

Updated Guidelines (2024) and Expectations Governing the Application to Host the Mineralogy and Museums Conference

Introduction

The Mineralogy and Museums Conference series has been a prominent feature on the calendar of mineral museum curators since the first conference in London in 1988. Since then, the series continued every four years in cities around the world (including Toronto 1992, Budapest 1996, Melbourne 2000, Paris 2004, Golden 2008 and Dresden 2012) until disruption in 2016 and the Global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, resulting in M&M9 being a hybrid conference in Sofia, Bulgaria and online in 2021. In 2024, the conference was relaunched in Cardiff as a dominantly in-person conference with a hybrid attendance possible.

Key Changes (2024)

As a lesson learned from the 2024 conference, the 4 yearly cycle is retained, but the year will change so that the M&M does not clash with EMC (European Mineralogy Conference) which has developed into a significant Mineralogical conference on the same years. This is a result of comments from M&M delegates explaining that many individuals only have access to funding for one conference per year. The 4-year cycle becomes 2027, 2031, 2035...

This will provide a mineralogical international conference schedule that looks like:

2025: (-),
2026: IMA2026,
2027: M&M11,
2028: EMC5,
2029: (-),
2030: IMA2030,
2031: M&M12,
2032: EMC6,

After the 2016 cancellation of M&M8 it was decided by the office bearers of the International Mineralogical Association Commission on Museums (IMA-CM), that a set of guidelines and expectations should be drawn up to regulate the applications to host M&M conferences in the future to ensure that all potential applicants are clear as to their obligations and commitments. This document is now updated after each conference to reflect developments.

Guidelines & Expectations

Above all else, it is imperative to stress that this conference is for museum and collections professionals (Curators, Collections Managers, Conservators, museum-based Researchers, public outreach advocates, and others in related museum-relevant roles, including those in Universities and Research Institutes). Interdisciplinary sessions or individual presentations are welcomed but must retain a clear and dominant connection to the mineral and geological sciences or the study, management, exhibition, interpretation or promotion of mineral-bearing specimens in museums.

1. The conference must be primarily organised by Museum or University professionals with a track record in promotion, study or preservation of the geological sciences, or by a national society affiliated with the IMA and advised by these professionals.
2. The physical conference venue should be centred in one city and suitable accommodation and travel links to and from this city must be available. The organising committee may, if required, call on professional help and advice from non-museum organisations for other aspects of delivering a conference (for example: accommodation, venues, catering and travel).
3. Ideally, none of the organising committee should have a personal connection with the commercial side of collecting geological objects or organising conferences in a way that might be perceived as having a personal conflict of interest. If there is the potential of a perceived conflict of interests this should be declared in the proposal for voting members to assess.
4. Prior to a proposal coming to the Commission for voting, the relevant IMA-CM national representative must be consulted.
5. The conference must not be organised in conjunction with, or by a mineral show organisation. The conference must be organised as a stand-alone event. Though it may take place at approximately the same time (e.g., in 2008, the co-occurrence of the Golden M&M6 conference and Denver Show 2008). There should be no direct connection.
6. Every effort should be made by the organisers to schedule the meeting to reduce overlap with the busiest University teaching periods. Previously the conference has been in July/August/September, but it is acknowledged that different countries have different schedules.
7. The proposal must come with a well-thought out and clear museum/collections relevant programme and a rough non-binding estimate of predicted costs. We would advise that any proposal should be submitted to the IMA-CM ideally three years in advance. *(An exception is made for the 2027 conference, due to the changes in planning cycle)*

8. The proposal should outline plans and timescales for the unexpected cancellation of the conference at short notice including information on the fees that are refundable and how delegates process refunds.
9. To mitigate against the organisers of the conference having unexpected challenges during any organisational period (institutional closure/loss of staff) it is advised that any organising committee be composed with at least one person from an alternative institution, national society and one member of the IMA-CM.
10. Although not mandatory, the organisers are encouraged to offer conference related field trips. These may occur during the conference, or immediately preceding and/or after the conference.
11. Although not mandatory, the organisers are encouraged to include an 'ice-breaker' and may wish to include an optional conference dinner/banquet.
12. Private meeting space must be available for any IMA or National Society business meetings, which must have online conferencing capability – separate from any conference hybrid-attendance. So that members of working groups and commissions who have not paid for the conference can still attend the business meetings.
13. The organisers of the conference need to show that they have a clear, robust organisational structure (we recommend establishing a small organising committee).
14. There must be clear points of contact for all enquiries connected with the conference. Delegates, or potential delegates, must be confident that they are contacting the right person and that any enquiry will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
15. The exact costs of the conference, accommodation, field trips etc must be set out for delegates well in advance, indicative costs must be available a year in advance to allow for the funding bid schedules at many Universities and Museums. Costings must be clear and easy to understand.
16. The organising committee must create an official M&M website where new items can be communicated. First circulars outlining indicative costs should be >1 year in advance of the conference and second circulars, with calls for papers should be c.6 months in advance of the conference, and in all communications, it must be clear that the conference is that of the IMA-CM, including the display of the IMA logo.
17. It is strongly suggested that the conference offers a 'hybrid' element, (so that it can be delivered both online and attended in person). The online platform used needs to be freely accessible to delegates and simple to use. If the event is hybrid, a social aspect for the online delegates should be included within the structure of the event and the costing of online vs physical attendance clearly communicated.
18. The proposal should be as inclusive as possible to delegates from all backgrounds and should prioritise maximising in-person delegate numbers

19. The IMA-CM Office-Bearers (board) must be part of the scientific/abstract review panel to ensure that Conference presentations are aligned with conference goals.

Rules for voting.

Due to the now regular online meeting schedule of the Commission, and widely accessible online meeting platforms - we are in a position to streamline this process, therefore there are significant changes to this section of the document (2024)

Those interested in hosting the conference are encouraged to approach members of the IMA-CM board, or their IMA-CM National representative at any time. The commission will announce the call for the new proposals within a couple of months of the current MM conference after updates to the guidelines have been made.

A closing date for proposals will be announced at this time, about three years in advance of the next conference (an exception is made for 2027, due to the change in the 4-year cycle)

After the closing date has passed, those who submitted a proposal will be invited to give an online presentation to the IMA-CM members at their next online meeting.

In the event of one proposal being received the members of the Commission will be required to cast a vote on behalf of their Mineralogical / Geological / Geochemical societies on the suitability of the proposal, if two or more valid applications are received, the members of the Commission will be required to cast a vote on behalf of their Mineralogical / Geological / Geochemical societies for the proposal they prefer.

The Office-bearers will give sufficient time for all the member societies to consider their vote and set a reasonable closing date, within 6 months for voting, individual votes may be cast during an online meeting or by e-mail to the secretary at any time.

It is recognised that a large population of smaller museum curators with responsibility of mineral and geological collections are not members of the Societies that form the IMA and therefore these potential delegates have no 'voice' on this decision-making process. Therefore the largest of these groups, the Society of Mineral Museum Professionals (SMMP) has two votes, cast by the chair of that society.

If a National Representative or IMA-CM board member is involved in the organising committee of the M&M conference proposal, that individual will not get to cast a vote.

There has been a tradition that alternate conferences have been held within Europe and then out-side of Europe. This will only be considered a pre-requisite

if there is more than one proposal from the region next due to host the conference.

The IMA-CM Board are requested to inform the IMA Council about the winning bidder. The winning bidder will then be contacted by e-mail and an announcement will be made to all the National Representatives of the Mineralogical Societies that form the IMA and to the SMMP.

- **All responsibility for the conference will then pass to the organising committee.**

TIMELINE

Date	Action
Four years in advance of next conference at the current M&M conference	<p>IMA-CM to announce a rough timeline for the formal call for proposals and the updating of the guidelines.</p> <p>IMA-CM to encourage those interested in proposals and to be available for questions relating to organisation.</p>
Post M&M conference (within 3 months)	IMA-CM to formally announce the call for proposals for the next MM conference and provide a closing date for the proposals
About 3 years prior to the next proposed MM conference	closing date for proposals
Within 6 months of the closing date	<p>IMA-CM Board to circulate proposals to the IMA-CM National Representatives</p> <p>Proposers are invited to IMA-CM meetings to present their applications and answer any questions</p>
About 2.5 years prior to the next proposed MM conference	Members of the commission will be asked to submit votes on the proposals.
After Voting.	The successful proposal will be announced, national representatives communicate this to their societies and the board will announce to larger interest groups such as the SMMP. From this point all responsibility for the conference will pass to the winning organising committee.
>1 year of MM conference	Organising Committee to produce a first circular with initial indication of costs, conference related events and field trip concepts.
c. 6 months before conference	Organising Committee to produce promote a first call for abstracts and finalise registration, fieldtrip costs.

The Office Bearers (Board) of the IMA-CM

Mike Rumsey – Chairperson
Stuart Mills – Vice-chairperson
Kim Tait – Secretary

2nd October 2021, edited 16th September 2024

Approved by voting commission members XXth XX 202X