
Evaluating the novel German “VIP” measure – addressing the stage of translational research between basic research and valorisation

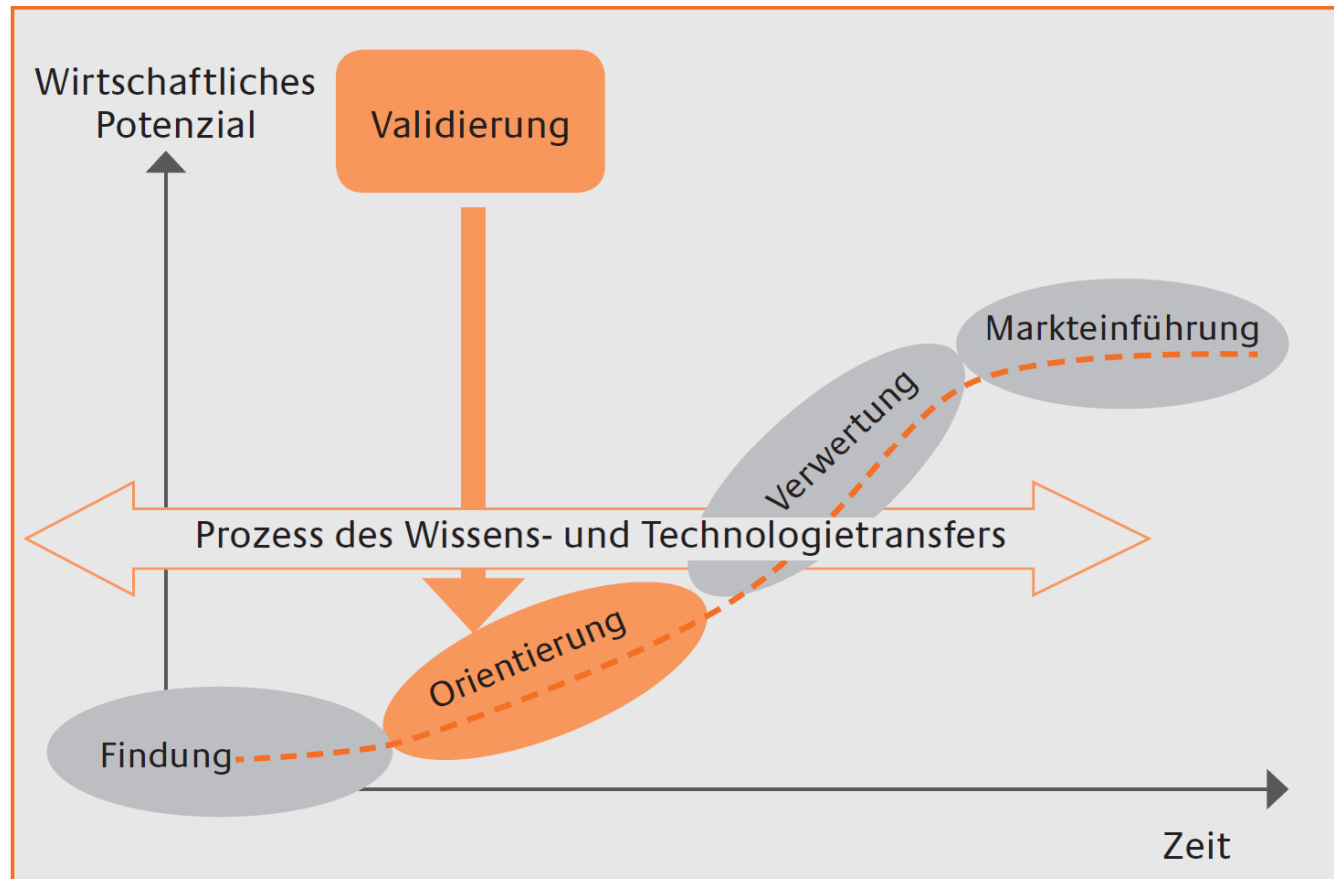
Evaluation of STI policies,
instruments and organisations:
new horizons and new challenges,
14 November 2013, Vienna
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Overview

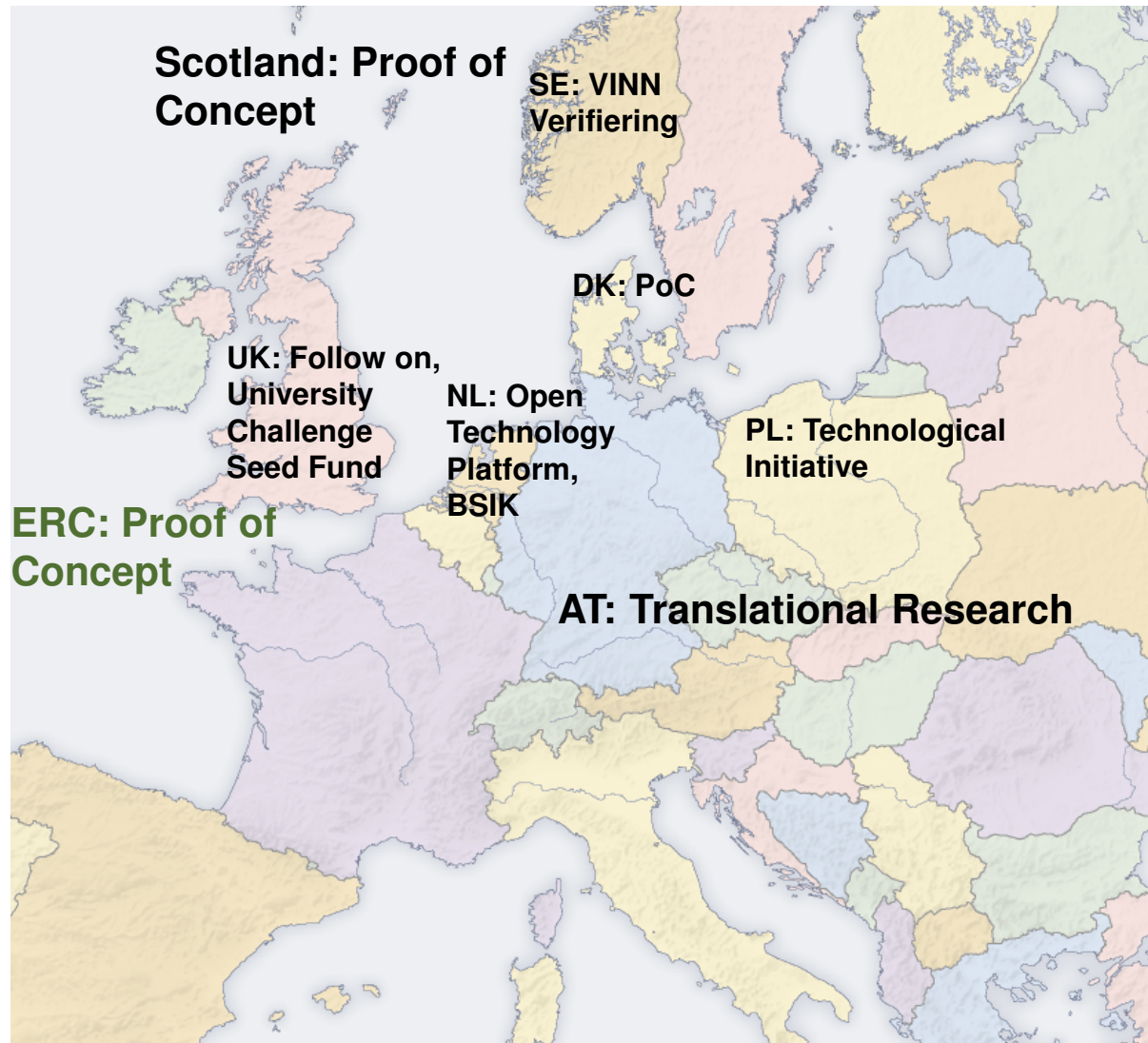
- What is novel about this funding measure?
- Does this require new approaches in evaluation?
- First conclusions about the methodology of the evaluation

The Idea of "Validation of the Innovation Potential of Scientific Research – VIP"



Source: German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF)

There are comparable approaches elsewhere



VIP is novel because...

- It **focuses** on the translational phase: It assumes, that the orientation phase can be **long** (~3yrs) and requires research activities (e.g. to test feasibility), which means that **considerable funding** is required per project (max. 1.5 mill. €, while international examples support projects with a lower amount (~0.1 to 0.5 mill. €).
- It has a „**research orientation**“: It aims to attract „not the usual suspects“, but researchers so far less interested in valorisation of their results. It leaves considerable degrees of freedom, offering a 3-year funding, exclusion of industrial partners and no milestones regarding the specification of a valorisation strategy.

Tender specifications of the evaluation

- ... are **comprehensive**: Themes of the evaluation are
 - evaluation of the programme approach
 - localization of VIP in the promotional toolkit of the federal government (and the federal states)
 - evaluation of the programme implementation
 - impacts on society and the environment and
 - effects on the innovation system.
- ... require an **accompanying** measure and opportunities for learning.

Systemic Interpretation and focus of the evaluators

Conceptual challenges are:

- Identifying the needs of the target group and assisting the programme owners in addressing them.
- Contribute to raising awareness for valorization (and a cultural change).
- Offering accompaniment and an exchange forum about aspects of “responsible research and innovation”.

Methodologically, this means:

- Multi-perspectival approach, involving all relevant actors and triangulation of results.
- Communicative and learning methods: focus groups, good-practice workshops
- Constructive Technology Assessment: Check at project start; workshops with selected projects

Some conclusions, rather questions:

Does real stakeholder participation fit with obligations vis-à-vis the client of the evaluation?

How to balance the accompanying approach with the impartiality of the evaluator?

Can evaluation have systemic effects, e.g. contribute to behavioural additionality of the funded, the „maybe-funded“ (and the funders?)?



Thank you!

Contact

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