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Smaller than plenaries and larger than concurrent sessions, theme forums are a core element of IAIA conferences. They consist of "cut-above" presentations and discussions which **address the conference theme and are cross-cutting**, bringing together on a particular topic the various aspects of impact assessment and examining how those aspects apply to different sectors and issues.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the Program Committee select the appropriate number of theme forums for the final schedule and to ensure that those selected are the highest quality.

Program Committees 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 basic paper sessions on a larger scale; the Program Committee will reassign the forum to a regular concurrent 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 Committee in February 2025, theme forum conveners should plan to send their regular session plans AND the following information to the 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 the chair does not send this additional information together with the session plans, the theme forum may 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) How does this session bring together on a particular topic the various aspects of impact assessment and examine how those aspects apply to different sectors and issues?
4) What are the objectives of the forum? What will participants learn?
5) Explain how this theme forum is different (i.e., a higher caliber) from a standard session.

6) 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) and describe how this format is innovative.
7) 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 The Hub (IAIA's networking platform)? Provide an article for the web site?)

If the session is not confirmed as a theme forum by the Program Committee, it will remain on the program as a regular concurrent session.

If you have speakers/panelists (open or invited), they should submit abstracts by 31 October 2024 and be registered by 22 January 2025. Per instructions provided to you in your session acceptance notice, even if your speakers are not preparing papers, they are required to submit an abstract on their topic or position via the abstract submission process. Individuals will not be included in the final program if we do not have their abstract and registration in our databases by the submission and registration deadlines.

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