

Concept for future joint conferences between FESPB and EPSO

18 June 2012

The goals:

To organize a top scientific bi-annual conference that should function on a self-financing basis that addresses state of the art and future directions in plant biology research and education

- basic and applied plant biology
 - covers plant biology in its broadest sense, encompassing agriculture, forestry, horticulture, ecology, environmental biology etc.
 - includes science policy and plant science-based societal issues
- and include contributions from students, Post Docs, senior scientists and policy makers from across Europe and beyond.

The basic idea:

To organize a joint EPSO-FESPB conference of 3-5 days with the title:

**“Plant Biology Congress 20xx,
jointly organized by EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO,
City, dates”.**

The conference should be opened and closed jointly by representatives from the two organisations. The EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO conference will replace the separate EPSO and FESPB conferences. For the first joint conference, each organization will pay €20 000 as seed financing into an EPSO-FESPB conference account, half of which will be made available to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) one year before the first conference. The other half will serve as a back up for future conferences. Apart from the seed funding, the two organizations will give each a non-refundable amount of €5000 to the LOC for each conference. One year after the conference, the final budget has to be presented to the two organizations. The conference organizers are expected to return the seed amount (€ 20 000) to the EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO conference account for financing of future EPSO-FESPB conferences. Any further financial benefits accrued will be split into two equal parts, which will be transferred to the LOC of the past conference and to the joint EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO conference account for support grants for future conferences. The two boards will decide how much of the budget will be made available to the next LOC for support grants. The LOC will ensure that a minimum of 30 support grants will be provided to European PhD students and Post-Docs from Eastern European countries. Allocation of support grants will be decided by a joint EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO committee.

Conference fees will be offered for three general groups of participants – industry, academia and students. Reduced conference fees will be for members of EPSO and FESPB only. Two categories of early and late registration fees will be provided.

In general, the selection of conferences will be carried out 4 years in advance of the event upon consensual agreement between both organisations (see below). The selection will follow an open bidding procedure that closes 1 month before the EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO conference at which the offers will be presented.

It is envisaged that already the selection of the conference for 2016 should be based on this concept.

If any of the two organizations wants to end the agreement, it has to be announced before bids for a next conference are invited.

Step 1 - The bidding process:

- Any member from EPSO or from FESPB can offer to organize the conference
- A joint effort of the two at national level is highly recommended
- The bid includes the proposed location, the members of local organizing committee and a provisional financial plan, including information on the event (see below) as well as the venue and how the financial and public liability is covered (i.e. society, ministry, venue or others)
- Electronic versions of the bids will have to be provided to both organisations 1 month before the next EPSO-FESPB / FESPB-EPSO conference for consideration and comments / questions by the members of the two organisations.

- At the conference, the bids will be presented to the EPSO board and the FESPB council who will separately decide on a top 3 ranking list. In the event, that the EPSO board and the FESPB council arrive at different choices, the EPSO board and the FESPB executive committee will come together to arrive at a consensual decision. In the case that no appropriate bid is available, the bidding process will be reopened.

The local organizing committee:

- Should be composed of members from EPSO and FESPB from the hosting country, with a chair and a vice-chair (ideally one from EPSO and one from FESPB)
- Contacts and proposes an agency/professional conference organization to do the registrations and payments of fees of the participants, the conference website and abstract book, as well as organizing the reservations of hotel rooms, the social program and other conference-associated activities.

The preparation and carrying out of the conference:

The local organizing committee:

- Continues its work with the agency/professional conference organization
- Carries out communication and attracts sponsorship. As communication with the outside world and sponsorship are crucial for success, these will be supported by EPSO and FESPB. To ensure press releases, articles, adverts, flyers etc. are representing correctly the goals and principles of both organization (such as main activities, membership, involvement in the conference), any communication to the outside needs to be checked by one person on behalf of FESPB and one on behalf of EPSO – the two contacts will be provided to the LOC.

Step2:

The scientific organizing committee:

- Will be composed of members appointed by the FESPB and EPSO boards and include representatives from the local organizing committee, with a chair and co-chair agreed by both FESPB and EPSO
- Proposes the sessions (scientific, policy, science and society)
- Proposes speakers and a reserve list of speakers to cover any withdrawals or decline of the invitations.

Step 3:

The scientific organizing committee presents the scientific plan of the meeting to the EPSO and FESPB boards for discussion.

Step 4:

Invitations to chairs / speakers / sponsors are based on joint invitations from the two organizations. Invitations are sent out by the local organizing committee on behalf of EPSO and FESPB.

Step 5:

The local organizing committee implements the proposal and is responsible for the running of the conference at the proposed location. Any questions the two boards might have prior to, during or after the conference, will be the responsibility of the chair and vice-chair of the local organizing committee.

Step 6 - Post conference issues:

One year after the conference, at the latest, the final budget has to be presented to both organizations. Any accrued financial benefits will be split into two equal parts, which will be transferred to the LOC of the then passed conference and to a joint EPSO-FESPB account for support grants for future conferences. The list of non-local sponsors should be provided to the EPSO and FESPB to provide to future organisers of the joint conference.