

Case Analysis of International Research Conferences

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Chapter 1

Summary and inspirational catalogue

1.1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Cities worldwide are competing to attract research conferences. It is well-documented that the large influx of people accompanying a conference, brings knowledge and financial capital to the host city that generate economic growth.

Furthermore, many analyses have studied the impact of conferences on research. These analyses, e.g. focus on the effects on research quality, creation of international research networks, knowledge sharing and the dynamics of conferences from a sociological perspective.

However, it is substantially less illuminated what benefits and barriers research conferences entail for the researchers hosting them, as well as their research environments and host institutions.

Organising a conference can be a monumental and time-consuming task for researchers. It takes time away from core activities of research and education, or force the scientist to spend his/her spare time on organising.

In this light, it is important to understand the research-related benefits of hosting to researchers, universities and departments. Moreover, it is important to understand potential barriers for the host and how to overcome them to enhance the impact of research conferences.

The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy has assigned IRIS Group the task of conducting this analysis to gain a solid basis of knowledge to qualify the council's advices and recommendations on this area.

In this analysis, we have studied the benefits from hosting international conferences. The purpose of the study was to;

- Illuminate the benefits of hosting international conferences, both for the individual researcher, research environments and the host institution, as well as identify the causes behind the effects.
- Illuminate challenges and barriers for hosting international research conferences.
- Identify Danish and international examples of congress supportive mechanisms.

The analysis has been conducted in line with the following three principles of the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy; 1) A holistic approach has been applied, i.e. the analysed subject is part of a context and has been analysed in this context and not as an isolated study, 2) The analysis is evidence-based as it rests on an empirical foundation constituted of in-depth qualitative case studies, 3) The analysis has an international scope as the chosen cases are a mix of conferences hosted in Denmark and abroad.

It is important to note, that the purpose of this analysis is not to increase the attraction of more conferences to Denmark as such. Instead, the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy seeks to establish an impartial evidence-based foundation for its policy advice on research conference.

However, the analysis will look at barriers, which can constrain researchers that seeks to attract conferences as well as conference supportive mechanisms that can help researchers, e.g. in the bidding process. And hopefully, the analysis will provide valuable input on how to increase the impact of research conferences on Danish soil as well as enhancing the value creation of support mechanisms for host researchers.

1.2. KEY FINDINGS

Benefits

Across the cases, we identified a number benefits from hosting international research conferences. For the individual researcher, the three most significant benefits are:

- **Increased visibility at the centre of the international research community.** The host is often in the centre of attention during the conference. There is often a welcome speech by the host and the host have more information about the programme, key researchers, the venue, city etc. Furthermore, the host normally welcomes and spend more time with the most esteemed researchers at the conference, generating valuable networks and contacts abroad.
- **Progress/advancement in research career** has in a few cases been pointed out as a positive effect from hosting. Hosting can create awareness of the researcher's commitment and skills in the eyes of the university management, as well as in the scientific societies that are often heavily involved in conferences. This can in some cases lead to promotions or recognition by the university management or high-level positions in the scientific association.
- **Invitations to speak at other congresses, workshops, summer schools, etc.** has also been highlighted as a potential benefit for the research host. Whether the invitations would have been sent had the researcher not hosted the conference is more difficult to ascertain. But it is likely that the conference has increased the attention on the host.

For the research environments and host university, the four most significant benefits are:

- **Exposure and visibility of research environment and host university.** Although it is difficult to establish the exact significance of the exposure, researchers, university managers and convention bureaus from all our cases underscored the attention, that an international research conference generates, as a very important benefit.
- **Easier access to recruitment of top researchers** was mentioned in half of our cases as a positive effect from the exposure of the research environment and host university. Conferences showcase the attractiveness of a research environment and the host city to the delegates and provides a subsequent platform for attracting them.

- **Access to create consortia for new funding applications.** Creating consortia with the purpose of applying for project funding is an important part of the networking activities that take place during a conference. Of course, this is not an exclusive benefit for the host, but for all delegates. However, the host may in some cases have a better basis for establishing consortia in light of the exposure and visibility at the conference.
- **Education and involvement of PhDs and young researchers.** Conferences constitute an opportunity for PhDs and students at the host university to meet top researchers, network and in some cases, present their own research to an international audience.

Hosting and organising require resources, time, and knowledge, but in most of the cases, examined in this analysis, the host researchers would be willing to do it again. However, two so-called “non-cases”, i.e. conferences that was considered but never realised, have also been included to get a better a picture of the critical preconditions for hosting.

Challenges and barriers

Our analysis also identified key barriers and challenges linked to all phases of the congress process and what was done to overcome them. While *challenges* primarily constitute nuisances in an otherwise well-functioning process, *barriers* are more critical and can halt a conference completely. The most significant ones are:

- **Time and resources.** For most researchers, hosting conferences is a very time-consuming, residual activity that can be at odds with the researcher’s core research and/or educational obligations, or force researchers to spend their spare time on organising. Adding to that the risk of failure, loss of prestige or economic deficits, the researchers themselves often avoid organising. Furthermore, researchers are primarily recognised, merited, and receive funding based on core research and educational activities, which overall provides few incentives for organising conferences.
- **Challenges in the bidding process.** Winning a bid requires the host to develop a convincing value proposition vis-à-vis competitors. The host researcher often lack key competencies in this process (e.g. skills to lobby and influence key stakeholders or knowledge on the total package of value offerings of the host city). Although convention bureaus have provided advice and support in some of our cases, the host researcher’s own efforts, networking and lobbying skills, deep subject knowledge and ability to organise a capable bidding group are key factors in composing a successful bid.
- **Conferences given low priority by home institution or department.** Compared to research and education, conferences are generally not ascribed a high priority by the managerial level at institutions or departments. While the university management representatives, whom we interviewed, welcome conferences that fulfils basic criteria of quality, and can contribute to “putting the university on the map”, they generally view it as a residual activity on line with other outreach activities.

Thus, with a few exceptions, the institutional support for researchers who wish to host conferences appear relatively random and is based on individual cases where the management on an ad hoc basis decide whether or not to support. This perceived lack of

transparency in the institutional support can be a source of confusion and discouragement among researchers in the bidding or planning phase, which in one of our two “non-cases” was the reason why the conference was never realised.

- **Economic risk of hosting and lack of deficit guarantees** can, according to several interviewees, be a significant, discouraging challenge. While it is important to conduct a thorough assessment of risks, costs and benefits, the potential financial insecurity and fear of a loss may impede researchers and leadership from bidding for a conference in the first place.
- **Handling value added tax** poses a challenge that can entail major difficulties and financial burdens for the host and/or the scientific society that organises the conference. The interviewed convention bureaus note, that the challenge pertains to all kind of expenditure and income in relation to conferences, e.g. rental of venues, delegate fees, dinners, covering travel expenses for keynotes etc. It is a particular important issue in high-VAT and expensive countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands.

Congress supportive mechanisms

While it is not a purpose of this analysis, per se, to attract more conferences to Denmark, the study examines mechanisms and policy instruments, both in Denmark and abroad, that can be employed to support researchers, who wish to host a conference.

Our analysis shows that there are many specific factors in the respective research environments and universities that motivate researchers to host conferences. Moreover, it is important to note that there are significant differences between conferences, which are primarily driven by strong scientific societies vis-à-vis conferences which are primarily organised by researchers at the host university.

In our case studies, it is the very large life-science conferences that primarily are organised by capable and financially strong scientific societies, that usually have the organisational and logistic competencies in-house. Furthermore, they carry the financial risk and the lion’s share of the organisational efforts. In these cases, the importance of supportive mechanisms for host researchers is obviously less pronounced, except perhaps for the bidding and lobbying phase.

In a number of the examined cases, regional convention bureaus proactively scout for these profiles, engage and motivate them, and assist them in composing a bid/value proposition. Several convention bureaus aim to build a lasting relation to prospective and former host researchers, e.g. through an ambassador programme, in which the researchers are given the task of raising awareness of the university, showcasing its research and attracting relevant conferences.

The services of Professional Congress Organisers (PCOs) and convention bureaus are among the most commonly available supportive measures to address the planning and execution phase. To a lesser extent, some universities also offer various services in this phase.

There are also examples of universities, joining together to create a more comprehensive package of support for host researchers as well as pooling their administrative resources in order to create critical mass. The Swedish initiative, Akademikonferens, is an example of this approach.

As mentioned above, financial needs and risks of hosting can constitute a major impediment for hosting conferences. There are many examples, both in Denmark and abroad, of financial incentives and deficit guarantees, offered by both institutions, governments, and funding bodies.

Finally, our analysis shows no examples of a structured and systematic follow-up from the conferences, which can diminish the returns from hosting. However, we highlight three examples of mechanisms or strategies that can increase the benefits from hosting:

- PCO's assisting researchers in goal-setting and fulfilment of goals
- Involving industry
- Use conferences to set an agenda

1.3. INSPIRATIONAL CATALOGUE

Based on our findings in the analysis, we have developed an inspirational catalogue of congress supportive mechanisms that in our view could ensure a better scouting and matching of conferences and hosts, as well as enhancing the impact of conferences hosted by Danish researchers.

The catalogue is rooted in the congress supportive mechanisms that we have identified across the six case studies and described in chapter 6. The catalogue is divided into three sections each presenting challenges and how to overcome them, inspired by practices identified in the case studies. They should not be viewed as policy recommendations, but as focus areas in which we see a potential for an increased effort, in light of this case study.

Enhanced strategic scouting for and motivation of host researchers by convention bureaus

To find and motivate the right researchers to bid and host conferences it is crucial that scouting efforts are efficient and targeted. While the Danish convention bureaus, organised in MeetDenmark, already works systematically with matching identified conference with prospective local organisers, it might be valuable to consider how the efforts could be enhanced, e.g. through;

- Data-driven identification of prospective hosts, e.g. using a combination of bibliometric data on cross-national publication activity, knowledge on potential conferences via the ICCA-database, knowledge on researcher's international involvement in scientific societies.
- Using Denmark's comparative research strengths as well as future oriented research strategies (e.g. Forsk2025) as a thematic platform for scouting efforts. These areas generally provide a comprehensive strategic backdrop and arguments for attracting conferences, featuring a higher probability of public investments in the areas, private funding and involvement, international exposure, investments in research infrastructure etc.¹.
- Enhance knowledge of the internal structure of relevant scientific societies, e.g. through stakeholder analyses, lobbying strategies etc., for those prospective hosts that do not yet have a strong foothold in the societies.
- Stronger facilitation of project groups around conference bidding and planning in close collaboration with the universities².

¹ Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2017) Forsk2025. The investment promotion agency Copenhagen Capacity recently collaborated with the University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School and the Technical University of Denmark in order to map the research strengths of Greater Copenhagen that had the potential to attract foreign investment to the city. The analysis was carried out by IRIS Group. See Greater Copenhagen – From Science to Business (2017).

² Facilitation of strong project groups is already very common in many universities' innovation and business-collaboration efforts.

Visibility and critical mass of university support functions

The analysis shows that many researchers are challenged with regards to their limited practical skills on planning a conference, e.g. preparing the bid, project management, handling suppliers, graphic design, AV-equipment, which expenses are exempt from VAT, etc.

First, it is important that researchers have awareness of their own skills, resources and limitations in relation to planning a large research conference. For many, it their first time to plan a conference with several hundred - in some cases thousands - of delegates, why it is important for them to make a realistic assessment of which task they can – and cannot – carry out themselves. Some interviewees point out that researchers sometimes jump to quickly into the process, ending up in situation where the sheer load of tasks have become unsurmountable.

Secondly, several services are already available for host researchers e.g. offered by convention bureaus and centres, PCOs, and in some cases at the host universities. Considering the limited time and resources available to researchers, it is important that researchers know “where to go” with their challenges in the different planning phases. This emphasise the need for raising awareness of the available services and service providers in the research environments.

Finally, we find that conference services and support available at the institutional level differ significantly. The Swedish partnership, Akademikonferens, is a good example of a model for increased collaboration between institutions on conference support. In that way, the services can be offered to a broader audience, and a critical mass in the competencies can be furthered.

Thus, it might be valuable to;

- Increase visibility of support functions available to researchers (in-house at the universities, PCOs, convention bureaus etc.).
- Consider forming stronger national or regional partnerships between convention bureaus and universities for enhanced knowledge sharing, services for hosts etc.
- Ask researchers to produce a list of tasks and steps from the outset, and be realistic about their time and skills. To ease the planning and execution of the conference, PCOs should be involved where needed.

Enhanced framework conditions at the national level

Danish national strategies and policies for tourism and event attraction, on the one hand, and strategies for research, education, and innovation on the other hand are anchored at different ministries, whereas the actual efforts to align and create synergies between event tourism, and science and education, takes place on a regional and local level.

While supportive services for host researchers generally should be anchored at the local/regional level, close to the researcher, venues and the institution, it could be advantageous to further examine how the two policy areas could be better aligned at the national level to create better framework conditions. Focus areas could include;

- Clearer national guidelines for the institutions on conferences e.g. with regards to quality criteria, compliance, funding etc.

- Targeted funding for promising research areas in which the volume of funding for executing conferences is scarce, but where conferences could prove important for lifting the research quality and international exposure of those areas.
- Possible national efforts to create more awareness of support functions among prospective hosts, e.g. campaigns or short, targeted information courses.
- Enhanced coordination of strategies for event tourism with national strategies and policies for future research focus areas (e.g. Forsk2025 in Denmark), research areas with investment prospects³ as well as a national innovation policies.

Enhanced framework conditions at the institutional level

Enhanced framework conditions are not only a national issue. Our analysis, furthermore, points to a general lack of coherence in the university strategies regarding conferences – both in Denmark and abroad.

This has a range of negative consequences. First, when the top-down university research strategies and bottom-up driven conferences are not aligned, the impact of the conference on the broader institution may not fully manifest itself.

At the same time, an approach to conferences characterised by randomness and case-to-case standards and managerial support at the institution, creates confusion among researchers, who do not know whether and when they can count on support from the management. Finally, there seems to be a strong potential for a broader diffusion of the benefits of conferences at the institutions. This, for example, makes it important for the institutions to consider;

- Clearer criteria for recognising researchers that successfully engage in hosting conferences, e.g. in promotions, bonuses.
- Better embedment of conferences in the overall internationalisation- and outreach strategies of the institution, e.g. exchange of academic staff and students, attraction of international funding, institutional communication strategies etc.
- Considering how conferences can be used to support the educational goals of the institution, both at the Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD-level.
- More transparent quality criteria for conferences, so that it is clear when, under which circumstances and how the institution will support hosts.
- Ensure better coordination and coherence between departments in order to provide researchers with aligned information and direct them to the right support functions at the institutional level or e.g. convention bureaus.

Finally, the analysis underlines the importance of access to a readily available, unbureaucratic deficit guarantees that can alleviate the economic risk of hosting.

³ See IRIS Group for Copenhagen Capacity, University of Copenhagen etc. (2017); "Greater Copenhagen's research strengths with investment prospects" <http://www.greatercph.dk/science-to-business/materialer>.

While there are examples of such guarantees, disbursed locally at Danish universities, they generally seem to be based at decisions made at the level of departments or faculties. The Danish Congress Guarantee Association does not serve as an actual deficit guarantee, but prove a guarantee for a bank loan/overdraft.

It is important to examine the need for, e.g. a national scheme for deficit guarantee further, namely to which extent they pose a widespread barrier for researchers beyond the six cases examined here.

Chapter 2

Introduction

2.1. BACKGROUND

The frequency and size of international research conferences⁴ on Danish soil have been steadily on the rise throughout the last years. Denmark generally punch above its weight as an international destination for conferences⁵.

The socioeconomic effects from hosting conferences are well-documented. Large conferences result in a substantial inflow of people and money to the host city, which is conducive for economic growth and job creation, e.g. in airports, hotels, venues and the service sector at large⁶.

Much less illuminated is the academic impact of hosting conferences and the barriers and challenges of taking on the role as host.

Conferences are essential instruments of knowledge sharing in global research networks within virtually all contemporary research fields. Research conferences are “agoras” of knowledge where new scientific ideas, theories, methods, and technologies can be exchanged, tested, reviewed, and developed.

Researchers from different countries can interact and form new international research groups, and potentially pave the way for new ground breaking science. In a Danish context, international research conferences may be an important factor in developing Denmark’s already strong research performance within a number of areas⁷.

For universities and individual researchers who take on the role as hosts, research conferences place them firmly at the centre of attention in the international research environment. This can affect both individual researchers, the research environment, and the broader institution positively.

On the other hand, hosting large international research conferences requires a strong commitment and significant resources from the host institution, and not least from the host researcher(s). The implementation of large research conferences is in most cases a process that can stretch over several years, and comprise a range of challenges, for example making a convincing bid, logistics (venue, accommodation, infrastructure), project and stakeholder management, identifying sponsors and budgetary challenges, e.g. accounting and exemptions from VAT.

⁴ Throughout the report, we use the terms conference and congress indiscriminately.

⁵ In 2015, the International Congress and Convention Association ranked Denmark no. 19 globally on its ranking of international destination for meetings and congresses. Copenhagen was ranked no. 10 on the global city ranking. The statistics is based on absolute numbers without taking the size of the country into consideration. In 2014, almost 70,000 delegates attended conferences or meetings held in Denmark. ICCA (2015): “ICCA Statistics Report”.

⁶ See e.g. MeetDenmark (2016): “Strategi for MeetDenmark” and PWC (2012): “The Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy”.

⁷ See DFIR (2016): “Viden i verdensklasse – hvorfor klarer dansk forskning sig så godt”.

The local organising researchers are often reliant on external actors in solving these challenges. If an international scientific society “owns” the conference, support from the society is an important factor in making the conference a success. The large international scientific societies often arrange annual or biannual conferences.

Besides, local organisers are often dependent on convention bureaus (CVBs) in the motivation and/or bidding phase, as well as local professional conference organisers (PCOs) in the planning and execution phase. Involvement of PCOs usually depend on the extent to which a scientific society is engaged. In box 2.1., typical services offered by convention bureaus are listed.

Box 2.1. Typical services offered by convention bureaus, e.g. Copenhagen Convention Bureau or Convention Edinburgh

- Scouting and matchmaking between prospective local hosts and conferences, which potentially could be attracted to the city.
- Support in the bidding process, e.g. developing a complete value proposition, storytelling, understanding formal requirements, funding presentation trips, production of bid books and PowerPoint presentations.
- Information and advice concerning meeting facilities, accommodation, transportation, social activities, teambuilding, incentives etc.
- Contacts to local service providers, local industry and government contacts and PCOs.
- Help with branding and promotional materials.
- Facilitation of site inspections by international societies.
- Reservation of hotel allotment.

It is crucial that hosting conferences spur benefits that match the costs of hosting them. They should furthermore create added value vis-à-vis simply “free-riding”, e.g. by attending existing conferences or exchanging knowledge through virtual communities and networks.

This leaves the question as to which extent attracting and hosting international research conferences is worth the effort – that is, whether they carry value added for society, universities, research environments and individual researchers that cannot be achieved through other means.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to;

- illuminate the effects of hosting international conferences, both for the individual researcher, the research environment, and the host institution, as well as identifying the causes behind the effects.
- illuminate barriers for hosting international research conferences.
- identify Danish and international examples of congress supportive instruments.

This report seeks to answer these questions through six in-depth case studies of large international research conferences, combined with two studies of potential bidders for conferences, which Wonderful Copenhagen deemed had a high probability of attracting, but which was never realised. Furthermore, the analysis draws on the existing literature, e.g. sociological theories and studies of conferences.

This chapter will shortly sum up these insights, as well as introduce the analytical and methodological approach used. The following chapters will introduce the cases (chapter 3), explore the motivation and benefits from hosting (chapter 4), examine challenges and barriers (chapter 5), and finally, identify supportive mechanisms (chapter 6).

2.2. RECAP OF THE LITERATURE

Before examining the effects of international research conferences further, it is worth casting a brief glimpse on the existing knowledge as it constitutes an important backdrop for the analytical framework and methodological design of the analysis.

The academic literature on the impact of research conferences, can broadly be divided into two categories: analyses focused on socioeconomic impact and analyses focused on the academic impact. Furthermore, while some impacts have a “formal” character others have an informal character. These distinctions are shown in the table below.

Table 2.1. The literature on the impact of hosting international research conferences

	Academic impact	Socioeconomic impact
Formal	Citations, publications, awards	Tourism, income to businesses, hotels, jobs etc.
Informal	Network, visibility, increased interdisciplinarity, funding, career advancement, etc.	Knowledge transfer to industry etc.

The first type of studies deals with the academic impact of conferences. These studies generally utilise a bibliometric/scientometric approach, e.g. measuring citations and publications from conference proceedings, priors etc.

- An analysis from 2011, focusing on the “computer vision” subfield of computer science, shows that journal papers, created on the basis of conference “priors” are significantly more cited than journal papers without priors. The analysis furthermore shows that having a prior conference paper did not make it any easier (faster) to publish in a journal⁸.
- A bibliometric study from 2008 shows that the relative importance of conference proceedings has been diminishing over time and the scientific impact of proceedings is losing ground to other types of scientific literature in nearly all fields, except for engineering. However, proceedings play a particularly vital role in computer sciences, where they account for close to 20 per cent of the references. The same study shows that citations to conference papers are declining in importance across all discipline areas (except technical sciences)⁹.

⁸ Eckmann et. al. (2012): "Relationship between high-quality journals and conferences in computer vision"

⁹ Lisée et. al. (2008): "Conference proceedings as a source of scientific information: A bibliometric analysis"

The second type of studies is typically present within tourism studies, and is based on economic geography and econometrics. These studies focus on the socioeconomic benefits from hosting conferences, e.g. on the economic impact on growth and employment, resulting from the financial influx spent on hotels, venues etc. From this perspective, conferences are generally viewed as being worth the costs of hosting them, e.g.;

- An analysis from the UK shows that the UK meetings industry¹⁰ directly generated over £20bn of gross value added in 2011, supporting 425,000 jobs.
- According to VisitDenmark, the daily expenditure for an international research delegate in Denmark is approximately 3,100 DKK. Thus, delegates are *the* segment within tourism that spends the most, fuelling an intense international competition on attracting conferences.

Another strand of literature focuses on the derived or indirect research-related value added from conferences in terms of generating international research network, international exposure etc. These studies generally utilise sociological or anthropological approaches, focusing on social networks, culture, learning and knowledge sharing. Examples abound the literature e.g. emphasize;

- The positive impact of bringing different constituents to the same physical event in relation to learning, innovation and the development of a research field¹¹.
- The complex, multi-layered generation of research network and knowledge sharing furthered by international conferences¹².
- That conferences carry beneficial impacts for the prominence and career development of the elite scholars, organising committee chair or member, program committee chair or member, session chair, or invited speakers¹³.
- The social role of conferences in entrenching existing power relations and hierarchies in research communities¹⁴.

Thus, the literature on research conferences have investigated a number of perspectives on both the socioeconomic and academic benefits of conferences. However, as mentioned the value added from *hosting* conferences is more sparsely illuminated. The following section will introduce the analytical approach used in this study.

¹⁰ Generally coined as "MICE": Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events.

¹¹ Schüssler et. al. (2015): "Field-Configuring Events: Arenas for Innovation and Learning?"

¹² Francisco et. al. (2011): "Conference Models to Bridge Micro and Macro Studies of Science"

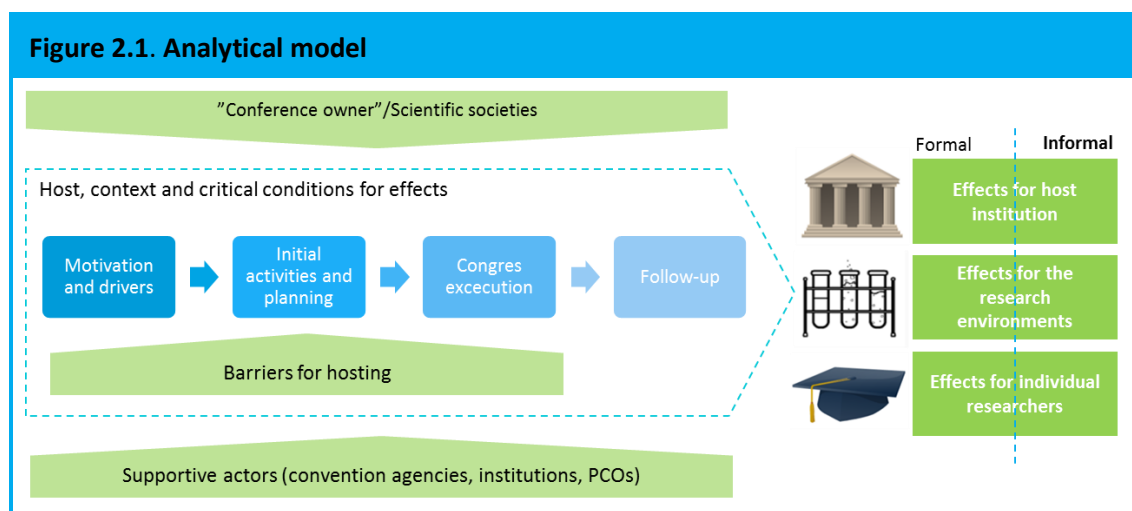
¹³ Jeong et. al. (2009): "Are you an invited speaker? A bibliometric analysis of elite groups for scholarly events in bioinformatics"

¹⁴ Silveira et. al. (2015): "Scientific events, power relationships and practices of researchers"

2.3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical framework of this analysis is based on the notion that the conference itself is only part of a larger process stretching from the motivation and decision to host a conference, through planning and execution, to the follow-up phase. All these phases can in theory spur benefits, both at the level of the host institution, for the research environments and for individual researchers.

The analytical framework below, represents a stylised depiction of hosting scientific conferences, and constitute the basic framework of this qualitative study.



The conference process

The left side of the analytical model illustrate the process and activities, which form part of hosting an international research conference. The process consists of four key phases, which can unfold during 3-8 years for larger international conferences¹⁵.

- First, **motivation and drivers** for hosting is important in relation to grasp the relevance of the conference for the research environment and the institution at large. It is furthermore crucial for exploring, which effects the involved actors expect from hosting the conference. E.g. the host can be driven by a desire to fill a gap in the existing knowledge within the field, a desire to be at the centre of the international network and/or a desire to be host for a conference drawing in elite researcher globally.
- Second, **the initial activities and planning** include the internal decision process in the environment or institution, the bidding process and lobbying in the international research society. Moreover, this phase includes the programming of the conference concept, allocation of resources and facilities, mobilisation of the international research community, calls for abstracts and the peer reviewing process prior to the conference.
- Third, **congress execution and congress format** include the activities carried out during the conference. For example, logistics (hotels, infrastructure and bureaucracy related to

¹⁵ Se MeetDenmark (2016): "Strategi for MeetDenmark"

the influx of hundreds or thousands of international delegates), specific congress elements, including keynotes, break-out sessions, panels, networking activities, external communication and outreach etc.

- Fourth, **follow-up** activities aimed at ensuring embedment and continued momentum in the research results and networks, generated at the conference. This includes publication of papers and conference proceedings, establishment of virtual communities etc. Furthermore, it includes evaluations and the host's opportunity to institutionalise organisational knowledge gained during the conference.

At large conferences, other actors usually play an important role. Above the process-figure, the "**conference owner**" is illustrated. This is the entity which is the overarching operator of a conference. In most cases, this will be a scientific association or society that seeks to extent networks and knowledge exchange between scientists from different countries or environments.

The extent to which the conference owners are engaged in organising the conferences may differ significantly. In many cases, scientific societies put conferences to tender among competing hosts or cities.

Another group of actors, are **supportive organisations** such as city/regional convention bureaus (CVB) that might scout for conferences and host researchers, and support researchers in everything from the bidding process to the execution of the conference. The higher education institutions and professional conference organisers (PCOs) may also support researchers in the process.

Benefits, barriers, and context

Benefits are the effects spurred by large international research conferences. The benefits can, as mentioned, be multidimensional and show in all phases described in figure 2.1. above – i.e. before, during and after execution of the conference. The benefits include;

- **Benefits for the host institution**, e.g. increased collaboration with elite research environments abroad, highlighting the research strengths of the institution, attraction of external funding etc.
- **Benefits for the research environments**, e.g. in relation to enhanced research quality, increased internationalisation, coherence between researchers, talent development, cases and research results that can be employed in relation to education, new research agreements with international research environments or with the industry etc.
- **Benefits for individual researchers** can encompass enhanced research leadership, better international standing in the global research community, publications in prestigious journals, new personal contacts, and career development because of increased visibility in the institution.

Furthermore, there can be spill overs to other environments at the institution, which for example can benefit from building new relations and exposing themselves to new research results.

Our analytical approach furthermore includes potential barriers for hosting. Barriers can exist at all levels (researchers, research environments and institutions) and in all phases. Barriers can include;

- Lack of time and resources for organising conferences vis-à-vis the core activities of researchers (research and education).
- Unclear goals or cost-benefits of hosting, e.g. if the conference does not match the research strategy of the environment or institution. Or if the expected long-term benefits of hosting do not justify the expected use of resources.
- Low prioritisation of hosting conferences by institution or from the surrounding research environment vis-à-vis other activities (e.g. research, education, business-collaboration etc.).
- Lack of experience or project management skills of host researcher and knowledge on practical and logistical issues.

Context and preconditions can influence the extent to which effects are realised in all phases. For example, there can be challenges related to the coherence between the congress and other activities at the institution/research environments. Or there can be challenges in preparing the mathematical calls or ensuring a high scientific quality at the conference. Another important issue is the collaboration and division of labour between the scientific society in charge of many conferences and the research host.

Lastly, overcoming barriers and reaping the effects of hosting conferences, can to some extent be influenced by congress-supportive framework conditions and instruments. This includes co-financing, start-up capital from the institution as well as national and regional initiatives aimed at attracting and supporting congress activities.

This analysis is based on a combination of qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in six international research conferences and desk research of the available literature on research conferences. The cases include;

- The 31st International Conference on Thermoelectrics, 2012 in Aalborg.
- The 12th International Family Nursing Conference, 2015 in Odense.
- European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress, 2016 in Copenhagen.
- 11th International Congress on the Biology of the Fish, 2014 in Edinburgh.
- 51st Congress of the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association and European Dialysis and Transplant Association), 2014 in Amsterdam.
- 28th annual congress of the European Economic Association and the 67th European meeting of the Econometric Society, 2013 in Gothenburg.

Furthermore, two conferences that were planned but never executed are included in the analysis as so-called “non-cases” to stress barriers great enough to halt a conference completely.

The cases will be described in the following chapter. See more on the methodological approach in Appendix A.

Chapter 3

Cases

This chapter provides a description of the six cases studied in this analysis. A textbox in the end of each case description summarises key fact about the conference.

3.1. THE 31ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THERMOELECTRICS 2012

The International Conference on Thermoelectrics is the most important annual meeting for scientists, engineers, and industry in the field of thermoelectric research, development of new materials and applications in power generation, refrigeration, thermal management, and sensing equipment. The conference is internationally prestigious and there are typically around 500-600 delegates attending.

The conference has been held annually throughout the last approximately three decades. The International Thermoelectric Society (ITS) is arranging the conference in corporation with a local organiser that varies each year.

Following a proposal from Aalborg University (AAU), the ITS Board chose AAU to host the International Conference on Thermoelectrics in 2012 in Aalborg, Denmark. The host researcher and local conference chair was Professor Lasse Rosendahl from AAU. Besides Professor Rosendahl, two other academic staff and two secretaries were involved in planning the conference on a continuously basis during the two years from 2010-2012.

Motivation for hosting

The idea of hosting the conference derived primary from Professor Rosendahl's engagement in the Center for Energy Materials (CEM) based at Aarhus University (Department of Chemistry)¹⁶.

Through Professor Rosendahl's engagement in CEM the idea of hosting the conference was incepted and stimulated. It furthermore played a crucial role that the broader Danish research environment within thermoelectrics also supported the idea of hosting the ITS conference. In addition to the prestige and recognition from his peers it also assured Professor Rosendahl that he had support from the local and national research environment to host the conference.

Besides a personal motivation to progress in his research career, Professor Rosendahl was also motivated by the opportunity to influence the international scientific community to focus more on the use of thermoelectric in the industry instead of fundamental academic research.

¹⁶ CEM is funded by the Danish Council for Strategic Research and the centre consists of multiple partners from academia (e.g. the Technical University of Denmark and Aarhus University) and industry - Danish as well as international. The aim of CEM is to develop new energy systems and to conduct outstanding interdisciplinary research and to exploit the results in specific industrial applications.

The process

The process started in 2010. The local tourism and convention bureau, VisitAalborg, played a crucial role, taking a great share of responsibility in the bidding process as well as in the following planning and coordinating process.

During the process of planning the conference, Professor Rosendahl worked closely together with ITS and he was placed in the board two year prior and two years following the conference.

The planning of the conference required more time and resources than Professor Rosendahl initially expected. Professor Rosendahl estimates that he spent between 200-300 hours on the conference. It was particularly the job to find sponsors that was more demanding and time-consuming than expected.

Besides his own time there were also a team of four other employees from AAU continuously involved in the planning from 2010-2012, and during the conference 15 students furthermore assisted him.

Professor Rosendahl was not directly allowed to downgrade his teaching and research obligations during the planning of the conference so he had to do a lot of the work in his spare time.

Professor Rosendahl has not been in a situation where he was asked to advice another researcher about taking on the task of planning a large and similar research conference. According to Professor Rosendahl, his recommendation would depend on the concrete situation.

Value added

The value added and gains from the conference can be summarised in the following:

- Increased international attention and branding of AAU within the field of thermoelectrics and thus an increased number of international researchers seeking to AAU.
- Stronger international network for Professor Rosendahl through the seat in the board of ITS and an increased number of invitations to give international presentations.
- Influence from the Danish research environment within thermoelectrics on the focus and direction in the international scientific community.



The 31st International Conference on Thermoelectrics 2012

- Local conference organiser: Aalborg University (AAU)
- International conference organiser: International Thermoelectric Society (ITS)
- Conference location: Aalborg, Denmark
- Number of delegates: About 600 from all over the world
- Conference frequency and duration: Annually. Four days.
- Scientific area: Technical sciences

3.2. THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL FAMILY NURSING CONFERENCE 2015

The 12th International Family Nursing Conference was held in Odense, Denmark in 2015. The conference takes place biannually and is focused on family nursing research, practice, education, and policy issues related to families in health and illness.

458 delegates from 31 nations, made the conference in Odense the largest International Family Nursing Conference to date.

The conference was arranged by the International Family Nursing Association (IFNA) whose mission is to transform family health globally. The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) was the local host and organiser with Associate professor Birte Østergaard as the conference chair and key coordinator.

Motivation for hosting

Dr Østergaard founded the Danish Family Nursing Association in 2013 and she is still president of the organisation. She has also been a member of the management in IFNA the last four years and she is actively involved in both the national and international family nursing environment. Thus, she had a strong international network and a lot of conference experience prior to the bid and planning of the 12th International Family Nursing Conference in Odense.

Dr Østergaard can be characterised as very passionate and ambitious on behalf of the family nursing society. Also, her main motivation was to promote and increase the focus on family nursing as an independent discipline in Denmark. In addition, the conference was also a great opportunity to keep her international network updated and promote her position within the research environment.

The process

The regional non-profit organisation, Inspiring Denmark, contacted Dr Østergaard in 2010. At the time, she was already involved in planning a Nordic family nursing conference at a smaller scale. Inspiring Denmark motivated her to try to attract the large International Family Nursing Conference in 2015, and the bureau was actively involved in making a professional proposal in the bidding process. Brasilia originally won the bid, but it turned out that the Brazilian organiser did not live up to IFNA's standard procedures (the issue concerned payment for accommodation). The conference of 2015 was instead awarded to Odense and SDU.

In general, IFNA has a relatively fixed concept for the conferences and the international organisation played a rather large role in making the call-for-papers, the specific program, finding sponsors, etc.

Dr Østergaard was a member of IFNA's conference committee that had meetings every second week two years before the conference and every week during the year up to the conference.

Professor Østergaard estimates that she spent about two months of full time work on the conference and especially the administration of the VAT turned out to be a lot more time-consuming and complex than expected (IFNA had to be registered as an independent company in Denmark).

Dr Østergaard also involved some of her Danish colleagues from the Danish Family Nursing Association who voluntarily contributed to the planning and execution phases.

When asked, she would recommend her younger colleagues to do the same and engage in hosting international conferences.

Value added

The value added from the conference can be summarised in the following:

- Promotion of the research environment of family nursing in Denmark and an increasing number of Danish researchers within the field.
- Stronger international network and participation in international research project (specifically Dr Østergaard has become involved in two larger European research projects because of the conference). During the conference, there was also a systematic focus on matching researchers and making new international networks and research groups.
- Invitations to give presentation as keynote speaker at other international conferences.



The 12th International Family Nursing Conference 2015

- Local conference organiser: Odense University (SDU)
- International conference organiser: International Family Nursing Association (IFNA)
- Conference location: Odense, Denmark
- Number of delegates: 458 from 31 different nations
- Conference frequency and duration: Every two years. Four days.
- Scientific area: Health

3.3. THE ESMO CONGRESS 2016 – FROM DISEASE TREATMENT TO PATIENT CARE

The annual congress of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is the premier scientific platform for oncology research and education, and the largest European event dedicated to oncology. ESMO bridges the gap between researchers, clinicians and patients and covers a broad scope of ontological research sub disciplines. The ESMO conferences primary attract doctors, but representatives from public authorities, the life science industry and relevant NGOs are also attending in a vast number.

In 2016, the congress took place in Copenhagen, Denmark at the Bella Center. With more than 20,000 delegates, the 2016 ESMO congress turned out to be the largest European cancer congress to date and the largest international research conference ever hosted in Denmark. Furthermore, it was the congress with the highest number of submitted and presented research articles at an ESMO congress. Relative to population size, Danish researchers submitted the highest number of scientific results for presentation.

Motivation for hosting

The convention bureau, Wonderful Copenhagen, played an important role in attracting the conference to Copenhagen. It is a very large event that attracts thousands of delegates to the city. Greater Copenhagen is in general a very strong region within life science - particularly regarding clinical research¹⁷. Thus, the oncology congress was a great opportunity to show the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention to the international research environment.

The Danish Society of Clinical Oncology (DSKO) was fully supporting the congress and the president of DSKO, Professor Ulrik Lassen at Rigshospitalet, was appointed Local Officer of the event. Professor Lassen has been actively involved in ESMO since 1996 and he was the Danish representative in ESMO from 2011-2016.

Professor Lassen was motivated by the great exposure that the conference would bring. Because of the size and scientific theme of the congress, extensive media coverage was almost certain. What was even more important was that the congress would bring attention from the international environment.

For Professor Lassen, the international attention was likely to bring him in a better position to advance in ESMO. The plausible career advancement was, however, not his primary motivation. Professor Lassen was proud to host the congress in Copenhagen, and to show the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention to the international research environment. But after the event he was motivation to advance in ESMO.

Also, he was motivated by the political support from the national and regional health care system as well as from the local municipality.

¹⁷ See IRIS Group (2017): "Dansk life science under mikroskop - En forskningsbaseret styrkeposition der forgrener sig"

The process

Discussions about Copenhagen as host city started several years before the congress took place. ESMO wanted the congress to take place in Scandinavia in order to attract more members from the Nordic countries. Since the ESMO Congress had already taken place in Stockholm, during previous years, the only other available choice was Copenhagen. Hence no comparison with other cities was done.

Following a request for proposal from ESMO, Wonderful Copenhagen and Professor Lassen placed the bid. When infrastructure, hotel capacity etc. was secured based on the previous size of the ESMO Congress, it was announced that Copenhagen would host the 2016 ESMO congress.

ESMO managed the entire process of planning, organising and execution of the congress through its own Congress Department and the involvement of other units, e.g. the Communications Department. It is a large and very professional society.

A bidding process was initiated among local Danish PCOs and media bureaus. The PCO, MCI group, was chosen to handle hotel booking and arrange a social event, while the strategic communication agency, Hansen Agenda, was appointed to create a partnership and coordinate the local communications.

Professor Lassen and CEO Lotte Hansen at Hansen Agenda had weekly meetings six months ahead of the conference. The collaboration was a success and the agency came up with a new approach involving a high degree of agenda setting to mobilise the Danish research environment and reach out to the broader society.

Among Danish researchers a lot of work was done to create a sense of ownership in the research environments. Ambassadors were pointed out in significant environments at universities and hospitals. The goal was to promote the congress in a new way by not just informing but actively involving the researchers to give them a sense of ownership. DSKO also financed an event for young doctors prior to the congress to involve them in the educational aspect of congress.

The Danish agenda focused on the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention with the patient in focus. This was the story that everyone at the conference should take home. Hansen Agenda facilitated a partnership between some of the main Danish stakeholders tackling cancer to present the Danish model. The partnership included The Danish Cancer Society, The Danish Regions, The Danish Health Authority, DSKO, and Copenhagen Science City.

A special event was arranged by Rigshospitalet and Hansen Agenda the day before the conference for a limited group of stakeholders including hospital directors, ministers, top government officials, and researchers. The aim of the partnership was to pass the Danish model of cancer treatment and prevention as a source of inspiration to both Danish citizens and countries around the world.

Value added

The Danish research environment received a lot of attention from the Danish society and in particular from Danish politicians. Hence, the agenda setting effort was a success (see box 6.7. in chapter 6). The conference received extensive media coverage and was officially opened by the Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The focus on the Danish model for cancer

treatment and prevention would not have been exposed to the same degree nationally or internationally had the congress taken place in another region.

The exposure of the Danish model and the focus on young doctors is also believed to increase the influx for new talents to Copenhagen. Likewise, the high number of symposia organised by the pharmaceutical companies is believed to carry the potential for increased investments in Danish life science companies and research.

The local research environments were highly motivated. The number of Danish delegates at the congress was 145 per cent higher than usual, and as mentioned above, relative to population size, Danish researchers submitted more scientific results for presentation at the congress than any of their international peers. The number of scientific abstracts submitted by Danish researcher increased by 129 per cent from the previous year.

Professor Lassen is now a member of the ESMO membership committee. He thinks that his role as the Local Officer at the congress helped him getting appointed for this position. He was aware of the workload that the congress involved. As the Local Officer, he could have spent less hours on the conference, but he insisted to be involved in all issues that arose. He had a feeling of responsibility, and if the opportunity rises again he is ready to host another conference.



ESMO 2016 Congress - From disease treatment to patient care

- Local conference organiser: Rigshospitalet and Danish Society of Clinical Oncology
- International conference organiser: European Society for Medical Oncology
- Conference location: Copenhagen, Denmark
- Number of delegates: 20,522
- Conference frequency and duration: Annual. Five days
- Scientific area: Oncology

3.4. THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON THE BIOLOGY OF FISH 2014

The International Congress on the Biology of the Fish is a recurring conference, held biannually at differing locations. The conference dates back to 1994, where a number of thematic symposia within the field of fish biology joined together to form a larger conference. The conference attracts both researchers as well as representatives from public authorities, fishery associations etc. The conference attracts approximately 400-500 delegates.

In 2014, the conference was hosted at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh following a bid to host the conference by Associate Professor of Marine Biology Mark Hartl, an expert of marine toxicology from the Centre of Marine Biodiversity & Biotechnology. The congress was hosted at Heriott Watt University's conference centre.

The conference focuses on all aspects of fish physiology. It is a research field, which is characterised by a high degree of international cooperation. Topics include fishery, aquaculture, nutrition, parasites, and disease to swimming and migratory physiology, ecological physiology, environmental stress, and toxicology, in both fresh and seawater environments.

Throughout its history, the American Fisheries Society's Physiology Section has been the driving force behind the conference. During the first years, the conferences was held at differing North American locations (e.g. Vancouver and San Francisco). The conference rotates in such a way that two conference are held in North America, followed by one outside.

Having existed for over 20 years, the conference is well-consolidated within the field of fish biology. Students (Master's and PhDs) constitute almost half of the delegates. Therefore, it is emphasised that hosts keep costs down and ensure cheap accommodation for the students.

Motivation for hosting

In the Edinburgh case, motivation for hosting the conference derived from Dr Hartl's longstanding engagement in the American Fisheries Society, where he served as President of the Physiology Section of the American Fisheries Society (2010-2012). His motives for attracting and hosting included;

- Attracting the international research community to Edinburgh, which, considering its geographical location, had been in the periphery of the predominantly American research community.
- Attracting a large event with more volume and impact than a traditional symposium. Since 2006, Dr Hartl had organised thematic symposia at the conferences.
- Promote internationalisation of the Heriot Watt University's strong research environments within aquaculture and fish biology, including exchange of PhDs and promotion of the School's Master's programmes.
- Progress in his research career, as outreach activities and international promotion of the Heriot Watt University is viewed positively by both the department and the institution.

Whereas internationalisation is viewed positively, the university does not have any explicit strategy on conferences. The university provides general administrative support for host researchers,

given that the conference fulfils some basic quality requirements, for example the conference's track record and that the conference society is well-consolidated.

The process

In 2010, Dr Hartl developed a proposal in collaboration with Convention Edinburgh to attract the conference to Edinburgh in 2012. The bid did not succeed at first, due to an internal AFS rule that every 2nd conference should be held in North America. However, he succeeded in attracting the conference for 2014, which was a clear advantage in terms of the additional time available for perfecting the bid and planning the conference.

Box 3.1. Requested information in the bid for ICBF 2014

- Description of conference planning assistance, formally through the home college or university or by an organising committee with prior conference hosting experience.
- Description of potential seed money, or other support, available from college or university, city, or region.
- Description of accommodations (affordable and up-market) for between 300 and 500 attendees, including many students, postdocs, and family members.
- Description of accessibility to the venue and things to see and do.
- Indication of potential sponsors.

Overall, Dr Hartl noted that the process was time-consuming, but not significantly more than he had expected. He spent a couple of hours a week during the first four years. This gradually increased to around a day a week about six months before the conference. The week before and during the conference he spent 100 per cent of his time.

Dr Hartl informed that the total budget of the conferences was approximately £180,000 which was spent on facilities, catering etc. Heriot Watt University furthermore provided £10,000 in start-up funding, which covered expenses until the inflow of conference-fees. It was an advantage that he was not required to provide large up-front costs.

Dr Hartl did not have access to a deficit guarantee, but the conference was covered by a cancellation and indemnity insurance policy. Dr Hartl preferred this option because a deficit guarantee, according to him, often entails some degree of loss of control on the part of the organiser.

In the case of ICBF, the local organiser is the host, while the Conference Chair traditionally is Don MacKinlay, one of the original founders of the conference. All "local" practical and logistic issues, including the venue, catering, social activities, funding etc., related to the conference is incumbent on the host researcher. The society is responsible for the scientific programme, website and administration of abstracts. The symposia at the conference are organised by individual researchers.

Dr Hartl set up a small organising committee that primarily came into use immediately before and during the conference. Voluntary students furthermore assisted him during the conference.

During the bid and the process of planning the conference, Dr Hartl worked closely together with Convention Edinburgh, which in his view was a critical partner for making the conference a success. During the bidding process, Convention Edinburgh funded two trips to the USA to pitch

his proposal. Subsequently, they helped him in many of the practical matters surrounding the organisation of the conference, printing of flyers and vetting suppliers etc.

No PCOs were involved in the conference, but according to Dr Hartl, this could have been beneficial in relation to handling tax, VAT etc.

Dr Hartl noted that it was a challenge to administer VAT, VAT registration, VAT reporting to the British tax authorities (HMRC) etc. The Society, because it is not recognised in the UK as registered charity, was not exempt from VAT. Dr Hartl could in principle have administered the finances through the University's accounts, but he wished to stay 100 per cent in control. This was important to him because he was personally carrying the risk. For him, a PCO could have provided accountancy expertise on these matters.

Value added

According to Dr Hartl, the benefits of hosting lived up to his original motivations and he would without hesitation do it again if asked.

Dr Hartl emphasise that the conference carry clear benefits with regards to being at the centre of the international research environment within fish biology. Thus, it creates international visibility for the local research environment and better access for forming international consortia for research funding.

On a more individual basis, organising the conference constitutes a “CV-boost” for the host researcher, which according to Don Mackinlay can contribute to the researcher's career advancement at the home university in light of showing the institutional or departmental leadership one's organisational skills.

For younger colleagues to get involved, he suggests to start engaging themselves in a committee or organising small workshops before bidding for a conference in their own right.



The 11th International Congress on the Biology of the Fish 2014

- Local conference organiser: Dr Mark Hartl
- International conference owner: American Fisheries Society - Physiology Section
- Conference location: Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland
- Number of delegates: 485
- Conference frequency and duration: Biannual. Five days
- Scientific area: Fish biology

3.5. THE 51ST CONGRESS OF THE ERA-EDTA 2014

The European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA) annual congress is a very large medical conference, attracting more than 8,000 delegates.

The conference is focused on clinicians and scientists in nephrology, dialysis, renal transplantation, and related areas – e.g. diabetes and metabolism, immunology and pathology etc. Furthermore, the congress has on a strong industrial attendance, e.g. from the pharmaceutical industry, that can arrange special industrial symposia and exhibitions at the conference.

Among the key purposes of the conference is to enhance knowledge exchange between hospitals, research and industry.

The 51st congress was held at the largest convention venue in Amsterdam, the RAI, in 2014. Of the 8,146 delegates, 61 per cent came from Europe. 128 exhibitors were present at the conference, of which 70 per cent were medical companies.

Motivation for hosting

The RAI played an important role in attracting the conference to Amsterdam. The conference had been in Amsterdam before (1996), and the venue had actively kept a close relation to the society throughout the years and could see that there was a window of opportunity for attracting the conference in 2013 or 2014.

The process started as early as 2009 when the RAI Amsterdam engaged the Dutch Federation of Nephrology, which in unison played an important role as the initial mover of attracting the conference. RAI Amsterdam engaged the Dutch Federation of Nephrology, which in unison played an important role as the initial mover of attracting the conference.

Two senior researchers/medical doctors – Professor Dr Peter J. Blankestijn, from the Utrecht Medical Center, and Professor Dr Piet ter Wee from Vrije University Medical Center and president of the Dutch Federation of Nephrology, backed by the Dutch Nephrology society, played a key role in attracting the conference to Amsterdam and were part of the organising committee. At the time of the bidding process, both researchers were heavily engaged in the Dutch Federation of Nephrology and were working together on a large kidney research projects as principal investigators. Professor Blankestijn was a council member in the ERA-EDTA.

Both Professor Piet ter Wee and Professor Blankestijn have for many years participated extensively in Dutch and international societies within nephrology, including council memberships in the ERA-EDTA and the Dutch Nephrology Society. Their motivations included;

- **International visibility of a Dutch research environment.** Professor Piet ter Wee was at the time establishing a stronger academic nephrology environment at the Vrije University Medical Center, and was furthermore president of the Dutch Federation of Nephrology. He found the ERA-EDTA to be welcome opportunity to create international visibility around the Dutch nephrology environment.
- **Branding of the country and Dutch nephrology research.** For Professor Peter Blankestijn, the primary driver was the chance to brand the Netherlands and Dutch nephrology research to the world. He expected that hosting the conference would spur

positive effects for the country in terms of attracting the global nephrology network to the Netherlands.

The process

The organisation and execution of the congress was overwhelmingly driven by the society ERA-EDTA in collaboration with the RAI and the Dutch Federation of Nephrology. The ERA-EDTA was responsible for the entire scientific programme, industrial symposia and the interaction with the venue.

In the entire process of actualising an ERA-EDTA-conference, the society, rather than the hosts, bear the lion's share of the efforts. It is the local scientific society that places the bid, and carry the responsible of raising the awareness of the conference and the destination. The ERA-EDTA assesses the bids, e.g. on the basis of scientific criteria of the host country and a very detailed evaluation system (see box 3.2.). Subsequently, the society conducts site visits to the relevant host countries.

Box 3.2. Application evaluation criteria – ERA-EDTA

The applicant should have the full support of the national nephrology society of the host country in which the ERA-EDTA annual Congress is held (often the president of the national society). The applicant must submit minimum two, and maximum three names for the Congress President. The Council will then evaluate the proposals and elect one of them as the local Congress President or ask for further candidates. The choice of a venue is based on:

- Quality of the venue, its technical equipment, reliability of services as well as the city's infrastructures.
- All costs involved.
- Availability of the venue in suitable dates.
- Relevance with regard to geographical matters.
- Precedence is given to cities where no ERA-EDTA congress has been held or to the ones where congresses were held further back in time (minimum break of at least 5 years before an ERA-EDTA congress can go back to the same destination).
- The final decision will be made by secret vote.

All planning was controlled by the ERA-EDTA, including the collaboration with the RAI, flyers, webpage etc. Consequently, the researchers in the organising committee did not spend much time on it, and it did not interfere with research and educational tasks.

The conference president was engaged in developing the research programme. The congress president was furthermore engaged in structuring the conference programme, although the main responsibility was incumbent on the scientific board, which consisted of elite nephrology researchers from all over the world.

The local organising committee, led by the congress president, was responsible for the social activities during the conference, e.g. a so-called Renal Run and dinners for the ERA-EDTA council members.

Value added

The two researchers clearly pointed out that hosting the conference was valuable in terms of showcasing Dutch nephrology research in light of the relatively large Dutch attendance to the conference and the opportunity to invite delegates to site events at the hospitals/research environments.

According to the interviewees, this visibility is crucial to establish new funding consortia, e.g. for Horizon 2020 applications. Furthermore, the researchers pointed out that it personally benefited them, in terms of more invitations to speak at other conferences. Professor Piet ter Wee subsequently became the chief medical officer at the VUmc and described his congress presidency as “the icing on the cake”.

The two researchers noted that they would do it again. However, they emphasise that ERA-EDTA was not very time-consuming for them, and they would be less enthusiastic about organising a conference by themselves considering their limited time.

The ERA-EDTA will host its 55th congress in 2018 in Copenhagen.



The 51ST ERA-EDTA Congress 2014

- Local conference organiser: Researchers at VUmc and UMC as well as RAI Amsterdam
- International conference organiser: ERA-EDTA
- Conference location: Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Number of delegates: 8,146
- Conference frequency and duration: Annually. Four days
- Scientific area: Life science

3.6. THE EEA – ESEM CONGRESS 2013

The annual EEA – ESEM congress is a joint event held by The European Economic Association and the Econometric Society. The first EEA Congress was held in Vienna in 1986. Since then the EEA has had congresses in many major cities in Europe, and in recent years, the EEA congresses have been held jointly with the Econometric Society. The congress is the largest and most prestigious meeting of economists in Europe. The academic scope of the conferences is rather broad to cover the interests of most scientific sub disciplines within economy. The conference on average attracts around 1,500 delegates.

In 2013, the 28th annual congress of the European Economic Association and the 67th European meeting of the Econometric Society took place at the University of Gothenburg’s School of Business, Economics and Law. The Department of Economics is one of the largest in Sweden and has a long tradition for international collaboration. The main fields of research during recent years have been development economics, behavioural economics, and environmental economics.

The academic programme for EEA – ESEM congresses is never dominated by a specific theme. But the local department of economics hosted two sessions within its core fields of research: Structural Change and Natural Resources in Developing Countries.

Beside the academic programme, several exhibitors were present. Among them, all the relevant academic publishers (e.g. Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge - Taylor & Francis, Oxford and Cambridge University Press, etc.). Also, some of the institutional members of the EEA were available

to speak to delegates about their research activities and work at their institutions. Among them, were representatives from the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, Bank of England, and Deutsche Bundesbank.

The 2013 congress ended up being one of the largest EEA – ESEM congresses in terms of number of delegates.

Motivation for hosting

At the Department of Economics, Professor Ola Olsson took the lead as host of the conference. He had been to several EEA – ESEM conferences at different locations prior to 2013 and thought that Gothenburg in many ways were better suited to host this big annual conference.

What motivated Professor Olsson was the opportunity to bring the international research environment to Gothenburg, and to show that the School of Business, Economics and Law has a number of internationally recognised research areas. The two special sessions on Structural Change and Natural Resources in Developing Countries were included in a side-event programme because of Professor Olsson. The two scientific societies plan the academic programme exclusively, but the side-event programme allowed a special focus on areas in which Gothenburg is specialised.

The opportunity to host a successful conference for his international peers was an important driver for Ola. He emphasised that he did not do it for the sake of his own career, but for the community of economist and in particular to brand the University of Gothenburg.

The process

Initially, the EEA contacted the Gothenburg Convention Bureau in 2010 with a general request if the city was interested and able to host the EEA – ESEM conference in 2013. Normally the convention bureau scouts for potential conferences and motivate the right researchers to place a bid. But in the years of the financial crisis things were different. The EEA wanted to make sure that the event could be executed, as cutbacks to academic funding had hit universities in southern European countries particularly hard compared to the northern part of Europe.

The convention bureau contacted Professor Olsson at the Department of Economics and together they made a presentation of Gothenburg showing the ability of the city to host the conference. There were no serious competitors, and in 2011 at the end of the annual conference that took place in Oslo, it was announced that Gothenburg would host the conference two years later.

Since 2008 the EEA has executed the annual conferences very professionally, managed top down. The main reason to professionalise the organisation of the conferences was to streamline the concept as it is repeated year-by-year. In that way, it is easier for the scientific society to create a historical archive and pass know-how easily and cheaply to local hosts.

Most of the planning was arranged by the EEA. The association invited delegates, managed the budget and arranged everything linked to the academic programme. The local host normally takes care of everything on spot like venues, catering, social events etc. But in reality, the EEA also arranged a lot of the local tasks at the 2013 conference in Gothenburg.

Gothenburg Convention Bureau printed flyers and giveaways to the 2012 conference to promote next year's conference in Gothenburg. It arranged info screens along the highway when the delegates arrived, involved Taste of Gothenburg (a collaboration to strengthen Gothenburg's restaurant scene) and informed all relevant restaurants, hotels etc. about the conference, so they could prepare in time.

Most of the preparation took place only in the weeks before the conference because of the summer holiday. According to the key persons involved, this period of time was rather stressful and could have been planned in other ways. But in the end, the conference was a success. A survey was distributed to all delegates after the conference, and the results showed an overall satisfaction with the conference.

Value added

According to Professor Olsson and the Vice Dean of faculty, Professor Olof Johansson-Stenman, the University got as much out of conference as possible. Effects should, however, not be overstated. As the Vice Dean explained; you cannot just set up a huge successful conference and get internationally recognised, you need a basis of solid research, publications, citation etc. To that, conferences might very well be a great supplement to put you on the map – but it is not the major way to do it. It is more on the margin. The priority of the school is research.

Both Professor Olsson and the Vice Dean welcome more conferences to the department. There is a similar sized conference on environmental economics planned for the summer of 2018 and the 12th Nordic Conference on Behavioural and Experimental Economics will take place at the university in the fall of 2017.

However, Professor Olsson would not take the lead in another conference. To him, it is something you do once as a researcher.

The EEA – ESEM congress 2013



- Local conference organiser: University of Gothenburg
- International conference organiser: European Economic Association (EEA) and Econometric Society
- Conference location: Gothenburg, Sweden
- Number of delegates: 1,656 of which 1091 were EEA members
- Conference frequency and duration: Annual. Five days
- Scientific area: Economics

3.7. THE “NON-CASES”

In addition to the six cases presented above, we interviewed two researchers who were encouraged by Wonderful Copenhagen to place a bid on a conference. One of these researchers seriously considered bidding, but never reached that stage. The other researcher made a bid, but lost it (2nd place).

The two cases are included in the analysis to provide a more hands-on perspective on which barriers can halt a prospective host researcher altogether. The two cases are;

The ESSHC is a biannual conference organised by the International Institute of Social History (IISH). The conference usually attracts between 1,000-1,500 delegates. The main objective of the conference is to introduce historians who use the insights and techniques from the social sciences to social scientists that focus on the past in their research and vice versa.

The prospective Danish bidder was Professor Anne Løkke from the Saxo Institute at the University of Copenhagen. Professor Anne Løkke was initially encouraged to place a bid by Wonderful Copenhagen and considered it. She had been to the conference abroad before and felt it would be highly beneficial to bring the conference to Copenhagen for a number of reasons, i.e;

- **Attract the community to Copenhagen**, which the researcher anticipated would be beneficial for the city.
- **Strengthen history research in Denmark.** By exposing the Danish history research environment and history students for the international history research community and elite researchers.

However, the researcher relatively quickly decided not to place a bid. The researcher mentions two main reasons for not bidding;

Limited time and resources; The main impediment was the anticipated time and resources that would be necessary to spend on organising. Specifically, the Professor notes that a number of structural conditions in research and education funding plays an important role. Thus, it is her perception that;

- The time spent on applying for external funding generally has increased vis-à-vis researching and teaching.
- The number of students in relation to the size of the teaching staff has increased within the Humanities.
- The success rate of applications as well as the size of individual research grants disbursed within Humanities and social sciences are small, e.g. compared to life science. According to the researcher, this makes it more challenging to organise a conference within these areas compared to say engineering or life science.

Cutbacks at the department. Adding to this, the researcher emphasises that the University of Copenhagen and the specific department were subject to cutbacks and layoffs at the time of bidding process.¹⁸ This context discouraged the researcher to engage in organising a conference.

Professor Anne Løkke add that she would like to bid for the conference when and if the context is different in terms of the resources and available time.

¹⁸ The University of Copenhagen went through a spending cut, during early 2016.

International Society of Biomechanics Conference 2017

The International Society of Biomechanics Conference is the largest conference in the field of biomechanics and movement analysis. The conference is held biannually and gathers around 1,000 delegates. The Danish bidder was Associate Professor Tine Alkjær from the University of Copenhagen.

Wonderful Copenhagen encouraged Dr. Alkjær to bid for the conference in 2017. She had a number of motives for bidding, including;

- **Creating visibility and attention.** Biomechanics in Denmark has a strong position internationally and the professor anticipated that the conference could draw additional international attention to Danish research in the field.
- **Benefits for the Danish research community.** The research environment in Copenhagen has a strong collaboration with the corresponding environment at the University of Aalborg, and Dr. Alkjær expected that the environment in Aalborg could benefit from side events etc.
- **Career advancement.** The conference would be beneficial for her career in terms of adding to her CV as a researcher and creating awareness at the department management.

However, the prospective host was from the outset worried that hosting might not spur the expected benefits. Specifically, the researcher was concerned that the visibility and awareness fostered by organising would have a relatively limited duration at the faculty level, thereby carrying limited impact career-wise.

After having decided to bid, the professor commissioned a small work group consisting of fellow researchers. As the formal requirements for the bid was relatively complex, the group drew on Wonderful Copenhagen's expertise in matters regarding price level in the host city, hotel capacity etc. Furthermore, the convention agency helped match the researchers with a PCO with expertise in budgetary matters.

The Danish delegation lost the bid, coming in second. According to Dr. Alkjær, some of the key reasons for losing the bid, include;

- **That the winning city had hosted the conference before**, which made them a safe bet in the eyes of the society. Furthermore, the Copenhagen bid had certain uncertainties in terms of expected attendance and the possibility of a large deficit.
- **Lack of management support** from the Faculty, including earmarked time exempt from the researcher's research and educational obligations as well as a financial deficit guarantee.

Furthermore, the researchers felt they lacked experience and key competencies both in relation to bidding and organising. Although the convention agency provided valuable and crucial counselling, the researchers still felt that the task was daunting. Specifically, the researchers felt they lacked the skills with regards to;

- Management and overview of the international scientific community, including the ability to influence key stakeholders and ensuring attendance.

- Composing a convincing and unambiguous tentative programme.
- Composing a plan for accommodation for the delegates.
- Planning social activities.

In light of these challenges, Dr. Alkjær was actually relieved to lose the bid. If she had to take on the task again, she points to the following critical conditions;

- Management support, both motivationally (“the feeling of management support”) and administrative, e.g. secretariat functions and student assistants.
- Setting up a professional planning group with strong project management skills.
- A deficit guarantee, which could have reduced uncertainties in the bidding process.

Chapter 4

Motivation and benefits

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we focus on motivation and benefits from hosting an international research conference. We will explore how researchers are motivated to engage in conference planning and hosting. We will furthermore explore the value added by hosting compared to simply participating in international research conferences, in light of the findings from our six case studies.

Motivation and benefits differ depending on whether we focus on the host researcher at the host university or look at the broader research environment and university. Thus, the chapter is divided into two main parts. Motivation is linked to the phases before and during the conference. Personal drive and motivation is vital to engage host researchers in bidding, planning and executing large events.

Benefits from hosting an international research conference can either show directly in the planning process and during the conference, or they can surface years after the event took place. Long term benefits like career advancement or increased recruitment of top researchers to the host university are, of course, difficult to relate directly to a specific event, which was also underscored by the interviewees.

4.2. THE HOST RESEARCHER'S MOTIVATION

Most of the host researchers and managing staff at the examined universities stressed that personal drive and motivation is a crucial precondition to take lead as a host for a large international research conference.

The fact that motivation is important, is not surprising. It is, however, more interesting to uncover the factors that motivate researchers to take the lead on large conferences. Taking the lead is a demanding task that often has to be done alongside with research and education activities at the university. It is time consuming and rarely compensated directly in terms of, e.g. a salary bonus or promotion.

Prior to all six conferences studied in this analysis, an inherent motivation was present. That is, the researcher was driven by a desire to seek out the challenge in organising a big event and in order to observe and gain knowledge within his or her particular scientific field of interest. More goal oriented motivational factors were, however, widely mentioned as drivers for taking lead in hosting a conference. Across the six cases, the most important ones are:

Academic acknowledgement from peers. Usually the researchers are very active in national or international scientific societies. In this context, they are motivated by acknowledgement from their scientific peers to host a conference that are often recurrent events held by the society.

In most cases, the host researchers expressed that they wanted to attract the international community to their home city and show the research strengths or speciality of their home university or country to the scientific society.

An example is the host researcher in Copenhagen who had a clear agenda to show the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention as a source of inspiration to the rest of the world.

Another example is the host researcher in Gothenburg who simply wanted to host a smooth and successful conference for the scientific society. He had attended the annual conference several times on different locations in the past, and was motivated by a believe that his home university in many ways was better suited to host the conference than some previous locations.

Broadening international research networks. An extensive international network is crucial to take part in cross-border research projects, apply for research funding and publish in international journals. Hosting an international research conference enables the host to take the centre stage of attention in the network, both during the preparation and the execution of the conference.

The host researchers all underscored the importance of the chance to network face to face. It was motivating to set up a forum where they could meet most of their international colleagues in their local research environment.

One of the local host researchers in Amsterdam emphasised the opportunity to have the best kidney researchers physically concentrated at his home university as a key motivating driver. The discussions that take place at conferences are difficult have via email or online forums. And the host is usually involved in more networking activities than the average delegate.

Career advancement. A successful conference can affect the host researcher's career as the researcher becomes the point of contact for both the university management and the scientific society. When applying for a new position the researcher's name is more likely to be remembered. Two host researchers mentioned this as a motivational factor.

An example is the host researcher at the conference on the biology of the fish in Edinburgh. He mentioned that the Heriot Watt University values researchers' international outreach and promotion of the university when researchers are promoted.

Another example is the local officer and host for the ESMO 2016 congress in Copenhagen, who said that he thought that he would be in a better position to advance in ESMO if he hosted the congress in Copenhagen. He was the Danish representative in ESMO from 2011-2016 and is now a member of the ESMO membership committee. The plausible career advancement was, however, not the only motivation. Inherent motivation was a big driver as well.

Encouragement and acknowledgement from the university management. In all cases, we find that encouragement and support from the managing staff are important to motivate the researcher to take the lead on a conference instead of prioritise on his research. The management should approve and understand the time-consuming task and acknowledge the potential benefits for the institution. If there is uncertainty about the financial aspect, the university management can support by securing a deficit guarantee.

The lack of such a guarantee was expressed as a very demotivating factor for the host researcher at the University of Copenhagen who unsuccessfully tried to get the biannual ISB conference to

Denmark in 2019. Conversely, a deficit guaranty of 1 million DKK secured by the University of Southern Denmark has motivated researchers at Odense University Hospital to attract conferences to the area because the financial risk was eliminated.

Encouragement and support from local convention bureaus. Local convention bureaus, like Wonderful Copenhagen, can in many cases play a motivating role, by scouting for host researcher, contacting them and encouraging them to place a bid for a conference that the bureau deems plausible to win.

4.3. THE HOST RESEARCHER'S BENEFITS

Benefits from hosting a large international research conference are analysed in relation to how important they are for the host researcher and when they affect him or her. Furthermore, we have examined to which extent the benefits are prevalent across the six cases. The overall findings are summarised in the table below and further elaborated in the following sections.

Table 4.1. Significance assessment – benefits for the host researcher

Benefits for the host researcher	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Visibility at the centre of the international research community	High	High
Progress/advancement in research career	Medium	Medium
Invitations to speak at other congresses, workshops, summer schools, etc.	Medium	Medium
Improved organisational skills	Low	Medium

Visibility at the centre of the international research community

The most important and most widely emphasised benefit from taking lead on an international research conference is the ability to meet research colleagues from all over the world. The host is more likely to attract attention from their scientific peers as he or she is the natural midpoint of the conference. All host researchers in the six cases expressed a special opportunity to engage in networks and informal discussions about the newest research and potential future research collaboration.

The researchers pointed out, that physical attendance simply makes it easier to arrange impactful meetings with the international elite. A lot of interaction takes place alongside the official programme, such as chats during coffee breaks, in the hotel lobbies and even before and after the conference. In particular, life science conferences attract delegates before and after the official conference programme because they want to spend time in the local research environment, visit hospitals and meet PhDs.

The host is often in the centre of attention during the conference. There is normally a welcome speech by the host followed by a presidential address or key note speech by an acknowledged

researcher, who most delegates attend. Furthermore, the host researcher simply has more information about the programme, venue, city etc. and he or she normally welcomes and spend more time with the most renowned researchers at the conference.

In one case, it was mentioned, that the host researcher might even increase the number of citations from his or her publications in the years following the conference because more attention was drawn to the host during the conference.

"I would say that the added value in terms of new agreements, networking and exposure is worth more than the socio economic impact from hosting such a conference."

Marc Horsman, Amsterdam Marketing

Progress/advancement in research career

While the most important factor for advancing in a research career is high impact research, researchers who take lead on a conference do make themselves more visible, and organising a large international research conference will be remembered in the research environment.

A few researchers pointed out that leading a successful conference does not in itself paves the way to a promotion at the university. Instead, researchers who engage themselves in hosting conferences are often ambitious and have a drive and passion for exposing the local research environment. The Congress and Programme Chair of the Biology of the Fish Congress has observed that researchers who engage in conference bidding are usually appointed deans or a similar position later in their career. These people are simply more outreaching.

Our analysis shows that it is more likely for the host researcher to make him- or herself noticed in the scientific societies that are often heavily involved in conferences. They are often actively engaged in the international scientific societies prior to the bidding process and in most occasions, they are also a known figure in the national counterparts to the international societies.

Thus, hosting an international research conference can potentially open doors for advancing in the scientific societies. This is especially the case for life science conferences. As we described in the case description in chapter 3, the host researcher at the ESMO conference mentioned that hosting the conference was probably an important step towards a new position in the international scientific societies.

Invitations to speak at other congresses, workshops, summer schools, etc.

Several of the host researchers interviewed in this analysis also pointed to the fact that they have been invited to speak at other conferences after hosting the conference. One also mentioned invitations to specific workshops and teaching a summer school.

Whether the invitations would have been sent had the researcher not hosted the conference is hard to say. Many of them are senior researchers and have been active in the research environments for many years. It is, however, likely, that the attention on the host during the conference will add to them staying "on the radar" of the research environment and scientific societies.

Improved organisational skills

In all six cases, the host was to some extent involved in the practical planning and organising of the event. The scientific societies often played a major role in the practical execution of the conferences, but some of the host researchers nevertheless mentioned that they improved their

organisational skills in the planning process and during the conference. Several of the PhDs who were involved in the conferences also mentioned this point as a useful benefit. Planning a conference do to some extent bring the researchers out of their normal “comfort zone”, and provides them with improved management skills.

An example is the EEA – ESEM congress in Gothenburg where eight PhD students were involved with different tasks. Two of them were more heavily involved as they organised and coordinated the 25 Master’s students who helped during the conference. It was full time work for a week in advance and during the conference. The Master’s students were paid a salary by the scientific society and the PhD students could file the hours that they spent as teaching time. Even though the PhD students did not attend many session due to their assigned tasks, they got intense organisational experience, which is not part of the ordinary PhD training, and they would happily do it again.

4.4. MOTIVATION FOR THE LOCAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT AND HOST UNIVERSITY

At the institutional level support for research conferences is primary motivated by an ambition to enhance the visibility of the host university on a crowded global map of research institutions.

Thus, hosting an international research conference with delegates from the most prestigious research environments is seen as a way to showcase the university and its research to the world. However, it is not all about promotion. Research institutions’ *raison d’être* is to facilitate education and knowledge sharing, and large conferences are an instrument to do so.

In all six cases, the research environments at the host universities have a tradition for international orientation. Enhanced internationalisation is also, in most cases, a central part of the universities’ strategy.

In the research environments, the opportunity to host an international research conference is also seen as an opportunity to attract a great amount of knowledge and concentrate it at the university during the conference. Students and PhDs can gain from that as the example above from the EEA – ESEM congress in Gothenburg illustrates. That is not the case when only a few delegates from the university participate in conferences abroad.

4.5. BENEFITS FOR THE LOCAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT AND HOST UNIVERSITY

We have analysed the benefits for the local research environment and host university in the same way as we in the section above analysed the host researcher’s benefits from hosting an international research conference. The table below shows identified benefits, their significance for the institution and how often they are mentioned in the interviews. Benefits for the local research environment and host university are somehow more diffuse than the benefits identified for the host researcher as described in the following sections.

Table 4.2. Significance assessment – benefits for the local research environment and host university

Benefits for the local research environment and host university	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Exposure and promotion of research environment and host university	High	High
Easier to recruit top researchers	High	Medium
Access to create consortia for new funding applications	Medium	High
Education and involvement of PhDs and young researchers	Medium	High
Improving the quality of research at host university	Medium	Medium
Strengthened internal network in the local research environment	Medium	Low
Income for the host university	Low	Low

Exposure and promotion of research environment and host university

The most prevalent benefit from hosting an international research conference is the exposure and promotion of the local research environment and host university. Although it is difficult to estimate the exact significance of the exposure, researchers, university managers and convention bureaus from all our cases underscored the attention that an international research conference generates as a very important benefit.

The benefit for the environment of getting attention can for example, according to the interviewees, spill over into:

- Invitations to join in new research consortia (two cases).
- Interaction between young researchers from the environment and experienced researchers from the global elite (one case).
- Increased investments from the industry (two cases - both life science).
- More researchers interested in the research area (one case).

“It gives young researcher a big boost to their self-confidence to see their research presented to a poster session. When you are host there is typically a higher attendance of young researchers from the host country. And it can be the place where they meet the right star researcher that can open doors and propel their career to new heights”.

Professor Dr Blankestijn, University Medical Center, Utrecht.

“The international research environment within fish biology is characterised by a relaxed and approachable atmosphere compared to larger conferences. The Physiology Section of the American Fisheries Society is very focused on involving students and using young talents as keynotes.”

Mark Hartl, Associate Professor, Heriot Watt University

It is especially an advantage if the academic programme at the conference includes sessions on specific research areas in which the host university is specialised. Many conferences are organised by scientific societies and the host university is occasionally left without influence on the academic programme. But some of the host researchers managed to include special sessions in the programme as the quote below illustrates.

"The value added of hosting, is the opportunity to influence the academic programme so that it set the spot light on some of the key research areas for the school."

Professor Ola Olsson, host researcher, University of Gothenburg

Furthermore, it is also clear that the value added of exposure and promotion differs between the cases, typically depending on the degree to which exposure is a strategic aim from the outset – and whether the aim is followed up by tangible measures. For example, the host of the ESMO congress in Copenhagen in 2016, actively used the congress to showcase Denmark's research strength within cancer research and treatment with the help from a strategic communication agency (see description of the congress in chapter 3).

Easier to recruit top researchers

In three of our six cases, it was mentioned that it has been easier to recruit top researchers to the university and local research environment in the years following the conference. The conference alone would hardly cause this positive trend, but according to our interviewees it might be an indirect effect. This should be seen as part of the above-mentioned exposure of the university to the international research environment. Besides the opportunity to show the specialised research areas of the university, visiting researchers explore the host city and the physical environment at the university. In this way, the delegates get a taste of what it would be like to live and work in the host city.

Several of the convention bureaus that we have interviewed also stressed this benefit for the host university based on feedback from former host researchers at conferences.

Access to create consortia for new funding applications

Among the networking activities that take place at research conferences, commitment to funding applications have a special status. This activity is prevalent across all cases studied in this analysis and the researchers explain that getting together in informal meetings is an essential part of the way to commit to a new research project that needs joint support and funding.

Many research funds, e.g. Horizon 2020, require an international consortium of researchers when applying for research grants. International conferences are important agoras to form such consortia. The host researcher in Edinburgh stressed that personal meetings are essential to commit to multimillion euro research projects. Such a commitment does not happen via virtual communication alone.

The attendance of the industry at conferences are also important when establishing new consortia for research projects. This is more prevalent in the cases with natural science conferences. Like international collaboration, inclusion of industrial partners is often a requirement in applications for research funding. The two large life science conferences that we have studied both

included extensive industry sponsored symposia and room to display new products, technologies, etc.

Another benefit regarding applications, was mentioned in the EEA – ESEM case in Gothenburg. The EEA – ESEM conference has often been mentioned in funding applications after the conference. The school is currently fundraising for visiting professorships among local firms in Gothenburg. Mentioning the huge international conference is often more tangible for a non-academic audiences than name dropping top journals in which you have published articles.

Education and involvement of PhDs and young researchers

It is custom to invite PhDs and occasionally Master's students at the host university to help the host researcher to plan and execute the event. The students get free access to the conference and are in some cases payed a small salary for their effort.

In most of our cases, the host researcher at the host university mentioned the opportunity for students to meet top researchers, network and in some cases, present their own research to an international audience. This opportunity is a great supplement to their research education that most students cannot afford if they should travel for the conference and pay the participation fee. An exception is the International Congress on the Biology of the Fish. When choosing congress location, it is critical that the bidder can keep the costs down and that cheap accommodation for students is available during the conference.

In Edinburgh, the host researcher also encouraged a local PhD student to organise a symposium and in Aalborg a PhD student presented his research results at the conference. His results got published in an international journal afterwards.

Improving the quality of research at host university

In all six cases, the conference role as an agora for research improvement was emphasised. This is the main purpose of the conference for both hosts and delegates. In some the cases, the host university formed a new group of researchers with different tasks during the conference. In one case to evaluate abstracts submitted for presentation at the conference. In another case a group open to new themes and ideas was formed during the conference and has continued its research since adding value to the local research environment. When big scientific societies are executing most of the conference, it seems less likely that the conference improves the quality of research at the host university more than the overall scientific progress that all delegates attending the conference potentially benefit from.

In two of the three Danish cases, it was mentioned that the number of articles submitted to the conference by Danish researchers was higher than usual when the conference takes place abroad. In the long run, it might generate more publications and citations for researchers at the host university and in national research environments.

Strengthened internal network in the local research environment

Not only international collaboration and networking are enhanced during a conference. In two of the six cases, interviewees from at the university explained that a big event like the conference strengthened the internal network at the hosting department and local research environment. Researchers worked together in another way to prepare and execute the conference and

students had a special entrance and got to know their professors at the department during the conference.

"The conference was great for the internal relationship at the department. It was a unique opportunity for the students to meet the professors in another setting."

Project Manager, Karin Jonson, University of Gothenburg

Income for the host university

As mentioned in the first chapter, large conferences entail a substantial influx of people and money to the host city, which is conducive for economic growth and job creation.

There can as well be an economic upside for the host university if the conference generates a surplus. It differs from conference to conference how revenue or deficits are distributed between the scientific society and the host institution. In some instances, a distribution key is present in other cases, the scientific society account for it all.

An example of a distribution key is the one use at the EEA – ESEM annual congress where the two scientific societies (The European Economic Association and The Econometric Society) and the host university equally share a potential surplus from the conference.

However, a potential economic benefit is not mentioned as a driver by any of the host institutions analysed in this study. And in most cases the host institution spent money and in particular time on the conferences.

Chapter 5

Challenges and barriers

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore the main challenges and barriers in all phases of the congress process and what the hosts have done to overcome them. While *challenges* primarily constitute nuisances in an otherwise well-functioning process, *barriers* are more critical and can halt a conference completely, e.g. in the bidding or preparatory phase.

The chapter does not cover factors that pose a barrier for attracting more conferences, as these factors are beyond the scope of this analysis. Instead we focus on barriers related to individual researcher's resources, skills and competencies, as well as their framework conditions at the research environments, departments and/or institutions.

The barriers are analysed in relation to what extent they are critical for the choice of hosting/not hosting a conference. Furthermore, we have examined to which extent the barriers and challenges are prevalent across our cases. The overall findings are summarised in the table below and further elaborated in the following sections.

Table 5.1. Significance assessment – barriers and challenges

Barriers and challenges	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Time and resources	High	High
Challenges in the bidding process	High	Medium
Conferences are given low priority by home institution or department	High	Medium
Economic risk of hosting and lack of deficit guarantees	High	Medium
Handling value added tax	Medium	Medium
Limited influence on conferences organised by scientific societies	Medium	Medium
Lack of coherence to institutional goals, and the broader institution	Medium	Medium
Weak follow-up measures	Medium	High
Regulations on academia-industry interaction at life science-conferences	Medium	Low
Challenges with motivating young researcher	Low	Medium
Organisational challenges	Low	Medium

5.2. TIME AND RESOURCES

In the pre-conference phase, one of the most widespread and significant barriers among the examined cases is lack of time and resources on the part of the researcher – a barrier which is highlighted in four of our six cases. Table 5.2. below provides an estimation on the host researcher's work load in our cases.

Table 5.2. Estimated total number of hours spent on (winning, preparing and executing) the conference by the host researcher

Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESMO in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg
App. 250	App. 300	App. 350	App. 500	Less than 100	App. 600

Hosting conferences is generally a residual activity for most researchers that either demand that they take time from their obligations within research and/or education or force researchers to spend their spare time on conference related activities. Adding to that, the risks of failure, loss of personal prestige following an unsuccessful planning process and/or economic deficits can make the transaction costs of hosting appear unsurmountable for the individual researcher.

Furthermore, as researchers primarily are recognised, merited, and receive funding on the basis of time spent on core research and educational activities the incentives for organising are generally weak.

Hence, researchers that wish to attract and host a conference will often have to spend his/her spare time on organising and planning the conferences, as illustrated by the quotes below.

"In academia, it is not possible to deprioritise research or educational obligations. At the same time, there is a high degree of self-management, so I have been able to plan myself. But it involved a great deal of work outside of my fixed working hours to make ends meet".

Lasse Aistrup Rosendahl, Professor, Aalborg University and host for ITS.

"The trade-off between time spent on research and conference planning can be an issue. In general, it is well balanced at the school. But a conference will always take someone's time that could have been spent on research".

Olof Johansson-Stenman, Vice-Dean of The School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

However, there are big differences between conferences, which are primarily driven by the host researcher, and conferences in which the scientific society carry the lion's share of the organisational burden. Especially large medical conferences are in many cases funded, organised, and executed by powerful societies (e.g. ESMO, ERA-EDTA or EEA), with relatively few resources needed from the host researcher or institution. In these cases, time and resources is a challenge of limited significance.

The table below illustrate the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between the local and international organisers in the analysed cases.

Table 5.3. Division of tasks in the planning phase

	Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESOM in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg
Announcement and marketing of the conference	The international society (ITS)	The international society (IFNA)	The international society (ESMO) and host researcher with PCO	Local organiser and CVB	The international society (ERA-EDTA)	The international society (EEA)
Prepare and manage call for papers	The international society and host researchers (AAU)	The international society (IFNA)	The international society (ESMO)	The international society (AFS)	The international society (ERA-EDTA)	The international society (EEA)
Review of abstracts	The international society and host researchers (AAU)	The international society (IFNA)	The international society (ESMO)	The international society (AFS)	The international society (ERA-EDTA).	The international society (EEA)
Coordinate the specific program	The international society and host researchers (AAU)	The international society (IFNA)	The international society (ESMO)	Local organiser	The international society (ERA-EDTA) and the host researcher	Primarily the international society (EEA)
Distribute the specific program	The international society (ITS)	The international society (IFNA)	The international society (ESMO)	Local organiser	The international society	The international society (EEA)
Finding sponsors	The host researchers (AAU)	The international society (IFNA)*	The international society (ESMO)	Local organizer	The international society	The international society (EEA)
Manage registration and payment	Local organiser (Visit-Aalborg)	The international society (IFNA) and the local organiser (Visit Odense)	The international society (ESMO)	Local organiser	The international society and local venue	The international society (EEA)

Note: Green = Local organiser/researcher; Orange = International scientific society; Yellow = Combination

*Has long-term international sponsorships with The Glen Taylor Institute for Family and Society and the College of Allied Health Nursing Minnesota State University Mankato.

5.3. CHALLENGES IN THE BIDDING PROCESS

The bidding process can be a challenging task for prospective hosts. Winning a bid requires the host to develop a convincing value proposition vis-à-vis competitors, e.g. on the attractiveness of the location and venue, the host's ability to organise the conference, suggestions for set-up and events at the conference, budgets etc. Some of these tasks are in some cases handled by the convention bureaus. Table 5.4. provides an overview across our cases on the responsibility in the bidding process.

Table 5.4. Division of tasks in bidding phase

	Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESMO in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg	Non-case A	Non-case B
Initial driver behind the bid	Local researcher	Local researcher and CVB	CVB	Local researcher	National society	International society and CVB	CVB	CVB
Developing bid and value proposition	Local researcher and CVB	CVB	No actual bidding process	CVB	National society, local researcher and CVB	Local researcher and CVB	Local researcher and CVB	Local researcher and CVB
Lobbying (if relevant)	Local researcher	Local researcher	CVB	Local researcher	National society and local researcher	CVB	Local researcher	Local research

Note: Green = Local researcher; Orange = Convention bureau (CVB); Yellow = Combination

The cases examined in this analysis show that the researchers often lack the following competencies in the bidding phase;

- The skills to lobby and influence key stakeholders at the scientific societies.
- Constructing a convincing value-proposition in terms of the language and selling points used.
- Understand and address the formal requirements of the bidding process. Navigating around the formal requirements can be complicated for researchers.
- Competencies with regards to preparing and planning a conference programme.
- Knowledge on the total package of value offerings of the host city.
- Competencies to make realistic budgets for the conference.

Local convention bureaus (e.g. Wonderful Copenhagen, Convention Edinburgh or Amsterdam Marketing) have in some of our cases been an important source of support and encouragement during the bidding process. The agencies have for example helped researchers in understanding the formal requirements of a conference tender, providing input on the value offerings of the city and assisted with writing skills and graphic layout in making a convincing value proposition. These agencies also fund presentation trips for researcher (e.g. Convention Edinburgh) and/or plan the site visits of representatives from the scientific societies in the bidding process.

Our cases, however, show that support from convention bureaus are often insufficient with regards to the lobbying efforts – e.g. understanding the internal “politics” and considerations of the scientific societies and which key stakeholders to influence. For example;

- In the case of the international Congress on the Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh, a bid was lost in the first place. The reason was - among other things - the internal rule of

thumb in the scientific society that, at maximum, every third conference can be held outside North America. The conference took place in Europe the year before.

- In the case of the ERA-EDTA, the location is chosen via secret vote in the executive committee, which underscores the importance of informal networking and influence in the society.
- In one of our non-cases, the researcher presumably lost the bid because of internal, implicit perceptions in the society a) that Denmark would be an expensive destination and b) that winning the bid typically required the candidate to bid for two consecutive years, in order to demonstrate a strong motivation and commitment.

Challenges with lobbying is particularly the case when prospective hosts do not have a strong foothold in the society, for example as a board member or similar. In most cases, however, the interviewed researchers were strongly engaged in the international and/or national scientific society before the bidding process. These networks award the bidders an edge over competitors in relation to lobbying for the attraction of the conference. This underlines the importance of the host researchers' position in international and national scientific societies in winning the bids.

5.4. CONFERENCES GIVEN LOW PRIORITY BY HOME INSTITUTION OF DEPARTMENT.

Lack of support from the management of the university or department is mentioned as an important barrier in many cases. With few exceptions, the institutional support internally at the universities for researchers, wishing to host conferences appear relatively unsystematic and is based on individual cases where the management decide whether or not to support.

Compared to research and education, conferences are generally not ascribed a high priority by the managerial level at institutions or departments. While the interviewed managerial representatives welcome conferences that fulfils basic criteria of quality, and can contribute to "putting the university on the map", they generally view it as a residual activity on line with other outreach activities.

Thus, with a few exceptions, the institutional support for researchers who wish to host conferences appear relatively random and is based on individual cases where the management on an ad hoc basis decide whether or not to support. This perceived lack of transparency in the institutional support can be a source of confusion and discouragement among researchers in the bidding or planning phase, which in one of our two "non-cases" was the reason why the conference was never realised.

This perceived lack of transparency in the institutional support might discourage researchers in the planning phase. The lack of management support voiced by the informants generally follow two veins;

- Ex-ante encouragement and support in terms of a lack of institutional backing in the bidding or preparatory phase – both morally (in terms of active encouragement) and practical (in the shape of administrative support and/or financial risk-alleviation).
- Ex-post support in terms of recognition and merit for hosting.

As an example of the barriers in the ex-ante phase, the host researcher in one of the non-cases, voiced a lack of leadership backing both morally and practical. In the other non-case the main issue was practical backing in terms of resources. According to Professor Anne Løkke, the dean at the Saxo Institute was open to the idea of hosting the conference, but due to budget cuts the institute's core activities were prioritised.

"Apart from an initial positive attitude from the dean there was no consistent management backing in the bidding process, nor economic support in shape of a deficit guarantee or the like. It was a one-man show, with very large risks as I did not know how the attendance would turn out. This happened during a time of large budget cuts and layoffs at the university, which made it way too risky for us – so it was in a way a relief to lose the bid (...) if I should do it again, management backing would be absolutely crucial"

Associate Professor Tine Alkjær, University of Copenhagen

"A university is like a layered cake. The university management often does not know much about what the researchers are doing and vice versa. They are generally not heavily involved in conferences"

Marc Horsman, Manager Meetings & Conventions at Amsterdam Marketing

5.5. ECONOMIC RISK OF HOSTING AND LACK OF DEFICIT GUARANTEES

The economic risks of hosting a conference, e.g. as a result of low attendance, unforeseen costs etc., can, according to several interviewees, be discouraging. This is particularly important in cases, where the researchers bear a large share of the organisational responsibility for the conference vis-à-vis the scientific societies. While it is important to conduct a thorough assessment of risks vs. costs, the potential insecurity may impede researchers and leadership from bidding a conference in the first place.

In one of the non-cases, the lack of deficit guarantee combined with a lack of leadership support was mentioned as a crucial factor for not wanting to bid for a conference again.

In the case of the biology of the fish conference in Edinburgh, the local organiser was not granted a deficit guarantee. While this posed a risk, the researcher also notes that it forced him to seek out good deals at local hotels and suppliers in close collaboration with the convention bureau.

5.6. HANDLING VALUE ADDED TAX

In around half of cases, rules for VAT (namely which expenses can be deducted and how) pose a challenge that can entail major difficulties and financial burdens for the host and/or scientific society organising the conference. The interviewed convention bureaus note, that the challenge pertains to all kinds of expenditure and income in relation to conferences, e.g. rental of venues, delegate fees, dinners, covering travel expenses for keynotes etc.

It is a particular important issue in high-VAT and expensive countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. VAT-rules and conferences are a complicated topic. The analysis shows that researcher and organisers alike find it difficult to navigate in the rules, exceptions, and models. Some of the challenges include;

- The judicial status of the lead organiser. For example, VAT-rules can differ whether the legal responsibility is placed at the university, a PCO, the national scientific society and/or the international scientific society – and whether the responsible entity has the status as a commercial actor or a non-profit organisation.
- To which extent does the “conference owner”, e.g. the scientific society gain a profit on the conference.
- How to handle industrial income, for example from pharmaceutical companies exhibiting at a medical conference.
- Ensuring clear and transparent contracts between conference partners that fully illuminate the issue of VAT and who bears responsibility.

5.7. LIMITED INFLUENCE ON CONFERENCES ORGANISED BY SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

In four of our cases, the international scientific society played a very extensive role in planning and executing the conference. The most prominent example is the large annual congress of the ERA-EDTA, which generally does not draw in local universities in the preparatory or execution phase. This also meant that the broader institutional effects of hosting was very limited. The main local beneficiaries of hosting were the two local members of the organising committee.

Another example is the IFNA-conference 2015, in which the set-up was characterised by a very fixed concept and programme, which – according to one interviewee – meant that the local organiser had very limited influence on the programme, calls for abstracts, key-notes etc. This meant that the local “learning” and motivation from the conference were limited. On the other hand, the economic risk for the local organiser was small.

The society-driven concepts have a number of advantages for the local researchers involved. For example, the society bears a much larger share of the economic risk. Furthermore, the societies often draw on an extensive experience from past conferences, a strong network, and a well-proven concept. The conferences are generally much less time-consuming for local researchers/hosts than conferences planned and driven by the researchers.

On the other hand, society-driven conferences leave limited room for local hosts to influence the event, e.g. the programme. According to one informant, this can lower the motivation of the host researchers and thus be a barrier to engage in hosting international conferences.

5.8. LACK OF COHERENCE BETWEEN CONFERENCES, THE BROADER INSTITUTION AND ITS GOALS

Generally, there seem to be little coherence between the specific conferences and the broader institutional or departmental goals, for example the research strategy. The impetus behind the conferences are generally characterised by emanating bottom-up from individual researchers. Furthermore, institutional support to “conference entrepreneurs” is ad hoc, based on the individual case.

Across our cases there is little efforts from the part of the institutions or departments to support conferences on the basis of what serves the research goals of the institution or department. The exceptions are;

- The ITC-conference in Aalborg, in which the local organisers received a strong management backing and a deficit guarantee based on the conference's alignment with the university's strategy. Specifically, the conference was highly focused on the industrial applications of material sciences, which is in line with the university's general business-oriented profile.
- The organisers of the ESMO-conference in Copenhagen, who was focused on linking the conference with the Danish stronghold within cancer research and the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention (see box 6.7.).

Furthermore, involvement of the broader host institution or other institutions, e.g. other research environments (in the country), departments etc. is virtually non-existent. At the ITC-conference, research colleagues from the University of Aarhus and the Technical University of Denmark was invited, but beside that the broader involvement is sparse.

The lack of coherence and general ad hoc approach towards conferences can have negative consequences for the ability to fully harvest the broader effects of a conference, e.g. contributing to fulfilling the institutions' research strategy or disseminating knowledge to other parts of the institution.

5.9. WEAK FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

In continuation of the lack of coherence and general ad hoc approach towards conferences, we have noted that all our cases display a relatively limited follow-up effort. While most of the conference cases carry out a subsequent knowledge gathering in the shape of basic surveys or evaluation, little is done to systematically embed the networks and reap the long-term benefits from the conferences. Some of the challenges, that a number of cases seem to indicate, include;

- **A general lack of long-term strategy and clear goals for hosting.** When the ex-ante goals of hosting, e.g. to increase international visibility, attract funding etc., are unclear it becomes difficult to make a targeted ex-post follow-up.
- **Lack of institutional embedment.** Generally, across most cases, the examined conferences have a very limited connection to the institution outside the immediate research environment. Thus, a few researchers (including an informant from the non-cases) pointed out that hosting is generally not followed up by any embedment measures from the institution. Thus, the conference is quickly forgotten again by the university and departmental leadership, reducing the positive impact at the institutional level.
- **In society-driven conferences, the follow-up benefits primarily lie within the society,** while the local hosts' involvement in the follow-up can be limited.

5.10. REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY INTERACTION AT LIFE SCIENCE-CONFERENCES

In the two cases of (very) large medical conferences as well as from two of the interviewed convention bureaus, the issue of compliance of international regulation for interaction between industry and healthcare professionals surfaced as a major impediment for executing medical conferences with participation from industry. This pose an important barrier, as the largest and most demanding conferences usually are within life science.

Specifically, the guidelines from EFPIA¹⁹ and EUCOMED²⁰ are mentioned as a challenge. These frameworks basically seek to balance the need for knowledge exchange between industry and the healthcare sector with concerns about conflicts of interest and industrial influence in health care.

This can, for instance, carry implications for the ability to conduct joint activities with industry at medical conferences, e.g. symposia. While this analysis will not go in depth with the challenges related to these frameworks here, our informants point to two primary challenges concerning the knowledge and awareness of the frameworks;

- The rules often change, which makes them difficult to navigate for both host researchers and advisors.
- The rules are interpreted in different ways across countries, and in some cases the rules are very strictly interpreted (by the institution and/or public authorities), which can entail a “better-safe-than-sorry”-attitude among hosts.

5.11. CHALLENGES WITH MOTIVATING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Our analysis show, that it can be challenging to motivate young researchers to engage in conference planning, which emphasised by many of the interviewed researchers. This is not due to a lack of interest in conferences among young researchers, but rather as a result of their network, resources and priorities in the stage of their career in which they find themselves.

First, senior researchers often have a broader network and are heavily engaged in international scientific research societys. They have attended more conferences and want to bring the research community to their home university. Young researchers are furthermore oriented towards producing top-quality articles in order to ensure progress in their research careers, which leaves little time to organise conferences.

“Young researchers are very oriented towards their career and generating high-impact articles. They seem more interested in fulfilling their ambition and career - and often do not have the time.”

Anita Soels, Business Development Manager, RAI Amsterdam

¹⁹ European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations

²⁰ European association for the medical device industry.

According to Wonderful Copenhagen, this focus on core research activities, can to some extent be seen as a general risk averse trend among researchers in recent years. An explanation, which especially the two non-cases emphasise are the cutbacks in research funding, which at some universities have resulted in layoffs. Consequently, these researchers – but especially young researchers without fixed research positions – have been less prone to engaging in conference planning vis-à-vis focusing on their core research and educational activities.

5.12. ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

Almost all interviewed host researchers emphasised the extensive practical skills and competencies needed to organise a major event, for example with regards to finding a date, booking venues, developing a programme, planning side-events etc. Furthermore, both researchers and convention bureaus point out that researchers in many cases are in doubt as to where they can obtain assistance and council in the planning phase;

Generally, the informants do not emphasise any major, or unsurmountable, logistic or organisational challenges with regards to executing conferences – and in almost all cases the convention bureaus or societies have played an important supportive role for the local hosts.

However, with respect to some practical challenges, the convention bureaus typically have limited reach. The mentioned challenges include;

- Forming and leading a competent, dedicated local planning and execution team around the conference, including involvement from young researchers/PhDs., convention bureaus etc. In one of the non-cases, the lack of commitment from fellow researchers meant that the prospective host researcher was “left alone” with the task.
- Identifying good keynote speakers, as these can pose a substantial expense and are often among the most important selling points. Relevant keynotes typically require a thorough understanding of the international research environment.

Only one informant (from the convention bureau in Amsterdam) has mentioned visa-regulations as a potential challenge for inviting delegates – and only in relation to specific countries, in which the risk of delegates seeking to immigrate to the host country makes for strict requirements. However, there has been established a national fast track in relation to international science delegates in the Netherlands, which limits the challenge.

Chapter 6

Congress supportive mechanisms

In this chapter, we explore how the informants solved the barriers and challenges at different stages in the process. We will, at the same time, look at some of the existing supportive mechanisms for congresses both in Denmark and abroad.

We focus the description of the supportive measures on the following key barriers;

- Supportive measures for motivating host researchers
- Supportive measures for planning and executing conferences
- Supportive measure that can increase the benefits from hosting conferences

6.1. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR MOTIVATING HOST RESEARCHERS

Our analysis shows that there are many specific factors in the respective research environments and universities that motivate researchers, and it can be challenging to influence them through supportive measures. For example, the environment's embedment in international research networks, the tradition for organising events and the encouraging role of senior researchers, department managers etc. are all important enabling factors.

Furthermore, the interviewed researchers in this analysis have all been passionate personalities and ambitious on behalf of their scientific field. They are researchers that stand out by having a very strong international network and a strong engagement in the international and/or national scientific societies, e.g. as council members.

In a number of the examined cases, the regional convention bureau proactively seeks to scout for these profiles, engage and motivate them, and assist them in composing a bid/value proposition. An example is the scouting and outreach effort of Inspiring Denmark in the Region of Southern Denmark.

Box 6.1. Scouting and outreach – Inspiring Denmark and University of Southern Denmark

The University of Southern Denmark has engaged in a collaboration with Inspiring Denmark – a regional organisation aimed at attracting events and conventions to the Region of Southern Denmark. The organisation offers assistance free-of-charge in attracting and conducting international conferences.

One of the core elements of Inspiring Denmark's work, is the organisation's systematic scouting and outreach activities to motivate researchers at the University of Southern Denmark.

With fixed intervals, Inspiring Denmark conducts an electronic survey among all researchers in the region. The researchers are queried 1) whether they are currently organising a conference, 2) interested in organising a conference and 3) whether they are engaged in a scientific society that organises conferences.

Based on the responses, Inspiring Denmark compiles a prioritised list. Subsequently, the organisation proactively reaches out and contacts the most promising, prospective host researchers. The organisation makes the researchers aware of the help and support they provide. The outreach efforts have a considerable importance in relation to furthering the individual researcher's motivation. The prospective hosts gain an assurance that they have access to professional support and alleviation in relation to

practical matters. In the case of the International Family Nursing Conference in 2015, the outreach from Inspiring Denmark was of critical importance.

Another example, is Convention Edinburgh, which through its Edinburgh Ambassador Programme is highly proactive in its approach to identify potential “influencers”, i.e. researchers who are internationally engaged and who could potentially host a conference. Dr Hartl, who attracted the conference “International Conference on the Biology of Fish” to Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh in 2014, was identified by the agency as an influencer as early as 2008.

From Amsterdam, there are examples of systematic use of business intelligence and data-driven concepts of scouting conferences (see box 6.2.). Such measures enable more targeted scouting efforts.

Box 6.2. Business intelligence and data-driven scouting in the Netherlands

In Amsterdam, both the large venue RAI and Amsterdam Marketing take part in scouting for conferences that could be beneficial to bring to Amsterdam. The RAI’s business intelligence unit is focused on identifying relevant rotating conferences. RAI is furthermore arranging business case events, where the plenary has been set up in a way so scientific societies and organisers can get an impression of how the venue functions. This was, according to the informant at the RAI, important in attracting the Congress of the ERA-EDTA to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam Marketing have been working on a data-driven scouting solution, which seeks to identify high-potential host researchers, based on their history of international engagement, membership of societies, international collaboration combined with knowledge on Amsterdam/the Netherlands research strongholds and match them with potential conferences from the ICCA-database. The model has not yet been launched.

A number of convention bureaus, e.g. Convention Edinburgh and Gothenburg Convention Bureau, seek to build a lasting relation to prospective and former host researchers through an ambassador programme, where the researchers are given the task of raising awareness of the university, showcasing its research and attracting conferences, e.g. on fairs and conferences abroad. However, according to the informants, the experience with ambassador programmes are mixed, as they rely on voluntary researchers, who often lack the time and resources to make an extensive commitment.

Conceptualised conferences

Throughout the case-studies, one of the most prevalent differences was that between highly conceptualised, society-driven conferences and conferences in which the local host played the most important organising role. Generally, very large conferences (especially within life science) are driven by financially strong societies with extensive organisational capabilities. Such conferences tend to be less resource-demanding for the local hosts, but leaves little room for the influence of the host on the conference programme, activities, etc.

Another related breed of conceptualised conferences, is offered by various science-related actors, such as journals, private endowments and public authorities in collaboration with local hosts. These conceptualised conferences are often smaller and allows the host researcher to plan the scientific programmer. Furthermore, the conference owner assists with all practical and

logistical needs, e.g. webpages, basic concept for workshops and even travel grants. Among them are;

- **Copenhagen Bioscience Conferences** are offered by the Novo Nordisk Foundation and feature a number of scientific conferences with biomedicine and biotechnology. The conferences attract elite researchers and young talents from all over the world, to discuss the newest scientific results and topics within a research area. Furthermore, the conferences are aimed at branding Copenhagen as an international beacon for bioscience research. Each conference is co-hosted by leading investigators from the Novo Nordisk Foundation cluster of research centres. The centres represent strongholds of basic research within metabolism, stem cell biology, protein research and biosustainability.
- **European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) Workshops** are meetings that cover different and evolving aspects of life science-related subject areas and bring scientists together to present and discuss their latest findings. Workshops may alternate with corresponding meetings held outside of Europe to facilitate interactions between scientists based in Europe and beyond. Scientists can apply for funding of up to €30,000 to organise an EMBO Workshop. Furthermore, the EMBO supports the organiser by creating a dedicated workshop webpage, posters and advertising and funds for young investigators and travel grants.
- **The Nature Publishing Group** arranges so-called Natureconferences aimed at the international scientific community, with the goal of fostering and facilitating communication and collaboration between scientists.

6.2. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR PLANNING AND EXECUTING CONFERENCES

The services of PCOs and convention bureaus are among the most commonly available supportive measures to address the planning and execution phase. To a lesser extent, some universities also offer various services in this phase.

There is a significant difference between conferences primarily driven by strong scientific societies and conferences driven by the host researchers. The two large medical conferences, ERA-EDTA and ESMO, are primarily organised by the societies/associations, which usually have the required competencies in-house, or involve consultants and PCOs themselves.

As mentioned in chapter 5, the challenges in the planning phase can be extensive for the host researchers, and can include;

- Lack of time and resources
- Economic risk
- Lack of competencies and experience on organising a large research event
- Handling VAT

In the following sections, we will explore how the researchers and organisers in the examined cases handled and overcame these barriers and challenges.

Lack of time and resources

Generally, the organising researchers spent time outside their working hours in the process. However, to the extent that the planning does not interfere with the researchers' research and educational obligations the department and/or institution usually grant the researchers a high degree of flexibility to plan and organise.

When the conferences are owned by a large scientific society, issues regarding resources are generally less of a problem because a lot of the preparation is arranged by the society. In these cases, the host researchers are also likely to spend less time preparing the conference.

However, external support for the researcher was an important factor in all our cases. E.g. Convention Edinburgh saw it as an important task to alleviate the researchers in both the bidding process and the organisational and planning process. Some universities also offer various services in this phase. An example is the University of Southern Denmark that support researchers by making resources and expertise available from the internal financial and communication office. The university also provides accommodation and physical facilities if the conference is held in the summer holiday period where capacity is idle.

A crucial factor to overcome the time issue is the moral and practical support from the university management. Thus, the management should 1) encourage the researcher and 2) provide support in terms of either in-house resources or PCOs.

Economic risk

As shown above, the financial needs and risk of hosting can constitute a major impediment for the host researcher and institution. There are many examples, both in Denmark and abroad, of financial incentives and deficit guarantees, offered by both institutions, governments, and funding bodies.

Some universities (but far from all) provide a deficit guarantee for the organiser. From the cases, there are examples of deficit guarantees from the Heriot-Watt University, Aalborg University, and the University of Southern Denmark (see box 6.3.).

Box 6.3. Deficit guarantees

Deficit guarantees are an important precondition for hosting, in terms of alleviating the researcher's time and energy in the early stages of conference work.

- At the University of Southern Denmark, a deficit guarantee is available at all major international conferences. Although, it has only been used in two of 30 conferences, it has significance in terms of alleviating the financial risk for both the department and the researcher, as well as the international conference owner. Furthermore, the access to a deficit guarantees can have a positive impact in relation to win a bid on a conference, as researchers refer to its existence when bidding for a conference.
- At the national level, Danish International Congress Guarantee Association makes it possible to apply for a bail for raising loans, or line of credit with a bank. The guarantee is not a guarantee against loss, but is an alternative to a personal line-of-credit. The guarantee can be up to 20 per cent of congressional total capacity costs to a maximum of DKK 250,000, e.g. rental of convention facilities, AV equipment, insurance, or marketing. According to Wonderful Copenhagen, the guarantee has not been in use during the last three years.

Other examples feature grants. In the Scottish case (International Conference on the Biology of Fish), the host institution provided a small amount of start-up funding for the researcher (£10,000), to cover up-front expenses such as a deposit for the venue, establishment of webpage etc. Another example is the Conference Grants Funds in the Netherlands, and the Science Foundation Ireland. The Foundation offers funding for conferences and bids through three different funding streams.

Box 6.4. Conference Grants in Ireland and the Netherlands

In Ireland, the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Conference and Workshop programme is aimed at facilitating international and national conferences and workshops of strategic value hosted in the Republic of Ireland. SFI supports conferences and workshops in all research areas. SFI Conference and Workshop programme fall into four different categories: Conference Bid, Conference, Exceptional Conference, and Workshop.

The applicant must be one of the event's organising committee Chairs, and if the conference or workshop Chair is not the applicant, a brief biographical sketch of the conference/workshop Chair must be included in the application.

- **Conference Bids.** SFI may fund some of the costs incurred in preparing a bid to host an important international conference, including for example consultancy costs and the cost of travel to present the conference bid. Funding of up to €6,000 may be requested.
- **Conferences** are aimed at sizeable events with significant international and national participation. These funds are generally aimed at supporting expenses such as overseas invited speakers and best presentation/poster awards. International society sponsorship is expected and will be looked upon favourably during the review process but is not absolutely required. Submissions must be received at least four months in advance and funding of up to €50,000 may be requested.
- **Exceptional Conferences** are expected to be sizeable events (1,000+ attendees) with significant international and national participation. They should be the most prestigious conferences in their field. International society sponsorship is required. Funding of up to €100,000 may be requested.

In the Netherlands, it is possible to apply for the so-called, Conference Grants Fund. The grants are intended to cover no more than a third of the total conference budget, with a ceiling of €8,500. The conference budget may not exceed €170,000. It is disbursed by the Royal Scientific Society of the Netherlands.

Source: Science Foundation Ireland

"There are so many conferences out there of varying quality, and there is a substantial economic risk of hosting them. We underwrite the costs after having made a thorough screening of the conferences. We look at the historical attendance, attendance by elite researchers to earlier conferences and the reputation of the society or organisation promoting the conference".

Professor Garry Pender, Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), Heriot-Watt University

Lack of competencies and experience on organising a large research event

In society-driven conferences, the competencies embedded in the scientific societies play the primary role in planning and organising the conference, while the local organiser is mostly involved in planning activities that require a local representative, e.g. side-events, social event etc.

Besides that, convention bureaus are generally alleviating the time and resources of the host researchers in the planning phase. Among the agencies' key competencies are marketing, and finding sponsors and PCOs. The convention bureaus know the host city, how to brand and embed a conference, and which PCOs to contact.

At the university level, the support services offered, differ significantly. Among the cases studied in this analysis, the University of Southern Denmark probably provides the most extensive package of services for host researchers, including communication/promotion of the conference, budgetary issues, applying for sponsorships and facilities for the conference.

In 2009/2010 Aalborg University entered a strategic collaboration with the regional tourism and event agency, VisitAalborg, to attract international research conferences to the city and the university. The agreement entails that VisitAalborg systematically meets with each department, where possibilities and potentials for attracting new international research conferences are discussed.

Box 6.5. Strategic collaboration between Aalborg University and VisitAalborg

When the potential for attracting a specific conference is identified, VisitAalborg bears a large part of the responsibility in the bidding process, e.g. in relation to professionalise the application. In the planning phase VisitAalborg handles a large part of the practical planning and coordinating tasks. Thus, in this phase the convention bureau acts as a PCO (PCOs usually enter when a bid is won).

Aalborg University provides a deficit guarantee to the responsible department in all major international conferences. The guarantee is estimated to have a profound impact, even though it has only been used in very few cases. Furthermore, Aalborg University has entered a long-term agreement with the Obel Family Foundation, that fund keynotes at major international conferences. This partnership reduces the economic risks and minimise the burden of finding sponsors.

Moreover, the university management generally emphasise their support for international conferences and the responsible host researcher, who is considered to have a major congress promotional impact.

Overall, the strategic priority set out by Aalborg University - in terms of systematic cooperation with VisitAalborg, deficit guarantees and visible management support – is estimated to have contributed to the currently status of between 10 and 12 conferences being held per year with over 400 delegates at Aalborg University.

Universities can also collaborate in a joint effort to support the execution of conferences. *Akademikonferens* is a Swedish organisation based on a collaboration between the Swedish medical university, Karolinska Institute, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the University of Uppsala. The purpose of the organisation is to enhance the visibility of the participating universities through professionally executed scientific meetings.

Box 6.6. Akademikonferens, Sweden

Akademikonferens helps research hosts in formulating and producing winning bids. The organisation assists the hosts with practical challenges, such as power-point presentations for meetings with decision-makers and planning of site-inspections (reconnaissance visits) for conference owners (e.g. scientific societies). Other services include;

- Consultancy for the hosts regarding venues, keynotes, entertainers, etc.
- Project and event management support for the hosts, e.g. regarding goal-setting, time planning, execution etc. The organisation provides project managers to support the hosts.
- Marketing plans, sponsors, budgets, procurement.
- Design and production of conference material, e.g. webpage, flyers, programme etc.
- IT-related services, e.g. online abstract-administration, search engine optimisation.
- Contracts with hotels and transportation firms and hotel reservation system.
- Planning and execution of social events, dinners, excursions etc.
- Database-system for registration of delegates, as well as registration for seminars and activities.
- Evaluation and statistics.
- Exhibition-setup.

Depending on the size and complexity of the conference, PCOs can be absolutely critical for the researchers with regards to planning and implementing conferences, creating webpages, ensuring systems for electronic upload of abstracts, ERP-systems for handling registration and fees, budgets etc.

Handling VAT

VAT is primarily a barrier that relates to knowledge on how to interpret and understand a set of complex, and often quite elastic, rules. Therefore, the researchers who have successfully handled the challenges have primarily drawn on experts from convention bureaus or experts from consultancies or PCOs.

To support host researchers, Aalborg University has compiled an overview manual, which provide a basic introduction and overview of pitfalls in handling VAT²¹. Additionally, MeetDenmark has informed that they are in the process of developing a manual on the topic.

6.3. SUPPORTIVE MEASURE THAT CAN INCREASE THE BENEFITS FROM HOSTING CONFERENCES

Generally, our cases do not present examples of a structured and systematic follow-up from the conferences. This can diminish the returns from hosting. However, three examples of mechanisms that can increase potential benefits are identified;

²¹ Aalborg Universitet (2016): "Vejledning AAU-konferencer – Moms og andre fokuspunkter".

- **PCO’s assisting researchers in goal-setting and fulfilment of goals.** One of the interviewed PCOs generally seek to engage researchers with setting “local” goals for the conference, and measures for fulfilling the goals. E.g. if the local hosts wish to use the conference to recruit young talents or create visibility, the PCO assists the researchers in setting tangible goals and embed activities at the conference, e.g. career stands or a communication strategy.
- **Involving industry.** Especially the large medical conferences are strong venues for creating networks between academia and industry and potentially form new research and innovation consortia in the slipstream of the conference. The engagement of industry at research conferences generally happen through industrial symposia, exhibitions, side-events etc. However, as mentioned above, compliance of regulation on industry-academia interaction does put certain boundaries on the extent by which such interaction happened.
- **Use conferences to set an agenda.** In the 2016 ESMO Congress in Copenhagen, a strategic communication agency helped the Danish partners in the preparation process and during the congress in creating a strong “Danish” profiling of the event, based on the Danish stronghold within cancer research and the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention. The agency established a partnership of key stakeholders and developed information material for the conference, featuring a showcase of the Danish model for cancer treatment and prevention²². Furthermore, ambassadors were appointed in significant research environments at Danish universities and hospitals to promote the congress among their peers (see box 6.7. below).

Box 6.7. Strategic agenda setting, Hansen Agenda

During the 2016 ESMO Congress in Copenhagen, the strategic communication bureau, Hansen Agenda, employed an alternative approach to promote the ESMO congress and the Society’s strategy.

In collaboration with the local host, the agency managed to create a sense of ownership of the congress in the local medical and research environments.

The result was an increased support among Danish researchers and oncologists and extensive media coverage of the congress as shown below:

- 98% increase in number of Danish ESMO-members
- 129% increase in scientific papers submitted by Danish oncologists
- 145% increase in Danish delegates at the congress
- 3 national TV features
- 3 national radio features
- 46 national news clips

“When we first met Hansen Agenda we were actually looking for a PR and communication agency to help ESMO find the right level of visibility among Danes. What we found was a very interesting PR approach to bring people to believe that what they wanted was to be with us!

By developing partnerships with key stakeholders in oncology and related fields, Hansen Agenda was able to create a strong and committed network that in the end was mutually beneficial, for ESMO and

²² Copenhagen Science City (2016): “The Danish Model for Cancer Treatment and Prevention”

for the Danish cancer community. Away from the traditional publicity campaigns, the results obtained have amazed everyone and have become a reference for future ESMO congresses”.

Vanessa Pavinato, Head of Communications, ESMO

Appendix

A: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The cases were selected in close dialogue with the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy and MeetDenmark, the Danish national agency for attracting conferences. Three of the cases are Danish, while the remaining three are from Scotland, the Netherlands, and Sweden, respectively. From the outset, it was important that the cases mirrored the extensive variation of conferences, based on the following criteria;

- **Location.** The selected cases should overall represent a variation between congresses conducted in well-connected metropolitan areas with capacity for hosting large conferences.
- **Institutional profile.** Second, the cases should represent both research-intense, national “Humboldtian” universities as well as regionally oriented universities. Universities with different profiles might have differing motivations and benefits from hosting conferences.
- **Differing scientific topics.** E.g. health, humanities etc. as prior research shows that the effects of research congresses can differ between different scientific areas.
- **Varying sizes.** Large congresses with several thousand delegates entail significantly higher demands on project management, venues, resources, funding etc. than smaller conferences with a few hundred delegates.
- **Distance in time.** Lastly, the difference in time may carry importance for the extent to which effects have unfolded. Furthermore, the reliability of the qualitative findings may differ between a congress conducted five years ago, and another held one year ago, because of memory.

Furthermore, we have interviewed representatives from two planned congresses that was never executed. The purpose was to achieve a more valid perspective on which barriers are significant to a degree where they can halt the realisation of a congress. In terms of focusing supportive measures towards the most significant barriers, this knowledge is crucial.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews with the following stakeholders;

- The researcher who was lead for attracting and/or organising the conference
- The scientific society behind the conference
- Representatives from the institutional leadership at the universities
- Representatives from local convention bureaus, PCOs, and/or the venues, at which the conference was held

In line with the analytical model, the interviews examined the following topics;

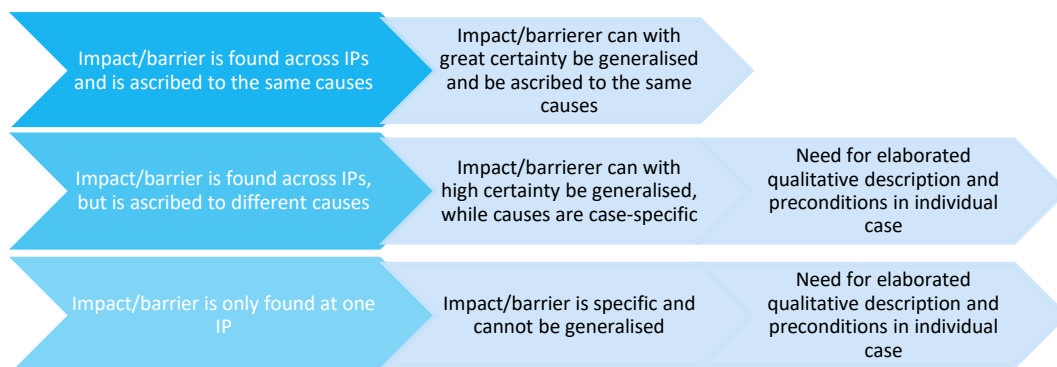
Box A.1. Interview topics

- Background and motivation for hosting the conference
- Initial activities before execution of conference
- Execution
- Follow-up activities
- Value added benefits and impacts from hosting
- Barriers, challenges, their causes as well as solutions
- Context and critical conditions for effects
- Congress-promoting framework conditions, instruments and partnerships

The qualitative analysis explored commonalities among the cases regarding impact, barriers etc. as well as determined to which extent the findings can be generalised. Furthermore, we examined critical factors and their significance for researchers and host institutions when bidding for international congresses. Lastly, we examined the importance of critical preconditions and contextual factors, such as the interplay between the university and research environment as well as the importance of experience and competencies on hosting conferences.

We used a qualitative model for examining causality in small-n qualitative cases-studies. The model was used for ascertaining the benefits, barriers and the causes behind, as well as their transferability, based on whether the informants' statements and inputs were consistent across the cases.

Box A.2. Analysis of causality



As illustrated in box A.2., observed impacts, barriers, and causes can be difficult to generalise, if they are only identified in one or few cases. However, the information contained in these cases can be of great interest, as it might describe e.g. barriers that are important under a certain set of circumstances. For that reason, we have provided a thorough description of each case study in chapter 3.

This knowledge is crucial to understand the causes leading to an observed benefit. We have employed “process-tracing” in which we have combined qualitative interviews with our knowledge on impacts, benefits, barriers and causes behind, to provide an in-depth, “tick” description of which causes lead to an observed impact or barrier.

B: INTERVIEWEES

In the section below we have listed the interviewees for each case, including their title, role in conference and organisation.

Thermoelectrics in Aalborg

Eskild Holm Nielsen, Dean, The Technical Faculty of IT and Design, Aalborg University

Professor Lasse Rosendahl, Department of Energy Technology, Aalborg University

Paw V. Mortensen, Special Advisor, Energy Fundraising and Project Management, Aalborg University

Assistant Professor, Alireza Rezaniakolaei, Department of Energy Technology, Aalborg University

Family Nursing in Odense

Professor Ole Skøtt, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southern Denmark

Associate Professor, Birte Østergaard, Department of Clinical Research, University of Southern Denmark

Kim Brixen, Director, Odense University Hospital

Hanne Konradsen, Board member, Danish Family Nursing

ESMO in Copenhagen

Professor Ulrik Lassen, Head of Department of Oncology, Rigshospitalet. ESMO National Representative in Denmark and Local Officer for the ESMO 2016 Congress.

Vanessa Pavinato, Head of Communications, ESMO

Lotte Hansen, CEO, Hansen Agenda

Trine Steffensen, Managing Director, MCI group

Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh

Associate Professor Dr Mark Hartl, School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society, Heriot Watt University. Conference chair and local host.

Don MacKinlay, Regional Enhancement Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Original founder of the conference and engaged in the American Fisheries Society.

Professor Garry Pender, Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), Heriot Watt University

Elaine Miller, Ambassador & Association Bid Manager, Convention Edinburgh

Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam

Professor Dr Pieter ter Wee, Medical Director, Vrije Universiteit Medical Center Amsterdam. Congress President and member of organising committee

Professor Dr Peter J. Blankestijn, Internist Nephrology, University Medical Center, Utrecht. Member of the Scientific Advisory Board in ERA-EDTA (2008-2011), member of Council (2010-2013), Congress secretary of the 51st congress

Anita Soels, Business Development Manager, RAI Amsterdam

Marc Horsmans, Business Marketing & Conventions team, Amsterdam Marketing

Paolo Zavalloni, ERA-EDTA Congress & Industry Relations Manager, ERA-EDTA Industry Relations

EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg

Professor Ola Olsson, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg. Host researcher.

Professor Olof Johansson-Stenman, Vice-Dean of faculty, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

Karin Jonson, Project Manager, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

Verena Kurz, PhD student, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

Gemma Prunner-Thomas, General Manager, EEA

Anneli Stahre, Project Manager, Gothenburg Convention Bureau

Non-case 1 European Social Science History Conference 2020

Professor Anne Løkke, The Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen

Non-case 2 International Society of Biomechanics Conference 2019

Associate Professor Tine Alkjær, University of Copenhagen

Wonderful Copenhagen

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier, Convention Director, Wonderful Copenhagen

Peter Dyhr Andreassen, Senior Project Manager, Wonderful Copenhagen

Thomas Trøst Hansen, Industrial PhD student, Wonderful Copenhagen