International Zoo Educators Association
2026 Conference RFP

SECTION ONE: HOSTING GUIDELINES

Introduction

International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) is a global membership organisation dedicated to expanding the educational impact of zoos and aquariums worldwide. The IZE biennial conference   brings together delegates from all over the world for a week of professional development focussed on global knowledge exchange, networking, fellowship, and collaborative conversations about the many dimensions of conservation education in zoos and aquariums including program delivery, interpretation, behavioural change, evaluation, and community engagement.

Conference Overview

IZE invites its member institutions to take on the honor and responsibilities to host, plan, and implement its biennial conferences. The Host will be responsible for all aspects of the conference from full financial obligation to the development and implementation of the program. The conference cost should be covered by the participant fees, contributions from the host facility, and any sponsorship fees raised by the host. The host organization's Conference Chair will join the IZE Board and be asked to provide bi-monthly conference updates.

IZE conferences promote global collaboration, offer professional development, and most importantly meet the goals of Social Change for Conservation—The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Education Strategy (WZACES). You can find WZACES, in nine different languages, at the following link:
www.waza.org/priorities/community-conservation/the-ize-waza-education-strategy/.
During the conference, we facilitate the exchange of ideas, best practices, and innovative strategies amongst all those involved in conservation education. The conference also provides a platform for networking, fosters collaborations, and builds a supportive international community. Our workshops and program sessions provide opportunities for professional growth and skill enhancement and can feature emerging trends, teaching methodologies, technology integration, team training, and other relevant topics that empower individuals to excel. IZE conferences provide a forum for building relationships, sharing experiences, and creating a supportive network that extends way beyond the event.

Conference Timing

The IZE Biennial Conference is usually held in October and is scheduled around the World Association of Zoos and Aquarium's conference. Please avoid September dates to ensure we are not in conflict with the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the European Zoos and Aquariums conferences. Proposed dates must be discussed with the IZE Board for final approval.

Conference Size

The IZE Conference typically has 100-150 delegates from more than 30 countries.

Conference Committee

To successfully plan a conference, the host site must create a Conference Committee that includes a Conference Chair that will be responsible for both leading the Committee as well as being the liaison to the IZE Board. Having a Conference Committee ensures that there is efficient planning and organization of the conference, financial oversight, task delegation, and risk mitigation. The working relationship between the IZE board and the Conference Committee ensures a successful meeting. The daily point of contact for the Conference Committee is the IZE President-Elect.

Besides the Conference Chair, other members of the Committee may include the Program Chair, Logistics Chair, Registration Chair, and AV Chair.
- The Program Chair works with the host committee and the IZE Conference Committee to develop the theme of the conference, create the Call for Papers, review the Call for Papers submissions, and create the program schedule.
- The Logistics Chair ensures the conference runs smoothly and oversees all the practical aspects of the conference including venue arrangements, catering, audio-visual setup, and other logistical details.
- The Registration Chair oversees the registration process for the conference managing the on-line registration system, overseeing communications from participants, and ensuring that the check-in process is smooth.
- The AV Chair handles all the technical aspects of the conference including procuring an AV service to overseeing AV set ups, remote viewing, and potential translation services.

The Conference Chair will meet with the IZE Board bi-monthly. The Host Conference Committee typically meets every month during the initial planning stages of the conference and then weekly starting six months before the conference. Other program chairs may be needed to organize a successful meeting.

Conference Facility

All arrangements with the Conference Hotel and/or Conference Center are to be made by the host. Following is information on past room nights as well as on-site registration, audiovisual, Internet, and break requirements.

Room Nights

Following is the estimated number of room nights from the conference held in Wellington, NZ in October 2023.

	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Room Nights	*40*	*65*	*65*	*65*	*65*	*65*	*50*

Registration and Information Desk: The Host shall ensure that a registration/information desk is located in a prominent location at the conference venue so that delegates may easily receive information.

Audio Visual: Host will be responsible for organizing all audiovisual needs for the conference including a visual and sound system and podium. The host must have the capacity to provide remote/online viewing to provide access and inclusivity. Additional technological arrangements are a plus.

Internet Access: The conference facility needs to provide robust Internet access to all delegates.

Break Area: The conference facility should provide an area for morning and afternoon tea breaks.

Conference Accessibility

In IZE's effort to meet the diverse needs of our community, we must ensure accessibility for all our conference participants. We believe that every individual, regardless of their abilities, should have the opportunity to attend and participate in all of conference activities. Sites should be inclusive and welcoming to all. Please share your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy or procedures.

Conference Sustainability

IZE places a priority on sustainability in our efforts to preserve biodiversity. We request that hosts opt to use sustainable methods when planning the conference including recycling and using sustainable materials.

Conference Communications

Call for Papers: Host must provide an on-line solution for abstract submission and communication with presenters.

Name Badge: Every delegate should receive a customized name badge with their name and the name of their organization.

Photographer: A photographer should be provided to take photos during the ice breaker, opening session, zoo/aquarium day, and the gala dinner.

Paperfree: The conference should be paperless, as far as possible, and the schedule and all logistical information should be housed on the Whova or a similar app.

Translation: English is regarded as the official language of IZE and the conference is conducted in English. However, if the Host desires, simultaneous translation between English and another language(s) may be provided. Any costs associated with translation services will be at the expense of the Host.

Website: The Host should create a mini-website that contains all of the basic information that a delegate will needed to make their travel arrangements including information about:
- Lodging
- Airport
- Local transportation

The website should also host information on the program including a welcome from the Conference Chair and IZE President, Call for Papers, and keynote speakers. Host will coordinate with the IZE Administrator on the Conference Registration. Only IZE members can attend the conference.

Financial Responsibilities

The Host should be aware that conducting a conference can be an expensive endeavour. The host institution will need to produce a budget and supplement the revenue earned through registration fees to balance the conference budget if necessary. Since IZE is a small, volunteer-led organization, it is not feasible for any conference expenses to be covered by IZE. The host may also recruit sponsors to help cover conference expenses.

Conference Fees

Hosts are encouraged to keep the *registration fee as low as possible* so as many members as possible can attend. Hosts should endeavour to set the early bird registration fee between $400 to $700 US and the location will guide the conference cost. If the conference fee is outside this range, an explanation must be included. The registration fee should cover the cost of the meeting venue, icebreaker, teas, lunches, transportation to zoo/aquarium, and the gala dinner. If possible, the Host should cover the cost of the Board Meeting venue, coffee and tea service, and lunch. The host is responsible for planning a balanced budget and assumes any financial risk or loss. Hosting an IZE Conference is an honor and should not make a profit.

To keep the conference cost at a reasonable level, other special social events or field trips could be offered as *an optional extra*. A reasonable daily registration fee for members should also be established, for those who may be able to attend some days only.

Conference Programming

The conference is usually structured along the following lines; however, we are open to new ideas. A two-day board meeting, official opening session, membership presentation, and a visit to the host site is required.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Morning	Board Meeting	Board Meeting	Official Opening Keynote AM Tea Sessions	Sessions AM Tea	Keynote Sessions AM Tea Membership Presentation	Sessions AM Tea Workshops
Afternoon	Board Meeting	Board Meeting	Lunch Workshops PM Tea Poster Session	Zoo/ Aquarium Visit Lunch	Lunch Workshops PM Tea	Lunch Farewell
Evening	Board Dinner	Icebreaker			Gala Dinner	

Board Meeting: The Host arranges for a meeting room for 20 people for two days along with morning coffee and snack service as well as lunch.

Icebreaker: This informal gathering is held the evening prior to the official opening of the conference.

Official Opening: The Host opens the conference, a high-level international representative or a representative of the country delivers a formal opening, and then the IZE President presents. The keynote address follows these opening remarks.

Sessions: Sessions are usually organized in classroom style if there is a separate room for lunch. If not, the meeting room should have a dual function for sessions and lunch using a banquet setup. The Conference Host is responsible for, with feedback from the IZE Board, for creating the Conference Theme, developing the Call for Papers, evaluating submissions, and creating the master program schedule. The Host handles all correspondence with members regarding their presentations and coordinates the number, session subthemes, and sequence of the program. We recommend that presentations are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes including questions and should fit into the overall theme of the conference.

Workshops: Three separate rooms that can accommodate at least 40 people are required for the workshops. If there are room partitions for the main meeting room, this option also works.

Poster Session: The poster session can be conducted in-person during a one-hour late-afternoon session or through three- to five-minute video vignettes interspersed through the sessions.

Zoo and Aquarium Visit: Host will arrange for transportation to and from the zoo/aquarium and either provide a box lunch or tickets for dining at one of the facilities venues. The on-site program should include special activities such as tours of behind-the-scenes areas and an opportunity to meet staff members.

Gala Dinner: The dinner is a celebratory event for the delegates. Hosts are encouraged to provide delegates with a memorable dining experience that could include a local cultural performance. A few minutes at the closing banquet should be given for some concluding remarks from the Host and IZE President. In those years in which there is a change in presidents, it is traditional to allow the incoming president to make some remarks and thank the outgoing president.

The Host is allowed flexibility in developing the conference program and is encouraged to incorporate local/national customs and experiences where appropriate. The host must provide the IZE Board with monthly updates on the conference which will include details of the program, social events, and updated budgets including accurate costs.

SECTION TWO: SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

RFP Response Intent and Deadline

If you are planning to provide a response to this RFP, please let the IZE Administrator at izeaoffice@gmail.com know of your intent by March 15, 2024. Your full completed RFP response is due by **Monday, April 30, 2024**.

Instructions

Please complete all the following sections for your response to the RFP using the Survey Monkey tool at www.surveymonkey.com/r/HOST2026 . Incomplete responses will not be evaluated.

1. **Organization Information**
   Organization name
   Contact name and title
   Contact email address
   Contact mobile phone number

2. **Proposed Conference Dates**
   Please provide the proposed conference dates, including alternative dates if available.

3. **Proposed Conference Theme**
   Please share your proposed conference theme that aligns with IZE priorities and links to the WZACES.

4. **Conference Site**
   Please provide a description of the conference site including:
   1) Location
   2) Distance from airport
   3) Distance from lodging
   4) Distance from zoo and/or aquarium
   5) Features of location including an overview of the city and zoo or aquarium
   6) Available room space for sessions, workshops, coffee breaks, and lunches
   7) Photos of inside and outside of conference venue
   8) Accessibility and inclusion approach
   9) Hybrid and online opportunities

5. Conference Lodging

If there is a broad range of hotels that are close to the conference venue, please provide a lower price hotel option along with a higher price option (with the understanding that the higher price hotel option will offer more amenities such as included in-room tea and coffee).

1) Hotel names
2) Hotel descriptions
3) Hotel amenities
4) Hotel fees: This should include the nightly rate and final total lodging fee with local taxes included as well as any additional fees for items such as Internet or activity fees. You will need to be able to determine an accurate total cost for member participation.
5) Photos of hotels including indoor and outdoor shots. Links to the photo section of the hotels' websites are adequate.

6. Conference Accessibility

Please share your plans to ensure that the conference will be accessible to all along with your organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy.

7. Conference Sustainability

Please summarize your sustainability approach for hosting the conference, addressing the following items.

1) Waste reduction: Providing opportunities for recycling and composting and avoiding single-use plastic.
2) Food and beverage: Arranging for locally sourced, organic, sustainable, and seasonal food options whenever possible. Choosing to have at least one meat-free meal.
3) Sustainable materials: Selecting eco-friendly and recyclable materials for signage and promotional items.
4) Green accommodation: Choosing a conference venue that prioritizes sustainability and that is either inside one of the host hotels or within walking distance to the hotel sites.

8. Conference Registration Fee and Budget

Please share your proposed full conference fee along with a very topline, preliminary line-item budget in US dollars. Budget updates by the Conference Chair will be required as part of the conference updates at the bi-monthly IZE meetings. Include a statement that addresses your commitment to minimizing the conference registration fee and confirmation that your facility will be able to cover all the costs associated with hosting the conference.

9. Conference Hosting

Please include a statement, of no more than 250 words, as to why your organization would like to be chosen to host the 2026 IZE Conference. Please include your experience in hosting a similar conference, if applicable. Include photos where relevant.

10. Conference Chair

Please provide a bio of the Conference Chair and their previous experience leading a conference or other large, multi-day event. Please include a letter of support for being the conference host from the President or Director of your facility.

IZE Contact Information

If you have any questions about the proposal or the requirements for being a conference host, please contact Debra Erickson, IZE Past President, at:
Email Address: debra.erickson@atlantisparadise.com
Mobile Phone: +1 954-618-9667