

9th Conference on the Evaluation of EU Cohesion Policy

Porto, 16-17 September 2021

Workshop 5A

“An economy that works for people: the social dimension”

**Evaluate or Evaluate...
there is no question**

Joaquim Bernardo | POCH Board President



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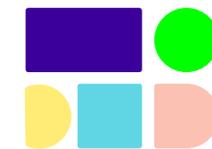


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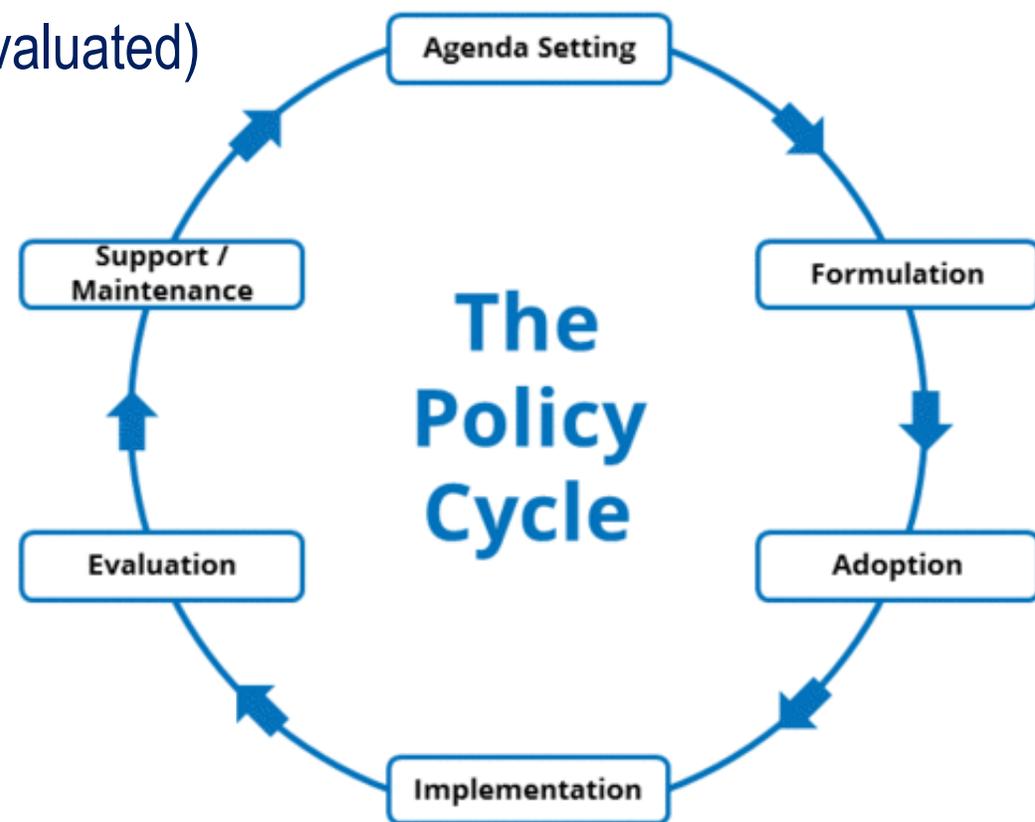
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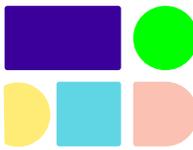
This is why we evaluate



- Understanding better the reality – *where we were, where we are, where we want to go* – in a public policy strongly financed by the ESF (since at least the 2007-2013 period, but not yet evaluated)
- Public Policy cycle
 - Evaluate to understand the state of the art
 - Evaluate to know where we are, to help to decide where we want to go
- Public Policy as an incremental process
 **Support (better) decisions**



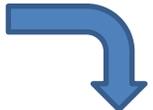
What we have been doing



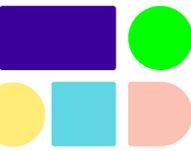
2014 | 2020



Type	Name of Evaluation	Starting	Timeframe	Status
Program	Midterm evaluation of the POCH	1 st semester/2021	2 semesters	Tender launched in August 2021
Thematic (Human Capital)	Evaluation of the Contribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds for Doctoral and Post Doctoral Training	2 nd Semester 2017	2 semesters	Follow-up closing in August 2021
	Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability	1 st Semester/2019	3 semesters	Follow-up beginning in July 2021
	Evaluation of the higher education grant system for less privileged students in Portugal	1st Semester/ 2019	3 semesters	Data analysis (2nd phase)
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to qualification improvement and reintegration into the labour market of adults	1 st Semester/2020	2 semesters	Midterm report in July 2021
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to the improvement of qualifications and employment conditions of employed adults			
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to Digital Transition in Education	2 nd semester 2022	2 semesters	New evaluation

- ✓ Evaluation integrated in a national plan, that involves the evaluation plan of the HC OP...
 - ✓ ...that covers the main areas of investment in the 2014-2020 period in the human capital domain (funded by more than one OP)...
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- ✓ ...and, in that context, the support of ESF to the higher education grant system involves almost 750 Million € of investment until 2020, with more than 175 thousand students involved.

Evaluation best friend – Monitoring

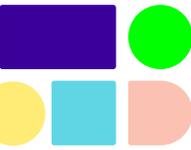


- Monitoring systems to feed Evaluation - especially needed for Counterfactual impact evaluation, that needs (a lot of) information about participants and non-participants, in this case, in the higher education system
- Monitoring as ongoing knowledge production system
- Understanding different levels of outcomes and results:
 - i. Data desegregation on the characteristics of participants and non participants (attention the need to respect personal data protection rules)
 - ii. Indicators to support political decision and political adjustments of higher education grant system, bearing in mind the main target – increase the population with higher education, in line with the target for 2020 in our national reform programme
 - iii. As the full understanding of the reality isn't possible (“the holly grail”), monitoring is especially useful as the starting point to evaluate the effects/impact of the policy



“If you don't reveal some insights soon, I'm going to be forced to slice, dice, and drill!”

It's not only the destination, it's the ride

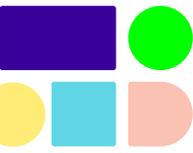


- In every policy process, and in every stage the involvement and alignment of the stakeholders is crucial – a continuous learning process



- Steering Group (as always) created to support evaluation process - in the case presented, involving especially the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGES), national body responsible for this public policy in Portugal and the Directorate General of Education and Science Statistics (DGEEC), besides the OP's that support this policy under evaluation and our national agency responsible for the technical coordination of the European Funds, the Agency for Development and Cohesion (AD&C).
- Relevance for the consolidation of an “evaluation culture”

General challenges and perspectives



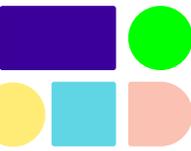
Main Challenges

- Limited specialized resources in evaluation, especially in counterfactual methods, in quantity and quality, in the market and in our public administration
- Data Protection Legislation
 - Example of Evaluation of the higher education grant system for less privileged students in Portugal
- Follow-up of conclusions and recommendations

Main Perspectives

- Growing evaluation culture, associated with the needs of more transparency and accountability
- Stakeholders stronger involvement
 - Monitoring committees/groups
- Government institution to support political decision - PlanApp

Counterfactual impact evaluation – specific challenges



- It's accuracy depends on the type of policy and dimension

Examples

- Evaluation of the higher education grant system – it's hard, but possible, to have individuals with similar profiles to compare with the control group
- Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to qualification improvement and reintegration into the labour market of adults – In this case CIE is quite accurate because we can isolate the treatment group and compare it with the society in general (individuals with the same characteristics in control group)

We're just starting to plan our evaluation. Which methods should we consider?

All of them.



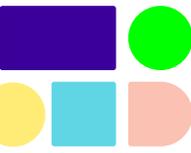
- If the policy is too specific or variations through the territory, **it's harder to established groups to compare participants and non-participants**

Example

- Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability – to find similar enough individuals we had to decrease the groups dimension (yet still representative)

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Counterfactual impact evaluation – specific perspectives



- The **reinforcement of the monitoring systems/administrative data bases** (big data) and of the capacities to treat that information **as a key condition for CIE**

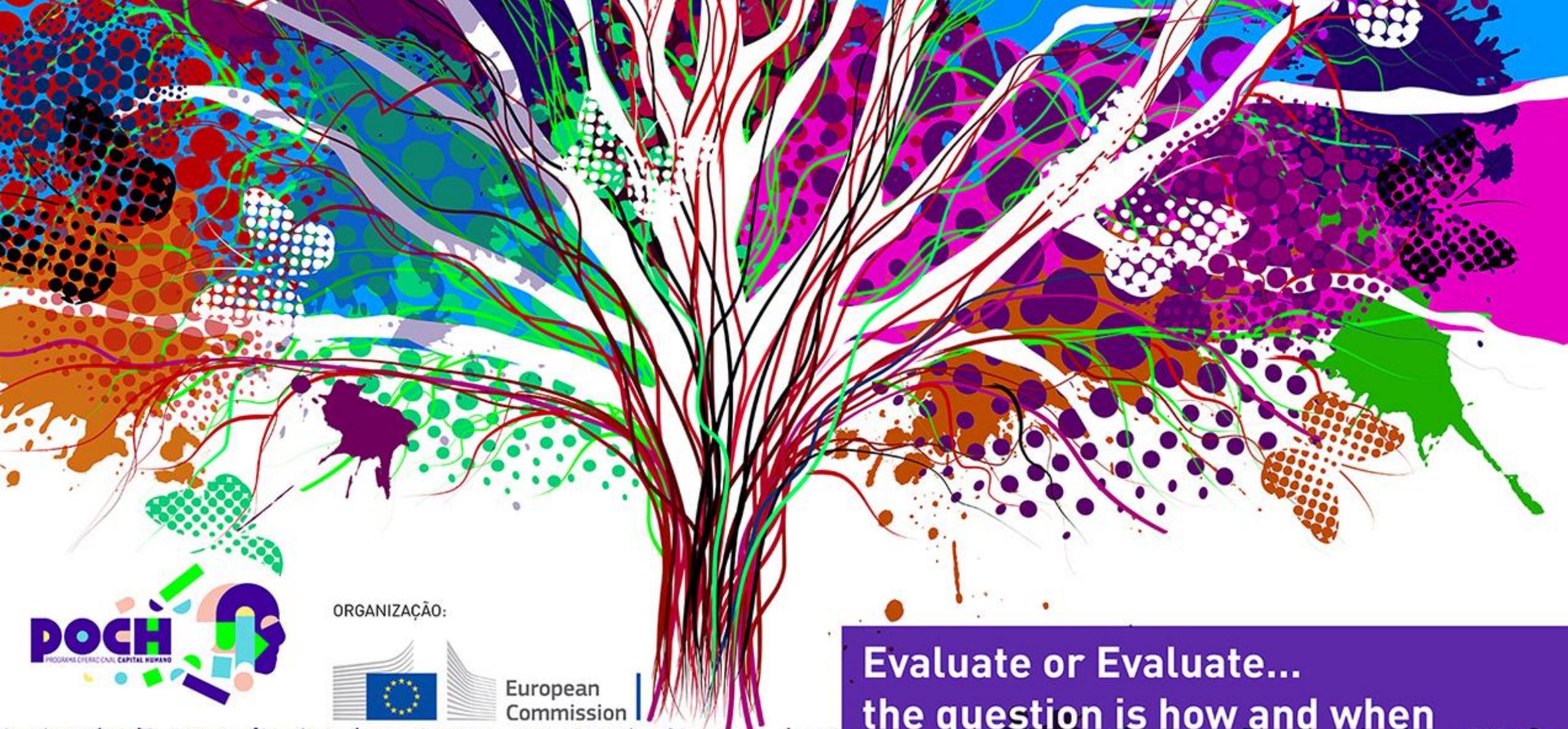
Example

- Evaluation of the higher education grant system – the different data bases mobilize for the evaluation, from the monitoring system of the European funds/ESF, from DGES and the statistical data from DGEEC, were crucial to support the CIE still underway

- The **development of “know-how”** in programming and implementing CIE

Examples

- The Evaluation of the higher education grant system (almost finished) and the Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability (finished) - evaluations integrated in the Human Capital OP evaluation plan that mobilized counterfactual evaluation methodologies (exclusively, in the first case, and integrated with other methods, in the second one)



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the question is how and when

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