

# Practitioner's reflections

## *The case of ERDF in Berlin*

Evaluation Summer School  
Burgas, 11/12 July 2019

Oliver Schwab  
IfS Institut für Stadtforschung und Strukturpolitik GmbH  
schwab@ifsberlin.de

# Background

- IfS working on behalf of the MA, including
  - Monitoring-related support (developing indicator system, quality control, data analysis)
  - Evaluation studies
- Long-term contract (2012 – 2024)
  - Covering the whole period from preparation to the final report
- IfS team consisting of 6 people, mostly senior level
- Close cooperation with MA

# ERDF Berlin - The OP

## PA 1 Innovation

- 605,687 mio. € total eligible cost
- 9 instruments (2 FI)

## PA 2 Investment in enterprises – start-ups

- 140,000 mio. € total eligible cost
- 4 instruments (1 FI)

ERDF OP Berlin  
1.270,4 mio. €

## PA CO2-Reduction

- 243,921mio. € total eligible cost
- 1 Instrument, different IPs

## PA 4 Integrated Urban Development

- 230,000 mio. € total eligible cost
- 3 instruments

# The current status of the OP

- End of 2018
  - Commitment rate: 81%
  - Payment rate: 38 %
  - One of the most advanced German ERDF-Ops
  - 1.698 „operations“
    - Plus 571 additional cases of support in FI
    - Only a handful already finished
- Evaluations
  - Basically per PA
  - Different settings and designs
  - All on their way
    - First interim reports available
    - First final reports 2020

# How to improve evaluation questions

# Evaluation Plan – Basis for evaluation questions

- Evaluation plan
  - Draft by evaluation team and MA
    - Based on literature review
  - Discussed in the ERDF-Working group of MC
  - Decided in the MC beginning 2016
- Content
  - General approach and framework – theory-based evaluations
  - For each PA-evaluation
    - General objective
    - Core questions
    - Basic methods
    - Basic programm theory

# Evaluation plan – basis for evaluation questions

	PA 1 – Innovation	PA 4 – integrated urban development
Objective	Evaluate the contribution to strengthening innovation activities	Evaluate the contribution to the development of the selected areas
General questions	Focus on effects on the level of enterprises: Spillovers, competitiveness, and changes in enterprises strategies Role of intervention compared to other factors.	Focus on development of the territories: Integration and participation of inhabitants, synergies of different instruments, contribution to OP-objectives

- Focus on better understanding the underlying mechanisms
- Mode of enquiry: explanatory-critical

# Evaluation concepts – concrete evaluation questions

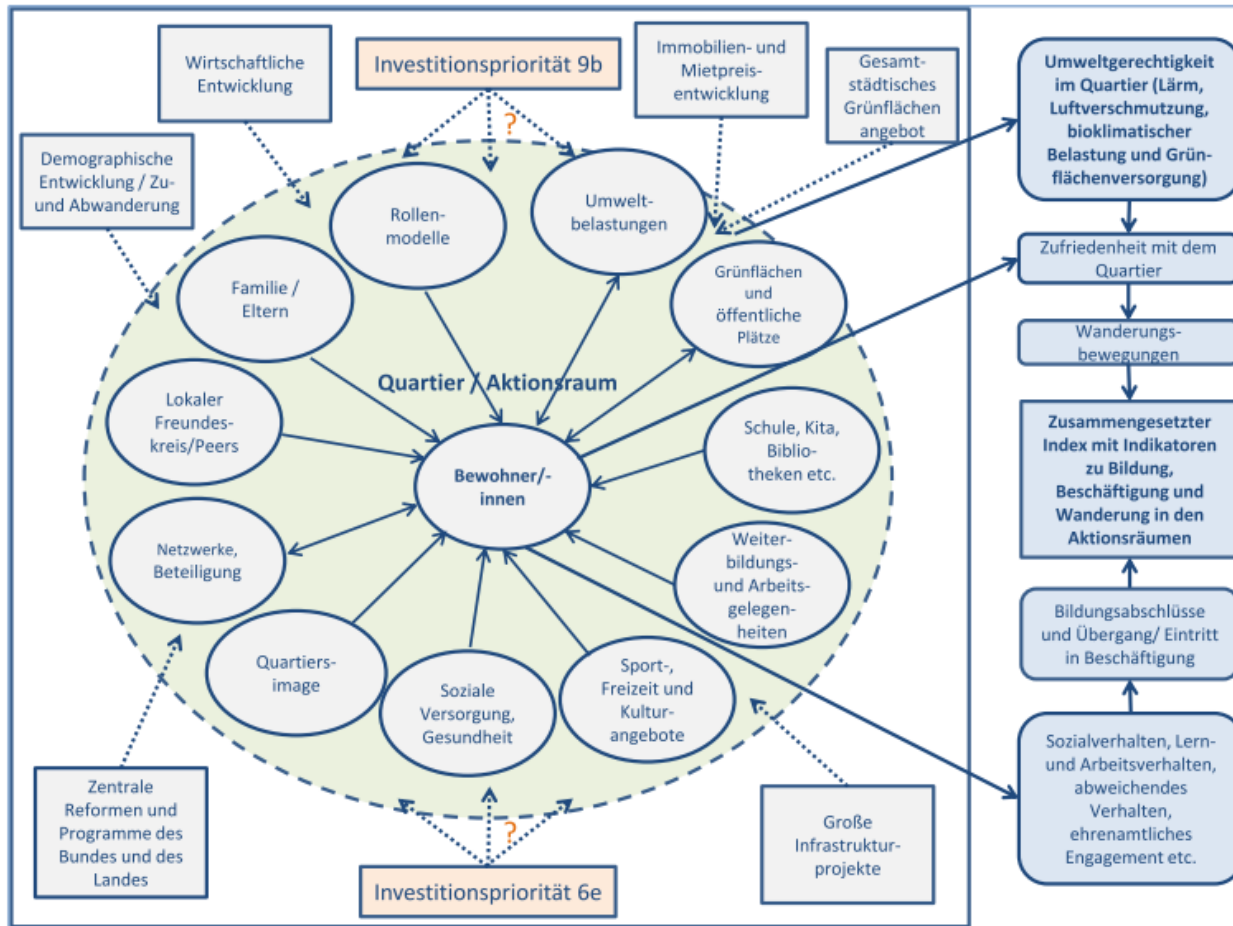
- Evaluation concepts
  - Drafted by the responsible evaluators
  - Discussed with MA and steering group – and revised after discussion
- Content
  - Concrete questions
  - Draft programme theory as framework for the evaluation work
  - Balanced with methods and budgetary limitations



# Evaluation concepts – concrete evaluation questions

	PA 1 – Innovation	PA 4 – integrated urban development
Questions	<p>On the level of the project – 3 questions</p> <p>On the level of the enterprise/research organisation – 3 questions</p> <p>External factors – 3 questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence on innovation process?</li> <li>- Success factors for innovation</li> <li>- Role of framework conditions</li> </ul>	<p>10 questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in the selected areas</li> <li>- Contribution of the intervention</li> <li>- Synergies</li> </ul>

# Evaluation questions – link to theory of change



# Evaluation process – refining the questions

- Feedback with the steering groups
  - PA 4 evaluation
    - First phase 2017 - Interim Report end of 2017 focus on baseline data and programme theory
    - Second evaluation phase 2019/2020 – focus on results
    - Decision to adopt the evaluation approach
      - Research on smaller territorial units
      - Questions: interplay between different developments in smaller neighbourhoods for the broader territory
  - PA 1 evaluation
    - Adjusting evaluation questions – stronger focus on selected mechanisms in enterprises

# Evaluation questions – programme design

- Designing the programme
  - Decision on objectives (and result indicators)
  - Decision on the structure of the intervention (number of specific objectives?)
    - PA 1 – one specific objective
    - PA 4 – two specific objectives
  - (implicit) selection of the mechanisms that are likely to lead to effects

# Evaluation questions - comments

- Process involving MA, other partners and evaluation team
  - Main interest of administrative partners: either technical or general learning – strategic issues of less importance
- Comparatively clear focus of the evaluations
- Programme theories as framework to locate evaluation questions
- Evaluation competence to balance questions and methods
- Opportunity to adjust budget and schedule underway

# Evaluating whole programmes?

# Evaluating whole programmes? - Internal Coherence

- Mainly PA 2 – single instruments without being clearly embedded in a strategy
- PA 3 – decarbonisation: targets different sectors (Public buildings, transport, enterprises) with different mechanisms leading to effects
- Process of developing the programme theory as test for coherence
  - PA 2: no artificially coherent programme theory
  - PA 3: several theories of change instead of one coherent model

# Evaluating whole programmes? – External coherence

- Instrumental Context
  - Other interventions of relevance
    - PA 3 with a rapidly changing political environment and growing set of instruments on national level
  - Relevant external developments
    - PA 4 significant growth of the population of Berlin (-> housing market)
- Explicitly formulate external factors of relevance in the programm theories
  - If necessary, adjust programm theories underway



# Evaluating whole programmes? – strategic coherence

- Characteristics of the ERDF Berlin
  - Weak strategic framework
    - Both on OP level and in domestic policy
  - Varying strategic basis of the single Ops
    - PA 1: Explicit strategy
    - PA 2: No clear strategy
    - PA 3: Implicit, but partly weak strategy
    - PA 4: Clear, but complex strategy
  - Policy Framework
    - PA 3 – decision on a climate policy act in Berlin in 2016

# Evaluating whole programmes? – Synergies and interrelations

- Looking at target groups
  - Which parts of the interventions are addressing the same target groups?
    - Enterprises in PA 1, 2 and 3
    - „Overlapping“ interventions? Interrelations? Synergies? Or opposite effects?
- Looking at territorial units
  - In how far do interventions in a given territory interact?
- Use cross-cutting issues
  - Issues like sustainability, Gender can offer different perspectives

# Evaluating whole programmes? – Comments

- Defining the scope and scale of the evaluation
  - Take the context into account:
    - Other relevant instruments
    - Target groups and their needs - Interrelation between mechanisms
    - Policy strategies
      - Sectoral or general
- Subject of evaluation limited to the content of the OP

# How to make sense of the results of an evaluation

# Evaluation process as learning process

- Ongoing exchange on evaluation related issues
  - Evaluation plan
  - Evaluation concepts and reports
- Formats
  - ERDF working group of the MC
  - Steering groups for the evaluations
  - Informal exchange (!)

# Evaluation process as learning process

- Actors involved determine the way of interaction
  - Forming coalitions of those who are open-minded and interested
- Developing an „evaluative attitude“
  - Overcome sceptical attitudes
  - Let people „connect“ to evaluations
    - Take their concerns seriously
    - Get them involved in discussing findings and drawing conclusions
  - Show the usefulness of evaluation

# Evaluation influence - difficulties

- Balance technical and strategic aspects
  - Tendency to ask for technical adjustments
  - Lack of a format for strategic and more political exchange
  - Evaluation influence more in administration than in policy making?
- Balance between evidence and interest
  - e.g. single instruments (PA 2) can hardly be justified by evidence on results, but are not disputable politically as they are supported by important interests

# How to make sense of the results of an evaluation

- Problem-focused concept of use
  - Knowledge to be used for a concrete decision
    - Focus on the decision point
    - Timing extremely critical
- Learning-focused concept of use
  - Knowledge contributing to the body of knowledge of an organisation (-> policy learning, organisational learning)
  - Knowledge as part of a „stream“
    - Ongoing process of changing knowledge
    - Diffuse and indirect effects
    - Timing not so critical



- ERDF OP Berlin – Evaluation Plan (German only)
  - <https://www.berlin.de/sen/wirtschaft/gruenden-und-foerdern/europaeische-strukturfonds/efre/der-efre/operationelle-programme/das-operationelle-programm-des-efre-2014-2020/#bewertung>
  - Here you can also find the interim Report for the evaluation of Axis 1, 3 and 4