

IPS 2022 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Saint Petersburg, Russia

June 22-29, 2022

www.ips-planetarium.org/conferences | www.ips2022.com

General Information: info@ips2022.com

Sponsorship questions: alex@ips2022.com

This year, the IPS Biennial conference is planned to take place at [Planetarium 1](#) in Saint Petersburg, Russia, with a robust virtual component, from June 22-29, 2022.

Planetarium 1 is the world's largest planetarium with a 37 meter diameter dome, opened in 2017 by a team of enthusiasts. The planetarium is part of a 4000 square meter complex located in a historic gas storage facility which also contains multimedia display halls, lecture venues, and the [Yota Lab](#), a science and technology laboratory that designs robots and produces equipment, content, and architectural solutions for other planetariums.

Planetarium 1 is a high-tech venue for bringing together the scientific, technological, and art communities. Since its opening, it has hosted over 1000 events, including festivals, concerts, educational lectures, exhibitions, scientific meetings with cosmonauts and astronomers, and conferences.

[IPS 2024](#) will be held in Berlin, Germany. We are always looking for future conference hosts. If you are interested in proposing to host a future IPS conference, please contact the [IPS President](#) for further information.

CONFERENCE QUICK LINKS

[Official 2022 IPS Conference Website](#)
[Proposal submission and IPS Conference info](#)
[2022 Conference Schedule](#)
[2022 Conference Registration](#)
[Presenter planning guidelines](#)

CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

IPS Leadership is very aware that the current travel conditions and well-documented human rights concerns have brought deep uncertainty to this year's conference. As an organization, our guiding principle is to facilitate an open, inclusive, diverse, and equitable conference experience, whether in-person or virtually. For the first time ever, the IPS 2022 conference will offer a hybrid/virtual option for members who are unable to attend in-person due to travel restrictions, financial limitations, or any other reason.

For those members who choose to attend in-person, the conference hosts at Planetarium 1 have stated that they "will abide by the [IPS Code of Conduct](#) and do our best to ensure all attendees of the IPS 2022 conference are safe from any discrimination or harm." IPS fully supports the efforts of Planetarium 1 to provide the safest professional environment for those who are able to attend, either in-person or virtually.

This document contains answers to frequently asked questions about the 2022 IPS Conference. Please know that these will be updated as best as we can leading up to the conference. Also, while we are doing our best to address every concern and question submitted to IPS Leadership, there may be some questions we are not currently able to answer, or that we have unintentionally missed. For additional information visit www.ips-planetarium.org/conferences and www.ips2022.com. For any questions not answered below or on the conference websites, contact info@ips2022.com. For sponsorship-related questions and concerns, Planetarium 1 has a dedicated sponsor point of contact, Alexander Adli, who can be reached at alex@ips2022.com.

What was the process for determining the IPS 2022 conference site?

Sites interested in hosting an IPS Conference submit a letter of intent to the IPS President no later than four years before the conference. Sites then gave an initial proposal presentation at the IPS Board meeting four years before the conference. Copies of those proposals are relayed by Board members to affiliate representatives and IPS members within their continental zones for discussion and feedback. Interested bidders then make a second/follow-up presentation at the Board Meeting three years prior to the conference. After

that presentation, IPS Board members and Officers (minus the IPS President) vote on which site will be awarded the IPS Conference.

At the 2018 IPS Conference in Toulouse, there were two proposals presented for the IPS 2022 conference: Houston, USA, and Saint Petersburg, Russia. In June 2019, after much consideration, the IPS Council selected Saint Petersburg, Russia as its 2022 conference site.

If IPS Membership was concerned about human rights issues in Russia, why was this particular site location voted on?

Following the bids at the 2018 IPS Conference in Toulouse, serious concerns were expressed regarding safety and security of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, questioning/inclusive) persons at both proposed conference sites and a [petition concerning the 2022 IPS conference host sites](#) received 281 signatures from planetarium professionals as well as allies outside of our community. The IPS officers and council members called a special meeting to discuss these issues. Each prospective host was then sent a letter requesting their responses to these concerns. In September 2018, both sites pledged to abide by the IPS Code of Conduct and provide a safe and welcoming environment for all IPS members and conference participants, as [expressed in their formal responses, which you can read online here](#).

Given the very serious concerns presented, were there no other options for the conference selection process?

As this was happening, the IPS Council (who were the decision-makers at the time) considered the arguments for extending the submission deadline for bids, but decided against doing so for several reasons:

- Some members suggested that retroactively changing the rules and extending the deadline would be unfair to the original bidders.
- Efforts were made to find additional bidders, but there were no viable prospects. So, a deadline extension was not likely to change anything, other than shortening the conference planning time available to the host site.

- The Council also strongly values the international nature of the organization, and were concerned about setting a precedent that could potentially restrict many countries from bidding (and the downstream effect that could have on engagement).

As a result of this scenario, IPS discussed ways to improve the bidding process in the future. In particular, extending the time between when the bidding cities were announced and when those bids were voted on by council to allow more time for community feedback. We also talked about changes to the bid process to request equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) information in the bid.

Has the IPS conference site selection process changed since then?

Yes. After the vote was announced, the strong reaction from our community and the surfacing of the EDI issues surrounding the conference site host selection discussions demonstrated a need for more structure and transparency in this process. As a result, there have been a number of changes implemented within the organization's structure, policies, and around the conference site selection process, in efforts to create this transparency and to center and prioritize EDI for IPS and all of its members.

Among these changes were:

1. The addition of a new requirement that each bidding conference host site must include a statement within their conference proposal on how their site, proposed conference program, and their home country, province, state, or governing political entity supports equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of the bidding process.
2. Clarification/update on the rules that govern Council Meetings, and more descriptive minutes taken at said meetings, to maintain transparency within the IPS and ensure policies are being upheld.
3. The elevation of the EDI Working Group to a standing committee within the IPS.
4. Creation of an updated Code of Conduct.
5. Creation of a Conference Site Assessment Toolkit and implementation procedure for the conference site selection process.

6. The dissemination of a Culture & Climate Survey.
7. The requirement that the documents from all conference bidders are released publicly and published on the IPS Website (starting for the IPS 2024 site selection process).

What, specifically, has IPS done to improve transparency and center EDI in the IPS conference site selection process?

As of 2021, the IPS Board assesses bidding conference sites with the use of a [Conference Site Assessment Toolkit \(CSAT\)](#). The CSAT was created with help from the IPS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee in order to ensure potential conference sites are vetted and assessed through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. On the CSAT, the evaluation criteria for potential conference sites are divided into two categories: Inclusive Excellence and General Considerations. 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. While, the CSAT is not intended to be a formula for picking a conference site, it is a tool that helps Board members weigh factors, and helps to inform the discussions and decisions made by the Board.

In 2021, the IPS Board also announced that future conference site votes would be shared with the entire membership, via the Board Meeting minutes, and the *Planetarian*. Previously, these vote results were kept confidential. This new policy took effect before the 2024 conference site was selected.

How is the IPS demonstrating its commitment to EDI within these discussions and through its other actions?

Our members come from all around the world and bring a full spectrum of experiences, differences, and unique perspectives to our community. The IPS recognizes that it is through this diversity that our organization can grow and find success in our shared mission to enhance the world's appreciation and understanding of our universe. Therefore, we are committed to respecting and embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion in people, ideas, and opinions and providing a welcoming environment for all members of our international community. While geopolitical challenges exist everywhere in

the world, we recognize that the planetarians in these areas are a part of our community, and that the individuals do not necessarily represent the views of their governments. Barriers to conference participation unfortunately exist with every conference site location and the IPS has taken, and continues to take, steps to be more inclusive and accessible - including adding remote participation/virtual options, conference scholarships, etc.

What if I have reasons that prevent me from traveling in-person to the IPS 2022 conference site, but I would like to participate? What options do I have?

These are unprecedented times, and we recognize that there are valid and important reasons that prevent IPS members from being able to participate in the in-person conference. We respect and acknowledge these reasons, and IPS is committed to reducing barriers to participation for all its members for this and for future IPS conferences and events. We know that there can be no perfect solution, but IPS is taking steps to minimize these barriers, and for the first time, we are offering a robust hybrid conference with virtual participation options. There is more information about the virtual options below.

I want to do something to help and show support to my colleagues who feel unsafe due to the policies of host countries' governments. What can I do?

The [Rainbow Railroad](#) is an organization that helps LGBTQIA+ people seek asylum from places where they're at risk of persecution, imprisonment, and death—including in Chechnya. If you have the means, please consider donating to them or another charity of your choosing. [Charity Navigator](#) is an excellent site for finding an organization whose work aligns with your values. You can also [donate to the IPS](#) to help fund IPS initiatives.

The IPS is also always looking for people to [join IPS committees](#) to help with our work. There are many to choose from, but the [EDI Committee](#) is strongly committed to these issues and can be joined by emailing edi@ips-planetarium.org.

VIRTUAL OPTION

For the first time ever, IPS is planning a hybrid event that will provide an option for members who, for any reason, are unable to travel to attend in-person.

In the recent [2021 IPS Culture & Climate Survey](#), we heard from over 200 planetarians regarding barriers to participation in IPS conferences. The largest factors reported for why people don't attend more conferences were that the travel costs are too high and the conference fees are too expensive for them. Additionally, other barriers to in-person conference participation were reported, making it difficult for people to attend IPS conferences held in the past. In 2020, the in-person conference was replaced with a virtual conference: IPS vCon 2020. In the survey, people commented on how they thought the IPS vCon 2020 was a great experience. Additionally, people commented on how having a virtual option is a great way to address the barriers to conference participation. We couldn't agree more and will do our best to create a memorable, inclusive virtual component for future IPS Conferences.

What will the virtual experience of the conference be like?

It is our aim that the virtual conference will encompass as much as possible as the in-person event. Papers, panels, workshops, and posters will be presented by delegates both on-site in Saint Petersburg, and connecting remotely from around the world. The conference hosts at Planetarium 1 are working to expand virtual options in order to make virtual participation a meaningful experience for membership.

In addition, the online experience of IPS 2022 will be nearly identical regardless of the number of in-person attendees. So for any individuals not planning on attending in-person, there should be little to no impact on the virtual experience whether there are 12 in-person attendees, 100, or 400.

How do we know we can implement a successful virtual experience of IPS 2022?

In 2020, COVID forced the cancellation of the in-person conference, and the IPS quickly pivoted and presented a virtual conference - something we had

never done before. From that experience we have a much better understanding of the process of implementing a conference in this format. We will build upon lessons learned and the success of the first ever IPS virtual conference to offer this opportunity, going forward, for members around the world who are not able to travel in-person to conferences. IPS Leadership will be working closely with Planetarium 1 to integrate virtual and in-person content throughout the conference.

If the virtual experience will include all of these things, why might I want to attend in-person?

As committed as we are to making the virtual experience as meaningful and comprehensive of an IPS experience as we possibly can, we know there is no substitute for in-person, face to face interactions and being together under the dome. As the largest Planetarium in the world, at 37 meters, Planetarium 1 is an amazing facility and worth seeing in person. Saint Petersburg is the '[Cultural Capital of Russia](#)' and excursions are planned to the [Hermitage](#), [Mariinsky Ballet](#), [Scarlet Sails Festival](#), [Gottorp Globe](#), and more.

COVID-RELATED

For the most up-to-date information, visit [the official Saint Petersburg COVID control measures website](#). The [current COVID statistics in Saint Petersburg](#) can also be found online. We suggest using Google Chrome or a similar browser with translation capabilities to read these sites in your native language.

What will the COVID protocols be for the in-person event?

With the IPS 2022 conference still months away, it is too early to know for sure what the COVID protocols will be at the in-person site during the conference week.

Current (January 2022) protocols for the city of Saint Petersburg state that citizens are required to use personal protective equipment (masks) in public places. Masks are mandatory when visiting trade and consumer services, train stations, airports, public transport stations, as well as in all types of public transport, including taxis. Individuals over the age of 65 or who suffer from chronic diseases are advised to self-isolate at this time.

As of January 29, 2022, Planetarium 1 visitors are required to present an identity document along with proof of vaccination, past illness, or a medical certificate accompanied by a negative PCR test performed within three days of the visit for entry. While inside Planetarium 1, guests are required to wear masks and gloves, and maintain social distance of at least 1.5 meters.

The conference host will keep IPS conference planners aware of any major changes in local infection rates and COVID protocols. IPS will share these updates with membership as they are received.

Will IPS require any of its own COVID mask or vaccination mandates for the conference?

IPS strongly recommends that all members who attend in-person be masked when in contact with others and follow all local, regional, or national protocols in place during the conference.

The organization currently has members in 58 countries with very different local protocols, access to vaccines, antibody treatments, and effective masks. Some member countries are using vaccines that aren't approved or accepted as vaccines in other member countries. For us to attempt to mandate a certain level or type of vaccination or masking that is equitable and accessible to all of our members is not an option.

Please note that some European airlines and areas require surgical, valve-free, or other specific non-fabric masks to be worn. Make sure to check the specifics on your airline's website for guidance on how to select the appropriate highest quality mask available to you.

Is it possible that the IPS 2022 conference could move to a virtual only event due to COVID or other circumstances?

The decision to move to a virtual-only event will be made by the conference host, giving the community a substantial amount of time to plan for either case. The IPS supports either decision that is made by Planetarium 1.

VISAS, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, AND OTHER TRAVEL LOGISTICS

We recommend that you check directly with your local Russian Embassy or Consulate for the most up-to-date information on Visas and entry requirements.

Visa-free access

- Citizens of the following states are able to enter Russia without a Visa: Abkhazia, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Maldives, Mauritius, Moldova, Montenegro, Nauru, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, South Africa, South Korea, South Ossetia, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela

Citizens of the United States:

- [Business Visa](#); Full information available in the 'Required Documents' section

E-Visa: <https://evisa.kdmid.ru/>

As of January 2022, issuance of e-visas is temporarily suspended. Citizens of these countries should follow up with their local Russian Embassy or Consulate for current information on Visas and entry requirements.

- Citizens of these countries are eligible for the E-Visa: Andorra, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Islamic Republic of, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Democratic People's Republic of, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Portugal,

Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Vatican

- E-Visa holders must enter Russia through [one of the entry points listed under Section Two here.](#)
- E-visa applicants are not required to submit an invitation letter, hotel booking confirmation, or any other document confirming the purpose of their travel to the Russian Federation.
- The unified e-visa is a single entry visa. The validity period of a unified electronic visa is 60 days from the date of issue. The permitted period of stay in the Russian Federation on the basis of a unified e-visa within its validity period shall not exceed 16 days from the date of entry.

Citizens of other countries: please follow up with your local Russian Embassy or Consulate for information on visa/entry requirements.

Visit [Travel Tips](#) on the IPS 2022 website for more information about travel to Saint Petersburg.