

Guidelines for proposals for IUSSP Scientific Panels

[Scientific Panels](#) play a vitally important role in the work of the Union in the years between International Population Conferences. They provide a way to involve members in advancing specific research themes and to participate in the activities of the Union. While the number and selection of Panels are both determined by the Council of the IUSSP, most panel topics arise from suggestions put forward by the Union's membership, thus ensuring that the research activities of the Union reflect the research priorities of its membership. The Council may accept members' proposals as is but may also suggest modifications, merge proposals, propose other topics or select other individuals as members or chairs of these new panels.

The purpose of this note is to offer guidance to members wishing to propose the creation of new Scientific Panels to the Union's Council. Because the nature of the panels submitted to, or endorsed by, the Council is broad, a one-size-fits-all approach to standardising the elements, format and content of proposals is unsuitable. However, the Council recommends that proposals for Scientific Panels contain the following elements and consider the aspects set out below.

1. **Title:** The proposal should offer a succinct and informative title for the panel. The subject of the panel should be neither too narrow nor too wide. The theme should be of relevance within the field of population studies.
2. **Justification:** Provide a short justification of the relevance of the topic for the Union, and motivation as to why the panel should have priority in the Union's scientific agenda for the next few years. Briefly note how the proposed panel will build on current knowledge in the population sciences, advance that knowledge, and how that knowledge will feed into current theoretical or public policy debates. Proposals should also take into consideration how the proposed topic builds on, complements or differs from current and recent past IUSSP Panels on the subject or related subjects. A list of [past](#) and [current](#) panels is available on the IUSSP website.
3. **Duration:** State the anticipated duration of the panel. Most panels are established for a period of four years, but panels with a narrow focus or a limited scope of planned activities can be established for shorter periods. There is limited possibility for extending the duration of a panel beyond four years, subject to the agreement of the Council. Such extensions are usually for a limited period of time to allow for planned activities to be completed.
4. **Activities:** Outline the activities planned for the panel, together with a rough outline of the timing of those activities. The program of work varies among panels, although typically panels in the past have sought to organise around three seminars – physical or virtual ('cyber') – during a four-year cycle, and to publish the panel's findings in a special issue of a journal, or as separate papers in a number of different journals. The possibility of a published volume, making use of the Union's arrangements with Springer, might also be considered. Other activities might include, for example, running training workshops or organising themed sessions at conferences organised by other associations.

5. Outputs: Specify the outputs anticipated from the panel's activities. Where a special issue of a journal or a book is envisaged, potential publishers or journals should be identified and contacted as early as possible.
6. Panel Chair: The proposal should include the name, affiliation and email address of a potential chair of the proposed panel, who should be a recognised expert in the topic of the panel. Nominees for chairs should have agreed to their name being submitted. The final decision on the appointment of a chair rests with the Council.
7. Membership: Names of other panel members do not have to be provided at the proposal stage, but the membership of panels should be constituted with due regard to gender and geographical representation and should not exceed 5 members, in addition to the chair. If names of panel members are suggested, nominees should have agreed to their names being put forward together with their affiliations and email addresses. *All panel members are required to be members of the IUSSP.*
8. Additional guidance:
 - a. The IUSSP Council is keen for panels to find ways to involve junior and younger demographers in the work and activities of the panel. In addition to encouraging attendance at and participation in panel activities, additional roles could include helping to organise panel meetings, summarising meeting findings, or drafting policy briefs for the panel. The IUSSP Secretariat may be able to assist with funding specifically directed at encouraging this kind of involvement.
 - b. If the panel is expected to produce policy-relevant outcomes, consideration should be given to how the results will be communicated to policymakers. For panels with a training component, consideration of how the effectiveness of the training will be evaluated is desirable.
 - c. The panel chair and other panel members are responsible for raising funds to support the panel's activities. While the IUSSP does seek funding to support the activities of Scientific Panels, full funding from the IUSSP cannot be guaranteed. Providers of core financial support to the IUSSP (currently UNFPA, the Hewlett Foundation and the French government) should not be approached without first discussing the matter with the IUSSP Secretariat.