



BOARDROOM

THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

— 2023 VOLUME 1 | VOLUME 2 | VOLUME 3 | VOLUME 4 —

EDUCATION FOR
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

ASSOCIATION PERFORMANCE:
A MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

BUILDING RESILIENCE
FOR SUCCESS

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Associations as Catalysts for Change

In today's world, we are faced with numerous complex challenges, including climate change, gender inequality, and economic disparity, which require collective efforts to overcome. In this regard, associations can play a pivotal role by bringing together people and organizations with shared goals, facilitating collaboration and resource pooling to make a more significant impact. At Boardroom, we have been advocating for this approach for some time now through our 'Building Back Better' series, which is now entering its third year.

The issue at hand is that business events, including conferences, congresses, and meetings, contribute significantly to carbon emissions. According to the International Energy Agency, the events sector is responsible for approximately 1% of global carbon emissions. To tackle this problem, associations can collaborate with their members to promote sustainable practices during events.

To make this process more accessible, associations can join initiatives like the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative (NZCE), which provides concrete guidelines and ideas for hosting carbon-free business events. At Boardroom, we have taken this step and encourage others to follow suit.

And it's not the only area where associations can also play a significant role. The empowerment of women is another one. Despite significant progress in recent years, women continue to face significant

barriers in many areas of society, including the workplace. Associations can help to address this issue by creating opportunities for women to connect with each other, build their skills and knowledge, and access mentorship and leadership development programs. By doing so, associations can help to level the playing field and create a more inclusive and equitable society.

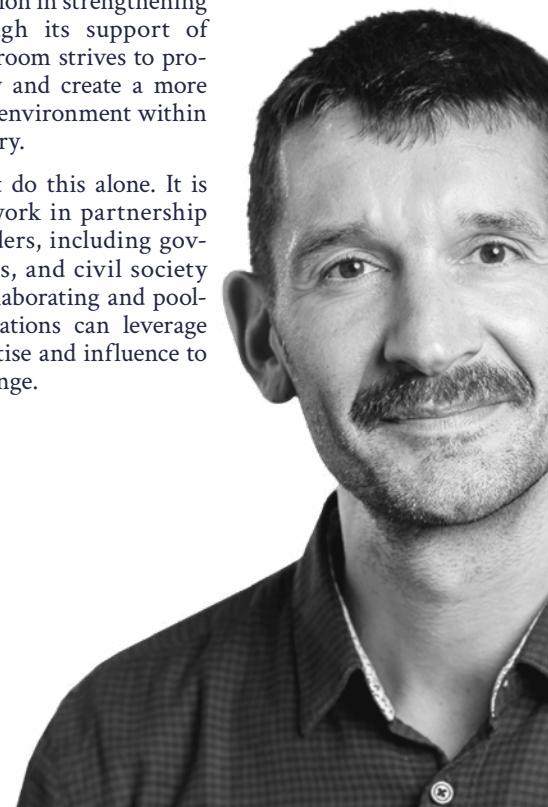
In that regard, Boardroom takes an active stance in supporting the Women Who Advance Associations initiative, which recognizes and celebrates the exceptional talent and innovation of female leaders within the international association community. This initiative serves to highlight the contributions of female leaders, trailblazers, and change-makers who are propelling the association community forward. By showcasing the positive practices and stories of these women, the initiative aims to promote the essential role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in strengthening associations. Through its support of this initiative, Boardroom strives to promote gender equality and create a more inclusive and diverse environment within the association industry.

But associations can't do this alone. It is essential that they work in partnership with other stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and civil society organizations. By collaborating and pooling resources, associations can leverage their collective expertise and influence to drive meaningful change.



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Ariane has more than fifteen years of professional experience in associations' management, including complex educational and event programming, project management, business development, strategic planning, and team leadership with international exposure. She worked for the International Society of Nephrology, the International Society of Endocrinology, and the European Society of Organ Transplantation.

As part of the EPIC mission, Carlos works closely with industrial photonic companies to ensure a vibrant and competitive ecosystem by maintaining a strong international network and acting as a catalyst and facilitator for technological and commercial advancement. He brings with him a strong background in microelectronics which was acquired through several management positions held at the international association SEMI.

Susan has worked in the medical association field for over 15 years. She was External Relations and Strategic Business Manager at the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care where she led and built the strategic partnership with industry stakeholders. She moved to the International Society of Nephrology in a similar position in 2019. She today holds senior consultancy and advisory roles for several medical associations.



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Building Back Better Series

Education is the Keystone to a Sustainable Future

Knowledge is power. It forms mindsets and accelerates personal and societal progress. Education is the tool given to teachers and students to transmit and acquire this knowledge from the early school stages and throughout a lifetime. It cannot be dry and random but rather designed to create an ethos for society's continuous sustainable development. Where the school system's traditional resources stop, associations can and should pick up the baton to keep their members up to date and thus more beneficial to society.

Words Vicky Koffa

Learning is a life-long process, so stopping after our university years makes no sense. The pandemic proved that the world is changing fast and adaptability is key. But adaptability without topical knowledge is impossible. The way forward is by following regular training to boost personal and professional growth and contribute to economic prosperity and responsible citizenship while restoring the health of the living systems upon which lives depend on.

THE BENEFITS OF ASSOCIATION-LED EDUCATION

"Associations can act as a collective consciousness to gather all experiences and share with others by providing trainings in a non-conventional way – learning from each other along the way. Within an evolving world, associations such as UITP can provide a learner-centric education as our trainers bring hands-on experience, and our participants can be more active in sharing their experiences," says Adrian Poher, Training Manager at UITP (International Union of Public Transport) Academy. UITP Academy delivers a wide range of training programs, customized workshops, and on-site study tours for all public transport and urban mobility stakeholders on an international level, all certified with the standard for learning services for non-formal education and training.

"Trade Associations that are focused on public affairs tend to find training offered by the association less appealing unless their sector is facing a major crisis. This is why most of the good case studies we've had so far come from professional societies, especially those in the medical sector. Nevertheless, as more associations are looking into diversifying their revenues and investing in their members' engagement, we are bound to see new projects popping up in the coming years," says Ioannis Pallas, ESAE's Association Manager.

In some cases, the education provided by associations is not just complementary to a conventional diploma but downright necessary. *"Surgical oncology is not a recognized specialty, making it essential for associations like the ESSO to fill the gap in the education and training of surgical oncologists so that they acquire the skills and experience relevant to their practice in their field of interest,"* says Carine Lecoq, COO at the European Society of Surgical Oncology. With 18 in-person educational courses every year covering both basic and advanced skills, expertise and hands-on practice is offered to junior and more experienced surgeons alike.

Associations which are education providers have more active and engaged members willing to work hard for the recognition of their profession if need be. *"A core objective for EARMA is to promote research management as an acknowledged profession in European Research Performing Organizations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organizations (RFOs). As such, a key activity is our professional development program,"* says Nyle Lennon, Head of Communications at the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA). *"We provide an early-stage research administrators masterclass for recent starts and a more advanced European Certificate in Research Management to create specialist advisors. These courses are particularly necessary as research management training in Europe is very limited."*

Taking these training to a cross-sectorial level means getting a more global understanding of society's needs for progress. *"At the International Union of Radio Science, we try to stimulate cross-discipline education. We offer short courses, tutorials, overview papers in areas which are adjacent to one's research field so that they can broaden their scope and actively seek cross-discipline commonalities,"* says Peter Van Daele, Secretary General at URSI.

Such targeted ways of learning accelerate sustainable development as professionals of all ages become better servants of their sector and implement multi-industry knowledge to raise our quality of life. These expert-led courses foster innovation and can be embedded with a mission for long-term sustainability.

THE DIGITAL ASPECT OF LEARNING

A question often raised is how to best deliver education. *"During the pandemic we had to switch our entire global training agenda to a virtual program. There are downsides to missing out on physical gatherings, as our participants cannot network face-to-face, but with digital sessions, we reach a much larger audience; people can connect from almost anywhere, and these channels are far more affordable for audiences in developing countries,"* says Poher from UITP.

In-person workshops are obviously an invaluable way of fostering collaborations and ideas, but the digital element has offered new potential. Through online activities associations can diversify their revenues and are in a better position to measure the impact of their trainings. Ignoring these benefits would lead to rigid, short-sighted models.

"Digital learning has a cost, in particular when it comes to hybrid events as this requires both a physical venue and an online platform. For a same event, work is doubled. Also, the cost for a professional digital platform, live streaming or on-demand access is a major additional financial burden," highlights Lecoq from ESSO. But retraining and repurposing staff together with some initial financial investment will quickly show digitalization's benefits (further membership engagement and retention, and financial rewards for the association).

Post-pandemic associations find that a combination of in-person large conferences with regular online training sessions is an effective plan. *"We had a lot of success with our online offering and expect to maintain a certain degree of virtual activities going forward because we know that this is often a much more accessible arrangement for our members. It must be acknowledged, though, that in-person interaction is preferred for networking and teambuilding,"* notices Lennon from EARMA.

"Some training sessions are more suited to a virtual setting, and some more suited in person. With those more suited to face-to-face we can involve different elements such as on-site technical visits, adding a great deal of value. Perhaps the best way to describe this is a blended approach to learning," concludes Poher.

Global Association Performance: A Membership and Leadership Perspective

Author, speaker, strategist, and futurist **Sarah Sladek** has conducted research to evaluate the performance of associations worldwide, focusing on both membership and leadership perspectives. This marks the first research effort of its kind.

For the past two decades, associations have been challenged to engage members, with increasing numbers reporting flat or declining membership. Does the same hold true now? Did global pandemic change the outlook for associations? The Global Membership Health Study was conducted to answer these questions and more.

Members and association staff representing 275 associations in 59 countries participated in the study in late 2022, conducted by Membership University and distributed in partnership with societies of association executives. This was the first research effort focused on assessing the state of association performance globally through both the membership and leadership lens.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

The study revealed two significant findings:

1. *The state of association health isn't tied to geography.*

Members worldwide reported similar membership experiences, and association staff reported similar trends and outcomes. Globally, associations are experiencing disengagement and decline.

2. *Age diversity matters.*

Associations reporting higher numbers of young members (under age 40) reported higher levels of membership engagement.

While some associations observed a spike during pandemic, the growth hasn't been sustainable.

Here's why: The data indicated decision-makers are, in large part, not aligned with

member interests and needs. In addition, members reported lower levels of positivity and engagement in comparison to boards of directors and association staff and were considerably less likely to believe membership provides a return on investment.

The only time a divergence popped up was when an association reported having a higher percentage of young members actively involved.



If the solution to disengagement is, in large part, to engage young members, why aren't more associations doing this? Because there's a lack of understanding or prioritization.

In the 1990s, belonging transitioned. The trend seemed to pop up overnight. Suddenly, young people were less likely to join, engage, or renew. This shift occurred for many reasons, but it really boils down to these four factors:

- Economic instability and rapidly changing technology influenced changes in the decision to join and engage. What younger generations expect, need, and value differs because what they learned and experienced during their formative years of brain and social development is considerably different than what previous generations learned and experienced.
- Most membership organizations were designed for the 20th century. Clearly defined processes, rules, and roles automatically create resistance to any variance, making it difficult to evolve.
- Young people today forge connections based on trust with organizations that reflect their own views and values. They seek organizational cultures characterized by positivity, security, inclusion, and respect.
- Young people are less willing to wait for organizations to create a place for them to belong, and considerably more likely to hold organizations accountable for their actions (or inaction).

Recently, I worked with an association boasting its success in engaging young people. Closer analysis revealed just 25% of the association's membership was under the age of 40. Moreover, young people weren't permitted to serve in leadership roles.

It's not enough to invite people to sit in the room but refuse to give them any influence, power, or voice. Belonging ensures everyone's insights, commentary,

and perspectives aren't just heard, but encouraged.

Associations need to be committed to reaching at least 50% of members under the age of 40. Anything lower places an association at risk. The next generation is an organization's only succession plan. There is no one and nothing else. The engagement of young people is critical to an association's future success and its ability to innovate and remain relevant.

NEW NEEDS

In this era of rapid change, entirely new skill sets, perspectives, and abilities have emerged. Each generation has something to learn and something to teach, which is why age diversity and cognitive diversity matter now more than ever.

But that's easier said than done. The next generation is a reminder change is necessary and unyielding, which can conjure up fears of irrelevance and feelings of defensiveness. The corresponding call for organizational change can feel daunting. It's just easier to do more of the same.

However, the more-of-the-same approach has led to decline. There's a reason why the Global Membership Health Study revealed widespread disengagement, except for associations with age diverse memberships.

The lack of age diversity in an association is not the result of a character flaw (i.e. young people aren't joiners). Rather, it hinges on an association's ability to create communities inclusive of new people and new ideas. Associations serious about engaging young people should take these tips into consideration:

→ Listen

Seek to understand how things look from the perspective of young professionals. What they want and expect from your organization is probably quite different from what established professionals want and expect. Listening is the first step toward building a relationship of trust and belonging.

→ Create solutions

Make it your organization's priority to generate new ideas and creative alternatives. Cognitive diversity and collaboration lead to innovation and community-building, and this can only be achieved by bringing people of various ages, backgrounds, and skillsets to work in community together.

→ Encourage feedback

An environment where only the executives and board members have influence seriously hinders potential for innovation, problem-solving, and relationship-building. It's imperative people of all ages have a voice.

→ Prioritize

Professionals under the age of 40 are now the workforce majority. Their perspectives should be represented at every decision-making table and prioritized throughout the entire organization.

Did global pandemic change the outlook for associations? Yes, and no.

Members are seeking more access, stability, and collaboration in the wake of a global shutdown. But those needs have been there all the while, growing in urgency.

The pandemic spurred a sense of hope; hope more people would realize the value of associations and therefore increase membership. And that may have happened. For a moment.

But membership engagement isn't tied to external forces. Recession, war, and pandemic have plagued countries for the past several years, but nothing has altered the desire to belong.

As the study demonstrates, membership will continue to dissipate until associations succeed at creating communities of belonging for everyone -- regardless of age.

Sarah Sladek is a renowned thought leader and researcher of generational shifts, engagement trends, and change management strategies. She is the founder and CEO of XYZ University and Membership University, which recently launched a groundbreaking research initiative titled the Global Membership Health Matrix. In addition, she is the author of five books and numerous research studies, and host of the Save the Associations web show and Membership IQ podcast.

Navigating the 21st Century: Building Resilience for Success

Special Boardroom contributor **Ole Petter Anfinssen**, Executive Director of EDBAC and DBA Research Associate at Henley Business School, UK, explains how building resilience is key to thriving in these unprecedented times.

The organisational environment is becoming increasingly demanding as global issues and the shift to online work bring unprecedented challenges. To overcome these challenges and avoid emotional stress, we need to develop and strengthen one key capacity: resilience.

Resilience can be described as “*the capacity to cope with stress and avoid catastrophe*” (Jawad & Kakabadse, 2019). It is crucial to understand that resilience is not only required by individuals, but teams and entire organisations as well. Therefore, we can also refer to strengthening organisational health and culture, supporting performance and financial growth.

Part of my job is to translate health into a financial language, and people often ask me if investing in health provides a return on investment. The answer is a definite yes, and for associations this might even create the competitive advantage that is needed to excel in this increasingly pressured market.

Key to this development is resilience as we are experiencing a high level of uncertainty, where pressure and mental health issues are increasing (Jawad & Kakabadse, 2019). Handling stress and challenges in the workplace while performing at a desired level is a continuous struggle,

and we are being torn in almost every direction, balancing multiple identities and lives (Roche & Haar, 2013) - leaders, colleagues, friends, or partners in our work, private and social lives. In each of these roles we are experiencing various levels of discontinuity (Anfinssen, 2019) - triggering emotional stress, often due to worries.

Hence, it is essential to develop and strengthen resilience.

A SURVIVAL MECHANISM

One could argue that resilience is a survival mechanism, especially these days, when faced with isolation and a lack of social interaction due to hybrid working,



alongside shifting economies and political uncertainty.

Resilience can also be defined by “*individual, social and environmental factors and characteristics*” (King, et al., 2016) amongst people who can handle these challenges in contrast to those individuals who cannot.

Nevertheless, it might be easier than you think to build and develop resilience. You can ask yourself the following questions in order to support the development of both individual and team resilience.

1. “Is there any possible scenario by which this could actually turn out to be a good thing someday?” (Rao, 2017).
2. “What can I – and my team – do to make this scenario come about? How can we turn this event into a good thing that we can all celebrate someday in the future?” (Rao, 2017).



10 HABITS

We all know that life has challenges. To thrive and survive in today's environment, we must be able to manage challenges and recover from setbacks. Here are 10 habits or rituals that can help us cope.

1. Be present and do not merely live in the future, chasing the next big thing. Learn from the process and apply yourself.
2. Make sure to stay focused on the task at hand, pay attention to contextual and environmental changes, and concentrate on what you want to achieve.
3. Maintain perspective and avoid getting lost in negative emotions. Many of us struggle with self-doubt and experience Imposter Syndrome.
4. Stop dwelling on all the “maybes”, as for future decisions it can be paralyzing while the hindsight can become counterproductive.
5. Make sure to get enough sleep. Lack of sleep decreases focus, self-control, and patience, while it increases aggression.
6. Engage in physical activity and exercise regularly. It not only supports health and well-being, but it releases endorphins – supporting a positive mindset.
7. Focus on nutrition, as your body needs good fuel to optimise performance. A healthy diet supports physiological and psychological health and well-being.
8. Build and maintain a support network (Rook, 2019) or personal board, as talking to someone you trust may help to gain perspective and/or support you in your decision-making process.
9. Create meaning (Rook, 2019) and provide purpose to both work and private life, keeping in mind that purpose can change over time (Coleman, 2017). Avoid misconceptions such as: “*purpose is only a thing you find, purpose is a single thing and purpose is stable over time*” (Coleman, 2017).

10. Reflect and learn from situations and experiences (Rook, 2019), as this will prevent making the same mistake twice.

Adopting these habits and rituals will not only build resilience but also prevent burnout and improve work-life balance (Paliwal, 2016). This can also benefit your association as a whole, as being unbalanced can impact entire organisations. Finally, a resilient person maintains a positive outlook and sees opportunities during difficult times while moving forward. Setbacks are only temporary (Folkman, 2017).

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Good governance
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FEATURE

The Do's and Don'ts of Good Governance

Good governance is a crucial aspect of effective organizations, regardless of their size or purpose. It involves adopting a set of principles that promote efficiency, transparency, and ethics in decision-making and operations. The goal of good governance is to always seek the best outcomes for stakeholders and build a sustainable future for all.

Introduction Remi Deve

The Global Governance Institute (GGI) has identified ten key themes that make up the foundation of good governance. These themes are clarity of purpose, roles, and behaviors, the application of principles, leadership and strategic direction, effective external and internal relationships, transparency and public reporting, systems and structures, challenge on delivery of agreed outcomes, risk and compliance, and organizational effectiveness.

Clarity of purpose is the starting point for any system of good governance. Boards must understand the purpose of the organization and the vision set by those who govern it. Principles driving the organization must be of fundamental value and must reflect the organization's purpose. Good governance requires clear strategic direction and leadership within the governance system to ensure the organization is proactive rather than reactive.

Effective external relationships are crucial in good governance as it is rooted in the interests of all stakeholders. Leaders of the best boards and governing bodies are directly engaged in stakeholder relationships. Effective internal relationships also play a vital role as boards must understand the feelings and actions of the organization's internal stakeholders. Good communication between those who run the organization and those who work for it is essential to avoid any organizational issues.

Transparency and public reporting are essential components of good governance. Openness builds confidence and early disclosure supports early improvement. The best organizations have empowered staff who welcome comments and are committed to putting things right when they go wrong. Systems and structures must be in place to benchmark against relevant best practice and track compliance against standards and targets. Boards must be well-informed about tools available to help identify and measure

outcomes and to measure the organization's performance against relevant benchmarks.

Risk and compliance are critical aspects of good governance, especially for healthcare organizations. The board must ensure that they always observe the compliance regimes and that the risk system used by the board properly alerts management and the board of any danger of failing to meet compliance standards. Good governance requires boards to regularly discuss the value they can add to their organizations and to carry out their responsibilities to the highest standards of probity and transparency.

In the end, good governance is about creating value for stakeholders and building a sustainable future for all. The ten key themes identified by the GGI provide a comprehensive overview of what good governance entails. Organizations must adopt these principles and remain focused on them to ensure their governance practices are effective and efficient.

The Guiding Principles of Effective Governance

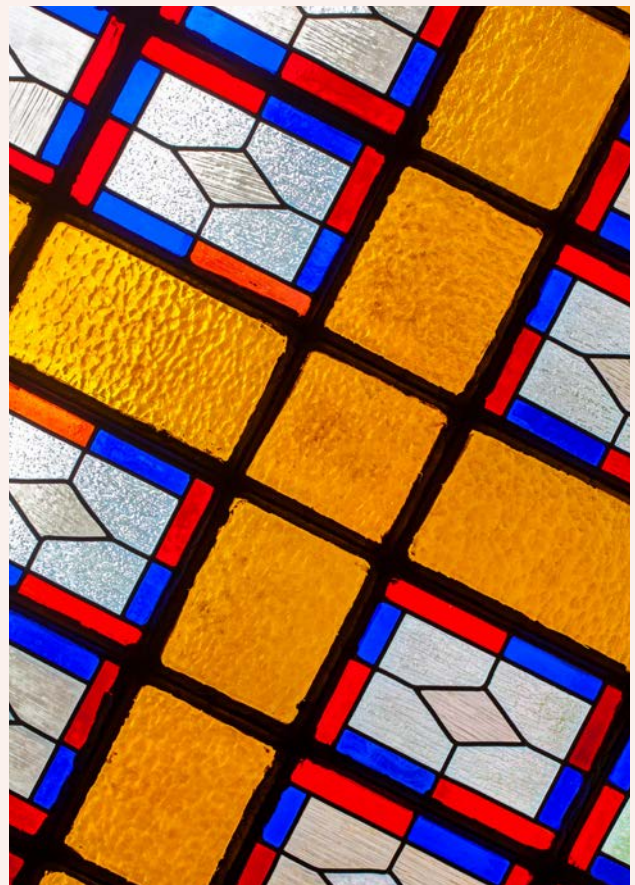
Stylianos Filopoulos, the founder of Association By Design and co-chair of the ESAE Governance Community, provides some guidance to assist you in your governance endeavors.

When it comes to good governance, two things are certain: It is necessary, and it is difficult to achieve.

Good governance is essential to ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, impact, and accountability of the organization. It demonstrates a commitment to acting in the best interests of the association, through the operation of transparent and ethical processes that comply with the law and can withstand scrutiny. On the other hand, bad governance leads to a lack of trust and engagement and can result to the termination of the association.

With changes in society and the environment, the concept of good governance has also evolved. Based on my 15+ years of experience in association management and looking at the current socio-economic landscape, I will try hereby to outline elements of good governance.

1. **Fit for Purpose:** Governance is a tool to achieve your purpose. Before creating a governance model, it is imperative to know what you stand for and what you want to achieve. Make sure to have a clear vision and set of values in place before hiring a good lawyer to help you draft the association articles and assure legal compliance. The by-laws should be a living document.
2. **Board & Secretariat Empowerment:** Board and secretariat should know and understand the association's articles, the processes, their role, and liability. To this end, the association articles should be kept simple, with more detail and flexibility in the internal rules that can be updated as needed.



The executive team should be educated about the governance process and the importance of following the rules. A good practice is an induction session for every new Board Director where the association governance model is thoroughly explained. Do also invest in directors and officers (D&O) insurance, it can create a sense of safety to the Board and the CEO and will help decision making.

Make sure that the internal rules are followed in the daily management. Sometimes, internal rules lay down complex processes in legal language. Visualising internal processes using timelines can facilitate implementation. Also be flexible if something does not work, check why, and change it if needed.

3. Power Transition: Do not allow Presidents and Secretary Generals to stay on forever. Good governance requires smooth transitions of power, achieved by limiting the mandates of the President (and why not of Secretary General/CEO) and having clear procedures in place. A President-elect system is a good solution for consistent transitions.

4. Diversity & Inclusion: Good governance in a rapidly changing VUCA environment requires diversity and inclusion to build capacity for change. The association's leadership and members should represent its diverse stakeholder groups and be open to new ideas and perspectives.

Emphasis should be placed on the perspectives of the younger generation as their beliefs on community involvement, diversity, and collective action can significantly improve and sustain associations for the future. Consider adding board members with advisory positions to assist leadership in making well-informed and diverse decisions. ASAE and ESAE are excellent resources for developing a DEI strategy.

5. Agility & Start-Up Mentality: Associations must have an agile mindset and be willing to restructure as needed, not just for the sake of change. Introduce design thinking and member-centric approaches as they are key to innovation. Think about project management principles (discipline agile, portfolio management) to organise your secretariat as a response to mobile working and employee mobility.

In every case avoid creating one more technical committee to discuss agility.

6. Digital Preparedness: The digital age requires associations to be technologically prepared to maximize performance, impact, and accountability. Over the next few months we will be experiencing a wave of new AI tools*. In a short period, applications will provide unimaginable operational support, streamline processes, and improve decision-making and strategies. However, associations must also prepare for the ethical use of AI and its potential impact on their *raison d'être*.

7. ESG: The environmental and social challenges require everyone to contribute to sustainability. The Environmental Social Governance (ESG) has become a key requirement in the corporate world, and associations must prioritize ESG as well. This can be achieved by developing an ESG plan and setting specific targets, such as reducing carbon footprint and promoting diversity and inclusion. While ESG might seem more relevant for bigger associations, smaller associations can also take actions and lead by example for the communities they represent (e.g. with materiality impact assessments).

8. Accountability: Setting measurable and achievable performance and impact indicators can help the association stay on track. It also allows people to make sense of what they are doing and feel proud for their achievements.

I hope this makes sense and is useful no matter if you are a trade association, a professional society, or an NGO and despite your size and the interests your associations represent. If you think that this is too much for your association to handle, I will suggest two simple guiding principles.

Do not build silos and do stay in a flow state.

*To write this article I had some very interesting discussions with ChatGPT.

For more information about ESAE, with which Boardroom has an exclusive partnership, visit www.esae.eu



Five Key Questions to Drive Your ESG Framework

As associations put more focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives, it's important that they involve stakeholders and make sure their strategy aligns with their organization's values. A look at five questions to use to start conversations around ESG, by **Kristi Donovan**, CAE, for ASAE.

Association executives are navigating the role of their organization in advancing environmental, social, and governance initiatives. There has been an elevated need for a formalized and proactive strategy due to the mission-driven purpose of associations and the strong ESG stance embraced by the private sector.

If your association is looking to develop an ESG strategy, here are five questions to ask to engage stakeholders in discussions and uncover ESG strategic priorities that align with your organization.

1. What Are the Key Goals and Targets That Resonate With Stakeholders?

The purpose of ESG discussions is to create the space for organizations and professionals to recognize their impact and make choices about their future. Creating tangible goals and objectives and key results (OKRs) is a critical step in creating your ESG framework.

To establish your goals and OKRs, you can start with research initiatives to reveal which ESG priorities resonate with your

stakeholders and what their commitment is to different aspects of ESG.

This is an opportunity for associations to take an honest look at their impact on these issues and weigh stakeholder perspectives in the context of their industry/profession and its relationship to the issues. Once you have the data, use it to inform facilitated goal-setting discussions with your board and employees that can later be incorporated into your strategic plan, competencies, and programs.



Case in point: The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) set the goal of advancing DEI principles in medical education. They are developing tools for individuals, organizations, and communities that aim “to add depth to ongoing efforts; help guide curricular and professional development; and facilitate critical reflection, formative performance assessment, cross-continuum collaborations, and improvements in healthcare services and outcomes.”

2. What Is Our Time Horizon?

Determining whether the ESG initiatives are on a short, medium or long-term horizon can help formalize the steps, objectives, and timeline for the initiatives. It can also help forecast the financial investment and resources needed to work toward the vision. Setting this time-horizon goal also brings accountability to stakeholders since the progress can be tracked, measured, and articulated in strategic discussions.

Case in point: The American Institute of Architects is working “to exponentially decelerate the production of greenhouse gases contributing to climate change” with a goal of net-zero emissions in the building sector by 2030.



3. How Will We Integrate ESG Into Organizational Reporting Structures, and How Do We Measure Success?

ESG is a critical investment in the social capital of the industry/profession you represent, and it is a long-term investment that stakeholders need to believe in. Associations may be tempted to trim back on their efforts if stakeholders don't clearly realize why they are engaging in the efforts and tracking progress.

Incorporating ESG measurements into your dashboards and reporting structures will communicate that ESG is a priority and help your team evaluate the resources needed. You can use the data to measure progress, as well as to define the connection from profitability and revenue back to the ESG strategy.

Case in point: The Society for Personality and Social Psychology leverages attendee data to make decisions on where to host meetings based on carbon footprint.

4. What Resources and Skills Are Needed to Accomplish ESG Goals?

Work cross-departmentally to identify the resources needed (e.g., employee time, financial investment, program and policy development) to implement ESG goals. Undertake market research and utilize industry studies to uncover the operational and competency needs to implement each initiative.

Case in point: The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics undertook research to better understand member needs and interests around industry sustainability. Leveraging the research, AIAA gathered a cross-departmental team of stakeholders to explore how the association could comprehensively address the topic utilizing staff and volunteer expertise, as well as its portfolio of products and services.

5. How Are Associations Partnering for Exponential Impact?

Associations can make a collective impact when they combine resources and mobilize their stakeholders. Look for ways to partner with associations and businesses to advance your ESG goals through campaigns, petitions, volunteer projects, and so forth. In addition, be on the lookout for associations that are advancing the goal you are working toward and reach out to find ways to collaborate.

Case in point: The American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, International City/County Management Association, National League of Cities, and YMCA of the USA have joined forces to transform workplace culture by prioritizing employee mental health and calling on leaders to sign onto an initiative called ‘Striving for Mental Health Excellence in the Workplace.’ In doing so, leaders make a commitment to support employee mental health and influence a workplace culture shift.

A strategic focus on ESG can strengthen relationships and trust between stakeholders and the association, optimize investment returns, improve overall association strength, and positively impact our world. Start these crucial conversations around ESG and then leverage sustainable business practices to create even greater impact.

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The Center for Association Leadership

Mastering the Art of Good Governance

According to **Denis McEvoy**, AC Forum Secretary General, good governance can seem a daunting prospect; however, ultimately and quite simply, it facilitates the effectiveness and continuity of an association.

In large part, the implementation of proper governance in the not-for-profit sphere has been upsettingly recent and in many instances has been in reaction to high-profile charity scandals. Most associations have a somewhat disorganised origin: founded and operated for many years on an entirely voluntary basis. Because of this, the implementation of effective governance structures can present painful challenges and resistance. There are some easy Dos and Don'ts to help overcome these hurdles.

DO

Know your roles

Board members need to know their duties. An initial briefing for candidates, followed by signing a volunteer agreement and a thorough onboarding process will do the trick.

Create the culture based on values

A first and important step to a healthy organisational culture comes from how the board functions and communicates. Defining core values and using them as guardrails for all membership engagement, activities and partnerships must be sacrosanct.

Listen (...and hear)

It's a simple one, but often abandoned in lively debate. A board full of people focused on having their next turn to orate is not one focused on good governance.

Be ambitious

Ambition is a virtue. For a board, ambition is critical and its absence leads to torpidity. Governance need not be to the detriment of an

association's ambition, rather it facilitates it. Ambition need only stay within the lanes created by a strategic plan and a proper risk management framework.

Tell the organisation's story

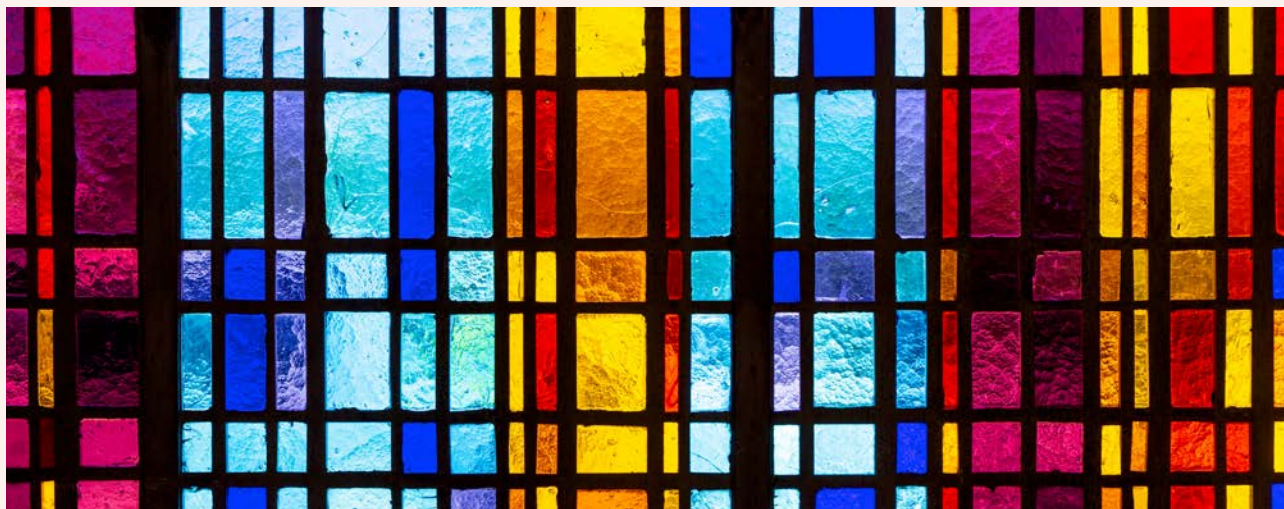
An organisation can do a lot of good, but without the board telling its story there is a failure to assure sustainability. Deliver on the strategic plan and proudly inform anyone that will listen!

Engage the members

Focusing on the strategic plan, work plan, and governing documents to the exclusion of engaging members might still give the appearance of a good governance structure, but in reality will lead to mission drift and stagnation. Listening to what the members want is not a difficult undertaking and can take many shapes. A relationship with the members helps to ground the board and keep focus on the strategy and core values.

Support your professional staff

Board and staff must have a solid working relationship. At the core of this is mutual respect, but beyond that is the duty of care of the board to the association's staff. Making the staff's wellbeing an ongoing board consideration contributes to a positive organisational culture. A board does not need to parent the staff, quite often it can be as simple as creating an environment in which honest exchange can take place and communicating the board's continued support of the staff. In addition, a simple way to ensure a well-functioning association is to listen to the



staff and their experience and advice. They are the professionals hired to do the job, getting muddled up in operations distracts from the actual work of the board.

DONT

Engage in groupthink

It's somewhat of a buzz phrase and a get-out-of-jail free card for when things go awry and no one is to be held accountable, but groupthink is entirely detrimental to the health of an association. It must be constantly guarded against through mindful assessment of board engagements by all board members.

Be reactive

Strategic planning is clearly important and crisis management has an important role. What does not in any way benefit an organisation is kneejerk, reactionary decision-making. Considered deliberation within the established framework is always the answer. Don't get spooked easily!

Overpromise

Setting expectations is important for morale, reputation, resource management. Avoidance of overpromising does not undermine the advice to be ambitious, but it does mean that ambition should lead to achievable goals with room for over delivery.

Ignore skills mix and board development

A board that sits around the table in a self-contented manner without engaging in regular self-review is a recipe for disaster. Keeping a balance of skillsets of board members and facilitating

ongoing development of the board is the only way to prevent deficiencies from taking root. When a board becomes unbalanced, even in a short period of time, it can take years to fully repair the damage.

Worry about individual credit

All board members should get acknowledgement for what is a big commitment (if being done right). However, getting tied in knots divvying up credit is a complete distraction and inevitably leads to board disunity.

Sacrifice core values for growth

Core values can never be infringed, even for growth or benefit. Don't lose your soul to gain the world.

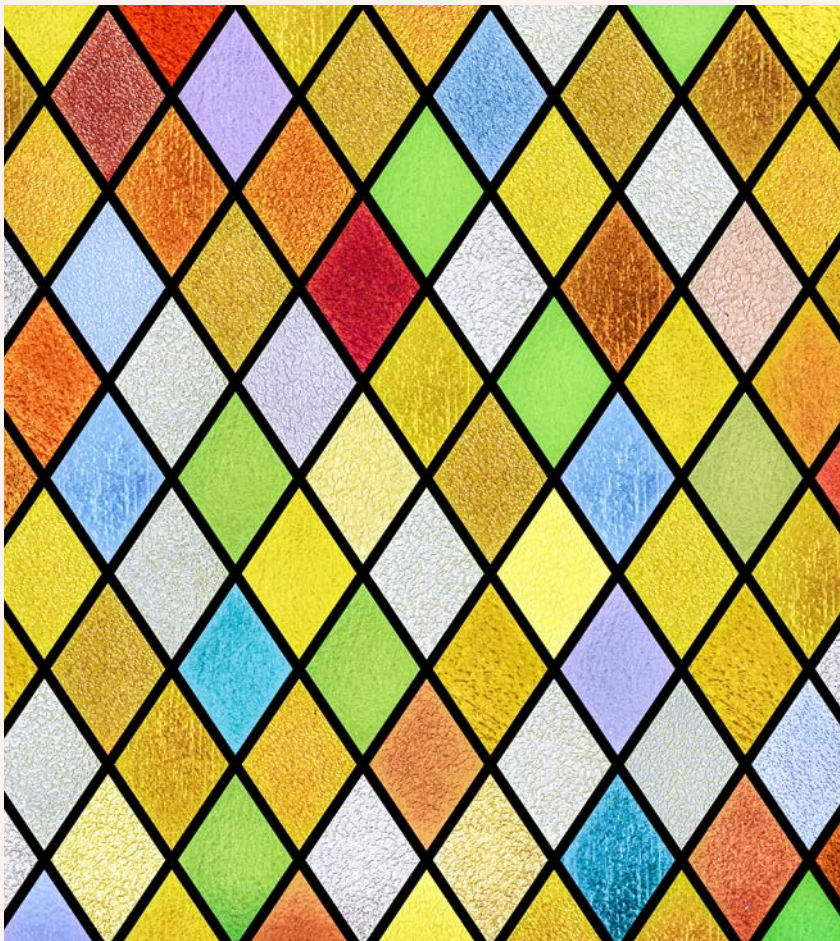
Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. And it omits the basic requirements for a full suite of documentation, policies, procedures, board meeting preparation and conduct. Adopting a governance code will make this a straightforward process. The Dos and Don'ts here are intended to smoothen the ongoing implementation of good governance. Best of luck on your good governance journey!

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A Tale of Two Governors

International Advisor to Global Association Hubs **Martin Sirk** believes that people have a greater impact on outcomes than processes, regardless of the governance model. However, the potential harm caused by a single "bad governor" with significant influence over the association's decision-making is often neglected in discussions of this topic, despite being a leading cause of governance failures.



Governance is a complex and multifaceted issue: query Boardroom's website and you'll find 114 articles touching on the subject, even before this magazine edition's appearance adds another dozen. 'Good' governance, 'agile' governance, 'purpose' governance, 'virtual' governance, 'green' governance. Governance structures, models, historical norms, performance metrics, rules and skills. You'll find analyses on different models for defining authority, determining accountability, optimising decision-making. And helpful advice on how to run governance meetings, designing Board election processes, what kind of support structures are needed, risk management models, and much, much more. A powerful body of work exists on best practice across a wide range of structural, procedural and evaluative dimensions.

But there's a lost piece in this jigsaw. A missing link that destroys the chain's integrity. A loose cannon on the logically-constructed, well-organised deck of SS Good Governance: it is, quite simply, the "bad governor"!

BAD NAPOLEON

*"He behaved like a little Napoleon";
"They've poisoned the well"; "Five years of*

progress undone"; "Staff trust has been utterly destroyed" (all real quotes from conversations with - necessarily anonymous - association CEOs... except that the swear words have been removed!). I've heard stories of financial corruptibility and dodgy dealings, nakedly self-interested decision-making, plotting and scheming, ethical inadequacy, self-aggrandisement and even narcissistic sociopathy. Associations are not immune from the concept that power has the tendency to corrupt, nor from the reality that many of those who crave power are those who should ideally be kept furthest away from the matches and petrol!

Lower down the danger scale, but still existentially risky for associations, here's a non-comprehensive list of stereotypes that I'm sure many readers will recognise:

- One Year Wonders - the President who insists on doing *everything* in their 12 months in office.
- Status Kings/Queens - "Never mind the recent collapse in recruitment, why wasn't I given the Presidential Suite?"
- Sample of One-ers -Who use anecdotal member complaints to promote policy changes.
- The Iconoclast - "I was elected to shake things up!"
- The Careerist -Views everything through the prism of whether it's good for their future prospects.
- I Always Know Best - the star surgeon, company CEO, senior bureaucrat, emeritus scientist who comes from a world where no-one ever says "no!"

The big problem is that NO governance model or structure is immune to the damaging impact of even a single "bad governor" near the levers of power (the bad apple in a barrel process kicks in - their malign influence spreads like wildfire). Such people tend to be

self-confident, extrovert, and excellent at persuading others to support their agenda. Sometimes their true nature isn't even visible until they reach high office. But once they reach such positions of authority and power, they benefit from the natural deference that others give to the title, influencing the behaviour and thinking of both fellow Board members and ordinary members. Their character deficiencies and personal agendas can radically change group decision-making, by-pass checks and balances, create dangerous new norms and precedents, drive the CEO and staff to distraction, and most importantly, divert resources and attention from the association's Mission.

Challenging the behaviour of a "bad governor" or at the extreme, removing them from power, is an exceptionally difficult (and potentially career-damaging!) procedure, as evidenced by the rarity with which any sanctions are imposed. And the higher up the authority ladder they've climbed, the more difficult it is to effectively apply any rules or sanctions that might exist within the association's governance model. The most common "solution" is for everyone to quietly wait until they step down from their position of authority, and to hope that the institution itself hasn't been permanently damaged.

PLEA TO ASSOCIATIONS

Given this seemingly intractable problem, what then is the unspoken secret to good governance? "Good governors" (of course!).

Whilst this may sound flippant, it isn't. It's a plea for associations to place far more emphasis on and to devote far more resources towards the careful evaluation, encouragement, selection, training and development of volunteer leaders who have the most valuable character traits - empathetic and altruistic to start with - of good governors, than on tweaking the

structures, rules, processes and bureaucratic details of their governance models. If you can get enough of these right people in place, they can *always* find a way to move the association forward, no matter how bad the deficiencies in the model!

This is particularly important for international associations with aspirations to good global governance: to elevate individuals with an understanding of and empathy for cultures and working environments beyond their own, who will not be too deferential to titles to speak up honestly, who can express the philosophies, perspectives and concerns of members in their region of the world, and at the same time maintain a commitment to the global mission of the association. In many regions of the world, such people are too humble to put themselves forward, leaving the field open to others with less worthy motives (bad governor types exist in every culture!). No association should leave itself in such a vulnerable position, but few take the proactive steps needed to identify and nurture a cohort of the right kind of future leader within every region and sector of their community.

Will this proposed shift of focus from processes and structures to people entirely eliminate the risk of bad governors? No, of course not! But it will significantly reduce the risk, not only because more of the right people will be encouraged into leadership positions, but because of greater institutional awareness of the damage that can be caused, which can and should lead to stronger safeguards.

Martin Sirk is International Advisor to Global Association Hubs, a partnership between Brussels, Dubai, Singapore and Washington DC, which is committed to promoting the societal value of international associations, and to stimulating the discussion of important issues through events and articles such as this, which appears as part of a collaborative partnership with Boardroom.

Bigger, Better, Bolder, Braver

The Benefits of Working with Fully Inclusive Boards

Good governance ensures the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of an organisation. It demonstrates a willingness and ability to act in the best interests of the association, ensuring the operation of effective, open and ethical processes which adhere to the law and stand up to scrutiny.

But what does that mean practically speaking?

Words Jennifer Jenkins, IAPCO member & director of Worldspan

I am a firm believer in the power of associations to bring about change and improve the world. Despite this, the governance structures used by these groups are frequently criticized. If you look up definitions of 'good governance,' you'll find negative language used. It is important to recognize that boards and their members are not just supervisors and regulators, but also play a key role in driving innovation and progress.

Notwithstanding the obvious frustrations of working with sometimes overly complex committee structures (necessary to ensure representation, diversity and inclusivity) my own experience of working with association boards is that they are always open to challenge and, importantly, to change. And, without exception, the bigger and broader the board, the bolder and braver the output.

We know there are four main reasons why we join associations – why we choose to actively “associate”. To achieve a sense of belonging; we are tribal. To achieve a degree of distinctiveness; we are unique. To achieve a sense of status; we are peer-minded. But most importantly, to reduce uncertainty; we are reassured. Evidence suggests that in times of crisis – in troubled times like these – we feel the need to associate more and not less. To compare experience, to share practice, to set benchmarks and to map a collective way forward.



SIMPLE DEFINITION

Andrew Corbett-Nolan of the Good Governance Institute offers a simple definition. *"Good governance makes it easy to do the right thing and really difficult to do the wrong thing."* And association boards are always concerned with doing the right thing. Making the right decisions for the member communities they serve. They are, in fact, collectively tasked with making progress. Of course, decision-making can be slow, sometimes even laboured, but there is no direct correlation between a fast decision and good or right decision.

But what does this mean – practically speaking – in my world of association management and specifically conference, congress and content design and delivery? How does good governance help to drive better education, engagement and end goals?

Good governance is reliant on good governors, or trustees. In most cases, volunteer trustees. And, in practical terms, that is where good governance pays off.

Trustees drive consensus in decision making. When we reach consensus, we make better and sometimes braver decisions. Without exception, my association clients are the first to innovate. And are, contrary to popularly held opinion, less risk adverse.

As conference and congress partners and planners they have been the first to go paperless, the first to go green, the first to go virtual and the first to go back in the meeting room.

Trustees drive clarity of role and purpose. When specialist expertise is needed, committees and their sub-committees are a blessing, not a curse. Without exception, my association clients are better able to group and re-group to cover decision-making ground. Committees are small and powerful allies in the race against time. And time is always of the essence when it comes to conference and congress planning.

Trustees drive commitment to the cause. When it comes to attracting new members, sponsors, and supporters, trustees are ready to step up to the challenge. I have found that my clients in the association sector are well-equipped and eager to promote the shared cause and leverage their professional connections for maximum impact.

Trustees drive engagement. When we need to design and deliver better delegate experiences, trustees are our best "mystery shoppers." Without exception, my association clients are better able to input into key content, programming and marketing decisions because they are, after all, delegates. They have vested interest in the success – educational and commercial – of conference and congress.

It is easy to get frustrated with committee-based decision making. Associations and the agencies (or in-house) providers who support them do not use the same, or even similar, business models. Agencies strive to do more with fewer people. Efficiency is a driver. Associations strive to do less but involve more people. Outcome is a driver.

Take a moment, at the beginning of any new project to map your committees, your communications, your channels and yes, your cast of committee characters of which there will be many. Put one person in charge of managing the planning process in a way that works for all parties.

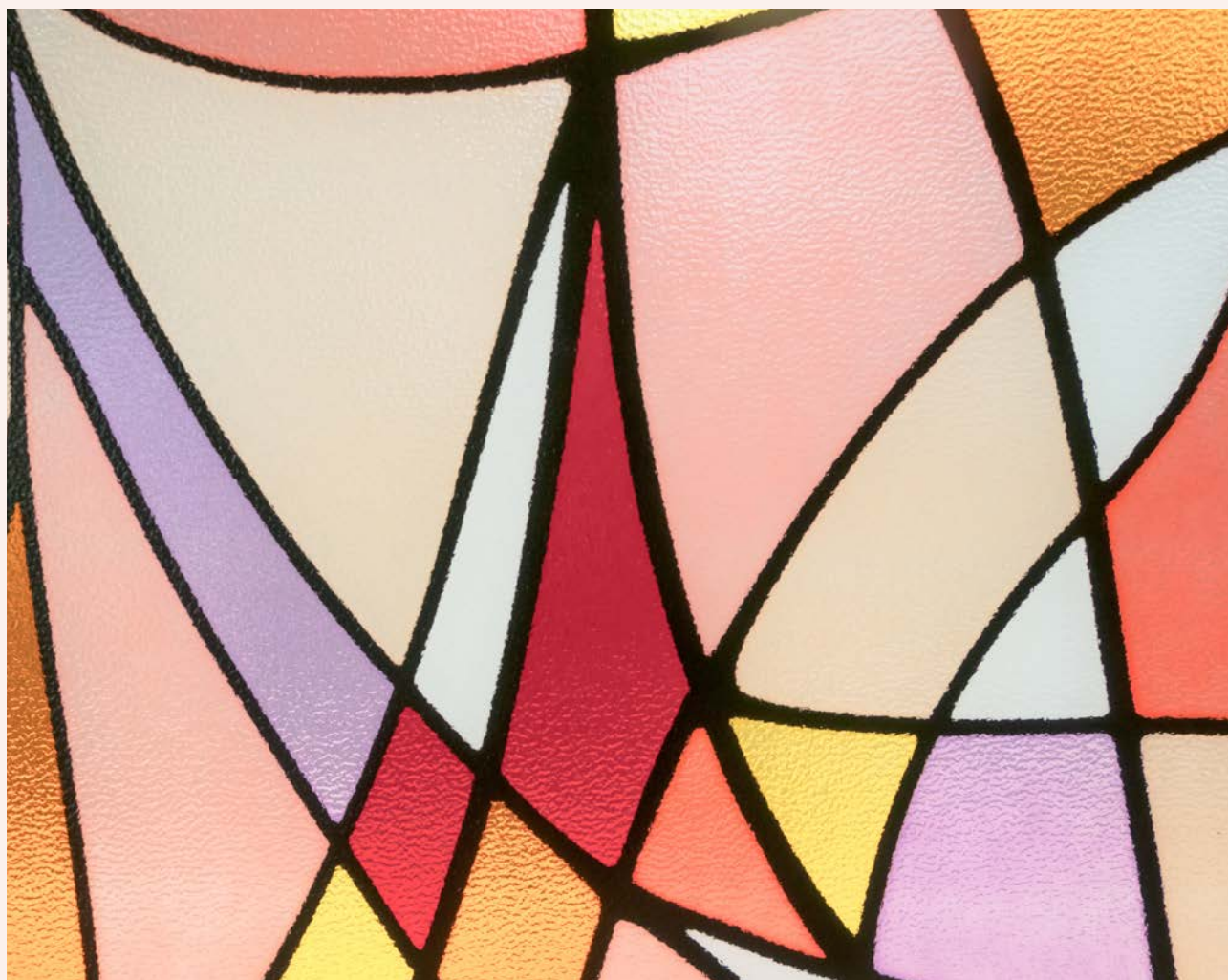
Good governance drives successful outcomes. It may sometimes feel like a challenge but never let it become a chore.

IAPCO is a not-for-profit membership association, registered in Switzerland. IAPCO members are Professional Congress Organizers (companies, not individuals) that have qualified for membership under the detailed application process by demonstrating that they consistently deliver PCO services to their clients and partners at high quality standards. They retain their membership through annual quality checks and reviews by the IAPCO Quality Committee



Clear Mission, Clear Governance

Sven Bossu, CEO of AIPC, believes it's crucial for smaller associations to match their governance model with their mission and purpose.



Having a clear mission and a clear governance is important for any organization, whether it is a large financial organization or a small association. Having worked in both, my personal experience is that it is even more important for smaller organizations to be clear about their purpose and to have a process in place which allows for checks and balances, ensuring that mission and actions are fully aligned.

When I worked for global financial institutions, I quickly became acquainted with solid processes that were in place to make sure that the mission of the organization was clearly articulated and backed by rigorous governance processes which made sure that the organization's activities were in line with this mission. This came with a lot of oversight committees, meetings and communication. And perhaps a bit of red tape.

When switching over to association management, it equally quickly became clear that having a good governance in place is even more important for this type of organization. Per definition, associations exist because they provide value to their members and in most cases this value is not monetary. In the case of AIPC it is about connecting a global community of convention centre leaders, engaging with upcoming talents and creating new networks, providing unique professional education and recognizing excellence.

However, there are three pitfalls for small organizations like AIPC. The first one is that you do all the above, but you don't communicate about it. The second one is that you divert from the core purpose of the organization and put effort in activities

which could be fun, but don't bring value to the members. And the third one is that you become complacent and do the things you always did. In all three cases, the end result will be loss of members and eventually the end of the association.

A good governance will address all of the above, when respecting a number of ground rules. First of all, strong communication. To be honest, this is an area in which AIPC has grown over the last 24 months, especially as our "classic" communication channel - our face-to-face meetings - were not happening. While there is still room for improvement, both the frequency and the format allow for efficient and effective communication to the members. We now have weekly updates, pro-actively invite members to give input/feedback on activities (versus the classic post-event surveys) and explore new formats, such as the recently launched "CEO Talk".

Secondly, having a diversified, balanced and "working" Board of Directors. I am very proud that the Board of AIPC is very diverse from a geographical and inclusiveness point of view. Having this mix of people with different backgrounds and skillsets on the board brings diversity of thought and decision making. Just as an example: when having discussions on sustainability and the role AIPC needs to play, it is very enriching to hear the views from both Julianne Jammers from Lausanne and Taubie Motlhabane from Cape Town, who are facing very different circumstances when it comes to making convention centres carbon zero. One lesson learned is that when you have

such richness of opinions, it is also very important to leverage this and allow for open discussions (versus opting for the very managed board meetings, in which all decisions are taken upfront). This brings more value to both the association and the board members.

And thirdly: continuous improvement and risk management. The full AIPC activities portfolio is reviewed on a regular basis, both from an impact, effort and financial point of view. This allows not only to improve existing products and services (or even abandoning some of them), but it also creates the intellectual "space" to re-think what we do and how we do it. At the same time, this must be accompanied by identifying potential risks and taking steps to mitigate them in order to help protect the organization and its members. Doing this in full transparency, not only with the board but with the full member community is a challenge and similar to our communication, there is room for improvement - but we're getting there.

Doing all the above in a small organization like AIPC is not straightforward. But I believe it is the only way to continue to deliver value to our members across the globe and demonstrate the purpose and reason of existence of AIPC.

AIPC represents a global network of over 190 leading centres in 64 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide.
www.aipc.org





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Balancing Tradition & Progress: Discovering Guadalajara

When considering where to host your next conference in Latin-America or the Americas – depending on your perspective – you may be pleasantly surprised by the country's second-largest city, Guadalajara. Located in the state of Jalisco, it seems to be seamlessly blending traditional Mexican elements such as *mariachi* music, tequila, and *charros* (regional cowboys) with modern advancements which makes it a smart and sustainable destination. Known for its green spaces and progressive outlook, Guadalajara, indeed, offers a unique and fulfilling experience for conference attendees.

Words Remi Deve



Guadalajara boasts the largest economy in western Mexico, due in part to its ideal weather, breathtaking natural surroundings of mountains and forests at an elevation of 1,500 meters, and strategic location. The state of Jalisco alone is home to 51 industrial parks, contributing to the region's economic growth and stability. A blend of traditional industries, such as textiles, footwear, petrochemistry, paper, tequila, furniture, sugar, food, fur, forestry, and mining, and modern industries, such as electronics and apparel, form a thriving business district that attracts both local and foreign investment.

MEXICO'S SILICON VALLEY

Guadalajara is Mexico's leading producer of software, electronics, and digital components, with telecom and computer equipment accounting for roughly 25% of the country's electronic exports. It attracts numerous international companies, such as General Electric, IBM, Intel Corporation, Hewlett-Packard, Siemens, Flextronics, Solectron, SCI Systems, and Oracle, among others, who have established manufacturing facilities, research centers, and satellite offices in the metropolitan area. As Guadalajara was designated by the Federal Government and MIT as the new Digital Creative City and received significant funding to invest in building the necessary infrastructure to attract new IT companies, the city has become the hub of Mexico's IT software industry, earning it the nickname "Mexico's Silicon Valley."

In addition, the city is home to numerous technology institutes, educational centers, and 12 highly prestigious technical and engineering universities, including the Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG), Universidad Panamericana, the Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESO), Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education, and the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG). This abundance of specialized, highly-qualified human capital is a testament to Guadalajara's commitment to fostering innovation and technology.



It's easy to understand why Guadalajara's motto is 'Traditionally Modern'. Gustavo Staufert, General Director of the Guadalajara Visitors and Conventions Bureau, describes Guadalajara as a unique blend of the modern and traditional: *"The city is recognized as one of the 17 most innovative digital cities in the world, but also has a rich history and cultural heritage."* According to Staufert, *"Guadalajara can be thought of as the heartland of Mexico, embodying this duality that sets it apart globally while maintaining its authentic Mexican identity."*

AMBASSADORS AS TROUBLE SHOOTERS

Guadalajara can count on a strong network of ambassadors to tell the world what it's good at. These are both local and national champions, who Staufert describes as *"trouble shooters"*. The ambassadors are enthusiastic about promoting Guadalajara's value, and have the full support of the Bureau. Their role is to connect OFVC with the right people in various organizations and help overcome any obstacles in bidding for a conference. Staufert explains that the ambassadors take pride in this role, and OFVC is there to support them in any way they can.

An ambassador at heart, Dr. Victor Manuel Larios Rosillo, who serves as a Professor and Director of the Smart Cities Innovation Centre at the University of Guadalajara, played a key role in bringing the first IEEE International Smart Cities Conference to Guadalajara. To leverage its existing vibrance, the city has indeed embarked upon a campaign called the Ciudad Creativa Digital (CCD) project to drive its transformation into a Smart City and become a global centre of digital media creation.

Reflecting on the events that led to this, he states that as part of their Digital Creative City activities, they submitted their Smart City project to an international contest held by the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) in search of a city with the potential to become a Smart City. They ultimately earned recognition and became the first reference city of IEEE. *"As a result, in 2015 Guadalajara hosted the first IEEE International Smart Cities Conference (ISC2), which solidified its status as an IEEE Core City and a hub for exchanging best practices, sharing innovations, and fostering education and collaboration,"* Rosillo said.



Paulina Balbontin Duron, an oceanographer who leads a team of high-class professionals at Acuario Michin, is another ambassador for Guadalajara: she was instrumental in securing the International Aquarium Congress for the city in 2024. While she acknowledges the support she received from the Bureau during the bidding process, she also recognizes the value of conferences in general. She argued: *"Guadalajara boasts a wealth of knowledge, intellectual power, and expertise in various fields, along with top-notch facilities suitable for hosting large conferences. The presence of quality hotels, restaurants, and transportation options adds to its appeal as a conference destination. The city benefits not only from the increased economic activity generated by the visiting guests and attendees, but also from the added prestige of hosting leading international intellectuals in a particular field of expertise – in my case oceanography. This elevates Guadalajara's reputation as a hub for knowledge and results in a mutually beneficial scenario."*

SUSTAINABILITY IN GUADALAJARA

What may not be widely known is that Guadalajara is taking steps towards making a positive impact through sustainable initiatives. Recognizing that business events have a responsibility to be both effective and sustainable, the city has set out to become a leading example in this regard.

In this regard, the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (AMG) embarked on a noteworthy endeavor in 2018. With the objective of enhancing mobility planning towards sustainable modes in its nine unique municipalities, each with distinct characteristics in terms of size, population density, urban development, access to services, and more, AMG initiated the creation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. The plan aims to promote sustainable, accessible, safe, and economically efficient modes of transportation, making Guadalajara a role model for others to follow.

The city is actually taking sustainable initiatives seriously, with some venues leading the charge. For example, Expo

Guadalajara, the city's largest venue, established a foundation to promote "socially responsible events" and foster corporate social responsibility. The foundation invests in social co-investment projects and partners with organizations and companies to create high-impact initiatives. Meanwhile, Akron Stadium, located a few kilometers from the city centre and which will be one of the host for the next FIFA World Cup, is equipped with eco-friendly technology, from its lighting

to its scoreboards and seating, ensuring it leaves a minimal carbon footprint.

Additionally, the Guadalajara Visitors and Conventions Bureau will be a pioneer in the region this year in initiating an ambitious project to transform the events that take place in the destination, integrating sustainability and legacy to catalyze regeneration. They will be mentored by international leaders such as GDS-Movement & Meet4Impact, who are currently partnering to help destinations

and organizations increase sustainability, drive regeneration and achieve social impact. The first event that will integrate this transformative vision and purpose in Guadalajara will be Intermoda, the largest fashion business exhibition in Latin America with 39 years of history. It will take place in July at Expo Guadalajara.

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Meeting infrastructure update

A trip to Guadalajara, which Boardroom happily took part in in January, would not be complete without a few site inspections of key meeting venues and hotels. The list below is, of course, not exhaustive.

EXPO Guadalajara, the largest venue in the city, boasts accessibility that can accommodate up to 60,000 daily visitors. Its expansive ballroom features the largest column-free space in Mexico, with a capacity for 10,000 people. Conveniently located with 3,300 hotel rooms within walking distance and equipped with modern indoor and outdoor facilities, this venue is an ideal option for hosting a major conference.

The **Performing Arts Center**, located near the University of Guadalajara, is not only a hub for the arts but also for conferences. It features five theatrical spaces, with the largest being Room Plácido Domingo, which is dedicated to opera and dance and has a seating capacity of 1800 spectators. The other rooms have capacities ranging up to 900 people. Adjacent to the Center is the Cineteca with 5 screening rooms, including one premier room that can accommodate 383 people. A 12,800-sqm expo hall is also being constructed right outside the Center, adding to its versatility as a conference venue.

Espacio 1500 is another suitable option for events of varying sizes, with rooms and terraces that can be adapted to accommodate the event's size. Located in a privileged area with stunning views of the city, it can host up to 800 attendees across 9 different event halls. If Espacio 1500 is not large enough, the nearby JW Marriott provides a modern and luxurious option. This LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building has 191 rooms and 6 meeting rooms, making it a convenient option for those looking for additional space.

Of course, the city, with about 28,000 hotel rooms in total (and another 3,000 currently under construction)

boasts accommodation for all kind of budgets. The recently opened **Hotsson Hotel**, located near EXPO Guadalajara, has 216 rooms. The hotel features three meeting spaces on the ground and first floors that can host up to 350 attendees.

If you prefer the comfort of international brands, the **Hyatt Regency Andares** with its 257 rooms is a solid option. Situated in the heart of Zapopan's thriving financial, technological, and commercial district, it features an elegant ballroom that can accommodate over 800 people theater-style. **Hilton Midtown** is another example of Guadalajara's mix of grandeur and sophistication. Located near La Minerva and the University of Guadalajara Assembly Hall, the hotel offers a modern atmosphere and 12 meeting rooms with flexible event space, capable of accommodating up to 700 people.

Additionally, the city is filled with other cultural venues that are well-equipped to host major congresses. For instance, the **Cabañas Cultural Institute**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, seamlessly blend culture, functionality, technology, and architecture.



INSIDE THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Case Study

The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Scientific Symposium

The 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium took place 9 – 15 October 2022 at Boardwalk Convention Centre, in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Jointly organized by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) and the Sustainable Seas Trust (SST), with the support of the South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB), the event offered a unique region-wide and global platform to discuss all things related to what is now known as the blue economy. It was also a perfect opportunity to demonstrate South Africa's sense of hospitality.



The **Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)** is dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific, and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences with a view toward sustaining the use and conservation of its marine resources throughout the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region, which consists of 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Réunion (France). WIOMSA is particularly interested in linking the knowledge that emerges from research to the management and governance issues that affect the region's marine and coastal ecosystems.

Meanwhile, **Sustainable Seas Trust (SST)**, a science-based organization, works to protect Africa's marine resources for the benefit of all who live on the continent.

SST was founded in 2006 as a long-term education trust aimed at ensuring marine sustainability and alleviating the poverty of coastal communities through education and skills development.

The organisation originated out of the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP) when it was a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) flagship programme. ACEP operates in the Western Indian Ocean with partners in Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Tanzania.

THE SECTOR WIOMSA AND SST OPERATE IN

Both WIOMSA and SST fall under the blue economy, which advocates for the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and

job creation while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.

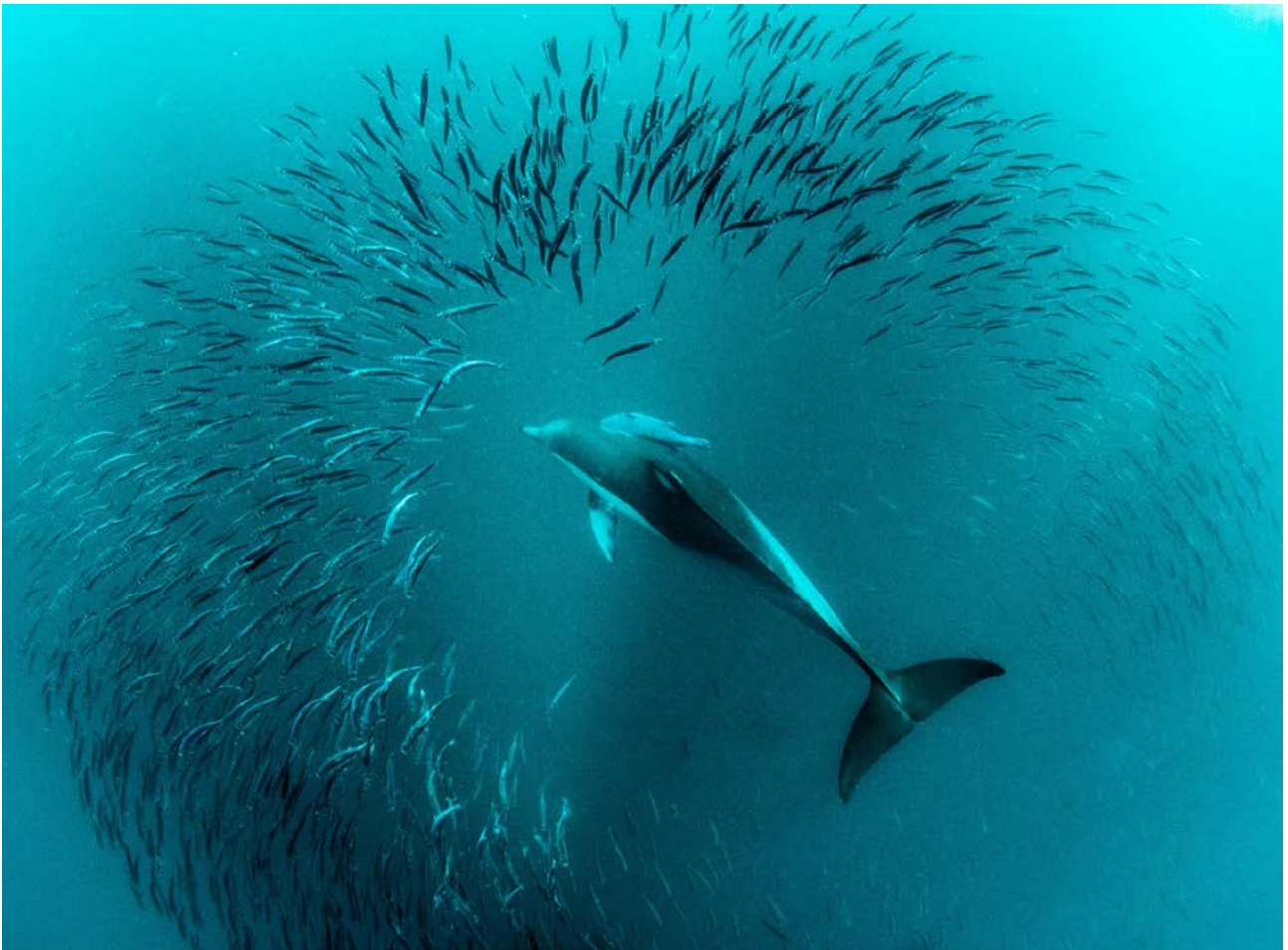
WIOMSA is dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific and technological development of all aspects of marine sciences in the Western Indian Ocean region.

SST cares about the marine environment, the animals that make the oceans their home, and the people who use and enjoy them. The organisation aims to grow a network of stakeholders in the conservation and waste-management sectors to facilitate best practices around conserving our seas and managing the waste that flows into them

THE 12TH WIOMSA SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

The WIOMSA Scientific Symposium is a triennial event that was first held in Mombasa, Kenya, in 1990.





In partnership with the Sun International Boardwalk, Nelson Mandela University, and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, SST put in a proposal to jointly host the 12th WIOMSA Scientific Symposium – the largest open scientific conference focused on the marine and coastal environment in the Western Indian Ocean. The event offered a unique region-wide and global platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity development, strategic action, and cooperation. It also presented an opportunity to showcase innovative solutions for addressing the challenges facing coastal communities,

policymakers, management authorities, and the private sector in the region.

VALUE TO THE SOUTH AFRICA ECONOMY

The WIOMSA Scientific Symposium is Africa's foremost meeting of minds in marine science. The 2022 event drew 1000 delegates – many representing key policy influencers from 33 countries across the continent. It boasted a rich scientific programme, which included 7 Keynote presentations on topics of regional and global importance, 150 oral, and 315 poster presentations, and 13 mini

symposia. Due to the extensive range of ongoing research activities in the Western Indian Ocean, the symposium included 56 separately themed sessions.

Such was the significance of the WIOMSA Scientific Symposium that the United Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development endorsed the symposium as an official UN Ocean Decade action. The event also served as the launch platform for Our Blue Future, a multi-stakeholder regional alliance uniting a diverse group of stakeholders with the common goal of ensuring a healthy, prosperous,

and resilient future for the communities, businesses, and ecosystems of the West Indian Ocean.

Events such as these aid in fulfilling the mandate of increasing arrivals to South Africa, bolstering the economy, and positioning the country as a world-class events destination. The impact cannot be underestimated: During the Meetings Africa conference in 2018, it was announced that business events contributed R115 billion (9.4% of South Africa's gross economic product) to its economy in 2017. The country welcomes more than 1 million business event delegates annually, and the business events industry created over 250 000 jobs, both directly and indirectly.

PARTNERING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU

The South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB) supported the 12th WIOMSA Scientific and made a significant contribution to the event's success, particularly with regard to the bidding process for WIOMSA.

The collaboration with SANCB also gave participants the opportunity to partake in local tourist and leisure activities.

The last day of the symposium was set post-conference excursions and tours organised by Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.

"The symposium has been recognised at a global level as a very important activity that contributes to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, [which is to say] we need to establish the science that we need for the oceans that we want in Africa," said Dr Arthur Tuda, WIOMSA Executive Secretary.

More on all SANCB's services
at www.southafrica.net/gl/en/business

How the SANCB can help associations

The South Africa National Convention Centre (SANCB) offers comprehensive support for planning and hosting business events in the country. It acts as a neutral source of information and assistance, and works in partnership with local convention bureaux to provide tailored support for association planners. The SANCB's team leverages their expertise, planning skills, and knowledge of the destination to help make conferences in South Africa both successful and stress-free for organizers and attendees.

What does SANCB do?

The SANCB offers support throughout the entire process of bidding and hosting conventions. When bidding for conventions, they assist with research, bid strategy development, and content creation for bid documents and presentations. They also play a crucial role in connecting with government officials, lobbying and promoting bids, arranging local site inspections, and working with local convention bureaux. When hosting conventions, they assist with collateral materials, provide guidance on government regulations, and offer insight on destination and local concerns.

In addition to this, SANCB also provides marketing support for South Africa as a destination and for events held in the country through promotion and publicity efforts. They actively work towards increasing attendance and adding a unique South African touch to the events they support.

Which sectors are targeted?

The SANCB prioritizes efforts to bring events to sectors that the government has identified as areas for future growth. By hosting major events in these sectors, the country can see significant acceleration in economic benefits.

Delegate boosting

The SANCB focuses on increasing delegate attendance for associations by coordinating efforts and providing marketing and promotion support. They understand that having a high number of delegates is crucial for a successful congress or convention, and offer three different packages to assist with boosting attendance: standard, standard plus, and elite. These packages are tailored to meet different needs, taking into consideration factors such as the international association agenda, support provided in the bidding phase, delegate origin and number, seasonality, duration, and economic development criteria.

Onsite event services

During SANCB-registered events, where active support has been given during the bidding process, the SANCB will co-ordinate a number of on-site services that will enable South Africa to promote its image and take full advantage of the benefits of holding such events.

Meetings Africa

Lastly, the SANCB team is responsible for managing Meetings Africa, a trade show for the business events industry organized by South African Tourism. The key goal of Meetings Africa is to foster the rotation of meetings across the continent and provide a premier platform for the regional business events industry to showcase their offerings and attract more global and regional events to Africa.

Harnessing Canadian Cleantech Power for Greener Conferences

Canada provides a unique opportunity for business events in the cleantech space. Known as a welcoming, safe and easily accessible destination - with world-class conference infrastructure - Canadian cities like Vancouver, Montréal and Halifax are home to a wealth of sector expertise which visiting associations can leverage to enhance their event.

Words Marc de Faoite

With a flourishing industry dedicated to sustainable solutions, Canada is at the forefront of the cleantech space. Decades-long investment from Canada's public and private sector has fuelled the country's leadership in sustainable transportation, clean energy and much more, making Canada the ideal conference destination for associations eager to engage with the latest developments in this arena.

Canada has some 1100 companies active in a cleantech market that Clean Energy Canada predicts will employ 650,000 people by 2030, and which by Canada's Innovation Economy Council estimates was worth \$2.5 trillion in 2022.

Speaking at the last Cleantech Forum, Canadian start-up launch pad MaRS's cleantech director, Tyler Hamilton discussed the thirteen Canadian cleantech ventures - out of a field of 11,000 applicants - that made the prestigious Global Cleantech 100 list, the highest number of any country: *"The record number of Canadian companies on this year's list demonstrates we are more than just a cleantech innovation powerhouse. We are producing high-impact companies and commercializing climate and environmental solutions that the world needs and wants as we march to net-zero."*

INNOVATIVE VANCOUVER

Six of the thirteen Canadian companies featured on the Global Cleantech 100 list are based in Vancouver and its surrounding area, as are more than 200 cleantech companies, employing in excess of 3,500 people. These include world-leaders like Ballard Power Systems, Ionomr, and Carbon Engineering. Vancouver has the world's largest hydrogen fuel cell industry, accounting for an impressive 16% of the global market share, and the smallest carbon footprint of any major North American city.

Meanwhile the University of British Columbia's Clean Energy Research Centre, and Simon Fraser University's partnership with

Foresight Cleantech Accelerator Centre, are among the many institutions engaged in cleantech research. Conference organizers can leverage Canada's expertise and experience to make conferences both informative and inspiring, by hearing from local expert speakers, engaging in B2B exchanges, and participating in site tours of cutting-edge facilities.

While all this intellectual capital provides plenty of interest to associations, knowing that the Vancouver Convention Centre is the world's first double LEED Platinum Convention Centre, in a city that has the highest percentage of sustainable hotels of any city in the world, makes Vancouver's appeal as a prime cleantech event destination self-evident.

LEADING MONTRÉAL

Host to the 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference: COP15, Montréal topped the Union of International Associations' annual list of top host cities for international conventions in the Americas, while it was also the first city in Canada to join the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index. The *Palais de Congrès de Montréal* conference centre has an Eco-Conditionality Policy, which includes discounts of up to 10% to organizations taking tangible actions relating to sustainable development, while its Palais Boreal programme, established in 2019, facilitates carbon emissions offsetting.

Montréal's focus on sustainable solutions extends beyond the MICE industry, with 1000 organizations and over 200 public research groups working in the cleantech sector. The city is home to phenomenal research institutes and organizations - like the McGill Centre for Innovation in Storage and Conversion of Energy - which are focused specifically on innovation, and cutting-edge companies like CarbiCrete. This carbon removal technology company aims to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas



© DESTINATION VANCOUVER/HUBERT KANG

emissions by replacing cement as a binding ingredient in precast concrete products, injecting CO₂ into the fresh concrete to provide strength instead, while permanently sequestering CO₂.

Meanwhile Montréal's Effenco is focused on the electrification of heavy-duty vehicles through the use of ultra-capacitors, instead of the more standard lithium batteries, while GHGSat, as its name suggests, specialises in the remote monitoring of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Montréal's cutting-edge expertise is available to conference organizers, with the possibility for bespoke facility tours, as well as keynote speakers, allowing associations to tailor exciting and engaging events that add real value to the conference delegate experience.

SMART HALIFAX

Associations in the cleantech space would be in good company when considering Halifax for their event. With the highest number of cleantech firms in Atlantic Canada, the city was chosen to host the 2023 Smart Energy Event, Canada's CleanTech Event for Municipalities and Utilities. The city's home province of Nova Scotia produces the least waste per capita, and has the highest waste diversion rate in Canada, making it easy for meeting planners to take advantage of leading recycling/composting programs.

Halifax is also demonstrating its commitment to sustainability as one of sixteen Canadian destinations to participate in the GDS Index as part of the Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan.

The city is home to cleantech research centres like FORCE (Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy) and Dalhousie University's Clean Technologies Research Institute.

Similar to Montréal's CarbiCrete, Halifax's CarbonCure is also focused on potentially industry-disrupting technology in the reduction and sequestering of greenhouse gases in concrete manufacturing and applications. The chance to see this type of technology in action, and to speak with the innovators and technical experts, can help planners to add meaningful value to events.

In conclusion, these are just some of the impressive list of green and cleantech credentials that Canada brings to the table, and part of what has burnished Canada's reputation as a global leader in sustainable meetings. But while cleantech is obviously important to the national economy, as well as its future, it is just one of the key sectors Canada has prioritized. Beyond these three key cities, Canada is home to a multitude of destinations from coast-to-coast capable of providing associations with the perfect place to host their events.

For impartial insights, inspiration, and introductions, planners can reach out to any of the Destination Canada team, or directly contact Virginie De Visscher (Senior Director of Business Development, Economic Sectors, Destination Canada Business Events) at Devisscher.virginie@destinationcanada.com

Maastricht, A Knowledge Hub Innovation Powered by Women

Maastricht is well-known for being the site of the signing of the Treaty on European Union in 1992, which led to the creation of the euro and increased cooperation between European countries. However, what may be more noteworthy today is that the Dutch city has developed into a hub of knowledge and innovation, with a multitude of international organizations and educational institutions in various fields.

Words Remi Deve



This is becoming increasingly important in a world economy driven by knowledge and innovation, with universities, research institutes, and clusters playing a crucial role. Maastricht, with its rich history and culture as well as strong international presence, has embraced this concept and become a hub of collaboration between public and private organizations working towards a better future. The city is home to one of the best young universities in the world*, multiple public and private research centres, six medical schools, and

three university hospitals, all within 30 kilometres of its city centre.

DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

Situated at the Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus, Maastricht University Medical Center (MUMC+) and Maastricht University are two of the largest employers in the city, creating a robust and dynamic academic environment.

Boardroom magazine interviewed two women in leadership positions, Prof. Dr.

Pamela Habibović (Rector Magnificus of Maastricht University) and Dr. Helen Mertens (President of the Executive Board at MaastrichtUMC+).

Both women acknowledged the international significance of the work being done at their institutions, enhancing Maastricht's status as a globally impactful destination.





"Maastricht is a knowledge hub when it comes to medical sciences and innovation," says Dr. Mertens. "The MUMC+ is one of the seven

university medical centres in the Netherlands. We combine our healthcare with scientific research and academic education. We offer the best possible care to our patients. Besides, new treatments and diagnostic tools are being invented and developed here. We work on fundamental research to generate deeper knowledge on the origin of diseases and the functioning of the human body. We valorize our knowledge on campus in for instance start-up and scale-up companies."

Dr. Pamela Habibović continues, *"Maastricht and the Limburg region are known for their quadruple helix collaborations, which involve the university, hospital, local businesses (including both small and large industries in the area), and the province and municipality government. Additionally, Maastricht is a prime example of a European city, located near Germany and Belgium, resulting in a highly international population that brings together diverse scientific perspectives."*

VALUE OF CONFERENCES

According to them, the value of conferences for Maastricht is two-fold: the city benefits from the influx of visitors and the university benefits from showcasing its research and expertise to a wider audience. Maastricht University Medical Center (MUMC+) and Maastricht University are an integral part of this, adding value in terms of health promotion and complex academic care, which the Brightlands Campus has become, among many other reasons, known for. For many years now both organizations have been working with the Maastricht Convention Bureau which is the independent party that facilitates and supports them in organizing conferences. The infrastructure for hosting medical and scientific conferences is also a valuable asset for the Maastricht Health



Campus, and the nearby congress centre, MECC Maastricht, provides excellent facilities for hosting large conferences.

"As an organizer of an international conference with about 1000 participants in 2018, I can speak from experience," says Dr. Habibović. "Visitors love Maastricht, the people working at MECC Maastricht are highly professional and the city is easy to reach. On the other hand, it is important to hold international conferences to showcase the city and the region as a knowledge hub, adding to its value as a great touristic place."

Dr. Mertens couldn't agree more: *"The fact that we have an ideal infrastructure for hosting medical and scientific conferences is a very valuable asset of the Maastricht Health Campus. We do have the knowledge, brainpower and expertise in various medical fields and the nearby MECC Maastricht provides us with excellent facilities to host large conferences. Combined with the availability of quality hotels, restaurants and transport is a key for success. The city of Maastricht itself also benefits from the presence of all those guests and attendees that need to eat, sleep and spend their free time around. But to have hundreds of international leading intellectuals in a certain field of expertise visiting Maastricht also boosts our reputation as a university medical centre. It really is a win-win situation."*

PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Female leadership is an important aspect of Maastricht, with the university having the second highest number of women

professors in the Netherlands., though there is of course still significant disparity between disciplines. This commitment to diversity and inclusion is emblematic of the values of the city and its institutions, and the university is committed to promoting this.

"We have quite a reputation nowadays of female leaders in Maastricht," says Dr. Mertens. "My predecessor at Maastricht UMC+ was the first female CEO, and the mayor of Maastricht being a woman is another excellent example of female leadership. But it is actually not about gender, it's about content. Having the right person, on the right spot, on the right time."

As Dr. Habibović concludes: *"It is crucial to promote a work environment and a city where diversity and inclusion are prioritized and transformation is ongoing, even if a heavy-handed approach is not desired. The glass ceiling is much more than achieving a position. It's about acceptance. I hope by leading by example to show others that not only is it possible, but that it's really just a no brainer."*

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Applied Health Sciences Meet Business Events

A melting pot of cultures, Singapore is considered one of Asia's top destinations. Its diverse background, use of advanced technology and commitment to progress have led the small city-state to reach high levels of knowledge and expertise. Economic sectors like Applied Health Sciences, Innovation & Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Urban Solutions among others offer opportunities to business events organizers for partnerships and insights and added value for conference attendees.

Words Vicky Koffa

Singapore can definitely boast about being a major hub in Asia for the applied health sciences industry. Over the years its reputation has been growing steadily in the Biomedical, Healthcare and MedTech sector. A combination of quality manufacturing capabilities, pro-business environment, as well as dedication to innovation and research have given the country the edge to quickly transform medical breakthroughs into viable patient solutions.

PROGRESS IN HEALTHCARE

Enjoying one of the world's most efficient healthcare systems, patients in Singapore (and about half a million overseas patients yearly) benefit from accessibility and proximity to the latest medical technologies and drug developments. In fact, the country ranked first in 2020 in Bloomberg's Health-Efficiency Index, which tracks life expectancy and medical spending in 57 economies around the world.

Springing from investment and collaboration between academics, government and private entities, Singapore now features a few major healthcare achievements. Examples include the creation of the Experimental Drug Development Centre - a national platform for discovery and development of therapeutics and diagnostics that save and improve the lives of patients, and the Target Translation Consortium, which coordinates early-stage drug discovery efforts across academia, healthcare institutions and government agencies.

Singapore's ageing population has shifted the focus towards remote medical monitoring devices, assistive devices, and virtual healthcare services. Researchers need to relieve the pressure on the hospitals, which has served as motivation for advancements in preventive and rehabilitative healthcare. Moreover, the National Electronic Health Record (NEHR) project, launched a decade ago, means that each citizen will have his or her own electronic medical record.

BUSINESSES ARE DRAWN TO SINGAPORE

This innovative, collaborative and holistic approach towards medicine and healthcare has attracted many of the largest pharma firms in the world to set up their regional headquarters in Singapore. In spite of its relatively small size, eight of the top ten pharmaceutical firms such as Abbott, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer are located in the area featuring some of the world's most advanced manufacturing facilities as well as Research & Development Centres. Singapore saw a 24% growth in biomedical manufacturing industry in 2020.

It comes as no surprise that Singapore is a regional leader in MedTech, since the country's goal is to become a smart nation over the next years. It is home to more than 60 multinational MedTech firms, including Becton Dickinson, GE Healthcare and Thermo Fisher Scientific, creating a solid ecosystem with highly-skilled professionals, which amounts to 10% of Asia's MedTech market. Solutions for diagnostic imaging departments, a high-speed sterile line for live virus filling and a service hub for portable



healthcare equipment repairs portray some of the innovative work being done there.

In such a thriving ecosystem of science and collaboration it is inevitable that the start-up scene would follow suit. Firms such as Structo which specialises in dental equipment solutions using 3D printing, and Hello Health Group which provides consumer health information to 35 million users across the region are bright examples of the government's investment in start-ups.

A VALUABLE ASSET FOR BUSINESS EVENTS

Associations could not miss the opportunity to create value for their conference attendees. Like-minded conferences benefit from Singapore's innovative Healthcare sector by forging meaningful partnerships and collaborations between key opinion leaders, institutes, firms, start-ups and research organisations.

A recent example was the 14th World Stroke Congress, which took place at the Suntec Convention & Exhibition Centre from 26 to 29 October 2022. Held in Southeast Asia for the first time, the event was attended by more than 4,400 visiting and virtual delegates from 107 countries. The conference gave a chance to experts to discuss the betterment of stroke care, whereas the exhibition held at the same time showcased the latest innovations in medical technology.

In commemoration of World Stroke Day on 29 October, the Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA) organized the Stepping Out For Stroke day. Over 800 healthcare professionals,

members of the public, 180 volunteers and 100 stroke survivors and their families gathered to raise awareness for stroke and funds to support stroke survivors and their caregivers.

The 7th World One Health Congress was held from 7 to 11 November 2022 at Marina Bay Sands' Sands Expo and Convention Centre. More than 1,400 in-person and 1,000 virtual delegates from academic institutions, civil society, government bodies, private sector, and multilateral organizations from around the world came together to improve health and well-being worldwide. Their main focus was the global One Health movement which seeks solutions to prevent and mitigate crises that originate at the animal-human-environment interface. The program of the event was full of important keynotes, panel discussions, novel research presentations, and insightful debates, highlighting important collaboration opportunities between sectors.

Singapore has now created a strong name for itself in the Applied Health Sciences industry, offering unique knowledge and collaboration opportunities and added value to association conferences.

More information

www.visitsingapore.com/mice

Sustainably Minded Adventurers Gather in Lugano

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) is a global organization that promotes responsible adventure travel and supports the growth of the adventure travel industry. It organizes the Adventure Travel World Summit (ATWS), an annual event that brings together adventure travel professionals from around the world to network, learn, and exchange ideas. In July 2021, the ATTA announced that the 2022 ATWS would be held in Lugano, Switzerland from October 3-7, 2022.

Words Marc de Faoite

HUMAN CONTACT & CONNECTIONS

According to Shannon Stowell, CEO of the [Adventure Travel Trade Association](#), *"It's clear to us: We as an industry can't do without international events. To actually shake hands - look into each other's eyes. This kind of exchange is priceless and moves us forward because the business of travel relies heavily on trust."* Stowell went on to emphasize the value of holding the ATWS in a location that is easily accessible by clean and reliable public transportation and where attendees can immerse themselves in the local culture. He also highlighted the ATTA's efforts to minimize the event's environmental footprint by using sustainable venues and reducing single-use materials.

The ATWS in Lugano was a significant event for the adventure travel industry, attracting more than 750 delegates from around the globe and representing a variety of sectors within the industry. The Summit took place at the Palazzo dei Congressi, which is located in the heart of the city and offers a wide range of amenities and services.

The theme of the Summit was sustainability in adventure travel, and the event focused on the four natural elements



– air, water, fire, and earth – as a way to emphasize the importance of nature in the adventure travel industry.

Attendees participated in educational sessions and adventures that explored the relationship between nature and adventure travel, and discussed ways to prioritize sustainability in the industry. These included presentations from industry experts, panel discussions, and interactive workshops. In addition, attendees had the opportunity to participate in off-site adventures that highlighted the natural beauty and adventure opportunities in the Ticino region.

SUPPORTIVE SWITZERLAND

“Switzerland Tourism, Ticino Turismo, and other organizations provided significant support for our event. This included assistance with logistics, marketing, and other aspects of the event, which was crucial in helping to make the Summit a success and showcasing the Ticino region as a premier destination for adventure travel,” said Stowell. Switzerland Tourism and Ticino Turismo worked closely with the ATTA to promote the event and attract attendees from around the world. In addition, they provided support with logistics, including transportation and accommodation for attendees.

Despite the fact ATTA had to implement health and safety measures, the ATWS in Lugano ticked all the boxes. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the industry, and many businesses and destinations have had to pivot and adapt to new challenges. ATWS allowed attendees to explore the challenges presented by the changing landscape of the adventure travel industry and exchange ideas on how to overcome them.

DIVERSITY & INNOVATION

The event also provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about new and innovative products and services that can help them adapt to the changing landscape of the adventure travel industry.



The event attracted a diverse and international group of attendees, and provided a platform for meaningful discussions and exchanges of ideas on the future of adventure travel and sustainability, including climate action with the likes of Tomorrow's Air as an example of the ability for anyone to make a difference, whether a traveller or a business.

In addition to the educational sessions and networking opportunities, ATWS also featured keynote speakers who provided insights and inspiration on the theme of sustainability in adventure travel. These speakers included industry experts and thought leaders who shared their experiences and insights on the challenges and opportunities facing the adventure travel industry.

TOUR OPERATOR MARKETPLACE

One of the key successes of ATWS was the Tour Operator Marketplace, which brought together a diverse group of businesses and destinations from around the world. The Marketplace provided an opportunity for tour operators to showcase their products and services, and for attendees to learn about new and exciting destinations for adventure travel. In addition, the MediaConnect session was thought out as a platform for attendees to pitch story ideas to over 40 international travel writers and editors. This was an opportunity for attendees to promote their businesses and destinations to a wider audience, and for media

representatives to learn about new and innovative products and services in the adventure travel industry.

Another notable outcome of the ATWS in Lugano was the increased awareness of sustainability in adventure travel. The Summit focused on the importance of sustainability in the industry and provided a platform for attendees to discuss ways to prioritize environment-friendly initiatives in their businesses and destinations. The educational sessions and adventures gave attendees concrete examples of how to incorporate sustainability into their operations, and the keynote speakers provided inspiration and ideas for how to make a positive impact in the industry.

Stowell concluded: *“The ATWS in Lugano was a successful and valuable event for the adventure travel industry. The support provided by Switzerland Tourism, Ticino Turismo, and other organizations was crucial in making the Summit a success, and the event provided a platform for meaningful discussions and exchanges of ideas.”*

As the adventure travel industry continues to evolve and grow, the ATWS in Lugano will be remembered as a key moment in its development.

**More info on Switzerland
as a convention destination:**

myriam.winneppenninckx@switzerland.com
www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings

Cairns' Second Act

The Cairns you may have been familiar with pre-pandemic has received a significant facelift over the past five years. Now with an influx of new hotels and venues — as well as the multi-million-dollar renovation of the region's flagship venue, the Cairns Convention Centre — visiting associations have a wealth of choices, whether they want to meet in the rainforest or in boardrooms overlooking the bay.

Words Lane Nieset

The people of Cairns talk about living in paradise, a modern city which is the gateway to two natural wonders: the Great Barrier Reef and the world's oldest rainforest, home to the greatest diversity of plants and animals in Australia.

RECENT REVAMPS

The revamped city offers direct flights from all of Australia's capitals (which then connect to Europe), and the domestic airport has undergone a large-scale, \$55 million renovation of both the arrivals and departure lounge. Accessibility extends to accommodations, beaches (which are wheelchair-friendly) and the Great Barrier Reef, which can be explored via custom hydraulic lift — making Cairns an accessible destination for delegates with mobility and other special needs.

In 2020, the Cairns Convention Centre started a \$176-million redevelopment and expansion, adding 10,000 sqm of new exhibition and function spaces, including three, 110-seat meeting rooms; a 500-seat multi-function space; a tropically planted

courtyard; and a 410-seat plenary lecture space — plus a redesign the exterior. The refurbished existing Centre debuted in May 2021, and the expansion will be completed mid-year.

Along the expansive waterfront parks and lagoon, you'll notice a vibrant restaurant and bar scene, the result of the \$28-million Esplanade Dining Precinct project, which features footpaths to make the area more pedestrian-friendly, an extended dining area, vertical gardens and contemporary awnings for better weather protection. And since 2018, Crystalbrook Collection has opened three, new five-star hotels — an investment of more than \$500 million — with Crystalbrook Riley, Crystalbrook Bailey and Crystalbrook Flynn adding 877 rooms to the city's broad accommodation landscape., already featuring many international hotel brands who find the destination appealing.

ECO-CENTRIC EVENTS

In a region encased in nature, Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef places sustainability front and centre. The latest initiative: helping visitors offset their carbon footprint through a collaboration with Reforest, a new platform impacting how events interact with the planet. What does this mean for visiting associations? Reforest can calculate your event's high-level carbon footprint and assist planners in partially or entirely offsetting their event through tree-planting programmes localized to the host destination.

In addition to solutions like Reforest, organisations like Reef Restoration Foundation are creating habitats within sections of the Great Reef by collecting damaged corals, while the Coral Nurture Program, meanwhile, is bringing together researchers and five local Great Barrier Reef tour operators, establishing 124 coral nursery platforms in 30 sites on the Great Barrier Reef, in addition to utilizing locally designed Coralclip to plant more than 76,000 corals. Visiting associations can tap into these programmes and





CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE

help continue the impactful projects underway through donations or excursions with partner tour operators.

As Rosie Douglas, general manager of Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, explains: *"The Australian bureau works with operators that lead the way for your eco-sustainable event. An hour north of Cairns, Port Douglas Daintree was the first in the world to achieve Ecotourism Australia's ECO Destination Certification – we know how to deliver on a green promise."*

And just 10 minutes north of Cairns CBD, Skyrail Rainforest Cableway has become a leader in eco-sustainable tourism by becoming one of the first in the world to hold EarthCheck's Master Certification. And the Reef Fleet Terminal is just a five-minute walk from most city hotels. With more than 600 tours departing daily, visiting groups have plenty of options to take in the local and Indigenous culture in the form of food trails, beaches and accessible outback.

BOOSTING MARITIME DEVELOPMENT

On the horizon, the Cairns Marine Precinct Expansion will help Cairns remain a maritime destination for commercial, defence and recreational industries across the country and internationally. Since the area acts as the gateway to the Pacific region, the precinct services approximately 15% of all Australian registered vessels and close to 80% of all North Queensland registered vessels over 15 metres.

With restrictions due to available waterfront land, wharf length, and constrained deep-water access, the precinct is limited in terms of infrastructure growth to meet the anticipated future demand. The expansion project will allow Cairns to secure larger defence and maritime contracts, and *"cement the region's status as a world leader for maintenance, repair, and overhaul for defence*

and recreational vessels, including superyachts," explains Federal Infrastructure Minister, Catherine King.

Through the creation of a common user facility at the Precinct in Portsmith, and a 5,000-tonne ship lift on the site of the Fearnley Street boat ramp, *"the benefits will flow well beyond the port precinct with jobs creation from trades through to professional services,"* explains Advance Cairns CEO, Jacinta Reddan.

EDUCATION CITY

Since opening in 2015, CQUniversity Cairns' student enrolment has grown 20% year-on-year, every year. To keep up with the growth and Cairns' future as an education city, a new campus is slated to be built next to Cairns Convention Centre, with the capacity for more than 2,500 students and an anticipated impact of generating \$500 million into the Cairns economy over the span of a decade.

"Around a quarter of all jobs advertised in Cairns are for qualified graduates in allied health, engineering, accountancy and cyber security, with many roles going unfilled due to lack of supply locally," explains CQUniversity Vice-Chancellor, professor Nick Klomp. *"We need to grow our own talent pipeline in Cairns, and the only way to do that is by building new teaching infrastructure to support the growing local demand for tertiary education and training."*

Contact

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Do you see **change** as a **positive force**?

In a world that's changing faster than ever, now is the time to hear lessons and learnings, face to face, from others on the same association journey as you.

And when you start to see change as a positive force, nothing can faze you.

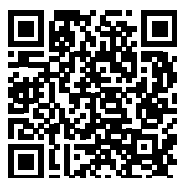
What? Association Focus, delivered in association with ICCA, AC Forum, AMC Institute, ASAE, ESAE and Global Association Hubs, at IMEX Frankfurt. A tailored programme designed to answer – and challenge – the biggest questions of the year ahead.

Where? IMEX Frankfurt, Messe Frankfurt

When? Monday 22 May 2023

Why? Where there's community, there's knowledge

Register today
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23-25 MAY 2023

Association Focus @IMEX Frankfurt

Sharing Best Practice is Key to Growth & Success

"While it's always been useful to learn from each other, this need is now amplified. Coming together to share experiences, best practices and tackle challenges head-on gives association professionals the greatest opportunity to innovate and position their organisations for future growth and success." **Carina Bauer**, CEO of the IMEX Group introduces Association Focus, a dedicated day of learning and connections for association event professionals.

Association Focus, taking place the day before IMEX Frankfurt on Monday 22 May at KAP Europa in Frankfurt, is divided into two streams. One is designed for association leaders, the other for association event professionals.

EVENT DESIGN, EQUITY & COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

Event design, membership growth, equity and commercial strategy all top the agenda of the topical and interactive programme.

→ **Sustainability spearheads the programme** with - *Sustainability - less talk, more action*. This rallying cry has been given extra urgency following an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC), which stated that only 'drastic' cuts in carbon emissions, starting in 2025, could stave off 'climate disaster'. Nika Kurent from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Anne-Laure Leuba from the European Society of Cardiology, Guy Bigwood of the Global Destination Sustainability Movement and UFI's Kai Hattendorf, will all discuss

the immediate, practical steps which associations can take.

→ **How can you plan and executive innovative meetings on a budget?** How can you create the best possible environment for delegates to learn and connect with each other? These are some of the challenges which Jane Cziborra from Alzheimer's Disease International and Brenda Sanderson from Interaction Design Association (IXDA) will address in *Association meeting and event experience design - how to create the wow factor*.

→ At a time when association budgets are under pressure, it has never been more important to focus on **developing commercial partnerships that increase revenue and minimise financial risk**. Fran Rickenbach from the National Association of Nephrology Technicians and Edward Byers from the Canadian Society of Association Executives look at how associations can be creative while also enhancing their revenues in *Developing a robust commercial strategy for income generation and diversification*.

→ **Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion is critical, not only to the success of an association but also the members it serves.** A key part of that effort is supporting and advancing EDI strategies at the top levels of volunteer leadership. *Let's discuss! Diversity, equity & inclusion for associations* will focus on some of the toughest issues that association leaders must address to promote inclusivity.

Delivered in association with ICCA, AC Forum, AMC Institute, ASAE, ESAE and Global Association Hubs and sponsored by Amsterdam and Messe Frankfurt, IMEX's Association Focus takes place Monday 22 May. The day ends with an Association Social where attendees can catch up with industry friends or make new connections prior to the start of the three-day trade show.

IMEX Frankfurt takes place 23 - 25 May 2023.

All sectors of the business events community can register at imex-frankfurt.com/register

Tradition Meets Sustainability in Frankfurt

Frankfurt am Main, the city at the heart of Europe, is an attractive congress destination with a mix of contradictions, offering the traditional and the modern, business and culture, the big-city bustle and peace and quiet.

Frankfurt boasts a remarkable skyline, characterized by numerous contemporary skyscrapers that create the most impressive skyline in Germany. Despite this, the city located on the River Main also possesses a lush, green side. One such example is the presence of one of the largest urban forests globally, and the largest inner-city woodland in Germany. However, Frankfurt's greenery does not stop there, with approximately half of the urban region being composed of green spaces.

The variety of event facilities available in Frankfurt am Main is as varied as the city's own features, and "green" is a notable aspect in this regard. Frankfurt's conference sector is progressively embracing sustainability, with many venues already receiving official certification, and the majority of upcoming construction projects prioritizing eco-friendliness from their inception. Similarly, the hospitality industry in the area is taking measures to conserve natural resources and promote environmental responsibility.

Case in point: the Frankfurt Marriott Hotel, which offers an ample selection of meeting amenities, including Frankfurt's most significant ballroom capable of hosting up to 800 guests, and 23

recently revamped conference rooms. The hotel is at the forefront of the organization's eco-friendliness campaign, known as "Serve 360 - Doing Good in Every Direction," and it endorses the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The hotel is dedicated to establishing a positive and sustainable influence throughout its daily operations and the entire value chain.

Frankfurt has of course several alternative convention locations, including Messe Frankfurt, one of the most massive exhibition and conference centers globally, and home to the IMEX trade fair. The venue is home to KAP Europa, capable of accommodating up to 1,000 attendees, and the initial conference structure to obtain Platinum Certification from the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB). Furthermore, the company, alongside all its locations, aims to fulfill the Environmental Management System (EMAS) regulations by the end of this year.

The arrangement of environmentally friendly conferences also emphasizes mobility, and Frankfurt's compressed size and extensively developed public transportation network facilitate visitors to move around the city promptly and efficiently in a sustainable manner. The Frankfurt Convention Bureau can help associations organize their congresses sustainably by providing advantageous Congress and Congress Combination Tickets, providing boundless access to the city's public transportation system. In addition, they offer comprehensive advice and a wide variety of services for planning and delivering congresses and conferences in Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main region.



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We are thrilled to announce the birth of a triplet:

a Book, an Event Organiser & a Meeting Academy

Born in the spring of 2023, all in good health.

On this occasion, we invite you for a genuine Dutch baby shower.

When: Wednesday 24 May, 8AM (before IMEX)

Where: Frankfurt Marriott Hotel (in front of Messe Frankfurt)

What: How do Dutch people celebrate a new baby? They have a kraambezoek-visit, where they visit the baby at home, often marked by a temporary stork statue in the garden. Visitors are welcomed by a nurse and the parents, who show them the baby. Congratulate the parents and eat a special cracker with sprinkles, then leave within 30 minutes or when it gets too crowded.

Pop in, and bring your friends!

The three babies:



The new book *Meetings, by Default or by Design*, by Mike van der Vijver and Eric de Groot



the new *Boardroom Events* venture, by Cecile Koch and Remi Deve



the *Middle East Meeting Masters Academy*, Simon & Victoria Young and David Benitez.

They are a true triplet as they have all inherited the Meeting Design DNA that was created by MindMeetings' Mike van der Vijver and Eric de Groot over the past 30 years.

The parents:

David Benitez, Victoria Young, Simon Young, Eric de Groot, Cécile Koch, Remi Deve, Mike van der Vijver.

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To register for
the baby shower:





Did you know Boardroom is

A financial contributor to the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative?

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One of the few media partners of The Iceberg?

An ambassador of #Meet4Impact?

To collaborate
with us



Boardroom's strategic partners

