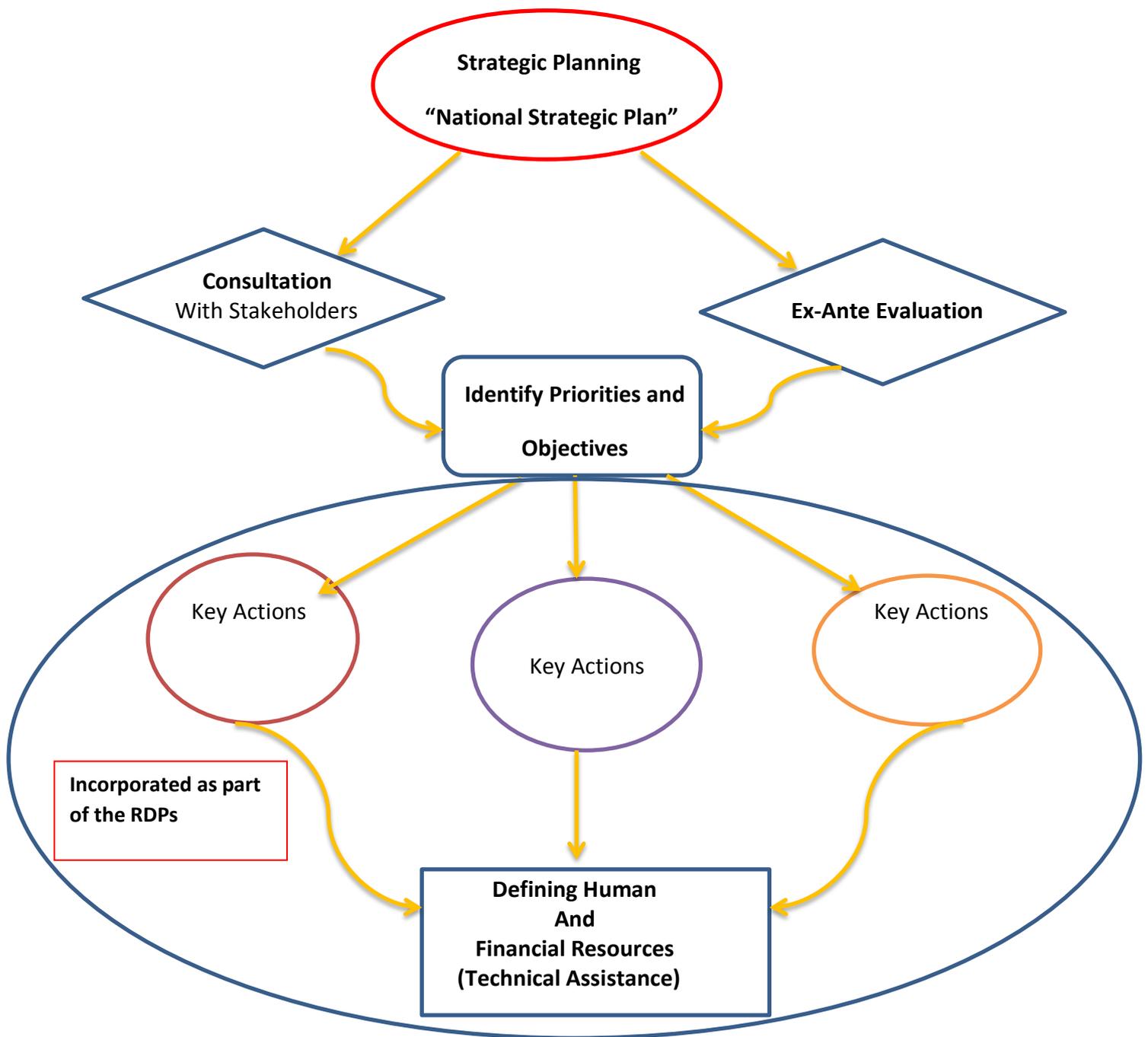


“How to Ensure Network Resource Allocation is Driven by Needs?”



The discussions focused on how to ensure that National Rural Networks have the necessary human and financial capital that allows them to fulfil their mandate in the most effective but efficient way. The important focus is that resources are apportioned according to the needs and networking should be given its importance when competing with other demands

for technical assistance budget on the basis of defined and approved priorities and objectives. During the current programming period most of Network budgets have suffered from this lack of planning where a number of networks cannot function as desired because of lack of resources or from continuous cuts in their budget and control on their expenditure. No participants could recall what was the formula (if there was –many commented) used by the Managing Authority in defining the network budget.

This can be adjusted by integrating certain provisions in the Commission Regulation that obliges Managing Authorities to incorporate provisions for networking in the preparation of their National Strategic Plan.

In this way priorities and real needs are identified which are then clearly linked to a set of defined objectives in line with the provisions of the regulation to be incorporated. This will ensure that in the drafting of the RDPs, Managing Authorities include also a list of actions (minimum) that will be undertaken by the Network for which then respective resources must be taken into account when defining the share of technical assistance apportionment.

Finally, it was mentioned that this type of discussion and guidelines has to happen NOW as many Managing Authorities have already started the process to prepare for the 2014-2020 programmes. An additional comment raised during the closing of the session was linked to include a “ring-fencing” clause under Technical assistance implementing rules that defines a minimum amount of funds for the networking function. Comparisons were made to the ring-fencing under Leader, Axis 2 and the NRN operational budget.