



# POLAND'S GREEN TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

In Poland, as across the world, an increasing number of cities are taking action to adapt to the evolving expectations of travellers, event organisers and local communities. Sustainable development is becoming a cornerstone of destination competitiveness. Conference and event organisers are increasingly demanding green certifications, locally sourced products, digital materials instead of printed ones, and energy-efficient infrastructure solutions.

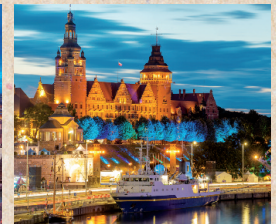
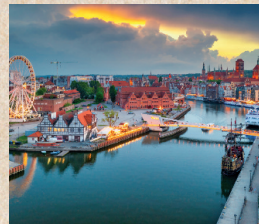
Polish cities are responding to this transformation by actively embracing environmentally and socially responsible practices. They are modernising their tourism strategies, introducing certification systems, investing in sustainable

transport and engaging in the education of local communities. Sustainable development is undoubtedly set to remain a key direction for destinations worldwide in the years ahead, not only within the context of business tourism.

This trend is confirmed, among others, by research conducted by ICCA as part of the Global Association Meetings Protocol, which identifies Sustainability, Equity and Legacy as the leading one of the four main strategic priorities for convention bureaux, according to association clients.

Many conference, congress and hotel facilities place strong emphasis on quality and hold certifications such as Green Key, BREEAM, LEED and WELL.

## POLISH GREEN CHAMPIONS



**KRAKÓW, GDAŃSK, WROCLAW AND SZCZECIN** are among the so-called Polish Green Champions – cities actively developing a sustainable offer for the meetings industry. Their presence in the international Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) confirms Poland's growing importance on the map of responsible MICE destinations. Each of these cities implements its own strategy, combining environmental, social and business objectives.

### KRAKÓW – A LEADER IN TRANSFORMATION

Kraków was the first Polish city to join the GDS-Index in 2022, initiating a systematic approach to measuring and managing the impact of the tourism and events sector. The city continues to improve its performance – in the 2025 edition it was recognised among the “Most Improved Destinations”. Its activities include the development of urban policies, close cooperation with the industry, and the implementation of reporting tools. The ICCA Congress held in Kraków in 2022 was also organised in line with the principles of a sustainable event.

### GDAŃSK – URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION

The Baltic city joined the GDS-Movement in 2023 and focuses on strategic management and the integration of sustainability policies with the MICE sector. A key element is cross-sector collaboration and the implementation of ESG standards in tourism and events. One of the city's major challenges is the transformation of former shipyard areas into a new urban district, featuring venues such as ECS, Montownia and 100cznia. Gdańsk made a significant leap

forward in sustainable tourism development, advancing by 15 positions in the Global Destination Sustainability Index 2025. In the same year, the city hosted the workshop “Regenerating Polish Destinations: Sustainable Tourism in Action” with GDS-Movement experts Marta Mills and Janie Neumann.

### WROCLAW – INTEGRATION AND ACCELERATION

Wrocław joined the GDS-Movement in March 2025, treating its membership as a catalyst for further professionalisation of sustainability efforts. The city focuses on integrating the local MICE community (for example through the publication of the “Green Events in Wrocław” catalogue) and implementing international ESG standards. Participation in GDS-Index enables Wrocław to benefit from benchmarking tools and to further develop its event offering in line with global trends.

### SZCZECIN – THE “FLOATING GARDEN” STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

Szczecin also joined the GDS-Index on 20 March 2025 as the fourth Polish city. Participation in the index is a natural continuation of the long-term “Floating Garden 2050” strategy, based on leveraging water and green resources. The city views GDS as a tool for the internationalisation of its MICE offer and for further development in line with sustainability principles.



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## GDS-FORUM AND IMPACT DAY 2026 IN SZCZECIN, POLAND



**GDS-Forum & Impact Day from 16 – 18 June 2026, Szczecin, Poland**, will be the stage for the year's GDS-Forum and Impact Day events, hosted by the Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement) in collaboration with #MEET4IMPACT, the City of Szczecin, the Szczecin Convention Bureau, the PTO, and the PCB. The selection of Szczecin as the host city for the 2026 edition is a significant distinction for both the city and the entire Polish MICE market. It also serves as recognition of the consistent efforts undertaken in the field of sustainability, positioning Szczecin among the most committed destinations in Europe. The programme includes both the hands-on GDS-Forum and Impact Day, during which participants engage in activities supporting the local community

and environment. This approach reflects the concept of “impact-driven events”, where business events generate tangible social and environmental value, going beyond traditional networking and educational objectives.

Hosting the GDS-Forum & Impact Day in Szczecin also represents an opportunity to strengthen Poland's position as a destination consciously developing its offer in line with ESG principles. The event will attract representatives of convention bureaux, congress organisers, event agencies and sustainability experts from around the world. It will serve not only as a platform for knowledge and experience exchange, but also as a space for building international partnerships and promoting best practices. From the perspective of the Poland Convention Bureau POT, hosting the GDS-Forum & Impact Day in Poland carries particular strategic importance.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON POLAND 2026



**Spotlight on Poland** is a signature event promoting Poland as an attractive destination for business tourism, combining an industry conference with a study visit for international hosted buyers and association representatives. The event serves as a platform for relationship building, showcasing destination potential, and facilitating knowledge exchange among meetings industry professionals.

The 2026 edition will mark the 5th anniversary of the event and will be particularly special as it will be held in conjunction with the GDS-Forum & Impact Day. From 15–17 June, participants will gather in Poznań, where the main part of Spotlight on Poland will take place, including conference sessions, workshops and networking opportunities with Polish MICE service providers.

Participants will then travel to Szczecin to take part in Impact Day. A key element of this year's Spotlight on Poland event is the integration of the MICE community around the concept of “Value, Relevance, and Impact”.

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## DESTINATION POLAND GREEN ACADEMY



In 2025–2026, the “Destination Poland Green Academy” is being implemented – a nationwide educational programme of the Polish Tourism Organisation and the Poland Convention Bureau, delivered in cooperation with the SITE Poland. The aim of the project is to support the Polish MICE industry in building competencies, implementing best practices, and consciously designing events in line with sustainability and ESG principles.

The project includes several key activities, including a series of practical educational workshops organised across selected regions of Poland, led by Aneta Książek from the Poland Convention Bureau and SITE Poland experts Beata

Koziarska and Grażyna Grot-Duziak. The programme is based on the original Sustainable Incentive Travel Manifesto, developed as a result of two editions of the Responsible Incentive Travel Day conference. Destination Poland Green Academy workshops have been held in Bydgoszcz, Kielce, Lublin, Poznań, Łódź and Katowice – MICE destinations often referred to as 2nd-tier and 3rd-tier cities.

An additional element of the initiative is the preparation of “Green Talks” – a series of interviews with regional representatives conducted after each workshop. The activities will be complemented by the development and publication of an e-book featuring practical examples of best practices from across the regions, intended for use by the entire industry. The initiative will be further strengthened through the promotion of both the programme and Poland’s MICE offer on the SITE Global platform.



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## THE SUSTAINABLE INCENTIVE TRAVEL MANIFESTO



The Sustainable Incentive Travel Manifesto is a comprehensive set of principles and best practices designed to inspire the MICE industry to responsibly design incentive travel programmes. The Manifesto was developed by members of SITE Poland: Grażyna Grot-Duziak, Dorota Cholewa, Emilia Kubik, Beata Koziarska and Grażyna Łukaszyk, and is the outcome of two editions of the Responsible Incentive Travel Day conference held in Warsaw.

The Manifesto highlights the importance of delivering more meaningful, conscious and ethical experiences for incentive participants (both outbound and inbound). It also addresses tangible actions aimed at reducing carbon footprint and protecting the environment, as well as building reputation and competitive advantage for organisers and suppliers through sustainable and responsible practices. The authors emphasise that it is not merely a set of recommendations, but a call to action for the entire sector.

The Manifesto is based on 10 pillars, demonstrating how to consciously and responsibly design incentive travel programmes and events. Each pillar underlines practical actions that can become standard practice within the incentive industry.



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## LOW SENSORY SHOW ROOM



The **Low Sensory Show Room POT PCB** is a new solution implemented at events supported by the Polish Tourism Organisation and Poland Convention Bureau, designed for meetings with over 300 participants. The space has been developed in cooperation with the "Mamy Podobnie" Foundation as a mobile, modular low-sensory solution, created in line with best practices in neuroinclusivity and accessibility.

The Low Sensory Show Room POT PCB is an open space available to all participants of events (supported by Poland CVB) who, at any given moment, need to reduce stimuli, find calm or regain comfort.

Research by **Welcome Brain & EICC** shows that 20% of the population is neurodivergent, 88% believe that events do not address their needs, and 85% avoid events that are not sensory-friendly. Additionally, 75% of individuals experience sensory overload during meetings and events, including trade fairs, while noise alone increases stress levels by 34%.

By introducing the LSSR, the quality of participant experience at meetings and events is significantly enhanced. Attention to wellbeing translates into higher guest satisfaction, a more professional image for organisers, and strengthens Poland's reputation as a destination that understands the evolving needs of the MICE market and responds with tangible solutions. The Low Sensory Show Room is a practical example that commitments to responsibility and inclusivity can take the form of measurable actions.

All elements of the space's equipment are sourced from Polish manufacturers specialising in sensory products, including: **Intibag Sp. z o.o.**, **Kolderkowelove.pl**, **Thebeejoy.pl / The World of Nature**, **Nowodvorski Lighting**, **Kapitan Instrumenty** **Drewniane** and **acupresboards**.



To date, LSSR has been featured at the following events:

- **CONNECT Aviation** (Route Development Forum), Lubelskie Centrum Konferencyjne in Lublin, 17–19 February 2026
- **EFFECT MICE Festival**, Expo Łódź, 21 April 2026
- **SITE Poland Responsible Incentive Travel Day in Warsaw**, Radisson Collection Hotel, 24 April 2026

The LSSR will also be present at the **GDS-Forum & Impact Day 2026** in Szczecin, taking place on 16–18 June 2026.

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## A SHIFT IN APPROACH



**A new approach to meetings in Poland is redefining events** – moving away from a model focused solely on logistics towards one where the participant experience becomes paramount. Poland is committed to building its image as a destination offering personalised, interactive and engaging events that deliver unique value, both in terms of content and emotion. A participant-centric approach forms the foundation of competitive advantage. Events created "for people and with people" enhance positive experiences, resulting in a greater likelihood of return visits and stronger recommendations of Poland as an attractive meetings destination.

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