



## **ISA Conferences Protocol 2019-2022**

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Principles of ISA conferences .....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities .....	3
3.1 Host organization .....	3
3.2 Conference Organizing Committee.....	3
3.3 Conference Scientific Committee.....	4
3.4 Board .....	5
4. Other guidelines .....	5
4.1 Conference location and timing.....	5
4.2 Choosing the venue and partner organization .....	5
4.3 Marketing/branding.....	5
4.4 Financial management.....	6
4.5 Conflicts of interest .....	6
4.6 Timeline summary.....	6
5. Learning.....	6
Appendix A: Sample call for bids .....	8
Appendix B: Preparing a bid to host an ISA conference.....	9
Appendix C: Sample MOU .....	10

## 1. Introduction

According to the ISA [By-laws](#), ISA holds annual conferences (see table below) to further our objectives as defined in our [Strategic Plan](#). This protocol has been prepared to ensure that all ISA conferences:

- are conducted in a manner consistent with ISA’s vision, mission, and strategic plan, and in accordance with our By-laws and branding;
- further the collaborative work of ISA by ensuring that conference-related work with our members and external agencies occurs within a framework of true partnership;
- bring together science and personal experience, including the experience of bereavement;
- generate sufficient funds to cover all costs incurred.

	Location	Host organization(s)
<b>ISA2005 (first annual)</b>	Arlington, VA, USA	none
<b>ISA2006</b>	Japan	SIDS Family Association Japan
<b>ISA2007</b>	Birmingham, UK	Perinatal Institute, SANDS UK
<b>ISA2008</b>	Oslo, Norway	WHO, Norwegian Society of Perinatal Medicine, Norwegian SIDS and Stillbirth Society, Perinatal Research Center
<b>ISA2009</b>	South Africa	Priorities in Perinatal Care
<b>ISA2010</b>	Sydney, Australia	ANZSA, SIDS and Kids (with ISPID)
<b>ISA2011</b>	Antigua	American University of Antigua
<b>ISA2012</b>	Baltimore, MD, USA	First Candle (with ISPID)
<b>ISA2013</b>	Hanoi, Vietnam	Institute for Reproductive and Family Health
<b>ISA2014</b>	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Royal Tropical Institute (with ISPID)
<b>ISA2015</b>	Vancouver, Canada	Still Life Canada
<b>ISA2016</b>	Uruguay	Uruguayan Society of Pediatrics, the Argentine Society of Pediatrics, Era en Abril (with ISPID)
<b>ISA2017</b>	Cork, Ireland	University College Cork
<b>ISA2018</b>	Glasgow, Scotland	The Scottish Cot Death Trust (with ISPID)
<b>ISA2019 (15<sup>th</sup> annual)</b>	Madrid, Spain	Umamanita
<b>ISA2020</b>	Brisbane, Australia	Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth (with ISPID)

The objectives of this protocol are to:

1. clarify the principles of ISA conferences;
2. clarify roles and responsibilities;
3. provide guidelines to host organisations to ensure a successful conference;
4. help to capture learning from each conference as a way of building our institutional memory.

## 2. Principles of ISA conferences

In order to ensure conferences are conducted in a manner consistent with ISA’s vision, mission, and strategic plan, we lay out the following principles which should be adhered to for each conference:

1. The process of conference planning should be open and transparent;
2. The call for bids should be made three years prior to the conference date, with a decision on the host organization made two years prior to the conference date;
3. The call for bids should take into consideration ISA priority areas as identified by our Strategic Plan;

4. Only ISA members are eligible to submit a bid;
5. Conferences should be held in a low- or middle-income country every two years;
6. Conferences should be held in varying locations to achieve a wide geographic coverage over time;
7. Conference programs must accommodate the needs of bereaved parents, health practitioners and researchers;
8. Conference programs must have a substantial focus on perinatal death, including prevention, awareness, education and bereavement.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

In order to ensure that conference-related work with our members and external agencies occurs within a framework of true partnership, we have described roles and responsibilities of key players as follows.

#### **3.1 Host organization**

The host organization must be an ISA member. The organization is responsible for setting up a Conference Organizing Committee with some of its key staff as members, and for ensuring these staff have sufficient time, resources and space to work effectively. The host organization is also ultimately responsible for conference financing.

#### **3.2 Conference Organizing Committee**

Each ISA Conference shall be overseen by a Conference Organizing Committee (COC) which is established and managed by the host organisation. The COC reports regularly to the ISA Board via ISA Board representatives who are COC members. The COC will be established at the outset of planning and maintained until the final Conference report is submitted to the Board after the conference.

#### ***Membership***

COC membership includes representatives of the host organization and the board as well as other individuals chosen on the basis of their particular skills. The COC is established by the host organization and must include:

- Representatives of the host organisation;
- The Chair of the immediate past Conference's COC or his/her delegate, if possible;
- The ISA Stillbirth Risk and Prevention Committee Chair or his/her delegate;
- The ISA Communications Committee Chair or his/her delegate;
- The ISA Treasurer;
- Bereaved parents;
- Individuals with experience in organising conferences, marketing and fundraising.

All COC members must commit to undertake the work required to ensure the success of the conference. COC membership is approved by the ISA Board. The COC chair is elected by COC members.

#### ***Responsibilities***

The COC has overall responsibility for the Conference, including:

- Providing a report of the Conference plan and general program themes to the board twelve months prior to the Conference;
- If possible, announcing the Conference at the prior year's conference closing ceremony;
- Finding the conference venue;

- Find a venue for the conference dinner, organizing a remembrance ceremony, and all other program components besides the scientific program;
- Fundraising;
- The budget (management of which may be delegated to another party);
- Marketing, including announcements and website development and hosting;
- Post-conference evaluations;
- Producing a conference report and submitting it to the board no more than 6 months after the conference. This must include a brief review of this protocol including recommendations for updating it.
- Making abstracts available to the public (e.g. by posting them online).

To facilitate access to a wider audience, where possible the COC should facilitate conference streaming and offer reduced prices or fee waivers for attendees from low- and middle-income countries, for instance by partnering with organizations able to fund these costs.

### **3.3 Conference Scientific Committee**

The conference's scientific program shall be planned by a Scientific Committee (SC).

#### ***Membership***

SC members shall be decided by the COC and should include:

- representation from high-, middle- and low-income countries;
- ISA members;
- Individuals from a wide range of disciplines;
- A reasonable gender balance.

#### ***Responsibilities***

The Scientific Committee has the overall responsibility for the scientific program including:

- Defining conference themes and proposing them to the Board;
- Planning the program and submitting it to the COC for approval;
- Identifying and inviting speakers;
- Facilitating International Accreditation;
- Putting out a call for abstracts at least 6 months before the conference;
- Reviewing submitted abstracts;
- Vetting researcher awards;
- Facilitating pre-conference workshops (where relevant).

Conference themes must ensure the program accommodates the needs of parents, health practitioners and researchers, and provides a substantial focus on perinatal death including prevention, awareness, education and bereavement.

Invited speakers should include both local and international experts, of whom at least 10% should be from low- and middle-income countries, if possible; speakers should represent all disciplines pertinent to perinatal death in order to ensure a multidisciplinary program.

The invitees list should ideally be finalised 9 months prior to the Conference.

Reasonable expenses of keynote speakers should be covered by the conference budget, including: registration fees, roundtrip economy airfares, and accommodation and breakfasts during the Conference. However, in an effort to ensure that these costs can at least be fully covered for speakers from low- and middle-income countries, all speakers will be asked to cover all or part of their costs from other sources, if available.

### **3.4 Board**

The ISA Board must:

- Put out a call for bids in a timely manner;
- Manage bids and select a host organization and venue for each conference in a timely manner;
- Ensure the protocol and call for bids are available on the website and sent to ISA members;
- Approve conference themes;
- Recommend speakers as requested by the COC;
- Attend each conference if possible;
- Ensure conference learning is captured (see Learning below);
- Carry out periodic mailings to promote the conference (email content must be provided by the COC).

The conference organizing committee will not be requested to cover the conference fees of ISA board members.

## **4. Other guidelines**

### **4.1 Conference location and timing**

ISA aims to hold a conference every year, alternating between high-income countries and low- or middle-income countries each year. The ultimate goal is to achieve a wide geographic coverage over time.

In countries where perinatal death rates are high but it is not possible to hold a large conference, a smaller conference or working meeting may be held instead. Such meetings may be held every two years.

### **4.2 Choosing the venue and partner organization**

The call for bids will be put out by the Board in October each year for the conference to be held 3 years hence (see Appendix A for a sample call). Directions for preparing the bid are in Appendix B.

The Board will manage the call for bids and select the winning bid at least two years prior to the conference date.

ISA conferences are hosted by member organizations. Hence, only ISA member organizations are eligible to submit a bid. In order to further global collaboration for the reduction of perinatal deaths, conferences in partnership with other organizations, particularly large global organizations, are encouraged.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) detailing the working relationship between ISA and the host organization (with other external agencies if any) should be drafted by the COC Chair as soon as possible after establishment of the Committee, and must be approved by the ISA Board (see Appendix C for an example).

### **4.3 Marketing/branding**

All ISA conferences must have a website. ISA can provide the design of the website used for the 2019 conference. Said website can be modified to suit the upcoming conference. If the COC wishes to design a new website, the design, development and management of said website is the responsibility of the COC.

The initial notice for the upcoming Conference should be put on the ISA website and announced prior to the end of the current Conference. Further announcements, invitations and reminders should be distributed to ISA members, other relevant organisations and other individuals at regular intervals, at least every three months, and made available on the ISA and conference websites.

All promotional materials regarding the Conference must clearly identify ISA as the Conference sponsor. The conference brand name is ISA[year in question], for example “ISA2019”.

Local media coverage is encouraged for all ISA conferences and is the responsibility of the COC in collaboration with ISA’s Communications Committee as possible.

#### **4.4 Financial management**

The host organization must generate sufficient funds to cover all costs incurred. The COC is responsible for the Conference budget and for ensuring that all expenses incurred as a result of the Conference are met.

ISA will make a modest financial contribution to Conference costs if deemed possible by the Board, but may not be in a position to do so. On the other hand, any profits from the conference belong to the host organization, and the host organization may, at its own discretion, donate a portion of these profits to ISA.

All fundraising and sponsorship activity is the responsibility of the COC.

#### **4.5 Conflicts of interest**

All presenters at ISA Conferences and meetings must include a statement describing any conflicts of interest in their presentations. All abstracts must include a statement describing any conflicts of interest. No sponsor may promote their products during presentations in exchange for financial support.

#### **4.6 Timeline summary**

- 3 years prior to conference: Call for bids
- 2 years prior: Choose host and sign MOU
- 1 year prior: Finalize keynote speakers & launch website
- 10 months prior: Launch preliminary program
- 9 months prior: Invite abstracts and open registration
- 5 months prior: Close call for abstracts
- September-October each year: Conference (alternate months may be chosen if necessary)
- 6 months after: Conference report, protocol review, and abstracts made available online (if possible)

### **5. Learning**

This protocol will be approved by the Board and if necessary revised every three years. The next review is due September 2022.

A conference report including lessons learned and recommendations for future conferences will be provided to the Board by the COC after each conference.

A permanent link to the conference website, including program and abstracts online (when available), will be added to the ISA website. Key conference documents will be added to the ISA Dropbox Conferences folder, including the program, abstracts, the MOU, the conference report, and minutes of COC and SC meetings. Basic details of the conference, including location, date, link to website, host organization name, and COC chair, will be added to a spreadsheet that lists all ISA conferences.

Where possible and relevant, the Board may consider writing a brief article on a particular aspect of the conference for publication.

## CALL FOR BIDS TO HOST CONFERENCES

**ISA2021: Submissions close December 31, 2019**

**ISA2022: Submissions close June 1, 2020**

### Where can the conference be held?

ISA aims to alternate our annual conferences between high-income (HIC) and low- or middle-income countries (LMIC). HIC conferences are generally larger (400+ delegates); LMIC conferences are smaller, often more regional than global in scope. We also aim for wide geographic representation of our conferences over time. Past conferences have been held in HIC including the USA, the UK, Norway, the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Australia and Japan, and LMIC including South Africa, Vietnam, Antigua, and Uruguay.

- The ISA2021 conference should be in a LMIC, preferably one we have not yet been to.
- The ISA2022 conference should be in a HIC, again preferably new for us.

### What should the focus of the conference be?

Each conference has its own themes, but all conferences must:

- accommodate needs of bereaved parents, health practitioners and researchers;
- focus on perinatal death, including prevention, awareness, education and bereavement;
- align with ISA's [Strategic Plan](#).

### What does hosting a conference entail?

The host organization is responsible for setting up a Conference Organizing Committee (COC) which has overall responsibility for the Conference. The COC sets up the Scientific Committee which is responsible for the scientific program. For more details on committee membership and responsibilities, see the ISA Conferences Protocol [add link]. The host organization is also responsible for conference financing and must generate sufficient funds to cover all costs incurred.

### Who may submit a bid?

All ISA member organizations may submit a bid, and may do so in partnership with other relevant organisations. Organizations which are not members must join ISA in order to submit.

### What must the bid include?

- A proposal that follows the "Bid for hosting an ISA conference" format (see Appendix B to the Protocol)
- A cover letter, including the organization's name, website link, and location; the name, title, and contact information of the contact person; and a description of why the organization wishes to host the conference. Please confirm in your cover letter that you are an ISA member.
- Bids must be in English and no longer than 10 pages

### Where can I submit a bid?

Please send your submission in a single Word document to [info@stillbirthalliance.org](mailto:info@stillbirthalliance.org) with the header "Bid for hosting ISA2021 conference" (or ISA2022). If you have not received an acknowledgement of submission within 7 days, please contact us to follow up.

### What if I have more questions?

Refer to the Conferences Protocol at [LINK](#) or contact [info@stillbirthalliance.org](mailto:info@stillbirthalliance.org)

We thank you for your interest!



## Appendix B: Preparing a bid to host an ISA conference

*Instructions:* Please prepare your proposal in English, addressing all 7 of the areas listed below. Your proposal should be no longer than 10 pages.

1. **Themes:**
  - a. While the themes of the conference will not be decided until after a bid has been accepted, we would like to hear from you about 2-4 themes you feel might be of interest, and how they align with the ISA conference principles and strategy.
2. **Logistics:**
  - a. Proposed meeting venues (including space for plenary and break-out sessions, pre-conference workshops, poster sessions, small meetings, and registration)
  - b. Likely transportation and accommodation requirements and options for all participants (speakers and delegates)
3. **Timeframe:**
  - a. Proposed dates (considering other important dates, meetings and conferences related to stillbirth that may conflict)
4. **Management:**
  - a. Proposed Conference Organising Committee membership (including people with particular expertise both within and outside your organization)
  - b. Proposed involvement of volunteers
5. **Fundraising and budget:**
  - a. Local sponsorship opportunities
  - b. Other funding sources for the conference
  - c. A statement verifying your understanding of responsibility for conference funding
6. **Social program:**
  - a. A description of social activities and entertainment that could be provided for delegates
7. **Conclusion:**
  - a. Explain why your country is a good choice for this conference
  - b. Explain why your organization is well-placed to host the conference, summarizing your resources and other advantages

Once done with your proposal, please submit it as a Word document together with your cover letter at [info@stillbirthalliance.org](mailto:info@stillbirthalliance.org)

The cover letter must include the organization's name, website link, and location; the name, title, and contact information of the contact person; and a description of why the organization wishes to host the conference. Please confirm in your cover letter that you are an ISA member.

If you have any questions, you may refer to the ISA Conferences Protocol or email [info@stillbirthalliance.org](mailto:info@stillbirthalliance.org) Many thanks for your interest!

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**between**  
**[name of host organization],**  
**Host of the ISA[year] conference,**  
**and**  
**the International Stillbirth Alliance**

**Introduction and purpose of the Memorandum**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the International Stillbirth Alliance (ISA) and [host], a member organisation of ISA; the two organizations are hereafter called “the Parties”. The MOU describes the agreement between [host] and ISA for their collaboration in presenting the ISA[year] Conference (hereafter “the Conference”).

**Responsibilities and obligations of the parties**

[Host] and the ISA Board will work collaboratively through the ISA[year] Conference Organizing Committee (COC) and Scientific Committee to organize the conference and develop the conference program according to the ISA Conference Protocol [add link].

As per the ISA Conference Protocol, [host] will take responsibility for all aspects of the conference organisation.

The COC will provide progress reports every 3 months to the ISA Board during the development of the conference and a final conference report within 6 months of hosting the Conference.

ISA will undertake to support the Conference in the following ways:

- Advertising the Conference on the ISA website and through the ISA members email list as requested by [host];
- Assisting with identifying international speakers;
- Encouraging all ISA Board members to attend.

[Host] will cover accommodation and travel costs for all keynote speakers and as many speakers as possible from low- and middle-income countries unless these costs are otherwise covered.

ISA accepts no financial responsibilities for the conference. The management of all income and expenditures relating to the conference will be the responsibility of [host].

ISA and [host] will share ownership of any copyright or other rights to use abstracts or presentations submitted to the Conference.

**Dispute Resolution**

The ISA and [host] enter into this agreement, and interpret its paragraphs, in good will. Each party is responsible for notifying the other about any actual or potential conflict of interest. The Parties will negotiate and cooperate with each other in good faith to resolve any disputes or conflicts that arise in connection with this Memorandum. If the parties cannot resolve a dispute or conflict of interest between them, they will endeavour to have the matter mediated or arbitrated on mutually acceptable terms.

## Signatures

This MOU will come into force once it is signed by both parties below.

<b>For the International Stillbirth Alliance:</b>		<b>For [host organization]:</b>	
Signed:		Signed:	
[name], Chair		[name], President [or similar title]	
Dated:		Dated:	