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Research in support of the environmental objectives 2012–2016

Our goal is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems in Sweden have been solved, without increasing environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders.

Swedish Agency
for Marine and
Water Management



SWEDISH
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

Knowledge to drive environmental action



Maria Ågren



Björn Risinger

•• The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management are working purposefully and actively to ensure that environmental policy at every level is developed, implemented and evaluated on the basis of the best available knowledge. This is a responsible and challenging undertaking.

Our place in the research policy landscape is a modest one, but one that is important in supporting environmental efforts across society, and we are using it strategically to develop the work in which we are engaged.

This document is a statement of direction for our future research initiatives and a tool in our long-term knowledge-building endeavour.

Maria Ågren, Director-General
Swedish Environmental
Protection Agency

Björn Risinger, Director-General
Swedish Agency for
Marine and Water Management





The generational goal as a guide

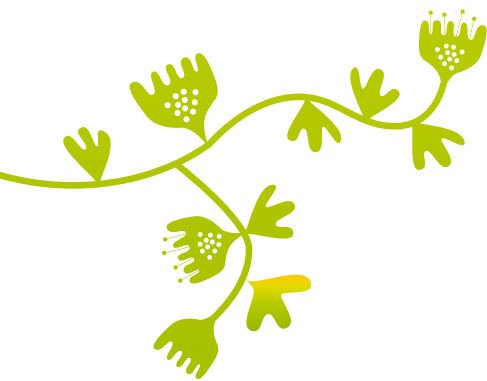
•• Through the Environmental Protection Agency's environmental research allocation, funding is provided for high-quality environmental research in support of the work of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency for Marine and Water Management. This document presents our joint approach for the period 2012–16. It briefly describes our overall priorities and our guidelines to promote scientific quality and practical environmental relevance. It also describes our specific needs, the character of our calls for proposals, and how we intend to collaborate with other stakeholders and bring about creative encounters between environmental research, environmental action and environmental policy. Serving to guide our efforts is the generational goal that forms part of Sweden's system of environmental objectives.

Our goal is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems in Sweden have been solved, without increasing environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders.



•• This generational goal defines the direction of the changes in society that need to take place if Sweden’s environmental quality objectives are to be achieved. Internationally, it represents a unique position, underlining as it does that environmental policy, environmental action and environmental technology within a country have to take into account the effects and consequences to which they give rise beyond its borders. This document is to be seen in the light of the global challenges of our day.

This statement of direction takes into account the Swedish Research Council Formas’s “Analysis of Environmental Research and Strategy Proposal for 2011–2016”; “For Swedish Success in Research and Innovation 2013–2016” (background analysis for the Government’s research and innovation bill, submitted by the Swedish Research Council, the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, Formas, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish National Space Board); the EU’s Green Paper on Horizon 2020; and the Lund Declaration of 2009.



Moving society towards the environmental objectives

•• The transition needed to achieve the environmental objectives is a challenge to the whole of our society. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency for Marine and Water Management are driving environmental action through:

□ Environmental governance and management in the areas of climate and air quality, inland waters and seas, soil, biological resources, biodiversity, pollution, recycling and waste.

□ The application of and issuing of regulations and guidance under the Environmental Code, other relevant legislation, and international directives and conventions.

□ Analysis, development and evaluation of goals and means for the realisation of environmental policy, with a particular emphasis on the effectiveness of policy instruments from a multilevel perspective and their relationship to institutional and technical structures and counteracting policies.

□ Analysis of prevailing conceptions, values and alternative courses of action in the environmental sphere.

□ Participation in the Government's environmental efforts within the EU and internationally.



□ Cross-sectoral coordination of follow-up of the environmental objectives and provision of environmental information, together with guidance to public agencies with responsibilities within the environmental objectives system.

□ Economic analyses and consideration of outdoor recreation issues, protection of natural areas, noise problems, and fishing, hunting and wildlife issues.

•• In line with the generational goal, all these aspects of societal change should be viewed in an international perspective, so that national environmental protection efforts do not increase environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders. This requires targeted, ongoing and long-term generation of knowledge for the benefit of environmental action.



High-quality science for the sake of environmental action

•• Our research initiatives will combine high scientific quality and significant practical relevance to the environment, by the following means:

□ We will operate in a similar manner to a research council, with competitive calls, customary scientific peer review of applications, and continuous evaluation of the scientific quality of our initiatives.

□ We will apply a needs-focused approach, undertaking a broad, systematic needs analysis in advance of calls and expert scrutiny of the relevance of applications. We will make strenuous efforts to ensure that our initiatives support the implementation of environmental policy and are of benefit for environmental action throughout society.

□ The needs identified will guide the format of our calls, which will provide for coherent programmes, projects and various types of synthesis work.

□ We will involve researchers on a remunerated basis in our environmental efforts, for example at seminars and conferences and as experts in international negotiations.



•• Our research initiatives will:

□ Take as their starting point the carrying capacity of ecosystems and our planet's biophysical boundaries, viewing ecological sustainability as a *condition* both for economic development (which can be regarded as a *means*) and for social sustainability (which can be regarded as a *goal*).

□ Build on and develop knowledge about the functioning of ecosystems and their resilience in the face of environmental pressures.

□ Proceed from the landscape as a whole – with urban and rural areas, coasts and seas, mountains, inland waters and wetlands as arenas for new solutions based on cross-boundary environmental thinking and responsibility.

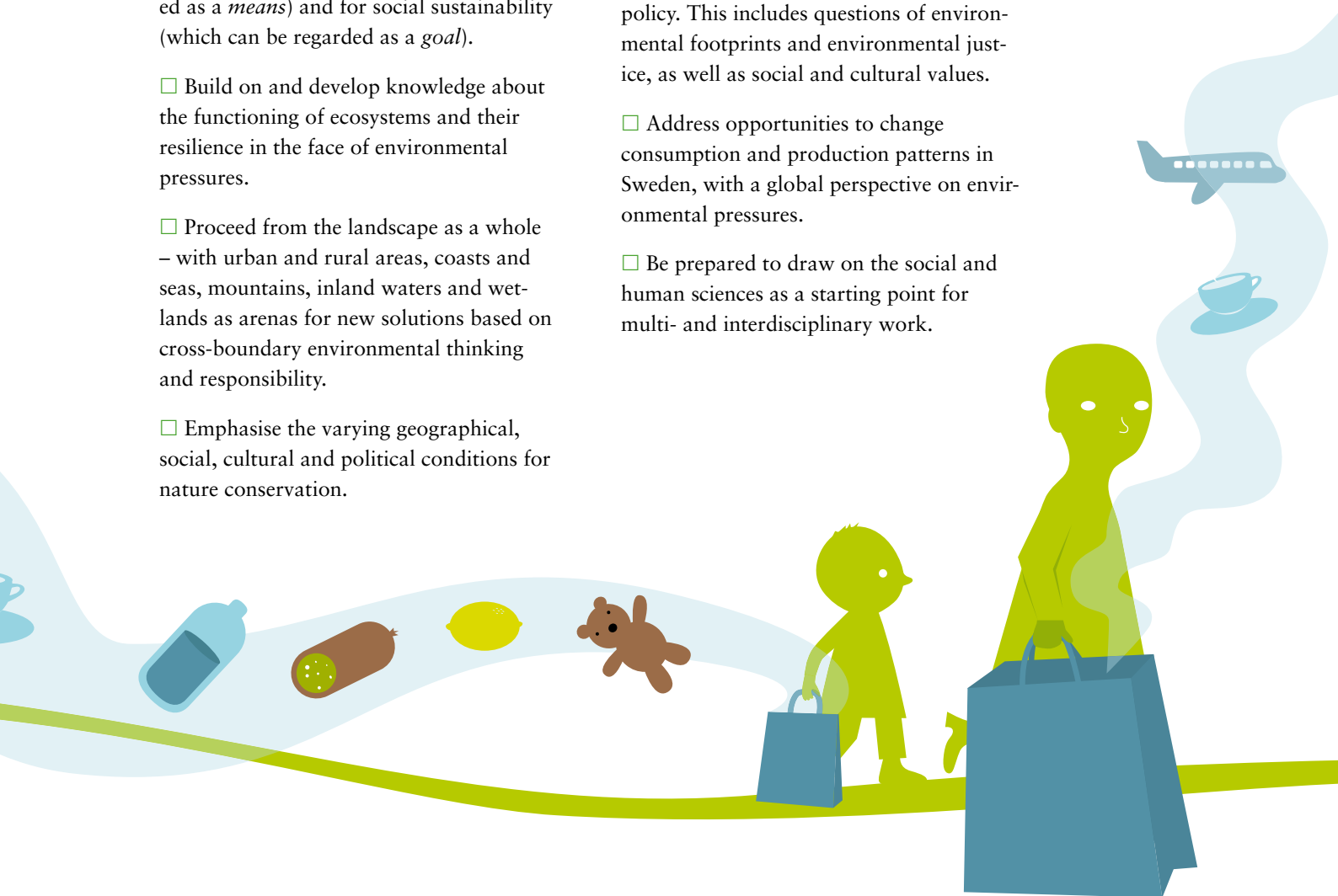
□ Emphasise the varying geographical, social, cultural and political conditions for nature conservation.

□ Address discrete societal issues as a component part of major technical, economic or institutional systems.

□ Address Swedish environmental problems and Swedish environmental policy as a part of international environmental policy. This includes questions of environmental footprints and environmental justice, as well as social and cultural values.

□ Address opportunities to change consumption and production patterns in Sweden, with a global perspective on environmental pressures.

□ Be prepared to draw on the social and human sciences as a starting point for multi- and interdisciplinary work.



Bringing together research and environmental action in the spirit of the generational goal

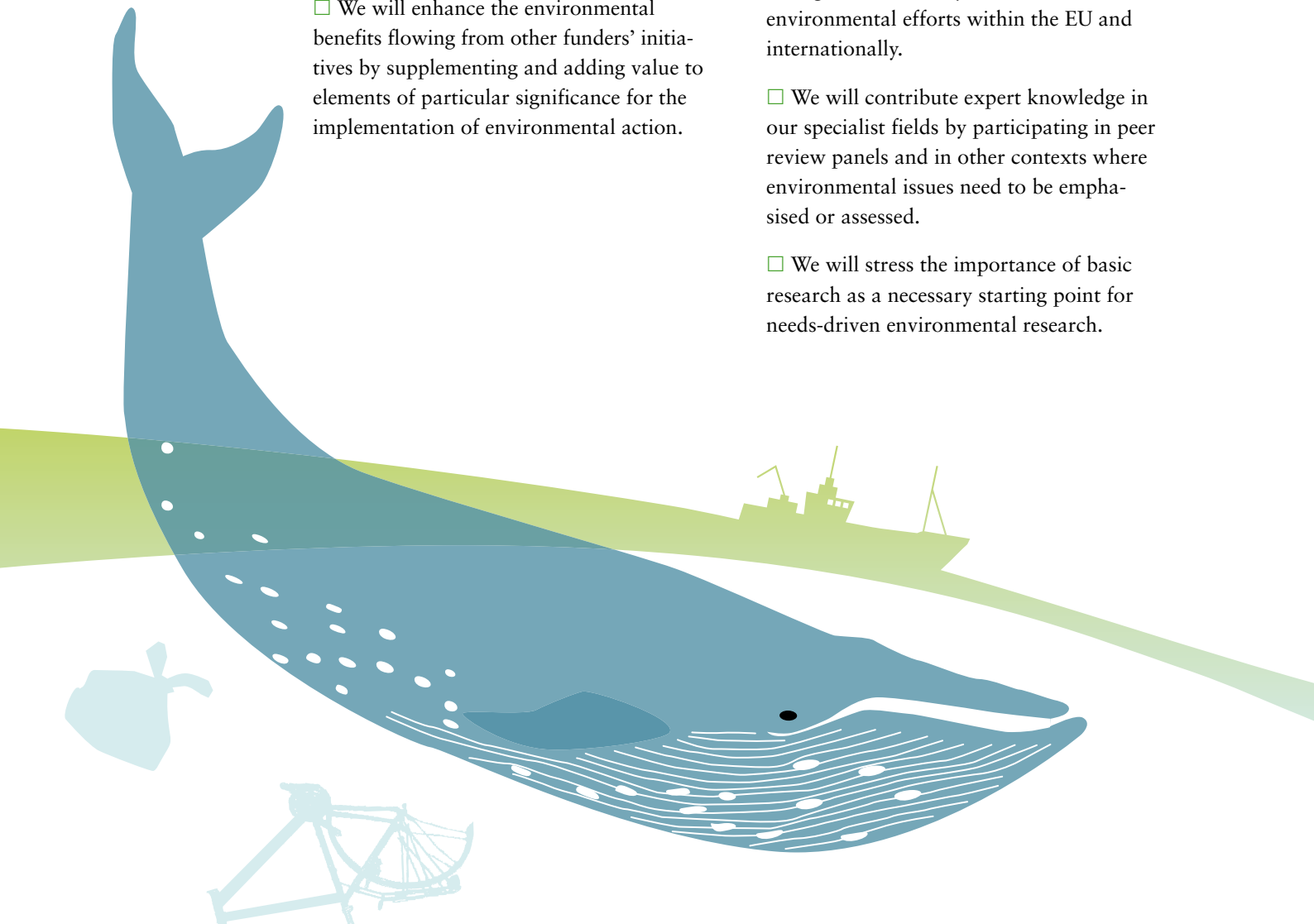
- We will collaborate strategically and cross-sectorally with other research funders and stakeholders, in the spirit of the generational goal:

- We will enhance the environmental benefits flowing from other funders' initiatives by supplementing and adding value to elements of particular significance for the implementation of environmental action.

- We will strengthen European R&D collaboration in the environmental field by participating in networks and taking joint initiatives. We will give priority to undertakings that will carry forward Sweden's environmental efforts within the EU and internationally.

- We will contribute expert knowledge in our specialist fields by participating in peer review panels and in other contexts where environmental issues need to be emphasised or assessed.

- We will stress the importance of basic research as a necessary starting point for needs-driven environmental research.

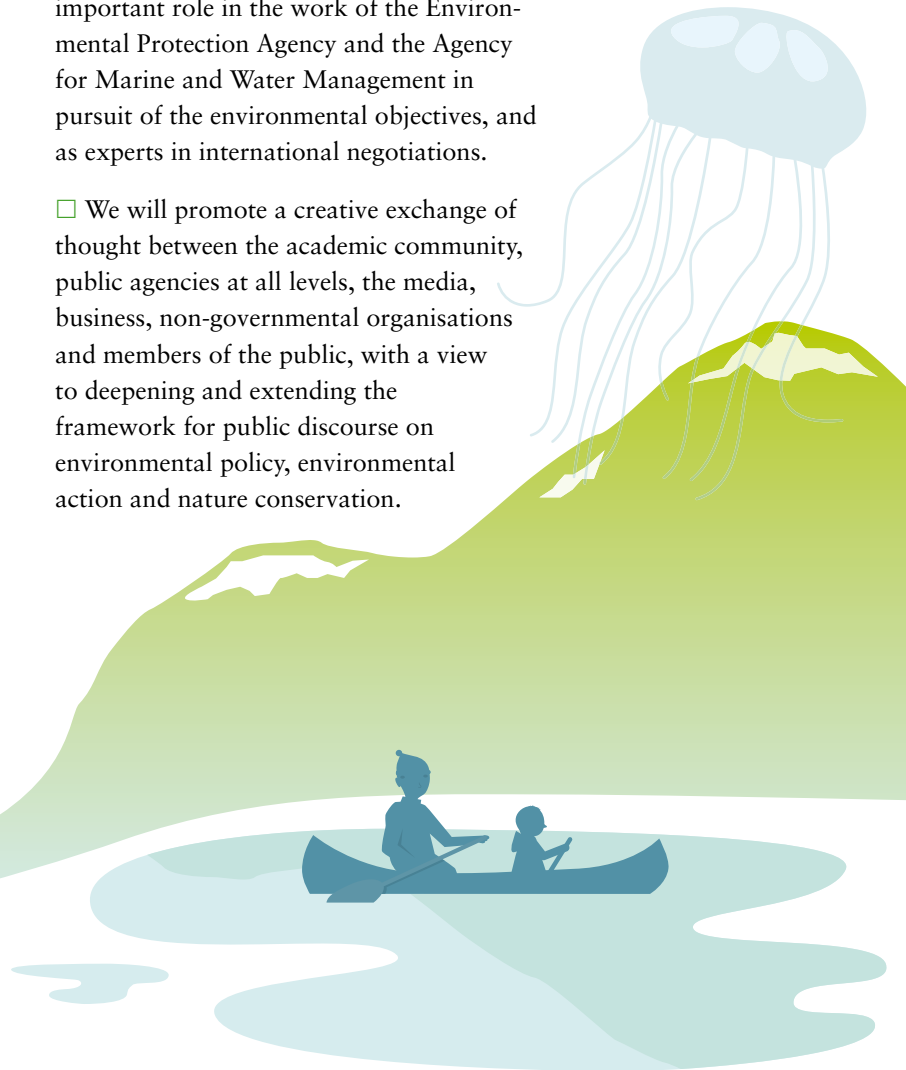


Our applied research initiatives build on a foundation of good basic research. We need a greater understanding of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and of the character of material flows in society. There is also a need for infrastructure, data and model development for environmental data provision and analysis, risk and vulnerability analyses, and environmental technology and innovations that contribute in a globally sustainable manner to achieving the environmental objectives. We attach particular weight to independent, questioning social and human science research in the environmental field.

- We will bring about fruitful encounters between environmental research, environmental action and environmental policy:

- We will give research and researchers an important role in the work of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency for Marine and Water Management in pursuit of the environmental objectives, and as experts in international negotiations.

- We will promote a creative exchange of thought between the academic community, public agencies at all levels, the media, business, non-governmental organisations and members of the public, with a view to deepening and extending the framework for public discourse on environmental policy, environmental action and nature conservation.





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