COMMUNICATING CCUS: A guide to running effective webinars

Webinars are a great tool for communication and dissemination of scientific project updates, milestones and deliverables; both internally and externally. In an interconnected, globalised world, webinars also allow for far-reaching networking allowing stakeholders to join from all over the world.

This briefing provides some guidance on planning, organising and running webinars to connect with your target audiences and deliver informative, engaging and interactive webinars.

Planning ● Rehearsing ● Delivery ● Follow-up

PLANNING:

First steps

- Decide on the purpose of your webinar and the information you want to convey; also identify your target audiences
- Define title, programme, duration and preferred event chair and speakers
- Set a date & time (ideally, allow 6-8 weeks for organising and publicising)
- Gather speaker biographies and include photos, if possible
- Create the event on your chosen platform (GoToWebinar, Zoom, Teams, etc.) to generate registration link for use in email invites and on web pages
- Create the event in the relevant section of your website and include the registration link

Publicising

- Relevant stakeholder mailing lists
- Targeted emails to network/colleagues/partners inviting them to share
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)[*]

Top tip: publicising the event by inviting people to visit your website for more details and registration will generate traffic to your site.

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[*] For more information and tips see the Stakeholder Toolbox - Comms Guide

REHEARSING:

It is useful to do one or two Dry Runs a few days before the webinar. The purpose of this is to allow presenters to familiarise themselves with the platform and provide an opportunity to:

- Test audio and video quality, and practise slide progression
- Go through any relevant housekeeping
- Practise Q&A and any other attendee engagement (videos, live polls, etc)

Top tip: for best results, combine all presentation slides into a single slide pack and run them from a single source. This allows for smooth transitions between talks and minimises the potential for technical issues.

DELIVERY:

With effective planning and rehearsing, delivery should be professional and seamless. It is good practice to have organisers, event chair and speakers join 30 min before the event is due to start to check that everything is working well or troubleshoot any technical issues.

FOLLOW-UP:

The following actions will help you engage further with your audience after the event and gauge its success:

- Post-event survey: most webinar platforms have a facility for a post-event survey, this is a great way to gather feedback and improve for future events
- 'Thank you' email to participants, with an invitation to watch the recording and find out more about the project
- 'Sorry we missed you' email to absentees with an invitation to watch the recording and find out more about the project