INTRODUCTION

This Good Practice Framework provides a checklist of issues to consider when planning major events, with the aim of maximising the success of the event, while minimising any risk (financial or reputational) to STEP.

It has been developed by the Oversight of Conferences Committee, a subcommittee of the worldwide Board, whose remit is to identify and monitor potential risks in relation to STEP events worldwide. The Committee will work with Kerri Linstead, STEP’s Head of Events, to help branches and regions implement the Framework.

The current Oversight of Conferences Committee members are William Ahern (Chair), Tony Pitcher, Simon Morgan, Brian Walters and Kerri Linstead.

If you are planning a major conference or event, we would ask that before making any financial commitment, you develop and submit a business plan in line with this Framework to the Committee, in order to help us to avoid competition between events, manage any potential problem areas and provide support as necessary to ensure your event has the best chance of success.

Upon receipt, the committee will review and make a decision as to whether approval is given (on behalf of the STEP Board) to proceed.

It is a decision of the Board that ALL new major conferences or events follow this procedure. It is also a wish of the Board that any current established conferences or events follow the reporting procedures outlined in this framework. This will give comfort to both the conference or event organisers and the Board that there is no potential risk.

A major conference or event is defined as having costs equating to more than 50 per cent of a branch/region reserves.

Completed business plan template, and any questions, can be directed to Kerri at kerri.linstead@step.org
BUSINESS PLAN

1. Overview (Business Plan template)

1.1. Give a brief overview of the plans and objectives for the conference or event, including:

- Purpose of the event – this may be to raise awareness of the branch, increase membership numbers, to promote the region, or increase branch finances.
- Timing – ensuring adequate timelines for planning and avoiding clashes with other events is crucial.
- Location – considering how accessible/attractive the venue is for people from out of town.
- Attendees – where will the delegates be coming from?
- Sponsors – what firms are you targeting?
- Draft budget

A Business Plan template can be found on the Branch Portal (www.step.org/branch-portal).

More details on each point above can be found below (points 2 to 7).

2. Communicating timings and plans

2.1. Provide an outline of timings and plans for all aspects of the organisation, allocating responsibilities for the various tasks involved. STEP WW can provide a detailed breakdown of these tasks on request, but as a general guide these might include:

- Venue contracts
- Programme
- Budget
- Registering delegates and collections of monies
- Speaker liaison
- Sponsor care
- Onsite event management

3. Budget

3.1. A comprehensive budget showing various attendance scenarios should be produced before proceeding with plans and securing venues, etc. This should be completed alongside the business plan template. For guidance on what to include, download our Budget Template. This template is detailed but please use as you feel appropriate for your proposal.
3.2. Regarding budgeting and speaker travel costs, please note the following:

(a) No conference should take place without proper detailed budgets.

(b) Insurance is required for larger conferences and events, and STEP WW can assist with organising this. The insurance cost should be included in the budget along with a contingency fee for unexpected extra costs.

(c) As a rule, STEP does not pay travel expenses, save that if the organising committee wish to have a speaker whose travel expenses will not or cannot be absorbed, they may consider making a contribution, but this would only be in exceptional cases, and then generally at Premium Economy Rates.

(d) Should there be a keynote speaker, who would not otherwise attend, and he/she does not work in the wealth management industry, it is normally acceptable, subject to budgetary constraints, for full expenses of business class travel to be paid.

(e) Otherwise if a branch really wants a speaker who cannot be funded, they would have to see if the budget can accommodate such an expense.

(f) Sponsorship income is key to the financial success of a conference. Realistic forecasts should be included in the budget and potential sponsors identified.

4. Timelines

4.1. We would recommend a one-year timeline for an international event and six months for smaller, more local events. There would need to be a good business case to support an event with shorter timescales.

4.2. When considering a date and location for an event, please note the following:

(a) It is essential that you provide a proposed date to STEP WW to ensure there are no clashes with other major STEP events.

(b) It is recommended that you scan the market for other competitor programmes happening in your region, avoiding clashes and competing with your market. The STEP WW team are willing to help and if you can share intelligence about the market with them, this will help them too.

(c)STEP WW prohibits a branch/chapter from holding any meeting in another branch/chapter’s territory without prior written approval from the branch chair and STEP WW Head of Events.
5. **Programme**

5.1. When organising a large-scale conference it is essential that you appoint a committed chair and diverse conference committee with knowledge of different speakers and sectors to take responsibility for the programme. A maximum of five committee members including the chair is recommended for a large conference. STEP WW recommend that the conference committee adhere to the following guidelines when planning a conference programme:

(a) No weight should be given to whether a firm sponsors or supports STEP financially – sponsorship and speaker selection should be kept separate. No sponsor should be a speaker on the programme, unless they are an excellent speaker selected via unanimous vote among the committee.

(b) No conference committee member should be a speaker or moderator on the programme unless they are an excellent speaker selected via unanimous vote among the committee – they can however Chair Day 1/Day 2 or morning/afternoon and be responsible for these sessions.

(c) Conference committee members’ firms should not be featured unless they are excellent speakers selected via unanimous vote among the committee.

(d) A firm should be featured only once on the programme.

(e) Committee members are responsible for conducting quality checks on the sessions for which they are responsible: the presenters and their speeches should be vetted, and they must arrange rehearsals in advance of the conference for panel sessions.

(f) Focus on strong, authoritative speakers – people with flair and intellect who stimulate the audience.

(g) Include external speakers, perhaps from political, regulatory or technological experts, or someone with interesting or strong views, even if they are challenging. These can make for the most interesting and thought-provoking presentations.

5.2. Initial ideas for the programme should be shared with STEP WW.

5.3. In support of member’s specialised interests, the committee is encouraged to forge linkages with the steering committees of the global Special Interest Groups, who can assist with topic ideas and speakers for inclusion in a programme. The inclusion of special interest areas of content can mean that an event appeals to a wider pool of both STEP members and non-members.
5.4. If the programme is to feature panel sessions, we recommend special attention be paid to these to ensure the presentations are of the expected standard.

5.5. Recommendations for panels and speakers:

(a) All programmes must have well-thought-out and comprehensive bullet points as to what the panel is expected to cover.

(b) All panel chairs should communicate with all their panel members at least a month before the conference and report to the programme committee to demonstrate that the panel is well prepared on the topics that it is expected to cover.

(c) The conference committee must satisfy itself that speakers and panels are well prepared and with a contribution of substance and relevance.

(d) All speakers should be advised that they must not criticise any institution operating in the private wealth sphere in public, or make any reference that could be so interpreted. The speaker must also not bring STEP into disrepute.

6. Logistics

6.1. Due to the sheer amount of detailed work involved in running conferences and events, we would recommend working with professional organisers to deal with the logistics. If financial support from STEP WW is required to underwrite a conference or event, it is a requirement that the events team at STEP WW manage the organisation from proposal stage through to completion. The events team have a great deal of experience in working with branches to produce successful, profitable events and can offer advice on all aspects of the planning process. For those conferences and events underwritten by the branch finances, STEP WW can offer as much or little support as required.

6.2. For those conferences organised by the branch, a comprehensive list identifying all of the key tasks involved in planning, with allocated responsibilities, should be produced. This should be approved by STEP WW Head of Events.

7. Sponsorship

7.1. Sponsorship income is of vital importance to the financial success of any conference. Any sponsorship must adhere to [STEP’s Advertising and Sponsorship Policy](#).

7.2. If a sponsor wants to furnish a speaker for a seminar, it is essential that the speaker be a credible professional who might be invited to speak independent of the sponsorship.
7.3. Any STEP conference uses STEP’s global brand and must ensure that our brand is not brought into disrepute, and that there is no confusion about who is running the conference. For this reason it is important to have standard sponsorship agreements to give clarity to all parties not just regarding the financial arrangements, but also how all parties’ brands will be used, and for what and in what context. STEP WW sponsorship partners, Think Publishing, have a great deal of experience in working with sponsor firms and can assist with this process.

7.4. A copy of the standard sponsorship agreement should be provided to STEP WW to ensure all aspects have been covered. For guidance on what to include, download our suggested Sponsor Agreement template.

REPORTING

To help mitigate any potential financial or reputational risk, each conference or event will need to complete a Planning Report six months from event date, three months from event date and one month from event date. The completed Planning Report should be directed to kerri.linstead@step.org

Finally, a short Evaluation Report should be completed after the conference has taken place. This can then be used as a debriefing tool to evaluate the positives, negatives and what can be learnt for future conferences. The completed Evaluation Report should be directed to kerri.linstead@step.org

All relevant forms and templates can be found at www.step.org/branch-portal

KEY CONTACTS

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