**EMBO Courses &
Workshops Programme**

India | EMBO Lecture Courses Organiser guidelines

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EMBC Member States (A): Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom

EMBC Associate Member States (B): India, Singapore

Countries / territories covered by a co-operation agreement (C): Chile, Taiwan

Countries / territories eligible for co-funding by EMBO and The Company of Biologists (D): Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea

EMBO subject areas: Cell Cycle**,** Cell & Tissue Architecture, Cellular Metabolism**,** Chromatin & Transcription**,** Development, Differentiation & Death, Evolution & Ecology, Genome Stability & Dynamics, Genomic & Computational Biology, Immunology, Membranes & Transport, Microbiology, Virology & Pathogens, Molecular Medicine, Neuroscience, Plant Biology, Proteins & Biochemistry, RNA, Signal Transduction, Structural Biology & Biophysics, Systems Biology

Contact: courses_workshops@embo.org

1.   About

The aim of an India | EMBO Lecture Course is to teach participants in India, primarily PhD students and postdoctoral researchers. The course should provide participants with background and underlying concepts, thereby making the topic accessible to scientists with diverse scientific background.

An India | EMBO Lecture Course should consist of:

- Scientific lectures by experts: preferably the speakers would give a more general overview lecture as well as a more specific research lecture
- Poster sessions and student presentations
- Additional sessions covering e.g.:
    o Technologies relevant to the research
    o Journal clubs
    o Reviewing of manuscripts
    o Career options
    o Responsible conduct of research
    o Where, when and how to apply for postdoctoral positions and fellowships
- Practical training if deemed necessary

Organisers are encouraged to consider covering scientific writing, job applications, presentation skills or grant application writing.

Attendance of these events should not exceed 120 participants and the ratio of speakers to participants should be around 1:5.

2.   Funding

The maximum funding available for an India | EMBO Lecture Course is €35,000 of core funding from EMBO and INR 5.5 Lakhs (~ €7000) from India Alliance. It is expected that participants (other than the speakers) will pay for some of their travel, accommodation, and a modest registration fee.

EMBO funds can be used to cover:

- travel (economy), accommodation and subsistence costs of the speakers;
- catering costs during the meeting;
- administrative costs up to €4,000 for in-person meetings and up to €8,000 for virtual and hybrid meetings;
- room hire, audiovisual and IT facilities essential for the course;
- accommodation for participants;
- social activities (e.g. excursions) expenses up to €3,000.

For hybrid meetings, an additional grant of €10,000 will be provided. The funds can be used to cover:

- Rental of a virtual platform to host the virtual part of the meeting;
- Rental of additional AV equipment and personnel costs;
- Additional administration costs up to a total of €8,000.

EMBO funds do not cover overheads or purchase of equipment. They cannot be used for gifts, honoraria, *per diem* expenses, poster prizes, or dinners/meals organised exclusively for speakers.

India Alliance funds can be used to cover:

- travel grants for participants (up to INR 20,000 per person);
- childcare support (up to INR 20,000 per person);
- training workshops (see examples above).

In order to reduce environmental impact, organisers are encouraged to consider distributing the abstract book in electronic format via the course website and to print only a minimum number of hardcopies, if necessary.

It is understood that, as an organiser, you do not render any services on behalf of EMBO or India Alliance. The organising institution is responsible for the India | EMBO Lecture Course. It is supported by EMBO and India Alliance with a grant provided that the event is organised as described in the initial application (except for any further modifications that are subsequently approved in writing by EMBO and India Alliance), and that promotion of the event and submission of the final documentation complies with the funding conditions.

If you are holding your course in hybrid or virtual format, please refer to Organising hybrid or virtual events for a summary of options and points to consider.

Please inform us as soon as you have decided upon any changes to the original plans, via courses_workshops@embo.org.

3.   Payment of the grant

The funds will be transferred to the account specified by you and to which you have access. EMBO will not be able to transfer the funds to 3rd parties. We recommend that you open a separate account, preferably at your institute, with the name of the course (but please do not use the term EMBO in the naming of the account, since this implies to our auditors that this account is managed by EMBO).

Approximately four months prior to the start of the course, 80% of the allocated funding will be transferred to organisers. EMBO must be notified of any significant changes to the course budget and/or scientific programme after it has been initially approved.

Once the final financial statement and reports have been approved by EMBO, the remaining funds (up to 20% of the allocated funding) will be transferred.

Since EMBO offers to set-up a website and registration system, design a poster and provide meeting bags and pens at no additional charge, any expenses incurred for these services will not be covered by EMBO funding and will be deducted from your final payment with the exception of the COMS payment service.

India Alliance funds must be claimed and accounted for directly with the Alliance. Please contact Ms. Himashree Bhattacharyya at communications@indiaalliance.org.

The final documentation must be submitted to EMBO within three months following the end date of the course. Failure to do so will result in the final payment being forfeited.

EMBO and India Alliance reserve the right to claim unspent funds based on the financial statement.

4.   Travel grants

India Alliance provides travel grants that can be used to cover travel, accommodation, visa costs and/or registration fees. The travel grants shall be allocated by the organisers on the basis of need and the quality of the abstract submitted. All applicants have to justify the reasons for applying for a travel grant. A maximum of INR 20,000 per person can be awarded.

5.   Childcare grants

India Alliance provides childcare support to participants or speakers when attending any India | EMBO Lecture Course. Eligible costs include fees for a caregiver or childcare facility, travel or accommodation costs for a caregiver or for taking the child to the meeting, etc. A maximum of INR 20,000 per person can be awarded.

6.   Registration fees

Organisers should keep in mind the VAT (Value Added Tax) in India when setting the registration fees.

The registration fee for an India | EMBO Lecture Course:

- may be charged up to a maximum of INR 5000/ €60 (< 5 days in length) and INR 7000/ €90 (≥ 5 days in length).
- should be charged at a minimum of INR 12000/€150 for participants from industry.
- should be paid directly to the organiser (or the organiser's nominee) and included as income in the final financial statement. Please note that EMBO does not collect registration fee payments; however, fees can be collected via the website set up by EMBO (see Registration Fee Collection).
- must be waived for one EMBO editor registered for the course (the editor will cover their own travel and accommodation expenses).
- may be waived for editorial staff from other scientific journals who attend the course.

The income from the registration fees is considered as EMBO funding.

Reduced registration fees can be charged to virtual participants. Discounts for group registrations should be considered.

7. Participants

When selecting speakers and participants, organisers are requested to ensure gender balance. For India | EMBO Lecture Courses, a greater representation of scientists based in India is encouraged. Participants should not be restricted to pre-defined groups (whether this be from a single institute or other defined groups).

It is at the discretion of the organisers to define their own policies on participants using social media (e.g. Twitter) or taking photographs or recordings of presentation slides or posters during the meeting. Please inform participants of the policies that you would like to adopt via your meeting website (there is a section on the website made by EMBO) and other communication channels.

8. Alert for speakers

Please note that speakers at EMBO Courses and Workshops have been contacted (via email or phone) by companies who wrongfully claim to be responsible for hotel and/or travel bookings and request credit card information. Please alert your speakers to this and inform them about the procedures you will use for the organisation of your meeting.

9. Publicising and co-funding

The course will be entitled "India | EMBO Lecture Course". The (main) title of the course may not mention other organisations or institutes that support the conference. Organisers should also refrain from using excessively long titles and numbers referring to previous meetings.

The website, poster and all materials should include the EMBO logo, the India Alliance logo and the India | EMBO Lecture Course stamp. The EMBO Press logo should be featured with other supporter logos on the website and poster.

Sponsors cannot be mentioned in the title of the meeting but can be acknowledged on the website and the poster. Sponsors who provide €20,000 or more towards the meeting can be recognized as co-sponsors. The co-sponsors' logos can be displayed prominently on the website.

EMBO does not consider funding courses when the other co-funders/sponsors insist on the proceedings being published (although publications can arise from Lecture Courses, provided that all contributions are given voluntarily).

All India | EMBO Lecture Courses are advertised on the EMBO poster, EMBO and India Alliance websites and social media channels and through selected other print and online media.

Further advertising is left at the organiser's discretion. It is a strict condition of EMBO funding that any additional publicity, as well as the programme and abstract book, should clearly indicate that the meeting is an India | EMBO Lecture Course, without subtitles relating to previous similar meetings or other organisations.

The scientific programme of your meeting, as submitted at the time of application, was reviewed and approved by the EMBO Course Committee. Responsibility for subsequent changes to the programme, and the organisation and execution of the event, lies exclusively with the event organisers.

Organisers shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, standards and guidelines, including the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; see also Data protection below), in the advertising of an EMBO funded meeting. Organisers shall also ensure that all processes and procedures used relating to the organisation of the meeting comply with all local laws, regulations, standards and guidelines that apply in the jurisdictions in which the meeting takes place.

10. Poster and website

EMBO will create the course website (including an online registration system), design a poster and abstract book cover at no additional charge where organisers opt for this. EMBO hosts the website but does not take responsibility for the content provided by the organisers of the meeting. Organisers are responsible for ensuring that all content and images provided by them for the websites and posters comply with German copyright laws. Fines resulting from copyright infringement will be the organisers' responsibility and will be deducted from the final payment of the awarded EMBO funding.

For information on various methods of collecting registration fees, please see [Registration Fee Collection](#). Please note that EMBO does not handle registration fee payments, but only provides information that may be useful to organisers.

Please note that EMBO does not print or mail the posters or abstract books designed for your course.

Organisers who make their own websites and posters have to adhere to the EMBO brand guidelines (please refer to "[Guidelines for organisers creating their own web pages and posters for EMBO Courses or Workshops](#)").

Full details will be supplied to organisers shortly after acceptance of the funding conditions has been confirmed.

11. Reducing the CO_2 footprint

EMBO and India Alliance would like to promote the reduction in CO_2 emissions in order to lessen environmental impact by encouraging the organisers to implement, to the best of their abilities, some measures that should keep the CO_2 footprint of the course at a minimum.

We are aware that these measures may neither seem nor be significant on their own, but we do hope that they will create awareness and will help to change many people's minds and behaviours. Only together can we make a difference to the climate and the future of the planet and our children. We would therefore welcome that organisers encourage debate about this topic at the meeting.

Reducing long-distance air-travel: If possible, organisers are encouraged to include at least one remote presentation at the meeting by an overseas speaker. This should not be given by an additional speaker but should replace a regular speaker in your programme. The money saved for travel and accommodation (max. €1,500) as a result can be used to cover additional travel grants for participants travelling to the venue by train from the available core budget. Please indicate this in your budget estimate.

Provide catering with lower CO_2 impact: Catering should be served in non-disposable wares and, if possible, try to avoid (plastic) bottled water and plastic cups.

Electronic programme and abstract book: Organisers should distribute the abstract book in electronic format via the course website and to print only a minimum number of hardcopies, if necessary. Via the EMBO provided registration system organisers can export the abstract book in electronic format. This can then be made available, password protected, on the course website.

Central locations: Consider venues that are centrally located and easily accessible by public transport.

Plastic-free badges: Organisers should consider using paper badges.

EMBO promotional items: EMBO provides notebooks (FSC certified paper), bags (from recycled materials), and pencils for meetings on request. Notebooks are perforated to encourage their continued use after the meeting. You will be contacted prior to the meeting to inform us of your needs.

12. Participant feedback

If EMBO creates and hosts the website for the course, feedback from all participants is automatically collected after the meeting. Participants who filled out the questionnaire automatically receive their certificate of attendance via email. Organisers will have access to the anonymised feedback forms.

Should you be using your own registration system, EMBO will request a complete list of participants, including speakers. They will be contacted by EMBO with the request to fill out the feedback questionnaire. Organisers will have access to the anonymised feedback forms.

13. Data protection

Since India | EMBO Lecture Courses include speakers and attendees from Europe, you have agreed to comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#)). Under the GDPR, you hold the position of "data controller", meaning that you are the decision-makers regarding the personal data that is collected and processed for the organisation of your event. As a data controller, you must familiarize yourselves with the GDPR and your obligations to your data subjects. Specifically, you must agree only to collect personal information that is necessary for organising your meeting and ensure that the people whose information is collected are aware of the ways in which it will be used. Any person whose personal information (including names, email addresses, institutional addresses etc.) is to be used in the promotion of the meeting must explicitly agree to their information being used in this way. You must also ensure that subjects are aware of [their rights under the GDPR](#), including the right to be made aware of the data you hold about them and to correct, erase or receive a copy of this data.

An appropriate disclaimer informing users of their rights under the GDPR will be included in all online registration systems supplied by EMBO. If you are not using the websites or registration platforms provided by EMBO, it is your responsibility to ensure that the participants are made aware of their rights.

If you are planning to contact event participants after your course, you must obtain their active consent during the event (e.g. through a sign-up list). Please be aware that under the GDPR, you have an obligation to document that they have given this consent, so please keep the corresponding documentation.

14. Final documentation

- A short report (1–2 pages) about the course, including a short scientific overview, participants' reaction to the location and organisation, and any other relevant comments.
- Final financial statement, which should include all income and expenditure for the course. Please note that the organiser must retain receipts for ten years after the course for auditing purposes.
- Total number of applicants, and the number, gender, nationality and country of residence of academia & industry participants, and of instructors and speakers.
- Programme and abstract book (preferably electronic).
- If applicable: List of travel grant, childcare grant and registration fee waiver awardees, including name, institute, nationality (if known), country of residence and amount awarded for travel and childcare grants. Please note that the organiser must retain receipts for ten years after the course for auditing purposes.

All above documentation must be submitted to EMBO within three months following the end date of the course. Failure to do so will result in the final payment being forfeited.

15. Registration Fee Collection

This brief overview is intended to provide information on the possible avenues for setting up a payment system for your EMBO funded event.

You may want to get advice regarding tax implications of your meeting. These may arise for example from collecting registration fees, sponsorships etc. These implications may differ between the place from which you organize the event and where the event is taking place.

Please note:

- EMBO does not recommend or guarantee the services of any of these providers.
- EMBO does not offer to set up or provide support in the use of these services—questions about the platform and how to work with it should be directed to the support services of the respective providers.
- Some services charge a commission for the transaction of each payment. You should check the amount of the fee and consider whether to adjust your pricing accordingly.

Payment module via EMBO supplier	Online transactions (PayPal, Stripe, WorldPay etc.)	Bank transfer
Can be used with a standard checking account.	Requires that you have a business bank account.	Requires that you have a business bank account.
The registration system matches the payments to the participants.	Payments and participant registration have to be manually matched.	Payments and participant registration have to be manually matched.
Credit card payments are possible.	Credit card payments are possible.	Credit card payments are NOT possible.
Included with the EMBO website, but not set up by EMBO.	PayPal and other online payment services generally charge a commission for each transaction.	There may be additional charges for international transfers.
For set up and support, please contact: m.mandl@conference-service.com	For support, please contact your service provider. For a brief tutorial on how to use PayPal for online payments, please see here.	For support, please contact your bank.

IMPORTANT

Please note that your chosen payment provider may not be available in all countries and may not accept all credit cards, debit cards, or payment methods. EMBO cannot help with any problems relating to the platform you use.

Please also note that only the payment module via the EMBO supplier will allow for matching the payments with the registrants' data. For all other methods of accepting registration fees, you will need to manually match the payments with the registrant's data.

16. Organising hybrid or virtual events

16.1. Hybrid conferences

We understand hybrid conferences as an in-person conference with a virtual component.

The simplest format is an in-person conference where the talks are streamed to registered virtual participants, or alternatively, the talks are recorded and made available to the virtual participants

after the talk. The latter has the advantage of allowing participants in different time-zones to watch the talks at a convenient time.

With little extra effort, virtual participants can be included in the Q&A sessions via the chat options offered by most virtual streaming platforms (e.g. Zoom, Cisco Webex, Vimeo, YouTube Live and others).

Virtual participants could also give short talks based on the abstracts submitted. Sufficient time needs to be allocated in the programme to accommodate the switch between virtual and on-site speakers. Virtual speakers should be encouraged to present live but in case of technical issues, it is recommended that they provide pre-recordings of their presentations.

Social networking platforms, such as Wonder.me, Gather.Town, SpatialChat, Topia and others allow participants to meet in virtual space. According to our survey, respondents felt that, if attending the conference in person, they might not have time to join any virtual social networking event. On the other hand, virtual participants may find the opportunity to virtually meet with other (virtual) participants useful.

Some of our hybrid conference organisers have experimented with virtual poster sessions, i.e. in-person and virtual participants met in virtual space to discuss their posters. This can be done e.g. by using Gather.Town, Wonder.me, Remo or individual Zoom break out rooms for posters. In practice, this requires that the in-person participants find a quiet space (either in the venue or in their hotel rooms) to join the virtual poster sessions.

An alternative may be to hold separate poster sessions for in-person and virtual participants, and/or to hold a virtual poster session before or after the meeting for all participants.

Another option is to ask all poster presenters (virtual and in-person) to upload their posters on the meeting website (e.g. Whova, an all-in-one solution; figshare [for data sharing only]). Selected virtual poster presenters can also be invited to give flash talks as part of the programme.

Prepare all poster presenters on how to present their poster in the chosen platform.

See more suggestions below in the How To section under "Virtual Conferences".

Technical requirements:

Taking an in-person conference into virtual space requires technology in addition to the usual AV equipment:

1. A virtual platform that allows access to the talks for virtual participants.

   This could range from a simple webpage with links to the talks to a sophisticated platform with a chat, forum and other features.

   EMBO can offer a simple conference webpage with links to the video stream. This is based on the webpage that EMBO provides to course organisers.

   Otherwise, organisers of EMBO Courses and Workshops can chose a platform of their liking (including the virtual EMBO platform). Platforms that have been used by recent EMBO hybrid meeting organisers include Gather.Town and Whova (the latter also doubles as a meeting app for on-site participants).

2. A licence for streaming software (e.g. Zoom, Cisco Webex, YouTube Live, etc.)

   Organisers of EMBO Courses and Workshops can chose the software of their liking.

3. Cameras, microphones, audio mixer(s) and on-site technical equipment to provide sound and video to the virtual participants.

   It is recommended to select a venue that provides these services or to arrange this with the venue and hire the necessary professional equipment and technicians. Organisers should have a clear idea of what they want and discuss the possibilities with the technicians. AV technicians may not be familiar with the specific requirements of scientific meetings, a thorough briefing may be necessary. Points to consider are:

   - For optimal engagement, the video streamed to the virtual participants should switch views between presentation, speaker and the audience.

   - During Q&A sessions, the audience needs to use microphones, so that questions are audible for the virtual participants. A camera filming the audience during Q&A sessions is helpful.

   - When recording talks for later viewing by the virtual participants, make sure that you have software that supports the recording and that sufficient storage capacity is available. It is important to upload the talks as soon as possible after their live recordings, so that participants in other time zones have timely access to them.

   - Conventional laser pointers used by speakers will not be visible to the virtual audience. Digital laser pointers are visible for both virtual and on-site audiences.

The EMBO grant can be used to pay for these services.

Personnel requirements:

In addition to the on-site arrangements, organisers need to consider the administration of the virtual side.

Apart from the technical and personnel requirements described above, an additional chairperson will be needed during the sessions to monitor the questions from the virtual audience.

Speakers:

A major reason why scientists attend conferences in-person is the opportunity to personally meet (prominent) speakers in their field. It was expected that speakers listed would also be present on-site to deliver their talks, even if some may not have stayed the full duration of the conference. In the future, this may change. Individual speakers may not be able to attend in person and may be invited to make their contribution virtually.

Another consideration is the carbon footprint resulting from long-distance travel, which may be reduced by asking a speaker from overseas to present remotely.

Organisers should agree on a clear policy on remote speakers and make it absolutely transparent to the participants prior to registration who of the invited speakers will be on-site and who will speak remotely.

Prior agreement from speakers for the streaming of their talks, and possibly recording for later viewing by the participants, has to be obtained. The virtual audience needs to be informed if a particular talk will not be available to them.

Please indicate in the programme which talks will be given remotely.

Virtual participants:

There are many reasons why participants may not be able to attend a meeting in person, these include:

- Health reasons
- Care requirements
- Lack of funding
- Difficulty to obtain a visa

amongst other possible reasons.

Offering participation via virtual streaming of talks will allow these scientists to learn about the latest developments in their field despite these restrictions.

An upper limit to the number of virtual participants will be set by the streaming licence purchased, but organisers might want to take other aspects into consideration.

Please note that recorded talks may be essential for virtual participants in other time zones, as they may not be able to participate in the live sessions.

Registration fees for virtual participants:

Registration fees charged to on-site participants cover part of the costs of the conference, such as venue rental, meals and speaker costs. Since the delivery of the virtual component requires significant finances, charging a reasonable fee to virtual participants is fully justified.

Registration fees charged to virtual participants should be lower than on-site fees and may be waived for participants under certain conditions (e.g. for participants from low income countries). Group fees for multiple participants from individual labs or institutions should be considered.

Transparency:

Organisers should clearly specify how the conference will be run and what virtual and on-site participants can expect. This should be detailed on the website of the meeting and should include information on what is available for virtual participants, e.g.

- Access to talks (specify which talks are not streamed) and if as well as which talks will be recorded and available on demand. Specify when the talks will be available and for how long (if applicable)
- Participation in a Q&A session, via virtual platform or other means (e.g. via chat, meeting forum, email, Twitter) (if applicable)
- Participation in discussion sessions or other on-site sessions and activities (if applicable)
- Abstract submission (if applicable)
- Selection for short talk/flash talk (if applicable)
- Participation in (virtual) poster sessions (if applicable)
- Means of communicating with other participants, either virtual or on-site, via chat, a meeting forum or other (if applicable)

Potential in-person participants should be able to see from the website which speakers will not be present in person prior to registration.

Venue:

Chose a venue that has experience in hosting hybrid meetings.

Code of conduct:

Organisers should have a code of conduct for virtual and on-site participants, a policy regarding data protection (both participants' personal data as well as the scientific data presented) as well as specifying the use of social media during the meeting.

Participants should agree to these upon payment of registration.

16.2. Virtual conferences

Purely virtual conferences require careful preparation. The "conventional" in-person meeting programme that we are used to, frequently lasting more than 12h per day, cannot be transferred one-to-one to virtual space. A virtual meeting should not be as long and intense per day as an in-person meeting. This may mean that the meeting may stretch over more days, has shorter presentations or fewer speakers. This may also result in fewer topics to be covered. The length of the scheduled breaks can be seen as a compromise between allowing people to have bathroom, coffee or meal breaks versus losing them to other activities.

See in the above section on technical requirements about suggestions regarding virtual platforms.

16.3. Suggestions for organisers

Here are some suggestions on how to deal with more specific issues that you may be faced with when organising a virtual/hybrid meeting.

How to address the **lack of rapport** between speaker and the audience during the talk in a virtual meeting:

- Use a platform that allows the speaker to see, for e.g., the chair, or a panel of session organisers.[1]
- Have all session speakers (and chairs/organisers) meet in a session[2] before going live to make them feel comfortable and get to know at least some of the audience. This is particularly important for short talk speakers and flash talk speakers who may be less used to speaking in an online format.
- Play artificial applause audio clips at the end of the talk.[3]

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[1] For e.g., Zoom Webinar mode offers this function.
[2] For e.g. The practice session in Zoom Webinar allows for this, also enable the waiting room so that participants are allowed to enter when all panelists are ready and comfortable to go live.
[3] Some CC0-licenced (free to use for any purpose, no attribution required) sounds can be found here:
https://freesound.org/search/?q=clapping&f=license%3A%22Creative+Commons+0%22&s=score+desc&advanced=0&g=1

- Have a poll running visibly during the talk (of course not to be addressed by the speaker during the talk, but visible evidence for reactions to the talk).
- Encourage participants to show virtual reactions (clapping hands, thumbs up etc.)
- Q&A sessions can also help improve the rapport with the audience (see suggestions below).
- If the speaker wants to see the participants or the chair while presenting, they should be advised to use two screens for a more comfortable experience.

How to run **Q&A** following a talk or a session in a virtual or hybrid meeting:

- Sessions should be moderated by a chair who selects the questions.
- Questions could be upvoted by participants.[4]
- Live questions where the moderator preselects the questions and opens a channel for the question to be asked live can make the talk more interactive.[5]
- Collect all incoming questions in the poll/chat/Q&A of the platform or directly in e.g., a Slack or Jitsi channel, and ask the speaker to answer them in writing during the course of the meeting. The collected questions could be downloaded and posted on for e.g., a dedicated Slack/Jitsi channel so that the answers are visible to all participants.
- Place speakers in breakout rooms and have live discussions with the participants after the talk. You may consider grouping the speakers to prevent that less popular speakers are alone in their breakout room.[6]

How to **facilitate networking** at a virtual or hybrid meeting:

- Organise speed networking events in breakout rooms.[7] These could also be arranged using keyword matches of participants.[8]
- Meet-the-speaker sessions in breakout rooms with all participants visible. These could be organised to meet different requirements, for e.g., restricted to junior participants to allow for juniors to ask questions, or one for speakers and group leaders only, etc.
- Organise thematic breakout rooms (select a discussion leader or host to kick off the discussion). The themes could e.g. be scientific, technical, political, or career advice related.
- Organise mentoring sessions for junior scientists with an appropriate host.
- Facilitate/encourage one-on-one virtual meetings via your platform or ask participants to indicate their means of virtual communication.[9]

How to deal with **time-zone** differences:

- Record talks for re-viewing at convenience
- Restrict virtual meetings to half days
- Indicate local times on the virtual platform

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[4] Zoom, Slido, Pathable, Glisser are some of the platforms that allow for this.
[5] For e.g. Cisco Webex and Webex Webinars and Zoom Webinar, more info also at 12 Steps to a wildly successful webinar
[6] A comparison between Zoom Meeting and Webinar features can be found here: Zoom Meeting and Zoom webinar comparison
[7] Some popular platforms for these include: Wonder.Me, Zoom, Remo, Gather.Town, SpatialChat
[8] Some software allows this includes Grip and Brella
[9] Some platforms allow one-on-one calls e.g., Pathable, Engagez, Slack with license, etc.

How to run **virtual poster sessions**:

- Posters, possibly including a short presentation, can be uploaded on free [10] or commercial[11] platforms.
- Reserve specific timeslots for poster sessions, like in live poster sessions. Poster sessions can be organised in breakout rooms, where each poster presenter has their own breakout room during the poster session. Encourage (require) presenters to be "at" their poster at the specified times.
- Hold at different times of the day to accommodate different time zones.
- Organise flash talk sessions to allow poster presenters to introduce their poster during regular meeting times. These could be pre-recorded to minimise technical problems.
- If the platform does not provide one-on-one live meeting function, encourage poster presenters to publicise their own channel (e.g. Zoom [free for 40 minutes], Skype, etc.), so that those interested in talking to them can do so.

To address **screen fatigue** during virtual meetings:
- Restrict meeting duration per day to 0.5 days
- Maximum meeting length of 3–4 days
- Add adequate breaks, for e.g. 10-15 min between sessions or talks; 45 min to an hour for lunch

Disclaimer: *This document is intended to assist organisers set-up virtual meetings and offers merely suggestions and advice. EMBO does not endorse any software or services and does not take any responsibility for third-party services that the organiser may choose to use.*

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[10] For e.g., figshare, SlideShare, scribd.com, prezi.com, speakerdeck.com
[11] For e.g., ipostersessions.com, confex.com, posterpresentations.com, https://lp.fourwaves.com/virtual-poster-sessions, https://gather.town/