

Guide for Making a Proposal for the Organisation of the ISMIR Conference

The ISMIR Board

Monday 12th May, 2025

The International Society for Music Information Retrieval (ISMIR) is a non-profit organisation (see the Society By-Laws on <https://www.ismir.net/pdfs/ISMIR-Bylaws.pdf>) which, among other things, oversees the organisation of the ISMIR Conference. The ISMIR conference is held annually and is the world's leading research forum on processing, searching, organising and accessing music-related data.

The present document is intended to provide guidelines to institutions interested in making a bid for the organisation of future editions of the conference.

Contact: board@ismir.net
Society's website: <http://ismir.net/>

Contents

1	General Information	3
1.1	The ISMIR Conference	3
1.2	Format of the Proposal	3
1.3	Evaluation Criteria	4
1.4	Communication with the ISMIR Board	4
2	Requirements	5
2.1	Location	5
2.2	Dates, Facilities and Local Context	5
2.3	Organising Committee	5
2.4	Housing	6
2.5	Diversity and Code-of-Conduct	6
2.6	Hybrid Format	6
2.7	Timeline	7
2.8	Budget	7
2.9	Reviewing workflow	8
2.10	Conference Website and Promotional Aspects	9
2.11	Activities and Topics	9
2.12	Papers and Proceedings	10
3	Data about upcoming and previous conferences	12
	Appendices	12
A	Where to send the Calls for Papers and Participation	12

1 General Information

1.1 The ISMIR Conference

The revolution in music distribution and storage brought about by digital technology has fueled tremendous research activities and interests in academia as well as in industry, resulting in the field that is known as Music Information Retrieval (MIR). The ISMIR Conference reflects this rapid development by providing a meeting place for the discussion of MIR-related research, developments, methods, tools and experimental results. Its main goal is to foster multidisciplinary exchange by bringing together researchers and developers, educators and librarians, as well as students and professional users.

The ISMIR conference has been held annually since 2000. It is a medium-size conference with an attendance of 300–500 (in person) and 100–200 (remote), and has traditionally intended to be accessible and affordable both to organizers (in terms of organization complexity and financial burden) and to participants.

The conference has a duration of four days preceded by one day of tutorials. Traditionally the programme has included:

- Day 1:
 - Tutorials (fees not included in registration)
 - A welcome reception (fees included in registration)
- Days 2 to 5:
 - Single-track oral presentations, organised in multiple sessions
 - Single-track poster presentations, organised in multiple sessions
 - One to three invited keynote speech or speeches
 - A “Late-Breaking/Demo” session
 - An “Unconference” session
 - A public Society meeting (including Society elections every second year)
 - A “Widening Inclusion in MIR” (WIMIR) session as integral event in the regular conference program
 - Daily lunches and coffee breaks (cost included in registration)
 - Oral/poster presentations for papers published at TISMIR
 - A conference banquet (cost included in registration)
 - Optionally: a panel on a specific topic (e.g. industrial panel, panel on evaluation)
 - Optionally: A concert consisting of music/sound art works submitted through the conference Call for Music
 - Optionally: a session on a special topic (e.g. hybrid deep learning for MIR)
 - Optionally: some social event(s) (e.g. concerts, jam sessions, tours)

Proposals that deviate from the above-mentioned activities are possible, but should be discussed with and agreed by the ISMIR Board.

1.2 Format of the Proposal

Proposals for hosting ISMIR can be submitted anytime, but the time between the proposal and the conference is expected to be between 2 and 3 years.

Proposals to organise the ISMIR Conference should be written in a PDF document that should be sent to the contact email provided on the first page of this document. The application document must include the following aspects:

- (I) Motivation
- (II) Dates, facilities and local context (see Section 2.2)
- (III) Organising institutions and proposal committee (see Section 2.3)
- (IV) Housing aspects (see Section 2.4)
- (V) Timeline of the organisation (see Section 2.7)
- (VI) Budget (see Section 2.8)
- (VII) Reviewing aspects (see Section 2.9)
- (VIII) Website and promotional aspects (see Section 2.10)
- (IX) Activities and topics (see Section 2.11)
- (X) Papers and proceedings-related aspects (see Section 2.12)

1.3 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the ISMIR Board with respect to the following criteria:

- Proposed mechanisms to guarantee the high level scientific quality of the conference
- A clear intent or mechanisms in place from proposers to reach financial break-even (i.e. no financial gain nor loss)
- Compliance to the format mentioned in Section 1.2 and the requirements listed in Section 2

1.4 Communication with the ISMIR Board

We encourage proposers to contact the Board informally before investing significant effort in proposal writing. Proposers are invited to communicate with the ISMIR Board via the contact email provided on the first page of this document.

2 Requirements

2.1 Location

Ideally, the location of ISMIR should alternate between Europe/Africa, Asia/Australasia and North/Central/South America on a rotating basis, but the Board sees this as one of many desirable aspects of a bid rather than a strict rule.

2.2 Dates, Facilities and Local Context

Dates for the conference should be around the month of October of any given year, the date should not conflict with other important meetings or major holidays.

Organisers are encouraged to indicate whether they would be interested in other years if their proposal is not accepted for the proposed dates.

Organisers must agree to reserve an adequate number of rooms and/or spaces for conference activities:

- that can accommodate a large enough number of people (currently 300–500)
- that include rooms for diverse activities (panels, tutorials, posters, etc.)
- that are within small distance of each other
- that have very good transportation links to the housing solutions proposed

Proposals should include a description of the local context (town specificities, typical climate in target dates, closest international airport, typical international travel costs, local transportation, etc.).

2.3 Organising Committee

The organising committee should propose at least:

- one general conference chair
- one general scientific (program) chair
- one tutorial chair
- one late-breaking/demo (and/or unconference) chair
- One diversity and inclusion (D&I) chair
- One sponsorship chair

Having multiple co-chairs for the above-mentioned roles is recommended. Other roles such as a music chair, music curators, a publicity chair, a finance chair, local arrangement chairs, etc. are also possible. The proposed chairs should have already been approached and given their agreement to take on this role. The proposal should include brief bios for the chairs and other principal involved people.

To facilitate communication with the ISMIR Board, at least **one general co-chair** needs to attend the monthly ISMIR board meetings to give a conference status update.

2.4 Housing

In their formal application to host an ISMIR Conference, interested institutions must agree to either reserve a large number of rooms, or provide evidence that a large number of rooms will be available to participants:

- In a suitable venue (hotel or other) for the whole duration of the conference
- At a reasonable rate (we generally consider a “reasonable rate” compared to other international conferences (e.g., ICASSP, Interspeech) in the same or previous year).

2.5 Diversity and Code-of-Conduct

The ISMIR Board invites proposers to foster diversity in their proposals, and as much as possible to make more visible on every level of the conference minorities and parts of the MIR research community that have been traditionally under-represented (e.g. women, culture, geographical location), e.g.:

- members of the organizing committee of ISMIR,
- keynote speakers,
- session chairs,
- reviewers,
- panel chair,
- panelists
- student volunteers for the conference (as a way of bringing them in contact with the MIR community)

The open exchange of ideas and respectful, harassment-free scientific debate are central to ISMIR. In their application, conference organisers must agree in writing with the code-of-conduct detailed on <http://confcodeofconduct.com/>. They must also agree to publish it on the conference website, and to enforce it throughout the conference.

2.6 Hybrid Format

Moving forward from 2022, ISMIR conferences will take place in a hybrid format, with an in-person component (as is reasonable based on pandemic/other factors) and an online component.

Participants will be able to take part in all core conference activities, whether in person or online:

- Present their work (tutorials, papers, music, LBDs)
- Attend tutorial, paper, keynote, and other plenary presentations
- Interact with presenters and other attendees
- Socialize and network with other participants; attend dedicated social activities

The ISMIR Tech Team maintains a reusable set of technology tools to facilitate the online offering of the conference.

2.7 Timeline

An indicative timeline should be provided, covering the whole period between the date of proposal to target dates of the conference, and including milestones such as dates for:

- Communication schedule with ISMIR Board
- Establishment of conference web site
- Schedule of calls for papers, tutorials, etc.
- Selection of reviewers
- Submission deadlines
- All important steps of the reviewing workflow (e.g. papers out to reviewers, papers back from reviewers, etc.)
- Selection of tutorials
- Proceedings online
- Registrations (early, late)

This can be provided as e.g. a Gantt chart or any other format. Organizers are encouraged to consider timelines for visa applications for attendees, and how the conference timeline can accommodate timely issue of visas to ensure attendance.

2.7.1 Submission Deadline Extensions

We encourage organisers to keep to their advertised deadlines unless there are unexpected circumstances which create the need for an extension. Any extension should be fair (apply equally to all authors) and public (announced on the ISMIR Community mailing list). What has worked well for past conferences is to allow revisions of PDF files but no new submissions or changes to metadata (title/author) and abstracts for up to a week after the deadline (during which time meta-reviewers and reviewers can bid for and be assigned papers).

2.8 Budget

Managing the conference budget is the responsibility of the conference organisers. However, after acceptance of their proposal, organisers **should communicate regularly with the Treasurer of ISMIR with respect to budget-related matters**, and make an updated itemized balance spreadsheet of the budget available to the Treasurer. After the conference, a final balance spreadsheet should be provided to the Board.

The ISMIR Conference has traditionally intended to be accessible and affordable both to organisers (in terms of organisation complexity and financial burden) and to participants. Organisers must explicitly agree to do their best effort to reach financial break-even (i.e. no financial gain nor loss) in the proposal.

Organisers must agree to registration fees comparable to, or cheaper than, those of previous ISMIR conferences. The registration fee must include the individual membership fee for the Society (currently 10 USD) which will not be counted toward the conference balance sheet and will be **transferred to the Society** at the end of the conference.

Proposals should include:

- Spreadsheet estimate of budget
- Estimate of registration fees (early, late, student)
- Sponsorship plan

Depending on the financial status of the ISMIR Society, the Board may provide a *financial subsidy* to the conference organizers. The Board understands financial uncertainties of organizing a conference, and will support the organizers with this financial “cushion”. This decision will be made around the beginning of the year of the conference together with the conference organizers. Conference organizers are expected to adjust the conference registration rates to reach financial break-even taking into account of the subsidy.

If the conference incurs a surplus of S larger than T (where T is a threshold that depends on the location of the conference), the amount $S - T$ will be transferred to the Board. The amount T is then kept by the organizers to promote ISMIR locally (by organizing workshops, summer school, providing local grants). The use of T should be detailed in the proposal when applying to host the conference. If $0 < S \leq T$ then the organizers shall keep all of the surplus. Currently (as of April 2025), the board has fixed T to 20K Euro for locations where it wants to actively promote ISMIR, and to 5K Euro for locations where ISMIR is already largely active (Europe, USA and Canada). If the conference incurs a deficit ($S < 0$), the Board will work with the local organizers to attempt to cover the deficit.

Providing a financial subsidy to support conference attendance (e.g. by means of travel grants and/or cheap housing) for groups of individuals who may not be able to attend otherwise is a common feature of ISMIR conferences. Proposals should describe the financial support to be provided for this purpose, and the groups of individuals for whom support is intended to be provided.

2.9 Reviewing workflow

Organisers must agree to implement a double-blind reviewing workflow, following a two-tier model (i.e. with one level of “regular” reviewers, and another level of “meta-reviewers”), as in recent editions of the conference.

2.9.1 Criteria for Paper Acceptance

Submitted papers should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Novelty of the paper
- Scholarly/scientific quality
- Appropriateness of topic
- Importance
- Readability and paper organization

Proposals can propose a slightly different list of criteria, to be eventually decided between the organisers and the ISMIR Board.

2.9.2 Conference Management System

Organisers must agree to use an appropriate conference management system for managing all operations and communications related to the paper submission and review process, and a system for long-term hosting of conference outputs (papers, posters, and videos). The Board respectively recommends CMT and miniconf for the above tasks. Other conference management system options can be put forward and will be discussed between proposers and the Board.

2.9.3 Open Review Initiative

In 2023, the ISMIR society started an Open Review Initiative to discuss and experiment with open review practices at ISMIR conferences. In 2024, the practice of “anonymously publishing reviews of accepted papers when the authors and all reviewers and meta-review consent” was implemented. In 2025, the practice of “anonymously publishing reviews of accepted papers when authors consent” will be implemented. This open-review initiative is ongoing and more practices are likely to be experimented before the society will converge to a particular practice. While the organizers can decide the exact review practice, they need to communicate and discuss with the ISMIR Board during the monthly ISMIR Board meetings.

2.10 Conference Website and Promotional Aspects

The Conference website will be called `https://ismiryyyy.ismir.net` where `yyyy` is the year of the conference. The URL will be provided by the Board. Organisers must link their site to that URL. Website hosting, content edition and management is the responsibility of the organisers from its initial publication online until at most two months after the completion of the conference. After this date, the organisers must provide a **static** version of the website for public archiving on the official ISMIR domain.

2.10.1 Online Guidelines for Reviewers

The website must include guidelines for reviewers (see e.g. websites of previous editions of the conference).

2.10.2 Past ISMIRs

The conference website must include a link back to the Society website with past ISMIR conferences (<https://ismir.net/conferences/>).

2.10.3 ISMIR Logo Placement

The official ISMIR logo should be displayed prominently on the conference web site, proceedings, programme booklets, and any other ISMIR-related document.

2.11 Activities and Topics

Proposals should include a list of scheduled activities (see Section 1.1), together with a draft program for the conference (subject to change).

Proposals should identify any major changes in the Call-for-Papers (CFP) list of topics with respect to recent ISMIR conferences (if any).

2.11.1 Keynote/Invited Speakers

The conference program should include between 1-3 keynote or invited speakers.

Finding an appropriate keynote speaker (relevant to ISMIR, a good speaker, well-known, etc.) often takes a long time, so it should be started early.

Conference organisers must cover the travel and housing expenses of the keynote and invited speakers, and provide complimentary conference registrations. If an honorarium is paid (which has not been the norm at ISMIR), it should be symbolic, to avoid increasing the registration fees.

2.12 Papers and Proceedings

Organisers must agree to publish all papers and posters selected in the review process in PDF format.

Papers must be made accessible and linked on the conference website, on the latest at the starting day of the conference.

A complete book of proceedings must be edited and a PDF version must be linked on the conference website, on the latest at the starting day of the conference.

2.12.1 Copyright of Accepted Papers


Organisers must agree to publish papers under the following licence:

- CC-BY Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0).

This license authorises anybody to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material) the work for any purpose, even commercially, under the following terms:

- Attribution: The work must be attributed to its authors, a link to the licence must be provided, and indications if changes were made should be given.
- The copyright is retained by the corresponding authors.

See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> and <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode> for full details. Accordingly, all papers must bear the following footnote on the first page:

 © **AuthorNamePlaceholder**.
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).
Attribution: **AuthorNamePlaceholder**. **“PaperTitlePlaceholder”**, International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference, **YearConferencePlaceholder**.

2.12.2 Number of Papers

The number of papers presented at the conference must not vary too much from previous editions of the conference (see Section 3).

2.12.3 Author Registration Requirement

Organisers must agree that for each accepted paper, at least one author must register for the conference, and that papers with no registered author on the author registration deadline will be removed from the conference programme and will not appear in the proceedings nor on the conference website.

2.12.4 Important Requirements for Papers

Organisers must ensure that papers presented at the conference and published in the proceedings consist of original contributions (not previously published and not being considered for publication elsewhere on the date of presentation at ISMIR).

2.12.5 Paper Format

To ensure a consistent proceedings, organisers must provide templates for L^AT_EX and MS Word, together with detailed instructions on formatting paper submissions. We encourage organisers to use the same format and templates as used in previous years.

All accepted papers must have the same format.

All papers to be published in the proceedings must have a maximum of 6 pages excluding acknowledgements and references; the latter two sections do not have a page limit. Papers must conform to Adobe's PDF format (e.g. include all fonts).

2.12.6 Late-Breaking/Demo and Unconference Documentation

At the discretion of each facilitator in the Late-breaking/Demo and Unconference sessions, notes taken during a given session will be refined into a 1-2 page summary, with a deadline for this document set at three weeks after the close of the conference.

2.12.7 Post-Conference Report

Organisers must also agree to provide, at the latest, 2 months after the end of the conference, a final report describing experiences gained in organizing the conference. A template report from previous editions of the conference will be provided to organisers, which they can update at the end of the conference. This report is passed on to future conference organisers, to ensure continuity and retention of best practice.

3 Data about upcoming and previous conferences

A list of past conferences can be found at: <https://ismir.net/conferences/>

A list of upcoming conferences can be found at: <https://ismir.net/>

Diverse useful statistics for previous ISMIR conferences are available on the Society website.

Appendices

A Where to send the Calls for Papers and Participation

The following is an indicative, non-exhaustive list of places to send the conference call-for-participation

- The ISMIR Community mailing list community@ismir.net
- The NIME Community mailing list community@nime.org
- AIMI list aimi@lists.aimi-musica.org
- AFIM afim.info@afim-asso.org
- MusicDSP music-dsp@music.columbia.edu
- ICMA icma@umich.edu
- SMC Network smcnetwork@llista.upf.edu
- Computer Music Mailing List in Brazil compmus-l@sbc.org.br
- Auditory mailing list AUDITORY@lists.mcgill.ca
- SIGMM (linked to CBMI, etc.) sigmm@pi4.informatik.uni-mannheim.de
- ICAD icad@santafe.edu
- Wiki CfP www.wikicfp.com
- UAI list uai@eecs.oregonstate.edu
- LinkedIn RecSys <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Recommender-Systems-1758697>
- DMRN DMRN-LIST@jiscmail.ac.uk
- CHI-ANNOUNCEMENTS CHI-ANNOUNCEMENTS@listserv.acm.org
- DBWorld Dbworld@cs.wisc.edu
- SIGIR IRList@lists.shef.ac.uk
- User modeling um@di.unito.it
- ML list 1 <http://groups.google.com/group/ml-news?hl=en> ml-news@googlegroups.com
- ML list 2 <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/datamining2/> datamining2@yahoogroups.com
- LinkedIn group EURASIP http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1970808&trk=anet_ug_hm
- The ESCOM mailing list escom-mailing-list@gaggle.email
- The SMPC community list https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfgQoMLQZjB0XPvu0__2XgkQ63ri-g1S-pz9BrjZt0rdIf1jQ/viewform
- The SysMus community <http://groups.google.com/group/sysmus-conferences>