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GOVERNING THE EVALUATION OF SMART SPECIALISATION STRATEGIES: EMERGING NEW CHALLENGES

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Territorial strategy, entrepreneurial discovery & evaluation

- Smart specialisation has shaken up the regional innovation policy scene
 - A merging of existing place-based innovation policies with new industrial policies
 - Aranguren *et al.* (2015; 2016), Foray (2013), Kroll (2015), McCann (2015), Morgan (2013; 2016), amongst many others ...
- Yet the defining characteristic of smart specialisation is how regional prioritisation of innovation investments happens
 - Priorities should emerge from an ‘entrepreneurial discovery process’ (EDP)
 - Territorial strategy, not government strategy: participation of ‘quadruple helix’
- This implies above ***a core concern with regional governance***, through which the vested interests of different agents can be articulated in a collective identification of priorities to be pursued (& supported by government policy)
- While evaluation is acknowledged as a key element of smart specialisation strategies, little emphasis has been put on the ***governance of evaluation***

Why is governance central?

- EDP requires shift from fixed plans to open processes
 - Territorial strategy is ‘alive’
- EDP is sensitive
 - Ultimately about making choices about thematic priorities, which are difficult
- EDP is complex
 - Multiple levels of territory, multiple layers & domains of decision-making

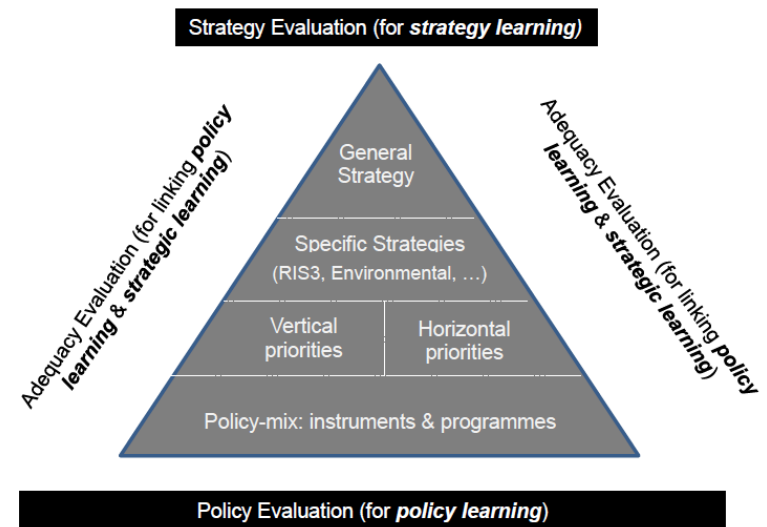
Governance is central because the EDP is a pluralistic context (Lynn, 2012;

Howlett and Ramesh, 2014; Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2016):

While territorial strategy implies a shared vision, getting there requires navigating through a range of different interests (sometimes contradictory) and potential conflicts among different actors

Evaluating territorial strategy in a pluralistic context

- Implies more than evaluating policy and/or policy-mixes (which is complex itself)
- Important to shift from an accountability focus to a focus on policy and strategy learning
 - Evaluation as a dynamic process of strategic intelligence
- Evaluation takes places in a highly pluralistic context
 - Different interests over what to evaluate and who is involved
 - Evaluating public but also private actions

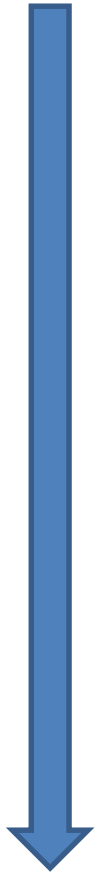


Source: Magro & Wilson (2015)

These characteristics make governance of RIS3 evaluation a challenging process in which there is no single owner but the region itself.

Relationship between evaluation in an EDP context and its orientation

Increase the need of a new governance model

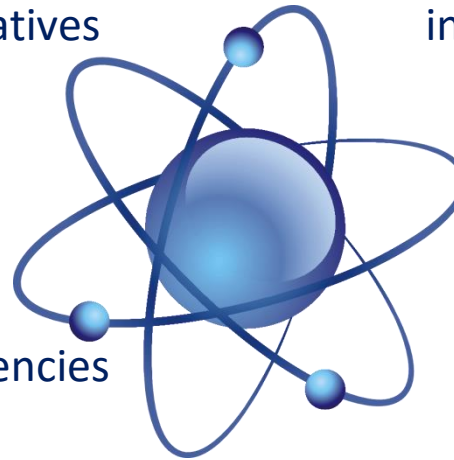


Evaluation purposes linked to EDP	Actor interested	Effect on evaluation orientation
Compliance with EU requirements	Government	Accountability
Identifying new activities within the territory	Government, operational actors	Focused on monitoring of new activities development
Efficient use of public funds	Government and agencies	Policy evaluation (impact approaches)
Contribution of public policy to territorial strategy	Government, agencies	Evaluation as a policy learning process
Commitment with the territorial strategy (PPP)	Government, agencies, operational actors	Evaluation as a strategic learning process
Involvement of quadruple helix	All actors	Evaluation governance spread among all the actors

Actors involved in the EDP in the Basque Country: Model based on steering groups

Government layer: regional government (different departments), provincial councils municipalities/cities representatives

Operative layer: knowledge organisations: universities, technology centres, other research institutes



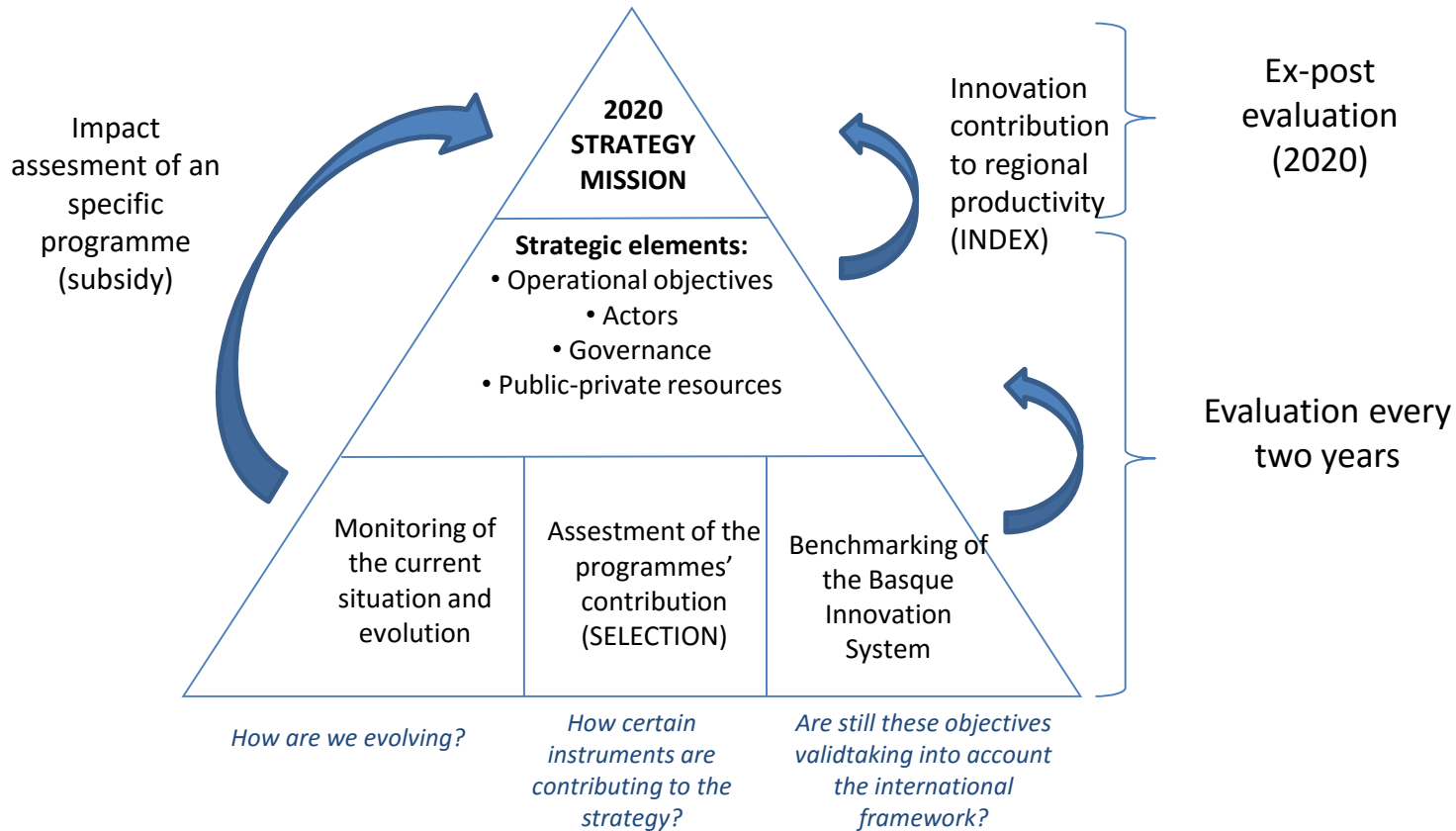
Administrative layer: regional agencies from different departments, agencies from provincial councils, agencies depending on municipalities/cities

Operative layer: industry: cluster associations and companies

Operative layer: others: hospitals, other associations, civil society?

Differences in interests in the EDP and also differences in power can be seen, not only in terms of actors, but also depending on the specific priority (i.e. cluster associations more powerful in the energy priority)

S3 evaluation model in the Basque Country

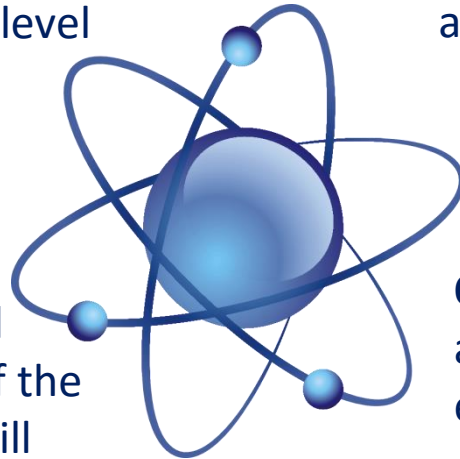


ADVANCES IN A NEW APPROACH TO EVALUATION FOR THE STRATEGY BUT STILL BASED ON A TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE MODEL

Actors involved in the S3 evaluation in the Basque Country

Government layer: regional government is the 'owner of the S3 evaluation', fragmented multi-level approach

Administrative layer: regional innovation agency in charge of the evaluation process, which is still fragmented in other agencies



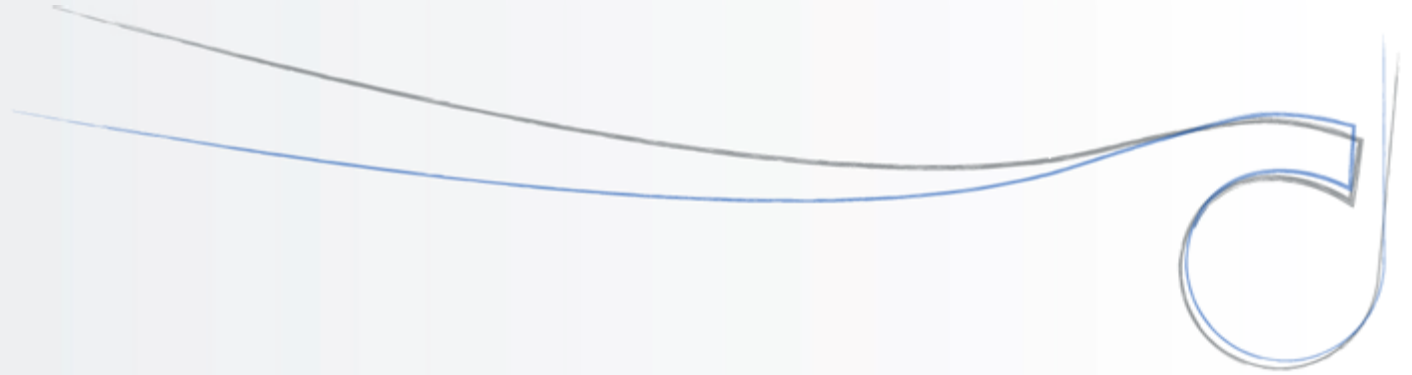
Operative layer: knowledge organisations: they act as unit of analysis in some specific evaluations

Operative layer: industry: they act as unit of analysis in some specific evaluations

Operative layer: civil society missing in evaluation exercise

Key elements territorial strategy evaluation governance

- The EDP provides the pluralistic context for territorial strategy evaluation
 - It therefore conditions the evaluation process itself
 - Appropriate & feasible evaluation approaches will depend on the balances between different actors (public and private)
- This makes it very difficult to design S3 evaluation from the beginning
 - Only general principles can be set
 - Evaluation as a process that evolves with the EDP
- There is no 'right approach' to S3 monitoring and evaluation, because what to evaluate (and how) should be determined as part of the EDP governance
 - This will ensure evaluation plays the desired strategic intelligence role
 - But failures in governance imply fragmented evaluation



Thank You

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