

 27/03/2020

# Klimatråd i Sverige – A comparative study of best practices



*Cases analyzed: Jönköping –  
Västra Götaland – Jämtland*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Sweden's overarching climate target is to reach net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045, followed by negative emissions. To achieve this, the climate targets and the Climate Act, together with the Swedish Climate Policy Council, constitute Sweden's climate policy framework, which entered into force on 1 January 2018.*

*But these are not the only tools used in Sweden. Regions and counties decided to put up independently the institution of the Climate Councils, a new type of collaboration between the public and private sectors aiming to achieve the previously quoted goal.*

*The Climate Councils analyzed in this paper have a different geographical, institutional and contextual background. Cases analyzed come from the Jönköping, Västra Götaland and Jämtland Region.*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.2 The institution of Climate council in Sweden

The institution of Climate council arises in Sweden as a proactive reply to the sustainable development goals that the Country is asked to achieve. Climate councils are characterized as institutions with a geographical peculiarity and a collaborative partnership. Climate council's members of the geographical area of competence partner together, be them private or public, singular or collective. Commitment and collaboration are needed to face changes, opportunities, threats, challenges that climate change offers every day.

### 1.3 Climate council of Jönköping

Jönköping Climate Council has been founded in 2011 as a result of common forces between the County administration and the local companies. The Climate Council is held by the chairwoman (primarily County Administrator). The Climate Council in Jönköping counts around 60 members, consisting of companies, public institutions, and the University. The Climate Council is divided up in different groups of interest where the members of that particular sector collaborate together.

### 1.4 Climate council of Västra Götaland

Västra Götaland Climate Council has been founded in 2017 from the collaboration of the Region, the County and the local companies. The work of the Climate Council in Västra Götaland is carried out in a tight collaboration between the Region and the County, who work together for every aspect taken into consideration. Activities and goals of the Västra Götaland CC are backed by a strategy called "Klimat 2030". The Climate

Council counts nowadays 15 members, who change in a 1/3 proportion once a year.

### 1.5 Climate council of Jämtland

Jämtland Climate Council has been founded in 2015. Jämtland County's Climate Council is run jointly by Region Jämtland Härjedalen and the Jämtland County Administrative Board. Jämtland Climate Council is formed by 60 members, coming from organizations from the sector of trade and industry, public administration, academy.

## 2. TOPICS OF ANALYSIS

This paper was born as a comparative research among three Regional Climate Councils: Jönköping, Västra Götaland and Jämtland. I decided to put more focus on the strategies of communication carried out by these three institutions and the modes of collaboration they put in place. Communication here, means both internal and external communication, ranging from the meetings within the members to the newsletters sent out to all the interested people who subscribe. The institution of Climate Council arises as a collaborative tool, a space for dialogue and a platform between interested parties.

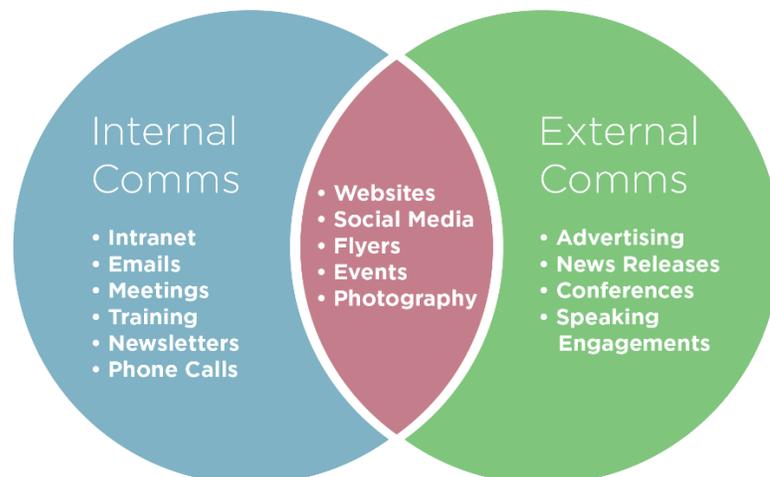
### 2.1 Internal communication

Internal communication refers to communication between members of the different Climate Councils. Effective communication is grounded in internal support. The institution should secure internal communication, meaning communication between the members of the same working groups and of different working groups and between the members and the leaders. The premise

is that members committed to the institution facilitate trustworthy and transparent communication. The better informed are the members of the institution, the better they communicate within the institution itself and with their own network. Internal communication tools, as for an institution like the climate council, regards internal newsletters, meetings, agenda-setting, emails and social media.

## 2.2 External communication

In order to be effective, communication needs to have a strategy, that is a plan of action designed to achieve a set of communication aims or objectives. External communication is simply the transmission of information from the institution to its stakeholders. In reality, communication is a challenging process requiring an understanding of stakeholders, their information needs and communication channels. With a growing urgency to explain how our climate is changing, consistent branding and coherent messages are more and more required. For the institution of the Climate Council, external communication tools include events, newsletters, social media. Of course, there is a need to take into consideration the availability of an ad hoc budget for communication expenses.



## 2.3 Collaboration

Partnerships for sustainable development are multi-stakeholder initiatives undertaken by different actors, which actions contribute to the implementation of inter-governmentally, agreed development goals and commitments. Climate Councils arise as collaborative institutions, born from the collaboration between different institutions like Regions, County administrations and the companies active in a certain geographical area. Collaboration is intrinsic in the institution of the Climate Council, which acts as a space for dialogue and activity for different members involved. Collaboration carries within values and challenges, that can be overcome by working together. Collaboration looks like a simple process, but in order to achieve an effective collaboration different interests, modes of communication and know-how need to meet to achieve the goals.



### 3. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

#### 3.1 Comparisons among the internal communication strategy in the three climate councils

Internal communication within the Climate Council is essential for members to make timely and well-informed decisions for the institution itself. Let's see how internal communication is carried out in the three Regional examples:

The internal communication in Jönköping Climate Council finds its roots in the dialogue between the different parts. At an internal level, the institution is divided up in a very specific group of actions because in order to be successful you must be very dedicated to the groups and people need to feel involved. Involvement is key, and that's why the Climate Council has the role of space of discussion about what the different groups are doing. There is clear communication between the different working groups. Annually there are 4 general meetings where all the members meet plus there are meetings just for the specific working groups. The chairwoman holds the general meeting but then everyone is free to join and to raise their hand to ask questions and comment.

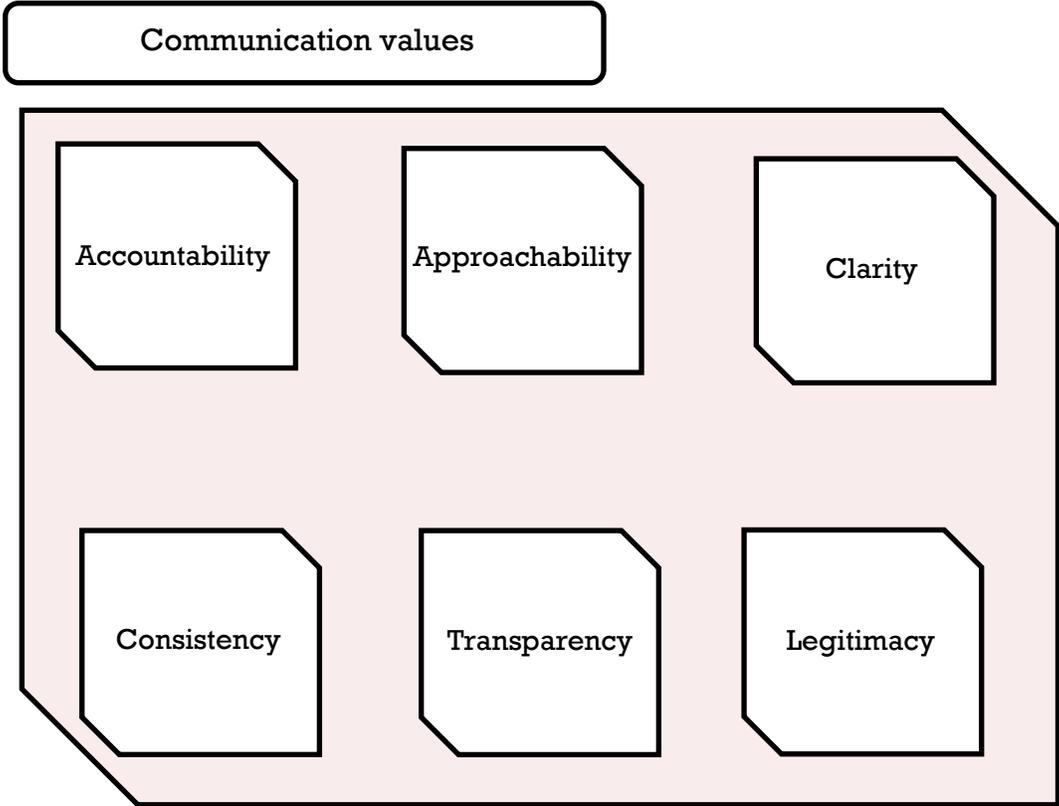
Dialogue is at the core of the internal communication strategy for Västra Götaland Climate Council. Here trustworthiness and transparency are build-up thanks to an active dialogue in the first place between the Region and the County, i.e. the institutions who put up the Climate Council. Region and County work as a single body of an institution here and that is visible in how well the institution is working. The process behind the setting up of the Climate Council is very important, as for the involvement of the people as well. There is a tight dialogue between the institution and its members, which starts by visiting the new entries of the Climate Council.

Moreover, there are annual meetings with a very good attendance rate and more frequent sector meetings. Two people – one from the Region and one from the County – share the chairmanship of the meetings and then everyone is free to join and to speak their mind. Jämtland climate council makes use of general meetings that take place 4 times a year, hold by a representative of the Region and one from the County. Collaboration and transparency are key in Jämtland's Climate Council strategy. Also in the case of Jämtland Climate Council we see the importance of tight collaboration between the two institutions of the Region and the County.

### 3.2 Comments and suggestions

Transparency is both a requirement and a key to success for the institution of the Climate Council. Through transparent information, the Climate Council gains support from the government and offers a positive tool to the companies that are participating. Good and proactive communication within the institution makes it work faster, better and smoother. Good practices as regards internal communication regards sending out the agenda before the meetings so that members come prepared: involvement of the people is the key issue as regards meetings. Cultivate the relationship with the members is very important and in this regard comes another good practice: organizing initial company visits to new members as it happens in Västra Götaland Climate Council and spontaneous company visits to members as organized by Jönköping Climate Council. The suggestion I allow myself to make is to enhance the digital tools of internal communication for example LinkedIn (which Västra Götaland Climate Council already uses) and internal newsletters. The three Climate Councils all carry out internal surveys within their members to ask on a yearly basis what should be

changed, what should be better performed. This is an excellent way to engage and listen to stakeholders.



## 4. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

### 4.1 Comparisons among the external communication strategy in the three climate councils

Climate councils are institutions born to have a strategic impact on their members and their local community. As an institution working in a specific community, Climate Council has also its own strategic external stakeholders. A communication office exists in Jönköping Climate Council and its formed by members of the companies collaborating with the Climate Council who have a communication role in their own company. The group meets apart of the general meetings in order to elaborate and discuss new communication activities. Even if institutions like the Climate Council external communication is less strategically important, still some important activities are carried out. Jönköping Climate Council relies in the first place on the network effect of the different members in the Climate Council to spread a positive word about the institution. Independently from this, it organizes different events like the Climate Week in September, the Climate Prize and, moreover, it collaborates with the University in supporting Ph. D. and Master's students. The website is also another important tool for external communication and today counts around 700000 visitors. Moreover, it makes use also of a Facebook page and of a monthly newspaper sent out to direct subscribers. It was under Jönköping's Climate Council initiative that in 2019, a meeting in Almedalen was organized to gather all together representatives of different Swedish Climate Council and discuss about possible future developments as regards collaboration. Västra Götaland Climate Council communicates externally to general stakeholders using the personal website, social media channels, newsletters and debates articles published on the press. Moreover, Västra

Götaland Climate Council made an advertising campaign on public transportation, whereas the target was not the direct citizen but the company for which the citizen was working. The idea behind is to spread knowledge about the institution as a tool for corporations and not for the private citizen. Västra Götaland Climate Council has a communication office in which representatives from the Region and from the County meet, work and discuss tightly together. Västra Götaland Climate Council's makes us also of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages and of videos uploaded on YouTube. Social media are linked up from the website of the Climate Council.

Jämtland Climate Council disposes of a communication office that deals with all the communication initiatives. The communication department is held by the climate council Secretariat, backed up by the communication office at the County Administrative Board. Jämtland Climate Council makes use of a website to convey all the information regarding the institution. Jämtland Climate Council also makes use of social media like Facebook and Youtube.



## 4.2 Comments and suggestions

External communication is important in order to involve all the stakeholders taken into consideration in the activity of the climate council. The target of Climate Council is very precise and direct, so that's why it is important to make up ad hoc external communication practices. Brand identity should be constructed following the requirements of the target. Even if direct citizens are not the selected target of communication, still it's favorable if events and activities carried out in the local community are marked under the Climate Council logo so that citizens can recognize there is the institution behind. Giving a sense of continuity pays off. The suggestion I allow myself to make is to enhance the presence in the digital environment by developing coherent social media pages where both citizens and members can get informed and involved in what it has been done locally in terms of sustainable development. On a general note it is important to convey a coherent and consistent message to all the stakeholders.

## 5 COLLABORATION

### 5.1 Comparisons among the different forms of collaboration carried out by the three climate councils

The Climate Council institution arises as a collaborative institution where both the public and the private sector make their part to reach the sustainability goals.

Collaboration can be seen as a joint effort towards a common, specific goal, where every part involved puts something valuable in order to achieve something even more valuable. Collaboration is the opposite of competition, because even competitors (here referring to actors in the same location or in the same sector) are called to work together by helping each other.

The strategy of collaboration behind the institution of the Jönköping Climate Council has its roots in the joint effort from different sectors in order to achieve the plus efficiency in the energy sector in the whole County. The institution works on a collaborative basis whereas actors from the different sectors participate in the meetings, decide upon the next steps and give out advice about the Climate strategy.

In Västra Götaland, a tight collaboration is carried out between the Region and the County: these two institutions work hand in hand to ensure the achievement of the “Klimat 2030” strategy. The two institutions hold jointly the Council meetings and decide together the next steps to follow in the strategy. All the activities put in place from the two institutions are decided, designed and implemented by representatives of the two institutions. As a joint institution, they collaborate with all the companies and other institutions that decided to join the Climate Council: an inter-sectoral collaboration is carried out effectively.

Jämtland Climate Council arises intending to become a platform for collaboration between parties from trade and industry, public administration, and interest organizations. The overall purpose of the Climate Council is to contribute to the implementation of the county's energy and climate strategy, and the regional action plan for climate adaptation, with the associated measure plans for energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate adaptation. That's why Jämtland County's Climate Council is run jointly by Region Jämtland Härjedalen and the Jämtland County Administrative Board. Tight collaboration is carried out by the two institutions also in this case.

## 5.2 Comments and suggestions

Collaboration modes and targets seem productive in every region taken into consideration. Tight collaboration is put in place both in Västra Götaland and Jämtland Region: this means that people, means, money and ideas are put together in the achievement of a common goal. This way of doing things can be an inspiration to other climate councils that struggle with money or responsibility issues.

Collaboration in the different sectors works effectively because the different companies are divided up in working groups based on the sector of action. General feedback is given out at the general meetings where every participant can express his opinion. Intersectoral collaboration and communication is a powerful tool because it gives to every participant an overview based on sometimes very different point of views on a matter. Different knowledge, traditions and problem-solving techniques end up in an overarching way of achieving the sustainability goals.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC THEMES

**Cross–sectoral and public–private collaborations involving businesses, government and civil society groups make up a new and unique form of social organization.**

**In order to collaborate in the best way, the actors involved need to communicate in the best way as well. Communication builds up the sense–making and the reputational capital of an institution.**

**Internal communication involves a multiplicity of actors who need to be involved proactively. Internal communication fills the gap between the actors and rises the level of engagement. The high attendance rate of the members of the Climate Council’s meetings is assured if internal communication is effective: members find it more interesting and useful to participate to Climate Council’s meetings if an agenda is issued right before the meetings.**

**External communication, on the other hand, is a tool of accountability for the institution itself. External communication in this case has its grounds in the corporations’ network and in the organization of events open to the public. External communication in the case of Climate Councils has the aim of raising the awareness of the existence of the institution among other companies and actors willing to join. General public – citizens is not the main target for the Climate Councils.**

**Suggestion to improve the effectiveness of the general institution of the Climate Council is to increase the chances of meetings of different Regional Climate Councils to exchange ideas and general knowledge.**

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 highlighted the strategies and activities carried out from the three Climate Councils as regards internal and external communication and collaboration.

On a final note, Climate Councils represent a very effective institution in terms of positive collaboration and useful communication. The partnership value-add shows its effects in the positive and effective way in which actors from both the same and different sectors collaborate together.



