



## PLANNING AHEAD

Organising a quality Bankers' Association annual meeting requires meticulous planning, preparation and, ideally, a 365-day schedule

An association's annual meeting is usually no more than a three-day event, but its planning and organisation can take a whole year. Here's what a forum of development bankers in the region does to make sure their conference is successful:

### VENUE SELECTION

The meeting's location is chosen by the Association Board of Directors, representing 21 countries in Asia-Pacific, with input from the Secretariat staff. Normally, the event venue follows a rotation system among the board members, giving each a chance to showcase his or her institution and country. The meeting site is known at least two years in advance.

### EVENT COMPONENTS

The three-day event consists of a one-day conference on latest industry issues or trends; a day for Board, general assembly, committee and networking meetings; and another day for a cultural tour. Other activities include a welcome/awards dinner and a closing/gala dinner.

### PLANNING DIMENSIONS

The Secretariat staff provides a step-by-step planning checklist for the host institution to follow, but also allows the host to engage a professional conference organiser. The first critical step is to determine the city location and conference hotel as early as possible and make the necessary reservations. Then, the planning shifts to forming the conference team and the details of the various event activities. At this point, communication and coordination between the Secretariat team and host team is constant.

### SUPPORT RESOURCES

A conference micro-site with facility for online registration, hotel reservation and general information is a must. The Secretariat staff engages a website developer to design the content and look of the site and its functionalities. This micro-site should be up and running at least six months before the annual meeting.

### THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

The multi-activity nature of an annual meeting means that each activity is treated as a separate event, with its own peculiar needs and scope of work. For instance, the Awards Night has different elements – from trophy design, show production set and script to selection of emcees. The conference proper needs agenda development, topic and session design, speaker selection, room arrangement, equipment and technical support, stage set-up, etc. All these details require careful planning and execution.

### GLUING IT ALL TOGETHER

Building up all the activities into one big event calls for focused and dedicated people within the team, since expertise and experience differ. Indeed, bringing together the various elements requires a combination of human, financial, technical and partnership resources. It is a massive task.

### FUTURE CHALLENGES

As financial resources become an issue in the future, charging attendance fees and sponsorship generation could be resorted to. It is also good to get fresh ideas and concepts to spruce up the event and make it interesting for the new generation of delegates.

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