

<b>Name</b>	<b>Virtual conferences</b>
<b>Brief Description</b>	<p>Also known as virtual seminars, virtual conferences are temporary online forums around a certain topic, where different media are employed to keep interaction flowing among organizers, speakers and the public. They are normally done via the internet, but there is a possibility for server-based e-conferencing as well. They usually happen real-time, with participants interacting all at once, known as “synchronous conferencing” although there is also the option to pre-record videos which will be then screened (“asynchronous conferences”) (Engage2020 Consortium, 2013).</p> <p>Some of the most typically used media include live or recorded videos, live or recorded presentations with slides, message swapping, file sharing and polls and surveys. They tend to be <b>carefully planned</b>, with clear time-frames and discussion topics. The development of the internet and new communication technologies has enabled the emergence of new softwares well-suited to satisfy a variety of needs and purposes (e.g. business meetings, educational sessions or stakeholder dialogues) that allow high levels of interaction while dealing with great numbers of attendees from very diverse locations around the world- adjusting to budgetary constraints-. Some of the most common ones include <a href="#">GoToWebinar</a> , <a href="#">Zoom</a> or <a href="#">Cisco Webex</a> . Some other softwares have incorporated a gaming element to make the experience more real for the user, such as <a href="#">Virtway events</a> or <a href="#">vFAIRS</a>.</p>
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>Before the Event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a specific topic</li> <li>• Choose a digital platform</li> <li>• Select speakers and facilitators</li> <li>• Set the agenda</li> <li>• Contact speakers and participants</li> <li>• Promote the e-conference in your networks</li> </ul> <p>During the Event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely and concise logistical information to participants, speakers and staff</li> <li>• Provide logistical support to speakers and to the presenter</li> <li>• Be prepared in case of technical problems</li> </ul>
<b>Estimated planning time needed:</b>	20-80h
<b>Estimated budget needed:</b>	Medium - main entries: hosting platform costs; speakers pro bono fee
<b>Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge exchange</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Dissemination of outcomes</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer learning</li> </ul>
<b>Time estimated:</b>	>2h
<b>Target Audience:</b>	All audiences suit this format

<b>Number of audience:</b>	>40
<b>Group composition:</b>	Conferences are suitable both for homogeneous and heterogeneous groups
<b>Level of Knowledge required and possible challenges</b>	The organiser should have a sound understanding of the subject matter of the conference and be able to choose the right formats and speakers related to its target audience
<b>Facilitator Skills</b>	Moderate (Depending on session, whereas it is interactive and conducting to discussion on brainstorming, in which case higher experience is preferred or if it is a matter of introducing speakers in a panel where less experience is needed).
<b>Example</b>	<p>European Urban Resilience Forum 2020 Online version:  <a href="https://urbanresilienceforum.eu/">https://urbanresilienceforum.eu/</a></p> <p>4th Biobased Economy Conference - VIRTUAL Edition  <a href="https://events.b2match.com/e/biobased2020">https://events.b2match.com/e/biobased2020</a></p> <p>Mannheim 2020: 9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns  <a href="https://conferences.sustainablecities.eu/mannheim2020/">https://conferences.sustainablecities.eu/mannheim2020/</a></p>
<b>Relevant sources</b>	<p>Reshef, O., Aharonovich, I., Armani, A. M., Gigan, S., Grange, R., Kats, M. A., &amp; Sapienza, R. (2020). How to organize an online conference. <i>Nature Reviews Materials</i>, 5(4), 253-256. Available at: <a href="https://www.nature.com/articles/s41578-020-0194-0.pdf">https://www.nature.com/articles/s41578-020-0194-0.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7408">http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7408</a></p>