

IMA GENERAL MEETING GUIDE

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CONTENTS

- 9 1. Introduction
10 2. Date of General Meeting
11 3. Location
12 4. Finance
13 5. Meeting program
14 6. Bid to host an IMA meeting

1: Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a general guide to making a bid for, and organising, a *General Meeting* of the *International Mineralogical Association*. For events and issues not covered in this guide, to propose arrangements that do not follow this guide, or any questions, please contact the IMA secretary for advice.

The International Mineralogical Association holds a general meeting every four years, often known as the *IMA Meeting*. The organisation of a general meeting is defined in Article 10A of the bye-laws of the IMA.

Each general meeting is organized on behalf of IMA by an *organizing committee* put in place by a *member society* or by a collaborating group of member societies. The venue will normally be in the country of the member society or in the country of one of a group of member societies from a particular region.

The purposes of the general meeting are to:

- provide a forum for presenting research by mineralogists and researchers in related fields.
- provide a venue for IMA working groups and commissions to meet and conduct their business and to promote their work to participants.
- provide a venue for three IMA council meetings and two IMA business meetings as required by the constitution of the IMA.

The final programme of the general meeting, including choice of topics for sessions, session convenors, invited and plenary lecturers, award ceremony, the organization of accommodation, field excursions and social programme, and the advance promotion of the meeting, is the responsibility of the organizing committee. However, the organising committee should plan the general meeting in accordance with the guidelines in this document. The organising committee should also ensure that the working groups, commissions and council of the IMA are kept fully informed of plans and are involved in organising appropriate scientific sessions and inviting suitable plenary speakers. To this end, the chairperson of the organising committee, or a nominated senior member of the organising committee, becomes the 2nd vice-president of the IMA and serves on IMA council for the 4 years preceding the general meeting.

The organising committee and the general meeting are completely financially independent of the IMA. The IMA takes no financial role in the general meeting. Any financial profit or loss from the meeting must be borne by the organising committee or a local institution or society. If the IMA meeting generates a financial surplus, the organisers are encouraged to donate a portion of the profits to the IMA to be used in support of IMA activities including student awards.

In order to help the IMA improve the general meetings, the organising committee should prepare shortly after the meeting a brief report on both the organisational aspects and the final financial budget of the meeting and submit it to IMA council.

64 **2: Date of General Meeting**

65

66 IMA general meetings are traditionally held in the months of July, August or September, but
67 this is not an absolute requirement. If possible, the date should be chosen to avoid extreme
68 weather conditions (including high or low extremes of temperature) in the conference location.
69 The meeting dates should not clash with other major conferences in mineralogy or related
70 disciplines, such as the Goldschmidt conference. The meeting dates should avoid local or
71 regional events or major tourist periods that will result in higher prices for travel and
72 accommodation.

73

74 The organising committee should consider incorporating local, regional and national meetings
75 of member and related societies into the IMA general meeting in order to increase attendance
76 and participation.

77

78 Normally a general meeting starts with registration (and possibly workshops and field trips –
79 see below) on a Sunday, with the opening reception open to all registrants on Sunday evening.
80 This timing allows international travellers to take advantage of reduced air fares by staying
81 the Saturday night before the meeting. The number of days allocated to the scientific sessions
82 should be sufficient to ensure that there are no more than 5 or 6 scientific sessions held at the
83 same time but should not run more than 4 or 5 days (not counting the Sunday). Field trips,
84 workshops, summer schools, and similar activities should be scheduled outside these days of
85 presentations at the conference.

86

87

88 **3: Location**

89 *City*

90 The host city must be located in a country to which travel is not significantly restricted for
91 most potential conference participants (e.g. by limitations on visas).

92

93 The host city should have good connections for national and international travel, including at
94 least a regional airport with direct flights to an international hub, and good rail connections.

95

96 There must be a range of accommodation for meeting participants at a range of reasonable
97 prices including low-cost student accommodation.

98 *Conference centre*

99 The conference itself may be hosted either in a conference centre or other suitable venue such
100 as a university campus. The conference venue must be located near hotels and other
101 accommodation and be accessible by public transport from the areas with accommodation and
102 areas with restaurants. All rooms used at the conference venue must be accessible for
103 participants with reduced mobility.

104

105 The conference venue must include:

- 106 • a reception area for participants to register, deposit luggage, and a help desk for
107 questions about local travel, restaurants and accommodation. Often the local tourist
108 board can provide staff for a help desk,
- 109 • a theatre with sufficient capacity for all of the expected participants to attend plenary
110 sessions,

- 111 • rooms or theatres of varying sizes suitable for the individual scientific sessions,
- 112 • rooms or theatres for the IMA business meetings, IMA commission meetings and the
- 113 meetings of individual member societies, all equipped with facilities to video
- 114 conference to enable non-attendees to participate in these meetings.
- 115 • a few small rooms that can be used by IMA council, working groups and commissions,
- 116 and groups from individual societies for their business meetings etc.
- 117 • a hall or similar space for the poster sessions,
- 118 • an area for the commercial exhibition that is central to the rooms and theatres used for
- 119 the scientific sessions to ensure a constant flow of participants around the commercial
- 120 exhibition.
- 121 • catering of refreshments and lunch during the breaks between scientific sessions, and
- 122 the opening reception. All catering must be served in the exhibition area.
- 123 • a wireless network for the use of participants.

124
 125 The staffing of the conference venue may be provided in full, or in part, by a commercial
 126 company. But the organising committee should carefully consider the additional costs of using
 127 a commercial conference organiser. The organising committee should consider using students
 128 as staff (for example to run the audio-visual equipment in the lecture rooms) and to reward
 129 them with reduced or waived registration fees.

130
 131 The organising committee should seriously consider whether the conference venue can
 132 accommodate a ‘hybrid-mode’ conference with some, or the majority, of participants being
 133 on-line.

134
 135
 136 **4: Finance**

137
 138 The organising committee and the general meeting are completely financially independent of
 139 the IMA. The IMA takes no financial role, and any financial profit or loss from the meeting
 140 must be borne by the organising committee or a local institution or society. Financial losses
 141 cannot be passed on to subsequent IMA general meetings.

142
 143 It is the responsibility of the organising committee to ensure that the meeting is run in
 144 accordance with local financial laws and regulations, and that an organisation takes financial
 145 responsibility for the meeting.

- 146
 147 In developing a budget for the meeting, the organising committee should:
- 148 • keep student registration costs low.
 - 149 • keep general registration rates at a level similar to other international scientific
 - 150 meetings of a similar size and stature.
 - 151 • consider offering invited plenary speakers free registration and/or accommodation
 - 152 and/or reimburse them for travel expenses from the budget of the local organising
 - 153 committee.
 - 154 • make realistic estimates of attendance. Note that several previous general meetings
 - 155 have been attended by far less participants than expected by their organising
 - 156 committees, resulting in significant financial losses.
 - 157 • have a back-up plan if there is a global or national travel restriction that greatly reduces
 - 158 in-person participation, and clearly evaluate the costs of a hybrid or remote-only

159 meeting. The registration fee for on-line participation should be significantly less than
160 fees for those attending in person.
161 • if possible, provide a travel pass to each participant that allows free travel within the
162 host city on public transport, for the duration of the conference.

163
164 Although the IMA does not financially support the general meeting, it will normally:
165 • provide travel grants and other awards to some students to help them attend the
166 meeting. These are paid directly by the IMA treasurer to the student awardees.
167 • cover the travel costs of IMA Medallists (but not their registration fees which are
168 expected to be waived by the organising committee).

169
170 At the end of the meeting, the organising the committee should prepare a brief financial report
171 of the meeting and submit it to IMA council, to help IMA in guiding organisers of future IMA
172 meetings. If the IMA meeting generates a financial surplus, the organisers are encouraged to
173 donate a portion of the profits to the IMA to be used in support of IMA activities including
174 student awards.

175
176
177 **5: Meeting program**
178

179 Chairs of the IMA Commissions, or a commission representative delegated by them, should
180 be invited to serve on the program committee, to ensure that the meeting accommodates the
181 research themes and topics of importance to IMA.

182
183 The scientific program should be organised either by a separate program committee that
184 reports to the organising committee, or by a sub-group of the organising committee. In this
185 section the term ‘program committee’ is used to indicate the structure responsible for the
186 organisation of the scientific program.

187 ***Scientific sessions***

188 The scientific program should be organised around groups of sessions, each on a common
189 theme. The program committee should select a range of themes that covers the wide range of
190 interests of the members of the member societies of IMA. Each theme should be organised by
191 one member of the program committee who will coordinate all of the sessions and events
192 associated with that theme.

193
194 The working groups and commissions of the IMA, and IMA council should be asked to
195 suggest both general themes and topics for individual sessions. The working groups and
196 commission members as well as IMA council members should also be asked to organise
197 sessions and workshops.

198
199 Poster sessions must *never* be scheduled at the same time as oral sessions, plenary lectures,
200 IMA business meetings, or any other event which a significant number of participants will
201 attend. The poster boards must be located either in, or immediately adjacent to, the commercial
202 exhibition. Refreshments must be provided in the commercial exhibition during the poster
203 session.

204

205 ***Award and other IMA lectures***

206 Each year, on the recommendation of the IMA medal committee, IMA chooses a senior
207 mineralogist as the recipient of its *IMA Award*. The two recipients of the award (one for each
208 of the two years preceding the meeting) should give their award lectures as plenary lectures at
209 the general meeting. The lectures should be advertised as the *IMA Award Lecture*.

210
211 The program committee should discuss with the IMA president and secretary whether the IMA
212 award is presented at the start of the corresponding plenary lecture, or in a separate award
213 ceremony.

214
215 The organising committee can invite national member societies and other organisations (e.g.
216 the European Mineralogical Union) to also distribute their society awards at the IMA meeting.

217
218 If an award ceremony is organised, it must be held as a plenary session (and not at a social
219 event requiring additional payment) so that all participants can attend.

220
221 Two lecture slots equivalent to, or in place of, plenary lectures must be allocated for the
222 Presidential lectures of the IMA past-President and the current IMA President.

223 ***Commercial exhibition***

224 The commercial exhibitors can contribute significant income to a meeting. It is therefore very
225 important for future IMA meetings that the exhibitors feel that they have received a good
226 return on their investment in the meeting. Therefore, the meeting must be organised so that
227 the exhibition area remains the hub and central meeting place for all participants throughout
228 the entire conference. This can be achieved by:

- 229 • Holding the opening reception in the exhibition area
- 230 • Serving all refreshments during breaks in the scientific sessions in the exhibition area
- 231 • Serving lunch in the exhibition area
- 232 • Holding the poster session in, or immediately adjacent to, the exhibition area
- 233 • Providing seating and tables for participants in the exhibition area.

234
235 Some exhibitors may want to host presentations or lectures, which should be scheduled outside
236 of the times of scientific sessions and not at the same time as IMA business meetings.

237
238 When inviting exhibitors to attend the general meeting, the organising committee must be
239 completely honest about attendances at previous general meetings, and the expected
240 attendance at this meeting. Organisers of previous IMA meetings have over-estimated
241 attendances by a factor of two or more and this has led to some companies no longer exhibiting
242 at IMA meetings.

243
244 The organising committee must discuss proposals for the exhibition area and the timetable for
245 the scientific program with the exhibitors to ensure that the exhibitors are satisfied with the
246 arrangements. The exhibitors have much more experience of conferences than the organising
247 committee and therefore can be a source of good advice.

248 ***Additional scientific activities***

249 The program committee should consider hosting tutorial workshops to be held either
250 immediately prior to the meeting, or in the days immediately following the meeting. A general
251 invitation to run a workshop should be issued to the global mineralogical community and the

252 IMA commissions at least 1 year prior to the meeting, so that the workshops can be advertised
253 as part of the program.

254
255 The program committee is expected to organize field trips to mineralogically significant
256 localities which should be scheduled either before or after the main scientific portion of the
257 meeting.

258 259 *IMA council and business meetings*

260
261 The constitution of the IMA requires that during the general meeting there are two IMA
262 business meetings and at least one, and up to three, council meetings. The council meetings
263 must be scheduled, in consultation with the IMA secretary, at times when there are no
264 scientific sessions.

265
266 The two business meetings of the IMA are the plenary body that governs all operations of the
267 IMA. The IMA council is answerable to the IMA business meeting, which is made up of
268 delegates from all member societies who have voting rights. The business meetings are open
269 to the public and, in the interests of democracy, the meetings must therefore be scheduled at a
270 time when there are no other activities or sessions at the general meeting. The business
271 meetings **each require two hours**. They should initially be planned for the lunch times on the
272 Monday and Wednesday of the general meeting. A room in the conference venue large enough
273 to accommodate several hundred participants with a stage and table for the council must be
274 provided. A packed lunch (e.g. sandwiches or similar) should be provided to participants. The
275 time and place of the business meetings must be prominently advertised in the conference
276 program book and materials.

277
278 The details of the room and the times for the business meetings should be discussed in detail
279 with the IMA secretary before any outline timetable for the meeting is prepared, and at least 6
280 months before the general meeting.

281 *Refreshments and lunches*

282 These should be included in the registration fee and served in the exhibition hall.

283 *Social program*

284 The opening reception should be the first opportunity for participants to meet one another. It
285 is also an important opportunity for young mineralogists to meet senior members of our
286 community. Therefore, this reception should be open to all participants at no extra cost to
287 participants (i.e. the cost of attending the reception is included in the registration fee). To
288 maximise exposure for the commercial sponsors and exhibitors, the opening reception must
289 be held in the exhibition hall.

290
291 The venue for the conference dinner should be easily accessible by public transport from the
292 conference venue, so that participants can return to their accommodation whenever they wish.
293 If it is possible, a reduced fee for the dinner should be offered to students. No official business,
294 nor awards, should be made at the dinner because many participants will not attend the dinner.

295
296 Accompanying persons should be allowed, on payment of a minimal registration fee, to attend
297 the opening reception, plenary lectures and any award ceremonies. A social program (e.g.
298 visits to tourist attractions) can be organised for accompanying persons.

299 **6: Bid to host an IMA general meeting**

300

301 The IMA Business Meeting makes the final decision on the venue, date and persons to
302 organise an IMA general meeting on the basis of bid documents submitted to IMA council.

303 *Process*

304 Each general meeting is organized on behalf of IMA by an organizing committee established
305 by a member society or by a collaborating group of member societies. This organising
306 committee must include representatives of the national mineralogical society or societies who
307 are hosting the meeting.

308

309 More than 6 years prior to the proposed meeting, potential organisers should form a group to
310 prepare a bid document. They should contact the secretary of the IMA to find out deadlines
311 for submitting the bid, and to obtain previous successful bid documents to use as a guide.

312

313 This group should prepare a bid document (details below) and submit it to the IMA secretary
314 well in advance of the IMA council meeting held 6 years before the general meeting for which
315 the bid is being made.

316

317 The submitted bid document will be informally reviewed by IMA councillors. They may ask
318 for revisions prior to the council or business meeting in order to improve the bid by clarifying
319 any unclear issues.

320

321 The bids will be formally considered at a council meeting 6 years prior to the date of the IMA
322 meeting. Groups submitting a bid must send at least one person to attend the council meeting
323 prepared to answer any questions about the bid. At this point council will provide further
324 feedback on the bid and will indicate whether or not the bid might be accepted; this is **not** the
325 final decision.

326

327 A revised bid document must be submitted to IMA council in advance of the council meeting
328 held at the preceding IMA general meeting. This is usually 4 years in advance of the meeting
329 described in the bid document. The deadline for submission of the document is required to be
330 significantly in advance of the meeting and will be set by the IMA secretary.

331

332 At that meeting IMA council will formally recommend one bid to be approved by the IMA
333 business meeting, which will be held at the same general meeting. The delegates at the IMA
334 business meeting will then vote to approve one of the submitted bids.

335

336 The chair or vice-chair of the organising committee of the successful bid will be invited to
337 serve on IMA council as the 2nd vice-president from the 3rd council meeting of that year until
338 the 2nd council meeting held at the IMA general meeting that is the subject of the bid. The 2nd
339 vice-president of the IMA is responsible for maintaining communication between IMA
340 council and the organising committee of the general meeting, and for ensuring that the
341 requirements of IMA council are met in full.

342

343 ***The bid document.***

344 The bid document should consist of a single pdf document and be submitted to the IMA
345 secretary. It should contain sufficient information to convince the IMA council that the
346 organising committee can organise a successful general meeting in accordance with the
347 guidelines and requirements given in this document. Therefore, at minimum, it must contain
348 the following information:

- 349
- 350 1. A list of the members of the organising committee, with their affiliations, and their
351 responsibilities with respect to the meeting.
 - 352 1.1. A chair and vice-chair must be identified, and their email addresses given.
 - 353 1.2. A treasurer, responsible for financial matters of the meeting must be identified, and
354 their email address given.
 - 355 1.3. The representatives from the national mineralogical society (or societies) hosting the
356 meeting must be identified, and their role (e.g. president) in their society stated.
 - 357 1.4. If a conference secretary or secretariat is to be established, provide contact details.
 - 358
 - 359 2. A description of the program committee that will be responsible for organising the
360 scientific part of the meeting (see section 5), including:
 - 361 2.1. A chair and vice-chair must be identified, and their email addresses given.
 - 362 2.2. A provisional list of members, confirmed or proposed. The members should include
363 the chairs of the IMA commissions, or a person delegated by them.
 - 364
 - 365 3. The proposed dates for the meeting and how they meet the requirements listed in section
366 2 of this document.
 - 367 3.1. It may not be possible to set final dates at the time of the preparation of the bid
368 document if other conferences have not set their own dates. The organising committee
369 should try to contact other organisers (e.g. of Goldschmidt) to avoid dates of other
370 conferences. In any case, approximate or possible dates should be stated.
 - 371
 - 372 4. The proposed conference city and how it meets the requirements listed in section 3 of this
373 document, and:
 - 374 4.1. Clearly state the visa requirements for participants to enter the host country.
 - 375 4.2. Estimate the costs (in euro or \$) for each participant (the range of hotel prices,
376 registration, local travel costs) to attend the meeting.
 - 377
 - 378 5. The proposed venue and how it meets the requirements listed in section 3 of this document.
379 In addition:
 - 380 5.1. State whether or not you will use a professional company to handle conference
381 logistics such as registration etc, or whether this will be done by the organising
382 committee (e.g. via a University office).
 - 383 5.2. State whether or not you will use a professional company to handle conference
384 logistics such as security, audio-visual equipment etc. If not, state who will organise
385 these aspects of the conference.
 - 386
 - 387 6. A detailed overall budget (in euro or \$) for the conference that meets the requirements of
388 section 4 of this document. This must include all costs and expected income sources with
389 a complete explanation for items.
 - 390 6.1. Estimate the registration fee on the basis of a realistic number of registrations. Note
391 that some previous IMA general meetings have been attended by less than 50% of the
392 number of participants originally estimated in the bid documents.

- 393 6.2. The registration fee for students should be set significantly lower than that of
394 participants in professional employment.
- 395 6.3. Provide a clear statement, in an official letter, of financial responsibility from a
396 responsible officer of the institution or company that will take financial responsibility
397 for the general meeting.
- 398
- 399 7. The overall plan for the scientific program including the scheduling of plenary lectures,
400 medalist lectures, IMA business meetings, etc., and how it meets the requirements listed
401 in section 5 of this document.