



# Lessons learned from the ex-ante evaluation process of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020

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# Outline – Lessons learned from the ex-ante evaluation process of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020

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- Process and steps
- Stakeholders involved, including roles and responsibilities
- Resources, skills and competences
- Using available evaluations findings for an informed policy making
- State of play of the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan
- Lessons learned in summary

# Introduction

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- Case study undertaken in Feb 2019: a follow-up study of experiences among key actors involved in the RDP 2014-2020 ex-ante evaluation process
- Aim of study: to document lessons learned, improve 'institutional memory' at MA to learn from past experiences.
- Based on:
  - interviews with officials at MA, ministry, (former) consultants
  - analysis of working and draft documents, minutes, process plans and (some) correspondence

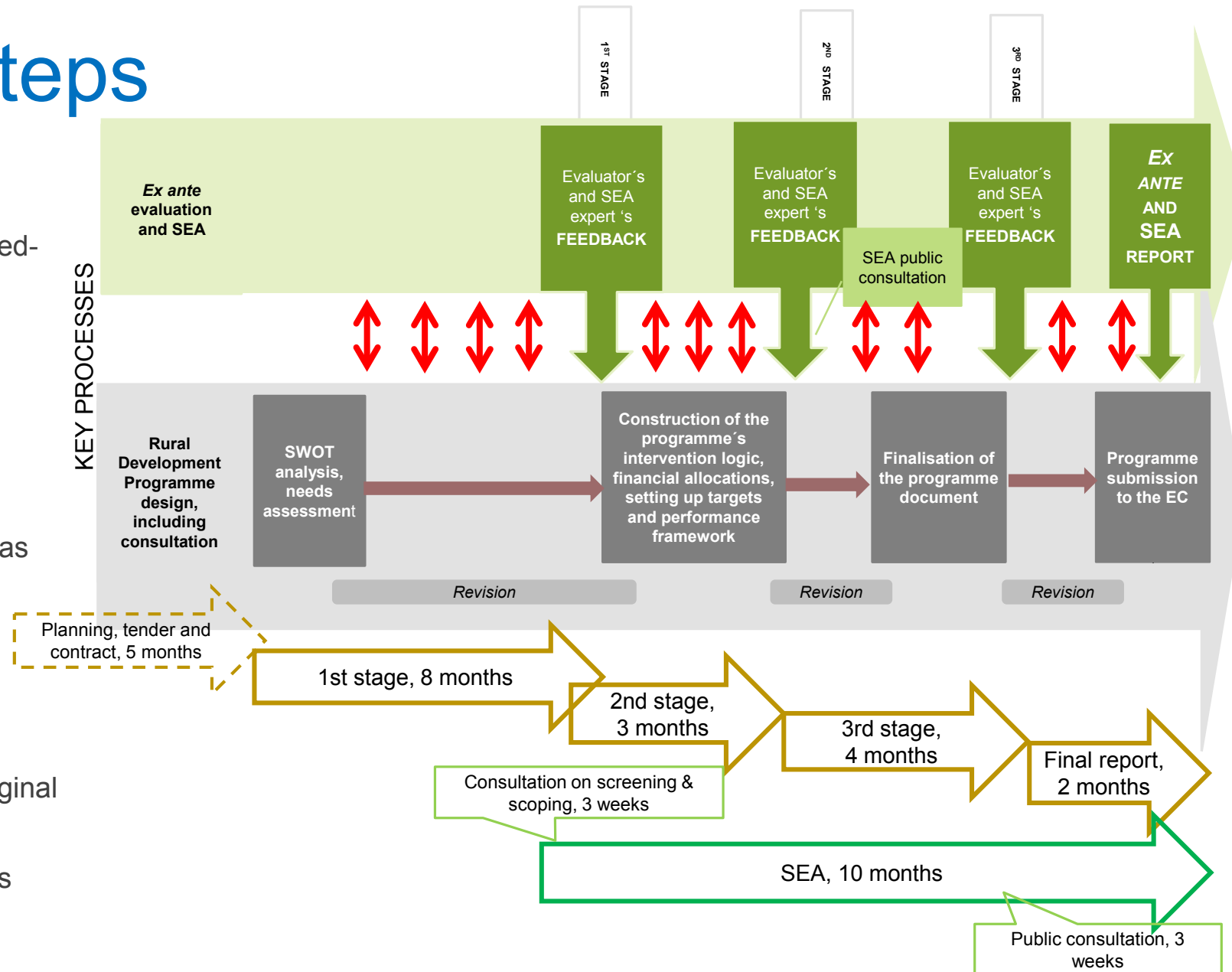
## **Ex-ante evaluation of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020:**

- Preparations started: Oct 2012
- Evaluator contracted: Feb 2013
- Final delivery: Jun 2014 (originally planned for Dec 2013)
- Contracted evaluator: SWECO (with sub-contractors: Nordregio and Hushållningssällskapet)
- Contracted cost of ex-ante evaluation: approx. 1,6m SEK (~EUR 185 000)

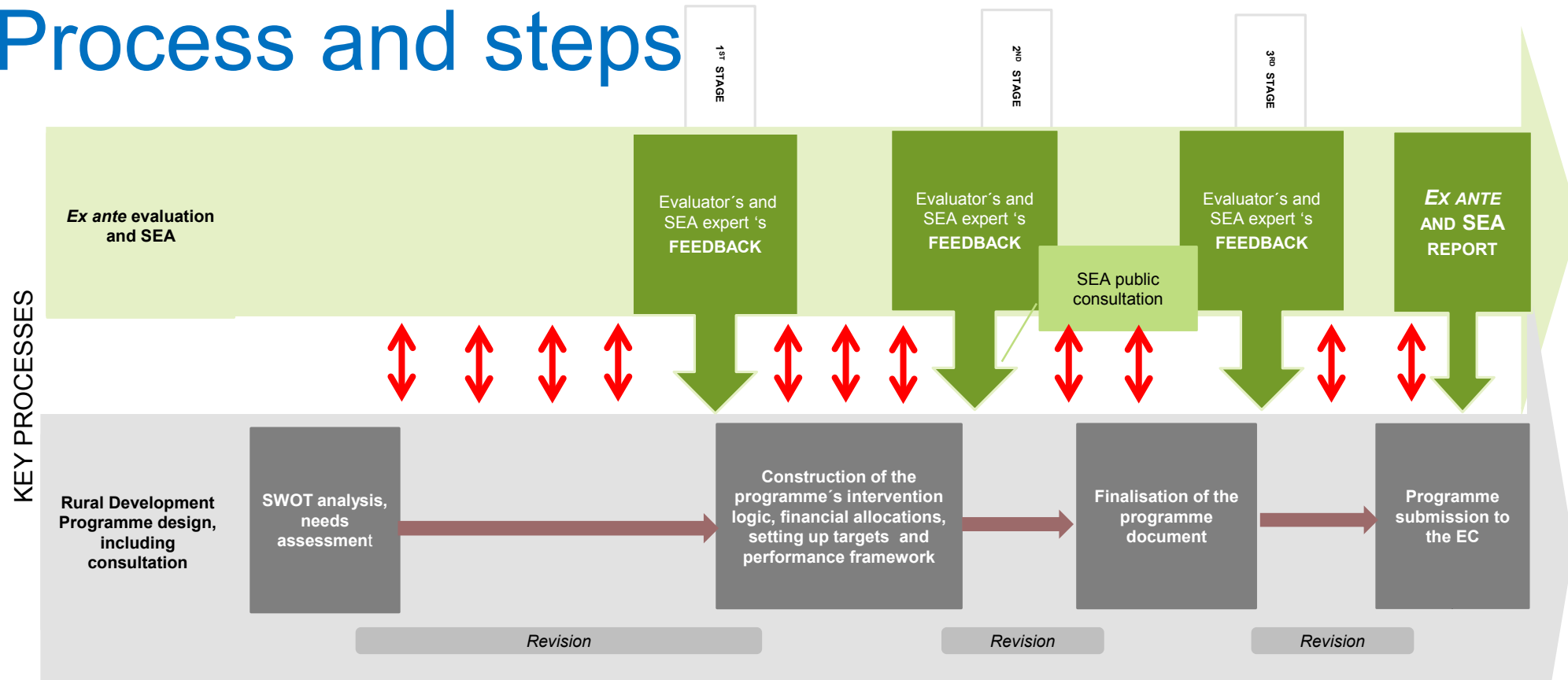
# Process and steps

## Reflections from ex-ante of RDP 2014-2020:

- Ex-ante was an iterative process, frequent feedback and contacts throughout
- Frequent steering group meetings (MA, ministry, evaluators)
- Long initial phase in ex-ante (SWOT and needs assessment)
- SEA consultation was more extensive than expected (screening & scoping consultation, as well as of draft SEA)
- Partnership agreement came in at a late stage
- Process steps were followed but...
- ...political negotiations lead to changes in original time plans (especially during 3rd stage)
- A lot of flexibility was required from evaluators



# Process and steps



## Lessons learned for the future:

- Long time spent on SWOT and needs assessment in ex-ante should not be seen as a problem (provides a solid foundation for the rest of the process)
- Include SEA and SEA consultations in planning from the start
- Ensure that evaluators are aware that plans change and flexibility is needed

# Stakeholders involved including roles and responsibilities

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## Reflections from ex-ante of RDP 2014-2020:

- SWOT and needs assessment done jointly MA and ministry
- MA was facilitator of ex-ante process (incl. tendering and contracts)
- Ministry and MA involved in construction of RDP
- Political processes responsibility of ministry
- Evaluators (consultants) provided ongoing and iterative feed-back to policy process
- SEA experts not in core team at consultants

## Lessons learned for the future:

- Important to have identified persons responsible for overall coordination in all organizations
- Need to involve SEA experts early on and clarify responsibilities for different parts of SEA process (incl. consultation)

# Resources, skills and competences

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## Reflections from ex-ante of RDP 2014-2020:

- Overall, competent and experienced consultants as evaluators
- Both generalists and specialists (e.g. environment, agricultural economics) were involved
- However, it was easier to find environmental specialists rather than environmental policy generalists
- At times, there was a lack of awareness of the limitations of the policy process (especially environmental aspects) and the political nature of policy-making
- Consultants found helpdesk draft guidelines very useful

## Lessons learned for the future:

- Very valuable to have evaluators that are 'flexible in time but rigorous in substance'
- Require experience from analysis of European or national policy also from environmental experts involved
- Continue to refer to guidelines, consider adapting relevant parts where necessary

# Using available evaluations findings for an informed policy making

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## Reflections from ex-ante of RDP 2014-2020:

- Ex-ante widely seen as useful for construction of RDP
- Ex-ante seen as a “quality check” of the RDP – both pro forma (does it meet formal requirements?) and in substance (are the interventions logical?)
- Using evaluators for improving SWOT and needs assessment seen as particularly valuable
- Ex-ante brought a “critical friend” into the policy process
- Ex-ante findings provided civil servants with useful input in discussions with political level
- Evaluation results were not used as support to MA (e.g. for detailed regulations) after the RDP was submitted and completed

## Lessons learned for the future:

- Encourage a critical but goal-oriented dialogue between evaluators and policy-makers
- Consider using evaluators as support also after strategic plan is finalised



# State of play of the ex-ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan

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- Systematic follow-up study of experiences from previous ex-ante completed (= this presentation)
- Tender process is in the start-up phase
  - Request for Information process completed with a number of suppliers
  - Plan to include ex-ante and SEA in single contract
  - Time plan is a challenge – how to deal with evaluator’s contract in case of delays in adoption of legal proposal for CAP 2021-2027?
  - Pillar I requires careful consideration
- SWOT and needs assessment underway
- Helpdesk guidelines have been useful – a minor review (in light of wider policy changes) would be helpful

# Lessons learned – in summary

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- Evaluators' input in the early stages (SWOT, needs assessment) is very useful
- Don't forget to plan for SEA and its consultation phase
- Ensure evaluators have a flexible but rigorous approach
- Ensure SEA and environmental experts also have an awareness of European (or national) policy-making
- Make use of the guidelines, adapted where necessary
- Encourage a critical but goal-oriented dialogue between evaluators and policy-makers
- Consider using evaluators as support also after strategic plan is finalized

# Thank you

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Further information:

[Sweden's RDP 2014-2020](#)

[Ex-ante evaluation of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020](#) (in Swedish, with English summary)

[SEA of Sweden's RDP 2014-2020](#) (in Swedish)