JMIC | JOINT MEETINGS INDUSTRY COUNCIL

3RD EDITION | JUNE 2026

# The JMIC Global Manifesto

## Further Rationale for the use of Business Events as Key Drivers for Multidimensional Industry and Destination Growth and Transformation


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The JMIC Global Manifesto was published in 2020 to leverage the power of business events to act as agents for post-pandemic economic recovery and aligned its content and messages to those of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Manifesto was used by many in the global business events sector as a communication tool to policy-makers tasked with re-starting their economies in times of continued uncertainty and pressures.

In May, 2023, edition 2 of the Manifesto was published and provided an industry rationale for the use of Business Events as key driver for growth and transformation.

This, the 3rd edition, is one such tool that helps to quantify and communicate the importance of, as Professor Greg Clark stated at a recent IMEX Policy Forum in Frankfurt (May 2025): "the Business events industry is setting its own table and inviting policy-makers and stake-holders to join, instead of the industry waiting to be invited to somebody else's table."

The global meetings and events industry, valued at USD 759 billion in direct GDP impact and over USD 1.8 trillion in total GDP impact according to the Events Industry Council's 2026 Global Economic Significance Study, represents one of the most effective, scalable and measurable platforms for achieving this objective. The industry supported 24.2 million total jobs of which 9.7 million direct jobs in 2025 and continues to serve as a catalyst for trade, knowledge transfer, innovation and community advancement.

The core value of business events lies not only in their measurable economic outputs, but also in their ability to:

**1** | Advance professional, corporate, academic and social development through knowledge exchange.

**2** | Enable cross-sector transformation, linking business, science, education, healthcare, technology and policy.

**3** | Deliver long-term legacies that strengthen destinations far beyond the event itself.

As such, business events should be regarded as essential strategic assets that governments can leverage to achieve both short-term economic gains and long-term transformational goals.

**The role of business events in supporting societal advancement is now widely recognised. They are not merely tourism products, but instruments of economic policy, with demonstrable outcomes in innovation, sustainability and global collaboration.**

For example, EIC data shows that the global business events sector generates more direct GDP than many large economies, placing it ahead of industries such as consumer electronics and telecommunications. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) further underscores that meetings and events act as a cornerstone of the wider visitor economy, driving air connectivity, investment and workforce development.

This Manifesto therefore articulates a set of high-level positions and calls to action that can help local, regional and national governments to strategically deploy business events as drivers of multidimensional growth.

## DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

Governments and industry leaders decide whether and how to integrate business events into development strategies at local, regional and national levels. Yet, it is the global evidence base, including Events Industry Council (EIC) economic data, and deeply insightful narratives from The Iceberg (supported by JMIC and it's members), that empowers strategic advocacy.

The Iceberg serves as a vital impact case study and advocacy hub capturing and showcasing the social, economic, academic and professional legacies of meetings, conventions and exhibitions. They represent elements often "beneath the surface" and are critically valuable.

Its content extends beyond raw metrics, offering case studies, storytelling and legacy-focused messaging that reveal the often-unseen ripple effects of events.

By integrating The Iceberg's narrative-driven approach, policy-makers and destination strategists gain richer storytelling tools, allowing them to communicate both tangible economic impacts and intangible, long-term legacies, societal well-being and community resilience.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

**1 | Complements economic data:** Whilst figures from our member and partner resources underscore meetings' GDP and job contributions, The Iceberg captures qualitative legacies—from trust-building networks to enduring social change.

**2 | Supports emotionally resonant advocacy**: When advocating to governments or institutions, combining quantitative data with anecdotal evidence of innovation, community uplift, and professional growth creates a fuller, more compelling case.

**3 | Encourages legacy-conscious planning:** The Iceberg's focus on what's "below the surface" encourages organizers and governments to strategically design and develop events with the aim of creating lasting societal and academic outcomes, rather than short-term gains.

With this enriched narrative, this Manifesto positions business events not merely as economic engines but as strategic investments in societal infrastructure that are capable of fostering innovation, building trust, strengthening institutions, and enriching communities long after the event ends.

## JMIC's POSITION

As presented in Edition 2 of the JMIC Global Manifesto, the meetings and events industry, comprising of bureaux, professional organisers of trade shows, congresses and conferences, service providers, convention venues and a global supply chain, must be recognised and utilised as a highly efficient, cost-effective vehicle for economic growth and transformation. By enabling knowledge exchange, talent mobility, investment attraction and innovation ecosystems, business events deliver measurable outcomes far beyond tourism. EIC data confirms this:

- Business events generated USD 1.8 trillion in total GDP in 2025, contributing a total economic impact of USD 3.1 trillion when indirect and induced effects are included.
- The sector directly supported over 24.2 million jobs worldwide, with an even greater employment footprint across allied industries.
- Business events fuel productivity by convening leaders, innovators, and decision-makers in controlled, results-oriented environments.

This positions business events as indispensable assets for governments seeking diversification, sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

▷JMIC MEMBER DATA SHEET

# **Here's Why** | 15 Ways Business Events Create Strategic Advantage in Multidimensional Growth and Transformation



**1** | Relationships & Trust



**2** | Community Hub



**3** | Community Legacies



**4** | Multi Sector Impacts



**5** | Economic Development



**6** | Innovation



**7** | Investment



**8** | Talent



**9** | Digitalisation



**10** | Sustainable Development




**11** | Uses Existing Investments



**12** | Laboratories for Public Policy



**13** | Support of Visitor Economy



**14** | Image & Reputation




**15** | Measureable ROI



# 1 | Relationships & Trust

## Business events build relationships, trust and international cooperation:

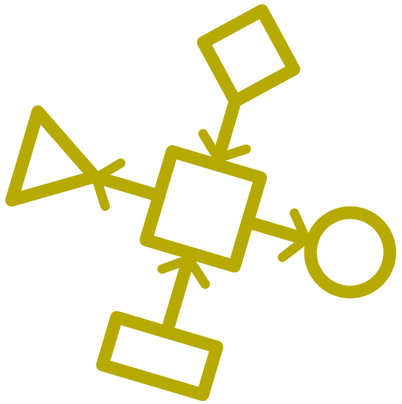
At a time of geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, disrupted supply chains and declining institutional trust, business events provide structured environments in which relationships can be built and maintained.

Face-to-face meetings remain critical for creating the trust needed to support investment, trade, scientific collaboration, business partnerships and public-private cooperation. They also help strengthen international networks that can be mobilised during times of crisis or transition.

For governments, business events therefore represent more than networking opportunities. They are platforms for diplomacy, collaboration, investment attraction and long-term relationship building across sectors and borders.

**RELEVANT INDUSTRY STATISTICS**

2026 Global Economic Significance of Business Events Events Industry Council, Page 26: 70% of surveyed event organisers, venues, destination marketing organisations, and suppliers view building relationships through face-to-face interaction as most difficult to replace.



## 2 |

# Community Hub

**Business events act as community hubs that connect stakeholders around shared priorities:**

Business events bring together governments, businesses, universities, investors, associations and local communities in one place, creating a unique platform for collaboration.

Unlike many other forms of economic activity, business events create neutral spaces where different stakeholders can exchange ideas, identify common interests and align around long-term goals.

This is particularly valuable for governments seeking to strengthen innovation ecosystems, support cluster development and create stronger links between industry, academia and public institutions.

Business events can therefore act as catalysts for local engagement, regional partnerships and stronger community cohesion, while also connecting destinations to international networks and opportunities.

# 3 | Community Legacies



## Business events create valuable, relevant legacies in the host community:

Major business and professional events can deliver lasting community benefits, from enhanced destination reputation and new international networks to knowledge exchange and skills development. When policy makers, destination leaders and organisers work towards shared strategic objectives, these events can be leveraged to address community priorities and generate impact that endures well beyond the event.

CASE STUDY

**Access to Iceberg and new IAPCO case studies:** ICN 2025 – Economic impact: Based on industry benchmarks, the congress generated an estimated €10.5 million – €17.5 million in economic impact for Helsinki.

**Policy and legacy:** The event launched the Student and Early Career Nurses Alliance, culminating in the adoption of the Helsinki Communiqué, and reinforced nursing's role in universal health coverage, equity, and inclusion.

# 4 | Multi Sector Impacts



## Business events simultaneously advance a wide range of different sectors:

Business events are efficient means of supporting the advancement of a wide range of economic, professional, academic and business sectors. As a result, they can drive activation, engagement, and transformation across the many different sectors that will need to be stimulated in order to deliver a multidimensional growth rather than simply addressing a limited range of these sectors individually. They enable action by others rather than being limited to what they can achieve on their own.

CASE STUDY

**Bidding specialists Business Events Sydney (BESydney)** secured IAC 2025 for the city in partnership with Investment NSW, the Australian Space Agency and the Space Industry Association of Australia. The Congress welcomed more than 7,400 delegates from 99 countries and injected an estimated $47 million into the local economy.

IAC 2025 delivered landmark outcomes for the Australian and global space community. The Australian Space Agency signed agreements with NASA and the European Space Agency, strengthening cooperation on space technology.

▷ BESydney CASE STUDY

# 5 | Economic Development

## Business events support economic development, industrial transition and future competitiveness:

Business events are not only drivers of visitor spending. They are strategic tools that can support industrial development, attract investment, strengthen supply chains, increase exports, reduce trade barriers, support establishments abroad and accelerate the growth of priority sectors.

Governments increasingly seek to diversify their economies, build resilience and position themselves in high-growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, life sciences, clean energy, financial services and technology. Business events can support these ambitions by bringing together the decision-makers, investors, researchers and companies needed to accelerate sector growth.

Business events also help regions and cities to reposition themselves economically by attracting new industries, supporting entrepreneurship, encouraging talent retention and strengthening connections between local businesses and global markets.

For governments, this makes business events a practical and cost-effective policy tool that can contribute directly to economic transformation and long-term competitiveness.

Statistics from **UFI Economic Impact Study**, updated in April 2026, reveal that the global economic impact of exhibitions is of €393 ($444) billion of economic impacts on hosting territories, supporting 4.3 million jobs.

SOURCES

▷ Global Economic Impact of Exhibitions (2026)



# 6 | Innovation

**Business events drive commerce, innovation, knowledge transfer and transition— all critical requirements for growth and transformation:**

The entire purpose of these events is to accelerate progress in every sector they support through communications, information sharing and collective engagement. This naturally facilitates the kind of innovation that is always a driver in economic and professional advancement but will be particularly critical in adapting to the demands and expectations that will result from the "new" economies and economic priorities arising in the future.

For governments seeking to strengthen innovation ecosystems, accelerate innovation and research, drive R&D&I policies, receive market feedback and improve competitiveness, business events therefore represent a practical and measurable tool for accelerating progress.

**CASE STUDIES**

Newest innovation showcases at exhibitions globally; researchers presenting cutting-edge research at conferences.

▷ CES CASE STUDY

▷ AIDS Conference CASE STUDY

▷ Insects to Feed the World CASE STUDY



## 7 |

# Investment

**Business events attract the investment needed for economic diversification and can be focused on priority areas for government policy:**

Business events, particularly international events, are magnets for investments that drive key economic and professional sectors. As a result, they are important strategic tools that can be used by a city, region or country to selectively stimulate top economic and social priorities. Criteria for pursuing specific business events can be readily adjusted to address government policy priorities for key sectors and societal development.

# 8 | Talent



## Business events support talent attraction, retention and workforce development:

Talent is increasingly one of the most important drivers of economic growth, transformation and competitiveness. Business events help destinations attract, develop and retain talent by creating improved opportunities for learning, networking and professional advancement.

Conferences, congresses and trade shows provide access to the latest research, technologies and best practices, while also connecting professionals to peers, mentors, employers and international networks. For governments and employers, business events can therefore support workforce development, address skills shortages and help position destinations as attractive places to live, work and innovate.

They are particularly valuable in sectors facing rapid change, where continuous learning and upskilling are essential.

**CASE STUDY**

70% of attendees state that in-person events are the best sources for training and professional content, highlighting their irreplaceable role in upskilling and professional development. (Bizaboo/Freeman: 2025 State of Events and Industry Benchmarks)

**WindEurope Annual Conference, Copenhagen 2025:** Facing a projected shortfall of 230,000 skilled workers by 2030, WindEurope used its annual conference (16,200 participants) to launch two legacy initiatives connecting the sector with local education: a hands-on Open House for 550 children and parents, and a Wind Energy Teacher's Toolkit piloted in seven schools and showcased to 32 European delegates including the European Commission and OECD. The Toolkit has since been adopted nationally and integrated into an EU-wide teacher training course, with WindEurope committing to replicate the model across Europe.

Source: Copenhagen Legacy Lab / Wonderful Copenhagen, 2025

▷ WindEurope CASE STUDY



# 9 | Digitalisation

## Business events are responding to the growing movement toward digitalisation and can deliver content and results in person, via the virtual world or both:

Most business events today have a companion digital component that can further extend global exposure and reach, and have become increasingly sophisticated. This means that the potential impact of an event can be extended to a global audience, with correspondingly greater image and legacy benefits for the host community.

CASE STUDY

**UFI Barometer:** 9% of all see impact from digitalisation as one of the most important business objectives on the mid-term basis.

▷ UFI Global Exhibition Barometer CASE STUDY

# 10 | Sustainable Development

## Business events lead the economy toward sustainability:

Sustainable development has long been a focus for the business events industry itself. Business events are inherently a more sustainable way to conduct global business, as they consolidate numerous individual meetings, site visits and trips into one high-impact gathering, reducing the overall environmental footprint that would result from multiple scattered interactions. In addition, industry initiatives such as JMIC's **Net Zero Carbon Events** help embed sustainability principles within event planning and delivery, addressing areas such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, local sourcing, sustainable mobility and responsible hiring practices. These efforts are also increasingly aligned with broader frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Business events also play an important external role in supporting and accelerating the green transition across the wider economy. Trade shows, congresses and professional meetings provide a platform for showcasing existing technologies, methodologies and best practices that support more sustainable business operations across sectors. At the same time, they are often where entirely new ideas, products and partnerships are introduced: from clean energy technologies and circular economy solutions to new approaches in mobility, construction, food systems and resource management. In this way, business events do not only improve their own sustainability performance but also act as catalysts for wider transformation across industries and communities.

**ADDITIONAL READING INFORMATION**

- ▷ AUMA Study I The Added value of trade fair visits: How individual trips are avoided
- ▷ NZCE: The Trade Show Travel Balance




# 11 | Uses Existing Investments

## Business events often benefit from funding mechanisms already in place:

As a largely user-pay sector, a significant proportion of costs are covered by organisers, exhibitors, sponsors and attendees, creating strong leverage for any public investment. This means that government support can often generate substantial economic and strategic returns without the need for entirely new funding programmes. Business events also make efficient use of existing public investments such as convention centres, transport systems, hotels and other infrastructure, allowing destinations to stimulate economic activity and wider policy outcomes relatively quickly and cost-effectively.

# 12 | Laboratories for Public Policy



**Business events can be used as testbeds for new government policies and economic development strategies:**

With the wide audience on-site, business events provide a stage for governments to present, influence and assess public perceptions towards new policies and economic development plans. Governments and institutions often have opportunities to scope participation and shape agendas at business events to receive real-time, on-ground feedback to tweak their policies and strategies.

CASE STUDIES

### Singapore FinTech Festival

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) hosts the Singapore FinTech Festival, one of the world's largest fintech events, to showcase innovations in digital banking, payments, and blockchain technologies. The event provides a platform for testing ideas in regulatory sandboxes, gathering feedback from thousands of participants, and refining financial policies before broader implementation.

▷ Singapore FinTech Festival CASE STUDY

### Hannover Messe (Germany)

EU and German government bodies have used the world's largest industrial trade fair to present draft climate and industrial policies, gathering reactions from businesses across on various topics.

▷ Hannover Messe (Germany) CASE STUDY

# 13 | Support of Visitor Economy



**Business events strengthen the wider visitor economy and improve destination resilience, brand value and welfare economics:**

Business events generate demand across a broad range of sectors, including accommodation, transport, hospitality, retail, culture and local services.

Unlike leisure travel, business events can often be targeted towards off-peak periods and secondary destinations, helping to create year-round demand and more balanced economic activity.

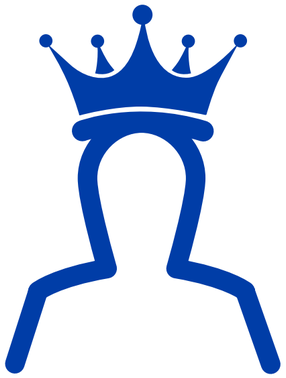
They can also strengthen air connectivity, improve the viability of hotels and venues, and support small and medium-sized enterprises that benefit from business travellers and event-related spending.

For governments, this makes business events an important tool not only for generating visitor expenditure, but also for improving the resilience, diversification and long-term sustainability of the wider visitor economy.

More than half of trade show attendees are first-timers to that event. Many of whom also visit the host destination for the first time.

▷ Trade Show Stats

# 14 | Image & Reputation



## Signature business events can cement a destination's reputation as a business centre:

Prominent business events generate profile and prestige for the host destination in a globally-visible way. In our ever-changing world with evolving economies, established destinations will need to consolidate their leadership position under new conditions. At the same time, there will be new opportunities for emerging destinations to raise their profile as attractive business destinations if they can offer alternate attributes such as a business and work-friendly climate coupled with the right social and environmental conditions which will be increasingly in demand in an inter-connected world.

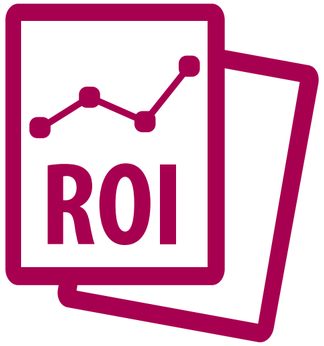
**INDUSTRY STATISTICS**

According to ICCA's 2025 rankings published in May 2026, cities like Lisbon, Paris and Barcelona lead the ranking, confirming Portugal's rise as international association destination. Five cities from the Asia Pacific region now feature in the top 20, confirming the multi-year rise of the region, whereas the Americas remain underrepresented in the global top 20.

▷ **The World's Top 20 MICE Destinations: Inside the ICCA 2025 Rankings**

## 15 |

# Measureable ROI




**Business events' results are measureable — so ROI can be clearly demonstrated:**

While the value proposition for business events ranges from the economic impacts of delegate spending (tourism benefits) to economic and professional development outcomes generated, reliable measurements such as sophisticated economic impact models are already in place for both.

A recently published report by UFI and Explori titled 2025 **Channel Insights Report**, highlighted that post-pandemic period, exhibitors are getting more value from supporting events now. "Overall satisfaction", "net promoter" and "likelihood of return" scores showed high results. Event objectives are also being met more successfully though exhibitors who attend meetings with the objective of 'meeting or engaging with existing customers' give significantly higher ratings.

One of the mostly used metrics across the globe, with 300 destinations signed up, is the **Event Impact Calculator** by Destinations International. Delegates and other event participants are not "incidental" visitors – so their travel purposes and spending patterns can be measured accurately, and the returns can be measured and reported with greater precision.

**FOUR IMPORTANT POLICY IMPLICATIONS** | To be applied in a practical way, the arguments above can and need to be embedded in government policies and structure. A starting point for this process is an acknowledgment that:

### 1 | TOURISM POLICY BEYOND ECONOMICS

Business events are economic, scientific and professional by nature, and only marginally tourism-related (in that they support the visitor and hospitality sector). They should therefore be seen in the context of trade, economic, social and environmental development affiliated with social and investment policies rather than tourism policy.

### 2 | AN INTEGRAL PART OF A 'VISION' FOR THE FUTURE REQUIRING CROSS-SECTORIAL COLLABORATION

As governments are increasingly expected to articulate and deliver a vision for multidimensional growth and transformation, business events can serve as strategic instruments to advance these ambitions. When integrated into national or regional development agendas, business events can help drive progress toward stated economic, social, scientific, and innovation goals.

### 3 | ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITIES

There should be an effort to align business events and overall government policy priorities so that events with the greatest potential to support / advance those priorities (health, education, innovation, major events) can be targeted and more strategically and effectively utilised to create positive change.

### 4 | AVAILABLE FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Rather than relying on short-term subsidies or one-off support measures, governments should adopt stable, consistent and long-term investment approaches that recognise business events as strategic assets for economic development, innovation, talent attraction and international positioning. This includes ensuring that publicly funded venues, transport systems, research institutions and destination organisations are aligned to support business events as part of broader economic and policy objectives.

# Ten Steps to Delivering the Message

The Global Manifesto is not a final solution in itself. It is a framework to understand, define and communicate business events as a lever and vehicle for multidimensional, balanced growth and positive transformation.

**Due to the global, culturally diverse and politically differentiated nature of our industry, the collective narrative cannot alone be delivered from a single, central authority or organisation. It must also, by national, regional and local industry stakeholders, be interpreted and iterated to serve their own political needs and realities so that it can be a relevant and trusted vehicle for communicating with their respective governments and public authorities.**

**Part of the Manifesto is therefore advice on how this can be done by the industry.**
**Based on the experiences of many industry members, here are some key steps to consider;**

# 1 | Identify the top issues in your community and align with national, strategic priorities:

In most parts of the world today, economic growth and societal development are top priorities. However, many other issues will be seen as priorities as well and these should be understood as they will likely relate to specific subject-matter business events. Such events can be used as examples of how business events can support community concerns and government policy priorities. Identify the top issues in your community and align with national, strategic priorities.

## 2 | Create consensus:

Governments will want to know that they are getting a consensus view. This means that if there is an existing local organisation in place they should be empowered to act and speak on behalf of the industry as a whole. If there is not, one should be formed with stakeholders that align with the objectives of the problem you are trying to solve

In organising such an entity, consider potential alliances with other relevant organisations such as professional, business, academic or special interest groups with shared understanding and objectives. This kind of alignment will further strengthen your position.

## 3 | Do your research:

It is key to understand who the key-decision makers are along with their administrations and influencers. Furthermore, it is important to understand what their current policies, priorities and barriers are in general as well as for the sector relating to business events. This can typically be found in documents on government priorities for action, strategies of election platform statements and promises.

## 4 | Organize your data and anecdotal evidence:

Arguments must be accompanied by trustworthy data, numbers and cases to support and illustrate them. Hard data such as economic impact study results are helpful but vastly underestimate true industry value, so consider enhancing this with case studies that illustrate event outcomes and impact from your own experiences. Legacies, destination image enhancements and relevant knowledge transfers are often particularly useful as they enable others to more easily understand the overall concepts at a practical level and can be extrapolated to other events.

## 5 | Access available industry resources:

Many resources including research, reports and case studies are already available and can be accessed via the JMIC website **www.themeetingsindustry.org**, **www.the–iceberg.org** and **www.eventscouncil.org** among others. Referencing such documents will not only save time and effort but also validate the effort that has been put into managing issues of concern.

## 6 | Do the "translation":

The first principle of successful communications is to organise your arguments into terms that are of greatest interest to your audience, and this is particularly the case with governments. This needs to be positioned not as what you *want* but rather how business events can be a lever for them to succeed. This may require you to review their list of priorities as above to select examples of how the industry can help them achieve their own objectives. Avoid the use of industry jargon, acronyms or agendas and instead focus on areas you know to be of importance to your audience.

## 7 | Be consistent in your message:

Governments and policy-makers are more likely to respond positively when they hear a clear, credible and consistent message from across the business events ecosystem.

Mixed messages, competing agendas and overly narrow sector interests can weaken the industry's position. Instead, destinations, venues, organisers, associations and other stakeholders should align around a shared narrative that positions business events as drivers of economic growth, innovation, talent, investment and long-term competitiveness.

The language used should also remain consistent. Wherever possible, avoid presenting business events only as tourism activity and instead emphasise their wider role in supporting public policy objectives.

## 8 | Timing is everything:

Timing is key in delivering your industry message–there are often forums that lend themselves to putting forward a proposal which is well thought-out. However, a private audience with a key decision-maker or committee can be more effective as it allows for detailed review. Personal and professional contacts with politicians and officials may be the best route if this lends credibility; at the same time, government figures often officiate or participate at events taking place in such local facilities as convention centres which can provide a pre/post opportunity for a conversation.

## 9 | Practice your “elevator conversation”:

Often an opportunity will present itself unexpectedly (i.e., during an event occasion as noted above) and there will only be enough time to make an overall comment or two that must generate enough interest to produce a further opportunity.

A very compact statement (such as paraphrasing the Manifesto or using a locally relevant example) may be sufficient to start an engagement but only if it is decided and rehearsed in advance to ensure clarity and an interest in following up.

# 10 | Feedback to your colleagues and stakeholders:

Documenting successful advocacy efforts, government engagement and event outcomes is important in building a stronger evidence base for the industry.

By sharing examples, case studies and lessons learned with peers, destinations and industry organisations can improve future advocacy efforts and strengthen the overall position of business events in public policy discussions.

JMIC and The Iceberg can play an important role in collecting and disseminating these examples so that successful approaches can be replicated elsewhere.

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This document was prepared and issued by the Joint Meetings Industry Council.

# JMIC is grateful for the industry-wide input received in support of the development of this Manifesto.

## FOR MORE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Excerpts of this input can be viewed as part of the 2-part JMIC / Iceberg webinar by accessing links on either of their web sites:

**www.themeetingsindustry.org | www.the-iceberg.org**

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