

CAPE TOWN RATED BEST AFRICAN CONVENTION DESTINATION FOR FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Wesgro is proud to announce that Cape Town has once again been rated the number one city in Africa for convention business by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA).

The city is now in the top 40 destinations for business tourism in the world, improving 15 places on the global rankings from 54th place in 2015 to 39th place in 2016.

A total of 62 meetings took place in Cape Town, representing mainly medical sciences, education and technology sector. An additional 12 international association meetings took place in Stellenbosch.

The ICCA is a prominent international meetings organisation boasting more than 850 members in over 80 countries worldwide. It represents the global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry.

This was the fourth consecutive year the city has won the award ahead of others such as Johannesburg, Marrakech and Nairobi, largely due to conference bids secured by the Cape Town and the Western Cape Convention Bureau, a strategic division of Wesgro.

The Bureau's role is to promote the Cape among meeting, incentive, conference and event planners as a premier business events destination. It also offers pre- and post-bid assistance, convention planning support and on-site services to meeting planners, and has been voted the Best Convention Bureau by Southern African Association for the Conference Industry for the past two years.

In the last financial year, the Bureau secured 33 new bids with an estimated delegate attendance of 28 000 and an estimated economic impact of R424-million.

Over the past six years, the estimated economic impact of the conference bids secured by the Bureau exceeds R1.5-billion, making business tourism events such as association meetings an important economic contributor and job creator for the region.

Wesgro CEO Tim Harris noted that, "... in today's competitive business-events environment, retaining the number one spot is a concerted effort between stakeholders and partners within the industry. The Western Cape offers a captivating, dynamic product and service offering as well as unwavering professionalism that make it a top destination to meet and do business. We're incredibly proud of our ICCA ranking and will work hard to maximise this momentum."

"Being ranked as Africa's top business tourism destination is excellent news for our region. The expansion of the Cape Town International Convention Centre is also set to double the centre's existing exhibition capacity and we will see an increase in the number and size of conferences, resulting in more business travellers to our region. Through the Cape Town Air Access initiative, we are also making it easier for tourists to reach us. We know conferences have a significant economic impact, driving growth and creating jobs for residents. Business tourists have the potential to become leisure tourists, traders and investors into our region," added Western Cape Economic Opportunities Minister, Alan Winde.

Cape Town has risen above competitive cities and its continued popularity demonstrates that we can deliver top-class conferences on a global scale.

"We are delighted to see that Cape Town is attracting an increasing number of association conferences and meetings. Cape Town has risen above competitive cities such as Sydney, Dubai, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Durban in these ranking and its continued popularity demonstrates that we can deliver top-class conferences on a global scale. In its 2015/16 financial year, the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) hosted 39 international conferences and continues to host the highest number of international association events in Africa. The CTICC is proud of the key role we have played, together with our partners, in Cape Town's rise as a top global meetings destination. As our expansion comes on stream, we look forward to attracting and hosting more local and international association events," concluded Julie-May Ellingson, Chief Executive Officer of the Cape Town International Convention Centre. 