Conference Planning Guidelines Manual
Draft: March 2014

Table of Contents

_____

Conference Planning Guidelines Manual revised Mar 2014

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to offer guidance and support to DbI members who are considering making an application to host a DbI conference and serves as a guide to those who are successful with such an application.

It provides an overview of what is involved in planning a conference and includes requirements established by the Board, the DbI Constitution and By Laws that need to be observed. As part of the application process, applicants will be required to justify decisions that do not follow this document; keeping in mind the guidelines presented in this manual should be adapted to suit the needs, traditions and customs of your country.

Under the name of Deafblind International there are an increasing number of conferences and events organized each year. The general practice is to have a World conference every four years and members are also encouraged to hold conferences on a regional basis or related to special interests. Conferences held to date include World conferences, European conferences, Asian conferences and conferences and events organized by DbI Networks.

The "official" DbI conferences are the World and European conference and any other Regional or thematic conference that DbI decides to officially support. Official conferences are subject to the conditions stated in these guidelines

DbI PURPOSE

Our Vision:
To be the international association which promotes awareness of deafblindness as a unique disability and to influence for appropriate services for deafblind people around the world.

Our Purpose
To support professionals (such as educators, administrators, researchers, medical specialists, etc.), families and deafblind people to raise awareness of deafblindness. Central to our work is to support the development of services to enable a good quality of life for deafblind children and adults of all ages.

Our Goals
DbI will enhance organizational capacity to meet the needs of deafblind people.

Influence the development of services for the benefit of deafblind people and their families around the world.

DbI will encourage improvements in practice and creation of new knowledge by facilitating improved communication and networking.

_____

Conference Planning Guidelines Manual revised Mar 2014

DbI Objectives
Of the seven objectives four can be related **directly to conferences:**
- to promote and improve the recognition and awareness of deafblindness as a unique congenital or acquired disability that affects children, adults and elderly people.
- to support the civil rights of deafblind people and the equalization of opportunities in all aspects of life
- **To encourage the development of networks and opportunities for association and learning for professional and to the benefit of deafblind people and their families**
- **To enable interaction between deafblind people, families and professionals, organizations in the field and wider community**
- **To promote and improve education and opportunities for deafblind people**
- to encourage support and services for deafblind people that lead to self-determination and quality of life
- **To promote and improve quality of services of deafblind people by encouraging research, staff development and training, polices that lead to good practice and dissemination of information**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES
It is not easy to host a major conference, but DbI has developed much experience and aims to share knowledge and experiences with all those wanting to host a conference.

DbI Board/ Mancom /Secretary
Local planning committee host a Management Committee (Mancom) meeting one year in advance of conference
Local Planning Committee and Scientific Committee have a seat with direct reporting to DbI Board
Approve Chair of Local Planning Committee

Local Planning Committee
The Local Planning Committee is responsible for the overall logistical organization of the conference. They need to have strong linkages to the Scientific Committee to ensure the needs of the Program are met, in the planning. DbI secretary is a member of the Local Planning Committee. Dbi Mancom liaises as appropriate.

The Responsibilities of the Local Planning Committee include:
- Sourcing venue for conference
- Negotiating contracts for Venue, preferred rates for hotel, planning tourist day (if applicable), meals,
- Coordinating venue requirements for conference, DbI meetings, Networks
- Dealing with Media inquiries
- Meeting Accessibility Standards
- Arranging for interpreters/Intervenor/translators as needed

_____

- Setting up registration process, collect fees
- Ensure budget is maintained
- Provide Onsite staffing, including volunteers. Ensuring that they receive an orientation to the building to assist as needed.
- Promotion of Conference before to ensure interest in delegates
- Seeking sponsors (patrons), trade show exhibitors
- Planning social activities
- Planning pre and post conference activities (workshops), working with the Networks to ensure they have space to meet during the conference
- Coordinating transportation for delegates from Airport/Train to venue/hotels
- Providing general information to inquiries before, during and after the conference.
- Develop Marketing Plan to promote the conference

Once the host organization or country has been selected, they should propose membership of the Local Planning Committee. The DbI Board must approve the composition of the Local Planning Committee and Chair.

There must be a strong link between the Local Planning Committee and the DbI Secretary. In some instances it might be appropriate for the Secretary to be a member of the Local Planning Committee.

The Local Planning Committee should have regular, recorded meetings and all decisions should be documented and forwarded to Mancom.

The Local Planning Committee can recommend membership of the Scientific Committee (including the Chair). This report is submitted to the DbI Secretary for discussion and agreement by the DbI Mancom. It is then submitted to the DbI Board for approval.

The Local Planning Committee has a Conference Secretary. The terms of reference for a Conference Secretary are attached in the appendices.

Sometimes the Local Planning Committee uses an external agency* or conference planners for planning the logistics of the conference.

Scientific Committee
The Scientific Committee is primarily responsible for the conference program. They are separate and independent from the Local Planning Committee. They must have strong linkages to the Local Planning Committee to ensure that the needs of the program are met. Dbi Mancom liaises as appropriate.

The Scientific Committee membership must be approved by the DbI Board.

_____

The success of a conference is often determined by the ability of the Scientific Committee to devise a stimulating Program.

The responsibilities of the Scientific Committee include:
- Determining a conference title and theme to recommend to the DbI Mancom;
- Determining the full conference program (including speakers, plenaries and workshops);
- Production of first and final announcements;
- Calling for, collecting and processing abstracts,
- Working with speakers by gathering biographies for introductions, ensuring that speakers submit their presentations electronically to be posted after the conference. Ensuring that presentations are loaded electronically for the day of their presentations.
- Negotiation with key speakers;
- Production of the final conference program;
- Editing of proceedings, posting on the website following the conference
- Ensure budget is maintained
- Maintain strong linkages with the Local Planning Committee

The Scientific Committees should aim to:
- Be representative of DbI's membership profile (for example, including people who are deafblind, families and professionals); as well as representing congenital and adventitious deafblindness.
- Have a good geographic spread and representation from different countries;
- There must be at least one member of the Scientific Committee who has been a member of a Scientific Committee for a previous DbI conference;
- A member of the DbI Mancom will be entitled to attend any meeting of the Scientific Committee;
- A member of the DbI Mancom must attend the first meeting of the Scientific Committee in order to establish relationships and links;
- Previous experience suggests that around seven or eight people are an appropriate size for a Scientific Committee.
- Minutes of any meetings will be recorded and shared with the Local Planning Committee and Mancom.

Relationships between Committees and DbI
It is essential that there are strong links between:
- the Local Planning Committee and the Scientific Committee
- the Local Planning Committee and the DbI Secretary
- the Scientific Committee and the DbI Secretary

These links could be through cross-membership or through structured reporting.

_____

Accountability

The Local Planning and Scientific Committees are accountable to the DbI Mancom and must provide a report, through the Secretary, to every Mancom meeting between the decision being made to host and the actual conference.

The report from the Local Planning Committee should include any activities undertaken which relate to the conference planning: for example, number of registrations, process of registering, budget, promotion and media, sponsors, trade exhibitors, social activities, accessibility, pre and post conference activities, Network days, transport and general information.

The report from the Scientific Committee should include any activities related to the scientific program: for example, theme, schedule of conference, time of announcements, call for papers, plenary speakers, workshops, organizational matters and general information.

A representative from the Local Planning Committee and/or Scientific Committee will be expected to attend all DbI Mancom meetings for the two years preceding a conference. Dates, times and locations will be provided by the DbI Secretary. Two reports a year are required to be sent to the DbI Mancom four weeks prior to their meetings.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The conference is a good opportunity to discuss public relations strategies, including PR materials such as media kits, advertisements and posters that promote core values of DbI and bring attention to the disability of deafblindness.

One of DbI's goals is to encourage improvements in practice and creation of new knowledge by facilitating improved communication and networking. One of the strategies to achieve this is by promoting a system of conferences which are accessible to the international field of deafblindness. DbI conferences are an excellent way to bring people together and encourage shared learning.

OFFICIAL DbI CONFERENCES

The "official" DbI conferences are the World and European conference and any other Regional or thematic conference that DbI decides to officially support. Official conferences are subject to the conditions stated in these guidelines

There are other conferences and events that DbI will endorse (for example, DbI Network events). Mancom should be informed of the content of all network meetings and conferences.

_____

WHEN CONSIDERING APPLYING TO HOST A CONFERENCE

Only members of DbI can apply to host an official DbI conference. If a group of organizations are jointly applying to host the conference, then at least the lead organization must be a member of DbI.

The planning, implementation and financial responsibilities for the conference lie totally with the host country. The planning of large conferences is a complex activity and there are many professional companies and agencies in this field that operate on a commercial basis. It is not necessary to use such an agency but it has to be recognized that it is hard, time-consuming work. Experience in conference management is essential and sometimes employing conference organizers can offer a sound way forward. Companies are not cheap, although they may charge reduced fees to charities and voluntary organizations. You will need to include their full costs in the overall budget.

Conference planners may be able to leverage better pricing with venues, speakers (if needed), catering and audio visual than without a planner. This is one way that savings can be realized.

Answering these questions may help any discussion about holding a conference.
- What is your proposal for the overall management and supervision of the conference within your country?
- What sort of committee structure are you considering?
- Do you have personnel available who have experience and expertise in planning large meetings and who can serve your local organizing committee?
- Would you involve personnel from other countries in your region of the world in organizing the conference?
- Would you look to any involvement from the DbI Mancom in the detailed organization of the conference?
- How often would you wish to have meetings between your committee and the DbI Mancom during the planning period?
- Do you have staff or friends who can undertake jobs on a volunteer basis? The economics of a conference means that many jobs have to be undertaken without payment.
- When would you propose to begin work?

APPLYING TO HOST A DbI CONFERENCE

Five years prior to a scheduled conference, the DbI Secretariat calls for Expressions of Interest. This process is for DbI to have an idea of who is interested in hosting a conference and for DbI to engage in conversation with prospective hosts about their ideas and plans. The DbI Mancom then decides, based on set criteria, who will then be asked to complete a full application.

_____

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The DbI Mancom is responsible for ensuring that all of the criteria are met. The applications, with recommendations from the Mancom, are then presented to the DbI Board for a decision.

The DbI Board must approve recommendations related to the:
- membership of all conference committees
- conference theme
- conference titles

These decisions will be based on recommendations from the hosts following Discussions with the DbI Secretary and other Mancom members.

DbI Conference Timelines
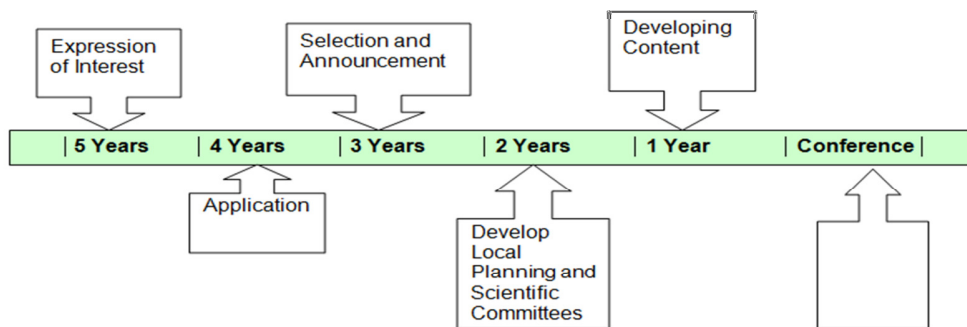
DbI Conference Timelines

LOGISTICS

Conference logistics should be coordinated well in advance to ensure a well-organized and enjoyable event.

General Planning

All activities must be coordinated to ensure the efforts of Local Planning and Scientific Committees accomplish the goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively. This comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading to accomplish a goal.

Site Selection

The Conference town / city should be readily accessible within international travel services.

_____

The organizers should anticipate around 300-500 delegates and should arrange a selection of accommodation to meet their budget. It should include hotels, guest houses and student/budget rooms. It is the stated wish of most DbI members that the conference venue and the accommodation should preferably be together in the same place, or as close to the venue as possible.

All Conference venues should be fully accessible. If this is not possible, this must be pointed out, so that a decision on suitability can be made by the Mancom.

CONFERENCE VENUE
There are many things to consider when selecting a venue.

What venue do you have in mind?
Will it have the following basic requirements?
- Plenary auditorium for up to 500 delegates;
- Site Accessibility
- Consideration should be given to the number of delegates per workshop and 12-16 separate breakout rooms and their capacity,
- Office space for the Secretariat including access to computers, photocopiers etc.;
- Audio-visual facilities;
- Soundproof room for Interpreters';
- Central meeting place;
- There should be an Information Desk, centrally located, and a Poster-Board for announcements.
- Dining considerations (separate dining room, catering, available restaurants in the area)
- Meeting Room for DbI Board Meeting for up to 50 people
- Exhibit Hall for Tradeshow/Display/Poster Presentations
- Accommodation Block of Rooms (Single/Double)
- Internet Access at the Site (all meeting rooms)
- Parking Availability in the area
- Ease of Private and Public Transit to the site.

AV Requirements
This can be a very large undertaking for a conference, however, it is a very necessary to ensure that the rooms are set up for each speaker, as well as for the delegates. Each space must be set up properly to ensure that the technical issues do not arise during presentations, discussions and announcements. Due to the nature of the conference, many considerations for accessibility need to be taken into consideration.

Plenary Auditorium
- Lectern/Panel Table for Responses

_____

- Microphone
- LCD Projector appropriate for the space
- Screen appropriate for the space
- Laptop computer preloaded with presentations (and a backup)
- Platform for Interpreters
- Studios for Translators
- Translation Equipment/Earphones

Meeting Rooms (12-16)
- Lectern
- Microphone at lectern or lapel microphone for each speaker
- LCD projector
- Screen
- The committee will need to determine if speakers will bring their own laptops or if you will provide. If they are provided, ensure that the presentations are preloaded and tested for the speakers.

Dining Hall/Restaurants
- Seating for all Delegates
- If the site does not have a Dining Hall/Banquet Hall, sufficient areas for meals during the conference.

Relief Area for Service Dogs
- Some delegates may bring their service dogs. An area adjacent to the meeting halls with natural grass for their relief and a disposal site for depositing bags.
- Ensure that delegates with dogs are oriented to this area when they check in.

Using Conference Planners
Given the attendance at the DbI conference, there are only limited venues that can accommodate the banquet, meeting room and sleeping accommodations that are required. The host agencies may consider using a conference planner to assist the committee, especially if the conference is not being held in their home community. The following are aspects that you could engage a conference planner in, however, the more that the committee expects the conference planner to handle the higher the cost of the planner:

1. **Venue search**
   - Prepare a request for proposal for space for the conference including:

_____

Venue, dates available, room rate, meeting space, meeting room rental fees, complimentary items such as internet access, rooms, prize for silent auction, etc., and proximity to other activities

- Determine with the Local Planning Committee potential locations that have venues to support the size of conference

2. Registration Management

- Develop registration process protocol and receive registrations and payment status from designated client authority or on-line registration service (fees for on-line registration paid by the conference committee)
- Prepare reports as required from database or excel spreadsheet provided by committee or on-line registration service
- Design and preparation of confirmation letter, map, pre-reading material
- Send confirmation packages to all registered delegates
- Prepare on-site name badges and custom delegate itinerary indicating workshop selection; provide special diet tickets, etc.
- Send materials out for photocopying
- Prepare on-site conference bag for each delegate to include agenda, materials, speaker handout materials, tabs if required etc., and/or coordinate purchase and production of handout CD-ROM
- Manage all aspects of on-site registration
- Provide final lists of attendees and specialized reports as needed
- Act as main contact for event registration and respond to enquiries from phone, fax or email
- Registration Manager on-site for duration of event managing registration – including computer and printer on-site to manage any changes/new delegates, etc.
- Work with designated agency to prepare reports and backup documentation for possible audit
- If required, source/negotiate/contract with on-line registration supplier and manage set-up requirements
- Test on-line registration from website, if needed

3. Speaker Management

Working with the Scientific Committee:

- Send detailed confirmation letters to speakers outlining their date and time of presentation
- Follow up with presenters regarding their bios and session descriptions for the registration brochure
- Follow up with the presenters regarding their audio visual needs
- Follow up with the speakers to obtain their PowerPoint presentations for copying or CD-ROM production and to burn to a master CD for onsite at the event.
- Prepare and send speaker thank you letters after the event

4. Marketing Material Preparation

_____

- Hire graphic artist and printer (within assigned budget) or work with designated client supplier
- Work with graphic artist for a "Save the Date" flyer, registration brochure and Conference Program preparation
- Prepare master PowerPoint slides for on-site promoting client, sponsors, etc.
- Preparation of in-house signs and/or ordering of professionally printed signs

5. **Venue Liaison and On-Site Management**
   - Prepare meeting specifications document outlining room set ups, audio visual requirements, breakout rooms, catering, etc. with venue
   - Attend final pre-conference meeting with hotel to review order
   - Review and sign off banquet event orders with venue
   - Review the final invoice from venue for sign off before payment by client
   - Provide a Senior Meeting Planner on-site for duration of conference to manage the event which includes liaison with banquet captain for catering, checking room set ups, working with A/V company for equipment testing, organization of presenters, cueing of emcee, signage, etc.
   - Assistance with delegates special needs
   - Prepare volunteer schedule (registration desk, workshop monitors, etc.)

6. **Supplier Management**
   - Seek quotes for signs, audio visual equipment, name badges, décor and entertainment, transportation if needed

7. **Script**
   - Preparation of the on-site event script for emcee to include timing, housekeeping notes, introductions for speakers, recognition of sponsors, etc., technical cues for audio visual technician
   - Prepare technical script for A/V supplier

8. **Program Development**
   Working with the Scientific Committee:
   - Assist committee in the development of the program to ensure the best possible experience for all participants (i.e. education flow, dedicated exhibit time, etc.)
   - Assist committee in the creative development of themes and format of sub-events
   - Attend face to face committee meetings as needed to plan details (and unlimited conference calls)

9. **Conference Sponsorship Program**
   - Develop a Conference Sponsor and tradeshow prospectus for committee to sell
   - Manage sold Sponsorships (send confirmations, collect ads, logos)
   - Manage sold exhibitors (send confirmation letters, manage tradeshow set up and tear down)

---

10. **Other Activities**
    • Organize other activities (tourist day, area information, spa, etc.)

Financial/Budget

The successful financing of a large international conference is not a simple matter. It is unlikely that the fees alone will be enough to cover all the costs. The fees do need to remain affordable for delegates, so it is necessary to seek conference sponsorship for the activities of the conference.

A detailed budget must be prepared taking into account the number of delegates that are required to achieve a break-even point; how much conference sponsorship will be needed; from what source will conference sponsorship come (government local and national, corporate supporters, fundraising); how will any ultimate deficits be covered.

The host organization must accept full budget responsibility and all management responsibilities. Applications must contain a statement that the host organization is willing to take on this responsibility.

There are no financial resources available from DbI towards the Conference or towards the costs of the Planning and Scientific Committees. Members must be able to finance their involvement themselves.

It is not the purpose of DbI Conferences to make a surplus, however, if there is a surplus then this should be handed back to DbI for reinvestment in future DbI events.

If a conference experiences a loss, DbI is not in a position to cover this loss. It is the full responsibility of the local host, therefore essential that the budget be maintained and carefully monitored.

In addition:
    • The host organization must accept full budget responsibility.
    • The host organization must provide a free registration for the DbI Information Officer to attend the full conference program. It will be the role of the information officer to take pictures and write articles related to the event for the DbI Review and DbI's social media.
    • If a group of organizations are jointly organizing the conference, the financial responsibility taken by each organization must be clear in the application. An agreement between these organizations is highly recommended.
    • Costs should be kept to a minimum so long as quality standards are met.
    • Full information on accommodation costs must be provided in the application.
    • Consideration to be given to day delegate rates as this could sometimes be helpful.

_____

- Speakers and Presenters will pay all conference fees and it is not expected that any payment is made for any contribution they make to the conference. It is recommended that speakers and presenters are not paid any fees. There is some room for flexibility when speakers are invited to attend who are outside the field of deafblindness. These costs must be built into the budget.
- The organizers must determine at an early stage whether or not they are to take responsibility for organizing the accommodation for delegates. They should at least include information about a variety of different accommodation options for delegates to pursue themselves.

DbI FINANCIAL INPUT

There are no financial resources available from DbI towards the Conference. However, in certain circumstances, DbI may consider making a small loan to a conference host so as to assist with cash-flow.

DbI INVOLVEMENT IN BUDGET/FINANCES

- A conference budget must be prepared by the Local Planning Committee and sent to the DbI Mancom for approval by the DbI Board.
- All reports to the DbI Mancom must include a financial update.
- The Mancom may request further information at any time, including copies of bank statements.

PARTICIPANT SPONSORSHIPS

There is a sponsorship process for conference delegates through DbI and there are usually a number of other organizations who will sponsor delegates. DbI will call for expressions of interest prior to an event or conference and people interested in being sponsored are required to complete an application form. The DbI Secretary will assist in the co-ordination of these sponsorships and the requests will be sent to the Participant Sponsorship Committee and recommendations approved through Mancom.

LOGO USAGE AND PROTOCOLS

The DbI logo is to be used on all materials produced for the conference. In that manner, the Chairs of the Local Planning and Scientific Committees must approve all outgoing communication/templates, program to ensure that the logo is used appropriately.

The Logo can be obtained from the DbI Secretariat.

_____

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling an event to minimize the adverse effects of accidents and limits the liability of host agencies and DbI.

By reviewing and answering three basic questions when coordinating conference activities

What can go wrong?
If something goes wrong, how will we respond?
How will any losses be paid for?

If something is likely to go wrong
- reduce the risk by not holding the activity or event
- Modify the activity or event to lessen the risk
- Prepare a plan to address any potential problems
- Find support from others (organizations) that will agree to participate and share the risk

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment will provide useful data for designing the conference program. Ask a wide variety of members to offer suggestions for discussion topics and presentations. Gather information on participants interests through a variety of methods past conference evaluation reports.

CONFERENCE THEME

The themes of official DbI Conferences should:
- Reflect the values of DbI;
- Reflect where DbI as an organization is at the time of that Conference;
- Be appropriate to the themes that are relevant and important to DbI at that stage in its development;
- Be broad enough to attract as much of the DbI membership as possible.

The theme may well be relevant to the host organization or country to, but it would not be appropriate for the theme to be relevant to the host and not to DbI.

The DbI Mancom should be consulted in advance for suggestions regarding possible themes. The final decision must be approved by the DbI Board.

_____

BENEFITS

The Local Planning and Scientific Committees must give consideration to the ways in which a conference can benefit developments for people who are deafblind and their families in that country or region.

TIME AND DURATION

The duration of most conferences is five days, with registration beginning on the eve of the first day. In setting the date, consideration should be given to other major conferences and religious holidays.

Consideration should be given to the time of year where more economical airfares may be available (avoid high travel/vacation season). A recommendation for conference dates will need to be approved by the DbI Board.

The organizers should allow for other meetings, such as pre or post conferences to hold in conjunction with the main conference when suggesting the dates. The organizers will be able to veto these events if they have reasonable grounds, but once agreed they must give the organizers of these additional events as much support as possible. Helpful support would include information on venues, accommodation and local liaison. Information about official events must also be included in the Conference announcements and program.

LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATION

No country in the world is precluded from applying.

It is recommended that at least every second World Conference should be held in a part of the world that is convenient for the majority of members to reach.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

English will be the official language. Other official languages will be dependent on the host country. Platform interpreters must be provided during plenary sessions.

One of the principal costs of an International Conference is that of providing simultaneous translations. If any language other than English is permitted at any time, then translation into English is essential. If English is the only language to be used then booths and equipment, at least for plenaries, must be provided for the use of groups bringing their own interpreters. The organizers must advertise the availability of this service in the Announcement and seek information from those groups intending to bring their own interpreters. The payment of such individuals is a matter for the groups bringing them, unless the organizers are able and willing to provide such translation facilities themselves.

_____

Platform interpreters for plenary sessions for deaf delegates must be provided in the official languages, as necessary and the need for this should be identified within the information sought in the pre-registration material. Interpreters for workshops should be provided to the extent possible within the budget.

Deafblind delegates must find and pay for their own personal interpreters. As a recommendation, these interpreters should pay the accompanying persons' rate.

FAMILY CAMP AND THE INCLUSION OF DEAFBLIND AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Applicants are asked to consider the feasibility of holding a Family Camp in conjunction with the Conference to enable families with their children to attend and participate. Applicants should state if they are providing an additional program for families or essentially a child-minding service. It is recommended that this be a decision reached together with the families' association in the host country.

Consideration must be given to all the needs of deafblind and family delegates in order to ensure their full participation in the conference.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

An interesting program of cultural, tourist and professional visits should be considered and included in the application. It should be clear whether the costs of these are to be included in the conference fee in full or in part or whether they have to be paid for separately. It is usual for some evenings and the afternoon of the third day to be used for this purpose.

Information on tourism in the country/region should be available as part of the pre-registration process and a service of information and, if possible, booking should be available at the conference.

A Reception should be considered which may include entertainment of some kind. It is traditional to hold the Conference Banquet on the last night of the Conference. Most DbI members have indicated their wish to have a social gathering point, strategically placed for both the conference venue and the residential accommodation, where delegates can meet outside the conference times.

TRADE SHOW AND CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP (if applicable)

The trade show and Conference Sponsorship program is an important revenue stream for the conference. Being a Sponsor or trade show exhibitor lets vendors:
- Market their products and services
- Network with the primary decision makers in the organization
- Continues to build relationships with organizations in a fun and unique forum

_____

There are several levels of Sponsorship for the Conference and a sample of the fee structure and the benefits provided to the sponsor is included in the appendices:
- Presenting Sponsor (max 1)
- Dinner/Keynote Sponsor (max 4)
- Product Sponsor (max 5)
- Entertainment and Reception Sponsor (max 5)
- Break and Lunch Sponsor (max 3)
- Coffee break Sponsor (max 3)
- Advertising Sponsor
- Trade show exhibitor

SILENT AUCTION (If applicable)

The silent auction can be held during the conference. Members are solicited for donations and may mail, courier prior to the conference or drop the item(s) off at the registration desk upon arrival. Conference Sponsors and local vendors are also able to contribute prized to this event.

PROMOTION

An International Conference is often of great benefit to the host organization in terms of reputation and awareness within its country. DbI therefore encourages the organizers to maximize the public relations opportunities of the conference and does not place any limitations on this.

DISCLAIMER

To protect DbI Board of Directors and the Conference Committee from liability when approving presenters, patrons and tradeshow exhibitors, the following disclaimer must be included in the conference package:

"***The information presented or advertising material available during this conference is provided for general information purposes only and is neither sponsored nor endorsed by DbI. For more information on these products and services, attendees are encouraged to contact the presenter or advertiser directly***."

TRANSPORTATION

It is unlikely that a Conference of this nature would benefit from the nominating of official airlines etc. but the organizers are recommended to investigate this. All relevant information on travel to and from the host country should be provided in the pre-

_____

registration material, including information on car-hire etc. Welcome booths at airports and bus/train stations are recommended where this is feasible.

Applicants must consider the need for, and cost of, transportation within the conference:
- travel between residential accommodation and venue;
- travel between conference locations ,if not all on one site;
- Travel for social/recreational activities.

CONFERENCE BAG
The Conference Bag must contain:
- Texts;
  It is strongly recommended that presentation that are to be presented are available for interperters at the start of the Conference.
  Speakers are responsible for providing texts in print and on disc (ASCII format recommended for screen readers) to be sent at least one month before the conference.
  Speakers and Presenters are responsible for bringing any handouts. Handouts should be available in print, large print and Braille.
- Abstracts;
- Proceedings (if not to be provided after the conference and these must at least be in English);
- List of delegates' names and addresses (the application form must include an opportunity for delegates to agree to addresses being inserted in the list).

ACCOMPANYING PERSONS
Applicants must determine if accompanying persons, (for example family members, Interpreters, Guides), will have to pay the full delegate cost or whether there will be a reduced rate to include which includes Conference Bag, meals, reception, banquet etc.

POLITICAL CLIMATE
Applicants should consider the political stability in their country and how this might affect the success of holding of the conference. It is recognized that it is difficult to consider this so far ahead of the conference, but it is essential that countries which do not have regular political stability consider and report on it in their application.

DbI AWARDS
DbI has the privilege of honoring people who have made exceptional contributions to individuals who are deafblind and to DbI and at conference will present awards. The DbI Awards give a unique opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our

_____

colleagues and are usually held during the conference. The Awards Committee and DbI Mancom are responsible for this portion of the program.

ACCESSIBILITY
DbI believes strongly in access for all. We understand that it's difficult to find the ideal buildings for accommodation and meetings and so often we are solving problems to make access as good as it possibly can be. The following are some suggestions for things that should be considered and some ideas that might be helpful. You will have more suggestions.

A. Visual
- Changes in lighting levels from corridors to rooms are the most difficult, we are aiming for uniform lighting free of shadows and differences.
- Extra lights can be brought in.
- Screens and blinds can help with the control of light through windows.
- Good contrast helps so at registration desks for e.g. a black cloth can help with the location of white papers/conference packs.
- Yellow and black tape can be used to highlight areas and are traditionally used on stairs or to cover trailing cables.
- Good clear and frequent signage reassures. It's helpful to 'walk' and navigate areas from a number of directions to experience how a new delegate might feel coming to the conference centre or to a hotel.

B. Auditory
- Hotels and dining rooms can be noisy places and often we have least control over these environments.
- Acoustics can be helped in the dining/assembly areas by the use of soft furnishings or screens to absorb the noise. So practically screens in areas perhaps with the conference poster display can improve the auditory environment while at the same time having a function.
- Loop systems need to be in place and are always worth testing, sometimes sound can 'leak' from one room to another.

C. Information
- The official language of DbI conferences is English. Provision for other languages can be made through a range of translation options. The conference may choose to provide simultaneous translation through booths or conference delegates can bring their own translators.
- All conference materials must be available in accessible formats including Braille, large print, contrasting colors. Ideally electronic formats should be sent to delegates before arrival.
- The conference pack should contain the program, local information and any emergency or help arrangements. A delegates list should be provided so that

deafblind colleagues know who is at the conference. Delegates should be asked permission to have their name listed on a delegates list for the reasons of access.

D. Physical environment

- Attention should be given to where stairs are so that alternative access points can be noted or organized. Ramps and signage need to be considered.
- Lifts should be checked for size and ease of operation. With permission you may be able to add Braille signage.
- The location of accessible toilets in relation to rooms and how to navigate between areas needs to be considered.
- Seating should be as flexible as possible; if tables need to be used for equipment they don't block escape routes.
- Flexible seating also helps interpreters who may need to change position from side on to face on, etc.
- The possibility of seating with back support for interpreters is helpful.
- Handrails along stairs should be checked for orientation.
- Mobility routes should be checked for trip hazards and if there are protruding stairs or walls these can be taped to indicate a difficulty.
- External routes and access to transport needs to be considered.

EVALUATION REPORT

Within two months of completion of the conference, a comprehensive evaluation report is required to be sent to the DbI Mancom. This feedback is very important information to inform future conference hosts of how the conference was organized and any issues which can be addressed more positively in the future. The following information should be included in the report:

- Conference Program – including Scientific and Social program and any other conference related activities.
- Participants – including the numbers, countries represented and any other issues.
- Funding and Sponsorship
- Tradeshow and Patronage
- Other fundraising activities
- Budget (approved and actual)
- Exhibitors
- Volunteers
- Media
- Pre/post Conference Workshops
- Participant Evaluation/Feedback of the Conference – how was this done
- Results
- Recommendations for Future Conferences.

_____

The cost of preparing this report should be included in the conference budget.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are recruited to help with Conference events and are usually supplied by the conference host agencies. Volunteers should check in at the registration table at least 30 minutes before your first scheduled task and become familiar with the building layout to ensure they can find the room they will be working in and can direct someone to the key areas e.g. registration desk, washrooms, and dining room. Volunteers should be easily identifiable. The conference committee should identify a main contact person for volunteers. Meals for volunteers are provided according to the volunteer's schedule. Volunteers are responsible for assisting delegates, speakers and presenters, ensuring that their needs are taken care of and that the conference runs smoothly.

Volunteer Responsibilities
1. **Registration**
   • Welcome delegates, sponsors and tradeshow participants
   • Provide them with their name badge
   • Provide them with the delegate bag and briefly highlight some of the contents
   • Provide them with an on-site program/trade show floor plan
   • Let them know that there will be someone at, or in close proximity to the registration desk throughout the conference if they have any questions – or to look for one of the volunteers and how they will recognize a volunteer (i.e. colour of shirt, colour of badge, scarf, etc.)
2. **Workshop Monitors**
   • Come to the Registration desk 45 minutes prior to start of session to pick-up Monitor Kit (script/bios and gift(s))
   • Greet speaker in meeting room 30 minutes prior to start of session
   • Assist speaker in set-up (distribute handouts, etc.) Note: A/V techs/planners will also be checking on final set-up
   • Thank speaker at end of session (present gift if applicable)
   • If there is not enough seating, arrange for extra chairs
   • Ensure that the last speaker gets a signal when there are only 10 minutes remaining and again when the workshop should be ending
3. **Tradeshow (if applicable)**
   • Assist vendors in finding their allocated space
   • Ensure vendors have working electrical and networking capabilities, where previously requested
   • Circulate to ensure vendors have what they need
   • Troubleshoot as necessary
4. **Meals**

_____

- Welcome delegates at the doors (2 volunteers on each door)
- Check name tags for conference status or collect meal tickets at the door
- If delegate does not have ticket – send to registration desk
- Direct keynote speakers or VIPs to their table if required

5. **Silent Auction (if applicable)**
   - Set up
     - Set up tables with auction items; keeping in mind what is visually appealing and that all items can be easily viewed
     - Ensure an auction bid sheet and pen is provided for each item/group
   - Auction Monitoring
     - Monitor tables to ensure bids are set to correct increments
     - Point out items of interest to potential bidders, encourage bidding
   - Closing
     - Arrange with registration to make an announcement 15 minutes before bidding closes
     - When bidding is closed, collect the bid sheets and confirm who has purchased the item(s)
     - List items and purchaser on sign and post at registration desk. Ask registration to announce the names of the winners and provide details for picking up their item(s)
     - Have items available at registration desk for pick-up and payment. Payment options are: cash, cheque, or credit card.
     - Ensure purchaser is provided a receipt as proof of payment
     - Thank the purchaser for their support of the conference

6. **Runners**
   - Based at the registration desk
   - Be prepared to fill in at registration desk, tradeshow, silent auction and/or workshop as necessary
   - Assist workshop volunteers with additional chairs or with finding IT assistance as necessary

If you have any questions or require further information please contact:

Secretariat
Deafblind International
Email: secretariat@deafblindinternational.org

_____

Appendix

Appendix 1: DbI World Conferences Terms of Reference for Conference Secretary

Preamble
- The Secretary is an integral component for the successful management of the conference.
- The secretary should have proficiency in English (the language of the conference), and the ability to communicate in the language of the host country if hosted in a country where the primary language is not English.
- The secretary should have proficiency in computer software, including MSWord and MS Excel. Knowledge of and access to a database management software system would be beneficial.
- Preferably the secretary should have a good knowledge of the field of deafblindness and have good contacts throughout the international community in this field. A background in event management is desirable however strong organizational skill are essential.
- With the use of the internet and telephone being the major function of the secretary, it is not crucial that the secretary be located in the immediate vicinity of the Local Planning Committee. The description of activities outlined below suggests that the majority of activities will be by electronic means. However occasional face to face meetings may be required.
- The Conference secretary will report to the Chair of the Conference Local Planning Committee and work under the guidance of the Committee.

The Secretary will:
a) Materials and Website
- Work with the local committee to design final appearance of the conference website (wordings, logos, time and location etc.) in cooperation with the Conference Webmaster.
- Ensure that the conference website is accessible in English and the language of the host country if hosted in a country where the primary language is not English. The website should also be accessible for people with disabilities.
- Ensure that the website is integrated and updated with the DbI website on a regular basis by keeping the DbI Secretariat informed of announcements.
- Design all forms necessary for the conference, including those for Registration, Accommodation, Tourism Day and other social events, Accessibility Needs, the Call for Papers and Poster Sessions, Organization Displays etc.
- Select promotional material and conference satchel materials.
- Work with the Conference Webmaster regarding uploading of all these materials and forms for the website.
- Ensure accurate Visa information is available on the website for delegates traveling from outside the host country. A letter from the Conference Organizers on Conference letterhead should be available on the website for delegates to download to assist with their Visa applications.

_____

- In addition to the information being on the conference website, prepare hard copies of Official Notices of the Conference for distribution via email, by post (to those we know do not have email). Distribute to as many individuals and worldwide Organizations in the field of deafblindness and disabilities that are known to the Conference organizers and DbI. Much of this information is available from past DbI Conference organizers.
- Provide regular notices for the website and for distribution by email as per various deadlines.
- Ensure Draft and Final Agenda is uploaded to the Conference website.
- Research other events and websites to promote DbI conference. Send promotional material to events who agree to distribute. Preferably seek this promotion free of charge.
- Consider the production of a quarterly e-bulletin to circulate far and wide. Use the e-bulletin to make announcements, as a reminder for deadlines (e.g. registration, call for papers etc.), have mini-competitions, snippets about host country and what delegates can look forward to when they visit.
- Work with Conference Scientific Committee and Local Support team to gather the Plenary and Workshop papers and prepare the Conference Proceedings for distribution during or after the conference.
- Prepare and manage the circulation of conference evaluations surveys which will be used to create a post conference evaluation report.

b) Scientific Committee
Work closely with the Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC) to develop the guidelines and application form for the Call for Papers, and any other information required (e.g. technology).
- Assist with distribution of submitted abstracts/papers to members of the committee.
- Distribute letters via email or post regarding decisions of the SC (paper is accepted, rejected, placed on hold etc.).
- Prepare the agenda of the Conference based on the decisions of the SC, as per recommended organization of workshop presentations (groupings by sub-themes, room designations etc.)
- Invite Plenary Speakers on the advice of the SC. Determine if any of these speakers will be paid.
- Provide notice to Plenary Speakers and successful workshop presenters of the time and location of their presentations in advance of the conference. Notice will also include guidelines for presenting, confirmation of technology needs etc.
- Work with SC Chair to recommend Chairs for each workshop. Send invitations to Chairs along with time and location of the workshop they are to convene.
- Work with Support Team to produce Certificates and acquire gifts for presentation to Workshop and Plenary presenters.
- Ensure Conference Evaluation questionnaires are produced in cooperation with Scientific Committee.

_____

c) Funding Proposals, Letters of Invitation and General Communication/Correspondence

- Work with Support Team (Fund Raising) to develop list of organizations, embassies, individuals, etc. which are sources of potential funding.
- Assist by preparing appropriate letters and applications of request for specific funding.
- Work with funding agencies (PerkinsInternational, DbI, Sense International, CBM etc.) which support attendance for individuals from developing countries. This will involve coordinating their notification, registration, and accommodation etc. for these supported individuals.
- Prepare letters of invitation for individuals requiring a travel visa to attend the conference in the host country (also see Website & Materials).
- Be the first contact with individuals and organizations to answer all requests for information regarding the conference.

d) Other Management

- Prepare and maintain data base of registration information unless website is able to perform this function.
- Provide confirmations of registration, accommodation, special assistance requests and tour selection to conference participants.
- Source local volunteers to work before and during conference. Roles may include – meet and greet at the airport, conference venue guides, tourist day attendants, ushers at social events, room hosts for all sessions, first aid, general runners, information providers at registration area etc.
- Convene meeting for volunteers for pre-conference training. What is expected of them, what to wear, how they will be looked after – food, drinks, car parking etc.
- Determine Awards to be presented at conference and liaise with DbI regarding the production of the awards trophies and logistics for presenting these.
- Regularly communicate with the Local Planning Committee on the management of the Conference as per registrations, accommodations, local transport for delegates, venue accessibility and tourism etc.
- Assist Local Planning Committee by preparing periodic reports for DbI on the progress of the Conference.
- During the Conference period, coordinate with the Conference Support team on all aspects of needs of Conference participants including Registration, Technology, Printing, Translation, Information Services, photographer, performers or musicians for social events etc.
- Coordinate with Conference Centre on catering requirements for daily meal breaks and social functions including opening & closing ceremony and Banquet.
- Work with Conference Support Team to ensure Conference Evaluation questionnaires are included in the Conference Registration package.

e) Post Conference
- Assist Local Planning Committee by preparing various conference summations and evaluations that are deemed necessary.
- Post the Conference Summary and report on the conference website as well as DbI website for reference.

Appendix 2: Expression of Interest to Host a DbI Conference
 1. Details of Applicant

Host Organization name:	
Contact person:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Facsimile:	
Email:	
Website:	

2. Why do you want to host a DbI Conference?

3. What benefits will there be to you and your country in hosting this Conference?

```



```

4. What unique features or special attributes does your country offer which would be an important reason for DbI to choose your site?

```



```

Please email completed applications to DbI Secretariat at secretariat@deafblindinternational.org.
DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

DbI
DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

Conference Planning Guidelines Manual revised Mar 2014

Appendix 3: Application to Host a DbI Conference

Please ensure that you have read the DbI Conference Guidelines before proceeding with an application. The DbI Management Committee will then expect the following areas to be covered in an application:

1. Who are the host agencies? Is this a partnership between agencies?

2. Will all the agencies working with deafblind people in your country be involved? If not, please could you explain why not?

3. Why do you want to host the conference?

4. What benefits will there be to deafblind people in your country and region in hosting this conference?

5. What is your proposal for the overall management and supervision of the conference within your country?

6. What sort of committee structure are you considering?

7. Are you planning on using an agency for the logistic organization of the conference?

8. How will you maximize Public Relations and political opportunities that hosting such a conference might enable?

_____

9.   What unique features or special attributes does your country offer which would be an important reason for DbI to choose your site?

10.   Please could you provide a draft summary budget for your conference, including the following:
- The approximate number of paying delegates you expect to attend
- What percentage of costs will be covered by registration fees
- How the other costs will be covered
- Are there local contributors (e.g. agencies, governments, corporations etc.) to subsidize some of the cost? How much local financial assistance is possible?
- Approximately what you expect the registration fee to be (highest and lowest levels)
- Approximate accommodation costs
- If you expect the conference to generate a profit or a loss – and, if a loss, how this will be covered
- What kinds of facilities are available for residential arrangements and conference meeting space?

11.   What social arrangements and activities are possible?

12.   Do you have sources for providing financial assistance to participants from countries who may find it difficult to pay?

13.   Do you have less expensive hotel accommodation options for participants from countries who may find it difficult to pay?

14.   Have you read, understood and agree to follow the DbI Conference Guidelines? Is there anything you would like further information about?

_____

Appendix 4: Budget Template

Revenue	Actual	Budget	Variance
Patronage/Tradeshow			0.00
Registration Fees			0.00
Other			0.00
Total Revenue			0.00
Expenditures	Actual	Budget	Variance
Conference Materials			
Delegate Bags			0.00
Photocopying			0.00
online registration			0.00
Program Speakers			
Fees/ Honourariums			0.00
Travel/Accommodation			0.00
Translation			0.00
Interpreters'/Intervenors			0.00
Administration			0.00
Miscellaneous			0.00
Venue			
Food/Beverage			0.00
Audio Visual			0.00
Meeting Rooms			0.00
Communications			
Graphic Artist			0.00
Conference Calls/committee			0.00
onsite Brochure Printing			0.00
Website			0.00
Other			
Banking Fees			0.00
Evaluation			0.00
			0.00
Total Expenditures			0.00
Variance	0.00	0.00	0.00

DbI
DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

Conference Planning Guidelines Manual revised Mar 2014

Appendix 5: Sample Workplan Template

ITEM	LEAD	TARGET DATE	STATUS
Establish Local Planning Committee (core) and Scientific Committee			
Submit Committee Lists to Mancom			
Develop Sub Committees			
Develop Theme and get approval from Mancom			
If using Conference Planner, Determine needs and Contract			
Establish Date for Conference and get approval from Mancom			
Investigate Sites			
Investigate Accommodation/alternatives			
Determine Budget			
Contact other agencies that have hosted Conference for structure			
Develop Conference Sponsorship Program			
Develop Save the Date teaser card			
Call for Abstracts			

Research Plenary speakers			
Silent Auction Request Paper Sponsorship and Tradeshow			
Solicite Tradeshow and Sponsorship ready to target			
Conference Gift			
Site visit and confirm registration process			
Criteria for Abstracts to be established			
Abstracts deadline			
Invitation to VIP's			
Sessions			
Speakers			
Musical Entertainment			
Develop Program for after hours			
Corporate Sponsorship to be pursued			
Trade Table Vendors to be pursued			
DbI Board Update			
Determined cost for spouse			
Send out final email version of brochure and registration			

_____

packages DbI members. Post on Website			
Develop Registration Site			
Draft Program			
Adjust Budget based on known costs			
Sponsorships			
Registration form, session sign up forms, other activity forms, trade table forms and brochures			
Brochure Sign off, Post on Website			
Trade Table confirmations			
Accommodation Cost			
Send out reminder flyer for conference			
Sessions			
Decorations			
Name Badges			
Schedules			
Hospitality Suite			
Registration Desk			
Review and Revise Committee Structure			
Silent Auction			
Finalize Sponsors			

_____

Finalize Trade table vendors			
Financial Report update			
Final Payments			
Equipment			
Financial Report Update			
Speakers and Presenters			
Bios/Slide Shows gathered			
Set up Office			
Silent Auction			
Conference Bags			
flags, banners etc.			
Pictures of the conference			
Opening Ceremonies			
Send Thank you letters to all firms and persons who contributed to the conference			
Final Financial Report			

_____

Appendix 6: Final Report Template

Executive Report

To: Dbl Mancom

From:

Date:

Re: **Dbl Conference XXXX**

▪▪

Conference
Date/Location

Hosted by:

Local Planning Committee:

Scientific Committee:

Conference Secretary:

Meeting Planner (If applicable):

Registration
In total, there were XXX delegates at the XXXX Conference including XXX full-conference delegates, 33 speakers, 82 Exhibitor/Sponsor representatives, XX Companions and XX Translators/Interpreters.   There were XX countries represented at this conference.

A total of 632 room nights were picked-up at the XXX (list hotels) for the event.

Event Sponsors/Exhibitors

What Attracted Delegates to Attend
According to the evaluation report, the main reason people attended this event was because of the entire conference package, including expertise of speakers, educational content, ability to network and the location in XXXX. **62.2%** reported the conference met or exceeded their expectations.

Highlights of Program

Education:

Networking Events:
Social:

Family Camp:

Post/Pre Conference:

Evaluation Results
Response rate varied per question on evaluation. Highest response rate: XXX

Positive Highlights of the Evaluation Summary:

Resort/Food
Majority of comments from participants related to the amenities and the Food and Beverage served.
Positive Feedback:

Feedback to Learn From:

Social Activities
Positive Feedback:

Feedback to Learn From:

Tradeshow
Positive Feedback:

Feedback to Learn From:

Education:
Positive Feedback:

Feedback to Learn From:

Recommendations from the Local Planning Committee

Recommendations from the Scientific Committee

_____

Recommendations from Meeting Planners (if applicable)

Budget

Revenue	Actual	Budget	Variance
Patronage/Tradeshow			0.00
Registration Fees			0.00
Other			0.00
Total Revenue			0.00
Expenditures	Actual	Budget	Variance
Conference Materials			
Delegate Bags			0.00
Photocopying			0.00
online registration			0.00
Program Speakers			
Fees/ Honourariums			0.00
Travel/Accommodation			0.00
Translation			0.00
Interpreters'/Intervenors			0.00
Administration			0.00
Miscellaneous			0.00
Venue			
Food/Beverage			0.00
Audio Visual			0.00
Meeting Rooms			0.00
Communications			
Graphic Artist			0.00
Conference Calls/Committee			0.00
onsite Brochure Printing			0.00
Website			0.00
Other			
Banking Fees			0.00
Evaluation			0.00
Total Expenditures			0.00
Variance	0.00	0.00	0.00

_____

DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL

Conference Planning Guidelines Manual revised Mar 2014