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## Review: environmental governance in Sweden

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# ***Review: environmental governance in Sweden***

## **Abstract:**

This paper provides a review of environmental governance in both theory and practice in planning area, to improve our knowledge and capacity for achieving environmental sustainability. Based on the generalizations of core principles of good governance from recent academic literatures, and the important areas of environmental practices in planning process, this paper presents the review on participation and accountability aspects, closely integrating legislation part, as well as referring to the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency if it is connected. In the first section of this paper, a literature review is presented. It covers the five attributes and is based on textbooks and academic journals with a coverage from 1990s until now. This section is followed by an empirical study of environmental planning, policies and programs in Sweden during the last 20 years. The first section provides knowledge guiding the practical analysis, and the second part tests the theoretic knowledge in Swedish context. Based on both reviews, the paper targets for defining the key points and dimensions in both theory and practice. The author tries to find out the strengths and weaknesses of Sweden's environmental governance and sustainable development. Finally, this study proposes some suggestions and directions to promote existing theories by learning lessons from Sweden's experience, and to advance the implemental effectiveness in Sweden and elsewhere by absorbing from theories.

**Key words:** Review, Environmental Governance, Sweden, Participation, Accountability, Rules of law, Transparency, Effectiveness and Efficiency

## **Introduction**

### **Research problems**

Environmental governance has received considerable attention from the social sciences for at least 50 years (Davidson & Frickel, 2004). Nowadays in Sweden, beyond the current scientific knowledge and techniques for environmental analysis and decision-making, the need to both understand and mediation of the interrelationships among different elements and dimensions of the environmental development becomes extremely crucial to environmental sustainability. Thus, environmental governance contributes more and more greatly to realizing the environmental sustainability in Sweden. With the great environmental achievement by Sweden, one can sum up experiences and find strengths and weaknesses from Sweden's practice, both contributing to transferring the knowledge to other countries and improve Sweden's own performance. On the other hand, environmental governance, counted as a multidisciplinary approach, relates to extensive knowledge, flexible methods, complicated relationships within multi-actors and different governing levels, is largely context depended. It has been studied broadly by scholars from whom the insights, monitoring and evaluation results, and information dialogues

take more attentions on the practical than the concept and by whom the explorations of theoretic and empirical issues are often treated as inconsequent and isolated fragments. Thus, a comprehensive and context-depended analysis of environmental governance is extremely necessary. When addressing these problems, there is a constant need to study environmental governance by integrating the theoretical knowledge with the practical analysis on Swedish implementing issues from multidimensional aspects.

### **Research aim and objectives**

Giving a general review, the study aims to define and promote the knowledge of crucial dimensions, the process and methods of environmental governance to improve the environmental sustainable development. The research has three objectives: Firstly, based on both reviews, the paper targets for defining the key points and dimensions in both theory and practice. Secondly, the author tries to find out the strengths and weaknesses of Sweden's environmental governance and sustainable development. Finally, this study proposes some suggestions and directions to promote existing theories by learning lessons from Sweden's experience, and to advance the implemental effectiveness in Sweden and elsewhere by absorbing from theories.

### **Research question**

In order to improve knowledge, by literature review, firstly we need to summarize what the most important attributes to good governance in generally and environmental governance in particular are. And how are these attributes explored in the literature and what are the core points in the theory? Then by the review of empirical issues in Swedish context, the author also concentrates on exploring these questions: which kind of effective approach does Sweden most frequently use? What are the strong and weak parts in Swedish practice? Finally, by comparison of the two reviews, the author hopes to find out: which is occurrence or absence between theory and practice, and why is it occurrence or missing? How could we improve the environmental governance in Sweden and elsewhere by learning the theory and practice?

### **Research structure and methods**

The paper has a two tiered of methods, one is general academic literature review, the other is document analysis of empirical environmental issues in Swedish planning process. The author makes a practical analysis by interviewing with Swedish practitioners and policymakers in different departments and levels, and the points from the interviewee could be the valuable insights and instruments for advancing the knowledge in implementing process of environmental governance.

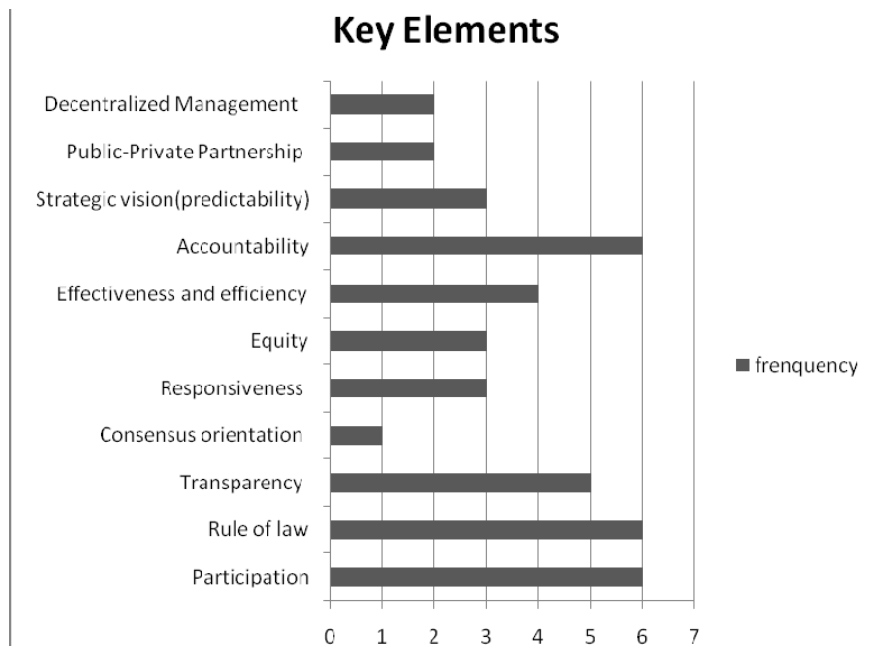
As a start, five attributes are listed as the most valuable principles to good governance from the recent academic literature. They are Participation, Accountability, Rule of law, Transparency, Effectiveness and efficiency. Then jointly considering on environmental practices in planning process, the author finds out a large account of research or practice are emphasizing on Participation, Accountability, and Rule of law. It doesn't mean the other two attributes are unimportant in learning environmental

governance, but as this study finds those five elements are so intensively combined and effected with each other. To make this paper more clearly on the environmental governance, it presents the review on participation and accountability aspects, closely integrating legislation part, as well as referring to the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency if it is connected. In the first section of this paper, a literature review is presented. It covers the five attributes and is based on textbooks and academic journals with a coverage from 1990s until now. This section is followed by an empirical analysis of environmental planning, policies and programs in Sweden during the last 20 years, corresponding to previous theoretical review. In this part, the author analyzes both the strength and weakness in environmental legislation, organization systems, approaches or instruments in Swedish planning process. It also takes Stockholm and Upplands Väsby as examples of municipality. Finally, the paper discusses and integrates the lessons in both theoretic and practical reviews, to generate conclusions and provide some suggestions for Swedish environmental governance.

## **1. Understanding environmental governance- what are the principles?**

Aiming to improve the capacity of governance for environmental issues, a relevant question is to define what the good governance is, what its key attributes are. While there is much interpretation for good governance, this paper endeavors to generate core principles of it that have become widely accepted in literature. The world bank epitomized “good governance” in its recent literature with five key attributes: “Predictable, open, and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of public good, the rule of the law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs.” (World Bank, 1997 in Mehta, 1998) Habitat II outlines 5 key attributes as a workable and fair mode of governance, which are accountability by public officials, transparency in public procedures, processes, investment decisions, contracts and appointments, participation in making public choices, rule of law, and predictability by public and private institutions. (UNCHS, Habitat II in Mehta, 1998) And UNCHS also gave 14 points in Expert Group Meeting on Urban Poverty and Governance Indicators, 1999, Nairobi, Kenya. 9 elements are defined by UNDP: Participation, Rule of law, Transparency, Consensus orientation, Responsiveness, Equity, Effectiveness and efficiency, Accountability, Strategic vision. (UNDP, 1997) And also 8 points are listed by Kas & Logo Def in 1997, 6 key by UNESCO, 2008. Based on the results of the most frequent found in documents (*Figure 1*), we could generate the most valuable five attributes for good governance. They are *Participation, Accountability, Rules of law, Transparency, Effectiveness and efficiency*. Then when the author goes to look at environmental governance, three of them, participation, accountability and rule of law, appear especially important in environmental governance. In this paper, it presents the review and analysis from participation and accountability aspects, closely integrating legislation part in each of them, as well as referring to the transparency, effectiveness

and efficiency if it is connected. Environmental governance contains two concepts: environment and governance. In this paper, environmental governance is defined together from two perspectives: environmental management and planning process. It means an innovative approach to manage environmental issues within planning process for sustainable development, with multi-disciplinary knowledge, flexible and effective instruments, a positive interaction among multi-stakeholders.



**Figure 1** The frequency of attributes for improving governance mentioned by scholars or research organizations

## 2. Environmental Governance in Literature

### 2.1. Participation

As a planning project have a practical impact on urban living environment which is highly concerned by related actors, consent of consumer, worker, and citizen contributes with more chance of successful implementation of environmental policies than neglect of stakeholder's opinion. (Kempton 1991; Kasemir et al., 2003) Thus, wide participation by both the public and private becomes a key foundation stone for good environmental governance and a key determinant to sustainable development. The idea of participatory urban governance originated in 1990s by the need to create and maintain the sustainable development which are discussed in Rio Conference on environment and development (UNCED,1992) and Habitat II (1996). UNDP stated the participation means all the voice of the citizens should be heard in decision-making process, by direct involving and through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. (UNDP, 1997)

#### 2.1.1. Definition

The definitions of participation have evolved forward by scholars during the past two decades, from dualist to pluralist, from legitimacy to more effective, from reactive to

interactive. (Innes & Booher, 2004; Berkes, 2009) In the beginning, participation is defined as a public decision process to make one-way communication involving dual actors of citizens and government, and it is mostly ensured by law as a required step. (Innes & Booher, 2004) Then by realizing the non-effectiveness of this approach, some critiques appeared and the theory of participatory urban governance was improved. Innes & Booher proposed to reframe public participation in pluralism frame: “The participation must be collaborative and it should incorporate not only citizens, but also organized interests, profit-making and non-profit organizations, planners and public administrators in common framework where all are interacting and influencing one another and all are acting independently in the world as well.” (2004, p. 423) In this article, depending on the literature review, *participation in urban governance could be defined as a kind of multi-dimensional collaborative approach to solve the public problems, make policies or plans, by communication, learning and action together with government and all related stakeholders*. And according to this definition, the study discusses participation as a broad term, which could be behaved with several concrete concepts in different contexts, such as public participation, partnership, network, deliberation, co-operation, co-ordination etc..

### **2.1.2. Approaches**

There are many different approaches and instruments to improved understanding and implementation of participation. “Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.” (UN-ESCAP, n.d.) And based on the argument of establishing pluralism frame incorporating all kinds of independent stakeholders (Innes & Booher, 2004), and Mehta’s research on urban governance (Mehta, 1998), we could sum up three effective approaches to promote participations- Local Government and Citizen Interaction, Networking, Public-Private Partnerships-, and Mehta also put forward the detailed indicators to each of them (*Table 1*). These approaches separately function in different collaborations between different actors. *Local Government and Citizen Interaction* “indicates open communication between the government, non-government organizations and the community as a whole”. (Kas & Logo Def, 1997 cited in Mehta, 1998, p.10) *Networking* “refers to the ability of the local governments to forge cooperative relationships with other local governments and other entities to build infrastructural capacities. (Kas & Logo Def, 1997 cited in Mehta, 1998, p.10) *Public-Private Partnership* “suggests an active joint working arrangement between local government and the private sector in the programmes of local government. “(Kas & Logo Def, 1997 cited in Mehta, 1998, p.10) Partnership in governance is also defined by other scholars as: mutual dependence (Cars & Von Sydow, 2001), a long-term relationship and interaction, and shared responsibility for outcomes (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Baud & Post, 2002), getting benefits for each actor, presented in concrete activities, bargained with tension and conflict as well as co-operation (Baud & Post, 2002). According to the different mandates and capacities, roles of actors vary in partnership, “local governments work with the private sector in different forms and each arrangement has its own advantages and disadvantages”. (Baud & Dhanalakshmi, 2007, p. 137) (*Table 2*)

As well as the approaches above, there are some other methods for participation, such as establishing open-ended settings (Kasemir et al., 2003), mutual trust or trusted political leadership (Baud & Dhanalakshmi, 2007) , and the interacted medium (including legitimate or informal) (UNDP, 1997), the scenario methodology for promoting engaging stakeholders (Kasemir et al., 2003).

**Table 1: Indicators of three primary attributes to accelerate participations**

<b>Attributes of Participation</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Local Government and Citizen Interaction	Cooperative efforts among local governments, nongovernmental organizations
	Mechanisms that allow consultation between the local government and the electorates on various interests: <i>Freedom of media; Process of public discussion; Percentage of people voting; Use of referendum on key issues, Right of establishing association etc.</i>
	Implementation and extent of projects launched by LG/NGO/PVO collaboration.
	Role of key groups in consultation
Networking on inter-local governments and other entities	Extent of inter-local government networks.
	Extent of regional (intra-local) networks.
	Extent of international network
	Scope of resource complementation in the network/networks.
	Technology interchange/ collaboration.
	Improvement of common interest and agenda.
	Expertise and training exchange.
Public-Private Partnerships	Incentive mechanism used to encourage private sector to participate
	Efficiency of local government bureaucracy improved by private sector initiatives, e.g. technology improvement, training, etc.
	Joint involvement of public and private sector in planning, funding and implementation of programs/projects.
	Privatization of local government services

(Based on the data from Dinesh Mehta, 1998; UNCHS,1999)

**Table 2: Different forms of partnership between local government and private sector in providing public services**

<b>Forms</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Working with small-scale companies	locally accountable to government and citizens alike	
	affordable costs	
	adapted to local conditions	
Commissioning large-scale project developers(communit y consultations)	attractive to local policymakers and politicians, as they provide organizational arrangements with transfers of new technology, and provide cities with a level of 'modernity'	much more expensive
Setting up a special urban development agency (municipal		

representatives work with the private sector)		
Providing basic services through foreign companies.	The same as type 2	The same as type 2

(Based on the data from Baud& Dhanalakshmi, 2007, p. 137)

### 2.1.3. Problems

While scholars are often willing to give insight or positive description about participation and partnership, there are still many potential difficulties on it. (Armistead & Pettigrew, 2007) It is claimed that the partnerships is or can be associated with disadvantages: inconsistent with the traditional accountability, limit public participation to elites, inefficiency without targeting the most urgent goals (Cars & Von Sydow 2001). Baud& Dhanalakshmi ( 2007 )indicates that although with shared power, responsibility and interest, there have been some inequality to some social group. By case study of environmental issues, both Zérah (2009) and Baud& Dhanalakshmi( 2007) get the conclusion that multi-stakeholder arrangements or participation are limited to the middle and upper middle class, in contrast, the poor end up on the losing side. Armistead & Pettigrew (2007) summarize a variety of reasons for failure in partnerships including: gaps in the purpose, unwillingness or un-active, conflicting on resources or funding, suspicion political leadership, conflicting professional cultures and practices, power struggles, inadequate resources.

## 2.2. Accountability

### 2.2.1. Definition

Accountability is a core concept in good governance. In a wide range, it could be defined as decision-makers in government, organizations, private sectors provide an account to the public and institutional stakeholders which will be affected by its activities. (UNDP, 1997) To reduce corruption and assure citizens that their actions is guided by the social demand (UNCHS, Habitat II), accountability is supposed to establish a clear policy on who is accountable to whom and for what, and a set of criteria in measuring the performance of government officials (Mehta & Dinesh, 1998). The notion of accountability comprises two connotations: “Answerability, the obligation of public officials to inform about and to explain what they are doing; and enforcement, the capability of accounting agencies to impose sanctions on power holders who have violated their public duties.” (Schedler, 1999). Habitat II points out accountability involves “the allocation of public funds, providing safety and security, and pursuing equitable economic well-being for society”. (UNCHS, Habitat II)

### 2.2.2. Types of accountability

In the perspective of implementing enforcement, O'Donnell states there were two kinds of accountability: horizontal accountability which means the performance of public agencies and government authorities will be restrained by the state institutions,



and vertical accountability by which civil citizens, organizations and mass media restrain the abuses and enable Fair and effective performance on officials (O’ Donnell, 1999). From another view of body’s relationship, accountability exists in two ways: “direct accountability between front-line providers and users of services, and the indirect way by which users go through government agencies which monitor and control the quality of services of front-line providers”. (World Bank, 2003, p. 14) Stone et al. classify accountability in 8 types: political, ethical, market, administrative, managerial, judicial, constituency relation, and professional. (Stone 2005; Dwivedi & Jabbra, 1989) In each type, there are different concepts, mechanisms, implementing approaches, relationships of actors and stakeholders, and instruments. Jointly considering the connections to environmental issues and planning process, four types of the above are put forward in this paper and their characters are described here. (Table3) And among them, administrative and managerial accountability are considered as similar system in governance. For instance, now in market accountability, with the transfer of responsibility from a direct provision to an enabling institution for service organizations, the functions of government also change to standard-setting, monitoring and control of building, operation and maintenance of services. (Batley, 1996; Baud & Dhanalakshmi, 2007). This change also causes the transform of institutional framework in which accountability is organized.

**Table 3: Different types of accountability and its characters**

Types	Stakeholders		Enforcement mechanisms
	Provision	Acceptors or users	
Political	government, civil servants and politicians	the public; legislative bodies	Election, constitution, legislative inquiry (The powers, procedures and sanctions vary from country to country)
Administrative / Managerial	Officials; Civil servants; Employees	Superior officials; Directors; Citizens	Internal rules and norms; some independent commission, e.g. audit committee; a Hierarchy system; Legitimacy; “watchdog” units; citizens complaints
Market	Private or public service providers	Government; Supervision department; Customers	“customer-driven”; competition; Outsourcing service
Ethical	Individuals, businesses, NGO, research institutions	The public	responsible tools; professional expertise; an effective enabling environment

*(Based on the data from Stone 2005; Dwivedi & Jabbra, 1989)*

### 2.2.3. Approaches

The establishment of accountability refers to several aspects, “different institutions and locates the authority for accountability in differing combinations and types of sectors (public, private, intermediary), processes, decision rules, knowledge, and values” (Weber,1999). The increased networking, cooperation and involvement within multi-stakeholders, in some sense, promotes accountability and performance in service provision. (Baud & Dhanalakshmi, 2007; Cavill & Sohail, 2004) Harlow & Rawlings also suggests an 'accountability network' framework, in which agencies coalesce in a relationship of support and are fortified by shared expertise and ethos. (Harlow & Rawlings, 2007) By a case study of public reviewers in four municipalities in Sweden, Hanberger states that inspectors and municipal auditors, participation and concrete means such as on-site visits, conducted tours, democratic dialogue could improve citizens' contribution to democratic accountability. (Hanberger, 2006) Cavill & Sohail found that “approaching councillors and voting for politicians, public meetings, protests and organizing petitions emerged as the most useful mechanisms for securing accountability”. (Cavill & Sohail, 2004) Besides, both transparency and the rule of law play a significant role, accountability can not be enforced without them. UNCHS presents four indicators for assessment of accountability and transparency: Fairness in enforcing laws, Clarity of procedures and regulations and responsibilities, Existence of sanction, performance standards and disclosure laws, Codes of conduct for professional associations. ( UNCHS, 1999) GDRC organization lists four principles of accountability: a. specify responsibility and authority, b. provide guidance and support, c. monitor and assessment of responsibility and authority, d. take appropriate action. (Table 4)

**Table 4: Four Principles of Accountability**

<b>Specify responsibility and authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• program results and resources, financial and human, allocated</li> <li>• How they are to be monitored and assessed</li> <li>• limits to their authority</li> <li>• organizational values, policies, rules and regulations, and the behavioural standards</li> </ul>
<b>Provide guidance and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular and timely management information</li> <li>• training and development</li> <li>• access to senior managers</li> <li>• advice from financial and human resource management experts</li> </ul>
<b>Monitor and assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivery of programs, cost and quality</li> <li>• management of human and financial resources</li> <li>• decision-making: authority fully exercised but not exceeded</li> <li>• compliance with policies, values, rules and regulations, and behavioural standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Take appropriate action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellence</li> <li>• satisfactory performance</li> <li>• unsatisfactory execution of responsibility and authority as a result of carelessness</li> <li>• unacceptable execution of responsibility and authority due to deliberate flouting of policies, rules and regulations or exceeding the limits of decision-making authority.</li> </ul>

(Resource from: GDRC Programme on Urban Governance: Urban governance indicators, <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/accountability.html>, Accessed 2010-03-21 )

#### **2.2.4. Problems**

Nowadays the traditional established systems of accountability is obsolete according to the institutional shifts of multilevel, decentralized and network governance from hierarchical government in the Western world. (Weber, 1999; Kersbergen & Waarden, 2004; Harlow & Rawlings, 2007) In other words, the assumption of responsibility will be ambiguous when the decision-making process involved multi-actors, the competitive mechanism in market will be ineffective when there are more co-operation between firms to share knowledge (Jorde & Teece, 1990). Anne Davies is the Public/private overlap, the unclear responsibility between public sectors and private entities on cooperation could undermine political and administrative accountability in certain areas of public service provision, e.g. contracting out of government. (Davies, 2001) Although, the cooperation or partnership promotes the effectiveness and efficiency of activities, it brings the inherent conflicts- the vague of accountability- between traditional institution and participatory approaches. The promotion of accountability, participation and effectiveness requires an adaptive legislative and institutional framework to support it. (Hirst, 2000; Eckerberg & Joas, 2004)

#### **2.3. Lessons from literature review**

Obviously, now the participation is frequently studied by scholars as the most useful and innovative attributes for environmental governance approach. Based on the literature, we could sum up the core characters of participation: multi-stakeholders, multi-dimensional collaboration, interactive mode and diverse approaches. Good participation could be realized in two complementary ways, formal way e.g. legislation, regulation, policy, institution etc., and informal way like freely association and expression, accessible and interacted medium, flexible and innovative management, also trusted political leadership. And concerning on multi-stakeholders, it is quite difficult to involving all related actors when dealing with each public issue, so it's better to understand and make use of different approaches (as presented above) according to different situations faced by different actors. In a few word, local Government and Citizen Interaction contributes to promote the democratic, ensure transparency of decision-making process, collect the public's knowledge and power to solve the common issues. Networking functions in the aspects of knowledge and technology exchange, increasing fund support, enlarging common interest, effective use of resources between the entities of local governments, regional governments and even international governments. Public-Private Partnership is advantageous for market economic with a departure point of win-win results, high efficiency and shared responsibility between the public sectors and private sectors. As scholars said there also some weaknesses of participation now, such as inconsistent institutions between participation and accountability, which means when involving different stakeholders, shared right to express and safeguard the common or private interests but not shared responsibility to take on the results. And this problem is also combined with another one that how to improve the effectiveness of decision-making and implementing

when several issues and standpoints are put forward by actors instead of focusing on urgent issue and targeting for objective. Another weakness mentioned a lot in literature is the poor position of low-class citizens in the process of public participation, because of the lack of knowledge, status and channel, although the public participation has been somehow improved.

The effectiveness of accountability is influenced by different mechanisms and elements depending on the concrete context and system. In planning and environmental area, most responsibility is accounted in an indirect way: government or public agencies set standards and monitor the quality of services of front-line providers for users. And political, administrative, managerial, market, ethical accountability are effective components to environmental governance. During the process of achieving accountability, clarifying of procedure and responsibility, forceful auditing and monitoring are the core principles. And nowadays with the increasing participatory governance, on one side, it enhances the inter-supervised within cooperators and public inspection which is the fundamental to accountability. On the other side, involving multi-stakeholders results the vague of responsibility because of the inconsistency between tradition accountability system and cooperated governance. Considering on that, the conflicts should be solved by establishing an innovative institutional framework and find a new approach on managerial, market, and ethical accountability.

### **3. Environmental governance in the Sweden's planning process**

Based on the reflection of literature review, empirical part is organized in three parts: Firstly, general overview of Sweden's formal systems in environmental governance. Secondly, how participation functions in Sweden's environmental management and planning process, focusing on three crucial points learned from literature part: Interaction, Networking, Public-private partnership. Thirdly, discuss the accountability role and situation of different stakeholders in Swedish Environmental management and Planning Process, taking the four types of accountability discussed in the literature as an outline: Political, administrative or managerial, market, and ethical accountability. Among this, Stockholm and Upplands Väsby will be discussed as examples of Sweden's municipality.

#### **3.1. Formal system in Sweden's environmental and planning area**

In traditional Swedish political and administrative organization, local self-governance is accounted for a large extent rather than national, regional level, because the local government has the tax autonomy. (Hirst, 2000; Eckerberg & Joas, 2004) Central government is assisted by the Government Offices and around 300 government agencies to implement the Riksdag's decisions and initiating new laws and law amendments. The agencies must apply the laws and carry out the activities decided by central government and report to corresponding minister. Environmental Ministry is the authority mainly responsible to Sustainable development, making

Environmental policy, Environmental legislation, Environmental quality objectives and EU and International co-operation. The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) is the agency for community planning, urban development, building and housing. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Swedish EPA) is a coordinator and promoter of environmental work, nationally, within the EU and internationally, responsible for producing and disseminating environmental information, making environmental objectives, policy, and implementing environmental decisions, also evaluating the environmental situation. Regional board takes the responsibility on safeguarding the national interests, but has little authority in influencing the urban development except on the infrastructure constructions. The local government has autonomy to organize its own administrative system, making policies and planning on condition that complying with the national law, act and policy. Corresponding to each level, there are responsible environmental and planning offices. (Government offices of Sweden, 2004)

To ensure all the activities are implemented in a proper way, a set of laws are established in both environmental and planning area: The Swedish Environmental Code (EC 2000), Planning and Building Act (PBA 1987) Planning and Building Regulation (PBR 1987). Swedish Environmental Quality Objectives is adopted environmental quality objectives in 16 areas. And in the system of Swedish EPA, it also draws up and develops environmental regulations, environmental quality standards, economic policy instruments, and distributes grants, environmental management systems (Assessment, Licensing and Monitoring).

### **3.2. Participation**

The environmental movement, the pluralism of stakeholders and the shift of power from Centralized to a decentralized demand the improvement for participation in norms, rules, regulations and practice in the planning process in Sweden. This part analyzes participation in Swedish context from three aspects: Interaction, Networking, Public-private partnership (Mehta, 1998), which is referred as crucial attributes to participations in the literature section. And in each aspects, the paper analyzes how participation in environmental issues manifest in Swedish practice from two perspectives: the legislative domain, such as PBA (Planning & Building Act), ED (Environmental Code) etc., and practice in planning process in detailed planning, comprehensive planning and regional planning.

#### **3.2.1. Local Government and Citizen Interaction**

##### **1) From Formal Perspective**

The new PBA is launched in 1987 in Sweden. One of the purposes of the law is to improve the possibilities for public participation. The figure left shows the procedure of formal planning process in PBA. (*Figure 2*) In both PBA and EC, the provisions explicitly state the individuals or organizations that are likely affected by the activities should be involved in the consultation. The consultation gives the authorities and applicant an opportunity to interact with each other and a public hearing is often held.

Stated in the PBA, the draft proposal of all types of plans should be exhibited to the public; in EC, for those activities likely resulting in a significant environmental impact, the application, the environmental impact statement, a judgment, how the public access to those information shall be notified to the public. (Legislation-PAB 2006, c. 4; EC 1998, c. 5) These provisions in the law make sure the public have an opportunity to access to and comment on them before the case or matter is dealt with, and they also regulate the transparency of the planning process (Boverket: Board of Planning, Building and Housing in Sweden, 2006).

- Who shall be involved?

During the consultation, government authorities-Municipality, CAB (County Administrative Board, n.d.), relevant Regional planning body and other municipalities that may be affected – should be involved in a formal process, while actors outside the formal system are explicitly defined important to be informed, such as organizations, associations and citizens that are likely affected in the program or the proposal (Boverket, 2006).

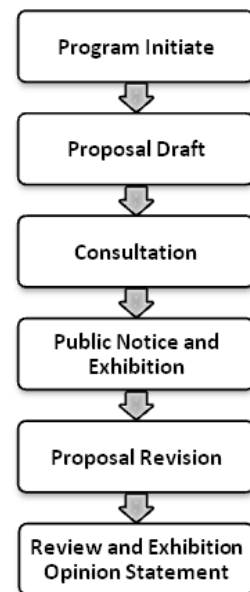
- Forms of interaction

In the legislative system, a number of interacting methods in the planning process, such as consultation, publishing exhibition notice, proposal exhibition, actors submitting writing comments, appealing, data shared free to the public (Boverket: Board of Planning, Building and Housing in Sweden, 2006).

- Discussion

Consultation indeed provides an arena and opportunity to improve the material upon which decisions are made, and to enable insight and influence based on the communication and negotiation by responsible governments and related citizens. It is clearly stipulated in the legislation that, the responsibility for Municipality or CAB (County Administration Board), to inform and involve the related actors to the planning consultation and exhibition, and the requirement of documents that authorities should provide.

But, the promotion of Interaction between Government and Citizen is on the minimum level in the legislative perspective. At first, as stated, consultation and dialogue still happens in later planning process after proposal has been done, even it is just a draft. Then during the consultation, the relevant private actors only have the opportunity to take part in the consultation rather than largely influencing the result. Second, besides writing the comments after exhibitions and appealing for the result, there are no concise provisions about efficient approaches and instructions for related stakeholders to safeguard their interests. Although the way of appealing what they



**Figure 2: Formal Planning Process in PBA** (Source from Boverket, 2006)

object takes a long period and costs too much resource but usually without leading to satisfied results as they expect. And this slow appealing process not only makes bad effect on local government but also citizens. In the legislation, more words is about related actors should be given an opportunity to assess the proposal, but not provided the effective approach for joint decision-making. At last, the legislative provisions regarding consultation, exhibition, public notice, reviewing statement and exhibition opinion, are almost the same to regional planning, comprehensive planning and detailed planning, only with little difference of exhibition period and involved actors, e.g. in detailed planning with addition of affected parties and the co-operative tenant owners, tenants and residents. (Boverket, 2006) But in different planning, the subjects and objects, the task and targets are totally different which indicates that the mechanism, approach and procedure for public involving should be dealt with according to its own attribute. The legislative system seems have weakness of neglecting the difference of planning in each level.

## **2) From Informal Perspective**

Not to replace formal process, informal effort works as a complement approach for promoting interaction between local government and citizens. In Sweden, the administrative system is different among local municipalities, thus each one has the autonomy to organize the systems depending on their own conditions after 1991. Thus to promote communication between government and citizens in planning, many municipalities have made great efforts on inventing their own informal measures. A number of them set up special sectors responsible for organizing the communicative activities and coordinate between government and citizens. An example from the municipality of Upplands Väsby could be utilized as an illustration. The municipality establishes a communication sections to involve the citizens in the whole process including the program initiate, planning proposal and revise work. The communicators or coordinators hold meetings every month to interact with the citizens, exchange knowledge, getting available information and promoting understanding on each other. (*From a presentation of a communicator in Municipality of Upplands Väsby*) In Stockholm's planning process, when proposals will harm the interests of some actors, planners will hold irregular meetings with related citizens or organizations to communicate with each other. But the discussion in the long-term and abstract issues in planning is hard for citizens to express their own opinions without professional knowledge. In this case, planners sometimes invent innovative ways to involve people to experience planners' idea and express their own opinions, besides the irregular meetings, such as using scenario methodology in planning. Another example is, in an ongoing project of Norra Djurgårdsstaden, there are some objections to the constructions nearby the National Park, because it may lead to potential damage to the landscape environment and ecological sustainability of the district around. Thus, planners proposed some activities, such as "tourist", in which around residents and other related actors travel in the area following planners to experience their planning by themselves, then feed back their good or bad feelings about the plan. (*From an interview with a planner in Stockholm planning office*) As

many municipal officials said, the communication not only contributes with the increased support from citizens, but also the improved knowledge for sustainable development.

Apart from specific ways above, most of municipalities utilize the interacted medium very well, especially the data published and shared on internet. In website of City of Stockholm, the citizens could easily find ongoing work plans, consultation & exhibitions of plans, existing plans (including detailed plans and specifications, drawings, building permits, maps, and other land survey documents). And it is also convenient for people to find a contact for each affair and then raise a question. (City of Stockholm, 2009) On the website, Board of planning, building and housing launches an annual inquiry of environmental objectives survey of the country's municipalities since 2006. The media of internet website is used as a simple method with effective collection of data to monitor the environmental quality objective in Sweden. Each municipality log in to reply to the questionnaire and the provincial can log in to monitor the proceedings. The results of the survey will be published for the county administrative boards and citizens to monitor how municipalities operate their work. (Boverket, 2010)

From the perspective of citizens in Sweden, associations often play a significant role in the environmental protection and public space defending from the urban exploitation. For example, in the protection movement of Urban Green Areas in Stockholm, 62 civil-society organizations established network to protect the Stockholm National Urban Park, including user groups, such as boating clubs and allotment gardens, and culture and nature conservation groups (Ernstson 2008). The large influence of the movement led to the exploiting issues related to the national park transferring from the local event to the national interest which attract more attentions and inspections. From that on, the develop projects connecting the Green Areas in Stockholm are required for restrict consultation, EIA and environmental supervisions from the citizens, civil-society organizations and user groups.

### **3) Lessons**

Formal legislation to promoting participation is on the minimum level, the consultation in the formal way performs as one-way reaction but not mutual interaction. Though the consultation in planning process or EIA doesn't contribute a lot to the communication between government and the citizens, it indeed stimulate the transparence and social oversight in planning process by involving the public. Although the importance of actors outside the formal administration is explicitly stated, they are still in a powerless role for the later involvement and without the effective approaches to influence the result. And another weakness is that the legislation is inconsistent with the varied types of planning by neglecting their differences.

As a complement to formal process, informal approaches indeed make great contributions to communications between local government and citizens on planning



process in some municipalities. Those ways are freedom of media, irregular meeting, participative discussion, establishing association, which is considered crucial to participation by scholars (see Table 1). The participative way will effectively contribute to the mutual understanding, which comprises knowing about the requirement of citizens by decision-makers, and about embarrass and challenges from local government's perspective by the public. Free media accessibility gives a simple way for citizens to know about and monitor what is going on in their city. The right of establishing association strengthens the role and influence of citizens, from individuals to groups. In despite of been powerless, the role of citizens from passive to positive in informal planning process.

### **3.2.2. Networking**

#### **1) International Network**

The great Swedish environmental achievement is largely accelerated and contributing in EU and even the world. In the European area, especially in EU, Swedish EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) cooperates with the EEA (European Environmental Agency) on making comprehensively environmental states and policy impacts on different European countries, through establishing the network of experts and institutions. In addition, Swedish EPA also participates in European research cooperation through the ERA-NET (European Research Area NET) that helps keep track of other countries' research, increase research budget, access to knowledge, strategies and work practices as well as the opportunity to share costs. Both of those cooperative efforts are intended to generate knowledge to assist the planning and implementation of environmental policy measures in the EU and its member states. Meanwhile, Swedish EPA commits to development international cooperation with their partner countries on assisting them to establish effective environmental administrative system and contributes to open collaboration between public agencies, individuals and trade and industry. Now there 30 international development projects are currently in progress and Swedish EPA also runs an international course in environmental governance. (Swedish EPA, 2010) 'The delegation for sustainable cities' is a program appointed by Swedish government, such as, to assist the export of environmental technology and promote international cooperation on the development of sustainable cities. (The Delegation for Sustainable Cities, 2009)

Sweden also actively participates in EU or international sustainable programs, in the regional level. In 1996, the Stockholm Region was established to address the need for greater co-ordination of activities on the EU level by the City of Stockholm, the Stockholm County Council and the Association of Local Authorities. The Stockholm Region fulfills those tasks by monitoring thematic areas including social and welfare matters, environment etc., searching for Funding Possibilities, Conferences and seminars, spreading and gathering of strategic information. (Stockholm Region, n.d.) And Stockholm region is involved in several international cooperation projects within the EU, such as a Baltic Sea collaboration, Metrex (The Network of European

Metropolitan Regions and Areas) etc.. (Office of Regional Planning, Stockholm County Council, n.d.) Now the region is processing a projects, POWER, which is a €5.8m inter-regional programme aimed at driving Low Carbon Economies in seven European regions inviting the local/regional stakeholders to participate in the regional initiative. Stockholm Region also has a number of partners , including Baltic Sea States Sub regional Co-operation (BSSSC), Eurocities, UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), Metropolis, The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), Edge Cities, Wider Europe Enlargement network. (Stockholm Region, n.d.)

In city of Stockholm, the EU and international involvement is getting expanded and plays a more active role in sustainable development of Stockholm. EU policies have an impact on the allocation of public services in Stockholm. And the City can provide better and more efficient services by initiating new ideas and implementing best practices through EU funded and programs, working with other cities in Europe. Stockholm assists the City's administrations and companies in seeking EU and global support for developmental efforts, opportunities to EU and global collaboration, looking for partners for projects etc. (City of Stockholm, 2010)

From the above, it is obviously to see, by participating in EU funded projects and global cooperation, Sweden gains an opportunity to have an overview of the development of European metropolitan areas, to increase the support funding from EU, and to learn innovative ideas, advanced knowledge and skills. EU and International cooperation becomes a part of daily life and an element of structure in Sweden.

## **2) Regional network**

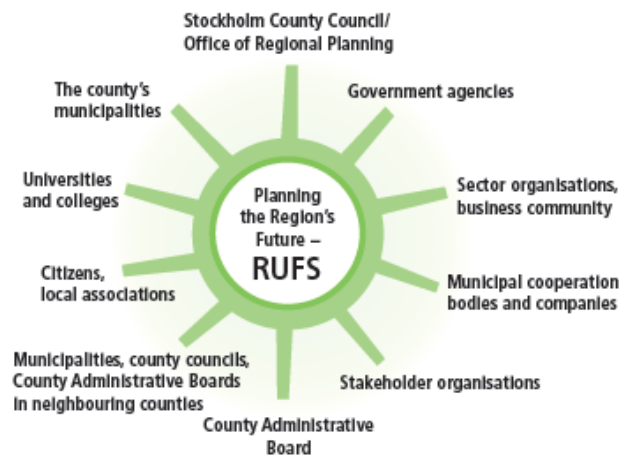
Apart of having an active international network, some regions also operate close internal coordination with a broad partnership of municipal authorities, county councils, universities and colleges, public authorities, organizations, industry and commerce in Sweden. To efficient arrange a large range of issues together, the job, housing, transportation and business, East Central Sweden drew up the collaboration between regional bodies, involving seven counties: Stockholm, Uppsala, Sörmland, Västmanland, Örebro, Gävleborg and Östergötland.

With a powerful network in Regional Planning in Stockholm, the Office of Regional Planning works closely with other authorizes and organizations, including 26 municipalities, the County Association of Local Authorities (KSL), government bodies such as the County Administrative Board, the Swedish Road Administration and the Swedish Rail Administration, as well as various stakeholder organizations and research institutions. (*Figure3*) And the office settled several methods for accelerating coordination in regional planning TOUSLE: Develop strategies, Create arenas and meeting places, Unique expertise and international contacts, Develop and share knowledge. (*Table 5*)

**Table 5: Methods for accelerating coordination in Stockholm regional planning, TOUSLE**

<b>Methods for accelerating coordination in Stockholm regional planning, TOUSLE</b>	
<b>Develop strategies</b>	Making the Regional Development Plan together with regional stakeholders provides the cornerstone for close collaboration with a broad stakeholder.
<b>Create arenas and meeting places</b>	Required for a place for dialogue and coordination, Fatburen are set for storing treasure of experience, facts, statistics and maps, also exchanging experiences and ideas with stakeholders by workshops and seminars.
<b>Unique expertise and international contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve managers or planners' knowledge on planning process and project management skills in a network organization.</li> <li>• Keep a small organization flexible on long-term strategy making by assigning the task of analysis, projections and statistics to the foremost analysts and experts outside.</li> <li>• Establish extensive networks all over the world to access front research in regional development.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and share knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Council provides co-financing for projects designed to enhance or protect the environment in the Stockholm region.</li> <li>• The document of analyses, projects (Consultation report, exhibition proposal, EIA and implementation) and statistics are accessible in several ways, publications and information of seminars, conferences, and lectures are free to download on website.</li> </ul>

*(Based on the data from 'Planning for Europe's most attractive metropolitan region', The Office of Regional Planning, Stockholm County council)*



**Figure 3: Collaboration with a broad partnership in Stockholm regional planning**

*(Source From: Planning for Europe's most attractive metropolitan region, The Office of Regional Planning, Stockholm County council)*

### 3) Inter-Local Network

More and more municipalities establish partnership with their neighbors in the work of environmental issues. Co-operation between neighbored municipalities leads to share cost of inputting material and human resources, though it seems very difficult. It contributes to making effective decision and implementing satisfactory solutions.

(Larsson, 2001) In some municipalities, co-finance is used as an effective method to make an involvement in the co-operation, such as in the road constructions.

There are a number of sustainable programs initiated by governmental agencies.

‘Sustainable Municipality’ program initiated by the Swedish Energy Agency is a unique cooperation between the Agency and more than one fifth municipalities. The Swedish Energy Agency contributes with knowledge, information and networks which facilitate and make municipalities’ work more efficient, for instance, collecting and disseminating good examples by the municipalities to selected target groups. ( Swedish Energy Agency, 2009) ‘The Delegation for Sustainable Cities’ is another program targeting for sustainable development cooperating with the municipalities, market players and other parties. (Delegation for Sustainable Cities, 2009)) Through the cooperation, municipalities can learn from each other's experiences, can give and provide support and discuss the various possibilities or obstacles, and in this way make decisions both in the long-term and systematically. Researchers and universities also participate in it, contributing with methods and tools.

#### **4) Lessons**

Wide and constructive network contributes with generating innovative ideas, best practices, advanced knowledge and skills, accessing front research, increasing research budget, sharing costs, providing a long-term and systematic overview, encouraging incentive competition and self- public supervision. From the practice stated above, we can see EU and international corporation takes an important role in accelerating their sustainable development in Sweden. Kern and Löffelsend (2004) argue in a paper that EU is becoming a central actor in environmental governance in Baltic Sea region during recent years. On top of that, constructing closed network in local level now is becoming both the significant and challenged task of most municipalities for future development for the strong competitions.

There are multiple approaches for constructing cooperation in the network, such as joint-making environmental states and policy impacts assessment, research cooperation, development cooperation projects, making agreements, and setting up sustainable programs. And, in each approach, effective instruments are used to accelerate network construction: financial support, policy regulation, information and shared data, educating and communicating program, create arenas and meeting places. The establishment, clarified accountability and efficient work of coordinator is crucial for the cooperation.

### **3.2.3. Public-Private Partnership**

The Public-Private Partnership could exist in multiform, planning or decision-making, management, supervision, information provision and knowledge communication, technical support. To encourage and promote the Public-Private Partnership, government agencies initiate and support funds for programs.

In Swedish environment licensing system, many agents involve in environmental monitoring program<sup>1</sup> as data providers or in other roles, including national, regional and local authorities, universities, consultancies, research institutions, clubs and societies, and private individuals. Swedish EPA is the coordinator to integrate a large range of environmental aspects and collaborate the joint agents. Effectively coordination is essential to gain a comprehensive picture of the environmental situation, increase participation and save costs. One instrument for the coordination of Sweden's environmental monitoring is using recommended standard methods (online handbook) by diverse providers. 'Delegation for Sustainable Cities' is to promote cooperation in urban development projects between business, municipalities and other actors as well as public participation. (Delegation for Sustainable Cities, 2009) Another example is Building-Living Dialogue, which contributes to the formulation of strategies and engagement of Building and Property Sectors<sup>2</sup> for the sustainable development. It is based on voluntary agreements and consenting commitments between companies, municipalities, authority and the Government, used as an approach of promoting implementing changes in the building and construction market and as a complement to laws and subventions. Besides commitments, the dialogue project establishes the Building-Living Education program and Environmental classification system both of which assist building sectors save energy and safeguard environment by showing an overall picture of building and maintenance processes and the building principle. While the former aims to increase the capacity of implementers and managers, and the latter targets for providing a solid basis for taking decisions on building and construction. (Building-Living Dialogue, n.d.) And in each municipality or each program, there should be one sector in charge of the coordinating task between promoting public-private partnership. In Stockholm, the Executive Office is the administration commissioned their assignment to efficiently lead and co-ordinate the municipal activities. And, in complex projects, such as Norra Djurgårdsstaden in Stockholm, the planners implement good corporations with related companies and organizations by irregular meetings. (from the interview with a planner in planning office)

## **Lessons**

As Cars & Von Sydow (2001) summarized, there are four beneficial features of Partnership in Swedish Planning: the possibility to achieve synergy, budget enlargement, creative solutions from different experience and spread risk. And the partnership between Government, business and individuals could not only exist in the planning process, but more frequently on the environmental management, supervision,

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<sup>1</sup> Swedish environmental monitoring program describe and analyze the state of environment that provides data for the drafting and prioritization of environmental policies in environmental management and the published data to make it possible for anybody to take part in the political debate.

<sup>2</sup> Here, the building and property sector refers to clients, building proprietors and property managers, both public and private, architects, technical consultants (constructional consultants, installation consultants and other technical consultants taking an active part in the creation and maintenance of buildings) as well as the construction industry and the building material industry. ([http://www.byggabodialogen.se/templates/Page\\_3478.aspx](http://www.byggabodialogen.se/templates/Page_3478.aspx))

information provision and knowledge communication, technical support. The partnership between government and private sectors in planning process usually exist in the detail planning rather than comprehensive or regional level, and usually happens in an informal way.

### **3.3. Accountability**

According to the types and mechanism of accountability discussed in the literature part, in this section, the paper analyzes accountability situation for different stakeholders in Swedish Environmental management and Planning Process. (Table 3)

#### **3.3.1. Political Accountability**

##### **Election**

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy country, in which the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) is the nation's legislative body representing the people to make decisions and draw up proposals for new laws. The people have an opportunity to select which parties are to represent you in the Riksdag, county council and municipal council by general election every four years. The Government implements the Riksdag's decisions and proposals. (Government offices of Sweden, 2004) The prime minister who has a direct powers of governance is pointed by Riksdag. (Wikipedia, 2010) Sweden has a higher level in election turnout and the politicians often has a high degree of support by the citizens in last decades, but it has declined steadily in recent years. (Holmberg, 1999 in Wikipedia, 2010).

##### **The Constitution**

The Swedish Constitution defines provisions on the "relationship between decision-making and executive power and the basic rights and freedoms of citizens". (Government offices of Sweden, 2004)

##### **Auditing committee**

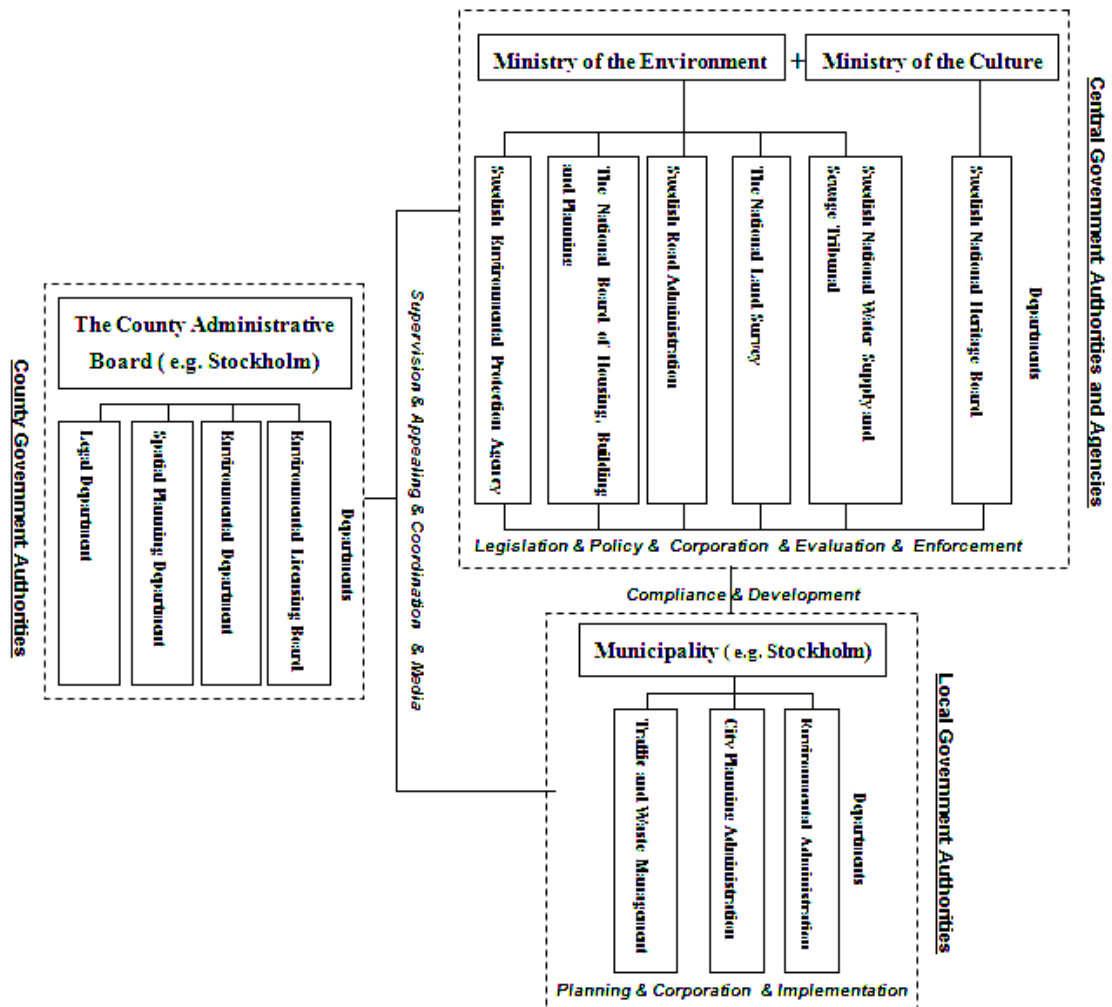
Riksdag points the committee of each governmental office and ministry to inspect if their activities apply to the law and decisions made by Riksdag. (Government offices of Sweden, 2004)

#### **3.3.2. Administrative or managerial accountability**

The Government settles the preconditions for each agency's operations and makes the ordinances including general administrative provisions that specify how the agencies should implement their tasks. (Government offices of Sweden, 2009) The administrative accountability is usually enforced by internal rules, independent commission, a Hierarchy system, Legitimacy, "watchdog" units, citizens complaints (*See Table 3*).

In 'Environmental Performance Review of Sweden', the OECD presents that, Sweden needs to better integrate environmental issues into other sectors, such as planning and building, heritage, transport, energy, industry, forestry etc., to highly strengthen the inspection, compliance and enforcement of environmental regulations at regional and local levels. (OECD's, 2004) Now, through the environmental and planning practices,

the authorities' accountability is fulfilled according to a hierarchy and integrative administrative organization from the national to the local governments, including various agencies. (Figure 4) Ministry of the Environment is the national authority who is responsible for the areas of Sustainable development, Climate policy, Environmental quality objectives, Environmental legislation, Ecocycle policy etc.. Based on legislations and policies decided by Ministry of the Environment, the related Agencies carry on their environmental tasks and report to the Ministry. (Ministry of the Environment, 2004) In which, Swedish EPA is the most important national agency to present proposals for environmental policy and legislation to the Swedish Government, assess and evaluate the implementations of the environmental policy decisions and projects. (Swedish EPA, 2009) Besides, there are some others national agencies independently fulfilling commissions, or cooperating and communicating together for sustainability, such as the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, Swedish road administration, Swedish National Heritage Board etc.. Then, to the subordinate administration, Local and Regional self-government are responsible for providing a great proportion of all public services, with a high degree of autonomy to execute their work well. Their responsibilities are specified partly in the Local Government Act and partly in laws and ordinances covering specific areas, such as EC, PBA. (SALAR, The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2009) The County Administrative Board is responsible for overseeing if the national goals are realized, with the main missions on supervisions, appealing against local government decisions, licenses and economic support, information and advice supply (CAB, 2009). It works as a mediation authority between the central government and municipalities, to "promote safeguarding of national interests in municipal plans". (Legislation-PAB etc., 2006, p. 27) While Swedish municipalities work directly on public resource allocation and service provision, such as Planning and building, Health and environmental protection, Water and sewerage if concerning on environmental issues.

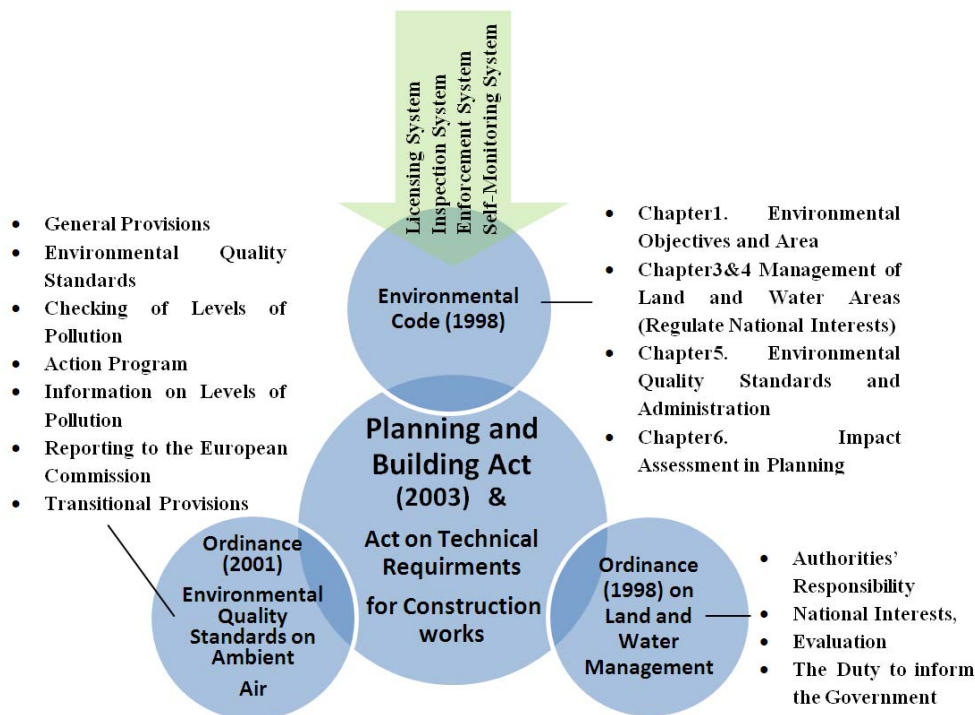


**Figure 4: The Organizational Structure of Swedish Planning Regarding Environmental Issues**

On top of a hierarchy, integrative system and the independent commission, the legislation plays an important role on the clarification and enforcement of the accountability in environmental and planning issues. As the problem mentioned in literature, ‘vague of accountability’ caused by conflicts between traditional institution and participatory approaches, the wide environmental involvement in planning and building activities also demands the legislative integration, to clarify the responsibility, authorities and enforcement among different sectors. Boverket, made a summary of legislation in 2006 that covers the PBA, the Act on Technical Requirements for Construction works etc., as well as parts of EC with related ordinances that must be jointly applied into Planning and Building activities. (Boverket, 2006) (Figure 5) On top of that, ED or ordinances also specify the regulations regarding the licensing, inspection and enforcement system for environmentally hazardous activities. In the system, a lot of environmentally hazardous activities or operations could not be started without a license, to make sure the activities are complied with the relevant rules in the EC or ordinances. Besides this, a self-monitoring system is also mandatory for operators to have, for there are too many activities and operations to be regularly inspected and enforced by the authorities themselves according to EC.



(Swedish EPA, 2009) EC also states the responsibility of supervisory authorities and clearly points the executors for supervision. (Swedish EPA, 2000, p. 139)



**Figure 5: Legislation framework on how to integrate the PBA with the Environmental Code and other relevant environmental ordinances (Data based on Legislation-PBA etc., 2006)**

Besides the above, the Government also monitors agencies' or municipalities' activities by an annual report from them containing information about inter alia, expenses, revenue and results (Government offices of Sweden, 2009), an annual inquiry of environmental objectives survey<sup>1</sup> on the website (Boverket, 2010). These reports and inquiry results are published by the related administrative boards, by which the superior authorities and citizens could monitor how municipalities or agencies operate their work.

“Every Swedish citizen shall be entitled to have free access to official documents.”(Chapter 2, Article 1, Freedom of the Press Act) This legislation regulates the public access and transparency of official documents, which in some sense promotes the accountability of authorities by public oversight. To involve the public supervision, on the website of most authorities or agencies, the public can find development strategy, annual report, as well as reports and contact persons for various

<sup>1</sup>Board of planning, building and housing launches an annual inquiry of environmental objectives survey of the country's municipalities since 2006 on the website. The internet media is used as a simple method with effective collection of data to monitor the environmental quality objective in Sweden. Each municipality log in to reply to the questionnaire and the provincial can log in to monitor the proceedings. The results of the survey will be published for the county administrative boards and citizens to monitor how municipalities operate their work. (Board of planning, building and housing, 2010)

programs to respond to questions, comments or suggestions on specific issues. In this case, the contact person has the responsibility to communicate with the public. Such as, EPA shares the Environmental monitoring data to the public to involve more people's attention and supervision, with the purpose of promoting the extent and degree of Environmental monitoring. (Swedish EPA, 2009)

The last but not the least, providing guidance and support is absolutely a necessary step for clarifying the accountability. For an instance, guides to environmental monitoring are provided to ensure the consistency and efficiency of policies and approaches, to ensure the coordination and comparability of environmental monitoring between the national and regional levels the local level. The guide covers the guidance and support on quality assurance process, a general nature on the planning and implementation of monitoring, the variables to be measured and techniques for doing so. And also, Swedish EPA draws up the environmental quality standards to provide a criterion for people to play environmental positive activity, make reasonable assessment, judgment, and monitor. But now, the system including several sub-systems seems not so clear to give a guidance or criterion for the actors to follow up in planning and environmental practice.

### **3.3.3. Market Accountability**

In Sweden, some mechanisms are used to audit the environmental impacts of service providers' activities (Building and Planning projects), to encourage them to have environmental self-monitoring, such as Economic instruments, Licensing system, mandatory for operators to have a self-monitoring system. (Swedish EPA, 2009)

Environmental economics now seems as an innovative concept in Sweden, which means environment is usually considered together with the economics and limited resources. Environmental economics is targeting for encouraging companies and private individuals to reduce emissions and make the best use of limited natural resources and services, improve their identification on profiting by positive environmental impact as earnings in the traditional sense. The Environmental Performance Review of Sweden reports that Sweden has made great progress on environment during the past decade, especially in an extensive use of market-based instruments and green tax reform<sup>1</sup>. But the review also points the level of taxation is ineffective to exert influence on companies and private individuals. (OECD, 2004) Economic instruments include taxes, fees, tax relief, refunds, various grants and subsidies that are used to influence people's unsustainable behavior by the incentive of cost-efficient. (Swedish EPA, 2009)

### **3.3.4. Ethical Accountability**

With the improved significance of sustainability, environmental improvement is not only considered as an approach to economic benefit but also an ethical responsibility

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<sup>1</sup> Green tax reform is another environmental economic instrument. Taxes on environmentally harmful activities are increased in exchange for tax reductions on individual earnings. (Swedish EPA, 2009)

and identification. Officials, companies and individuals want to demonstrate their corporate responsibility and commitment to environment improvement and wish to be considered as leaders in environmental practice. (Welford, 1994) The ethical accountability in some sense promotes the attractiveness of environmental sustainability. Now, many informative instruments are frequently used as a complementary and communicative incentive approach in the urban planning and environmental protection system, to change the opinion and behavior of experts, officials, managers, operators and the citizens etc., awareness-raising, knowledge transfer, best practice education programs. (EPA, 2009)

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1. Core points in theory**

Formal process and informal process are considered as complementary ways for improving participation and both of them are vital to participation. And three aspects are pointed out as different approaches to dealing with each public issue according to different situations and different relationships of stakeholders. Inconsistence between traditional institution and participatory governance, ineffectiveness on handling urgent issues and low position of low class citizens are three main problems discussed by scholars.

Within the market economy, in planning and environmental area, the responsibility of government or public agencies is transferred from drawing up standards and monitoring the quality of services for the public instead of providing directly. According to different systems and different related actors, political, administrative/managerial, market, ethical accountability separately functions in environmental governance. Clarifying of procedure and responsibility, forceful auditing and monitoring are the core principles. Considering one of problems of participation, 'inconsistence between traditional institution and participatory governance', the vague of responsibility is one negative result to accountability of this inconsistency.

Thus to establish a new institutional framework or strengthen managerial, market and ethical accountability are the way to solve the problems both in participation and accountability.

### **4.2. How are they handled in Sweden?**

#### **Participation**

From the general review of Swedish Planning process, we learned a lot of efforts and achievements are made by government, citizens, organizations and private sectors on promoting participation in environmental sustainable development. This trend is consistent with a large amount of study on participation we found in literature. Formal legislation functions in a minimum level, existing only in the aspects of involving the related stakeholders in consultation and public exhibition without referring to the

establishing network and partnership. It doesn't promote participation and communication in Swedish environmental governance a lot, but it indeed contributes the transparency and social oversight in planning process. As a complement to formal legislation, the approaches in informal ways are getting more effective, flexible and diverse, more focusing on improving the capability, knowledge and skills of the stakeholder managers, planners, constructors, providing technical support, supervision, free media accessibility. Looking at the role of different actors, the extent of involved actors is getting broad, including government authorities and agencies, international organizations, universities, public organizations, industry, commerce and the citizens. Among which, the role of citizens has changed from passive positions to a bit more positive basing on the transformation from formal legislation to informal process, especially when they establish association from individuals to groups. Local associations play an active role and have a large influence on Swedish environmental governance, this finding responds to the previous literature referring, 'Participation needs freedom of association and expression on one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.' (UN-ESCAP, n.d.)

Among the other approaches to promote participation, establishing international and EU network makes larger contributions to Swedish planning practice than government and citizens interaction and public-private partnership. But constructing inter-local network is still in the less active level in Sweden. The government plays an instructing and supervising role in system construction for initiating joint projects, programs, making policy, creative instruments and agreements in general. Based on the local self-governance system, many municipalities add some flexible sectors or positions, organized some communicating meetings and activities to accelerate participatory governance in their administration to complement the weakness of formal process. The role of planners becomes diversity, such as coordinators, managers, designers etc., which should have broad the knowledge, analytical skills and management competence. And it is obviously that coordinator is crucial for a successful cooperation. Many effective instruments are used in the network construction: financial support, policy regulation, information and shared data, educating and communicating program, create arenas and meeting places.

And the public-private partnership in Swedish environmental governance is not so active as network establishing. It exists both in the planning process and environmental management, such as environmental assessment, supervision, information provision and knowledge communication, technical support. Even the later one is more frequent because public-private partnership easily progresses in the concrete activities.

### **Accountability**

And from the review, it concludes the accountability is ensured by the administrative system, legislation, effective instruments, mutual stakeholders supervision and ethical improvement. It appears that administrative system, full range and integrated legislation, economic instruments make good sense on ensuring accountability in

Sweden's environmental governance. Therein, apart of specifying and taking the independent commission of each department, the integration and cooperation between these sectors is crucial to environmental governance. Then the task goes to how to enforce these commissions done in a proper way, when the problem of vague of accountability will come up with multi-stakeholders involvement as mentioned in literature. The integrative legislations covering related provisions in EC, PBA, the Act on Technical Requirements for Construction works etc., clarify the responsibility, authorities and enforcement among different agencies and sectors. Here we can find that good legislative framework plays a very effective role in the Swedish practice, although there are fewer studies exploring the legislation systems. And the market-based instruments to encourage people to take their own responsibility has made great progress in Sweden, such as the economic instruments and green tax reform. And improving people's environmental awareness and behaviors by awareness-raising, knowledge transfer, best practice education programs are put forward as the important tasks to promote the ethical accountability in Swedish environmental governance. Making a clear and effective guidance or criterion in planning and environmental system is also a foundational component of ensuring accountability, although the Swedish practice in this area still needs to be improved.

We can see the five elements are so intensively combined with and affected by each other in the Swedish process. The achievement of environmental governance is based on the rule of law, which acts as the foundational rule and formal approach to enforce the accountability, transparency, participation and other aspects effecting on the capability of governance. Both formal and informal ways of involving the public do stimulate the transparency and social oversight in planning process. Meanwhile transparent institutions inform the responsibility to the public clearly, and highly engage the public to concern and participate in the public issues. Effective instruments are valid to accelerate network and partnership construction and ensure the accountability: economic instrument, information shared, education program, creating arenas and meeting places. Certainly, each of these attributes is inter-stimulated.

### **4.3. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of Swedish practice?**

#### **Strengths:**

- Sweden has made a lot of efforts on improving participation in environmental governance, especially by active performance on establishing network of International and EU level.
- The composition of involved actors is becoming broad and diverse, and the position of citizens is getting better through informal ways, especially by setting up local association which could have a large influence on Swedish environmental governance.
- The government plays an instructing and supervising role in initiating projects, program, making policy, creative instruments in the establishing the networks; and many local governments create flexible and effective ways for accelerating

public participation in their administration, based on their local self-governance system.

- Planners work more as coordinators, managers than designers, which largely promote the process of cooperated governance.
- Effective instruments are frequently and well used both in encourage participation and ensuring the accountability, such as financial support, policy regulation, information and shared data, educating and communicating program, create arenas and meeting places.
- Good legislative framework plays a very effective role in the Swedish environmental governance.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Formal legislation functions in a minimum level in participation, and the legislation somehow is inconsistent with the varied planning for it uses the same propositions for all of them and neglects their differences.
- Although, the position of citizens has been improved, they still can't influence the important issues they care about.
- The cooperation between inter-local network in local level and public-private partnership play an inactive role in Swedish environmental governance.
- In the environmental management system, the organization framework, the guidance or criterion showing the users how to use this system and follow up the process does not present clearly.

#### **4.4. What can we learn, how can we improve environmental governance in**

##### **Sweden and elsewhere?**

Considering the strengths and weaknesses in Swedish development, gaps between practice and theory, and also the potential ways for future development, these aspects following are needed to be further studied and improved in practice area: 1) How to improve the citizens' positions in both formal and informal way? Such as expanding and developing the collective participatory ways which lie on establishing associations. 2) The cooperating network between local government and public-private partnership need to be improved through initiating joint programs or projects and inventing innovative instruments. For an instance, the local governments could make a financial cooperation on constructing the infrastructure, or using or protecting some natural resources, which are beyond the geographic bound. Considering when someone put money into things, they surely will take their account for getting better results and more interests. 3) An excellent coordinator becomes more essential for organizing and managing a successful project. And to be an excellent coordinator requires broad knowledge, good skills on communicating with peoples, and also the capacity on organizing issues. All of these are different with the traditional ways architects, planners, constructors and operators are educated. Thus the function and crucial principles of a good coordinator is worth in studying, and the education programs are required. 4) The legislative system should be adjusted to include more provisions on making public could influence the process, and to provide

corresponding provisions to different planning in different levels. 5) More solutions are required to solve the problem of ambiguous accountability caused by incoherence between participatory governance and traditional institution system. Although Sweden has made good performance on integrative administrative and legislative framework and effective instruments, the integrative and clear legislation, the constructive and instructive guidance in planning and environmental system are still considered as potential ways to clarify accountability in environmental governance. And on the other hand, there are also some informal approaches, such as market economic instruments, environmental awareness and behavior education, need to be developing to contribute accountability for environmental governance.

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