Hosting the 4th ECSA conference in 2022

Introduction

Hosting an ECSA conference is a fantastic opportunity to bring citizen science into focus in your organisation and country. It brings recognition to your work, attracts international visitors to your city, and supports the thriving citizen science community in Europe and beyond.

ECSA conferences are a celebration of the citizen science community, a networking and partnership-building opportunity, and a biannual highlight in the citizen science calendar. The ECSA General Assembly also takes place at our conferences; this is the primary route through which ECSA members legally make decisions and influence our direction as an association.

We aim to hold our conference and General Assembly in a different European country each time, and good connections and access to the venue are important to ensure our members can attend easily. Previous ECSA conferences have been held in Geneva (2018) and Berlin (2016), and in Brussels (General Assembly 2019). The next ECSA conference will be held in Trieste, Italy, in May 2020.

Call for proposals

We are currently welcoming proposals from ECSA members to host our next conference in 2022, and General Assembly in 2021 (see the separate call for this). If you would like to host an ECSA conference, please read the information below carefully, and prepare a proposal which meets all of the requirements. Proposals for hosting the 2022 ECSA conference can be submitted to ECSA headquarters at ecsa-admin@mfn.berlin until **4 May 2020.** All proposals that meet the requirements will be considered by the ECSA Executive and Board of Directors, and we are grateful to all members who offer to support us in this way You will be informed of the results within three weeks of the closing date.

Bidding process

Bids to host an ECSA conference are called for approximately two years before the event, to allow sufficient time for decision-making, planning and fundraising. Where possible, this will be extended to three years to enable overlap with the organisers of the previous conference and ensure continuity and the sharing of lessons learned.

The call to host a conference is open to any ECSA member. The announcement is posted on the ECSA website and sent via email to the ECSA members mailing list, as well as via our newsletter and social media accounts.

Conference requirements and logistics

The ECSA conference is typically a two-day event, often with additional days before or after for Working Group meetings, side events, field trips and public activities. The ECSA conference is attended by up to 450 people and includes several parallel sessions, so venues must be able to accommodate this.

We aim to keep registration fees as low as possible to reduce barriers to attending. As a result, conference hosts are expected to fundraise for the conference's running costs. It is expected that up to 10% of tickets will be available at reduced rates for those who cannot afford full conference fees. Funds raised should be used to cover the costs of the conference and its organisation. Any amount that exceeds these costs is split equally between ECSA and the host organisation.

ECSA conferences are held in English, although concessions can be made for some sessions to be held in the local language. Conference hosts should also plan to make the content (e.g. keynote presentations) as accessible as possible to online-attending delegates, for example through live streaming, social media and other means.

The conference organisation should align with ECSA's evolving environmental and safe space policies. An inclusiveness policy is being worked on for future events.

The following sections outline in detail what is required of teams bidding to host the ECSA conference, and the support ECSA will provide. Information about past conferences may also be useful, and can be found at www.ecsa-conference.eu.

Expectations of the host organisation

The bidding group has responsibility for all logistical and physical arrangements for the conference. A Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up between ECSA and the successful host organisation, covering the below arrangements.

The host organisation commits to undertaking the following tasks:
- hire or assign a conference organiser (or an alternative system) to facilitate project management and control
- identify and secure a venue with a capacity for at least 450 delegates, and with five or more breakout spaces for parallel sessions
- secure contracts for catering, security, technical support and other goods and services as required
- prepare a detailed event budget, and lead and coordinate all fundraising activities.
- bear sole responsibility for all financial aspects of the conference: the host organisation commits to bearing any financial risks, and should provide a letter of support alongside this proposal document detailing their commitment to meeting these expenses through fundraising and other means
- manage all registrations and payments
- organise inclusive and gender-balanced keynote speakers as suggested by the ECSA Conference Working Group

- develop a communications strategy and produce communications/publicity materials for distribution by all ECSA members, supported by the ECSA Communications Officer and in accordance with the ECSA social media policy and ECSA style guide
- update and maintain the existing conference website (www.ecsa-conference.eu), which should be available for at least three months after the conference
- provide information on hotels and associated events/activities
- prepare and publicise the call for proposals
- assess proposals, with support from the ECSA Conference Working Group and ECSA headquarters
- inform all applicants about the acceptance or rejection of their proposal
- develop a high-quality conference programme based on inputs from the ECSAConference Working Group, including social events for participants as well as public events
- coordinate with neighbouring events as necessary
- maintain close collaboration with ECSA headquarters and the ECSA Board of Directors, by sharing meeting minutes, providing monthly updates on progress, and highlighting any significant risks or opportunities as they arise
- document all aspects of conference planning, budgeting and delivery, including recording aspects of the conference via video and photography
- provide a written report post-event, covering all aspects of the conference (statistics, comments, lessons learned and recommendations for future conferences, etc.)
- provide a list of all registrants with their email addresses to ECSA headquarters immediately after the conference.

Support from ECSA

Host organisations will work closely with the ECSA headquarters, Executives and Board of Directors to plan the conference. This will be conducted through the ECSA Conference Working Group, which comprises the host/conference organiser, at least one member of the ECSA Board of Directors, one member of ECSA headquarters (typically the ECSA Communications Officer), plus additional ECSA members. Wherever possible, this group will also include past ECSA conference hosts. ECSA's Communications Officer will support the conference hosts with planning and executing a publicity strategy for the conference.

The ECSA Conference Working Group will meet on a regular basis, and has the strategic lead on all aspects of the conference. It commits to undertaking the following tasks:
- support the host organisation to develop a comprehensive project plan and timeline
- define the conference theme
- support the host organisation to develop a fundraising strategy and facilitate fundraising activities, including suggestions for potential sponsors and making introductions where appropriate
- define the conference programme and suggest different session formats, including innovative online/social media formats for those who cannot attend in person
- provide ideas for keynote speakers and make introductions where appropriate
- plan the call for proposals, support publicity for this, and contribute to the assessment and selection of proposals
- approve the final conference programme

- support all aspects of conference planning
- moderate conference sessions as required
- coordinate, write and review the conference proceedings.

What to include in your proposal

Proposals to host an ECSA conference should:
- demonstrate the capacity and experience of the hosts and local organisers to run a major international event, including maintaining a website, publicising the event, arranging venues, taking payments, developing an innovative programme, and organising attractive social events
- present a draft budget outlining the main costs and the anticipated income for the conference (please include the major items of expenditure, main sources of income, estimated registration fees and a fundraising plan)
- include a letter of support for the bidding organisation detailing their commitment to meeting the conference expenses through fundraising and other means.

Your proposal **must** include the following information:
1. Name of main contact
2. Name of host organisation / address
3. Contact details: email address / telephone number
4. Proposed date of conference (or a date range, if flexible - to be discussed with ECSA Executives)
5. Venue address and description (including technical resources available, for example sound systems, projectors, WiFi)
6. The capacity of the main room, and the number and capacity of available breakout spaces
7. Whether you are proposing to coordinate the conference alongside other events in the same venue/city (if so, please provide details)
8. The names of the person(s) leading organisation of the logistics of the conference, and who will support this, including:
    a. whether you will employ someone to organise the conference, contract this out, or undertake this within existing job roles
    b. what plans are in place if key staff cannot fulfil their roles for any reason
9. A draft budget outlining the main costs and the anticipated income for the conference, and including:
    a. the major items of expenditure
    b. the main sources of income
    c. estimated registration fees
10. How you will support people to participate if they cannot, for various reasons, attend in person (e.g. discounted delegate fees, bursaries/sponsorship, online discussions, virtual conference, live streaming video, social media , live tweeting, etc.)
11. The main risks, and how you will manage these.

The ECSA Executives would like to express their thanks to all teams bidding to host the upcoming conferences for their commitment to and support for ECSA.

Prof. Johannes Vogel, Ph.D.

ECSA Executive Chair, on behalf of the ECSA Executives and Board of Directors
Berlin, February 2020