

CASE STUDY

FAST FACTS



Event
55th ICCA Congress

13 - 16 November, 2016

Venue
Borneo Convention
Centre Kuching



Number of Participants
834 from 61 countries
88 percent international delegates



Delegate Profile
Specialist in organising,
transporting and accommo-
dating international
meetings and events



**Estimated Economic
Impact to Malaysia**
RM322.186 million

Winning the bid to host the 55th ICCA Congress for Malaysia is deemed as an important benchmark. Kuching is one of the first few second-tier destinations in Asia to win the rights to host the Congress, following the 2015 event in Buenos Aires (Argentina), 2014 in Antalya (Turkey) and 2013 in Shanghai (China). The global event created a platform for Kuching to showcase its capability in hosting a world event with the aim of attracting future clients to its destination.

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA LEVERAGING INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR THE 55TH ICCA CONGRESS



The 55th International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Congress 2016 kicks off

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Malaysia was awarded the right to host the 55th International Congress and Convention Centre Association (ICCA) Congress, to be held in Kuching, Sarawak from 13 – 16 November 2016. ICCA is the global expert in international association meeting. With its headquarters based in Amsterdam, it has over 1,000 members in over 100 countries.

ICCA represents the world's leading suppliers in handling, transporting and accommodating international meetings and events and comprises over 1,000-member companies and organisations. Since its establishment over 50 years ago, ICCA has carved a name for itself by specialising in the international association meetings sector - offering unrivalled data, communication channels and business development opportunities.

Meeting professionals view the annual ICCA Congress as a gold standard event, just as athletes view the Olympics. The 55th ICCA Congress created a platform for Kuching to showcase its capability in hosting a world event with the aim of attracting future clients to its destination.

Winning the bid to host the 55th ICCA Congress for Malaysia is deemed as an important benchmark. PR value from the Congress is invaluable and has earned Malaysia a credit as a serious industry player among its peers. Kuching is one of the first few second-tier destinations in Asia to win the rights to host the Congress, following the 2015 event in Buenos Aires (Argentina), 2014 in Antalya (Turkey) and 2013 in Shanghai (China).

OBJECTIVES

All of the integrative events that are planned, organised and implemented in collaboration with the relevant members, industry partners and other stakeholders in conjunction with the Congress were initiated to achieve these objectives:

- (i) As a country, Malaysia has a goal to achieve a developed nation status by 2020 with business events being part of the strategy. Tourism is already one of Malaysia's key economic sector and the plans for expansion include growing business tourism arrivals from 5% to 8% of overall tourist arrivals by year 2020, targeting more international events, and establishing Malaysia as a leading business tourism destination (ETP Annual Report, 2013). In this context, the decision to host the coveted ICCA Conference in Malaysia could not have been timelier.
- (ii) This project is in line with MyCEB's strategic goal to drive deeper engagement and cooperation between Malaysia's public and private sectors, leveraging on collaboration to allow the nation to continue winning international conventions. This initiative underscores the need to review and focus event evaluation in a way that Malaysia can learn and improve at subsequent event bidding, planning, and eventually hosting the event.
- (iii) One of the strategic goals as outlined in the newly launched Malaysia's Business Events Roadmap 2020 is to deeply engage government ministries and agencies to communicate how business events will play a major role in achieving the 2020 goals of every government ministry. The ultimate objective is to get full support from the government to help Malaysia bid, plan and leverage on international conventions.

EVENT LEGACIES

Government Advocacy

The 55th ICCA Congress held in Kuching in November 2016 was a catalyst for the generation of new collaborations for the future and sustainability of the nation's business events industry. The Congress managed to bring together an effective network of event stakeholders to cultivate collaboration and integrate different purposes in a comprehensive strategy, which will also incorporate future events. With optimal use of the host community's integrated set of resources, these new networks have the potential to further leverage and sustain the benefits of events that otherwise may have a short-lived lifespan.

The various cross-leveraging meetings and engagement with key leaders and policy makers to raise awareness on the importance of business events both socially and economically has led to a presentation of a business case at the Tourism Cabinet Meeting chaired by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister. As a result of that, at the Cabinet Ministers meeting, it was proposed that each ministry and government agencies appoint an officer as a focal point within each ministry to support the business events industry in Malaysia.

SCB collaborated with ICCA and the Librarians Association of Malaysia (Sarawak Chapter) to raise book donations to benefit children in rural Sarawak, providing the host committee with an opportunity to conduct corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The delegates contributed 358 books which were distributed to five schools and two villages. According to SCB, the activity has raised the awareness of such opportunities for helping rural communities.



On the community engagement front, SCB and Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK), the event's venue, provided training and briefing sessions with local suppliers and providers in Kuching on the importance of hosting the event and what it would mean to the destination if the event was deemed successful.



This will allow for effective and efficient collaboration within different organisations to ensure the success and future development of the sector. The organisation of the 55th ICCA Congress presented a platform for relevant parties to initiate the government advocacy programme and to raise awareness, particularly within the government and ministries to support the industry.

Education

ICCA Malaysia's goals and objectives include developing future leaders for the business events industry. Several organisations worked together to host young associates, students and executives to attend the 55th ICCA Congress to gain new knowledge, network among global experts and gain a better understanding of the industry.

As the Congress was hosted for the first time in Malaysia, these organisations collaborated in organising programmes and offered grants to attract young individuals to attend the Congress. Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre offered the Professional Development Grant and hosted three young local association executives, the Sarawak Convention Bureau awarded five scholarships through its Asia Pacific Young Professionals Development Programme in collaboration with ICCA's Asia Pacific Chapter; while the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) together with the Malaysia Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS) and SCB hosted three students from Sunway University that had won the 2016 Bid Challenge initiative conducted earlier in the year. These initiatives resulted in inspiring and equipping Malaysia's young industry professionals with global perspectives and better tools for developing the business events industry in the future. It helps to improve tertiary education and quality of graduates and grow local knowledge and capacity building.

Community Engagement

On the community engagement front, SCB and Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK), the event's venue, provided training and briefing sessions with local suppliers and providers in Kuching on the importance of hosting the event and what it would mean to the destination if the event was deemed successful. ICCA delegates include meeting organisers from all over the world and it was imperative for Kuching to deliver its best. Kuching being a second tier city was in need of a high profile event to boost the image of the destination as a potential host city to organise future events. Through the training and briefing sessions, the local shops were made aware of the potential business opportunities – offering special rates for the ICCA delegates and ensured provision for a wide range of products.

Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR)

With more than 800 delegates gathering in Kuching to attend the Congress, it certainly provided the host committee with an opportunity to conduct corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. SCB collaborated with ICCA and the Librarians Association of Malaysia (Sarawak Chapter) to raise book donations to benefit children in rural Sarawak.

It managed to collect 358 books from the delegates to be distributed to five schools and two villages. According to SCB, the book share initiatives will be adopted by future conferences and the activity has raised the awareness of such opportunities for helping rural communities. The Borneo Orangutan Project (BOP), the brainchild of both ICCA and local hosts, was initially launched at the International Business and Tourism Management (IBTM) trade show in Barcelona in November 2015, highlighting the plight of the endangered species. Through collaboration with Sarawak Forestry, the project focused on raising funds for the orangutan conservation efforts in Malaysia.

Six baby orangutans were adopted by among others IMEX America, ICCA and Skycity New Zealand International Convention Centre. The BOP project not only attracted international attention but also raised RM70, 000 through corporate adoptions. The book share initiative and BOP project benefitted the local community and contributed to the conservation of the ecosystem, as well as enhancing the reputation of the destination as capable of driving social and environmental change.

Branding and PR

Another important legacy is the branding of Sarawak and Malaysia as a serious player in the global business events industry. In 2015, SCB launched an integrated PR and marketing campaign #RoadtoSarawak which included marketing collateral, advertising, social media, communication and collaborations with other ICCA Malaysia organisations including MyCEB, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre as well as BCKK. ICCA allowed the host country to bring the brand to its peak and it's up to the destination to carry it forward. At last count, the ROI for PR and eyeball count totaled up to RM10 million in value.

Also, for the first time, ICCAWorld broadcasted the event via Facebook Live videos on their Facebook page and generated a reach of almost 126,000 impressions, 2,400 engagements and 324 link clicks. The video of the closing ceremony garnered 3,100 views reaching more than 9,000 people. The number of followers for ICCAWorld Instagram increased by 5.5 percent and with 13,200 followers, the @ICCAWorld Twitter account generated a reach of over 145,000 impressions and almost 5,000 engagements in November. These outcomes indicate nothing else but a raised awareness of Malaysia and Kuching as a business destination – receiving international and local media coverage that reflected positively on Malaysia, the state of Sarawak and the capital city of Kuching as a conference destination.

Advocacy for Second-Tier Cities

The organisation of the 55th ICCA Congress gave Kuching the opportunity to profile the destination as a capable second-tier city and to share their winning strategies, expertise and knowledge with other second-tier cities which was one of the main initiatives proposed during the bid. There are more than 250 potential second-tier cities in the Asia Pacific region, of which only 30 are ICCA members. This event was used to reinforce Kuching's position and reputation as a second-tier city to host world events.

With nearly 830 delegates from 61 countries, the 55th ICCA Congress contributed an estimated of RM322.186 million to Sarawak in delegate expenditure with 42.7 percent of attendees spending EUR800 - 1200 throughout their stay and a total average length of stay estimated at 5.6 nights. 41.1 % of delegates extended their stay in Malaysia while 37.1 percent of the delegates plan to revisit the country in the future.
