

A scenario for the arrangement of the Séminaires Européens de Statistiques.

1. The Séminaires Européens de Statistiques (SemStat) are held approximately biennially. The final decision regarding the theme and site of a SemStat should be reached at least two years in advance of the meeting. Negotiations on the site of future meetings normally concern a period of about 2 or 3 years ahead.

2. The form of the SemStat. In its established form a SemStat runs from a Monday morning till the afternoon of the following Saturday, with the Wednesday afternoon kept free of a scientific programme and devoted to excursions.

The invited part of the programme consists of:

- **Four Expository Lecture series**, each series composed of three lectures.
- **Three Individual Lectures**, each lecture slot lasts 1.5 hours, divided into lecture and discussion at the discretion of the lecturer concerned.

The Expository Lecture series provide expositions of aspects of the theme of the SemStat, which should be accessible to well-informed and able post-doctoral researchers in statistics who are not specialists, and should lead them to the frontiers of research. The Individual Lectures should provide surveys of complementary research areas. Neither Expository nor Individual lecturers need necessarily be established in the field, but should be committed and able expositors. It is a strong advantage for these speakers to be relatively young. The lecturers are expected to prepare expository papers to be published in a conference volume shortly after the meeting.

In addition to the invited lectures, the conference programme contains contributed papers. These need not necessarily be related to the topics of the invited paper sessions. Contributed papers may be either read or presented as posters. Those read are grouped into sessions, each session comprising about 5–6 papers, with 15–20 minutes allocated to each paper. There should be no parallel sessions (this may imply a restriction on the number of contributed papers). This structure of the programme has proved to be extremely successful in the past three SemStat Meetings.

3. The European Regional Committee appoints and maintains a Steering Group for the SemStat. The Steering Group consists of between five and seven people, including a Chairman. The term of service on the Steering Group is five years. The task of this group is to support the Chairman in obtaining funding for SemStats (for example using the Euroconference grant schemes of the EU) and to determine themes and locations and advise on main speakers, in consultation with a suitable range of persons including European Regional Committee members. In particular the Steering Group should liaise with the Programme Coordinator of the European Regional Committee to ensure coordination with other meetings. The time of service in the Steering Group should in general not exceed 5 years. It is important to maintain continuity as well as renewal. It should also be aimed at drawing young promising people into the group.

The Steering Group should meet about two years before the SemStat (for example at a previous SemStat) in order to plan the programme. At this time it should

- choose the theme
- suggest the location and Local Organizer
- suggest names of Expository and Individual lecturers, with reserves.

It should also comment on and advise on grant proposals to obtain funding when appropriate. The Chairman is responsible for submitting and managing these grants. Sufficient funds should be obtained to fund travel and subsistence for a total of about 60 participants, speakers and organisers per SemStat.

Further points the Steering Group should consider in its meeting are the following:

a) The theme of the SemStat should be topical and currently active. The production of a volume of expository papers arising from the conference should be discussed. The conference volumes are published by Chapman and Hall, thus supporting the strong link between Chapman and Hall and the Bernoulli

Society. The result should be to contribute strongly to the ability of participants and volume readers to contribute to modern statistical research.

b) Particular care should be exercised in the selection of speakers, who need to be able expositors who will produce outstanding expository articles for the conference volume.

c) It is helpful if the ERC Programme Coordinator can be present at the Steering Group meeting. If this is not possible, the Steering Group Chairman should inform the ERC Programme Coordinator immediately about the decisions made at the meeting. The invitations should not be sent out before the ERC Programme Coordinator had had an opportunity to comment on the proposed programme.

d) The Local Organiser and the Steering Group Chairman need to liaise closely. It may be appropriate for them to be the same person on occasion.

e) The SemStat locations should be chosen so as to produce a good geographical spread over successive meetings.

f) Subsequently to the Steering Group meeting the organisational details are the responsibility of the Chairman, who should, however, keep the Steering Group informed and may delegate tasks as appropriate.

After the meeting of the Steering Group, and when the ERC Programme Coordinator has had a chance to comment, the invitations to the Local Organizer and then to the lecturers should be sent out. These invitations should be signed by the Steering Group Chairman. The following list contains some additional guidelines:

g) The letters of invitation should set a date by which an answer is needed. Some mail connections are slow, but two months should be adequate for even the slowest connections. If there is no answer, a polite reminder should be sent without delay, with a firm deadline for response.

h) Once the lecturers have accepted, they should be asked for exact titles of their talks. Closer to the SemStat they should also send a preliminary draft to be distributed to participants. It should be made clear in the invitation that this preliminary draft will be required, that the talks are to be expository in nature, at the level indicated in a) above, and that a volume will be prepared after the conference, with financial proceeds to be used to help fund future SemStats.

Each author of the conference volumes donates his/her royalties to SemStat. This money is kept in an account administered by Nuffield College, Oxford (David Cox is the account holder). It is tradition that the conference dinner is funded from the proceeds of the preceding SemStat volume.

i) The letters to the Local Organiser should explain the general structure of the SemStat and the responsibilities of the Local Organiser (see (j) below). Once a Local Organiser has accepted, he or she should choose two or three colleagues to form a Local Organiser Group.

After the Steering Group meeting, and after the site and speakers have been established, the Chairman should write to a list of senior European scientists in statistical science to ask for nominations for participants. The list should be completed in consultation with the Steering Group and the ERC. A sample letter [A] is attached. A deadline for response should be attached so that invitation to participants (sample letter [B]) can be sent out one year before the SemStat. In turn a deadline for acceptance of invitation should be set so that (after approval by funding authorities if required) participants can be definitely invited or placed on a reserve list and so informed nine months before the SemStat (sample letter [C]). Listed participants should normally be completely funded for travel and subsistence (together with registration fee to supply funding for speakers and organisers). This level of funding is available, for example, from EU Euroconference schemes.

About one month before the meeting preliminary drafts of the lectures should be sent to participants, together with local information supplied by the Local Organizers.

During the meeting the Chairman should collect statements of admissible expenses from participants (together with supporting receipts), either to reimburse immediately or via cheques posted after the meeting. Accommodation can normally be paid directly from grant-supplied funds. It is a tradition that the conference dinner is funded from the proceeds of the preceding SemStat volume.

After the meeting the Chairman, together with the Local Organizer and others will edit (including light refereeing) the SemStat volume. This will normally contain papers representing all lectures but not contributed talks.

There may be further administration details required by the funding authority (for example EU Euroconference protocol requires nomination of a Conference Chairman and "Virtual Committee", to be approved by them).

j) The Local Organizers, who take care of local arrangements, are people selected by the Local Organizer above. In consultation with the Steering Group Chairman, the Local Organizer should

- arrange accommodation, communal meal arrangements, and lecture rooms;
- determine timetable including selection of contributed talks;
- distribute local information to participants and speakers;
- organise the Conference Dinner;
- organise such other local details as may be required.

k) After the SemStat has taken place the Steering Group Chairman should provide the Programme Co-ordinator of the European Regional Committee with such available information on the meeting (number of participants, budget, etc.) as is of importance for the Archive of the European Regional Committee.