





# CHOOSE THAILAND



## THRIVING TRACK RECORD

Welcoming, innovative, and armed with strategic acumen, The Kingdom of Thailand provides MICE travellers with MICE solutions to deliver the economic impact they seek in successful business events. Thailand achieved top ranking in ICCA for the most number of meetings for 2 consecutive years, and within the first three-quarters of 2018, received over 900,000 MICE travellers and generating almost 69 million baht in receipts.

## STRATEGIC HUB

Thailand's dynamic geo-positioning is a key factor to being an award-winning MICE destination. An unparalleled market access to the region, including the burgeoning CLMV region, and enthusiastic traders in China.

## AN EYE ON INNOVATION

Thailand 4.0 has the government of Thailand identifying the key industries that will spur economic growth through innovation. These include Bio-tech, Smart Devices, Digital and more. Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has aligned support schemes to rally to the national policy.





## COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT

**10** Special Economic Zones will be established with Thailand's neighbors to facilitate trade flow and offer connectivity with an emerging ASEAN market. An Eastern Economic Corridor will be set-up to provide special investment opportunities in key industries under Thailand 4.0 and a springboard to China, India and ASEAN.



## SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Thailand is a champion in CSR and Sustainability. TCEB's MICE Capabilities has incorporated several modules with focus on sustainable best practices, such as farm-to-function, food waste prevention.

## PEOPLE & COMMUNITY

Doing business in Thailand is an enjoyable affair, supported by friendly and enthusiastic professionals. World-class brands have redefined success milestones here, with awards like Best Business Hotel 2016 by TTG and World's Leading Green Resort by World Traveller Award World Winners respectively.

## EXPERIENCE AUTHENTICITY

Thailand has been pushing the boundaries in giving a unique perspective. Nowhere else will you be able to find the level of authenticity in merging comfort with culture, and the modern with natural marvels.



## SUPPORT & SOLUTIONS



The Thailand Conventions and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) instills its presence in the business travel market by elevating standards and supporting positive transformation. To start redefining your business events, speak with us today.



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Issue

# 2

TTGassociations • TTG Asia  
**TRADE MEDIA**  
OF THE YEAR  
2017 (Travel) • 2015  
MPAS Awards

TTG Asia  
**FEATURE**  
OF THE YEAR 2017  
(Source)  
MPAS Awards

TTGmice • TTG Asia Luxury  
**TRAVEL JOURNALISM**  
BUSINESS ARTICLE  
2018, 2014, 2013, 2011 & 2009 • 2016  
PATA Gold Awards

TTGassociations  
**JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE**  
PRINT & ONLINE  
2016  
Anak Sarawak Award

TTG Asia  
**MOBILE APP**  
OF THE YEAR 2015  
(World)  
MPAS Awards

## Lifting the lid on meetings at sea

**By Pamela Chow**

To attract more business events from the corporate sector, cruise industry leaders are speaking out to dispel common myths and misperceptions about bringing conferences and meetings on board cruise ships.

One common misconception is that business events have to book out a whole cruise in order to enjoy its facilities, shared Princess Cruises' South-east Asia director Farriek Tawfik at the Asian MICE Cruises Conference yesterday.

In reality, corporate groups as small as a meeting of 10 pax can enjoy the privacy of venues not used in the day, such as lounges and discotheques, Farriek revealed. He added that usage of these venues is free of charge, and corporates need only pay for add-ons like canapés and drinks.

Michael Goh, senior vice president – international sales, Genting Cruise Lines, chimed in: "There are different formats for different MICE businesses, such as full charter, partial charter and a group block arrangement. Groups can run from 50 to 4,000 pax and have different programmes, so organisers have to innovate all the time. No two MICE cruises are the same."



Genting Cruise Lines' Michael Goh (middle) and Princess Cruises' Farriek Tawfik (right) discuss MICE possibilities on a panel moderated by TTG Asia Media's Karen Yue

Although cruises have become known for fun incentives and teambuilding programmes thanks to on-board entertainment, serious conferences and training sessions can also be conducted on a ship with the right facilities, alongside light-hearted elements in shore excursions.

"The best is for travel agents to match their passenger demographics and needs to the correct ship," said Farriek.

Arrangements for events on board are typically taken care of by one planner from the cruise company, advised Goh. This provides a "seamless arrangement" of elements from dining preferences to

entertainment and even shore excursions.

"These misperceptions persist because of a lack of brand and product awareness. There is a lot of training and product education needed, and more MICE-optimised facilities, entertainment, meeting rooms and shore excursions," expressed Farriek.

An incentive group from Surabaya that Princess Cruises recently hosted was a good word-of-mouth platform to spread awareness of business cruises, said Farriek.

Dream Cruises also recently hosted a 2,000-pax business group alongside 2,500 leisure passengers on board its ship.

## TCEB plans new roadmap for Thailand's MICE cities

Come 2019, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) will launch a new masterplan for several MICE cities in the country to focus more on their designation management, marketing and development.

The city profiles of Chiang Rai, Udon Thani, Phitsanulok, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Phetchaburi-Hua Hin-Cha-am and Nakhon Ratchasima have already been studied, according to Supawan Teerarat, senior vice president, strategic business development & innovation with TCEB.

The bureau will be "setting up a meeting and public hearing with private and public stakeholders in each of these cities" to assist them in the upgrading to become MICE-ready, Supawan revealed.

The strategy to increase the number of MICE-designated cities will be based on their level of readiness.

There will be three classifications: International MICE City, Regional MICE City and Domestic MICE City.

Said Supawan: "Our goal is to groom them all to become International MICE Cities."

When asked for an update on the five designated MICE cities, Supawan shared: "We are proud to say that after

more than five years of engaging with these cities, they now understand how the MICE sector generates revenue to the destination, and some cities – Chiang Mai and Phuket – have included MICE activities in their strategic plan.

"For instance, Chiang Mai has allocated a budget to run



Supawan: three levels of readiness

MICE activities every year, and we are hoping other cities follow suit as this will confirm their long-term commitment to the MICE industry and TCEB."

Last year, Chiang Mai welcomed 50,881 business events

visitors, which generated a revenue of 4.7 billion baht (US\$144 million). Meanwhile, the domestic market brought in 2.1 million visitors and generated 4.9 billion baht in revenue.

As Thailand is gifted with diverse destinations offering myriad attractions and strengths, TCEB hopes to designate more cities for business events. Aside from the aforementioned cities, others being assessed include Rayong and Prachuab Khiri Khan.

"Three more cities will be looked at next year – Ubon Ratchani, Nakorn Srithammarat and Kanchanaburi," added Supawan. – **Rachel AJ Lee and Karen Yue**



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# *A Picture Perfect* **Switzerland**

Located in the heart of Europe, Switzerland makes an outstanding incentive destination with its stunning landscapes, lakes, and mountains. Perfect for any type of incentive trip or conference, Switzerland offers a wide breath of spectacular scenery, magnificent hotels, world-class attractions and exciting activities. Here are the top reasons why this dreamy destination should be your top incentive choice.

## **1 THE ULTIMATE EVENT LOCATION**

Switzerland has a long and successful history of bringing people together, so it's not surprising that the meetings industry plays an important role in Swiss tourism. Reliability, outstanding facilities in inspiring settings and an innovative approach are factors the destination possesses which help foster creative thinking. Switzerland Tourism has a specialised department of meetings and incentive experts working worldwide who are multilingual, well-travelled and familiar with the needs of guests from a wide variety of cultures.

## **2 SHOPPING**

Typical Swiss ingenuity, precision and quality are evident in a wide range of local products, from high-tech outdoor leisure equipment to luxurious embroidery from St. Gallen – not to mention practical Swiss army knives, fine jewellery and a vast choice of watches in all price ranges. Visits to museums and craft businesses usually include the opportunity to buy on-site – anything from organic mountain produce such as Alpine cheese to ornate belts and exquisite chocolates.

## **3 SECURITY, HEALTH, INSURANCE**

Switzerland is famously clean and safe, and its medical care ranks among

the best in the world. If by any chance you need treatment here, you are in the best hands. It is strongly recommended that all visitors have personal travel insurance, including coverage for personal accident, sickness, loss or damage to luggage and personal effects, and cancellation.

## **4 CLIMATE**

Switzerland enjoys a mild climate featuring moderate heat, cold and humidity, with conditions varying greatly depending on altitude and local topography. The climate of the Montreux Riviera or Ticino, for example, is virtually Mediterranean, while the country's highest peaks are capped with snow and ice all year round. Suitable clothing is advised to be brought accordingly for different itineraries and activities.

## **5 YOUR NATURAL CHOICE**

Travel in Switzerland is straightforward and supremely enjoyable with its high quality of life, pristine landscapes and the long tradition of hospitality. Switzerland is proud to set high standards with its landscapes, from glittering glaciers to Alpine pastures and palm-lined lake shores, enjoy unparalleled levels of environmental protection. Even the water in the rivers and lakes are clean enough to drink. Equally impressive are the accommodation and leisure facilities – and the warm welcome extended to guests in this cosmopolitan and charming country.





## SAMPLE ITINERARY WHICH WILL BRING DELGATES FROM GLACIERS TO PALM TREES:



### Day 1

- Arrival day in Zurich
- Time to arrive and refresh
- Morning arrive in Zurich and refresh
- Afternoon: Discover the City of Zurich with a etuck tuck city tour, baot ride or flag throwing workshop
- Evening: Dinner at the Juckerfarm

### Day 2

- Morning: From Zürich to St. Moritz
- Morning: Journey by train Zürich HB-Landquart and shopping at the outlet stores
- Journey by coach from Landquart to the Landwasser Viaduct Albulapass, Picnic on top of the Albula pass
- Afternoon: Arrival in St. Moritz and Chocolate tasting at Confectionery Hauser; Time at leisure
- Evening: Transfer to the Suvretta's

cable car station and evening up in the mountains

### Day 3

- Morning: From St. Moritz to Lugano with a coach passing by the Morteratsch glacier; Stop at Palazzo Vertemate Franchi (Italy) and eating a Gelato
- Afternoon: Activities in Lugano like wine tasting or a pedalo race on the lake of Lugano
- Evening: Farewell evening at the Lido in Lugano (beach grill party)

### Departure day

- Brunch
- Flight from Lugano to Zürich with international connections
- Flight from Milano airport (1h by bus from Lugano)

*Meet Dominique OI at the Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau stand E3 and discuss with her the possibilities for your next incentive to Switzerland.*





# Dangling unique experiences for groups

**By Paige Lee Pei Qi**

Cruises are courting business event groups onboard with their offer of customised activities and unique venues, according to the panel of global cruise CEOs who spoke at the Asian MICE Cruise Conference yesterday.

Sharing how Royal Caribbean Cruises

is able to provide a collection of innovative experiences, Angie Stephen, its managing director, Asia Pacific, said: "When you are looking for an agenda for a meeting group,

you would not think one can ice skate, skydive and surf all at once, but you can onboard Royal Caribbean."

With the ability to customise activities according to group sizes and physical abilities, meeting planners will have a seamless experience when planning programmes on board, said Stephen.

Likewise Michael Goh, senior vice president – international sales, Genting Cruise Lines shared how corporate planners will have a "breeze" with the planning of onboard entertainment as different shows are staged every night during the cruise.

Goh shared: "We all know it is always a challenge for any MICE organiser when it comes to entertainment, and we at Star Cruises are able to settle all that.

"The potential for MICE is so great

because cruises are able to take care of everything from accommodation and meals to entertainment and meeting venues," he elaborated.

Citing how exorbitant it may cost for business events organisers to stage fireworks in a destination, Goh highlighted how Dream Cruises offers fireworks on sea as a grand finale for five-night cruises, which would certainly appeal to delegates.

Goh and Stephen both also shared how there are plenty of unique meeting venues available onboard – away from the typical boardrooms – which would charm delegates.

For instance apart from hosting team-building activities, Royal Caribbean's ice skating rink can also be used for casual meetings. Star Cruises also provides another venue in Galaxy of the Stars – which offers panoramic views of the ocean from a glass-fronted observatory area.

According to Goh, the MICE segment is "clearly growing", especially over the past five years.

"In the past, we probably might only see a MICE group size which ranges between 50 to 100 onboard. But

today a MICE group can go up to a few thousand, with some even opting for a charter option," Goh said.

Sharing how new destinations have also been developed to cater to this growing market, Goh said Genting Cruise Lines started cruising to more than six new destinations last year like North Bali and Macleod Island – a private island – in Myanmar.

As for Royal Caribbean Cruises, Stephen said: "We develop our destinations and itineraries based on what consumers want, and we see that the Asians want shorter cruises because they are new to it and want to test it first."

According to Stephen, three- to four-night cruises are the most popular options for the Asian market now.

She advised: "There are different ship sizes and classes in the cruise industry, so it is critical that you put your group on the right ship with the right brand to the right destination.

"I guarantee you will be a standout in your pitch to your clients when you put cruise as an option, because it will be something unexpected and it will surprise and delight your customer," Stephen concluded.

"... it is critical that you put your group on the right ship with the right brand to the right destination."

**Angie Stephen**

Managing director Asia Pacific, Royal Caribbean Cruises

## Resort buy-out middleman on the prowl in Asia

**By Yixin Ng**

The business events world now has a new middleman – a hotel and resorts buy-out specialist with a cruise rental sub-brand.

"We started with our first events in 2016. Last year, business was really good, and this year, even better. Business has (gotten off the ground) very fast, but also because there's nobody else is doing what we do," said Daniel Rudolf, head of sales & marketing of the Germany-based Rent-A-Resort.

Established in 2015, Rent-a-Resort is the world's first company specialising entirely in property buy-outs for business events.

On how the industry can benefit from a middleman specialising in buy-outs, he said: "Planners looking for a buy-out can (approach) 10 resorts and nine will say no. Many won't even understand what they're talking about.

"They can approach the convention bureau, but the (bureau) doesn't have

the (relevant expertise) or handle buy-outs. They can only tell you what hotels are available (and the planner has to go through the long process of sourcing)."

Rent-a-Resort's expertise and network reduces the trial-and-error process for planners, which translates to time-savings and a better match. Clients approach the company with information on dates and number of rooms required, and can hear back as soon as in 48 hours, he shared.

"We know which resorts don't do buyouts, and there are many reasons for that, having (prior) arrangements with tour operators (is one). And we know which ones do."

The company also has knowledge of when resorts in Europe have their seasonal closures, hence opening them up is possible for "season extensions" for corporate groups.

In parts of Asia, where many resorts

open year-round, Rudolf admits Rent-a-Resort's knowledge of the landscape "is still in the development stage".

Still, requests for Asia are coming in strong, and the company's resort network is quickly shaping up.

The company secured its first property buy-out in Asia earlier this year, a booking of Anantara Mui Ne in Vietnam. Rent-A-Resort has site inspections in Phuket and Danang lined up for November, and is hoping to work with Banyan Tree's Angsana resort in Vietnam.

Demand for Asian resorts is palpable. "Asia is far, but you probably have more flights from Frankfurt to Phuket, for example, than you have to Ibiza or other islands closer by. It's a long (way to Asia), and more expensive, but accessibility to (many Asian resort destinations) is good. Asian resorts are also a lot more exotic for European clients



**Rudolf: nobody else does what we do**

than an island they visit all the time with their families," he remarked.

The company is a "venue finder" first and foremost, but it also has partners that can charter flights and book tickets. For more complicated arrangements, Rent-A-Resort has agency and DMC partners.

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### Investing in the future leaders of business events

The annual Future Leaders Forum (FLF), organised in strategic partnership with IMEX, Meeting Professionals International and MCI Group, returned to Bangkok yesterday. Its goal is to inspire the very best students and young working adults to join the business events industry. This is the 16<sup>th</sup> year that FLF has been organised in conjunction with IT&CMA. Photo by Yingyong Unanongrak



# Meet well, dine well



Michelin Plate distinction for Tables Grill

By Xinyi Liang-Pholsena

In a city with a growing fine dining scene, the recognition of Tables Grill and Erawan Tea Room as Michelin Plate restaurants in the inaugural Michelin Guide Bangkok 2017 has enabled Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok to take a bigger bite out of a competitive business events and functions pie.

“Our corporate bookings at Erawan Tea Room remain strong, and the recognition from Michelin has given us a slight uptick in this type of business. Specifically for Tables Grill, we

are utilising this recognition to further highlight our new chef, Hans Zahner, who achieved a Michelin star in Shanghai previously,” said Frederic Kolde, the hotel’s director of F&B.

“Many of the business event leads we receive are in direct relation to Michelin Plates,” he added.

A contemporary French restaurant designed by renowned interior designer Tony Chi, Tables Grill features three areas for events: the main area, which can be transformed into a versatile space for 100 guests; the Chamber is suitable for intimate gatherings and wine-and-dine meetups of less than 12; while the light-filled Cellar can seat bigger groups of 32 guests.

At the same time that events planners are paying more attention to dining well, Kolde also observes an uptick in demand for environmentally friendly practices such as eliminating the use of plastic straws with biodegradable versions.

“To reduce wastage in meetings, we have partnered with Thailand’s Scholars of Sustainability foundation to donate

surplus food to communities in need and compostable food to local family farms,” he shared.

“Another trend is supporting local community products, so we have worked with a few local community projects in Thailand, such as The Royal Project Foundation to improve the quality of life of hill-tribe people.”

Beyond the restaurants, food still occupies a key theme at Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok’s three event facilities.

The residence is a multi-function event facility with a seven-metre-high open kitchen that can accommodate up to 700 pax for receptions. A recent revamp added a connecting door between rooms 304 and 305, allowing the two function spaces to be connected and facilitating events of bigger scale, according to Kolde.

The Campus, featuring a collection of seven event rooms, is suitable as a bespoke event concept ideal for networking and collaborative meetings, while the pillarless Grand Ballroom can accommodate up to 1,500 pax for receptions.

# Liven up the SG experience

A new DMC which offers a host of in-depth and immersive activities for conference, incentive and meeting groups has been launched in Singapore.

Xperience Singapore Events & Travel – owned by Xperience DMC, a partner of Destination China – is headed by director Jane Goh, a veteran in hotel conference services and tour guiding.

She remarked: “There’s a lot of focus on man-made attractions (in Singapore), but the soft (experience) is not there yet. I wanted to show another side of Singapore that a lot of incentive visitors have not seen.”

Activities offered by Xperience include a hands-on Teochew opera experience, learning and performing the lion dance,

and dragonboat rowing on Marina Reservoir.

Goh shared that many of these activity providers do not have the means or knowledge to market themselves to overseas planners.

“Activities like dragonboat racing can be done for conferences and teambuilding. We would like to promote this (activity) to event planners so that they know there’s something different they can do here,” shared Goh.

Being a smaller DMC puts Xperience at an advantage as opposed to bigger players, said Goh, as the outfit offers clients “direct contact” with the management and assurance to meet any request that they have.”

– Pamela Chow



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# Malaysia’s positive projections

The high-profile UFI conference in March, a new government and expanding business events hardware are all helping to instil confidence in Malaysia’s business events stakeholders, discovers **S Puvaneswary**

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) has projected a healthy forecast for business events in 2018 and over the next few years. Its CEO, Zulkefli Sharif, said: “The sound economic environment is a platform for business events, in particular the exhibitions sector. Most exhibitors will only consider bringing their exhibitions to countries with a strong economy and strong government support, thus Malaysia looks very attractive in 2018 and beyond.”

Zulkefli’s confidence stems partially from MyCEB’s hosting of the 13<sup>th</sup> UFI Asia Pacific Conference in Kuala Lumpur last March, an event organised by UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.

He said: “The conference was the perfect platform for Malaysia to highlight and promote its expansion of space in the global exhibition market as more than 950 international trade fairs (held here) proudly bear the UFI approved label.”

The event’s networking dinner also put the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) in the lime-light, drawing the attention of exhibition organisers from around the world.

“The event was an opportunity to showcase our venue to delegates as well as obtain strong leads for 2019 and 2020,” said Gunther Beissel, MITEC’s CEO.

Beissel believes that “size matters” when it comes to organising “prestigious MICE events”.

“In this category, MITEC offers some statistics never before seen in convention centres in Malaysia. As the nation’s largest venue, MITEC is capable of hosting mid-size to mega events in its 11 spacious exhibition halls that are as large as eight football fields combined, and a ballroom. “We have hosted a one-day event in



Kuala Lumpur was the centre of attention among exhibition specialists when UFI members met in March

December 2017 with more than 42,000 people in attendance. That event occupied our entire three double-volume floors,” he said.

In terms of destination marketing efforts, MyCEB is working with Tourism Malaysia and The Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture and Tourism Malaysia to increase Malaysia’s visibility in Europe.

Zulkefli explained: “There are more European markets now that are looking at Asia as a longhaul incentive travel destination, and Malaysia has long been considered as one of those options.

“We are working closely with Tourism Malaysia to leverage on Malaysia’s destination partnership with ITB Berlin in 2019, where we are the official partner country for the event.”

Earlier in May, the European Travel Agents and Tour Operators Associations (ECTAA) held its 117<sup>th</sup> Semi-annual Meet-

ing in Kuala Lumpur, an event attended by 46 delegates from 25 associations in Europe. MyCEB’s general manager for business events, Ho Yoke Ping, gave a product presentation on what Malaysia could offer for business events.

To further grow European arrivals, MyCEB participates in various MICE-focused tradeshows and conducts sales missions in the continent.

Over in Asia, MyCEB regards China, India and South Korea as its largest meetings and incentive travel markets. They contributed 84 per cent of total corporate meetings and incentive travel business to Malaysia last year. To further grow these markets, sales missions and networking events with meeting planners and corporate clients are in the pipeline.

China, in particular, received greater attention this year, with MyCEB adding Chongqing to its annual roadshow

## Major business events coming up —

- International Beverage Trade Network Fair 2018; Kuala Lumpur**  
November 22–24, 2018
- 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance for Healthy Cities Global Conference and General Assembly 2018; Kuching**  
October 17–19, 2018
- 10<sup>th</sup> Penang International Halal Expo & Conference 2019; Penang**  
March 1–3, 2019

line-up which covers Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu and Guangzhou. Now into its eighth year, the roadshow showcases Malaysia’s best and latest offerings to entice more corporate meetings and incentive groups from China.

Besides facilitating B2B engagements, the roadshow this year introduced training to local meeting planners to guide them in creating interesting thematic incentive itineraries in Malaysia.

Further efforts by MyCEB include the fourth annual Malaysia Business Events Week in August. It serves as a platform for local business events players to converge, communicate and debate issues that impact on the future growth and sustainability of the industry.

Moving forward, Angeline van den Broecke, director of sales & marketing Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, said “the city of Kuala Lumpur should have a dedicated business events convention bureau as most international cities already do”.

Having a city CVB “will enable a city-wide strategy focused on driving bidding processes, marketing and the promotion of a business events brand identity”.

## What’s hot

### Sunset Dinner Cruise

Organised by North Borneo Cruises in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, the Sunset Dinner Cruise experience unfolds along the South China Sea, cruising pass the waterfront, islands and water villages that dot Sabah’s west coast.

Wander around the vessel and take in the panoramic ocean views, warmth of the setting sun and gentle sea breeze. There is an upper-deck and an ethnic themed air-conditioned restaurant below offering an international buffet spread accompanied by music from a live band. The cruise runs for approximately two hours and can take a maximum of 100 guests.  
Email: [info@northborneocruises.com](mailto:info@northborneocruises.com)

### Dinner in the Sky

Fancy a dining experience that offers a whole new perspective of Kuala Lumpur’s city centre? Dinner in the Sky, a new attraction located on Bukit Bintang Road, takes diners up into the air by crane where food is served. Enjoy fine Italian cuisine prepared by Villa Danieli of Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur Hotel. Available for customisation, the experience is available for dinner in two sessions of one hour each, with a maximum capacity of 22 pax per session.  
Email: [info@dinnerinthesky.com.my](mailto:info@dinnerinthesky.com.my)



From left: Dinner in the Sky, Kuala Lumpur; Macalister Mansion, Penang; Sunset Dinner Cruise, Kota Kinabalu

### New World Petaling Jaya Hotel

New World Petaling Jaya Hotel is located with direct access to major highways – the Federal Expressway and North Klang Valley Expressway – and sits in close proximity to the Kelana Jaya and Glenmarie LRT station.

It offers all the conveniences of the city and easy connection to local business and leisure activities. The hotel has 300 guestrooms, two restaurants, a rooftop infinity pool and a fitness centre. The hotel’s event facilities include a 1,700m<sup>2</sup> pillarless grand ballroom and eight meeting rooms.  
Tel: (603) 7682-0000

### Macalister Mansion

Macalister Mansion in Penang occupies

a beautiful century-old mansion that has been conserved and adapted for travellers’ accommodation and event usage. Rooms are named according to spaces typically found in a mansion – The Den, The Dining Room, The Cellar, The Living Room, and The Lawn, for instance. Every space boast an individualised concept.  
Email: [contactus@macalistermansion.com](mailto:contactus@macalistermansion.com)

### Crockfords Hotel

Part of Resorts World Genting integrated resort, Crockfords Hotel offers a collection of luxurious rooms and suites. Every room and suite boasts panoramic views of rolling hills and mountain sunrise. All are equipped with advanced in-room climate control, Wi-Fi con-

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### City Connection Travel

Catch an bird’s-eye-view of Langkawi’s 99 islands, mangrove forests, sandy beaches, limestone hills and waterfalls onboard a Cessna Caravan Ex aircraft. It can seat 10 people and departs from Langkawi International Airport at 14.00 daily. The half-hour flight costs between RM330 nett (US\$82) per person for 10 guests per flight to RM660 per person for four guests per flight.  
Email: [enquiry@cityconnectiontravel.com](mailto:enquiry@cityconnectiontravel.com)





Jinzun Port



Taiwan North Coast



Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival

# DISCOVER TAIWAN, *an Island of Festivities*

*Taiwan is a destination where memorable experiences await any time of the year. From mouth-watering treats discovered at numerous night markets to traditional temples and structures that distinctly mark the country from any other, each city in Taiwan hosts attractions and activities as vibrant and colorful on sunny June as it does during December winters.*



Taitung Chu Lu Ranch

**I**N Taiwan, tradition is honored and celebrated year round through a trail of festivals that highlight the best of the country's people, stunning landscapes, culture, and delectable cuisine. Together with a continuously developing infrastructure towards sustainable growth, this urban oasis is a top travel and business destination, making Taiwan the ideal host location for your next corporate MICE event.

Taiwan invites you to dive into a world of awe-inspiring festivities that are rich with history and sure to fill your senses with sights and sounds like no other. For the adventurous, take part in what is considered to be amongst the most dangerous displays of religious commemoration. In Tainan, the Yanshui Beehive Fireworks Festival, sparks off annually during the 14th and 15th day of the Lunar New Year. Experience a unique display of authentic Taiwanese culture and find yourself in the midst of dragon boats, crackling fireworks, and thousands of lanterns that light up the night sky.

Complementing festival tourism, MEET TAIWAN offers visiting delegates a new perspective on organizing more impactful international conventions and corporate group activities. Taiwan provides a comprehensive portfolio of prestigious indoor convention venues in its major cities—Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung, Tainan, and Kaohsiung. The latest addition of which is the Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center, Hall 2 which is expected to define the future of Taiwan's MICE industry as a leading example of a premium convention and exhibition center in Asia. Featuring Taiwan's first sky garden exhibition hall, its doors will open to the public on March 2019.

For those wanting to take your meetings a step further with more adventurous activities, Taiwan also has an array of natural outdoor venues where companies can boost collaboration and performance with CSR team-building events such as planting trees after completing a Dongfeng Bicycle Green Way ride or a beach clean-up team competition—just two of many possibilities for a memorable and rewarding time in Taiwan.

All images courtesy of Taiwan Tourism Bureau.

## TAICHUNG WORLD FLORA EXPOSITION

### *The Sound of Blooming*



Image courtesy of  
Information Bureau of  
Taichung City Government

Taichung is in full bloom for the 2018 World Flora Expo which will be held between this November to April 2019. The city invites you to stroll through its three exhibition sites—Waipu, Houli Horse Ranch & Forest Park Area, and Fengyuan Huludun Park—where a spectacular orchestra of nature's most beautiful creations await.

(Official 2018 Taichung World Flora Exposition website: <https://2018floraexpo.tw/En>)

## MEET TAIWAN BOOTH PR ACTIVITY: HELLO FROM TAIWAN CITIES AND COUNTIES

During IT&CM Asia 2018 in September, famous attractions of 10 Taiwan cities and counties will be featured at the Taiwan Pavilion. To learn more about Taiwan's coastal cities, famous locations, and activities, visit the **MEET TAIWAN booth (C2)**. You can also participate in a "Hello from Taiwan Cities and Counties" postcard activity during 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September that will result in getting a unique postcard sent directly from Taiwan.

To find out more about Taiwan, meet our representatives at **Booth C2**.



## MAKE AN IMPACT WITH TAIWAN'S VENUES



The Kaohsiung Exhibition Center (KEC)

From venues that can accommodate up to several thousands to conference halls suitable for more exclusive meetings, Taiwan has over 3,300 hotels, nearly 20 exhibition centers and a hundred other event spaces including museums, creative parks, amphitheatres, and beach resorts scattered throughout the country's 18 major cities including Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Tainan, and Taitung.

In the capital of Taiwan, the Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC) remains to be one of its most notable venues for international exhibits. It comprises of several sections including The Taipei International Convention Center (TICC), a Plenary Hall that can seat up to 3,100

delegates, and the TWTC Exhibition Hall that can accommodate 1,550 booths.

Also, in Taipei and underway to becoming the largest venue in Taiwan is Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center with one of its meeting rooms large enough to host 4,000 delegates. It also has an external 1,000 sqm open area ideal for outdoor gatherings. Nearing completion, Hall 2 of the Nangang Exhibition Center is due to be ready in 2019 which will increase the center's capacity to 5,000 booths.

The Kaohsiung Exhibition Center (KEC) is Taiwan's newest multi-functional venue and was designed on the waterfront by an international pro-environment team of architects. This "green" structure is based upon a lightweight steel frame under a bold wavy mantle of glass panels that symbolizes a billowing sail on the maiden seaward voyage. The venue invites maximum creativity for any type of event: indoor, outdoor and even seaside.

Within the next 2-3 years, Taiwan expects to open even more venues suitable for hosting international events including Tainan Convention and Exhibition Center, the Shuinan International Convention Exhibition Center, and the Taoyuan Convention and Exhibition Center.



### About MEET TAIWAN

Since 2009, the Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT) under the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) has been dedicated to improving Taiwan's MICE industry. Continuing its industry investment, the Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program (MEET TAIWAN) is steering Taiwan's MICE industry towards the global stage. The Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) is the BOFT-authorized organizer of the MEET TAIWAN program.



## Quest for meetings

Association meetings, in particular, are what Macau intends to court in an effort to emphasise its capability as a business events city. By **Prudence Lui**

### Major business events coming up —

- **124<sup>th</sup> MPEG Meeting 2018**  
October 8-12, 2018
- **International Astronautical Congress**  
October 10-14, 2018



The 47<sup>th</sup> SKAL Asia Area Congress is among the most prominent association meetings hosted recently in Macau

Association meetings continue to get prime attention at the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM), which is determined to raise the number of ICCA-approved meetings held in the destination.

An IPIM spokesman told the *Daily*: “Thanks to the efforts of Macau’s business events stakeholders, the number of association events held here is increasing.”

Some of the prominent association meetings recently concluded in Macau include the ICD Sections XIII (China) & XV International Congress & Induction Ceremony, and the 47<sup>th</sup> SKAL Asia Area Congress. The Asian-Pacific Society for Neurochemistry and the International Astronautical Congress have also confirmed their meetings in Macau this year.

The IPIM spokesman shared that conferences that rotate in Asia-Pacific and which have not been to Macau are

being targeted, along with international conferences for specific industry sectors such as technology, creative industries, finance, tourism, leisure & hospitality, and education.

To achieve its goal, IPIM has invested in participation at relevant tradeshows worldwide to promote Macau to international meeting and event planners.

Back this effort is IPIM’s Convention & Exhibition Financial Support Programme as well as its Conference Ambassador

programme which depends on reputable individuals to promote Macau for business events through their professional networks and to help identify new business opportunities for the destination.

IPIM admits that there’s still much work to be done, particularly on media programming, professional development, and bidding & support to achieve the set goals.

MCI Group, director of live communications, Olinto Oliveira, agrees with the direction that IPIM is taking.

He explained: “As an event destination, being able to show that Macau can cater to high-level events and meetings across a variety of sectors does validate the city’s place as an event destination of global standards. While early returns on this strategy seem promising, I do feel that it is still too early to pass judgement. However, there are definitely interesting times for the city.”

Oliveira added that the incentive schemes that encourage planners to pick Macau are also helping to “make Macau more attractive to potential events”.

Macau Explorer Cultural Travel’s managing director, Manuel Wu, said: “Association meetings is what Macau needs to (win over).”

For Macau to be an even more viable destination option for global association meetings, Wu suggested improvements in the following areas: more translation professionals to be made available, improved customs and immigration process for foreign delegates; and a higher level of service standards.

### What’s hot

#### Morpheus

Designed by the late architecture meister, Zaha Hadid, the five-star Morpheus hotel opened its door in June. It offers 770 guestrooms, suites and villas, including three ultra-luxurious pool villas and six duplex villas.

Built to satisfy well-heeled travellers and deserving corporate top-achievers, Morpheus dangles an alluring array of premium dining experiences from around the world, such as the World of Ducasse which has an entire floor dedicated to two Alain Ducasse restaurants and a bar; the Pierre Hermé Lounge; and Yi which is said to be the only Chinese fine-dining restaurant in Asia to present a blend of regional Chinese cuisines served omakase-style.

Other facilities include the Morpheus Spa and a pool located 40 stories up.  
Email: [rsvnmorpheus@cod-macau.com](mailto:rsvnmorpheus@cod-macau.com)

#### Zero Latency

Launched at Broadway Macau this June, Zero Latency is a 200m<sup>2</sup> virtual reality (VR) game arena featuring heart-racing zombie attacks, galaxy space missions and family fun adventures for up to eight players at one time.

Email: [info@zerolatenessvrmacau.com](mailto:info@zerolatenessvrmacau.com)

#### Art and Culture Journey

Organised by CoForte Organisation Development, the Art and Culture Journey is a guided tour through Macau’s traditional industry. Participants visit museums, exhibitions, galleries, historical buildings and a



Clockwise from top left: Morpheus; Zero Latency; Klook’s Qipao and Maqua Experience; Art and Culture Journey

shipyard to learn about the destination’s past and present. Some of the hands-on activities include learning to make a wooden paddle and keychain using wood which was once used to build ships.

Advance reservations of at least a month is needed, and the activity requires a minimum of 10 people.  
Email: [coforte.hk@gmail.com](mailto:coforte.hk@gmail.com)

#### Klook’s qipao and maqua Experience

The qipao and maqua are traditional outfits of the Chinese, and Klook has a programme that invites guests to rent one of them along with a traditional handbag, fan and hair accessories, and then head out to explore Macau’s streets. The fun experience can be enhanced with a special photoshoot package where guests will receive professionally edited photos at the end of the journey.  
Website: [www.klook.com/activity/11634-qipao-experience-macau](http://www.klook.com/activity/11634-qipao-experience-macau)



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# Going for the heavyweights



Kyoto will welcome the 5<sup>th</sup> World Parkinson Congress next June

Corporate incentive groups and academic conferences rank high on Japan’s agenda in its quest for more inbound business events, writes **Kathryn Wortley**

While working to attract a broad spectrum of business events to Japan, the Japan Convention Bureau (JCB) is eyeing incentive groups and academic conferences in particular, to help attain national tourism-related targets. By 2020, the government wants to attract 40 million inbound visitors annually, thereby generating four trillion yen (US\$36 billion) in tourism revenue. Meanwhile, by 2030, the goal is for Japan to become the top international conference destination in Asia. “To achieve these goals there is a strong emphasis on offering more high-quality incentive trips, and proactively

attracting international conferences,” explained Etsuko Kawasaki, executive director of the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), which runs JCB. JCB staff are engaging with organisations at home and abroad, as well as individuals, to gather information that can increase the appeal of Japan for conferences. In May 2017, JNTO representatives attended the Language Resources and Evaluation Conference in Miyazaki Prefecture, which attracted 1,100 pax, and joined some 8,600 attendees at the World Congress of Neurology in Kyoto in September 2017. Testimonials gathered from the event organisers will be shared globally to target the conference sectors,

alongside new videos designed to attract all kinds of business events. JNTO has also expanded its Japan Conference Ambassador Program, to include 55 ambassadors. “This by-invitation programme gathers outstanding individuals from various fields, such as academia, medical sciences and tech companies, to serve as front-runners in securing international conferences to Japan,” said Kawasaki. “They share their achievements (in Japan) with their global community, create networking opportunities with Japan-based professionals and raise the status of Japan as a meetings destination.” Collaborations have involved Japan-based business events stakeholders, too.

Last year JNTO organised a seminar with IAPCO at its annual general assembly in Tokyo. More than 100 participants came to find out how to manage and attract international conferences. In cooperation with INCON, JNTO held a seminar for regional CVBs to provide advice on how they can be more appealing to PCOs. A rise in bookings show these efforts are paying off. In calendar 2017, Japan secured a number of mega conferences, including the Asia Pacific Respiratory Society Congress (2,000 pax in Kyoto in 2020), the Asian & Oceanic Epilepsy Society Congress (2,600 pax in Fukuoka in 2020), the World Congress in Computational Mechanics (3,000 pax in Yokohama in 2022) and the General Assembly of the International Union of Radio Science (1,200 pax in Sapporo in 2023). For boost corporate incentive arrivals, JNTO organises the Japan Best Incentive Travel Awards, held for three editions since in 2016.

“These awards promote best practices in incentive travel, recognising the work of planners who merged the charms of Japan with fun and effective itineraries,” noted Kawasaki. Asian continues to be a key source market for corporate incentives. JNTO holds seminars in the volume markets of South Korea, Taiwan and China as well as fast-growing ones like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. According to data from JNTO, the result so far has been “a prominent increase” in corporate incentive groups to Japan from these countries in 2017 and 2018.

## Major business events coming up —

- **10<sup>th</sup> International Aquarium Congress 2018; Fukushima**  
November 4-11, 2018
- **17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Precision Engineering; Kamakura**  
November 12-16, 2018
- **5<sup>th</sup> World Parkinson Congress; Kyoto**  
June 4-7, 2019

## What’s hot

**Akasaka Intercity Air Conference Center**  
Akasaka Intercity Air Conference Center is the latest business events facility in Tokyo’s central business hub, Minato Ward. In addition to 12 conference rooms suitable for 16 to 192 people, the centre boasts two conference lounges, a boardroom, an amphitheatre and a garden. Also available are high-definition video transmission facilities and simultaneous translation booths.  
Email: [info@aicc.tokyo](mailto:info@aicc.tokyo)

**Daiwa Royal Hotel Grande Kyoto**  
Daiwa Royal Hotel Grande Kyoto, the flagship hotel of Daiwa House Group, opened close to Kyoto Station in June. The 272-room property is a five-minute walk from Kyoto Station and boasts an executive lounge and party room for business events as well as a restaurant, relaxation room and fitness room.  
Email: [kyotoreserve@daiwaroyalhotel.jp](mailto:kyotoreserve@daiwaroyalhotel.jp)

**Dandelion Chocolate Japan**  
Bean-to-bar chocolate producer Dandelion Chocolate Japan has kicked off chocolate-



From left: Akasaka Intercity Air Conference Center; Daiwa Royal Hotel Grande Kyoto; Shiroyama Hotel Kagoshima's Cellar N Baron Nagasawa

making workshops for corporate groups of six to 10 people at its shop in Tokyo. Chocolatiers will not only guide participants in the art of each of the eight steps in the process, but also offer chocolate tastings. All activities are designed with teambuilding in mind.  
Email: [events@dandelionchocolate.com](mailto:events@dandelionchocolate.com)

**Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art & Design**  
Launched in 2017, the Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art & Design welcomes

teambuilding groups with an atelier where participants can enrol in workshops and be part of an interactive art creation in a hall where body movement is expressed in images on screens. The museum also features an onomatopoeia rooftop where art doubles up as playground equipment.  
Tel: (81-76) 431-2711

**Shiroyama Hotel Kagoshima**  
As part of its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Shiroyama Hotel Kagoshima in Kyushu has

launched Cellar N Baron Nagasawa, a bar where corporate groups can enjoy wine tasting. This activity can be built into a larger teambuilding event, or stand alone as an add-on to pre/post-meeting programmes at the hotel. Also new at the hotel are the refurbished Lounge Casablanca and Garden Restaurant Holt, both of which can accommodate banquet events. These facilities join to the hotels’ existing portfolio of 11 F&B outlets.  
Tel: (81-99) 224-2211



# TTGmice

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## THE TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE

The article The Technology Experience in TTGmice June 2017 by Karen Yue has been awarded a PATA Gold Award 2018 in Travel Journalism - Business Article category.





# One city, nine ways

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena shows business visitors nine ways to experience the dynamic city that is Bangkok



## The Great Room co-working space – where working gets cool

The Great Room, a Singaporean co-work group, has grown bigger with a new overseas location in Bangkok's Gaysorn Tower. Measuring nearly 2,800m<sup>2</sup> on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> floors in the newly built Gaysorn Tower, the swanky co-working space provides an eclectic array of corporate facilities, ranging from desk space to private meeting rooms to entertainment suites, with panoramic vistas of the city's skyline, complimentary food offerings and speciality coffee to boot. A second location in Bangkok will open later this year in Sindhorn Tower. <http://thegreatroomoffices.com>

## Cru Champagne Bar at Red Sky – get high on drinks and views

Take drinking to the next level (literally) at the lavish Cru Champagne Bar crowning the Centara Grand at CentralWorld's 59th floor, four levels higher than its famed sister Red Sky. Not only does this swanky rooftop bar offers an extensive collection of bubbles and cocktails courtesy of its G.H. Mumm partnership, and gourmet delights like caviar, foie gras and oysters, it also dazzles with its 360 wraparound vistas of downtown Bangkok. Watch the sun set on the sprawling metropolis on a comfy settee or a designer chair encircling the illuminated circular bar centerpiece. <http://champagnecru.com>

## GoSnoop – snoop around Bangkok

Combine teambuilding and sight-seeing with this out-of-the-box game that get groups to explore Bangkok's hidden gems while picking up clues à la Sherlock Holmes along a specific route to unravel a mystery. Played in the Old Bangkok area, teams of two to six people

Above: Cru Champagne Bar at Red Sky  
Right: The Great Room



will go around on foot with a real map to search for particular items and pick up clues that will enable them to solve the mystery at the end. [contact@gosnoop.co](mailto:contact@gosnoop.co)

## Waldorf Astoria Bangkok – a new hospitality icon debuts

The highly anticipated Waldorf Astoria Bangkok, a first for Southeast Asia, finally opened its doors

on August 30. Rising above the upscale Ratchadamri area in the shape of a magnolia flower, the hotel's 171 rooms and suites (from levels six to 16) are the brainchild of Hong Kong architect Andre Fu and his design studio AFSo. Amenities include a trio of distinctively curated dining outlets at the topmost levels 55 to 57, a wellness spa, an outdoor swimming pool and meeting spaces.

Above: Waldorf Astoria Bangkok  
Right: Sühring;

## Insects in the Backyard – six-legged haute dining

Fancy fresh cricket pasta, ravioli stuffed with crab and water beetle meat, or tiramisu with silkworm powder? At Insects in the Backyard, located in the new Chang Chui





creative hub, six-legged critters are turned into fine-dining ingredients by chef Mai Thitiwat, who incorporated Thai and regional flavours while drawing on American and European culinary influences. Embracing sustainability and experimentation ethos, insects used in the restaurant are sourced from family-run farms around Thailand and raised in chemical-free environments. [www.insectsinthebackyard.com](http://www.insectsinthebackyard.com)

### The Market Experience - a cooking challenge with floral notes

The Market Experience, the cooking school and workshop of Bangkok-based tour operator Expique, offers culinary challenges right in the riverside Yodpiman Flower Market. Ranging from short 20-minute activities to four-hour team challenges, teams of up to 60 pax will be tasked to prepare a Thai feast, which will see their creativity, planning and teamwork skills being tested as they race around the market to find the correct ingredients and return to base to complete the tasks at hand – all the while surrounded by the flower trade in full swing. For bigger groups the programme can be customised to include cultural activities or turned into a fun day or racing around Bangkok. [www.marketexperiences.com](http://www.marketexperiences.com)

### Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse – versatile event space

Located on Surawong Road, the new-build Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse comprises 197 guestrooms and 106 deluxe suites across 32 storeys. Facilities on the property include four dining options, the Quan Spa, fitness centre, as well as an outdoor infinity pool. Event planners can make use of the property's 1,555m<sup>2</sup> of versatile event space spread across two ballrooms, nine meeting rooms, a colonial-style courtyard and an outdoor garden.

### Sühring – contemporary German taste in Bangkok

Identical-twin chefs Thomas and Mathias Sühring have introduced high-end German cuisine to Bangkok, adding to

the Thai capital's growing reputation as one of the best value gastronomic destinations in the world. Tucked in 1970s villa on a leafy street in the Sathorn business district, this Michelin-starred restaurant serves only a set menu of eight or 12 courses where diners are taken on a culinary adventure through a series of small plates. Two seatings are available each evening at 17.30 and 21.00. <http://restaurantsuhring.com>

### Lhong 1919 – where old is new again

The 19th century Chinese warehouse site has been given a new lease of life when the Wanglee family – which has owned the place for five generations – decided to turn it into a riverside heritage complex melding dining, art & design and photo opportunities. The piece de resistance of the mixed-use

preserved space is the large shrine to Mazu, the Chinese goddess of seafarers, as well as the original Chinese murals and stonework found and restored after scraping decades of paint and plaster. At this century-old national heritage site, there's also an 800m<sup>2</sup> function hall, a riverfront restaurant with 204 seats and a riverside lawn that can be turned into a reception area.






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## Boosting the tempo

Pleased with their MICE performance so far, TCEB is confident that its support schemes will continue to appeal, reports **Rachel AJ Lee**

According to a Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) spokesperson, performance for Thailand's business events industry from the first to third quarter in financial year 2018 was "impressive".

During the same period, the number of delegates grew 20.3 per cent to 910,912 year-on-year. Meanwhile, the generated revenue grew 8.5 per cent to 68,898 million baht (US\$2 billion) year-on-year.

Within the MICE sector, the segment that revealed the strongest growth was incentives, which posted a 24 per cent growth in overseas delegates (213,943 vs 265,384) and a 15.9 per cent growth in generated revenue (13,142 million baht vs 15,232 million baht).

TCEB offers a range of support schemes, which has brought in new business.

For instance, the support scheme in the meetings and incentive sector, entitled "Meet Mega", has been relatively successful in attracting mega-size groups. This year, TCEB has welcomed a total of eight mega groups – from direct marketing companies in the Asia-Pacific – that have held their events at certified venues in Bangkok, Pattaya and Hua Hin. Group sizes ranged from 3,500 to 20,000 pax, and resulted in a total of 65,280 delegates and generated 5,510 million baht in revenue.

Next, in the associations sector, 11 bids in the fields of medicine, engineering, IT and zoology, have been won by Thailand as of 1H2019. They are expected to bring in around 14,700 attendees and revenue of 1,227 million baht.

Meanwhile, the government agency's support has also brought in a number of exhibitions for 2018 such as the SILMO Bangkok – The ASEAN Optical Fair, Label Expo Southeast Asia, and Medical Devices ASEAN.

For 2019, CPhI South East Asia, a pharmaceutical tradeshow, has already confirmed its call at Bangkok. To be held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, the event is expected to draw more than 6,000 attendees and 270 exhibitors.

TCEB's president, Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, earlier this year shared that the bureau has aligned its efforts with the country's new economic policy to drive competitiveness in 10 key local industries – known as the 10 S-Curve industries – through business events.

The 10 S-Curve industries are integrated medical services, future automotive, smart device, health tourism, biotechnology, food processing, robotics, aviation and logistics, biofuel and biochemical, and digital services.

In this regard, TCEB has been collaborating with overseas and local partners to bring in business events from these industries into the kingdom.

Medical Devices ASEAN 2018, as a trade event for the integrated medical services industry, received TCEB assistance. TCEB supported IMPACT Exhibition Management in bringing more than 4,000 medical professionals around the region to attend the exhibition that highlighted technology and innovation in medical devices.

Other recent successes include SIGGRAPH Asia, CEBIT ASEAN Thailand, and Future Energy Asia 2018. SIGGRAPH Asia, the continent's largest conference and exhibition on computer graphics, interactive techniques, digital content welcomed some 6,500 attendees from 58 countries in November last year.

Another major business event win to watch is CEBIT ASEAN Thailand 2018, the first South-east Asia edition of CEBIT from Germany. Taking place from October 18-20 this year, CEBIT has been billed as a festival for innovation and digitisation.

Next, oil-and-energy event Future Energy Asia 2018 will take place from December 12-14.

TCEB's spokesperson said: "We are still looking for partners to bring in events from the 10 S-Curve industries and roll out support schemes. Our target partners are government agencies, especially the ministries related to the 10 S-Curve industries, and overseas organisers and local suppliers."

## MICE city on the radar

### Rose of the north

Chiang Mai, one of Thailand's five MICE-designated cities, believes that its international-level conference facilities, unique experiences and cultural immersion programmes will be able to pull in more corporate groups.

Nooch Homrossukhon, director meetings and incentives department, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), shared that one of Chiang Mai's key selling points is the city's Lanna heritage and tradition of ethnic tribes that reside in the mountainous areas. Moreover, Chiang Mai's natural landscapes and eco-tourism sites allow for "fun, educational, and adventurous teambuilding and incentive activities".

For instance, teambuilding programmes at the Horizon Village & Resort – located 10km from the city centre – are interwoven with local culture, such as Thai dancing class, Thai cooking class, or the making of herbal candles that delegates can bring home as a souvenir.

Aside from organising teambuilding activities, Horizon Village & Resort boasts Chiang Mai's newest meeting space, a Lanna-style convention hall named Hor Kum Twee. The 640m<sup>2</sup> function space has capacity for 500 pax theatre-style, and 400 pax for banquets. The property also offers a Grand Ballroom which can hold up to 800 pax theatre-style, as well as 12 other smaller function rooms that can hold between 10 and 300 pax.

Meanwhile, Chiang Mai Exhibition and Convention International Convention (CMECC) provides 521,600m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space across several halls, and 29 various meeting rooms. The largest hall – made up of three interconnected smaller halls – offers 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of space which can accommodate more than 10,000 people.

Besides CMECC, Chiang Mai has at least 10 hotels, mostly in the city centre, that can hold events for up to 1,200 delegates. For instance, the Le Meridien Chiang Mai has its own convention centre that can accommodate up to 1,400 people. The biggest group it has handled numbered 1,200 pax in February 2018.

The Chiang Mai International Airport is now being upgraded. Come 2030, with a runway expansion and terminal extension completed, the facility will be able to handle a taxiway capacity of 34 flights per hour, as well as cater to 18 million passengers. – **Rachel AJ Lee**

Take Photo/Shutterstock



Besides scenic views that Chiang Mai is loved for, the city now also boasts business events readiness

## Viewpoints | What will you be doing in 2019 to make it an even better year for your business?

“My 2019 has started as of July 18 and we plan to be bigger, better, faster and stronger in the next 12 months. We are focusing on developing our local team and MICE products (to ensure they) are more creative and memorable. Client relationships are also our priority, and we plan to grow closer with our existing clients. We also plan to attract more business from Western countries into our region. As CSR is in our DNA, this year we will continue to work with many local communities across South-east Asia and expand into more remote areas!”

**Wanwisa Namwisate, regional MICE manager, Buffalo Tours (Thailand)**

“For 2019, I'll be focusing on three things. The first is redesigning our experiential offer to make it more unique and harder to be organised by someone outside Thailand. This will bring more profits, and we can assure clients of good service. The second is implementing technology and digitalisation, both internally and externally (i.e. client proposals) to better our efficiency. Lastly, we will be giving back to society by creating a new platform to interact with the younger generation, to help them learn the ropes better so that they will stay in the industry longer.”

**Max Boontawee Jantasuwat, CEO, Events Travel Asia Group**

“Le Meridien Phuket looks forward to completing the resort's planned enhancements in 2019, after renovations were done to the free-form pool last year, and the complete redesign of our modern conference centre in 2016. Once next year's projects are completed, it will further establish the resort as an ideal destination for both leisure and business travellers. Plus, the integration of the Marriott International Loyalty Rewards programme will increase our share of meetings and incentives business on Phuket.”

**Derek Loke, director of sales & marketing, Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort**





# Engaging engagement

Corporate meetings are increasingly seeking deeper connections and audience engagement that extends beyond the meeting duration, writes **Karen Yue**

While business event planners have always understood that successful meetings engage participants, the definition of engagement has in recent times taken on a more critical meaning.

Firstly, according to business event specialists the *Daily* spoke to, audience engagement has extended beyond the duration of the event.

Sam Lay, senior director, Asia Pacific, CWT Meetings & Events, observed that corporate clients are increasingly forming event programming committees and conducting focus group discussions involving key participants, all in an effort to extract views on what they hope to see in terms of content at upcoming meetings.

He believes that this is happening in the corporate space as more participants now want a say in how a meeting programme should be, as well as companies' growing awareness that successful content needs to be co-created with partners. The latter, Lay opined, is due to the presence of a more learned and experienced internal planner – one who sits within the corporate organisation.

"People who are touching meetings today, compared to five years ago, are more aware of event technology, the right approach (to programming), as well as how they should work with their partners in organising a meeting.

"This has happened because there are a lot more meeting management courses being offered at higher education institutions, (and) more meetings are taking place which allows planners to gain more experiences," Lay said.

Secondly, as much as audience engagement has become wider – spreading beyond the duration of the meeting, it has also gone deeper, observed Mind-Meetings Netherlands' meeting designer, Eric de Groot, who pointed out that the instructional approach commonly taken by corporate meetings is fast going out of style. He believes that the Information Age is the catalyst.

"Sharing has become a trend. Wikipedia is proof of the power of crowd-thinking. As a result, many organisations are becoming aware of the value that lies in conversations with employees, in harvesting their individual insights. Today's meetings are no longer instruction



More corporate meetings are ditching instructional formats, favouring instead an interactional approach

platforms. Rather, meetings are test tubes for information chemistry."

He asserts that in a "new economy led by the young generation", corporate performance visions are no longer something only the CEO can provide.

However, not all organisations are aware of the need to alter the way they meet and engage their delegates. These organisations struggle to accept this new reality, choosing instead to maintain one-directional meetings, said de Groot, pointing to the "fear of chaos", and inability to process large amounts of new information from meeting participants as obstacles.

## Creative delivery

In hopes of leaving participants with a memorable and lasting impression, corporate meetings are getting more creative in the way they engage the audience, communicate their key messages and achieve their goals.

Drawing an example around annual general meetings (AGMs), Lay said these once rigid events are shaking off their top-down approach and are becoming more "sensorial".

"Traditionally at these meetings, someone at the top will tell the audience what's happening and what will happen next for the company. But in recent years, AGMs are kicking off with a big ra-ra. Videos are used (as part of presentations), and mechanisms are employed to track audience reaction, and that data

helps planners analyse which part of the event was most engaging and had the highest level of activation.

"So now, planners have data to help them know when to tune up and reengage people, perhaps at the six-minute mark when people's attention starts to waver."

Lay also suggested that corporate meetings are becoming more creative because communication technology has made it easier for planners to "see or hear how an event held 10,000 miles away was done, and to take something innovative from it to be incorporated into their own event here".

Daniel Chua, founder and chief executive of Singapore-based conference management agency, Aonia, said some corporate meetings have become more creative because of "an internal demand to keep things fresh and alive".

Most corporate meetings designed and executed by Aonia are aimed at top-level

**"Today's meetings are no longer instruction platforms. Rather, meetings are test tubes for information chemistry."**

## Eric de Groot

Meeting designer, MindMeeting, the Netherlands

personnel. These meetings are adopting more multimedia in content delivery and offering more interactive opportunities between participants.

"As the cost of event technology usage continues to drop over the years, we can expect even greater adoption," said Chua.

In terms of venue setup though, Chua's clients have kept to the familiar classroom layout even though new and unique ideas are encouraged.

"Formats have not changed much, and if it did, I'd think it was because of interesting event possibilities offered by venues which give clients impetus to try out new content delivery," he added.

## Impact on suppliers

Naturally, the pursuit of deeper audience engagement has changed the way corporate clients regard their meetings and events agents and venue suppliers.

"Agents were more reactive (but) as the industry advances, they must play a more consultative role and propose unique, valuable ideas to clients," Lay said. "And clients expect this of us, demanding that value proposition we can provide as their event partner."

Ramesh Daryanani, vice president, global sales, Asia Pacific (excluding Greater China), Marriott International, asserts that hotels must, too, play the role of an event partner.

Ramesh said: "Meeting planners have evolved from simply telling hotels, 'OK, I want a meeting room from nine to five and some tea and coffee', to being very specific about what they want participants to experience and to take away with them at the end of the event, and what the hotel can do to help make that happen."

Lay also emphasised the need for companies to approach meetings and events strategically in order to fulfil the need for deeper engagement. By looking at a company's full calendar of events for the year, instead of a single event each time, the internal planner can ensure a consistent approach to audience engagement and communications, as well as see where the opportunities for cost savings and consolidated spend lie.

CWT is pushing for this strategic approach with its corporate clients, determined to "look at a client's entire calendar of events as early as possible, and get involved in the planning just from the start".

"By doing so, one of the things we could do is putting in an innovation right at the beginning that will help the client save money, collect useful data and better engage attendees. To achieve this, CWT forges a very close relationship with various departments of the client's company, such as marketing and operations," he elaborated.

The heightened interest in deeper engagement has also prompted Mind-Meeting and Taiwan-based Asia Concentrate Corporation (ACC) to enter a 50-50 joint venture to birth Orange Gibbon, a company specialising in meeting design services. The founders hope that Orange Gibbon would create a more productive output for meetings delivered by ACC in Asia by adopting MindMeeting's Meeting Design solution.

To expedite the evolution of meetings design in Asia, de Groot said Orange Gibbon would "provide formats that structure the large-scale input and dynamic alternatives for information processing" and "connect meetings to strategic goals and use the wisdom of crowds to achieve those goals".

## HOTELS AS INFLUENCERS?

Marriott International's Ramesh Daryanani acknowledges the critical role frontliners play in communicating what hotels can do as event partners.

Sales staff are trained to use Marriott's Meetings Imagined platform, the company's meeting product that delivers memorable meetings and utilises an image-heavy website to

Ramesh Daryanani

suggest unique event ideas and guide objectives.

"A Marriott sales person digs deep into what the customer hopes to achieve through the event. He then gives the customer a visual of what Marriott can execute around the world, what other people have done in the past, and what makes events of the same kind successful."

Site inspections are special too, Ramesh claims. "We conduct 'wow site inspections'. From the moment a customer get out of his car to when he finishes the site inspection, our hotel

team makes sure that he gets an exemplary experience. Between a warm welcome and a fond farewell, all the activations – be it seeing the room or a meeting space – is customised to the needs of the customer."

When asked if this approach works for customers, Ramesh replied confidently: "Meetings and events now make up 20 per cent of Marriott International's business. In a market where we are opening numerous new hotels, we are still seeing growth in the meetings segment."





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# Asia’s big ones

With a healthy stable of no less than 800 guestrooms, supported by a plump inventory of convention and meeting spaces, these mega hotels are ever-ready to welcome large business gatherings



## Fairmont Singapore & Swissôtel The Stamford, Singapore

Fairmont Singapore and Swissôtel The Stamford jointly house the Raffles City Convention Centre, which offers more than 6,503m<sup>2</sup> of meeting space across 27 function rooms and ballrooms. The largest ballroom can take up to 3,200 people for a standing cocktail session.

There are a total of 2,030 guestrooms between Fairmont Singapore & Swissôtel The Stamford, often seen as one hotel complex; the former has 769 keys while the latter has 1,261.

Special arrangements for groups are available, such as an exclusive check-in space within a meeting room, an off-site catering for sessions, or a gala dinner outside of the hotel.

Its size and level of in-house support allowed Raffles City Convention Centre to host seven association meetings last year, including Association Management Solutions for IETF’s 100 Conference 2018, and the International Cotton Association Congress 2017.

## JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, UAE

The JW Marriott Marquis Dubai is the world’s tallest full-service hotel standing at a height of 355 meters, 26 meters shorter than Empire State Building.

The property is the first in the UAE capable of hosting groups, meetings and conventions of up to 1,000 people, where delegates can meet, eat and sleep in one location.

With over 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of indoor and outdoor event space, the property can accommodate small to large-scale meetings and conferences. Two ballrooms and 32 flexible meeting rooms provide state-of-the-art venues for every agenda.

Alternatively, three stunning outdoor venues with incredible views over Downtown Dubai, and the newly extended Dubai Water Canal can help

set the stage for an unforgettable event.

The 1,608 guestrooms are designed around the needs of today’s modern traveller, achieving a balance of effort-less style and modern functionality. There are also 17 restaurants, bars and lounges within the property.

The hotel has hosted multiple meetings from around the world, notably from the US, Europe and GCC countries. Meeting sizes typically range from 500 to 1,500 guests.

For large meetings, designated group check-in, and a private dining area for breakfast can be arranged. To help ease the set-up process, Dubai Ballroom on Level 2 has its own private access and private valet parking.

There is also a travel desk located in the hotel for organisers to book excursions and activities, and complimentary shuttle services to The Dubai Mall. To ensure the smooth running of an event, organisers will have a dedicated event planner to assist them throughout.

## Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel, Malaysia

With an inventory of 921 rooms, Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel is the largest single hotel property in Kuala Lumpur.

On-site facilities that matter to meeting planners include five F&B outlets – which offer a variety of Asian and International cuisine – as well as 28 function rooms spanning 3,715m<sup>2</sup>.

The property has staged many meetings organised by associations and councils since its opening in June 1996. An example is the Malaysia Sports Council in August 2017 for 1,000 people.

The largest venue option is the pillar-less Grand Ballroom, which measures 1,430m<sup>2</sup> and can accommodate up to 1,800 people for a cocktail reception or 750 people for a sit-down banquet.

For large groups, a group check-in can be arranged. Additional perks



Left: JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, UAE. Above: Fairmont Singapore & Swissôtel The Stamford, Singapore

include a dedicated event manager for every meeting, access to an app that allows planners to communicate with key hotel operation staff in real-time, and support from Marriott International’s Global Meeting Strategy which promises to transform any meeting – big or small – into an experience.

## Hyatt Regency Sydney, Australia

Hyatt Regency Sydney’s recent redevelopment makes it the largest upscale, full-service hotel in Australia.

Large groups are easily serviced with 892 guestrooms and over 3,700m<sup>2</sup> of state-of-the-art meeting spaces, including two ballrooms offering panoramic views of Darling Harbour which seat

over 1,100 each. The two ballrooms also offer separate bathrooms, entrances, escalators and pre-function areas and goods lifts for easy access and complete privacy.

In addition, there are 21 meeting or breakout rooms, each equipped with multiple electrical, microphone and phone outlets, as well as high-speed wireless Internet access. The hotel also provides in-house audiovisual services.

Planners work with an assigned event manager from the hotel to ensure a smoothly-run event.

There are six restaurants and bars to cater to hungry hordes, including a 272-seat all-day dining restaurant, Sailmaker.

A separate bus bay entrance for large groups, as well as a dedicated group check-in are available on request.





## Grand Hyatt Incheon, South Korea

As the largest Hyatt hotel outside North America, Grand Hyatt Incheon packs in 1,024 guestrooms across two towers that are connected via a sky bridge, 26 individual event spaces totalling 4,566m<sup>2</sup>, and five F&B venues.

Within the East Tower sits a ballroom for up to 540 banquet guests, 11 event rooms, two hospitality suites and three boardrooms. Across that, in the West Tower – which was launched in 2014 – features a Grand Ballroom with a capacity of 830 people in a banquet setting, a large pre-function foyer, two large conference rooms, two drawing rooms, three meeting rooms, and the Garden Event Deck and Pool House, a dramatic space for up to 500 people, surrounded by cherry and pine trees and offering ocean views.

All event spaces feature modern multimedia and conference equipment as well as high-speed Internet access. Meanwhile, planners looking to host a meeting at the hotel are provided with support from an experienced in-house events team.

As well, Grand Hyatt Incheon maintains the Hyatt’s sterling reputation of catering excellence, promising association events memorable dining experiences that can be delivered beyond the hotel’s F&B establishments.

Recent meetings held at the five-star hotel include the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Society of Gastrointestinal Intervention in September 2017 the Korean Transplantation Society’s Asian Transplantation Week in October 2017; and the

Liver Week conference jointly hosted by the Korean Association for the Study of the Liver, the Korean Association of HBP Surgery, the Korean Liver Cancer Association, and the Korean Liver Transplantation Society in June 2018.

## Shinagawa Prince Hotel, Japan

Located just outside Shinagawa Station, with easy access to Narita and Haneda International Airports, the Shinkansen network, Tokyo Big Sight and Tokyo International Forum, the size of Shinagawa Prince Hotel befits its location.

The hotel has 3,626 rooms and meeting spaces totalling 2,046m<sup>2</sup>. In the annex tower, nine rooms can be broken down into various sizes or stand as one mega room. Additional function space is available on the eighth to 36<sup>th</sup> floors of the main tower as well.

The hotel also boasts 10 F&B outlets, and recreational facilities such as a bowling alley, swimming pool, indoor tennis and golf facilities, and a cinema.

A dedicated business events service called Prince Tokyo MICE City caters to planners’ needs, offering facilities nearby including Aqua Park Shinagawa (aquarium) and Stellar Ball (live concert venue). Meeting delegates can be transferred post-meeting to the group’s hotels across Japan, where they can enjoy golf, hot springs, skiing or nature.

The largest meeting hosted to date at Shinagawa Prince Hotel was a three-day medical conference that welcomed 3,000 guests per day.



Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park, Thailand

## Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park, Thailand

The sprawling Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen’s Park is Marriott Hotels & Resorts’ first Marquis-designated property in Asia. The Marquis designation is reserved for B2B-ready properties that satisfy seven key requirements such as being in a gateway city, occupy an iconic building, are of exceptional size and offer spectacular facilities.

With 1,360 rooms and 35 different function rooms offering more than 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of space, the Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen’s Park is the largest hotel in Bangkok. Its sheer size allows large-scale residential meetings to accommodate all delegates under one roof, saving logistical resources.

The largest venue space at the hotel is the Thai Chitlada Grand Ballroom, capable of hosting a 1,300-pax theatre-style conference.

The hotel is also brandishing its variety of dining options for business events as a major selling point, especially at a time when delegates are increasingly expecting unique dining experiences. There are eight F&B outlets at the hotel, including five full-service restaurants.

Recent meetings held at the hotel include the 24<sup>th</sup> Asian Seed Congress, and the 2017 IFLA Asia Pacific Regional Congress in November 2017.

## Seoul Dragon City, South Korea

Hotel giant AccorHotels launched a ‘hotelplex’ in Seoul’s Yongsan district last year, where four brands of different price points are housed under one massive roof.

Named Seoul Dragon City, the complex comprising Grand Mercure (202 rooms), Novotel Suites (286 rooms), Novotel (621 rooms) and ibis Styles (591 rooms), offering a total inventory of 1,700 keys, two multifunctional grand ballrooms, 17 meeting rooms, 11 F&B outlets, and a four-storey sky bridge that houses a cluster of uniquely themed, world-class lounges that welcome private events.

Seoul Dragon City’s event facilities are located across levels three and five, all connected by escalators and away from other non-event guest facilities.

The two grand ballrooms are named Hanra and Baekdu, each able to accommodate 1,972 guests in a theatre setup. The former can be split into three smaller spaces. The elongated foyer of Hanra and Baekdu can also support accompanying exhibitions that are sometimes part of congresses.

It is said that all event facilities combined can take in 4,900 attendees.

Seoul Dragon City is has welcomed several meetings such as Asian Critical Care Conference in April this year, and Unleashing Print Seoul by DSCOOP, a conference for professional print service providers and users, in May. Coming up in October, Seoul Dragon City will host the 38<sup>th</sup> Congress of Société Internationale d’Urologie.

## Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia

The 40-storey Hotel Mulia Senayan, Jakarta boasts 994 keys and meeting facilities such as The Grand Ballroom – one of the city’s largest – which 2,500m<sup>2</sup> of space and can comfortably accommodate up to 4,000 people. It is also easily accessible via its own entrance or from the main lobby.

In addition, 18 other meeting and function rooms are available in varying sizes. If those are not enough, Jakarta Convention Centre is located just across the street

For group check-in, the hotel has a dedicated airport representative team at the airport with a fleet of limousines that can cater to VIPs and groups of all sizes. Dedicated group check-in counters can also be arranged at function rooms.

The hotel has nine F&B venues to choose from, serving a multitude of cuisines from Sichuan to French.

The hotel has hosted a number of insurance, oil and gas, social organisation events, but the largest business gathering so far was by an automotive industry association that welcomed 800 people.



Clockwise from above: Shinagawa Prince Hotel, Japan; Grand Hyatt Incheon, South Korea; Seoul Dragon City, South Korea





# Weaker rupiah holds back incentives

By Tiara Maharani

In anticipation of impacts a weaker rupiah would have on outbound incentive business next year, event planners in Indonesia are now drawing up strategies to cope with rate fluctuations while keeping demand from corporates high.

The rupiah has declined from around Rp14,300 against the US dollar in early August to Rp15,000 on September 5, the weakest since the 1997 economic crisis.

Eddy Efendy, director of Synergy Production Travel and Events, commented: “It’s still difficult to predict the situation next year; we have to wait until December. But the incentive business is still fine for now.”

As the currency devaluation took place towards the end of the year, most groups this year have materialised, noted Eddy.

But event planners may soon begin to feel some pain from the rupiah’s downturn, as Indonesian agents typically quote in rupiah but make payments in the US dollar.

Pauline Suharno, managing director of Elok Tour, said: “Some clients understand the conditions and are willing to pay the balance due to the devaluation... The problem is many companies do not want to adjust the pricing.”

Rudiana, director of sales and marketing of WITA Tour, added: “The depreciation of the rupiah made conditions unstable. We find it difficult to determine prices, even though we must immediately submit proposals for incentives (programmes) next year.

“When the currency is not stabilised, the price balance becomes a problem,” he commented. “If the price is too high it will be difficult to sell, but if it is too cheap it also will reduce profits or even (be a) loss for planners.”

Compared with leisure travel, Rudiana said corporate incentives are more sensitive to a weaker rupiah.

“In a leisure tour programme, travellers have the option to alter itineraries to meet their budget. But for an incentive programme, everything is set from the beginning. If we promise to use a luxury bus or have dinner at a top-notch restaurant, we cannot change that (as these are perks for the clients).

Likewise, pricing is also the “most sensitive issue” for clients of Agustinus Pake Seko, president director of Bayu Buana, although the company has recorded a 15 per cent growth in business this year and bookings are still coming in for next year.

“(Clients) just want the cheapest package, but with rupiah depreciation it will be difficult. This is the challenge,” he pointed out.

To cope with the currency fluctuations, Agustinus would suggest to clients to exclude some meals from the itinerary, and let group members find their own.

“It is a win-win solution,” he remarked. “Without eating at a restaurant, prices will be much cheaper. Delegates will also have a more genuine local dining experience (by getting to pick what they’d like to eat).”

Elok Tour’s Pauline Suharno, meanwhile, would recommend a lower hotel category or a similar star-rated property outside of the city centre.

Another option is to cut the duration of the programme.

She shared: “Nowadays, agents choose to cut costs by not hiring freelance tour guides. Agents are now maximising in-house staff to serve clients.”

Rupiah devaluation aside, a mounting concern for Eddy is potential political

instability, as the national and presidential elections are due next year.

“If the rupiah continues to slide and the political situation is not conducive, business will be like falling down from a ladder,” he said.



Agustinus: clients more price sensitive



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# Here's to fresh beginnings

By Yingyong Unanongra



Sukosol Hotels Thailand's Pawich Chokkanlayanee, Bizfield Management & Tours Malaysia's Vivienne Wong and Sukosol Hotels Thailand's Pornnapa Lertpitaksit



Oakwood Hotel & Residence Surabaya's Andy Sadikin and Best Western Hotels & Resorts Indonesia's Andriana Hendrawati



TW Mice Event & DMC Taiwan's Stacy Yang, Ting Wang, Anna Tsai and Krystal Chien



Nine Land Hong China's Yan Yan, Provident Global Capital Group China's Kin Fung Michael Chow, Beijing BeiAo International Travel Service China's Vincents Yu, China Macao Federation of Youth Culture Macau's Tang Chon In Samuel and Macau Youth Entrepreneur Association's Kenneth O



Mooncake Educational Travel and Tours Philippines' Antonio Tony Esteban I and Carnival Singapore's Farriek Tawfik



Frasers Hospitality Singapore's Jacinta Teo and Pornsuang Likitganjanakul



Laguna Resorts & Hotels Public Thailand's Laddawan Somniyam



Tripez Travel Malaysia's Agnes Ho Muh Shing and Discover the World Singapore's Jimmy Kwan



Unison Medicare and Research Centre India's Ishwar Gilada



TTG Middle East's Motaz Othman, TTG Asia Media's Pierre Quek and Ambassador Tours Jordan's Khaled Khalifa



Light Miles Travel Philippines' Asuncion Cariquitan, Tattva Trails India's Maya Ayappa and China Ocean International Travel Service China's Selina Liu



GCPH (Thailand)'s Laurence Neumann, Southern Travels India's Sudhir Tull and B Braun Medical Supplies Malaysia's Pearl Germaine Danker



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# Getting the ball rolling

By Yingyong Unanongra



# Teeing off to a great start

By Yingyong Unanongra







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Just a stone's throw away is the [Genting International Convention Centre](#), home to the largest column-free hall in Malaysia. The grand ballroom can accommodate up to 3,500 guests in theatre-style seating. For banquet style, the hall can be separated to fit up to 1,800 guests.

For a spectacular theatre experience, you'll be delighted at the state-of-the-art [Genting International Showroom](#). With high-end multimedia facilities, sound and lighting, and stage theatre equipments,

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The highly-acclaimed outlets join a string of excellent restaurants at Resorts World Genting, including the award-winning [The Olive](#), [La Fiesta](#), [e18hteen Inspired Cuisine](#), and more.

The resort also presents an authentic hawker fare at the unique [Malaysian Food Street](#), where it brings together 20 established household names from different parts of the country such as Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown and Little India, Penang, Melaka, Ipoh and Kuching.





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