Monitoring and Evaluation in joint calls of "horizontal – INCO" ERA-NET and ERA-NET PLUS actions

Martin Felix Gajdusek, Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI)

Nikos Sidiropoulos, University of Athens, Centre of Financial Studies

Why? - our motivation

- To explore the existing situation regarding monitoring and evaluation processes
- To identify and understand the practical dimension of transnational/joint funding
- White spot in horizontal ERA NETs as of mid 2013
- Awareness of processes on funders side + evidence
- Feasibility of better monitoring and future evaluations
- To provide recommendations for future monitoring and evaluation processes
- Personal involvement

Object of Analysis

Horizontal INCO ERA NETs calls

- Policy driven, policy impact
- Joint identification process of topic(s)
- Regional/national priorities
- Pilot character
- Smaller budgets
- Funders activities portfolio is broad
- Intl. co-op departments at ministries, rarely agencies
- Bundling bilateral funding
- Excellence criteria + Policy driven action
- EU MS effort + country/region effort
- Variety of funding rules beyond EU MS
- Importance of EC labeling

Thematic ERA NETs calls

- Indirectly policy driven
- Given thematic focus + finetuning
- Limited regional scope
- Maturity: Repeated, multiple calls
- Substantial budgets
- Funders rather focused on funding
- Agencies of thematic programmes, partly owners
- Integrating int. co-op. component
- Excellence, building critical mass
- EU MS funding is driving force
- EU MS funding rules (exceptions)

Impact dimensions of horizontal+thematic ERA NET calls

- ## Impact on funding parties
  - Institutional learning
  - Enhanced visibility (nat., internat.)
  - Justification of public spending
  - Networking…

- ## Impact on final beneficiaries
  - Organisational/individual Researchers outputs, learning dimension
  - Adding own funds
  - Additional outputs
  - Networking

Research questions and assumptions

- Do systematic assessments of call outputs and results exist?

- Are there clear "programme" objectives reproduced in the call?

- Would clear objectives allow (better) monitoring and evaluation processes?

- Existence of any indicators?

- Prevision of any evaluation in the call text?

- Feasibility of and preconditions for advanced monitoring and evaluation processes

Example SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

- EC impetus/framework trigger process
- Motives and perception on side of funders (MS, AC)
- Beneficiaries response to call and take up in projects
- Support Structure JCS
- Real activities (spendings, outputs, results)

- What are the measurable effects?
- Net effects dimensions?

Methodology and approach

- Survey to INCO ERA NETs + thematic ERA NETs
- Observations of monitoring processes

Approached ERA-NETs

Target country/region	Acronym	Calls: Funding completed	Calls: Open call or Ongoing Funding	Calls: Planned	M€ Commited [1]
India	NEWINDIGO	1	1		6.82
Japan	CONCERT JAPAN		1		5.29[2]
Korea	KORANET	1	1		2.93
Russia	ERA NET RUS	1	1	1	24.84
Africa	ERA AFRICA		1		1.07
Black Sea Countries	BS ERA NET		1		3.50
Latin America (FP6)	EULANEST	1			1.57
Western Balkan Countries	SEE-ERA.NET PLUS	1			3.41
Target country/thematic ERA-NET	Acronym	Calls: Funding completed	Calls: Open call or Ongoing Funding	Calls: Planned	M€ Commited [1]
ICT+Agriculture (Israel)	ICT AGR(incl. -2)	1	1	4	9.33[3]
Forest research (Algeria, Morocco, Tunesia)	FORESTERRA		1		1.50[4]
Biotechnology (Russia in 8th call)	ERA NET EURO TRANSBIO	4	3	5	176.19[5]
Israel, Canada, US (parallel US-NSF call)	ERACAPS		1	1	20.00

[1] See Annex I (Sept 2013) in: Bertrand, E. and Niehoff, J.; Report on ERA-NET, ERA-NET Plus and JPIs and their joint calls; European Commission (2013)
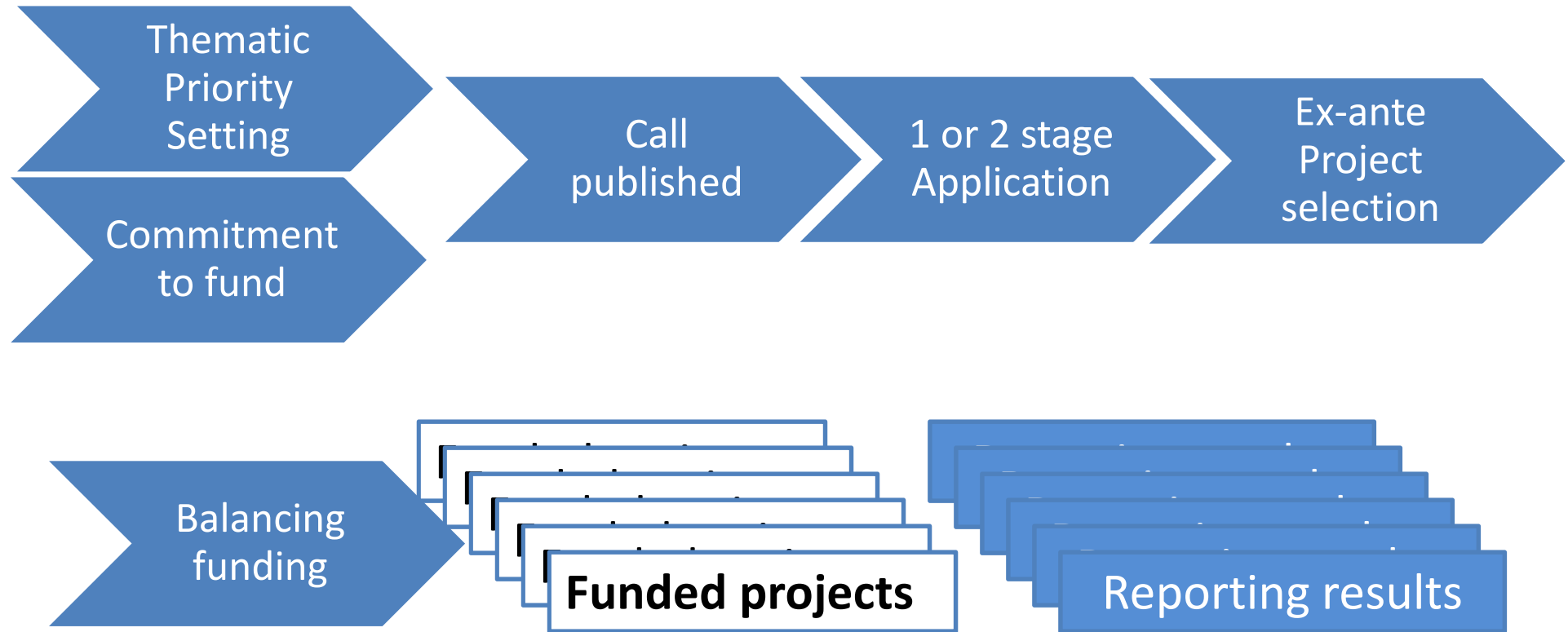[2] http://www.concertjapan.eu/system/files/CJ%20JC%20Call%20Text%20and%20Regulations_Final.pdf last accessed on 1/11/2013
[3] Excluding upcoming funding in follow up project ICT-AGR-2
[4] Recent launch of call
[5] Excluding the 3 calls planned in a follow up project to the ERA-NET

INCO ERA-NETs: Is funding simple?

Thematic Priority Setting

Commitment to fund

Call published

1 or 2 stage Application

Ex-ante Project selection

Balancing funding

Funded projects

Reporting results

Neither documentation!

Documentation ?

Non covered thematics

Not included funders

Non applicants

Ineligible

Not invited to stage 2 (if)

Available reviewers

Matching thematics (if)

Excluded during balancing

Differing funding rules Coordinator vs. Partners Organisational benefits EU MS, non EU MS partners

Timing (interim, at end, after) Spendings Outputs and Results Impact in some years

And much more!

Survey

- Thematic priority setting and objectives of call
- Ex-ante selection criteria
- Monitoring process during implementation
- Systematic collection of outputs
- Current versus feasible evaluation tasks
- Need for information/training on evaluation
- Other evaluation planned: Impact?

Priority setting and objectives of call

	Policy driven objectives	Motivation of Funding partners	Set up of call objectives Timing, involved groups	Definition of Call topic
INCO ERA NETs	Access Networking Intraregional cooperation Pooling bilat. funding Critical mass funding Piloting/Feasibility Sustained cooperation Thematic cooperation	Linkage with policy actions Sustainability of preERA NET EC top-up in ERA NET Plus Synergies of cooperation Openness of instrument Thematic needs	1 year in advance FP7 application (ERA NET Plus) Task leaders, (funding) partners Thematic consultation	Analysis Thematic workshops Against background of priorities on policy level Current event EU MS Funding partners All Funding partners
Thematic ERA NETs	Excellency Outreach to SMEs/collaborative research Transnational co-operation of SMEs	Visibility of thematic across EU Cooperation Coordination to avoid duplication Input from other sources of complementary funding Learning among researchers	3 -6 months in advance to calls Application to ERA NET Consultation with stakeholders Internal meetings, Management Board External High Level group	Open call in thematic Community asked Workshop of funders and potential beneficiaries Scientific Advisory board + High Level Group

Source: Own data from survey to ERA NETs

Call document /ToRs

Procedure
- (P) (J) Call Secretariat produces document
- Negotiations with funding partners
- National call coordinators or NCPs
- National funding rules: Annexes

No differences in Thematic /INCO ERA Nets

Ex-ante selection criteria

	Main categories	Additional categories
INCO ERA NET	Scientific Excellence Expected impact Quality of consortium Quality of project management Quality of the demonstration of proposal	Regional focus Transnational added value Sustainability Exploitation of results Originality, novelty Multi/interdisciplinarity Involvement (Gender, young scientists)
Thematic ERA NET	Technological and scientific excellence Social and economic perspective Consortium and Project Management Resources	European added value Transnational added value Exploitation and IPR Networking set of criteria

Source: Own data from survey to ERA NETs, call documents

Monitoring processes during implementation

	Content			Financial			
	Interim	*Interim*	*Final*	*Interim*	*Interim*	*Final*	*Final*
	Content	Meeting	Content (targets)	Financial to CS	Financial to Funding Partners	Financial to CS	Financial to Funding Partners
INCO ERA-NETs	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥
	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥
	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩
	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩
	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥
	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥
	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Thematic ERA-NETs	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥
	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟩
	🟩	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥

🟩 YES
🟥 NO

Source: Own data from survey to ERA NETs

Documentation of Outputs/Results

	Did you systematically collect outputs of the funded projects e.g peer reviewed publications, number of meetings, workshops, patents				
	Centralized by CS	from funding partners	external review	publication of results	*effort to collect all project outputs or results*
INCO ERA-NETs	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Thematic ERA-NETs	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES

Source: Own data from survey to ERA NETs

YES (green) / NO (pink)

Planning of Impact assessments - Feasibility

	Impact assessment planned	Effort to collect all projects output or result data	Access to relevant data and beneficiaries in some years	
INCO ERA-NETs				Why?
				☼
				How?
				☼
				Why?
				How?
				☼
Thematic ERA-NETs				☼
				☼
				Why?
				How?

Source: Own data from survey to ERA NETs

Current vs feasible evaluation tasks

Have you used any type of evaluation results for the design of a next joint call or do you plan to use such results?
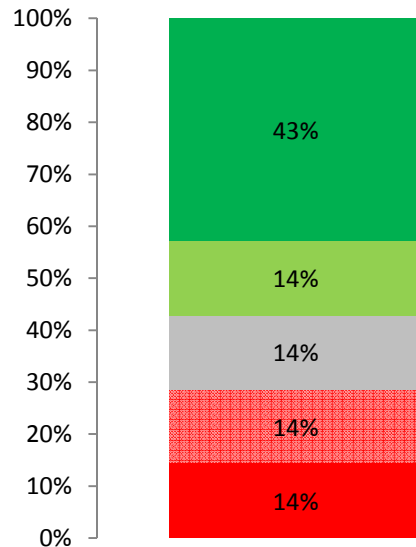
Do you think you could make use of the information received for the next call? (learning from monitoring)
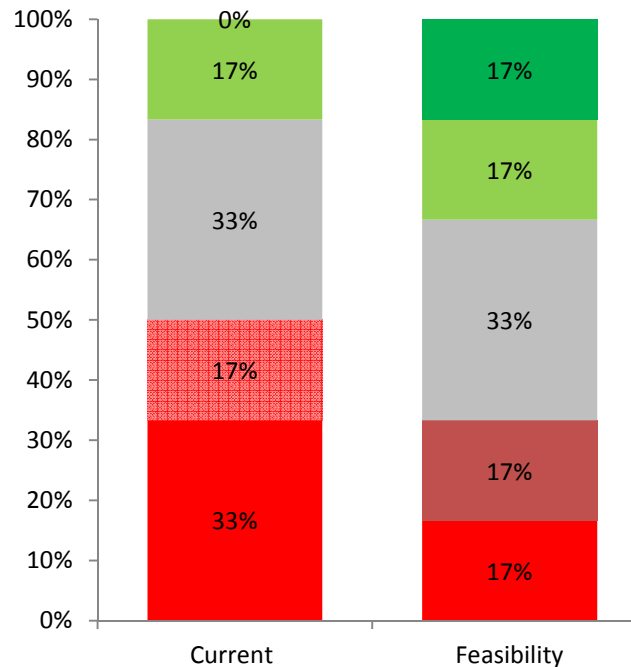

Legend:
- Agree strongly (dark green)
- Agree (light green)
- Neither agree nor disag (grey)
- Disagree (dark red)
- Disagree strongly (red)
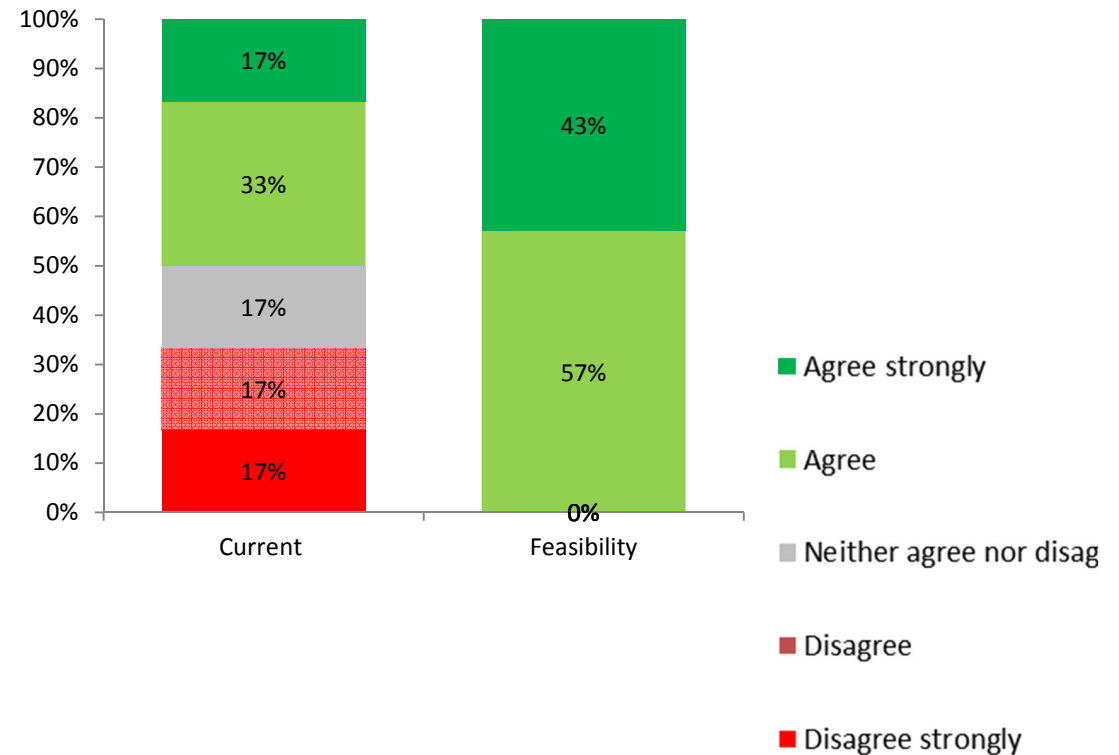
Additionality

**Did you explore/ask for behavioral changes towards cooperation that were triggered or influenced by the funding (or the application)**
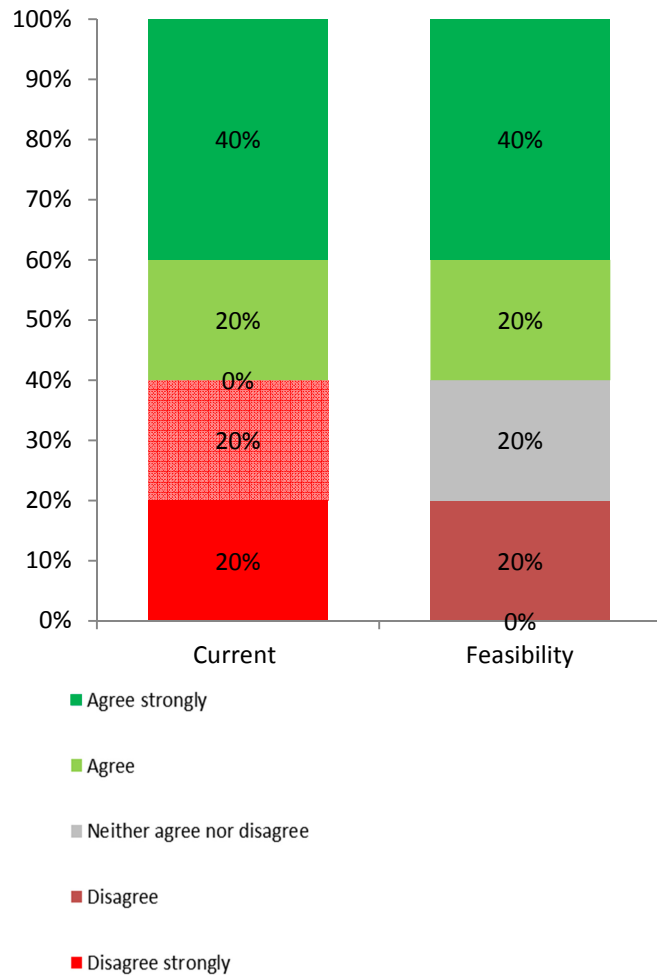
Did you ask the beneficiaries/funded partners in calls whether the funding had an effect on triggering additional own resources of a beneficiary (beyond planned in kind contributions)
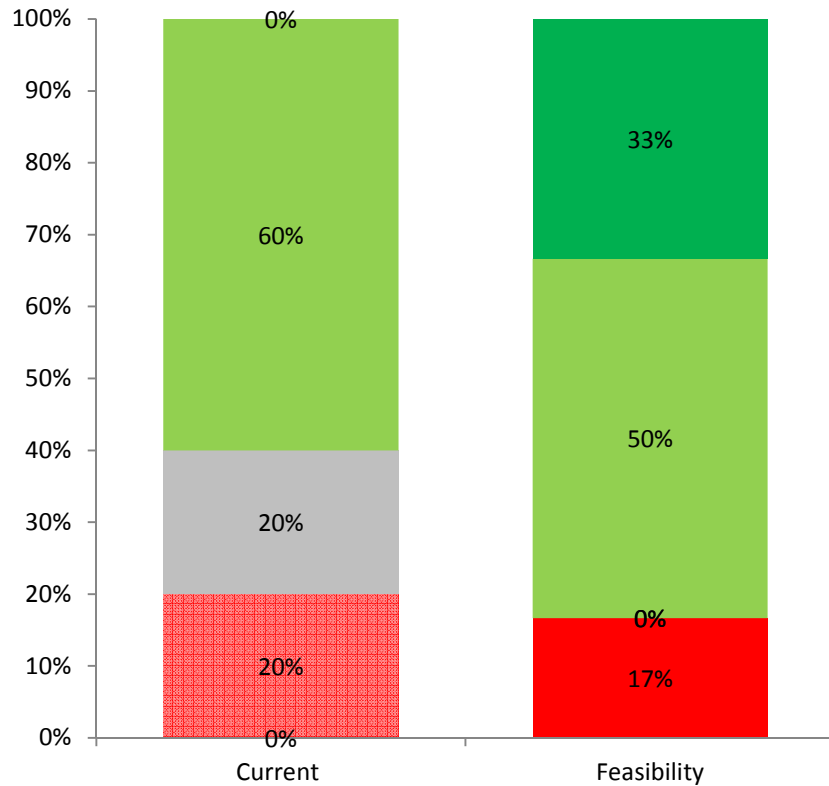
Did you explore the net – effects resulting from the funding provided

Legend:
- Agree strongly
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
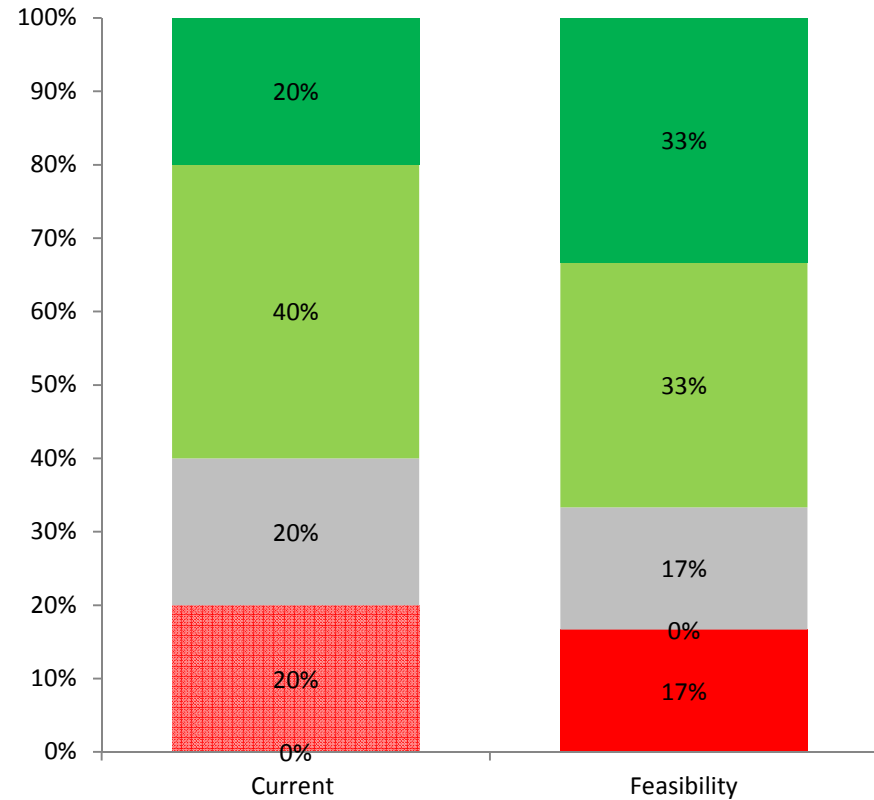- Disagree
- Disagree strongly
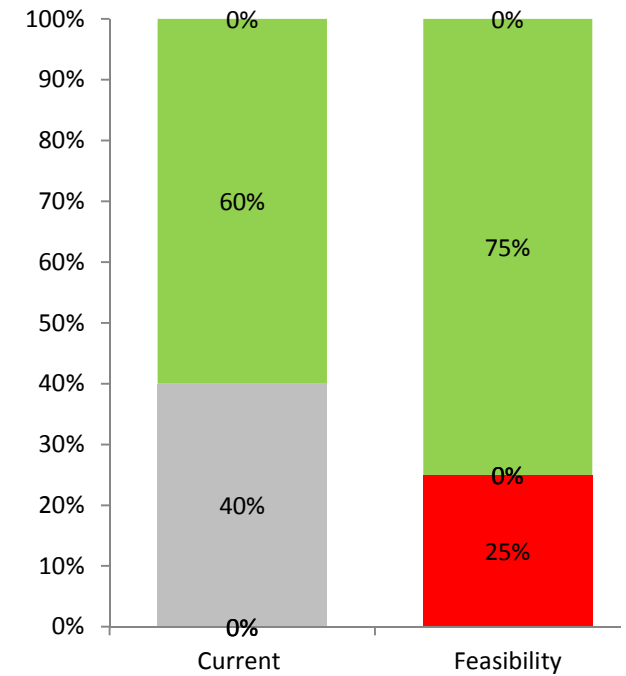
Indicators (Outputs, Results, Call success)

Did you define jointly indicators for the call (to define the final output expected from funded projects) in advance to a call?
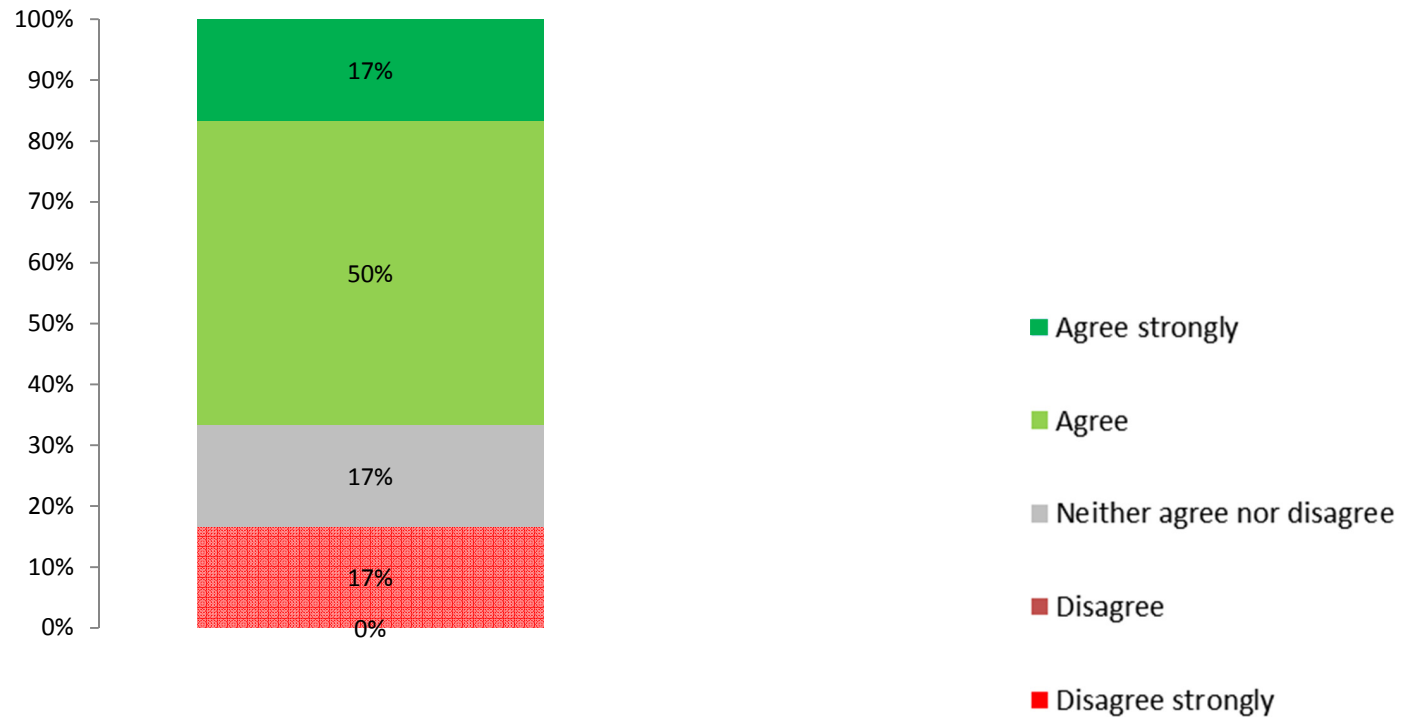

Have you defined a set of indicators so that the success of a call can be assessed when the joint funding ends?

Information needs

Did you realize at any time that you would need to know more on RTDI evaluation issues e.g. through training or consultation?

Challenges for assessing effects

- Schedule and duration of funding
- Asymetric response to calls
- Requested project types produce differing outputs
- Funding asymetry and effects on partner level
- Challenge of net-effects
- Indicators for internationalisation dimension

Key findings

- Neglectible number of quantifyable output/result indicators along call objectives

- Awareness of expected impact as ex-ante criteria but limited measurement options (or efforts)

- Late start with monitoring/planning of process

- Focus on funded projects, not on matching groups

Recommendations for better monitoring procedures

- Support function on national level for justification

- Timely planning, introduction

- Data provision can be a contractual obligation of funded projects

- Comparison with proposal (Review meetings, externals)

- Centralized vs. distributed by funding partner monitoring efforts – Integrate!

Recommendations for evaluation on "programme level"

- Establish quantitative indicators with objectives of call
- Control if objectives are part of ex-ante evaluation criteria
- Timely Monitoring + Impact evaluation concept before call (or in parallel)
- Employ knowledge from (external) evaluators or qualified staff (Agencies..)
- Establish learning with concluded joint funding actions (ERALEARN2, EC Annual joint funding meetings, national programme evaluation practices)
- Awareness of the value of evaluation for justification of follow up and sustainability

Potential use of evaluation findings?

- Varying evaluation culture of owners
- Schedule of calls – timing
- If there are no follow up calls, why?
- Future uptake of findings
- Learning community (of funding parties)

Not asked, not answered

- Relevance of evaluation for funding partners on national level (law/rule, justification etc.)
- Standardized Monitoring approach/setting in national context
- Influence of negotiables and non-negotiables like timing or compulsory monitoring cycles
- Policy relevance (NETWATCH, INCO assessments)

Conclusions

- Complexity
- Special needs for the INCO calls
- Need for minimum documentation requirements beyond EC reporting "standard set of indicators"
- Common agreement on procedure + resources
- Awareness of proper documentation e.g. for Control groups contacts and other support to future evaluators
- Evaluation potentially influence sustainability of joint funding actions

Thanks to…

…the (P) (J) call secretariats or coordinators of the 7 INCO + 4 thematic ERA NETs

…your attention

Questions?

gajdusek@zsi.at

nikos.sidiropoulos@gmail.com