

Guide to IEEE Standards Meeting Policies

Draft for approval by IEEE-SA Standards Board, 1999-09

The purpose of this guide is to assist you, the Sponsor Chair or the Working Group Chair, to plan standards meetings in a manner that does not jeopardize the not-for-profit tax status of the IEEE. We hope that you agree that this is an important goal—one that is worth a few minutes of your attention. You will discover that, for all but the most complex of meeting requirements, it is easy to understand and observe these few guidelines.

All of these guidelines are abstracted from the IEEE Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 10 and, in particular, Section 10.2, which pertains specifically to standards meetings. The P&P should be consulted if there is any question regarding the nature of these guidelines.

Basics

Guideline 1. Make sure that your meetings have the sole purpose of developing IEEE standards.

The objective of any IEEE standards meeting is to develop and produce IEEE standards that reflect a consensus among industry, government, and the general public and to serve the interests of those groups. If your meeting has any other purpose as its primary function, then it might not be appropriate as a standards meeting. That doesn't necessarily mean that you shouldn't have the meeting, but it does mean that it doesn't fall under this set of guidelines. You should check the more general set of meeting guidelines found in the IEEE Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 10.1.

Guideline 2. If you want to collaborate with another organization, ask for help.

Sometimes it might be desirable for a Working Group or a Sponsor to collaborate with a trade association, a consortium or another standards organization on a particular project. Although this sort of collaboration is commendable for the consensus process, it can lead to legal complications and can jeopardize IEEE's non-profit tax status. Therefore, before entering into any sort of collaborative arrangement, ask staff for assistance in developing a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the nature of the relationship.

By the way, this guideline does not discourage hosting arrangements. Even for-profit organizations are permitted to host IEEE standards meetings. Any financial support beyond hosting, though, must be approved by the IEEE Standards Association.

Planning the Meeting

Guideline 3. Put "IEEE" in the name of the meeting.

The title of any IEEE standards meeting must include the term "IEEE." Any advertisement, publicity, or electronic notification of the meeting must include the title. Furthermore, the IEEE logo must appear on all printed material.

Financing the Meeting

Guideline 4. Operate meetings on a "break-even" basis.

A budget for a meeting or a series of meetings should be planned to break even, neither making nor losing money. A small retention of funds as a rollover is allowed for standards meetings (which operate on a continuous basis).

Guideline 5. Don't plan to collect money unless you are prepared to deal with the taxes.

Laws regarding the collection of sales taxes and other taxes vary from state to state and locality to locality. In some places, you may even be required to pay taxes on meeting registration fees. Before making any plans involving the receipt of money, make sure of the tax situation by contacting the IEEE Tax Compliance Office at tax-grants@ieee.org.

Guideline 6. Provide proper signature authority on meeting bank accounts.

It's a good idea to have a single bank account for payment of meeting expenses. The account must provide signature authority to at least three individuals—at least two volunteers and the Managing Director of IEEE Standards. Furthermore, the account description must include the words "IEEE" or "IEEE-SA". The bank account must be closed within six months of the completion of the corresponding activity and closing statements must be submitted to the IEEE-SA BOG and to the relevant IEEE society along with a final budget report.

Guideline 7. If your meeting budget exceeds \$25,000, ask for help.

This guideline applies if either the budget income or budgeted expenses exceed \$25,000 for a single meeting. Many additional controls will apply if this is the case.

Furthermore, if your *annual* budget for meetings exceeds \$25,000 then there are additional requirements concerning insurance and auditing.

Obviously, you would prefer to avoid this situation. One thing you can do is to avoid running money through the IEEE account if it doesn't really belong there. For example, if a host company has arranged a meeting and wants to collect a meeting fee, let them handle the money—don't run it through an IEEE account.

On the other hand, if your budget legitimately exceeds the \$25,000 threshold then you should do two things. Study the provisions of the meetings policy in the IEEE Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 10.2, and contact IEEE staff for assistance.

Guideline 8. Submit any contracts for review.

All contracts, including hotel services and meeting management, should be submitted to the IEEE Standards Sponsor for review *prior to signing*. It is recommended that the Sponsor use IEEE Conference Services for this purpose. Competitive bidding must be used whenever feasible. The Working Group chair or Sponsor chair must forward the executed contract to the IEEE Standards Department for audit and retention.

Conducting the Meeting

Guideline 9. Conduct the meeting openly.

Anyone who is interested in a standards activity or potentially affected by it is permitted to attend any IEEE standards meeting. If there is a meeting fee, all attendees are required to pay it. (However, fees may be reduced or waived for students, life members, unemployed persons, retired persons, invited speakers and IEEE staff.)

Guideline 10. Refrain from discussions violating anti-trust laws.

The fact that the meeting is a standards meeting does not absolve participants of the responsibility to avoid discussing subjects that may violate anti-trust legislation. These subjects include:

- ✱Validity of patents or the cost of using them.
- ✱Any ongoing litigation.
- ✱Pricing or other issues related to anti-trust.

Guideline 11. Avoid job recruiting.

Job recruiting at a standards meeting is inappropriate and discouraged. However, open posting by prospective employers and employees is permitted if approved in advance by the Standards Sponsor.

Guideline 12. Notify participants of recording.

Notify meeting participants, in advance, if there will be audio recording, video recording, or photography at the meeting. Meeting organizers or Standards Sponsors are permitted to restrict such activities if they might impede free discussion or compromise commercial value. Furthermore, recording or photography may be halted whenever they are disruptive.

Guideline 13. Avoid encouraging the press.

Normally, press attendance is to be discouraged because their presence may hamper free discussion. If press chooses to attend, they should pay the normal meeting fee and their presence should be announced.

Guideline 14. Avoid sales exhibits.

Exhibits of vendor products and literature, sales presentations and other marketing activities are discouraged.