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#ManyWays16



Roberts Evaluation Pty Ltd



FIRST PERSON
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PublicHealthInsight
Inclusive research for healthier decisions

Lessons from the field

Evaluating prevention projects and programs

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Overview

- ▶ Background
 - Who's involved
 - Local Prevention Program
- ▶ Key challenges
- ▶ Key lessons
 - Some reflections

Background

- ▶ Local Prevention Program – one a suite of prevention activities implemented by the VRGF, but this is arguably the ‘flagship’
- ▶ The focus of projects is diverse – CALD, Indigenous communities, young males, allied sectors (AOD, FV), stigma and lived experience

Phase 1
15 projects
Jul 2014 – Nov 2015

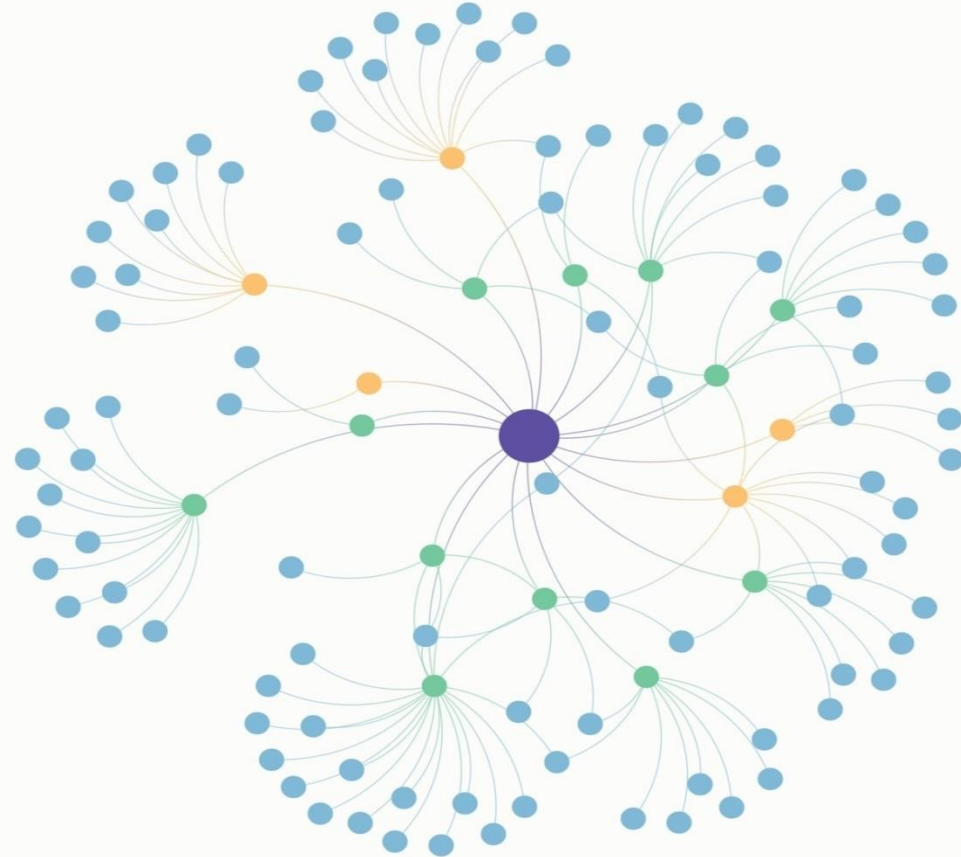
Phase 2
17 projects
Dec 2015 – Jun 2017

Team




Network Map of the Program

115 organisations
132 relationships



● Project leads - Phase1
● Project leads - Phase2
● Partners

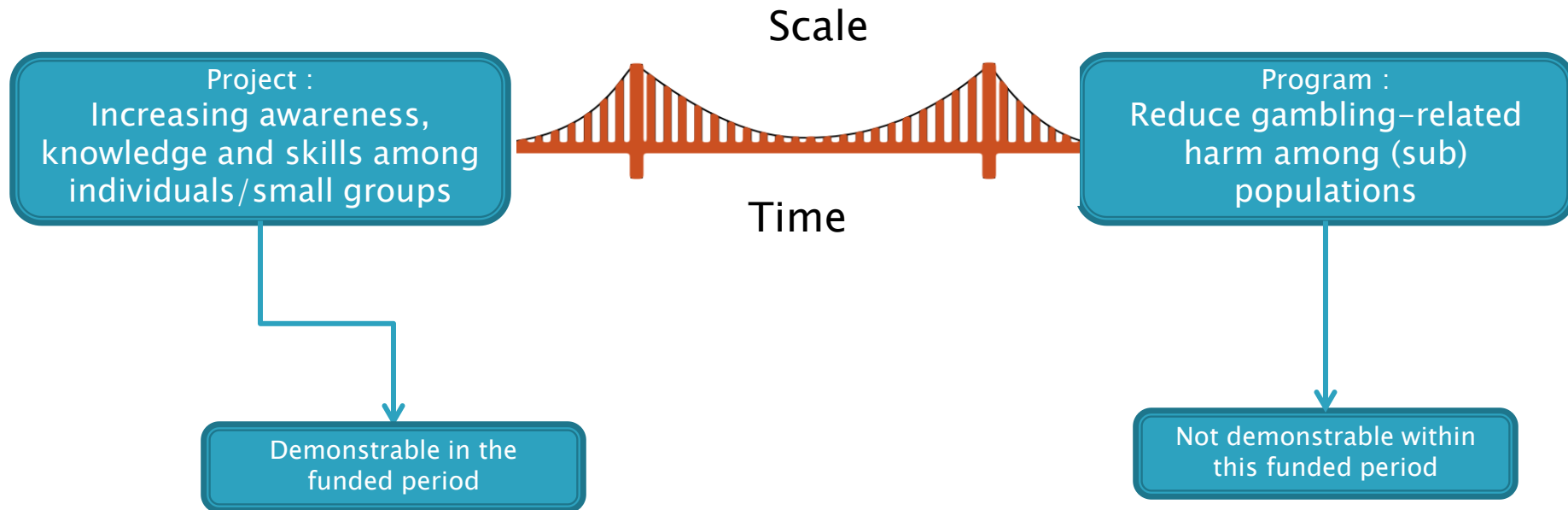
Challenges

- ▶ The initial focus was on collecting data against common measures to determine an 'impact' on gambling-related harm
 - ▶ Projects were implementing activities that targeted different populations in different ways at different scales – across primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (i.e. very broad!)
 - ▶ Organisations funded have a diversity of needs when it comes to evaluation – for example, some have an 'evaluation' position to assist the project, others do not
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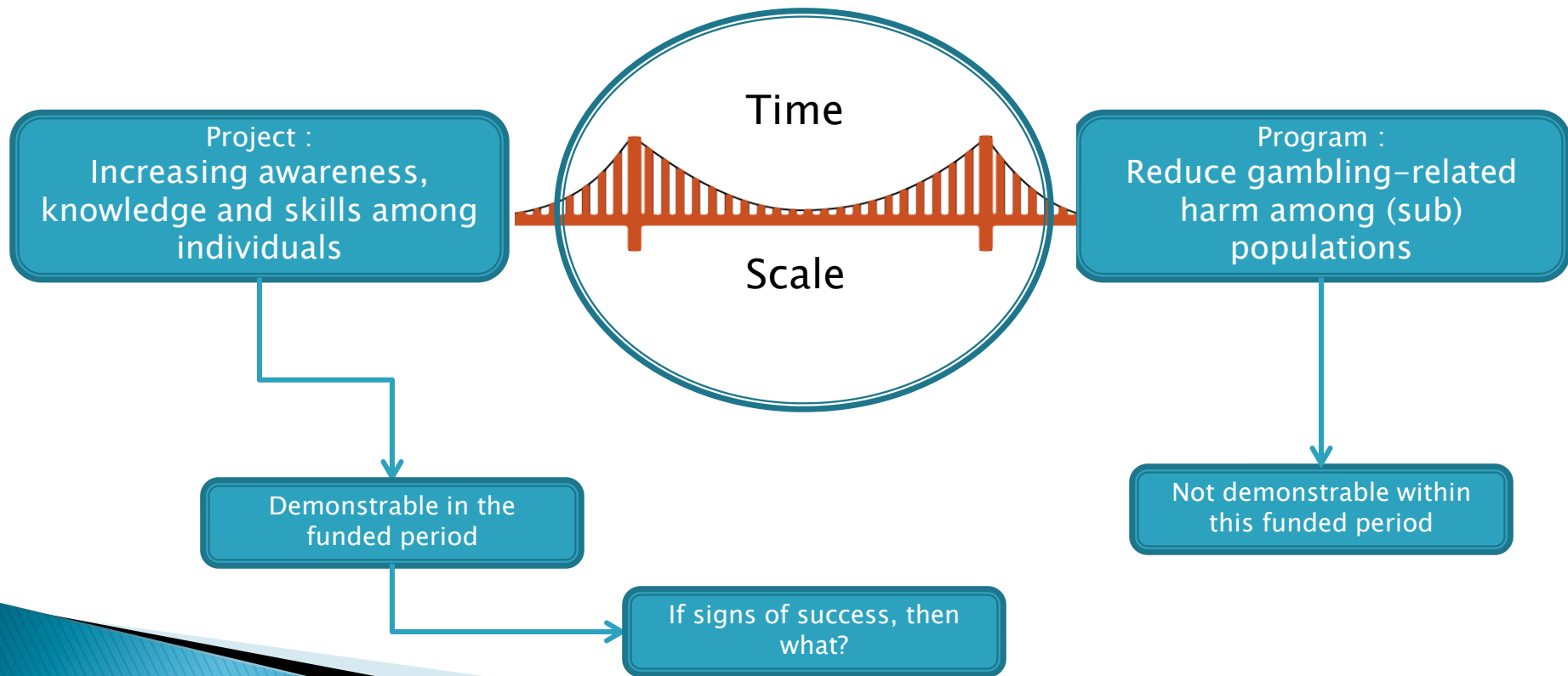
Challenges

- ▶ The foundation is also a relatively new organisation (July 2012) – it's approach and conceptualisation of the problem is evolving as more evidence is gathered
- ▶ Our emphasis with the evaluation has to be on 'finding what works' – still challenges with this though
- ▶ The nature of many of the Program-level outcomes (e.g. reducing harm) are outside of the scope of the evaluation:
 - Timeframe
 - Scale

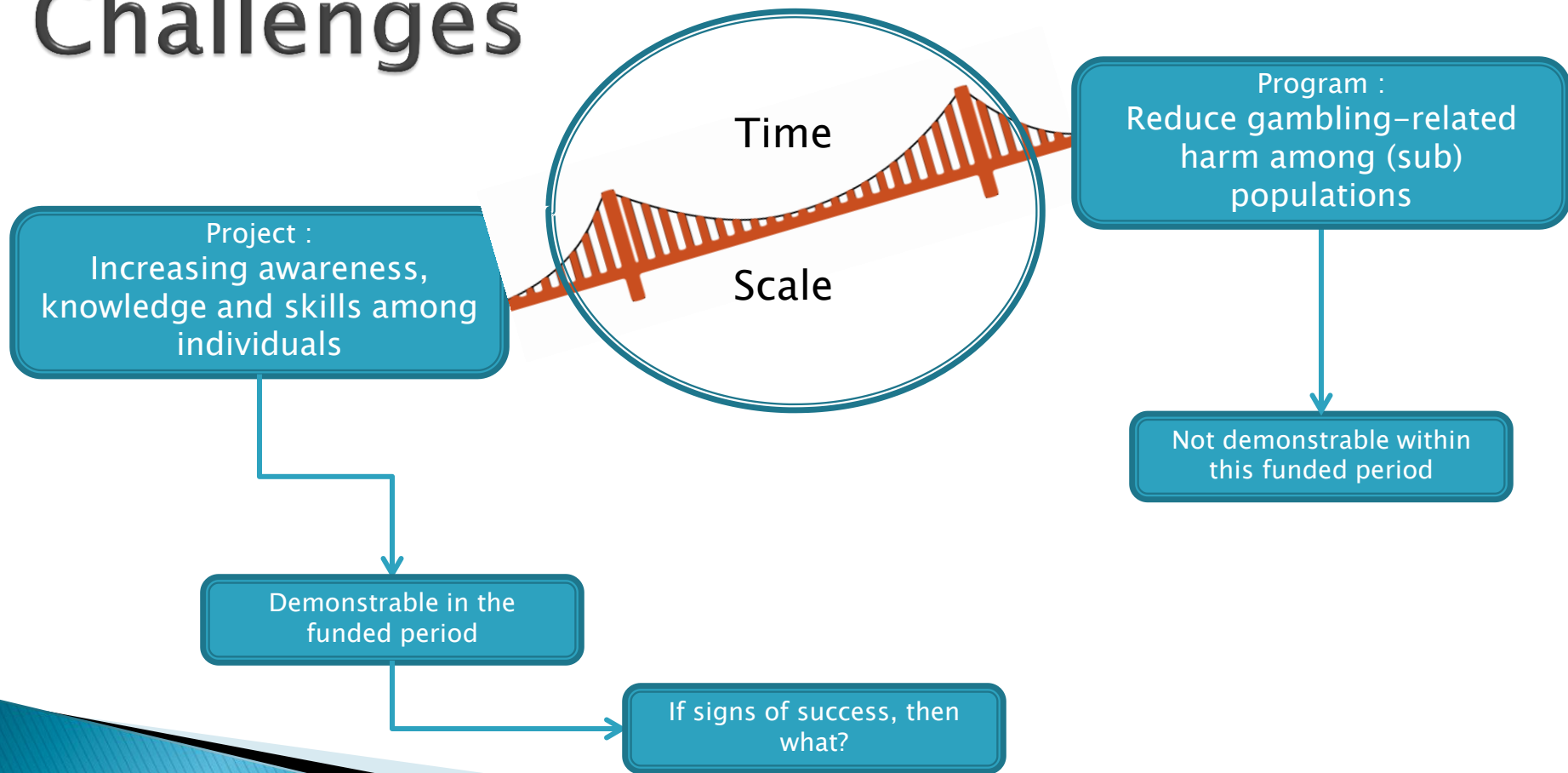
Challenges



Challenges




Challenges

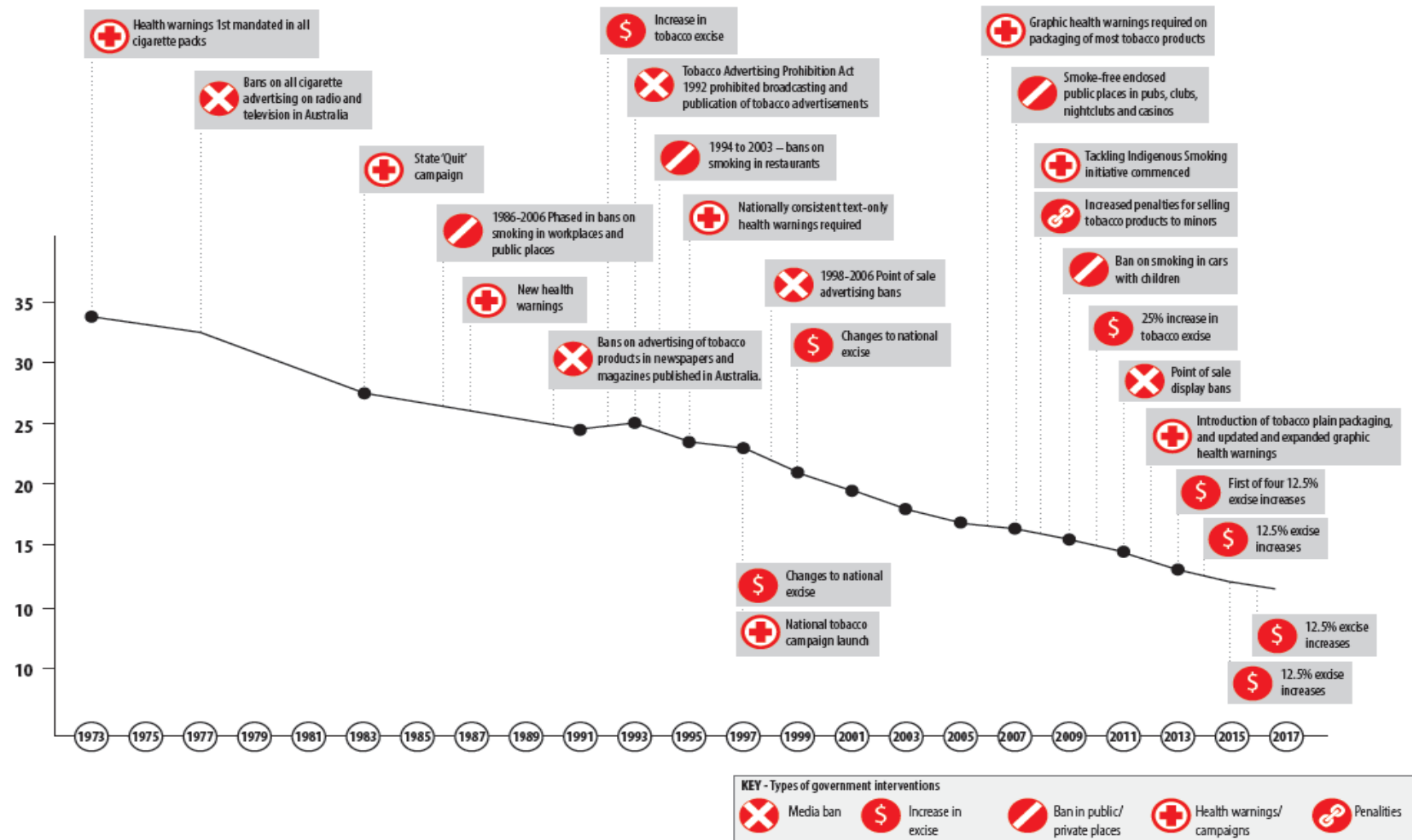


Challenges in summary


- ▶ A changing and evolving understanding of the problem
- ▶ A new organisation which continues to learn by doing
- ▶ A variety of funded projects doing different things in different ways with different groups at different levels
- ▶ Evolving emphasis for the evaluation
- ▶ Not much evidence:
 - On effective prevention practice in gambling – have to use learning from other issues

Given all of this,
**What are the key lessons for
the evaluation of prevention
projects?**






Key lessons

- ▶ Change takes time – still early days
 - ▶ Scale is a major consideration when looking at the ‘success’ of projects and the Program
 - ▶ Given that, what can we expect from an evaluation of a three year Program?
 - We can’t change the world (tobacco – 40+ years)
 - What is the focus then?
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Key lessons

1. Given the challenges, the focus has to be on **learning** – what does and doesn't work and how/why?
 2. Importance of evaluation in systematically capturing the learning of projects – it's about clarity, relevance and communicating lessons in a digestible way
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Key lessons

3. The importance for needing a process to decide what you do with those projects that are showing signs of success

My reflections

- ▶ Smaller steps at the start is OK
- ▶ It is difficult for an evaluation that involves 18 different organisations to 'move' quickly
 - Ideally, be 'adaptive' – in practice not as easy as that, but that is also a lesson
- ▶ It's a great start!



Thanks! Questions?



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