

# Sustainable municipalities

**T**he Swedish Energy Agency's Sustainable Municipality Programme is a unique collaboration between the Energy Agency and more than a fifth of all Swedish municipalities. It is based upon the ambitions of the participating municipalities to make their local community more sustainable. The Energy Agency contributes knowledge, information, and a contact network to facilitate and add to the efficiency of work within the municipalities. Together we can make more efficient use of energy and thereby contribute to a better climate.

Municipalities play an important role in efforts to achieve sustainable energy use with an energy system that is cost effective, secure and that has a low negative impact on health, the environment and the climate. When municipalities plan and build new urban environments, and renovate, the long-term and systematic handling of energy issues makes an important contribution to sustainable development.

Municipalities invest in long-term solutions that save money and spare the environment, while making the municipality a more attractive place to live. Municipalities can also help residents and businesses to save money and spare the environment by making more efficient use of energy. As the market demands more sustainable products and services, efforts by municipalities to develop greater energy and environmental awareness within the business community can serve to create jobs and growth.

## Cooperation is the key to sustainability

Most municipal operations involve energy issues. The prerequisites for a sustainable future are created by clarifying these issues and dealing with them as critical issues. By cooperating internally as well as with other organisations, municipalities can increase their knowledge and thus systematically integrate a long-term energy perspective in their daily work.

The Swedish Energy Agency and other authorities contribute know-how and expertise. The municipalities that participated in previous phases are participating as “sage communities”, offering their experience and knowledge. Researchers and the academic world are contributing methods and tools that are being developed within the program and elsewhere. But success is based upon the municipalities' own initiatives. It is the will and drive of the municipalities themselves that will ultimately determine the success of participation in the Sustainable Municipality Programme.

An important part of the program and a mainstay in cooperation will be the ability of municipalities to learn from one another, to give and take support and to discuss opportunities and obstacles. Good examples of the work of municipalities is a central part of the programme, and it is the task of the Energy Agency to gather together, administrate and disseminate these to select target groups.

## Focus on themes – finding the potential

The Sustainable Municipality Programme focuses on various thematic areas in which municipalities play a key role and have a lot to gain by taking a long-term and systematic approach.

Such themes include work to improve energy efficiency in municipal operations and information campaigns directed to residents and businesses, as well as energy-related expertise in physical planning, municipal facilities, real estate and housing. Other themes include crisis management involving heat and electricity supply, business development in cooperation with other stakeholders, municipal transport, public transportation, and municipal engineering provisions, as well as plans for schools and energy. Municipalities focus on the areas that correspond with their local energy and climate strategy.

## FACTS:

The Sustainable Municipality Programme was launched in the year 2003 as a five-year pilot programme with five municipalities. The programme was evaluated after nearly five years and the results were positive. The Swedish Energy Agency then approached all 290 municipalities in the country to investigate interest in a new phase of the programme. More than 60 municipalities, which is more than a fifth of all of the municipalities in Sweden, expressed an interest in a new phase. All of the municipalities that formally expressed their interest have been given the opportunity to participate. The current phase is being implemented from June 2008 to June 2011. At the same time an attempt is being made to integrate regional and municipal levels in a pilot county.

## More information

Read more about the sustainable Municipality Programme on the Swedish Energy Agency's web site [www.energimyndigheten.se](http://www.energimyndigheten.se).