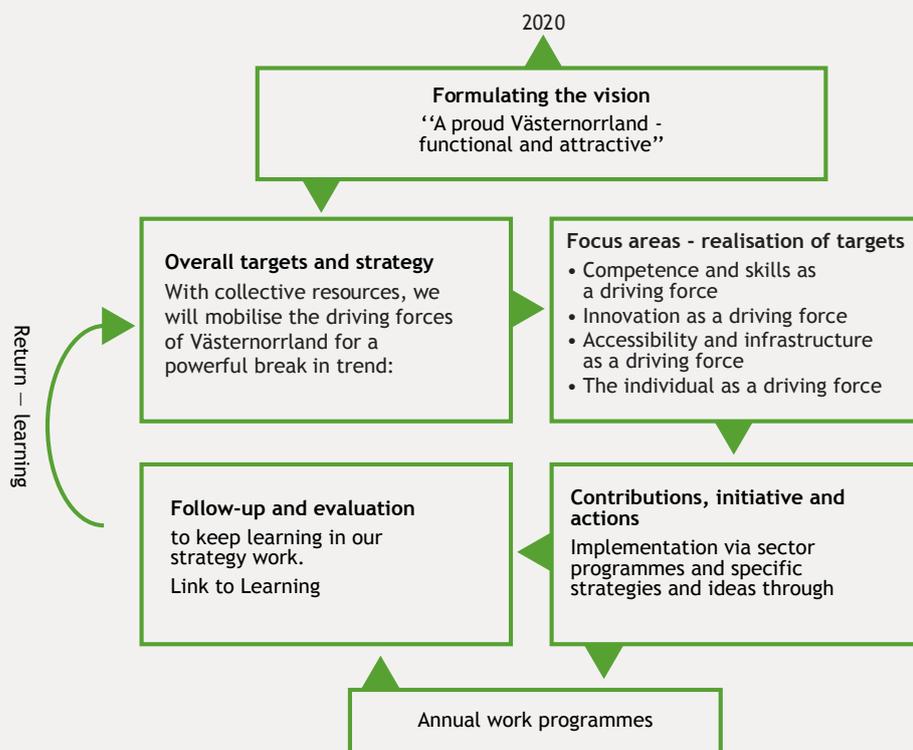


Future Västernorrland!

Regional county development strategy 2011-2020



Länsstyrelsen
Västernorrland

R.U.S.
REGIONAL UTVECKLINGSSTRATEGI
FRAMTID VÄSTERNORRLAND 2020

Preface

As the people of Västernorrland we have every reason to be proud. We make strong contributions to Sweden's growth and welfare through our exports, sustainable delivery of raw materials and energy as well as an internationally spearheading and active business sector. Growing research within industry and at our three university campuses pave the way for future innovations. We can already foresee good growth results from these still very young environments but also through the renewal power of individuals, existing companies and the public sector. This is made easier by the successively increasing interest in entrepreneurial attitudes in the county – not least amongst younger people.

Many are attracted by the good living environments for housing, education, service and recreational activities our county has to offer. There is fantastic nature right on our doorstep – environments that the majority of Europeans can only dream about. Through the large investments in infrastructure that began at the turn of the century, we will achieve significant improvements to accessibility over the next decade, which in turn will entail conditions for development. We have the potential to bring together our part of the country and strengthen connections with the surrounding world. As a result, Västernorrland can take full advantage of its conditions and become even more attractive to new and old inhabitants, businesses, visitors and investors.

Simultaneously, the county faces many challenges to be managed in a rapidly changing environment. The regional development strategy for the period 2011–2012, which follows this introduction, highlights many of these challenges. The development strategy should be seen as a tool for creating a common point of departure for the county to realise our potential.

One strength is that the regional development strategy rests upon a formal European and national framework and is complemented by a wealth of local and regional experience. Another strength is that we have managed to channel the comprehensive commitment of both individuals and organisations over the two years it took to produce the strategy into concrete development targets and initiatives – in regard to which there is now consensus in the county.

On 1 December 2011, public and private sector representatives for the County Partnership guaranteed their support for the regional development strategy and stated their intention to use the strategy as a basis for continued development work, thus finalising the collective development work and marking the strategy as a common starting point for the continued development of Västernorrland and this part of the country.

My hope is that the genuine interest that has characterised the work up until now shall continue in the exciting and comprehensive implementation now required, so that we can frankly assert our vision *A proud Västernorrland – functional and attractive*.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of those from within and outside the county, who in different ways contributed to the creation process of the development strategy.

Härnösand, December 2011



Bo Källstrand
County Governor

CONTENTS

Introduction 4

- 1. What is a regional development strategy? 4**
- 2. Strategy structure 5**
- 3. Long-term sustainable growth and development 6**
- 4. Some current market conditions 7**
- 5. Starting point 8**
- 6. Vision and overall targets for 2020 8**
- 7. Strategy with four new, important perspectives 9**
- 8. Focus areas – to realise the targets 9**
 - 8.1 The individual as a driving force 10
 - 8.2 The person – the driving force 12
 - 8.3 The person – the driving force 14
 - 8.4 Accessibility and infrastructure – the driving force 17
- 9. Implementation phase with follow-up and evaluation 19**
 - 9.1 Guiding strategic county partnership and responsible operators 19
 - 9.2 Sector programme and regional strategies 20
 - 9.3 Follow-up and evaluation of informative strategy work 21

Appendix 1 23

Regional analysis report The Future of Västernorrland – what do we know about it? 23

- Introduction 23
- Where are we? 24
- Population census and demographics 24
- Living environment and public health 25
- Environment and natural resources 26
- Mobility – accessibility –flexibility 26
- Communications 27
- Regional innovation systems and innovation support systems 28
- Trade, industry and business 29
- Regional manpower and competence support 30
- Complexity: Globalisation, urbanisation, individualisation 31

Appendix 2 32

Appendix 3 34

Appendix 4 38

Definitions of various concepts 39

Introduction

The regional development strategy (RUS) is an overall programme document for the future development of Västernorrland. The strategy is intended as a guide for the initiatives of the local, regional and national operators involved in work to promote development and growth up until the year 2020.

The development strategy has been developed over approximately two years by a wide circle of parties within the county, for example through a long series of seminars, conferences and the synchronisation of partnerships and on-going efforts by a work group representing the municipalities, the County Council and the County Administrative Board. In the autumn of 2011, after being circulated for comment, the strategy was approved by the strategic regional collaboration forum, “Länspartnerskapet” (the County Partnership), and established by the County Administrative Board in its capacity as the regional authority responsible for regional development.

This publication is the main document for the RUS. Additionally, summarised texts of this publication have been produced in the form of an abridged version and a version for the general public. There is an additional, more extensive analysis report and summary of comments submitted on the proposal (approx. 30 comments).

The realisation of this strategy shall be channelled by means of various regional sectorial programmes, through municipal and state monitoring and development programmes and in addition through a wide spectrum of initiatives from a number of interested operators, both within and outside of the county.

1. What is a regional development strategy?

In accordance with government directives, the regional growth policy aims to have the country’s regions utilise their own resources in order to optimally contribute to the total growth and development of the nation. However, the policy initiatives must be adapted to different regional conditions, meaning that a “bottom up” perspective must be applied. This can be done through formulating programme documents stating policies and directions for the entire county.

Development programmes exist at all levels: the EU, nationally, regionally and locally. They are normally connected through a collaboration chain, in which more general and strategic programmes provide support and legitimacy for more detailed programmes. One example is “EU 2020” – a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in all of EU¹. Sweden has the national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment², which specifies the government guidelines for the regions work. Amongst the municipalities' development plans and overall plans and the regional and national programmes/strategies, there are various mutual considerations described in more detail in the following section, in addition to Appendix 2. In practice, the same mutual considerations will be developed between operators on national, regional and local levels upon completion of the aforementioned strategies and programmes.

The national strategy in question brings forward areas such as cross-border cooperation, comparisons with other European regions and that to a greater extent than previously, regional development programmes shall provide the basis for a social infrastructure. At the same time, European targets regarding economic and social unity are complemented with a territorial perspective, which needs to be clearly observed. Here, it is about how different plans and accomplishments pay attention to opportunities, effects and problems related to matters of a geographical dimension, e.g. the effects of distance; the varying economic or demographic

relationships; conditions for cultural resources and varying natural given conditions, etc.

¹ with five objectives regarding activity rate/integration, conditions for R&D, reduction of emissions/energy efficiency, higher education levels, decreased levels of exclusion (fighting poverty)

² For 2007–2013: Innovation and renewal, Skills supply/improved labour supply, Strategic cross-border cooperation, Consideration of sparsely populated regions/cities

RUS is the joint platform for the strategic regional growth and development efforts in Västernorrland. As the overall directive document for the county, the RUS shall be a guide for various regional sector programmes and strategies (such as growth programmes, transport plans and cultural environment programmes). RUS shall also provide guidance for national and regional resource allocation, including prioritisations in connection with applications for the EU Structural Funds. According to additions made to the Swedish Planning and Building Act in 2011, overall municipal planning must be implemented into regional development strategies in a clear way.

Decisions forming the basis of regional development programmes/development strategies can be found in the Regional Growth Ordinance (2007:713). In Västernorrland, the County Administrative Board assumes the role of regional development body and is responsible for the creation of such a strategy. The development of the present RUS has, in accordance with the intentions of the Ordinance, taken place in close collaboration with the municipalities, the Municipal Association and the County Council together with other important operators from the industrial sector and other state authorities. A regional workgroup with representatives from the aforementioned operators has been central to the process and will play a key functional role in the completion of RUS.

2. Strategy structure

The following chapter provides a more detailed description of the content and its significance.

3. Long-term sustainable growth and development

Sustainable development is defined as a type of development that satisfies modern needs without endangering future generations' possibilities to meet their needs³. Sustainable development is based on an encompassing view of the needs of people and society, conditions and problems. The basic principle is that social, economic and ecological dimensions are integrated, meaning that in a way they are both conditioned on and supportive of each other.

To be able to achieve economic growth, the productivity development within industry and the ability to persistently sell goods and services is essential. Sustainability assumes that efforts will have financial strength after initial measures and support. This is to be done in order to maintain and develop economic value and load-bearing structures and to mobilise hidden resources and surpluses. Economic sustainability also presupposes that the international connections – both existing and potential – are fully observed.

At the same time, no sustainable economic development can take place if the environment radically deteriorates, if resources are not evenly distributed and if there is no growth in human capital. Sustainable social development is therefore simultaneously a result of and a condition for economic development. The social dimension emphasises the importance of resources, influence and power being divided equally, fairly and on an even footing so women and men can feel secure and can participate. The environmental aspect of sustainable development includes our resources being used in a way that is sustainable in the long term, so that biological diversity, cultural environments and ecosystem productivity are protected and preserved. This is one condition for both economic and social welfare in the long term. To summarise:

- Sustainable financial growth requires a positive development of productivity in the business sector, an ability to consistently sell products and services as well as financial viability of investments.
- Sustainable social growth is based on the even and fair distribution of resources, influence and power and equal, and that women and men can feel secure and that they can participate.
- Sustainable ecological growth includes using resources in a way that minimises the loss of biodiversity, which protects cultural environments and uses ecosystem services in a careful and sustainable manner, i.e. taking an active approach to the county's environmental targets.

Regional growth shall be sustainable, so that coming generations can be offered healthy financial, social and ecological conditions. This means that the growth created today must not come at the expense of either of these three dimensions. Sustainable development includes an understanding of the whole and knowledge of the interplay within and between the three dimensions of the sustainable perspective. It can also be viewed as a condition for developing renewability.

These basic conditions have not been pointed out as separate development areas in the regional development strategy as they are horizontal. They must permeate everything, from individual concrete development efforts to the most comprehensive discussions, so as to achieve a sound overall perspective.

4. Some current external conditions

Changes are taking place around us at an increasing pace, in business and society alike, through globalisation, constant technological leaps, urbanisation, environment and climate impact, as well as an increased individualisation of responsibility and initiative. The demographic conditions indicate that like many regions in Europe, we have an ageing population and weak demographic growth. No part of Västernorrland will be untouched by the opportunities and threats represented by this development. The success of the county in the given conditions depends on our ability to adapt, our capacity to see possibilities in new circumstances and our ways of collaborating in old and new combinations.

To know where to go and how to prioritise, we need to know which environmental factors affect us the most and how these in turn propel other strong trends. Increasingly radical globalisation means that everything is moving faster and following new patterns. The centre is shifting. Asia – with China and India leading the way – is becoming increasingly influential at the same time as our labour market is changing at an increasingly rapid pace. More and more activities take place online and internet-based communication continues to grow. The continued fast technological developments contribute to the disappearance of the need to fit in with the group. Now, there is status associated with being unique, and perhaps self-fulfilment constitutes a stronger driving force than before. Over a short period, we have gone from a collective to a more individualist behaviour. Simultaneously, many of today's serious social problems require collective measures. Traditional organisational affiliation has become less important; nevertheless, there is still a growing interest in rallying together on specific society-based matters.

An increased focus on environmental and climate matters has developed as a reaction to events taking place in the world around us. Various catastrophes such as oil spills, chemical emissions and floods come in succession and require us to prevent and manage risks. Climate change affects us in different ways and creates a need for improved energy efficiency and other new solutions. We all need to contribute to a positive development and create the conditions for risk management and adaptations to the changes that are under way. We also need to see that threats can also signify potential for development and business.

Demographic circumstances clearly show that there are more and more older people and relatively few young people in comparison. Many other European regions are experiencing the same problems and the same need to boost the number of people of working age. At the same time, many young people are struggling to enter the labour market. Currently, Västernorrland has a high level of youth unemployment, not just from a Swedish perspective, but also from a European one. This has led to young people entering the labour market and becoming established at a radically later age. We are also aware that it often takes a long time for people from abroad to establish themselves in Swedish society, which may contribute to them choosing to go to other countries and/or major city regions. Population movement is characterised by markedly increased urbanisation, which in turn affects the demographic structure of other areas that lie outside of the major city regions and do not attract new residents as easily.

5. Starting point

The foundation of the chosen targets, focus areas and measures in the development strategy is an extensive regional analysis report. This analysis includes the formulation of a few summary challenges that provide the basis for the prioritised guidelines for the strategy in the form of a vision, targets and focus areas. The analysis has been summarised in [Appendix 1](#).

The chosen directions in the strategy are motivated by the challenges of, on the one hand utilising the strengths of Västernorrland, and on the other of overcoming obstacles to sustainable growth in a situation where the county is exposed to an increasing level of competition. Västernorrland is home to a world-leading commodity-based processing industry, but it also has a fragmented local community structure. There is a need to successfully overcome all kinds of physical and other distances, and to do so in the long term. We need an increase in the population all over the county. In order to achieve this, we require a modern business sector, a knowledgeable workforce and enterprise as well as functional and adapted services. We need to take more pride in the attractive living and outdoor environments in our county and develop them further. The problem of an ageing population, high levels of unemployment, weak integration results, a lagging state of health and sparsely populated areas must be turned into a challenge that triggers development ideas.

6. Vision and overall targets for 2020

The vision and its targets set the direction for regional development work. Each ambition carries with it a sustainability perspective. The three overall targets have initially been identified based on the challenges found in the analysis, and they have been chosen as important ambitions for the county's development up until 2020.

Vision: “A proud Västernorrland – functional and attractive”

General strategy target:

With collective resources, we will mobilise the driving forces of Västernorrland for a powerful new trend that will give us:

Positive population growth: The Västernorrland of 2020 has 250,000 residents who enjoy a high quality of life and a tolerant atmosphere. Positive natural and environmental conditions contribute to the attractiveness of the county. More people move here, more children are born, more housing is built and fewer people die prematurely. The potential of immigration is fully utilised. The county is well balanced in terms of gender and age structures.

Increased accessibility: In Västernorrland, powerful investments bridge geographical and social gaps, and they open up the county to the world in a functional, sustainable and competitive manner: through quick, adaptable and environmentally-friendly communications in a well-balanced region.

Strengthened innovative ability: Västernorrland is a stable competitor. The county's residents, businesses and organisations are highly knowledgeable, creative and innovative. New thinking, motivating

entrepreneurship and investments within key areas has further promoted innovation and development in identified innovative environments.

The challenges facing the world around us and the county indicate that there is a constantly growing need to be close to events, information and resources in both large and small contexts. Västernorrland is in a semi-peripheral location in a region of Europe that is sparsely populated but rich in natural resources. The vision of a proud, functional and attractive region could thus also be expressed as opening the doors to a greater and more contributive Västernorrland, where we are close to each other, to the markets and the development frontier as well as to nature and culture.

7. Strategy with four important perspectives

The joint mobilisation of the strategy to achieve this target is strengthened when the various operators in the county, i.e. the municipalities, authorities, companies and organisations, are unified in common attitudes, collaborations and working methods. In support of this mobilisation, RUS has developed *four collaborative working perspectives*:

- **Strategic leadership** – cohesive, dynamic regional leadership that, based in the stated joint strategies, can resolutely and legitimately guide the county through future challenges.
- **Functional integration** – the inherent capacity of the multicultural structure in Västernorrland shall be utilised in order to build solid, result-oriented networks across the entire county
- **Sustainability perspective** – economic, social and ecological sustainability shall permeate concrete efforts and policy dialogues within all sector programmes and the entire regional growth and development work.
- **Effective communication** – effective information flows must be utilised at all times, and our possibilities are to be marketed in a way that creates an attractive image of the county and makes it a natural, cross-border collaboration partner for many.

8. Focus areas – for the realisation of the targets

Four prioritised focus areas have been chosen in order to make the overall targets more concrete and to create continuity from the challenges of the analysis and from national and EU guiding documents. The focus areas sum up the most pressing investments over the next ten years. Their implementation will be facilitated by a methodical use of the recently mentioned mobilisation strategy. For each focus area, a direction has been stated as the 2020 target, as well as a few more directly measurable targets. In each respective section and also [Appendix 3](#), some concrete ideas, initiatives and areas of initiative are exemplified. These have been judged to be in line with the targets and can be used for reflection and inspiration. The four prioritised focus areas are:

- **The individual as a driving force**
- **Competence supply as a driving force**
- **Innovation as a driving force**
- **Accessibility and infrastructure as a driving force**

Most of the planned initiatives in the focus areas will be carried out within the framework of various regional sector programmes and strategies included in the overall municipal

development plan. However, in some cases, they will be carried out through more specific, individual developmental ventures. Other initiatives in parallel to the sector programme for implementing RUS cannot be ruled out. Adjustments made to this by the county and the respective operators will be manifested in the annual work programmes and yearly operations planning.

The map images and summary of the analysis report in appendix 2 aim to bridge together the analysis and the strategy to reflect on the development potential within the four focus areas. As a basis for follow-up and evaluation of the strategy, a system with indicators will be linked to the respective initiative areas and integrated into the programme implementation. This system shall be formulated based on an integrated sustainability perspective that includes indicators, which shall also be formulated to measure sustainable development. For further information, see chapter 9.

8.1 The individual as a driving force

The human driving force is our most decisive development resource, and we need to pay attention to it, care for it and stimulate it. The living environment provides the framework for such a driving force, and it must therefore be strengthened in order to increase the appeal and productivity of Västernorrland. The natural environments are resources for promoting natural values and for ecosystem services. This entails a long line of value-adding measures for rich and varied nature, for attractive and energy-efficient housing, efficient communications, good schools and child care, working welfare and security systems as well as for an active culture scene and leisure time. Joint efforts are required to change the trends in ill-health, the ageing population, ineffective population bases, archaic gender norms, attitudes towards immigrants and their cultures, the high level of unemployment etc. and to reach the set targets of the strategy. Measures in this direction shall, among other things, contribute to increasing the level of participation in working life for both women and men, raise quality of life and reduce the strain on the health and welfare sector resources.

Directional target: In 2020 we will have built competitive and sustainable communities and living environments throughout the county. This will allow for a high quality of life and builds optimism for the future, commitment and openness.

Measures shall be implemented until 2020, in order for Västernorrland to

- provide a good quality of life, from a national perspective, for all its residents regardless of origin
- have a positive and stable net migration rate
- have a population that participates on a higher than national average level in employment and society
- see a level of competitive IT use that is promoted by small digital divides amongst residents and companies
- allow its residents to take part in more cultural and natural experiences than most other counties

The ambitions also cover the targets in the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding Swedish targets, including those to reduce poverty by 25 per cent, to reduce exclusion (<14%) and to promote social participation. The living environment perspective touches upon the EU targets to reduce CO2 emissions/greenhouse gases by 20 per cent when compared to 1992 (Sweden -40%).

In-depth information

Västernorrland has a lot to gain from creating strong conditions for people to combine work and family life. A nice environment to grow up in is, along with good parenting, an important base for the health of children and young people and for sustainable development in the long term. It is important to make use of young people's creativity, commitment and new ideas. Living environment also refers to social relationships, recreation, participation and security. Women and men of all ages need to feel safe both outdoors and at home, and it is important to have a strong trust between people. It is also a well-known fact that innovation processes are faster in regions where social capital is well developed. Taking advantage of different forms of social capital is therefore important from both a social and a growth perspective. In this context, the possibilities of the social economy are clear. Another aspect is that we need to make the county more attractive for people born overseas and others moving to the area, and in connection to this increase awareness of diversity as a resource for sustainable development. It is fundamental that we have a functioning supply of housing with sufficient incitement on the market for new builds and for developing standards. Social housing problems and opportunities need to be highlighted in the work to create attractiveness.

In order to maintain a good living environment and equal conditions for participants in recreational activities, sports and outdoor pursuits, it is incredibly important that we have healthy and accessible nature areas. It is a condition for biological diversity and for access to recreational environments. One of the greatest challenges for the future is that of environment, energy and climate matters. The effects of these must be integrated into all decisions so that we can maintain and develop our living environment for future generations. Water is a prerequisite to all life. The county has favourable resources for a good drinking water supply. At the same time we need to create resources for long-term planning of increased sustainability. The nature and culture environment, sporting activities, culture and other experiences to be had in Västernorrland stimulate us and give us possibilities for the future. An important tool for attracting people is to advertise the county as a tourist destination, which also increases the chances for the residents to feel proud of their county.

A good living environment presumes a strong cultural scene. Culture affects and inspires the individual, it develops society as a whole and also promotes a competitive hospitality industry. It is therefore a given that culture and cultural heritage is awarded its place in the strategic planning. This includes providing the conditions for everyone to be able to participate in the cultural scene in a wider sense.

Welfare is about the total living conditions and living relationships of girls, boys, women and men. This includes everything from an accessible labour market, quality housing in a safe area and meaningful recreation time to quality of education, healthcare and good habits. One challenge, not least for Västernorrland, is to reverse the trend of people developing less than healthy habits, for example in terms of being overweight, smoking and drinking alcohol. It is a great challenge – both human and financial – to reduce the outcomes of various lifestyle diseases and subsequently improve public health. An ageing population places increasing demands on housing choices, healthcare and welfare with maintained quality of life. This is a hotbed for new types of service and development of industry.

Appendix 3 provides a list of ideas for initiatives and measures that can be used as a means of support in implementing the strategy, which have been discussed in the partnership during the work on the county strategy. These are introduced under the titles stating the direction of the ambitions in accordance with the following:

- *Västernorrland's beneficial living environments*
- *Inclusive growth, • The rich nature and outdoor life of Västernorrland*
- *Added value through the county's culture and cultural heritage*

8.2 Supply of skills and competences as a driving force

Our supply of labour and competence is one of the most important issues for growth – for individuals, employers and thereby for the development of the county. Skills requirements are constantly changing and become particularly apparent in times of structural changes, globalisation and rapid shifts in technology usage. New jobs are being created, primarily in the service sector, along with new knowledge claims; existing jobs face new challenges and disappear along with needs for alternative use of people's skills. Life-long learning is becoming a focal point. Västernorrland needs to use more joint, parallel measures that create flexibility to face the effects of structural change and the economic cycle on the labour market and the education system. In the long term, this is necessary for making urgent changes to the business sector; the demographic development; education levels; the inclusion of young people on the labour market; migration needs etc. the labour force must be expanded and joint resources and potential must be made visible and utilised.

Directional target: In 2020, the county will have a sustainable system for collaboration and matching, which will provide an effective supply of labour and competence.

Measures shall be implemented until 2020, in order for Västernorrland to

- have one of the best matching systems for supply and demand on the labour market in the country
- have an inclusive labour market, free from discrimination and with a good level of integration
- allow operators to have a well-functioning strategic collaboration when it comes to education issues for the supply of competence
- have a competitive range of educations with a high level of accessibility
- have good schools that live up to the targets of the national education policy
- have residents with a level of secondary education equivalent to the national average

The ambitions also cover the targets in the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding Swedish targets for increasing the level of employment (ages 20–64) for women and men to 75% (Sweden 80%), reduce the number of people dropping out of upper secondary school to 10 per cent and increase the number of 30–34-year-olds with post-secondary education to 40 per cent (Sweden 40-45%).

In-depth information

Västernorrland shall offer a dynamic labour market with the chance for more people to contribute to the competitive power and sustainable development of the working life. Employers within the county need good recruitment opportunities with access to the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. Our workplaces shall offer attractive environments with positive development potential for companies and individuals alike. The work climate needs to be open and tolerant. Competence and skills can be attained through education, but also by taking advantage of informal knowledge, experience and personal traits. Continual competence development must be viewed from a broad perspective, so that relevant development needs can be captured and contribute to strengthened competition.

An on-going analysis of the region's unique development and growth conditions is needed, as well as close and increased collaboration between parties from the labour market, industry and education. This applies to developing the ability to maintain and promote competence in harmony with the region's conditions for development and growth. Mutual collaboration benefits individuals and operators alike in terms of strengthened competition powers. One tool for promoting this kind of collaboration is the county-based “Competence and Skills Platform”, for which the County Administrative Board is the responsible coordinator. Knowledge about sustainable development shall be safeguarded at all levels of the education

system in order to arouse curiosity amongst the well-educated workforce and prompt them to set to work on future challenges and development potentials.

Västernorrland has a long tradition of welcoming women and men from different cultures. Companies and workers who have moved to Västernorrland from other areas in Sweden or from other countries have been crucial to development. And people born abroad continue to be an important resource for the future of the county. Openness and acceptance for each individual's competence and experience will be an important device for mutual labour market integration. One essential building block is a functioning integration into schools and the labour market for young people and people born abroad. Another is that positive steps are taken to achieve a gender-equal labour market.

Many of those who choose to study in the county move here during their studies. Consequently, we need to be able to offer a wide range of good internships, summer jobs, cheap and attractive housing, along with a varied culture scene and range of free-time activities. During the study period, we need to create a link to the labour market, in order to increase the chances of a broader skills recruitment and so that more young people get rooted in the county. The long-lasting high levels of youth unemployment need to be broken down by focusing on finding more effective entry-level jobs for young people. In the same way, the tendency toward extensive failures at compulsory school and upper secondary school (especially for boys) must be reduced to reasonable nationally accepted levels.

The combined manpower resources must be made visible and utilised to achieve the targets for strengthening the manpower and skills supply needed for growth. An individual's knowledge, skills and interests shall determine their choice of education, work and salary, rather than stereotypes and traditional ideas, in order to make the most of women's and men's potential. Continuing with a segregated labour market creates financial inequality, in which low employment rates and salaries hamper development. One example is the very low employment rate amongst women born abroad that needs to be changed.

Appendix 3 provides a list of ideas for initiatives and measures that can be used as a means of support in implementing the strategy, which have been discussed in the partnership during the work on the county strategy. These are introduced under the titles stating the direction of the ambitions in accordance with the following:

I

- *Strategic education collaboration*
- *The new labour environment*
- *Taking advantage of the entire workforce potential*

8.3 Innovative ability as a driving force

The importance of innovation and renewal in business and society has grown along with the increasingly rapid pace of world change. The competitive advantage of the county is based in our ability to be alert, take initiative and to create strategic collaboration between individuals, operators and companies. By having a comprehensive view to stimulate close, networking, lively and innovative environments, we promote creativity, courage, new working methods and entrepreneurship. The county's strengths – especially based on our raw materials – need to be shifted to a higher-level profile, with regards to both existing and new activities, where service providers complement more traditional business models. For example, the opportunities that lie within the large investments in wind power (as well as the decontamination of industrial land) need to be widely utilised and linked to the growth of manufacturing and service companies within the county. The renewal efforts will be strengthened by intensified collaborations of an international character between research, education, business and the public sector, including further development of the driving innovative functions at Mid Sweden University and Umeå University. Prioritised direction for continued cluster development is finding synergies, services and products that intersect industries and regions and base these upon already established clusters/strategic networks.

Existing networks/clusters: The Forest as a Resource: Number One Forest Industry Network, the Biorefinery of the Future, Safety and Rescue Region (SRR), Bank/insurance/pension (CER), Environmental/energy technology (Clean Tech), Digital information management/archive, Tourism industry

Examples of new strategic networks: Sensor IT, Materials science, Electric hybrids/hydraulics, the experience industry, Local food production, Logistics & transport

Creativity and drive need to be cultivated at an early age, for everyone, regardless of circumstances, gender or origin. More sustainable support systems are needed since Västernorrland should represent a positive entrepreneurial environment, where new ideas and research results can be transformed into innovations for new employment opportunities and new enterprise.

Directional target: In 2020, the county will have a collaborative and supportive structure that pushes for a dynamic entrepreneurial and innovative climate on a high level in Sweden.

Measures shall be implemented until 2020, in order for Västernorrland to

- become one of the best entrepreneurial environments in Sweden, with an increasing share of young business owners
- be characterised by a speedy and competitive transition from ideas/research to sustainable implementation
- become known for its regional innovative environments and for the development of dynamic networks and clusters
- have had strong commercial success in, e.g., a growing energy and environmental technology industry

The ambitions also cover the targets in the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding Swedish targets to attain 3 per cent of GDP in R&D investments (Sweden approx. 4%), increase the amount of renewable energy consumption to 20 per cent of the energy supply (Sweden 49%) and increase energy efficiency by 20 per cent.

In-depth information

The successful companies and employees of the future want flexibility, freedom, fast pace, connections, participation and challenges. Working life shall be personal, with room for development. As previously stated, innovation processes happen faster in regions with well-developed social capital. It is therefore important to take advantage of different forms of social capital for the growth of both the county and its residents. Creativity, drive and entrepreneurship shall be encouraged already at an early age, regardless of resources or other background. However, this demands developed and persistent support structures to seize the attitudes and demanding tasks the county faces in this area.

Västernorrland shall stand for a good innovation climate, where new ideas and research results can be transformed into innovations that create new work opportunities, new companies and which contribute to regional competitive powers. The challenge lies in inspiring companies/industries to see their growth potential, to develop their innovation propensity and thereby increase their competitive edge. It is about paying attention to and developing supply as well as demand based on the operators when building supporting structures. In other words, it is not just about promoting various advice and development centres, it is also about focusing on (often gentle) support systems that can make it easier for companies to improve their conditions of actually achieving innovation, i.e. create added value through renewal. Strengthening the connection between these systems is an important task in order to meet targets.

Amongst the forums for promoting such connections are the networks represented by the county's prioritised cluster areas. We shall therefore continue work with the already strong cluster profiles of Västernorrland, but also open up to simultaneously complement these with new strategic networks and cluster initiatives that have the capacity to get established and grow. It is also strategically important to pay attention to the opportunities available at the intersection between different existing cluster fields. For this to be possible, there needs to be meeting places for strategic collaboration within and outside of the county where individual business development and innovation form the final decision for success and consequently for the county's development. So as to be able to achieve their full development potential, companies and other triple-helix operators need to find collaboration formats and business arrangements that reach out to many industries and technological and geographical organisations. Naturally, this includes an international perspective, where the EU as the "home market" must become the given market perspective for companies in the majority of industries.

The sustainable development perspective involves a broad approach and insight of the whole of society. In this respect, innovative environments are needed in order to create an active base for developing new ideas where the social and environmental perspectives form the entrance into new business opportunities. There is good customer potential for innovations and enterprise within both sectors for preventative and promotive public health initiatives as well as in the health and welfare sector. One other important area is tourism and the creative industries within design, art and culture as a future oriented part of the service industry that is expected to grow and enrich "traditional" industry.

Setting energy and climate targets shall make the county a leading example of a modern, green society built upon renewable resources and where sustainable, innovative industries can be run whilst adhering to climate conditions. Västernorrland has good opportunities to create established market operators within the green industries. This is where future innovative climate and energy solutions are developed. Based on the county's potential within green industry, target-oriented efforts will result in the creation and development of new markets. The county shall develop on a national scale and become an important producer and exporter of sustainable, renewable energy as well as technological and system solutions for the general public, businesses and public administration. We shall persistently strive to develop renewable

resources and environmental technology linked to the county's agriculture and forestry industries, such as energy crops, biogas and local foods. Promoting the growth of strategic networks between businesses is an important piece of the puzzle here.

The IT sector is developing rapidly. The emergence of new services and products is driven by technological developments and strong demand. This will place demands on innovation and adaptation of both the private and public sectors. IT provides companies with the possibility of increased effectivity and productivity. It also provides great business development potential through new sales channels and opportunities to reach new markets cost-effectively. We need to work strategically to increase IT use amongst people, companies and public operators within the county as this is of great importance for the county's competitive power and capabilities for sustainable development. Added to this are the specific future possibilities that can be found in Västernorrland's powerful position within the digital information management sector (both public and private).

Appendix 3 provides a list of ideas for initiatives and measures that can be used as a means of support in implementing the strategy, which have been discussed in the partnership during the work on the county strategy. These are introduced under the titles stating the direction of the ambitions in accordance with the following:

I

- *Strengthened innovation and investment climate*
- *Better promotion of entrepreneurship and new enterprise*
- *Driven cluster and innovation systems*
- *Strategic marketing of the county*

8.4 Accessibility and infrastructure as a driving force

Västernorrland shall be an attractive county to live in, work in and visit. The county shall be attractive to national and international investors, visitors, conferences and other activities. We need to implement system-integrated investments for sustainable freight and passenger transport, which facilitate developing living environments, business, employment and service. Not least must there be more closely connected railway initiatives taking place along the Bothnian Corridor as well as east-west along the Central and Ådalen Lines, with support from the EU TEN-T prioritisations. Furthermore, we must obtain a functional and sustainable expansion of the region between and within municipalities and neighbouring counties, as well as towards the national and international arenas. Strong investments together with conscious coordination of housing and public transport will lead to success. This requires good consensus and joint prioritisation amongst the county's public and private operators. Well-developed IT infrastructure that is at least in-line with the rest of Sweden plays important part, whereby the potential for sustainable business and living is created for the more sparsely populated areas of the country.

Directional target: In 2020, the county will have widely reached a competitive and sustainable accessibility

Measures shall be implemented until 2020, in order for Västernorrland to

- have funded plans for implementation that eliminate the large bottlenecks in the regional transport infrastructure: double tracks between Härnösand and Gävle, and a development of the Central and Ådalen lines
- allow for conditions that facilitate a competitive airline traffic
- have well-functioning freight and passenger transport that contribute to a sustainable expansion of the region
- give all residents and companies access to a fully developed, competitive and quality IT infrastructure
- give private and public services a level of accessibility and quality that increases the appeal of the entire county
- have the counties integrate the development perspectives into the RUS in their development and overview plans

The ambitions also directly and indirectly cover the targets in the Europe 2020 strategy and the corresponding Swedish targets. They shall most clearly focus on the matter of CO2 reduction and increased energy efficiency.

In-depth information

By striving for increased accessibility, improved infrastructure and developed passenger and goods transport, we create a functional and sustainable regional expansion between the county municipalities, neighbouring counties and to the national and international arenas. This bridges the large distances in the county, giving us more competitive strength and availability on regional, national and global scales. It also provides women and men better conditions for equal access to the labour market through commuting. In a similar way, investing in the different forms of broadband networks, other ICT solutions and mobile telephony are of high priority. This is to build up the strong competitive conditions for strengthened business and living throughout the county. Accessibility is

also a matter of performing adapted planning initiatives for reduced vulnerability with the aim of avoiding the elimination of society's basic infrastructure such as communication highways, electricity/telephone supply, water and waste management.

Over forthcoming years, a powerful coordinated effort needs to be made in terms of public transport and of public transport in relation to housing development so that we can achieve the positive development effects in Västernorrland – and Norrland as a whole – that completed and announced infrastructure investments indicate will come. Should future housing planning take place along the highlighted public transport routes, conditions for a good level of service within public transport will increase for a sustainable society. These efforts can result in positive effects for the county as a whole, particularly for certain municipalities/districts. Nevertheless, there must be a differentiation in outlook so that housing qualities of strategic value outside of the routes can be highlighted and included in the commuter regions. We should make the most of the advantages provided by a widened, realistic commuter region for businesses, households and individuals when it comes to being in reach of a better labour market, greater customer potential, broadened shopping range, greater choice of education and more varied access to nature, culture and experiences.

Now that we are making inroads into densifying and enabling public transports, there will nevertheless be areas that are not included. In these areas – to the western side of the county and coastal areas – it remains important to have a well-functioning, well-maintained road network, which requires dialogue and consensus with national operators in particular. In parallel, broadband and telephone networks will be expanded to secure essential, modern communication quality meeting the same standards as the rest of Sweden, so that residents, businesses and visitors to these areas have access to well-motivated services and transport, in addition to the chance of visiting natural and cultural heritage sites in the county. We also need to develop and maintain sustainable infrastructure in the more sparsely populated areas of the county that are more specifically beneficial to industry – for example for continued development within the agricultural and tourism industries. In this area, better dialogue and collective action are needed, as is strategic financing from both national and regional funds.

For the business sector and to maintain the proximity to the international arena, it will remain important to have well-functioning air traffic in the county that provides opportunities for frequent, flexible national and international travel. Many industry operators see this as a condition for securing their competitive power and developing their business, just as it is a way for the county to attract new enterprise. In any circumstances, air traffic must be maintained as long as we do not have rail travel to/from Arlanda Airport within two hours.

Appendix 3 provides a list of ideas for initiatives and measures that can be used as a means of support in implementing the strategy, which have been discussed in the partnership during the work on the county strategy. These are introduced under the titles stating the direction of the ambitions in accordance with the following:

I

- *Well-developed accessibility and competitive infrastructure*
- *Forward-facing communication and IT usage*
- *Sustainable regional expansion*

9. Implementation phase with follow-up and evaluation

9.1 Guiding strategic county partnership and responsible operators

To a great extent in each area, the practical development work focuses on achieving collaboration and cohesive outlook amongst a range of different operators. The power of development work is significantly increased through unanimous prioritisation and interaction.

One focal point for the county's regional growth effort is the **County Partnership**, which is the collective, strategic, regional network that includes municipal representatives and the Association of Local Authorities, the County Council, Almi Företagspartner AB, the Mid Sweden University, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the County Administrative Board, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (ERDF/Programme Office), the Chamber of Commerce, the Swedish Federation of Business Owners and the labour unions. This partnership is given the overall responsibility for creating collaborations in order to reach the targets of RUS and the programmes/strategies therein. The County Governor is the Chair.

The County Partnership provides guiding advice for the strategic regional work that aims to create long-term growth within the county. Consequently, the County Partnership also acts as the steering group for the implementation phase of the regional development strategy. In doing so, the Partnership is also responsible for regional sustainability and development matters – regardless of area – being included in a mutual context and discussed in a regional arena. Nevertheless, the direct responsibility for the realisation can vary, however shall always have an operative position within the organisation for the respective sector programme and strategy. A holistic perspective and the various sustainability dimensions form the foundations for building a regional platform for development issues.

During the forthcoming programme period taking place between 2011 and 2020, it is highly likely that a decision will be made to form a new region. In all probability, this will mean that new operators will be responsible for issues of regional growth. Thus it is important to take this into account even at this stage. As a result, it is also important to create a strategic regional platform with working methods that also work when a new chief operator takes over responsibility for the regional development work. The County Partnership serves such a purpose and can therefore act as a conduit during the changeover and thus ensure a continuation of the stable work to promote regional competitive strengths within the county.

The **County Administrative Board's development staff** will be the preparatory and monitoring body for RUS through dialogue and adjustment of incoming programmes and strategies. The development staff are supported by a large number of established, well-functioning networks, steering groups and advice functions that can contribute in different ways to a time-efficient and cost-effective implementation and completion of RUS. One example of these forums is the partnership for the rural programme and the regional service programme, the County Leadership Group for Gender Equality, the RÖK Partnership (regional agreement for introduction and integration), Sekom Y, etc.

9.2 Sector programme and regional strategies

The implementation of the regional development strategy primarily takes place through efforts within various regional sector programmes and overall strategies present within the different areas.

In addition to the above-mentioned regional sector programmes and strategies, there are other regional steering documents including the Agreement for International Collaboration, Regional agreement for introduction and integration and the IT strategy for Västernorrland County. Strategic guidelines based on the county's strategy documents are also summarised in the EU-related Structure Funds Programme, the Social Funds Programme and the Countryside Programme. Work regarding equality, environment and nature is steered by both national and regional target documents and steering documents. These are integrated into the day-to-day operational areas.

Where there are no specific programmes or strategies, specific and more clearly-defined efforts will be carried out within the existing operators' levels. Efforts will also take place within and between the different municipalities as well as through other important operators within industry, civil society organisations and other authorities that will take on specific commitments during the programme period. Where necessary, the County Partnership is tasked with initiating complementary programme writing.

A strengthened and constructive consensus along with an already established collaboration between various operators provides us with the right conditions to reach our targets. RUS and the sector programmes as common foundations for regional priorities significantly increase the force behind our efforts. Another success factor is the County Administrative Board, together with other bodies, forming the strategic leadership and all the collaborative power that this entails. This becomes even clearer during the strategy period, as the municipalities in the county, the County Council and other organisations progressively decide in what way the RUS guidelines shall be implemented within each organisation. In order to increase the coordination level and facilitate the formalisation of these processes and activity plans, **annual work programmes** for the implementation of RUS will be developed jointly in the county.

To achieve the vision and targets of this strategy, long-term, sustainable and strategic development work is required. The regional development strategy shall be the basis for all of those working to develop the county in various ways. Together we will choose the path to accomplish the vision by 2020. It is the total combination of operators, individuals, processes, programmes and enterprises that affect the development.

9.3 Follow-up and evaluation of informative strategy work

The follow-up of the RUS targets and their completion within the implementation of the strategy shall focus partly on the RUS structure and partly on the existing sector programmes. For a qualitative realisation of targets, performances need to be in close agreement with the ambitions stated. A follow-up system for successive and long-term learning also needs to be in place. It is also important to pay attention to how environmental factors change the conditions for the efforts and the validity of the targets.

The follow-up is also facilitated by well-formulated, well-grounded targets; clear plans for the RUS completion; consequent follow-ups of results and effects and finally, an evaluation of efforts and working processes. The experiences from the collective follow-up operations give us the opportunities for improving the completion of the development strategy.

Running parallel to the completion processes, there shall be an on-going, systematic learning process. This is a matter of effectively exchanging information between various actors and of having simple follow-up routines, but in some cases it is also a matter of having a more advanced monitoring method and way of obtaining information. In the relatively general guidelines of the county strategy, there is a natural difficulty which means that many targets cannot be directly measured or evaluated. These characteristics also apply to the guidelines for the operations. The follow-up must therefore allow room for this in ways such as creating good indicators to reflect the development.

The partnership and the concerned organisations must then also develop the forms of keen and actual learning in a way that does not clash with the implementation processes. The actual learning is connected to how the results from follow-up and evaluation are spread; how the dialogue space between various operators is established and how the knowledge basis may influence new decisions and target formulations. The challenge lies in effectively (systematically) making information and experiences available and raising this for building knowledge in different organisations and networks. Primarily we need to make the most of existing meeting places that already have a mental and physical infrastructure, and secondarily complement these with new ones that may promote the knowledge aim.

In order to assess whether the county's development is sustainable, methods that suit the sustainability perspectives need to be applied and developed to analyse and lead the work. If we are to show that development is going in a sustainable direction, the trend for each chosen measurable variable should basically be positive.

In order to be effective, the monitoring by the partnership and other relevant organs involved in meeting the objectives of the county strategy should be based on different perspectives, using varying methods and data.

Completion: The regional growth work should make it clear which efforts are linked to the county strategy; how specific implementation programmes are linked to the strategy and to what extent various parties participate.

Working methods: The organisation and working process involved in the strategy implementation, including annual work programmes, shall be evaluated.

Mechanisms for development/growth: Clarification of how and why various strategies are expected to be articulated and/or lead to the desired results and effects.

Sustainability aspects: It should be possible to show how different strategies are motivated and mobilised through a sustainability perspective, and contribute to sustainable development and growth. Variables in each and every one of the three dimensions (economic, social, ecological) and their adjoining indicators are needed for this. (For example, we will measure the environmental perspective by following up on environmental targets and environmental quality norms.

External monitoring: Systematic collection, distribution and feedback of global information will be secured.

Follow-up is a question of defining the relevant, observable measures of effects and results. However this also involves routines for compilation, accounting and reporting of these. The follow-up will comprise on-going compilations of those measures that can be specified amongst the targets established in the strategy. Supplementation with a number of indicators will take place to provide a more comprehensive template for analysis of the development.

Evaluation shall conclude in value judgements of target attainment. It is important that the combined county strategy process becomes the object of evaluation, perhaps through subsequent research. Such an evaluation must take place throughout the programme period. It shall initiate learning processes within strategic planning through the feedback that is created. The feedback shall contain value judgements of the working methods, activities and projects. Feedback should be able to initiate corrections and improvements to the working processes of the strategy completion.

The more immediate formation of the follow-up and evaluation in the RUS will be integrated with the *Learning programme for the county's regional development* that was developed by the county council in March 2011 and that shall be successively revised in parallel to the duration of the strategy work. Some of the fixed points for the continued operations are as follows:

The County Partnership has the responsibility of judging how the strategy works as a guidance for regional development work, for initiating the follow-ups and relevant knowledge basis for this and where there is a need for decisions for corrections to the strategy and work concentration. The County Administrative Board's development staff (and ultimately the County Management) are responsible for organising the learning system around the RUS and to coordinate it with the broader, county-strategy-linked, regional growth efforts in the county. Such an arrangement should be defined in terms of:

- Follow-up agendas, work groups, indicator lists, types of meeting etc.;
- Reports and documentation that summarise the analysis results, follow-ups and evaluations;
- A communication strategy for the outward parts of the learning process, including: dialogue space, online solutions such as a county-wide knowledge hub/think tank (PolicYnet).
- Openness for analysis and work with learning that is carried out in other regions, on national and international levels.

The learning plan will be rolled out in two-year periods, currently starting in 2011–2012. It is possible for the detailed RUS work with learning follows this timetable and otherwise coordinate with the designated annual management plans for the completion of the RUS. Initially, it is important that the structure for the learning work is clarified, that target indicators are specified and resource matters solved.

Regional analysis report

Regional analysis report *The Future of Västernorrland – what do we know about it?*

Introduction

The answer to the question posed in the title is that we do not know how things will turn out – which could be a good thing. But by taking a look back throughout history and around us, we can gain an understanding of how different courses of events can influence the way we behave in our future. To be able to achieve sustainable growth and development, we need to be aware of our strengths in the form of both resources and competence.

In this analysis document, we shall touch upon some of the internal and external relationships viewed as being crucial to how Västernorrland shall develop over the coming ten years. Based on this, we formulate some summary challenges that shall form the foundations for continuing positions regarding strategic targets and future initiatives for work with regional growth.

To a great extent, one starting point has been to use existing statistics and information locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to develop new insights into the county and its neighbouring regions. An in-depth analysis has been provided in an appendix as a complement to this report. This analysis provides more detailed information regarding different development trends and variables present.

It is important to underline that the analysis refers to the region that Västernorrland currently represents, independent of any future potential regional structures. In the future, the region issue must not limit outlooks, priorities and business opportunities. The county needs to work from a common regional development strategy, regardless of how the regional question is settled, with the aim of utilising the conditions of and access to sustainable development in the county.

Some of the principal lines of Västernorrland's development conditions can be identified, based on the external monitoring. They are summed up in the various sections that are presented in the document and can be formulated as three overall challenges:

• ***Increased accessibility:***

In a world of rapid changes, the county's geographical location in the centre of both Sweden and the Nordic countries offers great potential to develop good communications to and from the county in a greater regional, national and international perspective. This also applies to making the most of the future advantages provided by the regional structure for creating sustainable regional growth with accessibility within many different areas.

• ***Strengthened innovative ability:***

There is an inherent renewal and development potential within companies, our strong clusters and in society in general and we need to find a way for it to be fully utilised. The county's traditional industry structure needs to be crossed with new businesses and joined together with renewable powers to create a driving and permissible climate of entrepreneurship and investment. To supply manpower, skills and competence, developed collaboration is needed, as well as us jointly take care of the entire workforce potential to create an attractive and dynamic labour market.

• Positive population growth:

When the demographic situation of the county is combined with a clear increase in urbanisation, there is a need for a break in trend to be able to achieve a more even balance in the age distribution. We can create this by fully utilising the positive net immigration – not least of those people born abroad. Initiatives are needed to increase quality of life and to contribute to increased employment levels and higher average ages for both women and men.

Where are we?

Västernorrland is part of a broader European and northern Scandinavian context, with its geographical location in the middle of the Nordic countries and in central Sweden, which makes it well integrated into trans-regional relations. There are advantages here in this relatively well kept natural and living environment. But the development has led to a marked concentration of the country's population in the major city regions, with Västernorrland the “southern outpost” of this part of the country sharing the challenge of being home to a meagre tenth of Sweden's population. Västernorrland has the potential to mobilise strengths, using the county's central geographical position from a greater regional perspective in line with the EU's ambition for a developed Baltic Sea region and expanded communication lines along the Bothnian Corridor. In recent years, the close, functional connection within the Corridor with the neighbouring counties of Gävleborg, Jämtland and Västerbotten has been strengthened through both industrial and organisational cooperation as well as investments into industry.

Geographically, Västernorrland is a large region built upon contacts along river valleys and coast, characterised by a multi-centred, heterogeneous regional structure and “ribbon development”. With its 243,000 residents, the county is home to barely three per cent of Sweden's population. Västernorrland occupies 5.3 per cent of the land area. This corresponds to 11.2 inhabitants per square kilometre – compared with 22.6 for the country. The coast along Ångermanland has a population density approximately the same as the national level, whereas Sundsvall/Timrå has a large 28.

Just as the northern counties in general, the regional economy has its main basis on raw materials such as earth, forest and water power – showing just how much the settlements have adapted to nature's conditions. Recent decades have seen rapid developments in technology and the globalisation process, changing the main emphasis of the economy to more service-based products and knowledge-based service production. Consequently, the importance of population density has also increased and we must utilise the advantages given to us by the regional structure for the future: Ribbon developments create the grounds for strong transport communications, multi-centres provide a varied range of good quality housing and the volume of 125,000 people within a 45 minute car journey from the centre of Sundsvall is amongst one of the highest in northern Sweden etc.

Challenge:

- Utilise the county's central location in the Nordic countries and at the same time, turn the problems of the sparse building patterns into an advantage.
- Develop international collaboration, e.g., via the Baltic Sea Cooperation

Population census and demographics

The demographic development means that we are standing before a historic generation shift in all areas of society over forthcoming years. With an increasing proportion of the elderly and

(hopefully) a continued high birth rate, there is the risk for a very high support burden for the county's active population. This may give rise to financial imbalance and welfare losses. Some areas of the county have hit hard by people leaving the region, whilst others have only marginally grown in relation to other comparable regions. They are people who move to the county from abroad. They contribute to positive immigration statistics, whereas the county is not currently attracting sufficient new residents from other parts of Sweden. One important factor to future population growth is the increased level of immigration as well as the stable reception of refugees in the county's municipalities that leads to good possibilities for establishing roots in the county. A connection between economic growth and a region's ability to attract and employ women has also been demonstrated. A powerful increase of men and women aged up to 44 will be needed for a better age balance and development in the county.

A projection of the county's population from 2010 up until and including 2020 shows that if current trends do not change, the county will see a decrease of around 4,000 people. If Västernorrland is to successfully maintain its population level of approximately 243,000 residents up until 2020, net immigration of around 500 people per year is needed. If the county is to successfully increase its population to, for example, 250,000 in 2020, this must entail an increase of net immigration to around 1,150 people per year.

Challenge:

- Reverse Västernorrland's decline in population growth to create a sustainable age structure and an increased number of residents of childbearing age.

Living environment and public health

An attractive living environment that appeals to many people is strategically decisive for places and regions' future. To create the basis for social welfare and equal health, it is important to participate in the local community. Generally speaking, the people of Västernorrland live well and feel well, in a safe county. However, life expectancy for men in the county is the shortest in all of Sweden and for women, life expectancy is the second shortest. There is great potential for improvement when it comes to preventive public healthcare measures. The positive trend in the development of poor health must be strengthened so the county can reach national averages. There are big differences in employment rates and income levels between men and women, between those born outside and inside Sweden and between different areas of the county. Nevertheless, Västernorrland has a lower spread between low and high earners and between women and men's incomes than for the country on average. Imbalances within education, age structures and living and working life that were identified in the analysis risk leading to geographical and social differences. This in turn risks leading to decreased social acceptance and a lack of resource mobilisation. In many aspects, the equality situation in the county is good, and should be seen as a strength in growth for economic and social development, health and well-being.

The demands for housing and the range of housing in the county is uneven. The average prices for smaller properties is low in comparison to the rest of the country, with price developments over the past year being lower than the national average. A sustainable trend for the county would be to build housing and develop pricing that reflects regional and local growth on a par with national levels. Västernorrland is however one of the counties that is spending the most on culture per capita – an important factor to increase attractiveness. According to surveys, many county residents have a clear interest in history and believe that it is important to know about the history of the county and their home districts as well as its development and culture. This strengthens local and county identity.

Challenge:

- Get more people established in the county – either new residents or returning residents.
- Visualise and develop the quality of the county's environment, culture, cultural environment and activities for residents.
- Take advantage of the (in many respects) good equality situation for a sustainable, including growth and bridging over social and geographical differences.
- Profoundly improve public health amongst all population groups.

Environment and natural resources

The nature has long been an important resource for Västernorrland, an area characterised by its highly valued natural settings and cultural environment. The nature is very beautiful and is dominated by the distinctive landscape with forest-covered plateaus, large rivers and lacinated coastline which has provided unique conditions for the county's development. Not only does basic industry rest upon this, but so does future industry linked to the persistent raw material resources, energy streaming, environmental technology, tourism and experiences. The world heritage site, Höga Kusten [the High Coast] is a distinctive natural resource to both preserve and develop. The natural and cultural environments are important to women and men who live in the county and provide a source for recreation and knowledge of times past. And so, protecting the natural and cultural environments and access to them is an important welfare matter.

A long history of industry has led to work identifying and taking care of many polluted areas. This development has led to new knowledge and growing industries within environmental technology. Västernorrland has very good access to groundwater, both in quality and quantity, which can have development potential for the county. Some of the largest effects of climate change in Sweden have been measured along the Norrland coast, where average temperatures have increased by 2.2 degrees Celsius over just a few decades. The effects of a changed climate require preventative measures being made, linked to aspects such as buildings and infrastructure in addition to the possibilities to utilise the positive effects of climate change, such as longer growing seasons and new crops.

Challenge:

- Reduce the effects on the climate by converting and streamlining energy, together with managing the consequences of a changed climate – making the most of the positive effects of climate change.
- Strengthen and protect access to natural and cultural values for recreational time and tourism.
- Develop the work for creating a toxin-free environment, specifically from past industrial operations.
- Continual development of sustainable technology, system and business solutions with a forward-facing focus on energy and the environment.

Mobility – accessibility – flexibility

The pace at which the environment is changing is placing more and more demands on the future to facilitate essential and fast changes in society. The key matter for the Västernorrland district is how we – based upon our place in the world – can support flexibility with our sparsely populated areas and population base and our local environment, thus improving accessibility so the county's sustainable development is strengthened for the future. The analysis has made clear a long line of mobile and dynamic relationships in which we have

some clear challenges but also a number of good conditions.

Taking into account the accessibility of the county, Västernorrland makes large contributions to national production, when compared to southern regions with more effective contact patterns. In comparison to Norrland's average, the scattered structure of the county's communities and population are compensated for by the proportion of the population in larger densely populated areas and the lower density in rural areas. With this is a significant central point in the Sundsvall area – one of Norrland's biggest labour and housing markets. Despite its importance to the service supply and companies, IT access is lacking in significant in-land areas of the county – despite the reasonable total average for the county. The fibre broadband technology important to the future is clearly less well built than in the neighbouring county of Västerbotten, for example. It can be noted that the companies are still worse than households at using IT and IT communication, which is of course a competitive disadvantage.

Just as in the other Norrland counties, Västernorrland has worse commuter possibilities than in southern Sweden and is yet to develop larger and more durable labour market regions. However on-going investments in the Bothnia and Central railway lines and the European route E4 south in Sundsvall is increasing the potential for travel and growth within the county and over county borders to the north, south and west. Studies show clear growth potential should there be a tailored, sustainably aimed urban development in the affected regions. This development must then manage the different movement patterns of women and men. Such regional expansion appears to be necessary if the the labour market imbalance projected by the generation shift is to be reduced. The county is one of the five counties in the country with the worst balance, based on an accession of 32,000 young people and 47,000 people retiring This places higher requirements on net migration and that the deficit of the number of people moving to the county in relation to other parts of the country must change at the same time as migration from overseas continues to remain high. The deficit in the number of people moving to the county is biggest in comparison to Stockholm, Uppsala and Östergötland. This points to the importance of stimulating the return of the number of people aged between 25-35, based on the positive circumstances that completed surveys of attitudes show.

Challenge: Create tailored measures for strong competitive and sustainable access based on our “sparse starting point” by:

- Developing attractive housing markets and functional local and regional labour markets;
- Taking advantage of the potential of regional growth and achieve sustained service solutions and communications systems in various parts of the county;
- Stabilising the reception of refugees and attracting new residents from within Sweden and abroad, by providing good establishment possibilities.

Communications

The stretches of the East Coast Line and the Bothnia Line link the county's coastal towns – however current travel time is too long to allow for suitable daily commuting. The railway line exhibits a large flow of goods – by European standards – from northern Norrland southwards. The railway from Gävle-Sundsvall/Härnösand is already experiencing large problems with capacity and speed. On-going improvement work with passing points, travel centres, commuter parking etc., is not enough. A double track railway is needed for Gävle-Sundsvall/Härnösand, taking projected traffic amounts into consideration.

The Central railway line/Meråker Line running from east to west has a low standard speed, but through important investments, it has the potential to take over a large flow of the E14's freight

and passenger transport. Just west of Sundsvall, the E14 is of a particularly poor standard. The greatest bottlenecks on the E4 occur through Sundsvall (where new investments have now begun), Härnösand and Örnsköldsvik – all of these areas can be rectified and are profitable to public finances. There are strong grounds for improving the carrying capacity of the low-traffic inland roads based on their importance for the export-intensive forest industry. Smart investments are also needed to facilitate accessibility and sustainability, taking into account the continued large reliance on cars amongst households and companies within the greater part of the region.

Shipping accounts for 60 per cent of freight transport to/from the county, but poses an imbalance problem by way of a smaller amount of imports transported by sea. Here, containerization of goods travelling north would enable the use of idle tonnage, instead of overland transport. In this case, the harbour structure would require increased collaboration between the county's ports and the combi-terminals planned for Tunadal, Sundsvall (and any other potential areas). With regard to civil aviation, there are approximately half a million passengers travelling through the three airports in the county. This has a clear strategic importance for the export industry and the service sector. Without double tracks along the Härnösand-Gävle railway, there is no reason to down-prioritise the airports – something which began de facto when the State did not prioritise any of the county's airports, rather they transferred responsibility to the county and the municipalities.

Broadband access is a central component to the competitive and sustainable development of both county and country. Therefore, state authorities have established that Sweden shall have world-class broadband so that 90 per cent of all households and companies have access to broadband speeds of at least 100 Mbit/s by 2020 and 55 per cent already by 2015. Access to statistics on broadband coverage shows that Västernorrland has work to do in comparison with the rest of the country and neighbouring counties. This is partly a result of Västernorrland's difficult geography. The starting point in 2009 was such that 62 per cent of households in densely populated areas and 8 per cent of households in rural areas had access to a speed of >50Mbit/s. This can be compared with 90 and 40 per cent respectively in Västerbotten (Sweden 65 and 9 per cent respectively).

Challenge:

- Secure financial solutions based on our regional investment needs.
- Make better use of infrastructure by clearing away problems of undercapacity and bearing levels in the communication systems.
- Adapt transport communications in a sustainable direction, where our great reliance on cars may motivate investments into roads, more environmentally friendly cars, smart traffic and pool solutions.

Regional innovation systems and innovation support systems

We need to do more to inspire and provide space for girls' and boys' creativity than we are doing today – starting from an early age. This ability for renewal and adaptation is crucial to the competition and success of Västernorrland. This applies to all areas of society, with the very basis being how to transform new knowledge into a produced value – how companies and societies in a competitive, changing environment can survive, develop and create value by realising and seizing their growth potential. The literature available shows how the way we choose to organise, from strategic networks to clusters and closely connected regional innovations systems, will to a great extent determine our competitiveness.

The main emphasis of Västernorrlands leading innovation systems lie in the processing industry's structure, based on the dominance that was – and continues to be – in the county, based on raw forest materials and electric power (“The Forest as a Resource”). Gradually, sub-contractor systems have been added to this and have sometimes been developed into world-leading specialist network within a long line of areas. Areas such as control technology and engineering, sustainable energy technology, operations and maintenance etc. Universities and other public functions make substantial contributions. Interestingly, the equivalent “heavy operations”, together with the custom sub-contractors also operate within service production, first and foremost via the larger IT-based operations in the Sundsvall area working with government agencies and the forest industry's support functions. There are already many cooperation patterns that can yet be strengthened more in the future, by developing innovative environments and continued, systematic support of collaboration processes within the strategic networks. Networks and clusters that have most noticeably developed in recent years are: Processum – Biorefinery of the Future, Fibre Network/FSCN (The Forest as a Resource), Packaging Mid Sweden (The Forest as a Resource), Safety and Rescue Region (SRR), Bank-Insurance-Pension (CER) and Tourism via two destination investments.

National and international measurements of regional innovation ability suggests that we must complement the regional innovation system with conscious, supporting measures within many areas, especially for the promotion of entrepreneurship and business development. In recent years there has been a slight improvement of available support structures, however far too many are based on less sustainable, project-limited solutions. There is a need for improvement here that goes in a stabilising direction. The fact that the building of a new supporting system is effective is shown by progress made in the county, with regards to the frequency of newly started companies and their survival; attitudes to entrepreneurship amongst both women and men; the stimulation of product development and patent applications as well as an increased supply of risk capital.

Challenge:

- Clarify and strengthen the county's cluster profiles as regional innovation systems;
- Complement with new strategic networks and cluster initiatives with the ability to develop;
- Take advantage of the inherent will for renewal held by people, companies, research and the public sector;
- Streamline support measures for a strengthened economic climate, broadened new businesses, improved promotion of entrepreneurship and finance mechanisms tailored to the region.
- Further develop support systems for products and service development at Swedish top levels.

Trade, industry and business

After the crisis years of the 1990s, there has been a substantial streamlining within the county's industry, whilst service production has simultaneously become of greater importance. From the middle of the 2000s, employment growth within business sector services increased more than the Swedish average, while the county's total employment within that sector saw a weak increase. The positive trend was broken by the effects from global financial crisis which hit the county's industry hard, before showing a glimpse of a turn in the autumn of 2010. Part of the explanation for the county having a more problematic picture than the rest of Sweden is the business structure, where the development in growing industrial and service industries is not enough to cover the decline in the shrinking segments. Further explanations for the county are,

a non-existent employment supplement from the public sector; a continuing traditionally gender-divided labour market and, of course, lower growth contributions from the growing private service sector than nationally, but most of all in the bigger city areas. There are no marked deviations from Sweden in general in terms of the size division amongst county businesses. Structural changes during the 2004–2008 period are explainable as approximately ten per cent of the difference from national development regarding the division of industries, however are mainly explained by a long line of other regional circumstances.

A study conducted of the vulnerabilities, shows that the basic industry of Västernorrland holds a strong, highly competitive position and with comparative advantages. There is rather good diversification, relatively less dependence on international companies and a high number of personnel with theoretical excellence. However, one dilemma facing the county is productivity development (BRP⁴/employed), predominantly within the manufacturing industry outside of the engineering sector. Reasons contributing to this may can be the price development in some heavy industries – especially with prices being set in US dollars – but also lagging investments as a result of uncertain fluctuations in electricity prices, for example. This has most likely affected the measuring values for the county's exports, where in 2009 the county dropped to 8th place for export volume per inhabitant. A survey of competition development amongst the county's corporations between 2005 and 2008 confirms this picture of a collectively good competitive position, positive trends for workshop and company services, but a negative position and tendencies in, amongst other things, pulp/paper. In 2008 prior to the economic crisis, development in the county was still positive, with Västernorrland ranking 5th place for total GDP per capita. Productivity measured by total salary also increased well in 2008, however was weaker compared to national totals since 2000. This can partly be explained by less favourable employment and salary development.

⁴Gross regional product

Challenge:

- Regain the county's leading position in productivity development and value creation in different industry segments, with focus on service production and achieving higher levels of investment;
- Observe county industry's high dependence on electricity – promote sustainable, long-sighted and stable-priced electricity supplies;
- Make the most of growth potentials in mid-sized companies and in the generation shift occurring within companies, as well as idea and business offshoots from larger companies and the public sector;
- Stimulate the individual responsibility of industries in local and regional development processes and get more companies, company networks and organisations to expand their markets and national and international areas of activity;
- Break down gender segregation within industry and on the labour market, as well as increase workforce participation and open up to new solutions.

Regional supply of skills and competences for the labour market

Manpower and competence supply is a crucial development issue – for individuals, employers and society's development as a whole. The matter is applicable on local, regional and national levels and also has an impact on events taking place from a greater global perspective. It is becoming clearer in the transition to the “knowledge economy”, in which an increasing number of industries are becoming involved. Experiences drawn especially from the most recent economic crisis clearly show that competence requirements are continually changing at increasing speeds. If we take a look at the collective levels of education amongst people aged 25–64, we see that the county has a higher level of both women and men with upper secondary school education when compared nationally, and a lower level of those with longer post-secondary qualifications. In regard to the latter, there is an evident difference between women and men, which is particularly preferential to the younger women. In general, those born outside the Nordic countries have higher levels of education than those from Västernorrland and are also divided by gender, however this is not shown in employment statistics. There is competence here that is not currently being used.

Vocational and educational structures in the county's current labour market are greatly affected by the increase in retirements. Despite the fact that retirement levels are already significantly higher than those entering the workforce, this is not yet shown in labour market statistics. When the rationalisation resources within this have been exhausted, an improved market state can rapidly increase the demand for manpower in both the private and public sectors and within various industries and vocational categories. Adjustment work continues to be needed here. Well-functioning educational efforts on all levels, that create the conditions for life-long learning, are of continuous importance to development work. Insight and the ability to make the most of knowledge and competence develops competitive operations and areas of the labour market.

Challenge: A comprehensive perspective is required for achieving dynamic matching for supply of skills and competence for the labour market:

- Strategic cooperation amongst industry, education and other operators in society to increase the supply of manpower and competences and skills for the labour market.
- An attractive, well-functioning and dynamic labour market.
- Utilisation of the entire workforce potential.

Complexity: Globalisation, urbanisation, individualisation

Increasingly radical globalisation means that everything is moving faster and following new patterns. We have arrived at a rapidly increasing “borderlessness” in the majority of ways and this gives the county great opportunities – but also threats. The continuing acceleration of technological development is contributing to a disappearance of the need to “fit in” with collective patterns and to a focus on the individual person or object's identity. The strong pull of major city regions has a negative impact on the regions that are less attractive to move to. At the same time, the world is opening up to a global market that we can work on within various industries, no matter where we are located. The opportunities to specialise that can be found here can also mean that larger regional collaboration patterns are crystallised, in which smart collaboration with our surrounding regions can lead to a joint impact.

With greater movement and increasingly radical globalisation, it is also becoming more common for collaborations within different areas that are not founded on geography. There are development opportunities in the stabilising values found in the county's cultural, clean environment and good natural resources that can join in with this larger, new world. And so there is reason for the strategic development work to safeguard the county's strong export position, and closely reflect upon how an international perspective can be integrated clearly into future aims.

Challenge: In our rapidly changing world, with many conflicting signals at time, we need to apply the following perspectives to Västernorrland's development:

- See wider overall pictures
- Close, smart and sustainable
- Utilise the distinctive features of the territory
- Find nearby and far away growth promoters
- The driving force of women and people born outside of Sweden become normative in society
- Form clear regional leadership

Appendix 2**Regional structural images – a step towards a coherent spatial development plan in Västernorrland**

In a complex and rapidly changeable world, both companies and urban planning need to have a strategic ability to visualise sustainable alternatives that can be positively developed both in the near and distant future. Consequently, the need to cooperate and have an overall view is emphasized in an increasing number of contexts. Västernorrland's regional development strategy is no exception – this is shown by the target structures and “mobilisation strategy”.

Directions for driving a regional comprehensive view of the development and growth planning are given with successively stronger signals from both the EU and national sides. As part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, cohesion policy targets for economic and social cohesion have been complemented with the term *territorial cohesion*. This underlines the importance of viewing development planning – both spatial and otherwise – in one context. Many national strategies express the same thing. Additions to the Swedish planning and building act (PBL), are now being followed up by further expressing the strategic role of municipal overall plans. PBL provides clear legal support to the integration with others and also national and regional planning.

This is also part of the background that has accentuated the previous ambitions in the county to work with cohesive spatial development planning. One of the first efforts was made in conjunction with the 2004-2007 Västernorrland regional development programme. In this, the ambition was to prepare a spatial regional development plan, based on aspects such as the municipalities' overall planning. This led to the initiative for some inter-regional projects, where there was the opportunity to work with physical structural aspects linked to the EU's territorial cohesion policy.

Four regional structural aspects have been created as part of the foundation materials for the RUS. Their aim is to describe some of the county's targets and challenges, especially the functional ambitions, using a map. Two aspects are based upon fine-scale statistics on a voting district level. The intention is for the structural aspects to function as integrated aspects of the four respective focus areas in the county strategy, and create a strengthened bridge between aspects of analysis and completion. The maps have however not (yet) been developed into clear targets and strategic illustrations.

A continued refinement of the work is needed to make the structural aspects more clear and in line with the collected targets and direction of the action plan for the RUS and in turn, more usable for urban planning within the municipalities and the county. The biggest challenge lies with creating an inter-sectoral summary of the four aspects into one: A collected, territorial expression for the county's sustainable regional growth ambitions.

In reinforcing the territorial perspective, we will inevitably touch upon sometimes uncomfortable localisation matters – but at the same time, this is also the geographical price we have to pay for increasing context and clarity in coherent regional and municipal planning. Developing competitive environments for increased quality of life and growth as indicated by the county strategy points is about more location-bound aspects than are traditionally managed in the physical and overall planning. This means that in our continued development ambitions, we must not hesitate when faced with these difficulties, but instead try to find geographically linked tools that facilitate broad dialogues and effective realisation of targets. On-going dialogue in some preparatory county forums are required so the necessary development process can result in concrete programme and planning work.

Appendix 3**Examples of ideas for investments in harmony with the focus areas' development targets****1. The individual as a driving force*****Encouraging environments of Västernorrland***

- Prioritisation of building new housing in the areas in demand (2011: Central Sundsvall and Örnsköldsvik);
- Development, production and marketing of attractive living environments – especially for young people, families with children and active senior citizens (population groups willing to move);
- Collected mutual contributions to marketing the county's qualities to prospective new residents or people returning to the county;
- Adjust urban planning to the county's regionally ranked environment and climate targets, which entail a conscious localisation policy for new builds, smart energy use and functional traffic supply;
- Establishment of a regional forum for social sustainability matters for increased strategical planning and mutual initiatives;
- Initiatives promoting good health and encouraging preventative behaviour regarding healthier eating, exercising and free time habits, with equal opportunities for all girls and boys, men and women.
- Efforts for work preventing drug use and leading to higher workplace productivity, reduce the occurrences of drug misuse, violence, injury and accidents to increase quality of life and life expectancy.

Inclusive growth

- Active measures to reduce supply costs by improving the age structure within the county, increasing working capacity and offering secure, safe work;
- Efforts to provide all girls and boys the same opportunity to pursue their education at compulsory school and upper secondary school, thus increasing the number of pupils who go on to higher education;
- Efforts to promote work in changing attitudes and promoting everybody's equal worth, in order to highlight every person's competence and resources;
- Stimulate participation from residents – young people in particular – in different social matters through the organisations in civil society and increase the use of web-based tools;
- Renewed ways to make the most of the potential held by the non-profit sector, social companies and cooperatives as a strengthening channel for the functional integration of people who are either fully or partially outside of the labour market.
- Measures to further adjust accessibility of the physical and IT environments to increase the chances of inclusion and bridging over gaps;
- Pay attention to and promote local commitment and entrepreneurs who are making the most of the nature's potential.

The rich nature and outdoor life of Västernorrland

- Preserve, develop and highlight the unique nature of the county as an attractive access point for outdoor life, quality of life and a developed tourism industry;

- Efforts for increased accessibility to natural environments, especially green areas near densely populated areas.
- Long-term work with water supply and protection of water access;
- Reduced impact on the climate through the transformation and optimisation of energy, as well as managing the effects of a changed climate.

Added value through culture and cultural heritage of the county

- Efforts for culture, cultural heritage and its accessibility to secure the county's appeal and contribute to growth;
- Development of forms for large events in the broader cultural perspective, including sport and recreation;
- Develop and deepen the collaboration between cultural institutions and the civil society
- Find ways to contribute to increased tolerance in participation in modern and future society through knowledge about cultural heritage;
- Create good living and working conditions in the county for cultural practitioners.

2. Competence and skills for the labour market as a driving force

Strategic education collaboration

- Form/develop industry councils as well as a regional competence and skills platform for increased information and planning collaboration within the skills supply and educational area;
- Promote, coordinate and create the conditions for new and existing vocational education and training that is jointly developed by employers, employee organisations and education coordinators to meet the needs for competence;
- Create stronger ties for pupils and students to the region's employers both during and after their time studying. Do this through increased cooperation between education and industry.

The new labour environment

- Build a continual, coordinated and sustainable system for conducting skills analyses with regards to private and public sector employers as a common basis for planning and decision-making for optimised matching efforts;
- Adapt the matching system on the labour market to effectively take advantage of the actual need for manpower and manpower resources
- Promote increased competence and lifelong learning through needs-based efforts to develop competence that reinforces the position of women and men on the labour market – both as employers and employees.
- Strengthen study and career guidance around education and future development potential in keeping with the county's work with sustainable development.

Taking advantage of the entire workforce potential

- Prevent and tackle discrimination in the workplace and work to break down gender-based segregation in the labour market;
- Develop non-traditional work forms and ways of working for young people's possibility to study and work in the county;
- Highlight the competences of people born outside of Sweden and offer complementary education courses and validation for a better match on the labour market;
- Increase the employment rate, providing women and men with equal conditions to support themselves on their salaries; draw attention to gender pay inequalities;
- Prioritise coordinating efforts to information and communication about the

Västernorrland labour market, making it easier to recruit people for studies and jobs.

3. Innovation as a driving force

Strengthened innovation and investment climate

- Mobilise companies' will to regenerate, through new and focused forms of dialogue;
- Strengthen existing meeting places with new ones for developed business relationships within and outside of the county;
- Create increased opportunities to transform developing ideas and research results into entrepreneurship;
- Develop long-term, enduring and flexible collaboration forms for innovation and commercialisation amongst industry, universities/higher education institutions, institutions, civil society and other public and private operators;
- Increase awareness amongst businesses about the potential to be found in evolved board work and external supply capital;
- Develop and optimise regional supply of capital for companies in their early and expansive stages.

Better promotion of entrepreneurship and new enterprise

- Develop and support long-term creative environments within schools, society and industry and build up a system for promoting entrepreneurship from an early age;
- Strengthen the support system and industrial climate with specific focus on promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities amongst young women and men, as well as people born outside of Sweden;
- Stimulate entrepreneurship within potential new industries, such as entrepreneurial activities promoting good health, green industry, the health and welfare sector and cultural and creative industries;
- Make the most of the potential to be found in companies generation shifts.

Driven cluster and innovation systems

- Prioritise research and other innovation initiatives within the strategic competence areas and increase the opportunities for new business solutions amongst them, so inter-regional collaboration can develop existing and future innovation systems;
- Continued and renewed focus on process manager support in innovation systems and in the inclusion of sub-contractor functions in the cluster;
- Develop innovation collaboration amongst the public sector, universities/research institutes and industry – partly new procurement forms, possibilities to “hive off”, joint competence development etc., – as well as supporting infrastructure (pilot/demonstration designs, testbeds etc.);
- Force the pace of the county's transformation process towards greater sustainability within energy supply and energy use to reduce impact on the climate and development of smart technological and system solutions.

Strategic marketing of the county

- Ensure that the county's investments are based on what is produced within the innovation systems and clusters contribute to an increased international competitiveness.
- Enable increased regional, national and international visibility for the clusters and the regional innovation system, subsequently creating increased opportunities to access new markets and regional competitiveness.
- Destination development that responds to national ambitions to increase export maturity and attraction for new markets and target groups;

- Strengthen the county's opportunities to strategically participate in European and Baltic Sea collaborations;
- Structuralise and optimise the county's measures for national and international business recruitment and investment promotion.

4. Accessibility and infrastructure as a driving force

Competitively strengthened infrastructure with developed access

- Improve ties between the regional strategy documents and municipal planning, based upon a regional-local forum for sustainable urban planning;
- Develop working methods for increased systematics and long-sightedness based on the sustainability perspective of physical planning/spatial development planning;
- Focus the bases for decisions and financing solutions in focus Ensure conditions for well-functioning national air traffic to and from the county with good frequency of service and favourable international ties;
- Remove bottlenecks and vulnerabilities in infrastructure, with the aim to provide the conditions for industry to reach out to the global market;
- Conduct efforts for an increased coordination of transport and traffic planning for a more effective flow of goods and increased access to work, education, service and activities;
- Renew attitudes and behaviours towards public transport and create more favourable conditions for commuter groups – for various groups of citizens and based upon the varying needs of women and men, intensify in connection to the expansion of pedestrian and cycle routes;
- Investments into a well-functioning and sustainable road network in the entire county, with focus upon the areas where other transport methods other than road-based ones are not possible;
- Secure a persevering access to service throughout the county, by prioritising different measures in strategic service areas.

Forward-facing communication and IT useage

- Promote the establishment of well-developed, county-wide IT infrastructure that is of high and competitive quality; introduction of cohesive IT advice for the county/region;
- Develop IT communications to reduce journey numbers in terms of environmental responsibility and time optimisation;
- Increase the quality of IT communication in service and healthcare, for example eHealth with focus on the county's effectiveness in bridging distances;
- Stimulate an increased and more in-depth use of IT solutions amongst companies and organisations.

Sustainable regional growth

- Specific efforts for preparation/completion of double tracks along the East Coast Line between Härnösand and Gävle, including temporary, accessibility promoting investments up until time of building (partial double tracks, wyes Maland and Bergsåker respectively).
- Facilitate the promotion of commuting through investments into railways and traffic along the Bothnia Line/East Coast Line and Ånge, and Sollefteå/Långsele respectively;
- Develop combi-terminals at important junctions;
- Promote community building that supports the use of public transport and a development of sustainable regional growth; through coordinated and intermodal terminals, good frequency of service, new buildings in strategic locations etc.

Appendix 4

Targets according to the Europe 2020 strategy and Sweden's national reform programme

The targets of the European cohesion policy are to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion within the EU. It aims to reduce regional differences within the EU, as well as liberate regional growth potential. Structural funds are its primary instrument to target these goals. It is a part of Sweden's work to create sustainable regional growth (N-dep).

Sweden's national reform programme was handed over to the European Commission in April 2011 and states the Swedish national targets that were presented in the 2011 spring budget (Govt. Bill 2010/11:100).

The EU and Swedish targets are summarised in the table below. As a contribution to these targets, the EU suggests various contributions within three prioritised areas:

- Smart growth: develop an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- Sustainable growth: promote a more resource-efficient, green and competitive economy
- Growth for all: stimulate an economy with high levels of employment and with social and territorial cohesion.

Work with regional growth, including the completion of the cohesion policy in Sweden, shall be designed in such a way that the targets can be met.

Appendix 5

Definitions of various concepts

Biorefinery

Extracting different products such as biofuel, fuel, medicines, colours, textile products, solvents and other chemicals from forest or other plant-related raw material

Clean Tech

Clean Technology, where new technological solutions and business models tackle local and global environmental and energy challenges, and meet the requirement to provide competitive profits on investments.

Public health

Public Health is an expression for the state of the public's health, taking both level and distribution into consideration. Good public health is not just that health should be as good as possible – it should also be equally divided through as many different population groups as possible, and is reflected in the overall public health target, “good health on equal terms for all”

Health

Based on various definitions, health can be seen as a *resource* for people to achieve important life goals, a life *balance*, *well-being* and/or the chance for the *ability to act* based on your own circumstances – rather than simply an absence of illness.

Inclusive growth

The concept is observed in the Europe 2020 strategy, where it represents: Growth for all – that shall further high employment and social and territorial solidarity.

Innovation

An idea that is driven to becoming commercially marketable and in demand on a market or, in another way, implemented into a context where new value is created.

Innovation system

Combination of operators and trusting links between them, driving forces and game rules that – through collaboration – affect the ability to create innovations (NUTEK 2009).

Innovation support system

The operators/organisers, private and public support resources and formal regulation who, as individuals or in networks, work to facilitate things for individuals and companies with ideas for innovation and growth.

Integration

Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic and cultural background.

Equality

Equality refers to fair relationships amongst all individuals and groups of society and is based upon the notion that all human beings are of equal value regardless of gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation etc.

Gender equality

Women and men shall have the same powers in shaping society and their own lives. One condition for achieving equality is that women and men have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities within all aspects of life. The term “gender equality” as it is used in Sweden is limited to the relationship between women and men.

Cluster

A geographic and/or other type of gathering, concentrated on businesses and organisations working toward a common vision together with other operators. Other criteria include: clear coordination – often as Triple-helix – clear and target-focused specialisations, joint marketing, etc. (Vinnova 2009).

Quantitative and qualitative gender equality

The quantitative aspect refers to an even distribution of resources amongst women and men from all areas of society, by way of schools, work life, recreational activities and positions of power. An even gender distribution within a group entails that the ratio of women and men is somewhere between 40 and 60 per cent. An even gender distribution is not sufficient on its own to achieve gender equality. It also demands that knowledge, experiences and living conditions of women and men are taken care of – qualitative gender equality work.

Variety

Variety refers to the “mixture of backgrounds and competence of importance to work, quality and customer orientation”.

Human rights

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human rights are universal. They apply all over the world, regardless of country, culture or context.

Science Park

A technology and research park, an environment for growing development companies and with support functions such as evolving meeting places, company incubators, advice centres, joint reception and service functions, close to university research etc. The Åkroken Science Park is an example in Västernorrland.

Social economy

Organised operations with the primary societal goals, build upon democratic values and organisatory freedom from the public sector. Examples include associations, cooperatives and foundations powered by public and member interests, not by profit (Ministry of Culture).

Triple Helix

Cooperation amongst research, public operators and industry. Occasionally expanded to Quadruple Helix, where the trade union movement (wider context) are incorporated.