



The 15th European Evaluation Biennial Conference

Better Together: Collaborative thought and action for better evaluation

23-27 September 2024, Rimini, Italy
www.europeanevaluation.org

Attention – this is a Call for proposals for the in-person conference that will take place in September 2024. Not to be confused with other EES events taking place prior to the in-person conference

EES 2024 Theme: *Better Together: collaborative thought and action for better evaluation*

Many would argue that the world is in a state of polycrisis. There is a heightened sense of urgency and anxiety, as well as an awareness that no single group or agency has a monopoly on the evidence and insight needed to respond to these crises effectively and fairly. We can no longer afford to tackle these issues with monolithic, siloed, and linear approaches. Our individual areas of specialisation need to combine with other areas of knowledge and skill sets. Innovative and more inclusive collaborations will support learning and enable us to more effectively leverage transformative agendas for change. We are better together.

EES 2024 will offer our community the opportunity to stand together, in all our diversity, to re-frame how evaluation is understood, implemented, and used. The 2024 conference presents a timely opportunity to draw on the wealth of experience of the EES constituency and leverage it to promote a positive contribution from the evaluation world.

Building upon the valuable feedback received following Copenhagen 2022 and from other previous events, the EES 2024 will provide a new and even stronger opportunity to share, learn, and come together as a community.

The 2024 conference themes are reflective of a different approach to learning and sharing anchored on collaboration; the modalities combine old and trusted approaches with innovative ones. The programme will be reflective of the facility and designed to ensure that the physical space is used in the best possible way to facilitate sharing and collaboration. We aim to focus our agenda on younger and less often heard voices on the evaluation spectrum. We also invite EES TWGs and evaluation communities of practice to work with us in shaping sessions and strands and showcase new approaches and innovative collaborations in their fields of evaluation. Achieving these objectives relies on the goodwill of our whole community to embrace both collaboration and inclusion in the pursuit of a richer, more dynamic and impactful evaluation sector. **We look forward to welcoming you in Rimini in September 2024 where we will find new and better solutions to known and new problems by thinking together.**

Strands: The conference will offer **three strands**; each is shaped around how sessions are constructed rather than the substantive topics they each cover. The focus is on bringing together different voices to address common issues.

Collaborative action: This strand aims to bring together different experiences. Specifically, the experiences and viewpoints of **commissioners of evaluation, evaluated parties, evaluation users and the evaluators** around a common issue or subject. The strand aims to provide a space to articulate linkages between actors who are in some way engaged in evaluation but have uniquely different experiences with evaluation. For submissions under this strand, we invite participants to bring together different actors, or to speak about the wide range of views and perspectives that the different actors may have when faced with the same problem, process, or product.

Collaborative Thinking: Exploring Methodology, Theory, and Real-World Applications. This thematic strand centres on the integration of methodology with theoretical, socio-political, philosophical, or ethical considerations in the context of addressing real-world problems and applications. It encourages the examination of a singular issue from diverse viewpoints, highlighting how different philosophical responses, social or political conditions, and ethical concerns can inform and shape the methodological approach. The primary objective of this strand is to foster a collective exploration of various approaches to problem understanding, encompassing epistemology, philosophy, and ethics. We invite participants to submit contributions that present distinct philosophical and ethical perspectives while proposing methodological solutions that align

with these diverse viewpoints. By doing so, we aim to **encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and advance the understanding of the methodological implications arising from different philosophical and ethical frameworks.**

Collaborative practice: This strand focuses on **intersectoral work that addresses challenges and generates actions for change, from approaches that engage political, social and organisational actors towards solving large-scale issues such as environmental degradation, social injustices, economic instability to interdisciplinary and participative approaches enhancing the power of evaluation to optimise learning and transformation.** The aim of this strand is to encourage submissions which focus on bringing together experts from different sectors to address common problems. The objective is to identify ways by which actors from different fields and with different approaches see and address a common objective. For submissions under this strand, we invite participants to propose contributions that include different sectors or fields of interest, but which jointly contribute to the improved evaluation or understanding of a common problem.

Important information about the Call for Abstracts of proposals for presentations at the conference

EES conferences receive a significant volume of submissions, with a substantial portion being of excellent quality as determined through a rigorous double peer review process. Based on participant feedback, it has been noted that in previous conferences there were a considerable number of simultaneous sessions, which made it challenging for attendees to select and enjoy sessions comfortably. This year we aim to resolve these concerns through the adoption of a new approach that will deviate from previous conferences in two main aspects:

- The Call for Abstracts will be open for almost six months, from 15th October until 15th March. The **call will operate on a rolling 'first come, first served'** basis. This means that abstracts will be reviewed on submission and programmed immediately following successful peer review. **Early submission is therefore highly recommended:** submissions lodged late in the Call period risk being rejected due to insufficient space in the conference programme.
- **The number of submissions from any individual will be set at a maximum of two.** This will apply to all participants, therefore, please ensure that if you prepare a session with multiple participants, each is only part of one other session or you risk disqualifying your whole session.
- We will continue the recent introduction of **lunchtime sessions** to enable a wide choice of sessions in total over the three days but distributed across fewer parallels.

General criteria: we recommend you consider the following criteria, as these elements will weigh high on the scoring process:

1. Submissions that clearly mention inclusivity (re: gender, ethnicity, intersectionality, inter-agency collaboration practices)
2. The inclusion of persons from the Global South (Evaluators from countries in receipt of ODA and or countries considered to be under-resourced)
3. The inclusion of young or emerging evaluators (Evaluators under the age of 35 years or Evaluators who have less than 5 years of professional experience).
4. Sessions that include a diverse group of presenters (re: senior and junior presenters, different genders, ethnicities, geographic experience and disciplinary approaches represented)
5. Clear demonstration of a presentation approach that is interactive, and or innovative and engaging.

We welcome a **diverse range of submission formats**, from conventional presentation formats like individual papers or panels, to sessions that emphasise more interactive engagement such as Fishbowl sessions and our unique 'Solutions Focused Sessions' that encourage collaborative group work. The available modalities include:

Papers: Individuals wishing to present a paper on an individual basis. These are papers that are not part of a panel. Presentations based on papers will be placed within a multiple paper session by the conference organisers. Each paper will need to be presented in 15-20 minutes or less. Paper sessions will include 3 papers maximum.

- a) Titles of their contribution
- b) Abstract of the paper that is being proposed (max 500 words)
 - Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- c) Concise professional biography of each of the contributors to the paper who will be part of the presentation (within 50 words)
- d) Papers, at least in draft form should be attached to the proposal. This will be a required element of the submission but may be in draft form. If the presenter wishes to upload a final version closer to the conference, they can do so. If no paper is available a power point or link to a prezi can be uploaded/shared instead.
- e) Specifics on how the paper will be presented (authors are invited to use dynamic, interactive, innovative presentation techniques)
- f) Specifics on how the paper corresponds to the theme.
- g) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)
- h) Please state if you wish to chair/be discussants.
- i) Consent with publication of final presentation if one is shared (will be published on the conference website to stay available for the Conference delegates)

Panels: Each panel will include a minimum of 3 presentations by one presenter each and a chair. Each panel will have 90 minutes, it is expected that presentations will not exceed 60 minutes to ensure time for discussion.

- a) Title of the session
- b) The abstract should clearly indicate how the different presentations complement each other (bring together different approaches, fields, etc) to support collaborative work. Bidders are encouraged to engage with each other prior to the conference to ensure a seamless transition between interventions. A description of how this collaboration will materialise will be regarded positively by reviewers.
 - Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- c) Concise, professional biography for each contributor (within 50 words)
- d) For each paper the guidelines for papers should also be met
- e) Please submit short papers, power point, or link to a prezi presentation for each presentation. This will be a required element of the submission but may be in draft form. If the presenter wishes to upload a final version closer to the conference, they can do so.
- f) Specifics on how the panel corresponds to the theme.
- g) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)
- h) Consent with publication of final presentation (will be published on the conference website to stay available for the Conference delegates)

Meet the evaluation: These sessions are intended to provide an opportunity for complex evaluations to be presented and discussed from multiple perspectives, including that of the perspective of the commissioners, evaluators who conducted the assignment, and users of the evaluation. These sessions will be between 60-90 minutes in length. The presentation

portion of these sessions should not exceed 45 minutes to ensure ample time for discussion and dialogue with the audience.

This modality aims to facilitate engagement between the audience, the commissions, evaluators and users of specific complex evaluations. This will be an opportunity to explore the real-world experiences of complex evaluation from multiple perspectives.

- a)** Minimum 3 participants: At least one evaluator who was directly involved assignment, at least one person representing the commissioner and or user of the evaluation (these may be one or more individuals representing one or more agencies) and at least representative from the evaluated party.
- b)** Concise biographies of all participants (within 50 words each)
- c)** Titles of the evaluation
- d)** Abstract of the session that is being proposed (max 500 words)
 - Rationale of the evaluation
 - Objectives sought by the evaluation.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- e)** Specify of how the evaluation corresponds to the theme.
- f)** Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)
- g)** If the evaluation is public, please share it. If it is not public, please include a 1–2-page summary of the assignment or a power point presentation/link to a prezi presentation, which can provide participants with a better understanding of the assignment.

Solution Focused Sessions: These sessions can be of two types:

1) Solution Finding sessions where a problem or project is presented, and the challenges introduced. It can be led by two or more contributors (minimum 2). It is expected that a single presentation will be delivered - some 15 minutes - then key questions will be introduced, and individual groups will be asked to examine specific questions. The session should be designed as a highly participatory session where the organiser presents a project (real or fictitious) and explains the challenges encountered. The session is expected to allow the audience to contribute to identifying a clear and workable way forward.

2) Solution Workshops. These are sessions where a multidisciplinary, diverse group of presenters (minimum 3) share their application of a specific solution to a known challenge. The sessions are expected to share concrete knowledge on how an issue was addressed and enable the audience to use the tools shared in their own endeavours.

- a) Titles of the contribution
- b) Abstract of the session that is being proposed (max 500 words)
 - Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- c) Specifics on how the session corresponds to the theme.
- d) Minimum 2-page presentation of the issue/tool/approach which will be discussed. The submitter is encouraged to include additional material that can be reviewed ahead of the conference so that participants can actively engage in identifying solutions.
- e) Specify what the session will be focusing on, what the author expects to achieve with the session.
- f) Specify how you expect to organize the session (break out working groups, mini fishbowl, etc.)
- g) Specify room set up requirements and need for any specific material. The EES cannot guarantee all special material can be made available, but an effort will be made to do so.

- h) Specify how the session corresponds to the theme.
- i) Concise professional biography for each contributor (within 50 words)
- j) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)

Fishbowl: This type of session is best served for the discussion of issues surrounding a common theme, rather than the presentation of papers. The objective is to bring together different perspectives or points of view surrounding a single subject. The modality should include a brief introduction by starting participants, and a moderator. There should be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6, including a moderator, a presenter, and 2 starting discussants to frame the discussion. Proposed contributions to fishbowls must be introduced as a single event and include all participants.

- a) Titles of the fishbowl
- b) Abstract of the fishbowl that is being proposed (max 500 words)
 - Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- c) Specify of how the paper corresponds to the theme.
- d) At least one person to moderate, a second to introduce and a minimum of 2 discussants should be included.
- e) Concise biographies of all members of the fishbowl team (within 50 words each)
- f) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)
- g) Consent with publication of final presentation if one is shared (will be published on the conference website to stay available for the Conference delegates)

Sparking discussion: These sessions are designed to instigate discussion on key issues and provide an opportunity for important themes to be presented from multiple perspectives. The objective is to bring together different perspectives or points of view surrounding a single subject, which is very current/ contentious/unresolved. The modality should include 6-8 10-minute presentations by presenters who are able to effectively convey complex issues in a concise and dynamic way.

- a) Titles of the spark discussion
- b) Abstract of the spark discussion that is being proposed (max 500 words)
 - Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Titles of each presentation and short description
- c) At least one person to moderate, 6-8 presenters.
- d) Concise biographies of all members of the session team, focus on their public speaking skills should be highlighted (within 50 words each)
- e) Specify how the session corresponds to the theme.
- f) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)

Posters: these can be in traditional large paper format or in digital display. They can focus on any evaluation topic – practice, theory or methodology and can also include recently published books.

- a) Presenting author's name (if relevant also co-authors' names and email address)
- b) Presenting author's concise professional biography, also include for all co-authors (within 50 words)
- c) Title (title should not contain more than 20 words; each word should be capitalized, please do not use standard abbreviations)
The abstract text itself should not exceed 500 words and should reflect the following points:

- Rationale
 - Objectives sought.
 - Brief narrative and justification (with regards to the review criteria above)
- d) Specify how the session corresponds to the theme.
- e) Consent with publication of final poster (will be published on the conference website to stay available for the Conference delegates)
- f) Up to 10 keywords for each abstract (5 as a minimum required count)

Curated sessions: Youth Inclusivity and South Inclusivity

To promote inclusivity and involve young and emerging evaluators, as well as individuals from the Global South, we will be organising sessions that bring together senior evaluators with evaluators newer to the field, young or early stage in their career and where possible, include evaluators from the Global South.

These sessions will be led by the designated session leaders, who will have the freedom to define the format for the session. Each session will engage 3-4 presenters. Each leader will determine the theme and parameters they wish to focus on.

Young evaluators and individuals from the Global South will have the opportunity to apply for a specific session. The themes and parameters for these sessions will be published in Mid-October. Young and emerging evaluators who wish to apply to these sessions will be able to do so electronically using the same system as the rest of the participants, but they will have to select the **"Youth inclusivity and South Inclusivity: (correct theme)"**.

Contributions will be assessed as a two-step process:

First, the contribution will be reviewed as all other contributions. Second, submissions which have been accepted will be forwarded to the session leader will choose the participants they would like to include in their bespoke session. This session will count as one of the two sessions that the presents are invited to submit. The EES will try but cannot guarantee that submissions which are reviewed to be of high quality but not chosen by session leads will be included in the programme.

This approach aims to foster meaningful engagement and collaboration by providing a platform for diverse voices to be heard and included in the sessions led by experienced evaluators. This process is not linked to the sponsorship.

Sponsorship: The EES will provide a limited number of sponsorships to facilitate the participation of individuals who do not have the independent means to join the conference and more information on the criteria for sponsorship will be provided soon.