

Some basic criteria / guidelines for ATLAS II session moderators

Given the variety and expertise of the Subject Matter experts (SMEs) for the five Breakout sessions of ATLAS II, we can assure a solid preparation and introduction on the five subjects. And the SMEs should suggest some more resource persons (2 – 3 max.) to foster high quality inputs and debates on their topic. SMEs and some more resource persons are in charge of content and substance but not for the conduct of the session. For the latter we need qualified and experienced Moderators who can assure a well-structured, smooth and inclusive or interactive debate with the session audience – what is their key role.

Therefore such session moderators should have a clear understanding about their role what is a success factor for each session. They should provide the following skills:

- First of all, moderation is a facilitating skill,
- Compelling opening and introduction on the subject by introducing the “panellists”,
- After brief introductions by the Resource persons (panellists), active participation from all is essential (including remote participants),
- Keep an eye on clarity of terminologies and ICANN-specific acronyms, as many ALS reps. are newcomers,
- Enable an environment of openness where newcomers dare to step in by promoting questions and comments.
- Keep the debate structured and focused, short summaries on key aspects are useful,
- Avoid “alpha speakers” dominating the debate while encouraging silent audience parts,
- Being attentive to the cultural element of discussions and expression. For example, Asia participants are less likely to spontaneously speak their mind as North American participants are,
- Being attentive to language difficulties or confusions especially since an element of interpretation will be in the loop whether English/Spanish or English/French,
- Controversies are welcome but based on factual grounds,
- Good facilitation assures balanced and inclusive discourse,
- Watch time for interventions while sticking to timelines for the session,
- Summarise conclusions and outcomes at the end.

ATLAS II moderators should be familiar with these basics, provide experience from international events by reflecting multi-cultural set-ups and particularities.

Once again, if we want to assure high quality debates and outcomes during ATLAS II, we should select session moderators we know well enough to fulfil this important function. This needs more than “entertaining your audience” or chairing a monthly RALO call. Furthermore, it could be an asset when the moderator is closely familiar with the subject of his session.

Moderators should also have experience in moderating such a session, and in working in the At-Large environment.

These criteria are crucial to assure quality standards during ATLAS II sessions and to facilitate substantial debates and outcomes.