

Planning and Conducting a SETAC Seminar or Symposium Standard Operating Procedures

The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) sponsors several types of events to bring together scientists from business (both services and manufacturing), academia, government, non-profit organizations, and public interest groups for the purpose of prompting *Environmental Quality through Science*[®]. The [SETAC sponsored events matrix](#) distinguishes the differences in event types and their scope. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the process used for proposing, planning, and conducting a SETAC Seminar or Symposium. Organizations wishing to co-organize a SETAC Seminar must meet all applicable requirements. Any additional or alternative requirements of collaborating organizations must be negotiated with the applicable SETAC governing body.

Section I: SETAC Seminar: Components and Criteria

SETAC Seminars are typically 1-2 day meetings with entirely invited speakers/participants (typically 8-20) that are open to attendees (typically 50-150). Attendees may be required to register but are seldom charged fees. SETAC symposia have been very successfully organized in conjunction with scheduled meetings organized by SETAC and by other organizations.

The long-term objectives of SETAC Seminars are to:

- Promote understanding of an environmental issue that could be global or geographic in scope.
- Promote understanding of current acceptable best science and practices on a particular issue to increase acceptance and utility.
- Enhance understanding and collaboration between the SETAC membership sectors (i.e., business, government, and academia) on a particular topic, as appropriate.

These objectives are accomplished by adhering to the following standards:

- Ensuring the Organizing Committee and all invited speakers are balanced among industry, academia, and government.
- Getting endorsement of the appropriate SETAC global or geographic unit governing body.
- Summarizing the proceedings of the seminar quickly and to a wide audience of environmental scientists and managers, the public, and seminar sponsors so they can benefit from the seminar.

Criteria that a SETAC Seminar should meet:

1. Proposed seminar is consistent with SETAC goals.
2. Seminar topic is recognized as being an important and timely environmental issue by the relevant science committee and governing body, and is expected to be of interest to the environmental community.

3. Seminar objectives are clearly identified and the seminar designed so that the topic can be addressed within the time frame of the seminar.
4. Organizing Committee members must be current SETAC members representative of tripartite sectors.
5. Members of the Organizing Committee must include recognized subject matter experts.
6. Participants (including invited speakers) represent a diverse group of individuals including, when possible, academia, government, business, and other non-government organizations.
7. Participants represent a diverse group of countries if seminar is regional or international if seminar is global.
8. Participants must represent geographic, gender, and career-level diversity.
9. The potential for conflict of interest of participants does not exist or is acceptably resolved.

Section II: Planning and Conducting a SETAC Seminar

This section provides a description of the various steps involved in proposing, planning, and conducting a SETAC Seminar. These steps include: developing the topic, preparing the proposal, securing SETAC approval, planning the seminar, carrying out the seminar, and publishing the seminar proceedings.

Step 1. Developing the SETAC Seminar: Topic and Oversight

Any SETAC member can propose a SETAC seminar. Oversight of SETAC seminars varies depending on scope. Global SETAC seminars are governed by the SETAC World Council (SWC) while various geographic units sponsor seminars through their governing bodies. Governing body may elect to rely on technical reviewers for recommendations regarding the topic of the seminar. Likewise, a governing body may elect to request assistance from a SETAC office for administrative purposes. Oversight should be determined by conversations with the governing body early in the proposal stage to streamline the process.

Seminar proponents will identify a pertinent issue or environmental topic to serve as a focal point for the proposed seminar and form a tentative Organizing Committee, which should include at least one SETAC office staff member (typically the scientific officer) as an *ad hoc* member. The Organizing Committee will develop a proposal that clearly describes the topic, seminar objectives, organizing committee members, intended speaker expertise, targeted participants, a cost estimate and potential funding sources, and declare any conflicts of interest.

The appropriate SETAC governing body and/or the SETAC office is contacted for advice on seminar organization, input on tentative dates and location, budgetary considerations, etc. The proposal should contain sufficient detail to enable an initial screening review based on the aforementioned criteria by the appropriate SETAC governing body.

The proposal is reviewed within 30 days. If the SETAC governing body feels that the proposal meets the criteria sufficiently, it will approve the seminar in principle and request the preparation of a definitive planning document.

Step 2. Formal Approval

The planning document will be the Organizing Committee's blueprint for the seminar. It builds upon the preliminary proposal with additional detail, and will be used as a benchmark for progress during the planning process. The information described in Step 3 (below) should be included in the planning document.

As above, the planning document is initially reviewed by the appropriate governing body, which may elect to rely on guidance from a technical review team, and judged using the seminar components and criteria. The SETAC governing body has final authority in approving or disapproving the seminar.

Step 3. Planning the Seminar

After initial approval, the Organizing Committee will initiate the planning process cooperatively with the governing SETAC body and/ or the SETAC office. Listed below are guidelines and recommendations that are required in the planning process.

- A. Final Seminar Organizing Committee formation. The committee will be responsible for organizing the seminar, conducting the seminar, and ensuring that the seminar outputs are completed and distributed. The composition of the committee should be based on the seminar objectives. However, to be consistent with SETAC goals, the committee should contain diverse representation from government, business, academia, and other relevant groups.
- B. Final program development. One of the responsibilities of the Seminar Organizing Committee is to develop a specific program for the seminar. Although details will vary depending on the seminar objectives, generally the format will include a series of invited talks that could be followed with a panel discussion. Frequently, the formal presentations are documented and distributed prior to the seminar, while the discussions are documented during the seminar by members of the Organizing Committee. Translation and interpretation services are secured if deemed appropriate.
- C. Acquisition of financial assistance. It is the responsibility of the Organizing Committee to consult the SETAC governing body and / or office regarding the targeted fundraising goal and secure adequate funding for the seminar. It is the responsibility of SETAC to develop the final budget for the seminar. All formal letters of fund solicitation are mailed from a SETAC governing body, but Organizing Committee members must make advanced inquiries and identify specific individuals in different governmental agencies, companies, trade associations, etc. that may be financial contributors to the seminar. Financial support will not guarantee an invitation to present at the seminar (see D. below). While the specific cost of a given seminar will vary, it is important that sufficient funding 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 governing body will grant final approval for the seminar. Usual cost considerations include:

- Travel costs, *per diem* costs, registration waivers for Organizing Committee and invited speakers
- Location costs for the seminar meeting room(s)
- Audio/visual equipment costs
- Translation and interpretation services and equipment costs, where appropriate
- Staff support for ensuring a quality seminar and to work out logistical arrangements

D. Invitation of seminar participants. The Organizing Committee is also responsible for identifying and inviting a diverse panel of seminar speakers and participants. The expertise of the individuals invited to participate in a seminar should reflect the seminar's purpose and objectives. Considerations for participant selection include:

- Technical expertise that is relevant to the topic of the seminar
- Balance among government, business, academia, and other public interest groups
- Willingness to participate in the seminar
- Willingness and ability to appraise alternative ways of addressing the seminar topic
- Ability to set aside parent affiliations agenda(s) and participate as an individual expert seminar member

E. Management of seminar logistics. All logistics for SETAC Seminar are handled by the appropriate SETAC governing body. The objective is to assist the Organizing Committee in planning the seminar; to secure a comfortable, but productive setting for the seminar; and to provide participants onsite support as needed.

Section II: Communication of Seminar Topic

There are a variety of possible publications that can be prepared **ahead of a SETAC seminar** to prime the attendees for discussion such as [SETAC Technical Information Papers \(TIPs\)](#), webinars, and Virtual Issues – An online compilation of journal articles from both IEAM and ET&C on a specific topic of interest that can be made open access for a specified length of time.

There are also a number of possible publications that can **arise from a SETAC seminar** including: an article for the SETAC Globe, a poster at a SETAC annual meeting, a summary of proceedings and a press release. At minimum, a SETAC Globe article is required for each seminar. The Globe article should inform the membership about the purpose and main outcomes of the seminar. It should include the date and location of the seminar, the number of invited speakers, the number of participants, the demographics of the group, the members of the organizing committee, the objectives of the seminar, a brief overview of proceedings, and a summary of conclusions and future needs.

Seminar Planning Schedule

Timeline for planning, funding, scheduling, conducting, and communicating:

Timeline	Objective
	Proposal drafted and presented to the appropriate governing body and/or science committee
	If approved, recurring organizing committee planning meeting initiated
1 month after proposal approved	Planning document submitted to the appropriate governing body and/or science committee
	Logistic planned (venue, date, time, catering, AV equipment, translations services, etc.)
	Invitations sent to prospective speakers
	Seminar Program finalized. Marketing material prepared (brochures, SETAC News notices, etc.)
	Invitations sent to prospective attendees. Registration opens
1 month after seminar	A SETAC Globe article is prepared

Suggested Proposal Outline

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

SETAC_Seminar_topic_Proposal

Following is a suggested proposal outline:

- Topic: Description and justification
- Objectives
- Organizing Committee: List names, affiliations, email addresses, sector, and SETAC affiliation (if any)
- Logistics: Meeting the seminar is planned to coincide with, length of seminar (half day or full day) and potential timing (before or after the meeting)
- Funding goal and potential funding sponsors
- Attachment I: Anticipated range and affiliations and number of participants (for proposal) or participants list with listing names, affiliations, email addresses, sector, SETAC affiliation (only for planning document)
- Attachment II: Seminar program (only for planning document)