

Guidelines for Session Chairs

Sustainable Development Conference

Purpose of the Role

The Chair provides intellectual leadership to the session. The Chair is expected to frame the discussion at the outset, listen closely to the presentations and discussion, and conclude the session by identifying the principal insights, policy implications and recommendations that emerge.

The Moderator will ordinarily manage the flow of the session, speaker introductions, timekeeping and the Question and Answer segment. The Panel Organiser will provide logistical and technical support throughout the session.

1. Before the Session

Please consult the latest Conference programme for the confirmed date, time, format and composition of your session. The programme will be updated periodically at www.sdpi.org/sdc/.

For an in-person session, please arrive at the venue **10-15 minutes before the scheduled start**.

For an online or hybrid session, please join **at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start** to allow sufficient time for an audio, video and connectivity check. The Panel Organiser and IT team will be available to provide technical support.

2. Opening Remarks

The Chair will normally have **up to five minutes** for opening remarks.

The opening should:

- briefly frame the significance of the session theme;
- identify the central policy or research questions for discussion;
- establish relevant context without pre-empting the speakers; and
- encourage an analytical, constructive and policy-oriented discussion.

Detailed introductions of speakers should be left to the Moderator.

3. During the Session

The Moderator will manage speaker introductions, presentation order, timekeeping and audience questions.

The Chair is encouraged to listen for:

- areas of agreement and disagreement;
- important evidence or findings;
- emerging policy implications;

- gaps or questions requiring further consideration; and
- recommendations that could inform policy, practice or future research.

Speakers may be reminded of their allotted time where necessary. Adherence to the schedule is essential to ensure adequate time for discussion and to allow subsequent Conference sessions to begin on time.

4. Indicative Timing for a 90-Minute Session

The precise allocation may vary according to the number of speakers, but the following framework should normally apply:

Session opening and housekeeping: approximately 3-5 minutes

Chair's opening remarks: maximum 5 minutes

Speaker introductions: approximately 3-5 minutes

Speaker presentations: maximum 12 minutes each for up to four speakers; maximum 10 minutes each where there are five speakers

Discussant's remarks: maximum 10 minutes

Question and answer session: remaining time, normally 10-15 minutes

Chair's concluding remarks: maximum 5 minutes

5. Concluding Remarks

The Chair should reserve approximately **five minutes** to conclude the session.

Rather than summarising each presentation individually, the Chair is encouraged to identify:

- three or four key messages emerging from the session;
- areas of convergence or continuing debate;
- the most important policy implications; and
- two or three actionable recommendations, where appropriate.

The session should conclude within the allocated 90 minutes.

Thank you for your contribution to the SDC.