11th EES Biennial Conference
Evaluation for an Equitable Society
Convention Centre Dublin, Ireland, 1–3 October 2014
Independence, Partnership, Participation

GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE 2014 EES 11TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN

Introduction

The European Evaluation Society is seeking broad based engagement from the evaluation community at its 11th Biennial Conference in Dublin. We warmly invite your involvement since the EES Conference has always worked as a platform for sharing knowledge, ideas and experience regarding the theory, practice, methods and practices of evaluation in Europe and beyond.

We invite you to register and submit abstracts as soon as possible. They should address lessons of evaluation experience, emerging issues and critical concerns relevant to the advancement of our discipline. The types of presentations we envisage for the Conference are defined below. Next, you will find guidelines for submissions and for chairing sessions.

We hope that you will be an active participant in the Conference whether you opt to make a power point presentation, write a paper, chair or participate in a panel or roundtable or present a poster. You may also volunteer to help in the administration of the Conference.

Strands

The strands in which submissions are expected to be classified are:

- **Evaluation governance, networks and information**: this strand will bring together submissions that address the intersection of democracy and evaluation; the imperative of evaluation independence without isolation; the challenge of use and usability; the impact of the new information technologies on evaluation practice; the advent of evaluation networks across borders and the role of evaluation in knowledge management within and across organizations.

- **Evaluation research, methods and practices:** EES conferences have always provided convenient platforms for fulsome debate about evaluation models and methods. This strand will probe the frontiers of evaluation theory and research. How can evaluation research be more closely connected to real world evaluation practice? What might be the limits of co-construction and inclusive practice in evaluation design? How can evaluation be used to promote social justice and improve social programs?

- **Evaluation ethics, capabilities and professionalization:** The 'long march' towards evaluation professionalization faces many obstacles and evinces a lot of controversy. The Conference will offer space for much needed conversations about evaluation guidelines, evaluation capacity development, evaluators' capabilities, the risks and rewards of credentialing and the gradual convergence of evaluation standards across national borders. Diverse points of view regarding the boundaries of the evaluation discipline, the attributes of professionalism and the balance of costs and benefits of professional designation in diverse country contexts will vie for influence.

- **Evaluation of regional, social and development programs and policies:** The contemporary international landscape is characterized by global shifts in wealth and influence as well as growing inequalities and insecurities. Emerging market countries have become major actors in international finance, investment and trade. Evaluation internationalization is facilitating mutual learning about good policy practice. In particular, evaluations of regional and cohesion programs within the European space offer ample opportunities for two-way knowledge sharing with development evaluation practitioners.

- **Evaluation of governmental and organizational effectiveness**: the growing appetite for results through effective use of scarce resources has generated a growing demand for evaluation within governments

and organizations. As a result, evaluation is increasingly called upon to bridge social science research and management theory. This strand is expected to feature contributions from all sectors of the society (public, private and voluntary) as well as innovative experimentation drawing on systems thinking, developmental evaluation and other approaches adapted to the monitoring and evaluation of complex programs in uncertain operating environments.

Types of presentations

Abstracts are self contained. They specify and justify the choice of a particular type of session, i.e. a panel or round table, a paper session or a poster. They also suggest location in a particular strand. All sessions are 90 minutes long. The principles that govern the different types of Conference presentation follow.

Paper sessions: This is the most popular vehicle for participation in EES Conferences. Abstracts are submitted either in pre-determined session clusters normally aiming at four presentations. They should include a chair. Alternatively they may be submitted individually (leaving EES Conference organizers with the task of clustering them appropriately and selecting chairpersons).

The presentations are grouped in clusters (four each preferably) under a common theme for each session. Each presentation does not normally exceed ten minutes in order to allow adequate time for discussion. Use of power point presentations, visual aids and/or handouts is customary and encouraged. EES also welcomes the preparation of formal papers. These are submitted no later than eight weeks before the conference is held, i.e. by July 30, 2014. This deadline is firm in order to allow adequate time for peer review, consideration for awards and potential publication.

Panel and Roundtable sessions: A *panel* is designed to present contrasting or complementary perspectives on a relevant evaluation topic while allowing sufficient time to involve the audience. Abstracts for panels identify a chair and 3-4 panel members. The abstract is normally prepared by the chair since he/she is responsible for the overall quality of the presentation and the ensuing debate. The abstract describes and provides the rationale of the selected topic and demonstrates show how each individual panel member will contribute - and for how long. A paragraph outlining the contribution of each panel member is included.

Roundtable sessions are characterized by a substantive presentation of 15-20 minutes on an important or complex policy or methodological topic followed by 5-10 minutes rejoinders by 1-2 discussants and an hour or more of debate and audience participation. The chairperson ensures that issues raised are subjected to critical examination through cogent questions that are put forward for discussion and feedback. This proactive format helps to illuminate methodological or policy issues by bringing various perspectives to bear. The chairperson is also expected to provide a cogent wrap up at the end of the session.

Posters: Since the above sessions focus on issues relevant to the evaluation discipline and do not normally describe the conduct or content of a specific evaluation study or its results, EES offers to Conference participants the option of displaying the lessons drawn from their evaluation work through graphic displays on a poster board thus allowing them to engage in personalised discussion with Conference delegates. This helps to disseminate innovative evaluation methods and practices and to secure feedback. Posters are prominently displayed on Conference premises and are considered by EES a quality medium for conveying the richness and depth of one's evaluation work.

Only high quality posters that do not advertise services or products and contribute valuable knowledge and experience are considered for display. EES provides space, boards and pins while presenters provide the items to be displayed and undertake to be available to discuss their work one-on-one or in small groups during scheduled exhibition times.

Guidelines for abstracts

Abstracts for all types of presentations should be submitted on-line through the Conference Website – a notification will be sent to members and the Conference will be widely publicised. They should not exceed 500 words. They should include a proposed title; the strand in which the abstract best fits; the names of presenter(s) and concise bios (50 words); the type of session proposed, the rationale; the objectives sought, a brief narrative and justification (see review criteria below). Delegates should also specify whether or not they plan to submit a full paper. Submission of an abstract does not guarantee acceptance. To ensure quality, peer reviewers may suggest changes; propose a different type of presentation or recommend rejection.

Review criteria for abstracts

The review process will be carried out by expert evaluators selected by the Board. The EES Board has approved the following set of peer review criteria. They should be kept in mind in the preparation of submissions. Responsiveness to the overarching theme of the Conference (*Evaluation for an Equitable Society*) is not mandatory

1. **Relevance to the evaluation community:** Is the topic likely to evince interest among evaluation practitioners, managers, commissioners and/or users?

2. **Quality:** Does the proposed contribution meet high professional quality standards?

3. **Contribution to enhanced evaluation knowledge and skills:** Does the abstract focus on evaluation principles, approaches, methods and practices that may help in the professionalization of evaluation and contribute to enhanced evaluators' capabilities?

4. **Creativity and innovation:** Is the proposed contribution likely to generate a fruitful debate through the dissemination of new ideas and innovative methods that advance the state of the art?

5. **Public interest:** Is the proposed contribution likely to advance the public interest through the promotion of diversity and equity, cross-cultural exchanges, diversity of perspectives and methods, etc.?

Processing of abstracts

Only submissions from presenters who have registered and paid (or have benefited from a bursary) are included in the Conference programme. Once a submission has been accepted or rejected, an email notification is sent together with explanations and comments. Suggestions for improving the accepted abstracts may be offered.

At this stage, presenters of approved submissions will be requested to formally confirm their intent to make the presentation and register to the Conference if they have not already done so. Once a draft programme has been constructed preliminary information about timing and location of approved submissions will be communicated with a warning that the programme may change. Regular program updates will be posted on the website.

Presenters are responsible for all aspects of their presentation including power point presentations and handouts as appropriate. They are also accountable for delivering their presentations within time constraints and along lines agreed with the session chair.

The best papers prepared for the Conference will be considered for an award and/or may be proposed for publication by EES if the final version has been received by the deadline (July 30 2014).

Guidelines for chairing sessions

The quality of the Conference hinges in substantial part on the leadership exercised by session chairs. Chairpersons should be involved early in the process. The Secretariat contacts them with information about the session they will chair as soon as the programme is posted on the website.

Chairpersons shall contact speakers on their sessions by email or telephone to confirm the rules of the game and to ensure that speakers are well prepared. Normally, they ask the speakers to forward their draft presentations. Draft presentations to be sent to chairs should be required a few weeks in advance.

During the session chairpersons welcome the audience, briefly introduce the speakers, set a collegial tone, guide the discussion and offer brief "take away" remarks at the end of the session. Chairpersons are tasked with ensuring proactive involvement of the audience and to make sure that the session starts and ends on time.

Chairpersons ask attendees to be concise so as to ensure that no one monopolizes the debate. They defuse tensions through courteous and humorous interventions. They use timing cards to keep to the schedule and allow time for discussion. They encourage participants to follow up directly with the session presenters to explore issues that may not have been covered in the time available.

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