



Evaluating the Impact of EU Cohesion Policy

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Achievements of Cohesion Policy

- *2000-2006*
 - **Jobs created: 2.2 million**
 - **46,000 R&D projects creating 20,000 research jobs**
 - **2,700 km of new motorways**
 - **1,800 km rail (including 1,200 high speed)**
 - **Increase in GDP in Objective 1 regions due to Funds**
- *2007-2010*
 - **Jobs created: 200,000**
 - **20,000 RTD projects**
 - **1 million additional population covered by broadband**
 - **900 km new roads; 630 km railroads new or renewed**



Have we been effective?

- *Impossible to generalise across:*
 - **270 regions with different needs and objectives**
 - **Over 300 programmes and 1000s projects**
 - **EU15 vs EU12; Convergence vs Regional Competitiveness & Employment**
- *Objectives in programmes not sufficiently precise to judge if they have been achieved*
- *Indicators not used by all programmes and not linked to expenditure*
- *We know we have achieved a lot, but not if that is the maximum we should have achieved for the resources spent.*



Experience of Evaluating Cohesion Policy

- *Responsibility for ex ante and ongoing/mid term with Member States; for ex post with the European Commission*
- *Challenges for Evaluation at EU level:*
 - **No common indicators, no link with expenditure**
 - **Objectives of programmes not measurable**
 - **Implicit objectives economic, social, environmental, territorial**
 - **Predominant focus of programmes on absorption – inputs, not outputs and certainly not outcomes**
 - **Weak national and regional evaluations focused more on implementation issues than effects**
 - **Over-reliance on macro economic models – focused on GDP/employment**



Change of Approach for 2000-2006

- *Evaluated thematically with methods and evaluation teams adapted to themes*
- *Increased volume and quality of resources – financial (19 contracts), human (in designing and managing the contracts) & academic input*
- *Triangulation of evidence using different methods – literature, models, administrative data, qualitative evidence and piloted counterfactual impact evaluation in one area*
- *Weaknesses persisted, but we still managed to deliver much new evidence on policy effectiveness which is reflected in Commission's proposals for future.*



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Modelling Block

- Hermin
- Quest
- Transtools

Management
and
implementation
systems

Data Block

- Data indicators '06
- Major projects
- Geographic distrib.

Impact of Cohesion Policy 2000 - 2006

Thematic Block

- Enterprise support
- Environment and Climate Change
- Transport
- Structural change and globalization
- Gender and Demography
- Rural Development

Community Initiatives

Interreg III & Urban

Cohesion Fund

Transport & environment

Regional
Policy

Reflections on how to improve

- *30 academic experts as part of the ex post evaluation stimulated debate within DG Regional Policy & at public hearings*
- *Barca Report in 2009 and his focus on counterfactual impact evaluation*
- *Reflections on our evaluation guidance with leading evaluation experts (Florio, Martini, Leeuw, Stern)*
- *Outcomes Task Force led by Barca/McCann – 2010/11*
- *Ongoing work on Theory Based Impact Evaluation*
- *Pilots on Results*

Actions for Current Programme Period

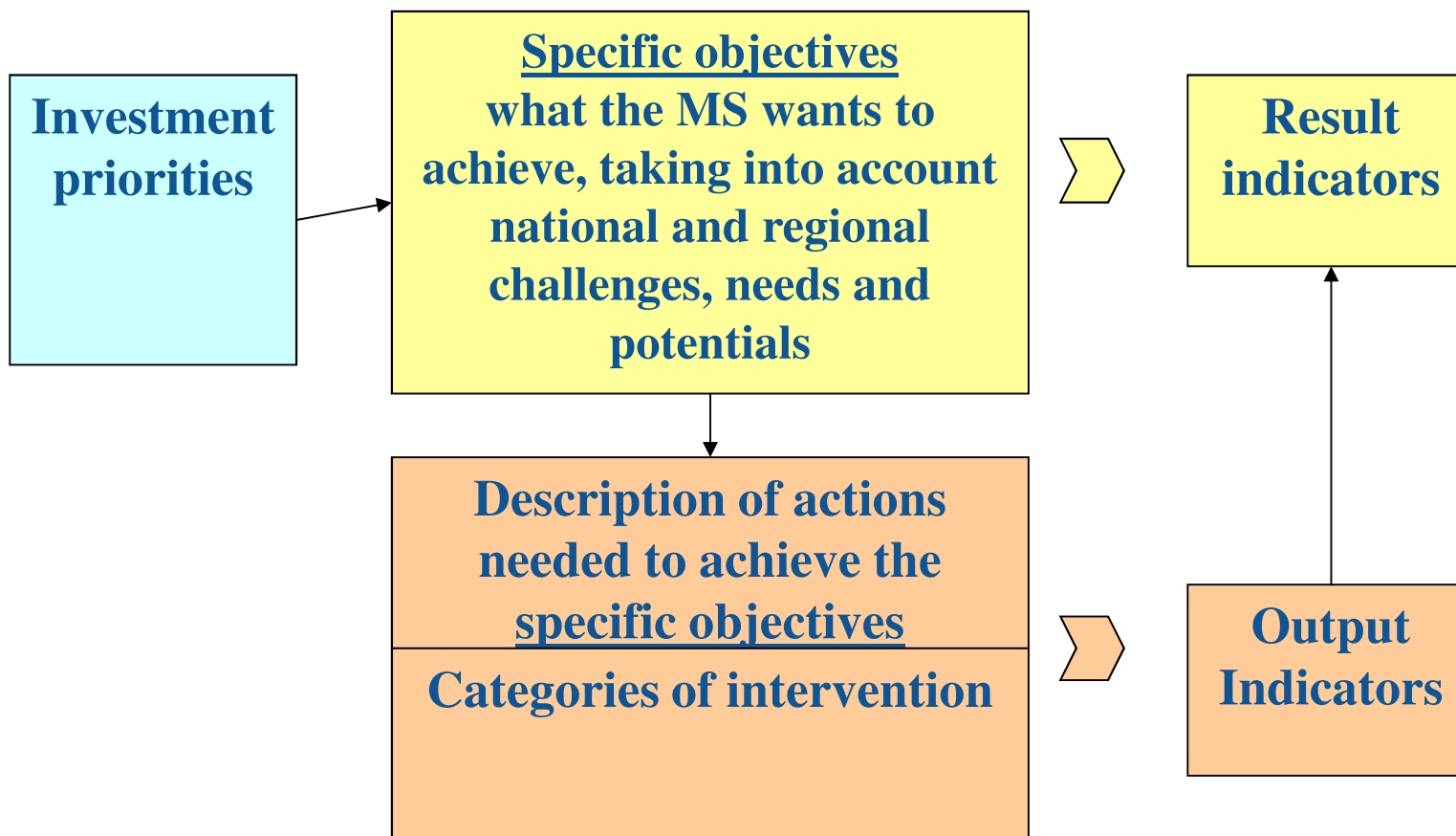
- *Improvements voluntary not obligatory*
- *Introduction of common indicators and follow-up of reporting against these to build capacity to report*
- *Ongoing evaluation starts to accumulate evidence in different intervention areas*
- *Expert Evaluation Network reviewing and reporting on evidence every year*
- *Methodological work on counterfactual and theory based impact evaluation – examples & guidance*

What is proposed?

- *Concentration of resources*
- *Programmes with clear articulation of what they aim to change and how, including baselines (programmes which can be evaluated!)*
- *Better gathering and reporting of basic data on outputs*
- *More precise requirements for evaluation including a final report synthesising evaluation findings and outputs and results*
- *Annual Implementation Reports to report progress*
- *Monitoring committees to focus on performance*
- *Performance Framework and Reserve to incentivise performance*



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Piloting Results Logic in Current Programmes

- *8 Member States; 12 regions*
- *Conclusions:*
 - **Feasible – but only with change of mindset**
 - **Indicators now used sometimes do not capture intended effects**
 - **Results focus must be designed into programmes**
 - **Reflecting on the "other factors" which may affect result indicators can improve programme design**
 - **Concentration requires political choices to be made but means fewer indicators**
 - **Baselines essential**
 - **Indicators don't tell you everything – importance of the qualitative**

Conclusions

- *Currently, we can assess what has been achieved but cannot draw conclusions comprehensively on effectiveness*
- *We now accumulate evidence on what works and why in what contexts*
- *There is no "proof", magic method or model – we build up a picture*
- *Process of sharing knowledge, building capacities across Europe*
- *Evaluation must be built up from the bottom – cannot be left to the EU level*
- *Only by building trust with MS and regions in current period, will we obtain agreement on what we propose for the future*



Further information

Concepts & Recommendations

ERDF + Cohesion Fund

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#2

Results Indicators 2014+: Report on Pilot Tests

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/result_indicator_pilot_report%20.pdf