



www.ees2010prague.org

The 9th European Evaluation Society International Conference
6th-8th October 2010, Prague, Czech Republic

**Evaluation in the Public Interest:
Participation, Politics and Policy**

Conference reminder

2nd Call for proposals
Proposals due April 30, 2010



Proposal submission and Registration starts February 18, 2010

The EES Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the next EES biennial conference will take place in Prague, Czech Republic on 6th-8th October 2010, preceded by professional development training sessions on October 4th-5th.

This conference is designed to stimulate forward and expansive thinking about the ways in which evaluation is embedded in the processes of politics and participation. Evaluation is present in a bewildering array of sectors, policy areas and institutional domains. It straddles civil society organisations, research and education institutions, professional milieus and communities. It displays a rich and growing diversity of methodologies, practices, innovations and perspectives. This mosaic of evaluation reflects the diversity and vibrancy of our profession.

The 2010 Conference will provide a unique setting for exchange, learning and the advancement of evaluation theory and practice.

Participation

At a time of unprecedented turmoil and uncertainty, the 2010 European Evaluation Society Conference in Prague will probe evaluation in the public interest at the intersection of Europe's diverse cultures and traditions. An imperative of evaluation requiring consideration is participation, and among other aspects, its relation to partnership.

In principle, evaluation contributes to the welfare of society by bringing relevant evidence to the attention of decision makers, by opening up public debate, by amplifying the voices of neglected groups and by levelling the playing field of policy formation. Yet, current relationships among public officials, private firms and civil society groups have to contend with the pressures of technical change, global integration, environmental pressures and rising public discontent.

Can evaluation contribute to inclusive decision making through agenda setting, broad based stakeholders involvement and proactive consultations with citizens? Can partnership be used to enhance the quality of evaluations? What evaluation capabilities should be nurtured to meet the contrasting expectations of stakeholders? In what circumstances do joint evaluations contribute to coherent decision making? How might evaluation processes inform the deliberations of the national and transnational networks that increasingly set standards for governments, voluntary associations and the private sector? What lessons have emerged from evaluations of international development interventions?

Politics

The connection between democratic evaluation and policy practice is mediated by *politics*. How can evaluation contribute to the legitimacy of governance in the European space? What are the implications for evaluation strategies, methods and tools of an enabling environment characterised by widening socio-economic inequalities and intensified environmental stress? What ethical standards should guide evaluation commissioning and practice so as to make authority responsible?

Open dialogue and civil deliberation cannot flourish when evaluation is vulnerable to capture by program managers and vested interests. The integrity of the evaluative process requires incentives, capabilities and governance arrangements that protect evaluation independence while remaining adapted to the diverse mandates of organisations and groups. Is evaluation in Europe attuned to these considerations?

Thus the Conference will examine not only the technical aspects of programs, methods and tools of evaluations but also the institutional structures and political dynamics within which they are embedded. How can independence be combined with proactive engagement? What relationships should be nurtured between evaluation commissioners, evaluation managers, evaluators, users and stakeholders? Do value driven evaluations imply an ideological orientation that affects the objectivity and impartiality on which evidence based policy-making claims to rest?

Policy

Effective governance is dependent on policies that provide for equitable and efficient delivery of public goods and the imposition of fair rules and restraints on social practices. Evaluation is mandated to contribute to the design and implementation of *policies* by enabling diverse voices to be heard and by generating evidence considered relevant to decision making. Through increased transparency and pluralistic approaches, evaluation also triggers pressures for improved performance and it restrains abuses of power.

Conference participants will be encouraged to share lessons of evaluation experience in all major policy areas – economic, social, environmental and cultural. The gender dimension of policy will be illuminated. Human rights approaches to evaluation will be featured. The looming threats to human security related to conflict, climate change and natural disasters will be considered. Regional development and cohesion policies will receive particular attention. Evaluations that address policy coherence for development issues will also be featured.

The policy arena is increasingly characterised by policy instruments that focus on partnership, cohesion and devolved responsibility combined with central direction for strategic decision making in an interconnected world. Does this evolution in the realities of governance have implications for the ways in which the instruments and mechanisms of policy enactment should be evaluated?

Strands

The above themes will be explored within the context of the following five strands:

1. Ethics, capabilities and transparency

If evaluations are to support democratic processes what steps might be taken to enhance professional practice? Where might the debate on evaluation professionalization, standards and capabilities lie? What knowledge, skills and attitudes should evaluators use in the conduct of their work? What are the challenges and lessons from experience of building evaluation capacities and network development in Central and Eastern Europe and the rest of the world? When is external evaluation independent and impartial?

2. Evaluation and Politics

The widening socio-economic inequalities and the looming crisis of climate change raise questions about the current and future contributions of evaluation to the legitimacy of governance in the European and international spaces. How can evaluation be used to facilitate principled agreements and innovative policy solutions that meet the imperatives of coherence and transparency? In this context we invite submissions, narratives and case studies that illuminate the dilemmas faced by evaluators in complex policy environments at organisational as well as local, national, regional and global levels.

Within this strand, sessions on institutional strengthening and how to be inclusive through evaluation are encouraged: the way evaluation might help to strengthen regional and local political processes by evaluating from a gender and human rights perspective, and giving a voice to men, women, children and people of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. This implies an interest in the way the processes by which we attribute value and worth to policy can be more widely used, and how issues of social justice can be meaningfully addressed; extending evaluation to legal and justice sector reform further enhances its democratic role.

3. Evaluation producers, beneficiaries, users and decision makers

We seek submissions about the balance of rewards and risks involved in participative and joint evaluations. Much is yet to be learnt about the ways to combine legitimacy, transparency with efficiency and timeliness. We also encourage papers and panel discussions about the changing landscape of evaluative knowledge users. What is the impact of the new information technologies on the potential expansion of audiences and users of evaluation? What are the bureaucratic impediments to participatory evaluations? What does evaluation in the public interest mean for evaluation design, methods and planning? What are the tensions between broad based involvement of stakeholders and the increasingly sophisticated nature of evaluation designs?

Furthermore, the advent of the web has changed the nature of partnerships, the conduct of politics and the processes of policy formation. What is the impact of the new network technologies on the nature, scope and delivery of evaluations? What are the emerging issues in the rapid and massive dissemination of evaluative information?

4. Sector policy evaluation

Evaluations straddle all sectors of the European economy and we are inviting contributions that examine their distinguishing features and challenges. How might evaluations be used or designed to contribute to local, national or international improvement within specific policy domains? In what domains have evaluations been especially influential and how do partnerships and politics impact on the evaluations of sector interventions and sector policies?

This strand also focuses on *evaluation of regional development and cohesion policies*: Are the EU policies aimed at cohesion, integration and reduced disparities across and within member states adequately reflected in evaluation practice? Vast resources have been invested in the evaluation of structural funds. What lessons can be drawn out of this experience? Have the evaluations generated meaningful results and changes in behaviour? We invite contributions on these and related issues.

5. Evaluation in developing and transition economies

The way evaluation might support the public interest in the allocation, distribution and use of resources for development. This includes an interest in how to improve evaluation as well as how to build up demand for evaluation in developing countries. Additional challenges to evaluators arise with the issues of governance, transparency and justice. New instruments for development assistance have been experienced, which call for innovative evaluation methods. Moreover, the role and value of evaluation in conflict and humanitarian context, natural disaster and climate change will be addressed along with ways and methods to evaluate human rights, gender inequalities and gender-based violence.

We also encourage contributions that address the overarching theme: methodologies, standards, impacts, and effects. We invite submissions that discuss experience of evaluative methods that highlights the implications involved in different methodological choices. The mounting concerns to demonstrate impacts and results have renewed doctrinal debates and generated controversy. What are the implications of different approaches for evaluation's involvement in building partnerships, influencing political practice and inducing participation?

We want to encourage a wide range of contributions to the conference. Therefore we offer different types of presentation formats, which should be indicated while submitting your abstract. All abstracts are welcome and the best ones are likely to be published or otherwise disseminated by EES. But in addition participants can make use of a wide spectrum of possibilities (panels and symposia, round tables, posters, etc). We also invite creative and original vehicles using the performing arts, film, music, etc.

Evaluation in the Public Interest: Participation, Politics and Policy



Proposal Submission

Closing date: 30 April 2010

We encourage you to submit abstracts in relation with the conference strands and overarching themes. We welcome all abstract for different types of presentation as papers, panels and symposia, roundtables, posters and innovative session formats. Please indicate the appropriate format and strand for your contribution (though the conference committee reserves the right to reallocate if necessary) and whether you are willing to act as a session chair. If you are unsure of the most relevant strand for your abstract, the conference committee will allocate it as appropriate. Further information regarding the different formats for abstract submissions is available from the conference website www.ees2010prague.org.

In case of any questions of further information needed please contact us at abstracts@ees2010.org

Guidelines for submission of proposals

1. **Abstracts MUST** be submitted electronically according to the following instructions by the specified deadline of April 30, 2010. Abstracts submitted by fax or by email will not be accepted.
2. **An abstract should** contain maximum of 300 words. The system will automatically let you know whether you complied with the rules before accepting your submission.
3. **Tables** can be inserted within the text using the "Paste from Word" button () from the editor toolbar. For more details see *Abstract submission walkthrough* on the conference webpage.
4. **Pictures** can be inserted using the "Image manager" button () from the editor toolbar. For more details about this function see *Abstract submission walkthrough* on the conference webpage.
5. **All abstracts must** be written in English.

Should your abstract be accepted for an oral presentation you must be able to give your presentation in English.

It is considered understood that Authors of accepted papers have the financial resources to pay all personal expenses incurred including Conference registration, production of their presentation, travel and accommodation during the Conference. Please note that it is not possible to offer discounted places to presenters.

Presentation types are:

Individual submission *(that will be organised into a session by the conference organisers)*

- ✓ Paper presentation *(oral presentation including questions and discussion based on a written paper)*
- ✓ Roundtable *(discussion among participants generated by a written paper)*
- ✓ Poster *(to be exposed in specific conference area)*

Submission for an entire session: please note that it is mandatory to list all your co-presenters *(if no names are listed, your submission will be classified in the individual submission)*

- ✓ Symposium *(3-4 presenters each giving a paper on a conference related theme)*
- ✓ Panel/debate *(more than one presenter, perhaps with one or more discussants, that may involve a debate among panellists followed by open discussion involving the audience)*
- ✓ Alternative format *(please specify)*

Please also indicate if you would be willing to act as a session chair.

6. **When submitting your abstract**, choose the most related topic (please refer to the list here). However, the Committee reserves the right to decide on final topic assignment upon abstract selection.

Submission strands

1. Ethics, capabilities and transparency
2. Evaluation and politics
3. Evaluation producers, beneficiaries, users and decision makers
4. Sector policy evaluation
5. Evaluation in developing and transition economies

Please note the overarching theme “methodology, standards, impact and effects”.

7. **Titles should not** contain more than 20 words.
8. **No abbreviations are** to be used in the titles.

9. Abstracts will be reviewed and selected by the Committee for oral or poster presentations – A preference for poster presentation may be indicated. However, the Committee will make the final decision as to how the abstract is to be presented. Abstract acceptance or rejection is based on the average mark awarded by the reviewers.


10. Posters are particularly suitable for the presentation of complex data or material requiring extensive illustration.

11. It should be noted that poster presentations carry the same status as oral presentations and will be subject to the same selection process by the Committee, i.e. by means of written abstracts in English.

12. Accepted abstracts will be published in the Abstract Book.

13. The following subdivisions of your abstract are recommended but are NOT MANDATORY. There is no need to use every section if not appropriate to your work:

- ✓ Background
- ✓ Objectives
- ✓ Methods
- ✓ Results
- ✓ Conclusion/Application to practice

If you need to enter Greek letters or use bold, italics or superscript/subscript please use the “Insert Symbol” button () from the editor toolbar.

14. All accepted abstract authors will be notified by e-mail.

15. Correction of abstracts can only be done before the deadline of April 30,2010.

16. Abstracts received after the deadline cannot be accepted and therefore will not be considered for the program or publication.

17. Disclosure of Interest The intent is to provide high-quality sessions focused on educational content free of commercial influence or bias. We ask all presenters to co-operate in this by:

- ✓ Declaring any potential conflict of interest on a Disclosure section of the abstract submission
- ✓ Do not include company names

Should you have difficulties in submitting your abstracts or you need further information, please contact the Conference Secretariat.

abstracts@ees2010prague.org or call + 420 261 174 304.

Administration

The Conference administration is undertaken by:

**Conference department & EES
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Conference Venue - Clarion Congress Hotel Prague

Clarion Congress Hotel Prague, the first MICE specialised hotel in Prague opened in March 2008. Conference facilities with total space of 4000 square meters divided into 23 flexible function rooms and halls serve for up to 2500 delegates.

Accommodation

The Czech capital is admired both for its historical architecture and its modern buildings. Clarion Congress Hotel Prague presents the contemporary trends in a hotel design. All rooms respect the comfort and the individual approach to all our clients Clarion embodies. The exquisite appearance of the hotel is also reflected in the rooms furnishing. The pure line of the hotel interior design copies the highest standard of the Clarion brand. You can also rely on the top service. The hotel offers 535 de Luxe rooms and 25 luxury suites. Our guests can also enjoy their stay in standard and executive rooms as well as suites. Standard rooms have en suite bathrooms, air-conditioning, TV with satellite and PAY TV, high speed Internet connection, telephone with direct dial function, safe and trouser press. Mini bar and coffee machine are present as a matter of course.

For more information about conference venue please visit www.ees2010prague.org.

