

# Ready, get set, go green!

Smart strategies for sustainable  
meetings and events.



**GLOBAL  
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# Ready, get set, go green!

**It's time to get back to in-person events – and to do so responsibly, in a way that minimises negative impacts on the environment. This white paper is designed to help travel and meetings professionals deliver the sustainable events their travellers and attendees expect.**

After two years of dialling in to a digital conferences, the next twelve months should see in-person meetings and events make a strong comeback.<sup>1</sup> At long last, salespeople can pitch to prospects face-to-face, management teams can strategize around the same table, conferences can convene likeminded professionals and colleagues can reunite to re-establish the relationships that are key to company culture. Indeed, internal meetings are expected to see the largest growth this year.<sup>2</sup>

The great return to in-person meetings and events takes place against a backdrop of growing corporate focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. Companies – and their stakeholders, including employees, investors, and the community – are increasingly concerned about how their business activities impact the wider world, with sustainability at the forefront. Over the last year, corporates have been signing up for sustainability initiatives like the UN's Race to Zero at an accelerating rate.<sup>3</sup> Today, sustainability is an issue at every level of the organisation, from the C-suite to the working level employee. In particular, it's a priority for rising generations in the workforce, with younger

employees placing larger importance on climate change versus older employees.<sup>4</sup>

Travel and meetings professionals are responding to the swelling demand for greener events: more than four in five (83%) say their organizations take sustainability into account when planning meetings and events.<sup>5</sup> And as global research among corporate buyers reveal, travel and meetings professionals are actively working to green their events, putting in place Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to capture the environmental impact of their activities and exploring how they can influence traveller behaviour with respect to sustainability.

Selecting the right destination is a critical factor in delivering more sustainable events that can meet both the organisation's environmental goals and create positive experiences for attendees. This paper introduces a framework for identifying green destinations, based on American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT) Global Business Consulting (GBC) engagements.

*Ready, get set, go green!* concludes with an assessment of Singapore's sustainable offerings, examining the policies and practices that the country has in place to create a powerful proposition for green meetings and events. The key lesson of the Singapore experience is the importance of progressive improvement and that sustainability is a process and not just an end goal.

# Organisations aim for in-person, greener meetings

Covid-19 has restricted corporate travel and meetings for more than two years. As the world gets back on the move, this section looks at how the sector is recovering and explores how sustainability is becoming central to travel and meetings.

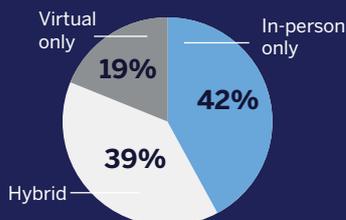
## Priorities for 2022 meetings and events

### MEETING BUDGETS ARE INCREASING

**64%**  
of travel and meetings professionals expect overall spend to rise this year

**14%**  
say spend will stay the same

### MORE IN-PERSON MEETINGS



81% of meetings in 2022 are expected to have a face-to-face component

### SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

**83%**

of organisations take sustainability into account when planning meetings and events

Source: 2022 Global Meetings and Events Forecast. November 2021. American Express Global Business Travel Meetings & Events.

## Great expectations: in-person is firmly on the agenda

The global travel industry is emerging from one of the most challenging periods in its history. All through the disruption of the pandemic, meetings and events professionals demonstrated extraordinary resilience and agility. By harnessing digital communication platforms, the industry created effective virtual event formats that brought people together safely at a time when travel restrictions and work-from-home regulations curtailed face-to-face interactions.

As countries around the world seek to entice international travellers to their shores as soon as possible, travel and meetings professionals anticipate a strong return to in-person meetings. Virtual and hybrid formats will continue, but more to support overall engagement strategies.

The 2022 Meetings & Events Forecast by American Express Global Business Travel Meetings & Events captures meeting professionals' outlook for the year ahead. According to the Forecast, 64% expect meeting budgets to increase in 2022. Testament to the appeal of face-to-face formats, 81% of events are expected to have an in-person element. Two thirds (67%) believe in-person meeting levels will return to their pre-pandemic numbers within one to two years.<sup>6</sup>

With 90% of companies shifting to a hybrid work arrangement, internal meetings are expected to see the largest growth as organisations rely on internal meetings to sustain company culture.<sup>7</sup> Linda McNairy, Vice President Americas, Meetings & Events, American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT), explains: “When Covid-19 first happened, people said internal meetings would be the last to come back, from a cost-savings perspective. However, what we've learned from all this isolation and separation is that meetings drive culture.” Just two months into 2022, Amex GBT Meetings and Events had seen a 200% increase in the number of meetings booked for the year.<sup>8</sup>



*“In line with macro trends, organisations are increasingly considering sustainability and diversity, equity and inclusion as part of their foundational planning. The global consensus on sustainability is that it must be a key factor in meeting programs, and a growing understanding that choosing inclusivity and equity creates more opportunity.”*



**GERARDO TEJADO**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
AMEX GBT MEETINGS &  
EVENTS

## Sustainability at the heart of travel and meetings

Over the past couple of years, organisations have embraced sustainability, with a particular focus on climate change. According to UN Climate Change, in less than a year the number of commitments to reach net zero emissions from local governments and businesses doubled.<sup>9</sup> As they look beyond Covid-19 to recovery, businesses continue to prioritise sustainability, building measures to reduce their environmental impact into their growth strategies.<sup>10</sup>

Global business travel is closely aligned with the green imperative and across the world, industry professionals are echoing the sentiment. 99% of

business travel professionals in Asia Pacific agree that protecting the planet is a priority and 89% of industry professionals already list sustainability as a priority for their company.<sup>11</sup>

Travel and meetings professionals are taking the lead in helping their organisations achieve green targets. 83% of those surveyed for the 2022 Global Meetings and Events Forecast say they are factoring sustainability into their meetings and events planning for this year.<sup>12</sup> Many are seeking to turn good intentions into actions by using Green Compass™ – a data insights capability created by Amex GBT Global Business Consulting (GBC) – to understand how they can reduce their carbon footprint while continuing to realise business goals through travel.

## Rapid return to travel underscores the value of in-person interactions

The travel and meetings sector is recovering at pace as companies get their people back on the road. Amex GBT transactions more than doubled between February and April this year.<sup>13</sup> This finding is mirrored in global industry figures where 88% of suppliers polled for April's GBTA Business Travel Recovery poll reported that corporate bookings had increased in the previous month. In February's poll, just 45% of suppliers had seen corporate bookings grow.<sup>14</sup>

Businesses understand that being present helps people perform more effectively. According to the Back to Blue Skies research undertaken by American Express and Amex GBT, 82% of business travellers said travel helps them do their jobs better. Virtual technology is a useful tool for communication but 79% of travellers preferred to be face-to-face for brainstorming and collaborative meetings. Business decision makers were convinced

about the bottom-line benefits of travel and meetings, with 85% saying these lead to higher profit and revenue.<sup>15</sup>

As the world looks beyond Covid-19, the travel and meetings sector is finding added saliency as – what industry commentator Rafat Ali describes as – “a strategy for developing company culture”.<sup>16</sup> The great shift to permanent hybrid or remote working is causing corporates to ask how they can transmit their cultural values and norms to employees – and particularly to new recruits. Research by Deloitte found that maintaining culture was employers' number one concern about the hybrid workplace.<sup>17</sup> By creating opportunities to bring employees together in-person, travel and meetings can help employers tackle this worry and there are signs that companies are already embracing travel as a driver of culture. As noted, internal meetings are set to be the fastest growing meetings category this year.<sup>18</sup>



# Key trends for meetings and events



**39%** of 2022 meetings expected to use hybrid formats<sup>19</sup>

**Hybrid here to stay:** despite the uptick in face-to-face meetings, hybrid formats will remain important tools for meetings professionals. Adding a virtual component to an in-person meeting enables meeting owners to accommodate attendee preferences, broaden their audience, and even provide a contingency plan should the entire meeting need to be transitioned to a virtual platform.



**MORE THAN 3/4** meetings managers actively strive to incorporate DE&I into event planning<sup>20</sup>

**Inclusiveness at the core:** organisations around the globe are embracing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I). Incorporating these principles into meetings and events can range from using minority-owned suppliers to ensuring venues are accessible to people with disabilities. The outcome is that meetings are truly inclusive and offer more opportunities for everyone to participate.



**Suppliers who embrace green can gain an advantage:** meetings professionals are increasingly requesting information on a supplier's green initiatives as part of the evaluation. Sustainable practices can therefore have a positive impact on the supplier's bottom-line as well as the environment.



**Governments can be key enablers:** as explored later, government agencies are increasingly driving sustainability across the whole supply chain. This integrated approach can benefit national travel and tourism industries and, by providing policy governance and impact measurement, help meeting professionals identify destinations that support their organisations' sustainability goals.

## New solutions for greener meetings

In response to the growing corporate interest in greener meetings, Amex GBT Meetings & Events launched a suite of sustainable meeting and events solutions in April 2022 to help customers measure and reduce their carbon footprint.<sup>21</sup>

The Sustainable Meetings Program advisory solution enables customers to benefit from the expertise of highly skilled teams who will help them assess their meetings program and develop an end-to-end

sustainability strategy, aligned with corporate sustainability goals. This includes setting measurable objectives, implementing systems to plan sustainable meetings and events, and measuring and reporting on an event's carbon impact.

The Carbon Neutral Events solution helps organizations reduce, measure, and offset meetings and events emissions. The proprietary GBT event carbon calculator identifies the carbon footprint and other sustainability metrics to help customers understand the relative impact of each event category. With this insight, customers can calculate the amount of offsetting measures needed to achieve carbon neutrality.

## Research study: corporate green priorities

Amex GBT's Global Business Consulting (GBC) team carried out a global research survey in the first quarter of 2022 to understand what organisations are prioritising as they plan greener events.<sup>22</sup> Reflecting the wider corporate emphasis on carbon emissions reduction, 88% of the travel and meetings professionals surveyed viewed addressing climate change as their number one priority. It is therefore not surprising that the top three KPIs for sustainable meetings and events revolve around tracking carbon emission levels, whether for group travel (35%), event (25%) or per attendee at an event (16%). Apart from carbon emissions, meeting professionals are also tracking KPIs surrounding food waste reduction (14%) and responsible waste management (11%).

Besides establishing green KPIs, travel and meetings buyers surveyed by GBC are considering methods to influence traveller behaviours towards sustainable meetings. Respondents have indicated that selecting green hotels is the top priority with 76% of respondents wanting their travellers to book with energy efficient hotels and event venues, whether by encouragement (63%) or mandate (13%). Almost two-thirds want to see their travellers consume sustainable food options (56% encouragement, 6% mandate).

### Scorecard for green events: corporate travel and meetings professionals' sustainability KPIs

Carbon emissions from group travel (35%)

Event level carbon footprint (25%)

CO2 per attendee (16%)

Food waste reduction metrics (14%)

Waste diversion (11%)

Water consumption (10%)

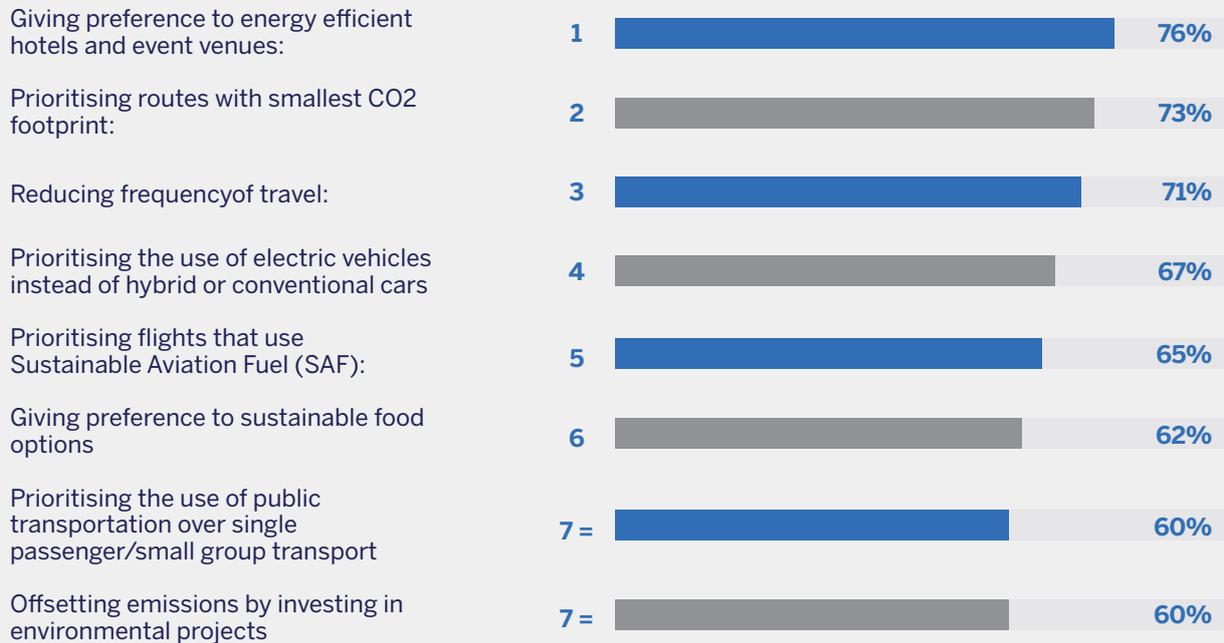
Energy density (6%)

Source: Global Client Sustainability Survey. Amex GBT Global Business Consulting. March 2022.

Corporate buyers are also looking to the supply chain to help them achieve sustainability goals. Many are sourcing for suppliers that adhere to sustainable practices and 70% of the respondents indicated that they place high or medium emphasis on green certifications and credentials when selecting a supplier. The focus on suppliers in sustainability is underlined by a recent audit of Amex GBT client requests for custom RFPs, where the top three requests revolve around sustainability. (see Sustainability a top priority for corporate RFPs).

It is clear from the poll that the majority of travel and meetings buyers are closely aligned with the wider concerns about sustainability in their corporations. A significant minority are already monitoring the environmental impact of their activities. Many are conscious of the importance of working with green suppliers – and they understand the role of their travellers' choices and behaviour in supporting sustainability.

## What traveller behaviours should be encouraged and/or mandated for a green travel program?



Global Client Sustainability Survey. Amex GBT Global Business Consulting. March 2022.

## Sustainability a top priority for corporate RFPs

- 1 Criteria for suppliers to improve environmental performance
- 2 Reporting capabilities on sustainability elements to help organisations manage internal carbon budgets
- 3 Any specific barriers to enact sustainable business practices, green certification, and credentials

Source: Internal ranking of client RFP requests by frequency. Amex GBT Global Business Consulting



# Ready, get set, go green!

Amex GBT spoke with meeting professionals from a broad selection of industries to understand what opportunities they had identified for making meetings and events more sustainable. For simplicity, the opportunities are grouped into three phases: Green start, Green advanced, and Green pro. Where are you on your green meetings and events journey?

## ● Proactively manage the basics

Selecting a destination which adheres to the UN Sustainability Development Goals (UN-SDG) means you can hold your meeting or event in a location that is aligned with your organization's sustainability objectives. A city that adheres to UN-SDG will have a wide range of certified providers in the supply chain. Providers with bona fide green credentials follow ethical business practices and can give you accurate data on their carbon emissions.

## ● Green selection across the supply chain

In the intermediate phase, meeting managers have started to integrate sustainability principles into supplier sourcing and include these principles as key decision-making criteria. Most intermediate programs will include carbon offsetting projects. This has a double benefit: as well as enabling you to reduce the carbon footprint associated with your event, CO2 offsetting schemes boost funding to community and not-for-profit environmental projects.

## ● Promote green practices and integrate wider ESG goals into your events program

An advanced sustainable program is built on a solid sustainability framework that creates awareness and promotes sustainability across all event opportunities. This ranges from proactive management across the supply chain to embracing ESG topics such as Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I), environmental, and socio-cultural impact.



# Destination: the critical factor for sustainable meetings and events

The choice of destination is the most significant factor in creating sustainable meetings and events. In this section, *Ready, get set, go green!* sets out a framework travel and meetings professionals can use to identify the best green destination for their needs.

## Location, location, location!

Selecting the right destination is perhaps the most important decision that meeting owners will make. This choice will shape every aspect of the attendees' experience and can substantially contribute to the success or failure of an event. A destination is equally important when it comes to sustainability. The choice will determine your ability to deliver a meeting that aligns with your sustainability and wider ESG objectives.

In recent years, globally recognised initiatives such as the Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-M) have emerged to help event owners identify destinations that offer the policies, practices and supplier ecosystem that together form a sustainable destination proposition. GDS-M evaluates the sustainability performance of destinations using 71 different indicators which look at environmental

strategy and infrastructure, social sustainability, industry supplier support and the destination management organisation's (DMO) strategy and initiatives. GDS-M has also developed the GDS-Index to help destinations benchmark and improve their sustainability performance. Since it was launched in 2016, GDS-M's GDS-Index of destinations has risen from 23 to 73 destinations.<sup>23</sup>

Another valuable initiative is offered by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The GSTC Destination Criteria (GSTC-D) provide certification standards, performance indicators, best practices from different cultural and geopolitical backdrops, and basic guidelines for education and training bodies. The GSTC-D framework helps destinations become more sustainable and also helps consumers and corporate customers to identify sustainable destinations.

*“One of the most impactful choices you can make for a greener event is where you host it. Location really does make a difference and can help you reduce your event carbon impact.”*



**MILTON RIVERA**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
GLOBAL CLIENT GROUP  
AMEX GBT MEETINGS &  
EVENTS

## Identifying your green destination: 3-pillar evaluation

Many of the corporates working with Amex GBT are increasingly aligning their travel programs around the 3-Ps of 'Planet, People, Profit', which refer to environmental sustainability, employee wellbeing, and cost management. The companies then aim to build and run their program in such a way as to balance these – sometimes conflicting – objectives.

When it comes to destination selection and evaluation, Amex GBT offers a modified version of the 3-Ps based on the destination's performance according to environmental, social, and economic factors. Understanding how a destination performs across these three pillars can take a meetings owner a long way towards identifying the green destination for their event. Below, consultants from the Amex GBT Global Business Consulting (GBC) team in Asia Pacific, explored how destinations in their region performed on the environmental, social, and economic axes.



### Environmental



As noted, many organisations are choosing to focus primarily on how corporate travel and meetings can help them reduce their carbon emissions. Checking with a resource such as Global Carbon Atlas will show you how a destination performs on CO2 emissions per metric tonne (MTCO2) ranked globally or against other countries in its region.<sup>24</sup> The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) from Yale University offers a more comprehensive view, using 32 performance indicators across 11 categories to rank 180 countries/regions on the vitality of their environment and ecosystem.<sup>25</sup>

### 2020 EPI Results Asia

DESTINATION	EPI SCORE
<b>JAPAN</b>	<b>75.1</b>
<b>SOUTH KOREA</b>	<b>66.5</b>
<b>SINGAPORE</b>	<b>58.1</b>
<b>TAIWAN</b>	<b>57.2</b>
<b>BRUNEI DARUSSALAM</b>	<b>54.8</b>
<b>MALAYSIA</b>	<b>47.9</b>
<b>THAILAND</b>	<b>45.4</b>
<b>TONGA</b>	<b>45.1</b>
<b>PHILIPPINES</b>	<b>38.4</b>
<b>INDONESIA</b>	<b>37.8</b>

## Social



This pillar looks at how a destination performs on issues that contribute to social cohesion including diversity and inclusion, good public health, and low crime. A useful resource that combines the key topics is the Safe Cities Index developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit.<sup>26</sup>

### Safe Cities Index 2021: overall score

RANK	CITIES	SCORE
1	COPENHAGEN	82.4
2	TORONTO	82.2
3	SINGAPORE	80.7
4	SYDNEY	80.1
5	TOKYO	80.0
6	AMSTERDAM	79.3
7	WELLINGTON	79.0
=8	HONG KONG	78.6
=8	MELBOURNE	78.6
10	STOCKHOLM	78.0

## Economic



This pillar is closely integrated with social performance – strong social foundations can help a destination attract investment to grow the economy. A flourishing economy in turn will fuel social and environmental progress. By spurring infrastructure development, business growth and a competitive marketplace – the right economic climate can contribute to a compelling destination proposition.

## The key role for government agencies

Apart from evaluating a destination on the three pillars, it is recommended for meeting planners to work with the relevant local government agencies responsible for inbound tourism and events such as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and convention bureaus to understand what initiatives are in place that can support sustainability goals, as well as your wider ESG objectives.

Important initiatives could include:

- **Availability of low or no-carbon ground transportation options such as hybrid and electronic vehicle (EV) taxis; public transport including metro, local rail, and trams; cycle and e-scooter options.**
- **Choice of venues and hotels with green certification from a recognised provider such as GSTC.**
- **Local food schemes to support producers in the city or region and reduce food miles.**
- **Access to a diverse supply chain with, for example, accredited women-and-minority owned service providers.**
- **Investment by the destination in green and renewable energies, plus promotion of sustainably constructed buildings.**

The above list is by no means exhaustive: and liaising with the local government agencies will give a comprehensive overview of ESG initiatives underway in the destination.

# Spotlight on Singapore: evaluating a sustainable destination

**How does a destination measure up against the three pillars evaluation described in the previous section? Here, in partnership with Singapore Tourism Board (STB), *Ready, get set, go green!* asks how the destination performs on the environmental, social, and economic fronts and looks at the actions Singapore is taking to become a "City in Nature, where Large Experiences come with Small Footprints".**

In the following discussion, note that the social and economic pillars are often entwined and can be difficult to separate. For example, Singapore is ranked the best country in the world for human capital development by the World Bank Human Capital Index.<sup>27</sup> This is an indicator of both social resilience and economic performance. On this basis, there may be a degree of overlap between the Social and Economic sections.

## Environmental +



Singapore has a long-established reputation as the gateway to Asia. Half the world's population lives within a 7-hour flight radius and Singapore hosts almost half 46% of multinational companies' Asia regional headquarters.<sup>28</sup> With its the strong leisure and business offering, Singapore was attracting more than 19 million inbound visitors pre-pandemic, with 2.5 million arriving for business and professional reasons.<sup>29</sup>

Yale University's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) places Singapore in the top 3 destinations in Asia for sustainability performance (latest figures refer to 2020). Globally, the EPI ranks the country just outside its top quartile – but Singapore has much bigger ambitions.<sup>30</sup> As the world looks beyond the pandemic to recovery, the Singapore Government has set out to make the country a global leader in sustainability.

The 2021 Emerging Stronger Together Budget included a commitment of S\$30 million for EV initiatives, including enhancing charging networks and revising road taxes. In May, the government's Emerging Stronger Taskforce, charged with charting Singapore's post Covid-19 recovery, recommended the country becomes the leading global hub for autonomous transport technologies and an early mover in the global smart mobility industry.

2021 also saw the launch of the latest edition of the government's most ambitious Green Plan yet, the Singapore Green Plan 2030 which sets sustainability targets based on the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Conceived as a living document that evolves year to year, the plan's carbon emission commitments are constantly reviewed to achieve net zero as soon as possible.

There are five key pillars to the Green Plan:



CITY IN NATURE



SUSTAINABLE LIVING



ENERGY RE-SET



GREEN ECONOMY



RESILIENT FUTURE

The Green Plan's Energy Re-set pillar will play an important role in fulfilling international goals relating to travel and transportation, including those set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization.<sup>31</sup>

Further supporting the drive to decarbonize the economy, the government's Budget 2022 included the announcement that carbon tax levels will progressively increase from 2024. This will provide a strong price signal and impetus for businesses and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint in line with national climate goals.

## Singapore's water story

**Singapore is one of the world's most water-stressed countries, topping the list of 167 nations likely to face extremely high water stress in 2040, according to a 2015 report by the World Resources Institute.<sup>32</sup>**

To augment Singapore's water supply and enhance its water security, Singapore has increased its water catchment area, which today covers two-thirds of the island, and invested in R&D and technology to develop weather-resilient sources of water, namely high-grade reclaimed water known as NEWater and Desalinated Water.

NEWater is Singapore's success story in water sustainability. With its cutting edge technology to treat, recycle and supply water, NEWater supplies up to 40% of Singapore's total water demand.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the good progress made, Singapore's national water agency, Public Utilities Board (PUB), is still investing in research to meet future challenges. For example, PUB is actively looking into electro-deionization technology and biomimicry, which could potentially halve the energy required in desalination. In the process, Singapore has become home to a thriving ecosystem of more than 100 companies that provide solutions for various water challenges in the region.<sup>34</sup>



# Travel and tourism key to Singapore's green drive

In line with the Singapore Government's Green Plan, STB has created a sustainability strategy for the travel and tourism sector.<sup>35</sup> The strategy aims to develop Singapore as one of the world's most sustainable urban destinations. Central to this is the understanding that travellers are increasingly demanding sustainable travel options, and Covid-19 has made consumers more mindful about sustainability issues.<sup>36</sup> Tourism businesses can ride on this opportunity by creating more sustainable experiences for visitors and moving towards more sustainable operations.

A key element of the strategy is to ensure all sustainability efforts in the tourism and travel sectors contributes to national and international level.

Specifically, three strategies have been identified to build a sustainable tourism sector:

- Associations to provide industry-specific directions to shape businesses' sustainability strategies
- Leverage innovation to support sustainable tourism outcomes
- Build sustainability-related capabilities of the workforce

In March 2022, STB and Singapore Hotel Association launched the Hotel Sustainability Roadmap, which sets out two targets for Singapore hotels to adopt in their sustainability journey. The targets are:

- 60% of hotel room stock in Singapore to attain internationally-recognised hotel sustainability certification by 2025.
- For hotels in Singapore to commence tracking of emissions by 2023 and reduce emissions by 2030, with a view to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The roadmap also lays out strategies and related initiatives that harness technology and innovation to help hotels achieve these targets.

To support STB's vision for Singapore to be an innovative and sustainable destination, the Singapore Tourism Accelerator programme looks out for promising companies that are developing solutions to future-proof the travel and tourism industry and match them with Singapore tourism companies to bring viable solutions to fruition. In one example, a Singapore-based start-up, Lumitics helped Millennium & Copthorne International Limited reduce food waste and lower costs through their solution which combines AI, data analytics and image recognition software. For the next Accelerator run, STB will be broadening the scope to develop sustainability-related technology solutions and will welcome innovative technology solution providers that can track, monitor and achieve the sustainability goals of tourism businesses to submit proposals.

Underscoring their commitment to create a leading sustainable destination, STB joined the GSTC in 2021 and has announced it's participation in the 2022 GDS-Index.<sup>37</sup>

*"Sustainability for tourism is no longer an option. It is the right thing to do, and everyone in the tourism industry must play their part. As part of our plans for sustainable tourism, Singapore will participate in the GDS-Index in 2022 to benchmark our social and environmental performance against other destinations and to promote standards, certification and a greater adoption of sustainable practices among our meeting players. We are optimistic that our sustainability journey will be transformational and enriching, not just for the industry, but for our planet."*



**KEITH TAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

# Sustainability across the Singapore supply chain

A green destination will host a diversity of sustainable suppliers to enable travel and meeting professionals to achieve their sustainability goals in areas including reducing carbon emissions, managing waste responsibly and using local sustainable food sources.



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## Energy conservation and efficiency

Sands Expo & Convention Centre is Singapore's first carbon neutral MICE venue, with a mission to accommodate varying commitment levels to sustainability.

[marinabaysands.com/sustainability.html](http://marinabaysands.com/sustainability.html)



© Singapore Tourism Board

## Waste management

Resorts World Sentosa, with its best-in-class efficient waste management system, has ambitious plans and a highly effective e-waste management program.

[rwsentosa.com/en/sustainability](http://rwsentosa.com/en/sustainability)



© PARKROYAL Collection Marina Bay

## Sustainable food

PARKROYAL COLLECTION Marina Bay Urban Farm-to-table concept, innovatively contributes to food resilience, supplying a fresh produce grown on the roof of the hotel.

[panpacific.com/en/hotels-and-resorts/pr-collection-marina-bay/sustainability.html](http://panpacific.com/en/hotels-and-resorts/pr-collection-marina-bay/sustainability.html)

## Social +



Singapore offers political stability and a vibrant multi-cultural society. Singapore's diversity is enhanced by its status as a global crossing. The millions of visitors who come to the country in every year leave their imprint, bringing fresh ideas and fostering cultural exchange.

Singapore ranks high on safety and security. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Safe Cities Index 2021 ranks Singapore third globally, with the country achieving second place ranking for health security.<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that the 2021 edition of the Safe Cities Index has been updated to reflect the dynamic nature of the urban safety landscape with a special focus on the pandemic impact. It has also introduced a brand-new pillar, environmental security.

Another key element of the social pillar is education and skills. Singapore is ranked second in INSEAD's Global Talent Competitiveness (GTCI) Index - behind Switzerland and ahead of the United States - and the country's leadership in the World Bank Human Capital Index was noted above.<sup>39</sup> In recognition of the national imperative to reskill Singapore's workforce, STB's Tourism Human Capital Office is focusing efforts to restructure the tourism workforce and build future ready jobs and skills. In April 2021, STB, together with NTUC and five trade associations and chambers, developed the Tourism Sector Capability Development Roadmap to prepare the tourism industry for the post-pandemic world. The key areas of transformation include skills necessary for a modern destination such as upskilling workers for

hybrid events and preparing them to support new experiential offerings through digital content curation.<sup>40</sup>

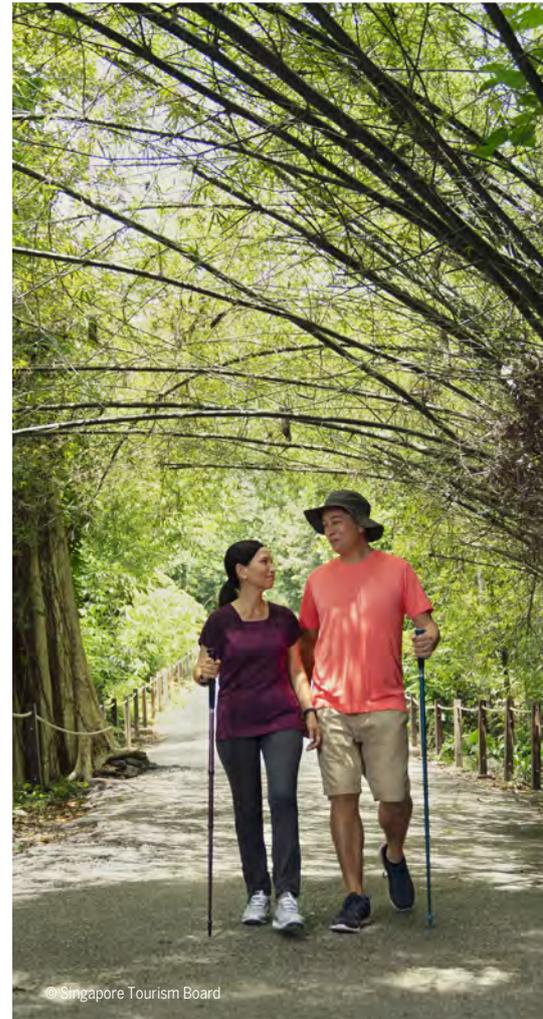
As for conserving and promoting its social and cultural heritage, the Singapore Heritage Plan sets out a national masterplan, co-developed with community representatives. In 2020, Singapore's distinctive "hawker culture" – the practice of Singaporeans gathering at hawker centres to enjoy hawker dishes originating from Chinese, Malay, Indian and many other traditions - was inscribed as Singapore's first element on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.<sup>41</sup>

## Economic +



Singapore is renowned for its high-performance economy. The country provides one of the world's most business-friendly regulatory environments. GDP growth has been amongst the world's highest<sup>42</sup> and the country regularly comes top or near top of the competitiveness rankings prepared by bodies such as World Economic Forum and the IMD business school.<sup>43</sup>

The strength and dynamism of the Singapore economy bolsters its status as a green destination in several ways. Singapore is a magnet for talent and investment, enabling the destination to continually expand and deepen its sustainable tourism and visitor proposition.



© Singapore Tourism Board

## The Singapore Grand Prix (SGP) will return in 2022

**This landmark event will reinvigorate the tourism and lifestyle sectors, as well as support local jobs and businesses, while adopting solutions to reduce its carbon footprint.**

From 2022, STB and Singapore GP Pte Ltd (SGP), the race promoter for the Formula 1 Singapore Grand Prix, will work together to reduce the carbon footprint of the Singapore race and foster the transition to more sustainable business models. Initiatives include switching to renewable energy sources, increasing recycling efforts and switching to sustainable materials. A full sustainability audit will also be undertaken in 2022, which will guide the development of other green initiatives that will be implemented for the rest of the new 7-year term. As part of its corporate sustainability efforts, SGP will also continue to engage the local community, and encourage diversity amongst event personnel and volunteers.

# Expanding opportunities for green in-person meetings

**The 3-pillar evaluation indicates that Singapore is a sustainable destination. With the concerted investment in environmental improvements and social development now underway, Singapore is ready to become a leading global destination for sustainable meetings and events.**

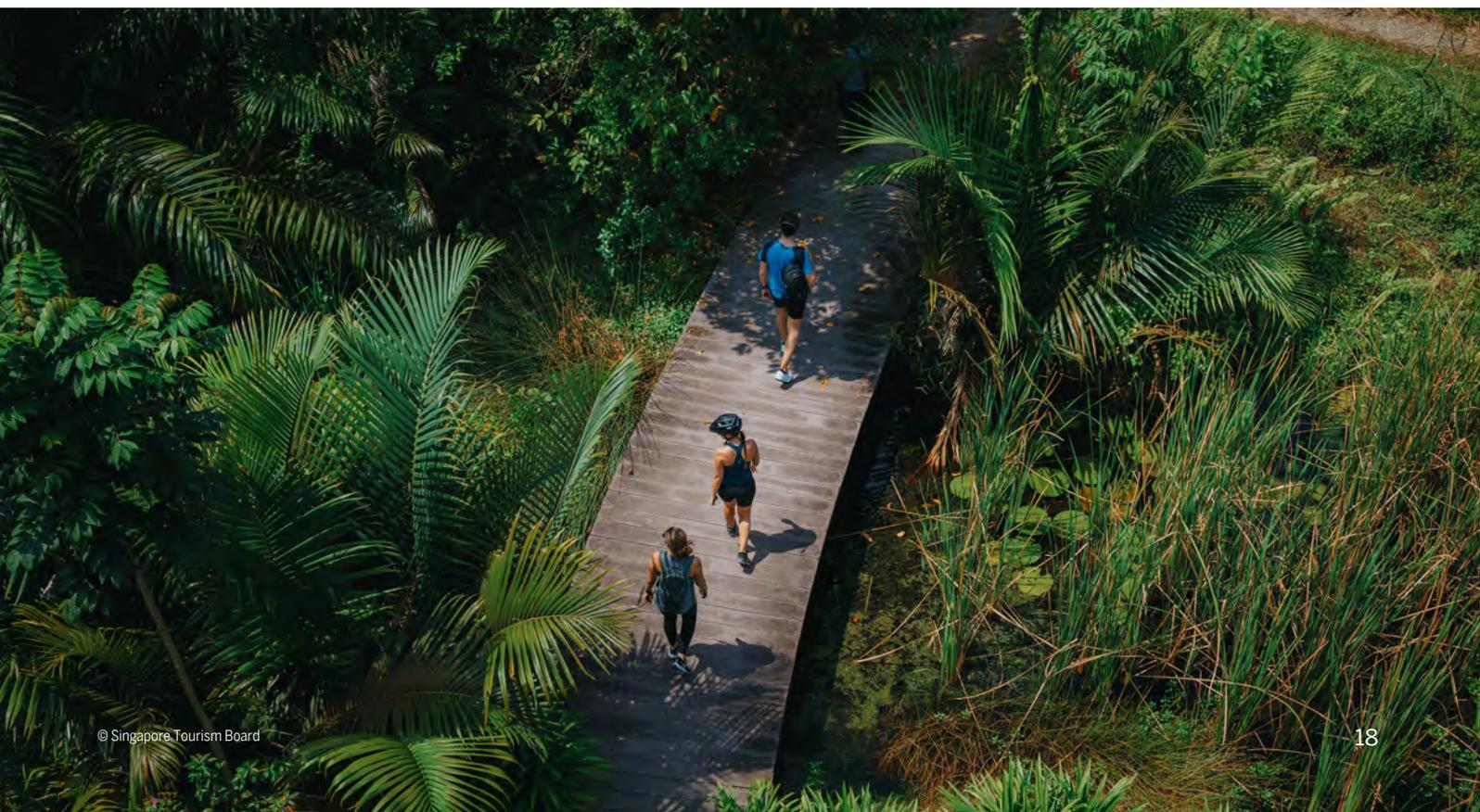
The Singapore example underlines the importance of continual improvement. Sustainability is a process, not an end point. There's always an opportunity to do more and do it better, like the decarbonisation commitments in the Singapore Green Plan which are constantly reviewed to achieve net zero as soon as possible.

In Singapore, the government and agencies such as STB are investing in the development of strategic destination management, monitoring adherence to UN-SDG standards, and acting as catalysts for destination visibility. And, of course, other destinations around the globe are striving to build stronger sustainable tourism and events propositions.

This is a welcome development for corporate travel and meetings professionals intent on greening their events programs. Every year, their choice of sustainable destinations is growing; up from just 23 in 2016 to 73 in 2021, according to the 2021 GDS-Index. The growing ecosystem of sustainable suppliers from net zero cab

rides to distinctive locally sourced cuisine, allow meeting owners the opportunity to create, authentic and sustainable experiences. These advances are also matched by the ongoing development of increasingly sophisticated measurement techniques, enabling meetings owners to capture and report on the performance of their sustainability strategies with greater accuracy.

*As Ready, get set, go green!* shows, the continual improvement of the sustainable meetings sector means there are always more ways for corporate travel and meetings to satisfy the growing appetite for in-person events while reducing environmental impact. By applying the strategies described in this paper, travel and meetings professionals can deliver meaningful benefits to their colleagues while helping their organisation accomplish its sustainability and wider ESG objectives. The pathway to green meetings and events is clear – now, it's time to take the first steps.



## About American Express Global Business Travel

American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT) is the world's leading B2B travel platform, providing software and services to manage travel, expenses, and meetings & events for companies of all sizes. We have built the most valuable marketplace in B2B travel to deliver unrivalled choice, value, and experiences. With travel professionals in more than 140 countries, our customers and travellers enjoy the powerful backing of American Express Global Business Travel.

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## About the Singapore Tourism Board

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is the lead development agency for tourism, one of Singapore's key economic sectors. Together with industry partners and the community, we shape a dynamic Singapore tourism landscape. We bring the Passion Made Possible brand to life by differentiating Singapore as a vibrant destination that inspires people to share and deepen their passions.

### **TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STB:**

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**To learn more about how you  
can make travel and meetings  
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Please contact:

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