Activities related to the organization of scientific congresses and their software support:

Every software program is created to support some kind of human activity. Familiarity with the activity is crucial to its successful implementation. Let's make a quick overview of the activities involved in the organization of a scientific congress before being familiarized with SCS Conference.

PREPARATION PERIOD

Registration of potential participants interested in the event.

At the time the idea of a scientific congress is incepted, are also determined the forms of its distribution to potential participants. This may include advertisements in specialized scientific press, direct invitations to prominent representatives of particular fields or, as it happens more and more often these days, using the worldwide network – the Internet.
Regardless of the way the information of the event is distributed, it may also contain an Internet address where anyone could register for eventual participation in the congress. That is actually the first step towards the automation of the organizational activities using SCS Conference. SCS Conference, however, does not stop at that point. The software allows participants to perform all activities required for their registration from a distance, starting with the filling in of the participant's individual data and the selection of a type of contribution to the sending of abstracts. The activities included in the participant's online registration are detailed below: *(see below for further details regarding the enlisted activities)*
- Selection of a password and filling in of the participant's individual data;
- Selection of the type of contribution (oral contribution, poster, exhibition stand, etc.);
- Selection of a service package (hotel accommodation, tourist sightseeing, number of accompanying individuals);
- Address for the invoice (if different from the residence address);
- After the successful registration, the user logs into the system and provides the additional data, required for his/her participation. The password, personal data and the abstracts may be changed prior the completion of the registration process.
- Uploading an abstract of the scientific results to be presented;

Type of contribution – poster, oral contribution, exhibition stand, attendance.
There are several types of contribution to a symposium. The most common forms of presentation of recent scientific results are: oral report and presentation of a poster. The scientific congress may be, of course, attended for the purpose of listening to and not reporting scientific results.
Various exhibitions of items related to the research work, for example, laboratory equipment, etc., are often organized during scientific congresses. These are the

four most common forms of participation in a scientific congress, set as default under the "type of contribution" of SCS Conference.

Packages.
Besides the science related events, every scientific conference offers to its participants hotel accommodation, meals at a restaurant as well as various entertainment activities for the free time. These may include visits to different establishments with programs, trips, etc. The participant may also be accompanied during the trips.
These various services form the packages to be selected by the applicants for participation at the time of their registration.

Abstracts
Every scientific conference has requirements to the quality of the research results to be presented. Therefore, the use of an abstract is widespread. The abstract is a short description of the scientific achievements to be presented at the conference. The abstract is the criterion determining whether a participant will be allowed to present his/hers results at the conference and into which symposium s/he will be included. Reviewers are appointed so as to ensure the objectivity of the abstract assessment process. They are specialists in the relevant sphere who assess the qualities of the research results on the basis of the abstracts submitted by the scientists. SCS Conference allows for these activities to be performed automatically via the Internet. The abstracts are to be uploaded online and the reviewers receive an invitation to perform a review by e-mail and a link to a website address where the review is to be performed.

Distribution of the participants by symposia and specification of the type of contribution

After the application process for participation in the scientific event has finished, begin the activities of the applicants' approval, specification of the type of contribution (it may differ from the type, proposed by the candidate) and the distribution of the participants to the different symposia. The symposia are the separate elements making up a scientific congress. The symposia are narrowly specialized events and involve scientists working in that specific field. The distribution of the participants by symposia is performed by a representative of the organizers, called Chairperson of all symposia. The distribution is on the basis of the subject of the abstract submitted by each scientist.

Note: It is possible for one scientist to participate in more than one symposium presenting different scientific achievements. Therefore we will discuss below the distribution of abstracts.

Each symposium has its own chairman called Chairperson of a single symposium. The chairperson is a narrow specialist in the field of that particular symposium. Chairperson of a single symposium may reject a participant, assigned to the symposium s/he is in charge of. Such a participant is then returned to the Chairperson of all symposia for another assignment.
The determination of a reviewer and the viewing of the reviews is responsibility of the Chairperson of a single symposium.
All the above activities for distribution of the participants by symposia, assignment of reviewers and collection of reviews are performed automatically using SCS Conference. That is possible due to several comfortable tools (e.g., "reviewers list") accessible from the menus of Chairperson of all symposia and Chairperson of a single symposium.

Receipt and review of abstracts

An important criterion in the selection of participants is the quality assessment of the scientific achievements to be presented by the participants in the course of the congress. Abstracts (see "abstracts" in italics above) are used for that purpose. SCS Conference has completely automated the process of abstract collection and reviewing. This is performed from a distance without sending of any paper copies. The applicants for participation in the congress upload the files with their abstracts to online forms to be filled in upon their registration. Thus, the "attached" abstracts may be changed by the applicant until the submitted abstract has been approved.
After the acceptance of the final abstracts has been completed, a representative of the organizer, called for the purposes of this software Chairperson of all symposia, distributes the abstracts by symposia. This is performed entirely with the help of SCS Conference.
Each symposium has its own sub-chairman, called for the purposes of this software Chairperson of a single symposium. It is, actually, the Chairperson of a single symposium who assigns a reviewer to each received abstract. This, again, is an entirely automated activity. The Chairperson of a single symposium compiles a list of reviewers and assigns abstracts to each of them. The reviewers receive an e-mail informing them how to perform the online review of the assigned abstracts. The review is a series of answers to questions, set by the organizers. Then, the collected reviews are viewed by SCS Conference and if they contain any particular answers (e.g., answers reflecting unsatisfactory quality), such abstracts and their authors are marked. In such cases the Chairperson of a single symposium decides what steps need to be undertaken to improve the abstract.

Of course, not all reviewers are able to respond within the period set by the organizers. For that purpose, there is an option to remind the reviewer of the expected review as well as of the assignment of the abstract to another reviewer.

Collection and processing of payments
Scientific conferences, just like many other activities, involve collection and processing of payments. All conference participants pay in one or in several installments their fees for "the right to participate". These fees vary depending on the package of services and the number of accompanying individuals.
The provision of these services may be a labour-consuming activity if there are several hundred participants. SCS Conference has envisaged for that reason an opportunity to track the payments of all applicants depending on their individual packages and number of accompanying individuals. Thus, it is clear at any time what amount has been paid and what is the outstanding amount due by each participant. There is an option to send automatically generated e-mails to participants who have delayed their payments containing automatically provided information of the due amounts as well as of the amounts paid until that time. Invoices are issued by a completely automated procedure using SCS Conference.

Feedback from participants
The communications with a large number of people requires numerous staff and complex plans to assign the tasks to employees. SCS Conference can easily handle this task. There are sample letters, available to the organizers of the scientific conference, which can be sent to various sub-groups of participants (e.g., participants with outstanding payments). The text of the sample letters may be set by the organizers. Besides the e-mails, the participants may also be contacted using the main page, which the participant sees after logging into the system. That is very useful if the e-mail connection with a particular participant has failed (as a result of changed address, for example).

DURING THE EVENT

Registration of arrived participants

Upon arriving at the place of the event, each participant registers at the reception desk. The reception desk is equipped with a computer, Internet connection and, of course, SCS Conference. During the registration it is established whether all due payments have been executed and after marking the participant as "arrived", s/he may be issued an invoice and an attendance certificate.

Preparation of statistics regarding the participants
Just like any other software solution, SCS Conference provides its users with all kinds of statistical data and references relating to the registration process, the payments and the arrival of participants. The statistics by payments and the distribution of participants by country are just some of the possible statistic data.

After you have been familiarized with the organizational stages of a scientific conference, now we can turn to the instructions for SCS Conference operation.