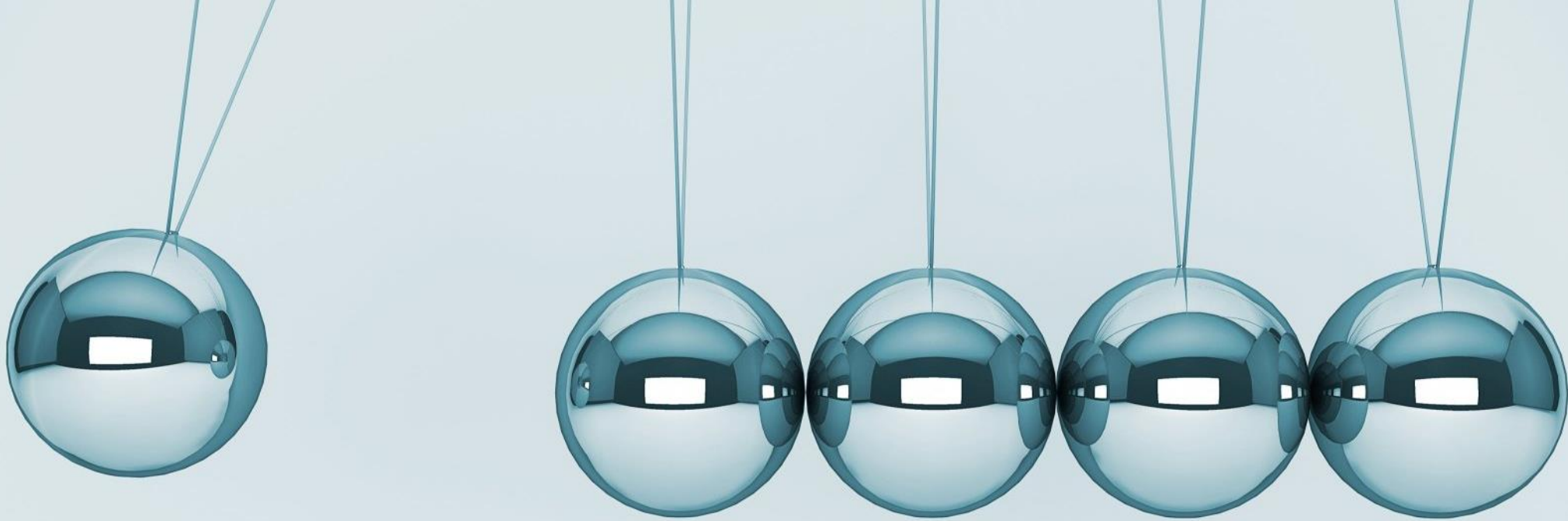




Mainstreaming project results of Erasmus+: lessons learned from European studies

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Content

- Why impact?
- What we know about impact?
- What stimulates impact?
- How to evaluate impact?
- How the NA can improve impact?
- Take aways!

Why impact?

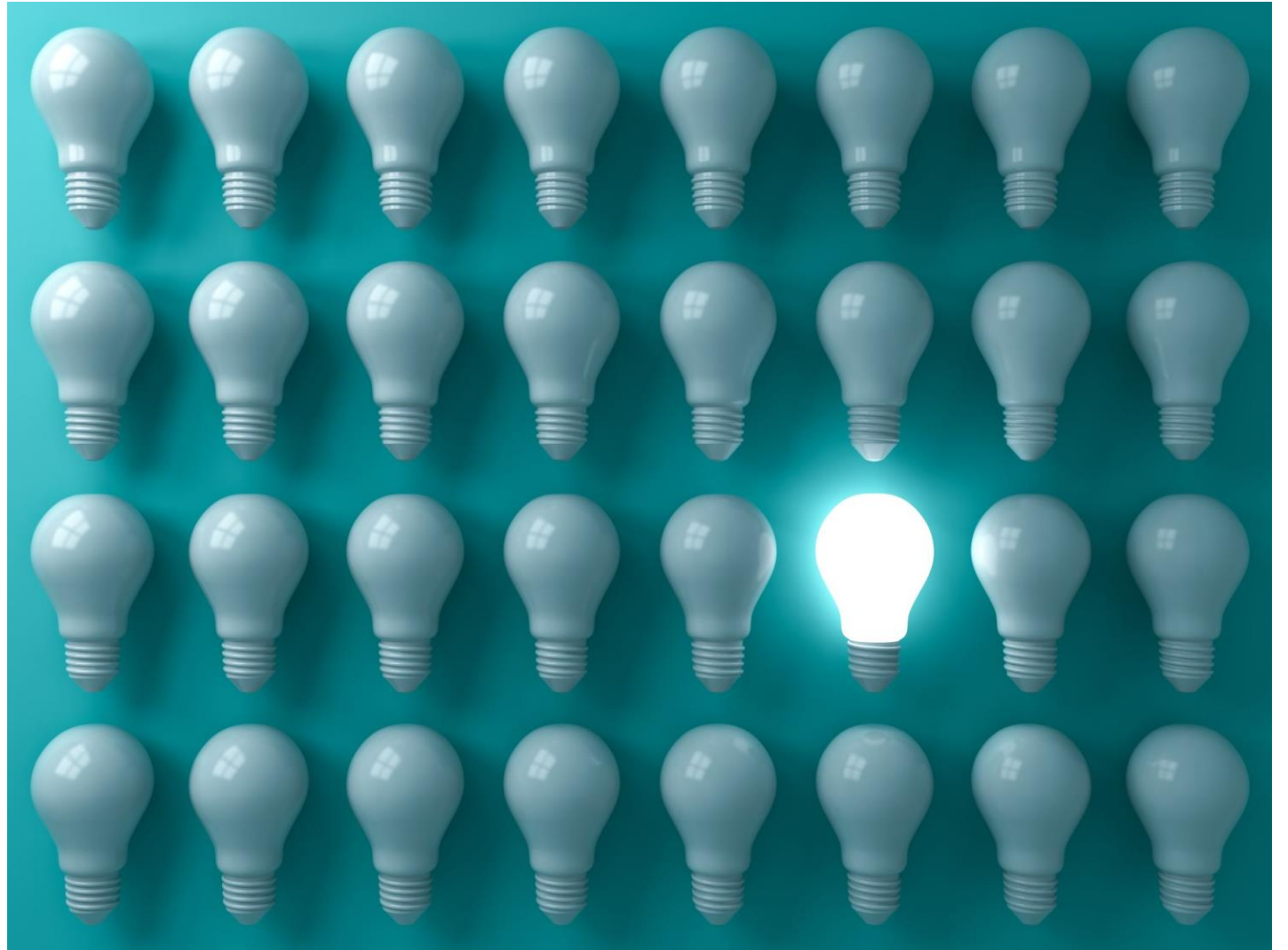


Why impact?

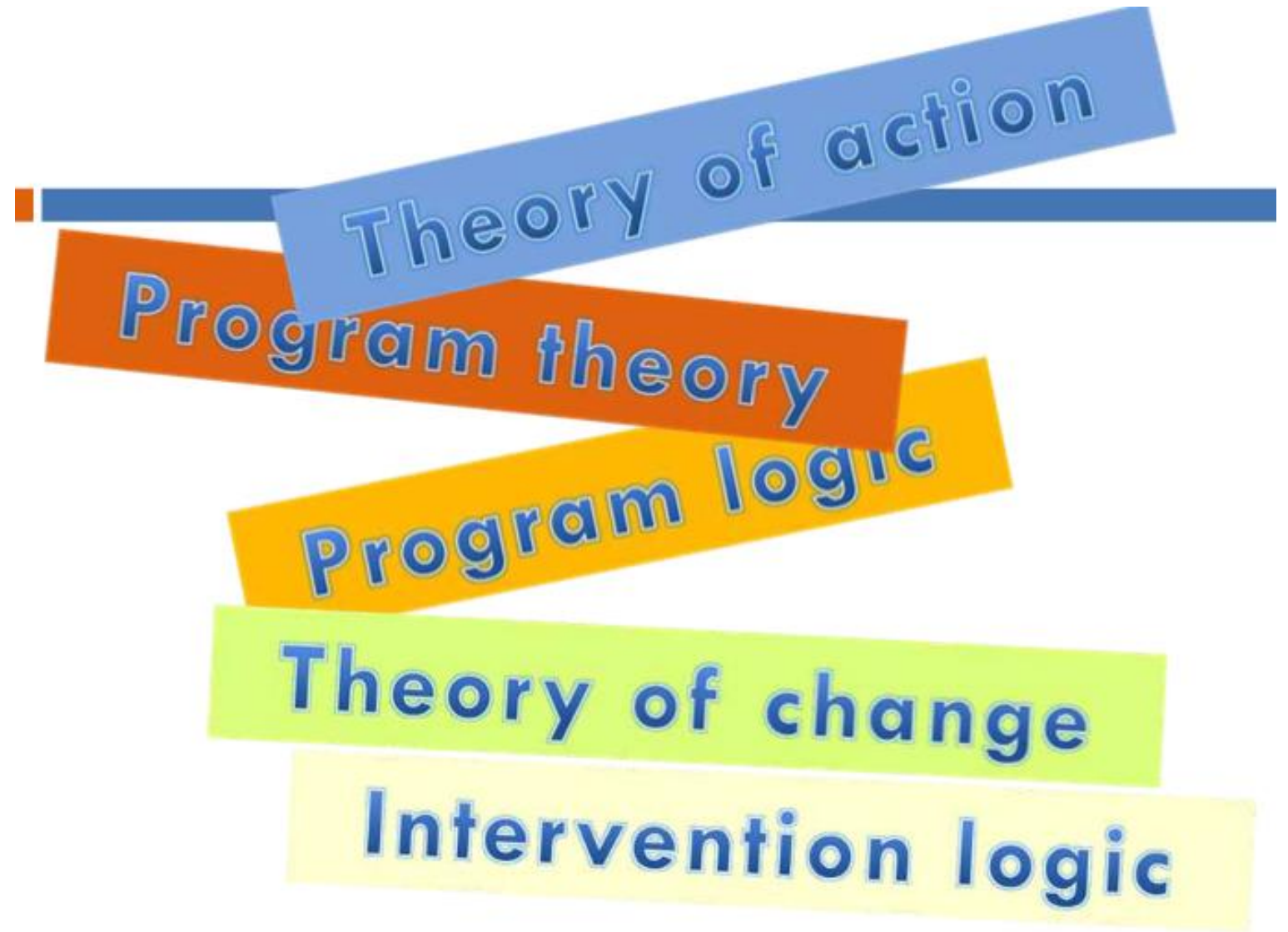
- Changed thinking within the Commission (activities => outputs => impact)
- Project applications score lower on impact criteria
- Difficult to transfer developed methodologies, products, and process experiences to other parties
- Risk that the investments made will not bring about sustainable change in education & training



Do we have
sufficient focus to
sustainably
embed project
outcomes?

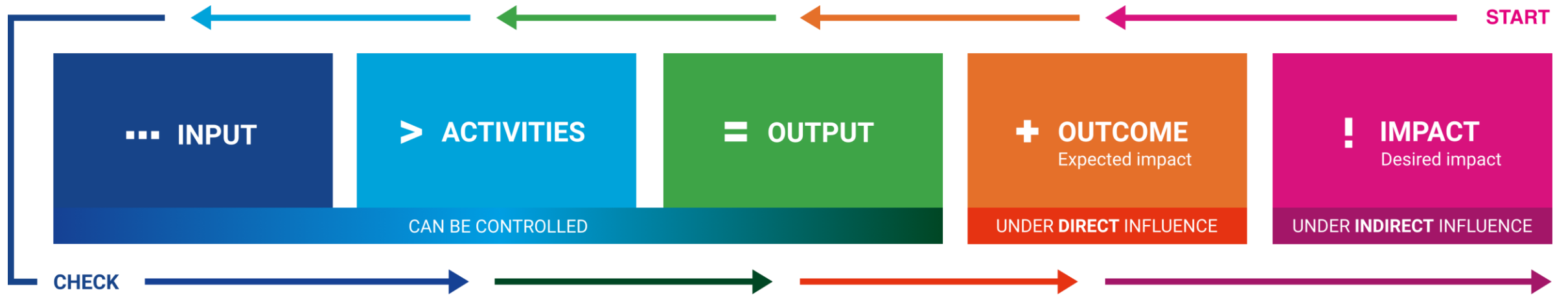


**Increasing
attention
within
Erasmus+ on
impact**



The European Commission line of thinking (the “theory of change”)

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- Why is this a problem?
- What can we do about it?
- What do we want to achieve?
- What questions are we looking to answer?
- What are the possible ways to find a solution?
- What could be the effects of these solutions, and for whom?
- Which solutions prove to be the most efficient and effective?
- How can we monitor and evaluate this?



Use of the impact tool (NL)

- Support from NA (knowledge sessions, workshops, seminars, impact tool, etc.) is appreciated.
- Applicants (KA1 and KA2) would have paid less attention to impact without support
- Applicants do require more concrete approaches/tools to promote impact within and outside the organisation.
- Reintroducing the distinction between expected and desired impact.
- Proportionality of impact depending on KA and project size.

Source: Panteia & SEOR (2020)

What is
impact?



What is (not) impact?

Impact \neq project result

Impact \neq dissemination

Impact \neq sustainability

Expected impact \neq desired impact

Mainstreaming = impact

Impact is mentioned **41 times** in the Erasmus+ programme guide, but it does not appear in the glossary of terms.

Impact is a **process-oriented strategy** through which successful innovations/approaches are embedded into regular activities and/or standard policy (EQUAL programme 2000-2006).

This includes:

- Determining **which innovations/outputs** are successful (good practices)
- **Disseminating** these good practices (awareness/knowledge transfer)
- **Mainstreaming** good practices (actual behavioural influence/embedding)

Dimensions of impact

Vertical impact

Policy makers
Directors
Managers
Teachers
Support staff
Other stakeholders



Horizontal

Students/Pupils
Subject Colleagues
Other Colleagues
Other Institutions
Other Target Groups
Other Regions/Countries



Transversal

Subject areas
Curricula
Organisations
Policy areas
International



Longitudinal impact

Project Activities
Project Outputs
Learning Activities
Improved Practices
Effects of Actions
Transfer of Practices



What do we
know about the
impact?



Cycle of studies on the impact of Erasmus+ in the Netherlands

Impact of Erasmus+ & eTwinning on primary and secondary education (2022)

Impact Erasmus+ on higher educations (2024-2025)

Impact van Erasmus+ on the adult education sector (2023)

Impact Erasmus+ on VET (2024)

- Impact on organisations
- Impact on staff
- Impact on learners
- Impact on policy

Method: online survey, casestudies, interviews (non) participants

Research Network for the Adult Education Sector in Erasmus+

- Better **understanding of the impact** of international cooperation and mobility projects
- Strengthening **collaboration and dialogue** between research, policy, and practice
- **Improving the Erasmus+ Programme** by enabling high-quality and practice-oriented evaluation and impact research
- Increasing the **visibility of the benefits of adult education** in the EU and member states and the role of Erasmus+ (advocacy)



Impact on organisations: internationalisation

By participating in Erasmus+...

- Organisational embedding of internationalisation has improved due to Erasmus+
- Particularly due to Erasmus+ accreditation
- Smaller beneficiary organisations still face specific challenges



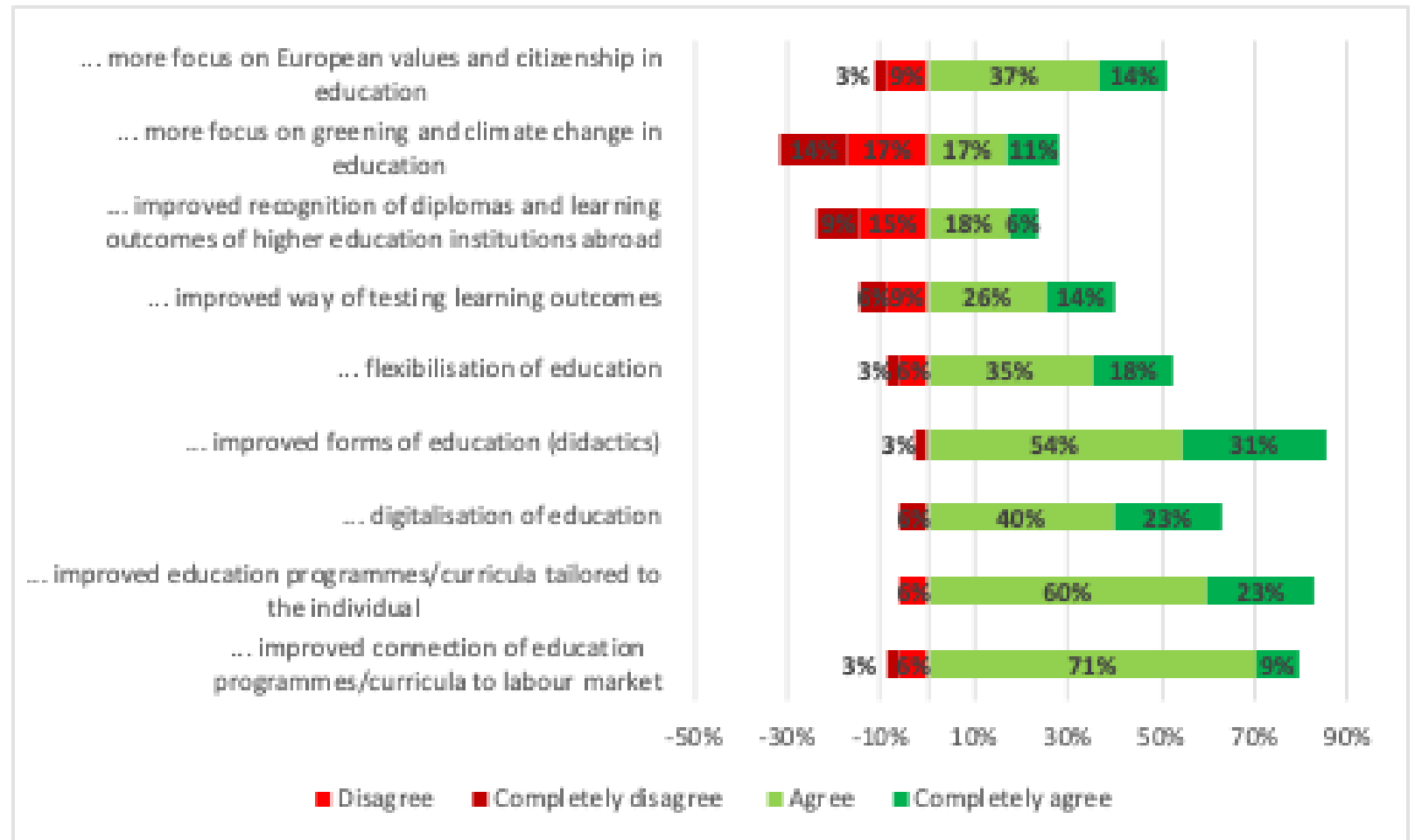
Source: Online survey, RIA-AE (2024)

Impact on organisations: learning offer

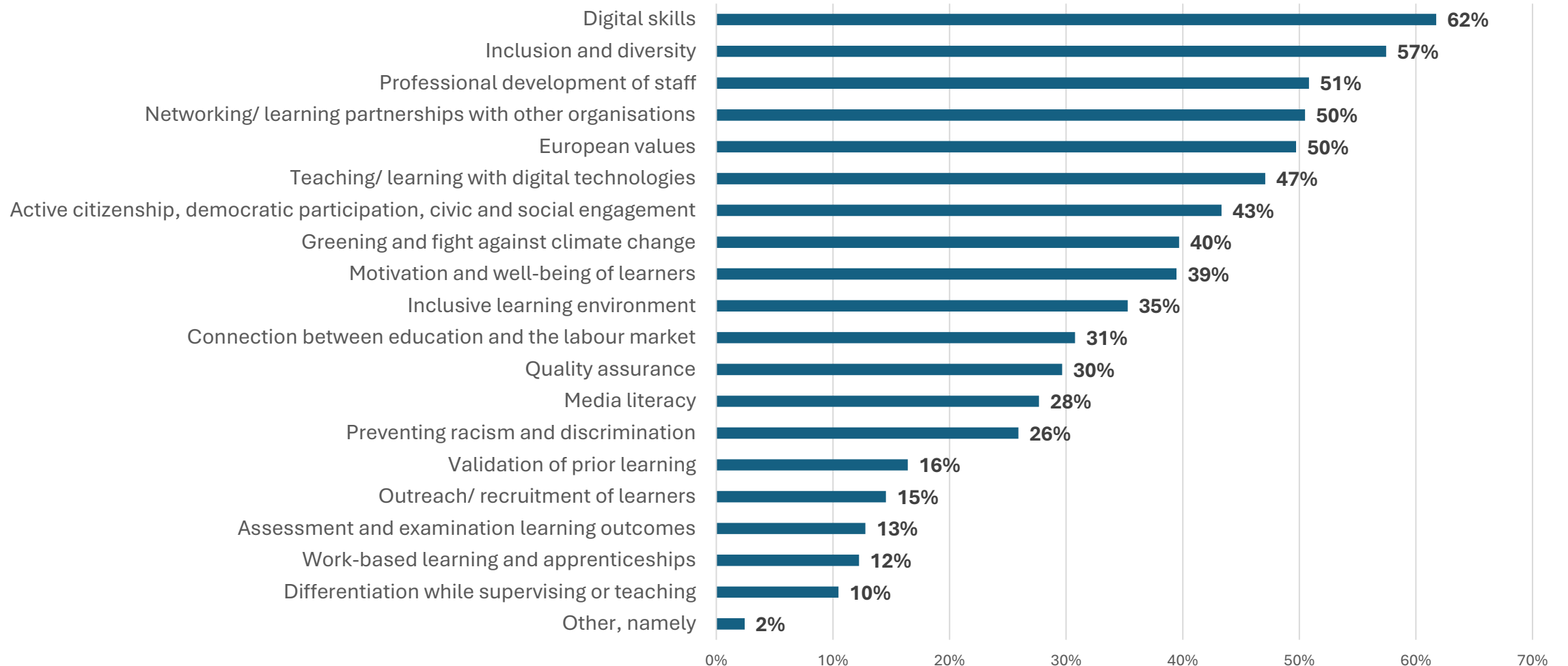
Example higher education (NL), mid term evaluation Erasmus+, 2024

Research shows that output is frequently used by participating organisations (NL)

- 87% AE
- 89% VET
- 89% HE



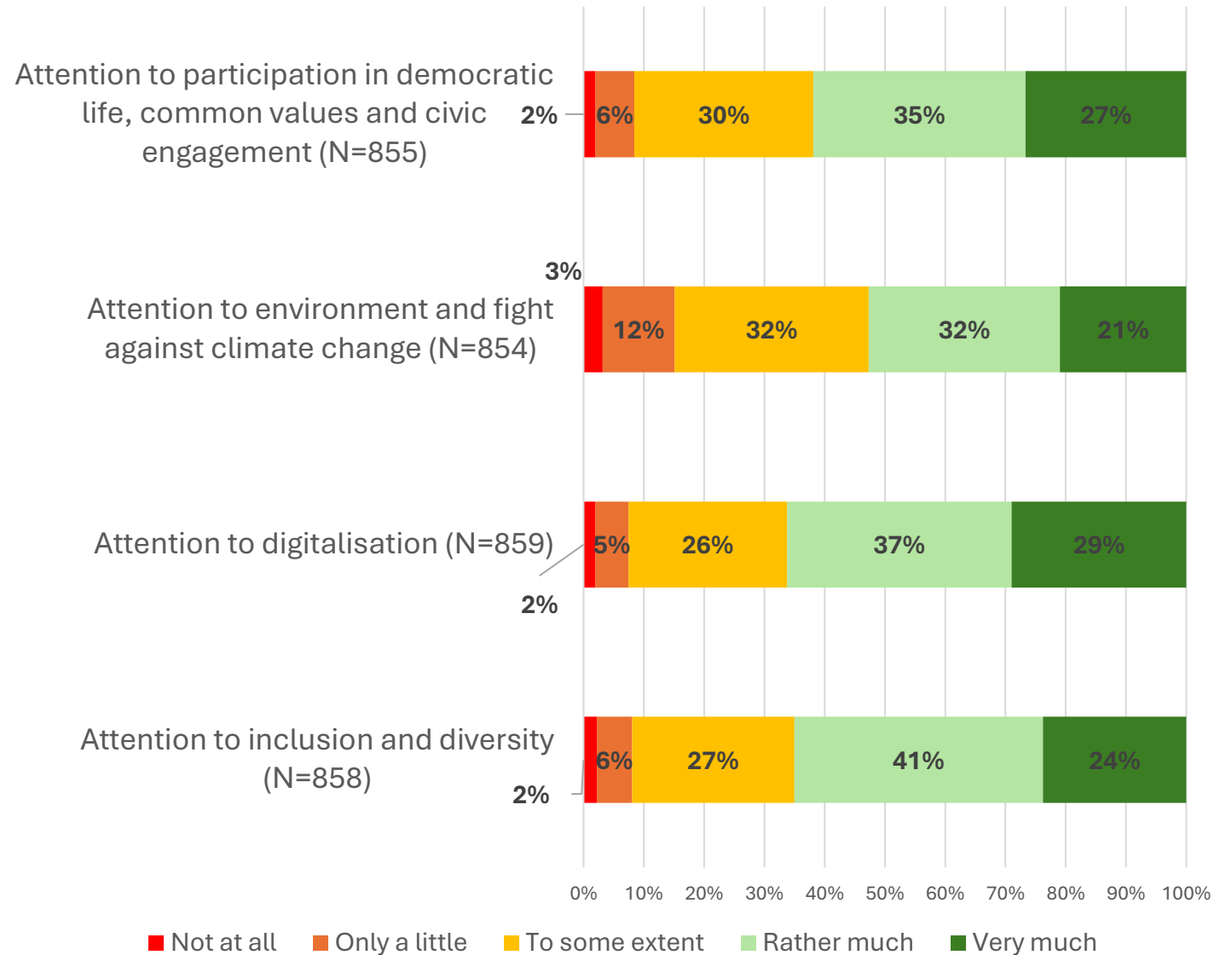
Impact on organisations: thematic focus



Source: Online survey, RIA-AE (N=907)

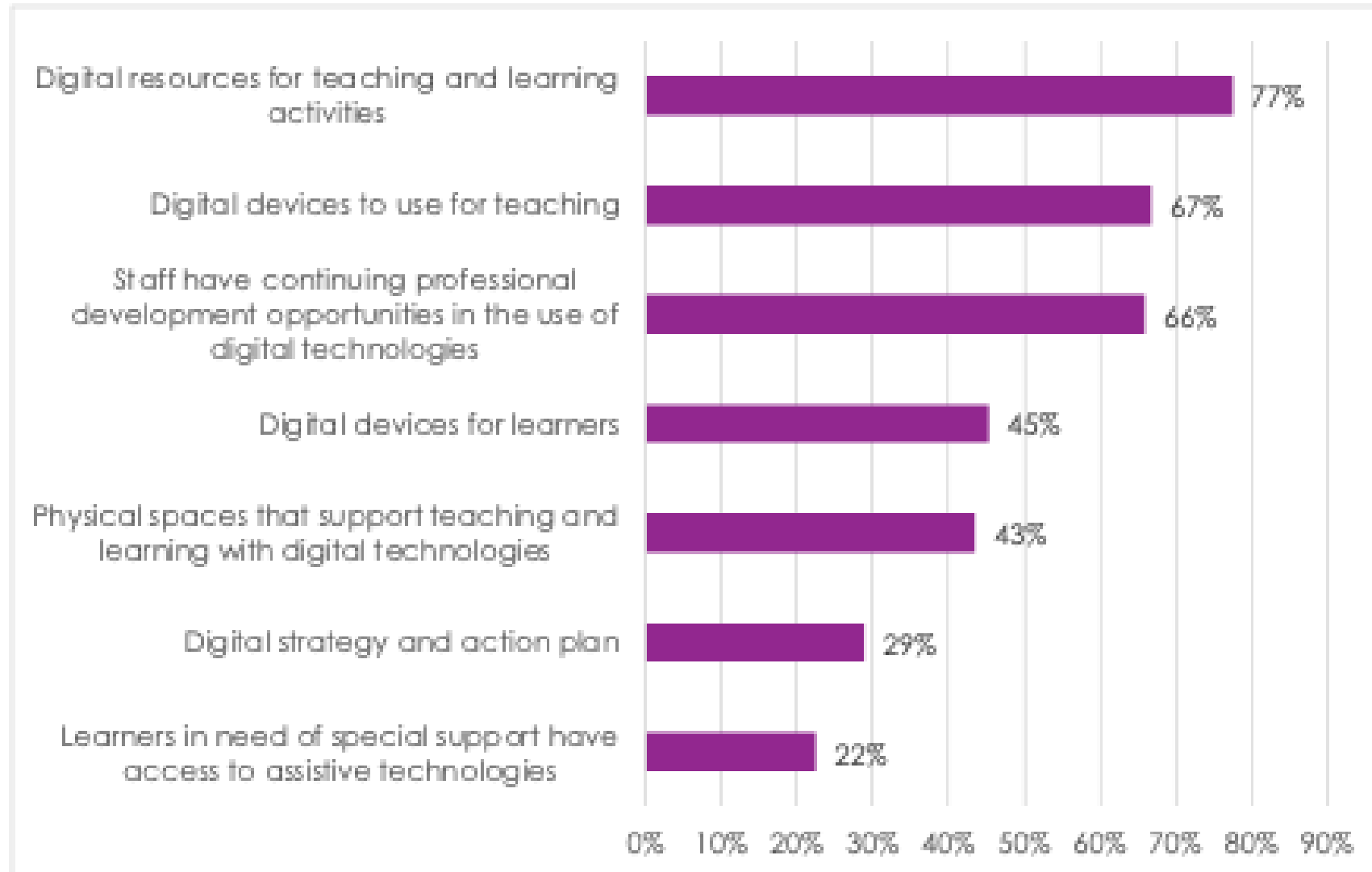
Impact on organisations: horizontal priorities

- European research shows that countries score well on the impact of Erasmus+ on the priority of inclusion & diversity, digital transition and active citizenship
- Score is lower in the area of green transition.



Source: Online survey beneficiary organisation RIA-AE network (2024)

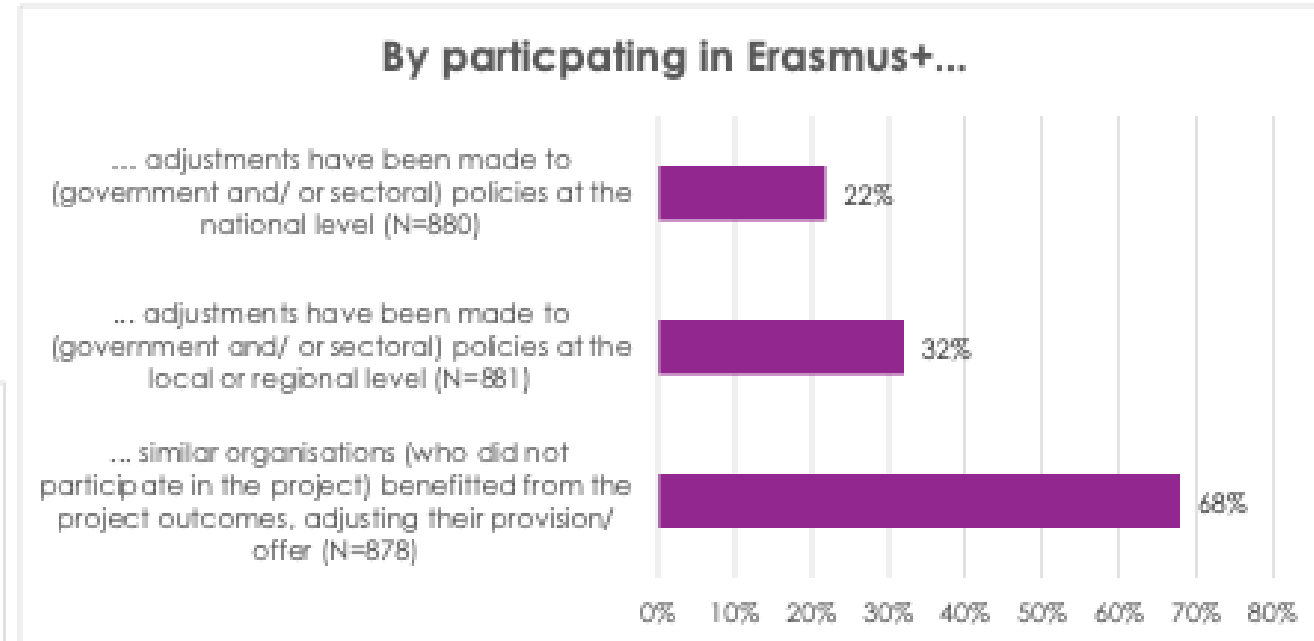
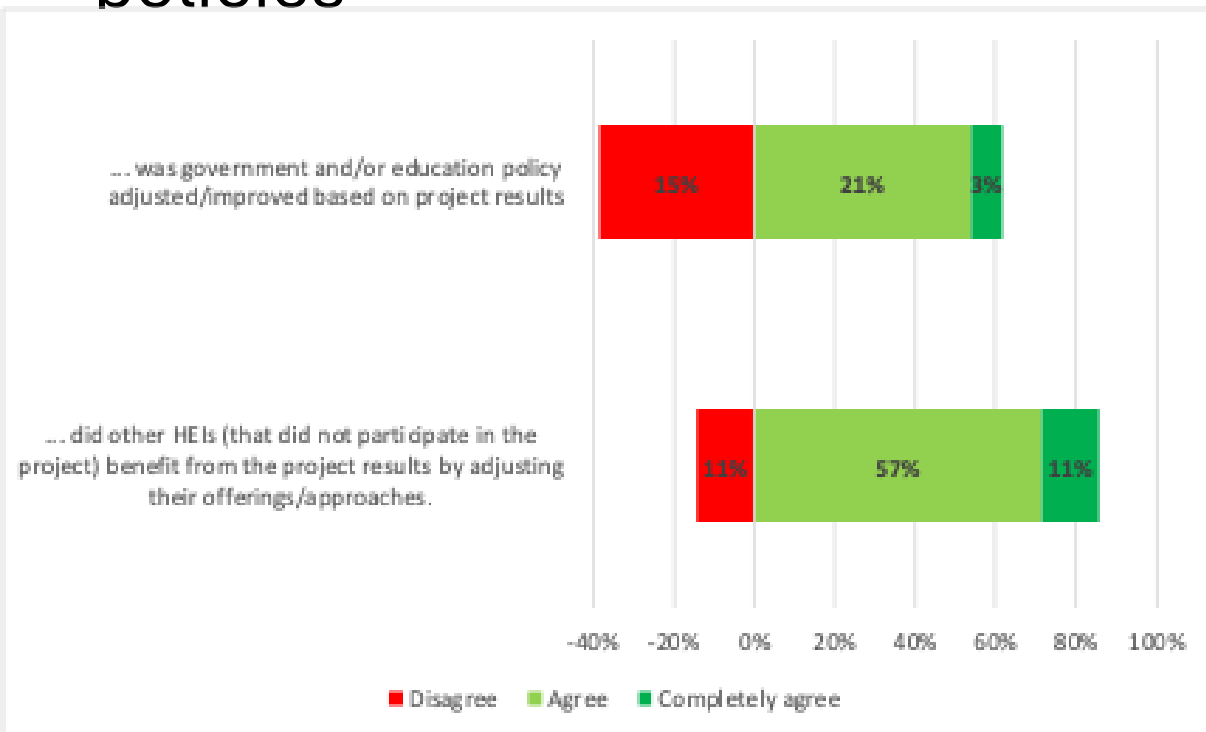
Impact on organisations: horizontal priorities



Source: Online survey beneficiary organisation RIA-AE network (2024)

Impact on other organisations / policy

Project coordinators report lower impact of their Erasmus+ project on other organisations and policies



Point of attention?

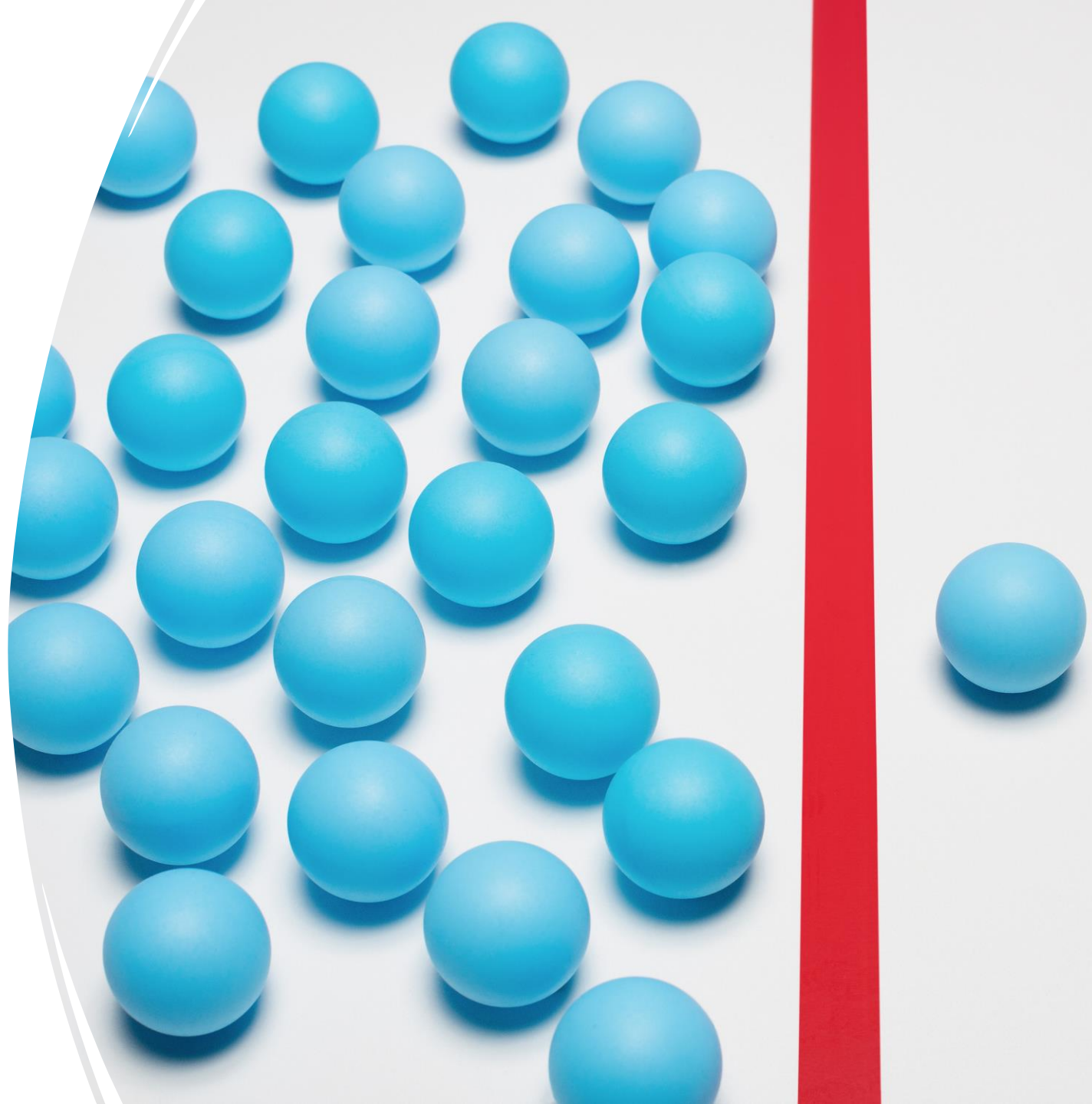
What drives and
hinders impact?



Challenge

One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It... makes you think that after all, your favourite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded... Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to illtreat the original man who brings it.

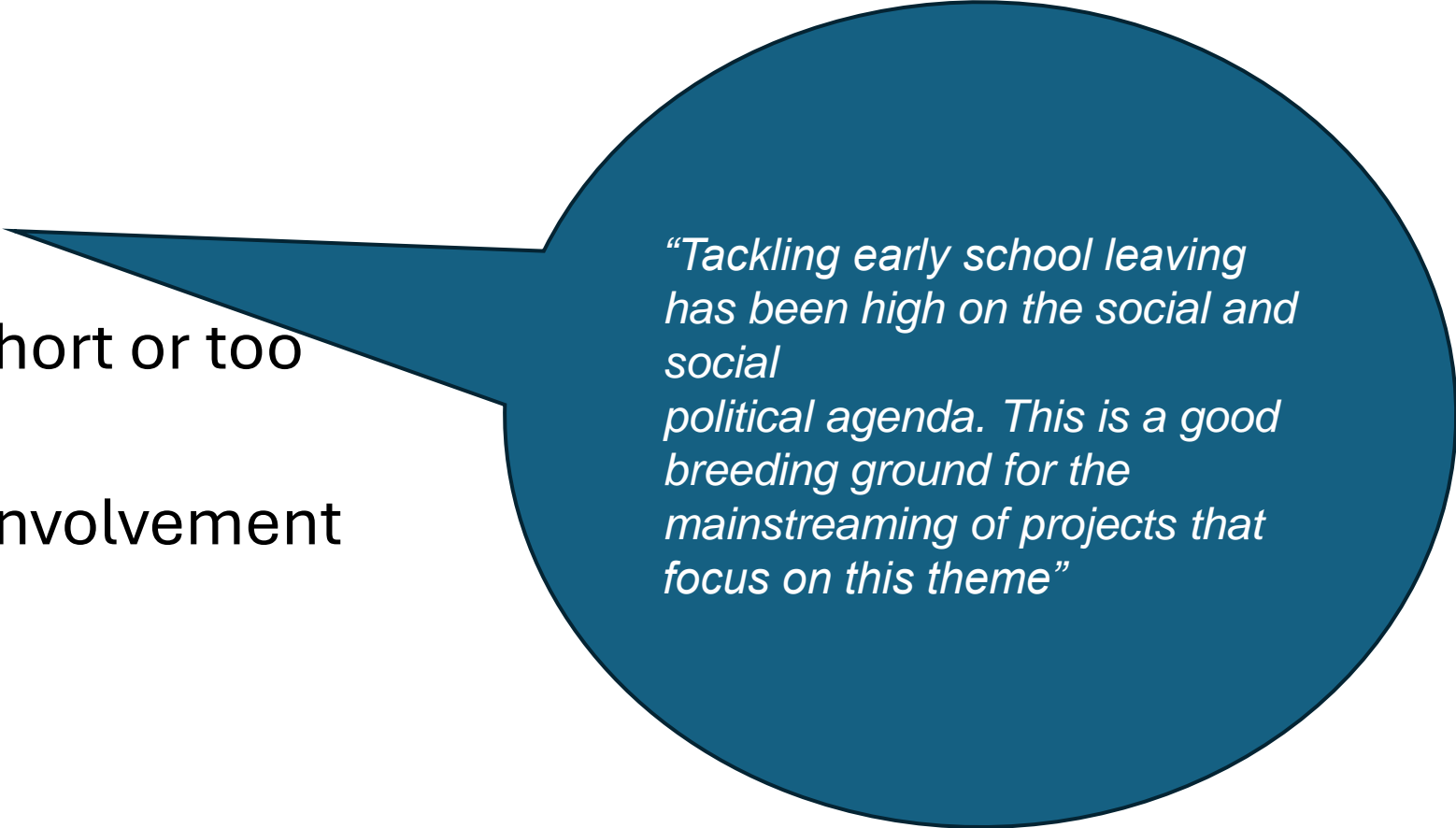
-Walter Bagehot Physics and Politics-



Stimulating/ hampering factors for impact

Context

- Proven product quality
- Favourable time
- Project lead time (too short or too long)
- External appreciation, involvement policy
- Practical translation

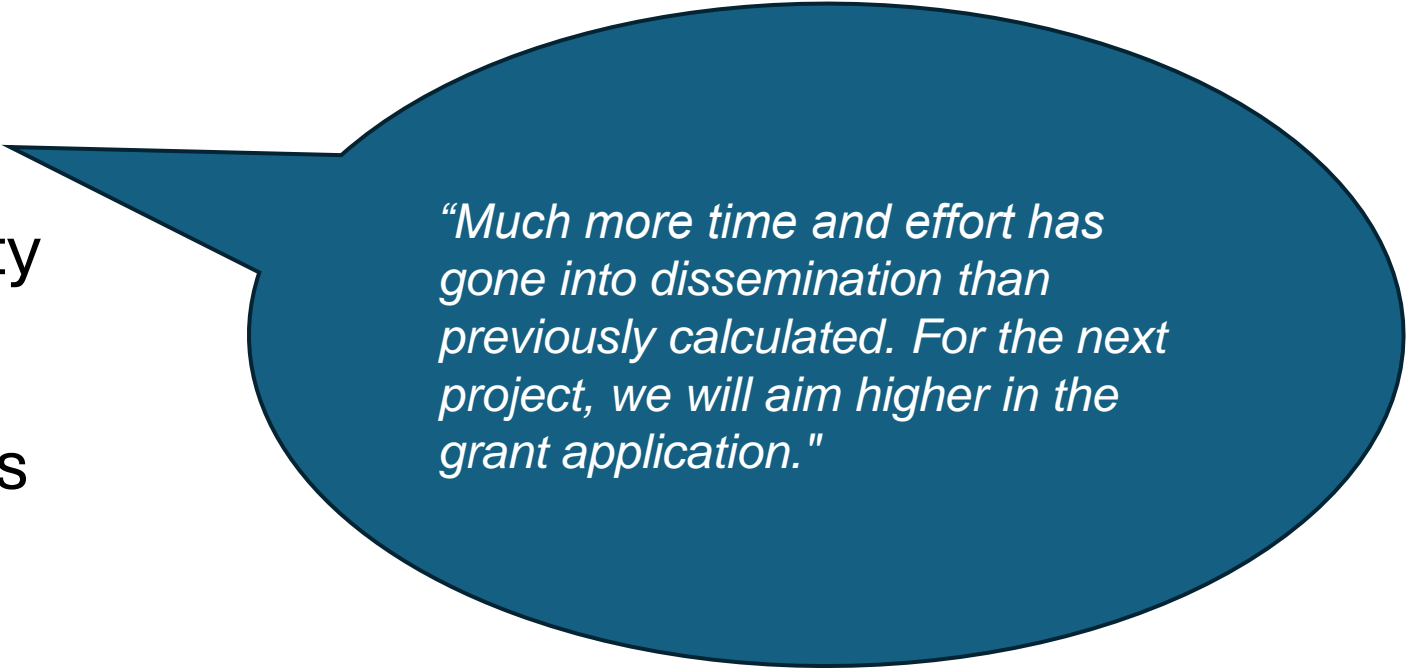


“Tackling early school leaving has been high on the social and social political agenda. This is a good breeding ground for the mainstreaming of projects that focus on this theme”

Stimulating/ hampering factors for impact

Organisation

- Management support and motivated employees
- Available time and capacity
- Dependency on individuals



"Much more time and effort has gone into dissemination than previously calculated. For the next project, we will aim higher in the grant application."

Stimulating/ hampering factors for impact

Systematic approach

- Realistic Goals (SMART)
- Awareness of long-term strategy
- Balance between planning and flexibility
- Clear definition of target groups (stakeholders/network analysis)

Partnerships

- Find good partners and make smart combinations (already within the project)
- Linking up with existing 'infrastructure' such as local, regional and national (administrative) networks.
- Appoint ambassadors

“After this project, I will spend much more time on topics such as dissemination and impact in my next application.”

“Influencing policymakers can only be partially determined in advance and the contact must be made by ourselves”

Stimulating/ hampering factors for impact

Implementation and follow up

- Dissemination is a continuous process, but with phase differences
- Reach out to intended audiences at an early stage
- Only go public if there are (substantiated) concrete (partial) results to report
- Responding to current events and political momentum. Seeing and seizing (unexpected) opportunities and possibilities
- Consideration should be given to organising a 'midterm' conference instead of (or in addition to) a final conference.
- Connect with the perception of the receiving parties (message and form)
- Provide follow-up strategy after project termination

"Don't honk your horn until you have something fundamental to say"

'Experience shows that when the project is finalised there is no time left to mainstream'

How to measure
and evaluate
impact?



Evaluation with impact

- Evaluation is learning
- Evaluation is a dialogue
- Evaluation also needs impact

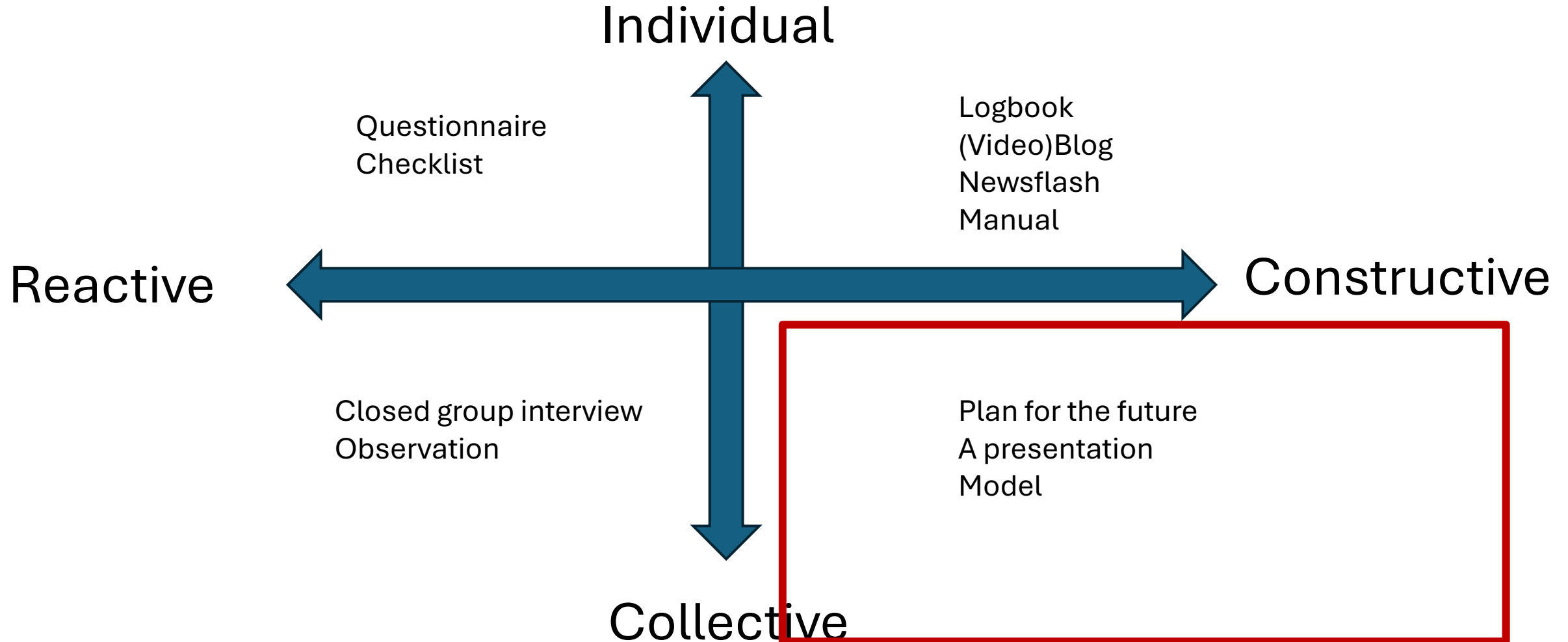


Requirements for the evaluation

- Motivating
- From a (theoretical) framework
- Rich learning experience
- Interactive
- Feedback on behaviour
- Evaluation is a dialogue



Choice of evaluation methods and instruments

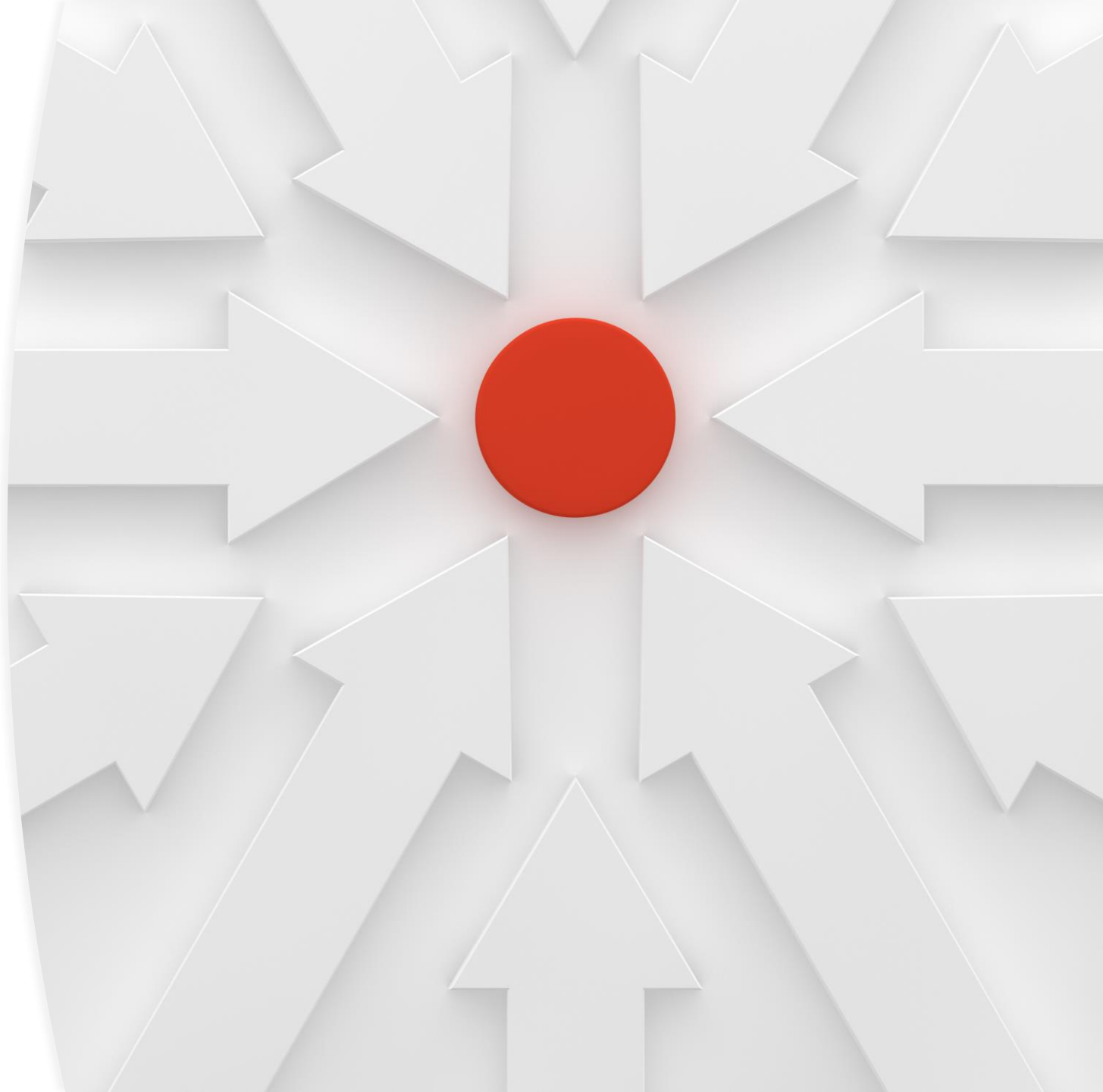


How can the NA
better stimulate
impact?



Points of attention from various studies/evaluations

- Improve the link between programme and policy (strategic prioritisation; improve knowledge management of programme)
- Stimulate knowledge exchange between projects (thematic clustering) and make use of each other's networks and platforms
- Consider allocating additional budget for good practices to further mainstream outcomes



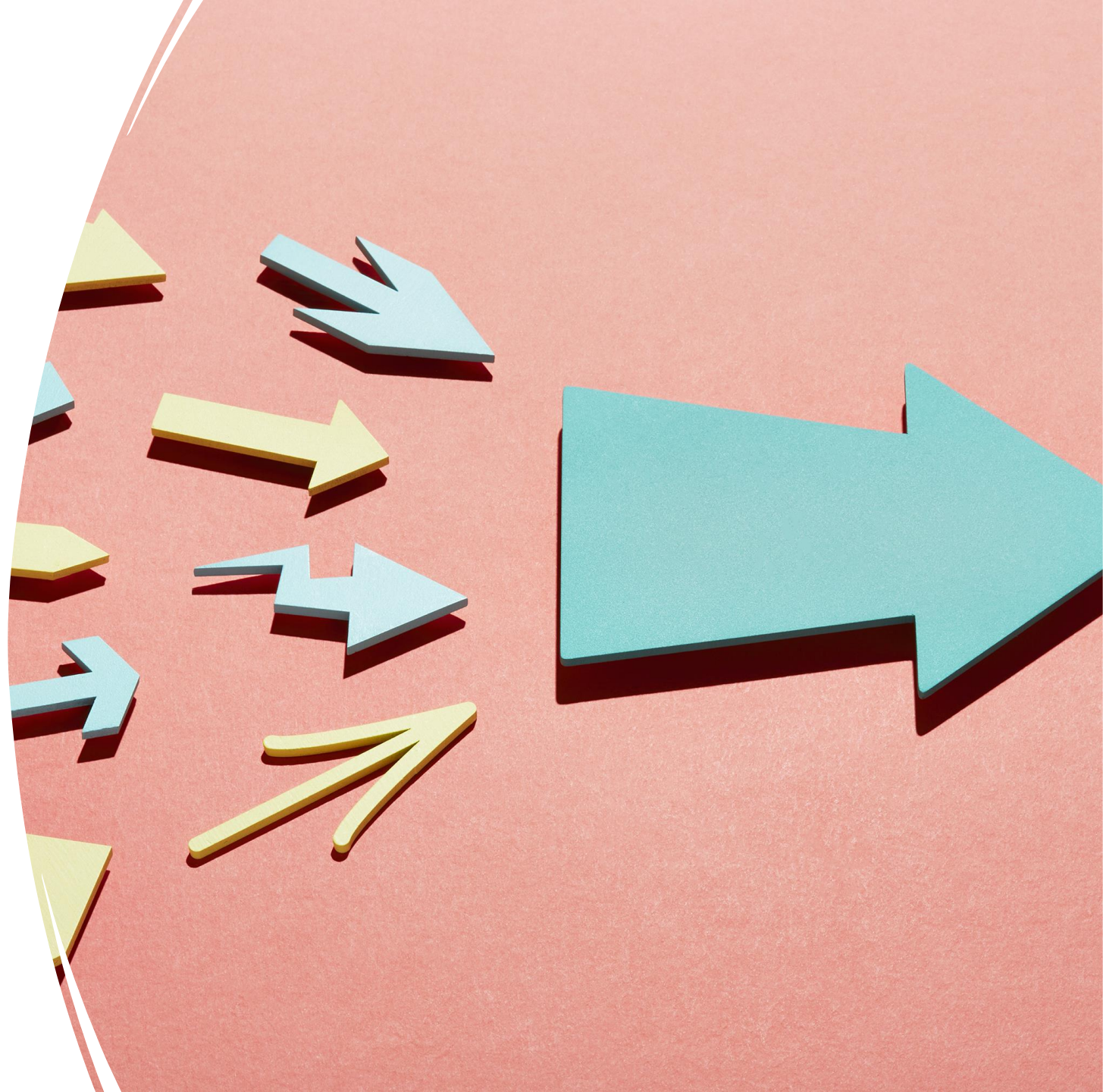
Good practice National Thematic Networks (EQUAL 2000-2006)

- National Thematic Networks (NTNs) were supported to facilitate vertical mainstreaming of innovative project results
- NTN consisted of politicians, policy makers, experts, business leaders
- The NTNs are a direct link between the EQUAL projects and the policymakers in government and (national) organizations
- The NTNs have the task of good practices and make recommendations for their wider implementation
- NTNs should support the projects within their focus area in the their mainstreaming activities



Take aways

- Importance of impact is increasing
- Impact is more than dissemination
- Different dimensions of impact require different approaches
- Stimulating and hampering factors
- Increasing the learning capacity of the programme



Thank you
for your
attention



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