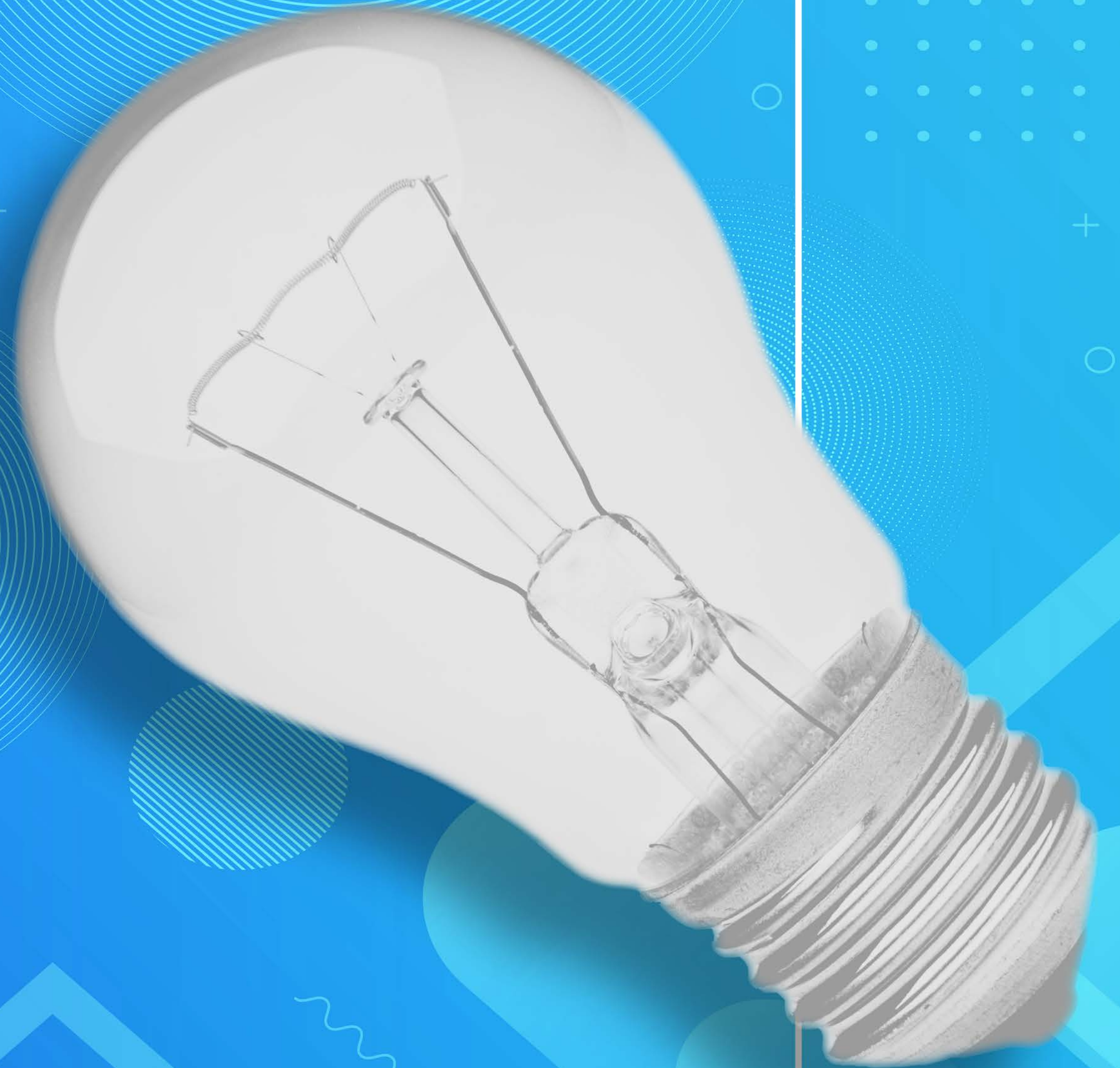


# 10 Tips to Plan Successful Webinars

COMMUNICATIONS  
TEMPLATE SERIES

Disaster Risk Financing  
& Insurance Program



01

**To Webinar  
Or Not?**



# Is a webinar the right format to present your content?

Some ideas are better suited to the webinar format than others. Below are a few examples of content that would be suitable for a webinar:

- An in-depth discussion or detailed examination of a technical topic from a fresh angle—e.g., using disaster risk financing (DRF) best practices to protect public assets
- A panel discussion of a timely, news-based issue related to your area of work— e.g., DRF during the COVID-19 pandemic
- A thorough, process-driven “how-to” tutorial—e.g., a demonstration of DRF analytics tools
- An adaptation of a well-received conference presentation—e.g., fundamentals of DRF training or introduction to DRF
- A candid interview with an industry thought leader—e.g., a one-on-one interview with current or former ministers of finance or leaders in fintech and insurance
- Highly interactive training sessions with a small group—e.g., training in story-telling techniques to promote DRF



# Below are examples of content that will **NOT** make a compelling webinar:

- ✗ A minor update to a World Bank project
- ✗ A broad, “content-thin” general topic
- ✗ A tired idea or concept without a specific angle—e.g., “DRF is important”
- ✗ A sales pitch or project pitch
- ✗ A long technical lecture (running 30–45 minutes) with no defined takeaways

Remember that your participants are taking time from their day to connect with you virtually, so it is your responsibility as host to ensure that the webinar is genuinely interesting and useful.

2022

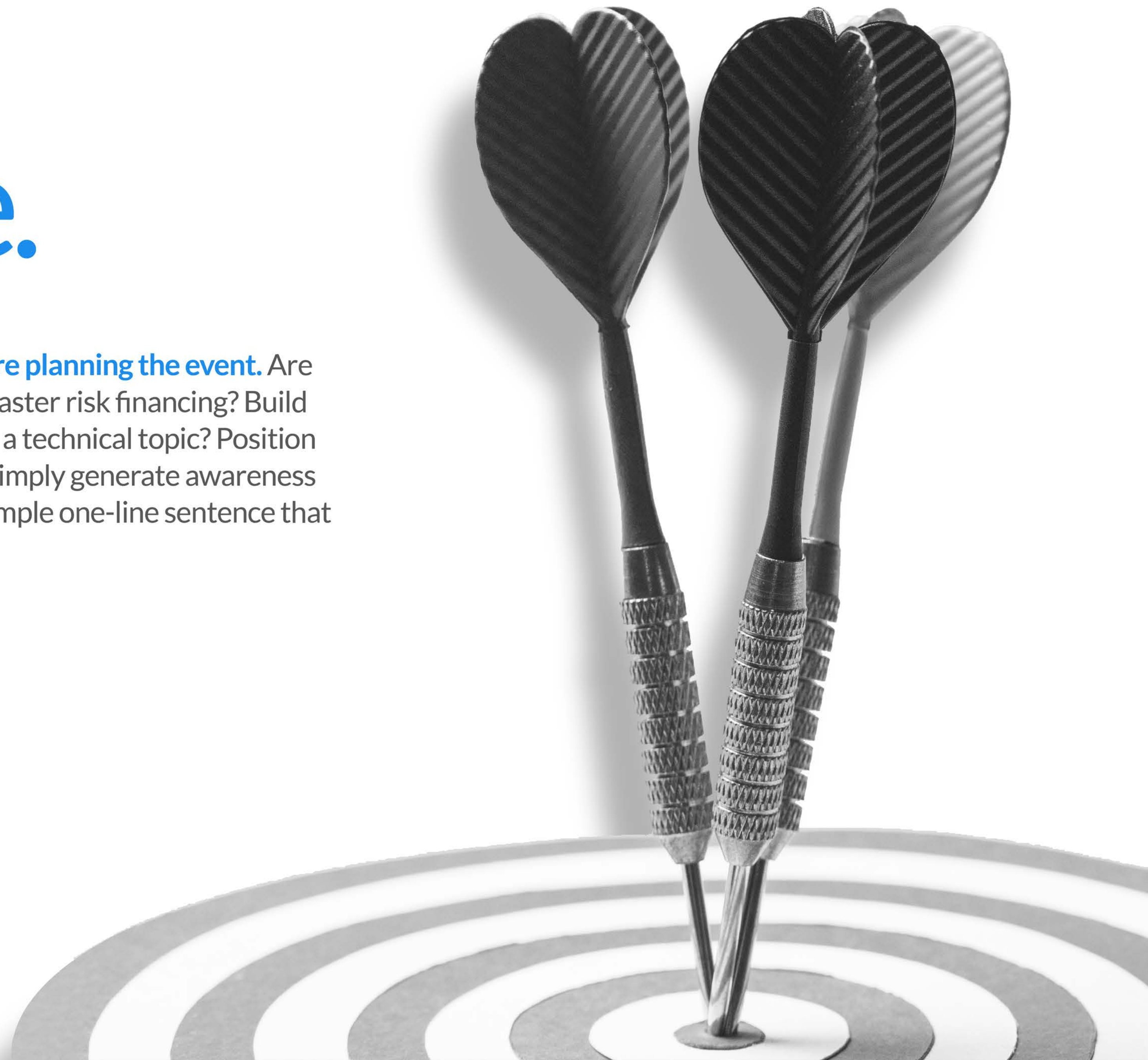
**Plan: 10 Tips For Planning  
Successful Webinars**



# 01. Decide on your objective.

Before you begin designing your webinar, ask yourself **why you are planning the event**. Are you trying to showcase a project or idea? Inform people about disaster risk financing? Build professional relationships with stakeholders? Do a deep dive into a technical topic? Position yourself or the webinar team as experts on a technical topic? Or simply generate awareness about your work? You should be able to state the objective as a simple one-line sentence that clearly defines what you hope to achieve through your webinar.

**REMEMBER:**  
DEFINING YOUR OBJECTIVE WILL  
HELP SET THE TOPIC, TONE, AND  
LEARNING DESIGN FOR THE  
WEBINAR AND THUS FACILITATE  
A SMOOTH AND SEAMLESS FLOW  
OF INFORMATION.

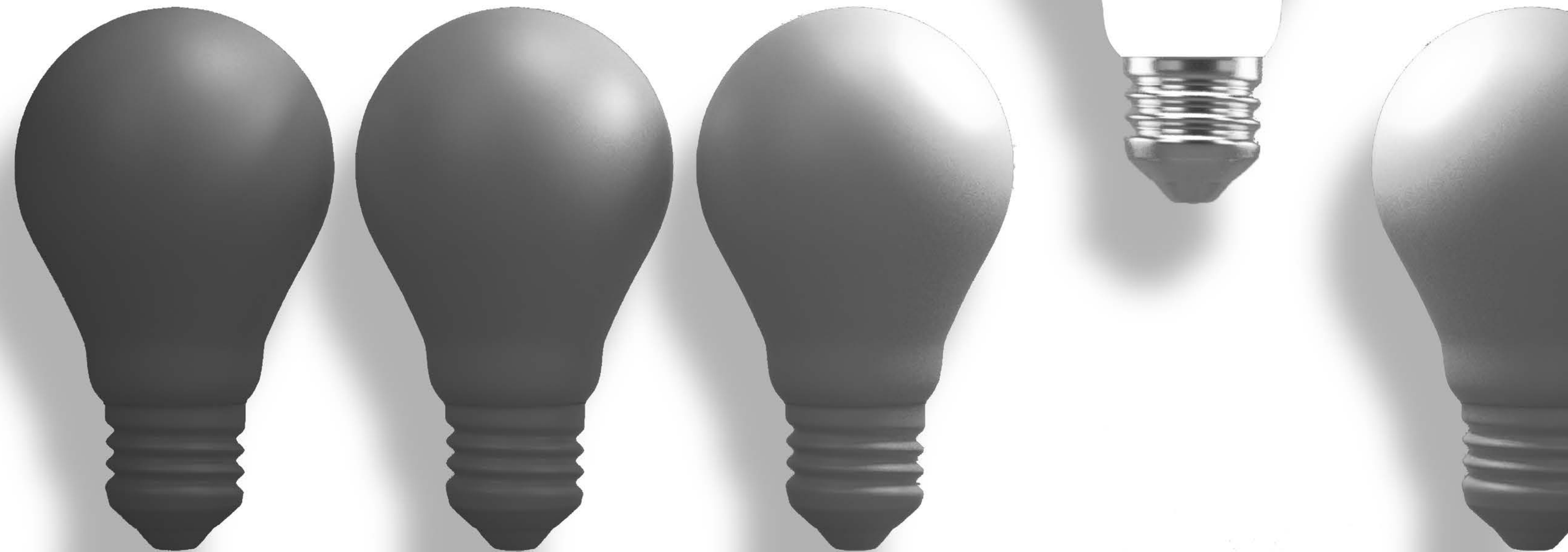


# 02. Select the right topic.

Once you have decided on the objective, spend time defining the webinar topic. While the objective can be broad (e.g., informing stakeholders about DRF), the topic should be narrow and specific (e.g., a deep dive on using best practices in public financial management).

Once you have narrowed down the topic, you must work in a disciplined manner to develop your content strictly around it and avoid any digression from the chosen topic. This is especially important in a webinar format, given how easy it is to lose direction in an online medium. A webinar that lacks direction and fails to offer value to the audience is unlikely to achieve its purpose. The idea is to cover a limited topic to ensure that the audience and the presenters do not lose focus.

**REMEMBER:**  
IT MAY BE NECESSARY  
TO CONDUCT MULTIPLE  
WEBINARS TO ACHIEVE  
YOUR OBJECTIVE.



# 03. Identify your primary audience

As you determine your objective and topic, you should also be considering the stakeholders who would benefit most from the webinar. For a webinar to be engaging, it must be demand-driven and bring value to stakeholders. The webinar's primary audience is the audience you most wish to reach, and it will guide how content is tailored.



REMEMBER:  
THE CONTENT OF THE WEBINAR SHOULD BE CLEARLY ALIGNED TO YOUR PRIMARY AUDIENCE. THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION AND THE INTERACTIVE PORTION OF THE WEBINAR CAN BE TAILORED FOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY AUDIENCES.



# 04. Choose the right webinar software

Once you have settled on your primary audience, do a quick analysis of their available technology, including its limitations. Not all webinar platforms offer the same features. Make a checklist of the top five features you will require and then do a comparative analysis to see which one suits your budget and requirements the best.

Ideally, pick webinar software with multiple engagement tools (polls, whiteboards, breakout grouping, messaging, etc.), customizable landing pages, a dedicated help line, and an easy registration process.

**REMEMBER:**  
THE SOFTWARE YOU CHOOSE WILL  
ULTIMATELY DETERMINE THE QUALITY  
OF YOUR WEBINAR, SO WHEREVER  
POSSIBLE USE THE ENTERPRISE VERSION.  
THE WORLD BANK GROUP RECOMMENDS  
WEBEX.

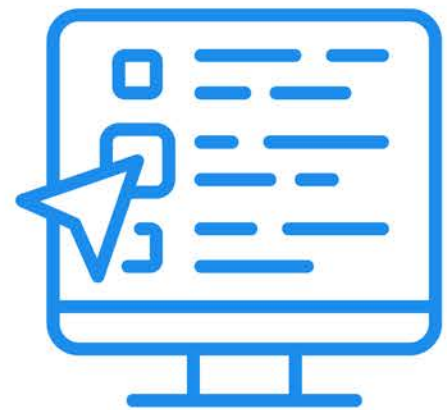


# Understand what your webinar platform can (and can't) do.

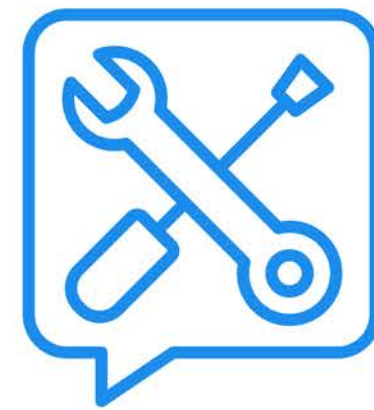
Almost all webinar platforms allow you to share online visuals like PowerPoint presentations, and most provide audio feeds via an integrated Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) or over a separate phone line. **Please ensure that audio is available through direct dial-in as well as through internet, so that stakeholders with different speeds and internet bandwidths can connect.**

Some webinar platforms also allow you to broadcast a live video feed of the presenters, and perhaps even video of the learners.

Your webinar platform should be equipped to allow the following:



**01.** Use of on-screen collaborative tools like whiteboards, chat boxes, and polling tools



**02.** Installation of third-party apps to incorporate additional features, such as interactive maps, word clouds, quizzes, social media feeds, and external web pages



**03.** Assignment of participants to breakout groups (when relevant) with their own video and audio feeds (optimal for small group work)



**04.** Private chat conversations between host and panelists



**05.** Running of a practice session on the platform

# 05. Pick the right webinar team and speakers.

Your objective and topic will determine the ideal format for your webinar. Whether you choose host and presenter, single presenter, dual presenter, or a panel, ensure that presenters are confident and articulate and are comfortable speaking in front of a screen. Energetic and enthusiastic presenters can enliven the virtual format.

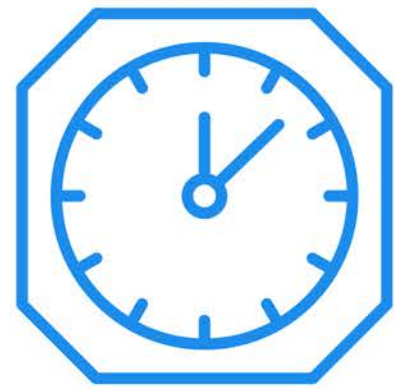


# There is a “we” in “webinar.”

Every webinar should at best have a moderator, facilitator, and at least one presenter on the call.



The moderator will focus on the technology.



The facilitator will focus on the flow, time, questions, etc.



The presenter will focus on the content.

Ensure that you meet as a team before the webinar to discuss your expectations for these key issues:

- The amount of content (number of slides; number of minutes or seconds per slide)
- Duration of the presentations (generally not longer than 10–12 minutes per speaker)
- Transitions between sections (ideally with audience interaction)
- Participant interaction (three to five audience interactions per hour)
- Slide quality (at least 50 percent visual), etc .
- Comfort in using the platform features and technology



**REMEMBER:**  
PRACTICE PRESENTATIONS AHEAD  
OF TIME ON THE WEBINAR  
PLATFORM TO ENSURE THAT  
TRANSITIONS BETWEEN  
PRESENTERS ARE SMOOTH.

# 06. Create engaging content.

People are far more likely to tune out a webinar presentation than a presentation given in person. A webinar is not the place to be spontaneous with your content.

- Ensure that your session is structured into short (e.g., 10-minute) blocks, with enduring content that has explicit value for the audience.
- Make an outline of your key point in each slide and then add further notes.
- Use humor (as culturally appropriate), and ask questions or share an anecdote in between slides to help lighten the mood or break the monotony. However, this nonessential material should contribute not more than 10 percent of your content.
- Pair your copy with visually compelling slides or even videos to add more variety.
- Share handouts with the audience in advance, where possible.



**REMEMBER:**  
AN AUDIENCE WILL TAKE THE  
TIME TO SIT THROUGH A WEBINAR  
ONLY WHEN HIGH-QUALITY  
CONTENT IS BEING SHARED.

# 07. Have a strong promotional plan and send multiple reminders.

Start promoting your webinar at least two weeks in advance. Decide on a promotional plan. In addition to sending information on the webinar to targeted mailing lists, such as the DRF Community of Practice, notify key stakeholders by email, and promote the session on your personal and corporate social media pages.

**REMEMBER:**  
A BEST PRACTICE IS TO SEND  
ANNOUNCEMENTS 14 DAYS BEFORE THE  
WEBINAR, AND THEN AGAIN A WEEK  
BEFORE, A DAY BEFORE, AND AN HOUR  
BEFORE.



# If the webinar is part of a series, announcements should include the following:



- Recordings and slides from the previous webinars as relevant links



- Quotes from previous participants on the usefulness of the past webinars



- A calendar of all webinars in the series

**REMEMBER:**  
ALWAYS PROVIDE A REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE WEBINAR. THIS ADDS CREDIBILITY TO THE EVENT AND PROVIDES VALUABLE DATA ON PARTICIPANTS THAT CAN INFORM THE DESIGN OF YOUR CONTENT. CLOSE REGISTRATION (WHEN POSSIBLE) AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.



# 08. Prepare clear technology instructions.

The need to manage the technology is part of what makes a webinar very different from a face-to-face event. Every webinar should have a moderator whose primary focus is to ensure that the technology works optimally. Too often, time is wasted trying to resolve one person's audio or computer problems while other participants are forced to wait.





# A few preparation tips:

- Test the technology ahead of time to make sure that it is working well. However, please be aware that the same webinar platform can work quite differently on different occasions and with different internet connections.
- Before the webinar, email the participants and presenters with clear instructions on
  - Testing their computer for compatibility (most webinar platforms provide this capability)
  - Using the webinar technology
  - Downloading the right add-ons and versions for the technology
  - Contacting the technology lead/moderator through a separate phone line or text message
  - Logging in again if they get disconnected for some reason
- Ensure the facilitator and moderator are on the platform at least 15 minutes in advance to make sure it works, and to greet those participants who come online early.
- Include a series of preliminary slides with instructions on how to set the sound, how to frame questions, and whether any other programs need to run. These slides can run in the background while early participants wait for the webinar to begin.



**REMEMBER:**  
POOR HANDLING OF WEBINAR SOFTWARE CAN CAUSE INTERRUPTIONS AND DELAYS THAT RESULT IN DISTRACTED CONTENT DELIVERY. THIS CAN IMPACT THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE WEBINAR AND CAUSE MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO DROP OUT.



# 09. Do a test run and rehearse your content.

Like any other presentation, a webinar requires practice and rehearsal beforehand:

- Ensure your internet connection is reliable and all your equipment is fully functioning.
- Earmark a location in your house or office where you can hold the webinar uninterrupted.
- Check the video and audio settings on your device.
- Test all the functionalities in the software to ensure that it is free of glitches.
- Always do a full rehearsal of the content with the webinar team. While this may seem time-consuming and unnecessary, it helps speakers master content and feel more confident about presenting, and it allows another check on the delivery time. It also helps identify any gaps in slides and other visual content.
- Always practice in front of the webcam with your video switched on. See how you appear in the video and make sure your voice is clear and audible.
- Have the team record a snippet of your voice to check tone and inflection.



**REMEMBER:**

**A WEBINAR OFFERS LIMITED LIVE FEEDBACK IN THE FORM OF AUDIENCE REACTION OR BODY LANGUAGE. THEREFORE, PRACTICE IS KEY.**

# 10. Follow up (and follow through) on the event.

A webinar does not end when the last person disconnects. Always think about what you can do afterward to support your audience and continue the learning, information flow, and conversation. Follow up with individuals who asked questions that were not answered during the webinar.

As soon as possible after the webinar (ideally within 48 hours), send participants an email with supplemental materials, the recordings, and slides.

Whenever relevant, assign a follow-up task or issue a follow-up invitation. For example: You can invite participants to join a follow-up forum discussion after the webinar. Use an asynchronous platform like Yammer or SharePoint for this purpose.

Type your message here...

SEND



**REMEMBER:**  
SEND PARTICIPANTS A REMINDER ABOUT THE NEXT WEBINAR YOU ARE CONDUCTING  
AND ALLOW THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN UP FOR FUTURE EVENTS.

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**Disaster Risk Financing  
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