

International Camping Fellowship (ICF)

Guidelines for the Bidding and Planning for Future International Camping Congresses (ICCs)

1. Introduction

ICF encourages the running of an International Camping Congress in locations around the World once every three years. The Tenth ICC will be run in Turkey in 2014, and subsequent ICCs each third year after 2014. ICF sees the running of regular ICCs as integral to its mission of Bringing Together a World of Outdoor Experience.

The specific purposes of running an ICC include:

- To provide a venue and occasion for all those with an interest in Camping around the World to meet to network, discuss and exchange views, socialise and renew friendships.
- To provide education and information about current trends, training and camping practices, and novel camp programs and models of interest to an international audience and universally applicable.
- To enable the host country to present the camping practices and culture of the locals to a wider international audience.
- To provide a forum for those interested in and undertaking research into camping and camping practices, to report their progress, and to learn about other research being undertaken.
- To provide an international platform to raise the profile of camping generally, and in the host country in particular, and to bring to the attention of the public, the value and potential of camping and camp programs.

This document provides guidelines to assist a potential host country in considering whether to bid to host a future ICC; what responsibilities it undertakes in becoming a host country; how it should go about preparing a bid document for consideration by ICF; and how it should prepare to host an ICC.

2. The Bidding Process

ICF seeks to be able to formally announce the successful bidder, location and approximate dates for the next ICC as part of the closing events for the previous ICC. This gives rise to the following timetable for the seeking, evaluating and announcing of bids.

In the year following the running of an ICC, ICF announces that it is formally seeking expressions of interest in bidding for the ICC which will be run, at that stage, in 5 years time. Countries are invited to register their interest in bidding before the end of this year.

During the following year, the ICF Portfolio Manager for Congress Oversight (currently Bill Oakley) will make contact with potential bidders, resolve issues, and assist countries to lodge a formal bid in time to be considered by ICF at its meeting during that year (usually held around October).

ICF will consider bids and decide who is the successful bidder before the end of the calendar year, and advise all bidders of the result.

The successful bidder will have the following year (the year in which the next ICC will be run) to prepare for the announcement of the next ICC host country during the ICC, and to encourage those present to re-gather at the next ICC.

The following notes give guidelines as to what is expected in hosting an ICC, and provide advice as to what has proved successful in the past, and what matters should be considered by the potential bidder.

3. Conference Organising Committee (COC)

The host country should create a Conference Organising Committee (COC) to plan and run the conference. During the three year period leading up to the ICC, the Chairman, or other nominated member of the COC will be appointed a member of the ICF Board, and would be expected to attend the annual ICF Board meetings during this period, to liaise with ICF and to keep ICF up to date on planning for the ICC. The cost of attending these meetings should be covered by the budget of the ICC

In the past it has often been found useful for the COC to host the ICF Board meeting in the first or second of these years at or near the proposed location of the congress. This enables the ICF Board to get first hand information on plans for the ICC, and enables Board members to have experience with which to encourage participation from their home countries in the ICC.

The ICF Portfolio Manager for Congress Oversight will maintain contact with the COC, and will act as liaison with ICF in Congress planning matters.

4. Who is the Congress Bidder?

The budget for an ICC is likely to involve many hundreds of thousands of dollars. The responsibility for financially underwriting the Congress is with the Congress bidders and the COC. ICF needs to be able to establish that the bidders and the COC have the necessary financial and managerial resources available to be able to run a conference. ICF does not have the financial resources to be able to support or financially underwrite an ICC. The bidder may be a National or Regional Camping Association, or a joint venture comprising several camping organisations. The bidders should have the funds available to provide a suitable cash advance to cover expenses prior to income being received.

The bid document should clearly identify who is the congress bidder, and provide details of their ability to underwrite and manage an ICC.

The ICC itself may be specifically organised, or may replace a regular local conference, or be a re-badged local event for the year in which it takes place.

5. Conference Finance and Budget

It is the responsibility of the COC to budget and operate the ICC to recover all costs. If the COC does not have experience in running a major international conference, it is recommended that the COC engage the services of a suitable local professional conference organiser. The budget should cover the costs of maintaining liaison with ICF as described above, and also should include the payment of a fee to ICF (currently set at \$50USD) for each conference fee paying participant (including partners) who does not come from the host country.

5.1 Fee Structure

It is the responsibility of the COC to set fees which will enable it to recover costs for the ICC. Fees for international participants should include the ICF fee as described above. Other components which may be included within a fee structure include:

- a. A discount for early booking and fee payment. This particularly useful to receive funds earlier, and to get an idea of numbers.
- b. A discount to ICF members. ICF membership comprises both full (fee paying) memberships as well as Affiliate (free) membership. The discount should only apply to full ICF members, or a greater discount should apply to full members.
- c. Discounts for other or local camping association memberships.
- d. Partners and family member discounts

- e. Discounts for multiple participants from the one camp or business
- f. Discounts for Conference speakers (see also the section on Conference Program)
- e. A further discount for ICF Board members. ICF Board members are expected to meet their own costs in travel and accommodation when attending Board meetings. The COC may therefore consider that a further discount for their participation is warranted.

The COC may also consider including fees for part time participation, and participation in specific Conference meals and events.

5.2 Sponsorship and External Support

The COC may seek additional financial support in the form of sponsorships and grants. Previous conference organisers have found it good to be able to say that all fees collected from participants have been spent on providing the Conference. Any surplus earned from the Conference was derived from sponsorship and other payments.

5.3 Scholarships

ICF has a Fund, the Bill Bowker Scholarship Fund, which is able to offer full or partial scholarships to assist those whose attendance at the Conference would be valuable, but who, otherwise could not afford to attend. The COC is invited to consider providing additional funds to support scholarship attendance and/or to promote applications for support from the Bill Bowker Scholarship Fund as part of their overall promotion.

6. Accommodation

Previous ICCs have been held in conference centres with separate accommodation; in large hotels which include conference facilities; in universities with student accommodation; and in resorts combining all facilities. The majority of international participants prefer relatively comfortable hotel style accommodation, although there is a sizable minority which will seek the cheapest accommodation available. There is the potential to increase international participation, particularly from younger staff, if some cheaper, possibly dormitory style accommodation, is included amongst the accommodation options.

7. Conference Location and Timing

The conference location should have regard to the ease of transport to the venue from most parts of the World. There should be ready transport available from the nearest airport, which should be a suitable

international airport, or connected to one. Are there other benefits of the location? For instance, are there other tourist attractions of the area? Is the location near to local camps or camping which might facilitate options to visit local camps in or around the congress program?

In relation to the time of year for running an ICC, ICF simply seeks that it be run during the calendar year, at a time which suits the local COC, but which allows the maximum international participation from most parts of the World. In setting the congress dates the COC should seek to avoid the major religious festivals and holidays of the major religions (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu) and major holidays like Thanksgiving in USA and Chinese New Year. The peak camping times of the Northern Hemisphere summer should also be avoided. Most recent ICCs have been scheduled around September/October/November. This time has proved to be most generally acceptable, although some have been run in the January and February time period.

The duration of an ICC is usually four days for the conference proper, with up to a week at either end to facilitate a range of pre- and post- conference activities. See more about this in the sections on Program and Activities.

8. Visa, Customs and Entry implications.

ICF seeks a venue and location for an ICC which will facilitate the maximum international participation from all countries involved with ICF. ICF is active in approximately 60 countries around the World, and this number is growing. The willingness of host countries to welcome participants from all countries, and the ease with which visas and other entry formalities can be arranged, will be a significant factor guiding ICF's choice of host country. There should be included in a bid document a statement from the Government of the host country indicating that the Government is aware and welcomes the bid being made, and will work with the COC to facilitate the entry of all those who wish to participate in the congress.

However the existence of an international congress is often used as a means to fraudulently seek entry to a country by people who are not intending congress participants. It is strongly recommended that the COC make early contact with the immigration and customs officials for their country, in order to cooperate to ensure that an ICC is not used in this way. ICF is ready to cooperate with any measures which may be required to ensure the integrity of our conference participation.

The bid document should also advise whether there are any quarantine issues which may impact upon the people or goods which are able to be brought to the ICC

9. Number of Conference Participants

It is difficult to be definitive about the number of conference participants which can be anticipated. The number of participants in recent ICCs has exceeded 500. However this figure is affected by the number of local participants, location, timing etc. The number of international participants has been steadily growing along with the growth in ICF membership, and the growing importance of ICCs in facilitating international networking. It is probably reasonable to plan for around 300 or more international participants, to which should be added the COCs estimate of local participation.

Host countries are strongly urged to encourage the maximum level of local participation possibly. Attending an ICC in your own country is one of the best and cheapest ways to experience an international congress.

Substantial local participation will ensure that the value of hosting an ICC is seen in the development of camping locally, persists long after the ICC.

10. Program and Activities

The responsibility for preparing and presenting the program of the ICC is principally with the COC. The program should present a mix of locally, and internationally relevant topics, balanced to provide maximum relevance for those attending. However there are some activities and events which need to be included in the conference program and pre- and post-congress activities. The following sections combine specification of these requirements, along with suggestions, and advice on what has worked in the past.

Most ICCs have followed, more or less a traditional conference format of three or so “highlight events” (eg Opening Ceremony, Banquet, Closing Ceremony) and a mix of keynote speaker plenary events, and break out sessions to a range of more focussed workshops covering a range of topics.

It may be necessary to pay speakers’ fees to secure appropriate keynote speakers, but it is the tradition within our industry that camping people will freely share their knowledge and experience with others. Therefore, besides possibly a rebate/discount on the conference fee, most speakers from within the industry will not expect to be paid speakers’ fees. ICF

Board members and ICF Ambassadors will assist the COC in identifying and securing suitable speakers and workshop presenters.

10.1 Special Events – Opening, Banquet, Closing

Most of what follows are not mandatory requirements, but simply suggestions about what has worked well for others.

Opening Ceremony/Event

This normally takes the format of some activity or ceremony which is locally relevant at the start of a major event. For example in Australia an opening ceremony will often include a ‘Welcome to Country’ ceremony performed by the local indigenous people. It is good if the event can involve local performers, and in particular, local child performers who can impart the flavour of enthusiasm and excitement for what is to come. The event need not be long, and may be followed by a meal or food and the opportunity to mix and network.

Banquet.

This may be a slightly more formal event, and may provide the opportunity to formally welcome Government and other dignitaries and to acknowledge sponsors. There may be a speaker or some other entertainment following the meal. The Banquet has also been used as an opportunity to generate some funds for the Bill Bowker Scholarship Fund. This may be in the form of a raffle or some kind of auction or similar event.

Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony Event usually offers ICF and visiting contingents the opportunity to express their appreciation to the organisers of the conference and to make some presentation to various members of the organising committee. Sometimes conference participants are invited to make some presentation or performance representative of their own country.

The Closing Ceremony will also include the formal announcement of the time and place for the next ICC, and should offer the host country for the next ICC the opportunity to make a short presentation about the next ICC and invite/encourage us to participate in it.

The Closing Ceremony is usually followed by a fairly relaxed social event (dance, party, booze up etc.) to allow the mixing of all participants

Other Events

Most previous conferences have included some form of event which takes people away from the conference venue. This might be to visit local camps, or other nearby tourist attractions. An opportunity to interact with locals can be valuable as part of this. The trip may include a meal, or some kind of party gathering away from the conference venue. A “night on the town” evening activity is also often included and gives the opportunity to give a range of choices from fun nightlife venues to theatre performances; from pub eats to a more formal restaurant venue. This kind of event might be at the cost of the individual participants.

10.2 Research Forum and Activities

The role of an ICC in supporting and facilitating the development and exchange of research information and news has grown dramatically over recent years. ICF now has a Research Committee headed up jointly by Stephen Fine from Canada and Deb Bialeski from USA. The COC is urged to make early contact with Research Committee about making provision for research sessions and activity during the ICC.

Generally the Research Committee will organise and arrange the content of the research sessions at the conference, and will simply need venues and slots in the program made available. They will seek a minimum of three, preferably four workshop slots for a research stream within the conference program. These slots will be used to enable approximately three researchers in each workshop slot to report on their research and the outcomes. The Research Committee may also seek an opportunity to report to a wider audience within the conference on recent progress made in research.

Because individual researchers need to seek permission and support from their research institution to be able to attend the conference and report on their research, we need to start this process early, that is in the year immediately following the preceding ICC. The ICF Research Committee will organise the calling for submissions and will make the selections of who will present.

ICCs are growing in stature as an event at which research is reported and progressed. We hope the COC will directly liaise with the ICF Research Committee on the details of support required for the Research Forum and other research activity and program at the ICC.

10.3 ICF General Assembly

The ICF Annual General Meeting – the meeting at which ICF annual financial position is reported will no longer be part of an ICC, because legal requirements stipulate that this take place within a limited period after the end of our financial year. However it is still intended to have an ICF General meeting as part of an ICC. The ICF constitution and by-laws mandate that the term for a number of offices within ICF goes from ICC to ICC. It is therefore likely that at the ICF General Meeting a number of people may be completing their term in office, and others will be commencing theirs. The ICF General Meeting will also give the Board of ICF the opportunity to report to a wider ICF audience on matters of interest and relevance to the whole ICF membership. However it is not the wish of ICF to dominate the content of the ICC program, and it is not expected that this meeting should either be long, or be a plenary event requiring attendance of all or most of the congress participants. ICF would therefore seek a workshop session be set aside towards the end of the ICC (day 3 or 4) for an ICF General Meeting. It would be helpful if the competing workshops do not include ICF specific workshops or issues.

10.4 Meeting of Association Presidents and Executives (MAPE)

A major aspect of ICF's work is to support the formation and development of national and regional camping associations. This work is supported by holding as part of the program of each ICC a meeting of the Presidents, secretaries and executives of the various camping associations represented. The meeting is to give everyone the opportunity to report on the developments in their particular association, and to facilitate networking between the officials. From this has grown a number of partnerships and cooperative arrangements. Again this meeting simply requires a normal workshop slot somewhere in the program. ICF will facilitate and run the meeting, and simply require COC to make available the venue and time slot. As many as 60 have attended similar meetings in the past.

10.5 International Room

ICF requests that the COC make available an International Room throughout the Conference . This room provides a venue for meetings and informal gatherings of internationals during the congress. It is also a venue which enables visiting contingents to provide a display and promotional material about camping in their country, and possibly small souvenirs and

snacks. ICF personnel are happy to manage and maintain the room during the congress.

10.6 ICF Special Awards

ICF have a number of special awards which are made annually or periodically. These include the ICF Druzba Award, Butterfly Awards and special recognitions. ICF may seek suitable brief times during the plenary sections of the conference to make formal award presentations

10.7 ICF Requirements outside the period of the Conference

The local organisers may include supplementary tours and activities outside the period of the congress proper. These may include additional pre- and post- congress tours and special training courses and activities. They may include meetings of kindred and other related organisations. In addition to these activities ICF has a number of further meetings and activities which take place outside the congress period as follow.

10.8 ICF Board Meeting

The ICF Board meets at least once each year, and makes its board meeting in a conference year in the three days prior to the conference. The agenda should be able to be completed in two full days of meeting. As the Chairman or nominated representative of the COC is a member of the Board at this time this also gives an opportunity to sort out last minute arrangements prior to the ICC. Usually the ICF Board meeting is held at the conference venue, or at some suitable venue nearby. ICF Board members will arrange to arrive earlier for this meeting, and it is helpful if they can move into their conference accommodation earlier to save a move. The COC is asked to arrange a suitable meeting venue with usual meeting facilities for a group of around 20. Tea and coffee making facilities and access to a working lunch is helpful.

It has become a traditional that ICF seeks to host a dinner for members of the COC on one of the evenings during this meeting. ICF will also try and make available suitable people to assist with the promotion of the congress by undertaking radio and television interviews, or meeting with important officials or dignitaries.

10.9 International Camp Directors Course (ICDC)

ICF has developed and delivers training through an International Camp Directors' Course to new and prospective camp managers and directors. Accredited courses are run in many countries throughout the year by

licensed and accredited ICDC trainers. ICF seeks to run at least one, and possibly several such courses prior to the ICC. In order to train and accredit suitable trainers to participate in and conduct future courses, ICF adds a “train the trainer” component to the ICDC being run prior to an ICC.

A basic ICDC course requires four full days, and it is helpful if the course can finish, allowing a day between the finish of the ICDC and the commencement of the congress program. The “Train the trainer” component is a further one day which must be before the basic ICDC course – a total of five days before the congress.

The basic course would normally have between 20 and 30 participants, and a staff of 5 or 6. An ideal venue for an ICDC would be a camp or camp like venue incorporating accommodation and catering, which is not the conference venue, but is not far away from the conference venue. Part of the ICDC course involves having a semi-formal dinner on the evening of day three of the basic course, and to which guests are usually invited.

ICF staff will arrange the staffing and operation of the course(s). The cost of the venue, accommodation and catering will be met by the course participants, and normally ICF will organise and financially underwrite this event. The COC is only asked to assist with identifying and securing suitable facilities. The current ICF coordinator for ICDC is Connie Coutellier, who will negotiate specific details and arrangements.

10.10 General Meeting of ICF Ambassadors

ICF has established the position of ICF Ambassador as a nominated representative of each country participating in ICF to represent ICF to their country, and their country to ICF. In addition ICF Ambassadors are responsible for electing three “Members-at-Large” to the ICF Board to provide some regional representation on the ICF Board. The terms of Members-at-Large run from ICC to ICC, so they need to be elected for the new term.

A general meeting of Ambassadors is required to be held just prior to the commencement of the ICC. This meeting is chaired by the ICF President and is attended by all ambassadors present and by the whole of the ICF Board. The total attendance is therefore likely to be in excess of 60. The meeting should be in the 24 hours prior to the Conference Opening Ceremony, and provision should be made for the early arrival of ambassadors to attend this meeting. The current person on the ICF Board responsible for facilitating and arranging this meeting is Jeff Bradshaw

with whom direct negotiation of detail may be undertaken. It is expected that this meeting will last between 2 and 3 hours.

10.11 ICF Board Post Conference Meeting

It is possible that the ICF Board will seek to hold a brief meeting immediately following the ICC. This meeting, requiring probably no more than an hour, should be as close to the end of the conference as possible, so as not to inhibit departure arrangements. It simply requires a suitable room in the conference venue to be made available.

11. Administration, Marketing and Promotion

11.1 Conference website

Perhaps the single most important part of marketing and promoting the Congress is the creation of a Congress Website. The website should be established as soon as possible after the announcement of the congress, and should be updated with additional detail as it is developed. The website will be linked to and accessible through the ICF website, and it is recommended that the COC negotiate links from the major camp websites around the World.

The website should have the capacity to develop online booking for the congress, and have the capacity to receive secure online payment by credit card.

11.2 Conference Timeline

Decisions as to whether to attend a conference are usually made a year or so out from the event. It is therefore important to have as much information about the program of the conference available as early as possible to allow people to make a decision about whether the conference is worth attending as early as possible. A substantial amount of the detail of the program content should be available at least a year before the congress is held. This enables camp managers to decide their own and their staff's attendance at the congress, and to budget and plan accordingly. Although this can be challenging for organisers, we have found that the more information which is available early, the more participants we are able to attract.

Earlybird booking discounts should be used to encourage bookings and commitments at least six months before the congress, and COC might even consider the approach used for ICC2014 where two separate earlybird dates were used to encourage even earlier booking.

11.3 Conference Agreement

The conference bid document and details will be used to draw up a formal agreement between ICF and the Congress Organising Committee. Not so much an instrument of legal enforcement, this agreement is really to further assist in ensuring each party understands its role and responsibility in planning and organising the congress. The agreement will be drafted by ICF and circulated in draft form. A final agreement will be prepared for formal signature at a ceremony included during the prior ICC.