

## How Stockholm will become one of the most attractive places for international academic meetings

***Stockholm aims to become one of the most attractive places in Europe for international academic meetings. Attraction Stockholm, which is funded by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, is a collaborative project between academia, the City of Stockholm and industry. Within the scope of the project, an action plan and vision for achieving the goal have now been presented.***

International meetings are a critical tool for strengthening the attractiveness of a destination and getting more stakeholders to understand the importance of working strategically over the long term with meetings. Doing so helps strengthen the local colleges, universities and businesses. It also helps attract talent, generate competitive advantages, spread knowledge, foster values and boost the Stockholm brand.

International academic meetings help support the entire regional innovation system.

Results of the project thus far, and the vision for the future, were presented at a knowledge sharing seminar on 30 March 2022. The seminar started out with a presentation by the Chairman of the Steering Group, Karin Ekdahl Wästberg, Innovation Director, City of Stockholm. Karin emphasized how important innovation is to a city's competitiveness, since all parts of the regional innovation system nourish each other and contribute to the whole. And when looking at the big picture, it is clear that international academic meetings play an extremely important role. The City of Stockholm is working strategically to promote innovation. Although the City is already an innovation leader in the EU, it is important to continue maintaining and strengthening its position. Innovation is an important tool for solving challenges over both the short and long term so that Stockholm can remain an attractive place for people to live, work and visit.

Karin Mäntymäki, Director Market Development Visit Stockholm AB, describes Stockholm as a top-ranked destination for academic meetings. Nevertheless, it must strive to strengthen its position even more. Attraction Stockholm has served as a catalyst for the entire ecosystem of those who work with meetings and it has established a long-term collaboration and platform to work from:

*"It is fantastic that we are now able to take the next step. With the goal and action plan that have been developed, we will be able to strengthen our collaboration efforts and find new ways of attracting international, academic meetings,"* says Karin Mäntymäki.

A panel discussion between the various partners who have participated in the project was also held at the seminar. The panel participants were: Jan-Olov Hoog, Karolinska Institutet, Gunilla Iverfeldt, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Andreas Namslauer, Stockholm Science City, Elisabeth Rendahl, Region Stockholm, Emma Mancilla, Stockholm International Fairs and Caroline Strand, CEO at Visit Stockholm. The panel discussed the project's results and importance of building up and maintaining a platform for collaboration between strategic stakeholders and the ecosystem, with the aim of attracting even more international academic meetings to Stockholm.

### **Facts about Attraction Stockholm**

In April 2021, Visit Stockholm and Stadsledningskontoret for the City of Stockholm received SEK 1.3 million from the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth as part of the initiative called *Hållbar platsutveckling inklusive möten och arrangemang* (which means, sustainable location development, including meetings and events) to implement the project, Attraction Stockholm. The aim of the project is to develop new ways of promoting long-term collaboration, innovation and meetings. The collaboration includes representatives from industry, the City of Stockholm and academia.

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