



**VIRTUAL CLIMATE SUMMIT  
CLIMATE:RED**

9-10 Sept

**For everyone, everywhere**

# Session Hosts Handbook

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**climate:red**

# Welcome!

The Red Cross and Red Crescent will be running [Climate:Red](#), an entirely virtual and global climate change summit on **9 – 10 September 2020**. Our network of 192 National Societies, 165,000 local branches and 14 million volunteers, have agreed that climate change is a critical challenge facing us. We are committed to massively scale up our collective action and integrate climate across all areas of our work. By bringing together people from all around the world without any flights, Climate:Red creates a truly global platform to debate, learn from each other and inspire climate action.

We are grateful for your contribution to the summit by hosting a session. This handbook will guide and support you in planning and designing your session.

Your role as a session host is invaluable - and so is your role as a participant, so we also encourage you to join other sessions!

What you will find in the handbook:

- A session host checklist with essential dates
- A planning guide to get you started
- A session design guide
- Tips for effective facilitation and session planning
- A list of resources.

**We will be updating this handbook. Do check back for more information. Please feel free to leave a comment with a question.**

# Session Host Checklist

## Have you:

- Checked your title, abstract, and organisation and edited/modified them by August 21st in the event Host Access Area <<https://go.climate.red/sessions>>?
- Submitted the link to your session and any other links by 28th August?
- [Planned your session?](#)
- [Designed your session?](#)
- Considered your participants privacy and safety?
- Assigned a host and a tech moderator for your session?
- Held a practice run of your session in your chosen platform with any panellists or contributors?
- Timed and tested any presentations you will be using?
- Reviewed the Climate Red:Summit schedule, identify other sessions you want to attend.
- Contacted us to let us know if you are providing live interpretation?
- Promoted your session through your channels using #ClimateRedSummit and submitted a promo video for the Climate:Red channels by 28th August (optional)?

## Planning your virtual session

### The first step in planning your session is to articulate:

- What you want to accomplish during your session
- What participants will gain by attending your session

**Create a title** reflecting what you want to accomplish. An interesting title is critical for the summit participants to decide if they're going to join your session.

Then **write a brief description** explaining what will happen in the session along with what your participants will gain from attending. Also mention any outputs you hope to create during the session (e.g., a best practice list, a plan of action, etc.).

Note: You can not change session titles and descriptions after August 21st.

## Tracks, Themes & Types

### Sessions at the Summit have:

- **Tracks** are your session objectives and are determined by the summit organisers.
- **Themes** are the content and topics of your session. When you proposed your session, you were allowed to choose up to three themes. You can change the themes on your session until August 21st.
- **Types** are how you want to organize your session. You should pick and choose one session type that suits your session the best.

## Privacy, Safety and Consent During Your Session

Please see our community participation guidelines.

### Some best practices

- **Do not share your session link with** anyone but the Climate:Red Summit organisers. Distributing your link means it's more likely that you will get uninvited guests.

- At the beginning of the session, please **let your participants know your plan to use outputs based on their contributions**. Also, remind them at the end.
- **Don't make a recording of your session**. If you do need to make a recording, you should give the participants a warning that you are recording, an explanation on how you will use the recording, and an opportunity to log out of the session before you start. A sample explanation might be:

We will only use the recording for internal purposes. However, if we did want to share any part of it publicly, we would ask your permission before we do.

- **Don't collect participants' contact details**. There are legal implications in collecting contact details and storing them safely. **Instead, offer your contact details and encourage your participants to contact you.**

## Promoting your session

The Climate:Red summit encourages you to promote your sessions through your networks and channels to ensure strong attendance. For social media, please use #ClimateRed, for example, like this:

Climate change affects everyone everywhere. I'm hosting a session [title or topic here] in the global, virtual #ClimateRed Summit on 9 and 10 September, organised by the Red Cross Red Crescent network. Join us and register here: <https://climate.red/atrium> #ClimateRed

We will provide more resources for social media and digital promotion closer to the event. You also have the opportunity to promote your sessions on the Climate:Red channels through video. To enter a video, please read the instructions here <<https://future-rcrc.com/selfie-video-brief-for-hosts-and-speakers/>>, record your video and send it to [solferino.academy@ifrc.org](mailto:solferino.academy@ifrc.org) by 28th August.

## Designing your virtual session

Designing a session is not just creating an agenda, but creating a meaningful experience for your participants.

### Step 1: Review these session design principles.

Before you design your session, please consider these principles. We hope that they will inspire you to create an engaging and interactive session at the Climate:Red.

- **Design to reach your objectives:** It is important to design the session with clear learning goals in mind. Logical sequencing of activities and good flow are crucial already when designing.
- **Design for your audience:** From the start of the planning, focus on content: what would this audience find engaging/relevant. Keep digital capacity in mind. A well-designed session shows respect for its participants, and the time and engagement they are giving to it.
- **Design to deliver effective facilitation:** Creating an online environment that makes participants feel safe and heard. Effective facilitation also means being familiar with the technology – and being able to support participants in using the technology without frustration.
- **Design for flexibility:** Facilitating virtual meetings always requires flexibility and requires a good team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to address potential challenges. Spaces designed with shared principles, open leadership, and opportunities to collaborate will work best.
- **Design for learning effectively from success and failure:** Reflection during your session and documenting lessons learnt are crucial. These reflections can provide participants with an opportunity to make recommendations for future learning events.
- **Design to maximize interaction and engagement:** Consider the size of the group. Some activities might be more appropriate to smaller / more substantial groups.

Taking turns and interactive activities keep participants engaged and can generate enthusiasm for the topic.

- **Design to enable creativity:** Engaging sessions will include elements of surprise and invite participants to take small risks during it. Carefully crafted processes allow creativity and contribute towards an inspiring event. Of course, it is essential to provide an opt-out version (as in face to face meetings) to allow for a safe space.
- **Design for a sense of community:** engaging virtually can often make participants feel removed and disconnected. The design of the session should, therefore, consider how to create a sense of community in the process. Bringing personal or physical aspects of the meeting can help.

## Step 2 - Choose your session type.

Review the session types shown on the [Climate:Red website](#).

## Step 3 - Consider Your Session Format

There are many ways to design a session that's participatory, inclusive, and productive. Your topic and your affinities will determine your session format.

If you're looking for a starting point for an interactive workshop, consider this suggested session structure informed by scientific research on how individuals learn. This can be adopted for any topic.

- **Very** briefly describe your session topic and goals, and do intros with the group.
- Begin with an **activity** that introduces the session topic in a way that invites participants to share their perspective and experience in small groups.
- Then convene to a large group and get participants to reflect on the experience in a **discussion**. Ask questions to help participants reflect on the experience. What surprised you

about the activity? What did you discover? What did you see or hear from others in the group that stuck with you?

- Then provide your **input**, share your own experience, learnings, and expertise on the topic along with additional information, research or anything else that might be relevant to the participant.
- Then provide an opportunity for **deepening** with a small group activity that allows participants to practice skills, processes and methods.
- Wrap up the session by **synthesising**, summarising key points and outcomes and ask: what new ideas were raised in the session? What did participants get out of the session? Allow for a short question and answer time.

For more details on this session format, see FabRiders' [tips for designing an effective workshop session](#).

## Step 4 - Make collaborative tools and technology choices.

After you have a clear sense of what will happen in your session and what you want your participants to do, choose [the tools](#) and [technologies](#) you will use.

Please remember you are responsible for hosting your session (for example in Zoom or MSTeams) and you will need your account to do this. You must provide us with a meeting link to your session along with any other links to online tools you will use - we have extended the deadline for submitting your session links to 28th August.

## Step 5 - Consider these effective facilitation techniques.

The below section provides tips to create a smooth experience for participants.

### Before you run your session:

- **Prepare your session** with the same amount of care that you would for a live meeting.
- **Test, test, test!** We recommend testing your audio and visuals in the platform that you will be using. Also, it is a good idea to check any collaborative document you might use and double-check that any links you want to share with your participants are the right links and that they have the appropriate editing rights. If you have a team of facilitators, make sure everyone knows what will happen.
- **Pre-record relevant parts.** If you are going to run a presentation and you are not sure that your bandwidth is enough for your audio and video to come through clearly, or maybe you are nervous about managing participants. A good idea would be to pre-record certain parts of your session.
- **Identify roles and responsibilities.** Don't underestimate the number of people it takes to support a meeting. Have a strong team with clear roles and responsibilities to support the sessions. Some roles to consider for running your session at the summit.
- Technical host (s)
  - designs, participates and coordinates technology and content with the team
  - handles breakout room set up, breakout room Q & A
  - handles interpretation
  - assigns 'cohost' duties

- Facilitator Host (s) (See more on the Facilitator Role)
  - designs, participates and coordinates technology and content with the team
  - runs the public part of the meeting (front of house)
  - guides a group process
  - keeps the event flowing and positive
  - fosters engagement
  - ensures outcomes or process are captured
- Community manager/engagement (s)
  - moderates people – shut video, verify users, kicks out potential troublemakers
  - coordinates with business owners on potential problematic participants
  - coordinates questions
  - Shares outreach and announcements for the event across networks
  - provides community engagement training
  - coordinates the back of the house (WhatsApp) and the front of house communications
  - answers questions in the chat
  - provides the collaborative documentation
  - coordinates technical and community teams with facilitators
  - manages waiting room
- Moderators
  - provides extra support for technology and community teams
  - cohost
  - can advise if there are potential problem makers

For more on roles see: [“What we’ve learned at the Solferino Academy about running virtual meetings”](#))

## During the session

- **Provide clear technical support.** If people haven't used the platform before, or if you don't know if they know how to use it, you can use a few minutes at the start with a mini-tutorial. Images can be beneficial.
- **Set the ground rules.** What rules should participants follow in the session? How will questions be handled? How will you ensure that people respect each others' ideas?
- **Set the scene.** Run through the objectives and agenda early on. Make sure that everyone understands their role, and what the group is seeking to achieve. Establish clear goals and expectations.
- Monitor **the agenda, and summarise.** It is a host/facilitators' role to keep in control of the agenda and the time. It is nice to check in to tell people what they've achieved so far and what's next.
- **Make all participants feel welcome and heard.** You can start by asking people to introduce themselves in a chatbox, polls, or draw them in with a short activity.
- **Create a friendly, positive atmosphere** by using a positive tone of voice, be genuinely interested in your participants and not getting frustrated if something goes wrong.
- **Keep up the momentum and energy.** Even if you have designed a highly engaging process, there may be a moment where the energy is low. Take a break, or do a quick energizing activity.
- **Listen actively,** remain interested and engage in what is going on. To guide a process, be clear on how you are progressing towards objectives.
- **Keep an eye on the time.** Try to be flexible and balance the need for participation with the need to keep things running efficiently.
- **Bring a session to closure.** End the session by going back to the original objective and explain how it was achieved. Also, highlights can be mentioned here, as well as possible next steps.

## Create an inclusive and safe space

- **Maintain a safe space** - see also [video](#). If you are very clear about your objective, and you know who your audience is, you can

facilitate your session in a way that is appropriate for your audience to reach the goal. Use appropriate language to suggest actions, for example: “I invite you to turn on your cameras.” rather than telling people: “now you must turn on your cameras.” Leave participants with the freedom to opt-in and out of certain things. For more tips, [here is a checklist](#) to create an inclusive and safe meeting.

- **Keep it simple!** If you notice that people are not joining in, it may be that the instructions were not clear yet. Rather than moving on too quickly to stick to your schedule, take your time to ensure people know how to join in.
- **Turn on webcams if** bandwidth allows. If in real life, you see people slumping, yawning, checking their emails, you know it’s time to shake things up. If people can see each other, they will feel more connected. Again, let people opt-out of this if this is not appropriate for them.
- **Ensure outcomes or process are captured.** Make sure that you keep an accurate record of what’s going on. A great way to engage participants AND take notes is “[collaborative note-taking](#)”. After the event, follow up to ensure that outstanding actions and issues progressed to a successful conclusion.

**And when things go wrong: stay calm, cool and collected.** If you don’t get stressed, your participants won’t get stressed. Remember, even with all the testing in the world: Things. Will. Go. Wrong. And that is normal! When we have a virtual session, there are also sorts of factors you can not control: bandwidth, the devices participants are using that, etc. Here are a few things that might go wrong, and some tips about how to deal with them.

1. Help! I lost my host. You may be a session’s co-host and all of a sudden, the primary host who had a presentation to share drops off the meeting. It is always advisable to have more than one person who has all the materials (e.g. presentations) and fully understands the process. If one person drops out, the other person should be able to take over reasonably seamlessly.
2. I planned 3 five minute presentations and a discussion, but my presenters all took 15 minutes. It is excellent if you can be very clear on expectations of any presenter, co-host, or moderator. Agree with

presenters before that when they hear a particular sound (bell, you say “1 minute left”, etc.) - they know they have one minute left.

3. That whiteboard feature looked so simple, but in my session, everyone wrote words on top of each other, and we could not read anything. Here, we'd like to go back to Test, test, test! Especially if you are not very familiar with a specific technology, try it out first with a safe audience, perhaps your family members or friends. In the whiteboard feature, for example, it is easy for a host to move words written by someone else around, but you may not know this if you have not tried it.

## Additional Resources

Further reading to help you in planning your session.

- [Virtually Amazing Design Principles](#)
- [FabRiders' tips for designing an effective workshop session](#)
- [Virtually Amazing website with tools](#) (will be populated much more in next 4 weeks)
- [Climate Centre Games site](#)
- [Doctor Patient Clinic](#)
- [Liberating Structures](#)



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