

Summary of follow-up report 2012/13:RFR4

Committee on Environment and Agriculture

Committee on Industry and Trade

SVERIGES 
RIKSDAG 

THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT

Follow-up of certain aspects of the Rural Development Programme



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– Summary of follow-up report 2012/13:RFR4

Preface

Rural areas with a strong development capacity are a resource for the entire country's development and growth. The Swedish Rural Development Programme is a vital instrument for achieving a rural development that is economically, ecologically and socially sustainable. The Swedish Rural Development Programme is financed jointly by Sweden and the EU and comprises a total of approximately SEK 36 billion during the seven-year period 2007-2013. The current Rural Development Programme is very broad and covers issues affecting several parliamentary committees. Central government funding for the Programme comes primarily under the Swedish central government budget's expenditure area 23 – Agricultural sciences, rural areas and food, which is prepared by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture in the Riksdag. The Rural Development Programme also has natural ties to expenditure areas 19 – Regional growth and 24 – Industry and trade, which are prepared by the Committee on Industry and Trade.

In February 2011, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture and the Committee on Industry and Trade decided to conduct a follow-up of certain aspects of the Rural Development Programme. The follow-up has focused on three aspects of the Programme: support to micro-enterprises, basic services (e.g. trade in convenience goods and broadband development) and support to biogas production.

The follow-up was conducted by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture's and Committee on Industry and Trade's joint follow-up and evaluation group, comprising the following members of the Riksdag: Irene Oskarsson (ChrDem), Chair, Krister Örnfjäder (SocDem),

Nina Lundström (Lib), Erik A Eriksson (Cen), Kent Persson (Lft), Åsa Coenraads (Mod), Lars Isovaara (SweDem) and Kew Nordqvist (Grn). The background material for the follow-up was prepared by Senior Evaluation Officer Christer Åström and Research Officer Peter Strand at the Committee Services Division's Evaluation and Research Unit, and Committee Secretary Roger Berggren at the Committee on Industry and Trade, together with the Secretary to the follow-up and evaluation group, Committee Secretary Lena Sandström at the Committee on Environment and Agriculture.

The follow-up was carried out during the spring and summer of 2012 and completed in October 2012. The report of the follow-up and evaluation group has subsequently been published as part of the Reports from the Riksdag series (2012/13:RFR4). The follow-up was presented to both committees in November 2012. This brochure includes a summary of the conclusions.

The assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group in brief:

- Sweden's rural areas are a resource for the development of the whole of the country. Long-term, sustainable and continuous efforts are crucial for rural development. The Rural Development Programme is one of central government's most important instruments for achieving this.
- Local participation and commitment, regional development and a broad perspective are all important. It is positive that central government takes a broad approach to rural development and that measures can vary in different counties.
- As a result of the Rural Development Programme, rural issues have been highlighted in various ways. Continued efforts are also needed to achieve a positive rural development. It is important that the Rural Development Programme is used to actively counteract negative developments in rural areas.

- The Rural Development Programme can be simplified and the number of measures reduced. Administration by the public authorities can be further developed and red tape reduced.
- It is too early as yet to establish the results of the Rural Development Programme. On the basis of the case studies, however, there appears to have been a positive impact on the development of rural areas, even if the Programme probably will not achieve all its objectives. It is essential to highlight results that are not measurable too. It is important that the Government reports and assesses the outcome of the Rural Development Programme to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) on an annual basis.
- It is vital that the Rural Development Programme supports continued development of the commercial sector. Support to micro-enterprises is important for business development in rural areas, but it is difficult to identify quantifiable results.
- It was initially difficult to receive applications that matched the support for basic services. The reorientation to broadband development helped to boost interest.
- It is positive that support to biogas has been given an important role in the Rural Development Programme. Many counties prioritise this issue and interest in biogas investments is increasing. Biogas support is, in several cases decisive for investment decisions, but there are problems as regards profitability.
- Rural issues are complex and broad, which is why there is a need for cooperation and coordination between the public authorities' various measures in this field. It can be difficult to obtain an overview of the support that is available for rural areas. Coordination between different kinds of support must be improved. While there must be a clear delineation between different measures, opportunities for synergies must be highlighted.

- Follow-up and evaluation of the results of the Rural Development Programme are essential. Knowledge and lessons learnt should be exploited and passed on. Audit and controls play a prominent role and affect the public authorities' work. It is important that the number of financial errors is reduced as regards support granted. Errors are expensive as they lead to large reimbursement obligations for Sweden, and affect trust in this form of support. It is important, partly to simplify the application procedure in order to reduce the risk that applicants make mistakes and, partly that the Swedish Board of Agriculture and county administrative boards take measures to improve the authorities' processing of support.

The purpose and implementation of the follow-up

The Riksdag Committee on Environment and Agriculture and the Committee on Industry and Trade have carried out a joint follow-up of the Rural Development Programme. The purpose of the follow-up has been to give both committees a deeper knowledge base in issues relating to employment and development in rural areas, which can subsequently be used in their consideration of parliamentary business. The committees have chosen to carry out this follow-up primarily in order to study qualitative results in a number of case studies as a supplement to the follow-ups and evaluations conducted within the regular follow-up and evaluation structure of the Rural Development Programme. The follow-up has focused on three aspects of the programme, mainly under axis 3: support to micro-enterprises, basic services and support to biogas production. Case studies have been carried out in the counties of Kalmar, Norrbotten and Västra Götaland.

The Swedish Rural Development Programme 2007–2013

The Swedish Rural Development Programme for 2007–2013 is the third consecutive programme for Sweden. Measures are designed to support a general development of Sweden's rural areas, e.g. as regards enterprise and employment. Sweden has received a total of approximately EUR 1,953 million from the EU for the period 2007–2013. The Programme is divided into four areas known as axes, whose objectives and focuses are the same in all EU countries. Within each axis, grants may be provided for various measures in the form of business support, project support or environmental compensation. The overall objective for axis 3 is to create a more diversified and competitive commercial sector with a higher quality of life in rural areas.

The programme has been broadened in relation to the previous programme period with the aim of promoting a diversified commercial sector and a better living environment, local services and infrastructure. The current Rural Development Programme covers a broader target group than the previous environmental and rural programme, primarily as regards the parts focusing on a diversified rural economy and better quality of life, i.e., axis 3. The EU Rural Development Programme for 2007–2013 distinguishes itself from previous programmes in the field of agriculture in that it contains relatively large parts where grants are not awarded according to strictly defined criteria.

The Ministry for Rural Affairs has the main responsibility for the Rural Development Programme in Sweden. The Swedish Board of Agriculture has the national responsibility for planning of implementation, administration, follow-up and payments. Administration of applications, controls, decisions concerning support and decisions concerning payments has primarily been delegated to the county administrative boards. The Swedish Board of Agriculture grants support to national projects. Each county administrative board, as well as the Sami Parlia-

ment, has drawn up a strategy for implementation of the Programme in their respective region.

Implementation of the Rural Development Programme

Observations

The development of rural areas varies in different parts of Sweden, and the commercial sector in rural areas is changing. As regards public measures, developments are affected by many different measures in different policy areas, where the Rural Development Programme is one of several measures. Enterprise in rural areas can be promoted in various ways, and much of what steers development is beyond the control of the Rural Development Programme. In the follow-up, most stakeholders highlighted the importance of taking measures in several policy areas in order to promote rural development, e.g. schools and infrastructure. Several stakeholders stressed the role of the municipalities in work with rural development.

Most of them considered that it is positive that the counties are free to organise the Programme in different ways as needs vary in different parts of the country. Differences in the counties' way of working with rural development cannot only be attributed to different strategies.

The Rural Development Programme is very broad, which is perceived as a strength by many people, but some regard it as a weakness. Some stakeholders have questioned whether certain investments, for example, in broadband and biogas, should be included in the Rural Development Programme. Several of them say that it is positive that central government takes a broad approach to rural development. Attitudes differ among the interviewed stakeholders as regards what type of measures should receive support from the Rural Development Programme. Many of them highlight the "bottom-up perspective".

Initially it was difficult to launch measures within axis 3, owing to the introduction of new kinds of activities in relation to previous rural development programmes. The Programme is still associated with agriculture, and it has been difficult to disseminate information that it is not only targeted at farmers. The county administrative boards have established channels to reach farmers, but not always to reach other enterprises in rural areas.

There are many ideas for the development of rural areas and stakeholders consider that it is important that the central government helps to encourage these ideas. The focus of the county administrative boards is on processing cases rather than on working proactively with rural development. Processing times are often long, which curbs enthusiasm among those working in the project or enterprise that is implementing an investment.

The Rural Development Programme has its origins in agricultural administration procedures. Different working procedures are applied to work with regional policy and business policy measures, where it is more a case of consultation and context-creating measures. Several stakeholders have emphasised the need for coaching for enterprises in rural areas. It can be difficult to see the difference between some of today's measures, and several stakeholders consider that more general measures would be preferable. The way the different measures are divided up is problematic for the public authorities, but not for applicants who just need to decide whether they are applying for enterprise support or project support. The county administrative board examines which is the most appropriate measure.

For the county administrative board, the division into several measures can entail lock-in effects, that is, that budget funds may remain unutilised for certain measures. Some say that it is positive that the Rural Development Programme focuses on slightly larger investments and projects, while others stress the importance of smaller investments and projects. Several stakeholders say that there is a certain degree of pro-

ject fatigue and that a long-term, sustainable perspective is important in work with rural development.

There is some uncertainty regarding the rules for other public co-financing of measures under axis 3. It has sometimes been difficult to find co-financing and various co-financers can have different requirements, for example, regarding reporting back. The fact that grants are paid retroactively requires high levels of liquidity. It is difficult, in particular for small enterprises and projects, to take part in the Rural Development Programme if their liquidity is not good.

There is an ambition to simplify the implementation of the Rural Development Programme. Most stakeholders consider, however, that the Programme is complicated from the administrative point of view, both for recipients of support and for public authorities. It is characterised by routines for agricultural subsidies. Some enterprises say that it is not worth the effort applying for support. Several people also point out that applicants can become obliged to reimburse payments after an audit if the application form has been filled in incorrectly, even if the county administrative board has approved the application. Several stakeholders say that it is crucial to simplify the administration of grants.

The youth, integration and gender equality perspectives have been highlighted to a limited extent in work with the Rural Development Programme. It is noted that there are both advantages and disadvantages with the Leader method.

Assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

In the light of the findings of the follow-up, the group makes the following assessments regarding the implementation of the Rural Development Programme.

- The Rural Development Programme has helped to highlight rural issues in various ways. Continued efforts are also needed to achieve a positive rural development. It is important that the Rural Devel-

opment Programme is used to actively counteract negative developments in rural areas.

- Rural areas are a resource for the development of the whole country and it is important that central government actors in various fields of society take their responsibility for the continued development of these areas. The Rural Development Programme is one of central government's most important instruments for working with rural development, but many factors that influence the development of rural areas also fall outside the framework of the Programme. It is important that central government activities in all policy areas help to develop rural areas and that the results achieved under the Programme are not counteracted by decisions in other fields of policy. It is crucial to monitor the results of the Government Offices' work to secure the impact of decisions in relation to rural development.
- It is important that central government work with rural development is characterised by a long-term perspective, by stability and by continuity, in order to achieve the intended results.
- It is positive that the changes that have taken place in the commercial sector in rural areas are also reflected in the Rural Development Programme and its implementation. There are many development ideas and entrepreneurs in rural areas and it is important that central government supports efforts to encourage these ideas so that they can be implemented as concrete and successful development measures.
- It is positive that the Rural Development Programme has been designed to reach new target groups. At the same time, it has been difficult for the authorities to reach the new target groups and information measures have not always reached all parts of Sweden. Ahead of the coming Rural Development Programme, it is vital to further improve information measures, in particular vis-à-vis these new target groups.

- Local participation and commitment are decisive if development measures are to produce long-term, sustainable results. Irrespective of the working procedure chosen, it is important to encourage local cooperation between different stakeholders in rural areas. It is vital that the role of municipalities in work with rural development issues is highlighted.
- The youth, integration and gender equality perspectives have only been highlighted to a limited extent in the three counties included in the follow-up. It is crucial to stress the importance of giving these issues greater attention in continued development efforts, especially in order to achieve long-term and sustainable results.
- It is positive that the counties are free to organise the implementation of the Rural Development Programme in different ways as needs vary in Sweden's different rural areas. Increased regional adaptation leads to greater regional and local involvement and thus a greater "bottom-up perspective", which is positive. It is important that the county administrative boards can explain to and communicate with the stakeholders what the priorities are in different counties and the reasons for this.
- As the reality differs in different parts of the country it is inevitable that measures will need to vary in different counties. At the same time, it is important that the national regulatory framework is followed in a similar way in the counties. Local and regional stakeholders are satisfied with regional adaptations. For stakeholders working with, for example, projects that cover several counties, however, regional adaptations and differences in priorities between counties has led to some difficulties. It is important that the county administrative boards and other authorities work to facilitate measures covering several counties without neglecting regional adaptation.
- It is positive that central government takes a broad approach to rural development and that the Rural Development Programme has

a broad perspective. At the same time, it is important that the Programme focuses on measures that are central to rural development.

- It is important that the measures have a breadth and that they focus on both the commercial sector in rural areas and on more general development measures that can benefit both enterprises and inhabitants in rural areas. There is, for example, a need for coaching for and advice to enterprises in rural areas, as well as support for cooperation between enterprises.
- It is difficult to distinguish between some of the measures of the Rural Development Programme. Furthermore, the way the measures are divided is problematic for the public authorities. Fewer measures of a more general nature might make the public authorities' work more efficient.
- The way the Rural Development Programme is organised means that grants are paid retroactively, which requires high levels of liquidity on the part of the enterprises and projects. This entails problems, in particular for small enterprises and projects, and it can be difficult for them to take part in the Rural Development Programme if their liquidity is not good. This matter should be addressed in continued work with the Rural Development Programme.
- There is an ambition to simplify the implementation of the Rural Development Programme, but despite this, the Programme is complicated from the administrative point of view, both for recipients of support and for the public authorities. It is important to continue work to simplify administration in connection with support.
- It is important to continue to try to reduce processing times, in particular in order not to curb enthusiasm among those working with development projects and rural enterprises that wish to develop. At the same time, it is also important that greater demands on public authorities do not negatively affect the authorities' ability to carefully assess applications and applicants' plans.

- In the coming Rural Development Programme it is important that the public authorities are given scope to work with information and quality assurance. Continued development efforts could include more elements of exchange of experience between different authorities' processing of applications for grants and payments, both in the field of agricultural administration and, for example, in work within the framework of regional and business policies. It would be positive if the processing of different funds could be compared and good examples presented.

The results of the Rural Development Programme

Observations

The follow-up shows that it is still too early to establish the results of the current Rural Development Programme. However, several stakeholders say that the Programme leads to growth, employment and increased profitability, but that it has been difficult to quantify the results. Most of the business investments would have been made even without the support of the Rural Development Programme, but they would perhaps have been on a smaller scale and taken longer to implement. Several of the projects would, however not have been realised without support. Some of the stakeholders question whether competitive operations should receive support.

Several of the stakeholders consider the Rural Development Programme to be important and that it has made work with rural development possible. Several people consider that support levels are low but psychologically important, and several stakeholders consider that the Rural Development Programme has done more good than indicated in the mid-term review. Here other values besides the economy and employment play an important role. The Rural Development Programme can support initiatives at grassroots level, and has led to many developments in rural areas, for example, the creation of meeting places. There

are examples of cases where work with the Rural Development Programme has helped to generate a feeling of social cohesion and a belief in the future at the local level. Several of the interviewees consider that it is difficult to speak about the long-term effects of the Programme. Some employment opportunities are more long-term, while others are more short-term. The stakeholders also point out that enterprises in rural areas need to be able to survive without support too.

As regards measure 312 Business development in micro-enterprises, the mid-term review showed that support has led to a favourable development. The Swedish Board of Agriculture's latest annual report shows that the objectives to achieve increased gross value added and a greater number of employment opportunities will presumably not be achieved. In the evaluated counties, measure 312 is regarded as important for business development, but it has been difficult to identify concrete results. With the help of support, small enterprises have been able to develop and, to some extent, expand. The support has, for example, made it easier for enterprises to receive bank loans.

As regards support to basic services for the rural economy and population (measure 321), the mid-term review showed that support had partly just been used to a limited extent and, partly that it had generally had little impact at the time of evaluation. Even though many people consider service issues to be important, it has often been difficult to receive applications. A re-orientation towards broadband development means that this kind of investment is now predominant among those receiving support under this measure. In addition to investments in broadband, other measures that have been granted support show a considerable breadth as regards both focus and economic scope. In part as a result of varying conditions and priorities, the measures that have been granted support in the three examined counties also show considerable breadth. It is often difficult to assess how many people benefit from investments made as part of measure 321, and often there seems to be an uncertainty regarding who has or should have the responsibility for ensuring access to services in rural areas.

Support for biogas (measures 121, 311 and 312) was not dealt with in the mid-term review as this support was first introduced in 2009. According to the Swedish Board of Agriculture's annual report for 2011, many counties are actively prioritising investments in biogas, and there is an increasing interest in such investments. At the same time there are uncertainties about the profitability of biogas plants. In the three examined counties, support for biogas is viewed as very important and in several cases of decisive importance for investment decisions. The development potential is considered to be great, but several stakeholders ask for operation subsidies in order to achieve better profitability. According to the stakeholders, the main problem with support for biogas is that available funding is not sufficient, and the maximum funding limit for measures 311 and 312 has been too low.

Assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

In the light of the findings of the follow-up, the group makes the following assessments regarding the results of the Rural Development Programme.

- It is too early as yet to establish the outcomes of the Rural Development Programme. On the basis of the case studies, however, there appears to have been a positive impact on the development of rural areas, even if the Programme probably will not fully achieve its objectives.
- Most of the studied business investments would presumably have been made even without support from the Rural Development Programme, but they would have been smaller and taken longer to implement. As regards support to projects, several of the studied projects would presumably not have been possible to carry out without support.
- It has been difficult to quantify the results and assess whether the objectives of the Rural Development Programme have been

achieved, and what results it has yielded so far. It is also difficult to say anything about the sustainability of the achieved results and the long-term impact of various measures. It is important to achieve long-term results that help enterprises and services in rural areas to survive without support too.

- It is not easy to measure all results, but “soft results” which are difficult to measure are also important, for example, that meeting places have been created and that communities have regained a sense of social cohesion and confidence in the future. The Rural Development Programme has made active work with rural development possible throughout the country, and a lot has happened in rural areas. This is also an important result of work with rural development.
- It is important that the Government, in its annual reports to the Riksdag, presents and assesses the results of economic measures implemented under the Rural Development Programme. This should also include an account of the scope of central government co-funding.
- Support to micro-enterprises is assessed to be important for business development in rural areas, even if it has been difficult to identify quantifiable results. With the help of support, small enterprises have been able to develop and, to some extent, expand. Support has, among other things, made it easier for enterprises to receive bank loans. It has been stressed that this is a successful measure from the point of view of the Sami people. It is difficult to assess the long-term results of the measures. It is essential that the enterprises can survive without support.
- The issue of access to services in rural areas is important, but there have nevertheless been relatively few applications under measure 321 on basic services. There is considerable breadth in work carried out as a result of support within the various measures, and this is primarily because of varying conditions and priorities in the coun-

ties. It is difficult to assess how many people benefit from several of the investments made under the various measures. It is important that coordination of different central government measures to promote services in rural areas receives greater attention. In continued efforts, it is important to consider the issue of who has or should have responsibility for ensuring access to services in rural areas.

- It is positive that, within the framework of the Rural Development Programme, concerted efforts are made to achieve continued broadband development in rural areas. A well-functioning IT infrastructure is a basic precondition for the development of innovative service solutions in general.
- It is positive that biogas has a central role in the Programme, and many stakeholders have prioritised biogas investments. Interest in biogas investments is increasing, at the same time as there are some uncertainties regarding the profitability of biogas plants. This means that support for biogas is important and, in several cases, of decisive importance for investment decisions. Several of the stakeholders say that the development potential for biogas is assessed to be great and many ask for operational support in order to achieve better profitability. One of the major problems that has been highlighted – that the maximum ceiling for support (SEK 1.8 million) was too low - has now been resolved through the Commission's decision for an amendment. However, it continues to be a problem that available funds are not sufficient.

Coordination and cooperation

Observations

Rural affairs affect several ministries and public authorities in Sweden. There are different kinds of cooperation between authorities and, on the whole, this functions well. Some stakeholders have highlighted the

issue of the distribution of work among the authorities and pointed to unclear management and coordination, combined with an unclear administrative structure. Cooperation between counties is perceived, in certain cases, to be limited, but there are also examples of cooperation. Within the counties, cooperation has been developed between many stakeholders. Enterprises and projects have stated that contacts with the administrative authorities have been good.

There are many forms of support available for rural areas. The Rural Development Programme is one such form, and many stakeholders apply for support from different sources. Rural development is about taking a cohesive view and here, the division of central government measures into different programmes and measures may be regarded as an obstacle. Several people have highlighted the need for greater coordination between different forms of support to rural areas. The fact that there are different forms of support from different authorities addressing the same target group may be regarded as complicated by the applicants. The stakeholders consider that clear delineation and avoiding doubling of funding are important. It has also been mentioned that it is important that various measures generate synergies, but it was stressed that it is difficult to plan for this.

Assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

In the light of the findings of the follow-up, the group makes the following assessments regarding coordination and cooperation.

- Coordination and cooperation between public authorities are extremely important with a view to supporting further rural development, not least, in order to achieve favourable results in relation to resources put into the Rural Development Programme. In this context, it is crucial that the Government's steering of the public authorities is clear. The division of responsibilities among authorities and administrative structures must be clear. This applies, for example, to counties where the regions are responsible for development

issues, while the county administrative boards are responsible for the Rural Development Programme. As regards the Rural Development Programme, there are different kinds of cooperation between the relevant authorities, and this cooperation functions well on the whole. However, it is necessary to facilitate cooperation between counties.

- It can be difficult to obtain an overview of the many different forms of support available for rural areas, as this can pose a problem for those working with rural development. The fact that there are different kinds of support from different authorities addressing the same target group can be perceived as complicated by applicants, among other things as different forms need to be filled in and sent to different authorities. With the purpose of facilitating processes for enterprises and projects, the possibility of introducing similar application documents and reporting routines regardless of the form of EU support should be considered.
- It is important that work with rural development focuses on viewing rural areas as a whole; the division of central government measures into different programmes may be an obstacle in this context. At the same time, it is important that the delineation between different forms of support is clear. It is also important that different measures can generate synergies, even if this is difficult to plan for in practice. In the light of this, greater coordination between various forms of support for rural areas is needed.

Follow-up, evaluation and audit

Observations

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is responsible for follow-up of the Rural Development Programme, and this is reported in annual reports. The European Commission regulates the information to be provided

in annual reports at the national level. Evaluation of the Programme is carried out prior to, mid-term and after the completion of the Programme, by an independent body. The mid-term review is conducted by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), and has been criticised by various stakeholders. At the regional level, controls are carried out in connection with payments and final reports. Several of the stakeholders stress that it is important to follow-up and evaluate the results of the Rural Development Programme. At the same time it is noted that it is difficult to measure the effects. Several stakeholders point out that ongoing evaluation could serve as an alternative to mid-term reviews.

Many controls are conducted under the Rural Development Programme. Audits are conducted by the Court of Auditors, the Commission's auditors, the Swedish Financial Management Authority and various control functions at the relevant authorities.

A number of financial errors occur in the Rural Development Programme. These often involve small amounts but lead to considerable costs for Sweden. A large proportion of financial errors also leads to demands for more audits in Sweden. The Rural Development Programme's latest annual accounts could first be approved by the Commission after supplementary examinations on account of the high level of financial errors. Several stakeholders say that fear of making mistakes may mean that authorities are too cautious in their processing and that funds are therefore not used efficiently or fully. Enterprises and projects may acquire reimbursement obligations if the audit reveals errors and this may discourage potential applicants from applying for grants. It is important that errors are discovered when applications are processed by the authorities rather than at the audit stage.

Assessments of the follow-up and evaluation group

In the light of the findings of the follow-up, the group makes the following assessments regarding follow-up, evaluation and audit.

- It is important to follow-up and evaluate the results of the Rural Development Programme and how these develop over time. The knowledge and lessons learned from the work with rural development should be exploited and passed on to various stakeholders.
- It can often be difficult to measure and quantify results, especially in the form of concrete effects. However, it is necessary to be able to follow developments even if results are not easily measurable. It is also important to follow the long-term effects of support, both at the general level and from the perspective of individual decisions to approve grants.
- It is difficult to evaluate results in connection with the mid-term review as so little time has passed at that stage. At the same time, it is difficult to use the results of the mid-term review within the current programme period. Ahead of the forthcoming programme period, therefore, it is necessary to follow developments regarding the effects of support over the entire period that measures have been implemented, for example, in the form of ongoing evaluation.
- Controls and audits play a key role and affect the work of the public authorities. It is important that the rules are observed. At the same time, the control system may create worry and a fear of making mistakes, both at processing authorities and among recipients of grants. There is a risk that the public authorities will be excessively cautious in their processing of applications and that fund will not be used in full or efficiently. It is therefore important that errors are discovered when applications are processed by the authorities rather than later at the audit stage.

Follow-ups (in Swedish) by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture (MJU) and the Committee on Industry and Trade (NU)

Thematic follow-ups by the Committee on Industry and Trade

- *Statens insatser för att stödja forskning och utveckling i små företag* (in Swedish) [Central government measures to support research and development in small enterprises] (Report 2004/05:RFR2, statement 2004/05:NU1y)
- *Follow-up of certain aspects of the Rural Development Programme* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av vissa frågor inom landsbygdsprogrammet] (Report 2012/13:RFR4).

Thematic follow-ups by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture

- *Förutsättningar för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion – En uppföljning* (in Swedish) [Conditions for small-scale food production – A follow-up] (Report 2005/06:RFR3, Committee report 2005/06:MJU8)
- *Uppföljning av de fiskepolitiska insatsernas resultat och konsekvenser för företag inom fiskeområdet* (in Swedish) [Follow-up of the results and consequences of fisheries policy measures in the field of fisheries] (Report 2007/08:RFR3, Committee report 2007/08:MJU2)
- *Follow-up of government measures for the marine environment* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av statens insatser inom havsmiljöområdet] (Report 2008/09:RFR3, Committee report 2008/09:MJU1)
- *Follow-up of central government measures for small-scale food production* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av statens insatser för småskalig livsmedelsproduktion] (Report 2009/10:RFR1, Committee report 2009/10:MJU2)

- *Follow-up of organic production and public consumption* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av ekologisk produktion och offentlig konsumtion] (Report 2010/11:RFR1, Committee report 2010/11:MJU2)
- *Follow-up of central government efforts concerning sustainable cities* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av statens satsning på hållbara städer] (Report 2010/11:RFR2, Committee report 2010/11:MJU1)
- *Biological diversity in running waters and hydropower – a follow-up* (summary in English) [Biologisk mångfald i rinnande vatten och vattenkraft – En uppföljning] (Report 2011/12:RFR1, Committee report 2011/12:MJU1)
- *Offentlig utfrågning om biologisk mångfald i rinnande vatten och vattenkraft* (in Swedish) [Public hearing on biological diversity in running waters and hydropower] (Report 2011/12:RFR3, Committee report 2011/12:MJU1)
- *Follow-up of certain aspects of the Rural Development Programme* (summary in English) [Uppföljning av vissa frågor inom landsbygdsprogrammet] (Report 2012/13:RFR4, Committee report 2012/13:MJU2).

Ongoing follow-ups by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture

- *Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för utgiftsområde 20* (in Swedish) [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's report on expenditure area 20] (carried out annually, the latest follow-up included in Committee report 2012/13:MJU1)
- *Uppföljning och analys av regeringens resultatredovisning för utgiftsområde 23* (in Swedish) [Follow-up and analysis of the Government's report on expenditure area 23] (carried out annually, the latest follow-up included in Committee report 2012/13:MJU2).

The follow-up reports are available in Swedish on the Riksdag website (www.riksdagen.se) and can also be ordered from the Riksdag Printing Office (Postal address: SE-100 12 Stockholm, Sweden, tel.: 08-786 58 10, fax: 08-786 61 76 or e-mail: ordermottagningen@riksdagen.se). Summaries in English of several of these reports are available on the Riksdag website.

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