

PROSPERA regional report – Municipality of Varberg

*An analysis of the peri-urban area that surrounds the city of
Varberg*

Spring of 2020

Authors:

Ulrika Rylin, Municipality of Varberg

Frida Eriksson, Municipality of Varberg

Daniel Wennerlund, Potential 12

This regional report was produced within the PROSPERA project, funded by Interreg Europe.

More information? See the project's website: www.interregeurope.eu/prospira/

Table of contents

Objective and outline of this report.....	3
Setting the scene	4
1. General information on the municipality of Varberg and its surrounding peri-urban area	5
1.1 Geographical location	5
1.2 Identification of the peri-urban area	5
1.3 The demographic context	6
1.4 The built environment	7
2. Economic development of the peri-urban region.....	9
2.1 Economy (industry, offices, retail, etcetera)	9
2.2 Food production	9
2.3 Tourism	10
2.4 Mobility.....	11
3. Natural heritage of the peri-urban region	12
3.1 Natural heritage.....	12
3.2 Cultural heritage	13
3.3 Environment	14
3.4 Climate change	14
4. The policy instrument that is addressed by the Municipality of Varberg in the PROSPERA project is the Regional Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f” ...	15
4.1. General information	15
4.2. Governmental context of policy instrument “Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f.”	16
4.3. The challenges addressed by policy instrument “Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f.”	18
4.4. Related local policy instruments	20
4.5. The PROSPERA window of opportunity.....	22
Potential	22
The missing link.....	22
Defining leverage	22
5. The Good Practices of Varberg	24

Objective and outline of this report

This regional analysis report was developed within **the Interreg Europe project PROSPERA, PROMoting Sustainable development and regional attractiveness through PERi-urban Areas**. The project's overall objective is to improve regional policies on protection and promotion of natural heritage by tackling loss of ecosystem services and to improve sustainable development in peri-urban areas threatened by urban sprawl. The ultimate aim of PROSPERA is to prevent biodiversity loss, soil consumption and further degradation of natural assets, by in parallel leveraging on those challenge as a way to favor regional attractiveness and economic sustainable development. To that extent, PROSPERA sets up a process of interregional learning that includes study visits and knowledge exchange sessions.

To provide sufficient and adequate background throughout the interregional learning process, each region that is involved in PROSPERA, developed a regional analysis report. In other words, each regional analysis report aims to inform the own stakeholders as well as stakeholders from other partner about the characteristics of and the challenges in their local peri-urban area. As such, **the present report is a guide for all PROSPERA partners and their local stakeholders when visiting or interacting with the municipality of Varberg**. The information in the regional analysis report is not exhaustive but specific to the objective and rationale of the PROSPERA project. The regional analysis reports were developed in the first year of PROSPERA via a step-by-step process, including surveys and a workshop on the regional analysis report.

The report consists of different parts. **In the first part of this report the municipality of Varberg sketches their general context**. This part includes information on the geographical location of the PROSPERA region, the local demography and the built environment. **The second part of this report analyses the economic development of the local peri-urban area, as well as the natural heritage, both PROSPERA core themes**. **The third part of this report sketches the policy instrument that is (in a later stage) developed** by the partner within the PROSPERA project. This part explains the added value and the innovative character of that particular policy instrument and the local policy context. Finally **the last part of this regional analysis report identifies good practices of the local region**. These good practices are presented to the other PROSPERA regions and provide a source of inspiration.

Setting the scene

Varberg is located on the west coast of Sweden in Region of Halland. Varberg Municipality is 1703 km² (both land and lakes) with a land area of 874,40 km².

In the whole Municipality lives 64 374 inhabitants and the city of Varberg has 35 125 inhabitants. The region of Halland have 329 352 inhabitants, and in comparison to other regions the third highest population growth in Sweden.

A bit simplified one could describe it as; in the west is where Varberg meets the sea with a long coast line, highly attractive for both recreation and housing, and in the east the municipality is characterized by woodland and rural areas. In between these, one will find the farmland with the important agricultural sector. From north to south goes the highway and the train, connecting and making Varberg easy accessible to bigger cities as Gothenburg, Malmö and Copenhagen. Even though, urbanization is at it strongest in the City at the coast there are towns and villages that also grows facing similar problems of land-use, balancing economical interests with environmental needs as well trying to be competitive for both new citizens and new companies.

In the current situation of growth and in the Prospera-project some challenges could be highlighted to uncover the essential needs that drives the participation in the project:

Urban sprawl; the city is growing and how we use and plan to use our land is of great importance. Densification of the city continues, but growth is also apparent in areas where it is challenging to monitor the growth in an effective way. Further, the city faces challenges of offering affordable housing for different stakeholders.

Mobility; facing the need to cut CO₂-emissions raises the question on how to promote sustainable mobility in rural areas with low population density.

Tourism and the natural heritage; Tourism is essential for growth, business and employment but could also mean an overuse of eco-systemservices.

In summary a growing Varberg faces different degrees of urbanization where a balance between economical, environmental and social perspectives is needed. This challenge is apperent in the city of Varbergs but it could also be experienced in other parts of the municipality not as densely populated.

Here is why the concept of Peri-urban areas offers a fruitful concept to understand and pinpoint specific challenges of the specific space where a municipality grow.

Prospera helps Varberg to find solutions, explore new aspects of this challenge and adopt good practices on how to managing growth in a sustainable way.

1. General information on the municipality of Varberg and its surrounding peri-urban area

The following paragraphs provide some general information on the territory of the municipality of Varberg, case-study in the PROSPERA project, with a focus on the peri-urban area. This information isn't exhaustive but aims to provide sufficient background to enable a learning process together with local stakeholders as well as transnational learning throughout the PROSPERA project.

1.1 Geographical location

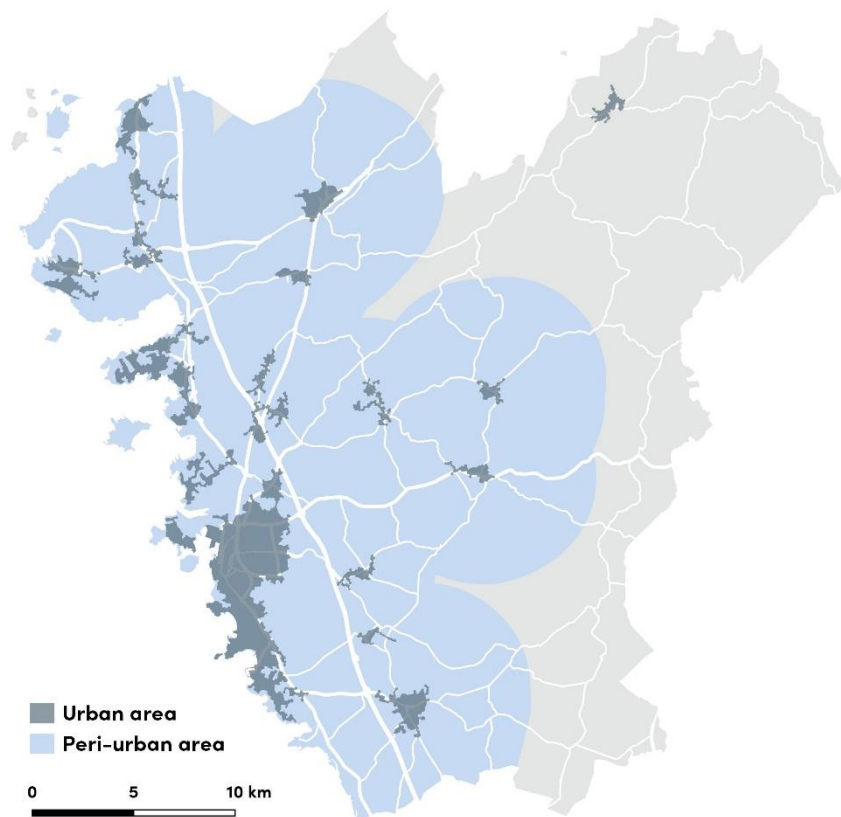
The Municipality of Varberg is located in the South-West of Sweden in the region of Halland. It borders in the north to Göteborg in Västra Götaland region. South of Halland is Skåne with Malmö and the Öresundsregion which also includes Copenhagen.

The Municipality is 1703 km² (both land and water). The land area is 874,40 km². The region of Halland is 5454 km².

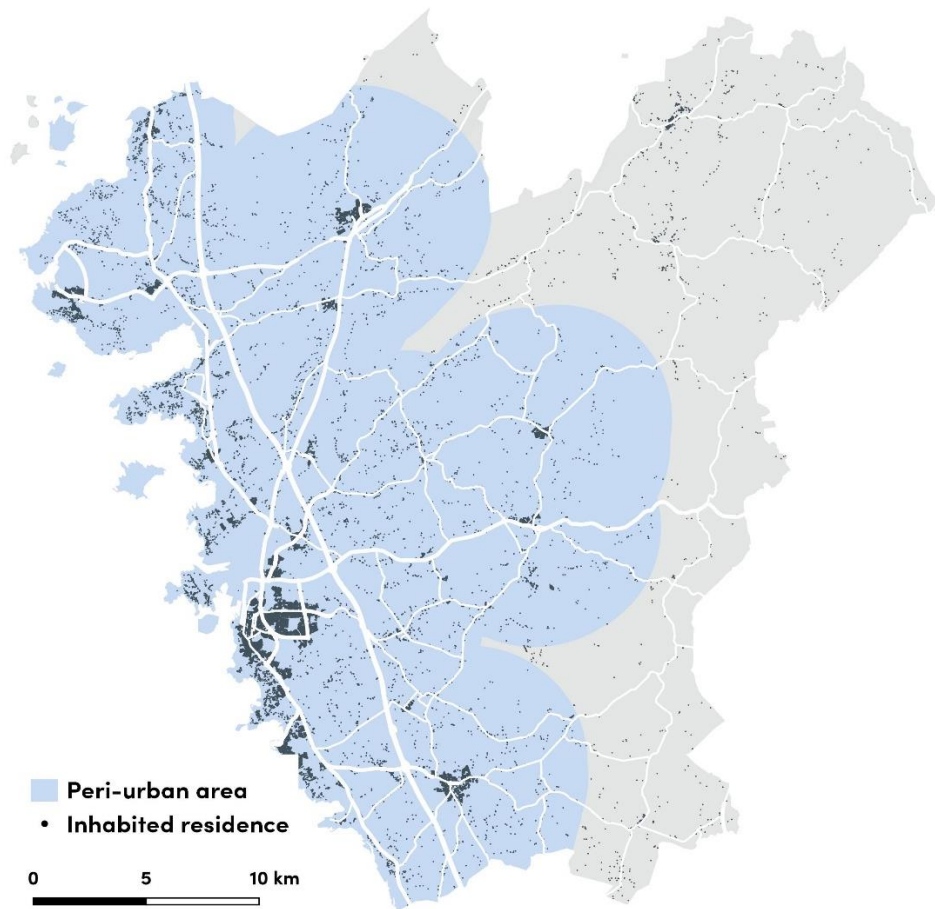
1.2 Identification of the peri-urban area

The peri-urban area of Varberg is quite a large part of the municipality. It incorporates a number of different activities, stakeholders, business and types of land.

On the map below there is the urban areas which includes villages and towns as well as the City of Varberg.



To understand the significance of the concept of Peri-urban it should be noted that 62 000 out of 64 500 citizens live in the peri-urban area.

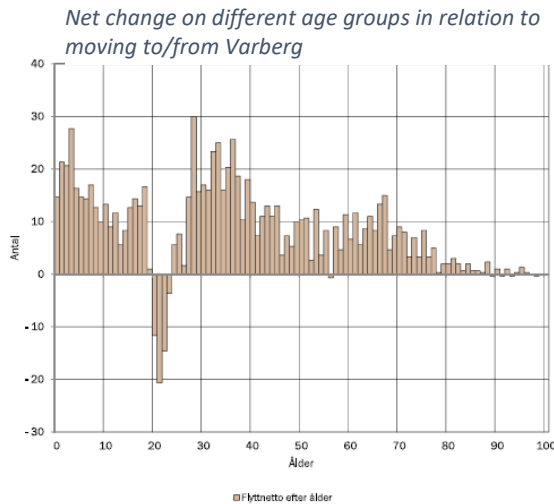


1.3 The demographic context

Population – status and development

- Varberg Municipality has 64 374 inhabitants
- The city of Varberg has 35 125 inhabitants
- The region of Halland has 329 352 inhabitants
- Halland has the third-highest population growth in Sweden
- According to recent statistics. The population of Varberg Municipality has increased with almost 11 000 people in comparison to 2000. The same statistical source (SCB) identifies people born in the 60s as the largest generation in Varberg today (approx: >8000).
- Varberg is estimating to be 80 000 people in 2030, increasing by 1200-1500 people per year. The average age is expected to grow from 43,1 to 43,3 from 2018-2033.
- The population of Varberg are older than the national average of 41,2 years and the Region Halland 42,2. Some of the growth is immigrants and an effect of the refugee crisis in 2015.
- About 13 700 people live outside the Urbanised areas aka. “Serviceorter” and Smaller communities.
- Population density is 74,37 ppl./km² which is higher than Halland (region) 61,5 ppl./km² and Sweden 21 ppl./km²

In summary, significant demographic challenges are both the ageing population as well as that emigration of young people.



Varberg has no university, so young people move to other cities, but according to statistics from the municipality they tend to come back, so this is not a big problem. This is underlined by the chart, where we see that highest net is in the age group “young adults”/late twenties even though they are also the age group with highest emigration.

The negative net value is related to when young people start at the university in other cities.

Average income Varberg Municipality 2018

- Average income Varberg, men 356 700 SEK (approx: 35 000 euro)
- Average income Varberg, women 259 100 SEK/year (approx: 26 000 euro)

1.4 The built environment

Housing and building

Varberg is an attractive and competitive city to move to and live in for many people. It is close to several large cities and towns where people can work and commute to, and its proximity to nature and the sea further adds to its attractiveness.

The attractiveness is one essential reason that Varberg is facing a high demand for housing and new houses, but due to various reasons, it is a challenge to meet this demand.

New homes are expensive to build, which results in high production costs and a low unemployment rate results in labour shortages in the construction sector.

The challenge is further problematic since the local government also experience a lack of human resources in critical positions.

In summary, this adds up to two main challenges for housing in Varberg:

- Affordability of housing
- Sufficient supply of housing

Year	Number of houses built	
2008	427	
2009	200	
2010	164	
2011	193	
2012	330	
2013	329	
2014	207	
2015	241	
2016	378	
2017	297	
2018	309	
	3075	Total
	280	Mean/per year
	Past figures on housing/built environment (e.g. ten years ago)	

Looking at the planning dimension of this, we see that Urban sprawl (=fragmented building) and densification makes the situation more complicated. The process does often mean appeals against plans and regulations.

This makes it is easier and faster to build on new undeveloped lands which means that plans and ambitions clash with the need for affordable housing and the pressure of the market.

From a peri-urban perspective this is general challenge since the values of the peri-urban areas are used for a number of different activities such as recreation and tourism. Further more these areas also potentially are able land and once turned into new houses or for industry related activities it is a challenge to reverse that type of development.

2. Economic development of the peri-urban region

The following paragraphs focus on economic developments and challenges within the peri-urban area of your region. The information provided in this part of the report is specific to the PROSPERA project, and as a consequence not exhaustive.

2.1 Economy (industry, offices, retail, etcetera)

The main economic activity in Varberg concentrates towards:

- Energy
- Public sector
- Wood industry
- Shoes, design, logistics and retail shopping
- Tourism

Looking further into the peri-urban area, we identify three principal segments:

- Wood industry,
- Nuclear power plant (energy),
- Offices for Agriculture and tourism

Even though we see that the primary industry's in this area are energy and wood processing. Agriculture is also a rather important activity in this area. The trend is also favourable for commercial businesses in a growing tourism sector.

UNEMPLOYMENT:

- Sweden 7,0%
- Halland 4,9%
- Varberg 4,6%

Challenges

Varberg is growing, and the pace is sometimes hard for municipal services to cope.

The growth rate of Varberg results in labour shortages in some sectors. There is also a general problem in recruiting employees with the required and demanded competence.

The competition are often quite hard to find the correct competences but the city have several initiatives to counter this; both through externally funded projects with support to worklife educations, but also through collaboration with the relevant industry branches through forums as well as with other educational providers in the vicinity. The city also offers vocational educations and have established a Campus Varberg as part of this.

The low unemployment rate also affects the growth of new businesses. New companies are not established in the same number as before. Previous years the growth has been organic but a more structured and regionally coordinated investment programme is organised by the Region of Halland.

2.2 Food production

Main farming activities:

- Arable farming (winter wheat, oats)
- Cattle farming (Dairy cows, sheep, pigs)
- Aquaculture (Langoustine)

In a national comparison, Varberg is big in Dairy Cows, Sheep and sows' The sector consists of 757 companies in the farming industry and about 1500 members in the farmers association.

Varberg has at least three farms considered as significant, even in a national comparison, with around 200-350 ha farmlands each. The total numbers for the sector are complicated to extract mostly due to the company structure/association form where some are associations/cooperatives, and some are private businesses.

Challenges

The sector is facing several challenges, connected to the economic situation in Sweden as well as to the ageing population and climate change:

- Profitability
- High labour prices and regulations increase competitiveness and make imported products more attractive.
- Water – rain and drought
- The high average age among farmers

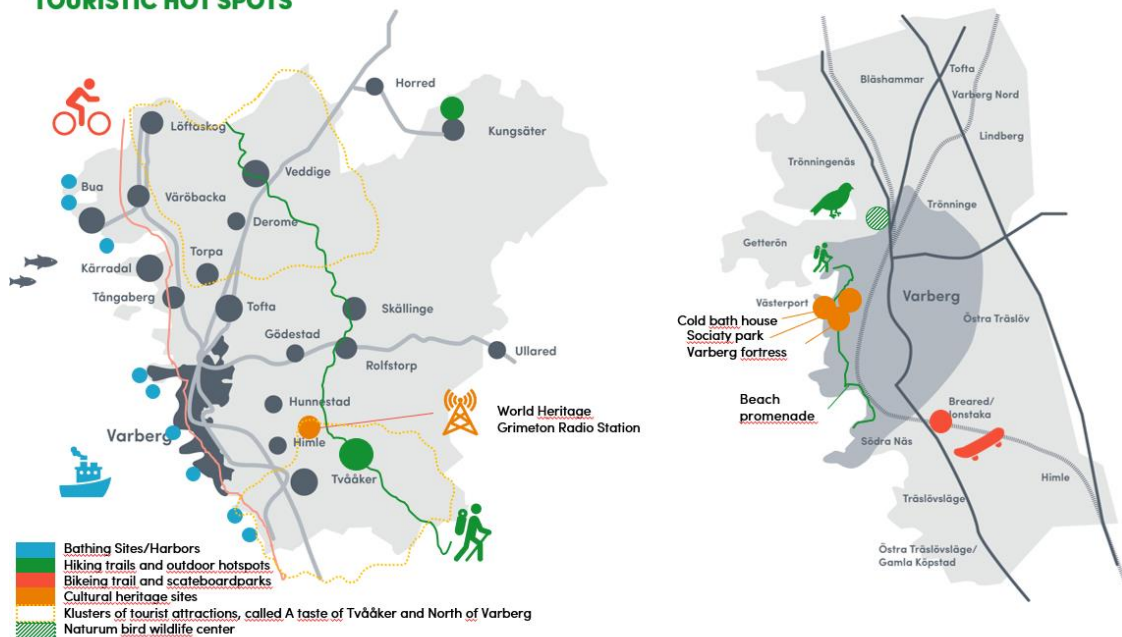
2.3 Tourism

Status

Varberg has 824 000 commercial guest nights per year, and in Halland, the number is 2,8 million. The primary season for tourism is summer who stands for 550 000 guest nights of the total amount.

The primary reasons for visiting Varberg is a competitive offer of activities and attractions in Culture and Nature. The proximity to the sea and the cultural heritage of Spa are also common reasons to visit Varberg.

TOURISTIC HOT SPOTS



These areas also put the focus on challenges directly connected the use of Cultural heritage and nature meaning that there is a need to increase the sustainability of the tourist attractions as well as a continuing need to collaborate and form partnerships with the landowners.

The seasonal tourism does also mean that the municipality have a challenge in finding a balance when investing in infrastructure that meet the demands from tourists in peak season. This does could include issues around parking spaces, mobility issues for tourists, roads and also other types of infrastructure such as water and/or sanitation.

2.4 Mobility

In Varberg, we have access to bus, train, bike paths and walkways in the vicinity of the city but in the Peri-Urban areas, public transportation is not so frequent. The primary mode of transport in Varberg, especially for the peri-urban regions is by car.

In 2018 7702 ppl commuted from Varberg and 5921 commuted to Varberg.

Mode of transportation for inhabitants

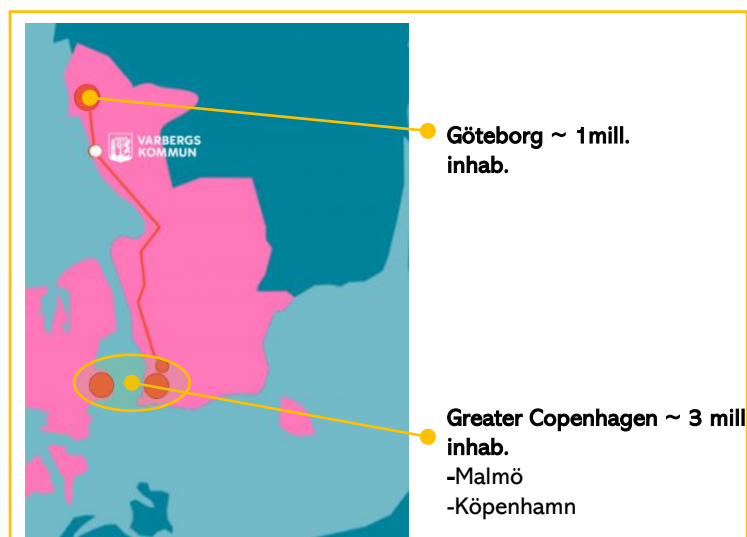
61% car	12% bike
9% walk	4% bus
3% train	12% other

Transport nodes and challenges

One of the main problems probably shared by many similar cities and towns is to promote sustainable mobility in a peri-urban region that has a low population density. For Varberg, it is a challenge to develop and offer a resource-efficient and competitive alternative to cars.

The map below shows a picture of what the challenges are. Black lines are the priority routes for public transportation. These routes are very well connected to the main villages outside the city and other main areas of employment. However, the land in between these routes is not well connected, and here the car sometimes offers the only realistic alternative. Finding new solutions and attractive incentives to promote more diverse behaviour among both citizens and tourists is, therefore, a big priority.

The train (red line) between Gothenburg and Malmö/Copenhagen go through Varberg and makes it well connected to important large metropolitan areas in the south-west of Sweden.



3. Natural heritage of the peri-urban region

The following paragraphs focus on economic developments and challenges within the peri-urban area of your region. The information provided in this part of the report is specific to the PROSPERA project, and as a consequence not exhaustive.

3.1 Natural heritage

There are different levels of protection for the natural heritage areas:

Areas with a higher level of protection are considered either of national interests or as established Natura 2000 areas.

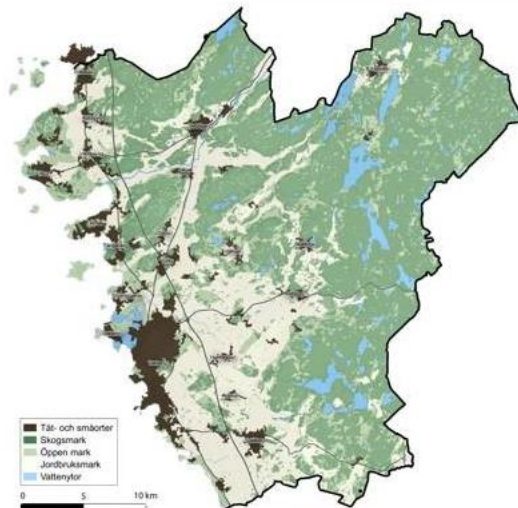
Other areas could also be a priority to safeguard but are instead identified as essential and valuable from a local perspective and have no formal legal protection.

Varberg Landscapes

The municipality consists of following different landscape characteristics:

1. *The coastal landscape* – along the coastline in the west
2. *The urban landscape* – mainly in the city of Varberg
3. *The agricultural landscape* – a big part of the municipality, between the urban area and the forest landscape further east
4. *The forest landscape* - eastern part of the municipality

Land use	
Woodland:	45%
Farmland:	32%
Water:	5%
Built land:	8%
Other:	10%



Major challenges

The natural heritage is exposed to risks and challenges shared by the partners in PROSPERA. All partners may not acknowledge every point, but at least some of them.

- Farmland near the city – ie exploitation of valuable farmland for other purposes
- Considerable growth and need for housing and it is easy to build on agricultural land
- Coast with protection - beach protection limits the possibility to exploit attractive land even in a systematic and sustainable way. One could say that the city grows at the coast since this is the most attractive place to both live and visit. This makes the coast an focal point on where different interests clash; tourism, companies, natural heritage advocates and citizens.
- Flood risk and increased sea levels due to climate effects
- Promotion of sustainable tourism – it is necessary that the natural heritage is exploited and explored in sustainable way.

3.2 Cultural heritage

The full map of all the areas of cultural heritage identified in Varberg cultural environment program.



https://karta.varberg.se/?m=map_1&x=166945.59350585935&y=6336741.999572755&z=0&l=0,550#

Some of these areas are nationally protected, and Varberg also hosts a World Heritage Site (Grimeton Radiostation).

The areas in and near the city of Varberg has an urban character, including old and characteristic building and environments which tells us about the history.

The areas in the countryside, a bit away from the city of Varberg, has more of an agriculture character. The world heritage in Grimeton consists of several radio towers and represent the start of the modern information technology of wireless communication.

Major challenges

- Awareness of the different cultural heritage areas and its assets
- Sustainable tourism
- Increase in farmers and the cultural understanding of the areas
- The ageing population and lack of interest in preserving historical heritage sites (have been done mostly in local interest groups and voluntary work)

3.3 Environment

Sustainable building is one of our biggest challenges. Some areas are becoming more densely populated, but we are generally sparsely populated. Urban sprawl is a problem as it is easier to get permission to build outside planned areas.

3.4 Climate change

Within climate change, we consider two different perspectives when analyzing the situation in Varberg and its implications on urban/rural planning as defined by the PROSPERA project. On the one hand, we have climate adaption and mitigation of risks to counter the effects of climate change. On the other hand, there are specific sectors that require additional support to decrease the over-all CO₂-emissions for the municipality.

Both these areas indicate that there is room for new strategies and policies to address these challenges. It is especially relevant in regards to the scope of the Prospera-project.

Climate adaption and mitigation of risks

- Raised sea levels
- Flooding
- Waste-water management

Initiatives to decrease CO₂-emissions

- Individual transports by car
- Food production/Agriculture, animal intensive with high emissions of methane and CO₂.

4. The policy instrument that is addressed by the Municipality of Varberg in the PROSPERA project is the Regional Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f”

The fourth part of this regional analysis report describes the policy instrument “Regional Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f”. Varberg municipality chose to review, improve and implement this particular policy instrument throughout the PROSPERA project. In accordance with the ambitions of PROSPERA, the focus lies on the protection and promotion of natural heritage by enhancing the sustainable development of peri-urban areas.

In the next paragraphs attention is given to what extent the selected policy instrument is currently responding to the challenges identified in the region, as described in part 2 and 3 of this report. Furthermore attention is given to the governmental context and the analysis has been then extended, taking also into consideration other policy instruments that are relevant for the PROSPERA themes.

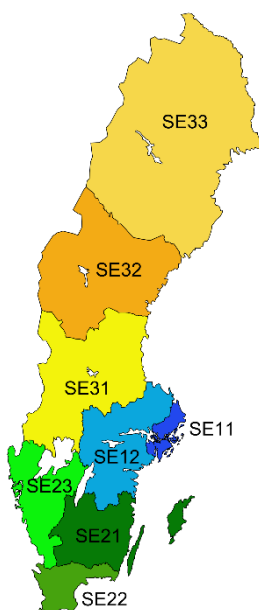
Furthermore, a window of opportunity is identified to improve this particular policy instrument supported by the PROSPERA project.

4.1. General information

Addressed policy instrument:

REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR WEST SWEDEN 2014-2020, AXIS 3, INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4F – ERDF (EN)

Investment priority 4f: PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN, AND ADOPTION OF, LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES



Geographical scope

The addressed Policy instrument is a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and part of the EU Cohesion Policy and therefore surrounded by detailed regulations.

The ERDF is governed by both Swedish Regions and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. For OP WEST SWEDEN the Geographical Scope is in the Nuts2 area West Sweden (SE23) which covers Region of Halland and Region Västra Götaland.

These two players, the RUS and the SFP, have different roles in the implementation:

- The regional authorities ensure that the operational programme is built upon their two Regional Development strategies (ie RUS in SE) who together cover the hole NUTS2-area West Sweden.

The regions have also representatives in the Structural Fund Partnership (SFP).

- The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (SAERG) has a government mandate to manage and distribute funding from the European Regional Development Fund – they are the Managing Authority (MA).

In summary and a bit simplified, the regions are strategy owners and decide what to prioritise while the MA is controlling the implementation. This relationship is vital to understand the partner strategy and the potential to influence the policy instrument.

Time

The West Sweden operational programme is following the implementation period for all other similar programmes covering the years from 2014-2020. The new programme is under development as we write this as well the underlying strategies relevant for the Policy Instrument 2021-2027.

4.2. Governmental context of policy instrument “Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f.”

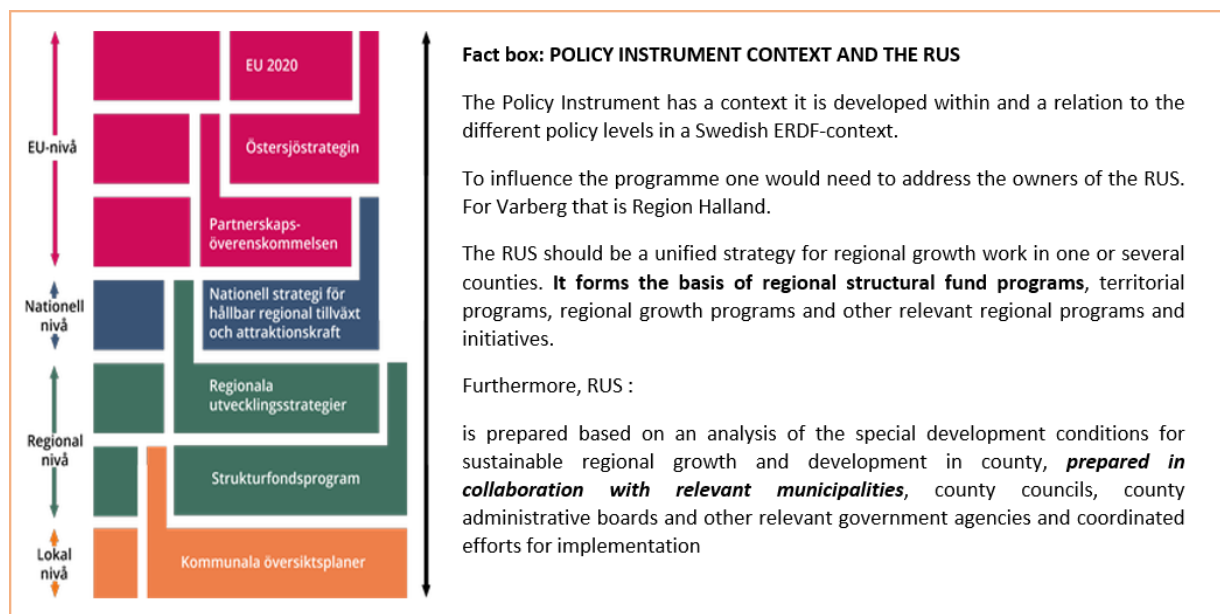
Decision making

Decision making is shared between the managing authority (MA) and the Structural Fund partnership (SFP). While the MA is taking formal decisions, the SFP is the body who prioritise among projects and calls.

Managing Authority (Administrative, financial and juridical power in the implementation)

Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the programme. They communicate about the programme, manages project applications and ensures that the regulations are followed. The MA carries out the procedural examination of the projects and submits its to the Structural Fund Partnership. After a priority meeting in the partnership, the formal decision is made by the Managing Authority.

Structural Fund Partnership (Decides the scope of the programme, individually develop the underlying strategy(ies) as the Regional development strategies and in partnership develop the final programme)



The partnerships consist of elected representatives from municipalities and county councils, representatives of the social partners, the county administrative boards, stakeholder organisations and associations. For Varberg Municipality, the main interface to SFP is Region Halland.

Potential to influence

First, the significant obstacles concerning the influence on a Swedish Operational Programme within ERDF and in an Interreg Europe-project are probably the shared ownership of the programme. Second, it is further complicated by the fact that in OP West Sweden is co-owned by two regions. That is something that must be taken into consideration, designing a proper strategy for influence as well as identifying a realistic window of opportunity. The challenges of influence could be summarised into three points:

- Co-ownership when defining the scope of the instrument – i.e. merging of two RUS into one single Operational Programme.
- MA does not take any topic-related decisions (at least not formally), that is outside their formal competence
- The formal MA is the policy instrument owner according to Interreg Regulations

On the other side of this discussion is what possibilities lies within the grasp of PROSPERA for Varberg Municipality. Since the Regional Development Strategy RUS is expected to be a guiding document when designing the policy instrument, this is one crucial part of describing the potential to influence. The RUS is developed by Region Halland in close collaboration with its municipalities and other essential stakeholders. As one of the local authorities, Varberg is expected to contribute to this work. Since the ERDF is closing, the development of a new RUS has already started in the region and is therefore open for influence.

Depending on what topic, the input is requested from Varberg, and different departments will contribute with feedback and propose changes. There are also workshops planned during the fall of 2020 ready to be addressed by the project partners and the ongoing work is closely monitored by the project.

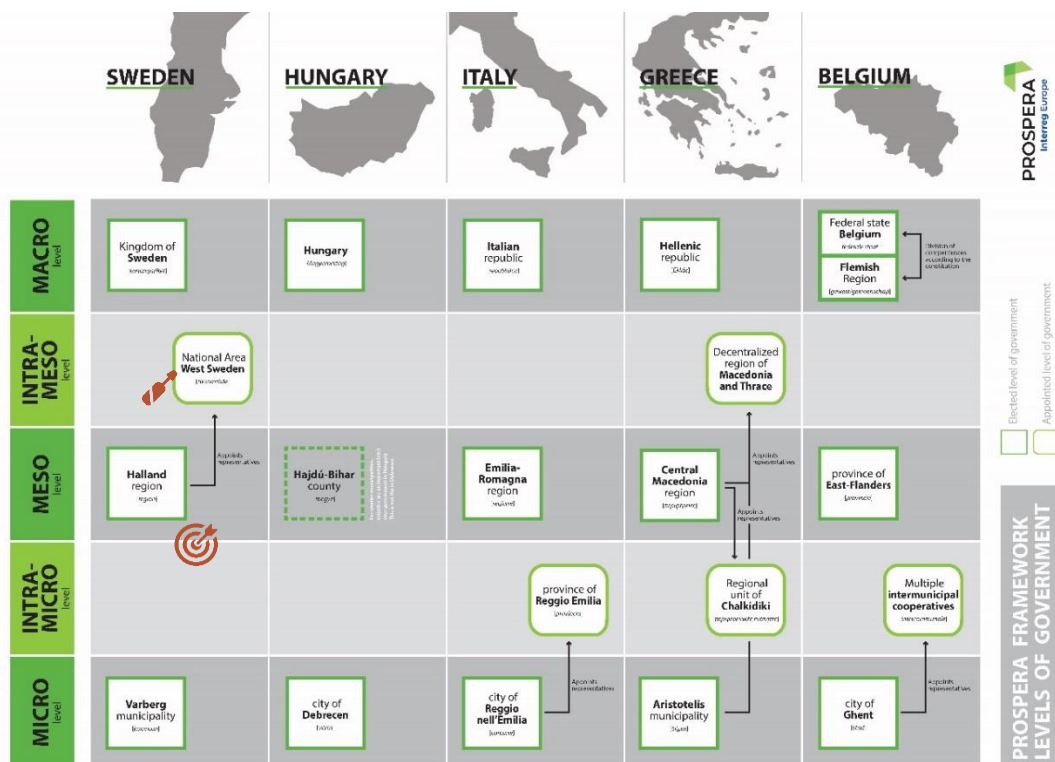


Figure 1 - Framework Levels of government

Note regarding the scheme; the decision making is done in collaboration between the two regions in the NUTS2-Region of West Sweden. This could, in a sense be an example of decision-making at INTER-MESO-level. However, this level does not formally exist in Sweden so it makes more sense to define the correct decision-level as MESO since the two regions are actually representatives of this.

For implementation of projects the correct would be to view it as an example of INTRA-MESO-level implementation. Mainly due to that the projects have a possibility to include actors from the whole NUTS2-region and expected to contribute the development of the entire area.

The utilisation of the Policy Instrument by Varberg Municipality

Varberg is a quite experienced user of the ERDF-instrument in general and also under the specific axis/Investment priority. This has been done both as project leaders and partners in regional and local partnerships. The projects have involved departments with responsibilities in sectors such as in, Business development, Urban/City Planning, Environmental issues.

As examples of this engagement, two projects are especially interesting, both in scope and that it relates to the specific investment priority:

SOLREG - The project aims to promote increased production and use of solar energy in Halland by better utilizing the technology and knowledge available in the solar energy industry.

BAS - Build attractive societies for businesses - The project aims to create a collaborative arena for sustainable social development in Halland, which contributes to increasing the attraction for the business community by working for a more carbon-dense economy in urban development. The focus of the project is circular transformation, sustainable mobility and design of a collaborative arena for a smart city.

4.3. The challenges addressed by policy instrument “Operational Programme for West Sweden 2014-2020, Axis 3, Investment priority 4f.”

Main objectives of the Operational Programme ERDF

The programme is focused on strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs, contributing to a more low-carbon economy and promoting sustainable urban development and has three funding priorities:

- Increase innovation, growth and competitiveness in SMEs with particular focus on entrepreneurship and cooperation between businesses
- Support innovation for a low-carbon economy
- Integrated sustainable urban development to address the specific needs and potential in the city of Gothenburg

Under the AXIS Support for Innovation of a low-carbon economy the targeted investment priority 4F is found with the title: *PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN, AND ADOPTION OF, LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES*

This priority (4F) is then further divided into different headlines with proposals of expected activities

- Research and innovation collaboration for a more low-carbon economy
- Testing and demonstration for a more low-carbon economy
- Innovation and innovative procurement for a more low-carbon economy
- Innovation and market development for a more low-carbon economy

Also, there is a horizontal goal regarding Urban development that we acknowledge. The Urban development goal is however, only eligible for projects implemented for the largest city (Göteborg). In this specific part of the Policy Instrument, several identified topics and challenges do certainly apply to the PROSPERA peri-urban terminology. We believe that this would be important to embrace in the further development of PROSPERA activities in our regional context and include this in our regional report analysis.

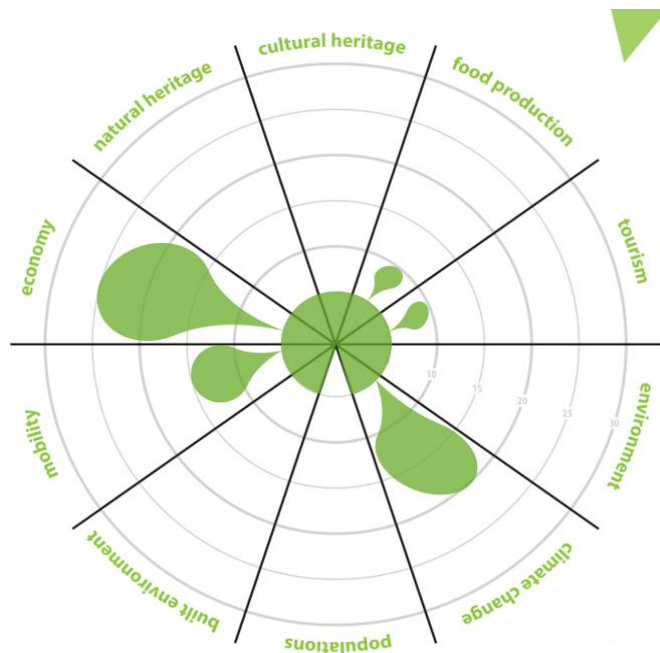
To clarify this we use a specific paragraph that exemplify how we disagree with the the policy instrument. In the paragraph below it is implied that urban challenges faced by Gothenburg is something that distinguishes them from the rest of the region.

A quote from the OP that highlights this is (in bold):

*The rural areas of Gothenburg, particularly in Hisingen and in the north-east, are large and are located next to areas of housing under the ‘million homes programme’ which are geographically smaller but are larger in terms of population. This large-scale mix of urban environment and urban areas **distinguishes Gothenburg** from the rest of West Sweden. There is potential here to exploit possible synergies between the city and countryside and in a new and better way consciously to coordinate operations in the regional, social and agricultural funds with the aim of creating employment.*

Two additional comments on this; first there are regulations governing how the money is spent and the “urban investment priority” has some kind regulation that we need to be aware of. Second this limited view might be a bit obsolete today. The programme was written some 7-8 years ago and the view of what a urban challenge could be is changing both in our region but also in EU programmes such as URBACT. To raise awareness and promote the peri-urban area/terminology would probably be an important part of a strategy for improving the Policy Instrument.

It should however be noted that there is one term in Swedish that is used by at least one project in a similar way (Stadslandet/ “City Land”) and they have to some extent incorporated the peri-urban concept in its operations. Nevertheless, the project is delivered in an area that is, with its characteristics defined as “urban” in the programme. This means that socio-economical issues is the main drive for the project rather than the peri-urban area itself.



The focus of the Policy Instrument

Comment on the scoring: Some of the topics with 5-10 points in priority is not explicitly mentioned under 4F. However, the programme has financed projects in this area but with the aim to support innovation/triple-helix collaboration within Tourism and Cultural heritage and also for the food sector.

The specific challenges and themes in detail

Built Environment: Promoting sustainable construction through New products, processes and services that support eco-friendly and low-carbon development.

Mobility – Addressing gaps in the transport infrastructure and promoting public/private innovations for transport and transport of goods and services.

Economy - Make better use of the opportunities in increasing global demand for low-carbon products, processes, services and solutions. Increased collaboration between research, trade and industry, citizens and the public sector is needed to develop new knowledge and find new forms of cooperation and solutions to urban challenges, related in particular to a low-carbon economy. Support to companies to reach new and international markets for these products. Support to all actors for promoting innovation procurement

Food production - Support for collaboration between urban and rural areas in terms of food production.

Environment AND Climate change - Large greenhouse gas emissions from the industry demands actions both from climate and environmental perspective. Address this through Test-labs for public-sector activities, such as health and social services, public transport and schools, developing environments for test and demonstration of innovative solutions, to contribute to the development of more low-energy processes and services.

In summary, the Policy Instrument do indeed have relevance for PROSPERA, but most of the activities and challenges are connected to innovation, research and SME competitiveness (Economy). The most relevant seems to be limited by the “urban development priority”.

4.4. Related local policy instruments

Built environment

EN/SE	Regional development strategy, Best place to live/ Regional utvecklingsstrategi, Den bästa livsplatsen
Responsible	Region Halland – MESO-level
Comment	The inclusion of the rural perspective is more integrated in the strategy than in the OP of West Sweden. It has a more holistic approach and includes a variety of issues with relevance for “Built Environment” while the OP is more oriented towards business and economic growth.
EN/SE	Strategy for Community-led local development in Halland/Lokalt ledd utveckling Halland (LLUH)
Responsible	LLUH sekretariat – MESO-level
Comment	It has a specific priority named: Housing and construction. This priority includes actions for new housing alternatives, new methods for construction and citizens engagement into these relevant processes. The budget is limited, which means there is a focus on soft measures rather than investments.

EN/SE	Varberg Municipal Comprehensive plan /Översiktplan Varbergs kommun
Responsible	Varberg Municipality – MICRO-level
Comment	The overview plan is the municipality's long-term vision of how the municipality land and water areas should be used and how the development should be done. It offers a common long-term goal and put separate decisions into a broader context. It also includes guidance and ambitions on how the built environment should be developed.

Mobility

EN/SE	Regional mobility supply programme” - Regionalt trafikförsörjningsprogram 2020-2024
Responsible	Region Halland – MESO-level
Comment	Public transports and how citizens in different parts of the region could get to and from work in a sustainable way and not research and innovations aspects of the mobility challenge.
EN/SE	Strategy for Community-led local development in Halland/Lokalt ledd utveckling Halland (LLUH)
Responsible	LLUH sekretariat – MESO-level
Comment	A focus on the transport infrastructure and support innovations that ensure a more flexible solution to mobility issues from a rural perspective. Also includes broadband issues. Typical issues are around solutions for commuting and car-sharing, more in line service innovations rather than substantial investments in research and infrastructure.
EN/SE	Varberg Municipal Mobility Strategy – Trafikstrategi Varbergs kommun
Responsible	Varberg Municipality – MICRO-level
Comment	The strategy is the municipality's long-term vision of how mobility is supposed to be developed until 2030. It covers the transport sector of Varberg in broad perspective, fuel, transport of goods, public transport, commuting etc.

Economy

EN/SE	Regional development strategy, Best place to live/ Regional utvecklingsstrategi, Den bästa livsplatsen
Responsible	Region Halland – MESO-level
Comment	In addition to previous answers on this question, it is important to aware of that the RUS is the underlying strategy for the OP West Sweden (i.e. Prospera Policy Instrument). A bit simplified that means that many issues/challenges found in the Policy Instrument is also apparent in the RUS – and this regards especially the economic dimension i.e. innovation, growth, job creation etc. However, this shares the same lack of the peri-urban-concept as all others.

Food production

EN/SE	The Regional food strategy / Regionalt Livsmedelsprogram
Responsible	County Council of Halland – MESO-level
Comment	Supports different parts of the Food sector in Halland; tourism, business development, Public meals (schools, elderly care, hospitals, etc), Local food, sustainable production etc. Developed in close collaboration with stakeholder from public, private and academic sectors.

Environment

EN/SE	Varberg Sustainability Strategy, Varberg takes the lead /Hållbarhetsmål, Varberg visar vägen
Responsible	Varberg Municipality – MICRO-level
Comment	It adds other perspectives of sustainability than just the possibility to develop new products, contribute to growth. It includes actions within the following areas: (1) A healthy society, (2) A Viable Ecosystem, (3) Resource Efficiency. It also acknowledges ecosystem services, land-use and other aspects of the PROSPERA-definitions that is not apparent in the OP Västssverige

Climate change

EN/SE	Regional Action Plan for climate adaptation/Regional plan för klimatanpassning,
Responsible	Länstyrelsen Halland/County Administrative Board of Halland, - MESO-level
Comment	The strategy is dedicated to mitigating the risks of climate change. It covers flooding, heat and other challenges expected to be more frequent in the future. In comparison to the Policy Instrument, this is not of delivering new solution, innovation and research.

4.5. The PROSPERA window of opportunity

Potential

The Policy Instrument focus on Innovation, Competitiveness and Research in benefit for SMEs. This is as we define it, equal to the Economy topic of PROSPERA. The upside of this is seen when analysing the previously financed initiatives/projects; if an idea aims to promote SMEs competitiveness, their collaboration with the academic sector and public authorities the chance to get funding from the P.I. is rather high. This shows flexibility and is demonstrated by several projects, both ongoing and finished, that address these issues for both the food sector and tourism industry as well as initiatives for cultural and creative SMEs.

- So, one conclusion is that PROSPERA is relevant and comply with our Policy Instrument but to some extent, the natural heritage dimension could have been more evident.

Axis 4 focusing on Low-carbon-economy together with the assumption that Clustering and Triple-Helix collaborations bring growth is an attractive characteristic of the P.I and offers inspiration and possibilities for the partners in Prospera.

The missing link

Doing this type of analysis of one single ESIF-instrument, it should be noted that there are other Instruments within that specific "Policy-ecosystem" – who has other topics as its strength (Culture, Social issues, urban and sustainable mobility etc). Putting them together, they comply rather good with the diversity of PROSPERA-topics but it also uncovers a very obvious misfit which brings us to our second conclusion:

- None of the available and analysed Policy Instruments take the Peri-urban areas into account.

One could quickly pinpoint the urban and rural dimension as the two dominating and most common perspectives competing for funds and attention. The urban-dimension is in the Policy Instrument limited to certain areas within West Sweden and not possible for Halland or Varberg to apply from. In that context there are traces of the Peri-Urban potential, but due to regulations of the Operational programme, the potential of adopting the concept on a broader scale is limited.

Finally, one should remember that the rural perspective is promoted and supported by the CLLD (Leader instrument) but it lacks the clear focus on competitive SMEs/Research/Innovation as stated in the Policy Instrument addressed.

Defining leverage

The essential ingredient in a Regional Development Strategy is growth, often addressed from an urbanisation perspective and then aligned or balanced with the preservation and safe-guarding of rural areas and its natural assets. What we lack in our addressed Policy Instrument, is the definition of the area in between this two – the Peri-urban as defined by Prospera. In a regional context, it is possible

to argue that this area is where the city grows. However, these areas lack natural advocates and are not an acknowledge concept.

This brings us to our key messages arguing for the Peri-Urban areas:

1. There is an area between the urban and the rural – Peri-Urban - exposed to both urban and rural challenges but also specific issues.
2. If regional Growth and urbanisation is a goal, the area that we intend to use for this growth need to be highlighted, valued and defined on its own terms to use assets and resources efficiently properly and sustainable.

5. The Good Practices of Varberg

Good Practices

Name: **Arena Project**

Summary

The Arena-project put the focus on how to support and promote the transition towards a circular and bio-based economy. In the centre are six public and private companies that work together with the municipality and RISE, Research Institute of Sweden. The project facilitates the identification and development of Circular business ideas based on partner needs and possibilities.

Name: **EMC – The Energy and Environmental Centre**

Summary

EMC is a Public and Private partnership (leverage 3) to support the environmental sustainability of the local business community. EMC is financed by membership fees and offer different services to its members' such as education, events, consultancy in sustainability, project management.

Name: **Hallifornia**

Summary

The event “Hallifornia” is an action sports festival organised in Varberg. During 2019 the organisation of the festival was procured with new demands on the organisers to integrate activities and plans on how the event is supposed to contribute to sustainability and the circular economy. Each participating company must fulfil the environmental policy covering, for example, waste management, Paper bags instead of plastic, proportion ecological and vegetarian choices on the menu, use of eco-labelling for food, cleaning material etc.

Name: **Lassabacka Landfill**

Summary

The practice is an example of how to design a development plan of the previous landfill area. The process has involved a multitude of stakeholders that could support the identification of values and potential that builds upon a perspective aligned with their organisation core activities. It means that primary school actors contribute with knowledge on how to increase the pedagogical value of the site, tourist operators with the tourist potential, representatives from the Municipality, ensure alignment with long term vision, and so forth. The final product is a plan that is both functional, accepted and endorsed by several different stakeholders.

Name: Promotion of Grassland in Peri-urban areas

Summary

The initiative is a project for promoting grasslands in periurban areas owned by the municipality, and increase knowledge of these areas, their value and identifying possible measures for the promotion of biological diversity.

The proposed GP showcase a process for the Local authority on mapping and prioritising between these areas in collaboration with key stakeholders such as; the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, local NGOs and landowners

Name: Rural village development strategy

Summary

"Ortsutvecklingsstrategier" – (Rural village* development strategy) is a way of planning for sustainable development of rural villages. The strategy is formed in cooperation between local stakeholders, politicians and public officials. The strategy is used in areas where the goal is to promote a living countryside and promote rural development. The Strategy includes overall spatial planning but more importantly, the cooperation between the municipality and the local stakeholders. The strategy identifies challenges, possibilities and presents activities for developing the area.

* A rural village is a smaller built-up area in the rural area outside the city.

Name: Hop-on-Hop-off Mobility

Summary

The good practice of Åkturen is about rural mobility management and sustainable tourism. Åkturen is a public hop-on-hop-off bus to rural tourism hot spots. It is a new way of using public transport for promoting rural businesses to develop without increasing car traffic and emissions. You can reach several of Varberg nature reserves and an outdoor area with 12 hiking trails and ten tourism destinations on the tour. You pay and buy your ticket through the same channels as you would for public transport.