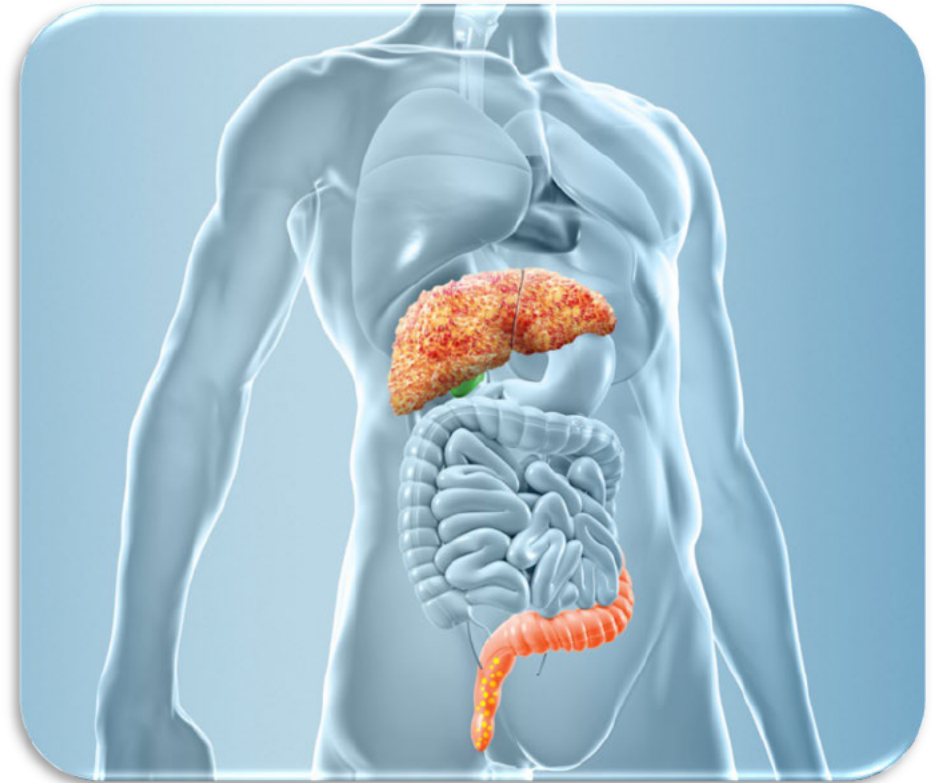


Masterclass Lecture

Behind the scenes: organizing a scientific conference and other things

Cristina López-Vicario
Assistant researcher
Hospital Clinic-FCRB-IDIBAPS

MICROB-PREDICT 8th General Assembly Meeting,
Bellaterra, 28-30 September 2026



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*From younger speaker at the
Workshop on Lipid Mediators
(Pasteur Institute, Paris, 2012)*



*To member of Organizing Committee of the
Workshop on Lipid Mediators
(2022-2024-2026)*



European Workshop on Lipid Mediators!

This biennial workshop is primarily aimed at scientists interested in the field of bioactive lipid mediators.

Numerous International speakers invited or selected from the submitted abstracts will present their work.

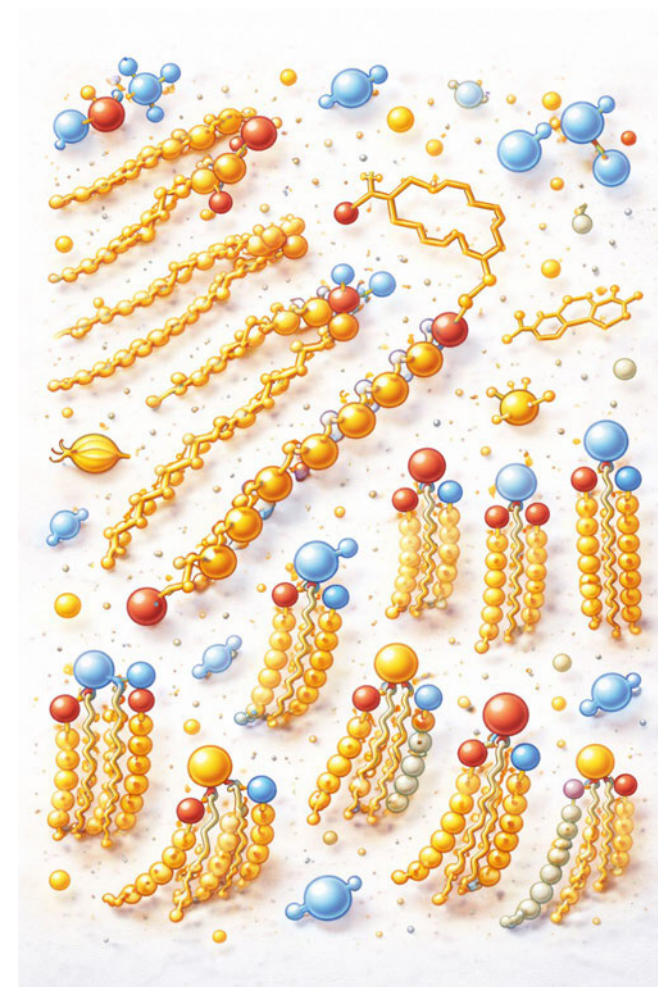
Scientists from Europe and beyond will share their expertise on the biochemistry, molecular biology and physiology of lipids as signaling molecules, as well as their involvement in inflammation, and their specific roles in several disease conditions.

The workshop has two main objectives:

- 1) to bring researchers together to discuss the latest results and developments in this rapidly expanding field;
- 2) to foster interactions and exchange of ideas between different laboratories.

We especially encourage students and postdoctoral scientists to attend this workshop, and a special session will be dedicated to them.

This year 2026, the workshop will be held in Paris at the Institut Pasteur. Previous editions took place in Barcelona in 2006, Valladolid in 2008, Paris in 2010 and 2012, Istanbul in 2014, Frankfurt in 2016, Brussels in 2018, Stockholm in 2022 and Edinburgh in 2024



<https://workshop-lipid.eu>

EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR LIPID MEDIATORS (ESLM)

Who are we?

- A **European, non-profit scientific association**, established in 2013.
- Brings together scientists interested in **bioactive lipid mediators**.
- Promotes **scientific interaction, exchange of ideas and development of the field**.
- European in spirit, but open to collaboration with scientists **from outside Europe**.

What does ESLM do?

- Organizes the **European Workshop on Lipid Mediators (EWLM)** every **two years**.
- Supports **young scientists**, including students, postdocs <35 years and technical staff.
- Provides **travel awards** for young researchers based on the quality of presentations in the Young Scientists' Session.
- Promotes geographical diversity by moving the EWLM to a **different European country** for successive editions.

FROM ESLM TO EWLM: HOW THE ORGANIZATION WORKS

ESLM Board

Governance, finances & scientific principles



EWLM Organizing Committee

The Board constitutes the organizing committee



Local Organizing Team

People based near the host city support the logistics



EWLM

2-day scientific workshop + optional educational day



What are scientific meetings

- Scientific meetings are at the heart of a scientist's professional life since they provide an invaluable opportunity for learning, networking, and exploring new ideas.
- Scientific meetings should be enjoyable experiences that add exciting breaks to the usual routine in the laboratory.



WHY DO WE ORGANIZE SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS?

- To share knowledge: Present new findings, methods and ideas
- To connect people: Bring together researchers from different backgrounds, institutions and countries
- To exchange ideas: Discuss, challenge and refine scientific concepts
- To create collaborations: Turn scientific interactions into new projects, networks and opportunities
- To inspire the next generation: Give visibility to early-career researchers and foster scientific careers
- To build a scientific community: Create a shared space around a common research question
- To accelerate science: Move from knowledge → discussion → collaboration

We don't organize conferences just to communicate science.
We organize them to create the conditions for new science to happen.



Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

- **Rule 1: The Science Is the Most Important Thing**

- Get the right people there, namely the best in the field and those who will be the best, and the rest will take care of itself.



- **Rule 2: Allow for Plenty of Planning Time**

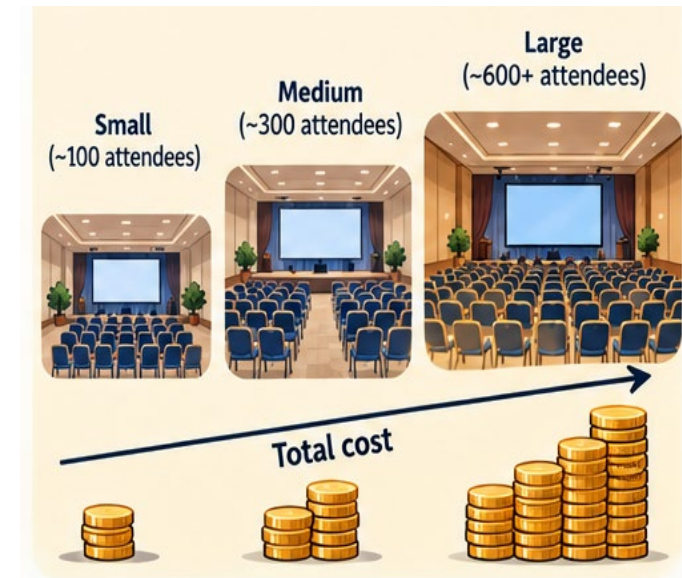
- Allow plenty of time to select your meeting venue; to call for, review, and accept scientific submissions; to arrange for affordable/discounted hotel rooms; to book flights and other transportation options to the conference.
- Keynote speakers will also require you contact them months in advance.



Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

• Rule 3: Study All Potential Financial Issues Affecting Your Event

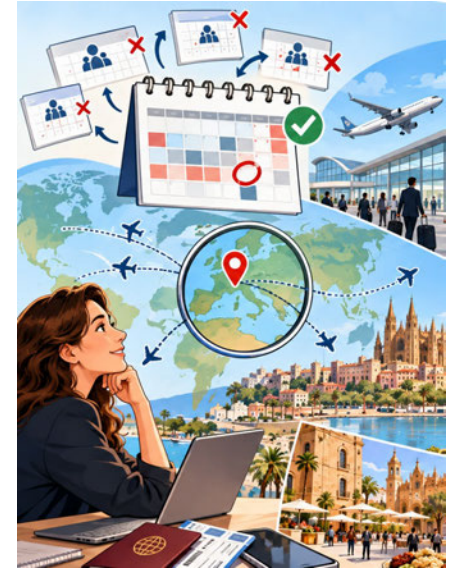
- Sponsors are usually the primary source of funds, next to the delegates registration fees.
- To increase the chances of being sponsored by industry, write them a clear proposal stating how the money will be spent and what benefits they can expect to get in return.
- The cost of your conference will be proportional to the capacity of the venue (number of attendees).
- You will need to include the actual cost of renting the venue, meals and coffee breaks, audiovisual and venue staff, travel fellowships, publication costs for proceedings in a journal and awards for outstanding contributors.
- All these issues will determine how much you need to charge your participants to attend.



Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

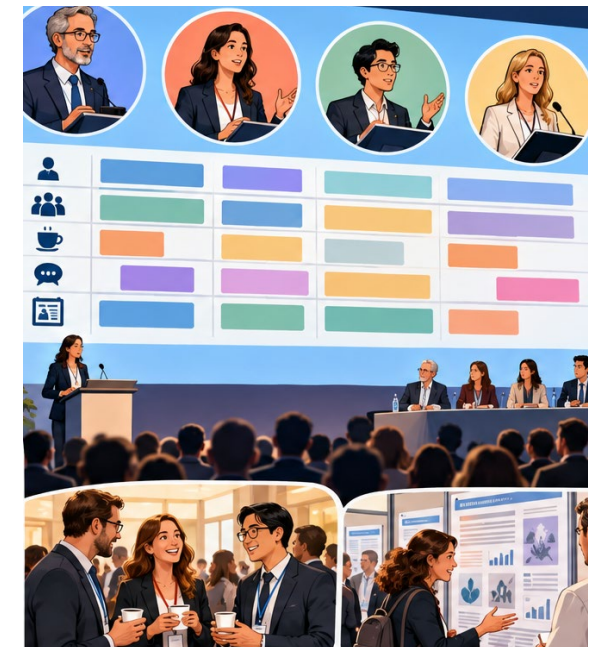
- **Rule 4: Choose the Right Date and Location**

- Choose a date as far away as possible from established conferences or around a main conference, in the form of a satellite meeting.
- Consider how easy it is to travel to the location, whether it has a strong local community in the field and whether it has cultural attractions.



- **Rule 5: Create a Balanced Agenda**

- A conference is a place for people wanting to share and exchange ideas.
- Having many well-known speakers will raise the demand for your event but that has to be balanced with enough time for presentations.
- A mix of senior scientists and junior scientists always works for the better.
- Allow plenty of time for socializing; breaks, meals, and poster sessions are ideal occasions to foster networking and meet potential collaborators.



Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

- **Rule 6: Carefully Select Your Key Helpers: the Organizing Committees**

- The organizing committee members separate the areas of responsibilities depending on their interests and availability:



Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

- **Rule 7: Have the Members of the Organizing Committees Communicate Regularly**

- Online meetings ahead of the conference to assign responsibilities. Tasks such as registration tables, carrying microphones for attendees to ask questions, having poster boards, materials to attach posters, etc., are easily overlooked.
- The local organizers should convince the other members that the venue will work.



- **Rule 8: Prepare for Emergencies**

- Attendees need to be aware of all emergency procedures in terms of evacuation, etc.
- All attendees should be reachable as far as possible during the conference.



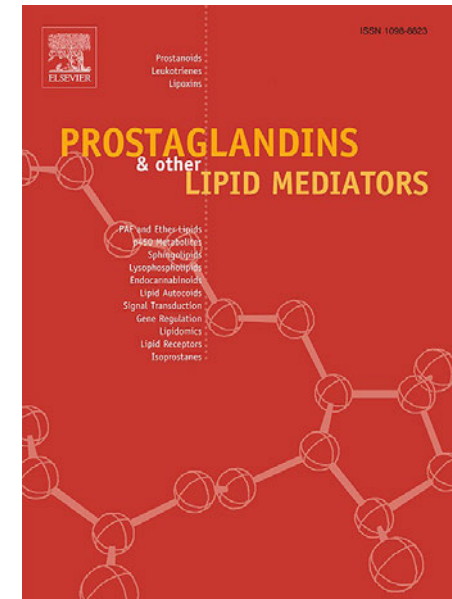
Ten Simple Rules for Organizing a Scientific Meeting

- **Rule 9: Wrap Up the Conference Properly**

- At the end of the conference, you should give credit to everyone who helped to make the event a success.
- It is time for the awards ceremony.
- Communicate the location and if possible, the date, for the next event.

- **Rule 10: Make the Impact of Your Conference Last**

- Published proceedings are the best way to make the results of your conference last. Negotiate with journals far in advance of the conference to publish the proceedings.
- Social media is today important tool: Upload photos and videos, post the names of presenters who have received awards or travel fellowships. including a summary of the activities.



Corpas, M. (2008).

2026: Organizing the 10th EWLM and other things

This year, I discovered that organizing a scientific conference and organizing a wedding have much more in common than I expected.



VS



In both cases, you have a large group of people, a limited budget, a very tight schedule...

...and everyone has an opinion.

The ingredients

Scientific Conference

Keynote speakers

Invited speakers

Abstract submissions

Scientific programme

Venue

Catering

Sponsors

Registration desk

Name badges

Networking

Gala dinner

Conference chair

Social media

Wedding

Bride & groom

Special guests

RSVP

Wedding programme

Wedding venue

Catering

Parents / financial contributors

Welcome drinks

Seating plan

Cocktail

Wedding dinner

Wedding planner

Photographer & Videographer material

WHERE DOES THE BUDGET COME FROM?

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

REGISTRATIONS

The more participants → the bigger the budget

+

SPONSORS

+

What is saved from past conferences

The more sponsors → the more possibilities

The golden rule: never spend money you haven't secured yet.

You have to trust the treasurer of the society, the same as you trust the rings wearer child.

WEDDING

GUESTS

The more guests → higher costs

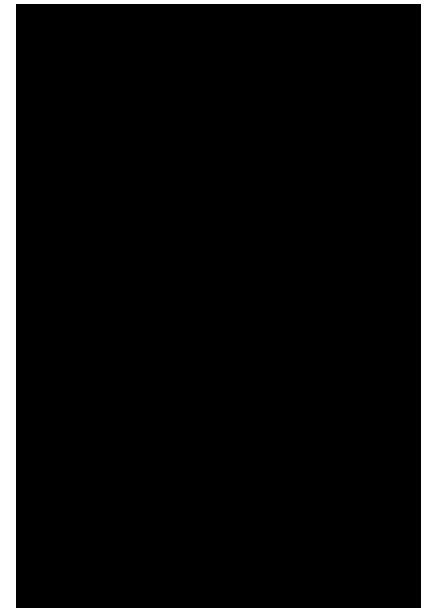
+

CLOSE FAMILY

+

Savings from Bride and Groom

image not shown
publicly for privacy
reasons



More similarities...

The speakers $\approx$ The wedding guests

Before the event:

“Yes, of course, I will attend.”



Three months later:

“Can I bring someone with me?”



The day before:

“My flight has been cancelled.”

Master of Ceremonies $\approx$ Conference Chair

Both are responsible for keeping everyone on time and everything is under control.

The seating plan in a wedding $\approx$ Orders and thematic sessions of speakers

At a wedding, you wouldn't want to seat people next to each other if they haven't spoken in 20 years.

At a conference, talks should be grouped by topic and area of expertise to keep the audience engaged and ensure continuity between sessions.

The musicians $\approx$ audiovisual equipment

In a wedding, you can have a beautiful ceremony, but music is what helps transmit those emotions to the guests.

In a conference, you can have the best speakers and the most relevant science, but if the sound is terrible, the slides cannot be seen or the audiovisuals keep failing, the scientific message doesn't get through.

The best technical production is the one you don't notice. So, in both cases: invest in the people who make the message heard.

CATERING: MORE IMPORTANT THAN WE THINK

At a wedding, people are expecting to eat.

At a scientific conference, people are expecting to eat, drink coffee, network, discuss science... and come back exactly on time for the next session.

WEDDING

- Cocktail
- Dinner
- Wedding cake
- Open bar
- Dietary restrictions
- Vegetarian / vegan / allergies

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

- Welcome coffee
- Coffee breaks
- Lunch
- Gala dinner
- Dietary restrictions
- Vegetarian / vegan / allergies

→ **Timing, timing, timing!**



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: THE WEATHER FACTOR

☀ Perfect weather → Great experience

☁ Rain → Plan B

💨 Wind → Plan B

💧 Heat → Plan B

No Plan B? No panic.

There is one member of the organizing committee who never answers your emails and never follows your instructions:

the weather.

So when planning outdoor activities, don't just plan the event.
Plan the experience you will deliver if the weather changes.



**Good organization is not about controlling everything.
It is about anticipating what you cannot control.**

WHAT I LEARNED FROM ORGANIZING BOTH

A successful event depends on many professionals whose work is almost invisible.

You cannot control everything.

Someone will always ask for a last-minute change.

Have a Plan B/C/D...Z

In both cases, you are not really organizing an event.

You are organizing an experience.

And whatever you do...

...never underestimate the power of a good Excel sheet.

ID	Work Package / Area	Task	Description	Responsible	Start date	Deadline	Status	Priority	Comments
Conference: European Workshop on Lipid Mediators (EWLM) Dates: 1-3 July 2026 Venue: Paris, France									
1.1	Governance	Constitute organizing committee	Confirm members and roles	Chairs	01/09/2025	15/09/2025	Completed	High	✓ List finalized
1.2		Regular OC meetings	Monthly meetings (agenda, minutes)	Conference Manager	01/09/2025	Ongoing	In progress	High	Next meeting: 10/10/2025
2.1	Scientific program	Define scientific themes	Main topics and session format	Scientific Committee	01/09/2025	30/09/2025	Completed	High	Themes approved
2.2		Invite keynote speakers	Send invitation letters and confirm	Scientific Committee	01/10/2025	30/11/2025	In progress	High	7/10 confirmed
2.3		Call for abstracts	Prepare guidelines and open submission	Conference Manager	01/11/2025	15/01/2026	Not started	High	
2.4		Review abstracts	Assign reviewers and make decisions	Scientific Committee	15/01/2026	15/03/2026	Not started	High	
3.1	Venue & logistics	Book venue and rooms	Plenary, parallel sessions, posters, exhibition	Conference Manager	01/09/2025	15/10/2025	Completed	High	Contract signed
3.2		Audiovisual and IT	Projectors, microphones, livestreaming	AV Company	01/02/2026	30/06/2026	In progress	High	Technical visit scheduled
3.3		Catering	Coffee breaks, lunches, welcome reception, gala dinner	Conference Manager	01/10/2025	31/05/2026	In progress	Medium	Menu options received
3.4	Finance & sponsorship	Accommodation	Hotel block and booking link	Conference Manager	15/10/2025	31/12/2025	Not started	Medium	
4.1		Budget planning	Income and expenses forecast	Treasurer	01/09/2025	30/09/2025	Completed	High	
4.2		Approach sponsors	Prepare sponsorship packages and contacts	Sponsorship Team	01/10/2025	31/01/2026	In progress	High	5 companies contacted
4.3	Marketing & communication	Monitor payments	Registration and sponsorship fees	Treasurer	01/11/2025	30/06/2026	Not started	Medium	
5.1		Website	Design and content	Web Team	01/09/2025	31/10/2025	Completed	High	Live
5.2		Social media	Posts, logos, key dates	Web Team	01/10/2025	Ongoing	In progress	Medium	Monthly plan
5.3		Promotional materials	Flyer, banners, email templates	Web Team	01/10/2025	15/01/2026	Not started	Medium	
5.4	Registration & attendees	Media outreach	Press release and contacts	Web Team	01/03/2026	30/06/2026	Not started	Low	
6.1		Set up registration system	Online platform and fees	Conference Manager	01/10/2025	30/11/2025	In progress	High	Using Cvent
6.2		Manage registrations	Answers to enquiries, invoices	Conference Manager	01/12/2025	30/06/2026	Not started	High	
6.3	On-site management	On-site check-in	Registration desk, badges, welcome pack	OC Volunteers	30/06/2026	01/07/2026	Not started	High	
7.1		Volunteers	Recruit and train	OC Volunteers	01/04/2026	30/06/2026	Not started	Medium	
7.2	Post-conference	Signage	Room signs, posters, directions	Logistics Team	15/06/2026	30/06/2026	Not started	Medium	
7.3		Welcome pack	Program, badge, map, info	OC Volunteers	01/06/2026	30/06/2026	Not started	Medium	
8.1		Feedback and evaluation	Attendee survey	Conference Manager	01/07/2026	31/07/2026	Not started	Medium	
8.2		Financial closure	Final report	Treasurer	01/07/2026	31/08/2026	Not started	Medium	

