

ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences on Global Change Research

within the framework of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme

The **ESF Research Conferences Scheme** provides the opportunity for leading scientists and younger researchers to meet for discussions on the most recent developments in their fields of research. It acts as a catalyst for creating new synergistic contacts throughout Europe and the rest of the world. It develops principally through the establishment of long-term partnerships between the ESF and national and international organizations, including universities. **ESF Research Conferences** are open to scientists world-wide, whether from academia or industry. The conferences may be single events, or series, usually with a biennial meeting focusing on specific aspects of the same general topic. They generally last for four or five days and up to 150 participants and invited speakers may attend. Chairs select participants from applications received as a result of publicising the conferences. A conference fee is charged to participants.

Conference Guidelines

European Science Foundation

<http://www.esf.org>

The **European Science Foundation (ESF)**, with its headquarters located in Strasbourg, France, provides a common platform for its Member Organisations in order to advance European research and to explore new directions for research at the European level. Through its activities, the ESF serves the needs of the European research community in a global context.

Vetenskapsrådet

<http://www.vr.se/english/>

The **Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council, VR)** was established in 2001. Its main mission is to support basic research of highest scientific quality within all areas (humanities and social sciences, medicine and natural & engineering sciences). Among the many tasks of the Council the following can be mentioned: to promote high quality and renewal of Swedish basic research; to support research initiated by scientists; to initiate and promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research; to promote a gender perspective in research; to promote and initiate international research co-operation.

FORMAS

<http://www.formas.se/>

FORMAS (Forskningsrådet för miljö, areella näringar och samhällsbyggande–The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning) is a governmental research-funding agency related to several ministries, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications and the Ministry of Education and Science. FORMAS encourages and supports scientifically significant research related to sustainable development. This especially means support in the areas of the environment, agricultural sciences including forestry, horticulture, veterinary medicine, food, fish and reindeer husbandry, and spatial planning including building sciences and community systems. The

projects supported cover a wide range of approaches from basic research to more applied efforts and within the built environment also demonstration and experimental projects.

ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences

The European Science Foundation (ESF), the Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council, VR) and Forskningsrådet för miljö, areella näringar och samhällsbyggande–The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (FORMAS) have agreed to co-sponsor a series of Scientific Conferences, within the framework of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme. The Series will be known as '**ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences on Global Change Research**', and will be at the highest scientific level with respect to topics and choice of participants. The Conferences will bring together participants and experts in **earth systems and other relevant disciplines** to discuss topics that are of major importance to the scientific community in Europe. Selected conferences in the series will take place every other year.

Topics

The topics should be at the forefront of scientific research and may be interdisciplinary when appropriate. ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences will concentrate on topics in the broad area of **Global Change Research**.

(1) Proposals and Deadlines for Submission

Proposals will be called for on the ESF Research Conferences website (<http://www.esf.org/conferences>), and they should be submitted to ESF by the deadline stated in the Call. Calls will be addressed to leading European scientists for Conferences to take place in Europe. Proposals will be for a single event. The Proposals will be evaluated through international Peer Review for which Referees will be nominated by the appropriate ESF Science Committees. The final assessment and selection of topics, on the basis of three written reviews, will be made jointly by the three Partner Organisations through a small Review Panel composed of members of the ESF Science Committees and scientists nominated by VR and FORMAS.

The Assessment Criteria that will be applied are: (i) Scientific scope of the proposal, which should focus topics in the broad area of Global Change Research; (ii) Scientific relevance in terms of novelty, originality and timeliness; (iii) European dimension and added value; (iv) the Draft Programme: the scientific standing of the proposer and the quality of the proposed scientific programme.

Venue and Date

A limited number of venues, each linked to a certain scientific disciplinary area, is being established in order to create a clear 'brand-name' for ESF Research Conferences, and a predictable relation for the scientific community. ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences will take place in **Nynäshamn**, located **around 60 km south of Stockholm and 100 km from Arlanda airport**. The maximum capacity at this venue is **250 participants**. The Conferences will generally be held in the summer (May-September). The typical duration of a Conference is 4-5 days. Participants will normally arrive on a Friday or Saturday afternoon, and depart on Wednesday or Thursday after breakfast. When submitting a Proposal for a Conference, the desired **month** and **the year** should be indicated as a minimum.

Scientific Programme

The Chair, supported by one or two Vice-Chairs and a small Conference Steering Committee, will be responsible for developing the **scientific programme** for the Conference.

Profile and Format of the Conferences

The core activities of the Conferences will be based on **lectures by invited scientists**, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by **extensive discussion periods** e.g. 30-minute lecture followed by an extended discussion period. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room will be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable will be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. In addition to the 5-6 hours per day of lecture room activities, poster sessions, round-table discussions or discussion groups will be organised. Either one afternoon or extended lunch periods will be usually kept free of lectures in order to allow time for free time activities.

One evening should be reserved for a '**Forward Look Plenary Discussion**' about future developments in the field. The format of this discussion will be provided by ESF ¹.

In order to encourage speakers to present their latest results and ideas, which may not yet be fully explored and ripe for publication, no written papers will be requested. The publication, as proceedings, of selected papers prepared after the Conferences may be approved by the Chair, subject to the agreement of the speakers concerned.

Participants will take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which will be particularly beneficial to **younger researchers** who may be less outspoken in the more formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the Conference, both the speakers and the participants are expected to stay for the whole duration.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions will be a very important feature of this series of conferences. Ideally, the venue for the poster session will be located close to the main meeting room and will be large and light enough to host such an event. Moreover, a **social event** may be incorporated into the meeting. The following factors should also be considered:

- each participant should give a one-slide presentation about the contents of his/her poster contribution at the beginning of the scheduled poster discussion sessions;
- sufficient time should be allowed for posters to be viewed, ideally throughout the entire meeting.

(2) Organisation

In order to encourage leading scientists within Europe to chair ESF-VR-FORMAS Conferences, only the **scientific** aspects of the meeting organisation (including any decisions on financial support for invited speakers and other participants) will be undertaken by the Chair (or Co-chairs) and the Steering Committee. However, it is recommended that Chairs seek **additional sponsorship** from other sources, and they should advise ESF which organisation(s) they intend to approach. All other organisational tasks and logistics will be the responsibility of the ESF Conference Unit, working in close co-operation with the venue, and an ESF Conference Organiser will be assigned to each Conference. His/her tasks will include coordinating the administrative arrangements at the venue, publicising the Conference, financial and budgetary matters, the processing of applications, communicating with participants and speakers, making payments and collecting fees. The ESF Conference Unit is well equipped to manage the organisation of the Conferences in a standardised, streamlined manner, in close co-operation with the Chairs.

Grant

The Grant available for the Conference will normally be used to meet the expenses of the invited speakers and selected young scientists. Travel should be by rail or by economy air. Experience shows that it is often possible for speakers to obtain some of their travel costs from other sources, if the sponsor offers partial support. The co-sponsors will jointly provide a total grant of **EUR 40 000** per Conference. It is expected that participants (other than the speakers and selected young scientists) will pay their own travel and subsistence costs, and the registration fee.

Management of the Grant

The ESF Conference Unit, in close consultation with VR and FORMAS and the Chair, will manage the Grant. ESF will be responsible for all payments.

¹ (ESF's Forward Looks are the key to the development of strong links between the European scientific community and science policy makers. The purpose of a Forward Look is to define research agendas and priorities in a particular research domain and to communicate the results to research funders. The themes are selected on the basis of their importance to European research.. See <http://www.esf.org/flooks>).

Registration Fee

A **registration fee**, in the order of EUR 250-300 will be levied, in order to cover the costs of organising and administering the Conference. This levy will be in addition to the subsistence costs. The Conference fees (subsistence + registration) will be all-inclusive i.e. full board and lodging, meeting facilities for the duration of the meeting, a social programme, and group bus transfers. All fees will be paid to ESF, and an online fee payment facility will be available.

Additional Sponsorship

The Conference will be advertised as "ESF-VR-FORMAS Conference on...". Additional sponsorship may be acknowledged in publicity material in terms such as "With major support from..." or "With additional sponsoring from...". If an external sponsor wishes to have its logo included in advertising material, the Chairs should advise ESF accordingly. ESF, VR and FORMAS do not usually favour co-sponsorship that requires formal proceedings to be published. There should be no confidential information. Eventual IPR or copyrights are the property of all participants contributing financially or intellectually to the Conference.

Publicity

ESF will publicise the Conference in appropriate scientific journals and on its **web site**. ESF will be responsible for the publicity of each Conference, and for disseminating information to potential applicants.

The identity of a Conference will be promoted through a standardised, graphical presentation of all its documents, which will include the logos of ESF, VR and FORMAS. The Conference will be advertised to **appropriate individuals and laboratories**, to **ESF Member Organisations** and to a **network of scientists**. Whenever possible, individual advertisements and calendar entries will also be placed free-of-charge in the scientific press, and in other appropriate journals and newsletters, according to the associated science disciplines.

In addition, it is very important that Chairs provide a **comprehensive, substantial emailing list** for circulation of an advertisement. (Important: this list of email addresses must be in the form of either a Word or an Excel document with all addresses listed in **one** column only and with a single address **per** row).

As soon as it is agreed to go ahead with the Conference, Chairs will be expected to email the ESF Conference Unit with the following documents in order to advertise the event:

- the **preliminary scientific programme**, including a paragraph about the scope of the Conference, the list of topics to be covered, the list of confirmed invited speakers with their affiliations and the titles of their lectures;
- the full address and email list of the **invited speakers**;
- a **comprehensive, geographically-balanced email list** of all potentially interested scientists;
- a **list of scientific journals** or reviews and their websites for publicity and free inserts in calendars of events.

Applications to Attend the Conference and Deadlines for Application

An online **application facility** is available via the ESF Research Conferences website (<http://www.esf.org/conferences>). The deadline for applications is to be no later than 3 months before the event. The ESF Conference Unit will process all applications and email them to the Chair for decision, together with each applicant's one-page abstract and list of publications.

Participation

Chairs will select participants from applications received as a result of ESF publicising the Conferences. The basic criteria for accepting participants will be their scientific merit and their scientific needs. Participants, including speakers, may be accepted from any country, although there should normally be a high proportion of Europeans. Without compromising scientific standards, organisers should aim for a wide geographical representation of scientists, with a recommended ratio of **about two-thirds European participation to one-third non-European**. Special attention should also be paid to the involvement of **younger applicants** and those from **developing countries**, and over-representation of scientists from the host country should be avoided. Moreover, the gender balance should be taken into consideration. ESF Research Conferences are expected to be large conferences of up to 150 participants. The attendance should generally be at least 80 participants.

Final Selection, Programmes & Invitations

The Chair should decide on the participation within **3 weeks** of receiving the applications. At this stage he/she should finalise the scientific programme and email it to ESF, together with the list of participants and the allocation of financial support. An invitation, the Final Programme and Practical Information Guide will be emailed to each invited speaker and participant. The Programme and Practical Information will also be available on the ESF Research Conferences website.

Book of Abstracts

If the Conference Chair wishes to have the lecture abstracts and/or (extended) abstracts for posters assembled into a **Book of Abstracts**, the cost should be included in the conference budget or covered by the Chair's own funds. The ESF Office cannot be involved in actually arranging for the production of this booklet and suggests that this task could be delegated to a young collaborator who could be offered a grant to cover his/her attendance at the conference.

On-site Administrative Arrangements

The ESF Conference Unit will finalise all on-site administrative arrangements with the conference venue. A **Conference Organiser** from ESF will be present for the duration of the Conference to take care of registration, any travel payments and to oversee the local administrative organisation. Owing to the size of the events, Chairs are encouraged to provide an **assistant or young researcher** to be responsible for the organisation of the poster sessions and/or other on-site scientific aspects and to help at the registration desk as required.

Questionnaires

Participants will be required to complete a **questionnaire** on various aspects of the Conference. The completed questionnaires should be returned to the on-site secretariat during the event.

Report on the Conference

The Chair is expected to write a **conference report**, as it is a condition of sponsorship that a scientific report be submitted after every Conference. The **conference report** should have the following format:

1. An **introduction** (up to two pages) on the topic in non-specialist terms (especially for highly technical subjects);
2. **Scientific content** of the conference:
 - a. a summary of the conference sessions focusing on the scientific highlights
 - b. an assessment of the results and their potential impact on future research or applications
3. **'Forward Look² Plenary Discussion'**:
 - a. State-of-the-art in the field;
 - b. Emerging topics;
 - c. Visions for the future of the research field – identification of issues in the 5-10 years+ timeframe;
 - d. Is there a need for a foresight-type initiative?
4. The **reaction of the participants** to the location and the organisation, including networking, and any other relevant comments.

The reports should be sent to ESF **no later than six weeks** after the end of the Conference. The reports will be forwarded to the appropriate ESF Standing Committees and Expert Committees for information and consideration in their science policy discussions and also to ESF's Partners in the ESF Research Conferences Scheme. The **Introduction** may be posted on a **'Conference Highlights'** page within the ESF Research Conferences website (subject to the explicit authorisation of the Author).

Enquiries and Further Information

For all enquiries and/or for further information concerning the Conference, please contact conferences@esf.org.

² See <http://www.esf.org/flooks>