

KBS Thematic Meetings – Guidance for Arrangers

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1. Description of KBS thematic meetings

There is a lengthy tradition of Kettil Bruun Society (KBS) thematic meetings, starting with the International Group for Comparative Alcohol Studies, which was one of the two traditions of meetings from which the KBS was formed. This text describes the organization of KBS thematic meetings as well as general requirements that must be met before any such meetings are endorsed as official thematic meetings of the Kettil Bruun society.

A KBS thematic meeting is hosted by a particular research centre or group of members and must be self-financing. Some thematic meetings are part of an informal series of meetings and held every three or four years, while others take place only once. Thematic meetings typically have between 30 and 50 participants most of whom present papers during the meeting.

Thematic meetings typically take place over a 3-5 day period (with half-day meetings often held on either the first or the last day leaving time for arrival/departure). When possible, all papers are presented in plenary sessions. However, parallel sessions are sometimes organized when the number of presentations exceeds the total time allotted for presentations. Sometimes an extra half or full day is reserved at the conclusion of the meeting so that, for example, summary findings from work presented at the meeting are presented to a wider audience.

The host group or centre must raise sufficient funds to hold the meeting. Part of the budget for the meeting is typically used for reserved for rental meeting rooms, lunches and/or a dinner. A typical amount budgeted for a thematic meeting would be on the order of \$20,000 – 25,000 USD, though meetings have also been held with smaller or larger amounts. Typically, meeting participants pay for their own travel to and from the meeting as well as accommodations while attending the meeting, with either a low or no registration fees. For some thematic meetings, the local organizing group may obtain sufficient funds to cover the cost of local accommodation during the conference for meeting participants, as well as meals for several days. When extra resources are available, organizers may also be able to partially offset some participants' transportation costs or waive registration fees for participants from low or middle income countries.

In order to attract scholars with smaller budgets (e.g., PhD students and the like) the meetings are often held in places where lodging expenses can be kept relatively low.

Budgeted funds are required for:

- meeting rooms and equipment rental, coffee break comestibles, and for at least some of the meals during the meeting, including a conference dinner.
- travel and accommodation expenses for a few invited participants, around whose presentations the program is organized (but typically not for compensation for their presentations, *per se*)
- costs of clerical assistance in managing the logistics of the meeting. Often this work is absorbed into the work of a research centre or group, and not specifically budgeted.
- publication costs if, for example, a published product is envisioned as a result of the meeting.

2. Requirements for a KBS Thematic Meeting

The Coordinating Committee of the KBS must approve any proposed meeting before it can be designated as an official thematic meeting of the society.

Normally, those proposing a thematic meeting present a draft call for papers and a plan for the meeting to the Coordinating Committee prior to the Committee's June meeting.

Criteria which must be satisfied for a thematic meeting proposal to be approved include:

- (1) The proposed theme of the meeting must be endorsed by the Coordinating Committee;
- (2) The meeting must be genuinely international in scope and participation and must provide the opportunity for researchers interested in the topic to submit an abstract for consideration;
- (3) While it is expected that there will be some invited presentations at a thematic meeting, there must also be a call for papers directed to all KBS members which invites presenter-initiated papers within the meeting's theme.
- (4) A typical arrangement is that the abstracts are reviewed by the chair of the local organizing committee, along with one or two colleagues who are also well versed in the central focus of the thematic meeting.

3. Program for the thematic meeting

Normally, the program is organized around submitted abstracts, typically comprising a consistent subtheme. Invited presentations may serve as introductions to the subtheme and a commentary or discussion session for invited presentations is often included. Depending on the organizers'

preferences, these invited presentations may be longer than the usual KBS time for presenting a paper – perhaps as long as half an hour (20 min- for presentation + 10 minutes for discussion).

Presenter-initiated papers are usually handled in the same way as is done for the KBS June meetings: the speaker presents their paper for 10 minutes after which an assigned discussant has up to 10 minutes to comment the corresponding paper(s) and then opens up the discussion of the papers to the audience. However, this time allocation is freely adjustable at the discretion of the organisers. However, it is important that there be enough time reserved for discussion and feedback.

As in the KBS June meetings, the conference day is usually organized around four 1½ hour sessions: 9.00 – 10.30, 11.00 – 12.30, 14.00 – 15.30, 16.00 – 17.30. A conference excursion may be included in a thematic meeting, usually instead of the last session of one of the meeting days.

It is desirable to provide at least one responsibility, if not more, for each meeting participant so that attendees are asked to discuss papers and/or chair sessions, even if they have not submitted an abstract. It is advisable to clearly inform and advise participants of their roles well in advance.

Organizers should issue a call for papers with an abstract submission deadline that provides sufficient time for program organization and management of meeting logistics – for example, at least 3 months prior to the time of the meeting. Invited participants are typically recruited even earlier. Meeting participants should be asked to submit a paper for precirculation at least three weeks before the meeting so that papers can be put up on the conference website at least two weeks before the meeting. The conference website should be accessible to all participants with a simple password and should normally be kept accessible online for some time after the meeting.

4. Publication and the thematic meeting

Many KBS thematic meetings have resulted in thematic publications, often coordinated and edited by those organizing the meeting. Such publications have taken several forms, such as:

- A book published by a commercial or academic publisher.
- A “self-published” book or a book in a research series in the alcohol field.
- One or two thematic journal issues. Note that a supplement to a leading journal can cost USD \$20,000. Other journals will accept thematic issues as regular issues of the journal.
- A thematic group of papers in an issue of a journal.

A book or journal issue is a tangible product of the meeting which helps to advance the field, often increasing the appeal of the meeting proposal to funding bodies. However, the amount of work involved in getting papers reviewed, revised, and ready for publication is substantial and such efforts should not be taken lightly. If the organizers have such a publication in mind, they may want to indicate such intentions in the Call for papers, as it may increase the attraction of the meeting for potential participants. It is, however, advisable to present the publication as a possibility rather than a certainty

and there should NOT be any implied promise that publication is assured for any presentation accepted for the meeting. Commonly, organizers looking toward publication have announced at the end of the meeting that they will be seeking to put together a publication. Meeting participants are typically asked to indicate if they do not want their paper to be considered for such a publication. Participants will submit abstracts for the publication and a small description of the theme will be submitted to a journal with the abstract collection by the editors.

5. Issues of logistics, timetable, etc.

Thematic meetings are smaller than the KBS June all-comers meetings and the logistics and work involved are typically a bit less onerous. But the meeting still needs to be fully and carefully planned and organized. The [Guide for Planning the Annual Alcohol Epidemiology Symposium of the Kjetil Bruun Society](#) offers useful guidance which can be adapted and used by organizers of a thematic meeting.

Coordinating Committee, June 2013