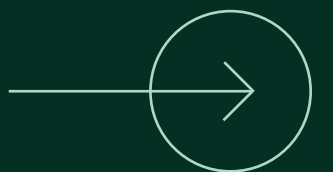




BUSINESS EVENTS LEGACY & IMPACT STUDY

INSIGHTS REPORT - YEAR ONE

Published May 2024



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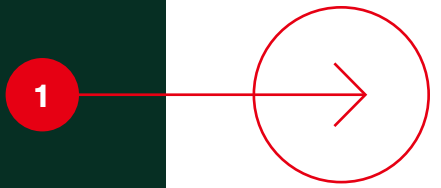
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Cover Image
Montréal, Québec



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business events bring a host of tourism benefits to a destination, but their impact extends well beyond delegate spend.

In fact, they can unleash powerful ripple effects that are felt long after they end and delegates return home—from opening the door to transformative collaborations and unlocking investment opportunities, to attracting top-notch talent and spurring innovation.

Recognizing this potential, in 2022, we launched the Legacy & Impact Study, to evaluate the economic, social and environmental impacts of up to 16 international conferences held in Canada between 2018 and 2024. These conferences, which all relate to the priority economic sectors in which Canada excels, were selected in consultation with our destination partners, based on the size of the event, proportion of international attendees, and involvement of a local champion and organizing committee.

In collaboration with our research partners, #MEET4IMPACT and GainingEdge, our goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the beyond-tourism benefits of business events and uncover strategies for actively creating a lasting business event legacy.

Our early findings, exploring the legacy and impact of seven of the international conferences studied, do just that, revealing that business events can leave an extraordinary legacy by leveraging four key factors.

Government participation, destination collaboration, community engagement and pre-event activities are key to leaving a lasting event legacy—and the power of such a legacy should not be underestimated.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a myriad of examples of the positive policy, financial and intellectual legacy of these conferences and the transformational impacts that legacy has driven.

By sharing these insights, we hope to show that business events hosted in Canada—and around the world—can leave a positive handprint, rather than a negative footprint, building a future of regenerative tourism that leaves a sustainable legacy.

Virginie De Visscher
Executive Director, Business Events
Destination Canada



On behalf of Destination Canada, I'm delighted to share these early findings of our Legacy & Impact Study with you.



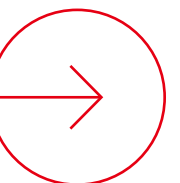
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE LEGACY & IMPACT STUDY?

Between 2022 and 2025, Destination Canada's groundbreaking Legacy & Impact Study is tracking the long-term benefits of business events held in Canada.

Building on our industry's wealth of anecdotal evidence, it aims to uncover concrete proof of the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from these events.

The study is being conducted by #MEET4IMPACT and GainingEdge, two leading organizations and recognized experts in the field of event impact.



WHY IS LEGACY IMPORTANT?

Destination Canada is committed to ensuring meetings hosted in Canada—and around the world—leave a positive handprint, rather than a negative footprint. We want to lessen the environmental footprint of events, while boosting their socio-cultural and economic benefits.

While international competition to attract business events continues to grow, many associations are also increasingly seeking to build deeper connections and longer, more powerful meeting legacies for the benefit of the association, the communities where they meet and the overall destination.

For destinations, there is growing recognition that the impacts of business events extend beyond their immediate economic effect, providing lasting value to the local population, communities and sectors.

This Legacy & Impact Study will give the business events industry a deeper understanding of the real impacts of events and serve as an invaluable tool in showcasing the value of business events. These findings will help inform a longer-term strategy for developing models that leverage business events to actively provide lasting legacies within sectors and communities—supporting their growth, competitive advantage and resilience.



WHAT IS LEGACY?

Academically, legacy is defined as all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible outcomes created by an event that remain past the conclusion of the event.

In this study, we will use the term “legacy” to describe the long-term, intentional and positive effects that a meeting aims to create, which will yield impacts for different stakeholders.

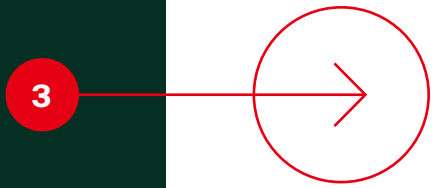
EVENTS STUDIED

The events studied in Year One

The Legacy & Impact Report is evaluating up to 16 conferences held in Canada between 2018 and 2024, across the six key economic sectors in which Canada excels: life sciences, natural resources, finance and insurance, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and digital industries.



EARLY



Business events can leave an extraordinary legacy by leveraging four key factors:



**Pre-Event
Activities**



**Government
Participation**



**Destination
Marketing
Organization
(DMO) Involvement**



**External
Collaboration**

FINDINGS



PRE-EVENT ACTIVITIES

Pre-event activities could include social media campaigns, workshops, advocacy efforts and small pre-conference gatherings that take place before and in the lead-up to the main event.

Among the seven studies examined, four events intentionally featured pre-event activities, which yielded significant positive outcomes, particularly in the social, policy and human dimensions.

Pre-event activities play a critical role in making a conference or event successful. These activities provide an excellent opportunity to initiate legacy development, ensuring that the event has a lasting impact beyond its immediate execution. Engaging in pre-event initiatives allows the host destination to showcase its credibility and leadership within the relevant sector or topic, thereby strengthening its position as an industry leader. This, in turn, can attract future investments and partnerships. Furthermore, involving the local community early on is crucial as

it enhances awareness and education about the conference's focus, fostering a connection between the event and local stakeholders.

In addition, the pre-event phase provides an ideal opportunity to conduct high-level meetings with international and national government officials, potentially influencing policy and cementing relationships. By integrating this strategic element, organizers can not only increase the success of their event but also ensure that it delivers sustained benefits. This approach has been observed in various cases where the effectiveness of pre-event activities greatly influenced overall event outcomes.

Examples

1

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

Change for Climate Global Mayors Summit produced the Edmonton Declaration, addressing climate change and calling for all stakeholders to implement sustainable solutions.

2

24th International AIDS Conference

The Global Village provided a space for creating public awareness before and during the event, engaging directly with the local community.

3

International Metropolis Conference

A Pre-Conference PhD Seminar Program showcased presentations on Immigration Data, International Student Experience in Canada and Data for Immigration Research.



Example

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

Ahead of the conference, Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson, convened a Global Mayors Summit to bring together a network of global city mayors and the science community to discuss their unique needs. It resulted in the Edmonton Declaration, a call to action for mayors to take the mantle of leadership on climate change, which was signed by 4,500 North American municipalities.



GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION

Government participation could include the announcement of new funding or policies at the event, or the involvement of elected officials in the event itself.

Events with government participation tend to yield higher social, political and financial impacts. Such involvement enhances an event's credibility and outreach. Further investigation is needed to determine the extent of government involvement that leads to the most significant impact.



DMO INVOLVEMENT

The involvement of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) is crucial, but varies widely.

Historically, DMOs have had limited roles in relation to meetings once they've been secured. Commonly, they would limit themselves to a sales and marketing role, but would also often help meeting organizers engage with local event management companies for ongoing service and support. However, DMOs around the world are now exploring an expanded future role related to event legacy.

This could include:

- Ensuring the mission and goals of an international client and local host are clearly understood
- Sourcing events which connect and respond to a local community need or gap
- Agreeing on community legacy visions and goals with stakeholders
- Building capacity of the DMO team and industry and supporting the development of a legacy ecosystem in the community
- Working closely with clients to develop legacy activities of mutual interest as early as possible
- Allocating and investing resources to legacy strategies and initiatives in annual budgeting
- Assisting in the planning and management of impact measurement processes

Example

24th International AIDS Conference

Tourisme Montréal, with the Palais des Congrès and meeting organizers, launched a significant scholarship program, formed a local impact committee and crafted a social impact strategy.

The DMO's active involvement in shaping this strategy was key, setting this case apart. Tourisme Montréal and the Palais des Congrès partnered with the International AIDS Society to establish the local impact committee, engaging researchers, professors and advocacy groups to align efforts. They also collaborated with #MEET4IMPACT to define impact objectives, plan activities and assess campaign effectiveness.

Examples

1

Insects to Feed the World Conference

The Marché des Insectes Comestibles (Eating Insects North) was a collaboration involving Université Laval, industry partners and the destination, aiming to showcase Québec's insect producers. The activity occurred during and after the conference, was led by students and attracted 12,000 members of the general public.

2

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

Various Change for Climate community events aimed to inspire dialogue and action among residents and visitors. One such notable event was the Youth and Climate Change report, which was presented at the conference by 14 high school students to share a global youth perspective on climate change.



EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

External collaboration refers to partnerships or involvement with individuals, organizations or entities outside of the core organizing team or group responsible for the event.

This collaboration in planning and implementing legacy initiatives can take various forms and can greatly enhance the success and impact of the event. External collaboration in an event can enrich the experience for attendees, expand the event's network and increase its overall impact and success in generating positive outcomes.

FURTHER FACTOR OBSERVATIONS



Vancouver, British Columbia

Intentionality

Early strategic interventions in legacy planning processes for upcoming events—including stakeholder engagement, research and action planning—can improve outcomes. Beginning with bid submission, a deliberate approach increases the chance of tangible results. Setting clear intentions and engaging external partners early fosters strategic alignment and long-term impacts.

The process includes:

- Hosting stakeholder engagement workshops involving local hosts, destination representatives, strategic partners, professional convention organizers (PCOs) and key beneficiaries.
- Drafting action plans for event organizers and destinations with indicators for monitoring outcomes.
- Charting progress and proposing corrective measures if needed.

Event Size

Larger events, especially those with more than 500 attendees, may have a more pronounced impact on social, human and intellectual dimensions. In some of the case studies, the COVID-19 era presented challenges in realizing an event's full potential (due to travel restrictions, event cancellations). Nonetheless, larger events inherently have greater potential to affect positive outcomes.

Shift to Transformational Relationships

Both destinations and events should consider transitioning from transactional to transformational relationships. This shift involves a strategic event portfolio approach, considering how events align with local social and economic goals. The study highlights the need for more deliberate selection and organization of events to achieve socioeconomic objectives.

Organizer Knowledge and Resourcing

Associations should also consider allocating more resources to design event strategies that prioritize longer-term impact and align with global and sector-specific goals. This shift requires reallocating resources, engaging with strategic partners and creating additional work streams in event planning. Organizations need to move from tactical to strategic functions and ensure their clients have the capacity to set, implement and measure goals for legacy programs and activities.



ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL FACTORS THAT COULD AFFECT EVENT LEGACY

Further factors that have the potential to affect event outcomes, but which require further study and analysis:

- History of the event
- Involvement of international association in planning
- Type and scale of non-program and legacy-focused activities
- Number of institutions and type of institutions forming the local organizing committee (LOC)
- Funding source: private versus public



KEY FACTORS OF IMPACT BY EVENT

Event Case Studies	Sector	Size	Pre-Event Activities	Government Involvement	Degree of DMO Involvement*	Degree of External Collaboration*	Example of Impact	Economic Impact (tourism spending) CAD*
14th International Social Innovation Research Conference	Life Sciences	500–999	No	No	Low	Low	The creation of new opportunities for students (research skills development and employment) through additional financial support.	\$1.08M
International Metropolis Conference	Advanced Manufacturing	1,000–1,999	Yes	Yes	Low	Medium	Conference leveraged its position within the host city and demonstrated global leadership in immigration.	\$1.60M
24th International AIDS Conference	Life Sciences	>2000	Yes	Yes	High	Medium	<div>Translating research in an accessible way to inform and educate locals through community-led activities and exhibitions, such as Rapture (a contemporary dance tribute to the millions of people who have tragically died of AIDS).</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">\$18M in funding to decentralize forms of HIV testing\$8M for HIV self-test kits\$9.9M to expand community testing\$15M to UNAIDS 2023-2025	\$10.52M
CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference	Natural Resources	500–999	Yes	Yes	Medium	High	Creation of the CitiesIPCC Legacy Research Grant Program, on which the City of Edmonton, with support from Alberta Ecotrust, partnered for three years to deliver research grants to help advance Edmonton’s progress toward becoming energy sustainable and a climate resilient city.	\$1.35M

*Economic impact calculated using Destinations International Event Impact Calculator

KEY FACTORS OF IMPACT BY EVENT

Event Case Studies	Sector	Size	Pre-Event Activities	Government Involvement	Degree of DMO Involvement*	Degree of External Collaboration*	Example of Impact	Economic Impact (tourism spending) CAD*
Insects to Feed the World Conference	Agribusiness	500-999	Yes	Yes	Low	High	Creation of a new Chair of Leadership in Education in Primary Production and Processing of Edible Insects, and a new international organization.	\$1.22M
MACRO 2022 - 49th World Polymer Congress	Natural Resources	250-499	No	No	Low	Low	New international collaborations and knowledge sharing to further develop research into polymers.	Greater than \$556,000
AquaCulture Canada and WAS North America	Life Sciences	1,000 - 1,999	No	No	Medium	Low	A strong business networking and partnership platform. The largest aquaculture trade show in Canada, with more than 100 booths and 1,200 visitors.	\$2.23M

*Economic impact calculated using Destinations International Event Impact Calculator

INITIAL

Government participation, DMO involvement, external collaboration and pre-event activities are key to leaving a lasting event legacy. In the events studied so far, the most prominent impacts fell into three categories:



Policy Impacts

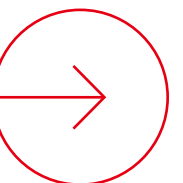


**Financial
Impacts**



**Intellectual
Impacts**

IMPACTS





POLICY IMPACTS

Initial observations from events studied:

- Influencing policymaking
- Practical decision making
- Stronger governance



Ottawa, Ontario



Examples

1

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

The Edmonton Declaration is intended to facilitate dialogue between cities and governments to spur research, innovation and funding for climate change initiatives. The Declaration emphasizes the need for urgent action to limit global warming to 1.5 C and recognizes the pivotal role of cities in addressing climate change.

2

Insects to Feed the World Conference

Advocacy by local stakeholders involved in this conference led to the official recognition of insects as livestock and an agricultural science by Québec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Initial observations from events studied:

- Growth of a sector
- Increased public funding and budget spend on sector development
- Increased spending in destination and local economy

Example

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

A new \$500,000 Legacy Research Grant program, funded by the City of Edmonton and Alberta EcoTrust from 2019 to 2021, was announced at the conference, for research that would help Edmonton mitigate its emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The outcomes of these grants will be measured in Year Two. However, the actual projects funded included the use of modelling to provide detailed climate projections to help the City of Edmonton prepare for climate change, and research into the effect of climate change on older adult populations and immigrant populations.





INTELLECTUAL IMPACTS

Initial observations from events studied:

- Public engagement with the local community
- Knowledge/idea sharing and knowledge transfer
- Developing new research projects



Edmonton, Alberta



Examples

1

CitiesIPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference

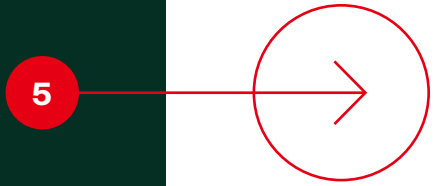
The Change for Climate program inspired action amongst the community through key projects. For example, the Become A Reuse Champion initiative provides online resources to empower people to buy or sell used goods, repair items and rent, borrow or share instead of consuming.

2

MACRO 2022 - 49th World Polymer Congress

A special lecture aimed at emerging or young researchers enabled them to have their work highlighted and to update their knowledge. Also, an Awards Program recognized Canadian talent, put a spotlight on award winners and raised the profile of individuals.

WHAT'S



In 2024 and 2025, we will conduct additional research on the **seven** events studied to date and additional events being assessed.

NEXT?

ADAPTING OUR APPROACH

We will adapt our approach based on our research learnings so far.

Indigenous Perspective

The data collection process will focus on understanding the impact of an event on Indigenous communities and their feelings of inclusion. This will involve focusing on conferences related to topics that affect Indigenous communities, as well as conferences held in cities with active involvement from DMOs and Indigenous communities.

Economic Impact

We will expand the assessment of economic impact by including longer-term economic development outcomes, such as investments in the sector. Economic development agencies in the host cities will be interviewed to gather information about investments related to event hosting.

Additional Key Informant Interviews

We will interview strategic event partners, representatives from key institutions, researchers aligned to events, organizations, trade associations, and industry clusters, as well as citizen groups, community organizations and business owners.

Key Sponsors

Information will be collected from sponsors to understand their motivations and outcomes from supporting events.

Survey Data from Participant

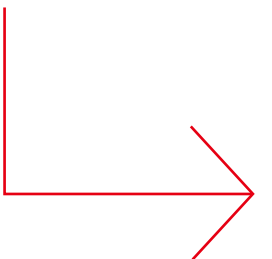
Future events will include surveys with outcome-focused questions to assess the impact on participants. For retrospective events, efforts will be made to obtain survey data from when these events were conducted.



Duck Lake, Saskatchewan



Winnipeg, Manitoba



RESULTS TO COME

Annual results will be shared through reports, case studies and presentations as findings are uncovered.

A full report with collated evidence and case studies is expected in 2026.

MORE INFORMATION

For more details, please refer to the Appendix and visit businesseventscanada.ca.

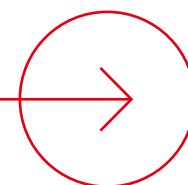


Moraine Lake, Alberta

THANK YOU

CANADA*

APPENDIX CASE STUDIES



CITIESIPCC CITIES & CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENCE CONFERENCE

Edmonton, Alberta
March 5 - 7, 2018

Mission







The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was founded with a mission to assess climate change science, socioeconomic impacts and response strategies for international conventions. The intentions of the event align with the IPCC's mission and extend to inspiring the next frontier of research focused on the science of cities and climate change. The primary goals included assessing the state of academic and practice-based knowledge related to cities and climate change, and establishing a global research agenda through collaborative identification of key gaps by the academic, practitioner and urban policy making communities.



Impact Intentions

Impact intentions were co-crafted by the City of Edmonton, the local advisory committee and the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), Explore Edmonton:

- To promote Edmonton's leadership in the global effort to address climate challenges
- To enhance Edmonton's international reputation as a host city
- To showcase the clean technology solutions and innovations of Edmonton, Alberta and Canada
- To engage Edmontonians in the science of climate change by partnering on a minimum of five community events
- To raise external funds to offset the costs of the conference to the City of Edmonton, up to \$1,253,000 plus in-kind support

Key Outcomes	Activities	Legacy & Impact Categories
The Change for Climate Global Mayors Summit brought together global city networks, mayors and the science community to discuss their unique needs prior to the main conference.	Pre-conference activity to initiate interest, spark enthusiasm and drive momentum.	<div><div> Policy</div><div> Natural</div></div>
The City of Edmonton's Change for Climate Campaign , a series of pre-conference events to inspire residents and visitors to engage in dialogue and take action on climate change challenges.	Pre-conference activity to assemble global city networks, mayors and the science community to discuss their unique needs prior to the main conference.	<div><div> Social</div><div> Natural</div></div>
The Edmonton Declaration was created to help cities collaborate with governments to stimulate research, innovation and new funding sources for cities to combat climate change.	General conference programme to inspire global and regional research on climate impacts and solutions for cities, that will lead to peer-reviewed publication and scientific reports that will inform the IPCC's next Assessment Report.	<div><div> Policy</div></div>
The CitiesIPCC Legacy Research Grant , funded by the City of Edmonton, with support from Alberta Ecotrust, from 2019 to 2021 delivered research grants to help advance knowledge about how Edmonton can become an energy sustainable and climate resilient city.	Announcement of a research grant allocating \$500,000 to research supporting Edmonton's ambition to becoming a sustainable, climate resistant city.	<div><div> Financial</div></div>



INSECTS TO FEED THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Québec City, Québec
June 12 - 18, 2022



Québec City, Québec

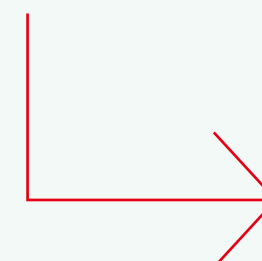
Mission

First hosted in 2014 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and a senior entomologist from Wageningen, the Netherlands, the Insects to Feed the World Conference aims to foster dialogue and exchange research on edible insects, advancing legislation, communal knowledge and sector innovation. Gathering academics, industrialists, and experts worldwide, the event showcased the latest advancements in edible insects and ento-technologies.

Impact Intentions

The impact intentions were provided by the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), Québec City Business Destination:

- Deliver economic impact created by the event
- Showcase the City of Québec's expertise in hosting conferences
- Create case studies to encourage future ambassadors to bid for international events
- Provide greater visibility of insect processing companies
- Showcase the socioeconomic impact of insect feeding in future
- Make the sector visible to the Government of Québec and investors



Key Outcomes	Activities	Legacy & Impact Categories
The creation of a Chair of Leadership in Education in Primary Production and Processing of Edible Insects (CLEIC) at Université Laval , funded mainly by industry with a key focus on supporting sector development.	General conference programme including 8 keynote speeches, 156 oral presentations and 58 posters.	 Intellectual
Official recognition by the Government of Québec of insects as a livestock and as an agricultural science.	Lunch and Learn Sessions including academia and industry discussing challenges in the field.	 Natural
Demystification of the sector and introduction of the public to local suppliers through tastings and cooking demos by local and celebrity chefs.	Le Marché des Insectes Comestibles, a public showcase, attracted 12,000 visitors, democratizing insect consumption and garnering interest through tastings and cooking demonstrations conducted by both local and celebrity chefs.	 Social
Training of aspiring chefs to introduce insects in menus in establishments across the city.	Well-known local chefs promoted the Marché and acceptance of edible insects. Québec City Convention Centre’s catering team trained chefs and incorporated insects into the menu.	 Intellectual



Québec City, Québec