



**Foreword for ITCM China 2014**  
**By ICCA CEO Martin Sirk**

ICCA is delighted to continue our strong supporting role for ITCM China, as the event goes from strength to strength with even more international participants as well as a strong pan-China presence, including a wide range of ICCA member companies and organisations attending as both exhibitors and hosted buyers.

Our annual Congress was held last November in this great city of Shanghai, and we attracted a record attendance for any ICCA event outside Europe, in fact this resulted in our second-highest participation ever with over 900 delegates from more than 60 countries. Delegate feedback from this event was amongst the highest ever received, and Shanghai's reputation as a world-class meetings destination was given a tremendous boost. Not only were delegates interested in hearing general information about China's economic development and meetings industry capability, we also filled education sessions that looked in great practical detail about how to organise international meetings in China, and how to set up representative offices or business partnerships.

One of the most important pieces of research to be highlighted during our programme looked at the extent to which ICCA member companies and destinations around the world had developed China market strategies - it turned out that more than half have already developed concrete strategies and most of the rest were in the process of doing so, whilst many were opening representation offices in China, setting up specific services for Chinese delegates or all-China events, employing Mandarin speakers, and a host of other initiatives. In other words, the global meetings industry is now taking China incredibly seriously - as a competitor when bidding to host events, as a source of delegates to events in their own countries, and as a potential business partner. We would like to recognise the valuable work of Dr Ding Yi of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics and Prof Helmut Schwaegermann from Hochschule Osnabrueck in Germany in conducting this research.

ICCA is particularly pleased to continue our collaboration with ITCM China on the Association Programme, with the help of our ICCA China Committee members, the largest ICCA national grouping in Asia-Pacific. ICCA believes that the international association market segment is the most strategically valuable of the entire meetings business, and it links intimately with the economic and societal development strategies of nations and cities. China is in a tremendous position to expand their success in hosting association meetings, and ITCM's initiative is a valuable contribution to this strategic objective.

Finally, I wish every success to this year's Future Leaders Forum which brings students into contact with our exciting industry, and the China International Meetings & Conferences Forum, which ICCA has supported since this innovative annual event was first conceived. These are great initiatives that demonstrate that ITCM China is more than just a trade show, it has become a catalyst for the entire meetings industry's development in China.

Yours sincerely,

**Martin Sirk**  
**CEO**

**International Congress and Convention Association**