

The report prepared by **Elena Mironenko** (summer 2022)

**Theme:** Swedish waste management system and best practices in sustainability

As a sustainable development specialist, I was incredibly interested to get acquainted with the Swedish experience in everything related to ecology and sustainable development. After all, everyone on the planet probably knows that Sweden is one of the leaders in the field of waste management and highly respected for the love to the environment in the world.

This study allowed me to receive a grant from Sverker Åström foundation, which was possibly the best experience in my professional life. Let me share the interesting results of this internship.

1. First of all, upon arrival in Stockholm, I decided to find out what are the environmental initiatives in the city to reduce food waste. As we know, food waste has now become one of the global problems that attracts the attention of organizations such as the UN. It was incredibly interesting to know what kind of initiatives there are in Stockholm in this area. As a result, the Foodsharing Stockholm movement was found. I managed to be a volunteer and help with food distribution. It turned out that the movement takes products close to the expiration date from restaurants, shops and cafes, and then distributes them to everyone on the appointed day. It was a wonderful experience!



<https://www.instagram.com/foodsharingstockholm/>

<https://karrot.world/#/groupPreview/75>

2. Then I met with an amazing project that I saw only in Sweden – Pop-Up Recycling. This is a network of containers that appear in the city at the appointed time and take various unnecessary things from people. Some things are distributed free of charge on the spot, and some are sold in second-hand shops. This helps to reduce the amount of waste in the city.



3. Then I started to study all projects in the field of the public economy. In particular, I was very interested in what things the Swedes can rent to reduce not only the amount of resources consumed, but also the amount of resources required to produce new things. We managed to contact and meet with some of the projects in order to understand their mechanics.

a) Khyber is a startup that allows you to rent any children's things.

b) Rentabike - bike rental so as not to buy new ones for a short time.

c) The KTX project, which created a map of shared microwave ovens for campus students.

d) A project where you can rent climbing and hiking equipment without having to buy new ones.

4. I managed to get acquainted with two Swedish projects that are engaged in saving food in cafes and shops, selling it through their apps at a discount:

a) KARMA

b) OLIO

5. It turned out that in Stockholm there are charitable refrigerators in which unnecessary food is stored for those who may need it. I was able to communicate with the organizers of this action.

6. One of the most important and interesting meetings that happened to me in Stockholm was a meeting with the managers of a thrift store for people in a difficult life situation - Matmissionen. Store managers talked about supply chains, charitable work and the social aspect of their business. Russia really lacks such stores!

Anyone can shop at Matmissionen stores, but Matmissionen is primarily for members. There are two prices for items sold - the regular price and the membership price. Low-income people who find it difficult to find enough money in regular grocery stores can apply for membership. As a member, they can buy items for a third or less than the regular store price.

In addition to providing cheap meals for members and reducing food waste, Matmissionen allows people to learn and thus enter the labor market. Food Mission is a unique job training venue based on the fact that these are the only grocery stores in Stockholm that are run by the non-profit sector and therefore not profit oriented.



<https://www.stadsmissionen.se/vad-vi-gor/matmissionen>

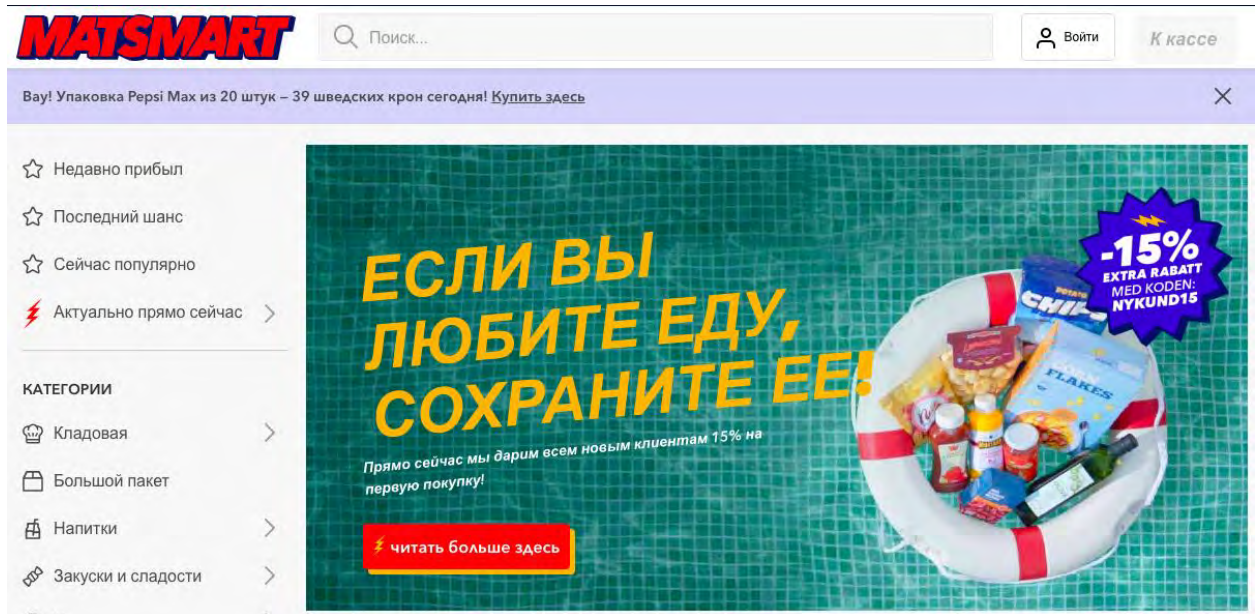
7. My main focus during my internship was food waste prevention and recycling. As a result, a number of Swedish projects were studied:

- a) Matkasse - helps to plan the menu for the week to avoid spontaneous purchases and overconsumption of food.
- b) Karma Box - a subscription to a box of rescued fruits and vegetables.
- c) Too good to go is a new Swedish start-up that allows you to buy a box of various tasty things at a cafe that have an expiration date at a low price.

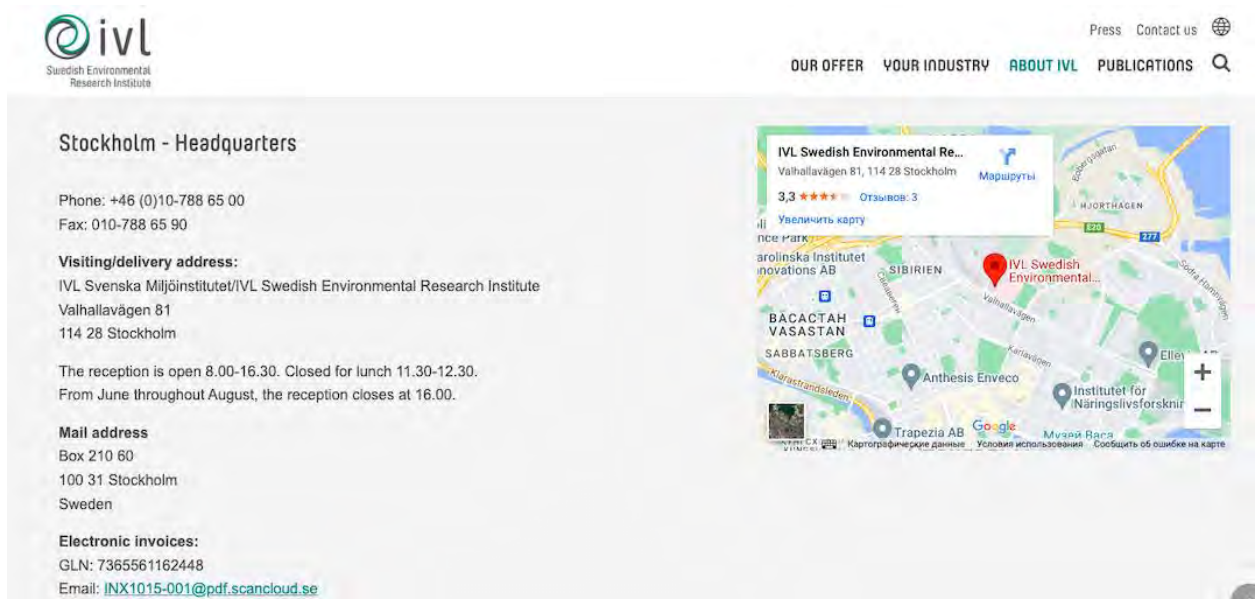
8. Separately, my attention was very attracted by the new Swedish company Matsmart. This company sells nearly out-of-date products from grocery chains at low prices. This is a super successful startup that was very interesting to study. Unfortunately, I was not able to meet them personally, however, the business model seemed very interesting to me, and I would like



to do something similar in Russia.



9. I also planned to meet with the Swedish Environmental Research Institute to learn more about their food waste reduction initiative. The institute has released an agreement to reduce food waste among retailers, which is very interesting. However, for political reasons, the meeting was refused.



10. I also had the opportunity to attend a workshop on sustainable packaging from a local startup in Norrskén coworking space.

11. During my stay in Stockholm, I got to know one of the most remarkable startups in the field of responsible fashion - Hack your closet. The company rents clothing sets for a month. Clothes that are returned in good condition are donated to charity. This business model helps reduce the impact of fast fashion on the environment and the consumption of new items.

12. I managed to choose a sunny day to visit the Tyresta National Park. In it, I not only had the

most wonderful hike, but also studied the local visitor center, which turned out to be just awesome. I communicate and work a lot with national parks in Russia, and I will be happy to share the experience of Sweden with them in order to organize immersive and beautiful visitor centers, as well as memorable souvenirs.



13. In Russia, one of our environmental projects is the production of environmentally friendly souvenirs for companies. Unused souvenirs not only waste a huge amount of resources in the production process, but also add a fair amount of waste to already crowded landfills. It was extremely interesting for me to walk through a lot of Swedish museums to see the Swedish approach to souvenirs. To be honest, these are the best souvenirs I have ever seen. Very functional items, often made from natural materials. I will definitely apply this experience in my work in Russia.

14. In early June, my sister and I managed to get to the climate exhibition in Etnografiska. We were amazed by the unexpected visual techniques that were used at the exhibition, which immerse the viewer in the problem of climate change. I really want to bring this exhibition to Russia now.

15. Of course, I did not forget to look into the largest Ikea in Stockholm to find out how the store organizes separate waste collection, as well as how communication on the topic of an eco-friendly lifestyle is carried out with customers. In Russia, we interacted a lot with the Ikea sustainability team, and it was very interesting to compare approaches to sustainability.





16. My sister and I also got to know the new COOP initiative. The supermarket chain has released an application in which you can evaluate the environmental friendliness of food by a number of parameters using a barcode. Later, we contacted the developers to find out how the application was made and whether we could port it to Russian realities.



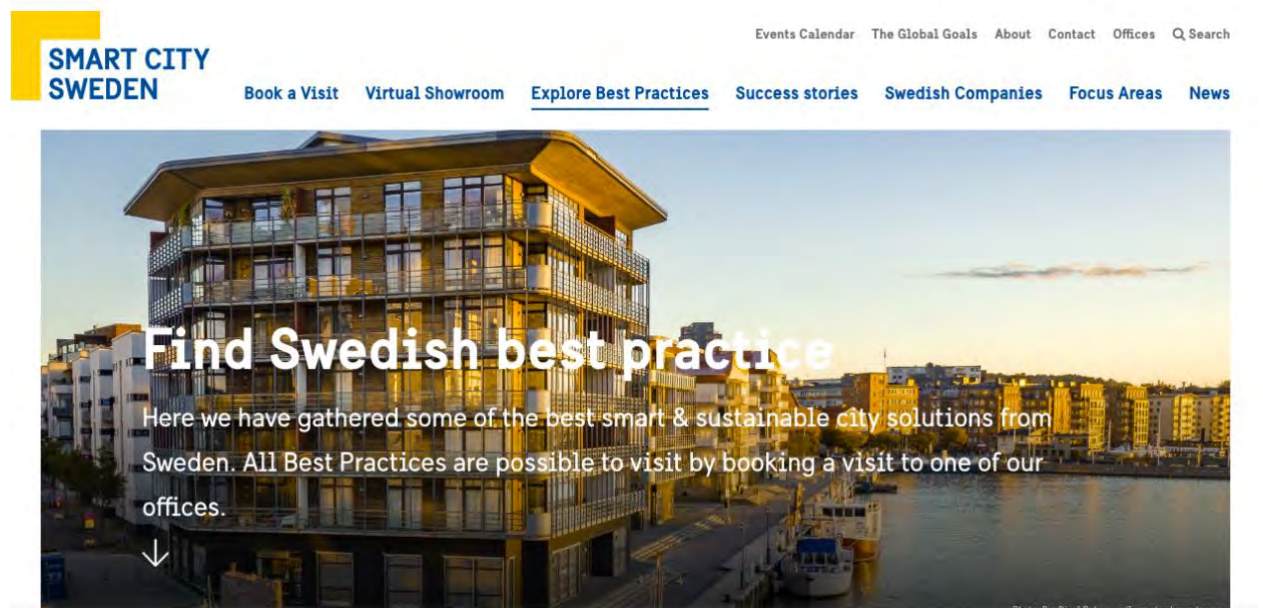
16. Taking the opportunity, my sister and I also recorded a small free eco-habits course in Sweden for our Russian audience.



17. There was an attempt to participate in the Keep Sweden Tidy action, but the movement could not be contacted.

18. I also tried to organize visits to biogas plants, a paper recycling plant, and waste recycling plants, but due to political reasons, I was unable to reach an agreement with any of these enterprises. State-owned companies in the current situation cannot accept Russian citizens.

19. However, in an informal setting, we managed to get acquainted with members of the Environmental Protection Agency, where we were told about the best practices in Sweden, which are reflected on the website <https://smartcitysweden.com/best-practice>.



20. Studying all the possible practices in the field of recycling things in Sweden, I visited the Langholmen Hotel. The building was once a prison, but instead of being demolished, it was converted into a comfortable hotel. Great practice!





21. As part of my study of building repurpose practices in Sweden, I visited the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. This is a modern building, which is completely assembled from the old predecessor building. The walls and bricks were not made again, they belonged to the old building. And all superstructures are made of environmentally friendly materials - glass and wood.



22. I also managed to visit several community gardens in Stockholm. This practice does not exist in Russia, but it is simply necessary here. It was interesting to find out how the space is organized, what advantages community gardens bring to the city residents, and also to see how it is organized.





23. I devoted part of my internship to Swedish sustainable restaurant practices. It turned out to be a separate pleasure and a very interesting topic. I studied the practices of the following restaurants:

- Fotografiska
- Långbro Vårdshus
- Thornströms Kök
- Boo Natur
- FARM
- Lilla Bjers
- Hävvi i Glen
- Horte Brygga
- Kalf & Hansen
- Spill.

In Russia, we often work with restaurants on sustainability. Therefore, it was especially interesting to get acquainted with the Swedish experience in this area. The sustainable concept of Swedish restaurants is based on local products, support from local suppliers, herbal ingredients, reduced food waste and a smaller carbon footprint.

24. One of the most memorable meetings I had in Sweden was with the chef of Fotografiska restaurant. For several hours we talked about sustainable restaurant practices such as:

- zero solid waste
- zero food waste
- uncycling waste and turning it into amazing new things. For example, turning glass wine bottles into candlesticks, vases and gravy boats. Or a ceramist creating plates that include grill waste.
- Creation of own tidal power plant in the future.
- Supply chain of farm products.
- Formation of the menu, considering seasonal products.

We agreed with the chef that he will hold a webinar with the Russian audience to share his experience with the restaurants of our country.



25. And of course I couldn't help but visit the most famous second-hand shopping center in the world - ReTuna! This is a unique and the only shopping center on the planet that sells only used items. We saw the world's only second-hand IKEA, where they restore and resell furniture. As well as many other great stores that save things.

Thanks to the amazing opportunity to receive a grant from the Sverker Åström Foundation, I have grown as a professional in my field, received a lot of inspiration and ideas that I brought to Russia. I thank the foundation from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity. I fell in love with Sweden with all my heart and I hope to return there again one day, because there is so much more to see there.

I wish good luck and prosperity to the foundation and all future scholarship holders!

Sincerely, Elena Mironenko