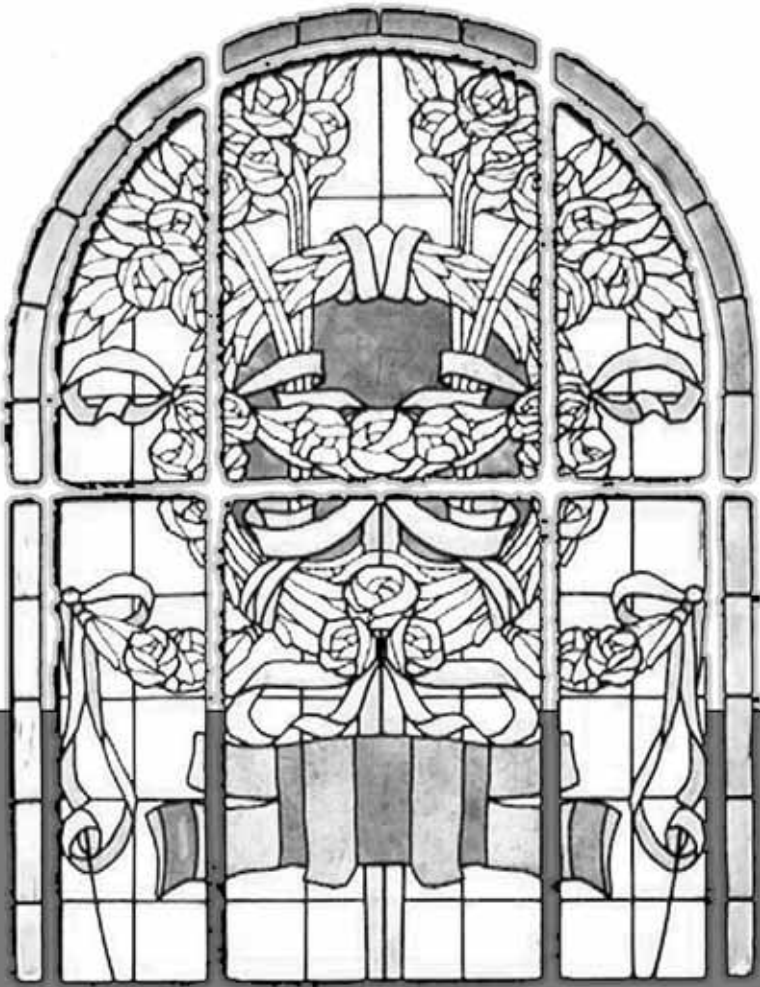


# MATERIALI UVVAL

Analisi e studi

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*Issue 4 – 2005*

## **Evaluation questions, field research and secondary data: indications for evaluative research**

*Guidelines for the Mid Term Evaluation of the Operational  
Programmes – Community Strategic Framework 2000- 2006 for  
Objective 1 (Module VI)*



Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze  
Dipartimento per le Politiche di Sviluppo  
Unità di Valutazione degli Investimenti Pubblici



The *Public Investment Evaluation Unit* (UVAL) provides technical support to public administrations, by developing, testing and disseminating ex-ante, ongoing and ex- post evaluation methods for public investment projects and programmes. One of the aims is to improve effective spending and better performance of European structural funds. The Unit is part of the network of national and regional evaluation units.

UVAL was first established with its actual structure and form in 1998, in the context of the wider restructuring of the development policies functions, under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, which resulted in the establishment of the Department for Development and Cohesion Policies (DPS). UVAL is staffed with a maximum of 30 members, coordinated by a Unit Head, and is part of the Public Investment Technical Evaluation and Monitoring Unit. UVAL reports directly to the Head of the Department for Development and Cohesion Policies (see D.M. 19 dicembre 2000, *Modifiche al riassetto organizzativo dei dipartimenti centrali del Ministero del Tesoro, del Bilancio e della Programmazione Economica*).

The Unit provides evaluations of various aspects of investment programmes and development projects, including their relevance and coherence with economic policy directions, their economic and financial feasibility, their compatibility and cost effectiveness compared with alternative solutions, including their socio-economic impacts in the geographical areas they aim to support.

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## ***Evaluation questions, field research and secondary data: indications for evaluative research***

### **Guidelines for the Mid Term Evaluation of the Operational Programmes – Community Strategic Framework 2000- 2006 for Objective 1 (Module VI)**

#### Abstract

These Guidelines – *Evaluation questions, field research and secondary data: indications for evaluative research* – provide analytical and operational guidance on specific aspects of programme evaluation processes, which are particularly important for ensuring evaluation quality and potential use. Evaluation questions are crucial for orientating evaluative research towards issues of particular interest and concern. In relation to evaluation questions, these Guidelines provide analytical and operational suggestions for defining useful questions for complex programmes. In this context, field research and primary data collection is of paramount importance in order to collect information not only related to expected results, but also crucially on what actually happens in reality, including the unexpected or negative effects that programmes may contribute to. The Guidelines offer an overview of the arguments which make field research a non-negotiable imperative for evaluative research, as well as the main advantages and limitations. In addition, the document examines a selection of methods and techniques (e.g. interviews, observations, focus groups, case study and sampling), emphasising the importance of research designs which document and justify methodological choices and the selection of information sources, to be integrated in the process of feedback on results and findings. A key complementary dimension of any evaluation process is the use of existing secondary data, including their identification and selection. These are of particular use for framing the key issues of interest, for developing meaningful hypotheses and questions and sometimes for orientating field research and primary data collection, by providing initial evaluative indications and directions. The Guidelines provide operational and theoretical indications on the use of such secondary data. In particular, they focus on statistical data available at the local level and with territorial detail and they include an operational tool, a database which will be further refined and updated, with a selection of available sources on the web. The database is available on the attached CD and will be regularly updated on the website of the Evaluation Units Network ([www.retenuvv.it](http://www.retenuvv.it)).

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