

Guidelines for preparing a proposal for a World Archaeological Congress Inter-Congress

WAC holds Inter-Congresses between the major International Congresses convened by WAC every four years. Inter-Congresses bring together archaeologists and others who wish to explore issues of mutual interest. They usually are organized by members of WAC regional electoral colleges, but may be organized by others with the concurrence of the WAC Executive and Council.

WAC encourages organizers to avoid scheduling an Inter-Congress in the same year that a major International Congress is being held to avoid the inevitable stress on finances for both delegates and possible funding agencies.

We have established this set of guidelines to assist in the preparation of proposals to hold an Inter-Congress. In no way are these to be considered absolutes that you must address in a proposal, but they are matters that undoubtedly will be raised as the Executive and Council consider your proposal.

You may wish to use the boldface items as an organizational scheme for your proposal, although this is not required.

The Proposed Theme

Each Inter-Congress should have a single theme, expressed in the title of the Inter-Congress. Recent and planned themes are:

- Threats To Archaeology, its Importance, Values and Development
- Archaeological Theory in South America
- Archaeological Invisibility and Forgotten Knowledge
- Overcoming Structural Violence
- Archaeology in Conflict
- Indigenous Peoples and Museums: Unraveling the Tensions

The proposed Inter-Congress theme should support or address the goals and Codes of Ethics of WAC, as stated at: <http://www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/site/home.php>

You may have any number of sub-themes related to the main theme, but the number should be manageable in the time allotted for your Inter-Congress. In the proposal, these should be listed as “possible” themes only; you may wish to or need to alter them as planning progresses.

Inter-Congresses should not have concurrent sessions, and too many themes may make that impossible. In your proposal, provide an explanation of the main theme, but do not

provide an explanation for the sub-themes. Your explanation of the theme should include a statement of what the theme means, why it is important, and who the intended audience is to be. Will it be only regional archaeologists? Will it involve indigenous people? Will it involve scholars from outside archaeology? Will non-archaeologists find it useful or interesting?

Organizers

List the organizers of the proposed Inter-Congress. This can be an organization, but is usually one or several individuals. WAC believes that it is very important to have one or two individuals given the main responsibility and authority for decision-making for the Inter-Congress. Often, one individual handles the academic program and another handles the local arrangements, such as transportation, accommodation, and excursions. Your proposal should name the individual(s) who have such responsibilities and give some details about their qualifications. Are they active in the field? Have they organized large meetings before, and what meetings were they? They *must* be WAC members to serve as organizers. These individuals usually will be the only people who will communicate directly with the WAC Executive about the Inter-Congress.

Is there a committee structure to assist with organizing and executing the Inter-Congress? Usually, this means an academic committee and a local arrangements committee. The academic committee can be comprised of individuals from different locations or institutions, but the local arrangements committee generally is comprised of individuals from the venue because they know the location best. In your proposal, you should discuss the organizational structure, and if you already know some of the key members of committees, you may wish to list them and discuss their qualifications.

Will there be co-sponsors? If so, who are they and what are their interests in co-sponsoring the Inter-Congress? Having co-sponsors is not a requirement, but is often useful for planning and financing the meeting. Co-sponsors may be universities, museums, libraries, private foundations, businesses, or some other organization with a reasonable interest in the theme or a connection to it. You may wish to include web addresses (URLs) of any co-sponsors.

Indigenous Involvement

If the event involves Indigenous subject matter, discuss how Indigenous people will be involved in the Inter-Congress. Will they be co-sponsors? Will Indigenous people be members of planning committees? Will Indigenous people chair sessions and give presentations? Inter-Congress organizers may wish to contact WAC Indigenous Representatives for assistance if Indigenous people are to be involved.

Student Involvement

WAC is committed to student participation at all WAC events. Discuss how students will be involved in the Inter-Congress. Will students be part of the organizing body? What

steps will be taken to facilitate student participation? How will the Inter-Congress benefit student members of WAC? Inter-Congress organizers may wish to contact the WAC Student Committee for assistance in contacting student representatives, if necessary.

Proposed Dates

What are the proposed dates for the Inter-Congress? Planning the date is an extremely important matter. If the meeting will have widespread, international interest and participation, consider what other meetings have been announced that might compete for either the dates or for funding. You also may wish to consider whether your meeting will coincide with the academic year and primary fieldwork seasons so that you can attract the largest audience. If you are associated with a university that has student housing, you may wish to consider holding the meeting during times when these cheaper lodging costs might be available.

Inter-Congress Attendance

Give an estimate of how many delegates or attendees will attend the Inter-Congress. On what basis(es) did you estimate this number? How will you inform the archaeological or other interested communities that this meeting is to be held? You should consider the following:

- Sending notices to organization newsletters
- Sending notices at intervals before the meeting to WAC and other archaeological listservs. Costs may be free for these effective notices
- Preparing posters or other materials for distribution at professional meetings or through direct mailings
- Sending press releases to local media as the meeting nears in order to attract news coverage and some attendance by interested non-archaeologists

Location

Discuss the location of your proposed venue. The place where you hold your Inter-Congress obviously is an important consideration. Is the location easily accessible by plane, trains, or cars? For international meetings, air travel is crucial, but sometimes arrangements can be made for inexpensive transfers to the venue. Perhaps the location you choose is keyed to a particular locale such as an important archaeological site with limited transportation. This may be acceptable to the Executive as long as the reasons for holding the Inter-Congress in such a location are clear and adequate transportation can be provided.

Facilities

Discuss the facilities and amenities of the venue itself. The greatest concern for facilities is a conference venue that can provide these spaces:

- Adequate rooms for the sessions.

For meetings, one consideration is having meeting places capable of handling the media needs of presenters. For some presenters, this may mean simple equipment such as slide or overhead projectors. Others may require media projectors and a computer with PowerPoint or similar software. Presenters with needs beyond these should provide their own equipment.

- Adequate places for lodging and provision of food for those attending. You need not discuss these in detail, but be certain to show that you have considered these aspects:

- Housing

Although not a requirement, organizers may wish to provide a range of lodging types. You may have access to inexpensive lodging in university residence halls or similar facilities. Some attendees prefer greater privacy and may wish to stay in a hotel, so you may wish to provide a range of hotel choices, prices, and qualities.

- Food

Dietary practices and needs are variable and many are culturally defined. You must allow for them. This may be as simple as providing vegetarian options, but can be more complex and related to particular health or religious requirements. You may choose to include one or more meals in registration costs and have them catered. You should plan on providing coffee, tea and other beverages, and fruit or other snacks for breaks.

Although some conferences function best when groups are isolated and focused on the subject, many attendees wish to have other things to do or see. They may be travelling with companions or family members who will not be attending the Inter-Congress. Are there museums, theaters, or other attractions in the area that may allow for this? Such possibilities are not a requirement, but do make a venue more attractive for attendees.

Images: You may wish to list or provide brief descriptions of such facilities or attractions. If you have a digital camera, you may wish to provide general photographs of the venue, such as an overview of a university campus or a museum where the meeting will be held. Include any image you think may be relevant.

Costs and Funding

Discuss how you intend to fund the Inter-Congress and provide a simple provisional budget.

Primary funding usually comes from local sources. The sponsoring organizations will provide much of the funding themselves. Please realize that WAC itself can provide very

limited financial support, but WAC may be able to help you locate organizations that offer grants for delegate travel and provide suggestions regarding other matters of funding. Usually, attendees pay for their own transportation, lodging, food, and registration costs. Inter-Congress organizers often pay for travel or other costs related to keynote speakers, but may also offer an honorarium. Usually WAC discourages offering large honoraria for speakers, but that is a choice for the organizers.

Registration costs: Many costs may be incorporated into an Inter-Congress registration fee, but WAC encourages efforts to keep this fee as low as possible. In addition, we advise that you plan for advanced registration for the Inter-Congress so that members can registrar online and with credit cards. This facilitates international registrations. Make arrangements with WAC to use either their system or your own for secure online registrations (preferred). WAC members *must* be offered a discount to the registration fee in an amount at least covering the cost of joining WAC. If you intend to provide meals or coffee/tea breaks as part of the registration fee, be sure to say this in your proposal. You may wish to give an estimate of the possible registration fee, but this is not required and will be considered only as an estimate.

WAC does not expect any Inter-Congress to make a financial profit, but please note that any profits from the Inter-Congress will revert to WAC. You will be asked to provide an accounting of funds. WAC is a volunteer organization, so profit may go directly to the organizers or to the institutions that sponsor the event. WAC may allow the profits to be used to support WAC projects within the region or to be used by the WAC Executive for projects the organizers suggest (support for student or Indigenous travel to meetings, for example, or the Global Libraries project). If you have a particular project within your region or wish to designate the use of any profits for a WAC project, you may choose to include it in your proposal.

Additional Possibilities

You may wish to include other items in your proposal that relate to the venue, facilities, or costs.

Excursions: Many attendees travel a long distance and have never visited the region where your Inter-Congress is being held. You may wish to arrange for tours to be part of the Inter-Congress (and part of the registration fee), but usually organizers plan for pre- or post- Inter-Congress tours at additional costs. Usually the tours are arranged through travel companies, but organizers may choose to arrange tours themselves to make them specific to the topic of the Inter-Congress. Tours can be a way to help cover the costs of a conference. People expect tour costs to be affordable, but recognize that using tours to cover other conference costs is a standard practice. If you organize tours, you may wish to provide for tours of varying lengths or distance, but recognize that offering too many choices may keep tours from reaching a minimum number required to cover costs.

Events: Many Inter-Congresses have offered cultural activities or events, sometimes as part of registration and sometimes at extra costs. This may be a reception in a museum

related to the Inter-Congress or a performance by Indigenous or ethnic groups from the area. The kind of events offered at Inter-Congresses has varied widely. None are required, but they do make the Inter-Congress more attractive.

Closing Plenary: Depending on your choice, a closing plenary open to all participants can be held at the end of the last day of the Inter-Congress presentations. It allows participants to present and vote upon resolutions originating from discussions held during the Inter-Congress. Note that these resolutions are not binding on WAC until endorsed by the Assembly because there will be non-WAC members at the Inter-Congress and closing plenary.

Dissemination of Conference Materials

How do you intend to disseminate conference papers or relevant information to archaeologists or other interested parties who cannot attend? You are strongly encouraged to make at least one book of WAC volume series or one issue in a WAC-related journal by putting together papers presented in the Inter-Congress. Currently, the WAC book series include One World Archaeology, Worlds of Archaeology, Indigenous Archaeologies, Global Cultural Heritage Manual Series, and Research Handbooks in Archaeology, and the WAC-related journals are *Archaeologies*, *Arqueología Suramericana/Arqueología Sul-Americana*, and *Journal of Environment and Culture*. Details of these volume series and journals can be found in WAC website. You are encouraged to consult with the editors of the relevant volume series and/or journal to plan for publications immediately after the Inter-Congress.

Perhaps you might also wish to consider contacting a university or museum press with which your institution has a relationship; they might well be willing to publish some of the papers. Another possibility is electronic publication, but remember that not everyone has access to online or other digital media. For those who have the facilities, a live Internet broadcast of the sessions may be possible. Costs are surprisingly inexpensive. Some systems allow for viewers of the broadcast to ask questions. In some cases, papers done far enough ahead can be put into an “electronic symposium” for viewers and participants to read, with the possibility at the conference for more discussion instead of listening to presentations.

Additional Information

If you believe that other information would be useful to WAC for review of your proposal, please include it.

Would a different format be more appropriate than an Inter-Congress?

Perhaps you have an excellent idea for an academic meeting but do not believe that it is worthy of an Inter-Congress. If so, WAC is willing to consider giving its approval and recognition to other forms of academic meetings:

- Workshops - Single focus meetings with a small number of attendees (10-20) on a very specialized topic. Usually workshops include elements such as training sessions on some new (or old) technique, law, or approach. The emphasis is on intensive learning.
- Symposium - A more traditional academic meeting of short duration, often a day or two, and usually on a single, specialized issue or subject. Attendance is limited, usually 50 or fewer people.
- Academic Session at another organization's meetings - Sometimes it is possible to sponsor a traditional academic session at the annual meetings of another organization, such as the Australian Archaeological Association, the Canadian Archaeological Association, or the Society for American Archaeology. Normally such sessions are invited and their subject usually is linked to the organization's goals.

What happens to your proposal when it is submitted?

We strongly encourage you to send proposals electronically for ease in distribution. Your proposal should be submitted to the WAC Secretary who will send it to the WAC Meeting Planning Committee [note: this would need to be established and charged with reviewing proposals] and to the Executive. The Meeting Planning Committee examines the proposal, which usually takes around six weeks from the date the Secretary forwards it to them. The committee and the members of the Executive may request additional information, which possibly will lengthen the process. You can expect to hear about your proposal within approximately eight to ten weeks.

If you have questions, please contact the WAC Secretary who will send your questions to the appropriate committee or individual.