

Guidelines for the ESA Conference

March 13, 2017

This document contains guidelines for the ESA conference. In preparing these guidelines, we have striven to be comprehensive. However, the ESA Steering Committee (SC) Chair should be consulted on all matters arising during the organization of ESA conferences where advice or policy decisions are needed. Throughout this document, SC stands for Steering Committee, PC for Program Committee and OC for Organizing Committee.

1 Bids for ESA

1.1 Notification of a Proposal

The site of $ESA(x + 1)$ is decided at the Business Meeting of $ESA(x - 1)$. Bidders for $ESA(x + 1)$ should notify the ESA SC Chair of their intention to present a proposal at the Business Meeting of $ESA(x - 1)$ at least two months before the start date of $ESA(x - 1)$. The bidder(s) should also notify the organizers of $ESA(x - 1)$ of any equipment needed for their presentation. It is also expected that the chosen organizing site for $ESA(x + 1)$ makes a short presentation during the Business Meeting of $ESA(x)$, reporting on the status of the organization of the conference.

1.2 Presentation of a Proposal

The presentation for each candidate location should *not* be too long (5 to 10 minutes). The bidder(s) should be aware that in the presentation they should not say what they might do but what they will actually do. The presentation should mainly focus on providing the following information:

- Name(s) of the Organizing Committee (OC) Chair(s).
- Specific dates of the meeting — ESA should take place around the first week of September.
- Features of the proposed location: i.e., transportation (including airport(s) and major airlines), communications, expected temperature, etc.
- Expected registration fee (see also the budget issues below) and cost of accommodation (cheap accommodation should be included).

1.3 Selection of the Conference Location

The selection of the site for $\text{ESA}(x+1)$ is made at the Business Meeting of $\text{ESA}(x-1)$. The Business Meeting also appoints the OC Chair(s) for $\text{ESA}(x+1)$.

2 ESA Program Committees

2.1 Program Committee Chairs

The Program Committee (PC) Chairs of each Track of $\text{ESA}(x+1)$ are selected by the ESA SC before December 31 of year $x-1$. It is strongly recommended to avoid PC Chairs from the country where the conference is held.

The PC Chairs of each Track of ESA are responsible for setting up and maintaining the submission server for their Track of the conference. We strongly recommend that the PC Chairs adopt a conference management system that offers support for the preparation of the proceedings.

The PC Chairs are also responsible for the feedback that is sent back to the authors of submitted papers. In particular, PC Chairs should make sure that the comments (originated either by PC members or by external reviewers) sent back to the authors are dealt with in a professional manner.

2.2 Program Committees

The following notes are meant as recommendations for the selection of PC members.

1. Nobody should sit more than once in an ESA PC in a 5-year period, except, as a Chairperson. Furthermore, nobody should be a Chairperson more than once in a 10 year period. All past ESA editions are included in the counting. These constraints hold separately for each track.
2. If two candidates have comparable qualifications, precedence should be given to the person who has never been in an ESA PC before.
3. At least one third of the PC members should be young researchers (PhD at most 10 years before, including preferably people who got their PhD at most 5 years before) with a strong, generally recognized research record.
4. The jobs of Program Chair and Local Organizer are decoupled.
5. The Program Chair selects the committee, trying to make sure that all relevant research subareas and topics are represented. A PC member is expected to attend the PC meeting and the conference.
6. ESA wants to be a forum for algorithmicists in computer science and operations research. The composition of the PC should reflect this goal.

2.3 Test-of-Time Award

- The ESA Test-of-Time Award would like to recognize paper(s) from ESA Procs. from 19-21 years prior (i.e., in year x papers from Procs. ESA $x - 21$, ESA $x - 20$, ESA $x - 19$ are considered) that have best met the "test of tim". Only for the first year, the ESA Test-of-Time Award 2015 will consider papers from Procs. ESA 1993, ESA 1994, ESA 1995, ESA 1996.
- The winner of the ESA Test-of-Time Award is selected by a committee of three members, appointed by the ESA Steering Committee. The regular term of a Award Committee member is three years. Starting from 2017, one Award Committee member leaves the committee and a new member enters.
- All papers from given years are eligible for the award, except those that are authored or co-authored by members of the Awards Committee.
- The prize may be shared by more than one paper, and the Award Committee reserves the right to declare no winner at all.
- Although the Award Committee is encouraged to consult with the theoretical computer science community at large, the Award Committee is solely responsible for the selection of the winner of the award. All matters relating to the selection process that are not specified here are left to the discretion of the Award Committee.
- The ESA (year x) Test-of-Time Award winners are announced towards the end of year x via the ESA Symposium webpage and the usual mailing lists (like DMANET, THEORYNET). Moreover, the ESA (year x) Test-of-Time Award winners are presented at ESA year $x + 1$ at a (small) award ceremony. SC chair invites authors of ESA (year x) Test-of-Time Award papers to attend ESA year $x + 1$, and the OC of ESA year $x + 1$ is encouraged to waive the registration fee.

2.4 Invited Speakers

There are a couple of plenary invited ALGO talks. The selection of invited plenary speakers is made by the organizers in close collaboration with the PC chairs of the ALGO conferences and workshops. There are no additional semi-plenary invited ESA talks. Semi-plenary invited lectures of other ALGO conferences are not to be scheduled in parallel with ESA talks.

When contacting potential invited speakers, it is important to stress that invited speakers are expected to write up their contribution for the proceedings. In particular, the speakers should offer a report of the state-of-the-art in their area of research addressed to a general (non-specialistic) audience. The names of the invited speakers should be finalized earlier enough so as to be included in the call for papers: i.e., invited speakers for ESA($x + 1$) should be finalized before the ESA(x) conference.

Whilst the first informal invitation may be sent to the invited speakers by the PC Chairs, it is important that the subsequent formal invitation be sent by the OC Chair(s) in order to guarantee coherence with respect to the budget for the conference.

OC and PC chairs are encouraged to consider recent ESA Test-of-Time Award winners as invited speakers. ESA ToT awardees, if willing to, should be given a possibility to present their work during ESA conference, e.g., during ESA Best Paper session. The OC Chair(s) should invite them to conference and offer to wave the registration fee.

2.5 Call for Papers

Each PC Chair can propose to the SC possible modifications, updates or extensions to the list of topics for each Track, in view of the latest developments in the area. The call for papers of $ESA(x + 1)$ should be ready for distribution at the $ESA(x)$ conference.

While preparing the call for papers for the conference, the PC Chairs and the OC Chair(s) should pay special attention to the selection of appropriate deadlines for the submission of papers to the conference and for the notification to the authors. In particular, ESA PC Chairs should coordinate with the ICALP PC Chairs in order to allow a period of at least one week between the ICALP notification and the ESA submission.

Submission dates to a high-quality conference such as ESA should be strict.

2.6 Submissions

The tradition of ESA is that PC Members cannot submit papers to the Track on whose PC they serve. The OC Chair(s) could, in principle, submit papers to the conference since they do not play any role in the selection of papers. It is, however, preferable that they refrain from doing so for the sake of transparency.

2.7 Planning of the Conference Proceedings

The PC and OC Chairs of ESA are responsible for the steering of the publication process for the conference proceedings. Typically, they are responsible for putting together the material needed for the preparation of the proceedings and for submitting it to the publisher. Starting in 2016, the proceedings of ESA conferences are published in the LIPIcs series.

- The OC Chair(s) of $ESA(x + 1)$ should obtain from Dagstuhl information about the pricing of the proceedings.
- The PC Chair(s) should make plans for the timely preparation of the proceedings, and should agree upon a deadline for the final submission with Dagstuhl/LIPIcs. It is strongly recommended to allow for sufficient leeway between the deadline for the delivery of final manuscripts from the authors of accepted papers and the actual deadline for the submission of the proceedings to Dagstuhl/LIPIcs.

- After the notification of acceptance/rejection to the authors of submitted papers, the PC Chairs collect the papers for the compilation of the proceedings.
- The PC Chair(s) should inform Dagstuhl that the material needed for the publication of the conference proceedings has been uploaded, and is ready for their editing process.

2.8 Special Issues

Selected papers from ESA are expected to be published in a timely fashion in a special issue for the conference, edited by the Program Chairs. An ESA special issue should reflect the scientific excellence of the conference; it should offer to readers the “best” of the conference across its tracks, and should appear in a broad spectrum journal. The tradition so far is that ESA special issues appear in the journal *Algorithmica*.

3 ESA Organizing Committee

As a general rule, the OC Chair(s) should plan to run a successful conference smoothly and safely. Below, we list a few other issues that require special attention.

3.1 Publicity

Conference publicity is a very important issue, and the OC and PC Chairs should make their utmost effort to advertise the conference. Early publicity is important, so that people can plan their schedule and make travel arrangements.

The following are some issues that OC and PC Chairs might want to consider in their efforts to publicize the conference:

- Disseminate widely the call for papers, final program and call for participation.
- Make printed copies of the call for papers available for distribution at the previous/current year’s conferences.
- Get calendar entries in call for papers sections of relevant Web sites.
- Make sure the conference web site is highly (and early) visible.

3.2 Organizational Issues

ESA is organized jointly with several other conferences and workshops in the context of ALGO. It is the decision of the ESA OC Chair(s) which conferences or workshops are organized jointly with ESA. Other issues to be taken into account by the OC Chair(s) include the following:

- ESA talks are scheduled on three consecutive days only.

- **Business Meeting.** The ESA Business Meeting takes place typically on the first day of the ESA conference, at the end of the scheduled talks. The OC Chair(s) should reserve a spacious room, and a light refreshment would be a plus.
- **Steering Committee Meeting.** There is typically an ESA SC Meeting at lunch on the first day of the conference. The OC Chair(s) should provide a suitable room for the meeting as well as lunch for the participants in the SC Meeting.
- **Social Events.** These typically include:
 - Welcome reception,
 - Excursion (optional) and
 - Conference dinner.

The OC Chair(s) might also consider arranging light refreshments at registration time.

3.3 Budget Issues

On top of the usual expenses in organizing a congress, the following expenses should be carefully considered by the Conference Chair(s).

- The registration fee for each ESA participant should include the EATCS membership fee for one year (two years if the participant is a student), to be returned to the EATCS at the end of the conference together with the list of participants (including affiliation, postal and e-mail addresses) who become EATCS members or renew their membership. Each regular participant at ESA will receive a one-year membership. In this way, he/she may take advantage of the discounted registration fees at all conferences (e.g., MFCS and ESA) that offer a discount to EATCS members. The registration site should clearly explain
 - that, when registering for ESA, one becomes an EATCS member for one year (two years if the participant is a student) and
 - what are the advantages of becoming an EATCS member (e.g., paying reduced fees at other conferences).
- The OC Chair(s) should provide cheques for the best paper awards for the conference. At the time of writing, EATCS sponsor best paper and best student paper awards for the equivalent of 600 euros in total. Upon agreement with the President of the EATCS, the amounts for these prizes may be deducted from the EATCS membership fees to be returned to the EATCS.
- The cost of the physical PC meeting (if any). It is strongly recommended that the PC meeting be held electronically in order to keep the conference expenses low.

- The cost of invited speakers (usually registration fee, conference banquet and local expenses). If the budget for the conference permits it, we recommend that the OC Chair(s) cover the travel expenses of the invited speakers at least in part.
- The OC Chair(s) are encouraged to waive the registration fee for authors of ESA year $x - 1$ Test-of-Time Award paper(s).

4 Check List and Timing

The following indicative check list and timeline could be helpful for the organization of $ESA(x + 1)$.

- First week of July $x - 1$: Presentation of the bids to the ESA SC Chair.
- $ESA(x - 1)$: Presentation of the bids at the Business Meeting. The Business Meeting chooses the site for $ESA(x + 1)$.
- 31 January x : The SC selects PC Chairs.
- 1 August x : PC members invited by track PC Chairs and lists of PC members finalized. Invited speakers invited by OC Chair(s). Opening of the web site for the conference.
- $ESA(x)$: Call for papers ready for distribution at the conference. Presentation of the site at the Business Meeting.
- Some time in the second half of September x : First announcement of the call for papers to mailing lists.
- Some time in January $x + 1$: Second announcement of the call for papers to mailing lists.
- Some time in February $x + 1$: Opening of the submission site.
- Some time in April $x + 1$: Submission deadline.
- Some time in June $x + 1$: Notification to authors.
- Some time in the last week of June $x + 1$: Call for participation is sent to mailing lists.
- First / second week of September $x + 1$: ESA conference.