

Overview of new legislation

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This article summarises key amendments to Swedish environmental law which came into effect at the start of 2021.

New emissions trading regulatory framework

A new law on emissions trading has entered into force. The new provisions adapt Swedish law to align it with amendments to the EU Emissions Trading Directive and otherwise entail a modernisation of the existing regulations. Provisions which corresponded to EU regulations or were out of date have been removed. Rules for the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation have also been introduced through the new law.

The new law contains, among other things, provisions on:

- permit requirements for greenhouse gas emissions; and
- delays and fees for violations of, for example, the obligation to hand over emission rights and reporting obligations in accordance with EU regulations.

The penalty scale for violations of the law or regulations has been increased from a maximum of one year's imprisonment to a maximum of two years' imprisonment.

State aid for certain environmentally friendly vehicles

The government has issued an ordinance on state aid for certain environmentally friendly vehicles in order to promote the introduction of such vehicles on the market. The ordinance makes it possible to apply for support from the Swedish Energy Agency for the purchase of heavy trucks that run on electricity, gas or bioethanol, as well as certain electrically powered tractors and power tools.

The aid amounts to 20% of the purchase price, but no more than 40% of the additional cost in relation to a comparable conventional truck or work machine. Support will be paid to companies, including natural persons engaged in business activities, as well as to municipalities and regions.

Planned termination of electricity certificate system

The amendments in the legislation mean, among other things, that the electricity certificate system will be terminated in 2035, and that facilities, permanent production increases and certain conversions that are completed or put into operation after 2021 may not be awarded electricity certificates. The amendments also mean that the government is authorised to issue regulations at a later date for the allocation of electricity certificates. A condition for the issuance of such regulations is that Sweden and Norway must agree a different stop date within the framework of the common electricity certificate market.

Invasive alien species

The government has amended the Environmental Supervision Ordinance in order to implement the EU regulation on invasive alien species. By way of the amendment, the Swedish Maritime Administration is responsible for providing supervisory guidance with respect to invasive alien species that live in water.

Municipalities' new information responsibility

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The ordinance on geographical environmental information has been amended to impose an information responsibility on municipalities with regard to detailed development plans and plan descriptions according to the Planning and Building Act. The information responsibility means that municipalities must make detailed development plans and plan descriptions available. This is a prerequisite for being able to establish a secure and standardised digital infrastructure for making data about the community building process available.

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