

Promoting inclusiveness in events organised within the Earth Sciences Department framework

Introduction

The Earth Sciences Department at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center-Centro Nacional de Supercomputación (BSC-CNS) is committed to fostering engagement strategies that promote a more inclusive and diverse community. To support a welcoming and diverse community of Earth system modelling across Earth system sciences and high-performance computing (HPC), we are implementing activities to create a more equitable environment for everyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, societal background, and career stage, among many others.

Our events engage members of the HPC community, researchers, engineers, users, and stakeholders. These events should be organised following some guidelines to ensure they are as inclusive as possible. These guidelines are aimed to help those planning, organising and running events to ensure that they are open, welcoming and beneficial to all. Not all points in the following checklists will be relevant every time, but they are intended to serve as reminders of the areas to think about at each stage of the planning and organisation process.

The following guidelines should not be considered the final word, but are open to comments and suggestions for improvement in the light of the experiences of all of us.

Before the event

The planning stage

- Ensure that **the organising team is diverse** and includes people from under-represented groups. Discuss the need to avoid unconscious bias explicitly, and ensure that all voices are heard.
Be prepared to address resistance by emphasizing that gender balance and any kind of diversity (age, background, culture, origin, religion, etc.) do not compromise quality. Instead, they enhance discussions, introduce diverse perspectives, and often lead to fresh, innovative

ideas. Ensure that the distribution of tasks is made properly to avoid reproducing gender (or other kind of) roles.

- **Collaborate with existing initiatives** (such as Women in High-Performance Computing, WHPC, and other networks) **to identify and connect with diverse presenters**. Using these resources helps ensure that, for example, the same few female speakers are not repeatedly asked to contribute, avoiding an undue burden on them. Include diverse speakers throughout the core elements of the programme, ensuring they are integral to the event.
- Take **care when choosing dates** to avoid religious holidays and allow for a good work-life balance. For longer events, consider offering childcare options to make the event more accessible and family-friendly. Whenever possible, organise the event from Tuesday to Thursday, so attendees can travel during work days.
- Ensure that **all social events are inclusive**. Provide non-alcoholic drink options as a standard, along with food options that accommodate all dietary restrictions, preferences, and allergies (i.e., vegan, gluten-free, halal, etc.). The food should be properly labelled so people can easily identify what they can eat.

Sporting activities should be welcoming and accessible, with no gender segregation and the option for participants to opt out without feeling excluded. Consider offering nearby quiet spaces for those who prefer/need a more relaxed environment or a break from social activities. Consider also choosing an environment that is baby and toddler-friendly to facilitate participation by new parents.

- Establish a **plan of action** in case of discomfort (e.g. harassment) or non-compliance with the code of conduct during the event. Ensure that all organisers are aware of the action plan and know the steps to take in case it needs to be put into action. Ensure having a reference person who can put into action the plan.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit at BSC has a sexual and gender-based [harassment protocol](#) that can be used or serve as a starting point. In case this protocol is used, ensure having a reference person who can refer any complaint to the EDI Unit so that the measures established in the protocol can be implemented.

- Establish a list of indicators that allow for an evaluation of the organisation and achievement of the event in terms of inclusiveness.

Communication and registration

- **Publicise the event** through diverse networks (such as Women in HPC networks) and not only generalist channels.
- **Ensure that publicity material sets a welcoming tone**. Include an explicit statement in the event notification that applications from people in under-represented groups will be especially welcomed. Publicise a speaker list that demonstrates that participants from diverse backgrounds will find role models with whom they identify before they need to decide whether to apply. Use gender-neutral language (e.g. “they” instead of “he/she”, or the equivalent in the lingua franca for the meeting). Make materials accessible for visual impairments and use culturally neutral language, colours, and symbols to avoid unintended offence.

- Prepare and provide a code of conduct, and as a condition of registration, require participants to **agree to accept a code of conduct** at the event. This sends the message to the less confident that the tone of the event will be supportive.
- Ask for **all relevant information at registration**: e.g. dietary needs, accessibility needs, etc. Again, this sends the message that the organisers are taking accessibility seriously. Offer the option for people registering to give their preferred name and pronouns, and ensure that these are respected: e.g. provide name badges that use the preferred name and pronouns. Make sure to include in the registration form those fields necessary to be able to carry out the post-event evaluation (e.g., disaggregation by gender, white/non-white, career stage, straight/queer, or similar groups when possible to catch potential bias in the perception of inclusiveness).
- Provide as **much information** as possible and in a clear manner in the case of **visa requirements**. Offers the possibility to provide any necessary documentation (e.g. letter of invitation) in a way that accommodates the preference/need of the attendees. Some people may not want to use the name they have on the official documentation for the event badge, for example; in this case, offer the option to provide an invitation letter (or any other necessary documentation) with a different name, in case it is necessary for the authorities.

Making the logistics accessible

- Ensure that **the venue is physically accessible** to all and that have at hand all the required facilities (such as restrooms, maternity room, etc). Remember that people's accessibility needs may not be visible, and they may not wish to disclose them.
- The **environment should be quiet**, and the sound system should ensure that presentations are audible to those hard of hearing and that they can participate freely in informal discussions.
- **Visual materials** should all be easily intelligible to those with colour vision deficiency.

During the event

Setting the tone

- Ensure the visible and active involvement of diverse speakers, instructors, and helpers.
- Identify clearly whom participants should approach if they have any further needs.
- Ensure compliance with the established code of conduct. If this is not the case or if a situation of discomfort (including harassment) arises, ensure that the previously established action plan is followed.

Encouraging participation by all

- Make available **multiple ways of participation** (e.g. hybrid) for those people who may not be able to attend in person.

- Make available **multiple channels for participants to ask questions or seek help**. Not everyone feels comfortable speaking up in front of the whole group.
- In group discussions, consider **explicitly inviting and welcoming contributions** from quieter participants, but ensure that they do not feel under pressure to speak if they do not wish to. Be mindful of the dynamics within the group; e.g. if there are powerful voices, such as famous or senior participants, make sure that others are not intimidated and equally participate.

Follow up

- Ensure that all the necessary information has been collected to be able to evaluate the organisation of the event in terms of inclusivity, to identify the points that have not worked or that need to be improved.
- Include explicit questions about inclusiveness in feedback questionnaires. For example:
 - “To what extent did you feel welcome and supported during the event.”
 - “What could we have done to improve accessibility?”

Appendices

Suggested text for terms of participation

Inclusivity and respect declaration:

We are committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all participants. We expect all attendees to treat each other with respect and kindness, regardless of gender, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other characteristic. Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. By registering to attend this event, you agree to uphold these values and to contribute to a positive and respectful atmosphere.

Include a tick box for respondents to accept the declaration.

(Adapted from text suggested by the European Institute for Gender Equality:

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/words-matter/communication-formats/events>)

Suggested code of conduct

Suggested plan of action in case of harassment or non-compliance with the code of conduct

Follow the [protocol](#) established by the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit at BSC.