

The Power of *Mutual Learning*

#MutualLearning



How To Design *Mutual Learning* Formats for Maximum Impact

7 March 2018

The first Policy into Action Forum on the '*The Power of Mutual Learning*' presented three success stories of public organisations in **Estonia**, **Italy** and **Lithuania** that had directly benefited from learning from their peers in other European countries. The second Forum – held on 7 March 2018 in Brussels, Belgium – built on that showcase to examine more closely what makes *Mutual Learning* work in practice: What key concepts can help to understand *Mutual Learning*? What *Mutual Learning* formats exist? How can *Mutual Learning* programmes and activities be designed and delivered to achieve maximum impact?

A key objective when designing any *Mutual Learning* activity is to create the right conditions for not only individual participants to learn, but for those participants to take the learning back to their organisation or country in order to concretely support change and knowledge transfer. Optimising this dynamic can be very complex, particularly when the desired change is framed by EU policy priorities and the degree to which organisations learn and change is influenced by their institutional, political and cultural make-up, and the often fast-paced and pressured environments in which they operate.

A range of *Mutual Learning* formats can be used to enable participants – and the organisations / countries they represent – to learn from each other to deliver concrete outcomes. They include:

- Conferences / seminars
- Thematic workshops
- Study visits / exchanges
- Peer reviews
- Peer support



Moreover, these and other formats can be combined to deepen the learning experience and target specific organisations / countries. They can also be enhanced through the use of tools and techniques, such as diverse facilitation methods to animate event discussions and digital platforms to pool knowledge and learning resources.

The Forum discussions highlighted a number of key considerations when developing *Mutual Learning*, including the:

- Value of having a well-established network (where people know and trust each other) as a framework for *Mutual Learning* delivery.
- Importance of designing *Mutual Learning* activities in a way that they can benefit and give recognition to the more 'advanced', as well as the 'learner' countries.
- Challenge of measuring and evaluating the outcomes of *Mutual Learning* over time to demonstrate the added value and return on investment in EU policy terms.
- Useful analogy shared by one participant to emphasise the ownership of the organisations / countries involved: "*Mutual Learning* provides the ingredients, but the cooking has to be done back at home."

The next Forum will continue these discussions, with a focus on small group work and practical exchange. The event will be held on 22 May from 12.00 to 14.00 at the **EU Thon Hotel, Brussels**. Don't miss out on the next round of conversation and register your place early! icf.com/policyintoaction



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ICF serves clients in Europe through permanent offices in Belgium and the UK and a network that stretches across the continent. Our clients benefit from the skills, resources, and expertise of over 200 staff in policy implementation and programme services, public policy research, evaluation and analysis, public communications and aviation.

Today, we support the effective delivery of public policies and a growing number of programme across Europe. ICF manages training schemes, grant programmes, capacity building and technology appraisal for governments and EU institutions.

ICF is also a leading provider of analytical support to policy-makers. We have a highly experienced team of experts in policy research and evaluation, impact assessment, regulatory design and service performance. We work across the policy spectrum, from skills to health, climate change to food safety, migration to gender equality.

Learn more at [icf.com/company/locations/european-region](https://www.icf.com/company/locations/european-region).

Policy into Action - The Power of Mutual Learning

Mutual Learning programmes help governments, agencies and businesses facing a common challenge to learn from each other as a means of improving their ability to make the right decisions, reduce or eliminate the risks of making the same mistakes twice, and adopt better ways of implementing policies or strategies on the ground to achieve better performance and outcomes.

In a world that is fast-changing and uncertain, organisations cannot survive alone. They have come to rely on ICF to design and deliver facilitated Mutual Learning to open the door to a wider pool of experience and knowledge, and thereby find effective solutions to complex problems. In the European public policy context, the spirit of cooperation has never been more important and Mutual Learning provides an avenue for European countries to work together across many policy domains.

Learn more and see highlights of ICF's recent *Policy Into Action Forum* at [icf.com/mutual-learning](https://www.icf.com/mutual-learning)