Indicators: now and for the future

Ivanka Lakova
DG Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

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If a citizen in your programme area asked you: *what is concretely better today because of this programme*, what would you answer - without mentioning projects, partners or meetings?

What is riskier today: trying to show what changes because of Interreg - or continuing to say that cooperation itself is the result.

Before we talk about performance, let's ask ourselves a few honest questions

- If this programme disappeared tomorrow, what concrete problem in our territory would immediately worsen?

- What would citizens/businesses/public services actually miss?

- In five years' time, what would we point to as evidence that this programme changed something meaningful?

- If our budget were cut by half, what would we protect at all costs? why?

- Which of today's activities would we *not* be able to justify anymore?

The **raison-d'être** test	• What problem exists **because borders exist** and would not exist otherwise • Why is Interreg the right instrument for this, and not national or regional programmes
The **scarcity** test	• If we could only fund two things, what'd they be & what would we stop doing? • What are we willing **not** to fund in order to achieve real change?
The **credibility** test	• How would we know, without a report, that this has worked? • What would change in the daily reality of people or systems
The **public money** test	• How would you explain this intervention to a taxpayer who has never heard of Interreg? • What would make them say: "OK, that makes sense"?

Output vs Result Indicators

Output indicators tell us **what the programme delivers directly**:

- what we fund
- what is produced
- what is completed

Result indicators tell us **what changes because of those outputs, how**:

- behaviour
- performance
- or conditions

improve for people, services or systems.

In short: **outputs** **are** **what we do**; **results** **are** **why it matters**.

Why the EU budget makes this distinction

In Cohesion Policy (and as of 2028 → the entire budget) result indicators do **not** measure final societal impact

They measure **short- to medium-term, plausible changes** that the programme can realistically influence within the programming period.

The EU budget focuses on **contribution, not attribution** - what we can credibly influence, not what we fully control.

This reassures programme managers and auditors alike.

Output vs Result Indicators (1/2)

Result indicators are **not a judgement**, not a promise of impact, and not a trap

They are simply a way to show that funded activities are leading to **real, observable improvement**, not just completion

Output vs Result Indicators (2/2)

If we only measure outputs, we know we were busy

If we look at how the outputs are conducive to changing performance, behaviour, conditions, we know we were useful

Three very simple pictures in metaphors

Building a bridge

- **Output:** A bridge is built
- **Result:** Traffic flows faster and more safely across the river
- **Impact (not required):** Economic growth in the region

Cohesion Policy stops at "traffic flows better" , not "the economy grows"

The emergency services

- **Output:** Joint training sessions completed
- **Result:** Emergency response time is reduced in cross-border incidents
- **Impact:** Fewer lives lost

We measure whether response improves - not whether risks disappear

The gym

- **Output:** I go to the gym three times a week
- **Result:** I am stronger and fitter
- **Impact:** I live longer

I *can credibly measure fitness, not lifespan*

Thank you!