

Dubai named number one global destination for international association meetings in 2021

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Dubai has been named the number one destination globally for association meetings in 2021 by a report of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). The newly-published ICCA Statistics Report ranked Dubai the top city in 2021 both for the number of meetings organised by international associations and estimated participants at these events.

Dubai is showcasing its excellence in hosting business events at the 2022 edition of IMEX Frankfurt, the world's leading meetings industry exhibition, with its largest ever delegation at the trade show. The record participation underlines Dubai's position at the forefront of the global business event sector's recovery and the strong interest from meeting planners across the world to explore the city's offerings and capabilities.

Dubai was among the first destinations to resume in-person business events after the COVID-19 pandemic, opening itself to hosting international meetings and attendees as early as October 2020.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, said: "Driven by the visionary leadership and guidance of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the city has rapidly emerged in the post-pandemic period as a host destination of choice for international associations and their major meetings, as well as the wider business events ecosystem. Dubai's number one ranking in the ICCA Statistics Report reflects the priority placed on restarting business events in Dubai and engaging with the association community to highlight the city's readiness and safety measures.

"The ability of international associations to meet in person safely is critical, giving them and their respective memberships vital opportunities for knowledge sharing, professional development and networking. We continue to work closely with international associations to ensure that Dubai can provide a platform for their business events and add momentum to the recoveries of the respective professions and industries they serve."

A total of 32 co-exhibitors have joined Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau, at IMEX Frankfurt 2022, which runs from 31 May to 2 June. Partners joining DBE at the event include Emirates, Jumeirah Group, Dubai World Trade Centre and Emaar Hospitality, as well as a wide range of other hotels, attractions and destination management companies (DMCs). The combined teams from DBE

and the co-exhibitors are expected to have over 500 client meetings at the newly-designed Dubai stand two-year hiatus amid the global pandemic, and is welcoming over 2,800 buyers from around the world – spanning agencies, corporates, independents and associations.

Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said: "Dubai's strong presence at IMEX Frankfurt is a testament to the city's commitment to driving the recovery of the global business events sector, and building on the lead the city has taken in reshaping the industry in the wake of the pandemic. Dubai's position as a world class business events destination has only been possible thanks to the city's visionary leadership and the combined efforts of stakeholders across the public and private sectors.

"We continue to see a robust and growing appetite among meeting planners and association executives to rebuild their event calendars and collaborate with destinations that can provide them with safety, stability and a diverse range of offerings. Our partners from across the city have once again stepped up to ensure that Dubai is able to present a unified and comprehensive proposition to a global audience."

Beyond the meetings at the Dubai stand, DBE is also leading a number of events and activations that will facilitate engagements with key decision makers, including an evening reception for event planners; a dinner for members of IAPCO (professional conference organisers) in collaboration with Melbourne Convention Bureau; and a breakfast with association executives hosted in collaboration with International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). Furthermore, DBE will participate in several knowledge exchange and business development events taking place on the sidelines of the show.

IMEX Frankfurt is part of a year-round calendar of activities for DBE, facilitating engagement with meeting planners and buyers around the world. Other major trade shows this year include IMEX America (11-13 October), IBTM World (29 November – 1 December), while DBE will also lead roadshows and sales missions across all its key markets.