

Call for bids for hosting the 6th ISA Forum of Sociology 2029

The Executive Committee of the International Sociological Association (ISA) invites all ISA collective members and public universities to make a bid to host the 6th ISA Forum of Sociology in 2029. Bids should be submitted to the ISA Secretariat **by February 15, 2025**. All bidders are expected to present their proposals online at the ISA Executive Committee's annual meeting in the first week of March 2025.

Hosting the ISA Forum of Sociology is an extraordinary opportunity to bring together the global community of sociologists in your country, fostering an environment where ideas, cultures, and perspectives converge. By welcoming participants from all corners of the world, local organizers will play a pivotal role in shaping a global dialogue on the most pressing social issues of our time. This event connects national and international scholars and empowers local and national researchers, academics, and students with the opportunity to engage directly with leading sociologists and social scientists from all continents. For universities and departments, hosting the Forum means supporting an unparalleled platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and visibility on a global stage. It's an invitation to be at the heart of a transformative event for the field of sociology and to showcase local expertise and academic excellence to a worldwide audience.

The ISA Forum of Sociology

The ISA Forum is a five-day international conference designed first and foremost as a meeting place for over 65 ISA Research Committees, Working Groups, and Thematic Groups, that organize between 1,000 and 1,250 panel sessions in total. Each Forum focuses on a socially relevant theme involving public actors to which different areas of sociology can contribute, aiming to provide an array of opportunities for global dialogue about transformative change. Recent themes have included environmental issues, human rights, welfare, social justice, inequality, and democratic participation.

The ISA organizes a major in-person event every two years, alternating between its Forum and the World Congress of Sociology. The first ISA Forum was held in Barcelona (2008), the second in Buenos Aires (2002), and the third in Vienna (2016), attracting 4,231 participants.

The fourth Forum, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, was conducted online due to the pandemic in 2021. The fifth Forum will occur at the University Mohammed V in Rabat, Morocco, in July 2025. ISA will organize its sixth Forum in 2029.

The ISA aims for geographic diversity when selecting the locations of its events, reflecting its global membership.

Who can bid?

National sociological associations, ISA regular collective members, universities, and sociology departments can bid to host an ISA Forum on Sociology.

While a bid initiative may originate from other institutions (e.g., national or provincial tourist organizations, congress centers, and professional conference organizers), **the ISA Executive Committee will only consider their bids if the National Sociological Association or the proposed hosting university is fully supportive.** Ensuring an active sociological community in the host country that has formally committed to organizing the Forum is crucial to a successful bid.

The bid should outline the proposed membership of a Local Organizing Committee (LOC), which can include representatives from a coalition of inviting bodies. The chairperson of the LOC should be an ISA member who has attended at least one ISA Forum of Sociology or ISA World Congress of Sociology in the past. Additional LOC members who are current ISA members and have attended at least one ISA Forum of Sociology or ISA World Congress of Sociology in the past will be positively valued.

Principle of Freedom

The ISA is a member of the International Science Council (ISC). As such, it is committed to the Principle of Freedom and Responsibility in Science ([Article 8 of the ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure](#)), which sets out the freedoms that scientists should enjoy and their responsibilities. A formal statement of compliance with this principle should be included in the bid.

Organizers are encouraged to ensure a welcoming and secure environment for all attendees, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, and to affirm this commitment explicitly in their bid.

Organization

The ISA Forum of Sociology is jointly organized by the LOC and the ISA (through the ISA Secretariat and Research Council), but each also has specific duties:

The LOC is responsible for the following:

- Designing the conference logo and graphic elements. Different proposals are expected to be submitted to the ISA for review, and both (ISA and LOC) will develop graphic applications from the approved design. The conference logo must be ready for promotional activities two years before the Forum.
- Providing the rooms for the Forum venue(s), including spaces for book exhibitions and social events, and floor maps of the venue to be included in the program book and pocket guide.
- Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception, including translation services.
- Social programs, including the Farewell Party and other cultural events.
- Addressing problems regarding visas for participants coming from many different countries.
- Mobilizing local/regional sociologists and other social science colleagues to develop regional contacts, encourage participation in the meeting, and find volunteers, among other things.
- Organizing a volunteer program to answer questions about local life (e.g., transport, places to eat, currency exchange), attending to organizational needs in the rooms, assisting at the registration desk, etc.
- Media relations, including a press information package.
- Seeking local sponsors. To this end, develop sponsorship and exhibition selling documents, including a draft of the venue's floor plans.
- Online booking of hotel accommodation for participants.
- Producing the local information for the website, including a guide to transportation options, electricity, currency exchange services, etc.
- Preparing bags or any other delegate items agreed upon.
- Providing childcare services (for a fee) and medical services at the venue.
- Preparing and handling sightseeing tours.
- Professional photography services for Forum days and social events.
- Production of paraphernalia (t-shirts, mugs, souvenirs, etc.) for sale at the conference (optional). The LOC will keep any proceeds from the sale of these.

The ISA is responsible for:

- Announcing the Forum worldwide and for the communication strategy, including social media and email management, with participants.
- Handling all sessions and abstracts management software with its own Professional Conference Organizer (PCO), including early registrations and on-the-spot registrations.
- Setting registration fees.
- Managing the Forum webpages and the Forum app, including local information and guides provided by the LOC.
- Preparing the final program book and pocket guide, printed locally.
- Promoting and booking the exhibition area spots with the LOC's advice.

Forum Theme and Program

- The ISA proposes the Forum theme. The program is based on the Research Committees, Working Groups, and Thematic Groups sessions, which have complete autonomy to organize their content and carry out the selection process.
- A Scientific Program Committee organizes the plenaries, semi-plenaries, and integrative and professional development sessions. This Committee comprises ISA members, LOC members, and ad hoc guests.
- The LOC will organize at least three semi-plenary sessions on national/regional sociology and social issues, in consultation with the Scientific Program Committee.

The ISA and the LOC will collaborate to ensure the best possible quality for the Forum. This will involve regular meetings to share decisions and exchange information. The LOC and the ISA can also suggest other ideas and proposals regarding any matter related to the forum's organization.

How to bid? Selection Procedure

1. If you are considering submitting a bid to host the 6th ISA Forum of Sociology, please consult the **preliminary checklist** below to evaluate your location's suitability.
2. Expressions of interest must be received by the ISA Secretariat at isa@isa-sociology.org in a single PDF file no later than **February 15, 2025** and should include the following:
 - a. An expression of interest letter, signed by the National Association or the proposed hosting university, extending the hosting offer. The letter should include an introduction to the preliminary Local Organizing Committee, the inviting bodies, and the proposed venue(s).
 - b. Letters of support from the inviting bodies (e.g., the National Association, Sociology departments, universities, local or national authorities, and the tourism ministry).
 - c. Preliminary checklist filled.
 - d. Formal statement of compliance with the Principle of Freedom.
 - e. In addition to the above, the expression of interest could include any other materials you want the selection committee to review, showing why your proposal is the best place to organize the next ISA Forum of Sociology.
3. Bidders will be invited to present their proposals online for 15 minutes during the first week of March 2025 at the ISA Executive Committee meeting.
4. Shortlisted bidders will be informed by **March 15, 2025**, and should present a complete bid proposal by **June 10, 2025**. Please refer to the Guidelines for Bidding below.
5. The full bid should include:
 - a. Presentation of the LOC. Please note that the chairperson, and if possible, other members of the LOC, should be ISA members and have attended at least one ISA Forum of Sociology or ISA World Congress of Sociology.
 - b. Detailed information about the proposed venue (city and hosting institution) and the different aspects covered by the **Guidelines for Bidding** (below).
 - c. Proposed date (between July and early August 2029).
 - d. Presentation of the Local Professional Conference Organizer (LPCO) and its key persons responsible for organizing the Forum.
 - e. Preliminary budget.
 - f. Information on plans for social programs and pre- and post-Forum tours.
 - g. Prospected sponsorships.
6. Site visits will be conducted to the shortlisted bidders' venues after July 2025.
7. The final decision will be announced on **December 5, 2025**.

You should expect confirmation of your proposal's receipt within 24 hours. If you do not receive acknowledgment, please request confirmation that your bid has been received.

Preliminary Checklist

VENUE	YES	NO
Availability of the conference venue in July - early August with 65 rooms with a capacity of 40 to 200 persons + three rooms with a capacity of at least 300 persons.		
Availability of one auditorium for the Opening and Closing ceremony, with a capacity of at least 2,000 people.		
Luncheon facilities on the conference site or in restaurants within walking distance that can serve 2,000 persons within two hours at affordable prices.		

CITY	YES	NO
An international airport located at a reasonable distance and well connected to the host city, with regular direct connections to all main airports worldwide.		
An efficient public transport network to allow participants to move around easily.		
Abundant availability of accommodation facilities in different price categories to cater to all participants.		

ORGANIZING TEAM	YES	NO
A national sociological association, a collective member of the ISA, and/or the university and sociology department proposed as the venue is extending the bid.		
A team of local colleagues (of at least 5 people) can be established to form a Local Organizing Committee (LOC).		
The chairperson and at least two other members of the LOC are ISA members and have attended at least one ISA Forum of Sociology or ISA World Congress of Sociology in the past.		

If the answer to any of the parameters above is no, the ISA cannot accept your bid.

If the answer to all of the parameters above is yes, please read more about the detailed requirements below to help you prepare a more elaborate bid.

Guidelines for Bidding

The following section details the aspects that should be considered and addressed in the submitted bid document.

Only shortlisted bidders should present a full bid proposal. Still, you may review this section carefully to decide whether to make a bid.

The ISA welcomes and strives for diversity in languages and cultures. However, to facilitate global communication, the ISA administrative working language is English. Therefore, **all communications regarding the bids and the Forum should be in English.**

Hosting City

The hosting city must have the following:

- An international airport located at a reasonable distance and well connected to the host city, with regular direct connections to all main airports worldwide.
- An efficient public transport network to allow participants to move around easily.
- Abundant availability of accommodation facilities in different price categories to cater to all participants.

Venue

Following its commitment to support public higher education, the ISA is strongly inclined to host the ISA Forum at public universities worldwide or in a combination of congress facilities (for the opening and/or closing sessions) and universities. Venues with all facilities on the same campus within walking distance of less than 10 minutes between rooms will be preferred.

Venue facilities for 4,500 or more attendees must be available for free or at a minimal cost and must include:

- One plenary hall with a capacity of at least 2,000 persons.
- Three rooms with a capacity of 300 persons (simultaneous sessions).
- At least 65 session rooms with a capacity of between 40 and 200 persons (simultaneous sessions).
- Three rooms for roundtable sessions that can accommodate up to five circular tables.
- Book exhibition space for 30 booksellers (at the conference site or in close proximity).
- Luncheon facilities at the conference site or in restaurants within walking distance that can serve 2,000 persons within two hours at affordable prices.
- Catering for accessibility needs.

- Available banking, print and copy facilities, and medical services at the conference site or nearby.
- Insurance for the conference venue(s) to cover liability and injury that may occur to participants on the venue premises. Participants will be responsible for their travel insurance and will be informed about it during the registration process.

Technical Equipment Requirements

- Standard audiovisual and presentation equipment in all session rooms, including microphones for bigger rooms.
- Free Wi-Fi access of sufficient capacity for all participants during the Forum.
- Office facilities for an ISA Secretariat of at least five persons equipped with a computer, printer, photocopier, etc.
- For the opening and closing ceremonies, simultaneous translation into the host country's language will be used if it differs from English.
- The ISA Forum is an in-person-only event. No hybrid or virtual equipment is required.
- Opening and closing ceremonies and plenary sessions should be streamed on the ISA YouTube channel. Technical equipment is needed.

Required Accommodation Facilities

- Efficient and reliable hotel booking system.
- Capability to host around 4,500-5,000 people.
- Hotels of different categories: 40% two-star hotels, 50% three-star hotels, and 10% four-star hotels or more.
- Availability of medium- and low-cost accommodations (including student dormitories) for at least 1,000 persons.
- There should be affordable and accessible public transportation between the hotels and the venue. Venues within 10 minutes by public transport or 20 minutes of walking distance from the hotel zone are an asset.

Visa Requirements

Being able to welcome colleagues from all countries, including in the Global South, is crucial. Visa regulations are a critical consideration in the selection process. Therefore, prospective organizers should work closely with the relevant authorities to ensure smooth entry for all participants to the host country. The ISA expects that no sociologist wishing to attend the Forum will face barriers in securing entry to the event.

- The LOC should make written information available to participants about visa requirements, the time required to obtain visas, visa costs, visa forms, application procedures, and any other information that will minimize complications for the delegates.
- The LOC should handle invitation letters and other requirements for visa procedures. Ideally, “visa on arrival” arrangements should be negotiated for participants from countries without a host country embassy or consulate.

Sustainability

The ISA is committed to making the ISA Forum of Sociology a more sustainable event, and we encourage all bidders to demonstrate their dedication to environmental responsibility. Hosting a large-scale conference presents unique challenges and opportunities in this regard, and bidders are expected to outline specific measures they can implement to minimize the event’s environmental impact. Examples of sustainable practices include:

- **Reducing Waste:** Implementing initiatives to minimize single-use plastics, providing digital alternatives to printed materials, and encouraging waste separation and recycling.
- **Sustainable Catering:** Offering locally sourced, seasonal, and plant-based food options while reducing food waste through careful planning and donating leftovers.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Utilizing venues prioritizing energy efficiency, including renewable energy sources, energy-saving equipment, and controlled temperature at moderate levels in the meeting rooms.
- **Eco-friendly Transportation:** Attendees should be encouraged to use public transportation, cycle, or walk, and carbon offset programs for international travel should be promoted.
- **Sustainable Materials:** Using environmentally-friendly materials for signage, decorations, and conference materials and considering reusable or recyclable options wherever possible.

Bidders are encouraged to highlight any innovative approaches or partnerships that can further enhance the Forum’s sustainability. By prioritizing sustainability, the event can set a positive example for future conferences and leave a lasting, positive impact on the host community.

Sponsorships

The ISA is committed to upholding the sociological community’s ethical reputation and core values. Therefore, potential sponsors should be carefully vetted to ensure their alignment with the principles of academic integrity, social justice, and inclusivity that define our discipline. While sponsorships are welcome, they must not compromise the community's ethical standards or reputation.

- We expect organizers to prioritize sponsors whose missions resonate with the values of the Forum and the broader sociological field. Sponsors must support, rather than undermine, the goals of fostering critical inquiry, diversity, and equality.
- Considering that, it is critically important that the LOC develop a fundraising strategy, including discount offers with national airlines and key stakeholders in the host country and region.

Professional Conference Organizer

The scope and complexity of the present-day ISA Forum of Sociology require the services of a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) to assist the LOC. The ISA has a PCO that manages all abstract selection processes and registration (as stated on page 4). A Local PCO (LPCO) will be appointed to be responsible for all organizational and logistical matters of the Forum, including handling contracts and sponsorships, and will draw up an agreed-upon timeline for its preparation.

A local convention and tourism bureau representative and/or the proposed convention center can recommend appropriate companies. However, it is advised that the LOC obtain proposals, references, and financial quotes from more than one LPCO to ensure that their final recommendation will provide the necessary services under all applicable laws and that value for money is assured.

Although the proposed LPCO may help the LOC prepare the bid, the LOC may not sign a contract with an LPCO until the ISA has approved it.

Budget

The bid should describe the LOC's financial infrastructure, indicate the amount of the funds expected to be available for the Forum, and list the host's organizations, institutions, and bodies that are ready—or may be expected—to support the Forum in terms of money, services, equipment, or workforce.

The bid should also include a detailed estimated budget. The costs of hosting the conference should be reasonable. However, costs vary considerably from one location to another. Budget and revenue sources will be discussed before the selected bidder signs the Memorandum of Agreement. The surplus from Forum receipts shall be divided 50-50 between the ISA and the LOC.

Please clearly specify the costs for each of the following :

- Conference facilities: rent and cleaning; technical equipment and support; signs and decoration; internet connection and free Wi-Fi, printing facilities; exhibition space; registration area.

- Medical services.
- Childcare services.
- Special arrangements for disabled participants.
- English/host country language simultaneous translation services: interpretation equipment (cost per 2-hour session) and interpreters (cost per language).
- Conference materials:
 - Design of conference poster and logo.
 - Conference bags (including local information, maps, etc.); printed materials such as posters and leaflets.
- Social events:
 - Opening Ceremony: venue, decoration, special guests' gifts, and translation.
 - Welcome Reception: venue, catering, and social program. Good-quality finger food with inclusive options (vegetarian, gluten-free). Beer and/or wine included.
 - Closing Ceremony: venue, decoration, special guests' gifts, and translation.
 - Farewell Party. On-site dinner style with music or cultural proposals at an affordable price for attendees.
 - Tourism programs.
- Exhibition: set up and handling expenses.
- Local Professional Conference Organizer services. The ISA does not work with percentage or overpriced contracts for PCO services. A quote should be provided.
- A list of approximate airfares from representative sites across the globe, including what reduction might be secured from the national or other airlines.

Additional information

In addition to the information provided in these guidelines, the ISA Secretariat can answer queries about the bidding process and offer advice when appropriate. You can contact the ISA Secretariat at isa@isa-sociology.org.

Successful Host

The successful Host must sign a formal Memorandum of Agreement (Contract) governed by Spanish law with the ISA to organize the Forum of Sociology.