

IMEX Policy Forum 2022

What does success look like?



imex GROUP



Highlights from the National Government Discussion

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Some 45 representatives from 12 countries attended the National Policy maker session at this year's Policy Forum. Participants included ministers and deputy ministers, ambassadors, senior civil servants and high-level representatives from government promotional agencies.

Participants were first briefed on the objectives of the session:

- To provide an overview and framework to understand how perceptions about the strategic value of business events have evolved over the last two decades and are likely to develop in future.
- To identify and share new ideas on how to align the interests of business events sector and policymakers at the national level.
- An opportunity for country representatives to share innovative or noteworthy developments in their business events sector, or to raise and obtain advice on some of their biggest challenges.
- To prepare delegates to more fully participate in the General Session that was to follow.

The facilitators then gave a short history of business events evolution:

Past:

Bed nights-focused segment of tourism, high-yield, offering a solution to leisure-tourism seasonality. Also, the building of meetings infrastructure such as convention centres is seen as a tool of city regeneration and a strong creator of frontline hospitality jobs. "Any event will do".

Present:

A tool for advancing economic development priorities in key segments and for stimulating inward investment; strongly linked to knowledge economy strategies, including universities and R&D institutions. "Carefully targeted events".

Future:

Citizen-centred strategies, taking into consideration the full societal and local impact of the event (both positive and negative); alignment with UN SDGs; links to competition for talent and for attracting start-ups; innovation ecosystem is a key competitive advantage, and needs to be leveraged. "Create your own events".

The participants were then divided into five groups, each of which included representatives from at least three countries, with pre-assigned table moderators. These groups first discussed "Current challenges and solutions", then turned to "Future aspirations - what does success look like", each table collectively selecting a topic from a menu of options under these two broad themes.

Topics were included in the menu because of their relevance for high-level policymaker and industry alignment. Following each round table discussion, spokespersons shared their highlights with the whole room.

In the first round, tables considered the following issues:

- Risk/Safety/Pandemic - perception and reality
- Metrics - how to measure what matters
- Funding models: DMOs, Events; Infrastructure

In the second round, tables considered the following issues:

- New structures/new models
- SDGs and sustainability
- New forms of competition and how to be competitive

