

## Guidelines for Reports on Activities

The Editorial Board (EB) had on 19 February 2011 deliberated, among others, the backlog of reports on activities. Your kind feedback on the above matter was taken into account. The recommendations from Editorial Board (EB) were subsequently tabled and passed in the monthly meeting of the Standing Committee on Information and Publications. The guiding principles decided are as follow: -

- (i) Each report shall be limited to one printed page at the maximum, all-in.
  - (ii) If more than 2 pages, the author should summarised this as feature articles instead of reports.
  - (iii) All reports are subjected to selection for publication by the EB i.e. not all will be published. In this selection process, the EB could seek advice from any suitable party.
  - (iv) Reports should be value-adding to the readership, and should omit frivolous details.
  - (v) Reports should preferably be submitted within one month from the date of the activity, and the EB will strive to publish them within the next two months
  - (vi) For reports prior to this guideline, since there was a tacit assumption of 'sure publications', the EB will try to schedule all of them for publication, but considering the magnitude of the backlog, the currency of the reports and their contents, the EB retains the right to decline the publication of any such report.
  - (vii) For the purpose of tracking the activities of each Branch and Technical Division, the full list of activities have always been published in the Annual Report of IEM, hence it is redundant to list them in the Bulletin.
- 3) **Reports on activities should be value-adding to the readership:** For example, reports on talks should be akin to an extended abstract from which readers could get the gist of the talk and the subsequent Q&A. Reports on visits, forums and others shall serve a similar purpose, e.g. highlighting critical observations, issues, resolutions that will be interest to the readers. Other than the basic information such as title, venue, name and affiliation of the speaker, details which are of little interest to most readers (such as the time of arrival at a destination, presentation of a token of souvenir etc.) should be excluded.
  - 4) **A report should preferably be submitted within a month from the activity:** Considering that some Technical Divisions have internal vetting process prior to submission, the EB will not be unreasonably strict with this requirement.
  - 5) Although the EB will strive to publish the reports in a timely manner, the EB reserves the right to schedule from a later date, e.g. to provide room to clear the backlog, or to better fit the theme of the month. Until the backlog is cleared, each issues of the Bulletin will contain a mix of 'ancient' and relatively current reports.
  - 6) As the reports that predate this guideline may not be in the proposed format, it is the discretion of the Bulletin Editor to allow their publication close to their original form, or to further edit them to suit the new format if it could be done without excessive demands on editorial time.
  - 7) To avoid further burdens to the Secretariat staff who is currently spread paper-thin, the authors will not be alerted of the fate of their reports. Such feedback will be provided only after the situation improves.

Based on the guiding principles above, the EB promulgates the details as follows:

- 1) **Each report shall be limited to one printed page at the maximum:** First and foremost, all reports should be concise and precise in view of the limited publication space. Without figures, one printed page contains about 800 words, and the word count must be reduced appropriately with each additional figure or photo. As the sizes of such insertions affect their word-count-equivalent, it will be left to the judgement of the authors on the number of words to cut. The Bulletin Editor retains the right to edit or further reduce the number of words.
- 2) **All reports are subjected to selection for publication by the EB:** To better inform themselves on the suitability of the reports, the EB is free to seek further advice from parties deemed fit to do so, while avoiding conflict of interest such as asking the same Technical Division to vet their own reports.

Operationally, the Bulletin Editor will be the main person performing the above tasks while the editor at the publisher will improve the writing. The EB serves an advisory role, and where deemed necessary, to modify the proposals by the Bulletin Editor.

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We believe that the measures above will not only clear the backlog, but also push the Bulletin to greater heights as all new reports will have to vie for publication space. However, we do not want this to quench the rate of submission of reports. Do rest assured that good reports will continue to see the light of the day. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

IEM JURUTERA Editorial Board, 14 July 2009  
Revised 19 February 2011