

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY ONLINE

Expanding Pathways for Sustainable Growth in Emerging Markets

The challenge for any training event, and especially for webinar trainings, is to design and facilitate a learning process that taps into adult learners' intrinsic motivation, professional interests, and expertise.

What is the pathway toward more engaging and sustainable learning BEFORE, DURING and AFTER live ESG disclosure and transparency webinars?

This Tip Sheet offers guidance and examples for more fully engaging diverse senior leaders, and for enhancing the impact of online learning, based upon lessons learned from IFC's Disclosure and Transparency program.

IFC's "Beyond the Balance Sheet" Program offers an ecosystem of resources and reporting tools to help emerging market companies customize their disclosure of strategic, governance, and performance information in a progressive way – depending on the organization's size, complexity, and operational context. ESG disclosure and transparency (D&T) training and platform resources build upon the success of IFC's award-winning Disclosure and Transparency Toolkit "Beyond the Balance Sheet."

What is new and different about IFC's capacity building is the increased reliance on live online webinars and e-learning modules. Prior to COVID-19, D&T teams engaged companies, regulators, and institutes of directors through in-person advisory meetings and training-of-trainer (TOT) workshops, which were delivered in two three-day formats. IFC is now presenting ESG disclosure and transparency content within two-to-three-hour virtual learning webinars and e-learning modules.

The guiding principle in the preparation of D&T webinar content is similar to the guidance for ESG disclosure and reporting: *not more, but better information*.

This Tip Sheet offers guidance and examples for more fully engaging diverse professionals and for enhancing the impact of online learning. Flat screen communication is not intended as a substitute for the dynamics of face-to-face human interactions. Instead, valuing the power of in-person connectivity, this paper anticipates the increased reliance on online learning and the blending of in-person workshops, live webinars, and platform-based learning formats.

To maximize results, a cohesive and engaging experiential learning *process* is as important as the selection of the *content* that is presented.



IFC's D&T E-Learning Modules

I. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS

IFC's disclosure and transparency (D&T) workshops and webinars attract company executives, board directors, investors, regulators, and other professionals with demonstrated commitment to helping emerging market companies attract capital and build resilient enterprises. As adult learners, they come together with individual preferences and pre-conceptions that are grounded in diverse career and leadership experiences.

With respect for the expertise and experiences of senior leaders attending IFC events, this guide recognizes experiential adult learning as a model for engaging diverse senior leaders as champions for a leadership and learning process that motivates, provides vital information, and supports the integration of financial and ESG disclosure and reporting in the most practical and concrete ways.

Experiential adult learning is a pragmatic, action-oriented approach to leadership and capacity building. Compared to academic coursework, which tends to focus on mastery of content, this model engages learners in the dynamics of continuous learning. The four-phase process begins with reflective analysis of concrete experiences, introduces pragmatic concepts and tools, and encourages strategic group problem solving as practice for the real-world application of what has been learned.

The inter-locking phases of the experiential learning cycle begin with motivation (*Who? Why?*), encourage reflective analysis (*What works?*) and lead to progressive levels of strategic problem solving (*How?*) and innovation (*What if...?*).

Listen to insights on experiential adult learning from Mary Jo Larson [here](#).

The four-phase learning process is summarized and illustrated below, in Figure 1.



MOTIVATE with authentic experiences, stories, and examples. *Tips:* What is the business case for D&T? Elicit questions and concerns. Relate discussions to participant concerns & interests.



INFORM with focused presentations, D&T tools, and examples of reporting on company strategy, governance, and performance. *Tips:* Probing questions draw out relevant experiences and challenges.

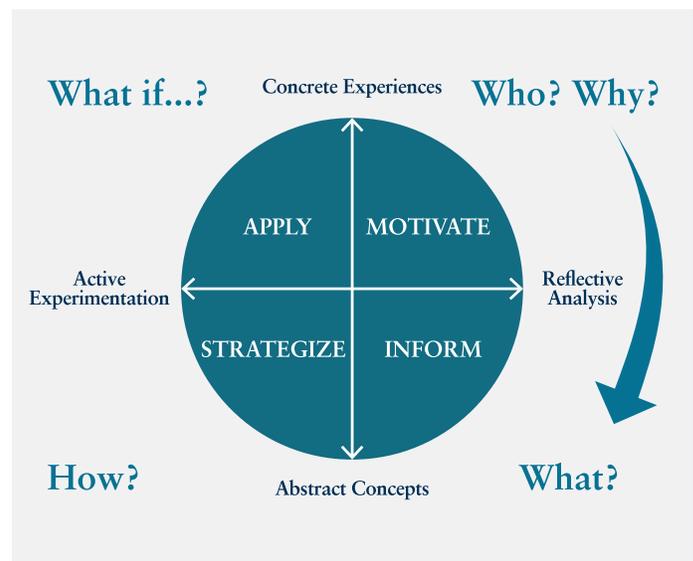


STRATEGIZE *with* adult learners to seek useful guidance and tips for addressing ESG realities, opportunities, challenges, and dilemmas.



APPLY pragmatic D&T understandings, tools, and practices to support capacity building within organizations, networks, and partnership.

Figure 1



Motivation is the most important phase of experiential adult learning. Who are the participants? Why are they seeking D&T knowledge and skills? Due to the time constraints, training facilitators tend to discount the significance of the trust and confidence building practices that welcome participants and set the stage for candid and respectful communication.

II. LEARNING AND CONNECTING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Comparing the dynamics of in-person workshops to those of virtual webinars, what tends to be missing from online learning events are the social dynamics, such as the pair and table group conversations and problem solving deliberations that help to build relationships, understandings, and consensus on ESG thinking and practices.

This section offers **PRACTICAL TIPS** for motivating and engaging adult learners *before, during, and after* D&T webinars. Why place such emphasis on motivating and engaging and eliciting local perspectives? By seeking concerns and questions and “checking in” for feedback, facilitators increase the probability that the D&T concepts, tools, and frameworks they are presenting as international best practice are truly relevant, meaningful, and doable in local contexts.

MOTIVATING BEFORE Webinars (Sample)

Prepare Participants

- Promote event, elicit applications.
- Send brief survey to gauge interests, information, and case studies.
- Deliver the program in 2.5 – 3 hour sessions over 3 or 4 weeks.
- Do not clutter the agenda to allow time for discussion.
- Forward objectives and agenda.
- Send videos in advance of the webinar.
- Send materials at least 2 days before.
- Promote peer-to-peer learning by forming practice groups or pairs and assigning different tasks to each.
- Others?

Regional and D&T Teams

- Communicate to prepare approaches and logistics (6-8 weeks in advance).
- Seek regional case examples.
- Ensure IT support familiar with webinar functions such as chat rooms for 4-7 people.
- Rehearse projecting slides, break out room.
- Discuss time management signals, if needed.
- Review participant list and concerns.
- Forward PowerPoint (PPT) slides to IT (back-up support).

DURING webinars:

General TIPS for motivating and interacting *with* participants:

- Welcome participants with all cameras on, a smile, and your eyes scanning participants’ faces.
- Event organizers facilitate brief “informal” participant introductions before the formal opening.
- Use a conversational voice when speaking – avoid the monotone associated with reading texts.
- Personalize with brief, authentic D&T anecdotes or stories.
- Catch the audience’s attention with remarkable updates, facts, or questions.
- Minimize reliance on PPT slides.
- Avoid more than four bullet points on each PPT slide – use visuals that stir imaginations.
- Encourage questions, comments, and concerns in the **Chat** function.
- Have a person assigned to manage the Chat and integrate relevant questions and comments within session discussions.
- Be prepared to show additional examples, slides and resources based on burning questions from the Chat.
- Activate participants during every session by asking for Chat responses to YES/NO questions or polls that rate on a scale of 1-5, or multiple-choice questions. Participants may also give **Reactions** by raising hands or selecting a positive symbol.
- Pose a meaningful question as a challenge for **Breakout Room** conversations with 4-8 participants.
- Assign one facilitator for each Breakout Room conversation. Encourage other participants to report out following 10-15 minutes of discussions in groups.

- **Practice, practice, practice** – integrate practice exercises after each webinar to build and demonstrate knowledge. For example, consulting companies interested in assessing and developing annual reports should review and provide recommendations for annual reports improvement. Institute of directors should develop a training course for their market based on the skills and knowledge acquired.
- **Peer-to-peer learning** – allocate time for groups/pairs presentations and discussion after each session.
- **Videos/interviews** – as time differences can make it challenging for all experts to participate, record videos or podcasts of 2-3 minute providing experts insights on a particular topic. Microlearning helps disseminate the course and creates new “snackable” content.
- Organize follow-up consultation with experts after each session in the series.
- Such series are a great medium to pilot and collect stakeholders’ feedback on new D&T tools and products.
- Others?

The sample webinar agenda below offers guidance for motivating adult learners at the beginning of a live D&T webinar event. As emphasized above, respectful interactions early in the learning process help to “break the ice” for a more engaging, productive, and sustainable learning process.

MOTIVATING DURING Webinars (D&T Agenda)

TIME	TOPIC	TIPS/ LESSONS LEARNED
15 min	Informal Registration, Introductions Facilitated by local hosts/organizers. Participants greet and introduce selves informally. (Share brief bios in advance.)	<i>Encourage face-to-face interactions from the start, with cameras & microphones “on,” chat greetings, etc.</i>
20 min	Formal Welcome and Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/regional D&T keynote speaker • TOT facilitator orients to goals, agenda, webinar norms/tips • Norms – ESG and Leadership 	<i>Limit formal introductions to 3-4 sentences! Panel bios are attached below the Agenda. Refer to ESG pillars to establish norms, include webinar tips.</i>
0 min	Interactive Panel Discussion (3-4 experts) Topic: How Companies Attract Capital and Build Resilient Enterprises Focus: Why is ESG transparency important when everyone is focused on financial sustainability? Listen to responses from panelist Anne Molyneux and moderator Ralitza Germanova here.	<i>Focus discussions on one core question. Limit speakers to one PPT each. Moderator finds ways to link speakers’ ideas to ensure cohesive discussion. Encourage “Chat” comments, questions.</i>
10 min	Q&A: Checking In Participants ask questions and comment using “Chat” or microphones. Listen to the conversation as Erik Vermeullen offers webinar tips here.	<i>Local organizers monitor Chat questions. Ask for comments. Encourage participants to un-mute microphone and turn cameras on. Protect the 10 minutes for Q&A and be patient. Listen, and respond with integrity, authentic voice.</i>

MOTIVATING AFTER Sessions (Sample)

Interactions with Participants

- Request feedback during closing remarks.
- Forward any promised D&T resources.
- Direct participants to ESG Platform resources and regional pages to encourage user-created content and creation of community.
- Support Up-skilling, continuous learning.
- Ask participants to prepare action plans with activities for the next 6 to 12 months and follow up every 4 to 6 months.
- Others?

Debrief D&T Team

- Discuss what works / any suggestions.
- Analyze participant feedback, suggestions.
- Support Up-skilling, continuous learning.
- Develop regionally inspired new tools and material and/or upgrade existing ones.
- Others?

“ASK THE EXPERT” SERIES

All D&T webinar participants are invited to sign up for a one-hour practical discussion with a D&T session presenter. Participants sign up in advance of multiple opportunities.

III. EMERGING D&T PLATFORM AND ECOSYSTEM

The Beyond the Balance Sheet Platform serves as an attractor and focal point for continuous, self-paced D&T discovery, learning, creating, and assessing in response to regional requests for resources and support and navigating the fast-changing ESG landscape. The Platform is designed to help companies continue their ESG disclosure and transparency journey so that investors and other stakeholders can access, understand, and trust their ESG reports and communication.



What is the pathway to more sustainable D&T learning? The experiential learning journeys launched during D&T training workshops and webinars is enabled through Platform resources that facilitate a continuous process of exploring learning, creating, and assessing:

-  **Explore** the business case of ESG disclosure, best practical, regional and industry examples and more. *[Motivate]*
-  **Learn** with practical, self-paced resources for the integration of material ESG information in strategy, governance, and performance. *[Inform]*
-  **Create** with tools and step-by-step guidance on how to communicate ESG disclosure and interact with different audience. *[Strategize]*
-  **Assess** the disclosure through a gap analysis tool that builds on the IFC’s D&T framework to analyze and improve ESG disclosures that go beyond the balance sheet. *[Apply]*

The essence of the ESG Platform and ecosystem is continuous experiential learning, connecting workshop and webinar participants to pragmatic resources, self-paced learning modules and regional or industry specific communities. This e-learning system contributes to the creation of trust and confidence by valuing sustainability and by promoting more effective “reporting” and “communication” practices, as well as more open and inclusive dialogue among companies, investors, and other stakeholders.

The Beyond the Balance Sheet Platform is considered crucial in expanding opportunities for sustainable growth in emerging markets. Emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), provide ever-expanding possibilities for multi-stakeholder dialogues that contribute to the strategic impact of D&T knowledge and tools in emerging markets. This flagship program is implemented jointly with UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Expert Insights (audios): [IFC's ESG Disclosure and Transparency webinar, Myanmar: December 17, 2020](#)

- Insights on experiential adult learning from Mary Jo Larson
- Panel discussion with Anne Molyneux and moderator Ralitza Germanova
- Webinar tips and guidance from Erik Vermeullen

IFC's *Converting CG Training for Online Delivery: Key Issues* (Jan 2021) provides useful tips and guidance on converting in-person workshops into the online webinar format.

[IFC's Corporate Governance Board Leadership Training Skills Guide](#)

[IFC's Disclosure and Transparency Toolkit](#)

[IFC's Special Guidance: Disclosure and Transparency in Crisis - Increasing Resilience and Building Trust During and After COVID-19, February 2021](#)

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McCarthy, B., and D. McCarthy. 2005. *Teaching Around the 4MAT Cycle*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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2121 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C., 20433 USA
Internet: www.ifc.org