

HOW TO PLAN A CONGRESS

CHECKLIST FOR THE ORGANISATION OF A CONGRESS

This document will assist you in planning and organising a congress:

1. Congress profile

- Purpose, topic and objectives of the congress
- Duration of congress and exhibition (including build-up and breakdown)
- Dates – avoid competing with established fairs, congresses and official holidays
- Organising body (national/international)
- Programme design (schedule, evening events, pre- and post-convention tours, etc.)
- Room requirements (number of session halls, net exhibition space, etc.)
- Technical requirements
- Infrastructural requirements of the venue
- Number of abstracts
- Invited speakers
- Official languages
- Local regulations of host country

2. Delegate profile

- Intended number of attendees (delegates, accompanying persons and exhibitors)
- Composition and market segment of attendees
- Attendee countries (immigration rules and visa formalities)

3. Budget

You need to consider the following points:

- Expenses and revenues
- Financial procedures
- Cash flow
- Tax implications
- Legal and audit implications
- Insurance coverage
- Accounting
- Budget control and interim reports
- VAT
- Profit allocation

- Responsibilities (budget, profit/deficit, signatory powers, etc.)
- Revenues from registration fees, exhibition, sponsorship and merchandising
- Public grants and funding programmes of foundations and companies, public assistance
- City/national support
- Airline contributions

4. Task distribution

- Specify roles and responsibilities (international committee/national committee)
- Appointment of a scientific committee
- Specify which tasks can be done in-house by the association and which tasks should be entrusted to a professional congress agency (PCO)

5. Destination and venue selection

In order to select a suitable destination and venue for the congress, the following issues should be taken into consideration:

- Convention profile
- Accessibility/international access
- Budget
- Price structure
- Infrastructure/services
- Venue capacities and quality
- Congress facilities
- Hotel capacities
- Safety and security
- National regulations, customs clearance

6. Timetable

- Deadlines
- Responsibility of tasks and observance of deadline
- Congress script (inclusive build-up and breakdown, congress scheduling, responsibilities)

7. Scientific programme

Structure:

- Plenary sessions
- Parallel sessions
- Speeches and presentations
- Discussions
- Workshops
- Poster sessions
- Satellite symposia
- Exhibition
- Abstracts

Schedule:

- Call for papers
- Abstract handling
- Selection criteria
- Type of presentations

Speakers:

- Costs (journey, accommodation, fee, etc.)
- Requirements
- Invitations
- Briefing and hosting

8. Social programme

- Opening and closing ceremony
- Social programme
- Accompanying person's programme
- Tour programme (congress and pre-/post-congress)
- Financing

9. Marketing and promotion

- Marketing service opportunities
- Logo/design
- Website, print material
- On-site promotion at other events
- Journals/advertising
- Media
- Database

10. Sponsorship

- Financing and pre-financing, Return on investment
- Marketing service opportunities
- Sales and handling
- Sponsors' meetings (pre-, on-site and debriefing)

11. Logistics

- Secretariat
- Registration
- Accommodation
- On-site handling
- Print material
- Social programme
- Transportation
- Safety and Security
- Catering
- Signs
- Technical equipment and construction
- Staff/hostesses/students
- Press (accreditation, press release, on-site organisation)

12. Evaluation

- Analysis (objectives, budget, cash flow, ROI, ROO)
- Attendee questionnaires
- Statistics
- Press releases
- Event report, minutes
- 'Thank you' letters to sponsors, speakers
- Debriefing with committee/staff