



A **session** is a 90-minute block of time during which discussion centers on a particular topic. Sessions may utilize a variety of formats.

- **Session formats**

- **Debate:** A debate takes place between two or more opponents who are experts in their fields as well as being entertaining presenters. The debate topic is clearly defined in terms of a question, with one side presenting the affirmative case and the other the negative case. Debates are usually invitation-only, but may also be open.
- **Caravan:** Each of 6 speakers is assigned a station consisting of a pinboard (for the presenter to post 4 to 8 A3 slides) and chairs arranged around the pinboard in a semicircle. Session participants are organized into six groups and will have the opportunity to visit four out of the six stations in turn. Each presenter repeats his/her presentations four times, to four different groups of attendees, until attendees have visited four stations. Caravan sessions are open or by invitation only.
- **Fishbowl:** Four to five chairs are arranged in an inner circle. This is the fishbowl. The remaining chairs are arranged in concentric circles outside the fishbowl. A few participants are selected to fill the fishbowl, while the rest of the group sit on the chairs outside the fishbowl. In an open fishbowl, one chair is left empty. Any member of the audience can, at any time, occupy the empty chair and join the fishbowl. When this happens, an existing member of the fishbowl must voluntarily leave the fishbowl and free a chair. The discussion continues with participants frequently entering and leaving the fishbowl. When the session is over, the moderator summarizes the discussion. Fishbowls are closed to abstracts.
- **Game/Gaming:** Plan and play a strategy game where player have to navigate real-life policies and goals affecting impact assessment professionals. This activity-based session format is highly interactive and encourages communication, networking, and team building. A gaming session is usually closed to abstracts.
- **Panel discussion:** In a panel, the chair introduces each speaker and puts each talk in perspective. Each speaker gives a brief (5 minute) prepared presentation, usually presenting a different view or experience on the topic, followed by discussion between the speakers and then questions from the audience facilitated by the chair. Panels are open or by invitation only.
- **Paper session:** In a paper session, authors orally present the findings of a prepared paper or project. A chaired paper session typically allows 4-5 presentations of 15-20 minutes each, including time for specific questions. Ideally, the chair allocates time for general questions and then open discussion following the presentations. Paper sessions can be open or by invitation only.

- **Pecha Kucha** is a presentation methodology in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each (six minutes and 40 seconds in total). This format allows for concise and fast presentations and a lot of discussion time. Pecha Kucha sessions are open or by invitation only.
- **Solution room:** Designed to provide peer-supported advice on individuals' most pressing problems, each speaker presents a challenge they are facing. Participants then divide into small groups of 8-10 individuals. Each speaker presents their problem to a small group and has it brainstormed by the group in 7-minute cycles. At the end of a cycle, the participants move on to the next table and the speaker talks to a different group. Groups share tables with paper that they can write on to gather solutions to the problems. Solution rooms are open or by invitation.
- **Theme forum:** Smaller than plenaries and larger than concurrent sessions, theme forums include "cut-above" presentations and discussions which address the conference theme, bring together on a particular topic the various aspects of impact assessment, and examine how those aspects apply to different sectors and issues. Theme forums are intended to be cross-cutting and can be any format listed here. Final selection of theme forums is a competitive process. The theme forums accepted and listed in the preliminary program are considered tentative and will not be confirmed for the final program until a final review based on additional criteria. Theme forums are open or by invitation.
- **Workshop:** In a workshop, the topic is specific and seeks to resolve a defined problem. A workshop may or may not have formal presentations, but often includes a combination of 2-3 short paper presentations and active discussion. Workshops can be open or by invitation.
- **World Café:** The World Café format is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. The process begins with the first of two or more rounds of discussion for groups of 8-10 seated around a table. Each round is prefaced with a question. At the end of each 15-20-minute round, each member of the group moves to a different table. They may or may not choose to leave one person as the "table host" for the next round, who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round. Once all rounds have been completed, key points from each table are presented to the whole group for a final collective discussion. World Cafés may be open, open by invitation, or closed, depending on how the chair wants to hold the session.
- **Open, closed, and by invitation only: what does it mean?**
 - **Open:** Anyone is welcome to submit an abstract to present or speak.
 - **By invitation only:** Only individuals invited by the session chair may submit an abstract to the session.
 - **Closed:** The session does not accept abstracts.