



Sponsorship of IRPA Congresses

A Policy Note for the IRPA Executive

As approved by the Executive Council September 2010

Background

Sponsorship income is of vital economic importance to the success of IRPA Congresses – both International and Regional Congresses. Such income serves to keep delegate fees as low as possible and hence enable the widest possible delegate attendance.

Sponsorship is an increasingly important, common and accepted practice across all the national and international professional association meetings market. To date IRPA has not systematically addressed ways of maximising this income stream for its Congresses compared to many other international associations, where a more vigorous approach to sponsorship is becoming the norm.

Some of the international organisations who support and endorse our congresses are sensitive to being associated with commercial organisations. Sponsorship arrangements (and indeed exhibition presence) must be sensitive to this concern.

For any individual congress the topic of sponsorship is best addressed in close association with the exhibition income stream because in many (but not all) cases the same organisations will wish to be involved in both activities. In IRPA's situation there is also an interaction with current consideration of the wider support of commercial organisations for our activities. However, this note addresses only the matters related to financial sponsorship of IRPA Congresses.

Sponsorship Principles

It is proposed that the following principles underpin IRPA's approach to congress sponsorship:

1. All sponsorship must be openly acknowledged and visible to all interested parties.
This removes any perception of 'influence behind closed doors'.
2. Sponsorship cannot be used to exclude or disadvantage the involvement of any other relevant party.
For example a sponsor cannot insist on specific parties being refused involvement in any part of the Congress.
3. IRPA retains full control of its scientific programme and the associated output from the Congress.

Note: this must also apply to the endorsement of our Congresses by other international organisations

4. Acceptance of sponsorship does not imply IRPA support for the sponsoring organisation, and must not be used as such by the sponsor.

Implementation in Practice

In many cases there needs to be a pragmatic interpretation on the implementation of the above principles which recognises the sensitivities of our interested parties.

In general terms there is a wide grouping of sponsorship opportunities which do not generate significant concerns, including:

- Congress bag and miscellaneous inserts (including advertisement flyers)
- Receptions, dinners, entertainment
- Delegate badges/lanyards
- Coffee breaks and lounge areas
- Internet access provision
- Links to sponsor websites from the congress website
- Advertisements in the printed Final Programme
- Advertising signage and projections around the congress venue, including within the lecture rooms

Sponsor involvement in the congress scientific programme is somewhat more sensitive, but there are no reasons for a blanket prohibition (and there is much experience of this type of sponsorship within similar international associations). It is suggested that sponsorship proposals for such activity are judged on an individual basis against the following framework:

- Sponsorship of specific lectures, lecturers, scientific sessions and Refresher Courses within the standard scientific programme:
 - The pattern of sponsorship takes account of current practice within similar organisations
 - The sponsorship could be deemed to bring IRPA into disrepute through an evident conflict of interests (eg the sponsor is identified with inadequate radiation protection practice or is otherwise disreputable)
 - The sponsorship will present no significant difficulty, embarrassment or conflict to any participant in the session (eg including international organisations involved in the session)
 - It is recognised that particular sensitivity could occur when the sponsor is a commercial organisation and a major participant is a governmental organisation: however, proposals will be judged on a case by case basis.
- Requested sponsored lecture, update session or corporate promotion – content proposed and delivered by the sponsor:
 - Judged on the scientific/technical merit of the proposal in relation to the congress topic(s) [Would this be of significant interest and value to the delegates?]
 - The sessions are open to all delegates (in principle, depending on practicalities such as room size etc).

In the above situations the decision on accepting the proposed sponsorship should be taken by the Congress President acting in association with the Chairman of the Scientific Programme Committee and the IRPA President. In coming to a decision any advice by the Congress Organising Committee (eg ICOC) and the Scientific Programme Committee (eg ICPC) shall be taken into account. [Note: decisions may need to be made on a timely basis].