

Sweden

Recent policy developments

- A pilot project in Skåne and Västra-Götaland merging counties with a directly elected regional assembly and responsibility for regional development was made permanent in 2011. In the spring of 2014, the parliament reallocated the responsibility for regional development in six more counties. From January 2015, the county councils (directly elected regional assemblies) in Jönköping, Örebro, Gävleborg, Östergötland, Jämtland and Kronoberg will gain responsibility for regional development from the county administrative boards (national government agencies at the regional level).
- From 2015, there will be 10 county councils out of 21 responsible for regional development. In the rest of the country, county administrative boards are responsible for regional development in four counties, and regional development councils (assemblies indirectly elected by municipalities and county councils) in seven counties. The government has announced that further changes will not be implemented before the general election in September 2014.
- Part of the Swedish government and government agencies relating to regional development have undergone a substantial overhaul during recent years. The Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (Tillväxtanalys) and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) were created in 2009. The Ministry of Agriculture was transformed into the Ministry for Rural Affairs in 2011.
- A National Strategy for Regional Growth and Attractiveness 2014-2020 was launched in June 2014, with a broader scope than the previous National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment 2007-2013. The new strategy adopts a cross-sectoral approach and will rely on multi-level governance mechanisms for dialogue and learning.

| Government structure | Municipal-level governments | Intermediate-level governments | Regional or state-level governments |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Unitary | 290 | | 21 |

Regional development policy

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Lead ministry(ies) or committees | Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication |
| Regional development framework | The National Strategy for Regional Growth and Attractiveness 2014-2020 scheduled to be launched in June 2014, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and complemented with priorities such as physical/spatial planning and regional attractiveness for regional sustainable growth. |

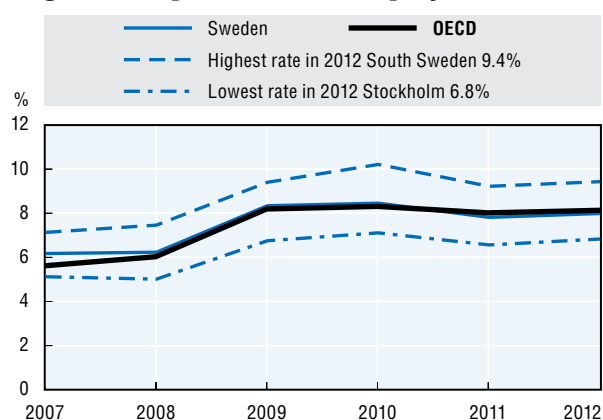
Urban development policy

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Lead ministry(ies) or committees | Ministry of Health and Social Affairs |
| Urban policy framework or strategy | A National Platform for Sustainable Urban Development |

Rural development policy

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Lead ministry(ies) or committees | Ministry for Rural Affairs; Swedish Board of Agriculture |
| Rural policy framework or strategy | Rural Development Programme |

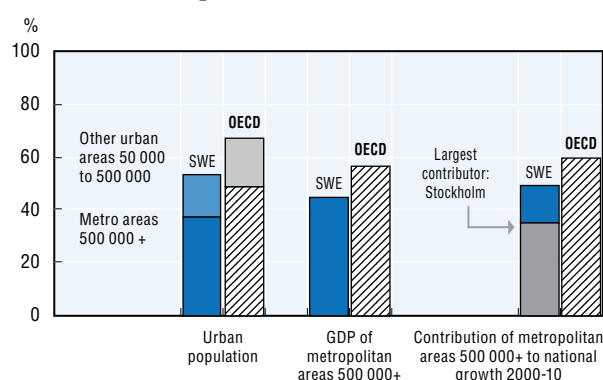
Regional disparities in unemployment trends



In 2012, South Sweden recorded the highest unemployment rate (9.4%), as well as the highest youth unemployment rate (26.3%).

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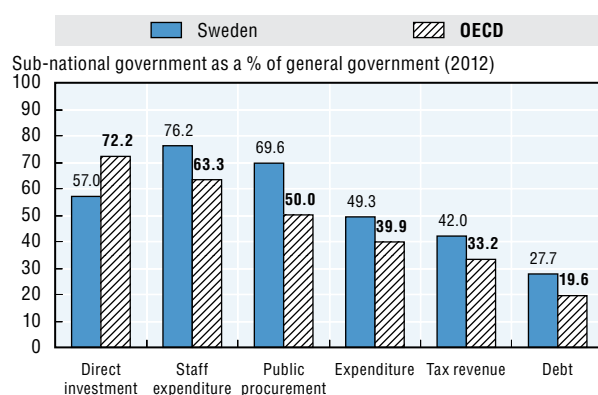
The importance of urban areas



In Sweden, 53% of the population lives in cities of different sizes: the share of population in metropolitan areas (urban areas with more than 500 000 inhabitants) is 37%, compared to 49% in the OECD area.

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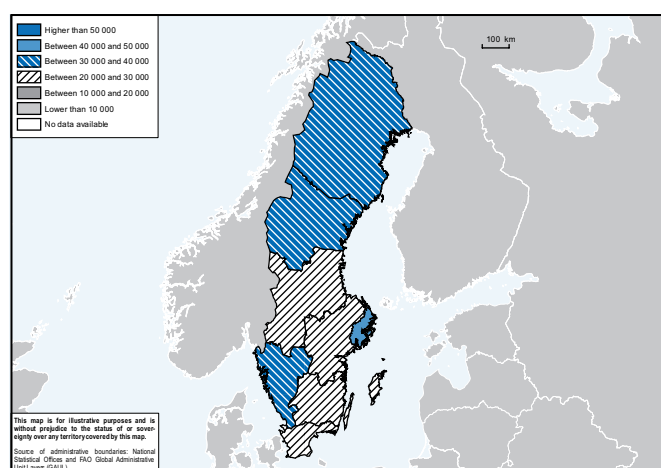
The role of sub-national governments in public finance



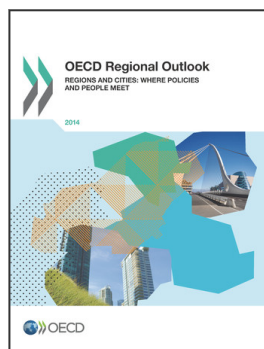
Health and social protection are the two largest spending items for SNGs in Sweden: together they represent 54% of sub-national expenditure, compared to 30% in the OECD area.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933108871>

Regional differences in GDP per capita levels



GDP per capita levels in Swedish regions were above the OECD average in 2010. In the previous decade, GDP growth in Swedish regions was above the OECD average, with the largest difference observed between Upper Norrland (3.2% annually) and Småland (1.4% annually).



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