**The Society for Environmental Geochemistry & Health (SEGH)**

**Supporting researchers, conferences, meetings and events**

1 Introduction & Overview

The major activity of SEGH is to promote, internationally, conferences and symposia addressing the main aims of the Society (Appendix and [www.segh.](http://www.segh.)net), to encourage active debate and discussion on pressing research issues for experienced and early career researchers (ECR) in academia, governmental and non-governmental organisations, business and industry.

Annual international meetings are held, moving between Europe, Asia/Pacific, Africa and the Americas; we also encourage locally organised one-day meetings to be held under the Society’s banner. The Society has global membership and the Board seeks to include all regions in events. Currently, SEGH promotes three types of event:

1. **The International Symposium on Environmental Geochemistry (ISEG).**

This is the key International meeting on Environmental Geochemistry, held every 3 years since 1991, jointly promoted by SEGH, International Association of Geochemistry, and the International Medical Geology Association (IMGA). The meeting is typically 4-5 days (+ field trips) attracting ~200-300 + delegates, with parallel sessions and has support from a number of relevant organisations.

1. **The annual international SEGH conference.**

This annual meeting typically attract ~80-120 delegates, with the more recent meetings being three days plus field trip plus workshops. These meetings are friendly but academic, with stimulating keynote addresses exploring interesting themes and ideas. Through the oral and poster sessions, these meetings provide an opportunity for experienced and more junior researchers, and students, to promote their own work and receive thoughtful critiques from peers and knowledgeable colleagues.

1. **Specific, focused workshops, symposia or task force activities**

These are less regular events, in a variety of formats (e.g. one day meetings, jointly hosted or longer working group activities). A specific focus or a timely issue normally stimulates the organisation and SEGH has been able to support a number of such events which have had significant impact on the scientific community.

Since the 1980s many successful regional SEGH conferences have been held in Europe; the International board are keen to promote regional activities more widely.

2 Publications arising from meetings

The meetings have often resulted in special issues of the Society’s journal Environmental Geochemistry & Health (<http://www.segh.net/Journal/>). Examples include:

*Environmental Chromium contamination and remediation.* 2001; 23(3)*;*

*Changes in Soil Quality & Its Remediation.* 2004: 26(2-3)*;*

*Arsenic in the Environment – Risks & Management Strategies,* 2009; 31(S1)*;*

*Environment & Human Health.* 2009; 31(2)*;*

*Practical Applications of Medical Geology.* 2010; 32 (6)*;*

*Environmental Quality and Human Health*. 2011; 33(4);

*The Geochemical Environment and Human Health*. 2012; 34(6).

*Environmental Geochemistry and Health*. 2015; 37(6).

Please speak with the SEGH chair well in advance of the conference if you would like to co-ordinate a special issue linked to the meeting.

3 Support from SEGH and the structure of events

There are few if any rules, but SEGH, over the last 30 years of activity, has developed a loose format and process which has been successful:

* The typical format for the annual international SEGH meeting is for three days of presentations, with an optional field visit. The meeting includes a few keynote speakers, which follow the normal, as well as a few unusual, topics of SEGH interest. We hope for a broad set of topics, so our members can see a place to offer presentations, but also learn something new. The link between environment and health remains a core theme. More recently, workshops have been run outside the main meeting (both before and/or after the main meeting days, but before the field trip). Workshops can be organised by the conference committee or a call for proposals made at an appropriate point early in the advertising of the meeting.
* A typical format for the annual international SEGH conference would be:
  + Day 1 registration, workshops, and informal reception/ice breaker; SEGH Board Meeting (typically on Day 1 before the evening ice-breaker)
  + Day 2 oral/poster sessions
  + Day 3 oral/poster sessions
  + Day 4 oral/poster sessions
  + Day 5 fieldtrip, workshops
  + Time for Annual General Meeting during the main meeting at a suitable point (one hour maximum): reports, nominations, board membership and hosting of future meetings
  + Time for presentation about the next meeting presentation (not at the end when people have left), typically five minutes; maximum 10.
  + An ECR lunch. The aim of the lunch is to welcome the new annual intake of ECRs onto the SEGH mentorship scheme. Here a buffet style lunch is preferred to allow mixing of the new intake with each other, but also with SEGH mentors. As such, this free lunch for up to 30 (approx. 20 ECR and 10 mentors) needs to be planned into the budget. For this meeting we use a fairly loose definition of ECR, but ideally within 3-4 years of completing PhD; PhD students can be included although the main focus should be on those who are research assistants/associates or in the later stages of their projects. SEGH operate the mentorship scheme on a first come first served basis; the first 20 ECRs to register for the conference and tick yes for the scheme will gain entry to the free networking lunch.
* While we expect the international meetings to be cost neutral at worst, and ideally to make a surplus, smaller 1-2 day events will need underpinning by the host organisation, while regional groups can apply to SEGH for some backing to keep their activities going.
* We do not encourage parallel sessions: it is very difficult in practice to ensure such sessions are working to the same timetable, giving rise to frustrations when delegates move between sessions and miss something important. In the typical SEGH meeting with <130 delegates, parallel sessions are not needed.
* The registration fee should offer a discounted fee for members of SEGH (we have member and student/retired member grades) and a non-member fee which includes annual SEGH membership (this membership fee is paid to SEGH at least 2 weeks before the meeting by the conference organisers). Day rates are also encouraged.
* SEGH will support (and typically co-ordinate and help judge) prizes for best **student** oral and poster presentations. Marking guidelines and proformas are available from the SEGH secretary.
* Any surplus from the conference is normally split between SEGH and the organisers. The split is negotiable but the organisers should anticipate not less than 30% of any surplus is payable to the society.
* SEGH board and members will support the host with advice on organisational aspects, getting contacts and in disseminating/advertising the event to their own networks, as well as providing many of the delegates.
* Poster sessions should have dedicated time and place, and not just be held in a coffee/lunch break. Clearly assigned sessions, with accompanying flash presentations or break-out groups for discussions around posters – perhaps two evenings for posters around drinks, for example - enable more people to have an opportunity to present.
* Guidelines should be provided on what constitutes a good talk, and what makes a good poster. We are fortunate that SEGH meetings typically have a mixed professional audience and presenters need to consider the extent of usage of professional jargon. As such, presentations should target a broad, but informed, audience. Furthermore, it is essential that all presenters (oral and poster) are reminded to include the implications for human, animal and/or environmental health of their work.

4 Questions for organisers

Have you considered the following issues, and whether you:

1. Have support from your institution – are you able to get reduced costs of room hire, facilities, IT support, delegate Wi-Fi access, etc?
2. Can obtain support, grants or sponsorship from networks/organisations?
3. Can access website space and support for a conference web site?
4. Can access efficient on-line registration (and payment) facilities? SEGH is developing such a system in-house, which will be available to all conference organisers should this be required.
5. Have organisational support from colleagues (and student helpers) to set up and run the event?
6. Can provide a good social element for the meeting – conference dinner and mixer events?
7. Can set a fee level which will attract delegates and ensure breakeven/minor profit from the meeting?
8. Can provide access to suitable accommodation and ensure the logistics of arrival at the conference venue is straight forward? Providing a number of options for delegates is ideal, some will bring accompanying persons, others will have a very restricted budget.

5 Budget for SEGH Meeting

An outline budget is distributed with this document (Excel spreadsheet), giving a list of typical items to cost into any budget proposal, so that proposers and organisers have not missed any costs.

Also include the following into the budget to ensure they are covered by the standard registration fee:

* Free ECR and mentors lunch (min. 30 places)
* Workshop(s) (liaise with the President over workshop topic(s)).
* Delegates rate to include membership fees for non-members (payable to SEGH)
* The ice-breaker event
* Honorary one year SEGH membership for invited keynote speakers (payable to SEGH) where non-members are invited
* Also consider including the following in the standard registration fee:
* The conference dinner

Support from experienced SEGH committee members around what, in reality, these budget items can entail can be of great value to the new host team.

Sponsorship should be sought, as it is in the organisers own interest to make the conference budget balance. Sponsorship helps keep student (and retired) fees down, without elevating non-member/member fees excessively. Members pay reduced rates over non-members, although in practice the differential equates to the membership fee (subsequently paid to SEGH before the meeting).

As many of the social events as possible should be included in the conference fee, enabling a good number of delegates to attend.

6 Hosting SEGH meetings

The SEGH Board welcomes offers to host SEGH supported meetings and events. The Board meets regularly, and local members are encouraged to identify hosts and stimulate the organisation of meetings. The Board coordinates the programme of meetings, reviewing proposals and accepting/nominating hosts for events. This includes synchronising meetings and forward planning to try to ensure SEGH supported meetings do not clash with other related events.

Anyone wishing to host a meeting should **send a proposal** to the SEGH Board through the chair. The proposal should cover the following points:

1. Place and time of meeting, including the host institution.
2. An outline programme, including main themes for the meeting.
3. An outline social programme.
4. Any proposed field trip and outline workshops.
5. An outline budget.
6. Support available from the host institution and staff / students.

**Appendix**

**SEGH Aims**

SEGH was established in 1971 to provide a forum for scientists from various disciplines to work together in understanding the interaction between the geochemical environment and the health of plants, animals, and humans. We recognise the importance of interdisciplinary research. SEGH members represent expertise in a diverse range of scientific fields, such as biology, engineering, geology, hydrology, epidemiology, chemistry, medicine, nutrition, and toxicology. Source: [www.segh.net](http://www.segh.net)