

# Society for Benefit-Cost Analysis

## Guidelines for Discussants

Thank you for serving as a discussant for an SBCA conference session. You serve an important role in the session by offering your perspective and insights regarding the substance and significance of the work presented, both individually and collectively.

Please note that the SBCA does not require presenters to have a written paper in addition to their presentation. Many presentations will be based on a paper, but others may not be. Presenters are required to submit PowerPoint slides in advance of the conference (**by Friday, March 10**). If there is an accompanying paper, it should also be shared with the discussant.

To support you in your role, we offer the following guidelines.

- As you prepare for the session, you may need clarification from the presenter(s) to fully understand their work. You should feel free to reach out to them prior to the session to obtain clarity and better tailor your remarks.
- Your comments may focus on individual presentations/papers, as well as larger themes and issues for the field.
- In commenting on individual presentations/papers, highlight the key contributions, along with both strengths and weaknesses. Focus on major points, as you will likely not have time to cover more minor issues. (More comprehensive feedback can be provided to the presenter in writing or in a marked up copy of the paper or presentation.) Your critique may focus on assumptions, methods, and interpretation of findings. In cases where a paper is available, if your point was not covered in the presentation, you may need to offer additional context for your comment. Be as constructive as possible by offering alternative approaches or specific ideas for improvement where you can. This is especially important for presentations based on work that is in the early stage of development.
- In offering broader comments, you can place the set of presentations in the context of the field, highlight important themes, identify broader questions raised, and suggest directions for future research. Your expertise in related areas may provide the basis for insights that extend beyond how other experts on the topic view the subject.
- Be sure to stay within the time allocated to you to leave time for audience discussion. The chair will provide signals as you near the end of your allotted time.