

PROPOSAL FOR HOSTING THE 2006 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SYSTEM DYNAMICS SOCIETY IN SWITZERLAND

Local Host: University of St. Gallen, Prof. Dr. Markus Schwaninger
Local Co-hosts: University of Lugano, Prof. Dr. Gianluca Colombo
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, Prof. Dr. Bernard Lehmann
Interdisciplinary Center for General Ecology, University of Berne, Prof.
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Zurich, July 13, 2004

Dear officers and members of the Policy Council,

Dear Executive Director,

Dear members of the System Dynamics Society

The Swiss Chapter of the System Dynamics Society is very pleased to invite you to Switzerland for the 2006 International System Dynamics Conference.

With this document we would like to present you a selection of two potential venues. We have visited each of them and been able to get detailed offers and preliminary reservations for the indicated dates of the conference.

Earlier this year, at your Policy Council meeting on February 9, the Swiss System Dynamics Chapter was officially approved. A considerable number of academics and practitioners are involved in system dynamics in Switzerland. The chapter's goal is to strengthen collaboration and co-operation between them and to spread system dynamics in Switzerland. This effort is reflected in the identification of the local host and co-hosts. The University of St. Gallen under the lead of Prof. Dr. Markus Schwaninger would be happy to act as local host. Markus Schwaninger would at the same time be Conference Chair. With the local co-hosts, the University of Lugano, the Interdisciplinary Center for General Ecology at the University of Berne, and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, we are able to meet all the responsibilities of the local host and to formally strengthen the co-operation between universities. We regard this as an important prerequisite to foster and spread system dynamics in Switzerland. As several universities are involved we are also able to guarantee a fair amount of local volunteer labor.

Approximately half of the members of the Swiss Chapter are practitioners. From this side we argue very strongly that the conference also be an opportunity for companies to learn about the power of system dynamics for their purposes. Concerning program features we would therefore want to take up the challenges identified by Prof. George P. Richardson in his presidential address from 1997 and combine high standards for academic research with an attractive information and exchange platform for consultants and practitioners.

The prices in this proposal are all indicated in Swiss Francs (CHF). The current exchange rate is 0.8, so at this time 1 Swiss Franc equals 0.8 US \$.

We would be delighted to host the 2006 conference in Switzerland and hope that at the end of this document you share our professional interest and enthusiasm.

Local host

For the Swiss System Dynamics Chapter

Prof. Dr. Markus Schwaninger

Birgit Kopainsky

Silvia Ulli-Beer

1 Conference venue 1: Parkhotel Waldhaus, Flims

Switzerland is probably most famous for its spectacular mountain scenery. The traditional and internationally famous Parkhotel Waldhaus in Flims lies in the heart of the Swiss Alps and combines an exceptionally professional management with breathtaking surroundings and impressive hotel features.

Flims is at the center of the “Alpenarena” (Flims-Laax), one of Switzerland’s top three skiing destinations. Located in the rumantsch-speaking area of Switzerland - rumantsch being the fourth national language - this destination combines mountain wilderness, tourist attractions and a rich cultural heritage.

The offer of the Waldhaus applies to the period of July 15 to 20, 2006. Because of the approaching high tourist season no later date is possible (mind the difference to the other proposed venues). However, during the conference, the hotel would uniquely host the conference guests.

1.1 Unique and attractive features of the Waldhaus

The Waldhaus consists of four newly renovated historical buildings, two of which contain the rooms for plenary and parallel sessions and two of which offer accommodation. All the buildings are linked by underground passages and are within two minutes walking distance at maximum. About half of the meeting rooms offer spectacular views of snow and glacier covered mountains. The buildings are surrounded by a huge park including a lake, jogging trails, walking paths, a pet zoo, and recreational areas. The hotel is within walking distance of the town of Flims with its shops, restaurants and tourist attractions. The hotel owns a series of restaurants in Flims so that a rich variety of meals can be guaranteed for individual dinners. The room rates of the hotel include utilization of the extensive exercise and wellness area, swimming pool, and shuttling with the hotel-owned bus everywhere and anytime within the Flims-Laax area (e.g. pick-up service for arriving guests). The room rates apply for the period of three days in advance of the conference until three days after the conference.

The Waldhaus has a unique reputation for hosting conventions. Recently it has been selected to host the summer session of both chambers of the Swiss Parliament in August/ September 2006. The Waldhaus employs a Convention Manager and a Convention Assistant who are at their full disposal before and during the conference. For the duration of the conference they additionally provide a list of people for all kinds of possible problems with their respective duties and availabilities. At the inspection trip we were impressed not only by their professionalism and experience but also and very importantly by the enthusiasm the managing team and the hotel owner showed for hosting the System Dynamics Conference and for organizing everything according to our wishes.

The Waldhaus coordinates contracting, meals, technical support, and information during the conference. For the coordination of accommodation and the organization of local activities, they work with the local tourist board.

For further information see www.parkhotel-waldhaus.ch. We have also attached a set of additional material provided by the hotel.

1.2 Travel cost and accessibility

Flims is accessible from Zurich airport within a two hours train and bus ride at an additional cost of **CHF 100.-** We could also organize a shuttle service from Zurich Airport to Flims at a 1-hour interval on Sunday. The price would be approximately the same.

While we are aware of the fact that the additional travel time is an issue we would also like to point out that the train runs through a vast part of Switzerland, starting in Switzerland's biggest and most pulsing city Zurich, slowly ascending from the lowlands and the more urbanized areas into the more rural pre-Alps and finally the Alps which our country is so famous for. As mentioned before, the Waldhaus offers a free shuttle-service for hotel guests between the bus stop and the hotel.

1.3 Meal and accommodation costs for attendees

For meals, the Waldhaus offers:

- ? Refreshment breaks for **CHF 11.50** per person per break. This price covers coffee, tea, orange juice, fruits and croissants (in the morning) or pastry (in the afternoon). Refreshment breaks can be held indoors or weather permitting outdoors on the terrace.
- ? A welcome reception for **CHF 25.-** per person. This price covers white wine, red wine, orange juice, and a selection of chips.
- ? A conference dinner for **CHF 50.-** per person. This price covers a four-course meal either vegetarian or with meat but not including beverages.
- ? The possibility of a sandwich bar for lunch breaks. This is optional and not part of the conference package.

In the Waldhaus itself there are three different bars, the lounge hall, and two restaurants. For people interested in something really special (and admittedly, really expensive...) the Waldhaus offers a seven-course dinner in the hotel's museum where each course is served in different museum room, with a special wine, and accompanied by stories about the history of the hotel and the region.

Regarding accommodation, the Waldhaus offers:

- ? 100 rooms at the Waldhaus itself at **CHF 205.-** per person per night, breakfast included.
- ? Rooms in partner 4-stars hotels at **CHF 160.-** per person per night, breakfast included.
- ? Rooms in low-cost partner hotels at **CHF 80.-** per person per night, breakfast included.

<p>So for four nights, meal and accommodation costs per participant amount to CHF 964.- or 784.- respectively, for fully paying members (app. US \$ 771.- US \$ or 672.-) CHF 464.- for student and low-income participants (app. US \$ 371.-)</p>

1.4 Direct conference costs and facility characteristics

The rooms for parallel sessions and meetings are all **CHF 200.-** per room and per day. Some of the rooms can be combined so that they can handle over 100 people. The rooms are located in two buildings but within 2 minutes walking distance of each other. The two buildings are connected by an underground passage. In parentheses and in *italics* we have indicated a suggestion of how to use the rooms. The capacities of the rooms in theatre style are:

? Building 1/ room Flem 1:	60	(<i>parallel small</i>)
? Building 1/ room Flem 2:	45	(<i>parallel small</i>)
? Building 1/ room Flem 3:	10	
? Building 1/ room Pic As:	130	(<i>parallel big</i>)
? Building 1/ room Joker:	50	(<i>conference office&storage</i>)
? Building 1/ room Piccolo:	60	(<i>exhibitor area</i>)*
? Building 1/ Panorama		(<i>poster session</i>)*
? Building 1/ Rotonde		(<i>refreshment breaks</i>)*
? Building 2/ Belmont 1&2 (double rate!):	130	(<i>parallel big</i>)
? Building 2/ Cauma 1&2 (double rate!):	60	(<i>parallel small</i>)
? Building 2/ Mundaun:	90	(<i>parallel big</i>)
? Building 2/ Cresta:	25	(<i>parallel small</i>)
? Building 2/ Greina:	15	(<i>parallel small</i>)
? Building 2/ Primula:	10	

The rooms indicated with a * are adjacent and participants can circulate freely through them. We also suggest organizing a sandwich bar for optional *lunches* in the refreshment break area (Rotonde).

The *plenary room* in building 1 comes **free** and handles 500 people.

The so called “Arvenstübli”, which is a cigar lounge in building 1, also comes **free** and could be used as the *exhibitors’ lounge*.

The lounge in building 1 is at the centre of all the rooms and would be highly suitable as *registration area*. It has a bar and comes **free**.

All the rooms are equipped with a complementary wireless internet connection.

For the *conference dinner* we would need the event hall which costs CHF **2’100.-** for the day of the dinner. In case conference attendance is unexpectedly high (higher than 550 participants), the event hall can also be used as plenary room.

Other rooms can be turned into parallel or meeting rooms if need be. The managing team at Waldhaus assured us that they have turned almost everything into meeting rooms at special occasions.

Beamers –except for the beamer in the plenary room – and overhead projectors are provided by the local host and co-hosts and therefore come at no additional costs.

For other *technical equipment* we have to allow for:

- ? Beamer for the plenary room: CHF 600.- per day, CHF **1'800.-** for three days
- ? Poster and bulletin boards: CHF 120.- per board (package rate), CHF **3'600.-** for 30 boards.
- ? Exhibitor tables: CHF 20.- per table, CHF **400.-** for 20 tables and three days.
- ? Easels for conference/sponsor posters: CHF 30.- per easel per day, CHF **1'500.-** for 10 easels and five days.
- ? Sound for plenary room: CHF 300.- per day, CHF **900.-** for three days.
- ? Sound for rooms handling more than 100 persons: CHF 150.- per day, CHF **2'250.-** for three rooms and five days.
- ? Screens: CHF 40.-, CHF **2'000.-** for 10 screens and five days.
- ? Telephone line for conference office: CHF **25.-** per day plus metered call charges.
- ? Fax for conference office: CHF 80.- per day, CHF **400.-** for five days.
- ? Whiteboards to be used with marker pens: CHF 20.- per board per day.
- ? Flip-chart with sheets of paper: CHF 60.- per day.
- ? Extra roll of paper: CHF 50.-.

If we rent all the meeting rooms for a period of five days, the event hall for one day and the technical equipment for five days, direct conference costs amount to

CHF 62.- per person with 500 participants (app. US \$ 50.-)

CHF 78.- per person with 400 participants (app. US \$ 62.-)

1.5 Manageability of risk

All prices will be firmly contracted. There are no additional taxes; everything is already included in the price. Due to uncertainties in the exchange rate, it will be difficult to firmly contract prices in US \$, though.

1.6 Local activities

For minor questions about Flims itself and the surrounding region the concierge at the hotel reception in the Waldhaus is available during the entire conference. For the organization of local activities the Waldhaus co-operates with the local tourist office and offers a wide range of activities. The Waldhaus also offers a daycare service for hotel guests' children.

2 Conference venue 2: Convention Centre, Lugano

Lugano is the biggest city of the Italian speaking canton of Ticino and stands at the crossroads between Northern Europe and Italy. Surrounded by mountains and situated at the borders of a splendid lake, Lugano brings together all the characteristics of a metropolis of great style, while maintaining the traits of a small city. Most particular is the large pedestrian area, which contains the historic centre.

Much of Lugano's success as a centre of tourism derives from its temperate climate, moderated by the presence of the lake and with a high average of sunny days, but also from the typical uses and customs of the Mediterranean way of life.

We can reserve the Convention Centre either from July 15 to 20 or from July 22 to 27.

2.1 Unique features of the Lugano Convention Centre

The Lugano Convention Centre is centrally located, in the middle of the splendid Municipal Park and right next to the equally splendid lake. The Convention Centre and the city of Lugano hosted the summer session of both chambers of the Swiss Parliament in August and September of 2002. The Convention Centre is run by Lugano Tourism which has the advantage that the competent, helpful and enthusiastic staff coordinates the organization of the conference rooms, welcome reception, conference dinner, transfers, and excursions. They also book hotel accommodation and provide a 4-language hostess for general information and assistance. The staff is available for the entire duration of the conference and happy to help with whatever questions, problems or wishes we have.

As in Flims, we were impressed by the professionalism, experience and enthusiasm of the staff and the hotel owners in the city of Lugano.

For further information see www.lugano-conventions.com. We have also attached a set of additional material provided by Lugano Tourism.

2.2 Travel cost and accessibility

Lugano has a local airport (6km from the city centre) with direct flights from and to Zurich and Geneva. A Shuttle Bus connects the airport with the hotels in Lugano and costs around CHF **20.-** for a return ticket.

Milan Malpensa International Airport is 1 hour away from Lugano. The direct link from and to Malpensa airport is operated by two shuttle companies and costs around CHF **50.-** for a return ticket.

Lugano is directly situated on the North-South axis of the St. Gotthard route and can be reached quickly and comfortably by international rail or by car. Parking space is an issue, though, and only offered by some of the hotels in Lugano.

2.3 Meal and accommodation costs for attendees

Accommodation bookings can be made using a hotel booking card. Rooms will be confirmed directly to the attendees. The hotels in Lugano are all family-run and very charming. We have inspected two- to four-star hotels and were impressed by the quality of all of them. The hotels, however, are not very big so participants will be spread all over the city. They are all within easy walking distance of the Convention Centre or connected to it by a direct bus connection that runs every 10 minutes. The prices per person are:

- ? Five stars: CHF **240.-** per night, breakfast included.
- ? Four stars: CHF **160.-** per night, breakfast included.
- ? Four/three stars: CHF **115.-** per night, breakfast included.
- ? Three/two stars: CHF **95.-** per night, breakfast included.
- ? Two stars: CHF **75.-** per night, breakfast included.

The official caterer of the Convention Centre is Mövenpick which offers coffee breaks and an optional sandwich bar at the following rates:

- ? Refreshment breaks for CHF **9.-** per person per break. This price covers coffee, tea, orange juice, fruits and croissants (in the morning) or pastry (in the afternoon). Refreshment breaks can be held indoors or weather permitting outdoors in the park on the lake shore.

The welcome drink could be offered on the lake shore. The Lido open-air swimming centre is transformed into a visual entertainment place every night and the bar with the adjacent beaches could be privatized and rented for the night of the welcome drink at the following price:

- ? Drink and snacks per person incl. rental of the location between 7 and 10 p.m.: CHF **12.-**

For the conference dinner we suggest a boat trip of an hour where the aperitif is served. The boat would get us to Swissminiatur in Melide where you can see the whole of Switzerland in less than an hour. Melide lies on a peninsula on lake Lugano and there you can leisurely discover Switzerland's most picturesque features like towns, villages, monuments, and buildings at a scale of 1:25. The restaurant at Swissminiatur offers a Swiss buffet with specialties from the main four cultural regions and according to the Slow Food guidelines for CHF **70.-** per person, rental of the place included.

Transportation back from Swissminiatur would be organized with shuttle coaches at CHF **15.-** per person so that the entire dinner would amount to CHF **100.-** per person.

So for four nights, meal and accommodation costs per participant amount to
CHF 824.- or **644.-** respectively, for fully paying members (app. US \$ 660.- US \$ or 515.-)
CHF 484.- for student and low-income participants (app. US \$ 387.-)

2.4 Direct conference costs and facility characteristics

The daily rate of the rooms in the Convention Centre and their respective capacity in theatre style are:

? First help room		free	(storage)
? Room D		CHF 160.-	(conference office)
? Room A	1'000	CHF 2'000.-	(plenary)
? Room A	200	free	(parallel big)
? Room B	200	CHF 1'920.-	(parallel big)
? Room B	150	free	(parallel big)
? Room B	100	free	(parallel big)
? Room E	100	CHF 480.-	(parallel)
? Room F	35	CHF 200.-	(parallel)
? Teatrino	90	CHF 400.-	(parallel)
? Room C1	40	CHF 200.-	(parallel)
? Room C2	10	CHF 80.-	(meeting room)
? Room C3	30	CHF 200.-	(meeting room)
? Room G	10	CHF 160.-	(meeting room)

Beamers –except for the beamer in the plenary room – and overhead projectors are provided by the local host and co-hosts and therefore come at no additional costs.

For other *technical equipment* we have to allow for:

- ? Beamer for the plenary room: CHF 650.- per day, CHF 1'950.- for three days
- ? Poster and bulletin boards: CHF 120.- per board (package rate), CHF 3'600.- for 30 boards.
- ? Exhibitor tables: CHF 22.- per m² occupied surface, CHF 1'320.- for 20 tables and three days.
- ? Easels for conference/sponsor posters: CHF 30.- per easel per day, CHF 1'500.- for 10 easels and five days.
- ? Sound for plenary room: CHF 400.- per day, CHF 1'200.- for three days.
- ? Sound for rooms handling more than 100 persons: CHF 150.- per day, CHF 2'250.- for three rooms and five days.
- ? Fax for conference office: CHF 80.- per day, CHF 400.- for five days.
- ? Outside analogical telephone line: CHF 25.- per line and per day plus metered call charges.
- ? Outside ISDN telephone line for the conference office: CHF 300.- per line and per day plus connection and wiring costs.
- ? Whiteboards to be used with marker pens: CHF 20.- per board per day.

? Flip-chart with sheets of paper: CHF 60.- per day.

? Extra roll of paper: CHF 50.-.

All the rooms are equipped with a complementary wireless internet connection.

If we rent all the meeting rooms for a period of five days, the event hall for one day and the technical equipment for five days, direct conference costs amount to

CHF 76.- per person with 500 participants (app. US \$ 61.-)

CHF 95.- per person with 400 participants (app. US \$ 76.-)

2.5 Manageability of risk

All prices will be firmly contracted. There are no additional taxes; everything is already included in the price. Due to uncertainties in the exchange rate, it will be difficult to firmly contract prices in US \$, though.

The Università della Svizzera Italiana, represented by Gianluca Colombo, is within walking distance of the Convention Centre and is ready to help out with everything, starting from technical equipment to student workforce. We could also try to hold the sessions on the premises of the University if this option was preferred.

2.6 Local activities

Upon request and free of charge the staff of the Convention Centre can handle the organization of excursions and spouses' programs, transfers, tour guides etc.

3 Conference venue 3: Crowne Plaza, Geneva

We have also considered the city of Geneva as a potential location for the conference. The hotel Crowne Plaza is located directly next to Geneva International Airport and a very impressive hotel with modern conference facilities. The price level in Geneva, however, makes it almost impossible for a non-for-profit organization to host a conference in any of the existing venues. We have attached the offer of the hotel Crowne Plaza but will not comment on it in detail as it is far too expensive.

4 Concluding remarks

With the Waldhaus in Flims and the Convention Centre in Lugano we have, in our eyes, two highly valid options for the 2006 conference of the System Dynamics Society. The two venues are both very suitable for hosting a conference of our size, the staff of both of them impressed us thoroughly and the location of both venues is breathtaking and shows the best in scenery and culture our country can offer. To facilitate the choice between the two locations these are the main differences:

- ? Flims lies in the heart of very typical and breathtaking Swiss mountains which our country is so famous for.
- ? Lugano, on the other hand, combines Italian charm from a scenic point of view with Swiss reliability from an organizational point of view.
- ? The train/ coach ride from Zurich International Airport to Flims takes some 2.5 hours. It is offset by a panoramic trip covering a wide variety of Swiss landscape.
- ? Lugano can easily be reached by direct shuttle service either from Milano Malpensa Airport or from Lugano Agno Airport.
- ? In the case of Flims the conference would take place in a hotel equipped with modern conference facilities. On the premises of the hotel, we could hold all the conference activities including welcome drink and conference dinner. The hotel itself and the premises are an island of relaxation and concentration and could not be more adequate for the purpose of a conference.
- ? In Lugano the conference would be held in a convention centre. Welcome drink and conference dinner can either be organized on the premises of the convention centre or in other places which would provide a unique Swiss experience.