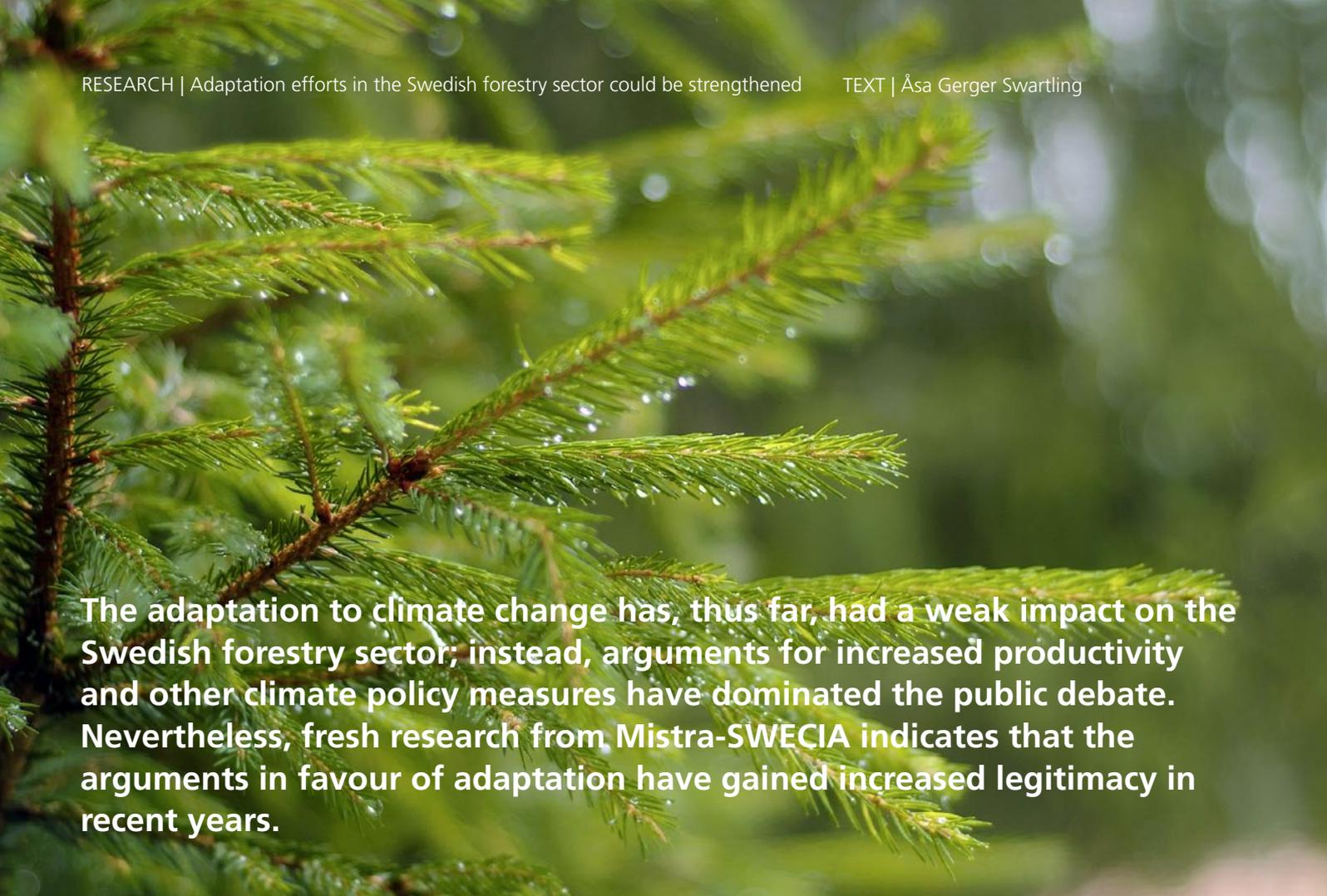


MISTRA SWECIA
CLIMATE, IMPACTS & ADAPTATION

Annual Report 2012



The adaptation to climate change has, thus far, had a weak impact on the Swedish forestry sector; instead, arguments for increased productivity and other climate policy measures have dominated the public debate. Nevertheless, fresh research from Mistra-SWECIA indicates that the arguments in favour of adaptation have gained increased legitimacy in recent years.

Adaptation efforts in the Swedish forestry sector could be strengthened

IT IS A CHALLENGE to increase our understanding of how the formal and informal dimensions of institutions interact in society and affect societal development. This holds true, to a great extent, in the case of adaptation to climate change, where the adaptation processes often take place at the local level and are based on the prevailing local conditions. Other national or global drivers also affect our efforts to adapt to climate change to a varying degree. Experts have a vital role to play, through the dissemination of knowledge about the expected changes to our climate and their subsequent effects on ecosystems and society. On the other hand, the state has

a key role in governing our actions by encouraging desirable behaviours and can thus expedite and facilitate the adaptation measures being implemented at regional and local levels.

Formal and informal institutions

In order to gain an overview of the adaptation landscape in a sector, as well as of the obstacles and opportunities associated with our adaptation to the expected changes in climate, Mistra-SWECIA studies both formal and informal institutional dimensions of the management processes. During Mistra-SWECIA's first programme phase, several

of these institutional aspects were investigated using case studies. One of the studies looked at the risks of flooding in the Stockholm region and the other examined the Swedish forestry sector's perceptions of the issue of adaptation to climate change. Over the course of the past year, we have analysed how views regarding adaptation to climate change have altered, in the discussions surrounding Swedish forestry, between 1990 and 2010. The analysis is based on a literature review and interviews with key players within Swedish forestry, both from industry and public administration, as well as forest owners from Kronoberg and Västerbotten. We have set out the most important recommendations for adaptation and criticisms from the discussions, what the counter-arguments were and which additional social issues have been taken into account, as well as how external events have influenced the debate. The analysis also encompasses how social development has influenced the Swedish forestry sector, and the lessons learned that could be applied to future decision-making. The results show that researchers, together with policy and decision-makers, have advocated the integration of climate change adaptation in the Swedish forestry sector. Moreover, international policy on adaptation measures has had an influence on the Swedish debate. The negative consequences of the storm, Gudrun, in January 2005 have also contributed to an increased awareness of and interest in adaptation to climate change.

Increased legitimacy for adaptation

In recent years, arguments in favour of adaptation have gained increasing legitimacy within Swedish forestry policy and within the sector at large. Despite this, the issue of adaptation has had a weak impact on the forestry sector. Instead, the debate has been dominated by arguments in favour of climate policy measures that contribute to increasing carbon sequestration in forests and other land-based ecosystems, as well as in long-life products, and the potential for renewable energy via increased forestry production. The study shows that adaptation efforts can be strengthened by strong leadership and a clear mandate, as well as by creating arenas where all Swedish forest stakeholders can meet, discuss and exchange experiences and knowledge about the adaptation options for Swedish forestry.

The institutional landscape

Observations after 2010, the final year of the study, indicate that the Swedish institutional landscape for adaptation to climate change is changing fast. This is also true, to some



What is an institution?

In general terms, institutions are often equated with organisations or associations of people. In academia, however, the concept 'institution' is often defined in broader terms, encompassing the shared norms, rules and habits that structure and regulate social behaviour. Individuals, organisations and networks are the carriers of ideas in this process.

extent, in the case of the Swedish forestry sector. During the second programme phase, Mistra-SWECIA's research into the formal and informal institutions within the Swedish forestry sector will be broadened. The ambition is to involve hundreds of forest stakeholders from the north to the south. We hope that many of these will share their experiences and contribute to our research into the factors and processes that enhance adaptive capacity and which may further the existing adaptation efforts within Swedish forestry.

FURTHER READING:

Ulmanen J, Gerger Swartling Å and Wallgren O (2012). Climate Change Adaptation in Swedish Forestry Policy. A Historical Overview, 1990–2010. SEI Project / Mistra-SWECIA Working Paper no 6, York: Stockholm Environment Institute