

Breakout Groups



When organising a virtual meeting, you can assign the group to work in smaller teams to answer a question or tackle a specific challenge.



Objective

Breakout groups are used as a large group discussion technique designed to increase participation.



What it takes

4-200 persons
10-30 minutes

Process

When organising a virtual meeting, you can assign the group to work in smaller teams to answer a question or tackle a specific challenge. Breakout groups can be assigned randomly or you can create specific groups. For large groups, we recommend to either use random breakout sessions, or to have people sign up to their preferred breakout session prior to your meeting.

Before your breakout session, be very clear on the objective, task and timing of the session. It may help to share your instructions visually as well, e.g. with a screen share. Answer any questions of clarification if needed.

Key considerations for a successful breakout session:

- **Task:** Keep your task as simple and straightforward as possible. Less is more! It can be nice having breakout groups work simultaneously on a collaborative note document, so everyone can see what others are doing. Tip! Include page breaks between groups, so your text doesn't jump around.
- **Size:** Keep group sizes relatively small. Group sizes between 2 and 8 are ideal. Tip! Check the maximum number of breakout rooms in your tech platform and cap your participant total accordingly.
- **Timing:** Anything between 10 and 30 minutes can work well, depending on what you want to achieve. Consider that it takes a bit of time for people to introduce themselves and get started on the task. A much heard phrase that we would like to avoid is: "we didn't have enough time in the breakout room".
- **Moderator:** One of Climate Centre's favourite phrases is: "we invite you to self-organise". For many tasks, especially simple ones, we find that no formal sub group moderation is needed. Sometimes, culturally, it can be helpful for someone in the breakout group to have the mandate to guide a discussion. In that case, you may include an instruction like: in your breakout rooms, choose your moderator. For some more complex tasks, it can be beneficial to have a previously appointed breakout room moderator. In this case, make sure all moderators are clear about the objective, timing and method of capturing and sharing the discussion.

Climate relevance

To address challenges, it can be helpful to start the conversation in smaller groups, to engage everyone and get as many different opinions as possible.



virtually amazing

Enabling virtual engagement for facilitating complex dialogues to tackle Climate Change

