Facilitating webinars to share knowledge
Using virtual platforms for learning and engagement

MARGOT STEENBERGEN (RED CROSS RED CRESCENT CLIMATE CENTRE)

In brief

Purpose of a Webinar
A combination of 'web' and 'seminar', a Webinar is an online presentation, lecture or workshop.

When to use
To 1) convene a large number of people; 2) exchange knowledge and experience in a large group; or 3) elicit feedback on a particular approach, challenge or opportunity. Note: the BRACED licence allows us up to 100 participants.

Who can participate?
Anyone with access to a computer or smart device that meets the minimum system requirements.*

How long does the process take?
As long or as short as you want; BRACED Webinars typically last an hour.

* Our current system is Adobe Connect. When in doubt, check their website for the latest information on system requirements.

Description

'I tuned into your webinar this morning on adaptive management for complex problems. It was fascinating… I am super keen to learn about applications in development communities'
Webinar participant.

An interactive approach to showcase experiences and learn from peers

See: www.braced.org/discussions for upcoming as well as past Webinars.

Webinars can be a great tool for organising online meetings. Some advantages are as follows:

- It is an online medium, so it is convenient and cheap for both presenters and participants: no one has to travel to get to the meeting.
- No special equipment is needed.
- It can be recorded, so people can view it later if they cannot attend.
- Invitations and registration forms are simple for participants to fill in online.

Why is every meeting not a webinar? Some things to keep in mind:

- Internet speed must be adequate to allow participants to view the presentation without distortion or lag time. This can be a limiting factor for field staff with unreliable internet connections.
- Audio voiceover may be limited to the presenter.
- Audience environment may be subject to interruptions or disruptions such as side conversations, having to do other work at the same time, etc.

All in all, a Webinar offers *great opportunities for both participants and presenters.* However, unless they are carefully planned, the audience may lose interest or get distracted and disengage. So it is important to **plan and prepare.**

Example outline of a tried and tested one-hour webinar

1. Starting screen: Participants sign in at different times and can introduce themselves in the chat box and share their expectations in a poll; see 'feature in the spotlight' (30 minutes before the Webinar).

2. Introduction: The host introduces the speakers and shares practical data, such as on the session being recorded, the duration and the way for the audience to interact (<5 minutes).

3. Presentation: Speakers present their topic and start live streaming by connecting the video camera. Participants share their questions or comments in a chat box. Recommended elements of thepresentation:

> **a. Overview:** Present lay-out of the webinar (<5 minutes)
> **b. Content part 1** (15–20 minutes)
> **c. Interaction:** Address questions of the participants and/or introduce a poll to receive instant feedback; see 'feature in the spotlight' (5–10 minutes)
> **d. Content part 2** (15–20 minutes)
> **e. Interaction:** Same as before but this can be opened up for further discussion (10–15 minutes)

Tip! Keep your slide show short, simple and sweet!

4. Conclusion:

> **a. Wrap up:** Host summarises the most interesting elements of the presentation and discussion (5 minutes)
> **b. End poll** evaluating the Webinar
> **c. Closing:** Host thanks the participants and the presenters

Features

Webinars are very flexible and offer many features, including:

- Presentations, whiteboards with writing and drawing tools, chat boxes, audio and video conferencing and meeting recording.
- User management, administration and reporting. You can see participation statistics such as user activity from visiting the event page.

Feature in the spotlight

- **Polling.** Polls are useful during a meeting if you want instant feedback on what is being presented. There are three types of poll questions: short answer, multiple choice (single answer) and multiple answer. With any of the Poll pods in Connect you can share the results with the audience either during the poll or after, which can also serve to pique the attendees' interest.
- Those who feel confident can **play** with the medium. Pablo Suarez from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre uses a digital version of Snap! in this webinar. The idea is simple: engage your audience by asking them to choose a number they think is most likely to be chosen by others. Reflect on the process and choices and in the second round ask the audience a question related to the content of

the Webinar. An example is, *'What is a barrier to effective climate change adaptation? Type one word you think others will most likely choose.'* Participants who have chosen a word that others also choose gain a snap point. After this question you can again reflect on the process and the responses.

'It was my first experience of sharing thoughts in that kind of learning platform and I found it very interesting… The feedback and questions that came out of participants were very useful' Mulugeta Worku, Webinar presenter working for an Implementing Parnter, Christian Aid

Screenshot from BRACED Webinar – 'Innovative methods for communicating climate information'