

R8 Conference Coordination Committee**Tiziana Tambosso****Goals and progress against goals since the last report****1. Efficient management of the CoCC**

Five CoCC meetings were held (March 17, March 24, May 5, June 6, June 29) with detailed minutes containing task distribution and reports on activities.

Reports for the R8 OpCom (multi-regional agreement for HISTELCON, new revised budget with new initiatives, new sites for EUROCON 2025 and HISTELCON 2025)

Reports for VP_TA with summary of activities

The committee webpages were updated (see <https://ieeer8.org/category/technical-activities/conference-coordination/>)

2. Timely review of the financial and technical co-sponsorship (TCS/FCS) requests and conc unit approval

From March 2023 a further eight requests for R8 Technical Co-Sponsorship were handled with two declined, six approved.

9 requests of Conc. Unit. evaluation have been received: 6 approved and 3 declined.

3. Ensure success of the R8 flagship conferences: call for bids, support, oversight

On May 5th the CoCC meeting was held to evaluate the candidates for the EUROCON 2025. The R8 CoCC recommendation for the EUROCON 2025 site was submitted for approval to the R8 OpCom meeting of May 8th and the motion has been prepared to be approved by the R8 Committee of August 11th, 2023.

A second call for bids for the organization of HISTELCON 2025 was circulated and three proposals have been received from: France Section (Bordeaux or Paris), Romania Section (Central Library - University Politehnica of Bucharest) and Germany Section (University of Bonn).

A Virtual Meeting with HISTELCON 2025 conferences candidates, to answer their questions on the final bid preparation, was held on May 25th, with the participation of 3 bidders and Section chairs or their representatives (total 9 people). The meeting was appreciated.

We plan to hold this type of virtual meetings with the bidders/Section chairs in the future as well to ensure a good understanding of the R8 rules and a set of good bids to choose among them the best candidates for organizing future R8 flagship and portfolio conferences.

The evaluation of the three candidates' final documents was done and the discussion of the results was held during the CoCC meeting of June 29th. The three candidates were considered with great accuracy, considering all the evaluation criteria. The general comment from the CoCC was that all the three bidders did a very good job. Recommendations of the committee and the related report was prepared for the OPCOM meeting of July 1st-2nd, 2023. The HISTELCON 2025 conferences site proposal will be presented during the R8 meeting of Ottawa, August 11th, 2023.

Details about letter of intent and endorsement letter for flagship/portfolio conferences have been added (see: <https://ieeer8.org/technical-activities/conference-coordination/pages/flagship/>)

- the new call for bids for 2026 R8 conferences has been added:

23th IEEE MELECON 2026 (150 participants)

9th IEEE ENERGYCON 2026 (150 participants)

10th IEEE RTSI 2026 (150 participants)

Dead Line for LoI and EL: 30 November 2023

Dead Line for final bid: 31 December 2023

The role of the steering committees for the R8 portfolio/flagship conferences has been discussed during CoCC meetings and defined as follows:

Only R8 flagship and portfolio conferences have a R8 steering committee, proposed by the CoCC and approved by R8 Op-Com.

The primary role of the R8 Steering committee is working on a list of best practices and lessons learned for that specific conference (each Flagship/Portfolio conference has its own peculiarities).

This list shall be useful for the present and future organizers with the main goal of ensuring a standard level of quality and a continuous improvement of conference results (number of attendees, high technical quality, industry participation, involvement of students, YP, WIE, positive feedback by participants, ...)

The list of best practices and lessons learned should be a living document enriched with multiple experiences of previous and present conference organizers.

The composition of the steering committees reflects this objective.

The recommended composition of the flagship and portfolio R8 steering committee is as follow:

- Previous conference chair/s
- Current conference chair/s
- Senior representatives from R8 (R8 director, VC TA, conference committee chair/representative)
- Host Section chair / representative
- other relevant IEEE or R8 representative/s for that specific conference
- (optional) Senior representatives from a non-IEEE organizing entity (university, national association/organization, etc.)

Future conference chair may be invited to participate in the steering committee meetings to gain experience.

One of the IEEE/R8 senior representatives will be appointed chair of the committee by the R8 OpCom.

The R8 CoCC Operations Manual will be modified to include this definition and will be considered for approval at the next R8 Spring Committee meeting.

Meetings of the R8 steering committees of the R8 portfolio/flagship conferences have been held.

Conference	Number of meetings
EUROCON 2023	1
HISTELCON 2023	2
AFRICON 2023	4
MELECON 2024	1

4. Increase IEEE R8 visibility through conferences and Industry focused events/conferences

The organization process of each flagship/portfolio conference is supervised from the application form check list to the final report submission and budget control. The conferences are enriched with special events (workshop, competitions, panels) organized with the contribution of the R8 Committees.

The first flagship conference of 2023, EUROCON, has been held on July 6-8, 2023, in Torino (Italy). The conference was successful with more than 300 participants and contributions from authors coming from 48 countries (about 18% authors outside R8). The main technical sessions of EUROCON 2023 were organized with the support of over 30 Chapters and Affinity Groups of the IEEE Italy Section. Besides 27 regular technical sessions and 2 special sessions, the EUROCON program was highly varied, including an opening plenary session with 3 keynote speakers (two from big industries), 6 invited speakers, 2 invited sessions, 8 workshops, and 3 tutorials. In particular, the workshops, organized with the participation of R8 main committees, covered many aspects of key interest for R8, including **industry**, women in engineering, hu-

manitarian, membership, **entrepreneurship**, standard and soft skills, enhancing the networking opportunities and involvement of different realities, from startups to large industries, as needed in a R8 flagship conference.

Relationships with industries that have contributed to the special events have been strengthened.

The program was further enriched with many competitions aimed at covering the whole range from young students to young professionals and young entrepreneurs (WIE competition for secondary schools, B.S. and M.S. Student Competition, R8 Student Paper Contest, Best student video & poster competition, Best PhD and Young Professional demo competition, Best Entrepreneurship idea demo & poster competition).

In AFRICON 2023 a workshop dedicated to industry has been organized by the R8 Action for Industry Committee, CoCC representatives will participate in AFRICON to strengthen the relationship with local industries and having feedback for improving the participation of industries in the next AFRICON conferences.

The organization of RTSI 2024 (Research and Technology for Society and Industry) is going on with the selection of the best site and involvement of the industries in the main program.

A best practice documents has been prepared to be used as a starting document by the steering committee and further lessons learned from EUROCON 2025 organization will be considered.

5. Support the sections' conference coordinators

The updated list of section conference coordinators can be seen on the conference website (<https://ieeer8.org/technical-activities/conference-coordination/pages/section-coordinators/>).

24 Sections/subsections appointed conference coordinators. 7 sections indicated the name of the conference coordinator, but they have not completed the nomination process which requires registration of name and role in IEEE V-tools.

Other 38 Section/subsections still don't have a conference coordinator different from Session chair.

The CoCC recognizes the important role of the Section Conference Coordinators. For this reason, the R8 CoCC Operations Manual will be modified to include the definition of the role of Section Conference Coordinators and will be considered for approval at the next R8 Spring Committee meeting.

The proposed definition of the Section Conference Coordinators role is summarized in the following:

Section Conference Coordinators role:

- learn from the IEEE MCE website and R8 CoCC education workshops all the news and tools useful for IEEE conference organizers and act as a point of reference on these topics at the Section level.
- Monitor the IEEE conference occurring in their Section and seek out opportunities for Section to participate in these conferences as TCS or FCS.
- Give assistance to Section conference organizers.
- Collect, from Section conference organizers, information and contacts of industry financial supporters, local associations, editors of journals, which are interested in direct cooperation proposals from new R8 conference organizers. Section conference coordinators should transmit that information to R8 CoCC.

To support Section conference coordinators /Section chairs and other R8 OU Chairs a second education Workshop on "IEEE conference organization and sponsorship" has been organized in conjunction with EUROCON 2023, on July 5th, 2023. The workshop was hybrid, with about 30 participants both in presence and online and the contribution of two presentations from IEEE MCE staff.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide information and guidance to develop a successful IEEE conference.

The workshops included 5 presentations. First, benefits for the OU organizing conferences, goal settings and target market, team building, timing, partners, financial planning & financial patrons, were described. Then, overview of the technical program management, sponsorship opportunities, responsibilities of the organizational unit sponsoring conferences, peer review process, similarity check, ensuring a high-quality technical program were given. The third presentation introduced the IEEE MCE resources available to conference organizer, education programs. Moreover, a brief overview of the scope of the IEEE Conference Committee, the TPIC (Technical Program Integrity Committee) review process and CQC (Confer-

ence Quality Committee) purpose was given. At the end the R8 Flagship & portfolio conferences, the organizers selection process and evaluation criteria were described.

One hour was dedicated to Questions & Answers, a fundamental and highly appreciated moment of interaction with the public. Attendees had a reduced registration fee to participate in EUROCON 2023.

In the second half of 2023 and then in 2024 advanced training workshops dedicated to R8 TCS conference organizers and session chairs / conference coordinators will be organized in order to provide them with more details on how to create more value for participants through the sponsorship of the IEEE R8, but above all through the knowledge of how IEEE conferences and events can be used as a driving force to reach a wider audience and be of greater impact for the local scientific/industrial/cultural community (e.g. through special events dedicated to industry, startups, WIE, Diversity & Inclusion, YP, Students, ...).

6. Ensure good relationship with MGA, MCE, and other regional conference coordinators

Interaction with IEEE MCE is constantly maintained (almost daily email contacts).

Cooperation in the organization of education workshops for R8 conference organizers.

Participation in IEEE ICC meetings.

Participation in Convene 2023 at Panama City with three CoCC representatives.

New initiatives

1) Add the Africa Council as Financial Co-Sponsor of AFRICON

Scope: participation of AFRICA Council as FCS of all the next AFRICON conferences with a financial involvement of 20%, 50% for the organizing Section, 30% for R8

The Procedure, proposed by the CoCC and agreed with the R8 OpCom is the following:

- a) a motion with this agreement approved by the Africa Council (with all AC Section and sub-sections voting)
- b) the minutes of the AC meeting sent to the R8 director and CoCC chair
- c) the CoCC will prepare a motion for the Ottawa R8 Committee meeting with the proposal

All the steps were completed. The motion with the proposal to add the Africa Council as FCS of all AFRICON conferences starting from the 2025 edition with a financial involvement of 20% for AC, 50% for the organizing Section, 30% for R8 will be presented for approval at the August 11th, R8 Committee Meeting.

The R8 CoCC Operation Manual will be modified accordingly.

2) make HISTELCON a multi-Regional Conference

The proposal was approved during the R8 Committee meeting of Bucharest.

R7, R9 and R10 have shown their interest in this project.

The R8 CoCC has prepared an "Operations Agreement" which has been circulated among the interested regions for approval. Comments from the Regions ExCom have been collected.

The Operations Agreement was positively evaluated by R8 OpCom and will be presented for approval at the R8 committee meeting (Ottawa, August 11th, 2023)

During the Ottawa Section Congress, a meeting will be organized with the four Region Directors to obtain all the necessary approvals from all the Regions involved.

3) converting the R8 FCS conferences IEEE EDUCON into a new R8 portfolio conference

The IEEE Education Society agreed on the project. The Operation Agreement is under preparation. It will be evaluated by the R8 OpCom and IEEE Education Society ExCom and finally presented for approval at the next spring R8 meeting.

4) The CoCC started a new project for the evaluation of the R8 TCS conferences which could be upgraded to R8 FCS conferences.

The process started with the establishment of evaluation criteria and three phases of evaluation and selection where proposed. The first phase is based on the following selection criteria:

- well established conferences: they are at their nth edition.
- in the last two or three years they were TCS by R8
- they have sent the final report to R8
- they are co-sponsored by two or more chapters and/or by IEEE Societies/Council

Then a second phase is based on the analysis of each conference from the following point of view:

- they are always organized in the R8
- number of participants (select the biggest)
- kind of sponsorship from Societies, Chapters, Section (TCS or FCS)
- other organizations involved as FCS (universities, associations, ...)
- involvement of industries as patrons
- special events with industry participation
- they have the co-sponsorship of other regions or sections

A third phase involves meetings with individual conference organizers (selected after the second evaluation phase). Pros and Cons for R8 and the conference organizer will be analyzed with the aim of finding a common value proposition.

This project will continue to be enriched with further analysis of pros and cons.

5) The CoCC is working with the R8 ad hoc committee on climate change to organize a workshop on this topic during one of the next R8 portfolio conferences/events.