


**Operational Strategy  
2021–2023**

Report 2020:30

**Swedish Agency  
for Marine and  
Water Management**

An aerial photograph of a forest with a light blue overlay. The trees are arranged in a grid-like pattern, and the overall tone is a soft, muted blue. The text is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

This report has been produced by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. The Agency is responsible for the content and conclusions in the report.

© SWEDISH AGENCY FOR MARINE AND WATER MANAGEMENT | Date: 02/11/ 2020

ISBN: 978-91-88727-96-1

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management | Box 11 930 | SE-404 39 Göteborg

[www.havochvatten.se](http://www.havochvatten.se)

## Foreword

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) is a national administrative agency that implements a cohesive marine and water management policy on behalf of the Swedish government. We are working with issues of conservation, restoration and sustainable utilisation of lakes, watercourses, seas and fisheries resources. We collaborate with other public agencies and actors in society in Sweden, the EU and globally. We work from source-to-sea, applying a knowledge-based and coordinated management approach with a focus on the ecosystem. An ecosystem-based management approach means that all management tools must work in harmony to strengthen the ecosystems and the services they provide. Stakeholder engagement at all levels is a critical approach in ecosystem-based management.

The national policy framework emphasises assuming responsibility for the future, for Sweden and the world around us, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). This means taking strong measures in order to achieve clean seas, lakes and watercourses. It also means addressing eutrophication, environmental toxins, littering and other threats to lakes, coasts and seas, and in doing so creating an enabling framework for a blue and bio-based circular economy in which fishing is an important part.

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's operational strategy sets out overarching goals for our activities over the three-year period 2021–2023. These goals are based on our mission and responsibilities, which follow from the official ordinance, other statutes and policy. The operational strategy defines the framework in our process of planning and follow-up. Together with an annual operational plan, the strategy is translated into activities at unit level – the results of which we measure in the effects on the environment and in societal benefits, and report to the government, the general public and globally.

The world around us is in constant flux, and the operational strategy is therefore not a static document. It can be updated during the strategy period until 2023, on the basis of national, EU-wide and global priorities.

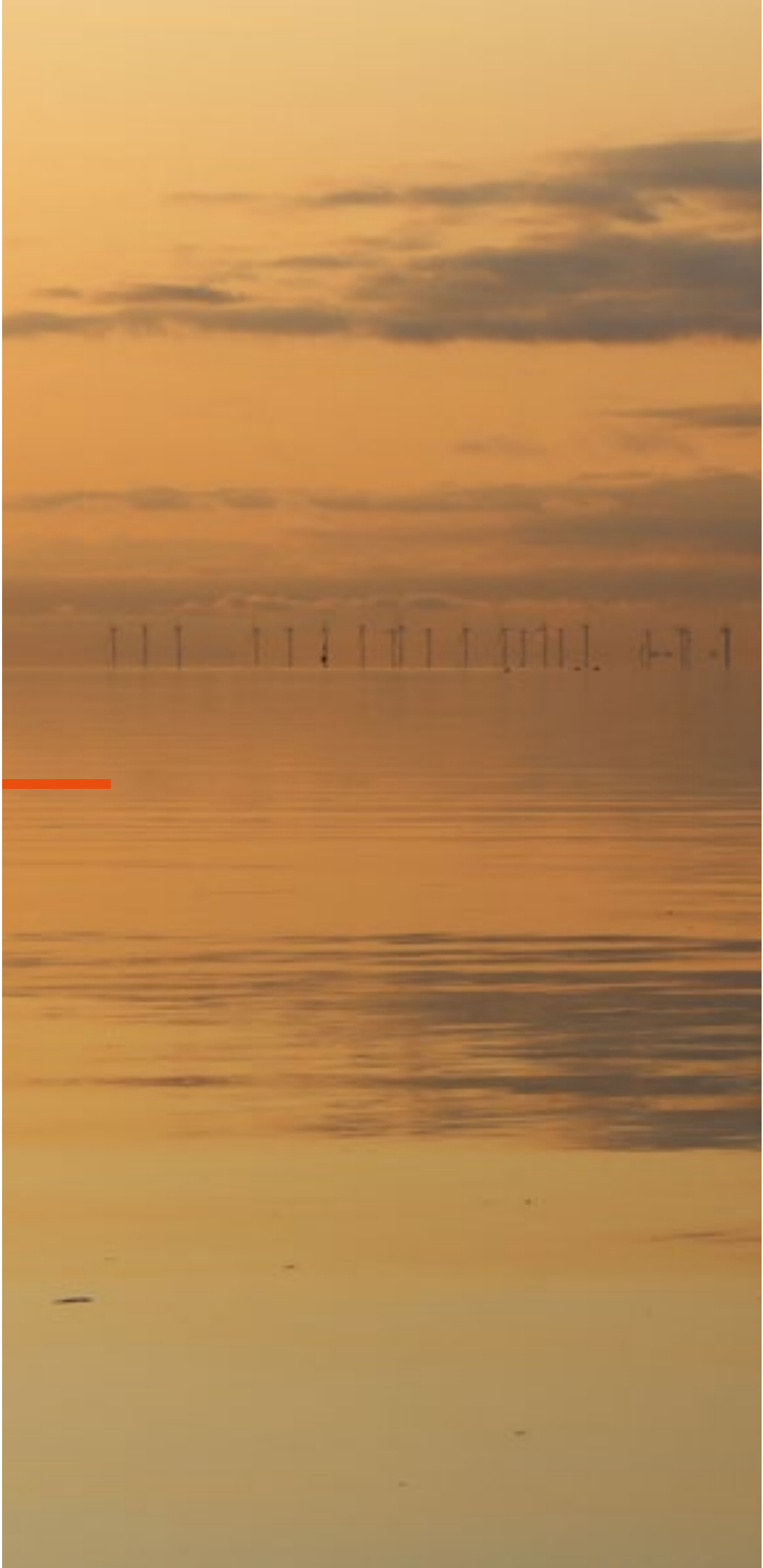
Jakob Granit  
DIRECTOR GENERAL

*Photo: Håkan Carlstrand*



## **Content:**

<b>External analysis – marine and water policy .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A goal matrix .....	8
Water resources .....	10
The sea and its resources .....	12
Sustainable utilisation of water and marine resources.....	14
The climate and marine and water management.....	15
<b>How the Agency supports the generation of societal benefits .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Our mission and our tools .....	18
Coordinated ecosystem-based management from source to sea .....	21
Results-based management .....	25
Collaboration with government agencies and actors .....	27
<b>Strategic goals for operations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Strategic goals guiding operations .....	30
Enabling goals for work to create the conditions.....	32
<b>How we work.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Working methods .....	36
Our sub-strategies within special development areas.....	38
Planning and follow-up.....	42



A photograph of a sunset over a calm sea. The sky is filled with soft, orange and yellow light, with some dark clouds near the horizon. A small boat is visible on the water in the distance. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

# **External analysis – marine and water policy**

The goals of the policy are to implement a cohesive marine and water management policy that creates sustainable ecosystems and contributes to a circular and bio-based economy. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) plays an important role in public administration by striving to achieve:

- sustainable water environments
- sustainable marine environments
- good conditions for the sustainable utilisation of marine and water resources, including fisheries and other blue industries

The goals and strategies of the policy are expressed not only specifically in the area of the environment, but also in goals and strategies that span different sectors towards more integrated societal goals.

## **A goal matrix**

Agenda 2030, with the 17 sustainable development goals, is a general international agenda for a shift to a sustainable society. Sweden's commitment is to implement Agenda 2030 for sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This will be done through a coherent policy at national and international levels, in which all the goals are viewed as a whole.

The goals in the agenda are all linked to water, as sustainable, aquatic ecosystems represent a basic precondition for sustainable social and economic development. Goal 6: to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and goal 14: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, are particularly relevant in providing guidance for our operations. Goal 13 on combating climate change and goal 5 on gender equality are examples of other important goals in the agenda that guide us.

The implementation of the goals in Agenda 2030 in Sweden emphasises a holistic perspective as well as the importance of coordination and collaboration between actors throughout society in accordance with goal 17: partnerships for the goals. At a

national level, the agenda's environmental dimension reflects the environmental goals that the Swedish parliament has adopted.

Examples of bridging overarching strategies that affect SwAM's work include the EU strategy "The European Green Deal", which is the EU's road map for a sustainable economy and implementation of the UN's Agenda 2030 and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. SwAM's activities are guided by the EU's provisions, including the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Environment Directive, the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive, the Habitats Directive and legal instruments linked to the common fisheries policy. EU law has been enacted in Swedish legislation primarily through the Swedish Environmental Code and the Swedish Fisheries Act with associated ordinances.

At national level, the Agency's work is guided by the Government's food strategy, the maritime strategy, rural policy development goals, the regional development strategy, the circular economy strategy, the energy agreement, the climate policy framework, the national strategy for climate adaptation and the goals for governmental work on the cultural heritage. Figure 1 summarises the different goal hierarchies in a matrix that guide the Agency's work.



**FIGURE 1.** Environmental goals, the government's and parliament's bridging strategies are related to legal instruments and strategies at global EU and national level. They specify what is to be done and who is responsible for what.

---

## Water resources

Society is in large parts structured on the basis of water resources, waterways and water-related ecosystem services. These services form a fundamental value and are a key natural resource that impacts most sectors of society. It is important to retain and rehabilitate the ability of the ecosystems to produce ecosystem services. Lakes and watercourses are used for energy generation, primary services, households and industry, and for the fundamental functions of the ecosystems in a nexus.

Coastal and water environments are important for recreation and tourism, taking into consideration cultural heritage that must



be preserved and managed for future generations. Lakes and watercourses are subjected to impacts from many sources, such as forestry, agriculture, industry and hydro power plants. In modern-day Sweden, sustainable water resource management is more important, and more sensitive, than ever in order to preserve and protect ecosystems and create the conditions for

sustainable use and growth. Climate change, population growth and increased economic activity can challenge both the quantity and the quality of water resources.

Water resource management encompasses lakes, watercourses, coastal waters and groundwater. Implementation of water resource management must take place with a holistic approach, in collaboration and be coordinated. It must be integrated with the implementation of other ordinances and directives in the areas of both water and nature conservation, and link in to marine management. Today's water management system primarily targets water environmental quality goals: Flourishing Lakes and Streams,

Rich Flora and Fauna, Zero Eutrophication and A Toxin- Free Environment.

The development of society places demands on access to water resources of good quality and quantity, and Sweden faces many challenges in achieving the ambitious goals established in EU's Water Framework Directive. Our water resources and associated aquatic resources have been utilised for a long time and are affected by physical exploitation and emissions of hazardous substances. The annual follow-up and in-depth evaluation of Sweden's environmental goals reveal that despite considerable efforts and diligent work, the measures and the instruments adopted are not adequate to achieve the defined goals.

Water management in Sweden strives to protect and improve our water resources, especially from a quality perspective. During the strategy period, we are developing working methods for the sustainable management of water resources from all societal perspectives, addressing both water quality and quantity perspectives. Drinking water supplies are particularly important in this regard. Improved conditions must be established to achieve a balance between the need of the ecosystem for water of good quality and other societal needs with demand for water of a certain quality and quantity with due consideration given to climate change. A future comprehensive sustainable water resource management approach needs to better integrate cultural environment, rural and energy policy, the Swedish food production strategy and work on climate change adaptation.



*Photo: Shutterstock*

---

## The sea and its resources

Maritime policy is based on the fact that the sea is an indispensable resource for mankind and for society. Maritime governance requires extensive collaboration with our neighbouring countries, as the sea crosses national borders. Sweden faces a challenge in reaching the environmental quality standards in our marine environments and as established in the EU Marine Framework Directive. The effects of eutrophication continue to be evident and extensive.

Marine ecosystems take a long time to recover following significant change stemming from human activities. The marine ecosystem is changing quickly, which is clearly evident in the changed composition of species and their distribution.

Climate change has a major impact on marine ecosystems. Changes result in, for example, increased surface water temperature, a lower salt content in the Baltic Sea, higher sea levels and more acidic seas. Increased precipitation in the tributaries of the Baltic Sea cause an increased load of nutrients to coastal waters. The living conditions for species of flora and fauna are affected by climate change. The geographical distribution of species can shift when habitats are changed and the interaction between species changes.

The increased presence of marine debris represents a growing threat in the marine space. Additional action is required to reduce the input of pollutants from land to sea. Local work on measures needs to be developed, as does work to reduce the internal load of nutrients from sediments, primarily from phosphorus, in lakes, coastal areas and seas.

In 2014, the Swedish government adopted five new interim goals in the Swedish environmental goal system – Milestone Targets for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. This decision was in line with the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the EU's Habitats Directive and the EU's Biodiversity Strategy. Regarding marine territorial protection, the current goal of ten per cent protection has been achieved in the marine space. However, protection needs to be better and stronger with regard to ecological representativity, connectivity and functionality. This issue has been and remains a high priority for the government through several government assignments and budget appropriations, such as

fisheries conservation measures in marine protected areas.

Similar to conservation measures in the freshwater environment, work within the marine environment also needs to take cultural heritage, rural and energy policy, the national food strategy and work on climate change adaptation into consideration.

A new biodiversity strategy has been drawn up by the EU Commission within the framework of the EU's "Green Deal". This strategy will probably place demands for increased protection of aquatic resources and the implementation of additional comprehensive, national measures.

The EU's common fisheries policy has the aim of ensuring that fishing operations are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Fisheries management is central to the achievement of the environmental objectives set out in the EU's marine and water policy, as well as the implementation of Agenda 2030. It is also important for achieving the national environ-

mental quality goals of protecting threatened species, preserving genetic variety and maintaining ecosystem services. National fisheries management supplements the EU-wide fisheries policy. There is significant scope for action within the trawling limit and in freshwater areas. During the strategy period we will, in line with the ecosystem initiatives, integrate fisheries management more clearly into marine environment policy, in accordance with the political objectives.



*Photo: Shutterstock*

---

## Sustainable utilisation of water and marine resources

The sustainable utilisation of water and marine resources is a pre-condition for achieving a good environment, broad societal benefits and the politically adopted goals. Sustainable utilisation and management of the aquatic resources requires good monitoring of the environment, management of information and environmental data should be made available in a safe, open way in order to benefit everyone. SwAM's ability to develop the management of environmental information is one important prerequisite to achieve good freshwater and marine environments that can be used in a sustainable manner.

The European "Green Deal" is a growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and healthy community with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. By 2050, there shall no longer be any net greenhouse gas emissions, and economic growth will have been detached from the consumption of resources. Development to achieve a circular, bio-based economy is crucial if Sweden is to become the world's first fossil-free welfare state, to contribute to the environmental and climate goals and many of the global sustainable development goals within Agenda 2030. For its part, the food strategy aims to increase production, contribute to a competitive food chain, increase employment, exports, innovation and profitability, while also achieving relevant environmental goals.

The new provisions for water-related operations mean, among other things, that any party that is running such an operation for the production of electricity from hydro power must provide its operation with modern environmental permits. The national plan that the government has adopted for the reassessment of environmental permits for all hydropower plants is a blueprint for achieving sustainable freshwater environments and maintaining the production of sustainable hydropower. The plan will be implemented for a period of 20 years. The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has worked together with the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Grid Company (Svenska Kraftnät) on the development of the plan. The three agencies will support and monitor its implementation on an ongoing basis. The proposals for national marine spatial plans for Swedish

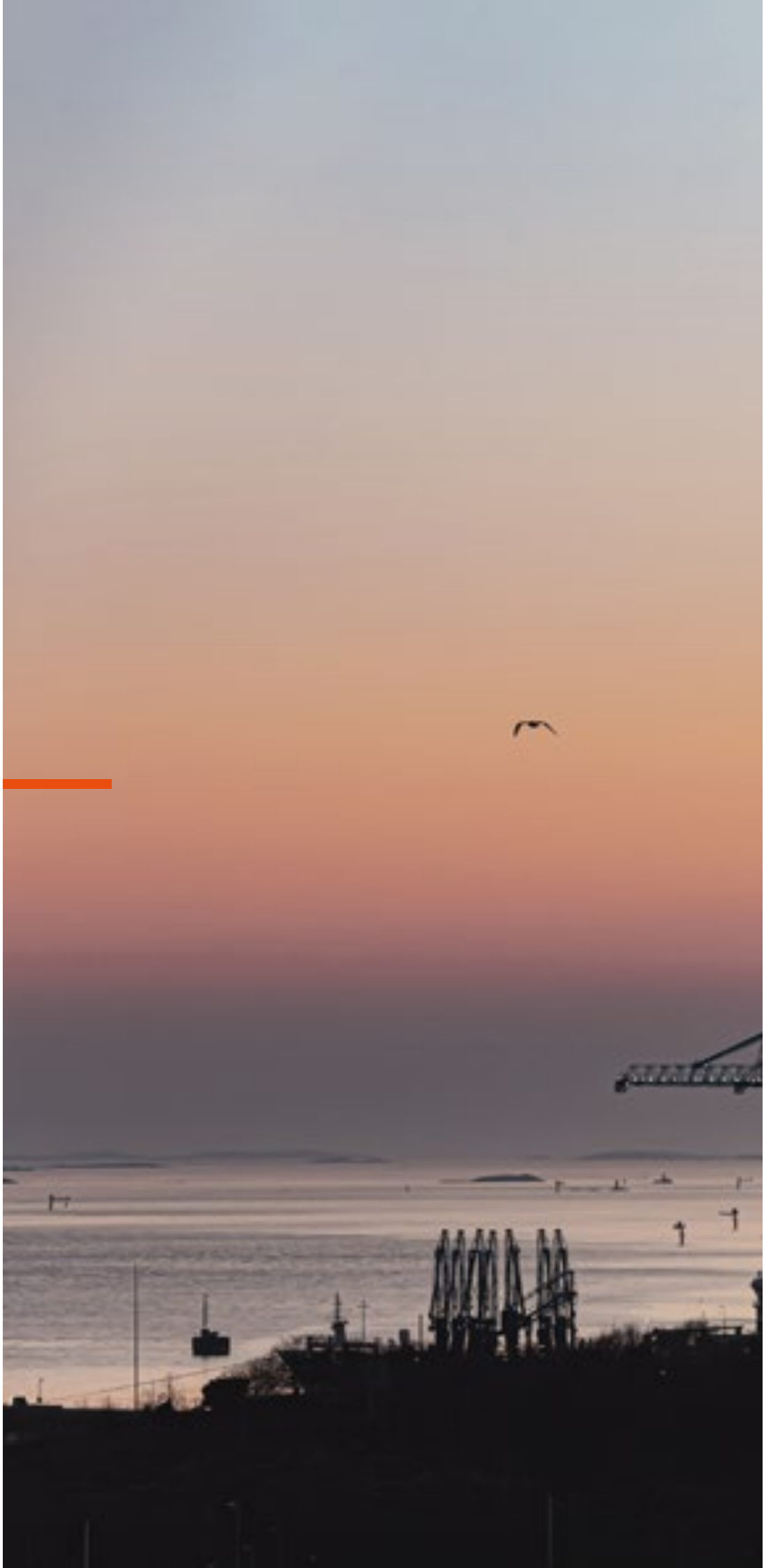
territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone have been presented to the Government for their decision in 2021. The plans describe the conditions for sustainable blue growth and environmental sustainability in the Swedish marine space. The decision will provide guidance on issues relating to areas such as shipping, energy production, mineral extraction, fisheries, defence and marine protected areas.

---

## **Climate change and water- and marine management**

Climate change is affecting both marine and freshwater resources. At the same time marine and freshwater ecosystems contribute to mitigating climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases, as well as contributing to the production of renewable energy. The Swedish Ordinance (2018:1428) on public climate change adaptation regulates and clarifies our work. For SwAM, this means that we need to consider the impact of climate change and that we have a responsibility to work to combat climate change and work to support climate change adaptation. The national climate change strategy aims to develop a society that is sustainable and robust in the long term and that actively addresses climate change by reducing vulnerabilities and identifying opportunities for transformational change.





# How the Agency supports the generation of societal benefits

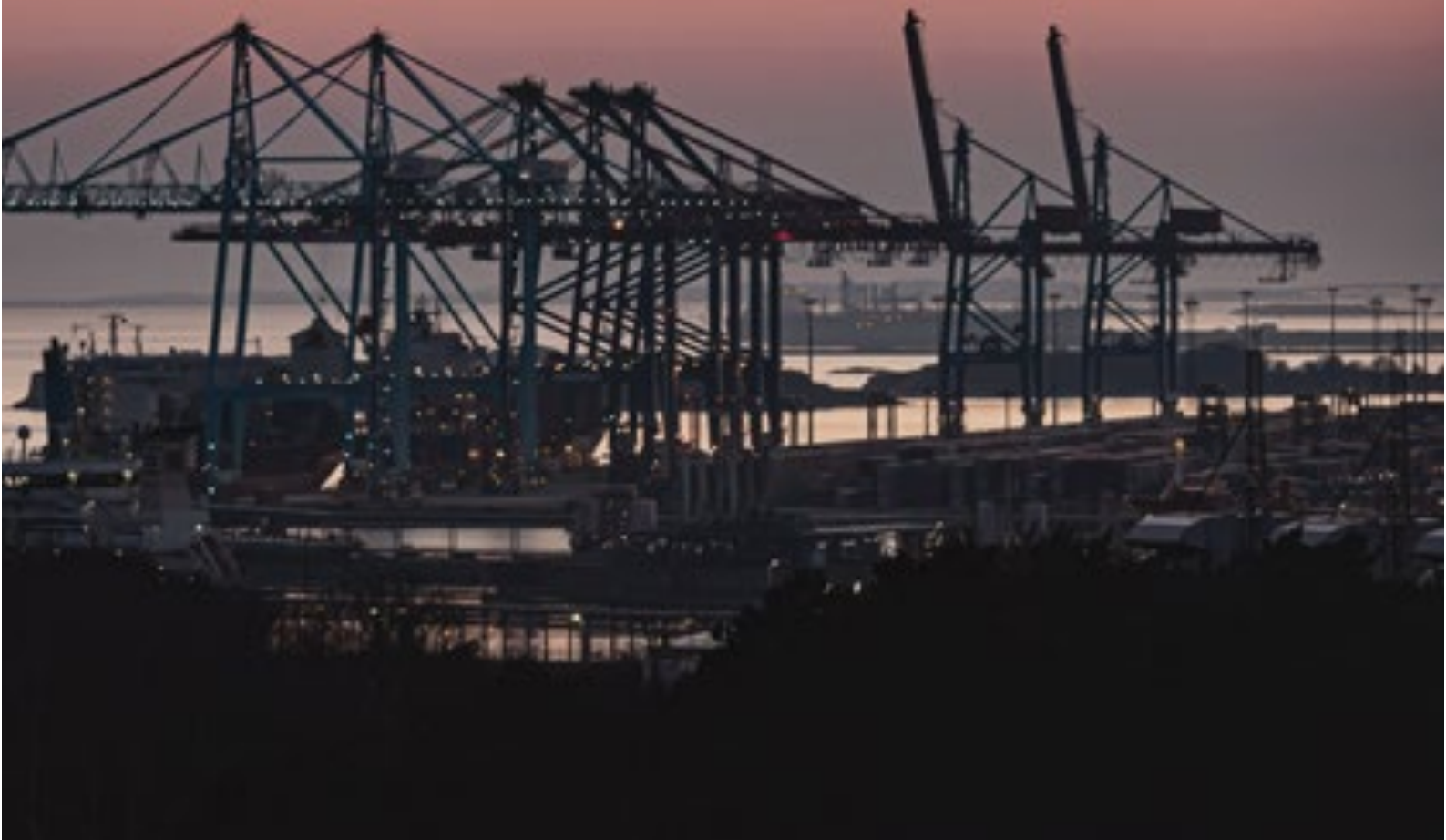




Photo: Natalie Greppi

---

## Our mission and our tools

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's fundamental mission is to make sure that goals and laws adopted by the Swedish parliament and government are realised.

According to our instructions (2011:619), our mission encompasses the conservation, restoration and sustainable utilisation of lakes, watercourses, seas and fishery resources. We are also governed by the Swedish Government Agencies Ordinance (2007:515) and operate in accordance with the public service ethos. Achieving the Swedish environmental goals means that we achieve the environmental dimension of Agenda 2030 in Sweden. Water and marine issues are not just national, but also part of a larger hydrological cycle from land to coast to sea spanning international borders.

SwAM has several management tools to achieve these goals. We guide and supervise other government agencies in issues relating to environmental permits for hydropower facilities and other dams, regional water supply plans, supervision of small waste water treatment facilities, environmental quality standards and the status and classification of water bodies. We also offer guidance in the area of marine management and fisheries administered by county administrative boards. We strive to provide modern guidance that takes into account different societal objectives and prevailing legislation in order to contribute to innovation in management and among business operators.

## **Restoration and programme of measures**

SwAM has state budgets to support the restoration of lakes, watercourses and coastal and marine environments supporting the programme of measures established by the public agencies. We finance, for example, liming in our watercourses, measures to reduce eutrophication and the restoration of aquatic habitats. When it comes to area protection, SwAM has tools to support measures developed in the collaborative framework for marine protective areas.

## **Development of case-law**

SwAM participates in prioritised environmental impact assessments to support management with expertise in our specialist areas and to contribute to innovative environmental development, such as environment-friendlier industry in the areas of aquaculture and mining.

## **Sustainable fisheries management**

The management of fisheries takes place through an ecosystem-based approach, and SwAM has several tools to work with, such as regulation, access and supervision through fisheries control, as well as ordinances covering the marine environment, marine planning and area protection. There is a dialogue with those affected by fisheries and the marine environment in forums including regional stakeholder groups attended by multiple government agencies and other stakeholders.

## **Environmental monitoring**

Environmental monitoring is an important task for SwAM; describing and analysing the state of the environment within our area of responsibility and collecting information about fish stocks and fisheries. The information guides our work and supports the analysis of whether Sweden at a national level is complying with, among others, the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Environment Directive. We shall also make knowledge of the marine and water environment, fisheries and the Agency's work available to those concerned, and promote research and development.

## **International work**

At a global level, Sweden strives actively to achieve Agenda 2030 for a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable world. Well-coordinated, integrated planning and management of both freshwater and marine resources is a precondition for contributing to the goal of No Poverty (Agenda 2030 goal 1), both in Sweden and internationally. We provide support to the government in EU affairs and other international collaborative frameworks. SwAM's international development work supports good management in developing countries, as we can use the competence of the whole Agency. At the same time we learn from the experiences of other countries, to benefit Swedish management of marine and freshwater resources.

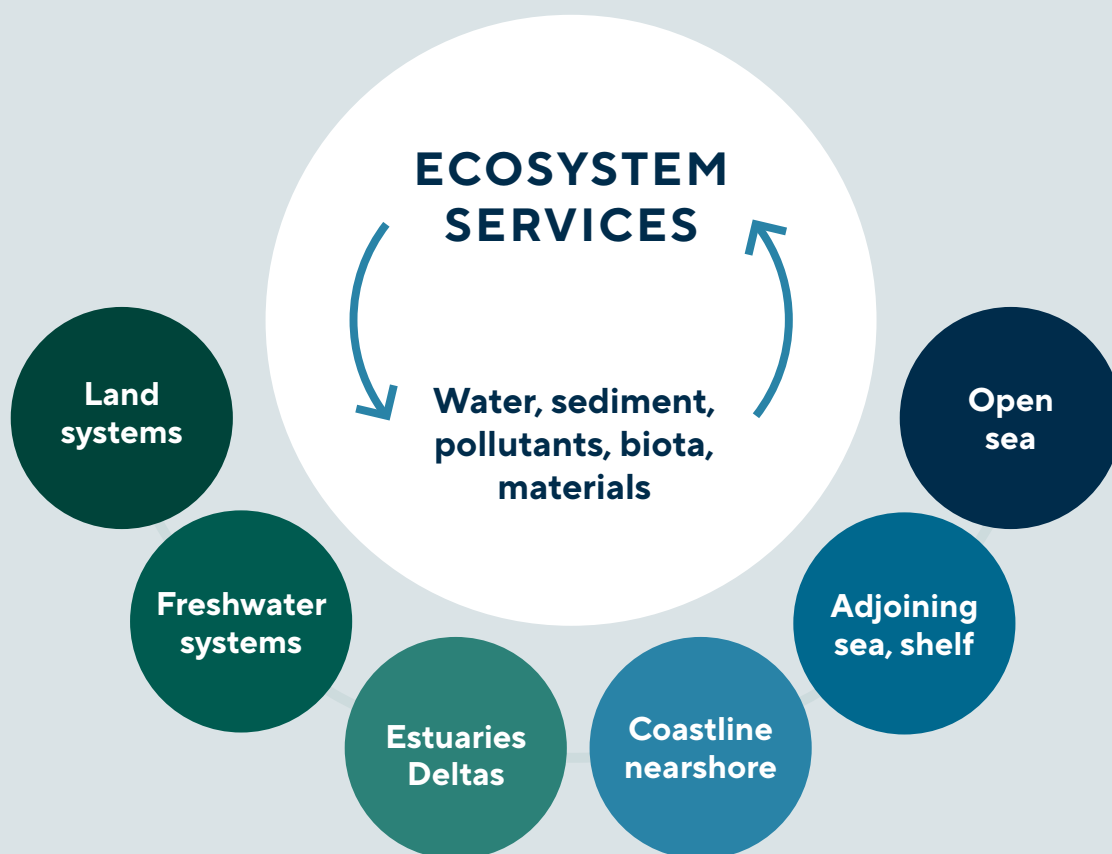
## **A learning strategy**

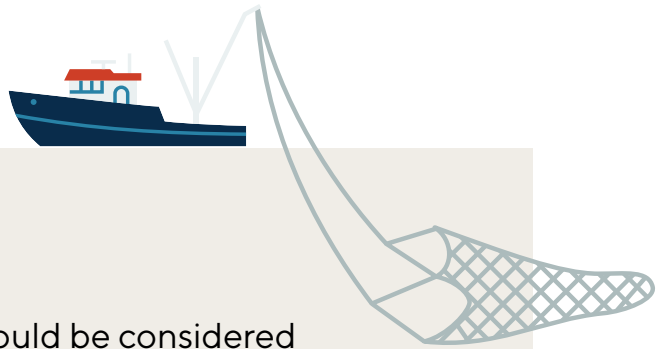
During the strategy period, the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management will be active in building the sustainable society within our areas of activity and develop our strategic competence and analytical ability for better implementation and information to the Swedish government and parliament. In our daily work, we learn continuously about the effects of our work for sustainable social development. Various government assignments, such as producing follow-up systems for the maritime strategy, develop our ability to work to ensure that aquatic resources are developed in a sustainable way. We strive to work innovatively in management and analysis and to make use of all our competences. One important element of this work is to play a unifying role in the implementation of environmental policy and to mobilise research and innovation resources in society.

## Coordinated ecosystem-based management from source to sea

Our work shall contribute towards the implementation of a coherent marine and water management policy. We see a need to work in a more coordinated and collaborative way in our day-to-day activities. This can be achieved in different ways, and the ecosystem-based approach shall guide our ongoing process of change in accordance with objectives established in government policy and legislation.

The ecosystem-based approach can be viewed as a working method or a management strategy to achieve established goals. It means that we shall use the management instruments we have available and that fisheries management, for example, is an integral element of management of the whole marine and water environment. There must be checks and balances to ensure that the long-term conservation of biodiversity and the utilisation of the ecosystem services in the marine and water environment are not adversely affected by fisheries operations. There must be collaboration with those affected by the ecosystems and management decisions.





The following principles should be considered when we implement an ecosystem-based management approach, from source to sea:

- › The establishment of common goals and participation in management, including the three sustainability dimensions ecological, economic and social.
- › The overall ability of nature to produce goods and services in the form of ecosystem services defines the conditions for management decisions.
- › Management decisions must be based on scientific evidence. If there is uncertainty in existing evidence, or if reliable data or information is unavailable, the precautionary principle must be applied.
- › Ecosystems are valued from a societal perspective and from an ecosystem services perspective.
- › The generational goal enacted by Parliament provides overall guidance to management decisions. This means that we must strive to hand over a better world to the next generation and not pass on environmental problems and debts to the next generation.
- › Management decisions are impartial and are based on the rule of law (public service ethos).



Coordinated, ecosystem-based management means the following for our operations in our day-to-day work:

- › We set goals, follow up and evaluate management decisions and measures so that we can adapt and streamline management.
- › We delineate our work in time and space, and prioritise on the basis of decisions by the Swedish government and parliament.
- › In our investigative activities, we integrate overarching strategies for sustainable use, which are regulated by government policy decisions, directives, action plans, regulations and guidelines.
- › We coordinate the planning and implementation of activities that affect the marine and water environment by treating fisheries management, marine environment management, water management and environmental monitoring as parts of a whole.
- › We utilise the opportunities created by digitalisation and integrate data and supporting knowledge in shared management systems, for increased availability, transparency and new working methods.
- › We undertake thorough analysis before management decisions, with different competences. Evidence for our decision-making must be transparent and available to all concerned.
- › We consider the stakeholders affected by our management decisions to enhance added value in our service and management decisions.
- › We work continuously to simplify rules to create effective management, and apply the principle “we make it easy to do the right thing”.

Photo: Oscar Nilsson



## Results-based management

To be able to use our resources efficiently and achieve the political goals, we have clear results-based management.

SwAM has a number of basic tools – regulations, guidelines, supervision, decision-making and appropriations – which enable us to work towards established policy goals and execute them. By means of good handling of our information, environmental information and communication, we disseminate knowledge to society.

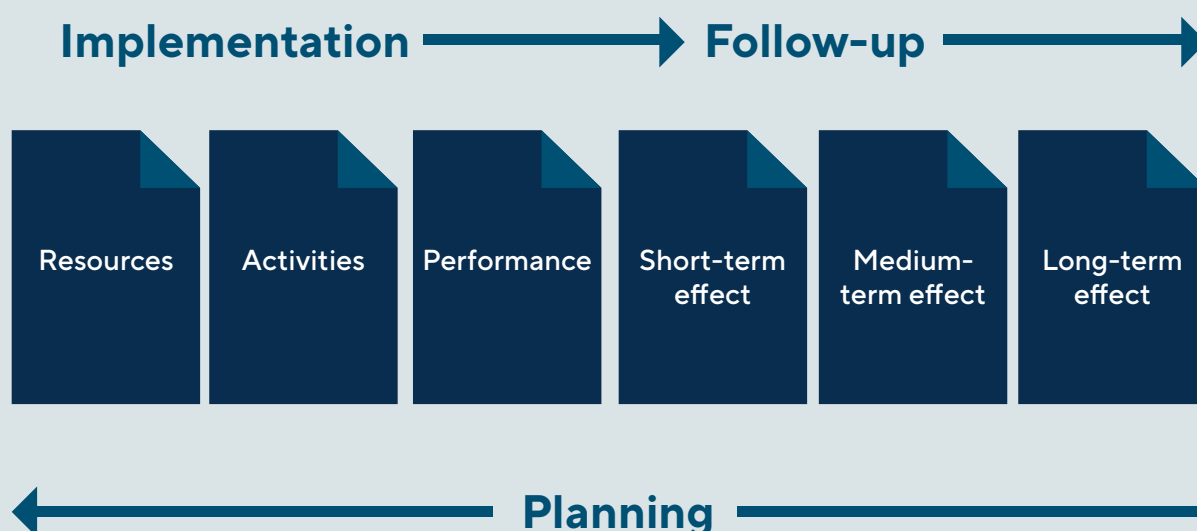
To achieve desired outcomes, we need to ask ourselves:

- › What is to be achieved – goals at different levels?
- › How are the goals to be achieved – causal links and assumptions concerning how the goals are to be achieved, known as a “theory of change”.
- › The need for staffing and other resources to perform the mission.
- › How are activities and initiatives followed up and monitored?

Causal links and assumptions concerning how the goals are to be achieved can be described using a causal chain. The causal chain depicts the intended correlation between activities and expected outcomes and results; a model that links up cause and effect is presented below (see Figure 2).

It is important to differentiate between activities, performance and effects. Results are often used as a collective term for performance and effects and contribute to desired societal outcomes. Performance means deliveries to a target group. Effects are anything that occurs as a consequence of performance and contribute to outcomes.

We have described the effects being targeted in the long term in the section entitled External analysis – marine and water policy. Long-term effects are based on the five operational goals we describe in the section entitled Goals for the operation. Short-term effects are developed on an annual basis in the Agency’s annual operational plan, which is based on the longer-term operational strategy, the government’s budget appropriation and other priorities decided upon by the government.



**FIGURE 2.** Management by objectives and results towards long lasting outcomes.

## Collaboration with government agencies and actors

Public agencies have different roles and responsibilities. There is therefore need for well-coordinated cooperation and collaboration between public agencies including good dialogue with actors in order to support change towards the objectives set by the government and parliament. There are many issues within SwAM's area of responsibility where there is shared responsibility between different public agencies.

One example is in fisheries management, where SwAM shall strive to achieve sustainable management of fisheries resources and has the overarching responsibility for the way fisheries are regulated, operated and controlled. The Swedish Coast Guard has the main responsibility for fisheries control at sea. The Swedish Board of Agriculture is tasked to promote fisheries. It is responsible for implementing the EU's regulations on support for measures within the framework of the common fisheries policy and the integrated marine policy, as well as market regulation of fisheries and aquaculture products. The work of the county administrative and regional boards encompasses initiatives to initiate, participate in and run projects to facilitate enterprise within the fisheries industry, and to improve opportunities for the general public to fish.

There are a number of overarching platforms for collaboration between government agencies, including:

- › The Director General's Forum: a platform between government agencies to implement Agenda 2030.
- › Environmental Goals Council: a platform to intensify work at all levels in society to achieve Sweden's environmental goals.
- › The Council for water and seas (SAMHAV): a forum for information, collaboration and operational coordination between heads of government agencies for the purpose of implementing a coherent water and marine policy, for which SwAM is responsible.
- › Regular meetings of Director Generals: one important form of cooperation between government agencies is bilateral meetings between the Director Generals. This is where the principles of cooperation are established, paving the way for collaboration at all levels within government agencies.





**Strategic goals**

To clarify our results-based management, we have defined areas that bring together associated and interacting goals during the strategy period. Many of the goals extend across the Agency's organisation and therefore require extensive collaboration, internally and externally. Every year we draw up an operational plan with interim goals in order to work towards the goals within the framework of the conditions under which the Agency operates.



## Operational goals

### › Goal 1. Flourishing Lakes and Streams

Lakes and watercourses shall be ecologically sustainable and their varied habitats shall be restored and preserved in Sweden and in transboundary watercourses. Natural productive capacity, biodiversity, cultural heritage and the landscape's provision of ecosystem services and water retention function shall be preserved. Emissions of nutrients to lakes and watercourses shall be reduced.

### › Goal 2. A Balanced Marine Environment, Attractive Coastal Areas and Archipelagos

The North Sea and the Baltic Sea shall have a good environmental status and productive capacity that is sustainable in the long term, while at the same time biodiversity shall be preserved and protected. Emissions of nutrients from Sweden and neighbouring countries to the sea shall be reduced. Coastal areas and archipelagos shall have a high level of biodiversity, public amenity and natural and cultural values. At a global level, we have well-developed collaboration with other countries, striving towards common goals as established in Agenda 2030.

### › Goal 3. Sustainable Utilisation of Water and Marine Resources

The sustainable utilisation of water and marine resources is a precondition for increased societal benefits. Businesses,

outdoor activities and other utilisation of water and marine resources shall promote a blue, bio-based and circular economy at regional, national and global levels. Fish stocks are managed within biologically safe limits using an ecosystem-based management approach. Sustainable utilisation shall contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and thereby be integrated into all of SwAM's work towards a sustainable society with healthy ecosystems.

› **Goal 4. Increased Knowledge Generation through Effective Monitoring, Follow-Up and Well-Managed Information Assets**

The Agency's knowledge requirements for adaptive management is based on quality-assured evidence for decision-making. The collated aquatic monitoring and its environmental information meet relevant management requirements, are accessible and make a difference for the environment and society. Our information is easily accessible, easy to find, understand and use for as many stakeholders as possible. Innovative ways to combine, analyse and visualise environmental information from different sources supports advanced analytical working methods. Shared learning is promoted through international partnerships.

› **Goal 5. Increased Regulatory Compliance through Advanced Fisheries Control and Traceability**

Effective fisheries control and compliance are undertaken in close collaboration with the Swedish Coast Guard, contributing to the sustainable utilisation of the ecosystem's services. Collaboration has been developed with the Swedish Police Authority, the Swedish Tax Agency, the Swedish National Food Administration and other government agencies, both within and beyond Sweden. The opportunities created by digitalisation have enabled tools and processes to be developed for follow-up, monitoring and control, providing a good service to the industry. Regulatory compliance has increased through good guidance and awareness of the regulatory framework for fisheries operations and sales.



*Photo: Karl Fredrickson*

## **Enabling goals**

Enabling goals to create good conditions to achieve the strategic goals are designed to develop our working methods and to ensure long-term capacity at the agency. We strive for a diverse and equal workplace. This contributes to us being an attractive employer. Our internal processes are characterised by an equal, inclusive approach and links into the guiding principles of the government policy for employers – leadership, attractive employer and innovation/development, and to our role as a regulatory agency delivering high-quality service to stakeholders and users.

› **Goal 6. Communicative Leadership and Employeeship that also Enhance our Attractiveness as an Employer**

By ensuring qualified tasks and a high level of personal responsibility in execution, we encourage innovation and flexible working conditions for all employees. Managers in the Agency are open and present, inspire confidence, listen to and engage employees, see the whole picture in the mission, collaborate and prioritise its implementation. We communicate a clear message about our mission, who we are, what we do and what we offer, both internally and externally, making us an attractive employer. Employees are informed, share information and contribute to an open, constructive working climate. A good physical work space creates the conditions for an activity-based working method and job satisfaction.

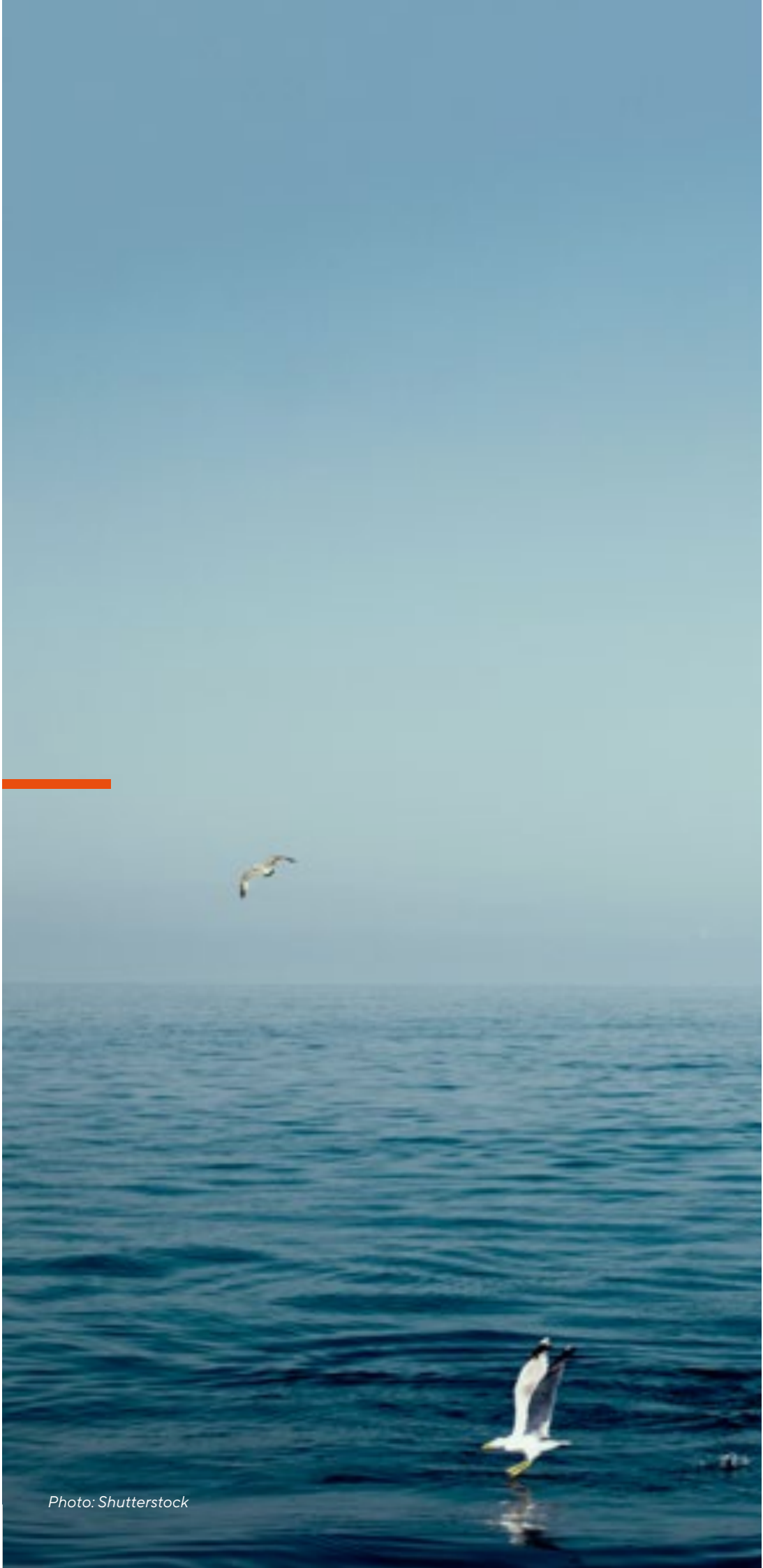
› **Goal 7. Working Methods are Digital and Innovative**

Our digitalisation agenda has rationalised the way we work, strengthened our analytical capabilities and ensures that we can do more with less. The information we process in our mission is of high quality, well-described and accessible in a safe way, contributing to more efficient processes and new ways of performing complex tasks. New partnerships, both internally and externally, in which different competences meet, create the conditions for innovation. Our working environment is characterised by flexibility and participation.

› **Goal 8. Legally Secure, Effective Processes and Competent Decision-Making Result in Good Public Management Decisions**

We have a strong management culture based on the principles of the public service ethos (democracy, objectivity, legality, respect, effectiveness and service, and the free formation of opinion), where behaviour and attitudes are in accordance with rule of law. Through innovative solutions and an outside-looking-in perspective, we meet the requirements of our principal and society for good service and the efficient use of resources by means of good internal governance and control.





# How we work





*Photo: Natalie Greppi*

---

## Working methods

All employees and managers are representatives of the Agency and our mission. An equal and inclusive approach is a precondition for us to achieve success and make the best decisions. Employees at SwAM communicate, create and maintain relationships, and share knowledge with both colleagues and external stakeholders. A good understanding of our overall mission and sense of belief in our working methods will strengthen the way we are perceived.

Our working method has structures that facilitate coordinated management and analysis for example through cross-sectoral councils at the agency, work in programmes and projects. Such structures improve collaboration internally and help us to identify synergies, avoid duplicate work and achieve better results. There is also a requirement for a clearer allocation of roles and responsibilities, and to prioritise assignments in the departments.

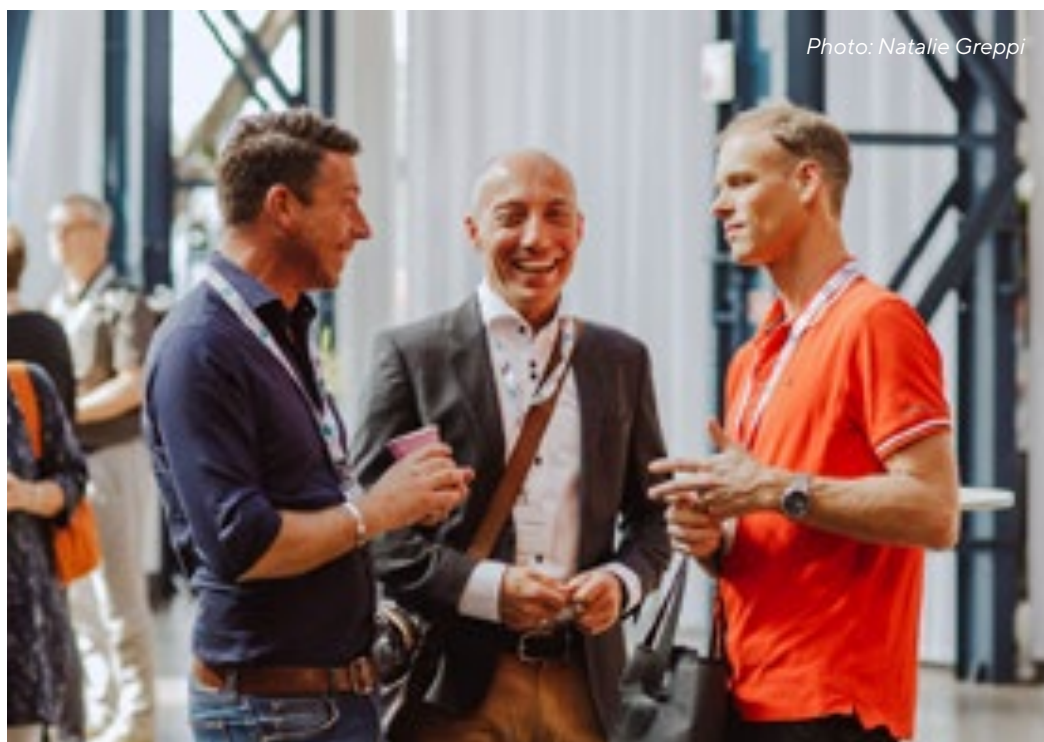
## Projects and programmes

The project form is used as a tool to perform delineated assignments and activities that cut across all or parts of the organisation, often including several departments and support units, or development jobs of a wide-ranging nature. The project form brings greater control and clearer resource allocation during implementation.

Programmes as a working method are suitable when there are several projects that affect an assignment or work area, and that cut across different parts of the organisation.

## Processes

A process consists of a delineated sequence of activities that recur in the operation and serve to meet a specific objective. A process can be, for example, processing permits in fisheries management, drawing up a regulation, an application for a grant or managing IT systems. The processes become a description of an operation: why it is there, what is to be produced and how (activities, resources, information and their relationships with one another). The processes also create a structure for archiving. According to the Swedish National Archives' regulations and general advice on archives at government agencies, agencies must report their information based on the agencies' operational processes.



## Our sub-strategies within special development areas

To support the development of our operations, we have developed a number of sub-strategies within different areas. Some of them are developed at our own initiative, others in the form of government assignments.

*Sub-strategies drawn up during the strategy period 2017–2020 and that are integrated into the operational strategy 2021–2023.*

The Agency's climate change strategy clarifies that management needs first of all to support the climate transition to a fossil-free society in order to avoid the most serious risks posed by climate change and consider adaptation in its tasks. The Agency's common and strategic approach to cultural heritage was described in the government assignment "reporting of the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management's guideline strategy for work on cultural heritage". In this, we defined a more collective, strategic approach to the way our operations affect cultural heritage and contribute to the national cultural heritage goals. In SwAM's long-term strategy to support the national regional growth strategy 2014–2020, the agency underlined the fundamental importance of ecosystem-based management to support sustainable growth.



Photo: Natalie Greppi



In SwAM's strategy for international development work, we describe how SwAM is contributing to achieving the global Agenda 2030 goals related freshwater and marine management in developing countries and in mid-income countries. We apply a source-to-sea perspective. Based on experiences and expertise, we see in particular that we can work proactively in the areas of: marine spatial planning, establishment of marine protected areas, restoration of watercourses and sustainable hydropower, management of fisheries in coastal areas and digitalisation from a broad-based perspective in which we support coordinated management from source to sea.

### **The digitalisation strategy**

SwAM's *digitalisation strategy* is a guideline document and a supporting document to transform the Agency's operational development through digitalisation.



## **Examples of sub-strategies currently being drafted**

In work that is under way, SwAM is working with the Swedish Board of Agriculture to develop a Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, – healthy ecosystems and sustainable industries. SwAM has the government assignment from an ecosystem-based perspective and the Swedish Board of Agriculture has the government assignment to become involved in promoting and developing the fisheries industry, aquaculture and leisure fishing. Many aquatic ecosystems in Sweden are impacted by development and are characterised by a poor environmental status, and there is therefore a major need to preserve and restore ecosystems in order to achieve the goals in the Maritime Strategy and the Food Strategy.

SwAM is carrying out analytical work in a dialogue with other government agencies, municipalities, institutes of higher education, stakeholder organisations and business operators in order to develop a framework for *sustainable water resources management* at national, regional and local level. It will address the management of water quantity and water quality to meet society's various needs and to reduce the risks of water shortages and flooding. SwAM will start a similar task during the operational strategy period for *sustainable marine management*. The dialogue form as a working method with many of society's actors will also provide guidance in this case.

The Agency is working on a sub-strategy for the *systematic collection of the Agency's knowledge requirements from research*. It makes it clear that quality-assured knowledge and evidence based on robust scientific grounds is a precondition for good public management, planning, well-founded decisions and effective measures that create a balance in ecological, economic and social sustainability and meet the major social challenges that we are facing.

---

## Planning and follow-up

The Swedish parliament and government provide instructions and funding to government agencies to implement agreed policies, laws and regulations. SwAM allocates financial means in the best way possible to achieve agreed objectives, performs analytical assignment and follows up on the results. SwAM's management team makes sure that there is internal governance and fiduciary management in place and that all employees are familiar with the mission of the agency.

SwAM has a clear results-based management framework based on an analysis of a matrix of global and national goals. (see Figures 1 and 2). Our planning process is adaptive and will focus on priorities for the coming year. The Agency's annual operational plan (AOP) clarifies sub-goals to support the goals defined in this Operational Strategy. The departments' performance and the units' activities are followed up quarterly and annually. We will continuously follow up and adapt our planning process based on the prevailing work situation, resource allocation and performance. The annual operational plan is a guiding document, and everyone, both employees and managers needs to be adaptive towards change during the year. We need to optimise our operations in the best way possible, which means that operational planning, new assignments, changes to our resources and our staffing must engage in an adaptive management process.

SwAM's annual results-based report contains significant information about what SwAM has achieved in relation to assignments and goals decided by the government and as defined in this operational strategy.



