



# The PCO Perspective

Business events as strategic tools for driving  
post-pandemic recovery and renewal

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Advocacy Guide

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## Introduction

The Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) created the JMIC Global Manifesto (published 15 July 2020). The JMIC Manifesto is a roadmap for the entire meetings and events industry.

The Strategic Global Task Force of National PCO Associations, formed by IAPCO, has created a supplement to the manifesto outlining the PCO perspective. This document focusses on the advocacy work that PCOs and the associations representing PCOs should consider.

## Global positioning:



IAPCO, as the global voice for Professional Congress Organisers, plays an active role in driving advocacy work across the numerous Councils, Boards and industry events on which we are invited to participate, including:

- JMIC
- Events Industry Council (EIC)
- Best Cities Global Alliance
- IBTM World, IMEX Group events
- International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association (IPCAA)
- Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)

just to name a few

# Formation of the Strategic Global Task Force of National PCO Associations

IAPCO has united 11 National PCO Associations from around the globe for the first time to connect and share coronavirus case studies and data with the primary goal to produce an advocacy plan and safe practice guidelines for PCOs.



## Strategic Global Task Force of National PCO Associations



## Strategic Global Task Force of National PCO Associations Mission Statement

Professional Congress Organisers (PCOs) specialise in delivering professional events both nationally and internationally. We are integral to the local and international events sector ecosystem, working with government, association and corporate clients to deliver events that can, and will, help governments with economic recovery.



# Advocacy for PCOs



## Multi-Sector Impacts

PCOs are instrumental in bringing together thought leaders from academia, industry, corporations and governments, covering a range of issues and industries. Through these meetings of minds, new vaccines are discovered, solutions to climate change are discussed and cutting-edge technologies are launched. To make these events happen, PCOs work with partners in media production, hospitality, logistics, entertainment, and financial and legal services – to name but a few.





## Path to Sustainable Development

Sustainability is key in the delivery of PCO-managed business and professional events. IAPCO supports a number of the UN Sustainable Development Group goals including access to Quality Education, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production and, of course, Life below Water, with the 'Ticky the Turtle' initiative.

[www.iapco.org/about-iapco/ticky-the-turtle](http://www.iapco.org/about-iapco/ticky-the-turtle)



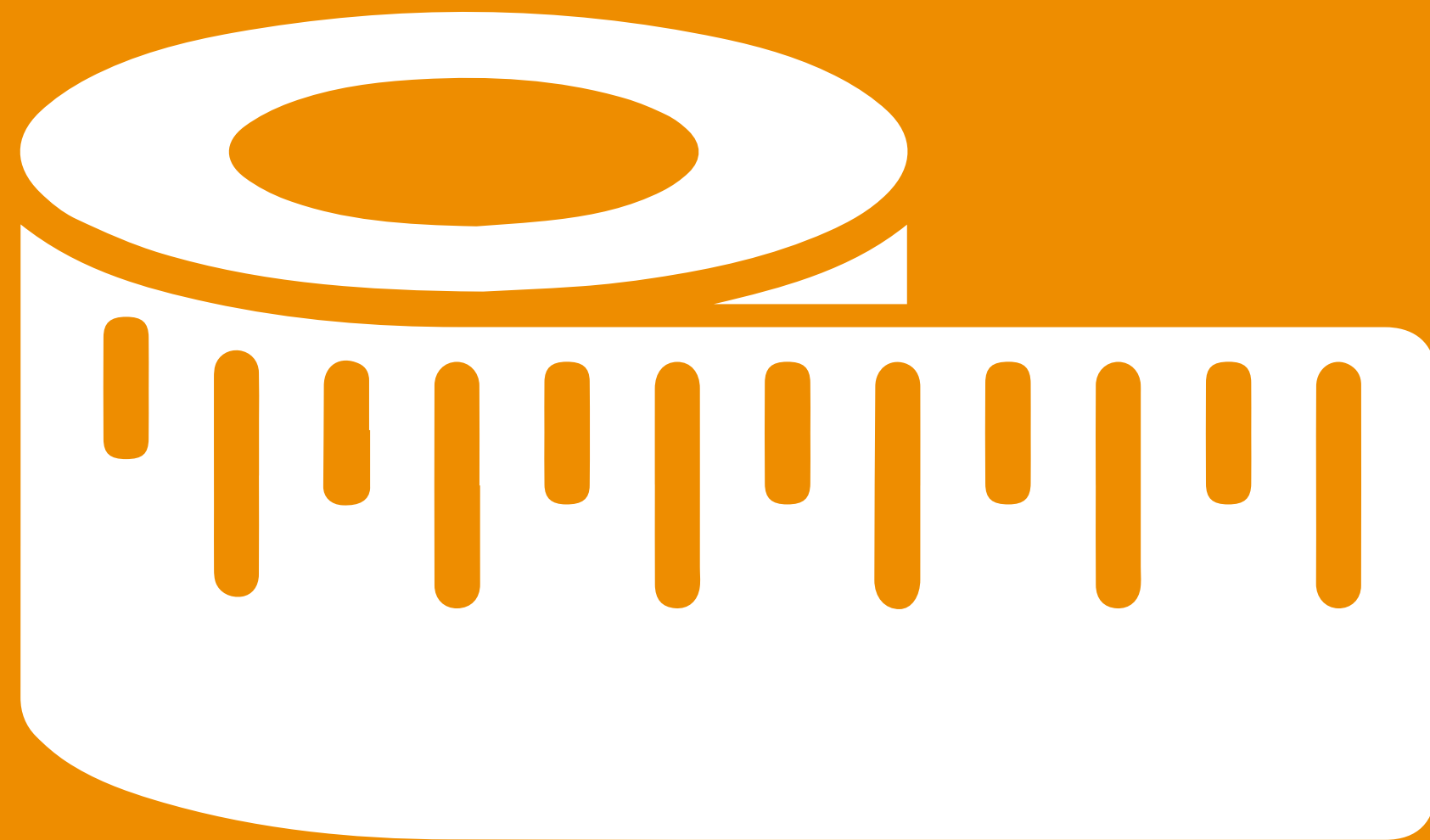
## Controlled Environment

PCOs are proactive and reliable in delivering physical events. IAPCO's National PCO Association Task Force has collated safe practice guidelines and standard operating procedures from member countries to help PCOs and their clients to ensure safe and secure event management. This information is in line with the respective national and state government guidelines and recommendations which is available on open source.



## Digitisation

PCOs drive innovation in the design and delivery of business and professional events. Throughout the current pandemic situation, they have developed and implemented virtual solutions to ensure that professional advancement can continue. In addition, over the past few years, PCOs and their technology partners have worked to digitise event participant data, enabling the use of track and trace systems.



## Measurable Return on Investment

Quantifying the economic impact of meetings and events:  
why governments should prioritise the reactivation of the  
business events industry.

## International Statistics

The Events Industry Council (EIC), of which IAPCO is a Council member, publishes data\* on the global economic significance of business events.

In 2017, the direct impacts of global business events included:

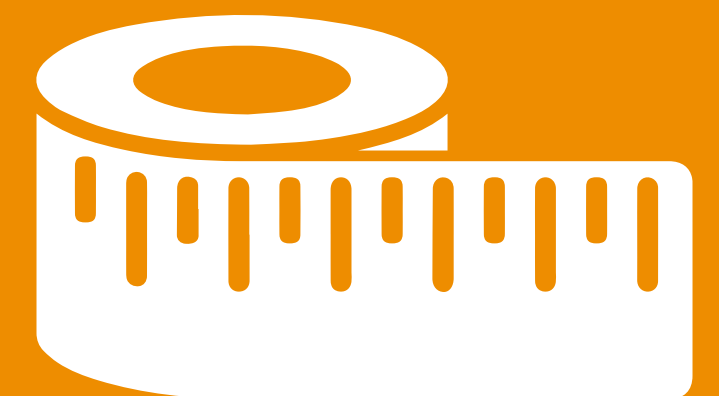
- 1.5 billion participants (+180 countries)
- \$1.07 trillion of direct spending
- Supporting 10.3 million direct jobs globally and generating \$621.4 billion of direct GDP \$704 average spending per participant/event

\*All economic data calculated in USD

The total global impact of business events included:

- \$2.5 trillion of output (business sales)
- Supporting 26 million jobs
- \$1.5 trillion of GDP  
(representing contribution to global gross domestic product)

<https://insights.eventscouncil.org/Full-Article/ArtMID/398/ArticleID/1445/2018-Global-Economic-Significance-of-Business-Events>



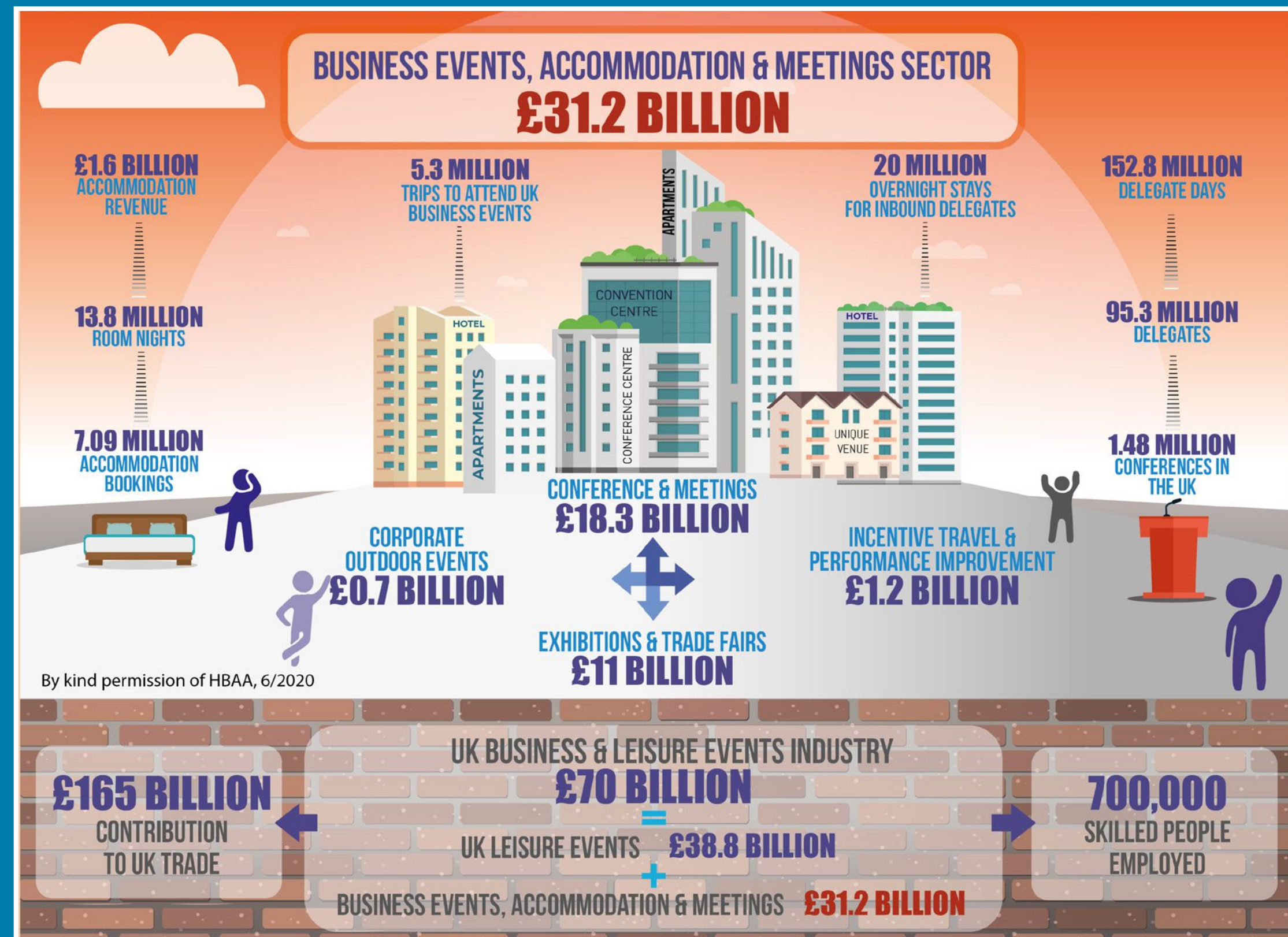
# IAPCO Statistics

International Association of Professional  
Congress Organisers (IAPCO) members'  
annual survey results 2019\* (published 2020):



\*All economic data calculated in Euros





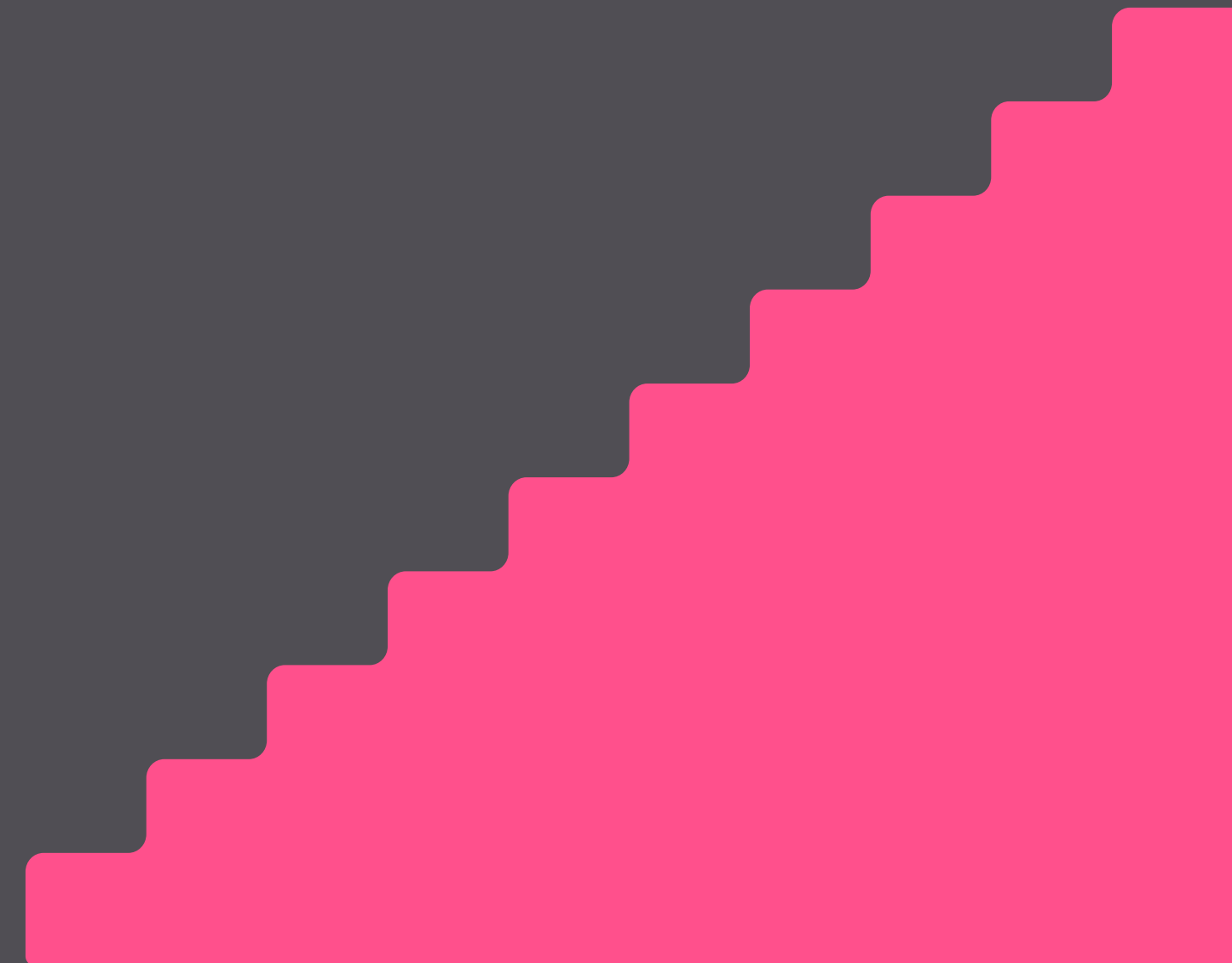
## Measuring your own data

It would be recommended that all PCO Associations gather their own members' data and produce similar summaries on their country for the purpose of advocacy.

See Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO) example left.

## 10 Steps to Delivering the Message

In addition to the ten steps identified in the JMIC Manifesto, as industry-wide considerations to delivering the message, IAPCO has specific recommendations for PCOs and PCO membership bodies:





# 1.

## **Be proactive:**

Prepare your own industry guidelines for safe re-opening of events and propose their adoption by your local government (if such guidelines are not already in place). Reach out to PCO Associations that have already created guidelines to learn from their successes OR contact IAPCO direct.

# 2.

## **Demonstrate the economic impact of our industry in your country:**

Showcase how PCO-managed business and professional events can play a major role in local and national economic recovery. Utilise international statistics but also use data specific to your country – organisations like ICCA can help you to assess this.

# 3.

## **Advocate for specific regulations and re-opening date:**

Request specific start-date and regulations for re-opening as planning and executing these events takes a significant amount of time and requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders.

## 4.

### **Be reliable:**

Prove your previous successes in delivering events alongside local authorities. Reliability and a proven track record will speak volumes.



## 5.

### **Join forces with local stakeholders for a strong and unified voice:**

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much” (Helen Keller, author, activist). Bring together your suppliers, clients and peers, create a plan of action, and assign responsibilities on how to get your message out there. It is important to have one strong and consistent message.

## 6.

### Gather regional data:

Monitor and analyse your neighbours' re-opening plans. National events are likely to be allowed prior to regional and international ones as we surface from lockdowns and restrictions. Therefore, it is important to understand the data from, and the strategies of, governments in neighbouring countries. Be proactive and demonstrate that you have considered the impact of movement of people across your region.

## 7.

### Be consistent:

Make sure all stakeholders comply with national guidelines by creating an auditing system. Has your event followed all guidelines?



## 8.

### Digitise:

Create innovative digital solutions to safely deliver your live event. Through sharing information in advance and digitising processes, you can instruct delegates of one-way systems, minimise queues at registration, facilitate connections through the use of apps and apply technology to allow knowledge-sharing.

## 9.

### Activate hybrid solutions:

Implement a mix of virtual (online) and physical elements that will enable delegates, sponsors and speakers who are still restricted from travelling to attend virtually. Work with your convention bureau/destination marketing office to include design elements that reflect the destination as much as possible. Gather analytics to discover trends that can be used to develop the next event.



## 10.

### Create trust:

Distribute case studies that communicate your achievements to your partners, providers, staff and clients. Engage with local and national media to share positive outcomes, not only within the events community but across your country's social and business sector.

## Things to consider if you are creating your own National Guidelines for PCOs

**Pre-Event** | Prepare internal and external checklists

- ✓ PCO staff
- ✓ Providers
- ✓ Venue

Dedicated communication plan, including:

- ✓ What measures are in place to safely receive participants
- ✓ How to communicate these to all audiences: partners, providers, client, exhibitors and participants



**On-Site** | Prepare comprehensive individual safety recommendations from arrival to departure

### Signage

- ✓ Ensure your venue has proper signage and follows all safety procedures
- ✓ Produce specific safety signage in all congress areas

**Comply with local physical distancing measures – ensure compliance at all times and areas:**

- ✓ Accreditation
- ✓ In sessions
- ✓ Exhibition and catering areas

### Create a Safety Auditing Team

- ✓ Implement a Joint Emergency Plan with the venue, local health authorities and local hospital

# Resources

Examples of existing guidelines:

- **Addressing COVID-19 Requirements for re-opening business events AIPC/UFI/ICCA**
- **IFPMA and EFPIA Guidelines for Virtual Medical Congresses**
- **BECA: CovidSafe Guidelines for the Business Events Industry**
- **World Travel and Tourism Council: Leading Global Protocols for the New Normal of Convention Centres, Meetings and Events**
- **IAPCO National PCO Association Task Force members**

For a full list of resources please visit: [www.iapco.org/about-iapco/strategic-global-task-force-of-national-pco-associations/](http://www.iapco.org/about-iapco/strategic-global-task-force-of-national-pco-associations/)