Preface and acknowledgements

This book reflects the cumulated insights and research results from a three-year multi-disciplinary research project – GreenGovern – ‘Participation, Deliberation and Sustainability. Governance beyond Rhetoric in the Domains of Climate, Forestry and Food Safety’. The project was coordinated by Karin Bäckstrand at the Department of Political Science at Lund University in Sweden and funded by Formas, the Swedish Research Council on Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (2006–2009). The aim of the project was to critically evaluate how new mechanisms for participation of citizens, stakeholders and organizations have gained ground in different areas of environmental and sustainability governance, more particularly climate change, forestry and food safety. The ambition of the research was to critically examine the rhetoric around new modes of governance that has emerged in the policy debate, and it asked if new modes of deliberative and market-based governance can effectively address what social science perceives as the main problems of sustainability governance: the implementation and legitimacy deficits. Can democratic legitimacy, participation and accountability be secured while at the same time assuring environmental performance and effective policies?

The idea to pull together a multi-disciplinary project on the legitimacy and effectiveness of new modes of environmental governance was first initiated in the creative and innovative atmosphere of the environmental seminar group at the Department of Political Science. The ideas were developed further in the autumn of 2004 with the help of a planning grant from the Lund University Vice Chancellor’s Office and the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS). In the spring of 2005, a group of 10 researchers at the Department of Political Science, the Research Policy Institute at Lund University, the Environmental and Energy Systems Studies at Lund Institute of Technology, and the Department of Physical Geography at Stockholm University brainstormed on research topics, theoretical approaches and empirical case studies. From this multi-disciplinary dialogue between political scientists, historians of science, ecologists, engineers, science and technology scholars, physical geographers and environmental scientists a research application emerged, which was granted the largest funding for cross-disciplinary research by Formas in the autumn of 2005. Our deepest gratitude is extended to Formas. The generous project funding enabled us to critically examine and
reflect upon how environmental politics can be rendered more effective and legitimate during a time frame of three years.

This book would not have come about without the sustained multi-disciplinary dialogue enabled by the GreenGovern project. The process of the project – a stimulating intellectual journey, dialogue and conversation between participating scholars – was as important as the outcomes. The work conducted in GreenGovern has been inspired by deliberative ideas. Ideas and arguments have been probed, tested and contested during the entire project. The annual project workshops in 2006, 2007 and 2008 at the seaside villages of Vitemölle and Kivik on the Swedish east coast Österlen have provided an environment for academic conversations and reflections, solitude and great fun. Our monthly literature seminars in Lund on various topics such as deliberative democracy, legitimacy, governance and environmental effectiveness have been lively and very helpful in gaining a common understanding of key concepts, theoretical frameworks and empirical fields of studies informing the project and the book.

The disciplinary and methodological diversity in the backgrounds of the project participants has been a great strength, as has the mix between theoretical inquiries and empirical work. In GreenGovern we have discussed literature in environmental politics, forest ecology, governance studies, history of science, consumer politics, EU studies, international relations and social constructivism. We have not always agreed: the debates have been heated but always very stimulating. The combined competence of researchers in different empirical fields: forest certification, climate governance, food safety, biodiversity and water governance informed discussions of a more philosophical kind on the nature of deliberative democracy and communicative action. It was very fruitful to confront abstract theoretical notions with the concrete reality of environmental problems.

Two workshops were arranged in the spring of 2008 with a broader academic audience, policy practitioners and stakeholders. We extend our deep thanks to Ingrid Stjernquist and Peter Schlyter for hosting the Forest Governance workshop at the Department of Physical Geography at Stockholm University in April 2008. We are likewise very grateful to Eva Lövbrand, Joakim Nordquist, Jamil Khan and Johannes Stripple for successfully co-organizing the Climate Governance workshop at Lund University in May 2008. Through the years the project has benefited from the constructive comments and reflections of many colleagues in Lund and beyond: Rasmus Karlsson, Åsa Knaggård, Gunhildur Magnusdottir, Emma Paulsson, Lennart Olsson and Linn Takeuchi-Waldegren. We also wish to thank our colleagues in the international research community who have, at various stages of the project, provided valuable input and encouragement. We extend our gratitude to Marie Appelstrand, Per Angelstam, Frank Biermann, Michael Böcher, Harriet
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Effective project administration is a precondition for creative and cumulative knowledge building, empirical inquiry and theoretical synthesis. Roger Hildingsson has made our lives easier through his effective work as GreenGovern’s project assistant along with his constructive substantial input to the project. We are also very grateful to Rasmus Karlsson who set up GreenGovern’s intranet, our virtual meeting place which saved our inboxes from collapsing from all versions of draft papers by the project participants. We also express our gratitude to Stefan Alenius, who was very helpful in all matters relating to administration of the project at the Department of Political Science.

The idea of writing a book synthesizing the cumulated insights on the effectiveness and legitimacy of new modes of environmental governance was there from the inception of the GreenGovern project. This book builds on the contributions of GreenGovern’s participating scholars at three universities in Sweden. Of the 14 researchers, 11 are based at Lund University or Lund Institute of Technology: Karin Bäckstrand, Roger Hildingsson, Annica Kronsell, Lovisa Hagberg, Johannes Stripple (Department of Political Science), Beatrice Bengtsson, Gustav Holmberg, Mikael Klintman (Research Policy Institute), Jamil Khan, Lars J. Nilsson, Joakim Nordquist (Environment and Energy System Studies). Two researchers – Peter Schlyter and Ingrid Stjernquist – are affiliated with the Department of Physical Geography and Quaternary Geology at Stockholm University. Finally, Eva Lövbrand works at the Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research at Linköping University.

Many of the project participants divided their time between GreenGovern and other projects with overlapping themes. The ADAM project (EU), ClimateColl (The Swedish Energy Agency), IMPACT (Mistra), LETS (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency), the SPARC project (the US National Science Foundation, University of Colorado) and the Transdemos programme (Bank of Sweden), enabled fruitful conversations to take place across projects on common concepts and topics.

However, more concrete ideas of book structure, themes and chapters took form during the spring of 2008 through a series of seminars. In GreenGovern’s workshop in Vitemölle in September 2008, the first draft chapters of the book were discussed. In this context we would like to express our gratitude to James Meadowcroft, who was invited to the workshop as an external commentator on the book project. James’s sharp, constructive and
helpful input was instrumental in moving the book forward. We are also very grateful to Felicity Plester at Edward Elgar for assisting in the publication of this book with professionalism, speedy and helpful response and enthusiasm. Furthermore, we are grateful to several anonymous reviewers who challenged us to push the boundaries of the book to achieve greater theoretical and empirical synthesis. Finally, this book would not have been possible without the collective input, support and help from colleagues and friends. However, we take full responsibility for any errors or omissions remaining in the book.