

## **GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE 2012 EES 10<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI**

### **Introduction**

The European Evaluation Society is seeking broad based engagement from the evaluation community at its 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference in Helsinki. We hereby invite submissions for presentations that address lessons of evaluation experience, emerging issues and critical concerns relevant to the advancement of our discipline.

We warmly welcome your involvement since we view the EES Conference as a platform for sharing knowledge, ideas and experience regarding the theory, practice, methods and practices of evaluation in Europe and beyond.

Please let us know whether you are interested in being considered for participating in a Conference session, chairing a session or presenting a poster. We expect to issue the formal call for abstracts on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. The types of presentations we envisage for the Conference are described. Next, you will find guidelines for submissions and for chairing sessions.

### **Types of presentations**

Abstracts are expected to be self contained. They should specify and justify the choice of a particular type of session, i.e. a panel, a round table, a paper session or a poster. All sessions will be 90 minutes long. The principles that govern these different types of submissions follow.

***Paper sessions:*** This is the most popular vehicle for participation in EES Conferences. Abstracts are submitted either individually (leaving EES Conference organizers with the task of clustering them appropriately in Conference thematic strands and selecting chairpersons) or in pre-determined clusters of 3-4 presentations (including discussants). The presentations should address a relevant evaluation topic. They are grouped in clusters of 3 or 4 papers under a common theme for each session. Each presentation does not exceed 10-15 minutes in order to allow time for discussion. Power point presentations or other visual aids and/or handouts are normally used. In addition, EES requires the preparation of formal draft papers that are submitted six weeks before the conference is held, i.e. by August 15 2012. This allows sufficient time for their expert review; consideration for awards and/or eventual 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 which may include discussants. 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 Roundtable chair 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 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 and for engaging 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 in Word format. They should not exceed 500 words. They should include a proposed title; 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). Proposing an abstract normally implies that a paper will be prepared and presented to the conference (see below). 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 is carried out anonymously 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.

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 proposal meet high professional quality standards?
3. **Responsiveness to the conference theme:** Does the abstract address the overarching theme of the Conference (Evaluation and the Networked Society)?
4. **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?**
5. **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?
6. **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 final Conference program. 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 are requested to formally confirm their intent to make the presentation. Once a draft program has been constructed preliminary information about timing and location of approved submissions are communicated with the proviso that the program 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 if any. They are also accountable for delivering their presentations within time constraints and along lines agreed with the session chair. The best papers are considered for an award and/or may be proposed for publication by EES.

### **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 are scheduled to chair as soon as the program is posted on the website.

Chairpersons 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 after the session and to fill evaluation forms.