



## THE ORGANIZERS GUIDE FOR WFSF WORLD CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

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## 1. GENERAL APPROACH

The organization process was separated to two main stages: a preparatory period and an execution period. The organization tasks quite differ in the two stages.

Preparation works of the event were coordinated and/or implemented by two groups:

- **the Scientific Committee** (sometimes known as International Organizing Committee) was responsible for the academic content of the event, while
- **the Organizing Committee** was in charge of all operative circumstances.

The latter was divided into five main chapters:

- Managing Director (MD);
- Welfare area, including catering, accommodation, registration and mailing as well as "logistics" (i.e. arrivals-departures) – these functions can be separated if needed and possible;
- Visuals & PR, including designing the view and outfit of the scene(s), preparing information-coordination visuals and hospitality-related materials, coordinating the volunteer-team, internal and external PR and media-relations – these functions can be separated if needed and possible;
- IT;
- Finances.

The two bodies were independent and had no hierarchy btw them, but while the MD was coordinating the tasks of the Organizing Committee, he/she served as liaison between two main committees: in the special case of Budapest, he has taken the tasks of the secretary of the SC.

However, the implementation period is rather built on projects (event related programs), and hence each Organizing Committee member becomes a **Project leader** of different programs at the same time. The two dimensions (Committee chapters and project leadership) have guaranteed that each program of the conference was supervised from many aspects as well as coordinated by one person in charge at the same time.

Below, please find the tasks relevant for each member. However there are significant interdependencies among the areas, the *permanent dialogue* should not be overcome. The organizers need to stay tuned via e-mail; within the FSD every second week btw September 2004 and April 2005, and every week btw May 2005 and early July 2005 meetings were organized. In July during three weeks a rotating "emergency contact line" was established (i.e. one organizer checked the emails for one week and made phone-calls if necessary). During August the organizers were working with the volunteers' team on a daily basis (based on the prototypes all materials were printed, photocopied and packed/structured/laid out, etc.).

During the entire organizing period each person in charge was to send sufficient information about his/her area to the website of the conference. Since the majority of the participant-related organizing tasks was done via the conference website, the most important – and time devouring – task of the first stage of the organization process was to create and set up the website.

At last but not least it is well advised to create socializing events where participants can informally meet and talk to each other. During these conversations and common activities people can get acquainted with each other not only as futurists, but also as human beings: common interests can be identified, new ideas may emerge, and networking possibilities are also supported. In Budapest for example a cruise on the River Danube and a folklore dancing event were organized, where not only socializing, team-

building and networking were endeavored, but also local culture, art, traditions and cuisine were introduced.

## 2. TASKS IN BREAK-DOWN STRUCTURE

### 2.1. THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- Define the focus of the conference (theme)
- Develop the structure of the conference
  - Opening and Closing Plenary program
  - Sessions' topics
  - Chairs, co-chairs for the sessions
  - Alternative programs (forums, round-table discussions, poster sessions)
  - Selection and grouping of abstracts
  - Grouping of papers
- Select and invite auspices and patrons
- Define conference guidelines
- Contact respected experts and patrons
- Communication with the Federation about professional issues
- Communication btw the Chair of the Scientific Committee and its members

### 2.2. THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

#### THE MD OF THE EVENT

- Coordinate the work of the Organizing Committee
  - Structure the tasks and revealing their interdependencies
  - Manage the different stages of the organizing period with highlighting the different time spans of the stages and of the tasks
  - Harmonize the varying time horizons of the different tasks as well as finding the focus and bottleneck areas
  - Support the relevant committee members with relevant information without making them over-informed
  - Organize the agenda and the dates of the meetings
  - Prepare input materials before as well as reminders after each meeting with tasks, due dates and responsible people
  - Harmonize the decisions and changes with the website content
- Coordinate the work of the Scientific Committee and the professional & financial supervision of the conference, managing the contact with experts & patrons
- Administrate the decisions of the Scientific Committee, and transforming them to Organizing Committee tasks
- Define conference schedule
- Organize the "Call for Papers" process in three rounds, the collection of abstracts, papers and presentations.
- Request and inform section-leaders, lecturers
  - Request letter
  - Sending Information, registration
- Collect proposed expenditures re. the programs, negotiating about incomes (sponsors) and provisioned expenditures with the WFSF team (see Finances).
- Collate the WFSF General Secretary's needs concerning the General Assembly

- Organize a volunteer team and coordinating their work
- Select and organize sufficient socializing activities (cultural event, boat-trip, etc.)
- Coordinate the follow-up work

## PARTICIPANTS' WELFARE

- Registration
  - Develop a registration form needs containing all necessary information about participants
    - ✓ Personal information (Optional questions/answers)
    - ✓ Professional information
    - ✓ WFSF membership and student status
    - ✓ Special requirements (health and diet related information)
  - The registration process should be administrated continuously in order to provide up-to-date participants lists periodically
  - Confirm registrations
- Outline scholarship tenders, collect and prepare them for judgment
- Accommodation
  - Select hotels and hostels (from different price-categories and possibly close to the venue)
  - Communication with participants (offering options and asking for making reservations)
- Catering
  - Select a catering-supplier
  - Make up headcount
  - Define level of hospitality (lunch, buffet, reception)
  - Calculate "special needs" (vegetarian, Muslim, kosher, hygienic)
  - Discuss timing both with the Organizing Committee and the catering supplier (when, where, what and for how many participants food and beverages should be served)
  - Negotiate with the venue-manager about offering furniture
- Handling personal requests
  - re. food and accommodation,
  - help through the registration process,
  - coordinate personal requests re. registration fees
  - special attention to VIP guests

## VISUALS

- Negotiate with the event-management
  - Reserve rooms (for the plenary, for workshops, for lunch)
  - Order furniture and accessories (flowers, flipcharts)
- Edit and print badge for the participants: one color for registered ones, one for organizers, one for the media, one for "guests" (as temporary solution until the permanent gets ready)
- Edit and print "direction signs" to be put on the walls of the venue
- Edit and print welcome-boards to be put in front of the building and at the entrance
- Edit and print name-tags for the plenary, for the sessions (chair and co-chair) and for the forums
- Edit and download a welcome-information slide for each session (name of the session, chair and co-chair of the session, schedule of the day)
- Order and settle a permanent information point for the entire time of the event
  - It should be visible and settled in a busy place

- Volunteers should be scheduled for intervals being on duty
- They need mobile phone, possibly Internet-access and a folder contains FAQ re. the event (both in terms of academic programs and socializing events) and the city
- Compose the conference folders: design and/or compose, order and pack the following items:
  - Program brochure
  - Abstracts
  - List of participants
  - Notebook and pen
  - Tourist information (including a city map)
  - Welcome page (showing WFSF as owner of the event)
  - Information about the organizer's institution
- Take photos of the participants, lecturers, workshops and socializing events throughout the event; download them to PC's and possibly at the closing plenary present a slide show of the best moments of the conference

## PR

### Internal

- Provide information about the event to the hosting institute
- Invite representatives of the hosting institute
- Provide sufficient room and occasion for dignitary representation of the hosting institute (incl. logos, visuals, welcome speech)

### External

- Contact and inform the media (printed and on-line press, radio, TV-channels)
- Design the press conference (invite participants, define and reserve venue, define time and order beverages)
- Prepare press materials (invitation letter, summary about FS, FAQ re. FS, press release, conference folders and press badges)
- Be prepared to obtain invitations to studios and give interviews to journalists

## IT

- Order domain name, select service provider and design the website
- Development of on-line payment facility if necessary (see Finances) and on-line registration
- Maintenance of the website: refreshing content
- Technical transaction of the conference's finances
- Collect technical necessities from the participants, inquiring the possibilities (IT Service Provider Centre, education tech.), match them (via e-mails)
- Order IT-background (projectors, PC's/laptops, sound-system) and adjust them on the spot

## FINANCES

- Preliminary and alternative budgets  
Define a preliminary budget at the very early stage of organization (preferably 30 months before the event) in order to consider possible incomes and costs of the event. Depending on different financial resources alternative budgets should be developed in detail (eg.: budget including only UNESCO

funds, budget including only registration fees, budget including both, budget including UNESCO funds and sponsor funds).

- Application for funds  
According to the deadline for different applications, develop proposals for funds in detail in the very early stage (be aware that requirements for applications vary in every organization)
- Registration fees  
In case there is a lack of financial resources registration fees need to be collected from participants. When defining the exact amount of registration fees several conditions should be taken into consideration:
  - WFSF membership
  - Students status
  - Scholarship status
  - Early registrationOn-line payment of registration fees enables organizers to collect money in advance but also requires a staff person who is only responsible for tracking payments and administrating the process.
- Scholarship program  
Decide about establish a scholarship program (free registration and/or free accommodation)
- Event-related purchase  
One person had the authority to take money from the bank to the venue and distribute the needed amount of money among the organizers. Each team-member was given the name and address to be indicated on the invoice upon shopping. Each team member was to sign a proof of receipt when obtaining money. After purchasing the rest of the money and the invoice were given to the authorized person and the proof of receipt was signed "accomplished".

### 3. FOLLOW UP WORKS

- Collect and edit all accessible papers of the event
- Administrate participants' contact information and handle it over to WFSF responsible
- Report and financial report to the WFSF and the financial sources (UNESCO, sponsors)
- Complete the accounting process: translate all invoices to English and send them to the WFSF Secretary General
- Prepare thank-you letters to the invited lecturers, patrons and sponsors, university leaders, press/media, personnel contributing to the success of the event
- Sum up media-appearances: which media, when, with whom created appearance for the event; handle it over to WFSF responsible
- Evaluate the event with the WFSF leaders, sum of lessons/positive features

*An important criteria of success is to have an – both in terms of organizing smaller or bigger domestic and international events – experienced, hard-working, creative and committed group of people during the preparations and throughout the whole event itself, who are used to each other and are able to carry on working under pressure and hectic changes; without these it is difficult to reach result and success.*

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