

9<sup>th</sup>  
Evaluation  
Conference  
in Prague

# Cohesion Policy:

Common Path to Results and Impacts

## Impact evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014 – 2020

Many hounds soon catch the hare

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MINISTRY  
OF REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT CZ



EVALUATION  
UNIT NCA



# What am I going to talk about today?



**How many small and medium-sized enterprises have been created in knowledge-intensive sectors thanks to the ESIF?**



**Exactly 0**





# Objective and focus of the evaluation



# The thematic evaluation was one of the largest evaluations carried out in the Czech Republic



## OBJECTIVE

The aim of the evaluation was to **quantify, interpret and evaluate the results** or impacts of programs financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) at the **nationwide/national** level, especially in terms of their contribution to the achievement of the expected results of the individual thematic objectives defined by the Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period.

*MMR, Description of the subject of performance Thematic evaluation of the Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 programming period*



How many thematic objectives have been defined in the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020?



# The project evaluated 11 thematic objectives

## Research, development and innovation, education



**TC1: Research, development and innovation**



**TC10: Education**

## Digitalization and technology



**TC2: Information and communication technology**

## Entrepreneurship



**TC3: Competitiveness**

## Energy



**TC4: Low carbon economy**

## Public administration



**TC11: Public administration**

## Environmental protection and circular economy



**TC5: Climate change**



**TC6: Environment**

## Transportation



**TC7: Transportation**

## Social issues

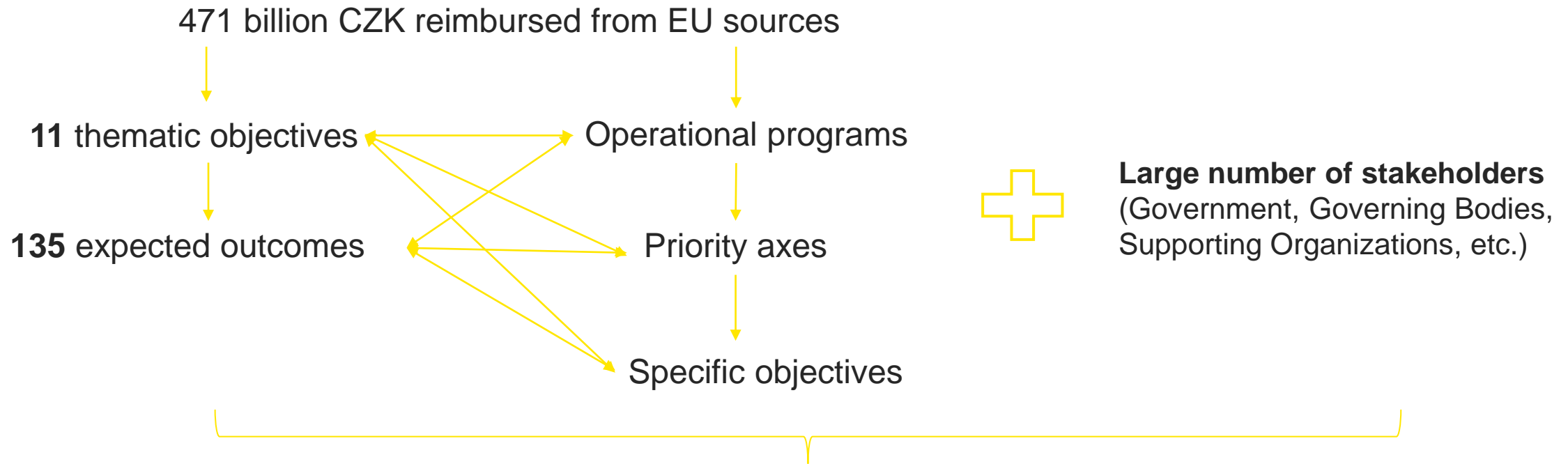


**TC8: Employment**



**TC9: Social integration**

# Funds were spread over too many areas and could not have any significant measurable socio-economic impact



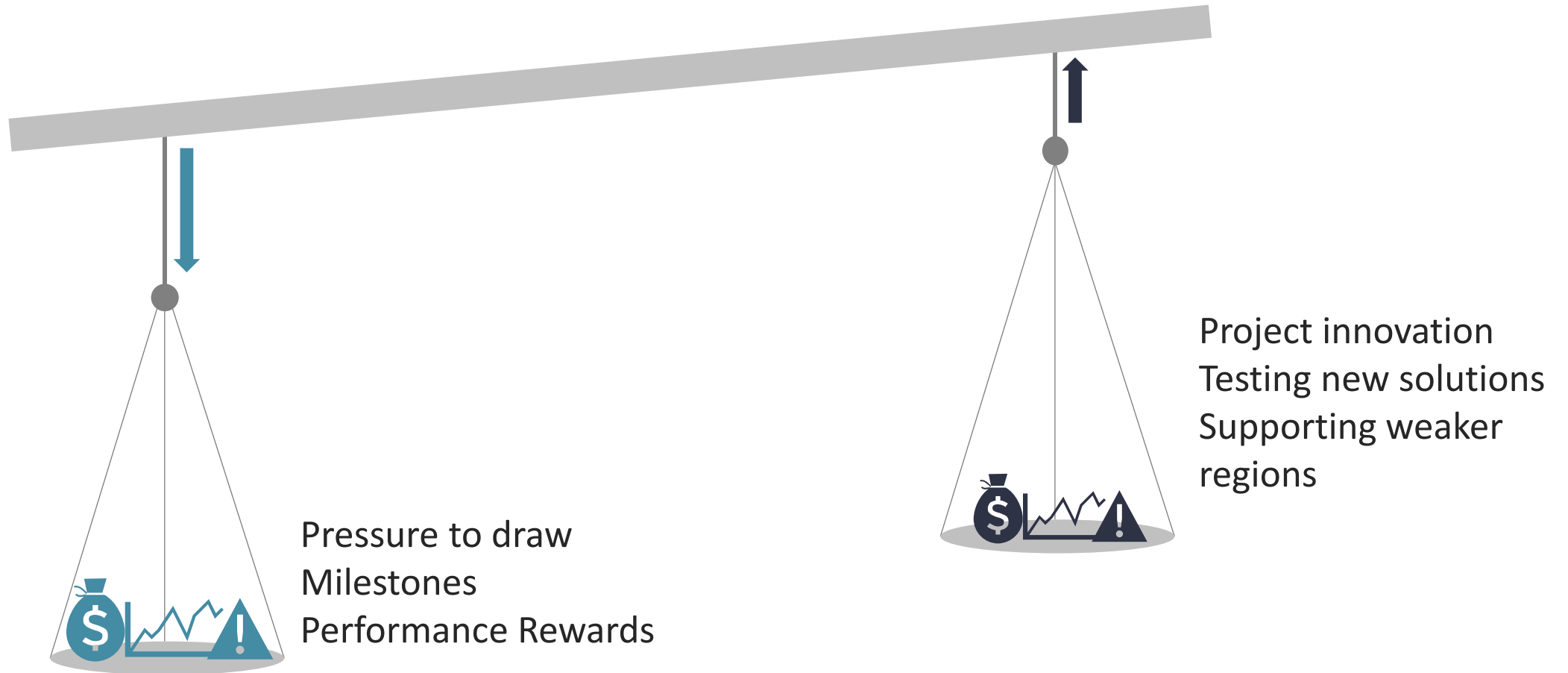
**The ideal "recipe" for uncoordinated implementation** of the Partnership Agreement



Significant complications for the implementation of the Thematic Evaluation



# The objectives of the implementation were different, contradictory





# Cross-cutting findings and recommendations

# TC2 and TC3 have the highest gap between allocated and drawn down EU funds

**113 802**

Projects approved

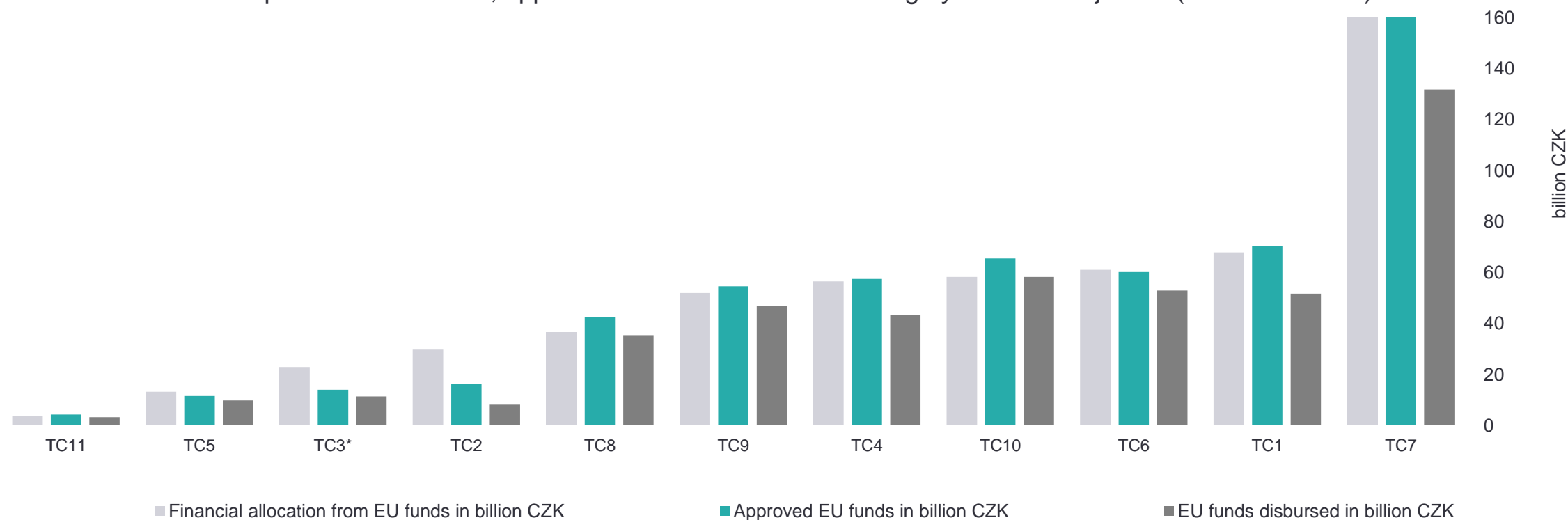
**653 mld. Kč**

Total funds disbursed (grants)

**471 mld. Kč**

of which EU contribution (grants)

Comparison of allocated, approved and disbursed EU funding by thematic objective (as of 30.4.2023)





# The large number of expected outcomes and the wide range of topics has caused the funding to be fragmented into many areas. This makes it difficult to demonstrate the impact of the ESIF on the development of the Czech Republic

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**11 thematic objectives divided into 135 expected results Funds targeting an overly ambitious number of diverse areas**

- Compared to the previous period, the number of programs has decreased
- The set-up was opaque and made it difficult to effectively evaluate interim results
- The set (evaluation-generated) theory of change further reflected a very complicated mechanism



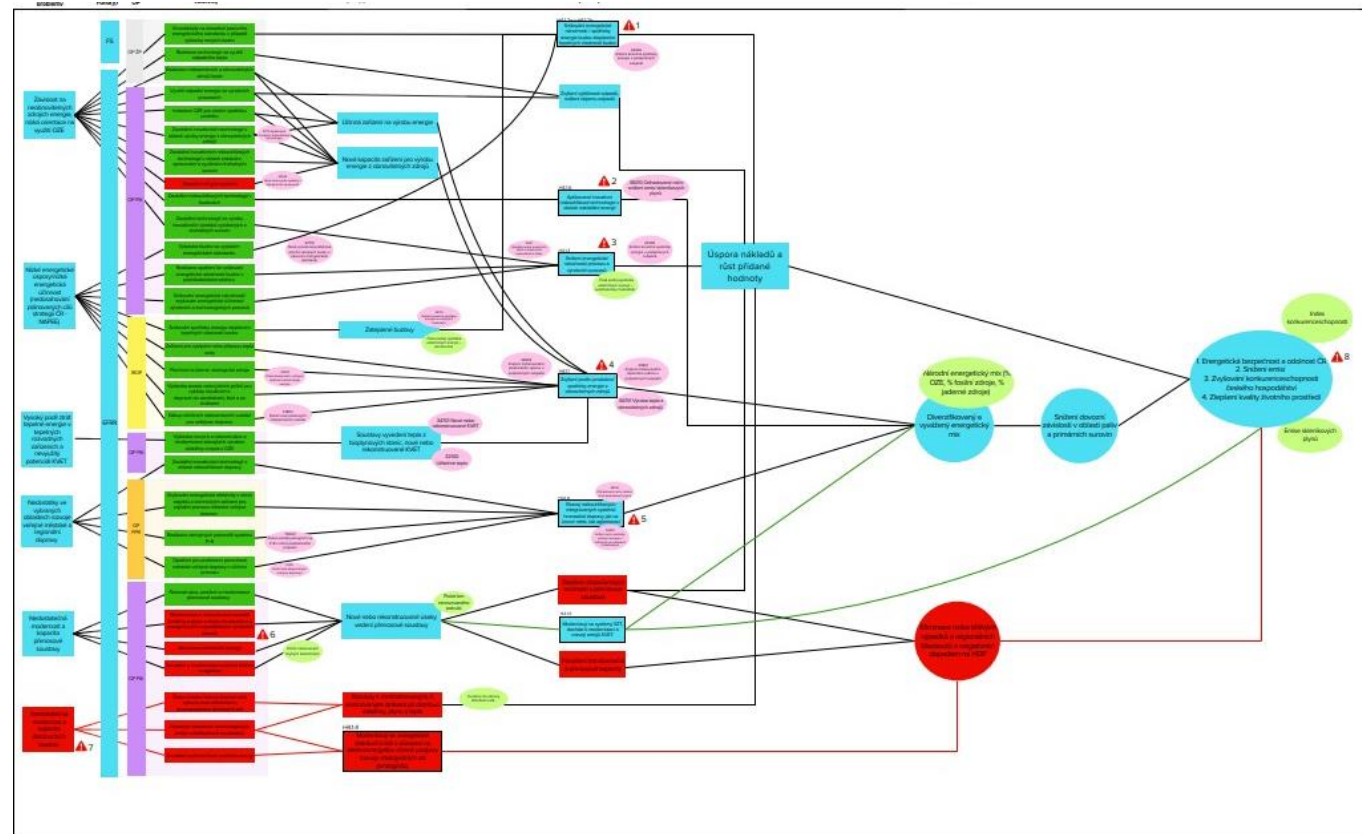
**Narrow the targeting of EU funds to strategically important areas, promote decentralization of themes**

- Simplify the link between thematic objectives, policy priorities, etc. and the logic of the Operational Programs
- Channelling resources into projects supporting research, development and innovation or major structural change
- Monitor regional distribution, track financial absorption from a territorial perspective during the actual implementation of the programs

***The fragmentation of the ESIF into many areas makes it more difficult to demonstrate its positive effects. The impact can only be traced where there is a representative socio-economic indicator at the level of the whole OP (OP Environment and Emission Reduction, OP CIP and Overall Support to Enterprise).***

*The evaluation of the effects of the ESIF on selected socio-economic areas confirmed this fact. In areas where the funds were more focused on one large area (e.g. road transport, energy intensity reduction or brownfields revitalisation), the use of adequate quantitative procedures demonstrated the positive impact of the ESIF on these areas.*

## Ex-post theory of change highlighted the unclear set-up of the Partnership Agreement



Example of the Theory of Change for Thematic Objective 4 - Transition to a low carbon economy (formed in 2022)



# The ESIF has been directed to areas where it has been only one source of public funding - this is reflected in the inconclusive results of its impact

2

## In addition to the ESIF, other, much more important programs have intervened

- ESIF often did not act synergistically with other programs, but rather competitively (e.g. LIFE and measures for the transition to a low-carbon economy)
- Some potential applicants preferred to use other sources (e.g. Norway Grants in the case of streamlining justice)
- ESIF has also been used where public funding is secured (e.g. in social services or employment support)



## Channel ESIF into piloting new activities in thematic areas where other resources are lacking

- Promote areas that are new or too risky (e.g. support research and development of new low-carbon technologies)
- Areas where commercial alternatives do not apply (e.g. high-speed connectivity in remote areas)
- Pilot new solutions, test their cost-effectiveness
- Continue to fund scaling up of solutions from public budgets (e.g. children's groups, mental health centers)

***Practical examples from the evaluation are the Counselling (TC3) and Support for the operation of social services (TC9) programs.***

*In providing advisory services to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the **SME Advisory Services program** was less professional compared to other programs of CzechInvest or Regional Innovation Centers, which better reflected the needs of enterprises.*

***The financing of the operation of social services was partly done through ESIF, which is not an ideal solution. ESIF should be aimed at solving complex problems and supporting the invention and implementation of innovations, not just funding expenditure to be covered by state or public budgets.***



# For some programs, the objectives of their interventions were vaguely defined and not measurable, making it difficult to meet them

3

**The implemented programs have only marginally contributed to the expected results of the Agreement**

- Some expected results could not be matched to a relevant program or specific objective
- Programs were identified that only minimally reflected the set theory of change and the needs addressed
- The impacts set out in the theory of change were not measurable due to the absence of relevant socio-economic indicators



**When setting intervention logics, take into account the measurability of individual causalities**

- The formulated outputs and impacts should be measurable using good quality project indicators or relevant socio-economic indicators

***Full-fledged theories of change did not exist at the beginning of the evaluation, they were added ex-post by our project team in cooperation with experts and the Managing Authorities.***

*Ideally, the theories of change for each thematic area should be clearly defined at the beginning of the implementation of the interventions. An example where a low correlation between the intended theory of change, the expected results and the implemented programs was identified is TC3 (SME Competitiveness), where the main objective was to support the creation of new innovative firms, but none of the programs addressed these areas*



How to evaluate everything

# What were the evaluation questions?

Is the image of **business** and entrepreneurs improving in society?

Is the number of **excluded localities** and the proportion of the population living in them decreasing?

Is the **energy performance** of buildings (including public buildings) being reduced?

Is the supply and use of flexible forms of **work** increasing?

Is the efficiency and effectiveness of **public administration** increasing?

Is access, use and quality of **ICT technologies** improving?





# What is the ideal approach to ESIF implementation?

## Objectives Identification

- ▶ Leaders identify objectives to be achieved, agree on resource

## Choice of intervention

- ▶ They choose actions that lead to the achievement of the objectives
- ▶ From the range of options, taking into account costs and benefits

## Evaluation of results

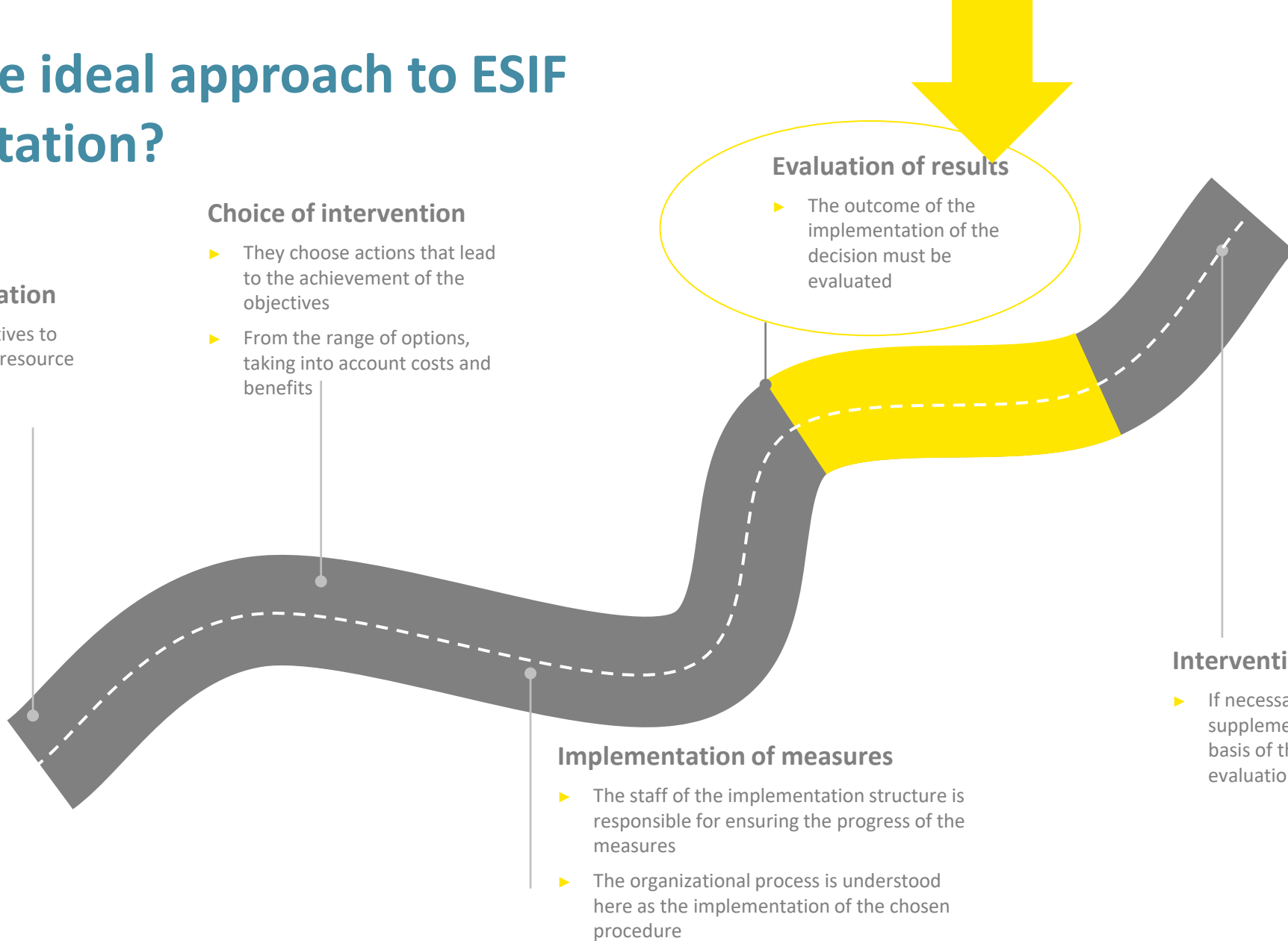
- ▶ The outcome of the implementation of the decision must be evaluated

## Implementation of measures

- ▶ The staff of the implementation structure is responsible for ensuring the progress of the measures
- ▶ The organizational process is understood here as the implementation of the chosen procedure

## Intervention modification

- ▶ If necessary, the policy shall be supplemented or modified on the basis of the results of the evaluation





# Project aspects

**How many pages did we use for the content of the final reports?**



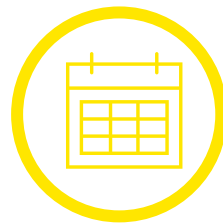


# Thematic evaluation in figures



**2106**

Pages used for the content  
of final reports



**26 měsíců**

Length of the thematic  
evaluation



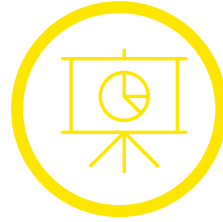
**16**

Members of the project team  
(+ project support)



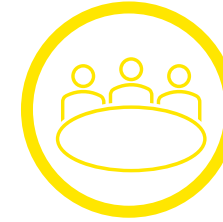
**24**

External experts and  
panelists



**90**

Publicly published outputs  
(+ dozens of working or internal  
documents)



**91**

Team meetings (+ adhoc or  
internal meetings)

# Thank you for your attention and feel free to ask any questions!

- Links to the studies:
  - Impact of the Cohesion Policy on Selected Socio-economic indicators of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020: [DotaceEU - Výsledková tematická evaluace Dohody o partnerství 2014-2020: shrnutí](#)
  - Final Report on the Regional evaluation of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020: [DotaceEU - Výsledková evaluace přínosů evropských fondů na regionální úrovni](#)
- Contact information: [linda.marsikova@cz.ey.com](mailto:linda.marsikova@cz.ey.com), +421 731 627 035





# Have a great day

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