FEATURE
SUSTAINABILITY: WHERE TO START TO FINALLY “WALK THE TALK”?
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EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY

COP26, the 2021 United Nations climate change conference, adjourned a couple of weeks ago in Glasgow.

It will be fair to say, we all had a bitter sweet feeling about the conference and its outcomes. On one hand, all the world leaders are showing commitment to climate change. On the other hand, we all felt, ‘too little too late’.

I was actually more encouraged from what was happening outside the conference venue and in many more cities around the world. About 100,000 people (most of them youth activist, next generation representatives) marched in Glasgow to demand more action on the climate crisis. This protest was the biggest during the COP26 summit and took place alongside hundreds of similar events around the world.

Ugandan activist Vanessa Nakate told protesters “Leaders rarely have the courage to lead. It takes citizens, people like you and me, to rise up and demand action. And when we do that in great enough numbers, our leaders will move.”

Looking at the business event industry, it can be perceived as not sustainable. However, we all know the importance of bringing people together. We all understand there’s no real replacement to face to face meetings.

So how do we go about this? Sustainability is not only about climate change, but also about what we leave to the next generation when it comes to environmental, economic and social issues. Looking at the 17 UNSDGs we can clearly see that sustainability is also about: Quality education, Gender Equality, Good health and Wellbeing and much more. The meetings we manage and the way we manage them can impact and advance those goals.

So, if we follow Vanessa Nakate, it is our reasonability as event professionals to ensure we create more sustainable events while reducing our carbon footprint. We need to lead by example - And it must start today!

Yours,
Ori

Ori Lahav, President 2020-2023

The new Omicron COVID-19 variant has had an immediate impact on global travel with governments imposing restrictions yet again. The potential impact to economies and the global meetings industry could be severe in the short and long-term.

We have also seen activism by people from all backgrounds and of all ages, around the globe, bringing increased attention to carbon emissions and environmental sustainability in general.

We can play our part to support and drive solutions. It is quite clearly more important than ever before that organisations and leaders in the business and professional events industry continue to demonstrate positive steps to encourage and conduct good practices in a consistent manner in order to support both safe and carbon-conscious travel and meetings whilst not losing focus on how these meetings can contribute to the betterment of societies.

Contributing to the achievement of the 17 UNSDGs are fundamental to us doing so. This edition of The PCO focusses primarily on environmental sustainability and shines a light on some of the incredible and interesting initiatives and thoughts of IAPCO Members around the globe. Knowing the great work many of our members do, I am confident that each actually plays a much bigger part in addressing and supporting many of the sustainability issues identified in the UNSDGs.

IAPCO strives to create positive impacts on as many of the UNSDGs as possible through our own activities. The recent announcement of IAPCO being a Supporting Association of the Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge focussing on UNSDG 13 –Climate Actionwhilst Quality Education (#4), Gender Equality (#5), Life below water (#14) and Partnerships for the Goals (#17), to name only a few, reinforces that commitment.

Sincerely,
Martin

Martin Boyle, CEO

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO
MEET...
ALESSANDRA DAMANT,
THE NEW IAPCO CO-OPTED COUNCIL MEMBER

Alessandra is based in Australia where she is the National Conference Organising team leader at Arinex. She was selected to be the next generation co-opted Council Member. Only days after her selection, she remotely attended her first Council meeting. We asked her a few questions on this occasion.

**What do you like most in your job?**
I enjoy having the ability to make every conference unique and provide a positive delegate experience that lives well beyond the event.

**Strangest work moment?**
When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit and most of my virtual onsite team was based in another State in Australia 1000 kms away. It was very strange not being able to be physically on the ground with the Arinex team.

**What made you apply to join the Council?**
I wanted to contribute and network with global PCO’s, to see how they operate worldwide and grow from these learnings and relationships.

**What are your goals joining the Council?**
I want to have an active role in helping shape our industry for future generations. Our industry is evolving rapidly as a result of COVID-19 and it would be fantastic to be a part of and contribute to positive advancements and change in the conference and events sector.

**How do you see our industry developing?**
Accessibility is going to be a key focus for PCO’s with the pandemic having opened up to once untapped audiences by going virtual. I think there will be a lot more pressure to ensure wider diversity and to be fully accessible to delegates who may have been denied the opportunity in the past. This might be via hybrid formats or sourcing delegate sponsorship and grants to enable more inclusion. Inclusion, along with more sustainable approach to events will be fully embraced.

**What are you looking forward to in 2022?**
Being able to travel safely within Australia and the world anytime I want.

**Any sustainability tips that you would like to share with us?**
Control what you can: choose venues and suppliers with the best sustainability practices and think about sustainability in every conference element starting with client objectives all the way through to event delivery.

**This or that?**

Alessandra Damant

**Coffee** ➔ **Tea**
**Red in winter, rose in summer**

**White** ➔ **Red**

**Beach** ➔ **Mountains**

**Australia** ➔ **France**

**Call** ➔ **Text**

**Virtual** ➔ **In-person**

**WFH** ➔ **Office**

**Twitter** ➔ **Insta**

**Run at 100KMH** ➔ **Fly at 10KMH**

That’s an impossible question to answer and I feel like I would make half my family angry if I answered!

WFH or in the office? I like a balance of both, currently doing 2 days WFH and 3 days in the office!

Insta, too much noise on Twitter
Join us in Lillehammer, Norway in-person or online for our first IAPCO EDGE Hybrid Seminar. EDGE Seminars are designed for meeting professionals and provide a unique, highly immersive and interactive experience. Attendance is limited to ensure maximum engagement.

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www.iapcoedgelillehammer.org
It has been more than 18 months since the IAPCO Council last met in person and although not all members could travel to Athens, those that could not connected to the meeting virtually. Those there in person, enjoyed being reunited and exploring the city of Athens between work sessions.

It was also the first occasion for all to meet the new HQ team. Work focussed on plans for the organization for next year’s activities from education content and delivery to new engagement tools for members and down to further commitment to sustainability throughout all IAPCO activities.

The Council visited some of the venues Athens can offer to a Congress, starting with the Megaron. Megaron is Athens International Conference Centre (6000 pax capacity), located in the centre of Athens, offers stunning aesthetics coupled with cutting edge technology.

The visit continued with 3 gems that can host social events. Art lovers will appreciate the National Gallery. After an extensive remodel this year, the Gallery hosts the largest single collection of Greek modern art and sculpture, dating from the post-Byzantine era to the present.

The Acropolis Museum displays sculptures, ceramics, and other treasures from the Acropolis in a 14,000 square-metre glass and concrete landmark, designed by the architect Bernard Tschumi.

The tour ended at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre, Renzo Piano’s beacon of sustainability and houses a cultural and recreational centre for all ages. The SNFCC is the largest cultural/educational project ever undertaken in Greece. Thank you to the City of Athens for hosting such a wonderful meeting!

On November 30, IAPCO and the City of Athens signed a new Destination Partnership during IBTM World 2021. IAPCO is delighted to count Athens as its 8th destination partner. The partnership will start on January 1, 2022.
As the world’s attention turns to sustainability following the recent COP26, Arinex is doing its bit by working towards carbon-neutral certification. It is expected to become the first Australian events management agency to become certified in the next few weeks.

As physical events continue to flourish once again, we cannot forget the impact that these events have on the environment if not purposefully designed.

Worldwide lockdowns and travel restrictions, which for our industry meant a sudden move to online events, helped reduce global carbon emissions in the first half of 2020 by as much as 7 per cent. However climate scientists have shown that global emissions have had a steady growth since (aside from a slight dip late 2020/early 2021 representing the second wave experienced by the northern hemisphere). It is up to all of us to show the path forward for sustainable events – to impart ideas, to learn from mistakes and to celebrate positive outcomes.

Achieving carbon neutral certification
Arinex has been working hard to do its part and is very excited to soon become the first Australian PCO to gain carbon neutral certification. Arinex CEO Nicole Walker said:

"We are excited to continue to lead the way for our clients, working creatively to reduce the footprint of their events and to continue our collaboration with other partners who are also leaders in this space.”

Ms Walker adds this is part of a long-term commitment: “We are acutely aware that this certification is only one step in our sustainability story – it’s not the be-all and end-all.
The important thing is to follow through with this for every event that we manage and to assist our clients in reducing the carbon footprints of their events while showing them they need not compromise on quality.”

The certification is expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

**Carbon neutral case study**
The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand’s (EIANZ) set a goal of carbon neutral certification for its 2018 Conference. It took careful planning, given delegates were attending the Sydney event from across Australia and New Zealand.

Arinex Project Manager Erin Kelly explains: “Organisers were determined not to pass on to delegates the cost of offsetting this event, so we had to be clever about the conference design in order to reduce the event footprint in the first place, which would therefore reduce the outlay.”

Arinex assisted the client to scrutinise all aspects of conference organising, from menu design to accessibility. Choice of venue played a big role, as did the marketing strategy in order to bring delegates on the sustainability journey. With the support of two key organisations – Pangolin Associates, who undertook work on a pro bono basis to measure the carbon footprint of the conference, along with the NSW Division of EIANZ which financed the purchase of the carbon credits as a legacy contribution to EIANZ 2018, carbon neutrality was achieved. It was the 10th certified carbon-neutral event in Australia.

**Collaborating to achieve net-zero**
Of course, all of this work is part of a bigger goal as the world works towards net-zero. This has been brought to the fore with the recent COP 26, which also highlighted the gains that are yet to be made.

It will take world-wide collaboration to reverse the impacts of climate change – we can’t rely on a handful of few to do the right thing. While governments may be slow to act, we individuals still have a moral obligation to play our part in reducing the footprint and we can achieve this in the daily work we carry out. Where there is change, there is opportunity. The international events industry is well placed to lead the way given its already strong ties and abilities to share knowledge. International organisations such as IAPCO already play a key role in promoting this and celebrating success, and this will only continue to grow. As sustainable event management continues to evolve, we will see the birth of new ideas, new businesses and renewed opportunities. Instead of fearing change, we should lean into it.

Arinex looks forward to hearing what our colleagues around the world are doing in this space and to likewise share our experiences as we all continue to drive this area. We congratulate IAPCO for shining a spotlight on this topic for this edition and thank the other contributors for also sharing their insights.

**What’s happening in Australia**
Progress is being quickly made in Australia and optimism has grown following our Government’s formal target to reach net-zero by 2050. Here are some highlights from convention bureaux and convention centres;

- Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) is well on its way towards achieving the coveted EarthCheck Master status.
- Brisbane’s 2021-22 Sustainability Action Plan lays out a clear sustainability agenda for the visitor economy, connected to the region’s narrative.
- Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre (BCEC) has achieved 10 consecutive years of audited best practice in sustainability with EarthCheck Platinum Certification.
- ICC Sydney is a 6-star green star convention centre and has launched a number of sustainable initiatives including an award-winning waste reduction program, banning plastic water bottles and more.
- Melbourne is proudly a top 10 sustainable global destination, as recognised by Global Destination Sustainability index.
- Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) plans to be 100 per cent powered by renewable electricity by 2028.
- Perth has set an emissions reduction target of 30 per cent by 2030.
- Sydney’s flagship program Sustainable Sydney 2030 defines a set of goals to make the city green, global and connected as much as possible by 2030.
Japan’s efforts towards post-pandemic recovery seem to be paying off. With a domestic vaccination rate of over 70% (as of Nov 5th, 2021), a third dose vaccination booster will soon be made available. There has been a significant decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases in Japan, with under 300 daily cases nationwide for the seventh straight day (as of Nov 5th, 2021). In addition to the above, foreign nationals are now allowed to enter Japan for short business trips, studying abroad and technical intern training. In principle, those inoculated with government-approved vaccines can reduce their quarantine period from the current 10 days down to a minimum of 3 days, provided their actions during their stay follow a previously approved plan and are supervised by their host company or organization. These changes are expected to boost international business activities. Currently all regions have lifted the state of emergency, and there are no restrictions for domestic travel in Japan. Restaurants can now serve alcohol and operate without restrictions on opening hours.

The latest information is available at https://www.japan.travel/en/coronavirus/

Under the above circumstances, international conferences such as the 17th World Conference on Earthquake Engineering (17WCEE, Sendai, Sep. 27 to Oct. 2) and the 19th International Symposium on Atherosclerosis (ISA2021, Kyoto, Oct. 24 to 27) have just taken place in Japan, albeit both in a hybrid format with measures to prevent infections. The restriction on large events that limited attendees to 10,000 people was lifted from the 1st of November (however the limit on attendees to 50% of venue capacity is still in place). This means a number of large events can now take place.

That being said, we now need to provide clear reasons for holding face-to-face events and demonstrate the merits of gathering at destinations rather than virtually. According to The Safe Cities Index 2021 report by The Economist Intelligence Unit, Tokyo ranks as the fifth safest city in the world, and Japan is a leading destination for international conferences in the Asian region. Recently, we have seen two successful bids secured for Japan, for the 27th Asia-Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology Congress (APLAR) and the 2024 IEEE World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI). We recognize that in-person conferences and business meetings are significant experiences, and we value face-to-face events. Is Japan worth visiting as a business traveller? From the Japan Convention Bureau we say yes! And we believe that the hosting of business events in Japan will bring unforgettable experiences to your delegates.
Over the past year, we have all undoubtedly planned as well as attended various digital meetings. Some were inspiring—perhaps even enjoyable— but several have left us with nothing more than a sort of digital fatigue, yearning for real-life get-togethers.

Hence, the first-ever virtual German Addiction Congress, which took place in September with 90 live sessions and more than 200 speakers, was faced with a challenging question: how to convince the participants that this was not going to be another informative-yet-dull virtual meeting?

To this end, the program committee and CPO HANSER SERVICE as the congress organizer focused not only on having notable international keynote speakers and varied topics but also tried to mix it up by adding classical program patterns and highlighting the ‘infotaining’ character of the congress. The scientific program included scientific symposia and thematic lecture sessions, poster walks, controversial documentaries, and political panels. In addition, workshops and meet-the-expert sessions were beneficial for both addiction therapists working in practice as well as young scientists. The event was rounded out by one author’s reading about her personal experiences as a former alcoholic, as well as free counselling sessions for patients and their relatives.

“The COVID-19 pandemic led to a surge in digitalization not only for the addiction care. This congress sends out an important signal: We move on! We stick to it!” said Jens Spahn, Federal Minister of Health, patron of the German Addiction Congress 2021. Given that performing arts and musical education play a key part in today’s field of addiction therapy, it was obviously a necessary component of the virtual meeting. For instance, the children’s philharmonic choir of Dresden welcomed the participants with a concert produced specifically for the German Addiction Congress. Additionally, students of the Music Academy of Frankfurt framed the scientific sessions as a common and recurring thread during the breaks, and performed during the closing ceremony. Arguably the absolute highlight, however, was the thematically fitting dance performance ‘Addiction to…’ during the virtual social evening, followed by an interactive artists’ talk in the digital networking area.

In short, the congress and its diverse topics—such as smoking cessation, internet addiction, and addictive drug use during lock downs—paired with myriad digital formats and cultural interludes, were met with a positive response from participants. Nevertheless, the host city Berlin hopes to welcome the German Addiction Congress on-site in 2023. “Addiction continues to affect a large group of our population. Here, at CPO HANSER SERVICE, we are proud to be able to support initiatives striving to fight against such disorders.” says Inge Hanser, Managing Shareholder.

The German Addiction Congress takes place every second year in Berlin with around 600 participants and has been organized by CPO HANSER SERVICE since 2012.

The video of the performance of the Philharmonic Children’s Choir Dresden can be viewed here.

As senior project manager for national and international conferences, Natalie always strives to get the most out of every event and meeting – for the participants as well as for her customers. She started with CPO HANSER SERVICE in 2018 as Project Manager Congresses and has managed several scientific meetings the past 4 years.
Ensuring Melbourne is a sustainable destination for business events is a key mission of Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB). Committed to the role, MCB works to secure business events for Melbourne that will have a positive social, environmental and economic impact for the city, and will reiterate its position globally as a safe, sustainable and innovative destination.

Acting on sustainability takes commitment from everyone and MCB is proud to work with its partner Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), who has cemented itself as a leader in the sustainability space.

Over the years MCEC has implemented initiatives that include: its involvement in the Melbourne Renewable Energy Project, appointing a full-time sustainability manager and championing local produce.

Prioritising sustainability, the organisation is committed to championing innovative ideas to provide better outcomes for the community, customers and its environmental footprint.

Building on its sustainability credentials, MCEC is proud to have again achieved gold status through EarthCheck, the world’s leading business advisory group specialising in sustainability and destination management for the travel and tourism industry.

MCEC has been EarthCheck certified since 2009 and has proudly achieved gold status since 2016. By continuing to work with EarthCheck, MCEC joins other industry leaders who are taking meaningful steps towards resolving some of the very real issues that face the planet.

There are many innovative programs underway, focusing on improving the sustainability of the city and enhancing the delegate experience. The city’s sustainable practices include transport services, infrastructure, green-city programs and environmental initiatives.

On December 2nd, IAPCO and AIPC released a research paper on hybrid events, as part of their alliance announced on October 25th. The document provides a unique insight on how the industry’s approach to hybrid has evolved, the challenges addressed and the ones still to be tackled, and it offers a view on the possible avenues ahead of us.

The event industry is one of innovation and creativity, in a continuous search to deliver unique experiences enabling the exchange of knowledge, stimulation collaboration and driving trade worldwide. The pandemic stimulated us to go even faster and bolder. By creating and implementing digital solutions in record time, we were able to continue to connect communities worldwide.

The learning curve in doing so is steep and there is still a lot to do before excellence is delivered in terms of service, business model, experience, etc. Both organizers and convention centers are still in the process of navigating through uncharted territories, learning both from each other and from other stakeholders and even other industries.

This is the key reason why AIPC and IAPCO decided to create a joint research paper on hybrid events, based on input from each other’s member-communities and enriched with valuable insights from other stakeholders in the event value chain.

The paper is the result of more than 30 interviews with industry thought leaders, combined with in-depth research through 30 reports and 75 articles. While the report does not have the ambition to provide the ultimate answers to all the questions related to hybrid events, it does provide unique insights on how the industry’s thinking on hybrid has evolved over the last 18 months.

“Hybrid gives us opportunities to completely rethink our business models. We can become the Netflix of the events industry, by new audience discovering, bringing content in creative ways and establishing innovative pricing models. This paper is a great source of inspiration for doing so”, says Greg O’Dell, President of AIPC.

This was echoed by Ori Lahav, President of IAPCO: “The hybrid market, to the extent that one can call it really new, is still ill-defined, and that many clients and venues are still struggling with giving hybrid a place. It is the role and responsibility of our associations to provide our communities with insights and guidance on how to embrace this new reality”.

IAPCO and AIPC have a shared ambition: raise the standards of service to excellence. This research paper, based on input from the members of both communities, is another step of making this a tangible reality.

The paper is available to read here on the IAPCO website.
There are so many ways that we do harm to our environment, and sadly it seems too little is being done to stop the damage being done. However, there are ways that we, on a personal level, can make small changes to our everyday habits and behave in a more environmentally friendly way. Congrex has taken this idea to heart, inspired by one of our core values: Care.

Every department of the company has created and put into action a different sustainability project within the last year, something which will be of benefit to the environment, both in the short and long term.

Before we present the first of these projects, we would like to mention some facts and figures that show the scale of a growing problem.

According to the World Wide Fund For Nature, plastic production increased twentyfold between 1964 and 2017, and most of this is used for packaging.

And more than half of this plastic (4.9 billion tons out of 8.3 billion tons produced worldwide), ends up in landfills or is simply discarded and left to pollute the planet.

For this reason, two of our sustainability projects focused on the reduction of plastic waste, both in the short and long term.

Project 1: Our Grocery Bag: Waste reduction, reusable grocery bags and buying unpackaged goods.
Departments: Accommodation, Registration, Sales & Marketing

The registration and accommodation teams have set themselves the goal of collecting face-masks and any other litter on the street in order to properly dispose of it. The sales and marketing team collected rubbish during a walk in the woods, and they decided to stop using plastic bags completely when shopping in the future. Fruit and vegetables for example, are now only bought unpackaged and taken home in environmentally friendly, reusable canvas or cloth bags.

After tidying up some of Basel’s streets and no longer using plastic bags, we then turned our attention to the contents of our new reusable grocery bags.

According to a Greenpeace report, 30,000 tons of pesticides are used every year by the agriculture industry in Germany alone. This causes untold damage to our wildlife, both animals and insects, and eventually finds its way to us humans. One way to help to reduce the use of pesticides is to buy certified organic products from local organic farmers. This is exactly what the sustainability projects of the Accounting, IT and Sponsorship departments have been doing.
Project 2: What’s in our grocery bag?
Smarter shopping choices.
Department: Finance, IT and Sponsorship

In Switzerland, as in many other countries, there are plenty of places where you can ‘pick your own’ fruit and vegetables directly from the fields of local farms. Our accounting team visited one of these farms near Basel and collected strawberries from one such field which is open to the public. The products are grown organically, without the use of harmful chemicals, and no planes, ships or refrigerated trucks are needed to bring the goods to the customers, as everything is grown locally.

A good alternative, for those who do not have this kind of farm nearby, are local farmer’s markets. This is the ‘sustainable-swap’ of our IT department. Buying as much from local markets as possible helps nature in several ways, and plastic waste can again be reduced because the products are offered unpacked in boxes, and shoppers can take them home in their own reusable bags.

Both sustainability projects show easy ways to put more eco-friendly products into our shopping bags and ultimately, into our bodies. And so, our latest sustainability project addresses the origin of almost all of these products which we can buy at the local farmer markets. It requires a small but extremely important insect - the bee.

According to National Geographic, about ninety percent of all flowering plants and seventy-five percent of grains rely on insect pollination. Without the humble bee, most of our food could not be grown. With this in mind, the dramatic decline in the numbers of bees has become a serious problem that is almost entirely attributable to human activity. Two reasons mentioned by the Swiss Food Safety Office are the lack of habitat and the increasing amount of land that is no longer cultivated and has been built on.

This means that the typical flight distance from the bee’s hive to a suitable feeding area has become longer and more difficult. Due to extensive construction, the bee’s habitat is becoming smaller and bee-friendly flowering plants are ever more difficult to find. For this reason, we at Congrex are glad that we could play a small part in protecting these insects.

Action 3: Where is the food in our grocery bag coming from?
Rethinking the origin of our food and making a positive change.
Departments: Association and Sponsorship

The Sponsorship Team created a new home for a colony of bees. One of the team members is a beekeeper and was able to build a new bee hive, which is now on his balcony. For those who are not up to this kind of project, we are happy to present an easier alternative. This was suggested by the Association Team, who had the idea to shorten the long flight distance for some city bees by planting a variety of different bee-friendly flowers on the balcony of our Congrex offices.

With these three projects, we have shown how anyone can reconsider their shopping choices and make it more sustainable. We started by simply changing plastic bags to reusable cloth bags, and then focused on the content of these bags, which should contain as much pesticide-free, local and seasonal products as possible. Finally, we took a closer look at the origin of these goods, as we all want to enjoy them for many years to come. This is only possible with the help of our busy bees, which we can support and protect by taking some simple action.
COP26 - the United Nations global warming conference beginning at the end of October 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, is considered a crucial moment for efforts to address the threat of climate change. This event marks a decisive step for the meeting industry too with the launch of the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative. It is a first of its kind collaborative effort to decrease the carbon emissions of industry-related operations by 2050, in line with global efforts.

However, the number of initiatives around sustainability in meetings and events seem to cause a tough time for stakeholders that are trying to determine where to begin. If you too are struggling, this article is for you. Here are a few actionable steps to get you moving in the right direction.

• **Step 1: Find an A-Team**
Starting such an initiative begins with forming a team that will dedicate time to move forward sustainability initiatives in the company and with its clients. As in the case of Kenes, we had an open call and recruited talents that are passionate about the topic and with diverse backgrounds in sustainability and nature preservation, with a team leader that specialised in sustainable event management. The so-called dream team then defined a clear goal towards which they are operating. Furthermore, a meeting schedule was put in place to keep the work flowing, and the work was distributed according to the expertise of each teammate.

If there is a lack of human resources within the company, the other way to begin is by investing in hiring a third-party consultant. In the industry, there are a lot of proficient companies that can guide you through the process.

• **Step 2: Align with the UN SDGs**
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth - all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The UN SDGs provide clear guidelines in terms of sustainability, so make sure to find those that align with your company’s mission and vision.
At Kenes we selected four that aligned perfectly with what we want to achieve. Selecting between three to five will keep your company on point and moving, with the option to always add more, once the first selection has been assumed by your corporate culture and is a natural part of the everyday operation.

• **Step 3: The Low-Hanging Fruit**

With a powerful base in place, the next step will be to identify and work towards low-hanging fruits. Do not underestimate their value. This is the perfect way to start and get your team moving, and each achievement is already achieving so much more than doing nothing at all. It will act as a boost of confidence and encourage all employees when they see the impact they bring. This will open the opportunity, after a set period of time, to navigate through more complex goals, with complete buy-in and support from all team members.

Some ideas on where to start, based on the Kenes experience:

- Write a Sustainability Policy – this is a document that will spell out your goals and will give you clarity on your direction
- Prepare marketing and storytelling activities – use storytelling around your sustainability actions and activities to open conversations and collaborations with different stakeholders
- Start measuring – there are free carbon calculators online

that you can use, and do not forget to set some key performance indicators around your set of SDGs to measure progress

- **Minimums** – ask your team to achieve at least three pre-set practices that fit their line of work – give them a list of ten that they can choose from but set the bar lower at the beginning. And an especially important moment – collect feedback on those that they could not achieve so that you can fine-tune your processes
- Organise training and open calls for your team – give your team members knowledge, but also, ask them to openly share their struggles, as many of these activities will be new to them

• **Step 4: Zero Everything**

The ultimate goal is working towards net-zero carbon emission and zero-waste events. It will be a process, driven, developed, and amended where needed by your sustainability team.

The path will push the company to experiment, test, measure, but most of all – to act.

The important part is to start. Once the first step is taken, as with everything, everything else falls into place and all processes will get smoother with time. But please, just start.

**Magdalina Atanassova** is Marcom Director at Kenes Group, where she leads the marketing communications team in planning and implementing brand strategies and activities for the Group.

*Magdalina is known for her passion for sustainability - she was part of the international delegation for the development of ISO20121 and is on the Advisory Board of the Sustainable Event Alliance (SEA) since its inception.*
SUSTAINABILITY: WHERE TO START TO FINALLY “WALK THE TALK”?

Author: Mélanie Delaplanche
Despite the disappointing results of the recent COP26, environmental and social responsibility are on top of the agenda and are here to stay. Legislation is tightening up, people are becoming more aware and they are expecting authentic sustainability initiatives from organisations.

Events are a key component of a communication strategy and a unique opportunity to showcase authenticity and demonstrate that your organisation walks the sustainability talk. Yet it is difficult to know where to start. Here are a few suggestions:

Why developing a sustainability plan is not an option anymore

Civil society, governments, international institutions, profit and not for profit organisations,…literally all the stakeholders of our societies have by now realised that things need to change. The Deloitte Global 2021 Millennial and Gen Z survey clearly shows that these generations are holding themselves and others accountable on societal topics like the environment, social equality but also discrimination. And it’s not just them, the Global risk report 2021 of the World Economic rates human-made environmental damage, erosion of societal cohesion as part of the most imminent threats (likely to occur in the next two years).

The corporate world understand they have to play their part too if they want to remain profitable and attract talents in the long run. The legislation is tightening-up: the EU announcement earlier this year about a mandatory legislation on due diligence, ensuring respect for human rights and the environment throughout the entire supply chain will change the game.

This is for the general context, let’s now zoom into the events world.

The excellent UFI and Explori report about sustainability in the exhibition industry, released in July 2021 reveals that, on a global scale, almost three out of four exhibitors and visitors believe a tradeshow should display a strong commitment to sustainability.

About one in three exhibitors and visitors say they would not attend a trade show that does not have a responsible approach to sustainability.

Interestingly, the COVID-19 crisis has brought-up sustainability as an incentive to attend tradeshows up the agenda for exhibitors (from 9% in 2021 to 12% in 2021), but not for visitors (no change).

The statement is clear, sustainability is important, where to start and what to do? Here are some suggestions.

Plastic waste – only the visible tip of the iceberg

To the question “In which of the following areas, if any, should trade show organisers prioritise introducing or enhancing sustainability measures?” 24% of exhibitors and 25% of visitors rate “Plastic bottles, lanyards, bags, give aways and swag” as their top consideration. « Booth construction & disposal » is however the top priority (17%) for the exhibition industry.

Well, although plastic is a major concern and has dire ecological consequences at all stages of its lifecycle, the focus should be elsewhere. Understandably, it is the visible tip of the iceberg and all eyes are on plastic use. It is good, but not enough. The industry needs to focus on where it can make a real difference.
Travel – the elephant in the room

When we look at the significant impacts of a conference, travel usually comes first. It is the elephant in the room, air travel has a negative impact on the environment with an important carbon footprint. But events are a lot about face to face interaction, emotions and connections. They will not disappear, no-one wants that.

What are the options then? Well, the classic reduce and offset. But it is also an opportunity to raise awareness on alternative travel modes, and showcase the positive impacts an event can bring to communities.

There are several ways to reduce travel impact:

Travel less: one positive aspect of the COVID-19 crisis is that it is now more acceptable to not travel, and event organisers have more often than not managed to attract bigger audiences through virtual or hybrid events.

Travel differently: incentives to use the train and public transport (offer a reduction on the attendance fee, inform about carbon impact of various travel modes). Advice on preferring direct flights and traveling light will not make a big difference, but will encourage behaviour change.

Offset the carbon emissions generated by travel, once measures have been taken to limit those.

So yes, air travel has a (very) negative impact on climate change, this is why I believe we should ensure the event is going to be worth it when we book a plane ticket.

But travel also brings a lot of positive impacts. Examples of positive impacts generated by people traveling are the networking opportunities, educational content shared among participants, cultural benefits of discovering other cultures. The economic impacts of events on the local communities through employment and local development opportunities (in some cases), charitable actions and legacy are important to outline too.

Exhibition building: an easy win

Exhibition construction (including shipping) and disposal is not so surprisingly identified as a top priority for the exhibition industry. This aspect is key: by tackling the negative impacts of booth construction & disposal, organisers can communicate about good practices too.

Establish guidance and rules for the exhibitors, identify and involve your stakeholders. For example, deciding that wood should only be sourced from sustainably managed forests, that a certain percentage of booth materials should be from reused and reusable materials could be a first step. Hiring an exhibition waste manager could also be a good idea as this person will assist your exhibitors during the planning and on site to segregate the waste in the right streams. The venue obviously has a major influence on this aspect too.

Food waste – a way to engage with the audience

Food waste is high on the visitor agendas. Good news, it means that it is a strong lever to engage with the audience. As the best waste is the one that doesn’t exist, asking participants to confirm attendance to meals will allow to better adjust ordered quantities, it is an opportunity to explain that this aspect is important and that you are doing something about it.

Don’t forget to measure – it is a long process

Change is unsettling, and it is sometimes difficult to know where to start from. My advice is to start with the easy wins, it builds-up confidence and gets the ball rolling. Then look at how performance can be improved over time, it means that you’ll have to start measuring your efforts, like the carbon footprint of travel or waste, the percentage of food waste, the number of plastic bottles or cups saved, etc… Transparency and authenticity are of paramount importance. Not achieving a target is no big deal, as long you have identified the reasons. Integrating sustainability is a lengthy but rewarding process. It generates co-creation and innovation.

Music and cultural festivals’ sustainability approach is quite inspirational. We Love green in France, La Semo in Belgium, the FME (Festival de Musiques Emergentes) in Montreal are concrete and inspiring examples of how these large gatherings, well known for generating important negative environmental impacts are addressing the challenge of waste. The organisers are fostering collaboration, facilitating
education and encouraging innovation. Welcome to the Village in the Netherlands, a music and art event of almost 10,000 people, believes in the power of innovation rather than awareness. They do this by teaming-up with start-ups and test concrete solutions rather than just sharing interesting information (article from Fast company here).

**Why the parallel with festivals? The “festivalisation” of events is a trend that has been growing lately in our industry, so why not also adopt the good practice of the most virtuous and innovative festivals?**

Associations have a similar positive influential role to play with their audiences by integrating sustainability into their conference programmes and implementing actual sustainable initiatives and communicate about it.

The results of 1,500 events organisers and suppliers’ survey are confirming that sustainability is more than a trend: The Regenerative Revolution, published in October 2020 by the IMEX Group indicate that in January before the pandemic, 90% of respondents agreed that an increasing focus on sustainability was important for the events industry. When asked again in May, after the pandemic had begun, 95 percent said their organisations were committed to developing more sustainable practices (source pcma.org).

What are your commitments?

Founder of Sustainability Addict and co-founder of The Sustainable effect, an association of sustainability consultants focusing on the events and cultural sectors in Belgium, Mélanie strives to empower her clients so that they gain confidence in their ability to define and implement responsible and sustainable practices in their organization or department. Mélanie has more than 20 years of experience in the international events and business tourism sector, including 10 years of CSR consulting for large companies, destinations (DMC) and agencies in the event sector,
Strong interpersonal skills are a sign of a high emotional intelligence quotient (EQ). Highly emotionally intelligent individuals are likely to become transformational leaders. In this article, you will find out how transformational leadership was the key to the Kenes Group successful transition through the turbulent times of the COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing a method that associations can use to nurture their boards and members' leadership skills.

In March 2020, when the world went on an unprecedented global lockdown, several associations were counting on Kenes Group to deliver top of the line professional conferences within the following few months. The 2nd Focus Meeting on Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Diseases, AAT-AD/PD™ 2020, scheduled to take place in Vienna in April, was turned to fully virtual by Kenes in under three weeks. From April to October of the same year, in a record time of six months, the Kenes IT team designed, developed, and coded their self-owned events platform, VirtuOz, while simultaneously operating many other virtual meetings relying on third-party suppliers.

“With COVID-19 everything changed - IT suddenly became the focus, the all-around player. It was challenging but we managed because we held meetings at least twice a week to keep the information flowing.”

“Soon we understood the magnitude of the changes that we were bringing to the company, leading it on a new path. Everyone worked more than 300 hours a month to make this possible”, explains Uzi Drori, Information Systems Director at Kenes Group.
These remarkable results were an outcome of the Kenes long cultivated transformational leaders, who day to day create a vision beyond their immediate self-interest that influences their teams to perform over their perceived capabilities. Transformational leaders have high quotients of emotional intelligence, which is the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions through strong essential, interpersonal skills such as active listening, decision-making, rapport, assertiveness, and empathy.

The five characteristics of transformational leaders, according to the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM), are known as the 5Is: idealised attributes (IA), idealised behaviours (IB), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS), and individualised consideration (IC). These are directly correlated to the abovementioned essential interpersonal skills, intrinsic to leaders who build trust, act with integrity, inspire others, encourage innovative thinking and coach people who ultimately deliver in an outstanding manner.

With the understanding that leadership itself is an emotion-laden process, Kenes Group has nurtured a family-like culture, legacy of the founder Gideon Rivlin who passed away in January 2021 and whose son, Dan Rivlin, is currently leading the business. CEO Dan Rivlin’s approach to the unprecedented circumstances brought by the global pandemic involved the implementation of Situation Rooms with the Management and companywide monthly updates since April 2020 to establish direct communication with his employees regarding administrative decisions.

“It seemed that during this period with fewer meetings, somehow we communicated more and more efficiently. We saw it internally, within the different teams, departments, and offices alike, who, inspired by Dan Rivlin’s updates and transparency, also made sure to communicate more efficiently together. We also observed the same improvement in the exchange with our clients. While before we may have relied on the perfect time to get together in-person to discuss important matters, the situation forced quicker and more open conversations. We all entered another level of togetherness, convening from our homes, being more authentic, empathetic and real,” commented Idit Reisner, Director of Operations at Kenes Group.

From a psychological standpoint, “mood effects” are cognitive and behavioural group responses to their leaders’ goals, intentions, and attitudes; this is also known as emotional contagion and explains why charismatic leaders influence others and drive what is called group affective tone.

Active listening, decision-making, rapport, assertiveness, and empathy are only a few of the essential, interpersonal skills that give individuals the ability to understand each other at deeper levels. Associations can enable such necessary communication processes, that allow teams to successfully perform and deliver in unprecedented circumstances, and reinforce transformational leadership within their boards, as well as with their members.
Editor’s note: Renowned anthropologist Dr. Jane Goodall has said of the climate crisis, “What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” With that in mind, we are dedicating the November/December edition of Convene fully — our first single-topic issue — to the climate crisis, and what the business events industry is doing to address this global challenge.

Some estimates show that by 2050, the carbon offsets market will be worth approximately $200 billion — and the events industry is helping to grow that market. (Chloe Niclas illustration)

EVENTS AND CARBON OFFSETS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Purchasing carbon offsets to shrink the footprint of events is becoming a more common practice, but not all offset programs are created equal. Here’s what to look for.

Author: David McMillin

When Munich Re, a global reinsurance company, tallied up the financial damage — $210 billion — from hurricanes, wildfires, and floods in 2020, the company traced the natural disasters back to the result of human activity: climate change. “Natural catastrophe losses in 2020 were significantly higher than in the previous year,” wrote Torsten Jeworrek, a member of the company’s board of management. “Climate change will play an increasing role in all of these hazards. It is time to act.”

One way of taking action that has become increasingly
popular is purchasing carbon offsets. The idea is simple: Pay for something to help the planet — planting trees or helping fund a wind farm, for example — to compensate for when you do something that contributes to harming the planet, such as air travel.

By 2050, German bank Berenberg projects that the carbon offsets market will be worth approximately $200 billion.

As the city of Austin has worked toward carbon neutrality, the Austin Convention Center has been leading the charge by buying carbon offsets, converting to renewable energy, and focusing on ways to be one of the greenest places to meet in the U.S.

Amy Moas, Ph.D., senior climate campaigner at Greenpeace USA, told Convene that the organization uses a few key criteria to evaluate the true impact of offsets. One of those is the idea of permanence, which underscores the need for a project to have a lifespan that will be long enough to counter the emissions that were released into the atmosphere. She points to two large recent wildfires in the West — the Dixie Fire in California and the Bootleg Fire in Oregon — as evidence that many forest-focused projects, a popular choice for offsets, fall short of making an impact. Both of these fires burned through hundreds of thousands of acres that were part of forestry offset projects.

“These are large areas of land that were supposed to be land for trees,” Moas said, “but they are no longer serving that purpose.”

As event organizers, and meeting venues and hotels and look for ways to address the climate crisis, how can they be sure that offsets aren’t off base?
Impact Dialogues are available on demand. Go to www.iapco.org/videos to replay.

In every edition we will be sharing a visual summary of our Impact Dialogue seminar by our illustrator and designer Jo Harrison. Visit our website to see more.
WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE OLYMPICS?

Dealing with disruptions:

- We were in a unique situation. First we had to look at all relationships and contracts.
- It really helped to find collaborative solutions.
- We identified suppliers who were unwilling or unable to come along for 2021.
- We had to prioritise and analyse.
- Keep options open for better and worse scenarios.

The philosophy and ecosystem:

- FASTER: M&E industry engaged quite late with the digital, perhaps 8 years later. It was a reaction to Covid, not an anticipation.
- HIGHER: With an increase of virtual and hybrid events there was a higher level of data.
- STRONGER: It is time for the M&E industry to deliver purpose-driven events with clear reasons for involvement. It makes the industry stronger.
- TOGETHER: The industry must work as a team to return to full strength and win again.

Barbara, are you seeing a rise in engagement virtually and a gain in new audiences?

ISSUE #1
- Mixed audiences
  - You can’t please everyone.
  - Segment audiences and curate content for stronger connection and engagement.

ISSUE #2
- Disengagement
  - Remember, technology is just a tool. The answer is inspiring stories and the fact that it is human nature to want to meet, want to be in the stadium and feel the vibe.

What are the best ways to counteract the post-event comedown?

Sarah:
1. An immediate ‘hot-debrief’
2. Be curious about others
3. Explore the emotions
4. Formal debrief at a later date

Barbara:
Digital has extended the life of events. So there’s no ‘post-event’ any more.

Pamela:
There’s no magic formula, but try not to go on holiday immediately afterwards. High emotions do not enhance a vacation.
AFEA+CSR Hellas: Sustainability wins the 2021 IAPCO Collaboration Award, supported by IBTM. An inspirational long-term partnership to increase sustainability awareness and actions in the Greek meetings industry.

In the vibrant settings of the newly opened Moco Museum in Barcelona during IBTM Leaders’ Summit, last 29 November 2021, Sissi Lygnou, CEO of Greek PCO AFEA and Ariadne Stagkou-Bell, CSR & Communication Specialist, CSR HELLAS received the 2021 IAPCO Driving Excellence Collaboration Award. The trophy celebrates partnerships that bring excellence to the meetings industry.

“The applications for the IAPCO Collaboration Award were outstanding. But the judging committee agreed the collaboration between AFEA and CSR HELLAS was exceptional because of the broadness of its actions. Sustainability is a key issue for our industry and this collaboration has sparked changes on a national level. It is highly inspirational and aligns with IAPCO commitment to integrate sustainability further in what we do” said Ori Lahav, IAPCO President, who awarded the trophy to the two winners in Barcelona.

Doing more for sustainability at the origin of the partnership

IAPCO member AFEA is an Athens-based established PCO with an experience of more than 40 years. Since 2017, AFEA has integrated Corporate Social Responsibility in the organisation’s strategy. AFEA has become a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, the international initiative of the United Nations, which calls companies to take action towards the protection of labor and human rights, environmental protection and anti-corruption. During 2019 and 2018, AFEA incorporated the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), declared its support to them and integrated them in the organization’s strategic plan.

But AFEA wanted to go further and contribute in creating awareness on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development as key element for the future strategic planning of the Greek meetings industry.
They decided to join the CSR Hellas Network with the aim to collaborate and invest further in the creation of awareness around CSR as well as to integrate its principles in the design and implementation of events worldwide.

CSR HELLAS is a dynamic network of businesses that act as leaders in the shaping of new and innovative entrepreneurial practices, contributing to sustainable development and value creation for all shareholders, employees, clients, suppliers, the local community and environment, as well as the Greek economy and society at large. It is part of the wider European Network of CSR Europe.

Concrete actions to increase awareness

In collaboration and with the guidance of CSR Hellas, AFEA developed the “Sustainable Events” organization service (SDGs 12,8,3,2)

Pre-pandemic, actions included contributions in philanthropic actions, support for the CSR Summer School, speaking engagements and mentorship.

During the pandemic, CSR & AFEA joined forces with the aim to further raise awareness around CSR issues, with a series of webinars for the tourism and meetings industry, which was attended by top officials.

Overall, the partnership created further awareness on sustainability on national level, wide promotion of all events on the national Media, interviews, education & transfer of knowledge about the need to integrate and empower Sustainable Development to all member companies and executives of Industry Associations.

CSR & AFEA are pursuing their collaboration towards the organization of further actions and with the aim to further boost the awareness around Sustainable Development.

We spoke with both recipients immediately after the ceremony and here’s what they had to say: Ariadne Stagkou-Bell, CSR & Communication Specialist, CSR HELLAS: “CSR HELLAS is a firm supporter of collective action in the context of the 2030 Agenda, prioritizing the creation of partnerships, particularly with SMEs, for the mutual pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and, more broadly, the European Commission’s ambitious sustainability policy. It is an illusion to think that all progress on this route depends on, and concerns only, large multinational companies; the transition to a new reality requires the involvement and cooperation of all, particularly in the Greek context, where the majority of human capital is employed by small and medium enterprises. A big congratulations to the AFEA team for daring to get involved in such an important field, leading by example and encouraging other companies, particularly in the tourism sector, to pursue the sustainability journey. Sustainability is the only future for everyone, and recognizing the value of partnering up with diverse stakeholders provides us with the know-how and skillset to transform this challenge into a fruitful opportunity.”

Sissi Lygnou, CEO AFEA:

“We are extremely happy and proud as this award gives us the opportunity to highlight the importance of a valued, long-term collaboration with the network of CSR Hellas, as well as to empower our efforts in creating a greater awareness on the key role of sustainable development in our Industry. As active IAPCO Members, we invest in partnerships which contribute to the shaping of a more sustainable future in the Meetings Industry. We would like to thank IAPCO for the chance to showcase our vision in this aspect and for honouring us with this award. We are grateful to have joined forces with the management team of CSR Hellas, who believed in this project from the very beginning and supported us in our efforts to create more awareness on sustainable development in the national Meetings Industry through a series of successful actions. We at AFEA sincerely hope that this collaboration will bring inspiration to more stakeholders of the Tourism & Meetings Industry and will lead to greater actions in the context of the 2030 Agenda towards a more sustainable future.”

The IAPCO Driving Excellence Collaboration Award, supported by IBTM, is now in its seventh year and attracted submissions which also deserve recognition:

Shortlisted Candidates

- MCI Middle East and Arab Association of Urology (AAU)
- Kenes Group and European Society of Paediatric and Neonatal Intensive Care (ESPNIC)
- The Conference Company and International Conference Services (ICS)
CONGRÈS INC. OPERATES ICCA 2021 ANNUAL CONGRESS’ NAGASAKI HUB

Member: Congrès Inc., Japan

This year, the main venue for the ICCA Congress was Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, with 5 additional hubs spread throughout the world. Nagasaki, Japan, was selected to host one of 2 Asia/ Pacific hubs, and Congrès Inc. was appointed PCO for the hub. This set-up enabled flexible participation either in-person locally/regionally or online, amidst ongoing border restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dejima Messe Nagasaki (https://dejima-messe.jp/en) is Nagasaki’s first full-scale convention center and was selected to host this ICCA Congress global hub just prior to its official opening on 1 November 2021.

READ MORE

ON BELGIAN SURGICAL WEEK AIM GROUP

Realised as a full F2F congress at the Antwerp Elisabeth Congress Center, from 8 to 11 September 2021, with 550 participants.
THE POWER OF DIGITALIZATION TRANSFORMS OUR PRODUCTS IN MENA REGION - ICOM GROUP PROSPECTIVE

Member: ICOM, Egypt

COVID-19 – Accelerator of Digital Transformation
COVID-19 Pandemic caused an acceleration of Digital Transformation all over the world, forcing countries and organisations around to make big changes in their business models and their education. The world changed, hospitals reached maximum capacity, business activity slowed and restrictions were enforced on people movement.

The COVID-19 crisis accelerated the digitalization of customer interactions globally from 20% to 58% and the share of digital services increased to 30%.

People had to accept this change, acknowledge this rapid shift to the new digital world in their education, work, medical services or even their daily needs. Digital Transformation is expected to add $100 trillion to the world economy by 2025. So, this is the future!

ICOM responds with a new Learning Management System (LMS)

Over the years, ICOM Group has always taken the market needs and trends in consideration, especially after COVID-19 forcing Digital Transformation into the market. Thus, as a leading education provider, ICOM created and implemented multiple e-learning units and products to serve all kinds of educators in all times.

Learning Management System – LMS – is one of ICOM’s significant projects. An integrated learning digital platform with well-established materials and handouts in multiple formats. All materials serve all types of knowledge seekers, pre-graduates or post graduates will enjoy their educational experience through LMS different projects on their easing platform. Each platform has its own advanced and automated software, educational material, quizzes and high-quality visuals.

Under this umbrella, ICOM created several products such as Full Mark, Fellowship Programs Platform and the Universal Experts Studio.

For the pre-graduates, “Fullmark” can be a turning point. It is a digital platform that provides school students recorded videos for their curriculums from well trusted sources. Consequently, helping the students and their parents to learn in a safe, secured and effortless methods.

As a further move from ICOM’s side to adapt to the market demands, “The Fellowship program in Clinical Transplantation” is the first educational interactive platform in the middle east that delivers up-to-date knowledge and evidence-based Clinical Kidney Transplantation experience through online, recorded, and easily accessible lectures.

One more interactive online platform is the “Universal Expert Studio”. It is designed to promote the Global Education through live webcasting and facilitate online learning to follow any conference highlights even the hands-on training right from any place, smoothly and efficiently. All audience were fully involved in their wanted conference details and received the recent updates from eminent experts, even meet with the speakers for a thorough experience.

Digital Transformation forced itself into any business. And ICOM adapted this change and worked upon it, creating LMS in a bold step to take yet effective and required actions through those 3 projects. Read the different cases online.
VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE AT ITS BEST FOR AFEA CLIENTS

Member: AFEA, Greece

Although in-person meetings are back and TOP priority for AFEA team, we are still aiming at the organization of state-of-the-art virtual meetings and to the offering of unique and unforgettable experiences to participants.

The 23rd EVSSAR CONGRESS “EVSSAR still e-live”, was organized on 1-2 October 2021 as a virtual meeting with the active participation of more than 250 delegates from all over the world.

The meeting included 18 scientific sessions over the 2 days and a social event highlight with a Remote Team Anthem created in cooperation with SongDivision to unite EVSSAR people through the use of music! The high-energy virtual session engaged participants with the creation of an unforgettable hit song written by the group to express their purpose and core values.
THE LARGEST AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CONGRESS RETURNS SAFELY TO MADRID

Member: Kenes Group, Switzerland

Kenes Group organises a safe and improved World ATM Congress, signifying the resilience of both the aviation and event industries.

The world’s largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition and conference - World ATM Congress - returned to Madrid at the end of October 2021. More than 6,000 delegates from 110 countries gathered safely. The event was inaugurated by His Majesty the King of Spain, in evidence of the air sector resiliency and recovery. This was the first time that the event featured Spain’s premier drone event, Expodrónica, and partnered with UMILES – Spain’s largest consortium of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) companies.

World ATM Congress is organised by Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) partnership with the Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA). The event aims to bring together the world’s leading product developers, experts, stakeholders, and air navigation service providers (ANSPs). Aviation thought leaders gather for three days of conference sessions, product demonstrations and launches, contract closures and educational and networking opportunities in Madrid, Spain.

WHAT’S NEXT? A COMPREHENSIVE EVENT ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Member: GIS Group, Taiwan

GIS Group partners with 5 other parties to turn POPOP Taipei into a sustainability themed event. There are a total of 9 hybrid forums, exhibitions and music performances that welcome all to participate. Audiences subscribe to tree planting in order to attend the, instead of purchasing traditional event pass. This will be a big step supporting the goal of planting 10,000 trees at coastal areas in Taiwan.

Under the big theme of sustainability, the hybrid forums cover points of view from different industries including meeting, social enterprise, art & culture, finance and more. GIS Group, as the role of the Meeting LAB, invited professionals from the travel industry to discuss further on sustainable travel solutions.

Apart from the forums, visitors can learn about the whole program and sustainability via the exhibitions. After entering the building, visitors will immediately be welcomed by the floating island exhibition. Using sustainable materials and reusable plants, the exhibition showcases the balance between nature, human behaviors and technology. Representing the meeting industry, a booth of the Meeting LAB has set up for visitors to experience being the spotlight of a virtual event, It is a great way for general public to learn more about the meeting industry and how we can move our field towards sustainability.
The 14th Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe, ENCORE 2021 culminated in the signing of the ‘Tullamore Declaration’ and ‘YouthCORE Statement’ by member regions - a statement of common intent which will guide regions to effectively exert their collective influence on the formulation of environmental policy within the EU.

Hosted by the Irish Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, the 14th Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe, ENCORE 2021 took place online on September 24th. The biennial conference of the ENCORE Network, ENCORE 2021, hosted ‘virtually’ from Tullamore in the Irish Midlands, was attended by political representatives from across Europe and wide-ranging stakeholders.

The conference culminated in the signing of the ‘Tullamore Declaration’ by member regions - a statement of common intent which will guide regions to effectively exert their collective influence on the formulation of environmental policy within the European Union. Please visit www.encore2021.com to view the Declaration.

Since the conference just over 6 weeks ago, ENCORE and YouthCORE are feature in a COP26 side event, as well as in a session at this year’s European Week of Regions and Cities.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION AT ENCORE 2021

Member: Abbey Conference & Events, Ireland

The conference culminated in the signing of the ‘Tullamore Declaration’ by member regions - a statement of common intent which will guide regions to effectively exert their collective influence on the formulation of environmental policy within the European Union. Please visit www.encore2021.com to view the Declaration.

Moderated by Dr Tara Shine, ENCORE 2021 opened with an address by Cllr Deirdre Heney, Cathaoirleach (Chairperson) of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and co-president of the ENCORE network. This was followed by keynote addresses from EU Commissioner, Mairead McGuinness and Senator Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity. In their addresses, Commissioner McGuinness and Minister Hackett clearly demonstrated how the themes of ENCORE 2021 – ecosystem services, circular economy and climate action – are central to a green and just transition to a low carbon and sustainable future.

Next to address the conference were YouthCORE delegates, youth representatives from across the ENCORE regions, who met on September 23rd, to create a YouthCORE statement - their vision for the future that they want. This YouthCORE statement will accompany the Tullamore Declaration to ensure that the voice of youth is heard. Elected representatives and senior government officials from across Europe then addressed the conference to endorse the Tullamore Declaration and proclaim their ‘Seeds of Change’ - environmentally positive actions and commitments that their region will be implementing in line with the Tullamore Declaration.

Since the conference just over 6 weeks ago, ENCORE and YouthCORE are feature in a COP26 side event, as well as in a session at this year’s European Week of Regions and Cities.
MAKING HISTORY: THE SIGNING OF THE HAMBURG DECLARATION

Member: CPO Hanser Service, Germany

The very first virtual Sports, Medicine and Health Summit took place from the 20th – 24th of April, 2021. It represents a new format for a scientific conference, where health policy and science aspects are combined, thus making it one of the largest educational platforms for sports, exercise, and health in Germany. The congress, which is set to play an important role in the sports industry, was successfully organized by CPO HANSER SERVICE.

In 2019, our world was turned upside down by COVID-19. Due to the high infection rate, numerous restrictions were implemented. Studies indicated that people, who regularly partook in sporting activities prior to COVID-19, were less likely to become infected.

As the health benefits of physical activity become more evident, numerous cities are making significant changes to their infrastructure to accommodate their residents. Hamburg is the only German city to have been awarded with the „Global Active City“ label, as it provides its residents with hundreds of sports halls, sports facilities, pools and gyms, as well as parks, numerous green spaces and rivers. Additionally, there are good cycling routes and attractive, safe paths for jogging and walking.

Hamburg is one of the first cities worldwide to officially have been awarded with the title of “Global Active City” - together with Buenos Aires, Lillehammer, Liverpool, Ljubljana and Richmond in Canada.

The best results can be achieved, when synergies are put into place - in order to promote physical activity, the Hamburg Declaration was signed by more than 40 organizations during the opening ceremony of the Sports, Medicine and Health Summit on the 21st of April 2021. The joint alliance to combat physical inactivity includes the commitment of renowned organizations, professional societies, and sports associations, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Federation of Sports Physicians (FIMS) and the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB). It calls upon national and international politics to commit to concrete structural measures.

By signing the declaration, the renowned organizations are committing themselves to developing a suitable strategy to expand the sports and physical activity infrastructure worldwide. The aim is to educate the public about the health and mental well-being benefits and to encourage them to join various sports clubs. As this initiative grows, we can expect to see a rise in physical activity and thus an overall healthier population worldwide.

The City of Hamburg supporting the congress and CPO HANSER SERVICE as co-organizer of the Sports, Medicine and Health Summit are very proud to have made a contribution to sustainable health policy with this declaration.

The next Sports, Medicine and Health summit is set to take place as an in-person congress in Hamburg in 2023. See you there!
SUCCESSFUL COMEBACK – LIVE AND ON-SITE WITH MORE THAN 4,000 VISITORS!

Member: Interplan, Germany

The first national congress at the CCL in Leipzig following the break caused by the pandemic was a shining beacon. The public and the meetings industry were watching very closely to see if a safe event with over 4,000 visitors and 100 exhibitors on site was indeed possible. Petra Köpping, the Saxony State Minister for Social Affairs and Social Cohesion, was impressed by the congress and the implementation of the hygiene concept. It is not only their enthusiasm that can be felt in the film (https://vimeo.com/617913373) of the Leipzig Trade Fair. Our Managing Director Bruno Lichtinger remarked: “It feels glorious to us too! All the various elements are dovetailing smoothly once again!”

Large congresses and events can be organised safely!

READ FULL STORY

“THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY PROVED TO BE RESILIENT. THE KEY IS THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE CHANGE AND DON’T FEAR TO EVOLVE”.

AIM Group International presents its response to the pandemic crisis in the 2020 Corporate Annual Report

AIM Group International published the 2020 Corporate Annual Report which focuses on the response and transformation following the extraordinary crisis caused by the pandemic. “Just like a black swan event, COVID-19 suddenly spread out and took the world completely by storm. With gatherings promptly forbidden as well as international travel being severely restricted, the meetings industry became one of the most disrupted sectors. As a major gamer changer, the pandemic demanded event agencies to find new ways to stay relevant in the market. We had to ask ourselves several times, which space and role should we as event professionals play during the crisis?” says Gianluca Buongiorno, President AIM Group International. “The answer was in the ability to react, to rapidly adjust and transform, to forget the past and be focused on the new ways to achieve clients’ goals. It was due to organisations and event professionals that were able to find the right solutions, providers and partners were in a position to review the procedures and work habits, to discover the best digital and technological tools that would help them provide an effective, added value”.

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NEW KENES GROUP STUDY ON HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PREFERENCES OF VIRTUAL EVENTS, 2020 VS 2021

*Member: Kenes Group, Switzerland*

Considering the effect that COVID-19 had on scientific meetings, Kenes Group reached out to past participants in 2020, to better understand how healthcare practitioners feel about virtual events. The produced survey analysis gave truly global feedback on the pressing question of effective virtual conferences. In 2021, Kenes Group reached out again to HCPs to see if one year of virtual events has changed their opinions towards the format.

Download the full white paper here: [https://kenes-group.com/healthcare-professionals-on-virtual-events-21/](https://kenes-group.com/healthcare-professionals-on-virtual-events-21/)

**What is in the white paper:**

- Decision making – what are the primary drivers beyond the participation at a virtual event.
- Value proposition – what are the right registration packages that suit HCPs best.
- Technical elements – what technical features can help HCPs learn better in a virtual setting.
- Session length – how session length preferences have changed since last year.
- Ideal virtual event – key points that will make a virtual conference a success, according to HCPs.
The annual national congress of anaesthesiologists and resuscitators, who are at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, had an enthusiastic return to in-person events. For the 75th National Congress ICARE 2021, SIAARTI (the Italian Society of Anesthesia, Analgesia, Intensive Care and Resuscitation) held one of the biggest scientific events with an impressive in-person audience in grand style in the beautiful city of Rome. AIM Group, which has been collaborating with the scientific association for several years, managed the entire organization of the event held from 14 to 16 October.

READ MORE

From 10 to 12 October 2021 in Milan, AIM Group brought together 1,500 participants with over 5,500 one-to-one meetings being held.
A series of in-person events organised by Kenes Group
It simply feels good to be able to meet in-person again.
No matter what hygiene mandates remain, it seems that there is a lot of joy when people get together again to network and exchange knowledge and ideas.
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