End line study of the
Valle case study area, Sweden

Magnus Ljung
Facilitator in the BioGov-project Sweden
National Competence Centre for Advisory Services
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Summary

This end-line study is process-oriented and developed in participation with the stakeholders involved in the BioGov-project in the Valle District in Sweden. It capture the whole process from October 2018 to April 2020, in which the stakeholders were involved in defining visions, values, what they had at stake regarding future and sustainable land use, as well as the development of an action plan for the territory. In the base-line study and the stakeholder analysis we identified which stakeholder groups to involve and who is to represent each perspective, we constituted a collaborative working group consisting of 20 participants covering both public and private organisations, business and NGO's, as well as a gender and age balance among them (the Regional Stakeholder Group, RSG). In the first phase we were able to describe existing perspectives and core values within the Valle District. By starting a process of implementing vision and values in concrete landscapes and environments in the area (nature reserves) we make stakeholders negotiate and take joint responsibility for the practical consequences of the need for a multifunctional land use approach. During the second phase new ideas and measures has been discussed in real-life settings, resulting in an action plan for the area. The work within the RSG has created a strong foundation for future work within the BioGov-project and the whole group now agree on the challenges we face, where we ought to be heading, and what measures that ought to be prioritised. Some guidelines for the development of a sustained collaborative governance model in Valle is now also possible to present.

Background and aim for the base-line study report

BioGov (Celebrating Biodiversity Governance) aims to improve policy and governance of the natural and cultural heritage. An important guiding principle to reach the goals are to increase the level of participation among stakeholders by developing and implementing new methods for multi-stakeholder communication, cooperation and partnership. This might involve many channels, methods and tools as well as different levels of participation - from information sharing to collaborative learning and joint decision-making. In each unique context the mix of methods will differ, why each case study area in the BioGov-project will need to develop an approach which fits its purpose, existing values and traditions.

A base-line study and an analysis of stakeholders' perspectives, values and roles was reported in March 2019. In order to facilitate an increased capacity to manage multi-stakeholder approaches in the Valle District we needed to better understand the preconditions both from an ecological, economic and socio-cultural perspective. Over the last year more meetings and activities have been organised, with an overall aim to move from vision to action.

The aim of this report is to describe the working approach, the process and its main outcomes so far. The long term outcome is a new model for biological governance which has been locally implemented. A model which also is possible to scale up and out to other geographies. In addition, a concrete output is a locally implemented action plan. This end-line study report will summarise the process and its outcome so far.

The Valle District in brief

On the slopes of Mount Billingen to the east, the Ice Age has left behind a unique landscape known as the Valle District, an area of lakes and gently rolling kame. The area is covered in nearly 40 miles of clearly marked trails, crossing meadows, pastures, and fields. There is also deciduous forests and many lakes. The unique cherry trees blossom in May. In the area there are viable agricultural activities, mainly based on grazing systems and cherishing a long historical and natural heritage. This has created an area of with biodiversity values and several nature reserves has been established over the last decades.

De statliga naturreser-
vaten i Valle samt det
år som de bildades.

The cultural and ecological values in the Valle District is also the foundation of an active tourism sector. There are good opportunities for outdoor life, fishing, and to visit businesses within the cultural sector. Altogether there are many interests to be managed in a rather limited area, why there is a need to develop methods shared decision making.

Methodology and activities

Guiding principles

To develop a relevant approach to multi-stakeholder cooperation one needs to work collaboratively and involve stakeholders in the development process. The methodological description in this study capture the work done in the Swedish BioGov-project during the whole project period (October 2018 – April 2020), but put a special emphasis on the last years activities. One can read more about the first phase in the base-line study and stakeholder analysis report from the project.

We have designed an approach where (following the MSP-guidelines, 2016):

a) All relevant stakeholders should be invited.
b) Participants must have equal opportunities to speak out.
c) Participants need to be able to speak freely.
d) The multiple perspectives (including values, interests, local knowledge and needs) of stakeholders must be explored and taken into account.
e) Ownership needs to rest with participants as much as possible.
f) Participation lead to the empowerment of the participants.
g) Power imbalances among stakeholders need to be rectified as far as possible.
h) The role of interventionists is mainly to facilitate critical learning and dialogue.
i) Participatory processes must be flexible and context specific.
j) Participatory processes must proceed on the basis of joint agreement and mutual respect.

As important as the methods used during the first meeting is the expectations you create as animator or initiator of the process. Such expectations are already created in the first invitation letter or calls you make to the stakeholders. We therefore took specific notice on how we formulated us in the first letter in order to let the stakeholders understand that the process they were supposed to encounter was different from what they were used to. That is built on their knowledge and active participation.

We also had a very broad definition on whom to invite. The list of stakeholder (groups) were long and we also identified key individuals who were important to have a dialogue with in order to successfully implement the ideas behind the collaborative work to come. There is always alternative strategies for core stakeholders to reach their goals rather than getting involved in multi-stakeholder partnerships, why they need to be curious enough to come to the first meeting and experience the potential of new ways of working themselves. Thus, we took the first kick-off meeting very seriously and wanted to focus as much on the participants' perspectives as on explaining the background to and aim of the BioGov-project.

The Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG)

The kick-off meeting took place on the 4th of October 2018. Almost 50 individuals participated and most stakeholder groups were there. Besides to inform about the project we spent much time on the two main questions; a) what is most valuable for me in the Valle region and what does it take to have these values also in the future, and b) what is my role

and what can I do to secure such values? We worked in groups and with maps of the area, and the discussions resulted in a lot of values defined by the participants.
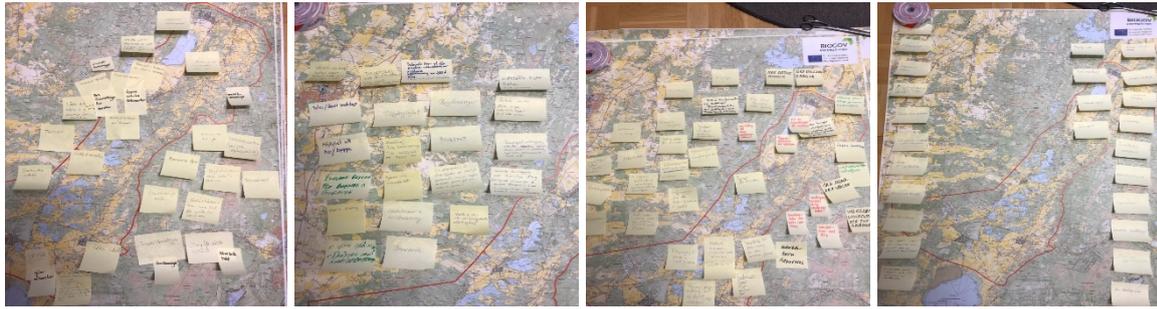
At the end of the kick-off meeting we also constituted a collaborative working group who were decided to continue working together during the project. Core stakeholder groups were identified by the participants at the meeting and most stakeholder groups got a designated person to represent each group. We also realised that we missed some important stakeholder perspectives at the meeting, why the project manager got the responsibility to contact them and ask if they were interested in joining the process.

The first meeting with the collaborative working group took place on the 29th of November 2018. At this meeting the main focus was on discussing the outcome of the kick-off meeting, to decide on how this group wanted to work together, the need for additional knowledge in order to better understand the complexity of the situation, as well as the participants' expectations on the project management. An early draft of this base-line study was presented and whether or not the stakeholders agreed with the emerging analysis was deliberated.

The second meeting of the collaborative working group on the 5th of March 2019 was also the last meeting which facilitated the development of the base-line study. At this meeting the stakeholders tried to develop a shared vision for the Valle area and what it will take to reach such a situation. In addition we asked the participants to give the project some guidance for how to work in practice when develop new management plans for specific areas. One important message was that all values are not be realised in all places. We thus need a landscape approach where certain places should focus its land use on specific values. An important insight enabling the dialogue to reach a point where each stakeholder needs to negotiate its values in relation to other values in each unique context. All stakeholders thus enter the process of becoming decision makers in a sense.

After these three meetings we had enough material to finalise the base-line study.

The next RSG-meeting was organised on the 29th of April 2019. We had together decided to meet outside at one of the nature reserves, Höjentorp-Drottningkullen, which is central in the discussion on a perceived need for a new collaborative governance model. During the first meetings this area was often on the agenda, why it was an easy choice to start the field workshops here. The focus was to discuss the practical consequences of the values and perspectives raised in the process so far. Issues like:

- How the area should be managed with regard to both cultural and natural values and to make especially the castle ruin an attractive place to visit?
- The National Property Board Sweden wishes to restore / convert forest to pasture land. What are the views of the group on this?
- How should we handle the large amount of dead trees in the area? Should these be left for the benefit of biodiversity or cleaned up so that the landscape is more beautiful? In addition, there is a safety aspect to hikers and other road users, which is important to consider.
- How will we manage the harvested and now grazed forest areas in the future?

The outdoor activity generated another kind of interaction and enabled the stakeholders to express their knowledge and concerns in new ways. This meeting was highly appreciated by the participants, but also from a project management perspective while we gained important information and ideas on practical measures to be taken on specific locations (local knowledge).

In June 2019 the Valle area was visited from some of the project partners in Europe. The visitors came from Spain, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania. Many of the participants in the RSG and the project team also participated. During the visit, we exchanged experiences on how to work with biodiversity and stakeholder dialogues.

The fourth RSG-meeting took place on the 26th of September 2019. It had two specific focus areas; first road management and compensatory measures within nature reserves, and secondly green infrastructure. The former issue had been raised during the summer and was important to solve immediately. The Swedish Transport Administration had in a formal letter explained the problems that many trees near roads, both in avenues and other environments, are dead / dying and are at risk of falling etc. At the meeting, the group discussed how to handle the situation and how we can create new avenues (compensatory measures) in the Valle area. The RSG-groups thus became a platform for the Swedish Transportation Administration. In this way we had an opportunity to test how the group could manage concrete issues and support decision making. Practically the meeting was organised both in-doors and out-doors, using a mix-method approach.

The County Administrative Board presented the work on green infrastructure and, as a way to connect to the former discussion on trees, an analysis of the old deciduous trees in Valle,

where they are and how they function as a habitat for several threatened beetles. Thereafter, a group work was carried out where each group discussed where in the landscape it may be appropriate to plant new avenues. To their help they had prepared maps. In the discussion it was important to consider different perspectives such as biodiversity, cultural environment, landscape scenery, land ownership, climate change and practical management issues, etc.
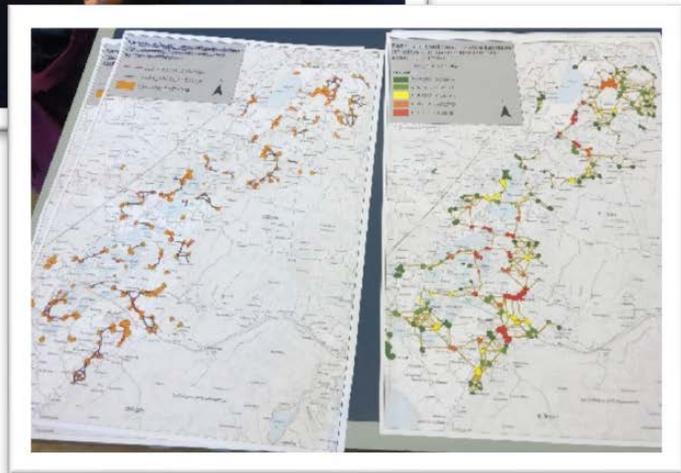
On the 25th of November 2019 the fifth RSG-meeting was organised and now the focus was shifted towards the action plan that has to be developed. The action plan covers the period after the first phase of the BioGov-project and until May 2022, and should define the actions that stakeholders will take in order to improve today's situation. Central to this is the development of a model for collaborative governance and multi-stakeholder partnership. The participants at the meeting had access to the material they developed over the last 1½ year, and the core question was: Based on the discussions and workshops that we have had in the project so far, which issues / challenges / actions does the group think are important to work with in the future? Furthermore, which of these measures are suitable to include in the Action Plan?

The RSG developed a list of activities, which we systematised and organised together. It was decided that the County Administrative Board was to develop a first draft based on the discussions of the meeting. This included to make an initial assessment of which measures are appropriate to include in the action plan and which are more suitable to work with in the

long term "alongside" the action plan. It was also decided that before sending a draft to the EU, the group must meet once more to give additional input on the draft and that those who were not present at the November meeting will have the opportunity to comment.

The RSG argued that it is important that they have an opportunity to comment on drafts, and that all partners have a possibility to have a say. This is thus a function that a future and permanent stakeholder group ought to have. As decided another RSG-meeting took place already the 21st of January 2020. At this meeting the project leaders at the County Administrative Board had drafted an Action Plan (see below in the text). It contained seven core actions on a) strategic level, b) best practice level from interregional learning, and c) best practice level from regional learning. The RSG group supported the suggested Action Plan but made some important clarifications. Another issue raised was the importance of not losing sight of all other measures and ideas that had not become part of the Plan. Many participants argued that they perceived these as important as what was listed in the document.

At the two last meetings a process evaluation was conducted which is summarised later in this report.

After the meeting in January 2020 the plan was to organise one additional meeting, the seventh RSG-meeting, to further discuss plans and measures for the Valle area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this plan had to be cancelled, why no more meeting was carried before the End-line study report was written.

Sustainable land use in the Valle area and the Action Plan

Sustainable land use

Sustainable land use is based on that all actors are efficiently working together with environmental, social and economic issues. Those issues are parts of a unity building sustainability. The challenge is to avoid working with one issue at a time, but instead integrate different perspective in decision-making processes. Such a vision entitles that identified pre-conditions for efficient collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnership have been addressed, enabled and facilitated.

Stakeholders' views on how policies and governance might be improved to achieve a sustainable and multi-functional land use need to be taken into account. Social and institutional innovations, for instance by developing collaboration and joint working methods, is part of the process of innovating and improving governance and thus land use. But stakeholders also need to better understand the potentials of an active biodiversity

management and the development of a green infrastructure. Such learning process benefits from having different perspectives and a closer cooperation. If so, a more efficient governance model for sustainable land use might be implemented which support, catalyse, and coordinate future initiatives. By such measures the high biodiversity values in the Valle District might be strengthened even further by becoming a natural part of stakeholders' decision making processes, both collaboratively and individually.

Sustainable land use aims to integrate the management of land, water, biodiversity, and other environmental resources in order to meet human needs while ensuring the long-term sustainability of ecosystem services and livelihoods. That is, celebrating biodiversity governance implies that one approach biodiversity management from both a social and ecological perspective simultaneously. By doing that we realise that a broad range of stakeholders need to get involved. The quality of decisions made is related to how good we will be in managing stakeholder participation in the decision-making processes. The BioGov-project is as such a welcome contribution to the future of the Valle District.

Action Plan 2020-2022

One important output from the RSG's work is the action plan. In short, the following actions are planned for 2020-2022 to improve regional policies for biodiversity conservation in the Valle area in Sweden (draft dated 2020-01-16):

Strategic level

Action 1:

1

Strengthen the role of biodiversity, green infrastructure and ecosystem services in the Valle area.
We want to develop a sustainable model of collaboration, joint working method, among a great deal of stakeholders to achieve a more holistic approach of the challenges concerning sustainable land use.

Action 2:

2

Mapping green infrastructure and visualize ecosystem services provided by green infrastructure.
We will start to develop an inter-municipal knowledge base of the green infrastructure in Valle and link it to ecosystem services and try to visualize its importance for a sustainable land use.
NOTE: This action is under development. It may be changed, further developed or even excluded in the final version of the action plan.

Action 3:

3

Preservation of natural pastures within the Valle area
In order to elaborate the green infrastructure of natural grasslands and the possibilities of efficient farming we need to identify valuable natural grasslands in risk of being abandoned and old pastures and meadows with good restoration possibilities. We then need to create a network among farmers and landowners to facilitate the distribution of pastures.

<u>Best Practices level – from interregional learning</u>

Action 4:

4

New management of nature reserves
We need a new more holistic management of several nature reserves within the Valle area thereby making them more optimal in preserving and increasing biodiversity and useful tools in the work with green infrastructure and the local community development.

Action 5:

5

Improved conditions for outdoor life.
We need to development the hiking- and biking trail system further as well as parking facilities in order to meet the demands from residents and visitors regarding outdoor life. The public access to the lakes also needs to be improved to enhance the possibilities of swimming, fishing and canoeing etc.

<u>Best Practices level – from regional learning</u>

Action 6:

6

Plan for management of public roadsides
We will produce a plan for the management of public roadsides taking into consideration the usage of these areas for conservation of species, green infrastructure and the control of invasive species.

Action 7:

7

Report of national guidelines to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
In order to stand as a model (good example) of implementing the policy document on a local scale using multi-stakeholder partnership and hopefully be spread to other geographies we will report the results and experiences from the project to SEPA.

The multi-stakeholder approach

The stakeholder concept – acknowledging pluralism

We define stakeholders broadly. We see a stakeholder as individuals, groups or organisations that are (or potentially will be) affected, involved or interested by measures or actions in various ways. Stakeholders can either be positively or negatively affected. Managing stakeholders is a deliberate attempt to involve them so that they are able to

contribute. Identification of the stakeholders and their potential role and contributions becomes an important issue.

A key concept in current discussions on sustainable land use and rural development is pluralism. That is, there is 'no size which fits all', instead stakeholders are best served by the broadest possible array of methods, information sources and structures. From a stakeholder perspective a sustainable governance model is therefore ideally flexible, adaptive and pluralistic. The consequence for the County Administrative Board and other agencies might be quite radical. Acknowledging pluralism may focus attention on platform and multi-stakeholder approaches as an alternative conceptual model for adaptive planning and management. In such a situation, priority setting should be based on discussion of values and principles rather than the drive to implement a specific model.

Consequently, we see a direct link between how we view the role of stakeholders, the consequences of involving them and how we later develop a future governance model. This is truly learning by doing.

Stakeholder description and representation

To the kick-off meeting an open invitation was sent out to organisations, associations but also individuals that have expressed an interest in the issues to be discussed. Specific measures were taken to make sure that some stakeholders attended the meeting, mainly by direct contact. At the meeting app. 50 participants were present, representing around 20 different stakeholder groups. They represented professional public and private organisations, as well as NGO's. They also represented different local groups, organised around interests or place, and there were also some individuals there representing themselves.

Having asked the participants about representation and absent stakeholders, they concluded that most of them were present with some few exceptions. We were missing a forestry association, the Swedish church (an important land owner), a very active athletic club, and some representatives for a local group working with the cultural heritage. It was jointly decided that these groups should be asked to be engaged in the future work and the collaborative working group.

In short the stakeholders represented different interests as described in the illustration below.

Stakeholder groups

ENTREPRENEURS
RESIDENTS
NGO'S
ANIMAL KEEPERS
LOCAL AUTHORITY
LAND OWNERS (agriculture and forestry)
TENANTS
COMMUNITIES OF INTERESTS
POLITICIANS
AUTHORITIES (regional and national)
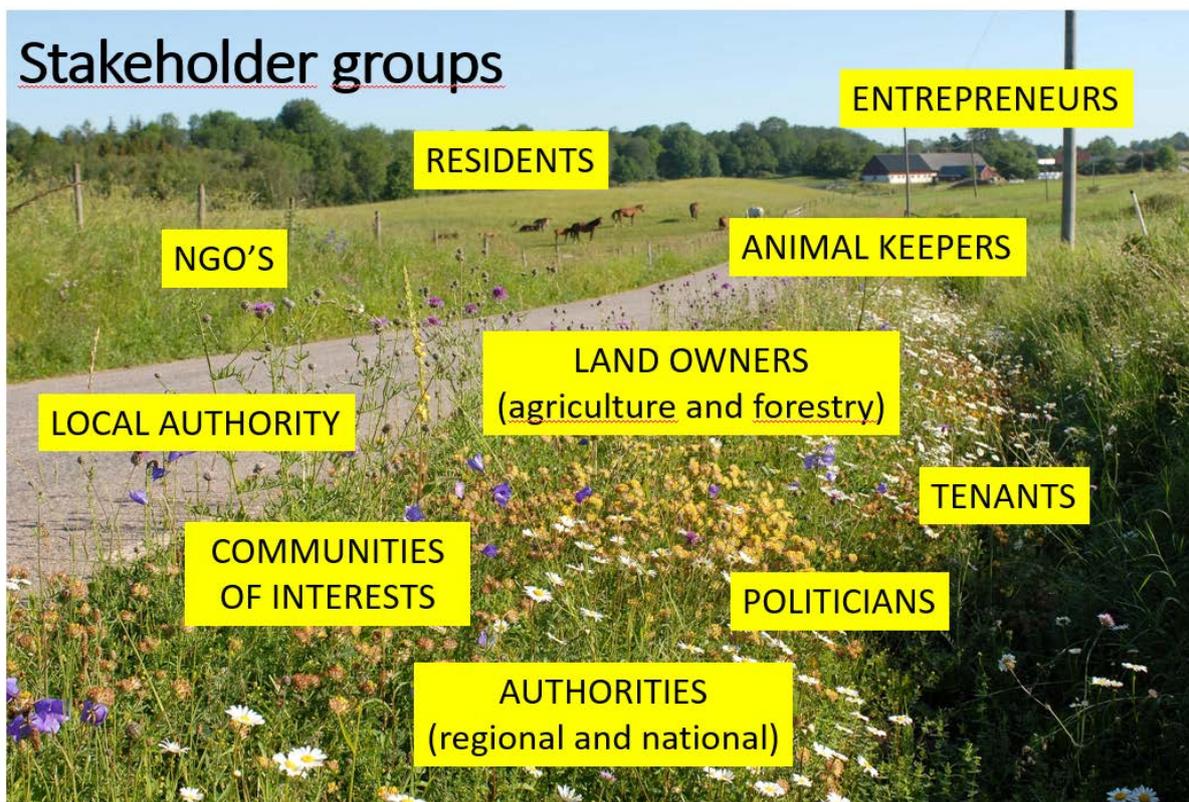
At the first meeting it was decided that the Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) should be constituted and also which stakeholder groups that should be part of it. The RSG became as follows:

Authorities (local, regional and national)
- County Administration, nature conservation (project managers) (regional)
- County Administration, rural development (regional)
- Swedish Forest Agency (national)
- Swedish Transport Administration (national)
- The municipality of Skara (local)
- The municipality of Skövde (local)

Business and trade
- Vallevägen, a local business association focused on tourism
- Tourism office at the municipality of Skara
- Vadsbo skog, a forest company
- Flämslätt, a conference facility owned by the Swedish church

Land owners and animal keepers
- The Swedish Farmer Federation and their local organisation
- Orgelgården, a farm business
- Karstorp, a farm business
- Backgården, a farm business

Education
- University College of Skövde

NGO's and communities of place, interest or identity
- Swedish Nature Protection Association and its regional organisation
- A local history society
- Istrum SK, an athletic club
- Two local fish and water management associations

With this mix of stakeholders the participants themselves argued that most important perspectives on land and water management would be represented in RSG. In addition, there was also the issue of representation. That is, which individual should represent the stakeholder group? There are practical limitations to the number of people who can participate actively in an interactive process, one needs to work with people who represent others. It make sense to stimulate the selection of people who are trusted by their constituents, have a certain amount of power and 'credit', and have good communication skills. Such persons are often better able to work as brokers between their own constituents and other stakeholder groups. As it turned out the RSG had such representatives and the communication in the group became productive although critical in a constructive sense.

It was emphasised in the RSG that the role of the representatives of different stakeholder groups was both to represent their specific interests and issues, but also to contribute to the joint learning and decision-making process. The responsibility was directed towards both their own constituents as well as the collaborative working group, including the shared outcome in terms of a new governance model in the Valle District.

Stakeholders' perspectives and values

The most important part of the base-line study, conducted after the three first RSG-meetings, was to identify which perspectives and values that guided the stakeholders view on future land management. This was done by facilitated discussions in smaller groups on what the participants perceived as valuable in the landscape, what was important to preserve and/or develop, and what values that characterised the Valle district for them. The documented group work resulted in two illustrations summarising first the different perspectives, secondly the specific values of the case study area.

Not surprisingly, the stakeholders' perspectives reflected what they had at stake and which interests they represented. A perspective is a stand-point from which you see certain aspects of, for instance, a landscape. Different perspectives are present in the same landscape, but each of them put specific characteristics of it to the fore. In the base-line study it became clear that one general perspective mirrored a view where the landscape was a *production landscape*, emphasising the forest resources, food production or fishing and hunting. Another perspective focused on the *landscape as an arena* for economic activities, such as tourism, outdoor life or angling. A third general perspective on the landscape connected it to a sense of place, or *landscape as identity*, as reflected in its importance as cultural heritage, its scenery and as the living environment for people. In addition, the *landscape as ecosystem* was obvious when connecting it to biodiversity, environmental objectives, ecosystem services, etc. Finally there were another general perspective emphasising the *landscape as rural area*, an area which was partly marginalised in society and where issues linked to rural development, like infrastructure and public service, came to the fore.

Perspectives

FOREST RESOURCES · HUNTING & FISHING · CULTURAL HERITAGE · ENTERPRISES & COMMERCE · LIVING ENVIRONMENT · FOOD PRODUCTION · PUBLIC SERVICE · OUTDOOR LIFE · INFRASTRUCTURE · BIODIVERSITY · GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE · ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES · LANDSCAPE SCENERY · ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

In the Valle District all these perspectives are relevant and present simultaneously. They all need to be taken into account, and be part of policies and other measures. Sustainable land use implies integrating all these aspects in priorities made, but to different degrees in different parts of the landscape.

This last issue – where do people want to do what – became the next step of stakeholder discussions. In order to reach this point we first needed to know how the abovementioned perspectives was expressed in terms of important values in the landscape. Values that were important to manage if we were to create a strong future. The trick of the trade was to transform the stakeholders' perspectives into values, that is, what was important for them. If putting all values together, would it be possible to agree on a vision for the Valle district? And would it be possible to identify basic value-conflicts?

The deliberation on these issues resulted in a thematic summary as described in the next illustration. In short, what the stakeholders argued as core values were:

1. Farmers' extortion rights, that is, the right to farm on a long term basis, being able to invest in the land use, technical infrastructure as well as people.
2. Grazing animals, reflecting that farms with animals were viable and had the possibility to make sure that historically grazed land were grazed also in the future.
3. Historical continuity, making sure that the geological, natural and cultural heritage is taken care of and that the unique characteristics of the Valle District is preserved.
4. Rural development that preserve rural areas by developing them, for instance, in terms of new businesses.
5. Diversity in all aspects of life, from biodiversity to social and cultural diversity and economic diversity.

6. Fishing and other tourism activities which is constantly evolving, but dependent on improved access, increased availability and supporting local services.
7. In general a high level of accessibility, including tracks for walking and riding, as well as measures to help people out and to experience the beauty, for instance by specific clearings.
8. Public service that creates pre-conditions for a sustainable living, such as, IT-infrastructure, roads, maintenance of public goods, and possibilities for housing.
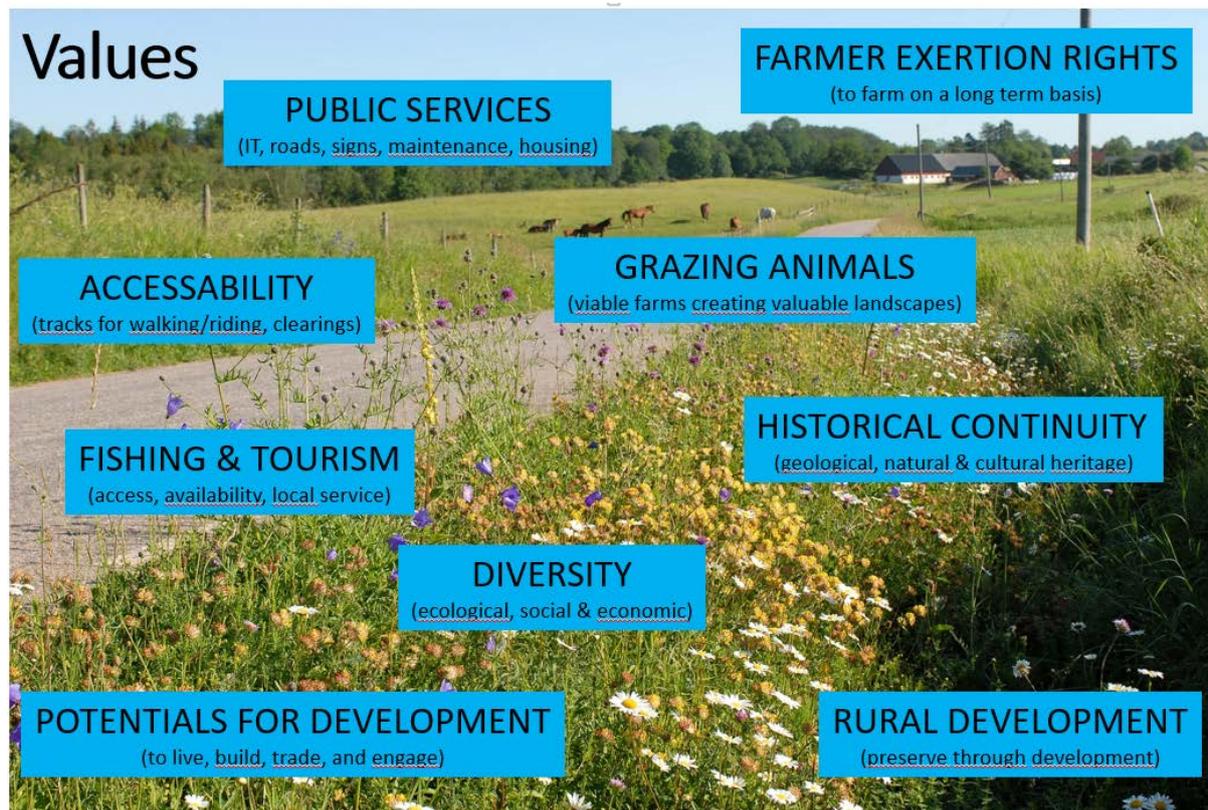
Altogether these values reflects both what is significant for and what ought to become the strengths of the Valle District. When asked if the stakeholders could agree on these values, the answer was yes from all participants in the RSG. They also believed that these values were possible to realise without too many conflicts. It was all about knowing which values where to be in focus when implementing measures in a specific area (such as a nature reserve). The participants understood that it was not the purpose to have all values present in all places, but that the aim of the future governance model was to find a way to jointly decide where to do what for which purpose!

Potentials for a local multi-stakeholder partnership in governance

The base-line study showed that there were a broad range of stakeholders engaged in different aspects of future land use. They are in general interested in taking part in a joint dialogue and learning process on how a new governance model might look like and how to implement it. By our work so far we have gained insights into existing perspectives,

stakeholders' values, how they perceive their role and responsibilities, but also which actions that ought to be prioritised over the next years and how the future collaboration should look like.

By enabling the stakeholders to take an active part in the analysis of the emerging synthesis of the stakeholders' values and how these can be part of a vision for the Valle District, we have used the local BioGov-process as a way to both develop and implement a new working approach. Putting values, similarities and differences, on the table and letting this be part of a facilitated dialogue among stakeholders, we believe is a strong foundation for the future. The RSG and the County Administrative Board is now trying to transform visions, values and stakes into its practical consequences when applying these on specific places or sites.

Altogether the work so far and the outcomes show that there is a good potential for local multi-stakeholder partnership, a important foundation for a new governance model in the area.

Evaluation of the process and working approach so far

As part of this end-line study we have also evaluated and critically reflected on the process so far. One part of this has been to mirror our process to the 7 guiding principles suggested by the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) Guidelines. Another part has been our own evaluation of the process so far, from the perspective of the participants in the RSG.

One specific activity has been to review RSG dynamics to implement Action Plan in Phase 2, by means of drafting and discussing a SWOT analysis of the RSG on the basis of the 7 MSP principles. This was done by an online discussion between the project management and process facilitator in Sweden and the project leader of the BioGov-project and Herman Brouwer, one of the author of the MSP guidelines.

In short the internal SWOT analysis and evaluation of the RSG dynamics resulted in the following conclusions (in short):

Principle 1. The RSG has consciously worked with rich picturing techniques in order to capture the complexity of the situation. In addition the process has been characterised by adaptive decision making, where input from the participants have enabled progression from a learning perspective (both broadening and deepening the discussions).

Principle 2. The process has proved the importance of both inter-organisational and inter-

sectorial collaboration. By creating a new platform for dialogue between stakeholders that does not usually interact on a long term basis, we have created a kind of social and institutional innovation enabling cross-fertilisation between organisations and sectors. The inter-dependence between stakeholders if we are to fulfil our vision has been emphasised. Nevertheless, there has been doubts expressed whether or not what we do is an "island of sustainability" far from the ordinary working mode in many organisations.

Principle 3. We have not been afraid to raise the issue of power in both meetings and in the survey. The analysis of power focus both on micro- and macro-level. As a matter of fact for many stakeholders in RSG they have experienced a win-win situation, where involvement in RSG becomes an important instrument for them to have an impact. Especially when talking about stakeholders which normally are not invited to talk about land use issues. They have, so to speak, become empowered by the process.

Principle 4. One important aspect was from the very beginning to identify values and perspectives, enabling us to identify potential conflict areas. That is, putting as much as possible on the table from start. Of course, some conflicts are value based, while others emerge first when issues become concrete and when having an impact on real-life. But we have been aware of these dimensions and tried to manage when it has been put forward.

Principle 5. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the process so far, has been the focus on creating a safe environment for constructive dialogue within the RSG. Although managing issues with a long, sometimes controversial history, a lack of trust, as well as different perspectives on values and actions, the RSG has developed a culture of nonviolent communication, reflection and learning. The project management has been a role model, inviting participants to listen, elaborate issues, and to accept complexity (no simple answers).

Principle 6. To develop a collaborative governance model is really a process of learning by doing. We have taken the opportunity to test different meeting techniques, decision tools, and pedagogics, and by that learning what seems to work and what does not. By being aware of the principles of collaborative leadership we have tried to be consequent in how we involve, adapt and increase trust between the participants. So far it has been successful, but the real challenges in collaborative leadership will probably be more obvious when we start implementing actions and allocating resources and responsibilities.

Principle 7. Mixed methods for learning has been applied in order to support different learning styles, but also to enable a deeper understanding of a situation by approaching it from different angles. We have learned the importance of being outside, transforming ideas and models into concrete measures when aiming to embed actions in its unique context (a part of a nature reserve, an alley with old trees, a hiking track, etc).

In sum we believe that we so far has taken the 7 guiding principles seriously. They have also been important for us when designing the process, making sure that we take into account core aspect of multi-stakeholder work. But there is some issues that we believe are necessary to keep in mind during the next phase of the project: Have we increased the expectations too much? Do we have the resources needed to carry the ideas through? How do we take care of ideas that have emerged, but which did not became part of the action

plan? By working the way we have, approaching future challenges broadly and inviting participants to raise all kind of issues, we have also created expectations that this work will be able to handle much of it (one way or another). Practically this implies that we probably need to involve other stakeholders in the future, taking care of issues which are not central to biodiversity governance, but still central to the local stakeholders and their view on sustainable land use.

The survey among members of the RSG

As part of the evaluation in this end-line study we also made a survey with the participants in the RSG. The survey was individual. It was organised according to a framework for assessing power in collaborative governance processes (Purdy, 2012)[1].

It focuses on aspects of participation as well as the collaborative working approach. Dimensions such as representativeness, access to resources, level of participations, administrative routines, internal communication, content, influence, and so on, was part of the survey. A new survey will be made at the end of the BioGov-project, but the results show that the participant in general is satisfied or very satisfied with the work so far.

Our conclusion is that the model we have been developing so far is on the right track. Both the forms and the content seems to fit the participants, as well as the level of ambition (intensity and continuity of the process).

An emerging model for collaborative governance and multi-stakeholder partnership

The RSG's main task is to jointly propose a model for sustained and collaborative governance in Valle. It is also about developing a working model that can be generalized and used also in other areas, not least in the future work on strengthening the green infrastructure and implementing a landscape approach in land-use planning. As said earlier, the starting point for guiding and organising the local approach has been the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Guidelines (MSP). One aspect of this is the process model of adaptive planning presented below.

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[1] Purdy, J. M. 2012. A Framework for Assessing Power in Collaborative Governance Processes. *Public Administration Review* 72 (3): 409–417.

1. Initiating
- Clarify reasons for an MSP
- Undertake initial situation analysis (stakeholders, issues, institutions, power and politics)
- Establish interim steering body
- Build stakeholder support
- Establish scope and mandate
- Outline the process

2. Adaptive planning
- Deepen understanding and trust
- Identify issues and opportunities
- Generate visions for the future
- Examine future scenarios
- Agree on strategies for change
- Identify actions and responsibilities
- Communicate outcomes

INITIATING

ADAPTIVE PLANNING

REFLECTIVE MONITORING

COLLABORATIVE ACTION
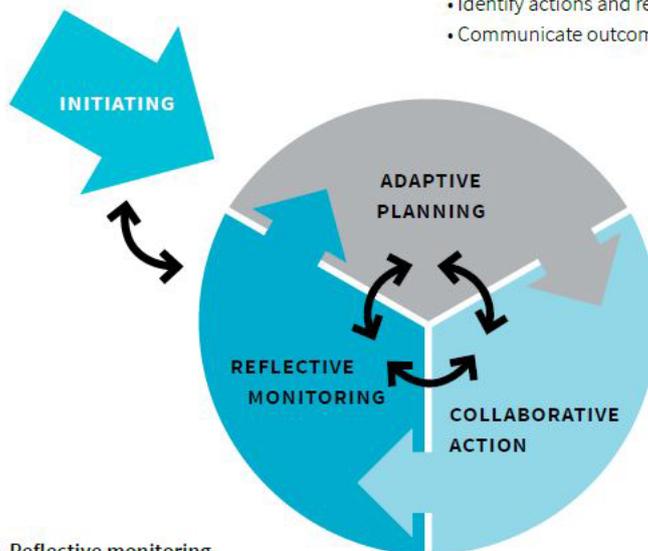
4. Reflective monitoring
- Create a learning culture and environment
- Define success criteria and indicators
- Develop and implement monitoring mechanisms
- Review progress and generate lessons
- Use lessons for improvement

3. Collaborative action
- Develop detailed action plans
- Secure resources and support
- Develop capacities for action
- Establish management structures
- Manage implementation
- Maintain stakeholder commitment

When planning for and initiating new regional stakeholder groups in other areas, or even when taking the next step in Valle when the BioGov-project has ended, all these aspects need to be taken care of. The participatory arrangement set up in Valle has focused strongly on the communication, learning and the co-construction of objectives among the stakeholders. So far, it has been successful with regard to trust building and joint learning and creating collaborative capacity. Critical factors involves a) collaborative leadership, b) a focus on communication, trust building and learning, especially early in the process, c) to gain momentum through small steps and clarifying the progress the group makes, d) continuous integration of both scientific and experience-based, local knowledge systems in the decision-making process, and finally e) ensuring a long term commitment among all participants. All these factors is important to keep in mind when entering the next phase, trying to establish a new governance model which is possible to scale up and out in Sweden.

Concluding remarks

To implement a multi-stakeholder approach and partnership means that several elements have to be taken into account: the history of social networks and earlier experiences of collaboration, existing cultural and institutional features, as well as the unique context and issues to be managed. Each case will have different ways of developing collective initiatives and meet the specific hindering factors. In the Valle District the ambition has been to tune
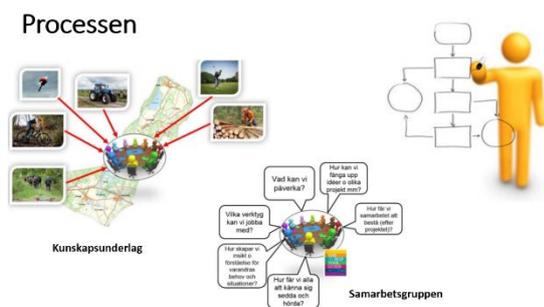
into ongoing activities and stakeholder networks, but adding an explicit discussion on values, the need for cohesion, accountability and transparency in decision-making processes. Putting an extra efforts during the first phase of the BioGov-project will hopefully lead to that future activities and learning will be more efficient and perceived as highly relevant among stakeholders.

The facilitation of the process has had double purposes; a) constituting and managing the collaborative working group, securing representativeness of different stakeholder interests, and b) supporting the innovativeness of the new stakeholder network, making actors to take responsibility for an integrated approach for sustainable land use (grounding a new governance model).

Procedural consensus has been instrumental to achieve a constructive discussion between stakeholders. That is, we have had an open discussion not only on the role of the collaborative working group, but also on the principles which should guide the communication and the joint working approach. Important criteria have been to apply a holistic perspective on what we do, test new working methods and forms of cooperation, ensure transparency throughout the process, allow critical perspectives, utilize the competence of the entire group and create synergies between us, set up measurable goals to create increased power of change, and not closing our eyes to inherent conflicts. These criteria on how to work together has been agreed upon among the participating stakeholders and is the basis for the procedural consensus.

To conclude, the experiences we have made so far is related to the importance of:
- invest in relationships, common goals and group coherence,
- finding a balance between leadership and shared responsibility,
- trying to focus on common ground and win-win solutions to secure cohesion among participants,
- adapting facilitation tools and approaches to different needs and learning styles, and
- monitor and evaluate the project not only on the tangible outputs, but also on the internal network dynamics and to manage an ever-changing process.

We now have a good understanding of which stakeholders to involve, we have constituted a regional stakeholder group, we have been able to describe existing perspectives and core values of importance in the Valle District, and we have started the process of implementing vision and values in concrete landscapes and environments in the area by the Action Plan.

Working with the base- and end-line study has been instrumental in creating a strong foundation for our future work.

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