

# The capitalization of projects and programmes in theory and practice

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## Content of the presentation

**Introduction** – What does capitalization mean, in your opinion?

Capitalization in **theory**

**Rationale** for capitalization

**Operationalization**

**Resources** and examples

# Introduction

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# What do you think of when you hear the word 'capitalization'?

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# Capitalization in theory

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# Defining capitalization

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- Concept developed in the framework of **EU cooperation**, but...
- **NOT defined** in EU legislative documents or policy guidelines
- Definition “by subtraction”, i.e. focusing on **what capitalization is NOT**:
  - not (exclusively) dissemination of knowledge
  - not (exclusively) communication
  - not (exclusively) result or impact assessment
- Yet, elements of all of the above can be identified in capitalization processes

# Defining capitalization (2)

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Adapting from a 2020 Interact definition, capitalization can be defined as

A building **process** aimed at consolidating the **capital** of (cooperation) projects and programmes with the objective of improving **knowledge management** (i.e., transfer of knowledge, multiplier effect, adaptation, awareness raising, and mainstreaming)

# Capitalization vs. “not” capitalization

## CAPITALIZATION

Capitalization of **experiences and results**, not only good practices.

Process based on **analysis of needs of selected groups**

Targeted **at re-using, enhancing knowledge** for a **selected group** of interested stakeholders

Structured approach (clear strategy)

## COMMUNICATION / EVALUATION

**Collection** of results, practices, lessons learned with positive connotation

Giving **visibility** to results, normally to general public

**Assessing results** and practices against efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, sustainability, impact

Structured approach (clear strategy)



# But, what is the “capital”?

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No unique definition, it varies from case to case.

Roughly, it can be considered:

**The knowledge generated by the sum and combination of results, processes, (positive and negative) practices a project/programme experiences throughout its life cycle and that are worth and can be analysed, reworked, transferred, and mainstreamed.**

# Capitalization as knowledge management tool

Transfer and reuse of knowledge are the core of capitalization for:

- Ensuring **sustainability**
- Contribute to the development and improvement of **mainstream policies**

KM to

- **learn and classify** (detailed specification of practices)
- **learn and share** (synergies outside the scope of the project)
- **learn and train** (transfer or mainstream)

Capitalization  
is part of the  
Project cycle!

# Capitalization in practice

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# A step-by-step process

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1. Define your **approach to capitalization**: tailor your work based on the stakeholders' needs and requirements:
  1. What
  2. Who
  3. How
2. Design the exercise's rationale: **review baseline and results**
3. **Capitalization plan** and preparation: objectives, expected results, tolos, means, etc. (*Project in Project*). Links with communication and evaluation.
4. **Implementation** (and adjustments, if needed)
5. **Disseminate and communicate** results

# Step 1 – Tailor your approach

Crucial moment of context analysis.

Capitalization is about planning and anticipation – do not improvise!



To capitalize or  
not to  
capitalize?

## Action points

**Context analysis:** geo, political, socio-economic framework, scope of the original project, degree of cooperation, etc.

Connect your capitalization with the **Programme's features** (if necessary)

**Involve external stakeholder** through consultation and/or other means

## Questions

**Is capitalization necessary?** If yes, who is the target? What knowledge do we want to capitalize? And how?

What / how many **resources** can we dedicate to the process?

# Step 2 – Prepare yourself

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Define the baseline of your capitalization process

Set-up the process' basics

## Action points

Review the **starting point of your project** (and where you are/want to be)

Review the (expected) **learning curve**: the process matters almost as much as the results

**Embark stakeholders!**

## Questions

Considering what we want to capitalize upon, what has been **our project's trajectory?**

Are all relevant stakeholders involved? Do they share our approach?

# Step 3 – The capitalization plan

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Core step

Indicatively, it follows the same structure as a regular project

## Action points

Having set the baseline, target groups, objectives, you can **define your “capitalization project”**.

**Define** the methodology, implementation steps, products, indicators, etc.

## Questions

What is the **expected outcome** of the capitalization process? What do we want to achieve, in terms of products/outputs and effects/outcomes, and/or advocacy? In which timeframe?

**NB:** look beyond mere “communication” products, publications, events – think strategically and innovate!

# Step 4 – Make it happen

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Operational step

Consist of implementing the capitalization plan

## Action points

Turn the plan into **practice**: define the activities and their individual contributions to the plan

**Simplify** as much as possible.

**Indicators** per output/outcome, not activity

## Questions

Are we achieving our goals? Are the target groups/external stakeholders adequately involved?

Are **adjustments** necessary?



# Step 5 – Proud of your accomplishment?

Operational step aiming at sustainability and replication

Consist of concluding the implementation of the capitalization plan

## Action points

**Share** lessons learned with reference group(s) and stakeholders

Link with **storytelling**

“Own” the process and ensure exchange **beyond project life**

## Questions

What is/are the right tool(s) for **reaching out** our target group and increase sustainability?

How can we **maximize** dissemination? NB: NOT visibility per se! Communication is not the goal

**What happens next?** Look for and exploit synergies, link with other initiatives

# Keep in mind

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What is **your “capital”**? What is that you want to promote for re-use, expansion, demonstration, advocacy, etc.? Make capitalization **part of your theory of change**.

Get out of your bubble! The added value of the capitalization process is not only for your ears: share it with external stakeholders and relevant target groups – **increased ownership is a necessary precondition for success**.

**Rework** information for adaptation and reach out.

**Resourcing the process is as important as the capitalization plan**: internalization or externalization of costs shall be defined from the get-go.

Define your **timeline** factoring in available resources and expected results (do not underestimate time needs)

Another capitalization is  
possible, isn't it?

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# Three types of capitalization (steps 1, 2, and 3)

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## 1. Learn and classify

1. DB
2. Identification and categorization of results
3. Thematic analysis

## 2. Learn and share

1. Reaching out targeted stakeholders
2. Tailor-made products
3. Clustering for synergies and complementarities

## 3. Learn and train

1. Transfer and/or mainstream practices
2. Building on positive (but also negative!) examples
3. Creation of community of practices/advocacy groups

### How to define what capitalization to put in practice:

**Context** - What is the level of integration of the cooperation territory?

**Willingness** - What is the level of understanding and prioritization of our project's topic?

**Readiness** - Is the project able to share tools, methods, and practices *beyond transferrable deliverables*?

**Cost-efficiency** – Feasible with the available resources and within the expected timeframe?

# Some considerations on mainstreaming

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Terminology is abused, sometimes out of context.

It's an ambitious objective: to **re-use results and processes at a wider operational, strategic, policy level** (could be local, regional, national, or even European).

Key is to select very carefully the **potential “receivers”** (Interact, 2020).

Contacts should be developed before the project ends (or work through existing networks and partnerships). **Find “your” network to develop**

# How to communicate? (Steps 4 and 5)

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**Transform and adapt messages** to your target (tailor-made products and messages), but do not undersell or diminish your results!

Combine:

**Thematic** communication (project results et simila)

**Methodological** communication (“how to” is equally important)

Consider the **multiplier effect** the EU can ensure you.

# Examples and good practices

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# Examples and good practices(\*)

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CBC Italy-Croatia, ENI CBC Mediterranean, North-West EU CBC, Central Europe: **dedicated calls for projects**

Interreg CBC Mediterranean: **modular architecture of projects** (see case of PANORAMED)

Non-CBC example: **Grand Est Region** (France), capitalization process to analyse the added value of EU projects

Non-CBC example: **Bridging the Gap**, joining forces to enhance advocacy efforts for inclusive public policies and international cooperation efforts via a three-pillar strategy



Questions? Comments?  
Doubts? Thoughts?

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