

Following introductions and welcome comments from the Chairman, the board entered into a wide ranging discussion on the work of the board, and how to meet the Government objectives for the board.

Specifically the Chairman set out the following;

1)The drivers for the Government's work programme and the background to why the Board had been set up and the appointments to the board.

2)What are the questions we are seeking to answer?

- what events is the UK currently offering that could be considered suitable to expand to an international audience.?
- what existing internationally based events could be considered as target events to bring to the UK on a temporary or permanent basis?

3) Key points for members to note:

- board members must be ambassadors for the sector and for the UK as a destination of choice. It is crucial that members engage and consult widely
- Members were reminded that there is an obligation for them to register any possible conflicts of interest as or should they arise.
- any comments to the press or wider communication on the Board should go through the Chair and DCMS press office.

The DCMS representative was invited to make some opening remarks which included:

- the Board must focus on delivering practical outcomes and recommendations. It would be sensible to deliver some "quick wins" as well as medium to long term outcomes.
- the BVE strategy sets the framework for the Board's objectives and the board should work within this framework
- the board was seen by DCMS as an open and continuing body for industry dialogue with government

UKTI representative was invited to make some opening remarks

- there is an emphasis on the whole of Government focusing on export
- 2020 targets were re-defined to deliver another 100,000 companies into export (288,000 exporting businesses).

- UKTI noted that the government maintained a £1 trillion target of UK exports by 2020 (stretch target)
- the government emphasis remained on certain sectors and markets - review work was currently underway on this policy.
- UKTI priority sectors - work is underway but more to do before it gets made public. There is unlikely to be a definitive list of sectors as there has been previously.
- Lord Maude' (Minister of State BIS) statement referred to cross sector support for events. UKTI focus on the benefit of individual businesses taking part in events. We need to make better use of the platform of events.

Opening comments from Visit Britain were invited and key points made included;

- VB won't be duplicating work done in the regions
- there will be a continuing focus on increasing visitor spend.
- GREAT is an effective enabler which could be utilised by the events sector. The Board can encourage use the GREAT brand to encourage companies and events to come to the UK.
- BVE will be a priority for the BTA
- The Ministerial Bid Support Initiative will continue to be run from the BTA.
- The next core cities meeting is on 24th February and there is an obvious need to engage with large destinations.

Other discussion areas introduced by board members included:

1)

- Query why buyers or other areas of the industry aren't represented on the Board?

The Chair explained that anyone could be brought in to meet with a subgroup of members as required to explore areas of specific interest to the board as it conducts its work

2)

- Query if the remit of the board permitted recommendations on infrastructure to support the sector?

The Chair acknowledged that we could but must be realistic to the constraints.

3)

Evidence and Research

In response to a wide ranging discussion on the value of evidence and research to support the recommendations of the board the following key points were made;

- Access to research would depend on what was already published and that which could be sourced from board member organisations.
- What are the value of the imports? (British businesses running overseas) do we know who these businesses are that are successfully running events overseas?
- Would the success of the Hydro be a useful case study?
- Could we look at success stories and give evidence to Government / local authorities of the benefits of this?
- Is there scope to look at what has been successful and why? EXCEL won the big financial show - why?
- what are the drivers for international events coming to the UK?
- Australia have done research on the value on congresses in terms of intellectual capital and this should be shared with board members

Subvention

The board concluded that information should be collated reflecting the following;

- the level of subvention across the UK (offer)?
- what are the benefits of “soft power” subvention and a comparative analysis with competitor countries

The board set out criteria for establishing the recommendation list for target events:

- establish through associations that can identify events that are due to come to Europe
- London & Partners have a list of pipeline events that they would like to win, and member bodies are encouraged to share this information
- could we “clone” events in other parts of the world to have one in Europe?
- focus on a small number of events to be realistic - maximum of 20
- focus on sectors - keen to know the priority sectors for countries

The filters that can be applied to the initial list of recommendations would include:

- Does the event meet Government growth agenda?
- Is it new or an existing events with growth potential
- Proportion of effort required to secure event measured against potential economic value

- It is noted that events are a long term proposition but are there some existing events that could lead to short term wins.
- Scale of event
- industry significance to UK priorities
- mobility of event - specifically, large scale events in fixed locations are determined by the market and by the willingness of the city to subvent. The level of investment of the cities is huge so the opportunity to win these events out of that city is very small. It would be high risk for an organiser to move a successful existing event from an established annual location.

It was noted that -

- unlike most of Europe the venues in the UK are in private hands (often equity investment) and therefore looking 3-5 years to get a return. With Earls Court closing the booking slots are hard to find - therefore the board recognise the need to be realistic about the aims.

AOB:

- subgroups will be created and members called upon for work streams as needed. Please see the cover note circulated with the minutes and letters from the Chairman of the Board.
- The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 June (14:00-16:00) in the Chancellor's room at DCMS.