



Ulf Bergström, SLU

## Project brief

Department of Aquatic Resources

# ECOCOA

— Ecological compensation in coastal areas

**Coastal areas provide a wide range of ecosystem services but increasing pressure from human activities is posing a risk to sustainable development and jeopardizing key values provided by coastal systems. ECOCOA will develop tools to address these losses.**

### **Restore, create or protect environments**

Environmental compensation, including biodiversity offsetting, is seen as a promising management tool to achieve no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Environmental compensation measures may entail, for example, habitat restoration, recreation of lost habitat, or protective measures.

### **Guidance on scientific basis**

Environmental compensation is not widely implemented in Sweden today, despite its potential to contribute to national and global environmental objectives, including the UN sustainable development goals. ECOCOA aims to explore how compensa-

tion can be applied in a cost-effective and flexible approach, based on ecological and economic criteria, to better manage shallow coastal ecosystems. The scientifically-based guidance will assist decision-makers.

The team, which includes ecologists and environmental economists, will develop case studies in collaboration with managers and other end users. ECOCOA is led by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, with partners from Anthesis Envenco, EnviroEconomics Sweden, the University of Gothenburg and Stockholm University. The project, which is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, run from 2018– 2021.

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\* **Ecosystem services** refer to the benefits that nature provides humans. Ecosystem goods and services maintain and improve our quality of life and may include e.g., water purification from wetlands, fish production from habitat, recreational experiences, etc.



Eduardo Infantes, Göteborgs universitet



Göran Sundblad, SLU

## Project description

ECOCOA will support the use of environmental compensation in coastal ecosystem management by developing scientifically-based guidance. These management tools will help to address the loss of values that result from human-caused damage to biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The project reviews and evaluates experiences from applying compensation in Swedish coastal areas, and compares this with examples from other habitat types nationally and internationally.

The project will consider which aspects are included (or excluded) in the current application of compensation measures and highlight possible improvements from alternative approaches. Further, the project will consider cost-efficiency of alternative compensation approaches.

The synthesis and guidance will be supported by the development of qualitative and quantitative case studies, addressing key themes and geographic areas. The studies will explore the loss of fish spawning areas, the use of habitat restoration as a compensation measure, and the identification of metrics for scaling compensation, for example.



Photo: Göran Sundblad, SLU.

## Contact us!

ECOCOA is conducting a web survey to support the case studies. Contact us if you wish to provide input on key issues that you think should be addressed.

Contact us if you are interested in receiving more information about the project's activities and results.

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