INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF PATHOLOGY

Biennial Congress

Host Division Handbook

A reference guide for Divisions applying to host and organize the IAP Biennial Congress.

About This Handbook

This handbook is the definitive reference for IAP Divisions wishing to bid for and organize the IAP Biennial Congress. It covers every stage of the process — from submitting an initial bid through final financial reporting — and should be read in full before submitting an application.

For questions not addressed here, contact the IAP Secretary directly.

Lead time required	Minimum 6 years before the proposed Congress date
Application to	IAP Secretary at secretary@iapcentral.org (written application)
Bid Checklist	See Part 2: Congress Bid Checklist
Congress timing	Typically held in October
Official language	English (simultaneous translation not required)

Companion Documents

This handbook is part of a suite of three IAP Congress planning documents. All three should be read together:

Document	Purpose	Where to find it
Host Division Handbook (this document)	Comprehensive planning reference covering all stages from bid submission through final financial reporting	IAP Central / IAP Secretary
Guidelines for Hosting an IAP Congress	Concise 11-point summary of procedures and responsibilities — a quick-reference overview	iapcentral.org
Congress Bid Checklist	Official checklist of all items required in a bid submission (also reproduced in Part 2 of this handbook)	iapcentral.org / Part 2 of this handbook

Part 1: The Bid Process

1.1 Submitting a Bid

The Division must submit a written application to the IAP Secretary at least six years before the proposed Congress date. The application must include all items on the Bid Checklist — the full checklist is reproduced in Part 2 of this handbook. Incomplete bids will not be considered.

All qualifying bids will be presented to the IAP International Council at the Congress six years prior to the proposed date.

1.2 Presenting to the International Council

Each bidding Division presents to the International Council. If more than one Division is contending, the order of presentation is determined by drawing lots.

Presentation length	Maximum 15 minutes
Room & AV	Liaise with the President of the current Congress or IAP Staff to confirm room layout and media presentation availability
Presentation content	There are no fixed content requirements, but keep in mind you are pitching your city to the Council. You will want to showcase the proposed venue and its suitability, as well as the broader attractions of the city and destination itself. Access to all divisions is essential, so showcasing your city's accessibility is important.

1.3 Voting

The venue is selected by the International Council via secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, conducted after all presentations have been made.

- If there are more than two applicants, voters rank venues in order of numerical preference.
- Voting continues until one contender obtains an absolute majority of the Council.
- The winning bid will be announced immediately to the Council.

1.4 Site Visit

Following the vote, a site visit date will be agreed upon. At least two IAP officers will visit the preferred venue and prepare a suitability report. A final decision is made based on this report by the International Council at the following Congress.

Travel costs	Covered by IAP
Accommodation, local transport, and meals	Covered by the host Division

Part 2: Congress Bid Checklist

The following checklist sets out all items that must be addressed in your bid proposal, presented in the order they should appear in your submission. This is the official IAP Congress Bid Checklist. All items are required — incomplete bids will not be considered.

> **i** *This checklist should also serve as your internal readiness assessment before submitting. If any item cannot be addressed, resolve it before filing your application.*

#	Item	Requirement
1	**Divisional Support**	Demonstrated strong local divisional support, with evidence that the division is a well-established organization with adequate financial reserves.

2	**Congress Leadership**	Appointment of a capable Provisional Congress President and an equally qualified alternate. The Provisional President will oversee bid preparation and deliver the formal presentation.
3	**Local Scientific Support**	Availability of sufficient, experienced, and engaged local IAP members to staff the scientific program and key subcommittees (e.g., hospitality, social events).
4	**Congress Venue**	Confirmation of a suitable venue available in September or October, capable of accommodating 1,500 to 3,000 delegates. Requirements include one large plenary hall, 10-12 breakout rooms of varying sizes, high-quality audiovisual facilities, registration and secretariat space, meeting rooms for Executive and Council meetings, microscope and slide preview rooms, hospitality and speaker ready rooms, and adequate space for trade exhibitions.
5	**Accommodation**	Availability of accommodation for up to 3,000 participants across a range of price categories. Lodging should be within a 10-minute walk of the venue or supported by efficient and safe transport with travel times not exceeding 10 minutes.
6	**Safety and Security**	Assurance of appropriate security measures and a generally safe environment for all participants.
7	**Cultural and Social Program**	Access to attractive cultural offerings, tours, and evening entertainment suitable for an international congress.
8	**International Accessibility**	Convenient access to an international airport with extensive global connections.
9	**Visa Accessibility**	No visa restrictions based on nationality; participants from all countries must be able to obtain entry visas.
10	**Communications and Secretariat**	A professionally staffed Congress Secretariat with reliable telephone and email systems, fluent in spoken and written English, capable of responding to inquiries within 24 hours.
11	**Tourism Support**	Engagement and support from local or national tourism authorities, including advisory services and promotional materials.
12	**Professional Congress Organizer**	Appointment of a qualified Local Professional Congress Organizer, preferably affiliated with a recognized international association of congress organizers. Must have experience planning medical conferences of 1,000+ attendees.
13	**Financial Planning**	Preparation of a draft budget with realistic registration fees comparable to past IAP congresses. All attendees must pay the registration fee; cost-control measures are encouraged to maximize participation.
14	**Digital Access**	Access to high-speed Wifi and phone service for all attendees.

Part 3: Setting Up — Once the Venue is Confirmed

3.1 Committees

Immediately upon confirmation, the host Division must establish:

- **A Congress President** — responsible for overall leadership of the event.

- **A Local Congress Organizing Committee (LCOC)** — responsible for the scientific program, finances, social events, exhibitions, and all operational aspects.
- **A Professional Congress Organizer (PCO)** — a qualified local PCO, preferably a member of a recognized international congress organizers' association, to handle technical and administrative management.

> ℹ *The LCOC and PCO must work in close coordination with the IAP International Organizing Committee throughout all stages of planning.*

3.2 Venue Requirements

The Congress venue — whether a convention center, convention hotel, or university — must include all of the following:

Facility	Requirement
Main lecture hall	Capacity for approx. 3,000 participants
Breakout rooms	10–14 rooms of varying sizes for concurrent sessions; The smallest should seat about 50; one should be able to host up to 500 and another up to 200.
Committee Meeting Room	Capacity for up to 30 (1 day prior to conference)
Council Meeting Room	Capacity for up to 120 (1 day prior to conference)
Registration area	Operational from the day prior to Congress opening
Slide preview room & digital viewing areas	Required
Secretariat office & storage	Required
Speaker ready room	Required
Hospitality room	Required
Poster area	Suitable large open space for poster display
Exhibition hall	Large open area with sufficient power outlets
Hotel accommodation	1,500 to 3,000 participants in various categories; walking distance or accessible by public transport
Airport access	Convenient access to an international airport

3.3 Visas

There must be no visa restrictions that would prevent registrants from any IAP Division from attending. This is a firm requirement and must be confirmed before a bid is accepted.

3.4 Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be established between the IAP and the host Division. The MoU is signed once the site visit report has been approved by the International Council. It formalizes the responsibilities, governance arrangements, and financial obligations of both parties for the duration of the Congress cycle.

> ℹ *The MoU is a binding agreement. Divisions should review its terms carefully and ensure legal sign-off from their organization before executing.*

Part 4: Planning the Congress

4.1 Master Planning Timeline

The table below sets out the key planning milestones. All deadlines should be confirmed with your PCO as early as possible.

Timeline	Action Required
6 years before	Call for bids Submit written bid to IAP Secretary Presentation to IAP International Council
5 years before	Site visit of successful bid from IAP Central Appoint Congress President and form LCOC Engage PCO Finalize Congress dates (check for conflicts with national/religious holidays and major pathology meetings) Design Congress logo and share with IAP Central
4 years before	Bid officially approved by International Council Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) reviewed and executed with IAP Central
3–5 years before	Begin initial contact with keynote speakers and session chairs Begin recruiting sponsors and exhibitors (reference previous Congress sponsor lists) Block Congress venue and hotel room allocations
2 years before	Distribute first announcement electronically Promote at the preceding IAP Congress and at USCAP meetings
9–10 months before (end of December)	Distribute second Announcement including scientific program, abstract submission forms, registration forms, accommodation forms
4–5 months before (April–May)	Abstract decisions complete
2 months before	Prepare updated (third) budget Distribute Final Program, case histories, handouts Confirm all AV, signage, catering, and security arrangements
Day before Congress	Registration desks open

4.2 Scientific Program

The scientific program is the heart of the Congress and must reflect the highest international standard. A typical program includes:

- Opening and closing ceremonies
- Daily plenary sessions with internationally recognized speakers
- Symposia, oral free papers, and poster presentations
- 16–20 Slide Seminars (which may be delivered via digital pathology)
- 16–20 short courses and 1–2 long courses

> ℹ *Provisions must be made for IAP programming. The LCO should work with the IAP Education Committee to finalize.*

> ℹ *The presentation of free papers is essential — for many participants, the ability to present is a prerequisite for obtaining institutional travel funding and approval to attend.*

4.3 Congress Schedule

IAP Congresses run for four to five days of scientific sessions, preceded by a welcome reception. The standard schedule is as follows:

Day	Program
Sunday morning/afternoon	Committee and Council Meetings
Sunday evening	Welcome/get-together reception (all registrants included)
Monday	Opening ceremony Scientific sessions begin
Tuesday	Morning and afternoon sessions Free evening (optional social event)
Wednesday	Morning and afternoon sessions
Thursday	Morning and afternoon sessions Congress Dinner (ticketed)
Friday	Morning and afternoon sessions Closing ceremony

4.4 Social Program

The following social events must be included within the standard registration fee:

- **Welcome Reception** — open to all registrants and accompanying persons.
- **Host Cultural Event** — a locally themed evening showcasing the culture and traditions of the host country, open to all registrants and accompanying persons.

Additional concerts, shows, and the Congress Dinner are offered as separate tickets separate from the registration fee.

An accompanying persons program of at least three half-day tours should be offered.

Pre- and post-Congress tours should be arranged separately by the PCO with a local travel agent. These must not be included in the main Congress budget.

4.5 Exhibition & Sponsors

Exhibitors, sponsors, and advertisers are an essential source of Congress income and must be integrated effectively into the Congress program. Key points:

- Provide ample, well-located booth space that encourages delegate traffic.
- Serve beverages in the exhibition area during break periods.

- Prioritize exhibitors in the fields of microscopy, laboratory equipment, laboratory supplies, software (including molecular pathology, digital pathology, and AI), and the pharmaceutical industry.
- Consult previous Congress exhibitor and sponsor lists when approaching potential exhibitors.
- Incorporate slots for industry-sponsored symposia into the program.
- Make ample advertising opportunities available.

4.6 Promotions and Communications

Successful promotion requires reaching prospective participants with two messages: that the program is scientifically important and that the destination is compelling. Recommended approaches:

- Ensure the program includes topics that are new, topical, or newsworthy.
- Recruit high-profile speakers — speaker quality drives attendance as much as location.
- Distribute all promotional materials electronically.
- Use social media for broad outreach.
- Promote actively at preceding regional and international Congresses.
- Publish announcements in relevant pathology journals and e-newsletters.
- Engage the local Tourism Ministry or Bureau for destination promotional materials.
- Maintain a current, well-designed Congress website throughout the planning period.

Part 5: Budget and Finance

5.1 Overview

Financial management is one of the most complex aspects of Congress organization. The PCO's expertise is essential throughout this process. The host Division must strive to at least break even; a surplus is strongly encouraged.

Three successive budgets are prepared as the Congress approaches and more reliable data becomes available.

5.2 Budget Stages

Budget 1 — Theoretical (approx. 6 years before)

Included as part of the bid presentation to the Council. Prepared when exact figures are unavailable. Registration fees should be benchmarked against the previous Congress and adjusted for international inflation.

Budget 2 — Working Budget (2–3 years before)

Prepared once fees and major cost categories are determined, including:

- Registration fee structure
- Meeting room rental costs
- Exhibition space pricing (per square meter)
- Slide seminar fees

- Social event costs
- Tours
- Audiovisual equipment

Presented to the International Organizing Committee for review and approval.

Budget 3 — Final (approx. 2 months before)

The most accurate budget, updated with confirmed registrations, confirmed exhibitors, finalized meeting room requirements, and contracted social event numbers. Prepare two versions — one based on conservative registration projections and one on higher projections — as a risk management measure.

5.3 Income

Income Source	Notes
Registration	Participants, residents/trainees, accompanying persons; covers all scientific content
Slide Seminar	Included in registration revenue line
Exhibition Fees	Booth space rentals
Sponsorships & Advertisements	Corporate sponsors and advertisers
Industry-Sponsored symposia	Satellite symposia separately funded by industry partners

5.4 Expenses

Fixed Expenses

- Venue rental: meeting rooms, exhibition space, poster space
- Audiovisual equipment & staffing
- PCO fees and on-site staffing
- Electronic distribution of all Congress communications
- Promotion and advertising, including all printed/electronic materials
- Signage, banners, and on-site décor
- Registration and accommodation for: IAP President, Secretary, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, and Chairs of Education and Finance Committees
- Site visit accommodation and local transport
- Security
- **IAP capitation fee: 5.5% of each active registrant's fee** — this must be included as a separate line item in the budget.
- Miscellaneous and contingency

Variable Expenses

- Beverages during session breaks
- Social events: opening ceremony, welcome reception, cultural evening
- Accompanying persons tours
- Congress app (program, abstracts, e-posters, social activities, venue maps)
- Name badges, notepads, and pens

- Certificates of attendance

> **i** *Pre- and post-Congress tours must not be included in the Congress budget. These are arranged separately by the PCO with a local travel agent, subject to LCOC approval.*

5.5 Profit Distribution and Final Reporting

Any surplus after all expenses are settled must be distributed as follows:

Host IAP Division	50% of net surplus
IAP Central	50% of net surplus

The LCOC must submit a final financial report to both the IAP International Organizing Committee and the IAP Executive Committee for approval before any distribution of surplus funds takes place. The financial report must be submitted within six months of the Congress end date.

Part 6: Quick-Reference Checklist

Use this checklist to track progress through the key milestones of your Congress planning.

Bid & Approval

- ☐ Written bid submitted to IAP Secretary (≥ 6 years out)
- ☐ Bid Checklist completed in full
- ☐ Presentation made to International Council
- ☐ Site visit hosted; IAP officers' report completed
- ☐ Final approval confirmed

Setup

- ☐ Congress President appointed
- ☐ Local Congress Organizing Committee (LCOC) formed
- ☐ Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) contracted
- ☐ Congress dates confirmed (no conflicts with holidays or major meetings)
- ☐ Congress logo designed and shared with IAP Central (≥ 5 years out)
- ☐ Visa clearance confirmed for all IAP Division registrant

Venue & Logistics

- ☐ Congress venue booked
- ☐ Hotel room block secured (accommodating 1,500 to 3,000 attendees, varied categories)
- ☐ Exhibition hall space confirmed
- ☐ AV equipment arrangements in place

- ☐ Registration area planned (open day prior to Congress start)

Scientific Program

- ☐ Keynote speakers and chairs identified
- ☐ Slide seminars (16–20) organized; digital delivery confirmed if applicable
- ☐ Short courses (16–20) and long courses (1–2) planned
- ☐ Abstract submission process established
- ☐ Free paper sessions included in program
- ☐ IAP programming incorporated into program

Communications

- ☐ Congress website live and maintained
- ☐ Social media channels active
- ☐ First announcement distributed electronically (2 years out)
- ☐ Second announcement with forms distributed (9-10 months out)
- ☐ Slide seminar materials received (6 months out, March–April)
- ☐ Abstracts received and decisions made (4-5 months out)
- ☐ Final program (2 months out)

Finance & Legal

- ☐ Budget 1 (theoretical) prepared
- ☐ Budget 2 (working) prepared
- ☐ Budget 3 (final, x2 scenarios) prepared
- ☐ IAP capitation fee (5.5% per active registrant) included as separate budget line
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) reviewed and executed with IAP Centra
- ☐ Sponsor and exhibitor agreements in place
- ☐ Final financial report submitted to IAP IOC and Executive Committee (within 6 months of Congress end)
- ☐ Surplus distributed 50/50 (host Division / IAP Central) after approval

Part 7: Key Contacts

The following IAP officers are involved in Congress planning and oversight. Contact details are available through the IAP Central office.

IAP Secretary & Executive Director	Primary contact for bid submission, general queries, logistics, bursaries
Chair, Education Committee	Scientific program guidance and IAP programming

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