

# 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

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# 1. Application guidelines for organisers of EMBO Workshops

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Applications to organise an EMBO Workshop 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](mailto:courses_workshops@embo.org).

## 2. Eligibility

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Applications must meet the following criteria to be accepted:

- The topic covered in the event must be within the life sciences (see EMBO subject areas on page 3).
- Scientists based anywhere in the world can 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, workshops must take place in one of the following:
  - A. An EMBC Member State
  - B. An EMBC Associate Member State
  - C. A country or territory covered by a co-operation agreement
  - D. A country or territory eligible for co-funding by EMBO and The Company of Biologists
- If you wish to organise a meeting in a country that is not listed, please contact the EMBO Office.

**Please note:** For repeating workshops, a new application is required for each individual event.

# 3. Application process

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## 3.1. Timeline 2023

Applications to organise an EMBO Workshop 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 CET
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 workshop 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

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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 meeting
- Proposed date and location of the meeting
- 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
- An abstract describing the principle themes and objectives of the meeting
- Subject areas and keywords
- A draft budget

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

- A description of the reasons to hold a meeting on the proposed topic
- Information on any competing or similar meetings held in the past, current, or following year
- Improvements that you have made based on feedback from previous meetings (if applicable)
- The list of speakers
- The draft programme
- A description of the networking activities
- If you are organising a hybrid meeting, a short description of the virtual component
- Selection criteria for participation and number of participants
- A list of the scientific organisers, a link to their respective home pages and their previous meeting organising experience
- A short description of the location
- A listing of measures you plan to take to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of the meeting

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 of event.

**EMBO Workshops** are meetings that cover different and evolving aspects of life science related subject areas and bring scientists together to present and discuss their latest findings. PhD students and postdoctoral researchers present their results in poster sessions and short talks and have the opportunity to meet and discuss with leaders in their fields.

Workshops may alternate with corresponding meetings held outside of Europe, facilitating interactions between scientists based in Europe and beyond. Workshops can be repeated.

The workshops should last between 2.5 and 5 days and attract between 80 and 450 participants.

Applications for workshops in emerging areas of molecular biology will receive priority.

## 4.2. Proposed title of meeting

The (main) title of the workshop may not mention sponsors', organisations' or institutes' names. Organisers should also refrain from using excessively long titles and should not mention numbers referring to previous meetings.

The description of the workshop should detail which organisms/systems are being covered.

## 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
- Virtual meeting
- Hybrid 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 event.

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

### Similar meetings

Please mention any meetings on the same theme held in the past, current or following year and outline how the meeting you are proposing will differ from those. Please consider any overlap with other EMBO Courses and Workshops, or those organised by CSHL, FASEB, FEBS, GRC, Keystone, etc. (max. 200 words).

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

For meetings 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).

Note that the committee receives the feedback from the previous meeting(s) and takes this into account when judging a resubmission.

Also, please list the names of the organisers of the three previously EMBO-funded workshops in case of a repeating workshop. Note that organisers are expected to rotate, **with no one scientific organiser involved with organising more than three consecutive workshops**.

For **resubmission** of a previously unsuccessful proposal, please state 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. If speakers are not confirmed, the proposal will have a minimal chance to be accepted.



Please consider the following:

- **Number:** There should be enough speakers to cover the topic in sufficient depth but without making the programme overly dense.
- **Expertise:** The speakers should be qualified experts in their area.
- **Speakers selected from abstracts:** Some speakers should be selected from abstract submissions.
- **Career level:** EMBO supports the career progression of young scientists. The list of speakers should balance early-stage (maximally 5 years of independence) and established investigators/group leaders
- **Gender distribution:** At least 40% of the speakers should be of the underrepresented gender. If there is a lower proportion, a justification must be provided. Applications with a lower percentage are generally not successful.
- **Geographical diversity:** Meetings held in EMBC Member States (A – see list on page 3), should have a minimum of 50% of the invited speakers based in EMBC Member States (A) or in EMBC Associate Member States (B) or from countries and territories covered by a co-operation agreement (C) (see list on page 3). Meetings held outside Europe (B, C and D – see list on page 3) should have a minimum of 33% speakers based in EMBC Member States (A – see list on page 3).
- **Repeat speakers (*only if the event is a repeat of an EMBO event*):** It is expected that at least 50% of the speakers are different between subsequent events in a repeating workshop series.
- EMBO supports the career progression of young scientists. The invitation of early-stage researchers, here defined as maximally 5 years experience as PI, will be viewed positively by the committee.

While EMBO specifies certain targets of gender and geographic participation to promote inclusiveness and diversity in EMBO Courses and Workshops, 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.

**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. Add a link to the home page of the speaker's research group
3. 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 the EMBC Member States),
  - E (for early-stage researchers)
4. Add title and link to a relevant publication that led to the speaker's invitation.

Please see example below:

No.	Name and affiliation. Include link to lab home page	Status (C,F,E, O,R)	List the most recent publication that is relevant to their contribution to the meeting (include title and PubMed link).
1.	John Bloggs (Institute, City, Country) <a href="https://www.XY.JohnBloggsLab/uxy.xy">https://www.XY.JohnBloggsLab/uxy.xy</a>	C, O	John Bloggs et al, Molecular Systems Biology, 2019; The systems biology of cancer stroma; PubMed link
2.	Jane Doe (Institute, City, Country) <a href="https://www.XY.JaneDoeLab/uxy.xy/">https://www.XY.JaneDoeLab/uxy.xy/</a>	C, F	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.

## 4.6. Programme

### Introductory paragraph

Please give a one-paragraph introduction, explaining the logic behind the order of the sessions. In the draft programme, please note in a few words what the invited speakers will contribute to that session. Final talk titles are not expected at such an early stage.

### Draft Programme

The programme should be sufficiently detailed, listing session themes and speakers, and including time for questions, discussions, and networking. It should have the appropriate duration for the size and focus of the meeting, and the time allocated to talks and Q&A sessions should be appropriate.

Please ensure that the programme is legible by adding empty lines between days. Please see example below:

Day	Time	Programme category (e.g., talk, break, keynote lecture etc.)	Speaker name and topic of talk
<b>Day 1</b>			
	12:00	<b>OPENING</b>	
	12:15 – 13:15	<b>KEYNOTE</b>	John Bloggs on cancer stroma
	13:15 – 13:45	<b>BREAK</b>	
	13:45 – 15:30	<b>SESSION</b>	Signalling networks in cancer I
	13:45 – 14:15	<b>TALK</b>	Jane Doe: Ras signalling in melanoma
	....		
	15:30 – 17:00	<b>POSTERS</b>	All posters

### 4.6.1. 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 workshop, 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).

### 4.6.2. 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 Workshops should be as follows:

- Greater than 80 (up to 450) 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.
- Maximum 25% of the participants should be from the host country. This requirement is waived for meetings taking place outside Europe (B, C and D – see list on page 3).
- EMBO is committed to a reasonable gender distribution in all activities, so please ensure that this is the case in the proposed event. 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](mailto: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 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 workshops (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 CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of the meeting

EMBO encourages organizers of EMBO Courses and Workshops to implement measures that reduce the environmental impact, including the CO<sub>2</sub> 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
<b>CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting</b>	
Offset the CO <sub>2</sub> footprint of your meeting through different actions e.g., by acquiring external funding for compensations via CO <sub>2</sub> 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 <sub>2</sub> offset projects; or any other innovative ideas	5
<b>Venue</b>	
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
<b>Hub</b>	
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
<b>Catering</b>	
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
<b>Travel</b>	
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 CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of travel further:** Organisers may additionally request speakers and participants to donate to CO<sub>2</sub> 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 rental 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 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 a total of €8,000.

EMBO funds do not cover overheads or purchase of equipment.

EMBO will create the workshop 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 allowed for EMBO Workshops is:

- €550 for academic participants, excluding accommodation.
- €350 for Postdocs and PhD students, excluding accommodation.
- Participants from industry should be charged a minimum of €700.
- 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. This additional funding should be used as follows:

- €2,500 for general travel grants and registration fee waivers.
- €3,000 for special travel grants and registration fee waivers for scientists of any nationality working in Chile, India, Singapore or Taiwan.
- €3,500 for special travel grants and registration fee waivers for participants from Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey.
- €1,000 are provided 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.

**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**

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- 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

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

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

The committee will pay special attention to the following aspects:

## A. TOPIC

- **Originality:** The topic should not cover an area where there is already an overabundance of meetings.
- **Relevance:** Significant new developments in a field should be addressed.
- **Breadth:** Topic(s) should be covered in sufficient depth and breadth.
- **Unique focus:** If the topic is similar to an on-going series of events funded by EMBO, the unique focus of the proposed meeting should be clearly indicated.

## B. PROGRAMME

- **Clear structure:** The programme should be sufficiently detailed, listing session themes and speakers, and allowing time for questions, discussions, and networking.
- **Appropriate duration:** The programme should have the appropriate duration for the size and focus of the meeting.
- **Talk duration:** The time allocated to talks and Q+A should be appropriate. Overly long talks should be avoided.
- **Previous feedback** (*only if the event is a repeat of an EMBO event*). If there was any negative feedback the attempts to rectify the issues in the current application should be specified.

## C. SPEAKERS

- **Number:** There should be enough speakers to cover the topic in sufficient depth but without making the programme overly dense.
- **Expertise:** The speakers should be qualified experts in their area.
- **Speakers selected from abstracts:** Some speakers should be selected from abstract submissions.
- **Status:** The vast majority of speakers should be confirmed.
- **Career level:** The list of speakers should balance early-stage and established investigators/group leaders.
- **Gender distribution:** At least 40% of the speakers should be of the underrepresented gender. A lower proportion must be justified. This is checked by the office prior to assignment.
- **Geographical diversity:** Meetings held in EMBC Member States (A – see list on page 3), should have a minimum of 50% of the invited speakers based in EMBC Member States (A) or in EMBC Associate Member States (B) or from countries and territories covered by a co-operation agreement (C) (see list on page 3). Significant bias for certain states should be avoided. Meetings held outside Europe (B, C and D – see list on page 3) should have a minimum of 33% speakers based in EMBC Member States (A – see list on page 3).

- **Repeat speakers (*only if the event is a repeat of an EMBO event*):** No more than 50% of the speakers should have spoken at the previous event in the series.

#### D. NETWORKING

- **Networking opportunities:** Sufficient time should be dedicated to activities that promote exchanges between the participants, e.g., coffee breaks, group activities, meet the speaker sessions, flash talks, discussion rounds. Other attempts to promote interaction amongst attendees are a plus.
- **Common meals:** Meals should be organised for all participants in order to encourage interaction. EMBO will not fund a separate "speakers' dinner" during the meeting.
- **Poster sessions schedule and location:** Poster sessions should be held at a time that encourages maximal attendance, ideally not during lunch/dinner or breaks, and should not overlap with other activities.  
Poster sessions should last for at least 90 minutes.  
At least two poster sessions should be organised for a meeting with more than 150 participants.

#### E. ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND MEETING LOCATION

- **Diversity:** Co-organisers should be an international and gender-diverse group of scientists.
- ***Only if the event is a repeat of an EMBO Workshop:*** The same scientific organisers cannot not be involved in the organization of more than three consecutive workshops (this rule does not apply for EMBO Lecture Courses, EMBO Practical Courses or EMBO Global Lecture Courses).
- **Location of the event:** The venue should be easy to reach, and it should be suitable for the type of meeting proposed. Participants and speakers should be accommodated in the same location or in a limited number of locations.

## 7. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

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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 Workshops

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EMBO | The Company of Biologists Workshops 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 workshop 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

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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

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## 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 workshop 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 use the EMBO Zoom licenses (for meetings and webinars). Otherwise, 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.<sup>1</sup>
- Have all session speakers (and chairs/organisers) meet in a session<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>4</sup>
- 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.<sup>5</sup>
- 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For e.g., Zoom Webinar mode offers this function.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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>

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

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> These could also be arranged using keyword matches of participants.<sup>8</sup>
- 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.<sup>9</sup>

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 free<sup>10</sup> or commercial<sup>11</sup> 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

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

<sup>8</sup> Some software allows this includes [Grip and Brella](#)

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

<sup>10</sup> For e.g., figshare, SlideShare, scribd.com, prezi.com, speakerdeck.com

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

*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.*