New urban economies
How can cities foster economic development and develop ‘new urban economies’
New urban economies

How can cities foster economic development and develop ‘new urban economies’
This publication is part of a bigger capitalisation initiative set by the URBACT programme for 2014–2015 with the objective to present to Europe’s cities existing urban knowledge and good practices about:

- New urban economies
- Jobs for young people in cities
- Social innovation in cities
- Sustainable regeneration in urban areas

These topics have been explored by four URBACT working groups (workstreams), composed of multidisciplinary stakeholders across Europe such as urban practitioners and experts from URBACT, representatives from European universities, European programmes and international organisations working on these fields.
URBAN GREEN GROWTH: MYTH OR REALITY?

By Stefan Anderberg*

‘To create the most resource-efficient region in the world’. This is the vision of Tekniska verken, the municipality-owned infrastructural company in Linköping, Sweden. It reflects the city's long-standing ambitions to be a ‘forerunner in climate and environmental initiatives’ and to support ‘business-driven’ environmental development, actively stimulating the development of a green economic sector. Linköping and the surrounding county of Östergötland are here used for discussing the development of the green economy in cities and regions.

THE GREEN ECONOMY: THE SOLUTION TO BOTH GLOBAL AND LOCAL PROBLEMS

Transformation to a ‘green economy’ has been launched internationally as a response to both the economic and the environmental crises (Bowen et al., 2009; UNEP, 2011). After the financial crisis, policy makers increasingly see that a shift to a resource-efficient low-carbon society could be a source of renewed growth, qualified jobs, and increasing social welfare as well as reducing environmental impacts and overexploitation of resources (Richardson, 2013; Gibbs and O’Neill, 2014).

Developing the green economy has often been presented as an opportunity for cities (Puppim de Oliveira et al., 2013). In Europe, the economic potentials of green technologies have been actively pursued since the 1990s via policies linking environmental policy to national and regional development strategies. Environmental investments, alternative energy and other sustainability projects have not only been introduced for improving the urban environment, but also for stimulating economic growth and competitiveness by developing competitive green technology sector and making cities and regions more attractive to citizens, tourists, and investors (Anderberg and Clark, 2013).

On all continents, cities have in recent decades introduced sustainability initiatives. In connection with recognised sustainable city forerunners such as Curitiba, Freiburg, Copenhagen, Portland, and Melbourne, it is often claimed that their efforts have had significant economic spin-offs. Despite this, there is surprisingly limited understanding of why some cities and regions appear more successful in developing the green economy, and creating green growth (Gibbs and O’Neill, 2014). Comparative analyses of green sector developments in different cities and their regional effects are lacking.

There is strong evidence that competitive green sectors are most developed where governments have integrated environmental and innovation policies, and successfully involved both public and private actors (Hamdouch and Depret, 2010). In Sweden, sustainable urban development and environmental technology have long been a strong focus for governmental environmental and innovation policies. Some Swedish cities e.g. Stockholm, Malmö and Växjö are internationally recognised as

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forerunners. Most major cities in Sweden can show similar developments, but only few can claim to be important environmental technology and innovation centres. Linköping is one of these few cities.

**WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEN ECONOMY?**

The current green economy agenda focuses on the development of green or clean sectors in the economy: renewable energy, sustainable transportation, green design and construction, ecological agriculture, and green water and waste management (Richardson, 2013). Such subsectors or developments in different sectors have traditionally not been covered by official statistics. However, there have been important developments during the last 15 years. Statistics Sweden (SCB) presents continuous environmental sector statistics since 2003, and the EU has also introduced statistics for the environment goods and services sector. The output of this sector increased in the EU by 83% for 2003–2012, and employment grew by 41%, from 3.0 million to 4.1 million, which corresponded to 1.8% of the total employment in the EU. A survey of the ‘clean economy’ in the USA 2010 (Muro et al., 2011) concluded that 84% of the green jobs were located in metropolitan areas, which gives some support for the view of cities as key locations for the green economy.

**GREEN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN LINKÖPING**

Linköping is the fifth largest municipality in Sweden (151,000 inhabitants) and the capital of the county of Östergötland (438,000 inhabitants), and forms together with Norrköping (135,000 inhabitants) the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country. The city has a university with strong technological and environmental research, a knowledge intense industry and is one of the most important IT centres in the country. Linköping has grown continuously for decades and perceives itself as a dynamic and innovative city with a young highly educated population that expects the city to provide efficient services, and to be environmentally conscious. City development strategies build on the image of an innovative city, and focus on continued growth and providing good services, while being a sustainability forerunner.

While other cities often have introduced eco-city projects for renewing their image, sustainability initiatives in Linköping have been motivated by citizens’ expectations, and the opportunity for the city to show its innovativeness and technical expertise. Resource-efficiency, business development, public participation and green procurement have been emphasised more than in other Swedish cities.

Governmental support, particularly via co-funding from the national investment programmes during 1998–2012, has been essential for sustainability efforts in Swedish municipalities. Linköping used these opportunities selectively for established priority areas, and the projects were fewer, but more continuous, than in other cities. These projects included:

- Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and use of fossil fuels (1999–2012)
- Launch and increase the use biogas as an alternative vehicle fuel (1999–2012)
- Sustainable transport, biking and public transport (1999–2004)
- Sustainable building, increasing energy efficiency (1999–2012)
- Cleaner urban waters (1999–2004)

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1. The green economy consists in Swedish statistics of 13 sectors: air pollution control; wastewater management; waste management; soil and groundwater; noise and vibration; environmental consultants; education, research and monitoring; recycled materials; renewable energy; heat and energy saving; sustainable agriculture/fishery; sustainable forestry; and other resource management.

2. Defined as agricultural and natural resources conservation; education and compliance; energy and resource efficiency; greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, environmental management and recycling; and renewable energy.

3. In 1998, ‘The Green People’s Home’ programme was launched. It added environmental goals to the traditional welfare goals, and introduced investment programmes that offered co-funding for environmental investments in the municipalities. Two rounds of local investments programmes (LIP, 1998–2004), were followed by two rounds of climate investment programmes (KLIMP, 2004–2012).
Municipality-owned companies such as Tekniska verken and the housing company Stångåstaden have been important carriers of the green ambitions of Linköping. These companies were never privatised as happened in many other cities. Tekniska verken has played a role as system builder in connection with e.g. the regional biogas development (Fallide and Eklund, 2014). This started in 1994 as an experiment for solving problems of slaughterhouse waste and pollution from buses in the city. Today, all city buses in the county are biogas-driven using methane produced in bio-digesters that draw on several waste streams (Figure 1). This development has had spin-offs in terms of new companies, technology exports and the national biogas research center.

Many Swedish cities have long used their green profiles for marketing. Linköping has been more hesitant, but gradually the city has become more active in this respect. The marketing of the city’s sustainability achievements particularly stresses the biogas development and the city as a hub for environmental technology and system development which is going to be shown at the planned Vallastaden eco-city expo in 2017.

Linköping and Norrköping work together to drive collaboration for strengthening the region. In the 1960s, they took initiatives for establishing the university, which today is an essential partner in regional sustainable development activities. In 2002, the regional development platform Östsam was established by the 13 municipalities in the county for coordinating initiatives and developing the regional external relations. It has been crucial for joint sustainability initiatives and seeking EU funding. Cleantech Östergötland, the regional platform for environmental technology, is another important regional platform.

THE GREEN ECONOMY IN LINKÖPING AND ÖSTERSGÖTLAND

Östergötland markets itself as an environmental forerunner and a clean-tech center of national importance. This regional image is confirmed by the statistics. In 2012, Östergötland had in relative terms 42% more employment and 70% more exports in the environmental sector than the national average. The employment in this sector increased 2003–2012 by 33% compared to the national average of 14%. Östergötland with only 4.5% of the Swedish population, contributed with a 1/7 of net national green job increase, and 10% of the increases of turnover and exports. During this period, the number of environmental sector workplaces in the region increased by 353 (54%), and the number of employees grew by 1,327 (42%). More than twice as many green jobs were added in Östergötland than in the five times more populous county of Stockholm.

Only the industrial service sector has in recent years experienced faster growth than the environmental sector. Despite this growth, the green sector is only responsible for 2.3% of the total regional employment. Waste management, renewable energy, recycled materials constitute the most important parts of the sector, followed by environmental consulting, and education, research, and monitoring. There are many small companies (>1,000 workplaces) in the region, but municipal companies are responsible for 60% of the employment, which is dominated by the big cities, particularly Linköping. In relative terms, the sector is most important in medium-sized city municipalities, and least important in the most rural municipalities. The workforce is very male-dominated, relatively old and the

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Figure 1. Biogas plant in the Kallerstad area (Linköping)

Source: Tekniska verken

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The biogas plant in the Kallerstad area in Linköping produces biogas from food and slaughterhouse waste. It also upgrades biogas from digesters at the city wastewater plant to vehicle gas. Nutrient-rich bio fertilizer that replaces chemical fertilizers in agriculture is received as a by-product.
educational level is rather low, despite the importance of consulting and education and research in the region.

Despite the strong development of the green sector in Östergötland, its future seems rather uncertain. The visions of green growth and increasing environmental exports have been only partially realised. The markets have expanded nationally and internationally, but the development of the green sector is still much more dependent on the region, and on national regulations, investments, subsidies, and export promotion than other industrial sectors. Uncertainties concerning regulations have in recent years negatively influenced the development of renewable energy and recycling.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Great hopes are connected to the ‘green economy’. Transformation to a ‘green economy’ is not only expected to solve urgent environmental problems, decrease dependency of scarce resources, and mitigate climate change, but also to create a new dynamic sector of the economy that substantially can contribute to renewed economic growth and qualified jobs in cities and regions.

It is difficult to systematically analyse the green economy since the concept is both diffuse and dynamic, and statistics are still not fully stable and reliable. There is no doubt, however, that the green sector in many parts of the world is growing as a result of important investments in renewable energy, waste management and pollution control. Even if its influence on regional economies is not restricted to the sector itself, the importance of the green sector is, however, still fairly limited in Europe, and a real transformation to a green economy seems distant also in regions with a strong and dynamic green sector.

Linköping and Östergötland exemplify a successful regional development of a dynamic green sector in a country that has long supported development of the ‘green economy’. The region can both show significant resource-efficiency increases and related economic development. As a wealthy high education, research and technology center, Linköping had advantageous preconditions for developing environmental technology but without a stable focus and strategy building on the city’s particular assets and experiences, patience and regional mobilisation of committed regional actors, the development of such a strong green sector would hardly have taken place.

However, this example also raises questions about the realism of the visions of green transformation and growth, and the future potentials of the green sector. Despite successful development of the green sector, contributions to regional growth, and particularly to employment still seem fairly limited. The educational level in the environmental sector is also surprisingly low, considering the significant consulting and research in the region. Despite impressive growth of exports, the green sector is still dependent on its home region as major market, and its future seems still dependent on national support in terms of investments, subsidies and promotion of exports.

If expectations are more modest, the Linköping case can be interpreted more optimistically. Cities may have very different and less advantageous preconditions, but they still have potentials of developing a green economy that contributes positively if they use and build further on their particular assets. The Linköping experience also suggests that medium-sized cities and regions may have advantages in terms of mobilisation, creating networks and build systems for creating favourable conditions for green business development. It also shows that a consistent strategy focusing on selected areas, where cities and regions are strongly involved and can make long-term commitments, is essential for the development of the green economy.●
In each case, we interviewed a variety of stakeholders (including representatives from the city council, universities, economic development agencies, associations, large companies and small start-ups) and asked them about their first-hand knowledge and experience in order to get a 360 degree view on their initiatives. We used these interviews to explore, the planning process, management, results, success factors, problems and lessons for other cities.

Another source of inspiration was the URBACT Sharing Event during the Open Days in Brussels, in October 2014. In the spirit of URBACT, this was a fun way to approach serious topics. The participants, URBACT cities but also newcomers, were invited to visit different workstream corners, intended to stimulate discussion and debate. Many responded to our provocative ‘theses’ that we had put on the wall, and gave us new ideas to work on.

We want to thank all the people who, directly or indirectly, helped us to realise this publication. Special thanks to the guest authors Emma Clarence and Stefan Anderberg. And also to our colleagues from the other workstreams: Alison & Mike, Darinka, Francois & Marcelline. We worked together as a team, and shared our ups and downs. And also special thanks to Emmanuel, Jenny, Maria and Melody from the URBACT Secretariat, and Peter Ramsden (URBACT Thematic Pole Manager) for their valuable comments, their commitment to make this exercise a success, and the courage to break new ground.

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URBACT Creative Spin network http://urbact.eu/creative-spin

URBACT REDIS network http://urbact.eu/redis

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<td>Useful public spaces instead of nice public spaces</td>
<td>Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council - IE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RomaNet II</td>
<td>Integration of Roma populations</td>
<td>Budapest - HU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTUR</td>
<td>Temporary use as a tool for urban regeneration</td>
<td>Rome - IT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fast Track Label
URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting integrated sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, re-affirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT II comprises 550 different sized cities and their Local Support Groups, 61 projects, 29 countries, and 7,000 active local stakeholders. URBACT is jointly financed by the ERDF and the Member States.

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