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Frequently Asked Questions: Food Security COVID-19 Learning Event

Eligibility

Can non-USAID/BHA-funded projects or organizations submit to be presenters/facilitators?

While this learning event is designed with and for USAID/BHA-funded activities, we value the experiences of the broader food security community and will accept submissions from non-USAID/BHA-funded projects.

Can non-food security projects submit to be presenters/facilitators?

Yes, especially if the project has a downstream impact on community-level food security, and as long as the topic falls under one of the thematic areas.

Our project has ended. Can we still submit as a presenter/facilitator?

Yes. But since this event is focused on the food security community's adaptations, innovations, and lessons learned during the pandemic, your project should have been active long enough for there to be implications resulting from programming during the COVID-19 context.

Thematic Areas

Does our topic need to respond to the convening questions listed under each thematic area?

Not necessarily. The convening questions are there to give you a sense of the direction each thematic area could take, based on our focus group discussions with partners. However, we don't see the questions as all-encompassing and we welcome other topics that deepen our collective understanding of any of the thematic areas.

Is there a maximum number of thematic areas that we should contribute to?

None! You can submit for multiple thematic areas. You may also have a topic that addresses one or more thematic areas.

What if I have a topic that doesn't fall under any of the thematic areas but I know would be important to share with the broader community?

Before you fill out your submission form, let's discuss your topic. Send us an email at learningevent@fsnnetwork.org.

Session Formats

What is the difference between a Collaborative Session and a Virtual Tea Room session?

How do I know which one to submit for?

Collaborative Sessions have clear objectives and outputs, will involve the development of a facilitator's guide and an online collaboration space (on Google Docs, Miro, etc.). On the other hand, the sole objective of Virtual Tea Rooms is to provide a space for peers to chat informally and network. A Virtual Tea Room

guest will not need a facilitator's guide; a list of prompting questions to get the conversation going will be enough. Collaborative Sessions can be twice as long as Virtual Tea Rooms.

If you want to bring people together to brainstorm, problem-solve, co-create an output, we suggest you submit for a Collaborative Session. If you want to bring people together to get to know each other, submit to host a Virtual Tea Room.

Selection Process

Is there a selection criteria? If so, what is it?

For all session formats (except the Virtual Tea Rooms), we're looking for topics that:

- Advance the conversations under any of the four thematic areas
- Address a current gap in food security programming knowledge
- Explore learning that is adaptable and replicable in other contexts—the “so what?” factor

For Collaborative Sessions, we'd like to see bold proposals, especially when it comes to problem-solving for common enduring challenges. Clear session objectives, target audience to convene, and, where possible, clear outputs, will make a session submission stand out.

For Virtual Tea Rooms, we'll be looking at the entire pool of submissions to ensure the offered tea rooms over the course of four days cater to a wide range of emergency and non-emergency implementers.

In all, our intention is to provide space for the food security community to convene over topics that improve overall effectiveness of food security programming. We'd rather work with partners to refine the direction of a session rather than reject a submission.

Will it matter if I submit early?

With the exception of Virtual Tea Rooms, yes. We will review each submission independently (not relative to other submissions). If a submission meets the criteria, we take it forward and begin planning for that session. Once the agenda slots have been filled up and all four thematic areas are well-represented, we will no longer receive new submissions. We recommend submitting before the May 6 deadline!

When would we know if our submission was accepted?

You will hear from IDEAL within a week of your submission. Given our May 6th deadline for submissions, we expect to have communicated to all prospective presenters/facilitators by May 12th.

Can I submit a session in partnership with another presenter?

We encourage you to have a co-facilitator or co-host for Collaborative Sessions and Virtual Tea Rooms, respectively. If you are submitting for a Lightning Talk or Resource Reveal slot and know of another implementing partner submitting on a related topic for either format, you can mention it in your submission form. We'll do our best to string your talks/presentations together.

Is there a limit on the number of submissions from an organization or a project?

We suggest keeping it to a maximum of two submissions (not including the Virtual Tea Rooms) per activity or project. There is no limit per organization.

How will you ensure that there will be no overlapping topics in the line-up of presentations?

Our session planning process will be highly collaborative. Instead of accepting or rejecting session submissions because of overlap, IDEAL will work with session presenters of similar topics to see how their content can complement each other.

Language and Accessibility

Will presentations be available in multiple languages?

Our goal is to make this event accessible in English and French (and to some extent Spanish). This means that pre-recorded sessions will have subtitles in the two non-spoken languages and live sessions will have simultaneous interpretation, to the largest extent possible. If a presenter prefers to present in another language than English, we will arrange interpretation.

Will Virtual Tea Rooms be organized by language?

Yes! The Virtual Tea Room host(s) can choose in what language they would like to host the conversations. We will make this clear on the agenda.

Session Planning

In terms of session planning, what would be the time commitment for a presenter/facilitator?

It depends on the session format, since the materials for each one differ. Preparing for a resource reveal or virtual tea room would be the lightest lift. Both Collaborative Sessions and Lightning Talks would require more preparation than the other two formats. We also encourage session teams to have weekly check-ins during the planning period.

How do we gather an audience for our collaborative session?

As part of the learning event communications plan, IDEAL will advertise the Collaborative Sessions through the FSN Network newsletter and website. You, as the prospective Collaborative Session facilitator, may also invite participants/the target audience you hope to convene from your own network.

General Questions

The learning event is scheduled for June 21-24. Will there be sessions all day?

No. We are looking at a 6-hour time block: 5:30-11:30 am ET. In other time zones:

- Dakar: 9:30am-3:30 pm
- Nairobi: 12:30-6:30 pm
- Dhaka: 3:30-9:30 pm

This may still change, depending on the number of session submissions we receive. We will communicate the detailed agenda by the third week of May and allow participants to save the sessions they want to attend to their calendars.

Where will the sessions be hosted? Will we get multiple Zoom calendar invites?

We will be using a virtual event platform called Whova, where participants can create their personal agendas, visit virtual exhibit booths, send messages to other event participants and presenters/facilitators, among others. Whova embeds Zoom meetings/webinars so we will have the familiar Zoom interface for the actual sessions. Whova will also allow you to save specific sessions to your calendar so you won't miss them!

If I register, do I need to attend all the sessions?

Not at all. We understand that Zoom fatigue is real! You will have the freedom to select which sessions you want to save to your calendar and only attend those that are interesting and relevant to your role.

DISCLAIMER:

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