



# **Guidelines for a Bid to Host a WAC International Congress**

**February 2025**

## INTRODUCTION

### Brief History

The World Archaeological Congress is the only archaeological organisation with elected global representation. Membership is open to archaeologists, heritage managers and members of the public. WAC is committed to the scientific investigation of the past and the protection of cultural heritage worldwide. It supports the empirical investigation and appreciation of the political contexts within which research is conducted and interpreted, and promotes dialogue and debate among advocates of different views of the past. It is committed to diversity and to redressing global inequities in archaeology through scholarly programs. WAC has a special interest in protecting the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples, minorities, and economically disadvantaged countries. It encourages the participation of Indigenous peoples, researchers from low-income countries and members of the public who are interested in cultural heritage. WAC promotes:

- Scientific research and publication on the material remains of the past.
- Public education to provide communities with information to participate in archaeological work.
- Professional education and training for economically disadvantaged nations, groups and communities.
- Action research addressing issues relevant to the empowerment and betterment of Indigenous groups, minorities and economically disadvantaged groups.
- Conservation of cultural heritage that is threatened by looting, vandalism, urban growth, tourism, development or war.

WAC International Congresses are held every four years and WAC-7 and WAC-8 respectively attracted around 900 and 1700 participants. The Congresses normally span six days (e.g. Sunday to Friday, or Monday to Saturday), with academic sessions running from the second to the sixth day and a day in the middle (fourth day) reserved for excursions. A number of crucial WAC organisational meetings also occur at each Congress and must be scheduled in a specific order. Congresses are open to both members and non-members. There have been eight WAC Congresses so far:

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

- WAC-1 (Southampton, England, 1986)
- WAC-2 (Barquisimeto, Venezuela, 1990)
- WAC-3 (New Delhi, India, 1994)
- WAC-4 (Cape Town, South Africa, 1999)
- WAC-5 (Washington DC, USA, 2003)
- WAC-6 (Dublin, Ireland, 2008)
- WAC-7 (Dead Sea, Jordan, 2013)
- WAC-8 (Kyoto, Japan, 2016)
- WAC-9 (Prague, Czech Republic, 2022)

WAC-10 will be held in Darwin, Australia, in June 2025.

Topics that are traditionally covered include: archaeological method and theory, public archaeology, heritage management, education and training, and the role and impact of climate, conflict, and social archaeology in contemporary society. In addition to the academic sessions, the conference organisers arrange a variety of social events and excursions where members get the chance to meet each other, make contacts, socialise, and explore the landscape and heritage surrounding of the conference venue.

### **Aims of WAC Congresses**

- To provide archaeologists and related groups with the opportunity to meet and continue WAC's effort to achieve a more equitable global archaeology.
- To provide a venue for convening the WAC Assembly and Council.
- To collaborate and present results, experiences and ideas concerning archaeological theory and practice, issues of heritage management, and archaeology as a profession.
- To expand upon or develop ideas and projects discussed or initiated at former WAC meetings.
- To bring together individuals from different cultural backgrounds to network and strengthen personal and professional links.
- To consolidate and expand upon continuing issues highlighted by working parties and round tables
- To provide a meeting place for other related groups if appropriate.

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

- To recruit new members of WAC and to increase awareness of its existence.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WAC AND THE CONGRESS ORGANISERS**

Bids to host the next WAC Congress should be received by the WAC Executive before **30 April 2025**. Bids must be made by WAC members and provide clear information as to the proposed infrastructure and relevant support, as detailed in these guidelines.

Once WAC has accepted a bid from a group of members to organise the next Congress, a member of the WAC Executive will take responsibility as the main point of contact between WAC and the Congress organisers.

**The organisers must provide progress reports to the WAC Executive on an agreed schedule. Failure to provide progress reports or to fulfil the obligations agreed by the Local Organising Committee (LOC) may imply the termination of the agreement.**

### **STAFF AND COMMITTEES**

The following positions need to be filled:

- **Patron(s) of the Congress:** an honorary position usually filled by a public figure in the host country who has a strong interest in heritage. Previous Patrons have included: HRH The Prince of Wales, President Nelson Mandela, Mrs Harriet Fulbright, Irish President Mary McAleese, and HM King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of Jordan. Patrons do not necessarily attend the actual Congress but have in the past either attended the Opening and/or Closing ceremonies.
- **Congress President:** an honorary position usually filled by a senior local archaeologist or other professional or academic from the host country with interests related to WAC. The Congress President is available to stand in for the Patron at the Opening and Closing ceremonies and would normally chair the Closing Plenary session. They may, but need not, take part in the detailed planning of the Congress. Past Presidents include Professor Michael Day (WAC-1), Professor Mamphela Ramphele (WAC-4), Richard West (WAC-5), and His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan Bin Talal (WAC-7).
- **Academic Secretary:** the principal leadership position. Secretary of the Local Organising

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

Committee oversees the work of the Congress Secretariat and chairs the National Advisory Committee and Local Organising Committee. This individual is normally responsible for the overall organisation of the Congress and for administrative links between the organisers and the WAC Executive. The Secretary can substitute for the President in chairing the closing Plenary Session.

- **Congress Secretariat:** overarching administrative body of the Congress. Manages registrations, produces the programs, promotional material and Congress website and organises social events and excursions.
- **National Advisory Committee:** should be composed by prominent archaeologists from the host nation and different backgrounds (academic, heritage management, etc). Together with the Congress Secretary and the WAC Executive, this body should encourage wide coverage in the academic sessions, round tables and exhibitions, encourage archaeologists in the host country and abroad to attend the Congress, and help with publicity.
- **Local Organising Committee:** works with Congress Secretariat to arrange local sponsorship, venues, excursions, accommodation, and catering. A member of the WAC Executive is to sit on this Committee and be consulted in all matters arising.
- **Scientific Committee:** usually comprises nominated WAC members, members of the Local Organising Committee and National Advisory Committee, and a representative of the WAC Executive. This Committee also deals with the academic content of the Congress, recommending congress themes, managing the submission of sessions and assessing abstracts submitted. Members of the WAC Executive have a special responsibility to provide the Scientific Committee with information about current trends and ideas for possible sessions.

## BUDGET AND FUND-RAISING

### Financial security

WAC does not have the funds to underwrite the financial security of WAC Congresses. **It is essential that the Congress organisers ensure they have a fail-safe system that will underwrite the Congress should it make a loss.** This can be done through careful preparation of all contracts including appropriate international cancellation policies, along with insurance, having an institution underwrite the Congress, or through registering WAC as a charity or not-for-profit organisation in the host

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

country. Bearing in mind the lessons learned from the COVID-19 global pandemic, LOC is strongly advised to include a "Force Majeure" contract provision in their formal agreements and expand the reasons for allowing cancellation without liability to provide for partial or total termination of their contracts in extreme circumstances, including, but not limited to disease epidemics, communicable diseases, terrorism, labor disputes, hazardous weather or any other potential international threats. The WAC Executive can help, in an adviser role, to steer the LOC through this process.

One of the major features of WAC Congresses is the intellectual richness that comes from diversity. **Congress organisers must obtain sufficient guaranteed funding to cover costs, including full or partial subsidies of the registration fee and travel and accommodation expenses, of at least 200 delegates from Indigenous groups and economically disadvantaged countries.** WAC will do everything in its power to assist organisers to raise funding.

A general budget model based on recent Congress budgets is available from the Executive on request. The model is only intended as a guide. In reality, wide variations occur between Congresses owing to a range of factors, including differing contributions in kind, such as facilities being offered free of charge.

While WAC does not require any Congress to make a financial profit, rather than break even, **any profits from a Congress normally revert to WAC**, unless a different arrangement is negotiated with the Executive in advance.

### **Sponsorship**

Registration fees generally form the bulk of Congress income, but sponsorship is also essential for a Congress to proceed. It is advisable to secure a range of sponsors, whose missions should not be in contrast to WAC values. Sponsors should be offered a sliding scale of benefits consistent with the value of the assistance they provide.

Suggested options are:

- General sponsorship of the whole Congress.
- Sponsorship of Congress costs (registration/accommodation/travel) of particular groups or types of participants.

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

- Sponsorship of a day of the Congress.
- Sponsorship of sessions or round tables.
- Sponsorship of excursions.
- Sponsorship of Congress social functions (i.e. congress party, congress dinner, etc.).

### **Grants**

Organisers should seek grants to help finance the Congress itself and to support local participants as well as for travel assistance for selected foreign participants (see below). Grant applications can be made jointly or independently by the Congress organisers and/or the WAC President or their delegate. All reasonable sources of aid should be considered.

The LOC must submit for approval a criteria that will be used to disseminate funds. Such criteria must be founded on the following principles:

- Applicants need to be WAC members in good standing before applications are considered.
- Applicants must represent an Indigenous community or come from a developing country.

### **Other sources of income**

In addition to registration fees, sponsorship and grants, sources of WAC Congress income might also include:

- Exhibition space.
- Bookshop space.
- Advertising in the participant's pack.
- Sale of T-shirts, posters and other WAC and Congress promotional material.
- Meal tickets.
- Excursions.
- Social functions.

### **WAC membership policy**

Current WAC members receive preferential registration rates for any WAC Congress. Intending

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

participants who are not paid-up members at the time of registration pay a higher fee including an additional amount equal to the cost of the appropriate WAC membership in that year.

All theme and principal session organisers must be WAC members and this requirement cannot be waived. However, membership requirements can be waived for non-archaeologists co-organising themes or sessions with a member or attending special meetings.

To avoid administrative problems in determining the membership status of participants, it is vital that the official WAC membership database is used at all times, before and during the conference.

Registration fees should be structured as follows, with Rate A rates being significantly higher than Rate B.

<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Rate A</b>	<b>Rate B</b>
<b>WAC Members</b>		
Full		
Concession (Student, Indigenous people, retired)		
Accompanying persons		
<b>Non-members</b>		
Full		
Concession (Student, Indigenous people, retired)		
Accompanying persons		

### **Categories:**

Rate A: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, USA and the majority of Western Europe (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United



## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

Kingdom).

Rate B: All countries not listed in Rate A.

### **Invitations**

The organisers are obliged to provide WAC Congress participants with official invitations whenever necessary. This is obligatory for those participants who need to obtain an entry visa to the host country. It is very important that the organisers issue such invitations at the earliest possible date, as soon as a person has registered for the conference or, in cases where participation is dependent upon a grant, as soon as the proposed paper or session has been accepted.

### **Accommodation**

The way in which accommodation for participants is secured will depend on local circumstances. However, it is important to secure a substantial number (at least 400) of cheap rooms (student housing, youth hostel etc.) and/or twin/triple/quad hotel rooms. The Congress Secretariat is responsible for securing a range of different accommodation options (with the Professional Congress Organiser, if any).

## **LIST OF PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES AND PRIVILEGES**

- **Participants:** these represent the main body of attendees. They pay the agreed conference participation fees and all other costs for accommodation, lunches, optional events and facilities.
- **Official Participants:** these includes the National Advisory Committee, Local Organising Committee, Scientific Committee, and Congress Secretariat. The conference **registration fee is waived** for these individuals but they must meet all other costs for accommodation, lunches, optional events and facilities.
- **Invitees:** these includes Patrons, Peter J. Ucko Medal and Lecture recipients and WAC Executive members. The Congress registration participation fee is waived, and depending on budget constraints, accommodation, lunches, and the WAC Congress dinner may be provided and travel expenses for WAC Officers (four persons) may be paid. In exceptional cases, a contribution to travel costs may also be made to one or two invitees. Additional

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

events must be paid for personally.

- **Display/Exhibition/Bookshop Providers:** registration by booking a display space is required. It is recommended that organisers set prices for space. One exhibitor may attend the conference as a registered participant for each pre-paid display space that is booked. The exhibitor must meet all other costs for accommodation, lunches, optional events, and facilities.
- **Sponsors:** individuals or organisations providing large sponsorship. In addition to being identified as a donor in a WAC Congress publicity material and participant documentation, sponsors should be offered use of one standard display space and other appropriate incentives such as waiving of a registration fee and tickets to other social functions (i.e. excursions).
- **Major Sponsors:** individuals or organisations sponsoring the conference with substantial funds. In addition to being identified as a major donor in Congress publicity material and participant documentation, major sponsors should be offered use of a dedicated display area twice the standard size as well as other appropriate incentives such as tickets to major Congress functions or free registration for one or more sponsor's representatives.

## WAC ORGANISATIONAL MEETINGS HELD AT CONGRESS

### WAC Assembly

The WAC Assembly is the principal policy-making body of WAC. It decides all matters relating to policy, elects the officers of WAC, creates and re-organises the Regional Electoral Colleges, and determines the venue and organisation of future WAC Congresses.

The Assembly as a body lasts for the duration of the specific WAC Congress at which it is formed and is composed of one elected representative of each country present at that Congress.

Short planning meetings of the Assembly need to be scheduled early in the WAC Congress program but the principal Assembly meeting must be scheduled on the final afternoon/evening of the Congress, immediately following the Closing Plenary (see below). This allows motions to be forwarded from the Plenary to the Assembly before the Assembly passes them to Council (see below).

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

### **WAC Council**

The Council is the main governing body of WAC between meetings of the Assembly and carries into effect the policies established by the Assembly. Council elections are organised by the Executive in consultation with the Local Organising Committee, but the Congress schedule must allow for the existing Council to meet for two days immediately before the Congress and once during the Congress before the Closing Plenary. The program must also allow the new Council elected at the Congress to meet on the day following the Closing Plenary and final Assembly, to decide upon motions to be forwarded from those meetings to the Executive for action. **Experience has shown that this first meeting of the new Council should not be scheduled on the same day as the Closing Plenary and final Assembly.**

### **WAC Executive**

The Executive is the main governing body of WAC between meetings of Council and carries into effect the policies established by the Assembly and endorsed by Council. The Congress program must allow the new Executive elected at the Congress to meet on the day after the Congress finishes, as members of the Council, and for the following day as well, as members of the Executive, to act upon motions forwarded by the Council from the Closing Plenary and final Assembly. **Experience has shown that this second meeting day for the new Executive is necessary and that the meetings of the new Council and Executive immediately following the Congress should not be scheduled on the same day.**

### **WAC Closing Plenary**

The Closing Plenary is held at the end of the last day of the Congress and is open to all participants. It allows participants to present and vote upon resolutions originating from discussions held during the Congress. Note that these resolutions are not binding on WAC until endorsed by the Assembly, because there will be non-WAC members at the Congress and Closing Plenary.

Closing Plenary resolutions are passed to the final Assembly, which meets immediately after the Plenary, and those resolutions that are endorsed by the Assembly as WAC policy are passed to the newly-elected Council. Resolutions adopted by the Council are then forwarded to the newly-elected Executive for action.

### **Other special meetings**

The LOC should allow for specialist meetings in the lead-up to and straight after the Congress. These could be, for example, WAC roundtables, taskforces and committees (see below) or meetings of other bodies under the auspices of the WAC Congress, such as national associations or international specialist groups. In the latter case, specific arrangements should be made with the individual bodies with regards to participants' access to each other's meetings and to WAC organisational meetings.

### **SESSIONS AND FORMATS**

WAC policy recommends that the total number of concurrent sessions and round tables is limited to a maximum of 15, to encourage some focus in the Congress and to avoid too many conflicting options for participants.

This policy implies that the Congress Scientific Committee may be required to choose among proposals to determine which will be included in the final schedule. While the Committee should aim for quality, it should be aware that this is not guaranteed by 'big names' and it is important that archaeologists early in their career be given a chance to organise a theme, session or present a paper. It is strongly recommended that session proposals have presenters from different countries. Innovative proposals – owing either to topic or format – are considered to add flavour to the Congress but should be carefully evaluated before being approved.

WAC Congresses currently have the following session formats:

**Themes:** A theme consists of several sessions that relate to the same overall issue (e.g. the archaeology of early farming, the heritage of slavery). Organisers can choose themes, but a call for other possible themes to be considered for inclusion should be sent out very early in the planning process. **The list of themes should be finalised at least 11 months prior to the beginning of the Congress.**

**Regular sessions:** A regular session lasts for two hours. Papers in a regular session will concern a well-defined issue covered by one of the Congress themes. **Note that papers can be submitted outside sessions and themes, for inclusion in general sessions. Session proposals need to be**

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

**closed at least 9 months prior to the beginning of the Congress.**

Regular sessions can be of a variety of formats. Examples might include 4 half-hour papers or twelve ten-minute presentations, or something in between, such as 12 five-minute papers with an hour of discussion or 5 twenty-minute papers with twenty minutes of discussion.

The Local Organising Committee can create sessions and invite specific speakers or make general calls for speakers in those sessions, but a general call for other possible sessions to be considered for inclusion should be issued as soon as the WAC Congress themes are finalised, and early enough to meet the required schedule for session proposals (as specified below). Organisers can also specify limits to the range of topics and formats if required to suit local circumstances.

**General session:** A general session follows the same guidelines regarding timing and format as a regular session. General sessions are created when a shared interest or element of common ground is identified by the Scientific Committee among papers proposed by members outside the context of a regular session.

**Plenary sessions:** A few, probably no more than four, plenary sessions can be organised during the Congress at a time when no other academic meeting is scheduled. These will normally last for no more than 90 minutes and will normally only include one or two key speakers on a topic of significant international interest.

**The Peter Ucko Memorial Lecture will be one of these plenary sessions and should be organised in close co-ordination with the WAC Executive.**

**Roundtables:** A round table is an interactive event organised around a specific and tightly focused question. Formal presentations are kept to a minimum and normally consist only of opening and closing remarks so that open discussion is encouraged.

**Taskforces and Committee meetings:** this type of meeting allows members to participate in the preparation of policy statements or other documents and offers the Taskforce or the Committee an opportunity to communicate with the membership.

**Poster Sessions:** this poster session consists of a group of posters organised around a specific issue and submitted together by an organiser, much like a session of papers. Posters will normally be displayed for the duration of the WAC Congress, but there should be a specific time scheduled in the Congress program for specially-prepared sessions.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Congress organisers traditionally hold three main social events. **Note that no event should be scheduled for the last night of the Congress, as it must be reserved for the consecutive Closing Plenary and final Assembly meetings** (see above). The fourth day is usually reserved for excursions (see below), so large-scale social events are probably inappropriate on that night.

The three events are:

**Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception:** held on the first evening of the Congress, before academic sessions begin. The ticket should cover at least one welcome drink and light refreshments. **Cost factored into registration fee.**

**WAC Evening Reception:** held on the second or third evening of the Congress. The ticket should cover at least one welcome drink and light refreshments. **Cost factored into registration fee.**

**WAC Dinner-Dance:** held on the second-last evening of the Congress. The evening is usually concluded with entertainment by a live band and dancing. **Not included in registration fee**, but the cost needs to be structured to cover the participation from a substantial number of subsidised participants from Indigenous groups and economically disadvantaged countries.

The Congress should also offer **free public lectures** by invited Congress participants, either at the Congress venue or in an accessible central location. These presentations allow internationally renowned figures to speak to interested members of the local community. Previous Congresses have also offered an introductory day of lectures on the archaeology of the region by local and international experts. This introduction is free to Congress participants as well as the local community and usually takes place on the Congress registration day.

## EXCURSIONS

Field trips and sight-seeing tours are held in the middle (usually fourth day) of the Congress, to allow participants to visit local and regional places of archaeological interest. Excursions can last either a whole or half day and if possible, should offer a good choice of different archaeological periods and

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

practices. Excursions are normally paid for independently of the registration fee. Pre- and post-Congress excursions can also be organised.

### **PRESS AND PUBLICITY**

The Congress itself and some of the matters discussed may attract local, national or international media attention. The Congress Secretariat should be prepared to manage media interest. In addition, WAC will wish to issue press releases during the Congress and immediately following, especially after the meetings of the newly-elected Council and Executive that follow the Plenary and final Assembly.

### **FACILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Bookshop and Exhibition**

A bookshop and professional exhibition is an integral element of the Congress and always proves very popular with participants. In co-ordination with the WAC Executive, Congress organisers should encourage publishers and exhibitors from across the world to attend. The bookshop and exhibition areas should be contained in one designated space with power points and internet connections for exhibitors. Organisers should be aware that the publishers of WAC book series may have a free booth at the Congress written into their contracts, or may seek a booth at a reduced cost.

#### **Complimentary Facilities**

Free facilities might include:

- Crèche for participants' children.
- Transport facilities, in particular the free or reduced-cost use of the host locality's public transport or a shuttle service to the airport.
- Local tourist, travel and accommodation information desk.
- Free visits to local museums as part of the Congress fee.

#### **Facility Requirements**

Space will be needed for the following daytime activities:

## Guidelines for WAC Congresses

- Large Hall - Opening and Closing ceremonies, Assembly and Plenary meetings.
- Lecture theatres – academic sessions and larger working party groups.
- Meeting rooms - WAC meetings, smaller specialist groups and round tables
- Bookshop and Exhibition Hall.
- Poster display area.
- Registration area.
- Congress Secretariat Office.
- WAC Office.
- Café area.

It is recommended all facilities should be located in easy reach of each other to provide a focal meeting point for participants.

### **LANGUAGE**

**The WAC Statutes** state that any of the official languages of UNESCO may be used in any of WAC's transactions. However, if a language other than English is to be used, the organisers need to make it clear in the program and supply abstracts in English and simultaneous translation of sessions. If presenters wish to present in their own language the major points should be outlined in English in a PowerPoint presentation or handout.

### **LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MOA**

**After the announcement of the successful bidder following voting at the WAC-10 Congress, the WAC Executive, represented by the WAC President, will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the hosts of the next WAC Congress.**