Evaluation of local and regional strategies and projects: Evidence from Spain

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Introduction: Why to evaluate?
- Case 1: Community Development in a deprived area in Bilbao
- Case 2: Integrated Territorial Development in the Basque Country
- Case 3: Regional Innovative Action in Castille y Leon
- Conclusions – Evaluation as a strategic tool
INTRODUCTION

Why to Evaluate?
- Control and Accountability – what have they done with all the money?
- Knowledge about results – what are the effects of the activities and measures? Did we really achieve what we wanted to achieve?
- Learning – what went well, which things went wrong, why did we (not) achieve the objectives? How can we improve working in the future?
- Support of cooperation under external guidance – evaluations add a new perspective to the programme implementation, they can initiate cooperation and mediate between involved actors.
Context: Evaluation in Local and Regional Development in Spain:

- Regional Development (more than industrial development) arises with the EU Structural Funds.
- Local community development is new to Spanish cities and is introduced with EU initiatives (URBAN, Urban Pilot Projects, Structural Funds).
- Evaluation becomes part of the funding management and structure, first (in 1994-1999) as an external obligation.
- Recently, Evaluation is seen more as a strategic instrument.
The Spanish Cases:
- Community Development in a deprived area of Bilbao (1997): UPP Otxarkoaga
- Territorial Development in a small Basque town (2001): Amurrio Project
- Regional Innovation Strategies in Castille and León (2003): Regional Technology Plan and Innovative Action
• The Spanish evidence:
  - shows different regional levels and policy areas
  - shows also the evolution of
    • the role of evaluation,
    • the evaluation techniques and
    • its integration into the programming process
  - in Spanish Local and Regional Development from 1997 to 2004.
Case 1: Community Development in Bilbao

- **Urban Pilot Project Otxarkoaga**:
  - Presented by a Local Economic Development Agency
  - Deprived area in the outskirts of Bilbao (northern Spanish City)
  - 13,000 inhabitants, 390 inh/ m²
  - Unemployment >35%, Spanish immigrants (mainly gypsies)
  - Three action lines:
    - Green: Environment and urbanism
    - Blue: Support to local trade and shops
    - Red: Training and new business opportunities
Case 1: Community Development in Bilbao

Guggenheim Museum
Case 1: Community Development in Bilbao

- Evaluation as part of the project:
  - Ex-ante Evaluation (1997)
  - Predominant function: control and accountability
  - Part of the EU legal regulations
  - External evaluation
  - Methods used: revision of project documents, interviews with project managers, interviews with collaborating organisations (neighbours, social, etc.), interviews (face-to-face, tel.) with final beneficiaries (trained people, shops, entrepreneurs)
Case 1: Community Development in Bilbao

- Ex-ante Evaluation as part of the project:
  - After the design of the project (not integrated)
  - Focus on:
    - Internal Coherence and Relevance
    - Identification of stakeholders and assessment of their integration
    - External Coherence
    - Evaluability of the project (existence and quantification of objectives, indicator system for outcomes)
    - Operative structure and project management
  - Little adaptation of the project according to recommendations of the evaluation.
Case 1: Community Development in Bilbao

• Conclusion:
  - In 1997 it is still early for evaluation in local development projects in Spain:
    • Little integration in project management
    • Reduced number and variety of methods
    • Lack of experience (also on the evaluators’ side) on methods, indicators, value of presentation and publication of results, etc.
    • Evaluation as a good control instrument
    • Evaluation already useful as a tool for mediation, stakeholder involvement and partnership building.
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

• Integrated Territorial Development:
  - Small town in the Basque Country (10,000 inh.)
  - Rural environment, but strong industrial sector (only 30 km distance to Bilbao)
  - Five-year project 2001-2005
  - Development Programme IZARTU of the Basque Regional Government, based on the URBAN approach
  - Overall programme management with on-going technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation.
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

- Integrated Territorial Development:
  
  - Three strategic lines:
    - Improvement of derelict sites and brownfields
      - Riverfront conditioning, regeneration of abandoned buildings
    - Training, Employment generation and business support
      - Training workshops, seminars for employees, business incubator, training for new entrepreneurs and business service centre based on ICT, new cultural centre
    - Territorial integration
      - Improved foot paths and cycle lanes, natural regeneration of a hill area and creation of a thematic park on Water and Sustainability.
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

http://www.amurrioelkarbidean.com
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

- Evaluation as part of the project:
  - At two levels: each project and overall programme
  - Important pre-assessment, each project was required to present a
    - socio-economic analysis
    - study of the local employment and training situation
    - environmental analysis
    - SW OT
    - Project management strategy, including a detailed indicator system per measure and an overall monitoring and evaluation system.
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

• Evaluation as part of the project:
  - Ex-ante evaluation integrated into the project proposal
  - Annual project reports based on the pre-defined indicators (with quantified expected results)
  - Interim Evaluation in 2003 for each project, according to general outline
  - Final Evaluation due in 2005 (indicator-based)
  - Ex post Evaluation due in 2006 (strategy and management analysis, focused on future projects)
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

• Ex-ante Evaluation as part of the project:
  - Part of project development (strategic and management)
  - Creation of the methodological model for the overall project evaluation (vision of an internal process more than on punctual external reports)
  - Relevance, coherence, identification of stakeholders
  - Evaluability assessment
    • Clear and concise system of objectives
    • Financial, Context, Performance and Result indicators
    • Indicators linked to time planning
    • Information sources identified
Case 2: Territorial Development in Amurrio

Conclusions:
- In 2001 consideration of evaluation as a strategic tool without exploiting its potential:
  - More integration in project management, pre-assessment linked to development of actions.
  - Reduced number of methods (SWOT, indicators).
  - Still predominant use as a control instrument, in this case for the Regional Programme Managers.
  - Evaluation helps also project managers to follow-up actions (especially useful in integrated programmes).
  - Evaluation findings used in political discourses, although still no publication of reports.
Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

- Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon:
  - Policy developed over the last years with different (EU funded) projects:
    - Regional Technology Plan (RTP) 1998
    - Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS + pilot project) 2000
    - Regional Plan for R&D and Innovation 2002
    - Innovative Action LEGITE 2003-2004
    - Actualisation of the Regional R&D and Innovation Plan (2006?)
  - Evaluation has become more and more important for the evolution and the steady improvement of this policy
Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

Evaluation as part of the policy:

- Part of all projects and strategies, but with problems in the beginning (RTP final evaluation), such as
  - Lack of indicators and information sources for regional innovation
  - Lack of baseline context indicators, qualitative indicators badly defined
  - No systematic data follow-up and treatment
  - Impact indicators seemed to describe the expected impact but were useless for final evaluation due to the short time that had passed after the finalisation of the project.
- Due to a lack of pre-assessment and methodological definition of the evaluation process in the ex-ante evaluation.
Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

- Evaluation as part of the policy:
  - From the beginning including the assessment of qualitative and intangible progress and results.
  - More and diverse methods (indicators, macro-economic analysis, surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)
  - Evaluation had always a prospective character, even final ones, including recommendations for future projects (strategy, type of projects, management, evaluation and follow-up system, etc.).
Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

- **Innovative Action LEGITE 2003-2004:**
  - Final Objective: to improve regional competitiveness
  - Two Action lines:
    - To improve regional balance of innovation dynamics
    - To work on the consolidation of regional innovation of excellence
  - Four Actions:
    - Integration of innovation in SMEs in peripheral areas
    - Network of Innovation Agents of 14 local Chambers of Commerce
    - Promotion of R&D projects in regional firms and Technology Centres
    - Promotion of a regional pole of excellence in the field of Digital Contents
Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

- **Ex-ante Evaluation as part of the project:**
  - Comprehensive, fully integrated in the project management.
  - Based on the Logical Framework Approach
  - Analysis of the Baseline Situation, SWOT
  - Relevance
  - Evaluability assessment
    - Definition of a system of objectives (short and medium term)
    - Quantification of expected results
    - Coherence (problem tree, objective tree, intervention theory)
  - Management and operative system
  - Planning of the monitoring and evaluation process.
### Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

#### Evaluation Framework of the project:

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<th>Evaluation Topics</th>
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Case 3: Regional Innovation in Castille and Leon

• Conclusions:
  - In 2003-2004, at regional level wider integration of evaluation as a management tool.
  - More interaction with project managers (in ex ante, on-going and interim phases), but still external.
  - New planning tools are used (Evaluation Framework, Tree of Objectives, Logical framework, etc.)
  - Evaluation exercise is more comprehensive than the compulsory report writing for EU Commission.
  - However: still seen as an external control, not considering fully the value as strategic tool for future policy planning.
The contribution of Ex-ante Evaluation:
- Ensures the RELEVANCE, FEASIBILITY and SUSTAINABILITY of a project
- Facilitates a dialogue/ OWNERSHIP
- Ensures that fundamental questions are asked and weaknesses are analysed
- Defines the key elements & the settings of a project
- Identifies measurements/ indicators of the projects achievements
- Systematic common sense (helping to adapt expectations to planned expenditure to time frames)
A baseline study might be needed to be able to measure the final results.

The process of setting up indicators shows if the objectives are vague.

Indicators should answer the questions:
CONCLUSION

• From Evaluation to Programming:
  • Evaluation will give new insights on how to improve programming (management, indicators, working methods, etc.)
  • Evaluation will give you information on which measures work (e.g. training measures) and which don’t (e.g. Business start-ups), so you can eliminate ineffective measures or change their design accordingly.
  • Evaluation gives the public and financing institutions a proof of what you have done and achieved, and legitimise for what you do at regional level.
ISSUES FOR FURTHER DEBATE

• Institutional Learning in project and programme management is necessary to exploit fully the potential of evaluations.

• Training and awareness-raising for both, project and programme managers and evaluators.

• Integrate Evaluation into the project-cycle, internalise the monitoring and evaluation function.

• Free evaluation from the stigma of being an instrument for control and punishment.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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