



Peer Cluster Program Guidelines

ACCO peer clusters typically consist of a group of five to eight individuals who meet weekly exchange ideas, boost morale and coach each other on complex issues they face in the workplace. While ACCO aims to bring together diverse groups of people with respect to roles, experience, sector and region, we will also seek to find common areas of interest and experience in matching participants.

During peer cluster meetings, at least two of the members are provided the opportunity to address a challenge or opportunity he/she is bringing to the cluster and briefly outline what he/she is thinking about it and has done thus far. Peer cluster members will ask questions and share insights exploring new possibilities for approach and action. Participants are encouraged not to solve the challenge, but rather, to explore ideas and help each other consider other perspectives. In a 3-week period, each cluster member should have brought at least one topic to the cluster for discussion.

At the conclusion of each topic area discussed, the facilitator will reflect on the group discussion, which questions and insights stood out, and prospective actions/approaches. The other cluster members will also reflect on what they took away from the exchange before moving on to the next topic area.

Important Considerations:

A peer cluster is:

- A safe and collegial space for participants – all conversations are conducted in Chatham House Rules (see <https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>);
- Opportunities for individuals to reflect and learn from their experiences and that of others in ways that empower themselves and their peers; and
- A dynamic forum enabling the exchange of experience, insight and innovation in the context of new possibilities for member actions, mindsets and morale.

Roles:

- **Cluster Coordinator:** Each peer cluster will have at least one member that serves as an administrator for scheduling and coordinating meetings. The cluster coordinator is responsible for the scheduling of his/her peer cluster's meeting every week.
- **Meeting Facilitation:** Peer cluster meetings are facilitated by one of the cluster participants. Each peer cluster will have at least two members that alternate serving in facilitator role and support each other during the meetings. Facilitators ensure that the meeting structure is followed and that each member is an active listener and participant.
- **Active Listener & Participant:** All cluster members are active listeners and participants in the group discussion.

Preparing for a Peer Cluster Meeting

Peer cluster members should consider the following points in preparing for a meeting:

- the topic or issue that he/she presents to the peer cluster may be: a challenge to be addressed, result to be achieved, options and possibilities to explore, or, a goal for personal resilience or professional developmental purposes;
- to ensure the peer cluster provides an effective conduit for interaction, the topic area presented should have a measure of complexity within the member's existing scope of responsibility or current situation that the member is committed to and willing to openly discuss within the peer cluster;
- the topic area should fall within the scope of ACCO's mission, or, the realm of personal resilience and/or professional development;
- the topic area should be of relevance and importance to the community of practice and should be actionable; and
- be open to guidance from peers, as well as providing insights and asking thoughtful questions to fellow cluster members.

Framing Your Topic or Issue

The following questions will help peer cluster members clarify the value they wish to get from the peer cluster experiences:

- What are my most pressing issues? How do they relate to others in our field of practice? Where do possibilities lie?
- How will this challenge my personal/professional development? What do I hope to learn from the discussion?
- What is the timeframe for addressing this opportunity? What are its key milestones?
- What are the driving forces behind this issue? What is my level of responsibility and influence over this? What have I done about it so far?
- What future am I committed to creating?
- What challenges or obstacles do I face today or tomorrow?
- Who is impacted by or interested in the potential outcomes?
- What possibilities exist for action? What do I intend to do?
- What do I need the group to help me with? What request do I have for the group?