Frequently Asked Questions for Side Event Organizers

As of 1 May 2024

This guidance note is prepared to address frequently asked questions and provide relevant information and guidance to organizers of side-events to be held in connection with the 9th Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development Goals (a.k.a. 2024 STI Forum) from 8 May to 10 May 2024.

Useful links

- Draft programme of the Official Sessions of the 2024 STI Forum (9-10 May 2024, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQ)
- Latest side events programme (8-10 May 2024, UNHQ, Virtual & Offsite)
- General Participant Guide
- Stakeholder Registration (deadline: **5pm, EDT, 21 April 2024**)
- Guidelines for Side Events
- Form to submit final details for in-person side events at UNHQ: https://forms.gle/XFS1asn4vYF19oin6 (deadline: **Wednesday, 10 April 2024**)
- Form to submit final details for virtual & off-site side events: https://forms.gle/sor7BrhkbkHRK8bc6 (deadline: **Friday, 12 April 2024**)
- 2024 STI Forum Side Event social media templates
- Template for side event summary (deadline: **17 May 2024**)

Frequently Asked Questions – All Side Events

1. **Where can I find the latest side events programme?**

   In connection with the 2024 STI Forum, a limited number of side events will be organized by Member States, UN system entities, Intergovernmental Organizations and accredited non-governmental stakeholders. Side events will be held either in-person at UNHQ, or virtually, or off-site in various New York City locations. The lists of side events are subject to change. Please always refer to the side events webpage for the latest information.

2. What were the criteria for the selection of side events for the 2024 STI Forum?

Selection of side events was guided by the following criteria:

- Side events must be closely related to the theme of the 2024 STI Forum;
- Side events should ensure gender and geographic balance and strive for meaningful participation of stakeholders, including civil society, women, youth, indigenous peoples, academic and scientific communities, among others;
- Side events should highlight concrete success stories and examples of innovations, solutions and technologies that support the implementation of one or more SDGs, especially those under in-depth review in 2024 (SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17).

Preference was given to side events organized by coalitions of actors including UN Member States, UN entities, Intergovernmental Organizations and recognized stakeholder networks, associations, Major Groups and Other Stakeholder constituencies.

3. What are the responsibilities of side event organizers?

Please refer to the responsibilities of side events outlined in the Guidelines for Side Events. In addition, the side events to be held in-person at UNHQ have been requested to limit the duration to maximum 75 minutes.

4. Can I attend the official sessions of the 2024 STI Forum at UNHQ? Where can I find the latest information about the programme of the official sessions?

The official sessions of the 2024 STI Forum will take place from 9 May to 10 May 2024 at the Trusteeship Council Chamber at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Draft programme of the official sessions of the 2024 STI Forum could be found here.

To participate in the official sessions of the 2024 STI Forum at UNHQ, please refer to the General Participant Guide. All representatives of non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders who wish to attend the STI Forum and parallel events in person from 8 May to 10 May 2024 must register by 21 April, 5PM, EDT. Please refer to this page for further guidance.

Kindly note for in-person side events, there is no separate registration process. All UNHQ side event organizers, speakers, and participants who do not already have a valid UN Grounds Pass must be duly registered for the 2024 STI Forum in order to access UNHQ to attend in-person side events from 8 May to 10 May 2024.

5. I am a representative from Government/UN system. Do I need to complete the stakeholder registration form on Indico to register for the 2024 STI Forum?

In order to attend the 2024 STI Forum, representatives from Governments or UN system entities should reach out to their Permanent Missions or Liaison Offices in New York to be included in

their delegations to the STI Forum. For further details, please refer to [the General Participant Guide](#).

The registration form on Indico with 21 April deadline is for representatives of **non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders** who wish to attend the STI Forum and its side events. People who already have a valid UN Grounds Pass do not need to complete this form to gain access to the UNHQ.

6. **I have submitted final details of my side event through the form as requested. What if my side event needs to change the official title or the list of organizing partners again after submitting the final details form online?**

   The secretariat can accommodate additional requests via email until 30 April 2024. Please note that it is not guaranteed that edits submitted after the deadlines will be reflected online in a timely manner, although they will definitely be reflected in the final side events programme on the STI Forum website.

7. **Can the Secretariat help promote my side event? Are there social media card templates I can use for my side event?**

   Promoting side events is the sole responsibility of side event organizers. The Secretariat will not provide any assistance in this regard. However, side events listed in the official side event programmes can use these [social media card templates](#), which includes the STI Forum logo. Please note that using the UN emblem for side event outreach is strictly prohibited.

8. **I understand that I am required to submit a summary of my side event after its conclusion by 17 May 2024. Is there a summary template?**

   Side event organizers are required to submit a short summary of the side event after its conclusion, no later than 17 May 2024. Please [click here](#) to download the summary template (click on "File" and select "Download" as word document). Summaries of side events will be made available on the 2024 STI Forum website. The Secretariat reserves the right to remove any content that is deemed inappropriate.

Other questions specific to UNHQ In-Person Side Events

1. **Who can I expect to participate in my side event? Can I send invitations to people to promote my side event?**

   Side events taking place at UNHQ will be open to everyone attending the 2024 STI Forum on a first-come-first-served basis, up to the capacity of the conference room.

It is the side event organizers' responsibility to promote their side events, including any necessary outreach to their desirable audience. To avoid confusion, side event organizers should not set up parallel registrations for their side events.

2. **I would like to know more about the people who will participate in my side event. Can I set up a registration page for my side event?**

All in-person side events inside UNHQ must be open to all STI Forum participants on a first-come-first-served basis. To avoid confusion, there should NOT be any parallel registrations for side events. Side event organizers who would like to learn more about their participants could consider arranging sign-up sheets at the event.

3. **Can I change my side event from in-person at UNHQ to virtual or off-site?**

Yes. If the organizers have decided to organize the side event virtually or at off-site locations outside of UNHQ instead, please inform the Secretariat at your earliest convenience.

4. **Can I switch to a different conference room or a different time slot?**

The initial assignment of conference rooms has balanced various factors including room availability and preferences expressed by side event organizers in their applications. After the initial assignment, the Secretariat will not initiate swaps of conference rooms or timeslots. However, if two side events in the programme have reached an agreement to swap, the Secretariat would be happy to accommodate the agreed changes.

Other requests to change conference room or timeslot assigned to in-person side events at UNHQ might not be able to be accommodated due to limited availability. Side events that cannot work with the assigned conference room facilities are kindly advised to change to virtual format or host the event outside of UNHQ in off-site locations.

5. **Do I need to inform anyone if my side event is expecting high-level participation (i.e. Head of State, Head of Government, ministers, UN Principals, First ladies)?**

For protocol and security reasons, please inform the Secretariat as soon as possible if any Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers, First Ladies or UN Principals are confirmed to attend your side event. Please do not forget to indicate your unique side event ID in the subject of the email.

6. **Some of the speakers of my side event cannot travel to New York and will have to speak remotely. Is it technically feasible in the conference room?**

If an organizer requires remote participation for a side event and is able to secure **the conference room from one hour before the start of the event**, UN Broadcast and Conference Support services could be available to support at additional cost.

Most side events in the 2024 STI Forum side event programme don't meet this one hour time requirement, which makes remote participation not feasible. When the side event is the first meeting of the day, or when the conference room is not being occupied by other events before your side event, it might be feasible. Please check with the Secretariat regarding feasibility of this additional service for your side event.

If it is confirmed that it is possible to arrange VTC support for your side event, Please reach out to request-for-services@un.org in order to secure a BCSS licensed virtual platform. (BCSS does not support remote participation unless it is on a BCSS licensed platform.)

7. **What services are NOT available for side events? What's included in technical services that I request in the room? What would be the estimated cost of my in-person side event at UNHQ?**

Costs of UNHQ in-person side events could be in the range of $1000-$2500, depending on the size of the conference room, services requested, as well as utility and security charges, among others. The exact number will only be available when official cost estimations are obtained from relevant service departments.

Kindly note that UN interpretation services will **NOT** be available to service side events for the STI Forum, although in conference rooms equipped with interpretation booths it is feasible for organizers to bring their own interpreters. Kindly also note that alphabet conference rooms (such as CR-F) are not equipped with interpretation booths or cameras, therefore **NOT** possible to request webcast services or arrange own interpretation there.

For detailed services included with the support of a technician, please see box below.

- **Interparliamentary Conference Room Services (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, TRI, ECO, etc.) with a Technician include**:
  - Microphone and ear shells with voice lift
  - Computer Projection of the client provided laptop for content/video playback
    (Laptop provided must have an HDMI output, or the client must provide an adaptor to HDMI)
  - Transmission for Webcast and recording
    (This includes audio or video recording)
  - Remote participation on a UN Licensed platform (such as Webex or Unite VC)
    (The conference room must be booked by the client in gMeets and available from one hour before the start of the side event for setup and testing.)

- **Alphabet Conference Room Services with a Technician include**:
  - Setup and operation of microphones for a portable conference room system
  - Assistance with connecting the client provided laptop to the display in the room
  - ***** No webcast, video recording, or remote participation are available in these conference rooms (Depending on the conference, the portable conference system that includes up to 32 table microphones can be booked for alphabet rooms. The room will need to be booked from 1 hour before the start for setup, if this service is requested)**

- **Alphabet Conference Room Services *(without a technician)* include**:
  - 70" Display with HDMI cable for the client to connect their own laptop (No BCSS Assistance provided and No Cost)
  - ***** No webcast, video recording, or remote participation are available in these conference rooms**

- **Interparliamentary Conference Room Services (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, TRI, ECO, etc.) without a Technician means:**
  - Screen and microphones off
  - Room access only
  - No webcast possible

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8. **Is it possible to organize my in-person side event at no cost?**

    No. Even if technical services and webcast services are not requested, there might still be minimum charges incurred for your in-person side event. The exact number will only be available when official quotes are obtained from relevant service departments.

9. **What is a Business Partner (BP) Number? Where can I find it? What if none of the organizing partners have a BP Number?**

    All Permanent Missions, UN funds and programmes that have paid for services at the UNHQ before would have a valid Business Partner (BP) number. The BP Number is needed to create an invoice for the event.

    *UN offices or Regional Commissions can provide Umoja Coding Block in lieu of the BP number.

    Together with the BP number, your side event must also confirm the legal name and address of the entity associated with the BP number and nominate a contact person for financial payments (name, email and phone number), to whom the invoice will be sent.

    Invoices must be paid in advance for any side event to take place.

    Typically, you can find your organization's BP number from colleagues who have managed financial relationships with the UN before. If your organization does not have a BP number, please check with your organizing partners first. Creation of new BP numbers might be time consuming and might not allow timely payment for your side event to take place as planned.

    If none of the organizing partners have a valid BP number, please urgently email salame1@un.org and li39@un.org with your unique event ID number included in the subject line [Side-Event + unique ID number - 2024 STI Forum]. Without a valid BP number, the side-event cannot take place as planned.

10. **What is the capacity of the Conference Room assigned to my side event? Can I please have a floor plan?**

    Floor plans to the relevant conference rooms with capacity details can be found here:
    CR-F, CR-7, CR-9, CR-11, CR-12, Trusteeship Council Chamber

11. **Can I arrange for my side event to be on UN WebTV? How much does it cost?**

    If your side event is assigned to a conference room equipped with cameras, you may request webcast coverage for the side event at additional cost.

    Please note that "alphabet rooms" (such as CR-F) are NOT equipped with cameras.

    Webcasts will incur additional costs of $296 per standard event (up to 3 hours), which will need to be paid in advance directly to UN Webcast. Events happening before 10am, between 1pm and 3pm and after 6pm will incur an additional charge of $222.

    To request webcast services for your event, please reach out directly to webcast@un.org.

Please indicate that this webcast is for a 2024 STI Forum side event, include its time, location, organizing partners, and share a programme/flyer/web link of the event.

You will be requested to provide a 16 by 9 aspect ratio graphic card (1920 by 1080 pixels). Please use this template to make one for your side event.

Kindly note that proof of payment must be received at least 48 hours in advance of the side event for the webcast service to be provided.

12. **Can I bring professional filming equipment inside of UNHQ to film my side event?**

Only accredited media can bring professional media equipment into UNHQ. Media accreditation guidance is available in the relevant section of the General Participant Guide. Kindly note that deadline for media accreditation is **3 May 2024**.

Delegates, NGOs and other pass holders may take photos or videos using a small camera or phone, provided that their actions are not disrupting the proceedings of the meeting nor interfering with the sightlines of other participants.

13. **Can I arrange simultaneous interpretation services for my side event?**

UN interpretation services are NOT available to service STI Forum side events. Organizers should plan to hold their event in English.

If your side event is assigned to take place in a conference room equipped with interpretation booths, organizers may opt to request access to the interpretation booths while engaging external interpretation service providers to provide simultaneous interpretation at their own cost. The organizers will be held accountable for all associated responsibilities and liabilities.

Kindly note that remote interpretation is strictly prohibited as intervals between side events will not be long enough for the technical set up required.

Please note that it is the sole responsibility of the side event organizers to ensure that all interpreters be duly registered to enter UNHQ to service side events.

14. **Can I arrange catering services for my side event?**

Catering services at UNHQ are managed by CulinArt. To enquire about catering services for your side events, please reach out to CulinArt directly at +1(212)963-7029.

15. **Can I bring pop-up banners into the conference room or set up anything outside of my conference room in the corridor?**

No pop-ups or banners are permitted outside conference rooms or in hallways. Banners, pop-ups are permitted inside your conference room as long as they are made of environmentally friendly materials and do not block access or egress paths in any way. Kindly note that items are subject to security screening on entry and may lead to delays. All items must be removed immediately following your event.

16. **Are there any other requirements/limitations/restrictions in the conference room I should keep in mind as a side event organizer?**

Side event organizers should keep in mind that

- Changes to the physical layout of the conference rooms are strictly forbidden.

- Food and beverages are not allowed in conference rooms. It is the side event organizers' responsibility to duly communicate it with their event participants.

- No digital nameplates will be available for side events. Side event organizers could bring their own paper nameplates for side events, if needed.

- Side event organizers should bring their own laptop with HDMI to connect to the in-room system. If the laptop has no HDMI connection, it is the responsibility of the organizer to bring the necessary hardware. There will be no connection cables available inside the UNHQ.

- **Regarding the display of PowerPoint and video presentations or pre-recorded video statements, side event organizers must bring their own laptop to the meeting with the files already uploaded. HDMI cable for PCs may be available upon request, but not for Mac. Side event organizers using a Mac must bring their own HDMI adapter/dongle to the conference room. Please note that side event organizers must have a designated focal point to operate the laptop during the side event.**

- All side events should strive to be paper-free to minimize the environmental impact of the Conference. We encourage side event organizers to work with QR codes to promote the download of documents rather than distributing hard copies in the conference room.

- No single use plastic bottles or other containers should be brought on-site or be made available to participants. The Secretariat reserves the right to remove any printed materials and single-use plastic items found in the meeting rooms.

- The sale of printed materials or any goods by side event organizers inside UNHQ is strictly prohibited. All materials left behind at the end of the working day will be disposed of.

Other questions specific to Virtual & Off-Site Side Events

1. **Is there a preferred virtual event platform for STI Forum side events?**

   No. There is no preferred virtual event platform of the 2024 STI Forum. Organizers of virtual side events are responsible for hosting their side event on a virtual platform of their choice, managing all logistical aspects of the virtual side events.

2. **Can I request to change the scheduled time of my virtual/off-site side event?**

Virtual and off-site side events can be scheduled anytime between 8:00am and 8:00pm from 8 May to 10 May except during the hours of the official sessions of the 2024 STI Forum (10am-1pm, 3pm-6pm, 9-10 May 2024).

The Secretariat can accept change of scheduled time for virtual and off-site side events up till the end of April. Note that virtual and off-site side events cannot be longer than 90 minutes.

3. **Can I change my side event from virtual to in-person?**

Due to limited conference facilities at UNHQ in New York, virtual events that decide to switch to in-person can only consider off-site locations outside of UNHQ and remain on the Virtual and Off-Site Side Event Programme.

4. **Can my side event be a hybrid event?**

It is up to the organizers to make hybrid arrangements for virtual and off-site side events. Side event organizers must cover all costs incurred and be responsible for all relevant event logistics.