

GDS-FORUM &

IMPACT DAY



# GDS-Movement and #MEET4IMPACT Impact Award 2026

Check the criteria below and submit your application via [this online Form](#)

MANY MINDS CAN...

GROW  
GROW  
GROW  
GROW  
GROW

ENGAGE TO  
CHANGE

?

GET  
HEARD

DO MORE

REDUCE

MOVE THE WORLD

DO LESS



#visit  
SZCZECIN!

▶ BETTER TOGETHER ◀

# Introduction

This award is a collaborative initiative developed by GDS-Movement and [#MEET4IMPACT](#), recognising Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) committed to **legacy and impact through business events**.

It encourages DMOs to develop innovative event legacy and impact programmes that leverage the mission of their clients and that contribute to a more sustainable and socially-responsible future for all.

**The winner will be announced during the GDS-Awards Ceremony, happening on 17 June during the 2026 GDS-Forum and Impact Day in Szczecin, Poland.**

**02 March 2026**

Impact, Innovation and  
Changemaker Award  
Applications Open

**17 April 2026**

Impact, Innovation and  
Changemaker Award  
Applications Close

**17 June 2026**

GDS-Awards Ceremony

# Eligibility

Any destination in the 2026 GDS-Index that has an impact programme, or is currently developing one, which leverages business events to generate long-term legacy and societal impact locally.

## The initiative or programme must:

- be unique and designed by/for the destination;
- have clearly defined objectives and alignment with the destination's business events strategy and the destination government's priorities;
- have a stakeholder engagement process;
- have committed resources and a plan to support clients to implement legacy projects;
- include outcome measurement and reporting.

**Each destination can only submit one application.**

# Why Apply

In addition to visibility among global DMOs, associations, policymakers, and sustainability leaders, and positioning as a frontrunner in regenerative destination transformation, the winner will:

- **enjoy on-stage exposure** at the 2026 GDS-Awards Ceremony in Szczecin;
- **be featured** on the GDS-Movement website and LinkedIn Channel;
- **receive coverage** in a dedicated press release;
- **present the initiative** at the GDS-Movement "Feeling the Pulse" webinar in 2026.



# Award Application

Please prepare a **presentation of maximum 8 slides** about your impact programme covering the following areas:

## Programme Overview

- What is the legacy or impact programme, and what objectives does it address for your destination?
- What makes it unique to your destination (not a generic or external framework)?

## Intention & Alignment

- Why was this initiative created and what need or gap does it respond to?
- How does it align with the destination's business events strategy?
- How does it support the government's priorities and wider societal outcomes?

## Stakeholder Engagement & Resourcing

- Who are the key stakeholders and what are their roles?
- What engagement processes and partnerships supported the programme?
- What staff, budget, and resources were committed, and how were clients supported to implement legacy or impact activities?

## Measurement & Reporting

- How do you measure and report on progress?
- What outcomes or results have been achieved so far?
- What are the next steps or future impact projections?

## Communication

- Do you have a communications plan or case study that demonstrates results, alignment, and interventions?

# Judging Process and Criteria

The applications will be shortlisted by an internal panel and, to determine a winner, the finalists will be independently evaluated by an external panel of judges.

**The applications will be judged based on five criteria with defined scoring weight:**

- 1. Uniqueness and originality (weight: 20%)**  
Development of own initiative and not using a generic framework, or one developed for another entity.
- 2. Intention and alignment (weight: 15%)**  
Clearly articulated intention, showing alignment with the destination's business events strategy and with the priorities of the government or municipality.
- 3. Stakeholder engagement and Resourcing (weight: 25%)**  
Stakeholders are clearly identified along with the engagement and partnership processes, and the destination demonstrates commitment through staffing, budget, resources, and client support mechanisms.
- 4. Measurement and reporting (weight: 30%)**  
Defined methods for measuring and reporting outcomes, supported by indicators and evidence of progress or demonstrated impact.
- 5. Communication (weight: 10%)**  
Clear communication of the initiative highlighting purpose, interventions, and outcomes.

# Submission Rules

- Maximum of 8 slides;
- English language only;
- videos are allowed only if embedded or linked, not attached separately;
- links must be accessible;
- no confidential information unless authorised;

Only complete submissions submitted via the dedicated [online Form](#) will be evaluated. Late submissions will not be considered.

**Deadline: 17 April 2026**

For any questions, email Giulia Barbero at [giulia@gds.earth](mailto:giulia@gds.earth)

# Impact Award Past Winners

The Hall of Fame

GDS-FORUM 8

IMPACT DAY



# Past Impact Award Winners

## 2024

The 2024 Impact Award winner was Copenhagen Convention Bureau with its “Copenhagen Legacy Lab” (CLL) initiative, recognised for its original framework to create long-term, positive impacts from congresses and events. CLL stands out by encouraging event organisers to collaborate strategically, ensuring lasting legacies that go beyond economic benefits, to contribute to local development in fields such as sustainability and healthcare. With its open-source tools and research, CLL offers a replicable model for cities worldwide.



Bettina Reventlow-Mourier, Deputy Convention Director of Copenhagen Legacy Lab receiving the 2024 GDS-Index Impact Award from Geneviève Leclerc, Founder of #MEET4IMPACT, and Guy Bigwood, CEO and Chief Changemaker of the GDS-Movement.

## 2023

The 2023 Impact Award winner was BESydney for their impact project backed with a decade of legacy research knowledge. Already piloting the project, their program aims to create positive social change through global meetings from the start of the bidding process to long after the event moves on.



Sebastian Gonzalez, Associate Director – Europe from BESydney receiving the 2023 GDS-Index Impact Award from Geneviève Leclerc, Founder of MEET4IMPACT, and Guy Bigwood, CEO and Chief Changemaker of the GDS-Movement

GDS-FORUM & IMPACT DAY



THANK YOU!

We look forward to receiving your applications.

