



INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION NETWORK

Chapter 4

Webinar Planning Guide

November 2025 - Update

Planning, Promoting, and Executing a Successful Webinar

Key components to executing a webinar include arranging the logistics and developing a plan that will help you to meet your deadlines and increase your chances for a successful event. A webinar can generate interesting discussions and reinforce the working group’s efforts. However, running a webinar can be challenging. This guide shares tools and best practices and samples for planning and executing a webinar.

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PROGRAM PLANNING

1. Select a Topic

Solicit ideas from members and NGAs on a working group call, by email, and at the annual conference, during a working group breakout session.

Include in workshop evaluation forms a question soliciting ideas for topics for working group programs.

Identify issues arising out of the group's work product.

Read the trade press for new cases, hot topics, or issues being discussed in member jurisdictions.

2. Identify the Program's Objectives

Once a topic is selected, consider the objective of the program. Is it to:

- Promote or explain the group's work product;
- Share experience;
- Teach, deepen understanding of particular issues;
- Promote convergence on substance and/or procedure?

Discuss with the moderator and speakers *inter alia*: What is the panel's "take away" or message? What practical advice do you want to convey?

3. Choose an Engaging Format

In light of the program's objectives, consider different formats to present the information and convey the message in an interesting and lively way. Examples include:

- Case studies and practical examples
- Discussion of recent empirical research
- Hot topics
- Debate propositions / Controversial statements
- Hypotheticals - Mock hearing, mock meeting, some sort of role play
- Demonstrations
- Interview
- Issue spotting/problem solving
- Interactive panel discussions/moderated Q&A
- (Brief) initial presentation(s) followed by panel reaction and/or discussion
- Practical pointers/top 10 lists

Assess whether recording the webinar is appropriate given its topics and objectives. If a recording is planned, ensure that this information is communicated during the speaker selection process, as it may influence agencies' choice of speakers.

AI features for transcription, summarization, and real-time assistance are becoming increasingly common in videoconferencing platforms. However, their usefulness and implications within the ICN context are to be assessed. Until such an assessment is completed and a decision is taken by the ICN, the use of AI tools during webinars (including built-in platform features) is not permitted. Co-chairs are therefore asked to ensure that all such tools are disabled for their sessions and that participants are informed accordingly.

Most ICN webinars are 60 to 90 minutes long – with a preference for at least 75 minutes, to allow time for questions. Often the format drives how time is allocated among the speakers and/or segments of the program. For example, if the program will debate three propositions, decide how much time will be allocated for each proposition and how much time each side will have to make initial presentations and any rebuttal.

4. Leave time for Audience Q&A

With any format, build in time for questions from participants.

Some programs wait until the end for Q&A. Others include a few shorter breaks for questions at appropriate times in the program. Building in some extra time to the scenario will keep the program from falling behind or running over.

If there are no questions at first, the moderator should be prepared to ask a question or two while participants form their own questions. The moderator or organizers could ask each speaker to provide in advance one or two follow up questions for this purpose (or for any panel discussions). Another option is to invite in advance a member or NGA to start off the Q&A session.

If using a platform that provides a chat or Q&A function, inform participants at the start of the program (and again before any Q&A periods) of this option to pose questions. It may be necessary to repeat audience questions for others (who may not have seen or heard the question) and/or to designate a speaker to respond.

WGs might consider ways to interact with the audience – such as using real time polling or other tools.

5. Choose a Strong Moderator & Dynamic Speakers

Working Groups should choose moderators with the experience and willingness to play a key role in the organization of the session and should brief the moderators accordingly.

There are several ways to identify potential speakers, including:

- On a working group call, ask for expressions of interest to participate either on the call or in a follow up email to the co-chairs.
- Circulate an email to working group members and NGAs asking for expressions of interest or speaker recommendations. In the email, include a description of the webinar and invite potential speakers to indicate their area(s) of interest or expertise on the topic and how they might contribute to the discussion.
- Ask the moderator for suggestions.
- Search the internet to see who has written or given a speech on the program topic.
- Search the trade press for jurisdictions that have brought relevant cases.

Selecting speakers:

When inviting ICN members to propose speakers, ensure that the call for expressions of interest explicitly states that the event is planned to be recorded. This information is important, as it may influence agencies' internal processes for selecting their speakers.

Avoid having too many speakers. The appropriate number of speakers will depend on the format of the program, but in general, a program should have no more than one moderator and four speakers.

Check the background of the speakers on the field to avoid overlapping presentations and to ensure diversity of viewpoint or approaches, including non-governmental advisors and stages of development. Consider also geographic and gender diversity when selecting speakers.

When selecting NGAs, clear the nomination with the NGAs home jurisdictions. The ICN member also may have ideas for NGA speakers from their jurisdiction.

Consider adding to the recruitment email a request for a short (2-4 sentences) bio/professional background of the speakers and the moderator and the substance of their contribution.

Example: If you are interested in being a speaker for the webinar (or would like to nominate an NGA speaker from your jurisdiction), please email the WG co-chairs with a short summary of your proposed contributions to the webinar – no later than [date]. Please note, we strive to select speakers with expertise in the subject and consider gender, geographic, and viewpoint diversity.

PANEL PREPARATION

6. Hold a Preparatory Call

Once the moderator is selected, involve the moderator in webinar planning. The moderator should play an active role in the preparations of the content, while the co-chairs typically play an advising role and assist in the logistical part of the program.

Hold at least one preparatory call together with the moderator. Consider holding the prep call using the webinar platform so speakers can test out the webinar features before the program. Where a prep call is not feasible, speakers may correspond through email exchanges.

The purpose of the preparatory call is to 1) introduce the speakers to each other, 2) inform the speakers of the program's objective, 3) discuss/explain the format of the program, and 4) review logistics (see next section).

On the prep call (or shortly after in writing via email), ask each speaker to share their initial thoughts on the topic and a general outline of their proposed presentation/remarks. Doing so early on also can help inform the choice of formats for the program and the order of speakers.

As planning progresses, ask each speaker to circulate a few bullet points setting out the substance of their remarks and any slides, if they will be used.

The organizing Co-Chair or moderator should circulate a "scenario" for the program identifying what each speaker is responsible for covering, the order of speakers, and the designated time for each segment or issue and speaker (see **Annex 1** for sample scenarios from past programs).

7. Share Logistics

The organizing Co-Chair or moderator should send speakers an e-mail with the logistical information and any relevant information.

After discussion with the moderator, the following logistical information should be explained to the speakers on the initial preparatory call and/or by email:

- Provide the date, time, and length of the program.
- If slides will be used, circulate the ICN PowerPoint template and inform speakers that their slides will be sent to the members of the working group and NGAs (unless the program is for members only), and posted on the website. This approach should be followed even when using an online platform, as not all participants may be able to use such technologies or may prefer to use hard copies. If speakers object, their presentation cannot be sent and posted.
 - If slides are used – ask speakers not to use animations or compressed images to keep the file size as low as possible and to avoid complications when slides are converted to PDF.
 - Also, emphasize any time constraints, with a suggested 2-4 slides per speaker focusing on the substance/main message and avoiding any repetition.
 - Inform speakers of any deadlines – for circulating initial and final drafts of any PowerPoint slides or bullets on the substance of their remarks.

- Inform speakers whether the program will be recorded and whether the recording will be posted on the website.
 - o Ask for their written agreement to both posting slides and recording the program in a follow-up email. If one speaker objects, it should not be recorded and posted.
 - o Alternatively, if it is the practice or desire of the group to record programs, be sure to inform speakers when extending an invitation so they can take this information into account in deciding whether to participate in the program.
 - o In case of agency-only webinar, the recording could still be made (if all speakers agree with) but the file could be shared with ICN members upon request, without the need to post on the Web (alternative approach)
- Request speakers to dial in/log on at least 15-20 minutes before the program to address any connection issues (or last-minute preparations).

8. Running the Program

The organizing Co-chair or moderator should greet the audience at the start of the program and take care of housekeeping matters:

- Ensure that any AI tools integrated into the host videoconferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Teams) are disabled
- Instruct participants to unmute and mute their lines after speaking.
- Instruct participants not to use any AI tools to transcribe or summarize the webinar discussion.
- Remind speakers to announce next slide and periodically announce the slide number (even if using the webinar feature not everyone will be logged on).
- Inform participants that the compilation of the PowerPoint slides are available on the webinar webpage and/or homepage of the ICN website and provide the link.
- If the program will be recorded, announce it at the beginning of the call so that participants are aware, in case they would like to ask questions (and don't forget to hit the record button).
- Provide instructions on how to pose a question if using the chat or Q&A feature.

The organizing Co-chair or moderator should introduce the panel and topic briefly.

- Consider dispensing with lengthy speaker introductions – name and affiliation should be sufficient. If more is shared, such as relevant experience, consider whether introductions need to be made at the beginning of the program or whether they can be made before each person speaks.

Stick to the timetable. That said, receiving too many questions is rarely a problem. If participants are engaged and asking questions, consider extending the Q&A time. And, be sure to leave time for the moderator to offer some concluding remarks to reinforce the program's take away/message (hint: use speakers' bullet points).

Advertise any relevant work product, upcoming programs, or the status of current work and requests for any assistance or input at the end of the call.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

9. Scheduling

Check the [ICN calendar](#) for known conflicts.

Select one or more dates and confirm availability with the [Horizontal Coordinator](#). Once the date is confirmed, lock in the date with the Horizontal Coordinator and email the [Secretariat](#) to post notice of the program on the ICN calendar.

2pm CET is the usual start time for ICN programs. Consider offering some programs at an Asia-Pacific friendly time.

Be sure to take into account time differences in each region (especially at the beginning/end of summer, as some ICN members may be discouraged from participating depending on the choice of time).

If needed, ask the Secretariat to provide dial in numbers and a link for the webinar. Arrange a test webinar, if needed.

10. Publicity

Publicize the program to the working group via email and on working group calls and reach out to the Chair's office to promote the program in the Chair's Newsletter and any ICN social media accounts. Take the time to craft a title that will spark interest among the audience. Note: if the program is for agencies only, make sure emails are sent to the correct working group member list, and not to NGAs.

Circulate a save the date flyer with the title, time/date, and description of the program to all working group members and NGAs as soon as the date is confirmed with speakers and the Horizontal Coordinator. Send a copy to the Secretariat for circulation to all members and NGAs.

Follow up the Save the Date with a Promotional Flyer with the following information:

- Moderator & Speaker names
- Link to the online meeting, dial in numbers, and access code
- Description of the webinar

Be sure to include the description of the webinar in the body of the email, instead of the attached flyer, since not everyone opens attachments. See **Annex 2** for sample flyers.

Send a copy of the flyer to the Secretariat for circulation to all members and NGAs.

Send reminders the week before, the day before, or the day of the program. If using slides, compile all of the slides into a single document and circulate them in PDF format with this reminder.

Post notice of the program on the ICN website at the same time as circulating the save the date flyer. Be sure also that the program is listed on the ICN Events Calendar.

11. Disseminating Learning

Prepare a written summary of the webinar (1-2 pages) for posting on the web and a shorter version for publication in the ICN Newsletter. Consider inviting a member or NGA to draft this summary. Providing bullet points prepared by the speakers will facilitate drafting. Provide a draft for comment to the speakers prior to publication.

If the webinar was recorded, send a link to the recording to the ICN Secretariat for posting on the ICN website (along with slides, if not already posted). Circulate an email with the link to the program to all working group members and NGAs. Some programs limited to agencies only may not be appropriate for posting.

It might also be useful to replay the program as a regional teleseminar (e.g. Asian-Pacific Friendly teleseminar) to disseminate the contents of the program to a broader audience.

12. Soliciting Feedback

On the next scheduled working group call, invite comments (both positive and constructive) on the format, topic, number of speakers, etc. to take into account when planning the next program.

Consider circulating an evaluation form at the end of the webinar – use platforms' evaluation feature or ask participants to take a short survey at the close of the program using the platform's polling option.

TASKS AND TIMING

6 Weeks (or more) Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify topic and program objectives • Clear possible dates with the ICN Horizontal Coordinator
5 Weeks Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a moderator • Identify speakers • Send date and program title to Secretariat for inclusion on the ICN calendar • Circulate save the date flyer • Send a promotional piece to the ICN Chair for inclusion in the ICN Newsletter
4 Weeks Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Planning Call with moderator and speakers
3 Weeks Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate Promotional Flyer
2 Weeks Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second planning call, if needed • Compile bullet points and slides and circulate them among the panelists • Circulate panel scenario allocating time for each presentation/intervention and order of speakers
1 Week Prior to Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry run/final planning call, if needed • Consider housekeeping matters
Week of Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send reminder email/circulate slide deck
Week after Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate Evaluation form • Circulate any program write up • Send a Thank you note to speakers



Annexes:

1. Sample Scenarios
2. Promotional Flyers
3. Evaluation Form