Checklist: how to plan a congress.

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This document is to 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:
▪ Selection
▪ 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)
▪ Transfer/transport
▪ 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
- Marketing service opportunities
- Return on investment
- Sales and handling
- Sponsors’ meetings (pre-, on-site and debriefing)

11 Logistics

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