



Effective Meetings

This Guide provides direction to ensure fair and inclusive meetings that encourage and facilitate participation, and do not consistently favour or disadvantage participant cohorts, in line with the Joint ISO Technical Management Board (ISO/TMB) and IEC Standardisation Management Board (IEC/SMB) [Meetings Guidance 1.0, TMB/SMB Guidance on effective virtual and hybrid meetings](#) (effective September 2021).



Standards Australia (SA) requires all employees and contributors involved in planning and running meetings across time zones, to follow the Guidance. This includes Secretaries, Chairs and Delegates of Technical Committees (TC), Sub-Committees (SC), Working Groups (WG) and Project Committees (PC).

For ISO/IEC JTC 1 Meetings, guidance is also available in [Standing Document 19 on Meetings](#).

Meeting Modes

The meeting mode is agreed by the committee at the planning stage.

- **Face-to-Face meetings (F2FM)**
All or most participants are attending at the host location.
- **Hybrid meetings (HYM)**
A combination of participants attending at the host location and attending virtually via online meetings.
- **Virtual meetings (VRM)**
All participants are attending virtually via online meetings.

Progressing Work Without Meetings

Not all action items will require a meeting, and such work may advance outside of meetings through correspondence or internal committee ballots. Refer to the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1](#).

Deciding on a Meeting Mode

The decision to hold a meeting as a virtual (VRM), hybrid (HYM) or face-to-face (F2FM), is by consensus of the group. General considerations when deciding on a meeting mode should include:

- The topics to be addressed;
- Global circumstances which may limit the viability of some meeting modes;
- Consideration of any requests/reasons for a particular meeting mode to be used;
- Enabling participation e.g. whether holding a HYM will lead to higher participation than a F2FM;
- First-time participants to the group who may benefit from less formal interactions with the rest of the group and how that might be facilitated;
- Allowing for social and personal relationships and how that might be achieved.



If considering meetings with face-to-face attendance:

- Consider the costs for all involved, including the host;
- Determine the ability of the group leaders to participate at the face-to-face location;
- Identify any restrictions imposed by countries that prevent physical attendance of individuals;
- Assess risks and potential impact of cancellation/postponement. See [Cancelling or Postponing a Meeting](#).

If considering meetings with virtual attendance:

- Consider the technical/technological capability of individuals to participate effectively;
- Consider the scheduling of the meeting in participant time zones.

Cancelling or Postponing a Meeting

Given the nature and unpredictability of global circumstances, group leaders and hosts may propose or decide on cancelling or postponing a meeting. The proposed/actual changes should be clearly communicated to participants as early as possible, before the meeting date, especially for meetings with a face-to-face component. Furthermore, information should be provided about a replacement date or a plan to decide on the next meeting date.

Timeframes for Issuing Meeting Notices

There are defined timeframes in which documentation must be distributed to Committees.

Pre-meeting / Planning Documentation

This table states the shortest amount of time before a meeting that documentation should be distributed.

	Face-to-Face and Hybrid		Virtual	
	TC/PC/SC	WG	TC/PC/SC	WG
Calling Notice / Meeting Logistics	Sixteen weeks	Six weeks	Eight weeks	Four weeks
Draft Agenda	Sixteen weeks	Six weeks	Six weeks	Four weeks
Proposals for new agenda items*	Six weeks	Four weeks	Six weeks	Four weeks

* including documents for decision, and contributions to existing agenda items

Post-meeting Documentation

This table states the longest amount of time after a meeting that documentation should be distributed.

	Face-to-Face and Hybrid		Virtual	
	TC/PC/SC	WG	TC/PC/SC	WG
Meeting Report	Four weeks	Four weeks	Four weeks	Four weeks

Scheduling Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

Meeting schedules should not consistently favour, or disfavour, one part of the world or time zone, even if a plurality or majority of the group members are in that time zone.

Scheduling a virtual or hybrid meeting should include the following considerations:

- Members' locations and time zones;
- Starting times that will accommodate all participants to the degree possible;
- Rotation of starting times that is fair for all participants.

To achieve this, the Chair or meeting organiser should:

- Use tools to assist the group to visualise the time zones side-by-side e.g. <https://savvytime.com>;
- Make every effort to avoid requiring participants to work in the middle of the night in their time zone (approximately 00:00 to 05:00);
- Poll participants and seek agreement on starting times.

In exceptional circumstances, groups may decide by consensus to schedule a virtual or hybrid meeting where for some participants the meeting will occur between 00:00 and 05:00 in their time zones. In these cases, group leaders should find ways to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all participants in their respective time zones.



Planning Meetings

There are additional factors to consider when planning meetings, depending on the meeting mode.

Planning a Virtual Meeting (VRM)

- Each VRM should be no longer than three hours in duration, including breaks;
- Consider the agenda items and what can be completed in each VRM session;
- Consider the technical/technological capability of individuals to effectively participate in a VRM;
- Schedule the meeting, as described in [Scheduling Virtual and Hybrid Meetings](#);
- Devise clear agreed rules to ensure opportunity is available to everyone to participate fully.

Planning a Hybrid Meeting (HYM)

- See also [Planning a Virtual Meeting \(VRM\)](#);
- Obtain group consensus on the duration, starting times and break times;
- Schedule around the time zone of the host location;
- Schedule the meeting to accommodate time zone differences, see [Scheduling Virtual and Hybrid Meetings](#);
- Consider the needs of both physical and virtual participants;
- Assess whether group leaders are technically/technologically equipped to manage both physical and virtual participants in a fair and equitable manner;
- Ensure at least one of the Chair, convenor or secretary will be at the physical location.

Planning a Face-to-Face Meeting (F2FM)

- Be prepared for virtual participation at short notice, under exceptional circumstances e.g. force majeure circumstances that may arise closer to the meeting date and prevent participants from attending F2FM.