

Voluntary Contribution Fund Coordinator

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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 2020 are:

- Maintain the stabilized income stream of the fund of 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.
- Increase VCF publicity and promotion to reverse the trend of declining application numbers.

Historical Trends

Over the course of 2018, the income situation of the VCF has been stabilized with the income from donations in that year totaling \$13,937. This is an increase of roughly 20% over the situation before 2017. This means, that the fund is in the fortunate situation to be able to continue operating at the target budget level of \$10,000 while maintaining and even strengthening its reserves. This in turn will permit compensating future fluctuations of the income stream.

During 2018, a total of 11 payments have been made to grant holders totaling \$6,109. A delayed reimbursement has been completed in January 2019 amounting to \$500. Unfortunately, 3 grants approved totaling \$2,300 were not claimed by their holders as the holders decided to cancel their respective planned conference activities. Therefore, the fund used only 2/3 of its target budget in 2018 with the remaining funds going to its reserves.

Grant statistics: number of grants awarded, stats by country, age, gender. Comparison with historical data

In 2019, a total of 12 grants have been approved, totaling an amount of \$9,100.

The grants approved were granted to members of the sections of Egypt (1), Iran (1), Kenya (2), Nigeria (1), South Africa (1), Tunisia (3) and Ukraine (2) with 9 of the grant holders being male and 2 female. One student member received two grants within the scope of the applicable eligibility criteria.

In total, 15 grant applications were rejected during the current year due to not meeting the application criteria. The two most common reasons for rejecting applications were requests to support the attendance of events taking place outside the geographical boundaries of Region 8 and applicants not being members of Region 8 for more than 12 months.

Compared to previous years, the VCF continues to see diverse applications from a range of different countries, particularly from the African continent. However, application numbers still show room for improvement.

Since the beginning of 2020, 1 application has been rejected and 3 further application are currently under evaluation.

Financial status

The fund is financially in a healthy state of operation with the target budget for 2020 being set at \$10,000.

The donation situation is expected to continue to be reasonably stable and the income of the fund in 2020 is expected to be above \$10,000 again.

The reserves of the fund at the beginning of 2020 currently exceed 5 times the annual budget. These are expected to grow moderately until the end of the year.

Future plans

An ongoing concern is the number of applications meeting the eligibility criteria. The low number of applicants currently effectively prevents the fund from spending the entire budget allocated for grants.

In November 2019, a social media outreach has been started supported by the Region 8 Today team to encourage additional applications to the fund. The focus in 2020 continues to be on raising awareness of the fund with potential applicants.

Other Issues to report