



## Guidelines for Theme Forum Preparation and Information Required from Theme Forum Conveners

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Theme forums are a core element of IAIA conferences and address cross-cutting issues of relevance upon themes decided on by the Program Committee to a wide range of impact assessment practitioners.

The purpose of these guidelines, which were mandated by the IAIA Board of Directors, is to help the Program Committee select the appropriate number of forums for the final schedule and to ensure that those selected are the highest quality. The number of theme forums is limited to 12 during the course of the 3.5-day conference, and no more than 4 theme forums may run concurrently.

Program chairs are encouraged to identify topics and solicit conveners of theme forums, as well as to select the best from among the many quality theme forum proposals typically received.

Theme forum selection is a competitive process that is conducted in two phases: those theme forum proposals received and listed in the preliminary program (phase I) are expected to undergo continuing development and will be reviewed again for inclusion in the final program (phase II) by the Program Committee, based upon the following criteria:

- Relevance of the topic to the conference theme.
- Relevance to a wide international audience.
- Quality of speakers.
- Format of the forum, i.e., how the information will be presented in the 90-minute time frame. Options include paper presentations, debates, panel discussions or other formats. Preference will be given to theme forum submissions that adopt innovative formats encouraging wide audience participation. Care is required to ensure that theme forums do not become paper sessions on a larger scale; the Program Committee will reassign the forum to a concurrent paper session if that option is more appropriate.
- Mix of topics to avoid overlaps and to ensure that a wide range of the most topical impact assessment issues are addressed and different perspectives are presented.

Following the session plan instructions provided by the program chair, theme forum convener(s) should plan to send their regular session plans AND the following information to the IAIA16 Program Committee. Final approval and inclusion of the theme forum, as a theme forum, in the final program is contingent upon receipt of this additional information by the session plan deadline and additional review by the Program Committee. If chairs do not send this additional information together with their session plans, the theme forum will automatically be changed to a concurrent session.

- 1) Explain the relevance of the topic to the conference theme.
- 2) Explain the relevance of the topic to a wide international audience.
- 3) What are the objectives of the forum? What will participants learn?
- 4) Explain how this theme forum is different (i.e., a higher caliber) from a standard session.

- 5) Describe the format of the forum: how the information will be presented in the 90-minute time frame (e.g., panel, debate, talking heads, skit, audience participation, paper presentations). Creativity gets extra points.
- 6) Describe any plans for follow-up after the conference. (E.g., will you ask all of the presenters to provide their transcripts to be included in the proceedings? Will you host a discussion on IAIA*Connect*? Provide an article for the web site?)

If you recruited or invited speakers/panelists, they should have submitted their abstracts by 30 November 2015 and registered by 5 February 2016. Per instructions provided to you in your session acceptance notice, even if your speakers are not preparing papers, they were required to submit an abstract on their topic or position via the abstract submission process. Presentations will not be included in the final program if we did not have their abstract record in our database by 30 November and/or if they did not register by 5 February.

You are strongly encouraged to ensure that the speakers in a forum coordinate their efforts to avoid duplication of content.

If your theme forum is approved for the final program, at a minimum, you should ask your theme forum speakers to prepare and submit a copy of their presentation to HQ (impact@iaia.org) by 6 April so that it may be posted online as part of conference preview and proceedings. Where speakers also wish to submit a paper for review, they may follow the instructions for optional paper submission and review that was provided upon submission and acceptance of their abstracts.