



nederlands huisartsen
genootschap

Preparatory Guidelines for WONCA Conference

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1. Introduction

This guideline for organising a WONCA conference has been drawn up on the basis of Dutch experiences. The Dutch College of General Practitioners (NHG) organised the WONCA Europe Conference Quality in Practice, which was held between 1 and 4 June 2004 in Amsterdam. The scientific program had a number of innovations which were appreciated by the participants and have contributed to the success of the conference. During the preparations, a great deal had been invested in the development of the setup and a guideline for the scientific program. This benefited the structure and cohesion of the 3-day conference.

The preparation of a WONCA conference is a large effort, involving a great amount of time. Fellow organisations in other European countries may benefit from learning about the experiences made in the Netherlands. It is of course of great importance that this be based on one's own conditions, wishes and possibilities. This guideline is intended as an assisting tool but not as a blueprint! The guideline could be amended or complemented in the next years with experiences made by other countries.

This guideline first describes an organisational chart with a possible structure of the organisation. Subsequently a global picture is provided of the preparation planning. Subsequently, separate chapters deal with the preparation of the scientific program and the logistical and organisational preparations.

These chapters are accompanied by detailed information and manuals in separate annexes, which could be useful for the preparation of a WONCA conference.

2. Aims of the WONCA conference

In 2004, the Council Meeting of the WONCA Europe has set the following objectives and starting points for the organisation of future WONCA conferences.

Aims of the Conference

The conferences should strive to be the major meeting places for practising GP's, researchers and teachers in the general medical practice in Europe. The intent is the exchange of ideas and experiences, and inspirations for future work.

When planning a conference, these should be the most important goals:

1. To create a forum for practicing GPs in Europe, with relevancy for their daily work.
2. To create a forum for researchers, teachers, and physicians active in quality work and other specific topics in general medical practice.
3. To deliver state-of- the art information on important topics in general medical practice.
4. To provide an opportunity for reflection and debate.

Conferences should:

- present important and high quality research;
- focus on new trends and challenges in general practice;
- be a forum for discussion and debate;
- provide opportunities for new researchers;
- influence the status and work of general medical practice in different countries.

3. Organisational chart

The organisational chart below presents an overview of the different committees which are involved in the organisation of a WONCA conference.

WONCA member/ Host Organisation				
Scientific Program Committee - Chapter 4 -		Host Organising Committee (HOC) -Chapter 5 -		
Subcommittee	Subcommittee	Organisation	Logistics	Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) (optional)

Advisory Board

The Scientific Program Committee submits the proposed scientific program to the International Advisory Board. The members of the International Advisory Board stimulate participation in the WONCA Conference and act as speakers in their own country.

4. Planning the preparation of a WONCA Conference in broad outlines

Below is an overview of the planning of the preparation in broad outlines. The year in which the conference is held is indicated with an 'X'.

The preparations begin three years ahead of the conference. The years preceding the conference are indicated with X-3, X-2 and X-1 respectively.

Activities which take place in the year prior to the conference are indicated with X-...months.

Activity	Preparatory year			Year of WONCA conference (X)	Responsibility with
	X - 3	X-2	X-1		
Determining subject and title	X				National Member Organisation
Determining duration and data of conferences	X				National Member Organisation
Setting up a Scientific Program Committee	X				WONCA member/ Host Organisation
Hiring Host Organising Committee (HOC)	X				WONCA member/ Host Organisation
Setting framework for the content of the scientific program	X				National Member Organisation/Scientific Program Committee
Planning	X				National Member Organisation/Scientific Program Committee/HOC
Taking an option on/determining conference location	X				National Member Organisation/HOC
Researching the capacity of needed hotel accommodation	X				National Member Organisation/HOC
Determining the scientific program in broad outlines/approaching key-note speakers	X	X			Scientific Program Committee
Creating sponsor brochure and start canvassing sponsors.	X				National Member Organisation/HOC
Setting up a PR plan, starting its implementation	X				National Member Organisation/HOC
Setting up a committee for the organisation of the Junior Doctor Program*		X			National Member Organisation
Establishing subcommittees		X			Scientific Program Committee
Hiring a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO)*		X			HOC

Activity	Preparatory year			Year of WONCA conference (X)	Responsibility with
	X - 3	X-2	X-1		
Scholarship* Establishing an Advisory Committee and start fundraising		X			National Member Organisation/HOC
Drawing up an exhibitor's manual and canvassing businesses for exhibition, market.		X			HOC
Start planning scenarios.		X			HOC
<i>Start call for papers</i>		X			Scientific Program Committee
Make WONCA Conference website operational		X			HOC
Start registration of participants through website.			X		HOC/PCO
<i>Deadline for submitting abstracts</i>				<i>X-6 months</i>	
<i>Final program</i>				<i>X-4 months</i>	
Grouping abstracts into workshops, symposia, oral presentations and poster sessions.				X-4 months	Scientific Program Committee
Printing program and abstracts book				X-1 month	National Member Organisation/HOC
Final scenarios for the conference				X-1 month	HOC
<i>Deadline of registrations</i>				<i>X-2 weeks</i>	
Assessment and final report				X+6 months	National Member Organisation/HOC

The activities indicated with * are optional.

5. Preparations of scientific program

Composition of Scientific Program Committee

It is recommended to set up a Scientific Program Committee for the preparation of the scientific program of the conference. When composing this committee, aspects such as the desired specific content-related expertise can be taken into consideration.

A Scientific Program Committee can, for example, be composed as follows:

- administrative representative
- board member
- several specialists in the field from inside or outside the office
- official secretary

Tasks and planning of Scientific Program Committee

The diagram below shows the tasks of the Scientific Program Committee with a planning and focal points. The last column refers to available annexes, which provide more detailed information based on the Dutch organisation of the WONCA conference 2004.

The column 'planning' is based on the premise of x =year of conference. $X=3$ means that the start takes place three years ahead of the conference.

Scientific program			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Setting up a Scientific Program Committee	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship with executive board of the national member Organisation - Secretariat function. - Communication structure. - Setting down agreements - . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task and competencies, 6.1 - Elements for the compensation arrangement, 6.2
First program setup	X-3/2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine the core message of the conference. - Consider the various target groups so that the conference becomes attractive for local and international GPs, trainee GPs, scientists and specialists. - Decide which part of the program needs to be steered and which part will depend on the submitted abstracts. This can give structure and cohesion to the program. - Approach key-note speakers early. - Ensure a good balance of the key-note speakers in terms of age and gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example of the arrangement of a Scientific Program 6.3.
Submitting a concept for a Scientific Program to the Advisory Board	X-2		
Working out the Scientific Program	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan a broad variety of sessions, such as workshops, ‘state of the art’ sessions, debate sessions and ‘hot new sessions’, and experiment with partly fixed formats, themes or lines during the days, and new forms like moderated poster walks. - Consider involving subcommittees for parts of the program. 	<p>Overview of types of partly fixed sessions and recommendations when setting up a content-related program 6.4.</p>

Scientific program			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Distribution of plenary program components and satellite sessions	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is recommended to plan a number of components yourself. This will give structure and cohesion to the program. - Through programming sessions, themes or lines can be introduced to the program. 	
Setting up subcommittees	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make clear agreements about tasks and responsibilities and set these down. - Set down how the Scientific Program Committee will be kept updated by the subcommittees and vice versa. - The special interest groups in different clinical fields can be involved for this purpose. - Compensation/holiday pay. - Provide for a good secretarial function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task assignment of subcommittee 6.5. - Elements of the compensation regulation 6.6.
Junior Doctor Program	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider organizing a Junior Doctor Program. - Collaboration with EURACT and Vasca da Gama Movement can take place for the organisation thereof. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guideline Junior Doctor Program 6.7.
Establishing a pattern for the assessment of abstracts	X-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure you have a system which gives insight into the status of the abstract. - International specialists can collaborate on the assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setup of abstract assessment in The Netherlands 6.8.
<i>Set deadline for submittal of abstracts</i>	<i>X-6 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submittal from X-1 tot X-6 months. 	
Final program	X-4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program book. - Consider to enable digital consultation of the program during the conference. - Consider agreements which were made with sponsors regarding logos and advertisements. 	See Annex Sponsor Brochure 7.6

Scientific program			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Assessing abstracts	X-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support by the own office is recommended. - Avoid working manually on completing the assessment form as much as possible. - International specialists can collaborate in the assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abstract assessment score sheet en format abstracts, 6.9
Speaker instructions	X-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give speakers clear instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruction manual for speakers, 6.10. - Guidelines for giving a lecture, 6.11. - Guidelines for making a PowerPoint presentation, 6.12.
Programming of satellite sessions based on submitted abstracts.	X-3 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of number of abstracts to be evaluated in 2004, 6.13.
Instructions to chair person	X-2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate carefully with chairs by e-mail and mail and set down agreements on promised cooperation. - Instruct the hosts clearly on objective, time monitoring and approach to the sessions. - Select competent chairs. - Ensure good communication between committee members. - Make clear agreements. - Make a list of back-up chairs in case someone drops out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directions for the chairs of oral presentations and workshops 6.14.
Scenario for committee members during conference days	X-1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw up scenarios for the members of the Scientific Program Committee and the subcommittees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scenario for committee members during conference days 6.15.

6. Organisation and logistics

It is recommended for the organisational and logistical preparations of a WONCA Conference to set up a so-called Host Organizing Committee (HOC).

Compilation of HOC

The members of the HOC preferably should come from the National Member Organisation and, if desired and applicable, a representative from the PCO. An example of how a HOC can be compiled follows below:

- one or more board members
- Chief of Financial Affairs or Controller
- coordinator of the WONCA Conference
- secretary

The tasks and planning of the HOC are listed in the chart below.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Contract with the WONCA	X-3		WONCA Contract 7.1
Setting up a HOC	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequency of meetings. - Making agreements on progress reports - Financial reports. 	Task and responsibilities HOC, 7.2
Finances	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget and estimate. - Involve the financial experts in making the estimates and negotiations. - Pay much attention to budget monitoring and reporting. 	Example of budget setup 7.3.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Planning	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin with a planning for the preparations and gradually complete and complement it. - Provide for comprehensive information for speakers and audience. - Keep to the schedule and deadlines! - Integrate contextual preparations in organisation and logistics. 	
Internal coordination and administrative/secretarial support	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering a possible involvement of PCO, think of an internal WONCA coordinator - Ensure good administrative/secretarial support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for a possible contact with PCO, - setting up contracts, - contacts with external¹, the committee members and the speakers, - answering questions, - internal coordination, - reports, - and archiving. 	Hiring PCO 7.4.

¹ Vertalersnoot: De brontekst luidt: 'externen'. Het is niet helemaal duidelijk wie of wat hiermee precies wordt bedoeld. Vandaar dat de vertaler heeft gekozen voor 'external'.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Sponsoring	X-3	<p>In general, follow the WONCA guidelines:</p> <p>The conferences should seek sponsorship from various sources in accordance with the general regulations given by WONCA. All sponsoring should be open and transparent for everybody. The European rules and WONCA's standards of sponsorships should be followed.</p> <p>More specific guidelines should be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclusive sponsorship of a conference should not take place. 2. Satellite symposia should be limited and take place outside the ordinary conference program. 3. Arrangements made by collaborating organisations funded by the industry should be clearly announced as such. A special fee should be paid for such arrangements. <p>WONCA Europe should actively help the conference organiser to find sponsors, and make clear what the conditions regarding sponsorships are.</p> <p>A proportion of the sponsorship income should be given to the scholarship fund.</p> <p>Practical suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is recommended to put together a sponsoring taskforce to raise funds. - Make clear agreement with sponsors. - Carefully check the performance of the agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations on Sponsoring 7.5. - Sponsorship Brochure 7.6.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Accommodation of participants	X-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising hotel reservations can easily be outsourced to a PCO. - The accommodation costs for participants can be limited by the organisation of a Hosted Housing Program. - Consider accommodation of speakers and own staff. - Ensure that good agreements are made for a cut-off date on cancelling hotel rooms and the financial consequences. 	Recommendations for a Hosted Housing Program, 7.7.
Hiring a PCO	X-2	<p>One could consider hiring a PCO for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participant registration; - processing of abstracts; - the general coordination of the organisation of the conference; - contacts with the conference location - the social program for the participants; - building and managing the website for the conference. <p>It is recommended to get several quotations.</p>	
PR	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PR material is to be ready in time for presentation, for example during an earlier WONCA Conference. 	PR recommendations and overview of PR material in 2004, 7.8.
Entry and registration	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration procedure Early-bird tariff from begin of registration to X-6 months Normal rate X-6 months – X 3 months - Late rate X 3 months – X 3 weeks On-site from X 3 weeks - Attention: accreditation points and organisation/time thereof. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of registration by country in 2004, 7.9. - Overview of registrations by date for conference in 2004, 7.10.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Website	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the website is attractive and informative. - An informative website saves a great deal of time! - Test the website in time. - Think about which data need to be removed from the website's digital file. 	Recommendations for the website 7.11.
Speakers part sessions	X-2/1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure clear communication. - Ensure that the speakers list is complete. - Watch out for (individual) agreements with regard to compensation and accommodation, etc.). 	Also see Annex 6.12 and 6.13.
Social Program	X-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organisation of a Social Program can easily be outsourced to a PCO. - One could consider putting together a welcome package for partners of participants. - One could consider offering a cultural event in the evenings (e.g. concert) and/or a social evening. 	Recommendations for Social Program and overview of applications in 2004 7.12.
Visits to GP practices	X - 2	Consider the possibility to offer visits to GP's practices. This gives participants a good idea of the national standards of GP care and provides an opportunity to meet colleagues from abroad in person.	Recommendations for visits to GP practices 7.13.
Exhibition	X - 2	<p>Sponsor funds are acquired to a large extent through organising an exhibition/market during conference days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try to recruit international businesses for the exhibition. - Inform businesses well in advance about what they can expect from the diversity of nationalities during the WONCA. - Start recruiting exhibitors in time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations Exhibition 7.14 - Exhibitor's manual 7.15.

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
Scholarship	X- 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is recommended to offer a scholarship to GPs with little funds so that they have the opportunity to attend the WONCA Conference. - It is recommended to set up an Advisory Board. - It is recommended to perform the administration of the funds and to bear the costs yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for Scholarship 7.16. - Scholarships by country in 2004, 7.17.
Invitational conference	X-1	As a PR measure, one can consider to organise a separate meeting ahead of the WONCA Conference for business relations of the own organisation.	
Technology	X-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is recommended to hire an AV specialist. - Equip smaller venues by default with laptop, beamer and sound equipment - Consider the use of an internet cafe. - On arrival of the speakers, check their (PowerPoint) presentations (by technicians in a separate room). - Provide for technical support in the various rooms. 	
Abstract processing	X – 7 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make it possible that abstracts can be submitted through the WONCA website. - The processing of abstract procedure is to be outsourced to a PCO. - Ensure that the abstract book can be compiled through a central digital database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abstract Assessment Score Sheet 6.9

Logistics			
Task	Planning	Focal points	Annexes
<i>After determination of the final program</i>			
Scenarios	X – 2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a separate scenario for each program component. - Make a scenario for the location. - Make a separate scenario for the technical aspects. - Ensure good harmonisation with all those involved (board, management, staff, PCO, committee members, location). - Enter important information at the beginning of the scenarios: - telephone numbers, location info, etc. 	Annex illustration from scenario 2004, 7.18.
Program book	X – 1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Announce all program components including speakers and chair persons. - Watch out for agreements with sponsors regarding inclusion of logos, etc. - Consider making a separate abstract book. 	
Deadline for registrations	X-2 weeks	-	