



# Practical Guidelines for CIVL/FAI Category 1 Competition Organisers Chapter 3

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Aéronautique  
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# **FEDERATION AERONAUTIQUE INTERNATIONALE**

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## **3 Role of the Competition Organiser (Event Director)**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Normally the Competition Organiser, or Event Director, is one of the principal drivers behind creating the bid. During the event, he has overall responsibility for all non-competition aspects, including: finance, administration, liaison with external authorities, logistics, media & public relations and ceremonies. He should work in close liaison with the Meet Director, providing the necessary support to ensure the smooth running of the competition itself. The appointment of, and delegation of tasks and responsibilities to appropriate expert personnel is absolutely critical. The Competition Organiser may take on a specific role during the event, such as Financial manager, HQ manager or PR/Media Liaison, for example, or may assume overall responsibility for all non-competition aspects, but he is strongly advised not to also be the Meet Director or Safety Director. He cannot be a competitor.

### **3.2 Before the Practice Event and Championships**

During the preparation of the bid, the Competition Organiser will already have identified many aspects that will require attention as soon as the bid is accepted. The Meet Director will already have been agreed, so that most of the technical aspects of the competition itself can be delegated immediately. Ensure there is regular liaison and updates on progress.

Summary of overall responsibilities. Some (many!) of the tasks may (should!) be delegated:

- Finance
- Personnel
- Administration & Information Technology
- Liaison with external authorities
- Communication, Media & Public Relations
- Ceremonies & Social Events
- Venues & Logistics
- Liaison with the Meet Director

### **3.3 Finance**

This is one of the most critical roles for the organising team, and best delegated to, or shared with someone who has the time, and the accounting and organisational skills, to do it well. If the Competition Organiser takes on this role himself, without assistance, he may find he has much less

time to spend on other important functions. However, keeping track of the financials provides a useful insight into the progress of the whole event.

### **3.3.1 Budgets**

However carefully the budgets were planned, things will change! Hopefully, you will already have determined which items may change, which are critical and those that can be dropped if necessary. Similarly, some expenditure items may be fixed cost, and some may be variable, negotiable or subject to fluctuation. Some contingency expenditure should be in the budget.

Keeping the budgets up to date and balanced is essential. Regular reviews should be held and changes with a budget implication should be notified regularly by all members of the organising team.

### **3.3.2 Financial Administration**

It is useful (and common practice) to set up a separate bank account for the event, covering both the Test Event and the Championships. Grant authorities and sponsors often prefer to see that their money is going directly to the nominated recipient. It also makes the accounts much easier to manage.

It is good practice to set up in advance, forms (and guidance notes) for volunteers and staff to claim (agreed) expenses, as well as procedures for paying bills. All personnel should be notified well in advance that expense claims must be supported by receipts and that external bills for goods or services will only be paid on production of official bills or invoices.

Note that in many countries, grant authorities are unlikely to pay out until after the event, and on production of final accounts, often backed up by copies of all bills and invoices. This can mean a gap of up to a year, or more, between the end of the event and when the grant money is received. Some sort of overdraft or loan facility is likely to be essential if grant income represents a significant portion of total income.

### **3.3.3 Income**

As has been emphasised in Chapter 2, it is virtually impossible to organise a successful Category 1 event from pilot entry and Team Leader fees alone. Some additional income may be forthcoming by creating a 'partner package'. Aimed at spouses, family members, friends and supporters, the partner package could typically include entry to all social events, pilot package (maps, info, programme etc) and a tee-shirt. It probably does not include transport to launch, retrieve, or lunch packs. It should be priced to be attractive but cover costs, of course.

Securing grants from local, regional or government sporting authorities can be a complex, time-consuming and bureaucratic business, even if you have some very good contacts! Often, the authorities cannot commit to a grant until you have been awarded the bid. In such cases, securing

these grants should be a first priority, as decisions can be made up to a year in advance. It may be advisable to work in conjunction with the local authority to seek funding at a regional or national level. Your NAC or Federation may be able to help with government level sporting authorities.

If you can get information about the priorities of the authorities you are dealing with, you may be able to angle your request appropriately. Tourism, may be a priority, for example, so explain how the running of a sporting event at the highest international level will not only attract more pilots and their families to the area, but will be a media opportunity to exploit too.

Sponsorship income can take many forms. The donation of suitable prizes is an obvious option. Local businesses and organisations may be able to help with discounts on purchases, equipment loans, rent free premises etc. Early publicity of the event will help pave the way for discussions with potential sponsors. Consider the 'return on investment' in terms of publicity, logos on banners and posters, web adverts and click-throughs, etc.

Another potential source of income is from the sale of souvenirs such as tee-shirts, posters, stickers, mugs, pens etc. If you are creating promotional products for pilots, then consider producing extras that can be sold, especially if you are likely to be encouraging spectators or if there is significant involvement of the local community (joint social events, for example).

#### **3.3.4 Expenditure**

Bear in mind that you will have to pay out some money on equipment, rental deposits, maintenance work etc, before any income is received. Be aware that delays on payments for essential services or equipment may cause problems if there are long lead times for delivery, and are unlikely to encourage suppliers to be cooperative.

### **3.4 Personnel**

You will already have appointed key personnel, some of whom will need to be remunerated, and you should have budgeted for a number of additional staff, (probably) mostly volunteers. It is normal that certain highly skilled and high responsibility staff, such as the Meet Director, Safety Director, Scorer and Live Tracking coordinator, are paid for their work. Liaise with the Meet Director for a complete list of staff required for the operational aspects of the Competition. Many staff will be needed to help at launch, in goal fields, at the target, driving transport/retrieve, and in the HQ.

The Competition Organiser should determine what staff he needs, both in preparation and during the event. Some may have overlapping roles, of course. Outside of the competition itself, consider the staff needed for the following tasks and responsibilities: finance (overall and day to day), administration, press/media communications, IT and website design, HQ/Office staff.

Even if these additional staff are strictly volunteers, there will be some direct and indirect costs involved. During the event, irrespective of whether packed lunches or snack packs are provided for pilots, it is normal to provide some refreshments for staff at lunchtime, especially those

working remotely for long periods of time. In order to attract the right calibre of volunteer staff, it may be worthwhile contributing towards travel or accommodation costs. Launch and goal staff may need to be transported or reimbursed for use of their own vehicles. Numbers for t-shirts, receptions, and maybe some gifts or 'freebies', should include staff.

Costs associated with these essential personnel can mount up rapidly! But a team of happy, self-motivated, dependable, skilled/experienced volunteers, committed to working on their own initiative towards a safe and successful event, can make an invaluable contribution, as well as reduce stress and pressure on yourself and your key personnel.

Keeping track of the volunteers, which days they work (before and during the event), contact information, and supporting them with timely and relevant information, is an administration job in itself.

### **3.5 Administration & Information Technology**

#### **3.5.1 Administration**

There is a definite role for an Administrator or Office Manager in the team. During the event, this person could be the HQ manager (see below). The Administrator will need to keep track of master documents & files (logos, letterhead etc); incoming and outgoing letters & contracts; update work and operational schedules & planning documents.

Make sure there is an efficient and effective system of communication between members of the organising team, right from the start. Encourage feedback and regular updates on progress. If you have an email contact form on your website, make sure the people who can deal with enquiries receive the emails!

During the event, someone will need to work in the office, handling enquiries from pilots, team leaders, officials, staff, press, local contacts and suppliers. In addition, they will need to update and maintain forms & documents for competition staff on a daily basis.

#### **3.5.2 Information Technology**

Setting up the competition website is an early task – at least 6 months before the Practice Event. Even with very basic information, it provides a reference point for pilots, team leaders, NACs and the press. Eventually, it will require an online registration system with databases behind, and an email contact form. CIVL is planning to create a template registration module for Category 1 events, which organisers can choose to implement on their own website. Keeping the website operational and up to date before, during and after the events, will require the efforts not only of a good communicator, but an IT specialist too.

### **3.6 Liaison with External Authorities**

This role requires tact and diplomacy, good communication skills and a good working knowledge of the event, the locale, and competition requirements.

### **3.6.1 Local/Town Council**

If the Mayor and councillors are on your side, they can provide a great deal of help in many ways, and can save much effort and expense! Every town will work differently, of course, but town councils can provide some or all of the following: town centre venue for HQ and/or receptions; technical services (road signs, decorations, logistics for parades, priority car parking); liaison/encouragement to local landowners and traders; permissions/licences for bars, catering, music; complementary social events during the event. Normally, the most common 'return' is to give the Mayor an opportunity to speak at the formal Ceremonies, hand out gifts, trophies, certificates and meet the FAI/NAC Officials.

### **3.6.2 Tourist Office**

The Tourist Office can be invaluable in helping pilots find accommodation, and for negotiating good rates for accommodation for FAI Officials and essential staff. Check they have someone who can speak some English. Provide a link to their website/email. Tourist Offices will normally also have good contacts with the local press, and with communications services (printing of posters, programmes etc). They may be able to help with Public Relations during the event, and generally they have a good insight into how the Town Council is working.

### **3.6.3 Local medical & emergency services**

If airports competitions are regularly held in the area, then the local medical and emergency services will be aware of the requirements. If you do not already have a relationship, then check with the Meet Director and/or Safety Director, who should be in contact if they have run events at your location in the past. There may be formal procedures to follow, such as the provision of a Safety File or Dossier. Once the bid has been accepted, it is useful to inform these authorities officially of the dates of the two events, and introduce them to the appointed Meet and Safety Directors if they are not already known to them. Once initial contact has been made, liaison can be passed to the Safety Director to organise detailed aspects. However, if the Safety Director is new to the area or does not speak the language well, ensure that you and/or the Meet Director are involved in discussions and planning. See role of Safety Director

### **3.6.4 Airspace authorities**

The Meet Director should advise on whether there are any airspace restrictions, if permissions are required, if special exceptions or exemptions are required, NOTAMs etc. The NAC/Federation may also lend weight to any requests. In any case, it is advisable to request written confirmation of any special conditions/permissions granted, at least 6 months to 1 year ahead.

### **3.6.5 NAC and/or Federation**

If the Competition Organiser is not part of the Federation, then he will already have been in contact during the preparation of the bid. It is advisable to keep an appropriate person informed of progress. Some NACs/Federations can provide technical assistance or guidance on issues

including: airspace, radio law, liaison with sporting authorities at government level and insurance (for the event itself and even for pilots). They may also be able to provide some help with the provision of funding, bank references, equipment such as windsocks, windblades, signage etc. Senior members of the NAC or Federation are often well versed with liaising with local Town Council officials, Mayors and other dignitaries. Your CIVL Delegate has access to the FAI Delegates mailing list to promote information about the event.

### **3.6.6 FAI/CIVL Officials**

#### **3.6.6.1 FAI Steward**

Prior to the Practice Event, an FAI Steward will be appointed to provide help and guidance on all aspects of running the Practice Event and the Championships. It is very important to work closely with the Steward, who will have detailed knowledge of the FAI rules and regulations governing the event and will have experience from previous Championships. Do not hesitate to check with the Steward if you are unsure about any aspect of the organisation. The Meet and Safety Directors should also have direct access to the Steward for advice and guidance. Further information on the role of the Steward is set out in the Jury & Steward Handbook and in Section 7 of the Sporting Code.

The Competition Organiser is responsible for the expenses of the Steward at both events. See the Handbook for full details.

#### **3.6.6.2 Jury**

Typically, a three person Jury is appointed to attend the Championships (none at the Test Event) in order to ensure the event is conducted according to FAI rules, and to resolve any official Protests. Sometimes remote Jury members may be appointed. The Competition Organiser is responsible for the expenses of all FAI appointed Jury Members attending the Championships, as set out in the Jury & Steward Handbook. It is advisable to ensure the Jury Members are given the contact details of the financial administrator so that travel and accommodation is organised to best suit all parties and that costs and timings are known well in advance.

### **3.7 Communication, Media & Public Relations**

This can be an extremely important aspect of a successful competition. Good press coverage is viewed as a measure of success by grant authorities, local councils, sponsors, sports councils, tourism agencies and FAI, as well as pilots themselves and their NACs. A media plan should be in place as part of the original bid, and can be put into action as soon as the bid is accepted. Ideally, a Media Officer should be appointed to coordinate PR activities and ensure consistency of information across the various media, before, during and after the events.

An FAI Media Communications person is available to help Category 1 Competition Organisers. The FAI can help promote your event through its international network of airports media channels. If you intend to produce video footage of your event(s), either for a stand-alone production, or for supply to TV and digital broadcast agencies, the FAI can help with information on distribution rights etc. See chapter 9 Press, PR and Marketing Communications



## **3.8 Ceremonies & Social Events**

You will already have downloaded the FAI document, [Protocol for Award-Giving and Closing Ceremonies at FAI Championships](#). It covers FAI required protocols and recommended procedures for closing ceremonies and the presentation of awards. The aim is to ensure a consistently high standard of ceremony across the highest level of airsports, maintaining a high profile for FAI as well as the Competition Organiser, local dignitaries and sponsors, and providing the appropriately high level of recognition of the achievements of the competitors.

It is likely that the local town council and mayor will wish to be involved in these ceremonies. This can be a great advantage and could free up some of your funds previously allocated to ceremonies, or at least may provide a more substantial event than you might have planned without their help and support. However, it is important that they understand the FAI protocol and requirements, and that they keep in mind the international nature of the participants. It may be worthwhile translating the key elements of the relevant documents, if necessary, early enough to be taken into account when planning.

### **3.8.1 Opening Ceremony**

There are no firm rules on how this should be conducted. However, from an FAI perspective, it is important that the Jury President is given the opportunity to address the assembled competitors, Team Leaders and organisation staff, to officially declare the Championships underway. Usually, Competition Organisers plan for a parade of competitors, organised by national teams, typically with Team Leaders, or local representatives (often children) carrying national flags.

Once the parade has gathered in its final location, short speeches by the Mayor, Competition Organiser or Meet Director, and FAI Jury President, are followed by the raising of the FAI flag. The FAI flag should then be raised daily, or flies continuously, throughout the competition.

Timing of the Opening Ceremony is important, as it should take place after the close of registration, but before the start of official competition flying. See later for guidance on setting the programme.

### **3.8.2 Closing Ceremony**

This is well covered in the FAI document and in the relevant chapters of Section 7. Keep the Steward informed of plans. Striking the right balance between a Ceremony and celebration for the local people and local press, and for the competitors and flying community, can be very difficult. Be wary of letting local dignitaries dominate proceedings, particularly if there are many VIPS who wish to make speeches in the local language. Summary translations should be included or pilots will get bored.

It is common for the Meet Director to speak during the prize-giving part of the Closing Ceremony, as he will have had most contact with the competitors during the event. The Jury President should, once again, be given the opportunity to declare that the Championship has been run according to the rules, and that the competition is now closed.

Timing of the Ceremony can also be difficult. For cross country events, trying to hold a full Ceremony in the evening, after a final task, is likely to result in a prize-giving close to midnight.

Consider that pilots have to be retrieved, especially if there is a remote goal, the scoring has to be finalised, and results published with time for pilots to review them. Holding the Closing Ceremony the following day allows a fixed time to be set for press, local dignitaries etc. However, it can result in the non-appearance of some pilots, even though Section 7 clearly states that all competitors should attend the closing ceremony

### **3.8.3 Medals, Certificates, Flags & Anthems**

The FAI medals and Certificates, as well as the FAI Flag and FAI Anthem on CD, will be sent to the Competition Organiser in good time prior to the start of the Championships. It is worth checking that the medals are all present and correct, and that you are familiar with which medals are awarded to whom.

The Certificates can only be filled in once the overall results are finalised.

You should try to make sure that National flags of all competing nations are available for the closing ceremony. It is possible to ask teams to bring their own flags and national anthems, but you may prefer to procure your own set: a) to be sure you have them all, and b) to ensure they are all the same size and format, and can be raised on whatever flagpole equipment you (or the town hall) will provide. National anthems can often be downloaded from the internet.

### **3.8.4 Social events**

Additional social events are always welcome during a competition that lasts a week or longer. They need not be expensive. A barbecue at the local campsite or landing field is simple to organise. Pilots may be happy to buy their own food to cook, if there is a free drink on offer and some music!

The local town may be persuaded to organise something on a larger scale that brings together local people and pilots. It may be possible to tie in a social gathering with something else already on the calendar in the area (midsummer festival, outdoor concerts etc). Opportunities may arise nearer the time, so keep the programme flexible and keep in touch with local contacts, especially the Tourist Office, which tends to be first to hear about upcoming events.

Communicate with local cafés and restaurants which might compile special 'pilot' menus or hold a happy hour, especially if they have a large screen that can show the results or video footage of the event.

## **3.9 Venues & Logistics**

This includes headquarters, airfields, launches, goalfields and target areas, as well as accommodation, transport, parking, lunch packs/refreshments (if provided), equipment, and staff. In liaison with the Meet Director, Safety Director, Scorer and other members of the team, the Competition Organiser needs to consider all of these issues in advance, not only to ensure there is sufficient time to prepare, but also to reconfirm the cost implications. These various logistical responsibilities could be allocated between different team members. See chapter 7 Operational Aspects.

### **3.10 Liaison with Meet Director**

Regular liaison with the Meet Director sounds obvious, both during the preparation phase and throughout the competition, and two way communication is essential. Some of the responsibilities and considerations listed above will be of interest to the Meet Director. Some of the Meet Director's work in progress will be of interest to the Competition Organiser. Sometimes, some formality, such as meetings, and creating and updating lists, can be an efficient means of keeping track of a myriad issues.