

ATBC Conferences Handbook

March, 2023

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	4
Objectives of ATBC Meetings	6
Components	7
Academic Component	9
Theme of the meeting	9
Plenary Sessions	10
Symposia	11
Individual Contributions	12
Open Oral Sessions	12
Poster Sessions	14
Program Planning	14
Special Academic Sessions	15
ATBC Council Meeting	15
Opening Plenary Session	16
Presidential Address	16
Logistics component	17
Chronogram and Key Dates	17
Venue	17
Venue equipment	18
Food	18
Communication	19
Website	19
Contact Point	20
Advertising	21
Finances	21
Finances management	21
Registration Fees	22
Opportunities for Sponsors and Exhibitors	22
Volunteers	23
Other Services	24
Registration desk	24
Presentation check Desk	24
Accommodation Childcare	25
Partner Airline	25
Capacity Building Component	26
Mentoring Circles	26
Courses	26
Social and Cultural Component	28
Social Sessions	28
Opening Ceremony	28

Closing Ceremony	29
Networking	30
Workshops	30
Public engagement	31
Conservation	32
Carbon Offsetting Program	32
Declaration	32
Other initiatives for Conservation	33
Conservation Committee Meeting	33
On greening ATBC meetings	34
Food and Waste management	34
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	35
Code of Conduct	35
Health and Safety	36
Players	37
Attendees	37
Conference Chair and Co-Chair(s)	37
Local Organizing Committee	37
Academic/Scientific Committee	37
Host Institution(s)	38
PCO	38
Council of the ATBC	38
ATBC Executive Director	39
ATBC Treasurer	39
ATBC Conferences Committee	39
ATBC Awards Committee	39
ATBC Conservation Committee	40
ATBC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee	40
Volunteers	40
Final Considerations	41
APPENDIX	42
CALL FOR SYMPOSIA	42
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS	46
DECLARATION	48
CODE OF CONDUCT	50
CHRONOGRAM AND KEY DATES	51
LOGO	57
FEES	58
SPONSORS	59
CALL FOR WORKSHOPS	61
CALL FOR GRANTS & AWARDS	63
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT	66

Introduction

Since its inception in 1963, the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC, known as ATB until 2002) has been dedicated to sponsoring annual meetings that promote research, education, conservation, and communication in the field of tropical biology and conservation. These meetings, which include oral presentations, posters, symposia, workshops, and other academic, cultural, and outreach activities, are an essential tool for the ATBC to achieve its mission, vision, and objectives.

Being international in scope, membership, and objectives, the ATBC is a worldwide entity that brings together scientists, decision-makers, and other social actors from both tropical and non-tropical countries to work on agendas with important conservation, research, and education implications for tropical biology. Recognized as a leading scientific organization, ATBC is committed to promoting conservation initiatives in tropical regions worldwide.

The ATBC annual meetings are held in different parts of the globe each year and are organized by different academic institutions in different countries, representing different cultures and environmental settings. This global perspective has enabled ATBC to establish a presence in various locations and facilitate the exchange of ideas, knowledge, training experiences, research challenges, and conservation issues among academics, students, and civil society.

However, organizing successful annual meetings in different localities around the world, along with the increasing number of members, represents a challenge along three major axes: (i) high academic quality, (ii) high standards of professional organization, and (iii) affordability and accessibility. The ATBC is committed to ensuring that its annual meetings maintain a high standard of quality and professional organization, while also being affordable and accessible to all attendees.

In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ATBC held its first virtual conference. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the ATBC is committed to maintaining the high standards of its annual meetings and continuing the providing of opportunities for researchers, students, and decision-makers to come together to discuss and promote conservation, research, and education in tropical biology.

The present handbook aims at ensuring that ATBC meetings remain successful scientific, academic, and cultural events. Achieving such a goal requires careful planning and diligent organized work on the three major components that underpin each ATBC meeting: logistical, academic, and social/cultural. In the next section (II), we outline ATBC meeting objectives. Thereafter we present in detail the three components and their elements (Section III). Then, in Section IV, we outline some post-conference actions to be taken by the Program Chair to provide feedback. Finally, in section V we provide a series of appendices that complement the Handbook.

Please note that the process of organizing an ATBC meeting begins with submitting an oral/written proposal to the ATBC Executive Director, expressing a desire to organize an annual meeting in a given country of venue. This should be done approximately 3-4 years before the proposed meeting year.

Once the oral proposal is accepted, a written proposal is presented to the ATBC Council, at least two years before the proposed meeting date. This proposal is presented by one or more individuals

(Program Chair and Co-Chairs) who will chair the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and who are supported by an academic institution.

The LOC will be responsible for all components of the meeting. The written proposal must contain supporting arguments, including a detailed description of the existing academic and logistic facilities that ensure the feasibility and success of the meeting. The ATBC Council reviews proposals and makes decisions regarding meeting venues.

Objectives of ATBC Meetings

The objectives of the Annual Meetings of the Association of Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) are:

1. To promote and improve cooperation, communication, and interchange among all people interested in the study, conservation, and/or management of any of the components and/or processes present in tropical ecosystems of the world, including the virtual component.
2. To provide a space where the most recent findings related to tropical biology and/or conservation can be presented and discussed, in order to catalyze further advancement and to foster the development of new collaborations and partnerships, both in-person and online.
3. To encourage and facilitate research in all aspects of tropical biology and conservation, by providing a platform for researchers to share their work and receive feedback from their peers.
4. To support the education of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as to assist them in the development of their careers, through networking opportunities, mentoring, and training workshops.
5. To acknowledge and honor the work of researchers who have had an outstanding long-term impact on the development of tropical biology and/or conservation, by recognizing their contributions and highlighting their work to the broader scientific community.
6. To promote awareness in the general public of the importance of studying and conserving tropical ecosystems, through public outreach and education activities, as well as by disseminating research findings to a wider audience.
7. To link ATBC with conservation initiatives, by connecting researchers with policymakers and practitioners, and by fostering partnerships between academia, government, and civil society organizations.

Components

The ATBC annual meetings include several key components:

Academic component: Researchers and students should present their latest findings and participate in discussions and debates related to tropical biology and conservation through academic sessions.

Logistics component: The logistic component of ATBC2023 involves organizing and managing various aspects of the conference, such as the venue, accommodations, registration, information, and support for attendees. The goal is to create a smooth and efficient experience for all participants, while also taking into account the diverse needs and preferences of attendees.

Networking opportunities: During the meetings, attendees should have the opportunity to connect with colleagues and experts in the field, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among different sectors and disciplines.

Social and cultural component: The meeting should include a variety of social and cultural activities, such as field trips, workshops and cultural events, that aim to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the tropical biology and conservation community and to celebrate the cultural heritage of the host country and region.

Capacity building opportunities: The meeting should include special sessions and workshops designed to support the education of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as to assist them in the development of their careers, with a focus on providing mentorship and training with special focus on underrepresented groups.

Awards and recognition: Acknowledge and honor the work of researchers who have had an outstanding long-term impact on the development of tropical biology and conservation is an important aspect to consider at ATBC meetings.

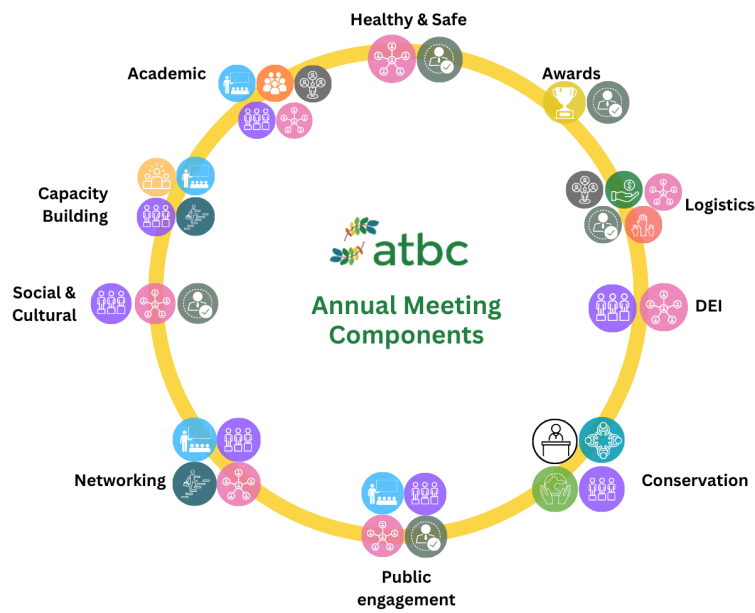
Public engagement: The meeting should promote awareness in the general public of the importance of studying and conserving tropical ecosystems. This component includes activities such as public lectures, exhibitions, and social media campaigns to engage the general public and raise awareness about the importance of tropical biology and conservation.

Conservation component: The meeting should facilitate connections between ATBC and conservation initiatives to achieve a positive impact in the conservation of tropical ecosystems, and to promote the integration of scientific research with the needs and perspectives of practitioners and stakeholders.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The ATBC annual meeting should strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all attendees, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other dimensions of diversity. The meeting should also actively encourage the participation of underrepresented groups in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

Health and Safety: The health and safety of all attendees should be a top priority during the ATBC2023 meeting. The meeting should be organized in compliance with local and international health regulations, with clear guidelines and protocols in place to ensure the safety of all

participants. Additionally, the meeting organizers should provide resources and support to attendees to address any health and safety concerns that may arise during the event.



Legend:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  Executive Director |  Academic Committee |  Capacity Building Committee |  Professional Congress Organiser |
|  Council |  DEI |  Grants & Awards Committee |  Volunteers |
|  Conferences Committee |  Conservation Committee |  Treasurer | |
|  Conferences Coordinator |  Early Career Scientist Committee |  Local Committee | |

Academic Component

The academic sessions of the ATBC annual meeting should be the backbone of the event, providing a platform for researchers and scientists to present their latest findings and participate in discussions and debates related to tropical biology and conservation. These sessions should be organized by a general theme, and will feature keynote speakers, plenary sessions, and symposia sessions. The academic sessions must be open to all attendees and should be designed to promote the exchange of ideas and the advancement of knowledge in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

In addition to traditional oral and poster presentations, the academic sessions should also include interactive and innovative formats such as panel discussions, roundtables, and lightning talks. These formats provide opportunities for attendees to engage in more in-depth conversations and to share their ideas and perspectives in a dynamic and interactive way.

The academic sessions should also prioritize the inclusion of early-career researchers, graduate students, and underrepresented groups in the field of tropical biology and conservation. Special sessions should be dedicated to these groups, providing them with opportunities to present their work, receive feedback and make connections with senior researchers.

Additionally, the academic sessions should include a strong emphasis on the integration of traditional knowledge and perspectives from local and indigenous communities, in order to foster a more integrative understanding of tropical ecosystems and their conservation.

Theme of the meeting

The theme of the meeting should be relevant to current trends and developments in the field, and should encourage a cross-disciplinary approach to problem-solving.

Guidelines for selecting the theme of the meeting:

- The theme should be broad enough to encompass a wide range of topics and research areas within tropical biology and conservation.
- The theme should be inclusive, and should seek to engage a diverse range of participants from different backgrounds, cultures, and disciplines.
- The theme should be closely tied to the mission and goals of the ATBC, and should align with the organization's strategic plan.
- The theme should be able to generate interest and excitement among potential attendees, and
- should be able to attract a broad range of participants from academia, government, NGOs, and the private sector.
- The theme should be able to generate interest and engagement among the media, and should be able to attract a broad range of media coverage.
- The theme should be able to generate interest among funding agencies, and should be able to attract a broad range of funding support.

Once the theme of the meeting is selected, the Chairs of the conference and the academic committee should work closely to develop the scientific program around this theme, ensuring that the program is balanced, inclusive, and relevant to the interests of the attendees. The Program Chair and the academic committee should also work closely with the other meeting organizers to ensure

that the scientific program is closely tied to the other components of the meeting, such as the social and cultural activities, educational opportunities, and public engagement activities.

Plenary Sessions

Plenary sessions should be designed to address important issues related to the meeting theme and feature a diverse range of speakers, including those from underrepresented groups, in an engaging and interactive format. This can include keynote lectures, panel discussions, debates, and other formats.

The plenary sessions typically last for one hour, including questions. To anchor the academic program around the themes of the meeting and provide a clear narrative for attendees, it is suggested to schedule one session each at the beginning and/or the end of each academic program day. Plenary speakers may also be invited to write review or discussion papers about the issues presented in their talks, for possible publication in *Biotropica*, the journal of ATBC.

A keynote lecture is a feature of a plenary session, usually given by a senior, world-renowned scientist or conservationist. The lecture is typically an hour long and covers important issues related to the theme of the ATBC conference. The speaker is chosen for their expertise and experience in the field and is meant to provide attendees with an overview of the current state of the field, as well as new insights and perspectives.

A panel discussion is a format that allows for multiple perspectives on a specific topic to be shared. In the context of an ATBC conference, a panel discussion would likely involve several experts in the field of tropical biology and conservation discussing a specific topic related to the conference theme. The discussion is moderated and allows for interactive participation from the audience.

A debate is a formal discussion between two or more individuals who have differing viewpoints on a specific topic. In the context of an ATBC conference, a debate would likely involve experts in the field of tropical biology and conservation discussing a specific topic related to the conference theme. The debate is moderated and allows for interactive participation from the audience. The speakers will express their point of view and an opportunity for the audience to ask questions and get different perspectives on the topic.

In addition to the traditional formats of keynote lectures, panel discussions, and debates, the ATBC conference organizers should also explore novel formats for plenary sessions. These could include interactive workshops, roundtable discussions, "un-conferences," or other formats that encourage active participation and engagement from attendees. These formats can help to foster new ideas and collaborations, and can provide a more dynamic and engaging experience for conference attendees. In order to ensure that these formats are successful, the conference organizers should work closely with the ATBC-Conferences Committee to develop and test these formats in advance of the conference. Additionally, they should also solicit feedback from attendees after the conference to determine which formats were most successful and how they can be improved in the future.

The ATBC-Conferences Committee should provide feedback on the diversity and inclusion of these plenary sessions to ensure they reflect the diversity of the field and society.

Once the plenary speakers have been decided, it is important to make this information available to the public. The most effective way to do this is by updating the conference website with the list of confirmed speakers. This will not only create excitement among the attendees, but also allow them to learn about the individuals who will be sharing their insights and expertise at the event. Additionally, publishing the list of plenary speakers on the website will also help to establish the credibility of the conference and attract more attendees.

Symposia

Symposia are an important part of the ATBC conference program and provide a platform for in-depth discussion of relevant research topics in tropical biology and conservation. The goal of symposia is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of current research findings and experiences among experts in a specific field. The format typically includes a series of talks given by speakers, each of whom presents their work and findings on a specific aspect of the symposium topic. Talks are usually around 15-20 minutes long, followed by a question and answer

session. The symposium organizer/moderator may also lead a panel discussion or facilitate a group discussion among the participants to encourage further engagement and exchange of ideas.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the symposium content, organizers should aim to select participants who are preferably mid-career or senior researchers/academics, ensuring a diverse group of experts with a range of perspectives and experiences. In addition, organizers should strive to include participants from underrepresented groups, including individuals from diverse ethnic, gender, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds, to ensure that the symposium reflects the diversity of the field and the society.

Each symposium session should include a maximum of eight and a minimum of six talks. This allows for a balance between providing a comprehensive overview of the topic and allowing enough time for discussion and interaction among participants. In some cases, a symposium may require two sessions to be completed in order to fully cover the topics at hand.

ATBC-Conference Committee will provide feedback on the scientific and diversity of the symposia to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the field and the society.

It is important to ensure that the evaluation process for symposia proposals is thorough and impartial. One effective way to accomplish this is to have proposals evaluated by a panel of peers, experts in the relevant fields. This will help to ensure that the proposals selected for presentation are of the highest quality, and that the program for the annual ATBC meeting is both diverse and representative of the most current research and thinking in the relevant fields.

Once a symposia proposal is accepted, speakers are invited to submit the abstract of their contribution. The accepted symposia and their speakers will be publicized on the ATBC annual meeting website.

As a reference, an example of a call for symposia can be found in appendix X.

Individual Contributions

The scientific program of the ATBC meeting should revolve around the theme of the meeting, with a focus on critical topics that align with the theme, but also considering traditional topics of basic science on tropical biology and ecology.

It is important that all presenters be notified of acceptance (or non-acceptance) of their contribution as early as possible, preferably at least 3 months before the meeting. This allows presenters enough time to prepare their presentations and make travel arrangements.

General guidelines for individual contributions:

- Abstract submissions: All abstract submissions should be relevant to the theme of the meeting and should clearly state the objectives, methods, results, and conclusions of the research being presented.
- Peer review: All abstract submissions must be subject to a review process, ideally carried out by the scientific committee, to ensure the quality and relevance of the research being presented. Format: Scientific contributions can take the form of oral presentations, poster presentations, or symposia.
- Time allocation: The time allocated for each scientific contribution should be appropriate for the format and content of the presentation.
- Support for students and early career researchers: The meeting organizers should actively encourage and support the participation of students and early career researchers, by providing them with opportunities to present their research and connect with established scientists in the field.
- Emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion: The scientific program should strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all participants, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other dimensions of diversity. The meeting should also actively encourage the participation of underrepresented groups in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

In appendix X, an example of the call for abstracts.

Open Oral Sessions

Open oral sessions provide an opportunity for a wide range of individuals to present their research and contribute to the overall knowledge and understanding of tropical biology and conservation. These sessions are an important platform for graduate students, early career researchers, practitioners, and other individuals interested in sharing their findings and experiences and receive feedback from their peers. They provide a space for the exchange of ideas and the development of new collaborations.

It is important to ensure that open oral sessions are organized in a coherent and structured manner, with contributions grouped by topic to promote the participation of graduate students, and priority given to contributions from ATBC members. This will help to ensure that the sessions are focused and relevant to the overall meeting theme.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the open oral sessions, the scientific committee should carefully review abstracts and select contributions that present fully developed results with clear conclusions. The oral presentations should be limited to 12 minutes, with an additional two minutes provided for questions and one minute for switching speakers. This format ensures that the presentations are concise, informative and engaging.

In addition to the content of the presentations, it is important to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion when organizing open oral sessions. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that the participants, presenters and session organizers are diverse in terms of ethnic, gender, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds. The ATBC-Conferences Committee can provide support to ensure the diversity and inclusion of these open oral sessions to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the field and the society.

To organize open-sessions with specific topics, organizers should start by identifying key areas of research within the field of tropical biology and conservation. Once these key areas have been identified, the LOC and the Scientific Committee can begin to develop specific topics for the program that align with these areas.

It is also important to consider diversity in the selection of topics . The ATBC Conferences Committee should be involved in this process to ensure that the program reflects the diversity of the field and society.

When reviewing abstracts for inclusion in open oral sessions at an ATBC conference, it is important to consider the following general aspects:

1. Relevance: The abstract should be relevant to the conference theme and the topic of the session for which it is being submitted.
2. Scientific merit: The abstract should present fully developed results with clear conclusions, and should demonstrate a high level of scientific rigor and quality.
3. Originality: The abstract should present new and original research, rather than simply summarizing previously published work.
4. Clarity: The abstract should be well-written and easy to understand, with clear and concise language.
5. Diversity: The abstract should be selected based on its relevance and scientific merit, but also consider the diversity of the field and society. The session should feature a diverse group of presenters, including those from underrepresented groups, to ensure a range of perspectives and experiences.
7. Following the guidelines: The abstract should follow the guidelines provided by the conference organizers.

In order to ensure that the open oral sessions are well-attended and engaging, organizers should actively promote the program and encourage submissions of abstracts in a timely manner.

Finally, open oral sessions should be run efficiently, with a designated "moderator" who is responsible for running the session, and ensuring that the timing and flow of presentations is maintained. This will help to create a positive and productive learning environment for attendees. It is suggested to involve the Scientific Committee as moderators for open oral sessions and provide them with clear guidelines and instructions regarding the format and time allocation for each presentation, as well as the use of audio-visual equipment.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions provide a platform for attendees to present their research and engage in informal discussions with their peers. These sessions allow graduate students, early career researchers, and other members of the community to showcase their work and receive feedback from more experienced researchers.

To ensure the quality and relevance of the poster sessions, organizers should aim to select contributions that provide clear messages and results in the abstract. Additionally, posters should be organized by themes, creating specific sessions allows for the efficient and organized presentation of research. These sessions provide an opportunity for attendees to engage with the research in a more informal setting, and allows for more in-depth discussion and feedback. This will also help to ensure that the poster sessions are well-attended and that attendees have the opportunity to view a diverse range of posters.

It is also important to consider diversity and inclusion in the selection of posters. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that posters are selected from a diverse range of individuals, including those from underrepresented groups. The ATBC-Conferences Committee can provide feedback on the diversity and inclusion of these poster sessions to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the field and the society.

It is important to consider programming at least one hour per day for these sessions, preferably in the evenings, to ensure that attendees have ample opportunity to view the posters and engage in discussions.

When reviewing abstracts for poster sessions, it is important to consider the following:

- Relevance to the meeting theme: The poster should address an important issue related to the meeting theme, and should provide new insights or perspectives on the topic.
- Clarity and completeness: The abstract should be well-written and provide a clear and complete summary of the research, including the research question, methods, results, and conclusions.
- Significance and originality: The research should be significant and make an original contribution to the field of tropical biology and conservation.
- Diversity and inclusion: The poster should feature a diverse range of authors, including those from underrepresented groups, to ensure that the session reflects the diversity of the field and the society.

Program Planning

Program and agenda planning is crucial for ATBC Conferences. It involves creating a schedule of events, sessions, and activities that align with the conference theme and goals. This includes selecting keynote speakers, panelists, and other presenters, determining the format of each session (e.g. panel discussion, roundtable, poster presentation), and coordinating with other organizers to ensure a cohesive and engaging program.

When planning the program and agenda, it is important to consider the following:

- Conference theme: The program should align with the conference theme and goals. This includes selecting keynote speakers and presenters who can speak to the theme, and creating sessions and activities that are relevant and interesting to the attendees.
- Diversity and Inclusion: The program should reflect a diverse range of perspectives and voices, and should be inclusive of all attendees. This includes ensuring that the keynote speakers, panelists, and presenters are diverse in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and other characteristics.
- Audience: The program should be tailored to the audience. This includes considering the attendees' interests and needs, as well as their level of expertise and experience in the field.
- Timing and duration: The program should be timed and structured in a way that maximizes engagement and participation. This includes considering the best time of day for different types of sessions, and ensuring that there is a good balance of shorter and longer sessions.
- Networking opportunities: The program should include opportunities for attendees to network and connect with each other. This can include social events, roundtable discussions, and other activities that facilitate interaction and collaboration.
- Evaluation and feedback: The program should include opportunities for attendees to provide feedback and evaluations on the conference. This can include surveys, focus groups, or other methods of collecting data.
- Virtual components: If the meeting is hybrid or virtual, the program should include activities and sessions that are specially designed for the virtual attendees and that they can participate in.

Special Academic Sessions

ATBC Council Meeting

The Council Meeting is a crucial event for ATBC, it allows for the review and discussion of key aspects of the organization's activities. The meeting is moderated and organized by the Executive Director, who leads the discussions and ensures that all key aspects of ATBC activities are reviewed. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC), in coordination with the Executive director and Officers, are responsible for ensuring that the necessary facilities and logistics are in place to make the meeting run smoothly.

The meeting is conducted by the ATBC Officers, including the Executive Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Biotropica Editor, ATBC Presidents (Past President, President and President Elect), ATBC Councilors, Chairs of standing committees, and Conferences Coordinator. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that all aspects of the organization's activities are running smoothly and efficiently, and to make any necessary adjustments or improvements.

One of the main focuses of the meeting is the current status of the ongoing conference. The Chair of the ATBC annual meeting is invited to present an updated report on all aspects of the meeting, including discussing any challenges or successes that have been encountered and making recommendations for future meetings. Additionally, chairs of future ATBC annual meetings are asked

to present advances on the organization of those meetings, in order to obtain feedback from the council. This allows for continuity and consistency in the planning and organization of the annual meetings.

The council meeting also provides an opportunity for new proposals for future ATBC annual meetings to be presented and discussed. This allows the council to review and consider new ideas and suggestions for future meetings, which can help to improve and expand the organization's activities and reach.

Overall, the Council Meeting serves as an important platform for review, feedback and planning for ATBC.

Opening Plenary Session

The Opening Plenary Session is a unique opportunity to set the tone for the entire event, providing attendees with a comprehensive overview of the current state of tropical biology and conservation, but also showcasing the cultural and environmental heritage of the host country. The Opening Plenary Session should be an inspiring and informative start to the conference, setting the stage for a productive and enlightening experience for all participants. The format of this session could be a keynote or a panel discussion. To make the session engaging and dynamic, the organizers may also consider incorporating multimedia elements and interactive activities.

Presidential Address

The presidential address is a key component of the ATBC annual meeting and is given as a plenary session. This session provides a platform for thought-provoking discussions and a chance for the current president of ATBC to engage with attendees and build relationships within the community. The president can share their vision and perspectives on the tropical biology and conservation, highlight important initiatives and current challenges, provide a historical review around an specific topic, etc. LOC should reserve a time slot of plenary sessions for this session and announce it as a highlight of the conference.

Logistics component

The logistical component of the annual meeting is a crucial aspect that requires careful planning and execution to ensure a successful and inclusive experience for all attendees. The LOC and Chairs should be aware of the importance of this component and must be prepared to take on the necessary responsibilities to make the meeting a success.

Chronogram and Key Dates

The chronogram for the ATBC annual meeting should be designed by the LOC in collaboration with the ATBC Conferences Committee, and the Conferences Coordinator. This chronogram should include key deadlines for various tasks related to the planning and execution of the conference, such as submission of abstracts, registration, speaker confirmations, travel arrangements, preparation of materials, among many others. The chronogram should also include timelines for the setup and breakdown of the conference venue, as well as any rehearsals or dry-runs that may be necessary. In addition, the chronogram should include any relevant deadlines for post-event follow-up and reporting, such as collecting feedback from attendees and submitting reports to the ATBC Council. Overall, the chronogram should be a comprehensive and detailed document that serves as a roadmap for the entire conference planning process.

There are some useful software and tools that help to organize the chronogram and make sure that all processes are running smoothly and on time. Trello, for instance, allows users to create boards for different projects and organize tasks into lists. In the case of our conference, the board could have lists for tasks such as registration, abstract submissions, plenary sessions, logistics, etc. with corresponding tasks and deadlines added to each list. Team members can also collaborate and communicate on tasks through the platform. This helps to keep everyone on track and ensure that everything runs smoothly leading up to the event.

An example of Trello Board for ATBC Conferences can be found in Appendix X.

Venue

The selection of the venue for the ATBC annual meeting is a crucial factor in ensuring a successful and productive conference. When choosing a venue for a conference, it is important to consider the spaces and services that will be required to ensure a successful and smooth event. Here are some of the things that should be taken into account:

1. Adequate space: There should be enough space to accommodate the attendees, including an auditorium for plenary sessions, rooms for simultaneous symposia and oral sessions, and a large area for posters and stands.
2. Physical infrastructure: The venue should have an efficient electricity system, internet connections, and restroom facilities. These are essential for ensuring the comfort and convenience of attendees and for running the conference smoothly.
3. Accessibility: The venue should be easily accessible and within walking distance from most

hotels to minimize the time and effort required for attendees to reach the conference.

4. **Ease of movement:** The spaces should be large enough to facilitate the easy transit of people. Ideally, all facilities should be within the same building to foster interaction among delegates as they move from one event to the next.
5. **Food and Beverage:** A venue with an on-site restaurant or cafes can be a convenient option for attendees looking for food and drink options.
6. **Audio-visual equipment:** The venue should have audio-visual equipment and technical support to run presentations and plenary sessions.

To accommodate attendees with disabilities, the venue should have accessibility features such as ramps, elevators, and wheelchair-accessible restrooms.

Having all these facilities within the same building will make it convenient for attendees and help to create a positive and productive learning environment. The venue should also be chosen considering other factors such as cost, accessibility, and availability during the proposed dates for the conference.

Venue equipment

It is also important to consider the equipment that will be needed at the venue. The following is a list of common equipment that should be considered:

- **Audio-visual equipment:** projectors, sound systems, microphones, and other audio-visual equipment are essential for presentations and sessions.
- **Lighting:** lighting is important for setting the mood and creating a welcoming environment for attendees.
- **Furniture:** chairs, tables, and other furniture will be needed for seating, registration, and poster presentation areas.
- **Wi-Fi:** having a reliable internet connection is crucial for presenters and attendees.
- **Electrical outlets:** adequate electrical outlets should be available in each room for charging devices and powering equipment.
- **Technical support:** a designated team or person should be available to provide technical support in case of any issues with equipment.

These are some of the equipment and facilities that should be considered when selecting a venue for an event. It's important to carefully evaluate the venue and ensure that all necessary equipment and services are available to ensure a successful event.

Professional Conference Organizers (PCOs) can play a crucial role in ensuring and coordinating all the necessary equipment and facilities at the venue.

Food

Food is an important part of the conference experience and can be used to create a sense of community and connection among attendees. LOC should take the time to carefully plan the menu and consider the dietary needs and preferences of attendees. This can include vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

Including lunch and coffee breaks in the registration fee for the conference is an efficient way for attendees to have access to food and refreshments during the meeting, eliminating the need to find food, and be fully focus on the conference. LOC can also provide a variety of food including vegetarian and vegan options, catering to the diverse dietary needs of attendees. Additionally, organizers can also make an effort to source food locally and sustainably, such as using organic and fair-trade products.

Another suggestion is to provide a water station and encourage attendees to bring their own reusable water bottles.

LOC should work with the caterers to estimate the appropriate amount of food needed, and encourage attendees to take only what they can eat.

Overall, the goal should be to provide delicious, healthy and sustainable food options for attendees, while also minimizing the environmental impact of the meeting.

Please avoid packaged and processed foods, and use reusable plates and cutlery instead of disposable items. This not only reduces waste, but also helps to support local economies by using products from nearby farmers and suppliers.

In addition to these strategies, organizers can also work with the venue to implement composting and recycling programs for food waste. This can help to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and can also be used as a source of fertilizer for local gardens and farms.

Communication

Website

The website for the ATBC annual meeting serves as the main source of information for attendees, sponsors, and other stakeholders. It is essential that the website is organized and easy to navigate, with clear and up-to-date information about the meeting, including the dates, location, and theme of the meeting, as well as information about registration, accommodation, transportation, and other logistics.

The website should also include a detailed program for the meeting, including the schedule of oral and poster presentations, keynote lectures, and other events such as field trips, workshops, and social events.

Additionally, the website should have a section for calls, such as calls for abstracts, papers, and posters, as well as information on deadlines, submission guidelines, and evaluation criteria.

To manage the website, the ATBC-conferences coordinator will be in charge of the overall design and content of the website, working in coordination with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The website can be developed using a website management tool such as XCD, which allows for easy updates and editing of the website content, as well as the ability to track website traffic and user engagement.

In addition to the website, the LOC should also consider creating a meeting brochure, which can be distributed to attendees and sponsors, and can include information about the meeting, the program, and other logistical details.

Contact Point

The main contact email for the annual meeting should be managed by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). This email should be prominently displayed on the meeting website, and should be the primary means of communication for attendees, sponsors, and other stakeholders. The email address should be monitored regularly by the LOC, and all inquiries should be responded to promptly and professionally. Additionally, the LOC should ensure that the contact email is also included in all promotional materials, such as brochures and flyers, to make it easily accessible for all interested parties. It is also important for the LOC to have a backup plan for managing the contact email, in case of unexpected outages or technical difficulties. The email address should also be kept active for at least a year after the meeting, in case any follow-up questions or concerns arise.

Hiring a PCO

Hiring a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) can greatly benefit the logistical component of the ATBC conference. A PCO is a company or individual that specializes in the planning and execution of scientific meetings. They often have experience in handling logistics such as venue selection, registration, and catering.

When hiring a PCO, it is important to conduct thorough research and choose a reputable company or individual with a proven track record of organizing successful scientific meetings. The PCO should have a clear understanding of the ATBC meeting goals and objectives, and should be able to provide a detailed plan for achieving them.

It is also essential to establish clear lines of communication between the PCO and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), Chairs, and Conference Coordinator. The PCO should provide regular updates on the logistical progress of the meeting, and should be willing to make adjustments as needed to ensure the success of the event.

Additionally, the PCO should be able to provide a budget for the logistics of the meeting and should be transparent about their costs and fees. The LOC should also have a backup plan in case sufficient funds are not available.

It is important to have personnel from the PCO available during the conference to ensure smooth and efficient operations. This can include representatives from the conference registration and information desk, as well as those in charge of managing the conference facilities and equipment. Having a strong and responsive support team can greatly contribute to the overall success and satisfaction of the conference attendees.

Identity

The logo is a crucial visual representation of the conference and is usually created by a professional and decided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) to reflect the theme and spirit of the event. The logo should be visually appealing and memorable, and should be used consistently across all conference materials and communication channels.

Appendix X shows some logos of ATBC previous conferences.

Advertising

Advertising is crucial for ATBC conferences as it helps to spread awareness about the event and attract participants from various regions, backgrounds and disciplines. Effective marketing strategies can lead to increased attendance, greater visibility for sponsors, and a more successful conference overall.

There are several ways to promote the conference including, but not limited to:

- Utilizing the official ATBC website and social media platforms to share updates and highlights of the event
- Sending out e-mail blasts and newsletters to the ATBC community and potential attendees
- Utilizing online and print advertisements in relevant publications and websites
- Working with local and international media to promote the event through press releases and interviews
- Encouraging attendees, sponsors and partners to share information about the conference on their own social media platforms.
- Having a clear and comprehensive marketing strategy in place can help ensure that the ATBC conference is well-publicized, well-attended, and ultimately successful.

Finances

Finances management

It is important for the Program Chairs and LOC to establish a clear budget for the annual meeting, taking into account all necessary expenses. This includes securing funding for the meeting venue, equipment and technology rentals, catering, communication expenses, and any other necessary costs. To ensure financial stability, it is recommended to secure funding from multiple sources, including registration fees, sponsorships, and exhibitors.

The ATBC usually allocates funds for specific expenses such as travel grants for members, presentation awards, travel expenses for Honorary Fellows, and council meeting expenses. The organization and additional financial needs for the annual meeting must be secured by the Chairs and Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

To ensure the success of the meeting, it is crucial to create a thorough and well-planned budget that covers all necessary expenses. It is also important to have different scenarios, and a contingency plan in case of unexpected expenses or shortfalls, such as negotiating with vendors for reduced rates or finding alternative cost-saving measures.

It is crucial for the Chairs and LOC to maintain transparency and communication with the ATBC Treasurer to ensure that the budget is being managed efficiently and effectively. Regular financial reports should be provided to the ATBC Council to ensure that the meeting is financially viable and sustainable.

Registration Fees

When it comes to conference fees, it is important to establish a clear and easy-to-use format for online registration. The website for the ATBC annual meeting should offer different payment options, such as credit card payments online, bank deposit, or bank wire transfer, with enough information provided on these options. ATBC members should be encouraged to renew their membership during the meeting registration process, while non-member delegates should be invited to join. It is also recommended to encourage early payment of registration fees and to avoid onsite registration and payment as much as possible. This will help to have total control of the budget and maximize planning of meeting activities. To encourage early payment, an 'early-bird' payment category with incentives should be established.

The conference fee for the ATBC meeting should include access to all sessions, conference materials, coffee breaks, and lunch. In order to make the conference more accessible and inclusive, organizers should offer reduced fees for students, early career researchers, and individuals from underrepresented groups.

The conference fee structure should aim to be inclusive and accessible while ensuring transparency and fairness. The conference organizers should clearly explain the breakdown of costs and the use of the registration fee, and they should consider dividing the fees based on their ATBC membership status, early bird status, and whether their career stage (students and professionals/post-docs), and should also take into account the attendees' location, with a division for those from high, medium, and low-income countries.

Depending on the status of the budget, the LOC should consider offering reduced fees and scholarships for students, early career researchers, and individuals from underrepresented groups, and providing options for volunteering.

It is highly suggested to include Carbon Offsetting Contribution as part of the registration fee. An example of the breakdown of the fees can be consulted in Appendix x.

Opportunities for Sponsors and Exhibitors

Sponsor opportunities are a crucial part of the conference funding and can provide great benefits for both the conference organizers and the sponsors.

The LOC should aim to create a diverse range of sponsorship and exhibiting opportunities to cater to different budgets and interests. These opportunities should be proactively offered to potential sponsors and exhibitors in a transparent and fair manner.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) should have clear guidelines on selecting sponsors and exhibitors that align with the philosophy and objectives of the ATBC and host institutions. This

includes considering the values, products, and services that the potential sponsors and exhibitors offer. The LOC should strive to establish partnerships with organizations that share similar values and goals as the ATBC, and those that can contribute to the success of the conference.

LOC can offer some benefits to the sponsors/ exhibitors such as exhibiting space in the venue, recognition in the conference materials, opportunities for engagement with attendees, registrations for the conference, recognition in the conference program book, tickets for the banquet, etc., based on their financial contribution.

An example of the opportunities for sponsors and exhibitors can be found in Appendix X.

Volunteers

Having a dedicated team of volunteers to assist with the logistics of the annual meeting is very important for ensuring a successful event. It is also a great opportunity for students to get involved in the conference and gain experience in event planning and management, as well as to expand their professional network.

The volunteers team can help with tasks such as registration, information desk, poster setup, support during the sessions, and other miscellaneous tasks.

The LOC should establish a plan for the recruitment and management of student volunteers, ensuring that their roles and responsibilities are clear and that they have the necessary resources and support to perform their tasks successfully. It is important to carefully select individuals who are enthusiastic, responsible, and have good communication skills, particularly in English, to be part of the volunteer team.

Recruitment of volunteers should start well in advance of the conference. By prioritizing DEI in the process, the conference will attract a diverse range of volunteers who will bring different perspectives and skills to the team, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and productive conference.

Giving priority to local students in the recruitment process for volunteer positions is common in ATBC annual meetings as they are usually more logistically accessible and able to provide the most support. However, it is important to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) aspects, and ensure that the process is fair and accessible to all interested individuals regardless of their background. The call for volunteers should be published well in advance of the conference to allow ample time for interested individuals to apply.

The following are some key considerations while managing the volunteers team:

- **Training:** Volunteers and staff should be provided with training before the conference. This can include information on the conference schedule, attendees, and tasks they will be responsible for.
- **Job descriptions:** Volunteers and staff should have clear job descriptions outlining their responsibilities and expectations.

- **Supervision:** Volunteers and staff should be supervised by a designated team leader who is responsible for overseeing their work and providing feedback. Supervision can be done by the Chairs, the LOC, Conference Coordinator, PCO, etc.
- **Communication:** Regular communication should be maintained between volunteers and staff, as well as with conference organizers. This can be done through regular meetings, or a messaging platform such as Whatsapp.
- **Appreciation:** Volunteers and staff should be recognized and appreciated for their work. This can be done through thank-you notes, a certificate, small gifts, or a volunteer appreciation event.
- **Evaluation:** The performance of volunteers and staff should be evaluated and feedback provided. This can be used to improve future conferences.
- **Safety:** Ensure that all volunteers and staff are aware of and comply with the health and safety measures in place during the conference.

An example of the Call for Volunteers is provided in Appendix X.

Other Services

Registration desk

The Registration Desk is a central location at the ATBC conference where attendees can check-in and obtain their conference badges, program materials, and other relevant information. The Registration Desk is usually located near the entrance of the conference venue and must be staffed by trained volunteers or conference staff who can assist attendees with any questions or concerns they may have. Attendees can also use the Registration Desk to make changes to their registration, such as adding or removing events or sessions, or to request special accommodations. The hours of operation for the Registration Desk may vary depending on the conference schedule, but it is typically open throughout the duration of the conference to ensure attendees have access to the services they need.

Presentation check Desk

The Presentation Check Desk is a designated area where presenters can check their presentations and ensure that they are compatible with the conference equipment. The Presentation Check Desk may also provide technical support for presenters who require assistance in preparing or delivering their presentations. This service is especially useful for presenters who are not familiar with the conference equipment.

Accommodation Childcare

It is recommended that the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) consider providing childcare services for attendees with young children. This can be done by offering on-site babysitting

services, or by providing a list of recommended babysitting services in the area. The babysitters should be properly vetted, with background checks and references provided. Additionally, the

LOC should have a clear policy in place for handling any issues or concerns that may arise during the event. Providing childcare services can make it more possible for parents to attend the conference, thus increasing the number of participants and diversity of attendees.

Partner Airline

A partner airline refers to an airline company that has established a partnership with the organizers of the ATBC conference. This partnership may include special rates and discounts for conference attendees, as well as a convenient and efficient travel experience for participants. The partner airline helps to support the conference and make it more accessible to attendees from around the world. It is important to note that while a partner airline may provide benefits to conference attendees, they are not directly affiliated with the ATBC conference and any issues related to their services should be addressed through their own customer service channels.

Capacity Building Component

Mentoring Circles

The ATBC Mentoring Circle program is a successful initiative designed to provide support, networking, and advice for career development in tropical biology and conservation, specifically targeting early-career tropical biologists such as graduate students and postdocs. During the conference, the kick-off meeting for mentoring circles should take place. Incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into this session is very important, creating a safe and welcoming environment for all attendees, regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other factors.

The LOC should work closely with the Capacity Building Committee to ensure that the mentoring circles are a highlight of the conference program and are designed to meet the needs and expectations of all attendees. This could include securing appropriate space, scheduling the sessions, and promoting the session to attendees.

Courses

The ATBC Conference should offer a range of courses to support the professional development and capacity building of attendees. These sessions are designed to provide attendees with the opportunity to learn new skills, gain new insights and knowledge, and interact with experts in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

The courses are typically led by experienced professionals from the ATBC community and may include hands-on training, case studies, and practical exercises. Course topics typically include statistical analysis, remote sensing, GIS, conservation planning, interdisciplinary perspectives, among others. These sessions typically require registration and may have a fee associated with them.

It is recommended that the LOC and the Capacity Building Committee open a call for proposals for courses and workshops, and once accepted, work on their dissemination and logistical needs. This process ensures that the courses and workshops offered are relevant and responsive to the needs and interests of the attendees. The call for proposals should be widely disseminated among the ATBC membership and beyond, with clear instructions on the proposal submission process, deadlines, and criteria for acceptance.

Abstract Writing Workshop

The Abstract Writing workshop is an online activity typically organized by the ATBC Capacity Building Committee in advance to the conference. The goal of the workshop is to help early career researchers, students and other attendees improve their skills in writing effective and compelling abstracts for presentation at the ATBC conference. It is expected to be held during the abstract submission process, and the LOC should promote it on the conference website to make attendees aware of the opportunity. The workshop is a valuable resource for attendees who

want to hone their abstract writing skills and increase their chances of having their abstracts accepted for presentation at the ATBC conference.

Social and Cultural Component

The social and cultural component is a critical aspect of the ABTC conference, as it allows attendees to immerse themselves in the culture and customs of the host country. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) is responsible for planning and coordinating social and cultural events for the conference.

The typical activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Welcome mixer:** A reception is typically held on the first evening of the conference to welcome attendees and provide an opportunity for networking and socializing. The mixer can be held in an enjoyable space, such as a garden or historic building, with enough space to accommodate several hundred delegates.
- **Cultural tours:** Organizing tours to cultural sites and landmarks, such as historical sites, museums, and traditional markets, give attendees the chance to learn about the culture and history of the host country, socialize and promote networking.
- **Field trips:** Organizing trips to interesting places nearby, such as natural ecosystems, botanical gardens, research sites, and historical sites, is highly recommended. These can take place before or after the meeting, or even as half-day trips during the meeting.
- **Traditional and cultural performances:** The LOC is invited to showcase the culture of the host country through traditional performances, such as dance, theater, or music performances. These are recommended at the end of each day.
- **Local cuisine:** The LOC can arrange for attendees to experience local cuisine during the conference.
- **Closing banquet:** A key event in the ATBC annual meeting is the closing banquet. LOC should aim to hold the banquet in an enjoyable and functional setting, such as large reception facilities, inside historical city buildings, or large gardens. A farewell party with dancing is highly recommended to end the meeting on a friendly note and to create a sense of being part of the ATBC family.
- The LOC is encouraged to also organize other events, such as sporting events or outdoor activities, in order to offer delegates a complete cultural experience.

Social Sessions

Opening Ceremony

The ATBC annual meeting Opening Ceremony is a highlight of the conference program and sets the tone for the rest of the event. It may include a welcome speech by the conference chair or other conference organizers and authorities, as well as opening remarks and announcements about the conference program. The goal of the opening ceremony is to provide a welcoming and engaging environment for attendees, and to set the stage for a successful and productive conference. In addition, It typically includes a plenary session, which is a highly anticipated and prestigious or provocative presentation/session. The ceremony is typically held in the evening on the first day of the meeting, and should be followed by a Welcome Mixer.

Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony marks the end of the ATBC annual meeting. During this event, attendees have the opportunity to reflect on the key highlights of the meeting, network with fellow attendees and presenters, and celebrate their achievements. This event is held on the final day of the meeting, in the evening. The Closing Ceremony can include a closing plenary talk, a report from the LOC, the reading of the ATBC Conservation Declaration, updates on ATBC activities, Biotropica news, announcements about future meetings, presentation of ATBC awards, recognition of the volunteers, passing of the baton to the chairs of the next ATBC Annual Meeting, etc. The Closing Ceremony provides a fitting conclusion to the meeting and helps to solidify the bonds that have been formed between attendees, presenters, and organizers. It should be followed by the Closing Banquet.

Networking

Networking is an essential aspect for ATBC conference. Various opportunities for networking should be available for attendees to connect with fellow delegates and experts in their field. These activities provide attendees with a relaxed and informal setting to engage with others and make valuable connections. Some of the networking activities that may be offered include: the Poster sessions, Roundtable discussions, Speed networking events, etc.

By participating in these networking activities, attendees can expand their professional network, collaborate with others, and establish new relationships that can be beneficial for their future work and research.

Virtual platform for networking

LOC should consider hiring the services of an electronic platform to facilitate networking and communication among attendees. Platforms such as Whova (www.whova.com) -used in ATBC2021 Virtual Conference, and during ATBC2022 in a hybrid mode- can provide opportunities for attendees to connect and network through its virtual lounge and private messaging system.

Workshops

Workshops are a very important part of ATBC conferences, they provide a platform for experts and students to come together and discuss new research perspectives, conduct synthesis of state of tropical biology and conservation issues, share data within the context of collaborative work, and more. These activities allow participants to gain a deeper understanding of specific topics and develop new collaborations. Additionally, workshops can provide an opportunity for underrepresented groups to share their perspectives and contribute to the broader scientific community.

The format of workshops can be flexible and can include panel discussions, breakout sessions, hands-on activities, and other interactive formats that facilitate dialogue and collaboration.

When reviewing workshop proposals, the Academic Committee should consider the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the topic of the conference and tropical biology and conservation science
2. Composition of the workshop organizing team, including representation from underrepresented groups.
3. Clarity and feasibility of the proposed format and activities
4. Potential for fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among attendees
5. Expectation of clear benefit to the ATBC community

Public engagement

The meeting should also provide opportunities for the public to learn more about tropical ecosystems and the importance of studying and conserving them. The goal is to make the conference accessible and engaging for everyone, regardless of their background or level of scientific knowledge. Through these efforts, the meeting will strive to increase public awareness and understanding of tropical biology and conservation, and inspire people to take action to protect these vital ecosystems. The LOC is responsible for developing and implementing this kind of activities to reach a broad audience.

Some activities that could be carried out to promote public engagement include, but no limited to:

- Public lectures: These will be open to the general public and will feature presentations by experts in the field of tropical biology and conservation, discussing the latest research and its implications for conservation and management of tropical ecosystems.
- Exhibitions: These will feature interactive displays and exhibits showcasing the diversity and importance of tropical ecosystems, as well as the research and conservation efforts being carried out to protect them. Exhibitions should include interactive displays and educational materials.
- Social media campaigns: These will be used to reach a wide audience and raise awareness about the importance of tropical biology and conservation through the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Commented movies: These will be scientific-oriented movies accompanied by commentaries by experts in the field, which will help to raise awareness about the importance of tropical biology and conservation.
- Scientific cafes: These will be informal gatherings where experts and members of the public can discuss tropical biology and conservation in a relaxed and interactive setting.
- Guided tours of local ecosystems, such as national parks or research stations, to give members of the public a firsthand look at the importance of tropical conservation efforts.

Conservation

The meeting should facilitate connections between ATBC and conservation initiatives, to achieve a positive impact in the conservation of tropical ecosystems, and to promote the integration of scientific research with the needs and perspectives of practitioners and stakeholders. To achieve this goal, the LOC and the ATBC Conservation Committee should think on activities such as:

- Partnering with local conservation organizations to promote and support their ongoing efforts in the host country and region.
- Hosting field trips to protected areas or conservation projects during the conference, allowing participants to see the work in action and learn about the challenges and successes of conservation efforts.
- Inviting speakers from conservation organizations to give presentations and lead discussions on current conservation initiatives and challenges.
- Offering workshops or training sessions on conservation-related topics such as community engagement, sustainable tourism, and monitoring and evaluation of conservation projects.
- Creating a “conservation corner” at the conference where conservation organizations and other groups can share information about their work and opportunities for involvement.
- Developing a long-term monitoring and evaluation plan for the conservation initiatives supported by the ATBC community during the conference (see carbon offset program below), in order to track the impact of their efforts and report back to conference attendees and participants.

Carbon Offsetting Program

The ATBC recognizes the urgent need for action to confront the environmental and social effects of global climate change. As a result, we decided to have carbon-neutral meetings, where the emissions generated by delegates traveling and other meeting-related activities are offset by contributions from attendees. The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management (ECCM) has estimated that a contribution of \$20 USD from each individual traveling from outside the host country, and \$5 USD from each person within the host country, would be sufficient to offset meeting-related emissions.

These amounts can change due to economic adjustments (for example, currency exchange). The carbon offset funds are allocated to conservation and rehabilitation of tropical ecosystem programs. LOC, together with the ATBC Conservation Committee explore and propose where and how these funds are to be allocated. The final decision will be taken by ATBC Council.

Once the initiatives have been selected, the Conservation Committee and the LOC, should establish a system for monitoring the impacts of the funding in the short-, medium-, and -long term. This could involve conducting regular evaluations of the progress of the initiatives, gathering feedback from the local communities and other stakeholders, or measuring the ecological outcomes of the conservation efforts.

Declaration

The declaration of the ATBC annual meeting is an important opportunity for attendees to come together and make a collective statement on the state of tropical biology and conservation. The declaration can include statements on the current state of tropical ecosystems, the challenges facing tropical biology and conservation, and the actions needed to address these challenges.

The declaration can be developed through a series of workshops and discussions held during the conference, where attendees can share their expertise and perspectives on the state of tropical biology and conservation. The declaration can also be informed by the presentations and discussions that take place during the conference, drawing on the latest research and insights from attendees.

Once the declaration has been developed, it can be presented and adopted at the closing ceremony of the conference, with the support of the ATBC Council. The declaration can then be shared widely with policy makers, stakeholders, and the broader public, as a call to action for the protection and conservation of tropical ecosystems.

It's also important to consider different languages and cultural backgrounds while drafting the declaration, making sure it is inclusive and accessible to all attendees.

The ATBC has a series of past declarations that can be used as a reference. Cartagena 2022 Declaration is provided in Appendix X.

Other initiatives for Conservation

Incorporating the role of the ATBC-Conservation committee in the annual meeting can take several forms. For example, the committee could organize dedicated sessions or workshops on specific conservation topics, where experts can present new research and ideas, and attendees can engage in discussions and brainstorming. The committee can also work with other organizations and stakeholders to co-sponsor events and activities that align with the mission of the ATBC and its conservation goals.

Conservation Committee Meeting

The ATBC annual meeting should provide a variety of capacity-building opportunities for attendees, including students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, practitioners, stakeholders, and other members of the community. Attendees can expect to learn from experts in the field and gain valuable skills through hands-on activities and interactive sessions. Examples of these sessions may include courses, workshops, and networking opportunities on topics such as field research methods, data analysis and interpretation, grant writing, or science communication. These educational opportunities will provide attendees with the tools and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen field.

The Capacity Building Committee plays a critical role in the organization and execution of these opportunities, with a focus on providing mentorship and training to underrepresented groups. The Capacity Building Committee should work closely with the LOC and the ATBC-Conferences Coordinator to ensure that the opportunities are relevant and of high quality, and that all logistic aspects are solved.

On greening ATBC meetings

Greening the annual meeting is an important step in addressing the environmental and social effects of global climate change. By implementing sustainable practices and reducing our carbon footprint, we can not only help to preserve the natural environment, but also make a positive impact on local communities.

This can be achieved by avoiding the use of disposable materials whenever possible and separating recyclable materials and organic waste. Meeting organizers can also encourage the use of reusable cups and water bottles during the conference. When disposable materials cannot be avoided, organizers should use materials made of recycled materials and avoid plastic.

The meeting package should also be given in a sustainable bag, such as a reusable grocery bag. This not only helps to reduce waste but also has a positive socio-economic impact for local communities.

In terms of food, organizers should aim to include less meat, food produced locally, organic and fair trade foods. They should also avoid packaged food and drinks. By doing so, we can support local farmers and businesses, and reduce our environmental impact.

Food and Waste management

LOC can also provide a variety of food including vegetarian and vegan options, catering to the diverse dietary needs of attendees...

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The ATBC annual meeting will strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all attendees, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other dimensions of diversity. The meeting will also actively encourage the participation of underrepresented groups in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

To achieve this goal, ATBC-DEI Committee and the LOC should implement a number of strategies, such as:

- Providing mentorship and networking opportunities for underrepresented groups in the field, such as women and minorities.
- Offering scholarship opportunities for students and early-career researchers from underrepresented groups to attend the meeting.
- Encouraging submissions from and participation of underrepresented groups in the scientific program, including oral and poster presentations.
- Hosting special sessions and workshops focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in tropical biology and conservation.
- Partnering with organizations that support underrepresented groups in the field to co-sponsor events and activities at the meeting.
- Providing training and resources for conference attendees on how to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment at the meeting.
- Publicizing the ATBC's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion on the conference website, in the conference program, and in other materials distributed at the meeting.
- Monitoring and evaluating the meeting's progress in creating an inclusive environment, and using this information to guide future efforts.

By implementing these strategies, the ATBC annual meeting will strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all attendees, and actively support the participation and advancement of underrepresented groups in the field of tropical biology and conservation.

Code of Conduct

Promoting and enforcing a code of conduct during its conferences is a crucial aspect for ATBC. It is important for the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), in coordination with the DEI-Committee, to effectively communicate the Code of Conduct for the conference to all attendees. This can be done through multiple platforms and media, including the conference website, emails to attendees, and other forms of communication. By making sure everyone is aware of the code of conduct, the conference can promote a respectful and inclusive environment for all attendees. This will not only help create a positive atmosphere, but also ensure that everyone's safety and well-being is taken into consideration.

The Code of Conduct for conferences (established by the DEI-Committee in 2022) can be found in Appendix X of this Handbook. Any changes or adaptations that may be required, should be approved by the ATBC-DEI Chapter to ensure that the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusivity are upheld throughout the Conference.

Health and Safety

Health and safety are crucial aspects to consider when organizing an ATBC conference.

For in-person events, safety protocols should be in place to ensure the physical well-being of attendees. The following steps should be taken:

- Conduct a risk assessment of the venue to identify potential hazards and implement measures to mitigate them.
- Have a first aid kit and trained first aiders on site at all times during the conference.
- Make sure the venue is accessible for all attendees, including those with disabilities.
- Provide clear and easy-to-understand information on emergency procedures and the location of emergency exits.
- Have a clear and effective communication system in place for emergency situations.
- Provide hand sanitizers and encourage attendees to practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of illness.
- Encourage attendees to inform the conference organizers of any specific health needs or requirements they may have.
- Provide information on nearby medical facilities in case of emergency.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to have guidelines and procedures in place to keep attendees safe. This can include things such as limiting the number of attendees, implementing virtual options for those who do not feel comfortable attending in person, and providing hand sanitizer and other personal protective equipment throughout the event.

For virtual events, health and safety measures should also be considered. This can include providing breaks for attendees to take during long sessions, encouraging good posture and ergonomics, and providing resources for attendees to address any mental health concerns that may arise from prolonged screen time.

Players

Attendees

Attendees are typically professionals in the field of tropical biology, ecology, and conservation. They may include researchers, academics, students, practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders from various institutions, organizations, and countries. Attendees can participate in plenary sessions, symposia, oral presentations, poster sessions, workshops, and other activities. ATBC conference provides an opportunity for attendees to learn from leading experts, stay updated on the latest trends and developments, and contribute to advancing the field of tropical biology.

Conference Chair and Co-Chair(s)

The Conference Chair and Co-Chair(s) are responsible for the overall planning and execution of the conference. They work closely with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and the ATBC Conferences Coordinator to ensure that the conference meets the standards set by the ATBC and that all aspects of the conference are well-coordinated and run smoothly. The Conference Chair and Co-Chair(s) are responsible for the academic content of the conference, including the selection of symposia and sessions, as well as the selection of keynote speakers and invited speakers. They also oversee the review process for abstract submissions and are responsible for the final program of the conference. Additionally, they act as the main point of contact for conference attendees, sponsors and partners, and are responsible for ensuring that the conference is inclusive and accessible for all attendees. They also play a role in promoting the conference to potential attendees and stakeholders through various means, such as social media, email, and press releases.

Local Organizing Committee

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) is responsible for organizing and coordinating all aspects of the ATBC annual meeting. This includes coordinating logistics such as venue, accommodation, and transportation for attendees, as well as planning and executing the scientific program, social and cultural events, and networking opportunities. The LOC works closely with the ATBC council and other committees, such as the ATBC-Conservation and ATBC-Awards committees, to ensure the meeting is successful and meets the goals and objectives of the ATBC. Additionally, the LOC is responsible for managing the budget and finances for the meeting, and ensuring that all aspects of the meeting are in compliance with local laws and regulations. Overall, the LOC plays a crucial role in the planning and execution of the ATBC annual meeting, and works to ensure that the meeting is a valuable and enjoyable experience for all attendees.

Academic/Scientific Committee

The role of the Academic Committee is to review and evaluate the scientific content of the

conference, including proposals for symposia, ad-hoc sessions, field trips, and abstracts of talks. The committee is responsible for ensuring that the conference program is of high academic quality and covers a wide range of topics within the field of tropical biology and conservation. This may include the selection of keynote speakers and plenary sessions, as well as organizing the program to ensure a balance of different perspectives and disciplines. The committee may also provide feedback to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and the Conferences Coordinator on the overall structure and format of the conference. The committee is led by Conference Chair and co-chair(s) who help to guide the committee, and make final decisions on the program and academic aspects of the conference. They are responsible for ensuring that the conference meets the academic standards set by the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC).

Host Institution(s)

The host institution refers to the organization (university or research institution) that is hosting the ATBC conference. This entity plays a crucial role in providing the necessary facilities, resources, and support to ensure the smooth running of the conference. The host institution provides administrative support to the conference organizers and helps to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for all attendees.

ATBC Conferences Coordinator

The ATBC Conferences Coordinator is responsible for providing support and guidance to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) to ensure the success of the annual meeting. This includes offering advice on both the academic and logistical aspects of the conference. The Conferences Coordinator is also responsible for managing the conference website, issuing calls for proposals and managing the online submission system for symposia, ad hoc sessions, field trips, and abstracts. Additionally, the Conferences Coordinator is responsible for promoting the event through mass e-mails and social media, as well as notifying authors about the acceptance of their proposed sessions and abstracts. In case the LOC decides to have a hybrid format, the Conferences Coordinator will also be responsible for setting up electronic platforms for the event. Finally, the Conferences Coordinator will be responsible for organizing and finalizing the program of the Event.

Council of the ATBC

The ATBC Council is the governing body of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC), is comprised of elected members from the ATBC membership, who bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the conference planning process. The Council plays a key role in the organization and success of the ATBC conference. The Council is responsible for making strategic decisions ensuring that the conference is aligned with ATBC goals and objectives. The Council oversees the conference's budget, program content, sponsorship opportunities, and outreach activities, as well as the necessary logistical and technical requirements.

ATBC Executive Director

The ATBC Executive Director plays an important role in the context of the ATBC conference. The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the overall management of the conference, including financial, logistics, and administrative and operational tasks. The Executive Director works continuously with the ATBC-Conference Committee, ATBC Council, Conference Chair(s), and other key stakeholders to ensure that the conference meets the high standards set by ATBC and provides a valuable experience for attendees.

ATBC Treasurer

The ATBC treasurer is responsible for overseeing and managing the financial aspects of the conference. The treasurer works closely with the conference organizers and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) to monitor the conference budget, and to ensure that all financial transactions are conducted in an ethical and transparent manner.

ATBC Conferences Committee

The Conference Committee plays an important role in ensuring the success of the event. Its primary function is to provide feedback and general guidelines to the chairs and Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The Conference Committee works to establish the overall goals and objectives of the conference, providing strategic direction and guidance to the event. They also help to ensure that the conference is aligned with the mission and values of the ATBC, as well as ensuring that the conference is inclusive and diverse.

ATBC Awards Committee

The ATBC-Awards Committee is responsible for recognizing and honoring individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the field of tropical biology and conservation. The committee is responsible for evaluating nominations and recommending award recipients to the ATBC Board of Directors. The awards presented by the ATBC include the ATBC Distinguished Achievement Award, the ATBC Early Career Award, and the ATBC Conservation Award. The committee also works to ensure that the selection process for these awards is fair, transparent, and based on the criteria established by the ATBC Board of Directors.

The committee also works to promote the awards within the tropical biology and conservation community, encouraging nominations from a diverse range of individuals and organizations. The committee members are experts in their field and are selected by the ATBC board for their expertise, experience, and dedication to the tropical biology and conservation.

ATBC Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee is responsible for ensuring that the ATBC conference aligns with the organization's commitment to sustainability and environmental conservation. The committee works towards minimizing the conference's carbon footprint through the implementation of carbon offsetting programs and the promotion of green practices during the conference. Additionally, the committee is responsible for drafting and disseminating the conference's Declaration on Conservation, which outlines the organization's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability.

ATBC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The ATBC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is responsible for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusiveness within the ATBC community. The committee is dedicated to working towards creating a safe and respectful environment for all attendees, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of their identity. The role of the ATBC

DEI Committee is to provide guidance and support to the LOC, to raise awareness about the importance of DEI in the ATBC community, and to promote the advancement of DEI initiatives and practices within the ATBC and beyond. It is also suggested to hold different DEI sessions during the conference, organized by the DEI Committee with the support of LOC.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a crucial role in the success of the ATBC conference. Their tasks may include registering attendees, guiding them to their rooms and activities, providing technical support during sessions, and assisting with general logistics. They also serve as ambassadors of the conference, fostering a positive and inclusive atmosphere and helping attendees connect with one another.

Final Considerations

Organizing a conference, such as the ATBC annual meeting, involves a wide range of tasks and responsibilities. The handbook presented here provides a comprehensive guide for the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) to follow in order to ensure a successful event. The handbook covers important topics such as budget planning, sponsorships and exhibitors, registration, health and safety, virtual components, volunteer and staff management, post-event follow-up, and reporting.

It is important to note that the success of the conference is not only dependent on the organization but also on the participation and engagement of the attendees. Therefore, it is crucial to involve the attendees in the planning process and to gather feedback throughout the conference.

Tools such as Trello can be very helpful in managing the tasks, deadlines and resources. The LOC and Conferences Coordinator should use them to create a detailed chronogram of all the activities, which will help to ensure that everything is running smoothly and on schedule.

It is important to remember that the ATBC annual meeting is not only a scientific event but also an opportunity to promote conservation and sustainable development. Therefore, it is essential that all the players consider the DEI aspect and take into account the needs and concerns of all the attendees.

It is important to remember that the success of the conference is not only dependent on the organization but also on the participation and engagement of the attendees. Therefore, it is crucial to involve the attendees in the planning process and to gather feedback throughout the conference.

This handbook is a starting point for the organization of the ATBC annual meeting, and it should be adapted and refined as needed. The LOC and Conferences Coordinator should use it as a guide and a reference, but also be open to suggestions, feedback, and new ideas. The most important thing is to work together as a team and to ensure that the conference is a memorable, productive and enjoyable experience for all the attendees.