



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 Mutes (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



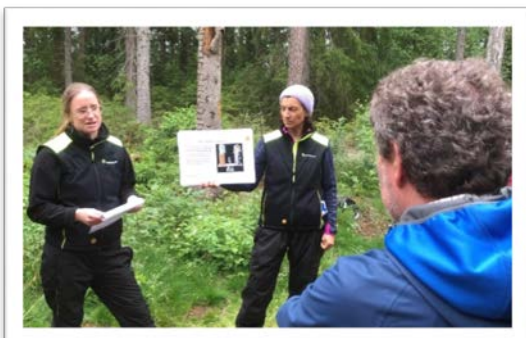
The Swedish transport administration – how to manage roadsides in order to favor biodiversity



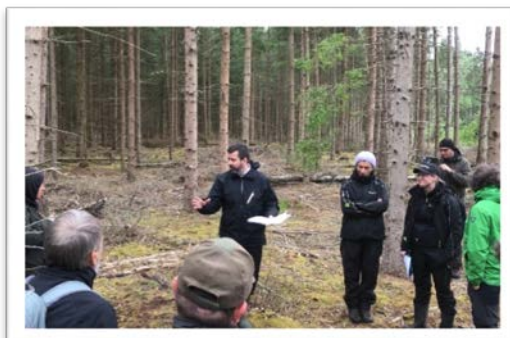
Flämslätt conference facility – how can they contribute to the preservation of the biodiversity



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 success regarding preservation of the biodiversity within the area and the local development.

It is important to incorporate the "new" concept of GI 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 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 of working with valuable region for different habitats (landscape 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 of green infrastructure.
4. Signs along the biodiverse roadsides informing the public .
5. Replacement habitat for *Osmoerma erimita*. 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 reserves is established in Sweden, the landowners are economically compensated with 125% of the property's loss on the market.
7. The concept of freedom with responsibility within the forestry – the law sets the minimum but landowner 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 thinking of protecting several trees within a certain distance instead of each single trees, together with the long term thinking (the generational gap) of preserving and developing "successors".
10. Several GIS analyses was 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).
11. The dispersal of free seeds in Poland for farmers/common people 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 growing in.

12. The family activities at lake Hornborga and the school-forest-concept. In Slovenia there is a handbook for playing and teaching in the forrest.
13. The knowledge of how lightning of churches can severely harm bats, (lightpollution).
14. The way of connecting culture with nature; art-exibitions within nature reseves, and the Iron frames in the landscape (turning it into art).



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



Visit to lake Hornborga

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 provides 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 forrest.
- It might be interesting to follow the output from the ongoing bilateral project between Sweden and Slovenia about pleasant forestry (forestry without clearcutting).



Batsafari

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 for green infrastructure. - 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