

HOW TO ORGANIZE A STUDENT & YOUNG PROFESSIONAL CONGRESS

This document is a guide on how to organize an IEEE Student and Young Professional Congress.

It has been prepared by the Student Activities Committee and the Young Professionals Subcommittee in Region 8 for 2014.

The content of this guide covers from the moment the Call for applications is released until the period after the congress when everything has to be finalized.



1. **Motivation to organize a SYP Congress**
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1. Motivation to organize a SYP Congress

The Student and Young Professional Congress (SYP Congress) is an event that takes place every two years in Region 8. It gathers both student and young professional members from all Sections in the Region and it provides an opportunity to network and get to know over four hundred people from all over the world.

During the Congress, a wide variety of workshops and lectures are organized, dealing with interesting topics in diverse technical fields and also related to soft skills.

Organizing such an event provides the opportunity to gain many different skills, from teamwork to fundraising, as well as it increases the profile of the student branch at region level. In general terms, it will improve the organizers' CV.

One very important fact to be taken into account is that this congress is not a regular conference or business oriented event. It must be volunteering, where organizers are motivated by enjoying the experience of engaging with the larger IEEE community and providing IEEE members an exceptional event. Since it is volunteer based, things like subcontracting more services than the minimum needed or having a surplus in the final budget must be strongly avoided.

This event takes place in only one student branch at a time, and it involves a lot of work for more than a year... but in the end the congress is an excellent experience that is completely worth it in terms of new friends and many awesome experiences, in both professional and personal scopes. Also, it gives the chance to strengthen the collaboration with the Young Professional Affinity Group.

This document intends to be a guide for those who are thinking to apply to organize this Congress, and it will try to help in the organization process, from the very beginning to the very end. There are also many Cross-sectional Congresses that usually take place the year in between two Region congresses, and most of this document is also valid in the organization of those.

Applying for it, organizing and hosting this event is a considerable challenge but also an honor and privilege for any student branch

(Leuven IEEE Student Branch, 2010)

Previous editions

So far, the editions of the Region 8 SYP Congress (former Student Branch and GOLD Congress, SBC) have been: Istanbul 1998, Eindhoven 2000, Cairo 2002, Passau 2004, Paris 2006, [London 2008](#), [Leuven 2010](#), [Madrid 2012](#) and [Krakow 2014](#). From all of them some experiences and good practices have been extracted, as well as some practices to avoid. Previous organizing teams are always a source of knowledge that can be consulted without any hesitation, whenever needs be.

Attendees' opinions

Even though the organizing team is usually very tired after the amount of work required to organize the congresses, attendees are excited and extremely happy to have been part of it. This is why taking their general comments into account is better rather than just focusing on each own opinions. Bad and good comments will be received, but balance is always positive, which gives as a result a great event.

Feedback is greatly appreciated in this case, so all the conclusions can be explored for further congresses.

2. Preparing the application

Every two years, usually a year and a half before the SYP Congress, the Student Activities Committee (SAC) and the Young Professionals Subcommittee (YPS) send out the Call for applications for the Congress. That is the moment when student branches have to decide whether to apply for it or not, and a very long process starts at this point. Different things are taken into account when selecting the student branch to be the host for this event, and applications must include them in order to increase their likelihood of being successful.

During the application process there is a first deadline to submit a simple application where the student branch expresses its wish to organize the Congress and explains only general ideas. After this first round, where least favorable applications are declined, the rest of the applying student branches have to prepare a second and much more extended application to submit in a second deadline, usually two months after the first one.



Figure 1 Comments in a survey about the Madrid SBC

Rules

The first proposal must be a 2 A4 page document with general information of the applicants and a general description of the location and ideas for the Congress.

The official rules for the second application are released by SAC and YPS by spring one year before the congress, which gives almost a year and a half for the preparation.

Organizing team and SB experience

Since this is a very big event that gathers students, young professionals, academia, industry ... the experience that the student branch has in those fields is very important. Having organized previously some other congresses and conferences, experience in dealing with sponsors and in getting speakers for the branch's events are all a great plus.

Also, it is very important to form a consistent team, where every member has its own tasks and is absolutely willing to cooperate until the end. Unfortunately, most of times, since it is a very exhausting process, some of the members of the committee simply fall apart from the rest of the group. This is why having a few members with a known volunteering history that have been involved in the branch's activities for years is better than having the majority of the team as "unknown" new members.

In addition, all the experience and industry contacts that the YP Affinity Group might be an extra support in the organization.

The organizing committee should include since the beginning at least the following officers: Chairperson, Head of Program, Head of Meals and Accommodation, Head of Technical Activities, Head of Social Activities, Head of Young Professionals, Head of Sponsorship, Treasurer, Secretary and Webmaster.

Dates

Selecting the exact dates for the event is one of the most important steps in the preparation, but does not need to be done in the first stage. Times such as public and religious holidays and special days must be taken into account, in terms of traveling, availability of sponsors and speakers, country or sport competitions and so on. Also, and since the Region 8 is very multicultural, some periods like Ramadan must be avoided.

Attendance to your SBC will depend greatly on the chosen date. Summer months are in general the time you should aim for, for the following advantages: student housing, if possible, will have highest chance of being free. Student attendees in general won't have to miss classes (Careful with countries in southern hemisphere! They have different summer months and vacation). Your team and student branch will not have to miss classes to organize it.

(Leuven IEEE Student Branch, 2010)

Venues

At this stage it is also very important to select the major venues, where most of the activities will take place. There will be many different events during the Congress that will require different locations, but mainly the locations for the workshops and lectures, the daily meals, the gala dinner and the lodging must be considered early on in the process. These places should be consulted in terms of availability and average price, since these are the major expenses in the budget.

Usually, the venue for technical activities and daily meals is the university or campus where the applying student branch is located. It has to be contacted regarding availability and conditions: having enough different spaces such as classrooms and auditoriums, refectory near the used buildings, air conditioning or heaters when needed, technical equipment, etc.

Regarding special events such as Welcome Reception, technical visits, etc., they have to be approached as well and taken into account in the budget in case they are not sponsored.

Housing

Finding lodging for four hundred people is not usually easy, unless you search in student dormitories. Actually this is most of times the answer, but it still needs to be confirmed, and it needs to be close to the main venues so there will be no need to transport all the people. Also, searching for locations connected by public transport or at walking distance from many places of interest is advised, since attendees will still have some free time and not only they will be grateful for an ease of movements, the organizing team will be as well. The place must be checked in terms of air conditioning as well, if it is needed.

Getting a rough quotation would be very useful in calculating the proposed budget, since this is usually the bulk of the budget together with the meals. When including the housing in the budget, it must be taken into account that this basic housing will be included in the basic registration fee, while extra features or higher quality lodgings would not be covered by the registration fee. This means that it could be useful having two options of lodging, the first and basic one included in the fee, and a second option (single room, higher quality hall of residence...) with an upgrade in the fee. Also, option without accommodation must be provided in case there are participants who might be staying in different places, or in the case of VIPs who would pay for a hotel instead.

In case of offering basic and upgraded accommodation, it should be considered in terms of their location and distance between each other and main event venues.

Catering

Preparing meals for such a big group is usually a difficult task, so this needs to be thought of in advance. Most times, the university catering is enough for most of the meals, so they should be asked regarding availability, locations, and food offer. It should not be forgotten the amount of different foods that will need to be served: Halal, Kosher, vegetarian, coeliac... so this has to be taken into account as well when looking for catering.

Breakfast and lunch should be offered in places near the technical activities venues, so cost in time and money for transportation is avoided.

Dinners are normally special: Gala dinner, multicultural evening, barbeque ... and their locations and costs have to be considered too for the budget, as well as transportation costs in case it is necessary. For dinners it is advisable as well to get places which are either close to the general Congress' locations or reachable by public transport.

Transportation

Only transportation related to the congress must be taken into account. This means transportation from and to the Airport the first and last day respectively, and moving within the Congress' locations, e.g. from housing to Gala Dinner.

Flights or attendees' travels to the Congress are not covered by the Congress fee; in most cases, they are funded by the Sections, but this is up to attendees and Sections.

Budget

The main items in the proposed budget will be: venues for technical activities, special venues, meals (breakfast and lunch), special events (dinner) and transportation. All these define the congress fee without accommodation being included. Adding basic accommodation gives basic fee with accommodation, and adding upgraded accommodation gives upgraded fee. These three options must be defined by the budget in the first stage.

It is recommendable to make clear at this stage the legal status of the student branch, in order to clarify how the invoices will be handled.

Location and Traveling

Another important point to consider when choosing a location for a SYP Congress is the location itself. Region 8 is very vast, so travel times can be long. Moreover, usually each section funds the travel of some members from the student branches in that section to attend the SYP Congress, which sadly means that the more expensive the travel is, the fewer students are funded. For this reason, locations with international airports and easily communicated by several transportation means are preferable.

Also, the general context of the city and the country is reviewed, in terms of avoiding damages, risks and difficulties for the attendees.

Support letters

As soon as one student branch supported decides to apply for the organization of this congress, one of the first things to think of is getting support from diverse entities: the University, the City Hall, companies, partners, neighbor student branches and Young Professional Affinity Groups... A lot of support usually means a lot of good relations and experience for local organizers, and these letters are the way other people can see that support.

Also, support letters from official entities are very useful in the Visa process, since they show the relevance of the event.

Tourist information

Regarding the situation of the country and context information, some tourist information is always useful. From places to visit to currency or power supply, passing by weather in the estimated dates and cost of the public transport and taxis are all useful facts. The more information, the easier is to evaluate the proposal.

Power Supply

The domestic electricity supply is 220 V/50 Hz throughout Spain with 2 pin wall sockets (Type C/F).

Time Zone

In April, the Time Zone in Madrid is CEST (UTC + 2)



Figure 2 Example of some tourist information

Visa

Going back to the topic of the vastness of the Region 8 and its multicultural members, it is very important to keep the Visa requirements in mind. The organizing team will have to handle it as soon as possible with the Embassies, and here the support letters from official organisms are always useful. Preparing a template for the invitation letters that will be needed by Visa applicants will be necessary.

Sponsors

It is necessary to make a preliminary list of potential sponsors, in terms of ease of getting them in sponsoring the congress. Local technology companies are usually easy to approach, and when contacting the multinational ones it is good having some contacts inside, as well as going through Young Professional members in industry.

Making a list with all the old members of the student branch and where they are working, as well as with sponsors of previous editions, and collecting previous contacts is a good starting point.

Application evaluation process

After considering all the organizational aspects, the formal look of the proposal is also very important. Making a brand and logo from the very beginning will strengthen the application.

Some general things that will be evaluated by the SAC and YPS too, apart from fulfilling the rules, are the novelties in the program, the general support, and the reliability of the proposal, and also external facts like if some other student branch in the same section has already organized one of these congresses, etc.

3. Organizing the congress

Once the SAC and YPS have selected one proposal, which is usually very difficult due to the high quality of the applications, the process will be followed up until the very end by both them and other Region committees.

First of all, it is time to set the individual clear tasks for each member of the committee, as well as the timeline with the general deadlines: bookings for housing, gala dinner, and meals, program, speakers, VIP invitations...

At this stage, the organizing committee is made up of a few members, each one in charge of a main task, which is the executive committee. As the time goes by in the organization, more members will need to be involved, reaching the maximum during the Congress itself, where as many volunteers as possible will be needed to help. It is important to make them engage with the Congress in order to avoid last minute desertions.

Dates

Now the first thing is to set the final dates for the congress. It is usually 4 or 5 days long, and it finishes on Sunday. Choosing the dates to fit in with this is the typical challenge.

Setting the dates is very important for the Visa process and the final bookings, so the sooner it is done, the better.

A typical SYP Congress timing would be as follows:

Wednesday	Arrivals and free time
Thursday	Welcome ceremony: congress starts
Sunday	Closing ceremony - free time in the afternoon

Table 1 Typical congress Schedule

Venues

Once the dates are set, the next step is identifying and booking the venues for congress activities, housing and meals. Regarding the congress activities, the location that was proposed in the application must be reserved. This is usually the university facilities, and it must be checked in order to know number of available rooms for workshops and their technical facilities (computer connection, projector, screen...), halls for plenary sessions, halls for coffee breaks and halls for other activities such as poster session and job fair.

These locations need to be booked as soon as possible, and the SAC and YPS can always give a hint on how many workshops and sessions there will be, or what kind of spaces will be needed.

Housing

The proposed lodging must be booked in advance. It has to assure enough rooms for all attendees, and usually a number of 350-400 is used for the booking. In summer time it is usually not difficult to find a free hall of residence with such free space, and they normally allow booking just part of the total, waiting for the final number which is set around 2 months in advance, after registration closes. Cultural and gender differences must be taken into account when reserving separate floors and corridors.

Meals

Although the final number of attendees is not determined, many catering companies allow reservations that will increase or decrease in number. It has to be assured that there will be a variety of food for all

attendees: Halal, Kosher, vegetarian, celiac..., and quotations can be made about regular menus, with the chance of upgrading them when the final figures and budget are known. Due to the different meals, it is very important to label all the food so all attendees know perfectly well what they can or cannot eat.

It has to be taken into account that breakfast and lunch must be near the workshops location, since there is not usually much time to spend in traveling between locations. Dinners are not that restrictive, but they have to be in places reachable by public transport as well, and preferably not take much time to reach.

Transportation

Basically two types of transportation are covered by the congress: from the airport to the congress venue the first day and return trip the last day, and transportation within the congress venues (e.g. dormitory to gala dinner restaurant, dormitory to technical visits...). The closer are the selected venues, the fewer journeys will be needed, which is the cheapest and easiest way.

The required journeys can be arranged either with public tickets in public transport or with a private company, and it is an item that has to be booked and put in the budget as well.

Sponsors: potential sponsors & personal contacts

One of the members of the committee has to be in charge of the sponsorships. First of all, a sponsorship offer has to be made, which is a document that will be presented to the companies describing the congress, its previous editions and sponsors, the context, and some sponsorship packages. These packages are what the companies might pay for, and they include from banners or booths to coffee breaks and plenary sessions, depending on the status.

The sponsorship offer has to be sent to the companies, potential sponsors, and it is always better having a contact inside to send them to, who will forward it to the right person.

Many times, the companies want a personalized package, but the offer is a good starting point for them to decide.

PARTICIPANT – for all packages

1	Logotypes on promotional materials and large banners, logo on invitations (5%)
2	Interactive link to Sponsor website from SYP homepage
3	Certificates indicating the status of the sponsor and the level of participation - in Polish and English
4	Right to use SYP Krakow logo, photo and video materials for marketing purposes
5	Job wall posting (A4 format) during the entire IEEE R8 SYP

Package EXHIBITOR – max 10 Includes the PARTICIPANT package

1	Rollup with other sponsors
2	Logo (10%) on T-shirts and other promotional materials
3	1/3 page of advertisement space in printed conference materials
4	Welcome pack - flier
5	Rollup during technical sessions – 1 workshop

PRICE: □1000 Euro + 23% TAX

Package SILVER – max 6 Includes the PARTICIPANT package

1	Rollup with other sponsors
2	Logo (25%) on T-shirts and other promotional materials
3	½ page of advertisement space in printed conference materials
4	Promotional stand during 1event (coffee break, workshop)
5	Welcome pack – flier + gadget
6	Rollup during technical sessions – 2 workshops
7	Includes access to participants e-mail database only

PRICE: □3000 Euro + 23% TAX

Package GOLD – max 4

Includes the PARTICIPANT package and additionally

1	Promotional movie in conference materials (prepared by the Sponsor) – 15 minutes
2	Possibility to submit materials for the post-conference publication, printed with a ISBN number; form and content to be discussed – 1 page
3	1 page of advertisement space in printed conference materials
4	Logo (50%) on T-shirts and other promotional materials
5	Promotional stand during 2 choosen events (coffee break, workshop, plenary sessions etc)
6	Invitation to the Gala Dinner for 1 representative with reserved seating among the high level executives of IEEE
7	Presentation during a technical session (plenary lecture, 30 minutes)
8	Presentation during the opening ceremony (5 minutes)
9	Welcome pack – unlimited content
10	Rollup during technical sessions – 4 workshops
11	Includes access to CV and e-mail database of participants

PRICE: □ 6000 Euro + 23% TAX

Package PLATINUM – max 2

Includes the PARTICIPANT package and additionally

1	Promotional movie in conference materials (prepared by the Sponsor) – 30 minutes
2	Possibility to submit materials for the post-conference publication, printed with a ISBN number; form and content to be discussed – 2 pages
3	2 pages of advertisement space in printed conference materials
4	1 rollup/stand, set in a prominent place during the opening and closing ceremonies
5	Big Logo (100%) on T-shirts and other promotional materials
6	Promotional stand during any number of events (coffee break, workshop, plenary sessions etc)
7	Invitation to the Gala Dinner for 2 representatives with reserved seating among the high level executives of IEEE
8	Presentation during a technical session (plenary lecture, 45 minutes)
9	Presentation during the opening ceremony (10 minutes)
10	Welcome pack – unlimited content
11	Rollup during technical sessions – any number of workshops
12	Includes access to CV and e-mail database of participants

PRICE: □ 10000 Euro + 23% TAX

Figure 3 Example of sponsorship offer in SYP Krakow 2014

IEEE funding: IEEE Societies & Region

Besides external companies, IEEE is usually a source of funding for these congresses. Contacting the societies through the section chapters is always a good option, and they are always willing to cooperate with giveaways and workshops.

Also, the Region usually funds one member for each student branch and each Young Professional Affinity Group in the entire Region, which is about half of the attendees. This has to be taken into account when calculating the budget as well.

All Attendees		467
Students		293
Funded		115
Non Funded		178
GOLD		45
Funded		23
Non Funded		22
TOTAL Stud+GOLD		338
IEEE Organization		27
Speakers		14
		88

Gender	
Male	252
Female	86
Alimentary Restrictions	
Ramadam	66
Non Ramadam	268
Vegetarian	21
Halal	34
None	213
Other	4

Figure 4 Final attendees figures in SBC Madrid 2012 (GOLD was former Young Professionals)

Budget & final fee

After all the previous items are covered, the rough budget can be calculated. It is good having several columns for several numbers of attendees: 300-350-400-450, which helps in understanding the figures.

Taking into account the major expenses (lodging, meals, transportation), and the major incomes (sponsors), the final fee can be calculated. In last editions the registration fee was around 300 €.

In case of funded attendees, when selecting upgraded accommodation the extra amount must be paid by them, since Region funding will only cover basic fee.

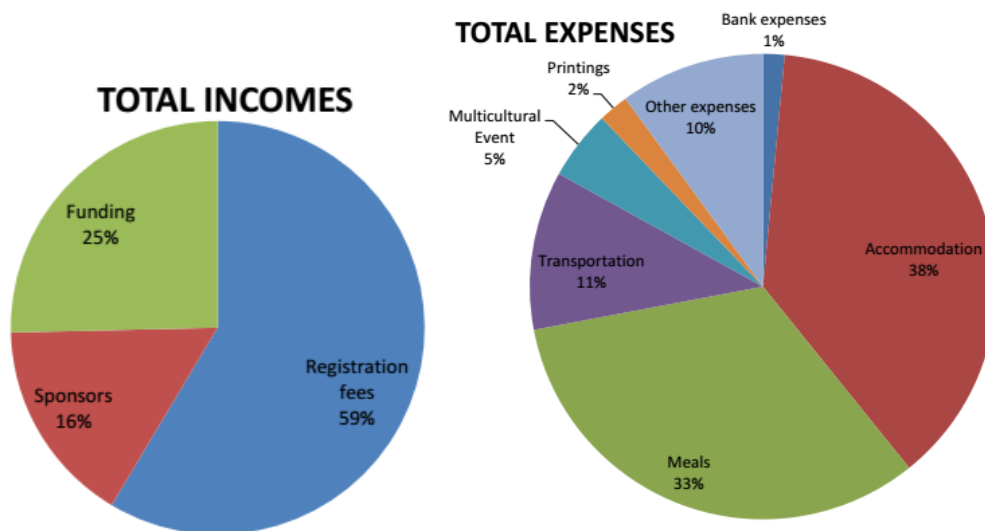


Figure 5 Final budget in SBC Madrid 2012

Website

Once the dates and major details are fixed, they need to be announced publicly. Making a clear website and presence in social networks is very important in terms of attendance. All the important announcements and fixed advances have to be made through them, so all attendees can be always up to date.

A website is also a good exhibitor for sponsors, and all the registration process will be online as well, so it needs to be well known, easy to understand and follow, and robust.

Visa

Another very important item that has to be followed up is regarding Visas. As soon as the final dates are set and the registration period approaches, the attendees will need an invitation letters to apply for the Visa, so some template should be prepared. Usually contact details are needed, as well as a description of the congress, the venues and the official support.

Sometimes, attendees who need visa also need to get the flight tickets and registration confirmation to apply for it, so they have to be registered in the congress, and sometimes they even pay the fee before knowing the Visa result. That is why it is very important making very clear the refund policy (e.g. Refunds will be complete two months in advance, half of the fee one month in advance, ...).

Since the Visa process can take up to four months or even more, the refund policy must be completely tied to the registration period. Thus, registration period must start early enough to allow Visa process and refund in case of Visa rejection. To get the full refund in case of visa rejection, applicants will have at least two months from the day of issuing the invitation letter to make the Visa application. It will encourage local committee to provide these letters fast!

Invitation to participate in the IEEE Region 8 Student Branch and GOLD Congress 2012, July 25 – July 29, in Madrid, Spain.

Visa Period Requested: 25.07.2012 until 31.07.2012, Passport-Number: applicant's passport #
Date of Birth: DD/MM/YY (Country): Country

Dear applicant's name

We have the pleasure to invite you to the biannually organized IEEE Region 8 Student Branch and GOLD Congress 2012 (IEEE R8 SBC&GOLD Congress 2012) which will be held this year in Madrid, Spain, from 25 July till 29 July. This Congress is organized in cooperation with and approval from the international IEEE Organization.

The accommodation will be located in the student residence "Colegio Mayor San Juan Evangelista" at Avenida Gregorio del Amo, 4, 28040, Madrid, Spain.

The congress fee paid by each attendee (320€) will cover all accommodation and food expenses during the Congress in Spain. Travel expenses are not included in it and should be paid by the attendee.

During this Congress, more than 300 IEEE Student Branch members, GOLD members and young engineering professionals from all over the IEEE Region 8 (Europe, Africa and the Middle East) meet each other. This event is intended to be an opportunity to share technical, social and professional experiences between different participants.

More information about the congress can be found on our web page that you can find in the following link: <http://www.sbcmadrid.es>

Figure 6 Example of invitation letter template (SBC Madrid 2012)

Program

Resuming Table 1, the rough program is as follows:

Wednesday	Arrivals and free time
Thursday	Welcome ceremony Plenary sessions Question and Answer session Workshops Gala Dinner: Awards ceremony
Friday	Workshops Poster session Career fair Barbeque
Saturday	Workshops Pre-university activities Visits to technical centers Multicultural evening
Sunday	Closing ceremony: Plenary sessions, conclusions

Table 2 Rough program

The next step in the organization process is starting with looking for speakers and sessions to fill the gaps, as well as leisure activities.

Due to the big number of attendees, and since most rooms in the university or the selected location have a capacity of about 30 people, it is necessary to organize parallel tracks, which consist of workshops that take place simultaneously in different rooms so every participant can attend a workshop. It is also advisable to repeat some of the workshops in consecutive slots, since there might be interesting topics that many participants might want to attend.



Figure 7 Plenary session in Krakow

Young Professionals might have their own track, focused on professional oriented topics, though most activities can be shared with students.

Regarding plenary sessions, they are normally filled with IEEE and Region 8 speakers, as well as with sponsors.

When creating the schedule for the event, do not forget to take into account the time needed for participants to get from one venue to the next. This should be considered, for example, if plenary sessions and workshops take place in different venues, attendees should be given enough time to get from one location to the next. Additionally, longer transportation times such as transportation to gala dinner or activities which take place outside of the main venues should be carefully calculated. These factors will allow for a more accurate schedule, avoiding delays, and eliminating stress for participants. Don't forget, the organizing team may be familiar with the location of the congress, but the majority of participants are new and still learning to get around from one place to another!

Gala dinner

It usually takes place in a fancy restaurant or similar location. The dress code is formal, so it is preferable to look for a location which is easily reachable by walking or either public or private transport.

Usually it has an Awards ceremony, so audio equipment and a stage must be available.



Figure 8 Gala dinners in Madrid and Krakow

Barbeque

This is another idea for the special dinners that will take place. It is not necessary a barbeque, but can be a cocktail in open space, or something but a normal dinner in order to make it also memorable. Treasure hunts, karaoke... whichever implies social entertainment is a good option.

Multicultural evening

It is an event where every attendee shares food, drinks, music and traditional dress from their countries. It must be an open and well ventilated place, since spicy food, *not only* soft drinks and regional dances usually increase the temperature and it should be remembered as an awesome experience where nobody fainted from the heat or lack of fresh air!



Figure 9 Paella instead of BBQ in Madrid



Figure 10 Multicultural evenings in Leuven, Madrid and Krakow

Question & Answer session

For the Question & Answer session, using a simple Google form is enough for attendees to submit their questions, and then some of the submitted questions might be preselected, keeping time for the live ones.

Poster session and job fair

Both events need an open hall or corridors to set the booths and the posters on the walls.



Figure 11 Poster session in Krakow

Pre-University activities

Inviting high school students to the congress for a morning workshop is a good chance to show them the best side of Engineering.

Visits to technical centers

Usually, technical companies and laboratories can offer guided visit to their facilities which are always very interesting for engineers.

Coffee breaks: sponsors

Every day around noon and mid afternoon, a coffee break must be offered. Usually, sponsors get them in their sponsorship package, so they must be in open halls allowing banners and normally booths as well for the sponsors to showcase their brand and engage with participants.

VIPs & speakers

As speakers are being contacted and VIP attendees like IEEE presidents or Region Operating Committee are being considered to attend the congress, they all have to receive formal invitations from the organizers

They will be staying at a hotel instead of the main dormitory, so including some available options nearby the congress location in the invitation letters would be a good idea. For them, congress fee without accommodation might be more suitable.

Regarding the fee, VIPs usually pay for their fee, so there is no need for the congress budget to include it. Same happens with most of speakers, since they are usually from Region, IEEE societies or sponsors, so their fee is covered by their corresponding entity. As for the rest of speakers, those whose fee is not covered by external entities, they should have their fee paid by the congress. In these terms, it could be useful calculating daily fee in case they would only participate in the congress for that day.

Gifts and giveaways

Bags, pins, magnets, stickers, cups, caps... all of them must be included in the welcome pack, as well as the sponsors' materials, useful information and of course the congress T-shirt!

Final details

Survival guide

It is always interesting preparing a "survival guide" that might be put on the website and printed in order to distribute it to participants. It should contain everything that could be useful for them during their stay, like accommodation, meals, timetables, directions... something like this would be very useful not only for attendees but also for the organizing committee, who will avoid being repeatedly asked the same questions every time.

Facilities details

Regarding the room distribution, it is advised to make a rough planning. Notice that there will have to keep separate floors by genders and in some cases different Sections as well. It is called a "rough



Figure 12 Welcome Pack in Krakow

planning" because in the last moment many of the attendees want to arrange themselves. Maybe giving them the chance of preselecting a roommate (via Google form or something) could be useful.

Preparing a Photocall for pictures and using it as a background in the plenary sessions is always a good idea, also in order to give sponsors and the event itself more visibility.



Figure 13 Photocall in Krakow

Some other things that should be clarified are:

- Dress code for all events: reception, plenary sessions, workshops, gala dinner, multicultural, closing ceremony.
- Wi-Fi access in all venues
- Towels and bedclothes: are they available? Where will they get them?

Touristic information

All the information about the city and country might be very useful: public transportation maps, weather during the Congress and/or gadget on the website, and of course, information about power supply, currency and emergency numbers.

Apps

Nowadays it is usual having mobile apps for everything, so making one for the congress is always an interesting option, since attendees will keep tuned to every notice, and they can look at their schedules, directions...

Leisure

Other leisure ideas are “Funny Picture contest”, the “Gossip box”, Congress’ pet, etc... It is up to organizers, but it allows time for entertaining as well.



Figure 14 Leuven attendees with Congress' pet

4. During the congress

After more than a year of organizing the congress, the last weeks pass by so fast, and it is time to keep together and stay strong, facing the congress.

Attendees' arrivals

Something that needs to be thought of in advance is how or who will receive attendees, in either airports or train stations, etc. Some of the organizing committee should be waiting for them and helping them to reach the lodging.

VIPs' and speakers' arrivals

Also, VIP attendees must be assisted in their way to the hotels, on how to take a taxi and how much should that cost.

Last minute not-show ups and changes

It is usual that some speakers do not show up, or give a short notice for the cancellation. In these cases, IEEE and Region speakers are a very good source of last minute topics to fill the gaps.

Technical Equipment

Something that has to be kept in mind is double checking all devices used for presentations (projectors, computers, microphones...) in all the premises that will be used during the congress.

Labels & signs

It is very important to keep signs and labels all around the place: labels for the food, signs with the workshops that will be taking place in every room, arrows and directions to get from one place to another, bathrooms etc.

Unexpected events and accidents

Sometimes **** happens, and it is unavoidable. Having someone in the team in charge of incidents could be useful, since the rest of the team is very busy with their own tasks.

Keep calm and SYP Congress

Over all, organizers will have to keep calm, give their best and be reactive to any possible incident. One or two weeks after the congress, after proper sleep, incidents are forgotten and everything is remembered as a great self-development and fun experience.

5. After the congress

After a few weeks of resting, everything seems to be just a good memory. It is advisable to not let too much time pass before closing the congress, so a few pushes more and it will be over!

Collecting presentations and materials

It would be great having a collection of all the presentations given during the congress and making them available for the attendees. During the congress, many attendees have to skip some workshops in favor of other ones, but that does not mean they are not interested in the first topic as well.

Also, speakers like to have presentations of the several workshops in order to know what was told the participants in the diverse fields.

Sharing the media

Nowadays, people take hundreds of pictures with their phones and tablets, and all of them are a good record of the event. Collecting them in order to later share with everybody is a good chance to keep the good memories alive.

Extracting the conclusions

After resting, it is necessary for the organizing team to have an internal closing meeting, in which everything can be reviewed and conclusions can be extracted for further events.

Closing email

It is strongly advisable to send out a closing email to the participants after the congress. In it, links to the material and media collected can be shared, as well as satisfaction surveys or requesting for final feedback.

Reporting

After all the bills are paid and the congress budget is closed, the Region 8 will ask for a report of final numbers, final statistics, budget, etc, collecting all the final status of the congress financials, as well as the organizing team opinions and conclusions.

Audit

After such a big event in terms of members and budget, IEEE will ask for an external audit. For this reason, it is advisable to keep everything clear, all the invoices and expenses as well organized and detailed as possible.

Supporting next editions

With all this behind them, organizers will be the best of the guides and helpers in the organization of next editions, so they should be open to be contacted by their successors organizing the following congress in case they might need support.

Message from the Student Activities Committee and the Young Professionals Subcommittee

After having attended and helped in some of the previous editions of the SYP Congress, all of us extracted some conclusions that would be advisable to implement in future editions. This is why we popped up with this document.

We hope this guide serves as an inspiration and support for future applicants to the Student and Young Professional Congresses. We intend it to be as complete as possible, covering all the different aspects that come out during the organization.

SAC & YPS, December 2014

References

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