

Dubai set to host major business events as Expo 2020 approaches

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Dubai's business events sector continues to build on its momentum as one of the first cities in the world to reopen for international meetings, with a busy calendar of high profile conferences, meetings and incentives on the horizon through the rest of 2021 and into 2022.

Following on from the resumption of international tourism to the city in July 2020, Dubai welcomed international business events from October 2020 and immediately saw a healthy pipeline of conferences and exhibitions taking place across the city. With meeting planners recognising Dubai's ability to safely host events and its prudent handling of the global Covid-19 pandemic, that is now poised to continue in the second half of 2021, through the hosting of Expo 2020 Dubai and into the rest of 2022.

Among the major congresses and conferences coming to Dubai in the coming months are the Congress of the Société Internationale d'Urologie, Society of Petroleum Engineers Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition, International Astronautical Congress, World Chambers Congress, LPG Week, Gastech and Africa Oil Week. Meanwhile, major incentive groups visiting the city will include AFC Life Science, Amway, Sunhope, Jeunesse and OMNILIFE.

Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said: "Driven by the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the city was among the first in the world to restart its business events sector, providing a vital platform for associations, businesses and organisations to resume their face to face meetings and drive knowledge development in key sectors. We understand the importance for the meetings industry globally to restart physical events, and thanks to the efforts of stakeholders across the city, this all continues to be done in environments that prioritise the safety of all delegates, participants and organisers."

With Expo 2020 Dubai commencing on 1 October and lasting six months, the city is poised to welcome a number of major corporate and incentive groups that will be looking to take advantage of the opportunity to allow delegates to experience and explore the world's greatest show during their time in the city. The

TO BUILD ON THIS MOMENTUM Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau, continues to engage with meeting planners internationally, face-to-face where possible, highlighting the city's business events infrastructure and rapidly developing knowledge economy. Over the coming months, DBE will host a number of study missions to the city, especially during Expo 2020 Dubai, allowing meeting and event planners to see offerings around the city and experience one of the world's largest events. Meanwhile, DBE's global team will also meet planners in their own markets through a series of sales missions, industry events and trade shows.

Steen Jakobsen, Assistant Vice President, Dubai Business Events, said: "In the wake of the global pandemic, Dubai was able to quickly restart its business events sector leveraging the city's ability to provide both a safe setting while at the same time facilitating impactful face-to-face meetings. We continue to see strong interest from organisers looking to get their business events back on track as soon as possible – and thanks to the aligned approach taken by stakeholders across Dubai, we have been able to quickly mobilise when necessary to accommodate businesses, associations and other organisations to review their original plans and relocate events to Dubai."

Among the major events taking place over the coming months in Dubai is Africa Oil Week. While traditionally hosted in South Africa, this year's edition has been relocated to Dubai, giving attendees the opportunity to engage in crucial discussions and deal making while at the same time taking advantage of a destination that can offer a safe setting. Meanwhile, Gastech, one of the world's largest exhibitions and conferences focused on gas, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and hydrogen, will also take place in Dubai, having been relocated from its originally planned host city of Singapore.

Chris Hall, Event Director, Africa Oil Week said: "We chose to temporally move Africa Oil Week to Dubai for 2021 due to the exceptional progress made in the UAE's vaccination programme. Dubai is also the leading financial centre in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia and presents an opportunity for our attendees to meet with new capital holders to further drive investment into Africa."