

Call for Expression of Interest

HOSTED BUYER GROUP TO BULGARIA

26–29 JANUARY 2027

Sofia, Bulgaria

Partners: Meetings by Visit Sofia | Bulgarian Convention Bureau | Expo Event Industry

OBJECTIVES

Join us this January to discover Bulgaria as a destination for international meetings, conferences, corporate events and incentive travel, explore its rich cultural heritage and modern event infrastructure, and meet key representatives of the Bulgarian meetings and events industry.

The initiative is jointly organised by **Meetings by Visit Sofia, Bulgarian Convention Bureau and Expo Event Industry**, with the support of local industry stakeholders.

The mission's overall objective is to promote Bulgaria as a competitive destination for international events, facilitate business cooperation, exchange knowledge and provide networking opportunities between international event organisers and Bulgarian industry representatives.

A key component of the programme will be participation in **Expo Event Industry 2027**, taking place on 27–28 January at Sofia Event Center. The event will provide hosted buyers with an opportunity to meet representatives of the Bulgarian meetings and events industry from across the country, establish direct business contacts and explore potential partnerships.

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The objectives for participants include:

- Explore purpose-built venues, business hotels and special event locations in the Bulgarian capital – Sofia.
- Meet with local PCOs, DMCs, event agencies, destinations and specialised service providers.
- Discover the diversity of Bulgaria's meetings and events offering through participation in Expo Event Industry 2027.
- Engage in dedicated B2B meetings and networking activities with potential business partners.
- Learn about Sofia's cultural heritage, history, gastronomy and local experiences.
- Get inspired to plan future international congresses, conferences, corporate events and incentive programmes in Bulgaria.

The Call for Expression of Interest is being launched to identify a **carefully selected boutique group of up to 10 international hosted buyers**, including international association representatives, corporate meeting planners and event industry professionals, with a genuine interest in exploring Bulgaria as a destination for future events.

The boutique format of the initiative is designed to ensure a personalised experience, meaningful business interactions and targeted networking opportunities with Bulgarian industry representatives.

By submitting an expression of interest in response to this call, you are indicating your acceptance of the call's terms and conditions.

Further details about the initiative, eligibility requirements and application process are provided below.

This call is published on the Bulgarian Convention Bureau website.

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically by 10 December 2026, 23:59 Brussels time, through the following application form.

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CONTEXT OF THE INITIATIVE

ACTIVITIES & AGENDA

The Hosted Buyer Programme offers an opportunity to explore Bulgaria's meetings and events assets, establish direct business contacts with local industry representatives and experience Sofia as a destination for international events.

The four-day programme combines business meetings, participation in Expo Event Industry 2027, site inspections, cultural experiences and networking activities.

Arrival date: 26 January 2027

Departure date: 29 January 2027

Tuesday, 26 January – Arrival & Discover Sofia

- Individual arrivals at Sofia Airport.
- Airport transfers and hotel check-in.
- Guided walking tour of Sofia, depending on individual arrival times.
- Introduction to the city's cultural and historical heritage.
- Welcome Reception and informal networking.

Wednesday, 27 January – Business Meetings & Networking

- Participation in Expo Event Industry 2027.
- Pre-arranged B2B meetings with exhibitors and industry representatives.
- Meetings with PCOs, DMCs, hotels, venues, destinations and event service providers.
- Opportunity to attend selected sessions of the professional conference programme.
- Participation in evening networking activities.

Thursday, 28 January – Business Meetings & Site Inspections

Morning programme

- Participation in Expo Event Industry 2027.
- Continuation of B2B meetings and networking with exhibitors and potential business partners.

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Afternoon programme

- Site inspections of selected purpose-built venues, business hotels and special event locations in Sofia.
- Meetings with venue representatives.
- Exploration of Sofia's infrastructure and opportunities for hosting international events.

Friday, 29 January – Departure

- Breakfast and hotel check-out.
- Individual airport transfers according to flight schedules.
- Departure.

The detailed agenda, including the programme of site inspections and individual travel arrangements, will be communicated to selected participants prior to their arrival in Bulgaria.

ABOUT EXPO EVENT INDUSTRY

Uniting Events, eXperiences, Professionals and Organisations

Expo Event Industry is a professional platform bringing together key stakeholders from the meetings and events industry, facilitating business connections, knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Following its successful first edition in 2026, which brought together more than 420 participants, 34 exhibitors and 46 speakers, Expo Event Industry returns to Sofia on 27–28 January 2027.

The event combines an exhibition, a professional conference programme, B2B meetings and networking activities, bringing together destinations, convention and exhibition centres, business hotels, event organisers, agencies and specialised service providers.

For international hosted buyers, the event provides an opportunity to meet a wide range of Bulgarian industry representatives in one place, discover new products and services, and identify potential partners for future events.

Further information: www.expoeventindustry.com

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WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This invitation is addressed to international association representatives, corporate meeting planners and event industry professionals responsible for planning, organising, sourcing or commissioning international meetings and events, who are interested in exploring Bulgaria as a destination for their future projects and establishing cooperation with Bulgarian counterparts.

The invitation is open to:

- International Association Representatives
- Corporate Meeting and Event Planners
- Professional Congress Organisers (PCOs)
- Destination Management Companies (DMCs)
- Event Management Agencies
- Incentive Travel Agencies
- Venue-Finding and Event-Sourcing Agencies
- PR, Marketing and Communication Agencies

The initiative is limited to a **boutique group of up to 10 carefully selected hosted buyers**, ensuring a personalised approach and high-quality business networking opportunities.

The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants has been reached.

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible:

- The organisation must be a legally established entity with a minimum of three years of experience and a clear track record in organising, commissioning or hosting international meetings and events.
- The applicant must be directly involved in the planning, organisation, sourcing, destination selection or decision-making process for meetings, events or incentive programmes.

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- The applicant must demonstrate a genuine interest in exploring Bulgaria as a destination for future events and establishing business cooperation with local industry representatives.
- The applicant must be available and committed to participating in the entire Hosted Buyer Programme.

Relevant professional experience may include the organisation of:

- International congresses and conferences
- International association meetings and conventions
- Corporate meetings and events
- Seminars and workshops
- Incentive trips and programmes
- Team-building activities
- Product launches
- Trade shows and exhibitions
- Sports and special events

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated qualitatively using the following selection criteria:

- Professional experience and track record in organising, commissioning or hosting international meetings and events.
- The applicant's role and level of responsibility in destination selection, venue sourcing and purchasing decisions.
- The type, scale and frequency of events organised by the applicant's organisation.
- The potential to bring international association congresses, conferences and recurring meetings to Bulgaria, including events subject to international bidding or destination rotation.
- The potential for future collaboration with Bulgarian counterparts and the likelihood of developing practical business cooperation as a result of participation in the initiative.
- The applicant's interest in considering Bulgaria as a destination for future meetings, events and incentive programmes.
- The relevance of the applicant's business interests to the products and services offered by the Bulgarian meetings and events industry.

The applicant's interest in establishing cooperation with Bulgarian counterparts should be clearly stated in the application form.

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The selection of applications will be based on the aforementioned criteria and the information provided in the application form. In cases of equal merit, balanced geographical and sectoral representation will be taken into consideration.

Priority may be given to organisations with concrete event projects, upcoming requests for proposals (RFPs), forthcoming destination selection or bidding processes, or previous experience in organising events in Bulgaria and an interest in further developing their activities in the country.

The organisers reserve the right to request additional information from applicants, if necessary.

Attendance at all planned activities included in the final agenda of the Hosted Buyer Programme is compulsory.

SELECTION PROCESS

This Call for Expression of Interest will have the following application deadlines:

1. **First cut-off date:** 10 December 2026, 23:59 Brussels time.
2. A second cut-off date may be announced, subject to the availability of hosted buyer places following the first round of evaluation.

First cut-off

Applicants will receive notification of whether their application has been accepted, placed on the reserve list or rejected within one week following the first cut-off date.

Second cut-off

A second cut-off date, together with its terms and conditions, will be announced only if places remain available.

All selected participants will be invited to reconfirm their commitment to participating in the Hosted Buyer Programme and provide the necessary information for the preparation of travel arrangements, accommodation and individual B2B meeting schedules.

Timely responses and cooperation with the organising team will be essential to ensure the smooth planning and implementation of the programme.

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COSTS

Participation in the Hosted Buyer Programme is free of charge for selected and officially invited participants for the official duration of the programme, subject to compliance with its terms and conditions.

What will be covered by the organisers:

- **Return economy-class flights.**
- **Accommodation in Sofia for three nights**, from 26 to 29 January 2027.
- **Transfers** from and to Sofia Airport.
- Local transportation related to the official programme.
- Full access to Expo Event Industry 2027.
- Participation in B2B meetings.
- Meals included in the official programme.
- Participation in the Welcome Reception, networking and social activities.
- Participation in guided tours and dedicated site inspections.

Please note that if more than one person from the same organisation applies, as a general rule, only one representative per organisation will be invited under the Hosted Buyer Programme.

Personal expenses and activities outside the official programme will not be covered by the organisers.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HOSTED BUYERS

Selected hosted buyers are required to:

- Attend the entire Hosted Buyer Programme.
- Complete the required number of pre-arranged bilateral business meetings.
- Actively participate in networking activities and engage with local industry representatives.
- Attend all scheduled site inspections and destination experiences.
- Complete a post-event evaluation questionnaire immediately after the programme.
- Complete a follow-up questionnaire four months after the event to assess potential business cooperation, enquiries, follow-up activities and event opportunities generated through the initiative.

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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest must be submitted electronically by **10 December 2026, 23:59 Brussels time – first cut-off date**, through the following link:

Application form – Submit your Expression of Interest

A second cut-off date will be announced only if places remain available following the evaluation of applications received by the first cut-off date.

The expression of interest should include:

- A fully completed application form.
- Information about the applicant's organisation, professional responsibilities and business activities.
- Evidence of previous experience in organising, commissioning or hosting international meetings and events.
- Information about potential future projects and interest in Bulgaria as a meetings and events destination.

Please ensure that all submitted information is complete, accurate and up to date.

Submission of an application does not automatically guarantee acceptance into the Hosted Buyer Programme.

Should you have any queries, please contact the organising team at office@bgcb.eu.

Personal data submitted through the application process will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR) and applicable data protection legislation.

PARTNERS

Meetings by Visit Sofia www.visitsofia.bg

Bulgarian Convention Bureau, www.bgcb.eu

Expo Event Industry, www.expoeventindustry.com

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