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PRESS RELEASE

WHITEPAPER RELEASE: SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS PAVE THE WAY TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Geneva, June 4th 2018. The **Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index)** is proud to announce the release of their second [Whitepaper](#) **“Sustainable Destination Management Trends and Insights: The Road to a Circular Economy”**. The GDS-Index is a **collaborative partnership** between [ICCA](#), [ICCA's Scandinavian Chapter](#), [IMEX](#), [ECM](#) and [MCI Group](#).

The [Whitepaper](#) focuses on **how destinations contribute to creating a circular economy**, with the implementation of active and **well-designed sustainability strategies** to support their overall social, environmental and economic development, overall increasing their competitive advantage. The report draws from analysis of **40 cities** who participated in the 2017 GDS-Index benchmarking [study](#).

Through case studies and comparative data, the research – conducted by [MCI Sustainability Services](#) – highlights **how destinations contribute to promoting the change from linear to circular economy** through leadership, focused strategy and collaboration for education and co-innovation. These essential characteristics are supported and implemented through solid local community and supplier engagement as well as targeted communication about sustainability, making destinations the ‘agents of change’.

According to **Sébastien Tondeur, MCI Group CEO**, *“The GDS-Index is becoming a **very well established and recognised supporting tool for Destinations and Cities to advance Sustainability across the Meeting and Events industry**. It helps them engage their local community, businesses, and internal resources around a meaningful and inspiring project that contributes to a more circular economy”*.



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Martin Sirk, CEO of ICCA, comments: *“The GDS-Index is **accelerating sustainable development** via knowledge sharing of its best practices and innovations. Building on the inspiration of the programme’s Scandinavian founders, **the Whitepaper collects and shares these pieces of wisdom with the ultimate goal of supporting other destinations to focus on sustainable growth**”.*

Carina Bauer, CEO of IMEX Group, mentions: *“I am particularly delighted and inspired to see how this project has grown and how the participating cities are using the research for further **improving their strategies and sustainability performance**”.*

Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, ECM President, comments that *“Sustainability is an increasing concern for our members. With the growing environmental and social pressures facing cities, we need greater action and collaboration to accelerate the development of more sustainable destinations. The GDS-Index is a **practical and tested benchmarking approach** already used by 40 of our members. **It has been proven to help DMO create, improve and promote destination sustainability strategies**”.*

To view and download the whitepaper visit [here](#).

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ABOUT THE GDS-INDEX

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) is a prize-winning grassroots Scandinavian initiative that evolved into the first-ever sustainability ranking for event destinations worldwide. A collaborative partnership between ICCA, European Cities Marketing, IMEX and MCI Group, that promotes knowledge sharing, capacity building, and benchmarking. In a world increasingly focused on responsible business, social development and addressing our environmental impact, the GDS-Index helps destinations to engage clients with sustainability, align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and drive the adoption, promotion and recognition of sustainable practices in their city. Find out more at www.gds-index.com.

ABOUT MCI

MCI is the global leader in engaging and activating audiences. Our business is founded on a simple human insight: When people come together, magic happens. This magic is called community. Since 1987 we have been bringing people together through inspiring meetings, events, congresses and association management. MCI helps organizations harness the power of community by applying our strategic engagement and activation solutions to build unforgettable online and offline experiences that foster change, inspire, educate and enhance business performance. MCI is an independently owned company with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and a global presence. Our 2,300



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professionals in 60 offices and 31 countries work with clients across Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, India, the Middle East and Africa. Find out more at www.mci-group.com.

MCI's pioneering and award-winning Sustainability Consultancy advises cities, governments, associations and corporations on how to accelerate transformation, catalyse innovation and enhance brand reputation. With over 850 high-profile environmental, social and governance (ESG) projects managed to date and industry-wide recognition for our pioneering sustainable event management, ISO certification consulting and sustainability reporting, we have become the world's leading organiser of sustainable events and events about sustainability. Find out more at www.mcisustainability.com.

ABOUT ICCA

ICCA - the International Congress and Convention Association - is the global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry. ICCA represents the main specialists in organising, transporting, and accommodating international meetings and events, and comprises over 1,000 member companies and organisations in over 100 countries worldwide. ICCA specialises in the international association meetings sector, offering unrivalled data, communication channels, and business development opportunities. Find out more at www.iccaworld.org

ABOUT IMEX

IMEX in Frankfurt 2018 will take place at Messe Frankfurt from 15 -17 May 2018, with EduMonday, its pre-show day of learning and insights on Monday 14 May. www.imex-frankfurt.com. IMEX America 2018, America's worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings & events, will take place from 16 – 18 October at the Sands Expo and Convention Center at The Venetian® | The Palazzo®, preceded by Smart Monday, powered by MPI on 15 October. www.imexamerica.com.

ABOUT EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING (ECM)

European Cities Marketing is a non-profit organisation improving the competitiveness and performance of the leading cities of Europe. ECM provides a platform for Leisure, Meetings Industry and City Marketing professionals to exchange knowledge, best practices and widen their network to build new business.

European Cities Marketing believes that whether in Portugal or in Poland, Ireland or Italy, DMOs are uniquely placed to project vision, ambition and a message to the rest of the world about their place. Equipped with the right tools and knowledge, strengthened by deep and meaningful private sector partnerships, we believe that DMOs should feel confident about asserting their position in city government, becoming an indispensable resource for all of those who wish to invest time and money in a city.

ECM members are official tourist boards, convention bureaux and multi-functional urban marketing agencies established by cities in Europe. They are official in the sense that they are constituted either as departments of city government or public-private partnerships (i.e. companies, foundations, etc.). Find out more at <https://www.europeancitiesmarketing.com>.