



Call for proposals for the hosting of the African Language Association of Southern Africa (ALASA) conference: 2024

Guidelines for the hosting of the ALASA conference

The ALASA conference is convened annually (date to be determined by the host/s in consultation with ALASA Board), preferably at a different university each year. It is organised by a Local Organising Committee (LOC) on behalf of the Association, supported by Regional Coordinators who are also ALASA Board members.

This document is intended to provide guidelines for the planning and organisation of the conference, and thus gives guidance to any hosting institution.

Conference proposal

In the year prior to the Annual Conference, the Association solicits from its members an expression of interest to host or co-host the conference. Upon expression of interest, the Board will request the potential host to submit a proposal along with a budget for review. The proposal should specify the conference theme aligned to the Association's objectives. The following information may be included in the proposal:

- The proposed date (Preferably around July)
- Proposed theme of the conference.
- Letter of support from the hosting University's Executive Management (DVC /VC).
- Conference venue (e.g., university campus or conference centre) and its facilities.
- Information on the proximity of the conference venue to hotels and other accommodation.
- Proposed format of the conference - e.g., virtual and/or in-person, rough schedule, number of parallel sessions, recommended keynote speakers and any special features of the programme;
- Proposed conference registration fees.



Conference support

It remains the responsibility of the host and the hosting institution/s to (co-) fund the conference, based on proposed registration fees or other sources of funding (i.e., sponsorship) to cover all the running costs of the conference. The budget meant to support the conference should include realistic provisional estimates of all conference costs.

Expected participants

Academics, researchers, and students who have an interest in African languages, language in education, linguistics, applied linguistics, language practice, forensic linguistics, human language technology etc. should be encouraged to participate.

Proposed structure of the conference

It is envisaged that the conference will run over three to four full days, starting with a welcome reception, book launches (if any), followed by a keynote address on the first day. The conference should include three to four keynote talks. Nomination and selection of keynote speakers should be proposed by the host/s in consultation with the Board. Also, the host/s should be keen to support gender equality in their selection and recommendation of keynote speakers.

Apart from keynote talks, the talks could consist of symposia or workshops and regular sessions. Regular sessions are organised in sets of parallel sessions, consisting of 25-minute talk slots (20-minute presentation, 5 minutes for questions). The regular sessions will consist of individual submitted talks organised as much as possible into thematically coherent sessions.

The program should also consider:

- Final planning meeting (between the host/s and the Board) to tie up the loose ends (usually one or two months before and a further one, a day before the full conference begins). This is needed to view the venues and to review and discuss the progress of the conference plans and budget.
- A conference gala dinner (ideally in some interesting venue, usually on the evening before the last day of the conference), award ceremony, platform for sponsors to pledge future sponsorship.

The program of the conference is decided jointly (by the host/s and the Board), noting the above recommendations.



The host city/university

Optimal locations for the ALASA conference are relatively central places that are easily accessible by public transport, and that have suitable university facilities or conference centres, and which can offer a range of adequate accommodation with sufficient capacity to cater for the conference participants without strain.

The conference venue

An appropriate conference centre or university buildings in very close proximity to each other, should be made available by the host/s which could include but are not limited to:

- A lecture hall for the plenary capable of seating between 150 – 200 participants.
- Four to five lecture rooms with minimum capacity for 50 participants for parallel talk sessions.
- A poster display area with boards and sufficient space for display with ample room for circulation between them, and access to refreshments.
- Open space for conference registration and helps desk, for publishers, and for informal conversation and relaxation.
- Access to Wi-Fi (with password).
- Catering facilities in or adjacent to the other spaces, sufficient at least for coffee breaks, and ideally for lunch as well.
- The lecture rooms must be equipped with good quality data projectors, and audio facilities.
- Arrangements and support for getting standard format digital presentations (e.g., Power point or Keynote) loaded onto data projector computers between sessions.

Responsibilities of the hosts/ organising committee

Once a conference has been agreed between the host/s and the Board, the LOC will typically participate in two or three preparatory meetings and continue to consult via E-mail, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom or MS Teams. The LOC will consult with the Board as and when the need arises. As standard practice, the LOC takes full responsibility to organise and manage the conference, and will not outsource the function to a commercial agency. Some of the responsibilities will include but are not limited to the establishment of sub-committees such as: Scientific, Admin and Marketing subcommittees. Such structuring is bound to work towards the delivery of a successful conference.



Conference fees

As part of the proposal to host the conference, the LOC will consult with the Board with a view to determine the conference registration fee and related costs.

Costs to be budgeted

In addition to food supplies, the following items carry costs:

- Conference venues.
- Design of the programme.
- Book of abstracts.
- Honorarium for keynote speakers, traveling and accommodation.
- Welcome reception.
- Book launches
- IT facilities.

Financial responsibility and reporting

After the conference, a detailed income and expenditure statement along with a narrative report should be presented to the Board at a formal meeting. If profits were derived from the conference, the Board should offer guidance on the retention and future use of those funds. The same information should be made available to future organising committees in order to assist them to plan their budgets.

Timeline

The following is a proposed schedule, meant to deliver a successful conference:

- 12 months before the conference: The website for the conference goes live. Further advertising could be handled through the mailing list.
- 9 - 10 months before the conference: delegates are invited to submit abstracts/ posters/ proposals, based on a conference theme, for consideration. Submission of symposia/workshops are also encouraged.



- 7 months before the conference, the organising committee, having evaluated the abstracts for oral presentations/posters and proposals for symposia/workshops begin to inform prospective attendees of the success or rejection of their submissions.
- 6 months before the conference: registration begins, and payment of conference fees/registration is administered.
- 3 months before the conference: a draft programme is compiled and shared with prospective attendees for correctness.
- 1 month before the conference: a programme is finalised and soft copies are shared with prospective attendees.
- 2 weeks before the conference: a summary of the programme is printed and is ready for distribution at the conference.
- At the conference, a printed programme is shared with delegates. An electronic programme is also made available to cater for cancellations and amendments

Important dates

- Deadline for submission of **Expressions of Interest and longer proposal can be submitted at a later stage.: 22 September 2023**. Please address your submission to the General Secretary of the Board: Dr Hleze Kunju: hlezekunju@gmail.com.
- For further information, contact the Chairperson of the Board: Dr Elias Maletse: maletseEN@ufs.ac.za
- Evaluation of Expressions of Interest: **25 September 2023**
- Notification of bidders regarding the outcome of their Expressions of Interest: **27 September 2023 (during the 2023 conference gala dinner)**.