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This story was written by [Tor Fossum](#), one of two leaders of Sweden's Green Map project. It's full of insights and lessons learned -- you can also click to read an [update](#) on this excellent Green Map. The whole project can be found online at www.greenguide.nu.

Going on Holiday

The story of the Malmö Green Map started in winter 1997. I was planning a trip to New York City with my wife, and as usual I searched in cyberspace for interesting environmental things to see or experience there, apart from the given tourist attractions. Not the easiest of tasks in this highly exploited, huge city of dreams. But one night I stumbled over a website for the Green Apple Map and suddenly got on to something that actually was to be the key to experiencing the city in a new way. The Green Apple Map led us to community gardens, organic food stores, markets and restaurants, green businesses and more besides the museums, Central Park, Chrysler Building and Greenwich Village. The whole idea of mapping different aspects of sustainable solutions in the city, the nicely designed icons and the international aspect of the Green Map System, was so interesting that I met up with Wendy Brawer, the mother and designer of the system, while we were there. We talked about the global project and the possibilities of making a Malmö Green Map.

That winter in Malmö there were preparations going on for a big environmental campaign arranged by Kunskap Malmö (Knowledge Malmö) called The Green Thread. A number of green projects were going to be launched to put the environmental aspects on the local agenda. As a part of the preparations meetings were arranged between the organisers and different authorities, organisations and NGO-groups in the city, to discuss what could be interesting to focus on. And everybody was invited to send in proposals for different projects. Which I did, Malmö Green Map being one of them.

After some time of waiting and lobbying through personal calls and meetings, one of the assigned project leaders, Bengt-Arne Richter chose the Malmö Green Map project as one to go for, and so it was to be.

Now things started to happen fast and the project grew big in very short time. Could we do it for the Malmö Festival, a yearly event in mid-August? I had set the publishing date in the project description to October, but we agreed to go for the earlier deadline (time-optimist as we both are....) It was decided that the first Malmö Green Map was to be launched in 40.000 copies in mid-August 1997. A digital version was planned to be out in October same year.

The Mapmaking Team

Bengt-Arne and myself became the local mapmaking team. Bengt-Arne, a teacher with biology as a speciality, knew most of what there is to know about parks, trees, nature and species in and around the city. Me, being an architect and working with environmental information projects, covered most of the rest. We had good complementary networks to back us, and support from city boroughs representatives, and NGOs to search for green sites and help in detecting mistakes on the map as work progressed.

Then started three months of hard work. We made a kind of project base in the cellar of Bengt-Arne's house, where the appropriate equipment and programs were installed. And worked both individually at home on the project and together there in that basement. We got hold of the city map from the Malmö City Planning department, and a drawn regional map. Lots of information going into the map was catalogued and checked. The map slowly took shape. There was not really much time, and that meant long working days till deadline, as we had also other projects going simultaneously. Days became nights.

A Setback and the Launch

We had problems from the start with the new computers, and using the programs, as we had to learn as we got along. But things seemed to sort out and we thought we were on schedule. Then, early one morning after a long night where we had put in a lot of information on the map, the system broke down completely. And there we were, lots of data lost and the computer on service. So there was not much else to do than to delay the publishing. But we did manage to get out a black and white copy of the map-in-the-making for the Malmö festival, for people to see what was coming.

The Malmö Green Map was launched on the 6th of September 1997. As the 7th green map on the globe and the first in Sweden. 40.000 copies were printed. A sponsor deal with MKB, a local housing co-operation, arranged for the distribution of 20.000 copies to their tenants. The map got a very good reception when it was distributed. There were positive articles in all the local newspapers right away. And the comments from people who got it in their hand were overwhelming. They liked the idea with all this kind of information linked together, many saw it more like a document than an actual map. Ilmar Reepalu, the Chairman of the City Executive Board, remarked on it early in his opening of the Green Thread conference, which hosted 500 people involved in local environment activities.

Evaluation

But soon some critics got press-coverage and there was some fuss about what to do about it. Some of the critics were about what was on or was not on, should have been and so on. Just like we wanted, as we were quite sure we had missed something in the short time we had making the map, and wanted feedback to improve things before giving out the planned digital version. But some of the critics were right, some faults should have been avoided with a more thorough check. There were a few wrong phone-numbers, and in two areas of the city and one regional, some of the green sites had been misplaced, and some numbers on the map had not been altered along with the final renumbering of sites in the index.

Evaluating the project and the criticism, we were quite happy with the result though. It was important to get the map out, and also any press is good press in the long run really. The Malmö Green Map was engaging people, and had marked its presence, and it indirectly helped bring focus on environmental issues.

Outcomes

The administrations in the two areas decided not to distribute the map because of the mistakes. The Green Thread project decided to withdraw the 20.000 that were to be distributed amongst the tenants of MKB. The other copies to be distributed as planned. Discussions started about a reprint of the map. We worked on the digital version while waiting for decisions.

When the Green Thread project summed up their campaign in December, and even though the project itself had come to an end, it was decided to finance a reprint of the map. And that efforts should be made to finish the digital map. The new budget was a lot tighter though, only money for the actual reprint and a little for other costs, mainly for work on the digital. The reason for this being that the aim solely was to correct the mistakes on the map, and reprint it as that.

This was not satisfying for me though. Having had some time studying the map, it

was clear that there were other things to do better as well. And my aim was to give out a better product. It was clear that we should make it easier to navigate the map. As we are not actual professional mapmakers we, as well as most other GMS mapmaking teams, we had missed out on some basic stuff. A coordinate system with vertical and horizontal indexing, a north arrow and scale for example.

This meant that there actually was a lot of work to do. As there was not much money to pay for the work, we had to toss it in between our normal jobs. The work had to be done over a longer time. But rich in experience from the first edition, where the work was compressed into a short period of time, that was no disadvantage.

Doing the job again

Once we started working on the map again we tried to look at it with new fresh eyes. We would be keeping the basic concept, the city on one side, the region on the other. But we would like to lift out the city centre as it was difficult to navigate with the numbers almost on top of each other in places. So we redesigned the main outline, moving the main map and putting the city centre down in the corner. This led to reshuffling of the text-blocks, that spilled over on the other side. This along with the indexing of the sites meant that we actually were redesigning the map, and it took its time. Different new aspects and proposals were tried out, we started to work with different colours on the texts.

One night a mail arrived from Wendy in New York, (she had just been on visit where we did a presentation of GMS in Malmö, so she knew what we were working on), she had seen the city centre as a circle in a dream. We tried it out, and yes it was a circle.

We got help by people in a Green Job-project to do all the work on checking numbers, placement, index of all the points along the way. Finally we sent it to the city-boroughs and interested people in the administration again for a last check. And just in time for the money set aside for the reprinting not to be withdrawn, as we were approaching year-end 1998, it was ready for printing.

Digital Flop

The digital version was to be based on a mapping system one of the sponsors offered us to work with. We, especially Bengt-Arne, put a lot of work into putting the information into the system. The sponsor was to continue to develop the system for a web-based version. But the sponsor never delivered the promised goods till this day in spring 1999, and temporarily, we have dropped this side of the project, at least with that partner.

But, apart from not achieving the goal of making a digital version of the map, we are quite happy with what we have managed to do so far. And there is more to do....

Plans for the future

To finish off next phase of the local greenmapping by summer 2000, that means:

- Making the digital Green Map.
- Expanding the projects both up and down in scale:
 - A - Up to a regional map, with the co-operation of the surrounding cities.
 - B - Down to city neighbourhoods and kids maps, within Malmö.

Work has started to find a new "digital" partner, and I am just starting to see if there are any partners or local areas suitable for local mapmaking. Bengt-Arne, now a headmaster at a new school, is maybe sparking off some kids mapmaking projects. On the regional level I have registered nearby Lund as a new project, this is delayed due to local reorganising, but it has been up on the agenda as a co-operation project between Malmö and Lund. And there are possibilities of making it a co-operation project with more cities involved.

Lessons to learn from Malmö

- It is vital to get official partners that can help with the financing.
- Sponsors keeps the costs down.
- It is a good idea to make it a part of a bigger campaign.
- Lobbying with the right persons at the right times do help.
- If possible, do not work on a too tight schedule.
- Environmental information to the public, like green maps, should always be free to obtain (or find).

Malmö's 1997 Green Map featured:

- A reference guide to natural resources, sustainable solutions and environmental information.
- About 450 environmental significant places in and around Malmö.
- The city on one side and the region on the other.
- Topics on the map; Nature and wildlife, food-production, shops and restaurants, recycling and reuse, Green business, Green buildings, Information and transport.
- Texts both in Swedish and English.

New features on the Malmö Green Map for 1999:

- The city centre shown in a bigger scale.
- The green points indexed with co-ordinates.
- Different colours on text to separate English and Swedish

The second edition of Malmö map was completed late 1998 and printed in the beginning of January 1999. This was the first Green Map, apart from the Green Apple Map, that has been republished. At this time there were 18 green maps published globally, projects going on in 90 places all over the world.

Malmö is Swedens 3rd biggest city with 250.000 inhabitants, situated in the very south of the country, in the Skåne Region. A fertile region with both extensive agriculture and rich biodiversity. Close to the continent with Copenhagen as the nearest neighbour, a 45 min boat-ride away.

One of the reasons for succeeding in capturing the authorities interest in the project was "First in Sweden...", another was the international aspect. Both being part of a global system, and the possibility of putting Malmö on the international environmental map, so to speak.

The Malmö Green Map time schedule:

Idea launched March 1997.
 Decision taken to do the project May 1997.
 First printed edition published early September 1997.
 Decision taken to finance a revised printed edition December 1997.
 Second printed edition printed early January 1999.
 Second edition launched April 1999.
 First digital map launched in summer 2000 ???

Financing

200.000: - SEK Swedish crowns (approx. 25.000: - US\$) for the first edition. Partly directly from the Green Thread's budget, partly from external sponsors. This financial backing made a sound budget possible, paying for the needed computer hard- and software, printing and the work put in. The second edition was made with only 80.000: - (10.000: - US\$).

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