

## PRESS RELEASE

### RECORD YEAR FOR DUBAI BUSINESS EVENTS WITH 62% BOOST IN DELEGATE WINS IN 2018

- *Over 153,000 delegates to visit Dubai as a result of business event wins in 2018*
- *13% growth in winning bids for the city's official convention bureau, with shift towards larger-scale events*
- *2018 wins to result in an estimated economic impact of approximately AED 1.2 billion over coming years*

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates. 16 January 2019:** Dubai Business Events (DBE), the city's official convention bureau, secured a total of 261 successful bids for meetings, conferences and incentives in 2018, which are set to attract an additional 153,640 delegates to Dubai over the coming years. The number of event bids won represents a 24% increase from 2017 and will deliver an estimated economic impact of approximately AED 1.2 billion to the city. This success also marks a 62% increase from the previous year in the number of delegates set to visit Dubai due to event bids won, signifying a shift towards larger-scale events and further cementing the Emirate as an attractive global business destination.

Throughout 2018, Dubai submitted 557 business event bids, up from 354 in 2017, and among the wins awarded were those for bids submitted in previous years. 2018 also marked DBE's 15-year anniversary, and the results are testament to the efforts of stakeholders and partners across the city who worked with the bureau towards the shared aim of growing and developing the city's business events sector.

**Issam Kazim, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, said:** "We look forward to hosting a number of significant events in the city over the next few years as a result of the outstanding performance in bid wins we have secured in 2018. Driven by the city's visionary leadership, Dubai has become a flourishing business events destination and knowledge hub which caters to a range of event types and sizes. Our strategy will continue to align with Dubai Tourism's Vision and in 2019 our goal is to build on this momentum and attract events that leave a lasting legacy for delegates and the city. To achieve this, we will continue to engage with business events professionals globally, while working with stakeholders and partners in Dubai to identify and pursue opportunities to bid for major business events."

Key bid wins from 2018 include the **World Congress of Gastroenterology** set to take place in 2021 with a total of 6,000 delegates in attendance, the **Mary Kay China Incentive** set to take place in 2019 with 800 delegates in attendance, as well as the **World Nut and Dried Fruit Congress**, set to take place in 2020, which will bring 1,000 delegates to Dubai. Other notable wins in 2018 include the **World Chambers Congress**, which will take place in Dubai in 2021 with 1,500 delegates set to attend and the **Congress of the Societe International D'Urologie** that will bring in 2,000 delegates to Dubai in 2021.

**Steen Jakobsen, Assistant Vice President of Dubai Business Events, said:** "One of Dubai's strengths when it comes to reaching out to event planners and creating compelling bids for major events is the close team work and collaborative approach taken by stakeholders across the city. The monumental growth in the number of delegates set to attend business events in Dubai as a result of 2018 bid wins is testimony to

the Emirate's increasing appeal as a global business hub. Business events hosted in the city play an important role in the development of our knowledge economy and are a crucial part of our wider tourism strategy and contribution to Dubai's GDP growth."

In 2018, Dubai hosted the 57<sup>th</sup> edition of the ICCA Congress, a leading conference industry event, that saw 1,156 meeting industry professionals from 79 countries around the world gather in the Middle East for the first time ever to share knowledge, discuss key challenges and opportunities. The event, which took place from 11-14 November, was the largest ICCA Congress ever held outside of Europe and included a host of educational sessions, social events for attending delegates, as well as the opportunity to participate in several CSR initiatives.

DBE also hosted in-bound study missions in 2018 that were designed to showcase Dubai's unique offering and world-class business event capabilities. The convention bureau hosted nine international study-missions, bringing in more than 302 hosted buyers and over 15 international trade media from key markets across Southeast Asia, India and Europe. The itineraries featured immersive experiences that showcased the range of hotels and event venues in the city. Attendees also experienced Dubai's ever-growing offerings with visits to popular attractions such as Dubai Frame and La Perle. In addition to the international study missions, DBE hosted a total of 26 site inspections for 63 clients and buyers in 2018.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About Dubai Business Events – the Official Convention Bureau**

Dubai Business Events (DBE) – the Official Convention Bureau, aims to further develop and increase Dubai's share of the international business events market in order to grow economic development, jobs and knowledge creation in the emirate. DBE's main goal, as a division of Dubai Tourism, is to establish the Emirate as a premier business event destination by helping organizers of international meetings, incentives, congresses and exhibitions plan and manage every aspect of their event. As a member of BestCities Global Alliance DBE aim to deliver the world's best service experience for the meeting industry.

### **About Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism)**

With the ultimate vision of positioning Dubai as the world's leading tourism destination and commercial hub, Dubai Tourism's mission is to increase the awareness of Dubai among global audiences and to attract tourists and inward investment into the emirate. Dubai Tourism is the principal authority for the planning, supervision, development and marketing of Dubai's tourism sector. It markets and promotes the Emirate's commerce sector, and is responsible for the licensing and classification of all tourism services, including hotels, tour operators and travel agents. Brands and departments within the Dubai Tourism portfolio include Dubai Business Events, Dubai Calendar, and Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (formerly known as Dubai Events and Promotions Establishment).

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