Board Resolution by Circulation 2017.2

Review procedure for shortlisting of proposals for policy-relevant research papers & completed papers

Background:

Over the past 10 years and 13 conferences, CPRsouth has experimented with different reviewing schemes. On multiple occasions, the latest being the 2016 September Board Meeting, dissatisfaction has been expressed about the procedures. The Board, on that occasion, decided to adopt a formal acceptance procedure.

The Board Paper seeks to implement that decision.

Action:

It is proposed that a three-person committee undertake develop a review procedure that gives adequate weight to the criterion of policy relevance in addition to the normal criteria of scholarly quality. It is desirable that the criteria and weights used for assessing the completed papers are supplemented and adjusted for assessing the proposals. Attention should be paid to styles of presentation in different disciplines, paying special attention to the concerns raised on behalf of those from engineering fields by Ashok Jhunjhunwala.

The last board paper on the subject, from 2012, is attached. It is possible that Tim Waema who served on the committee that came up with the current procedure can supply the relevant documentation.

It is proposed that Lishan Adam, Helani Galpaya and Timothy Waema serve on the committee and present their recommendations within 4 weeks so that they may be implemented in the selection process in 2017.

Based on that experience, the procedure will be reviewed and adopted with necessary amendments at the 2017 Board Meeting.

Annex 1

Board Paper 2012.4

Revision of paper-proposal-shortlisting, paper-selection and policy-brief procedures

Based on the experience of the six conferences since Board-approved procedures were implemented, it was suggested by several Board members that the procedures needed an overhaul. This paper provides a comprehensive revision. Please note that the various elements are interconnected and that changes in one element, such a change in shortlisting procedures, will impact a seemingly unrelated element such as the best-paper competition. The current criteria cannot be continued. For example, element 9 of the list below cannot be applied under even the procedures used at CPRsouth7.

Current procedures

Review of abstracts & selection of papers

The current marking scheme (given below) for selecting abstracts and complete papers has been in place since CPRsouth2 (2007). The same criteria and weights applied to both stages.

1. *Clarity of the thesis or the research finding (max 10 points)*
2. *Refers to previous studies (max 10 points)*
3. *Identifies the data or case studies to be used (max 10 points)*
4. *Identifies a framework for the analysis (max 10 points)*
5. *Analytical framework is appropriate (max 10 points)*
6. *Adequacy of methods (max 10 points)*
7. *Quality of writing (max 10 points)*
8. *The author is likely to produce a high quality paper (max 10 points)*
9. *Cohesion among the presentations for the panels (max 10 points)*
10. *Novelty, significance, and importance to the CPRsouth community (max 10 points)*

The abstracts were shortlisted based on double-blind review by at least three board members. The papers were single-blind reviewed.

- Until 2012, the shortlisted abstracts were grouped into sessions and the subsequent competition was among the groups: i.e., six abstracts would be listed under content and applications, with two to four selected depending on the number shortlisted. This procedure established the mentor-mentee relationship very early and reduced the workload for board members: the assigned chair and discussant read the papers assigned to their session; chose the best, and worked with the selected authors to improve them. But this meant double-blind was not feasible. Also authors in a group with good papers had a tougher path to selection than those in a group with relatively weak papers.
- In 2012, no prior grouping was done and shortlisted authors competed with all. After the scores were computed for all short-listed papers, the selections were made, and the conference organizer grouped those above the cut-off point into coherent sessions. Chairs and discussants were assigned at this later time and asked to mentor the paper givers. Workload was a little higher because a board member would now be asked to review one set of papers and mentor paper givers not necessarily from among that set.

Policy Briefs

After the paper selections were made, the selectees were informed that they had to prepare policy briefs and those who submitted them on time were given systematic feedback. Not all submitted; many failed to anchor their policy recommendations on their research.

For the first time a policy-brief competition was conducted in 2012. This resulted in a higher level of completion of policy briefs.

Proposals

1. Adopt the following procedure for shortlisting paper proposals, selecting papers and conducting the policy-brief competition

1. Rename the first stage as "A call for paper proposals," instead of "A call for abstracts."
2. Provide a guide and scores for each component (**Annex 1**).
3. Shortlist paper proposals for consideration as full papers, based on double-blind review by at least 3 judges.
4. Select the papers for the conference based on double-blind review by at least 3 judges.
    a. All papers will compete in one pool.
    b. The selected papers will be organized into coherent sessions by the administrative partner, who will also assign a chair and discussant for each session and initiate the mentoring process.
    c. The highest-ranked paper in each session will be shortlisted for the best-paper competition. In the event non-shortlisted papers have significantly higher scores than shortlisted papers, the administrative partner may add up to three papers to the short list for a total of a maximum of n+3, n being the number of sessions. It is necessary to have a short list of papers to be considered for the best-paper competition, to manage the workload of the judges. The best paper and runner up are to be selected based on a mix of factors including content and presentation. Audience scores will account for 40 per cent of the total as in previous competitions.
5. Require that policy briefs be submitted by a set deadline, based on the guide given in **Annex 2**.
    a. The best policy brief (and runner up) will be selected by two judges with no audience participation, purely based on the written text.

2. Approve the following marking schemes

Paper Proposals

TITLE (5%): Is clear and communicates no more and no less than the content given in the proposal.
PRINCIPAL RESEARCH QUESTION: (15%): Captures the essence of the proposal in no more than 50 words
POLICY RELEVANCE (15%): The relevance of the proposal to identified decision-makers in the ICT space is explicated
COMPONENT RESEARCH QUESTIONS (15%): Breaks down the research question further and is linked to the research plan
RESEARCH PLAN (45%): Includes a literature search, method and data sources sections; LITERATURE REVIEW (15%): Summary of a preliminary literature search indicative of awareness of prior knowledge and a broad understanding of the concepts and facts relevant to the proposed research; METHOD (15%): The method can range from a meta-analysis of the literature to a random controlled trial study; DATA SOURCES (15%) If primary sources are to be used the mode of data acquisition is articulated; if secondary sources are to be used at least one comprehensive source is listed.
LIST OF REFERENCES/SOURCES (5%): Identifies the key documents. APA style is used.

Papers

TITLE (5%): Is clear and communicates no more and no less than the content given in the paper.
PRINCIPAL RESEARCH QUESTION: (10%): Captures the essence of the paper in no more than 50 words
POLICY RELEVANCE (10%): The relevance of the paper to identified decision-makers in the ICT space is explicated
RESEARCH (60%): Includes a literature search, method and data sources sections; LITERATURE REVIEW (10%): Summary of a preliminary literature search indicative of awareness of prior knowledge and a broad understanding of the concepts and facts relevant to the proposed research; METHOD (10%): The method can range from a meta-analysis of the literature to a random controlled trial study; DATA

SOURCES (10%) If primary sources are to be used the mode of data acquisition is articulated; if secondary sources are used, all are listed; RESULTS & DISCUSSION (30%): are presented using tables, figures or other easy to follow means.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (10%): Findings are easy to find and easy to understand. The findings are substantiated in the research section. They are not trivial.
LIST OF REFERENCES/SOURCES (5%): Identifies the key documents. APA style is used.

Policy Briefs
TITLE (5%): Clear; communicates no more and no less than the content given in the brief.
INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH (15%): Presents the background and the policy relevance of the topic clearly and concisely.
FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS (15%): Are clear and convincing; supported by evidence in the research section
RESEARCH (45%): A method and sources of data, if used, are explicated; tables and graphs are used appropriately. Discussion is clear and targeted.
SOURCES (5%)
PRESENTATION (15%): Use of graphics, pictures or overall design aspects that may grab the attention of a policymaker and compel him/her to read the brief.

The above marking schemes will be embedded in spreadsheets as is done at present.