

Call for Proposals for Hosting ICOM15

The International Mycorrhiza Society (IMS) is requesting proposals from groups actively studying mycorrhizas to host the Fifteenth International Conference on Mycorrhizas (ICOM15).

The ICOM is the premier international forum for current research on all aspects of mycorrhizal symbioses. Research results are presented as invited plenary or symposium presentations, as contributed oral presentations, or as posters. The Conference promotes idea exchange and research collaborations. **The ICOM is held every two years. Thus, ICOM15 will take place in 2030.**

ICOM is the major international event supported by the IMS. The first ICOM was held in Berkeley (USA) in 1996. It was followed by ICOM2 in Uppsala (Sweden) in 1998, ICOM3 in Adelaide (Australia) in 2001, ICOM4 in Montreal (Canada) in 2003, ICOM5 in Granada (Spain) in 2006, ICOM6 in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) in 2009, ICOM7 in New Delhi (India) in 2013, ICOM8 in Flagstaff (USA) in 2015; ICOM9 in Prague (Czech Republic) in 2017, ICOM10 in Merida (Mexico) in 2019, ICOM11 online in Beijing (China), ICOM12 in Manchester (UK), ICOM13 in Cairns (Australia), and ICOM 14 in Quebec City (Canada). **Attendance has averaged around 600 (range 250 to 800).**

While the IMS does not underwrite the conference financially or cover any budgetary shortfalls, the IMS will provide advice to the local organizing committee. The Chair of the local organizing committee will serve on the IMS Board of Directors for the two years leading up to ICOM15 and the IMS will provide members to serve on the international scientific committee. The Chair of the local organizing committee must be a member in good standing of the IMS. By joining the Board, frequent and effective communication between the local organizing committee and the IMS board is facilitated.

What to include in a proposal

The purpose of the proposal is to provide sufficient information to the IMS Board of Directors to decide where to hold the next ICOM. The following list was developed based on the experience of previous ICOM organizers and is provided to help potential organizers think about major aspects of conference organization. It is understood that the information in the proposal will be based on the best current estimates of the local organizing committee and that firm details cannot be developed until a time closer to the event. Note that IMS members get a discount for ICOM registration. The registration discount varies from \$100 USD for students to \$200 USD for full members, subject to evaluation. **IMS membership fees are collected by IMS, while registration fees are collected by the ICOM.** ICOM Registration fees cover the expenses associated with the organization of ICOM.

Proposals should not exceed 10 pages and should be submitted By **June 30, 2026**, to:

- President, Justine Karst; karst@ualberta.ca
- Vice President, Jan Jansa; jansa@biomed.cas.cz

In the 10 pages, please include:

1. Summary of major aspects of the proposal (approximately ½ page and appropriate for posting on the website); provide an overview of why this location is appealing and ideal for the next ICOM,
2. Proposed dates, with rationale,
3. A clear and realistic preliminary budget:
 - a. Please provide us with an estimate of the registration costs for the meeting, that is, today's price for organizing such an event by the hosting venue. The

- final price is not expected to be higher than the current price adjusted for inflation leading up to the organization of the event,
 - b. include possible sources of sponsorships,
 - c. proposed fee and anticipated attendance (with the understanding that both are very difficult to predict long in advance of the conference date),
 - d. low registration fees are attractive, but fees must be adequate to cover the costs,
 - e. which aspects of the conference the fees are expected to cover
- 4. Information on the facilities proposed for the meeting,
- 5. Other events planned (trips, visits, workshops, round table discussions, etc.); opportunities for networking and establishing collaborations,
- 6. People and groups who will organize the ICOM:
 - a. Will a professional conference organizer be used? (organizers of previous ICOMs recommend this),
 - b. Who would the local committee like to see serve on the international scientific committee? (the IMS can assist you by contacting these people),
 - c. Who is willing to serve on a local organizing committee?
- 7. Indication of the experience of the people listed in #6 with organizing international scientific meetings,
- 8. Major transportation routes to the host city, their cost and convenience; proposed location relative to the region in which the previous ICOM was held,
- 9. A general statement on visa requirements (no need to provide details for nationals of all countries),
- 10. Availability of a range of types of accommodation including low-cost accommodation for students (e.g., student residences); apartments for groups,
- 11. Theme and format of the Conference,
- 12. Plans for inviting keynote speakers, to maintain the tradition of research excellence of the ICOM,
- 13. Plans to involve companies/industry in the activities of ICOM (some sessions on applied aspects; packages of 'benefits' can be offered to companies who sponsor various aspects of the conference),
- 14. Source of liability and cancellation insurances,
- 15. Other reasons why this location is a good location.

Once the proposals have been received by the IMS, the IMS Board of Directors will review them and solicit clarifying information from the submitters by **June 22, 2026**.

Updated proposals will be submitted to the IMS President and Vice-President by **July 6, 2026**. The IMS board will select the two most appealing bids and leads of the two proposals will give a short presentation (5–10 minutes) about the venue, location, and the overall theme on the last day of ICOM13 in Cairns. Following these presentations, IMS members will vote for the location by hand-vote.

The successful proposal will be announced **July 17, 2026**.