



IAAPA Expo Middle East 2026: Call for Presentations

For the first time, IAAPA Expo is bringing its globally recognized event to the Middle East. Hosted in the vibrant city of Abu Dhabi, this landmark edition will unite attractions industry professionals from across the region and around the world.

IAAPA Expo Middle East will offer an inspiring showcase of innovation, networking, and business opportunities in one of the world's fastest-growing leisure and entertainment markets.

The conference program features keynotes, industry presentations, panel discussions, and workshops that explore trends, best practices, and future outlooks. Special events, EDUTours, and networking receptions provide valuable opportunities to connect with leaders from both the operator and supplier sides of the industry.

The **Education Conference** at IAAPA Expo Middle East will include a wide range of sessions designed specifically for attractions professionals. It will take place at the ADNEC Convention Center in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from **30 March to 2 April 2026**.

Call for Presentations

IAAPA invites industry professionals, researchers, and thought leaders to submit proposals for **IAAPA Expo Middle East 2026**. We are looking for high-quality abstracts that showcase innovative ideas, practical insights, and actionable takeaways tailored to the attractions industry.

Speaker Engagement

Volunteer speaking engagements at an IAAPA Expo are delivered by industry and non-industry professionals. Speaking at IAAPA Expo Middle East is an opportunity to be a leader in your field and to serve as a subject matter expert. IAAPA Expo Middle East Speakers play an important role in moving the attractions industry forward!

Speakers are provided complimentary registration to IAAPA Expo Middle East which includes the Education Conference Program and access to the Trade Show Floor, however IAAPA does not reimburse speakers for travel or accommodations.

Submission Guidelines

IAAPA is seeking presentations, sessions, and abstracts that reflect the best thinking in the industry, informed by theory, research or case studies.

Be sure the content of your submission is relevant to attractions industry professionals. IAAPA Expo Middle East attendees should walk away with action items, best practices, and fresh ideas they can implement in their facilities. And don't forget, this is the industry of fun!

- Multiple participations per candidate are encouraged; however, a speaker may not participate in more than three (3) sessions.
- Sessions cannot be used as a place for direct promotion of a presenter's product, service, or monetary self-interest. Sales pitches disguised as presentations will not be considered.
- Sessions with more than two (2) presenters from the same company are not accepted.
- Session date and time are not guaranteed. A balance of session type and topics throughout the conference is the primary objective.
- All presenters must accept the terms of the IAAPA Speaker Agreement.
- Select sessions at IAAPA Expo Middle East will be recorded. Session recordings will be used for a digital event and as a continued resource on IAAPA's online learning platform.
- IAAPA reserves the right to combine sessions or change the session format to balance the number of sessions.
- Due to the high volume of submitters, IAAPA is unable to provide direct feedback related to the reason a submission was not accepted.
- Speakers must adhere to posted dates and deadlines such as document requests, session information, registration, etc. IAAPA reserves the right to cancel sessions based on noncompliance.

Important Dates

The dates below provide some details about significant activities related to the IAAPA Expo Middle East 2026 Call for Presentations.

Aug. 25, 2025	Call for Presentations portal open for submissions
Nov. 30, 2025	Call for Presentations portal closes , no further submissions
Dec. 01, 2025	IAAPA Education Committee begins the submission review process
Jan. 25, 2026	IAAPA Education Committee meets to finalize session selections
Feb. 01, 2026	IAAPA Education Committee notifies submitters on final selection

Proposal Review Process

IAAPA is a member-driven association. Submissions are reviewed by the IAAPA Education Committee and the IAAPA Education Middle East Task Force who are tasked with ensuring the conference offers a comprehensive, non-promotional, objective, and diverse program.

IAAPA committees are made up of IAAPA Members and are considered subject matter experts in their field. They seek to find sessions that intend to move the industry forward, challenge traditional thinking, and offer solutions to common problems. After making their selections, committees work with presenters throughout the remainder of the year to plan the selected sessions for IAAPA Expo Middle East. During the review process, Committees will consider proposals that include the elements listed below.

- Adult learning theory and instructional design – proposals should be innovative, stimulating, outcome focused, and engaging
- Participant motivation to attend the session – professional development, improve efficiencies, problem solving, networking and self-discovery
- Specific learning outcomes – clearly defined objectives and learning outcomes
- Type of content – proposals should be industry-relevant, contain best practices, case studies, or be informed by research
- Audience appeal – does the session align well with the audience selected

Proposal Submission Criteria

The following items are a requirement for all submissions.

- **Title** – The session title is the first required part of the abstract process. When creating a session title;
 - Convey the intent of your presentation with a succinct title, under 75 characters
 - Use words to grab the attendee's attention
 - Appeal to the intended target audience
- **Session Description** – The session description should provide the benefits of attending the session. If the proposal is selected, the session description will be used for the conference website and within IAAPA Connect+.

When creating a session description:

- Write in third person, present tense
 - Write in a style that makes the session appealing to attendees but can accurately deliver on the proposed description.
- **Other Session Information** – Proposals will have additional space to share any other information important for consideration of the proposal. Examples of items you might explain in this area are;
 - Speakers not yet confirmed for the presentation.
 - Any activities or exercises you plan to conduct during the session
 - **Session Type** – IAAPA Expo presentations are typically presented in 1 of the following formats:
 - EDUSession – 30 minute presentation. Can be presented as a Keynote or a
 - Panel of speakers. Exceptionally 45 minutes can be allocated for panel discussions.
 - EDUTalk – 20 minute keynote in a more casual learning environment (Innovation Stage)
 - **Room Set Preference** – You may select a preferred room set-up for your session. Room set-ups are not guaranteed and are assigned by IAAPA. Possible Room Sets include:

Session Format	Duration	Room Setup	Description
Keynote	30 mins	Theater Seating	A presentation exploring a session topic
Speaker Panel	60 mins	Theater Seating	A panel of speakers discussing a session topic
Exchange	60 or 90 mins	Round Table or Board Room	Informal face to face discussions between fellow attendees
EDUTalk	20 mins	Theater Seating	1 speaker presents a topic (Innovation Stage)

- **Area of Practice** – Identifies the overall topic of the presentation. Each Area of Practice has multiple disciplines that could be a more specific focus of the discussion. For a breakdown of these disciplines, please reference IAAPA's Common Body of Knowledge.

• **Learning Objectives** - List up to 3 learning objectives that attendees can achieve by attending your proposed session. If selected, Learning Objectives may be posted to attendees along with the session description to inform attendees of the benefits of attending the session.

When writing Learning Objectives:

- Write objectives from the perspective of the learner (not your presentation objectives).
- Make them action or results oriented using leading words like apply, analyze, discuss, develop, examine,
- explore, identify, recognize, etc.
- Avoid passive words like: learn, understand, and know.
- Make sure that you can deliver on the objectives you choose!

• **Content Level** – Assist IAAPA by selecting one of the options below for content level. If the proposal is selected, your selection will be used to assist attendees determine if the session is the right fit for them.

- Introductory (Suitable for all attendees)
- Advanced (Suitable for those with at least 3 years previous experience)

• **Language** All presentations at IAAPA will be conducted in English. IAAPA will provide English captioning for these presentations to support understanding and accessibility."

• **Speakers** – Submissions should identify the individuals who will participate in the session by indicating their speaker role and submitting a brief biography and headshot. If all speaker roles have not been assigned at the time of the submission, they may be added later if the session is accepted, with assistance from IAAPA. Each session allows for a maximum of four (4) speakers, one (1) of which may act as the moderator.

Speakers roles:

- Speaker: Individual presenting a topic
- Moderator: Leads a speaker panel discussion, introduces topics, or facilitates question and answer with attendees
- Panelist: a member of a panel discussion
- Facilitator: Individual leading an informal discussion during roundtable sessions

What happens next?

If your proposal is accepted, you can expect the following.

- IAAPA will notify the submitter of their acceptance into the education conference according to the timeline above.
- Upon acceptance, the submitter will be asked to confirm the session presenters.
- Session presenters must accept and submit the speaker registration and agreement in advance of IAAPA Expo Middle East.
- The submitted title will be provided to IAAPA's marketing team for edits and will be used to describe and promote the session on the IAAPA website and in the trade show program.
- Speakers must consolidate and submit one (1) presentation before using IAAPA Expo Middle East branded PowerPoint template.

The selecting IAAPA committee will begin correspondence with the presenters to assist with session planning. The committee will

- Assist with shaping the content and final presentation
- Ensure deadlines are met
- Review presentations
- Liaise between IAAPA staff and presenters
- Support presenters at IAAPA Expo Middle East with session logistics

Contact and Questions

If you have questions about the Call for Presentations, reach out to Tom van Liefferinge, Senior Education Manager at IAAPA EMEA, TVanLiefferinge@IAAPA.org