How to organise a scientific event?

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Events are an important tool in forest researchers' communication and training, and they have a significant role in the dissemination of research results. Furthermore, they provide a meeting place for policy-makers, researchers and other interest groups to discuss conclusions from research, information needs and future research priorities. The community has to be able to trust that the decisions made are based on solid and objective knowledge. Events are one way to facilitate the decision making.

After the decision of arranging scientific forest / environment related event is made, there may not be enough practical knowledge within the organising group or not enough time to search for such information. This publication is compiled to help out in such situations. A short first-aid handbook with templates to different situations may be useful both for those preparing their first scientific meeting and for those who already know what to expect from the process.

There are many ways of arranging events. This publication is based on a compilation of the procedures and templates developed over the years and applied at the European Forest Institute. During its 12-year history EFI has been involved annually in an average of 12-14 events, half of them EFI has coordinated or carried out the actual practical arrangements (reservations, registrations, contacts with the speakers and participants, etc.). The meetings have been rather small scale, the average number of participants being 70-80 coming usually from 15-25 countries.

The intention of the publication is not to cover the whole event industry, but it is giving only some tools for dealing with the practical arrangements. They have been of help for us at EFI in arranging successful events. There are some topics which will not be dealt with, i.e. the bidding procedure to get an event arranged in a certain place or by a certain organisation, photographing, media contacts in detail, marketing in detail, etc.. Because the publication is concentrating only on practicalities, topics such as how to choose a good time, title, develop aims, etc. are not dealt in depth. Also, because there are procedures which can be automated with different existing computer software, not detailed description on for instance how to keep up information on registrations or what to do with submitted abstracts is given. However, the templates have been developed in a way that they are easy to modify as needed, for instance, in correspondence with the authors, speakers, participants, etc. whether an automated or a manual system is used.

For developing and learning more about event industry and organising events there are numerous good books, websites and CDs available, which include very accurate and detailed knowledge on how to manage events and their practical arrangements. To help to begin the search some website links are included into Chapter 1. Literature, links, abbreviations.

The event industry is an area which is developing fast and constantly. New technologies and new formats of meetings are coming up and applied. Therefore, the author welcomes comments and suggestions on the future updates of this publication.

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