



FAI Ballooning Commission/CIA

Hot Air Championship Event
Website & Social Media Guide
for Event Organizers



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Thanks to the FAI Hang Gliding & Paragliding Commission (CIVL) for assistance from their document, *Practical Guidelines for CIVL/FAI Category 1 Competition Organisers, Chapter 9.*

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INTRODUCTION

This document describes how to structure the website and social media presence for Championships organized under sanctions from the FAI International Ballooning Commission (CIA).

The CIA Public & Media Relations (PMR) Subcommittee is available to partner with the Event Organizers to create a public and social media presence to share the excitement and beauty of hot air ballooning, gas ballooning and hot air airship events.

It is in the interest of all parties (Event Organizers, FAI/CIA, and Pilots) to have a good, professional, and up-to-date presence on the internet and in social media. By using the same website addresses and social media accounts with a common concept every year, the brand can be improved, and the fan base can be increased.

The objective of this document is to ensure captivating content is shared in real or near real-time to increase interest in competition.

Organizers are obliged to follow this guide unless an exemption is given as part of the FAI/CIA Organizers event contract.

NOTE: References to FAI-CIA Experts include Specialists from the following CIA Working Groups:

- *AX (Hot Air Balloon Events) Working Group*
- *BX (Hot Air Airship Events) Working Group*
- *AA (Gas Balloon Events) Working Group*
- *For the FAI Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, (long-distance gas balloon event) also consult the separate media guide titled: Website and Social Media Guide - Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett.*
-

The competition will be conducted under the authority granted by the FAI, according to the regulations of the Sporting Code of the FAI, General Section, and Section 5 as approved by the ISC and validated by the FAI, and these rules. All participants accept these rules and the FAI regulations as binding by registering in the competition.

1 DIGITAL TEAM ROLES

Only a few people are fortunate enough to feel the excitement of a championship in the air around them. To attract a wider public from around the world, it is important to share that magic using modern tools including a sustained web presence as well as dynamic social media use.

To do this, it is important to properly resource the digital team, where digital indicates both web and social media, and to empower them to post frequently and to draw from the content shared by competitors and their teams.

1.1 DIGITAL TEAM COMPOSITION

The team that creates and shares all the wonderful content about the competition can be small, but it must certainly be mighty, taking into account the following factors:

- *Content must be published in English and the local language.*
- *Content must be published multiple times a day, every day and that can be tiring over a long event where activities take place during all hours of the day.*
- *Content comes in various forms (high quality photo and video) and requires editing and technical skills to be uploaded after each flight rather than at the end of the event; and*
- *Content sharers must be trusted or have editors to ensure appropriateness (See 3.1).*
-

Organisers likely have not budgeted significant amounts for this. If that's the case, it is important to find qualified young journalists or other engaged people who might be willing to take on the work. The

promise of a balloon flight at the end of the event can be enticing whereas for some people it might fit university credits, coop work terms, an internship, material for their professional portfolio or other recognition.

Importance of a Good Photographer

The importance of a securing the services of a good photographer cannot be overstated. Without pictures, nothing will be published.

Ballooning is a very visual sport, which creates a natural flow to colorful photos and then to social media exposure. Finding the good photographer that captures the interesting and exciting photo is important. It doesn't matter if they are amateur or professional. What's important is that they work closely with the editor/PR liaison.

Photographers must be able to provide pictures to the editor several times a day, not two days after the event. Social media requires regular updates to keep visitors returning for the latest new photos.

1.2 AUDIENCES

It is important to think of the audience in four parts:

<u>Audiences</u>	Local (Local language)	International (English)
Understands competition	Likely involved already	Wants to follow along
Doesn't yet	Can be introduced and attend	World of possibilities

Our audience consists of the local audience, that could be persuaded to attend, and the international audience, that is not able to join in-person. Within these two types are people who understand hot air balloon competition and those who do not.

It is important to ensure there is content for all these audiences with the recognition that the population that does not understand competitive ballooning is much larger than the audience that does.

Within the population that does understand ballooning, if they are near the event, they are likely already involved. And if they are at a distance then they are definitely searching for content.

This means ensuring content that explains the competition plainly and without any ballooning jargon since those who understand will be in the minority.

1.3 CONTENT TYPES

For all audiences, ensuring the rapid sharing of content that helps inform and delight, is the key. A number of content types can be used and shared across multiple platforms, saving time and energy:

- *Short text articles: these are useful to help explain what is happening on the website and to introduce or link to other types of more dynamic content.*
- *Short videos: these can be edited or not but generally show some type of action – lifting of a green flag, launching, dropping of markers – and are best with an explanation of what is happening in both the local language and English. They can be shared on nearly any platform.*
- *'Going live': picking a platform and consistently going live for short bursts to explain what's happening is a good way of building an audience.*
- *Livestreaming: a long form of sharing, this requires explaining what is happening to all audiences in a way that best captures the competition, preferably by having more than one*

camera able to capture the launch and then marker drops. It works best with a knowledgeable host who can explain conditions, techniques and what appears to be successful.

- *Recaps: Stringing together content from competitors, their teams and the public and with a host narrating, a short recap of each flight should then include a look at the standings and should be published twice a day as possible.*
- *Picking up content from competitors, their teams, and the public: any form of good content on any platform can be collected and shared immediately to show how engaged people are with the event.*

2 WEB SITE CONCEPT

2.1 DOMAIN NAME

The domain name XXXX@fai.org shall be the primary entry point for information about the FAI CIA Championship.

The domain name is owned and controlled by FAI. The FAI IT Manager is the point of contact for any changes.

By default, XXXX@fai.org points to the event website (see 2.2). About one month after the previous Championship /11 month prior to an event, the domain is switched to the next year's event website.

2.2 EVENT WEBSITE

The objective of the event website is to promote a specific occurrence of each Hot Air Balloon Championship. The event website shall be setup by the event organizer usually no later than 2 weeks before the previous year's event, to have a minimal overlap.

As a minimum the event website shall include.

- *Date and place of the event*
- *Short description of the event*
- *Practical information for visitors*
- *Event program*
- *List of the competitors (when registration is finished)*
- *Up-to-date results of the competition or link to where they can be found.*
-

Some of this information is only known months or weeks before the event. The website shall be updated regularly and kept updated. The basic information should be available both in English and in the local language.

The event organizer is responsible to setup and host the website. He can use a custom domain name or ask for a sub-domain of XXXX@fai.org until XXXX@fai.org points to the site. Once the event is active, this shall be the primary domain and the only address communicated to the public.

The event organizer shall provide sufficient hosting performance preferably on a scalable solution that can support the access of the visitors during the event. During the event, the website can get simultaneous access of about 5,000 to 10,000 visitors (numbers from 2016/2017).

2.3 HISTORY

FAI/CIA Experts will be responsible for keeping an up-to-date historical data on the CIA website. This website is hosted by FAI and should keep the history of Hot Air & Gas Balloon Championships.

As a minimum this site must contain the results from all previous events. Event Organizers shall share access/file transfer of the Final Results at the conclusion of the event.

After each event the FAI/CIA Experts transfer the following information to the CIA historical files:

- *Final Results*
- *Competitor Information, Including list of Senior Event Officials*
- *Articles Highlighting the event*

2.4 RESULTS PORTAL

The results portal should be a page or site, either embedded within the website or linked to externally, that hosts the results.

The results portal should include:

- *Live tracking (see 4)*
- *A social wall (see 3.7)*
- *TV feed (if available)*
-

The event organizer is responsible for understanding the functioning of live tracking and implementing it during the event as well as adding a social wall feed.

2.5 COMPETITOR PROFILES

As always, the event organiser must create a page with the name, number, and country of each competitor.

This must also include a photo of the balloon being flown as well as social media handles the competitor might wish to have shared if they or their team are planning on sharing content during the event.

2.6 STATISTICS AND DATA PROTECTION

All parties should create minimal statistics (# of visitors, unique visitors, pageviews, etc.) with a daily resolution. Ideally the statistics also covers the country of origin of the visitors. This data will then be shared between CIA and event organisers.

All parties must ensure that the websites comply with the European data protection laws.

2.7 NAVIGATION BANNER

To give the visitors a simple option to navigate between the sites and to show them that those sites are connected, all sites must include the same navigation banner.

The navigation banner has 50px height and is kept in a simple, dark grey, design which is compatible with most website designs. The width of the banner can be adjusted to match the website width.

The banner is integrated using a JavaScript which makes it easy for the event websites to include the banner and the banner links can be centrally managed. The banner is hosted by FAI ([Need Hot Air Championship page](#)) and managed by the FAI/CIA Expert.

2.8 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR THE NAVIGATION BANNER

The navigation banner is prepared for easy integration in most websites. Reach out to the FAI IT Manager for the most up to date Navigation Banner for your category of event.

3 SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 NETIQUETTE

Be professional. Always communicate positively. Follow common sense and ethical behaviour. Be polite and fair. As official communicator (organizer / event director /...) treat all teams and nations equally.

The publisher of each article, message, photo, or video published on one of the social media channels must have the right of the author, producer, or photographer of the relevant material for publication on those channels.

Select a simple hashtag that can be used across all platforms and that is always communicated through official posts to encourage a following.

3.2 CRISIS COMMUNICATION

As an Emergency & Crisis Plan is established for the event, reference the FAI Guidelines: *In the event of a causality or serious accident at FAI Air Sports*. It will be very helpful in confirming all aspects of potential emergency situations are considered.

In particular, note 2.4.2 which states: ‘A spokesperson should be nominated to make any statement and to deal with the media’. Determine pre-event who will be the spokesperson for the event should an emergency or crisis unfold. Share the plan so all involved know the proper routine.

It is important that in case of an accident, communication in the channels should be suspended until further advice from the designated spokesperson. No social media posts should be published without the approval of the spokesperson. Don’t publish pictures or videos that incriminate our sport. Communicate facts, but no assumptions or speculations.

3.3 FACEBOOK

There is an official Facebook page for use of World Hot Air Balloon Championships. The page is owned by FAI and managed by the FAI communications manager. The content control of the site is moved to every year’s organizer. The intent is to build a yearly growing community instead of building a new community every year. In case the organizer has setup a Facebook site earlier, this site shall be merged with the official Facebook site, keeping the official site as the remaining site.

The content control for the site is given to the organizer about 10 months prior to the event. The event organizer may do the following adjustments

- *Rebrand the site to match the event’s logo and CI/CD.*
- *Adjust the organizer address in the site information.*
- *Post any content related to the Hot Air Balloon Championship or hot air ballooning in general. Previous content must be kept. The control is given to the organizer in good faith expecting that he follows the intend to maintain and build the community. In case of questions ask the FAI communications manager or the FAI/CIA Expert.*

The organizer can post any content on the Facebook site that relates to the Hot Air Balloon Championship or ballooning in general. They may present their sponsors, but the focus of the site must be to the sport and not to commercial aspects. Because the community is very international, a good part (around 2/3rd) of the posts must be in English and/or multi-lingual.

During the championship, the Facebook page should be used:

- *To present profiles of each competitor in the lead up to the championship.*
- *To introduce the host community for the benefit of spectators and participants.*
- *To ideally live stream opening and closing ceremonies, launches, target sites or flights from competitors.*
- *To share whether flights are going ahead or cancelled (including the task data sheet if it is going ahead).*
- *To present results as soon as they are available after each flight; and*
- *To present a summary of each flight through video and photo content.*

At any time, FAI, FAI/CIA, or any of its sub-commissions may also post on this Facebook site.

3.4 TWITTER

A similar procedure is used for the official Twitter account, owned by FAI (FAI communication manager) and managed by the organizer.

During the championship, the Twitter account should be used:

- *To present profiles of each competitor in the lead up to the championship.*
- *To introduce the host community for the benefit of spectators and participants.*
- *To share information and links to live streams.*
- *To share whether flights are going ahead or cancelled as well as the task data sheet.*
- *To present results as soon as they are available after each flight; and*
- *To present a summary of each flight through video and photo content.*
-

At any time, FAI, FAI/CIA, or any of its sub-commissions may also post on this Twitter site.

3.5 FLICKR

A selection of good pictures from every year is posted on Flickr by FAI. The Flickr page is managed by the FAI Communications Manager.

Unless a FAI appointed photographer is on site, the organizer is asked to send a selection of good pictures at maximum resolution, without any watermark, to FAI for publication. The copyright remains with the photographer, but free license for editorial use must be given. Those pictures may be used by public and media for editorial use and to promote the event.

3.6 YOUTUBE

FAI owns the YouTube channel which can be used for live streaming of the event or uploading of post-produced videos.

All videos must be closely related to the specific Hot Air Balloon Championship and the organizer or FAI must have the permission to publish the video.

The account is managed by the FAI/CIA experts.

3.7 INSTAGRAM, TIKTOK AND OTHERS

Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat represent some of the other app's organisers should consider using to reach audiences. On these media, short, sharable videos are key.

3.8 SOCIAL WALL

BALLOON LIVE tracking (see 4) integrates a minimal social wall that can only list Twitter messages.

Because many teams and fans communicated primarily with Facebook, it is recommended to add a separate social wall which integrates in the event portal.

In 2018 the solution from www.walls.io was used for the Gordon Bennett. The cost of this solution is 250\$ for one month. Normally it is enough to have the wall online for one month. The echo was very positive, and it is strongly recommended to continue using this system.

It is the responsibility of the event organizer to sign the contract with a social wall provider and to configure it. Contact the FAI/CIA Expert in case of questions.

4 LIVE TRACKING

Live Tracking for hot air balloon events is still in its early stages with the recent development and application of tools to support it. Due to the precise nature of hot air balloon competition and the speed at which balloons fly, live tracking must be accompanied by other tools to add excitement for the public.

4.1 REQUIREMENT

The Balloon Live App and Balloon Live Sensor (BLS) are new tools being used at all major competitions going forward. Event organizers are responsible for ensuring that this technology is used to the maximum of its technical capacity. For the purposes of this document, the goal is to ensure that its live tracking ability is used.

Live tracking should be presented on the webpage and accompanied by either a live stream or knowledgeable commentary. It must be presented such that it is easy to use and understandable for the general public and must work for the whole duration of each flight.

Information on Live Tracking for Hot Air Balloons:

<https://www.fai.org/news/cia-balloon-live-app-leads-evolution-competition-new-decade>

Details of BALLOON LIVE tracking from the developers:

<https://balloonlive.org/>

5 ANNEXES

5.1 TIMELINE AND ACTION LIST

The table below lists the actions by the different parties before, during, and after the event. The units are in months and weeks.

When	Who	What
Previous Event - 1m	Event Organizer	Setup event website. (Keep updated until end of event)
Previous Event - 1m	FAI/CIA Expert	Activate the website on the navigation banner
Previous Event + 2m	FAI IT manager	Point XXXXXXXXXXXX to the event website
Previous Event + 2m	FAI Communications Manager	Give access to Facebook to the new organizer.
Previous Event + 2m	Event Organizer	Adjust official Facebook page to CI/CD. Start feeding Facebook.
Event - 5m	Event Organizer	Begin publication of profiles of competitors.
Event - 1w	Event Organizer	Setup live tracking & social wall
Event - 1w	FAI/CIA Expert	Activate live button on navigation banner
Event	Event Organizer	Frequent updates about the flights on social media. Publish results as they are published immediately on the website and social media.
Event + 2w	FAI/CIA WG	Extract relevant information from event website and update History & Legend website

Event + 1m	Event Organizer	Send summary of statistics (website, Facebook, press, TV, etc.) to the FAI/CIA PMR SC and the applicable FAI/CIA Working Group.
Event + 1m	FAI IT manager	Archive event website
Event + 2m	FAI/CIA WG	Create visitor report combining all statistical information.

5.2 CONTACT ADDRESSES

FAI IT Manager	it@fai.org +41 21 345 10 70 Visa-Matti Leinikki
FAI Communications Manager	communication@fai.org +41 21 345 10 70 Faustine Carrera
FAI/CIA AA (Gas Balloon) WG Chair	Mark Sullivan (USA)
FAI/CIA AX (Hot Air) WG Chair	Uwe Schneider (GER)
FAI/CIA BX (Airship) WG Chair	Luc Van Geyte (BEL)
FAI/CIA Public Media & Relations (PMR) Chair	cia-media@fai.org Debbie Spaeth
Live Tracking-New Technology SC Chair	Claude Weber (LUX) claudio@weber.lu

Annex 5.2

FAI International Ballooning Commission (CIA) Sanctioned Event Organizers

[Logistics Checklist FAI-CIA Protocol & Social Media](#)

CIA Committee: Public Media & Relations (PMR) Sub-Committee
Contact PMR Chair: CIA-media@fai.org

NOTE : Documents are found at: <https://www.fai.org/documents>

Event Protocol

- *FAI Style Guide* – Visual Image of FAI
- *Rules on Advertising for FAI Air Sport Events*
- *Protocol for Award-Giving & Closing Ceremonies @ FAI Championships*
- *FAI Anthem* (Download MP3 File to play during Opening & Closing Ceremonies)

Crisis Management:

- *FAI Guidelines: In the Event of a Casualty or Serious Accident at FAI Air Sports* – Good resource for a comprehensive outline of details to consider for the Event Emergency & Crisis plan.

Event Publicity/Social Media:

- FAI-CIA works with organizers to publish competition stories to build interest. Stories can be shared on FAI Social Media including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.
- Suggestions for timeline includes:

Timeline: Immediately after Sanction is awarded

- Build interest in event location.
- Story on the flying area for the Championship. And things to do and see in the area. Hiking? Tourist Attractions? local culture?
- Past Balloon Events held here or elsewhere in the country?

Timeline: As the pilot list is compiled & entries are accepted.

- Stories on Past Champions who are participating.
- Stories on Junior Champions & Women's World Champions participating.
- Story on female pilots competing – FAI has news section for “Women with Wings” so could be included there.

Timeline: During Registration –

- Have on-site people who could do short videos of pilots, perhaps getting comments as they arrive for registration.

Timeline: During the event –

- If there is a person who will be doing daily updates for the Championship event page, could include on the FAI-CIA page too. And include the links to direct readers to the daily task result updates.

- Using WatchMeFly.net for Competition? Direct spectators here for Task & Weather sheet and build knowledge and excitement about the pending flight.

Timeline: Post Event

- Article summarizing the week.

Per CIA Sanctioned Event Application:

A: Match your PR Officer with the CIA PMR Chair to begin Social Media campaign.

EVENT OFFICIALS

PR Officer / Media Officer
(name, email)

- Establish Championship Event web presence for communication with event participants. (i.e. Website; Facebook page; Watchmefly.net, etc.)
- Work with CIA PMR Chair for media coverage during event – Stories for publication on FAI web site.
- Who will be on-site and willing to write daily updates? Share Name & contact details (Email).

B: Order the Sanction Kit for Flags, Medals & Diplomas.

FAI Sanction "Kit" Status	FAI & CIA Flags: Medals: Diplomas: Remarks:
Opening and Closing Ceremonies Agenda Reviewed	

- Confirm mailing address for Shipment of FAI Sanction Kit (Flags, Medals, Diplomas)
- Send event 'ship to' address to: EDS Contact & FAI Office
- Deadline: Minimum 3 months before beginning of event

ANNEX 5.3

REFERENCE LIST OF FAI-CIA DOCUMENTS

NOTE : Documents are found at: <https://www.fai.org/documents>

- *FAI Style Guide – Visual Image of FAI*
- *Rules on Advertising for FAI Air Sport Events*
- *Protocol for Award-Giving & Closing Ceremonies @ FAI Championships*
- *FAI Anthem (Download MP3 File to play during Opening & Closing Ceremonies)*
- *FAI Guidelines: In the event of a casualty or a serious accident at FAI Air Sports*

- *CIA Protocol for FAI and CIA Sanctioned Events*
- *CIA Competition Operations Handbook (For Hot Air Balloon Events)- Good source for explanation of competition requirements, etc.*



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