

COSPAR Assembly Requirements Document

The present document establishes a set of critical requirements for a site to be selected for an Assembly. It will be sent to countries who have expressed an interest in proposing to host a COSPAR Assembly. The purpose of this document is to define the criteria against which these proposals will be judged. It should be clear to all bidders that their proposal needs to address in detail each requirement and to provide evidence of their capacity to do so.

This document complements the “General Guidelines for Organizing COSPAR Scientific Assemblies”. It includes as Annexes a proposed template aimed at facilitating comparison of competing bids and the chronology of events associated with the selection of an Assembly site.

1. Eligibility of a proposal

To be eligible a proposal must be presented by a qualified representative of the space research community of a country (“the bidder,” e.g., Academy of Sciences, relevant Ministry, COSPAR National Committee, etc.) and guaranteed by an appropriate institutional authority. It must reach the COSPAR Secretariat in advance of the stated deadline (one month before the Bureau meeting preceding the meeting of the Council where the selection will be made). The official guarantee must cover the condition that all *bona fide* participants will be allowed entry into the host country, as required by International Science Council (ISC) rules. It must also cover the financial arrangement proposed by the bidder.

CRITERION 1: If a proposal fails to fulfill the above eligibility condition, it will not be given any further consideration.

2. Host country

The priority for COSPAR is to ensure that its biennial Assembly takes place under the best possible conditions in order to guarantee maximum visibility and attendance from all countries interested in space research and in particular from those with major space agencies and well-established programs. COSPAR also seeks to provide a sufficient level of comfort and a satisfactory environment for the worldwide space research community to work and exchange in the best possible conditions.

2.1. LOCAL SPACE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

COSPAR Assemblies provide a unique opportunity for space-faring nations to showcase their scientific achievements and to expose their space research community to enhanced interactions with their worldwide colleagues. An active space research community, involved in a variety of space and Earth science missions and in collaborative activities, provides the necessary foundation for the maximum benefit to be gained.

CRITERION 2: Proposals must provide evidence of a well-established national space research community, familiar with COSPAR, and of the availability of a team of scientists, engineers, administrators and other experienced supporting staff from which an effective Local Organizing Committee may be formed.

3. Technical aspects

The “General Guidelines for Organizing COSPAR Scientific Assemblies” provide a wealth of details regarding the needed and/or desired number of rooms, offices, projection equipment, posters, exhibition, social events, local transportation, press, etc. Hereunder are listed some key criteria that must be met by a proposal to be accepted.

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3.1. VENUE

Past experience has shown that a “compact” venue (whether a Convention Center or a University building) can be a suitable setting for a COSPAR Assembly, provided that it contains enough rooms of adequate sizes to host many parallel scientific events. The interdisciplinary character of COSPAR Assemblies and the need for participants to be able to move quickly from one session to another preclude for instance any excessive dispersion of the meeting rooms on a wide campus.

CRITERION 3.1: The proposed venue will preferably consist of one building. If the venue is distributed over two buildings, the walking distance between the buildings should not exceed 3 minutes (200 meters).

3.2. REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Taking stock of greater demand since covid for virtual participation, proposers should include a remote component package in their bid. See also annex 1.

CRITERION 3.2: In the case of equally meritorious competing proposals, preference will be given to bids offering the possibility for satisfactory remote participation.

3.3. ACCOMMODATION AND ENVIRONMENT

COSPAR Assemblies seek to allow scientists to meet inside the meeting rooms and to socialize outside the meeting rooms. The venue should be located in an area where there is enough social life (cafes, restaurants, parks...). Most hotels should be within walking distance of the venue to avoid excessive loss of time in local transportation.

CRITERION 3.3: A wide range of accommodation (hotels, dormitories, etc.) and catering facilities open during the Assembly should be accessible within walking distance of the proposed venue.

3.4. ACCESSIBILITY FROM ABROAD

The venue should be located near (within one-hour by public transportation) an international airport with frequent connections to a large number of major cities in the world.

CRITERION 3.4: The proposed venue should be easily accessible through direct air flights from abroad.

4. Preferred region

A rotation between continents, while not being a rule, has more or less prevailed in the past, allowing COSPAR Assemblies to be held alternately in Europe, the Americas and Asia. It is desirable to try and continue this practice so that Assemblies rotate between the various regions of the world at intervals not exceeding 8 or 10 years.

CRITERION 4: In the case of equally meritorious competing proposals, preference will be given to bids coming from a region where COSPAR Assemblies have least recently been held.

5. Sustainability of the COSPAR Assemblies

The space science community was a front runner in the early 80s in terms of flagging the dangers of climate change and global warming. Space missions observing the Earth are critical components of supporting climate action, and space research contributes to a very large share of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This gives COSPAR a particular responsibility in terms of leading by example. We pledge to achieve environmentally sustainable events in the mid to long run, and demonstrate significant progress in that direction for the next upcoming Assemblies. Various directions are being explored, including inception of efficient virtual participation components to all our events, observance of recommended good practices or existing certifications, or the use of CO2 footprint simulation tools to help individual participants monitor their impact. Local Organizing Committees are further encouraged to set up and monitor such tools and best practices, including but not limited to encouraging recycling policy within

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the Assembly's premises and strong eco-gestures by participants and organizing staff alike. Success in achieving some or all of these virtuous goals would also serve as a legacy for future such events, and encourage further improvement.

CRITERION 5: In the case of equally meritorious competing proposals, preference will be given to bids indicating measures to ensure sustainability.

6. Legacy of the Assembly

In addition to the obvious benefits of international scientific collaboration, COSPAR would like its meetings to have a positive and long-lasting impact on the communities (public, scientific, educational, industrial, political, ...) in the cities and regions where they are held. We recognize that at this stage of the bid process most potential hosts and organizing committees will not have prioritized this aspect of holding the Scientific Assembly. If possible at this point, however, please indicate what are the hoped for long-term outcomes and any specific activities already planned during the Assembly that could lead to them.

CRITERION 6: In the case of equally meritorious competing proposals, preference will be given to bids indicating measures to use the Scientific Assembly to create legacy in the communities in which it is organized.

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Annex 1 – Proposed Template

Bidders are advised to use the following format for their proposals in order to facilitate comparison of competing bids.

A. Invitation

This section shall include the formal expression of interest of the host country/institution, an official support letter from appropriate authorities, proposed dates, financial statement, visa arrangements complying with ISC rules, and all other supporting material signed by relevant authorities.

B. Science and technology background

This section shall highlight the merits and objectives of the bid from the scientific and technological standpoint. It shall illustrate the strengths and capabilities of the space research community in the host country and its involvement in COSPAR. It shall include information on the proposed Program Committee leadership and Local Organizing Committee composition and enumerate past experience in hosting events of comparable nature and size.

C. Venue

This section shall describe in detail the proposed venue: location, capacity, number and size of meeting rooms, equipment, walkability, social program, etc. It shall also provide information on catering facilities and other options for lunch.

D. Remote Participation

It is expected that remote participants will be offered the possibility to contribute in real-time and by video in all scientific sessions.

E. Accommodation

This section shall describe the choices offered for accommodation: number of rooms per hotel categories, low-cost and student accommodation, range of rates, distance from the Assembly venue, etc. It shall also provide information on proximity to and choice of restaurants for dinner.

F. Accessibility

This section shall provide information on international travel access to the proposed venue: distance from airport, flight frequencies, local transportation, etc.

G. Sustainability

Indicate measures the LOC/PCO plan to adopt to help ensure that the Scientific Assembly is organized in as sustainable a way as possible.

H. Legacy

In this section please list any already identified long-term impacts on local and regional communities that it is hoped will result, in the widest sense, from organizing the Assembly and Associated Events. If possible at this early stage, provide some indication of the activities planned for or around the Assembly that might lead to the hoped for long-term impacts.

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Annex 2 – Chronology/Deadlines

Bidders are informed of the sequence of events in the submission and selection of a COSPAR Scientific Assembly site.

A. Initial expressions of interest in hosting a future COSPAR Scientific Assembly

Expressions of interest in hosting a future COSPAR Scientific Assembly can be made at any time. However potential applications will usefully comply with the deadline indicated immediately below, in accordance with the COSPAR Council's preference for site selection with four years lead time. Following receipt of an expression of interest, the present Assembly Requirements Document and the General guidelines will be sent to potential bidders.

- **Deadline:** COSPAR Bureau meeting five years before proposed date (but with a preference for expressions to be made/presented at the preceding Council meeting, i.e., six years before the future Assembly is to be held and two years before it is to be voted)

B. Full bid document

Potential bidders shall send their bid before the deadline indicated immediately below. Proposals that are not submitted in full by this date will not be considered.

- **Deadline:** one month before the Bureau meeting preceding the Council session at the Assembly where the selection will be made, i.e., about 4.5 years before the future Assembly is to be held.

C. Evaluation of the bids

The Bureau will form an Evaluation Committee, consisting of at least the Executive Director, one Bureau Member, and an expert on organizing conferences comparable in size to a COSPAR Assembly. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the written proposals, visit if need be the proposed sites, and prepare a detailed report evaluating and comparing the proposals for compliance with COSPAR Guidelines, Assembly Requirements and any other relevant considerations.

D. Feedback to bidders

Within two months after the Bureau meeting, the Evaluation Committee may contact the bidders and offer them an opportunity to consider small, minor corrections and clarifications. Should this be the case, the bidders will be requested to send updated bids before the deadline indicated immediately below. Subsequently, bids will be distributed to COSPAR Council members.

- **Deadline:** one month before the first Council session of the Assembly at which the future site is selected, i.e. approximately 4 years before the future Assembly is to be held.

E. Verbal presentation of bids to the COSPAR Council by potential hosts and discussion thereof

At the first Council session of an Assembly presentations will be made by each bidder of no more than 20 minutes in length, strictly enforced, outlining their bid. The presentations will be followed by the presentation of the report of the Evaluation Committee, without the bidders being present. The Council may ask questions or for clarifications, but no decision will be made at the first Council meeting.

- **Deadline:** first Council Session of the Assembly at which the future site is to be selected, i.e., approximately 4 years before the future Assembly is to be held.

F. The formal, secret vote

At the second Council session a formal, secret ballot will determine the choice.

- **Deadline:** second Council Session of the Assembly at which the future site is to be selected, i.e., approximately 4 years before the future Assembly is to be held.