

ESF CONFERENCES UNIT

Operational Guidelines for Chairs

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Who we are

The ESF Conference Unit is located in Brussels and is responsible for the management and development of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme. Additionally, the Unit runs the ESF World Conferences and provides organisational and logistical support to other ESF units.

Head of Unit (Brussels)	Ms. Benita Lipps
Senior Conference Officer (Strasbourg)	Ms. Anne Guehl
Senior Conference Officer (Brussels)	Ms. Anne Blondeel-Oman
Conference Officers (Brussels)	Ms. Jean Kelly Ms. Alessandra Piccolotto
Junior Conference Officer	Ms. Victoria Ibbertson
Conference Assistance	Ms. Kajsa Svensson

Your Conference Officer

You will be assigned an ESF Conference Officer who will advise and support you on all procedures and take care of all the logistical aspects of your conference organisation.

Our Responsibilities: Logistics and Support

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for providing a high quality service in support of your conference.

In particular, we will:

- * Provide an introduction to the ESF Rapporteur
- * Take care of all administrative arrangements with the venue
- * Provide information, guidelines and templates to the Chair
- * Assist the Chair in publicising the Conference
- * Manage the processing of applications
- * Monitor the conference budget
- * Provide logistical support to the Chair
- * Liaise with the Chair, the invited speakers and the participants
- * Provide an on-site conference secretariat
- * Evaluate the operational quality of the Conference

Should you have any questions concerning these responsibilities, please do not hesitate to contact your conference officer.

The ESF Research Conferences Format

Over **four full conference days**, up to 25 invited speakers (including chairs) present the most recent developments in their field of research. Short talks should be complemented by poster sessions, round-table discussions or discussion groups. **Parallel sessions are not permitted.** To encourage further contact and informal networking, joint meals as well as a social programme are organised.

Arrival and registration take place on the afternoon before the start of the conference, and departure the morning after the conference has finished (5 nights in total).

Up to 150 selected participants and invited speakers may attend. The ESF Conference Unit reserves the right to cancel the conference if there are fewer than 80 potential participants and speakers at the application deadline.

Scientific Activities

The core activities of the conference will be based on the **lectures by invited speakers**, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An **informal exchange of ideas**, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants.

Time should be reserved for a **'Forward Look Plenary Discussion'** about future developments in the field. The format of this discussion will be provided by ESF.

In order to encourage speakers to present their latest results and ideas, which may not yet be fully explored and ready for publication, no written papers will be requested.

Networking and Social Activities

Participants will take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to early stage researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are **expected to stay for the whole duration**. Additionally, we encourage the inclusion of a social programme, which usually includes a half-day excursion and a conference dinner.

Conference Schedule

Due to the location of our venues, Day 1 is dedicated to registration and a welcoming reception, and Day 6 to departure after breakfast. (see Fig. 1)

Fig. 1: Typical ESF Research Conferences Schedule

Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>
	Morning Session 1	Morning Session 1	Morning Session 1	Morning Session 1	Departure
	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break – Group Photo</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	Morning Session 2	Morning Session 2	Morning Session 2	Morning Session 2	
	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
	Afternoon Session 1	Excursion	Afternoon Session 1	Afternoon Session 1	
Arrival/ Registration	<i>Coffee break</i>		<i>Coffee break</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	Afternoon Session 2		Afternoon Session 2	Forward Look Session	
Reception/ Dinner	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	Conference Dinner	
		Poster Session			

Please note:

- While poster sessions, round-table discussions or discussion groups are encouraged, parallel sessions are not permitted
- ESF Research Conferences within the ESF-LiU / ESF-VR-FORMAS Partnerships are one full day shorter (e.g., 4 nights, 3 full conference days)

Designing Your Conference

The ESF Research Conference Scheme aims to give you full responsibility and control over the scientific content of your conference while offering a well-established, effective organisational framework. For your conference to become a success, we ask you to work within this framework, adhere to the ESF values and strategic priorities and respect our working processes.

Conditions for Funding

By signing the Quality Level Agreement and accepting the role of ESF Research Conference Chair, you acknowledge our conditions for funding. These conditions define the scale, scope and format of ESF Research Conferences. Should these not be met at any stage of the organisational process, ESF reserves the right to cancel the conference.

- **Scale: Medium-sized research conferences**
On the day of the application deadline, your conference must have received at least 80 valid applications
- **Scope: Pan-European events, promoting synergies between high-level and young talents**
 - at least 35% of the conference budget must be allocated to support the attendance of young scientists/early stage researchers (<36)
 - no more than 60% of the budget can be used to support chairs and speakers
 - no more than 20% of the invited speakers and no more than 20% of selected participants can come from one specific country
 - A concerted effort should be made to achieve a good gender balance among both speakers and participants
- **Format: plenary-style, discussion-based exchanges**
The conference must adhere to the format described in the previous section: 4 full conference days (3 for ESF-LiU Conferences), up to 25 invited speakers, short talks and poster sessions, no parallel sessions. ESF will select the conference venue and set – jointly with the chair – the conference dates.

Terms of the Grant

Through its Research Conferences, ESF tries to promote its values of equality and Pan-European collaboration. While the outcome of your conference will be chiefly evaluated in terms of its scientific excellence, we ask you to support these values by respecting the following terms:

- **Equality:** at least 40% of chairs and invited speakers and at least 40% of participants should be from the minority gender. This should be reflected in the allocation of grants.
- **Pan-Europeanness:** at least 70% of all those attending should be from [ESF Member Countries](#). This should be reflected in the allocation of grants.

Your Responsibilities as Conference Chair

The Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme

As the Chair you will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the **selection and invitation of speakers**, and through the **selection of participants**. Additionally, you are expected to support ESF in advertising the Conference, and you are encouraged to raise further financial support for the Conference.

We expect you to operate within ESF rules, budgets, procedures and deadlines, and that you work in close cooperation with the ESF Conferences Unit at all times.

This includes the following responsibilities

- * The timely selection and invitation and confirmation of relevant, high profile speakers
 - * Raising further financial support for the conference in general, and for young scientists grants in particular; managing and allocating these funds with the help of the ESF Conferences Unit
 - * Publicising the conference through all available channels
 - * Providing international contacts, addresses, publications and journals relevant to the conference topic for the announcement and advertisement purposes
 - * Liaising with the ESF Rapporteur regarding the scientific content of the conference
 - * Selecting applicants and the allocating grants based on scientific merit, the promotion of young researchers, and the geographical and gender balance
 - * Cooperating closely with the ESF Conference Unit within the set framework and timelines. This includes:
 - * Exchanging information regularly, in particular, with regard to progress, developments and changes
 - * Operating within ESF rules, budgets, procedures and deadlines

If a Booklet of Abstracts is desired, the Chair will be responsible for its creation, production and cost.

Your Conference Officer will provide you with information and templates for each of these tasks. Should you have any questions concerning these responsibilities, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Quality Assurance

In order to maintain the excellence of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme, the quality of the conference will be evaluated both internally and externally by the ESF Conference Unit, an ESF Conference Rapporteur, you as Conference Chair and the participants.

The reports will be forwarded to the appropriate ESF Standing Committees and Expert Committees for information and consideration in their science policy discussions, and also to ESF's Partners in the ESF Research Conferences Scheme.

Selecting Participants and Allocating Grants

To maintain the highest scientific standards, the attendance of an ESF Research Conference is only possible after successful application. Therefore, one of your key tasks will be to select conference participants, assign short talks and poster sessions and decide on the allocation of conference grants.

A few days after the application deadline, your Conference Officer will provide you with an overview of all applications (including research interests and abstracts) and a grant allocation spreadsheet. These documents will help you make your decision while adhering to the terms and conditions specified earlier.

The grant allocation spreadsheet will allow you to:

Applicant Information							I.a Decision about Participation		
Surname	Name	Age	Sex	City Code	Net Code	Scientific Standing of the applicant	Relevance of application to the conference	Accept/Reject Applicant?	
1	Doe	John	32	M	RU	IN	1 - Average or less	1 - Average or less	Reject
2	Smith	Jane	29	F	FR	BE	2 - Good/Very Good	3 - Outstanding	Accept

- * Assign conference and travel grants to speakers
- * accept/ reject applicants

Applicant Information							I.b Decision about Short talk/ poster			II. Funding Decision			
Surname	Name	Age	Sex	City Code	Net Code	Poster	Short talk	Novelty, originality & timeliness of abstract	Short Talk/ Poster Accepted?	Travel grant Requested	Conference Fee Requested	Conference Grant (2)	Travel Contribution (3)
1	Doe	John	32	M	RU	IN							
2	Smith	Jane	29	F	FR	BE	N	Y	2 - Good/Very Good	Short Talk	Y	Y	200

- * Assign conference and travel grants to participants
- * Assign short talks or posters to participants
- * Give you an overview of the current financial status and your compliance with the terms and conditions

Conference Checklist

- 18-12 months

1 Agree on conference outline
The Conference Manager will suggest a date, taking into consideration the preferences expressed by the Chair, availability of the venue and other ESF Research Conferences commitments. If this date is not viable, an alternative date will be identified. Any deviations from the standard ESF Research Conferences Format will be agreed in writing in the Quality Level Agreement

2 Discuss next steps with your Conference Officer
Your assigned Conference Officer will provide you with the necessary templates, set the deadlines and discuss the next steps with you. **Please keep your Conference Officer informed at all times.**

- 12-9 months

3 Select, invite and confirm the conference speakers
The Chair will select and invite high-profile conference speakers in order to create a balanced scientific programme that reflects the most recent developments in the field of conference. The Chair will follow-up with invited speakers until confirmation of participation is received.

The Conference Officer will provide the Chair with a Letter of Invitation Template. The invitation needs to include but is not limited to the information provided in this template.

4 Raise/ apply for additional funds
The Chair is strongly encouraged to seek additional sponsorship. These funds can either be transferred to the ESF Conferences Unit to be included in the overall budget or managed by the Chair.

Additional sponsorship will be acknowledged in conference materials and the website proportionate to the amount provided e.g. up to 1500EUR, name mentioned – over 1500EUR name and logo etc.

Please advise ESF which organisation(s) you intend to approach

5 Contribute to conference publicity & advertising
The Chair should advertise the conference through all available channels

In addition, the Chair should provide the following documents:

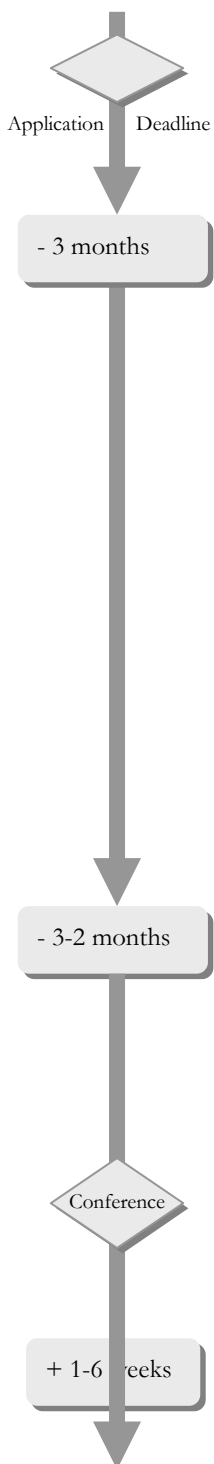
- * the full address and email list of the invited speakers;
- * a comprehensive, geographically-balanced email list of potential participants;
- * a list of scientific journals or reviews and their websites for publicity and free inserts in event calendars.

Should a third party wish to display information material during the Conference, this will have to be seen and approved by ESF at least two weeks prior to the Conference

- 6-9 months

6 Compose the preliminary programme
The Conference Officer will ask the Chair for the following:

- a conference picture
- a paragraph about the scope of the conference
- a list of topics to be covered
- a list of confirmed invited speakers with affiliations and the titles of their lectures;



7 Select the participants and conference grantees

The Chair, will select the participants from the list of conference applicants and allocate conference grants within the scope of the conference budget provided by the ESF Conference Officer

The Chair should send back the list of chosen participants and the allocation of financial support by the date agreed with the Conference Officer, which is normally **within 2 weeks** of receiving the applications

The following Selection Criteria apply:

- Scientific: Scientific merit of participants & scientific needs of the conference
- Geographical: Participants, including speakers, may be accepted from any country. Without compromising scientific standards, the aim should be for a wide geographical representation of scientists. Further Info see Terms and Conditions.
- Equality: Special attention should also be paid to the involvement of early stage applicants; an over-representation of scientists from the host country should be avoided. Moreover, the gender balance should be taken into consideration. Further Info see Terms and Conditions.

Respect the Conference Budget

The Conference Unit will calculate the conference costs as tightly as possible in order to keep fees down. Therefore, no further financial contributions can be made once the conference budget has been allocated

8 Compose the final programme

The Conference Officer will provide the Chair with a Template for the Final Programme. The Chair will need to provide the following:

- Final Conference Structure and Timeline
- Names of Sessions and Session Chairs and Speakers

9 Manage ESF Conference

The Chair will be responsible for the implementation of the programme and the scientific quality of the Conference.

The Chair is encouraged to invite an assistant or young researcher to help with the organisation of the poster sessions and/or other on-site scientific aspects.

10 Write the scientific report

The Chair is expected to submit a conference report no later than 6 weeks after the Conference. The Conference Officer will provide a Template for the Scientific Report.



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