CONTRACTS

A contract outlines details of an agreement between a supplier of goods or of a service and the conference organising body. The purpose of a contract is to protect both parties. It usually includes:

- what is to be supplied
- the agreed price

It is usually the supplier who writes the contract, so remember to read it carefully or hire the services of an industry lawyer.

The contracts are formal and recognised documents which are legally binding.

Negotiations with suppliers should take into account:

- the conference organiser is restricted by the budget and planned image of the conference
- the supplier’s profit structure

Past documentation is a valuable tool as a starting point to negotiate prices with suppliers. (Always update documentation so the next person can benefit from your experience). Useful information is:

- number of delegates
- number of rooms required
- food and beverage costs
- session room hire
- contingency plans for the unexpected

Check the following items with a supplier to ensure a clear understanding of exactly what is being supplied for the agreed price.

**Hotel/Venue**

- specify room type, rate and deposit (also if breakfast is included)
- what is accepted on the master account
- food and beverage costs - timeline & penalties if numbers are reduced
- policy on upgrading room
- run of the house
- short stay policy
- check-in and out
- early check-in and late check-out
- block booking time limit
- meeting room rates and 24 hour hold/access (no entry by another client)
- set up charges
• cancellation policy
• Audio visual rental, what is extra
• lock-up storage room
• telephone surcharges
• signage
• safety and fires codes

This list is meant to be the starting point only for contract negotiations.

Any amendments to the contracts by either party must be countersigned and dated with a return for contract approval.