



## Impact Report 2025

Environmental, societal and economic  
impact across our events and operations

## Introduction

Welcome to the EICC's third annual Impact Report.

While we have reported on sustainability for a number of years, this is the first time we have taken a fully rounded view of our impact, bringing together environmental, social and economic outcomes in one place.

Since opening in 1995, sustainability has been part of how we think and operate. In the early years, our focus was on reducing our direct environmental impact. Today, that understanding has evolved. We recognise that true sustainability is broader. It is about the difference we make through the events we host and the role we play in supporting people and communities locally, nationally and internationally, alongside protecting the natural world.

This year's report reflects that wider perspective, capturing not only our environmental performance but also

the social and economic impact created by the ideas, connections and opportunities that happen here.

Not all impact can be captured through metrics. At the heart of what we do is knowledge exchange, where ideas are shared, challenged and developed through conversation and collaboration. These moments often have the greatest influence, shaping individuals, organisations and wider society, even if they are the hardest to quantify.

A sustainable future depends on openness, collaboration and the exchange of knowledge across industries and communities. By being transparent about our own journey, we aim to contribute to that collective progress and to demonstrate the role business events can play in creating meaningful, lasting impact.

In my first year as Chief Executive, it has been a privilege to build on strong foundations. As we look ahead, we

remain focused on building on that progress, continuing to strengthen our impact and ensuring the EICC plays its full role in supporting positive change locally and globally. We will continue to challenge ourselves to do more, to go further, and to strengthen the impact we create.

**Amanda Wrathall**  
**CEO, Edinburgh International**  
**Conference Centre (EICC)**





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## Why impact matters now

Impact is now both an expectation and a responsibility

Business events bring people together to share knowledge, drive innovation and support economic growth. In 2025, the EICC hosted 175 events, totalling 173,000 delegate days (excluding the Fringe in August) and contributing £76m in economic impact. This brings the venue's total economic impact since opening to more than £1bn.

That value, however, is not without consequence. Events carry an environmental impact across energy use, catering, production and travel, while also creating significant economic and societal value through jobs, investment and knowledge exchange. Holding that balance is an important consideration for our sector. In January 2025, Storm Éowyn

caused widespread disruption across parts of the UK, a clear reminder that climate risk is now operational risk.

Industry benchmarks suggest the average event produces several tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The challenge for our sector is to reduce that footprint, while continuing to bring people together to share ideas, drive innovation and collaborate at scale.

This report outlines how we are responding, reducing environmental impact, strengthening inclusive practice and extending the benefits of events into the wider community.



175  
events

173,000  
delegate days

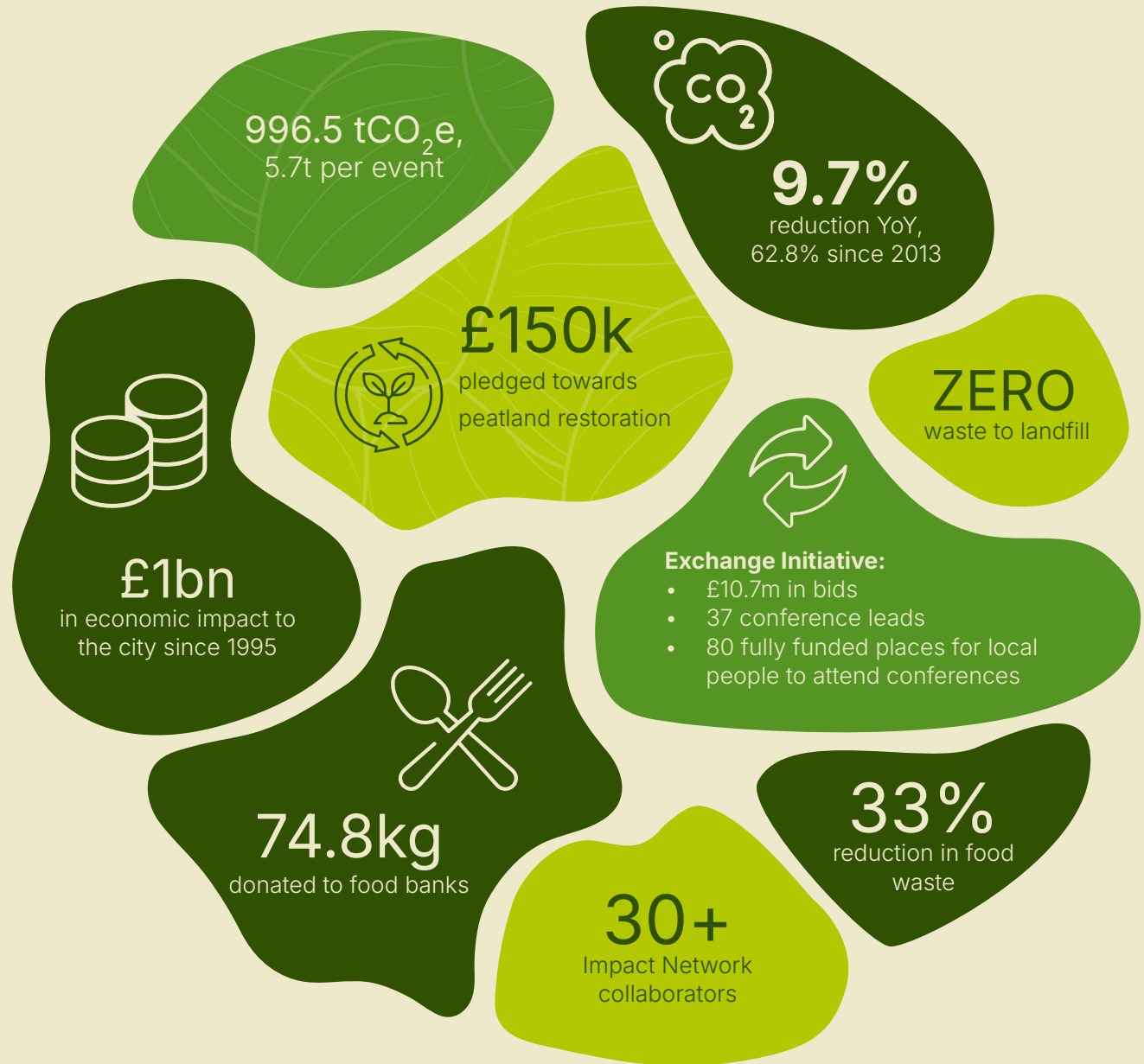
£76m  
in economic  
impact

## 2025 at a glance

The environmental, societal and economic impact created through a year of events at the EICC

Business events inevitably have an environmental footprint, which is why the EICC is committed to investing in projects that create meaningful, measurable change.

Through its partnership with RSPB Scotland, the EICC is supporting vital peatland restoration – protecting habitats that store carbon, support biodiversity and help tackle the climate emergency. As part of this commitment, the venue has pledged more than £150,000 in donations.



## Our impact framework

The EICC takes a triple bottom line approach to sustainability. We believe that true sustainability can only be achieved when economic, societal and environmental considerations are treated with equal importance.

Focusing on just one area in isolation is not enough; only by addressing all three together can we create meaningful and lasting change.

Our sustainability programme, Step Change, brings this to life, making sure environmental performance, inclusive practice and economic value are considered together, not in isolation.



### Environmental

We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint, embedding responsible practices across our operations and supporting projects such as peatland restoration with RSPB Scotland to protect biodiversity and capture carbon.



### Economic

We drive inclusive economic growth by attracting high-value events, supporting local supply chains and creating lasting value for Edinburgh and beyond.



### Societal

We use our platform to connect people, ideas and communities, championing accessibility, inclusion and positive social impact through every event we host.

## Impact through climate action

Measuring emissions allows us, and our clients, to understand the footprint of each event and identify where reductions can be made across energy, catering, production and travel. It also enables meaningful benchmarking against the wider sector.

In 2025, our total reported emissions were 996.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e across 175 events. This equates to an average of 5.7 tonnes per event.

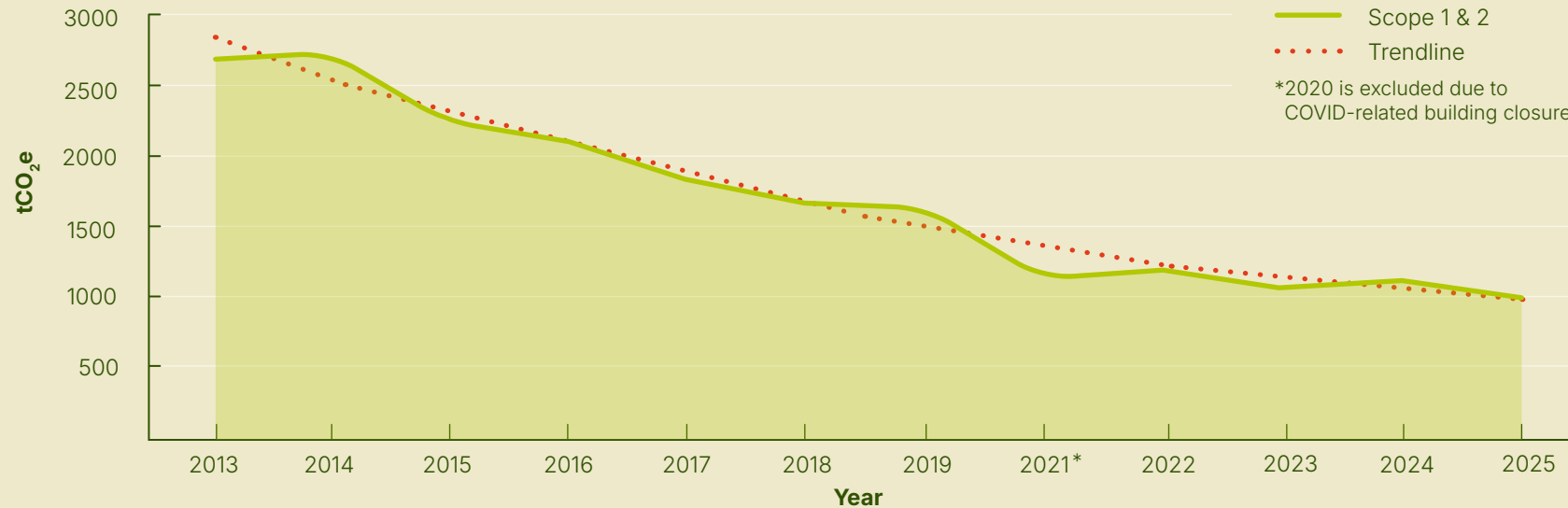
The 2024 Temperature Check published by isla – currently the largest global dataset of event carbon reporting – identifies an average of 7.61 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per event, meaning our events generate around 25% fewer emissions than the current sector benchmark.

Participation is voluntary and self-selecting, meaning organisations already measuring and managing their impact are more likely to report.

In addition, approximately 5% of the events in the dataset were hybrid formats, which typically generate lower in-person emissions.

Against this backdrop, our average of 5.7 tonnes per event demonstrates performance significantly below the current reported industry benchmark and reflects the strength of our ongoing commitment to measuring, managing and reducing event-related emissions.

EICC Total Emissions tCO<sub>2</sub>e (S1 + S2)



Our events generate **25%** lower than the industry average

## Green Meetings

Environmental performance is built into our operations – not added on



### Certified standards

In 2025, we retained the independently certified Green Meetings Gold and Green Tourism Gold Award. We also hold ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard.

This independent certification makes sure that environmental standards are embedded across energy, waste and procurement.

### Food waste

Food waste is down 33% vs 2024, with food prep waste down by 7.5%.

### Waste and circular systems

General waste has reduced significantly since 2013, supported by improved segregation and supplier collaboration.

All residual food waste is processed through anaerobic digestion, contributing to renewable energy and biofertiliser production. In 2025, total food waste fell to 89.7 t, down from 104.9 t in 2024, demonstrating ongoing improvements in food management.

### General waste (tonnes)

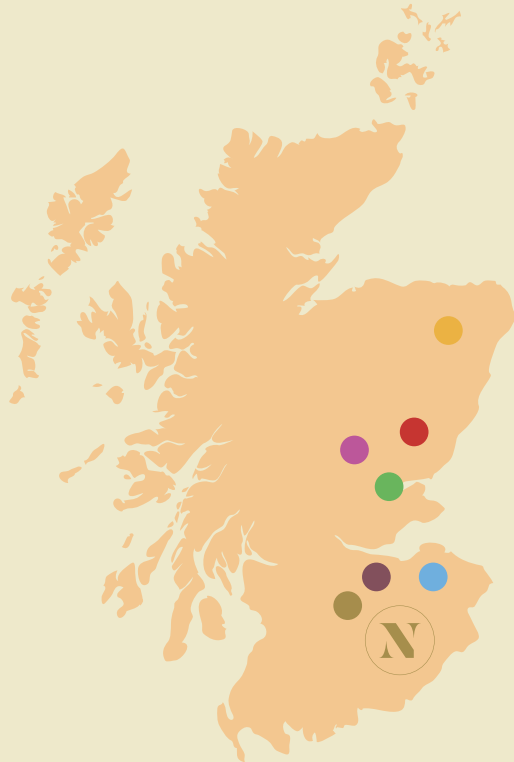


### Glass waste (tonnes)



## Sustainable gastronomy

EICC Nourish: Impact through sustainable catering



### Carbon-conscious menus

Every menu item features clear carbon labelling, helping organisers make informed, environmentally conscious choices. Plant-forward options and predominantly dairy- and gluten-free main courses help reduce emissions and waste while meeting diverse dietary needs.

### Precision and waste reduction

Portion-control measures reduce overproduction, while surplus food is redistributed through OLIO.

### Local producers

We partner with local suppliers including Modern Standard Coffee from Glenrothes, Yester Farm Dairies, and artisan producers such as Cold Town. Around 80% of our produce is sourced locally, and 8 of our key partners are based in Scotland. These collaborations reduce food miles and celebrate Scotland's culinary heritage.



## Making events more inclusive

### Impact through inclusion

The events industry has long been a space for innovation, networking and knowledge-sharing. But for neurodivergent individuals, who make up an estimated 20% of the population, attending conferences and large-scale events can present significant barriers.

In February 2025, EICC, Welcome Brain and ABPCO co-launched the Neurodiversity in Events checklist to address this challenge. Within our team, 13% of colleagues have received in-depth neuroinclusivity training, building our capability to create more inclusive experiences.

Insights from neurodivergent individuals in both personal and professional circles provided further motivation for meaningful change. A recent industry questionnaire reinforced this need, with over half of respondents saying they hadn't received any training on neuroinclusive events but wanted to. These findings highlight a

clear appetite within the industry to better support neurodivergent attendees.

#### What this means in practice:



Clear pre-event access information



Calm/quiet spaces and improved wayfinding



Supplier and team awareness of neuroinclusive needs



A checklist organisers can use to build inclusion into planning



At a major industry conference three years ago, there were important discussions on diversity, but neurodiversity wasn't part of the conversation. That felt like a missed opportunity."

**Gayle McGuinn**  
Head of Association Sales, EICC



The Neurodiversity in Events Checklist can be found here.



## Case Study

### Creating inclusive spaces with Natwest

When NatWest brought their Internal Audit Academy to EICC on 21 May 2025, inclusivity was built into the event from the outset. Guided by the Welcome Brain Neurodiversity in Events Checklist, the event became the first in the UK to achieve Gold-level accreditation.

#### Challenge

How do you design an internal conference that supports different sensory and communication needs – without compromising on pace, professionalism or delegate experience?



#### Action

Using the Neurodiversity in Events Checklist, NatWest and the EICC embedded inclusion into event planning, including:

- Calm/quiet spaces
- Sensory-aware signage
- Real-time captioning
- Clear pre-event accessibility guidance
- A team of on-site inclusion champions

Adjustments were also built into communications, venue layout and navigation from the very start.



Read the full case study here.

#### Impact

Attendees reported feeling considered, supported, and able to participate fully - demonstrating that inclusive design enhances the experience for everyone, not just those with specific accessibility requirements.

“The adaptations we incorporated were small but made a big impact, and we will be looking to embed them into our broader activities.”

**Nick Curle**  
Group Chief Audit Executive, NatWest

## Impact Network

### Impact through partnership

Launched in March 2025, the EICC Impact Network helps organisers extend the value and impact of their conferences beyond the venue and into the wider community.

Aligned with the five pillars of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership and Peace – this network provides structured connections to schools, universities, charities and local businesses across Edinburgh and beyond.

By offering practical pathways to collaboration, the Impact Network makes it easier for events to deliver measurable social value alongside economic and environmental performance.

With over 30 collaborators already engaged, the network continues to grow in 2026 – making sure more events leave a meaningful, lasting legacy.



Find out more about the impact Network



Organisers want to make a difference, but don't always know where to start. The Impact Network makes it easy to connect with local partners and bring impact initiatives to life."

**Elaine Miller**

Association Manager, EICC

#### The five UN SDG pillars:



**People**



**Planet**



**Prosperity**



**Partnership**



**Peace**



“It’s wonderful that the Network is already cranking into action with the connection between Cyrenians and the European Sleep Conference. How exciting!”

**Sophie Bell**  
Cyrenians

## Impact Network in action

### **British Hip Society** *Education outreach*

Partnering with schools across Edinburgh, the conference delivered workshops and career insight sessions that introduced young people to opportunities in orthopaedic surgery.

Recognising that a large percentage of surgeons come from private school backgrounds, the Society places particular emphasis on engaging state schools to help broaden access to the profession.

What began as a single initiative has since become a blueprint for future events, expanding educational reach and long-term influence.

### **Association of Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professions** *Health awareness & community impact*

Public heart health screenings, an EICC Live talk, a walking tour and a fun run raised awareness and funds for the British Heart Foundation.

Momentum from the event helped support the launch of a specialist SCAD heart clinic pilot at Forth Valley Hospital.

### **European Sleep Research Conference** *Community partnership*

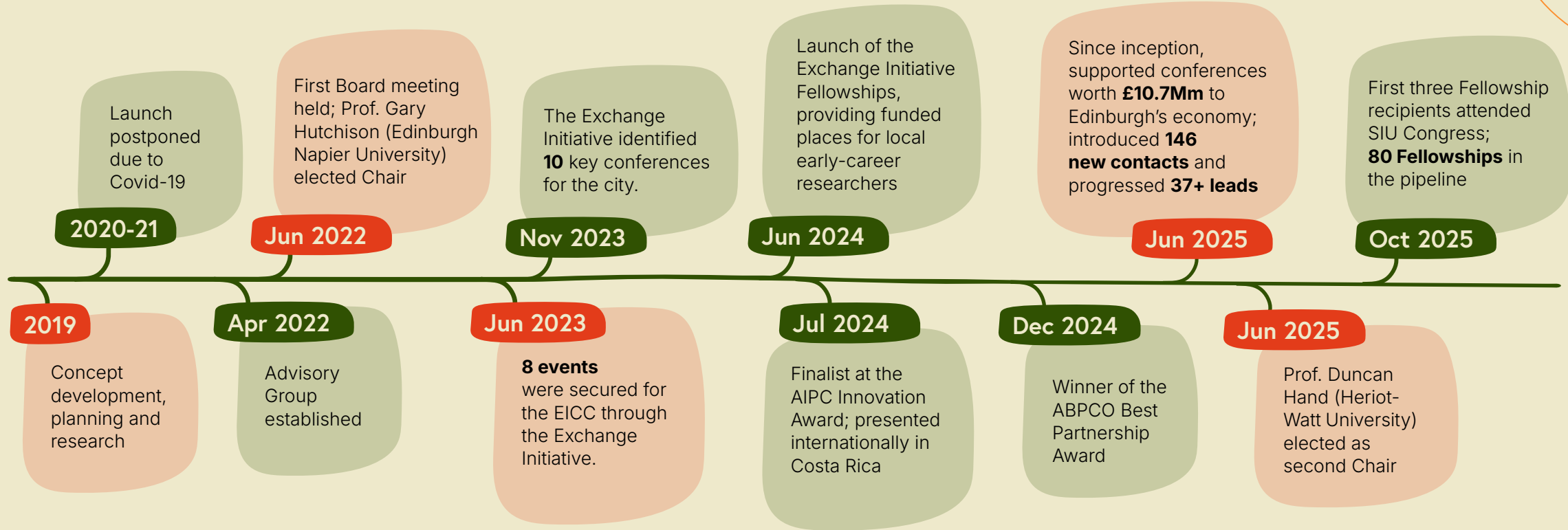
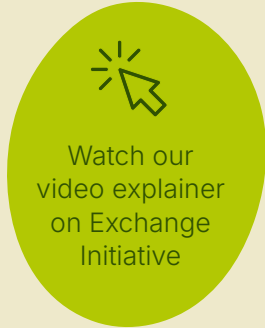
Through the Impact Network, organisers of the 2028 conference are working with leading homelessness charity Cyrenians to create opportunities for meaningful community engagement aligned with the conference theme.

## Exchange Initiative

The journey so far

The Exchange Initiative, EICC's academic advisory group, connects Edinburgh's academic community with the business events sector, supporting knowledge exchange and enabling conferences to contribute to research, innovation and opportunities across the wider city.

Since the introduction of the EI Fellowship initiative in 2024, over 80 fully funded places have been confirmed for local people at upcoming conferences, further extending the programme's reach and long-term impact.



## Exchange Initiative Fellowship

### Supporting emerging talent

Through the Exchange Initiative Fellowship, early-career researchers attended the Société Internationale d'Urologie (SIU) Congress at the EICC – gaining access to a global platform for knowledge exchange and professional development.

The SIU Congress brings together urologists, researchers, nurses, and industry leaders from around the world. For fellowship recipients, attendance provided direct exposure to international research, collaboration opportunities and real-world insight into how academic work translates into practice.

The programme forms part of the EICC's city-wide Exchange Initiative, which connects Edinburgh's academic community with major international conferences hosted at the venue. By offering complimentary registration places, the Fellowship ensures that events hosted in Edinburgh deliver wider community impact and help translate academic research into practice.

With over 80 confirmed places across upcoming conferences, the Exchange Initiative continues to connect world-class events with the next generation of early-career researchers and innovators.



To see the full video about the Fellowship program



The Fellowship has given me a chance to come to this conference and see the research that is happening at the moment"

**Mairead Butler**

Research Associate,  
Heriot-Watt University



  
Read our  
BSI case  
study

## Case study

### Impact beyond the venue

A large international meeting can be both ambitious and accountable, when sustainability is built into planning from day one.

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) General Meeting, hosted by BSI at EICC, brought over 1,300 delegates from 122 countries to Edinburgh. From the outset, sustainability was embedded in the event design, with BSI committing to deliver the meeting to ISO 20121, the international standard for sustainable event management.

#### Sustainability in Action

Certification required close collaboration between BSI, EICC, and event partners.

Initiatives included:

- Zero waste to landfill, with surplus meals donated to families in need
- Elimination of single-use plastics and installation of water stations
- Detailed post-event sustainability reporting
- Accessible, inclusive event planning, including a dedicated accessibility webpage and satellite hubs across the city

#### City-wide impact

Unused EICC spaces were repurposed for public workshops on Smart Cities, AI, Net Zero, and Quantum Technology, connecting delegates with local

  
"We didn't feel like a client with a supplier; it felt like a genuine partnership."  
**Jessica Penney**  
Events Portfolio Team Manager, BSI

academics, policymakers, and the public. Edinburgh became an "event campus," extending accessibility, inclusion, and legacy city-wide.

The General Meeting delivered over 250 sessions with more than 50 local staff involved. It demonstrates how collaboration between venue, client, and city can make sustainability measurable and repeatable, setting a benchmark for future international conferences.

#### Key outcomes:



**122**  
countries



**1,300**  
delegates



**ISO 20121**  
certification



**250+**  
sessions

## Sharing knowledge and best practice

In 2025, our Head of Sustainability, Rob Turnbull, represented the EICC at the AIPC Operational Excellence Summit in Barcelona, contributing to global discussions on how the events sector can build resilience and reduce environmental impact.

By sharing practical insight from the EICC's sustainability journey – including the operational systems, partnerships and long-term planning that underpin progress – Rob helped advance sector-wide learning and best practice.

Alongside international engagement, we continue to support local skills development. We also maintain ongoing engagement with sector and sustainability networks, including the Edinburgh Climate Compact Charter, AIPC Sustainability Working Group, AEV Sustainability Working Group, and our internal Green Team.

### Industry recognition and global impact

Our international impact continued through association engagement. Our Head of Association Sales, Gayle McGuinn, represented the EICC at the ICCA Congress in Porto as part of the Incredible Impacts session, celebrating association events that deliver meaningful, long-term legacy.

The International Papillomavirus Society (IPVS) conference, hosted in Edinburgh, was named one of three global finalists for the Incredible Impacts Award.

This recognition reinforces how conferences hosted at the EICC can deliver impact that extends well beyond the venue and the duration of the event.





It is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the young changemakers from across Scotland, see their passion... and be inspired by how their social enterprise is creating change."

**Kirsty Lynch**

Head of Social Enterprise in Schools (Scotland)

## Social Enterprise School Awards

### Empowering young changemakers

In June 2025, EICC supported and hosted the Social Enterprise Schools Awards, celebrating the achievements of young people creating positive change in their communities.

Delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy, the initiative supports young people aged 5-18 to develop leadership skills and launch their own social enterprises, with mentorship

of experienced social entrepreneurs and practitioners.

To ensure full participation, the event incorporated neuroinclusion measures including clear pre-event information, simplified venue maps, quiet zones and streamlined check-in processes, reflecting our commitment to accessible and inclusive event design.

By hosting the awards at the EICC and providing a welcoming, accessible environment, we helped create an inclusive stage for the next generation of changemakers – empowering young people to share ideas, build confidence and celebrate having a positive impact on their communities.

## Engaging the next generation

### **Power of Events School Ambassadors**

The EICC supported the launch of the Power of Events School Engagement Programme in the Edinburgh region, with several team members registering as Regional Schools Ambassadors. Through this initiative, the team has been actively promoting both the EICC and the wider events industry to young people, helping to raise awareness of career opportunities across the sector.

### **Sustainability and Global Citizenship Fair**

Through ongoing collaboration with Developing the Young Workforce, the EICC engaged with students at the Sustainability and Global Citizenship Fair at Firhill High School, building awareness of careers in the business events sector.

The session explored how the venue contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, while

demonstrating the range of skills required to deliver complex events. Features such as the movable floor and rotating auditorium generated strong interest, with questions about whether they were AI-driven leading into wider conversations about innovation, sustainability and future skills.

### **Local Careers Fair**

The team also participated in a local primary school careers fair, introducing pupils to the breadth of roles within the events industry. For many, this was their first insight into the scale and complexity involved in delivering world-class events. Interest was particularly strong in the variety of events hosted at the venue and the high-profile speakers and visitors it attracts.

### **Portobello High School**

Working in partnership with Developing the Young Workforce, the team welcomed a Travel and Tourism class from Portobello High School for a behind-the-scenes tour of the venue.

As part of the programme, students were challenged to design a sustainable, inclusive and impactful event, applying what they had learned in a practical context.

In the final stage, pupils returned to the EICC to present their event concepts to a panel of colleagues. The standard of work was exceptionally high, with two winning teams selected, recognising the strength and creativity demonstrated across the submissions.

Together, these initiatives support future talent, broaden access to careers in the sector and strengthen the role business events can play in creating opportunity.



## Creating lasting community impact

The EICC's commitment extends beyond event delivery

Through partnerships and team-led initiatives, we work with organisations across Edinburgh, embedding social value into how we operate.

In 2025, this included volunteering with The Larder and Cyrenians, circular economy activity through the Edinburgh Remakery and Social ITAD, supporting access through Exchange Initiative fellowships, and team fundraising at an internal event, with more than £2,000 raised for local charity St Columba's Hospice.

We maintain long-standing relationships with organisations including The Larder, supporting access to learning and good food, and Cyrenians, a leading homelessness charity.

Through volunteering and event-led connections, this work strengthens place-based impact.

Surplus food from events is donated directly to local food banks, separate to redistribution through OLIO, with 74.8kg donated in 2025.

### Circular economy and digital inclusion

Our partnership with the Edinburgh Remakery supports responsible technology reuse and recycling. Tech donation boxes at events contribute to digital inclusion, while using the Remakery as our Social ITAD provider ensures the circular management of retired equipment.



### Contributions and climate actions:



# 74.8kg

of food donated to local food banks in 2025

# EICC Live

Creating space for public learning

In 2025, we delivered six EICC Live events, using our platform to support public conversation on themes shaping society, from circular economy and tech poverty to future-facing innovation. All events were free to attend, ensuring accessibility for the widest possible audience.

Working with a range of community and sector partners, including the David Hume Institute, we supported thoughtful and open discussion, alongside collaborations with organisations such as Edinburgh Remakery to amplify practical action that encourages repair, reuse and responsible consumption.

In 2026, the programme will continue, with talks already planned on topics including robotics and cosmology.

### 2025 highlights:



**6**  
free talks delivered



**332**  
attendees across the programme



See EICC Live talks here



Attendees donated old devices and cables in our tech donation box. This resulted in an estimated saving of 3,455 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e, from equipment that would otherwise have gone to landfill.”  
Edinburgh Remakery

## Looking ahead

We're proud of the progress made in 2025 – and we know it provides a strong foundation and clear priorities for the year ahead.

**In 2026, we will focus on:**

### Reducing emissions further

including the travel and supply chain impacts associated with events

### Growing the Impact Network

helping more organisers build meaningful community outcomes into their conferences

### Improving measurement

so we can report impact with even greater clarity and consistency

### Expanding inclusion

supporting organisers to create welcoming experiences for all delegates

### Capital investment

as part of ongoing sustainability improvements to our building





## A focus on what matters

Business events bring people and ideas together in ways that shape industries, inform policy and influence communities. Our ambition is to ensure that value is created responsibly by reducing environmental impact, strengthening inclusion and extending the benefits of events into the wider community.

By focusing on what matters and working in partnership with clients, suppliers and stakeholders, we will continue to raise the standard for what events can achieve in Edinburgh and internationally. Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, we will invest in capital improvements to strengthen the building's sustainability, supporting its long-term environmental performance and creating an environment where the next generation of ideas can thrive.

The EICC is working towards the City of Edinburgh

**2030**

net-zero emissions target