

BI-ANNUAL MEDCOAST CONFERENCES ON THE MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL ENVIRONMENT: ORGANISATIONAL GUIDELINES

A. Organisational structure

Conference Chairman is the Chairman of MEDCOAST. The Conference Chairman has overall responsibility for the success of the conference and leads all groups involved in the organisation except the Local Organising Committee. Chairman's tasks include, among other things, management of the MEDCOAST Secretariat in communications with the participants, production of all publicity materials, collection of manuscripts, editing and publication of the proceedings, and the arrangements for the special MEDCOAST issues of the scientific and professional journals after the conference.

Conference Co-chairmen are usually the heads of the national lead institution(s) cooperating for the organisation of the conference in the country. Co-chairmen of the conference are responsible for all organisational work at the national and local levels, including publicity, sponsorship, management of the funds received from national and local sponsors and all logistical issues before and during the conference. Logistical issues include selection of the conference hotel, arrangements for transfer of participants between the airport and the hotel, design and organisation of all social events during the conference (including the one-day field trip) and all other details.

International Advisory Committee (IAC) includes internationally well-known experts and individuals from academia, governmental and inter-governmental organisations, non-governmental environmental organisations, and industry. The basic function of IAC is to reflect the international individual support to the conference. The International Advisory Committee is normally enlarged to include a number of individuals from the host country upon recommendations of the Conference Co-chairman.

Executive Program Committee (EPC), which is formed by a number of key international MEDCOAST people and representatives of the national/local academic institutions collaborating for organisation of the conference, is the group that is responsible for the scientific and professional quality of the conference. The size of EPC is typically around 10 to 15 people. The Conference Chairman chairs EPC. The main tasks of EPC are abstract selection, peer-reviewing of the submitted manuscripts and designing of the conference program (e.g. invited speakers for plenary sessions, parallel sessions, poster sessions, workshops, special meetings, etc.). The management of the Poster Session (e.g. the best poster award) and preparation of the Conference Statement (conclusion, declaration) are also handled by EPC.

Local Organising Committee (LOC), which is an extremely important body for successful planning and running of the conference, is formed by representatives of the national/local institutions collaborating for the organisation of the conference (normally up to 10-12 people). LOC is usually chaired by one of the Conference Co-chairmen, or by a representative of another national/local institution that plays a very significant role for organisation of the conference. The most important task of LOC is to generate sufficient levels of sponsorship from local and national institutions for achieving an enjoyable conference. LOC is responsible from publicity at the national level and from all logistical issues before and during the conference. The logistical issues include selection of the conference hotel, arrangements for transfer of participants between the airport and the hotel, designing and organisation of all social events during the conference (such as the welcome reception, other receptions, cultural night, closing banquet, cultural half-day trip and the technical field trip during the last day of the conference), and all other details before and during the conference (such as lunches and coffee breaks). LOC also makes arrangements to assist the MEDCOAST Secretariat in several duties during the conference, including registration, preparation of the poster session, and the secretarial work such as copying, communications, etc. during the conference.

LOC may also deal with sponsorship of the conference at the supra-national (regional) level in order to generate funds from the regional institutions for meeting the expenses of participants from the region (e.g. neighbouring countries), who otherwise cannot participate.

LOC may assign an official travel agency for the conference and cooperates with this company for designing attractive pre and post-conference excursions for the participants and a social program for the accompanying persons including cultural events and daily excursions. The travel agency operates a desk at the conference hotel or the conference centre throughout the conference to help the participants with their travel reservations, flight confirmations, and other inquiries. LOC may set up a **Social Programs Committee (SPC)** for carrying out these tasks. SPC works under the supervision of LOC.

The Conference Chairman (and Co-Chairman who are not the chair of LOC) follows the work of LOC and makes recommendations to the Chairman of LOC as appropriate at various stages of the organisation.

MEDCOAST Secretariat is the professional group that handles several crucial tasks for the organisation of the conference, including all types of communication with participants and international sponsors, designing and printing of the publicity materials (call for papers, bulletins, conference poster), publicity of the conference at the international scale (mailings, e-mail list-server, web-page), collection of abstracts, collection of manuscripts, assistance for editing and printing of the conference proceedings, all financial issues, registration of participants, daily management of the conference, and dissemination of the results (conference statement, proceedings, etc).

B. Participation, sponsorship and financial issues

The MEDCOAST's bi-annual conference series brings a considerably wide range of people from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea countries, or elsewhere, who are involved/interested in management of coastal and sea areas of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea or other seas of the world. The number of participants of the past conferences has been in the range of 150 – 270. The number of countries represented has changed from 25 to 35.

Several prominent inter-governmental and international organisations have provided modest levels of sponsorship for some of the past conferences. Additionally, the host (national/local) institutions have always provided invaluable support, both in-kind and financial. The financial sponsorship is crucial for the success of the MEDCOAST's bi-annual conference series. About 30 percent of the authors of papers selected for inclusion in the conference program, mainly from the developing countries of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, are usually not able to participate unless they receive some level of financial support. The MEDCOAST Secretariat handles the international fund raising and collaborates with LOC for the national fund raising. The MEDCOAST Secretariat chooses the eligible participants for partial financial support.

The sponsorship of the national and local institutions has been in the form of financing one of the social events (such as the welcoming reception or any other reception, the conference dinner or banquet, one day field trip), covering lunches and/or coffee breaks, paying for the rental of conference facilities, providing small gifts to the participants (such as conference bags, cultural gifts, publicity material), or in-kind support (such as providing transport between the airport and the hotel).

MEDCOAST in general and the conference series in particular, do not receive financial support from any organisation, either continuously or at substantial levels. Therefore, organisation of the conference series relies basically on the registration fees collected from participants by the MEDCOAST Secretariat. Most of the expenses of the conference, including the salaries of the personnel working for the conference at the MEDCOAST Secretariat, the related operational costs of the Secretariat, costs of travels during conference preparation, editing and printing of the conference proceedings (which are provided to the participants at the start of the conference) are all paid by using the money collected from the registration fees.

As a standing MEDCOAST policy, whenever the conference is organised in a developing country, the registration fee for participants from the host country is reduced by 50 % for encouraging wider participation.