



WFSA World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA) Guidelines

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

This document gives an overview of the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA) and outlines the requirements for applying for and hosting a WCA.

The WCA is the flagship congress of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA). It is jointly organised by the WFSA and a WFSA Member Society (MS) or Regional Section. The WCA is presented as a hybrid congress to allow both face-to-face and virtual attendance.

The working language of the WFSA and WCA is English. Subtitling and interpretation into Spanish and French should be considered to reach a majority of WFSA Member Societies.

1.1 Abbreviations

- COC = Congress Organising Committee
- EOI = Expression of intent
- LOC = Local Organising Committee
- MS = Member Society
- PCO = Professional Congress Organiser
- SC = Scientific Committee
- SAC = Scientific Affairs Committee
- VSC = Venue Selection Committee
- WCA = World Congress of Anaesthesiologists
- WFSA = World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists

This document also refers to the World Bank classification of countries:

- HIC = High-Income Country
- Upper MIC = Upper Middle-Income Country
- Lower MIC = Lower Middle-Income Country
- LIC = Low-Income Country

1.2 Main Objectives of the WCA

The WCA is a high-level scientific and educational meeting, providing:

- Information about developments in the field of anaesthesiology, critical care, pain and perioperative medicine;
- High-quality education for anaesthesiologists worldwide;
- Networking and advocacy opportunities.

It has specific objectives related to the following areas:

Science:

- To present and discuss recent research;
- To inform about new trends in research and recent results.

Education and Guidance:

- To provide scientific evidence and best practice updates;

- To stimulate discussion on controversial and new areas of practice;
- To provide clinical skills training.

Awareness-raising:

- To raise awareness of the WFSA Mission and Vision;
- To raise the profile of the Host MS
- To promote strategic exchange of ideas;
- To raise awareness of contribution of anaesthesiology to healthcare systems.

Networking:

- To promote greater engagement with MSs in all parts of the world, reinforcing positive interaction between individuals from all WFSA MSs;
- To strengthen interaction through social events and time for informal personal exchanges;
- To build for the future: attract new members and partners, additional funding;
- To support the development of future leaders in anaesthesiology.

Financial:

- To generate financial resources to support activities of the WFSA and the Host MS.

Legacy:

- Each WCA should plan to have long standing impact on local standards of healthcare, training, and education in the country where this is organised;
- The Host MS will support WFSA on advocacy in the region by organising high level meetings with senior officials of local Ministries of Health, and relevant local institutions and organisations working in the field of healthcare and patient safety.

Note: An important objective of the WCA is to provide a venue for two WFSA General Assemblies. Accommodating these along with WFSA business meetings is a critical component of the WCA.

1.3 Rotation Policy

From 2024, the WCA will be held as a hybrid meeting every two (2) years. The congress will rotate predictably around five (5) geographical regions:

- Africa / Middle East
- Americas (North, Central, South, and Caribbean)
- South, Central and East Asia
- Europe
- Southeast Asia / Australia, New Zealand, Pacific

In addition, the WCA will alternate between:

- A **larger WCA** (5000-8000 delegates) in 2024, 2028 and 4-yearly thereafter. This is likely to be co-hosted by a MS in a high-income country or upper middle-income country.

- A **smaller WCA** (2000-3000 delegates) in 2026, 2030 and 4-yearly thereafter. This is likely to be co-hosted by a MS in an upper middle-income country or lower middle-income country.

The planned rotation will therefore be:

- Africa / Middle East: 2026 (smaller)
- Americas (North, Central, South, and Caribbean): 2028 (larger; confirmed for Vancouver)
- South, Central and East Asia: 2030 (smaller)
- Europe: 2032 (larger)
- Southeast Asia / Australia, New Zealand, Pacific: 2034 (after review, smaller)
- Africa / Middle East: 2036 (after review, larger)

When selecting a host for the smaller WCA, consideration will be given to the capacities of countries within that region to also host a larger WCA.

Importantly, the objectives outlined above apply equally to the larger and smaller WCA, and both will have an equally high-quality scientific programme.

1.4 Dates and Timings

The WCA will be held during the period March to April, with the exact dates to be agreed by the WFSA and Host MS. The time between congresses should not be more than 26 months.

Suggested timings:

- 1 day: Pre-WCA workshops and courses.
- 3-4 days: WCA scientific programme.
- Days of the week are flexible, but it is recommended that the WCA begins or ends on a weekend.

SECTION 2: PREREQUISITES FOR HOSTING A WCA

This section provides a set of requirements for the successful planning and delivery of a WCA.

2.1 Host Country

The country hosting the WCA should be politically stable. It should be accessible to anaesthesiologists from all around the world, regardless of their place of residency, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

2.2 Host City

- Easy and affordable visa services must be offered by the country's immigration services.
- The city hosting the WCA should be served by an international airport with a good range of international connections. Travel by train or public transport between the city centre and international airport should take no longer than 1 hour.

- There should be reliable and affordable public transport and taxis for travel around the city.

2.3 Congress Venue

There are different capacity requirements depending on whether the application is for a larger or smaller WCA:

- Larger WCA (5000-8000 in-person participants);
- Smaller WCA (2000-3000 in-person participants).

In addition, the following must be complied with for all venues:

- Compliant with the pharmaceutical and medical device industries' codes of ethics and codes of practice;
- Located centrally, with easy and direct access by public transport from main hotels, city centre and airport;
- Have hosted at least one international congress of similar size within the past 3 years;
- Management and staff with good knowledge of business English;
- Management and staff experienced working with international organisations;
- No venue which is still under construction (or partly under construction) will be accepted;
- Exhibition area centrally located and on the same level as the main session rooms and poster area.

For specific venue specifications and requirements, please see Appendix 1.

2.4 Internet Connectivity

- The congress venue must have high-quality internet connection and a dedicated bandwidth and fibre optic cable for WCA;
- Extra bandwidth required for live streaming should be available at a reasonable extra cost;
- Free WIFI must be available:
 - Larger WCA: 4000 users at any one time;
 - Smaller WCA: 2000 users at any one time

2.5 Hotels and Accommodation

- Hotel rooms of various categories (3-4 stars);
- Selection of low-cost/budget accommodation;
- Capacity:
 - Larger WCA: 5000 rooms (contracted with release dates);
 - Smaller WCA: 2000 rooms (contracted with release dates)
- Easy reach of venue by public transport;
- Faculty hotel preferably within walking distance of venue.

SECTION 3: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1 Congress Organising Committee

A Congress Organising Committee (COC) will be formed 3 years prior to the WCA to undertake the detailed planning of the WCA. The COC will be co-chaired by the President of the Host MS or the chair of the LOC, and the President or the President-Elect/Immediate Past President of the WFSA. If the President of the Host MS is also LOC Chair, a second local representative will be appointed.

The COC will include members of the Local Organising Committee (LOC) and representatives of the WFSA including the current WFSA President, Treasurer, Scientific Affairs Committee Chair and CEO. This will be supported by the Professional Congress Organiser (PCO) contracted to organise the WCA.

The COC must provide:

- An annual report on the organisation of the WCA to the WFSA Secretary to be distributed to the WFSA Board;
- A verbal and written report to be submitted to the General Assembly at the preceding WCA.

3.2 Role of the Host MS

- Secure support from the regional and national government and relevant ministries;
- Propose WCA venue and all social event venues;
- Organise WCA social programme;
- Form the Local Organising Committee (LOC);
- Contribute members to the Congress Organising Committee (COC) and the WCA Scientific Committee;
- Approval of the Scientific Programme with the WFSA;
- Budget review and approval (shared).

3.3 Role of the WFSA

- Final approval of WCA venue;
- Final approval of PCO;
- Promotion of the WCA (mainly to Member Societies and individuals, but also to industry);
- Budget review and approval (shared);
- Contribute members to the Congress Organising Committee (COC) and the WCA Scientific Committee;
- Approval of the Scientific Programme with the Host MS;
- Agreeing terms with a publisher for the abstracts (currently *Anesthesia & Analgesia*);
- Harold Griffith Lecture – topic and speaker selection;
- Organisation of General Assembly and Committee Meetings;
- Management of VIPs / invited guests / scholarship programme (with LOC and PCO);
- Management of the “Global Village” (with PCO).

3.4 Scientific Programme

The WCA Scientific Programme must be CME accredited and be compliant with all codes of ethics. The Scientific Programme will be organised by the WCA Scientific Committee (SC).

The programme will be a broad mix of sessions and presentations held in a variety of formats to create an engaging and attractive programme for in-person delegates that will translate well into virtual format.

The scientific programme, including individual sessions within this, should have reasonable geographical, gender, and country income diversity representation.

Recorded sessions will be added to the WFSA online learning platform post-event after an agreed period of months.

3.5 WCA Scientific Committee

The WCA Scientific Committee (SC) will be co-chaired by one person appointed by the LOC and one person appointed by the Chair of the WFSA Scientific Affairs Committee (SAC). The Chair of the WFSA SAC may also appoint a deputy from their Committee. The SC will comprise representatives of the LOC and the WFSA. The SC will define the WCA tracks and topics and will invite internationally renowned experts to chair each track and propose the track programme.

The SC will also have an overview of the management of abstract submissions.

The WFSA Board in consultation with the WFSA Council and WFSA Scientific Affairs Committee will select the WFSA members of the WCA SC. Members of the SC will be selected for their expertise and experience in the development of scientific programmes to ensure that a programme of appropriate depth, breadth and quality is provided for WCA delegates.

3.6 Professional Conference Organiser (PCO)

It will be usual to work with the WFSA's core PCO. Collaboration between the WFSA core PCO and a local PCO may be considered. If a local PCO is to be considered, at least two options for appointment of such a company should be provided. A local PCO must demonstrate their experience in organising medical congresses of a similar size to the WCA and be willing to work in partnership with the WFSA core PCO.

The WFSA core PCO will:

- Have experience of organising and planning successful hybrid, global medical congresses of a similar size and nature;
- Be responsible for ensuring CME / CPD accreditation;
- Be prepared to work to an agreed budget with any unforeseen expenditure that exceeds the agreed budget by more than 10% (on any budget item) being approved by the WFSA and Host MS;
- Bear responsibility for maintaining a balanced budget and for proposing solutions in case a deficit is incurred or seems likely;

- Consider the tax and currency transfer implications of the WCA. Expert advice on tax and currency efficiency should be sought and shared with the Host MS and the WFSA;
- Present policy proposals for comprehensive damage and public liability insurance covering the WCA, naming the Host MS, the WFSA and relevant members and staff as insured parties. The Host MS and the WFSA should also consider a policy that insures against financial loss in the WCA due to cancellation or impairment of the WCA due to catastrophic events. The Parties shall approve and accept the most suitable policies;
- Agree to banking arrangements that protect the income of the WCA in a joint PCO / WCA account or separate WCA account (for example income from registration fees and sponsors) which will be distinct from a PCO cash flow account that will be used to cover expenditure.

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financial Control

- The WFSA and the Host MS shall maintain joint responsibility for the financial control and administration of the WCA in collaboration with the core PCO;
- The currency of the budget shall be US Dollars;
- The Host MS shall provide the WFSA with annually updated information developed during the planning and development of the WCA, beginning four years before the WCA or as soon as the application is confirmed;
- A separate WCA bank account will be opened which shall have joint signatory approval by the Host MS and WFSA;
- The Host MS will maintain separate accounts of all income and expenditure relating to the planning and development of the WCA;
- Regular financial reports will be provided to the WFSA Treasurer and CEO in the four years preceding the WCA. The schedule will be agreed upon with the PCO;
- The accounts of the WCA will be held and accessed directly by representatives of the Host MS and PCO. Viewing of the accounts will be available to the Host MS, the WFSA (Treasurer and CEO) and the PCO and can be requested at any time by any of these parties;
- All agreed expenses shall be:
 - a) approved and accounted in the calendar year of the expenditure;
 - b) paid from deposits according to approved amounts.

4.2 Interest-Free Loan

- The WFSA may provide, on request, an interest-free loan to the Host MS as "seed money" for the planning and development of the WCA;
- The size of the loan will be up to US\$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars), payable as agreed between the parties;
- This loan shall be repayable as soon as possible, but not later than 6 (six) months after the last day of the WCA and repayment shall not be dependent on the financial outcome of the WCA.

4.3 Surplus Share

The WFSA shall be entitled to not less than 70% of any excess revenue over all expenses (surplus). This shall be transferred to the WFSA immediately following completion of the final audit.

4.4 Loss and Liability

The WFSA shall assume responsibility for 70% of any deficit (loss) occurring from the WCA.

4.5 Audited Financial Report

- The audited final financial account of the WCA, prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, will be submitted to the WFSA as soon as practicable and no later than nine (9) months after the last day of the WCA;
- An external audit is required, and the selection of external auditors must be agreed upon between the Host MS and WFSA.

SECTION 5: APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

5.1 Venue Selection Committee

The WFSA Secretary will receive all applications to host the WCA on behalf of the Venue Selection Committee (VSC). The VSC is appointed by the WFSA Board and is composed of up to 8 members with experience in conference organisation and with appropriate geographic representation, the WFSA CEO and a representative of the core PCO (without voting rights).

Any conflicts of interests will be managed according to the WFSA policy in this area.

5.2 Criteria

Applications will be accepted from any WFSA MS included in relevant year's designated WCA rotation region. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with the following conditions:

- Be a fully paid-up WFSA member (dues paid in full for the last 2 years at the time of the application) and remain in good standing until the time of the congress;
- Have been a MS for 3 years at the time of the application.

5.3 Application & Selection Timeline

The Host MS will be selected four (4) years ahead of the congress by the WFSA Board upon recommendation of the Venue Selection Committee (VSC).

Shortlisted applicants will present their proposal in person four (4) years prior to the WCA in question. This presentation will usually take place at a preceding WCA (called WCA-4 below).

The following process will be followed:

Item	N° months before destination selection	N° months prior to congress
Call for Expression of Intent (EOI)	8 months	56 months
Deadline EOI submission	6 months	54 months
VSC informs applicants of accepted/ rejected EOI	5 months	53 months
Deadline to submit full application	1 month	49 months
Oral Presentation to VSC	WCA-4	48 months
Confirmation/approval by WFSA Board	WCA-4	48 months

5.4 Supporting Documents

To support their candidature, applicant MS are required to submit information about the compliance of their application with the standards for the organisation of a WCA.

The following items will be required as part of the EOI:

- Proposed dates
- Proposed venue incl. room capacity, exhibition space and transport accessibility
- Summary of hotel and accommodation available
- Confirmation of support from the most senior person (e.g. President, Secretary General or similar) within the applicant MS
- Summary of applicant MS' experience organising national or regional congresses

The following items will be required as part of the full application:

- Letter of application addressed to the WFSA Secretary via secretary@wfsahq.org
- Letter(s) of support from the most senior person (e.g. President, Secretary General or similar) within the applicant MS
- Country accessibility
- Venue information including:
 1. Available dates
 2. Proposal for venue rental – cost
 3. Floor plans with capacities (or links to online information)
 4. Information about exclusive suppliers (AV, Catering, etc)
- Hotel and budget accommodation information including:
 1. General information about number and type of hotels and budget accommodation
 2. General pricing information
- Information about city/national support for meeting;
- Congress partners and supporting organisations;
- Contact details of the city or national convention bureau;
- Proposed budget for the WCA;
- The last two audited annual financial accounts for the applicant MS.

The following items may be submitted with the full application:

- Letters of support from other MS in the region;
- Letter(s) of support from academic institutions in the country;
- Letter(s) of support from relevant national & regional organisations;
- Letter(s) of support from relevant local government authorities;
- Letter of support from the city convention bureau and/or tourist board.

5.5 Regulations and Compliance

All applicants must comply with international and regional pharmaceutical and medical device industry codes of practice.

5.6 Screening and Approval of Full Applications

- The Venue Selection Committee will convene before or during the WCA held four years prior to the WCA in question (called WCA-4 above);
- The shortlisted final applicants will each be granted a 45-minute session; each presentation will be no longer than 15 minutes with a further 30 minutes to answer questions from the VSC and discuss the overall application;
- The VSC will rank each application and recommend the preferred MS and venue to the WFSA Secretary;
- The final decision will be made by the WFSA Board;
- The choice will usually be announced to all MS during WCA-4.

5.7 Final Approval and Confirmation

- 2-3 representatives of the WFSA will visit the proposed venue within 3 months of the nomination to meet with the MS leadership and confirm the suitability of the destination, congress venue, meet with any proposed local PCO(s), meet with representatives of government, tourism offices etc. that supported the application;
- The costs associated with the site visit (specifically airfares and hotel accommodation) should be borne by the nominated MS, not the WCA budget;
- Should the site visit reveal any major differences, these will be raised with the WFSA Board and the nominated MS which will then have up to 6 weeks to address the issues raised;
- If concerns are not addressed satisfactorily, the WFSA Board will officially inform the nominated MS and WFSA Council and the co-hosting of WCA will be assigned to the applicant voted in second position.

5.8 Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent will be signed between the WFSA and the MS that has been nominated to host the WCA.

APPENDIX 1: CONGRESS VENUE SPECIFICATIONS

Larger WCA (5000-8000 in-person participants):

- Ability to host minimum 5000 participants;
- Session rooms: 10-12 parallel session rooms with 75-600 seats including basic AV, minimum 4 large rooms. At least 3 large rooms should be on same level as exhibition area;
- Plenary room: minimum 1500 seats for Opening Ceremony and Harold Griffith Lecture with basic AV;
- Workshop rooms (before and during congress): 8 rooms, 30-100 people, with basic AV;
- Meeting rooms: 12 smaller meeting rooms for Committee meetings and case-based discussion sessions, with basic AV;
- Speaker Ready room;
- Faculty lounge.
- High-quality internet connection and a dedicated bandwidth and fibre optic cable for WCA;
- Extra bandwidth required for live streaming should be available at a reasonable extra cost;
- Free WIFI must be available: 4000 users at any one time.

Smaller WCA (2000-3000 in-person participants):

- Ability to host minimum 2000 participants;
- Session rooms: 6-8 parallel session rooms with 50-500 seats including basic AV, minimum 3 large rooms. At least 3 rooms should be on same level as exhibition area;
- Plenary room: minimum 1500 seats for Opening Ceremony and Harold Griffith Lecture with basic AV;
- Workshop rooms (before and during congress): 8 rooms, 30-100 people, with basic AV;
- Meeting rooms: 12 smaller meeting rooms for Committee meetings and case-based discussion sessions, with basic AV;
- Speaker Ready room;
- Faculty lounge.
- High-quality internet connection and a dedicated bandwidth and fibre optic cable for WCA;
- Extra bandwidth required for live streaming should be available at a reasonable extra cost;
- Free WIFI must be available: 2000 users at any one time.

Exhibition Area:

- Raw space:
 - 3 Larger WCA: approx.5000 m2
 - 4 Smaller WCA: approx.2500 m2
- Centrally located, ideally column free, build height 4m minimum;
- Session rooms on same level (see point 2.3 Capacity);
- Catering areas should be set up in exhibition area.

Poster Area:

- Electronic posters boards are the preferred format;
- Adjacent to the exhibition area;
- Capacity:
 - Larger WCA: 1000 posters
 - Smaller WCA: 500 posters

APPENDIX 2: CONGRESS ARRANGEMENTS

Registration

Registration policies and procedures, including registration rates, will be determined by the WFSA Board based on proposals from the COC.

Registration Fees

Registration fees should be set considering fees charged for previous WCAs and taking into account fees applicable for similar international congresses and congresses held in the host region in the current period.

Registration fees must be tiered and available for in-person and virtual participation:

- Delegates from countries designed as LIC and LMIC by the World Bank;
- Abstract presenters;
- Trainees/residents;
- Allied health professionals;
- Group registrations;
- On-site day registration;
- Exhibitors.

Complementary Registration

This will be decided by the COC, but will usually be offered for the following:

- WFSA and Host MS Presidents;
- Chair and Members of the Local Organising Committee;
- Members of the WFSA Council;
- WFSA Past-Presidents;
- Track Chairs and Co-Chairs;
- Invited speakers - if presenting in or chairing at least three (3) separate sessions;
- Harold Griffith speaker(s);
- WFSA staff;
- Host MS staff.

Speaker Honoraria & Expenses

- A Harold Griffith speaker from a non-anaesthesia background may be paid a small honorarium at the discretion of the Chair of the LOC and the WFSA President;
- No other honoraria for speakers will be provided.

The Harold Griffith speakers will usually be reimbursed for reasonable travel and accommodation expenses.

Provision should also be made in the budget to support (in part) the travel and accommodation of speakers from less affluent countries. Support must be requested by the individual and will be agreed upon by the Chairs of the COC.

Social Programme

The Social Programme is organised within the WCA budget and in compliance with CME regulations.

The following components should be offered at a minimum:

- Opening ceremony;
- Welcome refreshments (tea/coffee/similar) in the exhibition hall;
- Networking event* – at additional cost, to be affordable for all delegates.

In addition, the following may be offered:

- Presidents' Dinner* – by invitation only;
- Speakers' dinner or track dinners* – by invitation only.

*These events are not part of the WCA programme and should not be promoted.

Note: As a result of current CME regulations, an accompanying person's programme should not form part of the WCA application.