are important tools. The region's vast distances and demographic challenges mean the county's access to high-quality broadband and expertise within the business community and academia open up excellent opportunities for developing distance-spanning solutions and innovative ways of providing services.

Västerbotten's traffic and infrastructure systems are important to regional development. The county's large area, dispersed population, gender-segregated labour market and changing circumstances mean that high-quality and accessible passenger transportation is critical to the county's future and development.

Travel patterns differ between men and women. In general, men commute longer distances than women, and women are more likely to use public transport. The fact that initiatives affect different

groups in different ways must be considered when implementing transportation initiatives. Continued development of communications within the county and with communities in other counties and countries creates larger labour markets, better access to education and services and improved competitiveness for companies, among other benefits. One example of this is the Bothnia Line railway, which has helped integrate the city of Örnsköldsvik into the Umeå region. Improving access is also very important for the continued development of the hospitality industry.

Västerbotten is home to important parts of the TEN-T European transport system. The various sections of the Bothnian Corridor are part of Europe's backbone railway network. The North Bothnia Line is the single most important link in reducing the lack of capacity within the corridor. It should dramatically improve conditions for both national and international transports and increase interaction between the coastal region's cities and nearby communities. The Umeå-Vaasa Kvarken Link, which has been noted by the EU and the Swedish government as supporting the Bothnian Corridor, links the east-west corridor on the Swedish and Finnish sides and is crucial for east-west cooperation.

Air traffic is important for connecting with the rest of Sweden and Europe. Moreover, in the inland region, it is the most important means of efficient, long-distance travel.

Sweden's target for its climate policy is to achieve a net total of zero greenhouse gas emissions

by 2050. Measures necessary to achieve this are discussed in the Roadmap 2050 document. Transports are the largest source of emissions in Västerbotten, so particular attention must be paid to developing a more efficient and sustainable transportation system. Given the county's dispersed population centres and growing cities, this involves both challenges and opportunities. The county is well positioned to become a pilot region for research and innovation connected to sustainable transports.

Västerbotten has conducted successful international collaborations in several fields, including research, culture, gender equality and healthcare, and also has well-developed international cooperation agreements with Helgeland, Norway and Östergötland, Finland. There are major opportunities to develop partnerships in our immediate area, e.g. in the Baltic Sea region, where cultural ties and shared challenges offer a good basis for cooperation. Other opportunities are found in developing cooperation with countries undergoing rapid development and where prosperity is increasing, such as in Africa and many parts of Asia. In this regard, Västerbotten's international diversity can serve as an important bridge to strengthening long-distance international cooperation.

This sub-strategy contributes to smart and sustainable growth. Priorities align with the flagship initiative, "A resource-efficient Europe", which highlights the importance of developing sustainable transportation systems that contribute to in-

creased competitiveness. The flagship initiative, "A Digital Agenda for Europe" emphasizes the significance of digital technology as an important tool for fostering competitiveness, innovation and reducing impact on the climate. This sub-strategy also stresses the importance of expanding cooperation within the domestic market.

Priority areas

- 6.1 Improved system functions and capacity within the transport infrastructure
- 6.2 Sustainable and efficient passenger and freight traffic
- 6.3 Improved collaboration on international transport cooperation and strategic planning
- 6.4 Good access to digital connections
- 6.5 Develop and continue to expand international cooperation

6.1 Improved system functions and capacity within the transport infrastructure

In many ways, a well-functioning infrastructure is a precondition for the county's development. Good infrastructure enables regional expansion with increased access to jobs, education and culture and leisure. Improving existing infrastructure can increase accessibility, although the need for new investments of varying sizes is unavoidable if a major transition to sustainable travel and transport throughout Västerbotten is to be achieved.

For example, the system effects of the Bothnia Line in the new system need to be strengthened, as do those of the North Bothnia Line and the Kvarken Link, which are interacting parts of the Bothnia Corridor and are necessary for a high-capacity transport system and for wider adoption of sustainable transports and travel by public transport throughout Västerbotten.

Travel interchanges and intermodality need to be developed within both passenger and freight traffic. Walking and bicycle paths are also very important in establishing sustainable, safe and healthy travel in the immediate region. Improved traffic safety and standards are needed on both European highways and other important transport arteries.

Other important issues are good operation and maintenance, better information for travellers and the development of ports. The EU Sulphur Directive to be implemented in 2015 and stricter environmental requirements for shipping make measures necessary if shipping is to be maintained and developed.

Research, innovation, demonstration and method and model development are important elements in all areas for creating effective and future-oriented solutions. Measures include:

- Lobby the state to continue the planning process for realizing the North Bothnia Line, with implementation to begin during the strategy period.
- Support the development of sustainable transport solutions for the Kvarken Link, E12-Umeå-Vaasa.

- Improve system functions and capacity of the Bothnia Line in interaction with the Main Line through Upper Norrland, the junction railway lines and Ådalen Line as well as through a rapid national development of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS).
- Improve the Inland Line's system links to the junction lines.
- Improve the capacity and standard of the E4 highway and other routes especially important for commuting and the business community.
- Improve traffic safety and the standard of the county's other European highways (E12 and E45), first and foremost on dangerous and busy stretches.
- Develop intermodality and promote transition to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport.
- Improve connections between the mountain valleys.
- Build and develop strategically-located interchanges, e.g. travel centres and parking for switching modes of transport.
- Investments in connected walking and bicycle paths both in and between urban areas and villages.
- Ensure the operation and maintenance of the entire road system, with special prioritization of the roads that connect the county's municipal capitals.
- Develop the region's ports and undertake special efforts to fulfil stricter environmental requirements.
- Improve traffic management and traffic information systems.
- Work to receive increased grants for bearing capacity and reconstruction measures for the county's fine-meshed road network. This also benefits the hospitality industry.
- Develop innovative transport solutions and seek out cooperation and co-financing for this at the national and European levels.

6.2 Sustainable and efficient passenger and freight traffic

Traffic and transport have a major impact on access to work and education and on business trips and the delivery of goods. Good connections with Stockholm from all of the county are important. At the same time, the transport sector is the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the county, so efforts are needed to reduce emissions per tonne or passenger kilometre and to mitigate transport-related problems like poor air quality, noise pollution and poor accessibility in towns and cities.

This requires increased use of public transport, walking and bicycling by changing behaviour towards more sustainable travel habits. One important consideration should be that women and men have different travel habits. For example, men use public transport less than women and are more inclined to commute.

It is also important that the relative use of fossil-free fuels is increasing. The environmental impact of freight transports can be reduced, while efficiency can be improved through new logistical solutions and by redirecting freight to more environmentally-friendly alternatives, such as trains. Research, innovation and demonstration projects can drive development within both passenger and freight traffic. Another important transport function is to support the development of functional regions within and across national and county borders. Measures include:

- Ensure and develop traffic via all modes of transport between Västerbotten, the rest of Sweden and its neighbouring countries.
- Improve the reliability, function and quality of passenger and freight transports.
- Stimulate travel by public transport for high-potential travel categories and increase public transport's market share in Västerbotten as a whole.
- Increase utilization of existing public transport with unused capacity.
- Increase the gender equality and social equality

appeal and function of public transport in the eyes of passengers.

- Promote community planning measures, behavioural change and strategic plans to shift travellers from cars to public transport, walking and bicycling.
- Invest in integrated, sustainable and accessible transport solutions in cities and municipal capitals that improve air quality, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, reduce noise pollution and congestion, and more.
- Develop flexible public transport solutions, including across administrative boundaries.
- Ensure that all airports, including private airports, can be developed and in the future can offer practical and competitive same-day return connections with Stockholm, and develop connections to other destinations, both national and international.
- Develop cooperation between airports in the region.
- Provide support to innovative business and logistical solutions for efficient and environmentally-friendly, sustainable freight transports during their establishment phase.
- Develop the use of fossil-free fuels, including electricity.
- Increase the use of digital services in the transport system.

6.3 Improved collaboration on international transport cooperation and strategic planning

More efficient and more inclusive initiatives are created by expanding cooperation within various types of strategic planning, such as between counties and countries, and by increasing understanding of the power and influence of different groups within different parts of the transport sector. Through cooperation, the county will have a greater impact on national and European infrastructure planning.

Many important initiatives in the county, such as the North Bothnia Line, the east-west link with Russia and the Atlantic coast (which includes the

E12-Umeå-Vaasa Kvarken Link), regional train service and the capacity of the railways, are issues that require coherent and systematic work to influence the EU and decision-makers at the national level. Measures include:

- Work coherently and systematically at the national and EU levels to develop north-south and east-west infrastructure and transport services, e.g. the North Bothnia Line, connections over the Kvarken straits, regional train service and increased capacity within existing railways.
- Develop a more strategic and coherent approach at the EU and national levels and increase expertise and commitment within the field, e.g. with external financing opportunities.
- Broaden use areas for government funding to the transport system to allow additional measures to influence transport needs and choice of mode of transport as well as the more efficient use of existing infrastructure, in accordance with steps one and two of the Swedish Transport Administration's four-step principle.
- Strengthen ties and cooperation between strategic and physical planning at different geographic levels through method and dialogue development and other areas.
- Strengthen coordination within freight and passenger traffic.
- Improve understanding about the distribution of power and influence among different groups in various areas of the transport sector.

6.4 Good access to digital connections

Västerbotten has a world-class broadband network. Presently, 62 per cent of Västerbotten's residents have access to high-quality broadband with transmission speeds of 50 Mbps or more. In an increasingly digitized world, access to digital connections is becoming more and more critical for accessing services offered by public authorities, for example.

Access to high-quality broadband provides good opportunities for developing distance-spanning services, innovative ways of running companies, public services and communication. However,

rapid digital developments require constant improvement and maintenance of the network while parts of the county still lack access to the broadband network. Use of mobile Internet has also increased and is expected to increase even further as the use of tablets and smartphones grows. This creates opportunities, but also expectations by users to be able to be connected wherever they go. Mobile networks are owned by operators who expand their networks as demand increases. This is one of the reasons that certain rural areas lack mobile coverage. Measures include:

- Increase expansion and quality of fixed IT infrastructure – the broadband network.
- Lobby to improve the ability to expand the mobile IT infrastructure.
- Increase the number of publicly-accessible wireless networks in the region.
- Influence and improve opportunities for securing external financing for expansion and quality-improvement work.
- Introduce "DigiPass Västerbotten" to make it easy for both residents and visitors to connect to the Internet within the county.
- Introduce welfare broadband so digital aids can be used free of charge by students in schools and users within healthcare.

6.5 Develop and continue to expand international cooperation

Västerbotten has a long tradition of international and cross-border cooperation and experience working with EU programmes as a tool for development, in particular. The county's development efforts can be strengthened even more by using several of the platforms and tools available in the EU and the Nordic countries. Cooperation is particularly important within Västerbotten's surrounding areas, such as the Nordic countries, the Barents region, the Baltic countries and the Baltic Sea area. New efforts should be directed toward developing international relations outside Europe, for example, by utilizing the county's ethnic diversity and contacts from various social sectors, par-

ticularly from civil society, academia and industry.

The need for and the degree of international efforts varies between different types of operations and sectors of society. Knowledge about available arenas and platforms within various sectors of society is needed to strengthen the international dimension of the county's growth initiatives, and there needs to be a clear focus on highlighting and sharing the added value from international relations. Measures include:

- Establish a regional consultative body for internationalization efforts and coordination.
- Internationalize operations and areas where Västerbotten has unique possibilities or characteristics, but that are less apparent in international cooperation, such as in renewable energy, energy supply and digital infrastructure and services.
- Enhance interaction with national authorities to coordinate international efforts and cooperation initiatives.
- Develop methods to follow up and implement the results of international collaborations and projects.
- Expand cooperation in northern regions, including border cooperation between Västerbotten and Norway, across the Kvarken straits, Baltic Sea cooperation and, above all, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Region, the Barents Region and the Arctic Region.
- Expand political and project level collaboration with regions within Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (Northern Sweden, Northeastern Finland and Northern Norway), Helgeland in Norway and Österbotten in Finland.
- Develop and maintain cooperation with Russia.
- Create a Västerbotten partnership for activities and collaborations in the northern regions.
- Establish a development initiative on international diversity as a resource for internationalization.
- Establish distant international partnerships for increased exchange, learning and development.

- Develop models for taking advantage of networks and knowledge from foreign studies and work experience.
- Strengthen existing and functioning structures for international cooperation.
- Utilize international settings from universities and academic global network as a resource for the entire region.



Photo: Patrick Degerman



INDICATORS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN VÄSTERBOTTEN

RDS sub-strategies and measures are intended to create growth that is both socially and economically sustainable. One regional development focus will be to annually monitor and analyse how the region develops using measurable indicators. Following up overall regional development allows us to determine if work is moving in the right direction.

Follow up will focus on the 17 indicators listed in the table on page 32. Eight of objectives correspond with the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 strategy, while the remaining nine are selected based on the region's challenges and goals. The values shown in the table are for 2010. Regional follow up will focus on measuring changes from the base year 2010.¹

The 2010 values are for the three areas of cooperation: Region 8, Trekom and the Umeå region. Region 8 covers the municipalities of Dorotea, Lycksele, Malå, Norsjö, Sorsele, Storuman, Vilhelmina and Åsele. The municipal cooperation Trekom involves Malå, Norsjö and Skellefteå. The Umeå Region includes the county's other six municipalities: Bjurholm, Nordmaling, Robertsfors, Umeå, Vindeln and Vännäs.

The annual follow up of regional development efforts measures and evaluates the changes for the 17 indicators. No targets are given for the indicators. Instead, a desired direction of the change is

noted. It's also possible to provide municipal level data for these 17 indicators in the annual follow up.

Efforts in the county to implement the regional development strategy will integrate an equality perspective. All socio-economic indicators are divided by gender to be able to follow progress for both men and women. An indicator that follows changes to the percentage of daily wages for women measures how economic growth is distributed between men and women.

Diversity is another key focus of the RDS. Diversity can be both a driving force for development and a right to be defended. Diversity is difficult to measure, and the type of diversity easiest to track statistically is based on country of birth. Indicators measure the integration of foreign-born individuals on the labour market through their employment rate and the change in the number of foreign-born individuals in the population.

THE INDICATORS

Net influx of residents

Attractive regions have more people moving in than moving out. The RDS focuses on developing the county so more people will want to live, work and prosper here. In an attractive region, more people choose to raise families, which further strengthens positive population trends. More men

and women choose to move into regions with better equality, leading to a more diversified labour market and setting the stage for higher economic growth. Net influx of residents indicates the difference between the number who choose to move in and those who choose to move out. The indicator specifies for women, men, and for both women and men ages 19-44 years.²

Property values

The region's attractiveness is reflected in property values. Increasing property values indicate increased value of the region's resources. A region rich in resources can more easily attract new residents. Rising property values also free up funds for new investments as the region builds new capital. These investments can be in new homes, businesses and innovation. Property values indicate the total purchase price for permanent housing in 2010.

Foreign-born residents

The demographic challenge for the region in the coming decades is that fewer people will be supporting an increasingly ageing population. It will become more difficult to recruit new employees when fewer and fewer young people are available to replace the large numbers of workers retiring.

This challenge is shared by the entire West-

ern world and immigration from other parts of the world will be required to address these changes. Increased immigration from other cultures improves diversity in the region. Diversity is a contributing factor to increased growth in the new knowledge society. The number of foreign-born residents who have immigrated to Sweden over the last ten years reflects immigration trends in the county.³ The number of foreign born residents is reported for men and women.

Upper-secondary school education

Education is important for allowing future growth in an increasingly knowledge-based society. The number of people with higher education is not the only key figure. Just as important, or even more so, is having the number of people with a limited education as low as possible. Young people without upper-secondary qualifications risk alienation, which can be difficult to break out of should they fall into unemployment and lack having a sense of belonging to a larger context. Young men are particularly at risk.

The percentage of young people 19-24 years old who lack an upper-secondary qualification represents those who are most likely to develop a sense of alienation. The percentage is shown for men and women and for foreign-born men and women.

Highly educated 30-34 year olds

Higher education is central for achieving smart growth based on innovation and renewal. Higher education enables growth since the work done in many industries requires more knowledge and expertise. The proportion of 30-34 year olds with at least two years of post-secondary education is a measure of human capital among recently graduated individuals. The percentage is shown for men and women and for foreign-born men and women.

Alienation

A functioning labour market that optimally utilizes everyone's skills is important for ensuring that everyone, both current and future residents, benefits from economic growth. An inclusive society is also about everyone's equal right to health care and social welfare. If everyone feels part of the community, it is natural to also help with and contribute to a growing and thriving labour market. Even when individuals have the necessary skills, they can be excluded from the labour market because of gender, age and country of origin. These are structural problems caused by, among other things, labour market opportunities being dependent on social networks. Alienation is defined as the proportion of the population aged 20-64 who are inactive (excluding full-time students) and the proportion who are long-term unemployed or on long-term sick leave.

Employment level

A high employment level points to the region's capacity for economic growth. The challenges of an ageing population and fewer working people to support them require a larger proportion of the population to work. A high employment level means that fewer are unemployed or economically inactive. The more people who are part of a workplace and that can support themselves, the fewer who are at risk of alienation. Achieving a high employment rate requires the labour market to be open and inclusive of everyone at its disposal. This leads to greater diversity and includes young people, women, foreign-born individuals and individ-

uals with disabilities. The employment rate shows the proportion of population aged 20-64 with jobs. The employment rate is shown for men, women and foreign-born men and women who immigrated to Sweden three to ten⁴ years ago.

Greenhouse gas emissions

The atmosphere's average temperature is increasing due to greenhouse gases. This increase affects the climate, resulting in more natural disasters, disruptions in food production and increased incidence of epidemics. The average temperature of the atmosphere has increased by about 0.7° C since the early twentieth century.

Greenhouse gases must be reduced to stabilize temperatures. If economic growth can be combined with reduced greenhouse gas emissions, the region can have a competitive advantage as mandates for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions are implemented. Greenhouse gas emissions indicate the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, measured in million tonnes CO₂ equivalents.

Energy intensity

A large proportion of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere comes from energy use. Energy efficiency measures could slow climate change. Since energy efficiency is difficult to measure, energy intensity is measured instead. Energy intensity measures the amount of energy required to produce a specific value added. Climate change is a global problem, and energy intensity as a measurement may indicate reduced energy use, even if the reduced energy consumption is due to energy-intensive production having moved to another place in the world. Energy intensity indicates the final energy consumption (MWh) weighted with the region's gross regional product (SEK million).

Renewable energy

Greenhouse gas emissions from energy use largely result from the use of non-renewable, fossil energy. Increasing the share of renewable energy used by end users can reduce greenhouse gas

emissions. For Scandinavian countries, readily available renewable hydropower means that renewable energy makes up close to 50 per cent of end user energy. The percentage of non-renewable energy in the transport sector is still high. Transition to renewable energy in the region is measured by calculating the percentage of renewable energy within total energy consumption.

R&D/GRP

A prerequisite for sustainable growth is investment in research and development to produce new innovations.* Research expands knowledge and leads to new ideas. A systematic development project can then apply the results of the research and other knowledge to the development of new or improved materials, goods, services, processes or methods.

Research and development is conducted in many different areas of society: business, higher education and the public sector (municipality, county council and state). Business investments could have short-term impact through the growth of innovations that are released onto the market and commercialized, for example. Ultimately, however, universities can need to invest in research that provides long-term structural results and knowledge development. The degree of research and development in the region is measured as the proportion of R&D per GRP. The more added value created in the region, the more that should be re-invested in research and development.

Renewal of the labour market

A dynamic labour market and a diversified economy are required for a region to be attractive to a large number of people. A diversified labour market means that a region is not dependent on individual industries or companies. A dynamic labour market can reduce exposure to shifting economic trends while improving matching of workplaces with skills. Renewal occurs in the business world when new workplaces are created. The degree of renewal is measured as the number of workplaces per 1,000 residents.

Total payrolls in the private service sector

To achieve a more sustainable society, the region's products and consumption need to impact on the region's environment less than in the past. Society is becoming increasingly wealthy and more and more goods and services are in demand. This requires the development of a service-based society. Services usually have less impact on the environment, at the same time as service industries are often more labour-intensive than manufacturing industries. This means that a developed service sector may increase demand for labour in the region, with reduced unemployment as a possible outcome. The service sector's share of the region's total payrolls reveals its importance.

Labour productivity, total daily wages/employee

Economic growth includes the more efficient use of resources in production, which means that the value of what is produced increases while the amount of work remains the same. One aspect of an increase in productivity can be an increase in human capital and know-how. Innovative solutions that give rise to technological development is another factor that can increase productivity.

Labour productivity is measured as total daily wage per employed person in the region.

Women's share of total daily wages

In a more gender-equal labour market, human capital is used more effectively. Increased gender equality has great potential to directly affect the labour market's way of operating. This is important, as research shows that women have a lower return on education than men, that is, that women earn less from pursuing an education than men. Studies also show that increased gender equality correlates with increased GDP.

Gender equality also plays a role in how attractive regions are. Both women and men must be attracted to the area, both to ensure population growth and to broaden the recruitment base for companies. Greater gender equality contributes to better and more diversified human capital

and thus can also contribute to more innovations. (Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis, 2012 report)

One way to measure the equality of women's and men's access to power and economic influence is to measure the distribution of total payrolls between the sexes. The distribution of payrolls indicates disparities in wage levels within and between industries, employment rates and the incidence of part-time work. Difference in economic influence is measured as women's share of total daily wages.

Goods exports/GRP

A region's internationalization is a measure of its increased competitiveness since internationalization allows the region's companies to reach more and/or larger markets. Internationalization can also be seen as a factor that increases exchanges with other countries and that can lead to more innovation. Internationalization is measured by calculating the proportion of the region's GRP made up of goods exports.

Level of ill-health

Many of the factors that make a region an attractive place to live and work in also indirectly improve the quality of life and health.

The level of ill-health (*ohälsotalet*) is the total number of days of absence from work per year for which work injury compensation benefits, rehabilitation benefits or illness/activity compensation is paid per resident aged 16-64 years. The level of ill-health is calculated for men and women and for foreign-born men and women.

¹ 2010 was a year in which the Swedish economy was essentially flat.

² The age range has been selected on the basis that many choose to start families in this period of life.

³ The foreign migration surplus figure does not provide a true indication of actual immigration, as those who choose to move to another part of Sweden after a time are then counted as part of the domestic migration surplus.

⁴ This time interval has been chosen because a certain period of transition applies when a person changes homeland as well as the fact that it is the relatively new arrivals' employment rate that indicates how well foreign-born residents integrate upon arrival.

INDICATOR	RESULT	YEAR	GROUP	REGION 8	SKELLEFTEÅ REGION	UMEÅ REGION	VÄSTER-BOTTEN
Net influx of residents	Net influx should be positive for people aged 19-44 years	2010	Women	-96	-133	206	-5
			Men	-149	-92	339	116
Property values	Property values should remain constant or increase compared with 2010	2010		141,766	484,093	1,434,426	2,043,100
Foreign-born residents	The number of foreign-born residents among the population should increase compared with 2010	2010	Women	643	996	2,749	4,281
			Men	606	1,028	2,917	4,460
Upper-secondary school education	The proportion of people who lack upper-secondary school education in the age range 19-24 years should decrease to less than ten per cent	2011*	Women	15%	15%	11%	12%
			Men	16%	18%	14%	15%
			Foreign-born men	57%	53%	35%	42%
			Foreign-born women	50%	47%	30%	36%
Highly educated	The proportion of people in the age range 30-34 years with at least two years of post-secondary education should increase to over 40 per cent	2011*	Women	42%	49%	67%	59%
			Men	21%	34%	50%	43%
			Foreign-born men	23%	32%	60%	53%
			Foreign-born women	38%	37%	64%	56%
Alienation	The proportion of alienated people should fall to under ten per cent	2010	Women	12%	12%	10%	14%
			Men	8%	8%	8%	11%
Employment level	The level of employment should increase to over 80 per cent	2010	Women	78%	78%	74%	76%
			Men	80%	81%	76%	78%
			Foreign-born men	56%	49%	48%	49%
			Foreign-born women	57%	53%	54%	54%
Greenhouse gas emissions	Should fall by 40 per cent compared with 1990 levels	2010		-2%	-7%	-10%	-8%
Energy intensity	Should fall by 20 per cent compared with 2008 levels	2010		-3%	-4%	-8%	-6%
Renewable energy	Should be above 80 per cent	2010		60%	63%	71%	68%
R&D/GRP	Should be above four per cent	2011**		4%
New workplaces per 1,000 residents	Should increase by five per cent compared with 2010	2010*		-11	-8	-8	-9
Growth, private service sector	Payrolls within the private service sector should increase compared with 2010	2010*		-998	-2,696	-5,172	-8,728
Total daily wages/employee	Labour productivity should increase compared with the 2010 total daily wages per employee	2010		244,248	269,029	274,140	268,909
Proportion of total daily wages	Women's proportion should increase compared with 2010	2011	Women	43%	40%	43%	42%
Goods exports	The relative proportion of GRP should increase	2010*		-25%
Ill-health	The number of days absent from work per person among the population (16-64 years) over 12 months	2010	Women	45	45	34	38
			Men	32	29	22	25
			Foreign-born men	17	24	18	19
			Foreign-born women	22	34	26	28

Regional indicators, 2013

Source: Statistics Sweden

* Statistics for periods after 2010 have not yet been published. The table shows the level during 2010 and not the change.

** R&D is taken from 2011, while gross regional product (GRP) is taken from 2010.

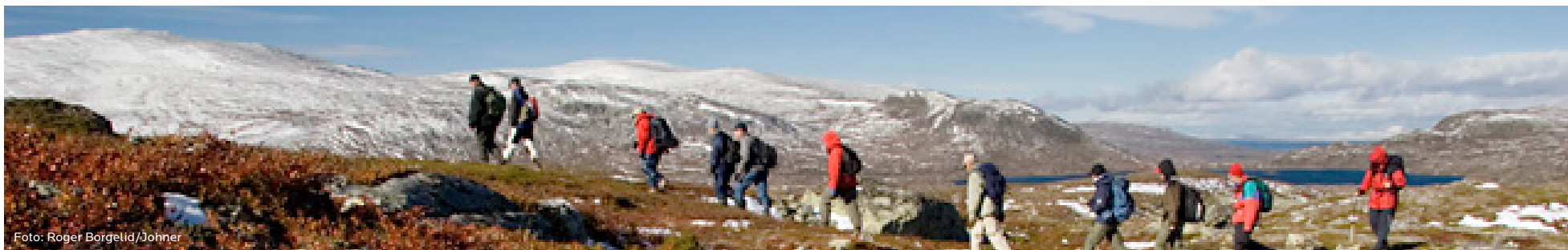


Foto: Roger Borgelid/Johner

HOW THE STRATEGY IS IMPLEMENTED

A shared commitment

The regional development strategy is the county's joint strategy for sustainable growth, and its implementation is a shared responsibility. Some of the priorities and measures within the strategy concern certain actors more than others, although all can play a role in its implementation.

It is important that that municipalities, government agencies and organizations integrate implementation into their respective strategies and action plans. Multilevel governance is essential to the strategy's implementation, meaning that actors from different parts of society and at different geographical levels should collaborate on development initiatives within the strategy's framework.

Regional strategies and programmes make the implementation of RDS priorities tangible. Some examples are the county transport plan, the cultural plan, action plans for business community development, IT strategies and programmes for rural development. The strategy is funded in part by municipal and county council development funds, government grants to agencies and organizations, state-allocated regional growth funds and financing from EU programmes.

Region Västerbotten is responsible for coordinating the implementation and on-going follow up of the strategy's priorities. The strategy also gov-

erns the Regional Council's activities. The regional growth funds managed by Region Västerbotten and the County Administrative Board finance activities undertaken within the framework of the strategy, but the funds are also governed by the requirements and criteria presented in the chapter State-allocated Regional Growth Funds.

The state authorities contribute to implementation within their respective sector areas by focusing their regional efforts on the strategy's priorities. The County Administrative Board plays an important role in coordinating the regional government authorities' strategy efforts. The activities and development projects of the municipalities and the County Council play an important role in implementing several of the strategy's priorities, especially those related to basic municipal operations and the municipality's commitments.

Västerbotten County's Development Council is a forum for strengthening and developing regional growth efforts. The development council's members are particularly responsible for ensuring the strategy is implemented in their own activities and for promoting the strategy's implementation in their active networks. The Development Council actively contributes to the follow up of the strategy by supporting Region Västerbotten by reporting on efforts within the strategy's framework.

Follow up and learning

When implementing the RDS, continuously following up, evaluating and learning from the work as part the strategy are important. Implementation involves many people, both through development projects and within ordinary operations, and cooperation is essential for creating an overall picture of the strategy's results and impact. The Regional Council assumes overall responsibility for following up and evaluating regional development work.

- Strategy indicators are followed up annually to provide a picture of development within the RDS's various strategic areas.
- Region Västerbotten and the County Administrative Board annually follow up the use of state-allocated regional growth funds.
- Municipalities, county councils and the development council document and communicate their efforts concerning the strategy.
- Qualified evaluations linked to the RDS's strategies are conducted continuously during the programme period.

The results of the follow up are communicated in networks and forums as part of the learning process of the regional development work.

A major review and evaluation will be undertaken during the strategy period to follow up the work and to determine whether or not the strategy needs to be revised to suit changing conditions.

STATE-ALLOCATED REGIONAL GROWTH FUNDS

Annually, Västerbotten receives state-allocated regional growth funds for use in achieving the objectives of the regional growth policy. The regional development strategy forms the basis for the priorities to be defined in Västerbotten during the period 2014-2020.

To qualify for project funding for regional growth activities, the following criteria apply:

1. Have the requirements listed under the section "Governing regulations and guidelines" been met?
2. Have the basic criteria been met?
3. How well have the selection criteria been met?
4. Is the project being conducted within the framework of prioritized measures?

Only those applicants who fulfil criteria one and two progress to the next stage of assessment. The projects are prioritized as part of criteria three and four.

Project applications are assessed based on remaining funds.

Governing regulations and guidelines

Project funds are to be used for activities that aim to achieve the goal of the regional growth policy. All projects funded must be conducted in accordance with the RDS.

The use of state-allocated regional growth funds, known as Appropriation 1.1, is governed by the Ordinance concerning support for project activities in regional growth policy (2003:596).

"Projects" refers to efforts made separately from ordinary activities in terms of time, finances and labour. Grants may not be awarded for operational support. Grants of no more than 50 per cent of the cost of a project may be awarded. Grants

may also not be awarded to activities eligible for funding under the Ordinance respecting employment contributions (1998:996), the Ordinance on regional grants for business development (2000:283), the Ordinance on support for commercial services (2000:284), the Ordinance on regional investment support (2007:61), or the Ordinance on state support for R&D and innovation (2008:762).

Applicants are to provide the information needed and conduct the necessary investigations to enable the assessment of the project.

Projects awarded grants must demonstrate regional added value and be both relevant and in demand in relation to regional development work in the county. Projects must also have significant support among stakeholders. In principle, a maximum duration of three years may apply, but should not constitute an absolute limit.

Basic criteria

Projects must:

- be implemented in accordance with applicable laws, ordinances and regulations
- support the RDS's priority areas;
- contribute to sustainable growth.

The project sponsor must:

- have fulfilled previous commitments to the funding organization;
- have no unsettled record of non-payment;
- be a legal entity, which includes the organization having a board or steering committee, operations manager, operating plan, corporate ID number and payment address.

Selection criteria

Projects are prioritized based on how well they describe their intended work in the following areas:

- Gender equality
- Diversity
- Environment and climate
- The development and renewal of the business community and business-community support structures
- Collaboration and networking

Projects are also assessed on the basis of the following prioritized activities:

- Activities that contribute to the implementation of the EU's regional and territorial structural funds programmes with distinct programme geography that include all or part of Västerbotten, such as the Regional Fund Objective 2 Upper Northern Sweden, the Botnia-Atlantica programme, the Northern Periphery Programme and the North Programme.
- Activities that contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.
- Activities within the EU sector programmes that have a clear regional added value.

ANNEX 1:

CONNECTION WITH EUROPE 2020 AND PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

The link between the RDS and Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 Strategy has three mutually reinforcing objectives: smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. Linked to these goals are seven main initiatives that show the measures needed at European and national levels to achieve the objectives.

Smart growth – Develop an economy based on knowledge and innovation

- 1: "The Innovation Union" is to improve the basic conditions for research and innovation.
- 2: "Youth on the Move" is to improve the performance of education systems and facilitate young people's transition into employment.
- 3: "A Digital Agenda for Europe" is to accelerate the deployment of high-speed Internet and utilize the benefits of a digital internal market for household and businesses.

Sustainable growth - promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.

- 4: "A Resource-efficient Europe" is to help decouple economic growth from resource use, support the transition to a low carbon-dioxide economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernize the transport sector and promote energy efficiency.
- 5: "An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era" is to improve the business environment, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, and support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial competitiveness.

Inclusive growth – Stimulate an economy with a high rate of employment and with social and territorial cohesion.

6. "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" is to modernize labour markets and make people more

empowered through lifelong skills development to increase their participation in the labour market and to better match supply and demand in the labour market, including through labour mobility. 7: "The European Platform Against Poverty" is to ensure social and territorial cohesion so that benefits of growth and employment are widely shared and that people suffering poverty and social exclusion can live in dignity and participate actively in society.

The table on the next page is an example of how Västerbotten's priorities can be linked to Europe 2020's overall objectives and main initiatives.

Connection, RDS-Europe 2020

Priority in RDS	Europe 2020 objectives	Main initiatives
Collaboration and new solutions for services	Smart growth Inclusive growth	European Platform against Poverty, A Digital Agenda for Europe, Innovation Union
Actively promote diversity and gender equality	Inclusive growth	European Platform against Poverty
Vibrant cultural life, social economy and leisure	Inclusive growth	Multiple
Digital solutions for increased welfare and efficiency	Smart growth and inclusive growth	A Digital Agenda for Europe, European Platform against Poverty, Innovation Union
A coordinated regional innovation support system with strong actors	Smart growth	Innovation Union
Meeting places for innovation	Smart growth	Innovation Union
Increased collaboration between academia and the business world	Smart and sustainable growth	Innovation Union, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
Improved access to venture capital	Smart growth	Innovation Union
Increased production and relative use of renewable energy	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe
Energy-efficient technologies and energy efficiency measures in housing, commercial properties and vacation homes	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe
Sustainable production and consumption	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe
Entrepreneurship based on the sustainable management of natural resources	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
Increase the proportion of students who graduate from upper-secondary school	Smart growth and inclusive growth	Youth on the Move
Increase the proportion of residents with post-secondary education qualifications in the county's labour markets	Smart growth	Youth on the Move
Develop the use of digital tools for learning	Smart growth	Youth on the Move, A Digital Agenda for Europe

Priority in RDS	Europe 2020 objectives	Main initiatives
Increase the proportion of employed 20-64 year olds	Inclusive growth	An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs
Improve matching on the labour market	Inclusive growth	An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs
More and growing companies	Sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
The internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises	Sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era, Innovation Union
Digital services and business models	Smart and sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era, Innovation Union
Increased employment and enterprise within the hospitality industry	Sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
A robust reindeer husbandry industry based on cooperation	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
Enterprise within information and communications technologies	Smart and sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era, Innovation Union, A Digital Agenda for Europe
Value-added natural resources and resource-efficient technologies	Sustainable growth	An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era, Innovation Union, A Resource-efficient Europe
Good access to digital connections	Smart and sustainable growth	A Digital Agenda for Europe
Develop and further refine international cooperation	Multiple	Multiple
Improved system functions and capacity within the transport infrastructure	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
Sustainable and efficient passenger and freight traffic	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era
Improved collaboration concerning international transport cooperation and strategic planning	Sustainable growth	A Resource-efficient Europe, An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era

ANNEX 2:

PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

The figure below provides a schematic representation of some important strategies and programmes at different geographic levels.



ANNEX 3:

DEFINITIONS

The following list contains definitions for a number of concepts used in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS).

Accelerator funds

Refers to capital and advice provided during early stages to help the company to leave an incubator and to accelerate the company's development towards the market.

Benchmarking

Refers to comparing, for example, your organization, company, region or municipality with other or similar organizations to gain knowledge about how the operation is doing in relation to others and to increase knowledge about development opportunities to improve and streamline operations.

Business angel

Refers to a private person who, either privately or through companies, invests capital in and provides business knowledge to unlisted companies with growth potential. The business angel is usually a person with experience and knowledge of entrepreneurship who, by providing capital, expertise, commitment and access to networks, helps companies develop.

Cleantech

Abbreviation for "clean technologies". Cleantech is a term often used for products and services that provide clear environmental benefits in relation to existing technologies and that are also judged to have marketable potential. The concept is closely associated with "environmental engineering", but can be said to differ from this concept through its particular reference to technologies with marketable potential.

Cluster

Clusters can be defined as a geographic concentration of related companies and actors who are characterized by mutual dependence and they impact one another, without direct requirements for interaction concerning research. A cluster assumes that there are geographic concentrations of related companies and other actors who both compete and cooperate.

Critical mass

Refers to a number or a quantity of something that is necessary to make a certain process possible. For example, this may be the minimum number of people required in a group for an activity to be held.

Ecosystem services

Are the functions of ecosystems (all living creatures and the environment within a set area) that benefit humanity in some way, such as the natural absorption of carbon dioxide and production of oxygen, insects that pollinate plants, and water purification via wetlands.

Energy intensity

Refers, in this strategy, to the amount of energy used per krona of gross regional product (value added).

Functionality

Refers, in this strategy, to how access to and the supply of services and activities, for example, could be increased by better coordinating the way they are produced and provided. This means that the focus is on how the function can be produced or provided to maximize the benefits to an area, rather than where it is produced.

Gender

Used in gender research as a designation for the socially constructed system that divides people into two categories (women and men) and associates these categories with different characteristics and behavioural patterns. Also used to describe the social process that ascribes people and institutions collective masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is used to describe the social, cultural and historically variable aspects of what it means to be male or female.

Geographic levels

Refers, in this strategy, to geographic areas of different sizes. Examples of geographic levels may be a local level, which could mean a village or municipality; a sub-regional level, which includes several municipalities; a county level, which includes a whole county; or a national level, which refers to Sweden as a whole.

GIS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are computer-based systems that combine geographic data and statistics with maps. Systems for collecting, storing, analysing, and presenting spatial information.

ICT

An acronym for Information and Communications Technology. Refers to technologies that provide access to information and/or communication.

Incubator

An incubator provides managerial and business expertise during a company's pre-commercial or early commercialization phase. It is also supportive and an aid to development. Incubators provide

both physical support, such as premises and office equipment, and expert support in the form of mentoring, administrative support and access to networks. The goal is to achieve a more efficient and rapid commercialization of business ideas and innovations, as well as to develop strong growth companies. Incubators may be physical or virtual.

Industry representatives

Representatives for employer, trade and labour associations.

Innovation checks

Cater primarily to inventors who have started up a new company and concern innovative projects in the very early stages.

Innovation funnels

A function that helps employees in the healthcare sector to move their ideas through to commercialization, as well as providing guidance within the innovation support system. Innovation funnels also guide companies that want to test their product or service in the healthcare environment.

Life science

Refers to research on living organisms such as microorganisms, plants, animals and humans.

Lifelong learning

All learning activities undertaken throughout life that aim to improve knowledge, skills and qualifications from personal, civic, social or employment-related perspectives.

Post-secondary education

Post-secondary education refers to university, college and vocational college education.

Public health

A collective term for the entire population's health status that takes into account both the level and distribution of health. Good public health should mean that health is as evenly distributed as possible among different social groups.

Quadro helix

Collaboration or cooperation among actors from academia, the public and private sectors and the social economy.

Region 8

An inter-municipal cooperative project among Dorothea, Lycksele, Malå, Norsjö, Sorsele, Storuman, Vilhelmina and Åsele municipalities.

Regional Competence Platform

The regional authority responsible for development in each county is commissioned by the national government to establish a regional competence platform. The aim is to improve collaboration concerning skills supply and education planning and to develop knowledge bases and needs analyses.

Regional expansion

Can be defined as the process that consists of connecting previously separate labour market regions to form a new and larger region, e.g. through increased commuting.

Risk capital

Capital that a venture capitalist is willing to contribute to start, develop or acquire a company that he or she believes has potential. Capital that risks failing to yield a return on investment.

Science parks

Science parks are innovation environments that offer knowledge-intensive growth companies infrastructure, networking and business and innovation development. A science park can be described as a meeting place for people, ideas, knowledge and creativity, and can act as a platform for major innovation and development projects, for example.

Seed capital

Seed capital is equity capital in the very early stages. The product has been verified (i.e., its novelty has been confirmed and it can be assumed that market demand exists). This money is to be used to develop the product to a finished state and to work the market ahead of its introduction.

The Skellefteå Region

An inter-municipal cooperative project among Malå, Norsjö and Skellefteå municipalities.

SME

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are companies with fewer than 250 employees and annual sales of less than EUR 40 million or a balance sheet total of less than EUR 27 million.

Social capital

Defined according to Robert Putnam's definition as "elements of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated operations" and that "social capital consists of three different forms; interpersonal trust, social norms and participation in formal and informal networks. Through participating in networks, social norms arise in which an important norm is reciprocity – interpersonal trust. Social capital can be seen as the cornerstone of a functioning democracy and society."

Social economy

Organized operations that have social purposes, are grounded in democratic values and are independent of the public sector. Operations are conducted primarily through associations, cooperatives, foundations and the like. The main motivation is public welfare or benefit to members, not profit.

Sustainable urban development

Sustainable development consists of three different dimensions that are interdependent; ecological sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability. Sustainable urban development

can be summarized as developing and building environments that enable people and businesses to thrive and grow.

Venture capital

Equity capital where the financier requires a degree of ownership of the company in return for their investment. The idea behind venture capital is to increase equity through a so-called "exit", in which the stakeholder sells its stake at a significant profit. Yield requirements are very high in the early stages, as it requires taking many chances to find a winner.

The Umeå Region

Formalized cooperation among the Bjurholm, Nordmaling, Robertsfors, Vindeltn, Vännäs and Umeå municipalities.

