



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCES: THE ACADEMIC IMPACT

The report at hand is based on extensive extracts from the report *Case Analysis of International Research Conferences*¹ by IRIS Group – a Danish consultancy company specialized in business, research and innovation policy and commissioned by the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy – an advisory body to the Danish Minister of Higher Education and Science.

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¹ IRIS Group (2017), *Case Analysis of International Research Conferences*, The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy - <https://ufm.dk/forskning-og-innovation/rad-og-udvalg/danmarks-forsknings-og-innovationspolitiske-rad/publikationer/artikler/2-irisgroup-case-analysis-of-international-research-conferences.pdf> (retrieved on November 2, 2017)

² The chapters 1 and 5 have been revised to adopt for the JMIC Case Study Program. Chapters 2-4 are mainly extracts from *Case Analysis of International Research Conferences*.

Abstract

Type of meeting: Six international research conferences held between 2012 and 2016 in six different cities analysed as one case study focused on the academic benefits and barriers of hosting conferences.

Size of meeting: The number of attendees varied from 458 to 20,522 delegates.

Geographical location of meeting: Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Gothenburg, Copenhagen, Aalborg and Odense.

Scientific main areas: Various fields including engineering, health, economics and biology.

Methodological approach: Primary data: semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders; secondary data: literature review.

Key benefits realized: The study is focused on the academic benefits and barriers when hosting international research conferences. The individual researchers benefit mainly in terms of increased visibility and network. The host institution and wider research environment benefit by easier access to recruitment, involvement of PhD students and younger researchers, as well as increased visibility. There are a number of barriers related to hosting international conferences of which the most prominent are lack of time and resources.

Relevance/Implications/Lessons Learnt (if applicable): The benefits and barriers to hosting research conferences vary for individual academics and host institutions. It is not clear when it is beneficial for an individual or a host institution to take on the task of hosting a research conference.

Future research (if applicable): The case study provides an overview of potential benefits and barriers. However, further studies are required to understand how the benefits and barriers are intertwined and the circumstances in which they are realized.

Key words: Academic impact, conferences, scientific meetings, visibility, networking

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1. Introduction

There are few practices in academia that are shared across disciplines and nations. Clearly, peer-reviewed publishing is one of these practices and so is education. Furthermore, conferences belong in this category if we understand them as events, where active researchers present their recent findings to their peers, receive immediate feedback and build a community around an intellectual interest. The research conferences can be traced back to the seventeenth century with the national academies and learned societies in the role of organizers, e.g. the Royal Society, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and the Accademia degli Investiganti (González-Santos & Dimond, 2015). Since then the concept has evolved along with the development of the scientific system (Soderqvist & Silverstein, 1994).

Today, the modern scientific system is characterized by knowledge sharing in hyperspecialized, global research networks (Wagner, 2008). In most scientific subfields, researchers from different countries interact and form international research groups that address very particular issues. The formation of these groups and networks are social processes, where the involved researchers need to meet and build trust among each other. International academic conferences are key platforms for these interactions. In this sense, the organization of conferences is one of the foundational pillars of modern academia. Nonetheless, research conferences have not been used as an instrument in science policy. The case study at hand aims to address this gap.

1.1. Policy context

The Danish meeting industry and related tourism organizations have for some years highlighted the economic benefits derived from business meetings (VisitDenmark, 2012). It is well-documented that the hosting of meetings is conducive for economic growth and job creation, e.g. in airports, hotels, venues and the service sector at large (Grado, Strauss, & Lord, 1997; Hanly, 2012; C.-K. Lee, Lee, & Yoon, 2013). Furthermore, a significant part of the meetings are academic events that presuppose the involvement of

the local research environment in the whole event cycle, from attracting the event, to executing and evaluating it.

One of the main concerns for the future development of the Danish meeting industry is the continued ability to recruit and engage local university researchers in the bidding and hosting process of large events. It can be a monumental and time-consuming task for researchers to engage in the organization of events and often it will take away time from other important activities e.g. grant applications, course preparations or participation in public debates. So why do researchers want to host events and what are the barriers for the researchers who are unwilling to do so?

In Denmark, the Ministry of Business and Growth is responsible for the continued development of tourism, including the meeting industry. The ministry wanted to address the above-mentioned concern in the national tourism strategy launched in 2016 and this was done through an advisory body to the Minister for Higher Education and Science, the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy. Thereby, the concern was dealt with in a science policy context, within which the main concern was to uphold and strengthen an international competitive science system. To our knowledge, this is the first report that has a science policy perspective on the benefits of hosting academic conferences.

The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy published the reports *International scientific conferences: market places for knowledge*³ and *Case Analysis of International Research Conferences*⁴ in June, 2017. The report *Case Analysis of International Research Conferences* was prepared by the

³ The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (2017), Internationale videnskabelige kongresser – markedspladser for viden, Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science - <https://ufm.dk/forskning-og-innovation/rad-og-udvalg/danmarks-forsknings-og-innovationspolitiske-rad/publikationer/artikler/internationale-videnskabelige-kongresser-markedspladser-for-viden.pdf> (retrieved on November 2, 2017)

⁴ IRIS Group (2017), Case Analysis of International Research Conferences, The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy - <https://ufm.dk/forskning-og-innovation/rad-og-udvalg/danmarks-forsknings-og-innovationspolitiske-rad/publikationer/artikler/2-irisgroup-case-analysis-of-international-research-conferences.pdf> (retrieved on November 2, 2017)

consultancy company IRIS Group and it is a case study compiling six international conferences and two non-conferences, i.e. events that were planned, but not executed.

The reports pursue the question whether hosting conferences spur academic benefits that match the cost of hosting them. For universities and individual researchers who take on the role as hosts, research conferences can place them firmly at the center of attention in the international research environment. This can affect individual researchers, the research environment, and the broader institution positively. On the other hand, hosting large international research conferences requires a strong commitment and significant resources from the host institution, and not least from the host researcher(s). The implementation of large research conferences is in most cases a process that can stretch over several years, and comprise a range of challenges, for example making a convincing bid, logistics (venue, accommodation, infrastructure), project and stakeholder management, identifying sponsors and budgetary challenges, e.g. accounting and exemptions from VAT. The local organizing researchers are often reliant on external actors in solving these challenges. With these tasks in mind, the reports ask whether it is better for Danish academics to “free-ride” by attending existing conferences. Is hosting conferences academically speaking worth the effort? And what are the barriers to hosting conferences?

Further the reports explore whether there is a rationale in supporting hosting activities as a crosscut to increased academic quality and capacity. This is interesting for the academic meeting industry, as many countries spend significant amounts of money on increasing the quality of their research and innovation systems.

The issues raised in the reports feed into two general trends in the academic sector. Firstly, across the research and innovation system there is a growing interest in how to assess and communicate the diverse impacts of scholarly work. The notion of “research impact” has gained importance and has, to a varying

extent, been embedded in research policies referring to universities' contributions to the knowledge economy (Benneworth, Gulbrandsen, & Hazelkorn, 2016; Greenhalgh, Raftery, Hanney, & Glover, 2016; Reale et al., 2017). The research impact agenda is reflected in current research and innovation policies in which the linear model of how high quality scientific research trickles down to society is no longer sufficient. So far, the hosting of academic events has been absent from this debate, but the reports by the Danish Council of Research and Innovation Policy hint to the relevance of including them in impact assessment debates.

Secondly, it has been the consensus among practitioners and scholars of science policy that internationalization of research is a pathway to increased quality and productivity (European Commission, 2011; S. Lee & Bozeman, 2005; Sugimoto et al., 2017; Wagner, 2008). However, hosting of conferences has not been included as an instrument to increase internationalization, at least not in Denmark, where none of the eight Danish universities refer to hosting activities in their internationalization strategies.

1.2. *Research context*

The academic literature on the impact of research conferences can broadly be divided into two categories: studies focused on socioeconomic impact and studies focused on academic impact. Furthermore, while some impacts have a formal character others have an informal character. These distinctions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The literature on the impact of academic events

	Academic impact	Socioeconomic impact
Formal	Citations, publications, awards	Tourism, income to businesses, hotels, jobs etc.
Informal	Network, visibility, increased interdisciplinarity, funding, career advancement, etc.	Knowledge transfer to industry etc.

1.2.1. Formal - Academic

Academic impact studies generally utilize a bibliometric/scientometric approach, e.g. measuring citations and publications from conference proceedings, priors etc.

- A 2011 analysis on the “computer vision” subfield of computer science, shows that journal papers, created on the basis of conference “priors” are significantly more cited than journal papers without priors (Eckmann, Rocha, & Wainer, 2012).
- A bibliometric study from 2008 shows that the relative importance of conference proceedings has been diminishing over time and the scientific impact of proceedings is losing ground to other types of scientific literature in nearly all fields, except for engineering and computer science. However, proceedings play a particularly vital role in computer sciences, where they account for close to 20 per cent of the references (Lisée et al., 2008).

1.2.2. Formal - Socioeconomic Impact

These studies are typically present within tourism studies, and are based on economic geography and econometrics. The studies focus on the socioeconomic benefits from hosting conferences, e.g. the economic impact on growth and employment, resulting from delegate expenditures on hotels, venues etc. From this perspective, conferences are generally viewed as being worth the costs of hosting them, e.g.;

- According to VisitDenmark, the daily expenditure for an international research delegate in Denmark is approximately 3,100 DKK (491 USD). Thus, delegates are the segment within tourism that spends the most, fuelling an intense international competition on attracting conferences (VisitDenmark, 2012).

1.2.3. Informal - Academic

Another strand of literature focuses on the derived or indirect research-related value added from conferences in terms of generating international research network, international exposure etc. These

studies generally utilise sociological or anthropological approaches, focusing on social networks. Examples that abound the literature emphasize;

- The positive impact of bringing different constituents to the same physical event in relation to learning, innovation and the development of a research field (Schüßler, Grabher, & Müller-Seitz, 2015).
- That conferences carry beneficial impacts for the prominence and career development of the elite scholars, organising committee chair or member, program committee chair or member, session chair, or invited speakers (Jeong, Lee, & Kim, 2009).
- The social role of conferences in entrenching existing power relations and hierarchies in research communities (Da Silveira, Bufrem, & Caregnato, 2015).

1.2.4. Informal - Socioeconomic Impact

The complex, multi-layered generation of research that arises from international conferences results in network and knowledge sharing between academia and industry (Francisco, Milojevic, Sabanovic, & Šabanovic, 2011).

Thus, the literature on research conferences has investigated a number of perspectives on both the socioeconomic and academic benefits of conferences. However, as mentioned the value added from hosting conferences is more sparsely illuminated. The following section will introduce the analytical approach used in this study.

2. Analytical framework

The analytical framework of this analysis is based on several distinctions made in relation to firstly the process, secondly the actors and finally the benefits and barriers.

2.1. *The conference process*

The conference itself is only part of a larger process stretching from the motivation and decision to host a conference, through planning and execution, to the follow-up phase. All these four phases can in theory spur benefits, both at the level of the host institution, for the research environments and for individual researchers.

- First, motivation and drivers for hosting is important in relation to grasp the relevance of the conference for the research environment and the institution at large. It is furthermore crucial for exploring, which effects the involved actors expect from hosting the conference. E.g. the host can be driven by a desire to fill a gap in the existing knowledge within the field, a desire to be at the centre of the international network and/or a desire to be host for a conference drawing in elite researcher globally.
- Second, the initial activities and planning include the internal decision process in the environment or institution, the bidding process and lobbying in the international research society. Moreover, this phase includes the programming of the conference concept, allocation of resources and facilities, mobilisation of the international research community, calls for abstracts and the peer reviewing process prior to the conference.
- Third, conference execution and conference format include the activities carried out during the conference. For example, logistics (hotels, infrastructure and bureaucracy related to the influx of hundreds or thousands of international delegates), specific conference elements, including keynotes, break-out sessions, panels, networking activities, external communication and outreach etc.
- Fourth, follow-up activities aimed at ensuring embedment and continued momentum in the research results and networks, generated at the conference. This includes publication of papers and conference proceedings, establishment of virtual communities etc. Furthermore, it includes

evaluations and the host's opportunity to institutionalise organisational knowledge gained during the conference.

2.2. *The actors*

The analysis focuses on the benefits and barriers seen from the side of the individual researcher, the research environment and the host institution. However, at large conferences, the ownership of conferences play a pivotal role for understanding the benefits. In most cases, the conference ownership will rest with a scientific association or society that seeks to extent networks and knowledge exchange between scientists from different countries or environments. The extent to which the conference owners are engaged in organizing the conferences may differ significantly. In many cases, scientific societies put conferences to tender among competing hosts or cities.

2.3. *Benefits and barriers*

Benefits are the positive effects spurred by large international research conferences. The benefits can be gained in all phases described above – i.e. before, during and after execution of the conference. The benefits include;

- Benefits for the host institution, e.g. increased collaboration with elite research environments abroad, highlighting the research strengths of the institution, attraction of external funding etc.
- Benefits for the research environments, e.g. in relation to enhanced research quality, increased internationalization, coherence between researchers, talent development, cases and research results that can be employed in relation to education, new research agreements with international research environments or with the industry etc.
- Benefits for individual researchers can encompass enhanced research leadership, better international standing in the global research community, publications in prestigious journals, new personal contacts, and career development because of increased visibility in the institution.

Furthermore, there can be spill overs to other environments at the institution, which for example can benefit from building new relations and exposing themselves to new research results.

Our analytical approach furthermore includes potential barriers for hosting. Barriers can exist at all levels (researchers, research environments and institutions) and in all phases. Barriers can include;

- Lack of time and resources for organizing conferences vis-à-vis the core activities of researchers (research and education).
- Unclear goals or cost-benefits of hosting, e.g. if the conference does not match the research strategy of the environment or institution. Or if the expected long-term benefits of hosting do not justify the expected use of resources.
- Low prioritisation of hosting conferences by institution or from the surrounding research environment vis-à-vis other activities (e.g. research, education, business-collaboration etc.).
- Lack of experience or project management skills of host researcher and knowledge on practical and logistical issues.

Lastly, overcoming barriers and reaping the effects of hosting conferences can to some extent be influenced by conference-supportive framework conditions and instruments. This includes the support from convention bureaus (CVB) that might scout for conferences and host researchers, and support researchers in everything from the bidding process to the execution of the conference. The higher education institutions and professional conference organizers (PCOs) may also support researchers in the process.

3. Methodology

3.1. Conferences selected

The case study is based on semi-structured interviews with key informants involved in six conferences, held between 2012 and 2016 in six different cities. The cases were selected in close dialogue with the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy and MeetDenmark, the Danish national agency for attracting conferences. Three of the cases are Danish, while the remaining three are from Scotland, the Netherlands, and Sweden, respectively. From the outset, it was important that the cases mirrored the extensive variation of conferences, based on the following criteria:

- Location. The selected cases should overall represent a variation between conferences conducted in well-connected metropolitan areas with capacity for hosting large conferences and regional centers.
- Institutional profile. The cases should represent both research-intense, national “Humboldtian” universities as well as regionally oriented universities. Universities with different profiles might have differing motivations and benefits from hosting conferences.
- Differing scientific topics. E.g. health, humanities etc. as prior research shows that the effects of research conferences can differ between different scientific areas.
- Varying sizes. Large conferences with several thousand delegates entail significantly higher demands on project management, venues, resources, funding etc. than smaller conferences with a few hundred delegates.
- Time since execution. Lastly, the difference in time since the execution of the conference may carry importance for the extent to which effects have unfolded. Furthermore, the reliability of the qualitative findings may differ between a conference conducted five years ago, and another held one year ago, because of memory.

Furthermore, interviews were also conducted with representatives from two planned conferences that were never executed. The purpose was to achieve a more valid perspective on which barriers have the strongest influence to halting the realization of a conference during the bidding and preparatory stages in particular those related to individual researchers' resources, skills and competencies, as well as their framework conditions at the research environments, departments and/or institutions.

Table 2: The six cases and their characteristics

Conference	Location	Institutional profile	Scientific topic	Size	Time since execution
31st International Conference on Thermoelectrics, 2012 in Aalborg.	Regional center	Regionally-oriented	Engineering	Approx. 600	4 years
12th International Family Nursing Conference, 2015 in Odense.	Regional center	Regionally-oriented	Health care	458	1 year
European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Congress, 2016 in Copenhagen.	Metropolitan area	Humboldtian university	Medicine	20522	Same year
11th International Congress on the Biology of the Fish, 2014 in Edinburgh.	Regional center	Humboldtian university	Natural Science	485	2 years
51st Congress of the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association and European Dialysis and Transplant Association), 2014 in Amsterdam.	Metropolitan area	Humboldtian university	Medicine	8146	2 years
28th annual congress of the European Economic Association and the 67th European meeting of the Econometric Society, 2013 in Gothenburg.	Regional center	Humboldtian university	Economics	1656	3 years
Non-case 1 European Social Science History Conference 2020, Copenhagen	Metropolitan area	Humboldtian university	History	1000-1500 (expected)	N/A
Non-case 2 International Society of Biomechanics Conference 2019, Copenhagen	Metropolitan area	Humboldtian university	Natural Science	1000 (expected)	N/A

3.2. Interviews

In all thirty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including;

- The researcher who was lead for attracting and/or organising the conference;
- The scientific society behind the conference;
- Representatives from the institutional leadership at the universities; and

- Representatives from local convention bureaus, PCOs, and/or the venues, at which the conference was held.

Appendix 1 contains a full summary of the interviewees.

The interviews examined the following topics;

- Background and motivation for hosting the conference
- Initial activities before execution of conference
- Execution
- Follow-up activities
- Value added benefits and impacts from hosting
- Barriers, challenges, their causes as well as solutions
- Context and critical conditions for effects
- Conference-promoting framework conditions, instruments and partnerships

The qualitative analysis explored commonalities among the cases regarding impact, barriers etc. as well as determine the extent to which the findings can be generalised. Furthermore, it identified critical factors and their significance for researchers and host institutions when bidding for international conferences. Lastly, it examined the importance of critical preconditions and contextual factors, such as the interplay between the university and research environment as well as the importance of experience and competencies on hosting conferences. We used a qualitative model for examining causality in small-n qualitative cases-studies. The model was used for ascertaining the benefits, barriers and the causes behind, as well as their transferability, based on whether the informants' statements and inputs were consistent across the cases.

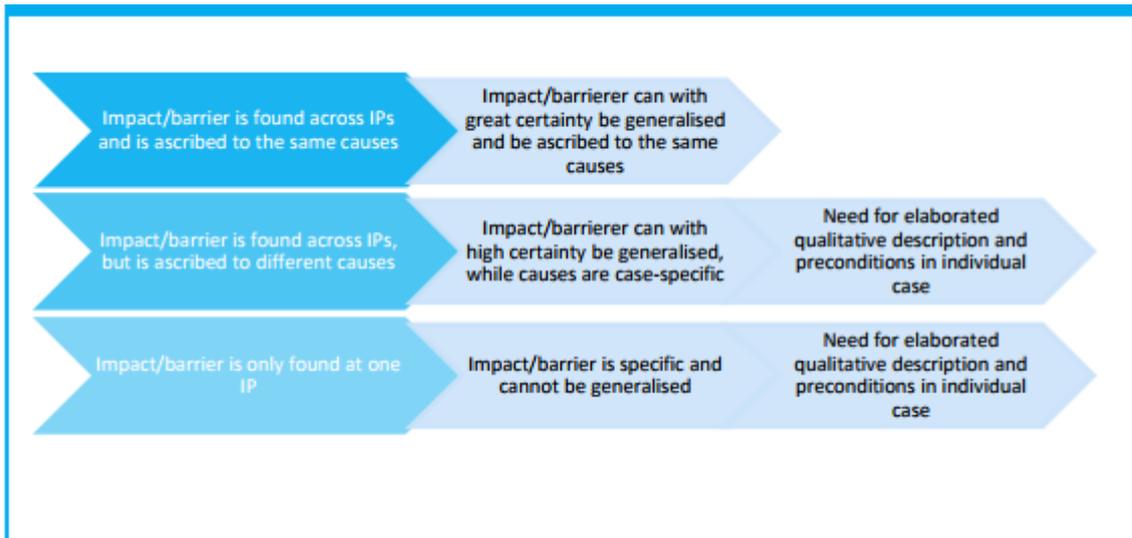


Figure 1: Analysis of causality

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, observed impacts, barriers, and causes can be difficult to generalise, if they are only identified in one or few cases. However, the information contained in these cases can be of great interest, as it describes e.g. barriers that are important under a certain set of circumstances.

This knowledge is crucial to understand the causes leading to an observed benefit. We have employed “process-tracing” in which we have combined qualitative interviews with our knowledge on impacts, benefits, barriers and causes to provide an in-depth, “thick” description of which causes lead to an observed impact or barrier.

4. Findings

The following chapter is divided into three sections. The first section sums up the findings related to the individual host researcher. The second section addresses how the university benefits from hosting conferences. Finally, the last section lays out the identified barriers for hosting events.

4.1. *Benefits for the host researcher*

Benefits from hosting a large international research conference are analyzed in relation to how important they are for the host researcher. Furthermore, we have examined to which extent the benefits are prevalent across the six cases. The overall findings are summarised in Table 3 and further elaborated in the following sections.

Table 3: Benefits for the host researcher

Benefits for the host researcher	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Visibility at the centre of the international research community	High	High
Progress/advancement in research career	Medium	Medium
Invitation to speak at other congresses, workshops, summer schools, etc.	Medium	Medium
Improved organizational skills	Low	Medium

4.1.1. Visibility at the center of the international research community

The most important and most widely emphasized benefit from taking the lead on an international research conference is the ability to meet research colleagues from all over the world. The host is more likely to attract attention from their scientific peers as he or she is the natural midpoint of the conference. All host researchers in the six cases expressed a special opportunity to engage in networks and informal discussions about the newest research and potential future research collaboration. The researchers pointed out, that physical attendance simply makes it easier to arrange impactful meetings with the international elite.

A lot of interaction takes place alongside the official programme, such as chats during coffee breaks, in the hotel lobbies and even before and after the conference. In particular, life science conferences attract delegates before and after the official conference programme because they want to spend time in the local research environment, visit hospitals and meet PhD students. The host is often a centre of attention during the conference. There is normally a welcome speech by the host followed by a presidential address or keynote speech by an acknowledged researcher, which most delegates attend. Furthermore, the host researcher simply has more information about the programme, venue, city etc. and he or she normally

welcomes and spends more time with the most renowned researchers at the conference. In one case, it was mentioned, that the host researcher might even increase the number of citations from his or her publications in the years following the conference because more attention was drawn to the host during the conference.

4.1.2. Progress/advancement in research career

While the most important factor for advancing a research career is high impact research, researchers who take lead on a conference do make themselves more visible, and organising a large international research conference will be remembered in the research environment. A few researchers pointed out that leading a successful conference does not in itself pave the way to a promotion at the university. Instead, researchers who engage themselves in hosting conferences are often ambitious and have a drive and passion for exposing the local research environment. The Congress and Programme Chair of the Biology of the Fish Congress has observed that researchers who engage in conference bidding are usually appointed deans or a similar position later in their career. These people are simply more outreaching.

Our analysis shows that it is more likely for the host researcher to make him- or herself noticed in the scientific societies that are often heavily involved in conferences. They are often actively engaged in the international scientific societies prior to the bidding process and on most occasions; they are also a known figure in the national counterparts to the international societies. Thus, hosting an international research conference can potentially open doors for advancing within scientific societies. This is especially the case for life science conferences. The host researcher at the ESMO conference mentioned that hosting the conference was probably an important step towards a new position in the international scientific society.

4.1.3. Invitations to speak at other conferences, workshops, summer schools, etc.

Several of the host researchers interviewed in this analysis also pointed to the fact that they have been invited to speak at other conferences after hosting the conference. One also mentioned invitations to specific workshops and teaching a summer school. Whether the invitations would have been sent had the researcher not hosted the conference is hard to say. Many of them are senior researchers and have been active in the research environments for many years. It is, however, likely, that the attention on the host during the conference will add to them staying “on the radar” of the research environment and scientific societies.

4.1.4. Improved organizational skills

In all six cases, the host was to some extent involved in the practical planning and organizing of the event. The scientific societies often played a major role in the practical execution of the conferences, but some of the host researchers nevertheless mentioned that they improved their organizational skills in the planning process and during the conference. Several of the PhDs who were involved in the conferences also mentioned this point as a useful benefit. Planning a conference to some extent brings the researchers out of their normal “comfort zone”, and provides them with improved management skills.

An example is the EEA – ESEM congress in Gothenburg where eight PhD students were involved with different tasks. Two of them were more heavily involved as they organized and coordinated the 25 Master’s students who helped during the conference. It was full time work for a week in advance and during the conference. The Master’s students were paid a salary by the scientific society and the PhD students could file the hours that they spent as teaching time. Even though the PhD students did not attend many sessions due to their assigned tasks, they gained intense organizational experience, which enriches their PhD training, and they would happily do it again.

4.2. *Benefits for the host university*

Table 4 shows identified benefits, their significance for the institution and prevalence across the cases. Benefits for the local research environment and host university are more diffuse than the benefits identified for the host researcher as explained in the following sections.

Table 4: Benefits for the local research environment and host university

Benefits for the local research environment and host university	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Exposure and promotion of research environment and host university	High	High
Easier to recruit top researchers	High	Medium
Access to create consortia for new funding applications	Medium	High
Education and involvement of PhDs and young researchers	Medium	High
Improving the quality of research at host university	Medium	Medium
Strengthened internal network in the local research environment	Medium	Low
Income for the host university	Low	Low

4.2.1. Exposure and promotion of research environment and host university

The most prevalent benefit from hosting an international research conference is the exposure and promotion of the local research environment and host university. Although it is difficult to estimate the exact significance of the exposure, researchers, university managers and convention bureaus from all our cases underscored the attention that an international research conference generates as a very important benefit. The benefit for the environment of attracting attention can for example, spill over into:

- Invitations to join in new research consortia (two cases).
- Interaction between young researchers from the environment and experienced researchers from the global elite (one case).
- Increased investment from industry (two cases - both life sciences).
- More researchers interested in the research area (one case).

It is especially an advantage if the academic programme at the conference includes sessions on those research areas in which the host university specialises. Many conferences are organised by scientific

societies and the host university is occasionally left without influence on the academic programme. But some of the host researchers managed to include special sessions in the programme as the following quote illustrates. "The value added of hosting, is the opportunity to influence the academic programme so that it set the spot light on some of the key research areas for the school." (Professor Ola Olsson, host researcher, University of Gothenburg)

Furthermore, it was found that the value added of exposure and promotion differs between the cases, typically depending on the degree to which exposure is a strategic aim from the outset – and whether the aim is followed up by tangible measures. For example, the host of the ESMO congress in Copenhagen in 2016, actively used the congress to showcase Denmark's research strength within cancer research and treatment with the help from a strategic communication agency.

4.2.2. Easier to recruit top researchers

In three of our six cases, it was mentioned that it has been easier to recruit top researchers to the university and local research environment in the years following the conference. The conference alone would hardly cause this positive trend, but according to our interviewees it might be an indirect effect. This should be seen as part of the above-mentioned exposure of the university to the international research environment.

In addition to the opportunity to demonstrating the specialised research areas of the university, visiting researchers are able to explore the physical environment at the university and the host city. In this way, the delegates can acquaint themselves to what it may be like to live and work in the host city. Several of the convention bureaus also affirmed this benefit for the host university based on feedback from previous host researchers at conferences.

4.2.3. Access to create consortia for new funding applications

Among the networking activities that take place at research conferences, commitments to funding applications have a special status. This activity is prevalent across all cases studied in this analysis and the researchers explain that getting together in informal meetings is an essential part of committing to a new research project that needs joint support and funding. Many research funds, e.g. Horizon 2020, require an international consortium of researchers when applying for research grants. International conferences are important agoras to form such consortia. The host researcher in Edinburgh stressed that personal meetings are essential to commit to multimillion-euro research projects. Such a commitment does not happen via virtual communication alone.

The attendance of the industry at conferences is also important for establishing new consortia for research projects. This is more prevalent in the cases with natural science conferences. Like international collaboration, inclusion of industrial partners is often a requirement in applications for research funding. The two large life science conferences that we have studied both included extensive industry sponsored symposia and room to display new products, technologies, etc.

Another benefit regarding applications was mentioned in the EEA – ESEM case in Gothenburg. The EEA – ESEM conference has often been mentioned in funding applications post the conference. The school is currently fundraising for visiting professorships among local firms in Gothenburg. Mentioning the huge international conference is often more tangible for non-academic audiences than name-dropping top journals in which one has published articles.

4.2.4. Education and involvement of PhDs and young researchers

It is custom to invite PhD and occasionally Master's students from the host university to assist the host researcher to plan and execute the event. The students gain free access to the conference and are in some

cases payed a small salary for their effort. In most of our cases, the host researcher mentioned the opportunity for students to meet top researchers, network, and in some cases, present their own research to an international audience. This opportunity is a great supplement to doctoral education that most students would otherwise not be able to afford.

An exception to conference affordability is the International Congress on the Biology of the Fish. When choosing congress location, it is critical that the bidder keep the costs down and that cheap accommodation for students is available during the conference. In Edinburgh, the host researcher also encouraged a local PhD student to organize a symposium and in Aalborg a PhD student presented his research results at the conference. His results were subsequently published in an international journal.

4.2.5. Improving the quality of research at the host university

In all six cases, the conference role as an agora (market) for research improvement was emphasized. This is the main purpose of the conference for both hosts and delegates. In some of the cases, the host university formed a group of researchers who were assigned different tasks for the conference. In one case to evaluate the abstracts submitted for presentation. In another case a group was tasked with identifying new themes and ideas during the conference. This group has since continued its research adding value to the local research environment.

When big scientific societies are in control of the conference, it seems less likely that the conference improves the quality of research at the host university over and above the scientific progress that delegates attending the conference potentially benefit from. In two of the three Danish cases, it was mentioned that the number of articles submitted to the conference by Danish researchers was higher than usual than when the conference takes place abroad. In the long term, conferences held in the destination can generate

more publications and citations for researchers at the host university and in national research environments.

4.2.6. Strengthened internal network in the local research environment

In two of the six cases, interviewees from the university explained that a big event like the conference strengthened both the internal network of the hosting department and the local research environment. Researchers worked together to prepare and execute the conference and students played an active role thereby getting to know their professors within the department. "The conference was great for the internal relationship at the department. It was a unique opportunity for the students to meet the professors in another setting." (Project Manager, Karin Jonson, University of Gothenburg)

4.2.7. Income for the host university

The management of revenue or deficits varies between conferences and it can be an economic upside for the host university if the conference generates a surplus. In some instances, a distribution key is present; in other cases the scientific society receives all surpluses. An example of a distribution key is the one used at the EEA – ESEM annual congress where the two scientific societies (The European Economic Association and The Econometric Society) and the host university equally share a potential surplus from the conference. However, a potential economic benefit is not mentioned as a driver by any of the host institutions analysed in this study. On the contrary, in most cases the host institution incurs considerable costs and time in staging the conference.

4.3. *Barriers to hosting*

This chapter will explore the main challenges and barriers in all phases of the conference process and the strategies used by hosts to overcome them. While challenges primarily constitute nuisances in an otherwise well-functioning process, barriers are more critical and can prevent the conference from occurring such as

in the bidding or preparatory phase. The barriers are analyzed in relation to what extent they are critical for the institution to host/not host a conference. Furthermore, we examine the extent to which the barriers and challenges are prevalent across all cases. The overall findings are summarized in Table 5 below and further elaborated in the following sections.

Table 5: Barriers and challenges

Barriers and challenges	Significance	Prevalence across cases
Time and resources	High	High
Challenges in the bidding process	High	Medium
Conferences are given low priority by home institution or department	High	Medium
Economic risk of hosting and lack of deficit guarantees	High	Medium
Handling value added tax	Medium	Medium
Limited influence on conferences organized by scientific societies	Medium	Medium
Lack of coherence to institutional goals, and the broader institution	Medium	Medium
Weak follow-up measures	Medium	High
Regulations on academia-industry interaction at life science conferences	Medium	Low
Challenges with motivating young researchers	Low	Medium
Organisational challenges	Low	Medium

4.3.1. Time and resources

In the pre-conference phase, one of the most widespread and significant barriers reported are a lack of time and resources on the part of the researcher – a barrier which is highlighted in four of the six cases. The table below provides an estimation of the host researcher’s total conference related workload.

Table 6: Number of hours spent by host researcher

Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESMO in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg
App. 250	App. 300	App. 350	App. 500	Less than 100	App. 600

Hosting conferences is generally a residual activity for most researchers that demands that they take time from their obligations within research and/or teaching or they must spend their spare time on conference related activities. Adding to this, the risks of failure, loss of personal prestige following an unsuccessful planning process and/or economic deficits can make the transaction costs of hosting appear

insurmountable for the individual researcher. Furthermore, as researchers are primarily recognised, merited, and receive funding based on time spent on core research and educational activities the incentives for organising are generally weak. Hence, researchers that wish to attract and host a conference will often have to spend his/her spare time on organising and planning the conferences.

In academia, it is not possible to deprioritise research or educational obligations. At the same time, there is a high degree of self-management, so I have been able to plan myself. But it involved a great deal of work outside of my fixed working hours to make ends meet. (Lasse Aistrup Rosendahl, Professor, Aalborg University and host for ITS)

The trade-off between time spent on research and conference planning can be an issue. In general, it is well balanced at the school. But a conference will always take someone's time that could have been spent on research. (Olof Johansson-Stenman, Vice-Dean of The School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg)

However, there are differences between conferences, depending on whether the conference is organized by the host institution or the scientific society. Especially large medical conferences are in many cases funded, organised, and executed by powerful societies (e.g. ESMO, ERA-EDTA or EEA), with relatively few resources needed from the host institution. In these cases, the challenge of time and resources for individuals at the institutions is of less demanding. Table 7 illustrates the distribution of tasks and responsibilities between host and international organizers in the six cases.

Table 7: Distribution of tasks and responsibilities between the local and international organizers in the analyzed cases

	Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESOM in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg
Announcement and marketing of the conference	International society (ITS)	International society (IFNA)	International society (ESMO) and host researcher with PCO	Local organiser and CVB	International society (ERA-EDTA)	International society (EEA)
Prepare and manage call for papers	International society and host researchers (AAU)	International society (IFNA)	International society (ESMO)	International society (AFS)	International society (ERA-EDTA)	International society (EEA)

<i>Table Contd.</i>	Thermoelectric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESOM in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg
Review of abstracts	International society and host researchers (AAU)	International society (IFNA)	International society (ESMO)	International society (AFS)	International society (ERA-EDTA)	International society (EEA)
Coordinate the specific program	International society and host researchers (AAU)	International society (IFNA)	International society (ESMO)	Local organiser	International society (ERA-EDTA) and the host researcher	Primarily international society (EEA)
Distribute the specific program	International society (ITS)	International society (IFNA)	International society (ESMO)	Local organiser	International society (ERA-EDTA)	International society (EEA)
Finding sponsors	The host researchers (AAU)	International society (IFNA)*	International society (ESMO)	Local organiser	International society (ERA-EDTA)	International society (EEA)
Manage registration and payment	Local organizer (Visit-Aalborg)	International society (IFNA) and the local organiser (Visit Odense)	International society (ESMO)	Local organiser	International society (ERA-EDTA) and local venue	International society (EEA)

Note: Green=Local organiser/researcher; Orange=International scientific society; Yellow=Combination

*Has long-term international sponsorships with The Glen Taylor Institute for Family and Society and the College of Allied Health Nursing Minnesota State University Mankato.

4.3.2. Challenges in the bidding process

The bidding process can be a challenging task for prospective hosts. Winning a bid requires the host to develop a convincing value proposition vis-à-vis competitors, e.g. on the attractiveness of the location and venue, the host's ability to organise the conference, suggestions for set-up and events at the conference, budget etc. In some cases, the convention bureau handles some of these tasks. Table 8 provides an overview of responsibilities in the bidding process. In many cases the local researcher has played a key role in driving, developing the bid and lobbying.

Participants indicated that researchers can lack a number of competencies in the bidding phase, including;

- The skills to lobby and influence key stakeholders at the scientific societies.
- Constructing a convincing value-proposition in terms of the language and selling points used.

- Understand and address the formal requirements of the bidding process which researcher can find complicated.
- Competencies with regards to preparing and planning a conference programme.
- Knowledge on the total package of value offerings of the host city.
- Competencies to make realistic budgets for the conference.

Table 8: Overview across cases on the responsibility in the bidding process

	Thermo-electric in Aalborg	Family Nursing in Odense	ESOM in Copenhagen	Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh	Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam	EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg	Non-case A	Non-case B
Initial driver behind the bid	LocalR	LocalR and CVB	CVB	LocalR	National society	International society and CVB	CVB	CVB
Developing bid and value proposition	LocalR and CVB	CVB	No actual bidding process	CVB	National society, LocalR and CVB	Local researcher and CVB	LocalR and CVB	LocalR and CVB
Lobbying (if relevant)	LocalR	LocalR	CVB	LocalR	National society and LocalR	CVB	LocalR	LocalR

Note: Green=Local researcher (LocalR); Orange=Convention bureau (CVB); Yellow=Combination

Local convention bureaus (e.g. Wonderful Copenhagen, Convention Edinburgh or Amsterdam Marketing) have in some of the cases been an important source of support and encouragement during the bidding process. The agencies have for example helped researchers in understanding the formal requirements of a conference tender, providing input on the value offerings of the city and assisted with writing skills and graphic layout in making a convincing value proposition. These agencies also fund presentation trips for researcher (e.g. Convention Edinburgh) and/or plan the site visits of representatives from the scientific societies in the bidding process.

Our cases, however, show that support from convention bureaus are often insufficient with regards to the lobbying efforts – e.g. understanding the internal “politics” and considerations of the scientific societies and which key stakeholders to influence. For example;

- In the case of the International Congress on the Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh, a bid was lost in the first place. The reason was - among other things - the internal rule of thumb in the scientific society that, at maximum, every third conference can be held outside North America. The conference took place in Europe the year before.
- In the case of the ERA-EDTA, the location is chosen via secret vote in the executive committee, which underscores the importance of informal networking and influence in the society.
- In one of our non-cases, the researcher presumably lost the bid because of internal, implicit perceptions in the society that a) Denmark would be an expensive destination and b) winning the bid typically required the candidate to bid for two consecutive years, in order to demonstrate a strong motivation and commitment.

Challenges with lobbying is particularly the case when prospective hosts do not have a strong foothold in the society, for example as a board member or similar. In most cases, however, the interviewed researchers were strongly engaged in the international and/or national scientific society before the bidding process. These networks award the bidders an edge over competitors in relation to lobbying for the attraction of the conference. This underlines the importance of the host researchers’ position in international and national scientific societies in winning the bids.

4.3.3. Conferences given low priority by home institution or department

Lack of support from the management of the university or department is mentioned as an important barrier in many cases. With few exceptions, the institutional support of the universities for researchers wishing to host conferences appears relatively unsystematic and is based on individual cases where the

management decides whether to support. Compared to research and education, conferences are generally not ascribed a high priority by the managerial level at institutions or departments. While the interviewed managerial representatives welcome conferences that fulfil basic criteria of quality, and can contribute to “putting the university on the map”, they generally view it as a residual activity on line with other outreach activities. Thus, with a few exceptions, the institutional support for researchers who wish to host conferences appear relatively random and is based on individual cases where the management on an ad hoc basis decide whether or not to support. This perceived lack of transparency in the institutional support can be a source of confusion and discouragement among researchers in the bidding or planning phase, which in one of our two “non-cases” was the reason why the conference was never realised. This perceived lack of transparency in the institutional support might discourage researchers in the planning phase. The lack of management support voiced by the informants generally follows two veins;

- Ex-ante encouragement and support in terms of a lack of institutional backing in the bidding or preparatory phase – both morally (in terms of active encouragement) and practical (in the shape of administrative support and/or financial risk-alleviation).
- Ex-post support in terms of recognition and merit for hosting. 49 As an example of the barriers in the ex-ante phase, the host researcher in one of the non-cases voiced a lack of leadership backing both morally and practical. In the other non-case the main issue was practical backing in terms of resources. According to Professor Anne Løkke, the dean at the Saxo Institute was open to the idea of hosting the conference, but due to budget cuts the institute’s core activities were prioritised.

The following quotes illustrate this point:

Apart from an initial positive attitude from the dean there was no consistent management backing in the bidding process, nor economic support in shape of a deficit guarantee or the like. It was a one-man show, with very large risks as I did not know how the attendance would turn out. This happened during a time of large budget cuts and layoffs at the university, which made it way too risky for us – so it was in a way a relief to lose the bid (...) if I should do it again, management backing would be absolutely crucial. (Associate Professor Tine Alkjær, University of Copenhagen)

A university is like a layered cake. The university management often does not know much about what the researchers are doing and vice versa. They are generally not heavily involved in conferences. (Marc Horsman, Manager Meetings & Conventions at Amsterdam Marketing)

4.3.4. Economic risk of hosting and lack of deficit guarantees

The economic risks of hosting a conference, e.g. as a result of low attendance, unforeseen costs etc., can, according to several interviewees, be discouraging. This is particularly important in cases where the researchers bear a large share of the organisational responsibility for the conference vis-à-vis the scientific societies. While it is important to conduct a thorough assessment of risks vs. costs, the potential insecurity may impede researchers and the institution from bidding for a conference in the first place. In one of the non-cases, the lack of deficit guarantee combined with a lack of leadership support was mentioned as a crucial factor for not wanting to bid for a conference again. In the case of the Biology of the Fish conference in Edinburgh, the local organiser was not granted a deficit guarantee. While this posed a risk, the researcher also notes that it forced him to seek out good deals at local hotels and suppliers in close collaboration with the convention bureau.

4.3.5. Handling value added tax

In around half of the cases, rules for VAT (namely which expenses can be deducted and how) pose a challenge that can entail major difficulties and financial burdens for the host and/or scientific society committee organising the conference. Interviewees from the convention bureaus note that the challenge pertains to all kinds of expenditure and income in relation to conferences, e.g. rental of venues, delegate fees, dinners, covering travel expenses for keynotes etc. It is an important issue in high-VAT, and expensive countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. VAT-regulation in regards to conferences is a complicated topic. The analysis shows that host researchers and organisers alike find it difficult to navigate the rules, exceptions, and models. Some of these challenges include;

- The judicial status of the lead organiser. For example, VAT-rules can differ whether the legal responsibility is placed with the university, a PCO, the national scientific society and/or the international scientific society – and whether the responsible entity has the status as a commercial actor or a non-profit organisation.
- To which extent does the “conference owner”, e.g. the scientific society gain a profit on the conference.
- How to handle industrial income, for example from pharmaceutical companies exhibiting at a medical conference.
- Ensuring clear and transparent contracts between conference partners which fully illuminate the issue of VAT and who bears responsibility.

4.3.6. Limited influence on conferences organized by scientific societies

In four of the cases, the international scientific society played a very extensive role in planning and executing the conference. The most prominent example is the large annual congress of the ERA-EDTA, which generally does not draw in local universities in the preparatory or execution phase. This also meant that the broader institutional effects of hosting were very limited. The main local beneficiaries of hosting were the two local members of the organizing committee.

Thus society-driven concepts have a number of advantages for the local researchers involved. For example, the society bears a much larger share of the economic risk. Furthermore, the societies draw on extensive experience from past conferences, a strong network, and a well proven concept. The conferences are generally much less time-consuming for local researchers/hosts than those conferences planned and driven by the researchers. With that said it was found that society-driven conferences leave limited room for local hosts to influence the event, e.g. the programme. According to one informant, this can lower the motivation of the host researchers and thus be a barrier to engage in hosting international conferences.

4.3.7. Weak follow-up measures

It was concerning to note that in all cases there were relatively few efforts to follow-up post the conference. While most of the cases undertake knowledge gathering via surveys, little was done to systematically embed any networks developed and reap long-term benefits from the conferences. Some of the challenges reported, include;

- A general lack of long-term strategy and clear goals for hosting. When the ex-ante goals of hosting, e.g. to increase international visibility, attract funding etc., are unclear it becomes difficult to make a targeted ex-post follow-up.
- Lack of institutional involvement. Generally, across most cases, the examined conferences have limited connection to the host institution outside the immediate research environment. Thus, some researchers (including an informant from the non-cases) pointed out that as the conference is not imbedded in the host institution the university and department leadership quickly forget the conference reducing opportunities for ongoing impacts at the institutional level.
- In society-driven conferences, the follow-up benefits primarily lie within the society, while the local hosts' involvement in the follow-up can be limited.

4.3.8. Regulations on academia-industry interaction at life science conferences

Participants from two (very) large medical conferences and two convention bureaus raised the issue of compliance to international regulations regarding interaction between industry and healthcare professionals as a major impediment for industry participation in medical conferences. The purpose of these frameworks are to balance the need for knowledge exchange between industry and the healthcare sector with concerns about conflicts of interest and industrial influence in health care. However, the regulations represent a barrier to conferences as they can affect opportunities to conduct joint activities with industry at medical conferences, e.g. symposia. This poses an important barrier, as the largest and most demanding conferences usually are within life science. Specifically, the guidelines from EFPIA19 and

EUCOMED20 are mentioned as a challenge. This can, for instance, carry implications for the While this analysis does not go into depth with the challenges related to these frameworks, our informants point to two primary challenges concerning the knowledge and awareness of the frameworks;

- The rules often change, which makes them difficult to navigate for both host researchers and advisors.
- The rules are interpreted in different ways across countries, and in some cases the rules are very strictly interpreted (by the institution and/or public authorities), which can entail a “better-safe-than-sorry”-attitude among hosts.

4.3.9. Challenges with motivating young researchers

Analysis shows that it can be challenging to motivate young researchers to engage in conference planning. This is because young researchers are oriented towards producing top-quality articles in order to ensure progress in their research careers, which leaves little time to organise conferences. “Young researchers are very oriented towards their career and generating high-impact articles. They seem more interested in fulfilling their ambition and career - and often do not have the time.” (Anita Soels, Business Development Manager, RAI Amsterdam)

According to Wonderful Copenhagen, this focus on core research activities is a trend among young researchers. Further the two non-cases emphasize cutbacks in research funding, which at some universities have resulted in redundancies. Consequently, young researchers without permanent positions have been less prone to engaging in conference planning vis-à-vis focusing on their core research and educational activities.

4.3.10. Organizational challenges

The majority of host researchers emphasized the extensive practical skills and competencies required to organise a major event, such as finding a date, booking venues, developing a programme, planning side-events etc. Furthermore, both researchers and convention bureaus point out that researchers' in many cases are uncertain as to whether they can obtain assistance and support in the planning phase. Generally, participants did not emphasise any major, or insurmountable, logistic or organisational challenges with regards to executing conferences – and in almost all cases the convention bureaus or societies have played an important supportive role for the local hosts. However, with respect to some practical challenges, the convention bureaus have limited reach. Practical challenges include;

- Forming and leading a competent, dedicated local planning and execution team around the conference, including involvement from young researchers/PhDs., convention bureaus etc. In one of the non-cases, the lack of commitment from fellow researchers meant that the prospective host researcher was “left alone” with the task.
- Identifying good keynote speakers, as these can pose a substantial expense and are often among the most important selling points. Relevant keynotes typically require a thorough understanding of the international research environment.

One participant (from the convention bureau in Amsterdam) mentioned visa-regulations as a potential challenge for inviting delegates – but only in relation to specific countries, in which the risk of delegates seeking to immigrate to the host country makes for strict requirements. In response to this challenge, the Netherlands has introduced a national fast track system for international science delegates.

5. Conclusion

The case study highlights several benefits related to hosting academic events. For the individual researcher, the benefits are related to visibility, career advancement, invitations to speak at other events and improved

organizational skills. The most prevalent and common benefit was found to be visibility. However, it seems unclear how the benefits relate to each other, e.g. how does visibility and career advancement depend on each other or how does visibility influence invitations to speak. These are obviously not mutually exclusive categories and it would be fruitful for further studies to explore these interdependencies as well as their relation to other key concepts such as networking? Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare the benefits by career stage that is do senior researchers experience different benefits to junior researchers.

For the host institution, the benefits are related to exposure and promotion of the research environment of the host university, recruitment of top researchers, access to application consortia, education of PhD-students, quality of research, strengthened internal network and income for the host university. Of which the most significant and prevalent benefit relates to promotion and recruitment. Similar to the researcher-related benefits it is unclear how the benefits are interrelated.

Furthermore, the case study highlights several barriers inhibiting the realization of these benefits, among which the most important barriers are time and resources. Some barriers can be overcome by collaborating with the meeting industry actors, including PCOs.

The study offers thorough descriptions of the experienced academic benefits arising in various cases. A next step for research in this area could be to explore under which circumstances the benefits outweigh the barriers, as the study does not offer an answer to the initial policy-driven question of whether hosting conferences is an optimal strategy for researchers compared to free-riding by participating in conferences in other places. In order to explore this question, we need to develop a theoretical model of how the benefits underpin each other and which barriers are most important. Moreover, we do not know whether the benefits and barriers vary by specific scientific disciplines or the type and size of meetings and these

considerations are worthy of future research if we are to continue to assist the industry to recruit and engage local university researchers in the bidding and hosting of conferences.

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Appendix: Interviewee details

In the section below we have listed the interviewees for each case, including their title, role in conference and organisation.

Thermoelectrics in Aalborg

- Professor Eskild Holm Nielsen, Dean, The Technical Faculty of IT and Design, Aalborg University
- Professor Lasse Rosendahl, Department of Energy Technology, Aalborg University
- Paw V. Mortensen, Special Advisor, Energy Fundraising and Project Management, Aalborg University
- Assistant Professor, Alireza Rezaniakolaei, Department of Energy Technology, Aalborg University

Family Nursing in Odense

- Professor Ole Skøtt, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southern Denmark
- Associate Professor, Birte Østergaard, Department of Clinical Research, University of Southern Denmark
- Kim Brixen, Director, Odense University Hospital Hanne Konradsen, Board member, Danish Family Nursing

ESMO in Copenhagen

- Professor Ulrik Lassen, Head of Department of Oncology, Rigshospitalet. ESMO National Representative in Denmark and Local Officer for the ESMO 2016 Congress.
- Vanessa Pavinato, Head of Communications, ESMO
- Lotte Hansen, CEO, Hansen Agenda
- Trine Steffensen, Managing Director, MCI group

Biology of the Fish in Edinburgh

- Associate Professor Dr Mark Hartl, School of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure and Society, Heriot Watt University. Conference chair and local host.

- Don MacKinlay, Regional Enhancement Biologist, Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Original founder of the conference and engaged in the American Fisheries Society.
- Professor Garry Pender, Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), Heriot Watt University
- Elaine Miller, Ambassador & Association Bid Manager, Convention Edinburgh

Congress of the ERA-EDTA in Amsterdam

- Professor Dr Pieter ter Wee, Medical Director, Vrije Universiteit Medical Center Amsterdam. Congress President and member of organising committee
- Professor Dr Peter J. Blankestijn, Internist Nephrology, University Medical Center, Utrecht. Member of the Scientific Advisory Board in ERA-EDTA (2008-2011), member of Council (2010- 2013), Congress secretary of the 51st congress
- Anita Soels, Business Development Manager, RAI Amsterdam
- Marc Horsmans, Business Marketing & Conventions team, Amsterdam Marketing
- Paolo Zavalloni, ERA-EDTA Congress & Industry Relations Manager, ERA-EDTA Industry Relations

EEA-ESEM in Gothenburg

- Professor Ola Olsson, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg. Host researcher.
- Professor Olof Johansson-Stenman, Vice-Dean of faculty, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg
- Karin Jonson, Project Manager, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg
- Verena Kurz, PhD student, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg
- Gemma Prunner-Thomas, General Manager, EEA
- Anneli Stahre, Project Manager, Gothenburg Convention Bureau

Non-case 1 European Social Science History Conference 2020

- Professor Anne Løkke, The Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen

Non-case 2 International Society of Biomechanics Conference 2019

- Associate Professor Tine Alkjær, University of Copenhagen

Wonderful Copenhagen

- Bettina Reventlow-Mourier, Convention Director, Wonderful Copenhagen
- Peter Dyhr Andreassen, Senior Project Manager, Wonderful Copenhagen
- Thomas Trøst Hansen, Industrial PhD student, Wonderful Copenhagen