

Ambassador Programme

Conference Organisation



Ambassador Programme Toolkit

Contents

1. Why bring a conference?	2
2. Bidding for your conference	3
3. What do you need to consider? A useful checklist.....	5
4. Preliminary Budgets Advice	8
5. Useful Information.....	11



1. Why bring a conference?

Bidding for a conference can be exhilarating and extremely rewarding. By working closely with the team at Convention Edinburgh you will benefit from a wealth of experience to help take the stress out of the organisation as well as having access to complimentary services that save you time and energy allowing you to focus on the important issues.

There are of course very rewarding benefits to running a successful conference.

- Provides a platform to raise the global awareness of your subject matter and gain recognition for Scotland's industries and academic institutions
- Opportunity to build alliances that develop collaborative research and grant application
- Due to increased professional recognition for conference organisers this may lead to career development and the opportunity to become a speaker at future conferences.
- One of the Research for Excellence Framework indicators

Through the Ambassador Programme and the events that we run you can hear about the experiences of our Ambassadors who have recently hosted conferences in the city. You can also learn more by reading our [case studies](#) on our website.

"I regularly run meetings for 50-200 people but a meeting of over 1000 was just too big for me to contemplate. Convention Edinburgh took me through the whole process step-by-step. They explained everything from budgeting and registration through to how to wow my delegates at the gala dinner. I went from being terrified to host the conference to being terrified I might NOT host the conference"

Dr Lesley Sloss, International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant ICMG 2013

"Once I had spoken to Convention Edinburgh, everything just fell into place. For anybody who is thinking of organising a meeting in Edinburgh, there is a huge amount of support in how to go about the process. There is always somebody there to help you - less than a phone - call away.

Without the support, knowledge and encouragement at the start I might have had cold feet. It has made a big difference."

Professor Peter Andrews, 5th International Hypothermia Symposium 2014

2. Bidding for your conference

Before you start

Through our own research here at Convention Edinburgh we can usually find out quite a bit about a conference and its requirements. However as many Ambassadors have already attended the conference then inside knowledge is always invaluable and can help considerably when preparing a bid. You may wish to consider some of the following:

- What is the next open year for the conference and is European / UK destination a consideration?
- Determine bid procedure from the national/international association
- What is submission date of bid and what detail is required at bid stage?
- Who are the decision makers?
- Who locally has the time and commitment to be part of your local organising committee?
- Do you require lobbying at the conference before your bid?
- Check budget information from past conferences
- Check to see if the conference has a core Professional Conference Organiser (PCO)
- Consider key people or organisations who could provide letters of support to strengthen the bid for Edinburgh
- Determine first draft budget and ensure that your conference is financially viable -see useful information section
- Establish objectives & theme of conference
- Set possible dates for the conference – be mindful of bank holiday and busy times for Edinburgh eg Festival time in August, Six Nations Rugby weekends
- Contact Convention Edinburgh in the first instance to advise on appropriate venues and gather quotes from meeting venues and social programme venues
- Contact the Convention Edinburgh to gather allocations and rates from the local hotels
- Consider where you would like to host any social events eg Welcome Reception, Conference Dinner and contact Convention Edinburgh for assistance

The Bid Presentation

Over 70% of conference destinations are chosen by the association committee based on the quality of the local member's bid presentation. At Convention Edinburgh we recognise this vital role and through the Edinburgh Ambassador Programme we can offer the following support when preparing your bid.

We can produce a bid document in-house for you, describing Edinburgh's strengths as a conference destination. This could involve:

- Letters of support from Lord Provost, CEO of Marketing Edinburgh Ltd and key people identified by the local committee.
- Convention Edinburgh can apply to the Scottish Government on your behalf for sector specific Ministerial letter of support
- Reasons why the conference should come to Edinburgh
- Access information
- Meeting venue suggestions and proposals
- Accommodation suggestions and proposals
- Social programme suggestions and proposals
- Pre & post conference tour suggestions
- Any financial information you provide

To support your bid Convention Edinburgh can provide:

- Visual material – images, DVDs , pop-up stands etc
- Transport to bid presentation for the Edinburgh Ambassador*
- A Convention Edinburgh staff member can accompany you to present the bid*.
- Merchandise to promote Edinburgh

**subject to budget & staffing*

3. What do you need to think about – A useful checklist

Here are some useful tips or things you may need to consider. This is by no means an extensive list and if you are using a Professional Conference organiser (PCO) then some elements may be covered by them. If you decide to use a PCO then this can be done at either the pre or post bid stage. For further information on PCOs please see our website for further details.

Financial – things to consider

- Consider using a PCO who can assist greatly in providing a budget
- Reviewing your budget and consider cash flow until delegate fees start coming in
- Set registration fees – indicating clearly what is included in delegate fee. Consider the different levels of delegate fees eg members, student , incentives for early registration
- Consider insurance please see here for further details

Sponsors

- Decide how much income has to be raised through sponsorship and set sponsorship packages accordingly
- Find out what the international/national association already has in place for sponsorship
- Liaise with sponsors and venue regarding sponsorship material and opportunities for branding

Venues

- If not using a PCO then contact Convention Edinburgh to help organise site visits to city and confirm venue
- You will have a main contact at the venues and they will be in touch with you at various stages to confirm the finer details of your event. Convention Edinburgh are still in touch at this stage and are available to support you when required
- Catering –what type of catering you will require particularly if it is an international delegation? Think about having catering in and around your exhibition so that your exhibitors have access to your delegates at key times
- Nearer conference – confirm details with venue to include room set up, menus, audio-visual requirements, access times, exhibition details, office space etc
- For all Convention Edinburgh assistance please see www.conventionedinburgh.com

Accommodation

- Convention Edinburgh's **Convention Accommodation Booking Service team (CABS)** will work on your behalf to manage your hotel allocations and provide you with an online accommodation booking service enabling delegates to book online directly from the conference website. All of our service is completely free of charge
- We can arrange for you to visit the hotels of your choice during any site visits

Conference Programme

- Develop topics and finalise your conference programme
- Consider content for opening/closing ceremonies, what receptions, lunches and dinners and other events you wish to include.
- Think of speakers you would wish to invite – consider their travel, accommodation, bios and also what equipment they will require to present.
- Do you wish to have a **sustainable conference** – how to achieve this
- Conference programme finalised and printed
- Consider technical aspect of conference – see useful information

Social Programme

Contact Convention Edinburgh team to assist with social programme suggestions and request proposals if not already in place. Do you require partner programmes?

- Transport – do you require transport to and from venue/hotels
- Nearer to the conference finalise details with the venue for menus, table plans, flowers/place cards etc

Administration

- Look at abstract papers and how to manage
- Consider systems for delegate registrations and payments – please contact Convention Edinburgh for advice
- Issue joining instructions for delegates and register any special requirements
- Consider employing a photographer and what parts of the conference or social programme you would like photographed.
- Think of delegate name badges, delegate bags, lanyards, welcome packs and organisation of any volunteers. Convention Edinburgh can provide delegate literature free of charge.
- Print all stationery – menus, tickets, invitations

Marketing

- Set up website for the conference. Convention Edinburgh can provide images and videos to assist.
- Think of using social media as a powerful way to promote your conference, this can also help to build up attendance.
- First announcement about conference and include if possible – theme, destination, dates, hotels, venue, sponsors, guest speakers, registration fees, first call for papers
- Think about marketing of the event – flyers, websites etc
- Press – think of advertising conference in press and any press attendance at event

See Convention Edinburgh [complimentary services](#) for where we can assist:

4. Preliminary Budgets Advice

Costs and income for conferences will vary according to traditions of specific conferences, however there are some standard costs and income guidelines which can serve as a starting point for building your budget.

Costs

- **Venue** - venues will quote costs for specific space and services, or a per person rate. The quote is usually for the current year and an annual rate of increase needs to be considered for the final budget. The specific services included in the charges vary widely from venue to venue and it is worth checking what the prices include.
- **IT** - IT specifications for conferences can vary widely. Check the venue proposal to see what is included and what are additional costs.
- **Catering** - tea and coffee availability must be included in the conference budget if not already included in the venue hire. Provision of lunches depends on the specific conference practice and costs can vary widely.
- **Marketing** - the previous conference will give an indication of the costs for design print and distribution, call for papers, promotion of the event etc. Later, specific quotes will provide details for the working budget.
- **Simultaneous Interpretation** –if the language of the conference will be English and if simultaneous interpretation is required. This will add to conference costs. Convention Edinburgh can provide you with recommendations of companies who provide this service.
- **Speakers and committee expenses** – this varies from one event to another. You should consider costs for airfares, accommodation and speakers' fees.
- **Social Programme** - welcome reception, gala dinner should be added to your budget. Holding your welcome reception in your main meeting venue may help with. If a different venue is being used, include the venue hire in your costs. Would you require coaching to the social venue?
- **Exhibition** – This is an important revenue stream for your event. Costs will include renting the area, supply of standard stands, and build-up time. PCOs may charge to organise your exhibition and secure your exhibitors. The costs of the exhibition are charged to exhibitors. Will revenue balance the costs?
- **PCO** - Professional Conference Organisers may charge a signing on fee, a per delegate cost and cost of mailings and telephone use, or a fixed fee. Later other suppliers' costs will be included in the conference costs but will not be firm at the preliminary stage. PCOs will provide full accounting of suppliers' costs. For further information:
<http://www.abpco.org/about-abpco/>

- **Conference Proceedings Publications** - costs are very dependent on the specific practice of your association. Check previous conference costs as a gauge.
- **Insurance** – you may wish to think of insuring your conference against unexpected difficulties eg weather, potential cancellation fees if delegates are unable to get to your conference. There are different things that can be insured against and speaking to a professional events insurer is advised. See [here](#) for further information
- **Contingency Fund** – expect the unexpected! Build a contingency fund into the budget. This is usually around 5-10% of budget costs.

Flexibility

Look at areas where you can be flexible with costs. For example, if lunches are included in the delegate fee, be prepared to alter the cost closer to the conference date when other costs will be clearer. Exchange rate fluctuations can alter the cost-revenue balance. Registration fees can be set relatively close to the event, allowing them to reflect realistic costs or include enhancements to the event such as the gala dinner.

Income

Delegate fees are a key element of conference income but will not be coming in as soon as expenditure is incurred. Both you and your PCO or your local organising committee will need a cautious approach to spending, frequently reviewing conference finances.

- **Delegate fees** – consider your fee structure and what it needs to include eg fees for association members, non-members, students and the number of non-paying delegates. Remember also to consider complimentary fees as they will incur a registration fee.
- **Exhibition** - The revenue from previous exhibitions is an excellent indication of what to include in the preliminary budget
- **Sponsorship** - The line between sponsors and advertisers may be blurred, and hard to determine at the preliminary stage

Where to go for information:

- **Previous Event Organiser** - budget from the previous meeting is an excellent source of information.
- **Convention Edinburgh** - conducts industry research to examine the history of the event: the pattern of delegate numbers, and types of venues used. We will gather preliminary costs from venues and PCOs for an event in Edinburgh.
- **BestCities Global Alliance** – if your conference has taken place previously in one of the twelve [BestCities](#) through membership of this alliance, Convention Edinburgh can gather useful information on the success of that event

- **Association Headquarters** - key source of information. Organisers should be able to provide information on the historical costs and income of an event including the type of venue used, the range of delegate fees, size and income of the exhibition, potential sponsors' support, and the number of sponsored speakers.
- **Professional Conference Organisers** - PCOs have a wealth of expertise. Your PCO will hone a preliminary budget into a specific working document as more detail is assembled through consultation with the association representatives, the local committee, and suppliers. They are best placed to give advice on VAT, the financial accounting for the event, and should keep you up-to-date on expenditure and delegate bookings.

5. Useful Information

Information on PCOs

Please visit our [Resource Centre](#) on the website.

Edinburgh Rewards Card

Introduced in June this year a new delegate rewards programme which gives your conference delegates a wide variety of offers and value added rewards at over 75 (and growing in number every day) bars, restaurants and retail outlets. Offers include anything from 25% off your food and bar bill to a free cocktail on arrival. Delegates will receive the card along with a free to download app to guide them to the many offers open to them. This card is given free of charge. We will supply a 'click button' for your conference website, a card and explanatory leaflet for each delegate and pop up stand to advertise use of the card for your registration area.

For further details look at our [website](#) or contact hillary.bett@marketingedinburgh.org

Edinburgh Brand Images & Logos

Our [Flickr website](#) has images and logos of Edinburgh which you are free to use for promotional purposes as long as you credit 'Convention Edinburgh,' use the Convention Edinburgh logo and link to the [website](#) when using photos on a website. If you are using any photos in offline e.g print media, please credit 'Convention Edinburgh', use the Convention Edinburgh logo and provide the following URL www.conventionedinburgh.com

Convention Edinburgh Business Tourism Film

The two links below allow you to view/download our, recently launched, Business Tourism Film.

View - <http://youtu.be/ACYgXw6WpYA>

Download - <https://app.box.com/s/xllrpcg6joqwipf3swbe> (mp4 file) or <https://app.box.com/s/aclhf6cfjlfenvq64uil> (mww file for embedding into presentations)

When using Convention Edinburgh's Business Tourism Film please credit 'Convention Edinburgh,' use the Convention Edinburgh logo and add a link to the website www.conventionedinburgh.com.

Reduced Bus Fares

Convention Edinburgh have negotiated on your behalf a special discount for bus travel with Edinburgh & Lothian buses. Not only will your delegates be entitled to reduced fares on the Airlink bus ticket but also on the exciting city sightseeing bus tours. The link will allow delegates to book and print their Airlink bus tickets as well as their sightseeing ticket, before they arrive in the city!



To make use of this discount, please add the following link to your website -

[https://kiosk.irstickets.co.uk/k?
lothianbuses&ECB&ka=ECB&TRACKER=ECB&promo=ECB](https://kiosk.irstickets.co.uk/k?lothianbuses&ECB&ka=ECB&TRACKER=ECB&promo=ECB)

Electronic versions of delegate literature available

You can view electronic versions of the delegate literature which we can provide here: <http://www.welcometoscotland.com/free-guides-edinburgh-scotland> - a click on the desired language will start the download

<http://www.3dmobimaps.com/images/maps/pdf/mobimaps-EDINBURGH-2013.pdf> - Folded Edinburgh map

<http://www.whatsonscotland.com/digital-magazines/may---jun-13> - Example What's on guide

We can provide these free of charge for you, but ask that you arrange a courier to collect the required amount of brochures from our office at 26 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 2JR between Mo-Fr, 9am – 5pm, or personally collect it, and let us know the time of collection in advance.

Reduced Air Fares

Convention Edinburgh, alongside Lufthansa Airlines, can help to arrange reduced air fares when flying with SWISS, Brussels Airlines, Austrian Airlines, United Airlines and Air Canada.

The process works as follows –

- Apply for a contract with Lufthansa at www.LH.com/events
- A contract will be sent to you for signature.
- Once the signed contract is returned, alongside your organisation/conference logo, a dedicated page will be provided to you.
- Alongside the dedicated page, you will receive a discount code, text and logo to be added to your event website and promotional marketing.

Should this be of interest, please contact the Convention Edinburgh team.

Event Promotion

We would be delighted to promote your event using our social media and website channels.

Twitter	@EdinAmbassador or @conventions
Facebook	Convention Edinburgh
Website	www.conventionedinburgh.com