



# The Usage of PART in the European Context

## Possibilities and Caveats

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# Scope of the Presentation

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- **Content:**
  - brief description of features of American, European & Austrian evaluation system
  - description of **PART characteristics**
  - **Pros and Cons** for applying such a tool in Europe and especially in Austria
- **What this presentation is about:**
  - **discussion paper**, based mainly on literature review
- **What this presentation is NOT about:**
  - thorough Appraisal (“Evaluation”) of PART

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# The American Evaluation System (I)

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- **Output measurement in the US:**
    - **Cost/Benefit Analysis** in the 1930s
    - **Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS)** in the 1960s
    - **Management by Objectives (MBO)** etc.
    - long-standing history
  - **More modern approaches:**
    - **GPRA** (Government Performance and Results Act)
    - **PART** (Program Assessment Rating Tool)
- **Aim: to increase accountability to political authorities**

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# The American Evaluation System (II)

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- **GPR:**
  - enacted in 1993
  - Calls for “*development, application and yearly update of outcome/performance measurements for federally funded support programs*”
  - Agencies have to write **strategic plans** and to publish **annual reports**

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# The American Evaluation System (III)

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- **PART:**
  - **Specific instrument “... to evaluate programme performance, determine the causes for strong or weak performance and take action to remedy deficiencies and achieve better results”**
  - Gave/gives **“teeth to GPRA”**
  - Based on PART: Performance Management System to **replace** programme evaluations?

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# The American Evaluation System (IV)

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- Some distinguished features of the American Evaluation System (if compared to Europe):
  - High usage of **peer reviews**, especially for R&D programmes
  - Alternatively: **more quantitative approaches** since the 1960s
  - More pronounced reliance on **quantitative methods & figures** to determine programme success
  - More pronounced usage of the terms “**outcome**” and “**performance**” measurement, as opposed to “evaluation”

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# The American Evaluation System (V)

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- **Suggestions for Improvement (Roessner, 2002):**
  - Outcome measurement improvements linked to **advances in innovation theory**
  - Taking into account more network effects
  - Issues of **skewed “value”** of supported R&D projects
  - More usage of **formative methods** (e.g., case studies)

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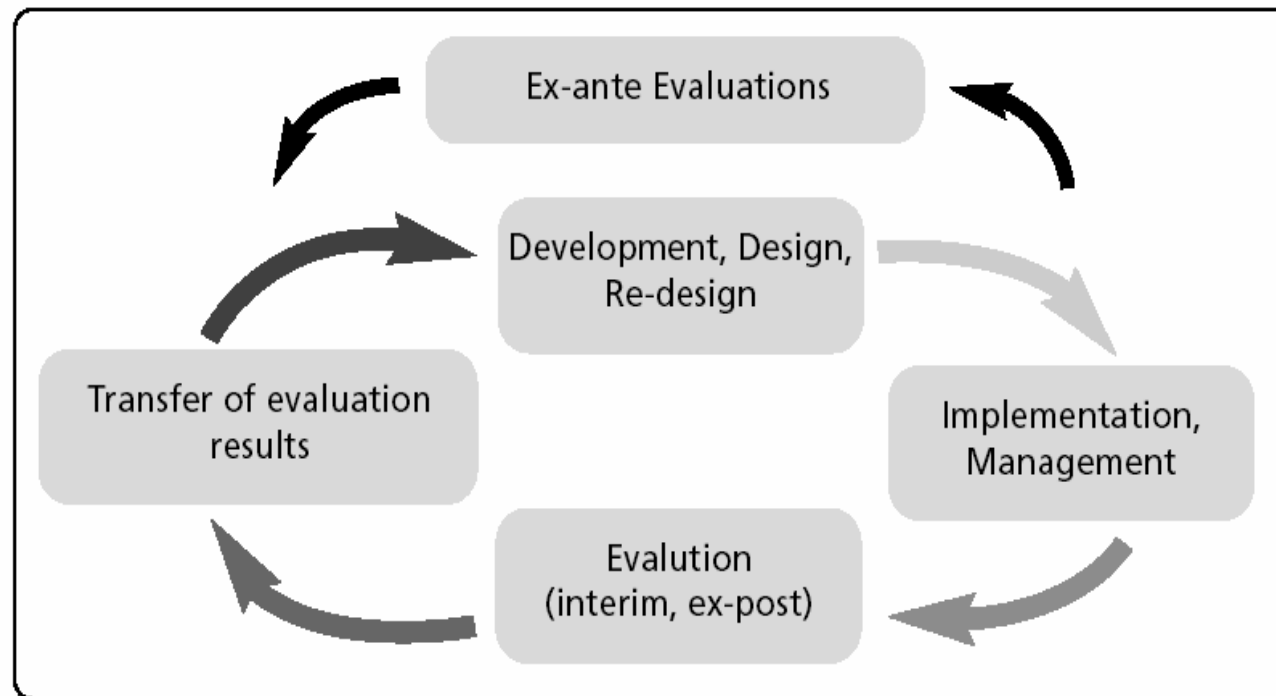
# The European Evaluation System (I)

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- **High fragmentation** across different European nations
  - “There is **no single way of doing research evaluation** in Europe” (Luukkonen 2002)
- Usage of the term “**evaluation**”
  - Seems to infer more neutral stance towards methods employed (qualitative/quantitative) as well as aims of evaluation

# The European Evaluation System (II)

## Ideal Situation: Policy Cycle



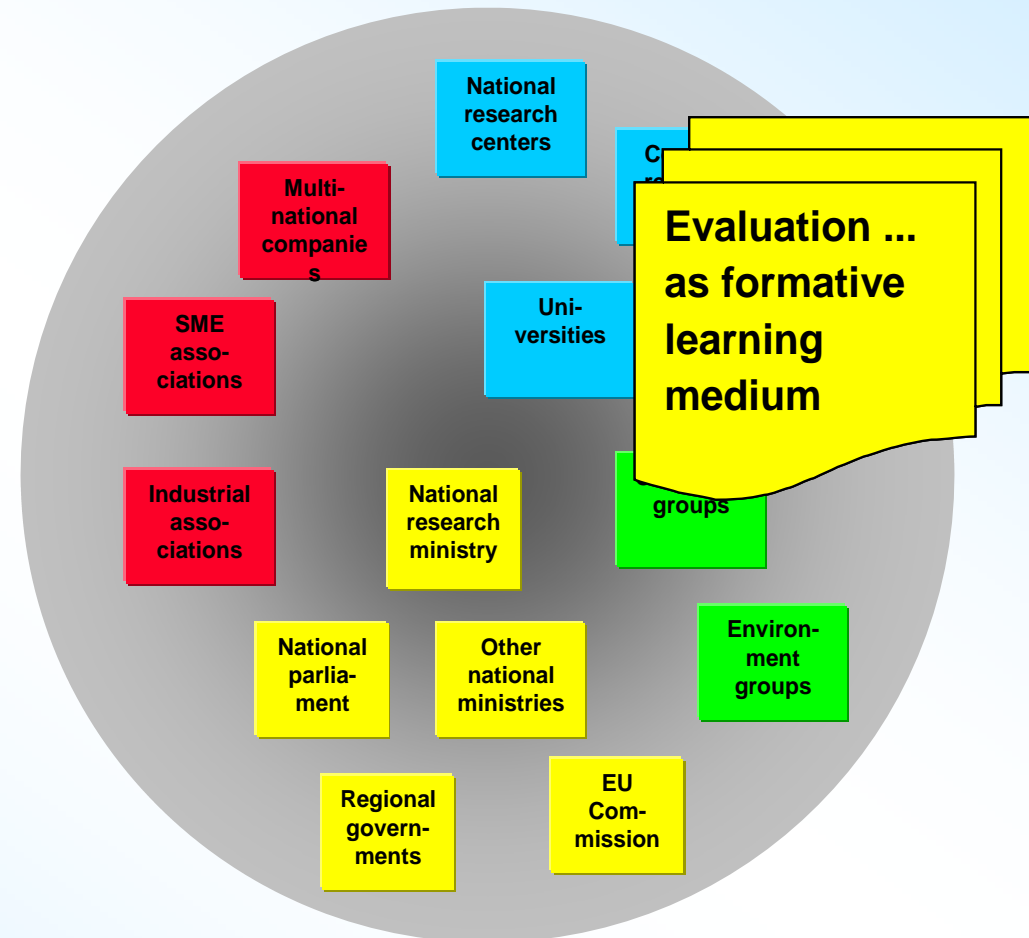
Source: Platform Research and Technology Evaluation, 2003-2005

# The European Evaluation System (III)

## Kuhlmann's Policy Arena:

- “evaluation as **strategic intelligence**”
- **reflexive process** for all stakeholders

→ **Evaluation is more than performance measurement**



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# The European Evaluation System (IV)

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- Some **distinguished features** of European evaluation practices:
  - Due to seemingly higher reliance on policy cycle: **less ex-post focused**
  - **However: Lack of long-term impact analysis**
  - Higher fragmentation makes it **difficult to compare different evaluation results**
  - **Dedication** of policy makers necessary

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# The European Evaluation System (V)

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- (contd.):
  - Growing body of **(semi-)professional evaluators** with different backgrounds
  - Creation of **evaluation standards**
  - Departure from “pure” panel reviews (instead: **mixed panels**)
  - Increased tendency to put **evaluations out to tender**
  - Trend towards **transnational evaluation consortia**

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# PART in Action (I)

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- **PART** is basically a **standardised questionnaire**.
- **Appr. 30 questions, in four assessment areas:**
  - **Purpose and design of a programme:**
    - to analyse whether aspects are **clearly defined and defensible**
  - **Strategic Planning**
    - existence and validity of annual and long-term goals
  - **Results**
    - management issues, financial oversight, programme improvement actions
  - **Accountability**
    - demonstration of results with accuracy and consistency

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# PART in Action (II)

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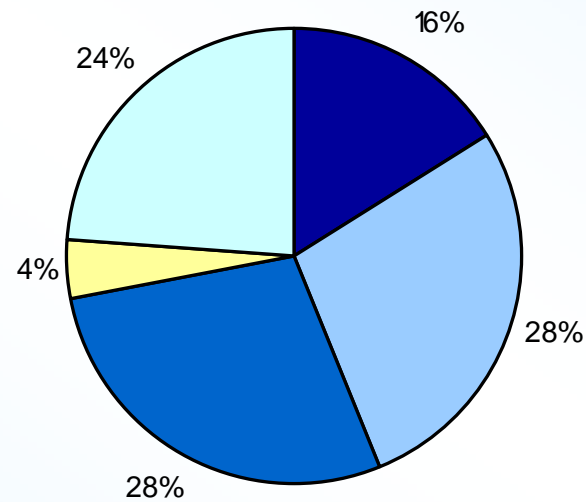
- Each question has to be **answered shortly** (yes and no), supported by detailed explanations and **evidence!**
- Depending on the supportive evidence, answers in each of the four sections are **graded on a 100-tier scale**
- The four scores are combined together for the final verdict:
  - **Effective**
  - **Moderately effective**
  - **Adequate**
  - **Ineffective**
  - **Results not demonstrated**

# PART in Action (III)

- **Examples of PART Questions:**
  - Is the programme purpose clear?
  - Is the programme design free of major flaws that would limit the effectiveness or efficiency?
  - Does the programme have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?
  - **Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted...? (!!!!)**
  - ...
- **Similar/identical** to questions that would be asked in normal programme evaluations
- **Reliance** and/or **Incorporation** of evaluation results
- PART to be carried out **by OMB staff on all federal programmes (appr. 200 programmes a year)**

# PART in Action (IV)

## PART ratings of federal U.S. programmes, 2006



■ effective ■ moderately effective ■ adequate ■ ineffective ■ results not demonstrated

Source: Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2006

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# PART in Action (V)

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- Apparent: A lot of **controversy about the usefulness** of PART among U.S. researchers.
- **Benefits:**
  1. **Revitalisation of evaluation** within an agency
  2. **Self-assessment** and **subsequent planning for enhancements**
  3. **Development of new assessment tools** and **performance measures**
  4. **Attention** on evaluation as a useful **tool for management**
  5. **Interest** in a **standardised review** of agency programmes
  6. **Interest** in aligning PART closely to agency programmes

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# PART in Action (VI)

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- **“Challenges”:**
  1. **Development of adequate performance measures**
  2. **Usage of 100-tier scale** (mistakenly suggests accuracy)
  3. **Subjectivity** on the part of the examiners
  4. **Overall context** (only individual programmes are assessed)
  5. **Programme improvements** (hardly reflected due to time-lag and being results oriented)

# PART in Action (VII)

- **“Challenges”** contd.:
    6. **Administrative costs** (PARTing every year every programme too expensive)
    7. **GPRA vs. PART** (Redundancy?)
    8. **Comparability** (for programmes from completely different areas)
    9. **Usage** of PART as a **political tool**
    10. **Relationship** between **funding decisions** and **PART scores**
    11. ....
- **In total, 24 “challenges” have been documented!**

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# The Austrian Context

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- **Multitude of Actors and Programmes** in the field of Science and Technology:
  - 3 ministries, 2 federal funds, 1 research council, 9 regional authorities with their agencies...
  - In 2001: more than **50 federal programmes**
  - Some programmes **reflect policy cycle** model or even the Kuhlmann model, **others do not.**
  - **Generally: Little Transparency** (who did what evaluation, how was it done etc.)
  - In S&T: **Establishment of a platform and evaluation standards**
  - But: No formal evaluation system established for every sort of federal support programme

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# Usage of PART in Austria (I)

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**Q: Can PART help increase transparency?**

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# Usage of PART in Austria (II)

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- **Most probably NOT**, if it is a direct copy of the U.S. version, because of these main reasons:
    - **Top-Down Implementation vs. Reflective Processes**
    - **Administrative load/opportunity costs:** maintenance of PART and Policy Cycle in parallel too costly
    - **Safety by numbers** issue (especially in R&D)
    - **One-size fits all** approach
- **All of these issues are in direct opposition to the present evaluation culture**

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# Usage of PART in Austria (III)

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**However, one has to acknowledge that**

- there is an expressed demand for greater comparability/transparency.**
- The policy cycle model has its disadvantages (e.g., necessary dedication of policy makers etc.)**

# Usage of PART in Austria

- **Maybe there is a place for a PART-like tool, if it is (compared to the US) revised and scaled down...**
  - ...to work more as a **mandatory “balance sheet”/“executive summary”** for normal (but also mandatory) programme evaluations;
  - ..., puts **less emphasis on scores/results** and more on the evaluation element;
  - ..., carried out **by independent evaluators**, using tender procedures;
  - ..., conceived in a **“policy arena” context** suggested by Kuhlmann, involving all actors.
  - ..., and **flanking measures** (such as meta-evaluations, context studies, evaluation standards) are put in place, too.
- **Aim:** A results/evaluation report database as a central information source and resource.



**Thank you for your attention!**

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