



# 20 24

BUSINESS PLAN



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of our association Board of Directors and Destinations International Foundation Board of Trustees, along with the entire team at Destinations International, I am pleased to present our 2024 Business Plan.

This plan reinforces our role as the leading global resource for destination organizations. Centered around our core pillars—Community, Advocacy & Research, Destination Tools, and Professional Development—we aim to solidify our global influence through deepened member engagement and innovative resource development.

Our objective is to create resources that significantly impact global advocacy, talent attraction, accessibility, social inclusion, and destination stewardship. A key aspect of this plan is the development of a focused global strategy, tailored to expand our reach and influence in the international travel and tourism sector.

Through this plan, we will reinforce our unwavering commitment to lead and innovate in the industry, driving growth and fostering global connections.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Welsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

**DON WELSH**

President and CEO

*Destinations International*

# WHAT WE DO

## ABOUT DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL

Destinations International is the world's largest and most reliable resource for destination organizations. In short - DI educates, equips, and empowers our members to grow the success of their destinations and to excel professionally. Membership grants access to a wealth of important industry resources, educational opportunities, and exclusive benefits.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

As the world's premier association devoted to enhancing the performance and impact of destination organizations, Destinations International is steadfast in our commitment to driving the success and influence of our industry.

# 2024 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IMPACTING THE INDUSTRY

These significant issues represent major industry and global matters facing our members and will shape much of DI's focus, research, and event content for the coming year.

As our reach broadens globally, we have aligned these significant issues with one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as listed below.

**COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT & ENGAGEMENT** - includes Resident Sentiment, Community Shared Value, Creating Community Support, Community Engagement Strategies, Transparency Strategies, and Balancing Priorities.

- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

**DESTINATION ORGANIZATION RESILIENCE, STABILITY & GROWTH** - includes Strategic Planning, Financial Stability, Funding, Staffing & Human Resource Management, Operational Efficiency, and Risk Management.

- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

**SUCCESS MEASUREMENTS FOR DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS** - includes New KPIs, Standard Operating Procedures, Industry Operating Standards, Community Indicators, Broader Public Relations Effectiveness, and Brand Recognition.

- SDG 3: Good health and well-being
- SDG 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

**EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL MARKETING** - includes Artificial Intelligence, Web 3.0, Metaverse, Data Security & Privacy, Investment & Implementation, Digital Innovation, and Changes in Mobile Technology.

- SDG 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

**DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP – INCLUDES RESPONSIBLE TOURISM PRACTICES,**

Regeneration Strategies, Climate Change, Environmental Resilience, Cultural Heritage Preservation, and Destination Management.

- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 13: Climate action
- SDG 14: Life below water
- SDG 15: Life on land

**SOCIAL INCLUSION** - includes Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Community Representation and Engagement, Homelessness, Supplier Diversity, Cultural Sensitivity & Respect, Safe Environment, Welcoming & Belonging Environment, Youth Engagement, Migration and Immigration, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Recognition of Indigenous and Minority Groups.

- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** - (internal & external) – includes Education, Job Training, Recruitment, Retention, Affordable Housing, Public Transportation, Healthcare Access, Childcare Services, and Accessibility.

- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities



# CORE PILLARS FOR THE ASSOCIATION



Destinations International fosters a strong, global community of travel and tourism professionals and promotes the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Our almost 1,000 member organizations and business partners from around the world connect to share insights and network, all aimed at helping their individual communities thrive.

**3 – YEAR VISION:** By the end of 2026, our goal is to reinforce our status as the premier global association for destination organizations and convention & visitors bureaus. We will deepen our engagement with current members, ensuring active involvement of professionals at all levels. Our focus will be on building a more inclusive and expansive global network, enriching our community with diverse perspectives from around the world. This growth, alongside our strong presence in the US and Canada, will enhance our position as the largest and most dynamic association in our field, serving as the key resource and collaborative platform for destination professionals worldwide.

## 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

### 1. Deepen Member Engagement and Extend Reach:

- Cultivate meaningful, purposeful relationships with members and business partners, ensuring that these connections are mutually beneficial. This includes creating platforms for collaboration and dialogue, which encourages the sharing of best practices and innovative ideas.
- Commit to ongoing member engagement and increased involvement with staff at all levels within member organizations.
- Continue efforts to extend our global reach and influence. This involves not just increasing our global membership footprint but also raising the profile of the industry, our association, and our member organizations.

### 2. Enhance Global Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange:

- Strengthen and broaden our global community by enhancing international collaboration and knowledge exchange. This involves building cooperative relationships not only with members, industry organizations and business partners but also with governments and communities worldwide.
- Focus on promoting and advocating for global best practices, leveraging the diverse perspectives and insights of our vast network.



## ADVOCACY & RESEARCH

Destinations International is the collective voice of destination organizations, empowering destinations on issues big and small. We strive to be champions for our members and recognize the importance of keeping our members abreast of the challenges and opportunities presenting themselves in the marketplace. We educate, equip, and empower our members to advocate on behalf of their destination organizations and their destination communities. We use our collective voice to elevate and advance the mission, goals, and efforts of destination organizations. We are constantly expanding industry knowledge, introducing new ideas and developing forward-focused research and relevant data.

**3 – YEAR VISION:** We will focus on providing scalable resources, enabling members to effectively showcase their organizational value within local communities. In collaboration with business partners, we will enhance our research projects and innovate new industry tools. Our objective is to empower destination organizations with robust data and advocacy tools, reinforcing their vital role in the economic and social progress of their communities and the essential role of the industry globally.

### 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

#### 1. Innovate and Expand Advocacy Resources:

- Proactively anticipate and respond to members' evolving needs with a heightened focus on industry sector advocacy, inclusion, digital innovation, destination stewardship, marketing resources, effective communication, and business event impacts.
- Spearhead innovative ideas and practices, focusing on emerging challenges and strategic issues in the industry.
- Develop solutions to amplify the industry's positive societal contributions, enabling members to effectively showcase the value and significance of destination organizations within local communities.

#### 2. Champion Global Standards and Collaboration:

- Advocate for the benefits of international collaboration and contribute to the development of global standards and best practices for the destination industry.
- Enhance research with industry partners, advocating for responsible industry growth on a global scale.



## DESTINATION TOOLS

We offer a suite of products built on best practices, insights, and research. We work to raise the effectiveness of destination organizations; increase relevancy among the destination's community; raise the level of professionalism through certification and accreditation; and provide actionable best practices and strategies for the sustainable success of destinations.

**3 – YEAR VISION:** Advance the development of innovative tools addressing key challenges like stewardship, social inclusion, and other emerging issues, equipping our members to navigate the evolving travel industry. We plan to strengthen partnerships with industry associations and business partner companies, fostering collaborative innovation and progress. In parallel, we'll work on establishing unified metrics and standards for measuring member success and setting industry benchmarks. Furthermore, we will amplify our outreach and communication strategies to better inform our members about these tools, ensuring they are well-equipped to utilize these critical resources effectively.

### 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

#### 1. Develop and Enhance Industry Resources:

- Identify key areas of need within the destination industry and develop innovative, data-driven tools and resources to enhance the effectiveness, adaptability, and professionalism of destination organizations. These resources will empower members to make informed decisions and optimize their impact, while also enabling strategies to measure and communicate their impact on local communities, economies, and environments effectively.





## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are the definitive resource for professional development within the destination marketing and management industry. We offer ongoing educational opportunities both in person and online and are committed to providing professional development and lifelong learning for our members.

**3 – YEAR VISION:** By the year end 2026, we want to offer a comprehensive range of learning opportunities tailored to all professional levels and verticals within our member organizations. A key focus will be consistently updating the programs to reflect the latest industry trends and emerging issues. We will also focus on enhancing the attendee experience at our in-person events, ensuring these gatherings are not only informative but also truly impactful and memorable. Additionally, we will intensify our efforts to raise awareness of our professional development offerings, ensuring our members are fully informed and able to take advantage of these valuable resources. Our goal is to ensure that every professional within our global community has access to the tools and knowledge needed to excel in the dynamic and ever-evolving travel industry.

### 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

#### 1. Develop Comprehensive Professional Development Programs:

- Develop a diverse array of educational programming and resources, designed to equip members at all levels and across different professional verticals with the skills and knowledge essential for professional excellence and destination success.
- Collaborate with educational entities, industry experts, and other stakeholders to create and implement professional development programs that not only prepare the workforce for future challenges but also raise awareness of the industry to attract a diverse range of talents.

#### 2. Strengthen Community Engagement and Lifelong Learning:

- Create opportunities for members to connect, learn, and inspire each other, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. This involves leveraging both in-person and online formats to maximize accessibility and engagement.

# DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Destinations International Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering destinations globally to excel through innovation and resource incubation.

The foundation focuses on tomorrow. It innovates new ideas and ways of doing things and incubates new tools and resources to improve the efforts of our members. It launches and manages future-facing programs and initiatives, develops next-generation professional development and tools, and fosters short- and long-term cooperative relationships around the globe on behalf of the association. It is our industry's think tank and research-and-development arm. It is an investment in the further professionalism of our industry and increasing the impact of our efforts.

With every dollar raised, the foundation takes aim at and helps ensure the continued growth of our industry worldwide.

## ASSOCIATION VS. FOUNDATION

The Destinations International Association and Foundation are two legally distinct organizations which complement each other. The association, the larger of the two, holds the collective history of our industry and focusses on the daily needs of our destination organization and business members in today's world. The foundation's efforts are guided by and support the strategic goals of the association. In exchange, the association's staff manage the foundation and support its fundraising efforts.

## CORE PILLARS FOR THE FOUNDATION

### INDUSTRY SECTOR ADVOCACY & RESEARCH

- > We create new knowledge and raise the voice of the industry.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TALENT ATTRACTION

- > We foster a passion for learning and develop tomorrow's leaders.

### GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT & SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS

- > We are driving collaborative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION & WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

- > We forge stronger communities where every individual thrives.

**3 - YEAR VISION:** By the year end 2026, we want to offer a comprehensive range of learning opportunities tailored to all professional levels and verticals within our member organizations. A key focus will be consistently updating the programs to reflect the latest industry trends and emerging issues. We will also focus on enhancing the attendee experience at our in-person events, ensuring these gatherings are not only informative but also truly impactful and memorable. Additionally, we will intensify our efforts to raise awareness of our professional development offerings, ensuring our members are fully informed and able to take advantage of these valuable resources. Our goal is to ensure that every professional within our global community has access to the tools and knowledge needed to excel in the dynamic and ever-evolving travel industry.

## 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS

### 1. Industry Sector Advocacy & Research:

- Develop and launch initiatives focused on creating and disseminating cutting-edge research that shapes industry best practices, while advocating for policies and practices that support the growth and sustainability of the destination industry and address emerging challenges and trends.

### 2. Professional Development & Talent Attraction:

- Develop diverse professional development programs for all career stages and verticals in the destination industry, coupled with talent attraction and retention strategies.

### 3. Global Engagement & Sustainable Destinations:

- Enhance global partnerships and collaborations to share knowledge and foster international cooperation, promote sustainable practices in destination organizations for responsible tourism, and develop programs that support destinations in achieving comprehensive economic, social, and environmental stewardship.

### 4. Social Inclusion & Welcoming Environment:

- Develop initiatives and resources that enhance social inclusion and create welcoming environments within the destination organization and the industry, while measuring and highlighting their positive impact on community success and well-being.

### 5. Ensure Financial Sustainability & Growth:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy to diversify and grow the Foundation's revenue, actively engaging donors, business partners, and stakeholders in our vision and mission to foster a collective commitment to the industry's growth and sustainable success.

# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**WHY GLOBAL:** Many years ago, the Destinations International board committed to expanding the association's global community and increasing the awareness of the association's work. The benefits of a global association versus a U.S. centric association include:

- 1. Enhanced Diversity of Perspectives:** Expanding globally allows the association to incorporate a wide range of cultural and regional insights. This diversity enriches the pool of ideas, strategies, and practices, fostering innovation and adaptability.
- 2. Wider Networking Opportunities:** A global presence provides members with access to an extensive network of professionals across different countries. This facilitates cross-border collaborations, partnerships, and knowledge exchange, which are invaluable for personal and organizational growth.
- 3. Increased Influence and Advocacy:** A global footprint strengthens the association's position as a leader in the travel and tourism industry. This enables more effective advocacy on international policies and trends, influencing key decisions on a broader scale.
- 4. Learning from Global Best Practices:** Exposure to different markets and operational models allows members to learn from global best practices. This helps in refining their strategies and operations, leading to improved effectiveness and efficiency.
- 5. Market Expansion Opportunities:** Being globally active opens opportunities for business partners to explore and enter new markets, aiding in their business expansion and diversification efforts.

**CURRENT SITUATION:** Destinations International is the world's largest association dedicated to providing resources for destination organizations. Our global community currently includes almost 1,000 member organizations and business partners from 29 countries and self-governing territories. The United States and Canada are considered our two mature markets, holding the largest number of member and business partner organizations.

**2024-2026 GLOBAL STRATEGY:** Our strategy will focus on sustaining and prioritizing our efforts in North America, while simultaneously expanding our community, forging partnerships, customizing services to diverse member requirements, and establishing platforms for international collaboration and dialogue in other key regions.

## **Additional Goals:**

- 1.** Perform an audit of current DI member benefits, products, services, and professional development offerings to identify those that provide the greatest value for global destinations and edit as needed for the global audience.
- 2.** Leverage the usage of Destinations International tools, such as Event Impact Calculator (EIC) and Destinations International DNEXT Assessment.
- 3.** Advance the development of global resources like the Destinations International DNEXT Futures Study and annual global Social Inclusion and Tourism Lexicons.

4. Develop relationships with US based global destination representatives.
5. Collaborate with other organizations to establish global standards for destination organizations.
6. Leverage partnerships with other industry organizations and business partners to amplify our efforts.
7. Engage a global communications company to increase DI's visibility and effectively communicate the association's value proposition.
8. Increase the amount of DI content available in other languages to enhance accessibility starting with French and Spanish.
9. Continue engagement with the Global Leadership Committee, offering DI members and partners meaningful avenues to influence and shape DI's global initiatives.
10. Continue to showcase DI's thought leadership by actively participating in key industry events across global markets.
11. Increase international participation in DI events, with a specific focus on CEO Summit and Annual Convention.
12. Organize an event in Europe targeting global destination leaders to showcase DI's thought leadership and provide a platform for DI members and partners to connect with international destination CEOs.
13. Continue to explore and assess opportunities in various world regions.

Specific goals and strategies will be tailored according to each region, as detailed below.

## EUROPE:

In June 2022, with the support of several partners, DI launched the Pathfinders Programme to shape the future of engagement across Europe. Members of this programme serve as an advisory group and collaborate with DI to pinpoint key opportunities for adding value to European destination organizations. Currently, the programme represents 24 European destinations. Based on our learnings from the past two years we know DI offers unique connections to North America, unparalleled by other European industry organizations. The focus for 2024 will be on devising a plan for long-term sustainable growth in Europe.

- Expand the Pathfinder Programme to include more global organizations, including North American members, to encourage knowledge-sharing and global collaboration.
- Continue to implement robust content strategy for Pathfinder participants, including webinars, regular virtual meetings, and in-person networking at industry events.
- Deepen organizational engagement beyond the designated Pathfinder.
- Develop or sustain partnerships with regional industry associations, including European Travel Commission and City Destination Alliance.
- Audit current DI member benefits, resources, and services to evaluate which are most valuable for European destinations and understand how to market these more effectively.
- Develop and launch Europe-specific membership model based on input from European members and Pathfinders.

## CENTRAL, SOUTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN:

- Strengthen engagement and enhance accessibility by translating key DI resources into Spanish.
- Maintain active engagement and emphasis on the DI business events strategy at key Latin America-based industry events.
- Sustain the partnership with the CVBS LATAM Association to broaden reach, distribute relevant content, and drive event participation.
- Sustain the partnership with the working group of Mexican destination organizations seeking to develop a Mexican Destinations Leadership Council.
- Collaborate with select consultants to develop content and strategies tailored for local engagement, including participation in DMAP accreditation program.
- Expand the footprint of Colombian and Mexican usage of the DI Event Impact Calculator.

## MIDDLE EAST

- Collaborate with select consultants to expand reach and uncover new opportunities.
- Leverage partnership with Saudi Tourism Authority to expand reach within the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia (KSA) and drive engagement with local destination organizations.
- Develop Event Impact Calculator model for Saudi Arabia.
- Prioritize fulfilling existing contracts with Saudi Tourism Authority, Royal Commission for Alula, and Qiddiya.
- Effectively complete on-boarding for new members.

## AFRICA, ASIA & OCEANIA

- Leverage membership of Goyang, South Korea, and Business Events Sydney by understanding how DI can meet their needs beyond what we currently offer.
- Develop a meaningful partnership with the regional organizations including the Africa Tourism Association and the Pacific Asian Travel Association.
- Continue to explore opportunities with country-based organizations such as the Japan Travel and Tourism Association, Regional Tourism New Zealand, and Australian Business Events Association.
- Create engagement opportunities through further development of relevant international content.
- Expand the footprint of Australian usage of the DI Event Impact Calculator.
- Expand the usage of the DI Event Impact Calculator.

## NEW RESOURCES COMING IN 2024

New online, self-paced, certificate programs

- Fundamentals of Social Inclusion - designed for members to understand and apply core Social Inclusion concepts in a professional setting.
- Business Intelligence Certificate Program - will consist of Sales, Services and MarCom training as it relates to group business

Updated Professional in Destination Management (PDM) certificate program

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Updated Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP)

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Immersive learning experiences at various in-person events

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Expanded tools and resources focused on accessibility

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Release of the Accessibility Playbook, in partnership with TravelAbility

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Advancements to the Social Impact Assessment Tool and provide the base report complimentary for all DI members

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Workforce templates that member organizations can utilize to raise awareness of the industry

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Expanded funding for the small destination organization event scholarship program

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Translation of various key documents and website sections into French and Spanish

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Additional enhancements to the online community and website

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Release of a DI Advocacy Plan Field Guide

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Release of a DI Advocacy Lexicon Field Guide

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Release of Social Inclusion Implementation Workbook

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Release of Destination Effect website and resources

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Release of Destination Organization Community Indicator reports

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Release of Destination Promotion: A Catalyst for Community Vitality report

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Release of report on the impact of the perception of a destination on meetings and events

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Release of annual advocacy, social inclusion, and global lexicons

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Release of annual resident sentiment studies for US and Canada

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Launch a joint stewardship/accessibility report with CityDNA

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Finalize and launch the Tourism for All project

## 2024 EVENTS

- FEB**  
**MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT**  
February 27-29, 2024  
Salt Lake City, UT
- APR**  
**CEO SUMMIT**  
April 2-4, 2024  
Boston, MA
- SPRING CDME COURSES**  
April 6-9, 2024  
Washington, DC
- CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES SUMMIT**  
April 8-9, 2024  
Washington, DC
- BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY WEEK & SHOWCASE**  
April 8-11, 2024  
Washington, DC
- JUL**  
**SUMMER CDME COURSES**  
July 13-16, 2024  
Tampa, FL
- VISITOR SERVICES SUMMIT**  
July 16, 2024  
Tampa, FL
- ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
July 16-18 2024  
Tampa, FL

- OCT**  
**FALL CDME COURSES**  
October 19-22, 2024  
Rio Grande, Puerto Rico
- ADVOCACY SUMMIT**  
October 22-24, 2024  
Rio Grande, Puerto Rico
- BUSINESS OPERATIONS SUMMIT**  
October 28-30 2024  
TBD
- SOCIAL INCLUSION SUMMIT**  
October 28-30, 2024  
TBD
- TBD**  
**FALL CDME COURSES**  
TBD, 2024  
TBD, Canada
- DEC**  
**PARTNER ADVISORY COUNCIL SUMMIT**  
Dec. 9-10, 2024  
TBD
- Q4 BOARD MEETING**  
Dec. 9-11, 2024  
TBD





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