



## World Social Science Forum 2012 Call for Proposals

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### 1. Introduction

In terms of its 2007 – 2010 Action Agenda, the ISSC held the first in a planned series of World Social Science Fora in Bergen, Norway, from 10-12 May 2009.

The series is aimed at showcasing and demonstrating the relevance of the Social Sciences in meeting the challenges of today's world, and providing the forum for an ongoing exchange of ideas across the boundaries of disciplines and regions, and between the social and natural and human sciences. Quality of discussion is to be assured by convening not only the leading scholars in their fields, but also younger scholars of exceptional promise.

A survey of participants at the 2009 event suggests that the experience of the first WSSF was overwhelmingly positive, and various valuable suggestions have been made about how to make the second WSSF even better.

### 2. The call for proposals to host the 2012 WSSF

Against this background of a very successful first WSSF, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) now invites proposals from ISSC member and partner organizations to host and co-organise the next World Social Science Forum (WSSF), to be held in 2012. The structure and format of this event, overall programme principles and organisational guidelines used, facilities and services provided, as well as funds raised, comprise a set of expectations that hosting organizations are asked to address in their proposal to host the next WSSF. These expectations are set out in points 1 to 5 below.

The criteria that the ISSC's Executive Committee (EC) will use to assess competing bids for WSSF 2012 are as follows:

- ⇒ Quality of the thematic proposal; international, inter-disciplinary, comparative relevance of the proposed theme
- ⇒ Organisational capacity and track record of the host and/or consortium of local/regional partners in organising similar events

- ⇒ Experience of the host and/or consortium in networking and creating opportunities for the involvement of scientists – also from the natural and human sciences – in the WSSF
- ⇒ Strength of the national/regional research community in supporting the host and/or consortium; evidence of their potential engagement in the Forum
- ⇒ Indication of financial commitments by the host and/or members of the consortium, as well as fundraising prospects nationally, regionally and internationally
- ⇒ Appeal and accessibility of the proposed location; no barriers to involvement of scholars of whatever nationality or background
- ⇒ Level and scale of facilities and services offered

### **3. Thematic Focus and Programme Principles**

The principles underlying the design of the 2009 WSSF programme remain relevant and should determine the programme of the 2012 event. They are as follows:

- Topics should be interdisciplinary and give proof of how different fields can provide complementary insights;
- Some sessions should show how the social, behavioural and economic sciences are engaging with both the humanities and the natural sciences;
- The empirical orientation should be broadly comparative, aimed at using cross-national data, historical diversity and the impacts of institutional variation to gain insight;
- The Forum should demonstrate the relevance of social research for public policies and social interventions;
- The issues addressed should have a broad public interest across countries and cultures and should encompass major current issues such as development or climate change;
- The questions raised, approaches used and research presented should be scholarly, innovative and original, designed to re-examine established views by means of critical study and to contribute to generalizable knowledge;
- The Forum should aim to bring together prominent scholars and central actors from the global research community, but also strive to ensure participation from minorities, as well as countries with weaker research systems;

- The Forum should have an overall “Conference Theme”. For the 2009 WSSF the theme was “One Planet – Worlds Apart”, which is elaborated on at <http://www.rokkan.uib.no/wssf/files/OnePlanet-WorldsApart.pdf>. Potential hosts for the 2012 Forum are invited to submit a theme proposal for discussion with and approval by the ISSC. The proposal should seek an appropriate link with the “One Planet – Worlds Apart” theme of the 2009 WSSF so as to ensure some thematic continuity between the events.
- The Forum should link with the preparation of the ISSC’s second *World Social Science Report (WSSR)* so that contributions at the Forum can be modified for inclusion in the WSSR. The second WSSR should be published before 2014; the first is expected to be published early in 2010.

#### **4. Format and Organisational Guidelines**

For details about the overall structure of the 2009 WSSF, see <http://www.rokkan.uib.no/wssf/files/schedule.pdf>

Excluding side events, the Forum should comprise at least two and a half days and preferably no more than three days.

##### *Plenary and Parallel Sessions*

Plenary and parallel sessions should comprise the core of the WSSF. For both types of sessions, sufficient time should be made available for presentations and discussions. In the case of plenaries, it would be preferable to allow at least 30-40 minutes for each keynote address, and for parallel sessions, at least 20-30 minutes per speaker.

Plenary sessions should ideally focus on one keynote address and include a discussant. Parallel sessions may or may not include discussants/rapporteurs.

In order to safeguard the highest quality of sessions, all speakers and discussants involved in the 2009 WSSF were pre-selected and invited by the Organising Committee (OC) and/or Session Organisers to participate. No open call for papers was issued for purposes of putting together the Bergen programme. Proposals to issue such a call should be motivated.

ISSC members should be invited to submit ideas for plenary and parallel sessions. All session proposals (including a description of the theme/topic and a proposed list of speakers) should be submitted for approval to the Organising Committee (or a core group, including the ISSC President or his/her delegate) before speakers are formally invited.

### *Special Sessions*

The WSSF programme should include at least two special sessions, dedicated to the award of ISSC Prizes: the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Research and Foundation Mattei Dogan Prize for Inter-disciplinarity. In each case prize winners are expected to give a lecture of at least 20-30 minutes. The costs of these sessions – excluding prize money, including travel and accommodation costs of the prize winner and jury chairs – should be covered by the WSSF budget.

Other special sessions to be proposed should meet the basic programme principles as set out above.

### *Poster Sessions*

Poster sessions were used at the 2009 WSSF primarily to stimulate the participation of PhD students and early career scientists in the Forum. Poster sessions can also be used instead of an open call for papers to ensure more inclusivity and provide possibilities for scholars to secure financial support from their home institutions. Alternative mechanisms can be proposed.

### *Scholarships*

The ISSC raised resources to make available a number of scholarships that were used to support the participation of PhD students and early career scientists from developing countries in the WSSF. Candidates were nominated by ISSC member associations. Applications submitted directly were also considered. Successful candidates were required to participate in the poster session. The ISSC would welcome a stronger emphasis on mechanisms aimed at facilitating the participation of early career scientists.

### *Side Events*

Side events include meetings (e.g. Executive Committee or Board meetings) and workshops of ISSC member associations/organizations and other partners, including UNESCO. They should be held in the margins of the Forum, preferably a day or two before and after the Forum. These events help to secure a WSSF audience and can usefully serve to bring a range of different stakeholders to the event. To encourage members/partners to hold side events, meeting venues should preferably be made available to organizers of such events free of charge.

### *Exhibitions*

The ISSC would like to see the WSSF provide an interesting platform for publishers, professional bodies and others to disseminate social science publications and information sources. Exhibitors were not charged for exhibition facilities at the 2009 WSSF; depending on interest and demand, exhibition space and facilities could in future be charged for. A strategy for securing sufficient demand would be welcome.

### *Access and continuity*

ISSC wishes to develop innovative ways of making the proceedings, discussions and content of the 2012 Forum available to a wider audience than those who are physically present, using IT and virtual networking methodologies.

## **5. Required Facilities, Services and Logistics**

### *Numbers*

The 2009 WSSF attracted almost 800 participants. It is hoped that 1000 or more will participate in the next Forum.

### *Venue*

The forum venue is conceived of as rotating regionally across the Regions represented within the ISSC. Thus, since WSSF 1 was held in Norway, the second WSSF should be held outside of Europe.

A “conference venue” with adequate space to cater for parallel sessions and side events under one roof would be ideal: It facilitates the ease/speed of getting from one session to the next and often the fees charged include technical and catering services. Having the Forum take place in one building also promotes more active networking amongst participants.

### *Equipment and other facilities*

All session/meeting rooms should be equipped for power point presentations and, if possible, internet access. Free WiFi services and an equipped conference office would be appreciated. A room for welcoming keynote speakers and other guests can be useful.

The full-time availability of an adequately staffed technical support team would be necessary.

### *Recording*

All of the WSSF 2009 sessions were recorded and audio files will be made available on the ISSC website. Audiovisual recordings would be preferable.

### *Translations*

The WSSF 2009 budget did not make it possible to offer any translation services. A small number of speakers did, however, request such services. If budgets allow, simultaneous translation would be ideal.

### *Travel and Accommodation arrangements*

The travel and accommodation costs of all speakers, discussants and session chairs involved in the 2009 WSSF were covered within the WSSF budget. A professional conference bureau was contracted to handle these arrangements, including reimbursement processes. Business class flights were issued only in very exceptional circumstances.

Similar arrangements would be expected for the 2012 WSSF.

### *Transportation*

Depending on the venue chosen, transportation to and from airports and between hotels and the conference venue would have to be arranged.

### *Catering*

The WSSF should include a dinner/banquet for all participants. Refreshments and lunches should be provided throughout the event.

### *Information and Communications*

A dedicated WSSF website, which could be used also for the registration process, will have to be designed and maintained. Proposers are invited to submit ideas for additional ways of disseminating WSSF information before, during and after the Forum itself.

## **6. Funding**

The 2009 WSSF operational budget amounted to some € 1,1 million, with “in kind” payments augmenting this total, mostly in the form of ISSC member and partner bodies directly financing the costs of speakers

The main sources of income were as follows:

- Norwegian Government
- ISSC member and partner organisations
- Norwegian Research Council and other scientific organizations based in Norway
- University of Bergen
- Registration Fees

Main cost items comprising the 2009 WSSF budget included:

- Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for all speakers, chairs/moderators, discussants
- Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for special guests, ISSC EC and staff
- Scholarships

- Venue rental
- Catering and entertainment
- Conference Bureau / Travel Agency
- Personnel and Overhead Costs: Bergen and ISSC Secretariats
- Organising Committee Meetings, and Fundraising costs
- Communications, including website, publications, recordings, etc.

A preliminary budget for the 2012 WSSF should make provision for these cost items and should be calculated on the basis of an anticipated participation rate of 1000 scholars.

Proposers are invited to discuss details of ISSC's role in fundraising for the 2012 WSSF, as well as anticipated costs for the ISSC Secretariat, directly with the ISSC Secretary-General.

The WSSF budget should be managed by the WSSF host, who would be expected also to manage payment and reimbursement processes, as well as undertake financial reporting to sponsors. The ISSC and the hosting organisation would sign a separate agreement to determine what actions to take with regard to potential losses incurred or profits made.

## **7. Governance**

Proposers are asked to provide information on the systems and structures they would envisage putting in place to organize the 2012 WSSF. The ISSC EC – represented by its President and Secretary-General – would expect to be members of a local organizing committee, and would co-chair the group in charge of defining and developing the substantive programme, i.e. themes and speakers (e.g. programme committee or core group of the organizing committee).

The ISSC would sign an agreement with the host of the 2012 WSSF to determine the exact roles and responsibilities of the ISSC and the hosting organisation. The ISSC EC would be asked to approve a number of key policy decisions regarding the overall theme, choice of keynote plenary speakers, registration fee rates, etc. These decisions would have to be made also on the basis of structured consultation with all ISSC members. The host would be required to participate in such consultations, e.g. by attending the 2010 ISSC General Assembly meeting.