

WORLD LEISURE CONGRESS

2026

BID DOCUMENTS



Note From the World Leisure Chair and COO,

Greetings,

The World Leisure Organization is pleased to extend to you and your community an exciting opportunity to host the 2026 World Leisure Congress. This international event draws individuals from throughout the world into a dynamic scenery wherein leisure and its influence on social, cultural and economic development can be explored. The World Leisure Congress is an event that can highlight an entire community and its commitment to enhancing quality of life through leisure.

The World Leisure Organization is committed to advancing scientific knowledge and best practice related to leisure through its biennial World Leisure Congress. The event has been staged in Asia, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania. In 2018, the event was held in the city of Sao Paulo hosting more than a thousand participants. Upcoming World Leisure Congress will be hosted in the cities of Pinggu/Beijing (2020), Dunedin (2022) and Breda/ Rotterdam (2024). The World Leisure Organization encourages communities to partner with professional associations, government agencies and universities to plan, organize and promote the event.

Decision-making regarding the selection of a community to host a World Leisure Congress is based on several factors. Strong emphasis will be placed on locating World Leisure Congresses in settings that reflect and/or desire to reflect the creation of leisure-oriented environments. Such environments should reflect contemporary designs, policies and programs illustrating best practices. The World Leisure Congress seeks placement in locals that wish to transform their communities, creating sustainable leisure-oriented environments. Strong consideration will be given to submitted proposals that provide innovative program designs above and beyond the basic program elements. Proposals will be sought which provide clear evidence of incorporation of legacy element's programs and other resources that will be sustained over a longer period of time. Last, the World Leisure Organization is particularly interested in seeking proposals that support partnership activities with different and various organizations.

Your interest in the 2026 World Leisure Congress is welcome. We look forward to receiving your inquiries and, in the future, your proposal for this important event. We may be reached by email at secretariat@worldleisure.org

Ms. Joanne Schroeder, WLO Chair



Dr. Cristina Ortega Nuere, WLO COO



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> WORLD LEISURE ORGANIZATION: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Founded in 1952, World Leisure Organization (WLO) is a world-wide, non-governmental association dedicated to discovering and fostering the leisure experience as a force for human development and well-being.

WLO is in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 1990, and affiliated to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

To promote leisure as a means to enhance the human condition

The World Leisure Organization is the world's leading advocate for leisure as a means to enhance the human condition.

Our vision is to provide leadership in advancing leisure as a central force in enhancing the human condition through advocacy, research, and education that promotes socio-cultural development, encourages sustainable economic growth, and improves the quality of life for every person world-wide.

WLO supports the right of all people to positive, quality leisure experiences while recognizing that many have special requirements related to disability, gender, age, social status, poverty, domicile or level of education.

In carrying out its mission, WLO is committed to working with all sectors of society – the public, non- government organizations, and commercial enterprises, to advance leisure as a human right in order to enhance the quality of life for all persons world-wide.

Through the research and educational outreach of its global membership, WLO promotes leisure as integral to social, cultural, economic, and sustainable environmental development.

> WORLD LEISURE CONGRESS: CONCEPT

Occurring biennially, the concept of the World Leisure Congress differs from many other major conferences in several respects.

The Congress is designed to attract participation from among academics, public and private sector practitioners, policy makers and from a range of disciplines including leisure in all its forms (tourism, culture, sports and recreation), with special interest in education, health, planning and many others affecting, or which are affected by, leisure policy, development and practice.

The Congress is also designed to act as a catalyst, drawing together all relevant stakeholders (universities/institutions/agencies) in the Host City and country to organize and contribute to the Congress.

Legacy as one of the most important assets for the hosting community. The Congress can be placed within the existing strategic context of the host city and/or country and should be designed to drive forward such strategies faster, deeper and more comprehensively.

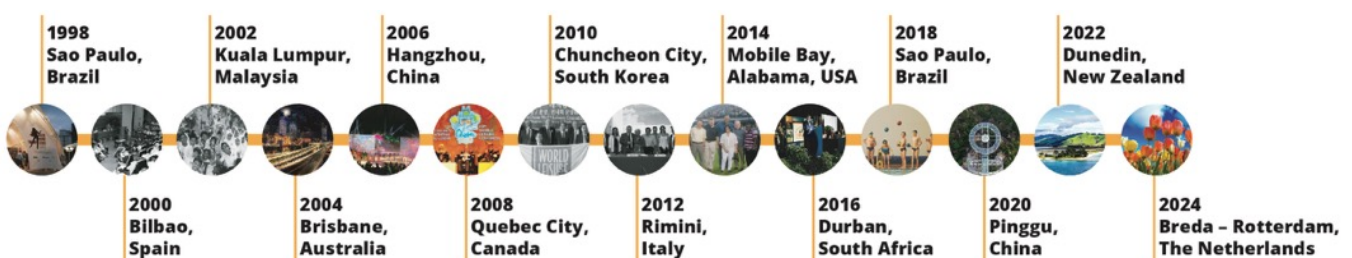
The Congress should make use of existing facilities (e.g. in a Convention Centre or University facilities) or those which can be provided on a temporary basis. Only if new facilities are designed for community and/or tourist use after the Congress should they be constructed by the public and/or private sector.

The activities staged during the Congress should not be restricted simply to presentations, debates and discussions but could be complemented by festivals and events for the participants and the local community which might reflect the variety of cultures within the city and environs.

On the award of the Congress, there will be a strong partnership and collaboration established between the Host City/Organizing Committee and the World Leisure Organization in the realization of the early development stages of the Congress (for example in developing an attractive programme). This process will be organic in nature rather than following the conventional staging of a Conference where the activities are set, well-established and organized by the International Organization itself.

In short, unlike the more traditional conferences, there is the opportunity for Candidates to come forward with imaginative ways in which the World Leisure Congress could be staged to the benefit of the local and international community, to contribute to social, cultural and economic development and to enhance the reputation of the hosting community and city as a desirable place in which to live, work, play and invest.

In recent years, the Congress has been held as follows: (full list of WL Congress can be found here: <https://www.worldleisure.org/congress/>)



> THE BIDDING PROCESS

In the same way that the concept of the Congress is different, so too is the bidding process. The World Leisure Congress bidding process has been structured to encourage candidates to propose in their own way, but within the philosophical context above, their concept for the Congress, the programme to be included and how it will be financed and organized.

We view even the bidding process as an opportunity for candidates to raise their profile, drawing attention to their community as a model of a leisure-orientated environment. Our bidding process has been designed to simplify the process even though there is a standard set of guidelines to follow.

We take into consideration the following factors (consistent with our strategic objectives) as priorities when selecting locations for events:

- Communities that reflect and/or have the desire to develop leisure-oriented environments.
- Cities that seek to transform their communities by creating sustainable leisure environments
- Events that clearly demonstrate innovative and legacy program designs.
- Programs which provide clear evidence of incorporation of legacy elements consistent with existing city and community strategies.
- Evidence of partnerships among all key delivery stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The bidding process should present an accurate reflection of the bidding-candidate's ability to plan, organize and implement the event. Although a bidding candidates will want to showcase itself in a positive light, we also want an accurate reflection of a community's commitment to stage and finance the event. Thus, WLO will expect realism in approach, as the Candidate File will form part of the contract between the Host Candidate and WLO.

The process involves three sections:

- **Part One** provides guidance on the timeline.
- **Part Two** sets out the key responsibilities of the Candidate and WLO during the Bid Process.
- **Part Three** provides guidance on the key elements to be included in the Bid under some standard headings.

PART ONE – BIDDING TIMELINE

Timeline

The following timelines will apply for the Congress to be held in 2026. Specific elements are described in more detail below: * All these dates are subject to change

March, 2020	Issue of Bid Documents for WL Congress 2026 (Request for Proposal)
October, 17 th – 23 rd , 2020	WL Congress in Pinggu-Beijing, China - Candidate Meeting (if necessary)
January, 29 th , 2021	Closing of "Intention to Bid"
April 30 th , 2021	Submission of Candidate Files
August 31 st , 2021	Report of the Evaluation Commission
Autumn 2021	Board Meeting and Decision (these dates may be subject to change)
2026	World Leisure Congress (dates to be determined)

PART TWO – RESPONSIBILITIES

This section sets out the key responsibilities of prospective Candidate and the WLO.

Interested Candidates Support Programme

Those Cities interested in bidding to stage the Congress will be invited to take part in a meeting which will be held during the 2020 WL Congress held in Pinggu- Beijing, China to clarify any aspect from the bidding process, documentation and learn more about WL Congress. The cost of registration at the Congress and all travel/accommodation costs will be the responsibility of the candidates interested in bidding.

Intent to Bid

All Candidates willing to be considered formally to host the 2026 WL Congress must sign the Registration Form no later than January 29th, 2021. The Registration Form is provided by WLO Secretariat (secretariat@worldleisure.org) upon request.

Fee

Candidates which intend to bid and have completed the Registration Form by the due date will be required to pay a fee of \$4,000 and will agree to pay travel and accommodation costs for the upcoming bid evaluation site visit and process, also by the same date. This fee will be largely used to support the administration process and evaluation work of the WLO Evaluation Committee. On signing the form and paying the fee, each city will be designated as WL Congress 2026 Candidate. The Registration fee is non-refundable.

Guarantees

The contract for the Congress will include references to guarantees required from the candidate and from third parties. It is mandatory that one of the leading parties or partners is represented, at least, by one university department, institute, faculty, research team or academic in leisure studies (culture, tourism, sports or recreation). Hosting candidate will endeavor to provide WLO with information about the faculties, departments, research groups, private and public agents specialized in leisure studies involved in the event.

The different Committees (Scientific/Academic and Operational) and the World Leisure Organization should cooperate and work together towards the success of the event. Collaboration in between the hosting organizer and WLO be in terms of guaranteeing WLO scientific activity integration, organization and logistics follow up in order to guarantee WLO brand position and standards. For that WLO representatives (Officers, Board Members and Secretariat) will have an active role, before, during and after the congress.

Before the WL Congress, WLO representatives will work together with the hosting organization in order to coordinate and plan every activity related to the full programme organization and marketing promotion.

During the WL Congress, the WLO representatives will be present and take part in every activity of the programme. Also, organize and coordinate relevant activities such as: Study Tour, Field School, Awards Ceremony, Member's Assembly, Colloquiums, Academy Seminar and Journal Editorial Meeting. These initiatives will boost and guarantee the international visibility and participation.

After the WL Congress, the hosting candidate in collaboration with WLO are committed to a debrief meeting and presenting a report accordingly.

Submission of the Candidate City File

The Candidate Application File must be submitted in electronic and hard copy form by April 30th, 2021. Three (3) copies of the hard copy format are required. The WLO will issue authorization for the Candidate to release its electronic form to the public and the media within 14 days of its receipt.

The Evaluation Committee

An Evaluation Commission will be established by the WLO. It will visit each Candidate to assess the proposals submitted. The cost of such visits will be met from the Registration Fee recorded above.

The Candidate File and any additional statements, representations and other commitments made during the visits will be legally binding.

The Evaluation Committee will report to the Board of the WLO on the technical strengths and weaknesses of each bid as well as the different approaches being adopted. It will not provide a recommendation on which Candidate should be awarded the Congress.

Emblem

In line with keeping the bidding process as simple as possible, there is no requirement for the Candidate at the stage of bidding to create an emblem which is different from that already used by the City.

Award of the Congress

The WLO will decide on the Host Candidate at its Board Meeting in the Autumn of 2021. The Board will vote by secret ballot and the decision taken by simple majority and eligible to vote. The Chair of the Board will vote only in the case of a tie. On award of the Congress, representatives of the WLO and Host Candidate will immediately sign the Host Candidate Contract. The WLO will supply Candidate with a copy of the Host Candidate Contract.

Rules of Conduct

The administration of the bidding process will be the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the WLO. In addition, and if needed, the WLO will establish a three person independent Ethics Committee which will advise the Chair of the Board and COO on any procedural matters and consider any complaints raised by any party in relation to the bidding process or Candidate's conduct. The Board reserves the right to take whatever action is merited if a breach of procedures or conduct is upheld.

Promoting the Bid

Candidates have the right to promote their candidature but must do so with moderation. No member of the Evaluation Committee or of the Board of WLO or of the Ethics Committee will accept any form of gift, financial support or donation in kind. No Candidate City will make such an offer either directly or indirectly such as through diplomatic or other channels.

Host Candidates may organize a modest reception on the occasion of the WLO Congress in 2024 and may stage an exhibition or display showing proposed arrangements in the Candidate City.

Candidate Cities must not make any comments about rival cities. No collusion between cities designed to affect the result is allowed.

Use of WLO Logo

On the award of the Congress, the Host Candidate will be allowed to use the WLO logo for marketing purposes. The conditions of use will be included in the draft contract. Use of the WLO logo is not allowed during the bidding process.

WORLD LEISURE ORGANIZATION PAYMENT FEE

For that, in addition to the Registration Fee recorded above, the Host Candidate will be required to pay for the fulfillment of the mentioned in prior lines the sum of US \$150,000 divided into five equal parts as follows:

- **\$30,000** on signing the contract in Autumn 2021 (These dates may be subject to change)
- **\$30,000** on September 30, 2022
- **\$30,000** on September 30, 2023
- **\$30,000** on September 30, 2024
- **\$30,000** on September 30, 2025

Under the umbrella of World Leisure Organization, the Host Candidate will have the opportunity to strengthen and bring innovation to its community projects within the following activities; Field school for international and local students, Study tour for academics and professionals, scholarship programs for international and local university students, and internationally recognized Award programmes. All activities will be lead and organized by WLO, in collaboration with the host candidate.

There shall be no tax or any fee or commission deductions of any nature on payments.

No other payment will be made to the WLO. We respect that, as the Congress are likely to be financed by different parties and any income is retained by the Host Candidate in full.

In the event that the Organizing Committee decides to stage a Trade Show as part of the Congress this will be the subject of a separate contract and fee depending on its scale and operation.

During the WLO Congress, accommodation for WLO officers should be provided and paid. Furthermore, accommodation for WLO Board members should be paid and provided by the hosting organization.

PART THREE – ASSESSING THE BIDDING PROCESS

Introduction

The following sections contains key questions about your proposals. The answers to these will be used to assess your Bid and provide a template for comparison with other Bids. To continue the theme of simplicity, we ask that the Candidate File is no longer than 100 A4 pages including any maps, diagrams or photographs.

GETTING THE PHILOSOPHY RIGHT

Concept

In this section we ask you to set out the rationale for bidding and staging the Congress:

- Why do you want to stage the Congress?
- What is the overall strategy for the Candidate and how will the Congress contribute to it?
- What is the leisure strategy (or equivalent) for the Candidate, City and Country and how will the Congress contribute to it?
- What specific benefits do you anticipate from staging the Congress?
- Will the community support the bid for and staging of the Congress?

GETTING THE ORGANIZING STRUCTURE RIGHT

Legal Aspects

- Describe the mechanism and the legal status of the entity you intend to employ to organize the Congress (e.g. through the direct involvement of the University, through the direct involvement of the City, through the establishment of a separate Organizing Committee (OC) or some other mechanism).
- Describe the type of institutions/organizations/agencies you intend to have represented on the Organizing Committee including universities, leisure organizations, national and local government, and commercial interests.
- Provide a covenant from all authorities involved in hosting the Congress which demonstrates their understanding that all commitments made are binding and that they are guaranteeing the fulfilment of obligations. These authorities include:
 - The government of your country
 - All local, state and regional authorities
- Whatever mechanism is employed, the WLO will appoint at least three members of the Organizing Committee. We would ask for this to be acknowledged in your Bid.
- State the names and titles of those individuals who have the authority to sign contracts and other documents (such as the Registration Form and Host Candidate Contract) on behalf of the Candidate.

ATTRACTING DELEGATES: THE PROGRAMME

In this section we ask you to provide an initial set of thoughts on the overall theme and content of the programme for the Congress, together with the corresponding committees formed/ co-chaired by the Host Candidate and WLO nominees. At this stage we are interested to hear:

- Initial ideas of a theme and programme which would be of interest to those in the city, the country, the wider region and internationally.
- Specify which universities, faculties, departments and research institutes in leisure studies (culture, tourism, sports or recreation) would be interested in leading the scientific programme.
- What expertise/range of specialisms are already available to help develop an attractive programme.
- What networks are already available to those involved and in which disciplines.

Associated Activities

In this section we ask you for initial thoughts on any associated activities you might stage during the period of the Congress, for example a trade show, community festival or educational initiatives. These might be for the delegates alone, for the community or for both.

PROVISION FOR THE DELEGATES

Venues

- State the ideal time for the staging of the Congress in 2026 and explaining your reasons for this selection. As this congress aims to attract delegates from around the world, please take into account the different religious and family festivities.
- Give an estimate of the number of participants you hope to attract.
- Identify the facilities which already exist which could stage the Congress.
- Identify those existing facilities which would need to be upgraded to stage the Congress. State whether these upgrades would be on a temporary or permanent basis. If the latter, state the long-term community benefit.
- Identify those facilities which would need to be newly provided to stage the Congress. State whether these facilities would be on a temporary or permanent basis. If the latter, state the long-term community benefit.
- State the capacities of each venue.
- Show on a map the locations of all the venues to be used and the distances from the geographical center of the City.
- Demonstrate that each venue can meet the requirements for the Congress including full access for people with a disability.
- Demonstrate that each venue has sufficient space for accommodation for such requirements as registration and catering.
- Demonstrate that each venue has the technical ability to house the specific activities (eg in terms of power capacity, technology and ingress/egress).
- State the ownership of each venue and its availability for the Congress.
- Describe the experiences of staging conferences within the City.

Personnel

- State what personnel (paid and voluntary) will be used/recruited to undertake the multiplicity of tasks prior to and during the Congress.
- What track record do you have in staging major domestic and/or international events? Please list these for the last ten years.

Accommodation

- Within a 10km radius from the geographical center of the city categorize the number, size and quality of hotels you have, their star rating (or equivalent) and the awarding authority.
- Within a 10km radius from the geographical center of the city categorize the number, size and quality of other accommodations available including university accommodation, hostels, touring parks and camp sites.
- What is the total number of rooms available during the Congress.
- What guarantees can you provide on availability of rooms and room rates for the period of the Congress.

Transport

- Describe the main transport links into the city – air, rail, road, sea and their capacities and international links.
- Describe the public transport infrastructure within the City and region.
- Describe the links between accommodation, venues and the transport infrastructure.

- Describe the journey times from the geographical center of the City to venues to be used for the Congress.
- Describe the transport management plan for the Congress including:
 - o Public transport capacities
 - o Private bus fleet capacities
 - o Overall capacity
 - o Any special transport management processes during the Congress (e.g. free or integrated ticketing)

Security

- Describe the roles, responsibilities, risks and capacities of those authorities responsible for:
 - o Fire
 - o Civil Disobedience
 - o Crime
 - o Traffic
 - o Natural and manmade catastrophes
 - o Terrorism
 - o Technological intrusions
- What experience of providing security for major events do you have? Please provide a range of examples.
- Describe any concerns you might have about the security of delegates during the Congress and their visit to your city and country.

Environment, Climate and Weather

- What will the temperature and humidity be during the period of the Congress.
- What are the daylight hours during the period of the Congress.
- Describe the environmental conditions of the City with specific reference to air and water quality.

Medical Services

- Describe the health care system in your City and region.
- Explain the arrangements for visitors to your country.
- Explain the arrangements for emergency services.
- Confirm that the existing resources within the City and region could meet the needs of those attending and participating in the Congress.

ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE

Cultural Activities

- Describe the range of dining and other leisure opportunities for delegates during “free evenings.”
- Describe the programme of cultural events the City might organize leading up to and during the Congress.
- Describe the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Congress.
- Describe any educational programme which might use the Congress as a focus.
- Describe any additional tourist/cultural opportunities available for delegates to the Congress.
- Describe any technical tours which could be provided for delegates prior to and/or after the Congress.

PROMOTING THE CONGRESS

Marketing

Outline your plans for promoting the Congress to prospective delegates.

- Describe your intentions of developing any Congress logo and/or mascot. Both will require the incorporation of the WLO logo and be subject to agreement between the WLO and Host City.
- Indicate the projected income from sponsorship in cash or value in kind.
- Indicate the projected income from merchandising in cash or value in kind.

Media Services

- Describe what media outlets there are in the City, Region and Nationally.
- What proposals do you have for coverage of the Congress in general and specific elements of the event including the streaming of all or part of the Congress.
- Are there any legal or tax issues in respect of foreign media/broadcasters covering the Congress.

POLITICAL, FINANCIAL AND LEGAL

Political Support

- What is the structure of the City Council?
- What are the specific powers of the City Council and its relationship with any higher tiers of state, regional or national government?
- Has the City Council now and in perpetuity agreed to bid and fully accept its responsibilities in the event the bid is successful?
- What elections and/or appointments are due to take place prior to the staging of the Congress and what is your assessment of the effect on the preparations for or staging of the Congress?

Customs and Immigration Formalities

- Describe the regulations in your country regarding immigration and entry visas.
- Identify any exclusions to entries to your country.
- Provide details of any health and vaccinations required for persons entering your country.
- Are there any restrictions on the temporary import of equipment (eg. sports equipment, photographic and audio-visual equipment)?

FINANCE

The Budget

- State how the World Leisure Congress will be funded.
- Provide a financial guarantee from the competent authorities covering any potential shortfall for the Congress.
- State the budget for any capital expenditure (both permanent and temporary, for venues and any other infrastructure) required for the Congress, its source and provide a financial guarantee that the required amount will be available for the required construction.
- Set out the budget for the full operation of the Congress and provide a financial guarantee that the required amount will be made available.
- Set out the annual cash-flow relating to this budget over the financial years prior to the staging of the Congress.

PART FOUR – CASE STUDIES AND TESTIMONIALS



1998-2018 SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

After 20 years of the memorable edition of the World Leisure Congress “Leisure Globalized Society” in 1998, the World Leisure Congress went back to the city of Sao Paulo in 2018.

Within the theme “Leisure Beyond Constraints” the 15th. World Leisure Congress in Sao Paulo became a great success attracting thousands of participants from more than 30 countries represented. The congress, satellite events and activities organized within the congress represented an outstanding sharing occasion for Brazil, Latin American countries and the entire international leisure community.



2008 QUEBEC CITY, CANADA

The World Leisure Congress in the city of Quebec became one of the most successful congresses, gathering more than 2,000 participants coming from more than 34 different countries. This gathering moment represented an important occasion for the international and Canadian leisure community.



2000 BILBAO, SPAIN

The city of Bilbao had the opportunity to host the World Leisure Congress gathering around 2,000 participants during the entire congress days. It became a privileged moment to position the city itself and the local team leading the congress at the international panorama.