

PME Regional Conference – Proposal for path to AGM

PME regional conferences provide scientists from regions which are currently underrepresented within PME, and in which comparable initiatives are hard to start without external funding, to start up a conference initiative in their region with the goals to:

- a) support the development of a regional research community that pursues the goals of PME (network building), and in this way,
- b) attract researchers from the region to actively participate in future PME conferences (international networking) and support them in preparing high quality PME contributions.

Expanding on ‘underrepresented’ and ‘need’ for funding

The above paragraph suggests two key aspects in relation to the target regions for this proposal. The first is that the region is underrepresented at PME conferences, that is, few participants from this region attend or have attended PME historically. The second is that it would be difficult to organize a conference with the requirements that are specified below without PME funding because there are regional factors that would make fund-raising for such a conference difficult within the region.

Application and Decision

- The initiative to propose a regional conference may arise from a regional researcher or a PME member who is not from the region, but has strong scientific connections to the region (non-regional researcher).
 - In the first case the regional researcher joins up with a non-regional researcher with close connection to PME (i.e. someone who has participated in several PME conferences and/or served on the PME IC) to form the organizing team.
 - In the second case the non-regional researcher approaches a colleague in the region, with whom they have already made contact in the past, to form the organizing team.
- The organizers submit a bid to PME, including the topic/theme, expected results and impact of the conference, possible regional and non-regional participants, means of local advertisement of the conference, proposed dates, location, and a budget draft.
- The bid should indicate how relevant existing regional mathematics education (professional and/or research) associations (if they exist) have been consulted and when possible and relevant a statement of their support should be included in the bid.
- The bid must be submitted to the PME vice president not later than 12 weeks before the PME IC meeting at which the bid will be discussed **and** not later than 6 months before the intended conference is to take place.
- The PME IC may consult the organizers about the bid during its meetings before or after the annual PME conferences.
- The PME IC decides on the bid based on the following criteria:
 - Potential to attain the goals of the programme with the regional conference
 - Feasibility of organizational and financial plan
 - Broad inclusion of regional researchers
 - Expected impact of the initiative, in relation to the budget required.
- In the case where the bid is accepted, two members from the PME IC are appointed who support the organizers in case of questions and advise on budgetary spending.

Suggested format of PME regional conference

- PME regional conferences are **conferences of two to four days**, which **focus on a common (possibly broad) research area of regional interest** but which is also connected to the goals of PME.
- Given that the goal is to involve the participants in future PME conferences, the language of the conference, including all scientific contributions, is English. However, if the authors desire, they can include an abstract of their research report in another language in addition to the English one. Contributions to discussions and questions following Research Reports and Oral Communications can also make use of other languages, as long as translation to and from English is provided by someone in the session.
- **Regional participants** should be 10 to 30 researchers who **currently have a position (which includes being a registered post graduate student) at an academic institution (including schools) in the region, and are conducting research or have the intention to do so.**
- Moreover, the organizers should attract at least two **non-regional participants** from outside the region who have a sound connection to PME and can give substantial input on the conference theme and program. However, not more than one third of all participants should be non-regional participants. [See roles of non-regional participants below].
- Each PME regional conference presents its work in the following forms:
 - A **proceedings volume** containing the written contributions of each proposal. This volume may be digital and will be made accessible via the PME web site.
 - A **90 minute presentation** of the work during and the results of the regional conference to the subsequent PME conference.
 - An **8 page scientific report accompanying the presentation to be published in the PME conference proceedings** (directly after the plenaries) on the scientific results of the regional conference.
 - Each regional participant that has a paper on the regional conference is encouraged/expected to submit a presentation for the subsequent PME conference. This might be a (revised) version of the paper presented at the regional conference.

Session types and reviewing

- PME regional conference are **announced** not less than 10 weeks before the first submission deadline via the IGPME list server, the IGPME web site, and a wide range of regional information channels. Submission is open for regional and non-regional participants.
- PME regional conference may include the following formats:
 - **Keynote lectures** (at most 50% from non-regional participants)
 - **Research Reports** (at most one third from non-regional participants)
 - **Oral communications** (at most one third from non-regional participants)
 - **Poster Presentations** (at most one third from non-regional participants)
 - **Topic-centred group discussions** (It is intended that at least one such group focuses on discussion of future research agendas, programs and collaborations for the region.)
 - **Workshops** (For example these could include research writing workshops particularly with a view to supporting preparation of research report and oral communication submissions for PME). Additionally workshops might provide support in the use of various technologies for research/ preparation of presentations/ using conftool and so forth.)

Time and page restrictions for the first three formats follow those of PME conferences. Research report and oral communication sessions are also organized according to the format of the PME conferences. Topic-centered group discussions should make up at least 10% of the conference time. There should ideally not be any parallel sessions so as to enable strengthened community building through these sessions.

- Research Reports for PME regional conferences are reviewed by at least three peers, where at least one is from the region and at least one is from the international PME reviewer pool.
- Poster Presentations for PME regional conferences are submitted for review to the local organizers.
- As opposed to the PME conference, **Research Reports which are rejected in the initial review process** should receive support from the organizers and the international PME reviewer for improvement and then go through a second round of review. If still unacceptable after that second round, they can be submitted as Oral Communication or Poster Presentation.

Roles of the non-regional participants

- The main goal of a PME regional conference is regional networking and to enable greater PME conference participation from the region in the future.
- The role of the non-regional participants is not one of “external experts”.
- The non-regional participants take the role of “critical, supportive and curious friends”. Additionally, they:
 - Represent PME and its culture during the conference and share with the regional participants what PME has to offer.
 - Bring an international perspective that informs the regional discussion.
 - Feed back ideas and results of the regional discussion into their own international work and networks thereby increasing international awareness of regional work and regional researchers.
- Apart from stimulating regional cooperation, it is of course also hoped that further collaborations between regional and non-regional participants arise from the conference.

Funding and support by PME

- PME regional conferences may partially or completely waive the conference fee for regional participants and of the non-regional organizer in order to encourage participation.
- The conference organizers should use a substantial amount of their budget to provide **travel and accommodation support for the regional participants**.
- Each regional participant receives a complimentary PME membership for the year of the conference and/or the year after conference.
- In general, non-regional participants take over their own costs for travel and accommodation. Deviations from this rule require the consent of the PME IC.
- PME supports a PME regional conference with an amount of **up to 20.000€**. The decision to fund the regional conference is made by the PME International Committee after presentation of a bid by at least one of the organizers. These funds may be used for:
 - Travel and accommodation grants for regional participants (non-regional participants only after approval consent from the PME IC for specific cases).
 - Catering at moderate costs during the conference, including a social event.
 - Costs for rooms, technical equipment, etc.
 - A low-budget for local organizing infrastructure.
 - A budget for the required audit.
- After the conference, the organizers provide to PME a **detailed financial report**, which has been audited according to the local regulations in the country in which the conference was held. **Remaining funds are to be paid back.**

- The organizers are allowed and invited to raise additional funds. PME holds its funds at the same level. Only funds remaining after funds from other sources were paid back have to be paid back to PME.
- The organizers are held responsible in the event that money was used in a way that is not in line with the goals of the PME regional conference programme. The organizers should keep close and regular contact with the IC contact persons (see below) in case of questions.
- Support funding for regional conference participants to attend the PME annual conference would be through the usual route of application for support (Skemp fund) but would be prioritised should they meet the criteria for funding.

Monitoring of progress and evaluation

- The two PME IC contact members are informed about the major organization of the conference at regular intervals. These contact members keep the PME IC (as a whole) informed in case of problems.
- The results of the conference (see above) are submitted to the PME IC. The PME IC contact members survey these results and write a summative report to the IC. This report is presented at the AGM.
- The organizers provide a report on participants' feedback on the conference with particular focus on how useful participants perceived it to have been. They submit the raw data (copies of participants' evaluations) and a summary evaluation report to the PME IC.
- Based on these results and the report, the PME IC engages in a final discussion of the specific conference initiative.

Expected gain for PME

- Attract researchers from less represented regions to the PME community by
 - Making them aware of PME and its culture (e.g., the Skemp fund).
 - Extending their skills to publish in PME (e.g. research reports) and present at PME (research reports, short orals and posters).
- Supporting regional networking of researchers in less PME-represented regions, and stimulating contacts to the international community.
- Including research problems from these regions into the PME research agenda and making them internationally visible.
- Using PME funds to support the goals of PME in an inclusive way.

Possible challenges:

- *Failure of the bid and LOC to communicate effectively with existing research networks in the region*
It is critically important that existing networks in mathematics education research in the region of interest are consulted in the process of submitting a bid in order to ensure that the introduction of a PME conference in the area does not undermine or clash with existing practices, networks and conferences. As far as possible such existing networks/ organisations should be engaged with by being part of the bid committee or being asked for an indication of support for the bid with a statement of how they perceive such a conference to support the broader efforts of their work in the region.
- *No bids are submitted*
In this case PME researchers with contacts into less represented regions should be encouraged to take the initiative and contact a regional researcher to submit a joint bid.
- *No sustainable effects*
It is not clear if the mechanism of the PME regional conference will be sufficient to attract researchers from the region to PME conferences nor whether the mechanism will enable the strengthening of regional networking, research and collaboration. To study

this, the IC should closely monitor the participant numbers from the respective regions for some years after a PME regional conference. It should also gather information on the number of submissions and number of acceptances of those submissions at the annual PME conferences. In relation to those submissions rejected or referred to for short orals or posters – it will be useful to gather reasons for rejection (e.g. language barriers, insufficient quality, etc.) Additionally some follow up surveys on research activities occurring in the region post the conference with a focus on whether this was enabled or stimulated in any way by the conference will be important.

- *Organisational challenges*

It is possible that a range of organisational challenges might arise. The piloting of a first regional research conference will enable a wide range of organisational and other challenges to be noted and to be brought back to the IC for informing adaptations to the current draft proposal herein.