



First Steps for the Chairman in the Preparation of an International Congress

This document is to assist the Chairman of the Local Organising Committee in the host country and assumes that the country has already been selected, but not necessarily the venue

DEFINITIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The definitions and objectives of the Congress need to be clearly defined:

- Purpose of the Congress
- Organising body: National/International
- Number and Composition of participants
- Market segment of participants
- Duration of Congress and Exhibition
- Year/month of Congress (avoid competing with established congresses and take into account public holidays)
- Frequency of Congress
- Number of abstracts
- Number and capacity of session halls
- Net exhibition space
- Official languages
- Identification of financial responsibility
- Publications
- Invited speakers
- Peculiarities of country in which the Congress is to be held
- Legislation and special permits required
- On-going events in the City/Country around the planned Congress dates
- Sustainability
- Access for all
- Technical infrastructure required
- Cultural (social) events
- General Secretariat

MANAGEMENT – ASSOCIATION

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the International and National Committees
- Appoint a National Organising Committee (Local) to embrace the various administrative activities
 - Promotion
 - Treasurer
 - Social
 - Sponsorship and exhibition
- Appoint the Scientific/Technical Programme Committee

MANAGEMENT – PROFESSIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISER (PCO)

Refer to IAPCO document: **How to Choose the Right PCO**
and: **Request for Proposal (RfP) for the Appointment of a PCO**

A PCO should be appointed at the earliest opportunity, the selection to take into account the following criteria:

- Experience in the international market
- Trust
- International recognition
- Financial stability
- Quality
- Transparency
- State of the art technology
- International membership

SELECT VENUE

In order to select a suitable venue for the Congress, the PCO consultancy would be helpful and the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Capacity: Exhibition space including access
 - Registration area
 - Poster area
 - Session halls
 - Catering
- Infrastructure/services
- Cost
- Exclusivity deals with local suppliers including in-house audio visual
- Internet capacity
- Accessibility
- Quality/management
- Staff experience with similar events
- Safety and Security
- Hotel capacities and distance from the venue
- Airport/international/national access
- Customs clearance/entry controls
- National regulations

MANAGEMENT – INDUSTRY

It is essential that Industry be considered to be a Partner of the Congress, with full co-operation and trust.

Local and/or International Industry Partners may be willing to assist in promoting the Congress.

CONFIRM DATES

When selecting the dates for the Congress, it is essential that an investigation be made into other events that may conflict, either in size, location or subject matter.

SECURE HOTELS

Having selected the venue, it is essential that the hotel accommodation is swiftly secured, taking into consideration:

- Speaker/VIP requirements
- Industry requirements
- Budget accommodation
- Sufficient accommodation for individuals in all categories

If the Congress has a reasonable track record, there should be enough information available on the actual 'pick-up' of rooms through the official Congress channel.

VISA MANAGEMENT

Assistance and information on VISA management should be provided

BUDGET

When preparing the initial budget, the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Tax implications
- Legal and audit implications
- Financial procedures
- Cash flow
- Currency stability
- City/national support
- Airline contributions
- Funding
- Industry support (direct and indirect)
- Profit allocation (if appropriate)
- Provisional costs

In addition:

- The budget should be realistic
- The budget must balance on a sensible breakeven
- The budget should be transparent to all

SCIENTIFIC/TECHNICAL PROGRAMME

Structure:

- Type of sessions
- Timetable grid
- Formats & furniture
- Live broadcasting

Abstracts, Publications and Proceedings:

- Abstracts management
- Selection criteria
- Posters/oral/other
- On-line and/or hard copy/electronic format
- Production & Distribution

Speakers/Invited persons:

- Origin
- Costs

Technical equipment:

- Quality
- Efficiency
- Clear guidelines for presentation

PROMOTION

- Logo/design
- www
- Print
- On-site promotion at other events
- Journals/advertising
- Using industry and other stakeholders
- Databank
- Social Media campaign
- Ambassador Programme

INDUSTRY

Exhibition:

- Location
- Access
- Build-up/breakdown (allowing for sufficient time for the size of the exhibition)
- Duration/open times
- Proximity to session halls
- Services (Technical, F&B, Freight Forwarding, Customs)
- Integrated delegate activities, interactive formats
- Stand allocation
- Legislation concerning materials on display

Sponsorship:

- Financing and pre-financing
- Marketing service opportunities
- Return on investment
- Free selection
- Guidelines for levels of sponsorship
- Hospitality suites
- Sponsors' meetings (pre-, on-site, and debriefing)

Contract:

- Payment against invoices
- Cancellation
- Terms
- Deadlines
- Rules and regulations

LOGISTICS

There are many detailed organisational tasks which need to be taken into consideration, some of the key elements to consider are as follows:

- Registration
- Secretariat
- Staff/hostesses/students (English language to be included)
- Transportation
- Technical equipment and construction
- Signs
- Catering
- Security
- First-Aid
- Press
- Social programme
- Companions' programme
- Tour programme (Congress and pre-/post-Congress)

TIMETABLE

Once the above First Steps have been completed a detailed timetable, setting out all the management and organisational tasks that need to be undertaken to complete the Congress, can be prepared. Depending upon the sequence of the Congress, this timetable should be undertaken as early as possible, as the timing of some items, for example, invitations to speakers, industry and promotion, are critical to success.

AFTER THE FIRST STEPS

The PCO will guide and advise Organising Committees on all aspects of the Congress.

List of Members

A full list of members, including all contact details, is available on the IAPCO website

Reference Documents

All IAPCO documents and guidelines can be obtained from IAPCO or from the IAPCO website to assist in the planning of your event.

Secretariat

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