

ESSA@Work

Information for Newcomers¹

ESSA@work is a meeting concept dedicated to the presentation and discussion of hands-on simulation work - meaning that you can discuss your work at any stage of your simulation project. The level of experience and academic ranking are no criteria for the group composition - everyone is welcome. The workshop is supported by experts who have a long experience in doing research and especially (agent-based) modeling.

The participants will have a diversity of backgrounds but a joint interest in agent-based modeling. Therefore the main potential for useful feedback relates to problems and questions related to the method (e.g. parameterization, validation, analysis of simulation results etc.). The diversity of disciplines, experiences and the work discussed provide insights that can be stimulating, refreshing and brings work forward. The participants are thus all peers that make up a unique support group.

Every participant has one hour to present and discuss her/his work. How this hour is used (more time for presentation or for discussion) is up to the participant! Different to a presentation at a conference, you are not 'selling' your work, but ask for the contribution of peers. The aim is to improve the quality of your work, to be able to discuss your thoughts and ideas with people that travel with you into the depths of your code or model when necessary. The clearer you communicate about your work and formulate your questions, the more you get out of it. You should go home with an idea/decision/plan to continue your work, having made a step forward.

The organizing team will collect overarching topics or questions that arise during the presentations of individual work. Based on these observations some topics for group discussion in small parallel discussion groups will be jointly defined. These group discussions are another part of the workshop.

A good atmosphere is very important for the quality of the meeting. To be in a (new) group where you share your work before everything is thought through can feel a little risky. This endeavor might take some mental hurdles to overcome when discussing your work that is not 'finished' yet. However, asking and receiving support in the process of developing your work is crucial:

- you win time by not reinventing the wheel,
- you get in touch with people that are valuable for your work,
- you make progress in a quite short amount of time,
- you get new inspiration
- AND gain very much stimulation and fun!

To ensure the good atmosphere, we moderate the meeting. In the end, however, atmosphere is the task of us all. Being part of this group does not mean to lean back and consume, but to actively participate. In other words: being interested and open to new/different ideas, listening to each other, engaging in discussions, asking for clarification and, very importantly, always giving constructive feedback. This is the spirit in which our group functions and succeeds.

¹ This text is based on the ESSA@work mission statement (<http://www.essa.eu.org/essa-work/>) authored by Iris Lorscheid, Frithjof Stöppler and Nanda Wijermans