

Concept paper: Online event tools

There are many kinds of **tools for organizing online events**, e.g. Zoom, Google Meet and Hangouts, GoToWebinar, Webex, Skype and Skype Business, Microsoft Teams, Whereby. These types of online tools can be used to organize various online events, e.g. workshops, meetings, webinars, conferences and also interviews. While most tools have limited free versions available, then the registered/premium/licensed versions usually have a wider range of options. Some tools also have the recording option (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Whereby, Zoom), which allows the organizer to use the recording of the event afterwards as well, option to share participants into smaller groups (e.g. Zoom) and option for polling during the discussion (e.g. Zoom). Some tools also allow the organizer or a participant with special rights to screen share (e.g. Zoom, Whereby) while some tools allow all participants to screen share (e.g. Microsoft Teams). In some tools, the organizer can also mute participants' microphones (e.g. Webex, Zoom).

What methods/other tools/ techniques can be used while implementing the tool?	Main aims while using the tool
These types of tools can be combined with various online ICT tools for polling and feedback (e.g. Mentimeter, Kahoot!) to engage the audience and to quiz/poll/ask their opinion on something before, during or after the event. Some online event tools have already integrated the polling opportunity feature (e.g. Zoom).	The aim of online tools is to facilitate organizing an online event in which participants can join, listen in and in some cases, also actively participate.
How can the tool be used in each phase of the process (when developing age-friendlier and green mobility solutions)?	
These tools can be used in all phases of the process (planning and development phase, implementation and feedback and evaluation) to bring together a group of people for an event of any purpose.	
What is the aim of engagement with this tool?	
These tools can be used for all types of engagement : informing, consulting, collaborating and empowering. Depending on the type of event and the audience, the level of engagement can vary. E.g. if you are organizing an online meeting between the user groups and city planners, the level of engagement is consulting or collaborating, but if there are actual decisions made during the online event with input from the participants, the level may rise to empowering.	
For how many people and how is the tool suitable (for one-time use)?	How much effort is required from the participant and what influences that?
From 2 to unlimited. While some tools do have limits on the number of participants, then premium or licensed versions usually allow for a very large group of people.	Very little to considerable effort – this depends on the type of event being organized and the tool used. If it is a webinar where participants simply listen in, the effort is minimal. If it is an interactive workshop, on the other hand, participants need to contribute. The effort also depends on the tool that is used, i.e. does the participant need to download smth or register for smth.

Time needed to <u>prepare</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Time needed to <u>implement</u> the tool and what influences the time needed?
Very little to considerable amount of time – this is influenced by the type of event that is being planned, the number of presenters engaged, the length and topics of the event, etc.	Very little to considerable amount of time – this is influenced by the type of event that is being planned, the number of presenters engaged, the length and topics of the event, etc.
Time needed to <u>summarize</u> using the tool and what influences the time needed?	Price for the user of the tool and what influences the price
Very little to considerable amount of time – this is influenced by the type of event that was organized, what kind of input was gathered and how much need there is for summaries. In most cases, however, some summarizing is required.	Free to high – depends on whether the free or premium/licensed version is used and/or whether there are other organizational costs, e.g. compensation for speakers.
SWOT on using the tool	
STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible, easy to set up and use • Convenient means of participation • Free versions are available of most tools • Most tools allow to screen share, send files and images, use the chat function, etc. • Some tools allow to call in via telephone, which eliminates the need to use smart devices 	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be time consuming to find the suitable tool and test it • Usually requires a certain amount of digital competency from the participant • Highly dependent on technology functioning as intended – any interruptions have a negative influence on the event • Some tools require installing the software to use all features
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used in combination with other online ICT tools to poll or get feedback from the audience. This may even help to make the digital event it more personal. • Recordings allow to disseminate the event after it happened as well 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential security and privacy issues
How to use the tool?	
How to prepare using the tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose the tool you want to use and set it up (e.g. if required, buy a license or use the free version) • Prepare your event and send detailed invitations to the participants which include the time, date and link (or phone no) to the event and contact information in case they run into trouble or have questions; if the event is recorded, notify the participants already in the invitation • Test the tool and the entire technical solution with all relevant participants – speakers, moderators, test audience members, etc. 	

How to implement the tool?

- Join the virtual lobby early to welcome connecting participants
- Enable earlier joining with the event for the participants to detect and solve problems before the official part starts
- Once everyone has joined, introduce the event, the aim, “online seminar etiquette” (e.g. everyone has to mute microphones or if you want the participants to ask questions in the chat or personally, use the hand raise function), the speakers and the time schedule
- If you are using additional ICT tools for polling, for example, introduce these at the beginning and/or ask participants to have their smart devices ready and close at hand
- Implement your event

How to follow up using the tool?

- Summarize the event
- Send thank-you notes to the participants, informing them the results of the event and/or of the next steps
- If the recording is used for any purpose, upload it online and make it available for your target audience

Tips and hints for using the tool with people in silver age

- **Do not assume that everyone has a smart device** – be mindful when using these types of online tools with the older demographic as not everyone may have a smart device on them or even know to use one. As some tools offer the call in option via telephone, this may be a more convenient option for elderly who just have regular phones.
- **Treat online events as you would regular events** – organizing an online event may be even more time-consuming due to technological demands and constraints, so be sure to test everything thoroughly and talk through all the details with the other organizers. Remember to keep your audience engaged and interested.
- **Ensure your poll/quiz is age-friendly** – make sure that the font size is large enough and that implementer/moderator speaks in a loud clear voice. Ensure that the question is understood by all.
- **If you are using additional ICT tools, allow ample time** – if your audience has elderly respondents, make sure to allow enough time to explain the mechanics of the tool, to receive replies (it may take longer to submit replies as handling smart phones may not be as quick and intuitive for everyone) and to have small breaks between questions.

More experiences from GreenSAM partners

Read [here](#) how Riga used online event tools to get the needed input from people in silver age instead of COVID-19 situation.

The screenshot shows a Cisco Webex Meetings window. At the top, there's a menu bar with 'File', 'Edit', 'Share', 'View', 'Audio & Video', 'Participant', 'Meeting', and 'Help'. Below the menu, a large black rectangle covers the top portion of the screen. The main content area displays a presentation slide with the title 'That's so many tasks – do I have the capacity?'. The slide has three columns: 'See' with a 3D cube icon, 'Measure' with an abacus icon, and 'Understand' with an icon of two people at a table. The GreenSAM logo is in the top right of the slide, and the Interreg Baltic Sea Region logo is at the bottom right. A small video feed of a participant is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide area. To the right of the slide, there's a sidebar with a 'Speaking: Gustav Friis' indicator, a list of participants (17), a search bar, and a chat window. The chat window shows messages from Silja Ngobese and Gustav Friis. At the bottom of the screen, there's a grid of 15 participant video feeds. Some participants have circular icons (K, NS, R) overlaid on their feeds. The interface includes standard Webex controls like 'Unmute', 'Stop video', and 'Share'.

Screenshots of using online event tools (GreenSAM partner meetings)