INTERNATIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATION

ICA Guidelines for Regional Cartographic Conferences

1. Introduction

ICA Regional Cartographic Conferences (RCC) are held at irregular intervals, typically run by local organizing committees in different locations around the globe. To ensure sufficient exchange and networking among participants, ICA Regional Conferences are typically held as in-person events. They can also be supplemented with hybrid elements or be held purely online if circumstances require. It is essential that previous experiences are handed on to future local organising committees, whether they are working independently or in conjunction with a professional conference organising company. The ICA Executive Committee (EC) have prepared guidelines to assist RCC organizing committees wishing to organize and run RCCs. These guidelines are meant to establish minimum requirements as a starting point. Organisers are invited to extend guidelines as necessary.

2. Objectives

2.1. The objectives of the RCC are to provide a regional cartography forum for presentation and exchange of new ideas and approaches through various session types, including plenary, technical, and poster sessions, as well as workshops and map exhibitions. It also provides a setting suitable for meetings of ICA Commissions and Working Groups.

2.2. A 'region' in this sense is typically understood to be a space that encompasses several countries, ideally parts of or whole continents.

As a regional forum, the conference ideally includes transnational topics and offers international scientific exchange. Therefore, in addition to local languages, offers should also be made in English for international guests.

2.3. The RCC typically includes:
- opening and closing ceremonies,
- plenary sessions with keynote speakers,

- scientific programme (involving selection, presentation and publication of papers and posters),
- social events, and possibly including 'map use' events,
- map and other exhibitions,
- workshops and events for ICA Commissions and Workings Groups

These are each further detailed below.

3. The Role of ICA in Regional Cartographic Conferences

3.1. The ICA EC invites member nations to ask for official recognition of a conference in their region as an RCC.

3.2. The EC decides on the applications and thus location and timing of an RCC.

3.3. Decisions are usually made 12 months in advance of an RCC.

3.4. Conference bids should include an invitation of the President, Secretary General & Treasurer or other members of the EC to inspect facilities and meet proposed key persons of the organizing committee.

3.5. Successful applications include as much detail, as possible. Once an RCC is officialy recognized and the bid has been accepted by the EC, a follow up report needs to be submitted to the EC, including the programme draft and a budget.

3.6. Two progress reports on the RCC organization are requested by the EC at least six and two months before the RCC takes place. The EC is available to respond to any question or issue that may arise.

3.7. While the content of the final programme is in the responsibility of the local organising committee, it is highly recommended to include ICA Commission and Working Group Chairs in the paper solicitation, review, and selection process. These ICA officers should also be invited to chair sessions during the RCC.

3.8. The EC must be consulted for the development of the technical programme. This will typically include approval of the conference topics, session themes, and keynote speakers, as detailed below in Section 10 of these Guidelines.

3.9. It is expected the LOC offers the opportunity for an EC member to address the conference during the opening of the event.

3.10. The EC will appoint an official liaison for the conference. This may be a member of the EC or a reputable person entrusted by the Executive Committee. It is expected that this liaison will be regularly invited by the LOC to meetings or, at best, become part of the LOC.

4. Recognition Process

4.1. Any national member of the ICA may submit a bid to host an RCC and seek official recognition by the EC. Affiliate members can submit a bid with the support of at least one relevant national member (if applicable). Bids for an RCC can also be made jointly by more than one national member.

4.2. A letter of intent should be sent to the Secretary General & Treasurer, accompanied by the request for recognition as an ICA RCC, including detailed information on the proposed location, regional outreach, facilities, lodging, committee members and personnel, registration fees, and a budget. The intent should normally be submitted at least 12 months before the event to the EC.

4.3. The ICA would expect the organisers of a RCC to promote the conference in an active manner to cartographers and GI scientists in the region and perhaps worldwide and invite as many as possible to attend. The RCC could give an opportunity to national cartographic bodies to hold regular meetings in parallel as an integrated part of the RCC.

5. Organizing Committee

5.1. The Local Organising Committee (LOC) shall be finalized, and the Conference Director appointed, at the latest as the decision to hold the RCC and official recognition as an RCC has been made by the EC.

5.2. The LOC typically includes a broad range of local cartography and GIScience professionals, thus ensuring representation of the various cartographic strands and diverse expertise in a member nation. It may include the official ICA liaison (see 3.10).

5.3. It is highly advisable to engage professional conference organisers for RCC organization, especially for handling registrations and accommodation. While it is recommended to engage a professional conference organizer, it is critical that the LOC and its sustaining organisations retain oversight and overall responsibility for managing the conference.

5.4. Based on prior experience, the EC recommends the following optional sub-committees:
- A Programme or Scientific Committee to handle the Call for Papers, manage submissions and reviews, consult with ICA Commission and Working Group Chairs, manage accepted submissions, edit proceedings, and organize the scientific sessions;
- A Social Programme Committee with duties to organise and conduct receptions and other social activities;
- Technical Exhibition Committee with duties to conduct the Technical Exhibition, if included;
- Cartographic Exhibition Committee with duties to collect items for the Cartographic Exhibition, edit the exhibition catalogue, and display exhibition items.
- Technical Tours Committee with duties to organise and conduct a diverse set of technical tours, if included.

5.5. A patron or honorary committee may be considered to further highlight the importance and regional flavour of the RCC, and to attract local and regional sponsors, etc. Ideally, patrons will promote the RCC in their networks, and public outreach activities (on the web, newsletters, social media networks, etc.), volunteer time of their staff for the RCC, provide contacts to the LOC, and contribute to specific events (e.g., Cartographic Exhibitions, tours, etc.), or make their space for RCC-related activities available.

5.6. The inclusion of RCC relevant sponsors from the public and private sector is recommended: RCCs are an opportunity to advertise and promote the discipline of cartography and GIScience to governmental and commercial bodies.

6. Timing

6.1. RCCs are at typically run annualy or biannually, but depending on needs, can also occur less frequently. They typically last 2-4 days, but depending on regional needs, can be shorter or longer.

6.2. RCC must not conflict with dates for planned ICCs. The EC will thus coordinate proposed RCC time slots, to avoid ICCs and concurrent RCCs.

7. Budget

7.1. The responsibility for the RCC budget rests solely on the LOC. The EC highly recommends sharing budget information as early as possible, as to enable feedback on anticipated fixed and other costs.

A tiered registration fee structure should be provided, with reductions for registered students, retired participants, members of the organizer's associations, for shorter than full conference attendance periods, and for accompanying persons. The category 'accompanying persons' must be restricted to those who are not attending any part of the scientific programme. It is recommended to offer reduced rates for attendees from developing countries. The accreditation of those who primarily serve in booths in the Technical Exhibition (if involved) must also be considered. Keynote speakers should be offered complimentary registration.

In the case of a hybrid or fully virtual conference, participation fees should be reduced and adjusted accordingly in order to cover the actual costs, but also to enable enough participants to have access. In addition, the above-mentioned reductions should also be taken into account in the new rates and fees should be pro-rated accordingly.

7.2. The following budget cost items are to be included at minimum:

Conference venue; professional conference organizer; printing, publications, equipment and materials for the Technical Exhibition, displays, and security for exhibitions; registration and payment systems, WiFi networking; signage; promotional efforts including website design, travel made by LOC representatives to promote the RCC; dispatch of publicity material and materials for exhibitions etc.

Other costs such as: personnel for administration, management, purchasing, catering, cleaning and liaising; costs associated with opening and closing ceremonies, and other aspects of the social programme.

In addition, ICA expect the following costs related to their participation to be covered locally:
- Full accommodation costs for the period of the RCC for the President and the Secretary General & Treasurer.
- Free registration at the ICC for the President and the Secretary General & Treasurer, every former ICA President, every EC member addressing the audience on behalf of ICA (see point 3.9), and any EC member appointed as an official liaison for the conference (see point 3.10) – including participation in the conference Gala dinner.

- Keynote speakers should be offered a complimentary registration fee.

In the case of a hybrid or fully virtual conference, costs should be considered for an online broadcasting format that allows for sufficient participants (up to 500) in parallel sessions and interactions, as well as the possibility of recordings.

Following the ICA publication strategy the publication fee of currently 15€ per paper has to be included in the budget.

8. Data Protection, Data bases of participants

8.1. Local and international data protection regulations should be studied carefully and applied throughout the process. It must be ensured at all times that no unauthorised data is collected, stored or shared, but only with the appropriate consent of the participants.

8.2. A comprehensive mailing list should be prepared for invitation and promotional purposes. Contact with the previous conference should be established to build on existing databases, if these have been set up in accordance with data protection regulations. The ICA allows existing protected mailing lists to be used, for example, to send information to all ICA members and commissions.

8.3. The database should be compiled in a form suitable for providing address labels and e-mail addresses. When collecting new data for the mailing lists, the respondents must be informed in advance and their consent must be obtained.

8.4. Participants in countries where a personal invitation is needed for applications to attend a conference or to obtain a visa should be issued with an invitation in a format of their choice and in accordance with data protection law immediately upon request.

8.5. The Mailing List database can be made available for the next LOC if the data protection regulations of both regions/countries allow this, with a request that may only be used for ICA conference purposes, and that privacy of this data be maintained.

8.6 For all recordings in sound and image during the conference as well as their long-term public or non-public reproduction and storage, the written consent of the person recorded must be obtained. It may be necessary to set up

different categories (recording only / sound only / recording and publication etc.).

8.7 All databases set up before and during the conference to record and manage participants and their data should be deleted after the conference when they are no longer needed. Here too, local data protection regulations must be strictly observed.

9. Promotion

9.1. Promotion is a key to a successful RCC.

9.2. All brochures and information carriers should contain as much information as available at the time. Potential delegates can be far from the venue, live in difficult administrative environments and have to make a decision on the basis of what they can read in the information provided.

9.3. An informative website must be set up and continuously updated with access to the following information on its home page:
- Promotional materials, or other relevant events, and mailed as widely as possible. This material needs to have as much information as possible at the time of distribution.
- Calls for submissions. Preliminary programme, including exhibitions, Commission and other meetings, social programme.
- Registration form, at least six months before the RCC, also distributed to the compiled mailing list.
- Information on accommodation and accessibility of the location. A list of reasonably cheap accommodation recommended by the organiser should be available for download.

9.4. Maps and other locational information should be included on the web site, such as the location of venue/hotels, tours, and other relevant data.

9.5. Preliminary Programme and Registration Forms should contain all necessary details for attendance. The registration form should cover all items and be clear and concise. It should clearly show the final price, free of any surcharges and fees and always include these (e.g. VAT) in the price. Some feedback mechanism is essential to allow conference attendees to report queries and potential problems (e.g. clash between presenting and chairing a session).

9.6. The event should be announced on as many conference listings, diaries, and calendars in publications as possible, and through e-mail lists as indicated above. ICA can help herewith by offering their communication platforms for

these purposes. Publicity can also be effective through launch events within the country, participation of national representatives in other conferences and meetings, publication of articles in journals and the popular media, and creation and dissemination of further brochures both nationally and internationally.

9.7. An on-line registration system should be created to allow people to efficiently register their interest, formally register, pay (using a variety of methods, including credit card), and arrange hotel accommodation. Local payments on arrival (also in cash) should be possible to allow participants access in case of difficulties with financial transactions in their country.

9.8. It is expected that registration fees will be kept relatively low: conference organisers should be aware that delegates expect that the registration fee will be considerably lower than their travel and accommodation costs, which are the main items of expense when attending a conference.

9.9. Early registration should be encouraged by introducing a discount for those registering up to 3 months before the conference. It should be noted that some alignment with the results of the paper reviewing process should be attempted: those submitting papers need to be told of the success or otherwise of their submission before the early registration period expires.

10. Technical Programme, Presentations, Publications

10.1. The technical programme needs to reflect the cutting edge of cartography and GIScience. An RCC theme, highlighted in promotional materials etc. (i.e., specific conference title, etc.) should be used.

10.2. Various submission types should be offered, i.e., full papers posters, and abstracts. The selection of the submissions will be based on a review process by an expert panel, as described in the Publication Regulations.

10.3. The expert review panel should include experts leading the cartography and GIScience fields, including EC members, Commission and Working Group Chairs. LOC is responsible for the organisation of the review process and review board. The use of an online reviewing system is highly recommended, especially for large RCCs.

10.4. All submissions need to be prepared following the ICA publication guidelines. All published submissions have a maximum length of 8 pages, and are formatted based on the existing ICA template. There are three proceedings tracks:

- Full papers based on full paper review (8 pages)
- Full papers based on abstract review (8 pages)
- Abstracts (half page)

LOC can decide together with EC whether to offer all three publication outlets or only a subset or additional format if justified. The publication is organized via the official ICA publisher at the time of the conference. Article Processing Costs have to be paid to the publisher (see Publication Regulations).

10.5. Posters should be a fundamental part of the programme, and there should be a dedicated space and opportunities to promote them. Formatting guidelines should be issued in the first call for submissions. It is essential that the poster sessions have an attractive, prominent, and easily accessible location. Posters should also be suitable for use in online formats and presentations and not primarily designed for print only. This is especially true for hybrid or purely virtual events.

10.6. Any sessions including early career scholars and student contributions may ideally be scheduled early in the conference to foster their visibility and networking with senior scholars.

11. Venue, Online Video platform

11.1. It is advisable to consider a couple of potential venues at the time of the official request, thus including a potential fall back option. A minimum of 200 seats is suggested for opening and plenary sessions. The venue should provide up-to-date technical and audio-visual equipment. International accessibility and availability of nearby lodging and transportation are important points to consider for site selection.

11.2. The conference will have a designated WiFi access area, free of charge to participants.

11.3 In the case of a hybrid or fully virtual conference an online transmission system must be selected that is state-of-the-art and allows the participation of many people at the same time, even in parallel sessions. The system must allow easy interaction (e.g. moderating questions/answers, panel discussions), be self-explanatory for the participants and also offer the possibility of audio and video recording.

For a hybrid event, a good concept needs to be developed on how to actively integrate the virtual participants into the on-site conference and clearly

communicate which parts of the event are designated for on-site participants only and which are for online participants only.

12. Signage and Information

12.1. The LOC will provide adequate signage outside and inside of the venue for navigation support.

12.2. Especially if parallel sessions are run, session rooms and exhibition areas should be clearly labelled, and directions to them indicated in the conference materials.

12.3. The programme time table, including daily modifications, should be prominently displayed in the registration area and updated on the website.

12.4. The LOC will provide on-site conference information including but not limited to the most recent version of the programme and schedule of events, maps of the venue, contact information, exhibition details, meal location, and further local information, etc. This information can be included in a conference bag together with the conference proceedings, and a most-recent list of attendees, etc.. For hybrid and virtual events, an online 'conference bag' that contains the same information material, is highly recommended.

13. Opening and Closing Ceremonies

13.1 To leverage promotion of cartography and GIScience in the hosting region, it is advisable that the official RCC opening be of high profile. Additional care has to be taken to promote diversity of the community (i.e., gender, age, thematic background, etc.) when selecting keynote speakers, session chairs, and other high profile roles at the conference. A representative of ICA should be given the possibility to address the regional community here (see 3.9).

14. Post Conference Duties

14.1 The ICA and the LOC of future RCCs rely on summary reports of past conferences. It is critical to receive such a report within 3 months after the conference, including conference statistics such attendee statistics for various events, presentation numbers by various categories, and summary remarks about the outcomes of the conference and any possible recommendations for future RCCs.

14.2 To support reporting, it is advisable to seeking attendee feedback at the conference with questionnaires placed in the conference bag. The survey results should be made available to the ICA EC.

14.3 It is expected that the conference website and relevant information on the programme, links to the presentations and the final report will be accessible online for at least 2 years after the conference. In the case of digital recordings of presentations, a suitable location must be identified prior to the conference where they will be archived for the long term and accessible beyond the day the conference website is shut down.

15. Exhibitions

15.1. Local exhibitions connected with the conference are encouraged, and such exhibitions may be open to the general public to further promote the conference.

15.2. The LOC is responsible for adequate security measures in the exhibition areas.

16. Social functions

16.1. Social events are an important feature of any conference and thus they are highly encouraged.

16.2. At least one ice-breaker or welcome reception should be included in the registration fee. A conference dinner or similar, open for all participants may be arranged for an additional fee.

16.3. Other social or networking events may be sponsored or offered.

16.3. Also in the case of a hybrid or fully virtual conference, such important networking opportunities should not be forgotten and sessions like a 'Carto Café' for exchange by Online participants should be considered.

17. Safety and Security

17.1. Safety and security for attendees, exhibitors, visitors and their belongings must be assured at all times during on-site conference events. The LOC is responsible for respective insurances.

17.2. Adequate measures must be implemented to ensure that this occurs. In particular, advice to delegates regarding their personal security outside the conference venue should be circulated.

17.3. Any safety or security related concerns that are identified prior to the conference or that arise during the conference must be communicated immediately to the EC, and all attendees.

17.4. The LOC will provide information and or assistance to delegates with disabilities

17.5. All delegates must be informed about on-site emergency and evacuation procedures.

18. Concluding Remarks

These guidelines are the result of many prior well run ICC and RCC conferences. They also take into account initial experiences that the ICA or its members have had with virtual and hybrid conferences in the wake of the Corona pandemic. The guidelines are aimed to support future LOCs in running equally successful RCCs. These guidelines may be updated with input from future LOCs at any time.

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