

Dubai set to benefit from another year of successful bidding activity for global events

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Dubai's business events sector and wider economy are poised to benefit from another year of successful bidding activity led by Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau.

Collaborating with stakeholders across the public and private sectors, DBE has captured a total of 120 events for the year 2021 and beyond. These events, a combination of conferences, meetings and incentive travel programmes, feature almost 70,000 key opinion leaders, scientists, government officials and other experts, which put Dubai at the heart of global conversations on the recovery of key sectors and professions, innovation and economic growth.

The robust performance, achieved despite continued disruption to the global business events sector, is largely attributable to worldwide recognition of Dubai's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dubai provided a viable and attractive alternative for hosting many events held over the past 15 months and now in the pipeline after organisers' original plans elsewhere in the world could not come to fruition.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, said: "Driven by the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the city's handling of the pandemic and rapid economic recovery continue to be recognised by the global business community. In addition to seeing Dubai become a hub of choice for businesses, associations and talent across a wide range of sectors and professions, this is also resulting in the city standing out as a preferred destination for events of all sizes.

"The experience of the past two years has only served to underline the importance of in-person business events and what they can offer to organisers, participants, sponsors, exhibitors and their wider networks. We therefore continue to explore all opportunities to host business events in Dubai and work with stakeholders in the city to provide meeting planners a safe, impactful platform for knowledge sharing, networking and creating lasting legacies."

Among the major events won in 2021 were the 27th International Council of Museums (ICOM) General Conference in 2025. Dubai Business Events (DBE) collaborated with the UAE's chapter of ICOM (ICOM-UAE), Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and Dubai Municipality to win the bid for the event. Other key events captured over the past year for the associations segment included the BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition (2022), Asian Congress in Pediatric Nephrology (2023) and the Congress of the International Society for Peritoneal Dialysis (2024).

Meanwhile, the city's pipeline of corporate meetings and incentive travel programmes also continued to grow, with the addition of McDonald's Russia Convention, AIA Star Convention and Oriflame Anniversary Gold Conference, all taking place in 2022.

The additions to the pipeline come amid a growing focus on the business events sector in Dubai, underlined by the formation of the Department of Economy and Tourism. One of the key priorities for the department is to capture 400 global economic events annually by 2025.

Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said: "Beyond just attracting more visitors to Dubai, business events have a significant economic impact and contribute to knowledge development and innovation in the city. The pipeline of association events coming to Dubai is testament to the city's ability to provide a platform for the sharing of knowledge and the expertise in the city for both hosting events and contributing to their rich programmes. Similarly, the strong line-up of corporate and incentive travel groups experiencing Dubai over the coming years is a clear indication of the compelling proposition major businesses around the world can see here."

In 2021, Dubai Business Events maintained a strong calendar of promotional activities around the world, through a combination of sales missions in key target markets, participation in major industry roadshows, including IBTM World and IMEX America, and inbound study missions.

This year, DBE will lead nine sales missions across four continents, showcasing the city in traditional strongholds such as India, Europe and China, as well as markets where it sees strong opportunities for growth, including Israel and Latin America. Groups from around the world will also continue to be hosted on study missions to explore the city, while DBE will once again be joined by stakeholders at all major trade shows.

Steen Jakobsen, Assistant Vice President, Dubai Business Events, said: "Our partners across hotels, venues, service providers and others within the business events ecosystem have always embraced the city's culture of collaboration, and in 2022 this will be more important than ever, as we look to leverage our world-leading tourism and events recovery and provide planners and associations with compelling reasons to bring their conferences, meetings and incentive travel programmes to Dubai. We are encouraging stakeholders to join and support DBE in our year-round calendar of activities both in Dubai and in source markets around the world, as well as of course in bidding for and hosting events."