

VISION VÄSTRA GÖTALAND A GOOD LIFE


The vision has been jointly formulated by Region Västra Götaland and the four regional associations of local authorities in Västra Götaland, with the assistance of a number of parties. It was adopted by the Regional Council on 5 April 2005.

On 5 April 2005 the Regional Council adopted »Vision Västra Götaland – A good life« as the basis for continued development of Västra Götaland.

This vision is intended as a platform for the efforts to enhance Västra Götaland as an attractive region in which to live and work. It has been jointly formulated by Region Västra Götaland and the four regional associations of local authorities in Västra Götaland, and with the assistance of a number of parties – organisations, universities/ colleges and public bodies. It replaces the regional development strategy adopted by the regional council in 1999.

The basis of the vision is »A good life«. This means good health, work and education opportunities, safety, spirit of community and participation in social life, a good environment protecting the renewable systems, meeting the needs of children and the young, sustained growth and a rich cultural life. »A good life« requires sustainable development, with its three dimensions – economic, social and ecological – being mutually dependent and strengthening each other.

There are five focus areas of particular priority in our continued efforts – trade and industry, competence, infrastructure and communications, culture and health. They are supplemented by four perspectives permeating all our work – the cohesive region, equality, integration and internationalisation.

This is the vision. Formulating targets and strategies and the implementation of initiatives are in the hands of the parties handling the issues. Commitment to these efforts will have a crucial bearing on our success in achieving the vision. It is a challenge to us all. 



HANS ARONSSON
PRESIDENT OF THE
REGIONAL COUNCIL

PREFACE

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} SUMMARY

»Vision Västra Götaland – A good life« is a vision for the development of Västra Götaland. Its central element is »A good life«, defined as follows:

* *Good health* * *Work and education opportunities* * *Safety, a spirit of community and participation in community life*
* *A good environment protecting the renewable systems – in nature, housing and working life* * *Meeting the needs of children and the young* * *Sustainable growth, generating resources for everyone, and a rich cultural life*

THE VISION HAS THREE SECTIONS:

- *Sustainable development* with its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental aspects. A sustainable society must provide for today's needs without jeopardising those of future generations. All decisions must be elaborated so as to take into consideration economic, social and environmental consequences in a prolonged time perspective.
- *Four general perspectives* should permeate everything – *The cohesive region, Equality, Integration and Internationalisation*
- *Five focus areas*, are the target of the main part of development efforts –
 - 1) A vigorous and sustainable trade and industry,
 - 2) A leading position in competence and knowledge development,
 - 3) Infrastructure and high standard communications,
 - 4) A leading cultural region and
 - 5) Good health.

Implementation activities linked to the vision will involve objectives, strategies and initiatives determined by the player responsible for a specific area or operation. This will go forward as a learning development process and be assessed independently. A follow-up will be performed annually in an open seminar. 

THE VISION

VISION VÄSTRA GÖTALAND RELATES TO THE »TERRITORY« OF VÄSTRA GÖTALAND. It is about »A good life«, a vision created in the early planning stages of Västra Götaland. This was the basis of the regional development strategy adopted by the the Regional Council in 1999.

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In the vision the citizens' elected representatives formulate visionary ideas for the future of Västra Götaland. The vision has been adopted by the Regional Council, and has support from the entire political sphere at both regional and municipal level. The creation of the vision has involved trade and industry, universities and colleges, and organisations as well. It is thus the framework for all development efforts in Västra Götaland.

A vision is a beneficial image of a desirable future. A good vision is simple; providing guidance and inspiration and

should be able to stand the test of time. Various interests should find a way of relating to the vision.

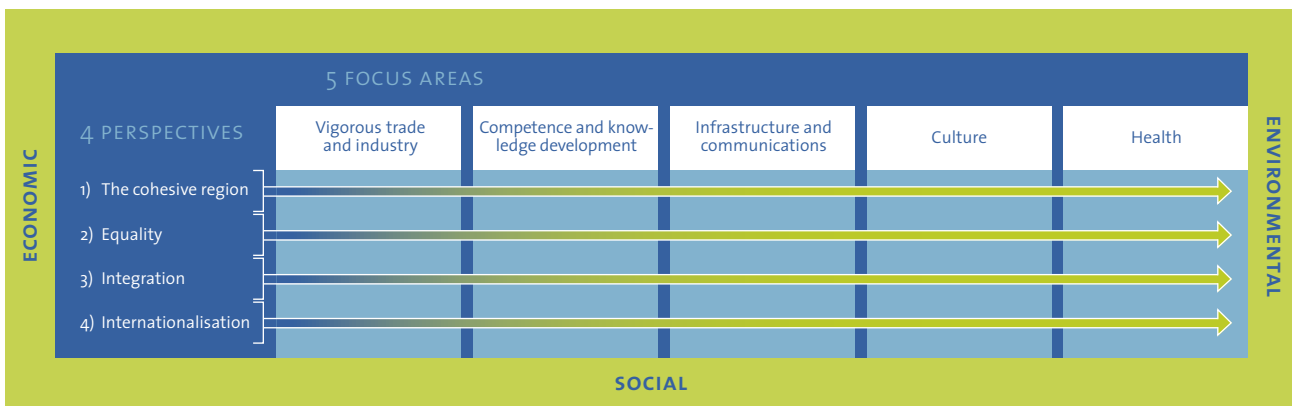
The vision has three sections:

- 1: Sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. This is the framework for the entire development process.
- 2: Four general perspectives permeating everything – the cohesive region, equality, integration and internationalisation.
- 3: Five focus areas – 1) Vigorous trade and industry, 2) A leading position in competence and knowledge development, 3) Infrastructure and communications, 4) A leading cultural region and 5) Good health.

This is supplemented by a model for implementation (with responsibilities and roles for the various players), and a model for regular assessment and analysis.

The vision can be illustrated by the following diagram:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT





A good life

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & A GOOD LIFE

GENERAL FRAMEWORK

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A sustainable society must provide for today's needs without jeopardising those of future generations. Sustainable development has three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. They are mutually dependent on one another and must interact and strengthen each other. Present and future generations must be ensured healthy economic, social and environmental conditions. This means that all decisions must be elaborated taking into consideration economic, social and environmental consequences in a prolonged time perspective.


THE FOLLOWING POINTS CARRY PARTICULAR WEIGHT IN THE VISION OF A GOOD LIFE AND IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- * Good health
- * Work and education
- * Safety, fellowship and participation in community
- * A good environment protecting the renewable systems – in nature, housing and working life
- * Meeting the needs of children and young people
- * Sustainable growth, generating resources for everyone, and a rich cultural life

Below are examples of areas included in the three dimensions of sustainable development:

- THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION covering economic development, productivity, investment, financial stability, innovation and infrastructures
- THE SOCIAL DIMENSION including education and training, working life, health, earnings, participation, culture and creativity
- THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION including climate, biological diversity, the ecosystem, air, soil and water

All three dimensions are fundamental to sustainable development. The clear majority of the variables should be developed in the right direction to achieve sustainability.

Västra Götaland must fulfil commitments to sustainability in international declarations. Control of climate trends is of great significance, with reduced use of fossil fuels being a central element. Chemicals are another important environmental issue. Sustainable production and consumption must have a prominent position in a national as well as an international perspective. 




FOUR GENERAL PERSPECTIVES – RUNNING

A cohesive Västra Götaland

Västra Götaland must be developed into a closely-connected region. This requires the individual components to interact and strengthen each other contributing to a competitive whole characterised by sustainable growth, welfare and a good environment. A cohesive region provides more scope for jobs, education, healthcare and caring services, culture and leisure. There are larger labour markets in a cohesive region providing greater accessibility, more opportunities for people to take advantage of what is offered by the cultural sector and other facilities and make the most of everyone's resources.


ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

- a region with shorter distances – attractive local labour markets with increased access to work, education and social contacts etc.
- a region where the individual components interact and strengthen each other for greater growth, well-being and a rich cultural life.
- growing power and a positive long-term population trend in the four parts of the region – the Göteborg area, Sjuhärad, Skaraborg and Fyrbodal.
- the resources of all individuals being used to the full regardless of gender, origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion. 

Equality

Making the best use of the resources of both women and men involves a broader perspective and greater opportunities for new ideas and development. Every contribution to the development process must be analysed and described from a male/female perspective.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:


- there is no longer a gender-divided labour market, or gender-traditional career and educational choices.
- an equal power structure in trade and industry and the public sector, and in politics.
- an equally good state of health among both men and women.
- a region without male violence against women and where women do not feel exposed.
- men and women receiving equal pay for identical and comparable work. 

THROUGH ALL THE DEVELOPMENT WORK

Integration

Integration is about creating an open society making it possible for all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin and cultural backgrounds, to earn a living and take part in community life on equal terms without having to give up their cultural identity. No one should be excluded from the labour market, the business sector, cultural life or associations because of their ethnic origin. Integration is a reciprocal process, a responsibility for both society and the individual in issues of human rights and obligations.


ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

- Diversity is a general asset contributing to growth and development in the region.
- All women and men of foreign extraction are in employment or education.
- Foreign/international training and professional qualifications are valid.
- Differences in degree of employment among people of Swedish or foreign extractions have been evened out.
- Employers, authorities and organisations agree on the integration process for newly-arrived refugees and immigrants, which is an international model.
- Voting turnout is high and more citizens of a foreign extraction take part in decision-making assemblies.
- Intercultural and international competence in the region is excellent. 

Internationalisation

Western Sweden has been highly internationally dependent for long and open to the surrounding world. Foreign trade, international communication and other contacts with foreign countries have been important factors for development and prosperity. As internationalisation and economic integration increase, dependence on the surrounding world also grows. This is true of trade and industry as well as of other sectors and activities.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

- Västra Götaland's international position and competitiveness are strong
- Västra Götaland has developed alliances and partnerships to gain a hearing for its interests in European affairs. There is active participation (in teamwork) on the global arena
- Västra Götaland is attractive to companies, capital, skilled labour, research, students and visitors
- The citizens are well prepared for international activities. 

FIVE FOCUS AREAS

The vision of »A good life« has five focus areas of priority in a long-term process to boost development in Västra Götaland. All areas include a perspective of sustainability and the four general perspectives.

- * A vigorous and sustainable trade and industry
- * A leading position in competence and knowledge development
- * High standard infrastructure and communications
- * A leading cultural region
- * Good health



Vigorous and sustainable trade and industry

The development of Västra Götaland is largely dependent on the capacity of growth in the commercial sector operating in tough competition and in interaction with national and international markets. Characteristics of trade and industry in Västra Götaland are strong international dependence, a high degree of specialisation and active networks with nationally important industries. There are also substantial contributions from companies active on a competitive global market. It is essential to strengthen the conditions of the existing trade and industry as well as for innovation and the creation of new business. Interaction between the research society, trade and industry and the public sector has to increase.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

- Trade and industry are characterised by strong development and innovation creating new products and services of global competitiveness. They are attractive to investment on the national and international levels.
- Highly developed interaction between research, trade and industry and the local authorities supporting innovation and clusters.
- A positive climate for entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses.
- Functional, sustainable labour markets with a high level of employment contributing to sustained growth and welfare.
- Resource management, environmentally-sound technology and environmental adaptation of products and services are at the forefront in the business sector.
- Västra Götaland is Scandinavia's most visited, appreciated and profitable tourism region on a long-term basis.
- The commercial sector makes use of the potential for development in an equal and multicultural labour market. 

A leading position in competence and knowledge development

Regions with well-educated populations are attractive, to investment and develop faster. Well-educated people contribute to sustainable welfare. Rapid development in working life and technology requires a fast pace in competence and knowledge development. A high level of education and research is of paramount importance, to Västra Götaland's long term development.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

High-quality comprehensive schools, upper-secondary schools and adult education.

- Stimulate the teaching environment for knowledge development doing away with geographical, social or cultural restrictions. The three dimensions of sustainable development are kept in mind.
- Schools respond to stimuli from working life, and produce pupils who are well-equipped for a future professional life and lifelong learning.
- The needs of the pupils are the centre of interest – quality, freedom of choice, participation and influence being significant.
- Schools satisfy the needs of individual knowledge seekers.
- Compulsory schools, universities/colleges and adult education are organised to encourage students to go on to further studies.
- There is regional cooperation in education to achieve higher quality at lower cost.

Higher education and research of a high international standard.

- An attractive and dynamic university education of high international standard. International exchange is a major element.
- Every second adult has some form of higher education.
- There is a »Western Sweden university« – an expanded, close cooperation between independent universities/colleges doing internationally advanced research. Peak competence and resources are used efficiently.
- Differences in education levels have been evened out between the different parts of the region.

Lifelong learning – for continuous skills development

- Skills development is open to everyone and possible to combine with other activities in easily-accessible learning environments in a way that promotes equality and integration.
- Interaction between education organisers and the community has been fully accomplished.
- A learning climate has been created that stimulates learning in the education system as well as skills development in working life.
- Education/training, professional competence and experience are put to maximum use.

General

Everyone should be equipped with skills contributing to development to meet the current requirements without jeopardising the needs of future generations. Gender-traditional education and career choices have come to an end and there are no differences in education due to gender or origin.



Infrastructure and communications of a high standard

Västra Götaland is Scandinavia's leading transport region and a propelling force for the Swedish economy. The transport system is essential for individuals' access to work, education and leisure. Investment in sustainable and safe infrastructure is of crucial significance to the development of trade and industry in the region and the country as a whole. Efficient and secure freight transportation and public transports are crucial for growth and development. The transport system is of great importance in a policy for sustainable development, primarily economically and socially. A conflict with the environmental dimension still remains.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

An international transport hub

- International links for all kinds of transport are strong and logistics are characterised by consideration for security.
- The Göteborg area is the logistics centre of northern Europe, with high standard connecting roads and rail routes.
- Direct flights to Europe's important destinations.
- The Nordic countries' hub for sea transport and sea-bound goods.
- Strong trade and industry and environment-related research and development in logistics and transport.
- Rapid, secure and energy-efficient flows – efficient terminals and flexible rules and regulations.
- The transport system adjusts to requirements of sustainability through a reduced dependence on oil and increased use of alternative fuels.


Sustainable and competitive infrastructure

- Investment in infrastructure promotes sustainable growth, easy access to Västra Götaland and inside the area and provides a high level of safety and positive development in the various parts of the region. International connections are first rate.
- Infrastructure expansion shows consideration for natural and cultural environments, contributes to better housing environments and respects both male and female values.

Public transport for a cohesive region

- Public transport offers a competitive choice as part of a long-term sustainable transport system with a high level of accessibility.
- Shorter travelling times increase access to labour markets and education, in Västra Götaland and its surroundings, making the region more circular (the cohesive Västra Götaland).
- Public transport develops in a way that corresponds to male and female transport requirements; it must promote integration and be accessible to the disabled.


IT region in international pole position

- An infrastructure for broadband with maximum speed and capacity for all companies and households. IT is to be used for people's personal development, participation and service as well as to strengthen the region's competitive ability.
- A leading position in the application of IT to promote competitiveness, use of resources and democracy. 

A leading cultural region

Västra Götaland is a region with a distinct cultural image. Natural and cultural heritage, cultural history and strong enterprises such as the Göteborg Opera, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Film i Väst give the region an identity and a distinctive character. Culture contributes to the citizens' personal development, create links between various ethnic groups and individuals and ties the region together. By preserving our cultural heritage we get confident and creative individuals. Culture also contributes to the region's development, as more and more people work in this sector, new companies are established and the cultural assets become increasingly well-known nationally and internationally. Culture is a vital element of the leisure industry.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:


- Everyone in the region has culture as a source of energy and stimulation and takes active part in cultural life.
- High quality culture flourishes all over the region.
- Museums, archives, libraries and adult education provide support for lifelong learning.
- Culture is an open door to the world.
- Culture is an asset for growth and development in Västra Götaland, nationally and internationally.
- The cultural environment and cultural history are looked after and developed.
- Gender and diversity perspectives are of great importance in cultural life. 

Good health

Health is a central value of “A good life”. Our health is affected by heritage, life style and the environment in which we live. Changes in ways of life, better housing and working conditions and developments in health care and medical treatment have in the long run resulted in better health and increased length of life. However, health problems still exist. It is obvious that social development in general and working life conditions is important. A good physical environment is vital, and so are solid social and economic conditions with sustained growth generating resources for all and providing jobs.

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE VISION ARE:

- The public health perspective is prominent and health aspects are considered in all social planning. Västra Götaland is at the forefront internationally in public health issues. Work-related unhealth is no longer a social problem. Housing and living environments are of high quality and people take part in community affairs. Health gaps related to gender and ethnic background have been evened out, along with regional differences.
- Children are able to develop their physical, mental and social skills without limitations and grow up in a safe and secure environment.
- High level health and medical care with an advanced degree of availability and quality offered on equal terms respecting everyone’s equal value. This in combination with a high level of education and strong research elements – all is of great importance as a growth factor for Västra Götaland.
- Well-developed interaction between parties with an influence on health conditions, e.g. working life, local authorities, organisations, primary healthcare, and with scope for various players in the healthcare system. The responsibility of each individual for his own health is the basis. 



IMPLEMENTATION

Vision Västra Götaland is the document where the citizens' elected representatives establish the visions for the future of Västra Götaland. The vision has been created in a process supported also by a partnership representing trade and industry, universities and colleges, organisations, and others.

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The next step will be objectives, strategy and initiatives. It is fundamental for each player to decide on objectives, strategy and initiatives for the activity for which they are responsible. This applies to municipalities and associations of local authorities, Region Västra Götaland, trade and industry, organisations, labour market representatives, universities and colleges, regional representatives of national authorities, local and regional companies and several others.

The vision, and the process of achieving it, is a learning development process, based on the following concepts and responsibilities:

VISION | *an image of a desirable future situation*

Vision Västra Götaland has been jointly formulated by Region Västra Götaland and the local authorities in consultation with a number of parties in the region, and is approved by the Regional Council.

OBJECTIVES | *what is to be achieved*

Tangible, time-specific and possible to follow-up (measurable). The objectives are set by each player responsible for the activity in question.


STRATEGY | *ways to achieve the objectives*

To be decided by the player in charge of the specific activity.

INITIATIVES | *what must be done*

To be determined by the player responsible for the specific area.


FOLLOW-UP AND ANALYSIS

To be undertaken by the player responsible for the specific area, and partly by an independent follow-up/assessment of the vision as a whole. An annual open seminar is organised. 

FOLLOW-UP AND ANALYSIS

Each player in charge of implementation is responsible for evaluations of their respective activity. In addition, an independent follow-up and assessment will be performed from an overall perspective based on the vision, focusing on development in Västra Götaland and the four areas of the regional associations of local authorities.

Region Västra Götaland and the associations of local authorities are jointly responsible for the process through the *Regional Development Group*. The follow-up concerns application of the three dimensions of »Sustainable development« and the challenges for a sustainable future. An independent assessment body will be contracted for this process – preferably including social scientists. Assessment is a current procedure designed as a learning process.

Once a year, an open seminar will be arranged inviting an audience from many various fields of society. Analysts will report on their findings as a basis for discussions on the direction of development and how to affect it. Politicians, representatives of trade and industry, researchers, authorities, organisations and the media will take part. 

Västra Götaland has 1.5 million people of 130 nationalities, representing 17 % of the Swedish population. Västra Götaland is one of the largest regions in Sweden. Göteborg is the largest city and the major centre of growth in the region.

The Regional Council has 149 members and is the political decision-making body in the region. Its members are elected in public elections every four years. The Regional Council is responsible for healthcare and for creating the best possible terms for the development of trade and industry, infrastructure, culture, tourism and environmental issues.

Västra Götaland has 49 local authorities. They provide the major part of all public service in their areas. They cooperate in four associations of local authorities. Cooperation with Region Västra Götaland on regional development issues is an important assignment. The Regional Council and the local authorities are both entitled to levy taxes in order to finance their activities.



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