

Headquarters

JULY 2022 #105 BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Taiwan

Green MICE in the sustainable management

Bestival 2022

Berlin's new gateway for MICE planners

Travel Trade Athens 2022

A place to meet from ancient to modern

AVPN

"I believe the big transfer for the next decade will be collaboration."

Business Events Australia (Cover Story)

"We are a relationship business!"



THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

PARTNERSHIPS FOR GROWTH



Launching a New Era of **Green MICE** in the **Sustainable Management** of **Taiwan** Events

Green MICE: Stay green, go sustainable

MEET TAIWAN has been promoting the national government’s **Green MICE Guidelines**, themed “Stay green, go sustainable”, with objectives of balancing energy conservation and environmental sustainability to reduce greenhouse gases, waste, and conserve resources, lessening the impact of MICE events on the environment and cooperatively taking Taiwan’s green MICE into post-pandemic times.

MEET TAIWAN assists local meeting organisers with international green sustainability certification compliance that includes sustainable event management, as well as offsetting the carbon footprint of events. Organisers can implement green measures during preliminary planning stages and consult the Green MICE Guidelines (and other promotional materials) available to guide their events. To date, 17 MICE companies in Taiwan, including event organisers, exhibitions and venues,

have obtained the ISO 2021 standard for Sustainable Event Management.

Each choice of venue opens up several variables linked to carbon emissions in terms of personal transport and electricity use during an event. Carbon footprints for exhibitions can be substantially reduced not only with efficient lighting solutions, but also by using modular and reusable decoration materials. Main priorities for conference events are to increase the energy efficiency of AC systems and to introduce sustainable food options in the meals served.

The Green MICE Guidelines list transportation, food, accommodation, and decoration materials as key areas to monitor when practising MICE activities in Taiwan. The exhibition event organisation process is also divided into pre-exhibition event measures, exhibition day event measures, and post-exhibition event measures to help participants better match tactics to each phase.

Taiwan’s newest international convention centre, ICC Tainan, is a green building.

The newly opened **International Convention Centre (ICC Tainan)** is a green building with intelligent monitoring systems and enhanced fire safety and evacuation features. Totalling over 820,000 square metres, the event complex has taken into consideration the reduction of environmental impact and becoming a green, sustainable, permeable, and low-carbon park. The entire area has a sustainable water conservation and flood prevention configuration, implementing emission and carbon footprint reduction in all phases of the project, as well as integrating local related industries and helping to develop the green energy industry.

ICC Tainan is an excellent example of how green technology is being strategically applied, supported by 15 academic institutions along with manufacturers, supply chains and materials that event organisers and their clients can use. The centre has solar panels on the roof that can produce about 3,383 kilowatt hours of electricity, raising the region’s standard for environmentally friendly building and architectural operations.

The development of this infrastructure comes in the wake of the **Shalun Smart Green Energy Science City**, a major demo zone of smart and innovative city systems that is the Asia-Pacific’s leading development centre for green energy.

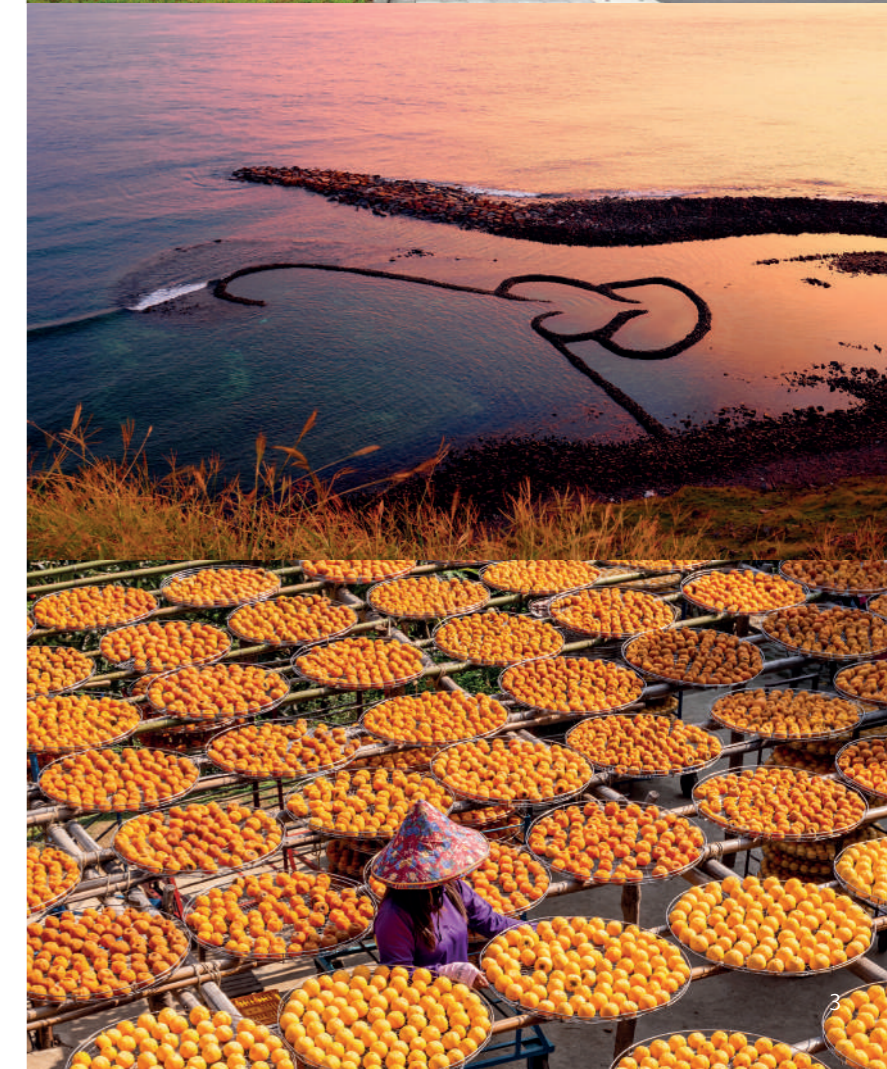
The new more to come with ESG

The MICE industry continues to develop towards environmental and social sustainability, and the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the concept of **Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG)** have become important elements for MICE events in the post-pandemic era. MEET TAIWAN will develop 10 original sustainable incentive travel itineraries this year, all taking into account SDGs and ESG, which can be considered for extended agendas after coming to Taiwan to participate in international conferences. These original itineraries will feature the diversity of each region in Taiwan, plus they intend to convey the spirit of protecting local cultural heritage and cherishing the natural ecology. Tourism can also be beneficial and achieve responsible sustainable development goals.

In the future, Taiwan will continue to implement the concept of Green MICE. MEET TAIWAN will support

Taiwan’s MICE organisers in their efforts to achieve the goals of energy conservation, carbon reduction, and sustainable development – all trying to do our part for Earth.

Taiwan’s MICE Promotion Program
Organised by Bureau of Foreign Trade, MOEA
Taiwan External Trade Development Council
Ad. by Bureau of Foreign Trade, MOEA





Meeting Destination Vienna

The city's newest hotels are leading the way in diversity, innovation and sustainability

Many exciting new hotel projects are revitalising Vienna as a sustainable and complementary meeting destination. Each promises to offer a fantastic setting for a wide range of events in the number one meeting destination, as stated in the "2021 ICCA Ranking – Destination Performance Index (DPI)" which was released at the beginning of June.

In Vienna one can find more than 350 hotels and around 32,500 rooms to suit all tastes and budgets. The newest additions presented here have one thing in common – the Viennese great taste when it comes to design and style.

The Rosewood Vienna

With work in full swing at the Wiener Graben, the 5-star Rosewood Vienna will be the luxury hotel chain's fifth hotel to open in Europe and the first in the German-speaking region. With 99 rooms and suites, as well as several meeting rooms, the hotel offers several dining areas – including a rooftop bar and an intimate garden restaurant - as well as private relaxation experiences at **Sense**, Rosewood Vienna's in-house spa.

The Leo Grand

A few steps from St. Stephen's Cathedral, we find a listed Baroque gem transformed into a luxury hotel with 76 rooms and suites. With its unconventional location, The Leo Grand has recently opened

combining the highest individual standards with contemporary luxury elements. The Leo Grand is also home to what is probably the most exclusive "Schanigarten" in Vienna, a winter-proof inner courtyard with an elegant bar and several private dining areas.

Hotel Gilbert

Since December 2021, MuseumsQuartier in central Vienna is home to Hotel Gilbert, a trendy 4-star hotel with a cosmopolitan philosophy, a strong environmental stance and top services. The green concept of the family-run BWM hotel is evident in the hotel's 57 flats, suites and lofts. In addition to a gym and sauna, there are also two meeting rooms, a thermal and anti-noise façade and several green spaces with an extensive indoor plant concept.



Bassena Wien Donaustadt

Set to open these days in Vienna's new TWENTYTWO district, this four-star property will be both a lively hotel and a relaxing retreat with 198 rooms spread over nine floors. The first

floor provides space for the public area with a library, a communal restaurant and bar, Bassena kitchen as well as a lounge, conservatory and pub garden. The congress centre of the Austrian Centre Vienna can also be reached quickly and easily by subway.

Hotel Indigo Vienna

A hidden gem at the gates of Naschmarkt, this boutique hotel boasts over nine floors, offering 158 modernly designed guest rooms – including a meeting room, two suites, restaurant, bar, a landscaped courtyard and a fitness centre. With an abundance of plants, the boutique hotel is inspired by the harmony and liveliness of Vienna's Margareten district.

Hotel Motto

Situated on Mariahilferstrasse, Austria's largest shopping street, Hotel Motto, combines 1920s Parisian style and modern Viennese lifestyle with Scandinavian hygge. The design of the rooms and suites matches this blend of styles with vintage-inspired decor and furnishings. High on the roof of the 1870s building is a restaurant with a bar and terrace, and on the

first floor the hotel operates its own organic bakery.

Almanac Vienna

The Almanac Vienna is currently under construction above Vienna's Ringstrasse and is scheduled to open in late 2022/early 2023. Planned as a five-star property with over 111 rooms – over two-thirds of which are suites – the hotel is being completely redesigned to meet the needs of the modern traveller, with breathtaking event spaces. A spa, concept shop, coffee shop and first-class restaurant with bar will complete the luxurious project.

Other venues to keep an eye on:

With high-quality facilities, high security standards, and easy access, "Ariana" provides another attractive event venue in Vienna that opened just a few weeks ago. In the fall, "Weitsicht Cobenzl" will open as a versatile and completely renovated location with the highest design standards – and a long history. As early as around 1900, the Viennese made their way up the hill to enjoy the fantastic view of the city. Several buildings make a great ensemble, the highlight is the "Kuppelsaal" which offers space for up to 500 people.

HQ #105

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THE ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Marcel A.M. Vissers
+32 (0)3 226 88 81
marcel@meetingmediagroup.com

MAGAZINE MANAGER
Manuel Fernandes
+32 (0)480 632 636
manuel@meetingmediagroup.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Vivian Xu
+32 (0)489 550 485
vivian@meetingmediagroup.com

EDITOR
press@meetingmediagroup.com

RESPONSIBLE EDITOR & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
Mechelseplein 23/1
2000 Antwerpen, Belgium

SOUTH KOREA
Soohoon Oh
+82 2 734 0786
soohoonoh@medireponline.com

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING
Farhana Khan
T. +32 (0)3 226 88 81
finance@meetingmediagroup.com

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Leading the Way in Diversity, Innovation and Sustainability



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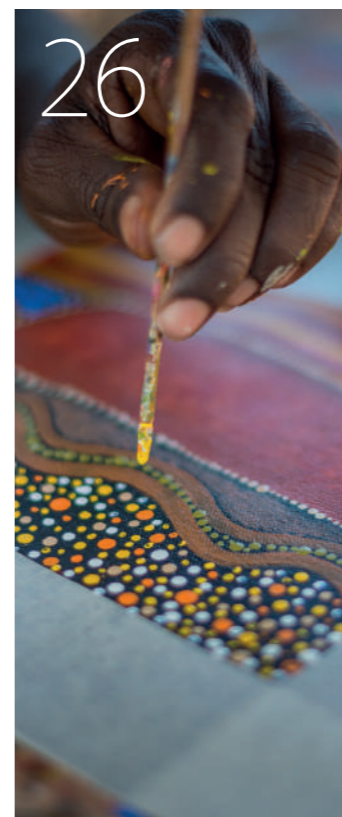
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Editor's Letter



PARTNER WANTED

AUTHOR: MARCEL A.M. VISSERS, EDITOR IN CHIEF

It happens regularly that I start looking for the correct definition of concepts or people with the sole intention of getting a clear picture about something. What that means again, is then the question for myself.

For example, I recently read in a newspaper that the European Commissioner for Trade wants to focus on “friendshoring” with other countries. What could that possibly mean?

First there was off-shoring. Then there was re-shoring and the word that is only a year old is called “friendshoring” – we would rather get our stuff from friendly nations than from unreliable partners.

In the meetings industry, the term partnership emerged in the early 2000s. But do not think that the term was already clearly defined at that time. No, it was a first step towards “We can do better together”.

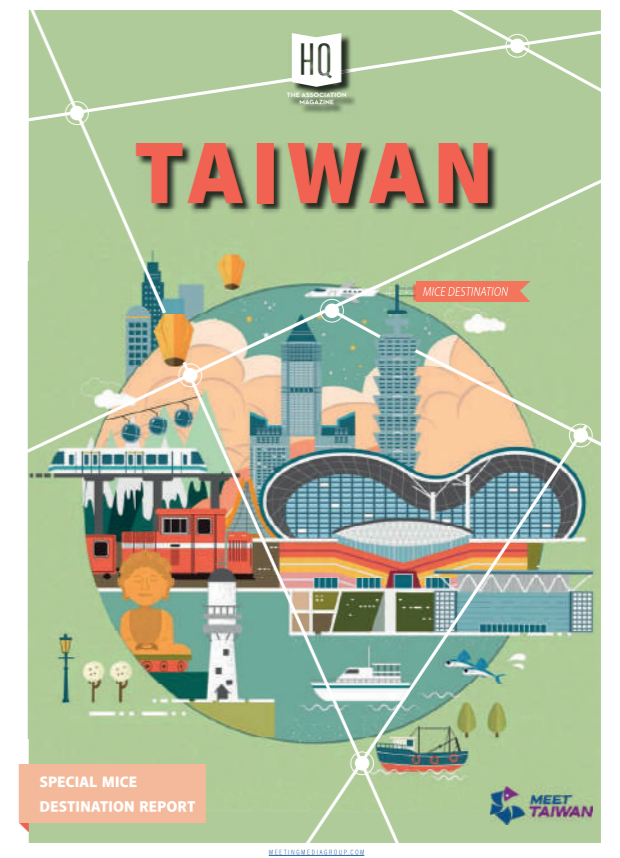
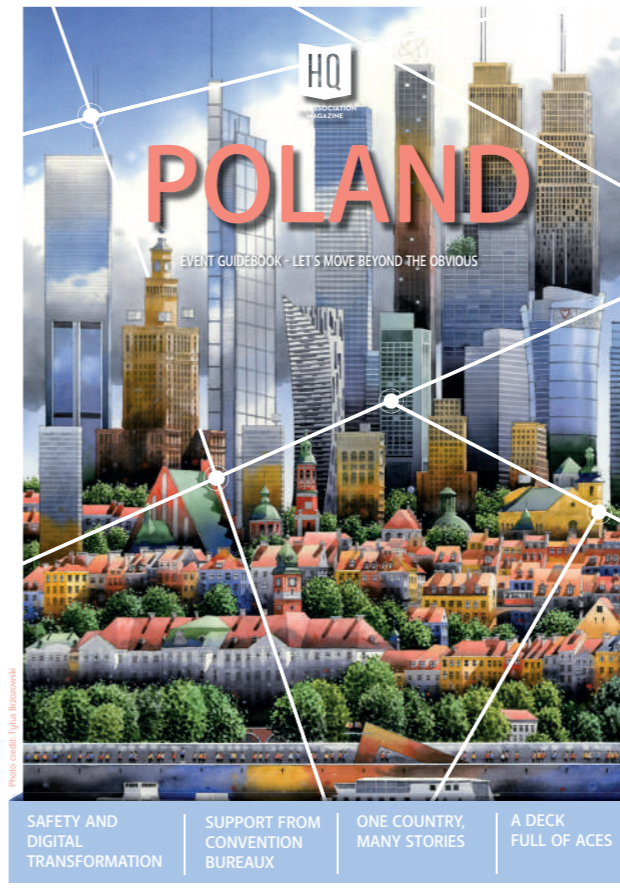
A word or a concept needs time to grow. And we are now at the point where partnership has to be redefined due to unexpected circumstances: pandemics, war and food shortages. We need to ask ourselves again who we can consider as potential partners.

This requires that each organisation or company redefine its values. The best partnerships will thrive in a climate where values meet and are given opportunities to grow.

The number of failures in building partnerships is uncountable, whatever one may say. The meetings industry still has to deal with fantasists who constantly repeat how well they are doing and how they are better than the others.

And we all know too that when a new buzzword comes along many of us like to join in and ride the wave. We want to belong and be heard. A slightly more critical view of things would not be a bad thing.

Perhaps you'll discover a few thoughts on this in the series of articles we've assembled for you in this magazine.



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CONTACT:

VIVIAN XU

VIVIAN@MEETINGMEDIAGROUP.COM

One **Good Turn** Deserves Another!

“When a conference is held, the priority for a lot of organisers is how many delegates can be accommodated in a particular destination, but in reality, for many associations what matters the most is content and quality. Associations are very passionate about what they do, and they want to make a difference in their sector. If they value their mission and objectives and want to relate them to our role as hosts, we will help them make that happen.”

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

These words from **Amelia Roziman, CEO of Business Events Sarawak**, echoed in my head from an exclusive talk at IMEX Frankfurt on the Malaysian state’s tribal legacy and external partnerships – *which you can read in this issue*. Indeed, each partner brings expertise, a new range of audiences, a diversity of topics and, in many cases, a financial cushion to support the expenses (and profits) of a certain event.

However, the subject of partnerships applied to the meetings and events industry is far more connoted with destinations, service providers, event suppliers and some sector-related associations. What about effective and lasting partnerships between membership-based organisations and business event destinations? What clear examples can we show today of positive and reciprocal cooperation between these two sides?

Destination managers constantly face fierce competition when it comes to winning event bids, and securing the return of client associations is no easy task – even if the experience in that destination was highly rewarding for both parties, the association needs to diversify its scope, cover new ground on scientific environments and look for some speakers

who can interject relevant topics to that meeting.

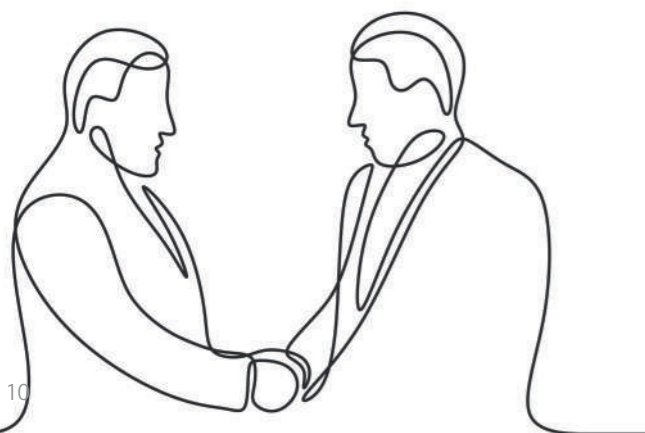
If the expectations of planners, organisers and delegates have evolved rapidly as the industry recovers and events call for other programmatic bases, then it will be time to listen first-hand to what associations have to say in their RFPs. A conference destination’s reputation and public narrative will also be measured by its local web of connections and how well it engages with its partners on the ground.

And that’s why Amelia’s testimony is so revealing, both for this edition and for the wide spectrum of association events – when we talk about partnerships for growth, we are not just maintaining strong and cost-effective relationships with other suppliers in the event industry, such as catering companies and local agencies. We are clearly talking about satisfying the needs of both parties, contributing to the achievement of the KPIs, key focal areas and overall goals for both the membership association and the event destination.

If an association can truly change a destination’s industry forever, a convention bureau can also significantly influence an association’s thought process. Partner up!

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Bestival 2022. Freedom, Innovation & Change

Bestival is the new gateway for event experts and MICE planners into Berlin's recovery. This business festival taking place on 25 and 26 August is included in a package of 13 measures for the next two years to help Berlin's events industry emerge stronger from the pandemic disruption. We caught up with **Marco Oelschlegel, Director of Conventions**, and **Manuel Wrobel, Head of Business Development**, to unravel the topics of this Summer event.

As with last year's premiere, this cross-industry event will focus on personal encounters and unique experiences, this time around five different experience areas: Sustainable Berlin; Glamour and Lifestyle; Wild Berlin; Art & Music; and Innovative Berlin. What kind of Berlin can we find in 2022 that we didn't have in 2019?

Marco Oelschlegel: A Berlin that has adapted to the changes and to a new scenario that we have not yet fully achieved. After the pandemic, our attention has focused on people's lives, how they live, how they interact socially, how they work. How we can make the different working arrangements more flexible for them. So, it is a Berlin that has adapted but is still reflecting on the different options to be taken. I am sure that we will

not have just one option, there will be several ways of working. The city is used to this dizzying change and the constant evolution of time, so I can't wait for what the future will bring.

What purposes do you set out to fulfil with this 2022 edition?

Manuel Wrobel: The end-goal is to bring direct business to Berlin. A lot of Berlin-based travel and MICE suppliers do not have capacity, time or people to travel around global tradeshows like this. The idea is not to brand it as a local exhibition like IMEX, but to make it part of our DNA by promoting Berlin in a creative way, adjusting it to our local industry. The festival last year had 300 visitors and this year we aim to triple the number. Our industry is no longer limited to hotel stays or direct turnover, but is moving forward with new content and stories to meet the clients' needs. If you look at our programme, you can find five distinct event topics with attractive elements like "Wild Berlin", where we look at our dance subcultures and party scene. Of course we will put our sustainability planning in there, as there will be lots of green activities happening by partners. But it's much more than that – we're trying to get visitors to experience the various



facets of the city without resorting to long formal presentations. On the second day, we will let visitors select their own tailor-made programme. You can choose to follow the fixed programme or create your own city tour. You will receive a free transport pass

“ *Bestival wants to bring words to life, give the city a face and offer you the freedom to explore as you please.* ”

from us to book as many appointments as you like between venues, hotels, ongoing events, etc.

How do you plan to combine the Worlds of Experience you have in store for Bestival with future events and conferences?

MW: Last year we set up a live event and an online event which actually translated into two different events – however, we quickly realised that we cannot offer the same experience. To be honest, we faced some difficulties simulating the same kind of experience and so we skipped the online event completely this year. We are marketing the destination to people who in turn will try to convince their clients about its potential and features. Keeping this message in an online format while trying to recreate the on-site experiences is counterproductive and almost impossible. We conducted a survey among all participants and also received this feedback from online visitors – if you compare an hour in front of the screen with a full day at the destination, respondents have no qualms about choosing the latter. Our belief is to create our own event, our own experiences and network. However, we are using digital resources such as matchmaking tools to arrange meetings, exchange messages, organise agendas to complement an on-the-ground experience.

Intellectual capital, legacy impacts and knowledge building are increasingly topical concepts in bidding for association events. What attention has been paid to these issues in Berlin's recovery?

MO: We are one of the biggest science hubs in Europe and one of the best student cities in the world. Considering these links with our key industries and institutes, we have followed the strategy of our Berlin city government and

our supporting agency – **Berlin Partner** – which have focused on five different pillars that are key for future conferences. Our goal as a convention bureau is to become one of the most innovative, sustainable and reliable destinations in the world. To achieve this it is essential to build support and strengthen the economy, but also to think strategically about what kind of business we want to attract and what we can extract from these events. And when I say we, I mean society as a whole. Legacy is a very important draw because we are working more and more on the quality of the events we bring here. If an event comes to Berlin, for example, it's not only the numbers that count, but above all how we can grow as a society from it. By getting more knowledge, by getting new connections and networks, and this is crucial on the path we are on.

Is it difficult to make this triage of events that are really worth hosting in Berlin?

MO: It's a different approach to doing business. Satisfying the supply chain is only one side of it, but if you go to a deeper level, then you have to consider getting in touch with scientists, institutes, politicians, new economies, NGOs, etc. Personally, I find this challenge even more exciting than before, as you can tap into a huge amount of information and knowledge both for your benefit and for your city and communities. It is an unusual path for many convention bureaux, but well worth it.

MW: We live in a world where everything is changing and to keep up with these changes we need to adapt very quickly. To make a difference when it comes to clients and especially event participants, we have to offer experiences. Even because today we are not competing with other international destinations, but with hybrid and online events. If so many people are falling for these online events, we have to create motivation and extra benefits to convince them that Berlin offers something unique and inimitable. A win-win situation for everyone between the local economy and communities, but also for delegates and participants.

Associations and enterprises that initially grew organically need to look for new ways to drive collaborative innovation that delivers on what their members need today. In her session at the last European Association Summit, **Caroline McLaughlin** explained how to develop smart digital learning strategies that drive the engagement and growth for your members.

“The role of an organisation like **AVPN** is to **dissuade people** from reinventing the wheel”



Caroline is the former **Chief Partnerships Officer** at **Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)**, a large network of over 600 investors established in around 33 countries primarily focused on increasing the flow of financial, human and intellectual capital to the social sector in Asia. Clearly, her strengths lie in its ability to create partnerships and social investment roadmaps on positive impacts and measurable results. *HQ* spoke to her:

Did replacing the face-to-face element with the distance and coldness of a dialogue between screens bring any risk when you decided to move to an online meeting?

At the beginning of the pandemic, we invested heavily in technology which allowed us to do networking events between breakout sessions, so the first conference we held online was in 2020. Then we found a new platform that allowed us to bring people together between sessions... but no one did. We tried to come up with creative processes to get the AVPN team into rooms to facilitate conversations, but it wasn't easy. In 2020, people were happy to consume online content at a large conference, but they weren't as comfortable attending webinars on zoom without knowing who they would see and meet. That's why we continued to produce content at online events, but when hosting webinars, we carefully selected who would be in the rooms. We then shared that information so that attendees felt more comfortable with the people they wanted to meet and who are useful to their network.

What major differences have you found in conducting the digital learning experience and courses in both face-to-face and virtual formats?

In the online format, we were able to bring together a much larger and much more diverse group

– geographically and gender-wise – from a stakeholder perspective. This is because people didn't need to fund their trip to Singapore and spend days of their schedule attending an in-person course. Secondly, we were able to offer a richer programme with more in-depth speakers and content that we would not have been able to do in person. Thirdly, the sophistication of the offerings and the comfort of the participants in an online environment allowed us to run more in-depth sessions and encourage small group work. It was a curious experience since it's much more difficult to create an ongoing and closer relationship with someone who is online. I truly believe that when you get to know someone personally you can be pleasantly surprised at how you get a better connection, and this also applies to a congress. However, we promoted the course as a way to both build a network impact investment and as a way to get a professional qualification during this time of pandemic. We made sure that we could offer added value to the fellowship at an exceptional time.

For someone who wants to invest and reap both financial and social impact returns, it is difficult to do this without external assistance. Why is this?

If you have a venn diagram then impact investment sits at the nexus between investment, philanthropy where investment can be applied in tandem with philanthropy to deliver both a financial and social return. People sitting



What the philanthropic sector is saying is that with so many sensitive and huge issues in the world - until we have the organisations and the thinking process focused on social return - we will never make a substantial change.

on the investor side often seek to maximise stakeholder returns, and then put some of that funding into the social sector. What the philanthropic sector is saying is that with so many sensitive and huge issues in the world until we have the organisations and the thinking process focused on social return, we will never make a substantial change. Our first fellowship was for impact investors and we created champions for impact investing across Asia. Every investment portfolio should include a social impact concern, and this is the message we try to get across to corporate stakeholders and banks. Investors have to realise that if they are going to talk about impact investing they need a new language and measurements to move the needle. It's not about grants or charity.

How does AVPN materialise this concept of partnerships for growth within the organisation's mission?

One of AVPN's priorities when forging new partnerships is that they can be relevant and meet the needs of our network. When you have a network like ours, many of its members operate in areas like consulting, providing quite a few services. The important thing is that you are constantly aware of what the role of the network is, and for us it is to move capital for impact. When we spoke to the **Gates Foundation** about the **Asia Gender Network**, we were able to bring together a high-level group of women in a network to raise the issue and understand how to improve the outcomes of women's goals across Asia. Another of the projects we are working on with the **Rockefeller Foundation** right now is on **"Impact Leaders"** in the global South. How to find leaders who can be supported and with whom we can develop leadership skills. The role of an organisation like AVPN is to dissuade people from reinventing the wheel. Asia has 60% of the world's population, so it is wrong to think that you are going to do something for the first time on such a large continent. Our main goal is to help organisations understand what is already working, who they can create alliances with, and what kind of impact projects and leadership they want to form, so that we can then step in as a facilitator to deliver that vision.

What setbacks has the pandemic caused to your community impact projects?

It was a challenge for the Asian gender network, for

example, when we tried to bring individuals together for our projects. We were able to do a lot online, but it's completely different to have a group of high profile women on a weekend talking about their experiences and how they created their impact. It took us some time to work out how you can pivot to certain things. I believe the big transfer for the next decade will be collaboration. One of the things we've seen in collaborative philanthropy is that the timeframe to achieve the SDGs is getting shorter – unless funds are pooled or multiple teams are ready to channel ideas, it simply won't happen. Another big trend will be in data management: how to pull AI to our benefit; how to use data to make better decisions about funding, etc. And the third addresses the dynamics of power in a multi-polar world. I think the work going on in the US in terms of giving more strategic funding to organisations on the ground will facilitate faster and more sustainable change. Because you are building trust with an organisation that better understands how to spend that money and how to move in a more informed way.

What partnerships and collaborative projects does the AVPN have in mind for the near future?

I think partnerships will look very different for associations and networks as they look for new ways to engage with members around themes and regions. Even with our annual conferences taking place in June, we've heard several organisations express that it's difficult to get travel approvals. Thinking about partnerships like we did in 2019 will not be the same, because people will travel less. I think corporations have saved a lot of money in the last couple of years and while their employees will continue to travel, the idea that they will attend every workshop or breakout session is unlikely. I think some conferences will remain at the top, but I don't think the dynamics will be the same as before. If it is a network, what issues will be fundamental to debate and who to partner with so that the projects materialise? For example, for an organisation of our type, it might be important to create a regional unit to address more localised issues. Or imagine more chapters and think about how to bring those chapters together in a regional meeting instead of the old quarterly meetings. Look positively to the best parts of online learning and hybrid connections, and incorporate them in the future.

Travel Trade Athens 2022: A Place to Meet from Ancient to Modern

“Reconnect”, “resume” or “reboot” are fairly recurrent words that the meetings industry has resorted to in this year of pandemic slowdown. Athens stepped up to the plate and stood before an audience of international buyers to promote its MICE products.

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

While certain destinations have taken advantage of this downtime to revamp teams, planning and even branding from one end to the other, others have only made one-off changes waiting for borders to reopen. In an extremely competitive market such as ours, putting these plans into practice does not embody within the same strategies or lead to the same results. To keep going is not as easy as it looks and that was one of the big takeaways from this trip to Athens. For a start, the dense history of the city, cradle of Western civilisation and democracy, helps us explain the resilience and perseverance that time-based interruptions like COVID arouse – if just those walls could speak. But even if we think about Athens’ role as a global city due to its geo-strategic location and its importance in international trade, arts, culture, education and tourism, we find that change and progress does not strike fear into their hearts.

The answer to these yearnings was at **Travel Trade Athens 2022**: a must-attend annual event for events and travel professionals, connecting over 70 international buyers with the leading suppliers to the Greek tourism and MICE industries. International travel industry experts, representatives of various international

associations and members of the international press, did not miss the call for this two-day immersive event, connecting Athens to key markets in Europe, the UK, the United States, and the Middle East. Organised by **This is Athens-Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB)**, in cooperation with the **European Tourism Association (ETOA)**, the small tradeshow provided over 1,500 meetings with officials from 90 Greek companies with the aim of strengthening local Greek industry to international opportunities in this recovery framework. And as traders prepared for work at the luxurious **Hotel Grande Bretagne**, a press conference next door at the **King George Hotel** was cutting the ribbons for the event with leading figures from the Greek industry. **Athens Mayor, Kostas Bakoyannis, Aegean airlines President, Eftychios Vasilakis, Athens International Airport Communications and Marketing Director, Ioanna Papadopoulou and Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA) CEO Vagelis Vlachos**, took the pulpit to outline the various points on the promotion and profile of Athens for the times ahead. These included the announcement of a new Schengen lounge area at Elefthérios Venizélos airport, a 92% recovery in air traffic compared to last year, a strategic rise in the EU market and a commitment to reduce the carbon footprint by 100% by 2025.

“Despite all the difficulties given to us, the pandemic also gave us an opportunity to design and activate a comprehensive development plan for the City of Athens. It was a chance to reposition and develop Athens as an attractive, accessible, and sustainable city,” Vlachos told us. To implement this strategy, the city has focused on two pillars: emphasising conferences and meetings in order to position itself as a top choice for business travellers, and promoting and empowering local businesses with initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and innovation along with a

roadmap for sustainable measures. It was also interesting to hear **Mayor Bakoyannis** portray the convergence between quality of life for residents and investment in Athens as a visitor destination: “In recent years, Athens has emerged as a destination for city breaks, for business travel, for investment and film productions. (...) In the coming years we must start to change the paradigm and change the way we think. We have to understand our city holistically, not to separate the tourist from the local economy, but to treat our destination and our city as one.” A clear example of this was the **This is Athens-City Festival** with over 100 activities during the month of May for locals and visitors.

A short programme along Athens

The first leg on this family tour took us to **The National Gallery** – also known as the Alexandros Soutzos Museum, with its more than 20,000 works of art, it is considered the most important art museum in Greece and is particularly notable for its collection of Greek painting and sculpture from the 19th and 20th centuries. However, what caught our attention most was undoubtedly the **Ellinikon Experience Park**, still under construction. Europe’s largest urban regeneration project that aims to be a multi-dimensional destination for global tourism, growing businesses and inclusive communities, connecting the heart of Athens with its charming coastline. Spreading over an area three times the size of Monaco, Greece’s largest development project is an €8 billion investment that aims to offer a multi-purpose mix of public parks, waterfront residences, retail and event spaces. It is expected to add up to 4.4% to the country’s economy and 75,000 jobs once completed, according to the developers. We end the day at the impressive **Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center**, a double building on Faliro Bay that includes the National Library and the Greek National Opera, as well as the sprawling Stavros Niarchos Park.

The **Megaron Athens International Conference Centre** – an AIPC member – is arguably the premier venue for large conferences attached to one of the city’s landmarks, the imposing Athens Concert Hall. In the building’s facilities, there is a total offer of 143,000 square meters and a selection of 18 spaces (with 4 main auditoriums) for meetings, combined with large exhibition areas and foyer totalling 12,000 square meters. Conceived as a large-scale, multifunctional cultural centre, Megaron is fully equipped to accommodate concerts and other musical events as well as conferences, with a total capacity of 6,000 delegates. A 30-minute walk away to the National Garden, we come across another historic building revitalized as a conference and exhibition centre for both public and private purposes. A monumental palace dedicated to the most pronounced principles of Olympism, the **Zappeion Megaron** has 4,546 square meters of exhibition and congress halls and a Peristyle Central Circular Atrium, fully equipped to meet the needs of scientific conferences, and sports exhibitions. The visit continued through the **Ilias Lalaounis Jewelry Museum** and ended at the illustrious **Acropolis Museum**, before returning to the hotel through the picturesque and charming Anafiotika neighborhood (Plaka).

Events in the pipeline

7th IAHR Europe Congress on Innovative Water Management
07-09/09/2022 at Divani Caravel Hotel

Green Destinations 2022 & Future of Tourism Summit
26-29/09/2022 at Radisson Blu Park Hotel

7th World Congress on Vascular Access (WoCoVA)
16-18/10/2022 at Megaron Athens International Conference Centre



Switzerland Meeting Trophy: A Once in a Lifetime Experience!

Switzerland Tourism had its hands full and set up a competition for event planners and event professionals to immerse themselves in the Alpine country and its MICE resources.

AUTHOR: MANUEL FERNANDES, HQ MAGAZINE MANAGER

Anyone old enough to remember the 90ies Europe-wide TV game show “*Jeux Sans Frontières*” might have some idea of what happened from 16 to 19 June in Switzerland. Seven teams representing UK & Ireland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, North America and the Nordic countries and comprising 80 participants, were called upon to compete for a coveted Swiss trophy, among physical, skill and general culture tests that helped put the Alpine country on the planners’ meeting map. All this with a slight tweak to drive the race through the most stunning scenery and unique destinations Switzerland has to offer. Organised annually by **Switzerland Tourism** – with a brief hiatus due to the pandemic – this audacious and unconventional team rally has become a sure bet for promoting meetings and incentive travel in the country. The invitation was exclusively aimed at managers and planners of agencies specialised in the MICE sector, allowing these professionals to get to know the country in greater depth.

This 2022 edition set out to explore the French cantons of Vaud and Geneva along the shores of Lake Lemman, on a route linking the towns of Villars-sur-Ollon, Montreux, Vevey, Lausanne and ending in the fantastic setting of Geneva. Travelling from mountains through the countryside, from seaside resorts to gorgeous cities, participants had the opportunity to find out the region in a playful way by appreciating the cultural richness, accessibility, leisure and unbeatable quality of Swiss infra-structure. In the end, the North American team managed to overpower the Belgians with a narrow victory. However, we all won by having enjoyed four fantastic days of hospitality, creativity and fun with the Swiss seal of quality.

Hotels and venues, you should know about:

Victoria Hotel & Residence

Victoria presents an interesting blend of an Alpine chateau-style with a quiet, pacifying minimalism.

Located in the centre of Villars-sur-Ollon, the Victoria Hotel & Residence has 150 rooms, 2 restaurants with bar, a relaxation and wellness room with indoor pool. Among the various flexible work spaces that make up 4 meeting rooms which can be merged to create one meeting space of 190m² and another of 55m², the four-star building has a unique design area equipped with state-of-the-art smart screens and technological tools.

Chalet RoyAlp Hôtel & Spa

Just a stone’s throw from the Victoria, this chalet boasts 63 stylish rooms and dreamy suites as well as 27 appartements with breathtaking views, and is packed with relaxation options such as spa treatment, fitness and an indoor pool. Just 90 minutes from Geneva, Chalet RoyAlp Hotel & Spa offers six meeting rooms and venues suitable for banquets, team buildings or private receptions. In addition, you will also have at your disposal a multitude of incentive activities such as cocktail parties, cooking classes, wine tasting, yoga classes or outdoor activities.

Maison de Montagne de Bretaye

Our first Swiss breakfast took place at the Crazy Moose restaurant at the top of the Vaud Alps and it was to-die-for. Owned by Maison de Montagne de Bretaye, this mountain house is now open to private customers with rooms, dormitories and a holiday apartment. The privatization of the premises is possible by request with 110 beds and 160 seats available in the restaurant or on the terrace. They also have a large modular conference room for 20 to 80 seats and a smaller one for 20 seats.

Fairmont Le Montreux Palace

Perfectly situated in the centre of Montreux, facing the flashy Lake Lemman, this century-old monument has been enchanting visitors since 1906 with its *Belle Époque* architecture, 236 rooms and suites, a range of luxurious offerings and a leading reputation in

Switzerland. In its world-class meeting and event facilities, the hotel offers 15 venues, including executive boardrooms and flexible function rooms with natural light and state-of-the-art technology for meetings and events for up to 1,200 guests.



Charlie’s World

Charlie Chaplin’s house-museum in Corsier-sur-Vevey seats in the middle of a ten-acre country estate, envisioned to show the personal and artistic side of one of the greatest film icons of all time. Meet the family man in “the Manoir”, embark on a journey through his masterpieces in “the Studio” and take a peaceful stroll through the surrounding gardens. Your guests can get an exclusive experience in one of three event spaces available for seminars, business parties, incentive activities, team building and sit-down dinners.

The Olympic Museum

Lausanne is the Olympic capital and where the worlds



Fairmont Grand Hotel Geneva

The second hotel of the Fairmont franchise enjoys a privileged location in the centre of Geneva with a large complex that includes 412 elegant rooms and suites, 3 restaurants, a bar, a lounge and a theatre with capacity for 1,300 people. The hotel also has one of the largest conference facilities in the city: 13 meeting rooms, most with natural light and views of Lake Lemman, which can be adapted for any type of event and accommodate up to 800 guests.

of sport, culture, technology, medical research and innovation come together as one. The Olympic Museum is an ideal venue for conferences, welcome receptions and group outings. Enjoy the Olympic room (max. 60 pax), the Auditorium (max. 200 pax) equipped with state-of-the-art technical equipment, in addition to several other convenient facilities (Club Coubertin, Café TOM or the gallery) for your receptions.



AIPC: Shaping the Future of Convention Centres

Bigger is not better; shift matters when planned; talent is crucial; scale is no longer relevant; Gen Z is just around the corner; and the countdown to Metaverse and AI has begun - these were some of the key takeaways from the **AIPC Annual Conference 2022** held in Budapest. *Manuel Fernandes Reports*

In recent months, *HQ* has paid close attention to the dilemmas, keynotes and most sensitive issues that have come through the management of a wide variety of convention centres around the world. Whether through our editorial partnership with the **International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC)** or through our exhaustive and extensive coverage of centres all over of the world, the magazine's message in this segment has allowed us to selectively figure out upcoming trends for international MICE suppliers. Topics such as talent attraction and new workforce demands, how to set standards for conference planning in the post-pandemic world, safeguarding delegates' safety and security at venues, virtual solutions and metaverse, or incubation events were constant subjects in our conversations with executives from convention centres, planners and forward-thinking MICE professionals.

It was then natural to continue this discussion in a wide expert audience at the 7th AIPC Annual Conference 2022, which took place in Budapest between 4 and 6 July. Hosted by the city's premier exhibition and convention centre, **HUNGEXPO**, the annual conference was themed "**Reshaping the Future**" and proved unwavering and quite resolute in pursuing this motto. A fairly inventive battery of sessions, with commendable participation at various way more open and more accessible to the fringes of the society that you don't see as much of at association conferences. Which ones? Local speakers, actors from other professional sectors, and mostly young aspirants to the MICE industry. New blood was one of the most debated themes of the conference and was framed for posterity in the Future Shapers programme: a window of opportunity through professional training and a community of peers and mentors, to support the development of senior managers and performers

within the AIPC community to think and act like leaders. A launch pad for certified professionals to become decision makers so that the industry can be rest-assured of its progress and continuity.

The future shapers

"Nine months ago, fourteen future stars of the industry with at least seven years of experience were hand selected to participate in the **AIPC Future Shapers Programme** following a rigorous application process that included a video pitch, a short essay and a commitment to an intensive leadership programme designed to fast track the career progression of senior leaders," said **Sven Bossu, AIPC CEO**. At the Budapest conference, the future shapers were finally able to present their solutions to some of the challenges facing the convention centre management and Boards. Split between two teams, these international participants tried to convince a jury of CEOs and industry leaders to invest in their solutions developed from three overlapping phases of a nine-month accelerated leadership programme. **AIPC Chairman, Greg O'Dell**, said this was another step towards converging professional training with his association's mission, "The ideas, business papers and project plans that were presented to our members through the conference brought us a pathway to a more automated, collaborative and meaningful way to plan events and communicate with our clients."

The final score could not have been more balanced and resulted in a tie - symptomatic of the relevance and success of the ideas presented that have sparked the interest of venue and tech suppliers. *(Check out their project ideas on our website)*



The speakers behind the programme

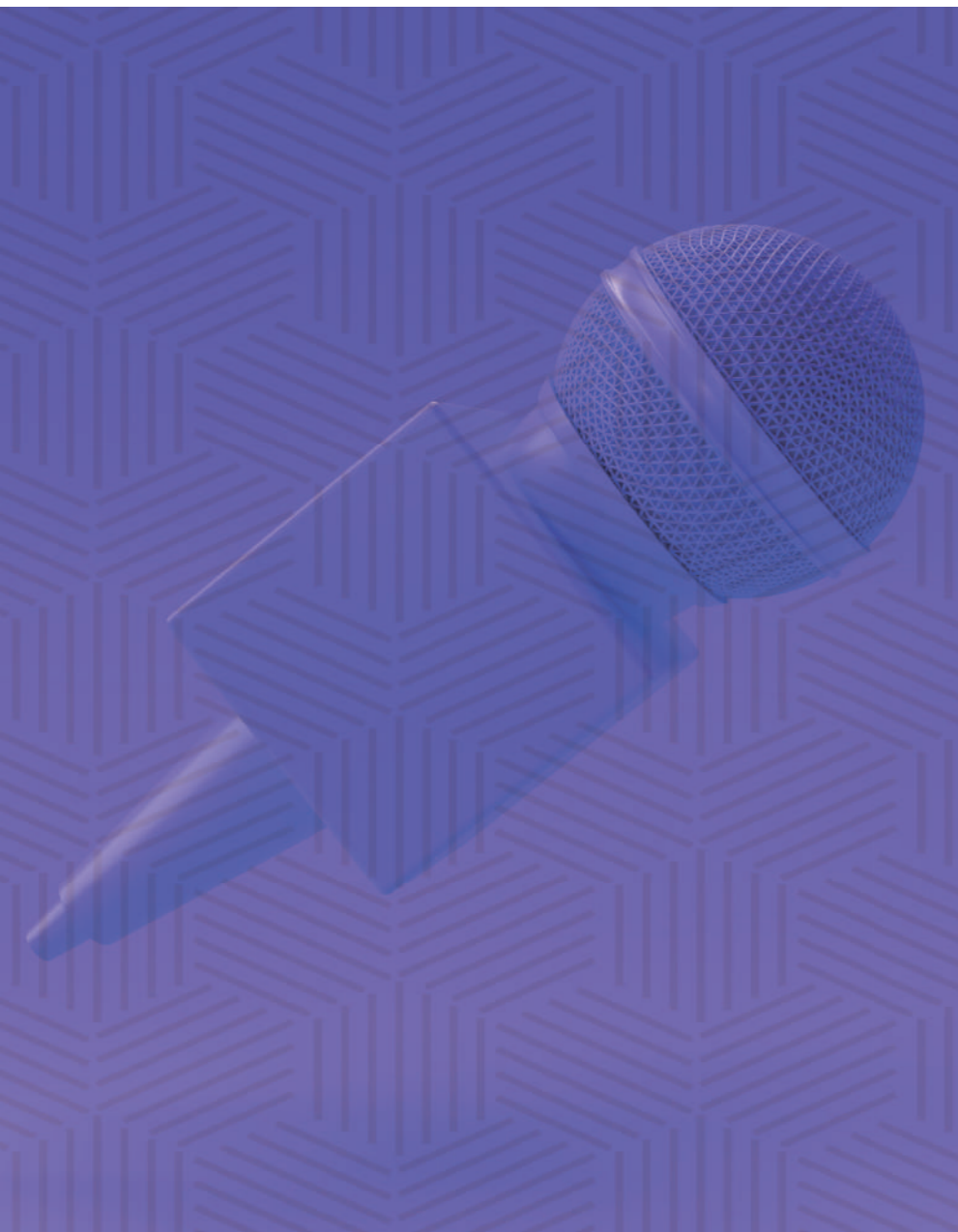
Following the official opening and a rousing keynote speech by the best-selling author, Catherine de Vrye, **Michael Hughes, managing director of Access Intelligence**, released a new survey to AIPC Members offering a detailed insight into what is happening in the convention centre community. Global trends, figures and KPIs, new client requests intended to offer a recovery forecast for these "MICE temples". The next session changed the countenance of the audience, alerting them to a risk closer than we expected: **Robert McClure, CEO of Paratus**, explained what is at stake within cyber security for convention centres, discussing the importance of web 3.0 and cyber threats for conferences. *A topic that will be explored in our next HQ edition.*

"Can a convention centre be representative of the aspirations and values of a city in a sustainable and regenerative way, while being technologically advanced and adapted to the needs of society?" This was the question that opened the *Populous* panel discussion on the overall design of buildings that are much more than engineering works - rather flexible and modular places that attract people, ideas and experiences to meet the conference of the future. Then we moved on to the metaverse space - **Steve McKenzie, executive vice president of Ungerboeck** and **Paul Foster, founder of One Plan**, explored the most innovative ideas in today's technology landscape, where corporate events will likely operate in a hybrid fashion in a post-Covid world and live conferences will be streamed simultaneously to the metaverse. Beyond cybersecurity, there was also a small chat on security at a much higher level: **Russ Simons, managing partner of Venue Solutions Group**, shared with the audience concrete cases of negligence in large events and margins of error soon to become real nightmares for event organisers in the physical and digital environment.

AIPC also honoured **ICC Sydney** with the 2022 Innovation Award for its end-to-end virtual management platform for hybrid events, **Connect Hub**, and **VIPARIS** with the delegate's choice award for its sustainable project **La Serre**. The next conference in 2023 will be held at the **European Convention Center Luxembourg**.

Check out the behind scene story in page 40.

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Feel connected



Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

Australia's Northern Territory offers a multi-sensory experience that transcends the physical and connects you to the land, the ancient culture and the people. We are a destination that empowers delegates to reconnect to what matters.

ntbusinessevents.com.au

Different in every sense for business events





BE Australia:

“We Are a Relationship Business!”

Australia conjures up images of golden beaches, stunning landscapes and unbeatable cities, but this is just the tip of the iceberg for Australia’s strong drawcards for the MICE industry. At the recent IMEX Frankfurt, Business Events Australia unveiled a new campaign, “There’s Nothing Like Australia for Business Events”. Find out more.

Tourism Australia’s (TA) specialist business unit, **Business Events Australia (BEA)**, launched two new business event campaigns in late March marking a turning point for the domestic sector and giving the green light to the long-awaited reopening to the international market. In a way, the strategic plan that paved the way for “There’s Nothing Like Australia for Business Events” was outlined by the first signs of domestic recovery from “Event Here This Year” right after the lockdown. Two months later at IMEX Frankfurt, BEA rolled out the second phase of this international branding campaign to drive demand for Australia as a preferred destination among incentive and association clients. After the official presentation, we spoke with **TA’s Executive General Manager Commercial & Business Events Australia, Robin Mack**, about this new campaign that launched into key global markets such as Europe, North America, Southeast Asia and New Zealand.

“We continued to deliver marketing activity throughout the pandemic and made sure we were well prepared to launch the new campaign when the moment was right. The creative strategy behind the campaign highlights that Australia has everything you would expect from a business destination, with our point of difference being our friendly people who offer fresh perspectives.” The campaign features a number of top tier BE products,

all of which have a strong sustainability offering. In Australia, this “green awareness” came long before the emergence of the pandemic, something that Mack confirms, “sustainability has always been part of TA’s Act which was developed in 2004. What I think is happening now is that the conversation is widening with a deeper impact and more compelling arguments.” As a National Tourism Organisation, the educational component and the advocacy of great Australian stories from a sustainability perspective is a legitimate claim. “There are quite a few stories we are broadcasting through our channels and interactive formats, such as the *Australia Next* magazine or the *Australia Innovates* video series, because we know it’s important to those who follow us,” adds Mack.

BEA has partnered with the **Exhibition & Events Association of Australasia** to develop a carbon calculator, enabling event organisers to assess the impact of their events and how to offset it. Putting words into practice, TA used this calculator to deliver the Australia Tourism Exchange in May as a carbon neutral event. It’s not only the event industry that has become more conscious, the accommodation sector has also opened 100 new or



ALL CONVENTIONS ARE THE SAME, RIGHT? UNLIMITED COFFEE, DELICIOUS PASTRIES, AND AN OPENING SESSION WITH AN INSPIRING KEYNOTE ABOUT THE LOCALS WHO INVENTED WIFI USED IN OVER 9 BILLION DEVICES WORLDWIDE. BUT WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT FROM THE AUSSIES? THERE’S NOTHING LIKE AUSTRALIA.

Melbourne, Victoria

“Sustainability has always been part of TA’s Act which was developed in 2004. What I think is happening now is that the conversation is widening with deeper impact and compelling arguments.”



BUSINESS EVENTS AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA.COM/BUSINESSEVENTS



renovated hotels, many of which are environmentally friendly. And it goes across the board. **Sustainability** and **Indigenous Heritage** are two of TA’s top priorities, and are represented by the Heads of Sustainability and Indigenous Affairs – two new roles within TA. Phil Lockyer (the new position in charge for Indigenous affairs) was responsible for the design and delivery of the organisation’s Reconciliation Action Plan – on the occasion of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games – and wider Indigenous initiatives. Mack explains, “Social legacy is something we certainly look at in everything we do. One example is the **SportAccord World Sport and Business Summit**, held on the Gold Coast in 2019, which we supported through our Bid Fund Programme. This event brought 1,700 people to Australia, including sports personalities, event organisers and associations, but also Olympic Committee members. This is significant as Brisbane was later selected as the host city for the 2032 Summer, a great legacy for the country.” Bringing people to a destination offers a global stage for the country, and that’s what BEA believes Brisbane has achieved through the event. The Olympic Games are estimated to bring a projected \$17.6 billion to the Australian economy when the event takes place. “Another example is in relation to the **68th International Astronautical Congress**, an association event held in 2017, where a new space agency for Australia was announced. This event, which was the largest that Adelaide hosted in 2017, had an incredible legacy for Adelaide and more broadly Australia. Australia’s

new space station was set up in an area called Lot Fourteen, a precinct for entrepreneurship, tourism and culture, located in Adelaide’s Central Business District. And in 2021, the Australian Space Discovery Centre also opened in the precinct, providing a place to inspire and educate young Australians.”

For TA, it wasn’t difficult to reconnect with all their partners and members and the key to that was communication. “Investing in relationships is crucial to our business. Throughout the pandemic, we have ensured our connection to the local and national industry on the ground remained strong by virtue of our communication and campaigns. As for partnerships with airlines, DMCs and regional offices, we didn’t walk away from them thinking we could pick them up later – we stayed connected. We operate in a relationship business.” Opting for the digital format, the business links with some Asian clients were maintained, welcoming the buyers from a distance but with the national industry together. So, for Robin Mack, “digital transformation has helped us a lot, and perhaps this hiatus has served to stretch the reach of the technology world. We see this digital phenomenon more as a support tool for us rather than a platform for interaction. Though we firmly believe the events we run in Australia cannot be replicated online. You can’t duplicate the networking that exists face-to-face in a seminar or a plenary session, into the virtual world.”



Northern Territory: Exploring Australia in Every Sense!

Australia's Northern Territory offers a pristine environment, uncrowded destinations and meaningful experiences, never more relevant than in today's world. Across its 1,348,199 square kilometres, wide-open spaces invite unhurried exploration and the welcoming relaxed lifestyle enables business event attendees to reconnect with what really matters. The Northern Territory is genuinely "different in every sense for business events."

Northern Territory (NT) destinations like **Darwin, Uluru and Alice Springs** offer a range of sophisticated venues and accommodation infrastructure coupled with immersive cultural and nature-based experiences. Across a wide range of professional fields, the NT is a smart choice for business events from sectors such as healthcare, space, agribusiness, energy and international education where local experts in these fields and technical touring can be incorporated into conference programmes.

The Northern Territory is well positioned to take advantage of business events opportunities in a post-pandemic world: "Highly effective community management, COVID-safe plans and a relatively low incidence of COVID cases enabled Australia's Northern Territory to recommence staging events well ahead of many other regions," says **Rebecca McCaig** (pictured right), **Northern Territory Business Events (NTBE)** Director. By August 2020, the NT was confident enough to stage the 11-day **Darwin Festival**, which included outdoor concerts, theatre, cabaret, film and visual arts. This was followed in May 2021 by the record-breaking **BASSINTHEGRASS Music Festival** delivered by NTBE partner, the NT Major Events Company, which was attended by 14,000 people. "This proven 'safe event' capability encouraged approximately 60% of impacted business events to be retained in the NT, opting for

postponement versus cancellation. Planner confidence in the NT's Covid-19 response, as well as the natural advantages offered by our pristine environment and wide-open spaces, has enabled the NT to maintain its impressive track record as a safe and appealing destination. The Northern Territory Business Events Support Fund, which is administered by NT Business Events, also played an integral role in keeping business events secured for the future."

COVID also presented an opportunity to keep planners engaged through virtual experiences, Ms McCaig tells us: "During the pandemic, our team delivered virtual activities for planners enabling them to experience the NT from their respective locations. A virtual Dot-Painting workshop was held in conjunction with Maruku Arts, an Uluru-based arts organisation owned and operated by the Anangu People. Another group of planners enjoyed a relaxing virtual yoga session with the sights and sounds of Uluru forming a calming and peaceful backdrop." Collaborative approaches through strategic partnerships are also valued, which is why NTBE engages with a range of national and global partners to generate business events opportunities. NTBE also partners with **Tourism Australia** to support a united destination presence at



“A major effect of COVID-19 has been an overall global shift in organisational culture to become more people and wellbeing oriented. The NT's wide-open spaces, nature-based activities and iconic landscapes consistently move, inspire and connect delegates to people and place, supporting this shift.”

trade shows such as IMEX Frankfurt. "The opportunity to attend IMEX Frankfurt 2022 was more important than ever, allowing us to reconnect with the global market and our industry colleagues. The show demonstrated the value of in-person connections and how conducive these environments are to establishing new relationships and strengthening existing ones," says Ms McCaig. NT Business Events also leverage **Tourism Australia's Bid Fund Program** ensuring that the NT and Australia are positioned as competitively as possible. "The **International Foster Carer Organisation Conference** (September 2022) and the **World Aquaculture Conference** (May 2023), both to be staged at the **Darwin Convention Centre**, provide great examples of our partner activity with Tourism Australia to enable successful bid wins."

NTBE holds a strong belief that a business event should be both professionally and personally enriching for delegates. "A major effect of COVID-19 has been an overall global shift in organisational culture to become more people and wellbeing oriented. The NT's wide-open spaces, nature-based activities and iconic landscapes consistently move, inspire and connect delegates to people and place, supporting this shift."

"We also aim to enhance the delegate experience in a meaningful way through access to an Aboriginal culture that is more than 65,000 years old. We know the opportunity to engage with the world's oldest continuous-living culture has a profound impact on delegates and we'll continue to encourage planners to make this engagement an essential element of their business events programs in the NT," explains Ms McCaig.

NTBE recognises the significant way in which business events can forge a strong community connection, provide meaningful engagement and leaving a lasting legacy. Visits to community health organisations and engagement with Aboriginal art collectives or cultural organisations are encouraged to enable valuable interactions between delegates and the community. A good example of this is **The Youth Mill**, "a Darwin-based programme and facilitation service that provides young people with a diverse range of pro-social, therapeutic, up-skilling activities from creative arts and recreation to the development of practical skills and employment pathways." Members of The Youth Mill deliver 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies and cultural performances with delegates gaining deep insights into the NT's ancient Aboriginal culture. "Other organisations actively involved in business events include **The Purple House** in Alice Springs, a 100% Aboriginal owned social enterprise, the aforementioned **Maruku Arts** (featured above) at Uluru and Aboriginal Bush Traders in Darwin," added Ms McCaig.

When it comes to upcoming events, the future is bright for this Australian region – according to NTBE, the Northern Territory is well positioned to leverage a renewed focus on wellbeing and the desire for a genuine connection-to-place that are amongst the key objectives of today's business events. "The NT offers scope for profound personal and professional outcomes that planners and delegates are now seeking. We will continue to competitively position our iconic landscapes, nature-based experiences and strong connection to culture alongside our sophisticated business events infrastructure and the depth of NT's diverse industry strengths," concludes the bureau's director.

Montreux Music & Convention Centre:

From Jazz festivals to International Conferences!

Crossing the stunning landscape between the steep slopes of the Alps and the shores of Lake Lemman, we find a timeless Swiss postcard: Montreux takes us back to its jazz festival and the celebrities who have called it home, but it also plays host to international conferences at the **Montreux Music & Convention Centre**.

You cannot remain indifferent to this place and nostalgic when you leave it. Montreux is centrally located in the European continent with some 150 direct flights at surrounding airports and train connections to a wide variety of destinations. With more than 2500 rooms including standard hotels, palaces and tailor-made venues, the Montreux Riviera is a dream come true with all the necessary amenities to host your event, including short walking distance between venues, refined spaces of *belle époque* architecture and top-notch services.

Among the many festivals, urban legends and major conferences held here, the **Montreux Jazz Festival** stands out as its cultural flagship being one of the most prestigious musical events in the world. From a small, purely jazzy three-day gathering at the Montreux Casino, the annual gathering has turned into an eclectic platform that today features artists from almost every musical style imaginable at the **Montreux Music & Convention Centre (2m2c)**. An 18,000m² multipurpose exhibition centre hosting all kinds of professional, cultural and public events on the shores of Lake Lemman, the 2m2c boasts a fully adaptable infrastructure, both modular and multifunctional, and is fully equipped to host most MICE events.

This is the great asset for organisers, exhibitors and visitors, since the venue includes the Auditorium Stravinski – adapted for 450 to 1,650 people for a congress and up to 800 for a gala dinner – and the 900-seat Miles Davis Hall. Its accessibility to hotels, restaurants, shops and the casino makes it a perfect venue for international events, which also include the **International Recruitment Forum**, and the **Geneva II Conference press centre**. During the pandemic, they were never completely closed and managed to maintain a minimum of activity throughout the period. **Rémy Crégut, CEO of 2m2c**, explains: “We tried to explore various possibilities in serving our residents, so we became the headquarters of the Civil Defence task group for two months, a vaccination centre visited by 25,000 people for six months. We were also the meeting room of the city council, and the host of several virtual event stages.”

This has not prevented the convention centre from suffering a particular impact due to the shutting of cultural activities that represent 50% of the overall budget. In the last two years, the venue has received subsidies from



“ *The big question for the future of 2m2c in relation to potential pandemics will be how to improve the air ventilation systems in large concert halls and banquet halls specifically applied to the space.* ”

the Ministry of Culture and from the Canton of Vaud for partial unemployment, a situation that has now normalised as they were able to end both years with a positive balance. Last but not least, this retraction of activity coincided with a possible closure of the centre for renovation in 2019 (now postponed to 2023), so they were already managing the space with a very light team. “We were also very lucky to host two major events as the pandemic began to recede: the **Swiss Economic Forum** in September 2020 and the **UEFA Congress** in April 2021, both with stringent health measures,” says Crégut.

The big question for the future of 2m2c in relation to potential pandemics will be how to improve the air ventilation systems in large concert halls and banquet halls specifically applied to the space. The good news for Rémy is that employees, but also attendees, “have learned to protect themselves when necessary, according to standard procedures and the convention centre’s rulebook.” The management’s goal for 2022 is to achieve 90% of 2019 annual revenues, but more importantly, 2m2c wants to maintain the high level of customer satisfaction that they have continuously sustained since 2015. Of course, their flagship event could not go unnoticed: “The Montreux Jazz festival is not only our biggest annual income but also our biggest promotional vehicle worldwide. During two weeks, 90,000 people attended at least one concert and 180,000 walked into the venue. These are extremely important figures for us!”

Nevertheless, a major setback at this turning point is clearly workforce and talent retention. “Our partners are finding it quite difficult to hire employees back as many of them have resigned from the pandemic. All organisations will have to rest their business models and tweak the way they were running operations,” warns Crégut. This is clearly a problem shared by other convention centres and a huge wake-up call to make MICE industry jobs more attractive in the very near future. About the technological advances and improvements that pandemic pushed forward, the CEO did not stammer: “The new technology for events is all about providing a smart architecture of fibre optic connection to high-speed Internet throughout the building, as well as access to electricity. The second point is to have an in-house partner capable of proposing all kinds of innovative and quality solutions at the right price.”

Thanks to the Montreux City Council and following Swiss environmental policies, the 2m2c was already a smart building when it comes to sustainability. With the renovation project, 2m2c will be able to upgrade and improve the existing technology with solar panels and geothermal energy for the heating system. The ban on plastic bottles is already on its way, but the venue is still working on a major plan with innovative operational solutions.



BESarawak: How to Tap New Social Ground Through Business Events!

Who would have thought that Sarawak, situated on the island of Borneo, would become one of the spearheads of legacy impacts in the global business events industry? Read Sarawak’s inspiring stories here as they navigate the social layers of events.

Malaysia’s largest state, hailed as one of the best biodiversity hotspots in the world, is also making a name for itself with destination innovation capabilities and elevating the multiple benefits of its business events. Early on, they realised that business events are powerful platforms for real change, cross-sector collaborations, greater community engagement, and better policy development with long-term and positive benefits. The Sarawak Government recognises that business events are drivers to empower communities, conserve heritage, culture and biodiversity, and promote the overall development of Sarawak’s industries, setting out 5 legacy impact pillars: **Sectoral; Community & Social; Trade & Investment; Environment; and Political.**

On the occasion of ICCA’s IMEX WEEK, it was discussed why advocacy and politics are so important in cementing new and strengthened congress destinations, and how this industry and its professionals can help political authorities better define proactive courses of action and legislation. We then set an exclusive interview at

the German trade show with the **Minister of Tourism, Creative Industries and Performing Arts, Datuk Haji Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, and Amelia Roziman (pictured below), CEO of Business Events Sarawak (BESarawak)**, to go into more detail about this Malaysian event legacy experience. During the pandemic, Sarawak did not back down and came up with a post-COVID-19 development strategy for 2030 – a ten-year plan to recover all sectors and economies to pre-pandemic levels and even further. “When we talked about this strategy, the focus of our ministry comprises two aspects: ecotourism and business events. Naturally, the post-COVID-19 development strategy has some KPIs that measure business events. For example, we are looking to get 50 homegrown business events in ten years. We don’t just want to bid for events to take place there, we want smart congresses to connect with Sarawak in our target areas,” said Minister Hamzah.



“We don’t want to become an association hub just for the sake of it. We want to be selective in the way we follow our journey with associations. When we talk about having a regional association in Sarawak, we want quality and to look at the key economic sectors of the Sarawak government”

Ai Community Library – a CSR project led by the 59th ICCA APRH Committee, which originated as a book sharing programme and then expanded into a life-changing initiative with support from the public and private sectors. The aim of the library was simple: to provide a functional space with educational resources and to help retaining a lot more disfranchised

And what are these target areas? The Malaysian state has stipulated **Urban, Social and Environmental Development**, along with **Rural Transformation in Agricultural Development, Re-engineering Economic Growth** (known as Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy – SCORE), **Service Industry** and **Digital Economy** as a clear commitment to convention-led legacies for social and economic inclusion. From here, you can see that the Sarawak government’s commitment to business events represents an important and standalone role of sustainable tourism. “When we say homegrown, it depends on the economic sector of Sarawak. If it meets the requirements in an area like agriculture, the congress has to be relevant to our sector, seeking convergence between the private sector and the government. The outcomes will focus on inclusive legacy impacts, meaning that not only the industry partakes but also our local communities, for the preservation of our heritage and our natural environment,” Roziman tells us. Among all these factors, they hope that each conference will not end in itself and leave a trail for Sarawak.

To measure this ten-year policy, Malaysian officials have chosen two important variables: economic impact and (of course) legacy impact. “Previously, people only looked at direct expenditure, but now we have also entered a new phase of economic impact with new KPIs on job creation, sector investment and increasing the ROI of business events. As for measuring legacy impact, we started collecting the date this year until 2025, so we can make a comparison of values – because only after the event has taken place and this process has matured can we get the results and validate that legacy,” says Roziman.

In 2016, Kuching hosted the **55th ICCA Congress** and one of the pillars of the programme was education. Out of that congress came the **“Gift of Love: Batang**

children. “What ICCA did was ask the delegates to bring two books on their arrival to the library. When we won the ICCA congress bid for the Asia-Pacific hub in 2020, we wanted to make it bigger and better. We went to the social media and appealed in 9 days to collect 500 books. We ended up receiving over 7,500 books from delegates, association, corporate organisations and general public. From there we had to store the books in the state library and finally we applied to the state company, Sarawak Energy Berhad, for funding to build a longhouse library in Batang Ai,” says the CEO.

Another example of urban development sparked by a major event took place in Miri. Five years ago, BESarawak hosted the **8th International Forum on Industrial Bioprocessing** bringing delegates from the four corners of the world. With a limited number of hotels, restaurants and suppliers, this conference turned out to be a success. Miri University applied to the government for a laboratory to do further research from that conference, and eventually got it

“For us, this is the true definition of legacy business events,” said the Minister. In the BESLegacy Initiative model, BESarawak in line with ICCA Asia Pacific hub has been trying to understand if in fact these impacts are clear to the whole local and regional industry. In recent times, they have trained all staff, including receptionists and managers, on legacy impacts, and industry partners as well so that they can tell the story and guide their clients and staff. “We don’t want to become an association hub just for the sake of it. We want to be selective in the way we follow our journey with associations. When we talk about having a regional association in Sarawak, we want quality and to look at the key economic sectors of the Sarawak government,” concludes Roziman.

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ASSOCIATION & PCO



Friend or Foe?

Collaboration rather than competition is usually considered the optimum strategy when relating to other organisations in the ecosystem of non-profits. However, is it that straightforward? Should non-profit organisations look to be more competitive?

AUTHOR: LOUISE GORRINGE, DIRECTOR OF ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT AT KENES

In the non-profit sector, it has never been more apparent that collaboration is important. The magnitude and complexity of current social, political, and economic issues are unprecedented, and these challenges cannot be overcome by working in silos. Therefore, non-profits quite rightly focus on how to best work together to further their individual and collective missions. Merger, alliance, coalition, partnership, collab, collective efforts, all terms used to signify a relationship with presumably beneficial results for all parties to leverage efforts and achieve greater impact.

And as non-profits continue to seek new sources of revenue, the sphere of collaboration has also increased, with the for-profit world an obvious go-to, particularly as for-profit organisations themselves pivot to invest resources sustainably in cause-related activities. Some are still hesitant as such partnerships are perceived to carry risks, but this shouldn't deter associations from investigating potential collaborations within the private sector.

Whilst for-profit partners can offer critical resources to a non-profit, non-profits offer companies a great deal in return, including the opportunity to enhance their image, access to information and specialists and their target audience. Due diligence is required to identify those companies that have similar aims and are not contradicting the values of the organisation, along with clear guidelines for a partnership to ensure the image of the association is not undermined. It is also important that non-profits take an active role in shaping the partnership, monitoring, and evaluating the relationship through each stage.

Given the above, collaboration is the natural choice for non-profit organisations, but is it the only choice? No! Competition is critical to the performance and survival of a non-profit organisation and so should be considered in the gamut of operating strategies alongside collaboration.

Non-profit managers and those working in the sector must accept that organisations compete for resources, including members, funds, staff, media, projects, etc. In the for-profit arena, organisations faced with competition exhibit a fight response with the aim of creating better products and services. In the nonprofit world, when faced with competition anxiety sets in – with the unfounded concern that supporters will withdraw resources and programmes will not be able to continue – and so nonprofits try to avoid.

Recognising competition forces non-profits to look inwards and understand the ecosystem they operate within and where they fit in, ultimately understanding what makes them different from other players and how to set the organisation apart. This insight then allows non-profits to navigate that ecosystem, make a clearer assessment of the opportunities for collaboration, decide who to partner with, and, most importantly, why.

Taking a more competitive outlook ultimately leads to more effective collaboration. So yes, non-profits should look to be more competitive, starting internally by reviewing the organisation's strengths and competitive advantage, which in turn will allow them to determine when they are strong enough to go at it alone or when they should look to collaborate with the right partner.



ABOUT KENES GROUP

For over fifty years, Kenes Group has been creating success stories with associations around the world. We're experts in helping associations reach their true potential by strategically building awareness, loyalty and satisfaction among current and potential members, as well as stakeholders. We harness the power of community, strengthening your association's brand through unforgettable experiences - fostering change, inspiring members, educating, and improving your association's business performance.

For more information, contact:

Estefanía Zárate Angarita
Marcom Director
Tel. +45 22 25 64 47

[✉ EANGARITA@KENES.COM](mailto:EANGARITA@KENES.COM)

[📄 KENES.COM](https://www.kenes.com)



Going Local: The Benefits of Local Partnerships for International Meetings and Events

For any association organising an international event, local partners (that is, partners located in the host city of the event) offer immeasurable value. The following are just some of the advantages that come with having local event partners:

- Destination knowledge and expertise
- Negotiating power with suppliers
- Fiscal and legal advice that is relevant to the host city
- Facilitated process for obtaining permits and licences
- International meeting leads and intelligence

The fact is, local partnerships are critical to an international meeting's success, and it's vital that associations find and nurture the right local partners. As a network of selected, high-quality PCOs, the World PCO Alliance operates on the premise that international expertise complemented by local partners is the best formula for organising international events. That's why in this article, World PCO Alliance members Nancy Tan of Ace: Daytons Direct, Kaoru Shibuta of Congrès Inc., Nina Freysen-Pretorius of The Conference Company, Yap Sook Ling of Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel, André Vietor of Bco Congressos and Jean-Paul de Lavison of Jpdl International, offer some tips that can help associations optimise the potential of such local partners.

First of all, the term "local partners" is most often associated with suppliers such as caterers, transportation and venues. But local partners extend beyond individual suppliers and can include:

- Universities and other academic institutions;
- Government;
- Industry;
- City councils;
- Media;
- Sponsors.

When considering a local partner, here are the key qualities to look for:

- Professionalism;
- Excellent cultural/destination knowledge - a partner that is familiar with the cultural/governmental context of that particular location can save the association much time and potential headaches as well as open the door to opportunities such as government incentives in the region;
- Ability to imbue the local culture into the event;
- Access to an extended network of suppliers – if your partner has a good reputation, they'll be able to introduce you to other partners that might be beneficial for your event;

- Access to potential new members - a partner that can introduce an association to a pool of qualified leads for new members is a good local partner to have;
- New research/knowledge on industry products and services - this is primarily of value to events in the scientific/research domain. Local partners who have insight into relevant breakthroughs can bring some exciting possibilities for an event.

The Covid pandemic has affected all areas of the meeting industry, including the association-local partner relationship. In addition to the above list of qualifications, associations should also be asking themselves the following questions:

- Does this partner appear versatile enough to adapt to any unexpected changes that may come our way?
- Is this partner skilled at performing a thorough risk and safety assessment?
- Has this partner succeeded in continuing to build its skill set and qualifications?

Speaking of the pandemic, Covid has only reinforced the value of (and, in some cases, the necessity for) local

partners. Associations organising international events have felt the need to protect themselves as much as possible, in the form of force majeure clauses in contracts, the ability to negotiate rates that meet the association's budget, and finding the right staffing due to short lead times and availability of skills and personnel. Moreover, while the hybrid event model, which became very popular during the pandemic, is still being used, the return to face-to-face meetings is clearly on the rise, and delegates are eager to participate in person. Associations thus need to put in extra effort to make in-person attendance as appealing as possible, and high-level destination knowledge is a key component.

Some associations may wonder, in an increasingly "borderless" world, is the locality of a partner all that important? The answer is yes. Ironically, in our "borderless" world, customisation is highly sought after, and this customisation can only come with local partners. Associations want to deliver an event that is authentic and complementary to the cultural and regional context of that host destination, and the fact is, there will always be nuances, rules and standards that differ from country to country. Local partners eat, sleep and breathe the destination; if they can help an association optimise the customisation experience, then such partners are more valuable than ever before. Even from an exclusively logistical perspective, local partners are the ideal solution for the so-called "last-mile" portion of the event planning journey. They have the knowledge of what is happening on the ground, they have realistic expectations of the delegate and supplier market, and a sense of what is possible and not possible.

If we look beyond pure logistics, however, and set our sights on the bigger picture, local partners have the potential of being a significant driver for overall change. They can be an instrument for unity and collaboration among all local stakeholders involved, providing real value to not only event attendees but to the association and its overall mission.



World PCO Alliance

 WORLDPCO.ORG

 WPCOALLIANCE@CONGRE.CO.JP

Building Partnerships is a Way to Grow – But It is Also a Skill

Over the years that I have been writing this column, we have had numerous discussions about partnerships. We have talked about partnerships among the stakeholders within an organisation. We have talked about partnerships among different organisations that serve the same industry or profession. We frequently mentioned the partnership among the association, travel, and hospitality industries. We have even discussed, in several different ways, the idea of partnerships among not-for-profit organisations and governments.

It is only natural in a partnership that each of the participants wants to know the proverbial, “what’s in it for me?” Now, in today’s world when people hear that phrase, they often think that somebody in the relationship – the partnership – is only concerned about what they are going to get out of it, not what the participants in that partnership can do together. Frankly, I have no problem with each participant wanting to know what they are going to get out of it. We all have to go back to our boards of directors, to our stockholders, to a government agency, or to some other policy body and explain exactly what the relationship is doing for us. We all want something out of the relationship, and it is reasonable to believe that people want to know what that is going to be before making any commitment of time, money, or resources to the partnership in the first place. We typically want to be able to anticipate the return our organisation is going to get on its investment.

In order to build partnerships that will be lasting, and successful, we first have to identify three things:

1. What does our organisation gain from the partnership?
2. What does the other party gain from the partnership?
3. What are we going to accomplish together that we could not accomplish alone?

The last question is, of course, the most important. **Partnerships for growth** is an excellent concept, but what does it mean? Obviously, most organisations will partner with another entity if they think it will help grow their association’s membership; or grow the attendance at an annual conference; or grow the image of the organisation as an influencer or subject matter expert in their field. Both partners want the same things. So how do we turn this into a solution where everyone benefits?



We must pick the right partners.

We need (wherever possible) to pick only the entities who can meet the criteria we have set for our organisational partners.

Wait, you do not have “criteria” for you partners? You probably do, but too often they are generalities like “sharing common interests,” or “this is one issue where we can work together.”

Remember – when you partner with another organisation or entity, your organisation is now “guilty by association” with that partner. You need to be precise about what the basic characteristics are for a good partnership for your organisation. Here is a checklist of what some of those characteristics might be:

1. **Common values, as well as common goals:** Do they do business the way you do? Is their reputation one with which you want to affiliate? Are their organisational values known and are they transparent? Are there any obvious situations that can cause the appearance of conflicts of interest?
2. **Clear communications channels:** Who are the official spokespersons for each partner? Have you determined what communications vehicles will be used internally (within the partner organisations) and externally (to target audiences, to the public, to the media, etc.)? Which organisation acts on behalf of the group and when?
3. **Clearly understood expectations and outcomes:** What will success look like and how will it be measured – more members? more money? more attendees? fewer duplications of efforts, lower costs? How will outcomes be shared (evenly?) based on the size of each partner organisation? Commensurate with how much money each has contributed?
4. **Agreement on the sharing of duties:** Is one organisation to be designated as the “primary” partner? Are all organisations expected to commit both staff and volunteer resources? How will resource allocation be accounted for in each organisation, and collectively?

5. **An understanding of how recognition is to be shared:** Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan liked to say that “there is no limit to what we can accomplish if no one cares who gets the credit.” That is a nice thought, but sometimes, in partnerships, it does matter who gets the credit. The co-branding that a partnership entails means that all partners need commensurate credit for the success of the group.

6. **A willingness to accept disagreement:** Even though the partnership is formed because of common goals, that does not mean there will not be some disagreement over how to accomplish those goals. This can happen when one of the partners has greater resources, or when one of the partners has a representative who tends to dominate discussions, etc. Compromising and negotiating skills are needed to keep moving toward those common goals.

There will, no doubt, be instances in which you have little choice about your partners. This often happens when joining forces to support or oppose legislation or regulations that could be harmful to an industry, or a profession, or a community’s economic development efforts. Even in these cases, you should analyse your partnership with some of the same criteria to identify possible areas of conflict.


It may seem like a lot of these “characteristics” are simply good common sense, but what could it possibly hurt to have such a checklist when trying to identify the right partners for your organisation?

Remembering that you are partnering for growth. It should be a winning collaboration for everyone.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Levin, CAE, CSP has more than 20 years of experience as an association executive and is also an internationally-known speaker and consultant to the nonprofit and association community. He currently serves as Executive Vice President of the Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, an international trade association, and as President of B.A.I., Inc., his speaking and consulting firm.

 MLEVIN0986@GMAIL.COM

 BAILEADERSHIP.COM



Major Meetings Industry Players Team up to Benefit the Newcomers

City Destinations Alliance continues the tradition of the ECM Summer School by carrying out the **CityDNA Summer School** this year in Turin, in person, on August 27-31, 2022. A live proof of the resilience of the European Meetings Industry!

Ongoing education and professional training are crucial to face the continuing changes within the Meetings and Events Industry. Since 1987, the aim of the CityDNA Summer School (formerly known as EFCT Summer School and then ECM Summer School) is to provide incisive insight into the structure and functioning of the Meetings Industry, bringing delegates face-to-face with top industry practitioners.

The programme sets out the background and context of the industry, with a focus on up-to-date and cutting-edge examples of European best practices. It is perfect for those just starting out in the sector and who quickly want to get up to speed. Course content is pertinent and realistic, adapted to staff of convention bureaux, hotels, PCOs, DMCS, airlines, conference venues, congress centres, convention centres, exhibition centres and suppliers of ancillary and other products.

An education programme supported by the Meetings Industry

The programme wouldn't be as qualitative without the support of the industry. Whether it's from the faculty members that are experienced professionals giving their time on a voluntary basis or from CityDNA partners that financially support the event and provide content for the educational programme.

Main CityDNA partners for the Summer School are *HQ Magazine* that gives City Destinations Alliance a platform to promote the programme. Other partners such as IMEX, GDS-Movement, IBTM, IAPCO, ICCA and The Iceberg show their expertise and know-how through content and by facilitating faculty members. This win-win situation is a nice exercise for both sides, either to gain content or to learn from the new generation integrating the Meetings Industry. This is how all these major players team up to benefit the newcomers in the industry.

This year's faculty members are all members/partners of City Destinations Alliance and give their time on a voluntary basis – a way of giving back to the meetings industry: **Gabrielle Austen-Browne** (Diversity Alliance), **Tamara Bernstein** (ICCA), **Guy Bigwood** (Global Destination Sustainability Movement), **Prof. Tommaso Castroflorio** (European Aligner Association), **Barbara Jamison** (London & Partners), **Sam Johnston** (Dublin Convention Bureau & Convention Bureaux of Ireland), **Catherine Kalamidas** (Rotterdam Partners), **James Latham** (The Iceberg), **Cain Leathem** (GB Fitness & IMEX Group), **Heike Mahmoud** (CCH – Congress Centre Hamburg), **Sabrina Meyers** (Sabrina Meyers Consultancy), **Christian Mutschlechner** (Congrex Switzerland & former Vienna Convention Bureau), **Mathias Sondermann** (SAP), **Stéphane Talboom** (K.I.T. Group & IAPCO) and **Daniel Waigl** (CIRSE) led by the course leader **Pier Paolo Mariotti**, CMP CMM (EURAC Research Bolzano).

The CityDNA Summer School enlarges its scope towards destination regeneration and diversity

After two years of holding this event online, CityDNA offers an improved programme of the Summer School containing the most advanced issues of the industry, explained by the best experts on the market. There again it is thanks to successful collaboration with relevant, trustful and innovative key players of the industry.

This year, thanks to the help of its partners, CityDNA has refreshed the programme so that it contains all the hot topics and relevant tools that newcomers may need to thrive in their career. More than 15 experienced professionals will lead them through the most advanced professional protocols for a successful introduction to the industry, complemented by practical workshops. There will also be a challenging hackathon among the students coming from all over the world, in order to seed the principles of an effective network in a very efficient competition.

One of the most important changes in the new programme is the addition of a session on sustainability and regenerative destinations. Led by Guy Bigwood, Chief Changemaker of the GDS-Movement, this session will focus on giving the newcomers in the meetings industry all the necessary tools to implement a strategy in their destination with sustainability and regeneration at its heart. This session will also be followed by a more hands-on workshop where students will discuss all the practical details and collaboratively look for ideas and solutions.

A new session this year will also focus on diversity, inclusion and equity strategies in destinations by Gabby

Austen-Browne, Founder of the Diversity Alliance. City Destinations Alliance commits to encourage a meetings industry where everyone is welcome and to ensure that systemically overlooked voices and perspectives are finally heard and respected.

Finally, the topic of legacy was added to the programme as impact of events for destinations and beyond doesn't stop when the participants leave. This session will be led by James Latham, long-term partner of City Destinations Alliance and Editor-in-Chief of The Iceberg.

Already 31 hosting cities and counting

Another "partner" that is essential in the organisation of CityDNA Summer Schools are the host cities! Since 1987, it's 31 different cities – *Gmunden, Luxembourg, Antwerp, Bergen, Lisbon, Salzburg, Valencia, Brussels, Innsbruck, Nice, Barcelona, Biarritz, Ljubljana, Sorrente, Stockholm, Istanbul, Budapest, Marsaskala, Berlin, Tallinn, Opatija, Bolzano, Tampere, Krakow, Dubrovnik, Genoa, Vienna, Zagreb, Dresden, Thessaloniki and London* – that have already held the event and next destination will be Turin!

Hosting cities usually seek for visibility, showing their focus on education. They also get the possibility to train their local stakeholders by encouraging them to attend the programme. When a city is hosting, it is an opportunity for the entire country to participate as it's more accessible. Finally, for the hosting city it is an opportunity to get an international perspective on their own work by welcoming more than 70 people from all over Europe and beyond.

Register now on citydestinationsalliance.eu and learn for your future success in the Meetings Industry.

Future Shapers

The Behind the Scenes Story

AUTHOR: SVEN BOSSU, AIPC CEO



AIPC's inaugural Future Shapers pitched their solutions to the challenges faced by the convention centre management industry at the **AIPC Annual Conference**, and what an amazing job they did. In front of a global group of senior conventions centre leaders, they gave a highly dynamic presentation – including dance moves for one group – with the objective to convince the audience that their solution should win.

But there was also a lot happening behind the scenes. The entire group actually met for the first time face-to-face two days before they had to present. Final tweaks to PowerPoints were done on the way over – it did help that some of the team members came from Australia and South Africa – and last minute information was exchanged via dedicated WhatsApp groups.

On Sunday afternoon – some still with a bit of a jetlag – they headed to Hungexpo, for the first rehearsal, after which they had to run to a dinner with the AIPC Board, followed by an opening cocktail at the Opera Building of Budapest. The “stage mums”, **Kathleen Warden** of the **Scottish Event Campus** and **Samantha Glass** from **International Convention Centre Sydney**, representing the Future Shapers Task Force, made sure they got to their appointments, made them feel comfortable on stage and even had a “support kit” delivered to their rooms (which included chocolates, energy bars, lip moisturizers and much more).

On Monday, the promotion campaigns really started, with electronic posters in the networking area and team members connecting with delegates in a way reminiscent of professional lobbyists at the European Parliament. In parallel, team leaders had to go on stage for a panel discussion, several team members did interviews with reporters from global trade magazines and all had videotaped testimonials, which will be published later this summer on the AIPC website. By then, jetlag was replaced by adrenaline and, in addition to all the above, every opportunity was taken to run through the presentation time and time again.

Finally, on Tuesday, the moment arrived. An emotional

Taubie Motlhabane, CEO of Cape Town International Convention Centre and member of the AIPC Board, welcomed both teams on stage for their presentations, after bringing the necessary energy to the room. The level of professionalism was stunning, to the point that one of the delegates actually thought it was a real company launching a product. It is safe to say that the entire audience was impressed, which was reflected in the standing ovations at the end of the presentations.

After all this excitement, the teams were invited to a “debrief” session with the Task Force, as the AIPC wanted to make the next edition even better. While sipping a well-deserved glass of sparkling wine, all team members were very open and constructive on things to improve and also expressed their willingness to keep actively involved in the programme, showing their commitment to our industry.

Three hours later, it was time for the announcement of the winner. Behind the scenes, there was a real discussion amongst the AIPC Board members whether or not the competition should go on, given that both teams had done such an amazing job. It was decided to keep the competition and the result was...a tie. While both teams had different scores on the criteria considered, the weighted average score turned out to be 7,3 for both teams, bringing an unexpected and magnificent finale to this first edition of the Future Shapers. It also left the AIPC team with a practical problem: there weren't not enough trophies on hand, something to be sorted in the weeks to come – but all participants will receive their well-deserved trophy.

Needless to say, the closing cocktail proved to be a great bonding opportunity for the full cohort.

AIPC

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Five Core Tips on How to Establish Effective Agency Partnerships

AUTHOR: FELICIA ASIEDU, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER AT CVENT EUROPE

Corporate events are an integral business cog used to attract new clients, drive sales, provide valuable networking and help achieve company objectives. However, successful events can take months of preparation and dedication that in-house planners rarely have the bandwidth or resources for and therefore need to outsource. Regardless of the event size or scope, maintaining a good rapport with external partners gives the support of a specialist and expert, and provides the necessary insight to bring the event vision to life.

Let's explore five core tips in-house planners can build on to effectively manage that important agency relationship, and ultimately create successful events:

1. Find the best agency for you

If the best events result from collaborative, productive partnerships, then unsuccessful ones often start with a clash of differing values and misaligned end goals. It's crucial to look for an agency that understands your brand and company culture, shares your creative vision (and adds to it), and has the proven experience to deliver across event types (virtual, in-person, and hybrid). An agency that constructively challenges the status quo can be advantageous to introduce new creative, innovative solutions and help you achieve those end goals.

2. Get the event brief right

If you invest time up front to establish a clear “why” you should host the event, this will help you create a comprehensive brief for your agency. To put this another way, it's about understanding the event's outcome first rather than thinking about the event format as the reason to host the event. Providing a vanilla brief is likely to result in non-descript output from the agency, so if you are unsure take the opportunity to co-workshop the brief together and agree the event objectives – begin with the business reason for “why”.

3. Adopt transparent working

Great partnerships thrive on open, collaborative and transparent working. To manage the planner/ agency relationship effectively, it is vital you have a mutual understanding of the event vision and insight into the overall strategy; encompassing pre-planning, onsite and post event delivery, and are consistently kept up to date with the latest developments of your event. We all know event strategies evolve as creative thinking kicks in – it's important that every element of this is shared throughout the process.

4. Add value with event tech specialists

Events generate numerous data points and require specific technology to help capture and measure it – this is the real ROI for most event organisers. Working with an event technology specialist can help you maximise the value that attendees get out of your event with digital engagement tools and gives you access to event solutions that can track the attendee journey and deliver powerful insights. With these insights you can measure ROI, prioritise leads, and create targeted messaging to make the follow up even more impactful.

5. Get noticed by your stakeholders

Make sure your trusted agency's experience includes delivering events for you against your budget and make sure you negotiate to use their resources, including preferential rates/ exclusive extras, to the fullest. Also, take the lead to foster collaboration to produce new, out of the box ideas for immersive event experiences with ROI feedback (via event tech solutions) that will impress your company stakeholders and help you stand out within your organisation.

cvent

Strategic Partnerships: Do They Really Have **Added Value** to Members, Customers and Stakeholders?



AUTHOR: MARTIN BOYLE, CEO OF IAPCO

The simple answer is yes, of course they do. The more pertinent questions to ask are how do you measure the value and benefits that can be achieved and who is in the driver's seat of creating a partnership at this level?

When one asks Google: "What is a strategic partnership?" you are very quickly provided with 59,200,000 responses. The most relevant I feel is really quite straight-forward:

A strategic partnership is a relationship between two commercial enterprises, usually formalised by one or more business contracts. A strategic partnership will usually fall short of a legal partnership entity, agency, or corporate affiliate relationship and can take on many forms from simple verbal agreements to Memorandums of Understanding and even formal contracts.

Now that we have a bit of a definition, let's look at the decision-making factors that may be required before considering forming a strategic partnership.

Who is the initiator and driver of the partnership and why is it being considered?

If you are a not-for-profit association, perhaps there is an organisation that has access to a specific service, membership group, certification, research or educational programmes that you feel would be of value to your own members and stakeholders. If you are a more commercially driven organisation, perhaps there is another that has a specific commercial asset that, should you wish to offer to your customers, it would require an investment above your means.

Whatever the reason you have, you must be clear in the rights and obligations of each party involved with regards to intellectual property, ownerships,

affiliations, exclusivity, competition, financial obligations, rights, duration and termination dates.

Measuring the value and results generated from a strategic partnership and then communicating these to the constituents involved is essential. Setting clear objectives at the beginning of the arrangement, with a methodology to capture and record the results, should be considered.

A concrete example

Looking at our organisation, it has been a strategic decision of the Council of the **International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO)** to drive strategic partnerships only with organisations that mirror our own mission of raising the professionalism of the global meetings and events industry. We have built mutually beneficial partnerships that are focused on shared educational content and drive specific advocacy initiatives through the creation of Task Force Partnerships.

As an example, and to provide context, in April 2020, as a direct response to the global COVID pandemic's impact on the business and professional events industry, IAPCO created a strategic partnership in the form of a "Strategic Task Force" of 14 national PCO (professional congress organisers) associations. Our 3-point mandate was clear from the start:

1. to advocate, through a unified voice for the safe re-opening of the meetings industry globally;
2. to share data and best practice case studies amongst partners in the Task Force, and;
3. to promote a multi-national model of cooperation



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and collaboration to our own respective memberships and partner groups.

This mandate, along with obligations of each partner in the Task Force, intellectual property rights, member benefits (which also included preferential education programme admissions) and duration of the partnership was set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all parties.

Safe practice guidelines were shared across the 14 membership networks and Tourism Ministers from six countries committed to take part in our first ever 'Politicians Forum' to discuss the importance that the meetings industry could play in restarting their respective economies. Without the commitment of each of the partner associations involved in this strategic group, IAPCO would not have been able to achieve the scale of the objectives.

What are the challenges?

Whilst we recognise positive outcomes that result from strategic partnerships, we also need to be alert to the challenges they pose in ensuring successful outcomes.

International Institute for Management Development (IMD) conducted a research project in August 2014 that was led by Professor James E. Henderson, Charles Dhanaraj, Karine Avagyan and Michelle Perrinjaquet. It involved 79 participants from 50 companies focusing on the challenges involved in

making strategic partnerships work. They found the following three challenges were consistent with other industry research:

Underinvestment (disagreement on revenue and cost sharing, lack of resources, lack of executive sponsorship and commitment, etc.)

Over-appropriation (competition, customer ownership issues, intellectual property sharing, etc.)
Misalignment (conflicting goals and incentives, unclear roles and responsibilities, difficulty in communicating the joint value proposition, extension of the internal silo mentality).

All of the above challenges reiterate that open communication is essential for successful strategic partnerships.

Let's return to you being in the driver's seat of your next strategic partnership opportunity. Have you and your partner(s) considered your own investment, both in times of financial obligations but also talent resources required to commit to the objectives of the partnership? Are you and your respective strategic partner(s) clear on ownership of all parts of the project and can you clearly state the roles and responsibilities and timeframes?

If not, take the time to review and redevelop. If so, go for it!

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers. IAPCO represents today 137 companies from 40 countries, comprised of over 9900 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events. www.iapco.org





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