



Folkhälsomyndigheten
PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF SWEDEN

Vulnerable groups and equality in environmental health policy

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The Public Health Agency of Sweden

- was formed on 1 January 2014.
- Approximately 500 staff at two locations.
- a national expert authority with overall responsibility for public health issues
 - Mental health
 - Sexual health
 - Prevention - alcohol, narcotics, doping, tobacco and gambling
 - Promotion - physical activity and healthy eating habits
 - Environmental health
 - Communicable disease
 - Vaccines and antibiotics/AMR
 - Outbreak support

Unit for Environmental health

~20 staff – environmental health, public health, global health, environmental medicine, toxicology, landscape architecture, soil science

Our mission: to detect, prevent and eliminate health hazards in the physical environment and to promote positive environmental impacts on human health.

Vulnerable groups and equality in health are always in focus.

- Supervisory guidance to counties and municipalities
 - Indoor: noise, temperature, dampness & mould, indoor pools, ventilation etc.
- Follow-up, reporting and compilation of knowledge to form a basis for decision making
- Knowledge support on environmental health to the government and other agencies

Policy framework for public health

The overarching aim for public health in Sweden is to create societal conditions for good health on equal terms for the entire population and to close avoidable gaps in health within one generation.

-June 2018

- Priority areas
 - **early life development**
 - knowledge, skills and education
 - work, working conditions and working environment
 - incomes and economic resources
 - **housing and neighbourhood conditions**
 - **healthy lifestyles**
 - control, influence and participation
 - equitable health and medical care that promotes good health

Policy framework for the environment

The overall goal of Swedish environmental policy is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems in Sweden have been solved, without increasing environmental and health problems outside Sweden's borders.



Reduced Climate Impact



Clean Air



Natural Acidification Only



A Non-Toxic Environment



A Protective Ozone Layer



A Safe Radiation Environment



Zero Eutrophication



Flourishing Lakes and Streams



Good-Quality Groundwater



A Balanced Marine Environment,
Flourishing Coastal Areas and Archipelagos



Thriving Wetlands



Sustainable Forests



A Varied Agricultural Landscape



A Magnificent Mountain Landscape

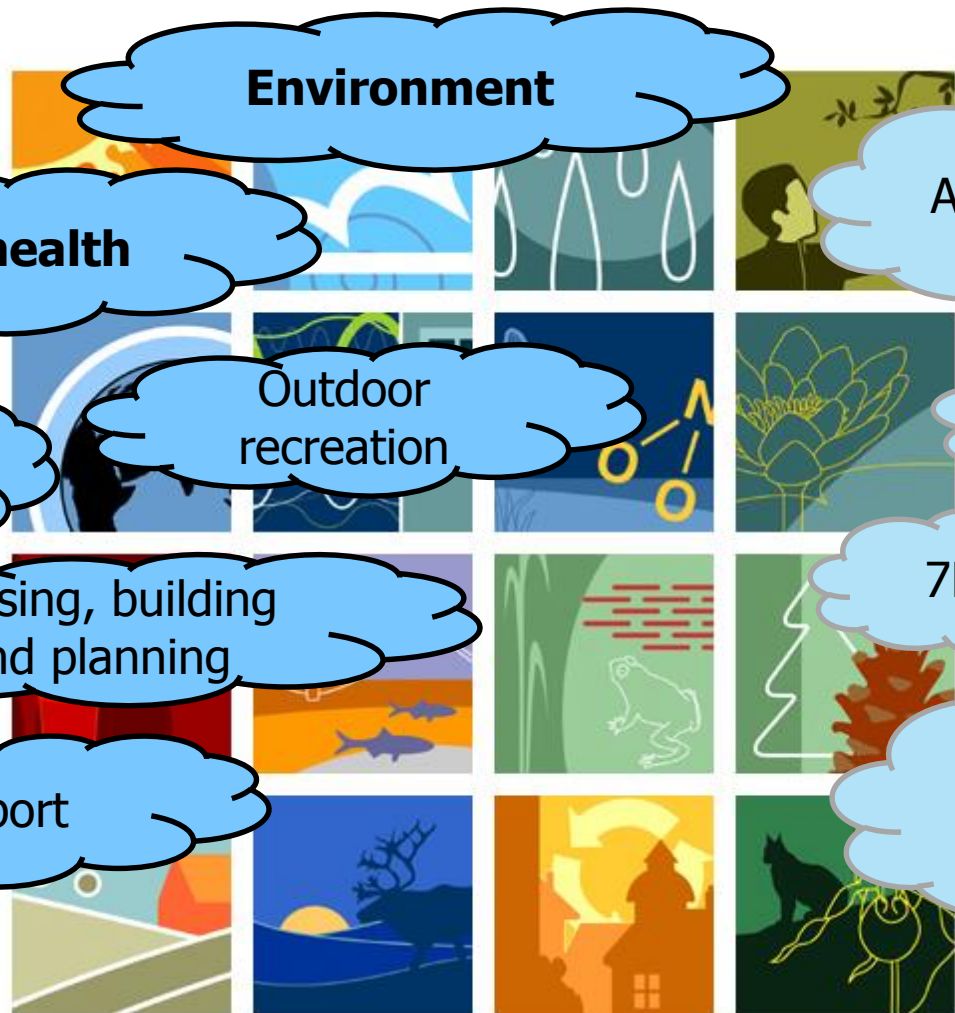


A Good Built Environment



A Rich Diversity of Plant and Animal Life

Policy framework for environmental health



Environment

Public health

Agenda 2030

Climate

Outdoor recreation

Health 2020

Housing, building and planning

7EAP

Transport

WHO EHP

Tools for environmental health policy

- Environmental monitoring
 - Noise, air pollution, water quality, indoor dust...
- Human biomonitoring
 - Vulnerable groups - children, pregnant and nursing women, teenagers, polluted areas
- Environmental health survey
 - Questions about exposure and experienced inconveniences related to different environmental determinants
 - Includes questions on socioeconomy
- Knowledge base for equity



Obstacles

Environment health is interdisciplinary..

- Public health
- Environment & Climate
- Outdoor recreation
- Transport
- Living, Planning, Building
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Fishery
- Wildlife & Marine conservation
- ...

... with different

- Perspectives
- Languages & backgrounds
- Modus operandi & cultures
- Priorities
- Focus groups
- Stakeholders
- Political aims
- ...

Obstacles for including vulnerable groups and equality

- Environmental health survey
– Noise, air pollution, etc.

Doesn't take into account differences in exposure or vulnerability

- Human biomonitoring
– Vulnerable groups, e.g. nursing women

There are socioeconomic differences within vulnerable groups

- Environmental health survey
– Questions not experienced in the environment
– Includes questions on socioeconomy

Not scientific enough for some

- Knowledge not always asked for

Not always asked for



Solutions for including vulnerable groups and equality

- Environmental health survey
 - Noise: Doesn't take into account differences in exposure or sensitivity. These can be combined with data on socioeconomic factors
 - Vulnerable groups: nursing women, vulnerable groups
- Environmental health survey
 - Can be verified – at least partly - by measurements
 - Includes questions on socioeconomy
- Knowledge: Formalise collaboration



Obstacles: different actors

Environment

Outdoor
recreation

Public health

Climate

Housing, building
and planning

Transport

- Public Health Agency
**Ministry of
Environment and
Energy**

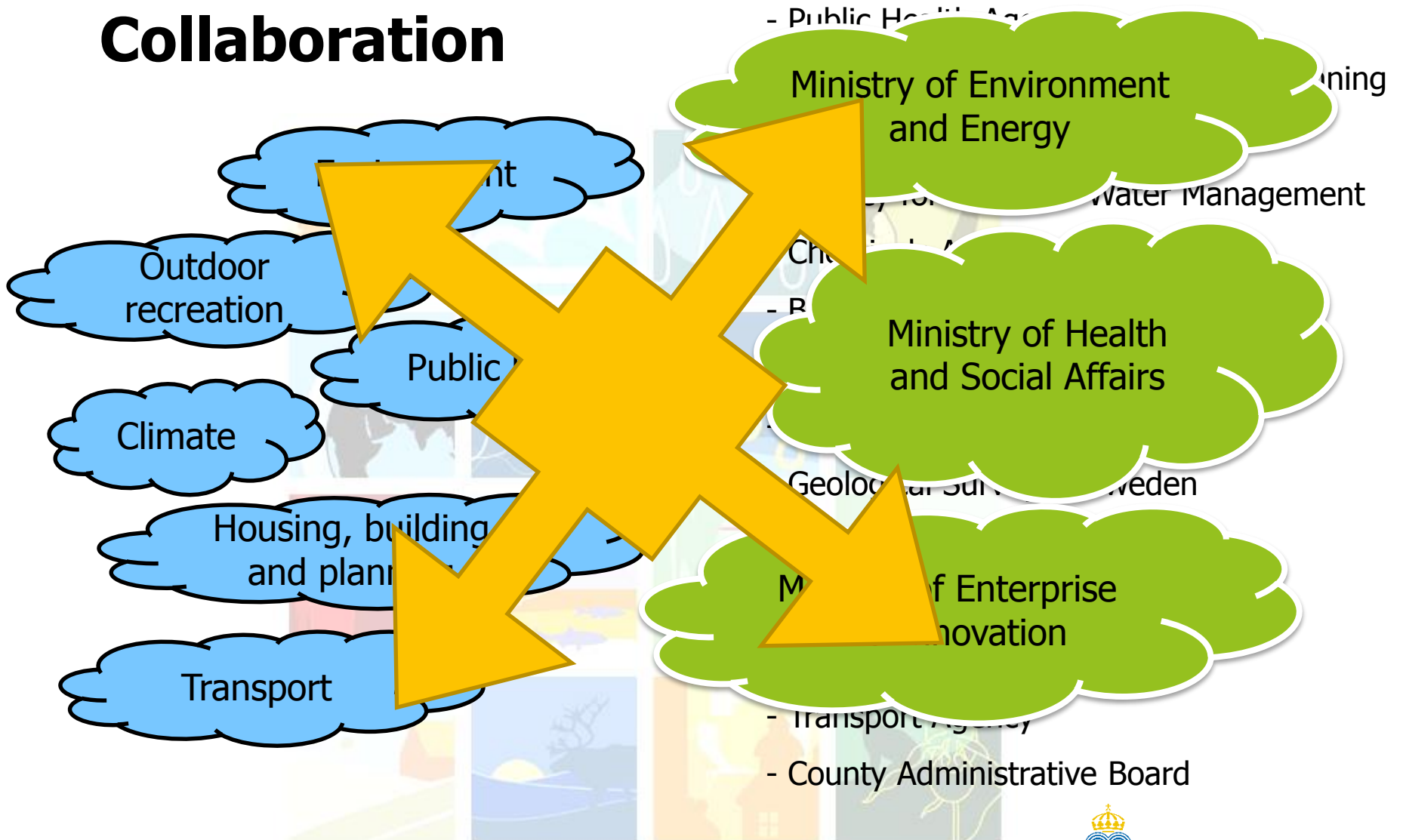
- Nat Board of Housing, Building & Planning
- Energy Agency
- Agency for Marine & Water Management
- Chemicals Agency

- Board of Agriculture
**Ministry of Health
and Social Affairs**
- National Food Agency
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Geological Survey of Sweden

- Forest Agency
**Ministry of Enterprise
and Innovation**
- Radiation Safety Authority
- Transport Administration
- Transport Agency

- County Administrative Board

Solution: Collaboration



Collaborative project:

Health as a driving force for environmental objectives and for sustainable development

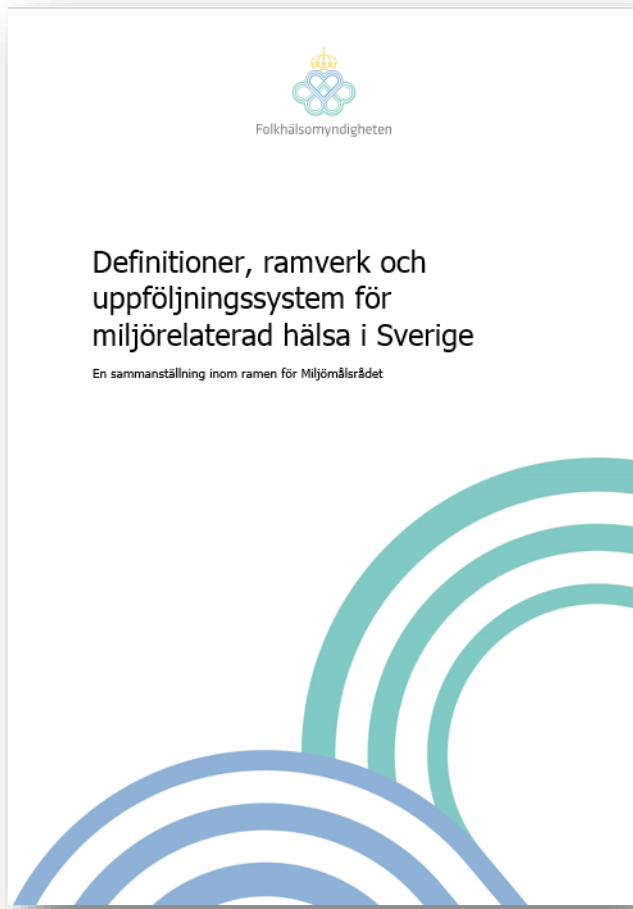
14 government agencies under three ministries

+ the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

+ 1 County Council

- National network for environmental health
- Forum for discussion, exchange of ideas and "hot topics"
- Common areas of interest which can lead to specific activities
 - Resulted in three reports that were co-written by all

Definitions, frameworks and monitoring of environmental health in Sweden



Common language

- Definitions of health, public health, environmental health
- Definitions of equality in health, equality in environmental health
- National and international goals and policy frameworks
- Available monitoring systems

→ **Many goals are the same!**

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publicerat-material/publikationsarkiv/d/definitioner-mal-ramverk-och-uppfoljningssystem-for-miljorelaterad-halsa/>

Collaboration gives synergies



Health in the Swedish Environmental objectives



For each of the 16 objectives:

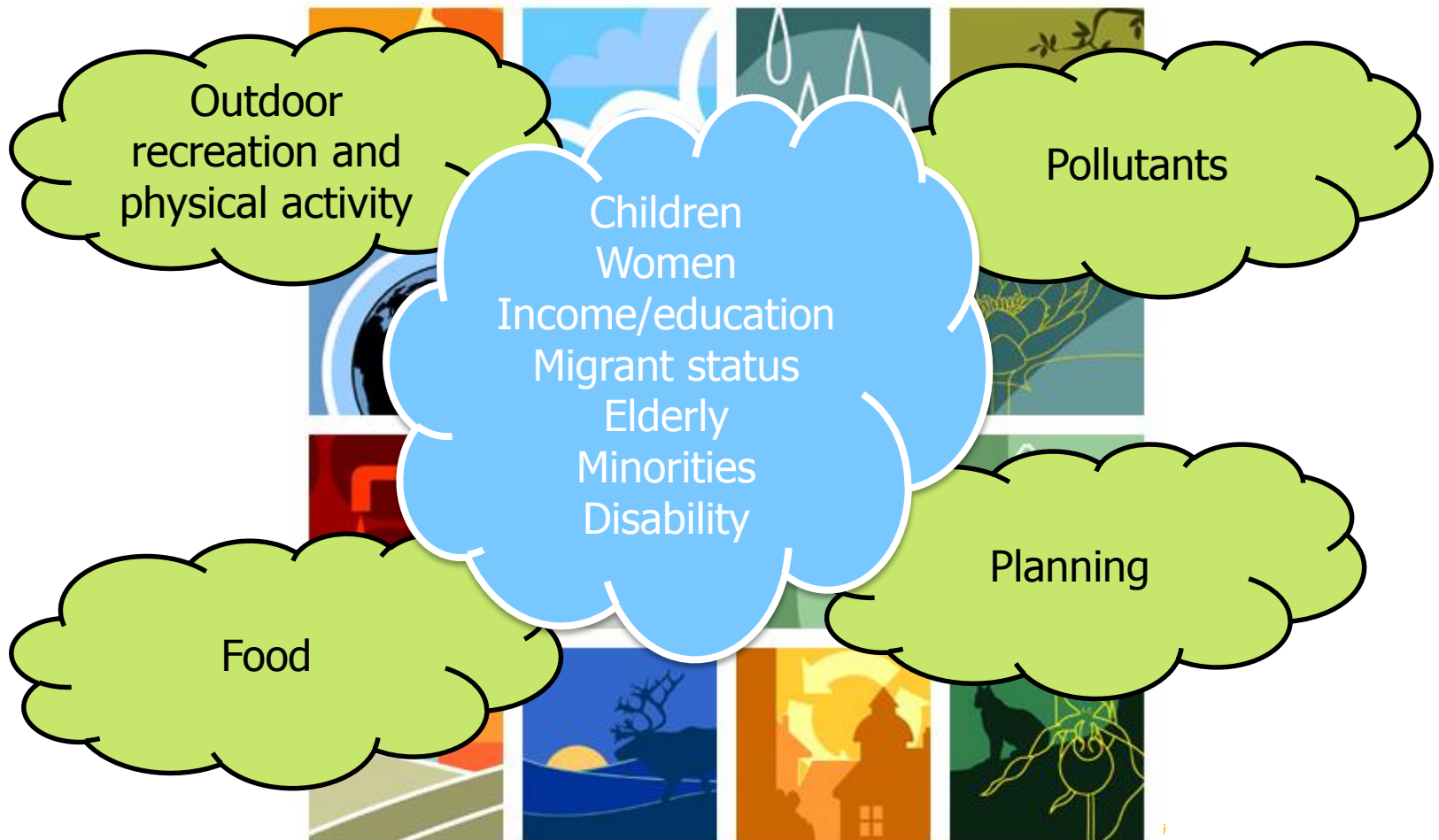
- Health aspects
- Vulnerable groups
- National objectives/goals
- International frameworks
- Environmental health monitoring

→ **A few common problems/issues**

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publicerat-material/publikationsarkiv/k/kartlaggning-av-halsa-i-miljokvalitetsmalen/>

Sid 16. 02/10/2018

Four main common issues



Synthesis - recommendations to the government

Identifies what is required in order to work more efficiently with environmental health

- Use health as a driving force for environmental work and a common goal
- Make common environmental health aspects more visible
- Focus on health promotion and wellness rather than risks
- Include inequality in all indicators and proposed actions
- Strengthen collaboration in environmental health

Synthesis – proposed actions

Formalise a national network for environmental health and use this to:

- Update the national action plan/WHO national portfolio
- Develop indicators that include health aspects and inequality
- Develop environmental health monitoring to include inequality
- Develop a method for cost/benefit analysis of environmental health

All Director-Generals officially behind it → strength!

Thank you!

