



Evaluation utilization in multi-institutional contexts

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Evaluation utilization in multi- institutional contexts

Our aim:

- **To analyze and asses the use of evaluation after conducting a participatory evaluation**

Case study ----> **The mid- term evaluation of the Rural Development Plan in the Basque Country (2000-2006)**

Outline of the presentation

- **The mid- term evaluation reference context**

- The mid- term evaluation
- The Rural Sustainable Development Plan 2000- 2006

- **The approach to evaluation**

- A participatory evaluation
- Towards a multi- phase evaluation

- **Analyzing the utility of evaluation**

- The utility of evaluation and the evaluation process
- Summary of the assessments obtained from the questionnaires
- Findings on evaluation use
- Some ideas for the future

The mid- term evaluation

- **Elaborated under the EC regulations and the EC evaluation reference documents**
- **Its main goals:**
 - ▣ To improve the relevance and the quality of the programme
 - ▣ To assess the implementation process
 - ▣ To increase the efficacy and efficiency of the actions and the programme
 - ▣ To identify changes and reorientations needed in order to achieve the expected objectives



The Rural Sustainable Development Plan 2000-2006

- **A Plan with multiplicity of contents:**
 - Intervention on: agricultural sector, forestry, agrofood industry, rural development and environment (biodiversity and natural value)
 - 9 lines of action. More than 35 measures
 - 7.000 individual beneficiaries each year + 100 municipalities + 32 local organizations
- **Inter-institutional nature:**
 - European to local level: DG Agriculture (EAGGF), Basque (regional) Government, Provincial Governments, municipalities, agrarian unions, rural associations
- **High degree of decentralization:**
 - Local Agrarian Offices + Rural Associations

Proposing a participatory evaluation

Our objective:

- To involve stakeholders in the evaluation process
- To familiarize stakeholders with the evaluation process and with the evaluation findings

Why?

- Stakeholder participation in the evaluation process leads to increased utilization of evaluation results
- Understanding the benefits of being involved in a evaluation process indicates progress in evaluation thinking (and culture)



Breaking new ground in evaluation practice in our region

Selection to participation

- **Mainly instrumental selection criteria:**
 - Primary users: managers, developers and implementers.
 - Other legitimate groups: experts and social agents

- Practical participatory model

Towards a multi-phase evaluation

Stages, tasks and actors in the evaluation

STAGES	TASKS	ACTORS
<p>Preliminary: Getting to know the actors</p> <p>October 2001-December 2001</p>	<p>Introducing the evaluation team to the agents.</p> <p>Information about the principles that will guide the evaluation work.</p>	<p>The client: EU Funds Coordination Office</p> <p>The evaluation team</p>
<p>First stage: Preparing the evaluation</p> <p>January 2002-July 2002</p>	<p>Drawing up the methodological guide for the intermediate and ex post evaluation.</p> <p>Review of the annual follow-up indicators, co-ordination and homogenisation of information sources.</p>	<p>The managers The evaluation team</p> <p>The managers (via individual interviews)</p> <p>Experts (via individual interviews)</p>
<p>Second stage: The evaluation design</p> <p>September 2002-December 2002</p>	<p>- Testing and approval of the methodological guide for the intermediate and ex post evaluation.</p>	<p>The evaluation team</p> <p>The managers via group meetings</p> <p>The client</p> <p>Experts participating in the</p>

Towards a multi-phase evaluation

Stages, tasks and actors in the evaluation

STAGES	TASKS	ACTORS
<p>Third stage: The development of the intermediate evaluation</p> <p>January 2003-September 2003</p>	<p>Gathering of data.</p> <p>Analysis of the data.</p> <p>Drawing up of first conclusions and recommendations</p>	<p>The evaluation team</p> <p>The managers via individual and/or group interviews</p> <p>Experts via individual and/or group interviews</p>
<p>Fourth stage: Drawing up of the final intermediate evaluation report</p> <p>October 2003-December 2003.</p>	<p>Testing and approval of the conclusions (feedback)</p> <p>Seeking consensus on the recommendations</p>	<p>Social agents (interviews) The evaluation team</p> <p>The managers via individual and/or group interviews</p> <p>Experts via individual and/or group interviews</p>
<p>Fifth stage: Dissemination of the intermediate evaluation</p> <p>May 2004</p>	<p>- Drawing up of the final report: written report and summarised visually presentations.</p>	<p>Social agents via individual interviews The evaluation team</p> <p>The client</p> <p>Dissemination among managers, experts and social</p>



Analyzing the impact of the results and the evaluation process

Truth test & Utility test
(Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980)

Truth Test:

Assesing the quality of the research and its conformity with prior knowledge and expectations

Utility Test:

Taking into account the implications of information for feasible actions and the challenge it poses to current policy



Questionnaires (n=48), in-depth interviews and participant observation

The utility of evaluation

Areas of impact

○ **Conceptual use**
(educational or learning-oriented):

1. Information supplied
2. Generation of knowledge
3. Agreement with the methodology applied

○ **Instrumental use**
(improving the Plan):

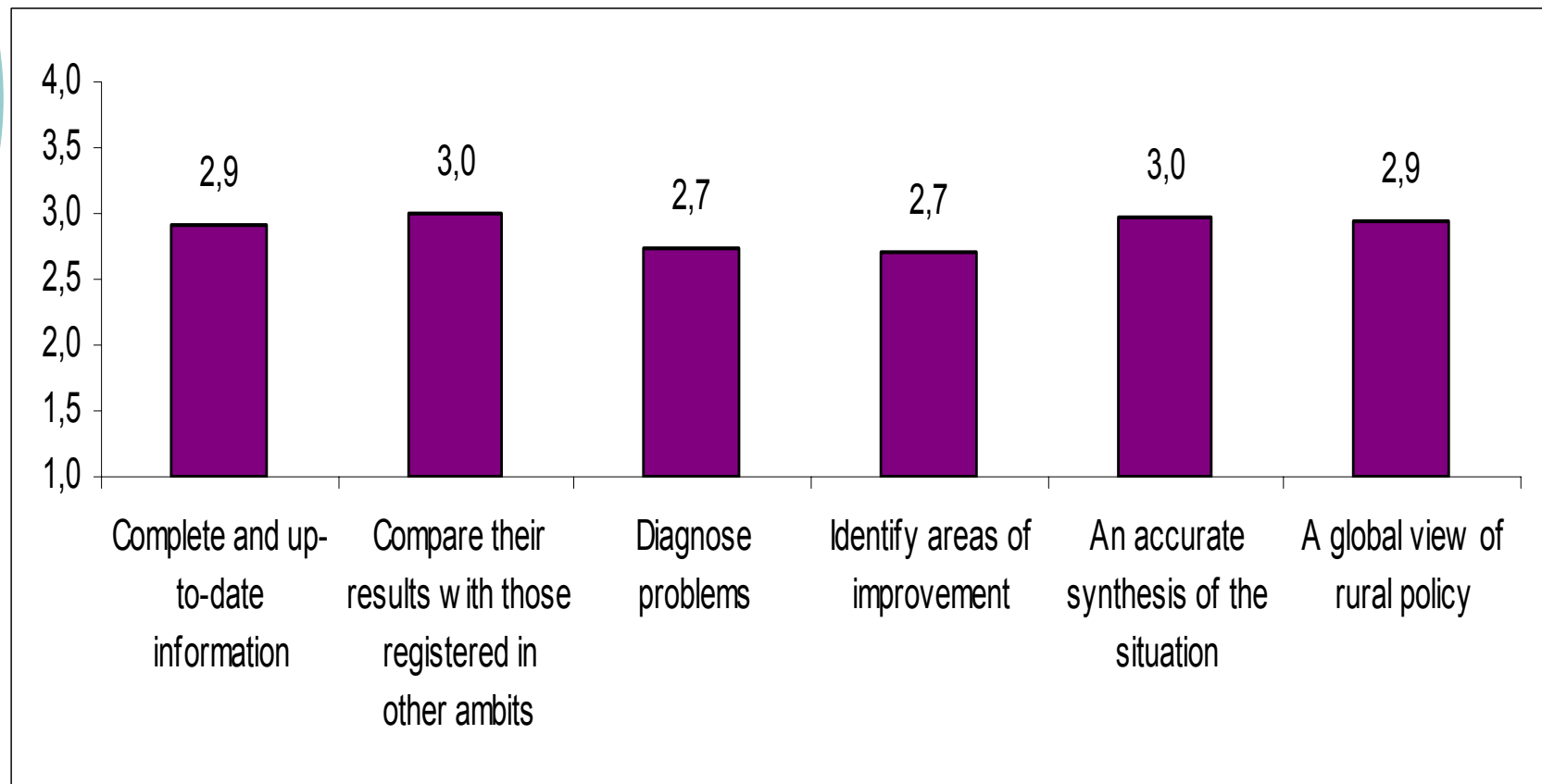
4. Improvement of application
5. Potential impact on policies

- Degree of relevance and overall satisfaction

- Our main tool: A semi-structured questionnaire scaled between 1 and 4

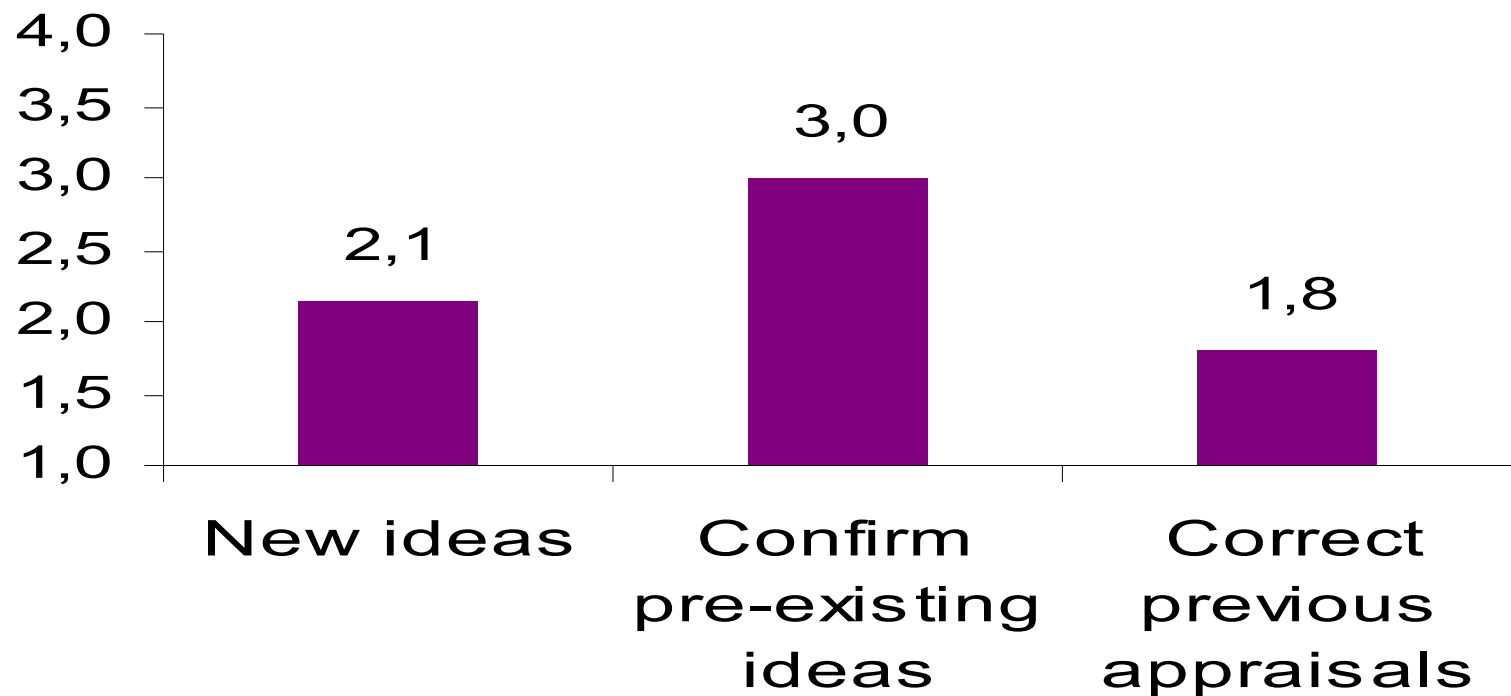
Summary of the assessments obtained from the questionnaires

Information supplied



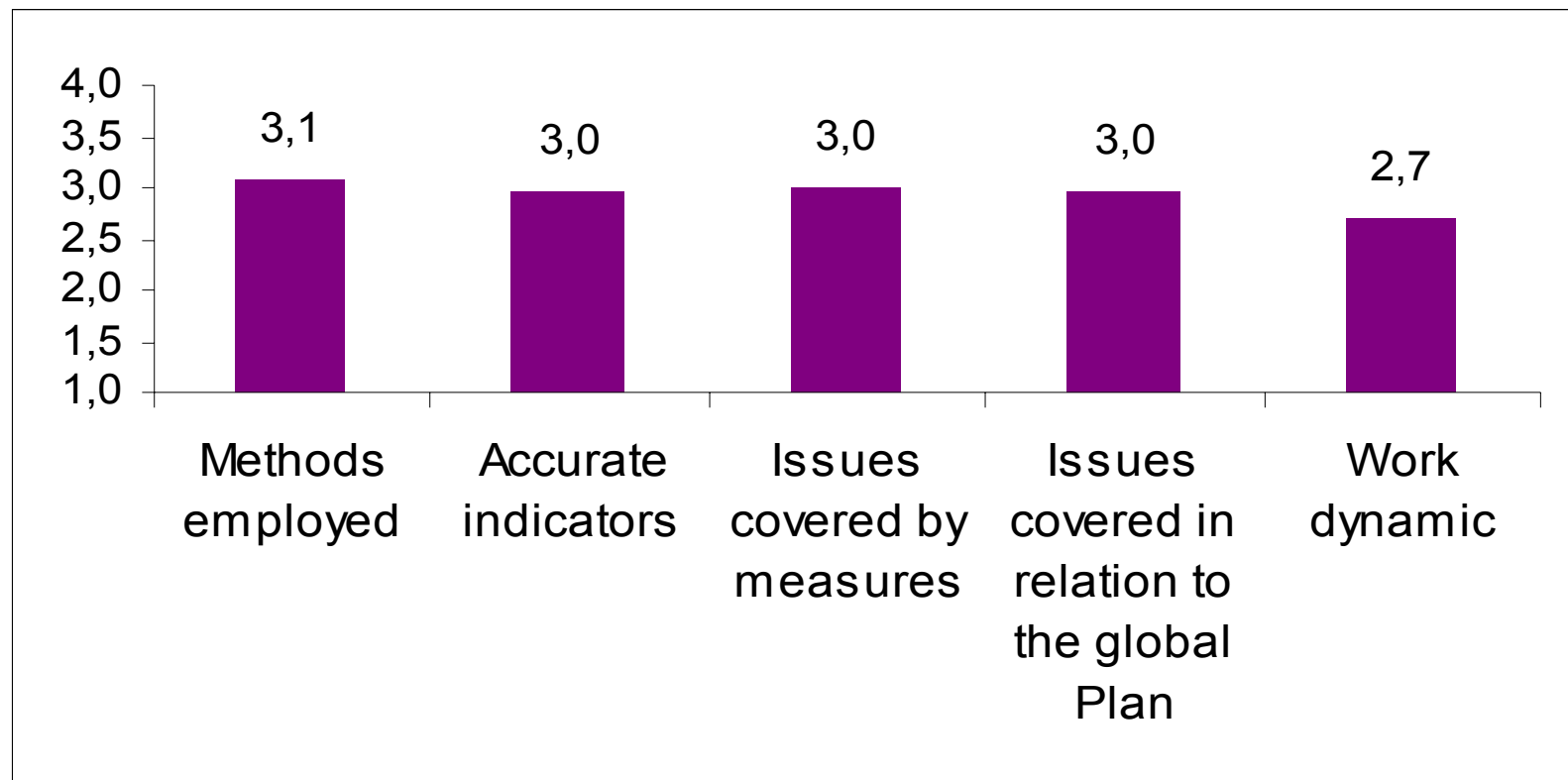
Summary of the assessments obtained from the questionnaires

Generation of knowledge



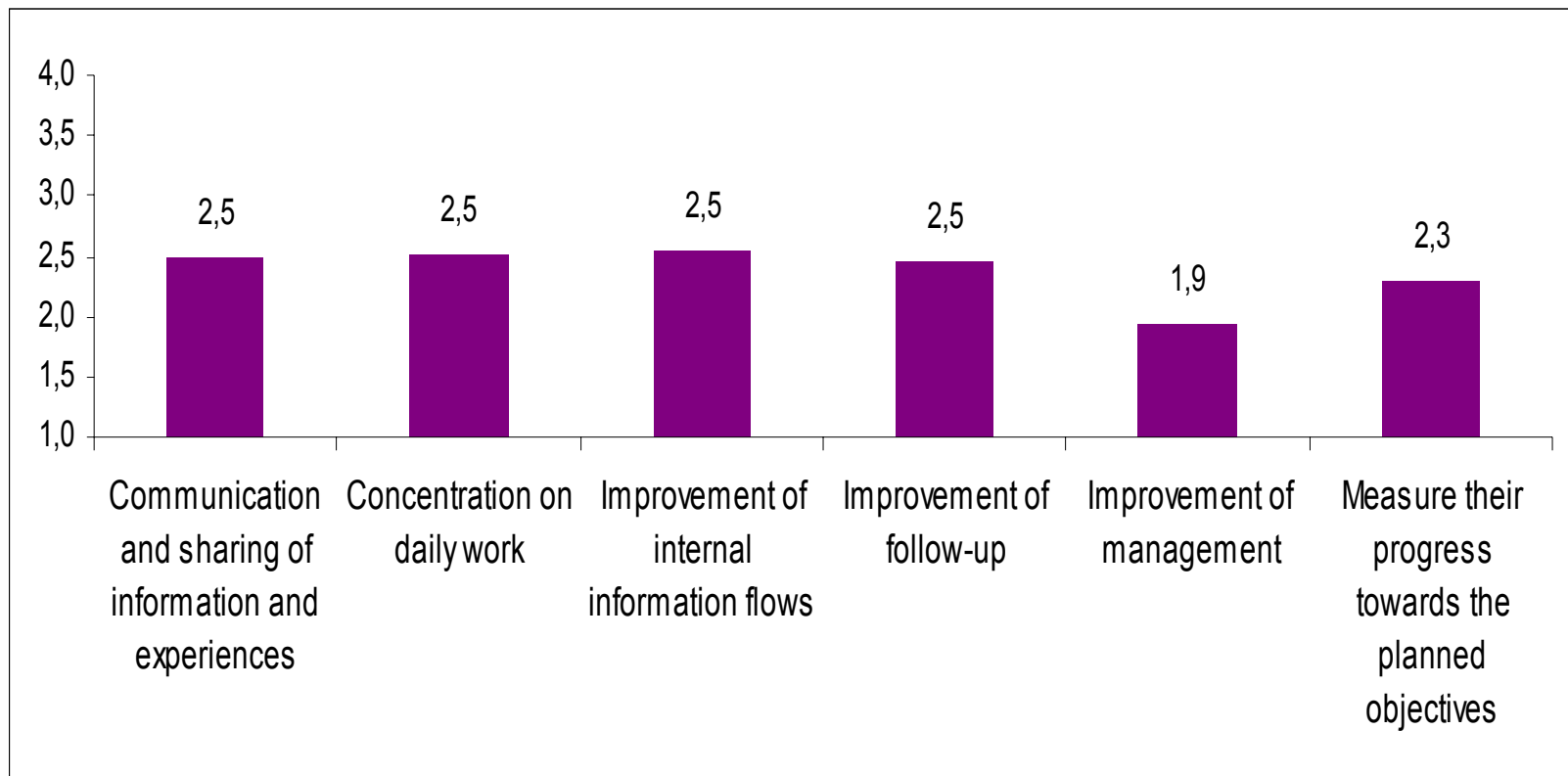
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Agreement with methodology



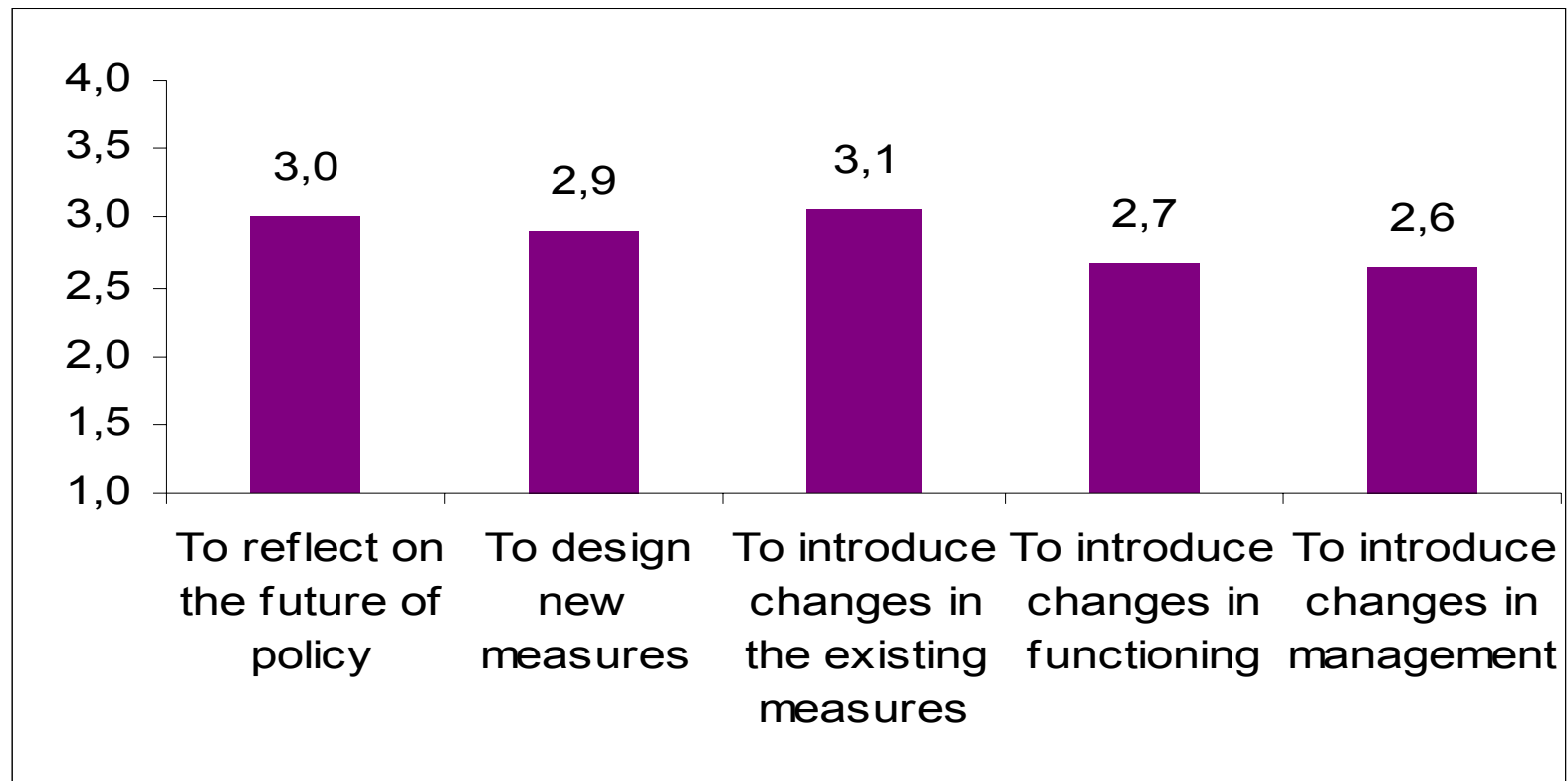
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Improving the application



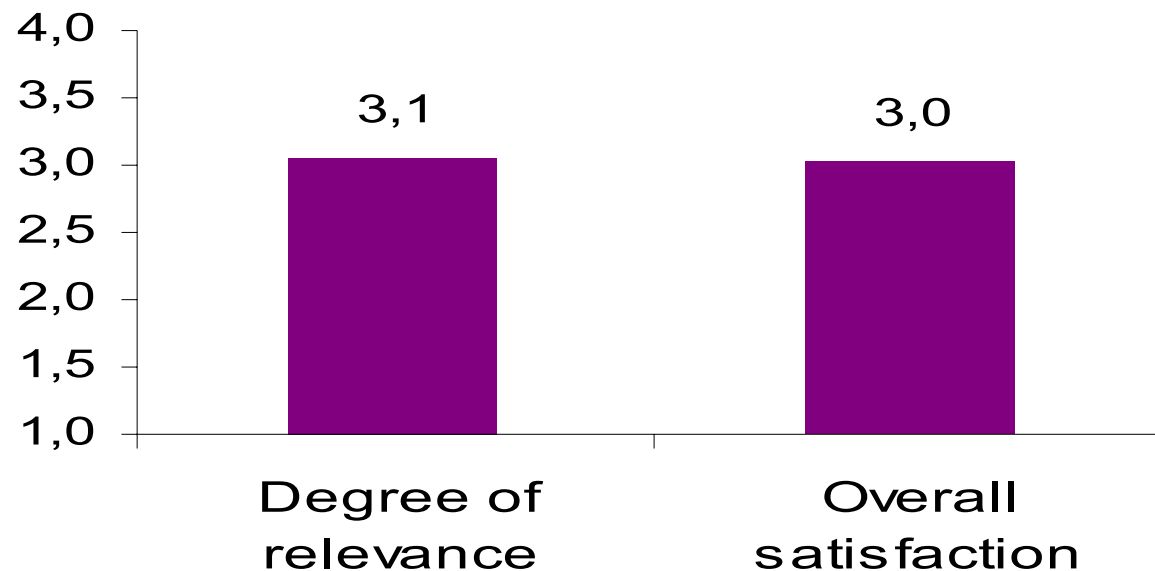
Summary of the assessments obtained from the questionnaires

Potential impact on policies



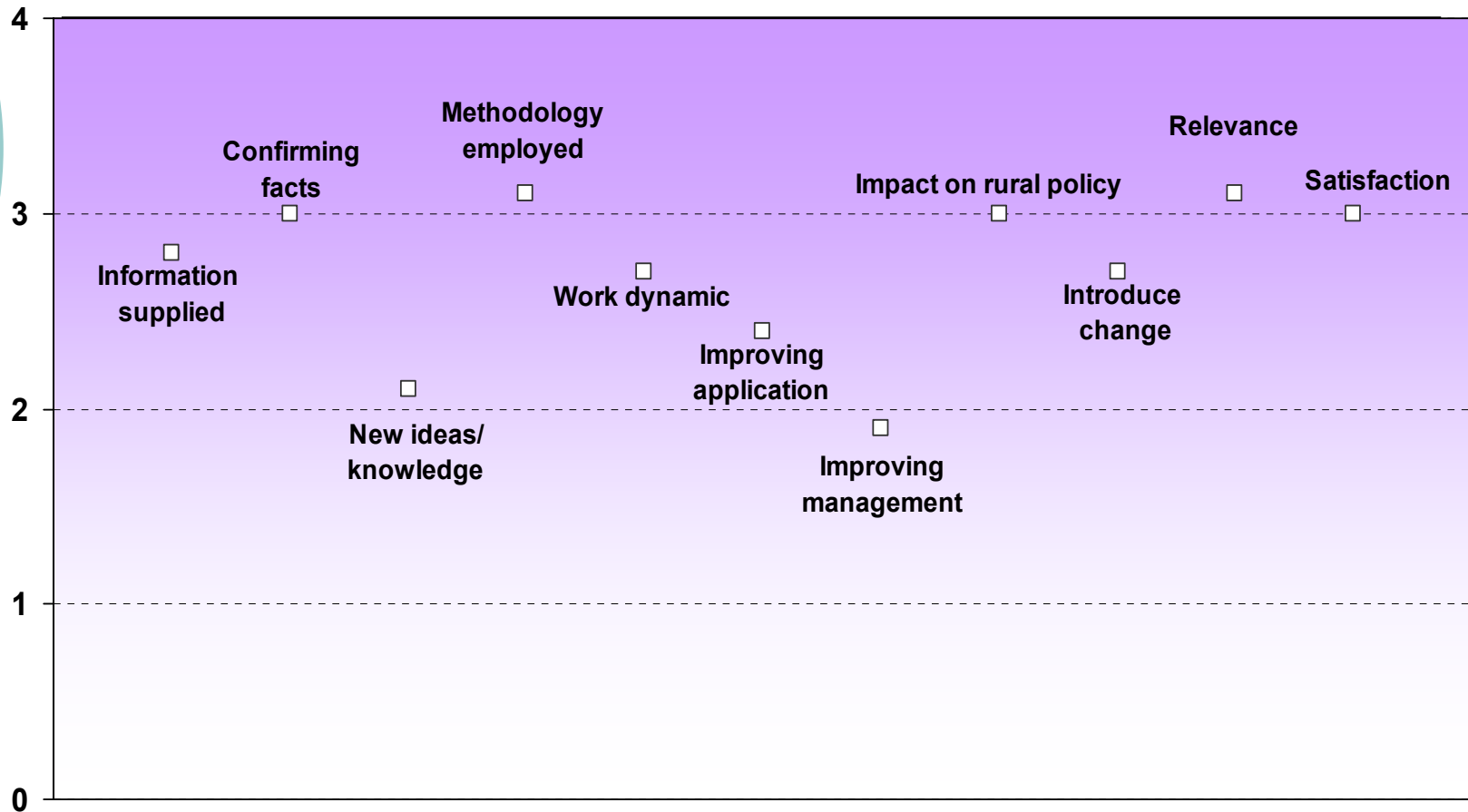
Summary of the assessments obtained
from the questionnaires

Degree of relevance- satisfaction



Summary of the assessments obtained from the questionnaires

Overall results



- The utility of evaluation

Findings on evaluation use (1)

- The information provided was very much appreciated. The evaluation report became a document of reference within the sector and is reaching increasingly wider audiences.
- It is a document that acts as an aid to debate and permits discussion based on contrasted evidence and well argued conclusions.
- The conclusions and recommendations are transparent, known to all actors in the process, derive from the logical reasoning process of the evaluation
- Contribute to bringing rural policy and its agents out



- The utility of evaluation

Findings on evaluation use (2)

- The evaluation has encouraged the promotion of an evaluation culture:
 - *“Evaluations had not been done like this before. We have had to learn”* (questionnaire n°= 3)
- Stakeholders demand more discussion groups, more sectoral meetings, etc. (working together).
- Where direct application of the results is concerned, the degree of satisfaction is pretty low. Stakeholders demand the inclusion of more operational aspects and internal management issues.
 - *“The evaluation should be geared to more practical issues”* (questionnaire n°= 28)



- The utility of evaluation

Findings on evaluation use (3)

- However, stakeholders attribute a powerful potential impact to the evaluation in reference to their capacity for changing rural policies. This result shows up one of the weaknesses of our evaluation model:
 - *“Let's see if it has any impact on our politicians. We are simply managers with no power decision, even if we might have the influence to make suggestions”* (questionnaire n°= 34)
- How is the participation of the political decision-makers in our evaluation? Only slightly



- The utility of evaluation

Some ideas for the future

- A sharper analysis of the organizational structure and politics is needed:
 - Creating new links between the participation process and the decision-makers.

**“And then we have to keep our fingers crossed
that audiences pay attention”
(Carol Weiss, 1998)**