

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

THEME:

Reimagining the Evidence-Informed Policy and Decision-Making Ecosystem in Africa

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Evidence to Action Conference (E2A) 2026 is the 9th edition of a flagship annual international convening jointly organized by International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED), Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), and the Research and Evaluation Center (REC), in collaboration with a wide network of Africa-based and global partners. With support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, E2A 2026 will be held in Accra, Ghana, at the ISSER Auditorium, University of Ghana, from 22–26 June 2026. The conference will bring together policymakers, researchers, evaluators, practitioners, funders, civil society actors, and knowledge intermediaries to advance dialogue, learning, and action on strengthening Africa-led evidence systems that meaningfully inform policy, practice, and governance.

The conference will feature two days of pre-conference and side events, followed by three days of plenary sessions, parallel technical sessions, and an exhibition.

E2A 2026 builds on growing momentum across Africa to reclaim, reshape, and strengthen the evidence-to-action ecosystem. While Africa has a long tradition of knowledge production, much of the evidence that informs policy and development decision-making remains externally driven, fragmented, or disconnected from lived realities. This conference seeks to learn from what has worked, how and where and what has not worked in the evidence to policy and action ecosystem. The conference will give opportunity to document, elevate, and scale Africa-led evidence practices, foster cross-context learning, and catalyze systems-level change that positions Africa as a global leader in evidence-informed policymaking and governance.

2.0 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

Grounded in a vision of transforming Africa's evidence ecosystem, E2A 2026 aims to:

- Reimagine the Evidence to Action Ecosystem by shaping systems that are rooted in African contexts, priorities, and legitimacy.
- Document and Learn from Practice by capturing enablers, innovations, and constraints—including the role of indigenous and community-based knowledge—in evidence use.
- Clarify Ownership and Audience by centering the needs of policymakers, practitioners, funders, civil society, and communities, while ensuring African institutions lead the agenda.
- Strengthen Collaboration across research institutions, governments, funders, civil society, and communities.
- Advance Systems Level Transformation that builds confidence in Africa led approaches and influences global evidence and policy debates.

3.0 DELEGATES AND PARTICIPANTS

The conference will convene a diverse and high level audience, including:

- Policymakers and government officials
- Research institutions and academia
- Civil society and grassroots organizations
- International and local NGOs
- United Nations agencies
- Private sector actors and social entrepreneurs
- Development partners and philanthropies
- Media and knowledge intermediaries

4.0 CONFERENCE THEME

The main theme of the conference, **“Reimagining the Evidence-Informed Policy and Decision-Making Ecosystem in Africa”** emphasizes the need for inclusive, context-driven, and transformative approaches that redefine whose knowledge counts, how decisions are made, and whose voices shape policy. It calls for inclusive, context-driven, and transformative approaches that

recognize the legitimacy of African knowledge systems and prioritize the voices and lived realities of communities that have historically been marginalized or excluded from decision making processes.

The conference will explore key questions such as:

- Whose knowledge counts in decision-making, and how can African-generated, indigenous, and community-grounded evidence be legitimized and institutionalized?
- What mechanisms or pathways can strengthen the uptake, translation, and sustained use of evidence in shaping policy, service delivery, and governance practices?
- How can governance systems be transformed to ensure incentives, structures, and institutions support evidence-informed policymaking?
- What barriers including political, structural, institutional, or capacity-related continue to inhibit responsive and equitable governance across Africa, and how can they be addressed?
- How can Africa build inclusive evidence ecosystems that amplify the perspectives and priorities of women, youth, indigenous communities, and other underserved and marginalized groups?
- What can Africa learn from past failures in evidence generation or use, and how can those insights inform more adaptive, resilient, and context-appropriate approaches?
- How can digital innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), and data systems be leveraged to accelerate progress, while addressing ethical, access, and equity challenges?

In exploring these questions, the conference will spotlight emerging research, innovative methodologies, indigenous knowledge systems, evaluation tools, and cross-sector strategies that are shaping the future of governance and evidence use across the continent.

4.1 Sub-Themes

The sub-themes of the conference are highlighted below:

1. **Legitimacy & Ownership of Evidence:** Exploring whose knowledge counts. How African-generated evidence is validated, and how to institutionalize African leadership in the evidence ecosystem.
2. **Evidence Uptake, Translation and Use:** Innovations, pathways and mechanisms for turning evidence into policy, practice, investments and community-driven action.
3. **Systems Transformation for Evidence-Informed Governance:** Re-imagining the governance structures and incentives that shape evidence production and use.
4. **Inclusivity & Equity:** Elevating the voices of youth, women, indigenous groups, and marginalized communities in evidence generation.
5. **Collaboration & Partnerships:** Lessons from successful multi-actor initiatives that achieved policy change.

6. **Learning from Failures and Adaptive Practice:** What has not worked in evidence-to-action, and why? How can Africa learn from missteps to avoid replication?
7. **Technological Disruption and Opportunity:** How can the rapid advancement of technology—particularly artificial intelligence (AI), digital data systems, and analytics—be harnessed to transform evidence generation, interpretation, and use across sectors in Africa, while effectively addressing the ethical, access, and capacity challenges it presents?

5.0 IMPORTANT DATES TO NOTE

Online submission of abstracts starts	February 24, 2026
Submission of abstracts ends	March 24, 2026
Notification on acceptance of abstracts	April 14, 2026
Deadline for registration and payment of fee	May 12, 2026
Receipt of PowerPoint presentations and soft copy of the poster presentation	May 19, 2026

6.0 OPPORTUNITIES & SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Abstracts are welcome from all sectors involved in generating, synthesizing, translating, or using evidence for development and governance. Submissions may include:

- Research studies
- Evaluations of policies, programmes, or projects (formative, process, or summative)
- Evidence synthesis products (e.g., systematic reviews, Evidence and Gap Maps)
- Innovative methodologies and tools supporting evidence uptake and use

Abstract Format

- Maximum 350 words
- MS Word document, double spaced
- Times New Roman, font size 12
- Written in English
- Should include: purpose, methodology, key findings/results, conclusions, and significance/contribution

Abstracts should be submitted electronically via: <https://bit.ly/E2A2026abstract>

Each abstract must be submitted separately.

We are accepting submissions for:

1. Short paper presentations

Papers are intended to generate discussion and, therefore, should be based on a recently completed evaluation, with the aim of clarifying issues in evaluation theory and proposing new and innovative evaluation paradigms. Paper proposals should indicate:

- Title of the paper
- Name, title and institutional affiliation of presenting author
- Email and telephone contact of presenting author
- Papers must be allocated to a specific Sub-theme.

2. Breakout Sessions

Breakout sessions will feature multiple panelists and a moderator and will be used to present diverse contributions or perspectives under a shared topic. For submissions proposing a panel discussion, please identify the key point of contact responsible for panel coordination. Panel proposals must also clearly identify the proposed panelists and the moderator/facilitator. Single-paper submissions do not need to propose a moderator, as they will be grouped into thematic breakout sessions and assigned a moderator by the organizers.

3. Short poster presentations

An exhibition of posters during the evaluation week will be provided for. As such, posters with images as well as text will be required for display at a designated space. Posters will be expected to depict an evaluation study including key questions asked, methodology, data, findings, recommendations and conclusions. Posters will be displayed during the conference and presenters need to be available to respond to questions about the poster on display. Accepted Poster presentations will be displayed in the exhibition hall for the duration of the conference. Posters should measure approximately **0.95 m** in width and **1.5 m** in height. Poster presenters are advised to submit the hard copy of their posters to the secretariat a day before/on the first day of the conference. Proposals for poster presentation must include:

- Title of the poster
- Name, title and institutional affiliation of presenting author
- Email and telephone contact of presenting author.

7.0 CONTACT FURTHER FOR ENQUIRIES

For more information about the conference, abstract submissions, participation and registration, applicable fees, hosting a pre-conference session/side event, please visit our website <https://www.iced-eval.org> or email us at: e2a@iced-eval.org or info@iced-eval.org.