

SEPTEMBER 2025-NOVEMBER 2025

IT'S A MICE WORLD

Features:

Data Management:
Next frontier for Africa's
MICE industry

The rise and rise of
bleisure

Beyond Football:
What hosting CAF Pamoja
2024 means for East
Africa's MICE industry

How hotels can lead
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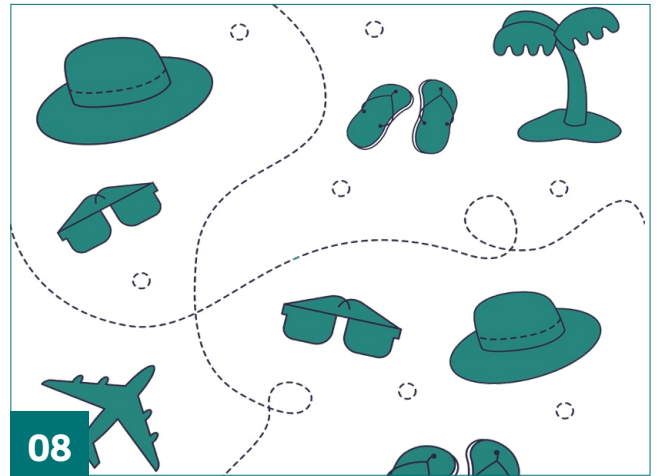
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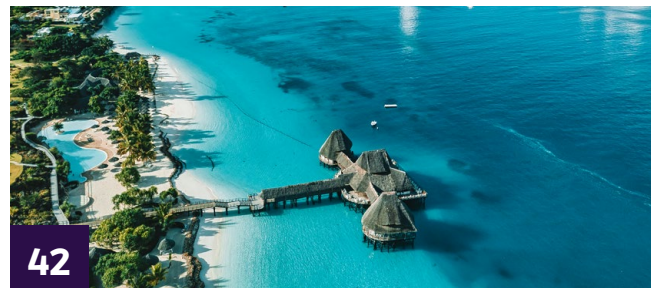


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OVER
1060
DESTINATIONS



173
COUNTRIES

About Us.

Kenya Airways (KQ) is the flag carrier airline of Kenya, headquartered in Nairobi. It was established in 1977 following the dissolution of East African Airways and was initially fully government-owned. Today, it is a public-private partnership with the Kenyan government as the largest shareholder. KQ is known as "The Pride of Africa" and aims to connect Africa's people, cultures, and markets.

KQ is member of the SkyTeam airline alliance, providing access to a global network of over 1,060 destinations in 173 countries. It operates a fleet that includes wide-body Boeing aircraft (including the B787 Dreamliner) and narrow-body Embraer E190 aircraft. Has received numerous awards, including Skytrax World Airline Awards for Best Airline Staff and Best Airline Cabin Crew in Africa (2024), and the World Travel Awards for Africa's Leading Airline (2020, 2022).



EXECUTIVE FORWARD

IT'S A MICE WORLD



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this special edition of It's a MICE World, released at a truly defining moment for our industry.

The Africa MICE Summit 2025 marks the sector's long-awaited return to its full face-to-face format—our first since the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a convening, this Summit represents a renaissance: the rebirth of Africa's Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector as a driver of trade, investment, and continental integration.

Looking back over the past five years, the journey has been remarkable. In the wake of the pandemic, our industry pivoted to hybrid solutions, embraced digital platforms, and sustained dialogue virtually when borders were closed.

Today, we celebrate milestones such as new convention centres coming online across the continent, greater adoption of event technologies, enhanced policy support, and a steadily growing recognition of the MICE industry as a strategic pillar of Africa's economic transformation. Equally important, there has been a visible commitment to professionalisation, certification, and training, ensuring that our talent base keeps pace with the demands of a changing industry.

But we are not only celebrating what has been achieved—we are also setting our sights firmly on the future. Over the next five years, we expect to see Africa's MICE landscape shaped by sustainability,

“*This guide provides the much-needed data, analysis, and pipelines to mobilise capital into Africa’s MICE ecosystem—spanning infrastructure, technology, and human capital development.*”

innovation, and people development.

Sustainability & Green Innovations: As climate change challenges deepen, Africa’s MICE industry must lead in green building, waste reduction, renewable energy, and circular economy practices. Our venues and events can, and must, become models of environmental stewardship.

MICE Technology: With Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality /Virtual Reality, digital ticketing, and smart event management systems, the future belongs to destinations and organisers who integrate tech seamlessly to enhance efficiency and delegate experience. Africa has already proven it can leapfrog in fintech; the same momentum can power our event-tech ecosystem.

Skills Development & Professionalisation: With Africa’s youthful population, capacity building remains a non-negotiable priority. Universities, associations, and certification bodies are stepping up, but greater investment in training, mentorship, and globally recognised certifications is key to creating a professionalised, future-ready workforce.

A landmark in this edition is the launch of the Africa MICE Investors Guide, commissioned by the Africa MICE Hub and developed in partnership with niche partners. This Guide provides the much-needed data, analysis, and pipelines

to mobilise capital into Africa’s MICE ecosystem—spanning infrastructure, technology, and human capital development. It is a timely tool that aligns with the Summit’s theme of “Catalysing Trade & Investment in Africa through MICE.”

This magazine also shines a spotlight on organisations, partners, and innovators who are championing growth across the continent—those building venues, leading associations, investing in skills, and driving sustainability practices. Their stories inspire and remind us that Africa’s MICE sector is not just bouncing back; it is rising stronger, smarter, and greener.

As you turn these pages, I invite you to celebrate how far we have come, and to join us in charting the bold course ahead. Together, let us unlock the promise of MICE as a true engine of Africa’s trade, investment, and development story.

Warm regards,

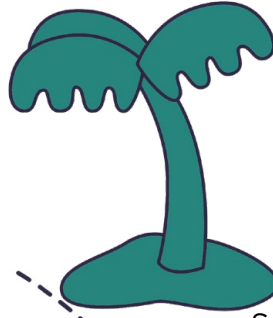
Kezy Mukiri

Kezy Mukiri
Convener, Africa MICE Summit 2025
Founder, Africa MICE Hub
CEO, Zuri Events



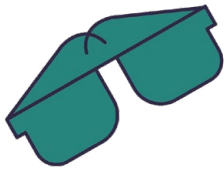
Bleisure

Bleisure is the practice of combining business travel with leisure activities. It involves extending a business trip to include time for personal exploration, relaxation, or enjoying the destination. It turns conferences and incentive programmes into opportunities for cultural immersion, relaxation, or family travel. This trend spotlight MICE destinations and boosts attendee satisfaction.



Sustainable venues & food

Sustainability has become a defining factor in venue and catering choices within the MICE sector, as organisations prioritise eco-conscious practices to align with global climate goals. Event planners are increasingly opting for green-certified venues that use renewable energy, efficient waste management systems, and eco-friendly infrastructure. On the catering side, plant-based menus, locally sourced ingredients, seasonal produce, and reduced single-use plastics are fast becoming the standard.



Personalisation

Participants now expect events to reflect their professional goals and personal preferences. Even details such as personalised event apps, dietary-specific catering, and interactive engagement tools are helping delegates feel valued and connected. By embracing personalisation, organisers boost satisfaction and participation and deliver higher ROI through deeper engagement and stronger relationship-building.



Wellness sessions

These are structured activities or programmes focused on improving a attendees overall well-being at events. They improve physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health by combating conference fatigue. These sessions can include health coaching, fitness classes like yoga, mental health education, stress management techniques, and mindfulness practices, with the goal of promoting a balanced and healthy lifestyle for participants.

Community impact

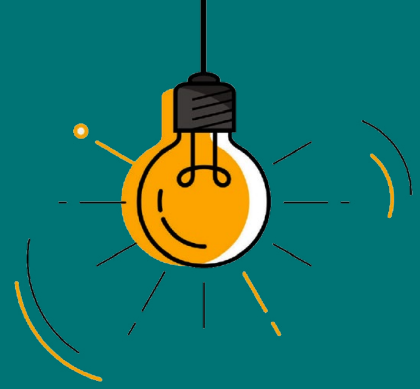
Community impact is emerging as a powerful trend in the MICE sector, with events increasingly designed to leave a positive legacy beyond the boardroom. Organisers are weaving social responsibility into their programmes by incorporating activities such as tree planting, charity fundraisers, local school engagements, and volunteer projects. By involving delegates in initiatives that support host communities, such events not only create lasting social value but also deepen participant connection and purpose.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Having MICE programmes that reflect gender balance, cultural diversity and inter-generational perspectives. Venues and event technologies should also be accessible to people living with disabilities. Such inclusivity strengthens a brand's credibility and fosters innovation by bringing varied voices and experiences to the table.

AI & digitalisation

AI and digitalisation are transforming MICE events by making them smarter, more personalised, and data-driven. Event organisers are using AI-powered tools for attendee matchmaking, agenda customisation, real-time language translation, and chatbots that enhance the participant experience. Digitalisation extends the event's reach through hybrid platforms, live-streaming, and on-demand content, ensuring inclusivity for both in-person and remote audiences. Advanced analytics now allow planners to track engagement, measure ROI, and refine future strategies with precision.



Did you know?

- The MICE industry took off in the 1960s. By the 1980s it had become a global powerhouse, turning business travel into a trillion-dollar tourism sector.
- Today, MICE is one of the fastest-growing sectors in global tourism, valued at over USD 900 billion in 2023 and projected to surpass USD 1.5 trillion by 2030.
- 75% of professionals discover new work partners or technologies at MICE events.
- Event attendees remember up to 80% of what they experience at live events, but only about 20% of what they read online.
- Companies that invest in experiential marketing generate a return that's five times higher than traditional advertising.
- Tourism is the world's biggest employer, powering 1 in every 10 jobs globally, with over 330 million people working to keep the world moving, exploring, and connecting.
- Keeping up with your social media trends has a hidden footprint: The internet emits more CO₂ than the entire airline industry.

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Milestones that shaped the MICE journey



2018

FIRST STEP

The first summit: Established a continental conversation around Africa's MICE potential.

Introduced the Africa MICE Awards, recognising excellence and innovation in the industry.

2019–2020

SECOND STEP

Grew participation to multiple African nations, drawing government agencies, private sector leaders, and international investors.

2021

THIRD STEP

Pioneered hybrid conferencing models in the wake of the pandemic, ensuring Africa's MICE sector kept moving forward.

2022–2024

FOURTH STEP

Expanded into a three-day experience with thematic focus areas: policy, innovation, and inclusion. Secured strategic partnerships that brought global visibility.



TRENDS IN THE MICE INDUSTRY

In 2018, the African MICE landscape was vibrant in potential yet fragmented in execution. While the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions industry thrived in pockets across the globe, Africa lacked a unified platform that could connect stakeholders, showcase destinations, and position the continent as a key player in the global business events space.

It was in this gap that Kezy Mukiri, the CEO of Zuri Events, saw both a challenge and an opportunity. As a woman with immense belief in Africa's capacity to host world class event, she envisioned a gathering that would do more than exchange business cards she saw a summit that would link policymakers, investors, and event professionals to a platform where impactful conversations are geared to inspire innovation and create partnerships powerful enough to advance the continent's economic narrative.

Accordingly, the Africa MICE Summit made its debut in 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, with over 250 delegates drawn from across Africa and beyond. This inaugural summit brought together government representatives, global MICE experts, hotel owners, destination marketers, and event professionals for a two-day dialogue.

The discussions highlighted Africa's untapped potential, explored strategies for building sustainable destinations, and emphasised the power of collaboration in driving competitiveness: Under the theme "Shaping the Future of Africa's Business Events Industry". Beyond the plenary sessions, the 2018 edition also provided a unique platform for networking and cross-border partnerships. This set a tone for what has now become the region's flagship gathering for thought leadership and innovation in the MICE sector.

Now in its seventh year, the Africa MICE Summit stands as a continental hub for ideas, opportunities, and transformation. The 2025 edition will host stakeholders from over 25 countries, showcase innovations, feature destination pavilions, investment matchmaking, and celebrate sustainability through the Africa MICE Awards at the iconic Kenya International Conference Centre (KICC) in Nairobi, Kenya. The summit will take place from 9th – 11th September 2025.

Beyond the panels and pavilions, the Summit is a living testament to what happens when a visionary leader dares to close a gap the world has learned to live with and instead, builds a bridge to a future no one thought possible. As we gather this year, we do so not just to talk about Africa's potential, rather we witness it in action and chart the course for the next decade of continental success.



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Incentives emerge as the fastest growing segment amid global efforts to elevate MICE

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is witnessing a significant shift with incentive travel emerging as the fastest-growing segment globally. Meetings continue to top the list followed by conferences, exhibitions and incentive.

According to the Global Business Travel Association, corporate travel spend is projected to hit \$1.57 trillion in 2025, surpassing pre-pandemic highs. Within that rebound, incentives are taking the lead. The Incentive Travel Index 2024 reports continued growth through 2026, with planners committing higher budgets and expanding participant numbers despite rising costs.

This momentum is being fueled by a new wave of corporate strategies where companies are blending business objectives with employee well-being, creating experiences that go beyond leisure. In fact, the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) notes that more than 60% of global companies now include incentive travel as a key part of their performance and loyalty strategies.

Africa and the world at large continue to elevate incentives as part of broader MICE growth strategies. Countries like South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Uganda and Tanzania have stepped up investments in incentive-friendly offerings, combining safari experiences, luxury resorts, cultural immersion, and sustainable travel to attract global firms seeking unique destinations.

For instance, in Tanzania the government has prioritised MICE as a driver of tourism growth, with plans to establish a National Convention Bureau to coordinate promotion and bidding for international events. In parallel, the Tanzania Tourist Board is introducing MICE training masterclasses to upskill local professionals, ensuring service delivery matches global standards.

TRENDS IN THE MICE INDUSTRY

In Kenya, the government and private sector are actively promoting high-profile events like the Africa MICE Summit and international expos to showcase Kenya's competitiveness. Efforts are also being directed toward sustainability, digital innovation, and inclusivity, with wellness programs, green event practices, and hybrid conferencing becoming mainstream. Partnerships between KICC, Kenya Airways and Magical Kenya signature Experiences remain the centerpiece of this strategy.

The Government of Zambia has launched a policy framework recommending the establishment of a National Convention Bureau, simplified licensing processes, and the development of an International Convention Centre in Livingstone. Zambia has also secured rights to host three major African conferences in 2026, expected to attract over 2,000 delegates, further enhancing its credibility as a business events destination.



Globally, destinations such as Singapore, Dubai, and Barcelona have also redefined their incentive strategies by offering personalised, sustainable, and wellness-driven programmes. With corporations seeking memorable and responsible ways to engage employees, the demand for transformative experiences is pushing incentive travel into a central role in the MICE industry.

Uganda is stepping up its MICE ambitions via a formal national push. The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) launched a five-year National Destination Marketing Strategy (NDMS 2024/25-2028/29) to target high-value meetings and aim for a top-five African MICE ranking by 2029.

South Africa on the other hand, continues to expand its global reach. The government is backing this growth through visa reforms, including digital systems for instant approvals, marketing campaigns and infrastructure investment. Additionally, South Africa has secured 53 international conferences between 2024 and 2029, expected to draw 24,000 delegates and inject millions into the economy. Its MICE industry emphasises sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation, ensuring the country remains a global player while retaining its leadership in Africa.

Globally, destinations such as Singapore, Dubai, and Barcelona have also redefined their incentive strategies by offering personalised, sustainable, and wellness-driven programmes. With corporations seeking memorable and responsible ways to engage employees, the demand for transformative experiences is pushing incentive travel into a central role in the MICE industry.

Experts believe that as the world navigates post-pandemic recovery, incentives will remain a key growth driver. The segment not only enhances employee morale but also promotes cross-cultural exchange and sustainable tourism. By combining immersive experiences with business objectives, incentive travel has proven to be a catalyst for both corporate productivity and destination competitiveness.

Ulwazi Place by Triatum Meetings in Serenity



Situated in the quiet suburb of Kitisuru, Ulwazi Place by Triatum brings a refreshing perspective to Nairobi's MICE landscape. Just minutes from the city's business districts yet away from the bustle, it offers the perfect balance of accessibility and tranquillity.

Our facilities include fully equipped meeting rooms and a modern auditorium ideal for conferences, seminars, and trainings. Each space is supported with high-speed connectivity, flexible layouts, and professional service to ensure smooth, productive sessions.

For multi-day programmes, Ulwazi Place offers residential meeting solutions with spacious accommodation ranging from studio rooms to two-bedroom apartments. Delegates can stay, meet, and relax within one convenient location, turning work into a seamless experience.

By combining an auditorium, versatile meeting venues, residential facilities, and personalised hospitality, Ulwazi Place delivers more than a venue — it provides an inspiring environment where ideas thrive, and outcomes are achieved.



SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN INNOVATION

The next decade of hospitalityEQ: Data, AI, and personalisation of Africa's visitors economy



MICE isn't just about ballrooms and booths, it's the heartbeat of Africa's visitor economy, bringing together business, leisure, sports, culture, and wellness into one vibrant ecosystem, writes

BARRY CLEMENS



Incentive travel has evolved far beyond a simple reward or celebratory getaway. Today, it serves as a strategic tool that companies use to foster employee loyalty, strengthen brand identity, and boost motivation.

For far too long, the term MICE - Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions, has been narrowly understood as events confined to conference halls and exhibition centers. MICE is much more than that. It sits at the crossroads where business travel, incentives, sports, culture, wellness, and investment converge, act as a powerful engine that drives Africa's growing visitor economy.

At HospitalityEQ, we see MICE as an essential thread woven through the entire visitor experience. Our mission is to help governments, investors, and destinations shift their perspective to embrace this bigger picture, demonstrating how advances in data, artificial intelligence, and personalisation are transforming every aspect of tourism and hospitality across the continent.

Unlocking new opportunities incentive travel

Incentive travel has evolved far beyond a simple reward or celebratory getaway. Today, it serves as a strategic tool that companies use to foster employee loyalty, strengthen brand identity, and boost motivation. Africa's unique appeal lies in the authenticity and purpose-driven nature of its experiences. From supporting conservation projects in protected wilderness areas to immersive cultural programmes led by local artisans, the continent offers experiences that resonate on an individual level. With AI technology, these journeys are crafted to be deeply personal, ensuring every participant feels that their trip was uniquely designed to reflect their values, interests, and aspirations.

Sports tourism

Africa's sporting calendar is expanding rapidly, and with it comes a wealth of opportunities that extend beyond the stadium. Sporting tournaments are increasingly becoming platforms for investment opportunities, professional networking, and city branding on a continental and global scale. Thanks to predictive analytics, destinations can

more accurately forecast infrastructure needs, from accommodations to transport, and create experiences that convert first-time visitors into lifelong ambassadors. By linking sporting events with broader urban development and tourism strategies, Africa is positioning herself as a destination where sports catalyse economic and social progress.

Culture as business diplomacy

Cultural events such as festivals, art fairs, and music performances have always been a magnet for both local and international audiences. The true potential of these gatherings lies in their role as business connectors. When recognised as gateways to commerce, trade, and investment, cultural events become powerful diplomatic tools.

Using AI matchmaking platforms, a CEO visiting an African city might be introduced to a local entrepreneur, creative, or innovator, sparking collaborations that transcend traditional business boundaries. These intersections of culture and commerce enrich communities and foster sustainable economic growth.

Wellness and sustainability

Wellness tourism has broken out of its niche status to become a mainstream market, no other region combines natural beauty and cultural heritage quite like Africa. The continent's diverse landscapes and time-honoured traditions offer an ideal backdrop for wellness programmes.

The greatest opportunity lies in combining productivity with well-being, these include incentive trips that integrate eco-conscious choices, executive retreats focused on restorative recovery, and community-led wellness projects that align with global sustainability values. This holistic approach not only supports healthier travelers but

also fosters respect for the environment and local cultures. This drives a more responsible visitor economy

How data and AI are transforming the industry

HospitalityEQ does not build technology products. We specialise in identifying where technology can unlock new advantages. Data and AI are opening exciting new chapters in Africa's tourism story.

They enable accurate forecasting of demand, guiding smarter investments in hotels, conference venues, and infrastructure tailored to future needs. AI makes it possible to personalise every interaction, turning incentive travel, events, and cultural engagement into experiences that feel tailor-made for each visitor. During live events, real-time data in-take allows venues and organisers to respond dynamically to guest sentiment and flow, thereby improving satisfaction and outcomes. On a broader level, strategic master planning informed by these technologies ensures projects maximise their return on investment and social impact.

A striking example is the Botswana airport hotel and Convention Center in Gaborone. By leveraging AI-driven insights, HospitalityEQ helped design a master plan that balanced 400 hotel rooms with a convention center capable of hosting 3,000 delegates, while thoughtfully integrating retail, wellness, and cultural spaces. The strategy combined data intelligence with practical reality, producing a blueprint that aims for long-term sustainability and profitability.

Why Africa is poised for growth

Africa's visitor economy benefits from its diverse markets, where business travel, sports tourism, cultural engagement, and



Image Promotions is a leading event management company in Zambia with over 30 years of experience, renowned for delivering world-class MICE solutions to government institutions, international agencies, and multinational corporations.

WHAT ARE OUR SERVICES?

As both a Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) and Destination Management Company (DMC), we provide end-to-end services for conferences, workshops, exhibitions, incentives, and corporate events. Our portfolio spans event production, AV technology, destination management, branding, and infrastructure, supported by innovative solutions that enhance delegate experiences. With a reputation built on professionalism, creativity, and reliability, Image Promotions sets the benchmark for hosting seamless and impactful international events in Zambia.

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SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN INNOVATION

leisure tourism not only co-exist but complement each other. This richness creates a resilience that smooths the traditional seasonal demand fluctuations seen in other regions. The continent's youthful and innovative population promises to be a key driver shaping future digital platforms, visitor content, and service delivery mechanisms, ushering in a new era of creativity and entrepreneurship.

Investor confidence is steadily growing, thanks to data-led, transparent projects that inspire trust and demonstrate latent potential. This combination of diversity, talent, and smart capital is positioning Africa as one of the world's most exciting and promising visitor economies.

HospitalityEQ's unique role

Our role is to connect strategy with opportunity. By analysing complex data sets, we reveal hidden or emerging demand patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. We then advise governments and industry boards on how to align tourism, trade, and culture to maximise mutual benefits. Investors rely on our guidance to identify high-potential projects that are future-ready and poised to deliver sustainable growth.

Above all, we work to position destinations as vibrant hubs where business, leisure, and culture harmoniously intersect, amplifying the value of every visitor's experience.

Because we approach MICE as part of the entire visitor ecosystem, our strategies do not simply focus on one segment such as hotels or conference halls. Instead, we work to strengthen the destination as a whole, creating a ripple effect of positive economic and social impact.

A vision for 2035

Imagine Africa in 2035 as a dynamic hub where the visitor economy thrives in seamless, intelligent harmony. Incentive trips won't just align with corporate values, they will become fully immersive journeys powered by AI that anticipate individual needs and desires before they are even clearly articulated. Sports events will have evolved into global trade shows and innovation fairs that spark business and cultural exchange in real time, providing far more than just competition.

Cultural festivals will transform into vibrant marketplaces where artists, entrepreneurs, and investors connect effortlessly through smart matchmaking platforms powered by AI. Wellness will be a natural and essential part of every business trip, seamlessly blending cutting-edge health technology with Africa's rich natural and cultural heritage.

Behind all of this, data and AI will orchestrate everything—from the design of smart cities that adapt dynamically to visitor movements, to super-personalised travel experiences where every moment is curated uniquely for each individual. This is the future HospitalityEQ is committed to bringing to life: an interconnected, sustainable, and deeply human visitor economy powered by technology and shaped by purpose.

About the Author

Barry Clemens is Group CEO of HospitalityEQ, a pan-African consultancy specializing in strategy, development, and management across hospitality and tourism. Barry is a recognised thought leader on how data, AI, and personalisation are transforming Africa's visitor economy, ensuring MICE, incentives, sports, and culture are seen not as isolated silos but as interconnected engines of growth.



Africa MICE Hub – Research. Innovation. Sustainability. Impact.

The **Africa MICE Hub** is the continent's leading centre for **research, innovation, and sustainable growth** in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions (MICE) sector.

We provide the **intelligence, platforms, and partnerships** to unlock MICE as a catalyst for trade, investment, and human capital development across Africa.



Our Pillars of Impact



Research & Knowledge:

Investor guides, fact sheets, and market insights to drive decision-making.



Innovation & Incubation:

Supporting startups, hosting hackathons, and investing in MICE tech and green solutions.



Training & Certification:

Building skills pipelines through industry training, academic partnerships, and global certifications.



Sustainability Leadership:

Consulting for hotels, venues, and event organizers to achieve eco-standards and green certifications.



Networking & Advocacy:

Convening forums and working with policy makers to strengthen Africa's MICE ecosystem.



Why Partner with Us?

- **Investors:** Access a curated pipeline of bankable MICE projects across Africa.
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- **Industry Leaders:** Scale innovations, showcase solutions, and connect with continental and global markets.

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Beyond the conference room

IMRAN SHAH delves into what it takes to designing immersive cultural journeys for MICE delegates

MICE events are no longer confined to four walls. Today's delegates crave stories, flavours, and connections that extend far beyond the closing session. The true impact of an event is felt when business seamlessly blends with culture - when delegates walk away with memories, not just meeting notes.

Imagine holding your breakout sessions not in conventional meeting rooms, but scattered across the vibrant corners of a city, each setting designed to inspire. Picture starting the day in a conference hall and ending it on a guided walk through heritage streets, savouring local cuisine, or listening to the rhythms of traditional music under the stars. Even more transformative are programmes where participants don't just observe, they engage: learning crafts from artisans, supporting community projects, or sharing meals in family-run kitchens. These immersive moments create bonds stronger than any icebreaker.

The benefits extend far beyond the delegates themselves. Such experiences fuel the local economy: craftspeople, musicians, farmers, and small businesses gain visibility and income. Communities take pride in showcasing their culture, and destinations

strengthen their identity while promoting sustainable growth. Delegates, in turn, leave with not only professional connections but also a deep appreciation for the place and its people.

I recall orchestrating an extraordinary experience for 400 delegates from across the globe at a conference in Dubai. The hotel we had chosen fit the budget but lacked sufficient breakout rooms. We explored unconventional options: bedrooms, restaurants, even hidden corners, but the challenge remained. Then, a bold idea emerged: why not take the breakout sessions into the city itself?

With delegates having limited time to explore Dubai, we designed a treasure-hunt-style meeting journey that transformed the city into our conference playground. Over the course of the event, participants visited 35 unique venues, from tailoring shops and gold souks to spice markets, traditional houses, government offices, blacksmith workshops, museums, and even cargo dhows. At each location, we set up projectors, screens, and all necessary meeting amenities, seamlessly merging business with adventure.



The outcome was nothing short of remarkable. Delegates networked naturally, collaborated creatively, and, more importantly, immersed themselves in the authentic rhythm of Dubai.

Every detail was designed to spark delight and surprise, whether it was a police escort down bustling streets to make guests feel special, a private camel race, taking spouses to local homes to experience culture firsthand, or designing movie-themed sessions inspired by iconic films.

The lesson was clear: a meeting doesn't have to be confined to four walls. By blending creativity, culture, and a touch of the unexpected, we can transform ordinary conferences into once-in-a-lifetime experiences, events that delegates will remember long after the final presentation.

Designing such journeys is not merely about adding leisure, it is about transforming perspective. When delegates experience the soul of a destination, they return with renewed energy, enriched understanding, and stories worth sharing. Creating programmes with utmost creativity where one can proudly say, this is an experience money can't buy, a once-in-a-lifetime moment, a program that cannot be repeated twice; is the true key to lasting success in the MICE industry.

About the author

Imran Shah is the visionary founder behind Destination Plus Tourism and Events, a company built on purpose, ethics, and innovation. With over 30 years of experience, Imran's journey began with job in 1993 and began a small business 2004 and evolved into a leadership role in the UAE and Saudi Arabia's Events, tourism and MICE sectors.



trademark

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The Role of Regenerative Safaris in Curbing Species Extinction

Regeneration is an essential part of sustainability that enables longevity and sustenance. It restores ecosystems and empowers communities. In tourism, regenerative safaris are emerging as a way to leave destinations better than we found them. For Kenya, where wildlife and landscapes form the backbone of tourism, this approach is vital in the face of climate change, urbanization, and habitat loss.

Did you know The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report found that 3% to 14% of species in terrestrial ecosystems are at risk of extinction with 1.5°C of warming. For tourism, especially in Africa where biodiversity is a core attraction, this is not just an environmental crisis, it's an industry-defining risk.

Species extinction means loss of natural heritage, fewer attractions, reducing travel motivations for Kenya and weaker tourism and community livelihoods. Tour operators have a unique opportunity to join conservation stakeholders in actively supporting conservation of species determined critically endangered. This can be through;

Funding conservation directly (e.g. reforestation, anti-poaching, habitat restoration)

This is channeling support to wildlife conservation initiative or organizations dedicated to specific flora or fauna by giving a percent of tour sales or as a periodic support.

Nomad Africa, 2024 Ecowarrior Awards Leading Tour Operator in Responsible Tourism Practices conserved 500 trees in the Kasigau Wildlife Sanctuary, a vital migration corridor in Tsavo National Park. Peaks and Safaris participate in Maanzoni Million Tree Challenge which restores the savannah ecosystem.



*Wildlife Counting at Athi Kapiti Conservancy-
June 2025 with Peaks and Safaris*

Supporting conservation projects

Tour operators could also include restorative activities such as tree planting, nurturing, wildlife counting exercises as part of tour itineraries to cater to the growing conscious



*Tree Planting at Ecotourism Kenya Community
Engagement Workshop- Aug 2025*

traveler interests and get buy in from the sector. They can also participate in events that feature a greening component. Real Africa Safaris, SawaSawa Africa and Kendirita Safaris among others, supported Ecotourism Kenya and Muguga Ecosystem Research Community Forest Association in a tree planting exercise in August 2025 that regrows Muguga Forest.

The Forest Challenge is an annual conservation event organized by the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS), the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO). It is a competitive, fun event designed to raise awareness and funds for forest conservation and reforestation efforts in Kenya's degraded water towers, like Kereita Forest. Among its supporters, are tour operators, who can consistently part take to contribute meaningfully.

Running an in-house initiative

Tour operators could go a step further by establishing their own conservation or community projects, from wildlife monitoring programs to community-based sanctuaries. These initiatives not only protect species but also inspire travelers to become long-term advocates for biodiversity. For instance, Community & Wildlife Conservation is an initiative by Sunworld Safaris.

Since 2020, they have supported community projects in health and education with 37 students sponsored, 504 textbooks distributed, an online learning platform and 9 medical camps held.

They have planted over 1000 trees and lessened through their antipoaching and bush meat trade preventive initiative. Eco adventures and Let's Go Travel are also



SUSTAINABLE
EVENT PRACTICES



EXPERIENTIAL
ENGAGEMENT



CORPORATE
SOCIAL IMPACT



BRAND
AWARENESS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EVENT
THAT **EARNs** YOU MONEY AND AN EVENT
THAT **COSTs** YOU MONEY IS YOUR
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keen in supporting education and youth in their community empowerment initiatives, e.g. Eco Adventures' MaaChild initiative which provides sustainable secondary educational support for school-going kids in rural southern Kenya, Let's Go supported Rhino Charge 2024 and conducts youth skills development through their product watch, etc.

Engaging locals

Restorative activities should have locals engaged as equal partners and custodians of natural resources. When they have a stake; through employment, revenue-sharing, cultural tourism enterprises, conservation partnerships, tourism becomes a force for restoring both people and nature.

One of the key outcomes highlighted and encouraged at the Ecotourism Kenya Sustainable Tourism Forum 2025,



A regenerative safari might fund wildlife corridors and provide training and business opportunities for local guides. It could support women's cooperatives in safari zones, linking conservation with livelihoods. It could support community conservancies as it is a model where biodiversity protection and community empowerment go hand-in-hand.

at a session on Conservation Wins, was collaborating with local communities and empowering them to be stewards of conservation.

A regenerative safari might fund wildlife corridors and provide training and business opportunities for local guides. It could support women's cooperatives in safari zones, linking conservation with livelihoods. It could support community conservancies as it is a model where biodiversity protection and community empowerment go hand-in-hand.

As climate change accelerates biodiversity loss, regenerative safaris offer a path forward, one where the tourism industry becomes an active force in protecting species and ecosystems. The International Union for Conservation of Nature produces several "lists" as conservation tools, most notably the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which categorizes species based on their risk of extinction into groups like Critically Endangered, Endangered, and Vulnerable. This can be used as a guide to select which species to consider for conservation support.

In doing so, you could also be part of safeguarding not only the survival of wildlife but also a central part of African tourism. Explore more regenerative practices through Ecotourism Kenya members.

Reach out to us for membership or partnership inquiries via comms@ecotourismkenya.org +254 726 366 080

SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN INNOVATION

Green Infrastructure

*In the recent past, there has been a rise in use of eco-lodges and sustainable MICE venues, **TERESA OTIENO** explains*



In the Kenya Vision 2030, tourism is seen as a critical sector for achieving various policy goals: it is expected to contribute to economic growth, while empowering communities and creating job opportunities. It has done exactly that; Kenya is recognised as one of the great tourist attraction countries. For example in 2025 there were a flock of tourists witnessed during the wildebeest migration in the Mara. MICE venues have led to better industry relations as specialists are all brought under one roof to discuss challenges and solutions for the industry. MICE events provide participants with memorable experiences, fostering positive memories and promoting a sense of community and belonging.

However, the rapid growth of this industry poses significant challenges regarding the environmental impacts caused by MICE activities. Large-scale MICE activities generate significant carbon emissions due to high energy use and long-distance transport for thousands of participants. Many MICE activities also produce large amounts of waste, especially from using single-use plastic, food packaging, and paper. During our plastic-free July challenge, students highlighted religious and entertainment tourism, which are new perspectives in terms of conference events. It is evident how much waste is left behind after rallies and crusades. These environmental challenges underscore the importance of implementing sustainability policies when organizing events.

There is an urgent need for innovations that power green infrastructure and green meetings. Green meetings are a concept that aim to reduce the environmental impact of MICE activities through implementing sustainable practices and innovations which blend economic viability with ecological responsibility. We have no shortage of

innovations that have been implemented and can be replicated here in Kenya.

Eco-lodges like the Emboo River Camp in Maasai Mara and conferencing locations like Kenya International Conference Centre (KICC) are prime examples of how green infrastructure is reshaping the industry. They combine innovative architecture through renewable energy, water conservation systems, and community engagement, to create spaces are proving that tourism and sustainability can coexist. Moreover, these locations have taken up innovations like green mobility, maximising natural light and building using local materials. Sustainability is actually expensive.

Globally, companies are striving towards their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, and it is no different here. Kenya has the opportunity to pioneer this and support sustainable tourist locations, from implementing clean transportation, waste-free conferences to incentivising green infrastructure. Collaborating with those in the infrastructure industry, we can begin at the grassroots how our venues are built. Through ensuring much intention is put into how we the create the venue, we shall be creating sustainable venues one by one.

Destinations, investors, and entrepreneurs have an opportunity to position themselves at the forefront of sustainable travel.

I can already see the future; a Kenya built with local materials, powered by renewable energy, and in its pristine natural state, designed to minimise environmental degradation while maximising cultural and ecological value.



Safari Park Hotel Casino, Kenya's premier hospitality and events destination, popularly known as The African Paradise is set on 40 acres of landscaped gardens with sparkling water features and an inland beach. The hotel is surrounded by indigenous trees, exotic birds and butterflies offering tranquillity for your business meetings.

Safari Park Hotel is arguably one of Nairobi's largest conference and events venues, a household name for international and regional MICE events. With over 20 versatile meeting rooms, indoor and outdoor breakout spaces and two signature venues; Jambo Conference Centre and Paradise Gardens perfect for hosting your exhibition with capacity to host over 100 booths. Safari Park Hotel is your perfect venue for conventions, seminars, exhibitions, gala dinners and cultural showcases.

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Wake up to garden views and flowing water from your private balcony in any of the 203 spacious rooms and suites. Guests are spoiled for choice across five specialty restaurants, from Japanese and Korean at Chiyo, Italian at La Piazzetta, Chinese at Winners Pavilion, African at Nyama Choma Ranch, to 24-hour dining at Café Kigwa.

After a day of meetings you can cool off in the pool, recharge at the gym, jog through the gardens, or ease into a calming spa treatment. Evenings bring world-class entertainment with the Safari Cats Dancers, live piano music at the Hemingway's Lounge and vibrant nightlife to connect and relax, blending business comfort with leisure. Safari Park Hotel is the ideal conference destination in East Africa.



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SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN INNOVATION

The climate imperative for MICE

*With the World Economic Forum projecting a five-year growth rate of nine percent Compound Annual Growth Rate between 2025 and 2030, the MICE industry is set for significant expansion. **DOMINIC WANJIRU** expounds.*



This projected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) positions the sector as an important driver of tourism, trade, and investment in Africa. Yet, as the industry scales, it faces a critical gap, as there is still no clearly defined emission profile or agreed industry-led set of reduction goals. This leaves the industry exposed, growing rapidly, but struggling to balance development with the urgent need for climate responsibility in the face of rising global scrutiny.

MICE, just like other sectors, is extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of a worsening climate situation. Today, extreme weather events such as floods and heat waves not only damage the experience and infrastructure and threaten attendee safety but are also so disruptive that they have become a key determinant in the choice of venues.

While the industry is highly vulnerable to climate change, it is also a notable contributor to the crisis. Intense resource use, particularly energy and water consumption, combined with waste management challenges and transport-related emissions, are critical hotspots for the sector.

This dual reality underscores the paradox of the industry. As significant as MICE is, with its diversified traveler profile and role as a key driver of economic activity, it must also be considered a critical segment when addressing climate action.

However, it is important to note that climate action in MICE goes beyond phasing out single-use plastics in conference rooms or promoting sustainability efforts on billboards. Climate action should be intentional, extending to building adaptive capacity within its workforce

through flexible business models where resilience is recognised as a key skillset. More importantly, the industry must first understand its emission profile to properly inform action planning. This means collecting baseline data to identify emission sources, then, in line with global aspirations under the Paris Agreement in 2016 to achieve net zero by 2050, draft and implement actionable, attainable, and measurable decarbonisation strategies across operations, supply chains, and value chains.

A strategic approach like this, backed by a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, would create the rapid response capabilities needed to accelerate recovery and ensure long-term functionality after climate-related disruptions.



What is most encouraging in this dispensation is that the opportunities ahead outweigh the challenges. For instance, since the industry is largely made up of Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), many of whom struggle with knowledge gaps and limited resources, there is an immense opportunity to empower them as local adaptation champions.

What is most encouraging in this dispensation is that the opportunities ahead outweigh the challenges. For instance, since the industry is largely made up of



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Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), many of whom struggle with knowledge gaps and limited resources, there is an immense opportunity to empower them as local adaptation champions. This can be achieved through targeted approaches that address their specific climate challenges while also connecting them to green growth opportunities. Because they understand the deliverables and complexities of the sector, MSMEs are well-positioned to recommend practical and workable solutions.

This empowerment opens access to both knowledge and adaptation financing. Simultaneously, the growth of the industry demands innovation. The MICE sector must adopt technologies that provide efficient ways to calculate emissions and track sustainability performance specific to the industry. Such innovations will not only enhance competitiveness but also strengthen

resilience in the face of climate risks.

Another key opportunity lies in the sector's ability to influence and support policy frameworks. By aligning with and accelerating progress towards Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and, more importantly, the targets of SDG 13, MICE can position itself as a climate-responsive industry. This would ensure its recognition in the next Global Stocktake in 2028, which assesses the world's collective response to the climate crisis every five years as we push towards the goals of the Paris Agreement in this final stretch of the Decade of Action.

If done right, the rising global attention on carbon footprints, resource consumption, and sustainability in events could position Africa's MICE industry as a climate leader.

How hotels can lead sustainable MICE practices

CARON VAN ROOYEN, General Manager, Hotel Verde, shares the lessons they have learnt about sustainable MICE practices.



The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry has long been a powerful driver of economic growth, bringing together professionals from across the globe to collaborate, innovate, and celebrate achievements. Yet as climate change accelerates and stakeholders demand more responsible business practices, the sustainability of these gatherings has come under scrutiny. Conferences often generate excessive waste, strain water and energy resources, and leave behind a sizable carbon footprint.

For hotels, which act as central hubs for MICE activities, the question is no longer whether sustainability should be prioritised, rather how to integrate it seamlessly into operations while maintaining exceptional guest experiences.

Few properties embody this balance as successfully as Hotel Verde in Cape Town, widely recognised as Africa's greenest hotel. Through innovation, certification, and a deep commitment to ecological responsibility, Hotel Verde offers a model for how hotels can lead the way in sustainable MICE practices—without compromising on comfort or quality.

Water conservation without sacrifice

Water scarcity is a pressing issue across much of the globe, and South Africa is no exception. Hotels, often large consumers of water, face the dual challenge of reducing consumption while ensuring that guests and delegates never feel their comfort has been compromised.

Hotel Verde addresses this challenge through a layered approach to water conservation. Low-flow fixtures, rainwater harvesting, and greywater recycling systems are embedded into daily operations.

“We wanted water conservation to be invisible to the guest,” explains David Pollock, Chief Technical Officer. “Delegates enjoy the same comfort they would at any leading hotel, but behind the scenes, we’re saving thousands of litres of water every month. It proves that sustainability doesn’t have to feel like sacrifice.”

For businesses seeking to host sustainable events, partnering with a hotel that takes water conservation seriously also sends a powerful message: that ecological responsibility is a non-negotiable part of corporate culture.

From waste to worth: net zero waste in action

MICE events are notorious for the waste they generate—from packaging and printed programmes to food scraps and single-use plastics. Without intervention, this waste often ends up in landfills.

Hotel Verde made history as the first hotel in South Africa to achieve net zero waste certification, demonstrating that it is possible to operate at scale while diverting virtually all waste away from landfills. The hotel's systems include rigorous separation of recyclables, composting of food waste, and innovative partnerships with local suppliers to minimise packaging.

“When delegates see how simple and effective our waste systems are, they often ask how they can replicate them back at their offices,” says Caron van Rooyen, General Manager. “That’s one of our proudest achievements—turning what could have been waste into inspiration.” This hands-on experience transforms sustainability from an abstract idea into a lived reality.

Hotel Verde
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Welcomes you to Cape Town

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Creating healthy, human-centred environments

Sustainability isn't only about conserving resources; it's also about creating spaces that prioritise human health and comfort. For MICE participants, who may spend long hours indoors, the quality of the built environment can make the difference between fatigue and productivity.

Hotel Verde's Leadership in Energy Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification—the highest rating under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design programme—attests to its dedication to building standards that support well-being. This includes superior indoor air quality, abundant natural lighting, and the use of non-toxic materials throughout the property.

"Delegates tell us all the time that our spaces feel lighter and more energising," notes van Rooyen. "That's not an accident—it's the result of designing with well-being in mind."



Delegates tell us all the time that our spaces feel lighter and more energising," notes van Rooyen. "That's not an accident—it's the result of designing with well-being in mind.

Innovation and leadership as a brand advantage

In an increasingly competitive hospitality market, leadership in sustainability can also serve as a powerful differentiator. By positioning itself as Africa's leading green hotel, Hotel Verde doesn't simply host events; it helps organisations align their own brand reputations with ecological responsibility.

For companies and associations eager to demonstrate their commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, hosting an event at Hotel Verde is more than a logistical decision—it is a statement of values. Delegates and clients see the alignment between a company's messaging and the venue it chooses, reinforcing brand credibility in the process. Pollock adds: "Every time an organisation chooses to hold their conference here, they're not just booking a venue—they're making a public declaration about the kind of future they want to build."

Sustainable practices as enhanced amenities

A common misconception is that sustainability comes at the expense of luxury or convenience. In practice, the opposite is true. Sustainable practices often lead to better amenities and experiences for delegates.

At Hotel Verde, this includes dining options that emphasise organic produce, locally sourced ingredients, and seasonal menus. Not only does this reduce food miles and support the regional economy, but it also introduces delegates to the unique flavours of the Cape.

"Sustainability is delicious," says van Rooyen. "Our chefs work with local farmers to create menus that surprise and delight."

Delegates leave with a memory of Cape Town that goes far beyond the conference room.”

Education through experience

Perhaps one of the most underappreciated benefits of hosting MICE events at a sustainable hotel is the opportunity for education. Delegates don’t just hear about sustainability; they see it, touch it, and live it during their stay.



We see every event as an opportunity to plant seeds of change,” says Pollock. “If just one delegate goes back home inspired to rethink how their own company approaches sustainability, then we’ve made an impact.

Hotel Verde actively uses its property as a platform for environmental education. Guided tours of its green features, interactive displays, and transparent communication about its certifications transform the hotel into a living classroom.

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The future of MICE is green

As sustainability becomes a central expectation rather than a niche preference, hotels are uniquely positioned to lead. They are not just venues; they are partners in shaping the environmental impact of conferences and exhibitions. By embedding sustainability into every aspect of their operations, hotels can simultaneously reduce their ecological footprint, elevate delegate experiences, and inspire lasting change in the organisations they host.

Hotel Verde proves that this is not only possible but also profitable. By investing in green technologies, earning certifications, and creating human-centred environments, the hotel has built a reputation that attracts eco-conscious businesses from around the world.

“The MICE industry is at a turning point,” concludes van Rooyen. “Delegates want to feel good about where they meet. Hotels that embrace sustainability wholeheartedly will be the ones that thrive.”

For the MICE industry, the path forward is clear: sustainability is no longer a trend; it is the foundation upon which successful events will be built. Hotels that embrace this reality will not only thrive in a competitive market but will also contribute meaningfully to a more resilient planet.



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Eka is a contemporary style 4-star hotel that provides all the comfort, convenience and efficiency to the discerning traveler.

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Eka Hotel has stirred up the local culinary scene with two restaurants, two bars and a 24-hr coffee shop that cater for the needs of our diverse clientele. Each dining experience provides you with a taste of a broad selection of local and international cuisine.

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Tanzania's emerging MICE industry

Event management as a driver of trade & tourism

The MICE industry has become a powerful engine for economic growth, driving trade, investment, and tourism while raising nations' profiles on the global stage. Tanzania, long celebrated for its natural wonders, is now positioning herself as a serious contender in this space, especially after the "unforgettable Tanzania" experience showcased by the Royal Tour video went viral. The country's MICE story is one of untapped potential meeting strategic opportunity. Tanzania's edge lies in a unique blend of assets: world-class natural attractions and expanding infrastructure. SUBRAN BAWJI writes.



Events are more than just gatherings; they are platforms for visibility and connection that create ripple effects throughout the economy. Conferences and exhibitions not only showcase Tanzania's capabilities but also provide a direct boost to local businesses. Critically, these events serve as springboards for trade deals and international investment, turning professional gatherings into direct drivers of economic growth. Delegates frequently extend their stays to explore natural attractions like Zanzibar or the Serengeti, turning business trips into "bleisure" experiences that generate lasting economic impact.

Venues like the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre (JNICC), Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), and Jakaya Kikwete Convention Centre (JKCC), plus private venues such as the Super Dome, signal the country's readiness. Additionally, the warmth and cultural richness of Tanzanians add a distinctive value, and these are the very foundations upon which strong event design is built. The true strength of event management in Tanzania lies in its ability to integrate the country's unique cultural assets into the event design itself. With over 120 tribes, each with its own traditions and culinary heritage, Tanzania offers a rich tapestry of unique experiences. The MICE industry has a golden opportunity to embrace this diversity, transforming a business trip into a journey of cultural discovery.

Food tourism, in particular, is an almost limitless opportunity. A conference can incorporate a Swahili cooking class or a tasting tour featuring local dishes like the spicy rich pilau or Zanzibar mix. These are not just activities; they are intentional design elements that build trust and create truly memorable experiences. By seamlessly weaving in authentic, community-driven

innovations, event professionals reinforce Tanzania's reputation as a professional, reliable, and culturally rich destination, directly supporting the nation's brand.

Tanzania's commitment to MICE is clear. With investors rapidly expanding hotel capacity and new 5,000-seater convention centres underway expected to host the International Apicultural Congress Apimondia in 2027, and the iconic 60,000 seater Benjamin Mkapa Stadium serving as a key venue for major sporting events, the country is backing its vision with tangible infrastructure. New state-of-the-art stadiums are also under construction for AFCON 2027. This aligns with the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (DIRA 2050), which identifies tourism, including MICE, as a leading driver of direct and indirect employment by 2050. Tanzania aims to be Africa's top tourism destination, with ecotourism, cruise ship tourism, and MICE central to this growth plan. The growing Swahili International Tourism Expo SITE is a prime example of a well-designed event that effectively links local businesses with international markets, driving both tourism and trade.

Tanzania's emerging MICE industry is a strategic lever for economic transformation. Backed by its rich culture, youthful and innovative population, natural wonders, and growing infrastructure, the country is ready to compete globally. Every well-executed event, designed with an understanding of Tanzania's unique assets, is proof that the nation is ready to lead Africa's tourism and trade future.

About the author

Subira Bawji is an experienced African event professional with over a decade in corporate events, high-level conferences, and outdoor experiences, recently stepping into moderating and inspiring others to #BeTheChange.



Fleuve Congo Hotel

KINSHASA | DRC



Fleuve Congo Hotel

Kinshasa premier
address for luxury and
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Overlooking the majestic Congo River, the Fleuve Congo Hotel stands as Kinshasa only five-star property. More than just a hotel, it symbolises the renaissance and ambition of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Once known as the White Elephant, the establishment has been transformed into an exceptional hospitality base for business travellers, diplomats, and discerning guests seeking discovery

Nestled in the heart of the diplomatic and commercial district of Gombe, the hotel offers a haven of peace amidst the capital bustling energy. Its majestic lobby, bathed in natural light, leads to 237 elegantly designed rooms and suites blending modern comfort with subtle cultural references.

The Fleuve Congo Hotel meets the demands of international travellers with reliable high-speed connectivity, ergonomic workspaces, a fitness centre, and a semi-Olympic pool. Gastronomy is highlighted in its restaurants, offering a refined interpretation of international and local flavours.

Service, personalised and attentive, is delivered by staff trained to international luxury standards. The 21st-floor Executive Lounge, reserved for privileged guests, provides an exclusive setting for meetings or relaxation with spectacular views of the city and the river. An essential address, the Fleuve Congo Hotel is the ideal partner for those contributing to the DRC dynamism, offering privileged access to institutions and a gateway to Kinshasa cultural heritage.

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The state of association management in Africa

Associations in Africa play a critical role in continental development by setting professional standards and influencing policy. JEFFERS MIRUKA shares his reflections.



Historically, African associations like the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) were created to build administrative capacity in post-colonial nations. At the national level, professional bodies like the Nigerian Bar Association have long provided self-regulation, reducing the burden on government oversight. However, the sector faces challenges exemplified by the African Union, which, despite a grand vision, has a 93% non-

implementation rate for its decisions between 2021 and 2023, showing a disconnect between strategy and on-the-ground impact. The sector's maturation is seen in the rise of specialised service providers, such as Association Management Companies (AMCs) like AFAMCO. This is further solidified by the formation of the African Society of Association Executives (AfSAE), a professional body for managers themselves, which fosters knowledge sharing and collaboration across the continent.

Financial sustainability:

From dependency to diversification

Historically dependent on foreign aid, African associations are now strategically pursuing revenue diversification for resilience and autonomy. A 2020 CIPE survey found that while over 40% of revenue comes from membership fees, associations are actively raising income from diverse sources. This includes consulting services, as demonstrated by the Long-Distance Drivers and Conductors Association (LODDCA) in Kenya, affinity programmes, training, events with sponsorships, and social enterprise models. This shift is a strategic necessity for building financial resilience and long-term impact.

The technological imperative:

Digital transformation

Africa's digital revolution has led to over 570 million Internet users, a significant increase since 2015. Yet, a considerable "uptake gap" exists, with only 22% of the population using mobile internet despite widespread network availability, largely due to high costs and a lack of digital skills. Associations are overcoming this by adopting specialised, localised software like Glue Up's AMS for Africa and scalable AI-powered CRM systems to manage interactions and overcome resource constraints. AI is moving beyond administrative tasks to strategic functions like data analysis and event personalised, crucial for staying relevant to members.

The regulatory and political environment

The legal landscape for associations in Africa is fragmented and complex, hindering cross-border operations. This is evident in South Africa's dual system of voluntary and registered non-profits. Governments are on a spectrum, with some creating enabling environments, such as Egypt's new law that simplifies NGO registration. Conversely, a

trend of restrictive "anti-NGO" measures, which includes burdensome registration and government interference, persists in many countries, posing a political challenge that associations must navigate.

Strategic challenges and recommendations

The sector faces internal challenges, including weaknesses in data collection and governance deficits like nepotism and corruption, which undermine institutional credibility and impact. There is also a persistent capacity constraint, creating a gap between ambitious goals and on-the-ground implementation. To address this, associations should prioritize data collection for evidence-based policies, invest in human capital through training programmes like CAE, AMI and YALI, foster intra-African collaboration to increase their collective voice, and embrace innovation by adapting business models and leveraging technology.

The future of association management in Africa

African association management is at a critical turning point, moving from external dependency to self-determination. The strategic shift toward financial diversification and digital transformation is building institutional autonomy and resilience. While challenges remain in the regulatory environment and internal governance, the sector is well-positioned for future success by investing in human capital, fostering collaboration, and embracing innovation. This evolution will allow African associations to not only lead their fields but also offer a new model for professional communities globally.

About the author

*Jeffers Miruka, Managing Director and CEO,
African Association Management Company
(AFAMCO)*

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Kenya's conference tourism driving economic growth

Kenya is redefining the future of its tourism and hospitality sector in line with Vision 2030 and the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BeTA). CPA JAMES MWAURA, CEO Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) explains the central role KICC plays to the MICE sector.



Recognised as a critical driver of national growth, tourism remains central to Kenya's economic development, with strong linkages to agriculture, manufacturing, and the service industries. While globally renowned as a premier wildlife and cultural destination, Kenya acknowledges that its tourism sector has yet to fully realise its economic potential on the international stage.

To address this, the government and stakeholders are charting a bold, transformative path that integrates technology, sustainability, inclusivity, and MICE tourism as key accelerators of growth.

The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife is also in the process of establishing and fast tracking the operationalisation of the Kenya National Convention Bureau (KNCB) in recognition of the need to rise to the dynamic facets of challenges in the Kenya's MICE sector.

Transforming tourism through technology and Innovation

Kenya is embracing digital transformation to enhance visitor experiences and strengthen global competitiveness. From mobile platforms and artificial intelligence to data-driven marketing and virtual tours, technology is revolutionizing destination promotion, bookings, and payments, ensuring seamless travel experiences for both leisure and business tourists.

MICE tourism: The new growth frontier

Globally, the MICE industry generates an estimated USD 2.5 trillion annually and employs more than 26 million people (AIPC, ICCA, UFI). Kenya is strategically positioning itself to capture a greater share of this dynamic subsector, which is the fastest-growing in global tourism. Nairobi, East Africa's business capital, stands at the heart of this transformation.

Some of the bids the Corporation has won.

Transform Africa 2024

*Africa Development Bank
AGM 2024*

*International Association
of Scientific Parks Congress
2024*

*International World
Federation of the Deaf
Conference 2025*

*70th Pharmaceutical Students
Federation Congress 2025*

*International Business Models
in Agriculture 2025*

*International Federation for
Social Workers 2026*

*International Maternal New
Born Health Conference 2026*

*International Congress for
Actuaries 2029*

The Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Africa's premier convention facility, continues to host high-profile global summits including the upcoming COMESA Heads of State Meeting in October 2025, SAM 2025-Africa Financial Inclusive Week October 2025, International Tower Exchange Conference and Expo (ITW 2025) September 2025 among key events.

In addition to this, in the 2024-2025 financial year, KICC also successfully hosted five major international conferences, including: International Tower Exchange Africa 2024, OFF-Grid Solar Forum & Expo, 9th Africa Economic Zones Organisation (AEZO) Annual Meeting. 60th Anniversary of Kenya's Diplomatic Journey and the International Air Travel Association (IATA) Ground Handling Conference 2025.



Beyond traditional forums, KICC is diversifying into contemporary events such as creative expos, youth innovation forums, gaming and digital culture conventions, fashion showcases, and global investment summits reflecting Kenya's modern and cosmopolitan identity.

Beyond traditional forums, KICC is diversifying into contemporary events such as creative expos, youth innovation forums, gaming and digital culture conventions, fashion showcases, and global investment

summits reflecting Kenya's modern and cosmopolitan identity.

Meetings have the power to fuel innovation, build networks, and accelerate growth. Kenya is ready to harness this power by offering world class facilities, sustainable infrastructure, and uniquely Kenyan experiences that merge business with leisure.

This writer's election as Chair of the ICCA Africa Chapter further elevated Kenya's global standing, unlocking access to strategic data, insights, and platforms critical for securing rotational international conferences.

A sustainable, inclusive, and competitive future

Kenya's tourism strategy is also aligned with emerging global trends such as remote work tourism, sustainable luxury, health tourism, and inclusive travel.

With its rich natural heritage, vibrant culture, and renewed focus on MICE, Kenya is positioning itself not only as Africa's top leisure destination but also as a global hub for transformative business events.

Kenya's position in the global MICE landscape

According to the 2024 International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) rankings, the global MICE industry continues to recover strongly. Developed economies lead the space, with the United States topping the global list with 709 meetings, followed by Italy and Spain. Europe remains dominant, while Asia is rapidly rising with strong performances by Japan, China, and South Korea.

In Africa, South Africa leads with 98 international meetings, followed by Morocco



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Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club is one of Kenya's leading five-star venues for both business and leisure. Set on 200 acres with a scenic 18-hole golf course, the hotel offers a relaxed yet professional setting for meetings, conferences, and special events.

We offer a wide range of MICE facilities, including flexible conference halls, executive boardrooms, and elegant outdoor spaces for exhibitions, product launches, and celebrations. Our largest indoor conference hall can host up to 120 guests. All venues are equipped with modern amenities, fast internet, and supported by our experienced events team to ensure everything runs perfectly.

Guests enjoy 130 Victorian-style rooms, four restaurants, three bars, a chic clubhouse, three tennis courts, two squash courts, up to 5km of jogging tracks, and a heated swimming pool.

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Upcoming events and conferences

Africa Pharma Expo 2025
Exhibition 16th-17th September 2025

E-Cooking Expo
19th-20th September 2025

MEDIC East Africa Expo
23rd-25th October 2025

International Electrotechnical
Commission (IEC-AFRIC 10th
Anniversary)
4th-6th November 2025

Changamka Festival Conference
Expo 4th-8th November 2025

International Sourcing Exposition
for Elevators Escalators (ISEEE)
2nd-4th December 2025

International Global Maternal
Health Congress (IGHC)
25th-27th March 2026

Africa-France Summit
14th-15th May 2026

ISO 2028 Annual Meeting
Conference 2nd-6th October 2028

International Union Forest
Research Organisation
5th-11th August 2029

and Rwanda. Kenya ranks fourth, hosting 29 international meetings, reaffirming Nairobi's growing influence as a regional conference hub. The upcoming Bomas Convention Centre is expected to further enhance Kenya's competitiveness and hosting capacity.

For conference tourism to develop, world-class conference facilities, improved connectivity, and the creating of tailored event packages. The growth of MICE also calls for attracting more high-profile meetings and conferences by investing in ultra-modern and support long-term sustainability.

The growth of MICE also calls for attracting more high-profile conference facilities. Embracing technological innovations will be key to keeping Kenya competitive in the evolving tourism landscape by investing in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven services, smart energy management, and digital wayfinding to enhance visitor experiences in the destination.

About the author

CPA, CS James Mwaura is the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) and serves as the Chairperson of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) African Chapter.



REGISTRATION DESK

Zippy Event Solutions Ltd is a leading event technology and management company, dedicated to transforming the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector across Africa and beyond. With a strong focus on innovation and service excellence, the company delivers cutting-edge solutions that enhance efficiency, engagement, and impact for organizers and participants alike.

At the heart of our portfolio is Eventmatic.io, a premier event technology platform designed for registration and delegate management. We provide end-to-end functionality to streamline event delivery. From online and onsite delegate management to secure payment processing, smart badge printing, QR-code tracking, and self-service kiosks, we ensure seamless registration and efficient check-in while optimizing the delegate experience.

Data Management

Next frontier for Africa's MICE industry

*The MICE industry is one of the fastest-growing segments of global tourism, generating billions in revenue annually and shaping trade, investment, and knowledge exchange. **SALLY NGINA** explains why data will be the core of this sector.*

In Africa, the MICE sector has gained increasing attention as governments, associations, and private sector players recognise its role in driving economic diversification and positioning destinations as hubs of innovation. Yet, as the industry matures, data management has emerged as the key differentiator between events that merely attract crowds and those that deliver measurable impact. With technology reshaping how events are planned and experienced, the ability to capture, manage, analyse, and apply data effectively is no longer optional—it is central to competitiveness in the global MICE marketplace.

This article explores the importance of data management in the MICE industry, the challenges faced particularly within the African context, emerging global trends, and the steps required to ensure Africa builds a data-driven MICE ecosystem capable of catalyzing trade and investment.

The growing importance of data in the MICE ecosystem

Traditionally, success in the MICE industry was measured by headcounts—how many delegates attended, how many exhibitors showcased, or how many hotel rooms were booked. While these metrics remain relevant, they are increasingly inadequate in demonstrating value to stakeholders.

Today, sponsors demand return on investment (ROI), governments seek evidence of economic impact, and delegates expect personalised experiences. Data management provides the foundation for meeting these expectations.

Here are the benefits of data in MICE:

Audience insights

Tailoring programmes and networking opportunities based on delegate demographics and behaviours.

Marketing effectiveness

Targeting campaigns to previous participants or high-potential regions.

Operational efficiency

Streamlining processes from registration to reporting.

Sustainability tracking

Measuring and offsetting carbon footprints.

Legacy measurement

Capturing long-term impact, such as partnerships and investments initiated through events.

Current challenges in data management

Despite these benefits, many African MICE players face structural and operational barriers in embracing data-driven practices.

Fragmented systems

Event data often exists in silos—registration platforms, payment gateways, CRM tools, and post-event surveys that rarely integrate. This fragmentation leads to duplication and underutilisation of valuable information.

Data security and regulation

Handling sensitive delegate and sponsor data requires adherence to stringent data protection laws. While Europe enforces GDPR, Africa is still developing uniform frameworks, leaving gaps in compliance and trust.

Skill gaps

Many event professionals excel in logistics and hospitality but lack training in analytics. Without the ability to interpret and apply data, even sophisticated systems remain underused.

Cost barriers

Advanced event management technologies and big data solutions can be expensive for smaller associations or local organisers, leading to reliance on manual processes.

Cultural resistance

A mindset shift is needed—moving from seeing events as “hospitality showcases” to recognising them as data-rich platforms for business intelligence.

Emerging global trends in MICE data management

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Predictive analytics for forecasting attendance and personalising agendas.
- Mobile event apps as real-time data collection tools.
- RFID & beacon technology for tracking attendee flows.
- Blockchain for secure contracts and transactions.

- Sustainability dashboards for transparent environmental reporting.
- Hybrid & virtual insights capturing both digital and physical participation.

Africa's unique opportunity

Africa can leapfrog into modern data management without legacy constraints. Just as mobile money disrupted finance, digital event technologies can allow the continent to set new benchmarks in MICE innovation.

The first step towards building a data-driven MICE ecosystem is capacity building. This can be achieved by training event professionals in analytics and compliance. Second is offering affordable tech by partnering with global firms and startups to provide scalable solutions. The other focus is policy alignment where data protection framework is harmonised across the continent. Next is industry collaboration where players share aggregated data to build benchmarks. Fifth is a shift in culture, where stakeholders move beyond headcounts to measuring real outcomes like deals, collaborations, and knowledge transfer. Finally, embracing public-private partnerships. Governments can incentivise technology adoption recognising the sector's wider economic impact.

The African MICE industry stands at a critical juncture. To compete globally, it must adopt data-driven strategies that demonstrate value, drive efficiency, and enable sustainable growth. As the global industry moves toward precision, personalisation, and sustainability, Africa has the chance to reimagine its events not just as gatherings, but as intelligence platforms for trade, investment, and transformation.

About the author

Sally Ngina is a Project Coordinator at Zuri Events.

Case Studies

Spotlight on Kigali,
Capetown, Nairobi and Lagos



TECHNOLOGY

Kigali, Rwanda

Data for seamless delegate experience

Rwanda has positioned herself as a continental leader in business tourism, with the Kigali Convention Centre hosting high-profile events such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Central to this success is the country's digital-first approach to data management. The Rwanda Convention Bureau integrates online visa processes, digital delegate registration, and real-time security systems. In addition, attendee data is used to personalise hospitality services, while post-event surveys feed into Rwanda's tourism intelligence system. This measures, impact on local businesses and accommodation.

Take away

A unified national approach to data gives Rwanda a competitive edge in attracting global events.

Cape Town, South Africa

Measuring economic impact

South Africa's MICE sector contributes significantly to GDP, and Cape Town has invested in impact measurement frameworks.

The Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) uses advanced CRM and data analytics to assess delegate spending, hotel occupancy, and supplier benefits. Reports from the CTICC show how a single international congress can inject millions of rands into the local economy, providing powerful evidence for policymakers and investors.

Take away

Data-driven economic impact reports help justify public investment and attract international associations.

Nairobi, Kenya

Tech integration in large-scale summits

Kenya, with the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), is a key player in Africa's MICE market. At major summits, such as the Africa Climate Summit, organisers deployed digital registration platforms, QR-based access systems, and live data dashboards tracking delegate flows and participation. Data insights have been used to improve crowd management, enhance security coordination, and provide real-time updates to partners.

Takeaway

Integrating event tech into logistics not only enhances efficiency but also builds trust among international organisers.

Lagos, Nigeria

The rise of data- backed incentive travel

Nigeria is increasingly using MICE to boost corporate and incentive travel. Event firms in Lagos have adopted cloud-based attendee management systems that track not only registration but also engagement through gamification and mobile apps. Sponsors receive post-event data dashboards showing attendee demographics and interaction levels, strengthening the business case for continued investment.

Takeaway

Private-sector innovation is driving a shift toward evidence-based sponsorship models.

YOUTH INNOVATION

A global stage for youth-led innovation



MICE events are no longer just about business or traditional corporate gatherings. They have evolved into a vital global stage for youth-led innovation and technological advancement. Young people, who constantly seek highly engaging and personalized experiences, have identified a gap in the traditional event model. This has created a significant opportunity for them to innovate and introduce solutions like gamification, a trend that is transforming how attendees interact with events.



By leveraging technologies such as AI, Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR), young entrepreneurs are crafting deeply personalized experiences that captivate audiences. This unique ecosystem allows young developers and visionaries to connect, showcase their groundbreaking work, and drive the future of various industries.

By leveraging technologies such as AI, Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR), young entrepreneurs are crafting deeply personalized experiences that captivate audiences. This unique ecosystem allows young developers and visionaries to connect, showcase their groundbreaking work, and drive the future of various

industries. MICE events are effectively bridging the gap between emerging talent and established industry leaders, fueling a new era of creative solutions and economic growth.

The MICE ecosystem: An innovation gap awaiting solutions

The MICE industry, built on bringing diverse professionals and thought leaders together, is an ideal environment for innovation.

However, traditional event experiences often fall short of modern expectations, creating a significant gap that young innovators are eager to fill. The current system presents several key challenges for attendees, including:

Registration

The process is often inefficient, with long queues, cumbersome paperwork, and a high risk of human error. Attendees desire a seamless, convenient, and paperless experience that is both quick and accurate.

Event Production

Many events lack the engaging and personalized elements that today's attendees crave. The need for more entertaining, experiential, and interactive networking is paramount. Attendees also want to eliminate the hassle of navigating large venues, highlighting a need for better digital wayfinding solutions.

Logistics

From booking hotels to managing on-site logistics, the entire process is often fragmented and complex. This creates an opportunity for young innovators to develop integrated platforms that simplify the attendee journey, ensuring a smoother and more efficient experience from start to finish.



SARAKASI TRUST

WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS EXPERIENCE

Sarakasi Trust is a leading performing arts organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya, which responds to the need for the further development and promotion of culture, performing arts and entertainment in East Africa Focusing on acrobatics, dance and music.

We operate on an open door policy, welcoming dancers and acrobats to join our professional training programs and access opportunities to perform at local and international platforms. Our commitment to talent development extends to the Sarakasi Kids Programme, training 4-17-year-olds, in dance, ballet, gymnastics, and acrobatics on Saturdays at the Sarakasi Dome (9am- 12pm).

In the MICE space, Sarakasi Trust offers immersive cultural entertainment that transforms events into unforgettable experiences. Our portfolio spans acrobatics, modern, traditional and contemporary dance, live drumming, circus acts, spoken word, and themed productions tailored for corporate, diplomatic, and international events.

In May 2024, we spearheaded the opening ceremony entertainment of the African Development Bank's 60th Annual Meetings Anniversary at Kenya International Conference Centre (KICC) This featured over 150 performing artists: dancers, acrobats, drummers, spoken word and the iconic Suzanna Owego.

Globally, our impact continues through: 3 Sarakasi All Stars team groups in London, Warriors Acrobats and 2 female acrobats in Italy, Black Panthers acrobats in Italy, and the celebrated Black Blues Brothers, who have been touring Europe for years.

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About Picha Clear Films

1

Picha Clear Films is a premier creative media and audio-visual production company based in Nairobi, Kenya.

2

3

We specialize in videography, photography, live stream production, TV commercials, documentaries, digital marketing, and social media management, delivering professional, high-impact content for clients across various industries.

4

5

6

7

Our team blends creativity, technical expertise, and a deep understanding of storytelling to produce engaging visual and digital experiences.

8

9

Whether capturing the magic of a live event, building a brand's online presence, or producing a documentary with purpose, we bring your vision to life with clarity and creativity.



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By addressing these pain points, young people are not only solving real-world problems but also transforming the MICE industry into a more dynamic and engaging space.

Youth at the forefront of tech transformation

Youth are natural digital natives and are at the forefront of key technological trends transforming the MICE industry itself. They are leveraging their unique skill sets to create solutions that are more immersive, sustainable, and data-driven.



As MICE stakeholders recognise the importance of youth development, they are creating more initiatives to actively involve young professionals. For example, events like the Africa MICE Summit and the Future Leaders Forum are now featuring dedicated panels and forums for young professionals, highlighting their critical role in shaping the industry's future.

AI and Data Analytics

Young innovators are developing AI-powered tools for personalised event experiences, intelligent networking, and data-driven decision-making for organisers. These technologies streamline event logistics and enhance attendee engagement.

Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR)

MICE events are increasingly incorporating AR and VR to create immersive experiences. Young developers are creating virtual tours of venues, interactive presentations, and mixed-reality networking sessions that transcend the physical boundaries of a traditional event.

Sustainable and Green Technology

With a growing focus on sustainability, young entrepreneurs are building tech solutions that help reduce the environmental footprint of events. This includes apps for paperless communication, carbon footprint calculators for event logistics, and platforms that promote eco-friendly practices.

The future is collaborative

The future of MICE is intertwined with the energy and innovative spirit of young people. As MICE stakeholders recognise the importance of youth development, they are creating more initiatives to actively involve young professionals. For example, events like the Africa MICE Summit and the Future Leaders Forum are now featuring dedicated panels and forums for young professionals, highlighting their critical role in shaping the industry's future.

By championing youth-led innovation, the MICE industry can ensure its own relevance and dynamism. These events not only provide a launching pad for new ventures but also create a legacy of empowerment, skill development, and economic growth that extends far beyond the event itself.

About the author

Samuel Wambua is the Project Lead at Zuri Events

The rise and rise of bleisure

*Across Africa, business events are no longer just about plenaries and PowerPoints, asserts **HASNAIN NOORANI**. He says that delegates want both purpose and pleasure, to meet, network, run at sunrise, taste local cuisine, explore culture and leave with a memory that says, “I came for work, but I left with something more.” This is the promise of bleisure (business plus leisure), and it’s transforming how destinations like Kenya design venues, agendas, and investment priorities.*

Kenya closed 2024 with 2,394,376 international arrivals, a 14.6% increase from 2023, breaking previous records, according to the Tourism Sector Performance Report 2024 by the Tourism Research Institute. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) confirmed that the travel and tourism sector contributed approximately KSh 1.2 trillion to the economy in 2024, supporting about 1.7 million jobs. In comparison, the sector’s contribution in 2023 was KSh 1 trillion with 1.55 million jobs, signaling rapid recovery. Within that growth, meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions, also known as MICE, play a critical role. A validation workshop on Kenya’s National MICE Strategy in 2025 highlighted that MICE-linked visitors accounted for about 27% of

arrivals in 2024.

Globally, the bleisure travel market is estimated at around USD 430 billion in 2024, underscoring its strength and demand. Another key development took place in January 2024 with the introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (eTA), which has streamlined entry into Kenya. This digital innovation significantly reduces friction at borders and positions Kenya as a more attractive destination for business travelers.

Bleisure isn’t just about excursions at the end of the agenda, it’s a shift in how delegates evaluate whole-event value: wellness, local culture, sustainability, and authentic experiences all count. These experiences deliver longer stays, higher



Woodnork Green

Bespoke branding for unforgettable experiences

Founded in 2013, Woodnork Green (WNG) is a leading Kenyan branding agency dedicated to transforming ideas into powerful brand experiences. Strategically based just outside Nairobi, we combine creativity, craftsmanship, and innovation to deliver outstanding branding solutions that resonate long after the event ends.

Our expertise spans fabrication of branding structures, large-format and digital printing, corporate merchandising, and thoughtfully curated gifting. Whether you need striking event installations, customised signage, or premium promotional items, we bring bold ideas to life with impact and style.

We pride ourselves on being a reliable partner for the MICE industry, helping brands stand out in competitive markets through tailor-made solutions. Guided by our core values creativity, teamwork, sustainability, quality, and reliability — we work collaboratively with clients to craft distinctive branding that enhances visibility, engages audiences, and creates lasting impressions.



Karen Village Art Centre,
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www.woodnorkgreen.co.ke

satisfaction, repeat visits, and more engaged attendees, which are all outcomes that matter for event. At Pridelnn Hotels, Resorts & Camps, we have centered our strategy around merging meeting efficiency with leisure discovery at all eight properties across Kenya. In Nairobi, our properties in Westlands and Azure along with Plaza Hotel & Convention Centre embed lifestyle perks like walkable cafes, green spaces, and resilience-enhancing amenities seamlessly with meeting logistics. At the coast, Pridelnn Paradise and Pridelnn Flamingo offer unforgettable meeting experiences with culinary experiences at all our restaurants. At Pridelnn Mara Camp, leadership retreats take place in the rhythm of the wild; early-morning game drives, conservation talks, and farm-to-fork meals that elevate agenda flow and foster camaraderie.

These examples are the architecture and foundations of better meetings. Imagine welcoming delegates with a guided coastal stretch before sessions, a fragrant coffee break rooted in heritage, or a CSR experience planting mangroves with community members. These are not afterthoughts, they propel meeting energy and memorability.

Kenya has the raw ingredients for global bleisure leadership: biodiversity, cultural depth, tourism connectivity, and experienced hospitality talent. To turn this potential into sustained growth, more must be done to align destination assets under a unified promise, invest in wellness-friendly infrastructure, and sharpen skills around event design, sustainability, culinary creativity, and storytelling.

We also need stronger access to data to give event planners clarity on tourism trends, performance, and future potential. The TRI and WTTC reports paint a

compelling picture already. But public private collaboration, data transparency, and consistency in quality standards will solidify Kenya's competitive footing in regional and global markets.

A culture of experience design not just venue provisioning is what will distinguish us from competitors. At Pridelnn, when we began, our goal wasn't scale-it was excellence in the details that delight guests. That ethos still guides us to date in our day-to-day operations and strive for service excellence.

Tourism recovery metrics tell us delegates want more than business, they seek stories, culture, and meaning. Kenya is primed to meet that demand and lead East Africa in bleisure-powered event tourism.

Bleisure is simply the business model of modern events. For destinations and brands that integrate it wisely, the return will be longer stays, deeper loyalty, and richer stories. Kenya's moment has arrived.

About the author

Hasnain Noorani, OGW, is the Managing Director of Pridelnn Hotels, Resorts and Camps.

Beyond Football: What Hosting CAF Pamoja 2024 Means for East Africa's MICE Industry

When Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania jointly secured the hosting rights for the CAF Pamoja African Nations Championship (CHAN) 2024 in December 2023, the news was largely celebrated as a football victory. Yet, beyond the thrill of the game, the championship represents a powerful boost to East Africa's MICE industry says SUSAN AGOI.



NOVOTEL

NAIROBI WESTLANDS



Where business
meets leisure in the
heart of the city

Novotel Nairobi Westlands is a contemporary four-star hotel strategically located in the vibrant Westlands district, offering the perfect balance of business efficiency and leisure comfort. Part of Accor Hotels, a global leader in hospitality, Novotel Nairobi Westlands seamlessly blends international standards with authentic Kenyan warmth to deliver memorable guest experiences.



Our hotel is designed with today's business traveler and meeting delegate in mind. With **347 spacious guest rooms and suites**, four distinctive restaurants and bars, and a rooftop pool with panoramic views of Nairobi's skyline, Novotel offers a unique "safari in the city" concept that blends modern comfort with the spirit of adventure.



As a leading MICE destination, we provide state-of-the-art meeting and event facilities that cater to conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and social gatherings. Our versatile meeting rooms are equipped with advanced audiovisual technology, high-speed connectivity, and customizable setups to accommodate small board meetings to large corporate events.



Beyond meetings, Novotel Nairobi Westlands is an experiential hub. From curated wellness at our In Balance Spa & Gym to vibrant networking sessions at our Trunk 'n' Tandoor rooftop bar, we create spaces where connections thrive. Our strategic location near embassies, multinational offices, malls, and entertainment hubs positions us as the preferred choice for global and regional travelers

NOVOTEL
NAIROBI WESTLANDS

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Nairobi - Kenya

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For the first time in history, three countries were jointly hosting a major continental tournament, and the ripple effects went far beyond the football pitch. In the global MICE portfolio, Sports events play a major role in blending competition with conferences, exhibitions, and incentive travel. In essence CHAN 2024 offered East Africa an opportunity to showcase its ability to deliver world-class event experiences and it outdid itself.



The most visible impact of CHAN 2024 lied in infrastructure. Stadiums, training grounds, roads, airports, and hospitality facilities underwent upgrades to meet international standards. Three major East African stadiums: Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani (Kenya), Benjamin Mkapa Stadium (Tanzania), and Mandela National Stadium, Namboole (Uganda) were revamped with capacities to host tens of thousands, state-of-the-art technology and adaptable spaces.

The most visible impact of CHAN 2024 lied in infrastructure. Stadiums, training grounds, roads, airports, and hospitality facilities underwent upgrades to meet international standards. Three major East African stadiums: Moi International Sports Centre,

Kasarani (Kenya), Benjamin Mkapa Stadium (Tanzania), and Mandela National Stadium, Namboole (Uganda) were revamped with capacities to host tens of thousands, state-of-the-art technology and adaptable spaces.

While built for football, these investments have a broader purpose: they enhance the region's readiness to host global conferences, trade expos, and high-level meeting. A delegate attending a summit benefit from the same upgraded hotels and airports that fans and teams use during the tournament. The infrastructure legacy is a direct enabler of MICE growth.

Secondly, CHAN 2024 placed East Africa at the center of Sports Tourism. The influx of fans, officials, media, and corporate sponsors from different countries across the African continent provides a platform for to MICE tourism which in turn reflects on business networking, side-events, and hospitality showcases. MICE players leverage on this to promote cultural showcases, incentive travel experiences, and mini-conferences around the matches. The blending of sports with tourism and business creates opportunities for East Africa to promote itself as a holistic MICE destination.

Moreover, the joint hosting under the "Pamoja" banner a Swahili word for together, signals a powerful story of regional collaboration and integration. For the MICE industry, this strengthens East Africa's brand as a unified destination capable of pulling off mega-events. It sets a precedent for future co-hosted conferences, trade fairs, and cultural expos that transcend borders and pool resources. East Africa can now market itself as a multi-destination MICE hub, where conferences and exhibitions flow across borders, offering delegates diverse experiences under one umbrella. This strengthens the bloc's competitive edge



when bidding for global conventions, where scale and diversity matter.

The MICE industry thrives on reputation and credibility, and successful delivery of CHAN 2024 strengthens East Africa's profile as a reliable, safe, capable, and exciting destination for football and other events. This enhances global visibility and investor confidence. International broadcasters, sponsors, and visitors get to engage with East Africa on a scale that few other events can match. This exposure not only boosts tourism but also reassures conference planners, corporate executives, and international associations that the region is ready for high-level gatherings

Behind the matches are thousands of professionals and volunteers managing logistics, security, media, and hospitality and so on. Their hands-on experience in CHAN 2024 is invaluable to the wider MICE ecosystem. From venue managers to caterers and event coordinators, the skills

honed during the tournament will elevate service delivery in future conferences and exhibitions, creating a stronger, more professional industry base.

Hosting CHAN 2024 is a strategic win for the East African. In a truly historic tournament, East Africa shone brilliantly at CHAN 2024. Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda each not only hosted but also advanced beyond the group stages, marking the first time ever that all three co-hosts reached the quarter-finals in the same African Nations Championship. This transcends to major heights in different sectors. For MICE this has been a chance to demonstrate readiness, build confidence, and craft a narrative that positions the region as a premier hub for business, tourism, and global events.

About the author

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Kenya Utalii College (KUC) is Africa's leading centre of excellence in Hospitality and Tourism training, shaping the future of service industries for over five decades. Since its establishment in 1975, the College has produced more than 60,000 graduates who now drive growth and innovation in hotels, airlines, resorts, cruise ships, and tourism organisations across the globe.

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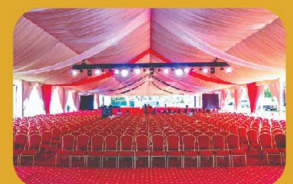
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