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## Victoria, Saskatoon and St. John's collaborate to boost conference tourism

### Cities in Sync is a landmark new initiative to create an efficient tool for planners booking conferences and meetings in Canada

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – Collaboration: two or more organizations working together to achieve shared goals. That's the idea behind a landmark new initiative being launched today by tourism organizations in Victoria, B.C., Saskatoon, SK, and St. John's, NL

Destination St. John's, Tourism Saskatoon and Tourism Victoria are providing a simple and effective way for meeting planners to book their meetings and conferences.

Cities in Sync was announced in Ottawa at the Tête-à-Tête Tradeshow, Canada's largest annual gathering of association executives, businesses and government agencies that procure or service the meetings and conference industry.

"This initiative gives planners peace of mind because they can work through Cities in Sync to book three consecutive events, knowing each one will meet their standards and expectations," said Miranda Ji, Tourism Victoria's Director of Sales for the Victoria Conference Centre and Business Events Victoria. "This is a competitive business space and any edge we can create to bring meetings business to our cities is a win for our regions."

The agreement allows meeting planners to book all three cities to support a natural rotation through Eastern, Central and Western Canada. Importantly, it allows each destination to know they have future business on the books.

Victoria, Saskatoon and St. John's are popular destinations with vibrant conference tourism sectors. As meetings and conferences are often booked years in advance, having business under contract provides some predictability for the tourism sector.

"We are excited about the prospect that this innovative concept will make booking conferences easier for planners. We'll be as creative and flexible as we can. It's a win for the destinations and the planners, said Krista Cameron, Director of Sales for Destination St. John's.

The Cities in Sync initiative also has a marketing component that will be funded by the three cities' destination marketing organizations, and includes incentives designed to appeal to planners. There is also consideration given to associations with bylaws requiring an additional province in the mix, thus creating a four-year cycle.

"We value our Canadian association business and what they can achieve through their national meetings," said Candace Schierling, Director of National Conventions and Event Marketing for Tourism Saskatoon. "Our partnership provides a seamless cross-country experience with incredible landscapes for delegates to experience. Our work together as destinations allows us to provide planners with added tools for a successful meeting and, in turn, our cities will have confirmed economic benefits and increased tourism. We are very excited to be the first cities in Canada to bring this program forward."





## ABOUT:

**Tourism Victoria** (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is the official not-for-profit destination marketing organization of Greater Victoria working in partnership with more than 950 members in Greater Victoria. Tourism Victoria initiatives include Business Events Victoria, sales and marketing for the Victoria Conference Centre, leisure travel, lifestyle and travel media relations, and leisure, sport and cruise sales. Tourism Victoria is also accredited by Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI).

**Destination St. John's** is a private sector company operating under the direction of a Board of Directors on behalf of its partners. It is first and foremost a sales and marketing organization; selling member's products, services and experiences to the world. It currently targets major meetings, conventions and incentive travel (MC&IT); sport and cultural events, leisure travel and group tours.

**Tourism Saskatoon** is a membership-based, non-profit visitor and convention bureau marketing Saskatoon and region as a destination of choice for leisure and business travel. Services include convention and events attraction, media relations, and membership services advocacy. Tourism Saskatoon is one of only a handful of internationally accredited destination marketing organizations in Canada.

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