Welcome!

Panel Discussion: Evaluation in the Field of Education and Research

Challenges of comparability in the evaluation of programs supporting centers of excellence

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The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is...

A self-governing organisation of German universities:

- 239 member universities
- 105 student bodies
Goals and tasks of the DAAD

Three strategic areas of activity

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE BEST

- Grant scholarships to the best
  - so that the professionals and leaders of tomorrow can gain qualifications at the best locations, prepare for positions of responsibility and cultivate contacts throughout the world.

EXPERTISE FOR ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

- Offer expertise for academic collaboration
  - so that academic and political leaders are able to make well-informed policy decisions.

STRUCTURES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

- Create structures that promote internationalisation
  - so that higher education institutions can improve the quality of research and instruction and address the challenges of the future with strong partners.
  - so that more people can cross borders and achieve success in study and research.
  - so that German remains an important language of culture and scholarship.
  - so that higher education institutions may contribute to development and build bridges to surmount conflicts.
We are an institution of the universities

- We believe in freedom of academic research & collaboration

- We support broad programmes allowing innovative approaches

- Tender documents can be clear on impacts but relatively open on outputs and outcomes

- Project applications can be very diverse
Centers of excellence in research and teaching

Programme History

- Research and academic relations policy of Federal Foreign Office (2009): aim is to promote the academic and scientific exchange between Germany and the world

- Result: Launch of Centers of Excellence programme

Task

- Selection of four centers of excellence contributing to scientific networking and contributing to the solution of global challenges
Broad project objectives

1. The establishment and consolidation of centers of excellence with outstanding foreign partners, which have a special focus on Germany (…)

2. Strengthening German science - especially in the field of research and international networking – with a focus on excellent post-graduate training in the scientific field.
Evaluation challenges: Different key objectives and characteristics

- **CE-Marine:** research network focusing on PhD training and research on marine sciences
- **HCLA:** Physical center with focus on MA programmes in four disciplines (health informatics, life sciences, astronomy, physics in medicine)
- **CPG:** Think tank for democracy and public policy advise
- **G-Risc:** interdisciplinary research project focusing on structures and dynamics of nanoscopic matters (chemistry, mathematics, physics)
Four centers of excellence worldwide (since 2009)

- CE Marin: Bogotá
- G-RISC: St. Petersburg
- HCLA: Santiago
- CPG: Bangkok
Key Challenge: comparability of centres

Evaluation on project level feasible

- Assessment against key objectives set in application
- Satisfaction of beneficiaries (students) can be measured

No direct comparability of different institutions possible

- Focus and disciplines are too different. Especially on Outcome level difficult: **Conditions and expectable outputs vary from discipline to discipline**
Prerequisite for success:

- Centres of excellence should **function as independent (virtual or factual) organizational units.**

Consequence:

- Centres should be **visible and recognized** both in the self-perception of the participants and in the external perception.
5C Model by Peter Morgan

- The capability to act and commit → choose between options, exert influence, change and develop on the basis of strategic intent.

- The capability to relate to other actors → form informal alliances and/or formal partnerships. This affects the legitimacy of the organization and thus how effectively it can pursue its mandate.

- The capability to adapt and self-renew → affects the ability of an organization or system to change and adapt to external or internal developments, new ideas and ultimately to learn.

- The capability to achieve coherence → balance between the need to differentiate and diversify and the need to maintain a common strategic focus.

- The capability to deliver on programme objectives → organization-specific outputs and outcomes.”
Assumption: definition of common `center’ characteristics allows comparison

- Capability to adapt and self-renew
- Capability to deliver on objectives
- Capability to relate to external stakeholders
- Capability to achieve coherence
- Capability to act and commit

Input → Capability to deliver on objectives → Output

Outcome
Application of theoretical approach & lessons learnt

**Application**

- Combined teams of academic assessors and professional external evaluators
- Combination of quantitative & qualitative methods
- Desk study, self assessment, online surveys, missions, expert interviews

**Lessons learnt**

- Theoretical model as useful tool for enhancing comparability
- The implicated results chain does not fully apply
- Model and implications of project implementation is accepted within the projects
Thank you for your attention!