

[CheckOrphan](#)
[BioEnergy](#)
[GreenBio](#)
[BioBasel](#)
BioEnergy - for sustainable energy
[Sign In](#) | [Register](#)
[NEWSLETTERS](#) [SPONSORSHIP](#) [SUBMIT CONTENT](#)
[Home](#) » [BioEnergy](#) » [News](#) » Sweden puts its bets on greentech

Sweden puts its bets on greentech

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

By [Stanley Reed](#) and [Ariane Sains](#)

Sweden boasts some 3,500 clean tech companies that together book roughly \$14 billion in revenues. Exports, which make up about a quarter of their overall sales, have grown 75 percent over the last four years. To further boost the industry, the government is earmarking \$590 million for environmental projects over the next two years.

Lake Trummen in southern Sweden used to be a polluted, weed-choked mess. Now, after a \$14 million cleanup, bathers crowd its clear blue water in summer. Vxj, a city of 80,000 that sits on its shores, is vying to be the most environmentally pristine place in Sweden. The town's car fleet is being converted to biogas, a clean fuel based on methane, and a new biofuel factory has created 320 jobs. Vxj has cut its carbon dioxide emissions cut by a third over the past 15 years, and the town even channels leftover heat from the local crematorium into homes.

Swedish business and political leaders think places like Vxj are on to something. A few decades ago the country led the world in developing mobile technology through companies such as Ericsson. Now, with telecom sales flattening, business and political leaders think green technology could spark a new export boom -- crucial to Sweden, where exports account for more than half of gross domestic product. "There is huge demand around

[Print Article](#)
[Email Link](#)
[Register Now](#)
[Newsletter Subscription](#)
[Submit Content](#)

Related Articles

- » [Scientists Announce Declaration on Biodiesel](#)
- » [Cornell technology makes biogas greener](#)
- » [Sewage plant generates power](#)
- » [Biogas plant that has raised hopes in Flint could be operati...](#)
- » [Cellulosic Ethanol May Benefit Human Health And Help Slow Cl...](#)
- » [Minnesotans to tour Swedish biomass operations](#)
- » [Bioenergy show will be held at Stoneleigh](#)
- » [At Biodiesel Show: Freeway Plantations, Chinese Tallow and A...](#)
- » [Bozeman company supplies crop for biofuel flight](#)
- » [Bio-Energy Power Plants to Tackle Energy Poverty in Rural In...](#)

the world for this technology," says Anders Brnnstrm, president of Volvo Technology Transfer, a subsidiary of truck and bus maker Volvo that has invested about \$20 million in clean tech companies.

While Denmark has wind power Relevant Products/Services giant Vestas and Germany has a host of big outfits such as Q-Cells that make solar cells and panels, Sweden's clean tech sector is made up mostly of smaller companies. In Vxj, for instance, IV Produkt makes energy Relevant Products/Services-efficient ventilation systems it exports to 15 countries, from Belgium to Ukraine. The company says the systems mean energy savings of 80 percent, paying for themselves in about two years.

Going Like a Steamroller

Some 30 percent of IV's \$38.6 million in revenues came from exports last year, a number that is likely to hit 50 percent by 2012, says sales manager Bjrn Fredriksson. In a Bauhaus-like suburban research park outside Stockholm, a startup called TranSIC is designing computer chips for the power systems of hybrid vehicles. And deep in the pine forests of Boden near the Arctic Circle, Swebo Bioenergy makes systems to burn manure and wood chips for heat.

The company, with close to \$8 million in annual sales, says it is deluged with orders from the U.S. and Europe. "This is going like a steamroller," says export manager Mattias Lindgren.

Sweden boasts some 3,500 clean tech companies that together book roughly \$14 billion in revenues. Exports, which make up about a quarter of their overall sales, have grown 75 percent over the last four years. To further boost the industry, the government is earmarking \$590 million for environmental projects over the next two years, including \$180 million to commercialize green tech. None other than King Carl XVI Gustav has become the green industry's biggest promoter and fan: He heats his suburban Drottningholm Palace with wood pellets and drives himself to and from Stockholm in a dark blue Volvo C30 station wagon that runs on biofuel. Where possible, light bulbs in the royal residences are being replaced with the energy-saving variety. He also has a prototype car that runs on hydrogen.

The 62-year-old king, whose environmental activism goes back to his Boy Scout days, is also taking to the road to pitch Swedish green business. He recently broke ground on a plant that Swedish Biogas International is building in Flint, Mich. "Mother Earth is not feeling well," the king says, "and she's reacting." Green projects such as the biogas plant are one way to help repair the damage."

Royal Example

The king also sees Swedish exports and the environment as natural

Top BioEnergy Articles

- ⌘ [Sixteen ancient technologies reborn](#)
- ⌘ [Biofuels as alternative sources of energy](#)
- ⌘ [Protéus announces collaboration with Syngenta in Biofuels](#)
- ⌘ [Haldia plant starts biodiesel production](#)
- ⌘ [India's Renewable Energy Sector and Green Energy Index unaffected...](#)
- ⌘ [Forest fuel - Power companies see opportunity in timber](#)
- ⌘ [Green crude](#)
- ⌘ [Kentucky university, General Atomics to explore enzyme, algae pro...](#)
- ⌘ [Algae: The new oil](#)
- ⌘ [Algae project will be focus of annual SCIA banquet](#)

partners. "We're a small country, so we're dependent on exports. And we've always lived in a clean environment, close to nature." He admits change isn't easy but says, "We have to think in the long term, not short term as we have before, but still make this happen quickly. I try to change my own thinking. We have to make this happen and not just discuss it. I don't like discussions."

And in an interview with BusinessWeek, he gently chides one reporter for flying to Stockholm to talk instead of picking up the phone.

With relatively little venture capital available in Sweden, the clean technology sector is scrambling to raise sufficient funds. But the U.S. ambassador to Stockholm, Michael Wood, is helping out. He has launched a program to steer U.S. venture money and potential U.S. customers to Swedish green tech companies. Of 52 companies on Wood's list, about a third have gotten financing or orders in the past 18 months.

Among the participants is the Sustainable Technologies Fund, run by Swedish entrepreneur Anders Frisk and U.S. venture capitalist Andre Heinz, whose family founded the H.J. Heinz food company. Their fund has invested \$2 million in Swebo Bioenergy. The global financial crisis may slow Sweden's green technology industry, but Frisk insists the long-term future is bright. "There will be tremendous growth for 50 or 60 years," he says.

Adds Heinz: "If you're able to offer savings in an economic downturn, you have a viable product, and clean tech does that."

© 2009 Top Tech News. All rights reserved.

Source: [Top Tech News](#)