Akademy 2019
Call for Hosts

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Call for Hosts

The KDE Community and KDE e.V. are seeking a host for Akademy 2019. We are looking for a location with a strong team of local, detail-oriented volunteers to organize and host our annual community summit. Akademy is the gathering of the KDE Community, one of the largest and most significant Free Software communities.

Hosting Akademy is an enriching experience that offers an opportunity to have an impact on your local Free Software community, and gives visibility to everyone involved. Find out how you can organise Akademy where you live in the text below.

Akademy (http://akademy.kde.org) is KDE's yearly week-long conference. The KDE Community gathers en masse in one location for seven days of conferences, workshops and coding. In 2017 it was held in Almería, in the south of Spain, and 137 people attended the event. In 2016 it was held in Berlin as part of QtCon, a joint conference for five communities bound together by their interest in Qt technology. In 2016 there were approximately 200 attendees, and we expect a similar number in 2019. Most past events have been organized in universities and colleges, but any location that has the facilities for talks, group sessions and hacking for a full week will be considered. We prefer a conference venue that is free or sponsored.

The conference program is usually structured as follows:

- Most attendees arrive on Friday and pre-register. The Annual General Assembly of the KDE e.V. is also often held on Friday.
- On Saturday and Sunday, the conference opens with 2 or 3 keynotes and two simultaneous presentation tracks for attendees to choose from.
- The remainder of the week (Monday to Thursday) is used for coding, workshops and Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions for smaller groups of 10 to 50 people.

The venue thus needs to offer a big lecture room that fits 150-200 people, a smaller lecture room that fits up to 50-100 people, and several smaller rooms for workshops.

Akademy requires a location that can be easily reached by international travelers, preferably close to a major airport. The conference venue should be able to accommodate the attendees and provide them with excellent Internet access (with WiFi and Ethernet) for all conference activities during the week. Furthermore, sleeping accommodations and places to find food should be close to the venue or easily reachable.

Organizing Akademy is demanding and requires a significant investment both in terms of time and effort. However, successfully organising Akademy is a rewarding task and is highly recognized and appreciated by the KDE Community.

The proposal should include:

- Details of the conference venue (infrastructure, facilities, room availability, Internet connectivity, on-site catering)
- A reasonably detailed budget
- Information about local community support, core team members, potential local industry and government support and sponsorships (if possible)
- Lodging options and overview of airports, train stations, public transport options

Applications can be sent to the Board of KDE e.V. at kde-ev-board@kde.org

Requirements for Hosting Akademy

Akademy is the annual meeting of the KDE Community. KDE e.V., the non-profit organization supporting the KDE Community, acts together with your organization as the official co-organizer of Akademy 2019, and can act as a signing party for contracts, if needed.

Akademy consists of the required Annual General Assembly of the KDE e.V., a two day conference and several days for coding, workshops, discussions, meetings, fun, socializing and more (the local team plays a substantial role in designing the non-technical parts of Akademy).

The requirements for a location for Akademy are listed below. These requirements are based on experience with previous Akademy locations. They can be altered, but deviating from these requirements needs to be supported by good reasons and creative alternative solutions to ensure Akademy is a successful and enjoyable event.

Goals

The primary goals of Akademy are to act as a community-building event for the KDE Community, to communicate the achievements of the KDE Community, and to provide a platform for collaboration with other communities and industry partners. Secondary goals are to engage local people with Free and Open software and to provide space for getting together to write code.

Format and Date

The number of participants cannot be predicted exactly and depends to some degree on the location. The numbers are based on participation in previous years. This program has been a successful formula to make the conference meet the established goals.

- One-day KDE e.V. meeting, up to 100 people. Other attendees arriving and pre-registering at a social event.
- Two-day KDE conference (Saturday/Sunday), up to 250 people.
- Five-day unconference, workshops and hacking (Monday to Friday), 150 people at the start, 100 people at the end.
- Social activities such as a welcoming reception, party and a possible sight-seeing tour or day trip activity.

Akademy should take place in the Northern Hemisphere during summer (June–August). Some consideration should be given to the impact of the date on lodging and travel costs, as well as to potential conflicts with public or religious holidays.

Local organization

A strong, reliable local team is essential to the successful organization of Akademy. There should be enough team members and time to take care of all the bits and pieces of organizing such a big international event.

The core local team should consist of around 5 people with one lead organizer who is the main contact. The organizing team should be involved for the entire planning and preparation of the conference. One person alone will not be able to organise a successful Akademy! The KDE Community is friendly and easy to get along with. However, it is also an energetic and demanding community. In addition, there are many little details that need taking care of.

The organizer is the main contact for the preparation of Akademy. He or she must be available to others who are helping with the preparations or providing services. **The lead organizer can expect to work about 5 hours/week in the first few months, 10-15 hours in the weeks leading up to the event, and almost full time in the week or so before the start of Akademy**. The lead organizer must also assemble a local organizing team and local supporters such as Linux User Groups.

KDE e.V. will assist with procedures and provide advice based on several years of experience and organization (such as general project management, managing the travel grants and sponsor acquisition). It is absolutely mandatory that the conference is supported locally (by a LUG, student FOSS group or similar) for registration, network administration, security, and other tasks. Good press contacts are also helpful.

At least 10 volunteer helpers are needed in the weeks leading up to the event. Prior to the event, there is a call for volunteers, so KDE Community members will be available to help.

If needed, KDE e.V. can also provide the local organizer with a formal letter or references for presentation and negotiations with local authorities (such as universities) and sponsors.

Tasks that the local team takes care of:

- Negotiate contract with conference venue and liaise with conference venue staff
- Write visa invitation letters for conference attendees (for this, a local legal entity, e.g. a university, is very helpful)
- Assist with setting up conference network
- Help to research and plan social program (e.g. conference party, day trip)
- Research inexpensive accommodation options and negotiate special rates with hostels
- Research going-out options (restaurants etc.)
- Research local options to print t-shirts, posters and other merchandise
- Assist with video recording the conference
- Promote the event among local media
- Act as main contact for local partners like LUGs, city officials etc.

This may seem like a lot, but there is no cause for concern. A team from the KDE Community has a great deal of experience with organizing Akademy.

The KDE Akademy Team starts with about five people who will be available to you, helping to coordinate the preparation of the event. They have considerable experience with useful organizing tools like web apps for task management and attendee accounting, mailing lists and IRC chat rooms.

Travel

The venue should be near a major airport and reasonably easy to reach by public transportation. Travel to and from the host location must be affordable to the majority of attendees. The hosting country's immigration laws and procedures should not exclude any KDE contributors from attending.

It is a plus if the hosting country does not have complicated and expensive visa procurement procedures for the majority of the participants (who will be from the EU and North America). For participants from other countries, getting a visa must be reasonably possible.

Conference Venue

The conference consists of various activities which each lead to some specific requirements for the venue.

Conference

Two days of Akademy will be dedicated to the conference itself. On those two days, 2 or 3 keynote talks will be available for all conference attendees. At other times during those days, there will be two parallel tracks of presentations. Therefore the venue must have:

- One big room for 250 (or more) people for events for all participants.
- Rooms for two parallel sessions, 100-150 people each.
- A room for a possible third session is a plus.
- Projectors in all rooms.
- Microphones and loudspeakers in all rooms.
- It should be possible to connect the audio output of a computer to the loudspeakers.
- Reliable network access for the speakers.
- Wireless network access in the conference rooms.

KDE e.V. Annual General Meeting

On one of the days, the members of the KDE e.V. (up to 100 people) will gather for the general assembly. For this meeting, the venue needs:

- One room for at least 100 people for a full day.
- Microphones and loudspeakers.
- A projector and screen.

Workshops, Birds of a Feather and coding sessions

The remainder of the week is used by the community to hack on applications and organize Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions and workshops. For this, the venue needs:

- Coding space for at least 150 people.
- Reliable and fast Internet access.
- Lots of power outlets.
- Both Ethernet and wireless network should be available.
- 6–10 smaller rooms for BoF sessions and other meetings. At least one of the rooms should accommodate up to 100 people. Whiteboards and/or flip charts should be available in these rooms. Projectors are a plus, but not absolutely required.

Network and Power

Easy and reliable access to the Internet are required for the full duration of Akademy. The KDE Community is demanding in terms of network, so prepare for more than you would ordinarily expect.

Almost everybody will come with a laptop, so wireless Internet access and plenty of power outlets to recharge batteries are mandatory. Additional wired network at least in the hacking rooms is highly recommended.

Cancellation

In some cases it might be required to sign a contract to cover venue costs in the unlikely event that the conference gets canceled. If this is an issue, it should be brought to the KDE e.V. as early as possible. If needed and the conference location gets chosen, the KDE e.V. will act as the signing party.

Local infrastructure

There will be around 250 or more people at Akademy for a full week, so there are some requirements for the venue infrastructure. There must be no imminent safety threats in or around the conference site or between the conference site and accommodation locations.

It is a plus if the conference and hacking session location, as well as the accommodations, are reasonably close to other public places, such as restaurants, pubs and shops. That said, the surrounding environment should not be too noisy and distracting.

Accommodation

Accommodation must be available for approximately 250 people during the peak days of Akademy. Most participants prefer a low cost option such as youth hostels at a cost of around 25 EUR per night. It would be nice if a mid-range option of around 50 EUR would also be available. A list of hotels near the conference venue is needed for participants who prefer a specific choice.

Akademy shouldn't take place at the same time as other major cultural events or conferences to avoid a lot of pressure on available accommodation. Please check the local calendar for trade shows or similar big events. Hotels and flights are typically more expensive during those events. Some people will arrive earlier than the conference and some will stay after it is over.

Transportation

It is preferable for the available accommodation to be within walking distance of the conference site. If this is not the case, there must be safe public transportation (even in the evenings), cheap taxis or a sponsored shuttle service.

Food

Inexpensive food options should be available near the venue. Contributors should be able to live on EUR 20 or less per day for food. It is preferable to have food available near the conference, and it shouldn't take much time to get something to eat. Availability of drinks at the Akademy site is a must. Free water would be nice. A variety of dietary options should easily be available, especially vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free.

Budget

KDE e.V. is able to cover the travel costs for some KDE e.V. members, speakers and other attendees if necessary, and if travel costs are not too expensive. KDE e.V. pays a maximum of 25 EUR per night for accommodation for sponsored participants. Food is usually not sponsored.

The conference has to be paid mainly by sponsorship. There is no conference fee. We have budgets and costs for the previous years, although they differ because Akademy has been growing. In the past, local organizers have managed to get the venues for free or by paying a small amount for services such as cleaning and security, but no actual rent. The KDE e.V. is able to pay some of the cost and will have primary responsibility for acquiring sponsors to cover the costs of the conference.

It is possible to reserve certain resources in advance at the venue (e.g. food vouchers). The organizing team will not be expected to advance this money. Any such financial arrangements should be discussed with the KDE e.V. which typically pays these kind of costs. All payments are made by the KDE e.V., which is responsible for the budget. The proposal should include a budget draft with the expected local costs. Income from local sponsors is welcome and should be included in the budget.

Sponsoring

Sponsors are an absolute must to cover the cost of Akademy and other activities sponsored by KDE e.V. Sponsorship funds must cover the conference site (if it costs money), the equipment, and part of the travel grants. This point is based on agreements between KDE e.V. and the local team – sponsorship acquisition by the local team needs to be discussed with the KDE e.V. board and the KDE e.V. business manager.

- KDE e.V. takes care of international sponsors mainly to cover the travel support.
- Required infrastructure (such as venue and meeting rooms, network and video equipment) should ideally be covered by the local organizations, local sponsors, or provided for free. However, KDE e.V. also can help with these types of expenses.
- If possible, the local team can also recruit local sponsors to cover some of the social activities.