



#WORKING WITH EUROPE COMMENT#

GOODBYE TO HOLISTIC EVALUATION (1)

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After two rounds of Erasmus minus evaluations one thing is clear: goodbye to holistic evaluation.

Holistic evaluation is about making sure that the best, most innovative and most promising applications are funded: what Europe needs.

Of course evaluators use the evaluation criteria score system as a tool and as guidelines, but they first of all make sure that the most powerful projects are granted.

This is not what happens in Erasmus minus.

In Erasmus minus the evaluation process is strictly tied to detailed scoring, ticking boxes and adding up total score.

The evaluation process clearly mirrors the application form itself: rigid, standardized, technical and no room for crossing the line or thinking outside the box.

Do you have only few IO's? Box ticked.

Do you avoid subcontracting? Box ticked.

Do you have a multiplier event? Box ticked.

This is how it goes.

A holistic evaluation, often practiced by qualified evaluators along the Lifelong Learning Program, pays attention to such details, but it does not allow such details and formal requirements to overrule the general evaluation of the application: "This is very strong and innovative application, and a solid work plan and a qualified partnership is demonstrated to back up the innovation. Therefore it must be granted."

The regression to rigid and formal and technical evaluation is a clear step back for European innovation.

It might be convenient for NA's and evaluators, but it does not ensure that Europe gets what it needs.

It might be technically efficient, but it mostly encourages mainstream, standard and mediocre projects to run; projects that are almost designed to please the rigid box ticking.

Interestingly, this happens in times where the European Commission promotes thinking outside the box, creative initiative-taking and even rule-breaking.

It seems as the evaluation practice in Erasmus minus directly contradicts those policies.

Probably this regression is also linked to the quality of the evaluators, at least in some countries.

Holistic evaluation takes skilled and experienced evaluators, not box ticking office workers.

This is not what Europe needs.