

TRADE AND TOURISM

Sector Focus



MICE Tourism

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Ajuntament de
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Summary



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MICE sector, business tourism

MICE is an acronym referring to **four types of business tourism**: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. Their common denominators are the fact that they are a tourist offer planned in advance, designed to accommodate large groups of people, and each of these activities is linked to a professional reason.

The special feature of **MICE tourism** is that it mobilises large groups, mostly at international level, who **meet in a particular location for a mainly professional purpose**. A niche market specific to business tourism, which is associated with terms such as the meeting industry or professional events.

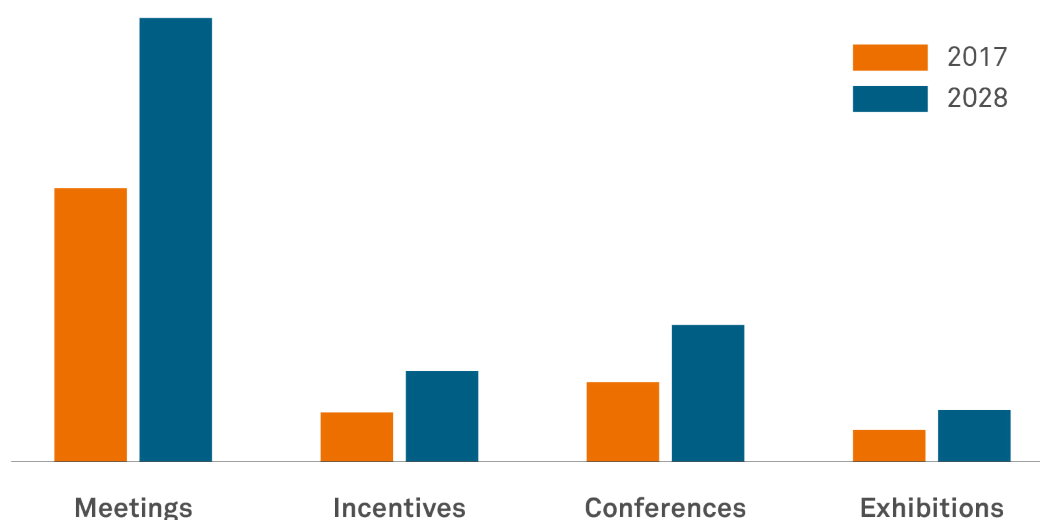
In particular, **MICE tourism** is defined by four markets:

- **Meetings**: They include any kind of trip planned to **hold one or more meetings**, whether they are small or large, short (two hours) or long (one week or more). Some examples are meetings such as board meetings, training workshops, shareholder meetings, management meetings for strategic corporate planning, etc.
- **Incentives**: They refer to trips that aim to motivate, promote and create a **business culture that encourages the involvement of company staff**, improves their productivity and, above all, represents a measure to retain and align talent. There are different types of incentive trips: teambuilding trips, reward trips, and even those known as Workation (a trip combining work and holidays), which are increasingly popular with the increasing opportunity of online work.



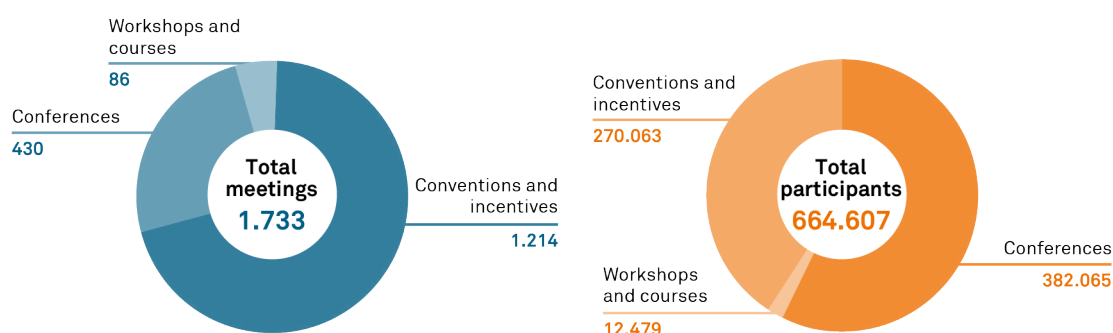
- **Conferences:** These events facilitate the **presentation, debate and exposure of work carried out within a specific professional network**. Conferences are usually networking events, which until now represented the most important part of business tourism.
- **Exhibitions:** Exhibitions offer companies the opportunity to **show their products and services**. They are often held as trade fairs that include booths, lounges, discussion areas, presentations and networking opportunities. These events usually bring together a large number of participants.

Figure 1. MICE on a global and local scale



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by Allied Market Research.

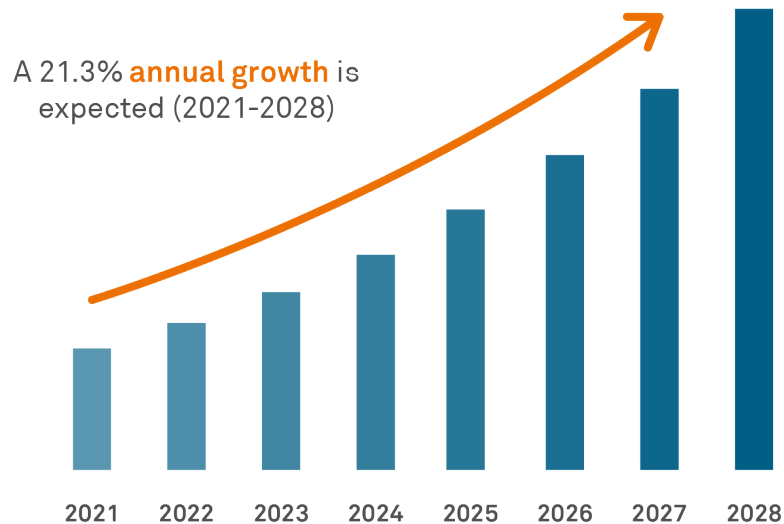
Figure 2. Number of meetings held in Barcelona and number of participants according to type of event, 2019



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by Observatori del turisme a Barcelona.

In 2021 **MICE tourism** had a very remarkable **global growth**. This increase is explained, above all, by the fact that the **phenomenon of globalisation** entails a greater interdependence that must be managed through meetings, conferences and other events. Some of the prospective exercises in this matter show growth curves as follows:

Figure 3. Opportunities and forecasts of the global MICE industry, 2021-2028



It is estimated that the MICE industry **will reach a global value of \$ 1,337.4 billion** in 2028

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by Allied Market Research.

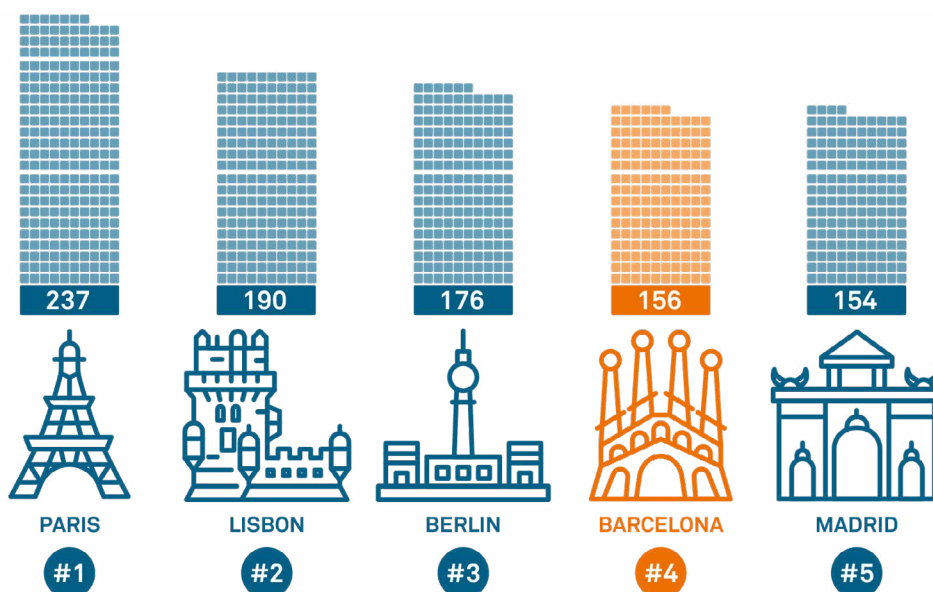
MICE tourism in Barcelona

Some of the main **economic benefits of MICE tourism** to a tourist destination, such as the city of Barcelona, are the following:

- It offers a wide range of opportunities to companies in the city to **become known in international markets**.
- It facilitates **access to new technologies** and to the latest **trends** in the sector.
- It generates a **multiplier effect in terms of entrepreneurship**, leading to the creation of new businesses and the settlement of start-ups in the city. For example, the international fair Alimentaria, held in Barcelona, represents an optimal platform for promoting innovative start-ups in the city, through having an exhibition space, holding meetings with specialised investment funds or by accessing awards such as the Food & Hospitality Startup Revolution Awards.
- It attracts visitors with a **high purchasing power**. The average MICE tourist, according to 2019 data, spent €208 daily, while the general tourist spends €146 on average. Besides attending meetings, they partake in other activities such as shopping, leisure, culture, etc.
- It provides a **high quality tourism model** and helps to **reduce seasonality** in the city's economy.
- It **improves the international economic positioning** of the city.

A sample of the last advantage is Barcelona's position in the 2019 world rankings made by the [International Congress and Convention Association](#) (ICCA), which highlights the main congress organiser cities:

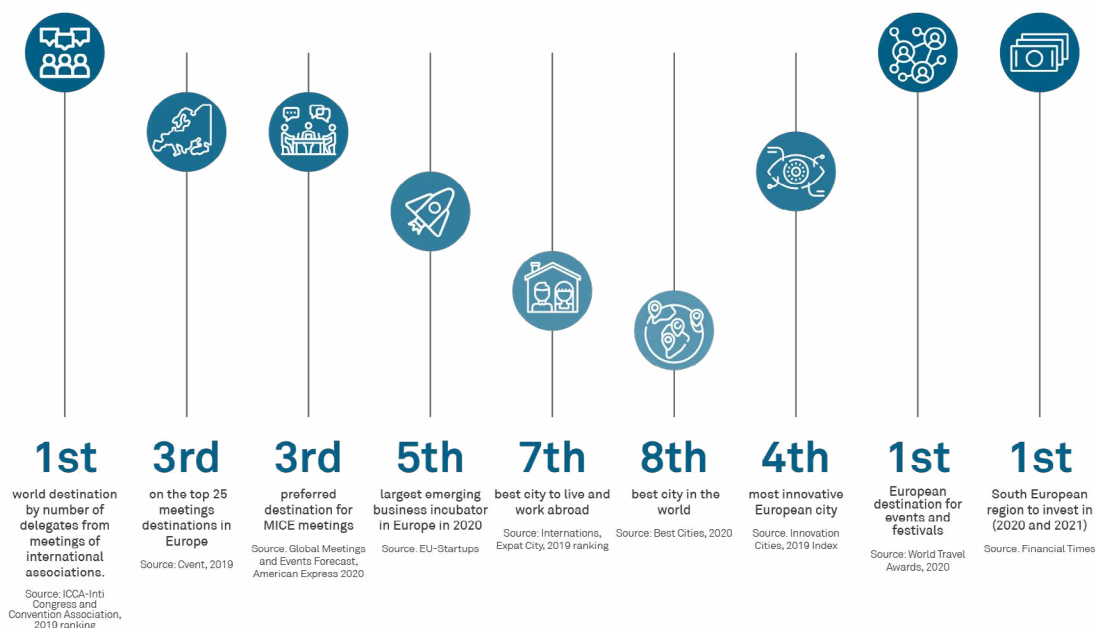
Figure 4. World ranking: number of meetings per city (2019).



Source: prepared by the authors, based on data by the International Congress and Convention Association.

Barcelona has a long history as a destination for MICE tourism, which has helped to **attract congresses and meetings** today on a global scale. According to data from 2019, MICE tourism in Barcelona represents **19.7% of the total tourists visiting the city**. The health-scientific sector accounts for 40% of congress topics, and the ICT sector (technology and telecommunications) accounts for 15%.

Figure 5. Barcelona's recognition and international positioning (2021).



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data by the Barcelona Convention Bureau.

The growing development of the hotel offer in the city of Barcelona is one of the most relevant indicators with regard to MICE tourism for two reasons. On the one hand, the tourist profile attending the meetings is basically staying in hotels. On the other hand, the city's hotels have specific venues to host any kind of corporate event: meetings, trainings, seminars, conferences, directed activities or workshops.

Impact of MICE tourism on professional profiles



MICE tourism has been recognised as a sector that makes a decisive contribution to the local economy. Not only does it have an economic impact that generates income for the tourism industry, but it also **creates great job opportunities**. Understanding this market is essential given that Barcelona is a city that has been able to position itself as a MICE destination, as has been shown on this report. Moreover, the prospects for growth that have been presented, in terms of the future, highlight this trend in the trade and tourism sector.

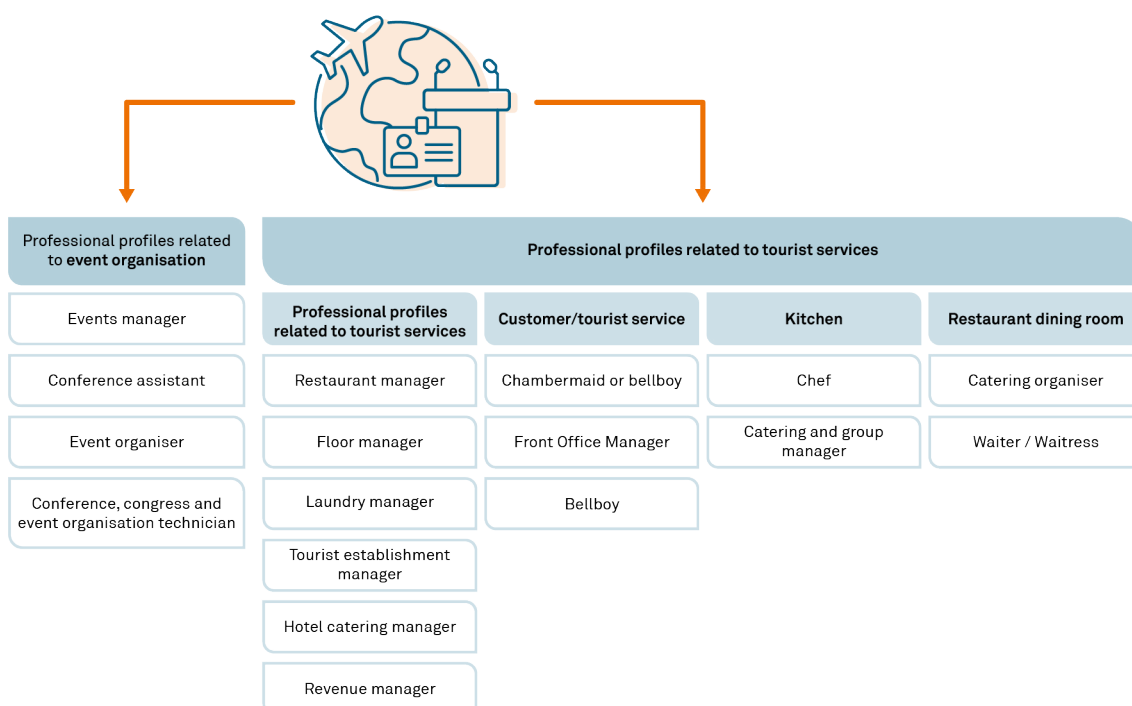
The management of MICE events demands professional profiles with specific knowledge and skills to implement projects, whether they are fairs, congresses, workshops, conferences, conventions, seminars, symposia or incentive trips. A MICE event requires **creating authentic experiences**, both for assistants and for speakers. For this reason, there is a large number of **skills and knowledge** associated with MICE tourism, such as:

- **Interpersonal, creative, organisational and technical skills.**
- **Creativity in event design**, originality to find disruptive and original elements. Professionals also need to select suitable venues and market effectively.
- It is key to **plan** and **organise** the set of tasks to be developed ahead and to **coordinate the teams** that contribute to making the event possible in order to manage the event stages and deadlines.
- **Multilingual technical knowledge** with notions in both the audiovisual field and in visa management applications, for example.
- Cross-cutting skills such as **empathy, teamwork, quick problem solving** (since response time is short) and **interpersonal skills** are essential.

In parallel, the sector requires **complementary knowledge in the field of marketing and public relations** to attend to pre- and post-event promotion campaigns, as well as to manage Barcelona's international positioning, before, during and after the event. On the other hand, there are also professionals working with **protocol** matters, entities that care for the corporate identity of the event, and those that deal with the **sustainability** of the meetings, to ensure the established environmental and quality standards. MICE tourism therefore has a **cross-cutting impact**, as it includes several professional profiles that are in one way or another involved in the sector.

However, the professional profiles that make up the **main value chain of MICE tourism** are those employed in **event management services** and **specific tourist services**. That is to say, services that mainly involve accommodation, hospitality and tourist activities in the tourist destination.

Figure 6. Impact of MICE tourism on employment



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The professional profiles associated with event management work primarily through **destination management companies** (DMC) dedicated to **organising a specific event or corporate trip**. The purpose of DMCs is to offer the whole range of logistical services in their destinations: transfers and transport, hotel accommodation, restaurants, activities, day trips, conference venues, thematic events, gala dinners, etc. Also, these profiles can be found in the **Professional Congress Organisers** (PCOs), who provide the professional support necessary to organise and manage meetings, plan congresses and create and develop these types of MICE events.

Recently, however, these professionals can also be employed by **MICE departments** of hotel groups, of public or private companies, in foundations, in patronage and sponsorship institutions; in conference palaces or fairgrounds; in tourism offices; in communication and event agencies, in protocol agencies and in companies providing services for events. They can also be self-employed.

Specifically, the profiles directly linked to event management and organisation are:



Events manager: They handle the **event value chain** from its definition to its marketing. They coordinate all the teams involved in their ultimate goal -meeting customer expectations. For this reason, they must be skilled in **customer care**, especially regarding sale and loyalty in the areas of MICE tourism promoters (on an international scale), and technical notions for the management and monitoring of events before, during and after they take place.



Event organiser: In addition to having the necessary knowledge to **organise events**, they must know the set of providers that make the event possible. They advise the clients in order to fulfil the set of requirements, infrastructure and services that meet their demands and needs.

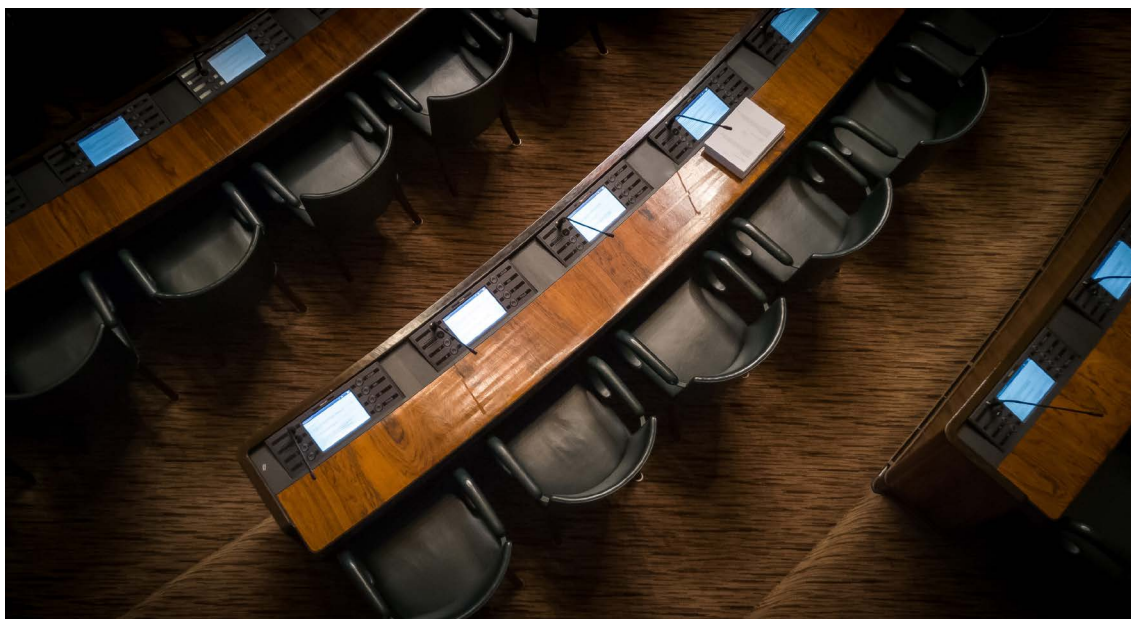


Conference, congress and event organisation technician: Specialising in MICE tourism, they provide the technical and practical skills for **planning, organising and coordinating the set of tasks and actions** required to make a congress, convention, incentive trip or corporate event possible.



Conference assistant: They are present at all MICE events. Their role is to **welcome and host the participants** of conventions or events, informing them about the schedule activities and the areas where they take place, and providing the necessary administrative and management support. In some cases, this professional profile **must undergo training** to manage the event -for example, in the case of conferences related to life and health sciences.





On the other hand, as stated above, there are **professionals in the accommodation sector** who are closely linked to event management companies. Hotel chains are making great efforts to position themselves competitively to become the main providers to host MICE events and offer their wide range of facilities to stay in the city hosting the event. Specifically, the professional profiles associated with the hotel sector that can be found in Barcelona are:



Tourist establishment manager: a professional who manages the **activity of the hotel** and takes responsibility for the proper functioning of the different operational areas.



Hotel catering manager: responsible for **supplying food and drink** adapted to the different public and to the evolution of demand.



Revenue manager: analyses and controls the **occupancy** of the establishment and manages the offer associated with event organisation, managing the different sales channels.



Chambermaid: a professional who takes care of the **maintenance of hotel room and facilities** to provide a satisfactory accommodation service to the clientele.



Floor manager: **oversees an adequate service of rooms and common areas** of an establishment by adapting the cleaning services, waiter staff and laundry to quality standards.



Laundry manager: **responsible for the cleanliness** of clothing, including the bedding of the different rooms: washing, drying, ironing and packing.



Front Office Manager: manages the **offer of hotel rooms**; controls check-ins, check-outs, bookings and billing services; and pays attention to the special requirements of the stay, such as accessibility issues.



Bellboy: in charge of **caring for the guests** from check-in to check-out. They offer support for assisting guests in finding their way around the hotel and in some cases they provide customised services.

MICE events have also impacted all professionals in the **hospitality field**, who care about providing welcoming spaces and tailor-made catering services. In commercial terms, reference is made to the **gastronomic offer of the city** of Barcelona, where there is a wide range of professional profiles associated with restaurants and food services, such as:



Restaurant manager: responsible for the **business strategy** of the establishment, including the gastronomic offer, the target audience and the pricing policy.



Catering and group manager: professional profiles that **primarily provide food services** MICE events. They plan and coordinate the tasks and logistics necessary to provide a quality service.



Catering organiser: in charge of the **assembly and collection of materials and utensils** to provide the catering service with the appropriate conditions and requirements.



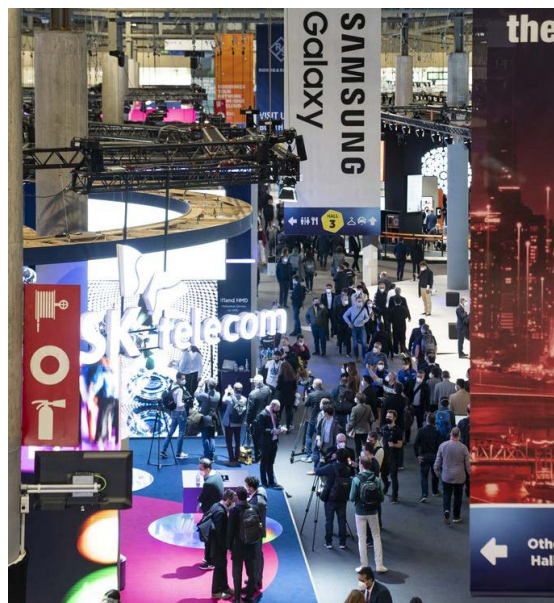
Chef: a professional dedicated to the preparation, conservation and presentation of the **gastronomic offer** of an establishment.



Waiter / Waitress: handles the **food and drink service in an establishment**. They meet the customer's demands and respect the corresponding safety and hygiene rules.

Finally, MICE tourism is a multi-faceted industry that **contributes to the economic development** of **multiple supplier companies**, such as:

- **Transport providers** (national and international), since mobility is a fundamental aspect to cover at any event.
- **Creative service providers**, to deal with communication and signalling aspects, generating banners, posters, huge LED screens, labelling, etc.
- **Audiovisual production providers**, who bring projection, video and streaming equipment, and provide sound lighting and photography technical services, among others.
- **Providers of unique venues** that provide the spaces to host the events together with the design, construction and decoration companies.
- **Public relations providers** dedicated to managing sponsors and caring for customers who attend meetings, incentive trips, conferences or exhibitions.



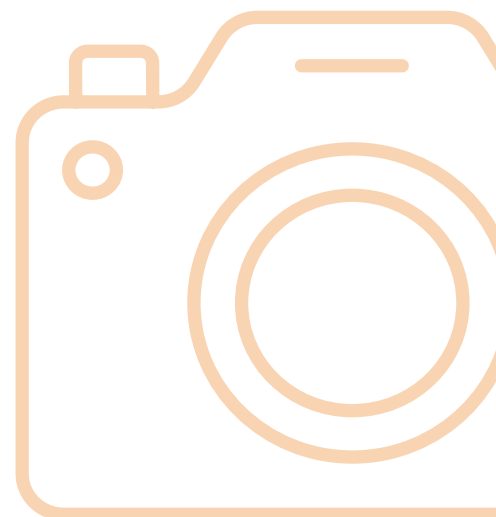
A focus on the MICE sector

MICE tourism has established itself as one of the tourist **trends with the greatest economic impact**, both in terms of revenue from the sector and in job creation. As the report shows, growth figures are **positive for the coming years** and this increase will favour the wide range of jobs associated with Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions.

It must also be said, however, that **the sector is undergoing a transformation**, especially in the field of **event organisation**, as technology is increasingly involved in marketing -for example, in the marketing and promotion of meetings-; or the growth of hybrid events that incorporate streaming, which although it demands more than broadcasting, it allows the audience to live the true experience of the conference.

Finally, the **impact of this sector on employment and professional profiles will be positive in the long term**, because MICE tourism will mean increasing the quality of tourism jobs. In the future, there will be a need for **greater qualifications** for professionals in the field of event organisation and tourist services such as accommodation and hospitality. Furthermore, in general, MICE activities **will financially boost the city of Barcelona** as new businesses appear that are linked to providing increasingly innovative services in these areas of work, opportunities for growth in competitive terms and also in terms of employment.

In short, **MICE tourism** becomes a mechanism for boosting the local economy which, at the same time, allows **the city to position on an international scale**, which reverts to a specialisation of the destination that ultimately favours a **more sustainable tourism model for the city and its citizens**.



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