How to organise remote meetings and webinars?

A webinar can be a powerful training and outreach tool, but the decision to use a particular tool should be based on your goals and the needs of your audience.

When determining whether a webinar is the best medium for your needs, consider:

Your audience

The subject matter

The time you'll need to cover your topic. Most online audiences tend to lose interest after about two hours (or less!)

!

While webinars work well for some topics, they are not suited to every training need

1 Select your speakers and support team

ORGANISER OR FACILITATOR

Responsible for developing the webinar topic, locating a speaker, setting up the registration, and communicating with participants before and after the webinar. During the webinar, the organiser usually participates by introducing presenters, interviewing the experts, moderating audience questions, and encouraging audience participation.

PRESENTER(S)

Concentrating their efforts on preparing and delivering their presentation.

ASSISTANTS

Can help by answering questions that the organiser and the presenter don't have time for, particularly on technical and logistical questions. You should consider asking for help if: you or your audience is unfamiliar with webinars and webinar tools; you plan to play a large role in the conversation (either as an interviewer or a participant); or you expect a large audience.

2 Determine the format of your webinar

✓ ✗

ONE SPEAKER

A single presenter speaks, demonstrates, and answers questions from the audience.

Fewer people to coordinate and train on how to use the webinar tool

Lack of variety in voices and perspectives

INTERVIEW STYLE

Interviewer asks a set of predetermined questions.

More engaging + Encourage the audience to ask question

More people to schedule, train, and coordinate

MODERATED PANNEL DISCUSSION

Multiple people on the line at the same time, with a moderator facilitating the discussion.

Offers a variety of voices and perspectives

More people to schedule, train, and coordinate + Challenging to keep panellists from talking over each other

INTERACTIVE

Audience members participate fully via instructor-led exercises and facilitated conversations.

If done well, participants receive a deeper understanding of the topic because they're fully engaged in the dialogue and the exercises

Can only accommodate a small group + Requires a very skilled, experienced facilitator

3 Plan the visuals

Because webinars rely on audio and visuals to get the message across, both should be engaging. Plain slides with a lot of text don't work very well.

Some slides you may wish to include are:

An introductory slide reminding your audience how to log in to the audio and what time the webinar will begin.

A slide introducing each presenter, including job title, organisation, and a photograph if available.

A quick overview of the webinar agenda and the topics to be covered.

4 Pick a tool

There are many tools that can be used for webinar or remote sessions, but the **following aspects need to be considered** when deciding which tool to use:

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL THE WEBINAR TOOL ACCOMMODATE?

WHICH FEATURES WILL YOU NEED?

See tools here

5 Create an agenda

Take time to prepare a well-structured agenda for the session. **Discuss it with the presenter/s and key participants** that will intervene in the session. For that, hold a **conference call** with the presenter/s.

What has to be determined in the call?

What questions you'll ask and **the order** in which the speakers will present.

Deadlines for materials. Ask presenters to send you slides or other visuals at least two to three days before the practice session so you have time to proofread and finalise the presentation.

An agenda with the order of the speakers and the **duration of each segment**.

6 Schedule a practice session with key persons

At least one 30-60 min run-through

INTRODUCE THE WEBINAR TOOL AND ITS FEATURES
Discuss how to use the tool and what features are available to the presenters. Also make sure everyone knows whom they should turn to if they have questions or problems during the webinar — and how they can reach them.

AN EQUIPMENT CHECK
Ensure that all of your presenters' operating systems, browsers, headsets, and other equipment are compatible with the web conferencing tool.

REVIEW THE AGENDA AND VISUALS
Go over the agenda and move through the presentation to ensure that slides are in the right order and that speakers know where they come in.

7 Communication activities

Start sending out information **two to three weeks before the event** to engage the audience.

What type of information should be included?

An engaging, succinct **description** of the event, including the main topic for discussion

An **outlined agenda** (if the final version is not ready)

An overview of the **type of webinar** (presenter/s, interview, level of interaction)

Technical requirements needed to attend the webinar (headset, browser, install software in advance, etc.)

A **registration form** where participants can sign up for the webinar (if the event is invitation-only)

Clear **instructions on how to join** the meeting and the options they can use as participants (join break-out rooms, raise hands to ask questions or intervene, keep microphone/camera off, etc.)

Download the CHECKLIST to plan your webinar!

www.rural-interfaces.eu