IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc)
Conferences Technical Co-Sponsorship (TCS)
TCS Policy and Process (v3.1)

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1. Scope

This document describes the IEEE Communications Society's (ComSoc's) policy and process for reviewing applications for Technical Co-Sponsorship (TCS) of conferences. It specifies the different steps a typical application review involves, from submission to IEEE and ComSoc until receiving decision of granting technical co-sponsorship or denying it. It also describes the roles of parties involved in the process and many of the evaluation criteria based upon which TCS decisions are made.

2. Introduction

The IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) sponsors many conferences throughout the world every year. There are two types of sponsorship: financial sponsorship, and technical sponsorship. Financial sponsorship means that ComSoc either wholly or partially shares the surplus/loss of a conference. Financial sponsorship implies technical sponsorship, and includes it therewith.

Conferences[1] that ComSoc financially sponsor are known as "Portfolio" conferences. Events in which ComSoc is not financially involved may apply for TCS. However, TCS is only available to conferences that are financially sponsored by non-profit entities. Granting ComSoc TCS is an indication of the technical quality of a conference as overseen by ComSoc. It is seen by ComSoc members as a sign of quality because it ensures that this conference has met our minimum expectations for peer reviewed events/meetings and is endorsed by at least one suitable ComSoc Technical Committee (TC), which help provide oversight. TCS qualifies the conference papers to be considered for inclusion into IEEE Xplore®, but does not guarantee it.

This document explains the TCS review process for conferences that are not financially sponsored by ComSoc. It updates and integrates several existing TCS policies into one framework that is organized and as easy as possible to understand and follow. It also adds a few new guidelines to help streamline the process and enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. Upon releasing this document, it will be effective immediately and will define the ComSoc TCS process. ComSoc policies are always evolving. Therefore, where this document contradicts published ComSoc policy, that policy shall prevail and take precedence. Also, the publication of this document does not undermine ComSoc's right to grant/deny TCS of events based on factor(s) not specified herein.

We describe the TCS process here below by providing:
- Information for applicants; explaining the steps an applicant takes to obtain ComSoc TCS

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[1] The word conference in this document refers to engineering/scientific meetings or events, including conferences and any stand-alone workshop or symposium seeking ComSoc TCS. The words conference, meeting, and event are therefore used herein interchangeably.

- Description of how the ComSoc evaluation process is carried out; outlining the roles and responsibilities of conference organizers applying for TCS; ComSoc Conference Operations (CO), ComSoc Technical Committees (TCs), and ComSoc individual members who represent the society in sponsored conferences.

3. **Information for Conference Organizers Applying for ComSoc TCS**

   a. A TCS application for a given conference can be submitted:
      i. No earlier than the conclusion of the previous occurrence of this conference
      ii. No later than 90 days prior to the Call for Papers deadline of this new occurrence

   The first rule ensures that TCS of conferences completes the requirements of the IEEE Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before the next occurrence can be considered. The second rule ensures that there is sufficient time to process an application in advance of issuing the CFP for that conference, which ensures that any changes (e.g., review process, etc.) can be accommodated. The second rule also provides sufficient time for ComSoc to publicize the CFP and the conference to its membership.

   b. The ComSoc TCS application Process involves two main steps:
      i. IEEE Conference Application: This application is handled by IEEE Conference Services. Applicants, i.e. conference organizers seeking ComSoc TCS status for their events, start the process by completing an IEEE Conference Application using the online form on www.ieee.org/conferences_events/conferences/organizers/conf_app.html. The first question posed is: Have you already obtained sponsorship for your conference?; In order to request ComSoc TCS, conference organizers need to answer "yes" in response to this question. Organizers should provide all requested details therein, bearing in mind that they must list all their proposed FINANCIAL and TECHNICAL sponsors. Financial sponsors will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). See www.comsoc.org/conferences/Event-Sponsorship for more details. Completion of the IEEE application generates a 5-digit conference ID number. Applicants should keep this number for their records and include it in all future correspondence with both IEEE and ComSoc.
      ii. ComSoc Application (Addendum): This application is handled by ComSoc Conference Operations. This step will be initiated by the organizer's listing of ComSoc as potential Technical Co-sponsor in the IEEE Conference Application. While IEEE will inform ComSoc thereto upon completion of the first step, conference organizers are encouraged to contact ComSoc Conference Operations (CO) at the same time to inform our society of their desire to request ComSoc TCS. Either way, ComSoc will ask the organizer to complete a short (2-3 pages) ADDENDUM which is related specifically to the ComSoc TCS process. The ComSoc Addendum is designed in such a way that it does not duplicate information requests already made on the IEEE Conference Application. ComSoc will evaluate the complete TCS application subsequently (IEEE application + ComSoc addendum) and notify the conference organizer and IEEE Conference Services of our decision regarding technical sponsorship of the event.

      Conference organizers are also encouraged to contact ComSoc Technical Committees (TCs), whose technical scopes overlap with the scope of the conference before, and

during, the application process (it is recommended to contact as many relevant TCs as possible). These communications should explore TCs' interest in endorsing the conference and its relevance to ComSoc technical co-sponsorship.

4. **Description of the IEEE ComSoc TCS Process (parties' roles and responsibilities)**

ComSoc relies on Conference Operations (CO), Technical Committees (TCs), and volunteering society members to evaluate the technical quality of conferences seeking TCS status. Since the TCS process has grown significantly over recent years, the following guidelines are critical for all parties to recognize and observe while contributing to the process:

a. ComSoc Technical Committees may endorse conferences within their technical scope and charter. An Emerging Technology Sub-Committee may only endorse an event for TCS purposes with the concurrent endorsement and approval of the Emerging Technologies Committee (ETC) Chair (ComSoc Conference Council Motion, June 12, 2014).

b. TCs can endorse conferences for TCS purpose **DURING THE TC REVIEW PERIOD** where the conference application/information is posted on the **TC REVIEW SITE**. Every application will remain active on this site for approximately **SEVEN BUSINESS DAYS.** Upon request of TC(s), this period may be extended for a few more days (provided the request is made on the TC review site, and approved by CO). TCs may endorse conferences **ONLY** via the TC review site, not by emails. Due to the magnitude of the work involved and the importance of treating all applications equally and fairly, such emails will **NOT** be considered as substitute for conference endorsement through the online TC-review form.

c. Since a single TC endorsement may qualify a conference for ComSoc TCS, a TC should endorse conferences only when that TC can ensure the following:
   i. The bulk of the event falls within the scope of the TC.
   ii. The TC can speak to the technical quality of the bulk of the event.
   iii. The event does not compete with existing ComSoc portfolio events. Competition is discussed in Section 4 below

   If a conference is only of partial interest to a TC, the TC should indicate so in the online form and may contact other TCs to collaborate thereto. Two or more TCs may endorse a conference that does not entirely match the technical scope of one TC.

d. Endorsements made through the TC Review Site must be complete, providing three names of current TC members (i.e., potential *TCS Representatives*) and their e-mail addresses. Information must be entered on the site before the posted deadline. Applications will not be available for TC endorsement after the deadline.

   While there is no limit on the number of events a TC may endorse, a given ComSoc member (who is a member of one or more TCs) may serve as a TCS Representative no more than **THREE TIMES** per calendar year[2] (regardless of which TC he/she is representing). This is an increase over the previous limit of two times (was enforced through October 15, 2014). **TCs and individual *TCS Representatives* are expected to maintain *TCS representation* records**

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[2] Instances of such service are determined and counted based on the year in which the conferences itself (not the TCS application) takes place

whereby they observe and ensure compliance with this limit. TC endorsements which do not fully observe this limit in assigning *TCS Representatives* may not be counted towards ComSoc sponsorship in future.

e. Per IEEE guidelines, *TCS Representatives* must be directly and substantially involved in the development and running of the technical program of the event. They are expected to report any anomalies experienced. They are to confirm that papers they reviewed were assigned reasonably, that conflict-of-interest policies were honored, that their reviews were adequately considered, and that the overall process was fair and appropriate. They are not expected to report on the entirety of the event or the entirety of the review process.

f. As soon as an application reaches ComSoc, an evaluation process starts where ComSoc Staff may communicate with conference organizer(s) for inquiries, information confirmation and/or refinement, etc.

Approximately every two weeks a Conference Operation (CO) meeting is held to review applications; ensure compliance with IEEE and ComSoc policies and requirements; verify that applicable fees have been collected; examine the time line; evaluate past-meetings' completeness and event's history with ComSoc; examine the last-event's TCS Feedback Forms, check for IEEE comments/recommendations (if any), etc. Decisions about applications are made accordingly by the ComSoc Director, Conference Operations (CO). These include: further inquiries if needed, posting (or not posting) application(s) onto the On-line TC Review Site, and granting/denying TCS for applications which have completed the evaluation process. ComSoc expects applying conferences to fulfill certain conditions including, but not limited to, the following:

   i. The conference must have an active web site, a Technical Program Committee (TPC) that is available for viewing on the conference web site, refrains from premature use of IEEE/ComSoc logos, and complies with IEEE policy concerning reference to IEEE Xplore®
   ii. The conference only accepts full manuscripts, 3 pages minimum
   iii. Every manuscript must receive at least three peer reviews
   iv. Acceptance rate of the conference should not exceed 50%
   v. Conference organizers should observe the ComSoc TCS policy, and application processing should be smooth enough to keep staff time and cost at their typical levels. ComSoc expects applying conferences to have steering/oversight committees that guarantees proper transfer of knowledge of the TCS process from one year to another.

Upon posting application(s) on the TC review site, an email request is sent out to the Technical Activities Council (TAC) mailing list (thereby reaching TC Chairs and Vice Chairs). This email asks TCs to review those pending applications. The announcement email typically has a subject line: "New Applications for Review and Response". A conference that meets all IEEE and ComSoc policy requirements and has at least one TC endorsement may receive TCS status. An event that fails to fully meet ComSoc requirements and/or receives no TC endorsements **on the TC review site** is not granted TCS status. ComSoc reserves the right to deny TCS without giving reasons.

More about the ComSoc TCS evaluation process can be found at www.comsoc.org/conferences/Event-Sponsorship

g. A conference which is granted ComSoc TCS will have a minimum of three **TCS Representatives**. Events endorsed by one TC only, may automatically meet this minimum with the three eligible representatives specified by the endorsing TC. If the conference is endorsed by multiple TCs, formal **TCS Representatives** will be assigned from the pool of representatives nominated by all TCs using the following guidelines:

   i. If two TCs are endorsing, the first name specified in each TC form will be selected. A third **TCS Representative** will be selected alphabetically (family names) out of the two names listed second in the two endorsing TC forms

   ii. If three TCs are endorsing, the first name specified in each TC form will be selected.

   iii. If four, or more, TCs are endorsing; the first name specified in each TC form will be selected. There will be more than three **TCS Representatives** in such cases (as many as the number of endorsing TCs).

Notwithstanding these guidelines, care will be given to avoiding conflicts of interest, and to ensuring that feedback forms provide credible assessments.

Formal **TCS Representatives** who are specified by any of the above methods are **REQUIRED** to complete and submit TCS Feedback Forms after the conclusion of the conference (item h below). Other ComSoc members who were nominated for TCS representation by TCs, and who were not selected as formal ComSoc **TCS Representatives**, may of course serve on the conference TPC as desired and are encouraged to submit TCS Feedback Forms. However, their service therein is not counted toward their three-time TCS representation limit. Feedback forms are property of ComSoc; and name(s) of a particular TCS representative(s) (making particular remarks) may be treated as confidential if so desired by this representative.

h. TCS Feedback forms must be submitted to ComSoc Conference Operations (CO), through a dedicated online form, after conclusion of the conference. Every **TCS Representative** is also expected to report any issue(s) he/she encountered about the conference to the Chair of his TC. Submission of Feedback forms may take place at the **TCS Representative's** earliest convenience, but must occur no later than **ONE MONTH** after the end of the conference. Submission of all due Feedback Forms for a given periodic event (annual or otherwise) is a precondition for considering this event for TCS in its next occurrence.

i. When a decision is made to TCS a conference, two emails will be generated: the first email is sent to the conference organizer (applicant) informing him/her of the decision made and subsequent guidelines. The second email is sent to the **TCS Representatives** who are required to complete the TCS Feedback Forms, reminding them of their assignment and feedback deadline. This second email will be copied to the respective TC Chair(s) to update their TCS representation records.

j. The process described above applies to Technical Co-Sponsorship of the main conference of any event applying for ComSoc TCS. It does not automatically apply to sub-events of the conference (e.g., workshops, tutorials, panels, special sessions, poster sessions, etc.). Papers of these sub-events are not included herein. If a conference organizer wishes to extend ComSoc's TCS to include these papers, this request must be made expressly on the ComSoc

Addendum. The organizer must clarify how these papers are reviewed and their acceptance rate so that a decision can be made about them.

It must be noted that TCs can endorse events/meetings which do not receive - or do not request - TCS status. Such an endorsement is an indication of the technical quality of an event from the viewpoint of the TC alone. If this is the only such IEEE involvement, it must be indicated by using the following text: "**Endorsed by the Technical Committee on X of the IEEE Communications Society**". In this case, however, the conference will not be eligible to use the IEEE and ComSoc logos and its papers will not be eligible for inclusion in IEEE Xplore®. TC logos can be used in such cases provided they do not include the IEEE or ComSoc logos as part of their graphic, and provided the entire text specified above is included.

5. Consideration of Competition with ComSoc Portfolio conferences

On the TC review form, TCs are expected to answer questions about whether the conference applying for TCS competes with ComSoc portfolio conference(s). The following briefly describes how competition, healthy or otherwise, may be viewed in this context.

Since ComSoc co-sponsors events in the society's broad area of expertise, and since professionals of other societies are active in this area all over the world, conferences that receive our TCS do constitute some natural, inevitable, competition with ComSoc conferences. Some of this competition complements ComSoc conferences, enriches our field and profession, and grows our global community and reach. This type of competition is healthy; and it is out of professional responsibility that ComSoc grants TCS to events of this nature. Other competition however may unfairly exploit ComSoc's work, stature, and accomplishments; may impact ComSoc conferences negatively in terms of paper submissions, conference success, etc. ComSoc cannot provide TCS for events which pose negative impact on its conferences.

Competition may be evaluated based on a combination of criteria each of which, solely, may not impact ComSoc conferences negatively. In principle, competition can be topical (technical scope), temporal, or geographical; and may be classified as follows:

   a. Topical/Scope competition: conferences designated to topics on which ComSoc portfolio conference(s) focus

   b. Competition in Topic/Scope and Scale: conferences designated to topics on which ComSoc portfolio conference(s) focus and are designated to broad coverage that mimics ComSoc flagship/portfolio conferences in terms of structure and/or organization

   c. Temporal and Topical Competition: conferences designated to similar topics, and take place at the same time as ComSoc portfolio conference(s)

   d. Geographical and Topical Competition: conferences designated to similar topics, and take place in the same geographical area (e.g., continent), as ComSoc portfolio conference(s)

Competition with ComSoc conferences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. ComSoc reserves the right to deny TCS to events the co-sponsorship of which would adversely affect ComSoc flagship and/or portfolio conferences.

Version history:

1.0 6/2012	**Initial draft (Internal only), Author: Joe Touch**
1.1 8/2012	**1st version (Internal only), Author: Joe Touch**
1.2 2/2013	**First published version, Author: Joe Touch (archived)**
2.0 6/2014	**2nd version, (New draft, Internal only), Author: Tarek El-Bawab**
2.1 & 2.2 6/2014	**Modified 2nd versions, (Internal only), Author: Tarek El-Bawab**
2.3 8/2014	**Modified 2nd version, (Internal only), Author: Tarek El-Bawab**
2.4 10/2014	**Modified 2nd version, (Semi-Final, Internal only), Author: Tarek El-Bawab**
2.5 10/2014	**Second published version, Author: Tarek El-Bawab (archived)**
3.0 03/2015	**3rd version, (New draft, Internal only), Author: Tarek El-Bawab**
3.1 03/2015	**Third published version, Author: Tarek El-Bawab (Active)**