

CANADA^{*}



BUSINESS EVENTS LEGACY & IMPACT STUDY

ENGINEERING EXTRAORDINARY EVENT IMPACT
FINAL REPORT

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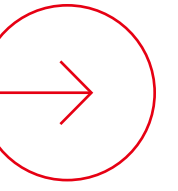
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business events have the potential to do far more than generate short-term economic activity. When designed intentionally, they can influence policy, attract investment, strengthen sectors and elevate a destination's global position.

For meeting planners, destination organizations, strategic leaders and sector associations, this represents an opportunity to deliver value far beyond the event itself.

The Legacy & Impact Study provides the evidence to prove it.

For decades, the business events industry has shared powerful stories about how events can spark collaboration and drive change. Now we have the data to explain how—and why—these impacts endure.

Over three years, Destination Canada, with #MEET4IMPACT and GainingEdge, analyzed thousands of data points from 15 international events across Canada, providing the most comprehensive view to date of how events create lasting economic, social and environmental impact.

The findings are clear: impact is not accidental. It is intentionally designed, supported and sustained over time.

These outcomes span multiple dimensions, from policy and investment to knowledge, community and environmental priorities. This impact unfolds as a chain reaction, beginning with individual learning and extending through organizations, sectors and ultimately destinations.

Delivering this level of impact requires more than strong programming. It demands collaboration and ongoing stewardship. When these elements are in place, events move beyond temporary gatherings to become drivers of long-term change.

To support this shift, the study identifies 18 impact accelerators—practical levers that expand and deepen an event's legacy across systems and sectors. The research also highlights the critical role of inclusion. Embedding diverse perspectives into event design and governance strengthens legitimacy, improves outcomes and ensures that benefits are more widely shared.

Taken together, these insights offer both proof and direction. They provide decision makers, destination organizations and meeting planners with a clear path to designing events that deliver extraordinary impact and lasting legacy—across Canada and around the world.

Virginie De Visscher
Executive Director, Business Events
Destination Canada



“ The findings are clear: impact is not accidental. It is intentionally designed, supported and sustained over time. ”

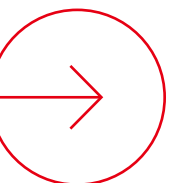
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE LEGACY & IMPACT STUDY?

For decades, the success of business events has been measured by delegate numbers, hotel nights and economic impact. While these metrics matter, they do not reflect the full, transformative potential of these events.

The Legacy & Impact Study, conducted between 2022 and 2025, was designed to address this gap.

Destination Canada, in collaboration with research partners #MEET4IMPACT and GainingEdge, tracked the short-term impacts of international business events hosted in Canada between 2018 and 2025—and generated evidence-based insights into how impact can be intentionally designed so it is sustained over the long term.



THE LEGACY & IMPACT STUDY JOURNEY

For three years, Destination Canada investigated the powerful regenerative impact of business events, evaluating the economic, social and environmental benefits of 15 global conferences across Canada.

YEAR 01

- 7 events studied
- 4 success factors identified
- 2 case studies published

YEAR 02

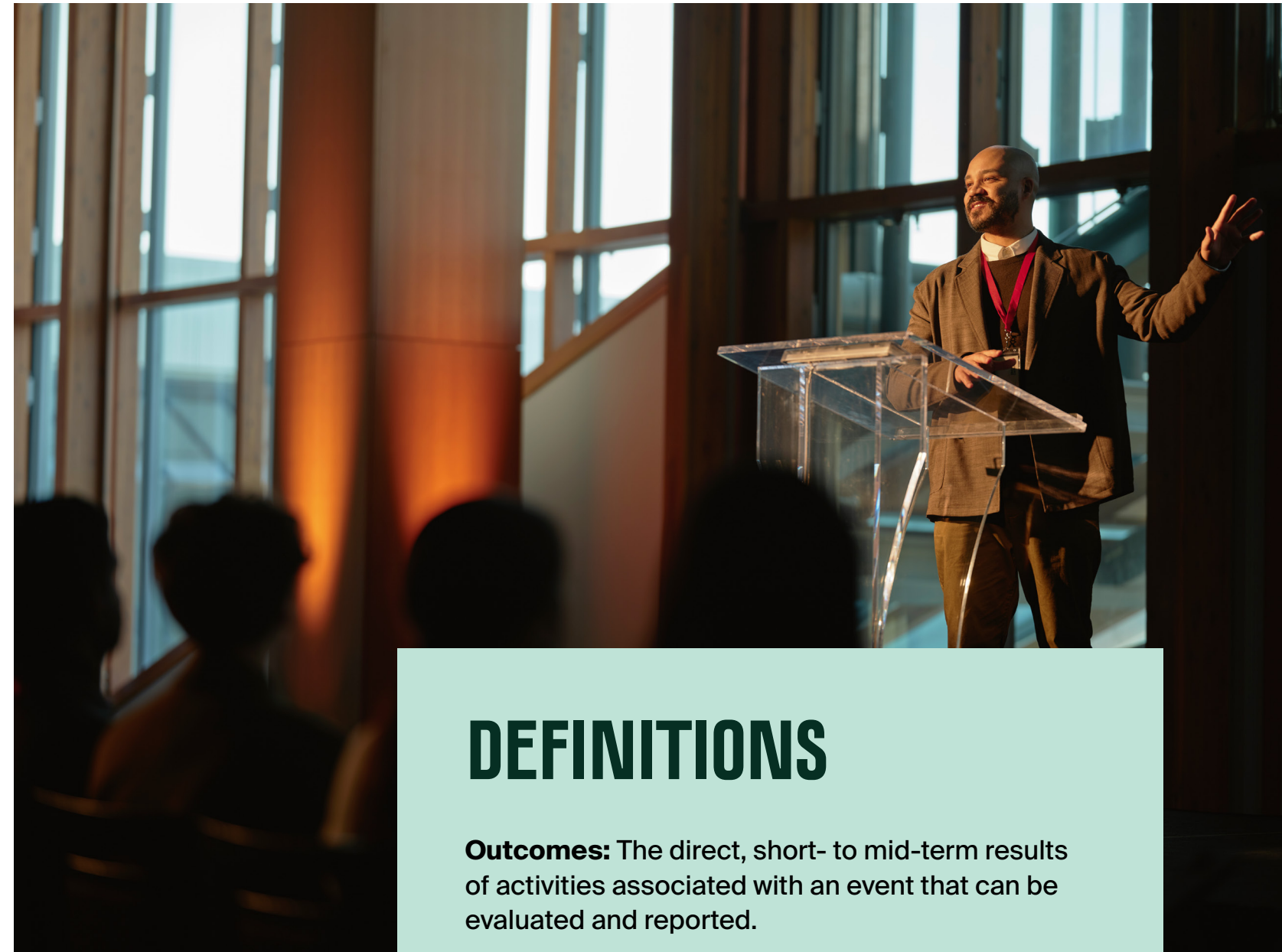
- 12 events studied
- Expanded research** to include Indigenous perspectives and longer-term economic impacts
- Expanded data sources** to include event sponsors, participant surveys and key informant interviews
- 9 legacy drivers identified
- 5 new and updated case studies published

YEAR 03

- 15 events studied
- New analytical tools** introduced
- 18 impact accelerators developed
- Expanded examination of the importance of **Indigenous involvement**
- 15 case studies published

WHY STUDY LEGACY?

To realize the full potential of business events, we must establish a new definition of success. By looking beyond immediate economic returns—and examining the effects an event can have months or even years later—we can better understand how events become catalysts for widespread change and how to design with this end goal in mind.



DEFINITIONS

Outcomes: The direct, short- to mid-term results of activities associated with an event that can be evaluated and reported.

Impact: Positive outcomes that benefit specific individuals or groups. Unlike direct outcomes, impact is more diffuse and often harder to attribute to a specific meeting activity.

Legacy: The tangible and intangible effects of an event that endure beyond the event itself.

WHY LEGACY MATTERS FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT

Studying legacy is only the first step. The real opportunity lies in applying these insights to deliver greater value from every event.

Designing events for legacy requires greater intention, coordination and investment. But when done well, the returns extend far beyond the event itself. The findings of the Legacy & Impact Study show that business events can be powerful tools for achieving long-term objectives—across sectors, communities and destinations.

For those who plan, support and invest in events, this creates a clear opportunity.

For strategic leaders

Designing events for legacy strengthens return on investment by extending impact beyond the event itself—supporting long-term objectives such as investment attraction, policy influence, sector growth and global positioning. It also enables organizations to demonstrate sustained value and align events with broader strategic priorities.

For destination organizations

Legacy-driven events contribute directly to destination priorities. They can strengthen communities, showcase local identity, build economic resilience, and create lasting social, cultural and environmental benefits. By aligning events with local strengths and priorities, destinations can extend the impact of hosting well beyond the event itself.

For sector associations

Business events are powerful platforms for advancing sector priorities. They can accelerate knowledge exchange, influence policy direction and strengthen global networks. When designed intentionally, events become catalysts for progress—supporting members, elevating sector visibility and driving long-term change across the sector.

For meeting planners

Designing for legacy strengthens an event's overall value. It enables planners to deliver more meaningful experiences for delegates, attract stronger partners and sponsors, and build a more compelling case for planning future conferences. Events designed with impact in mind are more relevant, more differentiated and more likely to endure.

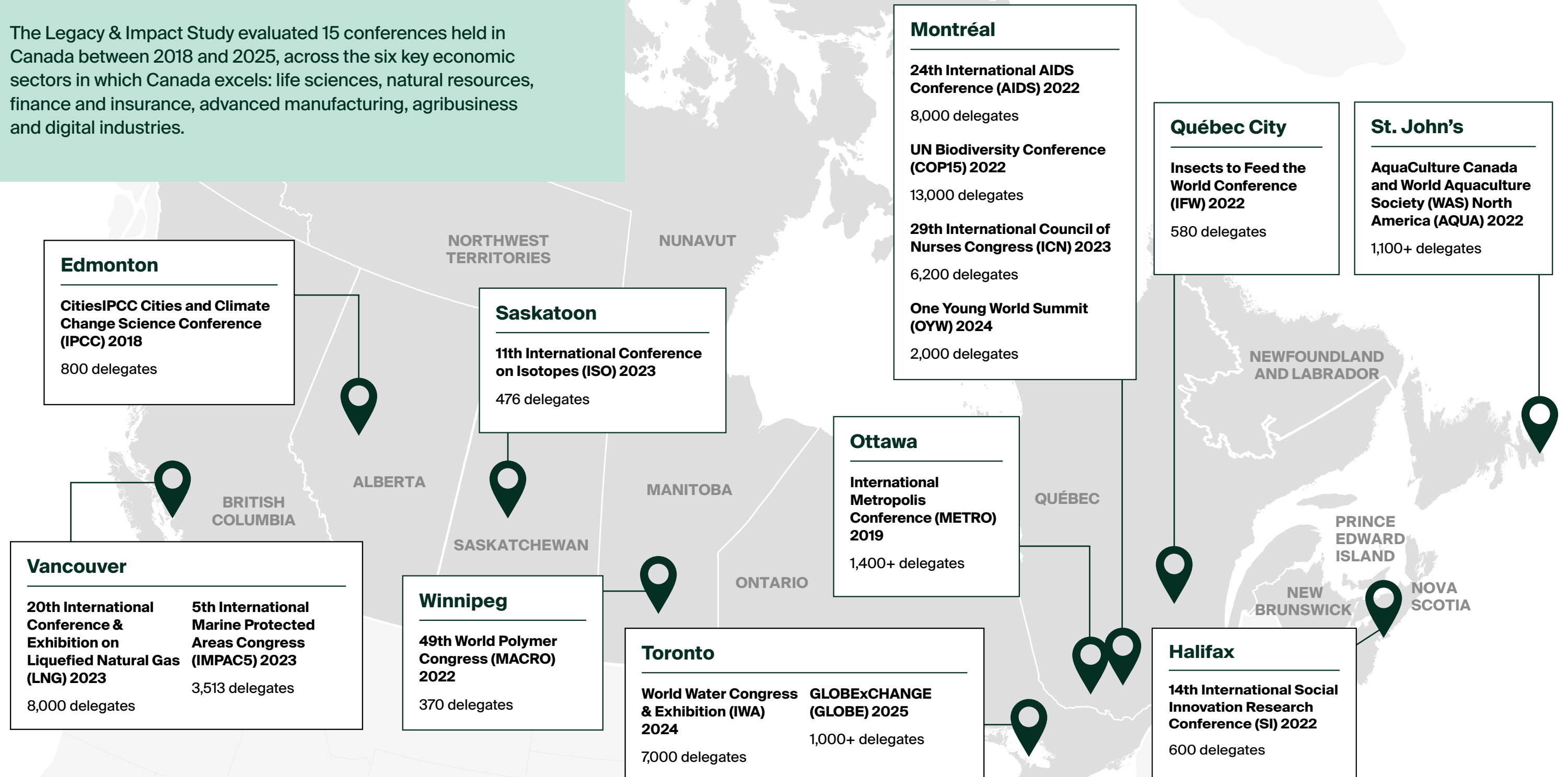
Across all audiences, the message is clear: designing for legacy transforms events from one-time gatherings into strategic drivers of long-term impact.



EVENTS STUDIED

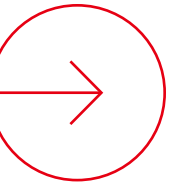
Events studied in Year Three

The Legacy & Impact Study evaluated 15 conferences held in Canada between 2018 and 2025, across the six key economic sectors in which Canada excels: life sciences, natural resources, finance and insurance, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and digital industries.



A BLUEPRINT

3



Business events decision makers can deliver extraordinary impact by harnessing five key insights.



The Full Potential of Events



Impact Accelerators



Impact as a Chain Reaction



The Power of Inclusion



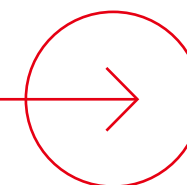
Foundations of Legacy

FOR LEGACY

THE FULL POTENTIAL

Business events create unique opportunities for collaboration, learning and resilience. As a result, their benefits expand far beyond economic advantages to the host city.

OF EVENTS





THE FULL POTENTIAL OF EVENTS

How do we measure outcomes?

Destinations are increasingly incorporating legacy measures into the events they host. Previously, this legacy has been difficult to measure.

By examining event outcomes across eight core categories, the Legacy & Impact Study captures how they shape organizations, sectors and destinations over time.

Together, these categories show the full potential of events to create lasting impact across multiple dimensions.

These eight categories are:



Intellectual

Research, development and innovation created through knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, technology transfer, data acquisition and transfer, and entrepreneurship.



Social

Positive contributions to social capital, such as strengthened networks, partnerships, shared experiences, social inclusion or a sense of community belonging.



Policy

Positive influences on institutional and government policy which help attract more resources, increase the profile of organizations and sectors, or create shared value.



Human

Any value or opportunity created for individuals, such as skills and career development, talent recruitment, improved work conditions, or any benefits to socioeconomic status, health and wellbeing.



Financial

Direct economic impacts and broader economic development drivers, such as attraction of foreign and local investments, trade, contributions to local enterprises or businesses, and the creation of grants.



Cultural

Outcomes that reinforce local or national values, customs and traditions, showcase local assets, language or knowledge, or promote local heritage.



Natural

Positive contributions to the conservation or restoration of ecology, biodiversity, ecosystems, energy, water and climate.



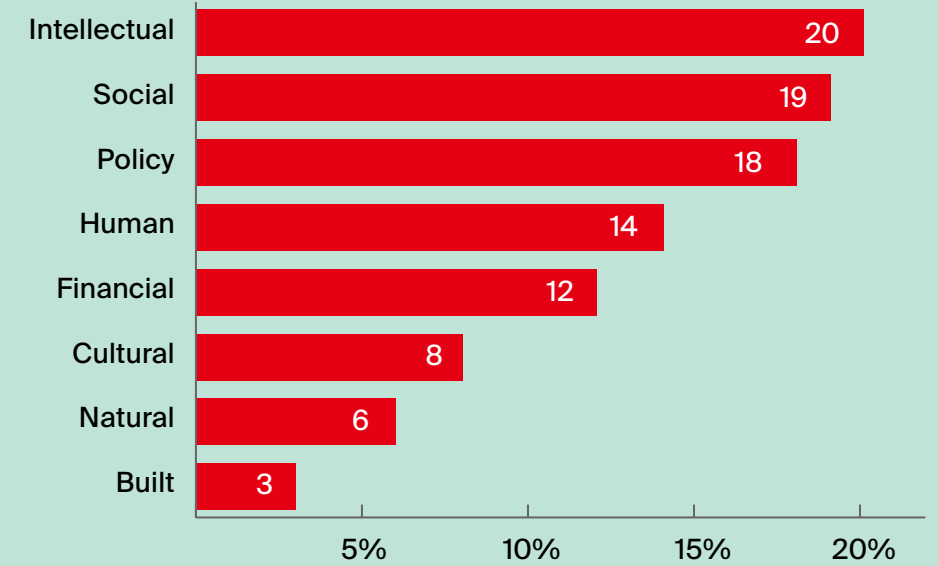
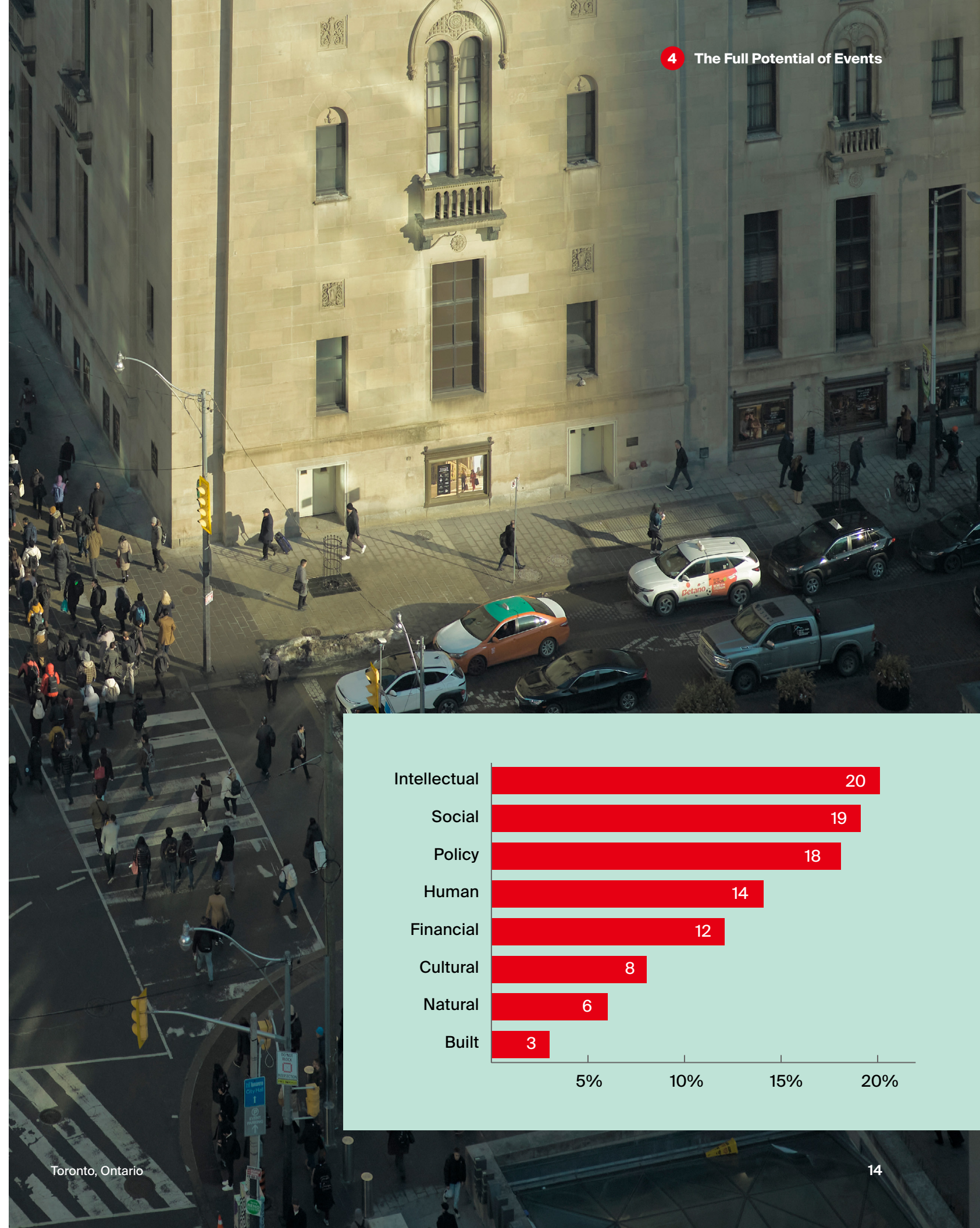
Built

Additions or modifications to infrastructure, manufacturing, tangible goods, technology and transportation networks.

These categories are best understood as a connected system. For instance, social outcomes, such as strengthened networks, often lead to intellectual outcomes as delegates collaborate and share knowledge. These interactions can also build skills—a human outcome—or contribute to increased investment in the months following a conference, representing a financial outcome.

THE MOST COMMON OUTCOMES

The graph on the right outlines the different categories of outcome and how often they occurred for the events studied. Three of the top four—intellectual, social and human—are early-stage outcomes and typically occur during the event itself. These help unlock later-stage outcomes in the months and years afterwards.





INTELLECTUAL OUTCOMES

Representing the most prevalent category, intellectual outcomes are the sparks that ignite subsequent outcomes—facilitating the introduction and widespread adoption of new ideas, best practices and research. They fuel innovation and scientific advancement in every sector.

Top 5 intellectual outcomes:

1. Sharing of new ideas or theories
2. Discussion of best practices and sector standards
3. Destination-level skills development
4. New intellectual collaborations within the destination
5. Increased sector innovation

Example

The 2022 **Insects to Feed the World Conference (IFW)** in Québec City was strategically designed to highlight Canada's emerging leadership in entomoculture and position the sector as a credible contributor to food security, sustainability and the circular economy.

It facilitated the adoption of new ideas and research through technical tours of the Insectarium (an insect producer in Montréal), engagement with government officials to position insects as legitimate livestock, and a student-run edible insect market, which offered tastings, culinary demonstrations and public dialogue.

Two other intellectual outcomes of the event included the creation of a permanent knowledge exchange platform, as well as the establishment of the Chair of Leadership in Education in Primary Production and Processing of Edible Insects (CLEIC) at the Université Laval, which secured long-term specialized research capacity for entomoculture.



SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Social outcomes help transmit ideas, allowing information to spread through professional networks, communities of practice and cross-border collaborations. The second most cited category, social outcomes frequently occur in combination with other outcomes, making it the central connector of the entire system.

Top 5 social outcomes:

1. Stronger, more connected professional communities
2. New international collaborations among sector partners
3. Inclusion of diverse perspectives
4. Increased awareness of social issues
5. Shifted social attitudes



Example

Delegates at the 2023 **International Council of Nurses Congress (ICN)** in Montréal identified opportunities to further advance equity and reconciliation within nursing. These concerns, including gaps in the congress's programming and design, were raised with event leadership. In response, the International Council of Nurses and the Canadian Nurses Association encouraged open dialogue, worked to understand these gaps, and ultimately implemented measures to ensure the adoption of Indigenous-led approaches and robust cultural safety practices at future congresses.



POLICY OUTCOMES

Policy outcomes show up prominently, highlighting how business events shape government relations, influence policy agendas, and enhance both national and international reputations. They typically occur after information passes through social networks and begins to permeate the greater social conscience—capturing the attention of the media, the public and governments.

Top 5 policy outcomes:

1. Government recognition of the sector
2. Media coverage and exposure to global audiences
3. Influence on political leadership
4. New strategic and/or policy direction
5. Amplification of the voice and profile of the organization or sector



Example

The Change for Climate Global Mayors Summit brought together global city networks, mayors and the science community ahead of the 2018 **CitiesIPCC Cities & Climate Change Science Conference (IPCC)** in Edmonton. This pre-event activity helped catalyze global and local action on climate change in many ways, including through the creation of the Edmonton Declaration. This document called for mayors to lead through science-based climate action, and was endorsed by 4,500 municipalities from across the world.



HUMAN OUTCOMES

Human outcomes reflect an event's impact on the individual delegate, such as skills development and leadership growth. They emerge alongside immediate intellectual outcomes and are reinforced through social outcomes.

Top 5 human outcomes:

1. Skills development
2. Positive attitudes, feelings or inspiration
3. Enhanced profiles of researchers or speakers
4. Professional training
5. Local talent development

Example

The 24th International AIDS Conference (AIDS) in Montréal in 2022 provided an opportunity for international colleagues to reconnect following the pandemic—boosting knowledge exchange and network development. Individuals could advance their skills through a conference program that included 150 sessions, as well as pre-conference presentations from key experts. Additionally, Tourisme Montréal and the Palais des congrès de Montréal partnered to provide an ambitious scholarship program to encourage the participation of delegates from low- and middle-income countries.

The conference also sought to create a sense of positivity and community, reduce the stigma around HIV and AIDS, and give a platform to marginalized communities. The Global Village, for example, provided a space for gatherings, speakers, activities and performances designed to create visibility, while fostering a sense of belonging and community. Media coverage shared the experiences of people living with HIV, helping to broaden understanding and awareness.



Montréal, Québec



FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

Financial outcomes typically refer to the direct and indirect economic benefits generated by a business event—often the most visible and immediate impact of large conferences. Longer-term economic gains, like influencing investment decisions or accelerating sector growth, usually come later and are built on strong intellectual, social and political outcomes.

Top 5 financial outcomes:

1. Direct financial benefits to local businesses
2. Delegate spend in region or city
3. External recognition of the sector that increases its legitimacy
4. Increased funding to the sector or cluster
5. Extended visitor stays, before or after the event



Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Example

The **International Conference on Isotopes (ISO)** in 2023 in Saskatoon advanced the profile of Saskatchewan's nuclear ecosystem, leading to new production contracts for medical isotopes. The conference also helped publicly showcase and strengthen partnerships and initiatives led by the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation. This contributed to a five-year, \$2 million agreement between the Fedoruk Centre and Canadian Nuclear Laboratories to increase production of Actinium-225, a rare medical isotope in demand for cancer treatment around the world.



CULTURAL OUTCOMES

Cultural outcomes enrich the conference experience, create emotional connections and elevate the perception of the destination. These outcomes, while often subtle, deeply intersect with social and financial outcomes to foster community pride, promote recognition and ensure event legacies are rooted in a lasting, inclusive identity.

Top 5 cultural outcomes:

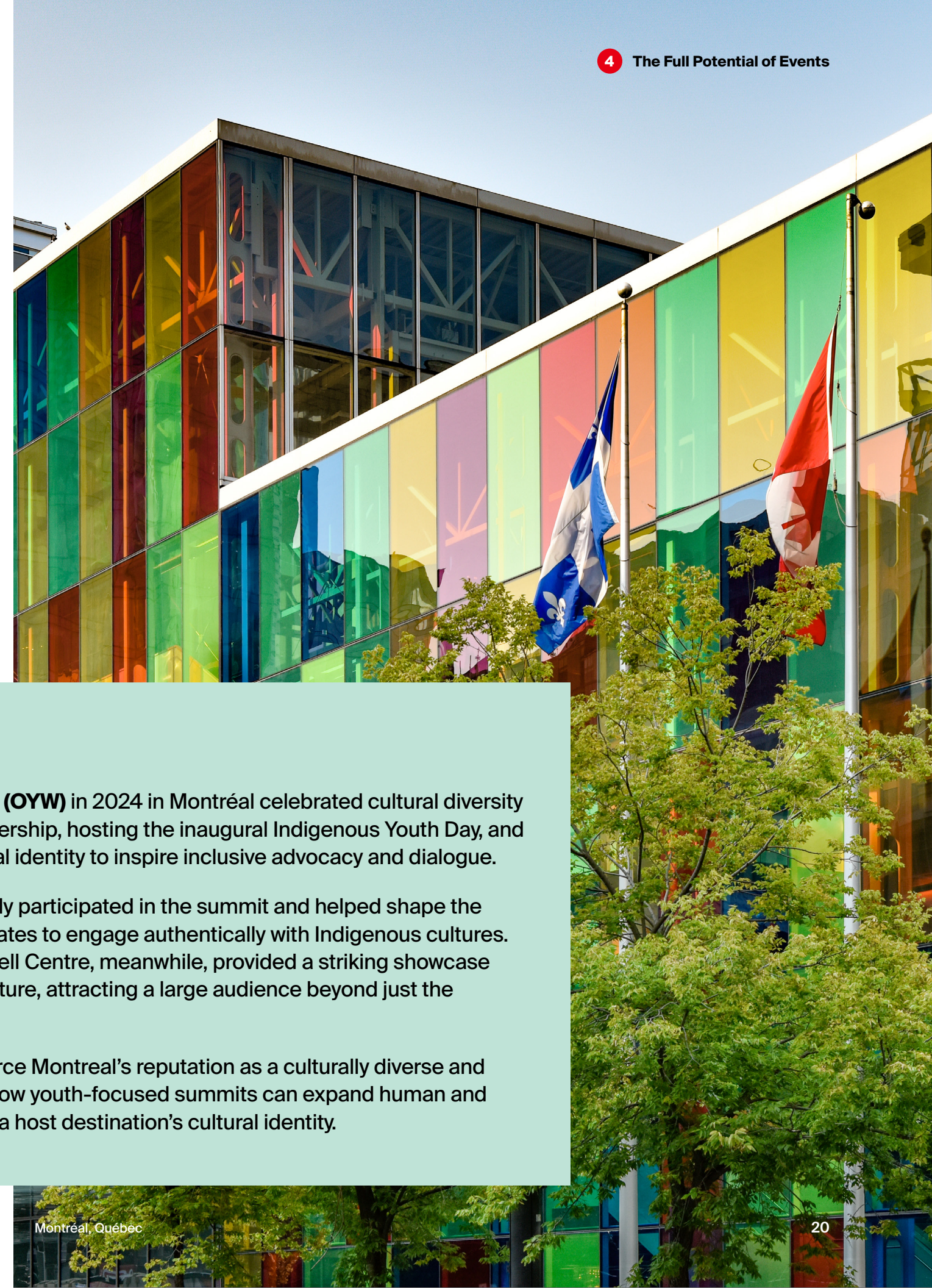
1. Connections between delegates and local culture
2. Introduction to Indigenous cultures
3. Introduction to cultural assets
4. Representation of local culture in marketing imagery
5. Amplification of local narratives

Example

The **One Young World Summit (OYW)** in 2024 in Montréal celebrated cultural diversity by spotlighting Indigenous leadership, hosting the inaugural Indigenous Youth Day, and leveraging the city's multicultural identity to inspire inclusive advocacy and dialogue.

Indigenous communities actively participated in the summit and helped shape the event's content, enabling delegates to engage authentically with Indigenous cultures. The opening ceremony at the Bell Centre, meanwhile, provided a striking showcase of Québécois and Canadian culture, attracting a large audience beyond just the conference delegates.

Overall, the event helped reinforce Montreal's reputation as a culturally diverse and inclusive city, while illustrating how youth-focused summits can expand human and social outcomes, and reinforce a host destination's cultural identity.





NATURAL OUTCOMES

Natural outcomes advance environmentally responsible practices, influence climate policy and embed sustainability into the built environment. Unlike other outcomes that may be achieved during an event, natural outcomes are usually only attained when other types of impact are sustained over time, allowing environmental change to take hold and scale across other domains.

Top 5 natural outcomes:

1. Locally sourced food and materials at event
2. Delegates are empowered to make sustainable choices
3. Increased awareness of environmental risks and issues
4. Event contributes to sector's climate change goals
5. Improvements in sustainable infrastructure

Example

The **UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15)** in 2022 in Montréal resulted in the historic adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which includes 23 global targets and the 30x30 pledge, encouraging governments to formally protect 30 per cent of Earth's land and ocean area by 2030.

The framework is more inclusive, measurable and reportable, strengthening biodiversity policies at all levels of the public and private sector and making them easier to implement. It also prompted parallel commitments in Canada and Québec, including Plan Nature 2030, which reframed biodiversity as a mainstream policy priority in domestic planning, and the Tiohtià:ke/Montréal Pledge, which encourages other cities to take bold action for biodiversity. Signatories to the pledge agree to voluntarily track their progress toward 15 specific biodiversity targets.





BUILT OUTCOMES

Built outcomes encompass both physical and technological changes, from accessible venues to digital tools. They were less prevalent in the events studied, but when taken into consideration, they can enable outcomes across multiple domains.

Top 5 built outcomes:

1. Awareness and knowledge sharing of technological advances
2. Showcasing and testing of new technologies
3. Development of new technologies
4. Event environment supports accessibility, wellbeing and safety
5. Higher understanding of circularity in manufacturing and consumption



Example

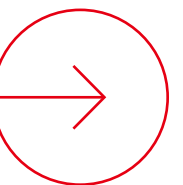
The **International Conference & Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** in 2023 in Vancouver offered a tour of the first electric tugboat capable of docking liquefied natural gas tankers. The HaiSea Wamis tugboat, a joint venture between the Haisla Nation near Kitimat, British Columbia and marine services provider Seaspan, is expected to help reduce the environmental footprint of the liquefied natural gas sector.

IMPACT AS A

When an event evolves from a temporary gathering into a powerful engine of national transformation and global influence, it does not happen all at once. Rather, it unfolds as a chain reaction.



CHAIN REACTION



LINKS OF THE CHAIN REACTION

The chain reaction of impact provides a practical way for those designing and supporting events to understand how early-stage outcomes translate into long-term impact—and how to strengthen impact over time.

Each impact builds on the last, creating momentum across five sequential levels. For an event to achieve a profound, lasting legacy, impact must progress through each of these levels.

For example, when an attendee leaves an event empowered to apply new knowledge or skills within their organization, the process begins. This is level 1.

If that individual then influences leadership to adopt new processes that alter the way they operate, the impact extends further. The chain reaction advances to level 2, building momentum toward broader, system-wide change across subsequent levels.

Level 1: Individual Learning and Empowerment

Delegates, students and early-career professionals are often the first to feel the tangible benefits of events. They gain new knowledge, skills and perspectives they can take back to their work, planting the seeds for wider legacy development.

Outcomes: Personal development, skill acquisition

Level 2: Organizational Innovation and Capacity

The collective learnings of participants permeate the organizations they represent. Organizations apply these insights to drive new practices, research, development and growth.

Outcomes: New processes, research and development investments, organizational growth

Level 3: Stronger Networks and Community Inclusion

Individuals bring their knowledge, skills and experiences into collective spaces that foster dialogue, collaboration and change. Events create relationships that strengthen professional networks and support diversity, equity and inclusion.

Outcomes: Strengthened networks, increased awareness of pressing issues, cultural enrichment, enhanced inclusion for diverse groups

Level 4: Sector and Policy Advancement

Impact moves beyond communities and begins to reshape entire sectors and fields of practice. Ideas and collaborations emerging from the event influence sector priorities and government policies.

Outcomes: Advanced industry standards, widespread adoption of innovative practices, new government policies, structural growth

Level 5: Destination-Level Legacy

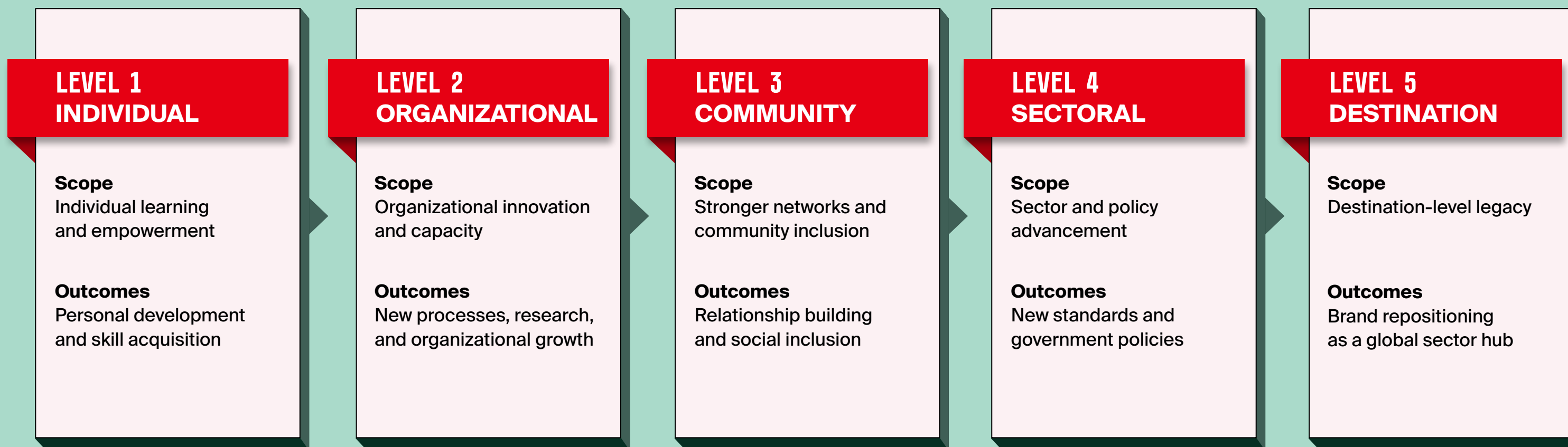
The host destination benefits from the business event through enhanced reputation and investment attraction.

Outcomes: Destinations permanently reshape their global positioning to become recognized international hubs for targeted trade, investment, talent and sectoral innovation



Montréal, Québec

IMPACT AS A CHAIN REACTION



CHAIN REACTION CASE STUDY

Attributing far-reaching impacts to a single business event is challenging. Not only does the full chain reaction take years—if not decades—to unfold, it also requires highly sophisticated measurement processes and practices.

None of the events studied have yet moved through all five levels. However, using the **Insects to Feed the World Conference**, we can show how it has moved through Levels 1 and 2, and extrapolate how Levels 3, 4 and 5 may unfold in the coming years:

LEVEL 1: At the conference, a researcher exchanges knowledge with international colleagues, industry leaders and regulators. She leaves with new knowledge, new contacts and a stronger understanding of the sector's global challenges and opportunities.

Outcomes: Skills development and knowledge exchange

LEVEL 2: After the conference, she applies this knowledge to her company and research work, contributing to the development of a new insect-based food product.

Outcomes: New processes, innovation and organizational capacity

LEVEL 3: Through contacts made at the conference, the company becomes aware of other events and public-facing food markets. They demonstrate their new product and share information about entotechnology—increasing public awareness and reducing stigma around insect consumption, while conducting market research.

Outcomes: Increase awareness and community engagement

LEVEL 4: As the insect sector grows and becomes more structured, the organization joins the new industry association. The researcher and her colleagues lead discussions with governments about how insect farming should be regulated and recognized within agricultural and food systems. This contributes to regulatory evolution and sector structuring.

Outcomes: New regulations, sector structuring and policy influence

LEVEL 5: Over time, Québec and Canada become increasingly recognized as leaders in entotechnology and insect-based food innovation, attracting international researchers, companies and investment.

Outcomes: Destination positioning and sector hub development



FOUNDATIONS

For an event to complete the chain reaction and create a lasting legacy, impact must be intentionally embedded from the outset.

For meeting planners and destination organizations, these foundations provide a clear starting point for designing events with long-term impact in mind.

Intentionality is the core driver—the force that sustains momentum from one level to the next.

It must be present in the event design, delivery and in the months and years that follow. Events that achieve a lasting legacy consistently demonstrate three forms of intentionality:



Intentional Design

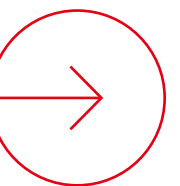


Strategic Collaborations



Sustained Stewardship

OF LEGACY

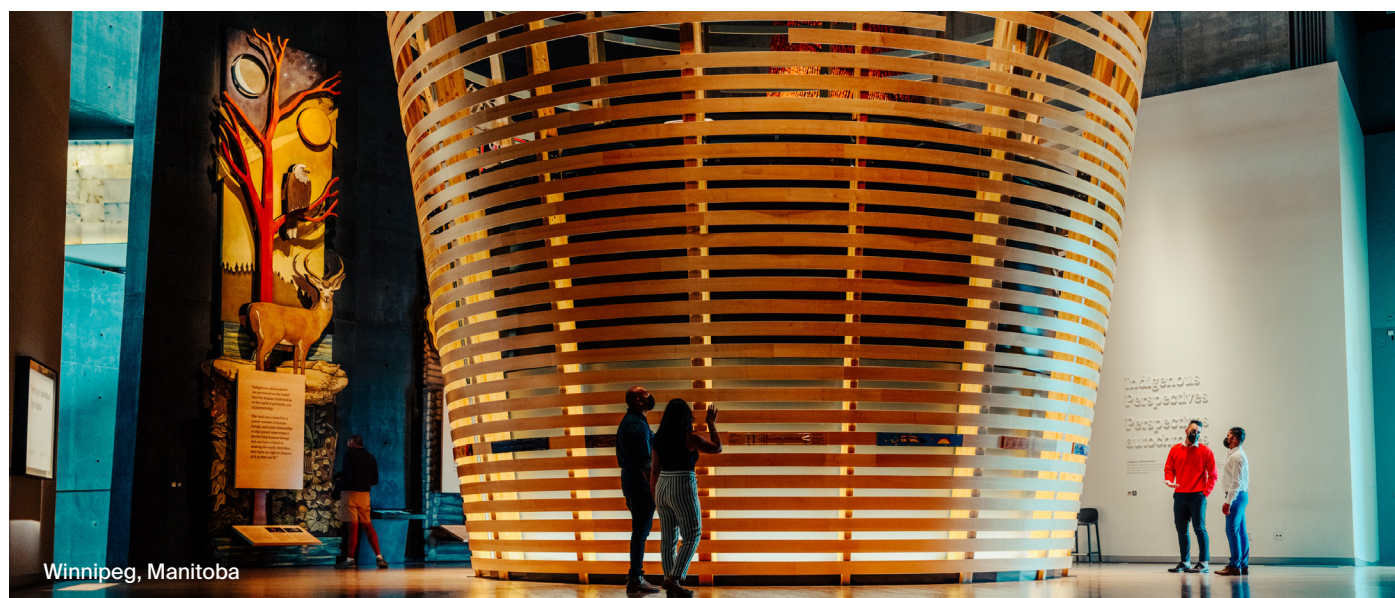




INTENTIONAL DESIGN

Intentional event planning starts with clear, long-term objectives and legacy goals, typically set out in a legacy plan.

Strong legacy planning is mission-driven and activities are clearly aligned to an event's purpose, as well as the host destination's strengths.



Winnipeg, Manitoba



Calgary, Alberta

Example

In 2024, Destination Canada, in collaboration with the federal government and local destination management organizations (DMOs), established the **International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF)**.

Unlike traditional bid-support programs focused primarily on economic outcomes, ICAF embeds legacy considerations into the investment process—demonstrating how funding mechanisms can support social, environmental and community objectives from the outset.

This innovation has encouraged local organizing committees (LOCs), with DMO support, to take a more intentional approach to planning meaningful event legacies.



STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

Longstanding event impact requires the collaboration of many different stakeholders—including DMOs, LOCs, governments, academia, industry associations, community organizations, sponsors, Indigenous communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

These types of collaborations are purposeful, cross-sectoral and coordinated.

Example

GLOBExCHANGE 2025 in Toronto fostered active participation from business, government, academia and civil society enabling practical, solutions-oriented discussions and partnerships.

The program was shaped by delegate feedback from the previous year, ensuring it addressed key challenges in developing climate and sustainability strategies.

Alignment with Canada's federal climate and clean economy strategies helped secure government engagement. At the same time, the Canadian Sustainability Standards Board (CSSB) convened Indigenous leaders and changemakers in an interactive session to inform its inaugural strategic plan.



SUSTAINED STEWARDSHIP

Many impacts take 12-36 months to materialize. Without dedicated follow-up, they remain invisible to policymakers and funders. Capturing these longer-term outcomes requires sustained, destination-level stewardship.

Strong stewardship plans are accountability-driven and remain aligned with the event's long-term mission.



Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

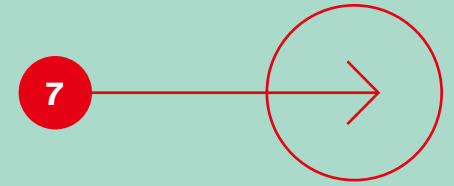


Example

The **Insects to Feed the World Conference** in Québec City started with a strategic action plan—a set of goals and objectives the organizers aimed to achieve, both during and after the conference. In the years since, this action plan has served as a roadmap, helping organizers track, measure and share impact on an annual basis.

Overall, this exercise in intentionality and sustained stewardship has allowed organizers to focus their follow-up efforts and identify longer-term outcomes that would previously have remained invisible.

IMPACT



To strengthen intentional legacy planning, we identified 18 impact accelerators that expand and deepen impact across systems and sectors.

These accelerators offer practical levers that planners and decision makers can use to strengthen outcomes and maximize the long-term value of their events.

When applied effectively, impact accelerators strengthen outcomes across multiple domains—ensuring events deliver lasting value.



Vancouver, British Columbia

ACCELERATORS

IMPACT ACCELERATORS

Impact accelerators take two forms: legacy drivers and success factors. While both shape an event's legacy potential, they operate in different ways.

WHAT IS A SUCCESS FACTOR?

A success factor is a supportive circumstance that is either pre-existing or concurrent with the timing of the event. While organizers may be able to influence some success factors—for example, by building strong relationships with government over time—others may arise from external conditions. For instance, a sudden shift in the economic climate can create new government priorities.

WHAT IS A LEGACY DRIVER?

A legacy driver is an operational lever that event organizers can use to strengthen an event's impact. These drivers are intentionally integrated into event planning and programming.



Victoria, British Columbia

IMPACT ACCELERATORS

Impact Accelerator	What Is It?	Why Does It Matter?	Example
Success Factors			
Government Participation	Governments actively support every stage of the event, from planning through to delivery.	Helps events achieve greater legitimacy and influence, as well as mobilize resources.	COP15 led to Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy and Québec's Plan Nature, both backed by substantial funding. All levels of government—municipal, provincial and federal—were involved in event planning.
DMO Involvement	Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) act as the connective tissue between organizers, government and communities.	Ensures outcomes are aligned with destination strategies, sustained beyond the event and integrated into sectoral positioning.	OYW elevated Montréal's global profile with strong support from Tourisme Montréal.
Pre-Event Activities	Delegates and communities are primed for participation through early training and collaboration.	Maximizes the value of in-event interactions.	OYW included extensive pre-summit community engagement, reflecting Montréal's local character and spirit.
External Collaboration	Organizers expand their reach through partnerships with external stakeholders, including universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Indigenous groups and international institutions.	Events achieve greater outcomes and partners help carry legacies forward.	Organizers at IMPAC5 recognized the essential role of Indigenous Peoples in achieving Canada's biodiversity targets and partnered with Indigenous representatives to lead congress planning.
Policy Alignment	Event timing and outputs support global policy cycles or key sectoral milestones, accelerating policy uptake and sectoral transformation.	Magnifies event relevance and impact.	IMPAC5 built on the momentum of COP15 , focusing on how the new marine protection target could be achieved.

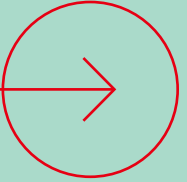
IMPACT ACCELERATORS (CONTINUED)

Impact Accelerator	What Is It?	Why Does It Matter?	Example
Defined Impact Strategies	A plan that clearly outlines how the event will deliver impact and defines the roles stakeholders play in its execution.	Prevents impact efforts from becoming fragmented, reactive, or unnecessarily limited.	IFW influenced Québec's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to formally recognize insects as livestock, unlocking new funding and industry support.
Human-Centred and Experiential Meeting Design	Forges human connections through things like youth engagement, public participation, cultural inclusion and authentic representation.	Allows events to generate stronger legitimacy and social cohesion.	The COP15 Youth Summit provided an important opportunity before the main summit for youth to showcase their work in conservation, helping inspire the next generation of biodiversity leaders.
Longitudinal Tracking	Tracks and reports delayed impacts, which are often difficult to measure.	Increases outcome visibility, potentially attracting the attention of policymakers and funders.	Longitudinal tracking through the Legacy & Impact Study shows how a commitment made at IFW in 2022 led to the launch of the edible insect sector's first association in 2024.
Sustained Funding	Governments and DMOs make sure event pledges extend beyond the event, by providing seed funding, dedicated legacy resources and appropriate downstream infrastructure.	Mitigates risk to legacy by providing sufficient funding and operational systems.	Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature, launched in 2026, stems from global commitments made at COP15 . It is backed by significant federal funding, including \$1.63 billion for conservation and Indigenous-led stewardship, \$444.3 million for marine protected areas, and \$231 million for Indigenous Guardians programs.
Legacy Drivers			
Knowledge Transfer	The exchange of scientific, technical, or professional expertise through presentations, workshops and publications.	Expands collective understanding within and beyond the sector.	IFW hosted a public insect market to educate the public on the benefits of insects as a sustainable food source and promote local expertise.
Capacity Building	Strengthening human and institutional capabilities by developing skills, leadership and professional networks.	Creates potential for impact to persist after the event ends.	IFW led to the establishment of a Chair of Leadership in Education in Primary Production and Processing of Edible Insects at Université Laval, increasing research capacity. This resulted in eight new courses, expanded curricula, advancements in research and development, and enhanced postgraduate training in entotechnologies.

IMPACT ACCELERATORS (CONTINUED)

Impact Accelerator	What Is It?	Why Does It Matter?	Example
Sector Innovation	Fostering collaboration between groups such as industry, academia and policy makers.	Catalyzes new research, products, services or processes.	At ISO , the Leaders Summit showcased Saskatoon's reputation as a global leader in isotope research.
Legacy Frameworks	Formal strategies, governance structures or action plans designed to amplify impact.	Defines long-term objectives, roles and measurement pathways for legacy implementation.	The Edmonton Declaration, created as part of IPCC , has been endorsed by more than 4,500 municipalities.
DEI Initiatives	The integration of inclusive values into event planning, content and community engagement.	Ensures equitable representation and participation.	COP15 , IPCC and IMPAC5 promoted youth and Indigenous participation in global processes, amplifying underrepresented voices and supporting more sustained inclusion of youth and Indigenous leadership in international environmental decision making.
Showcasing Local Expertise	Demonstrating a destination's intellectual and cultural assets.	Positions local stakeholders as global contributors and enhances regional reputations.	A local hospitality showcase at WAS resulted in more than half of delegates extending their stay.
Sustainable Practices	Integration of environmental and social responsibility into event operations.	Reduces resource consumption, waste and carbon emissions while modelling best practices.	Ahead of COP15 , a sustainable event management plan was implemented, certified, and later presented as a model for future federal government events.
Community Engagement	Connects events with residents, local organizations and beneficiaries through outreach, volunteering, education or public programming.	Allows event benefits to extend beyond delegates.	At AIDS , legacy initiatives drove pre-event collaboration between clinicians, researchers, patients, community organizations, government, Fierté Montréal and local artists. This strengthened community health initiatives, enhanced support for marginalized groups and fostered more equitable engagement.
Advocacy Activities	Use of the event platform to influence agendas, raise awareness, and secure long-term commitments.	Mobilizes policy attention and collective action.	Pre-event advocacy for IMPAC5 culminated in the Leadership Forum, which brought leaders together to align efforts to protect oceans.

THE POWER



Inclusion shapes legitimacy, social licence and the quality of business event outcomes.

For organizers and destinations, designing for inclusion ensures that diverse perspectives shape event outcomes, leading to more widely shared and lasting benefits.

Our research highlights a growing strategic shift towards embedding diversity, equity and inclusion across event design, governance and delivery.



OF INCLUSION

THE POWER OF INCLUSION

For underrepresented groups, events are transformative vehicles of inclusion and inspiration, offering visibility, validation and a sense of belonging.

More business events are deliberately integrating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to ensure equitable representation and participation. Meeting planners are also embedding inclusive values into event planning, content and community engagement.

Initiatives like these do more than build skills. They also develop future leaders, create role models and demonstrate the value of diverse perspectives in shaping sectors and communities.

Inclusion efforts succeed when leadership and governance roles are shared across diverse groups, protocols are co-developed and honoured, and invitations to participate are genuine.

Example

The **International Council of Nurses Congress** was held in Montréal in 2023, as national debates on systemic racism and cultural safety gained momentum across the health sector and the global workforce faced a shortage of 5.8 million nurses.

In this context, event organizers embedded anti-racist, equitable and inclusive practices into the event planning to help reduce inequalities and foster global dialogue on the workforce crisis.

These efforts positioned the International Secretariat of Nurses in the French-speaking World (SIDIIEF) as a leader in the event's planning. They also increased participation by students and trainees from under-resourced countries through targeted scholarships, and advanced anti-racism and cultural safety commitments within the Canadian Nurses Association's governance and training.



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

While Indigenous engagement is a core pillar of equity-focused work, it has a distinct focus.

DEI aims to address systemic barriers affecting racialized and marginalized groups, including Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous engagement, meanwhile, focuses on advancing Truth and Reconciliation, including the 94 Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 2015 report. These Calls to Action address the ongoing impacts of colonialism on First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

Several events in the study demonstrated Indigenous engagement. However, in many cases, efforts remained focused on representation and participation, rather

than deeper integration into event planning and structure. These observations highlight a clear opportunity to strengthen how Indigenous engagement is approached across the sector.

Our findings point to the importance of moving beyond participation toward genuine partnerships and shared authority. Embedding Indigenous perspectives in governance, design and evaluation will help ensure that future engagement is both credible and complete, and that outcomes reflect the priorities and leadership of Indigenous communities.

Example

The 2023 **International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5)** in Vancouver, co-hosted by Canada and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, placed a strong emphasis on Indigenous involvement. It provided an unprecedented platform for incorporating Indigenous knowledge into global marine protection strategies.

Indigenous leaders were engaged in event planning roles, a dedicated Indigenous Leadership Program stream was created, and space was made for Indigenous communities to lead their own programming.

The event also saw the recognition of the first marine refuge under Indigenous stewardship within the Northern Shelf Bioregion, a groundbreaking example of Indigenous-led environmental protection. Media attention further showcased the critical role of Indigenous perspectives.

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES



Social

The **One Young World Summit** ensured more diverse representation by establishing a dedicated Indigenous Youth Day and prominently including Indigenous voices across plenaries. This promoted inclusivity at both individual and community levels, embedding Indigenous perspectives within the summit's global dialogue.



Human

The **UN Biodiversity Conference** launched the First Nations National Guardians Network, providing tools, funding and training for Indigenous-led conservation efforts. The event also explicitly recognized Indigenous contributions to global biodiversity governance.



Financial

The **UN Biodiversity Conference** also facilitated an \$800 million federal funding commitment for Indigenous-led initiatives like the Great Bear Sea project in British Columbia and the Omushkego Wahkohtowin Conservation Project in Ontario, as well as projects in the Qikiqtani Region of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.



Cultural

The **One Young World Summit** featured Indigenous figures like former Grand Chief Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, the first woman who also identifies as Two-Spirit to be elected Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke. Also invited was social media influencer Scott Wabano, an award-winning Two-Spirit Cree fashion stylist and designer, creative director, media host and youth advocate.



BARRIERS TO INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT



Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Our research identified a range of approaches to Indigenous engagement across the case studies. While some events demonstrated strong, integrated practices, others reflected earlier stages of development—highlighting opportunities to deepen engagement over time.

In some cases, access to first-hand Indigenous perspectives was limited, underscoring the importance of building strong, sustained relationships and recognizing the significant demand on Indigenous leaders.

Based on these observations, we have identified four key barriers that may limit the depth and sustainability of Indigenous engagement, offering insight into where future efforts can be strengthened:

Underrepresentation and symbolic inclusion

Despite efforts to include diverse voices, Indigenous perspectives were sometimes underrepresented in core discussions and leadership roles.

Limited consideration of systemic issues

Some events demonstrated a willingness to include Indigenous representation, such as cultural performances, but did not fully address underlying systemic issues within event design and delivery that would ensure the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives.

Challenges in sustaining long-term impact

While events facilitated dialogue and networking, it was not always evident how these engagements advanced reconciliation or true partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

Structural and political constraints on advocacy

Advocacy efforts were sometimes constrained by structural barriers, such as negotiations dominated by federal or provincial governments, limited resources for Indigenous delegations and the absence of direct funding mechanisms.

RISKS TO MITIGATE

By tracking events over multiple years, this study provides a unique perspective on how outcomes evolve over time. In some cases, however, early momentum is not sustained.

We refer to this as “legacy mortality”—when initiatives, commitments or outcomes generated by an event diminish once it concludes. This can occur when sustained funding, clear ownership or long-term systems are not in place to support continued impact.

For meeting planners and decision makers, recognizing these risks is essential to sustaining impact over time and building lasting legacy.

To mitigate these risks and support long-term outcomes, impact must be intentionally embedded throughout the event and beyond.

Through our research, we identified five key risks that can limit the development of event legacies:

Limited or unclear evaluation frameworks

Legacy plans may lack clear metrics, baselines or governance structures, leading to fragmented efforts and reduced impact over time.

Superficial or unclear legacy positioning

Legacy may be described broadly or symbolically, without clear articulation or meaningful stakeholder input.

Unclear stakeholder roles and commitments

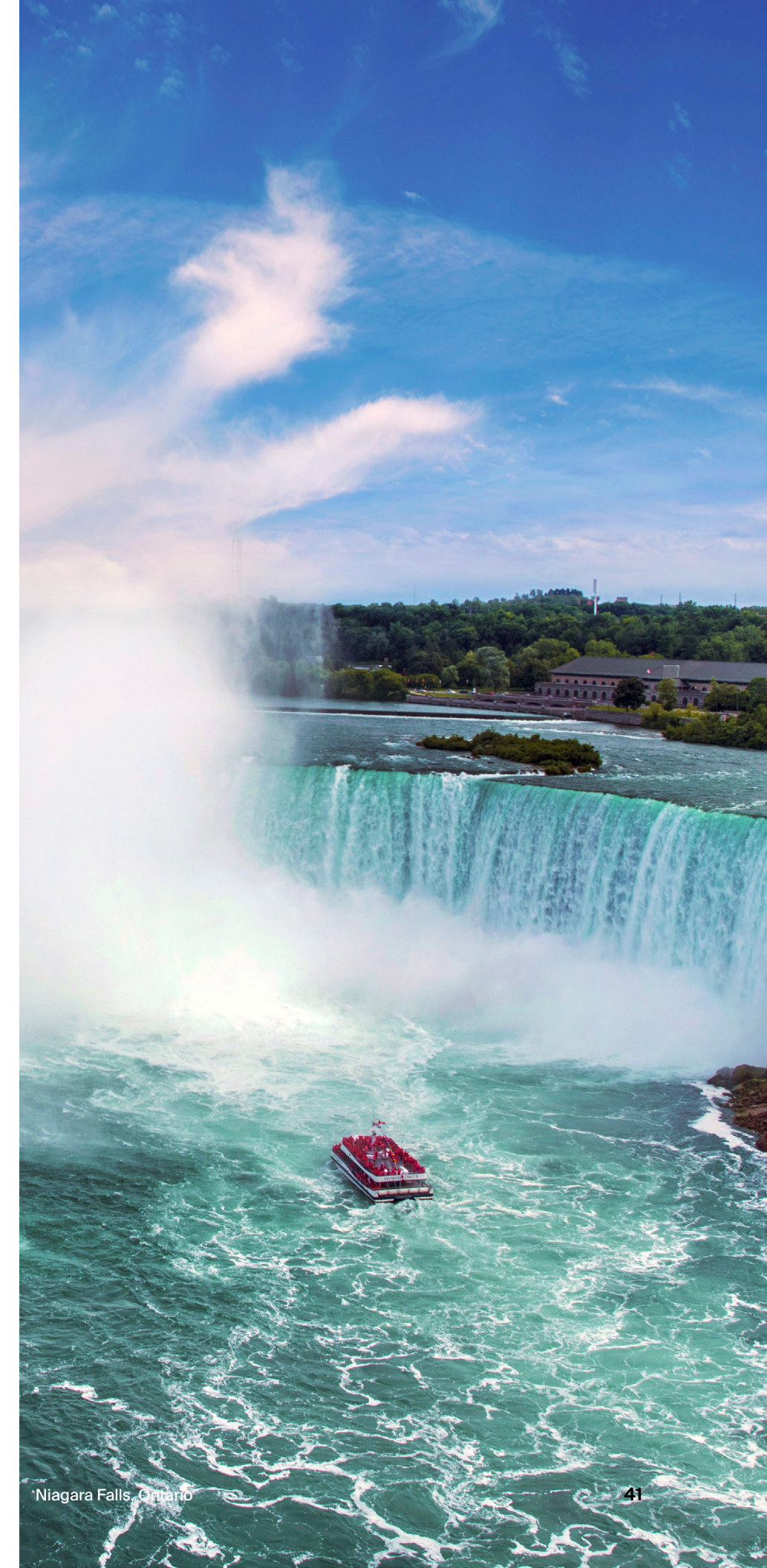
Governments and key partners may be identified, but roles and commitments are not always clearly defined. This can limit accountability for sustained funding, legacy stewardship and long-term delivery.

Standardized approaches without local adaptation

Legacy plans may be reused without sufficient adaptation to local context or sector-specific goals, limiting their relevance and effectiveness.

Dependence on uncertain funding

Legacy activities may depend on future grants, sponsorships or unconfirmed contributions, limiting their continuity and long-term impact.



A MODEL FOR ENGINEERING BUSINESS EVENTS LEGACY

To mitigate risks to legacy and amplify intentional impacts, it is essential to take a holistic view of business event planning.

On the following page, the infographic offers a visual representation of how business event legacies are created, mapping the full process from left to right.

The graphic shows how harnessing the foundations of legacy, impact accelerators and the power of inclusion translates into powerful outcomes across multiple domains.

When decision makers and meeting planners apply this model, they can design and deliver events that generate lasting legacy and far-reaching impact.

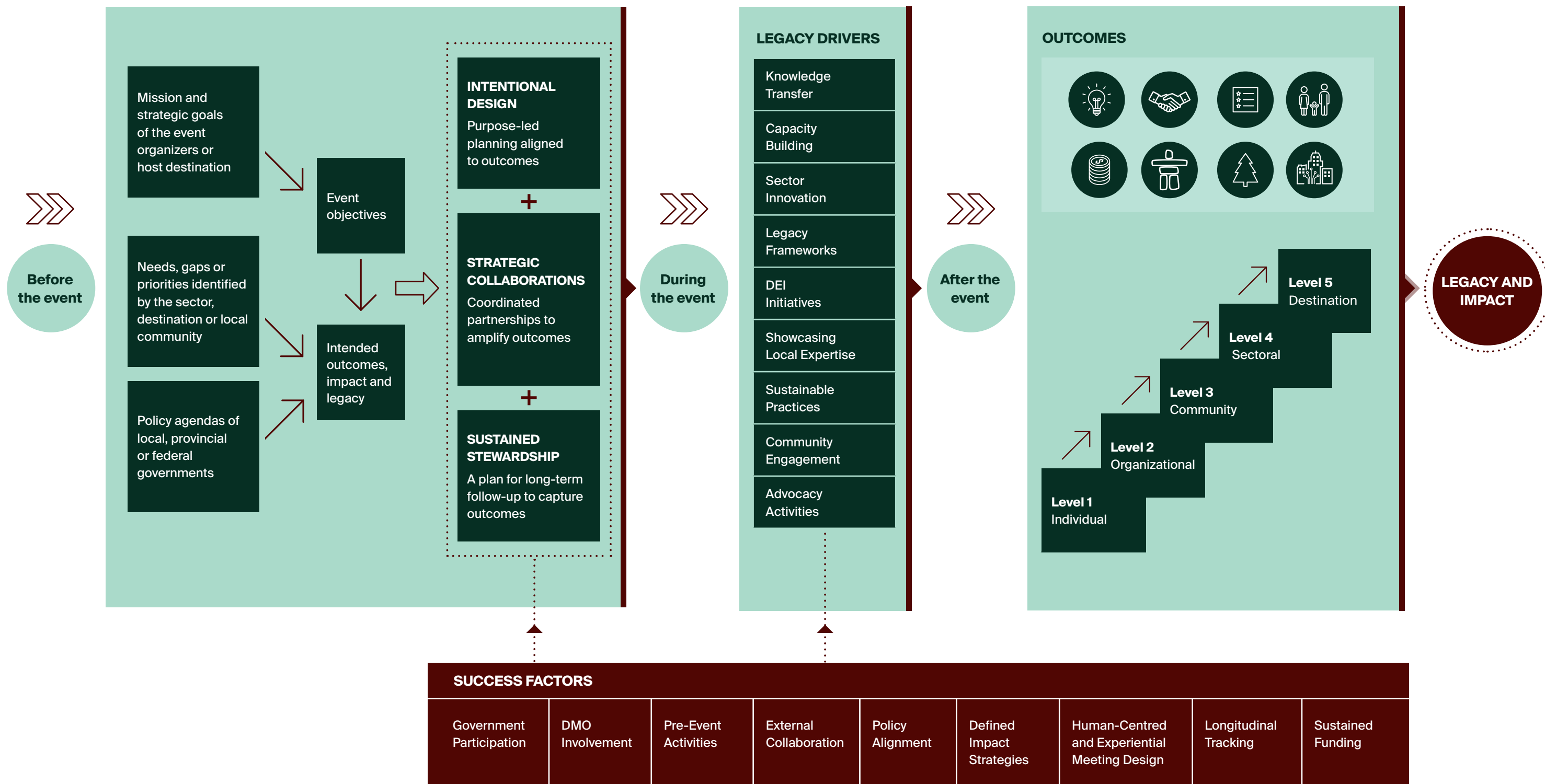


Victoria, British Columbia

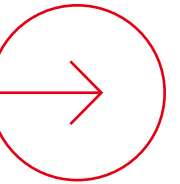


Toronto, Ontario

A MODEL FOR ENGINEERING BUSINESS EVENTS LEGACY



WHAT'S



The future of business events will be defined by the lasting legacy they deliver for sectors, communities and destinations.

NEXT?

ENGINEERING EXTRAORDINARY EVENT IMPACT



Halifax, Nova Scotia

Business events are powerful drivers of long-term change—shaping policy, advancing innovation and strengthening communities.

The Legacy & Impact Study provides the most comprehensive evidence to date of how these outcomes are created, along with a clear blueprint for designing impact intentionally.

For those who plan, support and invest in business events, this creates an opportunity to deliver value far beyond the event itself.

Realizing this potential now depends on coordinated action across the global business events ecosystem—including governments, destinations, associations, event planners, academia, and community and Indigenous partners.

This includes aligning strategies, investing in measurement and intervention capacity, and embedding intentional event design across every stage of event planning, delivery and evaluation.

By applying these principles, the business events sector can evolve into a powerful platform for sustainable development and inclusive growth.

As a next step, Destination Canada will build on these findings to develop a Legacy & Impact Framework—a practical action plan for meeting planners, governments and destinations.

Together, these tools will support the industry in designing events that deliver lasting legacy and far-reaching impact.



Edmonton, Alberta

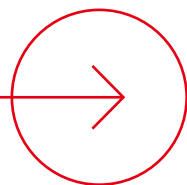
THANK YOU



Our sincere appreciation to all partners, stakeholders and communities who have contributed to the Legacy & Impact Study. Your collaboration has been instrumental in demonstrating how business events drive meaningful, lasting change—far beyond economic benefits. Together, we are reshaping the future of the industry.

Thank you for helping us turn insights into impact.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY



METHODOLOGY: MEASURING EVENT IMPACT



To better understand the full impact of business events, the Legacy & Impact Study used a custom measurement framework designed by #MEET4IMPACT.

By applying this structured framework, the study captures the full depth and breadth of event impact across multiple domains. This approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of how outcomes extend beyond immediate economic benefits.

The framework examines event outcomes across eight core categories: intellectual, social, policy, human, financial, cultural, natural and built.

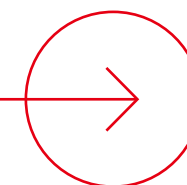
These categories were adapted from the Community Capitals Framework and informed by feedback from the business events industry, the Destination Canada Wealth & Wellbeing Index and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Together, they provide a common reporting language tailored to the diverse needs and priorities of the business events sector.

By applying this framework across 15 international business events, the study was able to track how outcomes emerge, interact and evolve over time—offering a clearer picture of how business events generate lasting impact.



APPENDIX: FEATURE CASE STUDY



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ISOTOPES

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
July 23 – 27, 2023

Overview

The World Council on Isotopes (WCI) promotes the safe, environmentally sound use of isotope technologies and the sharing of their peaceful applications to support global wellbeing. The focus of the 2023 International Conference on Isotopes (ICI) was to help steady the global supply of isotopes, which was disrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Conference aims:

- Position Saskatoon and Saskatchewan as key players in the global isotopes industry.
- Attract new government and industry funding for university chairs.
- Increase usage of the Saskatchewan Cyclotron Facility, allowing students, professors and industry to advance their innovations and contribute to the running costs of the centre.
- Attract new professors and international specialists to Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan.
- Showcase the contributions of women in nuclear science and technology, while engaging youth and Indigenous communities.
- Improve public perception of radiation safety and the benefits of isotope applications, especially among Indigenous communities.



Key highlights

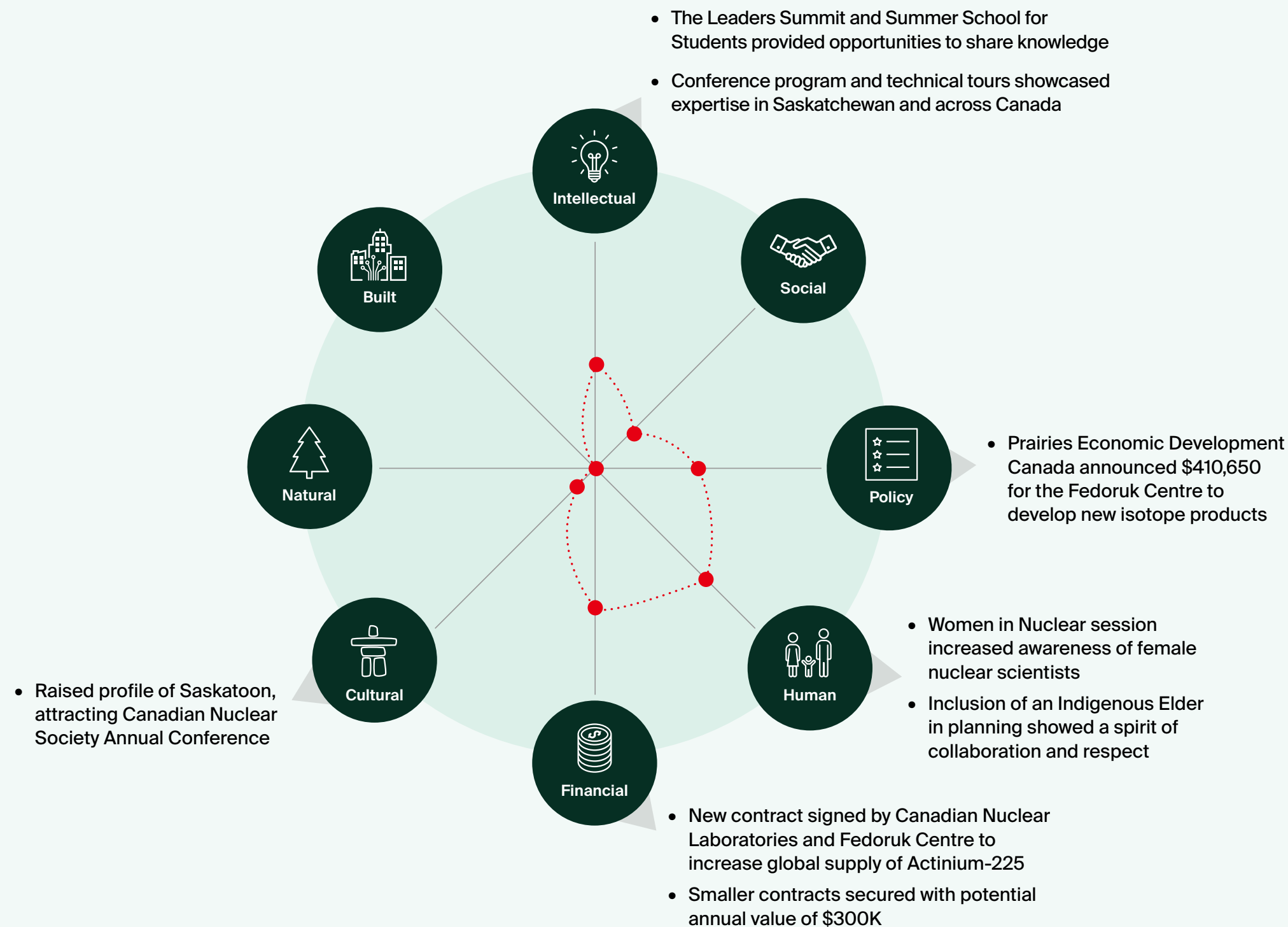
- The conference catalyzed new investments and institutional collaborations, demonstrating how business events can leverage scientific convening power to elevate global profile and local growth.
- It employed targeted legacy planning and alignment with regional expertise to deliver meaningful long-term impact.
- With strong Indigenous participation, youth engagement and international scientific collaboration, the event aligned with national innovation and health priorities, positioning Saskatoon as a future-facing global hub for nuclear development.

IMPACT ACCELERATORS

Legacy Drivers	Examples
Knowledge Transfer	A Leaders Summit brought together the Canadian and international communities to discuss common issues and strategic opportunities in the isotope industry.
DEI Initiatives	The Women in Nuclear session highlighted the prominent role of female nuclear scientists, both internationally and locally. As well, Indigenous Elders were included in planning the conference , and individual sessions promoted Indigenous nuclear stewardship.
Advocacy Activities	The World Council on Isotopes President's Forum addressed the public perception of radiation safety and the role decision makers can play in highlighting the benefits of radiation applications.
Sector Innovation	The event led to the creation of two university chairs , paving the way for new programs, courses, research opportunities, talent development and investment.
Capacity Building	Metrics tracked by the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation indicate growth in the nuclear ecosystem . This includes increases in academic engagement, new faculty positions, expanded partnerships—including with Indigenous communities—and international collaborations leading to local research opportunities. The Centre also monitors activity and output at the Saskatchewan Cyclotron facility.
Showcasing Local Expertise	Technical tours of local facilities showcased Saskatchewan's expertise, increasing visibility and understanding of its capabilities. The Fedoruk Centre was also recognized with the World Council on Isotopes Chair Award and the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council Not-for-Profit Advocacy Award, for its contributions to the isotope sector and its role in bringing the conference to Canada.

Success Factors	Examples
Pre-Event Activities	The Leaders Summit and Summer School for Students offered opportunities to share knowledge in advance of the conference.
DMO Involvement	While the Fedoruk Centre and the University of Saskatchewan were the primary hosts of the event, Discover Saskatoon provided bid and planning support .
External Collaboration	Inclusion of an Indigenous Elder in conference planning demonstrated a spirit of collaboration and respect. The agreement with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories showed enhanced collaboration and set the stage for increased isotope production capacity in Canada.

OUTCOMES ACROSS DOMAINS



Intellectual Outcome: Scientific programming, the Summer School and the high-profile Leaders Summit advanced knowledge and strengthened relationships between government, academia and industry, nationally and globally.

Policy Outcome: Prairies Economic Development Canada announced \$410,650 for the Fedoruk Centre to develop new isotope products for research and applications in the region.

Human Outcome: The event increased awareness and recognition of the role women play in the nuclear industry through a Women in Nuclear session. Speakers included Dr. Melissa Denecke of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Amy Gottschling of Atomic Energy Canada Limited, Dr. Kirsten Laurin-Kovitz of Argonne National Laboratory and Kaylyn Olshanoski, a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan.

Financial Outcome: The Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) signed an agreement with the Fedoruk Centre to significantly increase the global supply of Actinium-225, a rare medical isotope used to treat cancer. Smaller contracts were also secured, with a potential annual value of approximately \$300,000.

Cultural Outcome: Increased awareness of city, province and industry expertise helped Saskatoon attract the Canadian Nuclear Society Annual Conference in 2024.