IEEE Signal Processing Society

Conference Budget Guideline

This guideline is provided to help conference organizers to set a reasonable budget. Described below are basic concepts for creating a reasonable and approvable conference or workshop budget. Budgets must be approved by the Society before the conference or workshop is officially "approved" by IEEE. Therefore it is important to create a proposed budget that meets the requirements and is reasonable for the conference as early in the planning process as is possible.

The Budget Sets the Tone

The budget acts as a guide for the organizing committee. It tells the team what is important. For example, a large food and beverage spend says that the social functions are priority. A large publicity spend says that we want this conference to grow.

Building the Budget

Form. SPS has its own form that is preferred for building a SPS conference budget. The SPS form has extra features such as tax recovery formulas, break-even analysis for the banquet cost and ticket price, as well as summary charts breaking down the income and expense categories and comparison of fixed to variable costs. These extra features may help you to build an accurate budget.

Estimate. Use the as much actual quote information as you can find to set accurate estimates for expenses. A good source for estimates is the proposals from hotels including rental rates and menu prices although these rates and prices may not have been negotiated yet, they are a good guide for setting a budget.

We do not recommend using the proposed budget from year to year as they are very often not how the conference finally performed. It is better to ask the Society staff to provide the budget parameters.

Registration Fees. For advice in setting registration fees please see the "Setting Registration Fees" section within the *Guiding Principles for Finance Chairs*.

Honoraria. The payments to tutorial presenters and special guest speakers are called honoraria. Typical honoraria should cover the cost of their travel (coach airfare), accommodation (standard room), and/or preparation time. Therefore honoraria for a conference held in New York, NY is probably going to be higher than an honoraria for a conference held in Kansas City, MO because the guest room rates at the hotels in New York tend to be about twice of comparable rooms in Kansas City. But it is also important to base honoraria on precedent. If the conference has always had honoraria of $1,500 USD, then it may be wise to set the rate at $1,500 USD. Keep in mind that all honoraria must be reported in the conference's 1099/1042 reports.

Grants and Gifts. Do not include estimates for potential grants or corporate gifts in the proposed budget unless you have written proof that the grant or gift has been confirmed. Once a grant or gift is confirmed, you should revise the budget to reflect the additional income and adjust the

registration fees or expenses accordingly. Some grants set specific requirements that may or may not increase an expense line. For example a grant may be given for the express purpose of providing students with a luncheon. The revised budget would have an income of X amount with an expense line that is Y amount. Hopefully X equals Y, but that isn't always the case.

Administrative Meetings. For GlobalSIP, ICASSP and ICIP you must include the cost of supporting the Society administrative meetings including meeting space rental, audio/visual services, food and beverage, telephony services, etc. The cost for board member travel and accommodation is not to be included.

Budget Parameters

Each conference series that has been held three times or more has set parameters for expense, revenue, surplus, and registration fees. Budgets for future conferences should not deviate year-to-year from the average "actual" or "final" budget by more than +/- 5% unless there is sufficient reason to do so. The reasons for going outside of the parameters should be included when the budget is submitted for review. (i.e. the conference has grown from 150 attendees to 250.)

An approved general chair or finance chair may request the budget parameters from the Society Conference Services staff.

Budget Approval Process

Upon receipt a member of the SPS Conference Services Department will preview the budget on behalf of the SPS Conference Board Executive Subcommittee (CBES). The review typically takes 5 - 7 business days. If the budget is within the parameters set for the conference series the budget will be sent to the CBES for review and approval. If the budget is greater than +/- 5% of the parameters, the budget will be returned to the submitter for revision and/or explanations.

Once the CBES has approved the budget, if there are no other financial co-sponsors, the budget will be forwarded to IEEE for review and approval.

If there are other financial co-sponsors the budget will be forwarded to the relevant entity for review and approval. Once all of the required co-sponsor approvals are received the budget is forwarded to IEEE for final review and approval.

The contacts named on the budget will be notified when the budget is approved.

Interim budgets reports are expected according to the timeline set forth in the *Guiding Principles for Finance Chairs*.

After Approval - Managing the Budget

The Society requires that each conference and workshop provide regular reports on the budget. Each budget report should demonstrate the changes that have occurred since the previous report. The *Guiding Principles for Finance Chairs* has much to offer in regard to managing the budget, therefore it is recommended reading for all Finance Chairs.