



# INTERNATIONAL PLANETARIUM SOCIETY CONFERENCE SITE ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

**Approved by the Board Oct. 25, 2020**

## INTRODUCTION

The IPS Conference Site Assessment Toolkit is designed to help the IPS objectively assess and compare conference sites bidding for the biennial conference. It was created with help from the IPS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee in order to ensure that potential conference sites are vetted and assessed through the lens of “Inclusive Excellence,” or the commitment to respect and embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in people, ideas, and opinions.

The evaluation criteria for potential conference sites are divided into two categories: **Inclusive Excellence** and **General Considerations**.

- **Inclusive Excellence** assesses the proposal specifically through the lens of diversity and inclusion using three criteria: conference agenda, location/venue, and financial accessibility.
- **General Considerations** assess the proposal through important logistical factors such as: host city and time of year, planetarium and surrounding institutions, accommodating large numbers, conference agenda and activities, and technical capabilities.

The criteria listed in this toolkit can contribute to hosting a meaningful and productive conference. The assessment of these two categories ensures that potential conference sites are adequately set up to host a logistically successful conference and to create and foster an atmosphere where we can grow and strengthen our international community.

Considerations listed in this document are meant to be used as a guide and are not intended to be a complete or exhaustive list. **Furthermore, this packet is not intended to be a formula for picking a conference site but rather a tool that can be used to weigh factors, and to inform the discussions and decisions made by the IPS Board.** This should be kept in mind when assessing each category.

## ASSESSMENT - INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Through Inclusive Excellence, we aim to recruit, support, and retain a diverse international population of active and engaged IPS members, affiliates, and leaders, and create and maintain a culture and climate where all are welcome and everyone feels valued within the IPS community.

To help assess potential conference sites, selection considerations for criteria around Inclusive Excellence are listed below (summarized for IPS from [http://sudcc.syr.edu/\\_documents/InclusiveEventsSeminarsGuide.pdf](http://sudcc.syr.edu/_documents/InclusiveEventsSeminarsGuide.pdf)). Contact [EDI@ips-planetarium.org](mailto:EDI@ips-planetarium.org) if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding Inclusive Excellence.

**Inclusive Excellence - Agenda:** *This indicates how diversity and inclusion programming is reflected in the proposed conference agenda. This includes such considerations as: a draft list of diverse speakers who represent a variety of perspectives, identities, and/or other dimensions; welcoming events for new members and/or special interest group meetings; promotion of inclusion across multiple dimensions, including international inclusion; presentations, workshops, and/or forums for discussion on topics focused on Inclusive Excellence. (See “Conference Agenda” to assess programming as a whole).*

- Conference events do not occur during major religious holidays and festivals, or other potential conflicts
- A diverse planning committee is enlisted to ensure conference events and programming are inclusive
- A diverse set of speakers are included based on their expertise and point of view
- Special-interest group meetings are scheduled
- Adequate breaks and downtime are built into schedule
- Adequate transfer time between events is built into schedule
- Available live captioning, ASL interpreters, and translator options available for participants upon request
- Parallel and sequential events are located near each other to ease transfer time

**Inclusive Excellence - Location/Venue:** *This reflects how well the proposed conference site, including its location and all its associated venues and facilities, ensures an atmosphere that is safe, welcoming, and accessible to the diversity of the IPS and enables full participation of all members, including potentially marginalized members. (See “Technical Capabilities” to assess technology as a whole).*

- Safety of area
- Weather conditions
- Reputation of area for hosting meetings
- Accessible local restaurants and attractions
- LGBTQ+ friendly spaces
- Well-balanced vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, kosher, and Halal options at meals and local restaurants
- Ease and proximity to airport and hotels
- Hotels have accessible rooms that can be included in the rooms and facilities set aside for the conference
- Venue permits access by potentially marginalized people (indicated with signage where appropriate)
  - Sufficient accessible parking and drop-off areas
  - A paved and flat route to and from the main entrance, as well as any outdoor spaces
  - An accessible room layout
  - Automatic doors
  - Accommodations for guests who are blind or visually impaired (Braille, e-Text, etc.)
  - Adequate space for service animals and/or wheelchair maneuverability
  - Service animal and pet relief area(s)
  - Service elevator accessibility
  - Family and gender-neutral restrooms
  - Adequate seating, lighting, sound-systems, and technologies
  - Remote video streaming capabilities
- Child, parent, and family-friendly atmosphere
  - Name badges for kids who are attending
  - Children are invited to attend sessions as long as they are not being disruptive
  - Child care support such as lactation room(s), parents lounge, and on-site daycare upon request
- Room(s) that allow for quiet reflection or independent work without distraction
- Multifaith prayer room(s)
- Adequate taxi/transportation services
- Sufficient parking space
- Efficient, friendly staff
- Accessible, fully-staffed information desk
- Materials available in multiple fonts, languages, etc. upon request
- Optional pronoun stickers for name badges, set out on registration table for easy access
- An action plan to share information about options in advance so people can plan ahead

**Inclusive Excellence - Financial Accessibility:** *This indicates the cost and value of registration, accommodations, meals, and transportation, including general cost and value of travel to the conference location; additionally, this reflects whether the site will include conference scholarships and/or other appropriate financial assistance to members.*

- Rational cost and value of registration, meals, transportation, and accommodations
- Conference scholarships and/or other appropriate financial assistance
- Flexible child care grants

## ASSESSMENT - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

To help assess potential conference sites on criteria for general considerations, see the lists below (created with information from [www.marriott.com/Multimedia/PDF/SiteSelection.pdf](http://www.marriott.com/Multimedia/PDF/SiteSelection.pdf)). Note that there is some overlap between the criteria for Inclusive Excellence and the criteria below. This is to be expected as inclusive environments naturally benefit everyone.

**Host City & Time of Year:** *This reflects the basic municipal and tourist data of the area in which the conference is being held given the proposed date. This includes: weather, recreation facilities, and more.*

- Availability of local attractions
- Shopping & Recreation
- Restaurants
- Fair weather conditions
- Appearance
- Safety of area
- Reputation of area for hosting meetings
- Support and services available from local convention bureau
- Seasonality (peak season vs. off-season)

**Planetarium & Surrounding Institutions:** *This indicates the overall facilities of the planetarium and surrounding institutions and their appeal to the international community.*

- Proximity to airport
- Attractive, clean, safe environment
- Adequate lighting
- Service elevator accessibility
- Security of area
- Number of loading docks and proximity to exhibit area
- Crate and storage areas and policies
- Availability to access space after hours
- Availability and location of freight receiving area
- Availability of sufficient time for move-in and move-out
- Reputation of facility (e.g. for hosting meetings)
- First aid station
- Seasonality (peak season vs. off-season)

**Accommodating Large Numbers:** *This indicates the sites ability to accommodate and serve a large group (450-700) in terms of dining, accommodation, meeting facilities, and transportation.*

- Adequate dedicated staff
- Adequate space for planetarium presentations
- Elevators in sufficient numbers to serve guests
- Availability of guest services: drugstores, banks, etc.
- Number of rooms for meals and various types of sessions, gatherings, and meetings
- Number of hotel rooms available (including for early arrivals and late departures)
- Adequate parking space
- Adequate maximum floor load
- Adequate number of chairs, tables, etc.

**Conference Agenda & Activities:** *This reflects the overall conference agenda including such items as papers sessions, poster sessions, workshops and guest speakers. This also reflects any unique or unusual proposed activities: special tours, optional excursions, special nearby facilities of an astronomical/planetarium nature, and other activities available for family members. (See “Inclusive Excellence - Agenda” to assess the inclusivity of programming.)*

- Ample professional development opportunities
  - Paper sessions
  - Poster sessions
  - Workshops, short-courses, panels, etc.
  - Guest speakers
  - Networking events
- Adequate sponsor presentations and vendor hall time
- Business meetings
- Unique or unusual activities
  - Conference Theme
  - Special Tours
  - Optional Excursions
  - Nearby facilities of an astronomical/planetarium nature
  - Additional activities for family members

**Technical Capabilities:** *This reflects the technical capabilities of the site such as internet access, A-V equipment and assistance, planetarium capabilities, etc. (See “Inclusive Excellence - Location/Venue to assess technical accommodations for inclusion and accessibility.)*

- Adequate electrical outlets and power supply
- Availability of supplemental lighting
- Ample access to internet via hardline and wifi
- Audio and visual equipment
- Dedicated staff for technical assistance
- Remote video streaming capabilities
- Adequate capabilities of planetarium equipment and software
- Capacity to support temporary installation of additional sponsor equipment for in-theater demos

**ASSESSMENT**

Conference Site \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Inclusive Excellence - Agenda:</b> <i>This indicates how diversity and inclusion programming is reflected in the proposed conference agenda. This includes such considerations as: a draft list of diverse speakers who represent a variety of perspectives, identities, and/or other dimensions; welcoming events for new members and/or special interest group meetings; promotion of inclusion across multiple dimensions, including international inclusion; presentations, workshops, and/or forums for discussion on topics focused on Inclusive Excellence. (See "Conference Agenda" to assess programming as a whole).</i>									
<b>IE - AGENDA</b>	<b>Level 1</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 5</b>
	Inclusive excellence does not appear to be considered for the conference agenda.	Inclusive excellence appears to be considered but is very limited in scope or does not seem to be a priority.		Inclusive excellence appears a number of times throughout the conference agenda, and seems to be a priority.		Inclusive excellence appears to be a high priority and conference programming reflects many elements of inclusive excellence.		Inclusive excellence is a demonstrated high priority in the planned conference agenda, and proposers have suggested thorough and detailed plans for offering ample and varied opportunities for members to engage in diversity and inclusion programming.	
<b>Circle one</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Comments:</b>									

<b>Inclusive Excellence - Location/Venue:</b> <i>This reflects how well the proposed conference site, including its geographic location and all its associated venues and facilities, ensures an atmosphere that is safe, welcoming, and accessible to the diversity of the IPS and enables full participation of all members, including potentially marginalized members. (See "Technical Capabilities" to assess technology as a whole).</i>									
<b>IE - LOCATION/ VENUE</b>	<b>Level 1</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 5</b>
	Inclusive excellence does not appear to be considered for the conference location/venue.	Inclusive excellence appears to have been considered for the conference location/venue but is very limited in scope or does not seem to be a priority.		Inclusive excellence appears in a number of aspects of the location/venue and seems to be a priority, but they do not enable full participation of all members, including potentially marginalized members.		Inclusive excellence appears to be a high priority and the conference location/venue has made ample and suitable efforts to enable full participation of all members, including potentially marginalized members.		Inclusive excellence is a demonstrated high priority of the conference location/venue, the proposed site is safe, welcoming, and accessible to the diversity of the IPS, and proposers have done a thorough and detailed assessment of all associated sites and facilities to enable full participation of all members, including potentially marginalized members.	
<b>Circle one</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Comments:</b>									

<b>Inclusive Excellence - Financial Accessibility:</b> <i>This indicates the cost and value of registration, accommodations, meals, and transportation, including general cost and value of travel to the conference location; additionally, this reflects whether the site will include conference scholarships and/or other appropriate financial assistance to members.</i>									
<b>IE - FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY</b>	<b>Level 1</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 5</b>
		Inclusive excellence does not appear to be considered as a factor for the conference cost and value.		Inclusive Excellence may have been considered but the conference cost is prohibitively expensive for many members.		Inclusive excellence was considered, but the conference cost is still higher than average, value is lower than average, and there are limited or no opportunities for scholarships and/or financial assistance to members.		Inclusive excellence appears to be a high priority and is reflected in the conference cost and value, and some scholarships and/or financial assistance will be offered to members.	
<b>Circle one</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Comments:</b>									

<b>General Considerations - Host City &amp; Time of Year:</b> <i>This reflects the basic municipal and tourist data of the area in which the conference is being held given the proposed date. This includes: weather, recreation facilities, and more.</i>									
<b>GC - HOST CITY &amp; TIME OF YEAR</b>	<b>Level 1</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 5</b>
		The host location does not appear to have the basic amenities for a large number of visitors, and/or little or no consideration seems to have been given to the time of year.		The host location appears to have some of the basic amenities for a large number of visitors, but they are limited, and/or the time of year may be challenging for visitors.		The host location appears to have many of the basic amenities for a large number of visitors and the proposal addresses any potential limitations and/or the time of year is generally fine for visitors.		The host location appears to be well-suited for a large number of visitors with many established amenities and the proposal identifies and plans for any limitations, and/or the time of year is generally good for visitors.	
<b>Circle one</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Comments:</b>									

**General Considerations - Planetarium & Surrounding Institutions:** *This indicates the overall facilities of the planetarium and surrounding institutions and their appeal to the international community. This also indicates the sites ability to accommodate and serve a large group (450-700) in terms of dining, accommodation, meeting facilities, and transportation.*

GC - PLANETARIUM & SURROUNDING INSTITUTIONS	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Based on the information provided, the Planetarium and/or proposed conference venues are limited by logistics and/or are insufficient for hosting an event and/or serving a large group.			Based on the information provided, the Planetarium and/or proposed conference venues have some logistical concerns, but the proposal offers some workarounds and solutions in order to accommodate a large event and/or serve a large group.			Based on the information provided, the Planetarium and/or proposed conference venues are adequately suited for hosting large events, and the proposal demonstrates sufficient planning and problem-solving to accommodate the logistical needs of a conference and serve a large group.			Based on the information provided, the Planetarium and/or proposed conference venues are well suited for hosting large events, and the proposal demonstrates thoughtful planning and careful problem-solving to accommodate the logistical needs of a conference and serve a large group.
Circle one	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	
Comments:										

**General Considerations - Conference Agenda & Activities:** *This reflects the overall conference agenda including such items as the arrangement and abundance of papers sessions, poster sessions, workshops and guest speakers. This also reflects any unique or unusual proposed activities: special tours, optional excursions, special nearby facilities of an astronomical/planetarium nature, and other activities available for family members. (See "Inclusive Excellence - Agenda" to assess the inclusivity of programming.)*

GC - CONFERENCE AGENDA & ACTIVITIES	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	The proposed conference agenda does not offer a variety of professional development opportunities and does not provide adequate time for typical conference activities.			The proposed conference agenda offers some variety in professional development opportunities and typical conference activities, but they are of limited appeal and/or relevance.			The proposed conference agenda offers an adequate variety of standard professional development opportunities and proposed conference activities are interesting, appealing, and/or relevant.			The proposed conference agenda offers a good variety and quantity of standard and innovative professional development opportunities and proposed conference activities are highly interesting, appealing, and/or relevant.
Circle one	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	
Comments:										

**General Considerations - Technical Capabilities:** *This reflects the technical capabilities of the site such as Internet access, A-V equipment and assistance, planetarium capabilities, etc. (See "Inclusive Excellence - Location/Venue to assess technical accommodations for inclusion and accessibility.)*

GC - TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5
	Based on the information given, the proposed conference venues do not have adequate technical capabilities to support the needs of the conference.			Based on the information given, the proposed conference venues have the basic technical capabilities to support the needs of the conference.		Based on the information given, the proposed conference venues have suitable technical capabilities to support the needs of the conference, and the proposal anticipates and demonstrates some solutions for potential technical issues before and during the conference.		Based on the information given, the proposed conference venues offer ample technical capabilities to support the needs of the conference, and the proposal thoroughly anticipates and offers solutions for potential technical issues and complications during the conference.	
Circle one	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
<b>Comments:</b>									

**Additional Comments:**