

2025 ISA Forum: On site or online?

Dear colleagues,

On May 1st, the ISA Assembly of Councils (i.e. the members of Research council & of the National Association Council) has decided to postpone the ISA Congress to June 2023 and held it in Melbourne (rather than virtually). The Assembly of Councils also extended RC boards and ISA mandates until the next Congress.

Consequently, the next ISA Forum will also be delayed by a year to June or July 2025.

It remains to decide if this Forum will take place “on-site” or as a virtual Forum. As the RC/WG/TG play a fundamental role in the organizing of the ISA Forums, the ISA has asked the Research Council to deliberate and vote on this decision.

Our previous Research Council meeting have shown our capacity to exchange arguments on both sides before deliberating and taking collective decisions. In this perspective, I suggest the following deliberation and decision process.

May 24th – June 5th:

Sharing opinions and arguments on the Research Council listserv.

isa-researchcouncil2021@listes.uclouvain.be

This stage will allow us to gather arguments in favour and against a virtual Forum. Ideally, RC/WG/TG delegates should share augmented opinions after consulting their RC/WG/TG board or members.

We will gather good practices and ideas for virtual encounters based on RC and ISA member experience that will be useful for the Forum or for other RC conferences and meetings.

June 6-11: RC/WG/TG delegates will consult their board and/or member before the vote, based on the arguments and exchanges on the Research Council listserv.

June 12th, (12 pm-2 pm UCT):

Research Council meeting for final deliberation and vote.

The meeting won't last more than 1h30/2hours and will exclusively focus on the 2025 Forum

- Large RCs (above 200 members in good standing) will have two votes. The other RC/WG/TG will have one vote.
- For those unable to attend the meeting, it will be possible to vote by e-mail on June 11th.

The Research Council vote results will be sent to the ISA Executive committee that will make the final decisions on the Forum.

Some brief elements to contextualize the decision and a possible virtual Forum.

- The reasons to hold the 2025 ISA Forum online do not depend on the COVID-19 pandemic. Considerations in favour of a virtual Forum include the increase of participation by scholars from the global south and young colleagues and reducing our carbon footprint (by avoiding hundreds of plane travels).
- A virtual Forum in 2025 will be a very different experience from the 2021 Forum. The latter was planned to be held on-site and then translated online.
- ISA Congress will be held “in person”/ “face to face”. Virtual forums would thus alternate with presential congresses.

Please find in attachment a note that gather some initial ideas to think a virtual ISA Forum. The Research Council listserv is an open space where other arguments in favour and against this option will be expressed in the next two weeks.

While these arguments should be considered, I don't have a fixed personal opinion on how the 2025 Forum should be held, as both options have clear advantages. I look forward to this collective process and to seeing you again (virtually) on June 12th.

Geoffrey