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Preparing for the Role of a Rapporteur & the Synthesis Paper

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Outline of the presentation



- Introduction to the session
- Backgrounds of the participants
- Role and responsibilities of a rapporteur
- Three stages of preparation and delivery
- Issues of preparation and caution
- Synthesis preparation
- Concluding discussions



- Overall objective of this session
 - Self Introduction and background
 - Discussion on the role of a Rapporteur
 - Key discussion issues

- Actions during three stages of the process
 - Before the Event – preparation
 - During the Event – Recording
 - After the event – Contribute the report

Roles and responsibilities of a Rapporteur



- Capture overall messages of the conference, specific sessions, and presentations
- Each session will have 4-5 presentations each addressing different issue on the same topic
- Sessions have different topics related to conference themes
- They all add up in the synthesis report we prepare at the end
- Rapporteurs provide the needed input to prepare the synthesis paper.

Roles and responsibilities of a Rapporteur – contd...



- How to bring together a body of knowledge from different perspectives
- We are not just – recording the presentations – we are not – “Human tape recorders”
- Focus is on – summarizing the significant messages of a set of presentations
- Intellectual inputs, experience in the field, and prior knowledge are required

Outputs from the conference



- A 3–5-page conference summary and policy synthesis document for policy makers
- Hard copy book of abstracts and proceedings
- Potential journal special issue with high quality papers
- All will support the translation of research results into policy action at the country, regional, and global levels

Background preparation for Rapporteurs – prior to the event



1. Review abstracts of papers in your session

- a) Understand motivation of the paper and policy challenge
- b) General grasp of methods used, noting those that are particularly unique
- c) Main findings and conclusions

Policy messages are not always clear from abstracts

2. Check if paper is available

- a) Provides more detailed information and motivation
- b) Do not need to read, this is simply a resource

Other preparation issues



- Usually helps to have meeting of all rapporteurs with the synthesis writer will bring the expectations to the same level
- A social media groups is recommended to keep everyone informed and on the same page
- Language and accent may be an issue for some presenters and for rapporteurs not used to hearing different accents
- Past research knowledge, future gaps, and analytical thoughts is key
- Make sure both inclusion bias and omission bias are addressed – don't include that is not presented and don't avoid issues presented but you don't agree with.
- Take a balanced approach to bring different perspectives making sure all the perspectives are covered and used in the synthesis document

Some pointers



- Look at the presenters' research in advance to know their stand and contributions
- Download recent papers researchers have done recently on the subject
- Read the papers that are presented in the session – if they are already available
- Pick up some key points already before the presentations – advance reading helps
- Have a set of controversies that may come up for discussion – helps to explore in advance
- Finally, read about what you would want to take away for yourself from the paper

During the event



1. Record, Record, Record
 - a) Provides an important reference

2. Think big picture
 - a) Details are in the paper or PowerPoint
 - b) Don't focus on methods unless they present something truly unique
 - c) Understand what are the policy-relevant findings
 - i. Presenters were told to highlight these messages

3. Capture discussion and Q&A that are not available in the PPT.

Cautions



- Make sure we don't “ put our words into the mouth of the presenters”
- Bringing different perspectives is important – but avoid adding information from personal experience and knowledge
- Think about what you would value as a key message
- What comes clearly out and what does not come out clearly , but may be important
- Matching the subject areas with the rapporteurs – helps in catching key points.

After the event



- We would like to have a 200–400-word summary for each paper if possible.
- These can be integrated to develop a 750–1000-word summary of the session.
- Revisit the recordings as needed
- If a paper simply does not integrate well within the theme or if the policy messages are limited, it is ok to give it less attention

Additional Pointers



- Teamwork of the speaker, rapporteur, supporting colleague, and the chair of the session is key for producing good summary of the papers and the session
- The job may be mentally tiring – have a supporting colleague, if possible, to work with you
- Rapporteurs can participate in the discussion of the papers – to get details of a point or clarifications
- In a virtual session – participation of session may not be direct – need to check Q&A recording for the issues raised
- Also check the chat messages left by the participants
- Try to finish the summaries of the paper as soon as possible after the session or the conference – long time gap is not desirable
- The length of th summary is not an issue – but covering all the key messages is

Synthesis Document preparation



- As synthesis will be limited pages (3-4 pages)
- A literature review of the papers presented – one way to look at it
- Summaries of the sessions are added up to form the synthesis paper
- In addition to the session notes and summaries the recordings of the session help in synthesis
- Quality of the papers presented will vary – even though they have been selected competitively

Synthesis document preparation



- Synthesis paper combines the summaries of the several paper summaries provided by the rapporteurs
- In synthesis one could give less emphasis papers that do not add value
- Give attention to papers and more space that have concrete messages that are helpful for policy makers
- Share the paper summaries with the speakers and the chair of the sessions for feedback and corrections before adding it to the synthesis paper
- Language, diction, and style may be an issue to think about – have the synthesis paper reviewed and edited



- Discussions, Questions, and Answers?