

RWANDA CONVENTION BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Meet in Rwanda

04

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

10

DESTINATION MARKETING

06

CEO'S REMARKS

14

EVENTS HOSTED

RWANDA, A PREMIER MICE DESTINATION

18

PERCEPTION OF THE DESTINATION

08

INSIGHT INTO MICE SECTOR

20

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

09

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

23

2024 OUTLOOK



CHAIR'S REMARKS



... my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff for their hard work and passion, and to all our stakeholders for their commitment and support to the events' industry.

72

It is with great honour that I present the Annual Report of the Rwanda Convention Bureau for 2023. This report highlights the Bureau and the industry's progress and achievements, as well as plans for the future.

Firstly, I wish to thank our esteemed shareholder. the Government of Rwanda, for their unwavering support. The vision that has been set, combined with the trust and confidence placed in the Bureau to drive Rwanda's events industry, has been instrumental in this success. Despite the prevalent global uncertainties and challenges, RCB, together with other industry players, have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, underscoring our commitment to creating value and sustaining long-term growth.

Last year, the sector generated over US\$ 95 million in revenues, with over 160 events hosted and an estimated 65,000 delegates. This represents a 48% increase compared to the 2022 performance.

In a very dynamic business landscape, it is important to stay ahead of the trend, and I am confident that the MICE sector will further increase its contribution to Rwanda's economy through innovation. By investing in talent, infrastructure, and strategic initiatives, we aim to maintain our

growth in the global MICE sector.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff for their hard work and passion, and to all our stakeholders for their commitment and support to the events' industry.

Here is to another year of growth, prosperity, and positive impact.

Fred Swaniker RCB Board Chairman

99

... hosting events creates jobs and fosters economic growth in the country. H.E. Paul KAGAME

2023 End of Year Message



Youth met in BK Arena for the Giant of Africa Festival 2023

CEO'S REMARKS



... 2023 was a remarkable year, and we have demonstrated our ability to remain relevant in a dynamic market.

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Dear Industry Partners and the General Public,

Marked by substantial growth and our adaptability to emerging trends, 2023 was a remarkable year, and we have demonstrated our ability to remain relevant in a dynamic market. Our accomplishments as an industry are a testament to our commitment to growth, excellence and impact.

According to the International Congress and Convention Association's 2023 rankings, Kigali maintains its position as the second most preferred city in Africa for association meetings, while Rwanda keeps

the third position as a country. In 2024, the Bureau will focus on enhancing delegates' experience, strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders and exploring new partnerships, in addition to attracting more business to Rwanda.

As we enter the tenth year of the first National MICE Strategy and the establishment of the Bureau, we appreciate what we have achieved to date. As we reflect on our accomplishments and lessons, we also look ahead with excitement at the potential opportunities for the industry.

Thank you to all our industry partners for your dedication to make Rwanda a top events destination in Africa and beyond. Let us continue to work together to build a strong and sustainable industry.

Janet Karemera

RCB CEO

RCB MANAGEMENT TEAM



Janet Karemera
Chief Executive Officer



Candy Basomingera
Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Frank Murangwa
Director/ Destination Marketing



Sylvia Gasana
Director/ Events Coordination



Paul Mugabo
Director/ Support Services

Insight into 2023 MICE sector: A YEAR OF GROWTH & IMPACT

According to UNWTO Barometer (2024), international tourism made a significant rebound in 2023, achieving 88% of pre-pandemic levels. The sector is anticipated to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels by 2024, following this robust resurgence. Total export revenues from tourism, encompassing passenger transport, reached approximately USD 1.6 trillion in 2023, nearly 95% of the USD 1.7 trillion recorded in 2019. Projections suggest a continuation of this positive trend, with estimates indicating a 2% growth in international tourist arrivals above 2019 levels.

The global event management sector is expansive and varied as per Allied Market Research, encompassing a wide array of events such as corporate conferences, product launches, festivals, and sporting events.

In 2019, the industry was valued at USD 1,135.4 billion, with projections indicating it will reach USD 1,552.9 billion by 2028. This growth is expected to be driven by a compound annual growth rate of 11.2% from 2021 to 2028¹.

Africa notably recovered 96% of prepandemic visitors in 2023, primarily

due to strong demand from European markets. Additionally, according to IATA, the region experienced a vibrant recovery in international connectivity, particularly on intraregional routes and to Europe and the Middle East (UNWTO Barometer, 2024).

Africa is anticipated to emerge as one of the most rapidly growing regions in the MICE industry. Governments across various African nations, including South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Namibia are enhancing their infrastructure and connectivity to establish a stronger presence in the global MICE landscape. The Convention Bureaus are actively involved in marketing, promotion, innovation and the overall advancement of the regional and international MICE industry within Africa. Consequently, Africa is forecasted to become a favored destination for MICE events, driven by its concerted marketing and promotional efforts, which are expected to attract MICE tourists in the years to come².

Rwanda experienced a remarkable rebound in its tourism sector in 2023, with MICE revenue surpassing by

43% and leisure tourism exceeding by 10% over 2019 levels. This achievement is attributed to various strategies implemented, such as sports promotion and air network expansion, with coverage extending to a large portion of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The MICE industry is not merely a facilitator of events; it acts as an engine that drives economic development, fosters innovation, and positions destinations on the global stage. The Government of Rwanda has harnessed the potential of this industry as key to unlocking a multitude of socio-economic benefits for both local communities and the broader national economy.

Rwanda Convention Bureau is dedicated to fostering a thriving landscape for a vibrant events sector that drives economic growth. In 2023, we built upon our strong foundation, achieving significant milestones, and expanding our reach in exciting ways. We are thrilled to share our key accomplishments with you in this annual report.

 $^{1,2}\,https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/mice-industry-market$



Opening of the 73rd FIFA Congress, Kigali 2023, BK Arena

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



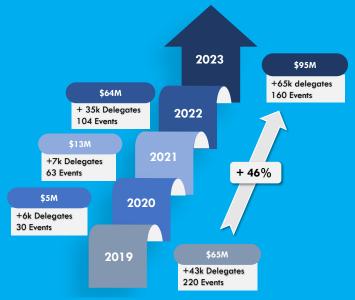
The performance achieved in 2023 surpassed that of all previous years, with over USD 95 million marking the highest revenue earned in the past decade since the inception of the Bureau.



160 EVENTS ORGANIZED

65,000 DELEGATES

48%
Increase in revenues compared to 2022



The events industry continued to experienced a notable recovery in 2023 by achieving the highest record of revenues.



Opening of the Women Deliver Conference 2023, Bk Arena

DESTINATION MARKETING

In an effort to promote and market Rwanda as a preferred MICE destination on the continent, the Bureau led the industry in the participation of different tradeshows, roadshows, international industry memberships and bid presentations.

Strategically, the tradeshows are major platforms for RCB and private sector companies to generate leads for future business and promote the country to international MICE buyers. These included several highly qualified hosted buyers, face-to-face meetings with key decision-makers, targeted business matchmaking and networking with industry colleagues across multiple sectors.

TRADESHOWS









GLOBAL INDUSTRY PLATFORMS

The MICE sector in Rwanda is affiliated with global industry platforms, contributing to destination marketing, generation of business leads and facilitation of knowledge exchange. Key platforms Rwanda is a member include ICCA, IAPCO, UFI and SITE.

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) functions as a worldwide hub for the international association meetings industry, boasting over 1000 members across 91 territories and countries. ICCA serves as a key leader in the association sector, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. By fostering trust and facilitating the sharing of expertise, ICCA aims to unlock the full potential of the association industry, driving positive change in both business and society.

IAPCO is a globally recognized association, driven by its members and dedicated to enhancing standards in the international meetings industry. Comprising top-tier professional congress organizers, IAPCO focuses on delivering exceptional continuing education opportunities and fostering collaboration among industry peers. Renowned for its high-caliber lectures, interactive workshops, social gatherings, and innovative offsite experiences, IAPCO is committed to empowering leaders through its Next Generation Leadership initiatives.

UFI stands as the premier global association representing toptier tradeshow and exhibition organizers, along with fairground owners, major national and international exhibition associations, and key partners in the industry. It champions the significance of trade fairs and exhibitions worldwide as unparalleled marketing and communication platforms. Additionally, UFI offers its members invaluable research and studies covering various facets of the exhibition industry.

SITE, Society of Incentive Travel Executive, is the only truly global business events association dedicated exclusively to incentive travel.

Founded in 1973, they are a professional association of 2,500 members located in 90 countries, working in corporations, agencies, airlines, cruise companies, and across the entire destination supply chain.











BIDS WON

The Bureau, through its sales and marketing department, actively competes for and presents proposals for various events. In 2023, we successfully secured to host 45 events that are projected to generate revenues of USD 32 million over the upcoming years.



Africa e-Governance Conference 2024



SUN Movement Global Gathering 2024



Africa Energy Expo 2024



FIA Annual General Assembly & Prize giving 2024



ISO Annual Meeting 2025



Africa Seed Trade Association Congress 2025



European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership Forum 2025



Men's Africa Handball Championship 2026



IPA Congress 2027



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS:

Government of Rwanda has engaged in fruitful partnership that not only bring events to the country but bring meanignful exchanges, skills and leave a lasting impact. For instance, Rwanda was able to secure 20 events that return annually or biennially. These recurring events have delivered tangible benefits to the destination, contributing both economically and enhancing its visibility. Some of which include:

- 1. Mobile World Congress Africa
- 2. Africa Green Revolution Forum
- 3. Kigali Global Dialogue
- 4. Basketball Africa League
- 5. Move Africa Global Citizen
- 6. Transform Africa Summit
- 7. Youth Connekt







EVENTS HOSTED

In 2023, the hosting of significant events has played a pivotal role in bolstering the country's economic growth and enhancing its overall visibility on the global stage. Among the 160 events hosted in 2023, the following stood out as major events characterized by a substantial number of international delegates, distinguished participants, and their significant economic impact.





FIRST TIME IN AFRICA

Rwanda as a destination has unique selling points that are instrumental in attracting and hosting international events which has earned it a competitive advantage and a recognized brand. This has leveraged our distinctive attributes and strengths, positioning Rwanda as a premier and preferred destination reaping the economic, and social benefits of hosting international events.

Rwanda was able to host for the first time in Africa events like 73rd FIFA Congress, World Tourism & Travel Council Summit, Women Deliver 2023 Conference, World Climate Research Program Open Science Conference 2023 (WCRP OSC), International Congress on Conservation Biology (ICCB), Move Afrika by Global Citizen and Trace Music Awards & Festival.

International Congress on Conservation Biology July 2023

JOY OF WINNING BIDS

The Bureau bids for events and successfully secures businesses to be hosted in Rwanda. Bidding takes time and perseverance: participating in pre-bid meetings, site visits and clarification sessions to gain insights and building rapport with the client/event organizers, showcasing the country's unique selling points, like expertise and past successes to differentiate our bid from competitors.

Among the successful bids won in previous years and hosted in 2023 were; International Congress on Conservation Biology (ICCB), World Climate Research Program Open Science Conference 2023 (WCRP OSC) and Women Deliver 2023









Kigali International Peace Marathon. 18th edition June 2023



SPORTS TOURISM GROWTH

Rwanda continues to seek innovative strategies to boost its tourism sector, evident in its distinct approach of building sports as part of diversifying its tourism sector. This strategy not only benefits the country's economy but also contributes to the development of local sports talent. In 2023, Rwanda experienced a notable increase in the number of sports events hosted, totaling 27 that attracted 13,785 participants. This marked a significant increase of events hosted by 59% compared to 17 events in 2022.

Key sports events hosted in 2023 included:

- Tour du Rwanda 2023
- Basketball Africa League (BAL) Finals, Season III
- 18th Kigali International Peace Marathon
- ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Qualifiers
- Afrobasket Women 2023
- Giants of Africa
- Ironman 70.3 Rubavu

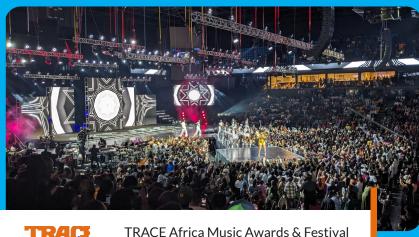
Rwanda has secured the hosting rights for the 2025 UCI Road World Cycling Championships, marking the first time an African country will organize this prestigious cycling event since its establishment in 1921.

Rwanda identified a niche market with sports tourism with a commitment to further invest in infrastructure to enhance the country's reputation as a sports hub. These sports facilities such as East Africa's biggest multi-purpose indoor arena, BK Arena, the Pele Stadium, which was inaugurated on the sidelines of FIFA Congress. The renovation of Amahoro Stadium, which will be able to seat 45,000 people showcases Rwanda's commitment to hosting top-tier events but also provide a platform for local athletes, fostering their development and contributing to the overall growth of sports within the country.

ELEVATION OF CREATIVE ARTS

Rwanda continues to elevate the creative arts industry and in 2023 through the events industry, it was clear that there is a place for creatives. Rwandan artists are increasingly gaining recognition on the international stage through collaborations with artists and cultural institutions from around the world. This exposure not only elevates the profile of Rwandan arts but also provides opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and learning.

The Trace Africa Music Award and Festival brought together music, fashion, and arts, giving young and creative talents a global stage to showcase their skills.



TRACE Africa Music Awards & Festival 2023

The Move Afrika by Global Citizen, headlined by the globally renowned artist Kendrick Lamar, was more than just entertainment. Move Afrika engaged 20 artisans, offering youth skill development and international event training. It provided a unique chance for fashion designers to connect with others in the African fashion and design scene. Local artists seized the opportunity to meet Kendrick Lamar, fostering inspiration, and connections, learning from each other and sharing experiences.

Additionally, the event honored community health workers for their invaluable contributions.



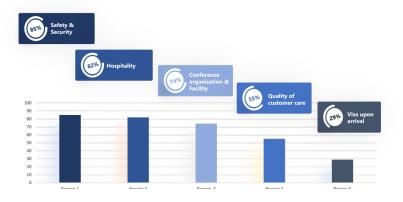
MARKET POSITION

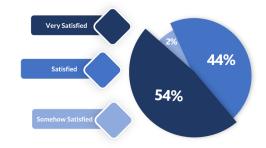


In the ICCA Rankings for 2022, Rwanda held onto its 3rd position, while Kigali maintained the 2nd spot in the Africa rankings. This represents a consistent performance compared to the standings in 2019. Notably, both Rwanda and Kigali have significantly improved from their 13th and 9th positions, respectively, in the 2014 rankings.

PERCEPTION OF THE DESTINATION

Delegates hosted in Rwanda provided insightful observations on the destination. 98% of the participants were satisfied with Rwanda as their preferred MICE destination as indicated in the graph below. 25 events were surveyed in 2023 with over 5,000 international delegates inteviewed via questionnaires administered using tablets.



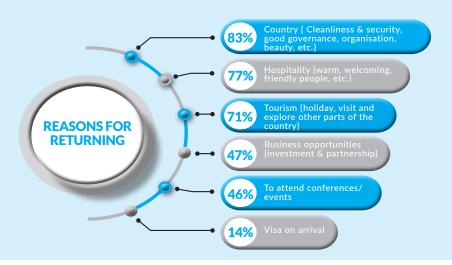


The sample size was determined using a research formula.

Among the reasons for their preference include safety and security, hospitality, conference organization and facilities and quality customer service with 85%, 82%, 74% and 55% respectively.

INTENTION TO RETURN

Survey outcomes reveal that 99% of participants expressed an interest in returning to Rwanda. The main attractions include cleanliness, safety and security, good governance, organization, among others.



SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS

The industry has made commendable strides in advancing environmental sustainability, with several key players leading the charge by implementing eco-friendly practices across the sector.

The Bureau has taken a proactive step toward the use of QR codes and digital collateral in lieu of printed Meeting Planner's Guide, Incentive Planner's Guide, and Dine-around resources. This initiative marks a significant shift towards sustainable practices and reducing paper waste. By transitioning these resources online, the Bureau not only streamlines accessibility but also enhances convenience for users who can now access information instantaneously from their digital devices.

Radisson Blu and Kigali Convention Centre have been awarded the prestigious International Environmental Green Key Certificate in 2023, which serves as a testament to their unwavering



dedication to fostering environmental awareness, sustainability and responsible practices within their business operations. This recognition underscores their proactive efforts to integrate eco-friendly initiatives into their daily practices, ranging from energy conservation and waste reduction to community engagement and environmental stewardship.

Planitswiss, a Professional Conference Organisig Company based in Rwanda has initiated a sustainable initiative by repurposing backdrop banners into functional items such as bags, raincoats, and tote bags. This innovative approach aims to minimize wastage and reduce pollution. Furthermore, they plan to distribute these upcycled products to students in schools, thereby not only promoting environmental consciousness but also providing practical and eco-friendly solutions for everyday needs.

Furthermore, Premier Transport Services as a key transportation provider vowed to introduced innovative solutions to reduce emissions and promote eco-friendly travel options. This includes the adoption of electric or hybrid vehicles to minimize fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Enhancing the staff capacity to perform effectively and efficiently in achieving the Bureau's objectives was a top key priority in 2023. The development of the Bureau's staff's capacities results in a more robust organization, consequently fortifying the destination.

The Bureau facilitated training sessions to enhance the skills of more than 30% employees in various domains such as project management, sales, and marketing. The training covered certifications like Certified International Convention Executives (ICCA), Certified Professional Sales Person (National Association of Sales Professionals), Project Management Professionals (PMP by PMI), and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CMI), among others.

30%
Staff skills
enhancement
facilitated in
CICE, ICCA, CPSP,
NASP,PMP,PMI & CMI.

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

The MICE industry acts as a catalyst for local businesses, including hotels/venues, restaurants, Professional Conferences Organisers and transportation services, as well as promoting Made in Rwanda products, among other sectors. Here is what stakeholders in their respective sectors had to say about 2023.

What an incredible year 2023 was for us! the events industry was flooded with opportunity and we took full advantage of this. We believe every company has their own unique offer and our strength will always be our personnel who are young, creative and not scared of taking risks. We have been blessed to be able to produce events that allow us to create imaginative concepts that give prominence to our culture but at the same time manage highly professional, well-structured events that have developed the team's skill, discipline and knowledge. We were honoured to be selected to produce and manage some of the highlighted events listed on the RCB 2023 calendar like the 73rd FIFA Congress, Ironman 70.3 Rwanda, Unleash Rwanda which hosted over 1,000 delegates from over 50 countries in the world and finishing the year off with the well-attended International Water Congress. Watch out for us in 2024! We look forward to a busy year as our team of personnel and equipment offering has increased in anticipation of a promising future for our industry. We also plan to curate our own events especially targeting the sports sector and new facilities and venues like the new stadium.

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Brenda Anderson CEO Ikaze PCO

2023 has been an amazing journey to the Guest Pro Tours & Services team. It has been a year where we expanded in all ways and got plenty opportunities such as providing logistics for different events in partnership with RCB. Such events were 73rd FIFA congress, Africa Health Agenda International Conference 2023, Kigali International Peace Marathon and others. These events contributed in helping us unleash our potential as well as amplifying our skills and experience. We believe 2024 will be a busier year and our plan is to put all our efforts as our vision is to create quality transportation services and increase our fleet in order to serve all kinds of customers.

Patrick Rukundo
Managing Director
Guest Pro Tours & Services.



2023 has been an amazing year for our two properties Kigali Marriott and Four Points by Sheraton Kigali. As for Kigali Marriott we hit the record turnover year since hotel opening in 2016. We ended up with a Total Hotel Revenue of 24.4% above budget. Occupancy was split between transient business and groups accounting respectively for 68% and 30% (the other 2% were coming from crew business). The groups segment has been remarkably sustained by the city-wide events that could help us optimize our revenues and yield accordingly: FIFA Conference (March 2023), BAL (May 2023), Women Deliver (July 2023) and Giants of Africa (August 2023). We look forward to another amazing year and we would also like to seize this opportunity to sincerely thank RCB for its active efforts in promoting Rwanda as a must-visit destination and for branding Kigali as the MICE hub in Africa. This has created a favorable environment where all stakeholders could thrive and win together from hoteliers, to tour operators, to PCOs to transportation companies.

MARRIOTT KIGALI



Mohamed Derouiche
Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing
Kigali Marriott and Four Points by Sheraton Kigali

The year 2023 marked a pinnacle for our organization, setting a new standard for excellence. It commenced with notable figures and influential individuals gracing our center. This included visits from ambassadors, leaders, and parliamentarians, aligning with our identity as a women's organization dedicated to empowering women. Furthermore, notable personalities affiliated with Giant Africa and a delegation from the European Union graced us with their presence. This significantly enhanced the visibility of the center.

Then came in the Women Deliver conference, which made the year more successful for us , we produced 6000 bags , and women made money from it , then during the conference all participants came to the center to buy souvenirs and we have sold a lot than what we did last years. That time everyone was talking about our center.

After that came in the Global Citizen, where we had a chance to make lampshade which were decorated on the Kendrick Lamar stage. All these conference brought a big market for the ladies to sell more and earn more income to support their families. And all ladies from the center were invited to the concert of Kendrick Lamar. It was very fun for everyone. So this year the visibility was very high. Many conference coming in Kigali, are a good opportunity for us. People visited our center as a good example of Women empowerment in Rwanda. We became a brand!

Then last year was our 15 th Anniversary, the celebration was on 20 th October, we had a chance to reunite with all our partners and thank them for their support, but also shared our ambition of building an incubation Center for women in Nyamirambo . Where we will have enough space to train and empower more women.

With RCB team and Rwanda Event team, the centre was able to increase the turnover.

'To empower women is building a family, a country and the whole world.'

Marie Aimeé Umugeni President Nyamirambo Women's Centre



In 2023, we increased our vehicle fleet by almost 60%. The new fleet include latest Land cruiser VXR, VIP luxury Hyundai staria vans (first of kind in Rwanda), VIP high roof vans and Hybrid sedan cars. The surge in demand, propelled by the rise in the number of events hosted in 2023, prompted the acquisition of new cars. This, in turn, empowered us to deliver exceptional services to our valued clientele. Digital transformation and e-mobility are our major focus areas in 2024. Our young fleet of vehicles coupled with artificial intelligence initiatives will heighten our service delivery in MICE industry. We will continue to thrive in the industry while striving for carbon emission avoidance by buying more hybrid and electric cars.

PREMIER
TRANSPORT & TOUR
SERVICES LTD

Joseph Kabera
Managing Director
Premier Transport Services

In 2023, the BK Arena in Kigali witnessed a remarkable year of international events, showcasing the city's growing prominence as a hub for sports and entertainment. Hosting events like the 2023 FIFA Congress, BAL Season 3, Women Deliver, GOA, The Boyz II Men concert, the Inaugural Trace Awards, and Global Citizens Move Afrika, the arena drew attendees not only from the region but across the continent. However, a notable observation was that many international event organizers struggled to localize their promotional strategies effectively, resulting in campaigns that didn't resonate with Rwandan fans as intended. Looking ahead to 2024, the BK Arena marketing team is committed to bridging this gap by actively participating in promotional and programming efforts right from the outset, ensuring a more tailored and engaging experience for the local audience.



John Ntigengwa Country Manager BK Arena

2023 has been the best year ever for Radisson Blu Hotel and Kigali Convention Centre, we were 22% up on turnover compared to 2022 and that was a record year. The Radisson Blu Hotel & Kigali Convention Centre excelled by hosting 45 international events, generating more than 80% increase in meeting revenue and s 40% surge in accommodation bookings from 2022. Notably, the hosting of Women Deliver 2023, attracting 6300 delegates over a five-day period, marked a pinnacle achievement. Additionally, our concerted efforts aligned with Rwanda strategy to promote business events through destination marketing, fostering an environment that attracts more impactful events. As we venture into 2024, we remain poised for greater success, contributing to Rwanda's growth as a premier destination for global conferences and events. Thank you to all our stakeholders who supported us during 2023 and more so our management and staff of the Radisson Blu Hotel & Kigali Convention Centre for always delivering outstanding service inline with our Every Moment Matters and Yes I Can attitude.



Rob Kucera General Manager Radisson Blu & Kigali Convention Centre

2024 OUTLOOK:

To learn more, visit our calendar of events on www.rcb.rw/calendar

+90
Confirmed events







AFRICA Africa CEO Forum
CEO
FORUM 16 - 17 May 2024



JCI Africa & Middle East Conference 22 - 25 May 2024



Basketball Africa League Season 4 24 May - 1 June 2024



ICANN80 Policy Forum 10 - 13 June 2024



7th Veterans' Football World Cup 2024 1 - 10 September 2024



Africa Food Systems Summit 2024 2 - 6 September 2024



20th Kwita Izina 18 October 2024



Mobile World Congress Africa 29 - 31 October 2024



Africa Energy Expo - Informa Markets 4 - 6 November 2024



SUN Movement Global Gathering 2024 25 - 28 November 2024





MEET US AT



IMEX FRANKFURT

14-16 May 2024



The Meetings Show - London 19-20 June 2024



IMEX America 8 -10 October 2024



IBTM WORLD-BARCELONA,

19 - 21 November 2024









CONTACT:

Address:

RDB Building KG 9 Avenue Kigali, Rwanda

PO BOX 3267 Kigali, Rwanda