

Results of the external evaluation of the COP

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Purpose of the evaluation

“The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact and effectiveness of the COP activities (including project management) in terms of the COP’s overall objectives, in particular “enhancing policy outcomes.”

Source: Terms of Reference, COP evaluation



Evaluation approach

Theory based evaluation approach

“Theory of change”

Evaluation focus:

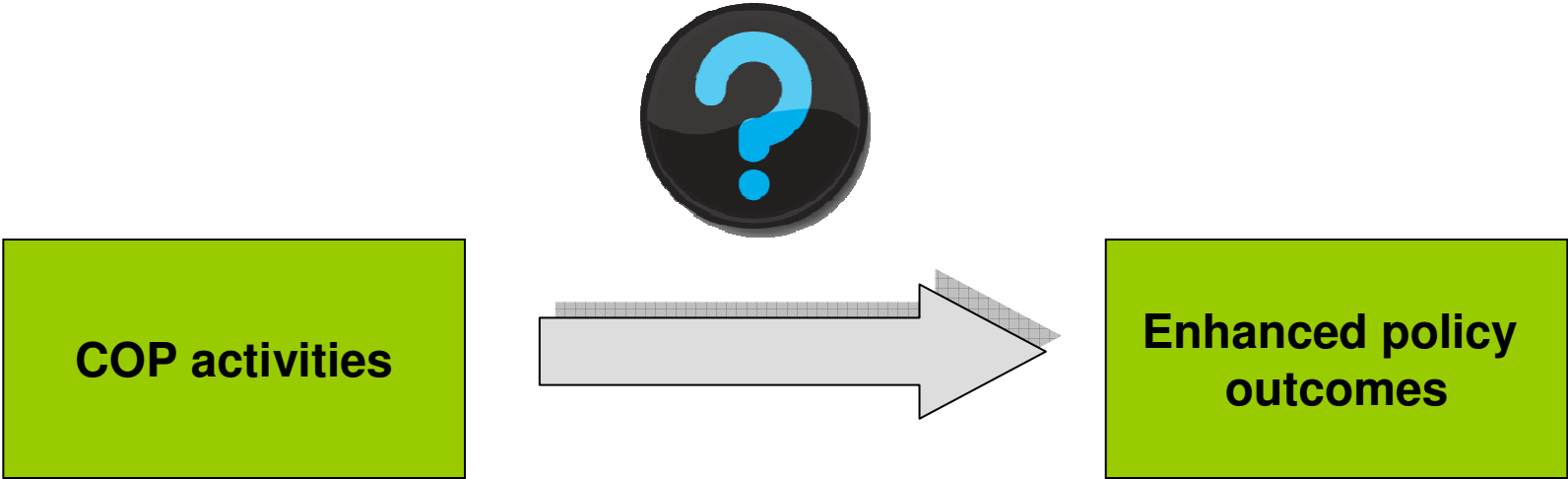
- Adequate and proper instruments
- Structure of the COP
- Outcomes and sustainability
- Challenges

Context

Qualitative methods



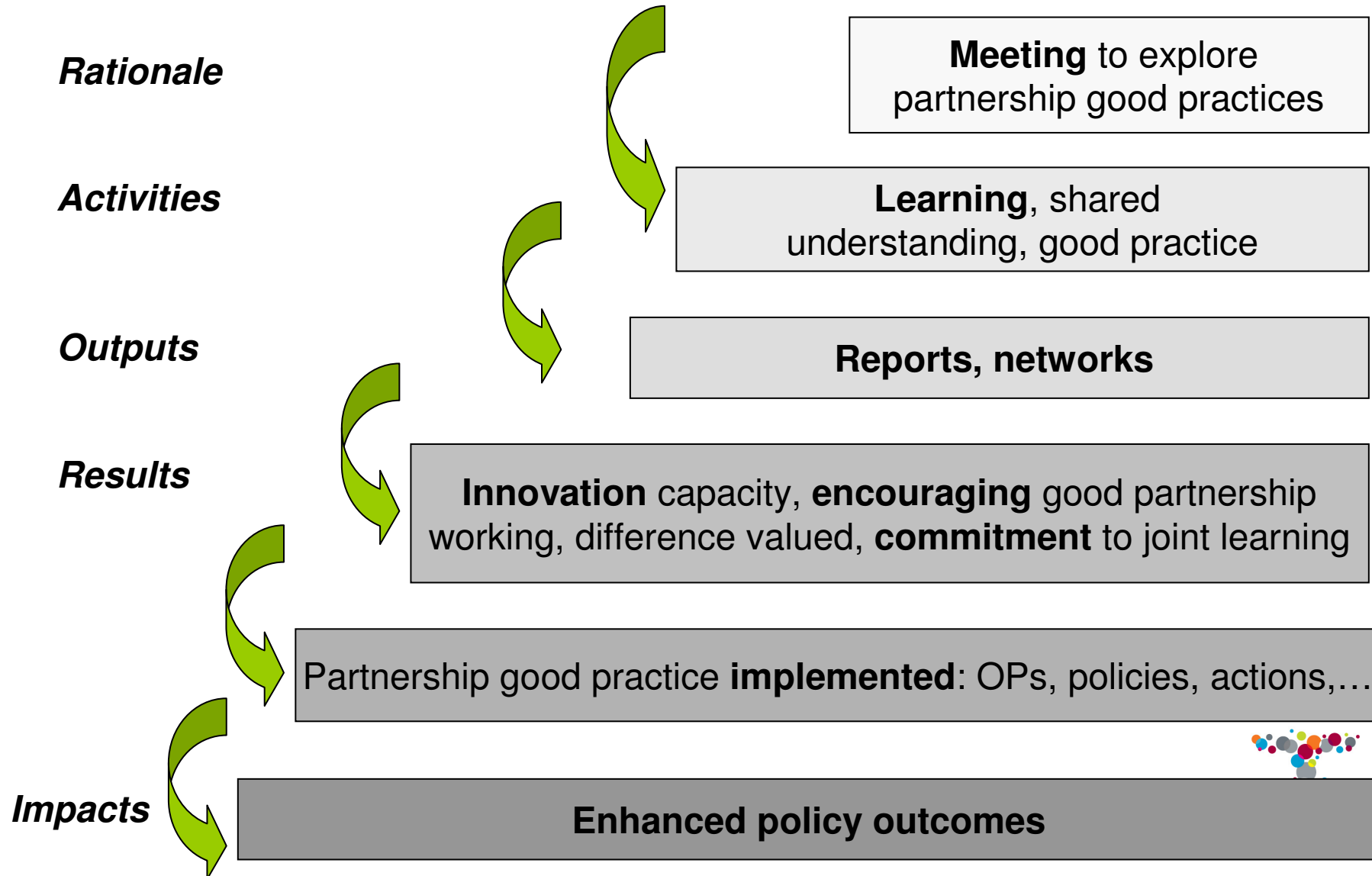
Effects on policy outcomes



Providing “high quality support to partnerships in the structural fund context”



A distance travelled model



A highly effective learning network

“A very good working group, sharing knowledge and reflecting.”

“Each time there is a PEO exploration it provides sources of best practice beyond partnership ... you get to understand better the whole mechanics of how it works.”

“The most important thing (...) is understanding the different approaches in the different countries and that the way (...) in your country is not the only way. The COP allows you to think out of the box and (...) in terms of different organisational settings and cultures.”



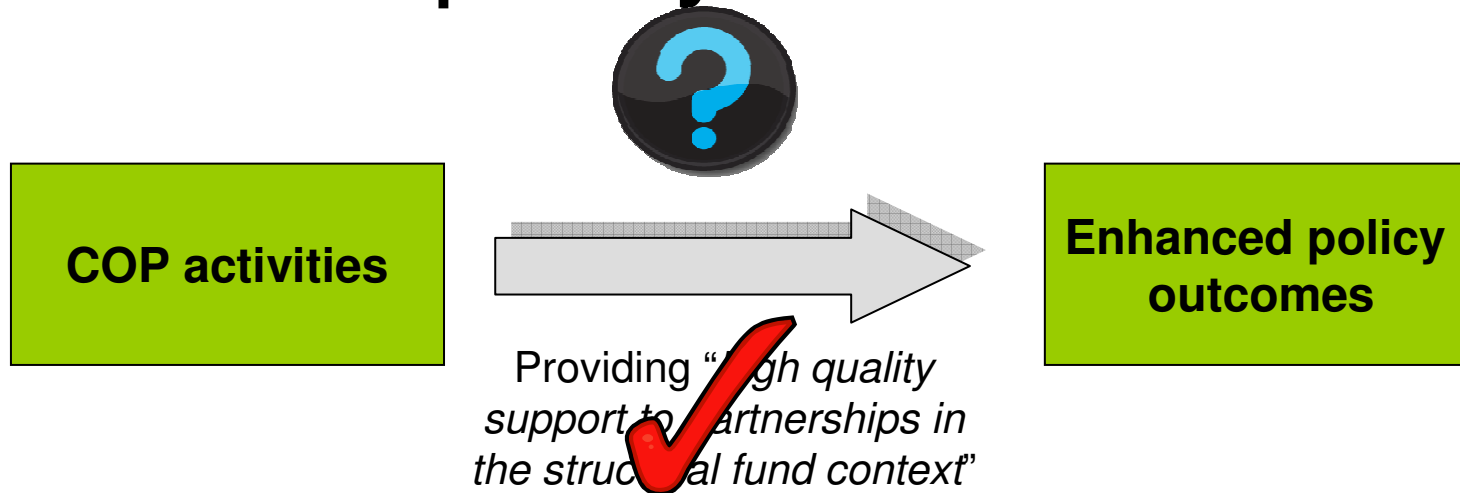
...supported by a supportive COP context

- Trust – inherited and constructed
- Mix of members
- Face to face meetings
- Critical friend approach

COP had most of the components recommended by Wenger for communities of practice



Effects on policy outcomes



COP achievements:

- Critical friend review
- Understanding of differences
- Collection of good practices
- Common definition of partnership and greater conceptualisation
- Key lessons reports
- Partnership learning manual



'Soft' results

- Critical friend peer reviews as knowledge transfer interventions for 'reviewees'
- Interaction and dialogue around insights from peer review meetings
- Networking between COP members
- Networking beyond the COP: other ESF networks, OECD LEED, national organisations



‘Hard’ results – putting knowledge into action

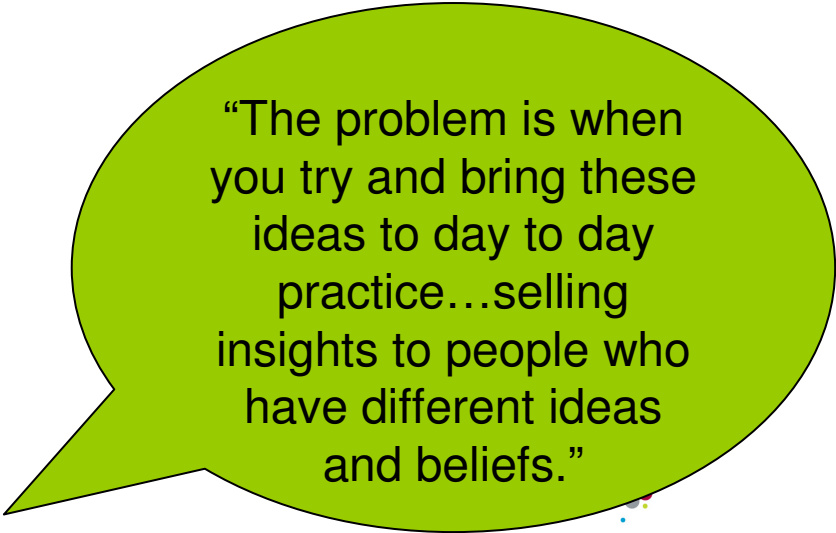
“Learning from others and then transferring this knowledge 100% is not possible. Therefore you need to look at administration and cultural and political nature of your own organisation and adapt the idea...the embryo is there because of the COP and it’s up to the member to apply it in the correct way and setting.”

- Greater awareness
- More reflective
- Some intentions to incorporate lessons into future projects and OPs



Challenges

- Timing – COP learning and committing ESF funds
- Legislation and politics
- Opportunities to influence



“The problem is when you try and bring these ideas to day to day practice...selling insights to people who have different ideas and beliefs.”

Outcomes and impacts

Rationale

Meeting to explore partnership good practices

Activities

Learning, shared understanding, good practice



Outputs

Reports, networks

Results

Innovation capacity, **encouraging** good partnership working, difference yet **commitment** to joint learning

Timing

Legislation

Influencing

Partnership good practice **implemented**: OPs, policies, actions,

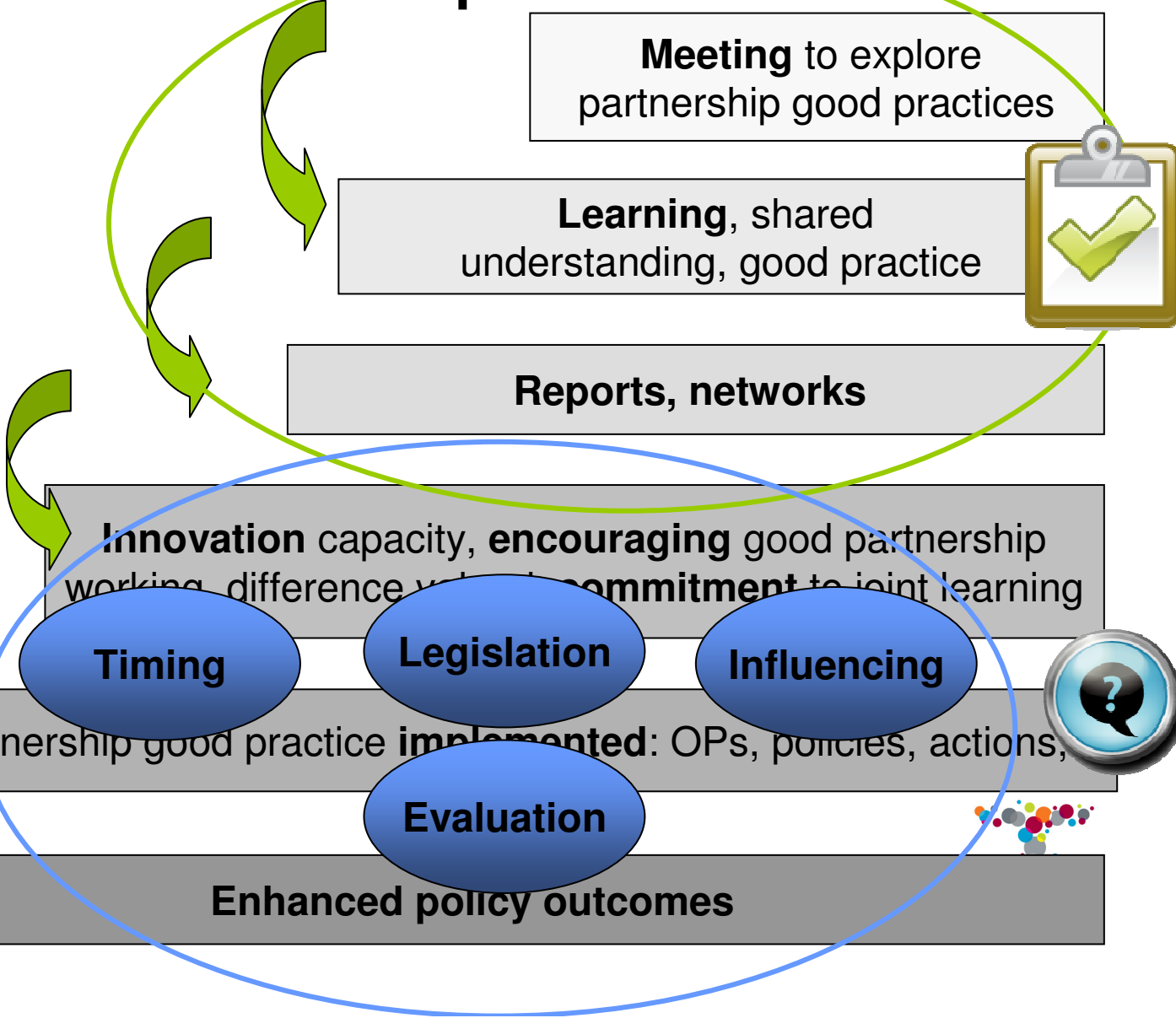


Evaluation



Impacts

Enhanced policy outcomes



Sustainability

- Continued interest in learning about partnerships in the ESF
- But: apply the lessons from the last two years' work



Sustainability

