



International Association
for Impact Assessment

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. By invitation only.
- **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 and require a minimum of 4 registered presenters.
- **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. The chair allocates time for general questions and then open discussion following the presentations. Paper sessions can be open or by invitation only and require a minimum of 4 registered presenters.
- **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 and require a minimum of 4 registered presenters.
- **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 or flips charts that they can write on to gather solutions to the problems. Solution rooms are open or by invitation only and require a minimum of 4 registered speakers.
- **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, by invitation, or closed.

- **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 crafted for the specific context and desired purpose of the session. 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 are typically closed.
- **Other:** if you have an idea for a session that does not fit any of the standard formats, please select “Other” and briefly describe your idea.

Open, closed, and invitation only: what does it mean?

- **Open:** This means that anyone can submit an abstract or speaker summary to the session. These persons are listed in the final program.
- **Invitation Only:** This means that only individuals specifically identified and invited by you, the session chair, are allowed to submit an abstract or speaker summary to the session.

Your invited speakers are required to submit abstracts or speaker summaries by the abstract submission deadline and are subject to the one-per-person rule; i.e., they may not be committed to more than one session. Persons who appear in your session plan (to be prepared at a later date) who did not submit abstracts and/or who are not registered will not be included in the final program. Only abstracts submitted online, by the submission deadline, will be accepted. These persons are listed in the final program.

- **Closed:** This means that no one can submit an abstract to the session. Some sessions are not conducive to presentations or formal speakers; therefore, abstracts are not appropriate and only the session chair is listed on the program. Examples: A workshop or gaming session with only the chair as a facilitator.

Minimum number of presenters in a session

- If you have an Open or Invitation-Only session, the following session types must have a minimum of 4 *registered* presenters in them in order to go forward into the final program: Paper, Panel, Pecha Kucha, and Solution Room.