



BEYOND MAHAPOLA

Connecting generations of scholars and professionals to share knowledge, dialogue and shape a better Sri Lanka

Organised by

LALITH ATHULATHMUDALI FOUNDATION

LALITH ATHULATHMUDALI RESEARCH CENTER (LAARC)



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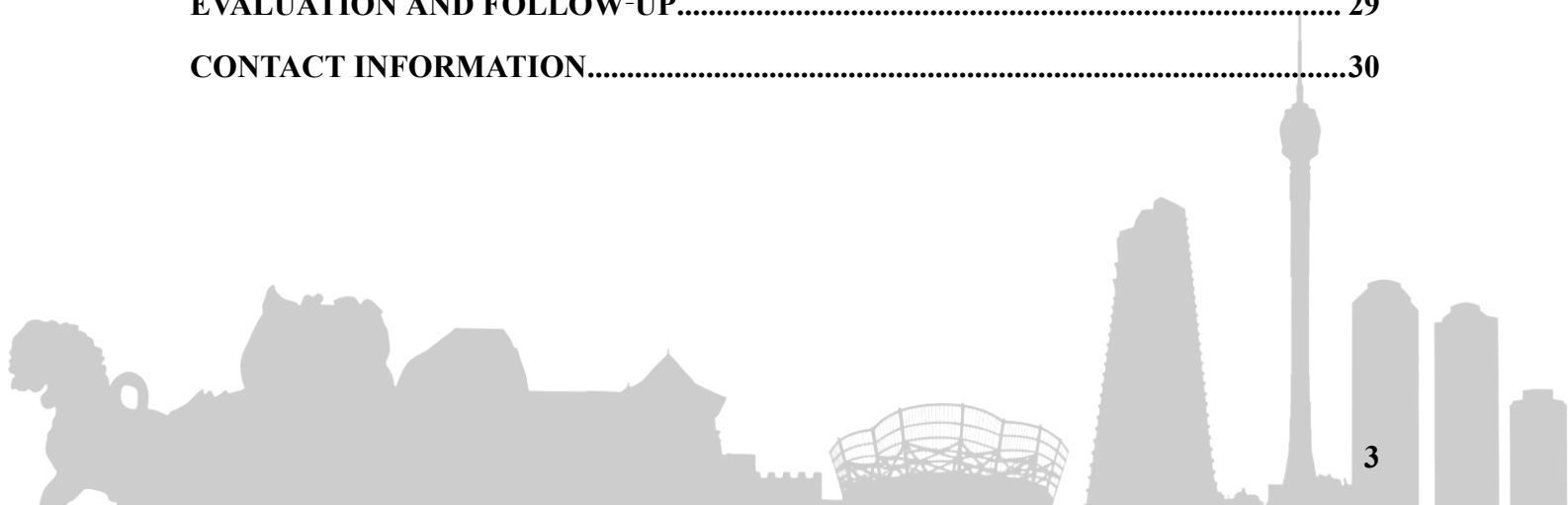
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The organisers of the *Beyond Mahapola* initiative extend their sincere appreciation to all individuals and institutions whose support made this inaugural event possible. Convened under the auspices of the **Lalith Athulathmudali Foundation (LAF)** and the **Lalith Athulathmudali Research Centre (LAARC)**, a platform dedicated to bridging research and practical impact, nurturing evidence-based policymaking and promoting principled leadership in Sri Lanka, this initiative builds on LAARC's continued commitment to collaborative dialogue, innovation and public service.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all Mahapola network, students, professionals and senior leaders participating across generations;

- the Interim Steering Committee and technical teams whose planning and coordination shaped the initiative's agenda;
- facilitators, moderators, rapporteurs and session chairs who guide the technical and dialogue sessions;
- communications and logistics teams ensuring a seamless and accessible experience for all participants;
- regional coordinators and prospective townhall partners whose engagement will sustain the initiative beyond its first event;
- contributors to LAARC's research, publications and platforms, whose insights inform the discussions and outputs of the initiative; and
- the volunteers and supporters whose dedication strengthens the shared purpose of connecting knowledge, leadership and public service.

The initiative honours the legacy of the late Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali, whose vision for equitable educational opportunity and principled public leadership inspired the Mahapola scholarship programme and continues to influence national discourse. Beyond Mahapola reflects a collective commitment to thoughtful dialogue, intergenerational mentorship and actionable ideas for Sri Lanka's future.





WELCOME NOTE

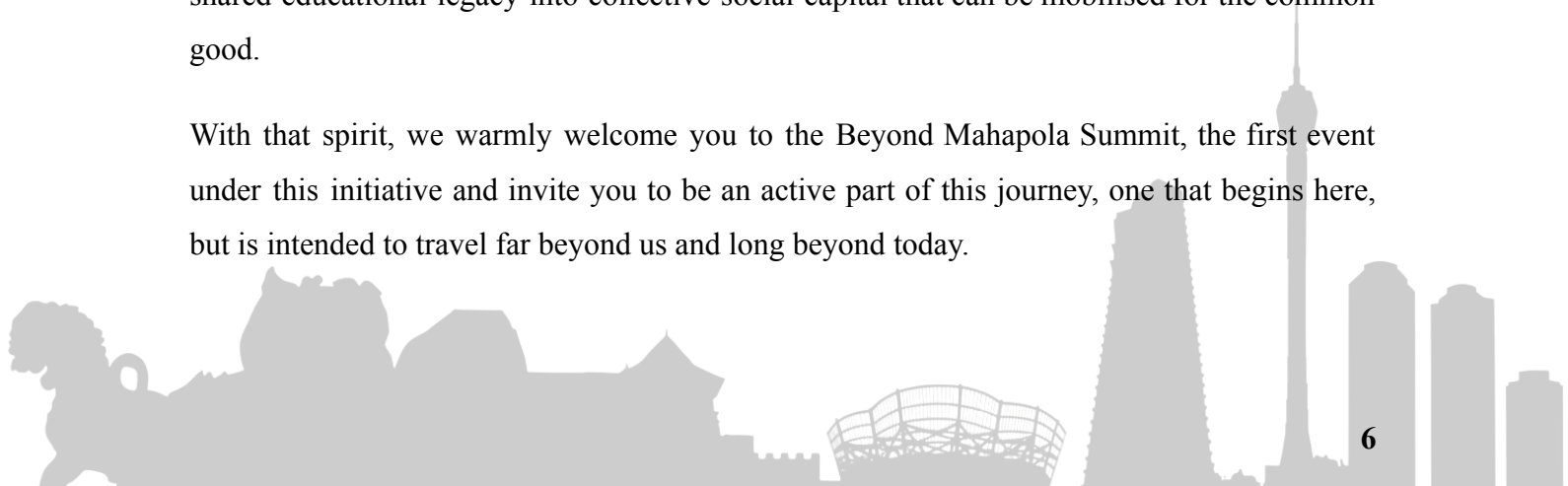
The *Beyond Mahapola* marks not only a commemoration of forty years of opportunity, achievement and gratitude, but also the quiet beginning of a different kind of conversation among Mahapola network and graduates of Sri Lanka. The *Beyond Mahapola Summit 2026*, as the first event under this broader initiative, gathers in one space those whose lives were shaped by a scholarship and those who now seek to shape the country's future through ideas, collaboration and service.

This guide is offered as a modest companion to that endeavour: a map to the sessions, people and spaces you will encounter today and an invitation to stay with the questions that will inevitably outlive both the summit and the initiative itself. The plenary sessions, technical sessions and inaugural ceremony set out in the pages that follow are not endpoints but first attempts at building a sustained, institutional platform for engagement, dialogue and action.

In that sense, the initiative is better understood as a point of departure than a destination, a starting step in transforming the shared legacy of Mahapola into collective social capital that can be mobilised for the common good. What begins here, as a plenary exchange, an argument over coffee, or a working proposal shaped within a technical session, can and must grow into regional townhalls, cross-generational networks and concrete interventions in the civic and policy spaces of Sri Lanka.

Crucially, this is not an exclusive call addressed only to Mahapola network, but an open invitation to all university graduates and to the wider community of thinkers, professionals and intellectuals in Sri Lanka who believe that knowledge carries with it a duty to the public. In that sense, the initiative is better understood as a point of departure rather than a destination, while the Beyond Mahapola Summit represents its first step in transforming a shared educational legacy into collective social capital that can be mobilised for the common good.

With that spirit, we warmly welcome you to the Beyond Mahapola Summit, the first event under this initiative and invite you to be an active part of this journey, one that begins here, but is intended to travel far beyond us and long beyond today.



Viduravi Athulathmudali
CEO/Director, LAARC



OBJECTIVES

The *Beyond Mahapola* initiative aims to strengthen the Mahapola community by connecting scholarship recipients across generations, disciplines and regions, creating a shared platform where knowledge, experience and ideas can flow freely. Beyond building personal networks, the initiative seeks to cultivate collective capacity for addressing contemporary social, economic and policy challenges in Sri Lanka.

One key objective is to identify and highlight leadership potential among scholars and graduates, recognising individuals who can contribute as thought leaders, mentors and practitioners in their respective fields. By mapping expertise across generations, the initiative intends to create a resource base that can be tapped for collaborative projects, research and public engagement.

Another objective is to explore innovative approaches to national challenges through small-scale pilot projects, workshops and applied research initiatives. Beyond Mahapola aims to provide scholars with opportunities to translate ideas into tangible outcomes, encouraging experimentation, cross-sector collaboration and community-driven solutions.

The initiative also seeks to expand engagement beyond Colombo, reaching diverse communities across the country. By establishing local networks, regional dialogues and townhall-style interactions, the project broadens participation in national development and offers equitable access to collaborative platforms.

Beyond Mahapola is designed to cultivate a culture of continuous reflection and shared learning. It encourages participants to document experiences, share insights and critically assess the impact of their contributions over time. Through this, the initiative transforms the Mahapola legacy into a living, evolving platform of social capital that contributes to Sri Lanka's long-term development and collective progress.

The initiative additionally aims to capture intergenerational storytelling and preserve institutional memory, recording the experiences, insights and lessons of past scholarship recipients for the benefit of current and future generations. By creating spaces for scholars to share their journeys, challenges and successes, Beyond Mahapola celebrates individual

achievements while building a collective narrative that inspires civic engagement, innovation and a deeper understanding of the evolving role of education in national development.



VISION

A united community of Mahapola scholars across generations, committed to knowledge, leadership and public service for the advancement of Sri Lanka.

MISSION

To convene Mahapola scholarship recipients from across generations and disciplines in a national forum that fosters intergenerational dialogue, civic leadership, policy-relevant thinking and sustained engagement while honouring the Mahapola legacy and shaping Sri Lanka's future through ideas, collaboration and action.

INAUGURAL CEREMONY

The inaugural ceremony marks the official commencement of the *Beyond Mahapola* initiative and represents a key milestone in bringing together members of the Mahapola community. Scheduled to be held

- on 15th May 2026,
- from 4.00 pm to 8.00 pm,
- at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH),

the ceremony introduces the programme's vision, structure and intended impact, setting the stage for the broader objectives of the initiative. It provides a platform for participants to come together across generations and disciplines, reflecting on the shared legacy of Mahapola while looking ahead to collective contributions to Sri Lanka's development.

The ceremony will feature a series of curated segments, beginning with **an opening performance and a presentation** that traces the history and evolution of Mahapola, offering participants a reflective and engaging introduction to its legacy.

Following this, **presentations by the Lalith Athulathmudali Foundation (LAF) and the Lalith Athulathmudali Research Centre (LAARC)** will outline the direction, goals and anticipated impact of the initiative.

A **panel discussion** will highlight perspectives from invited speakers across diverse professional fields, encouraging dialogue on leadership, public service and the evolving role of scholars in national development.

The inaugural ceremony concludes with a **fellowship and networking session**, providing space for informal interactions, collaborative discussions and the building of personal and professional connections.

Overall, the inaugural ceremony is intended not only as a formal launch, but also as an immersive introduction to the Beyond Mahapola initiative, combining reflection, dialogue and connection to create momentum for sustained engagement and collaborative action in the months and years to follow.

THE BEYOND MAHAPOLA SUMMIT

The *Beyond Mahapola Summit* represents the first major event under the initiative, bringing together scholars, graduates and professionals to engage in dialogue, collaborative problem-solving and knowledge exchange across national development themes.

Registration

- All participants are required to complete registration through the official online registration form.
- Upon successful submission of the form, applicants will receive a confirmation email outlining the next step, which includes an interview process for selection.
- Selection of participants will be based on the outcome of the interview.
- Following selection, the relevant protocol papers, along with the Interest Paper template, will be shared with all confirmed participants.

Language

- This is a trilingual summit.
- The summit consists of five (5) technical sessions, each with designated language arrangements as follows.
 - Agriculture and Sustainability: Primary language will be **Sinhala**.
 - Economic and Business Development: **English and Sinhala** will be used, with Tamil translation support provided where necessary.
 - Education and Skills: **English and Sinhala** will be used, with Tamil translation support provided where necessary.
 - Energy and Infrastructure: Primary language will be **English**.
 - Law and Governance: Primary language will be **English**.

Meals and Refreshments

- Lunch will be provided.
- Dietary requirements should be communicated to the organisers in advance.

Dress Code Policy

- Formal dress code must be followed by all committee members on the day of the summit.
- Smart casual is acceptable for workshops and other local initiatives.

Professional Conduct and Networking Protocol

- Committee members are encouraged to engage in informal networking during breaks and side events.
- Respectful dialogue and adherence to discussion protocols are expected in all sessions.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The use, possession or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol on the summit premises or during the course of the summit is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including disqualification.



SUMMIT AT A GLANCE

Date: 17th October 2026 | **Time:** 8.00 am - 6.00 pm | **Venue:** TBD

Time	Session
8.00 - 8.30 a.m.	Arrival of Participants
8.30 a.m. – 9.10 a.m.	Orientation and Protocol Briefing to the Committees
9.10 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.	Committee Icebreaker at Assigned Tables
9.30 a.m. – 12.05 p.m.	Technical Session for Scope I
12.05 p.m. – 1.00 p.m.	Lunch
1.00 p.m. – 3.40 p.m.	Technical Session for Scope II
3.40 p.m. – 3.50 p.m.	Tea Break
3.50 p.m. - 4.50 p.m.	Policy Formulation
4.50 p.m. – 5.35 p.m.	Final Committee Vote on Consolidated Model and Recording of Dissents
5.35 p.m. onwards	Cross-Committee Showcase and Closing Session

TECHNICAL SESSION FOR SCOPE I - DELIBERATION BLOCK

Time	Duration	Stage
9.30 a.m. - 9.35 a.m.	5 mins	Table Brief
9.35 a.m. - 10.05 a.m.	30 mins	Stage 1 - Framing and Preliminary Statement
10.05 a.m. – 10.40 a.m.	35 min	Stage 2— In-Depth Analysis <i>Facilitator Interventions may occur during the given time</i>
10.40 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.	35 min	Stage 3 — Further Depth <i>Facilitator Interventions may occur during the given time</i>
11.15 a.m. - 11.40 a.m.	25 min	Stage 4 - Recommendations
11.40 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.	20 min	Table Harvest for Working Model

TECHNICAL SESSION FOR SCOPE II - DELIBERATION BLOCK

Time	Duration	Stage
1.05 p.m. - 1.10 p.m.	5 mins	Table Brief
1.10 p.m. - 1.40 a.m.	30 mins	Stage 1 - Framing and Preliminary Statement
1.40 p.m. – 2.15 p.m.	35 min	Stage 2— In-Depth Analysis <i>Facilitator Interventions may occur during the given time</i>
2.15 p.m. – 2.50 p.m.	35 min	Stage 3 — Further Depth <i>Facilitator Interventions may occur during the given time</i>
2.50 p.m. - 3.15 p.m.	25 min	Stage 4 - Recommendations
3.15 p.m. - 3.35 p.m.	20 min	Table Harvest for Working Model

COMMITTEE WORKFLOW

The Committees at the Beyond Mahapola Summit are structured as interactive, team-based policy design exercises. Members across generations and disciplines work together within their assigned Committee to discuss key national challenges and develop actionable proposals.

COMMITTEE THEMES

The Summit is divided into 5 committees, each covering a specific theme.

1	Agriculture and Sustainability
2	Economic and Business Development
3	Education and Skills
4	Energy, Infrastructure and Logistics
5	Law and Governance

Every effort has been made to keep the Summit's procedures simple and free of unnecessary technicalities. Participants are not expected to master any complex rules or terminology in advance. All that is required is to follow the guidance provided by the Facilitators and Committee Coordinators on the day itself. The structure has been designed so that, by simply engaging genuinely with the discussion at each stage, the intended outcome, a well-considered Working Model for each Theme, will follow naturally.

KEY TERMINOLOGY FOR TECHNICAL SESSIONS

For clarity and consistency throughout the Summit, the following terms define the structure of the committee sessions:

THEME

The main area of focus of the technical session. This represents the broad field under discussion, and gives the Committee its name.

E.g:

Economic and Business Development
Education and Skills

SCOPE

A specific component within the broader Theme, addressed through its own dedicated Technical Session. Each Committee addresses two scopes across the day, one per technical session.

E.g.: under the *theme* of ‘Economic and Business Development’, *scopes* may include ‘Competition’, ‘Macroeconomic Stability’ or ‘Industrial Policy’.

TOPIC

A focused angle within a given Scope, assigned to a specific Table for deliberation. Each Table within a Committee deliberates a different Topic drawn from the same Scope, during that Scope’s Technical Session.

E.g.: Within the *scope* of ‘Competition’, a *topic* may be ‘Government policies to promote fair competition’.

TEAM

A pre-assigned group of participants, formed prior to the Summit, whose members are deliberately distributed one to each Table during Technical Sessions, so that no two members of the same Team sit at the same Table simultaneously.

E.g.: A Team of six members sends one representative to each of the six Tables within its Committee.

Teams will also designate a Team Leader who will thereafter be named a ‘Host’.

TABLE

A physical seating and discussion unit convened during a Technical Session, comprising one representative from each Team. Each Table deliberates a distinct Topic drawn from the Scope under discussion, and its outcomes are harvested toward that Scope's Working Model.

E.g.: During the Technical Session addressing Scope 1, Table 3 in the Law and Governance Committee comprises one representative each from Teams I through VI, each deliberating the Topic assigned to that Table.

Please note that the exact number of Teams and Tables within a Committee depends on the number of confirmed participants in that Committee, and is determined at the discretion of the Advisory Board and the Organising Committee.

HOST

The individual who leads discussion at a Table, acting as both moderator and participant. The Host is drawn from among the Table's own Team representatives, specifically, the pre-assigned Team Leader of whichever Team is anchoring that Table, and receives additional briefing material in advance to guide the flow of discussion.

E.g.: The Team Leader of Team B, seated at Table 2, serves as that Table's Host for the duration of the Scope's Deliberation Block.

RAPPORTEUR

Members or volunteers of the Organising Committee assigned to each Table, responsible for real-time documentation of Table discussions, capturing new concerns, proposed solutions, and notable contributions as they arise. Rapporteur notes are shared in real time with Facilitators to inform the timing of interventions, and are subsequently handed to the Drafting Team to inform the Working Model.

FACILITATOR INTERVENTION

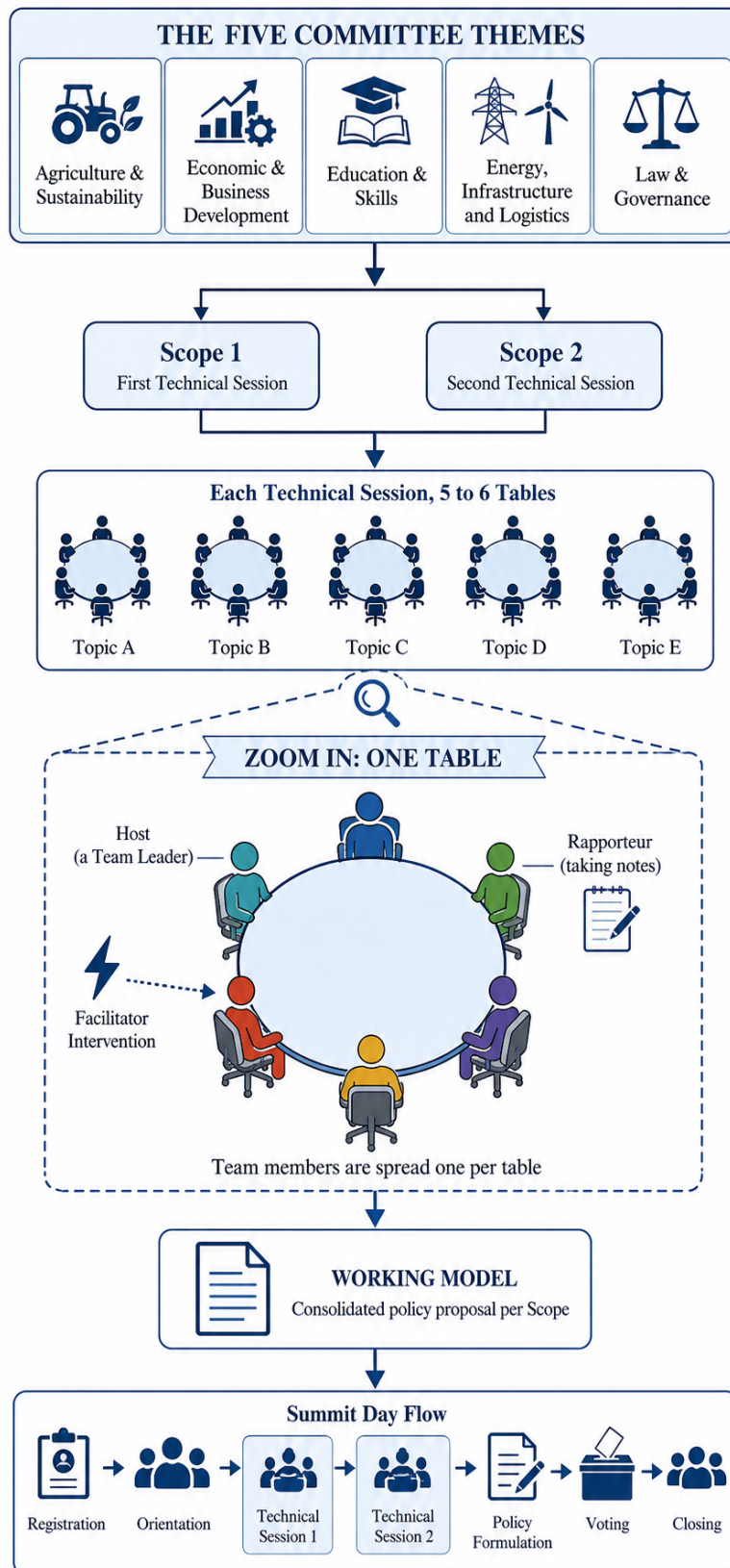
A targeted engagement by the Facilitator, a member of the Committee Advisory Board, with a Table during a deliberation stage, aimed at sparking a new idea, challenging an assumption, or reframing an issue already under discussion, so that the Table's output meaningfully advances toward the intended Working Model outcome.

WORKING MODEL

The structured consolidated proposal developed through the technical session. The Working Model reflects the outcome of position sharing, framework deliberation, amendments and voting. It represents the collective agreement reached by participating teams on that theme.



A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE WORKFLOW



THE PROTOCOL OF THE SUMMIT

PRE-SUMMIT

Before the Summit, participants go through a simple three-step process: finding out where everyone stands, working together in Teams to think through the committee protocol papers, especially the case study, and finally getting their Topics so they know exactly what to prepare for on the day.

Stage 1: A Short Survey to Understand Everyone's Views

A short survey will be sent out to all Committee members, asking for their views on the two Scopes their Committee will be discussing. Once everyone has responded, the Committee Coordinator will use the results to group members into Teams, making sure each Team has a healthy mix of perspectives to work with.

- Survey sent out: 27th August 2026
- Responses due: 3rd September 2026
- Teams confirmed: 5th September 2026

The number of Teams formed within each Committee, and their size, will depend on the number of confirmed participants, and is determined at the discretion of the Advisory Board and the Organising Committee.

Step 2: Teams Work Through the Protocol Papers Together

Once Teams are formed, the Committee Protocol Papers will be shared with everyone. Each Team will be given five questions per Scope to answer together, drawing on the case study within the Committee Protocol Papers and any supporting data. Teams are welcome to hop on a quick call to talk things through before putting their answers down as their Interest Paper. The main consideration within your Interest Paper must be to identify your negotiable points and your non-negotiable positions.

- Protocol Papers shared: 7th September 2026

- Interest Paper due: 21st September 2026

Step 3: Topics Are Shared and Teams Get Ready

A week before the Summit, each Team will be informed of the Topic their Table will be discussing. This gives the Team sufficient time to decide who will represent them at that Table, and to fine-tune their position, including what they are willing to compromise on, what they are not, and their overall stance, based on the Interest Paper they have already prepared.

- Topics shared with Teams: 10th October 2026
- Summit Day: 17th October 2026 (tentative)

DURING THE SUMMIT

Each Committee hall will have everything participants need close at hand, Facilitators, Committee Coordinators, Rapporteurs, and all the Teams assigned to that Committee. Experts may also be present and can offer their thoughts during discussions if they feel it would help.

Step 1: Getting Settled and Meeting Your Table

The day begins with a short orientation, just enough to walk everyone through how the day will flow and where things are documented, with nothing participants need to prepare for in advance. Right after that, everyone heads to their assigned Table for a quick icebreaker, a chance to meet the other representatives they will be spending the morning with before the real discussion begins.

- Arrival & Registration: 8.00 a.m. – 8.30 a.m.
- Orientation: 8.30 a.m. – 9.10 a.m.
- Icebreaker at Assigned Tables: 9.10 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.

Step 2: The Scopes dealt with at the Technical Sessions

Once everyone is settled at their Table, the Host briefs the group on the Topic they will be working through, and the discussion begins. Facilitators will move between Tables throughout, occasionally stepping in with a question or a new angle if a Table's conversation could use a nudge. This happens naturally, without any set script, so it never feels like an interruption.

The discussion unfolds in a few natural stages, moving gradually from first impressions to a firm set of recommendations.

- Table Brief: The Host introduces the Topic and gets the conversation started.
- Framing and Preliminary Statements: Each representative shares their Team's initial thinking on the Topic.
- In-Depth Discussion: The Table digs deeper, testing ideas against the protocol papers and each other's points. Facilitators may check in with a Table during this stage.
- Going Further: The conversation moves toward practical questions of what would actually work and what would not. Facilitators may check in again here too, if needed.
- Recommendations: The Table settles on a short set of concrete recommendations.
- Sharing Back: Each Table's representative shares their Table's recommendations with the wider Committee, so that everyone hears what came out of every Topic.

Rapporteurs will be quietly noting down the discussion throughout, not to slow anyone down, but so that nothing good gets lost once the conversation moves on. Their notes are what the Drafting Team will eventually lean on when it comes time to put the Working Model together.

After lunch, the Committee follows the exact same rhythm for its second Topic under Scope 2, with the same structure but a fresh conversation.

Step 3: Refining the Recommendations

After the short tea break, everyone returns to the same Table they were at all day. This is where the day's thinking gets sharpened into something ready for a vote:

- The Rapporteur spends 5 minutes stating the main points that came up under Scope 1.
- The Table then has 25 minutes to refine and redraft its Scope 1 recommendations into their final form for the vote, noting down any dissent within the Table as it comes up.
- The Rapporteur then spends 5 minutes stating the main points that came up under Scope 2.
- The Table again has 25 minutes to refine and redraft its Scope 2 recommendations, tracking any dissent in the same way.

Step 4: The Committee Votes

Everyone remains seated at their Table for this step as well. Teams are not brought back together even at this stage. One by one, each Table's finalised policy recommendations are put up before the whole Committee, and every participant votes on it together through an online, real-time poll.

This is where the earlier Table-level dissent becomes useful. If a recommendation had noted disagreement within its own Table, that disagreement is visible to the Committee as it votes, rather than surfacing as a surprise only after the fact.

Once voting is complete, the confirmed recommendations together form the Committee's Working Model for the day, ready to be carried into the Closing Session.

Step 5: Closing Session - Summary of Outcomes and Award Ceremony

The summit closes with a plenary session where each Committee's outcomes are shared with everyone. Rather than participants presenting, this falls to the Committee Coordinator, who puts together a short presentation covering the Committee's main policy recommendations, where there was broad agreement, and anything still unresolved that needs more thought down the line. This keeps the closing session focused and well-paced, without asking participants to prepare a presentation on top of everything else they've done during the day.

The day then wraps up with an award ceremony, recognising the effort and quality of thinking shown throughout the summit:

- **Best Overall Representative** (1 award), recognising the single strongest individual contribution across the entire summit,
- **Best Team** (1 award), recognising the strongest Team overall, across all five Committees,
- **Best Committee Representative** (5 awards), one for each Committee, recognising the standout participant within that Committee,
- **Honourable Mentions** (10 certificates, 2 per Committee), recognising other participants whose contributions stood out.

The marksheets will be released in due course. The closing session is a chance to recognise what participants built together, but it's also meant to push things forward. The goal is for the

conversations from the day to lead to real, sustained engagement well beyond the summit itself.



A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE PRE-SUMMIT AND SUMMIT WORKFLOW



DOCUMENTATION PROTOCOLS

Effective documentation is critical to preserve the outcomes, insights and institutional memory of the Beyond Mahapola Summit 2026.

SESSION OUTPUT RECORDING

- All Technical Sessions will be documented in real-time by dedicated rapporteurs.
- Senior scholars interventions, team proposals, amendments and final outcomes will be captured.

TEMPLATES FOR REPORTS

- Standardised templates will be used for all session outputs, including;
 - Team Interest Papers
 - Proposed amendments and voting results
 - Final agreed proposals or recommendations
- These templates will be released in due course.

REPORTS

- Session outputs: collected immediately after each Technical Session
- Post-summit reports: consolidated within one month of the event.



MARKING GUIDELINES

INDIVIDUAL MARKING SCHEME

Scored by the Advisory Panel and the Committee Chairperson(s), based on real-time Rapporteur reports displayed on screen, and supplemented by their own periodic observation of proceedings.

CRITERION	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Preparation	15	• The Team's Interest Paper answers all ten assigned questions (five per Scope). • Negotiable points and non-negotiable positions are explicitly and separately identified. • Positions are supported with specific reference to the committee protocol papers and supporting data.
Quality of Contribution	20	• Made at least one substantive point during Framing. Raised at least one distinct point during In-Depth Discussion not repeated from another member. • Proposed at least one practical consideration during Going Further. Points stayed relevant to the Table's assigned Topic.
Use of Evidence	15	• Cited a specific statistic or fact from the case study at least once. • Referenced a specific point from the Team's Interest Paper. • Claims were supported with a reason or source rather than asserted without basis.
Responsiveness	10	• Responded directly to at least one Facilitator Intervention. • Built on or explicitly referenced another participant's point at least once. • Adjusted or refined an earlier statement in light of new information

		raised at the Table.
Fidelity to Team Position	10	- Clearly stated the Team's negotiable points when relevant. - Clearly stated the Team's non-negotiable positions when relevant. - Any departure from the Interest Paper was flagged as personal, not left as an unexplained contradiction.
Contribution to Final Recommendation	15	- Proposed a specific idea or wording that appears in the Table's final Recommendations. - Actively participated in the Step 3 Refining stage. - Raised or responded to dissent constructively during Refining, where applicable.
Committee Vote Performance	10	- The recommendation(s) this representative contributed to received majority or plurality support in the Committee Vote. - The recommendation ranked favourably relative to others addressing the same Topic.
Constructiveness and Conduct	5	- No interruptions, dismissive remarks, or disrespectful conduct noted by the Rapporteur. - Acknowledged other viewpoints even when disagreeing. - Stayed focused on the Topic rather than personal or unrelated remarks.
Total	100	

BEST TEAM AWARD

Best Team is calculated as the average of the total Individual scores of every member belonging to that Team, across all the Tables where its members were seated. This means a Team can only win by having every representative pull their weight across the day, a Team with one outstanding representative and several weak ones will be pulled down by the average, while a Team where everyone contributed solidly, even without a single standout star, has a genuine shot at the award.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

To measure effectiveness and ensure continuity beyond the national event, a structured evaluation and follow-up process will be implemented;

POST-SUMMIT SYNTHESIS TIMELINE

- All session outputs will be compiled into a comprehensive synthesis report summarising key recommendations, agreements and insights.

REGIONAL TOWNHALL ACTIVATION ROADMAP

- Regional coordinators will implement pilot townhalls as follow-up to the national event.
- Outcomes and learnings from these townhalls will feed into the network and support ongoing mentorship, dialogue and local action.



CONTACT INFORMATION

For all enquiries relating to the Summit, committee members may contact the organising institutions through the details below.

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On-site assistance will be available at the Registration Desk and designated Information Points throughout the Summit.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:

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