



VisitBritain explores ‘impact beyond the plenary’ at its first Association Conference in Edinburgh

VisitBritain

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VisitBritain, in partnership with MeetEngland, Meet in Wales, VisitScotland Business Events and the Association of British Professional Congress Organisers (ABPCO), explored the importance of ‘impact beyond the plenary’ at its first Association Conference at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC).

The conference, which took place from 5-7 February 2024, brought together 80 industry professionals - including UK nations, city convention bureaus, international associations and professional congress organisers - to take part in a bespoke educational programme designed by non-profit organisation #MEET4IMPACT and GDS Movement. Across the two days, attendees were able to join a number of workshops to explore how the industry can define and execute mutually beneficial objectives to deepen the positive impact of a congress. This was further supported by British Tourist Authority Chairman Nick de Bois CBE who officially opened the conference, highlighting the importance of the association sector and recognising the critical role cities, associations and professional conference organisers play in bringing new events to Britain.

The event also provided the basis to soft launch the VisitBritain Impactful Framework. This 18-month project has been created in partnership with #MEET4IMPACT and GDS Movement to support the ongoing collective work in creating impact strategies across the business events industry. During focused sessions throughout the conference, attendees were able to discuss and

provide their feedback on the project, with the final framework being distributed to all attendees post conference.

Chairman of the British Tourist Authority Nick de Bois CBE said:

“I was delighted to welcome our UK nations, cities, associations and congress organisers to VisitBritain’s Association Conference. Over the last few days, we have all had a hugely valuable opportunity to explore how we, as an industry, can demonstrate the wider impact business events brings to an organisation, venue and destination in this fast changing and dynamic landscape. We are hopeful that the conversations taking place this week, alongside the launch of VisitBritain’s Business Events Impactful Framework, can help support us all on this important journey.

“None of this could have been achieved without the partnership and support of our chosen host city, Edinburgh. Being able to showcase one of Britain’s iconic cities alongside delivering an in-depth educational itinerary has allowed us to deliver a well-rounded experience to our attendees and once again demonstrate the high calibre offering that is available all across Britain for future business events.”

Geneviève Leclerc, CMP - Co-Founder & CEO of #MEET4IMPACT said:

“During this 2-year initiative, VisitBritain has shown remarkable vision and leadership. The VisitBritain Business Events Impactful Framework, inspired by #MEET4IMPACT’s BE Impactful Framework©, establishes a benchmark for national and city destination marketing organisations aiming to present a consistent method for showcasing the impact of the events they host. We are honoured to have had the opportunity to assist VisitBritain in their efforts to promote sustainability and make a positive impact, in collaboration with our partner Global Destination Sustainability Movement.

“We are incredibly proud of the collective effort put forth to elevate the work of cities and their partners in attracting impactful events to the UK! The framework will provide concrete support in maximising the impact of business events on key sectors across the UK, while also addressing social, environmental and economic development priorities. Several cities have already started developing case studies, and we are excited to see the impact in action as they test this work and report on the value creation generated by their events.”

Aside from the educational itinerary, attendees were also able to attend networking opportunities across the three days, including the welcome reception at the newly refurbished Moxy Edinburgh Fountainbridge rooftop bar and gala dinner at the renowned National Museum of Scotland.