



International  
Water Resources  
Association



# Terms of Reference Co-Hosting & Co-Organising an **IWRA REGIONAL WATER CONGRESS**

The purpose of this document is to explain the process of selecting the co-host and co-organiser for an IWRA Regional Water Congress and to describe in detail the various roles and responsibilities.



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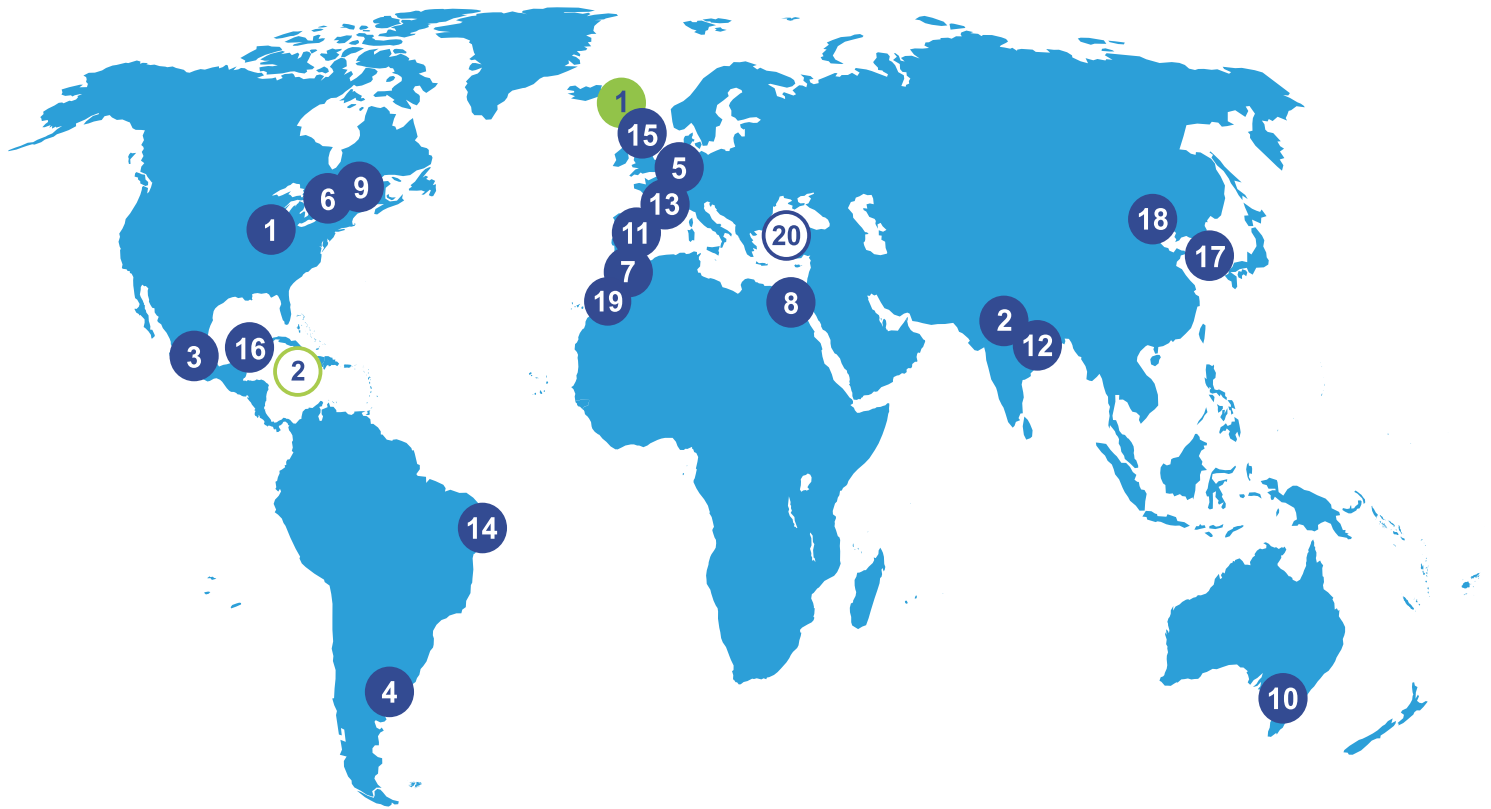
# FIVE DECADES OF IWRA CONGRESS EXPERTISE

The International Water Resources Association (IWRA) holds a large, global portfolio of water congresses designed to advance dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration across the international water community. These events serve as a critical interface where science, policy, and practice are brought together to inform decision-making and support collective action across scales.

While varying in scope and format, all IWRA congresses are grounded in a shared commitment to scientific quality, policy relevance, and inclusive participation. Through this approach, they contribute to improved water resources management worldwide.



# OUR CONGRESSES OVER TIME



## Islands Water Congress

1

Faroe Islands | 4-6 September 2024

2

Montego Bay, Jamaica | 9-11 December 2026

## World Water Congress

1

Chicago, U.S.A | 24-28 September 1973

2

New Delhi, India | 12-16 December 1975

3

Mexico City, Mexico | 23 April 1979

4

Buenos Aires, Argentina | 5-9 September 1982

5

Brussels, Belgium | 9-15 June 1985

6

Ottawa, Canada | 29 May-3 June 1988

7

Rabat, Morocco | 13-18 May 1991

8

El Cairo, Egypt | 13-18 May 1994

9

Montreal, Canada | 1-6 September 1997

10

Melbourne, Australia | 12-16 March 2000

11

Madrid, Spain | 5-9 October 2003

12

New Delhi, India | 22-25 November 2005

13

Montpellier, France | 1-4 September 2008

14

Porto-De-Galinhas, Brazil | 25-29 September 2011

15

Edinburgh, UK | 25-29 May 2015

16

Cancun, Mexico | 29 May-3 June 2017

17

Daegu, Republic of Korea | 29 Nov-3 Dec 2021

18

Beijing, China | 11-15 September 2023

19

Marrakech, Morocco | 1-5 December 2025

20

Istanbul, Türkiye | October 2027



## WORLD WATER CONGRESS

The World Water Congress is IWRA's largest and most established event, held every two to three years across different locations. It brings together 1,500–3,000 stakeholders from across sectors and regions and is widely recognised for shaping global water discourse and highlighting key priorities on the international water agenda.

The first IWRA World Water Congress was held in 1973 on the theme of the “Importance and Problems of Water in the Human Environment in Modern Times” and formed part of the international water community's first earnest attempts to address global water issues (e.g., the ground-breaking Stockholm Declaration of 1972 and the 1977 Mar del Plata conference).

Concrete outcomes of the World Water Congress are visible at the international, national, and local levels. This includes the establishment of the World Water Council following the Congress in Cairo (1994), the strengthening of national water collaboration in France through the Montpellier Congress (2008), which led to the creation of the National French Water Cluster, increased international visibility for Scotland's Hydro Nation programme (2015), launch of the World Water Envoys Programme (2021) and a Ministerial Declaration (2025) to accelerate progress toward SDG 6 and related goals by 2030.

# World Water Congress at a Glance

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**1,000 – 3,000**

ATTENDEES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

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**400 – 500** SPEAKERS

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**150 – 200** ABSTRACT  
PRESENTATIONS

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**50 – 75** REGULAR SESSIONS

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**50 – 75** SPECIAL SESSIONS

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**200** POSTER  
PRESENTATIONS

**80+** EXHIBITORS  
2,000 - 3,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
Exhibition Space

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**10+** IWRA  
AWARDS

**6** PLENARY SESSIONS  
Opening & Closing Ceremonies;  
4 High-Level Panels

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## ISLANDS WATER CONGRESS

Building on decades of experience delivering international water congresses, in 2024 IWRA launched the Islands Water Congress as the only global event dedicated specifically to the freshwater challenges and opportunities faced by island nations and communities.

Held for two to three days every two years, the Islands Water Congress brings together island governments, practitioners, researchers and communities to advance island-specific water management approaches. By combining global expertise with local relevance, the Congress provides a vital platform to address priority water and amplify island voices in the international water dialogue.

As with all IWRA events, the Islands Water Congress is designed to leave a lasting legacy that extends long beyond the event itself. The inaugural Islands Water Congress delivered several tangible outcomes, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the Tórshavn Dialogue on Sustainable Freshwater Management on Islands among participating island communities. The Congress also contributed to the formation of a legal expert group drawn from the Congress International Scientific Committee, the creation of a new IWRA Task Force on Islands and Water and the progress on a draft Water Act for the Faroe Islands, which is expected to be considered by the Faroese Parliament.

**The next Islands Water Congress will be held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, 9-11 December 2026.**



1st Islands Water Congress: International Scientific Committee

# 1st Islands Water Congress at a glance

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# 196+

PARTICIPANTS

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# 81

 SPEAKERS  
FROM OVER

# 40

 COUNTRIES  
AND ISLANDS

Representation from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, North, Central and South America, and Oceania

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# 10

 KEYNOTE  
SPEAKERS

# 15

 REGULAR &  
SPECIAL SESSIONS

# 7

 PLENARY  
SESSIONS

# 5

 SIDE-EVENTS

# 2

 TECHNICAL  
TRIPS

# 1

 HIGH-LEVEL POLICY  
ROUNDTABLE

Contributions related to:

# 33

 ISLANDS

# 4

 ISLAND  
GROUPINGS

## REGIONAL WATER CONGRESS

IWRA is launching the Regional Water Congress series to provide focused, regionally grounded forums for dialogue, learning, and collaboration. These events respond to the urgent need for exchange at scales where freshwater challenges can be most directly tackled and responses operationalised.

Typically held from one to three days, each Congress centres on a specific theme identified by the co-host. This theme reflects the dominant water management challenges, opportunities, and transitions currently shaping the region.

Overall, the Regional Water Congress offers a unique platform for hosts to convene local, regional, and global experts around region-specific freshwater priorities while simultaneously connecting regional perspectives to the wider international water community.

### BENEFITS OF CO-HOSTING & CO-ORGANISING THE IWRA REGIONAL WATER CONGRESS

#### LEADERSHIP

Positions the host as a focal point and agenda-setter for freshwater management in the global water dialogue, generating regional and international visibility among researchers, policymakers, water authorities, the private sector, and civil society.

#### COLLABORATION

Creates the opportunity to convene regional actors alongside international partners, strengthening regional cooperation while opening pathways to new initiatives, projects, and longer-term engagement.

#### REPUTATION

Builds long-term credibility for the host by showcasing expertise, experience, and leadership on a priority freshwater management theme, and by contributing regionally grounded perspectives to international scientific and policy discussions.

#### REVENUE

Generates economic and tourism benefits for the host through the participation of local, regional and international delegates.

#### PROFILE

Promotes the host city and country at the regional level, highlighting institutional capacity, research excellence, policy relevance, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the global water sector.

#### RECOGNITION

Leverages IWRA's established international standing to provide credibility and visibility, with the Association supporting engagement with regional and international media, press, and partner organisations.

#### EXPERTISE

Brings high-level regional and international experts directly to the host location, including senior policymakers and leaders of major organisations, strengthening regional capacity through direct exchange and exposure.

#### NETWORKING

Enables direct relationship-building with regional and international water professionals, institutions, and decision-makers across disciplines and sectors, supporting long-term collaboration beyond the Congress.



## WHO ATTENDS AND WHY

### PRACTITIONERS

#### (Water Managers, Utilities, and Technicians)

- Exchange practical experience, challenges, and solutions across the water sector.
- Learn from case studies, innovations, and applied research in water management.
- Gain insight into emerging trends, technologies, and operational approaches.

### PRIVATE SECTOR

#### (Industry and Company Representatives)

- Understand market trends, policy directions, and emerging technologies.
- Explore business opportunities, partnerships, and collaboration with public and private actors.
- Engage with decision-makers and position expertise through panels and technical sessions.

### POLICYMAKERS

#### (Political Leaders and Technical Officials)

- Learn from policy approaches and governance models implemented in other regions.
- Exchange experiences with different contexts facing similar water challenges.
- Strengthen evidence-based decision-making and public engagement on water issues.

### ACADEMICS/RESEARCHERS

#### (especially from Science, Policy, and Law)

- Showcase and access the latest research and analytical insights.
- Build research partnerships and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Contribute knowledge and insights that deepen understanding of freshwater management across regions.

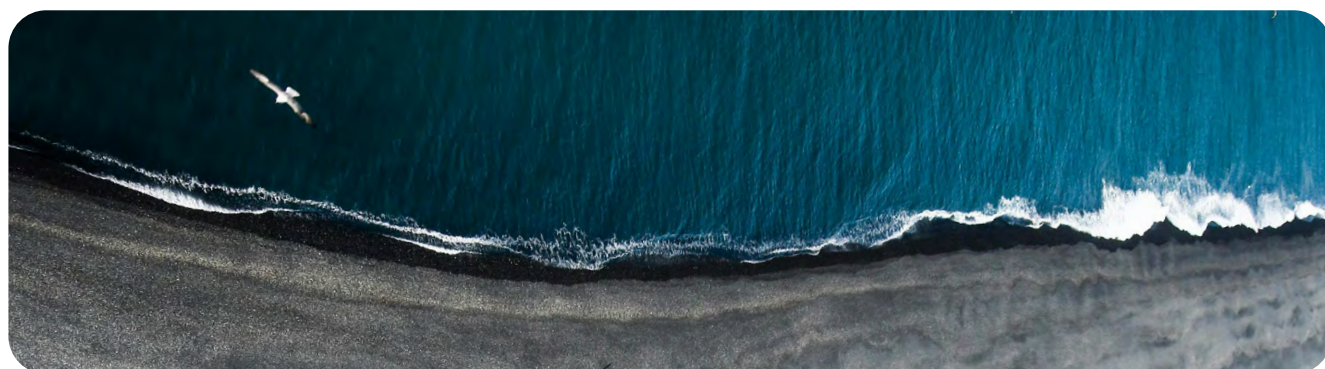
# ABOUT IWRA

**IWRA is an international, non-governmental, member-based organisation established in 1971. It is widely recognised as a leading global forum at the interface of water science and policy, advancing understanding and practice in water resources management worldwide.**

IWRA's mission is to build and strengthen partnerships that address water resource challenges and priorities at the local, national, and international level. We do so by bringing together the

global water community from across geographies, sectors and disciplines to improve water outcomes for all.

The Association promotes water education and research grounded in sound scientific, social, and ethical principles. IWRA seeks to continuously improve water-related decision-making by supporting a more integrated understanding of the physical, ecological, chemical, cultural, social, and economic dimensions of water.



**Specifically, IWRA aims to:**

- Provide platforms for dialogue on water resources at international, regional, and national levels;
- Strengthen the quality and accessibility of knowledge used in water-related decision-making;
- Promote cutting-edge research to inform policy and practice;
- Facilitate the exchange of information and expertise across countries, sectors, and professions; and
- Collaborate with leading international organisations.

**IWRA achieves these aims by:**

- Organising flagship events such as World Water Congress, Islands Water Congress, and Regional Water Congress;
- Delivering online conferences, webinars, masterclasses, and other virtual events in partnership with key water organisations;
- Publishing *Water International* (IWRA's peer-reviewed journal), special books, and policy briefs on key water topics;
- Developing and implementing thematic projects with partners, such as UNESCO, FAO, OECD, World Water Council, and Asia Water Council;
- Disseminating knowledge through digital channels, including IWRA's website, newsletters, and social media; and
- Coordinating member-led activities through Task Forces, Working Groups, and Geographic Chapters.



# APPLICATION & TERMS OF REFERENCE

## STEP 1 - WRITTEN APPLICATIONS

**Applications to co-host and co-organise an IWRA Regional Water Congress should be submitted in digital format to [office@iwra.org](mailto:office@iwra.org)**

Full applications should include the following:

- 1. An official proposal letter signed by the head of the bidding organisation.**
- 2. A detailed proposal explaining:**
  - a. Experience of the bidding organisation in the water sector, including examples of relevant past events or initiatives;
  - b. Key partners within and outside the country, and links to other regional/international water events;
  - c. Suitability of the proposed location (including conference facilities for plenaries, concurrent sessions, exhibitors, posters, side events, press conferences, interpretation facilities and VIPs; maximum venue capacity; hotel and accommodation options; transport links and accessibility; opportunities for technical/cultural visits; visa requirements; engagement with local community educational programmes; green credentials; and other relevant details);
  - d. Proposed mechanisms to manage the delivery of the Regional Water Congress including logistics, promotion, registration, budgeting, and accounting, in accordance with these Terms of Reference;
  - e. Any official languages of the Regional Water Congress in addition to English, and whether simultaneous translation will be made available for other languages;
  - f. The proposed timetable and key milestones of the Regional Water Congress,

including website development, communications, promotional activities, and , registration;

### 3. Congress Content

- a. A proposed overarching theme for the Regional Water Congress, with justification. The final theme will be agreed with the IWRA if the application is successful. Also provide details on any subthemes.
- b. A description on the types of content proposed for the Regional Water Congress. For instance, this could include: academic paper presentations in regular sessions and poster sessions; project presentations in special sessions led by participating organisations; high-level plenary panels; academic or practitioner workshops organised by the host; and other relevant formats.
- c. IWRA commits to supporting content development by using its extensive network of experts and inviting various high-level experts and personalities as speakers. IWRA will provide members to the International Scientific Committee, which is responsible for developing Congress content relative to the scale of the proposed event. Please provide a description of how the bidding organisation will also develop substantive content, and outline any additional support that is expected from IWRA.
- d. Details on the proposed overarching theme and any subthemes, including examples of high level panel discussions, special sessions, keynote speakers, opening /closing ceremonies, etc.
- e. Where applicable, details of the mechanisms for submitting, collecting, and

reviewing abstracts for individual presentations and/or proposals for special sessions by organisations, as well as the process for selecting contributors to the Regional Water Congress.

### 4. Social Programme, Technical Visits, and Other Activities

- a. Basic details on the proposed Congress social programme, including any dinners, receptions, meals, and cultural activities, as well as clarification on how the costs for these activities will be covered.
- b. Basic details of accompanying guest programmes, where applicable.
- c. Basic details on technical visits, where applicable.

### 5. Financial considerations

- a. A demonstration of the financial stability of the bidding organisation and its capacity to finance the proposed budget directly and/or through identified sponsors.
- b. Proposed budget to host and organise the Regional Water Congress, including:
  - payment of the Regional Water Congress hosting fee to IWRA;
  - coverage of all travel, accommodation and incidental expenses related to a site visit of the conference venue for two IWRA representatives, to be selected by IWRA, at least 10 months prior to the Regional Water Congress;
  - coverage of travel, accommodation and Congress registration costs for a minimum of 8 individuals, to be nominated by IWRA, to attend the Regional Water Congress;

- waiver of registration fees for a minimum of 8 IWRA representatives, to be selected by IWRA, and 3 IWRA staff; and
- confirmation that full financial responsibility of organising the Regional Water Congress rests with the bidder, and that IWRA shall not be exposed to any financial losses incurred through the organisation or hosting of the Regional Water Congress.

#### **6. Acceptance of the Terms of Reference of this document.**

#### **7. Contact details of the bidding organisation, key contact person and team members responsible for preparation and delivery of the Regional Water Congress preparation.**

### **STEP 2 - DECISION BY THE IWRA EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Following a review of all full applications by the IWRA Congress and Events Committee, a recommendation report will be submitted to the IWRA Executive Board for final decision.

### **STEP 3 - SIGNING THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

Once a bid is accepted by the IWRA Board, a Memorandum of Agreement will be negotiated and signed in advance of any public announcement of the Regional Water Congress.

### **STEP 4 - ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNER**

If possible, representatives from the Host will attend an upcoming IWRA World Water Congress and/or Islands Water Congress to formally announce their successful candidature and start promotion of their Regional Water Congress.



# BASIC TERMS OF REFERENCE

## HOSTING FEE AND REVENUES

- The host organisation shall pay a hosting fee to IWRA of €150,000 (Euros) for the first day of the Regional Water Congress, and €100,000 (Euros) for each additional day. This fee shall be paid in agreed installments.
- All registration fees, sponsorship income, and exhibition revenues shall be retained by the host organisation.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HOST

- If timing allows, the host organisation shall send representatives to the next IWRA World Water Congress or Islands Water Congress to announce their successful candidature and to establish links to their Regional Water Congress.

## DURATION AND SCHEDULING

- The Regional Water Congress shall last one to three consecutive days, starting on a date of the host organisation's own choosing.
- In setting the dates, due consideration must be given to the timing of other major water-related events, including IWRA World Water Congresses, Stockholm World Water Week, significant public holidays, and other major global events.

## SCIENTIFIC GOVERNANCE AND PROGRAMME

- The host organisation agrees to reserve at least half (1/2) of the positions on the International Scientific Committee for IWRA representatives.

- The host organisation agrees to submit the draft substantive programme, including the names and affiliations of proposed keynote and plenary speakers, to IWRA for review. IWRA shall be allowed up to two weeks to provide feedback prior to publication of the programme.

## COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

- The host organisation shall prepare and manage the Regional Water Congress website and promotional materials, ready to go live at least 12 months prior to the Congress.
- The host organisation agrees to hold monthly update teleconferences with the IWRA Executive Office, beginning from the date the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is signed.

## IWRA PARTICIPATION AND SITE VISIT

- The host organisation agrees to arrange and cover all travel and accommodation costs for a site visit of the conference venue by two IWRA representatives, to be selected by IWRA, at least ten (10) months prior to the Regional Water Congress.
- The host organisation agrees to cover registration, accommodation, and travel costs for a minimum of eight (8) individuals to attend the Regional Water Congress, to be selected by IWRA.
- The host organisation agrees to waive registration fees for a further ten (10) IWRA representatives, to be selected by IWRA.
- The host organisation agrees to waive registration fees for all IWRA Executive Office staff attending the Regional Water Congress.



# DETAILED TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Applicants to host an IWRA Regional Water Congress must demonstrate their capacity to deliver the following requirements as part of their application:**



## MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

The host Organisation is responsible for:

- » Overall logistics, management, and coordination of the Regional Water Congress.
- » Liaison with IWRA Executive Office:
  - ensuring compliance with IWRA procedures and precedents;
  - providing regular updates to IWRA;
  - participating in monthly coordination teleconferences with IWRA;
  - submitting principal promotional and print materials for advance review; and
  - ad-hoc communication as required.



» Financial control and budget and keeping of accounts:

- preparation and management of the Congress budget;
- opening and managing bank accounts;
- compliance with local and national tax requirements;
- maintaining full and accurate accounts;
- monitoring cash flow and funding accounts;
- reviewing bank statements;
- processing invoices and payments;
- monitoring expenditure against the approved budget;
- managing sponsorship and financial contribution funds;
- receiving registration fees and other income;
- monitoring non-payments;
- arranging appropriate insurance (including public liability and abandonment);
- managing international fund transfers, where applicable;
- managing any surplus funds; and
- preparing final financial accounts.

## WEBSITE

The host organisation is responsible for creating and maintaining a dedicated IWRA Regional Water Congress website ([www.regionalwatercongress.org](http://www.regionalwatercongress.org)), which will serve as the primary platform for Congress communication and participant interaction.

At a minimum, the website must include:

- Promotional information about the Regional Water Congress
- Registration information and access to the registration system
- Details on the venue, selected city and logistical arrangements

IWRA Regional Water Congress website must also link to a collaborative online platform developed or chosen by the host for the submission, management, and review of abstracts and special session proposals.

This platform must be integrated with the registration system to support the Congress' preparatory processes. All materials submitted through the platform must be shared with the IWRA in an organised format.

All material received is to be copied to IWRA following the Congress in an organised format.

Both the website and collaborative online platform must be operational at least 12 months prior to the Congress.

## PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS

All promotional and communication materials must be proposed by the host organisation and approved by IWRA. These typically include, but are not limited to:

- Save-the-Date announcements and Calls for Papers;
- posters and brochures;
- Congress Programme; and
- participant lists.

The related tasks that the host organisation is responsible for include, but are not limited to:

- development of a logo and Congress visual identity, including colour scheme and layout;
- design, format, and scope of all print and digital materials;
- drafting, collation, and production of content for all materials;
- translation of content into all official Congress languages;
- establishment and management of production timelines and deadlines;
- proof-reading of materials in all official Congress languages;
- coordination with printers, packers, and mailing services; and
- management of distribution of materials before, during and after the Regional Water Congress.

## THEMES

- The host will establish, in collaboration with IWRA, an International Scientific Committee (ISC) composed of local and international experts.
- The ISC will be responsible for the technical content of the Congress, including for proposing the final overarching theme and sub-themes for the IWRA Regional Water Congress and for managing the call for review and selection of all abstracts and session proposals.
- The theme proposed in the bid may be refined following the host selection in consultation with the host, IWRA, and ISC.
- Final approval of the overarching theme and sub-themes rests with IWRA.



## TECHNICAL EXPOSITIONS AND SPONSORSHIP

Conditions for any technical exhibitions and sponsorship packages are proposed by the bidding organisation with final approval by IWRA.

The proposal must include a fully equipped stand for IWRA at no cost.

## TECHNICAL VISITS/FIELD TRIPS

The host organisation is responsible for the planning and delivery of technical visits and fields trips, including:

- Selecting sites
- Invitations and ticketing
- Liaison with organisers
- Transport, guides, meals, and on-site logistics
- Communications of site details to registered participants

## FACILITIES

Depending on the final programme, indicative space requirements typically include:

- A plenary room that can accommodate all attendees
- 3-5 rooms for parallel sessions with a capacity of 50-100 people in each
- Rooms for special sessions and side events
- Dedicated coordination rooms for the host organisation, IWRA staff, and other groups with management or organisational responsibilities
- A VIP reception room
- Breakout spaces for meetings and exchanges
- Press facilities
- Space for technical exhibitions
- Space for poster presentations
- High speed Wi-Fi Internet access throughout the entire venue
- A suitable venue for the Gala Dinner for invited and/or paying guests on one evening of the Congress.



## LANGUAGE/TRANSLATION

English is the official language of the Regional Water Congress and all related materials. Additional official languages may be included, so long as adequate translation is provided for English language speakers. Additional languages may also be used depending on Congress location, participants involved, and translation services available.

## ACCOMMODATION

The host organisation is responsible for:

- Negotiating favourable accommodation rates across a range of price categories
- Finalising agreements and/or contracts with hotels and other accommodation providers, such as colleges, etc.
- Coordinating room allocations, deposits, cancellations, and liaison with accommodation providers

## REGISTRATION MANAGEMENT

The host is responsible for establishing and managing the registration process in consultation with IWRA.

- » Registration fees and categories:
  - Registration fees shall be set in agreement with IWRA.
  - The Congress is open to anyone wishing to attend.

- Discounts on registration must be offered to IWRA Gold Members.
- Discounts are usually offered for “early bird” registrations, students, and participants from developing countries.
- Registration must include on-site lunches.
- » Registration systems and operations:
  - Set-up and management of registration systems (digital or manual)
  - Organisation and supervision of badge production, Congress kits, and preordered tickets
- » Advance registration:
  - Receipt and monitoring of registration payments
  - Management of registration fee bank account
  - Issuing of confirmations and receipts
  - Handling cancellations, refunds, unpaid fees, and overpayments
- » On-site registrations:
  - Set-up and operation of on-site registration desks
  - Cashier and ticketing arrangements
  - Distribution of badges, materials, and Congress kits
  - Maintenance and updating of participant lists





### Contact

IWRA Executive Office  
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75008 Paris  
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**Email:** [office@iwra.org](mailto:office@iwra.org)

[www.iwra.org](http://www.iwra.org)



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