

Guidelines for the International Scientific Programme Committee

*It is recommended that this be read in conjunction with the IAPCO document
Poster Presentations at an International Congress*

The planning and co-ordination of the scientific programme is of vital importance to the smooth running of an international congress. Most members of IAPCO have wide experience of working with scientific committees and will provide administrative support to such a committee as part of their basic duties.

However, whenever a Professional Congress Organiser (PCO) is engaged, the scientific chairman should ascertain what tasks they would normally undertake and what extra services can be provided at additional costs. PCOs are able to provide a full, computerized abstract-handling service which can be of immense value to the scientific chairman and his committee.

These guidelines refer only to the scientific or technical aspects of a congress and are intended for the use of the scientific committee. It is assumed that all other aspects of the organisation are being handled by a PCO or other body, with whom liaison, especially on budgetary items, is essential.

BASIC QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE WHEN COMMENCING THEIR TASK

1. Committee structure and responsibilities

Is the committee to be appointed nationally or is there an international committee who usually work together to compile the scientific programme?

- How will the work be allocated?
- How long do you expect the work to take?
- How many members do you think are needed?
- How much time can each person set aside for this work?
- Create bookmarks (interaction & convenience functions)

2. Timetable and programme format

- What will the timetable be?
- Are speakers to be invited only/chosen from submitted papers - or both?
- How much time will be allocated to each spoken presentation?

- What will the programme format be:
 - Keynote/Plenary Sessions
 - Lectures?
 - Workshops?
 - Seminars?
 - Round Tables?
 - Symposia?
 - Poster Sessions?
 - Satellite Meetings?

Pharmaceutical companies or other relevant organisations are often invited to organise peripheral meetings alongside congress activities as satellite meetings.

- How many parallel sessions will there be? Can these be accommodated, bearing in mind the venue and expected number of delegates?
- How many presentations can be made orally and how many as posters?

3. Abstracts

- If papers are to be submitted, how many abstracts are expected? Is this knowledge based on historical records of the congress?
- In which languages will abstracts be accepted?
- Will all abstracts be accepted and, if not, why will some be rejected?
- How will you deal with more than the expected number of abstracts? Will you:
 - Specify in the Call for Papers that there is a restriction on the number of admitted abstracts?
 - Allow for more poster presentations?
 - Publish abstracts by title only?
 - Be more selective in adjudication and reject some abstracts?
- How will abstracts received after the deadline be dealt with?

4. Invited speakers

- Remember that keynote speakers and chairmen need to be invited early
 - To ensure that the best people are available and
 - So confirmed names and topics can be published in early publicity material and the Advance Programme/Call for Papers.
- Which people are to be invited?
- Who will invite them?
- What expenses/benefits will they receive?
- What other information will they require?
 - Length and topic of presentation?
 - Date and time of presentation?
 - Names of contacts on scientific committee?
 - Type of written material required and deadlines for receipt (e.g. abstract/full paper for proceedings)?
 - Acceptable languages for presentation (oral and written)?
 - Details of other speakers/topics in the session?
 - are essential. A map/floor plan to locate each poster when mounting should be available.

5. Call for Papers

- Will the Call for Papers be mailed with the registration mailing or in advance?
- How much information about the programme will be given in the Call for Papers:
 - Names of confirmed invited keynote speakers and chairmen?
 - Topics or keywords to choose from?
 - Format of sessions (posters, symposia, workshops, etc.)?

6. Poster presentations

- What time will be set-aside for posters?
- What format will poster sessions take:
 - Viewing only
 - Discussions in workshop sessions according to topic?
 - Review of all posters in plenary session?
- Will the posters be changed daily/every two days/ remain throughout?

7. Publication of abstracts

- In what format will the abstracts be published (book, journal, CD-ROM, www)
 - Horizontal (landscape) or vertical (portrait) format?
 - How many on each page - one, two, three, four or more?
- Will all abstracts be published, including those from poster presenters?
- Will abstracts for any satellite meetings be published?
- Will the abstracts be published in a separate book or in the final programme?
- Will a publisher be appointed or will the congress organiser print abstracts?
- Will the abstracts be distributed to all delegates at registration?
- What indices will be included:
 - Author and co-authors (how will presenting authors be indicated?)?
 - Keyword or topic?
 - Chairmen?
- Will figures or diagrams be accepted?

8. Pre-prints

Will pre-prints (extended abstracts) be published for distribution before or at the congress?

9. Proceedings

- Will proceedings be published in a journal, book or on a CD-ROM?
- Will full proceedings be distributed to all delegates during or after the congress?
- Will the proceedings be published on the www homepages of the congress?
- Payment for proceedings:
 - Will the cost be included in the registration fee?
 - Will the cost be an optional purchase and offered on the registration form (at an advantageous price)?
- Will a publisher be appointed or will the organiser arrange for printing the proceedings?

TIMETABLES AND DEADLINES

At least 18 months before the congress, an outline programme should be drawn up showing number and timing of keynote/plenary sessions, lectures, workshops, seminars, round tables, symposia and poster sessions. At about the same time, invitations should be sent to keynote/invited speakers and chairmen, not forgetting to give details of expenses payable. A timetable listing actions and deadlines prior to the congress is essential. Ideally, this would be month-by-month and include a precise schedule for the handling of abstracts, from distribution of the Call for Papers to printing the programme and/or abstract book. A PCO would be able to advise fully on planning a detailed schedule of activities.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following items will affect the whole congress budget

1. Committees

Complimentary registrations and other expenses to be allowed to committee members:

- Committee members to be specified
- Type of expenses/benefits to be specified
- Are spouses included?
- Remember pre-congress expenses (travel to meetings, catering, accommodation)
- Secretarial and administrative costs (what and for whom?)
- Abstract handling and computerization costs.

2. Speakers

Complimentary registrations and other expenses to be allowed to speakers and chairmen:

- Who is eligible?
- What is payable?
- Travel (where from and what class?)
- Subsistence
- Expenses for spouses
- Accommodation
- Fees

Note: it is recommended that any expenses payable are handed to speakers on arrival at the congress rather than mailed in advance; alternatively they may be payable after the event on submission of claim forms and receipts.

- Speakers' dinner or other entertainment.
- Gifts for keynote speakers.

3. Call for Papers

- How many to be printed and mailed?
- To be incorporated in the registration mailing or dispatched separately?
- Format and weight?
- Cost of putting information on the www?

4. Programme

- Number of days for the scientific programme?
- Sizes of rooms required?
- Number of parallel sessions?
- Audio-visual aids required?
- Are congress sessions to be interpreted into other languages? If yes, how many and what languages?
- Are print items to be translated into other languages?

5. Abstracts

- Format and size of abstract book?
- Included in registration fee or not?
- Number required?
- Mailed in advance or not?
- Whether CD-ROM is to be produced?
- Whether abstracts are to be put on the www?

6. Posters

- Size of area for poster presentations.
- Number and type of poster boards (lighting requirements and method of fixing should also be taken into account).

*Refer to IAPCO document: **Poster Presentations at an International Congress***

7. Other

- Special identification required for authors/presenters (e.g. special badges, ribbons).
- Mailings:
 - Separate mailing of Call for Papers
 - Interim details of scientific programme
 - Abstracts mailed out in advance.

8. Proceedings

- Are these included in the registration fee? If yes:
 - Typeset or camera-ready?
 - Hard or soft cover?
 - Book and/or CD-Rom?
 - All papers included or invited only?
 - Size, format and number?
 - Editorial costs
- If circulated after the congress, remember to include mailing costs.
- If placed on the www, remember the associated costs.

9. All print items

ABSTRACT HANDLING PROCEDURES

On receipt of the abstracts, a number of tasks will have to be undertaken, either by the PCO or other body. PCOs will have an abstract-handling programme on their computer system, which may or may not be linked to the registration programme. Whether abstracts are submitted on paper or by electronic means, the tasks to be carried out will include:

- Receipt, recording and acknowledgement
- Sorting and distribution
- Compiling computer lists and programme charts
- Input of programme information
- Printing of abstracts and indexes.

ADJUDICATION AND ALLOCATION TO SESSIONS

This is one area where the PCO is unable to be of assistance except by producing charts to aid the scientific chairman and his committee and offering advice as required. Depending on the size of the congress and the number of abstracts received, it is sometimes helpful for two or three days to be set aside for the scientific committee to "go into retreat" to consider all abstracts and compile the scientific programme. If a residential weekend is planned, remember to include the costs in the budget.

Reference Guidelines

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

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