

# **Evaluation capacity-building in the EU Member States: a cross-national overview**

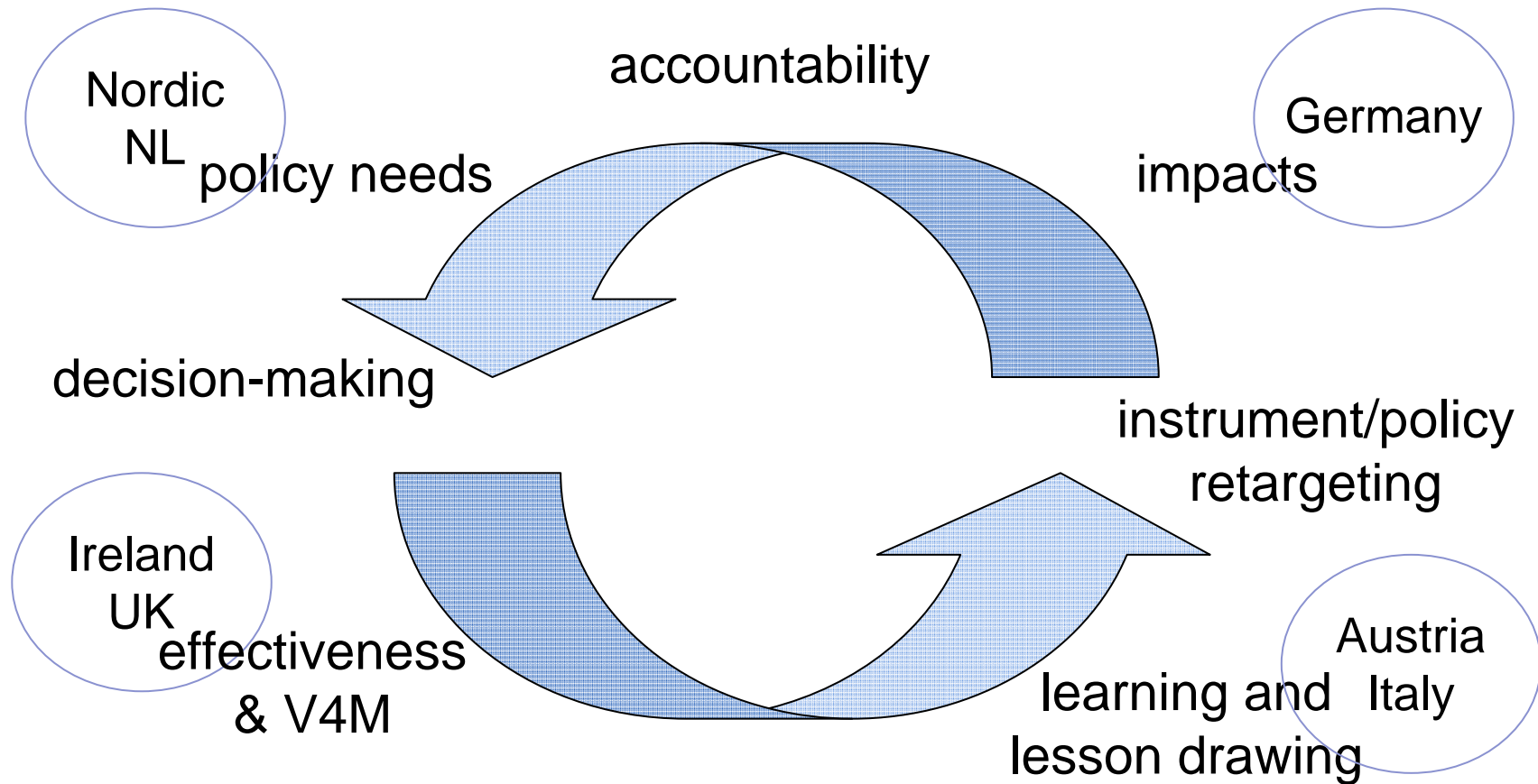
*Martin Ferry  
Vilnius, March 2009*

# Why is it important to build capacity?

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- Evaluation of ECP has acquired importance over time due to increasing
  - significance of Cohesion policy in EU Budget
  - political importance of Cohesion policy
  - need to legitimise, justify and give account
  - awareness of benefits of effective monitoring and evaluation
  - decentralisation of policy implementation

# Increased capacity supports various evaluation functions



# EPRC Evaluation capacity 2007-13

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- Shift towards a more flexible on-going approach
- Aim to have needs-based evaluations, assessing programme implementation and reacting to changes in the external environment
- Greater emphasis on development of evaluation capacity to enhance accountability
- Emphasis on strategic organisation, design and use: development of strategic evaluation plans

# Analysing evaluation capacity

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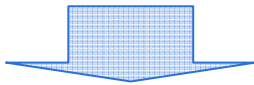
- DG REGIO (2007) report as point of reference
- Four dimensions:
  - ***Demand*** - refers to the commissioning side of the evaluation process
  - ***Supply*** - refers to the availability and quality of external evaluation expertise and socio-economic data resources;
  - ***Dissemination and utilisation*** of evaluation outputs;
  - ***Institutionalisation*** - refers to the wider administrative environment or culture

# Different starting points(1): evaluation cultures

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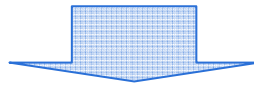
- ≠ evaluation traditions and cultures in ≠ countries

strong and  
well  
established



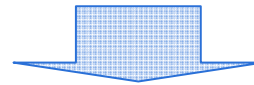
e.g. Germany  
Netherlands  
Sweden  
UK

developed in  
response to  
SF



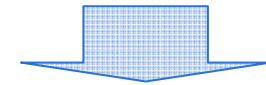
e.g. Austria  
Finland  
Ireland  
Italy

still not  
engrained in  
policy-making



e.g. Greece  
France  
Portugal  
Spain

recent  
phenomenon



e.g. EU12



## Different starting points (2): programming contexts

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- Varied evaluation capacity can be related to:
  - Overall division of management & implementation responsibilities
  - Size/focus of the programme
  - Size and scope of the community of evaluators
  - Level of involvement of programme partners, stakeholders

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## ➔ **Setting up formal structures for evaluation**

- dedicated structures or incorporated in policy units (central and regional)
- coordinating bodies, steering groups (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, UK)

## ➔ **Strengthening methodological bases for evaluation**

- user-manuals, guidelines, plans (e.g. EU10)
- setting evaluation standards (e.g. macro-economic modelling in Czech Rep.)

## ➔ **Building skills and knowledge**

- training courses (e.g. Ireland, Poland)
- workshops, conferences (e.g. Poland)

## ➔ **Raising awareness within public authorities**

- Fora for evaluation debate (e.g. Austria)
- Networking evaluators (e.g. Visegrad countries)

## ➔ **Improving monitoring data for evaluation**

- strengthening of databases etc. (e.g. Wales, Portugal)

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- ➔ Undertaking **meta-evaluations** of evaluation reports, i.e. ‘evaluate evaluations’ ( France, Italy, Sweden)
  - ➔ Creating **incentives for the development of external evaluation expertise** through tendering (e.g. attracting academia)
  - ➔ **Advertising** evaluation events and invite evaluators to participate in them
  - ➔ Encourage active role for **Evaluation Societies** (e.g. Czech Rep.)

- ➡ Creating centralised online access to evaluation reports - (e.g. Poland, Czech Republic)
- ➡ Setting minimum requirements for publications - (e.g. evaluation user manuals often require executive summary publicly available, clear accessible language)
- ➡ Encouraging ownership - involving programme managers, stakeholders in study process and subsequent debate
- ➡ Setting procedure to address and follow-up evaluation results - (e.g. Hungary)

# Impact on wider governance environment

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## ➡ Challenging:

- evaluation of programmes only sometimes used in wider public debate
- national importance attached to evaluation varies
- influence of EU requirements on national evaluation practices also variable

## ➡ But some examples:

- **Austria:** KAP-EVA platform created permanent forum on evaluation
- **France:** national training and information seminars boosted capacity, particularly at regional level
- **Portugal:** CSF Observatory reinforced the database for evaluation.



# Conclusions: Building evaluation capacity means...

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1. Raising awareness of different roles and relationships (between contracting authority, evaluators, stakeholders)
2. Developing strategic evaluation plans - i.e. according to actual needs
3. Building skills and knowledge (supporting units, active debate, networks)
4. Ensuring adequate resources (organisational, human & financial)
5. Improving data (quality, reliability, 'fit for purpose')
6. Adopting robust methodological approaches
7. Embedding evaluation as a policy management instrument (ownership, dissemination, follow up, demonstrating 'added value')