

Guidance for session chairs on how to hold a virtual session at the RDA 24th Plenary (VP24)

This document provides guidance for session chairs on how to prepare and hold a virtual session at the RDA VP24.

Equipment

RDA VP24 programme will be accessible via the dedicated event platform, 'Whova' [hu:va]. All sessions will be streamed via Zoom to Whova.

Session presenters will require the following equipment and tools:

- A desktop PC or laptop with a microphone and video camera.
- A fast and reliable Wi-Fi or wired broadband connection.
- A headset or earphones.
- Zoom App. To download the app, visit [Zoom.com](https://zoom.com).
- Whova App. To access Whova you must be [registered for the VP24](#).
- [Presentation slides template](#) is available for you to use.

Setting up your space

To create a professional set-up, please follow these instructions:

- Ensure your background is blurred or place yourself in front of a blank wall. VP24 Zoom background is also available to [DOWNLOAD](#).
- Ensure your face is well lit and avoid having a window behind you as this will create a dark silhouette for your audience.
- Ensure your microphone is not covered as this will impact the quality of your sound.
- Ensure you are in a quiet room.
- Be seated and positioned at a distance, so that the audience can see your head and shoulders.
- If sharing your screen, ensure you have closed everything else on your computer other than what you plan to share. Remember to turn off any pop-up notifications.

Available support for your session

The RDA Secretariat members will be assigned to each programme session. They will assist session presenters with technical practicalities.

The RDA Secretariat will:

- Open a Zoom room and start the session.
- Record the sessions.
- Give session chairs and presenters specific Zoom rights to fully facilitate the session.
- Monitor the session and solve any technical problem.

Responsibility of a Session Chair and Moderator:

- Introduce the session and each presenter before their presentation.
- Share informative materials in the chat throughout the session.
- Monitor the Zoom chat for any questions, interaction.
- Conclude the session.

Before the session

- Session chairs/presenters must join the session via the [RDA VP24 Whova platform](#). The [Whova Guide](#) is available to help you.
- Session chairs and moderators should enter the Zoom session **20 minutes before the start**. Session supporters will identify you once you join the Zoom session and will conduct tests.
- Consolidate your group's presentations into a single slide deck for a smooth experience.
- Attendees would benefit if your presentation slides are linked to [collaborative notes](#) and shared with them.

How to join the session

- A confirmation email with details on how to log-in to Whova will be sent once you [register for the RDA VP24](#).
- Log-in to Whova and locate the session you chair.
- Click on "Live Stream: Join stream"
- You will be connected to your session through Zoom.

At the start of your session

- Let attendees know that the session is **being recorded**. They can turn off their camera if they do not wish to appear in the recording.
- Include a **welcome message** in the Zoom chat to notify attendees that the session will be starting soon.
- Run through the **session agenda**.
- Let your audience know how your **Q&A** will be run (e.g., using the Q&A function in the Zoom or in shared collaborative notes).
- **Enable video**, at least at the start of each presentation, so attendees can identify a face with the speaker and feel more at ease.

During your session (best practices for an engaging session)

- **Keep your group webpage updated** as some individuals attending your session will be unfamiliar with your group's work.
- Actively **post questions** and **comments** to the Zoom chat to **encourage** participants' engagement (nobody likes being the first to write something).
- Post **relevant links** to the Zoom chat (collaborative notes, presentation slides, etc). Late joining attendees will not see links if the links were added prior to them joining.
- It is strongly recommended to have two chairs to share the management of the session, facilitation of Zoom chat, and audience engagement.
- **Avoid relying heavily on presentation slides**.
- Ensure **sufficient time** for audience **interaction**.
- **Provide more interactive sessions**:
 - Use [interactive tools](#) (like Menti) regularly to engage the audience.

- o Use a [Zoom Whiteboard](#) to enhance engagement by sharing ideas.
- o Use a [Zoom cursor pointer](#) when presenting to make it easier to speak to specific points.
- o Set up **quizzes, polls** (available in Whova and [Zoom](#))
- o **Split audience into groups** (use [Zoom breakout room facility > User steps](#))
- Offer attendees to use [Zoom Captures](#), automated subtitles, to easily follow the conversations or to meet accessibility requirements.

At the end of your session

- **Collect the unanswered questions** to follow up.
- To end your session, **thank everyone** for attending and then **click the 'End Meeting' button** on the Zoom meeting control bar. This will end the recording and will 'force' attendees out. Once pressed, it is not possible to restart your session.
- **Send thank you email** to attendees with links to materials captured in session, and remind them that the session recording will be made available in Whova within 24-36 hours.

Useful resources

[Important planning communication](#) for session chairs will be sent by the VP24 organisers.

If you would like to discuss any of the points above or require further support and guidance with planning your session, please contact secretariat@rda-foundation.org.