Lessons learnt client perspective
Evaluation Concept

- Evaluation stakeholder and process: adequate
- Evaluation cycle: not every seven years but programme monitoring
- No overall view but focused questions
- Multivariate methods
Project Management Foundation

- Acceptance
- Coordination of feedback in a hierarchic organization
- Benefit visible and appreciated
- Relevance of reporting systems
Interaction with Evaluator

- Common knowledge of the evaluation object
- Increase of database skills
- More in-depth view and understanding of programme ideas
- Independence - distance
- Budget management
- Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data
The evaluator’s perspective

- **Introduction**
  - technopolis group
  - Our assignments with the Humboldt Foundation
  - Methods applied in all three evaluations
  - Particularities

- **Dealing with complexity necessarily implies learning**
  - Methodology
  - Content & Results
  - Relation with the Client

- **The impact**
  - Concerning the stakeholders of an evaluation study
  - Concerning the scope of an evaluation study
The Technopolis Group

- Founded in 1989 as a spin-off from the Science and Technology Policy Research Unit (SPRU) of the University of Sussex
- Consultancy company specialised in the area of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy
- Offices in 9 countries with 90+ people
- We work for public organisations and public-private partnerships
- People with very mixed backgrounds in terms of background, experience and nationality
- We conduct studies, help with strategy building and in some instances support the implementation
Three Assignments with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

• Evaluation of the Humboldt Research Award and the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
  • “Award Programmes”: 2008-2009

• Evaluation of the Humboldt Research Fellowship Program of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation
  • “Research Fellowship Programme”: 2009-2011

• Evaluation of the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship Programme
  • “Feodor Lynen Programme”: 2010-2012
Methods applied in all three evaluations

- Stakeholder interviews
- Database analysis
  - > 20,000 entries
  - Long term funding
  - Multiple support types
- Online survey
  - Fellows
  - Hosts (not always systematic...)
- Analysis of final reports & assessments
Methods applied in particular settings

• Award programme:
  • Case studies,
  • Bibliometrics
  • Network analysis,

• Research Fellowship Programme
  • Digging more deeply in the database: 16,875 Fellows since 1970
  • Comparison of final reports of fellows and of their hosts
  • Special attention to alumni programmes
  • Participation in annual meeting
  • Case studies

• Feodor Lynen Program
  • Control group:
    • Survey
    • Bibliometrics
  • Focus groups
  • Participation in network event
Specific challenges

- Huge and long-term database
- Life long funding
- Multiple network layers
  - Within the Humboldt-Network
  - Triggered by the Humboldt-Network
  - Beyond the Humboldt Network
- Corporate Culture of the Humboldt Foundation
  - Individual treatment of each Humboldtian
  - Resistance to aggregation
  - Academic (research) ambition, pragmatic needs
When dealing with complexity, we necessarily reach the limits of our methodology...
In bibliometrics however, we have to limit the sample:

Journal impact factor of publications: distribution according to quartiles: „the top 25% journals: Q1
Learning about the field of investigation

• Data analysis without data mining uses up unpredictable resources
  • Step by step understanding of the database
  • Close interaction with the AvH
  • In parallel: reorganisation of the IT system
• When diversity is the key success factor of the funding intervention, “representativeness” is a misleading concept
  • Evaluation has to develop a new language from a systemic point of view
• The notion of a “project” does not capture the reality of long term cooperation.
• Understanding of the evaluation object needs counting, observing, empathy
The impact of this learning process

- Special attention when defining the scope of an evaluation study
- Special attention to the stakeholders of an evaluation study
  - Understanding of the logic of the funding organisation
  - Consciously design the relationship with the client: close cooperation in full independence
- Acknowledge evaluation as a learning process
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