



# INTERNATIONAL BIOMETRIC CONFERENCE MANUAL

Version January 2023

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## **1. Foreword**

- 1.1. International Biometric Conferences (IBCs) have been sponsored by the International Biometric Society (IBS) since 1947 and are one of flagship activities.
- 1.2. Since 1982, IBCs have been held every other year. This pattern has been established to avoid overlap with the biennial conference of the International Statistical Institute.
- 1.3. IBCs are truly international, attracting participants from across the globe, and representing the full range of Biometry.

## **2. About this manual**

- 2.1. This manual gives an overview of what is involved in organizing a successful IBC and sets out the key financial requirements.
- 2.2. It is not an exhaustive nor prescriptive manual.
- 2.3. Detailed development of IBC is a collaborative process involving a range of groups from the Society, such as leadership, the International Business Office, the local organizers and our conference management company. Detailed arrangements, such as logistics, financial and travel, will inevitably vary from conference to conference.

## **3. Key Facts**

- 3.1. International Biometric Conferences typically rotate to reflect the geographic diversity of the Society, with the intention of visiting in turn (a) Europe, (b) North America and (c) South America, Asia, Africa, and Australasia (i.e., rest of the world). An alternative interpretation of the typical rotation is (a) Europe, (b) North, Central and South America, and (c) Asia, Africa, and Australasia (i.e., rest of the world).
- 3.2. IBC is a one-week conference. It starts on Sunday evening with a reception and ends on Friday afternoon.
- 3.3. Wednesday is reserved for sightseeing or scientific tours.
- 3.4. The conference social events include the Welcome Reception, the Young Statisticians' Reception, and the Gala Dinner and are usually held on Sunday, Monday and Thursday evenings, respectively.
- 3.5. There are typically 700-1200 participants in the IBCs depending on location. Total registration will occasionally vary from this range.
- 3.6. Full-day or half-day short courses may be organized by the IBS Education Committee prior to, during or after the conference.
- 3.7. IBS governance meetings take place during the conference.

#### **4. What constitutes a successful IBC**

- 4.1. Good representation from around the world.
- 4.2. A varied and stimulating scientific programme reflecting the full breadth of the IBS.
- 4.3. An exciting and stimulating educational program.
- 4.4. Strong involvement from young biometricians.
- 4.5. A social program which both allows the space to network and enables participants to appreciate and engage with the host region's culture.
- 4.6. Reasonable prices, so that members from developing countries and students will be able to attend.
- 4.7. Sound financial management.
- 4.8. Sunshine!

#### **5. Conference Governance**

- 5.1. The President of the IBS presides over the IBC and gives a presidential address.
- 5.2. The outgoing (i.e., immediate past) IBS president is responsible to the IBS Executive Board for all aspects of IBC organization. This person is referred to as the Organizing President.
- 5.3. The Conference Advisory Committee (CAC) is charged with identifying potential locations for future IBCs (taking account of recent conference venues to ensure geographical variation) and encouraging the development of proposals from the eligible geographical regions. The CAC's final selection of a host Region is approved during a special meeting of the Executive Board during the IBC held four years prior. This is typically the only agenda item presented during this special Board meeting. The meeting should be held immediately following the completion of the CAC selection process, so that the host Region selection may be announced during the Closing Ceremony of the IBC. The Board may choose to ratify or reject the decision of the CAC.
- 5.4. Conflicts in both location and timing with other societies and groups should be avoided if possible (see §7.3).
- 5.5. International Programme Committee
  - 5.5.1. The International Programme Committee (IPC) is charged with the planning and direction of the scientific programme.
  - 5.5.2. IPC members should include representatives of the full breadth of scientific activity within the society and should reflect the geographical spread of the society. The IPC includes a representative from the Local Organizing Committee, or LOC (see §5.9).
  - 5.5.3. The IPC is responsible for organising the review of abstracts for invited sessions,

for contributed papers, (oral and posters) and assembling the final programme for the LOC to publish.

5.5.4. Annex B shows the prototype programme which includes the following elements: (a) short course programme; (b) invited programme, including showcase sessions and the awards session; (c) contributed programme; (d) poster sessions (e) social programme and tours, and (e) IBS governance meetings (for which the International Business Office will provide the schedule).

5.5.5. Since many participants will need to present in order to secure funding to attend, the IPC should seek to accommodate as many contributed oral presentations and posters as possible (contributed talks should not be shorter than fifteen minutes)

5.5.6. The IPC, appointed by the Executive Board, will be guided by the Organizing President. The IPC chair should not normally be a member of the hosting region.

5.5.7. The timeline in Annex A shows when the IPC should be appointed.

#### 5.6. Education Committee (standing committee of the IBS)

5.6.1. The Education Committee is tasked with developing the short course programme (typically run on the Sunday before the conference) and the *Statistics in Practice* session that takes place during the conference. See Annex A for the suggested planning schedule.

5.6.2. The IBO (International Business Office) will assist with preparation and distribution of short course materials as well as registration, accounting, and other related functions.

#### 5.7. Awards and Prizes

5.7.1. Annex E details the awards and prizes typically made at IBC, and who is responsible for them.

5.7.2. The awards and Prizes detailed in Annex E includes 1) Best Oral Presentation(s) by a Student Delegate, 2) Best Poster Presentation(s), and 3) The IBS Florence Nightingale Award.

5.7.3. All Award winners are named and recognized at the Awards Ceremony held on the final day of the conference.

#### 5.8. Conference Management Company

5.8.1. In 2017, the Executive Committee of the IBS, in consultation with various IBS Standing Committees and with the approval of the Executive Board, signed a multi-year contract with a conference management company to help with the organization of IBC conferences.

5.8.2. A multi-year agreement provides valuable continuity and corporate memory in terms of what needs to be done for each conference and potentially provides

access to economies of scale.

5.8.3. While our Core contract is with an office located in a geographic area that offers the possibility of regular communication with the IBO during normal Washington D.C. business hours, the concept is that a local office will engage with Local Organizing Committee members to help plan the local aspects of the conference.

5.8.4. Contracts with conference management and conference venue are to be signed by the President or Executive Director of the IBS.

5.8.5. At the end of each contract term, the Executive Board may choose to continue the Society's relationship with the current firm or select another firm.

#### 5.9. Local Organizing Committee

5.9.1. The Host Region/Network proposes a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for approval by the Executive Board.

5.9.2. The LOC, with help from the conference management company is responsible for planning and the direction of all the non-scientific facets of the conference, working closely with the Organizing President, the IBS Secretary/Treasurer, and the IBO.

5.9.3. The LOC will liaise with our conference management company account manager who will, as appropriate, provide links and introductions to a local office. The conference management company will assist with all practical aspects of conference management, including negotiations with potential conference venues and hotels, as well as providing assistance with accommodation, transportation, venue logistics, coffee breaks, lunch (if appropriate), preparation of participant packs, registration etc.

5.9.4. The LOC, with help from the conference management company, is responsible for provision of the social programme. This could be by either (a) providing a range of tour / activity options specifically for participants which they can choose from when they register online, or (b) – in established tourist centres - through directing participants to a range of local tour operators with whom they can book direct.

5.9.5. The LOC, with help from the conference management company and the IBO, is also responsible for ensuring (a) the programme is published on the website well in advance of the conference (refer to Annex A - timeline); (b) abstract and participant lists are in electronic format; (c) appropriate conference materials are provided to participants at registration.

5.9.6. The LOC, with help from the conference management company and the IBO, is further responsible for (a) providing a message board (either physical or virtual)

during the conference; (b) providing an information desk with details of local restaurants, maps, shopping events etc. (c) identifying volunteers to help throughout the conference.

5.9.7. The timeline in Annex A shows when the LOC should be appointed.

#### 5.10. Conference website

5.10.1. The conference website is the responsibility of the IBO and will include on-line abstract submission and conference and short course registration.

5.10.2. Arrangements for collection of fees are set out in the Finance section below, and also in Annex C.

5.10.3. The timeline in Annex A shows when the website should be created and populated.

## 6. Conference Venue

6.1. See 3.1 above for guidance on geographical location.

6.2. IBC locations will ideally be close to an international airport.

6.3. A well-established public transport system makes a location attractive.

6.4. A range of accommodation options is necessary, with some located in walking distance of the venue and some being suitable for students and others with tight budgets.

6.5. Both dedicated conference centers and University-based locations have been successful in the past.

6.6. The conference venue should accommodate at least six parallel scientific sessions, a poster session, a registration desk, refreshments, and exhibit space, and should offer internet access. At least one lecture hall must be able to accommodate a plenary session to accommodate 700-1200 conference delegates as described in §3.5. Nearby rooms are also needed for IBS business meetings during the conference and for the short courses prior to the conference. Good audio-visual provision is essential.

## 7. Conference Timing

7.1. IBCs are generally held in July, which of course is Summer for the northern hemisphere. December is also a possibility that might be more suitable for some Southern hemisphere locations. Note that for some southern hemisphere locations closer to the equator, a July conference can work very well (e.g., Cairns, Australia in 2004).

7.2. Consideration should be given to the dates of academic terms and other conferences to maximize attendance.

7.3. Once the conference date is fixed it should be circulated as widely as possible to prevent clashes emerging.

## **8. Satellite meetings**

- 8.1. One or two-day satellite meetings may be organized just prior to or immediately after the IBC. These may be organized under the purview of the IBS or be developed by other societies and groups.
- 8.2. For those satellite meetings organized by the IBS, one specific topic of methodology or application area is highlighted. Emphasis is on plenary sessions in a workshop-type format, with room for discussion.
- 8.3. As this is not part of the official IBC program, a separate local organizing committee and scientific program committee should be appointed by the organizer of the satellite meeting. Satellite conference or workshops not organized by the IBS may be co-sponsored by the IBS, usually without any financial commitment or administrative support.

## **9. Finances**

- 9.1. A typical outline budget, providing a template for submission of a bid, is shown in Annex C.
- 9.2. After a venue is selected, a final budget is developed with input from the LOC, conference management company, IBO, and IBS Treasurer (who may seek advice from the IBS officers and Budget and Finance Committee as appropriate).
- 9.3. The registration fees should be set at a level to ensure that all conference expenses are covered (including expenses related to conference management and the International Business Office). Conference expenses should exclude (a) the short course programme and (b) the IBS Executive Board meeting expenses, as these activities are not considered part of the conference.
  - 9.3.1. Students and participants from lower and middle-income countries should pay a reduced registration fee in each category.
  - 9.3.2. The IBS officers shall submit the registration fees for approval by the Executive Board: see Annex A timeline.
  - 9.3.3. All participants, from the Organizing President down, regardless of their role in the conference, must pay their registration fee.
- 9.4. All contracts associated with the IBC must be reviewed by the officers and authorized by the Organizing President. They should be signed by the Organizing President or the Executive Director.
- 9.5. Final balance
  - 9.5.1. Where the IBO collects all registration fees, and takes full financial responsibility, (a) forty percent (40%) of any surplus will be transferred to the host region or shared if more than one region hosts and (b) any loss is born entirely by the

Society.

- 9.5.2. Where the host region collects the registration fees, (a) forty percent (40%) of any surplus is retained by the host region and the remainder transferred to the Society (b) thirty percent (30%) of any loss is met by the host region.
- 9.5.3. Where there is a shared responsibility for collecting registration fees, appropriate arrangements regarding liabilities and distribution of surplus will be agreed upon with the Executive Board.

## **10. After the conference**

- 10.1. An electronic evaluation should be conducted with assistance from the IBO.
- 10.2. Accounts should be settled within sixty days and a full financial report presented to the Executive Board within three months.

## **11. Preparing a successful bid**

- 11.1. The Conference Advisory Committee is responsible for setting the procedure for inviting bids to organize the IBC, soliciting bids, and making a recommendation to the Executive Board.
- 11.2. The location and venue should be identified typically four years in advance.
- 11.3. Successful bids will convince the Conference Advisory Committee that the organizers can deliver on all aspects described above and should include an outline budget (Annex C) and an indication of the likely travel and accommodation costs for all participants.
- 11.4. In 2019, a new site selection process was introduced. It consists of three stages (see Annex G). The first stage is the Expression of Interest stage for hosting an IBC, in which regions can express their interest by submitting a relatively simple document (Annex H). The CAC invites three regions to submit their full proposals (see Annex I) for the second stage selection. Following document-based evaluations, the CAC selects two finalist regions and invites them to make the final presentation at the CAC meeting held during the IBC. More information on the process is found in Annex G.

## **12. List of Annexes**

Annex A – timeline

Annex B – typical programme outline

Annex C – outline budget spreadsheet

Annex D – relevant financial policies

Annex E – awards and prizes

Annex F – Past conference venues and registration numbers

Annex G –IBC site-selection process

Annex H –template of Expression of Interest for hosting an IBC

Annex I – recommended information included in the full proposal