

Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE) meeting

Meeting notes

Thursday, 28. XI 2024, 17,30-18,45h (Microsoft Teams)

Present at the meeting:

- Germany, **DeGEval** - Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V., dr. Angela Wroblewski, wroblewski@degeval.org
- Italy, **AIV** - Associazione Italiana di Valutazione, Nicola Orlando, norlando@irsonline.it
- N. Macedonia, **MEN** – Македонската Мрежа на Евалуатори (Macedonian Evaluation Network); dr. Vlatko Danilov, vlatko@basme.com.mk
- Poland, **PTE**, Polskie Towarzystwo Ewaluacyjne (Polish Evaluation Society), Monika Bartosiewicz-Niziołek, monika.bartosiewicz-niziolek@pte.org.pl
- Serbia, **INES** - Informal Network of Evaluators Serbia, dr Mihajlo Djukić,
- Slovenia, **SiES** – Slovensko društvo evaluatorjev (Slovenian Evaluation Society), Bojan Radej, sdeval@siol.net
- Spain, **AproEval** - La Asociación Ibérica de Profesionales por la Evaluación, dr. Aida El-Khoury de Paula akpaula17@gmail.com
- Ukraine, **UAO** - Українська Асоціація Оцінювання (Ukrainian Evaluation Association); dr. Olha Krasovska, olha.krasovska@gmail.com; Did not participate in the meeting personally but confirmed by e-mail their interest in cooperation.

The representative of **AIV** (serving as NESE Coordinator) led the meeting.

Agenda:

1. Introduction of participants
2. Importance of NESE for strengthening cooperation between national evaluation CSOs and VOPE (initiated by SiES)

Ad 2) SiES thanked AIV and NESE Secretariat for organizing the meeting and to everyone present.

The reason for SiES' request for the meeting is to announce **the Initiative for the Cooperation of National Evaluation CSOs**, which will be submitted for adoption at the 6th WBEN Conference (Western Balkan Evaluation Network, Sarajevo, October 2025) and will be prepared in cooperation with IOCE and EvalPartners.

The initiative is prepared based on positive experiences achieved in connecting the national evaluation communities of the five Western Balkan countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, N. Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia) in the past decade. WBEN has established an **effective cooperation infrastructure**, which is entirely based on voluntary work but has established itself as one of the indispensable tools of the national communities in the implementation of their work programs. WBEN organises annual meetings, regional conferences, and trainings, distributes monthly news, implements joint projects, and gains recognition at European and global levels.

WBEN wants to share its positive experiences with others, **grateful for the support and trust it has received from the international evaluation community**, which supported the initial

steps of forming the WBEN community with grants from EvalPartners and IOCE over a decade ago.

Regional cooperation is especially relevant for **smaller evaluation communities**, where CSOs' activities often rely on volunteers and lack critical mass for national activities. Regional synergies leverage existing CSOs' resources and strengthen their overall capacities. WBEN demonstrates this.

Larger, **established evaluation communities** also benefit from regional cooperation, which supports broader aspirations and systemic impact. Vertical structuring of CSOs is key for forming unified positions and supporting coordinated actions. Vertical structuring establishes formal mechanisms of accountability and transparency, bolstering the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs in the public eye. For instance, a regional level of cooperation facilitates the access of national CSOs to higher levels of international cooperation in the evaluation field.

WBEN will send the Initiative, coordinated between the co-sponsors, to NESE members for consideration and comments, and possible co-signing. The Chair expressed interest in NESE to consider the Initiative as soon as it becomes available.

After the introductory presentation (**SiES**), a discussion followed, from which the minutes summarise only the keywords reflected on the specific topic of the discussion.

The **DeGEval** representative understands the proposed initiative as reasonable, but it must be taken into account that the dominant motives for cooperation between national communities are sometimes also competitive. Therefore, it is not possible to count on a uniform model of regional cooperation.

The **MEN** representative emphasised that we need a strategy for community action, to which we can then link thoughtful activities in the development of the community as a whole. The representative of **AIV** noted that such things as a strategy need to be discussed at multiple levels, first at the national level, then at the NESE level, and the influence of higher levels of strategic direction must also be taken into account.

The **AproEval** representative presented her view on cooperation in the Iberian community between Portuguese and Spanish evaluators and cooperation between the Iberian and Spanish evaluation communities, as another original dimension of regional cooperation that outlines very context-specific challenges to cooperation between national evaluation communities. The AproEval representative commented that she will forward the WBEN initiative to the APROEVAL Board members for internal discussion.

INES representative stressed the importance of knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences (Representative of **AIV**) between national communities because they operate in different national contexts and thus give a broader perspective to the conditions in which they operate. On the other hand, national cooperation strengthens the possibilities for joint production of knowledge and innovation, for project cooperation, a prominent example of good practice is WBEN (more than 10 joint projects since 2013).

The representative of **PTE** presented the specifics of cooperation between the national communities of Poland and Ukraine, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia. One of her insights is that cooperation does not have to be coordinated from a centre (as in the case of WBEN, RB's note) but that virtually every member has the role of a centre in a multi-central organization of cooperation.

The Representative of **SiES** thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and asked them if they could consider the WBEN6 Initiative on cooperation between national evaluation CSOs with their comments or decide on possible support (forthcoming in February/March 2025).

The representative **AIV** concluded the meeting by calling on NESE members to strengthen exchanges between interested national evaluation communities at all levels of NESE's operations.

The minutes prepared by:	Bojan Radej, SiES
Verification:	Nicola Orlando, AIV
Date:	1. December 2024

Disseminated to:

- Participants
- WBEN Coordination
- IOCE Chairman
- NESE Members
- Slovenian Evaluation Society