

Informal Data Working Group Session Planning Template

This document will help you plan and facilitate an informal working group meeting. We recommend using this document after running **Data Skills Scoping [SessionPlan 1]** and reviewing **Our Data Audiences [SlideDeck 7]**.

WORKING GROUP MEETING BEST PRACTICES

- Get it scheduled as soon as possible, pick a date and time that you can make a routine, i.e. third Thursday of the month at 4pm. Choose an optimal time for group participation.
- Book a room that has plenty of wall space and natural light (windows!). Make sure it's big enough so you can have small group breakouts.
- For your first meeting choose a topic that got a lot of attention in Data Skills Scoping session.
- Always keep an ear out for emerging topics for future working groups. Look for opportunities to solve problems/challenges people may be having. **Make the meeting as valuable as possible.**
- Use a variety of interactive formats: discussions, demos, hands-on, etc.
- If appropriate rotate team members to lead the working group meetings.
- Remind people via email one week ahead and one day ahead of the time.
- Document each meeting. If you use flipcharts and post-it notes, take pictures. Always transcribe and distribute notes afterwards

EACH MEETING SHOULD HAVE

- Topic and goal: (e.g., we will build our critical thinking skills on data visualisations)
- A scheduled time, remember to start and finish on time!
- Location: (A nice space big enough for your group to have small group breakouts)
- A lead, rotate team members for this role to help build expertise and confidence. Use it as a way to develop ambassadors, data advocates and the data active.
- A note-taker/documenter: (rotate members)
- Supplies: Flipchart paper, post-it notes, markers, any visual aids or projector/screen if appropriate.
- A session plan, remember to use a variety of formats, but here's an example.
 - A brief introduction to the topic, and a quick go-round asking participants to say one sentence on what they want to know about the topic (why did they come?)
 - Get people to break into pairs to discuss their challenges on the issue and ask them to generate post-it notes with their challenges on them.
 - Present a relevant case study on the topic. If someone on the team has indepth experience in the topic, get them to present for five to 10 minutes
 - Allow for questions and answers
 - Ask the group if they have any resources they have seen or found valuable on the topic and create a list on flipchart paper with responses.
 - Wrap-up by asking the group if they had any ahas or takeaway learnings from the meeting. Also, ask if there are any relevant next steps/action items individuals or the group may need to take.
 - Ask for ideas for a topic and a volunteer to lead the next meeting.

Follow-up with an email with reminders of next steps/action items, notes including any relevant resources, and the time and topic of the next meeting.