

## The future of the CAPA Conference

### 1. Introduction

The Board will consider the future of the CAPA Conference during their Retreat in July 2023. The views of members will assist the deliberations. An on-line poll will be held during the Members Meeting to gather information to assist the deliberations of the Board.

### 2. Background

The initial discussion about the purpose and future of the CAPA Conference arose back in 2012. The purpose of the CAPA Conference has not been thoroughly addressed in recent times. Further, with the plethora of events organised by PAOs, and the cost and climate concerns associated with travel, it would seem to be getting more and more difficult to have an event that simultaneously attracts both overseas and local attendees to attend in-person. And virtual attendance by international delegates can be challenging with our region spanning many time zones.

In 2012, certain options were tabled for discussion:

<b>OPTION</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>1</b>	Only for leaders involved in and around the profession (say 200 attendees) focused on strategic issues facing the profession in the region – a “think tank” to drive future actions and outcomes.
<b>2</b>	Aimed primarily at a local audience (therefore topics to suit) and CAPA supports by providing international (global) flavour.
<b>3</b>	An international (regional) conference for accountants – opportunity for accountants in practice, business, and government to learn about the region; and assists in promoting relationships, trade in services, and exchange of ideas.
<b>4</b>	A combination of all the above (arguably the World Congress in a global context is a combination of all the above).

The debate at that time did not reach any firm conclusions for various reasons:

- CAPA introduced the concept of the FRED Forum (financial reform for economic development), staging FRED 1 in 2014, which effectively resembled Option 1 above, and therefore there would be an opportunity to reflect on that event; and
- the 2015 CAPA Conference was in motion, again providing an opportunity to reflect on that event

The matter was therefore next discussed by the Board in 2016, following which, **the directors ‘leaned towards’ change and agreed in-principal to discontinue the conference format, with a proviso that certain alternate events would be targeted, namely FRED style events (Option 1), and also by supporting ‘international events’ staged locally by PAOs (Option 2).**

Six months after the 2016 meeting, the directors deliberated again and, in the light of evolving circumstances and information regarding both FRED events and co-branding local events, **concluded “to maintain the status quo”**.

The reasons cited were:

- Continuity and frequency of FRED forums are uncertain
- Visibility of CAPA to a PAOs membership is important to some members
- Since held every four years, it is likely a member may wish to occasionally host
- There is brand recognition, partly arising from the legacy established by the CAPA Conference
- No track record for alternative events
- Demand for conferences is still high in South and Southeast Asia regions

Since then, the 2021 CAPA Conference was staged, and being held during the pandemic, was staged virtually (hosted by CA Sri Lanka) without any in-person international delegates.

**Attachment A** provides data regarding delegate attendance at the past 4 CAPA Conferences. Whilst international participation has been high on occasion, the attendance has come from a limited number of countries. Factors influencing attendance can include location, cost, ease of entry (visas), and available translation services.

Circumstances continue to evolve, in particular (1) the use of technology to allow large-scale participation in virtual events, and (2) the ongoing demands to reduce air travel for cost and climate impact reasons.

Further, for similar reasons, IFAC is currently deliberating the future of the World Congress of Accountants (WCOA), with the IFAC Board aiming to make a decision in June 2023. IFAC management is currently recommending, and seeking comment on, a proposal for a "Revised WCOA" which would be held adjacent to the IFAC Council, be staged every 2 years, and targeted primarily at convening its members (PAO leadership) and key stakeholder (Forum of Firms leadership) – these being the 2 main funders of IFAC. Others expected to participate would include Independent Network Partners (INPs) such as CAPA, and other key global institutions. Local activities could also be accommodated.

### **3. Commentary**

At the July Board Retreat, directors will consider the future of the CAPA Conference, and amongst other factors, will take into consideration the ongoing IFAC deliberations and any outcomes, and the information from the previous CAPA Conferences.

The Board will also consider the input of all CAPA members, and therefore members are asked to consider the following questions and participate in an on-line poll to be held during the Members Meeting.

**‘Organisational’ views rather than personal views are requested.**

These questions are aimed to better understand if the CAPA Conference, staged in its current form for which the objective is largely to attract local and international members’ members, can be successful. The responses from the poll will inform if the CAPA Conference is a recognisable brand.

Please prepare for the following 6 questions to be asked during a poll at the Members Meeting:

1. **[In-person event]** How many of your members (excluding CAPA meeting attendees) would you expect to travel to a CAPA Conference staged anywhere in the region?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> 0-5 / 6-20 / 21-50 / Over 50**
2. **[Hybrid event]** If the CAPA Conference is a hybrid event, how many of your members (excluding CAPA meeting attendees) would you expect to join virtually if the time difference from the host country is within **2 hours**?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> 0-5 / 6-20 / 21-50 / Over 50**
3. **[Hybrid event]** If the CAPA Conference is a hybrid event, how many of your members (excluding CAPA meeting attendees) would you expect to join virtually if the time difference from the host country is within **3 hours**?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> 0-5 / 6-20 / 21-50 / Over 50**
4. **[Hybrid event]** If the CAPA Conference is a hybrid event, how many of your members (excluding CAPA meeting attendees) would you expect to join virtually if the time difference from the host country is within **4 hours**?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> 0-5 / 6-20 / 21-50 / Over 50**
5. If a periodic, regional flagship event is retained - who should be the target audience?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> PAO members / Leaders and key players**
6. Would you like the Secretariat to contact you separately to discuss the future of the CAPA Conference?  
**CHOOSE ONE >> Yes / No**

The matter is complex, and the above questions do not necessarily capture all relevant aspects, options and inter-relationships. Members are encouraged and welcome to participate in the debate at the Members Meeting on 21 June or may **provide any additional written comments to the Secretariat prior to 30 June** which can be considered by the Board at their July Retreat.

#### **4. Action Required**

Members are requested:

- to consider the above questions and nominate a designated representative to input the organisational response during the on-line poll; and
- provide any additional input in writing to the Secretariat by 30 June 2023.

**Attachment A**

**Registered participants of CAPA Conference**

Year Venue	Local	International
2021 Sri Lanka - <i>Virtual event</i>	95% 1,904	5% 108
2015 Seoul, Korea	60% 625	40% 413
2011 Brisbane, Australia	56% 421	44% 337
2007 Osaka, Japan	73% 1,425	27% 538

**International (Excluding host) -  
above 15 participants**

China	Japan	Korea	Malaysia	Mongolia	Sri Lanka	Russia
	27% 29	41% 44			<i>host</i>	
	16% 66	74% 306	<i>host</i>			
	42% 141	14% 47	7% 25	12% 40		
	43% 233	24% <i>host</i>	4% 131	3% 23	3% 15	3% 15

**International -  
number of countries\***

15 and above	10 to 14	Below 10	CAPA members not represented
68% 2	0	11	9
90% 2	0	18	7
75% 4	3	22	2
81% 6	3	14	3

\*At all Conferences except 2021, this will likely reflect individuals attending the CAPA meetings.