OMPLEX SYSTEMS SOCIET

Conference on Complex Systems Vademecum

Contributors:

CSS Officers:

- Carlos Gershenson (as President of CSS until CCS2027)
- Ana Teixeira de Melo (as Vice-President and Secretary of the CSS until CCS2027)
- Laura Hernandez (as Vice-President and Treasurer of the CSS until CSS2026)

CCS Steering Committee members (on October 15th, 2025):

1. Alberto Antonioni (President, until CCS 2027)
2. Maia Angelova (until CCS 2026)
3. Iulia Martina Bulai (until CCS 2026)
4. Tiziana Di Matteo (until CCS 2026)
5. Mattia Mazzoli (until CCS 2026)
6. Ronaldo Menezes (until CCS 2026)
7. Hiroki Sayama (until CCS 2026)
8. Giulio Cimini (until CCS 2027)
9. Ricardo DiClemente (until CCS 2027)
10. Iacopo Iacopini (until CCS 2027)
11. Ricardo Gallotti (until CCS 2027)
12. Ruiqi Li (until CCS 2027)
13. Marcelo Moret (as Chair of CCS 2023, until CCS 2026)
14. Federico Botta (as Chair of CCS 2024, until CCS 2027)
15. Chiara Mocenni (as Chair of CCS 2025, until CCS 2028)

Other previous CCS main organizers:

- Márton Karsai (CCS 2021)
- José Ramasco (CCS 2022)

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1) Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the vademecum

This vademecum serves as a practical and institutional guide for the organization of the *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)*, the flagship annual meeting of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*.
Its purpose is to consolidate the collective experience of past editions into a structured reference document that assists future organizers in planning, managing, and executing the conference effectively.

The document covers the main phases of the conference lifecycle — from the bid preparation to post-event reporting — providing recommendations, procedures, and examples of good practice.
It aims to ensure coherence and continuity across different editions while preserving the flexibility needed to adapt to local circumstances, institutional contexts, and the evolving nature of complexity science.

1.2 Historical background of CCS

The *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)* was established in 2004 in Turin, Italy, initially as the *European Conference on Complex Systems (ECCS)*. Until 2014, the conference primarily served the European complexity science community. In 2015, it adopted its current name and format, marking its first fully global edition, hosted in the United States. Since its inception, CCS has been held annually in different countries and continents, reflecting the international reach and interdisciplinary nature of complexity science. Over the years, it has brought together thousands of researchers, practitioners, and students from fields including physics, biology, social sciences, computer science, and economics, fostering the exchange of ideas, the presentation of new theoretical and applied results, and the development of collaborations across disciplines and generations.

Past editions of the (European) Conference on Complex Systems include:

- ECCS 2004 — Turin, Italy
- ECCS 2005 — Paris, France
- ECCS 2006 — Oxford, UK
- ECCS 2007 — Dresden, Germany
- ECCS 2008 — Jerusalem, Israel
- ECCS 2009 — Warwick, UK
- ECCS 2010 — Lisbon, Portugal
- ECCS 2011 — Vienna, Austria
- ECCS 2012 — Brussels, Belgium

- ECCS 2013 — Barcelona, Spain
- ECCS 2014 — Lucca, Italy
- CCS 2015 — Phoenix, USA
- CCS 2016 — Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- CCS 2017 — Cancún, Mexico
- CCS 2018 — Thessaloniki, Greece
- CCS 2019 — Singapore
- CCS 2020 — Online
- CCS 2021 — Lyon, France
- CCS 2022 — Palma, Spain
- CCS 2023 — Salvador de Bahia, Brazil
- CCS 2024 — Exeter, UK
- CCS 2025 — Siena, Italy
- CCS 2026 — Binghamton, USA
- CCS 2027 — Wrocław, Poland

1.3 Core values and mission of the conference

CCS is guided by a set of shared values that define its identity and ensure its long-term success:

- **Scientific excellence** – maintaining a high standard of research and peer evaluation.
- **Interdisciplinarity** – promoting dialogue between scientific domains and methodological traditions.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – fostering a community that values diversity across gender, geography, and career stage, actively works to ensure equitable access to opportunities and resources, and promotes inclusive participation at all levels.
- **Transparency and collaboration** – fostering open communication between organizers, committees, and the wider community.
- **Sustainability** – minimizing the environmental footprint of the event and supporting responsible scientific practices.

The mission of CCS is to advance the understanding of complex systems by providing a vibrant, inclusive, and collaborative environment where scientific innovation and community building can thrive.

1.4 Structure of the CCS community and governance

The organization of CCS reflects the governance structure of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*, which ensures continuity, accountability, and strategic alignment across editions.

- The **Steering Committee (SC)** oversees the overall organization of the conference series. In accordance with the CSS bylaws, it prepares and submits proposals—such as future conference venues and major organizational guidelines—to the **Executive Committee (EC)**, which holds decision-making authority after evaluation of these proposals.
- The **Council**, as the highest governing body of the Society, represents the broader CSS community and provides strategic direction, contributing to major decisions concerning the long-term orientation of the conference series.
- The **Local Organizing Committee (LOC)** is responsible for all logistical and operational aspects of the event, working closely with the **Scientific Chair(s)**, who oversee the scientific program. The Scientific Chair(s) are selected in agreement with the Steering Committee and the Local Organizing Committee, and are not required to be based at the conference location.
- Additional working groups or teams (e.g. for sponsorship, communication, and inclusivity) may be established as needed.

Regular interaction between these bodies ensures coherence in scientific content, financial management, and communication, as well as a smooth handover between consecutive editions.

1.5 Timeline overview (from bid submission to post-conference reporting)

The organization of the Conference on Complex Systems (CCS) typically spans a period of 24 to 30 months, from the initial preparation of the bid to the delivery of the final reports after the event. This timeline is designed to ensure thorough planning, effective coordination with the Executive Committee and, through it, with the Council of the Complex Systems Society (CSS), as well as sufficient time for scientific and logistical development.

Below is an indicative sequence of major phases and milestones. The timelines should be understood as **minimum recommended deadlines** and not as targets to be exceeded. Delaying beyond these milestones is strongly discouraged, while advancing key phases ahead of schedule is encouraged whenever possible.

Phase 1 — Bid preparation and selection (T – 24 to –18 months)

- Drafting and submission of the bid document in response to the CCS call for proposals, including the proposed host city, the designated Local Organizing Committee (LOC), a preliminary budget, and an initial venue assessment.
- Presentation and evaluation of bids by the Steering Committee (SC).
- Submission of the Steering Committee's proposal to the Executive Committee (EC) for final evaluation and approval.

Phase 2 — Initial planning and setup (T – 18 to –12 months)

- Formation of the full LOC and appointment of the Scientific Chair(s).
- Establishment of the Program Committee (PC) and main working groups.
- Confirmation of venue, dates, and preliminary contracts.
- Launch of the official website and visual identity.
- Draft budget, sponsorship plan, and preliminary communication with the community.

Phase 3 — Scientific and logistical development (T – 12 to –3 months)

- Call for abstracts and satellite proposals.
- Warm-up organization in synergy with yrCSS.
- Selection of keynote and invited speakers.
- Setup of the submission and review system.
- Synergize with the YRCSS the warm-up, schools and tutorials.
- Abstracts bidding and notification of acceptance.
- Designation of the parallel sessions.
- Definition of satellites, relative rooms and call for abstracts window.
- Coordination of logistics: accommodation, catering, transportation, and hybrid infrastructure
- Announcement of measures to promote diversity, inclusion and equity in participation
- Opening of registration and early-bird period, with the early-bird deadline set after notification of acceptance for both main conference and satellite abstracts.
- Regular updates to the Steering Committee.

Phase 4 — Conference delivery (T = 0)

- Execution of the main conference, including plenary sessions, parallel tracks, poster sessions, and social events.
- On-site coordination of volunteers, IT support, and media communication.
- Collection of attendance and satisfaction data for later reporting.

Phase 5 — Post-conference reporting (T + 1 to +6 months)

- Financial closing and final accounting.
- Preparation of the post-conference report for the *Steering Committee*.
- Collection and publication of statistics, photos, and proceedings (if applicable).
- Transfer of knowledge and documentation to the next organizing team.
- Archiving of materials and website preservation.
- Sending attendance certificates to participants who request them (this can go on beyond 6 months after the end of the conference as participants realise they need the certificate at any point in the future)

Compliance with data protection regulations and opening of registration.

Prior to the opening of registration, organizers must ensure full conformity with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which applies to the conference given that the Complex Systems Society is based in the European Union, including when the event is organized by non-EU entities. The registration form must clearly specify which personal data are collected, how they will be used, and which information will be shared with the Society—where appropriate in anonymized or aggregated form—for statistical analysis of participation. Guidance may be provided on the nature of the fields and relevant data to be collected (e.g. affiliation, career stage, country, participation category). The text below can be included at the end of the registration from:

Data protection and privacy (GDPR)

The personal data collected through this registration form (such as name, email address, affiliation, career stage, country, and participation category) are used exclusively for the organisation and management of the conference, including communication with participants.

In accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the data controller is the local organising committee of the conference. Personal data will not be used for commercial purposes and will be stored only for the time strictly necessary for conference organisation and reporting.

Relevant information may be shared with the Complex Systems Society (CSS), in anonymised or aggregated form where appropriate, for statistical analysis of participation and internal reporting. By completing the registration, participants consent to the collection and processing of their personal data for the purposes described above.

☐ *I consent to the collection and processing of my personal data as described.*

2) Bidding and selection process

2. Bidding and Selection Process

2.1 Call for proposals and eligibility

The *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)* is hosted annually under the auspices of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*.
The *Steering Committee* periodically issues a **call for proposals** inviting potential host institutions to submit bids for organizing future editions, usually **two years in advance**.

Eligible applicants include:

- Universities, research institutes, or consortia with recognized experience in complexity science;
- Teams that can demonstrate institutional support and access to suitable conference facilities;
- Local Organizing Committees (LOCs) that include members of the CSS community and have a clear commitment to the society's principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and sustainability.

Joint bids involving multiple institutions or regional collaborations are allowed, provided that responsibilities are clearly defined. In such cases, one host institution must be designated as the primary contracting entity, assuming financial responsibility and acting as the signatory of the agreement with the Complex Systems Society.

2.2 Contents and structure of a bid document

The bid document should provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the proposed edition. While some flexibility is allowed, the following structure is recommended:

1. **General information**
    - Proposed host institution(s), city, and country
    - Main contact persons and organizational structure
    - Proposed dates and duration
2. **Venue and facilities**
    - Description of the conference venue, room capacities, accessibility, and infrastructure

    - Availability of spaces for plenary sessions, parallel tracks, tutorials, posters, and social events
    - Connectivity, technical support, and hybrid options
3. **Local context**
    - Accessibility (airports, transport links, visa requirements)
    - Accommodation options and price range
    - Local attractions and cultural relevance
4. **Team and experience**
    - Composition of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) and Scientific Chair(s)
    - Prior experience in organizing international conferences
    - Support from local institutions or sponsors
5. **Budget and financial plan**
    - Preliminary budget (expected income and expenses)
    - Proposed registration fees and justification
    - Sponsorship plan and institutional support
    - Risk management and contingency plan
6. **Sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion**
    - Strategies for minimizing environmental impact
    - Plans for ensuring gender balance, accessibility, equity in participation, and global representation
7. **Tentative timeline**
    - From preparation to post-conference reporting

The bid document should typically not exceed **15–20 pages**, excluding appendices. Supplementary materials such as letters of support, maps, or photos of the venue may be included.

2.3 Evaluation criteria

The Steering Committee evaluates bids based on a balanced set of criteria reflecting feasibility, scientific quality, and alignment with the values of the Complex Systems Society. Typical evaluation criteria include:

- **Venue and logistics**
  Adequacy, accessibility, and technical readiness of the proposed facilities, including compliance with accessibility standards and the capacity to host a large international conference.
- **Team experience and organizational capacity**
  Demonstrated experience in organizing large international scientific events,

including transparent financial management and coordination with multiple stakeholders.

- **Scientific environment and program quality**
  The presence of a strong local complexity science community and clear potential for interdisciplinary engagement. Proposals should include at least a *tentative list of keynote and invited speakers*, allowing the Steering Committee to assess scientific excellence, interdisciplinarity, and inclusivity in terms of gender balance and geographical representation.
- **Financial plan**
  Clarity, sustainability, and risk mitigation of the proposed budget, including realistic registration fees and sponsorship potential. Proposals may include mechanisms for *optional participant contributions* (e.g. a voluntary €5–10 fee) to support a CSS-managed fund devoted to long-term inclusivity actions, distinct from the conference-specific Open Arms Grant. Organizers must demonstrate the capacity to collect such optional contributions separately and to transfer them to the CSS in a transparent manner, in coordination with CSS procedures.
- **Geographical and institutional diversity**
  Consideration of regional rotation and institutional diversity to promote inclusivity and global participation within the complexity science community.
- **Equity, inclusion, and accessibility measures**
  Concrete plans to support equity and inclusion, including adherence to the CSS Open Arms Grant framework and the allocation of a minimum level of fellowships or financial support integrated into the budget from the outset. Proposals should detail planned measures, which may include: childcare or babysitting services; breastfeeding rooms; audiovisual support for participants with impairments; mobility accessibility; availability of quiet rooms; and other measures facilitating broad participation.
- **Sustainability policies**
  Clear strategies to reduce the environmental impact of the conference, such as sustainable catering, reduced waste, promotion of low-carbon travel options, or other locally appropriate measures.
- **Services to the community**
  Additional initiatives that contribute to the long-term value of the conference for the CSS community, such as training activities, outreach events, or support for early-career researchers.

The *Steering Committee* evaluates bids based on a balanced set of criteria reflecting both feasibility and alignment with the values of the *Complex Systems Society*.
Typical criteria include:

- **Venue and logistics:** adequacy, accessibility, and technical readiness of the proposed facilities.
- **Team experience and capacity:** proven ability to manage large international events and handle finances transparently.
- **Scientific environment:** local presence of a strong complexity science community and potential for interdisciplinary engagement.
- **Financial plan:** clarity, sustainability, and risk mitigation; realistic registration fees and sponsorship potential.
- **Geographical and institutional diversity:** rotation among regions to promote inclusivity within the global community.
- **Sustainability and inclusion policies:** concrete measures for reducing environmental impact and ensuring broad participation.
- **Community-oriented activities:** proposed non-standard, scientifically related initiatives (e.g. panels on science and society, education, art, or career development and job-matching activities).

The evaluation process may include a round of clarifications or interviews with the proposing team to address open questions.

2.4 Selection timeline and decision process

The typical selection process follows this structure:

1. **Call for proposals** issued by the *Steering Committee* approximately **30 months before the intended conference date**.
2. **Submission deadline** after 2–3 months, with all bids sent to the designated CCS contact.
3. **Preliminary review** by the Steering Committee, focusing on completeness and eligibility.
4. **Evaluation and ranking** based on the established criteria.
5. **Presentations or Q&A sessions** with the bidding teams (online or during a CCS meeting).
6. **Final decision** by the Steering Committee after receiving the approval by the CSS Executive Committee, usually **18-24 months before the conference**.
7. **Formal announcement** of the selected host during the subsequent CCS edition and initiation of the coordination phase with the Steering Committee.

The process aims to guarantee transparency, fairness, and sufficient preparation time for the selected LOC to plan the event successfully.

3) Organizational structure

3. Organizational Structure

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

The organization of the *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)* involves several bodies that collaborate under the supervision of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*. Each entity has specific roles and responsibilities to ensure a coherent, transparent, and efficient workflow.
The key organizational bodies are:

- The **Steering Committee**, which supervises the entire process and guarantees continuity between editions;
- The **Scientific Chair(s)**, responsible for the scientific vision and quality of the program;
- The **Local Organizing Committee (LOC)**, in charge of logistics, finances, and practical organization;
- The **Program Committee (PC)**, which coordinates the scientific review and session structure;
- The **Sponsorship and Communication teams**, supporting the visibility and financial sustainability of the event.

Close and continuous collaboration among these entities is essential for maintaining the standards and identity of CCS.

3.2 Steering Committee

The *Steering Committee* (SC) operates under the *Complex Systems Society* and acts as the principal supervisory body for CCS.
Its main responsibilities include:

- Defining long-term strategy and maintaining continuity across editions;
- Issuing the call for bids and selecting future conference venues;
- Approving the composition of the *Scientific Chair(s)* and the *Local Organizing Committee*;
- Monitoring the organizational progress through regular reports and meetings;
- Providing guidance on financial transparency, inclusiveness, and scientific scope;
- Ensuring consistency with the values and mission of the *Complex Systems Society*.

The SC also serves as a mediator in case of major organizational challenges and ensures that institutional memory is passed effectively to future teams.

3.3 Scientific Chair(s)

The *Scientific Chair(s)* — typically one or two senior researchers appointed jointly by the *Steering Committee* and the *Local Organizing Committee* — are responsible for the **scientific integrity and quality** of the conference.

Their main duties are:

- Defining the scientific themes and structure of the program in collaboration with the *Program Committee*;
- Coordinating the selection of keynote and invited speakers;
- Supervising the abstract review process and ensuring fairness and consistency;
- Liaising with the Steering Committee on the composition of the *Program Committee*;
- Supporting the LOC in maintaining a coherent balance between scientific content, interdisciplinarity, and diversity.

The *Scientific Chair(s)* represent the scientific leadership of each CCS edition and play a key role in maintaining its reputation for excellence.

3.4 Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

The *Local Organizing Committee (LOC)* is the operational core of the conference and bears primary responsibility for its implementation.
It usually consists of faculty and staff from the host institution(s), supported by volunteers and administrative personnel.

Main responsibilities include:

- Managing the overall logistics: venue, catering, accommodation, transportation, and technical infrastructure;
- Handling the budget, contracts, and financial reporting in coordination with the Steering Committee;
- Overseeing registration, communication with participants, and on-site coordination;

- Supporting the *Scientific Chair(s)* and *Program Committee* in implementing the scientific program;
- Organizing social events, outreach activities, and side programs;
- Ensuring compliance with the conference's sustainability and inclusion policies.

The LOC acts as the legal and financial entity responsible for the event, often in collaboration with the host institution's administrative offices.

3.5 Program Committee (PC)

The *Program Committee* (PC) supports the *Scientific Chair(s)* in shaping the scientific content of CCS.
It is composed of experts from various domains of complexity science, ensuring disciplinary breadth and international representation.

Core responsibilities include:

- Designing the thematic structure of the conference (tracks, sessions, and formats);
- Coordinating the call for abstracts, review process, and acceptance decisions;
- Supporting the organization of special sessions, tutorials, and satellite meetings;
- Advising on the selection of keynote and invited speakers;
- Ensuring a balanced and inclusive representation of topics, genders, and regions.

The PC operates through regular online meetings and communicates closely with both the *Scientific Chair(s)* and the *Local Organizing Committee*.

3.6 Sponsorship & Communication teams

The *Sponsorship Team* is responsible for identifying and securing financial and institutional partners to support the conference. This role may be assumed by a local team or by a continuity team operating across editions, particularly to maintain relationships with recurrent sponsors such as academic journals. Tasks include preparing sponsorship packages, managing partner relations, and ensuring appropriate sponsor visibility throughout the event and its materials.

The *Communication Team* oversees the visual identity and dissemination strategy of CCS, including:

- Website development and maintenance;
- Social media and mailing list communication;
- Press relations and media coverage;
- Coordination of announcements with the *Complex Systems Society*.

Both teams work under the supervision of the LOC and in coordination with the Steering Committee to ensure coherence in messaging and transparency in sponsorship management.

3.7 Communication protocols among committees

Efficient communication among all committees is critical to the success of the conference.
The following principles are recommended:

- **Regular coordination meetings** (monthly or bimonthly) among the LOC, Scientific Chair(s), and Steering Committee to monitor progress;
- **Shared documentation platforms** (e.g., collaborative drives or project management tools) to ensure transparency and record-keeping;
- **Clear decision-making procedures**, with minutes and responsibilities documented after each meeting;
- **Point-of-contact system**, where each major domain (scientific program, logistics, finance, communication) has an assigned coordinator;
- **Periodic updates to the CSS Council** to maintain alignment with the broader society.

These communication protocols foster accountability, prevent information gaps, and ensure that institutional knowledge is preserved across editions.

4) Planning and timeline

5. Planning and Timeline

5.1 Recommended overall timeline (18–24 months in advance)

The successful organization of the *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)* requires a long-term planning horizon, typically **18 to 24 months** before the event.
This timeframe allows for proper coordination with the *Steering Committee*, the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*, sponsors, and service providers, while ensuring that the scientific and logistical aspects progress in parallel.

The recommended timeline is structured as follows:

- **T – 24 to –18 months:** Bid preparation, evaluation, and selection of the host institution.
- **T – 18 months:** Formation of the *Local Organizing Committee (LOC)* and appointment of the *Scientific Chair(s)*.
- **T – 15 months:** Confirmation of conference dates and venue; initial contracts and budget draft.
- **T – 12 months:** Launch of website and visual identity; first call for sponsorship and preliminary communication to the community.
- **T – 9 months:** Call for abstracts, satellite proposals, and tutorials.
- **T – 9 months:** Organize warm-up event with yrCSS.
- **T – 6 months:** Abstract review and acceptance; preliminary program draft.
- **T – 4 months:** Satellites call for abstracts.
- **T – 3 months:** Registration deadlines, publication of the full program, and logistics finalization.
- **T = 0:** Conference delivery.
- **T + 3 to +6 months:** Post-conference reporting and knowledge transfer to the next organizing team.

This structured progression ensures that scientific preparation, communication, and logistical implementation advance coherently and on schedule.

5.2 Key milestones

Although each edition of CCS may have specific constraints, certain milestones are common and should be treated as fixed reference points in the planning process.

Phase	Milestone	Recommended Timing
Preparation	Selection of host institution and LOC	24 months before
Setup	Venue reservation and date confirmation	18 months before
Scientific Program	Selection of keynote and invited speakers	15 months before
Setup	Website launch and branding definition	12 months before
Scientific Program	Call for abstracts and satellites	9 months before
Operations	Opening of registration	7 months before
Operations	Abstract review and acceptance	6 months before
Operations	Satellites call for abstracts	5 months before
Operations	End of early-bird registration	4 months before
Operations	Publication of preliminary program	4 months before
Operations	VISA letters of acceptance	4 months before
Logistics	Final confirmation of suppliers (catering, AV, travel)	3 months before
Event	Conference week (execution)	T = 0
Follow-up	Financial closure and final report	3–6 months after

Each milestone should be accompanied by a clear division of responsibilities between the *LOC*, *Scientific Chair(s)*, and *Steering Committee*, with regular progress reviews and updates.

5) Scientific program

6.1 Structure (plenaries, parallel sessions, satellite meetings, tutorials, poster sessions, etc.)

The scientific program of the *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)* is designed to reflect the diversity and interdisciplinarity of the complexity science community.
Each edition follows a modular structure that can be adapted to local conditions, venue size, and community needs.

A typical structure includes:

- **Plenary sessions:** high-profile talks by keynote and invited speakers addressing broad and cross-disciplinary topics of general interest. The last Plenary session is usually given by the winner of the CSS Senior Award.
- **Parallel sessions:** contributed talks organized thematically across multiple tracks, representing the core of the scientific program.
- **Poster sessions:** spaces for discussion and networking, often accompanied by dedicated poster pitch sessions.
- **Satellite meetings**: self-organized thematic workshops held for two days during the main conference, coordinated under the CCS framework but managed independently. They typically take place mid-week. The two days are dedicated exclusively to satellite events, with no overlap between satellite activities and main conference parallel sessions.
- **Special sessions or panels:** thematic discussions on current challenges, applications, or policy-related aspects of complex systems.
- **Coffee breaks**. 30 minutes, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. A broad variety of snacks, not only sweet ones, is recommended.
- **Lunch**. Consider options to avoid long queues: buffet with multiple serving stations, lunchboxes.
- **Awards session**. A session should be dedicated to the communication and delivery of the CSS awards as well as any awards defined by conference organisers (e.g. best talk, best poster).

Organizers are encouraged to maintain a balance between established formats and innovative session types (e.g. round tables, debates, or interactive sessions) that enhance participation and community engagement, as well as sessions aimed at disseminating complex systems research to society at large and supporting that research, for example through discussions involving funders or policy-makers.

The Conference on Complex Systems (CCS) is intended to be primarily an in-person event, in order to preserve the value of direct interaction and collective discussion that define the conference experience. Hybrid formats may nevertheless be

considered, allowing a limited number of participants to join online in order to ensure inclusivity for those who are unable to travel.

6.2 Call for contributions and peer-review process

The **call for contributions** should be launched approximately **9–10 months before the conference**, allowing adequate time for submission, review, and scheduling.

Key elements to include in the call:

- Conference themes and scope;
- Types of contributions accepted (talks, posters, lightning talks, etc.);
- Submission format and platform (e.g., EasyChair, Ex Ordo, or custom systems);
- Important dates: submission deadline, notification, and registration periods;
- Review criteria (originality, clarity, relevance, interdisciplinarity).

The **peer-review process** is coordinated by the *Program Committee (PC)* under the supervision of the *Scientific Chair(s)*.
Each submission should be reviewed by at least **two independent referees**, ensuring fairness, scientific quality, and diversity of topics.

Recommendations:

- Adopt a **transparent and reproducible review process** with clear evaluation criteria.
- Use a **double-blind or single-blind** system depending on platform capabilities and community norms.
- Allow reviewers to suggest presentation formats (talk or poster) and flag interdisciplinary relevance.
- Collect conflict-of-interest declarations from reviewers and track chairs.

Final decisions are made collectively by the *Scientific Chair(s)* and *Program Committee*, based on review results, thematic balance, and logistical constraints.

6.3 Selection of keynote and invited speakers

The *Local Organizer(s)* and the *Scientific Chair(s)*, in consultation with the *Steering Committee*, are responsible for selecting keynote and invited speakers who represent the highest standards of excellence, diversity, and innovation in complexity science.

Key guidelines:

- Include **8-10 keynote speakers** representing diverse disciplines, geographies, and career stages.
- The category of **invited speakers, about 6-8,** may be used to include researchers who may not yet have a profile comparable to keynote speakers—typically because they are at an earlier career stage or work in a more specialized area—but who have already made recognized and sustained contributions to a specific research area within complexity science.
- Ensure **gender balance** and **international representation** in line with the values of the *Complex Systems Society*.
- Prioritize researchers whose work bridges disciplines or connects theoretical, computational, and applied aspects of complexity.
- Consider inviting speakers from emerging fields or from non-academic but scientifically grounded research sectors (e.g. industry research, policy-oriented research institutions, data science) to broaden the impact of the conference.

The invitation process should begin **at least 12 months before the conference** to accommodate travel, funding, and scheduling constraints.
All invited speakers should be clearly listed on the conference website once confirmed.

6.4 Thematic balance and interdisciplinarity

CCS is characterized by its commitment to **interdisciplinarity**, welcoming contributions from a broad range of fields including physics, biology, social sciences, computer science, economics, engineering, and beyond.

To maintain thematic balance:

- Define **broad thematic tracks** (e.g., networks, dynamical systems, data-driven modeling, social systems, cognition, etc.) early in the planning stage.
- Assign track coordinators within the *Program Committee* to ensure consistent review and selection standards.
- Encourage cross-disciplinary sessions and joint discussions between related domains.
- Monitor the distribution of accepted contributions to avoid overrepresentation of specific subfields.

Organizers are also encouraged to include **parallel sessions** that explore emerging or underrepresented topics, such as methodological advances, applications to policy or sustainability, and connections to AI and data science.

6.5 Program finalization and scheduling tools

Once abstracts have been accepted, the *Program Committee* and *Local Organizing Committee* must collaborate closely to finalize the detailed schedule.
This process typically begins **2–3 months before the conference**.

Recommended steps:

1. **Group accepted abstracts** by thematic similarity or session type.
2. **Assign sessions** to available rooms based on expected attendance and venue constraints.
3. **Integrate plenaries and social events** to ensure a coherent daily rhythm.
4. **Publish the preliminary program and the accepted abstracts** online at least two months before the conference.

It is essential to keep the schedule dynamic and easily updatable, as last-minute changes are inevitable.

Post-conference, the finalized program and book of abstracts should be archived and shared with the *Steering Committee* for documentation and institutional memory.

6) Logistics and venue

7.1 Requirements for venues (capacity, rooms, accessibility, networking spaces)

The choice of venue is a decisive element for the success of the *Conference on Complex Systems (CCS)*.
It should combine adequate **capacity**, **functionality**, and **accessibility**, supporting the dynamic and multidisciplinary nature of the event.

Essential requirements include:

- **Main plenary hall** with a minimum capacity of 600–800 participants, equipped with professional audiovisual systems.
- **Parallel session rooms** (8–10 recommended) with flexible seating and reliable projection facilities.
- **Poster and exhibition area** with sufficient space for movement and interaction, ideally located near coffee break zones.
- **Dedicated spaces for networking and informal meetings**, such as lounges, open halls, or outdoor terraces.
- **Accessibility for all participants**, including individuals with reduced mobility, in compliance with international standards.
- **Proximity to public transport and accommodation**, reducing travel time between venues and hotels.
- **Readable name badges**. Use huge fonts for names. Opt for either badges that hang from corners (so they do not flip easily), or print names on both sides.
- **Availability of specific support rooms**. Rooms for prayer; breastfeeding/childcare and babysitting; quiet rooms.
- **Equipment to support specific needs.** E.g. audio devices for those with audio impairments; projection with captions, when possible.

The venue should foster an atmosphere of openness and collaboration — central to the CCS identity — while offering efficient logistics and technical reliability.

7.2 Technical staff and IT support

Professional **technical support** is essential throughout the conference.
The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) should appoint an IT and AV coordination team responsible for:

- Supervising sound, projection, and recording systems in all rooms;
- Ensuring smooth transitions between sessions and rapid response to technical issues;

- Managing the central server or system for presentation uploads;
- Coordinating live feeds to secondary rooms (for overflow audiences if needed);
- Maintaining stable Wi-Fi connectivity across all areas.

CSS is intended to be primarily an in-person event. Digital tools may be used both for coordination and, where appropriate, to support limited forms of remote participation (e.g. program applications, abstract management portals, document sharing, or selective online access), provided that these do not undermine the quality of in-person interaction. It is strongly advised to conduct full technical tests in advance and to ensure the presence of at least one technician assigned to each main room throughout the event.

7.3 Accommodation and transport for participants

The host city should offer a **broad range of accommodation options**, covering different price categories and ensuring proximity to the venue.
Organizers are encouraged to:

- Reserve hotel contingents early (ideally 9–12 months in advance) through agreements with local providers;
- Provide a curated list of hotels, hostels, and apartments on the conference website with booking links or discount codes;
- Include affordable options for students and early-career researchers;
- Offer clear information about public transport connections, taxi or shuttle services, and airport transfers;
- Provide guidance on visa requirements and travel documentation when relevant.

If possible, the LOC may coordinate **local transport passes or discount agreements** to facilitate participant mobility during the conference week.

7.4 Social events and cultural activities

Social and cultural events are an integral part of the CCS experience, reinforcing the sense of community and interdisciplinary exchange.
They provide informal contexts for networking, collaboration, and cultural immersion in the host city.

Typical events include:

- **Welcome reception** on the opening day, or the day before the beginning of the conference, ideally hosted at the venue or by the local institution;
- **Conference dinner or banquet**, with attention to local cuisine and sustainable catering practices, and with the provision of a free or low-cost social event to ensure inclusive participation, recognizing that not all attendees may be able to afford the conference dinner.
- **Poster and networking events**, often combined with informal gatherings or music;
- **Cultural or guided visits**, offering participants the opportunity to experience the host city's heritage (not overlapping with the conference schedule);
- **Public outreach activities**, such as talks or exhibitions open to the general audience.

Organizers are encouraged to design these events with inclusivity, equity and sustainability in mind — ensuring accessibility, moderate pricing, and a reduced environmental footprint — while highlighting the cultural identity of the host city.

7) Budget and financial matters?

8. Budget and financial matters

8.1 Registration categories and fees

The Local Organizer(s) are responsible for defining the registration categories and corresponding fees. Categories should clearly distinguish between different participant profiles (e.g. regular participants, students, early-career researchers, reduced-fee categories), and may include early-bird and late registration options. Fees should be set to ensure financial sustainability of the conference while maintaining accessibility, particularly for students and researchers from under-resourced institutions or regions.

8.2 CSS memberships

In line with Complex Systems Society policies, conference registration is coupled with CSS membership. The terms of this linkage (mandatory or optional, duration of membership, fee structure) should be clearly communicated during registration and coordinated with the CSS to ensure consistency with Society guidelines. All kinds of conference registrations should include the CSS membership fee.

8.3 CSS advance and reimbursement

The Complex Systems Society may provide a financial advance to support early organizational expenses. The conditions for this advance, including eligible costs, reporting requirements, and reimbursement procedures, should be agreed upon in advance between the Local Organizer(s) and the CSS. All expenditures must be properly documented and reconciled within the agreed timelines.

8.4 Potential sponsorships

Local Organizer(s) are encouraged to seek external sponsorships to support the conference budget. Potential sponsors may include academic institutions, research organizations, foundations, or industry partners. Sponsorships must not interfere with the scientific independence of the conference and should be consistent with the values and ethical standards of the Complex Systems Society.

8.5 Open Arms Grant

A dedicated portion of the budget should be allocated to the Open Arms Grant, which aims to facilitate participation by researchers who face financial, institutional, or structural barriers. The eligibility criteria, application process, and allocation of funds should be clearly defined and communicated, in coordination with CSS guidelines.

The number of Open Arms Grants should be **at least one fully funded participant per 200–300 conference on-site participants**, with each grant covering travel, accommodation, visa costs, and conference registration fees.

8.6 Sponsorship plan

A structured sponsorship plan should be developed, detailing sponsorship levels, associated benefits (e.g. visibility on conference materials), and ethical constraints. The plan should be shared with and approved by the CSS to ensure transparency, coherence across CCS editions, and alignment with Society policies.

8.7 Registration waivers

The conference budget shall include provisions for registration waivers to support invited contributions and essential organizational roles.

- **Keynote speakers** are entitled to a full registration waiver, in addition to coverage of travel and accommodation expenses, subject to budget availability and CSS policies.
- **Invited speakers** are entitled to a full registration waiver; travel and accommodation are not automatically covered unless explicitly agreed in advance.
- **Satellite organizers** are entitled to at least one full conference registration waiver per satellite. This waiver may be used flexibly, at the discretion of the satellite organizers, including partial allocation across multiple individuals (e.g. satellite co-organizers or satellite invited speakers). In particular, the monetary equivalent of a full conference waiver may be used to cover the participation of multiple individuals attending only the satellite days.
- **Warm-up school lecturers** are entitled to a registration waiver, including those who deliver lectures but do not attend the main conference, as well as warm-up organizers who are members of the yrCSS advisory board.
- **Additional entitled categories** may include award winners and other roles explicitly defined by the Complex Systems Society. The full list of categories typically entitled to a registration waiver (e.g. keynote speakers, invited speakers, satellite organizers, award recipients) should be clearly defined and communicated to the Local Organizer(s) in advance, in coordination with the CSS.

For all individuals granted a **conference registration waiver**, the registration package shall **include the yearly membership to CSS**, in accordance with standard CSS registration policies. All registration waivers must be tracked transparently and approved within the overall budget framework to ensure fairness, consistency, and financial sustainability.

8) Communication channels

8. Communication and Outreach

8.1 Visual identity and website structure

A coherent and professional **visual identity** is essential to present CCS as a unified and recognizable event within the international scientific community.
The *Local Organizing Committee (LOC)* should develop a **conference logo, color palette, and graphic style** consistent with the visual language of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)* while reflecting the cultural and institutional identity of the host city.

Guidelines:

- Use a **consistent design** across all materials: website, posters, banners, badges, and social media graphics;
- Include the **official CSS logo** and acknowledgment on all communication materials;
- Adopt clear, accessible typography and layouts optimized for digital and print formats;
- Provide **English as the main communication language**, with possible local translations when relevant.

The **conference website** is the central information hub and should be launched at least **12 months before the event**. It must include:

- General information (dates, venue, committees, and contact);
- Calls for abstracts, tutorials, and satellites;
- Registration and accommodation details;
- Key deadlines and news updates;
- Sponsor visibility and acknowledgments;
- Accessibility and sustainability statements.

A well-maintained website builds trust, facilitates participant planning, and strengthens the conference's international visibility.

8.2 Communication channels (mailing lists, social media, newsletters)

Effective communication requires the coordinated use of multiple channels to reach different segments of the community.
The *LOC* should establish a **communication plan** covering the entire period from the first announcement to the post-conference phase.

Recommended tools and actions:

- **Mailing lists:** announcements via the official *Complex Systems Society* mailing list and other relevant academic lists;
- **Social media:** dedicated CCS accounts or hashtags (e.g., #CCS202X) on platforms such as X, LinkedIn, Bluesky, and Instagram, with regular updates on deadlines, speakers, and highlights; There are dedicated accounts for the conference, which would be transferred to organizers after the previous edition finished, and should be transferred to the organizers of the following edition.
- **Newsletters:** periodic email updates to registered participants and interested subscribers;
- **Conference app (optional):** to share program updates, maps, and notifications during the event.

Tone and content should remain **informative, inclusive, and professional**, avoiding excessive promotional language.
All posts should reinforce the identity of CCS as an open and globally connected scientific community.

8.3 Coordination with the CCS society communication team

The *Complex Systems Society (CSS)* maintains its own communication channels, which can amplify the visibility of each CCS edition.
To ensure coherence and consistency:

- The *LOC Communication Team* should coordinate regularly with the **CSS Communication Officer(s)** or equivalent representative;
- Key announcements (e.g., call for papers, keynote speakers, registration opening) should be jointly approved and disseminated through official CSS channels;
- Visual and textual materials should follow CSS branding guidelines when co-branded;
- After the event, summaries, photos, and statistics should be shared with the CSS team for inclusion in newsletters or on the society's website.

This collaboration strengthens continuity between editions and reinforces the perception of CCS as a unified global series rather than a set of independent conferences.

9) Evaluation and reporting

9. Evaluation and Reporting

9.1 Post-conference survey and statistics

A systematic evaluation of each CCS edition is essential to assess its scientific, organizational, and social impact.
The *Local Organizing Committee (LOC)* should conduct a **post-conference survey** among participants within **two weeks after the event**, collecting feedback on both scientific content and logistics.

The survey should cover:

- Overall satisfaction with the scientific program, venue, and organization;
- Quality and diversity of sessions and speakers;
- Effectiveness of communication and information flow;
- Accessibility, inclusiveness, equity, and sustainability aspects;
- Suggestions for future editions.

Quantitative results (e.g., satisfaction scores, attendance by session type) should be complemented by **qualitative feedback** to identify areas for improvement.

The LOC is also encouraged to compile **basic participation statistics**, including:

- Number of participants by country of the affiliation, gender, and career stage;
- Number of contributed talks, posters, and satellites;
- Attendance figures for plenary and social events.

These data provide an objective record of the conference scope and support long-term monitoring of inclusivity and growth within the CCS community.

9.2 Reporting format for Steering Committee and Society

Within **three to six months after the conference**, the *Local Organizing Committee* must submit a **comprehensive report** to the *Steering Committee* of the *Complex Systems Society (CSS)*.
This report should serve both as a record of the event and as guidance for future organizers.

The recommended structure includes:

1. **General overview:** dates, venue, number of participants, and main organizational highlights.
2. **Scientific content:** plenaries, tracks, tutorials, satellites, and thematic balance.
3. **Participation statistics:** attendance breakdown by country of the affiliation, gender, and discipline.
4. **Financial summary:** income, expenses, sponsorships, and surplus or deficit.
5. **Sustainability and inclusion measures:** actions implemented and outcomes.
6. **Communication and outreach:** website analytics, media coverage, and social media engagement.
7. **Participant feedback:** summary of survey results and key findings.
8. **Recommendations:** issues encountered, proposed improvements, and transferable solutions.

The report should be submitted in digital format (PDF) and archived by the *Steering Committee* as part of the institutional record of CCS editions.

9.3 Lessons learned and knowledge transfer

Each edition of CCS contributes to the continuous improvement of the conference series through shared experience and collective learning.
To ensure knowledge transfer:

- The *LOC* should maintain an **internal archive** (documents, templates, contracts, and communication materials) accessible to future organizing teams;
- A **post-conference debriefing meeting** should be held with representatives of the *Steering Committee* to discuss successes and challenges;
- The *Steering Committee* may organize **knowledge-sharing sessions** (e.g., short online meetings between past and future LOCs) to exchange operational insights;
- Recommendations emerging from the report and debriefing should be integrated into future versions of this vademecum.

By formalizing this cycle of evaluation and feedback, CCS ensures consistency, transparency, and the progressive enhancement of standards across all future editions.

Appendices

10. Appendices

10.2 Contact list of past organizers

To facilitate knowledge transfer and practical coordination, the *Steering Committee* maintains an updated **contact list of previous Local Organizing Committees (LOCs)** and *Scientific Chairs*.
This list includes contact persons, institutional affiliations, and the year and location of each CCS edition.

This table should be updated annually by the *Steering Committee* and made available to future organizers upon request.

CCS 2021: Márton Karsai (karsaim@ceu.edu)

CCS 2022: José Javier Ramasco (jramasco@ifisc.uib-csic.es)

CCS 2023: Marcelo Moret (mamoret@gmail.com)

CCS 2024: Federico Botta (f.botta@exeter.ac.uk)

CCS 2025: Chiara Mocenni (chiara.mocenni@unisi.it)

10.3 Branding guidelines and logo usage

Consistency in visual communication across CCS editions reinforces the identity and recognizability of the *Conference on Complex Systems*.
The following guidelines should be respected:

- The **CCS logo** and the **Complex Systems Society (CSS)** logo must appear together on all official materials (website, banners, slides, printed documents).
- The **local visual identity** (colors, motifs, imagery) can reflect the host city or institution, but should remain clean, professional, and consistent with the CSS style.
- Logos must not be altered, distorted, or used in low-resolution formats.
- For co-branded materials (e.g., sponsor acknowledgments, institutional partnerships), maintain balanced proportions and visual hierarchy.
- Any new visual adaptations (e.g., “CCS 202X” versions) should be approved by the *Steering Committee* before public release.

A shared repository of vector files and past branding materials is maintained by the *Steering Committee* to assist new LOCs.

10.4 Template for the call for papers and acceptance letters

Standardized communication templates help ensure professionalism and consistency across CCS editions.
Organizers are encouraged to adapt the following **templates** for their own use.

(a) Example – Call for Papers (from CCS 2025)

Dear all,

We are pleased to invite you to submit your abstract proposal for CCS 2025, Conference on Complex Systems, which will be held in Siena, Italy, from the 1st to the 5th of September 2025.

The main topics will include, and are not restricted to, the following: foundation of Complex Systems, Social Systems, Cities and Tourism, Complex Networks, Economics and Finance, Climate, Data Science and AI, Cognition, Energy and Environment, Computation, Complexity in Biology, and Neuroscience, and various applications.

Below, you will find key information regarding the submission process.

Deadline

The abstract call's deadline is March 20, 2025. Refer to the call page to be updated for deadline extensions.

How to Submit

Upload a PDF document (maximum 2 pages).

Page 1: Title, authors and their affiliations, full abstract.

Page 2: One figure with caption and references only.

If using LaTeX, please download the provided template. If using another editor (e.g., Word), convert to PDF before submission.

Indicate your preference for contributed talk, lightning talk, or poster (preferences are not guaranteed).

Ensure that the uploaded file is not password protected and does not exceed 5MB.

Instructions for Authors

Accepted abstracts must be presented in person by one registered author. If no author is registered before the deadline, the contribution will be withdrawn from the program.

Please note that each author can present only one accepted talk unless special permission is granted (please refer to the registration guidelines for more details).

Before Submission

To facilitate a smooth submission process, please ensure you have the following information ready: the presenting author's full name, affiliation, email, and contact number (where you can be reached during the conference), as well as the full names, affiliations, and email addresses of all coauthors. A PDF copy of the abstract should also be ready for upload.

When submitting your abstract, please carefully select the most relevant topics to facilitate proper reviewer assignment and session placement. The list of main topics will be available once you log into the CMT submission portal. You will also be able to edit your submission at any time before the deadline.

We look forward to receiving your proposals and to seeing you at CCS25 in Siena!

For more details, please email ccs25@unisi.it or visit https://ccs25.cssociety.org/abstract-2/.

Best regards,

The CCS25 Organizing Team

This template can be customized for tone and branding but should retain the formal and inclusive style representative of CCS.
Updated versions and editable files will be maintained by the *Steering Committee* for continuity across future editions.