

Ecological compensation in municipal planning – experiences from the MuniComp project

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The policy interest and legal conditions for applying ecological compensation in Sweden

Increased interest in ecological compensation to reach the Swedish Environmental objectives.

A governmental investigation 2017 proposed changes in several laws to support ecological compensation, but so far no changes.

2015



2016



2017



2019



The policy interest and legal conditions for applying ecological compensation in Sweden

- **Swedish Environmental Code – regulating environmental issues.**
Compensation demanded mainly for impact in protected areas (Natura 2000, nature reserves).
- **Planning and Building Act – regulating spatial planning and construction.**
No explicit support for ecological compensation.

Today most development projects do not require consideration of ecological compensation, compensation mainly rely on voluntary agreements.

Ecological compensation in Swedish municipalities – a background

- Municipalities responsible for spatial planning in Sweden.
Ecological compensation introduced in 1990s in some south Swedish municipalities based on the German “balancing principle” model. Includes a mitigation hierarchy.
- “Balancing” of nature losses within detailed development planning.
- The number of municipalities applying the balancing principle routinely has increased slowly over the years, but is still low.

”Environmental compensation as a policy instrument – a municipal perspective” (2018 – 2021)



Increase the knowledge on the conditions for applying ecological compensation in municipal planning in Sweden.

Learn from municipalities that already use compensation in their planning processes.

- Qualitative policy instrument evaluation.
- Application of mitigation hierarchy.
- Experiences from compensation cases.
- Use of metrics models.
- Public preferences of compensation options.

[All reports from "Naturvårdsverket":](#)

<https://www.naturvardsverket.se/om-miljoarbetet/forskning/miljoforskning/forskningssatsningar-natur/ekologisk-kompensation/>

Questionnaire on ecological compensation in Swedish municipalities

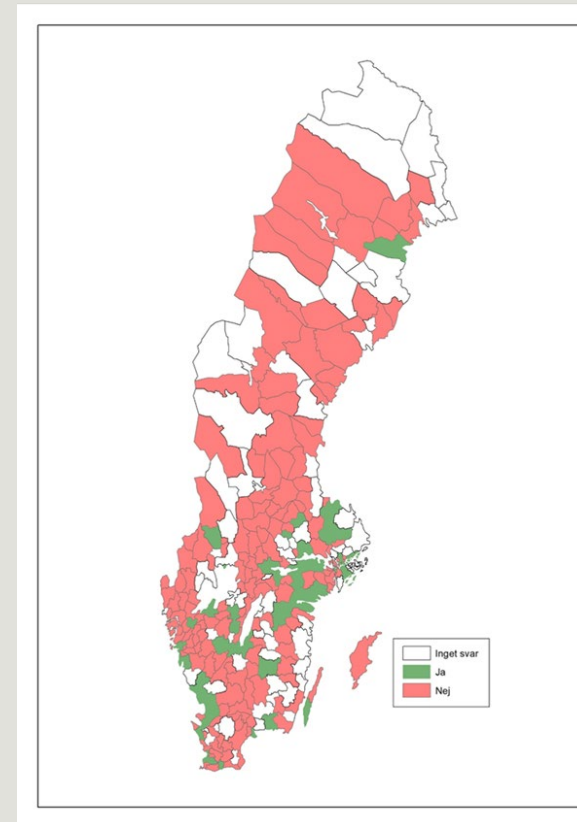
76 % reply rate (220 out of 290 municipalities).

22 % (48) reported that they "work" on ecological compensation.

But commentaries revealed that very few municipalities had established routines and written policies.

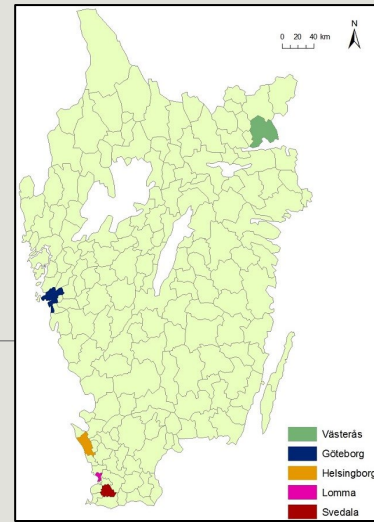
10 % (23) reported that they have plans to start working on ecological compensation.

Municipalities "working" on ecological compensation mainly located in southern Sweden.



Qualitative policy instrument assessment

Interviews with five municipalities with established routines.



- Political support and good collaboration among municipality departments very important.
- Weak and unclear legal support inhibits full implementation of compensation routines.
- Polluter pays principle difficult to apply – the municipality often pays for compensation measures.
- Lack of clearly formulated objectives for the work on compensation → quantitative policy instrument evaluation is not possible.
- Shortcomings in the evaluation of completed compensation measures.

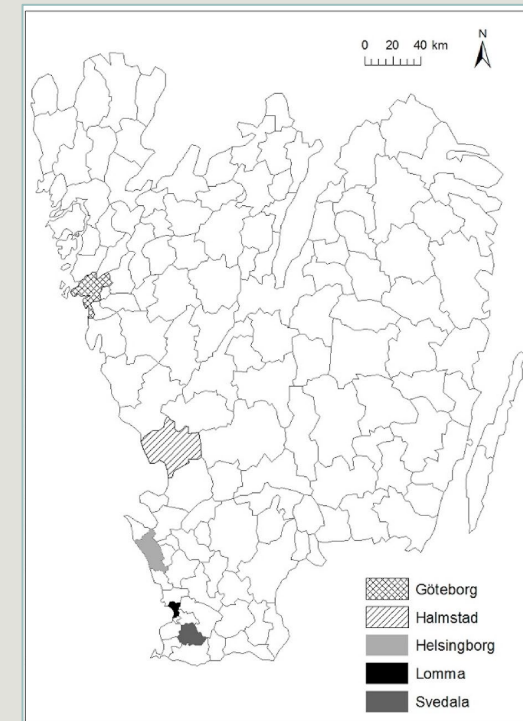
Metrics used in application of ecological compensation in Swedish municipalities

No streamlining: large difference in the number of metric variables, from 11 till 64.

Metrics models used mainly semi-quantitative variables and some grouping of variables.

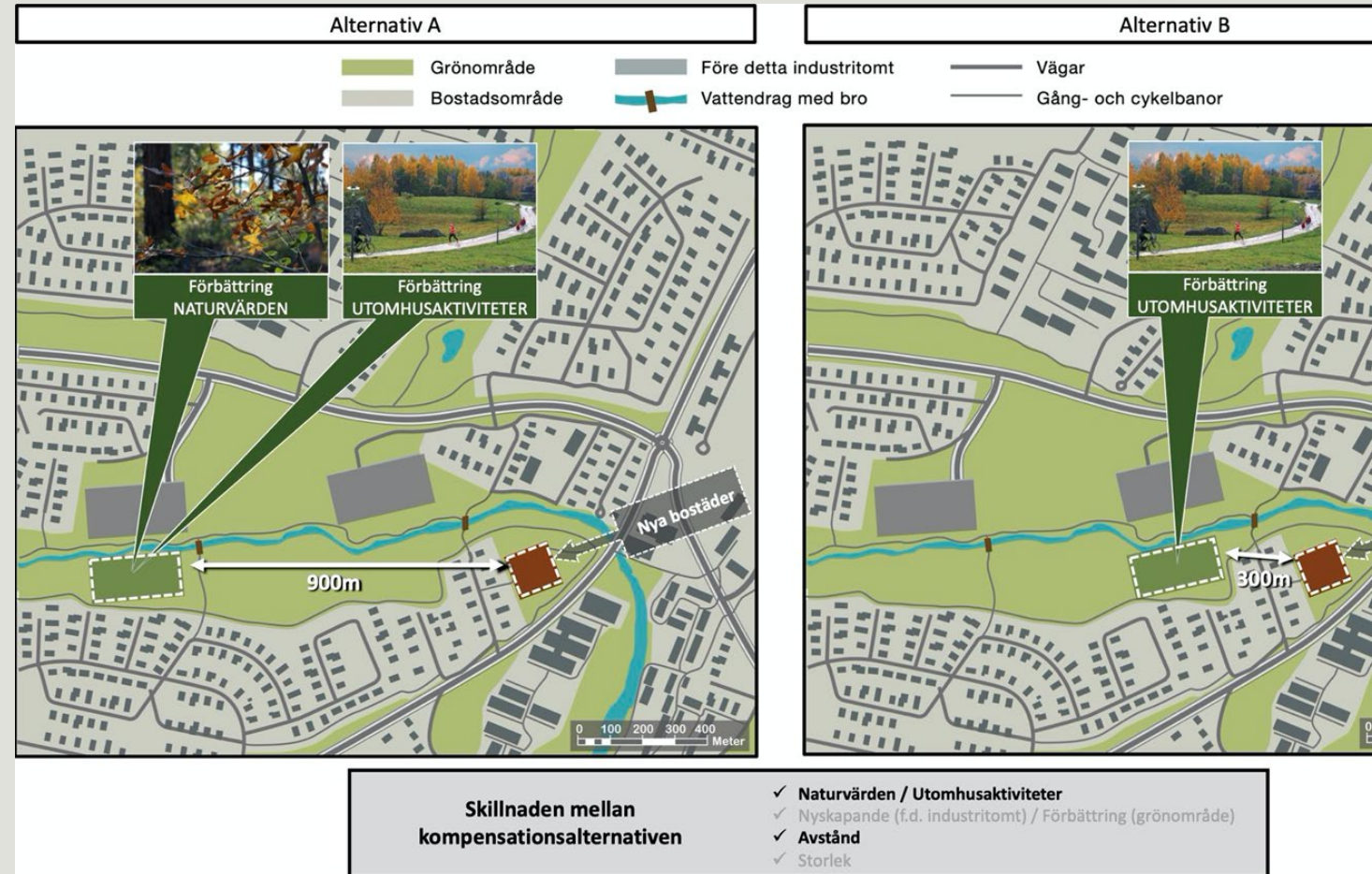
Gross lists of metric variables included both pure nature characters and ecosystem services.

Emphasis on lost values, while gains from compensation are not estimated using metrics models – this prevents NNL and NG to be assessed.



Public preferences for compensation

- Questionnaire “choice experiment” – different compensation alternatives.
- Urban areas > 2000 inhabitants.
- Ca. 1000 answers.
 - Nature or recreation?
 - Size of comp. area.
 - Distance to comp. area?
 - Comp. on grey or green area?



Public preferences for compensation

- **Larger compensation area better than smaller.**
 - More emphasized for nature values than for recreation values.
- **Compensation closer to the development site is better.**
 - More emphasized for recreation values than for nature values.
- **A combination of nature values and recreation values preferred over one kind of value.**
 - If forced to choose, nature values are preferred.
- **Compensation on grey areas preferred over green areas.**

Conclusions from the MuniComp project

- There is a growing interest from municipalities in applying ecological compensation in spatial planning. Ad strong public support.
- The weak support from the Planning and Building Act is inhibiting full application of compensation routines and the polluter pays principle.
- Ecological compensation in municipal planning is largely restricted to detailed development planning, with limited strategic application to the overall environmental work.
- Introduction and application of compensation in municipalities would benefit from national guidelines and streamlining of models and metrics.



VÄLKOMMEN!

SÅ HÄR NAVIGERAR DU PÅ SIDAN

VEM HAR NYTTA AV SIDAN?

VEM HAR SKAPAT SIDAN?

<https://ekoplankompassen.se/>