



Eval4Action Regional Consultation

Europe

Concept Note

The Eval4Action Campaign's overall objective:

The Decade of EVALUATION for Action (Eval4Action) aims to mobilize and spur commitments from decision-makers, the evaluation community and other stakeholders to develop stronger national evaluation systems and capacities, to support delivering the SDGs by 2030, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The specific objectives of the campaign are to:

- Raise awareness of evaluation's role in accelerating the delivery of SDGs by 2030, by including evaluative evidence when reporting on SDGs' progress at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), as well as at the national level.
- Generate personal and institutional commitments for action from: (a) decision-makers to strengthen national evaluation systems/capacities, and develop/support national evaluation policies and the use of evaluation; and (b) from UN agencies, the broader evaluation community and academia to produce high-quality evaluations and evidence to achieve the SDGs.

The Eval4Action Regional Consultations have the following objectives:

At the global level, the Eval4Action regional consultations will:

- Re-energize the global evaluation community to spur action for evaluation advocacy
- Identify promising ideas that will help focus the campaign's energy
- Showcase how the campaign's partnerships will work together to meet the SDGs by 2030

At the regional level, the Eval4Action regional consultations will:

- Increase the visibility of country-level evaluation stakeholders
- Invite resources and actions to increase evaluation's visibility
- Allow national and regional-level actors to feel connected to the Eval4Action campaign, and become champions for evaluation

Context for the Eval4Action Regional Consultation in Europe

In such turbulent times of baffling crises, contradiction and uncertainty, we – as an evaluation community – should come together, debate and agree on new ways of doing our professional work to better respond to the global challenges of environmental degradation, social and economic inequities, and political unpredictability.



The problem is not just that as evaluators, hoping to work in the service of the public good, we too infrequently demonstrate our beneficial consequences. But now, doing good through better evaluation just got harder.

To be sure, the field of evaluation has always evolved to embrace the complexity, interdependencies and systemic nature of public interventions. But by and large, we are still constrained by policy actions, which are in turn limited by their remit and rigid bounded areas of intervention, and are all too often conceived in terms of definable causes and predictable effects.

In Europe, there is a recognition of the importance of implementing the SDGs, **but very often this is disconnected** from how decision-makers report on their achievements, are held to account, and how we all learn how to substantially improve our actions within our own borders. As evaluation professionals, we have a fundamentally important role to play in this, and also have many of the skills needed to do so, but we need to play a more proactive role demonstrating how and what evaluation can contribute to this crucial area of policy.

While there is now a general consensus that the SDGs are important, the region is still grappling with the **urgency** of implementing them.

The general recognition is that **SDGs play a lesser role in the European political context** since the plans for economic recovery, heavily impacted by COVID-19, have been prioritized. In this context, governments switch to rapid and non-transparent actions and VOPEs play an even more negligible role in contributing to social betterment. This leads us to the following questions: How can VOPEs contribute to acceptance and implementation of SDGs? Is there a need to address new target groups? Can we unite our efforts in envisioning a more sustainable and more equal world?

Campaigns such as [the Decade for Action](#), and the accompanying [Decade for Evaluation for Action \(Eval4Action\)](#), bring much-needed attention to this issue, and the vital role evaluation can play in helping to implement the SDGs.

At the same time, the SDG's success depends on implementers and evaluators **moving away from the current siloed-approach**, to a more integrated one that utilises systems-thinking to better tackle these integrated issues within the overall agenda of sustainable development.

As part of Eval4Action's ongoing series of regional consultations, EES will be hosting the [European consultation on October 21st, 2020 at 15:00 CEST](#) to raise awareness and kick-start this discussion on a regional level.

The objectives of this regional consultation will be:

- To contribute to the Eval4Action Campaign, and show that the Europe is in solidarity with other regions



- Explain the situation of SDGs implementation and evaluation's role in this process in Europe
- To get the chance to share my ideas during the discussion in the break out rooms
- To be part of the process of systematically advocating for evaluation to play a role in SDGs implementation, together with other partners
- Provide examples to European national VOPEs on how to get engaged, and facilitating a discussion where they can express their views on the issue
- For EES to depict the urgency of transformations that evaluation must go through and demonstrate in order to face the challenges of Anthropocene

We will concentrate this consultation's discussion groups on the overall question:

How can evaluation help ensure a transformative recovery from COVID-19, one that addresses the crisis, reduces risks from future potential crises and *relaunches* the implementation efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda and SDGs during the Decade of Action?

Specifically:

- What is *the role of VOPEs* in this challenge?
- What *competencies* do evaluators in Europe have to face this challenge?
- What can we *learn from other regions* to work globally on transformations we desire, rather than merely reacting to each crisis as it arises?

European Regional Consultations follow up

Eval4Action consultations are not meant to be necessarily conclusive, but rather to kick off a larger process of reflection on transformative and accelerating role of evaluation in relations to social equality and planetary sustainability. Therefore, this event will also kick-start the EES' online webinar series on Transformative Evaluation, which looks at how we need to evolve the fundamentals of our role, practice and conduct as evaluators in a world of turbulence. This series provides the lead-up to our in-person **biennial conference** to be held on 6-10 September 2021, on the theme "**Evaluation in an Uncertain World: Complexity, Legitimacy and Ethics.**"

In addition to launching this webinar series, the Eval4Action European regional consultation will also lead the EES to **launch a new Thematic Working Group** to focus on evaluating EU-related policies. Together with various stakeholders and partners, the thematic working group on EU policies focuses on advocating building capacity and raising awareness about the role of evaluations in improving EU policies and quality of life. The TWG will also advocate for ensuring that the evaluation of these policies is aligned/harmonised with the SDGs.

Last but not least, deriving from experiences of DRG (Democracy, Human Rights and Governance) evaluation project, **NESE partners will engage in discussion** on local context specifications and axes of synergies that SDGs provide for the whole region.

