



Overview of the Organization of the Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine

1. Introduction

The mission of the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM) is to provide evidence-based improvement, education, and advocacy for emergency and disaster health care and disaster risk reduction.

The Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine is WADEM's showcase event and principal source of revenue. It aims to provide an exceptional and innovative scientific program, increase membership in WADEM, facilitate global collaboration and networking opportunities, and provide a memorable delegate experience. The congress attracts doctors, nurses, disaster researchers, emergency managers, first responders, and students worldwide.

The congress is co-hosted by a professional association, academic/research institution, or other non-governmental organization from the host country. The congress typically attracts 800-1,000 delegates, with more than two-thirds coming from outside the host country.

2. Organizational Structure of the Congress

The President of WADEM and the Congress Organizing Committee (COC) have overall responsibility for the Congress. The Executive Officer of WADEM is the main point of contact for any contracted Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) and works with the PCO to ensure the congress is a success. The PCO is responsible for the pre-event planning and organization, onsite management and coordination, and overall event logistics. WADEM may oversee tasks such as registration, abstract management, email and social media marketing, accreditation, etc., through its in-house capacity or contract the PCO for these services.

Representatives from WADEM and two or three Local Committee members will form the COC. The COC develops the scientific program by selecting keynote and invited speakers, abstract submission categories, special sessions, and themes; recruits people to chair sessions, review abstracts, and/or conduct workshops and other congress scientific content-related activities; and proposes social and networking events. Additionally, the COC will work with the PCO to manage the event's budget and make financial decisions.

3. Frequency and Dates of the Congress

The Congress is convened biennially in the odd years. Before choosing dates, potential conflicts with other national or international meetings and religious (Ramadan, Passover, etc.) and national holidays should be considered. The Congress typically occurs between **mid-April** and **mid-May**. The current scientific program design requires the length of the Congress to be approximately 3.5 days. The congress typically begins on a Tuesday and ends on a Friday around 13:00.

4. Location of the Congress

The present approach is to rotate the meetings through major geographical areas: Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, the Asia-Pacific Region, and Africa, unless the WADEM Board of Directors makes an exception to this approach.

Congresses have been convened in Mainz, Pittsburgh (USA), Rome, Brighton (UK), Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong, Montreal, Stockholm, Jerusalem, Osaka, Lyon, Melbourne, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Victoria (Canada), Beijing, Manchester (UK), Cape Town, Toronto, Brisbane, Killarney (Ireland), and Tokyo. The next edition will take place in Paris (2027).

5. Decision on the Location and Venue for the Congress

WADEM issues a "Request for Proposals" approximately four years in advance to potential co-hosts. Interested parties are asked first to submit a brief Expression of Interest (EOI). The Selection Committee will review the submissions and invite proposals from the qualified parties who submitted EOIs.

The WADEM Selection Committee will examine proposals. The WADEM Board of Directors will select the winning bid based on its recommendations. The short-listed destinations will be asked to give a live presentation online using a platform such as Zoom or Teams. Site visits will be conducted for the two finalist destinations. The finalist destination not chosen is welcome to submit an updated bid during the next round of proposals.

6. Requirements for the WADEM Congress Location and Venue

The minimum requirements for the Congress location and venue should include the following:

1. A professional association, academic/research institution, or other non-governmental organization involved in relevant disciplines with active members of WADEM who can co-host the event and coordinate with the COC.
2. There should be sufficient international flight connections to the selected city, with no more than one layover/transfer once a delegate arrives in the destination country. Based on previous congresses, delegates may come from more than 80 countries.
3. The meeting must be held in a location with adequate facilities to comfortably accommodate the expected attendance at the Congress, which will be 800-1,000 global delegates or more. Conference/convention centers and hotels with meeting space are suitable options.

4. Proposals for the venue should be submitted to WADEM and include a price quote, according to **Table 1: Room Capacity** provided in this document. The quote should include one full-day move-in day for the exhibitors and one half-day move-out day. It should also state the predicted yearly increase and what is included in the price (e.g., cleaning, security, extra cost for meeting room build-up, etc.).
5. Adequate hotel facilities should be close to the venue and represent a range of price points. Ideally, the hotels will be within walking distance of the venue (less than a 10-15-minute walk). Hotels with public transportation options nearby are preferred.

7. Meeting Space Requirements (see Table 1: Room Capacity)

It is preferred that all meeting spaces be under one roof, including all offices, scientific and general sessions, catering, and exhibition/poster areas. A nearby or adjacent hotel may be used for committee meetings and special functions. The following meeting spaces are suggested:

Table 1: Room Capacity

Room	Number	Layout	Capacity	Specifications
Plenary Session*	1	Theater Style	at least 600 pax	*Ideally, the plenary hall can be partitioned or modified to be used for other sessions in addition to the plenary
Breakout Session**	4	Flexible	100-150 pax	
Breakout Session	3-4	Flexible	50-75 pax	
Speaker Ready Room	1	Working stations	At least five workstations	** Preference that larger rooms can be partitioned or combined if needed
PCO/WADEM/COC Office***	1	6-8 people, Boardroom table	100-200 sq. ft.	***Available after normal business hours, key lock
Exhibition Space	<p>Exhibition space is required for <i>approximately 20-25 exhibition booths</i> (typically 10 x 10 feet; 3 x 3 meters), some tables and chairs, and up to 300 posters to be displayed at a time. If space is limited, the posters can be displayed daily and taken down (100 posters per day). Lounge areas with tables are also preferred, ideally within the exhibition area or a nearby foyer.</p> <p>The catering service (i.e., lunch and coffee/tea breaks) should mostly occur in the exhibition space. Some outside space is also helpful if vehicles or temporary tent facilities need to be displayed.</p>			

8. Scientific Program Structure

A draft scientific program outlining the proposed content is a submission requirement within the bid process documents. Previous congress scientific programs will serve as sample program templates, but should be updated to reflect current-day topics to form the basis for the bidder's draft scientific program.

The congress should provide an interactive, multidisciplinary scientific program during which global experts will exchange and enhance their expertise, develop and strengthen their networks, and advance the development of emergency and disaster health. The scientific program should include potential plenary sessions, proposed interactive sessions, workshops, panel discussions, tabletop exercises, debates, oral paper presentations, and posters. The importance of poster presentations should be emphasized.

In addition, the following special programs are likely to be included:

- French and Spanish sessions (*depending on locations*)
- Sponsor and exhibitor discussion sessions or product demos
- WADEM Chapters and Special Interest meetings
- Pre-congress Courses and Workshops

9. Social Events

The co-hosting organization should provide suggestions for locations for the following events:

- Congress Reception and Congress Dinner (*these events can be combined*)
- Delegate Networking Events (ex. Happy Hours, Wine Tastings, Cultural Tours, etc.)

These may be separately ticketed social events.

10. Social/Tourist Activities

The local members of the COC should help identify a reputable local tour operator/ or company that can arrange excursions (city tours, half-day tours, and full-day tours) for delegates and accompanying persons before, during, and after the congress.

11. Publication

The co-hosting organization agrees to assign all rights to publish the congress abstracts and proceedings to WADEM. The abstracts are typically published as an electronic supplement to *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* (PDM) and are available on PDM's webpage on Cambridge Core, Cambridge University Press's academic platform.

12. Fundraising (Sponsorship, Exhibition Sales, and Other Funding)

The co-hosting organization and/or the local committee should be committed to raising sponsorship and exhibition income and applying for subvention funding (subsidies or grants) in consultation with WADEM. The co-hosting organization will keep WADEM informed of any co-sponsoring organizations with which it has agreements.

13. Financial Liability

WADEM will prefinance the congress and assume financial responsibility for the event. WADEM will be the party to contracts with the PCO and venue unless otherwise agreed upon. The congress's net revenues will go to WADEM. There is no profit/loss sharing. The congress is one of WADEM's main sources of revenue.

14. Code of Conduct

The co-hosting organization and COC shall demonstrate political, racial, and religious sensitivity in all materials and program preparations. However, such sensitivity shall not limit the COC from raising controversial health issues in the scientific program. All parties organizing the congress shall adhere to sound ethical and honest business practices and always comply with applicable laws.

15. Definitions

- WADEM: World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine
- Congress: WADEM Congress for Disaster and Emergency Medicine
- COC: Congress Organizing Committee
- EOI: Expression of Interest
- PDM: *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* (Official Publication of WADEM)
- PCO: Professional Congress Organizer