Hosting the 11th International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens

BGCI Guidelines for Botanic Gardens

The International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens, normally held once every three years, is traditionally hosted by a BGCI botanic garden member, with Congress activities centred around the host botanic garden.

Where possible BGCI aims to reflect a broad geographical spread of Congress location to encourage participation from around the world. *Past Congresses have been held in Utrecht, The Netherlands (1991), Gran Canaria, Spain (1993), Brooklyn, USA (1996), Kerala, India (1999), Sydney, Australia (2002), Oxford, UK (2006), Durban, South Africa (2009), Mexico City, Mexico (2012), Missouri, USA (2015).* The last education Congress was held in Warsaw, Poland (2018). An education and engagement day was also included as part of the 8th Global Botanic Garden Congress in Melbourne Australia (2022) following the cancellation (due to the Covid pandemic) of the intended 2021 Education Congress.

The process for deciding the host of the 11th International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens is described below:

1. Pre-Proposal submitted by interested botanic gardens or arboreta to the Secretary General of BGCI by 2 December 2022.
2. Short-list of potential hosts developed by a sub-committee of BGCI staff and Board and submitted to the Secretary General of BGCI by 31st January 2023.
3. Secretary General of BGCI notifies short-listed candidates by 10th February 2023.
4. Full Proposal submitted by short-listed candidates to the Secretary General of BGCI by 9th June 2023.
5. BGCI's International Advisory Council sub-committee reviews and recommends proposed host to the BGCI Board for approval by 4th August 2023.
6. BGCI announces host of 11th International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens Congress by 31st August 2023.

Stage 1: Pre-proposal

Botanic gardens or arboreta interested in hosting the Congress with Botanic Gardens Conservation International should submit a pre-proposal in the form of a presentation of no more than ten slides.

The proposal should answer the following questions:
1. Who are you? Describe the Botanic Garden or Arboretum.
2. Where will the congress be held?
3. Why would you like to host the congress?

In addition, the pre-proposal should address the following criteria:
- About the Finances
  - Commitment to underwrite the cost of the congress
  - Commitment to co-organise the congress with BGCI
  - Commitment to cover BGCI costs in congress Budget. For example:
    - Registration costs for up to 5 BGCI staff
    - Travel costs for up to 5 staff for the congress
    - Travel costs for 1-2 BGCI staff to travel to congress host for at least one planning meeting
  - Ability to provide discount to BGCI Members on registration fees of at least USD 150.
- About the Location
  - Geographic balance (why the location is optimal)
  - Accessibility and transport links of congress location
  - Affordability and value for money
  - Facilities offered to congress participants, including proximity to the congress venue(s) and the host institution garden or arboretum
  - Proximity and diversity (costs and quality) of accommodation
- About the Congress
  - Approximate timing for when the congress would be held
  - The capacity (number of delegates) of the congress venue
  - Capacity to publicise the congress
  - Suggested theme for the congress
  - Potential for field trips and additional programmes
  - Availability of translation services
  - Option for virtual congress attendance
- About the Host
  - Previous experience in hosting large meetings
  - Host language
  - Potential links with other events and opportunities

The Pre-Proposal Presentation is an initial draft proposal, requiring limited research, and completed internally by the interested botanic garden or arboretum. The pre-proposal does not require any collaboration with external congress organisers, local authorities, or sponsors.

A sub-committee of BGCI staff and the BGCI Board will review the Pre-Proposal and provide a short-list of candidates to BGCI's Secretary General. Short-listed candidates will be invited to submit a final proposal to host the congress to BGCI.

Stage 2: The Proposal

Short-listed botanic gardens or arboreta are invited to submit a full, formal proposal for consideration by the IAC who will make a recommendation to the BGCI Board. Criteria assessed by the IAC, and their relative weighting are outlined in **Annex 1**.

The Proposal should contain:

1. **A Bid 'Letter of Invitation'** addressed to the Secretary General, outlining what the host botanic garden and city have to offer.

2. **Justification** including the rationale for hosting the Congress, previous experience, specific expertise, theme of the Congress, special anniversary of the host institution, other reasons e.g. central location etc.

3. **Background information** such as accessibility of the location, airport, rail and bus services, geography, language, exchange rates, value for money, tourist attractions, security/health, environmental sustainability.

4. **Timing of Congress**
   A recommendation should be made suggesting an appropriate date for the Congress taking into consideration climate, to enable delegates to travel at reasonable cost and to ensure good attendance.

5. **Experience and capacity for administration of the Congres**s
   See Guidelines Section 1 for further details below.

6. **Conference venue, facilities and resources**
   See Guidelines Section 2 for further details below.

7. **Accommodation**
   15-20 hotels should be listed with star ratings/ charges/ number of rooms/ proximity to Conference venue. The host botanic garden should provide periodic *shuttle services* where needed, e.g. from main hotels to meeting centre or from one congress venue to another.

8. **Social Events/ Venues/ Congress Tours**
   The following social events and tours are usually part of the Congress package:
   - *Pre- and Post-Congress Tours* are usually offered prior to and following the Congress.
   - *Mid-Congress tours* (half or whole day) provide an opportunity for international meetings to take place, such as Regional Botanic Garden Meetings, BGCI International Advisory Council or BGCI Board Meetings.
   - *Welcome Reception* – usually held the evening prior to the first day.
   - *Congress Banquet* – usually held the evening prior to the last day.
   - Other Social Events on related topics.

9. **Estimated budget and financial model**
   See Guidelines Section 3 for further details, below.

10. **Promotion and publicity**
    How the Congress will be publicised, support from the municipal authorities, tourism authorities etc.

11. **Letters of Support**
    For example, from prospective Congress Organisers, City Council/Tourist Bureau, National Parks Board noting Congresses previously organised.

Guidelines for Proposal

1. Administration and communication

Generally, both participating organisations (the host and BGCI) will foster collaboration through mutual respect; champion the partnership and any specific key messages and campaigns relating to 11ICEBG; sharing relevant communication and information between parties and with members via social and other channels; create an effective support platform for best use of resources, avoiding duplication wherever possible. Host institutions must have institutional communication facilities including email, video conferencing, and telephone.

BGCI and the host institution will form three main coordinating groups to support the congress: the Project Steering Group, the Programme Committee, and the Organising Committee.

The host institution will appoint a Congress Coordinator(s) with well developed organisational and communication skills to liaise with BGCI. Additionally (or alternatively), BGCI expects the host garden to appoint/hire professional Congress Organisers to support the planning, administration, and organisation of the congress.

Roles and Responsibilities for the three main coordinating groups and coordinator(s) are as follows:

Congress Steering Group
Oversight and key decision-making, including finalisation of overarching congress theme and main conference streams, identifying and securing keynote speakers. The Congress Steering Group will include appointed staff from BGCI and the host institution and will report to the IAC.

The Programme Committee
The Programme Committee will be appointed by BGCI and the host garden to include representation from the host garden, BGCI staff and international experts. The Committee will report to the Congress Steering Group. The Terms of Reference for the Programme Committee are as follows:
- Providing suggestions for keynote speakers
- Reviewing abstracts with a focus on particular Congress themes of interest/expertise
- Promoting the Congress and encouraging potential speakers / symposium organisers to submit proposals / abstracts
- Follow-up and coordination with congress organisers
- Assisting with the development of the programme of the Congress, - ensuring a good thematic, geographical and gender representation amongst the speakers

The Organising Committee

The Organising Committee will include the host institution, the Congress Coordinator, and the professional Congress Organiser. The Organising Committee will report to the Congress Steering Group. The Terms of Reference for the Organising Committee are as follows:

- Providing support and guidance to the administration and organising of the congress including:
    i. Accommodation, venue, audio-visual, catering, social programme(s), pre/post-congress tour(s), sponsorship, congress website, marketing, communications, development of program information (digital and printed), and delegate registrations and communications.
    ii. Follow-up and coordination with Congress Organiser(s) and Congress Coordinator(s)

Congress Coordinator(s)
The role of the coordinator(s) will be to work with BGCI staff to:

- Liaise with Congress Organiser(s) and Congress Steering Group
- Canvas ideas and develop congress themes
- Develop a Congress schedule
- Develop, produce and distribute the congress circular(s)
- Invite Keynote Speakers to address congress themes
- Correspond with delegates
- Compile the registration booklet
- Liaise with caterers/venue/hotel managers
- Arrange transportation for delegates during congress
- Raise sponsorship to support congress.

2. Facilities and Resources

Minimum facilities and resources required by the botanic garden to host the Congress should include:

- Auditorium with capacity of up to 350 people
- Lecture rooms (~10) to accommodate approx. 20-30 people
- 1 large area for poster sessions - poster stands/easels or other methods to mount posters required
- Other meeting venues with a note of capacity
- Translation facilities – the primary language for the congress is English, but sessions in other languages are permitted as long as translation into English is available
- Audio/visual technology and support for all Auditorium and Lecture rooms
- Access to free wireless internet for conference participants
- BGCI administration office to be available throughout the Congress – access to photocopier requested
- Where possible A4 floor plans to be made available
- Option for virtual Congress attendance

Information on proximity of hotels and Congress venues to the botanic garden should be provided.

3. Funding and financial planning

A draft budget should be submitted with the Proposal. The host botanic garden will be expected to:

- Underwrite the cost of the Congress and cover any financial shortfall;
- Seek and attract sponsorship for the Congress.

- The Congress Budget should include:

3.1 Sources of Income
- Registration fees (information for prior membership fees is available in Annex 2)
- Sponsorship from host institution, host city
- Corporate/ Commercial/Garden sponsorship
- Trade fair
- Congress Tours
- Pre-congress workshop fees

3.2 Expenditure
3.2.1. Congress materials
- Design of materials (logo and layout)
- 1st and 2nd circulars, forms and distribution (email / printing, envelopes, postage and labour)
- Programme and abstract book (in print, online, or in app).
- USB stick / access to cloud storage of Congress papers
- Congress website or mobile phone application
- Translation of website
- Delegate materials (where required)
- Banners and signs
- Translation of materials
- Travel for selected Keynote Speakers

3.2.2. Administrative costs
- Auditorium
- Hire of rooms for parallel sessions and breakout groups with capacity of up to 30 delegates
- Hire of equipment for sessions, e.g. chairs, lectern, table, lights, audio-visual equipment (screens, data projector, flip chart, other)
- Simultaneous translation equipment
- Interpreters
- Pre-congress workshops
- Poster display area
- Trade Fair area
- BGCI stand and Registration area
- BGCI office with photocopier and internet connection
- Movement/Transport between hotels and congress venue and between session rooms
- Guides for delegates
- Technicians for audio-visual and simultaneous translation
- Transport and set up of session rooms (furniture, electrical equipment and banners)

Both the host botanic garden and BGCI should aim to raise sponsorship for delegates from developing countries.

3.2.3. Secretariat
- Congress organisation/ Secretariat
- Registration of delegates
- Booking hotels
- Visa service

- Catering Services/ Tea and coffee breaks and Meals

3.2.4. BGCI Staff Time and Travel Costs
- Registration costs for up to five BGCI staff
- Travel costs for up to five staff for the Congress
- Travel costs for 1-2 BGCI staff to travel to Congress host for at least one planning meeting

3.2.5. Social costs
- Welcome Reception
- Congress Dinner
- Congress Tours
- Other events

3.2.6. Profits made from the Congress shall be divided equally between BGCI and the host botanic garden.

4. Memorandum of Understanding
A Memorandum will be drawn up and signed detailing responsibilities of BGCI and of the host garden.

5. Announcement of following Congress Venue and Host
Normally BGCI aims to announce the successful bid (with prospective dates) for hosting the next Congress at the end of the out-going Congress. BGCI will post this information on its website and in relevant BGCI publications.

6. Promotion and publicity
The host botanic garden is expected to seek regional and national/international press coverage. The Congress will be profiled on the BGCI website and in relevant BGCI publications. BGCI and principal sponsors should be acknowledged in Congress promotion materials and publicity.

Annex 1: Criteria assessed in proposals Criterion	Weighting
Host is a botanic garden or arboretum and BGCI Member	essential
Commitment to underwrite cost of the Congress	essential
Commitment to co-organise the Congress with BGCI	essential
Commitment to cover BGCI costs in Congress budget	essential
Discount offered to BGCI members	essential
Geographical balance	high
Accessibility, communication & transport links	high
Affordability & value for money	high
Congress facilities offered, including proximity to the botanic garden	high
Options for virtual attendance	high
Timing of meeting	high
Security & health	high
Capacity (number of delegates)	high
Capacity and plans to publicise the meeting	high
Translation services	high
Environmental sustainability	high
Theme suggested	medium
Accommodation proximity, range of prices and quality	medium
Sponsorship	medium
Field trip & tour programme (including for accompanying persons)	medium
Support from local authorities	medium
Previous experience in hosting large meetings	medium
Host language	low
Congress materials offered	low
Climate	low
Link with other events and opportunities for organizing pre- / post-congress activities.	low

Annex 2: Prior registration fees

Congress Location	Year	Size (People)	Early bird fee BGCI Member	Early bird fee non-member	Early Bird fee student	Normal fee BGCI Member	Normal fee non-member	Normal fee student	Late fee BGCI member	Late fee non-member	Late fee student
Missouri	2015	300	USD 395	USD 495	USD 275	USD 455	USD 570	USD 335	USD 525	USD 655	USD 385