8th Conference on the Evaluation of Cohesion Policy

Cohesion policy: what works well and what does not?
From evidence production to evidence use

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• Is evaluation the only evidence of what works and what not?
• Three examples from your experience of what works what doesn’t
• Did this evidence somehow contribute to the design of the policy?
• Final take on the most important priority for action
Is evaluation the only evidence of what works and what not?
Two streams of evidence

Evidence produced **within the framework** of the Policy itself

**→ Linkages exist**

Evidence produced **on the Policy but outside its framework**

(European Commission, Member States, regions)

(e.g., academic papers, think-tanks working papers...)

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Evidence produced **within the framework of the Policy itself**

- Answers policy-oriented evaluation questions
- According to a well-defined evaluation framework (i.e. Better Regulation guidelines)
- Takes into account the institutional and legislative framework

**Evidence produced on the Policy but outside its framework**

- Answers research-relevant questions
- More ‘out of the box thinking’
- Often passed a peer-review test -> methodological solidity and rigour

→ **Linkages exist**
How to make best use of different sources?

• Cross-fertilisation to improve methodologies and tools to provide robust evidence

• Promote dialogue and discussions among different ‘communities’
Experience on what works and what does not
Examples from personal experience

• **Works**
  - High EU added value in promoting discipline, setting standards and harmonised rules
  - Going on field, speak to people, collect evidence at project level
  - Promotion of experimentalism

• **Does not work**
  - Promoting principles through procedures
  - Contribution of individual projects to programme
  - Simplification should not be ‘simplistication’
Did this evidence somehow contribute to the design of the policy?
More difficult to learn from mistakes:

- Communication: improve understanding and ownership of results with good narratives
- Recognise complexity, refrain from simple answers
Take home messages
For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.

(H. L. Mencken)
THANK YOU!
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