

Guidelines for Organizing a DEMHIST Annual Conference

DEMHIST, founded in 1999, is the ICOM International Committee for the conservation and management of House Museums. Its name is an abbreviation of the French term "demeures historiques". House Museums range from cottage to castle, from antiquity to our days. The interpretation of House Museums includes historic, architectural, cultural, artistic and social information just as aspects of intangible heritage.

1. Frequency

According to ICOM-Statutes every International and National Committee must hold an annual General Assembly to authorize financial statements and programming. Where possible, DEMHIST aims to combine the annual General Assembly with a professional/scientific conference. This conference provides a platform to raise and discuss professional issues and is an opportunity for the Board and host to encourage new membership, especially among local attendants and professionals.

2. Host and Theme of the Annual Conference

In choosing a host, the DEMHIST Board should consider, as a priority, the need to address the worldwide reach of ICOM. Over a period, hosts should be seen to accommodate a variety of professional issues as well as geographical, socio-political, cultural settings, and locations.

The DEMHIST board must consider optional host proposals in the light of the above as well as the host's overall commitment to DEMHIST and ICOM. In years when the ICOM triennial General Assembly is being held, the DEMHIST conference should coincide with this in terms of location, scheduling and overall theme. They should also accommodate the commitment of DEMHIST to attend the triennial General Assembly of ICOM. The host institution must have the written backing of their ICOM National Committee at the time of submitting their proposal to the DEMHIST Board.

Where possible, the Board shall decide three years in advance in favour of a possible host and host country.

The Conference theme can be proposed by the host after close consultation with the Board; where possible, it should be announced at the General Assembly up to two years in advance. The theme should encourage a variety of topics in all papers though respecting the proposed theme.

The following themes have already been addressed by DEMHIST:

2000	Genoa	Historic House Museums Speak to the Public: Spectacular Exhibits <i>versus</i> A Philological Interpretation of History
2001	Barcelona	New Forms of Management for Historic House Museums
2002	Amsterdam	Historic House Museums as Witnesses of National and Local Identities
2003	Lenzburg	Facing and Solving the Problems of Historic House Museums: Examples and Models
2004	Berlin	"Rooms with a View" – Historic House Museums and their surroundings
2005	Lisbon	Safekeepers of Memory - Conservation of buildings and their collections
2006	Malta	"Managing the Past for the Future"- Sustaining Historic House Museums in the 21 st Century
2007	Vienna	A Kingdom for a House! Historic Houses as Local, Regional and Universal Heritage
2008	Bogota	Historic House Museums as a Bridge between the Individual and the Community
2009	Stavanger	Historic Houses as Documents of Social Life and Traditional Skills
2010	Shanghai	From Silk Road to Container Ship. Cultural Transfer between East and West, West and East
2011	Antwerp	Catching the Spirit. Managing and Communicating the Theatrical Assets/Aspects of Historic Houses and their different Approaches in reinventing the Past
2012	Los Angeles	The Artifact, its Context and their Narrative. Multidisciplinary Conservation in Historic House Museums
2013	Rio de Janeiro	Places for Reflection. Historic House Museums as Connectors of Cultures, Times, People and Social Groups
2014	Compiègne	Authenticity in Conservation in Historic House Museums and Palaces
2015	Mexico City	The Legacy of House Museums Promoting Dialogue Among Generations
2016	Milan	House Museums and the Interpretation of the Cultural Social Urban Landscape
2017	London	Are we Trying Hard Enough? Making Museums and Historic Houses Relevant to Audiences of the 21 st Century
2018	Baku	Joint conference with ICDAD
2019	Kyoto	House Museums as Cultural Hubs – The Future of Tradition in a Global Context
2021	Online based from Amersfoort	Historic House Museums for a Sustainable World: Challenges and Opportunities
2022	Prague	The Power of Historic House Museums

3. Programme

The conference programme, based on the conference theme, shall include:

- Key Speaker plenary sessions
- Paper panel sessions
- Open discussions and workshops
- Site and offsite visits
- DEMHIST General Assembly
- Optional post-conference tour (separate cost)

4. Benefits for the Host

The DEMHIST Conference provides a focus in the host country (city or region) for a gathering of international experts in the field of historic house museums. Each conference establishes a professional and personal network which will last far beyond the single conference. International experts provide fresh ideas, feedback and options on developments in the host country. The conference may raise the international profile of the host's house museum through its participation in worldwide networking from the point of view of business and tourism. The conference provides a platform for VIP or government representatives of the host.

5. Responsibility of Host and Board

The host of a Conference and General Assembly shall:

- define the Conference theme in detail
- develop the Call for Papers,
- organize the programme in accordance with the procedure detailed below,
- provide venues for General Assembly and Conference, and for the Board meeting (including the following dinner of the Board),
- provide support facilities and staff for General Assembly and Conference,
- propose a variety of suitable accommodations,
- send out invitations to the main speakers (enclosing a letter from the Chair), organize tours appropriate to the theme of the Conference.

While the Host should take the lead in all aspects of organizing the conference, it should work in coordination with The Board, consulting with the Chair and other board members as required.

6. Organizing an Annual Conference

Conference Venue:

Ideally the host organization will be in a position to provide the conference venue (at no/or greatly reduced charge). The venue should be within reasonable access of accommodation and transport. The conference venue should have a suitably large meeting room (for minimum 60-80 people), with all reasonable technical support including the ability for hybrid, remote participation in conference sessions. In the past a separate adjoining space for coffee and tea breaks has proved useful.

Lunch/dinner should be provided on site or nearby.

Scientific Programme and Call for Papers:

The host conference team should define the theme and send out the call for papers after Board approval. Disseminating the CfP and all conference information should be done through the DEMHIST secretary email or conference specific email address. This should be done no more than one year and no less than 7 months in advance.

After receiving all proposals, a review panel comprising members of the host conference team and Board members selects the papers for presentation at the conference. Papers must reflect the conference theme and be scientifically relevant. A minimum of papers by local professionals is desirable.

Languages:

ICOM is an international organization and has three official languages, therefore it should be possible to provide all information concerning the conference in English, French, and Spanish (DEMHIST board may be able to help with this). This also concerns the abstracts which should be distributed at the beginning of the conference. There should always be a provision for simultaneous translation from one or two of these languages into/from the local idiom, whenever none of the three is locally adopted.

Board Meeting:

The Board Meeting is an integral part of the annual conference. A significant portion of time (at least half a day) on the day preceding the conference needs to be set aside for Board business. The host should provide a suitable meeting venue (for 12 people) along with administrative infrastructure. The host should also arrange a joint dinner/lunch as an integral part of the Board meeting.

Fees:

The Conference registration fees must cover all costs of the event. The fees have to be calculated on a realistic basis; DEMHIST will not cover any deficit beyond the DEMHIST conference support budget.

The host is responsible for making sure that the registration fee adequately covers all costs and meet the conference requirements, including but not limited to: rent, receptions, coffee/tea breaks, technical support, bank commission fees¹, tours, travel and accommodation of key-speakers (no speaker's fee!).

The host is well advised to seek additional support by sponsors or local authorities (e.g. receptions, tours etc. by local historic houses, partner museums or municipalities etc.). Fundraising activities have to agree with ICOM rules; DEMHIST is glad to assist the host in their fundraising activities.

The fees should make a clear distinction between DEMHIST and non-DEMHIST members and ICOM and non-ICOM members. Board members pay the regular registration fees. The following people are exempt from the payment of a registration fee:

- Host organization/organizer,
- Chair and Secretary of DEMHIST,
- Key speakers, if specially invited.

Accommodation:

Accommodation arrangements should be settled between the participants and hotels directly, in order to reduce the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy for the host. The host should however arrange for special conditions with a range of three or four hotels at different price levels. In addition, a list of available hotels in the city/region or appropriate website or tourist/accommodation office email address/website should be distributed/sent out as early as possible.

Invitations:

Board and host have to be aware that participation in the conference may serve primarily as a means to gain entrance visas for host or transit countries. The host should therefore examine participation requests carefully on the grounds of an ICOM- membership or via the diplomatic representatives of the host country. Use common sense! If a letter of invitation is required for the visa, Chair and host should sign the letters of invitation jointly after careful examination of the circumstances.

Information:

The Call for Papers should be sent out as soon as possible (preferably straight after the annual conference) via email by the Secretary. The Call for Papers should be simultaneously published on the DEMHIST website, websites of the host, its partner organizations, the organizations of the Board members, the national ICOM-Committees and the ICOM- Bulletin, as well as social media.

An Information Sheet including place, date, theme, provisional programme and fees should be sent out in the same way up to 12 months in advance.

Registration form should be sent out 6-4 months in advance and include:

- Final programme,
- Address of the conference site and associated functions such as reception, starting point of tours etc.,
- A street map, or simplified street map, of the conference site area and/or additional locations (reception/meetings etc.),
- Contact details and contact person for the site (phone, email, etc.),
- Airport and indication of buses, taxis to city/venue,
- Sea Ferry Port (where applicable) and indication of buses, trains, taxis to city of venue,
- Train and Bus stations as appropriate,
- Ground Transport arrangements in city/region,
- Likely weather conditions for the conference period and associated advice such as appropriate clothing.

Publications:

The summaries and results of the Conference will be published on the DEMHIST website. The author is designated by the Board before the Conference begins.

Reporting and Feedback:

After the conference the host will be asked to complete a questionnaire and supplementary information that will include names of all participants, sponsors and other institutions/persons involved and any other relevant information. This information and a participant questionnaire will allow the board and host to evaluate the conference and produce an advisory note that may be shared during the next call for applications, as a means of creating a best practice manual.

Guidelines written by Daniela Ball and Hartmut Dorgerloh, September 2010,
edited and updated by DEMHIST Conference working group 2022

¹ Bank commission fees (currency conversions fees) should not be underestimated. A lot of people subtract the commission from the registration fee and do not pay the full amount, which may leave the host with a loss. The host is advised to consider this possibility when determining the fees.