

XXIII AIV NATIONAL CONGRESS ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA VALUTAZIONE

2 - 4 April 2020
Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro
Department of Political Science
Palazzo del Prete
Piazza Cesare Battisti - Bari



Evaluation use: frameworks, actors and practices



Call for paper

Debate topics

In the last few years, there has been an increased use of evaluation in Italy, with different characteristics according to different implementation sectors. The growth of an evaluation market and the rise in demand for evaluation did not follow a linear path. Nevertheless, evaluation demand has always been linked to practical objectives. In fact, evaluation in all its implementation fields is strictly tied to its use. The aim of evaluation is to orient future actions in light of the change brought about by the objects of the analysis; therefore, the practical role of evaluation should be read 'as the application of evaluation processes, products, or findings to produce an effect' (Johnson et al., 2009). In fact, 'evaluation by definition is context bound, knowledge is produced for a particular purpose, for a particular set of users, in a specific context' (Cousins and Shula 2006, p. 267).

Evaluation activity always refers to the context where the evaluation should be used and to the actors that will use it, in order to promote change from the insights and results produced by evaluation research. According to this approach, the use of evaluation refers to 1) the way the evaluation activity is designed and carried out and 2) the way actors use the results of evaluation in their social and organisational contexts.

The 'paradox of evaluation' (Højlund, 2014) animates current debate on evaluation: it refers to the lack of evaluation use or to evaluation misuse, for different actors. Clients and contractors require the evaluation but maintain that evaluations are unfit for use; evaluators criticise decision makers for not reading the evaluation reports, or not taking into account the recommendations; stakeholders involved in evaluation processes claim that they do not respond to their research and knowledge interests; actors under evaluation are not put in the position of processing and analysing evaluation results and therefore they are not able to properly use these results for future actions; the wider public is not put in the position to benefit from access to the growing amount of data available through new technologies.

Evaluation use types have been distinguished as 'instrumental, conceptual, symbolic, information, strategic, legitimising' (Højlund, 2014). The use of evaluation produces several questions such as: Which actors use evaluation? How does evaluation use varies according to different actors' viewpoints? When is the time for evaluation, when can actors use evaluation? Which kind of evaluation can actors use? Which kind of evaluation can be used in different contexts?

The evaluation use is the running theme of the XXIII AIV 2020 National Congress. The objective of the event is to take stock of the situation regarding the use of evaluation in Italy. Furthermore, the event aims to widen the debate on evaluation use to the Italian evaluation community, focusing on issues such the consequences of different use of evaluation by different actors, in different institutional and time frames.

The event

The Congress will take place from 2 April to 4 April 2020 at the Political Science department of Aldo Moro University of Bari. The programme includes thematic panels, plenary sessions, interviews and poster sessions to foster the contribution of the youngest.

The call welcomes panel proposals that allow the debate to be widened by comparing the current perspectives regarding the problems of evaluation activity. Proposals of individual papers will also be taken into account, with a particular regard to young people's contributions.

The following list includes suggested topics for the presentation of panels. Other proposals of interest will also be taken into account:

- ▶ inequality, development, democracy
- ▶ emergency policies and risk management
- ▶ educational policies and digitalisation
- ▶ urban policies, innovation and sustainable cities
- ▶ local development, inner areas and participatory design
- ▶ teaching and evaluation
- ▶ equal opportunities
- ▶ public administration performance, accountability and improvement
- ▶ third-sector organisations and social impact
- ▶ university and scientific research
- ▶ school performance and evaluation systems
- ▶ social policies and third sector
- ▶ regulatory impact assessment
- ▶ tools and methodologies for a proper evaluation use
- ▶ open and big data for evaluation

Submission of proposals

Panel, poster and individual paper proposals can be submitted either in English or Italian no later than **21 December 2019** through the email address *segreteria@valutazioneitaliana.it* indicating in the email subject 'Panel/Paper/Poster Congress AIV 2020' according to the proposal submitted.

Participation at the event is restricted to AIV members, who renewed their membership for the year 2020. Panel proposals (which will not exceed a two-hour session) must include a short description (maximum 500 words) of the proposed topic, brief information regarding the convener proposing the panel (maximum 50 words). Applicants will receive result notification by the Scientific Committee no later than **24 January 2020**.

Evaluation criteria:

- relevance of the contents;
- clarity of objectives;
- approach and methodology consistency;
- robustness of the results and arguments;
- originality of contributions.

The most interesting papers that contribute to the scientific debate during the Congress may be submitted for publication in *Rassegna Italiana di Valutazione (RIV)*, if they meet the scientific standards of the journal.

AIV dissertation and thesis award

Every year, during the Congress the best dissertations and theses on evaluation will receive an award. Eligible graduate courses for the award are:

- ▶ master degree dissertations (old and new order);
- ▶ second degree vocational master dissertations and doctorate thesis;
- ▶ Ph.D. dissertation

Dissertations and thesis must

- be expressly related to topics concerning evaluation;
- have been already defended;
- be related to 2015–2016, 2016–2017, 2017–2018, 2018–2019 academic years;
- be the first time they have been submitted for this award.

Those who are interested can submit their thesis by **21 December 2019** by email to segreteria@valutazioneitaliana.it indicating in the email subject: 'Thesis Prize' and attaching the dissertation/thesis file. Please also indicate:

author first and surname/family name;

- dissertation/thesis title,
- supervisor,
- department and university,
- academic year.

Applicants will receive notification of the result by the Scientific Committee no later than **24 January 2020**. Prizewinners may publish a paper taken from the dissertation/thesis if it meets editorial and refereed criteria of the journal.

'Best practice in the public administration' AIV award

For the second year, AIV is promoting an initiative to share 'Best Practice in Public Administration'. The aim of the award is to give prominence to the most meaningful experiences regarding evaluation of performance, with particular respect to the following topics:

- ▶ Consultation with the users for the purposes of the evaluation of the organisational performance (Legislative decree no. 150 of 27 October 2009);
- ▶ Performance evaluation based on benchmarking exercises with other entities;

- Involvement of the managers and other officers in the performance evaluation system.

Applicants can propose other topics specifying their relevance for other administrations. Applications should come directly from public administrations, their branches or from the Independent Assessment Body. Those who are interested can submit their proposal no later than **21 December 2019** by email to segreteria@valutazioneitaliana.it indicating in the email subject 'Best Practice in Public Administration Award'. Please also include:

- a short description of the experience;
- a contact name;
- the reason for the candidacy;
- a photo and documentation to support the request.

Applicants will receive notification of the result from the Scientific Committee no later than 24 January 2020. A section of the Congress will be dedicated to the award-winning initiatives. Details of the best initiatives will be passed to the Department of Public Administration to be disseminated within the Nation Network for the Evaluation of public administration provided for under Legislative decree no 150 of 27 October 2009.

Deadlines summary

NOVEMBER 2019	FRIDAY 8 Opening call for panel/paper/poster	DECEMBER 2019	SATURDAY 21 Deadline for submission of panel/paper/poster proposal	SATURDAY 21 Deadline for submission of Dissertation, Thesis and Best practice Award
JANUARY 2020	FRIDAY 24 Notification of accepted panel / paper / poster proposal	FRIDAY 24 Notification award winner for Dissertation, Thesis and Best practice	MARCH 2020	FRIDAY 6 Deadline for Congress early registration

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