

CONFERENCE PLANNING RELATED TO ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF PROCEEDINGS OF PARTICLE ACCELERATOR CONFERENCES

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Abstract

Planning a conference is easy and a pleasure when you know how. Keep in mind however, that each small detail neglected at the planning stage becomes a problem multiplied by the number of delegates at the conference, and the result can be no less than catastrophic: unpleasant for the delegates, embarrassing for the organizers. So attention to detail and careful planning are the key to successful, satisfying, hassle-free conferences.

1 PLANNING OVERVIEW

The choice of venue is one of the most important and difficult tasks of the conference organizer. The venue itself, its location, style and visual appearance will leave a lasting impression on delegates. A really unsatisfactory venue can seriously spoil the conference when bad food, poor seating, bad service etc. become more important than the conference itself.

Since this paper is concerned with planning, we will leave the actual characteristics of the venue and concentrate on time scales. The larger the conference the further in advance one needs to plan. For around 1000 participants one needs to book the venue at least 2 years in advance, though very often for EPAC and other accelerator technology conferences this figure is closer to 4 or 6 years.

For conferences expecting 1000 or so delegates, the committees are formed and the detailed planning begins approximately two years in advance. The first year is devoted to discussions and planning just how the conference will look, taste, feel and fit into the environment. It is a time to dream, since one can let one's imagination take the lead, the dreams become less enjoyable as the costing element takes over and one is left with what one can afford.

It is essential during this phase to list requirements carefully, and to attach costs to each item as the results of the calls for tender become available. Typical big items of expenditure are:

- rental of the venue,
- rental of exhibition booths and poster panels,
- coffees and teas,
- social events such as cocktails and banquets,

- rental of equipment such as computers for the processing of the files of contributions to the proceedings, and for e-mail,
- the production of the proceedings (reproduction of CD's and hard cover volumes), and of course
- personnel, prior to, during and following the conference.

An estimate of income is based on how much sponsorship will be available, how much can the industrial exhibition produce in terms of revenue, and the registration fees can be fixed accordingly. It is wise to arrange the budget so as to break even with a lower number of delegates than one really expects.

A year in advance of the conference all of the above details should be sewn up. The following year, the year preceding the conference, is then devoted to putting it all into action.

2 MAJOR TASKS AND DEADLINES: PRE-CONFERENCE

Listed below are the more important actions and deadlines. C-n = Conference minus number of months. Acronyms of Committee names are given in Section 3.

2.1 June (C-24)

At preceding Conference OC Meeting: Election of Chairman of SPC whose first task is to propose the composition of the SPC, and initiate a proposal for the composition of the SAB.

2.2 September (C-21)

Headed notepaper to the printer:

- Conference headed notepaper: this carries the names and addresses of the LOC Chairman, the Industrial Exhibition Manager and the Scientific Secretariat. It is used essentially by the LOC for all correspondence concerning local arrangements, industrial exhibition, etc.;
- EPS-IGA notepaper: for the use of the EPS-IGA Chairman for correspondence, in particular regarding sponsorship.
- EPAC Executive Secretary: for all correspondence concerning EPAC, conference organization, Prize Committee, and of course the scientific programme passing through the Scientific Secretariat.

2.3 October (C-20)

At SPC and OC Meetings: Decision on composition of SAB.

Formal invitations mailed to SAB with deadline for response *November (C-19)*.

2.4 December (C-18)

SAB acceptances acknowledged by e-mail. SAB invited to provide input for SPC using a Web form, concerning proposals for invited oral contributions, and concerning all other aspects of the conference organization. Deadline for response of SAB: *mid-January (C-17)*.

2.5 February (C-16)

SPC begins work on organization of Sessions and proposals for invited oral contributions, in particular taking into account the input provided by the SAB.

2.6 April (C-14)

SPC Meeting: continuation of elaboration of scientific programme.

OC Chairman contacts sponsors requesting financial support for Eastern European and Student support. Deadline for response, *May (C-13)*.

2.7 May (C-13)

Preliminary version of the EPAC poster available for advertisement at PAC.

2.8 June (C-12)

SPC, taking into account the scientific programme of PAC and any points of interest, finalizes proposal for invited oral presentations for OC approval.

LOC makes status report to OC, outlining overall organization of the conference, contents of which will form the First Announcement and Call for Papers.

Call for Tenders for the Production of the Proceedings mailed. Deadline for reply: *mid-July (C-11)*.

2.9 July/August (C-11/10)

First Announcement and Call for Papers finalized and sent to the printer.

Website set up containing all information contained in First Announcement, and in particular the Sponsoring Institutes and the Instructions for the Submission of Abstracts electronically using a Web form.

The Abstracts/Proceedings database is ready.

2.10 September (C-9)

First Announcement and Call for Papers mailed.

Formal invitations mailed to Invited Speakers, enclosing First Announcement. Deadline for reply: *November (C-7)*.

Call for candidates for the Accelerator Prizes mailed, enclosing First Announcement. Deadline for reply: *December (C-6)*.

Meeting of the Editorial Board to discuss bids received in connection with the Call for Tenders for the Production of the Proceedings, and to set policy should it be necessary. The Editorial Board also refines other organizational matters for the electronic processing of the conference proceedings in particular with respect to hard- and software, personnel, etc.

2.11 November (C-7)

E-mail to speakers to acknowledge acceptances and request Abstracts - same deadline as for other Contributors (*January (C-5)*).

Programme of Invited Oral Contributions on the Web updated to include names of speakers.

2.12 December (C-6)

Accelerator Prize Nominations mailed to Selection Committee.

2.13 January (C-5)

Deadline for the receipt of Abstracts using the Webform.

Data entered into the Abstracts/Proceedings database.

Abstracts and author information exported from Abstracts/Proceedings database and distributed to OC/SPC in preparation for meeting following month. The database is also used to provide statistical information such as geographical distribution of submitting authors, and numbers of papers by session/classification, etc., to help with the planning of the sessions.

The manner in which the abstracts will be published on the Web and in the Abstracts Brochure needs to be decided. EPAC has used two methods:

- Upon receipt of the Web text files, prepare .doc files to be distilled to .pdf: publish the .pdf on the Web, and compile the .doc files into a Word document for the Abstracts Brochure, or
- Publish on the Web the web-submitted abstracts (text/html), export the abstract data from the Abstracts/Proceedings database into a merge Word file for the preparation of the Abstracts Brochure.

2.14 February (C-4)

The Accelerator Prizes Selection Committee meets to decide on proposals for laureates and makes its proposal to the OC.

The OC/SPC decides on papers for oral contribution.

The SPC makes proposals for Eastern Europeans to receive financial support to attend the conference, based on the scientific merit of their papers.

The SPC decides on Session Chairmen to be invited.

The Abstracts/Proceedings database is updated.

2.15 March (C-3)

Laureates of Accelerator Prizes are informed of nomination and invited to supply photos and abstracts of the work they are invited to present orally at the conference. Deadline *April (C-2)*.

All contributors are informed by mail that their contributions are accepted for oral or for poster presentation.

Session Chairs are invited formally. Deadline for response: *April (C-2)*.

The Conference Guide is prepared and delivered to the printer with a 2-week delivery deadline. The Guide contains the full programme of invited papers and information for delegates upon arrival at the conference. It is used as a confirmation of intention to participate at the conference and mailed to all registered participants from the deadline for cheap registration (*April (C-2)*).

2.16 April (C-2)

A small SPC/LOC Sub-committee meets for one day to number all of the poster presentations into the programme in time and space.

The Abstracts/Proceedings database is updated to contain all of the programme information (tagging of programme codes, etc.)

The Website is made ready for authors to submit papers electronically in advance of the conference. A Web form is provided for authors to fill out with details of submission, including number of pages, keywords, etc.

All submitting authors of abstracts are contacted by mail and informed of the date, time and place of their oral or poster contributions. Enclosed are:

1. A Paper Submission Sheet to be handed in at the conference when submitting the contribution and the diskette. This Sheet is printed from the Abstracts/Proceedings database and it contains full details of the contribution (submitting author information, title of presentation, list of co-authors, programme information including Programme Code, Classification, Abstract Reference, date and type of presentation); a few areas are left blank for the author to fill in: identification of the diskette with document and figure names, keywords, number of pages);
2. Information for Authors (general)
3. Instructions for the Preparation of Papers
4. List of Keywords

2.17 May (C-1)

The Abstracts Brochure and the Programme are prepared.

The Abstracts Brochure goes to print with a 3-week delivery deadline. It is produced in Word either from .doc files (see above) or from data exported from the Abstracts/Proceedings database. The essential difference between the two methods is that the .doc files have

superscripts, subscripts and symbols. Exporting from Filemaker results in a loss of formatting which has to be re-introduced in the merged word file.

The Conference Programme goes to print with a 3-week delivery deadline. The Conference Programme contains the data exported from the programme code, title and co-author fields of the Abstracts/Proceedings database, sorted in programme order, into a word merge file. The last-minute information concerning the conference organization is also included.

2.18 June (C)

Pre-conference electronic submission of contributions to the Proceedings and the completed Webform via the Website up to a few days prior to the conference.

3 MAJOR TASKS AND DEADLINES: DURING THE CONFERENCE

3.1 Reception of Contributions

Authors of contributions to the proceedings are invited to submit their papers at the rhythm of the conference, that is the day preceding or of the presentation. Submissions are composed of a hard copy of the paper, a diskette containing the electronic files of the paper and the figures, accompanied by the Submission Sheet, duly completed by the author.

Reception Office staff accept the contribution if:

- the format is identical to the templates,
- the number of pages does not exceed the number of pages for the type of contribution (5 pages for invited papers, 3 pages for all others),
- the Paper Submission Sheet is correctly filled in with the identification of the electronic files, the platform on which it was prepared, keywords, etc..

The Abstracts/Proceedings database is updated through:

- checking that the title of the paper has not changed,
- checking that the list co-authors is complete,
- entry of the keywords and the number of pages.

Each contribution is then filed into a plastic sleeve, and a Processing Sheet printed from the Abstracts/Proceedings database is attached. The contribution is ready to be passed onto the Processing Office, grouped according to the platform on which the files were produced.

3.2 Processing (C)

Processing Staff at pc or macintosh workstations process the files and record actions on the Processing Sheets, the result of which is posted on a Board outside the Proceedings Office.

The posted results are in the form of green dots when the processing is successful, or red dots for problem files. Red dots imply that authors must return to the Proceedings Office to discuss the problem with the Processing Staff. Minor problems will have been fixed and the author will be requested to check that the result is

satisfactory. More serious problems may need to be discussed and agreement reached as to whether the Processing Staff goes ahead and corrects the file, or whether the Author should re-submit.

The Processing Sheet is completed following each action. When the processing is complete, the plastic sleeves are filed in folders in the order of the programme.

EPAC has tended to adopt this rather simple method of tracking contributions. PAC 99's web-based system was indeed an interesting innovation though it required more effort.

3.3 Presentation of Contributions (C)

The PAC series' require that only contributions which are presented at the conference can be accepted for publication in the proceedings. A careful check is therefore made during the poster sessions, the result of which is entered into the Abstracts/Proceedings database. At the end of the conference a careful check is made that all contributions have in fact been presented. Whenever a case is in doubt the author is contacted.

4 MAJOR TASKS AND DEADLINES: POST-CONFERENCE

4.1 June (C)

Immediately following the conference, LOC and electronic processing staff continue processing and problem solving for a few extra days.

The Abstracts/Proceedings database is updated to check on papers presented or not, received or not. Authors of papers presented orally but not received for the Proceedings are e-mailed to request papers.

A total of 2 weeks grace is allowed for authors of post-deadline papers.

Quality Assurance (QA) begins, consisting of a complete re-check of all papers.

As the electronic files go through the final QA check they are filed in directories: oral presentations in programme order, poster presentations in classification order. The Abstracts/Proceedings database is also checked for the last time. QA procedure takes approximately 3 weeks with 2 or 3 people working full time.

4.2 July (C+1)

QA finalized. Abstracts/Proceedings database complete.

A preliminary version of the Proceedings is published on the Web (without author index or search engine), using the table of contents exported from the Abstracts/Proceedings database with links to the .pdf files.

4.3 August (C+2)

The Editorial Board, without the SPC and LOC Chairmen, but usually with a couple of extra persons, meets for approximately 1 week to tie up the data

exported from Abstracts/Proceedings database, which form the table of contents and the authors index, with the processed files, in preparation for the CD production and the Web publication.

The .pdf files are copied onto a CD and sent to the firm which will reproduce them and airmail them to participants, with a deadline of 8 weeks from the date of receipt of the .pdf files.

The firm reproducing the CDs produces a preliminary CD for testing of functionality by the Editorial Board.

The Web version with search engine, author index etc. is published on the Joint Accelerator Conferences Website.

Hard copy volumes printed from the electronic files are sent to the Publisher for reproduction and distribution to participants by surface mail with a deadline of 12 weeks from the date of receipt of the manuscript. A copy is usually provided for proofreading.

5 COMPOSITION AND TASKS OF COMMITTEES

The meetings of the various committees which contribute to the organization of EPAC are planned to ensure that all of the above deadlines are met. A brief description of the committees, their mandates and their interactive rôles is useful to complete the picture.

5.1 Organizing Committee (OC)

The Elected Board of the European Physical Society Interdivisional Group on Accelerators (EPS-IGA) forms the EPAC OC. The EPS-IGA counts 18 members, each one is elected for a term of 6 years, spanning 3 conferences, to provide continuity. The Chairmen of the PAC and APAC OC's are co-opted. The EPS-IGA can co-opt non-IGA members to the OC.

The OC meets 4 times during the organization-span of a conference (October (C-20), June (C-12), February (C-4) and June (C)), the ultimate meeting being scheduled during the conference. The OC decides on all matters based on proposals from the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The newly elected members of the Board are invited to the ultimate meeting of the OC which takes place during the conference again to ensure continuity. The IGA Executive Secretary is Secretary of the OC.

5.2 Scientific Programme Committee (SPC)

The SPC is composed of a Chairman, 7 ordinary members, the Chairmen of the OC and the LOC, and one further LOC member, the Chairman of the subsequent PAC and APAC Programme Committees, and as many co-opted members as necessary.

The SPC Chairman is elected by the OC. SPC Chairman automatically becomes OC Chairman of the following conference. The SPC Chairman proposes the SPC composition to the OC by mail following the

conference OC meeting, to enable it to start work without delay.

The SPC meets usually 4 times (October (C-20), February (C-16), April (14), June (C-12)) two of them (October and June) immediately preceding the OC meetings. It makes proposals for the composition of the SAB, for the programme of invited contributions, with input from SAB, and the overall scientific programme planning of the conference.

5.3 Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

The composition of the SAB is agreed by the OC upon proposals by the SPC. It is an advisory committee with approximately 60 members, invited by letter signed by the SPC Chairman, then via e-mail and the Web. SAB advice is sought not only on proposals for invited talks, but also on overall organizational matters. SAB members are formally invited in October (C-20), deadline for response November (C-19). The SAB is asked for input concerning invited papers and organizational matters in December (C-18), deadline for reply mid-January (C-17).

5.4 Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

The LOC composition is proposed by its Chairman for approval of the OC. It meets a varying number of times, ~6 to 12 meetings over a 2-year period, as necessary and according to composition. The LOC Chairman makes

regular status reports to the OC. It is responsible for all arrangements on the local level - budget, registration, accommodation, social programme, etc.

5.5 Editorial Board

With the advent of electronic publication and the need to back up the LOC which is responsible for the production of the Proceedings, EPAC decided to set up an Editorial Board. It is composed of the Chairmen of the SPC and of the LOC (their competences cover the scientific programme and the budget), plus the person on the LOC with the particular responsibility for the production of the Proceedings (a complex task covering the provision of computing facilities for the receipt of the papers and the processing of the files prior to, during and following the conference, etc.), and of two other persons for historical reasons and continuity (John Poole and Christine Petit-Jean-Genaz). The Editorial Board meets usually only once at around the time of receipt of the call for tenders for the production of the hard-copy volumes and CD's (September (C-9)) to discuss the result of the call for tenders for the production of the proceedings and any policy matters arising. All arrangements for the submission of the electronic files etc. are agreed on the basis of e-mail, discussions, and the literature prepared in connection with previous conferences.