



BOARDROOM

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH LEGACIES

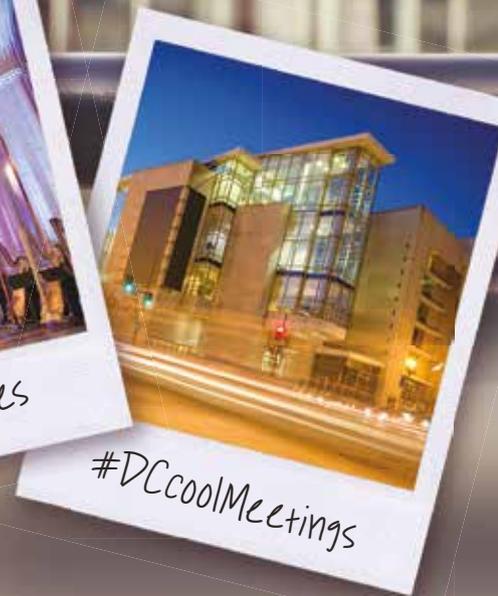
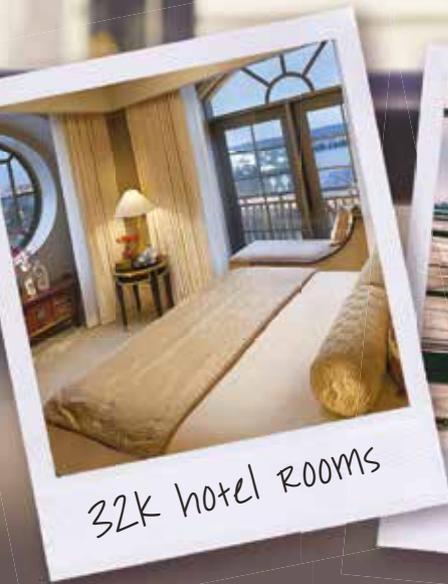
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Boardroom

By and for associations

Boardroom is designed to be a magazine by and for associations. What do we mean by this? We want to provide associations with the kind of information they need to manage as efficiently as possible. We even dare to state that our goal for 2018 is to become a magazine that delivers knowledge rather than mere information.

From the start, we established our Advisory Board, whose members have offered valuable information and helped us strategise and map out content. We are very grateful to them and hope that our collaboration will last for many years to come.

For 2018 we decided to expand the Advisory Board and bring on associations outside of Europe, so you'll be knowledgeable about trends taking place across the globe and not just on our continent.

We ended last year with an online article written by Franco Viviani, president of the International Council for Physical Activity and Fitness Research (ICPAFR). We hope that in 2018 we will receive many other articles written by you—the association—so Boardroom can serve as a platform where you can exchange relevant ideas on association management with your peers.

A concept that has received a lot of attention lately is transparency—and quite rightly so. Boardrooms may be the place where strategies and decisions are privately discussed, but these matters eventually become public and transparency is key when it comes to earning the respect of your members. We also noticed not long ago that the board's rules and bylaws are not always followed, which is proving to be another issue in our industry. If members find out, they may not hold their association to the same level of respect.



Cécile Vohl

Founder & Managing Partner

To end this year's first letter on a lighter note and to celebrate Cécile's input, we believe that a positive attitude toward the future will allow each of us to embrace new evolutions in a challenging—and changing—world. Our goal to deliver knowledge and help you navigate through even the most trying of times! Here's to embracing all of the exciting new happenings our industry has to offer in 2018!



Rémi Dévé

Founder & Chief Editor

BOARDROOM ADVISORY BOARD

Boardroom aims to cover a wide spectrum of issues of interest to associations. To do so and stay on top of trends, it works in consultation with an Advisory Board. A constant work-in-progress, Boardroom Advisory Board is made up of experts from non-profit advocacy groups. Today, the Board welcomes its first American member, Jennifer Fontanella.



Silke Schlinnertz

Head of Operations & Events, Euroheat & Power

Appointed in July 2014, Silke is in charge of the oversight and management of the Euroheat & Power office, events organisation and relations with Euroheat & Power members and partners. She joined Euroheat & Power in March 2011 from Colloquium Brussels, an international events agency.



Jennifer Fontanella

Director of Operations and Finance, International Studies Association (ISA)

Jennifer has been with ISA since July 2014 when the association moved its headquarters to the University of Connecticut. She is responsible for the management of ISA headquarter staff and has responsibility for managing the ISA's budget and finances as well as coordinating future convention planning.



Giuseppe Marletta

Association Manager, International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA)

Giuseppe is the Head of the Secretariat, facilitating good governance, supporting AIJA membership and communication strategies, over-seeing AIJA events. Prior to joining AIJA in 2012, he managed several European and International groups and associations, in the field of intercultural dialogue, policy making, project management as well as in the health sector.



Mohamed Mezghani

Secretary General, UITP: Advancing Public Transport

Mohamed worked at UITP as Senior Manager (1999-2001), Director Knowledge and Membership Services (2001-2006) and Senior Adviser to the Secretary General (2006-2013). He also out several technical assistance and training projects in Africa and the Middle-East. He established the UITP office for the Middle-East and North Africa in Dubai.



Grégoire Pavillon

Past Executive Director, European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)

Grégoire joined the non-for-profit sector over 10 years ago when he started working for a PCO in Geneva. He started his professional career as a chef and completed a Bachelor and Masters Degree at the Ecole Hôtelière in Lausanne. He also holds a Master of Advanced Studies in Non-For-Profit Management.

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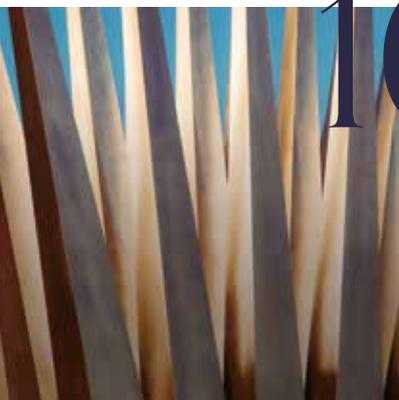
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ESSKA

Education at its Core

ESSKA is the professional medical association for musculo-skeletal problems, with an emphasis on arthroscopy, bringing together orthopaedic surgeons, clinicians and scientists from across Europe, and their existing societies, and helping them share their research, practical techniques and experience. Much of ESSKA's work revolves around sports injuries, but the organisation also serves the ordinary non-athlete. Zhanna Kovalchuk, Executive Director, explains how the association has grown over the years and the decisions they've had to make.

Interview Rémi Dévé



What are ESSKA's mission and vision?

ESSKA's stated mission is ultimately to "improve the quality of our patients' lives", which sounds well enough, but could be claimed by anybody, really.

But if you ask what ESSKA actually does, then it gets interesting. We cover a vast range of languages and cultures, on the European continent and further East. So the first thing we do is to bring all our members together - by using a lingua franca. Only then can we bring them to the same level of expertise.

The immediate question would be: "what level?" We could choose a minimal level of competence of course, something that everybody could manage, and which would reassure them. That would be the safe option, but we aim much higher. Our emphasis has always been on quality and we strive to bring everybody up to the highest level of professional competency.

What are some of the challenges ESSKA has had to face over the past years?

The real challenge has been the pace of our development. We've enjoyed a very quick growth, and we've needed to keep up, by finding the right people, resources and software for instance. Between 2012 and now our office has doubled in size and acquired a completely different set of professional skills.

So the challenge has been how to manage this constant change. Just when you think that everything's under control - that you're "fit for purpose" - that's when something new comes up. But that's why we enjoy what we do. Our association is a living thing, with enormous energy. Because it's voluntary, there are always new people turning up with new ideas, dynamism and enthusiasm, the fuel that drives us all along.

Another challenge is the sheer diversity of our members. We deal with over thirty language groups and cultures. So we constantly have to find a common language.

Can you tell us about the events you organise? We understand you're in the process of doing everything in-house. What prompted the change?

The core of what we do is education. We take the expertise - and the professional wisdom - of our very best, and we try and disseminate it. And we're always exploring better ways of doing this.

We start with the written word through our own journals and books. Then come, of course, our bi-annual Congress (with about 4,000 active delegates) and the whole range of other meetings including small 'hands-on' courses (for up to 25 participants each).

What we teach is increasingly the knowledge how (to do something), rather than the knowledge that (such and such is the case), and therein lies the difference between a

brilliant physicist, his head full of formulae but sometimes lacking the practicalities of life, and an engineer who can go out and build a bridge, sometimes with his/her own hands.

ESSKA prides itself on science, but it also understands that surgeons, many of who have carried out thousands of operations, depend upon their hands. That's an awful lot of experience, but how to pass it on? The best way is to peer over their shoulder as they operate, with them describing their every move. So we record these procedures for a wider audience and make them available on our educational online platform, the ESSKA Academy.

As for the 'in-house' question, we've actually been pondering this for some time. It seems to me that an association grows just like a child. There comes a day when it wants to do everything by itself, and can become frustrated if it has to rely on a professional congress organiser, with the potential accompanying risks of misunderstanding.

But we were all teenagers once, and we should remember the dangers of getting big ideas beyond our capacity. Some associations are just too small, or too young, to rely solely upon themselves. In my opinion they'd be better off finding a PCO, one who really does understand their business. I won't tell you anything new by saying that finding the ideal PCO - one that's in tune with you, but remembers its 'humble' role in supporting your association, who is responsive, open and more than a mere service provider - can be a challenge.

So, for huge associations, it does make sense to create their own event department, which can organise their congresses, as well as the secondary events. That certainly makes financial sense.

ESSKA actually falls in between those 'extremes'. We're in a phase when we use a hybrid model for our main congress. That's when an association deals with the most important aspects of event organisation - and is in the driving seat so to say - while the PCO helps at the operational level. I believe this is a good model for our size. It gives us the flexibility we need at the moment.

How do you keep up to date with developments in association management?

I'm not sure there are any developments in management actually. Oh yes, there is new software, and new methods of dealing with information. Some of these are useful, some others are just fads.

But people remain the same, human nature remains the same, and we deal with it in the same old ways, with courtesy and patience. The real developments I've noticed are in myself; that I gradually learn more about people.

The main theme of this issue of Boardroom is Legacy, or how conferences make an impact beyond the economic and financial one. How do you relate to that?

Our conferences (and sometimes our smaller meetings) serve a dual purpose: they bring our members together, from across their national divides, and educate them. It's sometimes hard to separate the two aspects, and decide which is more important. The junior doctors and hopeful surgeons need to reach out and find their mentors, the established figures who can foster them, and their careers. We make this possible. So our events are creating something - building the future if you like - that can't be quantified in euros and cents.

More information on www.esska.org



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TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH ASSOCIATION LEGACIES

International associations that convene congresses in destinations around the world mustn't miss out on the opportunity to leave legacies that reflect the values of the organisation, whether tangible or intangible, social, or economic or environmental. It's indeed not good enough just to hold a meeting in a city: in order to get support from the various local governments, national governments, etc., it makes all the more sense to organise something that goes beyond direct tourism benefits.

Words Rémi Dévé



As part of the 2016 World Parkinson Congress held in Portland, key local community members were trained to better understand Parkinson's disease in order for them to welcome the event's delegates, particularly those who live with PD. When Melbourne hosted the International AIDS Conference in 2014, Australia's health ministers pledged to eliminate new HIV infections by 2020. And to help woo the 2017 One Young World Summit, Bogotá created a public-relations campaign that spotlighted the destination's ongoing transformation and fostered lasting relationships among its public and private stakeholders (more on this in the following pages).

There are indeed many ways in which association events can leave a legacy. If you want to demonstrate the kind of broader 'output' values that are associated with meetings, congresses or conventions, you have to think in broad terms and look at the economic, business, professional, academic and community benefits that such events create. If those are sometimes a bit more difficult to grasp, that also places the meetings industry as a whole at the very centre of the global economy and the related scientific, professional, academic, business and social advancements it helps achieve.

The type of legacy chosen usually depends on many factors, including the objectives and values of the association, the nature of the profession it represents, the location of the congress, and the enthusiasm of members but no matter the choice, the examples are numerous, as the will to do good, and both the association and the destination will benefit.

But if that sounds like something that a lot of meetings and conventions are already doing – as any kind of significant investment or budget to achieve real tangible return is always welcome – some argue associations are not currently taking advantage of the potential to develop these types of initiatives. When associations select a host venue for their conference, they should want the destination and everyone in the destination to understand that for the three or four days that they are in the city, what goes on in this congress centre or in that conference hotel is going to change people's lives forever.

That is – quite simply put – what is at stake here and why associations should look at legacies as the ultimate opportunity for them to create value.

World Parkinson Congress

Opening Doors to the Community

The first World Parkinson Congress took place in Washington, D.C. in 2006. Together with a strong legacy component, the concept was simple: create a high-level scientific meeting on Parkinson's disease (PD) that opened its doors to the full community, including people with Parkinson's (PwP).

Words Eli Pollard

While simple in theory, the complexities in planning a totally cross-pollinated meeting, which had never been done before in PD, were numerous. We weren't sure if this was a one-off Congress, or a would become the triennial Congress it is today. Fortunately, the latter is what emerged and now every three years the World Parkinson Congress draws world leaders in basic and clinical science, care, and advocacy from across the globe. The recent WPC 2016 in Portland, Oregon, our fourth Congress, attracted nearly 4,600 delegates from 60 countries, 26% of whom were people with Parkinson's.

PD is a chronic neurodegenerative disease that impacts 7 to 10 million people worldwide.¹ Considering people may live for decades with PD, family members are very much part of the PD journey, so the number of people directly impacted by a PD diagnosis is probably closer to 40 million. There is a need for the World Parkinson Congresses, but we believe that there is also a responsibility that falls to us with each WPC we plan.

We start planning by asking ourselves how we can make an impact on the host city. We never want to enter a city to just hold our meeting and leave. We believe that it's our duty to elevate awareness of PD, an often-misunderstood disease, in the host city, before we leave.

Perhaps our biggest impact is made through our "WPC Parkinson's Ready" program which trains key local community members to better understand PD in order to welcome our delegates, particularly those

who live with PD. Our Parkinson's 101 course introduces PD to front of house staff and first responders who have little to no knowledge of PD. We work with our hotel staff, the convention center, local police officers, local fire fighters, taxi drivers, the airport staff and customs officials who may be the first to greet a PwP after a long flight. We prepare our delegates with brightly colored wallet cards announcing, "I have Parkinson's" and make sure that they have these cards with their passports when they go through customs, or check into hotels. This alerts the staff that the person in front of them may need extra care, especially if their medications are "off" and they are jetlagged, as exhaustion and stress can exacerbate PD symptoms.

Our Parkinson's Ready program is one small part of the World Parkinson Congresses, but the impact is profound. Not only do the trainees learn about Parkinson's, they now have more awareness and increased empathy for people who they work with in the future. These little details matter for our delegates.

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard is the Executive Director of the New York-based World Parkinson Coalition® \ www.WorldPDCoalition.org

1. Parkinson's Foundation, USA

Fostering Transformation in Bogotá

As the political and economic capital of Colombia, Bogotá is one of the most dynamic cities in Latin America with 7.6 million inhabitants. The commitment to lead through transformative initiatives that call for the integration of society is mandatory, even more so now that Colombia is at a crossroads in its history as the nation is leaving behind more than 50 years of internal conflict. Attracting international events that have an impact is part of an overall strategy of change.

Words Rémi Dévé, with Bogotá Convention Bureau

Working from the heart will always make a difference. If one is able to find a connection between people's deepest desires to be part of something bigger, then transformation will take place. Events, no matter the sector, are always created with a larger purpose.

Associations can play an active role in this conciliation process, consequently their events have that power of transformation and can align both members' and delegates' needs and those of destinations wanting to grow. Their events can activate a citizen movement, motivate people to create a link, involve the vulnerable population affected by conflicts, connect people to a larger purpose, and make them a reality in the short term.

In this context, Bogotá, led by its Convention Bureau, bid in 2015 and 2016, for two events that accomplished what the city and the country needed. The first event, One Young World Summit (OYW), engaged young people as key actors in different movements around the world, in the hope for them to

participate in a historical moment of Colombia and have them "*help create the country's future*". The purpose of the second event, the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, was to raise the level of dialogue around peace and contribute to the peace building process of the country.

Both events, which were held in Bogotá in 2017, help to:

- Activate citizen movements: citizens were involved not only during the bid process but also during the event. For example, OYW and the city were hot topics on social media for the whole duration of the event and more than 47,000 persons from seven countries were engaged in the Nobel Peace Prize Summit through livestreaming.
- Involve the vulnerable population affected by conflicts: both events had an active participation of people affected by conflicts, including speakers who shared their story, but also attendees and volunteers.
- Create a legacy: at the moment, OYW is measuring the impact of the projects regarding their contribution to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. On the other hand, the Permanent Secretariat of the Nobel Peace Summit, together with the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, is continuing the conversation with different foundations and the civil society.
- Increase the level of dialogue around the meetings industry in the country: now, actors that are not directly related to the meetings industry, are aware of the power of events and how they can be used to achieve different types of purposes.
- Create a strong network: at a destination level, creating ties between different actors (not only within the meetings industry) makes city bids more competitive thanks to the added value that all the actors can bring to the table.

A Broader Perspective

By involving local communities you can create a concrete legacy for host destinations. Whether it be business events or association congresses, strategic results can be achieved for everyone, the organiser, the attendees and local stakeholders.

Words Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno



The impact meetings have on host destinations and local communities is much wider than people imagine. Things like knowledge or skills transfer, sharing of scientific and healthcare advancements with local professionals, empowering young people or women in developing countries, and involving future political leaders, are all important legacies far beyond economic and touristic values. It is about how events change the real lives in a community.

Nowadays the meeting industry's broader value is becoming more and more understood. The most important industry associations are engaged in promoting this value, and professional congress organisers and associations are definitely on the frontline of this process. But, why should they deploy resources on a legacy programme?

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Planning an event with a broader vision for positive legacies on a local destination is not only a good practice for CSR and for moral reasons but it can produce significant outcomes for associations. It helps them attract and retain members, build brand reputation and promote accountability of the meetings industry to society. It also helps create a meaningful bond between delegates, boost team spirit and make conferences more engaging.

To realise the right legacy projects with the most concrete and useful impacts, it is important to have a strategic approach, identify clear objectives and plan the actions well in advance. Choosing initiatives tailored to the core activities and topics of the conference can foster the engagement of participants and sponsors, while it's advisable to interact with local people and stakeholders in order to understand the local social issues.

With those premises, the possible actions are numerous.

You can, for example, involve participants in construction/renovation projects, as happened at a national conference of real estate agents, where the attendees had the chance to participate in a volunteer program of building three new homes for families in need.

Or at a national congress of respiratory and pulmonary medicine, where, due to the relationship between respiratory health and air quality, it was decided to plant all the trees used for the decoration in a park. This was a concrete contribution of these specialists to the city's air quality. Also, during an international conference dedicated to Alzheimer disease, a sensory garden was built by local patients and after the event it was relocated as a community garden in a derelict area.

Of course the contribution of a conference is related to knowledge-sharing with the local community. For example, at a European congress of paediatric physicians local parents had the opportunity to discuss child-health issues with world-class specialists, during an open conference.

Another type of legacy is the economic support to local social projects by corporate donations or fundraising among delegates (e.g. gala dinner auctions or a fun run). In this case, it's important to carefully handle the choice of the recipient, and preferably working in close partnership with the destination stakeholders who know local needs and non-profit organisations.

A DEEP DIVE INTO REALITY

A good example of what can be done in terms of legacy is the SIAARTI Academy 2017, the innovative and efficient training event for the young members of the Italian Society for Anaesthesia, Analgesia, Resuscitation and Intensive Care – recently awarded at Bea World Award and IAPCO Collaboration Awards.

Together with PCO AIM Group, SIAARTI decided the small island of Lampedusa, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, was the most appropriate venue for the Academy. Once known as an ideal holiday destination, Lampedusa has become famous as the backdrop for migrant boat landings and major socio-sanitary challenges. The island is well acquainted with human suffering and known for its ability to handle emergencies.

Organising an event on such an island enabled some local facilities and companies – such as the airport, hotels, restaurants and

transfer companies – to be reevaluated and to successfully adapt to the needs of the meeting industry. AIM Group hoped to prove that Lampedusa was capable of hosting business events and educational activities, creating an important legacy in terms of the destination's reputation. Furthermore, the event was held just before the opening of the tourist season, providing an additional economic profit to local operators.

In fact, the island welcomed 100 medical residents from 38 postgraduate schools to attend plenary sessions, lectures for smaller groups and hands-on sessions with experts and stations with up-to-date simulators. A remarkable highlight of the congress was a maxi simulation. Organised in collaboration with the Coast Guard and the Military Corps of the Italian Red Cross, the sinking of a boat was simulated and field hospitals were situated on the beach.

The specialists had to play different roles, such as the wounded (with realistic make-up), rescuers (doctors and nurses) and observers, in order to test their ability to put into practice what they had learned and to move from abstract clinical practice to empathy of a real-life situation. The new format mixing team building, hands-on and theoretical sessions, and the legacy in the destination was the perfect solution to effectively involve young doctors and to get the island's operators ready to welcome new events.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno. Vice President, AIM Group International. AIM Group is one of the world leaders in the organisation of events and conferences. IAPCO represents today 118 companies comprised of over 5.000 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 41 countries. info@iapco.org \ www.iapco.org

Having an Impact: More Than Child's Play

Experts from around the world came together to find ways to get kids outside and active in September in Calgary, leaving a permanent imprint on the city.

Words Sarah Beauchamp

Four years ago, someone approached Heather Cowie, manager of recreation for the north and east region for the City of Calgary, about hosting the International Play Association (IPA) conference in Calgary. She said she knew nothing about IPA's mission, prompting that person to respond, *"That's exactly why you need to host this conference."*

Cowie and her team immediately began learning more about the organization's mission and quickly realized they not only wanted to host the conference, but they wanted to ensure the impact lasted well beyond the four days of events. *"I don't want to just do a conference,"* Cowie remembered her boss saying at the time. *"I want to do something that's meaningful."*

PLAY IN TIME OF CRISIS

So Calgary partnered with IPA Canada last year to host its 20th IPA Triennial World Conference, held at the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre, 13–17 September. IPA is an organization dedicated to securing *"every child's right to play and to promote healthy, high-quality play opportunities and environments,"* according to its site (ipaworld.org). Its annual conference brings together thousands of play researchers, advocates, designers, educators, practitioners, providers, and policymakers from around the world. In Calgary this past September, the conference featured more than 450 speakers, and hosted sessions on topics like the mental-health consequences of

a lack of play time and how children can make space to play in times of crisis.

There's been a steady decline in "children's free play" since about 1955, according to Peter Gray, Ph.D., professor emeritus of psychology at Boston College. That, he told *The Atlantic*, is partly *"because adults have exerted ever-increasing control over children's activities."* Without enough free play — when children are directing their own activities, unsupervised — kids are more prone to anxiety, depression, and attention and self-control issues.

"It's so important for kids to play and go outside and have child-directed play rather than adult-facilitated, so that they can test their own boundaries and take their own risks," Cowie said. *"You learn so many things about yourself... [including] how to negotiate with other people. It's physical, it's emotional, it's fun."*

OUTLIVING THE KIDS

Hosting IPA's conference also galvanized Calgary to create what they're calling a play charter. *"Rather than the city of Calgary doing a play policy, we're doing a charter that's collaborative in nature, to say why is play important, what are we going to do about it, and who's going to do something,"* Cowie said. About 30 organizations came together at the IPA Triennial World Conference to sign the charter and commit *"to do something about play in the next year."*

IPA was held at the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre, and its proximity City Hall

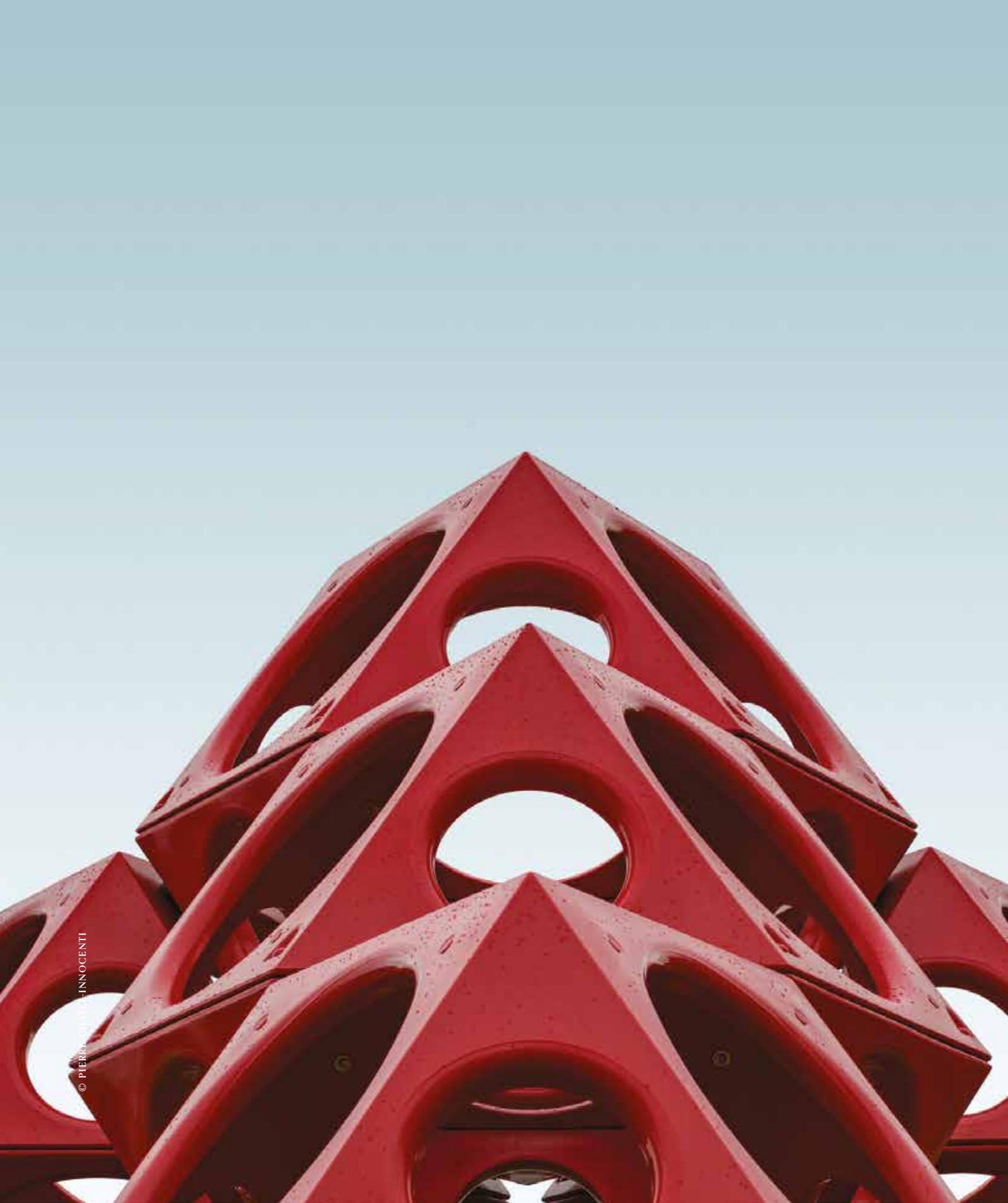
helped Calgary's elected officials to understand *"what we were doing,"* Cowie said. *"It was good access for them to come see what was happening."*

The IPA Triennial World Conference was a way for play professionals to gain new perspectives. *"Where we all are in the world with play is very different,"* Cowie said. *"An international conference gives you different perspectives, gives you different learnings, gives you different contexts. Certainly, contexts are different all over the world, but there are nuggets of information and knowledge that you can get when you have an international conference."*

When Cowie and her team first started this journey, they didn't fully understand the concept of play, but now, she said, *"every time we get together with the organizations that we partner with, I believe we get smarter. For me, that's what the conference is about. It's an amazing learning opportunity."* Hosting IPA has inspired Cowie to continue to create play initiatives. *"We've laid the foundation for legacy and we're gonna keep going."*

Sarah Beauchamp is a contributing writer to *Convene*, the magazine of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), and a partner of Boardroom.

convene



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Legacies As Powerful Arguments

With many destinations feeling increasing pressures and even community backlash from growing numbers of visitors, particularly as these are driven further into traditional residential areas courtesy of accommodation sharing vehicles like AirBnB, it's time to take a step back and critically re-assess the kinds of returns generated by various visitors that would justify these impacts.

Words Rod Cameron

In that regard, it must be said that pious pronouncements aside, all visitors are not equal – and the sooner we come to grips with that reality the easier it becomes to make intelligent decisions about which groups are most worth accepting and, in fact, pursuing. And by almost all measures, the benefits and legacies derived from participants in organised events like meetings, conventions and exhibitions far outweigh those of the average leisure visitor, for a number of easily demonstrated reasons.

RAISED AWARENESS

The first arises from the very purpose of the visit, which in the case of the latter group is invariably related to professional, academic or economic advancement, some of which always rubs off on the host community.

A major medical event leaves behind a legacy of awareness, new techniques and specialised knowledge accessible to local practitioners, while an academic event creates important opportunities for knowledge transfer, new networks and exposure for local research. In every case there is a residual benefit to the host that goes far beyond what might be expected from someone just there to take in the sights.

Secondly, even the most basic measure – the spending-based economic impact derived from a visitor – weighs heavily in favour of the delegate, for two reasons. First, the average daily spend by an event participant generally far exceeds that of a leisure visitor, and not just because of the demographics: such a visitor is far more likely to be financially supported to attend and thus able to afford higher level accommodation as well as devote

more to personal spending. But it doesn't end there. Each delegate also creates an additional requirement for organisers and an attraction for related groups like exhibitors, sponsors and supporters, all of whom bring incremental spending that is a direct consequence of that delegate attending in the first place.

Third, it is important to realise that in many cases a delegate represents an entirely new market opportunity – the primary purpose of their visit is to attend their event, which means they would otherwise not necessarily have come to that destination at all. Having come for the meeting – and if they like what they see – many subsequently return for a repeat visit, perhaps with family in tow. The result is both immediate and potential future benefits from an audience who would otherwise have been hard to reach.



INCREMENTAL BENEFITS

And finally, in a time when the “creep” of tourists from established visitor precincts into residential areas is becoming a source of local friction, delegates are far more likely to stay in areas associated with commercial accommodation than to avail themselves of shared alternatives. Again, this is partly a result of the fact that these are people more likely to be supported in their expenses and less likely to need to search for less expensive alternatives. But it is also a result of their need to be close to the facilities where events are taking place – like a convention centre or hotel venue – which are most likely to be in commercial or visitor precincts which have been designed to manage such groups with a minimum of disruption.

And all this is not to say that these incremental benefits come at the expense of more typical visitor spending – event participants are every bit as likely to engage in other leisure activities like restaurant dining, shopping and visiting attractions as are their leisure counterparts - in fact they are in many respects even more likely to do so as a result of activities organised in association with the event that expose the destination in addition to the less structured time they have available to explore on their own.

These are all factors we need to be thinking about as elements of the discussions we have with our communities, members, governments, etc. At a time when many different interests are competing for attention and resources from both, and when decision makers are having to make tough choices,

they are powerful arguments as to why what we do serves the broadest range of community interests – and why our audiences should therefore be seen as the highest priorities for visitor-related investment.

Rod Cameron is the Executive Director of AIPC and the Joint Meetings Industry Council. AIPC represents a global network of over 185 leading centres in 690 countries with the active involvement of more than 900 management-level professionals worldwide. For further information please contact marianne.de.raay@aipc.org.

THIS PIECE IS PART OF BOARDROOM'S LEGACY SERIES, WHERE WE TAKE A DEEPER JOURNALISTIC DIVE INTO HOW CONGRESSES, CAN LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY IN THE CITIES OR REGIONS WHERE THEY'RE HELD... AND BEYOND.

Legacies in and from Australia

World AIDS in Melbourne

Health and medical research spans a pipeline from concept to laboratory through to translation, clinical application and community benefit. It typically embraces a range of different disciplines, occurs in universities and hospitals, medical research institutes and companies, and in the community at large. It involves multiple professions, public and private entities and consumers. Australia is at the forefront of medical research and innovation, and high-profile conferences which have lasting legacies, as did World AIDS which took place in Melbourne in 2014, also partake of Australia's influence on the global stage.

WORDS RÉMI DÉVÉ



Australian researchers, physicians and healthcare professionals have an excellent reputation and make a difference locally and globally. The country's scientists have developed lifesaving discoveries, pioneered procedures, and been awarded Nobel Prizes—three researchers at the Australia National University's John Curtin School of Medical Research have received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their extraordinary contributions to medicine. These highly-qualified professionals continue to lead work in emerging fields of science, and champion the adoption of new technologies, many of which have global impacts.

Bionic ear

Australia boasts world-class medical research and healthcare infrastructure. Every year, pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies begin around 1,000 new clinical trials in Australia, meeting the highest quality and ethical standards. Clinical research is a focus for more than 40 Australian universities and 50 independent medical research institutes, with many working in collaboration. It's these partnerships that have enabled Australia's groundbreaking discoveries, including Gardasil®, a vaccine against human papillomavirus, and Relenza®, an antiviral drug used to treat influenza. Solutions such as the bionic ear and continuous positive airway pressure devices for sleep apnoea are also two Australian inventions that have transformed people's lives around the world.

In this context, Australia is getting ready to respond to future challenges, including new health technologies, communicable diseases, and caring for an ageing population with complex and chronic health problems. Research is the best way to prepare for these challenges, as it contributes to health system safety and quality, ensure effectiveness of health interventions, and enable the country to develop better methods of preventing and treating disease.

"Australia's track record of delivering exceptional association events is obviously a big part of why we are consistently chosen as the destination of choice to host medical/healthcare events. But I think our involvement in these events adds value in important other ways too through, for example, personal connections and the way our industry is able to connect thought leaders and innovators to

our centres of knowledge and excellence, providing opportunity to truly create legacies that can also drive change,” says John O’Sullivan, Managing Director of Tourism Australia.

Australian cities are leveraging their knowledge and research capabilities in medical fields, for example, in order to secure major events and to realise the knowledge, investment, employment, and health-care legacies – but not only – that can result from

them. The 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014), which took place in Melbourne after more than two years of extensive planning and preparation, might well be the epitome of this.

Attended by close to 12,000 delegates from 173 countries, the Conference was a platform for people working in the field of HIV, policy makers, persons living with HIV and individuals committed to ending the pandemic, to present new scientific knowledge and dialogue on the issues facing the global response to HIV. AIDS 2014 was the first ever International AIDS Conference to be held in Australia and provided a unique opportunity to

explore the diverse nature of the local and regional response to HIV.

The International AIDS Society chose Melbourne as the host destination for its collaborative approach, strong support from the city, state and federal governments. The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) was, at the time, the only venue in Australia capable of hosting an event of this size and magnitude. The Conference utilised the entire facility – all 66,333 square metres of it, and the in-house technology team provided all tech requirements and equipment to facilitate more than 100 satellite events and uploaded 700 individual presentation sessions to the AIDS 2014 website.

To ensure delivery of a world-class event and a memorable experience for a large diversity of visitors more than 500 MCEC employees even participated in HIV/AIDS awareness training, in conjunction with the Victorian AIDS Council and Living Positive Victoria.

City-wide collaboration

In its efforts to attract conferences, Melbourne has always been showcasing a whole of city or collaborative approach which supports the desired outcomes and legacies of the convention owner as well as the host destination. With its convention bureau leading the way, the city is collaborating across public and private sectors, with government and educational institutions, as well as with industry ambassadors to develop, in the end, a knowledge-based and creative society.

But, as Karen Bolinger, CEO of Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB), says, *“It’s not a matter of whether conferences should have a legacy or not. It’s actually a given but it hasn’t been recognised as such yet. The reason why people meet is really to expand knowledge, broaden networks, build opportunities. And something like AIDS 2014 is actually ground-breaking: AIDS conferences are the starting point of something bigger than they really are.”*

Melbourne Convention Bureau secured AIDS 2014 in 2011 and then worked closely with the International AIDS Society (IAS), which has over 16,000 members from more than 177 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS, right through to when the event was held, particularly in facilitating contacts for ease of visa processing and driving attendance. The reach of AIDS 2014 was extended through the City of Melbourne’s cultural program, which consisted of more than 160 events, encompassing more than 200 local businesses and was the largest city-wide activation in the history of the International AIDS Conference.

In this regard, the colourful and vibrant Global Village provided a space for community to gather from all over the world to meet, share and learn from each other and demonstrate the application of science and leadership, while the Youth Programme also offered a dynamic vibrant platform for youth, activists and community representatives. All in all, everywhere anyone went in Melbourne that week, they knew that AIDS 2014 was in town.

AIDS 2014 Fast Facts

- When: 20-25 July, 2014
- Where: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)
- Host organisation: International AIDS Society (IAS)
- Attendance: 11,742 delegates from 173 countries / more than 80 per cent international delegates / 6,000 visitors to the Global Village
- Economic contribution to Victoria: \$80 million
- Legacy: the Melbourne Declaration and the AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement

“What also happened is that a lot of the groups around AIDS, patients, carers, all the advocacy, all came together as a collective, and that was an added bonus. People had been working on their own until then and now were able to start building their network and talk about what work they could do towards supporting each other to in fine eradicate AIDS” said Bolinger.

Lasting impacts

Prior to holding AIDS 2014, Melbourne had long been acknowledged as a leader in the biomedical sector, predominantly via its Parkville Precinct, combining academia, R&D and local innovators and entrepreneurs, showcasing a positive collaboration between the public and private sector, government and education institutions that is driving the Australian city towards a successful knowledge economy.

And, as Andrea Fischer, from the Doherty Institute and Executive Officer for the International AIDS Conference, says, *“everyone is supporting innovation now, innovation is about research, it’s about discovering things and getting those discoveries out into the world.”*

When asked about the legacies of the Conference, she explains: *“When we were given AIDS 2014, the local stakeholders were really pragmatic about what they wanted to get out of the conference. They wanted the conference to actually leave a legacy behind. So we picked certain series of objectives, and that was just the research and the advocacy community, and we came together and formed different committees and came up with what we wanted to achieve from the conference. It was different to what the conference organisers wanted, but we were quite adamant as to why we were having this conference.”*

Most significantly, the strength of Melbourne’s scientific community and expertise in HIV research led by one of the ambassadors of Club Melbourne (one of the first and actually longest operating ambassador programmes set up by a convention bureau), Professor Sharon Lewin, was a major factor to the city’s success. The Conference also had several significant impacts not only in Australia but on the world stage.

Beyond economic benefits

The legacies of AIDS 2014 went indeed far beyond the media coverage and economic impacts, though the economic benefits for Melbourne and Victoria were significant, including an estimated economic

contribution to Victoria of \$80 million. The Conference brought great visibility to Melbourne’s expertise in HIV research and delivered real action for the HIV/AIDS community, including the Melbourne Declaration and the AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement signifying Australia’s health ministers from every state and territory to a commitment to see the virtual elimination of new HIV infections by 2020.

Professor Lewin argues: *“This last one is actually an ambitious goal but with current treatments and new strategies to prevent infection is possible. In addition, the conference led to a change in laws in Victoria that can criminalise individuals who transmit HIV infection. This was a discriminatory law that was out of date with our current understanding of HIV treatments and transmission. Globally, the conference raised awareness about the unique challenges facing the Asia Pacific region in the HIV response. Because of the location of the conference we had a very large presence from the region which provided the opportunity to build capacity through specific leadership and training programs, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.”*

“The enforcement of discriminatory and criminalising laws and policies against Key Affected Populations is deeply alarming.” adds Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, AIDS 2014 International Chair, President of the International AIDS Society (IAS) and Director of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Institut Pasteur in Paris. *“Such practices clearly violate basic human rights and heavily undermine HIV programmes by posing barriers to access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care. With the Melbourne Declaration we wanted to reiterate that every individual has the same rights and dignity as everyone else as we are born equal and part of the human family.”*

The International AIDS Conference was an extraordinary success as a result of a partnership between the city of Melbourne, the Australian government, HIV clinicians, researchers and community. It created real change and perfectly demonstrated why the business events industry is crucial to the growth and development of a city, a state or a country in particular... and the exchange of knowledge and the development of science in general.

For more information on business events in Australia: Simon Gidman \ Business Events Manager, UK \ Europe \ T: +44 207 438 4633 \ sgidman@tourism.australia.com \ www.australia.com/businessesvents



ICC Sydney

How a Convention Centre is Driving Legacy Impacts

In January, International Convention Centre Sydney launched a multi-faceted legacy programme designed to show that conferences can go beyond the spending of dollars, booking of meeting rooms or hotel stays. The Australian venue now offers associations the opportunity to engage with the destination like maybe nowhere else in the world – at least in such a formal manner.

Words Rémi Dévé

ICC Sydney facts

- 8,000 sqm of total meeting space across 70 rooms
- Capable of hosting three concurrent events as well as an 8,000 seat plenary
- A range of plenary options ranging from 750 to 8,000 people
- Total exhibition capacity of 35,000 sqm
- An external event deck of 5,000 sqm, complete with awe-inspiring city views
- Australia's largest ballroom for more than 3,500 in cocktail mode
- Adjacent hotel with 600 rooms and walking distance to over half of Sydney's 33,000 hotel rooms

As we move along our own daily paths, there is always a risk of losing focus on the bigger picture. But there is more to a venue's work than maximising revenue. All of its activities, including events, should be meaningful and make a lasting impact – and ICC Sydney seems to have understood this like no other when it initiated its Legacy Program, designed to connect the world's brightest minds, industry leaders and delegates across a diverse cross-section of Sydney and New South Wales' community.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

"The program will foster knowledge exchange, collaboration and engagement across four key streams – Innovators, Generation Next, Aboriginal Australia and Sustainability." explains Geoff

Donaghy, CEO of ICC Sydney. *"Each stream will provide clients with an opportunity to connect with Sydney and the broader community through dedicated initiatives – from direct exposure to Sydney's network of entrepreneurs and startups, and fostering the next generation of thought leaders via student engagement, to working with local Aboriginal businesses, and measuring the ecological impact of events."*

In an effort to document how a convention centre can make broader economic, academic, business and professional achievements out of the meetings it hosts, ICC Sydney hopes to positively influence the city's reputation. These will be executed in partnership with communities, private enterprise, government and education providers: the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (NICC),

Eora College, TAFE NSW, Sydney Water, the Sydney School of Entrepreneurship and local universities, among others, are already active partners of the project.

But how will this be managed practically? From day one of client engagement, ICC Sydney's team will work collaboratively with clients and its network of partners to develop a bespoke program, including components from each of the four legacy streams. They will act as the connection point between event organisers and local organisations and businesses, looking beyond traditional beneficiaries.

Most importantly, the Program will also be a systematic and measurable way of assessing outcomes while ensuring transparency and authenticity when connecting clients. "ICC Sydney will provide post-event reporting on results tailored to each client's bespoke program and CSR objectives - from tracking water and

waste consumption, engaging start ups, entrepreneurs or university students and measuring feedback to tracking investment in local Aboriginal businesses to raising money for local charities, and more" says Donaghy.

DEEPENED RELATIONSHIPS

ICC Sydney's Legacy Program is expected to deepen relationships with leading thinkers and innovators visiting Australia as it, together with Business Events Sydney, continues to attract some of the world's most highly regarded conferences events, including the likes of CeBIT Australia, Sibos 2018, COSPAR 2020 – dubbed the space Olympics – and the 18th World Congress on Medical and Health Informatics (MedInfo 2021). With its Legacy Program in place, ICC Sydney will be even better placed to support clients and build the city's reputation as one of the world's leading event destinations.

"The concept of 'legacy' exists within the business events industry and there is an emerging global awareness, but it can often be an afterthought. ICC Sydney is at the forefront of formalising a program to support associations to deliver impactful end-to-end experiences, the results of which are felt long after convention, exhibition and networking events take place at the venue. We are committed to forging meaningful connections for our clients well beyond the borders of the city. Our Legacy Program is a formal, systematic and measurable way of achieving this" concludes Donaghy.

More information:

www.iccsydney.com.au \ www.businesseventssydney.com.au





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Qatar at a Crossroads

My recent visit to Qatar showed that this country is at a crossroads. Its abundant wealth opened up a world of opportunities that weren't even fathomable not so long ago, and one thing recently became quite clear: Qatar can no longer rely on revenues from hydrocarbons alone. In an effort to become one of the key players in the Gulf region in a global move toward a knowledge-based economy, Qatar developed its National Vision 2030, in the hope that the next decade will be even more productive than the last.

Words Cécile Koch



The 'country at a crossroads' phrase can actually be taken literally: the amount of road work is impressive. Wherever you drive in the desert, you cruise through sand clouds made by the numerous trucks moving sand left and right in order to build roads, bridges and roundabouts that are meant to make the country more connected. There is clearly a well-designed strategy behind this scheme - and it's not for construction's sake.

BUSINESS TOURISM WITH A VISION

The Qatar National Vision 2030, launched in 2008, prioritises research, education, environment, medical, sports and, naturally, oil and gas, which is why Qatar particularly wants to attract international events in these fields. In 2014, Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) added the Qatar National Tourism Sector Strategy (QNTSS) to the 2030 Vision,

seeking to diversify the country's tourism offering and increase the sector's contribution to Qatar's economy. In 2017, the next phase of QNTSS was launched, charting out the next five years (2017-2023) of the tourism sector's growth.

During my visit, we received an introduction to some of these fields at Education City, home to Doha's high-profile academic

Qatar fast facts

- Hamad International Airport: The country's gateway to the world has a capacity to accommodate 50 million passengers annually.
- Museum of Islamic Art: This beautiful Qatar's museum showcases Islamic art and artefacts from around the world, spanning 14 centuries of history, and can be used for events as well.
- Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC): A venue located in the centre of Doha's commercial district. Its pillar-free 29,000sqm hall offers a highly flexibly blank canvas for event organisers.
- Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC): Part of Education City, the Centre boasts a hall for up to 4,000 people; a 2,300-seat theatre; 3 auditoria; 52 meeting rooms; and 40,000 sqm of exhibition space spread across 9 halls.
- Torch Doha: Meeting spaces for up to 300 people located in Sports City.
- Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel: The very first conference hotel in the city offers more than 3,000 sqm of space hosting up to 9,000 guests.

and research institutions, such as Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar and Georgetown University in Qatar. The City's campus is instrumental in making Qatar's capital a centre of excellence. Many foreign experts were involved in the building of the universities' infrastructure, with a vision to unlock Qatari potential, stimulate study and provide a base for specialists, as explained a young Qatari woman called Hend Darwish Fakhroo, who previously worked in the corporate world and was inspired to join Education City.

These initiatives helped raise Qatar's profile as a destination for scientists and researchers who are looking not only for a meeting place, but also for a location where they can continue to learn, share knowledge and experience something new outside the walls of a conference hall.

SMART & SUSTAINABLE

With 'knowledge' becoming the new buzzword in a post-oil scenario, another initiative saw the light of day, in the context of Doha's rapid urbanism and the 2030 Vision:

the smart city called Lusail. Its concept? To go beyond the usual, typical modern city, as urban planners reflect on futuristic aspirations, technologies and ideas, while, at the same time, capturing the authentic heritage and values of Qatari culture.

Sustainability is also an integral part of the concept. Qatar is aware that green technologies and ideas should be integrated into new developments. A fine example of this is the legacy of the Euroheat & Power association's congress last year. It resulted in the birth of a law regulating the District Cooling System (DCS), an energy-efficient air conditioning system that will help reduce electricity consumption by up to 40%. As Esraa Mohammed Ali Abel, Marafeq's Corporate Communication Manager and one of the congress organisers, said: *"We learned from the European collaboration that international connections can help us find out what is right or wrong to do."*

The government wants to attract international business events with a diverse delegate base from beyond Europe and the US markets. To that effect, it recently waived entry

visa requirements for nationals of 80 countries, making Qatar the most open country in the GCC region.

Professionals with shared interests can learn and exchange knowledge while experiencing the country's unique cultural offerings thanks to Qatar's world-class venues, an expanded transport network, and easy accessibility via its national carrier, Qatar Airways.

Twelve international conferences are already planned for Doha in 2018, including the first Middle East edition of ICEIRD (International Conference for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Regional Development) and the International Ground Handling Conference of the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

More information:

Qatar Tourism Authority \ Business Events
Department \ www.visitqatar.qa/businessesvents

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BOARDROOM'S 'KNOWLEDGE IN THE CITY'
SERIES TAKES A DEEP JOURNALISTIC DIVE INTO
DESTINATIONS AS KNOWLEDGE HUBS AND
THEIR ASSOCIATION APPEAL.

Jerusalem

A Triangle of Academia,
Industry & Government
Success

Every brick in Jerusalem's Old City tells a story that is thousands of years old. But these aren't the only building blocks that have transformed Jerusalem into the vibrant city it is today. Modernity mixes with the holy city's ancient past through institutions like The Hebrew University, the largest, oldest and most important international science research centre in the country—and one of the world's top 100. Building on this academic backbone, Jerusalem has emerged as a hub for life science and biomedical companies, with a number of ground-breaking achievements attracting the attention of associations around the globe—and the government offering financial support for international conferences to get here.

WORDS LANE NIESET



Five years may not seem like a long time, but for a city like Jerusalem, half a decade feels like a century in terms of innovation success. Jerusalem has undergone a technology renaissance of sorts, with one of the fastest growing start-up scenes on the globe. The proof is in the papers: Time magazine named the city one of the “5 Emerging Tech Hubs From Around the World,” and Startup Genome, the research body that ranks cities’ start-up ecosystems, ranked Jerusalem as one of the top 30 leading start-up ecosystems worldwide. It’s no surprise the high-tech hub has earned the title “*Start-Up Nation*,” since it is home to over a thousand start-ups—the largest number of per-capita start-ups and venture capital investments in the world.

Thanks to these investments, the number of active life sciences and hi-tech companies in Jerusalem has tripled from 150 to 570 over the past five years alone. One of the best examples of success sprouting from the city itself: in March, Intel acquired Mobileye for \$15 billion. The Israeli technology company, which develops vision technology for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems and autonomous driving, got its start in the halls of Hebrew University in Jerusalem and expects to increase workforce to 4,000 people once premises in Har Hotzvim tech park are complete. Another example: Lightricks, the company behind popular image-editing app Facetune, has developed two of the most successful paid mobile apps in the world thanks to research acquired at Hebrew University.

These are just two examples of how companies are getting their start in Jerusalem—and garnering knowledge from The Hebrew University—as well as inspiring both local and global enterprises, such as Kaspersky Lab and Rafael (Israel’s most important manufacturer of advanced defense systems), to expand their operations by moving to the city. “*Jerusalem features two main hubs: education and biotech. Innovative companies have established their own hubs in Jerusalem through the contribution of academics coming from the university*,” explains Dr. Joseph (Yossi) Tam, Director of the Multidisciplinary Center on Cannabinoid Research at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. “*One hub nourishes the other*.”

Jerusalem’s population pales in comparison to other capital cities, with just 850,000 citizens. Yet in addition to being home to three religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—Jerusalem also features 17 academic institutions that build on a history spanning back more than two millennia. The Hebrew University, which ranks 23rd in the world, features the highest number of life science Ph.D. students in the country, with cutting-edge research in areas like biotechnology, computer science, astrophysics, cancer and solar energy.



"The Hebrew University is one of the best universities in the world with many research centres that are well-absorbed in the city and educates students coming from all over Israel, as well as around the world, through its international programmes," Tam explains.

Along with affiliate Hadassah Medical Center, the two institutions conduct over one-third of the country's academic research, as well as 43% of Israel's biotechnology research. With over 1,800 students graduating annually and setting out into the community, Jerusalem is continuing to build on its reputation as a powerhouse in the field of life sciences, with over 100 companies specialising in this sector. You'll find everything from Har Hotzvim Industrial Park, home to some of Israel's largest biopharma companies like Rafa Laboratories and Omrix, to the Jerusalem BioPark at Ein-Kerem, located on the Hadassah Hospital and Medical School campus.

Given the facilities and wealth of research stemming from the city, Jerusalem has gained notoriety as a leader in scientific and medical conventions and makes for an ideal conference host, attracting over 350 tech events per year that include everything from inspiration meet-ups to

hackathons and conferences. *"Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and attracts many people coming to the country,"* Tam says. *"Being a perfect mix of religion and invention, history and culture, modernity and life, brings together many people from around the globe to explore this beautiful city."*

In September, mHealth Israel, the country's largest medical technology conference, met for the fourth time in the city, bringing together over 500 attendees from more than 20 countries, over 80 percent of which were entrepreneurs. According to mHealth Israel founder Levi Shapiro in a press statement: *"It is clear that Jerusalem is experiencing a boom in life science and Medtech investment and start-ups. Jerusalem offers the perfect setting for global C-level decision makers to meet innovative start-ups from across Israel, Europe and the US."*

Jerusalem may be known as a "Start-up Nation," but it's also continuing to progress as a "Cannabis Research Nation" thanks to the work underway at the Multidisciplinary Center

for Cannabinoid Research at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which hosts an annual symposium on cannabinoids. Building on five decades of work started by Professor Raphael Mechoulam, "the father of cannabinoid research," the center coordinates and conducts research on medical Cannabis and endocannabinoid activity and its therapeutic potential in treating disease.

In conjunction with the Jerusalem Conventions & Visitors Bureau, Dr. Tam helped persuade the International Cannabinoid Research Society (ICRS) to choose Jerusalem for its International Symposium on the Cannabinoids in 2021 at the Jerusalem International Convention Center (ICC), the same year as Prof. Mechoulam's 90th birthday. For both Jerusalem and the Multidisciplinary Center for Cannabinoid Research, this is a huge win since the ICRS is the oldest scientific society dedicated to the research of the cannabis plant, cannabinoids and their physiological and biochemical targets.

"One of our first goals after establishing the center was to host the ICRS conference in Jerusalem so that the international community of researchers can learn about the highly advanced work in the field of cannabinoids carried out in the center and in Israel," Dr. Tam said. *"I am certain that hosting this high-level conference will constitute another turning point in Israel's position as a global leader in cannabinoid research and development."*

The conference, which debuted in 1990, is one of the top in the field of cannabinoids research and brings together hundreds of leading researchers from scientific communities around the globe. In an effort to win the bid and compete with other nearby cities in Europe, the Jerusalem Conventions & Visitors Bureau was able to price match leading locales to ensure the city was a top contender, serving as a one-stop-shop offering financial support of up to €50,000.

When asked how the symposium will help build on the revolutionary scientific studies launched right here in the city over five decades ago, Dr. Tam responded: *"The conference brings together the leading researchers from the international scientific community and presents the latest and most up-to-date research in the field. Modulating endocannabinoid activity has therapeutic potential in a large number of human diseases, and research on cannabinoids may lead to very significant advances in basic science and therapeutics. We look forward to hosting the world's top scientists working to discover new therapies based on cannabinoids."*

More information on Jerusalem as a convention destination on www.jerusalemcvb.com.

Smart Stats on Jerusalem

Accessibility: Sitting halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, a 20-minute train ride away from the city, Israel's international airport, Ben Gurion, is just a 4-hour flight from Europe's major cities, with direct flights from 141 locations

Venues: The Jerusalem International Convention Center (ICC) is the largest and leading conference centre in the country with 27 halls accommodating up to 10,000 attendees, including the 3,000-person Ussishkin Auditorium—the largest in Israel

Accommodations: More than 17,500 rooms scattered across hotels suiting all budgets



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Case Study

42nd Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS) Congress

One of Europe's largest organisations in molecular life sciences, the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS), includes over 35,000 members spread across 35 biochemistry and molecular biology societies in Europe and neighbouring regions. For its 42nd congress, the organisation set its sights on Israel's capital, hosting the five-day event in September 2017 at the ICC Jerusalem. The congress brought together 1,600 molecular life scientists from over 66 countries to discuss such topics as cancer biology, molecular neuroscience, or protein degradation. Boardroom caught up with Congress Chair Abdussalam Azem, Head of the School of Neurobiology, Biochemistry & Biophysics at Tel Aviv University.

What makes Jerusalem an attractive destination for international congresses?

Israel a small country but here you can find everything; you can go to Tel Aviv and get a completely Mediterranean view or go to Dead Sea and see the desert. Then you go to the north of Israel and it's completely different. The unique aspect of Jerusalem is its diversity. The location is great and as a city we get a lot of support from the Jerusalem Conventions & Visitors Bureau. The ICC is also perfect because it's in the centre of the hotel area.

What are some of the aspects that made this congress such a successful one?

We have a very strong scientific programme and almost everyone came from outside of Israel; 90% came from outside Israel actually. They were invited because they're the best in the world. We brought in international delegates from Japan, Europe and the States, so we didn't only have European speakers. We also wanted to attract young scientists and brought in a lot from Europe. We offered fellowships since it's more expensive for flights coming from Europe than those within Europe. With such large congresses, people should invest efforts in supporting young scientists.

The congress was great because many young scientists attended talks and sessions [in addition to the pre-congress 17th Young Scientists' Forum, where over 100 young people had the opportunity to interact with pre- and post-doctoral scientists], and we tried to make a programme where everyone who was coming was able to present their work. If you look at the speakers (such as famous biochemist Bruce Alberts), they're leaders in the field. Most of them visited Israel in the past at least once, so the scientific connections—due to the fact that Israel is doing the highest level of research—are very strong.

Are there any lessons you would share with other associations planning an event in Jerusalem?

One problem we noticed with people coming to a congress is that they listen to one or two talks and then if they don't find food around, they leave to look for food. So, we decided that despite the high expenses, we would serve catered Israeli cuisine in the congress area so people don't leave the congress site [and sessions stay packed all day long].



An Emerging Knowledge-Based Economy in Rwanda

A relatively newcomer in the meetings world, Rwanda is shaping up as one of East Africa's premier business tourism destinations, thanks to the efforts made by the government and its partners to help strengthen and grow the sector. Betting on a knowledge-based economy, the country's continuing growth can indeed be attributed to its good governance and sound fiscal discipline, as well as to the commitment from both its public and private sectors to build a more equitable country.

Words Rémi Dévé



There is definitely something going on in Rwanda and its capital city Kigali. Over the past decade, the government and the private sector have invested massively in building the right infrastructure, skills, and institutional frameworks to provide an environment that is conducive to making a profound change in the country: from the establishment of higher institutions of learning, like the African Leadership University, University of Global Health equity or AIMS university, to the laying of fiber-optic cable nationwide, this land-locked territory is overcoming all obstacles and moving forward.

VISION 2020

The idea has indeed been to transform into a knowledge-based nation. Unlike most African nations, Rwanda has limited natural resources. Far from being a limitation, this has presented an opportunity for the country to take an approach to development that differs from that of its neighbors—an approach where information and communication technologies (ICTs) form the foundations of its plans to fundamentally transform its economy. At the beginning of the century, Rwanda drew up a blueprint—dubbed Vision 2020—for how to achieve this goal. Adopted in 2000, it outlined several initiatives, programs, and strategies for transforming Rwanda into a middle-income country and transitioning its agrarian economy into an information-rich, knowledge-based and service-oriented one by 2020. Rwanda's unique experience has also been driven by strong partnerships among the regulatory, policy, and implementing bodies.

The business events sector lies at the heart of this transformation. As Rwanda and Kigali host more and more international meetings—the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Global African Investment Summit, the African Union Summit (AU), the Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF), and The World Academy of Sciences, just to name a few—the Convention Bureau, which was one of the first established in East Africa, has been instrumental in getting the destination on the map. As a result, out of 39 countries, Rwanda placed 5th in Africa in the 2016 ICCA

(International Congress and Convention Association) rankings, while Kigali placed 3rd among the continent's top cities for meetings, conventions and events.

Kigali Convention Centre in numbers

- Total capacity of 5,000 delegates
- 32,000 m² of function space
- 18 different meeting rooms for up to 5,500 pax
- An auditorium for over 2,600 people
- Adjacent Radisson Blu hotel with 292 rooms
- 10 min from Kigali International Airport and from the city centre
- Awarded by WTA as 2017 Africa Leading Conference Hotel \ 2017 Africa Leading New Hotel \ 2017 Rwanda Leading Conference Hotel

Ranked 1st as the safest country in Africa and 9th in the world by the World Economic Forum in 2017, Rwanda is indeed quickly becoming a destination of choice for international conferences, with infrastructure development including the Kigali Convention Centre (see box) and the growing presence of international hotel chains, collectively offering numerous meeting spaces. By the end of 2017, Kigali had more than 3,500 upper- and middle-range hotel rooms available to accommodate delegates. In addition, the dedicated Convention Bureau, which offers impartial advice to international meeting planners, has created a link between the government and the private sector and reoriented the MICE space towards businesses. According to Denis Dernault, General Manager of the Kigali Convention Centre, *“all these projects have been central to opening up the Rwandan economy in order to attain the targets set for transformation of the economy.”*

COMPETITIVE CLUSTERS

In terms of knowledge, Rwanda's competitive clusters include Cloud Computing, Business Process Outsourcing, Mobile Application Developments, IT Security, E-Government and Education & Training with investment opportunities being Garments & Textiles, Kigali Innovation City and Nutritious Food. In this context, light manufacturing is steadily growing at an annual rate of 7% and expected to contribute 26% to GDP by 2020, while the new garments manufacturing sector is also expected to witness strong growth. With a major commitment to solar energy, Rwanda has increased its focus on domestic sources of energy and phased out heavy/fossil-fuel electricity generation.

Agriculture accounts for one third of Rwanda's GDP, employing about 70% of the country's population. The sector has gained significant growth of 5.5% per annum and the output is expected to grow at 8.5% by 2018. A strategic priority of the government is, in this regard, developing a competitive horticulture sector.

Rwanda also desires to make the country a regional destination for healthcare services by establishing a world-class healthcare and medical system – it has taken successful initiatives in this direction, establishing a universal healthcare system and embracing the world's first commercial drone delivery service.

Last but not least, with the establishment of the Kigali Special Economic Zone which is comprehensive of the Free Trade Zone, home to various industries, including an ICT park, Rwanda has again looked at moving forward and fast-tracking development in all sectors. At the core of the Zone lies Carnegie Mellon University, a world-class institution with which the government of Rwanda has partnered to establish a centre of excellence that develops much-needed, highly skilled ICT professionals.

For more information on Kigali Convention Centre, contact Nagen Naidu \ +250 724 000 005 \ nagen.naidu@radissonblu.com



Montréal

Paving the Path for Progress

Fresh off its 375th birthday, Montréal has morphed into Canada's cultural capital, offering a certain je ne sais quoi that's not quite North American, but not entirely European, either. Home to 120 different ethnic communities and a growing population of over 1.6 million, Montréal has evolved into an international city that embraces its storied past, but is also ready to dive head-first into the future with a wealth of research and increasing number of congresses revolving around aerospace, life sciences and artificial intelligence.

Words Lane Nieset



A buzzing port since its youth, Montréal has received a myriad of settlers to its shores and kept its pioneering attitude alive with its signature *joie de vivre* spirit. Visitors today are welcomed with open arms to the multilingual city that's one of the top for conventions on the globe—and a certified destination for sustainable events. Over the past 35 years, the Palais des congrès has held over 7,300 events; hosted over 19 000 000 participants; and generated more than 6 billion dollars in economic spinoffs. But for Montréal, the gain isn't in the numbers alone, it's in the legacy that's been created thanks to the local champions who are proving to the world (and attracting congress bids in the process) that the city is a hotbed of growth when it comes to scientific research.

Despite being home to top-notch researchers in fields like genetics, aging, economics and life sciences, Montréal's scientific community is building on its international reputation. Two ways the city aims to bolster growth: earning scientific awards and attracting large-scale international conventions. *"Attracting and holding large-scale international conventions makes it possible to generate significant intellectual benefits, while shining the spotlight on science and the scientific luminaries associated with the events,"* said Raymond Larivée, President and CEO of the Palais des congrès de Montréal.

INTO THE SCIENTIFIC SPOTLIGHT

One of the key factors of the city's success in attracting international congresses: the active Ambassadors' Club. Founded in 1985, the club's 330 distinguished members help turn the attention of global associations toward Montréal. The club's president, Hany Moustapha, Professor and Director at AÉROÉTS and Senior Research Fellow at Pratt & Whitney Canada, has been a member for a dozen years and is a leader in the metropolis' aerospace industry. With the help of members with this type of expertise like Dr. Pavel Hamet and Daniel Bouthillier, the club has successfully hosted world firsts like the International Congress on Personalized Health Care, where hundreds of delegates joined together for the first time to discuss

breakthroughs in molecular biology and medical approaches that focus on individual genetic makeup. Just two years later, the congress is returning to Montréal in September, bringing over specialists, researchers, academics and clinicians to discuss the application of P4 Medicine (personalised, predictive, preventive and participatory health care).

Montréal's Palais des congrès fast facts

- Located in the heart of downtown
- 51,280 sqm divided into 113 rooms and venues
- 33,638 sqm of meeting room space
- 3 Ballrooms, 4 terraces and -3,112 sqm of green roofs under development
- 15,000 hotel rooms within a 10-minute walk, 4,000 of which are accessible by the underground pedestrian network
- 20 minutes from the Montréal-Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau International Airport

The Ambassadors' Club has also partnered up with the Palais des congrès and the Fonds de recherche du Québec to support the region's researchers and scientists in terms of bringing and organising congresses in Montréal. In an attempt to tighten the ties between the Palais des congrès and the scientific community, the group set up the Prix Relève, a competition that awards grants recognising researchers involved in the process of securing and organising major international scientific conventions. Two years ago, the Palais also partnered up with one of the leading occupational health and safety research centres in Canada, the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST), to further development in this field and continue to grow the life sciences sector, which already accounts for 30 percent of the Palais' events.

"The club is helping by giving us tools and logistics to go and get additional conferences in life science, aerospace and other fields, and I think it's a very important concept," Professor Moustapha explains. *"But the Ambassadors' Club is just one aspect. In addition to ambassadors, you also have to define the strength of the city—whether it be medical, arts, IT, commerce—and once you identify this sector, form a special events committee that is supported by the congress centre that can go and attract more congresses. Since Montréal is known as the civil aviation capital of the world, we managed to form an aerospace committee in order to promote that sector for instance."*

A MAJOR AI PLAYER IN THE MAKING

While life sciences comprise a sizeable sector of Montréal's events, the city is also hoping to become an Artificial Intelligence (AI) hub by providing a platform for discussion on the development of ethical and socially responsible AI. The first step: the debut of the new Forum on the Socially Responsible Development of Artificial Intelligence last November at the Palais.

In 2021, the Palais will host the 30th International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI), bringing 3,000 experts from across the globe. *"The forum provided a unique opportunity for discussion between researchers from very diverse fields and this is quite unique, since most conferences have participants from a much narrower spectrum of expertise,"* explains McGill University computer science professor Joëlle Pineau, who assisted in winning the bid for the event and will head Facebook's new AI research lab in Montréal. *"This gave rise to very unique discussions on the impact of AI in our lives and societies, and that could only happen with the mix of perspectives."*

For more information on Montréal's Palais des congrès:

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Sharing Research In Nantes, France

The 36th Annual Meeting of the European Bone and Joint Infection Society (EBJIS) took place at La Cité Nantes Congress Centre in September 2017, bringing together experts, practitioners and companies specialised in the field. With high-level scientific presentations, knowledge sharing and networking opportunities, the conference proved to be a success and showcased Nantes both as a place of knowledge and a great conference destination.

Interview Rémi Dévé

The mission of EBJIS is to fight infections in the musculoskeletal system: it appeals not only to orthopaedic surgeons but also to microbiologists, plastic surgeons, infectious disease specialists, molecular biologists and material science specialists. Each year the annual EBJIS Conference grows bigger and gathers more than 500 participants from all over the world. That's exactly what happened at La Cité Nantes Congress Centre, where the meeting was held. Boardroom asked Gérard Giordano, Conference Chair and Chief of the Orthopaedic-Traumatologic Department at the Toulouse-based Joseph Ducuing Hospital, to reflect on the meeting.

Why was Nantes and La Cité chosen as the host destination for the Annual Meeting of EBJIS?

Nantes and its surrounding region are famous for its health research, and Nantes University Hospital (CHU) is a centre of reference and excellence in several domains on an inter-regional and national scale: cardiology, transplants, oncology, cellular and gene therapy, neuroscience, serious burns unit, etc. In the field of bone and joint infection, it actively contributes to advances in medical and pharmaceutical science through its research activity. It made sense for us to organise our Annual Meeting there, as we wanted to show our peers coming from all over the world the kind of knowledge on offer.

What are Nantes and La Cité's assets as a conference destination?

Besides being very active in the field we work in, Nantes is first highly accessible, thanks to the high-speed train and well-connected air

routes: delegates coming from abroad found it very easy to get in. It's a welcoming city, both dynamic and vibrant, I dare say even atypical in the French landscape. There is this little *je-ne-sais-quoi* that makes the destination very special. Of course the famous giant elephant which is regularly walking down the streets of Nantes and which we were lucky enough to have at our table helps...

What kind of support did the people working at La Cité give you ?

To sum it up, I would say the services, both on a professional and an interpersonal level, were outstanding, really. As an organiser of an international event of this magnitude, having this kind of logistical support and overall understanding of what we want to achieve is very valuable. La Cité didn't just sell space, they acted as a real partner of the Society: they listened carefully to our needs and requests and understood them, provided fine-tuned and timely answers, were incredibly reactive and their sense of hospitality was almost tangible. They were remarkably prepared: when you don't actually notice the organisation of an event, that means it's simply well organised, and that's exactly what happened.

More information on La Cité Nantes Congress Centre:

T. +33 (0)2 51 88 20 48 \ sandrine.chauve@lacite-nantes.fr \ lacite-nantes.com



Saint Petersburg

Opening Windows East & West

In five years, a city has time to change tremendously. That's the case of Saint Petersburg, which I had last visited half of a decade ago. As it's opening to the world, the city seems to want to attract international visitors like never before.

Words Cécile Koch



Saint Petersburg got its name after its creator, Peter the Great, known for his great thirst for science, traveling and modernising the country by opening to the West. The city is indeed one of the most Western looking locations in Russia. Not only because of the numerous 18th century palaces to be found among the many canals — Italian architect Carlo Rossi clearly got inspired by Venice — but also thanks to a certain *joie de vivre*. As much as Moscow will keep you in awe by its grandeur, Saint Petersburg will impress you by its swirl - even the inhabitants admit that their way of life is less stressful as that of the Muscovites.

But, while visiting the new Convention and Exhibition Centre, ExpoForum, I noticed a big banner announcing the coming of a Chinese business event. When you see the famous Heritage swarming with Asian tourists, you may well say that the windows have also opened to the East.

BURGEONING INDUSTRIES

Saint Petersburg's geographical location has always made it a trading hub. This has driven the expansion of the city, which is now fulfilling its industrial potential: experiencing active development are such sectors as energy, heavy machine-building, the automotive industry, the pharmaceutical industry, and a burgeoning IT and telecommunication cluster.

Flexible and modern, the ExpoForum, which was built to meet the needs of meeting planners, bears all the advantages that a new construction can bring. It is actually like Lego: no pillars in the exhibition halls, movable sockets in the floor, ceilings that can be lowered from 11 to 3 meters... it indeed must be rather easy and stress-free to organise your event in this centre. The ExpoForum is the biggest meeting venue in the whole of Russia, and only 10 minutes from the airport, 20 from the city centre, making it comfortably accessible.

Case study: ESC Workshop

Boardroom met with Lyubov Erofeeva, Russian chapter (RAPD) of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health, and the organiser of the ESC workshop, held in September 2017.

Tell us about your association.

The Russian Association of 'Population and Development' (RAPD) is a voluntary public non-governmental, non-profit organisation founded in 1991. Its mission is to promote the reproductive health of youth, women and men, to develop responsible attitude towards their health, creating a family and the importance of safe childbirth. Since 1993 RAPD has been an accredited member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (www.ippf.org), which operates in more than 170 countries.

Why was Saint Petersburg chosen to host the Seminar?

On one hand it was the RAPD decision, since we have a very well developed and strong RAPD branch in Saint Petersburg; on the other hand there are numerous medical universities in the city, which makes it very attractive for medical events. We wanted to

show the beauty of the city and the high level of interest from the scientists based in the North-West. In this regard, it made sense for RAPD to choose Saint Petersburg as the host destination for the ESC Seminar.

What was the collaboration with the Saint Petersburg Convention Bureau like?

The relationship with the Convention Bureau started a long time ago, when, back in April 2015, both the Bureau and the RAPD started working together on the bid. Since then and all the way to the event, there was extensive communication between us, as we discussed issues and shared news and information. It was the Bureau who suggested, for instance, the Park Inn Pribaltiyskaya Hotel where the Seminar was held. Administrative and logistical support were also in place from the start, since five members of the Organizing Committee are from Moscow and didn't know the specificities of the city.

The city centre luckily has not changed much since I was last there; but how could it have with all those palaces and the boulevards such as the famous Moskovsky, the Singer building dating from the Jugend-style period, and buildings from the Stalin era with their heavy granite cornices? Of course infrastructure has been upgraded, though: free and easy accessible wifi, modern hotels, trendy barber and coffee shops, fabulous restaurants often run by youngsters... all this partakes of the vibrant Saint Petersburg. You will find them in the centre but also in the newly developed areas which used to be warehouses or factories and which are now much sought-after neighbourhoods, often home to booming start-ups.

SMART CITY

Saint Petersburg also wants to become a smart city, and takes it inspiration from South Korea, according to Nana Gvichiya, Deputy Chairman

of the Tourism Committee. The sharp contrast between this beautiful historic city and the newest technology is set to make Saint Petersburg an interesting destination for events.

No wonder the city is attracting international conferences like the International Workshop of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health, which was organised last year, the International Conference of the Cruise Industry, Cruise Europe, which will be held this year, or the World Congress of Chefs and the World Congress of Cardiothoracic Surgeons in 2020, just to name a few.

In fact, while we were there the Saint Petersburg Convention Bureau got the confirmation that the World Tourism Organisation would organise its 2019 event in the city, reaffirming the fact Saint Petersburg is on the meetings map as never before.



Maastricht

Working on the Future

Maastricht is perhaps most known for being the place where the Treaty on European Union was signed back in 1992, which laid the foundations for a single currency, the euro, and significantly expanded cooperation between European countries. But today, what may be more interesting is that the Dutch city has, thanks to a multitude of international organisations and educational institutes in many areas of endeavours, emerged as a knowledge hub many associations can relate to.

Words Rémi Dévé

The global economy is increasingly powered by innovation and knowledge, and great universities, research institutes and competitive clusters are a key source of those, functioning as catalysts of the knowledge economy. As a city characterised by a rich history and culture, but also by a strong international ambience, Maastricht may have understood this like no other, as public and private stakeholders work hand in hand for a better future. In fact, four major universities, numerous public and private research and competence centres, three medical schools and four university hospitals are located within a 20-kilometer radius from Maastricht's city centre.

INNOVATOR & ACCELERATOR

The city's strengths lie primarily in the field of health and materials. Spearheading the regional economy in life sciences, the Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus is the epitome of a certain sense of innovation and focuses on precision medicine and innovative diagnostics and regenerative medicine. As a centre of excellence, it brings together

researchers and entrepreneurs to form one of the world's top locations for biomedical research, and helps accelerate medical product development and the application of clinical tests.

In this context, facilities like the Maastricht Valorization Center supports the entire value chain, from the idea all the way to market introduction. In addition, campus partner Medtronic works closely with its on-site peers to develop, build and study new devices to relieve pain, restore health and extend life among patients suffering from cardiovascular disease. Local expertise also lies in the regenerative medicine field, as smart biomaterials are being developed for human application, such as artificial vessels, spine and eye care medication, and even sophisticated bio-implants in orthopaedics!

Last but not least is the Maastricht University Medical Centre+ (MUMC+), internationally recognised for its clinical expertise in myocardial diseases, structural problems, vascular diseases and genetics, and relevant hi-res imaging technique - under which the

academic hospital Maastricht and the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences of the Maastricht University cooperate. MUMC+ provides a complete offer of excellent care: a broad offer of basic care and top clinical and advanced specialised care, always with the integration of research and education from the faculty.

SUSTAINABLE BIO BASED MATERIALS

Maastricht is also a leader in bio based materials, i.e. materials that are (partly) made from biological components. Over the past decades it has indeed become clear that the chemical industry has to look for biological renewable feedstocks to produce sustainable plastics and materials in the immediate future, and Maastricht is leading the way in the matter. The European, cross-border, research institute Aachen-Maastricht Institute for Bio based Materials (AMIBM), in this regard, focuses on the development of advanced bio based materials. Located on the Brightlands Chemelot Campus in the Dutch Province of Limburg, where Maastricht is also situated, it strives for excellence in applied and

translational research by creating synergies between academia and industry.

No wonder Maastricht, thanks to its fitting and 30-years-of-experience-rich venue MECC Maastricht, has played host to many conferences related to this scientific expertise of the city and region. The city welcomed, for instance, the World Pain Conference and the Scientific Meeting of the International Society Spinal Cord Society in 2014, and the Congress of European Microbiologists in 2015 and is already getting ready for the International Society for Paediatric Dentistry and the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in 2021. And as far as biomaterials are concerned, Maastricht will host the European Conference on Biomaterials in 2018 and the European Conference on Biotechnology in 2020.

MECC Maastricht fast facts

- 2 auditoria for up to 1.650 pax
- Floor space covering 30.000 sqm
- Can host up to 5.000 delegates
- More than 28 breakout rooms
- Green Key Certified
- 30 years of experience

Prof. dr. Pamela Habibović Chair Department of Instructive Biomaterials Engineering at the MERLN Institute confirms it: *"There is currently a lot going on in Maastricht and its surroundings in the field of biomaterials, medical devices and regenerative medicine, both from an academic as well as an industry perspective. This vibrant R&D environment, in combination with everything the city has to offer, makes Maastricht an ideal place to organise the annual conference of the European Society for Biomaterials"*.

To learn more about MECC Maastricht:
+31 (0)6 22 39 03 82 \ m.neijmann@mecc.nl \
www.mecc.nl





Switzerland's Thriving Biotech Sector

At its simplest, biotechnology harnesses cellular and biomolecular processes to develop technologies and products that help improve life in general. An ancient concept used by humans for over 6,000 years, modern biotechnology combats rare diseases, reduces our environmental footprint, feeds the hungry, uses less and cleaner energy, and has more efficient industrial manufacturing processes. In this regard, it does not come as a surprise that Switzerland, a leader in environmentally advanced technologies, is one of the strongest biotech hubs in Europe.

Words Vicky Koffa

A country whose main focus has long been on research, innovation and education, Switzerland has succeeded in achieving the highest level of cooperation between its universities and institutes with the international research community, investing record numbers per capita in pure research and new technology. Currently the country boasts a strong network of more than 250 biotech companies and research institutions, leading SMEs, and strong multinational corporations, the highest concentration in the world for one single country, and accounts for more than 700 suppliers and manufacturers. The main specialisation is on human and animal healthcare, with biotech industry, agriculture and IT following suit.

The Confederation's cluster strength derives from an interesting initiative called 1Nation1Cluster, led by the Swiss Biotech Association (SBA), which aims to connect all important stakeholders for mutual progress. Along with SBA, the Swiss Technology Transfer Association (swiTT) is active in the transfer of technology from institutes of public research and education, university hospitals, and other not-for-profit research organisations to the private sector, whereas the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) optimises knowledge and technology transfer through the use of thematic and regional networks and platforms.

Last but not least, the Swiss government plays a major role in catching corporations' attention, with attractive regulations in the area of taxation. In December 2013, the Federal Council introduced a Masterplan for the promotion of biomedical research designed to strengthen

Switzerland as a business location and at the same time guarantee public access to the achievements and products of biomedicine. Comprising 23 measures to be implemented by 2023, the Masterplan showed, in the 2017 report, progress in most areas covered, with priority given to support for young researchers, medical device safety and security of drug supplies.

This clockwork collaboration has brought about the so-called Health Valley. More than a thousand companies, start-ups and research and training centres are currently operating in western Switzerland, employing 25,000 thousand people, in a convergence of biotech and medical technologies. The cluster ranks among the top three European centres for biotech and medtech research.

With such an extensive offer of international experts in the field available to give presentations and share findings from new research and with cutting-edge conference technology in many universities and research institutions allowing participants to interact directly with researchers throughout the site, Switzerland can be an advantageous choice to organise your next event.

More info on Switzerland as a convention destination:

T. +32 (0)2 345 83 57 \ myriam.winnepenninckx@switzerland.com \ www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings



Antwerp

Shining Like a Diamond

The second largest port in Europe, Antwerp, is also known the world over as the global diamond capital. An atypical, compact metropolis where everything seems to be within reach, it embraces both heritage and innovation, business and leisure, global ambitions and a genuine concern for nurturing a highly enjoyable quality of life for its inhabitants and international visitors alike. Let's take a deep dive into its undisputed n°1 position in the global diamond trade.

Words Miek De Roeck

Antwerp and diamonds are inseparable. The city has had a distinct shine since 1447, when it first claimed the Diamond Capital title. The city has become the oldest, largest and most international diamond centre in the world, a place where the industry has pushed every boundary in diamond trade, diamond cutting, jewellery design and technology. One can safely say it remains as lucrative today as it was in the 15th century.

CUT IN ANTWERP

Over five centuries of tradition have made the city the unrivalled crown jewel of rough and cut diamond trading and manufacturing. Together with the Antwerp World Diamond Centre, nearly 1,700 specialised companies, representing 6,600 direct and 26,000 indirect

jobs in Belgium, work with the Diamond Office to ensure transparency and compliance in the entire industry. Within a single square mile, 84% of the global rough diamond trade and 50% of the cut gemstone trade is handled, adding up to a total value of 84 billion dollars. Antwerp's diamond imports and exports provide a significant boost to the Belgian economy, representing 15% of all Belgian exports outside the EU and 5% of total exports.

The role of Antwerp is unique as professionals from all over the world recognise its leadership in trade, processing, polishing and compliance. As many as eight in ten rough diamonds in the world trade pass through Antwerp at least once. As such, it hardly comes as a surprise that the terms "Cut in Antwerp" and "Triple Excellent" are

synonymous worldwide for perfect diamonds. Besides diamond jewels, Antwerp offers unique jewel creations that are made by talented Antwerp designers.

At the forefront of the diamond industry is Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC), a public-private partnership, officially representing and coordinating the Antwerp diamond industry. Their mission is twofold: strengthening Antwerp's position as the world's leading diamond trading centre and strengthening the image of diamonds to a general audience, through a wide variety of dedicated marketing campaigns, services, conferences, trade fairs and economic mission. They are partner in the Diamond Office, in order to streamline the vast import and export flow of diamonds in and out of Antwerp.

LEADERSHIP IN COMPLIANCE

Antwerp also has an exemplary role in the diamond trade as the sector played a crucial role in the introduction of the Kimberley-certificate, a verification system aimed at eliminating conflict diamonds.

The Kimberley Process (KP) is an international collaboration between governments, NGO's, industry and others, committed to removing conflict diamonds from the global supply chain. Members engage in a binding agreement that imposes extensive requirements on every participant. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), which was created in November 2002, safeguards the shipment of 'rough diamonds' and certifies them as conflict free. It entered into full force in 2003, when participating countries started to implement the rules. There are now 54 participants representing 81 countries.

In order to strive for more and better compliance, Antwerp will host the Kimberley Process (KP) Intersessional Meeting in June 2018. In the face of today's global challenges, it will enable participants to share their expertise and insights, and to have a positive, long-term impact on the trade of diamonds.

When it comes to polished diamonds, certificates include three reputable diamond gradings handed out by the HRD Antwerp, IGI or GIA labs. They examine the diamond's authenticity, whether it is a natural, lab-grown or treated diamond and will describe its characteristics - Carat, Clarity, Cut and Colour.

A DIVA AMONG THE JEWELS

Last but not least, Antwerp and the Antwerp World Diamond Centre introduced a quality label for jewellers called Antwerp's Most Brilliant. The label provides consumers and visitors with a guarantee of compliance, transparency and quality and strengthens the image of Antwerp as a jewellery hub. Jewellers are awarded the label if they fulfil a set of

criteria after being audited by an independent accredited office. Thanks to this label the consumer can buy jewellery with confidence. Labelled jewellers are recognisable by the sticker in the shop window 'Antwerp's Most Brilliant Officially Certified Jeweller'. More information can also be found on our website, see below.

Worth mentioning is also DIVA Antwerp Home of Diamonds, located right in the city centre. Opening in May 2018, it's set to create a unique experience, as visitors will have the opportunity to discover authentic pieces and learn about the history and

craftsmanship behind Antwerp's diamonds and jewellery. Just as a star or a diva dazzles on the big screen, DIVA aims to radiate as the new international diamond experience centre with a heart beating for historic and creative silversmithing, boasting fascinating story-telling and immersive productions.

For more information on Antwerp as a conference destination

Visit Antwerpen \ www.visitantwerpen.be/en/business \ business@visitantwerpen.be





Oslo

Ready for Forward-Thinking Associations

Oslo is in the midst of a major transition from a quaint but cherished city that served as the entrance to Norway's incredible landscape into an international hub for forward-thinking innovative, technological, sustainable and artistic projects.

Words Samantha Shankman

Medical associations have thus far been the most frequent visitor in Oslo, which continues to attract large gatherings. But as Annie Kristi Korsmo, Director of Conventions at VisitOSLO Convention Bureau explains, *“the city is experiencing a wide range of different associations visiting Oslo, and organisations within science, design, technology are on the increase.”*

ON THE INCREASE

The 5th European Academy of Neurology Congress, for example, will bring more than 7,000 neurologists to the city in June 2019, while, in the more immediate future, conferences from associations such as the International Society for Engineers and Researchers, the Nordic Educational Research Association, and the International Light Association will be among the 200 (and growing) global conferences hosted each year.

“Oslo is a city that has a lot to offer and is open to new ideas,” says Raquel Consul, co-founder and director of Lifestyle DMC, who organised a conference in Oslo last October. *“We expect associations in the fields of sustainability, innovation, architecture and sports to become more common in the future.”*

In this context, Oslo turned down the Olympic bid but in the same year created a new role within the VisitOSLO Convention Bureau focused solely on sports. The organisation

believes in hosting more frequent, smaller events throughout the year for the maximum benefit to the city and best experience for visitors.

“We want to use what we have in terms of resources, and not build more just for events,” explains Guillaume Dupuy, Project Manager for Sport and Congress at VisitOSLO Convention Bureau. *“Sustainability is a part of Norwegian culture.”*

HOST TO INNOVATORS

Although Oslo is only just beginning to receive recognition as a international hub for innovative companies, the city has been host to innovators, entrepreneurs, investors and corporates for more than a decade.

In 2017, the 13th consecutive Oslo Innovation Week welcomed 10,700 visitors for more than 75 events that seek to find real business solutions to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. The events touch on everything from artificial intelligence and blockchain technology to urban innovation, power couples and life below water. In addition, Oslo hosts the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony every year in December during which international organisations, global leaders, and accomplished artists come together.

Oslo is emerging as role model for European cities that are being redesigned for intelligent,

global visitors who expect cities to be diverse but accessible, luxurious but sustainable, and modern without losing their heritage.

“Oslo is a particularly safe city and succeeds with not only consistently high quality, excellent service but its international open-minded atmosphere and excellent infrastructure,” says Elisabeth Treffler, junior project manager at Atlantik Network.

NOVELTIES ALL AROUND

Look around and the atmosphere of innovation and forward-thinking progress is evident. There's a brand-new opera house, convention centre, completely redesigned neighbourhoods, and a new national museum that's hoped to rival the likes of Rijksmuseum. The Nobel Peace Center, which includes a main hall with a 450-person capacity to a 30-person classroom overlooking Oslo's City Hall Square, can host association events gloriously.

“What makes Oslo an ideal destination, from a logistical standpoint, is that everything is in walking distance. There are large venues for big congresses plus conference spaces in and out of hotels,” concludes Raquel Consul.

As Oslo becomes evermore connected to European and global capitals — it is worth noting the ease with which one can travel from the airport to the city centre — its attraction for global, innovative congresses will surely bloom.



Glasgow

A Trailblazer in Life Sciences

Glasgow never ceases to amaze. Once a post-industrial, second-tier Scottish city, Glasgow has blossomed into an innovative destination for associations. Not only is it constantly reinventing itself, the city has emerged as a global leader in health and life sciences and is home to many ‘firsts’ and innovations, which help attract a bevy of high-profile conferences every year.

Words Rémi Dévé

The last time I visited Glasgow was four years ago, and in such a short amount of time the city has tremendously changed. It has expanded in every direction, developing new districts, opening up unusual venues (a distillery for your next gala dinner anyone?) and offering a hotel landscape that appeals to budgets of all varieties. The people of Glasgow –after all, it’s them who “make Glasgow,” as the city slogan says– have been instrumental in making these changes possible. Citizens, along with all the people I met, have recognized the city’s spirit, creativity and enthusiasm, and this can be easily translated into success stories...and successful conference case studies.

7 TESLA MRI SCANNER

Scotland has long been a pioneer in the life sciences sector. Over the past century, Scottish science introduced MRI scanning, penicillin was discovered by a Scot, in addition to a number of other medical, pharmaceutical and technological inventions. This excellence in innovation is what continues to drive Scotland in general—and Glasgow in particular—putting the country on the map as a life sciences powerhouse, complete with dedicated resources, such as the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, which opened in 2015 and is now the largest hospital in Western Europe. Thanks to these elements, Glasgow has grown into the ideal environment for associations to gather, and the city places innovation at the forefront of its health sectors.

These sectors are key to the development of the city’s economy, and everyone seems to be working hand-in-hand to make positive change happen and attract investment to propel growth. In this regard, the so-called 50-miles-long Glasgow BioCorridor, home to a diverse array of life science companies, contributes significantly to the Scottish life sciences offer. Born out of the desire to enable all stakeholders to take advantage of specialised facilities and expertise, it now represents a major driver for the city and facilitates collaborative work between the public sector, industry and academia.

The epitome of this sense of innovation might well lie in the presence of a powerful 7 Tesla MRI Scanner. Housed at the new Imaging Centre of Excellence (ICE) at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUH), the scanner—which is 140,000 times stronger than Earth’s magnetic field—is used to research and treat a variety of conditions such as stroke, vascular dementia, Alzheimer’s disease and epilepsy.

Dr Carol Clugston at the University of Glasgow puts it this way: *“We have worked with a range of industry partners to develop industry-driven infrastructure to provide a focus for innovation and industry collaboration at the new hospital. Uniquely situated in the centre of the hospital campus, dedicated facilities have, for instance, been created for the pharmaceutical industry and SMEs to engage with clinical academics and NHS clinicians. Additionally, the Imaging Centre of Excellence (ICE) is all about creating collaboration space*



for industry and world-leading clinical academic expertise in stroke, cardiovascular disease and brain imaging.”

KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

When asked about how conferences have helped put Glasgow ‘on the map,’ Dr Clugston emphasizes their value not only in terms of knowledge exchange, but also for Glasgow as a city. *“Networking between researchers across the world is the key to research. Conferences help do just that. Their impacts are tremendous, especially if they succeed in engaging a variety of stakeholders, from focus groups to the general public. Glasgow is a very forward-looking destination; top scientists have chosen to live and work here, and by showcasing what we are good at, we disseminate knowledge and make the city radiate in a very positive way. The very first ESTRO (European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology) Physics Workshop, held last November, is a good example of our value-based proposition. ESTRO’s plan is to hold the conference here in Glasgow three years in a row, partly because of the expertise that we have in the field, but also because of the benefit of working with a partner longer term and being able to measure the impact of having the meeting here.”*

In this context, the Scottish Events Campus (SEC), together with Glasgow Convention Bureau and VisitScotland, is constantly identifying the city’s strengths in an effort to attract conferences that align

with those key industries. It also helps that Glasgow’s infrastructure is world-class. Accommodating up to 15,000 delegates, the campus is made up of the SEC Centre, the fully integrated SEC Armadillo and The SSE Hydro, as well as five hotels featuring 850 bedrooms—and three more debuting over the next two to three years.

For Glasgow, a collaborative approach is the key to success. Thanks to the strategic ‘team Glasgow’ approach, the city has developed a unified message that is being sent around the world. With four universities, a number of world-class venues, one of the most advanced teaching hospitals in Europe, and an environment of friendly, professional people, Glasgow has managed to leave a lasting legacy for its local organisations and academic institutions. Couple this with how convenient and streamlined it is to organise and host a conference in the city and it’s no surprise Glasgow has emerged from its shadow and stepped up from a second- to top-tier city that’s a leading choice for associations to meet in Europe.

To learn more about Glasgow as a conference destination or the Scottish Events Campus (SEC), contact Kathleen Warden, Director of Conference Sales, SEC
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What is Your Legacy Going to Be?

‘Legacy’ is the new IMEX Talking Point for 2018 which will be explored at IMEX in Frankfurt in May and IMEX America in October this year. As Carina Bauer, IMEX CEO, argues, there is a growing consciousness of the long-term impact we all make on the world that is running throughout our industry, society and among individuals, and IMEX’s Legacy Talking Point will give that consciousness due recognition.

INDUSTRY SHIFT

The Talking Point for 2018 reflects the industry shift away from planning an event around a ‘single moment in time’ towards planning an event with longer-lasting, more meaningful impacts – impacts that can be seen long after the event has ended.

These impacts could be on the attendees, the host community, the local innovation economy, the destination partners, the city leadership, the environment. At the same time, developments in technology and, of course, social media have allowed meeting and event planners to deliver long term meaning and value, far beyond a single meeting or event.

Carina Bauer, CEO of the IMEX Group, explains: *“Our strapline - ‘Legacy: What’s yours going to be?’ - recognises that just one person with a strong vision can make a massive difference. They can’t change the world in a year, however! Sometimes legacy lies in getting something started, creating momentum, initiating change or achieving buy-in.”*

Education across both shows as well as industry research and partnerships will cover the various angles of Legacy. These are: political legacy; knowledge legacy/social impact; CSR legacy; environmental legacy and personal legacy – which means exceptional people doing exceptional things. Each of these will be examined in different ways as the year goes on.

FOR EVERYONE’S BENEFIT

“IMEX has a strong, long-term commitment to the idea of ‘Legacy’. We’re lucky enough to be at the heart of a huge international industry – a truly giant global network - and we want to make more of that for everyone’s benefit. Having an annual Talking Point with year-round momentum allows us to both tap into –and deliver more value to– that global network” she concludes.

IMEX will be shaping some of the education sessions at each show around the new Legacy theme and it will feature in the Policy Forum at IMEX in Frankfurt as well as the show’s dedicated education day – EduMonday. IMEX has also commissioned several case studies plus two industry research reports.

IMEX in Frankfurt 2018 takes place on 15-17 May. Thousands of hosted buyers and buyer attendees from all over the world will meet and do business with around 3,500 international destinations and venues – all under one roof. They’ll also discover the latest learning ideas in over 180 education sessions, making new contacts and catching up with colleagues at the many networking events.

Registration to IMEX is free: www.imex-frankfurt.com

Following its successful launch in 2017, EduMonday, a full day of learning and insights open to all IMEX attendees and exhibitors, will be expanded, bringing together a vast range of learning sessions, covering technology, meeting design and, of course, legacy.

Legacies of Dubai Association Conference

Held in December 2017 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, the first-ever Dubai Association Conference was set to reinforce the essential role associations play in Dubai's socio-economic development and its transition to a knowledge-based economy. On that level, it definitely delivered and brought together association executives, government representatives, university faculties and students, as well as professionals interested in forming associations, coming from Dubai and the region, but also from all corners of the world.

Words Rémi Dévé



Like Dubai itself, or even the United Arab Emirates, the association community based in the region is rather young. Wishing to move away from a purely oil-based economy, the Dubai government realised very early that trade and professional organisations can play a key role in driving social integration, competitiveness, and knowledge sharing, and therefore support in the development of a knowledge economy.

PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE

In this context, the Dubai Association Centre (DAC) was launched a few years back and has already achieved considerable progress. Offering assistance for the establishment of non-profit, apolitical, and non-religious professional associations and trade bodies in the Emirate of Dubai, its main objective is to become a platform for dialogue and education for associations interested in exploring opportunities in the Middle East Region and to ultimately contribute to building an association community that drives the knowledge economy in the UAE and the wider Arabian Peninsula. The Dubai Association Conference is another step in the road to Dubai's association success.

In the opening session of the Conference, His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing & Dubai World Trade Centre, explained: *"Dubai has seen a tremendous rise in the number of associations over the past few years, which is testament to the city's significance to reaching their target groups based in the region. This rise has resulted in a heightened demand for networking and engagement platforms for associations across different industries. The Dubai Association Conference has helped respond to that demand and allowed for much-anticipated community-building."*

His Excellency Hamad Buamim, President and CEO, Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry added: *"Associations are among*

Three takeaways of the Conference

1

Susan Robertson, Executive Vice President of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) reminded the audience that *"associations make the world smarter, safer, and better (...) and can advance causes that government and official institutions could never do, by providing the most up-to-date information, best practice, and professional development and networking opportunities."*

2

In a session dedicated to globalisation, David Macadam, CEO of the International Council of Shopping Centers and Middle East Council of Shopping Centres based in the UAE, argued that *"better serving your overseas members, providing value and building engagement abroad are key strategies for associations wanting to go global. But you have to think this through: you can significantly increase your likelihood of success by researching the market and the competition and setting clear objectives, timelines, milestones, and metrics and using this research to create a kind of roadmap."*

3

For successful volunteer engagement, Mark Dorsey, CEO of the Construction Specifications Institute, urged the audience to *"be clear about what your organisation expects from its volunteers. People are usually attracted to a purpose and if you're clear about the purpose, it will be all the more easy. In fact, volunteer work might provide people with opportunities to learn skills they wouldn't be able to learn otherwise."*

the biggest contributors of economic growth and business activity globally, and they are crucial for generating the flow of innovative and creative ideas that can add value to our society. Supporting the growth of Dubai's association community is one of the main objectives of DAC, as associations have valuable knowledge, expertise and skill sets that can enhance the emirate's competitiveness and drive its knowledge economy forward."

SUPER KIDS

'Building a Community': that was in fact the very theme of the Conference. As industries ranging from technology and health-care to education and finance are growing quickly in Dubai and the UAE, there is a need for connecting industry professionals among associations, government, academia, and the private sector, a need for facilitating discussions and networking and knowledge sharing. In addition to providing all of this, the Conference, which had a strong focus on the future and unveiled the concept of the Super Kids during a session that proved very popular, touched upon the latest trends in areas such as membership, online communities, restructuring education, volunteerism and governance, among others. It also went beyond traditional methods of education to focus largely on collaboration and engagement.

The Dubai Association Conference also offered a unique opportunity to discover the various facets of Dubai, and what makes the city one of the most dynamic destinations in the world. At the same time, it provided a better understanding of what is available in the city for associations to tap into. Designed as a study mission, the itinerary featured a deep-dive into the UAE's rich heritage at the Etihad Museum, a glimpse into the future at the Prime Minister's Office and Dubai Future Academy and its Dubai Future Accelerators. There was also a behind-the-scenes peek of the site that will host Expo 2020 Dubai.

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Hackathons for Associations?

Traditionally, hackathons – the word is a combination of ‘hack’ and ‘marathon’ – are events that focus on entrepreneurship and engineering, often fueled by caffeine and junk food, culminating in the creation of inspiring prototypes and new ideas. Essentially, a hackathon aims to challenge its participants so they turn their ideas into reality – it’s a great illustration of what a sprint of collaborative work can accomplish. Taking a note from the tech world, associations are realising the value in this dedicated type of group problem solving.

Words Rémi Dévé

Hackatons were born in the world of tech startups in the 1990s and traditionally brought together computer programmers to create new software and tech solutions, judged by a panel of subject-matter experts and industry leaders. Facebook features such as the “Like” button and “Timeline” display were developed during hackathons. Today, hackfests, as they are also sometimes called, have spread to almost every industry sector, and are being used by businesses, community activists, and nonprofits to create innovative products, prototypes or programs, as well as help spark new ideas, identify challenges and solve real-world problems. Associations are also seeing the value of those intense sessions and jumping on the bandwagon.

POWERFUL TOOL

Hackathons are all about community and collaboration. For associations, they have become a powerful tool to promote engagement and collaboration with members or conference attendees, especially because the core mission of hackathons has endless possible applications. Hackatons can also help build bridges with the technology ecosystem. In today’s world it simply makes sense to be around start-ups, tech gurus, IoT engineers

and developers. It doesn’t matter what your industry is, technology is changing it, and associations have realised this.

But why would you, as an association, organise a hackathon instead of a regular seminar for instance? As Ney Neto, Director of Business Development & Innovation, MCI Brazil, says, a hackaton can actually be very efficient in the context of association management. *“One of the biggest challenges for an association is to keep its members engaged. Communication has changed with the digital transformation. E-mail blasts and one monthly newsletter might not be enough to have your members engaged. So a good objective for hackathoners can be to come up with a prototype a communication tool that will promote engagement with your members.”* he argues.

On another hand, hackathons might represent a good opportunity for industry professionals to listen to tech savvy people, the millennials, or your next trainee if you will. As digital natives, they think differently when it comes to digital communication, and a hackathon is a wonderful environment to exchange with them. *“One of the professions of the future is called Social Engineers, the meeting designers who go about this technology ecosystem. They seat in co-working spaces, talk blockchains,*

meet-ups, hackathons, game jams, and they can facilitate the connections between developers, IT mentors, and the professional or trade associations. In this context, they will be the ones designing innovation journeys to solve problems collectively.” says Ney.

Hackathons can also be efficient if your association needs to solve a problem that sits outside your area of expertise. Last November, MCI Brazil helped the Brazilian Association of Water Resources organise a hackfest. The objective was to prototype a technology based solution that would drive a more sustainable consumption of water by society and companies alike. In this particular case, it was agreed that the solution could be presented in the form of an app, platform, or either hardware (i.e. IoT, onboard systems, and the likes). The winner’s solution was a web-based integrated social platform, an educational and a social website built to connect the ecosystem of companies and entrepreneurs in Brazil who are researching and developing any sort of solution in the field.

The 8th World Water Forum committee was there and invited the team to attend the Forum that will be held in March 2018, where they will present their winning solution, which will be by then better elaborated,

to possible investors and accelerators. In the meantime, the association and industry leaders have offered mentorship to the team and help the development of their web-based social platform.

DEVELOPING APPS

Another example is the International City/County Management Association which sponsored its first hackathon to come up with new mobile apps to help members – the local government managers – better serve their constituents. They had in conjunction with their annual conference in Boston so that there was some dialogue between local government executives and developers, who, it doesn't come as a surprise, do not often speak the same language.

The association decided to first host a brainstorming exercise with about a dozen local government managers coming from around the country and asked to come up with a list of about 150 to 200 types of apps they would like to see developed. That became the 'source of inspiration' for Hackstock, the name of the hackathon, which brought together approximately 40 programmers to develop prototype apps. Judged according to nine criteria, ranging from quality of concept and thoughtfulness of utilizing civic data to collaboration with local leaders, the winning projects included a concept app that would

allow local government managers to illustrate the amount of funds being spent in different neighborhoods and districts. Another winning solution was an app that would help elections commissions maximize voter turnout by delivering turnout information at various polling places.

Last but not least is the example of the United Nations, who increasingly use Hackathons to work on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. For a few years, indeed, the UN and the people they represent seem to have become more and more disconnected from each other. Max Kalis, founder of Influx Trust, a charity exploring digital opportunities for a better United Nations, felt it was time to provide better opportunities for the UN and the public to collaborate, specifically through hackfests. Each year, they host a global hackathon and add more locations, with new SDG goals to focus on. Geneva was one of them, and as Michael Møller, Director-General of the UN office in Geneva, says: *"We believe Influx hackathons are a driver of community engagement helping not only to foster but to extend the efforts directed to tackle SDGs. The Hackathon spirit - to bring together experts from diverse fields and challenge them to create a feasible, viable solution - is an approach we seek to support and nourish with our own knowledge and experience."*

Tips for a successful hackathon

- Define a reasonable and realistic challenge
- Carefully select candidates (so you don't expose content to competition) and limit the number of participants
- Identify the judges and the reward offered to the winners. It can be monetary or in-kind
- Ensure strong internet access and appropriate bandwidth for the exchange of live information during the hack
- Ensure an inspiring room layout that encourages interaction, idea-sharing and facilitates teamwork
- Provide the latest technology in the rooms for teams to present their projects in an innovative way
- Provide enough food and caffeine so participants can keep up with the long hours and stress
- Open doors to sponsors to alleviate costs like F&B and equipment
- Bring in influencers and developers able to develop solutions presented by the teams

Tips courtesy of Ney Neto

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Building Connections with BestCities in Tokyo

Comprised of twelve convention bureaus partnering to help associations achieve success through their events, the BestCities Global Alliance has, for some time now, put in a lot of efforts on education, best practice, and advocacy within the meetings industry. After a successful first forum in Dubai, the second edition, themed ‘Building Global Connections Across Cultures’ took place in Tokyo in December 2017.

Words Rémi Dévé



Championing inclusivity and multi-culturalism within the meeting tourism industry in 2018 and beyond: that was the aim of the second BestCities Global Forum and on that matter the four-day programme, packed with thought-provoking sessions and plenty of networking opportunities, definitely delivered. Fifty or so delegates coming from all over the world and all kinds of associations took part in workshops and informative presentations learning about cultural management and intelligence, while looking at ways of establishing purposeful meetings, and acquiring practical skills they can apply to their day to day work back home and future events.

A MEANS TO AN END

In his introductory address, Paul Vallee, Managing Director of the Alliance, explained: *“What we can help with is providing value beyond pure tourism benefits. Associations have a higher purpose than just the organisation of meetings, which must become more than simply well planned events, with an increasing focus on their lasting impact and success in the long-term. For destinations and associations, events in general should be regarded as a means to an end, not an end in itself. And BestCities can help in the matter. In fact, that’s exactly what we want to promote with our Incredible Impacts grants, which were just given out to the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH), the World Parkinson Coalition (WPC) and the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT): those were really chosen as examples of excellence and what can be best done in the meeting industry.”*

In fact, the possible – and now necessary – legacy component of association meetings was what a lot of delegates took away from the Forum. Theo Tunga, Head, Operations Service, of Geneva-based ITU Telecom, clearly realised that is something his organisation could work more on. *“Recognising that our association events can go “beyond tourism” in areas such as legacy development, sustainability and accessibility was really an eye-opener for me. And the fact that an alliance like BestCities can help us just do that and advance the purpose of*

our associations by helping to create lasting legacies was, in a way, reassuring. We’re not alone in this” he said.

What is the BestCities Global Alliance?

The BestCities Global Alliance is a worldwide partnership of convention bureaux whose objective is to deliver the world’s best convention bureau practices for the meetings industry. The Alliance comprises of members in Vancouver, Bogota, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Houston, Melbourne, Singapore, Tokyo, Madrid and Berlin. The members exchange business leads, organise sales missions and client workshops as well as sharing best practices and knowledge on the international meetings industry. Not only does BestCities work alongside the association through all phases of their events, they also ensure that this support continues year over year.

Collaborating on strategic outcomes with international associations, while really understanding what they want to achieve and what they’re about from the inside out, the BestCities network conducts and shares detailed event research to aid planners in creating innovative meeting outcomes. In addition, they work closely with local industry stakeholders while also providing access to global knowledge and contacts. In this context, most of the associations present at the Forum came to understand BestCities’ added values when organising events.

CATHEDRAL THINKING

On the content front, the session led by Rick Antonson on cathedral thinking proved to be very popular. In the Middle Ages, building a cathedral was considered one of the greatest works that a community could undertake. But constructing such a monument was an endeavour of such scale that they would often take decades or even centuries to finish. The people that laid the foundations would do so in the almost certain knowledge that they would never live to see the finished product.

Like the craftsmen that laid the first stones at Notre Dame, today’s leading scientists, business leaders and creative innovators are beginning to think in terms of a new kind of wealth – the handing down of purposeful and life-affirming projects that only their grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren, will see bear fruit. Medical industries might be the epitome of cathedral thinking: it’s very likely that scientists trying to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease won’t be around when there will be one. Rick Antonson urged the audience to think about what they can cause, not only what they can do, and to reflect on the kind of long-term legacies that meetings can have.

Other sessions explored the impact of culture in business intelligence and the Hofstede’s cultural dimension model or how workplace values are affected by culture. In partnership with the Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau – the organisation was smooth and flawless to say the least, with the best time-keeping I have ever experienced! – the Forum also of course offered attendees a few cultural activities in order to explore Japan’s unique heritage.

Has your association a great legacy programme? Has your last conference left something great behind?

You could apply for and win an Incredible Impact grant from BestCities, in partnership with the International Convention and Congress Association (ICCA). For more information, visit www.bestcities.net



Can a Convention Centre Help Associations Grow?

As it has been long recognised that the meetings industry is all about the knowledge economy and that the impacts of face-to-face meetings go way beyond tourism benefits, suppliers are no longer suppliers, but clearly partners of associations that go the world over to host their conference. This is exactly how the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) sees itself – and rightly so. In fact, it's even safe to say it is helping associations grow, in the country and beyond.

Words Rémi Dévé

With the continued focus on the relevance of engagement and value creation to enhance the association journey, both from the organiser and delegate's side, the role of congress centres and their responsibility as advocates, connectors and advisors has clearly evolved over the years. From the delivery of economic impact through association meetings, job creation or addressing professional development needs, what venues can bring to the table is definitely more than the rental of empty space or audio visual equipment.

HELPING CAPABILITY

Up until 2015, KLCC hosted the Association Seminar, an association development interface which incorporated association development and education. Angeline van den Broecke, KLCC Director of Sales & Marketing, explains: *"The primary objective of hosting the annual Association Seminar was to provide an engagement forum focused on association executives, and to offer a relevant and meaningful education and knowledge exchange platform with the right content. Topics included familiarising locally-based organisations with case studies, bidding processes and the professional support and assistance available to them when bidding for international events."*

KLCC's strategy after 2015 was to continue an annual industry event that benefits associations. In this regard, the Centre, every year, initiates, supports or partners on to ensure the engagement and education of associations during dedicated activities. Examples include the Professional Development Grant for Association Executives, the hosting of the International Association of Professional Congress Organizer's (IAPCO) Council Meeting in September last year, and partnering on their EDGE Seminar, or the launch of the Training Academy to provide association executives and students with business events courses and certifications. KLCC also recently initiated the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Business Events Alliance, a collective designed to offer a one-stop service to association planners.

LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

Associations invest years in a relationship with a venue as the nature of business acquisition is based on a long-term engagement and a strong personal interface. A centre like KLCC can facilitate and provides a local context, as it embraces the need to be adaptable and connected to client needs beyond the scope of venue provision. Dr Raveenthiran Rasiah, President of the Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists, who was instrumental in getting the 6th World Congress of SIVA-TCI

in August, doesn't say otherwise: "KLCC just doesn't provide you with physical space for the conference. They also provide you with the support, in our case, to prepare for the bid to win the event. But beyond this, they are a good team to work with and very accommodating. In fact, they are directly involved in building the profile and capacity of both our association and event. They are also helping us deliver a legacy and be connected, locally and globally."

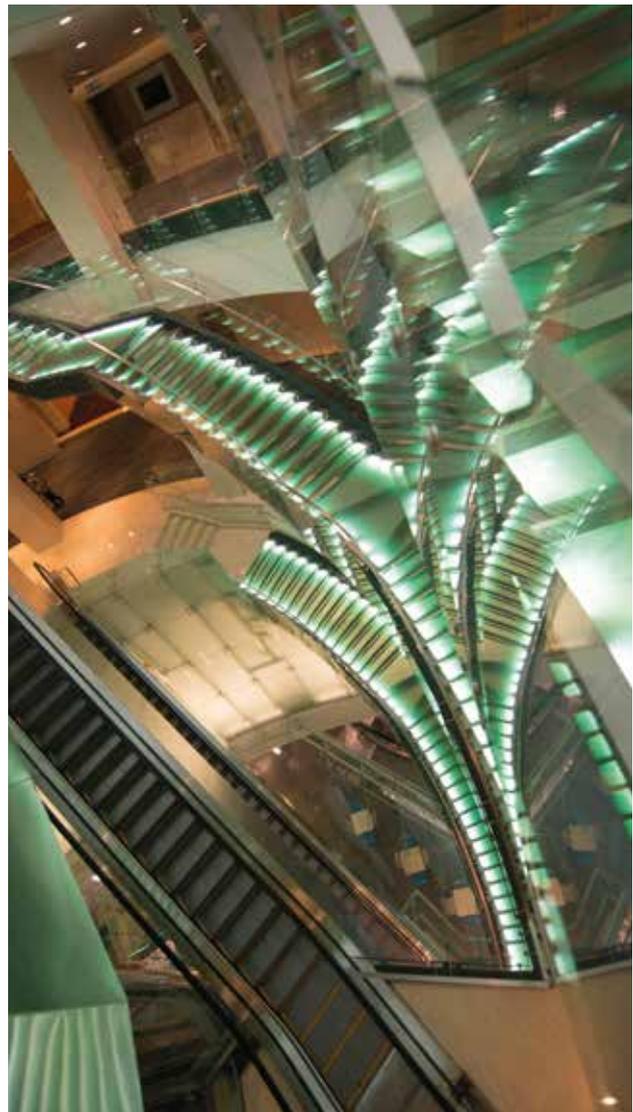
A venue is often the most effective interface with regional and national bodies with a stake in association events of all kinds, such as government, industry, healthcare, academia, and the likes. From a PCO perspective, venues and organisers should become strategic business partners with a common interest in the client's long-term success. "KLCC has understood the importance of knowing the business perspectives and objectives of all parties involved in the organisation of an event," says Roberta Odebrecht, of K.I.T Group, who chose KLCC for the World Library and Information Congress in 2016 and 2018.

"Association events are central to forging and maintaining brand and member loyalty. Both the organisation and the venue are responsible for the individual delegate, sponsor, faculty, guest experience and that is what determines brand awareness. Associations are mostly not-for-profit, but they face fierce and multiple competition – their success is largely dependent on delivering unique and valuable experiences at their major event – clearly, KLCC provides the foundation for that experience in a very pro-active and collaborative manner," she says.

In the end, a venue like KLCC remains a dedicated business events industry advocacy voice and is committed to the advancement and success of both the business events industry and the association community. "We believe a platform like ours provides an excellent opportunity for representatives from various associations to network and build rapport, share knowledge and experiences, which hopefully will result in more international meetings coming to our destination." Angeline concludes.

More information

www.klccconventioncentre.com





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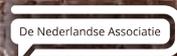
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