

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

CULTURAL
PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
SERIES

ZMINA
RESILIENCE



ORGANISATION
READY FOR
PROJECTS

WITH
MICHAL
HLADKÝ

zmina.eu

IZOLYATSIA
PLATFORM FOR CULTURAL INITIATIVES

**MALÝ
BERLÍN**
kulturné centrum

teh

 Co-funded by
the European Union

ZMINA:Resilience is a cooperation between IZOLYATSIA (UA),
Malý Berlín (SK) with support of Trans Europe Halles (SE).

■ ABOUT ME

Director of EIT Culture & Creativity East, Košice

EXPERIENCES

- Director, EIT Culture & Creativity East (1 of 6 EU hubs)
- Former Director, Creative Industry Košice (10+ years)
- Involved in Košice – European Capital of Culture 2013
- Responsible for UNESCO Creative City designation (2017)
- Experience with Creative Europe, Interreg, Horizon, EUI, Erasmus+, EIT
- Project author, lead partner, and implementation manager



■ OBJECTIVES

- Understand the difference between organisation and project

- Identify minimum project readiness capacities

- Learn a practical go / no-go decision framework

- Recognise the strategic role of networks

- Apply legacy thinking to future projects

■ QUICK POLL



Where is your organisation today?

- No projects yet
- Selective in projects
- Mostly project-driven

- Struggling /Ops, Fin, Capacity
- Doing well

- Active in EU projects
- Not yet active in EU projects

Why are you here today?

- Money/Funding
- Growth of organization
- My own capacity building
- Have an idea, want to know how to make it work
- Have no idea

■ Difference



ORGANISATION

Permanent

Mission-driven

Identity-based

Builds culture

Manages uncertainty continuously

Needs stability

PROJECT

Temporary

Objective-driven

Output-based

Delivers results

Operates within defined scope

Accepts intensity

■ Difference



A project is a Tool

An organization is a living system

■ Difference

ORGANISATION

Exists before the project

Exists after the project

Evolves over years or decades

Must survive funding gaps

PROJECT

Has start and end date

Has fixed budget

Has predefined deliverables

Is evaluated externally

■ Difference

If project collapses organization must still stand

If organization collapses no future projects exist

Difference

ORGANISATION LEGITIMACY

Mission consistency

Reputation

Long-term relationships

Governance credibility

PROJECT LEGITIMACY

Deliverables

KPIs

Compliance with guidelines

Reporting accuracy

■ Difference

ORGANISATION ENERGY

Sustainable

Rhythmic

Long-term learning

Capacity accumulation

PROJECT ENERGY

Intense

Deadline-driven

Peak workload

Performance pressure

■ Difference

THE STRUCTURAL RISK

When organisations behave like projects:

Hiring only tied to grants

No investment in internal systems

No strategic pauses

Staff turnover after each cycle

“Call chasing” replaces mission clarity

■ Difference

MODEL

Organisation = Platform
Projects = Experiments /
Instruments / Support mission
delivery

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP:

Organisation defines direction
Projects test and scale ideas
Lessons feed back into organisation
Systems get stronger

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP:

Call defines direction
Organisation adapts mission
Systems overstretch / burn out of people

■ Difference



A project is not your organisation.

It is a temporary agreement between your organisation and a funding logic. If that agreement starts defining who you are, you lose strategic sovereignty.

■ Project Readiness Capacity



STRATEGIC CAPACITY (Clarity Before Action)

Core question:

Why are we doing this project?

Minimum conditions:

Clear organisational vision/mission

Defined 2–3 strategic priorities

Ability to say “no”

Internal agreement on direction

Warning signs of weak strategic capacity:

“This fits because there is funding.”

Mission adapts to every call.

No long-term roadmap.

■ Project Readiness Capacity



OPERATIONAL CAPACITY (People & Structure)

Core question:

Who will carry this internally?

Minimum conditions:

Identified project lead (one responsible person)

Clear internal roles

Basic administrative competence

Reporting discipline

Meeting culture

What destroys projects:

Shared responsibility with no ownership

Director doing everything

No documentation culture

Weak task follow-up

■ Project Readiness Capacity



FINANCIAL CAPACITY (The Silent Risk Factor)

Core question:

Can we survive reimbursement delays?

Minimum conditions:

Cashflow buffer (at least 3–6 months)

Basic budgeting competence

Understanding of eligible costs

Separation of project and operational accounting

Ability to pre-finance

Reality:

EU funding comes in installments or reimbursements.

It does not pre-pay full effort.

Most organisations underestimate:

Co-financing obligations

Delayed reimbursements

Administrative corrections

If you cannot survive 6 months without reimbursement → high risk.

■ Project Readiness Capacity



LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Core question:

Is leadership stable and present?

Minimum conditions:

Strategic oversight

Decision-making clarity

Emotional resilience

Conflict management ability

PROJECTS GENERATE:

Pressure

Delays

Unexpected changes

Partnership tensions

Without leadership maturity, small problems escalate.

■ Project Readiness Capacity



CAPACITY IS A SYSTEM

These capacities are interdependent.

Weak strategy → wrong project choice

Weak operations → chaos

Weak finances → stress

Weak networks → isolation

Weak leadership → collapse

You need minimum/some strength in all — not excellence in one.

CASE STUDY

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Košice 2.0

CXI – Capacity for next project

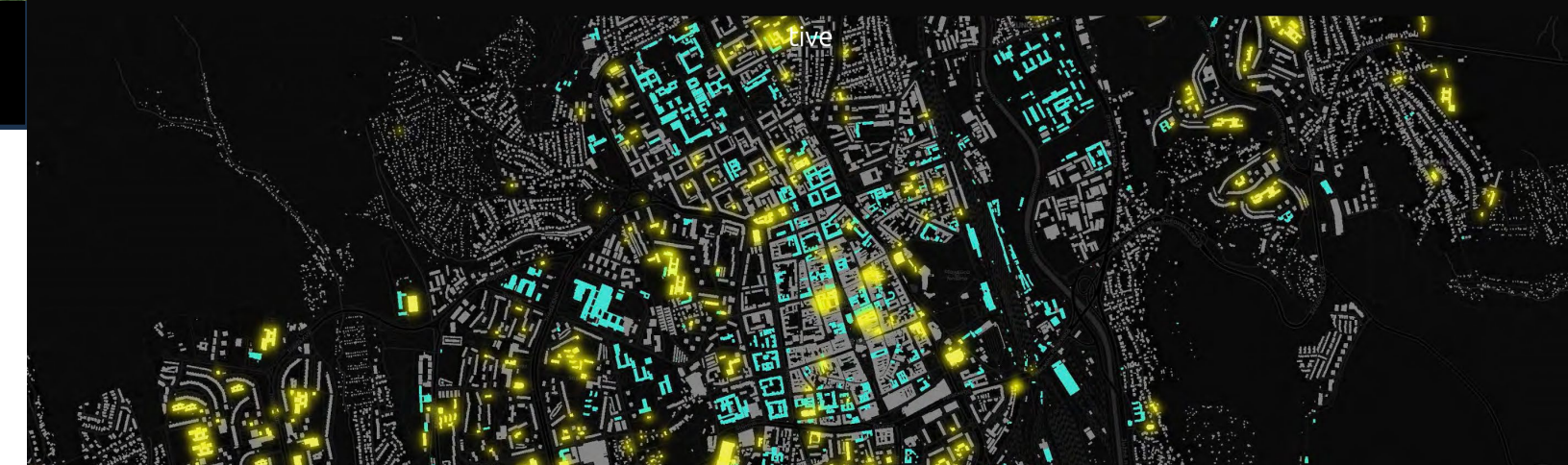
SAM SUD

Urban planning department



Smart Asset Management for Sustainable Urban Development
(SAM-SUD)

Supported within the European Urban Initia-



Creative Industry Košice, n.o.



Self assessment

rate 1–5:

Strategic clarity *****

Operational structure *****

Financial buffer *****

Network strength *****

Leadership stability *****

If 2 dimensions are below 3 → build before applying.

■ BREAK TIME

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LET'S TAKE 5

- We'll resume at 14:15
- Feel free to turn off your camera



GO / NO GO

HOW TO READ AN EU CALL

POLICY INTENTION

Every EU call is policy instrument.

Ask:

What broader EU priority does this serve?

What problem is the Commission really trying to solve?

EXAMPLE:

Creative Europe may talk about culture — but underlying logic may be:

Green transition

Digital transformation

Social inclusion

Ukraine integration

Democratic resilience

Gender equality

If your project idea does not serve that policy logic → weak alignment.

GO / NO GO

EU FUNDING LOGIC WORKS TOP-DOWN:

- EU political priority
- Programme objective
- Call objective
- Expected impact
- Activities

MANY APPLICANTS START FROM BOTTOM:

Activities first.
This creates the eclectic collection of activities

Start from impact backward.

GO / NO GO

IMPACT VS OUTPUT

Output = What you produce

Impact = What changes because of it

Example:

Output:

- 10 training sessions
- Toolkit
- Conference

Impact:

- 200 professionals improve capacity
- 15 organisations adopt new governance model
- New transnational cooperation framework established

GO / NO GO

THE HIDDEN SIGNALS IN EXPECTED IMPACT

Look for words like:

“Systemic”

“Scalable”

“Replicable”

“Policy contribution”

“Structural change”

“European added value”

GO / NO GO

SCALE & COMPLEXITY SIGNALS

Check:

Budget size

Number of partners expected

Duration

Reporting intensity

Signals:

€200k small cooperation ≠ €4m multi-country innovation project

The larger the budget → the more maturity required.

GO / NO GO

THE INTERNAL FILTER

Strategic Fit

Capacity

Opportunity Cost

Partnership Strength

Risk vs. Learning Value

GO / NO GO

FILTER 1 – Strategic Fit

Does this move our 3-year direction forward?

If the call disappears tomorrow, would we still pursue this topic?

If not → risk of opportunism.

GO / NO GO



FILTER 2 – Capacity Stress Test

Be honest:

Project lead?

Financial buffer?

Time in leadership?

Energy?

Projects consume attention and
Capacity.

They are finite.

GO / NO GO

FILTER 3 – Opportunity Cost

If we apply, what do we NOT do?

Pause another initiative?

Delay internal restructuring?

Postpone fundraising?

Strategic maturity means recognizing trade-offs.

GO / NO GO

FILTER 4 – Partnership Strength

Are we:

Leading – go only with trusted partners

Equal partner – are there trusted partners are there new we want to work with?

Always look for partners who build reputation and legacy for your organization

What do we learn?

GO / NO GO

FILTER 5 – Risk vs. Learning Value of preparation

Even if high risk, ask:

What do we gain even if don't get funding?

Network access?

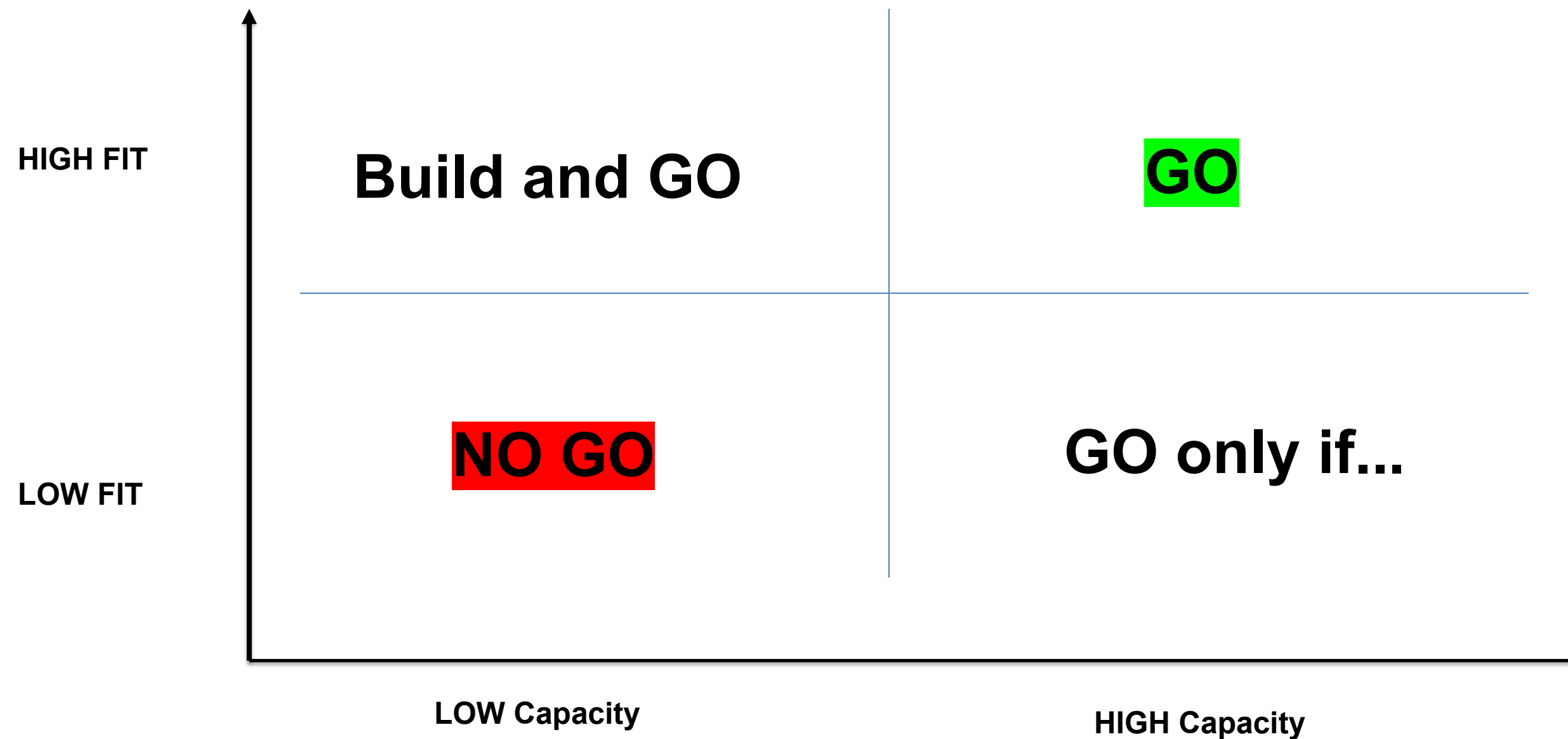
Strategic positioning?

Visibility?

Knowledge?

Sometimes "no funding" still builds capacity.

GO / NO GO



■ Networks

NOT CONTACTS. CAPITAL.

Many organisations think:

Network = mailing list

Network = conference contacts

Network = LinkedIn connections

In EU funding reality:

Network = accumulated trust + shared history +
credibility.

Without network capital, even strong proposals struggle.

■ Networks



EU PROJECTS ARE:

Transnational
Partnership-based
Risk-distributed
Reputation-sensitive

Evaluators assess not only idea —
but also partnership credibility.

If consortium lacks trust history → risk signal.

■ Networks

STRONG NETWORKS GIVE:

- Pre-call intelligence
- Draft programme insights
- Strategic positioning opportunities
- Informal partner mapping

You don't read calls first on the website.
You hear about direction months earlier.

■ Networks



REPUTATION ACCUMULATION

In EU ecosystems, reputation compounds.

If you:

- Deliver reliably
- Communicate clearly
- Respect deadlines
- Don't overpromise

You build long-term invitation probability.

■ Networks



DIFFERENT LEVELS OF NETWORK MATURITY

Level 1 – Opportunistic

Join calls randomly

No long-term collaboration

Level 2 – Thematic

Work repeatedly on one topic

Level 3 – Strategic

3–5 stable European partners

Co-create concepts

Share leadership

Level 4 – Ecosystem

Active role in European network

Influence agenda

Shape calls indirectly

■ Networks

NETWORK STRATEGY IS NOT RANDOM

Successful organisations intentionally structure:

- long-term core partners
- experimental collaborations – tested in projects
- European umbrella network

This balances stability and innovation.

CASE STUDY

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Košice 2013

ECBN

UNESCO Creative Cities

EIT



SELF ASSESSMENT

DO WE HAVE:

people abroad who would call us first?

partners who trust us with leadership?

network where we are visible, not passive?

■ LEGACY

WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE PROJECT ENDS?

Most projects end like this:

- Final report submitted
- Website archived
- Partnership fades
- Staff exhausted
- Knowledge undocumented

No structural change.

Legacy thinking reverses this.

■ LEGACY



WHAT LEGACY REALLY MEANS

Legacy is not:

A publication

A toolkit

A conference

Legacy is:

A permanent improvement inside the organisation.

**If nothing changes structurally,
the project was temporary activity — not development.**



INTERNAL LEGACY (Institutional)

Did the project:

- Strengthen internal systems?
- Improve governance?
- Build new competencies?
- Introduce better financial control?
- Clarify strategic positioning?

If yes → institutional growth.

If not → operational noise.



RELATIONAL LEGACY (Network Capital)

Did the project:

- Deepen trust with partners?
- Create long-term cooperation?
- Increase credibility?
- Strengthen European positioning?

Or was it purely transactional?

Network legacy is often more valuable than outputs.

LEGACY

STRATEGIC LEGACY (Future Leverage)

Did the project:

- Open new funding streams?
- Create new policy influence?
- Strengthen your reputation?
- Enable you to lead future consortia?

Strong projects are stepping stones, not endpoints.

CASE STUDY

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ECBN

Košice 2013
Residencies

Erasmus, I3, ..

Service Delivery

EIT



OUTPUT VS LEGACY

Output:

- 5 training sessions
- Handbook
- 100 participants

Legacy:

- Permanent training methodology adopted
- Staff trained in new facilitation model
- New long-term European partnership

EU funding rewards impact, but organisations should design for legacy.

■ LEGACY



WHY MOST PROJECTS HAVE NO LEGACY

Because organisations:

- Focus only on deliverables
- Treat project as extra workload
- Don't allocate reflection time
- Don't document learning
- Don't integrate outcomes internally

Legacy requires intentional design.



LEGACY DESIGN QUESTIONS (Before Applying)

Before submission ask:

What internal system will improve because of this project?

What competence will remain in our team?

Which partnership do we want to deepen long-term?

What strategic position will this strengthen?

What happens if funding stops tomorrow?

If you cannot answer clearly → redesign.

■ LEGACY

LEGACY AS INSTITUTIONAL MATURITY

Immature organisation:
Project = survival.

Mature organisation:
Project = institutional investment.

That shift is strategic.

LEGACY

WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE PROJECT ENDS?

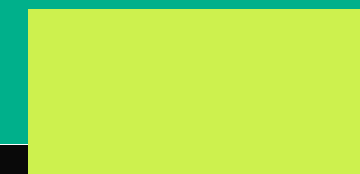
Think of your last project.

What remains today?

- Systems?
- Skills?
- Partners?
- Visibility?
- Nothing?

■ Q&A?

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Ask Anything

???

■ KEY TAKEAWAYS

Projects are instruments. Organisations are systems.

If projects define your direction, you lose strategic sovereignty.

Capacity comes before ambition.

Winning without readiness creates stress, not growth.

Expected impact defines ambition level.

Read EU calls from policy logic downward — not activity upward.

Strategic “no” protects institutional maturity.

Not every opportunity is aligned with your direction.

Networks are structural capital.

Trust, reputation, and long-term partnerships matter more than idea brilliance.

Legacy must be designed intentionally.

If nothing changes internally, the project was temporary activity — not development.

Institutional development is cumulative.

Each project should strengthen governance, competence, positioning, and resilience.

■ CHALLENGE!

Before your next EU application, ask:

Does this project strengthen our organisation?

Do we have the capacity to deliver without damage?

Will something structural remain after it ends?

If the answer is unclear — pause.

■ LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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THANK YOU!

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