

Proposal for an annual meeting format (quality and structure)

This document was written to come to a uniform structure for the ESPID annual meeting, fulfilling the goals defined in the strategic plan (goal N°3): *To excel the content and structure of ESPID Annual Meetings in order to strengthen even further its position in the PID field worldwide*". Our objective is to establish general principles and guidelines for the annual ESPID meeting organizers.

1. Overall structure of the meeting

a. Duration

The ESPID Board previously discussed if the duration of the meeting should be increased because of the large number of participants and the abundance of scientific material to be presented. In addition, the ESPID Board recently decided that the balance between pre-congress symposia (two days in Milan 2013) and the Scientific Programme of the ESPID Meeting (two days in Milan 2013) should not be extended to facilitate more pre-congress symposia. Nevertheless, research and networks within ESPID are still growing and require space and time for their members to meet during ESPID.

From the previous meetings we learned that the number of presentations and sessions has greatly increased, mainly in the scientific part of the meeting. The total number of scientific sessions (plenaries, symposia, oral sessions, interactive case, and literature review) was 7, 13, 15, 16 and 19 in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

The ESPID Board comes to the conclusion that the current duration; i.e. Tuesday morning until Friday (Saturday for the Research Masterclasses) evening should not be increased further. For most attending professionals, it is already a long period of time to be absent from work. Moreover, there are extra costs associated with a time length increase both for ESPID (venue rental, meals etc) and for participants (stay). The meeting should therefore be optimally organised within the existing timeframe..

Despite the economic situation worldwide, ESPID has been relatively successful in acquiring sponsoring from the pharmaceutical industry. In 2013 Milan a record number of 10 pre-congress symposia are scheduled. The ESPID Board is confident that we will be able to sustain a high level of support of the next few years.

b. Integration of the ESPID Meeting with Industry sponsored symposia (IIS)

The ESPID Board has discussed the possibility to integrate the ISS within the ESPID Meeting. At this stage, there is no demand from the industry to drastically change the structure. Attendance to their sessions is high and feedback is good. The current partnership with companies works well and the two days offered for sponsored symposia should be maintained. The schedule cannot be shorter as there is a need to provide all companies with requested plenary symposia.

Importantly, the ESPID Board believes that no parallel sessions should be proposed for the IIS, as there is an ESPID agreement that companies should be able to address to all attendees. However, the pre-congress industry part should not exceed the duration of ESPID meeting itself and duration should therefore not be extended over two days.

Recently, one of the pharmaceutical companies requested the opportunity to organize an educational symposium, using a unrestricted grant, within the actual ESPID meeting. The Board is currently considering this request and the conditions necessary to comply with rules and regulations.

An important strength of ESPID scientific meeting is the fact that attendance remains high even for the last session on the Friday, as shown by the Figures (750, 915, and 845) from the last three annual meetings.

The ESPID Board is aware of the increasing importance to comply with guidelines such as for example those from the EFPIA. As part of these guidelines the Friday Night Network Dinner cannot be sponsored any longer by ESPID funding, funding associated with the Meeting, or by the ESPID Foundation. The ESPID has a Code of Conduct in place for the (pharmaceutical) companies that sponsor the Annual Meeting. Adherence to this Code of Conduct is carefully monitored by Kenes and by the ESPID Board.

2. Type of sessions, scientific content

The ESPID Board has discussed how we can increase free communications, maintain high level plenaries and symposia, organization of an interactive case session and a literature review session, offer symposia to other society (for example PIDS), the Best of ESPID and Bill Marshall Award Lecture, all within a limited time frame of two days. At the same time, we strongly feel that the scientific content of the meeting needs to be diversified in order to meet the requirements of our growing society and cover a broad array of topics relevant to PID. The increasing number of sessions and invited speakers, necessitates a careful view of the costs.

a. Type of sessions

With the increasing number of participants, it has become necessary to organize more and more parallel sessions. However, keeping outstanding plenaries is important to cover topics of interest to all PID specialists and other ESPID attendees.

In the past five years we have seen a trend for a growing number of good quality abstracts, that worth to be presented in a more interactive way instead of a poster presentation. This is the reason the Board has initiated the concept of ePosters in 2011. ePosters are short oral presentations (7 minutes) in which five PowerPoint slides are presented followed by a short discussion. This concept has become very popular as it enables an estimated 170 presentation during the ESPID Annual Meeting. In the 2013 Milan meeting we will offer online access to the ePosters during the meeting.

In the 2013 Milan meeting we will reinitiate the concept of Poster Moderated Walks (PMW). Some of the best posters have been selected for this event, which will take place during lunch on Thursday and Friday. No parallel activities are allowed at these times in order to maximize attendance. The PMW's will be chaired by senior PID specialists.

The ESPID Board has formalized a standard for all ESPID Annual Meetings (See appendix). This standard needs to be adhered to by the local organizer of the ESPID Annual Meeting. This ensures continuous quality of the ESPID Annual Meeting. To further quality insurance the ESPID Board has decided to provide the members with the opportunity to score all presentations via an online tool as well as an app.

To summarize the following components are mandatory for the ESPID Annual Meeting:

- (1) 10-14 meet the professor (MP) sessions (5-7 on each day). It is important to limit the number of participants to keep these sessions interactive and to continue with the tickets system to limit attendance. Each MP must be chaired by two experts: one local and one international
- (2) Two plenary sessions on specific PID topics/breaking news with outstanding speakers. One of the plenary sessions should be placed as the last session on the Friday afternoon to attract a large audience. The other session should ideally be placed at the beginning of the meeting on the Thursday.
- (3) Six symposia: two sets of three parallel symposia.
- (4) One interactive case session and one literature review in parallel with oral sessions.
- (5) Four to six oral sessions: two sets of two parallel sessions, each preceded by a 20 minutes state of the art mini-lecture to introduce the session. The three best oral presentations will be awarded €100 and presented as very short reports in PIDJ or on ESPID website. Presentations must be scored by the chairs.
- (6) A minimum of 12 e-posters sessions. Presenters who are selected for e-poster presentation do not have to bring a poster, but must supply their material electronically on site or prior to the meeting. The five slides prepared by the presenting author must be sent in advance so the chairs can prepare the session. There must be one local and one international chair. The three best e-poster presentations will be awarded €100 and presented as very short reports in PIDJ or on ESPID website. Presentations must be scored by the chairs.
- (7) Regular poster presentation: As there is a need for poster presentations and interaction with the presenter, ESPID maintains a so-called regular poster presentation during the Annual Meeting. In addition the best posters are selected

for the Poster Moderated Walk.. The three best posters will be awarded €100 and presented as very short reports in PIDJ or on ESPID website.

All material from the meeting is made available online on the ESPID website and an increasing number of materials can be accessed online during the meeting..

b. Scientific content

The ESPID Board has decided that the Annual Meeting **should not have a specifically defined theme**; there should be room for many of the various facets of PID. We must meet the expectations of a broad audience of PID specialists, clinicians interested in PID, researchers, epidemiologists, basic scientists, microbiologists, etc.

The ESPID Board feels it is important that clinical research (patient-oriented), translational research (disease-oriented), and basic research are represented in the meeting. Specific scientific areas, that as a whole are underrepresented, deserve more attention in the meeting such as for example tropical diseases, parasitic infections, infections by HIV, etc. The local organizing committee and the international scientific committee are stimulated to expand the spectrum of topics presented at the ESPID Meeting. This ensures an increasing number of PID specialists will become interested and involved in ESPID.

The ESPID Board is currently in the process of evaluating which topics were covered in the previous five meetings and which abstract topics were most popular and which were underrepresented.

3. Organising committee: local organizing committee and international scientific committee: LOC, ISC

It is the responsibility of the local organizing committee to develop the programme in close collaboration with the international committee. The programme has to be approved by the ESPID Board. The Board will mandate two representatives to liaise with the LOC, and the ISC. The LOC is responsible, in close collaboration with the Kenes representatives, for the choice of the venues for the ESPID dinner, the network dinner, and the programme of the opening ceremony. The final decision on all these issues is with the ESPID Board.

The ESPID Board will install an ISC for the ESPID Annual Meeting. The procedure is in development.

4. Research masterclasses and research networks

As from the 2013 Milan meeting, a separate ESPID Research Masterclass Committee has been established. The organization of the ERMCM is well-documented, and the ESPID Board has approved of the guidelines developed by the committee.

Research networking activity has seen continuous growth in the past few years. The Research Committee will play an important role in the facilitation of network

development. The ESPID Board is currently involved in discussion with PENTA/PENTi to explore possibilities for further collaboration.

Network meetings should take place in parallel with industry sponsored symposia on the Tuesday and Wednesday, and also in the morning in parallel with the meet the professor sessions. Meetings taking place on the Tuesday and Wednesday should be closed as they should not compete with industry symposia for audience. The schedule of these meetings should be announced by the secretariat to all ESPID members.

5. Abstract Review and Scoring system

This subject remains an important point for discussion in the Board. The following issues have been addressed:

1. Decision on abstract categories
2. Review of all abstracts by three reviewers
3. Abstract scoring system
4. Strict adherence to deadlines for submission, no automatic extension of the deadline
5. Evaluation of abstracts by LOC and ISC

Issues that need to be discussed further:

1. Scoring of abstracts by specialists versus generalists
2. How to select good reviewers
3. What to do with discrepancies in the scoring of an abstract
4. Is it acceptable to have two reviewers instead of three?
5. Procedure surrounding the Late Breaker submissions needs to be clarified
6. Criteria for selection of orals, poster discussion sessions, and poster moderated walks

a. Scoring system

Reviewers are provided with a rating system for the abstract review process. They will rate the abstracts according to:

- Originality
- Quality of study design
- Clinical or scientific relevance
- How well are the conclusions supported by results
- Presentation of the data in the abstract

According to their rating of the previous abstract characteristics, the reviewers are asked to score the abstract as follows:

ABSTRACT SCORE (tick box)		If Score 3,4,5: Prefer (tick)
5	Excellent	Oral or poster
4	Very good	Oral or poster
3	Good	Oral or poster
2	Adequate	
1	Insufficient	

The ESPID Board decided that a cut-off point for acceptance/rejection is essential and that maximum of 15% of the abstracts probably can be rejected.. An average score lower than 2.0, with three reviews, results in automatic rejection.

Proposed rejection reasons

- Poor use of language and grammar
- Incorrect methodology
- Data do not support conclusions
- Insufficient or no data
- Out of the scope of ESPID
- Previously published
- Promotional in nature