

WHAT we do and HOW we do it



African Agenda are MASTERS of conferencing

WHAT we do

Goal setting and strategic planning are vital to a world-class conference. The result is more compelling marketing, more lucrative sponsorship and exhibitor partnerships, and higher delegate attendance.

We'll help you develop a vision and the necessary plans to achieve it using a project plan, timeline, budget and a regular schedule of organising committee meetings. It is our job to be proactive and drive planning, with decision making remaining in the hands of the host association or organising committee. As the project manager we are like the conductor, ensuring that all the players in the orchestra are performing well together.

Budgeting, financial management and reporting

Budget

- > Produce indicative budget after a strategy meeting to set financial objectives.
- > Adoption of conference budget.
- > Separation of variable costs (based on number of delegates) and fixed costs, allowing for tighter financial controls and minimisation of waste.
- > Conservative projections of income, delegate numbers and sponsorship/exhibition income.
- > Sensitivity analysis illustrates break-even scenarios, possible negative financial outcomes due to reduced attendance, and possible surplus funds if objectives are exceeded.
- > Early warning should action be required to reduce or eliminate a shortfall.

Financial reporting

- > Production of monthly income and expenditure statements and balance sheets.

Finalisation of conference accounts

- > Audit-ready conference accounts ready for sign-off within 90 days of conference close.

Delegate management and registration

- > Using the purpose-built and cloud-based EventsAir conference management system, we seamlessly manage multiple registration categories and facilitate secure online credit card transactions for fees, accommodation, social events, companions, transfers and more.
- > Delegates can log in and amend their registration if necessary.
- > Regular reporting, viewing rights or direct access for the organising committee.
- > Visa support documentation for delegates.
- > All systems are backed up by friendly customer service and enquiries are answered on the first ask.
- > Comprehensive joining instructions issued in the weeks before the conference consolidate all important conference information and set minds at ease.



Venue, accommodation and destination management

- > Up-to-date and detailed destination information.
- > Identification of venue and accommodation options.
- > Air travel, airports and ground transport.
- > Expertise on visas, health and inoculations, customs, currency, climate, safety and security.
- > Extensive pre- and post-conference touring plus day tour options and straightforward booking facilities.

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Technical (AV and IT) management

- Needs analysis, specification of a practical solution for audio visual and IT, budget, implementation plan.
- Special requirements such as conference app, webcasting and simultaneous interpretation.
- Understanding of practicalities such as load in, power and rigging, equipment quality and availability, layouts and floor plans.

Marketing and delegate boosting

- Strategic planning; attractive and relevant conference identity; promotional material, competitions and giveaways.
- Delegate boosting to ensure attendance goals are met.
- Comprehensive marketing plans that ensure compelling messaging and brand consistency.

Event management

- A well-planned and efficiently-run conference: anything less is unacceptable.
- Delegates leave with positive perceptions of all the role players.
- Concluding conference legacy report to guide future planning.



Full speaker and programme management

- From the Call for Papers to abstract management to conference proceedings to speaker briefing.
- Efficient use of time and space available and staging of multiple concurrent sessions.
- Seamless management of the programme running orders.
- Special care and professionalism for speakers and VIPs.
- Running a full-service professionally-appointed speaker prep room.

Technology and innovation

- Best of cost-effective technology is put to use.
- Social media, conference apps and surveys.
- Very latest thinking and best practice from webcasting to real-time delegate feedback.
- We know how to apply technical innovations to our conferences and to our own systems, resulting in efficiency, accuracy, transparency and exceptional service delivery.

Sponsorship and exhibition

African Agenda's service in relation to exhibition and sponsorship ensures successful sponsorship and exhibition recruitment, implementation, fulfilment and post-conference analysis.



Sponsorship management

African Agenda offers a full turnkey solution to manage all aspects of fundraising for any conference, irrespective of size or sector.

Sponsorship services include studying past sponsorship records, brainstorming, identifying new potential sponsors, developing attractive sponsorship packages, putting a value against each item, and creating a sponsorship prospectus, often in conjunction with exhibition opportunities which can be included in sponsorship packages. When the term "sponsorship" is used, it also includes grant funding from institutions and government.

With awareness of fiscal tightening and mindfulness of legislation and regulations, we administer a well-strategised fundraising drive to achieve results. We will advise as to regulations that affect sponsorship, such as in the pharmaceutical industry, and ensure that the sponsoring brand's connection with delegates is nurtured by putting the needs of the delegate first and crafting sponsorship packages that benefit sponsors as well as delegates. We will acknowledge and administer the requirements of institutional funding and grant finance.

Exhibition management

African Agenda offers a full turnkey solution to manage all aspects of the exhibition component of any conference irrespective of size. This includes the pre-planning phase, budgeting, marketing and sales, booking and invoicing, floor plan management, logistics, exhibition listings, on-site management, closing of finances and a post-conference report.

In one model of our exhibition service, African Agenda has no responsibility for originating stand sales and only provides planning, administration, fulfilment and reporting services. This is a very cost-effective option for less complex exhibitions where the potential exhibitors are largely known to the host and do not necessitate cold calling or hard sales.

In an alternative model of our exhibition service, African Agenda would take the full responsibility for not only planning, administering, fulfilling and reporting, but also undertake the full marketing and sales role.

HOW we do it

How does African Agenda assist clients to plan, budget, financially manage, administer, market and produce outstanding and financially successful conferences?

The planning stages

First things first, after appointment African Agenda will hold a half-day strategy meeting with the organising committee to determine the conference goals (financial and otherwise), plan how to work together, allocate responsibilities and agree a schedule of planning meetings.

It would be African Agenda's responsibility to draw up agendas for consideration by the Chair, circulate, take minutes which reflect all discussions and note actions to be taken by who and by when, and circulate within five working days.

Between meetings, African Agenda would work on points discussed at the meeting and develop proposals and costings for presentation and discussion with ultimate approval by the organising committee.

It is our job as the project manager to be proactive and drive the process, with decision making remaining in the organising committee's hands.



Budget

We present an indicative budget after the strategy meeting which would be reviewed and updated until the organising committee accepted it as the final conference budget.

As many expenses as possible are allocated to variable costs (costs directly related to the number of delegates such as meals and registration items) which allows for tighter financial control and minimises waste. Fixed costs such as venue, audio-visual, and management fees are itemised separately.

We suggest conservative projections of income and try to keep fixed costs as low as possible. Break even should be based on conservative delegate projections and fundraising targets.

The sensitivity analysis shows what needs to be achieved to break even. It also shows the negative financial outcome of reduced attendance and the possibility of surplus funds if numbers exceed break even.

In the event of numbers not meeting expectations, drastic action can be taken to reduce/eliminate any shortfall.

Accurate budgeting and aggressive yet tasteful delegate boosting are the recipe for a financially-sound conference with the opportunity to achieve surplus funds.



Full registration and accommodation management

After consulting on registration packages and pricing, we build a bespoke online registration for the conference using the EventsAir conference management system. It can include accommodation and any number of registration items. Confirmations and invoices are sent automatically, and we track payments and staff the registration help desk.

Reporting is flexible and all levels of access can be made available to the organising committee. Logistical information is communicated to registered delegates all along the way so they know what to expect and are kept apprised of conference developments. Reminders as to visa applications, accommodations deadlines and other required actions are regularly sent.

We prepare name tags and pack delegate bags and on site we set up and staff the accreditation area with a friendly and helpful team.

We have a good working arrangement with hotels across South Africa. It is important to offer a variety of five-, four-, and three-star properties, ideally within walking distance of the venue. This allows delegates to walk and saves a considerable amount of expense in supplying shuttle transport.

An accommodation booking and management service is provided at risk with negotiated pricing and an online reservation solution. Rooms at preferential rates are guaranteed available until 90-60 days prior to the conference and thereafter as per availability.

Financial reporting

Once the budget has been approved, African Agenda would produce a monthly income and expenditure statement within ten working days of the previous month-end, along with a balance sheet accounting for every Rand of income and every Rand of expenditure. We aim to have a set of conference accounts ready for sign off within 90 days of conference close.



Marketing and delegate boosting

The importance of an attractive and relevant conference brand cannot be understated. From developing the logo and conference identity, we carry through to a comprehensive communications plan for acquisition as well as engagement. Websites, social media, newsletters and announcements: all with clear calls to action that get people to register.

Presence at related events is encouraged and we'll work with the organising committee to identify suitable conferences in the sector at which we can take an exhibition stand, distribute brochures or even a slot on the programme.

Segmented marketing plans can be put in place to attract local delegates or African delegates or new delegates.

Promotions, competitions and surveys are all good ways to drum up interest in attending the conference.

Managing the conference

Delegates demand and deserve a well-planned and efficiently run conference; anything less is completely unacceptable. The host organisation is on show and under the spotlight. The African Agenda team will deliver a conference of the highest international standards so that delegates leave with positive perceptions of all the role players.

Post-conference reporting

This is something we take great pride in. We produce a report with all participation data, programme participation, marketing activities, objective and subjective analysis, survey data and financial results. This report can be submitted to sponsors as part of reporting on their ROI as well as to future hosts and organisers.

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