

Kalmar region investing in a future without fossil fuels

It's all a question of transforming ambitious targets into actual commercial benefits. If public representatives or industry figures in the Kalmar region are asked what it would take to get the region moving on climate change issues, the answer is always the same. It mainly comes down to tapping the area's potential and turning it into practical benefits for the public sector, trade and industry and individuals.

Kalmar region in south-eastern Sweden – and in the centre of the Baltic Sea Region – has already managed to get the region moving on climate issues on a massive scale.

“There is no contradiction in pursuing an ambitious climate policy at the same time as promoting proactive regional development”, says Leif Larsson, Chairman of the region's joint development body, “Regionförbundet i Kalmar län” (the Regional Council in Kalmar County). “We are not a metropolitan area and never will be. To be able to compete with other regions we therefore need to do things in a better and more proactive way”, he continues. “It may be a question of how we develop the economy, look after residents and visitors, how we take advantage of our geographical location in the middle of the Baltic Sea Region. And not least – how we turn climate issues into concrete benefits”, he goes on.

The Kalmar region has the right conditions to become a pioneer in climate issues and reduced use of fossil fuels in both Sweden and the EU. Even now 2/3 of the region's energy already comes from renewable sources. The region has abundant forests. Its location, right on the edge of the Baltic Sea, makes it ideal for the promotion of solar energy and wind power. Highly developed skills in energy technologies are another asset. Many prominent companies and organisations are already involved in large-scale development projects within the energy sector.

The region is converting from fossil energy to renewal energy

“Our climate-related initiatives in the county involve converting from fossil energy to renewable energy”, says Leif Larsson. “We are making more effective use of energy at all levels and in all sectors. We are producing renewable energy but also products and services which will facilitate the transition to a fossil fuel-free society”, he continues.

The work is divided into five key areas: energy efficiency and energy saving, transport, electricity, heating and knowledge enhancement and is accomplished through a concerted effort in the areas which fall within the responsibility of local authorities and the County Council. It also means bringing in other players from both private and public sectors, further education colleges and the university. The region provides a full scale demonstration model at both national and EU level.

Three ambitious climate targets will lead to a fossil fuel-free region by 2030

Kalmar region has set itself the target of being a fossil fuel-free region by 2030 (in net terms). A number of projects are under way to achieve this aim, both in the form of work which has already started and initiatives still at the planning stage. Everything has been brought together

under three sub-goals; energy and environment as growth factors, fossil fuel-free region 2030 and releasing economic growth from dependency on increased fossil energy consumption.

Sub-goal 1: Energy and environment as factors for growth

Development in Kalmar County's business sectors in terms of energy and the environment must be better than the country's average for the respective sectors. Apart from this the County will increase its production of **renewable** energy.

Sub-goal 2: Fossil fuel free 2030

By 2010 the County's greenhouse gas emissions must have reduced by 15 percent compared with the 1990 figure. Carbon dioxide emissions from transport must have reduced by 20 percent compared with the 1995 figure. Additionally all cars purchased or leased by the public sector must be eco-cars.

By 2020 all buildings must be heated by renewable energy. The county's production of renewable electricity must be at least equal to its electricity consumption. All journeys paid for from public funds must be made with environmentally-friendly vehicles or using renewable fuel.

By 2030 the region must be fossil fuel-free (in net terms)

Sub-goal 3: Releasing economic growth from dependency on increased use of fossil energy

Economic growth often depends on increased consumption of energy and materials, which in turn gives rise to environmental damage from emissions and strains on various ecosystems. Kalmar County aims to achieve a steady reduction in fossil fuel-based carbon dioxide emissions in relation to the gross regional product.

Sound climate measures have become a reality for the region

The Kalmar region has moved on from ambitious political targets to concrete action. As a result a large number of projects are currently already under way in all focus areas, both in the form of work which has already commenced and various projects at the planning stage, for example, in eco-car sales, renewable fuels and energy sources and international projects.

Eco-car sales are growing at a faster rate in Kalmar Region compared with the rest of Sweden

The Swedish government is offering 10,000 kronor to private individuals to purchase an eco-car. In Kalmar County companies and local authorities are also eligible for eco-car subsidies. The County's local authorities have already completed a joint county-wide tendering process for the procurement of eco-cars. Sales of eco-cars are growing at a faster rate in Kalmar County than in the country as a whole. 500 car owners have benefitted from the grant since its introduction in the county in 2005.

More than half of the region's public bus services run on renewable fuels

The county's twelve local authorities and the County Council in Kalmar County have completed the procurement process for the county's public transport for the period 2008–2014. Starting in August 2008 more than half the county's public bus services will run on renewable fuel (biogas or RME). All busses meet stringent environmental requirements.

Electricity from renewable sources is growing in the region

Wind power stations are currently under construction or projected both on land and at sea. Kalmar County also organises an annual national conference on wind power and is one of the

“nodes” in the national network for wind power use. Södra Cell in Mönsterås has invested in turbines in recent years and currently produces 650 GWh of green electricity. Kalmar Energi is building a combined power and heating plant due for completion in 2010. Kalmar County currently produces less than 1 TWh per year from renewable energy sources, but has the overall potential to produce up to 7 TWh. This is equivalent to the household electricity consumption in more than a million average Swedish households.

International cooperation

Kalmar Region has long-standing, well-established partnerships with Euroregion Baltic in the southern Baltic Sea Region, the Changxing region in China and Cape Wineland in South Africa. Energy and environmental issues are afforded high priority in all areas and a number of projects are underway.

More information:

Representatives from the Kalmar region will be attending the Climate Change Conference in Poznan on 10-12 December. Contact Carolina Gunnarsson, regionförbundet i Kalmar län, tel: +46 (0)70 353 48 55