

# Proposal to host WTC 2026



## Executive Summary

The Tunnelling Association of Canada (TAC) is pleased to present you with its Executive Summary which summarizes our proposal to host the World Tunnel Congress (WTC) and the ITA General Assembly from May 15-21, 2026, in Montréal, Canada. The Tunnelling Association of Canada hereby confirms that the application for the organization of WTC 2026 and the 52nd General Assembly has been prepared in line with the requirements of ITA-AITES Statutes and By-Laws including Appendix 1 of the By-Laws. TAC gives formal acceptance of Chapter V of the By-Laws and confirm that WTC 2026 and the General Assembly will be organized in accordance with these same By-Laws and Statutes.

### 1. Main Information as in Expression of Interest (EOI)

- Dates of Event: From Friday, May 15 to Thursday, May 21, 2026
- City Location of Event: Montréal (Canada)
- Theme of the Event:
  - Connecting Communities through Underground Infrastructure*
  - Connecter les communautés au moyen d'infrastructures souterraines*
- Details of the Venue: The venue, the Palais des congrès de Montréal (Montréal Convention Centre) is retaining all necessary space as described in Appendix 1 of the 2021 ITA-AITES Bylaws, Section C-1.2. (Details in section 2 below).

### 2. Proposal location

- City and Venue
- **Congress facilities:**

WTC 2026 and the ITA General Assembly would be held at the Palais des congrès de Montréal, a modern venue devoted to national and international meetings, strategically located in downtown Montréal in the core of their underground transportation system and hotel district. The Palais offers modern, sophisticated, and flexible facilities, equipped with powerful event technologies and featuring abundant natural light.

#### **Detailed space in accordance with Appendix 1-Section C-1.2:**

- The Palais can house all technical sessions, meeting rooms, food and beverage services, and the exhibition area under one roof
- WIFI services maintained throughout the entire facility: 250 Mbps Internet bandwidth complimentary package

- Lecture hall to house Opening Ceremony and Plenary Sessions for up to 2,700 people (2,284 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Spacious room for the ITA General Assembly - 32 m X 46 m: 1,522 m<sup>2</sup>
- Technical Presentation Rooms - 2 rooms for more than 350 people and 2 rooms for more than 500 people, located on the same floor and within a two-minute walk from each other
- Various meeting space: ITA Secretariat, Executive Director's Boardroom, Ad-Hoc meeting rooms, Press Room, Speaker Rooms, Offices, Ad-hoc meetings
- 20 Working Group and Committee Meeting Rooms ranging from 25 to 50 seats each in U-Shape and Training Session Rooms
- Registration Area
- Exhibition / Posters / Catering / Press Room with more than 8,700 m<sup>2</sup> of contiguous space for more than 250 booths of 3x3 m<sup>2</sup> with:
  - access to 18 unloading docks with dock levelers
  - ample wiring/piping channels and outlets for the supply of water, drainage, electricity, and compressed air
  - official customs clearance on site recognized by the Canada Border Services Agency

TAC has a firm commitment and written confirmation from the Palais des congrès de Montréal to hold the venue for TAC until a decision is made on the awarding of WTC 2026, and a contract is signed with the ITA-AITES. The Palais is **retaining all necessary space as described in Appendix 1** of the 2021 ITA-AITES Bylaws, Section C-1.2 for the dates of May 15-21, 2026.

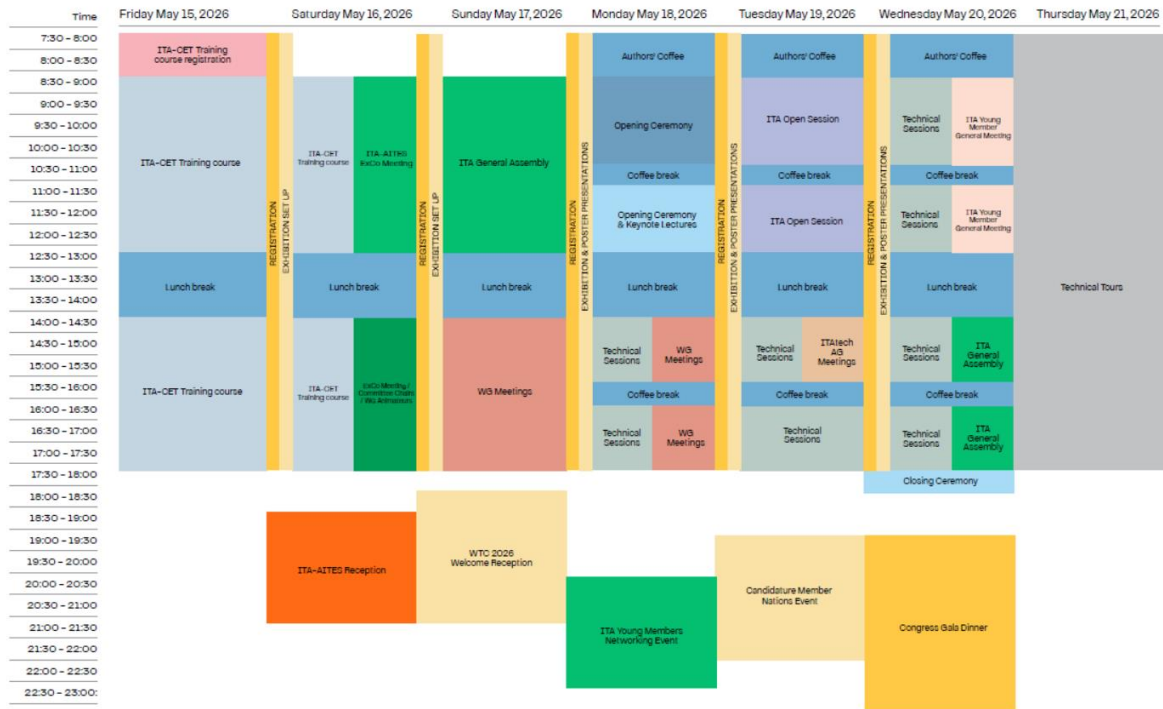
➤ **Theme of congress**

***Connecting Communities through Underground Infrastructure***  
***Connecter les communautés au moyen d'infrastructures souterraines***

The tunnelling industry plays a vital role in connecting our communities through underground infrastructure - delivering transportation, water and sanitation, utility and energy networks that cross, connect, and unite cities, regions, and continents. The nature of these projects and the challenges they face are varied, and so the ITA-AITES and WTC play an important role in bringing together and connecting our community of owners, contractors, suppliers, consultants, and academics. This is a diverse community, and very much like our communities at home, we often speak different languages, both literally and metaphorically; and so, it is that we look to bring together our international community of tunnelling practitioners to connect across languages to share experiences and knowledge to make our projects more safe, economic, resilient, and sustainable.

➤ **Draft Program**

The technical program, which is the primary focus of the Congress, has been carefully designed as per ITA requirements from Friday, May 15 to Thursday, May 21, 2026, including technical tours on the last day.



➤ **Participation estimation**

The Tunnelling Association of Canada (TAC) holds its annual meeting with more than 400 participants each year and if Canada is selected to host WTC2026, TAC would be honored to do a joint conference that would then include its members. We can also count on other Canadian societies who would be interested in including some of their members, access to a very high-level program with WTC2026:

- The Canadian Geotechnical Society (1,400 members)
- The Canadian Dam Association (1,000 members)
- The Canadian Chapter of the North American Society for Trenchless Technology (500 members)
- The Canadian Institute of Mining Metallurgy and Petroleum (10,000 members)

TAC enjoys the strong support of numerous corporate sponsors, whom we can count on to attend, sponsor and exhibit:



## ➤ **Tunnelling activities in Canada**

Canada has one of the most progressive tunnelling industries worldwide and is proud of its tunnelling achievements. Most major Canadian cities now have transit systems in tunnels and many more rely on networks of utility tunnels; road and rail tunnels have opened the Rockies to better connect the country and Canada's hydroelectric schemes are contributing to the country's green energy transformation.

Several of the world's most ambitious tunnelling projects have been recently completed here in Canada—from Québec's Romaine hydroelectric schemes, to deploying the world's largest rock TBM for the Sir Adam Beck power tunnels and pushing the envelope for Earth Pressure Balance machine (EPB) and slurry-pressurized tunnelling on the Port Mann Water Tunnel and Second Narrows Water Supply Tunnels, respectively. The future outlook is bright, and the Canadian tunnelling industry will continue to grow while remaining at the forefront of tunnelling technology. Plans for expanding transit, energy, hydroelectric and water supply systems across the country will continue to create demand for more tunnels and the industry's expertise.

Montréal is known for its Montréal Underground Network commonly known as “le Montréal souterrain” and has a rich history of tunnelling which goes back to the years of construction of the 5 km long roc Mont Royal Tunnel that started in July 1912 to be opened to rail operation on October 21st, 1918, after delays due to World War I and the Spanish Flu. After a relatively quiet period of heavy underground construction work in Montréal, the city is now experiencing a steady and growing number of projects spurred in part by interest in expanding the existing public transportation network and updating the existing water and wastewater infrastructure. In particular, the injection of massive private investment in light rail system across the city has created massive work and expedited the speed of decision making and project delivery.

On the other side, aging infrastructure as well as a need to comply with new fire life safety requirements has added major rehabilitation work for both the existing subway system and road tunnels.

Tunnelling in Canada has a bright future, which will continue with the development of diverse sectors. With growing populations there are needs for municipal water and waste infrastructure, rapid transit for our cities and secure transportation corridors (railway, highway) to connect our communities; access and delivery of natural resources (mining, oil, and gas) and energy (hydroelectric, nuclear) as well as military needs and fundamental explorations in particle physics. Canada will continue to rely on international expertise and innovation to achieve its goals.

For the next generation, it will also be a satisfying time for those who are interested in research and teaching. Universities across Canada are now graduating young students in every aspect of tunnelling and underground space development. Maintaining an adequate supply of capable graduates will provide inspiration for close cooperation between universities and various business sectors throughout Canada.

## ➤ Hotel Accommodations

The Venue, the Palais des congrès de Montréal, is within walking distance of 16,000 hotel rooms and linked directly to 4,000 hotel rooms through the city's underground pedestrian network. Montréal offers a full variety of accommodations to suit the budget and tastes of all delegates, from luxury hotels, boutique hotels, inns to more affordable hotels and student residences. More than 1,800 hotel rooms on peak nights have been secured with a confirmed 2026 room rate starting at €145<sup>1</sup> / Can\$196.

## ➤ Host City

Montréal has all the right ingredients to ensure the success of any international gathering:

- Montréal is ranked the number one host city in the Americas for international meetings<sup>2</sup>
- 20-minute connection from the airport to downtown and the convention centre
- Direct flights from Montréal to more than 150 destinations, including 91 international, 28 U.S and 31 domestic
- TAC can count on the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to provide the best possible service in helping coordinate the border crossing requirements for their event
- Safe and pedestrian-friendly city with numerous transportation modes: REM, Subway (Metro), Bixi (bike-sharing system), bus and taxi
- A low cost of living
- Over 6,000 restaurants city-wide offering some 80 different types of regional and international cuisine
- A unique cosmopolitan city where French, English and over 140 other languages are spoken in a special Euro-American *joie de vivre* atmosphere
- An exceptional line-up of all kinds of events and festivals, indoors and out
- Over 1,000 parks and green spaces, and a vast network of 900 km of bike lanes that makes it easy to travel all over the city, through parks, and along the river
- A city of contrasts and cultural pluralism, a free and open space for design and architecture
- An excellent selection of pre- and post-tours right at Montréal's doorstep

## 3. Technical program

### ➤ Technical program

The technical program will be organized to bring together different voices to discuss emerging and cutting-edge solutions, connecting government decision makers and city planners with the international tunnelling industry. These connections will help to build a stronger global network, connecting Canadian knowledge and expertise with the growing infrastructure needs

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<sup>1</sup>The value of currencies is determined by the foreign exchange market and can therefore always fluctuate.

<sup>2</sup> UIA - Union of International Associations and ICCA - International Congress and Convention Association 2021 rankings



of the developing world. For example, the technical program will place emphasis on sharing Montréal's vision and innovation on its world-class Underground City, connecting it with the ITA community to advance its goals for better use of underground space. In addition, the technical program will include a forum to exchange on the best ways to delivery complex underground projects faster while minimizing risks and reducing cost through partnering with public and private sectors as well as frameworks that connect owners, designers, contractors, and suppliers to streamline project delivery. Case studies such as the fast-track delivery of the Montréal REM Project will be highlighted.

### ➤ **Specific proposal**

All day technical tours will be arranged for Thursday, May 21, 2026. The extensive tunnelling in Montréal will enable some unique technical visits including:

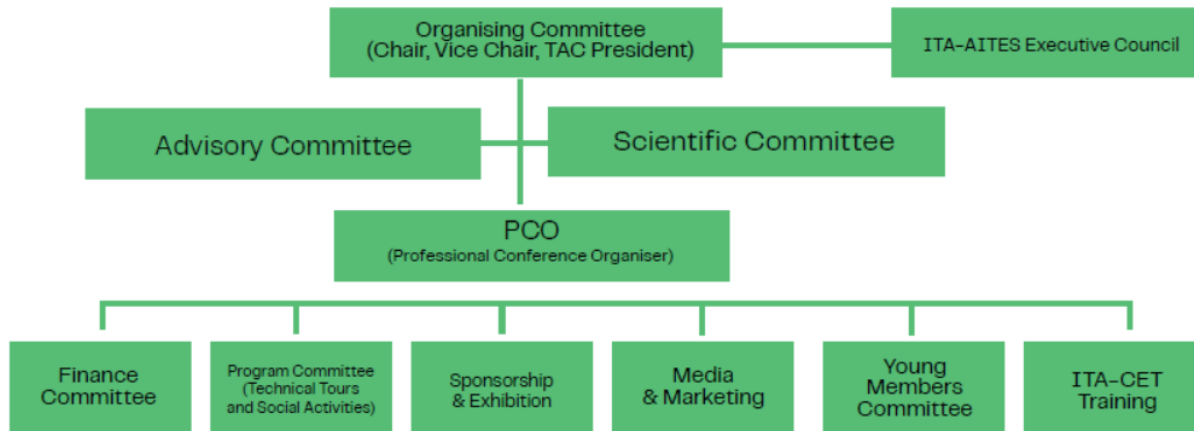
- **Underground City:** 32 kilometers of tunnels over 12 square kilometers of the most densely populated part of Montréal. *RÉSO*, commonly referred to as the Underground City (*La ville souterraine*), is the name applied to a series of interconnected office towers, hotels, shopping centres, residential and commercial complexes, convention halls, universities and performing arts venues that form the heart of Montréal's central business district, colloquially referred to as Downtown Montréal.
- **REM - rapid transit system:** The REM (*Réseau express métropolitain*) is a new rapid transit metro system that will span 26 stations, 67 km, and criss-cross the Greater Montréal Area. The first departures are slated for 2023, with the rest of the network expected to gradually become operational in 2023-2024.
- **REM de l'Est (future project):** In addition to the REM, the proposed light metro system will add 32 km of track and serve 23 new stations, providing fast and comfortable transit options that link city residents with boroughs in the east end of Montréal.
- **New McGill station:** In construction since fall 2018, the McGill station will provide a historic connection across the Mont-Royal Mountain and to the university poles. Ultimately, McGill Station will be one of the busiest stations in the REM.
- **Montréal's Metro Blue Line extension (future project):** A major project with 5 new universally accessible subway stations with a tunnel of approximately 6 km in length with 2 bus terminals.

## **4. Organization**

### ➤ **Planned organization**

If selected, WTC 2026 Montréal will be organized by the Tunnelling Association of Canada (TAC) in collaboration with ITA-AITES. TAC will establish the theme of the Congress, co-chair the Scientific Committee with ITA, and coordinate keynote lectures, training events, technical site visits, and social activities. An Organizing Committee (OC) has been developed based on the below Organizational Chart and it will maintain close coordination with ITA'S Executive Director and Executive Council (ExCo). The OC will be responsible for the financial control of the event and make

sure that everything is managed in a timely and professional manner. TAC has assembled a team of experts who not only are active in the underground industry, but also are well versed in the history of the ITA-AITES, organizing TAC conferences and previous WTCs. This team will be complemented by the next generation of TAC young members who will benefit from the experience of hosting a WTC. The TAC Bid Committee is an experienced group assembled to prepare the WTC 2026 proposal, which will be presented to the ITA-AITES and General Assembly; this group will carry onto the WTC 2026 Organizing Committee if the Canadian Bid is successful.



TAC is proposing the following Organizing Committee:

- Congress Chair: Dr. André Rancourt, PhD, P. Eng. (TAC Vice President East)
- Congress Vice-Chair: Dr. Jean Habimana, PhD, P. Eng. (TAC Québec & Maritimes Director)
- Bruce Downing, MSc, DIC, P. Eng. (TAC President)
- Scientific Committee Chair: Dr. Erik Eberhardt, PhD, P. Eng. (TAC Immediate Past President)
- Scientific Committee Vice Chair: Dr. Jonathan Aubertin, PhD, P. Eng.
- Advisory Committee Chair: Rick Lovat, P. Eng. (TAC Past President and ITA Past Vice President)
- Advisory Committee Vice Chair: Boro Lukajic, P. Eng. (TAC Past President)
- Finance Committee Chair Michelle Richards, CPA
- Program Committee Chair: Andre Solecki, P. Eng., PMP
- Venue - Palais des congrès de Montréal: Andrée-Anne Sauvageau (Business Development Manager)
- PCO : Sylvie Poirier, CAPM
- Sponsors + Exhibit Chair: Dan Ifrim, P. Eng.
- Media and Marketing Chair: Giuseppe Gaspari, P. Eng.
- Media and Marketing Vice Chair Anne-Marie Lefrancois, P. Eng., PMP
- Technical Tours: Stephanie Robillard, P. Eng.
- Young Members Committee Chair: Nichole Boulton, P. Geo., P. Eng.
- Young Members Vice Chair: Tim Packulak, P. Eng., P. Geo
- ITA-CET Training: Dr. Connor Langford, P. Eng., PhD

### Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee will be established in collaboration with ITA and TAC and will have the responsibility to review and comment on the abstract and manuscript submissions. The experience of the Scientific Committee members is crucial in order to deliver a high-quality technical program. The members will consist of an international group of technical specialists from industry and academia. **The Chairman will be Dr. Erik Eberhardt** who was on the WTC2010 Scientific Committee and attended many WTCs.

### Advisory Committee

TAC will populate the Advisory Committee with experts who have significantly contributed to recent TAC Conferences and WTCs from around the world. It is envisioned to have 3-4 Canadian and 10 to 12 International experts who will be intimately involved with the planning and implementation of WTC2026. **The Chairman will be Rick Lovat** who has extensive experience with the ITA ExCo and past WTCs. If Canada is successful to host WTC2026, Rick Lovat will serve as the Canadian representative for WTC2026 inside the ITA Executive Committee.

### ➤ Planned budget and registration fees

The Organizing Committee has prepared a conservative and balanced financial budget, based on 1,500 paid participants, 130 exhibitors and various levels of sponsorships: 1 Diamond, 2 Platinum, 5 Gold, 5 Silver and 10 Bronze. The budget is based on costs as they are known at this time and are subject to change. A major international firm will be auditing the budget and reviewing all financial statements after the conference.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET SUMMARY - Euro (€) <sup>3</sup>	
Revenues	€2,707,005
Expenses	€2,460,470
Expected surplus / (loss)	€246,235
% Expected surplus / (loss)	9%

Our goal in setting the registration fees is to provide value to attendees while keeping in line with previous WTC registration fees and competitive in comparison to related meetings.

SUGGESTED REGISTRATION FEES - Euro (€) <sup>3</sup>			
Early Bird		Standard	
Full	€885	Full	€1,060
Young	€485	Young	€580
Cat. 3	€575	Cat. 3	€690
Students	€310	Students	€370

Congress Registration fees include: all congress sessions, welcome reception, access to Exhibition Hall, Lunches & Coffee Breaks and Wi-Fi access.

<sup>3</sup> The value of currencies is determined by the foreign exchange market and can therefore always fluctuate.



The event is proposed primarily as an in-person, face-to-face, event format with select key components provided in a virtual format. The virtual formats would consist of recording and rebroadcasting of the morning plenary sessions to a password-protected, client-appointed digital platform/website. Due to the pandemic, a cancellation policy and contingency plan have been put together but TAC's target for WTC 2026 is to organize a successful congress in every aspect, highlighting the quality, high standards and principles of the organizers.

TAC's target for WTC 2026 is to organize a successful congress in every aspect, highlighting the quality, high standards and principles of the Organizers. To provide a clear and transparent agreement with the pre-registered participants, the Organizers have prepared a Contingency Plan in case certain unforeseen circumstances necessitate that WTC2026 has to be postponed or converted to a purely virtual congress or cancelled. Hence, the Contingency Plan refers to the actions that the organizers will implement along with the financial arrangements that will apply.

➤ **JPdL our PCO – Professional Conference Organizer**

The event will also enjoy the support of a team of tireless professionals from the Palais des congrès de Montréal, Business Events Montréal (Tourisme Montréal) as well as JPdL, our Professional Conference Organizer who has been carefully selected. They will dedicate themselves to making this prestigious international congress a resounding success. JPdL is one of the largest Canada-based business event organizers. They have a proven track record of creating successful events. Founded in 1982 by Jean-Paul de Lavisson, JPdL has grown into one of the world's leading business event specialists. From conferences to destination management services offered across Canada, JPdL is the one-stop for creating exceptional conferences. The JPdL team is comprised of many industry experts, most of whom have professional designations. As in other industries, certification in business event planning guarantees proficiency, skill, and knowledge. Relying on the combined experience of these experts guarantees a seamless and innovative event from start to finish.

We would be honored to have the opportunity to host the WTC2026 and the ITA-AITES General Assembly in Montréal, Canada and we are looking forward to welcoming you!

**To have access to our detailed proposal, you can click on the following link:**

[WTC2026 Montreal, Canada-Proposal.pdf](#)

Let's **connect** in Montréal, Canada in 2026!