

# Evaluation in Times of Uncertainty

S3 Targeted Support – Horizontal Activities  
Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain, 23 October 2019

# Uncertainty in the UK

*(based on English colloquialisms and idioms and inspired by the fairy tales of Old Mother Goose)*

- Parliament says Brexit is a wild goose chase
- Boris claims Brexit is the goose that lays a golden egg
- Parliament says that a wild goose never laid a tame egg
- Boris promises that the goose will hang high after Brexit
- Parliament gets goose bumps at the thought of a hard Brexit
- Boris claims that Remainers have booed Rees Moog's goose
- Parliament reprimands Boris for goosing at the dinner table
- Boris says that what's good for the goose is good for the gander
- Parliament claims that the Brexit deal tries to shoe the goose
- Boris asks Parliament to goose the engine and get Brexit done
- Parliament claims the Brexit goose is cooked
- Boris threatens to goose step his way across the UK

# Towards the Next Programming Period

- During the last programming period, support for regional innovation was conditional upon the formulation and implementation of a Regional Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) and the development of an accompanying monitoring system – but without any formal obligation to conduct RIS3 evaluations
- In the next programming period, **support for smart specialisation strategies will be dependent on the ability of regions to satisfy an ‘enabling condition’ – namely the ‘good governance of national or regional smart specialisation strategies’**

# Fulfilment Criteria for the Enabling Condition

- Currently, the fulfilment criteria for this ‘enabling condition’ specify that smart specialisation strategies shall be supported by:
  1. Up-to-date analysis of the bottlenecks for innovation, including digitalisation
  2. The existence of a competent regional/national institution or body that is responsible for the management of the smart specialisation strategy
  3. Monitoring and evaluation tools to measure performance towards the objectives of the strategy
  4. Effective functioning of the entrepreneurial discovery process
  5. Actions necessary to improve national or regional research and innovation systems
  6. Actions to manage industrial transition
  7. Measures for international collaboration

# Uncertainty

- Uncertainty currently exists with regard to:
  - The precise formulation of the enabling condition and the associated fulfilment criteria in the legislative texts for the next programming period
  - The meaning and interpretation of certain elements of the fulfilment criteria (What does industrial transition entail and what types of actions are needed to manage it? What types of international collaboration should be considered? What type of evaluation tools should be used?)
  - The ways in which regions will be adjudged to have satisfied the fulfilment criteria

# Certainty

- There is greater certainty, however, about some aspects
- For example, the formulation and implementation of RIS3s will still need to be based on:
  - Oversight by a competent managerial authority
  - A sound analytical base
  - An inclusive entrepreneurial discovery process
  - Actions aimed at improving national and regional innovation systems
  - Evidence of a functioning monitoring system
- There is also likely be a more overt focus than hitherto on evidence of the use of evaluation tools

# Monitoring and Evaluation

- The clear implication for the monitoring and evaluation of RIS3s in the next programming period is that the lessons learned during the establishment of monitoring systems in the current period will still be pertinent
- So too will the lessons learnt concerning evaluation theory and practice during the course of this S3 Targeted Support Action and the development of the MOOC that preceded it
- The onus is on regional and national authorities to recognise that both monitoring and evaluation are essential ingredients of the good governance arrangements that need to be in place to justify support for regional innovation

# Getting Ahead of the Game

- Ensuring that sound monitoring and evaluation practices are in place will be a necessity, but what can be done in parallel to get ahead of the game?
- Three suggestions are conceptually linked to some of the other activities discussed in this session, namely those that focus on:
  - Learning from the experience of others
  - Inter-regional cooperation
  - Industrial transitions

# Lessons from Other Regions

- Michalis Metaxas has today presented the results of a preliminary assessment of the RIS3 Monitoring System in Greece
- One suggestion would be for other regions to conduct similar assessments - of both monitoring and evaluation activities - and for these to be discussed and compared in open fora
- The immediate short-term aim would be mutual learning about good practice in monitoring and evaluation
- A longer-term aim would be the establishment of a repository covering not only monitoring and evaluation practices but also the results of such activities and the uses to which they are put

# Inter-Regional Cooperation

- Elisa Gerussi has put forward today a proposal for inter-regional cooperation
- A proposal specific to monitoring and evaluation could also be proposed
- Comparison of different monitoring and evaluation systems in dedicated fora is valuable, but there is much to commend the learning-by-doing that would occur if like-minded regions collaborated in the construction of shared M&E systems
- Variable geometry arrangements would allow regions to participate on the basis of a variety of criteria (similar goals and objectives/similar RIS3 orientations/ contiguous borders etc.)

# Industrial Transitions

- You have also heard today from Dimitrios Pontikakis
- He explained that a focus on the management of industrial transitions is a key fulfilment criterion
- He also described the evolution of a methodology to assist regions in their efforts to design and effect such transitions
- The evolution of monitoring and evaluation systems that are capable of tracking and assessing these transitions is also a prerequisite for the adequate management of such transitions
- Efforts to design appropriate M&E systems should therefore go hand-in hand with efforts to understand, design, implement and manage such transitions

# But Now It's Your Turn

- To discuss how you are preparing for the next programming period
- To offer comments on some of the suggestions you have heard today
- To offer suggestions of your own
- And to report back to plenary
- Bon chance!

**But remember.....**

You've all come a long way, but there's not far to go



Or maybe not

