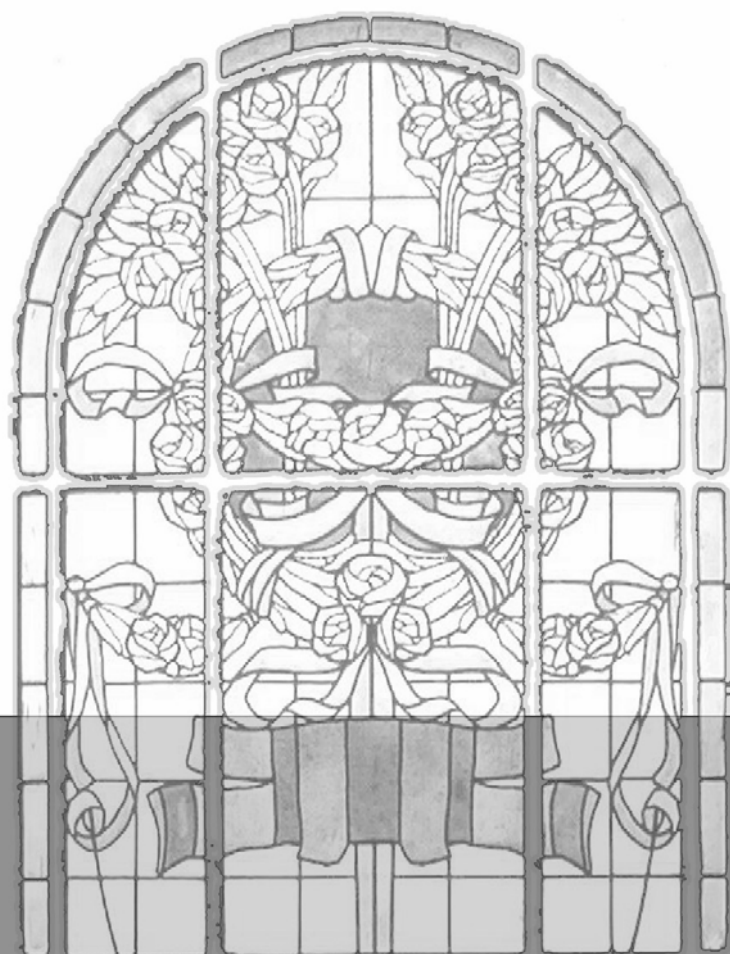


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Issue 22 – 2011

APPROACHES TO EVALUATION OF REGIONAL POLICY OUTCOMES

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Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo e la Coesione Economica
Unità di Valutazione degli Investimenti Pubblici

DPS

The Public Investment Evaluation Unit (UVAL – *Unità di valutazione degli investimenti pubblici*) provides technical support to government bodies by preparing and disseminating methods for evaluating public investment programs and projects before, during and after the projects themselves, in part to optimize the use of EU Structural Funds. The unit is a part of the network of central and regional evaluation teams.

UVAL operates within the Department for Development Policies of the Ministry for Economic Development, to which it was transferred by decree of the Prime Minister on 28 June 2007, as published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on 19 September 2007. The unit received its current structure in 1998 as part of the reorganization of the development promotion functions, which were previously assigned to the Ministry for the Economy and Finance.

The unit determines whether investment programs and projects comply with economic policy guidelines, assesses the financial and economic feasibility of the initiatives, and determines whether they are compatible and appropriate as compared with other solutions, while also evaluating their social and economic impact in the areas concerned.

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Approaches to Evaluation of Regional Policy Outcomes

Abstract

Increasingly, Europe is bringing its cohesion policy governance to revolve around impact evaluation. Naturally, this process is affecting Italy, too. In evaluations, the emphasis is shifting from supporting processes towards detecting, measuring, and explaining outcomes—favorable or unfavorable, expected and unexpected. This is a momentous change, and one which demands that public bodies acquire new competencies and develop new capacities. Italy has long created an institutional framework which enables it to sustain this change. By now, Evaluation Units exist in all Regions and in many Ministries, operate in a Network, and obtain support on evaluation from the National Evaluation System (SNV) and professional development via the NUVAL project, implemented jointly by the Department for Development and Cohesion and by the Department for Public Administration. Italy is, therefore, well positioned to actually implement innovations in evaluation. It is precisely within this framework that the NUVAL project, with scientific guidance from SNV, implemented the professional development course at the basis of this publication. This publication of the course main results aims at making the fundamentals of the main impact evaluation approaches accessible to the wider regional policy community in Italy. It also has the ambition of contributing to the methodological and institutional debate. The course, as well as this publication, focuses on only some of the existing approaches. Even though the approaches greatly differ from each other, the authors contend that they are not incompatible: rather, they can be combined to better address evaluation demands and provide credible answers to evaluation questions. It is the responsibility of Regions and Ministries, aided by their Evaluation Units and supported by SNV, to identify and use the approach—or the combination of approaches—which best fits their evaluation needs.

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