

HOSTING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY: GUIDELINES, WITH SOME REQUIREMENTS



updated April 2026

About this Document

This document provides the information needed by those who wish to consider hosting a conference in the series of International Conferences on the History of Cartography. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the accompanying document, *Organising an International Conference on the History of Cartography*, which potential organisers should also carefully review.

Further Information

Any queries should be addressed to the Chairman of Imago Mundi CIO, Wouter Bracke (wouter.bracke@kbr.be)

Abbreviations

- ICA International Cartographic Association
- ICHC International Conference on the History of Cartography
- IM The Trustees of Imago Mundi CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)
- MAGIC Map and Geoinformation Curators Group
- ISHMap International Society for the History of the Map

1. The Nature of ICHC

1.1. Statement of Purpose

The International Conference on the History of Cartography [ICHC] is dedicated to advancing knowledge of the history of maps and mapmaking, regardless of geographical region, language, period or topic. The conference promotes free and unfettered global cooperation and collaboration among cartographic scholars from any academic discipline, curators, collectors, dealers and institutions through illustrated lectures, presentations, exhibitions, and a social programme. In order to expand awareness of issues and resources, each conference is sponsored by leading educational and cultural institutions. Conferences are held biennially and are administered by local organizers in conjunction with Imago Mundi CIO.

[The whole of the above text needs to be included in the 'Call for Papers'.]

1.2. The Scope of ICHC

Each ICHC provides a forum for all scholars, both academic and lay, who are interested in the exchange of research findings and ideas about the history of cartography. **All papers must primarily concern the history of cartography, i.e., the interdisciplinary study of maps, their making, and their use in the past.** Participation from other academic disciplines—art history, history of science, geography, literature studies, cultural history, etc.—should therefore be actively encouraged. **Papers that concern only related subjects** (e.g., historical geography, the history of discoveries, and the use of maps for current political argument or for specific information about past landscapes) **would not be considered to fall within the history of cartography.**

[The whole of the above text needs to be included in the 'Call for Papers'.]

1.3. The Elements of ICHC

Each ICHC features academic and social programmes.

The academic programme has three major components: (1) the paper presentations, each twenty minutes in length (before questions and comments), grouped together in thematic sessions; there are three (perhaps four) papers to a session, and some sessions might be specially organized; (2) a poster session; and (3) at least one exhibition.

The social programme may be comprised of, e.g., receptions, a farewell dinner, and events or tours. Post-conference tours may also be offered.

In addition, recent conferences have made time within the programme for meetings organised by ISHMap, MAGIC, and ICA's Commission on the History of Cartography.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ICHC

§ 2.1. The Responsibilities of IM

IM is responsible for the international reputation of this series of conferences and provides continuity. IM seeks to represent the wishes of the international community of map scholars. It has two areas of specific concern:

First, IM seeks to ensure the quality and character of the academic programme. IM is committed to the principles of intellectual freedom; the conferences it coordinates are wholly international and entirely non-political. **IM therefore appoints two Trustees to serve on the programme Selection Committee (one of whom will be the chair), approves the conference themes (see sec. 3.4 below), and requires certain procedures be followed in selecting papers (see *Organising, sec. 6*), to ensure that papers and posters are judged on their value for historical research and intellectual rigour alone.**

Second, IM seeks to ensure that the conference fee remains affordable for the full international community and that some low-price accommodation is available.

The selection process is usually carried out now via email and/or online meetings.

2.2. The Responsibilities of the Conference Organisers

The organisers are responsible for proposing specific conference themes (see sec. 3.4 below), other financial matters, and all 'local' arrangements. All decisions must be made in line with IM's overall concerns. In particular, members of the programme Selection Committee from the host country should always be aware that proposals for papers and posters must be judged on their value for historical research and intellectual rigour alone.

3. SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL TO HOST A CONFERENCE

Before an invitation to host a conference is accepted by IM, potential organisers must show that they have the resources to run an international conference and that they are fully aware of what is involved. The following points indicate the basic requirements and the information that should, if possible, be supplied to IM.

The formal application, addressed to IM's Chair (see above), should come from the head of an appropriate organisation or institution. The financing of each conference is managed entirely by the local organisers. The sponsoring institution, or some other, should agree to underwrite the financial costs of the conference, in the event of an overall loss. Any profit would be retained by the local organisers. The application should give the names of the members of the organising committee and the institutions they represent.

3.1. Conference Dates

When proposing dates for the conference, the organisers should be aware of academic commitments occurring at different times in different countries. Academically, the ideal time is probably July, but June may be an acceptable alternative if there are good reasons for holding the conference then.

No dates should be announced until they have been agreed with IM.

3.2. Conference Schedule

§ The conference proper (i.e. between the Opening and Closing sessions) would normally last for four to five days, usually Sunday or Monday to Friday, but a shorter time-span is possible.

In order to allow for the presentation of as many high-quality papers as possible, it is acceptable to hold concurrent sessions (*Organising, Section 6.2.3*).

3.3. Venue

At least one properly equipped auditorium is required, preferably able to seat up to 250 people. Adequate space for concurrent sessions, if planned, should be indicated. The restricting of conference numbers because of limitations of auditorium size should be avoided.

There should also be adequate space and furniture for the display of posters in the Poster Session (*Organising, Section 9.5*).

Organisers should decide in advance of issuing a call for papers the balance between in-person and online participation and attendance. While IM strongly prefers in-person sessions, the use of online participation for meetings, workshops, and selected sessions (e.g. a keynote) can be considered. Venues must be able to support the format chosen by the organisers, whether in-person or hybrid.

§ Potential organisers should mention whether venues are air-conditioned.

3.4. Conference Themes

Potential organisers are encouraged to suggest between one and four specific themes that will set the tone for the conference. **The topics need to be scholarly, international and wholly related to the history of cartography. As finally adopted, the themes must also meet with IM's approval.** But it should also be realised that, in practice, many (perhaps the majority) of conference papers may fall outside the specified themes and no paper should be rejected merely because of that fact. **The list of themes must therefore always end with '...and any other aspect of the history of cartography'.**

For reference, please note:

- One theme, and therefore several sessions in the actual conference, can focus on the host country's own cartographic history, but **such papers should normally comprise no more than 20–25% of the total papers** in the final conference.
- Organisers might want to consider a theme that marks a specific and significant anniversary: the birth or death of a major cartographer, the publication of an important work, or an historical event which had cartographic significance.
- IM will appoint two Trustees to the programme Selection Committee, one of whom will serve as the committee's chair. The Trustees will be historians of cartography from other countries who possess a broad understanding of the subject and who can assist the local committee.

§ 3.5. Language

All abstracts and presentations will be in English.

3.6. Exhibitions

Conference-goers like to see the host country's cartographic treasures. They are also interested in unfamiliar cartographic material, and in interpretative displays which ask challenging questions. Exhibitions do not have to be restricted to 'treasures' from the early period, although these are always popular. For instance, many participants are interested in 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century mapping, in different map genres, and in how particular problems have been solved cartographically. Local content is of interest provided that the cartographic representation is unusual.

Participants will therefore expect at least one significant map exhibition containing historical material of significance for an international audience, with a printed catalogue of appropriate quality.

3.7. Information to be supplied to IM

- The most likely month for the conference
- Conference location (town, institution)
- The range and nature of the conference facilities to be provided, whether or not they are air-conditioned (when relevant), and whether concurrent sessions are likely
- The organisers' intentions regarding the use of online participation and attendance (subject to change according to circumstances, and bearing in mind 3.3 above)
- Suggested theme(s)
- Proposed exhibition(s)
- Plans (if any) for post- and/or in-conference tour(s) and excursions
- Proposed general schedule
- § • The names of the institutions and individuals who would be directly involved in planning the conference
- To ensure that potential participants (an increasing number of whom are self-funded) are not deterred by high hotel prices it is essential that cheaper accommodation is identified (university-style or hostel). Approximate (present-day) room prices should be cited in the proposal for that and for one or more cheaper hotels