

Site Selection for a Conference or Workshop

Know the History

If this meeting has been held in the past, contact the IEEE Signal Processing Society staff and the past organizing committee members to discuss the past locations and sites that have worked for the meeting. Knowing where the meeting has succeeded will give you a good sense of where your meeting will succeed.

If this is the first time for the meeting, contact the IEEE SPS staff. We will be happy to discuss the meeting goals and suggest other meetings in the SPS Conference Business portfolio for you to model your meeting after.

Choose a city

The basic criteria for an IEEE meeting city:

- Local industry or university support.
- Support and involvement of the local IEEE Signal Processing Society Chapter.
- Easy international accessibility to conference location.
- Appeal of local attractions/climate including the season of the event.
- Concurrent events which may impact the conference.

Getting Help

There are three common ways to approach site selection. You can work with a Convention and Visitors Bureau, you can hire a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) or you can go it on your own.

Convention and Visitors Bureau

The advantages to working with the CVB include:

- The CVB knows what the events are happening in their city and can guide you to available dates and properties.
- They have the meeting space and hotel guest room space information on-hand. They can tell you which properties have the space to accommodate the meeting.
- Some CVBs also will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on your behalf saving you time and trouble.
- The CVB will also help you with a site inspection should you decided to go to the next step.
- These services are free.

Professional Conference Organizer

The advantage of hiring a PCO is that they will do most of the work on your behalf. They will contact the CVB, issue the RFP, and conduct a site inspection. The disadvantage is that they expect to be paid for this service. The cost for this service can range from \$50 to \$100 per hour plus travel and materials.

Going It on Your Own

If you are an experienced conference organizer and have the time and energy for this project, it may be better for you to choose the meeting site on your own.

Request for Proposal

Once you have the history, select the city, and have a sense of which properties you would like to use for your meeting, you are ready to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). If the CVB is issuing the RFP, they will likely already have a form to complete and will distribute the RFP based upon your preferences. If the CVB does not issue RFPs you will need to do this on your own.

The RFP should be sent to the properties that the CVB has advised may be available and can accommodate the meeting. Please contact the IEEE Signal Processing Society Conference Services staff for the Property RFP form.

Most major hotels and convention centers have online RFP forms. However, it is a good idea to complete the Property RFP form before you start their online form. The Property RFP form will help you gather the information you may need to complete the online RFP.

We recommend issuing the RFP to a minimum of three properties and a maximum of five to start.

Once you issue the RFP you can expect to receive responses within one to two weeks. The initial response will be a "contact" call from the sales manager at the property. Be prepared to set up a conference call with each property to discuss your RFP. This is one reason you do not want to issue the RFP to more than five properties to start, each property will take at least one hour of your time just for this initial "contact" call.