

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE EVALUATIONS' RESULTS: A TRAINING COURSE

SETTEMBRE 2011 – MAGGIO 2012
INEA - SALA CINEMA, VIA NOMENTANA 41 – ROMA

The Italian National Rural Network, Task Force “Monitoring and Evaluation”, organizes a cycle of meetings involving national and international experts and practitioners on the topic: “The effective use of evaluation results”.

Introduction

Within the framework of rural development programming 2007-2013, the introduction of on-going evaluation requires a reflection on the definition of adequate models of organization of evaluation activities and structures of governance, to improve the quality of the research and give back to the policy-makers and to the other stakeholders of the programmes timely and accurate information on the implementation and effects of policies. It follows that the function of the evaluation to accompanying the implementation of rural development programmes and its actors is strengthened. And the relationship between evaluation and policy is enriched with new food for thought on whether to expand the scope of the research, beyond the community "theory-based" approach, to draw and explore paths to growth the skills that strengthen the relevance, usefulness, understanding and use of evaluations, encouraging the definition and implementation of better policies (evidence-based policy) and more close to the needs of the territories.

In this context, the National Rural Network, within the activities of the “Monitoring and Evaluation” task force, promotes the reflection of the different actors involved in the evaluation process on the topic of the effective utilization of the programme evaluations' results, encouraging the growth of the ownership of evaluation and of the professional skills, the dialogue and the comparison on different experiences.

Aim

The aim of the meetings is to contribute to the growth of widespread evaluation thinking among the actors involved in defining and implementing evidence-based policies: administrators, evaluators and stakeholders. Throughout the meetings a learning route is set, about useful and usable evaluations, effective communication and evaluations follow up.

Timing

The cycle course will take place in September 2011 up to May 2012, through bi-monthly meetings, scheduled for the second half of each of the following months: September, November, January, March, May.

The date of each meeting can be checked on internet site of the National Rural Development Network: www.reterurale.it.

Participants

The meetings are intended for representatives of regional and local administrations involved in planning and implementing the rural development programs, as well as for evaluators and

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institutional stakeholders (representatives of social economic partnerships, Local Action Groups and professional associations).

Academic experts on policy and evaluation and practitioners will take part in the meetings as panellists.

The learning route

The route is traced by thematic learning meetings on the relevant aspects of the evaluation use, design, communication and understanding and the follow up of the evaluation results.

Each thematic meeting is developed into two parts. The first is a panel session in which international academic experts and practitioners debate on the specific theme, bringing their point of view, research outcomes and experiences. The second part leads the participants discussing their experiences and expectations and the possible use of evaluation results, its opportunities and critics, in view of eventually track a possible way for a better evaluative action and delivery of policies.

Documents and references on each theme covered by the learning route will be provided to participants.

In order to foster a wider diffusion of the learning route, the audio-video recording of the meetings and the opening of a forum are scheduled to be timely available on the Italian National Rural Network - Monitoring and Evaluation section - website.

At the end of the learning route the participants will receive a certificate of attendance.

Themes of the meetings

1. ***The use of the evaluation results, policies and their delivery: the evaluation and the “evidence-based” policies***

This meeting deals with the theme of the evaluation use and its debate in the scientific literature, the relation between theory-based, utilization-focused evaluation and evidence-based policy, the analysis of the opportunities and of the experiences matured in different evaluation fields, the organizational changes and adjustments.

Why we need to evaluate policies and programs? What contribution can evaluation ensure to the definition of good policies and their better implementation? How and when evaluation can affect policy?

These are some of the questions that may be proposed and debated during this meeting.

2. ***Designing useful evaluation for policy makers and stakeholders***

The evaluation aims to produce useful knowledge on the effects of public policy interventions. In this context, the clear expression of evaluative questions and the definition of the more appropriate evaluation design are the crucial factors for carrying out useful and usable evaluations, in relation with the specificity of policies and the policy makers and stakeholders needs for knowledge.

What is an evaluative question and how to design it? Who participates in the process of defining the evaluative questions? What is the role of the stakeholders in the definition of the evaluation design? When an evaluation is appropriate and when it is usable?

These are the questions that may be proposed and debated during this meeting.

3. ***Effective communication of the evaluation results***

Effective communication is the main requirement to start the dialogue and debate on evaluation results and the way by which implementing them in the policy and its delivery. Moreover, it represents an influential element for the growth of the ownership of the evaluation processes and a tool for the accountability of policies and for the involvement of stakeholders in the definition of more effective policies.

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Why and when to communicate evaluation results and what does effective communication mean? Who are the stakeholders and what is their role in the communication of evaluation results? What is the role of the evaluators and administrators in communicating evaluation outcomes? What is the role of effective communication in the spreading process of a shared evaluation knowledge?

These are the questions that may be proposed and debated during this meeting.

4. *Understanding the evaluation results*

Evaluation results understanding and interpretation are key elements for their successful implementation in the definition and implementation of evidence-based policies. The meeting focuses on the comparison among possible solutions for a better understanding, comprehension and interpretation of evaluation results, in order to identify the most important recommendations to follow-up.

What do understanding and interpretation of the evaluation results mean? How to make the evaluation results clear? How to interpret them and through which techniques? Who to involve in the process of understanding and interpretation of evaluation results?

These are the questions that may be proposed and debated during this meeting.

5. *Using the evaluation results: approaches and methods for changes*

This final meeting deals with approaches and techniques for the use of evaluation results. During the meeting, the speakers will intervene on the meaning of recommendations and their relevance for policies improvement. Furthermore they will bring their experience about models and techniques for a better implementation of evaluation results and evaluative judgements.

What are the most relevant evaluative judgements for the improvement of policies and programs? How to define a path of implementation of evaluation results and who to involve? How to track the real follow-up of evaluation results? What critical issues and opportunities can have a process of implementation of evaluation results?

These are the questions that may be proposed and debated during this meeting.

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