



**LINKING
EVALUATORS
AND USERS
– ARE WE
EXPLORING THE
RIGHT
QUESTIONS?**

*EEEN 2016,
COPENHAGEN*

Aim: To explore experiences from different roles and perspectives

- How do we strengthen links between evaluators and users?
- We need good answers, but are we exploring the right questions?
- Knowledge takes time, where should we put our efforts?

Outline for plenary session

- Lisa Eriksson, Swedish EPA "*Linking evaluators and users – are we exploring the right questions*" (15-20 min)
- Jonathon Stoodley, European Commission "*A stronger approach to evaluation – experiences from the European Commission*" (10-15 min)
- Per Mickwitz, Finnish Environment Institute SYKE "*A theory based assessment of evaluations intended to inform transitions towards sustainability*" (20 min)
- Susanna Morrison-Métois, OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation "*Evaluation evidence from development co-operation programmes: addressing deforestation to reduce CO₂ emissions*" (20 min)
- Discussion (15-20 min)

LINKING EVALUATORS AND USERS – ARE WE EXPLORING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?

EEEN 2016, Copenhagen
15-16 September

Lisa Eriksson,
Swedish EPA

The Swedish EPA

- Has a small group of evaluators performing evaluations.
- Is commissioning evaluations from consultancies and academics.
- Is also funding research, with the aim to provide the agency with needed knowledge.

Who needs knowledge, anyway?

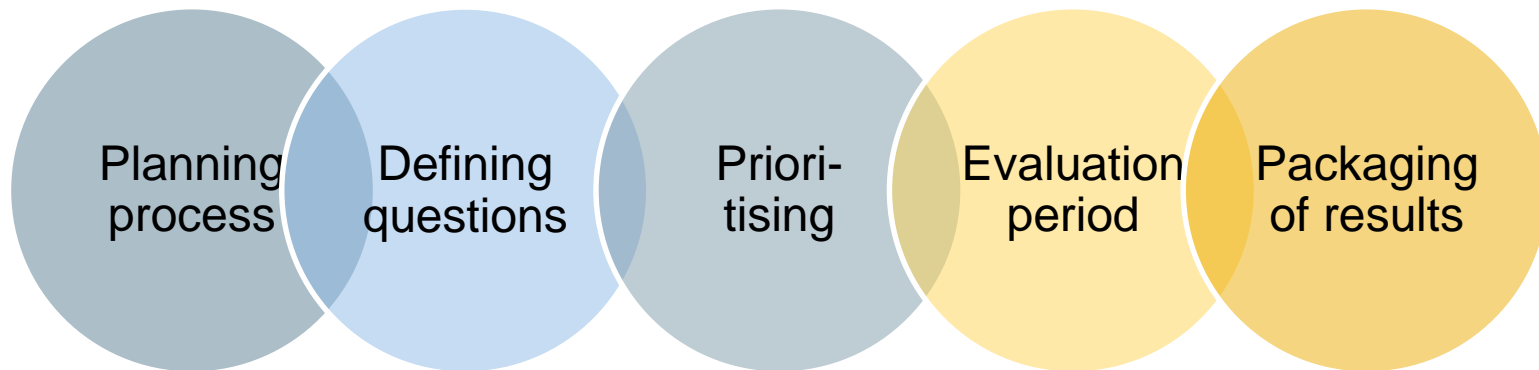
- Have you heard of **Fact resistance**?
- According to the Swedish Academy (the one with the Nobel Prize) Word List for 2016:
- **An approach where you are not affected by facts that speak against your own opinion**

Evaluators and users – we depend on each other!

- Communication, relevance and impact of evaluation are closely linked to each other.
- Let's explore these links and see how we can improve them further!

Communication and involvement

- The process to exchange knowledge between evaluators and users is crucial
- Communication before, during and after an evaluation is performed



A. Involvement in ordering process

Commissions from the different units of SEPA

Round of Enquiries each autumn

- Internal marketing (internal website, e-mail etc)
- Proposals received
- Dialogue 1 with presumptive clients
- Evaluators make a preliminary priority (based on use, timing and efficiency)
- Dialogue 2 with probable/discarded clients
- Final priority made by Head of Department

pros and cons:

- + Explicit need within the authority
- + Explicit and often motivated client
- Seldom identifies issues which are interdepartmental or lack an obvious location within the agency.

Which evaluations are performed?

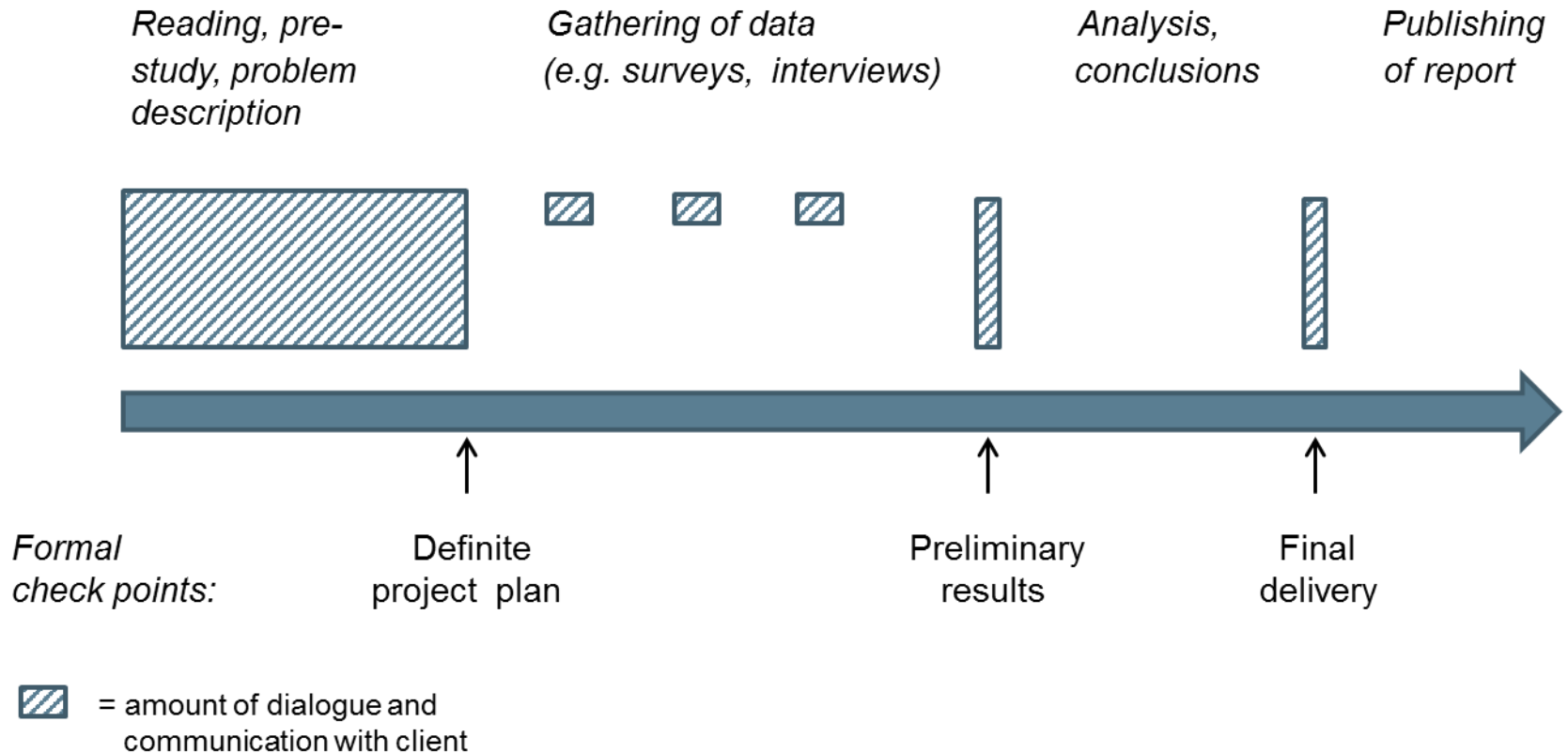
Commissions from the different units of SEPA/Criterias for prioritization

- **Use:** The importance of an explicit objective for the evaluation and how results/outcome could be used, e.g. as basis for decision making or as support in developing an area.
- **Timing:** Timing is important for use. E.g. before a decision on continued investment in an area. Or as an opportunity to learn from experiences before committing to new investment.
- **Efficiency:** To make sure evaluation resources are used where it is most relevant based on SEPA:s strategies and priorities.

Results from Enquiries

- Some evaluations performed by inhouse evaluators
- Some evaluations commissioned from consultancies and academics (inhouse evaluators help with formulating questions etc)
- Some questions to Research Unit to be part of longer projects
- *Some questions are never asked – evaluations are not being performed – lack of important knowledge?*

B. Involvement of users during evaluation

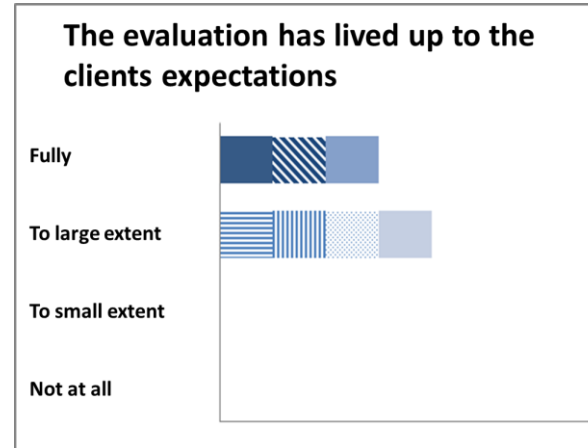
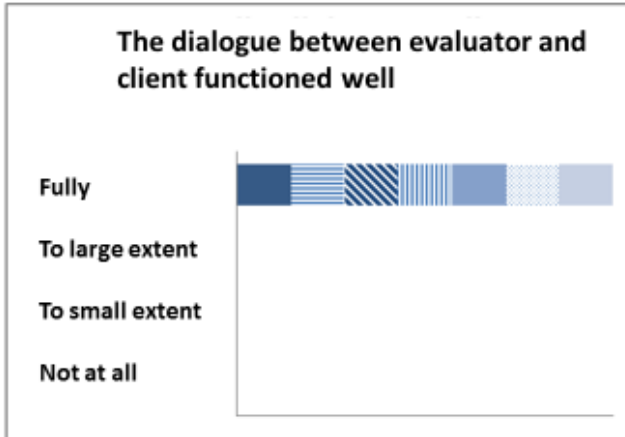


Approx. 25 weeks effective time

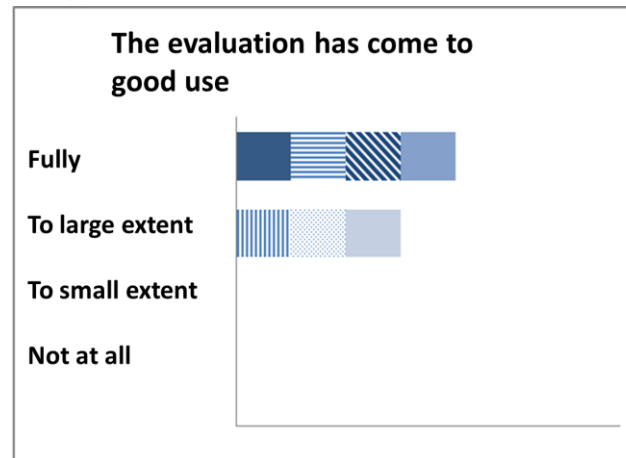
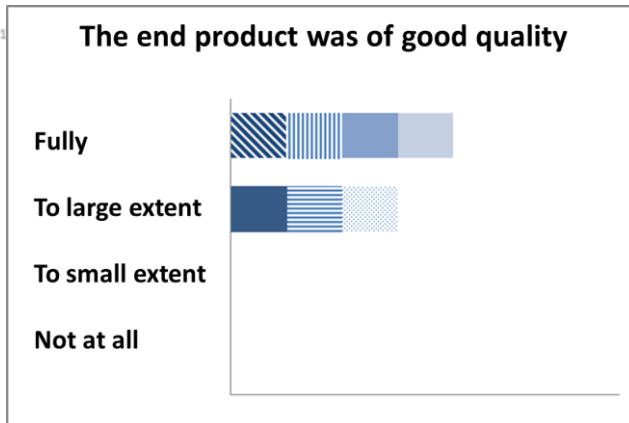
Internal follow-up made in 2013

- Purpose: A comprehensive picture of our collected work 2010-2012, extending our knowledge and point to ways of improvement.
- Goal: Follow up on the effects of the evaluations and if they are presently used.
- Approach: A questionnaire was sent out to the clients of 21 evaluations performed between 2010 and 2012.

Evaluations performed in 2012



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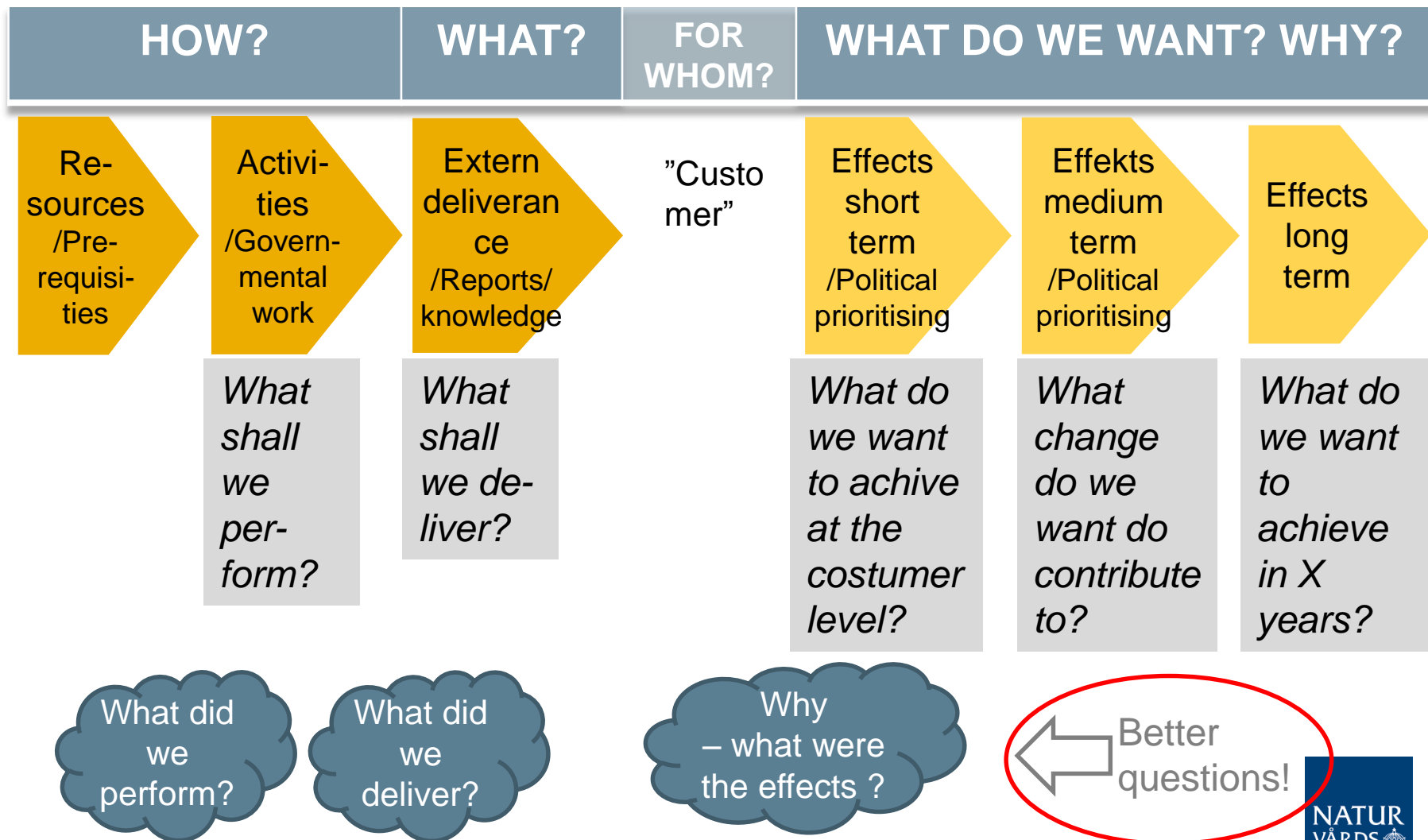


Research Unit works with "followers"

- The Swedish EPA (Research Unit) spends about 9 million € a year on research funding, with the aim to provide the agency with new knowledge.
- The administrative officials send in needs for knowledge and define the early questions. The research secretary helps them to further define the questions.
- A group of "followers" from the agency forms a network together with the researchers and have discussions along the way.

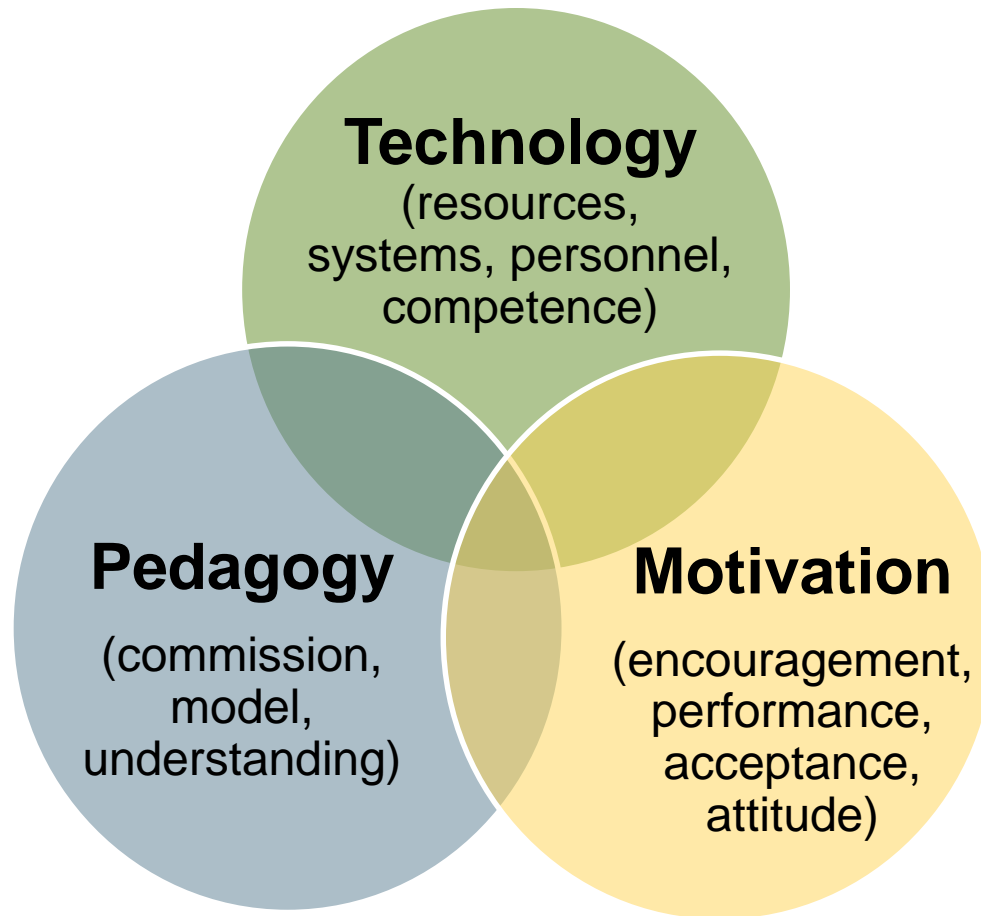
C. Better planning process – better questions!

What are the assumptions in every step in the logical program theory?



How do we change the customer's behaviour?

Where may problems appear in reporting systems?



(Modified from Kotler, P. et al 2001)

”Why should we fill in the forms?”



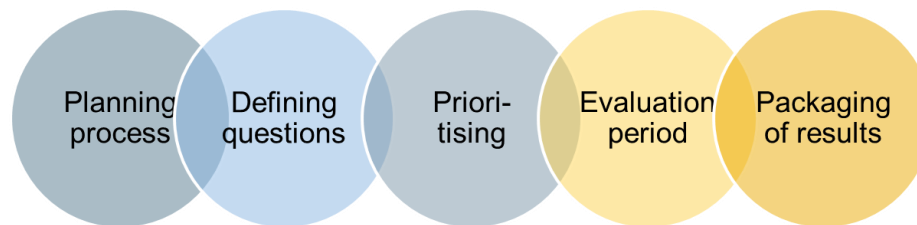
(Naturvårdsverket, Rapport 6708, 2016)

Conclusions from previous work

- With unclear guiding goals/criteria and no shared view of priorities the different levels develop their own interpretations for which effects to measure and report.
- A well-defined aim and well-known use of the reporting give motivation to report sufficiently.
- Unclear technical details in the system decreases motivation.
- Communication about goals, expected effects, and government is important.
- Do like the football teams and "spend more time in the locker room" – for communication and shared views!

Lessons learned as evaluators

- We now plan for extended communication – think evaluation when in the planning process!
- We search for simplified models from our evaluations and deliver ppt *and* a report.
- We continue to encourage evaluation of both effects and processes.



Lessons learned as users

- Important discussion inhouse – what are the crucial questions and delineations?
- We send our commission to our contracted consultancies.
- Tricky questions are further discussed with a university researcher and we continue to discuss the commission.
- We set a time table in the agreements on how to follow the progresses.
- Ordering, following, receiving – a continuing learning process!

Discussion

A process of exchange – what are your reflections and experience?

- How do we strengthen links between evaluators and users?
- We need good answers, but are we exploring the right questions?
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