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Guidelines for virtual demonstrations





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1 What is a virtual demonstration event?

A lot of characteristics of virtual demo events are similar to on-farm demo events. Demo events in general focus on showing and understanding innovation within a working farm context or within a local setting. They are based on knowledge exchange between farmers or between farmer and innovations actors (advisers, researchers, input providers...). Demo events in general are based on several objectives and good practices that also count for virtual demos:

- Stimulate knowledge exchange
- Use multi-actor approaches
- Bring together innovation actors and demo farmers
- Promote peer-to-peer learning
- Adapt the knowledge to the need of the farmers according to their sector and their country
- Improve science-practice interactions
- Be adapted to each regional/national specific needs/background

Similar to on-farm demo events, virtual demo events exist in multiple formats, depending on their objectives (e.g. dissemination of knowledge, provision of advice and solutions, co-design of tools, research development, ...). The broad range of virtual demo events can be divided on two characteristics scales (Figure 1):

- the number of participants: from less than 10 to more than 200, related to the prior set objectives
- the degree of peer-to-peer learning: virtual events could have the aim to maximise the exchanges between farmers (and other stakeholders) with a high level of peer-to-peer learning or to maximise information and innovation transfer with low interaction.

In other words the virtual demo events can be:

- Facilitated by different actors types (researchers, farmers organisations, farmers, advisory services, ...)
- Hosted on different types of platforms (Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, Gotomeeting, ...)
- Have multiple types of “demonstrations” (presentations, video, testimony, pictures, ...)
- Different in length, depending on the objective, number of participants and tools used.
- Targeting small groups of farmers or bigger groups of farmers
- Different in objectives: dissemination of new practices, training sessions (e.g. on how to use an online app), in-depth discussion on a specific innovation in practice, feedback on research results
- Have more or less opportunities for peer-to-peer learning
- ...

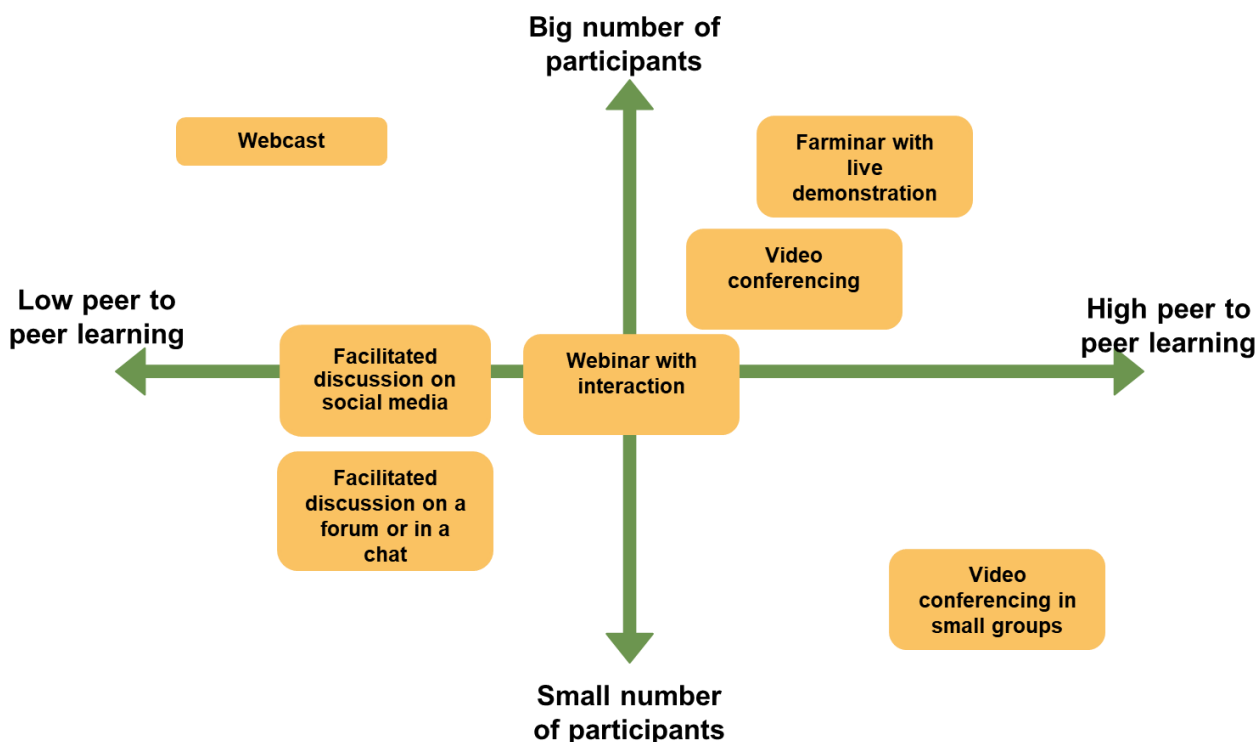


Figure 1: Demo event examples placed on a two main characteristics scale

Examples online:

- Webcast (live-stream of an event without interaction): <http://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5229/icode/>
- Webinar (live presentation with possibility to interact): <https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/webinars/webinars-for-farmers/>
- Farminar (live demonstration (in the field) with possibility to interact: “A farminar is a farm-focused “webinar,” an interactive presentation broadcast over the internet that includes both visual and audio elements, with live presentations coupled with slideshow images (source: <https://www.farmaid.org/blog/new-and-transitioning-farmers-this-farminar-is-for-you/>).” Watch some examples at: <https://practicalfarmers.org/category/farminar/> or <https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/veranstaltungen/9602>



The NEFERTITI project supports a wide range of virtual demo events. However, in order to reach our collective goal, we put forward some requirements and recommendations regarding the efficient organisation of demo events. And these guidelines are also written with these requirements in mind.

- **Virtual Demo should take place during a predefined time and at a predefined (virtual) space**
- **They should focus on peer-to-peer learning and give priority to farmer participants.** So, a video shared on social media or a video channel is not considered as a virtual demonstration.
- Include “visuals” to incentivise the discussion. Visuals can be a video, ppt-presentation, a story board, a testimony with pictures...
- Define clearly your objectives as if you would organise a physical demo event
- Define clearly the agenda and try to keep your virtual demo event short (60 to 90 minutes)
- Use video and/or farmer testimony rather than Powerpoint
- Facilitate the discussion to stimulate all the participants to speak, share their ideas and experiences
- Write and share minutes with the participants

2 Preparing a virtual demonstration event

2.1 Specify the objective

When you start organizing a virtual demonstration, you have to specify your objectives to be able to take the right decisions for the content and set-up of your demo. You should develop clear answers to the following 3 questions:

1. Why do you want to organise the demo event?:

What do I want to achieve? Do I want to inform, train, consult, discuss or collaborate with people? Is virtual demonstration a good solution to reach this?

2. Who do you target?

Good insights in your target participant group and its size, help to define how you will set up the virtual demo. You should take into account: language, regional legislation, sector, experience with the topic, computer skills, hard and software capabilities, network bandwidth.

3. What do you want to demonstrate?

Specify the topic and what exactly you want to demonstrate. To describe this in a detailed way, you can perform a task analysis. A task analysis identifies the job tasks that learners should learn or improve and their knowledge and skills that need to be developed or reinforced to perform the tasks in a good way (FAO, 2011).

2.2 Virtual demo event set-up

Once you have decided what you want to demonstrate, you can think about the format in which you will bring your messages.



Know your limitations

There are different options and when taking decisions you should take into account:

- audience-related factors (e.g., number and type of participants, their comfort with different delivery channels, their available time, their computer skills)
- technology aspects (e.g., hard and software capabilities, network bandwidth (Figure 2), licences for platforms and tools ...)
- organizational requirements (e.g., available time and budget)

E-LEARNING FORMAT	SPEED OF INTERNET CONNECTION REQUIRED TO DISPLAY/USE
Video conferencing, live webcasting	From 100 Kbps to 2 Mbps
Audio conferencing	From 56 Kbps to 128 Kbps
Application sharing, animations	From 256 Kbps to 1 Mbps
Whiteboard, slides	From 56 Kbps to 384 Kbps
Chat, instant messaging	128 Kbps
E-mail, discussion forums, screens with text and images	From 56 Kbps to 128 Kbps

Source: <http://support.apple.com/kb/ht2020> - Last visited: 30 June 2011

Figure 2. Required network bandwidth for different types of virtual e-learning formats (source: FAO, 2011, p.54)

Decide on your demo type

NEFERTITI supports those types of virtual demonstrations that have a real-time setting (so all participants meet during a predefined time) and include a facilitated knowledge exchange between participants and/ or between participants and demonstrators.

This type of virtual demos are, for example, webinars, video conferences or farminars. They are specifically relevant when a high amount of demonstrator-participant interaction is required, such as for product demos or tasks that involve hands-on practice, or content that requires detailed explanation. They are also useful for demos that have as an objective problem solving, networking, or knowledge co-creation.

When you are not yet experienced in virtual demonstrations, we recommend you to start with a small number of participants to make interaction easier.

Choose a platform

Before you can further develop the content of your virtual demo, it is important to choose a platform that you will use to host your demo, because each platform has specific potential and limitations. Frequently used platforms are: Microsoft Teams, Skype, Zoom, Gotomeeting, Jitsi meeting, Cisco WebEx. In a lot of cases your organisation will already use or pay for specific platforms, so ask your colleagues about it. If you are not experienced yet, we recommend to use the platform where you are already familiar with (e.g., because you use it in your own organisation). Here are some links with reviews on webinar platform software:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_web_conferencing_software: gives a comprehensive overview of the different types of software and their most important features: e.g. break out rooms, white



board, ability to record the event, chat function,

- <https://www.growthmarketingpro.com/best-webinar-software/>
- <https://www.maxcf.es/emitir-en-streaming/> (In Spanish, but automatic translation in English is good)

2.3 Content development

Make an agenda

When developing an agenda the following aspects should be taken into account:

- **Time of your event**
An event can last from 30 minutes to several hours. Take into account that it is harder to stay focussed for a long time during an online demo compared to an on-farm demo. So limit the time of your event or make sure that you provide sufficient interaction and breaks between different agenda items. For example, Unicef guidelines state that a webinar takes 60-90 minutes (https://www.unicef.org/knowledge-exchange/files/Webinar_production.pdf). We recommend to keep your virtual demos to less than an hour. Several shorter demo event will work better than one long one (<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/facilitating-virtual-meetings.pdf>)
- **Include time for a demonstration**
Each virtual demo event should have some kind of visual or testimony that refers to an on-farm practice. This can be a video (an old or new one), pictures, a testimony of a farmer, a ppt-presentation with research results, live streaming, simulations, virtual reality, In the NEFERTITI project we suggest to use a video or testimony rather than a Powerpoint, because it links more to the real practice. Make sure you know how to share your computer audio with the audience if you want to show a video by using shared screens on the platform.
- **Include time for interaction**
It is very important to include in your agenda time for interaction between the participants and the demonstrators and amongst participants. Also think in advance on how you will facilitate and stimulate this (see section 3.3). Some platforms have the option to make break out rooms, in which participants are redirected automatically to virtual rooms with a smaller number of participants. This increases the ability for peer interaction.

A potential agenda for a virtual demonstration is: Welcome/introduction, Testimony/demonstration with visuals, facilitated discussion, wrap up.

Make a demonstration

The demonstration can have multiple formats, and it should be prepared in advance of the event. The most used formats will probably be videos and ppt-presentations:

- **Videos**
You can decide to show old videos that were already made previously on a recent topic if it is difficult to make a new one. Guidelines on how to make a good video can be found here:
 - Recordings of a webinar and guidelines developed by Thomas Alföldi: <https://nefertiti-h2020.eu/webinar/>



- Guide for farmers to make videos and photos (developed by John Slater on behalf of Dairy New Zealand): <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5791453/dairynz-picture-this-guide.pdf>
- Tips for making videos of products: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfepQIjIIRA>
- How to make a whiteboard video in one day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nE6MciaRjo>
- How to convert a ppt-presentation in a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8JV3w4TOVw>
- How to make an animated video in ppt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU5vyHaCCXg> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1io7tFR6jI>

- **Presentations**

Online presentations differ from live presentations because the participants get distracted easier and you speak to a camera rather than to a physical audience. Thus, it is important that you have a story that sticks with your participants. In achieving this, there are 3 golden rules to follow (<https://thefloorisyours.be/en/onlinepresentations>):

- Have a plan: a well thought-out structure that guides you through your story
- Engage until the end: make it existing, reward you audience for their attention by giving them a concrete insight, look for wow-factors, after each step summarize what you did, ask questions regularly.
- Keep it as short as possible: focus on the essentials and refer to additional information or divide your presentation in shorter ones

2.4 Promote your virtual demo event

As for a virtual demo event, you should promote it amongst the target participants. Promotion for the virtual event is similar to that of an on-farm event: mailing list, website(s), social media, radio, newspaper,

When you invite participants for a virtual demo event, you should include:

- the event name
- the objective of the event
- the time
- the agenda with key note speakers, if relevant
- a link to register for the event

Once participants have registered, provide them with:

- a link to the platform
- a manual with easy guidelines on how log in to the platform (if the participants are not yet experienced with the platform).
- Any other relevant information, e.g. presentations, videos, agenda, that could be addressed in case of technical problems.

If necessary, provide some assistance to your participants who are not yet familiar with the software.



3 Carry out a virtual demo event

As mentioned previously, NEFERTITI wants to stimulate virtual demos that include interaction between farmers and demonstrators and amongst peers. Here we give some guidelines on what is necessary to stimulate interaction and provide some tools to stimulate interaction. Interesting information on how to facilitate virtual demos can be found here:

- <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/facilitating-virtual-meetings.pdf>

- https://www.unicef.org/knowledge-exchange/files/Webinar_production.pdf

Table 1. How to customize your virtual demo to meet the objectives (Mainly based on: <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/facilitating-virtual-meetings.pdf>)

Objective	Role of the participant in the outcomes	N° of Participants	Good practices for interaction during the demo
Inform or train a broad range of participants on a policy, decision, issue, innovative farming practice, product, tool or service	Communication and decision making is primarily one way from the demo organiser to the participants.	5 - 100s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - share documents, presentations or (real-time) videos on the topic - use the chat function and polls to engage participants and ask questions (for their understanding) - make a video (take into account the bandwidth of the participants) or documents that participants can turn to afterwards.
Consult selected participants about a modification, resolution, issue, policy, innovative farming practice, product, tool, or service	The demo organiser ask the opinion of participants and afterwards decides if and how he/she will use it to take final decisions.	5 – 100s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use the chat and polling to obtain participant input - use a virtual whiteboard to capture key points (similar to flip charts) - make live notes, so people see their feedback being captured



Objective	Role of the participant in the outcomes	N° of Participants	Good practices for interaction during the demo
Discuss options for resolution, (research) development, research implementation, policy implementation with a selected group of participants and use it to modify approaches	The demo organiser uses the input from participants to make decisions.	5 - 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participants introduce themselves - use webcams or pictures of the participants during introduction - make live notes to which more people can add. - collaborate on a shared, real-time document - use polling at decision points to move the discussion
Collaborate with selected participants with a high degree of knowledge exchange to solve problems, to make resolutions, create knowledge, develop guidelines, documents or good practices together.	All participants equally contribute (have the same power) to the discussion and create output together.	5 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use video calling for engagement and to see body language - collaborate on a shared, real-time document - use “chat” to get the discussion started and then focus on the points that come up multiple times - make sure everybody has the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. - make live notes where on or more people can contribute to. - participants share videos (take into account the participants’ bandwidth) and pictures on how they perform a specific practice.

3.1 Facilitator

Having a facilitator is important to safeguard a smooth process and knowledge exchange. The role of the facilitator is to (source: https://www.unicef.org/knowledge-exchange/files/Webinar_production.pdf):

- Promote the event (see section 2 preparing a virtual demo event)
- Set-up the online platform (see section 2 preparing a virtual demo event)
- Open the virtual demo:
This includes greeting the participants, introducing the demonstrator(s), organizing the introduction of



participants, explaining the features of the platform, explaining the agenda, making sure there is time for interaction

- Record the event if appropriate (take care of the GDPR rules and make sure your participants agree)
- Arrange or provide technical support to the participants (if necessary)
- Assist the demonstrator to facilitate interaction
For example, the facilitator can keep track of comments being made in the chat section, and make sure that questions are being dealt with.
- Ensure follow-up (see section 4 Evaluating and improving virtual demo events)

3.2 Demonstrator

The demonstrator is usually the expert who gives a presentation, testimony or explanation to the participants on the event topic. The demonstrator and facilitator are different persons. If there is no other option, for smaller meetings with a limited number of participants, the demonstrator could also take the role of facilitator. But you will experience that it is difficult to meanwhile focus on the content of the demonstration, the participants feedback in the chat, and maybe taking notes on what has been said.

The demonstrator makes sure he/she (source: https://www.unicef.org/knowledge-exchange/files/Webinar_production.pdf):

- Prepares content (video, presentation, pictures, testimony, live streaming ...) on the event topic to share with the participants
- Gets to know the platform features;
Make sure you know how to share screens. If you want to show a video on a virtual platform, you should check the tutorials of the platform on how to get the audio settings right so all participants can hear the recordings. Explore features to stimulate interaction with your participants.
- Engages the participants through interaction during the demonstration
- Stays present during the whole event for Q&A

3.3 Stimulating interaction

First, there are some easy ways to stimulate interaction with your participants:

- Ask **questions to all participants** during and after your presentation.
- Include a **Q&A section** (ask the facilitator to help in guiding the Q&A session)
- Use the **live chat** function of the virtual platform (ask the facilitator to track the questions and comments in the chat while you are demonstrating)
- Test your audience with a **quick quiz** on what you demonstrated
- If you do a series of virtual events: **challenge the participants to take action** based on what you demonstrated (e.g. prepare a video, send a picture) as input for discussion during the next event or to select who did the best job, was most innovative,



Second, there are numerous tools online that can be used in addition to the virtual platform you are using for auditory communication purposes. In this case you should prepare them in advance and provide the link to your participants so they can engage with the tool. Here are some examples listed:

- **Polls and surveys**
Prepare some (multiple choice or single choice) questions before and ask them to the participants during the virtual demo event. Some platforms have such a function included, in which you can ask questions, request participants to vote, and display the results immediately in real-time. If this feature is not included you could think about using tools like Mentimeter (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>), Slido (<https://www.sli.do/>), Kahoot (<https://kahoot.com/business/presentations/>) besides the virtual platform.
- **Brainstorming and pin boards**
You can use tools in which the participants can give opinions or inputs on specific questions themselves (for example, as you would do with sticky notes in a focus group meeting). Available tools are: Pin Up (<https://pinup.com/>; easy to use and free); Klaxoon (<https://klaxoon.com/our-products/klaxoon/brainstorm>; extensive functionalities, free online training); Mural (<https://mural.co/>; extensive functionalities, free online training); Miro (<https://miro.com/>; similar to Mural, but you have to pay for non-members to participate in a session).
- **Make content together**
You can also create content and stories together with your participants online: for example, guidelines for good practices of a specific innovation. By making such a story together, participants have to share their knowledge and experiences with each other. A tool to use for this can be Boords (<https://boords.com/storyboard-creator>). Also other apps in which all participants can collaborate together to create content can be used: e.g. presentations, sheets and documents made on google drive.

4 Evaluating and improving virtual demo events

4.1 Obtaining participant feedback

As for on-farm demo events, it is important to get participant feedback to help you to improve future virtual demo events. You can create an online questionnaire and send the participants a link to complete the survey (e.g., in Google Forms, Lime Survey or Survey Monkey). Questions you could ask are:

- Did the virtual demo meet your expectations? Why/why not?
- How did you appreciate the various sections (e.g. demonstrations of the X, discussion, testimony of Y) of the virtual demo ? (Use tick boxes)
- What was the most interesting to your during the virtual demo?
- What did you miss during the virtual demo?
- Which information from the virtual demo will you apply yourself on your farm?
- What are barriers to apply what you learned during the virtual demo?
- How did you like the platform and tools used during the virtual demo?
- Do you have any suggestions for topics and/or formats of future virtual demo?



You could also add (a) question(s) to probe for specific feedback on: the level of interaction, facilitation and support, technology used, ... to increase your learning on these aspects of virtual demos.

When you send the participants the survey, you can also provide them with (links to) additional information, the recordings for the event (make sure you have the participants' consent if you record the virtual demo) and the demonstration material used during the event.

4.2 Evaluate the organisation of the virtual demo event with the organisation team

To obtain lessons learned about your past experiences it is very valuable to discuss all feedback and own reflections within the organisation team. A process outline on how this could be performed is provided in the tools for evaluation and follow-up (trainingkit.fardemo.eu).

NEFERTITI

Networking European Farms to Enhance Cross Fertilisation and Innovation Uptake through Demonstration

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