

Manual

ICMA Regional

Conferences



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Manual: ICMA Regional Conferences

*This manual is intended for ICMA's regional coordinators.
It is the result of a workshop held by the ICMA regional coordinators in Helsinki.
This project was supported by the ITF Seafarers Trust*

Introduction

Congratulations on being chosen as a regional co-ordinator. In electing you, your fellow port chaplains and welfare workers in the region have shown their respect for your work on behalf of seafarers.

We understand that ICMA regional co-ordinators are highly skilled in such fields as pastoral care, maritime theology, and seafarers' rights. You may not have much experience of organising conferences. Therefore, we have created a toolkit to give you practical help in organising your regional conference.

But even before you start reading it, remember this: the staff at the ICMA Secretariat in London are there to help you. Call us or write to us and we will gladly assist you.

Toolkit

The toolkit includes

- this manual
- examples from previous conferences
- templates of important documents and letters
- the election procedure for appointing regional coordinators
- a timetable that can help you meet the deadlines before your next conference.

The term "toolkit" implies a selection of items which you can choose to use if you wish. Our purpose is to assist, not to cause stress.

Where to find the toolkit

All of the items in the toolkit are available to download free from the **ICMA website** at www.icma.as
Choose "Regional Conference Toolkit" from the menu on the left.



Conference manual

As far as possible, we want to avoid being prescriptive. In the manual, we try to show clearly

- the responsibilities of regional co-ordinators
- how the ICMA Secretariat office can help you
- the role of individual members of ICMA societies as conference delegates.

The conference manual

- is based on the advice and experience of regional co-ordinators
- includes guidelines on ICMA's policy regarding conferences
- will be expanded and updated periodically.

Contents of the conference manual

- Part one: Role of regional co-ordinators
- Part two: Planning the conference
- Part three: Making it happen



Part one

Your role as regional co-ordinator of ICMA

This section considers the **duties and priorities** of the regional co-ordinator. It includes

- Section 1: Priorities
 - Section 2: Responsibilities
 - Section 3: Communications
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Section 1

Priorities

Every region is different and therefore every regional co-ordinator interprets the task differently. The one common factor is that each one has to **organise a regional conference**. For some regional co-ordinators, this is their most important task. Others feel that it is just as important to maintain **communications across the region between conferences**. In any case, ICMA relies on you to **get to know your region**.

We understand that all ICMA regional co-ordinators also work for their own societies, churches or other institutions.

Different employers have different attitudes regarding their personnel accepting active roles within ICMA. ICMA does not want to create any difficulties between regional co-ordinators and the organisations that employ them.

ICMA

- understands that **chaplains should prioritise regular contact with seafarers**
- recognises that ICMA has a limited claim on your time and resources
- asks you also to recognise your own limitations and be aware of your priorities



Section 2

Responsibilities

This section gives you an overview of your responsibilities as ICMA regional coordinator. As discussed above, every region, and every regional co-ordinator, is different but there must always be a **regional conference**.

- See Part Two of this manual for detailed advice on organising the regional conference.

Responsibilities covered in this section are:

- i. **Keep in contact**
- ii. **Build relationships**
- iii. **Attend ICMA meetings**
- iv. **Organise the regional conference**
- v. **Complete all tasks within your term of office**
- vi. **If time allows... other tasks**

i) Keep in contact

Please keep in contact with the **ICMA Secretariat**. Remember, if you need any help or any information, do not hesitate to contact us. You could use:

- Email
- Letter
- Telephone
- Skype

Establish and maintain contact with **chaplains in your region**. Make sure you have correct and up-to-date contact details for them.

- See Section 3 "Communications" for advice and suggestions on ways of keeping in contact

ii) Build relationships

We strongly recommend that you spend time developing relationships within the region. Here are some suggestions:

- maintain regular contact
- explore ways to strengthen friendship and cooperation among chaplains
- encourage tolerance and understanding in personal interaction
- look for innovative ways to work together
- find ways of involving chaplains in organising the regional conference

- See Section 3 "Communications" for advice and suggestions on how to build relationships



iii) Attend ICMA meetings

ICMA may consult with you on matters concerning your region at such events as:

- Annual General Meeting
- Consultative Forum of ICMA
- Other maritime-related events in your region

iv) Organise the ICMA regional conference

It is your responsibility, as regional co-ordinator, to organise the regional conference. However, you do not have to do everything on your own. Consider the following:

- you are free to **delegate tasks** to colleagues
- you may even "outsource" organising the conference to a **local team**
- you should maintain the role of **overseer** yourself

But please note that, although you can delegate specific tasks to others, as regional coordinator, **you maintain ultimate responsibility** for organising the conference.

- See Part Two of this manual for detailed advice on organising the regional conference.

v) Complete all the tasks of your term of office as regional coordinator

Regional co-ordinators are elected (or re-elected) at each conference. This generally means a **tenure of 2-3 years**. As far as possible, outgoing and incoming co-ordinators should work together on **handing over responsibility**.

However, this is not always possible. Sometimes the outgoing co-ordinator will have new responsibilities elsewhere. But please understand that **newly elected regional co-ordinators** should not have to complete the **work of their predecessors** without **support**.

For this reason, your **term as regional coordinator** does not end at the election of the new coordinator, nor at the end of the conference, but only **after these tasks have been concluded**.

Regional coordinators' handover procedure

Regional coordinators meeting in Helsinki, 2009, agreed the following:

- **Outgoing regional co-ordinators** remain responsible for the **final conference documentation** including financial and narrative reports and any further requirements of the funders after the election of the new regional coordinator.
- Outgoing regional coordinators will hand over to the newly elected coordinator **up-to date contact lists of the region** and other useful ICMA-information.
- All of these tasks should be completed within **three months** after the conference.



vi) Other tasks

If, after completing these tasks, you have the time and energy to do more, then please do help ICMA especially in the following:

- to strengthen **ecumenical relations** among your regions' chaplains
- to maintain a reliable **network of contacts** in your region
- to better **understand your region**: pass on information about changes and developments in your region.

Remember, your most important responsibility

Organising the regional conference is your priority in your role as ICMA regional co-ordinator.

We invite you to **use all the help available** including:

- the staff of the Secretariat
- your colleagues in the region
- other regional co-ordinators past and present



Section 3

Communications

As we discussed above, keeping in contact and building relationships are among your responsibilities. In this section, we look at the means of communication you can consider using.

Topics covered in this section are:

- i. **Communication: who and why**
- ii. **Communication: how and when**
- iii. **Some communications tools**
- iv. **Attending ICMA meetings**

i) Communication: who and why

ICMA aims to ensure that no one feels **isolated in ministry**. ICMA member organisations differ greatly from each other. Some smaller organisations cannot provide much support or training for personnel. In most ports there is only one chaplain from each of a number of ICMA member societies.

For many port chaplains, their lifeline is contact:

- with chaplains from other ICMA organisations
- with the regional co-ordinator
- with colleagues in other maritime welfare organisations in the region

ii) Communication: how and when

ICMA is generally described as “an enabling network”. Networking enables effective ministry. Remember therefore that time invested in networking and communication benefits ministry.

Here are some suggestions:

- contact chaplains in your region to **introduce yourself** as the new regional coordinator
- occasional **telephone calls** to chaplains to maintain contact
- regular **email updates** of news
- a regional **newsletter**
- a programme of **visits** to other ports

You can judge what forms of communication are most appropriate and effective to build relationships in your region. This will depend on the resources available to you. Some regional co-ordinators are able to travel to different ports within their regions to meet other chaplains but, please note, that ICMA cannot centrally fund such expense. Others feel that travelling in the region is not necessary, especially as members meet at conferences and other events.

Whatever form of communication you choose, a complete, reliable and up to date **directory of contacts** is essential.



iii) Some communications tools

ICMA has numerous communications tools available. These include:

- a) The ICMA Directory online
- b) Regional spreadsheets
- c) Members' websites
- d) The ICMA website

a) The ICMA Directory online

The ICMA Secretariat maintains the ICMA directory which is available on the ICMA website at www.icma.as. The directory contains contact details of

- port chaplains ship visitors and other welfare workers employed by ICMA member societies
- directors and other leaders of ICMA member societies

As far as possible, we try to ensure that the ICMA directory contains only people who are **active in port ministry**. We want to avoid including nominal representatives who have little or no contact with seafarers or the port. However, we always respect the decisions of ICMA member organisations regarding their appointments.

Help us to maintain the ICMA Directory

The ICMA Directory is a very important resource used by various other organisations concerned with seafarers' welfare. **Help us** to ensure that the directory is as **correct and up to date** as possible. Let us know of any **changes, errors or omissions**.

We rely on your regional knowledge to help us maintain this important resource.

b) Regional spreadsheets

The ICMA Secretariat will supply you with a spreadsheet containing **names and contact details of chaplains in your region**. These spreadsheets are based on information in the ICMA Directory online. By cutting and pasting the email addresses in the spreadsheet, you can create your own **email distribution list**. Do not hesitate to ask the Secretariat for help.

c) ICMA members' own websites and directories

ICMA's member organisations also regularly publish new directories of their own port and managerial staff. The ICMA website includes links to the websites of our member societies.



d) The ICMA website

The website www.icma.as contains a wealth of news and information about seafarers' ministry.

Available on the ICMA website:

- "About ICMA" section containing background information
- important documents such as the ICMA Code of Conduct and Constitution
- ICMA events calendar
- publications available for downloading
- news from our members
- specially commissioned articles on topics of interest such as Year of the Seafarer
- regional news page
- ICMA Directory
- useful links

Remember that the ICMA website exists to **promote communication** among ICMA members. Use it to share your news. The Secretariat staff will be delighted to help you. The ICMA website is an important resource so let's take a closer look:

Share your region's news on the ICMA website

The ICMA website is maintained by the Secretariat as a service to all ICMA members. We invite you to use it to share news and stories from the region. New appointments, new centres and facilities and other changes can be announced on the website. All ICMA events, including regional conferences, are advertised on the ICMA diary page.

The Secretariat staff are delighted to receive photographs from ports and seafarers' centres. We recognise that members may be too busy to write articles themselves or may prefer not to write in English. We are happy to take details by telephone or Skype and produce articles for you. If regional co-ordinators wish, we can create sections for local news from the regions. We encourage you to send us your regional newsletters for inclusion on the ICMA website.

Some chaplains have their own pages on Facebook or similar social networking sites. Some use these sites to display pictures of seafarers for their families. Chaplains are encouraged to use whatever technology is available.

We ask that you remember that the Secretariat has a very small staff who might not be able to check everyone's webpages or blogs individually for news. Sadly, the Secretariat cannot respond to all the invitations from chaplains to join social networking sites.

We would therefore appreciate it if you would send us the articles that you would like us to highlight on the ICMA website. ICMA is particularly interested in articles that focus on ecumenical cooperation and articles on services that benefit seafarers.



iv) Attending ICMA meetings

In this section, we look at some of the meetings you may be required to attend, focusing on the requirements of the following:

- a) **Annual General Meeting and Consultative Forum**
- b) **Representing ICMA at other maritime events**

a) ICMA Annual General Meeting and Consultative Forum

Once a year, ICMA will enable you to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Consultative Forum. However, ICMA very much appreciates any **financial contributions by the region** to cover the costs of its regional coordinators to attend these meetings. For example:

- some regions share the costs by contributing an annual levy to a central account
- other regions find local sponsors to assist

All regional coordinators must submit an **annual written report** to the ICMA Annual General Meeting. These reports must be sent to the ICMA Secretariat:

- **six weeks** before the AGM, preferably before the end of August if the meeting is in October
- in electronic format.

A template for these reports will be sent to you in advance of the AGM.

Representing your region

At the ICMA Annual General Meeting and the Consultative Forum, you will represent your region and the chaplains who work there. You will be called upon as the expert who can give a first hand account of the **current situation in the region**. To speak on behalf of the region and its chaplains, you are encouraged to get an overview of activities in your region.

Some regional co-ordinators engage in **discussion with other ICMA member organisations** regarding **provision and deployment of chaplains**. This way, they ensure that as many ports as possible are covered. ICMA recognises that different member organisations engage in these discussions among themselves. Some organisations contact the regional coordinators to get a local view. They believe that the regional co-ordinator may be the best judge of what is appropriate for the region.

b) Representing ICMA at other maritime events

Occasionally, ICMA may ask you to attend an international event in your region as an observer from ICMA. Such events might include:

- ITF-Congress
- ICSW Seminar / ICSW-Regional Welfare Committee Meetings
- IMO or ILO events



ICMA may sponsor your attendance. When representing ICMA at these events, you should remember that you **cannot speak authoritatively for ICMA** and you should not make public statements on ICMA's behalf. You should, within one month of the event, write a **comprehensive report** on your impressions and recommendations and submit it to the ICMA Secretariat and the ICMA Executive Committee.



Part two

Planning the conference

Part two guides you through the process of deciding what to include and how to set objectives for an ICMA regional conference.

1) Basic principles

We begin by looking at basic principles: what is a conference for, how long does it last, what should it include.

2) Planning process

There follows a more technical discussion of objectives, outcomes etc. It includes practical advice and ideas to help you design the conference needed in your region.

1) Basic principles

Purpose of a regional conference

The purpose of an ICMA regional conference is to further the aims and objectives of ICMA. Let's begin by reminding ourselves what these are.

In a fragmented and divided society, it is the mission of ICMA to promote unity, peace and tolerance among its members.

It is the duty of every ICMA chaplain and welfare worker to serve seafarers, fishers and their dependants regardless of nationality, religion, culture, gender or ethnic origin.

ICMA Code of Conduct

The objectives of ICMA are the promotion of the spiritual, social and material welfare of all seafarers and the relief of need, hardship and distress among them.

This practice is reflected in a variety of different ministries.

ICMA Objectives

- You can download the ICMA Code of Conduct, and other useful information, from the ICMA website, click on "About ICMA" on the menu on the left of the page.

Regional conferences must therefore reflect these principles taken from the ICMA Code of Conduct and Objectives.



You may also need to consider requirements of the ICMA Executive Committee and funding organisations.

We can summarise five basic, compulsory requirements of regional conferences.

Five requirements of regional conferences

- i. Benefit to seafarers
- ii. Shared spiritual experience
- iii. Recognising our differences
- iv. Ex Com requirements
- v. Funders' conditions

i) **Benefit to seafarers**

We know it seems obvious. But remember that, for funding purposes and also to enable colleagues to attend, you must be able to **show how** your regional conference will **benefit seafarers**.

ii) **Shared spiritual experience**

The regional conference should focus on what we **share**: our **Christian faith**. Examples of opportunities for ecumenical worship are in the toolkit.

iii) **Recognising our differences**

Recognising difference, respecting each other's cultural traditions and celebrating what we share is the spirit of **ecumenism** and fundamental to the ICMA ethos. Delegates of different Christian denominations should be free to meet separately if they wish.

iv) **Ex Com requirements**

From time to time, the ICMA Executive Committee (Ex Com) requires the inclusion of specific topics of **current importance in the maritime world**. The ICMA general secretary is able to advise you on how to cover such topics. Previous examples include:

- MLC 2006
- piracy

v) **Funders' conditions**

If you rely on funding from an external source, you must consider the funders' **conditions for grants**. You must honour any agreements made with funding bodies.

- There is more information about working with funding organisations in Part Three.

How long is a regional conference?

- There is **no official length** for an ICMA conference.
- Generally, about three nights, and a **maximum of four days**, is appropriate.



2) Planning process

In this section we look at the formal planning process including agenda, objectives and outcomes. The longest subsection covers planning the agenda, i.e. what you want to do in your conference. We also look at setting objectives and predicting outcomes, a vital part of the planning process.

Agenda, objectives and outcomes

- Your **agenda** is the list of what you want to **do** during your conference.
- Your **objectives** are what you want to **achieve**.
- The **outcomes** are the **results** of the conference.

At this stage, we concentrate on these three. Details about timetables etc come later.

Jargon vs common sense

During the planning process, it can be easy to become distracted by theory or to get lost in technical language or “jargon”. This is a risk whether or not English is your first language. So, during the planning process, always keep two questions to keep in mind...

- *How will this benefit seafarers?*
- *How will this benefit Christian ministry to seafarers?*

If the answer to either question is “it won’t”, do not spend any more time on it.

The agenda

In the first section, we looked at the five requirements of an ICMA conference. But how do you decide what you want to do in order to meet those requirements? In this section we look at

- a) Researching the needs of your region**
- b) Creating a structure**
Reflection on the three contexts of seafarers ministry
- c) Choosing a theme**
- d) Training at the conference**



a) Researching the needs of your region

The conference should meet the needs of the region. First you may need to do some research to find out what these are. You should consider:

- i) the region
- ii) ICMA societies in the region
- iii) Port-based workers in the region

i) The region

What are the needs specific to the ministry in your region? There may be problems afflicting the ministry in your region which do not occur in other regions of ICMA. Regional conferences should always have a regional “flavour”.

ii) ICMA societies in the region

Focus your regional conference on what port chaplains and other faith-based welfare providers of ICMA member societies need right here in your region. If you don’t know what they need, ask them.

iii) Port-based workers in the region

ICMA conferences should be organised in a way that is “bottom up” and not “top down”. This means that port chaplains, not chief executives, set the agenda. Using whatever means of communication available, you can invite the port chaplains of your region to contribute ideas.

Something to think about

What makes ICMA unique, vital, special? ICMA is one of very few international organisations in the maritime welfare sector that has direct access to frontline service providers: the chaplains, ship visitors and centre staff. ICMA conferences should affirm, celebrate and reward the work of member societies and their chaplains.

But a word to the wise...

Remember that you are organising an ICMA conference. ICMA is an association of numerous societies, each with its own methods and traditions. Too much innovation, or local variation, can cause confusion and sometimes offend the sensitivities of others. Ecumenical working remains a sensitive issue and relations must be nurtured.



b) Find an overall structure

Taking into account the five requirements of ICMA conferences and the needs of your region, you can start thinking about an overall structure.

The reflection below has been written by ICMA general secretary Rev Hennie la Grange. You may find it useful in thinking about a structure for your regional conference. It may also help you to set an agenda for port chaplains that will impact on their daily practice at work. This reflection is included to help you to plan the conference that is appropriate to your region. It is not intended to prescribe topics for inclusion.

From this reflection you may decide to divide the conference into three distinct parts on perhaps three separate days, attending to each of these operational contexts separately. You may decide to use your conference to look at the overall picture of all three of these contexts of port ministry. But you could also decide to focus on only one of the three. You may even decide that only one topic should be discussed at your conference.



The three contexts of ministry to seafarers, a reflection

It seems there are three contexts to all ministry to seafarers

- **Church / faith**
- **Seafarers**
- **Maritime industry**

All three contexts are simultaneously present and are of equal importance. The port chaplain must negotiate these three contexts daily. It is necessary to consider all three simultaneously and to understand how they operate interactively. The art of a successful ministry to seafarers lies in integrating these three contexts. This is not easy to do.

ICMA conferences could help port chaplains to understand these contexts better and provide assistance to chaplains in dealing with the practical difficulties of this ministry.

Church / faith

Each of us has our own faith, thus we all have close relationships with God. We believe we are called by God to this ministry. Our ministry to seafarers is possible only because we are close to God. Our close relationship with God requires of us to maintain a working relationship with the church / denomination / employing society (which is often denominationally bound). Our faith compels us to confess and to act upon the ecumenical unity of the church. Therefore we are obliged to seek and maintain good relations with other faith-based operations aimed at ministry to seafarers. Finally and ultimately, we care for seafarers. This is our divine calling. Our duty of care has its roots in our own religious conviction. We uphold the Christian values of human dignity, justice and hospitality. Our holistic ministry includes caring for the spirituality of all seafarers, those from the Christian faith, and those from other religions.

Seafarers

Each port chaplain has a ministry to seafarers. We need to understand the pressing pastoral issues that seafarers face. We deal with the challenges of the seafaring profession which impact upon seafarers socially and psychologically. Responding effectively to this context is our prime concern. We must intellectually contemplate our interaction and relationship with seafarers and develop our skills in pastoral communications. It is important not to dismiss the personal interaction with seafarers as "self-evident" as though not requiring contemplation or organisation or structure or skill. Our interaction with seafarers should be the subject of constant reflection and evaluation.

Maritime industry

Each port chaplain should have a good understanding of the maritime industry within which seafarers and the chaplains themselves operate. All port welfare workers must understand the important issues of the day affecting the maritime industry and the maritime welfare sector, specifically how these apply to the delivery of care to and the wellbeing of seafarers



The three contexts and the conference structure

Whether or not you decide to use the three contexts, this section may give you some ideas about structure

i) Church / faith

- Our faith is what drives and informs us.
- Port chaplains are "faith workers".
- Therefore, ICMA regional conferences must always have a **spiritual dimension**.

The commitment to ecumenism

Our faith is not uniform. Each ICMA port chaplain comes from a faith tradition. Therefore the ministry of each chaplain is, to some extent, a product of that tradition.

ICMA conferences should be a celebration of all those **faith traditions working together**. ICMA members who are often closely bound to their denominations and underlying faith traditions feel strongly about their faith-based ministries. Some ICMA members would simply not be given permission by their employers to attend a conference with no spiritual dimension.

Celebrate what we share

The Ex Com has therefore decided that the general secretary should assist regional co-ordinators in including spirituality in their conferences. Conferences must acknowledge that the spirituality of ICMA members may differ fundamentally. But as we all share the **same commitment to Christian faith-based ministry to seafarers**, it may be good to focus the spiritual content of the conference upon this shared commitment.

On the other hand ICMA recognises the danger of "practicalities overtaking principles". It is important that we do not feel obliged to diminish the faith content of our conferences. Rather we should invite tolerance and exercise restraint. That is the essence of ecumenical working.

Faith and our funders

Sometimes we may feel obliged to appeal to funders for financial support. Grant funding is almost always conditional upon meeting the needs and including the agenda of the funder. **Funders are secular organisations** who cannot be seen to support the religious activity of any one faith or of any specific denomination. The same danger, that practicalities may overtake principles, looms. ICMA conferences should not compromise on the faith-based nature of the association.

Once again, just as the shared spirituality of ICMA is only possible if we focus on the ministry to seafarers, cooperation with the maritime industry and the maritime welfare sector is indeed possible when we realise that we share with secular institutions a **common concern for seafarers**.

A common goal

The idea is to focus the conference spiritually and practically upon the: seeking the **wellbeing of seafarers**. But always remembering: this is after all our God-given vocation.



ii) Seafarers

We need to understand the **issues affecting seafarers**, for example:

- isolation
- separation from family and community
- occupational health problems
- confined living-space
- integration of life and work
- restricted freedom of migrant labourers
- multicultural environment.

In surveys and studies, **seafarers have told us what they need**. Care for seafarers implies that their needs are taken into consideration and met. These include:

- Religious fellowship ashore
- Transport to and from cities, churches and seafarers' centres
- Communications
- Information
- Welfare support

iii) Maritime industry and the maritime welfare sector

As mentioned earlier, the ICMA Ex Com may, from time to time, require a conference to include certain topics of specific interest in the maritime sector. The ICMA general secretary will be able to advise you on these. You are, of course, free to include other topics, especially those of particular **relevance to your region**. Ideas include:

- MLC 2006
- ISPS Code
- port- and flag state control
- immigration and customs
- crew recruitment and –retention and human resources issues
- technologies available
- onboard protocols
- health and safety issues
- ports and ships and how they work
- seafarers' unions
- justice issues, advocacy and seafarers rights



c) Choose a conference theme

However you decide to address the three contexts, it helps to have a theme for your conference. A theme works like a **thread that links all the conference activities together** to shape a single learning experience.

Consider a slogan

A theme can be expressed as a slogan. A slogan is a short memorable motto or phrase. It is usually repeated often during the conference. It expresses the main idea or the overall purpose of the conference.

d) Training

Should ICMA regional conferences always include training? Let's discuss that question. We can define "training" as:

- formal teaching on a subject
- followed by assessment at the end of the course or conference
- with proof that students have achieved specific outcomes or results.

In favour of training

- Some ICMA societies stipulate that their own conferences should always be training events
- Some societies use their training budgets to pay for their chaplains to attend ICMA conferences, assuming that training opportunities will be in the programme
- Some rely on ICMA regional conferences for training because they cannot give training themselves, this is one of the main reasons for joining ICMA
- Potential funders may also prefer events which include training.

Not a holiday

Remember that ICMA regional conferences are part of the port chaplains' work. Employers have sometimes criticised conferences for being "jollies". They have said that conferences are only recreational events with little or no value for the real work of chaplains. At a time when travel and accommodation is expensive, and our societies have to work harder to maintain their operations, they will not approve of paying for a holiday.



A community of learners

But we also feel that it is too prescriptive to say that regional conferences must include formal training. We prefer to think of conferences as "learning experiences" and delegates as "communities of learners". This means that the conference must have

- Clear objectives
- An organised programme of events designed for learning
- Measurable outcomes

Link with ICMA's SMT

The ICMA Seafarers' Ministry Training (SMT) includes the three contexts described above. Remember that some newer chaplains may not yet have taken SMT. Others may appreciate a refresher course. ICMA has access to some resource persons who can deliver presentations intended as further education or next level training. Once again the ICMA Secretariat office can help you to find the right trainers.



The objectives

The agenda is what you want to do: the objectives are what you want to achieve. Clearly the two are very closely linked. Defining your objectives is a vital part of the planning process.

Clearly defined objectives will help you:

- to focus when planning the conference.
- to explain the purpose of the conference to potential funders and to member societies when inviting their chaplains to attend.

Showing you have achieved your objectives

You also need to think about how you will demonstrate that the objectives have been achieved. The table below shows examples of how different kinds of objectives could be evaluated or measured.

Objective	Evaluation
Training in pastoral care of seafarers after a death onboard	Role-play assessed by experienced trainers
Expressing spirituality in the working environment	Self-assessment, "did it do me good?": opportunity to share personal reflections
Learning about how MLC 2006 affects port chaplains	Written assessment (exam paper) in the form of a multiple choice questionnaire

"You cannot control what you do not measure"

Objectives of a practical or empirical nature, e.g. training on MLC 2006, are easiest to measure and likely to be of most interest to funding bodies. Subjective or theoretical objectives, e.g. deepening spirituality, are harder to measure but can be meaningfully evaluated within the context of ICMA.

But do not allow the difficulty of evaluation to deter you from pursuing these goals if you are convinced that these are pertinent to your region.



The outcomes

The outcomes are the results of your conference. Your planned objectives should lead to predictable outcomes. Remember these three points.

- Plan your outcomes, do not leave them to chance.
- Predicting your outcomes is part of your conference planning
- Include plans for measuring, or evaluating, your outcomes.

Why predicted outcomes are important

Outcomes are part of the evaluation of your conference. But that does not mean that your conference will only be evaluated when it is finished. Some evaluation will happen even before the conference starts:

- **Employers**
Employers of chaplains will evaluate your predicted outcomes when they decide if sending their chaplains is good value for money or a waste of time.
- **Funders**
Funders will look at your predicted outcomes when they decide whether your conference is a good investment. If you are applying for funding, think of funders as investors looking for a return on their investment. Your predicted outcomes of the conference are the potential return on their investment. You will need to have a good idea of what funders expect of their investments.
- **Delegates**
Predicted outcomes give potential delegates, your colleagues in the region, an idea of what they can expect of the conference and how they can participate. This is important for all parties involved in the conference.

A few ideas

- Remember that the holding the regional conference is an objective in itself: it brings us together and enables us to serve seafarers more effectively.
- One way to measure the success of your conference is to ask the delegates to evaluate it, this is discussed further below.
- Passing a resolution can be a successful outcome.



Conference resolutions

Passing a resolution during conference can have a beneficial effect. Sometimes conference are planned with the objective of passing resolutions. Resolutions could bring a sense of purpose and enable an organisation to assert its identity. However, conference resolutions should only be proposed if they can be implemented. A regional conference should adopt the position that its resolutions could be considered proposals or requests directed to ICMA or its members in general. The general secretary will be happy to advise.

Proceed with caution

Conference resolutions can be very risky. People who attend regional conferences are employees of their societies. They cannot be seen to be party to resolutions that conflict with the policies of their employers. Some conference delegates of ICMA member societies may be able to represent those societies' managements or policy-making authorities. But others will certainly not be. Therefore they cannot adopt resolutions which are binding to their societies. Membership of ICMA implies a willingness of member societies to co-operate. But ICMA cannot instruct individual societies or their personnel on what to do. In addition, as ICMA is an association of divergent faith traditions, there is always the risk that resolutions may alienate some members of ICMA.

Provisional note on ICMA policy

Please note that ICMA is presently considering the practice of conference resolutions and, if accepted, will shortly publish templates for use in formulating such resolutions. The issues to be considered are:

- *Whether conference resolutions could be submitted to all of ICMA prior to the conference for scrutiny by the ICMA membership. This would enable carefully worded resolutions that would meet with the approval of the entire membership. The resolution could then be released to the public during the conference.*
- *Whether some resolutions may be required to be made at the conferences themselves in response to events occurring concurrently with the conference. If at all, these resolutions should be approached with the utmost caution. Such resolutions should be carefully worded to clearly state whose resolutions they are: resolutions of the plenary as opposed to the resolutions of the individual or collective membership of ICMA. This may leave room for individual members of ICMA to disagree, and could address the difficulty of employees of member societies to be found in conflict with their employing agencies.*

Once again: **this is not yet ICMA policy and should not be attempted before ICMA has approved of**



a policy and produces clear guidelines on implementation.

To sum up, objectives

Make sure that your objectives are:

- clearly defined
- realistic
- that you will be able to demonstrate that they have been achieved.



Part three

Making it happen

By now you should be full of enthusiasm. You have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and how you will achieve it. Now is the time to start considering practical details. This section covers the following:

- a) Timescale
- b) Conference date
- c) Location
- d) Funding
- e) Venue
- f) Inviting delegates
- g) Schedule
- h) Language
- i) Reporting the conference
- j) Evaluation and follow up

a) Timescale

2 – 3 years in advance	1 – 2 years in advance	6 months – 1 year in advance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set a date• Choose a location• Conference budget• Apply for funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reserve a venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issue invitations• Deal with responses• Conference schedule

b) Conference date

Deciding on the year of the conference is the very first action taken by the newly elected regional coordinator. You should do this:

- almost immediately after the previous conference
- in close coordination with the general secretary.

Why so far in advance?

ICMA uses a two-year development cycle in planning and management. This is used for:

- avoiding clashes of ICMA and other maritime-related events
- allowing trainers and other ICMA executives to plan their diaries
- funding applications, including conference funding





Funding applications

One of the most important reasons for the early deadline for setting a date for your conference is funding. Almost all ICMA conferences are part-funded by sponsors. Applications for funding have to be submitted at least two years in advance. The **ICMA general secretary submits funding applications on behalf of the regions.**

Consider other events in the maritime welfare sector

Port chaplains, and other representatives of ICMA member organisations, may only be able to attend a limited number of events in a year. You should take into account other events such as:

- ICMA world conference
- ICMA regional conferences
- ICMA member societies' own conferences
- ICSW regional seminars / welfare boards

Sources of information

- calendar page of the ICMA website
- ICMA regional conference schedule
- colleagues from other ICMA member societies
- ICSW website

ICMA website

We try to include all the relevant events in the ICMA calendar page on our website. Help us by letting us know of any planned events in your society or region.

ICMA conference schedule

ICMA has a schedule for regional conferences. Although the schedule is subject to change, it sets the regular pattern for conferences. Updated versions are published on the ICMA website.



Order and Frequency of Regional Conferences

Region	Date	Venue	Date	Venue
ICMA World Conference			2011	Hamburg (to be confirmed)
Black Sea, Mediterranean and Middle East	2008	Malaga	2012	To be announced
Western Europe	2008	Bremerhaven	2012	Ghent
Northern Europe	2008	Gothenburg	2012 (April)	Helsingborg
Southern Africa (and East Coast and Indian Ocean Islands)	2009	Durban	2012	To be announced
North America / NAMMA	<i>Annual</i>		2013	To be announced
West Africa	2010	Grand Bassam	2013	To be announced
East Asia	2010	To be announced	2013	To be announced
UK & Eire	2010	Southampton	2013	To be announced
Brazil	2010	Paranagua	2013	To be announced

Always consult the ICMA general secretary

- before fixing the final date for the conference
- about information required for funding applications

Funding application responsibilities

regional coordinator	ICMA general secretary
supplies comprehensive budget information	submits the application to the funding body, e.g. the ITF Seafarers' Trust, the TK Foundation

- Funding applications are discussed in detail below



The two-year development cycle

The ITF Seafarers' Trust supports ICMA conferences. In return it expects ICMA to apply for grants from the Trust on the basis of a two-year development cycle basis. This means that the general secretary has to apply for grants for all the projects that need funding over a period of two years. The application needs to be made by July in the year prior to the start of the two years' development cycle.

The table below shows how the deadlines for funding applications work within the two-year development cycle.

Development Cycle	Conferences that may need funding		Deadline for the application
2010 to 2011	West Africa	2010	July 2009
	East Asia	2010	
	UK & Eire	2010	
	Brazil	2010	
	ICMA World Conference	2011	
2012 to 2013	Black Sea, Mediterranean and Middle East	2012	July 2011
	Western Europe	2012	
	Northern Europe	2012	
	Southern Africa (and East Coast and Indian Ocean Islands)	2012	
	North America / NAMMA	2013	
	West Africa	2013	
	East Asia	2013	
	UK & Eire	2013	
	Brazil	2013	





c) Choose a location

Regional conferences usually take place in regional co-ordinators' own ports. However this is not compulsory. You can choose to hold the conference in another location if you feel it is more suitable.

Which port?

The place that gets the ICMA conference must need the ICMA conference.

Who will benefit from the choice of location?

- The hosting team and other local ICMA members?
- Visiting seafarers or local seafaring and fishing communities?
- ICMA members travelling from other ports and other countries?

Also consider

- **National regulations:** are there strict visa requirements which might exclude colleagues of certain nationalities?
- **Travel connections:** is the location is easy to reach with reliable connections by road, rail and air?
- **Weather:** heatwaves, monsoons or heavy snow can seriously disrupt your conference.
- **Other local conditions:** civil disturbances, strikes, high prices and repressive regimes are best avoided.

If you decide not to hold the regional conference in your own port, you will need a local organising team in the chosen location. But remember that you, **as regional co-ordinator, are responsible for the regional conference.**

Points to consider when working with a local organising team

- **Fact-finding:** talk to your ICMA colleagues in your chosen location, find out who is available and how much time they can give.
- **Permission:** your ICMA colleagues may need permission from their own organisations to help organise the conference so be ready to answer any questions that their employers may have.
- **Agree in writing:** make sure that your local organising team knows exactly what their responsibilities are, it is best to put this in writing and ensure that everyone agrees.
- **Be available:** the local organising team must be able to contact you easily, remember to tell them in advance if you are going to be unavailable.
- **Support:** it may sound obvious, but don't forget to give your local team as much support and encouragement as possible.



d) Funding

The plans for your conference are taking shape. You know what you want to achieve, when and where. Now you must think about how to pay for it. This section looks at funding applications and considers:

- i) Budgeting information
- ii) Sources of funding
- iii) Faith and our funders

Funding ICMA regional conferences

- Most regional co-ordinators have to apply for external funding.
- Almost all conferences should be supported by local industry.
- However, in some regions, for example North America, conferences are funded entirely by members without any input from external funders.

If possible, discuss conference funding with your predecessor during your handover period.

i) Budgeting information

As we discussed above, the **ICMA general secretary can apply** to organisations such as the ITF Seafarers' Trust and the TK Foundation for funding for your conference. Requests submitted to funding bodies must include a comprehensive **budget spreadsheet**. Remember:

- the **regional co-ordinator** is responsible for supplying all the **necessary information**
- the **ICMA general secretary** uses it to create the **budget spreadsheet**

Budgeting information includes **estimations** of:

- costs
- how many ICMA members will attend the conference
- how much each member or their employing organisation can contribute
- local funding and sponsorship

Costs include

- hiring the venue
- accommodation
- transport
- conference activities
- administration



Estimating costs and attendance

Remember that you need to do this two years in advance. You are not expected to be 100% accurate but try not to under-estimate. Here are some suggestions:

- **Costs:** find out the current costs and then estimate what they will be in two years time based on the rate of inflation
- **Numbers of delegates:** make a reasonable estimate by taking into account factors such as:
 - number of delegates at previous conferences
 - number of chaplains in the region.
- **Contributions of chaplains and societies:** amounts contributed at previous conferences

Avoid under-budgeting

Try to include **all possible costs**. We want to avoid under-budgeting as it may be impossible to find extra funding for unforeseen expenses.

Include local funding

Your budgeting information should also include estimates and/or promises of local funding and sponsorship.

- Sources of local funding and sponsorship are discussed below.

Costs per delegate

Include costs per individual delegate in your budget information. Take into account accommodation, meals, materials etc.. This is necessary for the general secretary in making funding applications. For example, some funders are keen to support persons who would not normally be able to afford the expense of participating in a conference such as chaplains from developing countries.

Isn't that a lot of work?

We recognise that compiling budget information can be time-consuming. With no guarantee that funding will be granted, some regional co-ordinators may fear it is a lot of work for nothing. As discussed above, regional co-ordinators' highest priority should be organising the regional conference. You are therefore asked to accept that risk. Remember that the staff of the ICMA Secretariat are there to support you.

- There is a sample budget spreadsheet in the toolkit.



ii) Sources of funding

This section looks at sources of funding, both local funders and sponsors and the big funding organisations. We also consider how to approach secular funding organisations without compromising our identity as a faith-based organisation.

Local funding

It is **your responsibility to seek local funding**. The general secretary can advise you. Possible sources include:

- the maritime industry
- port authorities
- local government
- other local businesses
- local churches
- any other local source that would usually sponsor a conference.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship can come in different forms, for example:

- a cash amount
- a sponsored reception, activity or excursion
- supplying a resource person
- lending equipment or other resources.

Making the case

When you approach local funders, you need to “make a case”, i.e. explain why they should support an ICMA regional conference. This will be much easier if you have already defined your objectives and demonstrated **how the conference will benefit seafarers**.

How much can we request?

It can be difficult to know how much money we can reasonably request from funders. The best advice is to **base your request on need**.

Do what you can

Find as many sources of funding as possible, and be prepared to take whatever funding is available and do the best you can with it.



Funding organisations

As discussed above, the ICMA general secretary will make the application to the big funding organisations on your behalf. Remember to supply:

- Budgeting information
- Conference objectives

The general secretary will always aim to get as comprehensive a grant as possible. However, funders may be willing to meet only part of the request. Remember that funding organisations have their own objectives. It helps to know something about these when submitting funding applications. This information below relates to the two main funding organisations:

- The ITF Seafarers' Trust
- The TK Foundation

The ITF Seafarers' Trust

The following is based on advice from Mr Tom Holmer of the ITF Seafarers' Trust.

When applying for funding to the ITF Seafarers' Trust, it is necessary to demonstrate "good value for money". ICMA training courses are considered good value for money because of their practical preparation of welfare workers "on the ground". The remit of the Trust is to enlarge the number of ports which offer welfare services to seafarers and to support existing services. Therefore try to demonstrate how ICMA regional conferences will contribute to these aims.

Currently, the tendency is to provide services which end the isolation of seafarers, e.g. ship visiting and mobile centres. The Trust supports individuals who provide these services by funding start-up costs, wages and vehicles. The Trust is currently less likely to provide funding for seafarers' centres. However it may be willing to help centres and societies in difficulty if they can show a viable recovery plan. Again, try to demonstrate how the conference will contribute to these aims.

The Trust is more likely to fund work in developing areas of the world. You should supply information about the origin of the conference delegates and where they work. You should show exactly how the ITF money would be spent. The Trust also requires an estimate of total expenses and a breakdown showing what proportion they are being asked to cover.

Finally, remember that ITF funding comes from trade unions. Therefore, try to demonstrate a willingness to work in co-operation with local trade unions on behalf of seafarers. Consider including union representatives and ITF inspectors in the regional conference. Understandably, the ITF Seafarers' Trust will not look favourably upon events from which their own inspectors are deliberately excluded or at which the unions are unduly criticised. Maintain respect for the role of the trade unions and the ITF's position at the ILO.



The TK Foundation

The TK Foundation prefers to fund specific projects or issues rather than pay general running costs. The Foundation gave funding to the ICMA Southern African regional conference in 2009 because the conference included training on supporting survivors of piracy. If your conference objectives include specific projects of this nature, talk to the general secretary about the possibility of applying to the TK Foundation. Be aware that the Foundation requires a detailed budget.

Whose agenda is it, ours or our funders'?

The support that ICMA receives from the funding organisations does not mean that they ICMA principles are compromised. Remember you are organising an **ICMA conference** so:

- you are encouraged to include local trade union representatives
- other sponsors of the conference should also be respected and welcomed
- chaplains should maintain their unbiased position toward both unions and ship owners.

Furthermore **the prophetic role of the faith-based ministries** means that we always:

- address contentious issues and expose injustice wherever it is to be found
- offer guidance, seek to influence and find consensus.
- seek to build relationships and forge partnerships
- work to achieve justice, to alleviate suffering and to restore dignity.

iii) Faith and our funders

Neither the ITF Seafarers' Trust nor the TK Foundation will fund religious activities. But ICMA is a faith-based organisation. As discussed above, the ICMA Ex Com stipulates that ICMA regional conferences must include an opportunity for a shared faith experience. But how can we remain faithful to our principles while satisfying the demands of our funders? This is a very important issue for all of us so let's take some time to reflect on it.



Evangelisation and ICMA

How do we make the case for support to secular funders without losing our identity? The following reflection has been written by ICMA general secretary Rev Hennie la Grange.

Always take the ICMA Code of Conduct as your point of reference. Chaplains and staff of ICMA societies serve all seafarers and their dependents regardless of religion and culture. That service is offered unconditionally and with sincere respect for seafarers' own beliefs.

Several ICMA societies have evangelisation at the heart of their mission. Evangelisation is always possible because seafarers are free to ask questions and make their own decisions. But seafarers' ministry is not the same as evangelisation. Seafarers' ministry is faith-based, thus faith, our faith (and not a seafarer's perceived lack of faith) is what drives us. Serving seafarers is our God-given vocation irrespective of how seafarers respond to what we do. Our obedience to God, our commitment to live up to our mission, to be God-sent, governs our actions in this ministry. Our own faith in God is what shapes our identity.

If evangelisation then is to be understood as "approaching seafarers with only conversion in mind", seafarers' ministry is infinitely more. It is generally acknowledged that our faith-driven interaction with seafarers may inspire faith. This inspiration to faith is true of the entire church and of all believers and ministries. The very being of the church is missionary. But it is essentially Christian that God meets humans beings where we are, and then treats us as brothers and sisters, even before we have converted to faith. Just so, do we serve seafarers. If, from our ministry of service, faith ensues, we would support and nurture that faith. If no faith is forthcoming, we continue to be brothers and sisters to all seafarers, sent by God to befriend them.

The ICMA Code of Conduct specifically forbids "proselytising seafarers". This statement is embedded in the clause which deals with the relationship of ICMA members towards one another. ICMA chaplains do not attempt to "win converts" to or from other Christian denominations. In addition to being contrary to the principle of ecumenical working, this would be disrespectful to the seafarers' own values and might alienate them from family and home community. Accepting and valuing seafarers' own beliefs and traditions is a fundamental part of defending their dignity as people.

To sum up, funding:

- The ICMA general secretary will make applications to the larger funding bodies.
- You must supply the information needed for creating a budget spreadsheet.
- You should also supply clear objectives which are acceptable to funders and which comply with the ICMA code of conduct.
- You should seek local sources of funding if possible.
- Keep the general secretary informed on all funding-related questions.



Choosing the venue

You will have to start looking at suitable venues when you are compiling budgeting information. However, it is not necessary to make the final choice at that point. If possible, **compare different venues** and choose the most appropriate.

Can we use our own premises?

For reasons of cost, it might be tempting to use local ICMA society offices or even a seafarers' centre. However, a specialist conference venue offers the following advantages:

- proper conference facilities already in place
- compliance with local legislation regarding disabled access, hygiene and safety etc..
- local organising team will benefit from "escaping" from their own office environment

What do we need in a venue?

These facilities are **essential**:

- one room capable of holding all delegates for plenary sessions
- sufficient other rooms for workshops and activities for smaller groups
- social space which might be another room, bar or garden
- provision of meals and refreshments
- accommodation
- transport to travel facilities and other locations on the conference programme

These facilities are **desirable** but not essential:

- Conference equipment such as screens and projectors
- Chapel
- Prayer room or place for quiet reflection
- Wifi

Should delegates share rooms?

Accommodation is often considerably cheaper if guests are willing to share rooms. There is often a supplement for single rooms. Delegates who are unwilling to share can be asked to pay the supplement themselves. However, if at all possible, single rooms should be provided for **speakers and those with executive roles** who may need somewhere private in which to work and relax.

Reserving the venue

- **Reserve** the venue as far in advance as possible.
- **Agree in writing** with the venue about the date of confirmation.
- **Confirm** the venue as soon as funding is confirmed.
- **Remember to cancel** the reservation if you do not receive funding.



e) Inviting delegates

This section looks inviting delegates to attend the conference. It also covers:

- i) Sending invitations
- ii) Conference release forms
- iii) Subsidies to attend
- iv) Delegates spreadsheet

i) Sending invitations

Who invites whom?

- **Regional co-ordinators** send invitations to all chaplains in their region (with the exception of Sailors Society chaplains, see note below).
- **The general secretary** sends formal invitations to the heads of ICMA member societies and, where relevant, their regional heads.
- **The secretariat staff** announce the dates of the conference on the ICMA website and help with publicity.

When to invite them

As soon as you are certain that the conference will take place, send out your invitations. It is important to give ICMA societies **as much time as possible** to plan for conference expenses in their forthcoming budgets.

What to include

Invitations should be accompanied by the following documents:

- Conference agenda
 - Registration form
 - Subsidy information and application form
 - Conference release form (see below)
 - If possible, a preliminary programme (i.e. agenda and timetable, see below)
- A sample invitation and associated documents are included in the toolkit.

Sailors Society

Sailors Society has requested that formal invitations should be sent only to its head office in Southampton, UK, and not to individual chaplains. Please try to respect wishes of individual societies wherever possible. We understand that it can be difficult to exclude specific groups from general regional communications. Apart from formal invitations, **all other communications** can be sent to all members in the region as normal.

The general secretary has asked Sailors Society to explain the policy on formal invitations to its chaplains. Sailors Society chaplains should therefore understand that regional co-ordinators are not deliberately excluding them from invitations issued to their ecumenical colleagues. If Sailors Society chaplains contact you about the regional conference, ask them to contact their head office.



ii) Conference release forms

Some ICMA members organisations require their chaplains to seek signed consent of their line manager or other staff member in order to leave their ports and attend conferences.

- **Individual chaplains and staff** are responsible for obtaining the permission they need to attend the regional conference
- **Regional coordinators** can help by supplying conference release forms and reminding delegates of their responsibilities.

Conference release forms

It is important to note that this form is not relevant to all port chaplains. Some work autonomously and are not obliged to seek permission to leave port. It would be time-consuming and unnecessary for them to find someone to sign their form. As ever, we try to respect the wishes of individual societies as far as possible. If you are concerned, you could ask delegates to sign the form and return it stating that no such authorisation is required.

Regional co-ordinators should always send the conference release form to port chaplains who wish to attend the regional conference. However it is the **responsibility of individual chaplains** to talk to their employers and find out if they are required to have their form signed. Regional co-ordinators are not responsible for checking that individual chaplains have the appropriate permission to attend.

The general secretary can advise on the policies of ICMA societies.

iii) Subsidies

Here are some key facts about subsidies:

- without subsidies, some port chaplains could not attend conference
- we can never guarantee that subsidies will be available.
- there will only ever be a limited amount of money available for subsidies.
- priority will usually be given to chaplains from developing countries.

All potential delegates to conference should be asked to make **some contribution** to the cost of their attendance. Possible sources of funding include:

- local industry
- local government
- local Church
- their own fundraising efforts

You may like to include more information with your letter of invitation. There is a sample subsidy application form in the toolkit.



Who decides about subsidies?

- the **general secretary makes decisions** about subsidies and informs delegates.
- the **regional co-ordinator can advise** on who might benefit from a subsidy.

Subsidies, the procedure

Money is not usually sent in advance unless absolutely necessary. Delegates who are granted a subsidy usually **pay their travel expenses and then apply for a refund**. The procedure is as follows:

- Delegates who apply for a subsidy must **wait for confirmation** from the general secretary.
- After confirmation, delegates **make their travel arrangements and pay**.
- Then they can submit a **claim for expenses** to the ICMA Secretariat.
- The claim must be made using the **ICMA claim form**.
- Delegates must **supply all information required** on the ICMA claim form.
- If necessary, delegates should **consult their banks** about transfer procedures.
- Delegates must supply copies of **receipts, travel tickets** and any other supporting documentation
- The general secretary arranges for money to be refunded by **international bank transfer**.

When a delegate cannot pay in advance

Occasionally it is impossible for delegates to pay for flights or other transport in advance. In these cases, the general secretary may be able to book and pay for the flights. Delegates must understand that the cheapest option will always be taken.

iv) Delegates spreadsheet

Be aware that some delegates **may take time** to respond. They may need to seek permission to attend and to secure funding. When you receive completed registration forms, it is very useful to record the details on the **delegates spreadsheet**.

The delegates spreadsheet shows you:

- number of delegates attending
- arrival and departure dates and times
- number of single and double rooms
- number of meals and refreshments

Maintaining a spreadsheet is not compulsory but it will make it easier to organise transport to and from airports and to organise accommodation.

- There is a sample spreadsheet in the toolkit.



f) Conference schedule

The conference schedule is the timetable of the conference. It includes all the conference activities plus meals, refreshments, worship, recreation etc..

When you have a good idea of who is coming to conference, you can start to plan the details of the conference schedule. There is no set "ICMA schedule". Different schedules work in different circumstances. Here are some suggestions to consider when planning the daily schedule.

Local weather and daylight conditions

Are afternoons unbearably hot? Does it get dark early?

Local custom

What are normal office hours? Will local visitors and venue staff be available?

Facilities at the venue

Are facilities available all the time? Are there specific times for meals and refreshments?

Avoiding "overload"

It is tempting to try to include as much as possible in the conference schedule. This can be counter-productive. Delegates will not benefit from the conference if they are too tired. Aim to **balance working time with time for relaxation**. For example:

- if you have an early start, do not have a late session after the evening meal
- if you have a long morning session, follow it with a long lunch-hour
- if a siesta is part of local culture, work later into the evening.

Fellowship

Time for fellowship should be included in the schedule. This might be an outing to a place of interest or social event at the conference venue. This is a **vital part** of the conference. However, bear in mind that a schedule containing too much social activity may not be acceptable to funders or employers.

Pre-conference social

Some organisers like to invite delegates to arrive in the evening prior to the start of conference to give them a chance to meet socially first.

Conference activities

- for larger conferences, **parallel sessions** are practical, especially when certain activities, e.g. training, may not be relevant to all
- sessions should always include time for **questions and discussion**
- delegates should **not be expected to listen passively** to a succession of speakers
- consider **different formats** to make use of all expertise



Presentation formats

- some people dislike speaking in public but enjoy less formal activities such as workshops or discussions
- instead of a formal presentation, a speaker could be interviewed by the chairperson
- try a few short presentations by different speakers followed by a panel discussion
- every session needs a good chairperson who is both sensitive and assertive
- the chairperson should give everyone a chance to speak and ensure that no one exceeds their allotted time.

Speakers

Choosing speakers can be delicate. Ideally you should avoid boring speakers even if they are very knowledgeable or very nice. A **boring presentation is demotivating** for delegates. However, for diplomatic reasons, it may be necessary to allow certain people to speak regardless of ability. **Keep the sessions short.** Inform your speakers well in advance how much time they have. Ensure they understand the **expectations of the delegates.**



g) Language

What should be the official conference language? There is no one correct answer so here are some thoughts.

Should it be English?

- English is widely used within ICMA and across the **maritime sector**.
- A regional conference can be a good opportunity for delegates to **practise and improve their English**.
- **Native speakers of English** should be reminded to **pay special attention** to how they speak avoiding slang, colloquialisms and cultural references that will not be universally understood.

Can we use the local language?

- It may be practical to choose as the official conference language the one **spoken by the majority of delegates**, e.g. Portuguese or Spanish in South America.
- Having **at least one presentation in the local language** may be seen as courteous, especially if local dignitaries are invited to speak.

Respect is a universal language

The most important consideration is to **make delegates feel comfortable**. Help them to understand without tiring them, confusing them or disturbing others.

What about translation services?

There are different ways of providing translation services. Larger conference venues offer a soundproof translators' booth and headphones for delegates. The services of professional interpreters will considerably increase the cost of the conference. Local resource persons, or even other delegates, may be able to help. But remember that simultaneous interpreting is a highly skilled profession and extremely tiring. Having no translation at all may be preferable to bad translation.

Another possibility is to request copies of presentations in advance so that written translations can be prepared for those who need them. At one regional conference, small groups formed to ensure that delegates with translating skills could sit with other delegates who needed their help. This is a cost effective method which may promote a sense of solidarity. But use it carefully. Whispering during a presentation can be very distracting for other delegates.



h) Reporting the conference

Conference is a place for **discussion and interaction**. Generating reports is not the object. However it is important that you **record what happened** during the conference. This may be a condition of funding. Delegates may also be required to report to their employers. Conference reports should include:

- the conference objectives
- how they were achieved
- who participated
- who gave presentations
- any resolutions passed.

As discussed above, you should aim to complete the conference documentation within **three months**.

i) Evaluating and follow up

It is always best to get feedback from the conference delegates while they are still at the conference. To get this feedback and evaluations from chaplains after they have returned to their ports is difficult. But it may not always be possible to measure or evaluate objectives until after the delegates have returned home from the conference. The benefits become apparent when the chaplains go back to their ports and continue their ministry among seafarers enriched by all they have learned at conference.

It would therefore be best to give delegates the opportunity to comment and evaluate before the conclusion of the conference, perhaps in addition to a second round of comments that could be sent from home ports. You could consider including a post-conference evaluation e.g. chaplains' reports or statistics, as part of the overall process.

Bearing in mind the question of regional co-ordinators' tenure (above), you may wish to appoint a colleague to oversee this.

Conclusion

We hope that you have found this manual, and the associated toolkit, useful. It has been compiled using the experience and expertise of ICMA regional co-ordinators. Your experience of organising your regional conference will also be valuable to other members of ICMA. If you have any comments, insights, wisdom, thoughts or questions, please share them. The ICMA Secretariat looks forward to hearing from you.