

Voluntary Contribution Fund Coordinator

Andreas Koltes

Goals

The Voluntary Contribution Fund (VCF) provides support for technical activities of members with low income (below \$10,000 per year). The main focus of the fund is to support travel and subsistence costs of researchers presenting their research at conferences in Region 8, which they would not be able to do otherwise due to the lack of finance. The main sources of the fund are additional voluntary contributions declared by IEEE members during the annual renewal of their membership.

In order to fulfil the mission of the fund, the key goals for 2018 are:

- Stabilize the income stream of the fund to at least \$10,000 per year by raising awareness for the fund amongst the membership.
- Continue to increase awareness of the fund amongst potential applicants in order to issue at least 15 grants per year making full use of the target budget of \$10,000.
- Continue to increase VCF publicity and promotion compared to previous years.

Status

The VCF has seen a stable incoming donation stream of approximately \$11,500 per year in recent years. However, the donations income in 2017 was slightly lower than in previous years, totaling \$9,344. The donation account holds a financial reserve to compensate donation fluctuations so the VCF is able to operate as usual.

At the time of this writing, pending activities stemming from 2017 have largely been completed. In total, 15 grants have been approved for the previous year totaling funds of up to \$11,050. Out of these, 11 grants were paid by the end of 2017 which were comprised of \$9,401 in advances and reimbursements. In addition, \$3,709 was paid as reimbursements of grants approved in 2016. At the beginning of 2018, 4 grants approved in 2017 were still pending payment of up to \$2,000 in reimbursements.

During the previous year, 10 grants have been rejected due to non-eligibility of the applicants or lack of funds and 2 further grants have been retracted by the applicants. Compared to previous years, the grant holders receiving grants in 2017 were from a more diverse set of sections with 7 grant holders residing in African sections and 8 grant holders residing in Central and Eastern European sections. This was achieved by raising awareness of the fund with Section Chairs and conference organizers in Region 8.

The goals of the VCF set for 2017 have been fully achieved and the fund is in a healthy state of operation. Care must be taken to sustain the income stream to enable the fund to continue operating at the current level of funds being annually provided to the recipients of grants.

Outlook

On the income side, the donation situation is expected to continue to be reasonably stable based on the trend from previous years. However, the decline in donations in 2017 requires attention in the current year in order to stabilize the income stream of the VCF again. As the majority of donations are typically generated at the end of the year during the renewal process, suitable promotion activities will be put in place to encourage donations by the end of 2018.

Based on already approved grants and pending enquiries, the target volume of grants issued will likely be achieved again in 2018. The increased awareness of the VCF with Section Chairs and conference organizers will be supported by awareness activities in order to keep it at the increased level achieved in 2017. An overhaul of the application criteria and process is nearing completion and is planned to be instated during the current year.

Points of Concern

As the donation situation was slightly declining in 2017, care must be taken to stabilize the income stream to the fund (or ideally even increase it) as this is the fundamental operating base for the VCF program. Planning of a donation promotion campaign is underway for the upcoming renewal season at the end of 2018.

Other Issues to report