

Application guidelines

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Application deadlines:

1 March and 1 August annually

EMBC Member States (A): Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom

EMBC Associate Member States (B): India, Singapore

Countries / territories covered by a co-operation agreement (C): Chile, Taiwan

Countries / territories eligible for co-funding by EMBO and The Company of Biologists (D): Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea

EMBO subject areas: Cell Cycle, Cell & Tissue Architecture, Cellular Metabolism, Chromatin & Transcription, Development, Differentiation & Death, Evolution & Ecology, Genome Stability & Dynamics, Genomic & Computational Biology, Immunology, Membranes & Transport, Microbiology, Virology & Pathogens, Molecular Medicine, Neuroscience, Plant Biology, Proteins & Biochemistry, RNA, Signal Transduction, Structural Biology & Biophysics, Systems Biology

Contact: courses_workshops@embo.org

EMBO Course Committee Autumn 2023

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1. Application guidelines for organisers of EMBO Practical Courses

Applications to organise an EMBO Practical Course are accepted twice a year and must be submitted via the EMBO [online system](#).

Application deadlines are **1 March and 1 August** annually.

Selections for funding are made by the EMBO Course Committee in April/May and in September/October.

Please check the eligibility criteria before applying.

Should you have questions regarding your application, please contact courses_workshops@embo.org.

2. Eligibility

Applications must meet the following criteria to be accepted:

- Applications for practical courses must cover a topic from the life sciences (see EMBO subject areas on page 3).
- Scientists from anywhere in the world are eligible to apply, independent of their nationality.
- The scientific organizing committee must be geographically and gender diverse and come from more than one institute i.e., an international grouping representing the topics covered in the meeting.
- While organisers can be based anywhere, practical courses must take place in one of the following:
 - A. EMBC Member State
 - B. EMBC Associate Member State
 - C. Country or territory covered by a co-operation agreement
 - D. Country or territory eligible for co-funding by EMBO and The Company of Biologists
- If you wish to organise a practical course in a country that is not listed, please contact the EMBO Office.

Please note: For repeating practical courses a new application is required for each individual course.

3. Application process

3.1. Timeline 2023

Applications to organise an EMBO Practical Course must be submitted online.

First deadline for application	1 March 2023, 09:00 CET
Committee meeting	April 2023
Results announced to applicants	May 2023
Second deadline for application	1 August 2023, 09:00 CEST
Committee meeting	September 2023
Results announced to applicants	October 2023

Organisers are advised to apply as early as possible in the calendar year before the proposed date of the practical course to ensure sufficient time for the proper advertising and promotion of the meeting if the application is accepted for funding. **Applications to fund events in the same calendar year will not be considered.**

4. Application forms

The application must be submitted [online](#), and consists of an online and an offline form (Microsoft Word form).

In the [online form](#), you will be asked to provide:

- Proposed title of the practical course
- Proposed date and location of the course
- Format of the meeting i.e., in-person only, virtual only, or hybrid
- A list of the organisers, specifying their role, e.g., main organiser, co-organiser, administrative or financial contact
- An estimate of the number of participants that you expect
- Information on speakers and instructors
- An abstract describing the principal themes and objectives of the meeting
- Subject areas and keywords
- A draft budget

In the [offline form](#) (MS Word format) please provide:

- A description of the reasons to hold a practical course on the proposed topic
- Information on any competing or similar practical courses held in the past, current, or following year
- For repeat event applications, indicate improvements that you have made based on feedback from previous meetings. Please note that EMBO must have received and approved the reporting documents from the previous meeting before resubmission. The committee usually does not support repeat meetings without the reporting documents for the previous meeting.
- The list of speakers, tutors and trainers
- The draft programme
- A description of the practical work planned
- A description of the networking activities
- If you are organising a hybrid meeting, a short description of the virtual component
- The criteria for selecting event participants
- The expected number of participants
- A list of the scientific organisers, including links to their respective institutional home pages
- Information on organisers' experience in organising meetings
- A short description of the event location
- A list of planned measures to reduce the CO₂ footprint of the course

This form must be saved in PDF format and uploaded via the [online application site](#).

4.1. Meeting type

When completing your application, please ensure you choose the correct type.

EMBO Practical Courses promote the transfer of new methods and emerging techniques. The programme of a practical course should cover both theory and practice with the aim of enabling participants to implement novel techniques in their home laboratories.

A practical course typically will train 15 – 25 participants (for computational topics a greater number of participants can be accepted) and lasts between 4 and 15 days.

Participants are generally early-stage postdoctoral researchers and advanced PhD participants. For core facility staff training courses more advanced scientists are expected.

The ratio of instructors to participants should be sufficient to allow all participants to get good tutoring in the techniques/subject presented, normally the ratio should be around 1:5.

When planning the course, organisers should:

- Encourage participants to bring their own samples or data (where appropriate);
- Well in advance of the course, provide participants with the course programme and theoretical background material including selected references;
- Ensure that speakers/instructors give a briefing at the beginning of each day;
- Ensure that speakers/instructors stay for the entire duration of the course;
- Ensure that accommodation for speakers/instructors and participants is in the same

- venue;
- Include round table discussions in the programme;
- Include poster sessions and/or participants' presentations in the programme;
- Ensure that at least 40% of the programme comprises practical sessions;
- include training on responsible conduct of research.

4.2. Proposed title of meeting

The (main) title of the practical course should not mention a sponsor's, an organisation's or institute's names. Organisers should also refrain from using excessively long titles and numbers referring to previous meetings.

4.3. Meeting format and location

Please indicate the proposed format and location of your meeting by selecting the format type and entering the venue details on where the meeting will be held or run from (for virtual meetings):

- In-person meeting
- Hybrid meeting
- Virtual meeting

4.3.1. Hybrid format

EMBO has conducted a study on virtual and hybrid conferences, interviewing and surveying scientists about their experiences with virtual scientific conferences. The full report can be [downloaded here](#).

As a result, EMBO encourages organisers to experiment with hybrid meeting formats and will offer €10,000 on top of the core funding to assist with the additional costs incurred. The funds can go towards paying for a virtual platform (EMBO will be able to provide you with a simple solution for free), technical/AV support and the rental of technical equipment, as well as additional administrative support that you might need to set up the virtual component.

Please see [Section 10](#) for a summary of options and points to consider.

In the offline form, please describe what you plan to offer to virtual participants (e.g., access to the talks and possibly other activities). It is understood that the final format may differ from the description offered here.

The costs associated with the delivery of the virtual part should be included in the final financial reports to be submitted to EMBO. Please note that EMBO funding cannot be used to purchase technical equipment associated with running the meeting.

4.3.2. Virtual format

EMBO will fund virtual meetings. Organisers may use an online platform or event management tool of their choice. EMBO does not take responsibility for or endorse any online platforms or services. EMBO funds can be used to pay for online meeting platform, tools or software necessary to host a virtual meeting.

EMBO is offering a virtual meeting platform that is connected to the meeting websites that EMBO is creating for organisers. The talks are hosted on Zoom (Meeting and Webinar mode) and there is a chat function that also allows video chats among participants. Posters can be hosted on the site as well. The costs for this platform are moderate (between €1,100–1,500) and can be covered from the core EMBO funding. Please note that you will be responsible for setting up the site yourself and we will provide you with a user guide and limited online support.

The costs associated with the delivery of the virtual meeting should be included in the final financial reports to be submitted to EMBO.

Please see [Section 10](#) for a summary of options and points to consider.

4.4. Abstract, keywords, topic

Please provide a short **abstract** (max. 200 words), stating the principal themes and objectives of the practical course.

Describe the practical course with **five scientific keywords** and choose a primary and secondary subject area from the EMBO subject areas (listed on the page 3).

Describe the reasons for holding a practical course on the proposed **topic** in the near future (max. 200 words), describing recent developments in the field and how the practical course would contribute to the advancement of the research field. For repeating EMBO Practical Courses, please state why the course should be repeated, i.e., what are the new developments in the field that would justify a repeat at this stage.

Similar courses

Please mention any courses on the same theme held in the past, current or following year and outline how the event you are proposing will differ from those. Please consider any overlap with other EMBO Practical Courses, or those organised by CSHL, EMBL, MBL, etc. (max. 200 words).

If applicable – Feedback from previous EMBO-funded meeting(s) or resubmission

For courses previously funded by EMBO, describe any improvements or changes you propose to implement based on the experience of, and feedback from, the previous meeting(s) (max. 200 words).

Also, please list the names of the organisers of the three previously EMBO-funded courses in this series.

Note that the committee receives the feedback from the previous courses and takes this into account when judging a resubmission.

For **resubmission** of a previously unsuccessful proposal, please provide the ID number of the previous proposal and list the main adjustments that you have introduced.

4.5. Speakers

Organisers are expected to apply with a confirmed list of speakers/instructors. If they are not confirmed, the proposal will have a minimal chance to be accepted.

You should also list additional supporting personnel, such as teaching assistants for the practical sessions.

Please consider the following:

- **Number:** The number of speakers and instructors should be adequate to cover the topic in sufficient depth without making the programme overly dense.
- **Expertise:** Speakers and instructors should be experienced researchers with significant expertise in the course subject.
- **Geographical diversity:**
 - Meetings held in EMBC Member States (A – see list on page 3):** at least 50% of the invited speakers should be working across a variety of European countries. The inclusion of speakers from Asia-Pacific, Africa and South America is strongly encouraged.
 - Meetings taking place in Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Singapore or Taiwan:** at least 33% of the invited speakers should be from Europe. The inclusion of speakers from Asia-Pacific, Africa and South America is strongly encouraged.
- **Gender distribution:** At least 40% of the speakers must be of the underrepresented gender. If there is a lower proportion, a justification must be provided. Applications with a lower gender distribution are generally not successful.

While EMBO specifies certain targets of gender and geographic participation to promote inclusiveness and diversity in EMBO Courses and Workshops, we strongly encourage organisers to enable diversity across the spectrum, thus ensuring that EMBO Courses and Workshops are a safe, inclusive and welcoming learning space for all speakers and participants regardless of individual beliefs or characteristics.

Please list the speakers in the following format:

1. First Name Last Name, Institute, City, Country. Please list in alphabetical order, i.e., by Last Name.
2. Please add:
 - C (for confirmed)
 - F (for female)
 - R (for repeat speaker)

- O (for overseas speaker i.e., depending on location of meeting. For meetings held in EMBC Member States, add O for speakers based outside EMBC Member States. For meetings held outside Europe, add O for speakers based in Europe),
 - E (for early-stage researchers)
3. Add a link to a relevant publication that led to their invitation.
 4. Add a link to the home page of the speaker's research group.

Please see example below:

No.	Name and affiliation. Include link to lab home page	Status (C,F,E, O,R)	Describe the expertise that is relevant to their contribution to the course. Please provide a reference and a link to a relevant publication.
1.	John Bloggs (Institute, City, Country) https://www.XY.JohnBloggsLab/uxy.xy	C, O	John Bloggs is the developer of software to analyse EM data. John Bloggs et al, Molecular Systems Biology, 2019; The systems biology of cancer stroma; PubMed link
2.	Jane Doe (Institute, City, Country) https://www.XY.JaneDoeLab/uxy.xy/	C, F	Jane Doe has developed xy application in STORM Jane Doe et al, EMBO J, 2020; Ras signaling in melanoma; PubMed link
3.			

You will be requested to provide the number of **invited** speakers in each category in the online form, the percentages will be calculated automatically.

4.5.1. Tutors/Trainers/Instructors

List the tutors/trainers/instructors, i.e., those persons involved in the teaching (it is understood that their names may not be known at the time of application, but please indicate how many persons will be involved in the teaching). If some of the speakers stay for supervision of a specific part of the course, please also list them here.

Please see example below:

Name and affiliation	List the practical sessions that they will be guiding
XY from (University/Institute) and 4 scientists from her/his team	Practical session 1 on xy topic 4 groups of 4 participants supervised by 1 tutor each Duration: 2 x 3h
VVV from (University/Institute) and 4 scientists from her/his team	Practical session 2 on z topic 2 groups of 8 participants supervised by 2 tutors each Duration: 1 x 5h
...	

4.6. Programme

4.6.1. Practical work

Please describe the practical work including:

- Details of the practical or experimental work to be undertaken
- Description of the laboratory facilities
- Number and role of the teaching staff involved in the practical sessions. If their names are already known at the time of application, please include them too.

Example of practical work description:

“Practical session 1. Expression of membrane proteins in HEK293/insect cells via transient transfection using GFP-fusion proteins

Duration: 2 x 3 hours

Tutors/trainers: XY and **4 people of her team**

4 groups of 4 participants supervised by 1 tutor

Practical session 2. Quality control of purified membrane protein preparations: nanoDSF and Blue Native PAGE

Duration: 1 x 3 hours

Tutors/trainers XY and **3 people of his team**

2 groups of 4 participants supervised by 2 tutors

...

Labs for practical courses (including access to beamlines, cryo-EM facility and the lecture hall) are all within the two buildings ...

All participants will be informed about the relevant safety measurements before the start of the practicals and will be supervised by the tutors to assure they conduct themselves accordingly. Inappropriate or unsafe laboratory behavior will not be tolerated.

Several areas of Responsible Conduct of Research will be addressed at several levels during the course. During the practicals, the tutors will be role models demonstrating the professional responsibility of scientist to mentor less-experienced researchers. In addition, appropriate and inappropriate data representation (responsible conduct of research and research misconduct), documentation practices and data deposition according to the FAIR principles will be discussed here. We have asked the respective lecturers dealing with animal experiments, e.g., those generating antibodies, to address animal welfare. “

DRAFT PROGRAMME:

Please ensure that the programme is legible by adding empty lines between days. Add in a few words what the invited speakers will contribute to that session, final titles are not expected at such an early stage. Please also list the networking activities in the programme.

E.g.

Day	Time	Programme category	Speaker/Instructor/Tutors/Teaching Assistants/Contributions and topic of talk or session
Day 1			
	12:00	OPENING	
	12:15 – 13:15	COURSE OVERVIEW	John Bloggs
	13:15 – 13:45	BREAK	
	13:45 – 15:30	THEORY I	Basic optical principles crucial for advanced light microscopy
	13:45 – 14:30	LECTURE 1	Jane Doe: Diffraction, Point Spread Function
	13:45 – 14:30	LECTURE 2	Jane Doe: STORM
	14:30 – 15:30	EXERCISE 1	Jane Doe: Photon counting efficiencies
	15:30 – 16:00	BREAK	
	16:00 – 18:00	PRESENTATIONS	Participants: presenting their research projects (5 min each)
Day 2			
	9:00 – 12:00	PRACTICAL SESSION 1	John Bloggs, Jane Doe, 4 tutors. Preparation of cell lines for later analysis

4.6.2. Responsible conduct of research

EMBO considers education in responsible conduct of research as an integral part of researchers' training. Organisers of EMBO Practical Courses are requested to dedicate an appropriate section of the course programme to discuss ethical issues, good research practices and problems researchers may face when designing experiments (with the technologies covered during the course).

Course participants should learn how to design reproducible experiments with appropriate sample sizes resulting in statistically relevant results. They should be made aware of the importance of validating reagents, including antibodies, cell lines and animal models. They should learn responsible practices in relation to confidentiality, informed consent and responsible handling of research subjects and materials.

Digital technologies, such as image processing software, statistical packages and data-mining techniques should be introduced in a way that informs the participants of their potentiality as well as their limits.

Please describe in the offline application form how you will address the issues above during the course.

4.6.3. Networking activities

EMBO believes that networking is a vital component of every scientific meeting. Organisers are expected to facilitate networking through dedicated activities during the course, these should include, but not be limited to poster sessions, joint meals, meet-the-speaker sessions, flash talks.

Please describe how discussion and interaction between participants and speakers/instructors will be stimulated. The committee welcomes creative ideas regarding the facilitation/promotion of networking (max. 400 words).

EMBO will not fund a separate "speakers' dinner" during the meeting.

The networking activities should be listed in the programme.

If organising a hybrid meeting, please describe how you will involve the virtual participants in the meeting (max. 400 words).

4.6.4. Poster sessions (if applicable)

Poster sessions should be held at a time that encourages maximal attendance, ideally not during lunch or coffee breaks, with no other activities taking place in parallel, and should be held in a room with sufficient space, for a duration of at least 90 minutes.

The form requires you to tick if the following applies to your poster session:

- The venue for the poster session is close to the lecture hall
- The posters will be available for viewing throughout the entire meeting
- In case multiple poster sessions are planned, participants will be assigned to a specific session
- A social event will be incorporated (e.g., drinks and snacks)

4.7. Participants

The approximate number of participants for EMBO-funded practical courses should be as follows:

- Not more than 25 participants (excluding speakers), although computational courses can have more participants.

Further requirements:

- Early career researchers should have the opportunity to attend and present their research.
- Participants should not be restricted to a pre-defined group, such as an EU network or other defined groups.
- **Participant criteria for meetings taking place in EMBC Member States** (A - see list on page 3): a maximum 25% of the participants should be from the host country.
- **Participant criteria for meetings taking place in Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Singapore or Taiwan:** EMBO wants to foster interactions between scientists from Europe and other continents. It is expected that the wider local community benefits from the meeting taking place in a country outside Europe. 75% of the participants should be based in the continent where the meeting takes place.
- EMBO is committed to a reasonable gender distribution in all activities, so please ensure that this is the case in the in the proposed practical course.
- We ask organisers to enable diversity across the spectrum, thus ensuring that EMBO

Courses and Workshops are a safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning space for all speakers and participants regardless of individual beliefs or characteristics.

Provide an estimate of the number of participants you plan to accept and the percentage of participants who are based in the country where the meeting is taking place.

Please describe what criteria will be used to select the participants.

Please indicate the names and the role of those who will select the participants (e.g., organisers, speakers, instructors etc.).

Please also state the number of participants who will be selected for oral presentation and specify the duration of their presentations.

You may want to consider organising satellite meetings that are open to the local scientific community. If additional funds are necessary, please contact us via email at courses_workshops@embo.org.

4.7.1. Travel grants

Organisers receive an additional €10,000 for their events to cover the following support for participants:

Type of grant	Amount allocated	Available for registered participants working in laboratories in	Explanatory notes
Travel grants and registration fee waivers	€2,500	All countries	Applicants should specify their needs in the registration form. Maximally €500 per participant can be allocated.
Childcare grants	€1,000	All countries	To cover additional childcare costs incurred by participants or speakers when participating at any EMBO-funded meeting including virtual and hybrid meetings. Eligible costs include fees for a baby-sitter or child-care facility, travel costs for a caregiver, or travel costs for taking the child to the meeting, etc. Applicants should specify their needs in the registration form. Maximally €500 per participant can be allocated.
Special travel grants & registration fee waivers	€3,000	Associate EMBC Member States (Chile, India, Singapore and Taiwan)	Exclusively for participants of any nationality working in laboratories in Associate EMBC Member States. Registration fee waivers and travel grants should cover the cost of attendance for participants who need it. Applicants should specify their needs in the registration form. Maximally €1,000 per participant can be allocated.
Special travel grants & registration fee waivers*	€3,500	Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, and Turkey	Exclusively for participants of any nationality working in the countries listed. Registration fee waivers and travel grants should cover the cost of attendance for participants who need it. Applicants should specify their needs in the registration form. Maximally €700 per participant can be allocated.

4.8. Organisers

There can be only one main organiser and the number of co-organisers should not exceed five. Please list for each organiser their respective experience in organising courses (please restrict to the last three relevant events).

The **main organiser** is the primary scientific contact for all correspondence after submission of the proposal. **Co-organisers** are scientists who have major scientific/technical involvement in the planning and execution of the meeting.

The **scientific organising committee** must be **geographically and gender diverse** and come from more than one institute i.e., an international grouping representing the topics covered in the meeting.

The **administrative contact** will be copied on all email correspondence related to the

application. Additionally, you may add a **financial contact** who can be contacted for budgetary issues.

Multiple roles for one person are acceptable, e.g., one of the organisers may also be the administrative or financial contact.

4.9. Location

Provide the address of the proposed location and a short description of the venue (e.g., capacity and equipment of the laboratory facilities, accommodation and catering (max. 200 words)). The venue should have suitable facilities and preferably accommodation should be onsite or close by. Participants and speakers should be accommodated in the same location or in a limited number of locations.

Accommodation should be reasonably priced. If all participants cannot be housed together, make sure that also low-priced accommodation is available in the vicinity.

Please note the availability of wireless internet access and how the location can be reached.

4.10. Reducing the CO₂ footprint of the meeting

EMBO encourages organizers of EMBO Courses and Workshops to implement measures that reduce the environmental impact, including the CO₂ footprint, of the meetings.

We hope that this initiative will create awareness and help to change many people's minds and behaviours. Only together can we make a difference for the environment, climate and future generations on the planet.

The EMBO Courses & Workshops Programme awards points to meetings that implement sustainability measures. The meetings receive between one and five points for different measures. The accumulated points will rank the meeting on one of three levels, recognising the organizers' efforts towards increasing the sustainability of their course or workshop.

A meeting acquiring 23 points or more qualifies for the highest level (a meeting with very high sustainability), one with 18-22 points qualifies for level 2 (high sustainability) and a meeting with 15-17 qualifies for level 1 (moderate sustainability).

You may choose from the following measures to acquire a sustainable meeting label:

Measure	Points
CO₂ offsetting	
Offset the CO ₂ footprint of your meeting through different actions e.g., by acquiring external funding for compensations via CO ₂ offset projects (these could be certified organizations or initiatives that support biodiversity projects or local sustainability projects); by requiring speakers and participants to donate to CO ₂ offset projects; or any other innovative ideas	5

Venue	
Choose a certified environmentally friendly venue e.g., EU Ecolabel, Green key	5
Choose a venue that takes energy efficiency measures, but is not (yet) certified, e.g., uses solar energy, including for heating water, gets green electricity, participates in waste sorting and local recycling etc.	4
Choose a centrally located venue with good public transport connections, close to major transport hubs to reduce additional travel	4
Hub	
Organise one or more parallel meeting(s) in another location, i.e., a hybrid multi-city event. The meeting could be streamed to another location from the main meeting or variations of this to reduce long distance travel for local participants at each location	5
Catering	
Serve only vegetarian food on at least one day of the meeting	1
Serving locally sourced food	1
No bottled water, opt for water fountains/tap water in jugs	1
No single-use wares such as disposable cutlery, cups, plastic bottles or cans	1
Travel	
Require at least 4 speakers/organisers travelling within Europe to travel by train	3
Require some invited speakers from other continents to give their talks remotely. The funds saved on travel (€1,500 per speaker) can be used to fund train travel incentives for participants (see below)	2 for 1 3 for 2
Offer a discount on registration fees for participants traveling by train, or otherwise incentivize train travel with rewards. You could use the €1,500 that were saved on travel for invited speakers from other continents to fund train travel incentives for participants	2

 moderate sustainability	15-17
 high sustainability	18-22
 very high sustainability	23 and above

Additional steps that you can take for a more sustainable meeting:

Electronic programme and abstract book: Organizers are encouraged to distribute the abstract book in electronic format via the meeting website and print only a minimum number of hard copies, if necessary. Organizers can export the abstract book in electronic format via the meeting website provided by EMBO. The abstract book can then be made available on the meeting website as a password-protected PDF document.

Plastic-free badges: Organizers should consider using paper badges.

Promotional material: EMBO offers promotional materials for your EMBO funded course or workshop. We have aimed to source sustainably as much as possible and provide material that is useful beyond the meeting. Please order the minimum quantities you would need and encourage participants to re-use the bags and notebooks after the meeting as well.

Advertising: Organisers are encouraged to opt for digital advertising using the poster EMBO provides and use the social media handles set up for you.

Reduce the CO₂ footprint of travel further: Organisers may additionally request speakers and participants to donate to CO₂ offset projects, provide information and directions for local public transport and encourage its use, and encourage participants to walk where possible by providing maps, directions or organise an activity that is reachable by foot.

Raise awareness: Inform participants about the sustainability measures you are adopting for your meeting.

Ask participants for feedback and suggestions on your sustainability measures at the end of the meeting.

4.11. Budget (to be provided in the online form)

Expenses

The form requests your estimates for travel, accommodation costs, local transport or shuttle services that you want to provide, catering, expenses related to the venue, promotion and organisation. The sums are automatically calculated.

EMBO funds can be used to cover:

For in-person meetings

- Economy travel, accommodation and subsistence costs of the speakers.
- Onsite catering for the meeting.
- Administration costs up to €4,000.
- Room hire, audio-visual and IT facilities essential for the meeting;
- Social activities (e.g., excursions) costs up to €3,000.

For virtual meetings

- Rental of online platform to run a virtual meeting.
- Administrative costs up to €8,000.
- Room hire, audio-visual and IT facilities rental essential for the meeting.

For hybrid meetings

An additional grant of €10,000 will be provided. The funds can be used to cover:

- Rental of a virtual platform to host the virtual part of the meeting.
- Rental of additional AV equipment and personnel costs.
- Additional administration costs up to €8,000.

EMBO funds do not cover overheads or purchase of equipment.

EMBO will create the course website (including an online registration system), design a poster and abstract book cover at no additional charge. EMBO funds cannot be used to pay for alternative website providers.

EMBO funds cannot be used to cover gifts, honoraria and dinners/meals exclusively organised for the speakers.

Income

Registration fees

The maximum registration fee for an EMBO Practical Course should not exceed:

- €500 (> 5 days in length) and €350 (< 5 days in length), including accommodation.
- Participants from industry should be charged a minimum of €1,000.
- Reduced registration fees can be charged to virtual participants. Discounts for group registrations should be considered.

Funding and Sponsorship

Please state the amount of funding requested from EMBO. A maximum of €35,000 of core funding may be provided. **If the meeting is organized as a hybrid event, an additional €10,000 will be allocated to your event if funded. You do not have to request these additional funds in your application.**

An additional €10,000 will automatically be allocated to fund travel grants, registration fee waivers and childcare grants to participants.

You do not have to request funds for travel grants, registration fee waivers and childcare grants in your budget; these will automatically be allocated to your event if funded. Details on how travel grants should be distributed to participants can be found in the guidelines for organisers.

Please also state other funding sources or sponsorship that you expect and list any non-monetary support. Ensure that all funders and sponsors understand that they cannot be mentioned in the title of the meeting but can be acknowledged on the website and the poster. Sponsors and funders who provide €20,000 or more towards the meeting can also be recognized as co-sponsors.

State the name of the funder or sponsor, the status of sponsorship (confirmed, pending, not yet approached) and special conditions linked to the sponsorship

Budget balance

Total expenses should match the total expected income. Please explain if this is not the case.

5. Selection procedure

- All incoming applications are screened by the EMBO Office to ensure eligibility requirements are met.
- Each application is assigned to at least two members of the Course Committee for evaluation.
- Final funding decisions are made by the entire EMBO Course Committee in April/May and September/October each year.
- All applicants are informed of the outcome of their application by email shortly after the committee meeting.

Please do not contact the committee members directly. This may lead to your application being excluded from the review process.

6. Selection criteria

The EMBO Course Committee is looking to fund practical courses that cover the latest developments and gather the best international experts.

Applications should be as complete as possible, and the proposed course should not overlap with other meetings in the same year.

The committee will pay special attention to the following aspects:

A. TOPIC

- **Relevance:** The course topic should be cutting-edge and relevant to the scientific community.
- Application for courses that serve to teach newly emerging and important topics and methodologies will be given priority. Courses in areas that are not of sufficient general interest will not be funded. EMBO will not fund basic student courses that are traditionally offered by universities.
- **Selection of the techniques:** The course should not focus on a single (proprietary) technique but rather present a range of relevant techniques and methods.
- **Overlap with similar courses:** The overlap with similar courses should be minimal.

B. INSTRUCTORS AND SPEAKERS

- **Expertise:** The speakers should be leading experts in the topic, and instructors must have sufficient experience to lead the experimental sessions.

- **Gender distribution:** At least 40% of the instructors should be of the underrepresented sex.

C. PROGRAMME/SCHEDULE

- **Structure:** The time dedicated to lectures, practical work and discussions should be appropriate to the topic.
- **Practical sessions:** Practical sessions should comprise at least 40% of the programme.
- **Duration:** Depending on the topic and techniques, a practical course should last between three and fifteen days.
- **Networking:** Organisers should include networking activities, e.g., joint meals, breaks and group discussions.
- **Participants' presentations:** Participants should be given the opportunity to present their research.
- **Participants' samples or data:** If possible, participants should have the opportunity to bring their own samples or data.
- **Previous feedback:** If the application is for a repeat of a previously EMBO-funded course, the committee will consider the feedback received from the previous courses (the feedback will be made available to the committee by the EMBO office). Therefore, relevant issues raised by participants should be addressed.
- Issues concerning **responsible conduct of research** should be addressed.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOCATION

- **Equipment and materials:** The equipment and materials should be state-of-the-art and appropriate to the topic.
- **Housing:** Instructors and participants should be housed together if possible.

7. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

EMBO is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and as such does not use publication metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor during the assessment process (see <https://sfdora.org> for further details). Applicants are asked NOT to include publication-based metrics when listing invited speakers' and co-organisers publications.

8. Additional guidelines for EMBO | The Company of Biologists Practical Courses

EMBO | The Company of Biologists Practical Courses are meetings taking place in countries eligible for co-funding by EMBO and The Company of Biologists (D – see list on page 3).

- The website and poster of the course will be designed by EMBO.
- The organisers should acknowledge EMBO and The Company of Biologists in equal measure to EMBO in all materials produced.
- Any use of The Company of Biologists' name and logo shall be in accordance with the brand guidelines of The Company of Biologists, which is sent as a separate document.
- Organisers authorize EMBO to provide to The Company of Biologists the following documents:
 - a copy of each successful application, where funding was approved by EMBO; and
 - a copy of the final documents submitted by organisers to EMBO
- Organisers shall allow a representative of The Company of Biologists to attend each meeting for the purpose of writing reports which The Company of Biologists may publish on its websites or in its journals, in such form as it may determine at its sole discretion.

9. Confidentiality

All applications are treated in confidence and only publicized following acceptance of the funding conditions by the organiser.

The EMBO Courses & Workshops office should be contacted with any questions concerning applications.

Contacting individual members of the EMBO Course Committee to influence the decision process will result in disqualification of the application.

10. Organising hybrid or virtual events

10.1. Hybrid conferences

We understand hybrid conferences as an in-person conference with a virtual component. The simplest format is an in-person conference where the talks are streamed to registered virtual participants, or alternatively, the talks are recorded and made available to the virtual participants after the talk. The latter has the advantage of allowing participants in different time-zones to watch the talks at a convenient time.

With little extra effort, virtual participants can be included in the Q&A sessions via the chat options offered by most virtual streaming platforms (e.g., Zoom, Cisco Webex, Vimeo, YouTube Live and others).

Virtual participants could also give short talks based on the abstracts submitted. Sufficient time needs to be allocated in the programme to accommodate the switch between virtual and on-site speakers. Virtual speakers should be encouraged to present live but in case of technical issues, it is recommended that they provide pre-recordings of their presentations.

Social networking platforms, such as Wonder.me, Gather.Town, SpatialChat, Topia and others allow participants to meet in virtual space. According to our survey, respondents felt that, if attending the conference in person, they might not have time to join any virtual social networking event. On the other hand, virtual participants may find the opportunity to virtually meet with other (virtual) participants useful.

Some of our hybrid conference organisers have experimented with virtual poster sessions, i.e., in-person and virtual participants met in virtual space to discuss their posters. This can be done e.g., by using Gather.Town, Wonder.me, Remo or individual Zoom break out rooms for posters. In practice, this requires that the in-person participants find a quiet space (either in the venue or in their hotel rooms) to join the virtual poster sessions.

An alternative may be to hold separate poster sessions for in-person and virtual participants, and/or to hold a virtual poster session before or after the meeting for all participants.

Another option is to ask all poster presenters (virtual and in-person) to upload their posters on the meeting website (e.g., Whova, an all-in-one solution; figshare [for data sharing only]). Selected virtual poster presenters can also be invited to give flash talks as part of the programme.

Prepare all poster presenters on how to present their poster in the chosen platform.

See more suggestions below in the How To section under “Virtual Conferences”.

Technical requirements:

Taking an in-person conference into virtual space requires technology in addition to the usual AV equipment:

1. A virtual platform that allows access to the talks for virtual participants.

This could range from a simple webpage with links to the talks to a sophisticated platform with a chat, forum and other features.

EMBO can offer a simple conference webpage with links to the video stream. This is based on the webpage that EMBO provides to course organisers.

Otherwise, organisers of EMBO Courses and Workshops can choose a platform of their liking (including the virtual EMBO platform). Platforms that have been used by recent EMBO hybrid meeting organisers include Gather.Town and Whova (the latter also doubles as a meeting app for on-site participants).

2. A licence for streaming software (e.g., Zoom, Cisco Webex, YouTube Live, etc.)

Organisers of EMBO Courses and Workshops can choose the software of their liking.

3. Cameras, microphones, audio mixer(s) and on-site technical equipment to provide sound and video to the virtual participants.

It is recommended to select a venue that provides these services or to arrange this with the venue and hire the necessary professional equipment and technicians. Organisers should have a clear idea of what they want and discuss the possibilities with the technicians. AV technicians may not be familiar with the specific requirements of scientific meetings, a thorough briefing may be necessary. Points to consider are:

- For optimal engagement, the video streamed to the virtual participants should switch views between presentation, speaker and the audience.
- During Q&A sessions, the audience needs to use microphones, so that questions are audible for the virtual participants. A camera filming the audience during Q&A sessions is helpful.
- When recording talks for later viewing by the virtual participants, make sure that you have software that supports the recording and that sufficient storage capacity is available. It is important to upload the talks as soon as possible after their live recordings, so that participants in other time zones have timely access to them.
- Conventional laser pointers used by speakers will not be visible to the virtual audience. Digital laser pointers are visible for both virtual and on-site audiences.

The EMBO grant can be used to pay for these services.

Personnel requirements:

In addition to the on-site arrangements, organisers need to consider the administration of the virtual side.

Apart from the technical and personnel requirements described above, an additional chairperson will be needed during the sessions to monitor the questions from the virtual audience.

Speakers:

A major reason why scientists attend conferences in-person is the opportunity to personally meet (prominent) speakers in their field. It was expected that speakers listed would also be present on-site to deliver their talks, even if some may not have stayed the full duration of the conference. In the future, this may change. Individual speakers may not be able to attend in person and may be invited to make their contribution virtually.

Another consideration is the carbon footprint resulting from long-distance travel, which may be reduced by asking a speaker from overseas to present remotely.

Organisers should agree on a clear policy on remote speakers and make it absolutely transparent to the participants prior to registration who of the invited speakers will be on-site and who will speak remotely.

Prior agreement from speakers for the streaming of their talks, and possibly recording for later viewing by the participants, has to be obtained. The virtual audience needs to be informed if a particular talk will not be available to them.

Virtual participants:

There are many reasons why participants may not be able to attend a meeting in person, these include:

- Health reasons
- Care requirements
- Lack of funding
- Difficulty to obtain a visa

amongst other possible reasons.

Offering participation via virtual streaming of talks will allow these scientists to learn about the latest developments in their field despite these restrictions.

An upper limit to the number of virtual participants will be set by the streaming licence purchased, but organisers might want to take other aspects into consideration.

Please note that recorded talks may be essential for virtual participants in other time zones, as they may not be able to participate in the live sessions.

Registration fees for virtual participants:

Registration fees charged to on-site participants cover part of the costs of the conference, such as venue rental, meals and speaker costs. Since the delivery of the virtual component requires significant finances, charging a reasonable fee to virtual participants is fully justified.

Registration fees charged to virtual participants should be lower than on-site fees and may be waived for participants under certain conditions (e.g., for participants from low-income countries). Group fees for multiple participants from individual labs or institutions should be considered.

Transparency:

Organisers should clearly specify how the conference will be run and what virtual and on-site participants can expect. This should be detailed on the website of the meeting and should include information on the following:

What is available for virtual participants, e.g.

- Access to talks (specify which talks are not streamed) and if as well as which talks will be recorded and available on demand. Specify when the talks will be available and for how long (if applicable)
- Participation in a Q&A session, via virtual platform or other means (e.g., via chat, meeting forum, email, Twitter) (if applicable)
- Participation in discussion sessions or other on-site sessions and activities (if applicable)
- Abstract submission (if applicable)
- Selection for short talk/flash talk (if applicable)
- Participation in (virtual) poster sessions (if applicable)
- Means of communicating with other participants, either virtual or on-site, via chat, a meeting forum or other (if applicable)

Potential in-person participants should be able to see from the website which speakers will not be present in person prior to registration.

Venue:

Chose a venue that has experience in hosting hybrid meetings.

Code of conduct:

Organisers should have a code of conduct for virtual and on-site participants, a policy regarding data protection (both participants' personal data as well as the scientific data presented) as well as specifying the use of social media during the meeting. Participants should agree to these upon payment of registration.

10.2. Virtual conferences

Purely virtual conferences require careful preparation. The “conventional” in-person meeting programme that we are used to, frequently lasting more than 12h per day, cannot be transferred one-to-one to virtual space. A virtual meeting should not be as long and intense per day as an in-person meeting. This may mean that the meeting may stretch over more days, has shorter presentations or fewer speakers. This may also result in fewer topics to be covered. The length of the scheduled breaks can be seen as a compromise between allowing people to have bathroom, coffee or meal breaks versus losing them to other activities.

See in the above section on technical requirements about suggestions regarding virtual platforms.

10.3. Suggestions for organisers

Here are some suggestions on how to deal with more specific issues that you may be faced with when organising a virtual/hybrid meeting.

How to address the **lack of rapport** between speaker and the audience during the talk in a virtual meeting.

- Use a platform that allows the speaker to see, for e.g., the chair, or a panel of session organisers.¹
- Have all session speakers (and chairs/organisers) meet in a session² before going live to make them feel comfortable and get to know at least some of the audience. This is particularly important for short talk speakers and flash talk speakers who may be less used to speaking in an online format.
- Play artificial applause audio clips at the end of the talk.³
- Have a poll running visibly during the talk (of course not to be addressed by the speaker during the talk, but visible evidence for reactions to the talk).
- Encourage participants to show virtual reactions (clapping hands, thumbs up etc.)
- Q&A sessions can also help improve the rapport with the audience (see suggestions below).
- If the speaker wants to see the participants or the chair while presenting, they should be advised to use two screens for a more comfortable experience.

How to run **Q&A** following a talk or a session in a virtual or hybrid meeting.

- Sessions should be moderated by a chair who selects the questions.
- Questions could be upvoted by participants.⁴
- Live questions where the moderator preselects the questions and opens a channel for the question to be asked live can make the talk more interactive.⁵
- Collect all incoming questions in the poll/chat/Q&A of the platform or directly in e.g., a Slack or Jitsi channel, and ask the speaker to answer them in writing during the course of the meeting. The collected questions could be downloaded and posted on for e.g., a dedicated Slack/Jitsi channel so that the answers are visible to all participants.
- Place speakers in breakout rooms and have live discussions with the participants after the talk. You may consider grouping the speakers to prevent that less popular speakers are alone in their breakout room.⁶

¹ For e.g., Zoom Webinar mode offers this function.

² For e.g. The practice session in Zoom Webinar allows for this, also enable the waiting room so that participants are allowed to enter when all panelists are ready and comfortable to go live.

³ Some CC0-licensed (free to use for any purpose, no attribution required) sounds can be found here: <https://freesound.org/search/?q=clapping&f=license%3A%22Creative+Commons+0%22&s=score+desc&advanced=0&g=1>

⁴ Zoom, Slido, Pathable, Glisser are some of the platforms that allow for this.

⁵ For e.g. Cisco Webex and Webex Webinars and Zoom Webinar, more info also at [12 Steps to a wildly successful webinar](#)

⁶ A comparison between Zoom Meeting and Webinar features can be found here: [Zoom Meeting and Zoom webinar comparison](#)

How to **facilitate networking** at a virtual or hybrid meeting.

- Organise speed networking events in breakout rooms.⁷ These could also be arranged using keyword matches of participants.⁸
- Meet-the-speaker sessions in breakout rooms with all participants visible. These could be organised to meet different requirements, for e.g., restricted to junior participants to allow for juniors to ask questions, or one for speakers and group leaders only, etc.
- Organise thematic breakout rooms (select a discussion leader or host to kick off the discussion). The themes could e.g., be scientific, technical, political, or career advice related.
- Organise mentoring sessions for junior scientists with an appropriate host.
- Facilitate/encourage one-on-one virtual meetings via your platform or ask participants to indicate their means of virtual communication.⁹

How to deal with **time-zone** differences.

- Record talks for re-viewing at convenience
- Restrict virtual meetings to half days
- Indicates local times on the virtual platform

How to run **virtual poster sessions**.

- Posters, possibly including a short presentation, can be uploaded on free¹⁰ or commercial¹¹ platforms.
- Reserve specific timeslots for poster sessions, like in live poster sessions. Poster sessions can be organised in breakout rooms, where each poster presenter has their own breakout room during the poster session. Encourage (require) presenters to be “at” their poster at the specified times.
- Hold at different times of the day to accommodate different time zones.
- Organise flash talk sessions to allow poster presenters to introduce their poster during regular meeting times. These could be pre-recorded to minimise technical problems.
- If the platform does not provide one-on-one live meeting function, encourage poster presenters to publicise their own channel (e.g., Zoom [free for 40 minutes], Skype, etc.), so that those interested in talking to them can do so.

To address **screen fatigue** during virtual meetings:

- Restrict meeting duration per day to 0.5 days
- Maximum meeting length of 3–4 days
- Add adequate breaks, for e.g., 10-15 min between sessions or talks; 45 min to an hour for lunch

Disclaimer: This document is intended to assist organisers set-up virtual meetings and offers merely suggestions and advice. EMBO does not endorse any software or services and does not take any responsibility for third-party services that the organiser may choose to use.

⁷ Some popular platforms for these include: Wonder.Me, Zoom, Remo, Gather.Town, SpatialChat

⁸ Some software allows this includes [Grip and Brella](#)

⁹ Some platforms allow one-on-one calls e.g., Pathable, Engagez, Slack with license, etc.

¹⁰ For e.g., figshare, SlideShare, scribd.com, prezi.com, speakerdeck.com

¹¹ For e.g., ipostersessions.com, confex.com, posterpresentations.com, <https://p.fourwaves.com/virtual-poster-sessions>, <https://gather.town/>