

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE PLANNING AND CONDUCTING FOCUSED-TOPIC MEETINGS SETAC NORTH AMERICA

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process used by the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry North America (SNA) for proposing, planning, and conducting SNA-sponsored Focused-Topic Meetings (FTMs). An FTM should:

- Enhance interdisciplinary approaches, and include appropriate specialists outside of the fields of environmental toxicology and chemistry;
- Enhance participation by constituencies and user groups, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in meeting planning and development;
- Ensure that the FTM Organizing Committee and attendees are balanced among academia, business, and government, and make an effort to include NGOs;
- Have a clearly defined meeting topic and goals; and
- Be organized and conducted in a timely manner.

SNA sponsors FTMs to bring together scientists, engineers, and managers from academia, business, and government, and public interest groups to consider current topics in environmental science. FTMs are defined as those that are attended by between 200 to 500 participants, although smaller or larger FTMs are possible. FTMs aim to provide a forum for exchange of information and knowledge on specific, timely environmental topics. They may also be used as a training forum.

All FTMs are to be administered by the SETAC Office. It is critical to the success of every SNA-sponsored FTM that the experience of the SETAC Office staff be used from the beginning of the FTM planning process.

Criteria for Designation as an SNA-Sponsored Focused Topic Meeting

The goal of an FTM is to promote the advancement of technical issues in the environmental sciences. The following criteria provide guidance for designation as an SNA FTM.

1. The proposed meeting is consistent with SETAC and SNA goals;
2. The meeting topic is recognized as being an important and timely scientific issue by the SNA Meetings Committee, Science Committee, and Board of Directors;
3. The FTM objectives are clearly identified and the meeting designed so that the topic can be addressed within the designated time;
4. The Organizing Committee Chair and Co-Chair are experts on the topic being addressed. Members of the Organizing Committee must include recognized subject matter experts germane to the meeting topic; and,
5. The Organizing Committee and meeting participants represent a diverse group of individuals including academia, business, and government, and when possible, NGOs.

Planning and Conducting a Focused Topic Meeting

This section describes various steps involved in proposing, planning, and conducting an SNA FTM, including developing the meeting topic, securing SNA approval, planning the meeting, and responsibilities during the meeting.

Step 1. Developing the Meeting Topic

Meeting organizers, at least one who must be a SETAC member, identify a pertinent issue or environmental topic to serve as a focal point for the proposed meeting. An FTM Organizing Committee that includes at least one SETAC Office staff member as an *ad hoc* member is formed. The FTM Organizing Committee develops a proposal that clearly and concisely:

1. Describes and justifies the topic of the FTM;
2. Defines the meeting objectives;
3. Identifies the members and affiliations of the proposed FTM organizing committee;
4. Describes the anticipated range (in affiliation, geographical representation, etc.) and number of participants;
5. Describes the duration of the meeting;
6. Suggests and justifies potential dates for the proposed meeting;
7. Describes the format of the meeting;
8. Lists potential meeting cities and venues;
9. Lists potential meeting sponsors;
10. Indicates potential funding sources and estimated amounts;
11. Estimates probable registration and other meeting fees;
12. Describes meeting publication plans (proceedings, papers, etc.);
13. Commits to the development of a webinar; and
14. Describes the potential for follow-up meetings, workshops, sessions, etc.

The SETAC Office and SNA Meetings Committee should be contacted for example proposals, advice on meeting organization, and funding requirements for the potential FTM. The proposal should contain sufficient detail to enable an evaluation based upon the aforementioned criteria by the SNA Meetings and Science Committees, the SWC Publications Advisory Committee (PAC) and the SNA Board of Directors. The SNA Board of Directors recommends that the proposal be submitted to these Committees at least one year prior to the proposed meeting date. The Committees will provide recommendations regarding the proposed FTM to the SNA Board of Directors through the SETAC Office (see flowchart for the details regarding the approval process).

Step 2. SNA Meetings, Science, and Publications Advisory Committee Reviews

The SNA Meetings, Science, and Publications Advisory Committees, in consultation with the SETAC Office, will review the proposal in reference to the *Criteria for Designation as a SETAC Focused Topic Meeting*. Based upon this review, these Committees will provide one of the following recommendations to the SNA Board of Directors:

- Recommend SNA sponsorship as an FTM;
- Recommend SNA sponsorship with minor changes suggested;
- Recommend SNA sponsorship contingent upon incorporation of mandatory revisions; or,
- Recommend against SNA sponsorship.

The SNA Board of Directors will approve or reject the FTM proposal based on the recommendations of the SNA Meetings and Science Committees, consideration of the time demands on the SETAC Office, and the probability of obtaining adequate funding for the proposed meeting. Approval can take place at any regularly scheduled SNA Board of Directors meeting throughout the year or by ballot.

Step 3. Planning the Meeting

After approval by the SNA Board of Directors, FTM organizers may initiate the planning process in cooperation with the SETAC Office. Listed below are guidelines and recommendations that are relevant to the primary components of the planning process.

- A. Final FTM Organizing Committee Formation. The Organizing Committee is established and will have responsibility for developing, organizing, and conducting the FTM, and ensuring that meeting products are completed and distributed. The composition of the committee should be based upon the meeting objectives. However, to be consistent with SETAC goals, the committee should contain representation from academia, business, and government. If possible and appropriate, NGO representation on the committee may be beneficial.
- B. Final Program Development. One of the responsibilities of the FTM Organizing Committee is to develop a specific program for the meeting. The details will vary depending upon the meeting objectives, and may include plenary presentations, submitted presentations, invited presentations, discussions, poster sessions, debates, short courses, student activities (including a silent auction), exhibitors, social activities, publicity (including web site content), etc. The Organizing Committee also will identify Session Chairs, review abstracts, and organize abstracts into sessions.
- C. Acquisition of Financial Assistance. The FTM Organizing Committee has the responsibility to consult with the SETAC Office during the preparation of a budget and to secure adequate funding. All formal letters of solicitation must originate from the SETAC Office; however, the FTM Organizing Committee members should make advance inquiries and identify specific individuals in the agencies, companies, associations, etc. who may be financial contributors to the meeting. Sufficient funding should be secured as early in the planning process as possible. Funds must normally be secured, or at least have a very high probability of being secured, before the SNA Board of Directors will grant final approval for the meeting.

Usual cost considerations include the following:

- Travel or communications costs for FTM Organizing Committee for organizational and planning meetings;
- Location costs for the FTM meeting rooms;
- Audiovisual costs, including computer connections, projectors, screens, etc.;
- Computers, printers, copiers, paper, and other supplies for the conduct of the meeting;
- SETAC staff time to support the FTM;
- Cost of producing publications and webinar that result from the meeting.

D. Management of Meeting Logistics. The SETAC Office assists the Organizing Committee in planning the meeting; securing a productive setting for the meeting; and, supporting the needs of all participants with computer, copying, and communication equipment. The SETAC Office organizes all logistical support for FTMs.

Step 4. Responsibilities during the Meeting

The FTM Chairs and the SETAC Office are responsible for ensuring that the FTM runs smoothly.

The responsibilities of the SETAC Office include:

- Addressing all meeting venue issues (e.g., catering, A/V, security, payments, transportation);
- Registration of attendees, guests, speakers, press;
- Collecting registration and exhibitor fees, and for overall financial arrangements and accounting.

The responsibilities of the FTM Chairs include:

- Assisting in meeting set-up and take down as well as selected administrative duties (as directed by the SETAC Office);
- Welcoming participants to the FTM;
- Thanking sponsors;
- Introduction of plenary speakers (or identifying people to do the introductions);
- Introduction of short course instructors;
- Daily announcements (e.g., changes to the program, reminders);
- Compilation of student judging forms, and announcement of the winners;
- Personal contact with exhibitors, plenary speakers, guests, etc.

The FTM Chairs should seek assistance from their Organizing Committee as necessary or desired, to complete these tasks.

Publication of Focused-Topic Meeting Proceedings, Summary and Webinar

FTMs may not always result in a publication per se, but at a minimum, the Steering Committee will produce the following:

- an Executive Summary, to be made available free on the SETAC website;
- a *SETAC Globe* article with photos from the FTM;
- a poster at an SNA Annual Meeting; and
- a webinar.

Other potential publications from an FTM can include the following:

- Technical Information Paper (TIP);
- Open forum;
- Agency or departmental briefings;
- Proceedings;
- Articles for submission to ET&C or IEAM;
- Short courses;
- Videos.

The FTM Organizing Committee has the responsibility to coordinate the required publications efforts with the Publications Advisory Committee, the SETAC publications staff, and the SETAC Scientific Affairs Manager to ensure that the required publications are completed in a timely manner. The Executive Summary, *SETAC Globe* article, and webinar should be produced within 60 days of completion of the FTM. Article submission for ET&C, IEAM, or the *SETAC Globe* must be coordinated in advance with the respective editor-in-chief. SETAC has the first right of refusal to publish all materials that result from a meeting.

Framework for Planning, Funding and Scheduling a Focused Topic Meeting

A summary of the planning process, including a typical schedule, is presented below. Any variance from this schedule must be approved by the SNA Board of Directors no less than 10 months in advance of the proposed FTM date.

Months Prior to Meeting

12 – 18

Objective

Proposal submitted to SNA Meetings and Science Committees and the SWC Publications Advisory Committee. Each committee makes a recommendation to the SNA Board of Directors

10-12

The SNA Board of Directors approves or rejects the proposal. Proposal is returned to FTM Organizing Committee to address any concerns.

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Initiate meeting organization (program development). Fundraising begins. Exhibitors are approached (if applicable).

- 8 Cost estimates for meeting submitted and budget finalized. Funding sources and financial commitments identified. Web site material is finalized. Preparation of publicity material begins. First Call for Abstracts is sent.
- 6 Commitments for 50% of funds due. Plenary speakers are identified. Student and social activities are planned.
- 3 Commitments for 80% of funds due. Final approval of FTM is given by the BOD (timing linked to contract and deposit obligations). Abstract deadline and review. Meeting Program is finalized (including plenaries, platform/poster presentations, list of exhibitors, social and student activities, the welcome letter from the Chair(s), etc.).
- Meeting Conduct meeting in cooperation with SETAC staff. Chair(s) or their designees must be available to the SETAC staff throughout the meeting.
- Post meeting Within 60 days of Executive summary and a webinar are prepared for the web site, a summary article with photos is submitted to the *SETAC Globe*, and a poster is prepared for the next Annual Meeting. Other publications may be prepared.

