

Call for Partnerships: Guidelines

Content

- 1) Background
- 2) Aims
- 3) Eligibility Criteria
- 4) Award Criteria
- 5) Letter of Intent Guidelines
- 6) Timeline
- 7) Contact and Further Information

1) Background

The ESF Conferences Scheme brings together researchers from different nationalities, backgrounds, disciplines and at different career stages to jointly discuss the latest developments in new and emerging fields of research. Through their format, ESF Research Conferences promote free discussion and exchange of information, and aim to create long-term networks between participants. Participation is open to researchers from academia, industry, society and politics worldwide.

Conferences are grouped in series of 2-5 annual conference, with each series focussing on a specific scientific area. ESF Research Conferences Series are conceived, branded and financed in partnership with high-level European research organisations and universities. The scientific area and location of each series is suggested by the partner, aiming to showcase their excellence in their particular field of expertise.

This call invites research performing or research funding organisations, academies and learned societies as well as research-related associations, publishing houses, labs and think tanks to partner with the European Science Foundation in the creation of new ESF Research Conference Series.

2) Aims

ESF Conferences aim to contribute to the strengthening of a globally competitive European Research Area as laid-out in the ESF-EUROHORCS Science Policy Briefing 'EUROHORCS and ESF Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and their Road Map for Actions' (see <http://www.esf.org/publications.html>).

Identifying emerging and strategically important topics by addressing questions raised by the scientific community

New insights are generated at the level of individual researchers, research groups, labs and research facilities. It is therefore the scientific community itself that is best situated to identify emerging topics and tomorrow's scientific and societal grand challenges.

ESF Conferences aims to provide a platform for the scientific community to discuss important topics with colleagues from a variety of countries, sectors and disciplines. ESF Research Conferences aim to raise awareness for these topics on a European and international level and help create new research communities.

Strengthen the link between science and society; foster exchanges with politics and the private sector

Scientific progress is not happening in an empty void, it is closely interlinked with economic innovation, politics, policy and societal developments. The scientific community has a responsibility to reflect and communicate about the potential impact of its discoveries.

On the level of the conference series, research funding organizations, associations, publishing houses and industry are invited to participate in the conception and design - either as partners or co-sponsors.

For each event, ESF Conferences actively encourages the participation of researchers and expert stakeholders from different sectors – including industry, NGOs, media and politics – to actively participate in a joint discussion.

Conferences raise awareness for emerging and strategically important topics on a European and international level.

Their outcomes are to be made freely available to stakeholders from all sectors, chiefly through publications of reports, position papers and briefings on the ESF Conferences online platform.

To develop the research careers of Young and Early Stage Researchers

For Europe to be able to retain and recruit the brightest and most creative researchers, it is important to actively foster the careers of Young and Early Stage Researchers of all backgrounds. An early involvement in international contexts helps to develop the skills necessary to succeed in a globalised knowledge-based society.

ESF Conferences aim to promote the involvement of these groups through creating opportunities for active participation in the conference programme. Furthermore, grants, funding and participation quota and the conference format are consciously designed in a way that encourages participation.

Showcase regional excellence of European research, research performing organisations and universities through funding partnerships

EUROHORCS and ESF would like to see Regional Clusters of Excellence in Europe in which European research performing organisations and universities jointly finance and organise new research topics which are to be dealt with urgently within Europe and beyond. These could serve as nuclei for gathering critical mass in a specialised field, creating European centres of excellence, while at the same time showcasing regional excellence on a European level.

Through its partnership scheme, ESF Conferences aim to establish clearly branded conference series that showcase the expertise of an organization or region in a certain scientific field. Partnerships are encouraged to involve organisations from industry, third-sector, regional authorities and media to ensure an impact beyond the scientific community.

Connecting European research to the world

As research is by its nature a global endeavour, it is essential that European strengths are embedded in a global context, focusing on scientific excellence rather than national boundaries.

ESF Conferences does not limit its partnerships to organizations situated in ESF Member Countries and encourages partnerships that actively seek to forge bonds with research communities in other regions. Researchers of all nationalities can apply to co-chair a conference, as long as at least one co-chair is currently working at a European organisation. Conference participation is open to researchers from all countries. In series focussing on exchanges between two particular regions (Europe-Africa, Europe-Japan), balanced representation of those regions is required.

3) Eligibility Criteria

Both individual organisations and consortia of collaborating organisations can apply.

Individual organisations or – in consortia - coordinating partners must be research performing or research funding organisations, academies or learned societies (either privately or publicly funded) with legal status, situated in or collaborating with ESF Member Organisation countries (see <http://www.esf.org/about-us/79-member-organisations.html>). These organisations must have proven expertise and excellence in the scientific field suggested for the conference series.

In consortia, partner organisations must be organisations with legal status and an expertise and or high interest in the field proposed by the partnership as conference topic. Partner organisations can be public or private organisation from any sector including industry, media, NGOs, associations, regional or local authorities.

The scientific focus of the suggested series should not repeat topics covered by existing ESF Research Conference Series. Current series topics are:

- Molecular Biology+
- Mathematics
- Physics/Biophysics and Environmental Sciences
- Social Sciences and Humanities
- Biomedicine
- Biotechnology

Further information can be found at: <http://www.esf.org/activities/esf-conferences/partnerships.html>

4) Award Criteria

Proposals are evaluated according to the following award criteria:

Relevance to the aims and objectives of the Scheme

A description of the aims can be found in section 2 of this document. A partnership does not necessarily have to fulfil all aims, but could also focus on one or two aims specifically.

Uniqueness of the Proposed Series

Proposed series should fulfil a need in the scientific community, rather than duplicating existing conference series or similar initiatives within the European Research Area. If there are existing initiatives, it would be important to either highlight the distinctions or ways to collaborate.

Scientific Excellence of the Partner Organisations in the Proposed Field

The suggested conference series should focus on a topic that is of core interest to the partner organisation(s). The suggested conference series should therefore be one of many initiatives taken to strengthen the partners as a centre of excellence in this particular field. Ideally, the partners already have a standing with the specific scientific community and foster active collaborations in this area with science, industry, policy and media.

Novelty and Innovation of the Series

The series should focus on a topic that is an acknowledged or emerging grand challenge for European research and society. It should be broad enough to allow researchers working in the field to submit proposals for conferences to be hosted within the series, yet focussed enough to actively drive knowledge and innovation in the field. Novelty and innovation should be present either in the topic itself, or in the approach that is taken to discuss this topic (e.g. interdisciplinary).

European / International Dimension of the Series

The series should focus on a topic that is not just of local or regional importance, but that is an acknowledged or emerging grand challenge for European research and society. The topic should be relevant to researchers from different regions, countries, sectors and disciplines. It has to be evident that there is a need to discuss this topic in a European or international context.

Impact of the Proposed Series

The impact is the direct or indirect effect the series is projected to have on individual researchers and on scientific communities. Furthermore, the conferences and the series should aim to have a positive long-term impact on the European Research Area and the targeted scientific communities. They could, for instance, contribute to the furthering of knowledge, the establishment of new research communities or networking diverse stakeholders in a particular field.

The Cost-Benefit Ratio of the Proposed Series

A benefit-cost ratio evaluates the overall value for money of the proposal. It looks at the total return – primarily in terms of impact but also in terms of co-funding raised – in relation to the funding invested by ESF.

5) Letter of Intent Guidelines

Summary Section

Submitting this section is obligatory. All points need to be addressed for the proposal to be processed.

In this section, you are asked to: (1) summarise the core information about the series, (2) summarise the proposals by award criteria and (3) collect the formal signatures of the participating organisations.

Part A: Organisations

Submitting this section is obligatory. Point A.1 needs to be fully addressed. Point A.2 is only relevant if more than one partner organisation is involved in the proposal.

In this section, you are asked to:

- Sub-points 1-4: Provide the contact details and a brief description of the partner organisation (or – if there are several – the coordinating partner and the participating partner organisations).
- Sub-points 5-7: Explain the link between the organisation(s) and the proposed partnership and conference theme.

Further explanations:

- Legal status refers to the standing of the organisation in the eyes of law. Examples of these are governmental organisations, a private organisation, a public entity.
- Organisation type refers to the way the organisation is fulfilling its role. Some examples of these are academic institutions, agencies, societies, companies and corporations, international organisations, associations and foundations.

Part B: Aims and Objectives of the Conference Series

Submitting this section is obligatory. Points B.1-B.4 need to be fully addressed. Points B.5-6 are optional and can be used to strengthen the proposal.

In this section, you are asked to:

- Sub-points 1-2: Provide a summary overview of the proposed conference series content. The key data section should provide a short summary which can be used for classification purposes.
- Sub-points 3-4: Explain what this series aims to achieve – in terms of scientific focus, impact and in relation to the aims of the ESF Research Conferences scheme.
- Sub-points 5-6: Highlight links to ESF and other strategic priorities and give additional information if necessary.

Further information: Objectives and Activities of the Standing Committees

Humanities (SCH)

- About Humanities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/about.html>
- Current strategic activities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/strategic-activities.html>
- Strategy Documents of Member Organisations: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/humanities/science-policy/mo-strategy-documents.html>

Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences (LESC)

- About LESG: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/life-earth-and-environmental-sciences.html>
- Current Activities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/life-earth-and-environmental-sciences/activities.html>

Medical Sciences – European Medical Research Councils (EMRC)

- About EMRC: <http://www.esf.org/nc/research-areas/medical-sciences.html>
- EMRC Activities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/medical-sciences/activities.html>

Physical and Engineering Sciences (PESC)

- About PESC: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/physical-and-engineering-sciences.html>
- PESC Activities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/physical-and-engineering-sciences/activities.html>

Social Sciences (SCSS)

- About SCSS: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/social-sciences.html>
- SCSS Activities: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/social-sciences/activities.html>
- SCSS Position Paper: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/social-sciences/activities/strategic-activities.html>

Marine Sciences (MB)

- About MB: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/marine-sciences.html>

Materials Science and Engineering Expert Committee (MatSEEC)

- About MatSEEC: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/material-sciences-and-engineering.html>

Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee (NuPECC)

- About NuPECC: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/nuclear-physics.html>

Polar Sciences (EPB)

- About EPB: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/polar-sciences.html>

Space Science (ESSC)

- About ESSC: <http://www.esf.org/research-areas/space-sciences.html>

Part C: Implementation and Operations

Submitting this section is obligatory. Points C.1, C.2, C.6 and C.7 should be fully addressed. Point C.3 is only relevant for conference series starting before autumn 2012. Point C.4 is optional. Point C.5 should be fully addressed if no venue or Convention Bureau is involved in the proposal. If there is, please ask the venue or Convention Bureau to fill out Annex 1

In this section, you are asked to:

- Sub-point 1: Provide a summary overview of the proposed conference series structure. The key data section should provide a short summary which can be used for classification purposes.
- Sub-point 2: Provide feedback on the suggested way for organising the call for conference proposals.
- Sub-point 3: Describe the topic and scope of (inaugural) conference(s) scheduled before autumn 2012 (if there will be any).
- Sub-point 4: Provide information on the suggested conference format if you wish to.
- Sub-point 5: Inform us of your preferred location for the series.
- Sub-point 6-7: Describe the conference impact and your contribution to reaching the stakeholders and communities in terms of communication and advertising.

Part D: Funding and Support

Submitting this section is obligatory. Point D.1 needs to be addressed for the proposal to be processed. Points D.2-D.4 are optional and should be used to increase the cost-benefit ratio and strengthen the proposal.

In this section, you are asked to: provide a breakdown of the financial contribution of (each) partner.

Annex 1: Venue RFP

Submitting this annex is optional.

This annex is to be filled out by the conference venue or by the local convention bureau involved in the bid.

We highly recommend involving a venue partner in the preparation of this Letter of Intent and/or getting in touch with your local convention bureau, tourism office and local/regional authorities for support.

These organisations cannot only help with this section of the Letter of Intent but might also offer some incentives for attracting this series to your location. If a venue or a convention bureau is involved, they are requested to fill out this annex.

If you have a location, but no concrete venue in mind, please answer section C.5.

6) Timeline

9 July 2010	Eligible organisations are invited to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI), using the Partnership LOI template (downloadable from the 'call for partnerships' webpage)
19 Sept. 2010	Deadline for the Letter of Intent (LOI). Submission by Email to blipps@esf.org
24 Sept. 2010	Complete LOIs will be reviewed on eligibility and suitability by the ESF Conferences Unit. A suitability report will be issued for all eligible LOI. Full criteria and weighting see programme guide.
27 Sept. 2010	LOIs and suitability reports are transferred to scientific experts, appointed by the ESF Standing Committees (SC) for scientific evaluation. The experts will draft a funding recommendation to be endorsed by the SC.
15 Nov. 2010	On the basis of the suitability report and the funding recommendation, the ESF Chief Executive will invite selected proposers to submit a full proposal.
01 Dec. 2010	Deadline for the submission of full partnership proposals
Dec – Jan 2011	Review of full proposals, site inspections
February 2011	Selected proposers will be invited to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with ESF for conference series starting in 2012 and 2013.

7) Contact and Further Information

All information related to this call can be found on the ESF Research Conferences pages at: <http://www.esf.org/activities/esf-conferences/partnerships/callforpartnerships.html>

If you have any questions related to this call, please contact:

Benita Lipps

Acting Head of Unit, ESF Conferences

European Science Foundation | 149 avenue Louise, Box 14 | B-1050 Brussels

Tel.: +32 (0) 2533 2020 | Fax: +32 (0) 2538 8486 | Email: blipps@esf.org