

LETS-NEWS

No 1 2009



Governing transitions towards Low-Carbon Energy and Transport Systems for 2050

Lets talk LETS

Welcome to LETS first newsletter! After the kick-off on the 2-3 of February, the different work packages within LETS have now begun their planning- and research work. The website is launched, the communication strategy completed. The enthusiasm and commitment is overwhelming and infectious.

LETS starting point is that a low-carbon future is possible from both a resource, technical and economical point of view. Therefore LETS focal point is on different aspects of governance towards a low-carbon society. According to economist Lars Calmfors and historian Arne Jarrick in a debate article in DN (9/1), we know too little about how to set off these social processes. LETS do focus on these social processes. Our multidisciplinary approach is new, unique, probably risky and definitely joyful – all characteristic features of good science.

Today the emission trends move in the wrong direction. There are several signs that the climate is more sensitive to interference than we have thought. Everything suggests that the emissions must decline – a whole lot and fast. Several years ago Europe took charge of the climate work and has since then succeeded in reducing emissions with a few percent compared to 1990. But this is only the first step on a long journey towards the next goal which is a 20-30% reduction by the year 2020, and 80-90% by the year 2050.

Yogi Berra supposedly said: "If you come to a fork in the road, take it!" LETS do not only study the forks in the road – we will also show how to make the roads wider.

Lars J Nilsson
Program Director, LETS 2050



What's LETS 2050?

LETS is a multidisciplinary research program that runs between 2009 and 2012. LETS stands for *Governing transitions towards Low-Carbon Energy and Transport Systems for 2050*. The aim of the program is to identify, explore and suggest ways forward for Sweden, i.e. roads to implementation of low-carbon energy and transport systems for 2050, in order to reach ambitious climate policy objectives such as expressed by the 2° C target.

LETS starting point is that it is technologically possible and economically feasible to make the transition toward a low-carbon society – now it's time to find new pathways! LETS will focus on the following questions: What type of political governance is necessary and what conflicts will emerge in the in the transition?

LETS consists of the following five research areas – work packages (WP):

- WP0: Future Policy Scenarios and Alternative Pathways for LETS
- WP1: Governance: Developing Institutions and Policy for LETS
- WP2: Urban and regional planning and infrastructure for LETS
- WP3: Markets, industry and policy for bioenergy
- WP4: Citizen-Consumers and Voluntary Instruments for LETS

To create favourable conditions for dialogue between researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders is an important part of the project.

LETS started in January 2009 and will employ around 25 researcher from ten different departments. The programme is led by Lund Institute of Technology and is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Energy Agency, Vinnova and the Swedish Road Administration.

What's new in LETS 2050

LETS is up and rolling. LETS four year long journey started with a kick-off at *Biskopshuset* in Lund the 2-3 of February. During two days all the programme participants gathered to present and discuss LETS and the different work packages (WP). The funders were all invited to participate.

Kick-off – day 1

The first day of the kick-off started with an introduction of LETS by the programme managers. Then the funders gave their thoughts and views about LETS. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency described the origin of the programme idea – how LETS materialized. One essential reason for the birth of LETS was that we need a change – and we need it fast!

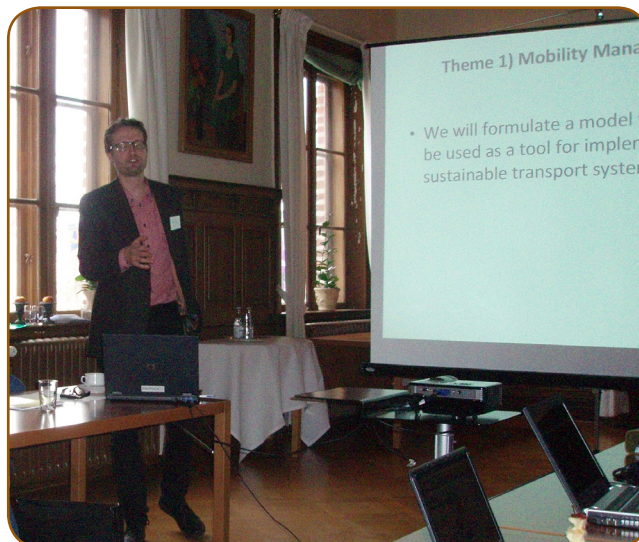
Day one continued with a presentation of WP0. Their mission is to study alternative technological and policy scenarios in order to find alternative pathways towards LETS. WP0 also strive to identify the crucial social, political and economical challenges that a transition towards low-carbon energy and transport systems could lead to.

After the WP0 presentation the different WPs sat down in groups and discussed what storylines could be used for and how they could be useful for their own WP.

Kick-off – day 2

On the second day the presentations of the remaining four WPs continued. WP1 presented their research focus: what type of governance, in terms of institutions and policy, are needed to enable the transition towards LETS?.

WP2 described how they will focus on studying urban, regional and interregional planning and changes in infrastructure as means for reducing CO2 emissions.



>> Mikael Klintman presents WP4

WP3 focuses on fossil fuel substitution using biomass. One of WP3's missions is to present cost-efficient and sustainable ways to replace fossil fuel.

WP4 aims to increase the understanding of the relationship between citizen-consumers, voluntary policies, and planning instruments directed towards a transition to reduced carbon emissions of the transport and energy systems.

The kick-off ended with a presentation from Trivector (coordinator and information manager) regarding the immediate future for LETS. The participants were shown a draft of the LETS website – one of the most important communication platforms of the programme.

LETS have high ambitions regarding information and communication, both internally within the programme and externally towards prioritized target groups. The LETS participants were reminded of the three core values that should characterize all communication surrounding the programme: Openness, Interaction and Innovation. And by that LETS had started.

>> A coffee break between the presentations can lead to interesting discussions





Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Name: Kristina Feldhusen

Position: Principal administrative officer at the Climate Change Department, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

What role does your agency have? – We are one of the funders. We are also the initiators of the programme. A couple of years ago we recognised the need to start a research programme that would focus on future studies regarding transport and energy systems. We specified this need in a research call where we requested an interdepartmental research programme that researches the possibilities of reaching sustainable transport and energy systems 2050 – and explores the pathways forward.

How can the results be useful? – We often get government assignments to prepare suggestions regarding measures and instruments within the areas of transport and energy. We hope that the results can be of use both as a base for these reports and as input to our own knowledge.

Expectations on LETS? – I hope that we're able to tie existing research together regarding technical solutions and instruments, with knowledge about behaviour and the possibility of political acceptance. It is also important that the work leads to a review of possible pathways that have good chances of being accepted in the society. It is important that we connect questions of public acceptance with the development of policy instruments; otherwise they are not likely to be implemented. This is crucial due to the enormous change we need to make in order to reach long term climate and other environmental goals.

Five Qs to a LETS-researcher

Name: Tommy Andersson

Institution: Institute of Economics, LU

Work Package: WP1

Your role in LETS? – I am the leader of one of the five work packages; the one called WP1. As a leader I shall try to coordinate the research within this area – and also try to do some research myself.

How can WP1 contribute to low-carbon future? – One can't manage these types of overall changes without proper institutions, rules and laws. The policy makers have to have credibility for this to work. We can contribute with research that shows how to design institutions that can control and supervise the compliance of emission goals.

What challenges are there? – The fact that we – the researchers – shall produce results that can be appreciated and of use even outside the academic world. That is always a tough balance act. Usually we talk our language, and outside this world they talk another language. So, to build a bridge between the public and the researchers is definitely a challenge.

LETS is a multidisciplinary programme. What's your take on that? – I see many advantages with LETS being multidisciplinary. Among others, it helps us take advantage of the knowledge possessed by other researchers – within areas that you are not so familiar with.

LETS contribution? – I think LETS will contribute with a lot of good research that will provide guidance and concrete ideas of how we can decrease the carbon dependence in our society – both from a political and economical point of view, and from a infrastructure and consumer perspective.



LETS wants you

LETS aims for openness and dialogue with stakeholders and other interested groups regarding the results that surfaces within the different areas of research. Are you interested in what's going on in a certain work package, or maybe you feel that you can contribute in some way?

Then contact one of the following project leaders.

WP0 – Future Policy Scenarios and Alternative Pathways for LETS

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WP4 – Citizen-Consumers and Voluntary Instruments for LETS

Project Leader:

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LETS-activities

Completed:

- » **LETS Kick-off, Biskopshuset in Lund.**
- » **LETS was presented by Lars J Nilsson at the NGIL workshop on Sustainability in Innovative Logistics.**

Up-coming:

- » **19/5 - LETS work meeting.**
- » **28/5 - LETS will participate in a seminar about Climate, Environment and Energy arranged by the Centre for European Studies at Malmö City Library, May 28.**
- » **28/5 - LETS will participate in a seminar arranged by the Business Network for Sustainable Transports.**
- » **4-6/6 - "Greening the state for low carbon futures. The role of reflection in transition governance" has been accepted as a presentation at the 1st European Conference on Sustainability Transitions to take place in Amsterdam, June 4-6, 2009.**

Funders

The research programme LETS is led by Lund Institute of Technology and is financed by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Energy Agency, Vinnova and the Swedish Road Administration. Together they invest in total 27.9 million SEK over four years.



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