

Sweden – SD Priorities

Source document: Strategic Challenges. A Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development (2005)

1. Building sustainable communities (*p. 23*)

- 1.0.1. Local and municipal environmental protection measures carried out in accordance with a Government Bill entitled Swedish Environmental Quality Objectives - a shared responsibility (Govt. Bill 2004/05:150, Rpt. 2005/06: MJU3, Riksdag Comm. 2005/06:48, 49). (*p. 28*)
- 1.0.2. The Government has appointed an inquiry entitled Commission on Climate and Vulnerability (Terms of Reference, ToR Terms of Reference, 2005:80), which is to present its proposals in October 2007. (*p. 28*)
- 1.0.3. In 2006 or 2007, the Government will present a bill in connection with the review of the Planning and Building Act (Swedish Government Official Reports 2005:77). (*p. 28*)
- 1.0.4. The Government has appointed an inquiry to propose a long-term strategy for sustainable development of rural areas (ToR 2004:05). Agriculture along with the collective value of rural landscapes, will be explored from a social and environmental point of view, as well as in terms of regional economies. A rural development strategy and programme co-financed by the EU will be put together during the spring of 2006 and will run from 2007 to 2013. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.5. The Government Offices are preparing a report on a sustainable urban development policy to be presented in May 2006. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.6. During 2006, the Government and the municipalities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö will be revising the local development agreements of the Government's metropolitan policy. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.7. A Government bill entitled National programme for energy efficiency and energy-smart construction (Govt. Bill 2005/06:145) is being submitted on the same date as this communication. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.8. The Government is stepping up its effort to encourage accessibility to public premises, as well as to combat sexualisation of public sphere. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.9. The Riksdag passed the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and Pupils (2006:67). The purpose of the act is to ensure that children and students enjoy equal rights, to fight discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religious belief or other personal creed, sexual orientation or disability and to combat other types of abusive treatment. (*p. 29*)
- 1.0.10. Sweden shares its experience and knowledge in the areas of sustainable development, environmental technology, infrastructure and urban development with the rest of the world through the EU, UN and development cooperation. For instance, Sweden is involved in the Sustainable Cities project, as well as in promoting better residential and road planning - particularly in areas affected by urbanisation, air pollution and waste management problems - within the scope of international development cooperation. (*p. 29*)

1.1. Promote sustainable development consistent with local and regional conditions (*p. 28*)

1.2. Ensure vital, safe and secure urban environments and city centres that are readily accessible to everyone (*p. 28*)

1.3. Encourage decent residential environments in which people feel a sense of belonging and ability to participate (*p. 28*)

1.4. Reverse social, economic and discriminatory segregation in the metropolitan areas (*p. 28*)

1.5. Guarantee the right of everyone to obtain housing on a nondiscriminatory basis (*p. 28*)

2. Encouraging good health on equal terms (*p. 29*)

- 2.0.1. A 2006 Government communication to the Riksdag will contain an initial report on the implementation of its public health policy. The effort proceeds from the conviction that maximum health is a human right. (p. 35)
- 2.0.2. The Government is drafting a proposal aimed at promoting higher quality occupational health care. (p. 35)
- 2.0.3. In 2006-08, the Government will provide special support to the healthcare sector for the purpose of encouraging county councils to adopt active measures that reduce sickness absenteeism. (p. 35)
- 2.0.4. The Government has assigned the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Social Insurance Administration the task of formulating a more quality assured, uniform and legally consistent process for sickness absences that correctly identifies people's ability to work and encourages them to return to their jobs as soon as possible. (p. 35)
- 2.0.5. Starting in 2006, the National Labour Market Board and Social Insurance Administration will review everyone who has been on sickleave for more than two years or has been granted temporary sickness and activity compensation. The purpose is to ensure that rehabilitation or other suitable measures are adopted so that people can re-enter the labour market and receive the proper level of compensation. (p. 35)
- 2.0.6. The National Board of Health and Welfare has been assigned to propose an action plan for improving children's environment and health. An interim report will be released in October 2006 and the final report in March 2007. (p. 35)
- 2.0.7. A total of SEK 1 billion has been appropriated for 2006 to institute reforms that will help children who are at risk of poverty, improve maintenance support and housing allowances to families with children, and introduce a child supplement for parents who are receiving student aid. Improvements in general child allowances will take effect as of 2006. A Government bill (Govt. Bill 2005/06:142) submitted to the Riksdag on the same date as this communication proposes that the income tax ceiling for parents' insurance and the sickness allowance system, as well as the lowest level for the parents' allowance, be raised. (p. 36)
- 2.0.8. The Swedish Work Environment Authority has been assigned to monitor the living conditions of young people between the ages of 16 and 25. The report is to be completed by early 2007. (p. 36)
- 2.0.9. The Government has appointed an inquiry entitled The Study of Young People's Life Situation in Terms of Stress and Its Consequences for Mental Health (ToR 2006:12), which will submit its proposal in May 2006. (p. 36)
- 2.0.10. The Government has instructed the National Institute for Working Life to review and summarise current research about how young women and men are faring at the workplace. The final report is to be submitted in May 2007. (p. 36)
- 2.0.11. Sweden is continually working to modify the EU Common Agricultural Policy so that production will better reflect consumer demand. In connection with the reform of EU marketing regulations for fruit and vegetables in 2006, Sweden will actively promote the elimination of all agricultural subsidies that have the effect of raising prices. (p. 36)
- 2.0.12. The Government's Food Manifesto, launched in June 2005, contains a series of measures in the area of food and health. (p. 36)
- 2.0.13. The National Food Administration and the Swedish National Institute of Public Health have documented a proposed action plan for healthy eating habits and greater physical activity among the general population. The Government Offices are drafting the proposal. (p. 36)
- 2.0.14. Measures to reduce alcohol consumption will be implemented on the basis of the New National Action Plan on Alcohol-Related Harm for 2006-10 (Govt. Bill 2005/06:30, Rpt. 2005/06:JuSoU1, Rpt. 2005/06:SoU12, Riksdag Comm. 2005/06:157). (p. 36)
- 2.0.15. The European Commission has released a green book to encourage broad-based consultation among EU institutions, Member States and civil society to identify ways of promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity. The results of the effort will be presented in late 2006. (p. 36)
- 2.0.16. Monitoring the strategies that govern Swedish development cooperation with individual countries includes a dialogue in which Sweden can raise issues, including health considerations, that are relevant to sustainable development. (p. 37)
- 2.0.17. In addition to plans to promote extension of the UN Millennium Development Goals to include sexual and reproductive health, Sweden is actively engaged in international efforts to oppose violence against girls and women. (p. 37)

- 2.0.18. Measures to prevent the spread and minimise the negative consequences of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmittable diseases are to be implemented on the basis of the National Strategy against HIV/AIDS and Certain Other Communicable Diseases (Govt. Bill 2005/06:60, Rpt. 2005/06:SoU20). (p. 37)
- 2.0.19. The Government will promote the inclusion of communicable disease control as a high priority at the EU, WHO, UN and regional levels. Initiatives are also being planned to study ways of encouraging the development of medications even if they are commercially unprofitable, including antibacterial drugs and HIV vaccines. The Government put together a strategic action plan in 2005 for fighting communicable diseases at the global level. (p. 37)
- 2.0.20. Measures to preserve the effective use of antibiotics against bacterial infections in animals and human beings are to be carried out pursuant to the Government's proposals in the Strategy for Coordinated Efforts to Prevent Antibiotic Resistance and Healthcare-associated Infections (Govt. Bill 2005/06:50, Rpt. 2005/06:SoU13). (p. 37)

2.1. Create social conditions that permit good health on equal terms for everyone (p. 35)

3. Meeting the demographic challenge (p. 37)

- 3.0.1. The Government's two-year employment package, launched in January 2006, aims to give an additional 55 000 people (1.2 per cent of the labour force) the chance to obtain a job or improve their skills. Most of the initiatives are part of the Government's labour market policy. (p. 43)
- 3.0.2. The purpose of the comprehensive ongoing income tax reform, including compensation for national pension contributions, is to encourage people to work. The marginal tax for low and middle income earners has decreased by 5 percentage points as a result of the reform. (p. 43)
- 3.0.3. The Government has assigned the Labour Market Administration the task of cooperating with employers and trade unions on additional initiatives to reduce part-time unemployment throughout the labour force. A one-man inquiry has also sought ways of strengthening the right to full-time employment. The report, entitled The full-time employment inquiry (Swedish Government Official Reports 2005:105), is currently being circulated for formal consultation. (p. 43)
- 3.0.4. As part of its effort to fight discrimination in the labour market, the Government has appointed an inquiry to explore the possibility of a system whereby people can apply anonymously for public sector positions. The report, entitled Anonymous Job Applications - A Method for Diversity (Swedish Government Official Reports 2005:115), was submitted in January 2006. (p. 44)
- 3.0.5. The Government has ordered a parliamentary committee to review the regulations on labour migration (ToR 2004:21). The purpose of the review is to find ways of encouraging labour migration from countries outside the EU and EEA. The proposal is to be based on the demand for labour and the principle that wages and other conditions of employment should be equivalent to those of the country's existing labour force. The committee will release its final report in the autumn of 2006. (p. 44)
- 3.0.6. A pilot project that has been under way since 2003 provides refugees and other migrants with extra support during their initial period of employment. (p. 44)
- 3.0.7. A joint 2004 declaration by employers and trade unions proposed a series of integration measures aimed at boosting the employment rate, encouraging equal treatment and opposing ethnic discrimination. (p. 44)
- 3.0.8. Proposals that focus on raising the quality of, and promoting participation in, Swedish language education for migrants will be submitted in 2006. The basic principle is that such education be more attentive to the needs and abilities of each individual. (p. 44)
- 3.0.9. An inquiry chair has been appointed to perform a broad-based, thoroughgoing analysis of Sweden's social insurance system (ToR 2004:129). The fundamental assumption is that the system is to remain universal, obligatory and financially stable over the long term. Special emphasis is to be placed on encouraging people to work and on issues stemming from ill health. The report, to be presented in November 2006, will provide the basis for a parliamentary inquiry to propose a reform of the social insurance system. (p. 44)
- 3.0.10. An inquiry chair will review tax regulations for the pension systems (occupational pensions and private pension savings) that supplement the national pension (ToR 2004:99). The goal of the inquiry is to adjust tax regulations in a way that increases the labour supply and favours economic growth. The report will be issued on 1 December 2006. (p. 44)

- 3.0.11. The Government has initiated a change to the monitoring responsibilities of municipalities pursuant to the Education Act. The change involves the way in which municipalities stay informed about adolescents who have completed compulsory school but not found gainful employment. (p. 45)
- 3.0.12. The Government has appointed an inquiry concerning a national coordinator to help young people enter the labour market more quickly. The report is due out in November 2006 (ToR 2005:21). (p. 45)
- 3.0.13. The Government has appropriated funds for a pilot project in which local non-profit initiatives referred to as navigator centres supplement the ongoing efforts by a number of municipalities to assist unemployed young people. (p. 45)
- 3.0.14. The Government appointed an inquiry to review parents' insurance regulations based on the principle of promoting gender equality and the interests of children. The inquiry has submitted a report entitled Reformed Parental Benefits – Love, Care, Security (Swedish Government Official Reports 2005:73). The Government Offices are currently preparing the report. (p. 45)
- 3.0.15. The Government submitted a ten-year development plan for geriatric care in March 2006. (p. 45)
- 3.0.16. The ageing population makes housing an even greater priority. Those who want to live at home should be able to do so as long as possible. Additional types of housing must be found so that people can make wise choices and achieve security throughout their lives. The housing allowance for pensioners was increased in 2006. (p. 45)
- 3.0.17. The Government has appropriated an additional SEK 100 million annually to help municipalities work with volunteer and non-profit organisations to more effectively support members of an elderly person's family. (p. 45)

3.1. Sweden shall manage to meet the demographic challenge in its economic and social dimensions. (p. 43)

4. Encouraging sustainable growth (p. 45)

- 4.0.1. The Government plans to approve a national strategy for regional development in the spring of 2006. The strategy will coordinate regional development policy and the EU's cohesion policy, identifying national intersectoral priorities. The strategy will form the basis of interagency participation in the regional development effort, the regional development programmes and the EU co-financed structural fund programmes for 2007-13. Similar preparations are under way to formulate the next rural development and fisheries programmes for 2007-13. (p. 53)
- 4.0.2. The administrative burden that businesses bear must be eased without neglecting social and environmental demands. The Government set a series of objectives in 2005 to ease the burden in certain legal areas, including taxation and the Annual Accounts Act. Environmental and labour market legislation will follow in 2006. (p. 53)
- 4.0.3. The Government has appointed a special investigator to analyse the prospects for Sweden's agricultural sector when it comes to producing bioenergy (ToR 2005:85). (p. 53)
- 4.0.4. A bill entitled Research and new technology for tomorrow's energy system (Govt. Bill 2005/06:127) is being submitted on the same date as the present communication. (p. 53)
- 4.0.5. The national wind power council is continuing to coordinate wind power construction in Sweden. A bill entitled Sustainable power with wind - measures for vivid windfarming (Govt. Bill 2005/06:143) is being submitted on the same date as this communication. (p. 53)
- 4.0.6. A bill entitled Renewable electricity with green certificates (Govt. Bill 2005/05:154) is being submitted on the same date as this communication. (p. 53)
- 4.0.7. The Commission on Oil Independence will present a report in the spring of 2006. (p. 53)
- 4.0.8. A bill entitled National Climate Policy in Global Cooperation (Govt. Bill 2005/06:172) is being submitted on the same date as this communication. (p. 53)
- 4.0.9. The Riksdag decision on Research for a Better Life (Govt. Bill 2004/05:80, Rpt. 2004/05:UbU15, Riksdag Comm. 2004/05:289) allocated SEK 210 million to research that supports sustainable development. Such research has excellent prospects for encouraging solutions that contribute to sustainable development, including the capacity of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to reprocess sustainable materials, goods and services. Sustainable development must be included in entrepreneurial training at the upper secondary and university level. (p. 53)

- 4.0.10. Entrepreneurship that focuses on sustainable development will be promoted by means of information, access to necessary seed financing and greater involvement among the providers of private venture capital when it comes to launching sustainable goods and services. The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Nutek), ALMI Företagspartner AB and Innovationsbron AB all have a role to play in that effort. (p. 54)
- 4.0.11. Nutek promotes the efforts of Sweden's small and medium-sized businesses to assume social responsibility. The purpose of such initiatives is to strengthen competitiveness by means of business concepts that are oriented toward sustainability. The EU is also beginning to work along those lines. (p. 54)
- 4.0.12. The National Institute for Working Life, the National Labour Market Board, the National Rural Agency, the Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies, Nutek and pilot counties will design methods and tools by April 2007 to raise the level of integration and diversity in regional development efforts. (p. 54)
- 4.0.13. The National Institute for Working Life is carrying out its assignment of expanding its R&D efforts concerning the way that the private sector organises the workplace. (p. 54)
- 4.0.14. In cooperation with employers and trade unions, the Government has put together strategy programmes for six different industries: Aviation and Space, Vehicles Metallurgy, Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Medical technology, IT and telecom, and Pulp and Paper. (p. 54)
- 4.0.15. A Government bill entitled From an IT Policy for Society to a Policy for the Information Society (Govt. Bill 2004/05:175, Rpt. 2005/06:TU4, Riksdag Comm. 2005/06:142) includes a series of measures aimed at promoting sustainable growth within the framework of Sweden's IT policy. (p. 54)
- 4.0.16. The Government's IT policy strategy group is working up a proposed national strategy for IT and sustainable development. The purpose of the strategy is to promote IT solutions that are cost-effective, energy efficient, designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, etc. (p. 54)
- 4.0.17. The task of Swedish Environmental Technology Council (SWENTEC), which was set up in 2005 as an organisational affiliate of Nutek, is to facilitate Sweden's efforts on behalf of an international market for environmental technology, as well as environmental goods, services and clean production. (p. 54)
- 4.0.18. Sweden will work to promote an ambitious EU waste management policy during negotiations concerning the European Commission's proposed Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste. (p. 55)
- 4.0.19. The final work on EU's new chemical legislation Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH), is expected to be completed in July 2006/07. REACH will improved the knowledge about the properties of chemical substances, provide technical data about chemicals in goods and the phase-out of the most hazardous substances. (p. 55)
- 4.0.20. Sweden is an advocate within the EU for greater use of bioenergy and improved energy efficiency. (p. 55)
- 4.0.21. Sweden is putting together an action plan to implement the EU's Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP). (p. 55)
- 4.0.22. The Government is continuing to support the private sector's voluntary assumption of social and environmental responsibility as part of the Global Responsibility effort. (p. 55)
- 4.0.23. Sweden is carrying on a project within the framework of development cooperation that will reach SEK 1 billion by 2008. The purpose of the project is to pursue strategic initiatives that further contribute to a sustainable, long-term reduction of poverty. The initiatives will be pursued in areas where Sweden has the strength to provide useful assistance, thereby integrating international solidarity, environmental considerations, social development and economic growth in both Sweden and the countries with which it cooperates. (p. 55)
- 4.0.24. In order to improve its initiatives for sustainable growth in developing countries, Sweden will seek opportunities in coordinating development cooperation, trade and investments. (p. 55)
- 4.0.25. At Sweden's initiative, the OECD development cooperation ministers will meet in the spring of 2006. Plans are for the meeting to approve a declaration on the role of climate concerns in development cooperation, as well as an action programme on protecting the environment and combating poverty. (p. 55)
- 4.0.26. By means of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda, Sweden will work to ensure that trade policy and the WTO promote sustainable development that accords a central role to poverty reduction, environmental protection and the improvement of social conditions. (p. 55)

4.1. Decouple economic growth and environmental degradation while promoting social welfare and cohesion (p. 52)

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- 4.2. For Sweden to be a leader in the development of new solutions that contribute to sustainable development, the commercialisation of knowledge and ideas, and business starts (p. 52)
 - 4.3. For Sweden to set conditions that significantly can reduce Sweden's dependence on oil and other fossil raw materials by 2020 (p. 52)
 - 4.4. Look after the interests of developing countries and the poor people and groups among their populations, so that everyone can benefit from the opportunities offered by global trade (p. 52)
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5. Participation in implementation of the strategy (p. 56)

- 5.1. The sustainable development effort must have the support of Sweden's population and organisations. (p. 57)
 - 5.1.1. The Government plans to arrange a series of local conferences in 2006-09 with the Council for Sustainable Development and interested local, regional and other key actors to encourage activity aimed at meeting the four strategic challenges while also starting work on the next revision of the strategy. (p. 57)

6. Leadership and responsibility (p. 57)

- 6.0.1. The Government plans to identify the governmental agencies whose activities are relevant to the sustainable development effort. The Government will then review ways of clarifying special sustainable development responsibilities in its steering documents for the various agencies. (p. 59)
 - 6.0.2. As part of its state ownership policy, the Government will continue to promote the state-owned enterprise's sustainable development effort by means of educational initiatives, participation in experience sharing and discussion of related matters with management, as well as the further development/ elaboration of follow-up and monitoring principles. (p. 59)
 - 6.0.3. The Swedish strategy for sustainable development must be shared and communicated with the private sector, municipalities, county councils and organisations so that they can use it as a basis for their own development of sustainable development strategies adapted to their own capacity, needs and requirements. (p. 59)
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- 6.1. Sustainable development is an overall objective of Government policy. This means that all political decisions must take into consideration longterm economic, social and environmental consequences. (p. 59)
 - 6.2. The state must serve as a model when it comes to promoting social and environmental consideration. State-owned enterprises - as well as the state in its capacity of fund manger, property owner or employer - must take the long-term economic, social and environmental consequences of their activities into consideration. (p. 59)
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7. Coordination and intersectoral cooperation (p. 60)

- 7.1. The Government's national strategy for sustainable development is authoritative for the efforts of public administration in the area. (p. 62)
 - 7.1.1. In accordance with the Government's instructions, the Swedish Administrative Development Agency (Verva) is to develop and furnish methods and guidelines for expedient control and organisation of its activities, including ways for agencies to better incorporate sustainable development as a horizontal requirement. (p. 62)
 - 7.1.2. The Government's appropriations document for 2006 charged the county administration boards with the task of strengthening the intersectoral effort and coordination among various policy areas in order to ensure efficient solutions and promote regional trends based on the Government's strategy for sustainable development. (p. 62)
 - 7.1.3. The Government will draw up a national programme for sustainable consumption and production patterns. Think twice! An action plan for sustainable household consumption (Govt. Comm. 2005/06:107), the first part of the programme, is being submitted to the Riksdag on the same date as this communication. The second part

will be an action plan for sustainable consumption and production patterns in the public and private sectors. (p. 62)

8. Tools (p. 62)

8.1. Sustainability impact assessments: All policy decisions must take into consideration long-term economic, social and environmental consequences. (p. 62)

8.1.1. The Government is planning to devise an impact analysis model for quality assurance of sustainability early in the process of preparing the key documents on which it bases its decisions. The effort is also intended to strengthen the rulemaking process. (p. 64)

8.2. Economic instruments and tax policy (p. 64)

8.2.1. The Climate Investment Programmes (Klimp) has been reinforced with additional SEK 200 million for 2006 and been extended to include SEK 320 million annually for 2007-08. (p. 66)

8.2.2. The Government has instructed the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Energy Agency to perform a fullscale analysis of current economic instruments related to the environment. Based on the evaluation, an inquiry will be appointed to propose any new or revised economic instruments of control that may be needed. (p. 66)

8.2.3. The Government will begin a review of the tax system in 2006 based partly on the need for Sweden to make the transition to a socially and ecologically sustainable society. (p. 66)

8.3. Sustainable public procurement: for the public sector to serve as a model when it comes to promoting sustainable development. As much as possible consistent with the Public Procurement Act (Swedish Code of Statutes 1992:1528) and EU rules, the public sector is to make social and environmental demands during public procurement processes. Public purchasers are to have access to the tools, training and other support that they need in order to make such demands. (p. 66)

8.3.1. The Government plans to put together guidelines for the use of procurement processes as catalysts for innovation. (p. 68)

8.3.2. The Government plans to work up an action plan in 2006 for making environmental demands during public procurement processes. (p. 68)

8.3.3. The Government has raised its 2006 appropriations for the Swedish Environmental Management Council's effort to encourage the inclusion of environmental demands during public procurement processes by SEK 2 million, for a total of SEK 5 million. The Council is also exploring the prospects for including social demands. (p. 68)

8.4. Education, culture, information and influencing attitudes: Sweden will be a leader in lifelong education and learning about sustainable development. A sustainable development perspective must permeate preschool, compulsory, upper secondary, university and adult education, as well as cultural institutions, while allowing for a free and independent media structure. (p. 70)

8.4.1. New curriculum objectives for upper secondary schools will take effect as of 1 July 2007. Sustainable development has been fully incorporated into the objectives. (p. 71)

8.4.2. A 1 February 2006 amendment to the College Act (Swedish Code of Statutes 1992:1434) mandates promotion of sustainable development in university education. (p. 71)

8.4.3. Many publicly financed museums have had free admission since 2004. By furnishing knowledge within the context of lifelong learning, museums promote sustainable development. (p. 71)

8.4.4. The Government has declared 2006 to be the Year of Multi culture in Sweden. The purpose of the initiative is for Sweden's cultural institutions to better reflect its ethnic and cultural diversity. Cultural offerings and practice must be non-discriminatory and a vital concern of everyone regardless of ethnicity. (p. 71)

8.4.5. A Government Bill entitled More important than ever! Public service radio and television 2007-2012 (Govt. Bill 2005/06:112) is being submitted on the same date as this communication. The Bill emphasises the importance of freedom of expression in combination with strong, independent and easily accessible public service media nationwide. (p. 71)

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