



Report from the peer review meeting in Sweden within the BIOGOV project 11th – 13th june 2019



I. Introduction

The second peer review visit within the BIOGOV project took place in the Valle area in the region of Västra götaland, Sweden from the 11th to 13th of June 2019.

The host of the meeting was the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland and the visiting parties was ADEPT Foundation (Romania), Ministry of Waters and Forests (Romania), EPA Mures (Romania), Slovenian forest institute (Slovenia), Slovenian forest service (Slovenia) the Lodzkie region (Poland), The Institute of territorial studies (Spain) and the province of Fryslan (Netherlands).



Also participating in the meeting was: Vallevägen (*an association that works for entrepreneurship and development of the Valle area*), The Swedish transport administration, The hometown association of Istrum, Eggby and Öglunda, Sten Catoni (*farmer and landowner*), The Swedish forestry agency, the municipality of Skara, Jens Rydell (*lecturer in zoology and leading expert on bats in Sweden*), Flämslätt conference facility and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation.

During the visit, all participants worked on how to find the best way for the regional stakeholder group to contribute to the strengthening of the green infrastructure within the Valle area?

The purpose of the meeting was also to get the visiting parties in contact with local stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities regarding nature conservation in the Valle area. This would hopefully lead to some identified good practices.



Visit at a local farm and discussions about the long-term requisites for small scale farming



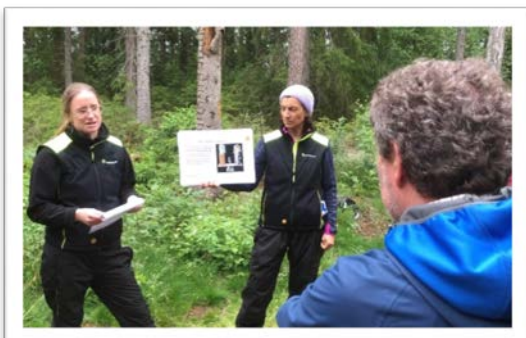
The Swedish transport administration – how to manage roadsides in order to favor biodiversity



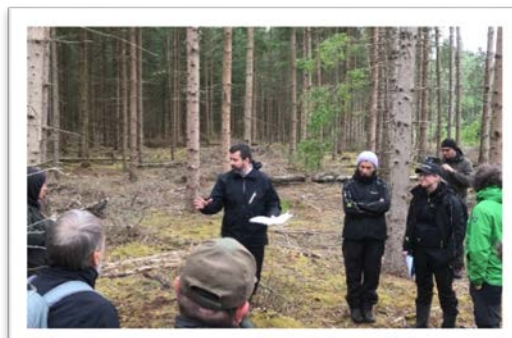
Flämslätt conference facility – how can they contribute to the preservation of the biodiversity



Discussions about local brands with Vallevägen



The Swedish forestry agency presents the concept of freedom with responsibility



The municipality of Skara – how to work with green infrastructure in spatial planning

II. Findings of the peer review visit

The most prominent good practice identified was the active engagement among the stakeholders and the ongoing mutual dialog among the different organisations leading to a constructive cooperation and coordination. To keep and deepen this cooperation/dialog was considered as a key factor for succes regardig preservation of the biodiversity within the area and the local development.

It is important to incorporate the "new" concept of green infrastructure into schools, and other places so that the information will be spread, understood and used. The importance of good and interesting/attractive communication towards the public about the green infrastructure and the importance of biodiversity was identified as one of the key-factors for success.



Hiking in natural grasslands together with the hometown association.

The meeting identified a lack of local products such as food or handycraft. The development of local products might be a way of strengthening both the cooperation among the different stakeholders but also a way of marketing the area more efficiently. There ought to be good opportunities in the area to start different projects and apply for money from the EU. Especially Vallevägen was identified as a suitable organization to coordinate different projects and apply for the EU-funding.

It is important to utilize local resources for example when organizing trips/excursions in the area or to serve meals based on local products. This is a way of strengthening each other and thereby the whole area.

In addition to the above, several recommendations and ideas were identified to bring home to each country. Here are some of them:

1. The Swedish concept of a regional action plan for green infrastructure as a knowledge and planning instrument to be used throughout every level of society.
2. The thinking in Sweden of working with valuable regions for different habitats (landscapes with a high density of valuable spots/areas, core areas, for a specific habitat).
3. The manual for the management of roadsides by the Swedish Transport Administration and how it is intergraded with the regional action plan for green infrastructure.
4. Signs along the biodiverse roadsides in Sweden informing the public.
5. Replacement habitat for *Osmoderma eremita*. In Poland they often move parts of old suitable trees from one area to another in order to favor the *Osmoderma eremita*.
6. Ecosystem payments - for example: when a nature reserve is established in Sweden, the landowners are economically compensated with 125% of the property's loss on the market.
7. The Swedish concept of freedom with responsibility within forestry – the law sets the minimum but landowners are encouraged to raise the level of nature consideration voluntarily.
8. The general nature considerations you always have to ensure when carrying out forestry, even in the production forest. This minimum is set both by the Swedish law and a general policy among most forest companies.
9. The understanding in Slovenia that the forestry needs to adapt according to climate change. For example: producing spruce forest is difficult with climate change - use the native species instead.
10. The thinking in Sweden of protecting several trees within a certain distance instead of each single tree, together with the long term thinking (the generational gap) of preserving and developing "successors".
11. Several GIS-analyses were presented and regarded as educative, such as identification of high value areas (in Galicia, Spain) and valuable regions for specific habitats (in Västra götaland Sweden), local connectivity predictions for insects on old and sunlit broadleaved trees (in the Valle area).

12. The dispersal of free seeds in Poland for farmers/cothe public in order to provide habitats (flowers) for insects. However, it is important to really use domestic seeds suitable for the environment they are supposed to be planted in.
13. The family activities at lake Hornborga and the school-forest-concept. In Slovenia there is a handbook for playing and teaching in the forest.
14. The knowledge of how lightning of churches can severely harm bats, (lightpolution).
15. The way of connecting culture in the Valle area with nature; art-exibitions within nature reseves, and the iron frames in the landscape (turning the landscape into art).
16. The importance of different edge structures as habitats and dispersal ways for many different species. It is crucial to manage and preserve these structures in order to achieve a functioning green infrastructure.



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation – what are the keys to a successful green infrastructure



Visit to lake Hornborga



Batsafari

Also some further actions were agreed between the host and the peers to follow-up:

- Poland provides a presentation about green ecosystem services and participatory GIS and replacement of habitat.
- Sweden will provide the presentation from the Swedish Transport Administration about management of roadsides.
- Slovenia provides info about forest edge management (cofinance on different levels) and also about the handbook for learning and play in the forest.
- It might be interesting to follow the output from the ongoing bilateral project between Sweden and Slovenia about pleasant forestry (forestry without clearcutting).



III. SWOT analysis

| | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|------------------|---|---|
| Internal factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very well educated, professional and well organized stakeholders within the specific topics they are dealing with. - Good planning and implementation of green infrastructure, especially with the help of the regional action plan. - Thorough analyses of both spatial and specificities of the habitat types that give clear ideas of what further actions are needed. - Good approaches in connecting scattered biodiversity (hot spots/mosaics landscapes) through green infrastructure for ex. specific analyses on edge structures. - Good knowledge about species and habitats within the area (Artportalen – databank of species where everyone can report). - Stakeholders seems very motivated in terms of dealing with biodiversity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of arena for sharing knowledge. - Limited mowed grasslands, lack of meadows. - Weak marketing of the area, for ex. lack of local products that may sustainable support extensive grazing. - Lack of knowledge about the importance of biodiversity among local people. - a slight disbalanced planning as appears to be more directed towards environment and less towards the locals that represent the key environment custodians. |
| External factors | Opportunities | Threats |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation within certain aims can result in stronger and better synergies. - Concrete action to act as catalyst for future participation /model design. - Explore how culture can help to preserve nature. - Enhanced tourism opportunities by marketing local products linked with biodiversity and local heritage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the expanded dialog in renewing the nature reserves does not succeed it may hinder the future renewal of nature-reserves. - Weak takeover of the traditions among young population. - The blaming of cattle for the climate change (big ongoing debate in Sweden) can change in consumers behaviour and thereby affect the biodiversity of grasslands which are dependent on cattle breeding. |



Annex 1 Background information

The county administrative board and its main role in BioGov

Sweden consists of 21 counties and in each county there is a county administrative board, (*see image*). The County Administrative Board shall work to ensure that national targets have an impact on the county and at the same time take into account regional conditions. The County Administrative Board shall have a state-of-the-art holistic perspective in its work and coordinate various social- and ecological interests and the efforts of government authorities.

This means that the county administrative board is an important link between people and municipalities in the county, on the one hand, and government, parliament and central authorities on the other.

The County Administrative Board work for development where the environment, economic growth and good living conditions go hand-in-hand. The goal is a clean living environment with a rich biodiversity, a stable labour market and a good life for the residents. In short, we are working towards sustainable development in the county.

The County Administrative Board is responsible for ensuring that decisions from parliament and the Government are implemented in the county and we coordinate government activities. With regard to the county's development, we shall safeguard and work for the interests of both individuals and society.

We are a knowledge based organisation which works with many different cross-sectoral issues. Our areas of expertise span diverse social issues, from rural development and biodiversity to integration and the protection of cultural and ecological environments.

Our work includes:

- regional growth
- infrastructure planning
- sustainable community planning and housing
- energy and climate adaptation
- cultural environment
- protection against disaster and emergency preparedness and civil defence
- nature conservation and environmental and public health
- agricultural and rural areas
- fishing equality
- integration
- food inspections, animal welfare and general veterinary issues



Within the BioGov project the County Administrative Board is represented by the nature-department. The nature department is, among other things, responsible for: protecting nature by making nature reserves, managing nature reserves, upholding national environmental laws and regulations. The nature department is also responsible for the task from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to coordinate the work on green infrastructure on a regional level. CAP-payment is handled by the agricultural department.

The policy document

Sweden has 16 environmental quality objectives established by the parliament in 1999 (see image).

The 16 Swedish environmental quality objective



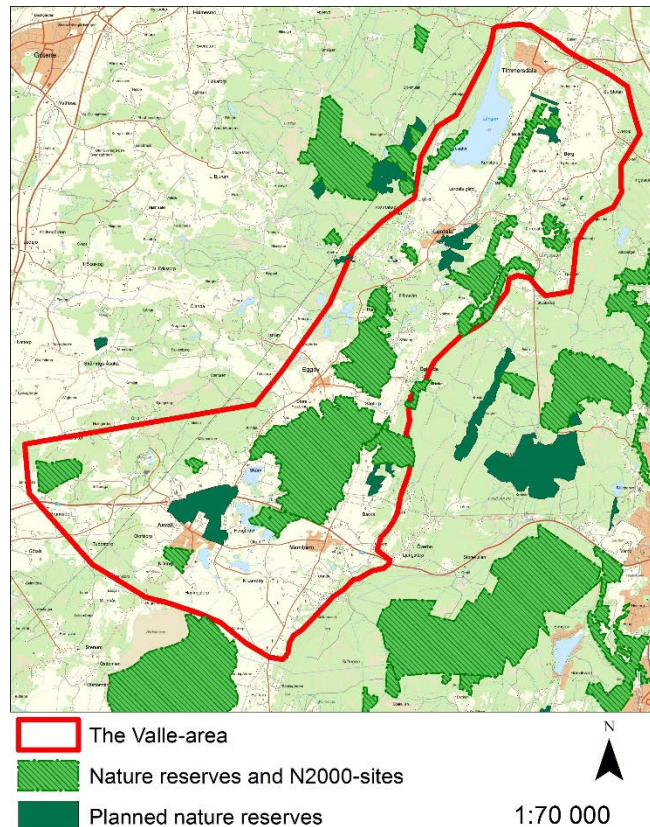
BioGov focus on No 16. A Rich Diversity of Plant and Animal Life. This environmental objective states that: *"Biological diversity must be preserved and used sustainably for the benefit of present and future generations."* The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is the responsible body



for the policy. SEPA has delegated to the County Administrative Boards to implement the policy on a regional level (*see image above*).

The Valle area (*what is the state of play*).

The Valle area is a valley known for its rich biodiversity. It is a mosaic and small-scale landscape where several different habitats meet. The ground/soil is rich in minerals, especially lime, and the historic landscape is well preserved in comparison with most other parts of Sweden. However, there is an ongoing loss of biodiversity within the area, mainly due to the abandoning of grazing areas, nutrient leakage and forestry. The farmers must struggle to make a living out of small scale farming. There are 15 nature reserves within the Valle area covering a substantial part of the surface. The county administrative board have control of the land use within the nature reserves and are also responsible for their management according to management plans (one plan per nature reserve). However, these reserves were established during the 1970:s and are not working very well today in terms of preserving biodiversity and as a resource for rural development.



BioGov

The overarching goal of BioGov in Valle is to establish a model of cooperation where a broad number of stakeholders can work together with the future challenges concerning nature conservation.

The project will also deal with enhancing the green infrastructure within the area, together with the renewing of 4 nature reserves.

The county administrative board have produced a regional plan for green infrastructure within the county of Västra Götaland. This is a knowledge and inventory document which identifies the importance of different areas within the region with regards to different habitats, species and outdoor life etc. The plan identifies different measures that ought to be taken such as preserve and develop ecological corridors, generally increase the amount of small and important habitats within the agricultural landscapes, keeping the water within a landscape by developing well-functioning wetlands, creating green element within urban areas etc.

The action plan also identifies different tools to use such as: make new and renew nature reserves, optimize the usage of CAP-money, find new projects, adaptation within forestry-planning and planning of infrastructure and the expansion of urban areas etc.

Why working in Valle?

Valle is a well-preserved area in Sweden with a rather good developed green infrastructure. It is essential from a national point of view to ensure the sustainability of the best preserved areas in the country before starting to work in areas with less preserved biodiversity. Due to Valle's high biodiversity there is a good foundation for the work with green infrastructure. The Valle area can thereby serve as a model for how to work in different parts of the country.

The challenge

The challenge in Valle is to redesign the nature reserves from a holistic perspective making them more useful in preserving the biodiversity within the Valle area as a whole (not only within each separate Nature reserve) and also to make them important tools for the rural development. Based on the regional action plan for green infrastructure, we also need to link the nature reserves together in terms of connectivity for species and habitats in order to sustain/develop a good functioning green infrastructure. This is mostly important thing is probably to increase (or at least preserve) the area of grazing and to ensure good conditions for profitable small-scale farming within Valle.

The work so far within BioGov

A regional stakeholder group (RSG) who participates in the project was established on a broad stakeholder meeting in October 2018. On this meeting we carried out the initiating phase according to the MSP-cycle. (see image)

The RSG has then met two times mostly focusing on the MSP-process carrying out the adaptive planning phase (see image)

In May 2019 the RSG will start the collaborative action-phase starting with discussing green infrastructure and renewal of nature reserves. In May 2020 the RSG will present a common action plan for the work to come.



The regional stakeholder group consists of:

Authorities

| | |
|--|---|
| Nature dep. of the County Administrative Board | Henrik Roos (<i>project leader and responsible for revision of the nature reserves</i>) Maria Thordarson (<i>responsible for green infrastructure</i>) |
| Agricultural dep. of the County Administrative Board | Marina Bengtsson |
| The Swedish Forestry Agency | Viveca Luc |
| The municipality of Skara | Abbe Sahli, |
| The municipality of Skövde | Aron Sandling, |
| Swedish Transport Administration | Mats Lindqvist, |

Industry

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Vallevägen | Cecilia Wadenbäck (<i>Chairman</i>) |
| Chief of tourism in the municipality of Skara | Marie Wennerholm |
| Vadsbo Skog (<i>Forrest company</i>) | Tommy Ek |
| Flämslätt/Skara stift (<i>Conference facility</i>) | Claes Schönborg |

Landowners

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| The federation of Swedish farmers | Jenny Nilsson |
| Orgelgården | Björn Malmgren |
| Karstorp | Helena Lidberg |
| Backgården | Sten Catoni |

Education

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| University of Skövde | Annie Jonsson/Jenny Lennartsson |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|

NGO:s

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Society for Nature Conservation, Skaraborg | Sofia Berg |
| Eggby, Istrum Öglunda hometown association | Morgan Johansson (<i>Chairman</i>) |
| Istrums SK (<i>sports association</i>) | Sandra Svantesson/Anders Pålsson |

Fishing Area Associations

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Emten-Flämsjöns FVOF | Rolf Pettersson (<i>Chairman</i>) |
| Skärvalången m.fl. FVOF | Ann Nilsson |

How to improve the policy document.

BioGov will not change the wording of the policy document. BioGov aims at improving the document by making the implementation of the policy more efficient through a greater understanding and acceptance of preserving biodiversity within a broad number of stakeholders and communities. We focus on finding synergies and win-win solutions among the different stakeholders regarding the preservation of biodiversity. The policy will thereby become a possibility not a threat.

BioGov will be presented to SEPA. SEPA can include the experiences from this project in national guidelines and allocate money to work specifically with similar projects. BioGov may thereby stand as a national model for working with participatory governance and thereby improve the efficiency of the policy document (*see image*).



Annex 2 -Learning question

We would like the overall learning questions of the peer review to be about engaging stakeholders in developing and preserving green infrastructure. We therefore would like to discuss and have recommendations about:

- **How do we find the best way for the RSG to contribute to the strengthening of the green infrastructure within the area?**
- **To make the different actors interested in participating in the development/preservation of the green infrastructure we need to show them how it benefits their interests. How can we do that in a good way?**

When reading the brochure from Adept handed to us at the meeting in Romania we think there are several good practices that could be implemented in Valle. For example: Mountain bike trails and guest house network, school activities, creating micro reserves etc.

It would be interesting to hear from Spain how they work with mapping of Green infrastructure. How can we map green infrastructure, make it easy to understand and show the link to ecosystem services?

Maybe there are examples from Slovenia regarding profitable forestry combined with a functional green infrastructure?

There are ideas of cultural events in Valle with a connection to the cherry trees. Are there any cultural (or other types of event) events in Poland based on the traditional fruit trees that we can learn from?



Study Visit program within the BioGov-project in Valle, Sweden 10 – 14th June 2019

June 10th (Monday)

Arrival of participants to Skövde railway station, pick up and transportation to Flämslätt, Valle.

20:00 Welcome dinner at Flämslätt

June 11th (Tuesday)

08:30 – 12:30 Introduction Meeting at Flämslätt.

- Presentation of the Swedish part of the Biogov project and introduction to the Valle area. – *The County administrative board of Västra Götaland*
- *Vallevägen (an association that works for entrepreneurship and development of the Valle area)* – What significance does the nature in Valle have for their business and what are their view of the Biogov project.
- Introduction to the regional action plan for green infrastructure in Västra Götaland - *The county administrative board of Västra Götaland*
- Management of roadsides - how do we strengthen the green infrastructure by using areas primarily managed for other purposes. – *The Swedish transport administration*

12:30 -14:00 Lunch at Flämslätt

14:30 – 17.30 Hiking: Sântorp – Höjentorp (3,5 km), together with the hometown association.

Discussions about:

- Preservation of natural grasslands, what are the challenges in a broader perspective
- Developing management plans in cooperation with stakeholders.
- Edge structures between forest and open land – important structures and tools for generating a well-functioning green infrastructure

19:00 – 21:00 Dinner at Löfwings.





June 12th (Wednesday)

8:30 – 12:30 Field trip.

- Visit to Backgården, and meeting with farmer/landowner
– Discussions of the long-term requisites for small scale farming in the area.
- Visit to the nature reserve Vingängen:
 - How to work with Green infrastructure in forestry. What are the tools (key-habitats, adaptations of clearcutting, forestry plans) and the best way of using them? – *The Swedish forestry agency and the municipality of Skara*
 - Green infrastructure of old broadleaved trees – *The county administrative board of Västra götaland*

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch at Flämslätt

14:30 – 17:00 Visit to Lake Hornborga

(incl. Swedish fika at Café doppingen)

- Lake Hornborga – the biggest wetland restoration-project in Sweden and one of Europes most famous bird lakes. It is also the most important resting and feeding place for the Cranes during their migration.
- How do we work with engaging schools, children and immigrants in the conservation of nature?

19:00 Dinner at Flämslätt.

21:00 – 22:00

- The bats in Valle - challenges and opportunities. - *Jens Rydell lecturer in zoology and leading expert on bats in Sweden.*

22:30 – 23:30

- Bat-safari in the near surroundings of Flämslätt



13th June (Thursday)

9:00 – 12:30 Meeting at Flämslätt

- *Flämslätt conference facility* – What significance does the nature in Valle have for their business and how can they contribute to the preservation of the biodiversity in the area.
- *Swedish Society for Nature Conservation*- the opportunities and challenges within the work of preserving biodiversity as an NGO. What are, from their point of view, the keys to a successful green infrastructure.
- Mapping of green infrastructure and ecosystem services – *Spain and the County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland*.
- The planning of green infrastructure for insects living on old and sunlit broadleaved trees – a connectivity study – *The County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland*.

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch at Flämslätt

14:00 - 17:30 Summary meeting at Flämslätt

- Identifying good practices,
- *SWOT-Analysis*

19:00 – 21:00 Dinner at Flämslätt.

14th June (Friday)

8:30 –

Departure of participants to Skövde railway station.

