



BOARDROOM
THE BEST RESOURCE FOR ASSOCIATIONS

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A BRAND-NEW WORLD

— 2022 VOLUME 1 | VOLUME 2 | VOLUME 3 | VOLUME 4 —

THE PERFECT
STORM

WHERE IS
THE RODMAP?

LEADERSHIP
PLANNING



AUSTRALIA INNOVATES PIONEERING NEW HYBRID ROCKET TECHNOLOGY



Australian rocket company Gilmour Space is emerging as a world leader in hybrid rocket technology with a goal to provide more affordable access to space.



In 2015, brothers Adam and James Gilmour launched a venture-backed rocket company with a vision to go to “all orbits and all planets”.



Seeing a global opportunity to provide small launch vehicles to new space companies, Gilmour Space began developing hybrid propulsion technologies and launched its first low-cost hybrid rocket in 2016.



While the majority of commercial rockets use either solid- or liquid-fuelled engines, Gilmour Space’s hybrid engine combines a liquid oxidiser with a proprietary solid fuel.



The company has raised A\$87 million in funding since its inception and is on track to launch small satellites to orbit from 2022.



These satellites have the potential to be scaled up for use in detecting bushfires, monitoring crops and improving internet coverage from space.



Gilmour Space continues to be at the forefront of cutting-edge space technology, helping to put Australia on the map as a key player in the space industry.



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Associations & The Great Reset

Restrictions are gradually easing as we write these lines, and with this comes hope. If our outlook to the world and how we treat it had started to change before all this happened, the crisis only made more urgent – and more visible in a way – the need for the world, with its many faces, to be handled more reasonably, respectfully and sustainably. Social inclusion, equity, diversity and the wellbeing economy are not mere trends, they are now considered as important as a strong economy itself. Transformation and change are in the making.

The world must act jointly and swiftly to revamp all aspects of our societies and economies, from education to social contracts and working conditions. Every country, from the United States to China, from the UK to France and Belgium, must participate, and every industry, from oil and gas to tech, must be transformed. In short, we need a “Great Reset”.

At our own, humble level at Boardroom, we like to think European and international associations have a role to play in igniting a new, different, better world.

That’s why last year we launched our Building Back Better (or BBB as we fondly refer to) series of in-depth articles, which explore how professional societies and

nonprofit organizations are capable of helping to build greater resilience in recovery by systematically addressing the root causes of vulnerability. The latest article written by Vicky Koffa focuses on the sustainable food chain that is cultivated through associations. It’s available online at www.boardroom.global.

This Great Reset is also advocated for by the new members of our Advisory Board, whom we present extensively in this very issue. Ariane Brusselmans (International AIDS Society), Susan de Bievre (Association Expert) Carlos Lee (EPIC) and Peter Van Daele (URSI), welcome on board! And of course a big thanks to our former and – now honorary – members Silke Schlinnertz, Jennifer Fontanella, Mohamed Mezghani et Matthew D’Uva for sticking with us for so many years.

Left unaddressed, the crisis we have faced – and the ones that will certainly happen – will deepen and leave the world less sustainable, less equal, and more fragile. Incremental measures and ad hoc fixes will not suffice to prevent the worst from happening. We must build entirely new foundations for our economic and social systems, and associations are in the front line to take a leading role in this.



Cécile Volz

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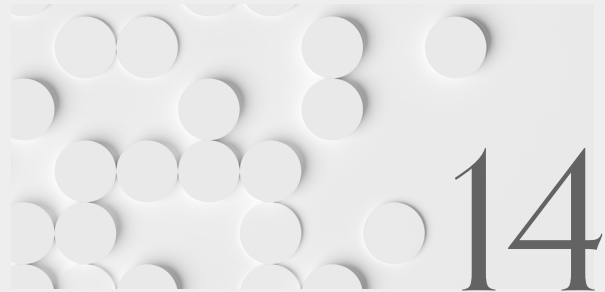
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A New Dawn for Boardroom Advisory Board

A brand-new Boardroom Advisory Board with brand-new members is a reason to celebrate. But, more importantly, it's a reason to put them in the spotlight and ask them about their organizations, what they do, how they see the association world and why they decided to join. Please meet Ariane Brusselmans, Director of Conferences at the International AIDS Society, Carlos Lee, Director General of EPIC, the European Photonics Industry Consortium, Peter Van Daele, Secretary General of URSI, the International Union of Radio Science, and association advisor and consultant Susan de Bievre.

Verbatim Remi Deve

PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR ASSOCIATION DOES.

Carlos Lee: EPIC is the world-leading industry association that promotes the sustainable development of organizations working in the field of photonics in Europe. We foster a vibrant photonics ecosystem by maintaining a strong network and acting as a catalyst and facilitator for technological and commercial advancement. EPIC publishes market and technology reports, organizes technical workshops and B2B roundtables, supports EU funding proposals, advocacy and lobbying, education and training activities, standards and roadmaps, pavilions at exhibitions.



Ariane Brusselmans: The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world's largest association of HIV professionals, with members in more than 170 countries. It gathers, convenes, educates and advocates for a world in which HIV no longer presents a threat to public health and individual well-being. Today, the IAS and its members unite scientists, policy makers and activists to galvanize the scientific response, build global solidarity and enhance human dignity for all those living with and affected by HIV. We are currently planning our major AIDS 2022 conference in Montreal for the summer, and very excited to convene after two years of virtual - a real in-person meeting again!

Susan de Bievre: I work with several associations. The main two are the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) and NATA, the Network for the Advancement of Patient Blood Management, Haemostasis and Thrombosis. They are at opposite ends of the association spectrum. WFSA is a global association with 135 national society members and therefore reaching over 80,000 individuals worldwide, NATA is a niche scientific society with 400-500 members specialising on a very specific topic. Most members of both societies are anaesthesiologists and intensivists so there is a link!

Peter Van Daele: URSI is a worldwide non-profit, non-governmental organization that coordinates the research in the field of radio science. This covers all activities from basic research to applications making use of radio waves and this is very broad, namely from design of antenna's over mobile communications, high-speed optical communications, remote sensing, propagation of radio waves in the atmosphere up to radio astronomy. By organizing conferences and meetings, supported by publications, URSI coordinates activities worldwide among individual scientists as well as national academies of sciences, which in fact make up the members of URSI.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE RECENTLY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO OUR READERS?

Ariane Brusselmans: I've actually just started my new role of Director of Conferences in December so I cannot claim that

I have done a lot since then! But I was really amazed when I learned about the Podcasts of the IAS, called HIV Unmuted, and this is something I would love to share. All kudos go to my colleagues from the communications department, who recently were awarded the "Best Association Podcast / Audio Series" of 2021 at the European and International Association awards. You should listen to them: hivunmuted.iasociety.org as it puts our current COVID crisis into perspective hearing Dr Fauci and other prominent scientists talking about the beginnings of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how everything was so uncertain and mysterious. It reinforces the message that we have to trust and follow the science.

Carlos Lee: We moved to online events of course, like everybody else, but we found out that they serve a different purpose. If the trust you can build at in-person events can't be replicated online, online gatherings, when they are frequent and not too long, are more inclusive, purely content oriented and reinforce a sense of community. Also, the design of small meetings - I mean board or committee meetings - has to be well thought out and this is what we've tried to do at EPIC and which has worked well so far. In a context where there's always a chance people won't show up because of the sanitary situation, it's important to create something that is both flexible and to-the-point.



Susan de Bievre: For many of us the last two years have been focused on rescuing events which are the main source of revenue for associations. We have carried out a fair amount of strategy work, looking to a future developing the positive experiences brought about by travel bans - using educational content, developing on-going virtual learning, reducing the length of congresses and spreading the events throughout the year rather than trying to cram everything into a four-day in-person event. Partnerships with industry stakeholders have evolved. The travel ban left a gaping hole, contact came to a standstill particularly with anaesthesiologists and intensivists who are leading the crisis in hospitals. We have all been thrown into a new world that has been on our doorstep for years but no one was quite brave enough to step into.

Peter Van Daele: Due to the pandemic, URSI had to switch from a 100% physical event strategy to a hybrid format allowing scientists from all over the world participate and interact. URSI is an academic oriented organization, which implies that the conferences organized are scientific conferences with call for papers, paper submission, strict peer review of the submissions, formal presentations and proceedings, serving as reference for future scientific work. This scientific aspect of the conference implies specific requirements put on the tools being used which is not found back in many other conferences and meetings organized worldwide.

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WHAT IS THE ONE THING NONPROFITS NEED TO BE FUTURE PROOF ?

Susan de Bievre: Like it or not, income. Without the insurance of long-term revenue societies have no view on their future, cannot plan long term, cannot engage in multi-annual projects, programmes, research, hire staff etc. We cannot plan with empty pockets.



Peter Van Daele: Membership engagement is crucial. Without income from members, any organization is destined to go down. Engagement by members is however only possible when one can show the added value for members to be part of your organization, and this is a main challenge in a scientific community. For an organization as URSI, where members are mostly national academies of sciences (so government agencies) it is challenging as these organization are confronted with decreasing budgets from a decreasing interest in long-term basic scientific research.

Carlos Lee: You must have heard it before, but I've always said that to be future proof associations have to be managed as companies. What is new, though, is the risk-taking level: what has clearly changed is the speed at which things go and at which you have to innovate. Some associations are by essence very conservative and traditional; however, they shouldn't be afraid to try out new initiatives. And boards have to lead the way in the matter - and be comfortable with it. At EPIC, we recently collaborated to launch a Certificate on the Frankfurt Stock Market, allowing people to invest directly into a basket of photonics public listed companies. The Certificate will also be used as an opportunity to reach out to the financial community to attract attention to our industry.

Ariane Brusselmans: I think that we need to remain extremely flexible and creative. We are navigating in the dark at present, especially with conferences, trying virtual, hybrid events, testing online networking tools. However, it's become apparent that we cannot replicate serendipitous encounters from real life online - or can we? Our business models also need to evolve - I do not hold the answers on the how, and that is why collaboration is key!

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE PART OF AN ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY ?

Peter Van Daele: URSI tries to get involved as much as possible in the association community as it is clear we all are confronted with similar challenges and we can learn from each other.

Carlos Lee: No, not really. We are in touch with other associations which form the 40 clusters of photonics and that's pretty much our community. I don't feel we're part of the Brussels association bubble because we're not so much on the lobbying aspect.

I would like to work a bit more on that, but we're still a sector where regulations are not the major critical thing.

Susan de Bievre: I feel completely the opposite of Carlos! The experience and knowledge that is shared by associations is invaluable.

Ariane Brusselmans: I do feel that there is a very strong collaboration between associations, as we all do pretty much the same things yet are not in direct competition. It makes a lot of sense to share and learn from each other, that is why I enjoy this job so much. There are of course the professional contacts that I have made over the years and I do keep in touch with a number of them and that is very useful, we exchange a lot. There are also a number of entities such as AC Forum, ASSOCIATIONWORLD, with events like GIAF or BIAF, Associations Executives and the likes that provide you the opportunity to network, learn from peers and see what others do.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE AS NEW MEMBER OF BR ADVISORY BOARD ?

Susan de Bievre: I am actually chuffed to have been asked, there is so much talent out there. I hope I can help you continue producing a publication that covers a very broad area of topics. Perhaps it would be interesting to have more input from industry stakeholders who we tend to see as our clients rather than stakeholders in our association.

Peter Van Daele: Being part of the BR Advisory Board brings new opportunities to trigger discussions on new challenges amongst the associations and non-profit organizations. We are looking forward to this new task and hope to be able to bring new ideas and experiences to the community.

Ariane Brusselmans: I am very proud to join the BR Advisory Board and I hope that I will be able to point the attention to major issues that we as associations professionals face in the coming months.



Carlos Lee: I hope to be able to bring maybe a different experience than my fellow board members - and maybe a different way of doing business. As an organization, we have an experience that is not so common, with all employees being home-based and no office. That doesn't make the bit least successful: if EPIC is 19 years old, our growth really dates back from only a few years ago. Hopefully some of our stories will be enlightening for your readers.

Ecosystems & the Natural Lifespan of Associations

International Advisor to the Global Association Hubs **Martin Sirk** explores the lifespan of associations and gives a few tips for professional societies and nonprofit organizations to be future-proof.

This article is being written shortly after Meta/Facebook lost a quarter of its value - \$240 billion - in a single day's trading, followed by Amazon increasing in value by close to that astronomical amount the following day. These wild swings remind us of the mortality of all organizations: start-up style growth can't continue unabated at scale (simple mathematics tell us such companies would eventually own or sell or control almost every resource on the planet), and when that growth falters the expectations of investors and the programming of algorithms ensure that the downward slope is far from smooth!

One of the most common models or metaphors for organizational life-cycle is that of trees in the forest, first made famous in Alfred Marshall's 1890 publication "Principles of Economics":

the largest trees suddenly toppling with little warning because of hidden structural weakness or rot, perhaps exacerbated by an external shock like a bolt of lightning (or a pandemic!), letting in sunlight for thousands of seedlings to compete in a race for the canopy. Variations on this life-cycle model of start-up, growth, maturity, (often invisible) decline and death (or for a relative few, renewal/rebirth) have been applied to bureaucratic and corporate organizations, products, events, and even ideas.

But this concept is surprisingly absent from discussions about associations (try Googling "association life cycle" if you doubt this claim!). We occasionally acknowledge that some of our products and services have a natural lifespan, but rarely consider the most well-established associations themselves as potentially at

risk of toppling. Perhaps because many of those formed during the great era of international association formation from the end of World War Two till the 1970s are now at the peak of their maturity and apparent invincibility!

Typical signs of the decline phase in companies and bureaucracies include: "mission creep"; political decision-making; solidified departments and areas of responsibility; flat budgets with higher proportions going towards administration and top executive salaries; thick rule books; a focus on historically important advantages and established ways of doing things; rent-seeking returns on financial investments; and loss of the most dynamic staff to start-ups. Any of these sound familiar?



POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

But of course, to quote the great statistician George Box: “*all models are wrong, some are useful*”. In the case of associations, a “trees + forest” life-cycle model can be of use to clearly identify potential solutions as well as sources of danger at different stages of development, it isn’t a cast-iron prediction of inevitable collapse and death!

We can identify essential nutrients and new sources of energy. For example, new forms of membership or grassroots decision-making to overcome bureaucratic inertia. We can deliberately nurture nearby seedlings - the many new online communities of shared interest - rather than treating these as invasive competitors. It’s a relatively painless process to interweave our root network with those of neighbouring (both competing and complementary)

associations to build collective strength - through mergers, collaborative events and educational programmes, and joint advocacy campaigns.

And of course we should trim off rotten branches to let in more light and fresh air - even though stopping activities or giving up an existing role is often the toughest and least pleasant task any association can attempt! We can even take advantage of new ecosystems, propagating regional offices or representation in destinations that treat associations as strategic economic and social assets, whether in relatively new hubs such as Singapore or Dubai, or within deep-rooted association ecosystems in Brussels or Washington DC.

The one thing that established associations cannot do is to nonchalantly bask in the sunlight provided by their current elevated

position in the forest. Competition in any environment is never-ceasing (resources are always limited, be they potential members, sources of revenue, or attention), dynamic new forms of life are constantly evolving, more external shocks are on the way in the slipstream of COVID-19, and any weakness or failure to radically enliven or reinvent will be punished without mercy.

This piece is part of the exclusive partnership between Boardroom and the Global Association Hubs, which comes as an innovative response to the increasing decentralization of international associations as they look to develop their activities globally.
www.associationhubs.org



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FEATURE

Strategic Planning for a Brand-New World

In these uncharted territories, associations are rethinking everything. Including how to revise their strategic plan, how to best execute on that plan—or in some cases, how to create a new plan altogether. But how to do that exactly? What should be taken into account? Who to involve? This is what this Special Feature of Boardroom explores.

Introduction Remi Deve

Strategic planning is important to associations because it provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals. A tool that is useful for guiding day-to-day decisions and also for evaluating progress and changing approaches, it helps move forward. In order to make the most of strategic planning, your organization should give careful thought to the strategic objectives it outlines, and then back up these goals with realistic, thoroughly researched, quantifiable benchmarks for evaluating results.

BUT HOW DO YOU DO THAT AS THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT HAS BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN?

If you had a three- or five-year strategic plan before *all this* happened, it's likely that you threw it in the bin long ago. And if you had tried to come up with another one last year, it's possible that this one too joined its colleague into the garbage.

SO WHY WOULD YOU GO THROUGH THE HASSLE OF ENVISIONING WHERE YOU WANT YOUR ASSOCIATION TO BE IN A FEW YEARS' TIME?

Well, it might be time to argue that strategic planning in these uncharted territories has everything to do with innovation, and with innovation comes flexibility and agility.

In an article published on ASAE: the Center for Association Leadership, Drew Yancey explains that by refocusing their strategic planning on innovation, it's possible for associations to make rapid progress and close the innovation gap many have been experiencing. In fact, if they adopt a trial-and-error approach, without being afraid of taking risks or being paralyzed with failures, they will be winners in the long run.

In this context, Yancey argues first for an expansion of the association's vision. Innovation goes way beyond new, improved

products or technology, it's - in a way on the opposite side of the spectrum - *"the consistent execution of new value for stakeholders."* If you have a clear view of the challenges your stakeholders face, then you're at the ready to help them and add value for them.

Then, strategic planning should involve the entire association board and leadership. *"Traditional association strategic planning often limited decision making to a small core subset of leadership,"* Yancey writes. *"But innovation is a team sport, and often the bigger and more diverse the team, the better. Associations are in a position to leverage their broad ecosystems to enhance innovation outcomes."* Involve the whole chain of your association, if you will, and innovation will happen.

Last but not least, a flexible strategic plan is obviously not a one-time thing, it's an ongoing, iterative process. And for that process to be efficient, you can create phased milestones your organization has to reach. Yancey has identified three:

1. The planting of as many new ideas as possible.
2. The growing of those ideas by clustering and vetting them, so that they are prioritized based on their potential and executability.
3. The harvesting of the top priorities through experimentation and adaptation.

"This is what makes strategic planning that is focused on new value creation fundamentally different from traditional strategic planning, which often moves from idea directly to execution. Now more than ever, associations and their members are dealing with significant unknowns, and experimentation is the fastest and cheapest way to reduce risk and ultimately deliver new value," he concludes.

The Need for an On-Going Strategic Plan

—

For AC Forum, **Anja Sander**, Executive Director of the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), argues that strategic planning requires constant adaptation.



A new world started on the day COVID occurred. There is really no new way of planning. These are the conclusions we came up after several reviews of what we do at the European Academy of Neurology.

What happened is that, early 2020, we all were confronted with our biggest threat. The many things we had taken for granted so far and that we were so reliant on and sure of were not possible anymore: travelling, meeting, going to the office, education, social activities, sports, and especially the organization of events and congresses, which are for many associations the major sources of income.

All our weaknesses were uncovered. And we had no control over what was happening whatsoever.

EMBRACING CHALLENGES

However, we realized at the same time – and this was perhaps even more important and motivating – that we were strong. We embraced the challenges and rose up to create new plans fast and effectively.

Although we of course did not know what would happen, our organization was actually lucky: we had always been strategically planning ahead for a long time. Just in case a crisis, no matter its magnitude, would happen...

More than fifteen years ago, we implemented a quality management system, with clear procedures and instructions for our daily work. This included project management tools and regular SWOT analysis. Having these tools turned out to be more important than we had ever believed. Due to a diligent risk-management system, we knew that we had resources to try out new things and make mistakes.

We also realized procedures and instructions are nothing without the people who implement and operate it. This is, in fact, another, even more important, strength an association should have.

But this cannot be developed overnight when a crisis hits. This needs many years to infuse. Investing in good relations and clear and transparent communication with your volunteers, members, employees, customers and vendors, is paramount.

START A PLAN

With all these resources in place, the planning can start – even in a post-COVID world. And remember: plans are only intentions and can be changed every step of the way!

The first thing to do is to look at your vision. Then, to define the goals you want to reach and the actions you have taken already. You might need to make changes and adjustments or even skip some.

EAN's vision is to reduce the burden of neurological diseases and our goal is to serve our members, to provide them with education and research, as well as networking opportunities. At the same

time, we are also an organization with staff members, volunteers, vendors, customers, partner societies, and they all rely on us.

Our annual congress is the main platform for us to fulfil our mission. Reviewing the vision and goals of EAN, the Executive Board together with the staff members, made a contingency plan in the early days of the pandemic, and it was decided to organize the congress online. All stakeholders were informed and after many meetings, questions and doubts, we created something completely new and unique.

Instead of an onsite event with more than 7,000 participants, we were able to organize the biggest neurology event – free of charge – with more than 43,000 registrations, within eight weeks.

This was a great success, but things were – and still are – changing fast, and we immediately started to think about the next steps. People learned to use all the online tools we left at their disposal and appreciated working and learning from home and virtually. Today, high-quality content can be accessed online all the time, from everywhere – those who can't travel for economic or social reasons for instance are catered for just like those who can. But at the same time, the networking opportunities and the serendipitous encounters are impossible to replicate in a virtual environment. Exhibitors and sponsors had the same feedback: they appreciated the high participation in the virtual sessions of the congress, but missed the interaction with the participants during the breaks.^[1]

To create a platform that caters to various audiences, we have gone the hybrid way. The costs – and the stakes – are high since you actually have to organize two meetings in parallel. There is a lot of uncertainty and many open questions regarding the new behaviour of participants, which we are not sure how to answer.

NOT AFRAID TO FAIL

But since we cannot look into the future, it is an investment we have to make. We have to try new things, evaluate, and try again if we fail.

At the same time, we need to make sure that the resources to do so are available. Ultimately, we will also need to develop new and different business models to be more flexible and less vulnerable.

In German, the word "plan" also means "map". So, why not look at the planning as a road trip or a hike?

On a map you first look at your goal, define your favourite road, but you also check for some side roads that you might need to take. Then, you put all your resources into a bag and the journey begins.

Go together with people, who you can rely on and who can rely on you. Going together, being open-minded, flexible, and transparent and having a common goal, is the best plan.

[1] [Onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ene.14702](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ene.14702) - Stamelou M. et al: Evaluation of the 2020 European Academy of Neurology virtual congress: transition from a face-to-face to a virtual meeting.

Creating the Perfect Storm

For ESAE, **Harry White**, Property Owners Association Executive & Executive Master in International Association Management Alumni, explains the process associations have to go through to plan strategically.

While the circumstances of the past few years have been frightful, the reality is that, as organizational leaders, we know that now, more than ever, our members and various stakeholders require our support and guidance. This must be considered an opportunity for organizations, as history has demonstrated that often it is those who emerge from hardship best that go on to be triumphant.

General Electric, General Motors, IBM, FedEx, Burger King, CNN, Uber and Airbnb are just some examples of enormously successful organizations that were founded during trying times.

CHARACTER OF GROWTH

As a South African and someone who worked for and knew President Nelson Mandela personally, I take great pride in employing some of his awe-inspiring statements, like the following: *"It is in the character of growth that we should learn from both pleasant and unpleasant experiences."* (November 1997)

While the pandemic has disrupted our lives for two years now, this is a man who wrongly served 27 years of his life in prison and regardless of the tremendous hardships and mistreatments suffered he



still emerged as a President who pursued a progressive and inclusive ideology for the country.

In respect of strategic planning, what we are basically striving for in our organizations by way of our various think tanks, visions, goals etc., is to create what I often refer to as the “perfect storm.” This represents a set of circumstances where an organization’s offerings are of such nature that stakeholders who already are participants undoubtedly wish to continue participating and prospective ones vehemently long to become part of the journey. This includes current and potential employees of the organization.

While much is made of the process of strategic planning, in essence it relates to the realization of: (1) where the organization is at a specific stage, (2) where we want the organization to go, (3) how we believe we can get there and (4) how we are going to assess whether we got there.

As an example, at the Executive Master in Association Management of Solvay School of Business & Economics, a strategic vision for an organization is defined as follows: *“An ambitious image of a future state that is radically preferable to the current state, according to those who develop it. It is a box that becomes a reference for an organization, and thus serves as a guide allowing each employee to approach work more effectively.”*

This is a very creative description of a strategic vision and involves having to know in detail what the organization’s current state is - good and bad. It also involves a process of having to establish what, for all our role players, a radically preferred picture of the future should or

could look like. And, to complete the process, agreement must be reached on the proverbial “box of tricks” which, if fulfilled by the agreed role players at the agreed time, will lead to us realizing that envisioned new state.

To best determine this radically preferred picture of the future, when taking into consideration the likely effects of the pandemic, organizations will need to increase the extent to which they engage with their stakeholders, prior to the strategic process and thereafter. This stakeholder engagement involves all appropriate information gathering means available to the organization.

Intensively understanding the various difficulties our stakeholders require to mitigate, together with the opportunities they are seeking to explore, is what will allow us to meaningfully find the innovation, tools, solutions, knowledge, or box of tricks if you like, to create that “perfect storm” for our organization.

STRATEGIC AGILITY

Rightfully, much is made of organizational agility as it aids adjusting to market and internal changes, but as we all know agility requires the latest intelligence. Commensurately during volatile times, strategic planning processes may also require an increase in regular intelligence and, as a result, we may want to consider the prospect of an agile strategy requiring regular review.

Because we have been unable to convene with our stakeholders in the same way we did before the pandemic and considering the many changes that happened over the

past two years, asking the right questions to our organization’s stakeholders is currently of such an importance that it would even be sensible to host a pre-strategy session for everyone to be aligned on what, how and when to ask.

Obtaining feedback from stakeholders regularly, as part of the strategic review process, will bear fruit as the pandemic and its effects are still ongoing. Same as with an agile project management approach.

Unfortunately, not many individuals have the time to diligently read extended commentaries or complete surveys as everyone is already exposed to large amounts of information and simply don’t have the time.

Therefore, the challenge or rather the opportunity for leaders and their respective teams involves finding innovative ways to create reciprocal internal and external communication mediums, which will provide the executive team with the latest stakeholder intelligence. This will be needed to strategize, evaluate, and adjust as the global evolves.

I end by wishing you all the very best with your respective strategic endeavors during the coming year and one final statement made by President Mandela: *“After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.”*

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



Where is the Roadmap?

The pandemic disrupted a lot of things, including the typical planning cycle.

Mid- to long-term planning did not seem to make any sense over the last 24 months. Has the time come to re-start the planning cycle or have the last two years demonstrated that it is a waste of time? This is what **Sven Bossu**, CEO of AIPC, wonders in this special contribution to Boardroom.

Even when navigating through uncharted territories, decisions still need to be made based on assumptions. At the start of the pandemic, the key assumption was that we would go back to normal in a couple of months and we based our plans on that. Then the facts changed, and we had to change our minds about our assumptions - a cycle we went through a couple of times over the last two years.

In most of the cases, we did not have any control on the changing environment: decisions impacting our industry were taken by local or national authorities, based on the advice of medical experts. And while in many cases, the relationship between the event industry and these authorities has improved because of the crisis and has resulted into a better understanding of the importance of the event industry, the very nature of the pandemic made things quite unpredictable.

TIME FOR A RESET

Personally, I think the start of 2022 is a good opportunity to do a reset. One way

of doing so, is to take a step back and ask three questions: what has changed, what has not changed and what remains uncertain and to do so both for the revenue and the cost side.

Looking at the revenue side, a lot has changed for convention centres worldwide and there might be an impact on certain elements of the cost side. First, there has been a clear change in the competitive landscape because of the accelerated shift towards digital. As a result, convention centres need to decide whether they want to step into this space or not, in which capacity - from one-stop shop to platform agnostic enabler - and with which pricing mechanism. Second, organizers are demanding far more flexibility, which impacts the predictability of cashflow. Here, convention venues need to decide on their approach *vis-à-vis* this demand - lenient, strict, or perhaps "shared risk". Third is sustainability. Here, the question for convention centres is not whether they want to become sustainable, as sustainability will become the next



minimum service level to attract investors and organizers. Therefore, the question is not a “why” but a “how”.

At the same time, three things did not change: first, there is still a profound, human need to connect face-to-face. Over the last months, I had the pleasure of attending several conferences and

events - not only event industry ones - and the levels of positivity, energy and engagement were staggering. Second, convention centres remain - by far - the best place of doing so in a safe and secure way. And third: for many associations face-to-face meetings remain crucial for achieving their mission. “Beating cancer” (European Society for Radiation Oncology) can not be achieved via Zoom. The same goes for “Inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow” (LEGO). To achieve these missions, people need to connect, interact, and inspire in real life.

WHAT IS UNCERTAIN

What remains uncertain however is how confident people will be to attend organized events - if allowed of course. This uncertainty can only be offset by the combination of purpose, experience, and impact. To put it clearly: I will happily enjoy a lecture from the comfort of my couch, no need to get up. But if by making the effort to attend the event in person, I will be able to share my ideas, learn from others and improve going forward it becomes a very different story. And that is exactly what I have seen over the last months when attending events: organizers have clearly understood that they need to accentuate and deliver upon these elements when reaching out to their communities.

All of this of course has an impact on the cost side. Putting in place a digital

offering - either on a standalone basis or in partnership - means a shift of resources. Allowing for more flexibility will impact cash flow or at least the predictability of that cash flow. Becoming sustainable will also require investment and management attention, even if there is no doubt about the positive business case at the end.

In addition, there are some macro-economic factors which will also impact convention centres. The labor market is tight, not only when it comes to IT - finding a good data-analyst might be a challenge - but also ambulant labor is short. Second, financial resources have been cheap over the last years, but increasing interest rates will change this situation. Third, costs are increasing in ways not seen over the last ten years.

Therefore, convention centres will need to think carefully when planning changes, most probably giving priority to those changes which offer more flexibility at a reasonable cost. Planning as such, however, is simply inevitable.

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



CEOs: Leadership Planning Through Lockdown Isolation

IAPCO CEO **Martin Boyle** advocates for a special program specifically targeted at association CEOs. It is designed to help them be problem solvers and targeted at the association's Member CEOs.

After two years of enduring the global pandemic, January 2022 has, at the time of writing these lines, arrived and with a new year, comes renewed optimism and energy.

Whilst some CEOs around the world have been returning to their offices to work alongside colleagues, others remain in remote environments as a result of restrictions in place in the cities and countries within which they work. Some CEOs, especially those from within the charity or not-for-profit sectors with limited resources, may have, in fact, never known it any other way having always worked in a remote office environment.

HOW DOES ONE STRATEGICALLY PLAN?

Despite the attractiveness of being a CEO, leadership can be all consuming, stressful and certainly lonely especially when it is paired with remote working conditions as many have had since late 2019. How then does one ensure the successful review, development and implementation of a strategic plan when physically separated from an office and team?

In the recent PWC's 25th Annual Global CEO Survey "Reimagining the Outcomes that Matter", conducted in October and November 2021, it was understood that the "*need for bold leadership to unite us as global citizens and problem solvers*" remained a key output of the skills of a CEO. Also reported was that three quarters of the same CEOs surveyed stated that they expected global economic growth to improve in 2022.

Uniting citizens may seem an almost impossible task for some when the very CEOs themselves are actually physically isolated from the people and groups they are trying to unite. However, if

interaction through unique models and platforms that empower CEOs to rise from a state of survival to a high level of engagement can be used successfully, great results can be achieved.

Many of the not-for-profit association CEOs from around the globe that I have recently spoken with have been calling on energy they may not even have known before. They had to re-group, re-evaluate and re-energize their focus on their missions and strategic plans to ensure the value proposition their organizations offer will be able to meet the post-pandemic needs of those that they serve this year and well into the future.

DEFINITELY IN LINE

This is certainly in line with what we are experiencing from the 138 company member CEOs that comprise the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) membership community.

Our own recent survey to our IAPCO membership identified the desire of our like-minded C-suite members to engage with one another through a structured program to explore challenges, opportunities and solutions together to help move from survival mode they had been facing in the recent 24 months to thriving in the years ahead. To help each other to look at what has been working in their strategic plans, what needs to be re-evaluated and what external influences are impacting on these plans.

Interestingly, a McKinsey & Company report from October 2019 entitled "The Mindsets and Practices of excellent CEOs" stated six main elements of a CEO's job that were found within practically all literature about the role of a CEO. They are:



setting the strategy, aligning the organization, leading the top team, working with the board, being the face of the company/organization and managing one's own time and energy.

Understanding all of this and developing programs that address the aforementioned can help to inspire creative initiatives that drive positive solutions.

Therefore, IAPCO created the IAPCO CEO Meet-up program. The concept was conceived in the summer months of 2021 and launched in November for IAPCO member CEOs to explore, together, the critical decisions CEOs need to make in 2022 – all whilst many are working in remote conditions. To facilitate, guide and support the program, IAPCO called upon external expertise to facilitate the program so engaged business coach and entrepreneur, Hazel Jackson.

The CEO Meet-up program journey includes four active 90-minute virtual workshops with work-based assignments in between. As some of the participating CEOs continue to be working remotely, it was important that the program is designed in a way which each could feel connected and united. So, through the use of a connected virtual platform, Hazel provides the opportunity to give dedicated time to working on the business of each participant, rather than in the business of each. Importantly, it provides the opportunity to work with peers in like-minded businesses in non-competing geographies, who are facing similar situations.

Outcomes anticipated are more clarity on strategic differentiators, being closer to customer needs, more ideas on managing and

retaining talent and tips for managing the oxygen to any business cash. All of this whilst providing that valuable connection amongst CEOs from different regions of the globe who share common desires to lead.

NOT ALONE

IAPCO is not alone in its belief and objective to drive connectivity amongst our CEO members and others within our community. Many other membership-driven organizations, peer-peer groups and networking platforms around the globe also continue to consider what they can provide to support their own CEOs and stakeholders. A little bit of research to discover the one that matches the different styles of CEOs can reap huge rewards.

As Nigel Davies, CEO of Claromentis, described in an April 2020 Forbes' article: *"directing, calming and inspiring fragmented teams that have had change thrust upon them, is not easily done from afar without planning and infrastructure."*

There is no better time than the present for CEOs to consider how we can work together to lead and unite our own communities, and each other, as global citizens and problem solvers.

IAPCO represents today 138 companies comprised of over 9,900 professional congress organizers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 40 countries. info@iapco.org / www.iapco.org





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Lessons Learnt From Organizing UN's COP26

For two weeks the eyes of the world were fixed on Glasgow and the Scottish **Event Campus (SEC)** as one of humanity's most important conversations took place in Scotland's largest city. Global leaders and some of the planet's most brilliant minds gathered in the city for **COP26**, an event which aimed to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Words Vicky Koffa, with SEC Glasgow



SEC GLASGOW

The crucial event took place at a time when the need to take concrete action is pressing, fact which became more obvious during the pandemic. The 26th Conference of the Parties revealed existing global problems and participating countries tried to tackle them with new agreements and drastic measures.

Glasgow's **Scottish Event Campus (SEC)**, the region's largest event location, provided the necessary setting for the demanding event in Glasgow's city centre. Between October 31 and November 12, the SEC added temporary structures for one of the largest

conferences to take place globally since the world closed its doors to events in March 2020. Over 40,000 delegates took part in the event, including global leaders, negotiators, high-level officials, activists, and the world's media. Those attending also required a daily COVID-19 test to gain entry to the site, with COP26 taking place against the backdrop of a global pandemic.

Rising to the challenge, the SEC's team worked as part of a multi-organization delivery team which included the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, event production

company Identity, the Cabinet Office, and a range of other partners. Collaboration proved once again to be the crucial element to make all others fall into place.

“The relationship between the partners was strong from the outset,” explains the SEC’s Director of Conference Sales, Kathleen Warden. “That was vital in order to deliver an event of this complexity. We built trust and fostered a one-team approach which went from strength to strength. This stood us in good stead when challenges did arise. We approached them all with a sense of collective responsibility. It was a masterclass in low ego, high performance, trust and respect.”

Several months on from the Conference, the SEC team can share their experience and the lessons learnt during this challenging event. Key points and outcomes include commitments for a green future for events, legacy creation and experience gained in organizing big-scale events in a time of crisis. Warden comments on these three points:

COP26 HAS HELPED INSPIRE A GREEN FUTURE FOR EVENTS

“For our industry, COP26 stands as an inflection point as venues, organizers, industry leaders, suppliers, and associations joined forces to amplify the need to work together for a net zero carbon future. So far, over 300 institutions and organizations have signed up to the NetZeroCarbonEvents pledge, committing to reach net zero by 2050. This is the first time the industry has achieved such a collaborative approach to climate change and sets us on a new trajectory. The SEC is proud to have been the catalyst for galvanizing industry leaders at a global level to develop a worldwide approach to sustainability in the events industry.”

EVENTS CAN LEAVE HIDDEN LEGACIES

“Closer to home, COP26 has impacted on the lives of people who need help and support here in Glasgow. Some 15,000 sqm of carpet, used within the site, has been donated to a local charity Spruce Carpets, a recycling social enterprise. In addition to this, furniture and other items not returned to stock were donated to local charities and used to help furnish the homes of homeless people who have recently moved into new accommodation. It has been interesting to see the ripple effect created by COP26,” she adds.

“It has also inspired change in businesses and institutions across the city. Glasgow was also one of the first to join the 1,000 Cities to ‘Race to Zero’ coalition to keep global heating below 1.5°C, addressing a wide range of environmental factors in the city, from use of derelict land and greenspaces to housing and social justice.”



EXPERIENCE HAS BUILT RESILIENCE

“One of the greatest benefits from COP26 is the experience that we, as a team at the SEC, have gained and the lasting connections we have made. Experience is a key asset for any event team,” continues Warden, “and what we experienced in the delivery of COP26 was an event like no other. It presented unique challenges, touching on every aspect, from logistics and planning, to security, transport and even the food served during the fortnight. The learnings are immeasurable. We grew and gained confidence from our successes and our collaboration with many agencies, both local and global. Our team strengthened existing skillsets and acquired valuable new ones. We also learned from the challenges and the unexpected, sometimes sudden, hurdles we faced. The result today is that COP has placed us in a far stronger position for the future and brought even greater resilience to the business.”

Glasgow, and the SEC, proved once more the value of business events, especially during difficult times. Bringing together the right partners creates a good basis for a meeting of great minds trying to exchange knowledge and tackle challenges. That is how legacy is created and the organizers can call it a success.

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Legacy Goals with a Sustainable Mind

After years of formal and informal talk, our industry is finally grasping the importance of legacy and is now taking concrete action towards it. More importantly, though, this action is realized with sustainability and the UN's Development Goals in mind. The notions are interlinked, however different, but if done optimal, the goals of one cannot be reached without a vision of the other. Always a frontrunner in both legacy and sustainability, Copenhagen CVB demonstrated in practice how the two, applied to conference planning, can make the desired, positive impact on the world.

Words Vicky Koffa

On 23-25 November 2021, the Bella Center in Copenhagen hosted "Electric City 2021", WindEurope's flagship event, in collaboration with WindDenmark. 8,000 participants, 400 exhibitors, 70 conference sessions and over 300 presenters from the world of wind and beyond were present in Denmark's capital for the biggest in-person event in a while. Government Ministers, leading CEOs, and experts from the worlds of technology, policy and finance crossed swords, exchanged ideas, and finally pushed change.

WindEurope is a returning client in Copenhagen; what was special about this conference was the Electric City concept. Seeking to make the message of sustainability widespread, the association recognized the necessity of intersectoral collaboration. Anders Mika Dalegaard, Head of Members & International Business Development at WindDenmark, explains: "The wind industry is more than just a distinction of on- and offshore. We need to have that sector coupling, because we need to have the energy that can be provided by wind energy to go into other sectors, like transport, planes, and heating. This means we have new

voices and new stakeholders at this event. We are keeping wind energy as a cornerstone, but the dialogue is spreading out."

SETTING THE LEGACY GOALS

The idea that all sectors are interconnected and the desire to drive sustainable change further led the association to the engagement of setting legacy goals, that reach out beyond their next event. That is when Copenhagen CVB, the host city's convention bureau, brought into play their prominent Copenhagen Legacy Lab. As discussed in detail in a previous article of Boardroom, this innovative initiative facilitates the systematic and proactive exploration and development of untapped potential impact activities.

Annika Rømer, Senior Manager of Copenhagen Legacy Lab, said: "WindEurope came to us with a clear legacy vision. As an international association, they come with global challenges. Our job was to co-create the right outreach activities within our nation to be part of the solution to their challenges, to see the ripples beyond the Copenhagen conference." As the legacy programme

suggests, the right questions were asked to support a vision and mission, relevant local stakeholders were selected and came together around ideation workshops with the association and committed to contributing to identified legacy goals. The result was a number of impactful activities.



A VARIETY OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Dalegaard said: *"We put in the effort in pinpointing the stakeholders, not only for our own sector, but for many others, trying to support the event. We wanted delegates to have a good experience coming here and promote the Danish wind industry. So, we got involved with the Danish Energy Agency, the Ministry of Climate and Energy, the National TSO, as well as Copenhagen Capacity, which focuses on assisting startups and attracting investment and talents. We involved the Danish Foreign Ministry and State of Green, a Danish public-private partnership facilitating relations with international stakeholders; and had 60 companies in total at the Pavillion of Denmark covering the exhibition floor showcasing their products."*

-With a focus on future supply of young talents and workforce, 50 students from the Danish Technical University were also part of the outreach activities. They were offered educational opportunities and in return they pitched ideas of their own to big energy companies. In fact, the university



had the chance to promote its online Master course, attracting more professionals and receiving global recognition.

The idea of Denmark's wind power energy islands also came in the spotlight. The two offshore energy islands are to be completed in 2030 and will be able to supply the average electricity consumption of 5 million households. The conference raised awareness for the benefits of the islands for Denmark and the world. The Lego Master demonstration used to visualize the islands also offered attendees opportunities for innovative ideas and development of the project. Important collaboration reached at the conference between interested countries (Germany, Holland and Belgium, UK) indicates the legacy achievements.

AND AFTER THE CONFERENCE?

The conference was crowned a success, with immediate impact as well as potential legacy tracks leading wind power into the future. The challenge remaining now is to monitor and follow the outcomes of these activities. Rømer says: *"Our job now is to use and develop the tools that can support us in quantifying the outreach activities, that are to be tracked. And figure out if we need to do an impact assessment looking at short term meeting outcomes versus more long-term legacy objectives. That's where, among others, digitalization of our processes and new economic methods come in, supporting us in monitoring continually the value created for both the destination and association."*

Bettina Reventlow-Mourier, Deputy Convention Director at Copenhagen CVB, who has been deeply involved in the congress from the outset and in its legacy process, informs us on the measurement challenge: *"Along with external consultants, we are looking into the methodology on how we can measure the broader impacts and long-term legacies in the future. We will scale*



the methodology and find a model for not only WindEurope, but all the cases that we run in our Legacy Lab. For sure there are several indicators, that we can easily implement on short-term positive outputs and immediate meeting outcomes. The long-term ones will be more of a challenge, but that is part of the journey and vision for achieving legacy."

The fact that the WindEurope conference was held in Copenhagen before (2019) certainly gave organizers and hosts a sense of ease and made the collaboration easier. The fact that the conference is confirmed to come back to the city in 2023, and that Copenhagen is known worldwide as a groundbreaker within congress legacy work, will certainly help with tracking, identifying, and measuring the impact of the 2021 event.

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More info about Copenhagen Legacy Lab:

www.copenhagencvb.com

Initiating Changes for a Better World

A new year is always a good opportunity to ponder on issues that really matter. As we write these lines, 2022 is just starting, and with it – again – the threats of this seemingly never-ending pandemic. However, there are reasons to be hopeful. And this is largely due to the changes those past two years have forced us to experience – changes that some destinations, like Paris, have embraced with open arms. After all, this is a time when innovation is key, and when one has to let go of old habits. This Paris has clearly understood: with collaboration, engagement and sustainability as lodestars, it's building back a better meetings world and actively preparing the 2024 Olympic Games.

Words Remi Deve



2021 ended on a high note for Paris, as it hosted the European hub of the ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) Congress at the end of October. Organized in a hybrid format, the event gathered about 1500 event professionals, in-person and online, who discussed and exchanged on topics such as innovation, sustainable tourism, and other major challenges related to the future of the meetings industry, like technology and inclusion.

“Hosting the 60th ICCA Congress was definitely a milestone for us,” explains Corinne Menegaux, General Director of the Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau. *“The hybrid format allowed us to showcase the extreme resilience of our industry, while highlighting our commitment to sustainability at the same time. Paris cannot but play an active role in the building of a better tomorrow, and we do believe hospitality as a whole can play an instrumental part in it. The French capital is by essence hospitable and the ICCA Congress really demonstrated this.”*

ALL THINGS SUSTAINABLE

Paris, indeed, is a frontrunner in all things sustainable. As it's working to be carbon-neutral by 2050, it wants to become the capital city of sustainability, especially when it comes to hosting events. As such, it wants to attract congresses and conferences that have a positive impact, not only on the destination itself but also on the local communities. The aim is to contribute positively to the city's economic and social growth - as was recommended by the first Sustainable Tourism Conferences that took place in Paris last summer. The Conferences identified several areas which could be improved: they encouraged, for instance, a short supply chain approach for all Parisian stakeholders.

“In Paris, everybody - whether the institutions, private companies, venues or agencies, have clearly grown aware they will lose if they don't promote responsible, eco-friendly behaviours,” explains Corinne Menegaux. *“Event venues are at the forefront of this approach and adapting to a rapidly changing sector. Best practices that meet the new ecological requirements of association organizers are now an added value that will make the scale tip the right way for Paris.”*

This of course doesn't come as a surprise for a destination that has always occupied the top of the lists of the best meeting cities in the world. The French capital, which has proudly topped the ICCA ranking in 2019 and 2020, is persistently reinventing itself to welcome large-scale events, with state-of-the-art, constantly renewed infrastructure and an exceptional know-how in hosting scientific congresses.

In this regard, content is key. Paris is known for having a strong expertise and *savoir-faire* in many major fields such as sports, science, culture, creation, and fashion, and has established itself as a major innovation hub. This attractiveness is also due the city's prestige and its hosting capacity but to the fact that event organizers are always enriching their offers with new experiences

as well- which is paramount for conference delegates. In Paris in fact, attendance in international events is on average 20% higher than anywhere else: a percentage that has everything to do with the fact that the French capital never stay at a standstill - even during the pandemic. In Paris, as you would expect, new exhibitions, like the ones on Gaudí at the Musée d'Orsay or Charles Ray at the newly-opened Bourse du Commerce for instance, happen on a weekly basis.

TURNED TOWARD THE STARS

This must have played a role for the selection of Paris to organize the 2022 International Astronautical Congress. Hosted by the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES), a member of International Astronautical Federation since 1981, it will welcome the burgeoning global ecosystem of start-ups, entrepreneurs, laboratories, research scientists and manufacturers who are involved in space activities or benefit from them.

“It may not be known, but the heart of French space but also of European space beats from Paris,” explains Philippe Collot, Congress Director at CNES. *“The headquarters of CNES and the European Space Agency are located in the French capital. Many other activities related to space technologies - whether institutional, industrial or scientific - are also based in Paris or in the Ile de France region. Because of its influence or its central position in Europe that is very well connected to the rest of the world, Paris is a ‘hub’ where the world can ideally meet up.”*

Meanwhile, Paris is also excitedly anticipating the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024. Such mega events usually represent a factor of acceleration and engagement: the Paris candidacy was based on the principles of responsibility, community impact, and infrastructure improvement. As such, the Games will allow Paris to showcase to the world its sense of hospitality and the richness of its cultural offer in all areas of endeavours, while implementing major sustainable projects, with new venues, revegetation of key spaces and the promotion of soft mobility altogether. In this context, the City of Paris and the Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the support of Paris 2024, recently launched 'bienVenue 2024', a free platform aimed to facilitate the interactions and the networking between exceptional venues and professionals.

“Our major challenge and our vision for the years to come is to make sure that events we host, no matter what format or size, are embedded in our local ecosystem,” concludes Corinne Menegaux. *“Events cannot happen in a vacuum. Our role is to make sure that they have an impact, that everybody benefits from them, no matter where they stand on the value or the supply chain.”*

More information on Paris as a congress destination:
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Bordeaux's Burgeoning Sectors Attract High-Profile Conferences

Surrounded by some of the world's most famous vineyards and France's second largest Atlantic port, Bordeaux is an elegant city with stunning 18th-century architecture, tree lined boulevards and a culturally vibrant centre. But it's also a congress destination associations can count on thanks to some strong industries and knowledge clusters that make it really stand out – together with a sincere commitment to sustainability.

Words Remi Deve

Situated within the French Department of the Gironde, where the mouths of the rivers Garonne and Dordogne merge, not far from the Atlantic Ocean, Bordeaux was given a UNESCO World Heritage listing for its outstanding ensemble of classical and neoclassical architecture. No wonder then that "La Perle d'Aquitaine", also renowned for its world-class wines and top-notch gastronomy, was named the Best European Destination for 2015.

Fast-forward to today, and there's even more reason to look at Bordeaux as an exciting conference destination. Not only has the shiny new wine museum, *Cité du Vin*, opened its doors in 2016, but the high-speed TGV train line from Paris has made it even more accessible. Simply put, Bordeaux offers an exciting range of diverse meetings venues with a stylish modern hotel and transport system. Add to this the endless options for off-site events at the myriad of exclusive local

chateaux and even river cruises, it's easy to understand why there's been something of a buzz about Bordeaux of late.

CUTTING-EDGE SECTORS

Bordeaux's success is, in fact, due to the combination of state-of-the-art infrastructure, and a dynamic R&D activity. If its famous wines are known the world over, the city has gained international acknowledgement for its cutting-edge sectors, including forestry



BORDEAUX, PORT DE LA LUNE

PLACE DE LA BOURSE

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& timber, robotics and oncology, but also neuroscience, cardiology, optics-photonics-laser, and more. The figures, actually, speak for themselves: there are 11 competitiveness clusters and over 60 clusters of international importance. Developing business tourism in Bordeaux and its metropolitan area is all about creating platforms for knowledge exchange.

In that regard, the neuroscience sector in Bordeaux has grown to become one of the largest communities in both France and Europe, with more than 700 scientists working in the **Neurocampus laboratories of Bordeaux University**. In the cardiology field, Bordeaux stands out as it's placed the emphasis on cardiac electrophysiology, a subspecialty the research conducted at the **Lycy University Hospital** has become famous for. As for the optics-photonics-laser trio, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region is home to the **ALPHA-Route des Lasers & des Hyperfréquences (ALPHA-RLH)** competitive cluster, one of the territory's five international hubs.

It comes hardly as a surprise that, in this context, Bordeaux should welcome prestigious national and international

events. In the pipeline lie the 2022 SFAP Congress of the French Society for Palliative Care (2,600 participants), the 32nd Annual Conference of the European Society for Biomaterials (1,200 participants), the 34th congress of the International Federation for Building, Urbanism and the Environment (1,200 participants), COBATY, organized by the International Federation for Building, Urbanism and the Environment (1,200 participants), or Robocup, the world's largest competition in robotics and artificial intelligence for research and education, which is set to attract 5,000 visitors in June 2023.

In terms of infrastructure, Bordeaux, with more than 11,000 rooms in some 210 hotels, offers a wide variety of accommodation ranging from small, charming establishments in the vineyards to conventional hotels sitting next to conference centres. The latter make a trio: located 15 mins away from the city centre and the airport, the Bordeaux Lac Business District boasts **France's second largest exhibition centre** (with 80,000 sqm of usable space,) the **Palais 2 Atlantique** for up to 6,000 participants, a 1,290-pax congress centre and 1,400 rooms on site; in the city centre the **Cité Mondiale Convention Centre** houses a 300-seat auditorium, meeting rooms of varying sizes, 1,270 sqm of exhibition space, and a hotel with 97 rooms in the same building; last but not least, the **Bordeaux Palais de la Bourse** in the city centre features modern facilities for events up to 1,200 people.

ECO-FRIENDLY & INNOVATIVE

Bordeaux may well be an 18th-century city, but it is proudly eco-friendly and innovative. A pioneer for urban regeneration, the city is fully committed to welcoming refugees, and fully accessible. In fact, it is making use of its existing resources and repurposing them to propel their smart tourism practices to

the top. Bordeaux, understandably so, has been named European Capital of Smart Tourism 2022.

When it comes to conferences, this translates into a green experience for delegates coming to the city. The use of public transport is strongly encouraged: 93% of large-capacity hotels are within 30 minutes of a congress centre; all the facilities of Congrès & Expositions de Bordeaux are certified ISO 14001, a family of standards which help organizations minimize how their operations negatively affect the environment; and the Bordeaux Exhibition Centre boasts France's biggest urban solar power station. Meanwhile, 200 professional partners across the whole supply chain have demonstrated a clear commitment to sustainability, enhancing their environmental performance. Bordeaux also ranks high on the GDS Index, the leading sustainability benchmarking and improvement program for destinations around the world, with a 78% score.

As Amélie Dechenais, managing director of the **Bordeaux Convention Bureau**, concludes: *"As a one-stop shop for association planners, we aim to attract high-quality national and international events to Bordeaux. To do so, we seek to align the conferences we bid for with the many burgeoning sectors - including aeronautics, geosciences, robotics, neuroscience and many more - that are currently flourishing in our region. In addition, we are becoming increasingly committed to hosting responsible events. At a time when it's paramount to build back a better world, we have become an eco-responsible destination - even though it's of course an on-going process and there are still things to be achieved in the matter."*

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**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**
BUSINESS EVENTS

Aligning Conferences & Sector Strengths

With its spectacular scenery and ancient Aboriginal culture, Australia's Northern Territory (NT) is where visitors can really enjoy an authentic Australian experience. But it's also the unique set of knowledge bases and attention to local engagement that makes it an outstanding conference destination.

Australia's Northern Territory is divided into two distinctly different regions. Home to capital city Darwin and World-Heritage listed Kakadu, the country's largest national park, the rich, green northern region enjoys a tropical climate. Meanwhile, the desert-like landscape of the south has a semi-arid climate, where you'll find landmarks such as Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Alice Springs.

Darwin is known for its expertise in a range of health specialities which include critical care, emergency management and trauma response plus rural and remote delivery. Its Menzies School of Health Research has been internationally acknowledged for its work in Indigenous health and tropical medicine. Catering for up to 1,200 delegates, the [Darwin Convention Centre](#) is situated overlooking the harbour.

Australia's most famous outback town, Alice Springs, provides an additional satellite meeting or technical tour option, just a two-hour flight from Darwin. Its Desert Knowledge Australia facility showcases state-of-the-art solar energy research and development projects for which the NT is renowned. Iconic Australian organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the School of the Air provide scope for educational off-site visits for groups.

The Northern Territory's other economic and social strengths lie in agribusiness, land management, mining, education and defence. The list of priority industries - the ones for which the NT seeks to attract conferences - has recently been expanded and now encompasses thirteen very diverse sectors, including tourism, creative and maritime industries, digital technologies and space. It hardly comes as a surprise that the NT will welcome prestigious future events such as the 2022 DevelopingEM Conference, the International Foster Care Organisation Conference 2022, the 2023 International Biolron Society Congress, the 2023 World Melioidosis Congress and the 2023 World Conference on Ecological Restoration.

Industry sectors in which the Northern Territory excels can provide association planners with conference options such as offsite technical touring and field trips to urban and regional locations,



access to local knowledge and NT-based expert speakers, as well as potential exhibitor and sponsorship support.

Planners looking to host events in the NT can benefit from the Northern Territory Business Events Support Fund (NTBESF), with financial assistance of a minimum AUD\$100 per delegate.

Priority consideration is given to conferences which align with the Northern Territory's economic, industry and social strengths. To meet the criteria, the event needs to be at the consideration or bidding stage and yield a minimum 80% of delegates from outside the Northern Territory.

"There are compelling reasons why association planners should consider NT as a host destination for their conference," says Rebecca McCaig, Director of [NT Business Events](#). "It's a safe and inclusive destination that offers an extensive range of industry and business sector strengths plus valuable support, from planning stages through to execution. Delegates can immerse themselves in our distinctive experiences, engage in meaningful ways with our local community and be enriched by our ancient Aboriginal culture."

"We offer a truly remarkable combination of elements which ensure a conference held here will deliver outstanding personal and professional outcomes," she concludes.

[More information on the NT as a conference destination on:
destination.ntbusinessevents.com.au](https://destination.ntbusinessevents.com.au)

Booming Biotech

With the amount of newly developed technologies and life science companies, Switzerland has rightfully earned a reputation as one of the most innovative locales for biotechnology in Europe.

Words Lane Nieset

With more than 1,500 lakes, 7,100 km of ski slopes, and 66,000 km of marked hiking trails, Switzerland often attracts visitors for its breathtaking natural beauty and culture—all of which is easily accessible thanks to public transport like sustainable, hydro-powered railways. It's this blend of urban nature that makes the country so popular for congresses. But Switzerland also attracts associations thanks to its major innovations and inventions, especially in the biotech and life science sector.

Besides its relatively small size, the country is home to 312 biotech companies that count 15,000 employees in the sector and a revenue of CHF 4.8 billion. A few of the major players include [AC Immune](#), [Biogen](#), [Evolva](#), [Helsinn](#) and [Polyphor](#). In terms of research and development, Swiss companies spent 15.6 billion Swiss francs in the sector in 2017, investing 40% (or over 6 billion Swiss francs) in pharmaceuticals, chemicals and biotechnology. The cooperation between the research taking place at globally leading universities like [ETH Zurich](#) and [EPFL Lausanne](#) and the private sector has resulted in the high productivity in the biotech sector, and Switzerland now ranks as one of the world's leading countries thanks to the number of products in the research pipeline.

DRIVING DEVELOPMENT

In addition to a landscape that includes modern research laboratories and production facilities, Switzerland offers access to international systems for the protection of intellectual property (European Patent Office EPO and [World Intellectual Property Organization WIPO](#)), which has made it one of the countries with the highest number of biotechnology patents per capita.

Switzerland is also the headquarters of the [International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations \(IFPMA\)](#), which represents research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations

around the world, as well as the [Swiss Biotech Association](#), which features about 220 companies, and scienceindustries, a Swiss business association for the pharmaceutical, chemical and biotech industries that includes more than 250 member companies. In Basel in particular, the Herzog & de Meuron-designed [Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area](#), a 50,000 sqm innovation space, in addition to more than 700 companies in the Basel Area, is a new hub for the life sciences cluster in Europe.

As Sascha Bucher, Head Basel Roivant Pharma and Head of Global Transactions, puts it: *"Switzerland is a very welcoming place for business to be conducted, and Basel*





© HERZOG & DE MEURON

is an ideal location for a growing biotech company. Basel is home to two of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies – Novartis and Roche – but it also serves as a regional headquarters for many other pharma companies and is a leading hub for many smaller biotech and medical device companies and start-ups. It is easy for us to hire experts across the entire biopharma value chain.”

Roche, for example, is working in both pharmaceuticals and diagnostics and excelling in the realm of personalized healthcare, as well as **cancer immunotherapy**. For the past 50 years, the company has been developing medicine designed to redefine treatment in oncology. Basel-based Bioversys, meanwhile, is fighting against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by creating impactful solutions that could help save the 700,000 people who die annually from drug-resistant infections.

“When it comes to the ongoing development of the city as a business location, Basel Area Business & Innovation and the services of the Economic Development Unit also have a key role to play,” explains **Karin Sartorius-Brüschweiler**, chairwoman and congress promoter at Congress Board Basel. “The innovation support they provide ranges from accelerator programs for start-ups, together with numerous events and workshops, right through to the provision of collaborative

workspaces and high-tech laboratories such as those at the *Technologiepark Basel* and the *Switzerland Innovation Park*.”

LIFE SCIENCE LEADERS

The economic hub of Zurich is also home to a cluster of biotech companies, such as Hemotune, which utilizes biomedicine and nanotechnology to develop a blood purification platform based on magnetic beads, as well as OxyPrem, whose devices monitor brain oxygen levels of preterm infants using a non-invasive infrared light. The city is also home to the **Life Science Zurich Business Network**, an independent association of representatives from the life sciences cluster in the Zurich area that is closely affiliated with **Life Science Zurich**, a platform helmed by ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. In addition, the Inartis Network is the Innosuisse National Thematic Network (NTN) for Life Sciences and helps propel cross-industry R&D projects across Switzerland.

In Geneva, meanwhile, the **Campus Biotech** is considered a Swiss centre of excellence in biotechnology and life sciences research, and focuses on three sectors: neuroscience and neurotechnology, digital health, and global health. The campus is designed around a philosophy of collaboration that aims to break down the traditional barriers between disciplines, institutions, academia, business, and philanthropy.

In the Vaud canton, whose capital is Lausanne, there are nearly 400 companies and the same number of laboratories in the life sciences sector, which has earned the region the nickname “Health Valley.” The Lausanne Montreux Vaud area features seven technology parks and one of the leading research institutions, **EPFL (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne)**. More than 25,000 people work or study on the campus, which overlooks Lake Geneva, and the site is also home to the new **SwissTech Convention Center**, one of the largest in the Lake Geneva region and the world's first fully automated congress centre.

With world-class technology and innovation park infrastructure in place across the country, as well as research institutions working alongside start-ups, Switzerland's rapidly developing biotech sector is offering associations plenty of local resources and knowledge sources to tap into when hosting events by giving researchers and scientists the tools and knowledge they need to develop projects and make medical breakthroughs.

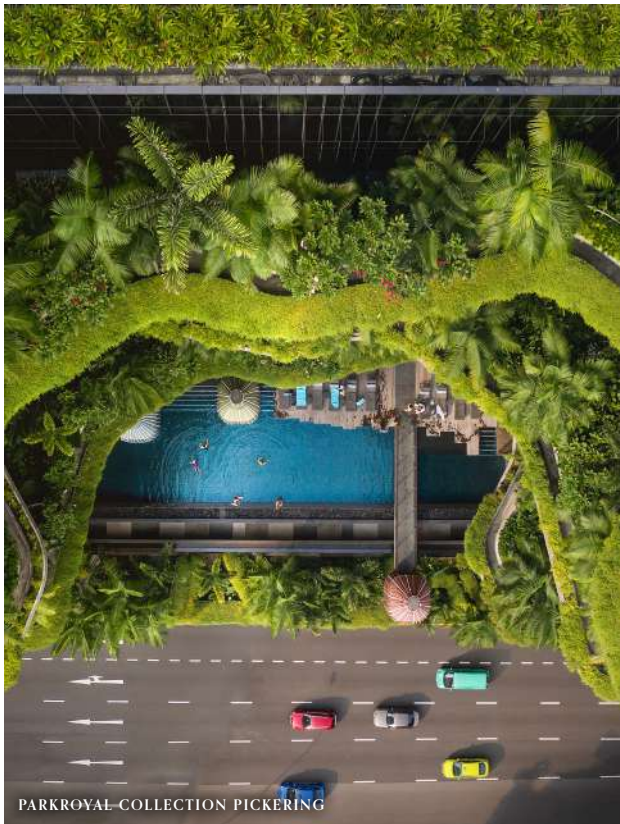
More info on Switzerland as a convention destination:
myriam.winnepeninckx@switzerland.com
www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings



Sustainability in Asia's Economic Powerhouse

Singapore's economic growth over the years has been an example for many other countries to follow. What is even more worth noticing, though, is the city-state's successful efforts to evolve without compromising the land, air, and water around it. Through sustainability pledges, governmental support and individual and collective responsibility, the island now offers itself for hosting green association events combining clean surroundings as well as business and knowledge opportunities.

Words Vicky Koffa



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PARKROYAL COLLECTION PICKERING

Surrounded by sea and limited in land, it has been a challenge for Singapore to achieve sufficient sustainability levels. The realization that the island needed a drastic change towards a greener future for its residents came early on. The Singapore river went, in this regard, through a massive clean up in the 1970s, while the leaders of the country turned their focus to R&D and innovative solutions to overcome constraints in the food sector.

Singapore's "30-30" vision is to produce 30 percent of the country's nutritional needs locally by 2030. Leveraging science and technological innovations to grow more with less, Singapore is transforming the agriculture sector into a sustainable and resilient against climate change industry. Vertical indoor or on rooftops farming and the use of smart technologies, converting waste into green energy to fuel certain farms or to use as fertilizer, and enhancing crops by use of carbon dioxide are practices favored and financially supported by the government.

Moving forward to achieve greener results, Singapore launched the first [Sustainable Singapore Blueprint](#) in 2009, followed by the [Green Plan](#) in 2021, outlining a focus on six pillars – a green government, a city in nature, sustainable living, energy reset, a green economy and a resilient future – all to be achieved by year 2030. New initiatives of these projects include doubling electric vehicle charging points, reducing carbon waste by 30% by 2026 and transforming Jurong Island into a sustainable energy hub.

Results of these efforts are already visible and global recognition confirms them: Green Port for three consecutive years awarded to

Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and Level 3 of the Airport Carbon Accreditation Scheme awarded to Changi Airport.

BUSINESS EVENTS MADE GREEN

The whole green spirit has inevitably penetrated the business events sector, both in terms of infrastructure and in the organization of eco-friendly meetings and experiences. From hotels and venues to event organizers and meeting planners, transportation, food and beverage, audio-visual set-up providers and everyone in between, a set of sustainability guidelines are thoroughly followed. These were set by the [Singapore Tourism Board](#) already in 2013, bringing Singapore to the top of sustainable business destinations in Asia.

Hotel and venues have a big role to play in this effort. The [PARKROYAL COLLECTION Pickering](#), the World's Leading Green City Hotel in 2020, includes green meeting packages for environmentally conscious clients in mind. Featuring eco-friendly alternatives like sustainable refreshments and a farm-to-table working lunch, the hotel can accommodate events of varying sizes up to 500 delegates. In the same hotel chain, the [PARKROYAL COLLECTION Marina Bay](#), a 'garden-in-a-hotel' concept, is engulfed in greenery. It also offers eco-friendly dining while being in the nature.

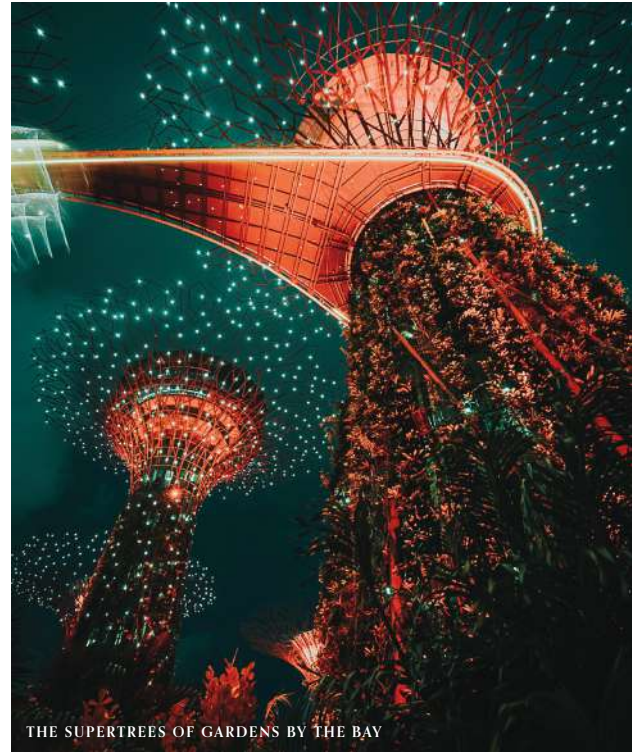
[Sands Expo and Convention Centre](#) has implemented green meeting goals in its practices and Sands Expo is the first green venue in Southeast Asia to attain ISO 20121 certification for event sustainability management. The venue can host conventions of up to 45,000 delegates, support 2,000 exhibition booths and accommodate 250 meeting rooms.

Slightly off the centre, [Resorts World Convention Centre](#) is the first MICE venue in Singapore to receive the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Green Certification 2021. The resort houses one of Singapore's largest photovoltaic installations in the hospitality sector and they offer customized learning courses on environmental management in the surrounding forest. It has completely replaced single-use plastics with biodegradable packaging and has committed to carbon neutrality by 2030.

Intending to meet the emerging demands of a new era of business travel, Singapore is also implementing lesser-known experiences which promote sustainability and innovation. Visits and knowledge packages at urban farms, the Smith Marine Floating Restaurant, or the Sustainable Farm-to-Table Food tour by Wok 'n' Stroll are some examples of unknown products and locations that complete the sustainable tourism delegates have an inclination for.

CONFERENCES & AWARDS PROOF OF SUSTAINABILITY

Associations are taking a liking in this green progress Singapore is making. The 2018 Schneider Electric Global Innovation Summit held in Singapore, was the largest green event held locally, with



THE SUPERTREES OF GARDENS BY THE BAY

an eco-friendly menu and having disposed of paper or plastic. Furthermore, Ecosperity Week 2021 gathered global business leaders, policymakers, investors, and civil society from the region and beyond to deep dive into opportunities in the areas of decarbonization and climate action, reimagining nature and resources, and sustainable investing and financing.

Awards did not take long to come as global recognition of Singapore's sustainability efforts grew. The country was named Best Business City in the World at the 2020 Business Traveler Asia Pacific Awards and Best Business City in Asia and in the World in 2021. Singapore Tourism Board was named as the 2022 PCMA Chair's Award Winner for "*showing outstanding leadership in the industry during the pandemic*".

Singapore is overcoming space and climate challenges to create a healthier future for its residents and for the world. Business events, as usual, are a big part of this plan utilizing their ability to promote green practices within and after the event and [Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau](#) is there to support this with the right infrastructure and policies.

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Geared for Regrowth

Barcelona, the capital of Spain's Catalonia region, is infamous for its art and architecture, which spans back 2,000 years and counts nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites. With its cobblestoned Gothic Quarter, 14th century cathedrals, Modernist masterpieces by big names like Gaudí, and museums dedicated to Picasso and Miró—not to mention the Mediterranean seaside locale and Catalan cuisine—it's no wonder Barcelona is one of the world's leading tourist destinations, as well as one of the top international congress destinations in Europe.

Words Lane Nieset



At the [M&IT Awards 2021](#), the [Barcelona Convention Bureau \(BCB\)](#) received the Bronze award in the category “Best Overseas Convention Bureau,” and, according to ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association), Barcelona was the fourth city in the world for organizing international congresses in 2019. With more than 200 congresses a year, Barcelona is the city with the largest number of participants worldwide, revealing an undeniable attractiveness which extends to other industries and sectors. You can easily understand why the *Financial Times* identified Catalonia

as the best region in southern Europe for foreign investment in 2020-2021.

SMART SOLUTIONS

Barcelona is a leader in information and communication technologies (ICT), and a centre in Europe for mobile apps, the Internet of things (IoT), e-commerce, videogames, and big data. The city sports seven major science and technology infrastructures, including the MareNostrum and Minotauro supercomputers at the [Barcelona Supercomputing Center - National Centre for Supercomputing \(BSC-CNS\)](#)

and the [University of Barcelona Electron Microscopy Unit Applied to Materials \(ELECMI\)](#), as well as eight universities, 31 research centres, and nine science academics and professional associations.

Barcelona is also receiving well-deserved recognition for its sustainable technology and innovative spirit. As the biomedical research, R&D, and 5G hub for southern Europe, Barcelona was ranked third smart city in the world by Glasgow University and fourth-most innovative city in Europe on the [Innovation Cities Index 2019](#). The world mobile capital offers a

state-of-the-art network of infrastructures, which includes free Wi-Fi hotspots in all districts and an extensive fibre optic network, and continues to embrace new digital challenges with a future-forward approach, thanks to its rapidly growing technology sector and hubs.

Placing the well-being, economic prosperity, and safety of the community at the forefront, the local technology centre is committed to providing sustainable solutions in terms of healthcare, climate change, leadership in technology, gender equality, and the preservation of science and technology.

STARTUP SOCIETY

Hosting, an enviable international diversity of tech pioneers, Barcelona ranks among the top six European startup hubs, and since 2017 it is the third preferred city in Europe for entrepreneurs to create their startups. In this scenario, **Tech Barcelona**, the private nonprofit association that supports and catalyzes Barcelona's digital and tech ecosystem, promotes the Urban Tech Campus, a network of singular buildings (Pier01, by the sea, is its cornerstone) to embed innovation and technology within the city while also involving its citizens.

As the tech capital of the Mediterranean, Barcelona's ICT sector accounts for 60,000 jobs and represents 4% of the city's business network. With 1,469 startups (64% of which are in 4.0 technologies like ICT, leisure, and health), the city is considered third-best for startups in Europe (according to **StartUp Heatmap Europe**) and continues to generate and attract talent. Case in point: **22@Barcelona**, a technology district set on more than 200 hectares of former industrial sites than now features 1,500 companies revolving around media, IT, energy, design, and scientific research.

Here, the knowledge cluster is formed by new companies housed in old factories and Modernista-inspired industrial complexes. For example, the old textile mill Ca l'Aranyó now opens up to the Pompeu Fabra University's Communication Campus, and the fabric warehouse Can Munné has been converted into the Bau design school. Architects like Jean Nouvel and Enric Ruiz-Geli have also designed contemporary architecture that have earned awards for energy efficiency, sustainability, and design, in addition to becoming city icons.

A few of the main goals of Barcelona Smart City include promoting the digital transformation of society and the business community by brining manufacturing sectors the latest digital solutions with the help of the innovative industries and institutions in the city, as well as conferences like the **MWC Barcelona**, which takes place 28 February-3 March 2022. The world's leading mobile communications event brings together more than 1,000 expert speakers and 70,000 delegates. At the core of the conference, startup platform **4YFN (4 Years From Now)** includes startups from around the world and focuses on topics like accelerating innovation through digital entrepreneurship and transforming industries through digital technology. Another example is **Integrated Systems Europe (ISE)**, the world's leading AV and systems integration exhibition, which will take place in Barcelona in May.

POST-PANDEMIC PLANNING

As a way to reactivate the city's economy post-pandemic and attract new congresses, Barcelona City Council has made a 3€-million financial contribution toward the new Barcelona MICE Destination Support Programme. The initiative will assist congresses and events that align with the city's strategic economic sectors: digital, creative, local economy, industry



4.0, life sciences, green and circular economy, commerce, and logistics.

In non-pandemic years, tourism in the MICE sector accounts for 19.7% of the number of tourists the city receives, and in 2020, that number dipped down to 11.8%. With the tourism meetings sector being one with the most significant economic impact on the city, the programme aims to relaunch the city as a tourism leader in the events industry by prioritizing congresses that bring together more than 500 people and involve overnight stays, in addition to those slated for 2022 that can help herald the message of the importance of face-to-face activity.

In addition to events already on the calendar, Barcelona Convention Bureau, which just launched **Check Barcelona**, a new app designed to improve the visitor-flow management, is working on candidatures for 90 new congresses over the next few years—40% of which are in the medical-scientific sector, and 15% in ICT. More than 150 congresses have already been confirmed for the coming years, and 100 applications are open until 2027.

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Adelaide's Fresh Take on Culinary Event Experience

The Adelaide Convention Centre in South Australia is continuing to transform the convention centre culinary experience with its innovative Honest Goodness menu philosophy. The latest iteration of the menu has seen the venue team up with First Nations growers to showcase native Australian foods.

Originally developed by Executive Chef Gavin Robertson, in collaboration with leading nutritional experts from the South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), the University of Adelaide and CSIRO, the Adelaide Convention Centre's Honest Goodness menu makes nature the hero, placing a strong emphasis on minimal intervention foods and the conscious reduction of processed elements. Ninety-seven percent of featured produce is sourced from local, sustainable environments, ensuring guests experience the best of South Australia.

"Our Honest Goodness menu has really set a new baseline for us, and is something that our team continues to build on with each new menu

introduction," says Simon Burgess, General Manager, Adelaide Convention Centre.

"In our latest menu, we've integrated various traditional native ingredients, which enhance featured dishes with their unique and diverse flavour offerings and textures, as well as provide opportunity for delegates to experience and celebrate one of the world's oldest cultures. While these ingredients have been utilised by smaller restaurants for some time, the challenge for large-scale venues such as ours was related to volume and consistency of supply. To enable us to feature these ingredients on our menu year-round, our team has engaged with local growers to plant and grow specific quantities of these ingredients especially for us, and then join us in our kitchen as we design new dishes."

The collaboration Burgess describes has seen the venue team up with local Australian first foods company, The Native Co., who operate a 6,000sqm greenhouse located just 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD. The company focuses on growing 16 different types of native herbs, which feature prominently on the Centre's menu from native mint and thyme through to lemon myrtle and warrigal greens.

Marlon Motlop, Native Herb Grower at The Native Co. comments: "It's pretty special to have our produce showcased in a venue such as the Adelaide Convention Centre. Not only does it provide a fantastic platform to showcase our produce on a large scale, but supports our education mission. As a First Nations grower, there is the responsibility to capture the stories and origins of each plant, and where they come from. Cultural origins are so important, and food provides a great segue into the education of Australia and Australian history."

This mutually beneficial partnership has enabled the Adelaide Convention Centre to provide delegates a unique culinary experience that is not only memorable, but educational and, quintessentially Australian.



GAVIN ROBERTSON, EXECUTIVE CHEF, ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE,
WITH MARLON MOTLOP, THE NATIVE CO.

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BOARDROOM ADVISORY BOARD



Peter Van Daele

Secretary General
International Union of Radio
Science (URSI)

Peter was elected as Secretary General of URSI in 2017. He is also professor at Ghent University and permanent member of staff from IMEC (Interuniversity MicroElectronics Center) in Belgium and more specifically with the IDLab (Internet Technology and Data Science Lab). He is directly responsible for several EU-funded research projects both on a technological level as well as on a more coordinating level e.g. as project coordinator of projects in the field of microelectronics and later in the area of Future Internet and Next Generation Internet.



Ariane Brusselmans

Director of Conferences
International AIDS Society

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



Carlos Lee

Director General
European Photonics Industry
Consortium (EPIC)

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



Susan de Bievre

Association Consultant
& Advisor

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



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