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# A STUDY OF CONGRESS PLANNING AND BIDDING PROCEDURES OF FINNISH UNIVERSITIES

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIPC	International Association of Congress Centers
APM	Association for Project Management
CNF	Congress Network Finland
CVB	Convention and Visitor Bureau
EFCT	European Federation of Conference Towns
FCB	Finland Convention Bureau
IACVB	International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus
IAPCO	International Association of Professional Congress Organizers
ICCA	International Congress and Convention Association
PCO	Professional Congress Organizer
PMI	Project Management Institute
UIA	Union of International Associations

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Finland Convention Bureau (FCB) is a national organization representing and promoting the meetings and events industry in Finland. FCB offers solutions and will find the ideal destination, organizer, city, venue, accommodation, transportation and/or restaurant services to specific needs of various congress organizers. (FCB, 2012) For the whole existence of FCB, it has been working very closely with Finnish universities. But recently, there have been lots of changes in Finnish universities, in many Finnish congress cities, and also in FCB. During the last decade, some Finnish university cities have founded an own convention bureau into their city to increase the amount of international congresses. There isn't any more a unique pattern, how most of the universities are searching, bidding and funding their scientific international congresses. The aim of this research is to examine how various congress planning and bidding procedures are managed and organized in these seven Finnish universities nowadays.

Countries and cities in every corner and continent of the world have been in contest for international congresses more than 100 years ([www.uia.be/history](http://www.uia.be/history)) and will be doing that even harder in the future. In the beginning of this study process the main knowledge base of this research was merely the destination branding, because there exists a hypothesis that destination matters in congress bids. The brand and image of each country and city either support or undermine its reputation as a reliable, professional, international and interesting congress destination. The empirical part of this study also revealed another perspective for this paper. The co-operation between universities and their regional convention bureaus should be strengthening.

The most competitive convention and congress destinations are those that understand the full potential of local convention bureaus and other organizations, like universities, in attracting and serving the convention and meeting industry. These convention bureaus or convention and visitors bureaus concentrate on overall convention destination marketing rather than the marketing of individual



convention service providers. In Finland these offices are mainly called convention bureaus. In the convention tourism it is important to find out the two main customers of the meeting and convention industry; associations and corporations.

This study will only focus on scientific congresses, held by the huge number of associations that exist to represent and promote the versatile interests of their members. How is this related to the university world? Inside one university there are many faculties and peoples related to these faculties are usually members in various associations. Associations hold a variety of meetings, including development and training programs, networking workshops, and much kind of seminars. From the destination point of view, the most desirable and actually visible gatherings are the annual meetings of each association. These events can attract hundreds or even thousands of delegates and these assemblies are very commonly called congresses.

A word 'congress' in this context can be defined many ways in different sources: a big and international meeting, an act or action of coming together and meeting, or a formal meeting in which representatives or experts discuss important matters, make decisions, etc. A convention, a congress, or a conference all used to go within the same category with differences in usage and meaning on an international level. Lawson already in 1980 suggested that:

*Congresses are usually general sessions, mostly information giving and the commonly accepted traditional form of full-membership meeting.*

*Conventions are a term widely used in North America and the Pacific region to describe major or total-membership meetings.*

*Conferences are usually general sessions and face-to face groups with a high participation, primarily concerned with planning, obtaining facts and information, or solving organisational and operational problems.*

Currently among meeting professionals globally, it is really commonly accepted and used that the word 'congress' means **an international association meeting or convention, and usually a congress is academic and scientific based.** That is

why universities and institutes of higher educations have so significant role in the congress industry. (Fagerström, 2013)

## 1.2 Research questions, objectives and scope

The aim of this research is to examine congress planning and bidding procedures of Finnish universities. This study tries to find out, if there are any similarities between these seven universities and their cities, chosen to this research, or are they all working separately in their own ways. Could it be possible to adduce coherent information about these scientific congress procedures? Between congresses and among these convention cities there are usually a quite tight competition; all potential destinations would like to have as much international events as possible. These coming congresses will bring e.g. new money, knowledge and reputation to the region.

The main research questions of this study are:

1. How various congress planning and bidding procedures are managed and organized in Finnish universities?
2. Could it be possible to improve the co-operation between universities and their local convention bureaus in Finnish scientific congress procedures?
3. There is a strong belief that destination and the brand of destination influences Finnish congress bids. Is this true or just a myth? Does the destination brand matters in academic and scientific congress bids?

The decision making process of many congresses is defined carefully in a congress bid of an international organization. The method is clear, but people make these decisions. So every time there is a human factor, which will affect these procedures. Which factors do people evaluate when selecting a congress destination a country and a city? Is there any opportunity to improve the attractiveness of a certain region or area with branding? Keeping the third research questions on mind, it is interesting to cite Simon Anholt (2009):

*“Nobody doubts that countries depend on their images much as companies do: With a good national image, attracting tourists, investors and talent, enhancing*

*exports, and winning the approval of other governments and international public opinion is relatively cheap and easy; with a negative or weak image, everything is a struggle.”*

The author has seen many examples where Finland and various cities or towns have won or lost a competition of an international event. Is this just a matter of luck or is there something else behind these decisions? This study will merely focus on scientific congress procedures which have been conducted by members of Finnish universities. It will also examine if there is any change to improve cooperation between the local university (academia) and its convention bureau (destination) in these congress procedures.

### 1.3 The limitation of Finnish university cities to be chosen to this research

The Finland Convention Bureau FCB promotes Finland as an international congress and convention destination. Leading universities, specialised hospitals and research institutes together with local or national convention bureaus help attract international congresses to Finland. Finns are well known in the fields of technology, biochemistry and medicine, among others. High educational standards have contributed to the emergence of high technology – Finland has been an expert for its mobile phones and it still has more internet connections per capita than any other country (FCB, 2012).

The idea for this research arises from the need of FCB. During the last decade many of leading Finnish congress and convention cities have established their own convention bureau to get more international events to their destination. FCB did not work alone anymore and the information about academic and scientific congresses had spread out all over Finland. FCB wanted to know what kinds of changes have happened inside Finnish universities and their destination cities concerning international scientific congress procedures.

In Finland there are nowadays 21 universities or academies according to Studentum. Together with FCB and their convention director Leena Sipilä, it was decided to examine only those Finnish universities and cities which have their own convention bureau in their region or have worked a long time systematically

together with their local university among scientific congresses. This study will experience the following seven university destinations; Espoo, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku, Rovaniemi and Vaasa. These seven cities and their universities will represent extensively the Finnish congress industry, when they are compared to the list of top 5 Finnish congress cities 2012 (Table 1). It is possible to notice that all five leading congress cities of Finland will be participating into this research.

*TABLE 1: Statistics by Finland Convention Bureau 2013.*

### **Top 5 Finnish Congress Cities in 2012**

City	Number of congresses	Number of delegates
Helsinki	254	40 478
Espoo	78	8 001
Tampere	73	7 300
Turku	65	5 074
Jyväskylä	63	4 802
Total (whole of Finland)	635	77 222

#### 1.4 Knowledge base of the research

The main objective is to study how Finnish universities search, plan and bid scientific congresses to their own destination, but as a by-product this paper will give a general view about the Finnish congress and convention sector and the project knowledge management behind the industry and the relevance of the Finnish brand for scientific congresses. Quite often, people have totally wrong images and thoughts about international congress procedures and the daily work behind these exciting events. The whole industry has a pretty fancy international stamp on top of it. This paper will illuminate the Finnish procedures of the congress and convention industry for wider audience.

When somebody is bidding a congress, he or she is actually taking part in a competition. But, who is competing and about what? Rather simply, there are different types of international congress events – and associations behind them –

which will organize a congress competition, a bid, between various destinations such as continents, countries, cities or regions. Congress delegates will spend a great amount of money to that particular and chosen congress destination, so it is very understandable that a contest among destinations is hard. The empirical research will mainly concern planning and bidding procedures of those Finnish universities and convention cities, which have been chosen to this study.

Two theoretical frameworks in this paper are based on knowledge management in project based organizations and destination branding. The empirical research actually sets out the knowledge base of this paper finally. It came into daylight that there exist weaknesses in communication between the academia and destination. This should be followed up more carefully. How to manage the knowledge between these main stakeholders of scientific congresses? Could it be possible to create better co-operation between universities and convention bureaus?

A scientific congress is a project, where the knowledge and substance of the project comes from university stakeholders. A local university and its professors or researchers commonly represents the knowledge and intelligence of the destination in these academic and scientific events 'congresses'. But this is only one part of the academic congress. A successful international congress includes at least logistics, travel and tourism services, event management and marketing. These latter elements will be dealt with the help of either convention bureau or the professional congress organizer. It depends of each congress. Project knowledge management offers tools for development.

In the beginning of the theoretical part of this research the reader will have a short overview about the history and challenges of the congress and convention industry. It will be also shown how Finland and Helsinki has been ranked in various international congress statistics in 2012. These statistics are the most important indicators in the congress sector globally. Regional convention bureaus are generally funded with public money and these rankings are means to prove the importance of the existence of bureaus. At first the knowledge base of this study will focus on knowledge management in project based organizations. Secondly this paper will focus on destination branding. There exist an advance hypothesis

in this research; destination branding matters in congress bids. At the start of this branding part, the research will give an overall picture of branding for readers and it will help them to understand the definition and content of destination and nation branding. Briefly, this paper will start from the concept of brand and then, gradually, it will narrow the perspective to destination branding, to nation branding and finally to the image of Finland.

### 1.5 Research strategy and approach

The author has worked in the Finnish congress and convention industry more than 20 years and she has a broad experience how to carry out various national and international events in a congress venue. Therefore, the author's personal ambition for this research is to improve her own knowledge about congress bidding procedures of the Finnish universities and their convention cities. One additional flavour of this study is to produce basic information about the Finnish scientific congress and convention sector, because the congress business, stakeholders inside it and common terminology of the industry are not well known. Since the beginning, the author has got a lot of support among FCB and other industry colleagues and it has been stressed a strong need to study these planning and bidding procedures of scientific congresses. The first research question was designed together with FCB and first steps of this study were made throughout the empirical qualitative survey.

The research strategy includes logical thinking behind the knowledge bases of this study and qualitative research approach side by side with the theory. This approach has been helped to establish and confirm facts, and to develop coherent information about the Finnish scientific congress procedures and even some recommendations for the future.

The aim of this paper is to study congress planning and bidding procedures of the Finnish universities in seven selected congress destinations. The main goal of this paper is to produce beneficial information about scientific congress procedures in place for FCB and even for other convention bureaus in Finland. This study approach is diversified in this research among chosen two knowledge bases; knowledge management in project based organizations and destination branding.

The final research strategy consists of dozens of articles, books and publications, face to face interviews, e-mail conversations, and two qualitative surveys. The whole research process has taken almost a year, but most of the work has been done within the last six months.

The approach adopted by empirical qualitative research was very useful in this paper, because it showed a pattern of meaning on the basis of the data which has been collected. This approach made it possible to move from the general to the specific and is can be called a bottom-up approach. As stated earlier, this qualitative research is based on one pre-determined hypothesis; destination branding matters in congress bids. The research subject and the topic of the research were clearly identified together with FCB and Leena Sipilä. First results from the qualitative research were guiding this study towards these selected theoretical bases.

#### 1.6 Concepts of convention bureau and bidding

Convention bureaus represent and promote destinations and their can be funded through different sources. Convention and visitor bureaus (CVB) world wide are usually a non-profit organizations supported by local room tax proceeds, which are paid by tourists or congress delegates staying in the hotels, government or municipal budget allocations, private membership fees or a combination of one or even all three of them. These offices can also be funded with a tourist commission, tourist and convention commission, or other similar variations, depends on each city and their habits. (FCB/KACVB, 2013)

Convention bureaus in each city, country or region commonly have certain prime responsibilities. Here are some quite usual ones listed, according to KACVB:

- *To encourage groups to hold meetings, conventions, events and tradeshows in the city or area it represents; to assist those groups with pre and post event preparations and while their event is in progress.*
- *To encourage tourists to visit and enjoy the historic, cultural and recreational opportunities the destination offers.*
- *To represent a specific destination and help the long-term development of communities through a travel and tourism strategy.*

- *To serve as a community's marketing agency, or other local authorities, by promoting the city's or region's assets to visitors with the objective of increasing the economic impact to the local economy with the greenest and cleanest of economic strategies - people visiting, spending money and leaving the community intact.*

A convention bureau does not actually organize congresses, meetings or other events itself. It helps visitors and organizers learn about the destination and local attractions and make the best possible use of all the facilities and services the destination has to offer. For visitors and for congress organizers, convention bureaus are like a key to the city. As a neutral resource, these bureaus can serve as a broker or an official point of contact for various tour operators, event planners and visitors. They assist these event planners with many ways in preparation and encourage other business travelers and tourists alike to visit local cultural, historic and recreational attractions. (KACVB, 2013)

Travel and tourism enhances the quality of life for a local community by providing new workplaces and posts, bringing in tax money for improvement of infrastructure and services, and attracting facilities like shops, festivals, restaurants, hotels and cultural and sporting venues that round up tourists, delegates and local people. (KACVB, 2013)

IAPCO defines a "bid" as an invitation to host an international congress or meeting in a country. To whom should it be addressed? In most cases the local national group or division of an international organization will need to support the motion and will be responsible for the management of that particular congress. When the national organization has obtained such an engagement, official invitations can be prepared and the bid project can begin.

Bids can be handled in many various ways depending on the destination who expresses the bid. There are cities, which have their own convention bureau and other cities without any at all. Each city or region has its personal procedure together with local organization; who is taking the lead and the initiative on active congress promotion. However, it is important that all stakeholders like the national organization, the local convention bureau, and prospective PCO (Professional Congress Organiser) work together unifying their efforts and



strengths in order to achieve the common goal. Bidding for an international congress requires commitment and drive by all parties involved in the process. (IAPCO, 2013)

Why should a destination bid for a congress? A congress usually brings enormous benefits to the professional community, the city and the country. As a rule, these benefits start months or even years before the meeting; from the moment when the key persons show their intention to bid to host the international event. A chain reaction is created as everyone involved focuses on one goal – winning the bid for the destination. The local convention bureau plays a very important role, usually activating all needed links in this chain. It is able to demonstrate the importance of the bidding. The local community needs to understand how many delegates this congress will bring to the destination and what kind of benefits the congress will bring; what this means in financial terms to the local economy; how many people will be involved in the process (perhaps new jobs) and last, but not least, the opportunity to show the world how wonderful the destination is. Hopefully the destination is able to respond to pre expectations, the brand image of it. (IAPCO, 2013)

IAPCO has made a list of some main benefits of an international congress:

- ***The benefits for the professional community (the Client) include:***
  - *networking with colleagues*
  - *state of the art information*
  - *business exchanges and co-operation*
  - *business opportunities*
  - *maximising attendance from members of the local profession due to the low cost of attendance compared to offshore Congresses (especially in third world economies or other Countries with low or no industry support).*
- ***The benefits for the country include:***
  - *accompanying persons' tours increasing local income*
  - *an increase in tax revenues from commerce (shops, restaurants, hotels)*
  - *opinion leaders talk about their time in the host Country*
  - *increase in the GDP for the Country*
  - *increase in the number of tourists visiting the Country.*
- ***The benefits for the city include:***
  - *generation of employment, by hiring temporary services*
  - *increase in the GDP of the city*

- *increase in the municipality tax revenues from commerce*
- *word of mouth marketing – the delegates tell others about the favourable experience they had in the city and the Country.*

## 1.7 Structure of the research report

**Abstract** is the part where is presented the idea of this research and explained shortly the aim of this study. Abstract gives a quick overview of background, methods and theoretical frameworks. It also shows keywords for database searching.

**Introduction** is the part where is presented the design of the research.

Introduction contains background information about FCB; it also defines main concepts which are related to this paper e.g. a congress, a convention bureau and bidding. Introduction also explicates all research questions, objectives, scope and defines limitations of this study. The research strategy and approach, and knowledge bases of research; knowledge management in project based organizations and destination branding, are presented in this introduction.

**Theoretical framework** is processed in two different chapters. The first one (Chapter 2) is dealing with the project knowledge management and the second one (Chapter 3) concerns destination branding. These two knowledge bases were confirmed throughout the empirical research of this paper. In this part of the research the author has scrutinized dozens of articles, books and electronical sources, which has been mirrored against the research topic and research questions. The author has frequently used the words “how” and “why”, while she has been searching relevant knowledge and information. This theoretical framework contains also the history of convention industry, a quick overview of challenges of the congress sector and international congress statistics, so that the reader is able to see how Finland and our capital city Helsinki are standing globally in the congress sector.

**Empirical research for congress planning and bidding procedures of Finnish universities** analyzes results of the empirical survey which was made among seven Finnish universities and their congress representatives. In this part it is presented all working methods of this empirical qualitative research, the data

collection methods of the survey, the content of the group of analysis, the timetable and other relevant details about the poll. In this section it is also examined Finnish congress professional's views about the Finnish brand for congress bids.

**Research context and methods** is the part where this paper briefly goes through the whole research process and it presents all methods used for this research. Data collection methods, limitations, timetable and all relevant research details about the study are sorted out in this point. Findings, recommendations and discussions are introduced in this part too.

**Conclusion** rounds up the whole research. This is a narrative summary of the study and this part connects results back to the introduction. The main goal of this paper is to find useful knowledge of the congress procedures of Finnish universities, and to study what kind of support project knowledge management and destination branding will offer for Finnish scientific congresses.

**References** keep track of sources throughout the whole research.

## 2 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN CONGRESS PROJECTS

### 2.1 The history and challenges of the convention industry

The human desire and need to exchange ideas and meet is as old as humankind, and that could be the basis of conventions and meetings. Actually, it was only in the twentieth century, when the convention and meetings could be defined as an industry. The convention and meetings industry has grown tremendously during the past decade and nowadays it is a truly global business. Its original roots can be found in North America and in Europe. (Weber&Chon, 2002). Throughout the pre-1914 period, Belgium was the main host country of the international convention movement. The UIA (Union of International Associations) was founded in 1907 under the name Central Office of International Associations by Paul Otlet (considered one of the fathers of information science) and Henri La Fontaine (Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1913) to enhance collaboration between various organizations and to serve as a centre for documentation. (UIA, 2013) Europe and North America are still those main host continents to the headquarters of many international associations and intergovernmental organizations that organize events regularly (Weber&Chon, 2002).

Conventions and meetings are an important part of the tourism industry. The international organization ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) was founded in 1963. The first and major aim was to evaluate practical ways to get the travel industry involved in the rapidly expanding market of international meetings and to exchange actual information related to their operations in this sector. This goal soon proved to have been taken at the right moment: the meeting industry has recently expanded even more rapidly than foreseen in the beginning (IAPCO, 2013). More often conventions and meetings are defined a part of an industry sector, which it is also referred to as the MICE sector (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions). This study will merely focus on the Finnish meetings industry from the perspective of Finnish universities and their regional convention bureaus. The paper will study their international scientific congress planning and bidding procedures.

Interest in the tourism value of various business events, including meetings, conventions, and exhibitions has been intense for so long that almost all major cities now have their own impressive convention and exhibition facilities, along with agencies devoted to selling the space and bidding on events. (Weber&Chon, 2002) The first convention bureau in the USA was established as far back as 1896 (Spiller, 2002) and the International Association of Convention Bureaus (IACB) was founded in 1914 (Getz, 2008).

As long as there have been people, there have been meetings. Archeologists, when they have investigated ancient cultures, have found primitive ruins that functioned as common areas where people would gather to discuss communal issues, such as hunting plans, wartime activities, negotiation for peace, or the organization of tribal celebrations (Montgomer&Strick, 1995). In ancient Rome many buildings were especially used for holding meeting and debates. The Roman Forum was a public square in the center of a city. It was utilized for judicial matters, public discussions and other business (Spiller, 2000). This explains why many terms used in the convention sector today are based on Latin terms. A word 'conference' comes from the medieval 'conferentia', which means "to bring together" and 'auditorium' originates from 'auditorius', which means "place to hear" (Thompson, 1995).

When industrialization passed over agriculture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States and Western Europe, it meant the huge growth of industry and commerce. The need for meetings between entrepreneurs and businessmen made conventions ordinary. (Falk&Pizam, 1991) Meetings in those days were not only enclosed to business people and professionals, but individuals too, who wanted to discuss and change ideas on political, religious, literary, recreational, and other issues. These latter conventions were mainly arranged by various associations, with many of them requiring attendance at annual membership meetings. (Spiller, 2000) The need to found and join associations is keenly built-in American culture. It has a long and respected tradition going back to the pilgrims and their well organized religious meetings (Voso, 1990).

As mentioned earlier, the first convention bureau was set up already in 1896 in Detroit USA. At that time, there were great interest with national trade unions and various professional associations to bring their members together at conventions and various venues around the country. Hotels started to promote their city or region by advertising their facilities and services for hosting meetings and conventions. The economic benefits deserved from convention tourism became more desired by cities. In Detroit they were first who employed a full-time salesperson to their actively growing convention business. Their model became extremely popular and other cities in United States monitored them in following decades. The International Association of Convention Bureaus (IACB) was founded in 1914. During the years the increased need to attract more visitors in addition to convention sector, the association had to add “V” for “Visitors” in its name in 1974. The new name was then the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus. (Schweitzer, 1997)

Perhaps the first truly international congress in Europe was the Congress of Vienna from September 1814 until June 1815 (Rogers, 1998), with delegates representing the most of the major world powers of those days. The two world wars taking place in the first half of the twentieth century in Europe has prevented a more rapid development of the convention industry compared to the United States (Spiller, 2000). Growth in Western Europe in the convention sector started slowly during the 1960s. Many important organizations were founded in those days; the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) in 1663, the European Federation of Conference Towns (EFCT) in 1964, and the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) in 1968.

The convention industry is recognized for a dignified economic contribution to convention destinations in world wide (Dwyer, 2000). The conventions and meetings industry’s recent growth is emerging as one of the most important sectors, not only within business travel, but also in the whole tourism industry. (IAPCO, 2013) In recognition of its importance, conference centres and congress halls are built around the world, not only in the major cities and capitals, but increasingly in secondary and tertiary cities and resort areas (Opperman, 1996). While the convention industry is expanding on a global scale, some continents, North America and Europe, are perhaps reaching maturity (Weber&Chon, 2002).

Growth is likely to continue in Asia. Notable is the emergence of Asian conference destinations on the international congress arena. Especially Singapore appears to be very successful and has been among the top 10 congress cities since 1988 (Opperman 1996).

Over the last several decades it has been seen an “economic development gold rush” in small and medium-sized cities to building up their own congress and convention centers (McNeill&Evans, 2004). These projects have often too easily accepted as a solution for enormous tourism growth without a full understanding of their true costs and benefits to the area. This is a rather typical paradigm for politicians and decision-makers to believe that a brand new venue should solve all tourism problems. It is just one piece of the cake. If a city or a region wants to be a significant congress and convention place – destination, its initial congress and convention hopes should be balanced with all potential realities. Hopefully this study will increase, at least a bit more, the knowledge of convention industry.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington caused of course the tragic human loss, but the business community was also deeply affected by these strikes. The whole tourism industry and especially airlines were most immediately impacted. The resulting fear of flying in the population, combined with the fact that many corporations put limits on travel of their staff members. This led to huge cancellations of travel. Afterwards tens of thousands of people lost their jobs, not only for airlines but also all other tourism industry sectors, and these effects were felt across the world. The convention industry also relapsed right away; there were many cancellations of conventions and meetings, and much lower attendance rate for a long time after these attacks. Fewer participants implicated less hotel nights, less food and beverage revenues, lesser premises and less tourism incomes. (AIPC, 2003)

The economic recession normally impacts direct to corporate events, but it doesn't have same kind of effect to scientific and association congresses. If recession will last for a long time and will increase the unemployment rate, it might influence to the amount of delegates over the amount of congresses. (Fagerström, 2013)

During this study on the congress procedures of Finnish universities it has come to the fore that all stakeholders do not necessarily have converging methods with their congress procedures. It is needed to examine what kind of tools there are available and possible to find in knowledge management for project-based organizations and could it be potential to model these methods to the Finnish congress sector. Before that, it is useful to study how Finland and Helsinki have been ranked in various international congress statistics. As stated earlier, these statistics are the most important comparison tools in the congress sector.

## 2.2 Finland and Helsinki in various international congress statistics

For the past 64 years, the Union of International Associations (UIA) has undertaken, for the benefit of its members and the whole industry, statistical studies on the every year's international meetings. Finland ranked 16th on the list of total **international association congresses** organized in 2012 (Table 2.). The statistics saw Finland climb five positions from 21st place last year. This listing includes altogether 167 countries. The global number of international association congresses organized last year was 10 529. The statistics are based on information systematically collected by the UIA and selected according to its own strict criteria maintained over the years: minimum 300 participants, minimum 40% foreigners, from at least 5 different countries, minimum duration 3 days. There are not purely national meetings included as well as those of an exclusively religious, didactic, political, commercial, or sporting nature, and corporate and incentive meetings, the survey of these areas not being within the scope of activities of the UIA. This is the leading ranking in the congress industry.

On the list of top international congress cities (Table 3), Helsinki ranked 14th, improving excellently from last year's 25th position. A total of 110 international congresses (approved by UIA) were organized in Helsinki in 2012. The list included altogether 1 374 cities globally.



TABLE 2: UIA, press release 4.6.2013

**Top 10 international meeting countries in 2012**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of meetings</b>	<b>Percentage of all meetings</b>
1. Singapore	952	9.5%
2. Japan	731	7.3%
3. USA	658	6.6%
4. Belgium	597	6.0%
5. Korea Rep	563	5.6%
6. France	494	4.9%
7. Austria	458	4.6%
8. Spain	449	4.5%
9. Germany	373	3.7%
10. Australia	287	2.9%
...		
16. Finland		

TABLE 3: UIA, press release 4.6.2013

**Top 10 international meeting cities in 2012**

<b>City</b>	<b>Number of meetings</b>	<b>Percentage of all meetings</b>
1. Singapore	952	9.5%
2. Brussels	547	5.5%
3. Vienna	326	3.3%
4. Paris	276	2.8%
5. Seoul	253	2.5%
6. Tokyo	225	2.3%
7. Barcelona	150	1.5%

8. Copenhagen	150	1.5%
9. Madrid	149	1.5%
10. London	119	1.2%
...		
14. Helsinki		

According to FCB and various international surveys they have studied, the average congress delegate stays in that particular destination for four days and spends approximately 350 euros per day. In 2013, FCB will carry out a detailed survey on congress delegates visiting in Finland, aiming to further investigate the delegates' use of money as well as their impressions of Finland as a congress country. Another main objective is to investigate the effects congresses have on local income and employment.

Latest Finnish statistics presented in May 2013 by Finland Convention Bureau (FCB) show that a record-breaking 635 international congresses were held in Finland in last year 2012 (Table 1.). The number of attending delegates reached 77 222. If it will be compared this number to previous year, the amount of international congresses organized in Finland increased by approximately 60 per cent and that is a huge increase. One key factor in the impressive rise in total congress numbers is the great co-operation between institutes of higher education and various organizations and associations.

All city convention bureaus work hard together with FCB and other branches of industry. In addition, most of the regional congress organizations have nowadays good processes in place for gathering statistical data. The recently established association, Congress Network Finland, is an organization aiming to develop the congress industry and educate professionals in their own business sector. It is an excellent union for all congress professionals to share information and to learn from each others.

*- Information sharing, industry meetings, education and networking have been keywords among Finnish congress professionals of late. The whole industry has*

*drawn from previous years' experiences and started working together towards increasing figures with great results, says **Leena Sipilä**, Convention Director at FCB.*

ICCA's International Association Meetings Tables has also published its own statistics every year. It is important to note that the ICCA database is not designed to include all association meetings taking place worldwide. To be included to this ICCA statistics, meetings must be held on a regular basis, have at least 50 delegates, and rotate between at least three countries. ICCA has released the 2012 Top 20 Rankings for cities and countries in May 2013; ICCA is reporting another year of continued strength in the international association meetings market. In this ICCA ranking Finland stands in the 22<sup>nd</sup> place and Helsinki in the 17<sup>th</sup> place (Table 4.)

*TABLE 4: ICCA country and city ranking TOP 20 measured by number of meetings organised in 2012.*

Number of meetings per country			Number of meetings per city		
Rank	Country	#Meetings 2012	Rank	City	#Meetings 2012
1	U.S.A.	833	1	Vienna	195
2	Germany	649	2	Paris	181
3	Spain	550	3	Berlin	172
4	United Kingdom	477	4	Madrid	164
5	France	469	5	Barcelona	154
6	Italy	390	6	London	150
7	Brazil	360		Singapore	150
8	Japan	341	8	Copenhagen	137
9	Netherlands	315	9	Istanbul	128
10	China-P.R.	311	10	Amsterdam	122
11	Austria	278	11	Prague	112
12	Canada	273	12	Stockholm	110
13	Australia	253	13	Beijing	109
14	Switzerland	241	14	Brussels	107
15	Sweden	233	15	Lisbon	106
16	Republic of Korea	229	16	Bangkok	105
17	Portugal	213	17	Helsinki	100
18	Argentina	202		Seoul	100
19	Belgium	194	19	Buenos Aires	99
20	Denmark	185	20	Budapest	98
				Rome	98

### 2.3 Knowledge management in congress projects

It is useful to define a project at first. It is a fixed-period group activity, with many stakeholders, designed to produce a unique product, service or result. (APM, 2013) A project is temporary. It has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and resources. (PMI, 2013) A congress is one good example of a project. In this scientific congress context it is important to stress that various stakeholders have different type of scopes and resources into the same project. Researchers and scientists (the academia) think about the content and the internal communication of the congress, in addition to this the destination (convention bureaus and destination management) has other, like tourism and business purposes too. Mainly objectives are common, but each stakeholder has its own view to the project.

A project is also unique, it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a singular target. A congress is generally a repetitive event, but commonly it changes its destination annually. Quite often a project team includes people who don't normally work together – sometimes from different organizations and across various continents or countries. (PMI, 2013) All these projects, congresses, must be expertly managed to deliver the on-time, on-budget results, learning and integration that the organizations need. (APM, 2013)

A good and talented project management is one application of knowledge, skills and techniques to execute projects effectively and efficiently. It's a strategic competency for organizations, enabling them to tie project results to the knowledge and learning, business goals and better compete in their markets locally and globally. (PMI, 2013) This is what congresses are. The number, size and complexity of these international meetings have increased significantly over the last three decades. Various reports indicate that project management processes are increasingly being used to implement these special international events even better. (Thomas&Adams, 2005) The project management process can facilitate a more effective and professional management of events, like congresses. I came across that earlier this kind of project management of large events has been considered "*more of a folk craft than a profession*" (O'Toole, 2000).

Over the last 25 years project management has seen the development of a defined body of knowledge, formalized management processes, and institutionalized professionalism designed to improve the management of projects or timed events. Project management as a process for change management, the repetitive nature of the project management process, and the processes designed to meet deadlines have been discussed to demonstrate how they can be adapted to increase professionalism in the management of different type of events.

(Thomas&Adams, 2005) The improvement ability of the project management processes might provide a modified and better management structure to the event management field. The Association for Project Management defines that project management focuses on controlling the introduction of the desired change. The Project Management Institute has noted that processes of project management fall into five groups; initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. These issues involve at least following sectors according to APM:

- *Understanding the needs of all stakeholders*
- *Planning what needs to be done, when, by whom, and to what standards*
- *Building and motivating the team or various teams*
- *Coordinating the work of different people*
- *Monitoring work being done*
- *Managing any changes to the plan*
- *Delivering successful results*

Effective project management is required to have both strong technical skills to help control the hard triangle of time, cost and functional scope as well as relationship management skills to work effectively with people and get the best out of them (APM, 2013). The successful business sectors will be those ones which will manage its projects most effectively, maximising competitive benefits while minimising the inevitable uncertainty. (Hillson, 2003) Project managers also need to have a third skill: it can be call as “knocking into the power lines”. This is a skill beyond the leadership of schedules, budgets and deadlines, beyond managing project teams or leading suppliers and users, and even beyond what is commonly regarded as managing a project's main stakeholders. (Bourne, 2004) This is an interesting perspective; this might be an area where project knowledge management of the congress industry should take up much deeper. Linda Bourne

based her opinion on data gathered from three case studies. She also stated: *“There is a need for project managers to be skilled in managing at the third dimension in large organizations; to understand the need for, have the ability, and be willing, to “tap into the power grid” of influence that surrounds all projects, particularly in large organizations. Without third dimension skills, project managers and their organizations will find delivering successful project increasingly more difficult.”* Project management might achieve better competence in managing this third dimension both through individual effort and with the support of the learning organization.

This third dimension is a fascinating viewpoint. When people are talking about international scientific congresses, they should see this third dimension between these two main stakeholders; the organizer of a scientific congress and the local destination. In the academia there exists the science, knowledge and knowhow, the substance of congresses – a right reason to be a reliable host of an international congress. Then there is this excellent and exciting destination – Finland, which has been seen differently, depending on each spectator.

When a visitor, a congress delegate, looks out from the plane, the first impression he or she may have is that there are an endless carpet of forest, with many lakes and small towns in between. The delegates are taken by surprise when they land in Helsinki to find that the airport is so modern and efficient. No polar bears in sight or walking on the street. It is truly surprising how uniquely exotic each season can be. Four times a year, nature changes its uniform totally – colour, light, temperature, sounds and scents. Everything changes in a way that does not happen anywhere else. The Finns are also considered to be cool – a bit quiet and reserved. However, when congress delegates get to know real Finns, they actually find them warm, friendly, and hospitable and especially honest people. (Visit Finland, 2013) It is quite obvious that best congress and convention destinations are those who have managed to fulfil this gap, this third dimension, which stands between their congress organizers and destinations; in this research context it means the Finnish universities and regional convention bureaus.

Managers in both organizations need frameworks to combine the links between their own organizational culture and knowledge. In that way, they can design and

create behaviors that will support their project management objectives. (Long&Fahey, 2000) *“Questioning fundamental beliefs and existing ways of working is a particular difficult challenge for leadership, but it is usually a key step in creating a new knowledge for the organization (Long&Fahey, 2000).* Both stakeholder parties should be used to the project and knowledge management and they should truly be interested in the common target, that way they will have a chance to succeed together. Both stakeholders should have rather equal maturity level in their project management. (Carver, 2013) In order for an organization to be able to settle whether its project management processes are working, agreed measures are required to enable it to compare its management of projects with best practice or against its competitors (Hillson, 2003). It is possible to note that change programmes, benchmarks and maturity models can play an important part in the project management by defining a supervised route to improvement.

Many project management professionals have developed benchmarks for estimating project management capability with the help of various maturity models. Most of these models put project management capability against bodies of knowledge, and tests the completeness of process coverage (Hillson, 2003). Knowledge and processes are important contributors to project management capability, but they are not the only important element. Many other attributes should be estimated to give a true and overall picture of one particular organisation's project management capability. (Hillson, 2003) In this congress context it is important that both sides (universities and destinations) have as equal and strong maturity level as possible, it will enable the better result in overall project management in congress procedures.

Next two figures from Stephen Carver’s presentation 10.4.2013 about project/programme management will simply show how important the maturity level is in projects. He is comparing different maturity levels and he is also demonstrating what kind of strategic advantage these stages will bring to the project management. Once again it is relevant to keep on mind these two different organisations and their common target, more and better congresses in Finland.

## PPM – Maturity Levels



Cranfield  
UNIVERSITY  
School of Management

## PPM – Strategic Advantage



Cranfield  
UNIVERSITY  
School of Management

FIGURE 1 and 2: Stephen Carver, Cranfield University, 10.4.2013

It is quite likely that there exists the need for various organizations to synchronize the development of the complete project knowledge management process.



Anthony Eve (2007) concentrates on the three key issues of development for the project management structure, “*what we will do*”, “*when we will do it*” and “*how we will do it*”. He thinks these are key elements in unification with an organization's project management maturity, he also defines these questions the typical components of the project management process and how organizations can measure effectiveness of their management in projects to their bottom line performance. The cost of management in project based organizations is not always synchronizing efforts in developing the whole process. It shows how huge investments are not maximized when individual elements of the management system are developed separately. That is why, there is usually the need to establish near, mid and long term change plans, or road maps, which under the control of top management define the development of all aspects of the project management. The overall support of organization is required to develop successful project management and it combines this with measuring project management maturity and the total impact of bottom line performance. (Eve, 2007)

The management of knowledge in temporary project organizations is an increasingly important factor in many sectors, also in congress and convention industry. On the basis of 27 structured interviews with project managers and knowledge management specialists in different corporations, the organization and the success factors of project knowledge management were analyzed in 2009 (Hanisch et al, 2009). Most of these respondents pointed out an urgent need for a significant improvement of project knowledge management, but only in few companies a systematic approach technically exists. The success of project knowledge management is mainly specified by cultural factors and technical aspects, like information sharing systems and talented project management methods. These are often considered to help as supporting factors only. (Hanisch et al, 2009)

Project knowledge management can be divided on ten areas. These sectors should be mirrored against the Finnish scientific congress procedures too. Actually all management is concerned with these items, but project management brings a unique level shaped by the goals, resources and schedule of each project (PMI, 2013):

- Integration, a common goal
- Cost, a skilled budget and business activity
- Human resources, right amount of people in right positions, cooperation
- Stakeholder management
- Scope, an "elbowroom" for the project
- Quality – internal and external
- Communications, a challenge and a chance
- Time, always limited in projects
- Procurement
- Risk management

Knowledge management makes significant impact on the management approach at all project levels (Bratic, 2012). The study of critical factors for knowledge management in project business (Mian et al, 2010) finds that a lack of incentives and the absence of an adequate information system are the most remarkable barriers to successful knowledge management in projects. Project managers should design an attractive incentive package to encourage all project members to participate in knowledge management motions and to suggest new ideas for these occasions. Managers should also make sure that an effective and user-friendly information system will be available before introducing knowledge management initiatives. Their study has proposed a conceptual model of critical factors for management of knowledge in project-based organisations. Six factors have been identified and presented in their model: 1. familiarity with knowledge management; 2. coordination among employees and departments; 3. incentive for knowledge efforts; 4. authority to perform knowledge activities; 5. system for handling knowledge; and 6. cultural support. (Mian, Helo & Kekäle, 2010)

The use of various project teams is an obvious trend in many business sectors and organizations and projects have become a means to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness these days (Gällstedt, 2003; Bratic, 2012). Because the knowledge management design particular body of knowledge within a project, well managed team play will be essential to the successful conclusion of project goals. Knowledge management involves all processes of an organisation to create, store, use and share knowledge and it has been considered a critical

strategy for different organisations to obtain competitive advantage in recent years (Knig, 2001; Ndlela and du Toit, 2001; Ofek and Sarvary, 2001; Bratic, 2012). Many organisations try to understand what they know and where that knowledge is. In project management, knowledge management allows a project team to reduce doing rework and save the time to that it takes to plan projects. Quite simply, if project managers want to have a good control over the project throughout the project's lifecycle, their need to have the right knowledge, right persons and the right timing by reducing uncertainty. (Bratic, 2012)

Surprisingly, knowledge management activities in project-based organisations has extremely little to do with technology; in fact, the focus must be on the behaviour and attitudes of people as determined by the professional, organisational, and national cultures from which they come (Ajmal el al, 2009). In all efforts to implement effective knowledge management, decision-makers must give essential attention to these cultural issues, which are critical for the success of knowledge-management operations. Here are presented three different cultural impacts on knowledge management for leaders (Ajmal el al, 2009):

- ***Create a no-blame culture that is really the key.*** *If people are to be open about their project knowledge, they must feel assured that there are no unfavourable consequences of openness.*
- ***Allocate sufficient time and resources for project post-mortems and documentation.*** *There should be a rule, strictly enforced; that a project is not over until the knowledge gained is properly managed. If possible the post-mortem should be facilitated by a qualified facilitator who is not involved with the project.*
- ***Establish easy to reference project records.*** *These should be with unique reference to documentation of failures and what could have been done to avoid them (this is related to points 1 and 2 above).*

It seems to be a quite obvious that Finnish congress destinations; government of cities and local convention bureaus should work more closely with the Finnish universities, so that every potential, internationally active researcher and scientist will get all possible help and support for their internationalization aspirations and

all major personal association connections are discovered and activated for congress bids locally. These two organizations have to have a common goal – a congress, but they will need each other to achieve it. They must use these knowledge management tools for project organizations, and they have to focus on that third dimension between main stakeholders both through individual effort and with the support of the learning organization. The focus must be on the behaviour and attitudes of people as strongly by the professional, organizational, and national cultures from which they come.

### 3 DESTINATION BRANDING

#### 3.1 Brand, branding and destination brand

A traditional definition for a brand has made by American Marketing Association already around 50 years ago (Malmelin&Hakala, 2008). A brand is “*a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers*”. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name. It does not matter, whether you run a global or a local company, a foundation or a charity, or a one-man-band, you still have a brand (McCartney, 2012). Building a brand means actually the development of entire business activity and it contains several strategical decisions (Laakso, 1999) and it is definately important that everyone involved in brand management is working towards a common goal (Wood, 2000). Products usually have a core and surround. The core specifies the basic features of the product such as functional performance. This is said to be responsible for about 20 percent of the impact of a product (commonly in consumer marketing). The surround directs those features/benefits that are less tangible, and more subjective, such as image. These elements are said to be responsible for about 80 percent of the impact of the product. (Wood, 2000)

The brand is the added value that the consumer is willing to pay more for the product when compared to normal, anonymous product, which also fulfil the same purpose. An unsigned product is a commodity. When the brand cannot offer a better advantage for consumers than your competitors, it becomes a commodity. The fate of commodoties will be determined with the help of markets. (Hafrén, 1994) Strongest brands are like private clubs, which membership is desired by consumers (Laakso, 1999).

If you have a powerful brand, it is as much an invitation for consumers to complain, as it is their guarantee of quality; as much a requirement for companies to behave correctly, as it is a licence for them to make more money; as much a commitment to continuous innovation, as an opportunity to enjoy customer loyalty (Anholt, 2002). It is as much a responsibility as a privilege. Having a

strong brand means living in the limelight, with all benefits and obligations that this special brand offers. We can define it as a kind of natural law, which will bring benefits to both sides. Brands seem to be well-wishing forces in society. It is the power and the nature of brands to bring transparency, honesty and fairness to all ventures. (Anholt, 2002)

It is obvious to think of branding and brands as a phenomenon of present time. Anyway, during the late 1990s and the early 2000s, it has been seen that branding has changed the whole spirit not only for companies and their products and services, but also for municipalities, universities, other non-profit organizations and even individuals. It is possible to state that branding became omnipresent.

But how far back in time does branding actually go? For instance, enterprises that sold patented medicines and tobacco began branding their products as early as in the beginning of 1800s. Around the same time, some fraternities and sororities branded their candidates with admittance rites, as a model of identification and bonding, a practice that has long since been identified as hazing and therefore abandoned. But that is still relatively recent history. Between the 1600s and 1800s, many criminals were branded as a form of punishment and identification. (Daye, 2006)

The word 'brand' is traced back to old word 'brandr', which means "to burn by fire". Ancient Egyptians marked their livestock with hot irons and that process was spread to Europe during the Middle Age and to America centuries later. Such branding helped ranchers to separate their own cattle. (Millman, 2012) In the 1200s, England demanded bread makers, goldsmiths and silversmiths to put their marks on goods, primarily to insure honesty in measurement. In the Medieval times, printers and paper makers, watermarks, and various other craft guilds presented their own marks. But branding goes back even further. As far as 1300 BC, potter's marks were used on pottery and porcelain in China, Greece, Rome and India. (Daye, 2006)

In those early days people wanted to identify source or ownership, hold producers responsible, insure honesty, provide quality assurance, differentiate, as a form of

identification and to create emotional bonding with these marks. It is interesting to realize that people value many brands for the same reasons today.

In 1875 the United Kingdom passed the Trade Marks Registration Act. One year after that, Bass Ale became the first trademarked brand in the world. The distinctive Bass triangle was the first iconic symbol to be registered as a trademark in 1876. Its logo received a trademark protection from the government; it became the icon for a new era of branding. Companies had finally legal protections for their brand identities. (Millman, 2012) In June 2013, Bass Pale Ale announced that it will change its name to ‘Bass Trademark No.1.’, celebrating the brand’s place in history as the first registered trademark in the United Kingdom (Figure 3).



*FIGURE 3: The first registered trademark in the UK, Bass Ale, 1876.*

Trademarks have become important elements for destination branding too. With these trademarks people are able to define and characterize the destination in one way and they also help them to remember the destination even better (Figure 4).

**I amsterdam.**<sup>®</sup>

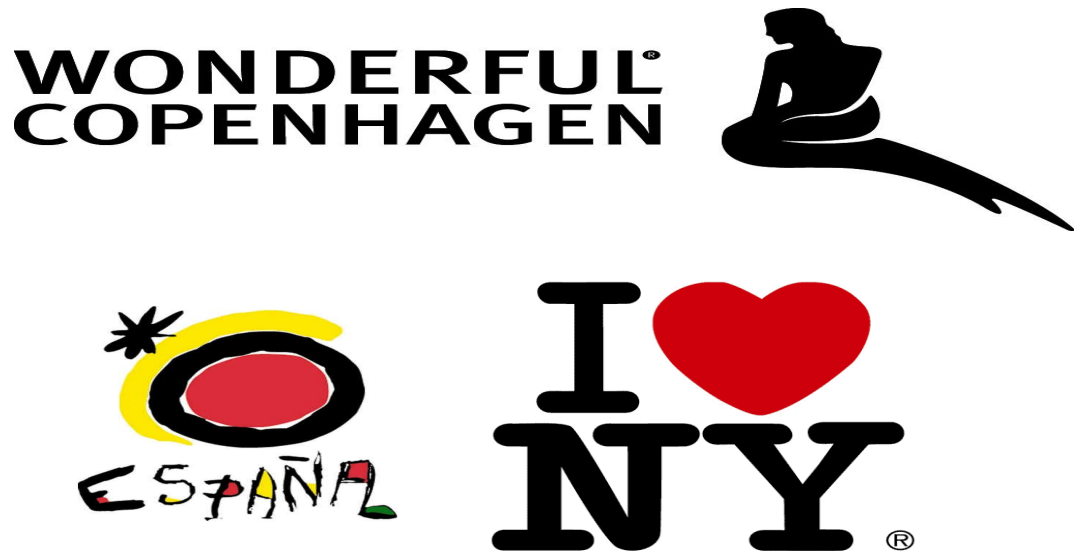


FIGURE 4. Trademarks of Amsterdam, Copenhagen, New York and Spain.

When the author started to collect information and material for this research it was realized that an increasing number of articles about place or destination branding have been published recently. According to Dioko & Harrill in 2010 “A little more than a decade has past since the first scholarly studies to destination branding were published (Gnoth, 1998; Pike, 2009; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998)”. Earlier, the fundamental research question used to be: Is it possible to brand and market nations, places and destinations in the same way as regular consumer products? A decade’s worth of research achievements by scholars and professionals in the tourism and consumer marketing sectors nowadays convinces many from both academia and industry to respond to that question in the positive way. Within this first decade of the millennium, several destination branding projects were started at the national level by various countries. Millions of dollars or other currencies have spilled into research and promotional activities globally. (Dioko&Harrill, 2011) It seems to be a very popular issue; local, regional and national government officials and governments are looking for various branding methods to differentiate themselves on the global level in order to find a competitive edge over rival cities, regions, or nations. Finland was not an exception. Finnish country brand delegation started their work in 2008 and they presented their final report in November 2010.



Normally a product is a physical good, it is tangible. It can be a service, an experience or even an idea. A destination, like a city, is totally different. A city contains physical goods e.g. buildings, monuments, streets and parks. A city can be modern, traditional or historical and it can be located by mountains, by an ocean or a river. A city can have religious and cultural attractions. Throughout various services and events, it can offer the visit experience of the city.

Combining the physical part and the experience part together it is possible to create the image of a city. (Kolb, 2006) The creation of a destination brand has to deal with multiple groups of stakeholders, socio-cultural identities and take into consideration the intangibility and multilateral aspects of a destination (Munar, 2010).

A positive place or destination brand may provide the needed competitive advantage to attract foreign direct investment to that particular destination, foreign talents and tourism, or it can even help increase exports from that place. Place or destination branding are able to focus on the political, economic, social, environmental, historical, and cultural issues related to the ambition of each place. (Fetscherin, 2010) More than a decade ago, when Simon Anholt first time talked about a “nation brand”, he stated that the reputations of countries operate like the brand images of companies and products, and they are equally crucial to the progress, prosperity and good management of those places (Anholt, 2008).

Place or destination branding is a sophisticated matter, because it includes multiple dimensions, levels, disciplines, and stakeholders compared to conventional corporate, product, or service branding. It has also been argued that destinations are too complex to include in branding conversations, because there are too many stakeholders and too little management control, but still branding is one of the hottest topics among destination marketers (Morgan et al, 2002). As mentioned earlier, there are governments and government officials in charge in many branding cases, it might launch some kind of politicized activity or it can spark opposite viewpoints and opinions that have consequences for public diplomacy and international relations (Fetscherin, 2010). However, Simon Anholt’s term, “competitive identity”, better describes the fact that managing the reputations of places or destinations has more to do with national and regional identity and the politics and economics of competitiveness than with branding as

it is normally understood in the commercial sector with products and services (Anholt, 2008). All destinations have their own brand images, but the extent to which they could brand, is totally different subject for another research.

### 3.2 Destination image

The image and the brand of a destination are two different concepts (Munar, 2010). One definition, and commonly accepted, for destination branding was made by Ritchie and Ritchie in 1998. They stated that destination branding is a name, logo, symbol, work mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience. The concept of destination branding is very closely related to concept of destination image. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991) destination image is “*not only the perceptions of individual destination attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination*”. Certainly, destinations have to utilize branding as an effective and innovative tool by building up emotional links with the customer. Destination branding has the potential to create consumer loyalty and position places with customers’ lifestyles and selfimages. Tourism is just one part of any destination’s economy, but it should combine to place marketing, because it supports the overall development of a destination brand. (Morgan et al, 2002)

A destination might have everything to offer for visitors, but it has to have the potential to be a favored destination, if the place is able to fascinate certain images, which should be identifiable with the real destination. A reputation of a destination can never be constructed alone through communications, slogans and logos: It needs to be earned (Anholt, 2009). When consumers select brands from products and destinations, they will make lifestyle statements as they will acquire not only image but also an emotional relationship (Morgan et al, 2002). When a brand has kind of emotional consumer relationship, there is a wide range of chances to differentiate through loyalty, rather than through visible and concrete benefits (Westwood et al, 1999, Morgan et al, 2002). How does this destination

branding benefit various stakeholders in the congress and travel sector? Firstly, it gives one kind of assurance of quality or expectation about it. Secondly, it enables to reduce searching costs, because there is an existing ready commitment to the place, and finally, it helps the destination unique differentiation. Purely in the congress sector, the desirability of the congress location added commonly a powerful reason to attend. Fascinating foreign destinations do not always increase the interest about a congress or a convention, but it may be counted as a fame factor (Russet, 2000; Weber&Chon, 2002).

When promoting a country or a nation as a tourist destination it is important to target not only the traveler but also the traveler's family and friends. Many international congresses have built up a versatile companion program to be a permanent part of the event. This kind of companion program is one good way to increase the amount of congress delegates. Dioko & Evangelista presented their studies in 2010 the top five most influential sources of information and target groups are in promotion purposes:

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Internet
4. Work colleagues
5. Travel books

Still, it is important to remember that people don't change their views about countries, simply because a marketing campaign tells them to do so. Actually they may have held their views for decades. Most publics today are simply too well vaccinated against advertising and too smart about the media to believe pure government propaganda (Anholt, 2006).

It seems that the approach of branding or philosophy of branding in the destination, the good and talented local branding management organisation makes the biggest difference between image building and branding. These branding philosophies are differentiated by the various levels of involvement of stakeholders and involvement of the destination's internal values, towards the destination branding process (Saraniemi, 2010). She also proposed in her studies,

that brand managers should consider more carefully both the internal and external developed activities and factors of the destination. Thus, it is possible to differentiate other approaches of branding from bare image building. Saraniemi saw that identity-based branding is strongly linked to destination branding. It could be based on both internal and external values and identities as well as their interaction in a process of creating the destination brand. Building an image only for customers, it seems to be a too narrow aspect of branding. People should remember that consumers (visitors or tourists) are those participative end-users, who create content and whose contribution to destination branding is remarkable (Munar, 2010).

### 3.3 The challenges of destination branding

Each destination is unique and these various destinations have their own life cycle and an ambition. This disparity of destinations causes a number of challenges, which were presented in Morgan et al (2002) studies. Firstly, most regional or national destination management or tourism organizations have really limited budgets and still they have to market even world wide. The second one is the challenge of politics. The enormous growth of international tourism has made it dominant in the service sector industry in the global economy and it is a huge gage. Tourism is a great driver for funding sustainable community development worldwide, but many nations do not know how to balance the economic growth and the preservation of tradition and natural environment. It is impossible to predict human behavior in globally, it may be more complex than it is presumed. Even the most sensitive development of destination branding and marketing as a tourist attraction, may change the inhabitants' social history and their dynamics of destination. (Ringer, 1998) Morgan & Pritchard wrote in 2002: “nowhere is the paradox of public *policy and market forces more sharply defined than in destination branding*”.

The third one is the challenge of the destination product. Services form a major part of the product “destination”, hence it is useful to understand marketing differences of services compared to tangible goods. Unique characteristics of services: intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability (Kolb,

2006). Marketers should remember these issues when they develop production, pricing, promotion and distribution of destination. The fourth one is the challenge of creating differentiation. When Greg Richards (2001) wrote about creative tourism, he stated that the approach to product development of destination is still too much product-led e.g. festivals, monuments, cultural buildings like museums and so on. He said: *“there is nothing unique about uniqueness any more”*, which means that most products are able to provide strong aesthetic and educational elements, but they are short of other crucial elements of experience – entertainment and escapism. His thoughts have really come true. It is said, we are living in the experience economy at the moment and the way in which each experience is presented has become more and more important. The pure product is not enough; people are ready to buy the personal story or experience behind the product. The versatile creativity in destination branding is important for producers and for consumers as well.

According to Morgan et al (2002) the fifth challenge is the external environment. Actually, all products and services are impacted by various external changes and forces, but destinations are extremely vulnerable to international politics, terrorism, economy and environmental disasters. There is not any chance to guarantee and confirm the final success; the destination would have had an extremely well-funded, well planned and strongly supported branding process ongoing, but still the unpredictability of external environment is always potential.

### 3.4 Nation branding

Why is it so important to brand a country? The world in which we live now, every destination has to compete with every other destination at least for share of mind, share of income, share of talent or even share of voice, because of the globalization. A nation brand is the mix of some core characteristics that could make a country distinctive, memorable and competitive. A country's brand is also a simple and clear measure of its 'license to trade' in the global marketplace, and the acceptability of its services, products and people to the rest of the world (Anholt, 2008).

Many articles around this study, concerning destination branding, have proved that countries depend on their images as much as companies. With a good national image, a country is able to attract tourists (congress delegates), investors and talent, winning the approval of other governments and international public opinion, and no less than stimulating exports. Business runs smoothly and there is a good flow, but with a negative or weak image, everything will be a battle of survival. (Anholt, 2009) Still there is no evidence or even too little studies whether a positive image of a nation is solely the natural consequence of successful expertise of state. Simon Anholt has made a critical question about this issue: *“Does reality merely produce perceptions as an illness produces symptoms, or can working on the symptoms somehow influence the course of the illness?”*

In a global world, national reputation and success increasingly is dependent upon the nation's ability to attract international investment, entrepreneurs, students, skilled workers, tourists, global media attention, and international economic, cultural or sporting events. To improve each nation's competitive edge in this environment, more and more countries will be developing national branding strategies to enhance their individual international profile. (Oxford Analytica, 2013)

Nation branding is dependent on the context such as special events or functions or even other countries. Even many peoples critical of nation branding have admitted that nation brands really exist. What they argue about is whether or how a nation can be branded. The answer depends on how someone defines and interprets nation branding. Nation branding is not a myth. The impact of nation branding should not be exaggerated or dismissed. A classical Greek Athenian philosopher Socrates once said: *“The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear”*. This seems to be true also in the twenty-first century. However, this is just one side of the coin. If a nation wants to change its image, it first needs to change its typical behaviour. Then it also needs to tell all people in the world about these changes. This is because images of one particular nation will not automatically change after changes in reality. The way for a nation or a destination to gain a better reputation is to communicate with global audience as to how good they are - this practice is called nation branding. (Fan, 2010)

It is relevant to realize that nation branding and nation brand are two different concepts. A nation will have a brand image with or without nation branding. As many other non-marketing factors also affect a nation's image, the role played by nation branding may turn out to be only a modest one (Fan, 2006). The image problem of a nation or place is often the reflection of some more serious political and socio-economic troubles in that area. A manicure or a pedicure will not help a cancer patient feel healthy. The City of Glasgow is a good example of reality, which Ying Fan has presented in his studies 2006. The local government of Glasgow has spent a huge amount of money in a campaign to rebrand the city as a cosmopolitan and cool metropolitan city to live in and to visit. The city has gained a new logo and slogan, but that has little effect on the big problems it suffers. The city has the highest unemployment rate, epidemic drug-related crimes, and lowest life expectancy in the UK. Local people at once questioned the reason about rebranding and some even alerted that this facile approach might actually make the situation even worse. They saw that nation branding will not solve a country's problems but only serves as the final touch, the icing on the cake. If economic development in a country is like completing a gigantic puzzle, nation branding is then probably the last piece. Common cores inside a particular country should be in order before any kind of nation branding.

The author had a chance to visit in Glasgow this summer. CNF and Finnish congress professionals' team made a benchmark trip to Scotland. It could be seen that the development plans that they had started more than a decade ago had brought forth results. This group was tourists and they could not find those problems which were presented in Ying Fan's studies. Once again, the city of Glasgow has launched a totally new brand in the end of June 2013 called: People Make Glasgow. Recently there has made huge investments for congress, exhibition and event facilities. The most recent is The Hydro, a building which cost £125million, and it has a capacity for 13,000 people. It is hoped it will attract a million visitors in a year to over 140 events, bringing in more than £130million a year to the Glasgow economy. (Daily Record, 2013) This proves that destination branding means goal-directed and persistent work, but it will get started with the help of devoted people – who will create a clear vision for the brand. Glasgow is

still far behind Helsinki in international congress statistics, but it will be fascinating to follow what happens in the future.

The opposite thoughts are not always true. Big and powerful nations such as the United States and China can certainly attract many negative observations, but the more well known a country really is, the more people are able to differentiate between the positive and negative sides of its brand. On the whole, people are most attracted to countries that mirror pure, coherent values and behaviours on those issues that people value, such as friendly population, competent government and excellent economic opportunities. (Anholt, 2008)

Simon Anholt's focus has been on a bottom up style of action, not top down, when he is managing governments and countries in destination branding. Just as a teacher might seek to improve the ambience in the classroom by giving every student, whatever their level of ability, a sense of their own value, so Anholt believes that helping each country to train its own solidarity to the international arena; it will result in better success. (Adnan, 2013)

Simon Anholt's MARSS model, derived from 20 years of working with diverse citizens of the world, identifies five clear measures on which global reputation depends. In his list the first is the biggest:

***Morality** - how good are you?*

***Aesthetics** - how beautiful are you?*

***Relevance** - how much do you impact on me?*

***Sophistication** - how developed are you?*

***Strength** - how strong are you?*

What used to be the deciding factor in global power games early days, perhaps guns and money? Today they are at the bottom of the list of ordinary citizens' requirements of other countries. The remaining other factors are all elements of soft power, measuring success at engagement, attraction and inspiration.

Globalisation is changing the world increasingly soft - more connected more mature and less macho. (Adnan, 2013) The hard power of guns and money has not left our physical world – not at all, but certain modesty has allowed the benefits of



cooperation and more devolved responsibility to arise. This has been a great seedbed for destination and nation branding.

### 3.5 Destination brand of Finland

Before this research dives deeper into the empirical qualitative research, it could be wise to get acquainted with the Finnish country brand, which was launched in November 2010. That report was entitled “Mission for Finland” and it contains altogether 355 pages. This report lists more than one hundred concrete missions. Some of them are targeted at the authorities, some at business and organizations, and some even at ordinary Finns (Yle, 2010)

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This is a straight quotation, how Ministry for Foreign Affairs expressed shortly this Finnish mission: *“The final report submitted by the Country Brand Delegation concludes that Finland’s pivotal strength is the country’s solution-oriented approach. Our practical and forthright approach to challenges will be in demand in the coming years as global problems come to a head in various sectors of human activity, from water purification to organic food production and education.”*

This country brand delegation, which was set up to improve Finland’s international reputation, stated that our country should profile itself as a problem-solver focused on functionality, nature and education. This delegation, led by Royal Dutch Shell and Nokia Chair, at that time, Jorma Ollila, outlined a strategy to make the country more appealing. In 2008, Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb called on the delegation to fine-tune Finland’s competitive edge. The country brand efforts strive to promote Finland’s economy, tourism and international status. (Yle, 2010) Already in 2010, the Country Brand Index showed that Finland was moving up on the list, being in the 16<sup>th</sup> position from previously holding the 28<sup>th</sup> position, which was obviously good news for everyone working with the Finnish brand in that time. Following two pictures will show Finnish development in that Country Brand Index, in year 2012 already in the 9<sup>th</sup> place (Figure 5 and 6).

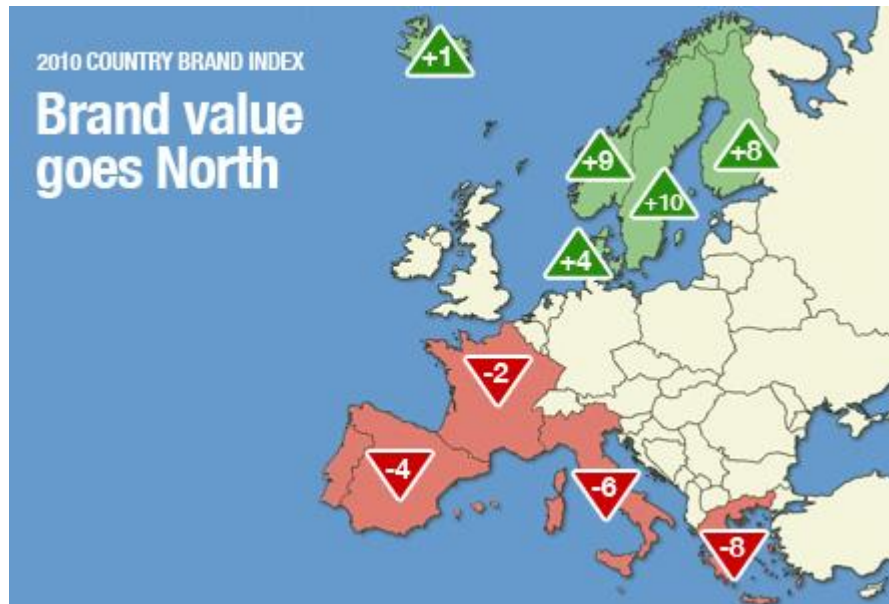


FIGURE 5: Country Brand Index changes in Europe 2010

([www.futurebrand.com](http://www.futurebrand.com))



FIGURE 6: Country Brand Index Top 10 in 2012 ([www.futurebrand.com](http://www.futurebrand.com))

According to the country brand group, Finland's strengths will lie in its negotiation skills, its ability to offer clean water and food, as well as good

education and good teachers. Group chair Jorma Ollila said, in a press conference 2010 (Yle, 2010), that Finns differ from other peoples in having a certain solution-centred approach in their actions. “Competitive Identity” master Simon Anholt worked with the Finnish brand delegation and he instructed to think about the question of *“What can we do, in order for other countries to need us?”* To be able to achieve this, the Finnish brand relies heavily on the character of the Finnish people, the shyness and quietness, but extremely hardworking and driven to achieve results. Simon Anholt even summarized it in two slogans, *“If you want results, get a Finn”* and *“No talking, but action”*.

This country brand delegation also proposed that one boost to the nation's image would be the ability to advertise the water in its 100 of thousands of lakes as being clean enough to drink. The report set up a target to be taken to make this a reality in most of the nation's lakes and rivers by 2030. This would be a great example to the world in the way we Finns are able to manage our waters. Also another proposal in that report was that the share of organic food production in the agricultural sector be gradually raised to one half over the following 20 years.

Countries compete with each other in many different ways. Competition is linked in part to the images on which people base their personal choices. Will they choose Finnish or the product of another country? Will they have a holiday or take part in the international congress in Finland or in some neighbouring country? Of course a positive country brand encourages foreign actors to choose Finland, Finnish expertise and Finnish products – whether the choice is made by a tourist, an investor, a consumer or a company. That’s why the country brand really matters.

The country brand is a question of reputation and image. It should be based on real strengths. Finland has been defined, by the country brand delegation, an efficient and solution-focused country, whose education system and technological expertise is among the best in the world, which has a diverse cultural life, and for which nature is an important resource. As already mentioned earlier, Finnish education and culture are strong components of the Finnish country brand. These two titles do not tell only of Finland as a country, but also the Finns as people. It

is possible to say, that some kind of expertise and creativity are our national soft powers.

The Finnish Tourist Board has made a great presentation about the brand of Finland, and how to differentiate (Figure 7). Real assets of Finland (Visit Finland, 2013):



Finland does not have luxury swimming pools, but Finland has natural coasts.



This is not Finland. Finland is reliable and safe.



Finland is not fine and flashy. Finland is functional and modern.



Finland is not a plastic beauty. Finland means naturalness.



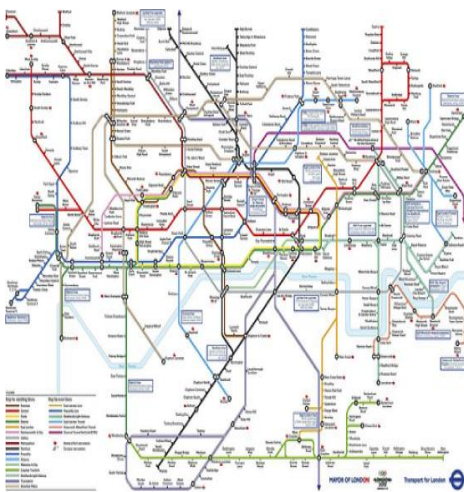
This is not Finland, but the right one is.



Finland is not big and expressive. Finland is small and sympathetic.



Finland does not have complex morality and cultural codes. Finland has easy-going social life.



Finland is not complicated, but easy and safe...

FIGURE 7: Real assets of Finland, the Finnish Tourist Board, 2013

Only with few pictures the Finnish Tourist Board has presented the Finnish brand and Finnish advantages extremely well. This is simple and it shows easily what kind of destination Finland is and what it is able to offer for congress delegates.

The Finnish Tourist Board (MEK in Finnish) is an agency under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy responsible for actively promoting Finnish tourism. FCB – Finland Convention Bureau is part of this board. The board works closely with other ministries, travel industry sectors, transport companies and local Finnish regions. This co-operation involves research, product development and primarily marketing of leisure and business tourism to Finland from abroad. Outside Finland, the Finnish Tourist Board promotes Finnish tourism using the name Visit Finland. VisitFinland.com is the official travel site of Finland. Visit Finland is represented in the following key target countries: UK, Russia, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, USA, China, Japan and India.

The Visit Finland conceptual identity is composed of four characteristics “4C’s”:  
**Credible, Contrasting, Creative and Cool.** These four traits can be defined as Finnish brand attributes. The following marketing themes for tourism have been developed on the basis of Visit Finland’s core values:

***Silence, please** means a counterbalance to the hectic, ever-accelerating rhythm of daily life, Finland offers peace and quiet and space to breathe, even in the heart of the city. Visitors can take things easy, stay at a cottage, enjoy a sauna, and explore an untouched natural environment.*

***Wild & free** means that every traveller would like to experience at least one memorable adventure during their holiday. Finnish nature offers opportunities for spectacular nature activities, such as snowmobile and dog sled safaris, island hopping by boat, canoeing in the archipelago or even a snowball fight in the city.*

***Cultural beat** means the uniqueness of Finnish culture is recognised around the world, from its classic design and Father Christmas to heavy metal music and tasty fresh produce.*

It is not indifferent which country catches more congress fishes. There is an enormous amount of tourism money available in these international events. As it is mentioned already in the beginning, one goal for this study is to examine does this Finnish destination brand support our scientific congress aspirations or not. Are there any kind of challenges between congress bidding processes of Finnish universities and the image of Finland? Do we beat all congress bids – if not – what kind of success and misfortunes Finland has faced? All these theoretical studies during this research have shown that destination branding is important and it matters, but does this go hand in hand with scientific congresses. The empirical qualitative research will go deep into this issue.



## 4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH OF CONGRESS PLANNING AND BIDDING PROCESSES OF FINNISH UNIVERSITIES

### 4.1 The method and the timetable of the empirical research

This empirical qualitative research was implemented in the spring 2013 and last responses were completed in the beginning of July 2013. The final response rate for the poll was 25 % and all seven cities were represented among the answerers. The aim of this study is to compare results between these seven university cities and to see if there is any chance to present a coherent model of these scientific congress procedures. It would be very positive if there is a potential to find new solutions or ideas for getting more international scientific congresses to Finland in the future.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1, p. 88-91) with a cover letter (Appendix 2, p. 92-93) was sent the first time between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April to all 68 potential answerers to the Finnish universities and the note (Appendix 3, p. 94-95) was made in 9<sup>th</sup> of May. It was also necessary to remind these local convention bureaus, at least once, that they should suggest their university contacts to respond to this poll. The final rate of responses was 18, but all chosen university cities were represented among respondents.

The survey was accomplished by the aid of a system of Digium Enterprise made by QuestBack Ltd. All answerers were able to participate in a voluntary lottery where there were raffled 3 packages of 2 person's musical tickets to Sibelius Hall. The content of the survey was formed together with FCB and Leena Sipilä and the final poll contained 11 different parts in all.

Here are listed all questions of this research questionnaire:

1. The congress city of the respondent.
2. Who is responsible for searching and planning of congress bids at your university? (Persons in charge)
3. A short description of a congress bidding process of your own university? (Congress bidding processes)

4. How have your congress functions been activated inside your university?  
(Activation of congress functions)
5. Do you have internal rules for organizing of a congress at your university?  
(Internal rules)
6. How do you market and inform congresses which will be fulfilled in your own university? (Marketing and communication)
7. How have congresses been encouraged and supported by your university?  
(Incentive methods)
8. Do you have an own system of credits or bonus points for congresses inside your university? (Internal system of credits or bonus points)
9. How do you finance congresses? (Finance)
10. How do you compile statistics with your congresses? (Statistics)
11. Do you have some kind of special know-how in your university or in the city, which will support your congress acquisition? (Regional differentiation)

#### 4.2 Limiting the group of analysis

It was essential to find appropriate answerers to this research. The best knowhow of the Finnish congress industry, and right people inside it, were able to look for FCB and regional convention bureaus. Firstly FCB gave their own list of “KOTA”-contacts to this group of survey. These “KOTA”-contacts are persons who annually collect areal congress statistics in different corners of Finland. From that list, it was possible to collect all proper people representing these seven university cities chosen to this research.

The second step was made when it was directly contacted these seven regional convention bureaus and were asked their investment to this research. Espoo Convention (Ann-Britt Jukka), Helsinki Convention Bureau (Ines Antti-Poika), Jyväskylä Convention Bureau (Jaana Ruponen), Tampere Convention Bureau (Ella Näsi), Turku Convention Bureau (Sari Ruusumo), Congress Vaasa (Maria Backman) and Rovaniemi Congresses (Juhani Sallanmaa) accumulated regionally a list of their own relevant congress contacts. Each of them knows like the back of their hands their local university personnel who are mainly dealing with

international scientific congresses. This meant a huge help for the right collection of the group of analysis.

#### 4.3 Persons in charge

In the beginning it is important to know, who is the decision-maker in the congress actions inside these seven universities. That is why; the first question was dealing with policymakers - persons in charge. In this question it was basically wanted to know who is responsible for searching and planning procedures for congress bids in each university. In this level all universities agreed and their replies were very convergent.

Generally it was possible to note that internationally active directors of a research group; professors or university lecturers, researchers, scientists or faculties themselves are key players to looking for congresses. It was notable that many answers **emphasized their necessity to organize international congresses**, they did not talk about searching and planning procedures of congresses, but they emphasized the necessity that they must arrange congresses of their own area if they are working actively inside their international working groups. There is usually one kind of pressure to organize an international scientific congress if a researcher or a professor is energetic in his or her international scientific network. An active action in international associations is part of the daily procedures in various universities.

This first question and its answers introduced many new thoughts to this research. It is notable that there exists this permanent demand among scientists to arrange congresses. So it is extremely essential to achieve a good network between universities and their convention bureaus or other congress stakeholders. The science, knowledge and knowhow direct objectives of the universities, but convention bureaus and local travel agencies have other goals, tourism and travel incomes to the region at least. It is important to get these two organizations to work together so that both of them will benefit from congress industry and both of them will support each other with their own professionalism. This is an essential matter and it is in key position in success. This confirmed the second theory.

#### 4.4 Congress bidding processes

It was crucial to understand what kind of steps people have to take to fulfil their goal to organize a congress. Procedures in these congress bidding processes were also quite equal in these seven universities. It depends on the size of a congress or rules of a congress organization what kind of procedures there are behind the congress bidding process. Small international seminars or congresses could be arranged pretty easily, but relatively often there are converging procedures in these bidding processes. Throughout all replies it was possible to draw a map or a list about congress bidding process of Finnish university:

- 1) The starting point: an association will announce their annual congress for bid or an active professor/a scientist wants to get or bid the congress of their own area to Finland.
- 2) Make a project plan and assemble an organizing committee.
- 3) Contact to the local convention bureau and/or FCB.
- 4) Prepare a bid and/or send an invitation – it will depend on the size and the procedure of a congress.
- 5) Take care of the economy of your congress: budget, finance and accounting.
- 6) Use the help of various local and national professionals for bidding and finance.
- 7) Fix the date of a congress: bookings for the venue and accommodation.
- 8) External help available if needed: PCO (professional congress organizer).
- 9) Marketing and communication together with the university and the network of your congress.
- 10) Clarify the support and hospitality of your congress destination.

It is quite usual that active researchers and scientists have been organized more than one congress during their career. By means of this question it was possible to see that a congress bidding process involves with many stakeholders, but still the primary stress lies in the hands of faculties and their active and earger professors and university lecturers. Without these enthusiastic and well networked scientists there will not be any chance to start new congress bidding processes. At this point, it is crucial to recognize that a university itself does not take care of any congress processes, faculties and people inside them are those real key makers. If there is a huge congress in question, it is essential that these scientists will get all possible

support and help from other stakeholders of congresses like convention bureaus, destination managements, PCO's and even venues.

A congress delegate will participate to a certain congress, because she or he takes an interest in the science and knowledge of that particular congress. The participant makes decisions to participate a congress mainly based on the content of a congress.

Through this research it is possible to emphasize the speciality of Espoo. They have improved their own congress procedures with the help of a congress consultant. Espoo Convention and Aalto-university have made a special co-operation agreement that aims to support inviting international scientific congresses and meetings, planning and arrangements in Espoo. They have employed an own congress consultant to work with professors and scientists and to help them with these bidding processes. According to the agreement the services of congress consultant are free of charge to international congresses and meetings hosted by Aalto University and the scientific community of Espoo. It is prominent that Espoo has gone up to the second place among Finnish congress cities in 2012, just behind our capital Helsinki.

Congress consultant provides consultancy at least in following matters, according to Aalto University:

- *Inviting international congresses and meetings, gathering the presentation material and making bidbooks*
- *Planning the budget, finding out the financial options and VAT issues*
- *Making the task list and scheduling*
- *Finding the conference venue and accommodation facilities*
- *Planning the printing material*
- *Planning the free-time program and accompanying persons' activities*
- *Applying the hospitality from the cities*

This model of Espoo is a very good solution to improve cooperation between Aalto University and the regional convention bureau. This congress consultant, Jan Fagerström, encourages and supports professors to call up congresses of their own sector to Espoo and he then works together with local travel and tourism industry to gaining the whole area. His job is in between these totally different

organizations and backs both of them. This is one positive pattern to manage a project and knowledge in congress sector.

Also Turku can be adduced as an example of one kind of speciality. The University of Turku has had an own congress office more than 20 years inside the university. This congress office was founded in 1992. It organizes mainly scientific congresses, both international and national, but it also welcomes other assignments if available. Their office is situated in the Centre for Extension Studies of the University of Turku, which is part of the Turku Technology Center. During the congress they commonly set up a registration desk at the congress venue. This is a pretty normal procedure also with other congress offices in Finland. These kinds of congress offices provide a full service, including the handling of the registration, accommodation arrangements, social programmes, printed materials and payment transactions, among other things. They also communicate with the speakers and participants as well as the official and social programme venues for the congress organiser. It means a remarkable help for all stakeholders. This office has worked inside the university for such a long time that it can be stated to be an essential part of the university and people have learned to know each other very well.

There might be own congress offices also in the other university cities in Finland, but those have not been revealed through this research.

#### 4.5 Activation of congress functions

Next question was dealing with activation proceedings inside the universities. All respondents were able to think about if there are any special activation actions inside their own university for congresses. As a matter of fact, international activity is one very important indicator in science communities. This was seen also during the first question, when respondents were pointing out those key persons of congress processes. The act of becoming international is a fundamental part of the strategy of many universities. Faculties and their departments are mainly responsible for their active international scientific work, including congresses. This is written in to all scientific functions and to the strategies of the universities. Anyway, throughout this empirical survey we are able to sort out

some little divergences between Finnish universities and their convention cities, how they try to activate congress operations nowadays.

*TABLE 5: Activation of congress functions in Finnish universities*

Espoo	Ambassador lunch once a year. Congress consultant meets professors regularly and tries to activate them to organize congresses.
Helsinki	In 2012 Helsinki University employed a new person, who has got acquainted with congresses and bidding processes internally. This work has just started. The city of Helsinki and University of Helsinki have activated their cooperation recently.
Jyväskylä	Jyväskylä Convention Bureau organizes constantly information events for potential congress organizers. Big congresses will be awarded financially.
Tampere	Tampere Convention Bureau constantly organizes information events for potential congress organizers. Faculties will be awarded with bonus points when they have organized a congress.
Turku	Turku University, Åbo Academy and Turku University of Applied Sciences encourage their staff to work active internationally.
Rovaniemi	University of Lapland encourages organizing congresses, but real practical support is missing.
Vaasa	Faculties take care of often repetitive congresses. No special activation programs.

#### 4.6 Internal rules

It was quite surprising to find out that inside the same university people gave totally opposite answers to this question concerning internal rules of universities for organizing a congress. This proves that respondents rub their elbows in different levels and frequency in congress issues inside their own university. Furthermore, this kind of lack of congress information does not support international efforts of the universities. Basic instructions for organizing a congress should be found much easier for researchers and scientists, because congresses are classified partly of their annual strategy. In these unclear situations it was necessary to double check this information from web pages of each university. Here it is presented a rough summary of internal congress rules of these seven universities:

TABLE 6: *Internal congress rules of Finnish Universities*

Espoo	Practical information for event organizers available.
Helsinki	From the internet pages of University of Helsinki it is possible to find a guide for congress organizers.
Jyväskylä	A very good checking list for congress organizers is available in the University of Jyväskylä web pages. Some faculties have their own congress coordinator, who helps them with practical issues.
Tampere	From the intranet of University of Tampere people are able to find practical information and advices for congress organizers.
Turku	From the intranet of University of Turku people are able to find practical information and advices for congress organizers.
Rovaniemi	No internal rules available.
Vaasa	No internal rules available.

#### 4.7 Marketing and communication

A successful congress is essential for all stakeholders who are dealing with congress functions. It is important that all potential congress participants will be caught up on beforehand. The content of a congress is dependent on experts. Without these specialists there will not be a good chance to network and to get desirable results from the congress.

Nowadays there are versatile marketing channels and tools available. By means of this survey it was possible to realize that some congresses of these universities are already using many instruments to marketing their becoming event. As mentioned earlier, there are financial awards available for a successful congress in some universities; it should encourage organizers to utilize multiple communication and marketing tools. It is also notable that internet and social media has not run down congresses, actually the situation is totally opposite, if we compare international congress statistics. The amount of congresses is not downward at all.

Mainly the congress organizer or organizing committee is responsible of marketing efforts of each congress, because marketing and communication is included to the budget of the event. A congress is able to use the web pages of its own university, but it also benefits the web pages of that particular organization or a congress, if it has own internet pages. Direct marketing to all potential scientific



participants will be implemented with channels of their own science community: internet pages, e-mails, direct mails, event calendars and even social media.

If the congress is organized frequently, it is helpful to start the marketing processes from the previous events or even same kind of events. Nowadays there are facebook pages, blogs and twitter pages opened for congresses. These tools will strike up mouth-to-mouth communication too. Sometimes press conferences or press releases are arranged; before, in the beginning, or even at the end of the congress, depending on the situation at each time.

This part of the survey could not come across with big marketing differences between these seven universities and their congress destinations. Actually all universities have almost same channels and tools available, but people who are responsible for marketing of a particular congress will make those important decisions; how they are going to reach all potential participants from their scientific network. Obviously the marketing budget of each congress defines final limits, but this research has only focused on marketing tools of scientific congresses, all costs are excluded from this survey.

#### 4.8 Incentive methods

The next step in this empirical survey was dealing with incentive methods for international congresses among examinee universities. The main purpose of this question was to find out, if there are any internal incentives or motivation systems available. It is also interesting to research; what kinds of systems are locally offered inside these universities and nationally offered inside the industry too.

In the beginning I have written down some unique features of incentive methods of these universities. In some universities faculties and its departments are able to get bonus points or even financial contribution when they have organized a congress. Mainly universities support their congresses with beforehand agreed personnel resources, free of charge spaces/venues, and case by case defined special services like congress bags, congress folders, notebooks, pencils/pens or even some sponsorship for restaurant services of a particular event. As stated earlier, congresses have been written in to the strategies of universities, that is

why certain amount of working hours are also able to benefit and spend for the use of congress processes. Congresses have been encouraged by the principal of each university. It is quite common, that they back up and help with bids and invitation letters and their moral support is possible to discover from many responses. It does not pull through from this survey if this mental support is enough.

The Finnish meeting industry has at least one national award, which should strengthen the bond between the universities (and their faculties) and the convention sector. The national congress industry **Pro Congress** - merit award is annually dealt out by Finland Convention Bureau (FCB). Professors Pekka Valittu, Timo Närhi and Yrsa Le Bell, along with the whole University of Turku Institute of Dentistry, received Pro Congress 2013 award this spring in Helsinki. These three famous professors have organised three quality dentistry congresses during the last year, one of which drew as many as a thousand attendees. In the long run, the Turku University Institute of Dentistry has organised nearly 40 congresses between 1994 and 2012, attracting a total of 4 500 attendees. These congresses have brought about five million euros to the Turku economic area and gained excellent reputation for the Institute. This Institute is active and innovative in its research, which has resulted in international appreciation. (Ruusumo, 2013).

The competition for attracting international scientific congresses is tough and the inviter's scientific qualification plays a key role along with local infrastructure and the know-how of local congress industry professionals. The staff at various Finnish universities is excellently equipped for international competition due to being experts in their fields of research. In addition, there are very well internationally networked and part of several international scientific communities. These are the key elements in the international congress networks. (Sipilä, 2013)

The University of Jyväskylä has a great incentive for congress organizers. The principal of the University of Jyväskylä awards the employed person, who acquires an international scientific congress to Jyväskylä and/or is responsible for the organisation of the congress. The prize will be allocated to support the international activities of PhD students. The principal of the University of Jyväskylä focus on 2500 or 4000 euros funding, which will enable that particular

congress organizer to send PhD students to foreign scientific congresses. This is an excellent tool for encouraging scientists to seek more congresses to Jyväskylä and this model could be used in other universities as well.

This financial award of the University of Jyväskylä has two categories:

1. 2500 EUR: at least 300 domestic and foreign participants
2. 4000 EUR: at least 800 domestic and foreign participants

*TABLE 7: Incentive methods of Finnish universities.*

Espoo	Support of own faculty and the principal of university for bids and invitations. Technical support and cheaper or even free of charge congress premises.
Helsinki	No special incentive methods.
Jyväskylä	The university premises are free of charge. Some staff resources and services available free of charge. The principal of university awards financially 2 congress organizers annually: 2500 euros (more than 300 delegates) and 4000 euros (more than 800 delegates).
Tampere	Faculties will be awarded with bonus points.
Turku	The university premises are still free of charge.
Rovaniemi	The university premises are free of charge. Some staff resources and services available free of charge. The principal of university usually opens congresses.
Vaasa	Possibility to apply for a subsidy.

#### 4.9 Internal system of credits or bonus points

An international congress entails bonus points in some universities. These bonus points confirm better financing next year for that particular faculty and its department. Each university has its own internal model of credits. According to this survey there are only two universities who will give bonus points for their faculties and departments if they have organized an international congress; The University of Tampere and the Aalto University Espoo. The University of Jyväskylä has its own awarding model which was presented previously. Helsinki, Turku, Rovaniemi and Vaasa do not grant any credits from congresses according to this survey.

#### 4.10 Finance

A talented economy is absolutely necessary in the arrangement of a congress. In this part of the survey there were explicit opinions among all answerers how to finance their international scientific events. Already in the previous articles it has surfaced that a congress must have a totally own budget, it could not be a part of the budget of the university. Majority of respondents stated that attendance fees are the most important part of the revenue of a congress, but still there are many other income sources to look for.

##### Main revenue roots for congresses

- 1) Attendance fees
- 2) Exhibition fees, if the congress has a fair of its own
- 3) State subsidy of the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (Tieteellisten Seurain Valtuuskunta – TSV)
- 4) State subsidy of the Academy of Finland (Suomen Akatemia)
- 5) Subsidy of a foundation or an association, related to the congress
- 6) Cooperation partners and/or corporate sponsorship
- 7) Support of the local destination (e.g. city, region or province)
- 8) State guarantee of operating loss (only special cases)

It is important that the Finnish congress industry has these kinds of organizations where congress organizers are able to seek a subsidy. The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies was established already in 1899. It is a national co-operative body for learned societies in Finland. It issues statements, launches initiatives and makes recommendations relating to academic research activities, especially when it needs to promote the interests of its own member societies.

The learned societies have had a vital role in organising the basis of exhibitions for the Finnish Science Centre Heureka. Another visible event is “Tieteen päivät” a biannual, but regular science festival, co-organised with the Finnish Cultural Foundation and the Delegation of the Finnish Academies of Sciences and Letters. The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies also has close links with Finnish cultural institutes abroad (Athens, Berlin, London, Paris, Rome and Tallinn).

In Finland TSV has a membership of 260 societies from all branches of arts and sciences, in total 250,000 individual members. Every year these learned societies

arrange hundreds of national meetings and international congresses, attended by the academic community, in large level, and the general public too. TSV is also among the first front academic publisher in Finland: more than 100 periodicals and some 250 new titles every year. The Federation also publishes a journal (*Science now*), which nowadays appears eight times a year. The newsletter contains information on the events and publications of the learned societies and on the current issues within the academic community.

There are three (3) categories for grants in TSV:

- state subsidy for organizing international conferences and national seminars
- state subsidy for organizing international conferences and meetings in sports field
- state subsidy to Finnish learned societies for publishing and international activities

The other key player in the funding of congresses is the Academy of Finland. This is a direct quotation of its mission: *“The Academy of Finland’s mission is to finance high-quality scientific research, act as a science and science policy expert, and strengthen the position of science and research. The Academy is an agency within the administrative branch of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.”* (Akademy of Finland, aka.fi)

The aim of the Academy is to contribute to the renewal, diversification and increasing internationalisation of Finnish research. Its activities cover the full spectrum of various scientific disciplines. The funding of the Academy of Finland for research amounts up to 317 million euros in 2013. Each year, its funding benefits about 8,000 people’s work at universities and research institutes in whole of Finland.

It supports and facilitates researcher training and research careers, the application of research results and the act of becoming international. It is keen to emphasise the importance of the impact of research and breakthrough research by encouraging researchers to submit boundary-crossing applications that involve

risks but also offer assurance and potential for scientifically significant breakthroughs.

The organizers of the scientific congresses (international or Nordic) are able to apply for governmental support from the Academy of Finland, when organizing the becoming congress in Finland. Priority will be given to international scientific organizations, recurring congresses. The Academy will issue a state grant from the portion of the total cost of the event to a maximum of 30%. The application period is normally in September. Small individual conferences may apply a subsidy for other times of the year too, however, at least six months before the beginning of the event (University of Helsinki, 2013).

#### 4.11 Statistics

It is essential to keep statistics on congresses. Throughout various national and international statistics (e.g. FCB, ICCA and UIA) there are possibilities to compare the popularity and attraction of each city, area or country. It is always a huge challenge to get all annual congresses visible statistically from every corner of Finland. In this enormous collecting work, all relevant congress contact persons are in key position. The process of congress statistics has developed recently, because of regional convention bureaus and their possibilities to influence and pressure areal operators to share information about their events. No doubt those universities who will get bonus points from international scientific congresses, they will not forget to report their international events. What about those others? There is always a human factor when people report, collect and forward relevant data to the administrator of statistics.

In the congress sector here in Finland the administrator of statistics is FCB that works under the Finnish Tourist Board. All regional convention bureaus, tourist offices, private congress offices and other areal travel agencies should collect basic information about congresses and they should forward that information direct to FCB. This came out through the research too, mainly all respondents noted that they collect relevant congress information (numbers) annually and they send that data to their local convention bureau, only few of them directly to FCB.

The Finnish Tourist Board produces a broad statistical and research data on tourism exports to Finland. These versatile statistics will be used for tourism marketing planning and monitoring purposes as well as for the development of products and services. Market information is collected in the main market area of several different themes: the development of the situation on the market, target groups, distribution channels, consumer's needs as well as the important from the point of view of the Finnish tourism trends. These studies will be carried out in Finland, which shall be annexed to the images, as well as the reputation and attractiveness of the Finnish consumer behaviour in tourism purchase decision process (MEK, statistics).

#### 4.12 Regional differentiation

Finland is a land of exciting contrasts, such as the real four seasons, the Midnight Sun and the winter darkness, urban and rural, East and West. Hence, it is quite obvious that each of our seven research university cities have something special to offer for congress delegates.

When the author was creating the original question to this part of the questionnaire together with FCB, they desired to know how these respondents from various universities see their own university and destination and how they going to describe specialities of these regions. Surprisingly, these respondents did not talk about their destination very much, but correspondingly they underlined the significance of their local convention bureau and local congress services like congress offices. Once again, it can be seen that the cooperation between universities and convention bureaus is extremely important – both parties have their own professionalism and together they are much stronger and talented than alone.

These responses of local specialities, in this qualitative research, startled and awakened many new thoughts. The basic idea was to show what kind of country Finland is and how these selected cities try to separate themselves. This comparison introduced that from the perspective of universities the destination is not as significant in their scientific congress objectives as expected. As an insight of all points of this qualitative research it is found that scientific congresses of the

Finnish universities are principally implemented with the power of science and Finnish destination brand has minimal significance to these scientific events. That is why; there is an essential need to make another qualitative research among convention bureaus. How they have observed this destination brand in their daily work. It was contacted with all seven convention bureaus and their local congress offices and it was tended to study how they have noticed Finnish destination brand in their day-to-day congress processes.

Next comparison defines how respondents in these seven universities wanted to differentiate their own destination.

*TABLE 8: Specialities of universities and their destinations*

Espoo	The faculties have lots of experience and knowhow about congresses. Registration and monetary transactions have been fixed nowadays with the help of the university systems. The city of Espoo (nowadays Espoo Convention & Marketing) has supported congress arrangements with various ways more than 30 years. The University has own congress consultant.
Helsinki	-
Jyväskylä	The faculties have lots of experience and knowhow about congresses. The faculty of humanities has its own conference coordinator. Help, support and professionalism of Jyväskylä Convention Bureau have been praised in various stages of the congress processes.
Tampere	The faculties have lots of experience and knowhow about congresses. Adept organizers inspire others to get congresses to Tampere. Help, support and professionalism of Tampere Convention Bureau and Tampere-talo have been praised in various stages of congress processes.
Turku	The University of Turku has had an own congress office more than 20 years. Many faculties consider it positive and secure when organaizing congresses. Help, support and professionalism of Turku Convention Bureau have been praised in various stages of congress processes.
Rovaniemi	The University of Lapland has also its own congress office inside the university. The excellences of Rovaniemi are location in the polar circle, Santa Claus, the nature, polar night, midnight sun and snow.
Vaasa	Help, support and professionalism of Congress Vaasa - City of Vaasa have been praised in various stages of congress processes.



#### 4.13 Finnish destination brand in the congress sector

The second qualitative research was directly sent to convention bureaus of these seven universities (Appendix 4, p. 96). First question for the Finnish congress professionals was dealing with the image of Finland. They were asked how they will identify the brand of Finland in their congress bidding processes. Is there any significance of the image of Finland in congress acquisitions (yes/no)?

Unanimously all respondents stated that Finnish brand matters. At this point – it is not similar to the opinion of academia. But it is also relevant to remember that convention bureaus are also dealing with many other events than scientific congresses. They help, support and promote corporate meetings and other association congresses too, so this makes the difference.

Secondly, when all respondents said yes to the first question, they had to justify their opinion. It was essential to know how Finnish brand matters in congress bids. Mainly all answerers stated that the Finnish brand is positive and is supporting congress bidding processes. Finnish people and congress organizers are perceived reliable, and especially our scientists and experts are noted highly professional, experienced and internationally successful in their own field. Finnish clean, exotic and arctic nature is seen as a good advantage. Finland is known for its high technology, qualified education and safety. There were also a few opposite viewpoints about the image of Finland. These respondents noted that the image of Finland is neutral or slightly positive, but not strongly fascinating or attractive. It was hoped that Finnish special features, like our harmony of nature, should be underlined even more and powerfully.

Next these answerers were asked to describe positive facts about the Finnish brand which they have learnt during congress bidding processes. These issues were highlighted about Finland: safe, reliable, organized, functional, unpolluted, high-performance, democratic, professional and Scandinavian. Finnish arctic and exotic nature – coldness and Lapland were also emphasized in this study. Finland has a good infrastructure and it has not had any remarkable political or religious conflicts in its history or near future.

The final question was dealing with negative decisions in congress bids. Are there any special features in the Finnish brand which had resulted negative? There were two issues which came up from the survey; expensiveness and remoteness. Finland is perceived a costly country, and that effects all levels e.g. travel costs, restaurant services, congress facilities and accommodation. The accessibility of Finland is a challenge; delegates will need more stopovers when travelling to Finland.

One finding was remarkable in this survey, 30 % of the respondents stated that they do not have any experience of negative congress bids. One person also stressed, that she is mainly working with scientific congresses, where the substance, quality of science, conspicuousness of applicant, proposed habit of handling of the matter and suitability of congress facilities are the most important facts. She confirmed that the brand of Finland does not matter in scientific congresses. This statement supports this study and those results which were already found from the empirical research to Finnish university people.

## 5 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

The author has worked more than 20 years in various congress and event venues in Finland and she wanted to use her own expertise, contacts and knowledge to improve at least one part of the congress sector with this research. Before starting, it was discussed with many colleagues within different congress organizations here in Finland. It was needed to know what kind of data was easily available and what kind of information people will require hereafter. Quite soon the idea of this study arised and together with FCB and Leena Sipilä it was formed a co-operation agreement about this research in the end of year 2012.

### 5.1 Data collection methods

The competition of international congresses between countries and cities is hard. That is why; there are lots of desirable statistics available inside the industry. There is also a long-standing history for collation in these global congress organizations like UIA and ICCA. They have done a persistent work for data acquisition for dozens of years, which is a good thing for the whole congress and convention sector. Throughout these statistics it is much easier to compare how each country and every city are ranked yearly. FCB takes care of rounding up Finnish national congress statistics together with their own congress contacts and with regional convention bureaus. With the help of these statistics it is much easier to place Finland globally.

In this research all seven qualified Finnish convention cities and their convention bureaus and FCB have an essential role. In the beginning, all representatives of these seven cities in Espoo, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku, Rovaniemi and Vaasa were interwieved. These consultations were made by phone, by e-mail or face to face. At the same time all this pre and background information were considered and evaluated together with FCB and Leena Sipilä. After this pre discussion, it was time to make a plan how to fulfill the aim of this study. It was decided to implement a survey among Finnish universities concerning their scientific congress planning and bidding procedures. This survey was an empirical qualitative research, where these seven universities and their congress cities were able to compare together.

This study is based on knowledge management in project based organizations and destination branding. As stated earlier, these theoretical frameworks outgrew by the survey, but there exist one pre-determined hypothesis; destination branding matters in congress bids. The main goal of this paper has been, from the beginning, to find out if there are various methods inside these selected seven Finnish universities and their convention cities to get more international, scientific and academic congresses to our country. It was also important to search if knowledge management in project organizations and the Finnish destination brand are supporting these congress procedures or not. Relevant information and knowledge about project knowledge management and destination branding were searched from books, academical articles or publications and various electronical sources. Key words have been mentioned already in the abstract.

During the whole research process it has come out that the congress and convention industry is not a well known sector commonly. That is why there exists some basic information about the history, concepts and challenges of congress sector in this paper.

Data collection has been carried out in several stages rather than once and for all. It was even reformed the process mid-way. It was decided to address an additional qualitative research only for convention bureaus in Finland. This second round was concerning destination branding only. All seven convention bureaus (Espoo, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere, Turku, Rovaniemi and Vaasa) had an opportunity to tell what they think about Finnish destination branding. Are there any consequences of our nation branding to these congress bidding procedures? When they gave a positive answer to this question, they had to justify their opinions. They also had to present good and bad examples of various cases, where Finnish nation branding were either supporting or preventing the desirable congress bid to come true. The author had to also interview a set number of people for this paper. The process of data collection and the analysis continued so long until it was not able to found new issues to the research.

## 5.2 Findings and recommendations

From the first qualitative research (Appendix 1) of this paper, it is possible to outline common findings of Finnish scientific congress procedures. These subjects will answer to the first and the second research questions, congress planning and bidding procedures of Finnish universities with developing proposals:

**Persons in charge** are, in all cases, internationally active directors of a research group; professors or university lecturers, researchers, scientists or faculties itself. They are key players in these scientific congress actions in Finnish universities.

=> Regionally these internationally networked scientists should be the main target group of local and national convention bureaus.

Convention bureaus should motivate and support them to invite and for bid new congresses to Finland in every possible way.

Procedures in these **congress bidding processes** were also quite equal in these seven universities. It was possible to see that a congress bidding process involves with many stakeholders, but still the primary stress lies in the hands of faculties and their active and eager professors and university lecturers. Throughout these responses and with the help of each university web-pages it was possible to make a road map of the bidding process:

- 1) The starting point: an association will announce their annual congress for bid or an active professor/a scientist wants to get or bid the congress of their own area to Finland.
- 2) Make a project plan and assemble an organizing committee.
- 3) Contact to the local convention bureau and/or FCB.
- 4) Prepare a bid and/or send an invitation – it will depend on the size and the procedure of a congress.
- 5) Take care of the economy of your congress: budget, finance and accounting.
- 6) Use the help of various local and national professionals for bidding and finance.
- 7) Fix the date of a congress: bookings for the venue and accommodation.
- 8) External help available if needed: PCO (professional congress organizer).
- 9) Marketing and communication together with the university and the network of your congress.
- 10) Clarify the support and hospitality of your congress destination.

Without these enthusiastic and well networked scientists there will not be any chance to start new congress bidding processes. Once again, it is important that these scientists will get all possible support and help from other stakeholders of congresses like convention bureaus and destination managements. It was notable that many answerers they did not talk about searching and planning procedures of congresses, but they emphasized the necessity that they **must invite and arrange** congresses of their own area if they are working actively inside their international working groups.

=> This statement “just invite and arrange” differs from other association congress procedures, where the bidding process means commonly a competition between destinations. Convention bureaus must utilize this knowledge carefully; all possible international scientific connections should be encouraged for bid more congresses to Finland.

Some good solutions came out in this paper. Espoo has improved its own congress procedures with the help of a congress consultant. Espoo and Aalto-university have made a special co-operation agreement that aims to support inviting international scientific congresses and meetings, planning and arrangements in Espoo. They have employed an own congress consultant to work with professors and scientists and to help them with these bidding processes.

=> Projects like congresses need to have a third skill: it can be call as “knocking into the power lines”. This is a skill beyond the leadership of schedules, budgets and deadlines, beyond managing project teams or leading suppliers and users, and even beyond what is commonly regarded as managing a project's main stakeholders. (Bourne, 2004) This supports the idea of a third party, who supports both stakeholders of scientific congresses.

The University of Turku has own congress office, which has worked inside the university for such a long time – 20 years, that it can be stated to be an essential part of the university and people have learned to know each other very well.

Versatile methods of **activation of congress functions** are presented in Table 5 (p. 56). The act of becoming international is a fundamental part of the strategy of many universities. Faculties and their departments are mainly responsible for their active international scientific work, including congresses. This is written in to all scientific functions and to the strategies of the universities.

=> It is essential that universities have their own activation program for congress functions, but they will need convention bureaus and even local authorities to make and maintain these activation procedures. The communication between these organizations should go both ways. This activation should be a regular and ongoing process, and it should be evaluated from time to time.

A lack of **internal rules** or incomplete information for congress organizers does not support internationalization efforts of the universities. Basic instructions for organizing a congress should be found much easier for researchers and scientists, because congresses are classified partly of their annual strategy. Differences between these seven universities are shown in Table 6 (p. 57).

=> A congress organizers' handbook (written or electronic) is needed and it should be a basic tool for all internationally active researchers and scientists. This lack of these internal rules is a real mistake, but it is the easiest part of these congress procedures to improve.

Talented **marketing** before the event and good **communication** during the event is fundamental. A successful congress is essential for all stakeholders who are dealing with congress functions. It is important that all potential congress participants will be caught up on beforehand. The content of a congress is dependent on experts. Without these specialists there will not be a good chance to network and to get desirable results from the congress. This research could not come across with big marketing differences between these seven universities and their congress destinations. Actually all universities have almost same channels and tools available and in use. Mainly the congress organizer or organizing committee is responsible of marketing efforts of each congress, because marketing

and communication are included to the budget of the event. A congress is able to use the web pages of its own university, but it also benefits the web pages of that particular organization or a congress, if it has own internet pages. Direct marketing to all potential scientific participants will be implemented with channels of their own science community: internet pages, e-mails, direct mails, event calendars and even social media.

**Incentive methods** are versatile in these seven universities (Table 7, p. 60). In some universities faculties and its departments are able to get bonus points or even financial contribution when they have organized a congress. Mainly universities support their congresses with beforehand agreed personnel resources, free of charge spaces/venues, and case by case defined special services like congress bags, congress folders, notebooks, pencils/pens or even some sponsorship for restaurant services of a particular event.

The principal of the University of Jyväskylä awards the employed person, who acquires an international scientific congress to Jyväskylä and/or is responsible for the organisation of the congress. The prize will be allocated to support the international activities of PhD students. There are available 2500 or 4000 euros funding, which will enable that particular congress organizer to send PhD students to foreign scientific congresses. This is one of the best tools for encouraging scientists to seek more congresses to Jyväskylä and this model could be used in other universities as well.

=> Incentives are necessary and they have some kind of an influence for congress bidding processes. It is the university who confirms its own incentives, but could it possible to develop this system with the help of convention bureaus and regional authorities. It might turn up new innovations and standpoints.

**Internal system of credits or bonus points** is built in only in few universities. These bonus points confirm better financing next year for that particular faculty and its department. Each university has its own internal model of credits. According to this survey there are only two universities among these seven who will give bonus points for their faculties and departments if they have organized



an international congress; The University of Tampere and the Aalto University Espoo.

=> It is recommendable that all universities will consider giving special bonus points for their internationally active faculties and departments, who will organize congresses. Actually, this is one good and traditional incentive which seems to be motivational too.

**Finance** is important in congress projects. Majority of respondents stated that attendance fees are the most essential part of the revenue of a congress. A state subsidy is also needed in many cases. That is way; the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies and the Academy of Finland are presented properly (p. 61-63). There was not any difference between these universities, concerning financing the congress. Here are listed main revenue roots for congresses:

- 1) Attendance fees
- 2) Exhibition fees, if the congress has a fair of its own
- 3) State subsidy of the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (Tieteellisten Seurain Valtuuskunta – TSV)
- 4) State subsidy of the Academy of Finland (Suomen Akatemia)
- 5) Subsidy of a foundation or an association, related to the congress
- 6) Cooperation partners and/or corporate sponsorship
- 7) Support of the local destination (e.g. city, region or province)
- 8) State guarantee of operating loss (only special cases)

=> These revenue sources should be listed in the congress organizers' handbook or the internal congress rules of universities (written or electronic). Convention bureaus should also help the scientist to find relevant information about the congress financing. Practically, this weakness can be solved pretty easily.

It is fundamental to keep **statistics** on congresses. Throughout various national and international statistics (e.g. FCB, ICCA and UIA) there are possibilities to compare the popularity and attraction of each city or country. This came out through the research too, mainly all respondents noted that they collect relevant congress information (numbers) annually and they send that data to their local convention bureau, only few of them directly to FCB. No doubt those universities who will get bonus points from international scientific congresses, they will not

forget to report their international events, but there is always a human factor when people report, collect and forward relevant data to the administrator of statistics.

=> With the help of these statistics various regions are ranked. These are tools which authorities will use when they are budgeting. Convention bureaus are quite often funded with public money, totally or partly. The good placement of a destination in these statistics supports its existence. The more cities and regions achieve new congresses, the more Finland will climb up in these rankings. The congress industry is multilateral and unfamiliar for the most of the people that is why statistical facts are needed.

**Regional differentiation** is a big issue and it connects this qualitative research to destination branding, but surprisingly it is linked to knowledge management too. Respondents from various universities, they did not talk about their destination very much, but correspondingly they underlined the significance of their local convention bureau and local congress services like congress offices in these scientific congress procedures (Table 8, p. 65). Once again, it can be seen that the cooperation between universities and convention bureaus is extremely important – both parties have their own professionalism and together they are much stronger and talented than alone.

Overall findings of this qualitative research prove that from the perspective of universities the destination does not matter in their scientific congress objectives. It was found that congresses of the Finnish universities are implemented with the power of science and Finnish destination brand has minimal significance to these scientific events. This is against the theory of destination branding, as it was learned in the theoretical part of this paper.

**Finnish destination brand matters in the congress sector**, according to Finnish congress and convention representatives. Unanimously all respondents agreed that Finnish brand matters. At this point – it is not similar to the opinion of the academia. These professionals, representing convention bureaus and destinations, are also dealing with the other kind of international events than scientific congresses, which make the difference. Positive facts about Finland are safe,

reliable, organized, functional, unpolluted, high-performance, democratic, professional and Scandinavian. Finnish arctic and exotic nature – coldness and Lapland were also emphasized in this study. There were two negative issues overall, which came up from the survey; expensiveness and remoteness of Finland.

Findings of this second qualitative research proves that in scientific congresses the substance, quality of science, conspicuousness of applicant, proposed habit of handling of the matter and suitability of congress facilities are the most important facts. The brand of Finland does not matter at all in scientific congresses. This answers to the third research question.

During this research process, it has been found out that knowledge management in project based organizations offers helpful improvement tools for congress procedures. Hence, the answer to the second research question is absolutely positive. Various stakeholders and their procedures will get support from project knowledge management. The most dispersion in Finnish scientific congress procedures was in internal rules, incentive methods, internal system of bonus points and activation in congress functions. The study of critical factors for knowledge management in project business (Mian et al, 2010) finds that a lack of incentives and the absence of an adequate information system are the most remarkable barriers to successful knowledge management in projects. Therefore, it would be useful to model and reflect all their six critical factors to the Finnish congress sector (Mian, Helo & Kekäle, 2010):

1. Overall familiarity with knowledge management tools
2. Coordination among and between employees and departments
3. Incentives to support congress actions
4. Authorities must help knowledge activities between both parties
5. Information system for handling knowledge
6. Cultural support

### 5.3 Discussion

It is essential that both stakeholders (the academia and convention bureau/destination management) understand the basic elements of knowledge management in project organizations. It's their strategic competency for each party, enabling them to tie congress projects to the daily knowledge and learning, and into their strategies. The most challenging one is the coordination between these two stakeholders, their various departments and even employees. One good solution could be a third party, who shuttles between two stakeholders and supports their common goal, like Espoo and the Aalto-university has done.

Linda Bourne (2004) introduced the idea of the third dimension in knowledge management. This thought should be reflected more carefully. Could it be possible to have an independent party in between these two main stakeholders of scientific congresses; a person or a group of persons who understand objectives and needs of both organizations? It is advisable for both authorities to analyze this chance.

Incentives are essential, as it was proved earlier and reliable congress organiser's guide books or materials are needed (written or electronic) – absolutely. Authorities must have a working comprehension on congress procedures and various sides of them and, of course, benefits of the congress business for the local economy. This means that universities and destinations together must build up a professional and functional system to handle knowledge in their congress procedures. Once again, the third aspect, a gap between two different organizations, has to take into account; how to fulfil this hole. It is quite obvious that overall cultural support is required in both sides and personnel resources are certainly needed.

From the perspective of Finnish universities the brand of destination does not matter in their scientific congress objectives, congresses of the Finnish universities are implemented with the power of science and Finnish destination brand has minimal significance to these scientific events. This study also confirmed that Finnish destination brand still matters in other kinds of association congresses and corporate events. Regional convention bureaus are important

nationally and they are needed. If Finland wants to improve its international congress rankings; areal work between universities and convention bureaus should be trained. It was also proved that Finnish ranking in international congress statistics is able to improve with these scientific congresses.

Convention bureaus are commonly funded with public money, totally or partly. They have to prove the importance of their existence annually with various rankings. A solid co-operation between the universities is crucial, because long-term commitments with the institutes of higher education will firm their value among authorities. International congress processes will take years, if decision makers have not assimilated that, convention bureaus might also have difficulties in the future.

In the final stage of this study it was published in the media, that in the future - during 2014, the Finnish Tourist Board (and FCB) will lose its independence and it will be joined into the Finpro; it is the national trade, internationalization and investment development organization in Finland. (Yle, 10.10.2013) It will remain to be seen how this will impact to the Finnish congress industry. At this point, it is fundamental to secure and improve basic congress procedures regionally and nationally and to focus on knowledge management in between both Finnish scientific congress stakeholders.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

This study has proved that there exist certain differences in these scientific congress planning and bidding procedures of Finnish universities. These divergencies are not too big, but if these findings will be utilized, there is a chance to improve the process regionally and nationally and even increase the amount of international scientific congresses in Finland in the future. Researchers and scientists (the academia) correspond to the substance and the internal communication of the congress; in addition to this the destination management (convention bureaus and destination management) has other purposes too. Mainly objectives are common, but each stakeholder has its own view to the congress project. It is also important that both sides have as equal and strong maturity level as possible, it will enable the better result in overall project management in congress procedures (Hillson, 2003; Carver, 2013).

Knowledge management in projects gives excellent tools to improve cooperation between universities and convention bureaus. It is fundamental to realize the main critical factors in the Finnish scientific congress sector. It is essential that both stakeholders (academia and destination management) understand the basic elements of their common congress procedures and knowledge management behind this process. It is their strategic advantage and it enables them to tie project results to the knowledge and learning; more and better congresses. The most challenging one is the coordination between these two stakeholders, their various departments and even employees. One good solution could be a third party, who shuttles between two stakeholders and supports their common goal. This third party could encourage and support professors and other researchers to call up congresses of their own sector to the destination, and then that could work together with a local travel and tourism industry gaining the whole area. This is an important task in between these totally different organizations and supports both of them. During the research process it was explored the third dimension of project knowledge management, supporting extra power, which is needed in successful congress procedures in between main stakeholders. This idea should be evaluated regionally.

Attractive incentives are essential in the congress procedures. It was notable that the academia did not talk about searching and planning procedures of congresses, but they emphasized the necessity that they must arrange congresses of their own area if they are working actively inside their international working groups. Good incentives will support and enable this significantly. Comprehensive congress organiser's guide books or material are needed too. Information about congress processes were dispersed in various sources and it was not easy to find.

Authorities must also have working comprehension on congress procedures and benefits of congress business for local economy. This means that universities and destinations must have a professional and functional system to handle knowledge in their congress projects. It is quite obvious that an overall cultural support is required on both sides. The focus must be on the behaviour and attitudes of people, surrounded by the professional, organisational, and national cultures from which they come.

Findings of this paper prove that from the perspective of universities the brand of destination does not matter in their congress objectives. It was found that congresses of the Finnish universities are implemented with the power of science and Finnish destination brand has minimal significance to these scientific events. On the contrary to Finnish convention bureaus, unanimously all of them stated that Finnish brand matters. At this point – it is relevant to remember that convention bureaus are also dealing with many other types of events than scientific congresses.

That is why all destinations (convention bureaus, supported by destination management and authorities) must turn over all stones and stumps of international scientific association contacts of their own area. This ongoing and persistent work needs staff resources and time, and it will be defaulted extremely easily, if authorities and the destination management do not understand the basic procedures of the congresses. Finnish society is changing and new income sources are needed, congresses are meaningful for destinations and their economy.

This paper is based on two empirical qualitative studies and the theoretical frameworks behind them. It might be possible, that there exist some specific details behind the congress procedures of Finnish universities, which have not

been revealed through this research. Still, it is believed that the main points that are emphasized in this study are significant and substantive.

For the future studies it would be interesting to research, how much destination branding really matters for other international congress events and could it be possible to model and benefit these scientific congress procedures for other international event planning and bidding processes.



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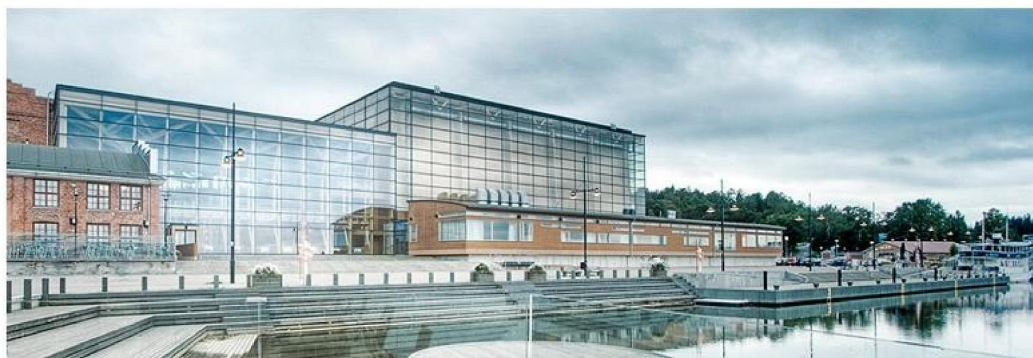
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1



Miten kongressien suunnittelu- ja hakuprosesseja johdetaan tai organisoidaan eri yliopistoissa/korkeakouluissa Suomessa?

#### Kysely

Olen Anu Kärkkäinen Sibeliustalon kongressipäällikkö ja opiskelen työn ohessa Lahden ammattikorkeakoulussa (LAMK) suorittaen kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan tutkintoa; Master's Degree in International Business Management (YAMK). Toteutan opiskeluuni liittyvän lopputyöni Finland Convention Bureaua toimeksiantona kongressialalle.

#### Tutkimuksen tavoite

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää miten Suomen yliopistot/korkeakoulut tänä päivänä suunnittelevat ja hakevat kansainvälisiä kongresseja. Tutkimuksella yritetään selvittää miten kongressien hakuprosessi on organisoitu ja toteutuu eri yliopistojen/korkeakoulujen sisällä. Tutkimuksen englanninkielinen nimi on: "A study of congress planning and bidding processes of Finnish universities".

#### Tutkimuskysymys

Miten kongressien suunnittelu- ja hakuprosesseja johdetaan tai organisoidaan eri yliopistoissa/korkeakouluissa Suomessa?  
How various congress planning and bidding processes are managed and organized in Finnish universities?

#### Tutkimuksen rajaus

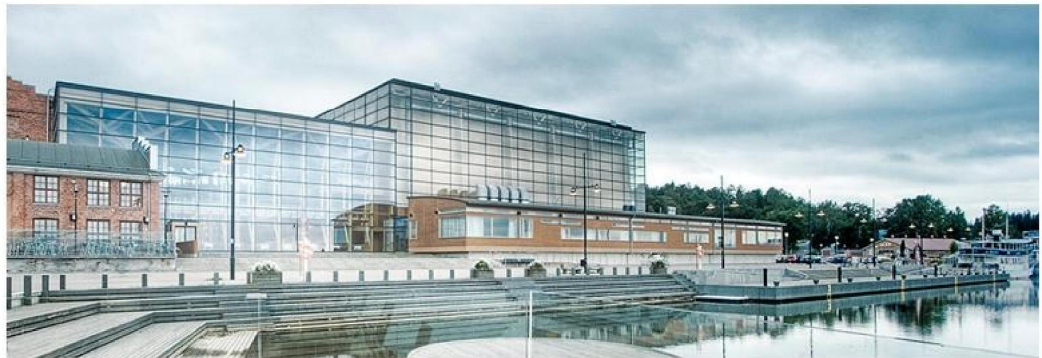
Tutkimus päätettiin rajata niihin yliopistokaupungeihin, joilla on oma convention bureau kaupungissa tai vastaavanlaista aktiivista "convention bureau" – toimintaa kaupungin ja yliopiston välillä. Tutkimuskaupungeiksi valikoituivat Helsinki, Espoo, Turku, Tampere, Jyväskylä, Vaasa ja Rovaniemi

Toivon, että pystyisitte avustamaan minua ja FCB:tä tutkimuksen toteutuksessa vastaamalla omalta osaltanne alla olevaan kyselyyn ma 20.5.2013 mennessä. Kaikki mukana olevat kongressikaupungit saavat tutkimustulokset sen valmistumisen jälkeen käyttöönsä. Arvomme kaikkien vastanneiden kesken kolme kahden hengen lippupakettia Sibeliustalon ensi syksyn Kuka Mitä Häh? -musikaaliin.



Lahden Sibeliustalo Oy  
Ankkurikatu 7, 15140 Lahti  
www.sibeliustalo.fi

Sibeliustalo on tutkitusti Suomen kokoustalojen  
ykkönen, jolla on tyytyväisimmät asiakkaat.  
(TNS Gallup 11/2011)



Miten kongressien suunnittelu- ja hakuprosesseja johdetaan tai organisoidaan eri yliopistoissa/korkeakouluissa Suomessa?

#### Kysely

##### 1. Edustamanne kongressikaupunki?

- Espoo
- Helsinki
- Jyväskylä



- Tampere
- Turku
- Rovaniemi
- Vaasa

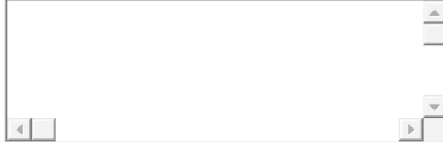
2. Kuka tai ketkä yliopistostanne/korkeakoulustanne etsivät ja suunnittelevat kongressien hakemista yliopistoonne?



3. Lyhyt kuvaus yliopistonne/korkeakoulunne kongressien hakuprosessista?



4. Miten yliopistonne/korkeakoulunne aktivoivat kongressitoimintaa yliopiston sisällä?



5. Onko yliopistoissanne/korkeakouluissanne omaa sisäistä ohjeistusta kongressien järjestämiseksi?

- Kyllä
- Ei

Jos vastasitte kyllä, niin millainen?



6. Miten yliopistonne/korkeakoulunne markkinoivat/tiedottavat toteutumassa olevista kongresseista?



7. Miten kongresseja kannustetaan ja tuetaan yliopistojenne/korkeakoulujenne toimesta?



8. Onko yliopistoissanne/korkeakouluissanne omaa sisäistä pisteytysjärjestelmää kongresseille?

Kyllä

Ei

Jos vastasitte kyllä, niin millainen?

9. Miten kongressit rahoitetaan?

10. Miten kongressit tilastoidaan?

11. Onko edustamassanne yliopistossa/korkeakoulussa tai kaupungissa jotain erityistä kongressiosaamista tai tietotaitoa, joka edesauttaa kongressien hankintaa?

[< Takaisin](#) [Jatka >](#)



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Sibelius-talo on tutkitusti Suomen kokoustalojen ykkönen, jolla on tyytyväisimmät asiakkaat.  
(TNS Gallup 11/2011)

## APPENDIX 2

Saunalahti Sähköposti

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**Aihe** FCB:n kongressitutkimus / LAMK Anu Kärkkäinen

---

Tervehdys Lahdesta,

Olen Anu Kärkkäinen, kongressipäällikkö Lahden Sibeliustalosta, ja opiskelen työn ohessa tällä hetkellä Lahden ammattikorkeakoulussa (LAMK) suorittaen kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan tutkintoa; Master's Degree in International Business Management (YAMK). Minä toteutan opiskeluuni liittyvän lopputyöni Finland Convention Bureauun toimeksiantona kongressialalle. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää miten Suomen yliopistot/korkeakoulut tänä päivänä suunnittelevat ja hakevat kansainvälisiä kongresseja. Tutkimuksella yritetään kartoittaa miten kongressien hakuprosessi on organisoitu ja toteutuu eri korkeakoulujen sisällä.

Toivon lämpimästi, että pystytte antamaan muutaman minuutin työajastanne tämän tutkimuksen hyväksi. Arvomme kaikkien vastanneiden kesken 3 kpl 2 hengen lippupaketteja Sibeliustalon syksyn KukaMitäHäh? -musikaaliin. Toivon saavani vastauksenne 8.5.2013 mennessä. Oheisen linkin kautta pääsette vastaamaan:

<http://digiumenterprise.com/answer/?sid=1004596&chk=QCSYVQPT>  
Ystävällisin tutkimusterveisin

Anu Kärkkäinen

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Sibeliustalo Lahest suht. ylpeänä esittää:

KUKA MITÄ HÄH? -muSIKAali

Mato, Sakke, Pulu ja legendaarisimmat Sliipparibiisit Lahessa syksyllä 2013.

[www.kukamitahah.fi](http://www.kukamitahah.fi)

## APPENDIX 3

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**Lähetetty** 9.5.2013 23:00:49  
**Lähetäjä** anu.karkkainen@saunalahti.fi  
**Aihe** MUISTUTUS FCB:n kongressitutkimus /  
LAMK Anu Kärkkäinen

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Kiitos teille, jotka olette jo ehtineet vastata kyselyyni, mutta toivoisin siltikin saavani vielä lisää arvokkaita vastauksianne. Tutkimukseen voi vastata vielä maanantaihin 20.5. saakka.

Tervehdys Lahdesta,  
Olen Anu Kärkkäinen, kongressipäällikkö Lahden Sibeliustalosta, ja opiskelen työn ohessa tällä hetkellä Lahden ammattikorkeakoulussa (LAMK) suorittaen kansainvälisen liiketoiminnan tutkintoa; Master´s Degree in International Business Management (YAMK). Minä toteutan opiskeluuni liittyvän lopputyöni Finland Convention Bureauun toimeksiantona kongressialalle. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää miten Suomen yliopistot/korkeakoulut tänä päivänä suunnittelevat ja hakevat kansainvälisiä kongresseja. Tutkimuksella yritetään kartoittaa miten kongressien hakuprosessi on organisoitu ja toteutuu eri korkeakoulujen sisällä.

Toivon lämpimästi, että pystytte antamaan muutaman minuutin työajastanne tämän tutkimuksen hyväksi. Arvomme kaikkien vastanneiden kesken 3 kpl 2 hengen lippupaketteja Sibeliustalon syksyn KukaMitäHäh? -musikaaliin. Toivon saavani vastauksenne 20.5.2013 mennessä. Oheisen linkin kautta pääsette vastaamaan:

<http://digiumenterprise.com/answer/?sid=1004596&chk=QCSYVQPT>  
Ystävällisin tutkimusterveisin

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## APPENDIX 4

Lähetäjä: Karkkainen Anu

Lähetetty: 14. elokuuta 2013 11:11

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Aihe: Tervehdys Lahdesta

Heissan kollegat ympäri Suomen,

Toivon mukaan kesä on mennyt teillä kaikilla hyvin ja olette myös voineet rentoutua lomalla. Minä lähestyn teitä jälleen tämän minun työn alla olevan kongressialan tutkimuksen tiimoilta. Minulla olisi nyt pelkästään teille ammattilaisille pari jatkokysymystä, joihin kaipaisin teiltä näkemystä ja lyhyet kommentit. Toivottavasti teiltä liikenee pari minuuttia näihin:

1. Onko teidän mielestänne Suomen imagolla eli ennakkomielikuvalla maastamme merkitystä kongressien saamiseksi Suomeen? (kyllä tai ei)
2. Jos on merkitystä, niin minkälaista merkitystä?
3. Mitkä asiat Suomi-imagosta korostuvat päätöksissä, silloin kun mielikuva Suomesta eli Suomi-brändi on ollut tukemassa kongressihakuprosessia?
4. Entä vastaavasti, onko teillä kokemuksia kielteisistä kongressipäätöksistä, ja mitkä asiat ovat silloin nousseet Suomi-imagosta esille?

Nämä kysymykset ovat nousseet työn aikana esille, ja siksi vaivaan teitä vielä kertaalleen.

Parhain terveisin Anu

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