

# The JMIC Global Manifesto

An Industry Rationale for the Use of Business Events as Primary Agents for Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery and Renewal

Tasked with the need to re-start economies devastated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments right now need tools and platforms that can advance a broad-based recovery in the most effective ways.

We all recognize that the primary value of the Meetings Industry is the role it plays in facilitating and supporting essential exchanges in the areas of professional, corporate, academic and social development. These are integral to not only economic advancement but societal development as a whole.

This sector is therefore a critical element in delivering recovery as well as transition and renewal that can be immediately utilized by governments responding to these requirements.

This document articulates and promotes a set of consistent, high-level arguments. They make the case that our industry should be utilized as a strategic tool for recovery, transition, and renewal.

## Business Events as Strategic Tools for Driving Post-Pandemic Recovery and Renewal

**OUR POSITION** | That the meetings industry, which comprises a range of efficiently interconnected organizers, service providers, suppliers and facilities engaged in the development and delivery of meetings, conferences, exhibitions and related activities (collectively referred to as business events) can and should be utilized as a highly efficient and cost-effective vehicle for driving economic recovery and renewal by providing an essential platform for the economic, academic, professional and business interactions required to re-ignite these sectors.

### Here's Why

15 WAYS BUSINESS EVENTS CREATE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

1

#### Innovation & Reinvention

**Business events drive commerce, innovation, re-invention, knowledge transfer and transition – all critical requirements for recovery:**

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 and re-invention 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 post-pandemic period.



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#### Multi-sector Impacts

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

Business events are an efficient means of supporting the recovery and advancement of a wide range of economic, professional, academic and business sectors. As a result, they can drive activation, renewal and re-engagement across the many different sectors that will need to be stimulated in order to deliver a broad based recovery 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.



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#### Relationships & Trust

**Business events restore relationships and build trust:**

Business events efficiently utilize the **collective power of group dynamics** and thinking to achieve a high level of integration. This is directly relevant to the need to repair the many “disconnects” that will have resulted from measures taken to isolate and distance during the pandemic. They are also about creating and maintaining the **productive networks** which will be critically important in the face of the kinds of global tensions (border closures, transportation shutdowns, isolation measures) that have come about in the course of the pandemic and will persist beyond the time when such initial restrictions are removed.



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#### Diversification & Self-sufficiency

**They facilitate economic diversification and self-sufficiency:**

With the COVID-19 experience having disrupted supply chains and enhanced the evident value of economic self-sufficiency, many communities have realized the **strength and resiliency to be had in a more self-contained and diversified local economy**. Business events facilitate this process by supporting the kinds of exchanges that lead to new relationships, investments and non-traditional business activities that can be used to drive diversification in the local and regional economy, up to and including the creation of new events that engage key interests in a collective approach to selected sectors.



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#### Transition & Renewal

**They are the key to economic and societal transition and to repositioning in the “new” economies of the future:**

Evolving social and economic conditions arising from the pandemic-induced recession means that the new economy will likely be quite different, embodying elements of the experience and knowledge economies that are replacing older models. Business events that accompany recovery will serve as **necessary agents of change and transformation** to ensure a more progressive form of economic activity and a more stable and therefore resilient economy for the future, which is a new goal for governments everywhere.



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#### Talent & Investment

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

Business events, particularly international events, are **magnets for individuals and investment resources** that drive key development and professional sectors. As a result, they are important strategic tools that can be used by a region or destination to selectively stimulate top economic and social development priorities. Criteria for pursuing specific business events can be readily adjusted to focus on areas of specific interest for economic, social and educational development that address government policy priorities for key sector development.



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#### Path to Sustainable Development

**They lead the “renewed” economy toward sustainability:**

A new priority for most governments is a focus on **sustainable development** due to a variety of new agendas (environmental, educational, social equity) that again require productive interactions to succeed. The key elements of sustainability have been embedded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), which are in turn directly addressed by industry events as demonstrated in recent studies that show meetings, conventions and exhibitions in fact address the widest possible spectrum of UNSDG's.



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#### Controlled Environment

**They take place in a highly controlled environment with strong health and safety measures in place and detailed contact tracing information available:**

Because of the highly structured nature of business events and facilities they represent a **much more secure form of gathering relative to other forms of public assembly**. In most cases, participants are pre-registered and organizers have many options for communicating with them in advance of, during and after an event. In addition, facility policies are generally such that rigorous standards are in place to ensure far better compliance with accepted protocols than would be possible in a general public setting or other gatherings such as concerts or sporting events.



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#### Community Legacies

**They leave valuable, relevant legacies in the host community:**

Major business and professional events generate **key legacies for the host community** in terms of destination profile, transferred skills and knowledge, new networks and image enhancement. These legacies can be shaped to address priority community needs through collaboration and creating shared objectives with the organizer, which at the same time is a way for a destination to compete more effectively for new business and re-shape how influential attendees regard that destination in a global context.



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#### Uses Existing Investments

**They have funding mechanisms already in place:**

The nature of business events is that they are **largely user-pay**, which means that they offer huge leverage for any investment. As a result, they are not as capital-intensive as other sectors seeking support but still facilitate the desired outcomes. They also **efficiently utilize existing government investments** such as event facilities, transportation systems and infrastructure already in place such that business incentives can be quickly generated without the need to establish entirely new programs.



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#### Digitization

**They are already responding to the growing movement toward digitization and can deliver content and results in person, via the virtual world or both:**

As the world struggles with the disruptions associated with the pandemic a benefit arising is that **most business events today have a companion “virtual” component that can further leverage global exposure**, and these have become increasingly sophisticated. This means that the potential impacts of an event can be extended to a global audience, with correspondingly greater image and legacy benefits for the host community.

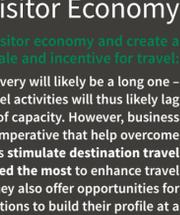


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#### Laboratories for Public Policy

**They can be used as “laboratories” for government policies by shifting the risk for testing new re-opening and business development strategies:**

Many aspects of the re-opening equation carry significant risks, including the possibility of a return to lockdown and the need to experiment with alternate economic recovery strategies. In these respects, **business events can be valuable tools for testing new approaches in a safe, well-contained environment** before they are more generally deployed, effectively testing both the direction to a “new normal” and the appetite for alternative business and social strategies.



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#### Support for the Visitor Economy

**They support the visitor economy and create a specific, timely rationale and incentive for travel:**

The road to travel recovery will likely be a long one – and many “optional” travel activities will thus likely lag far behind the restoration of capacity. However, business events offer a time-sensitive imperative that help overcome reluctance to travel and thus stimulate destination travel in a time when it is needed the most to enhance travel and hospitality revenues. They also offer opportunities for second or third tier destinations to build their profile at a time when many travelers are looking for new options.



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#### Image & Reputation

**Signature business events can make (or restore) a reputation as a business centre:**

Prominent business events generate profile and prestige for the host destination in a globally-visible way. In the changed world that will emerge from the COVID-19 experience established destinations will need to **consolidate their leadership position** under new conditions. At the same time, there will be new opportunities for other destinations to raise their profile as attractive business destinations if they can offer alternate attributes such as environmental quality and safety which will be increasingly in demand in a post-pandemic world.



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#### Measureable ROI

**Their outputs are measureable – so ROI can be clearly demonstrated:**

While the value proposition for business events includes both the economic impacts of delegate spending (tourism benefits) to economic and professional development outcomes they generate, reliable measures including sophisticated economic impact models, are already in place for both. 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.



### FIVE 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 | CONTROLLED GATHERINGS

Business events are **not public gatherings but highly controlled assemblies** and should be classified and distinguished as distinct from generic mass gatherings for the purposes of re-opening policies.

#### 3 | ALIGNMENT WITH 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 effectively utilized for this purpose.

Financial support and increased competitiveness can often be delivered by offering relief to event organizers for the use of existing government-owned facilities rather than creating new incentive programs.

#### 2 | ECONOMIC vs TOURISM POLICY

Business events are **economic, scientific and professional in nature** and only incidentally tourism-related (in that they support the hospitality economy). They should therefore be seen in the **context of trade, economic development, social and investment policies** rather than tourism policy.

#### 4 | AVAILABLE FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Existing investments in infrastructure and institutions should be reviewed for their potential to enhance competitiveness in the business events market.

#### 5 | AN INTEGRAL PART OF A ‘VISION’ FOR THE FUTURE

With governments today being called upon to articulate and demonstrate a vision for both **health and safety management** and economic recovery, business events can be incorporated into such strategies as strategic tools to achieve the stated goals.

This document prepared and issued by the Joint Meetings Industry Council  
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