GUIDELINES TO ORGANIZE AN

IEEE R8 CROSS SECTIONAL STUDENT & YOUNG PROFESSIONAL CONGRESS

Student Activities Committee (SAC) and Young Professionals (YP) Subcommittee present you a guide on how to organize an IEEE Region 8 Cross Sectional Student and Young Professional (XS-SYP) Congress.

This document aims to cover the crucial steps to organize a great event: from the moment IEEE approves your proposal until the congress is finalized.

With this guide, we hope we can increase your enthusiasm and willingness to be part of such an amazing process that will not only boost your skills, but also increase your visibility in IEEE and in the world.

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1 THE TRADITION

ack in the days, when the movie Avatar was about to be released, before Burj Khalifa was the tallest building in the world, while Region 8 committee was still in their student branches, more than 100 different student branches met together in the area referred to as the cradle of civilization to enhance their insight into technology. A first cross sectional congress was born, the Middle East Student Branch Congress. Not long after, on the far side of Region 8, a girl from Spain and a guy from Lisbon came to an agreement that Port wine is best served after paella, which did not take long to set the spark of the Iberian Student Branch Congress.

This mixture of poetry and technology echoes on as an everlasting reminder of the cultural richness of Region 8 and inexhaustible energy of young spirits spreading their motivation to each corner, age and profession. Now, the time is yours and you already have what it takes to cherish the tradition. This document is just a guide to help you make it happen.

Cross Sectional Student and Young Professional Congresses (XS SYP Congresses) are events that take place at every odd year, in Region 8. They gather both student and young professional members from all IEEE neighboring sections in the Region and provide opportunities to socialize and interact, to develop soft skills, to enhance knowledge of technology, discuss the common organizational challenges and prepare you for the new roles that await you. The top editions of the congress gather more than one hundred participants in a wide variety of workshops and lectures.

In 2014, the Student Branch Congress was renamed to Student & Young Professional Congress and many versions took place since the starting initiatives. Those were Central European Student & Young Professional Congress (CEuSYP) in Linz in 2011, Opole in 2013, Zagreb in 2015, Hellenic Student & Young Professional Congress (HSYP) in Patras in 2012, Cyprus in 2013, Thessaloniki in 2015, West European Student & Young Professional Congress (WESYP) in Eindhoven in 2015, Nordic Student & Young Professional Congress (NSYP) in Stockholm in 2015, Middle East Student & Young Professional (MESYP) in Amman in 2009, Doha in 2011, Beirut in 2013, Amman in 2015, Iberian Student & Young Professional Congress (ISYP) in Lisbon in 2009, Madrid in 2011, Porto in 2013, Madrid in 2015. With year 2017 setting in motion, new ones are shaping: Gulf Cooperation Council Student & Young Professional Congress (GCCSYP) and Africa Student & Young Professional Congress (ASYP). In 2017, ISYP is also merging with WESYP. Previous organizing teams are always a valuable source of knowledge that can be consulted without any hesitation, whenever needs be.

1.1   VOLUNTEERING AT THE TOP

A very important fact to be respected is that this is not a regular conference or business oriented event. It must put volunteering at the top, where organizers are motivated by enjoying the experience of engaging with the larger IEEE community and providing IEEE neighboring 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 is strongly discouraged.

The organization of this event involves a lot of work and makes you lean on your team more than ever, during a period of almost a whole 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. We will try to help you in the organization process, from the very beginning to the very end. As always, the Region 8 Student Activities Committee and Young Professionals Subcommittee are there for your further questions.

1.2   STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

One of the major leap and changes of your lifestyle will probably be the transition from student life to your first job. These two groups are very different but strongly complement each other. Students have more free time, endless and tireless dose of enthusiasm, creativity and commitment, while young professionals are more experienced, connected and steady to push everything to the end. As students, you will be your congress carriers and young professionals are making it much easier and richer.

At the same time, student-time memories are still fresh with young professionals, and students realize that young professional lifestyle is imminent. These two groups stand out with this rare and valuable level of interconnection and mutual understanding, which results in outstanding collaboration when joined together.

1.3   OUTLINE GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION

Each cross sectional congress edition is putting the focus to certain list of countries, defined mostly by geographical and cultural origins, but mostly previous congress editions. Bear this in mind when organizing your congress since the expenses are covered by a section and its subunits funds and, in most cases, a section will send students and young professionals delegations only to a single congress. Of course, when organizing a congress, feel free to spread your invitations apart from the given list. You are not in any way restricted to invite only the corresponding countries. Figure 1 is given to specify potential organizers of corresponding congress edition.

So far, unlike the Region 8 SYP Congress, there is no official call for proposals but when more than one branch is willing to organize a XS SYP Congress, we use them to provide a fair decision on to whom will be given a chance to organize a cross section congress. Readiness, willingness and permission are coordinated through Region 8 Student Activities Committee and Region 8 Young Professionals Subcommittee. Do this at least 10 months prior to congress dates.

Europe Africa Middle East

WESYP NSYP CEuSYP HSYP ASYP MESYP GCCSYP

Figure 1. Cross-section congresses outline geographical division
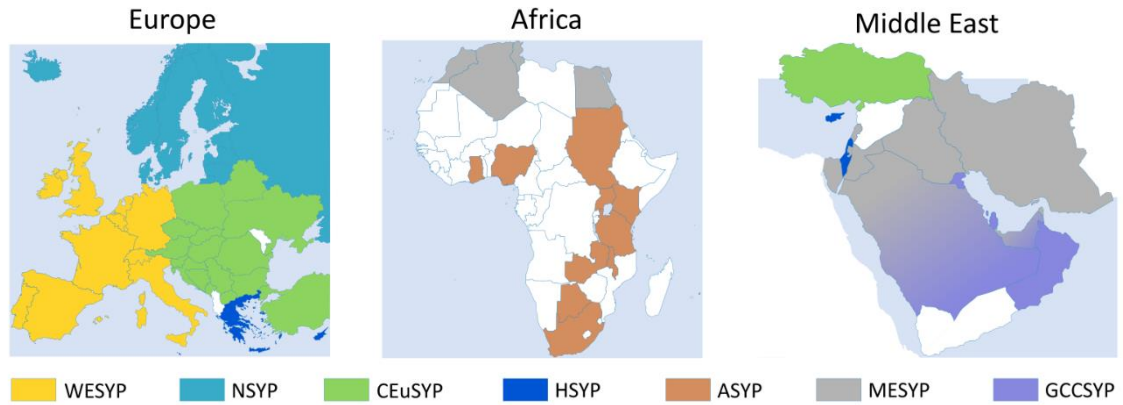
Table 1. Cross Sectional congresses outline list of sections

WEYP	NSYP	CEuSYP	HYSP	ASYP	MESYP	GCCSYP
Benelux	Denmark	Austria	Cyprus	Botswana	Algeria	Bahrain
France	Estonia	Belarus	Greece	Ghana	Egypt	Kuwait
Germany	Finland	Bosnia &	Israel	Kenya	Iran	Oman
Italy	Iceland	Herzegovina	Malta	Mauritius	Iraq	Qatar
Switzerland	Latvia	Bulgaria		Nigeria	Jordan	Saudi
UK &	Lithuania	Croatia		South	Lebanon	Arabia
Ireland	Norway	Czechoslovakia		Africa	Morocco	UAE
Portugal	Russia	Hungary		Sudan	Palestine	
Spain	Sweden	Poland		Tanzania	Saudi	
		Republic of		Uganda	Arabia	
		Macedonia		Zambia	Tunisia	
		Romania			United	
		Serbia &			Arab	
		Montenegro			Emirates	
		Slovenia				
		Turkey				
		Ukraine				

2 ORGANIZING THE CONGRESS

First of all, you should express your willingness to organize the congress at your university, with only your branch and/or YP Affinity Group and/or more branches and/or chapters from your section. For this, please send us an email to r8sac@ieee.org and r8yp@ieee.org. Don't forget to make sure that you have more than the minimum resources (including man power) available before applying and an approval from your Section.

Then, it is time to clearly set the individual 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… Please, take a look at the next few pages to get more details about each topic.

Very important: Create a log-file with everything you discuss! Organizing a congress requires the commitment of many enthusiastic people. There will be many decisions to be made and you should keep track of them, at least, to make sure that everyone follows the same path. Document everything you can and don't forget to include dates and name of the people involved in the each important decision!

Do you already have the text editor open? If yes, great! If not, just about time for it ☺ and let's start.

In this early stage, the organizing committee will be made up of congress organizers or organizing team, each person should be in charge of a certain task. As the congress date approaches, more members will need to be involved, reaching its maximum during the congress itself, where as many volunteers as possible will be needed to help. It is very important to create a pleasant environment between all the volunteers and make sure they are engaged in the congress atmosphere in order to avoid last minute desertions.
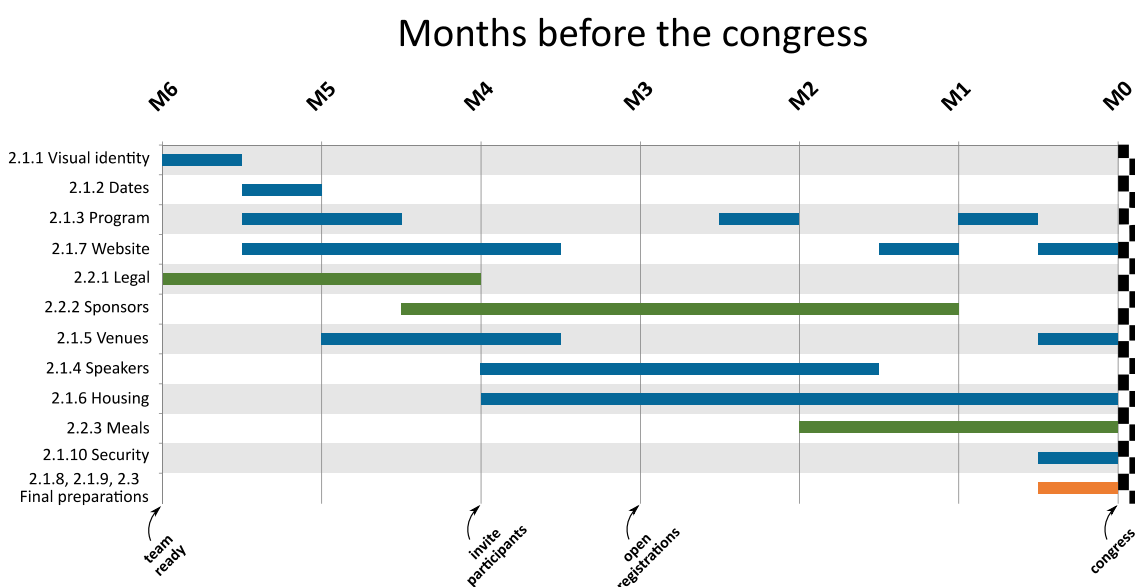
Figure 2. Indicative Gant chart of the congress organization.

2.1   ADMINISTRATIVE PART

2.1.1   VISUAL IDENTITY

Your visual identity is going to remain forever in all sponsors outreach, website, social networks, news, invitations, reports, promotional materials related to this event: it will be your image in the IEEE history books. Choose it wisely, with a lot of attention and effort put to what you aim for. As mentioned, the congresses are greatly related to geographical, cultural and IEEE tradition and your logo can be enriched with all of this. You can also reuse previous editions of congresses, either as traditional logo/logotype or as an inspiration for your own and new one.

Figure 3. Logos of previous editions of cross sectional congresses.

2.1.2   DATES

The first thing to be done is to set the final dates for the congress. It is usually 3 or 4 days long and finishes on a Sunday. Choosing the dates to fit in with this is the typical challenge. There is also a tradition for when each of the congresses are held, which is often set by a good reason such as students availability or climate conditions. For example, CEuSYPs are in May, HSYPs are in November and it may be a good idea to hold on to the tradition in this aspect as well.

Setting the dates is very important for contacting sponsors and setting the final bookings, so the sooner it is done, the better.

A typical XS SYP Congress timing is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Typical congress schedule

Friday	Arrivals and free time, opening and plenary sessions Gala dinner in the evening or other social event
Saturday	Plenaries and workshops – the core of the congress Multicultural evening or other social event
Sunday	Closing ceremony, free time in the afternoon

2.1.3   PROGRAM

There is a large number of activities you can choose from, to fit best to your cultural region, congress size, sponsors desires etc. There are some mandatory ones such as plenary sessions and workshops, but there is also a lot of freedom to choose from other kind of activities, such as job fairs, company visits, pre-university activities, Question and Answer session, or more of the social events.

Extending the Table 2, Fig. 3 and Table 3.1 give examples of programs from previous congress editions. When putting it together, try to harmonize the technical, soft skills and social aspects of your congress. This is perhaps the most creative part and the very soul of your congress so put a lot of brainstorming and exploit the feedback of previous congress attendees from your Student Branch or Young Professionals Affinity Group. You have the best knowledge of your regional cultural characteristics (are you early risers or night owls? Would you prefer intermittent or continued program?), so take this into account in the program outline.

Congress Schedule

Time	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:00-9:00	ARRIVALS	Breakfast + Transportation	
9:00-9:30		Breakfast + Transportation	
9:30-10:00		IEEE Xtreme	
10:00-10:30		Startup Scene	IEEE Q&A
10:30-11:00		Consumer Electronics	IEEE Q&A
11:00-11:30		Technical(Energy) / Technical(Computers)	Chapter Coordination Subcommittee
11:30-12:00		Technical(Energy) / Technical(Computers)	Chapter Coordination Subcommittee
12:00-12:30		Coffee Break	Personal Branding
12:30-13:00		Time management + Stress management prevention	Personal Branding
13:00-13:30		Time management + Stress management prevention	Space Electronics
13:30-14:00		Educational Activities Subcommittee	Space Electronics
14:00-14:30		Lunch Break	Lunch Break
14:30-15:00		Lunch Break	Lunch Break
15:00-15:30		EPICS-in-IEEE / Academic: Pitch + Workshop	Awards in IEEE
15:30-16:00		EPICS-in-IEEE / Academic: Pitch + Workshop	ARISTURTLES + PANDORA
16:00-16:30	Welcome Speech (by Organizing committee, Section Representative, City Representative etc)	Create an App + IEEE MadC	ARISTURTLES + PANDORA
16:30-17:00	Welcome Speech (by Organizing committee, Section Representative, City Representative etc)	Create an App + IEEE MadC	Closing Ceremony
17:00-17:30	SB Presentations + Young Professionals AG	Coffee Break	DEPARTURES
17:30-18:00	SB Presentations + Young Professionals AG	Coffee Break	DEPARTURES
18:00-18:30	Student Activities in Region 8	How to run a Student Branch / YP workshop	DEPARTURES
18:30-19:00	IEEE At Heart (OpCom)	How to run a Student Branch / YP workshop	DEPARTURES
19:00-19:30	YP presentation	Dinner Preparation	DEPARTURES
19:30-20:00	Funding Opportunities: events & speakers	Dinner Preparation	DEPARTURES
20:00-20:30	Transportation - Preparation Dinner in Greek Taverna	Dinner	DEPARTURES
20:30-21:00	Transportation - Preparation Dinner in Greek Taverna	Dinner	DEPARTURES
21:00-21:30	Transportation - Preparation Dinner in Greek Taverna	Dinner	DEPARTURES
21:30-22:00	Transportation - Preparation Dinner in Greek Taverna	Dinner	DEPARTURES
22:00-22:30	Networking	Dinner	DEPARTURES
22:30-23:00	Networking	Dinner	DEPARTURES

Figure 4. HSYP Congress program example.

Table 3. CEuSYP Congress program example.

Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
08:00 - 12:00	Registration	07:00 - 09:00	Breakfast (hotel)	07:00 - 09:00	Breakfast (hotel)
09:30 - 11:00	City tour	09:00 - 10:30	Plenary session 3	09:00 - 10:00	SB & YP Poster session
12:30 - 13:30	Opening session	10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break	10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break
13:30 - 15:00	Lunch	11:00 - 12:30	Workshop 1 - Technical	10:30 - 11:30	Plenary session 4
15:00 - 16:30	Plenary session 1	12:30 - 14:00	Lunch	11:30 - 12:30	Closing session
16:30 - 17:00	Coffee break	14:00 - 15:30	Workshop 2 - Soft Skills	12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
17:00 - 18:00	Plenary session 2	15:30 - 16:00	Coffee break	14:00 -	Leaving hotel
18:00 - 20:00	Free time	16:00 - 17:30	Workshop 3 - IEEE		
20:00 - 23:00	Gala dinner	17:30 - 20:00	Free time		
		20:00 - 23:00	Multicultural Evening		

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

The technical part of the congress is mainly filled with plenary sessions and workshops. Plenary sessions are a form of single lecture with one or more speakers, in front of all the participants with a bit of arbitrary interaction. Example of this are the opening session or a word from an IEEE R8 representative.

Figure 5. Plenary session at WESYP Congress.

Workshops are carried out in a highly interactive environment with a smaller number of participants. If there is a large number of congress attendees, and most rooms in the university or the selected location have a capacity of about 30 people, it may be necessary to organize parallel tracks, which consist of workshops that take place simultaneously in different rooms so every participant can attend a chosen one.

Young Professionals might have their own congress track, focused on professionally-oriented topics, although most activities are shareable with students.

Figure 6. Nao robots workshop at CEuSYP Congress.

Plenary sessions are normally filled by IEEE and Region 8 speakers, as well as by sponsors.

When creating the schedule for the event, remember 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. 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. Keep in mind the fact that the organizing team is probably very familiar with congress locations and they are part of their daily routine, but the majority of participants are new and still learning to get around from one place to another!

Gala dinner

While in the Region 8 SYP Congress, the gala dinner is mandatory, for XS SYP edition you may choose on your own if you would like to host it. It usually takes place in a fancy restaurant or similar location and may very well be the most expensive part of your congress. 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 7. Gala dinners at CEuSYP and MESYP Congresses.

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 or traditional dinner in order to make it also memorable. Treasure hunts, karaoke… whichever implies social entertainment is a good option.

Figure 8. Medieval experience at WESYP Congress and "Typical Dinner" at HSYP Congress.

Multicultural evening

This event is the greatest presentation of the cultural variety of nearby IEEE sections. It is an event where attendees share food, drinks, music and dress traditional outfits from their country. 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. Multicultural evening at CEuSYP Congress.

Poster session

The poster session is the exhibition of activities of participating Student Branches and Young Professionals Affinity Groups. This is a good way to see what your fellow colleagues from nearby sections were doing during the last year. It is also a great place for brainstorming of new ideas, exchanging possible ways of solving the mutual challenges or forming a new collaboration. The event needs an open hall or corridor to set the posters on the walls.

If you would prefer a more interactive session, you can also think of a pitch elevator concept where all OUs go over their activities, main concerns/challenges and strategy plans in a couple of minutes. The goal is to share experiences and learn from each other in whatever way you see fits best your congress dynamic!

Visits

Your local technical companies and university laboratories can usually offer guided visits to their facilities which are always very interesting for engineers. This is also a possibility for promoting your sponsors as they will get a chance to host many young enthusiasts and potential employees or clients. Tours are also a great way to fill your schedule before the congress has officially started or after it has officially ended since plane arrival and departure times always have some reserve time.

Figure 10. Technical museum visit at WESYP and city tour at CEuSYP.

Coffee breaks

Every day around mid-morning and mid-afternoon, a coffee break must be offered to retain the attention of participants during sessions and workshops. This is also an opportunity for sponsors to get in touch with participants in a more casual way. Coffee breaks should be organized in open halls allowing banners and normally booths for the sponsors to showcase their brand and engage with participants.

Group photo of all the participants

The most important thing that is remembered in history and put to the IEEE tradition is the group photo of your congress participants. Be sure to put the proper effort into taking it: camera, angle, sunlight, outfit and above all – the time. In some cases, group photo time is even reserved in the congress program. Figure 10 shows some of these examples recorded in history.

Fig. 11. Group photos from different editions of XS SYP congress, from left to right, bottom to down: MESYP, ISYP, HSYP, WESYP, NSYP, and CEuSYP.

Next edition of the congress

During your congress, you should ensure that the tradition is kept through the next congress edition. This is sometimes not an easy task since the next two years period is very cloudy for volunteers, but your congress is a great opportunity to set the right foundations. It is vital that you coordinate this with SAC and YP subcommittee in a way suitable for your edition of the XS SYP Congress. If there are many interested potential hosts, a way of selecting one (such as competitions, honors or chronology) is important to be held at your congress. If there are few or no interested potential hosts, it is strongly suggested to hold a session to encourage the next generation by transferring your experience and struggles, presenting the advantages and benefits you had while organizing and hosting the congress.

We all admit that you culture and customs are special in its own way and perhaps there are activities that are not yet listed that would bring this closer to your participants. Some additional ideas are:

- Job fair if you have enough sponsors and they are internationally oriented this would be a great opportunity to boost your funds from sponsors.
- Brainstorm or Q&A session: answering questions from members in the audience, at organizational level or technical related: SAMIEEE, vTools stuff, collaborations, organization of events and so on.
- Invite high schools around the area for a particular workshop (e.g. TISP)
- Integrate a sportive lecture (do you see your participants training yoga, boxing or dancing?) or workshop that are completely non-related with engineering as a **first slot in the morning** to wake and shake your participants and improve morning ratings for the regular workshops.

2.1.4 VIPS & SPEAKERS

As speakers are being contacted and VIP attendees such as IEEE president and/or Region Operating Committee are being considered to attend the congress, they all have to receive formal invitations from the organizers. Brainstorm the best way of approaching them with your Young Professionals and find contacts on IEEE Region 8 website, websites of SAC and YP Subcommittee. You can also extend invitations to other IEEE program chairs such as TISP, SIGHT or Academic, and society representatives if you have an existing collaboration. Remember also your dean (if the congress is at your faculty), Section representative or even the city Mayor.

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 congress fee: **VIPs pay for their fee**, **so there is <u>no need</u> 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 the speakers, those whose fee is not covered by external entities, they can only take part in their own session or stay during one day. In these terms, it could be useful calculating daily fee in case they would only participate in the congress for that day.

2.1.4.1 BACK-UP SPEAKERS

It can happen that speakers do not show up, or give a short notice cancellation. In these cases, IEEE and Region speakers are a very good source of last minute topics to fill in the gaps. Again, do not forget to take notes! With huge amounts of luck they won't be necessary, but usually that is not the case… It is very important to have a back-up plan!

2.1.5   VENUES

Once the dates are set, the next step is identifying and booking the venues for congress activities, housing and meals. 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 lunches, halls for other activities such as poster session or possibly social events. Obtain the corresponding permissions for holding the congress prior to making the advertising steps.

Don't forget to check, re-check and confirm again if all rooms are in order (booking and material).

2.1.6   HOUSING

The proposed lodging must be chosen and booked in advance with an approximate expected number of participants. This number is often very similar to previous congress editions so try to check this on time with people who attended them, previous organizers or SAC and YP Subcommittee. In average, this number is roughly 70 participants but it has also gone up to 250 for a MESYP edition. 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 1 month in advance, after registration closes. This is the part where Young Professionals negotiation skills are encouraged, together with section contacts and experience. Cultural and gender differences must be taken into account, possibly resulting on reserving separate floors and corridors.

Alternatively, you can make the accommodation separate from your congress registration (and registration fee) and leave it up to the participants to decide upon. This is introduced to make the participation costs as flexible as possible since, as you remember, they depends on the own section and subunits funding. In this case, exemplary hosts put an effort into finding adequate recommendations including expensive and cheap options. Very often you can negotiate discounts on larger group accommodation and you can take this opportunity to help your IEEE friends. Make sure that you provide necessary instructions to participants on how to exploit this option.

Don't forget to check, re-check and confirm again if the entity responsible for the housing has the correct times and the correct amount of rooms are booked.

2.1.7   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 the attendees can always stay up to date. Unlike the large SYP congresses, you are not guaranteed a certain number of participants due to different funding scheme. You have to put an effort into

finding and attracting them, and your website and social media are the best reference of your event quality, not only to potential participants but also to their funders.

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. Typical information provided at the website is: event introduction, program, sponsors, registration link, information about venue, housing or touristic aspects, and contact e-mail.

Finally, websites are usually closed after a year or two, and what is remembered in history is your social network webpages.

2.1.8   TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT & PERSONAL TAGS

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. Also take into account some equipment that may be needed for the reception to create some last minute labels that cannot be found.

Also, you should keep an updated list of all the participants including their full name and their section. This information will be very useful for the participants' personal tags. Another list with the speakers and staff should also be created for the same purpose. We suggest you to keep these two list separated to avoid mixed ups and because this way, separate people can take care of updating each list.

Creating a participant's kit is **not a mandatory task**. Congress organizers may think that having a kit is a nice way for each participant to remember the congress but nothing can weight more than photos and it is important to have in mind that most of the participants will travel so there is a high chance that they won't be able to take everything in their luggage. Thus, the bottom line is: if you think that it is worth offering it to the participants: have meaningful items and minimize it as much as possible! Otherwise, it won't be worth of the time you spend putting it together.

Creating tags should be **a mandatory task**. When creating the tags for each participant (including the speakers): You can also think of differentiating speakers/staff tags from the regular participant ones, such that is easily identifiable at a distance, e.g. colour.

Together with each personal tag, a small program can be included and a list of the local emergency numbers (and/or an emergency contact from the organizing team).

2.1.9   LABELS AND 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.

2.1.10 SECURITY OF PARTICIPANTS

One of the most mandatory parts of organizing such congress is to ensure the security of the participants. Before starting the program planning, make sure that the hotel is secure and no one can cause any harm to any participants, make sure also that the host institution is secure from any outsiders. Discuss this topic with your section and venue location and agree whether to inform your government, police, or hospitals. Think also about the necessity of data confidentiality.

2.2   FINANCIAL PART

2.2.1   LEGAL PREREQUISITES

Acquiring sponsors and registration funds, making contracts and payments is only possible through a legal entity in your country with the authorized person to give signatures and stamps. This is very different in all sections and subunits throughout the whole IEEE. If your Student Branch is a legal entity, this will make the congress organization easier from this perspective and you probably already know how to handle things. However, this is often not the case since it implies many obligations. What you can do is the following:

- Consult your section as the first and the most important helper:
    - section itself is perhaps a legal entity
    - section can relate their experience to you
    - section is often closely related to a faculty, which is for sure a legal entity
    - section is often closely related to other technical associations in your country, which are most probably legal entities
- Consult your Young Professionals AG – this is a part where they help a lot
    - young professionals often have experience that exceeds academic one
    - young professionals have probably organized similar events and attended lots of them
    - young professionals often have entrepreneurial experience or are related with such people – they can find out the fastest and the cheapest ways to handle this
- Last resort: find a third party agency (e.g. business and event organization agency, tourist agency)
    - agencies are in many cases more flexible and faster than faculties
    - agencies already belong to the organizational spheres – they can ease and make flexible your communication with people in charge of venues, accommodations, meals, online charging portals (including credit card payment experience) etc.
    - bear in mind that you can sign a collaboration contract with a third party agency only as a legal entity :) agencies also mean additional costs, whether necessary of unnecessary is up to you

The financial structure is the very core of your congress and will make things easier or harder at different stages of the organization. Put a great focus on this and work closely with your section and Young Professionals AG at each step. Remember also that the final decision is yours and will greatly impact the congress organization, which is your responsibility.

2.2.2   FINDING SPONSORS

The best possible sponsors are companies and associations that are already familiar with your work, i.e. your previous collaborations. This is the part where your tradition pays off. Check with senior volunteers in the Section, scout the Student Branch website events and news archives, ask your Young Professionals AG as they were often part of your Student Branches, in the past, and nurture personal contacts as much as possible. Some Student Branches are well connected

to other non-IEEE technical associations and this may be a fruitful area as well. Beyond the existing collaboration, outreach to every other company you find suitable and present them the whole international technical tradition of your XS SYP congress edition. Remember as well, not all sponsorships are with funding, perhaps water or coffee donations (or other goods) may be significant for you as well.

One of the members of the committee has to be in charge of the sponsorship. 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 all details 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. It is always beneficial having a contact on the inside to send them to, who will forward it to the right person and put in a good word for you.

Often, the companies will ask for a personalized package, but the standard offer is a good starting point for negotiation.

Table 4. Sponsor packages example.

Bronze: 500€	Silver: 1000€	Gold: 1500 €
• Promotion on the website of the Congress and Student Branch and YPAG website • Promotion via social media (Congress and Student Branch and YPAG Facebook pages) • Small logo on the official congress T-shirts	• Stand with company representatives during the breaks • Promotional materials in welcome packets for participants • Promotion on the website of the Congress and Student Branch and YPAG website • Promotion via social media (Congress and Student Branch and YPAG Facebook pages) • Medium size logo on the official congress T-shirts	• Possibility of presenting the company in the form of a workshop/lecture to the participants • Company representatives attendance at Gala Dinner • Stand with company representatives during the breaks • Highlighting the company in public appearances, printed materials etc. • Promotional materials in welcome packets for participants • Promotion on the website of the Congress and Student Branch and YPAG website • Promotion via social media (Congress and Student Branch and YPAG Facebook pages) • Large size logo on the official congress T-shirts

2.2.3   IEEE FUNDING

Although the IEEE funding for Cross Sectional SYPs is not dedicated in the same way as for the Region 8 SYP Congress, there are some funding opportunities from SAC and Young Professionals. From the region, you can count with up to $1000: SAC will support you with the maximum of 500$ and Young Professionals will grant you up to 500$. From MGA YP, you can get up to $1250: $500 if you apply for a STEP program in time plus, $750 from the seed funding. To guarantee these funding amounts, you should, in time, contact the SAC and YP teams as well as the MGA YP team, respectively.

Student Branches are often tied with particular societies and you can find more significant funding there, as well as great promotional materials for your gifts.

Besides SAC & YP, you can ask for funding from IEEE societies, the IEEE Foundation, IEEE Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology (SIGHT), IEEE Teacher in Service Program (TISP) or IEEE Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS). Such programs can offer a variety of funds and speakers that can help you manage your event and on return they get to promote their activities through you program. Some societies have standard funds for such events (e.g. 500-1000$), but all of the given are mainly individually considered.

You can start by sending emails to the representatives of these initiatives in Region 8 and they can put you on contact with the person in charge of funding.

In these emails, make sure to include a proposal concerning your event and including sponsorship packages. Consider having different default sponsorship packages for IEEE entities and industry.
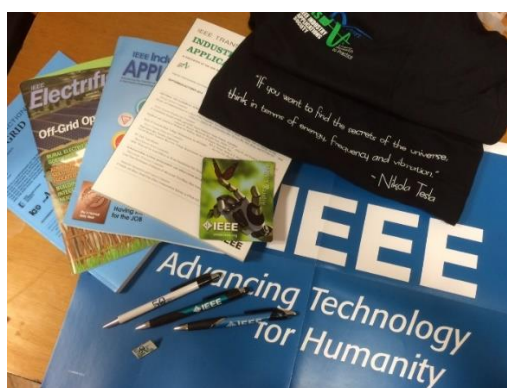

Fig. 12. Example of Industry Applications Society promo package.

2.2.4   MEALS AND COFFEE BREAKS

Although the final number of attendees is not definite, 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 what they can or cannot eat.

It has to be taken into account that breakfast and lunch must be near the workshop locations, since there is usually not much time to spend in traveling between locations. Dinners are not that restrictive, but they have to be in places shortly reachable by public transportation. Coffee breaks should exist at least every hour and half/two hours, i.e. in between workshops and/or presentations.

2.2.5   TRANSPORTATION

As far as transportation is concerned, the participants must be aware of how they are going to

be transferred from one location to another. Before the event, make sure to clearly provide them with the information about different public transportation options in your country in case they get lost somehow. Make sure also to include transportation fees in your budget, especially if the event location is far from the dorm/hotel.

2.2.6   BUDGET

It is very important to have an excelsheet with all the incomes (funding and sponsorships) and all expenses discriminated. **Don't forget to include an extra amount in the expenses, to account for any surprise expenses you may have during the congress.**

Start preparing this budget as soon as possible because it will give an idea on how much expenses you'll need to cover. When you think you have a more or less, complete budget: you can send us an email to set up a skype call so that we can give you some feedback. Don't wait until the last minute: the sooner you talk to us, the sooner we can help you!

2.3   CREATIVE PART

2.3.1   MOBILE APP

Nowadays, it is common to have 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 or directions.

2.3.2   FACILITIES DETAILS

Regarding the room distribution, it is advised to make a rough planning. Notice that there will a need for separate floors by genders and in some cases different sections as well. It is called a "rough planning" because in the last moment many of the attendees will want to arrange it themselves. Giving them the chance of preselecting a roommate (via form or similar) can 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.

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?

2.3.3   TOURIST 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.

2.3.4   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!

2.3.5   FINAL DETAILS

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

3 DURING THE CONGRESS

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

3.1 ATTENDEES' ARRIVAL

Something that needs to be thought of in advance is how or who will receive the attendees, in either airports or train stations, etc. Allocate some people from the organizing committee to wait for them and help them reaching the lodging.

3.2 VIPS & SPEAKERS ARRIVAL

Also, VIP attendees must be assisted in their way to the hotels, either guided by a volunteer or instructed on how to take e.g. a taxi and how much would that cost.

3.3 LAST MINUTE PROGRAM CHANGES (CHECK 2.1.3)

If for many reasons, one of the main speakers cannot make it to the congress: try not to panic. It can happen and there are many experienced people around you that can come up with a nice workshop or talk. Take a look at your previous ideas discussed at 2.1.3 and talk with your (organizing) team which could be the best option in the list.

3.4 TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE (CHECK 2.1.8)

At least every morning, before the workshops and/or presentation starts, the people responsible for the equipment should do a last re-check of the necessary equipment (beamers, pointers and any extra equipment required) in each room. This prevention action may save you immense time and troubles in case you notice some defective device (avoids delays and unhappy people).

3.5 LABELS & SIGNS MAINTENANCE (CHECK 2.1.9)

Take care of this in the same way as for topic 3.3. For large congresses, have a person responsible for checking if everything is clear.

3.6   SECURITY OF PARTICIPANTS (CHECK 2.1.10)

Remember to make this your priority and always keep in mind that what is normal for you might be very specific and uncommon for some of your participants.

3.7   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.

3.8   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-developing and fun experience.

4 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!
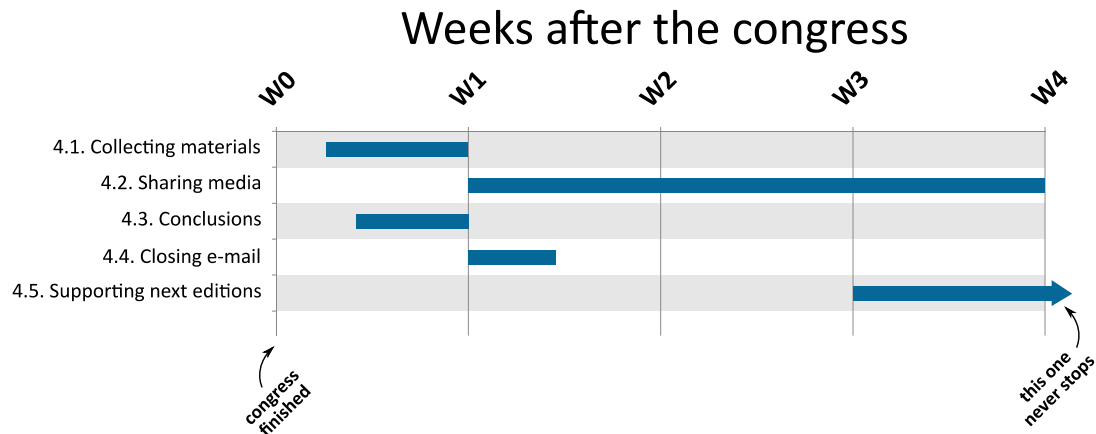

Figure 13. Indicative Gant chart of post-congress actions.

4.1 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.

4.2 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. Put them finally on your social media profile to gain the top visibility and record the event in history.

4.3 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. It is also recommended to hold a social event for rewarding your volunteers for their hard work during the last few months.

4.4 CLOSING THE 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.

4.5 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.

5 MENTORSHIP

One of the most important things about organizing such events is to learn from the previous editions experiences, especially learning from their mistakes to improve the quality of the event. That is why we highly recommend that you get in touch with previous editions organizing committees to get to know what went well and what not. If you do not know the previous edition organizing committee, we can make the introduction for you. Just ask us about it at the same you show your interest to organize the next edition.

6 FINAL MESSAGE & REFERENCES

References:

Young Professionals Subcommittee and Student Activities Committee, "How to organize a Student & Young Professional Congress", 2014.

Loads of photos, Facebook profiles, student branch websites and contacts from MESYPs, ISYPs, HYSPs, WESYP, NSYP, and CEuSYPs.

Great memories and personal experience in organization of MESYP 2017, WESYP 2015 and CEuSYP 2015.

FINAL MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE AND THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SUBCOMMITTEE

We gathered all this information to give you an idea of what you can be part of and we hope you are as much enthusiastic as we are in being part of such a movement. Cross Sectional Student and Young Professional Congresses (XS SYP Congress) gather both student and young professional members from neighboring sections in the Region and provide opportunities to socialize and interact, develop soft skills, enhance knowledge of technology, discuss the common organizational challenges and prepare you for the new roles that await you.

Unleash your potential!

Looking forward to working with you,
R8 SAC & YP SC Squad 2017, updated 2019