

The ISPRS Foundation (TIF)
Grants Evaluation Committee (GEC)

Guidelines for the Assessment of Applications for Travel Grants

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Since the XXIV ISPRS Congress in Nice in 2022, TIF. has made awards of travel grants for more than ten events, totaling around \$110,000. Nevertheless, the process has been more difficult than it might have been, because there are no clear guidelines. This document is an attempt to develop such guidelines.

Guidance from TIF

According to the TIF website (<https://www.isprs.org/foundation/foundation/goals.aspx>), “To achieve its Mission the goals of TIF are defined in 12 specific Categories for Grants and Donations.” The 12th Category is travel grants and the following detail is provided: “Travel Grants - to enable young authors, distinguished speakers, and officially designated Delegates, especially from developing countries, to participate in ISPRS sponsored events and in forums promoting international cooperation, advancements and benefits of the P&RS&SI sciences.”

Nomenclature

In view of the above reference to “developing countries” on the TIF website, these guidelines must necessarily refer to countries that are less prosperous than others. It is not the role of GEC to define these countries or develop appropriate terminology. To avoid errors in political correctness and to save time, we will use the term “low-income countries” and will bear in mind lists of countries such as those from the United Nations^{1,2}, IZA³ and OECD⁴.

Guidelines for the assessment of applications for travel grants

The following guidelines are proposed, based on the definition given above plus the practice of GEC over the years. They are neither complete nor final and readers are warmly invited to make inputs. They are to be considered as overall criteria: we understand that TIF must be flexible and that there may be some candidates (outstanding candidate, or good to have such a person at the

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/ldcs-at-a-glance.html>

² <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24reporten.pdf>, pp288 et seq.

³ <https://g2lm-lic.iza.org/list-of-low-income-countries-2022/>

⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/oda-eligibility-and-conditions/dac-list-of-oda-recipients.html>

event, etc.) for whom TIF may make exceptions to all these overall guidelines. They are not binding, nor are they statutes, bylaws or terms of reference; they are simply an aid to making difficult decisions. They are numbered for ease of reference, but these numbers do not imply any sort of ordering or priority.

GEC always seeks consensus with respect to its decisions, especially in cases of exceptions.

GEC, TIF and event organizers

1. GEC must receive critical information from the event organizers about applicants in a timely fashion. The information must be supplied two or three weeks before GEC's decisions are required. The committee needs to know the following:
 - Full paper or abstract received?
 - Accepted or rejected for presentation at the conference?
 - If accepted, will it be an oral or poster presentation?
 - Has the paper been accepted or rejected for publication?
 - If accepted, is it *Archives* or *Annals*?
 - What were the grade(s) given by the reviewer(s) of the paper?GEC can facilitate the process by requesting the information from the event organizers *only for the applicants*, i.e. GEC does not want information about event attendees who are not applicants.
2. Members of GEC should not have to receive and process emails from applicants seeking information about their applications in order to apply for visas, book flights etc. TIF should shield GEC from this. GEC will work as fast as it can after it receives the critical information from the event organizers. GEC and TIF must avoid involvement in the visa process.

Assessing the applications

3. We prefer to award travel grants to postgraduate students and early-career professionals, rather than persons already well established in their careers. We do not make awards to undergraduates.
4. We do not award travel grants to applicants who do not submit papers.
5. We do not award travel grants to applicants whose applications are incomplete. In particular, applicants who cannot produce a document from the conference organizers confirming receipt of the abstract or paper are usually rejected. Similarly, a letter of support from a supervisor or manager is required. These supporting documents can be uploaded during the online application process.
6. We prefer to award travel grants to applicants from low-income countries. We understand, however, that there are exceptional papers by authors from rich countries who may not find any financial support. We are willing to award travel grants to such applicants, but will ensure that the great majority of the funds goes to applicants from low-income countries.
7. We like to favor applicants who find additional support, from their universities or other grant-awarding bodies.
8. We take into account the amount requested by each applicant for registration, travel, subsistence etc. We often reject applications where the request is unreasonably high, and we

favor applicants who are clearly trying to save money. The information provided on the application form should make clear how the costs are estimated.

9. We try not to award travel grants in excess of \$2000 (US dollars), but this is not a hard and fast rule, because some applicants simply cannot avoid high travel costs.

The submitted paper

10. We do not award travel grants to applicants whose papers have been rejected by the event organizers.
11. We prefer to award travel grants to applicants whose papers have been selected for oral presentation by the event organizers.
12. We take into account the grades given to the papers of applicants by reviewers for the *Archives* or *Annals*.
13. An applicant selected to give an oral presentation is preferable to an applicant selected to give a poster presentation, but we realize that we must award grants to some applicants in both of these categories – we cannot exclude poster presenters in order to give all travel grants to oral presenters.
14. Similarly, an applicant whose paper has been accepted for the *Annals* is preferable to an applicant whose paper or abstract has been accepted for the *Archives*, but we realize that we must award grants to some applicants in both categories.
15. We understand that there is a trend towards presenters who do not submit a full paper for publication, because their publication plans do not include the *Annals* or *Archives*. We have not discussed how to manage this in terms of travel grants and do not make travel grants to such applicants at present.

Gender, geography, frequency, ISPRS membership

16. We try to have an overall balance with respect to gender and geographical distribution of awardees.
17. For events held in a region that is under-represented in ISPRS, we try to give priority to applicants from the region.
18. We award no more than one travel grant to an applicant in a four-year ISPRS cycle, i.e. the period between two successive congresses.
19. When applicants appear to be of equal merit, we try to give preference to those who have made the effort to become ISPRS members, or whose institutional affiliation is an ISPRS member.