

2003–2023
Brief History of
Two Decades of Cohesion
Policy Evaluation & Result
Oriented Approach

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IDEA

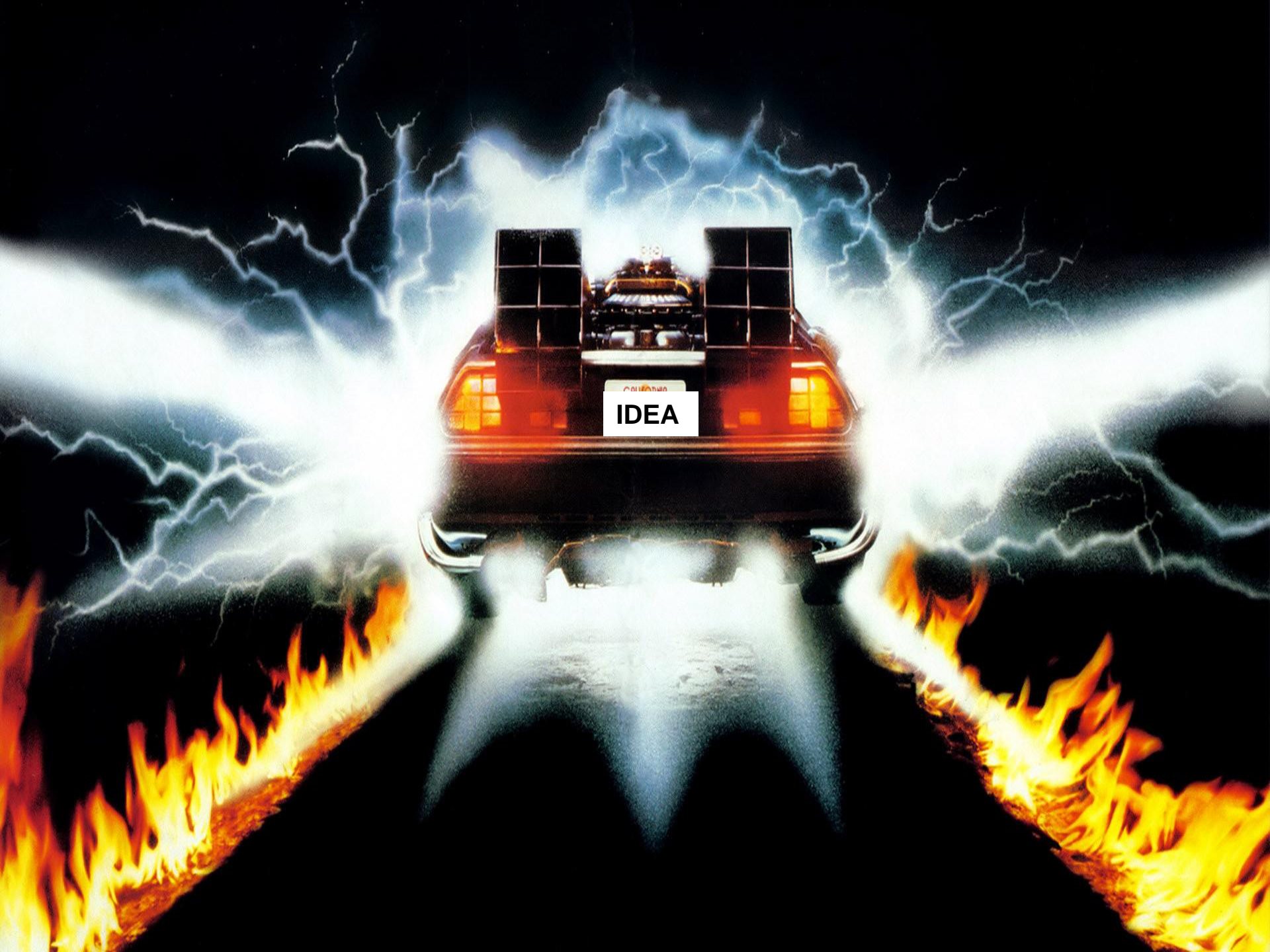
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Assumptions:

- Let us all imagine that we are in 2023!
- Let us all imagine that I am presenting you a preliminary outcomes of a case study conducted within the European Commission ex post evaluation of 2014-2020 programming period!
- Case study is dedicated to evaluation of “Two Decades of Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Oriented Approach”





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Methodological remarks:

Presentation divided into two parts:

- Part I: 2003-2013 (June) – based on strong evidence, main method: desk research (analysis of a few hundreds documents) and active observation technique (3240 days of expert work – 9 years).
- Part II 2013 (July) – 2023 – only preliminary research outcomes are available (mostly based on Delphi method and “one-man panel of experts”) needs to be triangulated with other methods

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2003-2013. Conclusions.

1. EVALUATION CULTURE:

Period of the most dynamic development of evaluation culture in European Union but mostly thanks to the New Member States (good practice examples: Lithuania, Hungary, Latvia, Poland). Most of Old Member States have been systematically lagging behind.

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2003-2013. Conclusions.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In first years ... disaster! But gradually improved with a strong support of Dg Regio and DG Employment and experts (Alberto Martini, Michael Wiseman...).

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2003-2013. Conclusions.

COORDINATION -a weak point.

- Evaluation activities were atomized both in Member States (example Poland) as well as on EC level which did not allow for drawing strategic conclusions.
- Breakthrough points were two papers Evidence Based (Cohesion) Policy (Polish Presidency exercise) and article of Daniel Mouque (overview of CIE studies). It triggered a new way of thinking (gathering strong evidence from OP level allowed for drawing more strategic recommendations for the whole EU).
- This approach had been successfully implemented by the EC within ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013.

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2003-2013. Conclusions.

RESULT ORIENTATION.

- Most of the time Member States as well as the European Commission were mostly “input oriented”.
- Success or failure were perceived mostly by a percent of budget spent.
- A small brake through point was paper of Barca&McCann and DG Regio Evaluation Unit follow up but...

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2013-2023. Preliminary observations.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

- adopted within the regulation moved (to some extent) the discussion from result orientation to product orientation (or some people during IDs called this even “millstone manipulation mechanism”).
- Exercise occurred to be (mostly) a waste of time for administration officers and money of tax payers.
- There are however opinions that the fact that all EU Regions achieved their millstones precisely at 100% is a success of result orientation.

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2013-2023. Preliminary observations.

COMMON INDICATORS

unfortunately performance framework had negative influence on the credibility of data transferred via IT system.

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2013-2023. Preliminary observations.

EVALUATION CULTURE

- thanks to stronger requirements developed quickly also in weaker countries and regions (mostly due to the obligation of conducting at least one evaluation of effects and obligation of preparation of evaluation plans).
- Help desk (opened both by DG Regio as well as DG Employment in September 2013) for preparation of evaluation plans occurred to be excellent idea!

Cohesion Policy Evaluation & Result Orientation 2013-2023. Preliminary observations.

BETTER COORDINATION

- some Member States decided for ambitious exercise to coordinate preparation of evaluation plans.
- good example is Poland which implemented integrated approach for all evaluation plans of 25 OPs.
- this allowed for really strategic approach and use of evaluation findings. This approach is currently (2021-2022) being followed by EC.

Any way awareness of EU citizens has recently grown into strength so much that European Commission decided to follow a path of the best performing administrations and soon new DG will be created:

DG Evaluation

The only question remains

Who will be the future commissioner?



Thank you for your attention!



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