

Emiliano Duch

## **The Environmental Industries Cluster in Västra Götaland Region (Case A – Research)**

### **The presence of environmental industries in the region**

The Västra Götaland Region (in Southwest Sweden) started in 2002 a support program to identify the interest in common services (in particular in the export promotion services) among companies in the environmental industries in their region.

The results of the study, carried out by a local environmental consulting firm, were very encouraging, with more than 165 companies identified, of which 63 showed interest, within the following sub-sectors:

- Energy optimization
- Renewable energy
- Air
- Soil
- Environmentally adapted products
- Transportation
- Water
- Recycling

A short summary of the study is attached at the end of this case.

The same consultant carried out a similar investigation for the companies in 13 communities in the Gothenburg region, for Business Region Gothenburg. That investigation covered some 170 companies, of which 87 showed interest in export supporting activities created by Business Region Gothenburg.

This case was prepared by Emiliano Duch on 2004 based on a real experience in the Region of Västra-Götaland (Sweden), as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. Some situations, characters and companies have been disguised to preserve confidentiality.  
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## **How to connect the environmental industries with the research already being done by institutions in the region?**

When the main environmental research institutions in the area were informed of the results of the study, they were surprised by the number of companies showing interest to collaborate in common services, since they had never succeeded in getting the industry to participate in any common effort.

They felt that there was unfortunate that none of those companies had ever been interested in their research, neither had responded to their calls for joint research projects or just for funding of their basic research.

At this time, regional research institutions in other fields had been following the so-called triple-helix approach, and some had recently participated in a nation-wide competition for substantial funds to be awarded to innovative cluster initiatives. The environmental researchers were asking themselves why shouldn't they use the results of that study to be considered as well for some innovative cluster funding.

If these cluster programs were generously funding other researchers, why shouldn't they get the same treatment? Even though they were already late for the large nationwide contest; they could probably still get funds from another national source that was funding as well cluster initiatives.

In any case, being the environmental research so wide, maybe a first step should be to have a narrower definition? Or not?

And how should they proceed, where to start? Should their initiative include industry and government, as it seemed to be politically correct in Sweden? At local, regional or national level?

## **Annex: Excerpts from the study “Kartläggning av miljöföretag och deras exportvilja för Västra Götalands Regionen”**

### **2.2 Project goal**

To investigate the interest from the “environmental” companies in export supporting activities created by Västra Götalandsregionen. The area covered by the first investigation was excluded.

### **2.3 Fulfilling of goal**

In 100 hours some 165 companies were interviewed and classified according to plan.

### **3.3 Branches**

- Energy optimization
- Renewable energy
- Air
- Soil
- Environmentally adapted products
- Transportation
- Environmental companies acc to their own statement
- Water Recycling
- Others

### **3.4 Result**

63 companies showed interest in export activities created by Västra Götalandsregionen.

## **4 Conclusions**

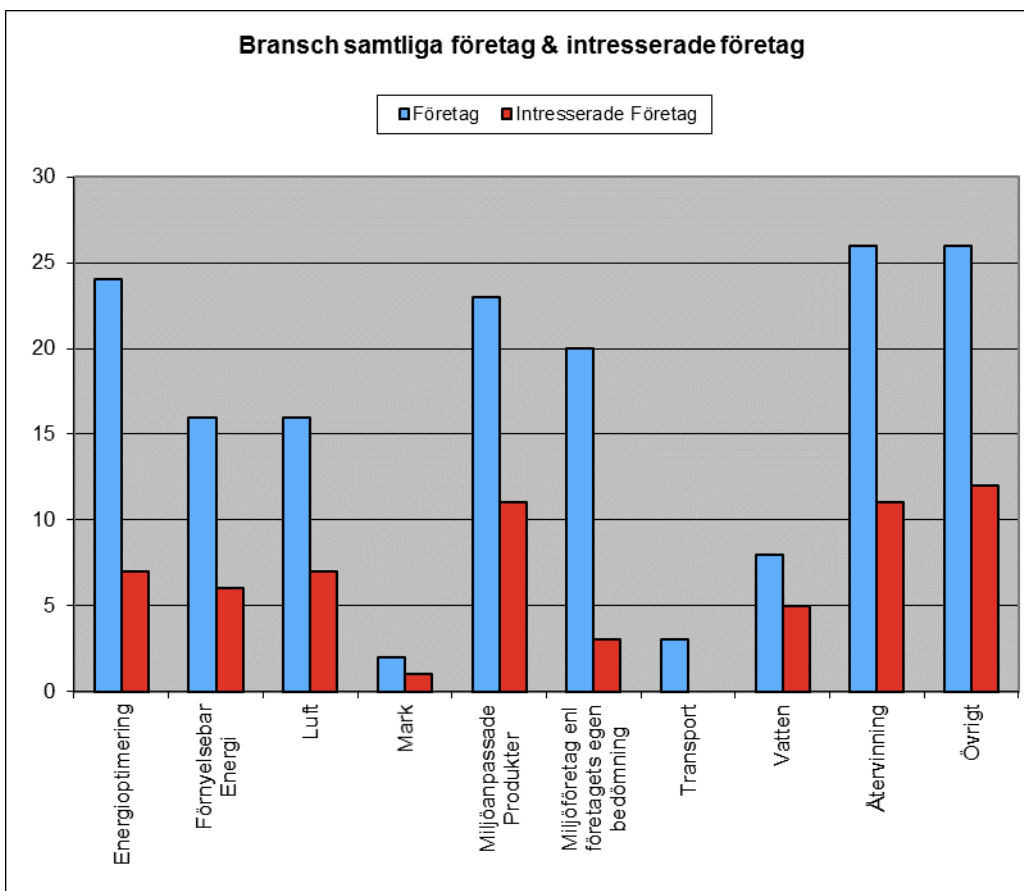
Branch specific activities – as opposed to general environmental export activities.

Concrete projects – like partly funded projects in e.g. FP 6

Cluster – E.g. the new national program

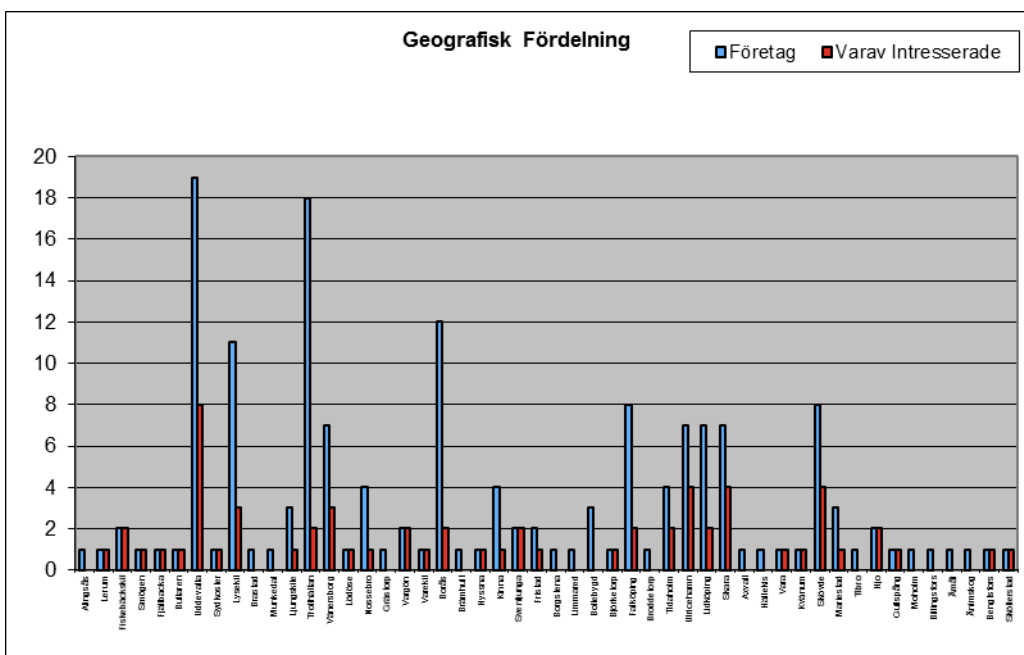
Export advisors – with specific branch knowledge

Diagram 4



All companies of the Industry and interested companies

Diagram 5



Geographical distribution