

# Evaluating major STI Instruments: the SHOKing truth

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with inputs from

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FTEVAL Conference 14/15 November 2013 / Vienna

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## Background

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- Based on the evaluation of the finnish *Strategic Centres for Science, Technology and Innovation* (SHOKs)
- carried out by Ramboll Managment Consulting, Gaia Consulting Oy and Joanneum Research POLICIES (2012/13)

# The SHOKs (I)

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- Characterization of the SHOK Programme:
  - Launched in 2006 (*but had a slow start*)
  - Between 09/2008 and 09/2012: 343 Mio € from TEKES + 40% from involved companies + monies from the Academy of Finland (*but much less than anticipated*)
  - Currently 6 SHOKs in operation (in the areas of environment&energy, metal industry, built environment, bioeconomy, health/well-being, ICT&digital services)

## The SHOKs(II)

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- Industry/sector-wide centres
- Organised as limited companies
- Defining strategic research agendas for the sector
- Time-span: 5-10 years
- Responsible for defining projects and channeling the funding

# What is remarkable about the SHOKs?

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- Program is meant to induce mayor structural changes:
    - Induce structural change in finnish industry → to make the country an internationally leading and attractive innovation environment
    - Provide the frame for long-term strategic collaboration between industry and science → to achieve breakthrough innovations
    - Put industry in the driving seat
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# Novelty of programme – novelty of evaluation ?

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- The programme definitively is meant to be a ,new type‘ of instrument in several aspects...
- ...but was evaluated with fairly standard evaluation approaches, e.g.
  - Peer-assessments
  - Logic-models
  - Focus groups and interviews
  - Participant survey
  - International benchmarking with similar programmes

# Need for new (evaluation) approaches?

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- The evaluation challenge:
  - Have we missed out on some of the effects and impacts of the programme (e.g. long-term behavioural effects or larger societal benefits)?  
→ **Definitively, but this was not the point of this evaluation !**
  - The evaluation was able to detect major flaws in the design of the programme and provide policy with options for future actions

# Evaluation results: flaws at the programme design level

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- Slow buy-in of companies (perception of too much complexity in the programme)
- Reluctance/too little incentive from academia to engage
- Role of incumbents too strong to expect radical shifts
- apart from some positive results at the level of individual SHOKs: → **TOO LITTLE (SCIENTIFIC) EXCELLENCE, TOO LITTLE RELEVANCE (FOR MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE)**



# Need for new (policy) approaches?

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- The policy challenge: to rectify
  - **(over)ambitious targets**
  - **Ill-defined programme concept**
    - Indication: slow buy-in even of industry, let alone academia...
  - **tensions between instruments/incentives and the programme goals:**
    - How much interaction with the science system can you get from an industry-led programme?
    - How much structural change can you expect from a strategic research agenda which is defined by incumbents?

# Some findings and further questions

## ■ Evaluation of SHOKs

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- adds to a growing literature which **cautions against too great expectations from large-scale collaborative schemes** (in terms of radical, breakthrough innovations)
- Reminds one that a **clear intervention logic** is paramount for success
- Underlines the necessity for good programme documentation and **data gathering from the start**
- (luckily) was not charged with the task to identify longer-term structural effects and impacts on society ... (for which we would really have needed some **new approaches** ...)

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# Thank you for your attention !

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