The Swedish Medical Products Agency has a broad responsibility. Our work with the approval, supervision and control of medicines and medical devices promotes the positive development of public and animal welfare, patient healthcare and safety. Driving environmental initiatives related to our main product responsibilities is included in our many duties.

Make the Baltic Sea Region the Leader in Sustainable Management of Pharmaceuticals.
The Consumption of pharmaceuticals all over the world is growing. Their use is of vital importance to human health, but at the same time, active pharmaceutical ingredients are increasingly recognized as potential environmental pollutants. The overall goal of this project is to initiate actions that reduce the impact of pharmaceuticals on the environment in the countries around the Baltic Sea.

Pharmaceuticals are designed to have specific biological effects and biological persistency; hence the risk of bioaccumulation and effects in non-target organisms. The widespread occurrence of medicinal products in the environment is well documented today, but our present understanding of the extent of the problem is fragmented and many knowledge gaps still remain.

The connection between public health and the environment was elucidated by the EU Commission in 2008 in the following way: “Pollution of waters and soils with pharmaceutical residues is an emerging environmental problem and also an emerging public health concern” and “It is now necessary to focus on measures that could reduce potentially harmful impact of medicinal products on the environment and public health”.

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Flagship project within the Baltic Sea Strategy

The Swedish Medical Products Agency initiated the project ‘Make the Baltic Sea Region the Leader in Sustainable Management of Pharmaceuticals’ and it was accepted as a flagship project within the Baltic Sea Strategy 2011.

The overall goal for the network is to initiate actions that reduce the impact of pharmaceuticals on the environment.

Priority activities 2013-2014

Our focus is to review the situation in the Baltic countries.

The objective is to collate current projects related to sustainable management of pharmaceuticals, disposal strategies for unused products, for example. The amount of pharmaceuticals produced, prescribed and sold in the countries around the Baltic Sea constitutes valuable data. Production sites plus good examples of sustainable management and monitoring are further examples of interest.

From this information it will be possible to compile best-practice examples from different countries to share and implement in other parts of the region.

It is encouraging to see both pharmaceutical and environmental agencies equally represented in the network, together with non-governmental organizations and representatives of the pharmaceutical industries.

For the future, continued development of cross-border, interdisciplinary collaboration is necessary to further the goals of this project in the countries around the Baltic Sea.

Extending our network and sharing our knowledge is thus an important activity.

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