

## **Criteria to become a Fáilte Ireland approved Professional Conference Organiser**

It is vital that all Professional Conference Organisers (PCO) managing international conferences in Ireland can demonstrate a consistently high professional standard in the organisation, management and administration of congresses, symposia, association conferences and other international meetings. To this end, Fáilte Ireland operate an approval process for PCOs.

Benefits to becoming a Fáilte Ireland approved PCO include:

- Listing on the Fáilte Ireland Business Tourism website [meetinireland.com](http://meetinireland.com).
- Business opportunities /referrals (for those who are members of their local Convention Bureau.
- Access to a full range of practical and financial supports to aid conversion
- Skills development support.
- Opportunities to attend international and in-Ireland sales platforms and networking events.

To qualify to become a Fáilte Ireland approved PCO you must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Have a permanent company or business address and a full-time staffed office in the Republic of Ireland.
2. The PCO must have been engaged exclusively or principally on a full-time basis in the organisation of professional association conferences, congresses, and other international and national meetings for at least 4 years.
3. Over the past four years, the PCO must have organised:
  - a. Eight international association conferences
  - b. Four of which should have been held in the Republic of Ireland
  - c. Five of the eight international conferences must have been attended by a minimum of 300 international delegates.
  - d. Should a PCO be engaged as a Core PCO for an International Association/Society and have experience in organising multiple conferences for said Association/Society then this experience will be assessed within the totality of the PCOs experience.
4. The PCO must have expertise and management systems in-house capable of managing all aspects of a major international association conference including (but not limited to): online registrations and activity, receipt of abstracts, exhibition, transport, social programme, financial operations and budgeting, printed materials, venue management, sponsor requirements, and dealing with suppliers. Full details of the experience and requirements will be made available in a confidential Self Completion Application Form which may be subject periodic audits and reviews to be undertaken by an independent evaluator appointed by Fáilte Ireland.
5. The PCO must have in place and maintain public liability insurance (minimum €6.5m) and employer's liability insurance (minimum of €13 million).

6. The PCO must have appropriate processes in place to ensure the 'safety' of their clients' funds, for example, an escrow account, or similar.
7. The PCO must be registered for VAT and have a current tax clearance certificate.
8. The PCO comply with all applicable laws governing its business.
9. The PCO shall be agreeable to submitting proof of its compliance with the above conditions each year to the Business Tourism Unit of Fáilte Ireland or if requested by Fáilte Ireland, to a designated third party.
10. As part of confirmation of the applicant's suitability for inclusion in the list of approved PCOs, the new applicant must agree to an inspection by Fáilte Ireland, or a designated representative, of a conference that the PCO is organising, should that be required.
11. New entrants are required to supply 2 referees from previous conferences they managed as part of their conditions/application.
12. Any breach by the PCO of agreed procedures, as signed off by the Business Tourism Working Group, will automatically result in the PCO being removed from the leads generation process operated by Fáilte Ireland.
13. Fáilte Ireland has the sole and final decision as to whether an applicant meets the above criteria for inclusion in the Fáilte Ireland leads management process.

### **Obligations of a Fáilte Ireland approved PCO**

There are a number of obligations placed on the PCO approved by Fáilte Ireland. These include

1. Participate in any research as required by Fáilte Ireland, or any third party appointed by Fáilte Ireland to facilitate or undertake research on their behalf.
2. Provide an end of year report on sales performance, to include bids won, bids in pipeline, conferences managed etc. Include a forecast of business won and in development for the upcoming year.
3. Update on status of leads won through the Fáilte Ireland process upon status change, and to include in end of year report.
4. To include an Extend Your Stay message and motivational content on the event website.
5. Any other request reasonably made by the Business Tourism Unit of Fáilte Ireland.