

15 LIFE ON LAND



SWEDEN AND LIFE ON LAND

MAIN MESSAGES

- **Protect, restore ecosystems and promote sustainable use of ecosystem services.** Intensify efforts to conserve, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems, to ensure habitats for endangered and other species, and to secure the natural production of ecosystem services in landscapes. Combat land degradation and restore degraded land as an urgent priority.
- **Inclusive governance of ecosystems on land.** Promote policy coherence. Integrate and secure ecosystem services and their values in decision-making processes. Mainstreaming biodiversity at all relevant sectors. Develop dialogues and cross-sectoral cooperation. Strengthen tenure rights. Empower women, young people and indigenous peoples and local communities, and the role of civil society. Strengthen education, monitoring and assessment, and spatial planning methods.
- **Sustainable supply chains.** Promote sustainable land and water use through forest management, including agroforestry, agriculture and fisheries, and multifunctional landscapes to increase resilience of societies. Create long-term value for local communities based on sustainable production and services. Strengthen sustainable supply chains, unblock markets and provide financing for sustainable wood products, as value creation to tackle deforestation and forest degradation.

SWEDEN ON TARGET FOR SDG 15: MANAGING MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPES FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

SDG 15 calls for the protection and restoration of land and inland freshwater ecosystems, landscapes and biodiversity and social values. It also frames the challenges and opportunities in terms of rights to resources and the management of natural resources such as agriculture, agroforestry and forestry.

Sweden at work nationally

Sweden's legislation and system of environmental objectives have provisions and goals that cover many aspects of SDG 15. Sweden has a rich experience of efficient governance, for the management of multifunctional landscapes and forests and knowledge-based regulations. Continuous innovation on sustainable value chain opportunities is key. About half of our forests are family-owned private land and approximately 38 per cent of the owners are women. The ongoing integration of ecosystem services in decision-making, and the development of green infrastructure, will contribute to the enhancement of ecological functioning of land-based ecosystems.

The maintenance and further development of sustainable forest management, in accordance with forest policy, environmental objectives and other priorities, requires further work to ensure biodiversity, to counteract and adapt to climate change and to stimulate increased growth and employment. Sweden's main challenges to achieving SDG 15 are to develop broad multi-stakeholder collaboration to live up to goals for the environment, employment and climate.

In recent years, the Government has made one of the largest efforts in Sweden to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of land-based ecosystems and to halt the loss of biodiversity. The Government has presented a strategy for Sweden's national forest pro-

gramme. The vision for this programme is that forests will contribute to jobs and sustainable growth throughout the country and to the development of a growing bioeconomy. The programme supports stakeholder dialogue and efforts to further develop sustainable forest management practices nationally and internationally.

The Government is working to implement a Swedish strategy for biodiversity and ecosystem services adopted by the Riksdag, in 2014. The strategy aims to achieve many Swedish environmental objectives that contribute to achieving both the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, and the goals of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (Aichi Biodiversity Targets).

The Government is making historic efforts to formally protect valuable natural resources, for example through the introduction of additional nature reserves. In 2015–2017, more than 700 nature reserves and three national parks were established.

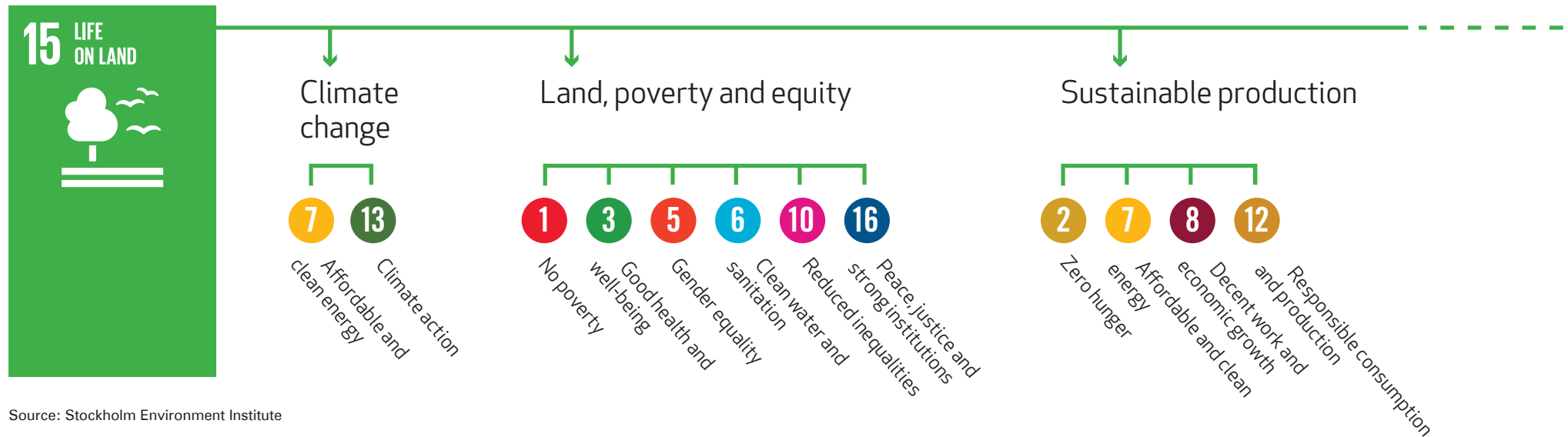
Sweden at work globally

The Government is engaged in regular efforts to mainstream biodiversity and the value of ecosystem services in relevant policy areas and processes, including through the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Over the next few years, efforts will focus on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets, and discussions of what a post-2020 framework could look like.

Sweden contributes to global efforts by supporting low- and middle-income countries' accession to, and implementation of, commitments under international environmental and climate conventions. In 2015, the Swedish development cooperation allocated more than SEK 2 billion (USD 230 million) to biodiversity interventions in developing countries, as calculated using the OECD policy marker system for biodiversity.

Sweden is a major global player in terms of forest research, innovation and the marketplace. Sweden has less than 1 per cent of the world's forest cover, but is one of the largest exporters of timber, pulp and paper. Sustainable forest management is a profile issue in Swedish international cooperation, and the Government is committed to the UN strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, as part of the integrated implementation of forest-related goals in the 2030 Agenda. The Government intends to continue to work at global level for long-term ownership and land tenure rights, active dialogue with knowledge carriers and stakeholders at different levels, and increased gender equality and decent working conditions in the forest sector.

Connecting the dots¹



Source: Stockholm Environment Institute

Terrestrial ecosystems are deteriorating and biological diversity is being lost at an alarming rate, which has profound implications for sustainable development. Land-use change, along with pollution, water scarcity, desertification and climate change, are harming the natural systems that support human and animal life.

Climate change

SDG 15 and SDG 13 (climate) are mutually reinforcing. Forests and healthy soils can act as carbon sinks, reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. Substitution of fossil resources by renewable wood materials, products and energy from sustainably managed forests is vital in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Resilient ecosystems can support climate change adaptation. At the same time, slowing climate change

can avert negative impacts on terrestrial ecosystems through, for example, extreme weather events, water scarcity and rising temperatures.

Land, poverty and equity

Terrestrial ecosystems provide livelihoods for poor and marginalised communities around the world. Ensuring access to land and forest resources – and supporting their sustainable management – is key for efforts to alleviate poverty (SDG 1) and inequality (SDGs 5 and 10) and requires strong institutions to supervise and enforce rights (SDG 16). Access and exploitation rights must be carefully balanced with conservation, including through innovative land-use and governance systems that protect the natural resource base, while increasing productivity. Achieving SDG 6 – in particular, universal sani-

tation access and wastewater management – is essential to achieving SDG 15. The release of untreated wastewater devastates terrestrial ecosystems and contaminates freshwater and food resources with toxic chemicals and pathogens that threaten human health (SDG 3). Achieving SDG 15 is essential to support water-related ecosystem services, such as soil erosion control, flood reduction and groundwater recharge.

Sustainable production

Achieving SDG 15, while meeting the resource needs of a growing and increasingly wealthy global population, is a major challenge. Future

food security (SDG 2) requires sustainably increasing global food production² and, in particular, moving away from low-yield practices used in many food-insecure regions.

The global economy also depends on agricultural and forest resources for a wide range of non-food products. This dependence is also set to grow as countries look to replace fossil resources with biofuels, bioplastics and other biomass-based products – linking productive use of terrestrial resources to SDG 7 (on energy) and SDGs 8 and 12 (sustainable, resource-efficient growth, and consumption and production).

¹ This section is based on an analysis by Stockholm Environment Institute. For more information on their work visit the SEI website www.sei.org

² FAO. 2017. The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges, Rome (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6583e.pdf>)



Sweden and the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

Sweden's transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies is well under way and is taking place throughout the country. More and more people in Sweden say that concern for sustainability affects their consumption decisions. Municipalities and county councils are committed to sustainable development. Large parts of the Swedish business community see sustainability as a competitive advantage. Civil society is paving the way through its own efforts and by pushing decision-makers. Young people are key for transformative change. The Swedish research community contributes cutting-edge research on sustainable development. Many Swedish public agencies have agreed on a joint declaration of intent to implement the 2030 Agenda.

On 14 June 2018, the Swedish Government presented its action plan for implementing the 2030 Agenda during the period 2018–2020. Sweden has the ambition to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Implementation involves a step-by-step approach towards a modern and sustainable welfare nation at home, and as part of the global system. This transformation must take place jointly, in partnership.

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