



WORLD PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Advance Psychiatry and Mental
Health Across the World

WPA Scientific Meetings Policy

Approved by Executive Committee 14 May 2019

1. General

This document describes the purposes and organization of WPA Scientific Meetings. It outlines the various types of Meetings and the requirements and decision-making processes. Further information about WPA Scientific Meetings can be found [here](#).

2. WPA goals for Scientific Meetings

- a. Increase the exchange of information between psychiatrists from different parts of the world, including networking, training and mentoring of early career psychiatrists.
- b. Contribute to the education of different categories of mental health workers by providing up-to-date scientific information.
- c. Increase exchange and collaboration between psychiatrists and their community, professional, government and development partners in all parts of the world.
- d. Boost collaborative research by bringing together psychiatrists and others interested in research from various parts of the world.
- e. Strengthen links between WPA Member Societies and between WPA and international and regional organizations in psychiatry.
- f. Increase the visibility of psychiatry nationally and internationally.
- g. Contribute to WPA funds.

3. Types of WPA Scientific Meetings

The WPA has two types of Scientific Meetings: WPA Congresses and WPA Co-sponsored Meetings.

4. **WPA Congresses.** There are three types of WPA Congress namely World Congresses, Regional Congresses and Thematic Congresses:

- a. **World Congress** - The World Congress of Psychiatry (WCP) will take place annually. The location of the WCP will be selected from one of the following three parts of the world: Asia/Oceania; The Americas; Europe/Middle East/Africa. The WPA will jointly organize the Congress with the hosting WPA Member Society through a mutually agreed contract or a co-operation agreement. A World Congress will normally last 3-4 days preferably between a Thursday and Sunday. The expected minimum number of participants should be about 5000.
- b. **Regional Congress** – Each of the two parts of the world not hosting a World Congress may host a Regional Congress. No more than two (2) Regional Congresses will take place annually and WPA will jointly organize a Regional Congress with a WPA Member Society through an agreed contract or co-operation agreement. Regional Congresses usually last 2-3 days preferably between a Thursday and Saturday. The expected minimum number of participants should be about 500-1000.
- c. **Thematic Congress** - These Congresses will be focused on one or more topics of interest. Their purpose is to address special issues that the WPA wishes to pursue. They can take place in parts of the world with a timing and format that does not compete with any of the other organized WPA Scientific Meetings. Thematic Congresses may be organized one or more times a year worldwide. They usually last 2-3 days and the expected minimum number of participants should be about 500-1000.

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The World Congresses and Regional Congresses are hosted and organized in collaboration with the governing body of a national Member Society. The Thematic Congresses are hosted and organized by the governing body of a national Member Society or WPA component as primary host or as co-host to an educational or other approved organization. The eligibility will be based on the rotation of WPA Congresses (see 4 (a) above).

5. **WPA Co-Sponsored Meetings** (see paragraph 8 below for further details)

The WPA can also be involved in Co-Sponsored Meetings. These are held in conjunction with national Member Societies, WPA components or other reputable organizations including educational institutions. The participation of WPA will be subject to the approval of the content of the meeting. They can be held one or more times a year in any part of the world. They are organized by the WPA components including a Member Society or a WPA Scientific Section or a WPA Zonal leadership in collaboration with a local PCO and should not compete with other WPA scientific meetings.

6. **Timing of WPA Congresses and Co-sponsored Meetings**

Congresses should avoid competing directly with other WPA Congresses or other major scientific meetings organized by other associations.

The preferred timing for all types of WPA Congresses is as follows:

- February - April
- May - June
- September - October
- November - December

The following major religious holidays should be avoided wherever possible:

- Easter (Catholic and Orthodox)
- Christmas
- End of Ramadan (Eid)

- Yom Kippur
- Chinese New Year

The WPA has prepared a timeline for each type of Congress and this is available on the WPA Website

7. WPA Congresses

a. Decision Making Process for hosting WPA Congresses

WPA should receive expressions of interest for World Congresses at least two years in advance of the proposed date of the World Congress and at least one year in advance for a Regional and Thematic Congress. The WPA Member Society or host organization should complete an Expression of Interest form which is available [here](#). The completed form should be sent to the WPA Secretariat for final approval by the WPA Executive Committee. The EC decision will be communicated to all bidders promptly after the decision is made.

A careful estimate of numbers should be included in the initial Expression of Interest form as the local host society's share of the surplus may decrease if numbers are significantly less than the number estimated.

Commitment to any party, such as a Congress Centre or local PCO, should not be made before the final decision has been made by the WPA Executive Committee. Member Societies should commit to join their annual Congress with the WPA World/Regional Congress in order to maximize attendance and impact.

b. Criteria for selection for WPA Congresses

- Public security and safety of the country and city involved.
- Strength of the host WPA Member Society in terms of members, activities and institutional resources, as well as its record of participation in WPA activities.
- Adequate accommodations and transportation resources.
- Adequacy of the Congress venue.
- Cost of the main items of expenditure such as venue, hotel and audio-visual costs.
- Accessibility of the city and the venue within the city.
- Clarity of the proposed budget and meeting WPA Congress expectations (applies only to any Regional or Thematic Congress not organized by WPA's Core PCO).
- Quality of the proposed plan for Congress preparation, including its timetable (applies to any Regional or Thematic Congress not organized by WPA's Core PCO).

c. Operating a WPA Congresses

Each WPA Congress should operate within the WPA Scientific Meetings Policy. The WPA has prepared sample scientific programmes, a budget template and a timeline for each Congress. These documents are available [here](#).

It is a WPA requirement that a Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) is appointed for all World Congresses of Psychiatry.

The WPA sets particular standards in the operation of its Congresses. The WPA's goal is to create a successful brand name for its Congresses and to ensure that Congresses have high quality scientific content related to psychiatry and its sub-specialties as well as high ethical and aesthetic standards. WPA Congresses should have an interactive, proactive format, with a balance by diversity, age, gender and geography, inclusion of service users and carers, engagement of the industry, ethical compliance, accreditation, evaluation and distribution of responsibilities.

d. Venue requirements:

The exact number of halls will differ from Congress to Congress and will depend on the type of Congress, the scientific programme and the numbers attending. The following rooms will usually be required but the numbers of each will vary:

- 1- 2 plenary hall - the capacity will depend on the estimated number of delegates.
- 4 – 5 parallel halls for Regional and Thematic Congresses with 100-150 seating capacity.
- 6 – 8 parallel halls for World Congresses.
- Smaller meeting rooms.
- Approximately 200 sq.m. for exhibition and posters.
- Meeting rooms for WPA Committees.
- Space for General Assembly every three years.

e. Local host involvement:

The local host Member Society or WPA component will have a co-ordinating role for the Congress and will be involved in planning, implementation and logistics. They will nominate a Co-Chair for the Organising and Scientific Committees (see (f) below). The local host is also expected to:

- Help with local knowledge.
- Ensure cooperation with the local authorities and any compliance with local regulations.
- Actively acquire sponsors and exhibitors for the congress from the local market.
- Obtain quotes for the logistics working with the PCO when relevant.
- Promote the congress to the national and regional psychiatric community.
- Provide recommendations for the social events.

f. Establishment of WPA Congress Committees

The WPA requires the establishment of the following Congress Committees:

The Supervisory Board should be established for WPA World Congresses only. The WPA President will be the President of the World Congress and Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Congress. The Supervisory Board will have overall responsibility for the entire Congress operations, content and financial, authorization of budget items above US \$25,000. It will make the final decision on any unresolved dispute in any other committee. A Supervisory Board must be established for World Congresses but may also be set up for Regional and Thematic congresses.

The Organizing Committee will have two Co-Chairs; one nominated by the host Member Society/WPA Component and one nominated by the WPA (usually a member of the WPA Executive Committee). Their remit is as follows:

- Finalise the appointment of the PCO, local or otherwise, if the Congress is not to be organised by the WPA Core PCO. Obtain names, contact details and a description of the services to be carried out by the Secretariat of the local host Member Society.
- Decide registration fees but with the Supervisory Board's approval for World Congresses.
- Describe clearly the work that the WPA Secretariat will need to undertake if they are required to provide assistance to the Organising Committees. Agree this with the WPA CEO at the outset and ensure appropriate allocation of funds in the Congress budget.
- Provide an estimate of the expected number of delegates, final dates and timings for opening and closing sessions and send to the Scientific Committee and the WPA Executive Committee.
- Obtain all venue details including audio-visual arrangements and the number of available rooms for the scientific programme.
- Send reports, including financial reports, every two months, to the WPA Chief Executive for circulation to the Executive Committee.
- Prepare the budget (see h below).

The Scientific Committee. One Co-Chair will be nominated by the WPA and the second Co-Chair by the local host Member Society or WPA component. Their remit is as follows:

- Assist the WPA President and the WPA Secretary for Meetings (or nominated Executive Committee representative) in finalising the names of the members of the Scientific Committee.
- Inform the Organising Committee if there are any budgetary requirements from the Scientific Committee so these can be included in the overall Congress budget.
- Identify the names and contact details of the Secretariat of the local host Member Society from the Organising Committee and obtain details of services offered by the local Secretariat.
- Finalise the details of services offered by the PCO / Conference Secretariat for the Scientific Committee such as sending information about scientific programme, calling for abstracts and selection of abstracts and other logistics related to the scientific programme.
- Prepare and send to the Organising Committee a draft template of the scientific programme within a period of 2-3 months of the Decision Date followed by a final programme which should be sent at least 2 months before the Congress date. Finalise the number of plenary and other sessions as suggested by the local Organising Committee and approved by the WPA Executive Committee.
- Prepare a List of Topics for the programme, the suggested number of Plenary and Special Lectures, Oral Presentation sessions, Posters, Seminars, Workshops or Educational Courses if required.
- For World Congresses finalise plenary and other speakers in consultation with local hosts.
- Ensure that the number of speakers is carefully calculated and is within the agreed budget.
- For Regional and Thematic identify speakers' names for Plenary and Special Sessions. 60% will be selected by the WPA and 40% by the local hosts.
- Finalise the dates and format for call of papers and formal letters of invitation to be signed by the WPA President and Co-chairs of the Organising and Scientific Committees to plenary and invited speakers.
- Prepare a plan with dates for submission of abstracts, closing date and preparation of the approved list of speakers for the scientific sessions. Consult the members of the Scientific Committee once the last date for call of abstracts is over for reviews and approval of the abstracts and finalise the approved list of abstracts for final submission to the Organising Committee and WPA Executive Committee at least four months in advance of the Congress date.

- Inform plenary, special sessions speakers and other presenters about the timing of their presentations soon after the closing date for registration.
- Finalise the preliminary programme at least three months before the Conference and send reports and updated feedback every two months about the progress of Scientific Committee work to the WPA Executive Committee.

Other members of these Committees will be decided by the WPA President, the EC and the local host Member Society/WPA Component. They should include international experts. The WPA Executive Committee will be kept informed about the working of the different committees of the Congress.

g. WPA Congress Requirements

There should be the following WPA Sessions:

- A presentation by the WPA President or her/his representative, during the opening and closing sessions.
- WPA forum / Meet the WPA session where WPA Executive Committee members will be available to share the WPA vision and plans with the delegates.
- A session or sessions during the Congress at which the WPA Action Plan and related programmes are presented, and which are organized in collaboration with the WPA Secretary for Education.

The WPA Executive Committee will require a Congress room for 12 people for one to two days before the Congress and then for the duration of the Congress, with coffee breaks (morning and afternoon), and a light lunch served daily in the Congress room.

h. Financial aspects of a WPA Congresses

Draft Scientific Programme: Once the WPA Executive Committee's approval has been obtained for a WPA Congress (referred to as the Decision Date), the draft scientific programme should be prepared within 3 months of the Decision Date.

Preliminary Budget: When the draft scientific programme has been agreed, a preliminary budget should be prepared by the local organisers, with the help of the core PCO or local PCO, based on the draft scientific programme. The preliminary budget should be prepared and sent for approval to the WPA Secretary of Finance (or the nominated EC representative) and to the WPA CEO within 5 months of the Decision Date. A proposed template budget for each type of WPA Congress is [here](#).

Contract: After the approval of the preliminary budget, a contract will be signed between WPA, Organizing WPA component and PCO (core or local) usually within 6 months of the Decision Date. This should cover details of organizational logistics, budget details or any other financial or legal liabilities.

The timing of the preparation of the draft scientific programme, the preliminary budget and the signing of the contract may vary between Congresses and the timings above are intended to be guidance.

The budget of the Congress should include Congress registration, travel (economy airfare), accommodation and per diem expenses of the eight WPA Executive Committee members plus 1-3 WPA administrative staff (the final number to be agreed with by the CEO WPA Chief Executive). The budget should also include Congress registration, travel and accommodation for the eighteen WPA Board Members.

The Council members are invited to the World Congress when the General Assembly takes place and their Congress registration, travel and accommodation should be in the budget for that Congress. The costs of the General Assembly, held every three years should also be included. In addition, the cost of the involvement of the WPA Secretariat in the organization of the Congress should be included in the Congress budget.

A revised budget should be submitted to the WPA CEO every six months until six months before the Congress when budgets should be sent monthly until the Congress date. The WPA CEO will forward these budgets to the WPA Executive Committee. As the revised budget may change depending on many factors, any variation of more than 15% may need to be reviewed, scrutinised and, if acceptable, approved by the WPA Executive Committee.

The application for and monitoring of the WPA Continuing Education (CE) credits process is organized by the Core PCO or the local PCO and, if required, the costs should be included in the Congress budget. There are several CE accreditation agencies in various parts of the world and the Core or local PCO will be able to advise on the most appropriate agency.

The balance of funds remaining after collecting all the revenues, less expenses as per the approved Congress budget will constitute the Congress surplus.

The surplus for World Congresses will be shared between the WPA and the national Member Society and the exact details of the surplus will be in the signed Contract. The surplus from Regional and Thematic Congresses will be shared between the WPA and the national Member Society or hosting affiliated society and the exact details will be in the signed Contract.

A careful estimate of numbers should be included in the initial Expression of Interest form as if numbers fall below 70% of the estimate the local host society's share of the surplus may decrease.

These financial arrangements may need to be reviewed from time to time by the WPA Executive Committee

8. WPA Co-Sponsored Meetings: General Guidelines

Decision Making Process for hosting WPA Co-sponsored meeting

The WPA Member Society or host organization should complete an application form which is available [here](#). The completed form should be sent to the WPA Secretariat for final approval by the WPA Executive Committee. The WPA Secretary for Meetings or other Executive Committee members if appropriate, will review all applications, in consultation with the WPA EC, and decisions will be announced to applicants at earliest convenience.

There may be special arrangements agreed between the WPA and the organizing Member Society or WPA component such as holding an EC meeting or focusing on a special scientific theme. The WPA may offer professional and scientific advice, as requested and appropriate. WPA will not bear any financial or organizational responsibility for such Congresses and will not share in any profits.

9. Approval of Co-sponsorship

If approved, the applicant can acknowledge WPA co-sponsorship as follows:

- Permission to use the WPA name and logo on print and electronic materials, (e.g., "a WPA Co-sponsored Meeting") with approval in writing by WPA before such materials are printed or distributed.

- One blast email to be sent by the WPA to the WPA membership with content provided by the requestor and approved by WPA.
- The activity will be listed on the WPA web meetings calendar.
- The applicant should note “Co-sponsored by the World Psychiatric Association” on the website and in all related material.

10. Operating a Co-Sponsored Meeting

The Co-sponsored Meeting content must align with the WPA mission statement. All WPA Co-sponsored Meetings should be in compliance with the respective ethical codes of conduct. The organizer must adhere to a conflict of interest disclosure policy for all faculty members. The organizers should provide a copy of the program and/or supplementary materials available at the time of the endorsement request. The organizers should provide the WPA with a list of names and email addresses of delegates and speakers after the Congress has taken place. They should also provide a summary of the Co-sponsored Meeting after it takes place, including available evaluation results.

These arrangements may be modified, if necessary, in consultation with the local host.

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