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THE GLOBALIZATION DILEMMA

VOLUME 1 | VOLUME 2 | **2023 VOLUME 3** | VOLUME 4

DRIVING SUCCESS THROUGH
SELF-MANAGEMENT

BUILDING
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A LOOK BACK
AT THE ESAE AWARDS



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The Great Divide?

Stating the obvious once again: the world is standing at the crossroads of unprecedented environmental challenges, and the events industry is no exception. The question arises: why do certain destinations and organizers take the lead in embracing sustainability, while others lag behind or neglect it altogether?

A recent trip to the United States made evident a great divide between Europe and the United States in terms of sustainability when organizing congresses, conferences, and meetings. While both regions share a commitment to hosting successful events, their approaches to sustainability diverge significantly.

Europe has emerged as a global leader in integrating sustainability principles into the fabric of conferences and meetings. The European Union's stringent environmental regulations, coupled with a robust culture of environmental awareness, have driven event organizers to prioritize sustainability. This shift is exemplified by the proliferation of eco-certified venues, the emphasis on carbon-neutral practices, and the adoption of renewable energy sources.

In European cities like Amsterdam, Vienna, and Copenhagen (there are many more of course), sustainability isn't a buzzword; it's a way of life. Meetings are organized with a meticulous focus on minimizing environmental impact. From using public transportation and utilizing energy-efficient venues to sourcing local and organic foods, European conferences strive to set a

benchmark for sustainable event planning. Of course, this is a work in progress, and there is no uniformity across the Old Continent, but at least good will is there.

In contrast, the United States grapples with a more complex terrain when it comes to incorporating sustainability into the events industry. While pockets of progress exist, the overall landscape paints a picture of mixed efforts. The sheer vastness of the country, coupled with a lack of uniform regulations, presents challenges to implementing consistent sustainable practices across conferences and meetings. My recent humble experience just showed that some destinations and planners couldn't care less about waste management, single-use plastic or public transport utilization.

However, it's important to recognize that the US is not standing still. In cities like New Orleans, sustainable event planning is gaining traction. Many organizers are focusing on waste reduction, responsible sourcing, and encouraging carbon offset initiatives. There's a growing awareness that sustainability isn't just about environmental impact; it also encompasses economic and social dimensions.

The great divide between Europe and the US in terms of sustainability in event planning is a reflection of distinct cultural, regulatory, and logistical factors. However, it's imperative that both regions learn from each other's successes and challenges. There lies an opportunity that is yet to be grasped.



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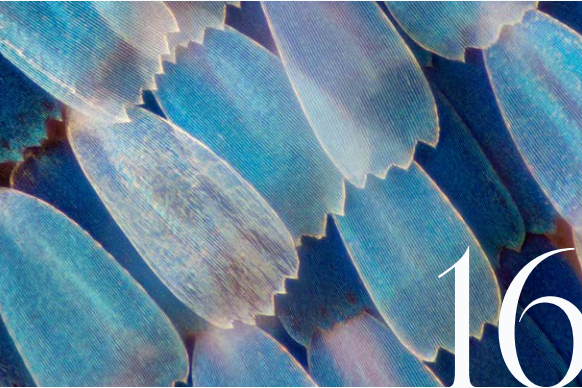
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By rallying members around global sustainability standards, an association serving Colombian manufacturers expanded its global footprint. An article courtesy from ASAE.

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As the world undergoes changes, global associations like AIPC must navigate diverse membership and adapt their roles to better serve members, posing a significant challenge, as notes AIPC CEO Sven Bossu.



A Look Back at the ESAE Awards

In a momentous celebration of exceptional achievements within the association community, the inaugural ESAE Association Awards took center stage in Brussels this June. Guided by Mohamed Mezghani, CEO of UITP and ESAE Vice President, the event, in which Boardroom took part as a jury member, honored the accomplishments of several associations and shone light on high-quality projects, poised to ignite inspiration among organizations far and wide. Now, let's delve deeper into the achievements of this year's four winners.

Words Remi Deve

IMPACT AWARD: THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF LIVER (EASL)

At the International Liver Congress in London last year, EASL showcased impactful social projects, collectively known as 'Love your Liver,' strategically designed to promote liver health awareness, encourage early detection, and foster community engagement and participation.

In UK capital notably, two key projects were implemented: visits to local primary schools to educate young minds about liver health and the operation of a mobile liver screening clinic. These projects align with EASL's goal to shift the focus of liver care from end-stage management to prevention and early treatment.

The impact was remarkable: 159 people were screened, over 60 pupils received essential education on liver health, and through extensive media dissemination, the message reached over 5 million people across Europe.

Crucial to maximizing this impact was EASL's strategic partnership with local actors committed to improving their communities. The collaboration with convention boards, local doctors, public health specialists, and educational

institutions significantly extended the reach of these initiatives.

EASL's commitment to evaluation and strategic planning was also evident in the publication of an impact report after the event, providing valuable insights into the project's efficacy and identified areas for growth. Building on the lessons learned, EASL strategically planned the 'Love your Liver' program for the EASL Congress 2023 in Vienna, resulting in more than double the impact of previous years.

DEI AWARD: WORLDCHEFS

Like a Chef is an employment training program, part of Feed the Planet, initiated by Worldchefs and powered by the Electrolux Food Foundation, AIESEC. Its primary goal is to empower underprivileged individuals with professional culinary skills, offering them opportunities for employment, self-employment, or advanced culinary studies. The program targets diverse groups, including immigrant women, single parents, and teenage orphans, aiming to create a positive impact on their lives.

Aligned with the UN SDGs, the program adheres to the strategic objectives of Worldchefs, focused on enhancing

global culinary standards. Designed to be flexible, catering to the specific needs of each country where it's been implemented, its curriculum spans nine weeks, comprising theory and practical training, covering essential aspects such as hygiene, culinary techniques, and eco-gastronomy, with an emphasis on reducing food waste. To enhance accessibility, teaching materials, such as PowerPoint presentations, chef's notes, recipes, and ingredient lists, are available in multiple languages.

Local partners collaborate by providing facilities for culinary training, and the program has been successfully set up in various countries worldwide. Notably, in Brazil, where the program is most active, an impressive 60.5% of participants found employment or established their own businesses after completion.

Since its launch in 2018, Like a Chef has trained and certified 1,013 individuals across different centres, positively impacting the employment prospects and overall well-being of its beneficiaries. New centres are set to open soon in Paris and Johannesburg.



EVENT TRANSFORMATION AWARD: FOODDRINKEUROPE

In June 2022, FoodDrinkEurope took a bold departure from its traditional Brussels annual event by organizing the #FoodFuture Ideas Festival and Summer Party. Instead of the usual meeting suspects – auditorium, breakout rooms, one-way lectures, etc. – they set up three large tents in the Museum of Natural Sciences garden, in which 23 influential speakers delivered inspiring Ted-style talks on climate change, healthier living, and sustainable packaging.

These were followed by a lively evening BBQ and drinks, creating a buzzing atmosphere. The Ideas Festival provided a platform for cutting-edge ideas and bright minds in the food and drink industry, ranging from promoting healthier eating in retail to showcasing a Portuguese carbon-free village.

FoodDrinkEurope also extended its support to the Ukrainian food and drink industry with the assistance of its member company ABInbev. The festival promoted and served Ukrainian beer at the bar, and even the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU participated in the event.

This year's event was a resounding success, with triple the usual attendance, attracting around 600 people throughout the day. Moreover, the 23 talks were filmed and made available on FoodDrinkEurope's YouTube channel. These recorded talks served as valuable resources for the organization to highlight the event's key takeaways and impacts, offering valuable insights and inspiration for future advocacy campaigns.

Overall, the NoFoodFuture Ideas Festival and Summer Party showcased FoodDrinkEurope's commitment to sustainability and innovation, while fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the industry.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AWARD: INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG LAWYERS

In 2022, the International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA) executed a targeted strategy to enhance its presence and impact on LinkedIn, with impressive outcomes. The follower count surged from 13,490 in January to 17,750 in December, a growth rate of +31%. This strategy aimed to broaden AIJA's reach, engage potential members, and elevate visibility, effectively generating heightened engagement and increased website traffic.

This achievement was rooted in a data-driven approach. With an emphasis on organic growth, AIJA meticulously analyzed 2021 data to identify content preferences and optimal engagement times. The organization leveraged its community's support, featuring events and initiatives geared towards legal professionals in engaging LinkedIn posts. Collaborative partnerships with other legal associations further bolstered AIJA's outreach, while its distinct focus on young lawyers under 45 necessitated tailored social media guidelines.

Results were substantial. The strategy significantly impacted membership numbers, with over 600 new members in 2022. Concrete data collection facilitated regular evaluation and adjustment, leading to strong outcomes such as a 31% growth in followers, an average monthly click-through rate of 1.58%, and an average monthly engagement rate of 3.37%.

Moving into 2023, AIJA continues to leverage this data for further improvements, maintaining the momentum with a follower count that has now surpassed 20,000. The strategy centers on humanizing the association by spotlighting members, commissions, and initiatives, along with forging international partnerships and collaborations.

Driving Success Through Self-Management

Special Boardroom contributor **Ole Petter Anfinssen**, Executive Director of EDBAC and DBA Research Associate at Henley Business School, UK, explains why self-management is key to driving performance.



Self-management is an indispensable element of human conduct and a part of how we manoeuvre our behaviour to reach desired goals (Duckworth Lee, 2009). In one way you could say it helps us to interact with our environment, as it supports our ability to make decisions and overcome adversity.

However, self-management is more than just management; it encompasses self-regulation, how we choose to respond and engage in various situations, how we effectively manage our emotions, thoughts, and behaviour (Gerhardt, 2007). Although our approach may vary depending on context, it is our ability

to assess and execute appropriate responses to a given situation (Gerhardt, 2007). Coupled with self-discipline and resilience, these skills form what can be aptly called our survival kit. Together, they largely determine our ability to cope with life's challenges.

Examining these skills and recognizing their interconnectedness allows us to anticipate our responses and potential outcomes in different situations. This understanding empowers us to navigate through challenges while maintaining optimal performance levels. As a result, associations must grasp the significance of self-management within the workplace and ensure its integration into the organizational culture and DNA, contributing to overall performance.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management consists of “*self-assessment, goal setting, time management, and self-regulation*” (Gerhardt, 2007), which can be taught if one undertakes proper training. The fundamentals of self-management on the other hand are considered to be “*time management, interpersonal communication, organizational skills, basic problem solving*” (Tulgan, 2017), which are characteristics that we all would like to see in our respective organizations, employees, colleagues and of course ourselves (Anfinssen, 2020).

SELF-MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Looking at leadership alone, “... 73% of leaders feel distracted from their current task either “some” or “most” of the time” (Hougaard & Carter, 2017). Consequently, self-management is an important component in driving results and supporting desired outcomes, and up to 65% of leaders are unable to complete all their tasks due to distractions and conflicting demands (Hougaard & Carter, 2017).

Hence, it is suggested that concentration and focus are key to effectiveness (Hougaard & Carter, 2017). For example, there is a relationship between focus and career advancement, and one should plan one's day according to focus and when one is most likely to be most concentrated (Hougaard & Carter, 2017).

The good news is that you can actually learn to increase focus, and a large part of managing yourself is to find purpose and knowing where to find it. However, finding purpose is subject to multiple misconceptions such as: “*purpose is only a thing you find, purpose is a single thing and purpose is stable over time*” (Coleman, 2017). On the contrary, one should not be looking to find one single purpose but provide purpose to everything one does as well as understand that one's purpose may change over time (Coleman, 2017).

10 tips to increase focus and concentration

1. Make sure to get enough quality sleep.
2. Make notes for yourself, so you don't have to constantly go around thinking about things you need to remember – which take focus away from the tasks at hand.
3. Avoid procrastination and stick to your deadlines.
4. Manage your time and avoid taking on more than you can handle.
5. Avoid checking your emails directly before bedtime, as it might come with unnecessary stress and prevent you from getting quality sleep.
6. Set boundaries for yourself – and remember that it is allowed to say NO. You do not have to give an explanation as saying no should be sufficient.
7. Make sure to adopt and sustain a healthy diet.
8. Engage in physical activity and make sure to get enough exercise.
9. Find your “happy place” where you can unwind and make sense of your emotions. Hence, creating time and space for reflexion.
10. Reduce the intake of alcohol and artificial stimuli. In contrast to what many believe, artificial stimuli such as caffeine actually decreases both focus and concentration (Hougaard & Carter, 2017).

We all need to practice and master these different techniques as all of us might experience difficulties in gathering focus from time to time, depending on context and situation – where multiple distractions might take place (Anfinssen, 2020).

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Thinking Local is the Key to Being Global

The international association meetings industry brings stakeholders, thought-leaders, expert voices, and interested participants from diverse and different backgrounds together. We are the hub of ideas and exchange; offering shared spaces where collaboration can bring about extraordinary results. It is in our remit, according to ICCA CEO **Senthil Gopinath** in this article, to promote best practice and knowledge exchange which can help frame our internationalism.

ICCA – as leading advocates of this industry, one with a proud 60+ year heritage – understands the need to be global. We were global from day 1 when our founders surmised that the jet age not only signified a revolution in travel, but in the way business meetings might be conducted. How the world has changed since the glamour, romance, and chrome-hued possibilities of the late 50s/early 60s?

One of the most critical – and transcendental – challenges we all face is sustainability. It rightly occupies much of ICCA's attention because sustainability is fundamental to our members' commercial – and ethical – standing. The expectations of society are growing, often outweighing what governments' demand, so we have a moral duty to conduct our business well by showcasing and sharing the best sustainability practices and initiatives.

Sustainability means different things to different economies, cultures, and communities. Yes, we share one earth, but this is not a level playing field. There is much that separates us. ICCA – as a global members organization – is uniquely placed to work with an international community of over 1000 members in over 100 countries and territories, containing

a potential network of over 100,000 business professionals. Professionals from destination marketing, meetings management, meetings support, venues, and transport sectors. Professionals who carry expectations around best sustainability practice in all that they do.

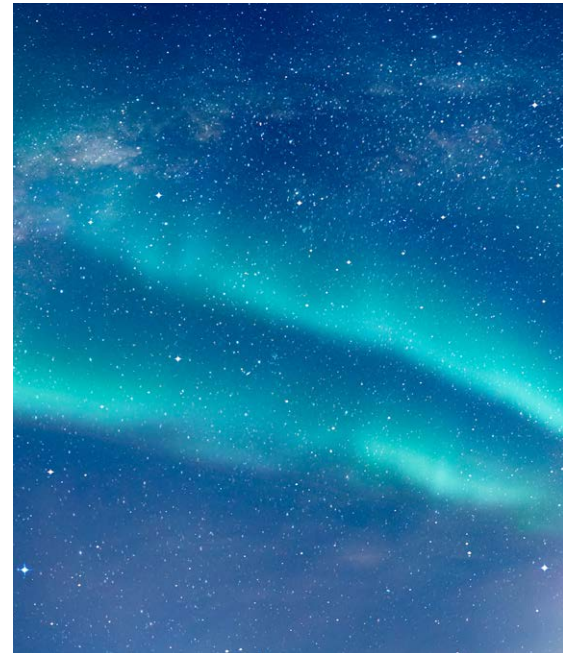
We have a committed and engaged audience but as nations grapple with environmental, social, and economic concerns, sharing best practices in an open, engaging, and achievable way is paramount to ICCA's value proposition. However, this is something that needs to be handled with sensitivity.

BEST PRACTICES

Sustainability best practices encompass a wide range of measures aimed at reducing our environmental impact, promoting social equity, and ensuring economic resilience. These practices can range from adopting renewable energy sources and waste reduction strategies to implementing fair working practices and community engagement initiatives. Recognizing and understanding the many diverse approaches at a local, regional, and national level is fundamental for how the international associations meetings

industry can effectively share knowledge and inspire change.

By bringing together representatives from various countries, industries, and sectors, we can facilitate cross-cultural dialogue, encourage collaboration, and foster a sense of collective responsibility.



We also have an increasingly powerful voice at local – and national – governmental level with politicians appreciating how much revenue our meetings bring into their economies.

By engaging in shared initiatives, by advocating for what we do, we empower countries with differing levels of resources or experience to learn from others and adopt proven best practices to suit their particular contexts.

CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVITY

It is essential we acknowledge that countries differ in terms of development, resources, and priorities. Treating every nation as an equal partner and respecting their unique circumstances will promote inclusivity. Our industry must actively include and encourage participation from less engaged countries to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed. World-thinking is something ICCA passionately believes in, and something we are mindful of considering our weighted European heritage. By having regional representation across the globe,

we can address and amplify our members' needs, concerns, and initiatives from ground level up.

A key aspect of sharing sustainability best practices involves adapting solutions to fit the local context of each country. Rather than imposing rigid frameworks, the focus should be on innovation and understanding the specific challenges and opportunities faced by each nation. Tailoring sustainable practices to local conditions enhances the likelihood of successful implementation and acceptance.

Developing nations often face significant barriers to adopting sustainable practices due to limited resources and infrastructure. Our industry can play a positive role in addressing this disparity by offering capacity-building workshops, training programs, and financial support.

TELLING THE STORIES OF SUCCESS... & ENGAGEMENT

Sharing success stories of sustainability implementation can be a powerful way to inspire action. The meetings industry can use various communication channels, such as conferences, publications, awards, and digital platforms, to showcase the countries that have made – and are making – significant strides in sustainability. By celebrating achievements at the micro and macro level, less engaged countries are encouraged to become active participants in the global sustainability movement.

Effective sharing of sustainability best practices requires active engagement and dialogue among all stakeholders. The international associations meetings industry can facilitate inclusive discussions where countries can express their concerns, share challenges, and seek guidance. By creating a safe space for open communication, the industry can foster mutual understanding and collaborative problem-solving. This is something that lies at the heart of our workshops,

forums, Chapter and Sector meetings, seminars and it is something that will permeate every aspect of ICCA's 62nd Congress in Bangkok this November.

As we strive towards a more sustainable future, the power of knowledge exchange, cooperation, and collective action will play a pivotal role in overcoming these huge challenges and help us create a world that thrives harmoniously with its natural environment.

So yes, ICCA is global and proud of it. We embrace our globalization, believing it is the accelerant for business, awareness, education, and change. We are fully engaged through our thoughts and our actions. ICCA is a founding member of the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative. We pursue a policy of 'progressive advocacy' under the auspices of the Global Advocacy Alliance with our partners IMEX and European CVB Alliance. We are active supporters of the GDS-Index, and use its industry-wide methodology in our Congress planning.

Major Congress showpieces also include the Best Marketing Awards and the Incredible Impacts Program (in collaboration with the BestCities Global Alliance) both celebrating better industry practices and initiatives.

60 plus years ago, our founders saw a glorious opportunity in making the world smaller and more connected. And we see it too by tightening the bonds between all our regions. And we don't always have to jump on a plane to pursue this dream. Who says the age of romance is over?



ICCA

This article is a result of the special collaboration established between Boardroom and ICCA, formalized through their official media partnership. Associations interested in joining ICCA can have a look at www.iccaworld.org/join/association-community

There's Something About East Africa

East Africa is a story waiting to be told, especially concerning its second-tier cities like Kigali, Kampala, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam. These destinations offer a multitude of choices for hosting meetings and conferences on a global scale. In this article – part of our Africa series – we explore East Africa's emergence as a promising business events destination, considering that it holds a significant 26% market share of ICCA Africa.

Words Remi Deve

The African continent oozes with opportunities. But when it comes to East Africa, the region has yet to unleash its full potential. Rick Taylor of The Business Tourism Company consultancy says its best: *"The centre of gravity of the sub-Saharan meetings economy will move over the next decade to consolidate around East Africa – Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia. The rippling multiplier effect will, when leveraged, cascade to neighbouring economies into southern Africa."*

Undoubtedly, East Africa possesses a unique allure, as it stands out as the most appealing region in Africa regarding its readiness for MICE. Countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and Ethiopia within the region boast well-developed MICE infrastructure and are supported by favorable policies and institutions.

"All the countries in East Africa have for example established National Convention Bureaus that are playing a crucial industry coordinating role," says Nicanor Sabula, Chief Executive of the African Society of Association Executives (ASAE). *"Connectivity in the region both by air and land remains*



one of the most advanced ones in Africa hence making the region the most attractive MICE destination in Sub-Sahara Africa."

However, the full potential of the region is yet to be fully exploited. *"Joint efforts to market and promote the region as a MICE destination would significantly boost the number of events being hosted in the region. Unfortunately, current marketing efforts are done in isolation and therefore prove to be ineffective on a global stage. There is also a need to invest in the capacity development of the various industry stakeholders including event planners and association executives to ensure delivery of events to international standards,"* notes Sabula.

Still, East Africa boasts meetings gems that are waiting to be unveiled. Some have recently clearly emerged on the world's stage.

RWANDA, THE RISING STAR

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

Kigali, Rwanda's vibrant capital city, has been making waves recently, with the successful hosting of major global gatherings, showcasing its capabilities and amenities for hosting large-scale events. Opened in 2016, the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC) has played its part in it: its multifaceted design reflects a Rwandan homestead with an Auditorium resembling a traditional hut and a hotel facade replicating a colorful woven basket. Despite its nod to tradition, the venue is

equipped with cutting-edge technology and modern amenities, making it a world-class facility. Covering 32,200 sqm, it can host over 5,000 delegates at once.

In June 2022, Kigali played host to the prestigious Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), welcoming representatives from more than 50 Commonwealth countries. This momentous event showcased Rwanda's capacity to handle high-profile gatherings with efficiency. Additionally, the city also successfully hosted the World Telecommunication Development Conference (ITUWTD) and the groundbreaking Women Deliver Conference hosted in July 2023 with 6,000 delegates.

The Government of Rwanda has actively supported the country's efforts to attract international events. It has facilitated ease of access for international travelers by offering visa-on-arrival services.

"Rwanda is strategically positioning itself as an attractive destination for association meetings, with Kigali ranking second on the African continent as per the ICCA 2022 rankings," says Frank Murangwa, Director of Rwanda Convention Bureau. *"Key elements of Rwanda's approach include collaboration with local associations, establishing destination appeal, investing in world-class conference infrastructure, emphasizing sustainability and conservation efforts, leveraging cultural and tourism offerings, and more. But establishing the country as a knowledge hub, in fields as diverse as agriculture, ICT, financial services, renewable energy, or mining, is what will make a real difference in the long run."*

KENYA, A CULTURAL MICROCOSM

Kenya is a diverse country in Africa, representing a cultural microcosm of the continent. It offers a variety of landscapes, from savannahs teeming with wildlife to unspoiled beaches, coral reefs, equatorial

forests, snow-capped mountains, deserts, and cool highland retreats. With an area of 586,600 sqkm, Kenya lies on the equator along Africa's eastern coast. The country is known for its warm and welcoming nature, where the phrase "Hakuna matata" (no worries) reflects the national attitude, and smiles are cherished.

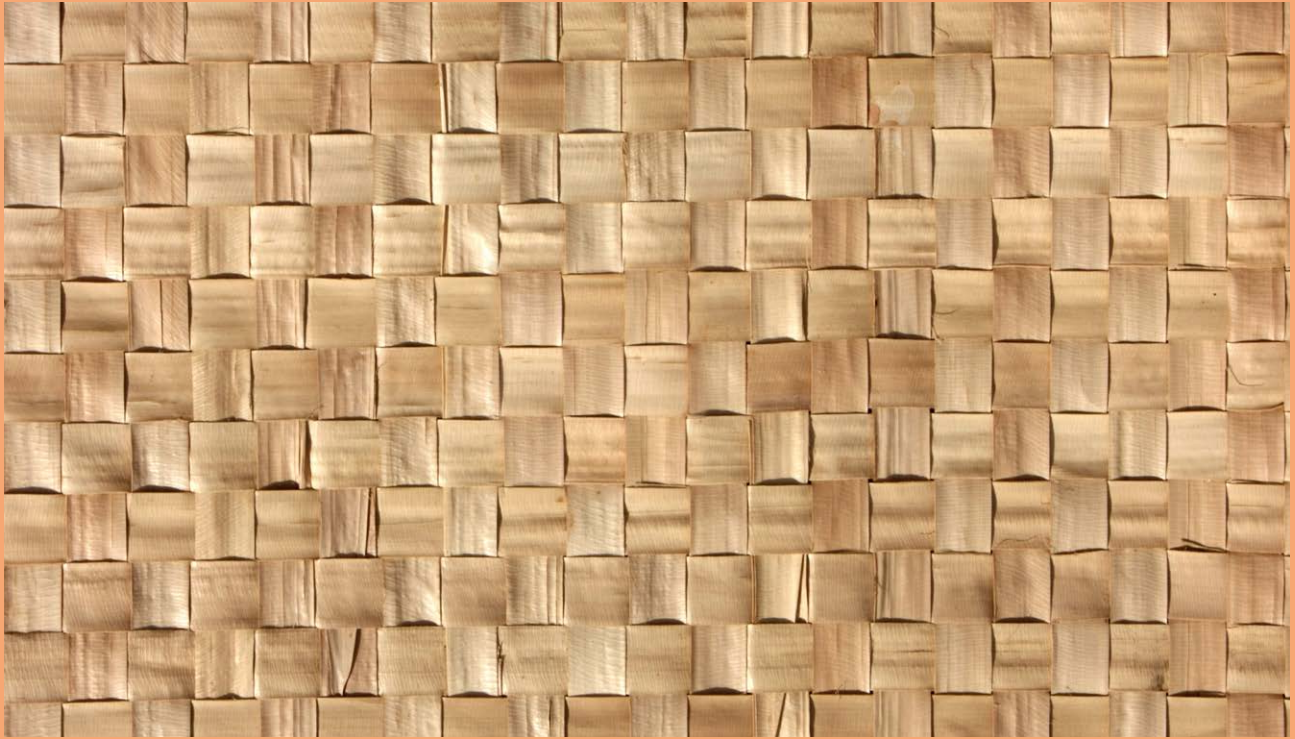
As one of the largest and most advanced economies in the region, Kenya is strategically positioned as a gateway to East and Central Africa, with a growing urban middle class and demand for high-value goods and services. The country serves as a communication hub, and its tropical climate makes it ideal for year-round activities.

Kenya is also recognized as a safe destination and has a thriving business and innovation hub, attracting companies and entrepreneurs. The visa process is straightforward, and the country offers a wide range of venues and accommodations for hosting events. In Nairobi, the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), for instance, has a track record of hosting a number of regional and international conferences including the World Bank Conference, Inter-parliamentary Union summit, and other UN based conferences, such as the 8th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES IN TANZANIA

According to experts, Tanzania is making strides as a prominent African player in the rapidly expanding meetings industry. The country's success in the business tourism sector is attributed to its increasing global reputation for offering diverse and high-quality tourism experiences.

Dar es-Salaam, the former capital of Tanzania, holds the distinction of being the largest city in the country and in East Africa, with a population of approx. 7 million people.



Situated on the Swahili coast, it serves as a significant economic hub and ranks as the seventh-largest city in Africa. Notably, Dar es-Salaam is also recognized as one of the world's fastest-growing cities due to its rapid development and urban expansion.

In terms of infrastructure, Tanzania boasts several international conference centres, such as the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC) and The Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre (JNICC), capable of accommodating large numbers of delegates.

Nestled in the heart of Arusha city, the former occupies a strategic location midway between Cape Town and Cairo. It is in close proximity to awe-inspiring landmarks such as Mount Kilimanjaro, the Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti, Tarangire, and Lake Manyara National Parks. The venue boasts ten meeting rooms, offering seating capacities ranging from 10 in

break-out rooms to a substantial 1,350 delegates in the main auditorium.

The vision is to create a road map for the development of the business events sector in the country. In an interview with Further Africa, former AICC CEO Elishilia D. Kaaya said: *"As far as I am concerned, this sector still has a lot to accomplish to reach its full potential. We are looking to develop many more such centres all over the country to boost business tourism and conferences in the future. We are currently scouting areas like Zanzibar, Dodoma, Mwanza, and also the southern part of Tanzania that is rich in natural endowments. As the only public organization in the country dealing with business tourism and conferences, we feel it is high time other parts of the country also partake in the share of this huge cake."*

IN CONCLUSION

"Africa," says ICCA CEO Senthil Gopinath, *"is home to some of the world's*

fastest-growing economies, half the world's youth population, and a growing middle-class. There is impressive financial growth in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Rwanda, just to name a few. Key sectors are developing and creating an international buzz, especially in agriculture, manufacturing, and telecommunications. Many challenges remain but added improvements in technology and infrastructure is creating a compelling - almost irresistible - narrative about Africa as a serious global player in both regional and international association meetings and events."

"We are almost at the end of the second decade of a century of change!" says Rick Taylor. "The decisions Africa makes going forwards on Trade, Infrastructure, population movements and dealing with climate change will set the agenda for the next 100 years. The roles of meetings and Africa in this space is critical. Africa is a long-term play and the vision for the continent has to be way beyond a short-term strategy."



Building Back Better Series

Can Associations Count on the Support of the Meetings Industry?

Actually, yes. During the wakeup call we recently had to face, the meetings industry stepped up and showed its resilience and ability not only to adapt quickly and efficiently but also to be in the forefront of driving positive change. As associations continue their efforts to make the world a better place through their diverse initiatives, they have found that they are not alone.

Guidance, collaboration, and education on hot topics like DEI and sustainability are widely offered to associations by industry organizations willing to add to the cause. In this chapter of our Building Back Better series, we delve into the industry projects associations can rely on to help steer them to a safer future.

Words Vicky Koffa



The journey to change is built on global collaboration, strong community, forward-thinking ideas, and support at every step of the way. Associations of any kind, willing to contribute to this journey, are lucky to have a helping hand from different actors in the events industry. The initiatives of the Incredible Impacts Awards, the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative (NZCE), New Intent, Women Who Advance Associations (WWAA), the European Society of Association Executives (ESAE) and the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) all add an extra layer to a future-proof society through association guidance and encouragement.

INCREDIBLE IMPACTS PROGRAM

The Incredible Impacts Awards, a collaboration between BestCities and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), underwent recent changes to further acknowledge associations that make a significant difference. These awards celebrate the innovative and impactful projects led by associations worldwide. By highlighting their achievements, the meetings industry showcases how associations are shaping a better future.

With a \$20,000 (USD) grant, a new selection process and a seed grant of \$5,000 (USD) for new legacy programs, the revised Incredible Impacts Awards now emphasize the long-term outcomes and broader societal contributions of association-led initiatives. This shift aims to recognize projects that go beyond economic considerations and deliver tangible benefits to communities, environments, and industries. By honoring associations that make a positive difference, the awards inspire others to adopt innovative approaches and have a more profound impact.

Lesley Williams, immediate past Managing Director of BestCities (the organization is now led by Loren Christie), says on the relevant press release: *"We're pleased to provide support to associations eager to implement a legacy program, with an eye towards encouraging most, if not all, international associations to integrate legacy and impact into their conference planning going forward."*

NET ZERO CARBON EVENTS

The Net Zero Carbon Events (NZCE) initiative - hosted by the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) - has been linking since August 2021 all business events stakeholders (venues, suppliers, and associations to name but a few) towards a common strategy

to tackle climate change and meet the 2050 net zero goal. Now with over 520 supporting organizations from 55 countries, NZCE has gathered to date 303 signatures from operators who have committed to the Pledge. Last year, phase 2 introduced a roadmap which set out a common framework for all stakeholders to make their net zero journey together. It recognized the challenges of varying progress among organizations and aimed at decarbonizing the in-person element of events.

In its current phase, NZCE is setting its priorities, focusing on 8 workstreams: Measurement, Reporting, Carbon Offsetting, Venue Energy, Production and Waste, Food and Food Waste, Logistics, Travel and Accommodation. Collecting data of success stories and failed attempts from all stakeholders involved will lead to fruitful ideas for the sustainable future of the industry. Reporting progress made as time goes by will provide hope and encourage more organizations to hop on the sustainability train. Associations have the unique opportunity to turn to NZCE for guidance and support from peers who might have experiences of sustainability practices to share or even help implement.

NEW INTENT

With a more social focus, Rory Archibald has founded an organization to drive the need for diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and environmental action within the global business events industry. New Intent will work with destinations, event strategists, and the entire event supply chain to advocate for the critical importance DEI and environmental action has in creating positive societal transformation.

"How associations approach DEI can profoundly shape the future of their membership, event attendance, education delivery, and the overall evolution of the industry. New Intent was established as a DEI advocacy organization within the business events community to address this pressing need. We are dedicated to assisting all stakeholders in the industry to adapt and embrace DEI policies and practices," Archibald says.

Through workshops, frameworks, and opportunities for open and honest discussions, New Intent aims to facilitate the transformation of these conversations into meaningful actions. Over the past six months, there have been collaborations with destinations, venues, and associations to guide them on their DEI journey. Additionally, roundtable discussions have been

conducted during industry gatherings such as IMEX in Frankfurt to collect valuable insights and analyze the requirements and priorities in this domain.

WOMEN WHO ADVANCE ASSOCIATIONS

The 2023 campaign of the Women Who Advance Associations (WWAA) movement speaks for itself. It showcases female leaders, trailblazers and change-makers who actively advance the association community and serve as an inspiration for gender equity and social inclusion. Sophia Hyder Hock, Chief Diversity Officer at Destinations International, says (as mentioned on the WWAA website): *"Our association embraces equity by investing in my position – someone dedicated to creating more equitable and inclusive spaces internally for our team and externally for our members. Destinations International is developing professional development certifications, resources, and research – and already have a DEI Assessment tool that helps destination organizations understand where they are in their journey while also holding them accountable for taking actionable steps."*

Nikki Walker, the Global Vice President of Associations & Communities at MCI, is an advocate for the inclusion of the younger generation. She believes (and hopes to inspire other associations) that the younger members are the future, and they must have a voice in designing the relevance of their association for themselves and their world. *"Our Association Engagement Index (AEI) provides global data and clear indications of the importance of engaging the younger generation so that they advocate for their association. This data shows they are the least likely to recommend their association today. Associations must work to change this,"* she says.

EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES (ESAE)

The core goal of ESAE is to educate and facilitate associations to exchange best practices and advance their professional development. In this role, the organization has initiated programs, training sessions, and resources to foster an inclusive environment in the association community and ensure that all voices are heard, regardless of race, gender, age, or background.

ESAE launched its DEI Charter earlier this year, and appointed its Vice President, Liesbeth Switten, as the ESAE Board member responsible for DEI. This is, aimed as an inspiration for other

membership-based organizations in Europe to embrace, influencing entire industries as a consequence, for the better.

"The pressing need for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the workplace and the society at large, is an excellent example, where many associations have started setting guidelines for their staff and members to follow. Associations not only play the role of honest brokers within their respective industries, but they can also influence their members and the society at large by showing the way and leading by example. ESAE is eager to encourage associations to adopt inclusive policies and practices, promote diverse representation in leadership positions, and create safe and welcoming spaces for all participants," says Ioannis Pallas, ESAE Association Manager.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES (ASAE)

Recognizing that embracing diversity leads to richer ideas, broader perspectives, and enhanced decision-making processes, ASAE has made significant strides in advancing DEI within the meetings industry. *"To support the future growth of associations and their ability to positively impact the world, ASAE is engaged in a continual strategic thinking and planning process. ASAE calls this journey of discovery that we're on Destination 2026, where we want to grow and evolve in the right way and according to the needs of our members,"* says Michelle Mason, President and CEO of ASAE.

In fact, ASAE is working to address the current, most pressing needs of association leaders by focusing on four overarching priorities: Create Member Value; Foster Workforce Development; Elevate Associations; and Enhance Culture and Infrastructure. Building strong professional peer communities, expanding awareness of association career pathways to new audiences, focusing on enterprise-wide ESG and updating ASAE's delivery and technology infrastructure are some of the practices the organization is currently applying to aid associations in their journey.

Associations, with the support of the meetings industry, are transforming events into platforms for sustainability, social impact, and inclusivity. By recognizing associations' long-term outcomes, encouraging sustainable practices, promoting social causes, and fostering diversity, the meetings industry enables associations to leave a lasting and positive impact on society. Through initiatives such as the ones mentioned above, the industry showcases its dedication to driving positive change.



FEATURE

The Globalization Dilemma

Incorporating global positioning into your overarching strategy has the potential to serve multiple purposes. Beyond elevating your presence and impact within your sector, it can facilitate the growth of your membership base, amplify your philanthropic revenue, and attract corporate sponsorships. But should you go global at all costs? Which are the roads to take, what are the challenges to overcome? Explored in detail within this exclusive Boardroom Special Feature, the topic offers a diverse range of insights by our esteemed panel of contributors.

How a Focus on Sustainability Helped an Association Find Its Global Place

International trends make it harder than ever to act provincially. By rallying members around global sustainability standards, an association serving Colombian manufacturers expanded its global footprint.

Words Mark Athitakis

A glance at the headlines these days makes it clear—if it hadn't been already—just how much we're connected globally. Many associations that often think of themselves as concerned only with activities in the United States have had to contend with global conflicts and international supply-chain issues that affect their members' access to goods and services, as well as the prices they pay for them. And that, of course, comes on the heels of a still-not-over global pandemic.

A statement by Talley Management Group CEO Gregg H. Talley, FASAE, CAE, [on their website] spelled out the stakes at the current moment. Recent events, he wrote, *"are now coupled with the already top-of-mind areas of increased focus on climate change, sustainability, wellness, and reduced corporate travel—all of which impact organizational and individual preferences on time management, cost, need, and risk in crossing international boundaries and long-haul travel."*

Given this ongoing transformation, I was interested in hearing about how a leading trade association in Colombia, ANDI, has been balancing an increased focus on sustainability with its goals around international outreach. According to ANDI President Bruce Mac Master, the association, which serves Colombian manufacturers across industries, has been paying attention to environmental issues since the 1990s. But in the past decade it's sharpened its strategy around sustainability, with a dedicated committee focused on energy and mining. Those committees meet regularly to discuss legislation, regulations, and establishing "common initiatives."

Finding common ground around those initiatives can be difficult for an association with such a wide range of members in diverse industries from finance to agriculture to healthcare. ANDI's approach, Mac Master says, is to keep its focus on the larger strategic goal of meeting global sustainability standards. ANDI has "defined as

a principle that the general interest takes precedence over the particular [industry's] interest, which minimizes conflicts," he says. "The positions that the association builds are normally collective."

Those efforts have paid off: Colombia has received high marks for its sustainable practices, according to the Global Reporting Initiative and International Institute for Management Development. All of this work is meant to remove the environmental stigma the country has faced in the past and do more to attract global business, particularly sustainable ones. ANDI has promoted and implemented recycling and packaging-reduction programs across 27 economic sectors and played a role in a national effort to make Colombia a carbon-neutral country.

Mac Master points to the investment of green companies from Spain, Norway, and Japan, combined with strong economic growth rates in Latin America, at least before the pandemic. And preserving historical sites and biodiverse areas is crucial to tourism and to the national economy as international travel increases.

The lesson for ANDI, and just about any association anywhere, is that a strategy around sustainability and an awareness of global trends are keys to survival. For some time, Mac Master says, ANDI was fighting headwinds on this idea.

"Other associations [in Colombia] for many years created so-called sustainability committees to oppose change," he says. "Employers' associations should be part of and drivers of change toward more sustainable societies and encourage their members to be among the leaders of this."

This article originally appeared on AssociationsNow.com. Reprinted with permission. Copyright ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership (March 2022). Washington, DC.



Embracing Global Positioning: The Path Forward for the Fertilizer Industry

Amid today's complex landscape, the fertilizer industry remains exceptionally connected, defying deglobalization trends. For the International Fertilizer Association (IFA), embracing a global outlook is more than expansion – it's a necessity to maintain influence, visibility, and growth. In this article, part of Boardroom's partnership with ESAE, **Alzbeta Klein**, IFA CEO/Director General, recognizes the value of maintaining a global presence as a cornerstone of the association's long-term strategy.

ENHANCING VISIBILITY & INFLUENCE

The fertilizer industry, with its significant role in supporting global food production and agricultural sustainability, stands to benefit immensely from increased visibility and influence on the global stage. Embracing a global positioning strategy allows industry stakeholders to showcase their innovative solutions, cutting-edge technologies, and commitment to sustainable agriculture to a broader international audience.

By adopting and supporting global positions and issuing global position statements through the association, the industry can illustrate thought leadership in pro-actively addressing emerging issues and positioning itself as forward-looking and, in some cases, as early adopters.

It was the industry's Scope 3 emission study commissioned in 2022 that highlighted enhanced visibility and influence, when this study was endorsed by Secretary Kerry, US Presidential Climate Envoy. It was the Future Minerals Forum in Riyadh where the industry was recognized at the Saudi ministerial level as the key for the future. And it was the USAID Administrator Power and US Presidential Envoy for Global Food Security who joined the IFA Board of Directors and highlighted the role and global visibility and importance of the industry.

By actively participating in global fora, conferences, and initiatives, fertilizer industry players can engage with governments, international organizations, and other key stakeholders to shape

policies, regulations, and standards that foster sustainable agriculture practices. This heightened influence can help in aligning the industry's goals with global sustainability agendas, paving the way for a more prosperous and environmentally responsible future.

EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP & COLLABORATION

A key aspect of the fertilizer industry's global positioning strategy is the expansion of its membership and collaboration with diverse stakeholders worldwide. By reaching out to potential members from different regions, the industry can tap into a vast pool of expertise, innovation, and market insights. Partnering with agtech startups further fosters knowledge exchange, promotes advancements in technology and sustainable practices.

Moreover, a global membership base enhances the industry's credibility and legitimacy, allowing it to advocate for policies that promote responsible fertilizer use and support the needs of farmers and agricultural communities around the world.

DRIVING INCREASED PHILANTHROPIC INCOME

Global positioning can be a catalyst for attracting increased philanthropic income to drive impactful projects and initiatives. As the fertilizer industry engages with diverse international donors and foundations, it can leverage its expertise in sustainable agriculture to garner support for programs aimed to address global food security, soil health, and environmental sustainability.



IFA's co-creation of the Sustain Africa initiative with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Rabobank brought funding to African agriculture, and further enhanced the industry's visibility in fighting hunger.

Collaborative partnerships with non-profit organizations and governmental bodies can enable the fertilizer industry to pool resources and expertise, amplifying the impact of philanthropic investments. By showcasing tangible results and positive social and environmental outcomes, the industry can foster long-term philanthropic commitments from stakeholders who share its vision for sustainable agriculture.

CULTIVATING CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

For the fertilizer industry, forging strategic partnerships with multinational corporations can unlock immense opportunities for growth and innovation. Various coalitions, such as the Private Sector Coalition of Action for Soil Health that IFA has co-founded, contribute to advancing industry stewardship programs, and help strengthen key messages.

Embracing global positioning also opens doors for potential corporate sponsors who are increasingly seeking to align their businesses with sustainable and socially responsible practices.

Through strategic alliances, the fertilizer industry can gain access to cutting-edge technologies, research, and funding that accelerates the development of sustainable fertilizers and agri-tech

solutions. In partnership with UM6P in Morocco, IFA successfully executed the Africa Startup Showcase, a challenge to help solve soil health in Africa. Simultaneously, corporations can find a compelling opportunity to invest in initiatives that address environmental challenges and contribute to global food security.

LEVERAGING CHALLENGES AS OPPORTUNITIES

While the benefits of global positioning are evident, the fertilizer industry must also address challenges of being truly global. Adhering to varying regulatory frameworks, understanding local market dynamics, and navigating cultural differences are crucial considerations for the industry overall, and for IFA as well. By investing in building strong local partnerships, the industry can turn these challenges into opportunities for growth and market penetration.

In conclusion, IFA encourages all stakeholders in the fertilizer industry to seize this moment and collectively shape a more sustainable and prosperous future for agriculture and humanity. By continuing its global positioning today, the fertilizer industry can pave the way for a resilient and sustainable agricultural ecosystem tomorrow, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

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



The Importance of Cultural Humility in Global Business

In the pursuit of global expansion, organizations encounter both growth opportunities and cultural intricacies. As **Francisco Gomez**, Founder & CEO, [Factum Global](#), underscores, adopting a stance of cultural humility is vital for understanding diverse norms, values, and business practices, enabling effective engagement and fostering global DEI initiatives.



As the world continues to become increasingly interconnected through trade and technology, many organizations are identifying opportunities to find new stakeholders and diversify their business by expanding operations globally. While providing exciting growth opportunities, going global also presents significant cultural challenges and executives must be mindful. Adopting a mindset of cultural humility is essential for successfully navigating different cultural norms, values, and business practices when working internationally.

Cultural humility involves maintaining an open, respectful attitude toward different cultures. It requires acknowledging that your own cultural perspective is not universal and being willing to learn from and adapt to the local cultural context. Practicing cultural humility is especially important when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

DEI issues are perceived very differently around the world. Policies and programs that seem logical and beneficial from a U.S. cultural standpoint may be confusing, inappropriate, or even offensive in other countries. For example, terms like "Latinx" intended to be inclusive to folks who identify as Latin-American and beyond the gender binary in the United States are often seen as alienating in Latin American countries due to the linguistic "imposing" of the letter "x." Discussions about systemic racial inequity that make sense in the U.S. may not resonate in parts of Europe and Africa, where gender or women's inequality may be more relevant. For example, today in Belgium, gender inequality is one of the top issues in the national discussion.

Associations and other organizations seeking to expand globally cannot just export their current DEI approaches unchanged. Doing so risks backlash from local partners and customers. DEI goals

developed solely from an American cultural perspective will likely miss the mark.

Instead, nonprofits looking to go global need to incorporate a broader, more inclusive worldview into their DEI policies. Here are some tips on how to do that effectively:

Research thoroughly - Before entering a new market, extensively research its history, demographics, cultural values and societal issues. Identify how DEI topics like race, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities are perceived locally. Understanding the cultural context will allow adapting DEI initiatives appropriately.

Engage local partners - Work closely with on-the-ground partners who understand the culture intimately. Get their input to shape DEI programs that align with local norms and needs. Be willing to modify initiatives significantly.

Listen first - Enter new markets with cultural humility, recognizing that your perspective is limited. Avoid assumptions. Listen closely to local people's views on diversity issues to determine what resonates before proposing solutions.

Customize training - When providing DEI education globally, offer culturally customized versions. Training on unconscious bias or equitable hiring developed for a U.S. audience needs adaptation for relevance in other cultures.

Highlight shared values - Anchor DEI efforts in universal values like inclusiveness, respect, and fairness. This creates common ground across cultures. Emphasize where U.S. and local priorities overlap rather than just exporting an American agenda.

Think globally - Develop some DEI initiatives that can work globally across operations. Initiatives promoting women in leadership or serving customers with

disabilities often have international applicability if handled sensitively.

Don't compromise - While tailoring execution, don't compromise core DEI principles. Fair treatment, equal access and respect for all remain relevant worldwide even if specific programs require localization.

Incorporate local voices - Intentionally add people representing different geographies, cultures and perspectives to your senior management team, Board of Directors and the teams shaping global DEI policies. This builds in diverse viewpoints from the start.

Measure carefully - Use culturally appropriate metrics to assess DEI progress and create data-driven action plans globally. U.S. measures around representation or equity may not apply universally. Define success locally.

Update strategies - View DEI efforts in new markets as works in progress and update them regularly based on your cultural insights learned through normal business operations. Continuously evaluate what resonates versus what misses the mark and update your organizational global strategy to include these elements.

Lead by example - With almost 80% of workers expressing interest in working for companies that value DEI in a recent CNBC Workforce Survey, it's clear that looking internally and committing to DEI from all levels of your organization—especially your leadership—could enhance a culture of belonging at home and sustain higher momentum for DEI efforts abroad.

Adopting a culturally humble mindset opens the door to expanding globally in an inclusive, ethical way. Respecting local cultural perspectives and business norms is key. With thoughtful adaptation guided by on-the-ground partners, associations and other nonprofits can spread their mission worldwide while living their DEI values.

Don't Go Global...

(...if you can answer "yes" to all these questions)

In the pursuit of global development strategies, many associations often overlook crucial considerations. **Martin Sirk**, International Advisor to the Global Association Hubs Partnerships, delves into these essential factors and offers practical solutions to help associations thrive in their international efforts.

There are hundreds of articles and check-lists on global development strategies (many are available on Global Association Hubs' website), yet countless associations remain wedded to a narrowly-defined geographical mindset, with "global" seen as a distraction or irrelevance. Sometimes this makes perfect sense, but how often?

HERE ARE EIGHT QUESTIONS.

If your association can answer "yes" to all eight – congratulations – going global is almost certainly a dumb idea!

1. Do you only have members in one country/region AND zero interest from prospective members beyond your borders?
2. Do your services/content only have relevance or market value in your country or region?
3. Is there no-one beyond your borders who could offer equivalent services to your members?
4. Do your members have zero connections, competition or need for information outside your borders?
5. Do you only advocate to national policymakers, worry about local laws?
6. Is your mission only relevant in your country?
7. Is your association monocultural, only working in one language?
8. Is one market capable of providing sustainable long-term growth?

Let's explore what those "yes" answers imply!

1. (Prospective) Members

Every association is by definition exclusionary: it is for some people or organizations and not others. But whilst geography is a logical constraining parameter for plumbers, it is a weak one

for associations: saying "yes" ignores the value of non-members' business interests/aspirations, cultural and historical ties, and intellectual input.

2. Content & services

Hopefully whatever you are delivering in your specialized field is world-class. If specialists outside your community are *not* interested in your content and services it probably means that someone else has got a superior offering!

3. Competition

This is a hyper-competitive world. The remains of the "local monopolies" that once defined many associations are disappearing. Answering "yes" ignores the certainty of increasing competition for your members' attention, attendance, and money – from other associations, entrepreneurs, even AI-algorithms.

4. Members' interests, competition, knowledge

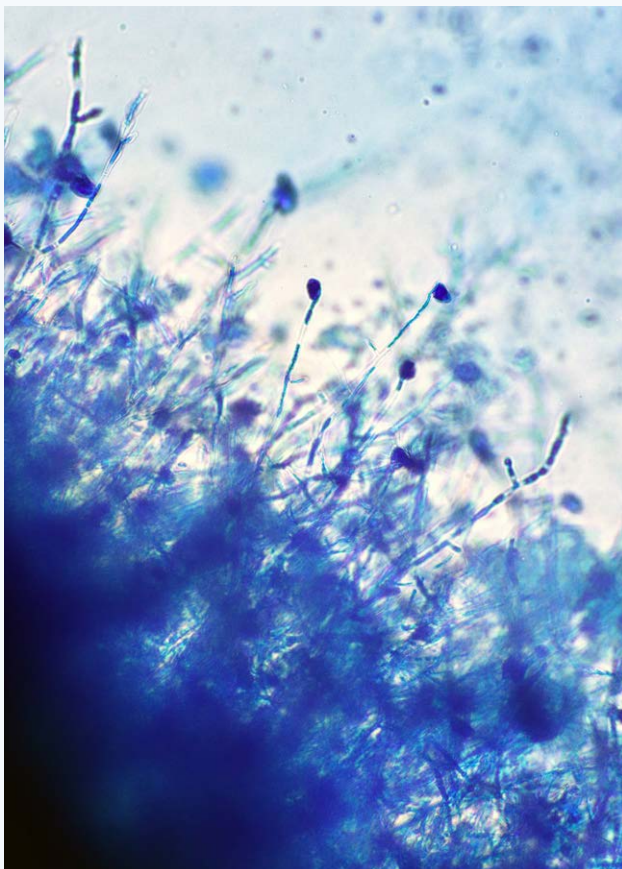
Many associations "go global" because a proportion of their members have already "gone". These know that scientific advances or business innovation are destination-blind, worry that others will out-compete them by accessing cutting-edge knowledge first. Once *any* members take this route, others will inevitably follow, if only to remain competitive at home. Answering "yes" assumes this exponential process hasn't started.

5. Advocacy

From tax to environment to healthcare, today's greatest societal challenges are global, even though most policy is legislated nationally. Partnerships between associations have become a key vehicle for engaging with these issues. "Yes"-answering, geographically-constrained associations, acting alone, won't be heard.

6. Mission

A "mission" implies ambition, acting for a greater purpose, a foundation of values, the possibility of fellow travellers. Any mission



that only has relevance within a single country almost inevitably negates these implications.

7. Language & culture

Today there is no excuse not to offer multilingual access at events and online, thanks to excellent AI translation and interpretation tools. Every country has groups from different cultures, especially working in science, healthcare, trade and high-tech. Associations that maintain a monolingual, monocultural strategy ignore socio-economic reality, at home as well as abroad!

8. Long-term growth

Giant markets like Brazil, China and the USA might appear to offer unconstrained growth, but competitive threats and strategic/tactical opportunities will inevitably be missed, and being exclusively active in any single market risks mortal damage should it suffer a socioeconomic crisis.

GO (A LITTLE BIT) GLOBAL

It's clear that the likelihood of any association answering "yes" to all eight questions is pretty remote! Logically, almost every association *ought* to have a global development strategy. But too

many assume that such strategies have to be comprehensive and complex, require inaccessible resources and skills, risk alienating members, divert from more critical priorities.

One pragmatic solution is to go *a little bit* global! By focusing on just one global dimension an association can start to develop a strategically coherent expansion beyond their current geographical boundaries without generating undue risks.

For example, introduce multilingual interpretation into events (Q7). Run a survey to ascertain members' current international activities (Q4), making global interests visible. If individuals or organizations outside your geographical boundaries are interested in membership or services (Q1 & 2), test a menu of non-member services (which could evolve into a change in membership policy). Or set up advocacy partnerships with overseas organizations that share your mission (Q5 & 6). Any single one of these actions is affordable, self-containable, justifiable to members without needing a politically-risky shift in priorities from "domestic" to "global".

Associations don't need to do everything, to counter each threat, exploit every opportunity. Constraints *always* exist around budgetary and staff capacity, cultural competence, regulatory access, market knowledge, member and board priorities. But help is available: Global Association Hubs – Brussels, Dubai, Singapore and Washington DC – have extensive services to help associations go global; ESAE and ASAE are sources of excellent peer-to-peer advice.

But the greatest resource is associations' own members. No association should be without a global advisory group, drawing on the wisdom of internationally engaged members: scientists involved in EU Horizon research, business leaders from multinational companies, expat doctors who can advise on birth-country cultures, start-up entrepreneurs and students. Every national association has members whose interests encircle the world, and these individuals will be excited to share their thoughts. They are *by far* the most qualified people to tell you: "don't go global"; more likely, they'll recommend the opposite!

Global Association Hubs, a partnership between Brussels, Dubai, Singapore and Washington DC, 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.

Brussels
Dubai
Singapore
Washington DC

**GLOBAL
ASSOCIATION
HUBS**

The Promise & Perils of Association Globalization

In the pursuit of association growth, going global emerges as a promising avenue. **Dermot Ryan**, Director of Marketing, Communications and Engagement at K.I.T. Group, explores the dynamics of this strategic evolution and the factors driving it.

Just about every association leader wants to grow their association and going global is one clear route to achieving this. If you review regional and national society mission statements, there are rarely geographic restrictions on their fields of activity. With the explosion of digital events during the pandemic, most associations have already gone global, expanded their reach and introduced new audiences to their society.

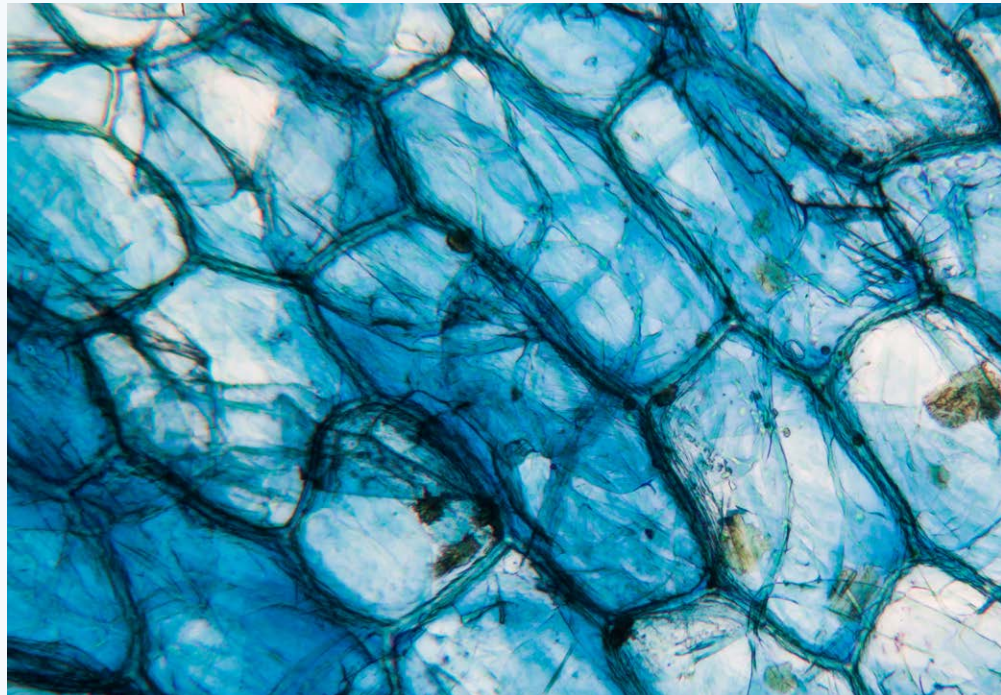
WE DO IT BETTER

As many regional and national associations are aware, just because you do not have the word "International" in your society name does not mean you can't attract and engage an international audience. While associations may develop strategies to enhance loyalty, most decisions to attend a meeting or to become a member are purely transactional, based on the product offering. In short: is what you are offering worth buying or can I do better elsewhere?

Knowledge transfer does not respect boundaries and many associations – and not just the large ones – already have a global reach. Take for example the following associations, one regional and

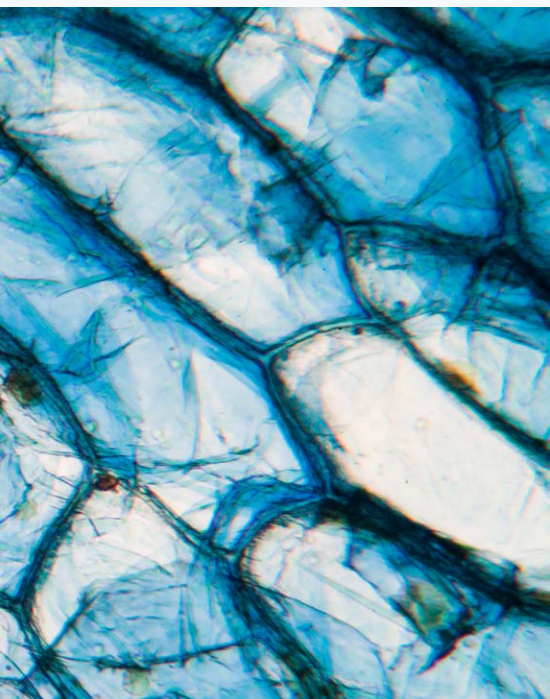
one national that think and act globally. The European Menopause and Andropause Society (EMAS) attracts 40% of their members from outside Europe and is the organizer of the 'World Menopause and Work Day' in September, which was launched after the release of their Global

Consensus Recommendations on Menopause in the Workplace in 2021. The German Immunology Society (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Immunologie* – DGfI) uses English as the official language of their Joint Congress with the Austrian Immunology Society.



So is it really a case of “Go Global or Someone Else Will”? The choice to expand globally is typically not triggered by concerns about other associations entering a global arena that your organization hasn’t explored. Instead, it often arises from the organization’s organic growth over time—such as a consistent rise in international event registrations—or from member and stakeholder requests. These requests might involve tackling global issues through increased advocacy or fostering international cooperation.

The potential financial rewards of going global are clear. It can open up new markets and revenue streams, drive membership and event registration, expand your sponsor pool and for scientific societies give their Journals enhanced visibility.



SHINY THINGS

But beware of shiny things! Enthusiastic boards must understand that it is a long-term strategy. They may expect fast results. Volunteer board members are keen to make a difference and leave a legacy during their term-limited leaderships and may want to push ahead too quickly without adequate consideration. There are many examples of failed global initiatives, and you don’t want a rushed initiative that has not been properly thought through to deter future leaderships from following a global path. Bad experiences can get embedded in an association’s organizational memory and be difficult to shift: “*We already tried that and it did not work!*”.

So, where to start? Rigorous research and review are key. Is there really a gap in the market and will it create a return on investment to justify an investment of resources? Is there a longer-term vision? Where do you expect to be in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years? Will it all be an unwelcome distraction from challenges closer to home that the association is already grappling with? Maybe now is not the right time to embark on a global initiative. How comfortable is the association adapting its membership dues model, services, delivery, ways of communication and even content to facilitate global growth? Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Will you be contributing to the overall growth of your association’s speciality and its global impact?

The association world is a crowded one with regional and international societies active in most disciplines; will going global antagonize partner societies active in the region(s) you are moving into and hinder future collaboration that may in the long term undermine your mission? It might be more productive to partner

with other regional/national associations on specific projects rather than striving to be global yourself.

Associations should aim for steady sustainable global growth and scale up over time. Find a trusted and experienced partner who can provide local/regional expertise and has global reach to guide your path – either a professional congress organizer (PCO), an association management company (AMC) who can support you on membership and other association-related activities, or a company that offers both PCO and association management services, depending on the strategy you want to follow. This will also offer the opportunity to scale up at some later point without initial heavy investment, such as recruiting in-house team members.

Choose a PCO and/or AMC who can serve as a strategic consultant and a source of advice to uncover potential challenges that might emerge—ranging from cultural and linguistic differences to regulatory and financial considerations. As many association team members are aware, enlisting an external specialist could effectively convince a hesitant Board that is resistant to altering its course.

Going global is not an end in itself and one size does not fit all. Before you start driving, make sure you have planned out your journey and have the right people on the bus.

IAPCO is a global not-for-profit membership organisation whose mission is to raise the standards of service amongst its members and other sectors of the meetings industry by means of continuing education, interaction with other professionals and research. IAPCO today represents 138 accredited businesses of professional congress organisers in 40 countries. IAPCO membership requires the demonstration of a continual high level of service delivery and retention through annual quality checks and reviews by the IAPCO Quality Committee.



Being Global in a Non-Aligned World

Global associations like AIPC face the challenging task of managing a diverse membership while navigating differences in values. As the world undergoes political and socioeconomic changes, associations must transform their roles to better serve their members. This evolving landscape presents a significant challenge that requires careful consideration and adaptability, as **Sven Bossu**, AIPC CEO, writes.

At this year's AIPC Annual Conference, we had the pleasure of welcoming participants from 35 countries across the globe – from Australia to Canada and anything in between. This diversity brings a tremendous value to the conference and to AIPC, as it allows to share knowledge at a global level. At the same time, this needs to be balanced with the fact that business realities can be very different per region, therefore requiring tailor made approaches. However, the biggest challenge will be around values.

From the start – back in 1958 – AIPC had global ambitions, which have resulted into today's global AIPC Community. We have members in almost 60 countries and have the ambition to further increase our geographical footprint, focusing on Africa and India in the next two years, as we realize that the expected increase in trade in these regions will result in a booming event market and therefore an increased need for the value AIPC brings.

Each new addition brings value to the association and its members in terms of knowledge, sharing of best practices and – very important – it stimulates the continuous improvement of AIPC's value proposal in terms of products and services to offer/develop.

GLOBAL APPROACH

This global approach also allowed us to have global companies as business partner, with a win-win on different levels. Just as example: Steve MacKenzie, Chief Innovation Officer at Momentus Technologies, is a permanent teacher at the yearly AIPC Academy, providing upcoming venue leaders to opportunity unique

access to an industry leader. The same goes for Populous' design director Adam Paulitsch.

At the same time, AIPC does face a number of barriers, all impacting the key success factor of any association: the member engagement, which – at AIPC – is measured by participation of the members to our (virtual) events.

First of all, there is a very practical barrier: having members spread across different time zones and geographical locations makes coordination and collaboration challenging. Just as an example: if we want to hold interactive webinar, we need to schedule them at least at two slots in order to ensure that Asian, European and American members can participate, which of course has an impact on cost, but also on the level of interaction which can be created.

A second challenge is related to cultural and language barriers. Fortunately, the very nature of the business our members are in – international exhibitions and conferences – makes this perhaps easier than for other associations. Nevertheless, it remains an important point of attention when organizing events, especially when it comes to interactive formats such as workshops or discussion groups.

Thirdly, there are the financial constraints at the level of the members and of the association. Our summits and flagship educational activity – the Academy – all take place in Europe. For the summits, this is related to the fact that we organize them just before major industry events (IMEX in Frankfurt and IBTM in Barcelona), leveraging the presence of our members at those

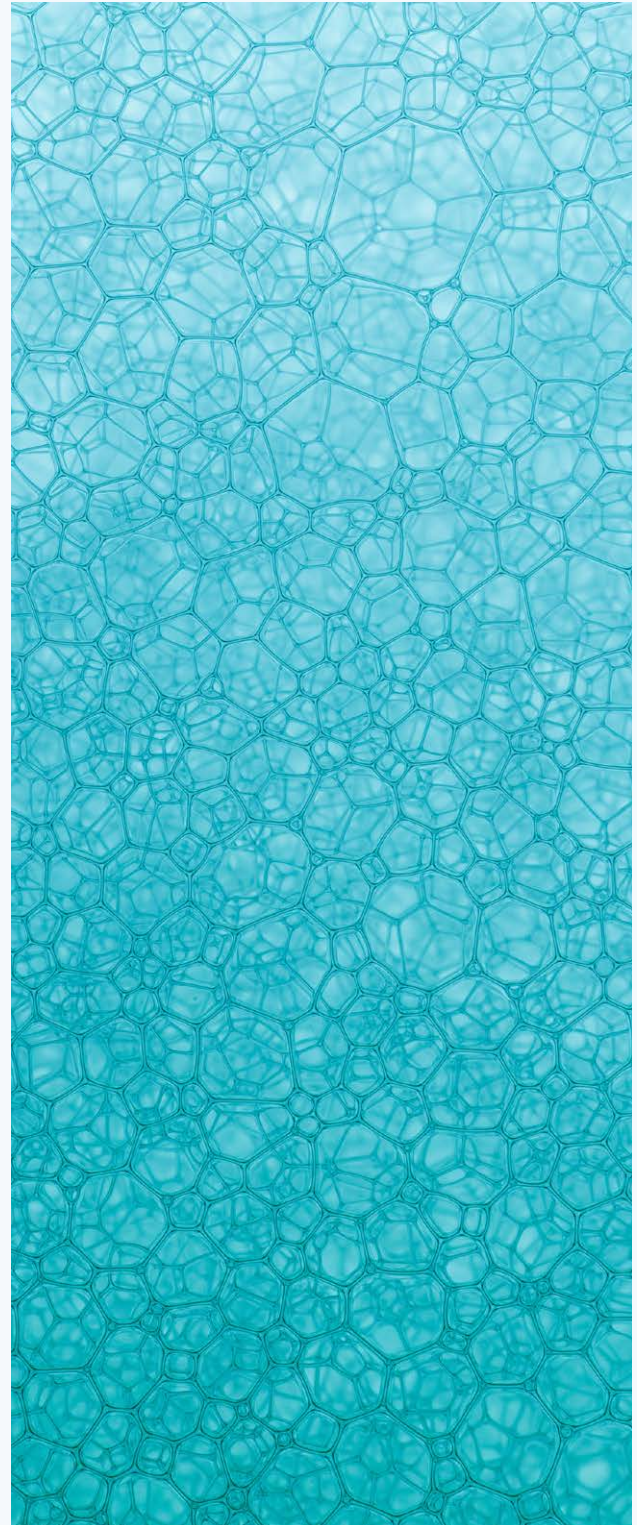
events. However, a number of our members do not attend these events and/or do not have the budget to attend. This has resulted in the roll-out of a set of regional summits (Africa, APAC and South America), having a positive impact on engagement levels but stretching our resources (both human and financial).

GETTING ON WITH THEM

I think all these barriers are known to all global associations and – to quote the late Queen Elizabeth – we should just get on with them. But in this non-aligned world (as the cover story of the June edition of *Foreign Affairs* stated) another barrier has become far more important: politics and socioeconomic factors. In an excellent article written by ESAE's Ioannis Pallas recently published on the website of Boardroom, an analysis was made of the impact of these factors or to put it in Ioannis' words: *"From embracing ESG and DEI policies to actively addressing the public and incorporating political criteria into decision-making, associations are transforming their traditional roles to navigate complex challenges and better serve their members in today's ever-changing environment"*.

This is indeed no longer about practical matters, but about values, resulting into uncomfortable discussions. It is one thing not to bring an event to a destination of which the values are not aligned with the values of the association, but how do you manage a global membership in a world in flux? For me, this will be the biggest challenge for global associations and there will be no single answer.

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





The choice to expand globally often arises from an organization's organic growth over time - or from stakeholder requirements.

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Taking Your Event on a Cultural Ride in Singapore

Who said that conference organizing is a dry set of presentations and discussions? Learning through experiencing is the way to drive delegates' curiosity and imagination leading to new ideas and creativity. Unique venues and experiences that highlight the culture and heritage of the host destination are easy to find in Singapore, a place where tradition, diversity and innovation go hand in hand.

Words Vicky Koffa



© DARREN SOH

INTERNATIONAL TRADEMARK ASSOCIATION GETS A TASTE OF SINGAPORE TEA & COFFEE CULTURE

Networking events are an essential part of conferences. If done in a beautiful and meaningful setting, the connections made can reach a different level. The International Trademark Association (INTA)'s annual meeting Live+ took place for the first time in Singapore, on 16-20 May 2023, and welcomed more than 8,000 IP and business professionals from around the world at Marina Bay Sands.

Part of the program included diverse business development networking excursions like the Chinese tea appreciation workshop by Yixing Xuan Teahouse. The 2-hour tour showcased the therapeutic effects of the art of Chinese tea making in a traditional teahouse. Another favorite activity among the delegates was the local coffee workshop by Nanyang Old Coffee. 45 minutes of hands-on brewing and appreciation of *kopi* (as the locals call their coffee) took participants through the 100-year

history of Singapore coffee culture and special way of ordering one. Both activities took place in the historical and vibrant district of Chinatown, Singapore's blend of tradition and urban life.

INTA also held their president dessert reception at the Fullerton Bay Hotel which sits on the historic Clifford Pier – an architecture landmark that was built in 1933. The hotel's upscale Clifford Pier restaurant offers Singapore's hospitality and heritage on a platter, and can host up to 600 guests with amazing views of the Marina Bay waterfront.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG LAWYERS EXPERIENCE WORK & PLAY IN SINGAPORE

The 60th International Young Lawyers' Congress (AIJA) was held from 22 to 27 August 2022, with over 400 delegates from more than 55 countries getting together to discuss and shape the future of the profession while enjoying the best leisure experiences the city-state has to offer, from dining, nightlife to recreational activities.

On top of a run alongside Singapore's waterfront architectural icons including Gardens by the Bay and the Helix Bridge, which gave participants memorable sights of Singapore to remember the congress by, organizers had booked the entire Tanjong Beach Club in Sentosa for an exciting day out at Singapore's premier island resort destination. Beach and water sports were planned while the memorable durian-eating challenge involved the region's signature 'infamous' fruit.

Keeping the delegates energized and engaged during their stay contributed to the successful conclusion of the congress. In fact, Xavier Costa, co-chair of the 2022 congress, said: *"The resourcefulness of the people, its location as a gateway to the region and the city's state-of-art infrastructure is like a well-oiled machine. Things work well and we were taken care of. It is a city that really has pride in doing things well."*

WORLD CONGRESS OF DERMATOLOGY (WCD)'S SPECTACULAR EVENING AT GARDENS BY THE BAY

The 25th edition of the major event took place on 3-8 July this year at the Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre and the Pan Pacific Singapore. Held for the first time in Southeast Asia, more than 12,000 WCD delegates discussed new developments in skin research and treatment.

A highlight of the conference's program was the Social Evening. Held at Gardens by the Bay (with its award-winning sustainably cooled conservatories and iconic Supertrees), the event included a solar-powered drone show at the supertree grove, portraying the beauty of the venue from above which ended WCD with a bang. It highlighted the successful conclusion of WCD as well as the far-reaching impact of such a huge medical conference. The memorable experience laid the ground for stronger connections and a deeper knowledge of Singapore.

UNCONVENTIONAL VENUES TO CONSIDER

The purpose-built MICE infrastructure on offer in Singapore (with a wide range of capacity and diversity of spaces) is undoubtedly an attraction for all types of association events - from small conferences to large-scale congresses such as WCD. But the nation has recognized the value of thinking out of the box when it comes to creative venues and conference organizing, as a response to the changing needs association event planners have in order to create a better experience for the attendees.

Placing emphasis on unique venues has gained Singapore a spot in the list of associations' favourite destinations. An architectural icon with distinctive twin shells, Esplanade is one of the busiest arts centres in the world. Located by the iconic Marina Bay waterfront, it is Singapore's national performing arts centre. Since opening in 2002, the venue has a range of venues from grand concert halls to flexible black box theatre spaces and can meet different event needs from opening ceremonies/galas to smaller meetings & social programs for associations.

The National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which has the world's largest collection of Southeast Asian modern art and reflects Singapore's unique heritage and geographical location. The building is housed in two of Singapore's national monuments, the former Supreme Court and City Hall, that have been restored and transformed to today's National Gallery. The 64,000-square-metre venue boasts a variety of event spaces from the expansive Supreme Court Terrace suitable for gala dinners to the Padang Deck that offers spectacular views of the Singapore skyline. Event planners can also organize a unique art-meets-cocktails docent-guided tour of the museum for their delegates. And why not add to the list a dinner among majestic manta rays and 100,000 marine animals at the Ocean Gallery, located within the S.E.A. Aquarium? Enjoy stunning vistas of marine life through the floor-to-ceiling viewing panels while transforming the space into a private networking session with sumptuous food.

Singapore seizes all opportunities to cater for associations seeking variety and originality outside the conference room. With sustainability as a priority, the city-state can offer association delegates memorable networking opportunities through sustainable and cultural activities. Original set-ups in unique venues come to complete the picture of the diversity, tradition and innovation flowing in Singapore's way of reimagining exceptional business events.

Host your next event in Singapore now
www.visitsingapore.com/mice

Conferences Made Easy... & More Sustainable in Monaco

The perception of Monaco from planners and delegates alike has definitely shifted. If it is still renowned for its somewhat glamorous lifestyle, the Principality is also taking significant steps towards sustainability, making it an ideal destination for organizing environmentally-friendly conferences. With its commitment to reducing the carbon footprint and preserving its natural resources, Monaco offers innovative tools and resources to help organizers create impactful events.

Words Remi Deve

In recent years, the small sovereign city-state nestled on the enchanting French Riviera has emerged as a steadfast advocate for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Spearheaded by the visionary leadership of HSH Prince Albert II, Monaco's government, businesses, and individuals have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to embracing social and environmental responsibility. Recognizing the profound significance of sustainable practices, the principality has embarked on a transformative journey, channeling efforts towards fostering a greater good for both present and future generations.

Monaco's efforts towards sustainability are commendable, considering its small size and the vast challenges posed by urbanization and tourism. From transportation to waste management and energy conservation, the Principality is raising the bar for sustainability practices worldwide. Monaco is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and promoting renewable energy sources,



with a long-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The government is steadfast in its support of environmental initiatives that aim to conserve natural resources and foster sustainable living.

Monaco's commitment to sustainability is evident in various sectors, including transportation, tourism, and event planning. The Principality has, for instance, implemented an extensive network of public transportation, including an electric city bus service and bike-sharing system that promotes sustainable modes of travel.

Also, many hotels and businesses in Monaco have adapted eco-friendly practices, such as reducing single-use plastics, sourcing local and organic produce, and implementing energy-saving measures. These efforts are in line with creating a more sustainable future for Monaco and ensuring that it continues to thrive as a diverse and vibrant destination.

EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY & TECHNOLOGY

The tourism sector in Monaco is certainly not left behind, and embraced the principles of eco-friendliness and CSR at all levels. It's in fact the Direction du Tourisme et des Congrès de Monaco (DTC) who has been leading the way in these efforts, with the creation of a CSR unit last year, as well as the development of a three-year CSR action plan.

Among several ongoing initiatives that are of interest to association planners and delegates alike, let's mention the new carbon calculator introduced by Monaco's government. Launched by DTC in close collaboration with the Mission for Energy Transition, this calculator allows conference organizers to assess the carbon footprint of their event and identify areas where improvements can be made. By calculating emissions from transportation, energy consumption, waste management,

and more, organizers can take proactive measures to minimize their impact on the environment. This transparency and commitment to measuring environmental impact sets Monaco apart as a destination that truly prioritizes sustainability.

Monaco has also embraced technology to enhance the conference experience while promoting sustainable practices. Visitors can make use of dedicated apps that provide real-time information on public transportation schedules, bike-sharing availability, and electric vehicle charging stations. This not only encourages greener modes of transportation but also simplifies navigation throughout the city.

In practical terms: YourMonaco.mc is an app that aims to provide residents and visitors with comprehensive information and resources about the Principality. It offers a diverse range of features to enhance the experience for both groups. On the other hand, Citymapper stands out by utilizing real-time data and advanced routing algorithms to enable commuters to efficiently navigate public transportation networks. What sets Citymapper apart is its integration with ride-sharing services, cycling routes, and walking directions, creating a user-friendly and all-inclusive tool for city navigation. Additionally, MonaPass offers convenient access to a variety of services and attractions. Acting as a digital pass, this app seamlessly grants users entry to museums, cultural sites, and popular tourist destinations in Monaco, making exploring the city hassle-free.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER'S GUIDE

Monaco will also soon offer event planners a valuable asset for arranging sustainable conferences: an extensive green guide. Scheduled to debut this autumn, the guide will furnish a wealth of insights, including optimal methodologies, locally eco-conscious venues, and a trove of advice



on embracing sustainable catering and integrating renewable energy solutions into event preparation. Additionally, it will supply actionable suggestions for waste reduction, energy preservation, and the advancement of environmentally friendly approaches.

Regarding the traditional planner's guide, it is presently undergoing revisions. Over the summer, the Monaco Convention Bureau's dedicated team has been working diligently behind the scenes to refresh all essential resources, with the aim of enhancing planners' convenience and efficiency.

In Monaco, hosting a sustainable and impactful conference is not only a possibility but also an opportunity to create lasting change and inspire others to follow suit. As the Principality continues to prioritize sustainability, it sets an example for the global events industry and paves the way for a more sustainable future.

More information

conventionbureau@gouv.mc
www.monacconventionbureau.com

Choosing Sustainability: Five Criteria for Selecting Responsible Venues

Discover how Canada's initiatives not only redefine event sustainability but also inspire a global shift towards conscientious event planning.

Words Marc de Faoite

2023 has seen record-breaking temperatures and the alarming increase of extreme weather events across our planet.

Sustainability can no longer simply be considered as a nice-to-have option, but as an essential core value that should help drive the ethos of any sector of activity, including the business events industry. Furthermore, sustainability should be seen in a broader sense than just environmental terms but embrace economic and social considerations too.

Destination Canada has gained global recognition for its emerging leadership in the sustainable business events arena, especially in recent times – courtesy of the Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan, which seeks to bolster the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability practices of business events hosted in the country.

Looking to host more sustainable events? It's crucial that you select the right venue. However, selecting this venue can be daunting without knowing the essential criteria to consider.

Here are five elements worth taking into account.

VENUE ENERGY GENERATION AND CONSUMPTION

Combining clean renewable energy with energy-saving practices can reduce a venue's dependency on polluting fossil fuels. Here, LEED certifications can help

guide event planners' choice of venue by providing a globally recognized ratings framework for categorizing energy-efficient buildings.

Canada's business events sector has risen to the challenge by adhering to the strict criteria LEED certification entails.

The Vancouver Convention Centre, for instance, holds Double LEED Platinum certification, being the first and only venue to have attained this accolade. The West building's six-acre living roof – the largest in Canada and the largest non-industrial living roof in North America – features more than 400,000 indigenous plant and grasses, enriching local biodiversity. This green roof also acts as a powerful insulator, which combined with on-site renewable energy generation, reduces energy costs and maintains the centre at a comfortable temperature around the year.

Similarly, Alberta's Edmonton EXPO Centre is a Green Key Global Meetings certified and Climate Smart certified venue, with yearly benchmarks in place to track and report its efforts to reduce its environmental impact – in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). The Centre has recently implemented a new solar array with a target of generating 33% of their energy.

There is also the Beanfield Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto, which is powered with 100% green energy. It was Canada's first LEED Silver conference centre and is

situated close to Canada's largest exhibition and convention centre, the award-winning LEED Platinum Enercare Centre. There is also a wind turbine located at Exhibition Place's waterfront that can generate up to one million kilowatt-hours of clean energy per year.

Last but not least is Victoria Convention Centre in British Columbia, which was designated as carbon neutral and has more than halved its electricity use by using LED lighting and real-time energy management systems.

FOOD & BEVERAGE SOURCING/OPTIONS

Agriculture is one of the leading producers of greenhouse gases (GHGs), but much of its impact can be mitigated by choosing less meat and favouring locally sourced food and beverages, which in turn economically supports the local community while building food security resilience.

Sensitive to this issue, Edmonton's EXPO Centre sources 35% of its food from local suppliers, which reduces the carbon footprint of events while representing an investment of over \$400,000 into the local economy.

Calgary's Grown Right Here program is at the heart of the food and beverage offerings at Stampede Park's BMO Centre, again promoting and favouring locally-sourced produce with menus featuring the world-famous Alberta beef, locally produced rye whiskey, and wine from neighbouring British Columbia's Okanagan Valley vineyards.



© MAURICE LI

WASTE HANDLING - DISPOSAL AND DONATION

Using less and wasting less is key to reducing any event's environmental impact.

A sustainable venue should have comprehensive and effective waste management systems and initiatives in place and convention centres across Canada have put these principles into practice.

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre specializes in zero-waste events, successfully diverting 90% of waste from landfills since 2014, while the LEED Gold certified Québec City Convention Centre even encourages event planners to get on board by managing event waste and biodegradable materials free of charge.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY

Conference venues don't exist in bubbles. They have co-dependent relationships with surrounding communities, both benefitting and benefiting from the many ancillary businesses and services that go into making an attractive destination.

Whether by being a major employer, purchasing produce from local suppliers, or increasing the number of visitors to the local area, venues can have a major impact on communities.

The Edmonton Convention Centre sources produce from local growers, leading to a reinvestment of more than \$750,000 into Edmonton's economy. Meanwhile, Explore Edmonton offers event planners the opportunity to give back to the community by allocating any number of tickets from their event to a local non-profit group. Its Responsible Events Program was conceived to align with the UNSDGs to ensure that events result in outcomes that work toward common community goals.

The Québec City Convention Centre has a big impact on the community and economy of the entire Québec City area, employing some 1300 people while supporting community projects for residents of the Centre's Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighbourhood.

SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES & FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

Implementing sustainable initiatives makes it easier for organisations and associations to address and reduce the meeting industry's environmental impact.

Several venues in Canada offer financial support to encourage event planners to organize sustainable events. For example, under its Eco-Conditionality Policy, Montréal's Palais de Congrès provides

discounts of up to 10% to organizations taking tangible action relating to sustainable development.

THE SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY

Choosing a sustainable venue is just one element of planning and hosting a sustainable event.

One way to ensure that you're taking the appropriate steps in your sustainability journey is to work with destinations and organisations whose desire for progress aligns with your own.

In this regard, the Canadian Business Events Sustainability Plan provides Canadian partners with the tools, knowledge and resources to improve their sustainability offerings, so that they in turn can help clients raise the standards of business events by hosting meeting more sustainably.

So, if you're looking to host sustainable events, consider Canada.

To learn more about successfully hosting sustainable events, planners can contact the Destination Canada team or reach out directly by email to Virginie De Visscher, Acting Executive Director, Business Events, [Destination Canada](mailto:Devisschervirginie@destinationcanada.com) at Devisschervirginie@destinationcanada.com

Exploring Ottawa's Experiential Conference Landscape

Gone are the days when conference organizing was synonymous with mere presentations and discussions. The contemporary approach underscores the value of experiential learning, igniting delegates' curiosity and imagination, fostering a fertile ground for creativity and innovation. In Ottawa, such transformative experiences are readily accessible.

The city's unique assets, whether cultural, historical, outdoor or sporting, serve as potent catalysts for this paradigm shift in conference dynamics.

Words Marc de Faoite

Experienced at hosting events of all sizes, Ottawa, Canada's capital, is a place where delegates often arrive early and stay on after conferences to make the most of all that this welcoming and inclusive city has to offer.

Ottawa is a unique business events destination that offers conference attendees a wealth of culture and the opportunity to experience the thrills of the great outdoors. Recently Ottawa just became even more accessible with Air France's new non-stop service between Ottawa YOW and Paris CDG making getting to Ottawa from Europe easier than ever.

INDIGENOUS & MORE

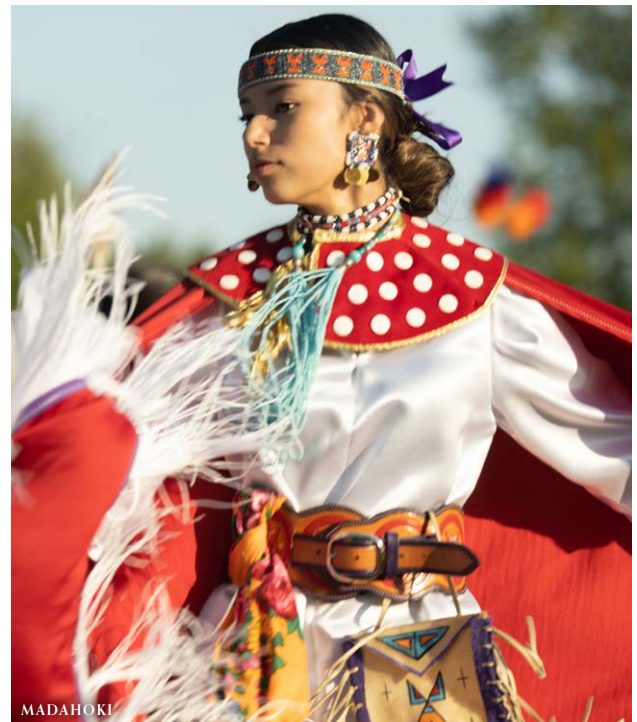
Many local attractions, tours, and events reflect the fascinating stories of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, making Ottawa the perfect place for conference delegates and attendees to discover the multiple facets of authentic Indigenous culture.

Ottawa is located on the traditional lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people, whose culture is alive and celebrated across the region. The city derives its name from the Algonquin word *Odawa*, meaning "traders", and was originally used to designate this region where Indigenous Peoples have lived, met, and traded for thousands of years.

Established in 1996 Ottawa Festivals, leads the region's multi-million dollar event industry, working to promote Ottawa as an exciting tourist destination. Ottawa has a busy calendar of events, festivals, and celebrations throughout the year, making a significant impact on the local economy and greatly enhancing

the region's image while making conference attendees' time spent in the city even more enriching.

Towards the conclusion of May each year, the Odawa Native Friendship Centre orchestrates the Odawa Pow Wow. This event



MADAHOKI



showcases an Indigenous dance and singing contest, along with an arts and crafts market, and attendees have the chance to savor Indigenous cuisine. Other signature events include the Ottawa Jazz Festival, the Canadian Tulip Festival, the Gatineau Hot Air Balloon Festival and many more.

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

As the country's capital, Ottawa is home to landmarks and monuments that celebrate Canadian history. Among the highlights are the Parliament Buildings and the Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ottawa also boasts seven national museums and other local museums and galleries that allow visitors to gain a deeper insight into Canadian history and culture. The Canadian Museum of History is Canada's most visited museum and home to the world's largest indoor collection of totem poles.

Fans of performing arts will find their needs catered to at Ottawa's National Arts Centre, the only bilingual, multidisciplinary performing arts centre in Canada that offers events in French and in English.

"Ottawa is a destination where you can mix meetings with memories," says Lesley Pincombe, Vice President, Meetings and Major Events, Ottawa Tourism. "If your delegates' hearts belong to culture and the arts and if they're into heart-pounding adventure in the great outdoors, they'll have a memorable time in Ottawa."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURES

Wherever you are in Canada the Great Outdoors is never far away. Ottawa is no exception, making the city the ideal base to allow conference delegates to spend time in nature, whether

soaking in the calm and quiet or involved in more hair-raising adventurous pursuits.

The region boasts some 800 km of scenic cycling paths, with the picturesque Gatineau Park being popular for mountain biking and hiking. White water rafting on the Ottawa River in the heart of the city can make an interesting team-building exercise for conference attendees, or there is also the possibility to enjoy the more sedate stand up and seated paddling.

The winter months offer numerous opportunities for cross-country and downhill skiing, as well as the chance to skate on the Rideau Canal Skateway, the world's largest outdoor rink.

Adrenaline enthusiasts can experience Canada's highest bungee jump, and relish breathtaking views while crossing the Ottawa River from the Province of Ontario to the Province of Québec or through the Gatineau Hills all while travelling by zipline.

All in all, Ottawa is a captivating city that harmoniously fuses urban allure with a wide array of outdoor escapades. Catering to both nature lovers and thrill-seekers alike, promising an encompassing experience that is bound to leave indelible memories for conference organizers and delegates alike.

For more information

Visit ottawatourism.ca/meetings, or to learn how the Ottawa Tourism team can help you secure and deliver business events that drives tangible outcomes and long-lasting legacies contact Theresa Gatto at tgatto@ottawatourism.ca

The Secrets of Interlaken's Success as the SEF's Host Destination

Interlaken, a picturesque destination nestled between two lakes and surrounded by the majestic Swiss Alps, has proven to be the perfect host for the prestigious Swiss Economic Forum (SEF) for some years now. But what makes it so special? Why would high-profile delegates convene to the region every year to network, collaborate and discuss current trends and challenges facing the economy and society?

Words Remi Deve



Since its relocation from Thun due to the increasing number of participants, Interlaken, Switzerland's breathtaking location has been home to the Swiss Economic Forum (SEF). The largest economic and tourism event in Switzerland, it brought this year over 1,500 participants from various industries and offered a platform for established companies, start-ups, and political leaders to exchange ideas and create meaningful business connections.

COMPELLING REASONS

One compelling reason for Interlaken's selection as the SEF host is the economic and tourism benefits it brings to the local community. A study conducted by the Institute for Tourism and Mobility in collaboration with the Institute for Business and Regional Economics of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts revealed that the SEF 2022 generated a total turnover of

CHF 10.36 million, resulting in a value added of CHF 4.98 million. This economic impact created around 34 full-time positions, contributing to the growth of the local economy. Additionally, the 1,760 participants of the SEF incurred approximately CHF 479,000 in additional expenditures during their visit, providing a boost to the tourism industry. The study also highlighted that the tourism value added amounted to around CHF 600,000, equivalent to 8.4 full-time positions.

Interlaken's strategic location, just 45 minutes away from Bern by direct train, has also played a crucial role in attracting the SEF. As the event outgrew its previous location, Interlaken stepped in to provide the necessary infrastructure and hotel capacity to accommodate the growing number of participants. Interlaken's accessibility, combined with its awe-inspiring scenery and reputation as a business and holiday region, made it an ideal choice.

In an interview with Boardroom, Martina Röhrig, MICE Coordinator at Congress Kursaal Interlaken, emphasized that *"Interlaken offers a unique combination of business and holiday feeling in a very small area. Whether it's the meeting location, hotels, railway station, or supporting programs, everything is within a few minutes' walking distance and can be easily reached with the new direct connection from Zurich airport."*

In terms of meeting infrastructure, Congress Kursaal Interlaken stands as one of the largest congress centres in the canton of Bern, and has provided the SEF with state-of-the-art technology, catering services, and versatile event spaces. With its historic building, modern Auditorium, and magnificent park, the venue offers a captivating setting, with no less than 5000 sqm capable of accommodating over 1500 people. Martina Röhrig highlighted the appeal of the venue, stating, *"The stylish ambience in the historic halls of the Kursaal, combined with the modern auditorium, makes this a uniquely attractive venue for events."*

ALIGNMENT IN SUSTAINABILITY

But beyond this, Interlaken's selection as the host city for the SEF also aligns with Switzerland's spirit of innovation and forward-thinkingness. The country's commitment to sustainability and its well-developed public transport network perfectly complements the objectives of the SEF. Interlaken itself has been recognized for its sustainability efforts, with the municipality awarded the Energy City label and Interlaken Tourism bearing the Swisssustainable "engaged" label. Congress Kursaal Interlaken in line with the sustainability ethos, even utilizes the water of the flowing Aare River to cool its 1,900 sqm auditorium, exemplifying a commitment to environmentally friendly practices.

This year's SEF also marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its 25th anniversary. To commemorate this occasion, participants were treated to an extraordinary drone show, leaving them with a lasting memory of the event. Other highlights included notable speakers and the presence of distinguished guests such as Alain



Berset, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Katalin Novák, President of Hungary.

The support provided by the Congress Kursaal Interlaken AG to the SEF organizers is instrumental in ensuring the success of the event. The professional team collaborates closely with clients to offer comprehensive solutions, addressing any logistical challenges that may arise. *"From planning and organizing the event to providing on-site support, the Congress Kursaal Interlaken AG offers a comprehensive service from a single source. The catering services provided are tailored to meet the specific culinary needs of the SEF, ensuring high-quality food and attentive service,"* explained Martina.

But the impact of hosting the SEF in Interlaken goes far beyond the event itself. The region gains significant exposure through continuous live broadcasting by Swiss Radio and Television (SRF) from the auditorium foyer. Moreover, many participants usually opt to stay overnight in Interlaken and its surrounding areas, providing a boost to the local economy and leaving satisfied visitors who may return for future leisure or business activities. As a result, the success of the SEF has opened doors for other conferences in Switzerland, such as the Swiss Innovation Forum or Switzerland Sustainable Forum, reaffirming Switzerland's reputation as a centre for economic growth and innovation.

Additionally, the SEF has a lasting legacy in nurturing young entrepreneurs through initiatives like the SEF.Growth support program and the annual Swiss Economic Award. These efforts further strengthen Interlaken's status as a beacon of innovation and economic progress in Switzerland.

Contact

info@congress-interlaken.ch / www.congress-interlaken.ch

More info on Switzerland as a convention destination

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Empowering a 'Parkinson's Ready' Community in Barcelona

Last July, Barcelona welcomed the 6th World Parkinson Congress, as part of its commitment to becoming "Parkinson's Ready." In collaboration with the World Parkinson Coalition (WPC), Associació Catalana per al Parkinson, Barcelona Convention Bureau, and sponsored by pharmaceutical company AbbVie, the city embarked on a legacy training program aimed at providing a supportive environment for people living with Parkinson's disease (PD) and their caregivers during the Congress.

Words Remi Deve



PLENARY, WORLD PARKINSON CONGRESS

Parkinson's disease, affecting approximately 10 million people worldwide, stands as the fastest growing neurodegenerative disorder on a global scale. For the World Parkinson Coalition, its mission revolves around providing an international platform, facilitating knowledge exchange on cutting-edge scientific discoveries, medical practices, caregiver initiatives, and advocacy work related to Parkinson's disease.

THE CONGRESS AS A CORNERSTONE

A cornerstone of the Coalition's efforts is the World Parkinson Congress, a triennial event that brings together a diverse community comprising researchers, clinicians, healthcare professionals, individuals with Parkinson's, and their caregivers from all corners of the world. This prestigious gathering serves as a pivotal platform to foster deeper understanding, advocate for improved care, and advance

groundbreaking research in the relentless fight against Parkinson's disease.

Taking place last July, the latest iteration of the event drew an impressive crowd of more than 3,000 delegates to the vibrant Catalunya city, offering a unique opportunity for collaboration and progress in tackling this challenging neurological disorder head-on. With its international reach and dedication to knowledge-sharing, the World Parkinson Coalition is thus continuing to play a vital role in the ongoing battle against Parkinson's disease.

But beyond its original mission and vision, the WPC always goes the extra mile to leave a lasting legacy in the cities chosen to host the Congress.

In that regard, the "Parkinson's Ready" program, which the WPC launched in 2010, has been committed to equipping key stakeholders with the knowledge and empathy required to support delegates with Parkinson's disease. By targeting and educating essential service providers through specialized training, the program has played a crucial role in preparing Barcelona to become a model city for individuals with PD,

and significantly improved the overall experience and comfort of the delegates during the Congress.

FOSTERING AWARENESS & EMPATHY

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard, Executive Director of World Parkinson Coalition, emphasizes the challenges faced by people with PD while traveling and the significance of accessibility and understanding in ensuring a positive experience. She states, *"PD is complicated and often misunderstood, so accessibility issues and lack of PD awareness by local staff can present a myriad of problems causing additional stressors for those living with the disease."*

"When we discussed the program with Barcelona Convention Bureau," Eli elaborates, "their response wasn't just a polite acknowledgment. It was resounding enthusiasm. They embraced the initiative wholeheartedly, expressing their commitment to collaborate and make it the most remarkable program ever offered."

And this is exactly what happened.

The "Parkinson's Ready" program took shape through a meticulous series of specialized trainings, thoughtfully designed to cater to diverse groups in the months leading up to the much-anticipated World Parkinson Congress in July. With a comprehensive approach, these trainings encompassed a wide spectrum of essential personnel, including transportation personnel, hotel staff, convention centre staff, local police, and airport customs officials. These professionals constitute the essential 'supply' chain, who might unknowingly interact with individuals living with PD before, during, and even after the Congress.

"Traveling long distance and moving around in a big city can be much more challenging than one can imagine," said Fulvio Capitanio, co-founder of Unidos contra el Parkinson and World Parkinson Congress Steering Committee member, who is living with PD, economist, "It's a great relief

for people with Parkinson's disease to know that you can find public servants educated about the disease and ready to help."

He continued: *"We are deeply grateful for the invaluable assistance provided by the Barcelona Convention Bureau, encompassing everything from selecting the groups for training to meticulously arranging the schedule and logistics of each session. Equally pivotal was the unwavering support of the Catalan Parkinson's Association, skillfully curating the training content to cater to the unique requirements of every individual group."*

FRESH ALLIANCES

"Ultimately, our efforts have led to the establishment of fresh alliances bridging the local Parkinson's community and the service industry," says Anna Bueno, Association Meetings Manager at Barcelona Convention Bureau. "We're confident these newfound connections will endure far beyond the duration of the Congress, fostering a lasting relationship."

In fact, the training initiative takes its place within a broader context - that of transforming Barcelona into a Smart City. This grand vision centers around harnessing technology to achieve sustainability, inclusivity, and enhanced



urban management. Christoph Tessmar, Managing Director of Barcelona Convention Bureau, wholeheartedly supports this notion and underscores the city's pioneering endeavors in this domain: *"Barcelona has proven itself as a leading Smart City through the renewal of smart transport and urban infrastructures... Our work with the 'Parkinson's Ready' training is making the city even smarter."*

Ultimately, the "Parkinson's Ready" program demonstrates the city's commitment to fostering empathy, understanding, and inclusivity for people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers. By equipping essential service providers with specialized training, Barcelona has aimed to create a warm and supportive environment for delegates. Beyond the event, the legacy of this initiative will continue to positively impact the lives of those with Parkinson's in Barcelona and serve as a model for other cities worldwide.

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Bahrain: The Next Big Thing on the Meetings Map

Bahrain's history as a host of events dates back to 1991 when the first exhibition and convention centre was established. Since then, it has evolved into one of the most prominent event destinations across the Gulf and the wider region. Over the past three decades, the Kingdom has successfully organized an array of events, including trade shows, conferences, concerts, and even sporting extravaganzas. With the opening of Exhibition World Bahrain in November 2022, it's now the next big thing on the meetings map.

Words Remi Deve

Strategically nestled in the Middle East, Bahrain serves as a vital crossroad connecting the East and West. With a rich history dating back to the Dilmun Age and an emphasis on authentic hospitality, Bahrain presents an all-encompassing experience for visitors.

A nation known for its open-mindedness, tolerance, and cosmopolitan spirit; Bahrain stands out as one of the world's most liberal business landscapes. Remarkably diversified, its economy leads the region with strongholds in the financial and technology sectors. The Kingdom's reputation as an accommodating business environment has recently been

solidified by its achievement of ranking No1 globally as the 'Best Destination for Getting Started Abroad' in 2023, as per the Expat Essentials Index published by InterNations. This acknowledgment mirrors the Kingdom's dedication to fostering a welcoming atmosphere for global engagement.

But today Bahrain is also positioning itself on the map as a thriving conference destination. The Tourism Strategy 2022-2026 has reinforced this commitment, with the introduction of Exhibition World Bahrain, the largest and newest convention and exhibition centre in the region. This monumental addition signifies Bahrain's



ambition to assert its presence as a major global destination for regional and international conventions, propelling it to the forefront of the business events industry.

Case in point: Bahrain made, in 2022, a resounding re-entry into the top 100 of the ICCA Global Rankings, securing the 89th position for international events held at Exhibition World Bahrain. This achievement underscores the Kingdom's progress and its ascent in the global events landscape.

Dr. Nasser Qaedi, CEO of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, puts it like this: *"We've seen that Bahrain holds great appeal for MICE visitors due to our luxury hotels, world-class infrastructure, and strategic location. Bahrain's rich history and cultural heritage make it a unique destination for business events. Exhibition World Bahrain now provides a platform for international exhibitions and conferences that couldn't be hosted here previously. We're eager to collaborate with new international partners to attract more large-scale events."*

A NEXUS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Indeed, Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB) stands as a testament to the Kingdom's burgeoning status as a conference destination. Boasting Arabesque accents that gracefully fuse contemporary design with Bahrain's rich heritage, the venue stands as a symbol of the nation's modernity while honoring its roots.

"Exhibition World Bahrain is situated in a dynamic area adjacent to the Bahrain International Circuit and the Al Dana Amphitheatre. The Kingdom is investing in strategic projects that contribute to economic growth. EWB is designed to cater to every type of event, delivering exceptional experiences and ensuring success for all event organizers," said Dr. Qaedi.



EXHIBITION WORLD BAHRAIN

Since its inauguration, EWB has hosted more than half a million visitors as of July 2023. Its prominence is further validated by its nomination for the Middle East's Leading Exhibition and Convention Centre 2023 award by the World Travel Awards.

Spanning over 309,000 square meters with both indoor and outdoor spaces, the venue provides a staggering 149,000 square meters of indoor and outdoor leasable space. Its flexibility and adaptability cater to diverse event requirements, offering a comprehensive range of world-class services. With ten exhibition halls covering a collective area of 95,000 square meters, the venue also features a Grand Hall accommodating up to 4,000 seats and 19 meeting rooms.

SUSTAINABILITY & MORE

But Exhibition World Bahrain's commitment extends beyond its architectural prowess and event hosting capabilities. Driven by a comprehensive CSR strategy, the venue actively contributes to the Kingdom's social, economic, and environmental welfare. The strategy revolves around three key pillars: Protecting the Environment, Investing in People, and Strengthening the Community.

In this regard, the venue is dedicated to sustainability, and embraces initiatives to minimize energy and water consumption, reduce carbon footprint, and eliminate single-use plastics. This approach aligns seamlessly with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, which underscores the Kingdom's aspirations for sustainable and innovative progress. *"The Kingdom's dedication to sustainability is evident through EWB's solar power project and its adherence to environmental standards. Bahrain's emphasis on technology and innovation in tourism is recognized globally,"* argues Dr. Qaedi.

EWB also invests in people and collaborates with educational institutions to cultivate a skilled workforce in the exhibitions, tourism, and hospitality sectors. This investment not only nurtures Bahrain's youth but also drives the Kingdom's expertise in the industry.

Last but not least, the venue's commitment extends to its collaboration with organizations, such as the Bahrain Society for Children with Behavioral and Communication Difficulties, to host events that contribute to community welfare.

As Bahrain's narrative in the MICE industry continues to unfold, Exhibition World Bahrain serves as a vibrant hub for progress and innovation, reflecting the Kingdom's commitment to shaping a remarkable future in the world of global events.

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New Zealand's Conference Scene Elevated

New Zealand has set its sights on attracting a record number of international conferences, supported by three new state-of-the-art conference centres. The new infrastructure aims to capitalize on New Zealand's natural beauty, warm hospitality, and innovative spirit to entice conference organizers and delegates from around the world, positioning the country as a premier destination for global gatherings.

Words Rochelle Long

New Zealand's three new sustainably designed convention centres mark a significant boost to its conference capabilities. According to Bjoern Spreitzer, General Manager for NZ & Business Events at Tourism New Zealand, these modern venues solidify the country's status as a world-class conference destination and enable them to bid for larger-scale events. Tourism New Zealand aims to secure a record 90 international conference bids in the next fiscal year.

"Business events is a core market for us, bringing high quality visitors that deliver knowledge, business and economic benefits, and positive social legacies. This is a great time to focus on the sector and target sustainable growth," he says.

All of the new convention centres offer cutting-edge technology, flexible function space, and world-class cuisine. But each offers its own look and identity, leveraging its host city's strengths with impressive results.

CHRISTCHURCH - FROM EARTH SCIENCE TO THE STARS

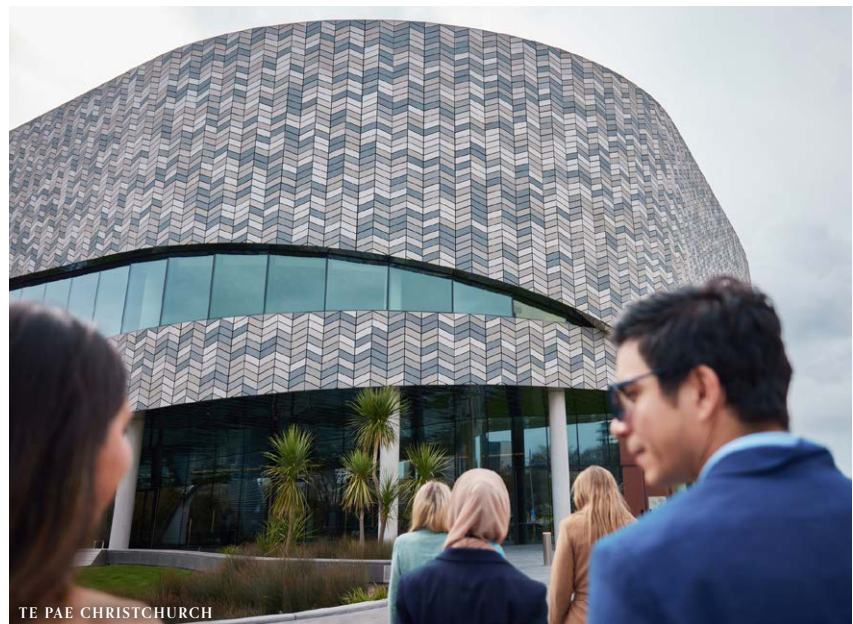
Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre is just over a year old, having opened in May

2022. Rising on the banks of the Ōtakaro Avon River, it's a very short but scenic stroll from the vast array of hotels, restaurants and retail outlets in the revitalised city centre of Ōtautahi Christchurch.

In the first 13 months of operation, Te Pae Christchurch hosted 290 events with more than 145,000 attendees including

88 convention events, 13 of which were international conferences.

Offering 28,000 sqm of flexible space, including a 1400-seat tiered auditorium divisible into two 700-seat venues, Te Pae Christchurch aims to increase its share of international conventions in the coming years in key sectors.



TE PAE CHRISTCHURCH

This October, it will host the ACM VRST Symposium, bringing 300 international VR software and technology specialists to the city and showcasing Christchurch's world-renowned HITLab and tech sector. Then, the APSA Asian Seed Congress in November is expected to attract some 1000 delegates, drawing on the knowledge benefits of the Canterbury region's strong agri/tech sector.

In 2024, Te Pae Christchurch will host the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Annual Scientific Congress, a large regional medical conference; and the Extreme Solar Systems V Conference, which will welcome some 500 astronomers from around the globe, aligning with Christchurch's burgeoning aerospace business cluster.

The International Conference on Geomorphology (1000 delegates) has chosen the city for 2026, capitalising on the strong earth science focus in New Zealand and the Canterbury region.

WELLINGTON SETS SIGHTS ON SCIENCE CITY

New Zealand's capital city Te Whanganui a Tara Wellington officially opened its new conference and exhibition centre, Tākina, in May this year, with more than 50 multi-day conferences already booked in its first year.

Located directly opposite Wellington's waterfront and Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, Tākina's ground floor public exhibition space and laneway ensure it's at the heart of life in this creative capital's cultural precinct.

Tākina incorporates 10,000 sqm of flexible conferencing space over two levels, with capacity for plenaries up to 1,600. This new facility has seen Wellington attract larger international conferences, including the International Council for Traditional Music's 48th World Conference in 2025, expecting more than 800 delegates.



The city is also securing more regional conferences including The Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases Conference and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, both bringing their Annual Scientific Meetings to Wellington in 2024.

Attracting conferences in the science and education sectors is a key focus in Wellington's business events strategy, as evidenced by the city holding the inaugural Life Sciences Summit earlier this year. This strategy received a boost when the New Zealand Government recently announced a NZ \$450m investment to make Wellington a 'Science City' through the creation of three new research hubs, bringing together research and expertise in oceans, climate and hazards, health and pandemic readiness, and advanced manufacturing and materials, energy futures and biotech.

AUCKLAND - CULTURE & SUSTAINABILITY ON A GRAND SCALE

Due to open in mid-2025, the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC) will be the largest new venue. Rising in the city centre of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, it will link directly by air bridges to the new Horizon Hotel and the SkyCity entertainment precinct and laneways connecting delegates to the vibrancy of New Zealand's largest city.

Its flexible convention and event space will cater for up to 4,000 people across 32,500 sqm, including a theatre capacity of 2,850 people.

Ahead of its opening date, NZICC has already confirmed 11 international conferences, with a pipeline of more than 60 international and large-scale domestic bookings holding space or in active discussions for 2025 and beyond.

International conferences announced to date include the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) 2025, estimated to attract 3000 delegates and showcase New Zealand's Indigenous Māori culture and education sector.

Science will take centre stage at the International Symposium on Microbial Ecology (ISME) in 2026, attracting some 1800 delegates to the city; sustainability and the environment will be at the fore at the International Coral Reef Symposium, and the Federation of Asian and Oceania Pest Managers Associations (FAOPMA) Conference, both expected to attract more than 2,500 delegates in 2026.

For more information on bringing your next conference to New Zealand
businessevents.newzealand.com

Amsterdam: Forging a Path of Impactful Innovation & Sustainability

The long-standing capital of the Netherlands needs no formal introduction to associations and meeting planners. Amsterdam has positioned itself as a prominent global destination for business events, attributed not only to its contemporary infrastructure and thriving knowledge ecosystem, but also to its pioneering spirit and firmly entrenched commitment to sustainability, reflected in various initiatives, ranging from its renowned cycling culture to its endeavors in promoting a circular economy. Driven by the "Amsterdam. Inspiration For Good." concept, the city is ready to host meetings looking to make a positive difference.

Words Vicky Koffa

The people of Amsterdam have made sure to form a city that doesn't follow trends, it creates them. Innovation and sustainability have penetrated every aspect of the growing economy, with ready-made ideas or tailor-made solutions at the disposal of meeting planners.

ASSETS FOR EVENT ORGANIZERS & ATTENDEES

The city boasts exceptional physical connectivity for its residents and visitors/delegates because of its strategic location and green initiatives. International high-speed train connections offer more sustainable travelling options to major European destinations. A large number of direct international flights have ranked Amsterdam Airport Schiphol #1 for global direct connectivity by the Airports Council International (ACI).

Urban smart mobility excels within the city boundaries, too. With frequent green energy-powered local trains, 100%

electric public buses and a wide network of bike lanes, delegates will not have to raise their carbon footprint. Not to mention that Amsterdam's compact size facilitates walking almost everywhere. As a result, it ranked #6 in the Urban Mobility Readiness Index and #2 for Sustainable Mobility when compared with 60 major cities around the world, in 2022.

The Dutch capital, in fact, seamlessly integrates sustainability values across its array of business event venues and accommodation choices. Spanning high-tech heritage locations to cutting-edge convention centres dedicated to fostering sustainability across the region, the city boasts an impressive selection of more than 500 contemporary and authentic establishments. These options, complemented by over 90 nearby green-certified hotels, cater to events of all sizes and formats. Notable venues such as the Green Globe-Certified Beurs van Berlage and EXPO Greater Amsterdam

exemplify this commitment. With features ranging from intelligent energy and waste management to forward-thinking plant-based catering, Amsterdam's extensive meeting offerings showcase the forefront of sustainability solutions for conference planners.

Innovation and sustainability come from a strong baseline in Amsterdam. A high concentration of prestigious universities, research centers, knowledge institutions and open innovation platforms set the scene for creative and impactful ideas for a greener way of living and doing business. Conference programs can be strategically designed to incorporate local academics as speakers or presenters, for example, so that attendees can capitalize on the knowledge found in hubs like Amsterdam Science Park or Amsterdam UMC, where future-focused solutions across AI & data science, life sciences and health, high-tech systems & materials, and sustainability are developed.

Amsterdam Smart City, for example, ensures collaboration between the right innovation and sustainability professionals to lead the city towards becoming a fully circular economy by 2050. Such initiatives have won Amsterdam first place in 2021 as the most sustainable European city, according to the Schroders European Sustainable Cities index.

A TESTAMENT TO SUCCESS

Actions speak louder than words and Amsterdam never ceases to act upon what it preaches when it comes to positive impact and sustainable events.

Just this past June the 17th annual edition of The Next Web (TNW) conference took place in one of Amsterdam's leading industrial heritage event sites, Taets Art and Event Park. With the bold theme 'Reclaim the Future', organization of the event was focused around sustainability, offering for instance meatless catering options and reusable tableware to reduce carbon emissions. Having ranked among Europe's top 3 tech ecosystems according to the 2023 Global Startup Ecosystem

Report (GSER), the city offered the perfect platform for extensive collaboration between eventgoers and local talent for far-reaching impact.

Likewise, a month earlier, WasteBuild Zero 2023 took place at NDSM, a former shipbuilding and repair company, gathering leading architects, engineers, designers, and developers across Europe to accelerate the transition towards a circular built environment. With over 16 hours of conference content and a buzzing exhibition space housing more than 30 circular solutions, Amsterdam set the stage for innovations including cutting-edge building materials and revolutionary techniques that challenged traditional construction norms while addressing the climate emergency. *"One of the reasons we're in Amsterdam is because of the leadership that Dutch architects and Dutch built environment is demonstrating when it comes to your circular economy roadmap,"* said Frazer Stokes, Founder of WasteBuild Zero.

In April 2023, Theater Amsterdam hosted the first-ever annual Plant

Forward conference. With a mission to accelerate the transition to 50% plant-based proteins by 2030, the event found its match in Amsterdam as the city is a forerunner in the protein transformation and home to numerous food industry pioneers leading the way towards more plant-based alternatives. As the second-best city in Europe for AgriTech and food startups, Amsterdam was a natural fit for the forward-thinking conference to set out while setting the standard for greener meetings.

EMPOWERING CONFERENCES' SUCCESS

The Amsterdam Convention Bureau's (ACB) support has been instrumental in the success of these impactful conferences. Meeting planners can count on the broad connections the bureau has within the city in regard to infrastructure, signage, transportation, venue arrangements, thought-leaders and decision-makers. With a commitment to harnessing the power of conferences for the greater good, the Amsterdam Convention Bureau facilitates the planning and hosting of purpose-driven events across a range of leading industries.

Whether its food, fashion or conventions committed to the energy transition, Amsterdam has created a unique conference destination that is purposely driven by innovation, focused on creativity, and empowered by sustainability. Associations looking for a different perspective are sure to find in Amsterdam a wealth of inspiration needed to shape their next conference - for good.



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The region is an ideal place for blissful relaxation and integration, e.g. in the numerous spas and thermal water facilities located in the Podhale region. The latter not only provide relaxation, but also have a positive impact on health. Tasting famous local cheeses or highlander dishes in the atmospheric setting of a shepherd's hut or a wooden inn will be a real feast for the senses. Those who prefer an active way of spending their time and are open to interesting experiences will also be satisfied. They can, for example, soar beneath the clouds on a paraglider or go deep underground - a tour of the mining route in the Wieliczka Salt Mine allows you to learn the ins and outs of the profession and feel the thrill. Collectors of thrilling experiences, albeit of a different type, can opt for rafting on the Dunajec - a mountain river where rafting has a 200-year tradition and has recently been included on the UNESCO National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Every visitor to Małopolska will leave with a solid dose of motivation and inspiration in their luggage that will last a long time, feeling relaxed and full of energy to do more. But they will probably want to come back soon - to experience everything again or try something completely new.

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<https://convention.krakow.pl/english>

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