



WORLD PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Advance Psychiatry and Mental
Health Across the World

Organising a WPA Regional or Thematic Congress: A summary

To be read in conjunction with the WPA Scientific Meetings Policy *(see link below)

Definition: The WPA has three types of Congresses - World, Regional and Thematic. They must operate within the WPA Scientific Meetings Policy.

A Regional or Thematic Congress may be hosted in an area where the World Congress for that year is not taking place. There may be one or more Regional Congresses per year and the Member Society / organising group should preferably commit its Annual Meeting to the Congress.

A Thematic Congress differs from a Regional Congress in that it will focus on a special topic which the WPA wishes to explore. There can be one or more Thematic Congresses per year.

Expression of interest: Expression of Interest should be made at least 6-8 months in advance on forms available [here](#) and should be completed online and returned to the WPA Secretariat.

Criteria for Selection: The WPA President in consultation with Secretary for Meetings will decide whether the Congress should go ahead, and this will be the Decision Date from which various actions follow. The President will report the decision to the next Executive Committee (EC) meeting. There are specified criteria for selection outlined in the WPA Scientific Meetings Policy - (see link below) including strength of host Member Society / organising group, any visa restrictions, public security and safety, adequacy and cost of proposed venue.

There will be an agreed contract between the WPA and the hosting Member Society / organising group. The WPA recommends having a PCO, core or local, for each Congress and this may be decided jointly by WPA and the organising group.

Timing, duration and numbers: Regional and Thematic Congresses usually last 2-4 days preferably between a Thursday and Saturday. However, the decision about the length of the Congress will be made jointly by the WPA and the organising group. They can take place at any time of the year but should avoid major holiday periods in the country and major religious festivals. The expected number of participants is usually between 500-1000.

Congress Committees: There will be a Supervisory Board, chaired by the WPA President who will also be the President of the Congress. There will be an Organising Committee and a Scientific Committee chaired jointly between the WPA and the Member Society/Organising Component and including the local zonal representative. There may also be an international Advisory Committee, appointed by the Supervisory Board to assist and give advice as necessary such as the review of abstracts. The duties of each Committee are outlined in the WPA Scientific Policy.

Scientific Programme: The draft scientific programme should be sent to the WPA three months before the dates of the Congress. The format of the Programme should include, plenary, special lectures, state of the art symposia, industry sponsored sessions and any other sessions decided by the Scientific Committee. Interactivity is encouraged incorporating new technology and enhanced networking opportunities.

For the invited speakers, there should be a balance between diversity, age, gender, inclusion of service users and carers, engagement of industry, ethical compliance, and accreditation.

Congress Venue: The venue requirements for the congress will be jointly agreed by the WPA and the Organising Committee and may include 1-2 Plenary halls together with parallel halls depending on the scientific programme.

Congress Budget: The preliminary (projected) budget for the Regional or Thematic Congress should be prepared and sent to the WPA Secretary of Finance, within 1-3 months of the Decision Date. Registration fee should be decided by the Organising Committee and approved by the WPA. A template for the budget is available [here for a Regional Congress](#) and [here for a Thematic Congress](#). The updated budget should then be sent to the WPA every two to three months until before the Congress date.

Congress Contract: Once the draft budget has been approved, the contract between the WPA, the Member Society/Organising Component and the PCO (if any) should be prepared and signed within 6 months of the Decision Date.

Accreditation: is encouraged for the scientific programme. WPA also issues CME accreditation and further details can be found [here](#).

Congress Speakers: should be selected on the relevancy of their expertise, professional stature, presentation skills and international representativeness. There are different levels of support for invited speakers from full coverage (flight, accommodation, registration), partial coverage (accommodation, registration) and waiver only (registration waived).

WPA requirements: There should be a presentation by the WPA President or nominated representative during the opening session. There may be sessions where WPA educational programs are presented and a meeting between WPA EC members (if attending) with those Presidents of Member Societies and WPA zonal representatives attending the Congress.

If it is agreed that there should be an EC meeting at the Congress, then the members of the WPA EC, 1 Secretariat staff member should be invited. The WPA Zonal Representative from the region where the Regional or Thematic Congress is being held should also be invited and all these costs should be included in the budget. A meeting room for the WPA EC should be provided for two days before and during the Congress. Refreshments including a light lunch should be provided. These costs should be in the Congress budget.

WPA financial requirements: The WPA will charge a fee to the local organising group, 50% of which will need to be paid eight weeks prior to the Congress. The WPA shall assume no financial responsibility and shall not cover any loss incurred by the local organisers, including the PCO, in the organisation of the Congress.

Share of any Congress Surplus: Any surplus (profit) from Regional and Thematic Congresses will be shared between the WPA and the national Member Society/Organising Component, and, if agreed by the Organising Committee, the PCO, as specified in the signed Contract.

Industry Support: Industry support is key to the success of WPA Congresses. WPA and relevant industries have their own codes of conduct for sponsorship which should be followed. Industry sponsored activity should not compete with the Congress's main scientific programme. Such activity must be approved both by the Scientific Committee and the President of the Congress and it should be made clear that these are industry-sponsored activities.

[WPA Scientific Meetings Policy](#)

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