



IFPMA/EFPIA/PhRMA Joint Guidance on Virtual International Medical Congresses Impacted by COVID-19: Case Study

General considerations

The server location (country) will not be considered as having any influence on the material review criteria.

Hypothetical 1 – American Society of Wobbly Knees (ASWK)

Background

- ASWK is a Chicago based American medical society representing the Medical Specialty of Wobbly Knees, and is actively involved in related activities such as medical/scientific information exchange, medical education and research to enhance patient care.
- Its annual congress attracts 40,000 HCPs, Researchers, Academics and Patient Groups and rotates across different cities in the US.
- The annual US congress mainly attracts delegates from the US with some attendees from other countries around the world:
 - 65% US based
 - 15% Europe based
 - 8% Asia-Pacific
 - 12% Other
- Given the COVID-19 environment, the 2020 congress, scheduled for 23-27 September, 2020 in Florida is now moving to a virtual platform.
- A virtual booth is available for Gold, Silver, Bronze and Exhibitor sponsors whilst a dedicated symposium, for which companies control the content, is allowed for Gold and Silver Sponsors.
- Your company wishes to be a Silver Sponsor and talk about Product X.
 - *Product X is approved in the US only.*
 - *Product Y is approved in Europe only.*

Minimum Company Actions

- Use the PhRMA Code as the basis for the congress activities and related review, as the majority of delegates would be expected to be from the US based on past experience, and taking into account that ASWK is a US medical society with a focus on US HCPs.
- Ensure ASWK has a process that requires delegates to sign a digital consent form acknowledging the virtual congress terms including:
 - appropriate privacy statements,

- specific permission to access different virtual areas,
 - details, if applicable, on the recording of the congress,
 - any rules around social engagement sites,
 - an understanding that promotional information and materials presented during the virtual congress have been developed according to the US label.
- Ensure the presentation(s) within the company symposia are non-promotional in nature.
 - Ensure immediately prior to the company's symposium, a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP (or has the right profession to attend such meeting),
 - that the information contained in the presentations may not be approved in the HCP's home country and that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
 - Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's promotional virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP,
 - that they are entering a company's promotional virtual booth that may contain promotional material or information intended for US physicians,
 - that non-US HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
 - a. *Given the majority of delegates would be expected to be from US, Product X can be proactively discussed at a company virtual promotional booth; however Product Y, being only approved in Europe could not be presented on the virtual promotional booth.*
 - Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's medical virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP and that they are entering a company's medical virtual booth.

Company Considerations for mid-long-term

- Companies should explore putting in place system to address appropriately the situation where HCPs view materials from countries other than their own (e.g. providing a link to a webpage with a list of countries for which when clicked sends the delegate to the relevant local prescribing information page).

Hypothetical 2 – European Society of Wobbly Knees (ESWK)

Background

- ESWK is a Netherlands based European Medical society representing the Medical Specialty of Wobbly Knees, and is actively involved in related activities such as medical/scientific information exchange, medical education and research to enhance patient care.
- Its annual congress attracts 30,000 HCPs, Researchers, Academics and Patient Groups and rotates across different cities in Europe.
- The annual European congress mainly attracts delegates from the Europe with some attendees from other countries around the world:
 - 70% Europe based
 - 10% US based

- 8% Asia-Pacific
- 12% Other
- Given the COVID-19 environment, the 2020 congress, scheduled for 24-28 August, 2020 in Paris, France, is now moving to a virtual platform.
- A virtual booth is available for Gold, Silver, Bronze and Exhibitor sponsors whilst a dedicated symposium, for which companies control the content, is allowed for Gold and Silver Sponsors.
- Your company wishes to be a Silver Sponsor and talk about Product X and Y.
 - *Product X is approved in the US only.*
 - *Product Y is approved in Europe and the US but not approved in Asian countries.*

Minimum Company Actions

- Use the EFPIA Code as the basis for the congress activities and related review, as the majority of delegates would be expected to be from the Europe based on past experience, and taking into account that ESWK is a European medical society with a focus on European HCPs.
- Ensure ESWK has a process that requires delegates to sign a digital consent form acknowledging the virtual congress terms including:
 - a. appropriate privacy statements,
 - b. specific permission to access different virtual areas,
 - c. details, if applicable, on the recording of the congress,
 - d. any rules around social engagement sites,
 - e. an understanding that promotional information and materials presented during the virtual congress have been developed according to the European (EMA) label.
- Ensure the presentation(s) within the company symposia are non-promotional in nature.
- Ensure immediately prior to the company's symposium, a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP (or has the right professional profession to attend such meeting),
 - that the information contained in the presentations may not be approved in the HCP's home country and that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's promotional virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP,
 - that they are entering a company's promotional virtual booth that may contain promotional material or information intended for European physicians,
 - that non-European HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
 - a. *Given the majority of delegates would be expected to be from Europe, Product X could not be proactively displayed/discussed at a company virtual booth as it is not approved across Europe. However, Product Y could be presented given that it is approved in Europe.*
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's medical virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP and that they are entering a company's medical virtual booth.

Company Considerations for mid-long-term

- Companies should explore putting in place system to address appropriately the situation where HCPs view materials from countries other than their own (e.g. providing a link to a webpage with a list of countries for which when clicked sends the delegate to the relevant local prescribing information page).

Hypothetical 3 – International Society of Wobbly Knees (ISWK)

Background

- ISWK is a Swiss based International Medical society representing the Medical Specialty of Wobbly Knees, and is actively involved in related activities such as medical/scientific information exchange, medical education and research to enhance patient care.
- Its annual congress attracts 20,000 HCPs, Researchers, Academics and Patient Groups and rotates across different cities around the world.
- The annual international congress generally attracts delegates from around the world and distribution varies depending on the location of the congress.
- Given the COVID-19 environment, the 2020 congress, scheduled for 24-28 October, 2020 in Rio, Brazil, is now moving to a virtual platform.
- A virtual booth is available for Gold, Silver, Bronze and Exhibitor sponsors whilst a dedicated symposium, for which companies control the content, is allowed for Gold and Silver Sponsors.
- Your company wishes to be a Silver Sponsor and talk about Product X and Y.
 - *Product X is approved in the US only.*
 - *Product Y is approved in most European countries and the US but is not approved in Argentina.*

Minimum Company Actions

- Use the IFPMA Code as a minimum standard as the basis for the congress activities and related review.
- Companies should assess and document which label they would like to use as the reference for their promotional material and activities in purely virtual congresses, taking into consideration the registration situation of the label, the demographics of attending HCPs etc. amongst others. The US / EMA label could be used as reference. Respective disclaimers are key in providing the appropriate framework.
- Ensure ISWK has a process that requires delegates to sign a digital consent form acknowledging the virtual congress terms including:
 - appropriate privacy statements,
 - specific permission to access different virtual areas,
 - details, if applicable, on the recording of the congress,
 - any rules around social engagement site,
 - an understanding that promotional information and materials presented during the virtual congress have been developed according to the 'company selected label' (based on point 2 above).
- Ensure the presentation(s) within the company symposia are non-promotional in nature.
- Ensure immediately prior to the company's symposium, a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP (or has the right professional profession to attend such meeting),
 - that the information contained in the presentations may not be approved in the HCP's home country and that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,

- include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
- [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's promotional virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP,
 - that they are entering a company's promotional virtual booth that may contain promotional material developed using the 'company selected' label reference (based on point 2 above),
 - that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
 - a. *Given this congress is aim at global attendance and that Product X is only approved in one country (US), it was decided not to be presented proactively in the virtual promotional booth. However, given Product Y is available in the US and in Europe, company may decide to proactively discuss it in the virtual promotional booth (based on point 2 above)*
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's medical virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP and that they are entering a company's medical virtual booth.

Company Considerations for mid-long-term

- Companies should explore putting in place system to address appropriately the situation where HCPs view materials from countries other than their own (e.g. providing a link to a webpage with a list of countries for which when clicked sends the delegate to the relevant local prescribing information page).

Hypothetical 4 – Asian Pacific Society of Wobbly Knees (APSWK)

Background

- APSWK is a Singapore based Asian Pacific Medical society representing the Medical Specialty of Wobbly Knees, and is actively involved in related activities such as medical/scientific information exchange, medical education and research to enhance patient care.
- Its annual congress attracts 25,000 HCPs, Researchers, Academics and Patient Groups and rotates across different cities around the Asia Pacific region.
- The annual congress generally attracts in majority delegates from Asia Pacific Region and some from other countries around the world; distribution varies depending on the location of the congress:
 - 60% Asia based
 - 35% Australia based
 - 5% Other
- Given the COVID-19 environment, the 2020 congress, scheduled for 24-27 November, 2020 in Sydney, Australia, is now moving to a virtual platform.
- A virtual booth is available for Gold, Silver, Bronze and Exhibitor sponsors whilst a dedicated symposium, for which companies control the content, is allowed for Gold and Silver Sponsors.
- Your company wishes to be a Silver Sponsor and talk about Product X and Y.
 - *Product X is approved in the US and Australia only.*

- *Product Y is approved in most countries in Asia, Australia and the US but is not approved in Europe.*

Minimum Company Actions

- Use the IFPMA Code as a minimum standard as the basis for the congress activities and related review.
- Companies should assess and document which label they would like to use as the reference for their promotional material and activities in purely virtual congresses, taking into consideration the registration situation of the label, the demographics of attending HCPs etc amongst others. One of the Asia Pacific label (or the US/EMA label) could be used as reference. Respective disclaimers are key in providing the appropriate framework.
- Ensure ESWK has a process that requires delegates to sign a digital consent form acknowledging the virtual congress terms including:
 - appropriate privacy statements,
 - specific permission to access different virtual areas,
 - details, if applicable, on the recording of the congress,
 - any rules around social engagement site,
 - an understanding that promotional information and materials presented during the virtual congress have been developed according to the 'company selected label' (based on point 2 above).
- Ensure the presentation(s) within the company symposia are non-promotional in nature.
- Ensure immediately prior to the company's symposium, a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP (or has the right professional profession to attend such meeting),
 - that the information contained in the presentations may not be approved in the HCP's home country and that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's promotional virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring:
 - the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP,
 - that they are entering a company's promotional virtual booth that may contain promotional material developed using the 'company selected' label reference (based on point 2 above),
 - that HCPs should refer to their home country prescribing information,
 - include a statement indicating the countries in which the medicinal product is registered,
 - [insert appropriate disclaimer, see Guidance].
 - a. *Given this congress is aim at global attendance and that Product X is only approved in US and Australia, it was decided not to be presented proactively in the virtual promotional booth. However, given Product Y is available in the US, Australia and most Asian countries, company may decide to proactively discuss it in the virtual promotional booth (based on point 2 above)*
- Ensure immediately prior to entering a company's medical virtual booth a pop-up box or equivalent appears requiring the delegate to acknowledge that the person is an HCP and that they are entering a company's medical virtual booth

Company Considerations for mid-long-term

- Companies should explore putting in place system to address appropriately the situation where HCPs view materials from countries other than their own (e.g. providing a link to a webpage with a list of countries for which when clicked sends the delegate to the relevant local prescribing information page).

References & Further Information

[Joint Guidance on Virtual International Medical Congresses Impacted by COVID-19](#)