

# A Guide to the FM Symposium

Version 3.10 - June 2022

The FM Symposia (“FM 20XX”) are organised by Formal Methods Europe (FME), a small association of members active in the field of formal methods<sup>1</sup>. This guide is intended for those considering making a proposal to host or get involved in the organisation of an FM symposium. Based on experience gathered from past organisers, it covers the bidding process (Section 1), the symposium’s organisation (Section 2) and financial matters (Section 3). Section 4 contains advice from organisers of recent events. Appendix A lists leading participants in the symposia to date. Appendix B and C provide additional information with respect to setting up a symposium budget. Constructive suggestions to this document are welcome and should be sent to [info@fmeurope.org](mailto:info@fmeurope.org).

## 1. Proposing to Host FM 20XX

The symposia are held at intervals of (very roughly) 18 months. A call for proposals to organise the symposium is issued to the FME membership mailing lists and announced on [www.fmeurope.org](http://www.fmeurope.org) about two years in advance of the conference due date. If you are considering making a proposal, we recommend getting in touch with [info@fmeurope.org](mailto:info@fmeurope.org). We are happy to offer information and advice. Note that the location for the symposium is not bound to Europe and we positively welcome proposals from all parts of the world.

The call contains details of the contents required in the proposal but, as a minimum, you will need to identify a host institution and describe the facilities, local support from academia and industry, and forms of available sponsorship. Initial proposals are short documents, but the authors of the most viable proposals will be contacted by FME with further specific questions during the review period. Proposals are assessed by the FME board with the support of an Advisory Board.

After the winning proposal is selected, a formal contract is negotiated with the prospective organiser. The contract must contain (a) the normal commercial clauses (b) a provisional call for papers, (c) a financial budget and (d) a symposium management plan.

## 2. Symposium Organisation

The key people in the organisation are the **General Chair** and **Programme Committee Chairs**. Below that management level, FME places no formal requirements on the organising structure, which is defined by the Chairs.

**Selection of the General Chair:** The General Chair is invited by the Chair of FME and is usually the same person as the proposer. The General Chair is normally expected to represent the host institution and must have the authority to mobilise its resources. The General Chair has full freedom and responsibility for the organisation of the event within the terms of the contract between the host institution and FME.

**Selection of Organising Committee(s):** The General Chair will normally select members of a team needed to organise the event and to handle specific aspects, such as publicity, sponsorship and so on. The structure and composition of this group is entirely up to the General Chair and not FME. Organising Committees typically include the following portfolios:

- Local organisation and accommodation
- Publicity

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fmeurope.org](http://www.fmeurope.org)

- Tutorials
- Workshops
- Industry Day
- Doctoral Symposium
- Exhibition & Tools Demonstrations

**Selection of the Programme Committee Chair(s):** The Programme Committee (PC) Chairs are selected and invited *by the Chair of FME* in consultation with the General Chair, the FME Board, selected colleagues, former PC chairs and FME members. In recent years, we have preferred to have two PC Chairs with some diversity in background and geographical location. ***Proposers are welcome to suggest potential PC Chairs but, to avoid embarrassment, proposers must not contact potential PC chairs directly as selection and invitation is made by the board of FME.*** The PC Chairs have freedom and responsibility for the provision of a successful scientific programme for the main symposium. Note that PC chairs are expected to attend and engage in the full symposium. PC chairs are also expected to contribute to the editing of a journal special issue, dedicated to the Symposium.

**PC Composition:** The PC Chairs choose the PC members in consultation with FME (to help ensure consistency from conference to conference). Some the members of the previous PC should be included to ensure continuity, but that does not mean that previous PC members have an automatic right to serve. The PC should also include some members of the FME board, to ensure FME's involvement in the selection process. Otherwise chairs are free and encouraged to mix new and experienced members. Geographical coverage, participation from industry and gender balance are important for FM Symposia, which are worldwide, not European, events.

The **PC size** has been increasing of late in order to reduce the burden of reviewing on members without compromising the number and quality of reviews. For a regular symposium, the PC size has been around 40, but for larger events such as FM'99, FM'09, and FM'19 the PC has been much larger (97 in FM'19). An average review load is now under 10 reviews per PC member. PC chairs usually seek 3 or 4 reviews per paper.

**Reviewing standards:** The PC chairs should specify the minimum contents of reviews, quality, style and what constitutes conflict of interest and require PC members and sub-reviewers "sign up" to this on accepting a review role. PC Chairs shall run the program committee meeting or equivalent evaluation session, ensuring that papers are properly reviewed and selected fairly.

**Guidelines of good practise:** PC Chairs should not submit papers to their area of responsibility (i.e., research track, I-day, workshops, tutorials etc.). However, they may submit to different areas (another track, a tutorial, if they are track chair, etc.) PC Chairs should consult with the previous year PC chairs to ensure that any good or bad experiences are taken into account.

**Tentative Scheduling:** A rough schedule for preparing papers, tutorials and workshops:

T - 15 months:	Advertising: CfP (latest)
T - 7 months:	Journal-first track papers: invitation
T - 6 months:	Papers: submission
T - 6 months:	Workshops & Tutorials: submission
T - 5.75 months:	Papers: Distribution to PC
T - 4.75 months:	Papers: Reviews completed, start of (virtual) PC meeting
T - 4 months:	Workshops & Tutorials: Notification
T - 4 months:	Papers: Notification
T - 3 months:	Tool Exhibition: submission
T - 3 months:	Papers: Final Versions to PC Chairs
T - 3 months:	Final Version of Proceedings to Springer Verlag

T - 3 months: Notification: Tool Exhibition Proposals  
T - 0 months: Enjoy Symposium

Note that FM symposia almost always have had a strict submission deadline policy. Deadlines are not extended and we intend to keep it that way.

**Symposium format:** The format is up to the General and PC Chairs. In recent years, the event has lasted five days (Monday to Friday) with two days of workshops and tutorials, including the Doctoral Symposium, three days of technical symposium. The Industry Day (see below) can run as a parallel track. The three days of the main technical symposium have usually begun with a plenary session featuring a well-known invited speaker. Where the volume of papers requires it, parallel sessions are sometimes used to give each author sufficient time to present his or her work (typically around 30 minutes per regular paper), with aligned morning and afternoon tea breaks to switch tracks and visit the tools exhibition. Traditionally, tutorials and workshops have been held on Monday and Tuesday, but organisers should consider Monday and Friday instead to avoid the common problem that people leave early on the last day to be home before the weekend. *This symposium format is by no means mandatory and innovations are welcome.*

**FMWEEK/World Congress:** Traditionally, every tenth year (1999, 2009, 2019, etc.) the symposium is organised as a "World Congress on Formal Methods." The FM General Chair is responsible for making this happen, by inviting other major FM-related events to join, perhaps to compose an FM Week. The World Congress normally has a larger PC, with representatives of as many countries around the world as possible. Other initiatives to reach out to all formal methods communities around the globe are welcome.

**Industry Day:** FME has a Memorandum of Understanding with the ERCIM Working Group on Formal Methods for Industrial Critical Systems (FMICS) on jointly organising an industry-focused event annually. The Symposium may be requested to host this event under the name of the "Industry Day" (I-Day).

The programme consists largely, but not exclusively, of invited talks given by practitioners rather than researchers. The plenary invited speaker on I-Day can be shared with the regular programme. In recent years, abstracts (about 4 pages each) of the I-Day presentations have been included in the LNCS proceedings, after a light review organised by the I-Day Chairs, and the I-Day presentations have been provided electronically after the event. The I-day is organised by two co-chairs, one from academia and one from industry, working in close collaboration with the PC and General chairs. It can be instrumental in bringing industry to the symposium, especially if it is offered and published as a one-day networking event, backed by some local special interest group or institute. I-Day has been notably successful in bringing industry and academia together, always with high attendance numbers and inspiring discussions. *Again this format is certainly not mandatory and innovations are welcome.*

**Journal-first track:** There should be a journal-first track for presentation of papers already published in partner journals selected by the FME board<sup>2</sup>. The selection of papers should be separate from the PC process. The track should have its own chair who should appoint two or three colleagues to form a selection committee. We suggest to include the previous chair and some of the FME Fellows. The FME board will introduce the chair to the editors-in-chief of the partner journals. There should be no open call, instead papers are nominated by the journal editors after confirming the authors' interest. If there are not enough nominations, the track chair may invite authors of papers published in the partner journals since the previous FM symposium. Papers in conference special issues should not be considered, nor papers heavily based on previous conference publications. When selecting papers, the track chair should consider the following administrative criteria:

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<sup>2</sup> As of this writing, partner journals are: Formal Aspects of Computing, Formal Methods in System Design and Science of Computer Programming.

- The paper should report substantial results.
- Novelty of the paper as judged by the reviews gathered by the journal or a brief evaluation by the session chairs.
- Priority to authors that haven't published in FM recently.
- Geographical distribution.
- No papers by the members of the selection committee.

Ideally, select enough papers to fill a session or two. The papers should be presented together to give visibility to the track. Notification of acceptance/rejection to authors should be made at least one month before the end of the early registration deadline. Authors register as normal conference participants, not invited speakers. Participation fees should not be waived. Journal-first track papers are not symposium papers and should not be included in the proceedings, although they could be mentioned.

**FME Business Meeting:** FME holds an open business meeting on one of the technical symposia days at lunch time – usually coinciding with the I-Day, when there is one. A suitable room with presentation facilities should be made available for this meeting. About 30 participants can be expected.

**Awards:** A "Best Paper Award" should be given for the best technical paper presented at the symposium. The Programme Chairs are responsible for organising the selection of this paper. Any costs associated with this award should be on the Symposium budget, but the FME board does not expect that any more than a certificate is presented. FME may also present its own awards at the Symposium. In that case, FME will cover the cost of the awards themselves, while the Symposium should budget for travel and free attendance for awardees. The General Chair should make sure that the Symposium schedule accommodates both "Best paper" and FME awards.

**Advertising:** We stress the importance of advertising all the parts of the symposium, especially workshops and tutorials, as well as the "traditional" conference. For workshops and tutorials, care should be taken to select dates for submission, decision, call and assessment of participation levels, in order to maximise participation. Flyers, an appealing web site, use of mailing lists and social networking sites are means to organise publicity and advertise the symposium. This may also be important to prospective sponsors of the event. Special care has to be taken to attract local industrial practitioners. Social media are also important channels for information to and communication with attendants before, during and after the symposium.

**Proceedings:** All previous symposium proceedings have been published in Springer's Lecture Notes in Computer Science (LNCS) series, and from 2016 in the Formal Methods subline. The Programme and General Chairs should approach our contact person<sup>3</sup> at Springer for initial approval *as soon as possible*. Springer will advise on the schedule for getting copy to them for printing. You need to work back from this to get submission dates, using the rough schedule above. General chairs should contact their immediate predecessor, before contacting Springer, in order check the ins and outs of the publishing contract. In the recent past, Springer has also sponsored a best paper award. Purely electronic proceedings are recommended as they have a positive impact on the environment, cost and schedule.

**Social programme:** An attractive social programme increases the interest in participating in a conference. However, it can present a financial risk because many participants end up not wishing to participate in such side initiatives. Consider a compromise solution where some of the social programme costs are included in the regular symposium fee. This option also avoids the difficulties participants can have in obtaining reimbursements for such expenses had they been charged independently. This option is recommended as long as the impact on fees is acceptable.

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<sup>3</sup> The FME board can supply you with the name and contact details of the responsible person at Springer.

**Sustainability:** The OC should make an effort to make the symposium a sustainable event. Some options that can be considered are:

- Plan for an environment-friendly *Reduce–Recycle–Reuse* mode of operation.
- Cut back on printed material, both for promotion and proceedings (electronic proceedings are already the norm).
- Use china cups and drinking glasses rather than plastic cups.
- Use recyclable badge holders etc.

### 3. Symposium Finances

*The primary goal of the symposium is to be a major scientific success, not to return a surplus. However, it must be run in a financially responsible way and should not make a loss.*

FME is a non-profit association<sup>4</sup> with no significant sources of income other than its symposia. We spend any surplus accrued on other activities to pursue our aims of fostering application, research and international cooperation in formal methods, in consultation with the membership. Usually, the surplus is used to sponsor workshops, bursaries, speakers and small projects, to provide a financial cushion for future FM symposia, and to cover running costs.

Organisation of the symposium is subcontracted to the host institution on a shared risk basis. A surplus or loss is split between FME and the host in a (negotiable but usually 3:2) ratio, but with an upper limit on any loss sustained by FME (typically € 35 000).

A formal budget is drafted for each symposium. The budget is an integral part of the contract between FME and the organising institute. Without an agreed budget, there is no contract.

In order to cover start-up costs, FME can provide a repayable float (usually € 5 000) to the local organisers, once the contract has been signed.

We have found that some general budgetary principles help to make for more conferences with fewer nasty surprises. We expect the budget to follow these, and they are listed in Appendix B.

The budget is structured as a balance sheet and a profit/loss calculation. We are happy to supply a template. The balance sheet distinguishes income and expenses with fixed and variable components identified separately for each category. The variable components are parameterised, and these parameters are listed separately. The profit and loss calculation is usually a rough sweep over these parameters, to identify the evolution of the break-even point over different participation scenarios. The items listed in the budget depend on the local situation, but a few of the usual items are listed in Appendix C for convenience. Previous budgets are available on request.

### 4. Lessons learned

**General Chairs:** When suggesting PC chairs to the FME Board, consider their time zones so that it will be possible for them to hold on-line meetings at a time which is reasonable to all of them.

**PC Chairs:** The number of submissions has been increasing over the last few years. You might want to consider pre-vetting abstracts. That was done for FM'15. For FM'09, the PC Chairs went to four reviews per paper - a big help in cases where one review was late or lost.

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<sup>4</sup> FME is registered at the Chamber of Commerce in The Hague as an association and operates under the law of the Netherlands.

**PC Chairs:** You do not have to think up a slogan or theme if you do not want to! Stress any particularly welcome subjects in the CfP. The full spread of subjects will get represented in submissions anyway.

**PC Chairs:** A physical PC meeting has not been held for many years. PC meetings are usually held electronically. Whichever sort of PC meeting you go for, the costs need to be budgeted.

**PC and General Chairs:** Forming the programme – try to form "clusters" of presentation and events that cater for specific interests to avoid "gaps" in the programme or – when there are parallel presentations – collisions. In particular, there have been suggestions that we should try to have a package suited to industrial participants who may not be able to attend for more than one or two days. One possible approach is to weight the first day or two with a higher proportion of papers of industrial interest and provide a reduced registration package for these.

**PC Chairs:** Be sure to communicate to authors that page limits are strict and apply also to the final version of accepted papers. We have had cases in the past where the final version exceeded page limits without the consent of the PC.

**PC Chairs:** If you decide on having different categories of papers (e.g. tool papers and regular papers), we suggest you clearly define the acceptance criteria for the different categories. It helps the PC discussions, and makes it clearer for authors what to expect.

**PC and General Chairs:** Managing invited speakers can be difficult, particularly with several affiliated or co-located events. Late agreement with invited speakers on their travelling and accommodation typically implies higher costs, so be on top of this.

**Journal-first track chairs:** Set up a schedule of work that allows you to send invitations a month or so before the deadline for paper submission. Invite the authors, emphasising the prestige of the track and the fact that participation costs are not covered. Sample is available.

**Journal-first track chairs:** Beware that sometimes a careful reading of significant parts of a proposed paper is required before it is absolutely clear that results have not been presented already.

**Journal-first track chairs:** Liaise with the local organisers to provide a certificate for all authors, signed by the chair and the PC Chairs. The certificates can be handed over during the journal-first track or in the conference dinner. Sample is available.

**Tutorials and Workshops:** If you are limited in accepting tutorials or exhibition spaces, use a strict first-come first-served basis and ensure transparency to avoid any risk of dissatisfaction from commercial competitors.

**Tutorials and Workshops:** Make the proposers responsible, as part of the acceptance criteria for their own proposal, for setting up a web-site and starting their publicity campaign to attract sufficient participants, linking up to the generic symposium web-site and vice versa. Set explicit minimum participation levels for each tutorial and workshop proposal with a hard deadline and communicate these clearly to both organisers and potential participants, to promote early registration. Decide to cancel these events if participation levels are really lagging behind expectations and offer already registered participants the possibility to move to another workshop or tutorial instead or a reimbursement. Only offer to print hand-outs and waive the tutorial or workshop fee to the organiser or lecturer, but do not offer other financial discounts or incentives. Instead, workshop organisers should be stimulated to seek their

own event sponsoring (for instance directly from FME) to cover additional cost, such as an invited speaker or a social event.

**Tools Presentations:** Set aside a room with data projection facilities for tools presentations. Timetable and publicise these.

**Sponsor Presentations:** In 2003 and 2005, some conference sponsors could buy a space in the programme in which to make a presentation. This was felt to be successful because of the technical strength of the presentations.

**OC Chairs:** Possible sponsors include

- BCS-FACS, IEEE, ACM, national computer science SIGs and science foundation
- Book sellers and publishers (Springer, Elsevier, Cambridge University Press)
- Local and/or regional Government and major research institutes
- Local Software Houses
- International Software/Systems houses specialising in FMs
- Suppliers of infrastructure (stationary, printing, etc.)
- Tools suppliers

**OC Chairs:** Regarding the venue, try to provide some quiet break-out rooms for ad hoc meetings, including chairs and tables.

**OC Chairs:** The exhibition works best if it is close by the coffee/tea distribution point(s). People tend not to visit the exhibition if it is on another floor some distance away. Understandably, exhibitors want to be close to the delegates and are more likely to participate and pay if they are able to get passing trade at coffee and lunch breaks.

**OC Chairs:** Remember to supply power supplies and networking facilities (wireless) for exhibitors and participants.

**Organisers:** Name badges get a lot of criticism. The important thing is not the conference logo, but the name of the participant. Please print the name clearly in large letters and the affiliation below it. Avoid extraneous material.

**OC Chairs:** Provide proper logistics and practical information to participants – particularly if the symposium is in an area most participants are unfamiliar with – such as:

- Contact information to the OC or local staff in case of problems.
- How to contact police or medical aid.
- How to travel between the airport, hotel area/city centre and symposium venue.
- What taxi/public transport companies (not) to use, expected cost, how to buy tickets, travel time etc.
- Map of the symposium venue.
- Recommended hotels of different price classes with approximate room costs.
- Local currency and tipping practises.
- Availability of ATMs and currency exchange offices, acceptance of credit/charge cards.
- Typical meal costs, where (not) to buy food, whether tap water is drinkable.
- Usual weather for the time of the symposium.
- Type of electrical plug, mains voltage and frequency.
- Places of interest (also for accompanying family members not attending the symposium).

**Publicity:** Recently, the call for papers has circulated mostly by email. Colour posters have been produced as a general call for submissions and participation. One good idea recently has been to issue a bookmark-sized card with the URL for the conference web site on it. This can be distributed at other gatherings (and even craftily inserted into some other events' proceedings ☺). FM'19 made a video version of the CfP with contributions from the PC chairs of the symposium itself and its associated and co-located events.

**Publicity:** Advertise tutorials and workshops extensively, both the call for proposals and after a selection has been made.

**Publicity:** The publicity plan of FM'19 included the effort to record videos of the talks of the whole symposium in the Youtube channel of FME. The initial plans were to subcontract a professional company to do this, including live streaming. However, the cost of this service was found prohibitive, putting the overall budget at risk. A compromise was found in hiring a professional to guide volunteers (students of social communication degrees) in doing the media coverage.



## Appendix A. Reference information

Symposium	Programme Chairs	Invited Speakers
<b>01: VDM '87</b> <b>(Brussels, Belgium)</b>  LNCS 252	Dines Bjørner Cliff B. Jones Mícheál Mac an Airchin- nigh	Cliff Jones Dines Bjørner Peter Lucas
<b>02: VDM '88</b> <b>(Dublin, Ireland)</b>  LNCS 328	Robin Bloomfield Lynn Marshall Roger Jones	Donald Good Jean-Raymond Abrial
<b>03: VDM '90</b> <b>(Kiel, Germany)</b>  LNCS 428	Dines Bjørner Tony Hoare	Ole-Johan Dahl Joseph Goguen Reiji Nakajima
<b>04: VDM '91</b> <b>(Noordwijkerhout,</b> <b>Netherlands)</b>  LNCS 551 & 552	Søren Prehn	Michael Jackson Robin Milner John V. Guttag
<b>05: FME '93</b> <b>(Odense, Denmark)</b>  LNCS 670	Jim Woodcock	Cliff B. Jones Antonio Cau Willem-Paul de Roever Peter Lupton
<b>06: FME '94</b> <b>(Barcelona, Spain)</b>  LNCS 873	Tim Denvir	Ralph Back Babak Dehbonei Fernando Mejia
<b>07: FME '96</b> <b>(Oxford, England)</b>  LNCS 1051	Marie-Claude Gaudel Jim Woodcock	Tony Hoare Terje Siversten Jan Peleska
<b>08: FME '97</b> <b>(Graz, Austria)</b>  LNCS 1313	John Fitzgerald Cliff B. Jones	Hermann Kopetz Loe Feijs Robin Bloomfield
<b>09: FME '99</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> World Congress</b> <b>(Toulouse, France)</b>  LNCS 1708 & 1709 (+CD)	Jeanette Wing Jim Woodcock	Tony Hoare Cliff B. Jones Amir Pnueli Joseph Sifakis John Rushby Michael Jackson

<b>10: FME 2001</b> <b>(Berlin, Germany)</b>  LNCS 2021	Jose Nuno Oliveira Pamela Zave	Daniel Jackson Jayadev Misra Simon Peyton Jones
<b>11: FME 2002</b> <b>(Copenhagen, Denmark)</b>  LNCS 2391	Lars-Henrik Eriksson Peter A. Lindsay	Natarajan Shankar (shared with FLoC) Anthony Hall David Basin
<b>12: FM 2003</b> <b>(Pisa, Italy)</b>  LNCS 2805	Keijiro Araki Dino Mandrioli	Kouichi Kishida Brian Randell Gerard Holzmann Jean-Raymond Abrial
<b>13: FM 2005</b> <b>(Newcastle, England)</b>  LNCS 3582	Ian Hayes Andrzej Tarlecki	Marie-Claude Gaudel Chris Johnson Mathai Joseph
<b>14: FM 2006</b> <b>(Hamilton, Canada)</b>  LNCS 4085	Tobias Nipkow Jayadev Misra	Ernie Cohen Nicholas Griffin Thomas A. Henzinger Peter Lindsay George Necula
<b>15: FM 2008</b> <b>(Turku, Finland)</b>  LNCS 5014	Jorge Cuellar Tom Maibaum	Arvind Paolo Bresciani Dawson Engler Schmuel Katz Jayadev Misra
<b>16: FM 2009</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress</b> <b>FMWEEK</b> <b>(Eindhoven, Netherlands)</b>  LNCS 5080 (+ DVD)	Ana Cavalcanti Dennis Damms	Wan Fokkink Carroll Morgan Colin O'Halloran Sriram Rajamani Jeanette Wing
<b>17: FM 2011</b> <b>(Limerick, Ireland)</b>  LNCS 6664	Michael Butler Wolfram Schulte	Jasmin Fisher David Harel Bashar Nuseibeh Janos Sztipanovits
<b>18: FM 2012</b> <b>(Paris, France)</b>  LNCS 7436	Dimitra Giannakopoulou Dominique Méry	Martin Abadi Asaf Degani Alan Wassyng
<b>19: FM 2014</b> <b>(Singapore)</b>  LNCS 8442	Cliff B. Jones Pekka Pihlajasaari Jun Sun	Gerwin Klein Zhenjiang Hu Jim Woodcock

<b>20: FM 2015</b> <b>(Oslo, Norway)</b>  LNCS 9109	Nikolaj Bjørner Frank de Boer	Elvira Albert Werner Damm Valérie Issarny Leslie Lamport
<b>21: FM 2016</b> <b>(Limassol, Cyprus)</b>  LNCS 9995	John Fitzgerald Stefania Gnesi Constance L. Heitmeyer	Manfred Broy Peter O'Hearn Jan Peleska
<b>22: FM 2018</b> <b>(Oxford, England)</b>  LNCS 10951	Bill W. Roscoe Jan Peleska	Annabelle McIver Leonardo de Moura Kim G. Larsen
<b>23: FM 2019</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress</b> <b>FMWEEK</b> <b>(Porto, Portugal)</b>  LNCS 11800	Annabelle McIver Maurice ter Beek	Erik Poll June Andronick Shriram Krishnamurti
<b>24: FM 2021</b> <b>(Beijing, China)</b> Held online.  LNCS 13047	Marieke Huisman Corina Pasareanu Naijun Zhan	Mingsheng Ying Paula Herber Clark Barrett Assia Mahboubi
<b>25: FM 2023</b> <b>(Lübeck, Germany)</b>  (Proceedings reference not known at this time.)	Marsha Chechik Joost-Pieter Katoen	Jeanette M. Wing Laura Kovács Harald Rueß

## Appendix B: Budget Principles

These principles are based on past experiences (good and bad!). We strongly recommend following them to reduce the risk of unknown unknowns!

- *Be realistic in terms of both expected income and expenditures.* Participation fees should be in line with comparable conferences. We aim to keep fees at broadly the current level or lower, with the aim of increasing participation. Sponsorships account for a significant part of the income; get these committed (in writing) and obtained as early as possible, and estimate a risk that they will not come through. Similarly, verify your expenditures up front by getting quotations from subcontractors and suppliers. Get competitive bids from multiple suppliers if possible, so that you can make good quality/price trade-offs and give some room for negotiation with prospective suppliers. On-site conference registration (and credit-card processing) services have been notoriously expensive at past events. Local applicable taxes must be reflected in the budget.
- *The budget must be defensive and aim for a surplus.* Round all income estimates down but round all expenditure estimates up. Risks (for example: not obtaining the estimated sponsorship fees) must be clearly visible<sup>5</sup>. Include an explicit contingency (usually 5% mark-up on the fixed costs and 5% mark-up on the variable costs). The right sort of surplus to aim for depends on the scale of the event and typically ranges between € 10k and € 25k. As a rule of thumb, the projected budgetary surplus should be roughly equal to the total planned contingency.
- *Make profit and loss calculations for several participation scenarios.* Show explicitly at what participation level the symposium would break even and how these figures evolve when participation levels are both lower and higher than this break-even point. The break-even point should be well within reach, assuming the number of expected accepted papers times 1.5, which provides a reliable lower estimate for the number of fully paying participants, based on previous experience. Furthermore, there may be thresholds in expenditures at certain participant levels (for example: hire extra busses for local transportation to conference modulo 50 participants), these should be made visible in these calculations if the impact is significant.
- *Provide a rationale for the estimates made.* Setting up an FM symposium budget requires making many estimates: the number of expected conference participants (fully paying, early versus late, students), number of accepted papers, number of parallel conference tracks, number of (parallel) tutorials and workshops. It should be clear how these estimates relate to the budget figures used. Numbers from past conferences are available from the FME Treasurer on request.
- *Limit the potential risks in case the event is (or needs to be) [partly] cancelled.* Although this has never happened, and we certainly hope it never will, it is better to be safe than sorry and plan ahead<sup>6</sup>. You can mitigate substantial risks in several ways, for example:
  - Make sure all contracts with local suppliers have clear cancellation policies in writing, as part of their quotation.
  - Consider the cancellation and refund policies for participant and hotel registrations; at the very least make sure these are well publicised and that associated expenses are covered.
  - Consider taking suitable event insurance (in particular for third-party liability).
  - Check that institutes (government, national science foundation or trusts) might provide financial backing in case of residual risks like this.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, if 5000 Euro is estimated as a target for future fundraising with 25% likelihood, then only 1250 Euro is added as expected income in the budget.

<sup>6</sup> For example, international travel was heavily disrupted by volcanic ash clouds over northern Europe in 2010.

- *Co-located conferences must not increase the organisational risks significantly.* Co-locating FM20XX with other major conferences<sup>7</sup>, either back-to-back or simultaneously, has been a great success in the past. If you choose to do this, it should be clear how the events may interact financially (for example, if shared local services are used). In particular, the FM event budget needs to consider the case where either event is cancelled or is significantly changed. Other examples include registration discounts offered to participants attending both conferences, or contributions owed to the co-located event organisation for services provided.
- *The FM budget must be in Euros.* If a different currency is used locally, then the associated banking cost and/or exchange rate fluctuations must be addressed.

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<sup>7</sup> Here we mean full-scale conferences with separate financial management (i.e. participation fees, registration), organisational structure (program committee), published proceedings and so on.

## **Appendix C: Checklist of Budget Headers**

### Budget parameters:

- Number of symposium days (typically: 3, Wednesday to Friday)
- Number of expected accepted papers (typically: 32)
- Number of parallel tracks (typically: two)
- Number of half-day workshops / tutorials (typically: 4 + 4)
- Number of full-day workshops / tutorials (typically: 2 + 2)
- Number of (minimum) participants per workshop
- Number of (minimum) participants per tutorial
- Number of invited speakers (typically: one per main symposium day)

### Budget estimates:

- Number of fully paying participants. As a ball park figure, assume roughly 2.5 times the expected number of accepted papers, varying from 70 (Turku, FM 2008, 23 accepted papers) to 186 (Porto, FM 2019, 39 accepted papers).
- Ratio of early to late registrations (typically 5:1)
- Number of additional one-day registrations (to specific workshops, tutorials or “Industry day”-only participants, usually 10 to 20)
- Number of student registrations (typically 20 to 40)

### Expenditure checklist:

- Conference facilities
  - Room and equipment hire (including beamers, audio equipment)
  - Support staff (security, technical services, student gophers, cleaning)
  - Registration facilities (staff, credit card services, hotel bookings)
  - Internet access for delegates
- Food and Drink
  - Refreshments and snacks (morning and afternoon coffee and Tea breaks)
  - Lunches (including drinks)
  - Social event(s) (location, staff, diner, drinks, entertainment, travel)
- Programme
  - on-line paper submission management system fee (e.g. EasyChair or CyberChair)
  - on-line PC meeting is assumed.
  - budget for invited speakers (basic travel reimbursement and hotel cost). As a rule of thumb FME uses € 1500 per person for intercontinental travel and € 750 for travel within Europe (travel + one night stay).
  - budget for doctoral symposium and Industry Day. If applicable, and preferably covered by sponsoring, basic travel reimbursement and hotel cost for selected participating PhD students, waiving registration fees for I-Day presenters or other discounts.
- Organising committee
  - Proceedings (ordering and delivery cost). Proceedings are expensive, in particular because of shipping costs. Consider the possibility of not providing printed proceedings for all participants.
  - Conference programme (booklet layout, printing)
  - Publicity (posters [call for participation], banners, signage)
  - Best paper award
  - Travel budget for general chair (e.g. to visit FME business meetings)
  - Registration kits (bags, badges, maps, tourist information)

- Additional rooms, materials and equipment (i.e. tool exhibition booths)
- Communication cost (fax, telephone, postage)
- Reproduction cost (workshop and tutorial proceedings, handouts)
- Banking cost (credit card payments: estimate 4.5% commission fee)
- Other out-of-pocket cost
- Gifts for invited speakers
- Photographer
- Event insurance

#### Income checklist

- Symposium participant fees (proceedings, lunch, symposium, coffee, tea)
  - Early registration (FM 2012: € 450, student € 300)
  - Late registration (FM 2012: € 550, student € 350)
  - Typically, proceedings and dinner tickets are not included in student registration fees.
- Full day workshop/tutorial participation fees (handout, lunch, coffee, tea)
  - Early registration (FM 2012: € 150)
  - Late registration (FM 2012: € 200)
- Industry Day or Doctoral Symposium only fee (lunch, coffee, tea)
  - Early registration (FM 2012: € 100)
  - Late registration (FM 2012: € 150)
- Add-ons
  - Extra proceedings
  - Extra conference dinner ticket (FM 2012: € 80)
- Tools exhibition fees
  - Academic booth / per day
  - Industrial booth / per day

#### Sponsoring

- Consider a variety of sponsoring opportunities like sponsor packages, sponsoring of specific sub-events like the Industry Day, invited lectures, the social event etc.