

SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU in partnership with the Event

PREPARING FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
Part 2 of 6



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Site Inspection Support

Site inspections are a means to showcase the elements included in the destination's bid. Site inspections are part of the SANCB's service offering. The South Africa National Convention Bureau (the SANCB) in conjunction with the city and province convention bureaux organises and facilitates site inspections to assist Association Heads with business-event decision making, and introduce them to the event professionals that will bring their meeting, conference, event or incentive to life.

The SANCB will invite key decision makers to view options to help confirm the conference venues and pre and post-show opportunities.

South Africa boasts myriad purpose built venues that cater for groups of up to tens of thousands. Some of the biggest and most well-known are:

- Sandton Convention Centre (Gauteng)
- Cape Town International Convention Centre (Western Cape Province)
- Expo Centre Johannesburg (Gauteng)
- Century City Conference Centre (Western Cape Province)
- Sun City (North West Province)
- Durban International Convention Centre.
- CSIR International Convention Centre (Gauteng Province)
- Tshwane Events Centre (Gauteng Province)
- East London International Convention Centre (Eastern Cape Province)
- Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre (Kimberley, Northern Cape)

Site Inspections are a crucial part of the decision-making process for business events. The venue must be conveniently situated close to transport routes and important amenities, and must boast the facilities and luxuries that befit a business traveller and conference delegate. The venue must be secure and attractive, with state-of-the-art infrastructure and technology, as well as excellent cuisine and a wide-range of culinary and beverage options.

Site Inspections also serve to reinforce positive aspects of hosting a conference in South Africa, and dispel negative preconceived notions.

These positive aspects are:

- South Africa is a cost-effective destination with attractive exchange rates
- Reassurance that South Africa is a world-class destination

- Delivery of world-class services and experiences that are on time and bring the WOW factor
- South Africa is a secure and harmonious nation
- The opportunity to leave a lasting impression
- Political / Economic stability
- South Africa is an innovative and advanced nation
- The South African people are warm, welcoming and professional

Furthermore, well-coordinated Site Inspections give decision makers key insights into the myriad venues available in the chosen city. This allows decision makers to make their choices based on the facilities, location and incentive options that best suit the conference attendees.

Getting the most out of your Site Inspection

It is essential to ask pertinent questions so that the venues, hotels, and incentive programmes add the utmost value to your delegates. For instance:

Location



How far is the venue from the airport?



Is it close to major transport routes?



Is it close to shopping and nightlife?



Is there a shuttle service?

Venue

- Are the reception staff professional and friendly?
- Is the entrance and lobby clean and well-maintained?
- Is there enough reception staff to handle a group?
- Is the registration desk easy to find?
- Are there ATMs, restaurants and shops selling essentials?
- Is there Wi-Fi? Is it free?
- What are the guarantee and deposit rules?
- Do the meeting rooms and conference halls allow for disabled access?
- Are there smoke detectors and fire escapes?
- What is the refund policy for cancellations?
- Are there plans for refurbishment?
- Can rooms be arranged in the configurations required?
- Are there breakaway rooms?
- Is the quality of food and beverages sufficient?

Case Study: UIA 2014

The International Union of Architects held their 15th World Congress in Durban in 2014. UIA 2014 brought architects from around the world to debate their common concerns and interests – through an unashamedly African lens. African knowledge, African challenges and African opportunities thus entered into a dialogue with the world.

UIA 2014 commissioned the support of the SANCB and the Durban KZN Convention Bureau in preparation for the 2014 event.

Airlines, hotels, and the relevant government offices were briefed timeously in order to co-ordinate an impactful and successful site inspection. Durban KZN Convention Bureau handled the complex logistics, because of the bureau's extensive experience in planning and rolling out high-profile visits. The planning committee of the International Union of Architects were treated to the best that South Africa has to offer, which led to increased confidence in Durban as a worthy host city.

Karen Eicker, UIA 2014 Commissary General, said that "Through our conference >



organisers, Turners Conferencing, we also began having regular meetings with the Convention Bureau at the Durban ICC in the year leading up to the Congress, around stakeholder involvement and support from a communications and logistics point of view”.

“Through our Marketing and Communications consultant, Dr Ali Bacher, we approached Tsogo Sun Hotels towards the end of 2012 as a potential preferred accommodation supplier. Through this site inspection process, the Southern Sun Elangeni and Maharani Hotel was chosen as our base because of its superb location overlooking the Durban Beachfront and because it is within walking distance of the ICC. However, well before the Congress, we block-booked accommodation with

hotels and guest houses throughout Durban – this was necessary as our delegate attendance was almost 4 500”, said Karen.

“The Durban ICC for the UIA 2014 Congress was a superb venue and it contributed significantly to the success of the Congress – primarily because of the successful relationship between interior and exterior spaces. Many of our delegates commented that it was a pleasure to walk between the ICC itself, where the Scientific Programme was held; Walnut Street (which we closed and dedicated to Student activities); and the Durban Exhibition Centre where the majority of our exhibitions were hosted; and that they met and spoke informally with colleagues and friends (old and new) in this very convivial atmosphere. The staff of the ICC were also

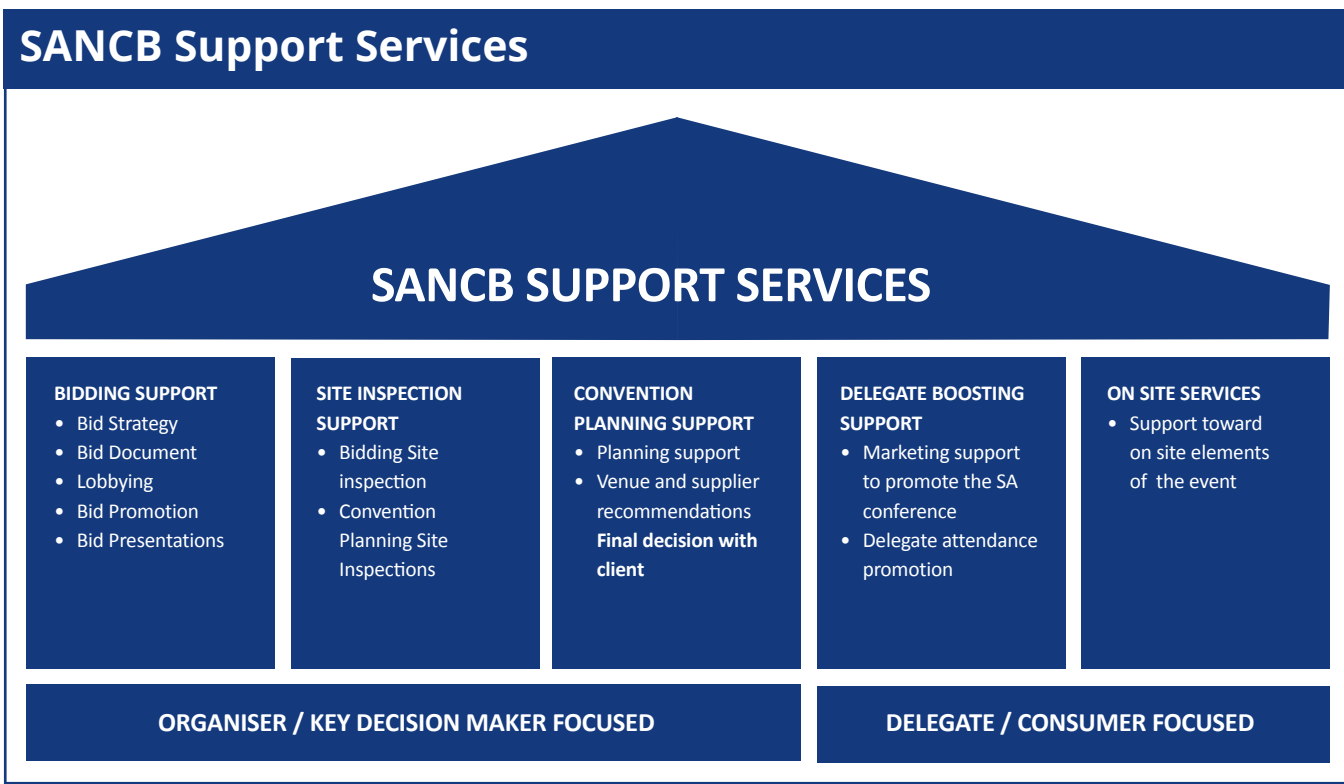
incredibly professional and accommodating leading up to and during the Congress”, Karen concluded.

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