

Planning and Conducting Focused Topic Meetings Standard Operating Procedure

The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) sponsors various kinds of events to bring together scientists, engineers, and managers from government, private business, academia, and public interest groups to consider the state-of-the-art of specific environmental topics. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process used by SETAC North America (SNA) for proposing, planning, and conducting SNA-sponsored Focused-Topic Meetings (FTMs).

SNA offers FTMs for the explicit purpose of providing a forum for the presentation and exchange of information and/or training in technical and/or policy issues on specific and timely environmental topics. As such, the goal of an FTM is to promote the advancement of a specific technical issue in the environmental sciences. The format of FTMs can be either uni-track or multi-track and can include a combination of platform and poster presentations. Further, FTMs may (but not necessarily) include break-out sessions and/or panel discussions. Attendance at FTMs is by open registration. FTMs are typically attended by between 150 to 300 participants, although smaller or larger FTMs are possible. The typical length of an FTM is 2-3 days but can vary. Outputs of FTMs can utilize a variety of media formats, but at a minimum should include a summary of the proceedings as a SETAC Globe article.

FTMs can be proposed by any SETAC member through forming a Preliminary Organizing Committee. FTMs are approved by the SNA Board of Directors (BoD) based on input from the SNA Science Committee. All FTMs are to be administered by the SETAC North America Office. It is critical to the success of every SNA-sponsored FTM that the experience of the SNA staff be used from the beginning of the FTM planning process.

Criteria for Designation as an SNA-Sponsored Focused Topic Meeting

The following criteria provide guidance for designation as an SNA FTM.

1. The proposed FTM is consistent with SETAC and SNA goals;
2. The FTM has a clearly defined topic and goals;
3. The FTM topic is recognized as being an important and timely scientific issue by the SNA Science Committee and SNA BoD;
4. The FTM goals and objectives are clearly identified;
5. The FTM is organized so that the topic can be addressed within the designated time;
6. The FTM is planned to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, and include appropriate specialists outside of the fields of environmental toxicology and chemistry;
7. The FTM is designed to enhance participation by constituencies and user groups, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
8. The Organizing Committee Chair and Co-Chair are experts on the topic being addressed. Members of the Organizing Committee must include recognized subject matter experts germane to the meeting topic; and,
9. The Organizing Committee and FTM participants represent a diverse group including academia, business, and government, and when possible, NGOs.

Planning and Conducting a Focused Topic Meeting

This section describes various steps involved in proposing, planning, and conducting an SNA FTM, including developing the meeting topic, securing SNA approval, planning the meeting, and responsibilities during and after the meeting.

Step 1. Developing the Meeting Topic and the Proposal

Meeting organizers, at least one of whom must be a SETAC member, identify a pertinent issue or environmental topic to serve as a focal point for the proposed meeting. An FTM Preliminary Organizing Committee that includes at least one SETAC Office staff member as an *ad hoc* member is formed. The FTM Preliminary Organizing Committee develops a draft proposal that clearly and concisely:

1. Describes and justifies the topic of the FTM;
2. Defines the meeting objectives;
3. Identifies some of the members and affiliations of the proposed FTM Organizing Committee;
4. Describes the anticipated range (in affiliation, geographical representation, etc.) and number of participants;
5. Describes the duration of the meeting;
6. Describes the format of the meeting;
7. Lists potential meeting funding sponsors;
8. Describes any meeting publication plans (proceedings, papers, etc.);
9. Commits to the development of required outputs of a FTM as described later in this SOP; and
10. Describes the potential for follow-up meetings, workshops, sessions, etc.

The draft proposal should contain sufficient detail to enable an evaluation, based upon the above criteria, by the SNA Science Committee and the SNA BoD. The SNA BoD recommends that the draft proposal be submitted at least one year prior to the proposed meeting timeframe. The preliminary Organizing Committee should submit the draft proposal through the SETAC science office. The Science Committee will provide recommendations regarding the FTM draft proposal to the SNA BoD through the SETAC Office (see the section of this SOP devoted to the framework for more details regarding the approval process).

Step 2. Proposal Evaluation

The SETAC science office will send the draft proposal to the chair(s) of the Science Committee. The SNA Science Committee in consultation with the SETAC Office, will review the proposal using the *Criteria for Designation as a SETAC Focused Topic Meeting* set forth at the beginning of this SOP. Based upon this review, the Science Committee, through the chair(s), will provide one of the following recommendations to the SNA BoD through the SETAC office:

- Recommend provisional SNA sponsorship as an FTM;
- Recommend provisional SNA sponsorship with minor changes suggested;

- Recommend SNA provisional sponsorship contingent upon incorporation of mandatory revisions; or,
- Recommend against SNA provisional sponsorship.

The SNA BoD will approve or reject the FTM draft proposal based on the recommendations of the SNA Science Committee. Approval of the draft proposal can take place at any regularly scheduled SNA BoD meeting throughout the year or by ballot. The BoD will notify the Preliminary Organizing Committee of the BoD's evaluation of the proposal.

Step 3. Planning the Meeting

After approval of the draft proposal by the SNA BoD, FTM organizers may initiate the planning process in cooperation with the SETAC Office. Listed below are guidelines and recommendations that are relevant to the primary components of the planning process.

- A. FTM Organizing Committee Formation. The final FTM Organizing Committee is established and will have responsibility for developing, organizing, and conducting the FTM, and ensuring that meeting products are completed and distributed. The composition of the committee should be based upon the meeting objectives. However, to be consistent with SETAC goals, the committee should contain representation from academia, business, and government. If possible and appropriate, NGO representation on the committee may be beneficial.
- B. Final Program Development. One of the responsibilities of the FTM Organizing Committee with SETAC staff guidance is to develop a specific program for the meeting. The details will vary depending upon the meeting objectives, and may include plenary presentations, submitted presentations, invited presentations, discussions, poster sessions, debates, short courses, student activities (including a silent auction), exhibitors, social activities, publicity (including web site content), etc. The FTM Organizing Committee with SETAC staff guidance also will identify Session Chairs, review abstracts, and organize abstracts into sessions.
- C. Acquisition of Financial Assistance. The FTM Organizing Committee has the responsibility to secure adequate funding, in consultation with the SETAC office. The SNA office will identify the target fundraising goals based on meeting logistical requirement. All formal letters of solicitation must originate from the SETAC Office; however, the FTM Organizing Committee members should make advance inquiries and identify specific individuals in the agencies, companies, associations, etc. who may be financial contributors to the meeting. Sufficient funding should be secured as early in the planning process as possible. Funds must normally be secured, or at least have a very high probability of being secured, before the SNA BoD will grant final approval for the FTM.
- D. Management of Meeting Logistics. The SETAC Office organizes all logistical support for

FTMs, in consultation with the FTM Organizing Committee. As such, the SETAC office takes responsibility for: securing a productive setting for the meeting; ; securing the necessary equipment for the meeting; identifying accommodation and transportation plans; planning coffee breaks, and any lunches, socials, and /or receptions during the meeting; organizing the advertising campaign for the FTM, and developing the meeting website, among other logistics. The SETAC Office will strive to synchronize timing and/or location with other SETAC sponsored events as appropriate for the FTM. The SETAC office is also responsible for developing the budget for the FTM.

Step 4: Finalizing the Meeting Proposal

After completion of the planning process by the FTM organizers in cooperation with the SETAC Office, the FTM organizers finalize the FTM proposal based on the final plans. The final proposal will include the same categories required in the draft proposal but will list final plans rather than preliminary plans. As such the final proposal will cover the following

1. Describes and justifies the topic of the FTM;
2. Defines the meeting objectives;
3. Identifies all members and affiliations of the proposed FTM organizing committee;
4. Describes the anticipated range (in affiliation, geographical representation, etc.) and number of participants;
5. Describes the duration of the meeting;
6. Describes the format of the meeting;
7. Identifies the dates and times for the proposed meeting;
8. Identifies the meeting city and venue;
9. Indicates secured funding sources and amounts;
10. Describes meeting publication plans (proceedings, papers, etc.);
11. Lists the planned outputs of FTM; and
12. Describes the potential for follow-up meetings, workshops, sessions, etc.

The final proposal should contain all the details that would enable an evaluation by the SNA Science Committee and the SNA BoD, based upon the aforementioned criteria. The Committee will provide recommendations regarding the FTM final proposal to the SNA BoD through the SETAC Office (see the section of this SOP devoted to the framework for more details regarding the approval process). The BoD will make a final decision regarding the FTM based on the recommendation of the Science Committee and its evaluation of the FTM budget prepared by the SETAC office. The BoD will notify the FTM Steering Committee of the final decision.

Step 5. Responsibilities during the Meeting

The FTM Chairs and the SETAC Office are responsible for ensuring that the FTM runs smoothly.

The responsibilities of the SETAC Office include:

- Addressing all meeting venue issues (e.g., catering, A/V, security, payments, transportation);
- Registration of attendees, guests, speakers, press;
- Collecting registration and exhibitor fees, and for overall financial arrangements and accounting.

The responsibilities of the FTM Chairs include:

- Assisting in meeting set-up and take down as well as selected administrative duties (as directed by the SETAC Office);
- Welcoming participants to the FTM;
- Thanking sponsors;
- Introduction of plenary speakers (or identifying people to do the introductions);
- Introduction of short course instructors;
- Daily announcements (e.g., changes to the program, reminders);
- Compilation of student judging forms, and announcement of the winners;
- Personal contact with exhibitors, plenary speakers, guests, etc.

The FTM Chairs should seek assistance from their Organizing Committee as necessary or desired, to complete these tasks.

Publication of Focused-Topic Meeting Proceedings, Summary and Webinar

FTMs may not always result in a publication per se, but at a minimum, the Steering Committee will produce the following:

- a *SETAC Globe* article summarizing proceedings with photos from the FTM;

Other potential publications from an FTM can include the following:

- a poster at an SNA Annual Meeting;
- Articles for submission to ET&C or IEAM;
- Technical Information Paper (TIP);
- a webinar;
- Open forum;
- Agency or departmental briefings;
- Proceedings;
- Short courses;
- Videos.

The FTM Organizing Committee has the responsibility to coordinate the required publications efforts with the SETAC publications staff, and the SETAC Scientific Affairs Manager to ensure that the required publications are completed in a timely manner and are of acceptable quality. The *SETAC Globe* article should be produced within 60 days of completion of the FTM. Article submission for ET&C, IEAM, or the *SETAC Globe* must be coordinated in advance with the respective editor-in-chief. SETAC has the first right of refusal to publish all materials that result from a meeting.

Framework for Planning, Funding and Scheduling a Focused Topic Meeting

A summary of the planning process schedule is presented below. Any variance from this schedule must be approved by the SNA BoD no less than 10 months in advance of the proposed FTM date.

Months Prior to FTM

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|--------------|---|
| 14 | FTM Draft Proposal submitted by Preliminary Organizing Committee through SETAC office to SNA Science Committee. The SNA Science Committee makes a recommendation to the SNA BoD. |
| 12 | The SNA BoD makes a decision and conveys it to FTM Preliminary Organizing Committee. Proposal is returned to FTM Organizing Committee to address any concerns. |
| 10 | FTM Final Proposal submitted through SETAC office to SNA Science Committee who makes a final recommendation to the SNA BoD. The SNA BoD makes a final decision on proposal and conveys it to FTM Organizing Committee. |
| 9 | Initiate meeting organization (program development). Fundraising begins. Sponsors and exhibitors (if applicable) are approached. The office begins to identify dates and venues with input from organizing committee. |
| 8 | After minimum fundraising goal is reached and the venue is identified, the SETAC office prepares a cost budget and submits it to the BoD. After BoD approval, the SETAC office secures venue. The website is launched. Publicity material is prepared. First Call for Abstracts is sent. |
| 6 | Commitments for 50% of funds due. Plenary speakers are identified. Student and social activities are planned. |
| 3 | Commitments for 80% of funds due. Budget finalized. Final approval of FTM is given by the BOD (timing linked to contract and deposit obligations). Abstract deadline and review. Registration opens. Meeting Program is finalized (including plenaries, platform/poster presentations, list of exhibitors, social and student activities, the welcome letter from the Chair(s), etc.). |
| Meeting | Conduct meeting in cooperation with SETAC staff. Chair(s) or their designees must be available to the SETAC staff throughout the FTM. |
| 60 days post | Executive Summary and <i>SETAC Globe</i> are submitted. |

At the following SNA Annual Meeting, a poster is presented.

Suggested FTM Proposal Outline

For electronic Submittals, please use the following file name convention:

SETAC_FTM_Proposal_topic_date

Following is a suggested proposal outline:

- FTM Topic – Description and Justification
- FTM Objectives
- Organizing Committee: List Names, affiliations, email addresses, Sector, SETAC affiliation (if any)
- Anticipated Range and Affiliations and Number of Participants
- Duration of Meeting
- FTM Format (e.g., uni-track or multi-track, invited speakers only or a combination of invited speakers and those identified through abstract submissions, plenary presentations and/or posters...)
- Potential Timeframe: Winter/ Spring/ Summer, year
- Potential Locations and Venues: A preference to location could be noted with reasoning.
- Potential Funding Sponsors
- FTM Planned Outputs / Products
- References

Note that the budget is prepared by the office separately from proposal.