



PRESS RELEASE

WHITEPAPER RELEASE: HOW SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS ARE ENHANCING COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

Geneva, May 15th 2017. The **Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index)** releases their first [Whitepaper](#) “*Sustainable Destination Management Trends and Insights: A Path to a Brighter Future*” at [IMEX Frankfurt](#). The GDS-Index is a **collaborative partnership** between [ICCA](#), [ICCA’s Scandinavian Chapter](#), IMEX and [MCI Group](#).

The [Whitepaper](#) identifies how Destination Management Organisations and Convention Bureaus are **using sustainability to drive the development and implementation of robust destination sustainability strategies**. These strategies are supporting their city’s overall social, environmental and economic development agenda and enhance competitive positioning. The report draws from analysis of **35 cities** who participated in the 2016 GDS-Index benchmarking [study](#). Through case studies and comparative data, the research – conducted by [MCI Sustainability Services](#) – highlights **ten key insights** on how destinations can reinforce their strategy through: leadership, financial incentives and capacity training, strong local community and supplier engagement, and effective communication about sustainability.

According to **MCI’s CEO Sébastien Tondeur**, “*Cities are **the growth engines of the future**, representing beacons of opportunity that carry the promise of education, employment and prosperity. The M.I.C.E industry has a critical role to play in supporting cities with the adoption of key sustainability practices. I am delighted to see how the GDS-Index is promoting a “**Path to a Brighter Future**” for destinations around the world*”.

Martin Sirk, CEO of ICCA, comments: “*The GDS-Index is **accelerating sustainable development** via knowledge sharing of its best practices and innovations. Building on the inspiration of the programme’s Scandinavian founders, the Whitepaper collects and shares these pieces of wisdom with the ultimate goal of supporting other destinations to focus on sustainable growth*”.

Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX Group, mentions that “*2017 is the [UN International Year of Sustainable Tourism](#) and for this I am particularly delighted and inspired to see how this project has grown and how the participating cities are using the research for further **improving their strategies and sustainability performance***”.

A press event to mark the [Whitepaper](#) release and celebrate the launch of the GDS-Index inspired **Glasgow Convention Bureau Sustainability Programme**, will be happening at IMEX on **Tuesday 16 May**, in Room Symmetrie 3, Hall 8 Level 1, Messe Frankfurt. All visitors are welcome.

To view and download the whitepaper visit [here](#).

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ABOUT THE GLOBAL DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX (GDS-INDEX)

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) is a prize-winning grassroots Scandinavian initiative that evolved into the first-ever sustainability ranking for event destinations worldwide. A collaborative partnership between ICCA, ICCA's Scandinavian Chapter, IMEX and MCI Group, it aims to promote the sustainable growth of international meeting destinations, highlighting best practices and responsible business tourism. In a world increasingly focused on responsible business and addressing our environmental impact, the GDS-Index helps destinations to engage clients with sustainability, align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and drive the adoption, promotion and recognition of sustainable practices in their city. Currently 38 cities in 5 continents have joined the process of benchmarking and assessment. The GDS-Index aims to drive the adoption, promotion and recognition of sustainable practices **across 100 cities by 2020**. Find out more at www.gds-index.com.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS & CONVENTION ASSOCIATION (ICCA)

ICCA -the International Congress and Convention Association- is the global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry. ICCA represents the main specialists in organising, transporting, and accommodating international meetings and events, and comprises over 1,000 member companies and organisations in almost 100 countries worldwide. ICCA specialises in the international association meetings sector, offering unrivalled data, communication channels, and business development opportunities. Find out more at www.iccaworld.org.

ABOUT IMEX

IMEX in Frankfurt, the worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events which takes place at Messe Frankfurt from 15-18 May 2017. For press releases - <http://www.imex-frankfurt.com/press/news-releases/>. For high resolution photography – <http://www.imex-frankfurt.com/press/images,-audio-video/press-photos/>. The IMEX Group also runs IMEX America, America's worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings & events, which takes place 10-12 October 2017 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center at The Venetian® | The Palazzo®, preceded by Smart Monday, powered by MPI on 9 October. For further press information, please contact: Emma Ward: emma.ward@imexexhibitions.com or Chris Lewis: chris.lewis@imexexhibitions.com.

ABOUT MCI

MCI is the global leader in engaging and activating audiences. Our business is founded on a simple human insight: **When people come together, magic happens**. This magic is called **community**. Since 1987 we have been bringing people together through inspiring meetings, events, congresses and association management. MCI helps organizations harness the power of community by applying our strategic engagement and activation solutions to build unforgettable online and offline experiences that foster change, inspire, educate and enhance business performance. MCI is an independently owned company with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and a global presence. Our 1,900 professionals in 60 cities and 31 countries work with clients across Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, India, the Middle East and Africa. Find out more at www.mci-group.com.

MCI's pioneering and award-winning Sustainability Consultancy advises cities, governments, associations and corporations on how to accelerate transformation, catalyse innovation and enhance brand reputation. With over 850 high-profile environmental, social and governance (ESG) events managed to date and industry-wide recognition for our pioneering sustainable event management, ISO certification consulting and sustainability reporting, we have become the world's leading organiser of sustainable events and events about sustainability. Find out more at www.mcisustainability.com.