

# SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU in partnership with the Event

ON-SITE EVENT SERVICES

**Part 5 of 6**



**Event**   
Africa's Leading Meetings Industry Magazine

**South Africa**   
NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU

**On-site Event Services**

On-site event services are vital as they add remarkable value to a delegate, especially if the delegate is visiting South Africa for the first-time.

On-site services are the little things that can happen on-site that make a big difference to the delegate's experience.

The South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB) is proud to offer on-site event services as part of its range of support services. The objective of this service offering is to enhance the delegates experiences, and put into perspective the value of the

delegate's visit to our country, over and above the value of attending the conference programme itself.

**What are On-site Event Services?**

Some examples include:

- Entertainment that is rooted in local custom
- Welcome stands and airport transfers
- Activity/local attraction bookings
- Travel arrangements and activities for accompanying persons
- Personalised gifts

- Giveaways and prizes
- Bespoke décor
- Meet and greets
- Information desks

**Why are On-site Event Services Essential?**

“Services such as personalised room drops and entertainment certainly give first timers a taste of South African food, culture and history. A well-coordinated opening ceremony or opening function entertainment, enhanced branding (either at airport or on site), unique speaker or VIP gifts, or mass giveaways to make the participants feel that extra bit “loved”, go a long way in the mind of the delegate. Without them the event would be fine - the little extras would probably not be noticed as missing – but at the same time the impact would be far less,” says Keith Burton, CEO of African Agenda, a professional conference organiser.

On-site services are the additional extras that make a conference better and more memorable; by spoiling the delegates, highlighting the destination, creating memorable social events and amplifying the networking situations.

**What is an Accompanying Person?**



Accompanying Persons are the people who accompany the participants to the conference and its host country, and are generally spouses. Accompanying persons do not follow the technical programme of the conference. They will be offered their own daily programme and at the same time, will generally follow the social programme offered at the conference. It is vital to offer services to Accompanying Person's as they have significant “free time” in which to experience the hospitality of the host country, and are often the deciding factor when considering a return visit.



Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC).

**Case Study: IAPCO 2016**

The International Association of Professional Congress Organisers' (IAPCO's) 47th Annual Meeting and General Assembly took place in February 2016 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). 76 delegates along with 13 companions from 28 countries attended

the IAPCO meeting. The African Agenda team created, with the funding by the South Africa National Convention Bureau; myriad gifts, unique experiences and visual elements to ensure that the delegates would have lasting memories of their trip to South Africa. Kristen Treemer, Director at African Agenda, the organiser of the IAPCO meeting, says

that “The purpose of on-site services is to enhance the delegate experience - the services are the additional extras that make a conference better and more memorable; by spoiling the delegates, highlighting the destination, creating memorable social events and amplifying the networking situations.” >

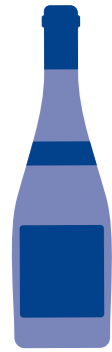


The conference chair giving the introduction.

**IAPCO:**



**On-site event services included:**



**A participant giveaway**

This consisted of a package of typical South African items (Amarula liqueur, biltong, knick knacks, and a beaded key ring). These items were presented in a recycled paper bag and awaited each guest in their room upon arrival. The team room-dropped the name tags and registration packs,

in order to personalise and “dress up” the room drop with these additional goodies, sponsored by the SANCB.

**Opening Ceremony entertainment -**

Traditional African Gumboot Dancing.

Kristen Treemer, Director at African Agenda:

“We had a small

space and limited time for stage changeover, so the gumboot dancers were a great solution for the need for some dramatic local entertainment. They make a great impression and are very “low tech” in that they don’t need an elaborate stage set up or any amplification – they provide all the impact and noise themselves!”



Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo giving the opening address at IAPCO 2016.



Meetings Africa 2014.

Keith Burton, Managing Director of African Agenda, says: “We were proud to host the world’s foremost conference decision makers, and delighted with their interest in Cape Town and South Africa as destinations. Arguably our most significant achievement was the perception change achieved among the delegates. Many had not been to South Africa before and their visit to our beautiful country – and first-hand experience of a flawless conference, and world-class conference infrastructure – firmly established Cape Town as an event destination of choice in the minds of this influential audience. African Agenda is the only sub-Saharan African member of IAPCO so we were representing not only the city and the country, but also the region.”



**Branding and in room décor**

The team created table dressings and décor effects to enhance the networking areas. “Having additional budget to dress up the meeting space is a wonderful

enhancement to the delegate experience. In this case we worked with Farm Design who bring a South Africa flavour with none of the kitsch”, added Kristen.

**VIP Transfers**



These transfers allowed African Agenda to give a private airport transfer to keynote speakers and council members. Kristen says, “For the VIPs, any chance we have to make their visit to South Africa more pleasant or their experience of the conference even better is really appreciated – they are the ones who are likely to have influential networks and share their SA experience with those networks, becoming an ‘ambassador’ for the country.”

**The Outcome**

According to Keith Burton at African Agenda, “These on-site event services are some of the things that make lasting impacts and create lasting impressions – an impressive event, memorable highlights and special personal impact go a long way to delegates returning to their homes as ambassadors for our ability to stage world-class and world-beating events; it also creates the desire to come back again!”

Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Chief Convention Bureau Officer at the South Africa National Convention Bureau, says “We have to make sure that all delegates have a fantastic time in our country. This will ensure that they tell their friends and families, which translates to further business.”

**Sage advice from Dirk Elzinga - Managing Director of Convention Industry Consultants (CIC)**

- A **welcome desk** at the point of arrival is very important. It is wonderful to see someone welcoming you with a sign of your conference at a time that you might feel slightly nervous in a new country/new airport experience;
- **Gifts** were very common in the past, but much rarer nowadays. If the conference organisers do opt for gifts, try to present guests with something original. A hand-crafted South African item with a story about where it comes from, and what it means, etc. A good distribution system is the traditional pillow gift in the hotel rooms of the delegates – but this is only possible if a central housing agent is used to secure the accommodation.
- Special, local, South African **entertainment** at the official opening session or at the congress gala dinner always works well.
- Opportunities for **Accompanying Persons**. Pay serious attention to the accompanying persons

- programme. When they are happy, the delegates will be happy.
- **Giveaways**. A better option is an auction of local artefacts and tourism prizes.
- **Opportunities for tourism activities**. We know that 25-30% of our international delegates return within a couple of years with their families for a holiday. But we don’t enough to stimulate that. We should prepare for each international delegate a “thank-you-for-attending-a-conference-in-our-country” brochure/website that offers the delegates a special holiday packages with elements of the pre- and post congress programme, if possible at special rates (for the first 24 months after the congress). We want those returning guests!
- Assist the congress organisers with their objective to **leave a legacy**. Prepare a long-list per destination of legacy projects (helping in schools, guest lectures in hospitals, planting vegetables in township gardens, a cycle tour through the township, art lessons, or guest lectures at local universities and other education institutes, etc.



Table Mountain welcome reception.

## SANCB Support Services

### SANCB SUPPORT SERVICES

#### BIDDING SUPPORT

- Bid Strategy
- Bid Document
- Lobbying
- Bid Promotion
- Bid Presentations

#### SITE INSPECTION SUPPORT

- Bidding Site inspection
- Convention Planning Site Inspections

#### CONVENTION PLANNING SUPPORT

- Planning support
  - Venue and supplier recommendations
- Final decision with client**

#### DELEGATE BOOSTING SUPPORT

- Marketing support to promote the SA conference
- Delegate attendance promotion

#### ON SITE SERVICES

- Support toward on site elements of the event

**ORGANISER / KEY DECISION MAKER FOCUSED**

**DELEGATE / CONSUMER FOCUSED**

*For destination expertise and convention planning support, contact the South Africa National Convention Bureau.*

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