

BUSINESS EVENTS

Going beyond tourism

Business Events Africa, in collaboration with the South Africa National Convention Bureau, will delve into the meaning of 'beyond tourism' over a series of three issues. In these supplements we seek to measure not just the immediate tourism benefits of business events but the longer lasting social legacies as well.



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NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU

DEFINING 'BEYOND TOURISM'

BUSINESS EVENTS come in many shapes: conferences, conventions, meetings, seminars, summits, exhibitions, training and recognition and incentive programmes. Their significance and contribution to the growth of the local economy and community cannot be underestimated.

At world conferences hosted by professional associations, ideas are generated, discussed and debated. Knowledge and new research findings are presented, collaboration is fostered, investment is stimulated; networks are consolidated, initiated and expanded.

"The identification and measurement of the broader economic, academic, professional and societal benefits arising from meetings, conventions and exhibitions is one of the greatest urgencies in the meetings industry today as it leads to a much more realistic value proposition for the industry and a broader basis for the ongoing investment required to support future development," said **Rod Cameron**, executive director, Joint Meetings Industry Council.

Government and industry are aware that the full value of the business event sector needs to be established. To date, the business event



sector has been evaluated primarily on its contributions to the tourism sector.

The tourism contributions have been impressive in themselves; however, the narrow focus has failed to account for a more extensive set of contributions to economies and communities.

Since last year, ICCA and BestCities Global Alliance have teamed up to create the 'Incredible Impacts Programme', which celebrates the "beyond tourism" value of international association meetings to create a powerful platform to advocate their positive societal impact.

"The SANCB is keen on congresses which leave a legacy behind for the community" – Denise Kemp, Eastern Sun Events

Martin Sirk, chief executive officer of ICCA said: "The biggest shift in the global meetings market over the last decade has been the mindset change from 'part of tourism' to 'economic and societal impact'. It's now broadly accepted that even though meeting delegates are one of the most valuable tourism sectors in terms of their direct spend in a destination, the biggest value from international association meetings comes from the vast quantities of knowledge that are created and shared, the inward investment and business connections that are stimulated, and the societal, healthcare and economic challenges that are addressed and solved.

"Incredible Impacts has been designed to celebrate some of the best examples of projects that showcase the wider impact of these meetings, and more importantly, to encourage greater awareness and new projects."

BEYOND TOURISM IMPACT:

Accelerates the adoption of change	Public awareness of healthcare or environmental issues, or achievement of improved outcomes	Advancing future intellectual and/or societal leaders (could be general young members of the association, or young women, or young people from developing countries, etc).
New investment	Improve academics and local intellectual capital	
Sustainability initiatives	International collaboration	CSI programmes
Improved training	Local innovation through collaboration	Improve the lives of the local communities
Knowledge and/or skills transfers to developing countries	Product development	Economic contribution to the host destination
Exposure to the world's leaders	Educating local associations	Intrinsic legacies - practice, social, economic, attitudinal



LOCAL PERSPECTIVE



Denise Kemp

Denise Kemp from Eastern Sun Events said: "The SANCB is keen on congresses which leave a legacy behind for the community.

"Some of our medical congresses have set up teams who come back to teach in Africa. Others set up fellowships to allow African and local specialists in training to go to the top units for six months or so. Yet others donate to charities with income from the congress. Others have an outreach where, for example, they will fund a session to educate GPs on the latest techniques for ENTs or gastroenterologists etc. Some run outreach sessions where they might have a session for Irritable bowel syndrome patients in that area (at no cost to the patient)."



James Seymour

The Durban KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau highlighted the significant legacy which the 2011 and 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (CMP7) to the Kyoto Protocol, had on the city of Durban and its

province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Some 18 000 delegates from 190 countries descended on Durban for this significant 'debate' of the impact of climate change and measures that can be adopted to deal with this challenge. COP17 provided an excellent opportunity to educate the residents of Durban about the reality of climate change and their role in it.

According to **James Seymour**, chief executive officer of Durban KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau, "A dedicated communication and advocacy campaign began prior to COP17 and extended throughout the conference, with other awareness initiatives held for specific projects.

"Key resolutions were made during COP17. Attendees including the EU, Norway, Australia and New Zealand agreed to a second commitment period (2012-2016) to the Kyoto Protocol, the only legally binding agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

"Both developed and developing countries committed to compiling a new international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which will come into effect in 2020, termed the Durban Platform for Cooperative Action", he said.

Mr Seymour continued: "Business events, or the realm of meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions, are amongst the most powerful current stimuli for social

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– James Seymour, Durban KwaZulu-Natal Convention Bureau

and economic development. Business events do not only stimulate tourism flow, the use of hospitality facilities and services and economic development through the spend of delegates, but are one of the most important forms of post tertiary education and training.

"They increase the level of knowledge of particular disciplines, encourage networking between peers in a particular field, and further develop and even establish particular industries.

Furthermore, they enhance the level of awareness and image of a particular destination and its ability to deliver. Research has revealed that some 20 per cent to 40 per cent of conference delegates return as leisure tourists to a destination where a conference was held. They also become critical word of mouth ambassadors for a destination," he concluded.



"The business events industry provides the catalyst for transitioning towards a knowledge and creative society. Indeed governments themselves acknowledge that it takes a meeting or a summit to solve global issues and to avoid catastrophe... and when scientists, medics and technologists meet, they too change the world."

– David DuBois, president and CEO of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events and immediate past chair of Convention Industry Council



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE



Joint Meetings Industry Council has launched a case study programme called The Iceberg. **Gregg Talley**, president and chief executive officer of the Talley Management Group said it is the opportunity to do this translation... to actually take us from the story to what that actually is worth in the destination.

"That's it. That's where we're going to find the holy grail, because now we're talking real economic development, local economic development, on a totally different scale than we've ever been able to talk about before."

In the first of these, "The Beyond Tourism



Gregg Talley

Impact of Meetings", Mr Sirk welcomed the fact that this analysis of the industry's true value is now widely accepted. "If you look at any successful,

go-ahead, cutting-edge destination, economic development, intellectual capital, transfer of knowledge, impact on society, these are the stories they're already telling. What's really gratifying is how this whole area has become completely mainstream," he said.

The knowledge transfer, the scientific and healthcare advancements, the movement of intellectual capital, and the economic development of a destination... these are the real legacies when business and professional events take place.



The global and local industry views clearly indicate that business events contribute to the economy in the short term, while in the long term, their legacies are broad-reaching and potentially far more valuable.

Business events stimulate creativity, inspire innovation, propel productivity and drive knowledge economies. They lead to global profiling, international network creation, cultural and business development and foreign investment.

Given the difficulty in accurate measurement of 'beyond tourism' impact to a destination, Business Events Africa and South Africa National Convention Bureau will present a local business events case study that best encompasses the 'beyond tourism' impact.