Evaluation as an Agent of Programme Change

An Example from Austria

AEA, Baltimore
Austrian Genome Research Programme GEN-AU
(GENome Research in AUstria)

Looking back on the mid term Evaluation 2005

Presentation at the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association, Baltimore, MD
November 10, 2007

Klaus Zinöcker,
Vienna Science and Technology Fund WWTF
R&D in Austria: starting position

• Member of the European Union
• Last Nobel laureate in 1974 (Friedrich August von Hayek)
• Number of Nobel laureates per Million inhabitants 1966-1999: 0.33 (US: 0.68)

• GDP per inhabitant: € 27 710
• Gross domestic expenditure on R&D: 2.54%
• 20,000 Researchers in Austria (US: 1,220,000)
• 15.3 scientific publications / 1,000 inhabitants (US: 17)
• Impact Factor: 4.5 (US: 6)

Some stereotypes
GEN-AU Key Facts

• Top down, thematic programme
  – Mission is to strengthen genome research in Austria and to foster networking among all relevant stakeholders
• 2001 – 2011, 3 phases
• Big (but also smaller) science
  – variety of project types: Large cooperative projects, network projects, pilot projects and projects addressing accompanying research in the social sciences.
  – dedication to the idea of networking
• Basic Research
  – Emphasis on scientific quality, no bridging activities
• € 10 Mio per year (1/10 of Austrian Science Fund), 100 Mio
And the money goes to…

[2 Examples]

• **BIN – bioinformatics integration network**
  – Aim of the project: To provide an environment for building bioinformatics capabilities in Austria,
  – Funding and Running Time € 1,733,952 for 36 months

• **Epigenetic Plasticity of the Mammalian Genome**
  – Aim of the project: The project is aimed at analyzing the epigenome of the mouse and creating a corresponding index.
  – Funding and Running Time € 3,453,446 for 36 months
Evaluation key facts

• 2004 – 2005, 5 months
• Mid term evaluation
• Focus: Quality of Management, R&D
  Policy fit
• Quality of Research was not in the focus
  → professional evaluators, no peers
Evaluation Timing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
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Mid term evaluation

No evaluation step planned
Evaluation Aims

• Legitimation
  – Should the programme, in its present form, be continued? Y/N?

• Learning
  – possible room for improvement?
  – provide support when it comes to adequately preparing a subsequent impact analysis.
# Evaluation Team

## Evaluation Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klaus Zinöcker</td>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Author / Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigitta Tempelmaier</td>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Author / Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred Radauer</td>
<td>KMFA</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Author / Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roald Steiner</td>
<td>KMFA</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosalie Ruegg</td>
<td>TIA</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Author / Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris Fischl</td>
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<td>Franziska Steyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helene Schiffbänker</td>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Scientific Advice</td>
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<td>Jacqueline Allan</td>
<td>Forfas</td>
<td>Guest Researcher</td>
<td>Scientific Advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martina Gugorell</td>
<td>KMFA</td>
<td>Research Assistance</td>
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<td>Susanne Fröhlich</td>
<td>KMFA</td>
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<td>Layout</td>
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</tbody>
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**contact addresses:**

[Joanneum Research](https://www.joanneum.at)

[TIA Consulting, Inc.](https://www.tiaconsulting.com)

[KMU FORSCHUNG AUSTRIA](https://www.kmu.at)

Austrian Institute for SME Research
Methods

• Desk Research
  – Sifting through tons of material
• Interviews
  – # 72, too much
• Case Studies
  – # 5
• Logic Chart Analysis
  – Not Jordan-Style
• Social Network Analysis
  – As a starting point for future research
• International Comparison
  – E.g. Genome Canada, NIH Human Genome Research Institute
Key Messages

• Lively scientific environment within the programme

• Proposal review and project selection processes are certainly a crucial point
  – Rumors were afloat, very harmful for the reputation and the success of the project
    → Increase Transparency!

→ Professionalize programme management
  → Agentification

→ Reduce the bureaucratic burden
Impacts of the Evaluation?

• Did the stakeholders learn?
• Is the programme better now?

• Did the evaluators learn?
• Did we contribute to evaluators‘ discussion on evaluation?
Impacts of the Evaluation?

• Did the Ministry learn?
  – Those who could have left the scene

• Did the Programme Managers learn?
  – “The GEN-AU mid term evaluation contributed to
    • The agentification of the programme
    • Establishment of efficient routines (e.g. controlling, public relations
    • Standardization and transparency.
    • Preparation of an Impact Assessment Tool, starting in 2008”

  (E. Glenck, head of department, Austrian Research Promotion Agency FFG, Nov. 8th)
Impacts of the Evaluation?

• Did the evaluators learn?
  – Further collaborations
  – …

• Other effects?
  – “knowledge spill overs”

• Did we contribute to evaluators‘ discussion on evaluation?
Impact of Evaluation Report?
Gen-au Homepage
www.gen-au.at

Evaluation Report:
http://www.fteval.at/files/evstudien/GENAU.pdf

Klaus Zinöcker
Vienna Science and Technology Fund WWTF
www.wwtf.at