Guidelines for Hosting UMAC Conferences

(Adapted in May 2003 from CIDOC conference regulations with grateful permission)

1. Introduction

These guidelines for UMAC conferences apply in particular for those conferences that are held outside the ICOM triennial conferences, but the general principles are relevant for all UMAC conferences.

(During the preparation for triennial conferences the tasks of the Local Organising Committee are usually taken over by the ICOM Organising Committee, who arranges the meeting, the facility, etc. The UMAC Board typically appoints one UMAC liaison person (preferably a local UMAC member). This person meets with ICOM's Local Organising Committee and other International Committee representatives. The ICOM triennial conference registration fee covers attendance at the UMAC conference, but a separate fee may be levied if a special UMAC excursion is arranged).

Existing information from one conference (e.g. letters of invitation, addresses of potential sponsors) should be gathered together in a dossier and handed over to the next organising committee.

These guidelines should be reviewed periodically based on the experience gained at the meetings.

2. The legal status of UMAC

UMAC is a professional committee of ICOM and not a legal body, it should be clarified in the beginning of a conference preparation who may sign orders on behalf of UMAC (or the Local Organising Committee or the National Committee).

ICOM Statutes, Art. 26.7 state "A National or International Committee shall not, without first obtaining approval of the Executive Council, enter into any contract or any legally binding agreement involving expenditure by ICOM, other than contracts and agreements that relate to its own activities and can be paid for from its own funds."

3. General information about the conference

3.1. Objectives

The objectives of the annual conference include the provision of:

- an annual forum for discussion between the staff of university museums and collections and other relevant persons;
- a focus for the work of the Committee and the projects of its Working Groups
- an opportunity for the staff of local university museums to meet, present their current programs and to become UMAC members
- an opportunity to visit local university museums and collections

3.2. Committee structure

The Board of UMAC will choose a Conference Co-ordinator or a UMAC Organising Committee (COC) with two or three members. The Conference Co-ordinator or one of the members of the COC should be a member of the UMAC Board and one of them should have had experience of a past conference. A representative of the previous year's conference and, if possible, one representative of the following conference should be involved in the conference organisation. The local hosts will establish a conference organising committee to co-ordinate the planning, hereafter referred to as the "Local Organising Committee" (LOC). The Co-ordinator (or the COC) should work closely with the local organisers. He/she has the responsibility for efficient communication with the UMAC Executive i.e. he/she gives reports to the Executive and consults the Chair and the Treasurer in specific urgent questions.

The Local Organising Committee will appoint a representative who will bear the main responsibility for contacts with the UMAC Board. This representative will also sign the budget and any contracts, if necessary. It is also advisable to appoint a proxy who will act in the name of the representative if he or she is unable to fulfil his or her mandate.

All information regarding the content of the conference (program, speakers, etc.) should go to all members of the LOC and to the UMAC Co-ordinator (or COC) as well as to the UMAC Executive.

3.3. Financial responsibility of UMAC and the Local Organising Committee

Participation at the conference should be widely available, so the Local Organising Committee is asked to organise the venue at as moderate a registration fee as possible. Fees are usually calculated for the whole conference. One day, accompanying persons and student registration fees should also be offered.

UMAC has limited financial resources and requires the Local Organising Committee to take primary responsibility for ensuring the conference does not incur a loss. In view of the need for a prudent financial policy, it is desirable to establish conservative break-even figures.

The Local Organising Committee will usually be expected to accept responsibility for processing all registration fees and payments and for producing a financial statement showing the outcome.

See also 5. Financial and legal policy

3.4. Official languages

The Committee's official languages are English, French and Spanish. Contributions can be made in any one of these languages. Any speaker or national host organisation proposing to make a presentation in another language than these three will be invited to arrange interpretation or translation facilities. Presentations in French or Spanish should be accompanied by a summary in English.

3.5. Location

The meetings in 2004, 2007 etc. are being held jointly with ICOM, as part of its triennial conference. The ICOM Executive Committee decides the venue for these meetings at least three years in advance.

The venue for intervening meetings are decided by the UMAC Board. Museums or related organisations that are interested in organising a meeting are invited to submit a written proposal to the Board, more than two years in advance. This should outline benefits of meeting in the country concerned and the facilities to be provided. It should be supported by a formal invitation from the national ICOM Committee (if such a Committee exists) and by a declaration of the hosting body to give the necessary (financial) support. The proposals will be assessed by the Board and if possible put to the vote of members at an annual conference.

Written notice of the place and dates of each conference must be given to every member of the committee at least twelve months before the meeting (see "New guide for international committee members and officers", available at http://www.icom.org/ICOM/ committee.guidelines)

3.6. Eligibility for attending

Unless constraints are applied by ICOM conference regulations, the conference must be open to UMAC members, other ICOM members, other museum professionals and other interested colleagues. Participation in the business meetings may be restricted to UMAC members. UMAC reserves itself the right to require different fees for these different categories of participants.

3.7. Technical, trade or book exhibitions

It is up to the LOC to decide on technical exhibitions according to their organisational capacities and financial means. All costs have to be covered by the budget and the risk has to be assessed by the LOC. The UMAC Chair and Treasurer have to approve e exhibition fees proposed by the LOC. Exhibitors are expected to register 3 to 4 months before the conference and to indicate their material and space requirements. Publicity material (leaflets) may be included in the conference documentation: this material should be submitted 1 month before the conference.

Fees charged for the exhibition space or for a commercial vendor should be indicated in the conference kits.

3.8. Space requirements

- Plenary session: lecture theatre or auditorium for 100 participants
- Concurrent sessions: two or more lecture theatres, with a size depending on the program
- Working Group sessions: 7-8 rooms, capable of holding 10-50 participants.
- Board Meetings: room capable of holding 10 participants

3.9 Accommodation

It is important to provide a range of accommodation options for participants, including a medium standard hotel and an inexpensive option (such as a student hostel). If possible, it is ideal to focus participants in a small number of hotels and hostels.

4. Division of responsibilities between UMAC and the Local Organising Committee

4.1. Objectives / Theme

The UMAC Board will establish specific objectives of the conference and its overall theme, in co-operation with the Local Organising Committee; explicit note will be taken of the local context.

4.2. Preferred date

September from preference, avoiding a conflict with other relevant conferences and any other major museum conference in the country concerned. However, UMAC may be interested in exploring joint or consecutive conferences with related organisations.

It has been found convenient to have the meeting start or end on a Sunday. This allows participants to benefit from reduced rate applied to week-end flights.

4.3. Board meetings

It is usual to hold a Board meeting on the Saturday or Sunday before the conference; and another Board meeting after the Annual General Meeting

4.4. Session timetable and requirements

UMAC does not follow a rigid formula, but the following guidelines can provide a basis:

- welcome
- core conference over three days
- mixture of plenary, concurrent and Working Group sessions
- Open Forum or Market of Ideas for short papers and presentations
- one or more evening receptions and a day largely of excursions, subject to local possibilities
- optional additional days before or after the conference may be scheduled for training sessions, workshops or travel opportunities (with separate fees).

The priority should be placed on two or more plenary sessions, with full AV support (slide projector, overhead projector, video projector, computer-based presentation facility, eg Powerpoint, Internet access); it should be assumed that all participants will attend.

No plenary or concurrent session should last more than 90 minutes.

Some (if not all) of the Working Group sessions should not conflict with other sessions

(this requirement could be covered by holding some Working Group sessions before the formal meeting, in which case there should be no fee for these sessions). A full day or two to three half-days have usually been devoted to Working Group sessions.

Board meetings are usually held before and towards the end of the conference, usually after the sessions in the late afternoon or early evening (this should be taken into account when planning access to conference facilities).

4.5. Allied or satellite meetings

There is no objection to such meetings. Joint sessions with national museum organisations are welcome.

4.6 Program policy and content

Selection and invitation of speakers: The final responsibility for selecting speakers rests with the LOC in consultation with the UMAC Co-ordinator (or COC) and the UMAC Board. A "Call for Papers" for specific subjects should be issued at least 12 months prior to the meeting, as part of the first announcement. Papers offered should be reviewed before selection by a local panel in association with a UMAC selection committee chosen by the UMAC Board.

Invitation of chairs and moderators: The LOC invites chairs of plenary sessions and moderators of panels. It is also desirable for the LOC to send "thank you" notes on behalf of the UMAC Board and membership after the conference.

Honoraria: No honoraria are paid to speakers and chairs, but if the LOC wants specialists of other areas to make a contribution, the extra funding should be provided by the LOC.

Reimbursement of travel and hotel expenses: Usually, travel and hotel expenses are not reimbursed to speakers and chairs. This may be considered in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the costs must be incorporated in the budget and the support must be approved in advance by the UMAC Co-ordinator, the UMAC Chair and Treasurer. The expenses of some participants (such as students or delegates from developing or distant countries) may be funded by UMAC through one or more grants; these participants will be required to make a contribution to the meeting.

Registration fees paid by speakers and chairs: Speakers and chairs are expected to pay fees, other than those who only attend for the day during which they make a contribution.

Abstracts, pre-prints, handbook, publication of papers on the web and in print: In normal circumstances, it is desirable for the LOC to take responsibility for these matters.

5. Financial and legal policy

The financial and legal responsibility of UMAC and the LOC must be defined at an early stage of the planning process. It is necessary to draw up an official document stating

financial and legal responsibilities on both sides. This is particularly important, if the host institution puts its own premises and/or staff at the disposal of UMAC before and during the conference.

5.1 Approval of budget and accounts

In normal circumstances, the budget should be drafted by the LOC, with the advice of the UMAC Co-ordinator. It should be submitted to the UMAC Board for review and to the UMAC Chair and Treasurer for approval.

5.2 Responsibility for a deficit or benefits from a surplus

UMAC Board and the LOC will agree on a formula for the distribution of any surplus. In the event of a deficit, the LOC must take responsibility for its effect, although UMAC will provide whatever support it can, if there are exceptional causes for the deficit.

5.3 Approval and currency of fees

Fees must be approved by the UMAC Co-ordinator, the UMAC Chair and Treasurer at an early stage in setting the budget. Subject to any concerns about the stability of the local currency, they may be levied in US dollars or the local currency. It is desirable that payments can be made by credit card.

5.4 Insurance requirements

In normal circumstances, UMAC does not require cancellation insurance to be provided. Adequate public liability insurance must be available to the host organisation.

5.5 Cash flows, budgets and auditing

UMAC may be able to provide a returnable cash float to help in the early stages of organising a conference. As UMAC conferences grow in size, this should be foreseen in the UMAC budget.

The LOC will also be responsible for opening new bank accounts, if needed. The budget will be continually monitored and updated to take account of any significant changes, with significant changes agreed by the UMAC Chair and Treasurer. The UMAC Treasurer (or other person appointed) will audit a final copy of the budget, signed by the representative of the LOC.

5.6 Free registration and meals

The only participants entitled to free registration will normally be any speakers and chairs who attend for a single day and an agreed number of local organisers or volunteers. If it is agreed to waive or reduce the fee for other deserving participants, this will normally need to be taken into account as an expense in the budget. Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to include expenses for special guests into the budget, e.g. inviting a guest speaker at a conference dinner.

5.7 Basis for accompanying person fee

This will be set at not less than a break-even figure.

5.8 Commercial sponsorship

Commercial sponsorship is acceptable in principle, as long as it is targeted at specific events or expenses, such as a reception. It is not considered to be desirable to have sponsorship for the overall meeting. Depending on the specific circumstances, it may be agreed that the UMAC Executive, UMAC Co-ordinator or LOC may pursue such sponsorship. Any offers of sponsorship must be subject to formal approval by the UMAC Chair. UMAC will recognise this sponsorship (either in the program or at an event).

5.9 Appeal fund

The UMAC Executive, UMAC Co-ordinator and LOC should jointly consider the desirability and feasibility of attracting grants to support the conference itself or the cost of participation at the conference by one or more participants.

6. Mailing lists and other distributions

The UMAC mailing list - maintained by the UMAC Secretary - should form the primary source. Current copies of these addresses will be made available in printed and machine readable form by the UMAC Secretary who will update them during the conference planning. Other lists may be available from local, national ICOM or museum association committees or related organisations. The address file of a UMAC conference should be handed over to the UMAC Secretary and to the LOC of next year's conference.

It is necessary for one or more dedicated mailings to be carried out. The cost of indirect or direct mailings should be included in the budget. (ICOM ANNOUNCE, MUSEUM-L or regional museum lists as well as the UMAC Web Site should be considered as parallel distribution methods.)

7. Publications

- Program: a printed program must be available at the Conference, the primary version of which should be in either English or French, with as much as possible translated into the other main language and the local language. The program should contain summaries of all papers.
- Papers should be submitted in hard copy and in electronic form as defined by the LOC. Copyright permissions must be obtained from the authors.
- At the time of registration, a participants list must be available, in either English or French, with the full address, telephone, fax, e-mail and URL (if available).
- Commercial exhibitors: the conference documentation should include a list of exhibitors, with full contact information.
- All papers should be published on the UMAC website as soon as possible after the conference.
- Selected papers may also be published in print form.

8. External publicity

The Local Organising Committee is responsible for publicising the conference, in particular to universities, museums kindred organisations and the media. UMAC will promote the conference on its Web site and within ICOM.

9. Local Organising Committee specific responsibilities

9.1. Liaison with UMAC

- checking of procedures
- participation in the UMAC Board meetings on the same terms as other working group chairs
- distribution of minutes to UMAC
- language check of printed material.

9.2. Financial control, budget and accounts

- establishing the budget
- bank account
- tax commitments
- keeping accounts
- monitoring cash flow and funding accounts
- checking invoices and paying accounts
- monitoring expenditure
- receiving fees
- advice on insurance needs
- advice on fund transfer
- production of final accounts.

9.3. Program development

- definition of the overall theme in co-operation with the UMAC Board
- development of the program
- contact with the speakers and session chairs
- editing of the sourcebook or conference proceedings, if the production is feasible (from the organisational and financial point of view).

9.4. Processing, production and distribution of documentation

- design of logo and publication style
- standard and extent of each printed item
- production
- translation
- deadlines
- proof-reading
- liaison with printer
- distribution.

9.5. Venue

- recommendation of venue
- contract
- allocation of space (program, social events, registration; sitting areas, catering, secretariat, exhibition, book exhibition)
- technical support for the program (public address, AV equipment, Internet access, briefing speakers)
- signs, etc. (directional signs, lecterns)
- equipment and furniture (photocopier, computer, printer)
- catering (space, menu, drinks, schedule).

9.6. Staffing

- registration and enquiry staff
- secretariat
- catering
- security
- porters, electricians, technicians, computer and telecommunication specialists
- timetables, instructions
- staff refreshments.

9.7. Informing the involved persons about their responsibilities

- responsibilities of chairs of sessions:
  - briefing speakers
  - moderating of the session
- responsibilities of UMAC Working Group Chairs / workshop leaders:
  - identification of technical equipment needed - one month before the conference
  - identification of the number of expected participants - one month before the conference
- responsibilities of the UMAC Board / UMAC Co-ordinator / UMAC Chair:
  - The UMAC Board should provide a returnable cash float for the initial steps.
  - The UMAC Board will make available to the LOC:
    - a database with names and addresses of the UMAC members
    - a database with names and addresses of major institutions (e.g. mda, CHIN etc.) for sponsorship, publishing, mailing etc. (planings)

9.8. Languages

- translation
- proof-reading
- simultaneous interpretation.

9.9. Promotion and publicity

- mailing lists
- advertising

- newsletters, journals, etc.
- management of mailing.

9.10. Registration

- registration procedure (system, organisation and packing of material, printing of tickets, name tags, participant list, etc.)
- advance registration (fees, confirmation, receipts, cancellations, collecting unpaid fees)
- on-site registrations (desk, cash, ticketing, amendment of participants list).

9.11. Social program

- welcome reception, receptions, dinners
- financial responsibility
- procedures and protocol for ceremonies
- guests and VIPs
- accompanying persons' program
- tours.

9.12. Accommodation

- selection of hotels, etc.
- contracts
- liaison, notification, room lists, deposits, cancellation.

The Local Organising Committee may prefer to delegate the hotel reservation procedure to an adequate organisation (such as the local or national tourist office) - or let each participant do his or her own reservation.

9.13. Technical tours

- choice of visits and hosts
- invitations and tickets
- liaison with hosts
- coaches, guides, etc.

9.14. Press

- accreditation
- press releases
- local contact.

9.15. Technical exhibition

- venue
- technical support.

10. Updating the guidelines

These guidelines should be reviewed annually by the UMAC executive and the outgoing conference Coordinator.

11. Timetable for the preparation of a UMAC conference

36/24 months before

- choice of the place and host providing deficiency guarantee,
- choice of the overall theme
- establishing of the Local Organising Committee (LOC)

18/12 months before

- official document defining duties and responsibilities of the host and the UMAC Board (better: earlier)
- first contacts to speakers (maybe: call for papers)
- preliminary information (at the UMAC conference, in articles in the UMAC Newsletter, in the Internet etc.)
- begin seeking sponsorship
- call for nominations for the UMAC Board prior to elections held in conjunction with the ICOM Triennial conference

18/9 months before

- agreement of the speakers
- information about deadline for the publication

18/6 months before

- first announcement (details of the program, costs, booking form) to UMAC members
- first announcement in museum publications

4 months before

Second and final announcement (details of the program, costs, booking form) to UMAC members

3 months before

Second announcement in museum publications

6 - 8 weeks before

Higher conference fee for late booking