Akademy 2013
Call for Hosts

KDE e.V.

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Call for Hosts

The KDE community and KDE e.V. are looking for a host for Akademy 2013. We are looking for a location with a strong team of local volunteers who have an eye for detail that is able to organize and host our annual community summit. Akademy is a great event to host as it is the gathering of the KDE community, one of the largest and most significant Free Software communities. Hosting Akademy for a week will create marvelous results and give visibility to you as a host and many others way beyond the internal KDE activities. It will also make an impact on your local Free Software community. A brief overview of the requirements is given below.

Akademy is the yearly week-long conference where the KDE community gathers. In 2010 we had about 400 attendee, and for Akademy 2012 we are expecting a similar number. Past events have been organized in universities and colleges, but any location that has facilities for talks, group sessions and hacking for a full week will be taken into consideration. Preferably, we can use the conference venue for free and it is sponsored.

The program of this conference is usually structured as follows. Friday is used for travel, arrival and pre-registration by most attendees. Saturday and Sunday the actual conference is held. It consists of 2 or 3 keynotes, which are attended by all participants, alternated with two simultaneous tracks where the audience can choose which one to attend. The remainder of the week is used for coding and workshops for smaller groups of 10 to 50 people. The venue thus needs to offer a big lecture room that fits 400+ people, a smaller lecture room that fits up to 200 people, and several smaller rooms for workshops.

Akademy requires a location which is easy to reach, preferably close to an airport. The venue where the conference itself will be held should be able to host the attendees as well as providing them with excellent Internet access through wifi and Ethernet during the conference and the hacking session. Furthermore, accommodations and places to find food should be close to the venue or easily reachable.

Organizing an Akademy has proven to be very demanding activity and requires a significant investment both in terms of time and effort. The team should be prepared to spend a lot of time on it. However, taking up this task will be a rewarding task which is highly recognized and appreciated by the KDE community.

The proposal should include
- Details of the conference venue (infrastructure, facilities, Internet connectivity, on-site catering etc.)
- A reasonably detailed budget
- Information about local community support, core team members, potential local industry and government support (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 organisation supporting the KDE community, acts together with your organization as official co-organizer of Akademy 2013, and can act as a signing party for contracts, if needed.

Akademy consists of the general assembly of the KDE e.V., a KDE conference and a multi-day workshop for coding, workshops, discussions, meeting people, having fun and more. Alternative formats are possible but this one has proven to be successful in the past. The requirements for a location for Akademy are listed below. These requirements are based on experience with previous Akademy locations. They are not set in stone, but deviating from these requirements will need good reasons and some creativity to provide alternative solutions for making Akademy 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 via the conference, and to provide a platform for collaboration with other community and industry partners.

Secondary goals are to engage local people, and to provide space for getting together to write code.

Format and Date

The last couple of years Akademy was structured as follows. The number of participants cannot be predicted exactly and depends on the location. The numbers are based on the participation from previous years. As said before, this program is not set in stone but has been proven a successful formula to make the conference meet the above defined goals.

- Arrival and subscription (Friday)
- Two-day KDE conference (Saturday/Sunday), up to 450 people.
- One-day KDE e.V. meeting (Monday), 100 people.
- Five-day hacking session (Monday to Friday), 350 people at the start, 250 people at the end.
- Social program like a reception, party and optionally a sight-seeing tour.

Akademy should take place in the (northern hemisphere) summer. Depending on the location it should be considered if the date has an impact on lodging and travel costs. Overlap of the conference date with public or religious holidays should not lead to severe problems with respect to accommodation or transport.

Local organization

Essential to successful organization of Akademy is a strong, reliable local team with enough hands 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 2 to 5 people with one main organizer who can act as the main contact. It is advisable to have a

small organizing team for the whole preparation of the conference, and not to do it alone! The KDE community is nice to get along with, but it is a very energetic community, and there are tons of little details, which have to be taken care of. So prepare for some sleep deprivation.

The organizer (or core local team) acts as the main contact for the meeting preparations. He or she must be available to other parties that are helping in the preparations or provide services. He or she must be prepared to be an almost full-time meeting coordinator especially in the last couple of weeks before the actual conference, and also some time after the event. From experience, **the organizer can expect to work 5-10 hours/week on preparations in the first few months and 10-15 hours in the weeks leading up to the event**. You will need to be able to round up local supporters from e.g. Linux User Groups.

KDE e.V. will assist with procedures, advice and organization (e.g. general project management, managing the travel grants and sponsor acquisition). It is absolutely mandatory that the conference is supported by local activists (like a LUG or similar) for registration, network administration, security, and other tasks. Good press contacts are also helpful. Experience has shown that at least 8-10 volunteer helpers are needed in the weeks leading up to the event and KDE e.V. is not in a position to pay salaries for that. In the past there were also always a couple of non-local community members that helped during the conference itself. KDE e.V. usually puts out a call for volunteers prior to the event.

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

Here's a short overview of tasks that the local team usually needs to take care of:
- Negotiate contract with conference venue and liaise with conference venue staff
- write visa inviation letters for conference attendees
- Assist with setting up conference network
- Help to research and plan social program (e.g. conference party, day trip)
- research cheap 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 solutions for video taping of the conference
- act as main contact for local partners like LUGs, city officials etc.

If this seems like a lot, don't worry, the KDE community has a a great deal of experience in organizing Akademy, we can help you with checklists and tips!

Travel

The venue should be reasonably easy to reach by public transportation, i.e. preferably near a major airport. Coach shuttles from an airport to the site are of course possible and welcome, but need to be sponsored. Furthermore, the hosting country's immigration laws and procedures should not exclude any KDE contributor 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 the US/Canada). For participants from other countries, getting a visa must be reasonably possible. Finally, traveling must be affordable for the majority of people or there needs to be extra sponsoring.

Conference Venue

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

Conference

The first two days will be the conference itself. In those two days talks will be given for the whole conference audience in alternation with parallel sessions (two tracks). Therefore the venue needs:

- One big room for 400 (or more) people for events for all participants (keynote etc.)
- Rooms for two parallel sessions, 200 people each.
- A room for a possible third session is a plus.
- Projectors in all rooms.
- Microphones, speakers in all rooms.
- It should be possible to connect the audio output of a computer to the speakers.
- Video recording of the talks would be nice
- Reliable network access for the speakers is required.
- Wireless network access in the conference rooms is a must

KDE e.V. General Assembly

On Monday the members of the KDE e.V. (about 80 to100 people) will gather for the general assembly. For this the venue needs:

- One room for at least 100 people for a full day.
- Microphones and speakers.
- Projector is required.

Workshops and coding sessions

The remainder of the week is used by the community to hack on their favorite applications and organize so called Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions and workshops. For this we require:

- Coding area for at least 300 people
- Reliable and fast Internet access (Presumably the 8 MBit/s figure refers to each user's connection, not to the overall network's connection.)
- Lots of power outlets
- Cable-bound and wireless network should be available.
- The hacking rooms should optimally be available all day and night (or with a well-announced unavailability between something like midnight and 8am).
- Additional rooms for BoF sessions and other meetings. 6 to 10 rooms, ideally. At least one of the rooms should be big enough for something like 100 people. Whiteboards, 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 during the full duration of Akademy is a must. The KDE community is very demanding in terms of network, so prepare for more than you would expect. Keep in mind that almost everybody will come with a laptop, so wireless network and enough power outlets to recharge batteries are mandatory. Additional wired network at least in the hacking rooms is highly recommended.

Cancellation

In some particular cases it might be required to sign a contract to cover costs in the unlikely case that the conference gets canceled. Although this has been rare in the past, 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

Given that there will be around 400 people for a full week there are some requirements for the infrastructure around the venue. Obviously, there must be no imminent safety threats in or around the conference site or between the conference site and the accommodation. It is a plus if the conference and hacking session location as well as the accommodations are not too remote from other public places, i.e. restaurants, pubs and shops. On the other hand the environment shouldn't be too distracting. We now describe in more detail the requirements with respect to accommodation, transportation and food.

Accommodation

Accommodation must be available for something like 400 people during the peak days. A good part of participants prefers a low cost option such as youth hostels, which should cost around 25 EUR per night. It would be nice if a mid-range variant around 50 EUR would also be available. Additionally a list of hotels near the conference venue is needed for participants preferring a specific choice. It's advisable not to organize Akademy at the same time as any other major cultural event or conference taking place that might put a lot of pressure on available accommodation. Please check the local calendar for trade shows or similar big events. Hotels and flights will be much more expensive during those happenings.

Transportation

If the available accommodation is within walking distance of the conference and hacking session site. If it is not the case, there must be safe public transportation (even in the evenings), cheap taxis or a sponsored shuttle service.

Food

Cheap (but not entirely deadly) food should be available. Contributors should be able to live on EUR 20/USD 25 or less per day for food. It is preferable if food is available near the conference and hacking session site and it doesn't take too 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 and vegan.**

Budget

KDE e.V. is able to pay travel for KDE e.V. members, speakers and some other attendees who need that, if traveling is not too expensive. KDE e.V. pays a maximum of 25 EUR per night for accommodation for sponsored participants who need that. Food is usually not sponsored.

The conference has to be paid mainly by sponsorship. Notably, there should be no conference fee. We have budgets and costs for the previous years, although they differ since Akademy has been growing. Usually, the biggest cost is (or rather would be) the venue. In the past the local organizers always managed to get this for free or we would only have to pay a small amount for cleaning and security etc. but no actual rent. The KDE

e.V. is able to pay some of the cost and will actively help to acquire sponsors to cover the costs of the conference. If really needed, a budget can be provided.

In these cases it can be more advantageous to reserve certain resources in advance at the venue (e.g food vouchers). In those cases it is not expected that the organizing team should advance this money. If this applies, it should be discussed with the KDE e.V. which will potentially pay these kind of costs. Effectively, until now all conferences were organized in such a way that all payments where made by the KDE e.V. which also carries responsibility for the budget. The proposal should include a budget draft with the expected local costs for venue and organization.

Sponsoring

Sponsors are an absolute must. Sponsoring should cover the conference site (if it costs money), the equipment, and part of the travel grants.

Sponsoring of other costs (like food or accommodation) is of course also much appreciated. Meeting rooms, technical infrastructure and Internet access have to be sponsored. This should be sponsored preferably by local organizations, recruited by the local organization team. KDE e.V. takes care of additional sponsors, in particular for covering the travel support.