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**Program Committee** **Virtual Meeting Standard Operating Procedures**

*Last Updated: December 2020*

**Mission:**In the event of a virtual meeting, the Program Committee is responsible for determining the format of the virtual scientific program. All major changes to the program must be approved by the Executive Committee, including date changes, timing changes in session, and/or decisions with financial implications. The Program Committee should meet with key stakeholders to ensure there are no changes to the purpose or goals of the virtual event.

**Operations and Considerations:** The Program Committee must make the following considerations, with help from the Executive Office.

* **Dates:** Will the dates remain the same as the original in-person conference, or will the dates shift to accommodate weekends and holidays, i.e. Father’s Day?
* **Virtual Format:** Discussion is needed on the format of the virtual conference:
  + Live virtual sessions being broadcasted to a live audience, including interactive Q&A and opportunities to virtually network.
  + Pre-recorded sessions released to attendees prior to the live conference, and Q&A during the live conference based on viewing the pre-released, on demand sessions.
  + Offer “Second Run” live sessions to accommodate international attendees in different time zones.
  + Displaying a pre-recorded talk being broadcasted to live attendees, with a blend of highlighted live keynote sessions and pre-recorded content offered throughout an extended period of time.
  + A combination of any and all of the above.
* **Time Zones:** The time zone during which live content will run should be considered in the planning process. This is especially true for events expected to draw large numbers of persons from outside the United States.
* **Timing:** The duration of time each day that will be allocated to live sessions should be considered, including whether to extend or condense the program relative to in-person conventional programming. Discussion is needed on how to format the program, and how long each day should be for virtual meeting attendees.Timing for individual live sessions should also be considered, including whether to shorten sessions relative to what had been expected for their in-person presentation. This may also allow more sessions to be included in the live programming. For instance, the first transition to virtual shortened all sessions by 50% to maintain similar 10-min talks for all presenters and keep full sessions to a single hour.
* **Presenter Notifications:** The Program Committee and PMG should have frequent presenter notifications, making sure presenters are provided as much advanced notice about changes to the scientific program as possible. It is advised that communication is not shared until decisions are final, to minimize opportunity for confusion. Presenters should also receive presenter guides that provide clear instruction with regard to presentation type (poster, taped in advance, live content). These should include expected parameters (file type and size), best practices for web-based presentations, and clear instructions for submission. Presenters should also be provided with deadlines to submit slides and meeting materials, and a release of rights form to sign that acknowledges their content may be recorded and shared with meeting attendees. Presenters will be notified of their session timing as soon as possible to allow time to reschedule any necessary meetings.
* **Deadlines:** Submission and registration deadlines may be reconsidered:
  + **Submission Deadlines:** If convention submission periods are still open, consider extending deadlines if printed materials are no longer needed.
  + **Presenter Details:** Presenter details, including ePosters, personal virtual meeting rooms, and/or audio files should be submitted by presenters no later than two weeks prior to the meeting.
  + **Registration Deadline:** Consider moving early bird registration deadlines to one or two weeks in advance of the conference as a method for determining the number of persons who will be attending virtually to plan accordingly.
* **Networking Opportunities:** CPDD members highly value networking opportunities, which are challenging in virtual meetings. The Program Committee should consider ways to engage attendees by incorporating networking opportunities. The method through which members will be able to network should be clearly outlined and advertised to members. The majority of networking sessions will benefit from having a designated moderator identified in advance; the moderator should make sure that conversation occurs and that questions are answered, particularly when large numbers of persons participate. This is critical for making the networking event a success. For broad topics or session Q&A with several presenters, consider novel networking set-ups such as topical breakout rooms within a single networking session. This method may provide opportunity for small group conversations that model in-person networking. Consider not recording networking sessions to promote open conversations. Examples of networking opportunities include:
  + Gamification, including virtual scavenger hunts designed to promote attendance in live or recorded sessions
  + Virtual Networking Hours
  + Exhibitor Hours
  + Q&A Sessions with Presenters
* **Building Breaks into the Meeting**: Organizers should take care to build opportunities for attendees to shift between programs or have short breaks. Consider building 5 min periods between sessions to enable transitions between meeting rooms and longer 30- min breaks after a block of 2-3 hours of continuous content. Networking periods can be added to these breaks to provide opportunity for continuous engagement that fluctuates between highly and less structured programming. This may help attendees to remain engaged throughout the day. Networking can include scheduled Q&A with recent presenters or novel topics. Take care to schedule breaks in a way that works for persons across time zones (e.g., lunch for east coast and west coast times).
* **Scientific Program:** The Scientific Program is composed of the following vehicles: Symposia (Full and Mini), Workshops, Forums, Oral Communication Sessions (full and mini), Poster Communication Sessions, Special Lectures (e.g., Awards, Plenary), and Late-Breaking Sessions. Together, PMG and the Program Committee develop/select, schedule components, and manage all of these activities. For all session types, it may be possible/appropriate to schedule Q&A session within networking break to preserve live session time for data presentations. The process for each session type is described below.
  + Symposia (Full and Mini): Symposia can be pre-recorded or broadcasted live as a webinar or as a virtual meeting with opportunity for audience feedback based upon the content and format desired. Q&A and chat may be available for attendees to interact during the live session. It may also be possible to schedule Q&A during networking periods and preserve live sessions for data presentations. Symposia chairs can be asked to manage presentation logistics, including whether to combine all ppts into a single file that is managed centrally by the chair or whether to have all presenters share their own screen during their talk.
  + Workshops: Workshops are generally less formal than symposia and meant to have more open dialog. They can be broadcasted live as a virtual meeting with attendees able to provide audio and video, due to the interactive nature. Q&A and chat should also be available for attendees to interact during the live session. Workshop chairs can be asked to manage presentation logistics, including whether to combine all ppts into a single file that is managed centrally by the chair or whether to have all presenters share their own screen during their talk.
  + Forums: Forums are also meant to promote open conversation so can be broadcasted live as a virtual meeting with attendees able to provide audio and video, due to the interactive nature. Q&A and chat should also be available for attendees to interact during the live session. Forum chairs can be asked to manage presentation logistics, including whether to combine all ppts into a single file that is managed centrally by the chair or whether to have all presenters share their own screen during their talk.
  + Oral Communication Sessions: Oral Communication Sessions can be grouped by topic and be pre-recorded. Consider releasing links for oral communication talks prior to the meeting. This serves to both engage members early and promote more registrations as well as provide members a chance to view talks of interest in advance so they can schedule networking opportunities with the speakers during the dedicated live meeting period. Consider asking Oral communication presenters to provide a dedicated Zoom or other link in advance of the meeting to be assigned to a Q&A period during which their link goes live to the membership to model in-person networking opportunities.
  + Special Lectures (e.g., Awards, Plenary): Special lectures should be broadcasted live and uncontested when possible. Q&A and chat should also be available for attendees to interact during the live session or scheduled during subsequent networking periods. Large sessions (plenary) should be allocated to Webinar rooms and central management of slide presentations should be considered.
  + Poster Communications Sessions: With the ePoster gallery, poster presenters can upload an ePoster, and attendees can browse poster images, listen to prerecorded presenter messages, engage in a group conversation, or participate in a ‘live chat’ with the presenter and other attendees. Consider releasing posters to members in advance of the live meeting to provide members time to view posters and plan to attend individual presenters networking sessions to ask questions. Poster presenters should be asked to provide a dedicated Zoom or other link in advance of the meeting and will be assigned to a Q&A period during which their link goes live to the membership to model in-person networking opportunities. Attendees will have the option to engage one-on-one with a presenter or join a larger poster discussion.
  + Late-Breaking Sessions: Late-Breaking Sessions can be pre-recorded or broadcasted live as a webinar. Q&A and chat should also be available for attendees to interact during the live session. These sessions maintain the same format as in-person (5 min talks) and require presenters to share their screens to post presentations for the duration of their talk.
* Distribution of Live Content Links**:** Links for live content should generally be individual Zoom (or other) links that are embedded into the online itinerary and also emailed as part of a morning email that collates all live content for the day. Closed meeting components (such as the business meeting) should be password-protected and distributed to qualified members. If there is interest in retaining attendees between specific sessions, consider using the same Zoom room for those sessions such that all attendees will immediately role over into the next session. Otherwise links should be independent to prevent conversations that run long from disrupting the subsequent session.
* Promoting Attendance: Consider creative strategies to encourage attendance. It may be valuable to provide members opportunities to familiarize themselves with viewing content virtually in advance of the meeting and prior to closure of early bird registration. This may include taping and distributing short “teasers” from high profile speakers or impactful sessions to increase enthusiasm for attending the meeting. Also consider providing a live session available outside of registration (with RSVP) to provide members who are ambivalent about registering an opportunity to sample the virtual meeting content and encourage registration and attendance.
* Key Performance Indicators**:** The Program Committee should establish critical benchmarks and performance indicators for a successful event. Benchmarks and performance indicators may include:
  + Social media like, shares and comments
  + Attendance pacing
  + Actual attendance
  + Meeting retention (e.g. attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, etc.)
  + Attendee satisfaction (e.g. net promoter score, speaker satisfaction, etc.)
  + Engagement scores
* Speaker Preparation
  + A virtual speaker-ready room should be available prior to and throughout the live meeting to provide speakers an opportunity to practice sharing their slides and problem-solve last-minute presentation issues. Speakers should be advised on best-practices for presentations, including being in a place with strong internet connection, not running media on other devices during their presentation period, to have appropriate lighting, and to use headphones with a mic when possible.
  + Speakers should be reminded to mute computers when not speaking and to turn off cameras when appropriate to avoid distractions to audience viewers

**Virtual Meeting Supplements:** The PMG Executive Office has developed virtual meeting guides to assist attendees and presenters in accessing the virtual meeting platform.

* [Virtual Meeting Presenter Guides](http://pmg.joynadmin.org/documents/1046/5f3184aaef0d26d810afd311.pdf)
* [Virtual Meeting Attendee Guides](http://pmg.joynadmin.org/documents/1046/5f3185d3ef0d26b811afd311.pdf)
* [Virtual Meeting Getting Started & Troubleshooting Guide](http://pmg.joynadmin.org/documents/1046/5f3185d9ef0d26f112afd311.pdf)