

INF Congress Guidelines

1) Call for proposals to host and organise the International Congress of Neuroendocrinology (ICN meeting).

1.1 The purpose of the ICN is to provide opportunity for all of the members of the INF to come together to exchange information about recent discoveries in neuroendocrinology and their application, identifying new frontiers, to learn from experts, to find openings for career development, to do these things both in formally structured sessions but also in informal gatherings, and to reinforce the worldwide college of neuroendocrinology.

1.2 To allow the INF Council to preview proposals, these will be invited one year before the decision on the venue is to be made. The initial review of the letters of intent will be at the Council meeting in fall the year before the upcoming ICN. The deadline for the submission of full proposals will be approximately three months before the Council meeting that makes the final decision after the hearing of the applicants and their delegation; typically this Council meeting will be at the ICN but also occur via remote means such as Zoom.

The timing of the ICN will be on the recommendation of the LOC and POC, subject to approval by the INF Council.

1.3 Proposals should meet the following requirements, which will be circulated with the call:

- i) Availability of a Congress Centre: that can accommodate >1000 (though the number of registrants may be from 500 to 1200); can run at least four parallel sessions (each with state-of-the-art audio-visual and remote access facilities) and posters, with small meeting rooms; is available on dates that fit with academic schedules, in a good weather season;
- ii) support from a local professional congress organiser is available;
- iii) costs to registrants must be in line with previous ICN meetings;
- iv) prospect of organisers raising funding;
- v) nearby economical accommodation;
- vi) easy and economical access by air from around the world;
- vii) a sufficient number of named local neuroendocrinologists committed to the ICN;

viii) good opportunities for social and cultural activities.

ix) written support is received from the INF member group or region that will act as “host”

2) POC.

2.1 The POC Chair is elected by the INF Council, with a remit to produce a cohesive scientific programme that is based on scientific excellence, recognises major new advances including those in “bordering” fields of science or of generic importance, promotes a different cohort of speakers from the previous ICN meetings, is aimed to satisfy the interests of the INF membership (as reflected in the geographic distribution of its members, and their varied scientific interests).

2.2 To this end the POC should reflect the composition of the INF Council, but its members will not also be INF Council members (except the Chair and Executive who are *ex officio* members), and its size will be the minimum compatible with this objective.

2.3 The POC members will be selected from nominees (up to 3) made by the INF Council constituencies, and from other bodies not members of the INF (e.g., European Federation of Endocrine Societies; Dutch Endo-Neuro Group), and selected by the INF Executive on the recommendation of the POC Chair: an important factor will be ensuring representation for the widest range of subjects within neuroendocrinology.

2.4 The LOC Chair will be *ex officio* a member of the POC.

2.5 The POC must work in a timely manner, according to a schedule agreed with the LOC, and approved by the INF, and its proposals will be subject to approval by the INF Council.

2.6 The POC shall conduct its business principally by electronic communication but may meet if this can be arranged at minimal cost to the INF, with the INF Executive’s prior approval.

2.7 The POC Chair is expected to attend INF Executive and Council meetings as requested, with financial assistance from the INF, to report on progress, and to present any concerns that the POC may have.

2.8 The POC Chair may request, in advance from the INF Executive, a subvention for reasonable office costs, and for travel expenses if approved by the INF Executive in advance.

2.9 The members of the POC will be named in the ICN meetings Programme and associated websites, and should be willing to collectively endorse the eventual programme. POC members will be expected to support the ICN actively to the extent of attending themselves and encouraging others to do so.

3) LOC.

3.1 The LOC Chair takes responsibility to organise the ICN on behalf of both the INF and the Host Society or Regional Group. The LOC will work in a timely manner, to a schedule agreed with the POC Chair and the INF.

3.2 The LOC Chair shall form a LOC to carry out this commitment and will base the scientific programme on the decisions of the POC (as approved by the INF Council).

3.3 The LOC will also be responsible for ensuring all arrangements for accommodation for the ICN, including for the participants, for preparing Abstracts for participants, setting up a website, for social activities, making provision for INF business meetings (and similar meetings of INF constituent societies and groups) during the ICN.

3.4 The LOC will be responsible for drawing up a budget for the ICN, which is intended to yield a profit as guided by the INF Council. The budget will be subject to approval by the INF Executive and Council. The INF will then assume, on the basis of this budget, responsibility for profit or loss, as determined from audited accounts prepared by the LOC; but the INF may seek to offset its liability with other parties offering written guarantees. In this case loss would be shared between the INF and other guarantors, and a pro rata share of any profit would be

offered to guarantors. The INF may also decide to offer an ex gratia payment from its share of any profit to the Host Society/Region.

Budgeting process:

3.4.1 The budget should be built on a conservative target number of registrants, in consultation with and as advised by the INF. This target must be kept under review, in consultation with the INF, and take into account factors that may affect reaching it during the whole ICN planning period. The LOC should establish a mechanism for continual external review of the budget.

3.4.2 As a corollary, the budget must be flexible and responsive (both upwards and downwards) to cope with greater or lesser numbers of registrants than expected, with identified critical points for review: especially *in the light of the number of Abstracts submitted by the* the submission of Abstract deadline and the *and the number of registrants by the* deadline for reduced registration. Alternative budgets should be planned on the basis of upper and lower limits of numbers of registrants.

3.4.3 Priorities for commitment of expenditure must be established, to realise the purpose of the ICN in 1.1.

3.4.4 Competitiveness (value for money) should be assured by obtaining competitive bids for the provision of services for the ICN.

3.4.5 The administrative costs per registrant and the venue cost per registrant will be among the parameters used to evaluate value for money.

3.4.6 Flexibility will be built in from the start of planning by, for instance:

3.4.6.1 booking a venue in which accommodation for scientific sessions can be scaled up or down, with sessions planned either in parallel or three abreast depending on number of registrants;

3.4.6.2 making minimal baseline commitments to provide registrants with refreshments and meals;

3.4.6.3 making minimal definite offers to speakers of financial support, i.e. waived registration fee and an indication that support for travel and accommodation may be given if the budget allows, but without any guarantee; even so, it must be recognised that the larger the proportion

of invited speakers to fee-paying registrants, the greater the proportion of marginal costs for speakers that falls on each of the fee-payers;

3.4.6.4 offering or agreeing to meet costs of any INF Officers to attend the ICN shall be strictly limited as agreed with the INF;

3.4.6.5 arranging social activities provisionally if to be funded from within the budget; or on a full-cost basis if to be paid for as an extra by ICN participants, but committed at a late stage to avoid cancellation penalties;

3.4.6.6 a contingency sum must be included.

3.4.7 The INF will guarantee a specific budget it has approved that is built and maintained on the above principles against loss (see 3.4); as a condition of this guarantee the ICN organisers shall periodically inform (as mutually agreed) the INF Executive of the standing of the budget, and projections;

3.4.8 Fund-raising through sponsorship should be sought, but this must not involve personal commitment or contractual arrangement of any of the organisers with a sponsor; the INF will endeavour to establish standing sponsorship of ICN by industrial concerns with particular interests in the field of neuroendocrinology (this aspect may be a particular responsibility of the proposed INF Strategic Action Committee);

3.4.9 Income from commercial exhibitors is welcome, but this must be assured to produce a clear profit on a real full costs basis. It should be noted that raising income from these sources can be a considerable effort for relatively little reward, and may put restraints on the choice of venue that indirectly increase ICN costs.

3.5 The budget shall include (with all relevant taxes):

3.5.1 Costs of venue hire, audio-visual facilities and professional services, including publicity and secretariat, security and insurance.

3.5.2 Costs of publishing the ICN Abstracts.

3.5.3 Costs of essential local transport during the ICN.

3.5.4 The indicative, but not promised, costs of invited speakers' travel and accommodation (within limits agreed with the INF).

3.5.5 Costs of ICN social and cultural activities (which may be budgeted as costs to registrants additional to the registration fee).

3.5.6 Costs of any LOC meetings, although the business of the LOC shall mainly be conducted electronically.

3.5.7 Reasonable expenses of specified INF Officers as agreed with the INF incurred in attending the ICN.

3.5.8 Income from Registration fees (set to give advantage to INF members, and graduate students).

3.5.9 Income from sponsors (including an INF subvention, as specified by the INF).

3.5.10 The LOC will open a bank account for all receipts related to the ICN and will be responsible for handling all matters concerning receipts and payments, and will carry all liability for such transactions. The INF shall not be liable for any indebtedness incurred by the LOC or Host Society, except as in 3.4.7.

3.6 The LOC shall be primarily responsible for publicising the ICN and for raising sponsorship from industrial and other sources. However, the INF Council and POC will co-operate with the LOC in publicising the ICN and in raising sponsorship.

3.7 The INF will make available its databases to publicise the ICN, but strictly solely for this purpose and not to be transferred to another party, and the LOC will make its databases of contacts for publicity available to the INF on the same basis.

3.8 The INF recognises that success of the ICN depends on continual positive interaction among the LOC, POC and the INF Executive. The POC and LOC Chairs undertake to report to the INF Executive and/or Council as requested, and conversely may request the INF Executive and/or Council to discuss problems or consider revision of agreed plans, or to resolve disputes between the POC and LOC. Decisions of the INF Executive shall be final. The LOC and INF Executive should agree on a timetable of “milestone” meetings or electronic conferences on budget plans.

3.9 The INF will provide financial assistance for the LOC Chair to attend meetings of the INF Executive or Council to which the LOC Chair is invited.

4) Geoffrey Harris Memorial Lecture. The LOC will include the Lecture in the programme. The INF Executive will nominate the Lecturer, after consultation with the POC and LOC and inviting up to three names from the POC and LOC jointly, with brief explanations for the names proposed. The INF will provide an honorarium for the lecturer, whose costs will be included by the LOC in the ICN budget (and which costs will be borne by the INF). The names of previous Harris Memorial Lecturers, and year of presentation, will be noted in the ICN booklet for delegates [see note #1 below].

5) Travel Awards. The INF may assist certain groups to attend the ICN, through an advertised competitive scheme. The INF Council will set up an Awards Committee to manage the scheme.

6) Invitations to Speakers. Invitations to speakers will be issued in the joint names of, and in the full knowledge of the President of the INF, the POC Chair and the LOC Chair. Sending of so-signed invitations and receipt of replies and all correspondence directly concerned with the ICN will be the responsibility of the LOC.

7) Acknowledgement of sponsorship. The Congress shall be called 'The International Neuroendocrine Federation (INF) 11th [et seq] International Congress of Neuroendocrinology'. Other sponsors may be listed in ICN literature, but less prominently than 'INF' or 'International Neuroendocrine Federation', and not in association with the Congress title, except that the name of the host society or region may be given prominence beneath the above title.

The names of the constituent societies in the INF shall be listed in ICN literature.

Publicity material for the ICN shall be subject to approval by the INF Executive and Council.

8) Role of the INF President. The LOC will programme an opening address by the INF President, and include in the ICN publicity literature and the Abstracts messages of welcome from the INF President.

9) Publications.

9.1 The LOC is expected to seek an economical means of producing the ICN Abstracts. The means of publication, e.g. as a journal supplement, will be subject to prior approval by the INF Council.

9.2 The LOC may wish to arrange publication of papers from the ICN. The means of publication shall be subject to prior approval by the INF Council.

10) Duration of responsibility.

10.1 The responsibilities of the POC Chair will end at the conclusion of the ICN. The POC Chair must submit a report to the INF Executive at this time, commenting on any matters about the Congress, particularly where the POC Chair wishes to recommend changes in procedures.

10.2 The responsibilities of the LOC will end once the accounts for the ICN have been audited and agreed by the INF Executive and Council, and any monies due to the INF (or of monies due to the organisers by the INF) have been paid. The LOC Chair is invited to submit a report to the INF Executive at this time, commenting on any matters about the ICN, particularly where the LOC Chair wishes to recommend changes in procedures.

11) Expectations of commitment from INF members.

11.1 Regional or Society meetings. INF constituent societies and regional groups are expected not to organise their scientific meetings on dates that compete with the ICN. An exception is where a Society or group can organise a meeting at a place and time that will complement the ICN. To this end it is essential that INF Constituent Societies keep the INF (via the Secretary) informed of their plans for meetings: thereby also gaining publicity for them.

11.2 Financial Support. INF constituent societies and regional groups should encourage their members to attend the ICN: both by advertising it effectively, and by applying their resources to give financial assistance particularly to trainees.

12) Acceptance. These guidelines were approved by the Council of the International Neuroendocrine Federation at its meeting on 25th October 2004. This approval was on the understanding that matters of detail might be negotiated between the INF, POC and LOC.

The POC and LOC Chairs are considered to agree to work to these guidelines when agreeing to act as Chairs.

The following principles will guide their actions in organising the Congress according to the Guidelines:

- **The Organisers of an ICN are acting on behalf of, and in the name of the INF, and are acting subject to the approval of the INF Council.**
- **The Congress will entail no personal costs upon the Organisers, nor will any financial benefit result to the organisers personally. *The ICN is expected to make a profit, to be returned to the INF [see 3.4 for disposal of profit]; sponsorship in exchange for personal commitments in any form, or for specific scientific programme changes, must be refused.***
- **No money may be paid or expenditure promised without the explicit authority of the INF Treasurer, except that the Treasurer may delegate authority to spend part of the ICN budget within agreed limits, to the local organisers without reference to him.**

All records of moneys received by the ICN and paid out by the ICN must be fully open and subject to independent audit if called for at any stage. The same individual should not be responsible for both control of the budget and commitment of expenditure. All gifts in kind (dinner tickets, waived registration, free accommodation etc) must be detailed and approved.

- **Responsibility for all key decisions must be distributed as widely as possible. *In particular, the LOC and INF Council have a collective responsibility for the planning of the ICN, and a duty to interrogate key decisions and their financial implications. The basis of planning should be as open as possible to ensure that decisions are taken with greatest awareness of all prevailing circumstances.***

The success of the ICN is the collective responsibility of all involved, including the speakers, the POC and the INF Council, who are expected to raise awareness of the **ICN** through their own individual efforts, in particular by attending themselves, by encouraging others, especially in their own labs to attend, and to help enable others to attend.

Notes

#1. Harris Lecture. This commemorates Geoffrey Harris, the ‘father’ of neuroendocrinology. The honour recognises major contributions by the lecturer to the advancement of knowledge in neuroendocrinology.

Previous lecturers are, in chronological order: CH Sawyer (USA); R Guillemin (USA); B Donovan (UK); B Flerko (Hungary); SM McCann (USA); J Meites (USA); E Knobil (USA); K Catt (USA); W Vale (USA); T Hokfelt (Sweden); S Nakanishi (Japan); L Martini (Italy); B Halasz (Hungary); D deWied (Netherlands); M Palkovits (Hungary); MG Rosenfeld (USA); RP Millar (UK); I Clarke (Aus); T Plant (USA).