

Role of government (OECD Reviews of Innovation Policy: Sweden 2012)

This chapter examines a range of public activities that influence the Swedish innovation system. It begins by charting the evolution of Sweden's science, technology and innovation policy before highlighting a number of issues of concern around public governance arrangements and innovation policy. The Swedish system is characterised by a multitude of strong intermediary organizations operating in a multi-level governance setting. While the national level remains dominant, the regional and, most notably, the European levels are increasingly relevant. The possible implications of current arrangements for national priority setting are discussed. The chapter looks at a number of substantive strategic innovation policy tasks that correspond to innovation system "functions" which policy should enable. These include supporting business innovation, facilitating access to risk financing, nurturing skills for innovation, spurring demand for innovation and fostering excellence and critical mass. Mindful of Sweden's national context and of policy practices in other leading countries, each section concludes with a discussion of promising policy directions.

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