

## **General Guidance for the Selection of Meeting Venues for the Society of Biological Psychiatry**

This guidance is designed to ensure the SOBP Annual Meeting fosters a welcoming and supportive environment, reflecting the Society's core mission and values and that the venues selected meet the needs of the meeting and of the attendees. All potential venues will be evaluated against these criteria as part of the selection process.

### **1. Non-Discrimination**

The host city must demonstrate a clear commitment to non-discrimination in its policies and practices, including legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.

### **1. Health and Safety**

The host city must have laws and practices that support the health, safety, and well-being of all attendees. This includes but is not limited to access to healthcare services, safeguards for reproductive rights for women and policies promoting accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Venues should be in locations with low crime rates and strong reputations for safety.

### **2. Fiscal Responsibility**

The SOBP will (a) ensure the venue is within budget and cost-effective, and (b) negotiate competitive prices for venue rental, technology, F&B, and other costs.

Venues offering discounts or incentives for non-profits and returning clients to be prioritized.

### **3. Capacity and Meeting Requirements**

The venue must have (a) sufficient space to accommodate the expected number of attendees, including breakout rooms, plenary halls, and poster presentation areas; (b) facilities that can support hybrid meeting formats (in-person and virtual) with state-of-the-art audiovisual technology; (c) ample exhibition space for sponsors and exhibitors to showcase their materials, should the Society decide to develop such partnerships; (d) flexible room layouts for networking, workshops, and smaller group sessions; (e) high-speed internet and be located in areas with good mobile phone network coverage.

### **4. Accessibility**

The venue should (a) be in a city with a major international airport to ensure ease of travel for domestic and international attendees; (b) be accessible by public transportation or offer convenient shuttle services to and from the airport; (c) should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act for US locations or equivalent accessibility standards for international locations to accommodate attendees with disabilities.

### **5. Location and Local Amenities**

The SOBP will prioritize venues in cities offering cultural opportunities for attendees to enjoy outside of conference hours and locations that offer nearby accommodation and dining options in various price ranges to suit diverse budgets.

### **6. Contingency Planning and Contractual Flexibility**

The SOBP will review the venue's policies on cancellations, rescheduling, and refunds to ensure effective contingency planning in the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., public health emergencies or natural disasters). Additionally, the contract with the venue will include clear terms

outlining services, payment schedules, and penalties, as well as provisions for scalability to allow adjustments in attendance estimates without incurring significant financial penalties.

## **7. Regular Review**

The venue selection process should include regular reviews of local laws, practices, and policies to ensure alignment with SOBP's commitment to providing a positive experience for all attendees. This review process will be overseen by the Council, supported by the Parthenon Management Group, and informed by direct input from SOBP committees and members. To gather feedback and preferences, it is recommended that members participate in a post-annual conference survey to evaluate their satisfaction with the chosen venue, as well as periodic surveys to express their preferences for future venue selections.