

14 September 2011

CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS **(GUIDELINES FOR ORGANISING ICOBTE CONFERENCES)**

International Conference on the Biogeochemistry of Trace Elements (ICOBTE)

The aims of ICOBTE are to serve as a forum for the free exchange of information and ideas in aquatic, terrestrial and atmospheric systems including soil science, plant science, limnology, aquatic chemistry, microbiology, biochemistry, and other related areas of scientific enquiry relevant to ecosystem and human health.

Organization of the Conference:

Conference Venue and Chairperson(s)

The Conference shall be held **biennially**. Successive venues of the Conference should be selected to be as world wide as possible. Geographic regionalization should be avoided. The selection of Conference venues is based solely on the evaluation of proposals to the ISTEb Executive Board (EB) from appropriate Conference Chairperson(s) persons providing evidence of backing by competent organization(s). Proposals must contain information concerning financial support and other aspects necessary to ensure the successful organization of the proposed Conference. Proposals are to be submitted to the Chair of the ISTEb Hosting Committee using the ISTEb Standard Conference Template. The ISTEb Hosting Committee will collect together information on all proposals for future conferences, based on the standard proposal templates. All information will then be presented to the EB for consideration, and they make the final decision on future hosts

Responsibilities of ISTEb Executive Board

After acceptance and approval of the proposed conference venue and chairperson(s), the EB is charged with the following:

- a) to provide all possible and available help to the Conference organizers including, but not limited to, providing mailing lists, submitting notices to professional publications, editing of announcements, providing advice on outside funding and sharing and updating ISTEb website with the Conference organizers.
- b) to interact with the Conference organizers to ensure that the organization of the Conference follows the spirit and rules of the ISTEb. Meetings between members of the EB and Conference organizers during the two years preceding the scheduled Conference are strongly encouraged.
- c) To appoint an editorial committee (The International Committee of ISTEb), in consultation with the Conference Chairperson(s), whose primary function is to ensure timely and high-quality review and publication of the abstracts.

Responsibilities of the Conference Chairperson(s) and Organizing Committee

It is expected that the Conference Chairperson(s) will form a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) consisting of a number of persons performing various duties necessary for the organization before and during the Conference. It is also the prerogative of the Conference Chairperson(s) to appoint a "Secretariat" to assist (but not to solely conduct) in the operation of the conference. It is to be especially noted, however, that the Conference Chairperson(s) is expected to make a serious and substantial commitment and to bear most of the responsibility for the conduct of the conference.

The duties of the Conference Chairperson(s) and the Organizing Committee are as follows:

- a) to engage in forming a **binding** "memorandum of understanding" (MOU) with the EB. This contract should be signed by the Conference Chairperson(s), the President and Vice President, and when appropriate by the Department/Institute/School Chair, Director or Dean of the organizing Institution;
- b) to secure substantial funding for a successful Conference in addition to registration fees and to be responsible for the collection and disbursements of all Conference funds, including ISTEb membership fees (when it becomes justifiable) and subsidy for deserving participants, especially from developing countries;
- c) to secure adequate physical facilities for meeting sessions, auxiliary activities, and for participant housing;
- d) to maintain and coordinate a conference website to provide all relevant information in a timely manner.
- e) to publicize the Conference in appropriate publications, websites, etc.;
- f) to obtain and prepare mailing lists of potential Conference attendees;
- g) to prepare and distribute Announcements under the auspices of ISTEb;

- h) to organize scientific and cultural excursions; accompanying persons to be included;
- i) to organize a banquet, receptions, and other social functions;
- j) to collect and secure abstracts or manuscripts for eventual publication in the Conference Proceedings;
- k) to organize the Conference Scientific Program (Oral and Poster sessions in Special Symposia or Technical Sessions – see below);
- l) there should be roughly equal numbers of Special Symposia and Technical Sessions;
- m) to prepare the Conference Program and Proceedings for distribution to delegates at the Conference (hard copy and/or electronic form);
- n) to provide the Executive Board with a detailed financial statement and a complete list of participants (with addresses) after the Conference;
- o) to distribute the list of participants to all participants, via the website, during or after the Conference; and
- p) the Conference should receive extensive and appropriate post-Conference publicity.

The Conference organizers must secure substantial funds for the organization of the Conference. The revenue may be derived from a) grants from governmental, industrial, and private sources, and b) registration fees. Within the regulations and legal limitations of the country where the Conference is held, any surplus funds, after the accounts for the Conference are closed, should be transferred to the treasury of ISTEBA, Inc. Any financial loss is the sole responsibility of the Conference organizers.

Detailed Aspects of the Conference

The conference should be held during the universally common university vacation period, preferably during June to September. Particular care (as an additional duty for the ISTEBA chair) should be taken to avoid conflicts with other scientific meetings covering subjects of overlapping interests.

The Conference should not exceed 4 days in length and should be held preferably from Monday through Thursday. Friday should be left open for field trips and excursions. Cutting-edge scientists may be invited as keynote speakers. Preferably, no more than 2 plenary speakers are invited and may be scheduled after the Opening Ceremony on Monday and before the Closing Ceremony on Thursday. Business meetings for the Executive Board and other Committees and an informal evening reception should be scheduled on the day preceding the Conference (i.e. on Sunday). The Welcoming and Opening Ceremonies should be scheduled on Monday with the Closing Ceremony on Thursday. The official welcome of the delegates should be made by the Conference Chairperson(s), official opening (start-up) of the Conference by the ISTEBA Chairman and the Closing Ceremony officiated by the President.

The primary language for presentations, Announcements, Proceedings, and business meetings is English. In certain countries the official requirements for concurrent use of the national language, in addition to English, should be respected.

Concurrent oral sessions on specific topics should be organized and poster sessions should be available for viewing throughout the working hours of the Conference. Each oral session should have one or two session chairperson(s) selected by the Conference organizers. It is preferred that Symposia organizers or International Committee and EB members serve as session chairpersons for Special Symposia or Technical Sessions.

Due to the need to allow people to move between parallel sessions and retain the conference timings, any “no-shows” that cause a gap in the published schedule should be filled with extra discussion or with a break, as decided by the chair. A notice to this effect should be presented to all chairmen, and copies provided on the chair persons’ desk at each parallel session.

Technical Sessions may be organized and chaired by EB or IC members on the basis of priority themes or received abstracts. Technical sessions provide an opportunity for oral presentations for offered papers, often grouped into more general topic areas than Special Symposia.

Special Symposia have been key attractive features of ISTEBA. No more than six concurrent sessions a day should be arranged.

Each symposium should have a chairperson(s), responsible for organizing the symposium and inviting speakers. Each symposium should have at least one invited keynote/lead speaker. Funds will be made available from ISTEBA to waive the Registration fees for two invited speakers per Special Symposium per full day (one per half day). The special symposium organizers are asked to raise their own funds to be able to invite speakers, and to publish symposia proceedings if they so wish.

In no circumstances should Special Symposium organizers depend on Conference organizers or EB to support them financially.

Criteria for selecting special symposia:

1. Timely, relevant topics to the themes of the Conference
2. Well known and credible organizer(s)/proposal(s) with proven experience in organization
3. Ability of organizer(s) to raise funds; proof of raising funds
4. List of potential topics in the proposed Symposium
5. Duplication of topics should be avoided
6. No organizer can propose more than one Symposium
7. An outline bid limited to one page should be submitted to the LOC and they will decide, together with the EB, which Special Symposia will go ahead and inform the organisers which bids are successful. The proposers should not commit speakers, resources or other organisations to the bid until after they are informed whether it was successful or not.
8. Abstracts that are not submitted or do not fit into the themes of the Special Symposia, will be grouped into themes that can become Technical Sessions.

The conference registration fee should include:

- a) Admittance to all Conference functions (except as noted below) and exhibits;
- b) Admittance to the informal reception on the evening before the start of the Conference;
- c) Conference Program and Abstracts;
- d) Lunch and refreshments at "coffee breaks".

The registration fee should not include the costs of

- a) Banquets;
- b) Excursions, field trips, and other extraneous social activities.

The time and place of the ISTEBA business meeting must be scheduled and coordinated by the President and must be announced by the Conference organizers in the Conference Program.

Financial Assistance

Conference organizers should make every effort to provide financial assistance to some Conference delegates. This financial assistance should be built into the Conference budget. Availability of financial assistance should be announced in the First and Second Announcements and delegates should be asked to submit a request for assistance as early as possible. Conference organizers should review all requests for assistance, with special consideration given to participants who can provide some matching funds, and should use the following criteria to choose assistance recipients:

- a) Working in low income countries (i.e. demonstrated need);
- b) Assistance recipients must submit an abstract which is reviewed favourably;
- c) Students should be considered to have special financial need;
- d) Young scientists from developing countries should get higher priority.

Depending on demonstrated need, financial assistance may include some or all of the following, in the following decreasing order of preference (reflecting the ease of administration):

- a) Conference registration waiver;
- b) Conference accommodation and meal waiver;
- c) Travel grant.

Assistance recipients should be notified in writing of the amount that has been granted them as soon as possible.

Conference Announcements

The Preliminary Announcement should be distributed during the preceding ISTEBA and should contain general information about the Conference. A Reply Coupon, with which an intent to participate and intent to present a paper(s) can be indicated, must be included.

The First (official) Announcement following **the Preliminary Announcement must be distributed at least 18 months before the scheduled Conference** to all respondents to the Preliminary Announcement and to others at the discretion of the Conference organizers, which can also be done electronically. It should include the following information:

- a) An outline of the general program;
- b) Details, if available, on housing, transportation, field trips, and other pertinent information;

- c) Information on the submission of abstracts including a statement that the acceptance of contributions is limited by available space and based on quality;
- d) Instructions to Authors if available at the time of distribution of the Announcement, must be attached;
- e) Deadlines for outline Symposia bids and the date of decisions regarding the Symposia that can be included;
- f) Information about the availability of financial assistance for Conference delegates (see above for details);
- g) Conference contact information.

The Second (official) Announcement and final call for abstracts should be distributed at least 12 months before the scheduled Conference. The Second Announcement should include the following:

- a) An outline of the general program with names and topics of main speakers including symposium organizers;
- b) Details on registration fees, housing, transportation, field trips, and other pertinent information;
- c) Information on the submission of abstracts including a statement that the acceptance of contributions is limited by available space and based on quality;
- d) Instructions to Authors;
- e) Way to register for the Conference;
- f) Way to register for the Conference Accommodation and Meals;
- g) Information about the availability of financial assistance for Conference delegates (see above for details);
- h) Conference contact information.

All Conference Announcements should be posted on the Conference website.

Conference Program

The program should include a detailed schedule of the scientific program and other relevant information. It should also include “welcoming/appreciation” remarks from the Honorary President, President, and Conference Chairperson(s). All Committee membership lists should be included in the program

Conference Proceedings

Electronic copy of extended abstracts of all oral and poster presentations at the Conference shall be presented to all participants at the time of arrival and registration at the Conference. A printed book of abstracts should be made available at extra cost to the delegates who request them in advance (i.e. at registration). **Only abstracts from registered participants** should be included in the Proceedings.

All submitted half page abstracts should be sent out for peer review by qualified scientists. The review process needs to be coordinated between the Conference Chair and the IC Chair (who will act as editors). Reviewers preferably will be members of the IC and/or Special Symposium organisers, but outside reviewers may be solicited. After the return of the reviews, the editors will select acceptable abstracts. The editors have the responsibility to reject any abstract submitted for either oral or poster presentation that does not meet high scientific quality. The following generalized criteria must be considered for acceptance:

- a) Is the scientific content of the abstract appropriate for an ICOBTE conference?
- b) For research papers: Is the paper presenting something new or innovative? For review papers: Is the review of a specific subject presenting new insights and interpretations?

All financial arrangements for the publication of the Proceedings, including losses or profits, are assigned to and are the sole responsibility of the Conference organizers.