Report on the 25th International Applied Geochemistry Symposium, Rovaniemi, Finland

Pertti Sarala ja Juhani V. Ojala
The 25th IAGS was held in Rovaniemi, Finland, in late August 2011 at the University of Lapland. This report summarises the organisation of the symposium, presents a demographic breakdown of the participants, summarises the finances of the meeting, and provides recommendations for organisers of future meetings.

The 25th IAGS technical session occupied 4 days between 22nd and 26th August 2011. The meeting was attended by 370 registrants, of whom 340 attended the technical program. Of these 340, 85 were AAG’s members, 42 (12 %) students, 94 (28 %) were from Finland, 156 (45 %) were from Europe, and 184 (55 %) were from Asia or overseas. 139 registrants attended five pre-symposium workshops and 14 one additional mid-symposium workshop (organized by ioGas), 175 attended the seven field excursion, and various registrants and their partners attended the five social events. Including the USD 10 000 (€ 6492.80) seed funding provided by AAG, and € 15 000 state aid provided by The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the symposium realised an excess of income (i.e. profit), after reimbursement of state aid, of € 35 698, of which € 26 773 has been returned to AAG. The event activity and demographic breakdown of registrants and the financial statement are attached.

Keywords
Symposium, applied geochemistry, final report

Geographical area
Finland, Lapland

Other information
Report serial
103/2012

Project code
4242006

Signature/name
Pertti Sarala, Senior Scientist (EurGeol)
Juhani V. Ojala, Senior Geologist
Content

Documentation page

REPORT 1-14

PUBLICATIONS 14
Summary

The 25th IAGS was held in Rovaniemi, Finland, in late August 2011 at the University of Lapland. This report summarises the organisation of the symposium, presents a demographic breakdown of the participants, summarises the finances of the meeting, and provides recommendations for organisers of future meetings.

The 25th IAGS technical session occupied 4 days between 22nd and 26th August 2011. The meeting was attended by 370 registrants, of whom 340 attended the technical program. Of these 340, 85 were AAG’s members, 42 (12 %) students, 94 (28 %) were from Finland, 156 (45 %) were from Europe, and 184 (55 %) were from Asia or overseas. 139 registrants attended five pre-symposium workshops and 14 one additional mid-symposium workshop (organized by ioGas), 175 attended the seven field excursion, and various registrants and their partners attended the five social events. Including the USD 10 000 (€ 6492.80) seed funding provided by AAG, and € 15 000 state aid provided by The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, the symposium realised an excess of income (i.e. profit), after reimbursement of state aid, of € 35 698, of which € 26 773 has been returned to AAG. The event activity and demographic breakdown of registrants and the financial statement are attached.

Conference Organisation

The conference was organised by the Finnish Association of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (VMY), the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK) and the University of Oulu together with the Rovaniemi-Lapland Congresses, a professional conference organiser (PCO). Local organizing committee (LOC) was corresponding of the technical program planning and coordination of the symposium.

The LOC comprised:

- **Co-chairmen**
  - Pertti Sarala, PhD, Senior Scientist, Geological Survey of Finland
  - V. Juhani Ojala, PhD, Chairman of the Division of Geology of Finnish Association of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (Store Norske Gull AS)

- **Committee members:**
  - Vesa Peuraniemi, Professor of Surficial Geology, University of Oulu
  - Eero Hanski, Professor of Geochemistry, University of Oulu
  - Esko Korkiakoski, PhD, Division Manager, Geological Survey of Finland
The general liability distribution of the symposium organisation was dealt as following: the Finnish Association of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers was responsible for finance, the Geological Survey of Finland and the University of Oulu together with LOC’s industry representatives were responsible for scientific, and PCO was responsible for the practical arrangements. LOC was also responsible for the coordination of the excursions and workshops including a part of their practical arrangements.

Any extra costs dealing with money transfers and accounts were avoided using the Finnish Association of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers as a responsible for the finance. Valued added tax (VAT 23 %) was included in the costs.

Following agreement from AAG in 2008 that Rovaniemi would host the 25th IAGS symposium, the LOC was convened from a mix of government, university and industry representatives. In addition to the seed funding of $US 10 000 from AAG, the LOC also secured a start up by the support of the Geological Survey of Finland. The LOC’s first tasks were to select a time, venue, potential theme and technical session outline, number of registrants, possible field excursions and workshops, and proposal of the social program. In evaluations the following criteria were used:

- Time: should be the best possible time considering weather, holiday seasons, hotel and venue reservations, for the excursions, and avoiding other conferences. Late August suits the best in this criterion in northern Finland.
- Venue: all activities on same place and floor for at least for 300 attendees, proximity to CBD and accommodations, reasonably costs. Of the four venues evaluated (Lappia Hall, University of Lapland, Arktikum, city hotels), the University of Lapland satisfied all criteria.
- Theme and technical sessions: must cover the main applied geochemistry activities in Finland and surrounding areas, should support each others, and should cover large field of applied geochemistry to make sure general interest. The compromise was ‘Towards sustainable geochemical exploration, mining and the environment’ supported by 22 proposed sessions.
- Registrants: ideal to get about 300 attendees from as many countries as possible and particularly from Europe and Russia, students number should be also high. The high number of registrants is also important to ensure breakthrough of the excursions and workshops. 340+30 was really a good number, more than expected.
- Field excursions and workshops: should support the theme and the session topics, should also cover the main fields of geochemical research in Finland, compact and short programs are ideal, and easy access from the venue or hotels would be a benefit.
- Social program: high quality, focus in local and Lappish culture through the program, near the venue or city centre (i.e. hotels), full program for the partners, too.

PCO (Rovaniemi-Lapland Congresses) was chosen based on their local knowledge, previous experience and their professionalism for organising similar kinds of meetings, and flexible way to plan and organise things. Rovaniemi-Lapland Congresses was both price-competitive, and had organised several national and international conferences (including geological conferences like biannual Fennoscandian Exploration and Mining Conference, held also in November 2011). The PCO was tasked with the following areas of responsibility by the LOC:

- Negotiating the final charges for the conference venue
- Negotiating charges etc for social events
- Transportation (e.g. for venue and social events)
- Workshop infrastructure
- Audiovisual infrastructure for the technical session
- Overseeing catering at the technical sessions
- Arranging booth layout and infrastructure etc for Trade Displays
- Mail outs and maintenance of a secure website for registration
- Registering delegates, including receipt of money for the meeting, field excursion, workshops, social events etc.

In very early phase, the graphic designer was chosen to design graphic layout for all the materials of the 25th IAGS (incl. flyer, poster, web pages, advertisements, layouts for publications etc.) and maintain the web pages. Ms. Irma Varrio was chosen for that. She also made layout of several symposium publications.
**Comment on Conference Organisation**

Important things are:

1) Key persons who are interested in organising the symposium and REALLY can engage for the whole process.

2) Have a professional conference organiser as a part of organising team. They have superior practical organising experience compared to typical scientists.

3) Have a professional graphic designer and web manager as a part of team.

4) Field excursions and workshop should have their own organising committees/teams

**Promotion**

The LOC instigated the following program for conference promotion:

- Printing and distribution of fliers (post card; 12.5 x 21 cm) notifying the conference dates, venue and theme distributed at various international and national geological meetings
- Personal e-mails through the LOC geoscience network.
- Continuous coverage of conference on the symposium website (www.iags2011.fi) opened on May 2009
- Links to the symposium website on AAG and organisers’ websites
- Promotional presentations in the 24th IAGS 2009, INQUA Peribaltic Working Group Meeting, several Finnish meetings
- 2-page second circular detailing registration and technical sessions, field excursions, workshops. Available online (pdf) and sent to AAG members
- One third to one page advertisements in various international and local geoscience organisation newsletters and journals (hard copy and online) - e.g. ELEMENTS, Explore, Geologi, Materia, Geofoorumi
- Posting of conference dates and themes etc. on national and international electronic bulletin boards (e.g. IUGS, Conference-service.com, GTK)

**Comment on Promotion**

The LOC considered that an integral part of promoting IAGS meetings is an informative and frequently-updated symposium website, preferably linked to other sites frequented by geochemistry professionals. Symposium website is an important advertising vehicle; however, our experience is that personal advertising in the form emails and hard-copies is still important. In addition, hard-copy advertisements in trade
journals, promotions at conferences with geochemical themes etc. are also important building up the visibility. This means that conference budgets must include amount for website maintenance, advertising, printing and postage.

PCO provided a significant amount of experience in the area of conference promotion, in terms of timing (i.e. when to send out information), content (what to send out), format (how to send it out), and method (i.e. hard copy versus email versus web advertising). Professional graphic designer ensures that layouts of promotional materials and website are high quality and uniform.

**Technical Program**

The symposium theme ‘Towards sustainable exploration, mining and the environment’ was chosen to cover a wide variety of applied geochemical interests globally and also to highlight the focus of activities in Finland and wider in Northern Europe. Four themes were raised to target session topics in four technical sessions’ days:

- Topic 1: Geochemical mapping, methods and history
- Topic 2: Data mining and geochemical exploration
- Topic 3: Geochemical research relating to ore deposits and mines
- Topic 4: Geochemistry in closed mine districts and environment

Under the themes, 22 technical sessions was proposed for the one A4-page abstract submission and 20 of them came through. 125 oral papers (including 6 keynote presentations) and 90 posters were presented at the symposium, from a total of 225 abstracts submitted. About 90% of submissions came well in the given schedule (31st March 2011) and ca 8% within one week after the deadline. The rest of submissions (incl. mainly keynotes and some abstracts for one of the special sessions) were done before the end of April. For acceptance process of the abstracts scientific board was formed consisting LOC and about 20 volunteer specialists all around the world concerning the oral sessions topics. Based on authors’ wishes and the scientific board proposals the final decision between the oral and poster presentations was done by the chairs of LOC (Pertti Sarala and Juhani Ojala). Noticing of the acceptance of the abstracts was delivered at the end of April 2011. To make sure that all the accepted abstracts will also to become presented, the confirmation with Early bird registration and payment was asked (at least one of the authors) at the end of May 2011.
Comment on Technical Program

Strict and clear deadlines were a benefit for the abstract submission and acceptance process. Use of commercial abstract submission and registration system by Oxford was a great thing and helped a lot to go through the whole process. Formation of the scientific board of LOC and volunteer specialists was an excellent idea and gave an opportunity to pass the acceptance process quickly and effective. All the abstracts went through the normal scientific review process where every abstracts had two reviewers. The number of abstracts per reviewer varied from three to eight depending on the interest of each session. For the biggest sessions four to five reviewers were chosen to share the number of abstracts per reviewer. Some editing of abstracts was necessary, particularly relating to the English of the abstracts. In some cases, it was necessary to refer the edited version to the authors.

Based on the guidelines of the earlier IAGS the abstract length was from two A4 pages to even extended abstracts (6-10 pages). Our experience was that people are not interested to write long abstracts nowadays. So, we decided to restrict the length no more than one A4 page. It was a good decision and could have been one reason to high number of the abstracts. The short abstracts gave also a good opportunity to save main part of the results to the manuscript of scientific paper like the IAGS Special volume in GEEA (at the beginning of February 2012 there were almost 20 paper submitted to GEEA). The program and the abstracts were published as printed book and as PDF version on web pages.

In spite of great number of the presentations, twenty sessions were clarified nicely during the four technical session days. Presentations were separated to three parallel sessions most of the time. A time of 15+5 minutes presentation was appropriate; chairmen and speakers were encouraged to ensure timeliness and most did. Mornings and mid-day keynotes were allowed 45 minutes, including questions. There were some late withdrawals from the program, and some no shows. Due to parallel sessions, a need for reserves drawn from the poster presenters was not needed.

Posters were shown in a main hall on the same floor as the auditoriums, close to registration desk, exhibition area and refreshment tables. Separate poster session was not able to arrange do to great number of oral presentation. However, the posters positioned physically between the site of the oral presentations and the venue for morning and afternoon coffees and lunch breaks gave good opportunity to presentations and discussions on the posters. All posters were displayed throughout the meeting.

The crew in the three auditoriums was composed of volunteers (mainly geoscience students or professionals) who were trained by the personnel of PCO. The crew was very engaged and interested in their
tasks. According to feedback from the presenters, audience and PCO, all arrangements went very well. Due to volunteer work, the cost was almost nothing.

**Sponsorship**

The original budget estimate of €15 000 for sponsorship was vastly exceeded, with sponsorship accounting for over €35 000 of the conference income. The following levels of sponsorship were offered:
- Platinum — €5 000 (3)
- Gold — €3 000 (6)
- Silver — €1 000 (3)
- Voluntary (0)

Other sponsorship opportunities included sponsorship of drinks at the conference social program.

**Comment on Sponsorship**

The LOC was responsible for the sponsor invitations. For mapping possible sponsors, the list of mining and exploration companies, software houses and commercial laboratories in Finland and surrounding region was composed. Some help was also got from the PCO. The list was divided up between the committee, who personally approached individuals or companies. The sponsorship opportunity was also mentioned in the IAGS web pages. Advertising flyer including sponsor categories and instructions was produced for help of contact making.

Any restrictions were not made for the sponsorships at any levels. Although, the given levels were quite reasonable, an interesting feature was that none of proposals for voluntary level didn’t come. That level was planned particularly for small companies to give opportunity to advert themselves with economy budget.

**Trade Displays**

Of the 17 booth spaces available 16 were subscribed, generating an income of more than €25 000 (more than €10 000 over budget). Booth position was on a first-come first-served basis, and PCO take of reservations.
Comment on trade booths

The trade display was organized in the main hall in the same area than coffees and other breaks were served. This arrangement was very good and it offered maximum exposure. Same type of the advertising flier than in the case of sponsorships was produced and delivered for potential companies by e-mails, personal contacts, letters and via web page. The flier included information of available booth categories and reservation instructions.

Workshops

Five workshops were offered, all before the meeting symposium. All of them gained sufficient support to be run, and totally 139 participants were registered. Topics of the workshops were choosen based on proposals the LOC got from the AAG members and some others. Governors of the workshops were also responsible of the arrangements and speaker invitations. Participation of the speakers to workshops was free, and two governors per workshop had also free conference dinner. The organizers arranged workshop material editing and printing based on speakers’ material. The LOC decided that it was important to get as much as possible participants and for that reason the registration fees where at very low level (€90-€120) including materials, coffees and lunch.

One mid-symposium workshop was added only some month before the beginning of the symposium as one software company wanted to give an opportunity for registrants to get latest information about their products. 14 people were participating on that.

Comment on Workshops

In the case of the 25th IAGS, the workshops were organised as a part of the program, although any income or costs were not counted in the budget. Low prices seemed to be good choise and brought a big number of participants. Also, the time for the workshops during one day after the pre-excursions but before the first symposium day was excellent.

The workshop organization based on the proposed topics and the volunteer governors worked well and helped the LOC a lot. To ensure that the workshop materials got ready in time prior to printing process, the LOC stated the deadline to be at the end of June, i.e. two and half month before the symposium. Main reason was to get materials ready before summer vacations on July.
Afterwards all the materials were added on web pages freely available. Before that, the authors were given a possibility to deny web publishing (only one was not published).

Field Excursions

Symposium location in Rovaniemi Central Lapland, near active mines and exploration projects, provided many field excursion options. Seven excursions were offered, all of them were organised, and four excursions were fully booked, with total of 171 participants.

Pre-conference Excursions
  - E1. Active and ongoing gold exploration and mining in Northern Finland (19 attendees)
  - E2 Care of mine districts and the environment after closure of mines (10 attendees)

Mid-conference Excursions
  - E3 Chrome and PGE deposits associated with the 2.45 Ga layered intrusions of Northern Finland (30 attendees)
  - E4 The Pyhä-Luosto Fell area and the Luosto Amethyst Mine (46 attendees)

Post-conference Excursions
  - E5 Geochemical and indicator mineral exploration methods and ongoing projects in the glaciated terrains in northern Finland (30 attendees)
  - E6 IOCG and Porphyry-Cu deposits in Northern Finland and Sweden (25 attendees)
  - E7 Geochemistry in Khibiny mountains and Monchegorsk, Kola Peninsula, Russia (11 attendees)

Comment on Field Excursions

Some excursions attracted early bookings, especially one day mid-symposium field trips. This was expected as IAGS symposiums are week long, and combining symposium with field excursions and workshops with travel takes three weeks. Little surprising was that the “Care of mine districts and the environment after closure of mines” was not as popular as was perceived from the discussions going on in the geological society. More mining and exploration oriented field trips were clearly more popular. High activity in the mining and exploration in the Fennoscandian Shield surely helped to sell the field trips. Also early planning based on field excursions organised in the past few years helped to tune the itineraries. If symposiums are planned to have a middle day without talks, based on our experience, even more one day trips could be organised.
Social Program

The 25th IAGS social program comprised:

- Get-together Party (Sunday 21st August) — included in registration cost (310 attendees)
- Welcome Reception (Monday 22nd August) — included in registration cost (343 attendees)
- Concert and Rovaniemi City Reception (Tuesday 23rd August) — included in registration cost (303 attendees)
- AAG Distinguished Lectures’ Night (Wednesday 24th August) — free to all, whether registered or not (203 attendees)
- Official Dinner (Thursday 25th August, Sky hotel Restaurant) — €90; 220 participants
- alternative to:
  - Sightseeing Tour, Mon 22nd Aug (17 attendees)
  - River Boat Trip, Tue 23rd Aug (22 attendees)
  - Ranua Wildlife Park, Wed 24th Aug (20 attendees)
  - Cruise on River Ferry Kemijoen Helmi, Wed 24th (Aug 32 attendees)
  - The Secret of the Antler, Thu 25th Aug (13 attendees)
  - Santa Claus Village, Fri 26th Aug (13 attendees)

Alternative social program was at the same time the Partners Program.

Comment on Social Program

Comments were only positive for all the social activities and the numbers of attendees great. Most of the activities were free and by this way we offered participation for everyone and maximized opportunity to make contacts. Monday Welcome Reception was at the same time “official” Trade show opening and that was good idea for the exhibitors. High quality performances highlighting local culture and history in good balance with general communication and discussions seemed to work fine and people enjoyed their stay in Rovaniemi. Feedback of the Partners program was excellent and most of the attendees were impressed of considering their demands (non-scientific topics).

Finances

The accompanying financial statement shows incurred incomes and costs for the symposium. Table 1 below is the summary of income and expenditure.
Table 1a. Summary of 25th IAGS 2011 income (€).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25th IAGS 2011 INCOME</th>
<th>á price €</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Total €</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAG member (before 31 May)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>€26,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAG member (after 1 June)</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>€7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitor (one incl. in booth price)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>€0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitor extra</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>€2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote speaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>€0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member (before 31 May)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>€57,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member (after 1 June)</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>€35,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>€0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>€0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student (before 31 May)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>€7,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student (after 1 June)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>€1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner registration (before 31 May)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>€2,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner registration (after 1 June)</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>€170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Paid registrations</strong></td>
<td><strong>363</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>€141,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Official dinner                            | 90        | 220          | €19,800   |
| Workshops                                  | 139       |              | €13,890   |
| Excursions                                 | 171       |              | €50,180   |
| Partner Programme                          | 117       |              | €5,748    |
| Exhibition fees                            | 14        |              | €33,000   |
| Other income                               |           |              | €40       |
| Sponsorships                               | 12        |              | €35,000   |
| Less Discounts                             |           |              | €11,198   |
| Plus Additional Charges (cancellation fees) |           |              | €4,194    |
| Less Bank Charges                          |           |              | €2,736    |
| **TOTAL**                                  | **€288,918** |              |           |

The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies aid €15,000  
AAG Seed money €6,493

**TOTAL INCOME** €310,411
Table 1b. Summary of 25th IAGS 2011 expenditure (€).

**EXPENDITURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic design, printing and promotion</td>
<td>9,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>4,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>36,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symposium assistants</td>
<td>1,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote speakers</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising costs</td>
<td>108,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>94,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>259,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reimbursement of The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies aid €15,000

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE** €274,714

**Excess of Income After Reimbursement** €35,698

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excess of Income After Reimbursement</th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VMY (share of excess income 25%)</td>
<td>8,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAG (share of excess income 75%)</td>
<td>26,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major source of the €35,698 profit realised from the symposium can be put down to the €20,000 above budget income from sponsorship income, from above expected number or participants in the symposium and fully booked field excursions and workshops.

**Summary and Recommendations**

During the symposium general feeling was that all arrangements went very well. We asked feedback from symposium participants and there were total of 75 respondents (before 27th Feb 2012). Their answers confirm the success of the symposium: 46 of the 75 respondents graded the symposium excellent (Table 2). The summary of the feedback is attached.
Table 2. Overall grade to the symposium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>grade</th>
<th>grade</th>
<th>pax</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous symposiums have come to similar conclusions as we did. Therefore it is important that these reports are made available to potential symposium organisers. Few important points:

- LOC composition: Service industry, and Mining and exploration industry personnel in the private sector are more likely to be regularly absent from planning meetings than government personnel, so it is necessary to ensure that the LOC has a stable membership to secure planning continuity and scientific quality, and a member from a professional conference organising company to answer the practical inquiries about the symposium.
- There are some regular international sponsoring companies for IAGS symposiums. To get other sponsors personal connections are important.
- AAG should inquire of its members about their opinion on the duration and cost (= value) of field excursions.
- The Rovaniemi LOC is unanimous in endorsing the use of a PCO, as few geoscience professionals are now allowed to or wish to commit the time or have the expertise to successfully organise a conference like IAGS. Private-sector geoscientists are under increasing scrutiny, as are government and academic geoscientists. PCO have superior knowledge of important details organising this kind of occasions.
- The value of PCO cannot be overstated. Excellent feedback from participants clearly shows this. They anticipate issues long before they can become issues. After all that is their job. When things go wrong, they are there to put them right. They know exactly who to contact, how and when. The difference between a well run, successful conference and a debacle probably lies these days in the hands of professional organisers.
- Sponsorship and trade display opportunities from an early stage is seen as necessary in securing a good financial outcome for the conference.
- In terms of a conference budget, sponsorships are significant factor in determining the nature of the bottom line. The level of sponsorship, and the number of delegates are the main contributors to the financial outcome of the conference, yet the most difficult to forecast.
In terms of venue, the LOC believes that sitting the meeting close to the city centre (infrastructure advantage) in an area of varied accommodation options means less inconvenience for registrants, and is attractive to a wider range of potential registrants.

For the particular venue, having everything on the same floor is essential the PCO indicates registrants are loath to travel even one floor to see posters or trade displays. It is also essential that the interaction of registrants at morning/afternoon coffee breaks and lunches is held in, or near, the trade display and poster area, to maximise exposure.

Social events should, if possible, take advantage of the host country’s culture, and be priced at a level to ensure a memorable time, but not at a cost that is prohibitive.

The format of a day free in the middle of the conference has its supporters. However, the organised program for during the middle day was also very popular.

AAG should review the list of registrants to ensure that all those who paid the non-members surcharge have indeed been given free membership to AAG for a one year.

We did not think about sponsoring delegates from the third world countries at the time of the budget planning. Retrospectively, it would have been a small item to reserve some sponsor money into the budget for this purpose. In addition, AAG Council might like to consider a scheme of financial assistance or reduced registration fees for such people.

PUBLICATIONS


