

## Annual Science Conference Income and Expenses

The Annual Science Conference (ASC) is an important gathering for the ICES community, however, with high costs and few Member Countries able to commit to host the event, discussions in SCICOM and in Bureau over the past year have considered the need for changes to the event to make it more attractive for participants and hosts.

The 2015 event was hosted by ICES in Copenhagen and organized by the Secretariat. Although expensive for ICES, it presented an opportunity for the Secretariat to gather some information on host costs and also to explore the potential use of sponsorships, and other creative ideas to find savings and keep costs to a minimum.

Figure 1 (below) summarizes the financial information by comparing ASC income and expenses using 2015 figures as a base under various scenarios. These scenarios include: 1. a shortened ASC to reduce the cost of renting a conference venue, 2. an increase in the fees by 40% (participants and stands) under the current split key (registration fee: 1/3 to the host country and 2/3 to ICES; stand fee; split equally between ICES and host country), and an increase in the fees by 40% as well as a new split key (equal split of all income between ICES and the host country).

### 1. Shortened ASC

It is clear that the rental of the ASC venue was the biggest expense for the “host” country during ASC 2015. And a shortening of the conference by two days would mean that the rental costs would decrease from 85% to 52 % of the overall costs.

### 2. Increase in the fees by 40%, using existing split key (1/3 – 2/3)

An increase in fees would mean that the host country would see an increase in the coverage of the overall costs from 11% to 15%, compared to the current situation.

For ICES this would mean an increase in the coverage of the overall costs from 60% to 83%.

### 3. Increase in the fees by 40 %, using the suggested new split key (1/2 – 1/2)

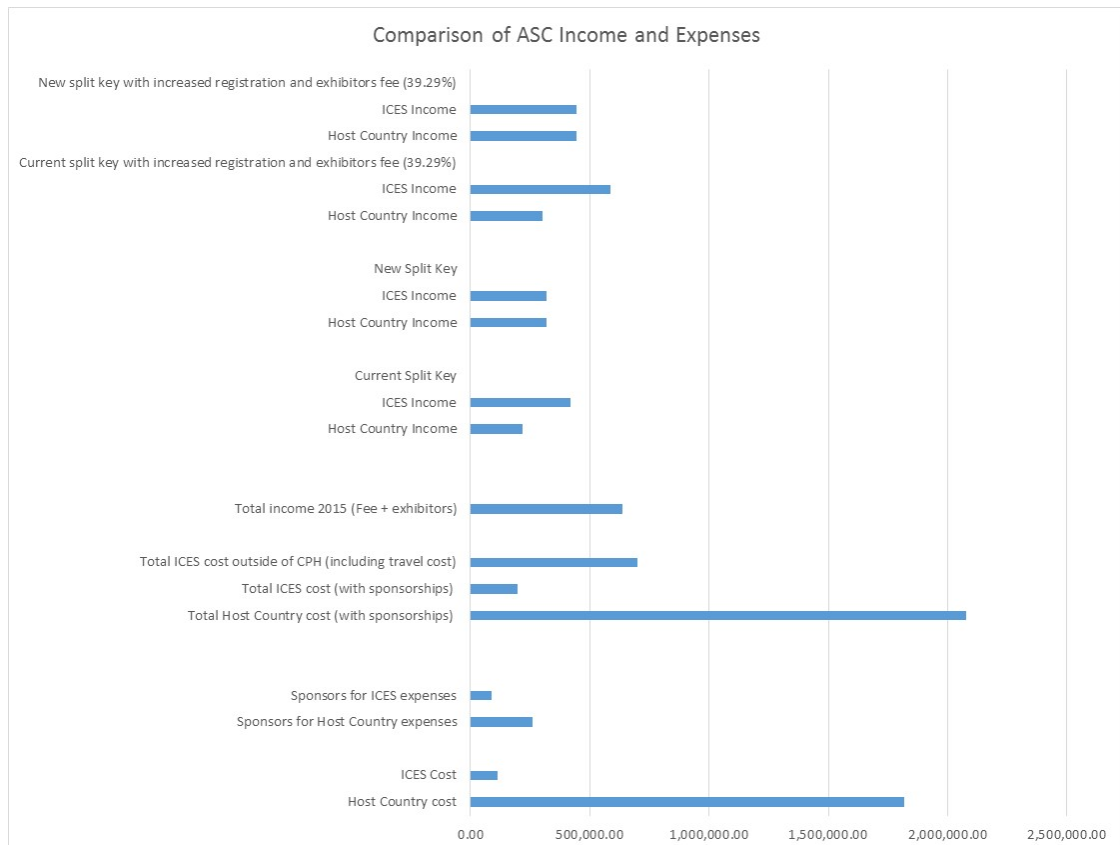
An increase in the fees and a new split key would mean that the host country would see an increase in the coverage of the overall costs from 11% to 20%, compared to the current situation.

For ICES this would mean an increase in the coverage of the overall costs from 60% to 63%.

It should be noted that there is an inherent risk in the all calculations, as these are dependent on the number of registered participants and the number of exhibitors at the conference. The cost on the other hand are more or less stable, independent of the number of registered participants. As can be seen over the years especially the number of registered participants vary, from just above 400 to the highest

number during the 2015 ASC; 734. Also, the number of paying participants vary, again with the ASC 2015 coming out with the highest number of paying participants. And this is amplified by comparing to the financial figures from ASC 2014, where the income was 250.000 DKK less than in 2015.

The meeting is invited to consider the financial implications of arranging an ASC, to both the host country and ICES, and whether a 40% increase in fees and a change to an even split of income between the host country and ICES will have a major impact on reducing the costs of the conference for host countries and ICES.



**Figure 1. Comparison of ASC Income and Expenses**

Based on Figure 1 the following can be stated:

#### 1. Host country expenses

The expenses for ASC 2015, had there been a host country are close to 2.1 million DKK. This includes also direct and in-kind contributions by sponsors (e.g., direct coverage of poster session drinks and snacks, as well as in-direct coverage of the expenses by inviting to a welcome reception).

#### 2. Host country income

2.1 Host country income, under the current system (same fee/registration: 1050 DKK and exhibitor fee: 12.000 DKK and split key 1/3 to the host country).

The host country share of income for ASC 2015 (had there been a host country) would amount to 220.000 DKK.

2.2 Host country income, with a new system, including a 40% increase in fees for registration and exhibitors.

Had the fees been increased to the suggested level the host country would have had an income of 305.000 DKK.

2.3 Host country income, with a new system, including a 40% increase in fees for registration and stand, and a new split key (50/50)

In case both the fees and the split key had been changed to the suggested levels the host country would have had an income of 445.000 DKK

2.4 Comparison between host country expenses and income

Depending on the chosen scenario the income covers from 10% to 20% of the host country expenditures.

### 3. ICES expenses

3.1. The ICES expenses for the ASC 2015, and adding to that the 2014 ASC travel costs as well as the direct contributions by sponsors (e.g., coverage of travel costs for keynote speakers and reduced prices for several services), amounts to nearly 700.000 DKK.

### 4. ICES income

4.1. ICES income, under the current regime (same fee/registration: 1050 DKK and exhibitor fee 12.000 DKK, and split key 2/3 to ICES).

The ICES income for ASC 2015 (had there been a host country) amounts to 420.000 DKK.

4.2 ICES income, with a new system, including a 40% increase in fees for registration and stand

Had the fees been increased to the suggested level ICES would have had an income of 586.000 DKK.

2.3 ICES income, with a new system, including a 40% increase in fees for registration and exhibitors, and a new split key (50/50)

In case both the fees and the split key had been changed to the suggested levels ICES would have had an income of 445.000 DKK

### 2.4 Comparison between ICES expenses and income

Depending on the chosen scenario the income covers from 60% to 83% of the ICES expenditures.

There is an inherent risk in the above calculations, as these are dependent on the number of registered participants and the number of exhibitors at the conference. As can be seen over the years especially the number of registered participants vary, from just above 400 to the highest number during the 2015 ASC; 734. And also the number of paying participants vary, again with the ASC 2015 coming out with the highest number of paying participants.

Reviewing the host country expenditures, the rental of the conference venue in 2015 amounted to 85% of the costs. It is estimated that had the conference been

reduced by for instance two (2) days the price of the conference venue would only have amounted to 52% of the overall costs.

## **2016 and forthcoming Annual Science Conferences**

SCICOM at its ASC and midterm meetings in 2015 discussed the format of the ASC. Discussions were guided by the SCICOM Review Group on the ASC. The following changes were introduced so far:

### **New features:**

At the 2015 ASC in Copenhagen some new events and formats were introduced:

- In addition to the events for our ECS introduced last year (bus stop, career chat) a mentoring event (meet senior ICES scientists, administrators) was held during the conference;
- A local student event: the secretariat invited students from “local”, Danish and Swedish (Lund and Malmö) universities to the ASC for a half-day period to learn about the ASC and marine science;
- A project marketplace where selected FP7, H2020 and other projects were given the opportunity to present themselves and to discuss benefits or drawbacks of ICES project participation;
- A reduced opening ceremony (1.5 hours);
- The extended two-hours lunch break introduced in A Coruna was kept providing opportunities for additional and ad hoc meetings;
- A communications networking and exchange event to which communicators from our member institutes were invited as well as a number of related programmes/IGOs.

### **Registration fee and cost-split-key**

After its introduction in 1999, the registration fee was kept at moderate levels ranging at the lower third of international marine science conferences (currently 140 Euro regular fee). This has probably contributed to the attractiveness to students and ECS which usually contribute more than one-third of participants. (In 2015, 156 participants identified themselves as ECS. ICES provided travel support for 20 ECS scientists, from our fund of ca 10,000 dkk).

However, financial options to meet the emerging gap between income and expenses and to ease the burden for the secretariat and host country were explored.

SCICOM decided to increase the registration fee (regular, early bird) to 190 Euro with corresponding (30%) increases of all other, reduced and late registration fees, to be effective from the ASC 2016. SCICOM did not consider this increase a risk for reduced attendance of students or ECSs or in general to the ASC in the future.

A division of income (and costs) for the ASC was agreed by Council in 2004, whereby the host country receives 33% of the registration fee + 50% of the exhibitors fee (exhibitors pay a fee of 12.000 DKK to rent a table/booth at the conference). The remaining amount is allocated to ICES, to cover some of the expenses incurred for arranging the ASC. ICES covers travels for its secretariat staff, not related to the advisory services, ASC keynote speakers, early career scientists, and various other general expenses. The expenses are approximately double the size of the ICES share of the ASC income.

SCICOM also recommended to change the cost-split-key to 50/50 to the benefit of the host country.

This scenario has been tested, using the 2014 ASC registered participants, who paid full fee, and the new 50/50 cost split key, dividing the income equally between the host country and ICES. Using the above as the basis for the calculations, and based on a comparison of the realized income/expenditure for 2014, this would mean an increase in income as follows:

- for the Secretariat of approx. DKK 7.700.; and
- for the host country of approx. DKK 95.000.

Council is invited to decide on and approve the 50/50 cost-split-key recommended by SCICOM.

### **Duration of the ASC**

Several scenarios for reducing the duration of the ASC, and for disentangling the theme sessions, SCICOM open sessions and the business meetings were discussed.

For the 2016 ASC in Riga, Latvia the number of theme sessions will be kept to 18, to be arranged in four parallel sessions because preparations by the host country were based on the traditional model. However, new formats of holding theme sessions and SCICOM open sessions will be encouraged and the new features introduced in 2015 be continued and developed further. One of the theme sessions accepted will be held under a strategic overarching theme (the Arctic).

For the 2017 ASC, the duration of the conference will be reduced to four days to accommodate a total of 12 theme sessions. This change will provide more flexibility for new formats of science presentations and room for other events, such as project marketplace or panel discussions. New formats of recurrent theme sessions under a strategic overarching topic may be continued as well (e.g., Arctic, Aquaculture, human dimension).

**Annex. Overview of sponsorship for the 2015 Annual Science Conference**

Item	Should have cost (DKK)	Actual cost to ICES (DKK)
Poster session reception sponsored by DPPO	100,000	0
Welcome Reception sponsored by the City of Copenhagen	100,000	0
Plenary speakers travel sponsored partly by the Carlsberg Foundation	80,000	20,000
Livestream service sponsored partly by Teletech	12,000	6,000
Conference bags, sponsored by IMR Norway	18,750 (estimated)	0
Gifts for award winners and plenary speakers, sponsored partly by H2O	19,750.00 (2014 cost)	12,306
Rental of 10 computers for internet café – sponsored by HP	12,196,97	0
Conference twitter game, sponsored by Kiel university	10,000	0
Walking tour, partly sponsored by Copenhagen Walking Tour	6400	3200
Printing of name tags, sponsored by Canon	6300	0
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