

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Headquarters

APRIL 2016

ASIA PACIFIC

Interview

DR. CAROLYN LAM

CARDIOVASCULAR
IN SINGAPORE

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HEADQUARTERS MOVING FORWARD

MARCEL A.M. VISSERS EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Headquarters as you know it is gone forever. Its Scandinavian layout has been completely revamped, as you will have realised by now, and with it we have tried to bring in new content and new ideas to you, our beloved association readers. We hope you like it – we surely have put in a lot of efforts in it.

As to fresh ideas, we know from experience that associations prosper best in open and free societies. There are many gradations of this principle in Asia and on the whole there is considerable government involvement. However, this does not preclude – and there is increasing evidence of this – that more initiatives are being taken to provide trades and industries with associative support. But we have to remain objective. Associations in Asia Pacific are still in their infancy. That is why the education of association professionals is of prime importance. Let's take a closer look at a specific example.

In India, 99 per cent of associations do not have a CEO, according to Ajay Kakar, who founded the BITEIN Dental Portal which now has a multi-tier membership fee structure, and who is the president-elect of the International Academy of Periodontology. Association leaders in Malaysia and Singapore also told us that they wished they had such a society.

Malaysia is playing a key role in fostering the creation of fully-fledged associations. Training modules have been made available to help elevate the professionalism of organisations. The government needs to be commended for this initiative which will hopefully be echoed in other countries. I am convinced that the Hong Kong charter which was set up last year would spawn the birth of more such societies, which in turn would advance the cause for the Asia-Pacific federation. However, there is still a long way to go.

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Delegates arriving at the Adelaide Convention Centre will not only enjoy world-class facilities, service and technologies but be welcomed into an intellectual ecosystem of creativity, industry, research and development designed to inspire.

With the Centre at its heart, delegates will witness firsthand the Adelaide's revolutionary transformation arising from the significant investment in developing world-class innovation hubs for medical and health research, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, food technology and education.

This means delegates can join some of the world's best minds in these sectors, who are now calling Adelaide home, and benefit from an infectious new energy which will inspire, encourage creative thinking, and nurture new ideas.

The Adelaide Convention Centre sits, both physically and intellectually, at the heart of this thriving ecosystem within the Riverbank precinct, adjacent to the South Australian Health and Biomedical Precinct – the largest in the Southern hemisphere, and within close proximity to three internationally recognised universities.

The Centre is able to connect you with these institutions, their researchers and academics, along with the organisations at Tonsley – a new advanced manufacturing and education precinct and the nearby Thebarton Technology Precinct.

Adelaide Convention Centre Chief Executive Alec Gilbert said the Centre actively assisting visiting delegates to connect with local thought leaders, innovative industry and research bodies and academics to conduct site

tours, share ideas and gain access to key speakers," said Mr Gilbert.

"This approach is about enriching the conference experience for delegates both within the Centre and the city itself."



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1

NEW CONVENTION CENTRE FOR QUITO, CAPITAL OF ECUADOR

The building of the Metropolitan Convention Center in Quito, capital of Ecuador, was officially announced in 2015 and is due to open at the end of 2016. The new facilities will help develop the meetings industry in the Ecuadorean city, providing a modern, flexible and efficient environment to host events. This industry is one of the fastest growing sectors over the last years. The Metropolitan Convention Center will have an approximate area of 24,000 sqm and will be able to host 6,250 delegates. The new venue is being built with the support of AECON and ADC, shareholders in the Mariscal Sucre International Airport Project. The Centre is situated within an allocated area of 11.4 hectares, located in the former Quito Airport.

WWW.QUITO.COM.EC

4

JAN TONKIN STEPS INTO IAPCO PRESIDENT ROLE

Jan Tonkin, managing director of Auckland-based The Conference Company, will take up the presidency of the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO). Headquartered in the UK, IAPCO is the industry body dedicated to continuing education, development and quality standards in the meetings industry. Jan says: "Our business is undergoing a period of intense change, and the role of the meeting planner is also shifting. IAPCO's role is to help manage and lead that change." The new Council will meet in Edinburgh in mid-April to review the Association's strategic plan. It is envisaged that education will continue to be a strong focus, as the organisation builds on the success of initiatives such as the new IAPCO EDGE seminar programme and the web-EDGE library of online educational resources.

WWW.IAPCO.ORG

2

INTRODUCING XIAMEN

Xiamen is a major city on the southeast coast of China, endowed with educational and cultural institutions supported by the overseas Chinese diaspora. In 2006, Xiamen was ranked as China's second "most suitable city for living", as well as China's "most romantic leisure city" in 2011. Since 2007, the development of the local meetings industry has been included into the city development strategy. The destination's main conference venue, Xiamen International Conference & Exhibition Center (XICEC), is located at the south-east coast of the city, easily accessible by public transport. It covers an area of 197,000 sqm, with indoor exhibition halls accommodating up to 3,500 booths. In addition, it also offers over 20 meeting rooms, four-star hotels and catering services.

ENGLISH.VISITXM.COM

5

LARGEST ASIA PACIFIC LIVER CONFERENCE IN TOKYO

Over 4,200 experts in Hepatology from over 70 countries assembled in Tokyo for the 25th Conference of the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL). Of these 4,200, two thirds were overseas participants. During this largest ever liver conference in Asia Pacific, the participants could study fruitfully and share views, values, and best practices regarding liver diseases. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB) contributed to the success of the Conference as they sponsored and organised technical visits, set up welcome desks at the airports, and arranged Japanese cultural programmes and city tours for participants.

TCVB.OR.JP

3

NEUROIMMUNOLOGY IN JERUSALEM

The 13th ISNI international congress of neuroimmunology will be held in September 2016 in Jerusalem. The congress chair, Professor Dimitrios Karussis of the Jerusalem University, explained why ISNI has chosen Jerusalem for the event: "Situated on the crossroads of three continents, Israel is easily accessible from all corners of the globe and blessed with Mediterranean weather. Israel is one of the few countries where the ancient and modern meet and is the centre of three great religions. Israel has a rich spiritual, economic, and social history, and is home to many institutions of higher education, some of the world's finest hospitals and research Institutions and numerous cultural and professional organisations." In 2018 ISNI will organise its congress in Brisbane, Australia.

WWW.ISNIWEB.ORG / WWW.JERUSALEMTCVB.COM

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MONTREUX RIVIERA, OPEN TO THE WORLD

Montreux Riviera, ideally situated between Lake Geneva and the Alps and centrally located close to Geneva International Airport, boasts an enviable microclimate, sun-filled terraced Lavaux UNESCO vineyards, as well as timeless Belle Epoque architecture and beautiful natural surroundings. The legendary Manoir de Ban, where Charlie Chaplin once lived, has been renovated and turned into a museum dedicated to his life and work, with spaces for events. As for activities, there is a top-class range of cultural attractions, including the Christmas Market, Montreux Comedy Festival, Septembre Musical and Montreux Jazz Festival.

WWW.MONTREUXRIVIERA.COM



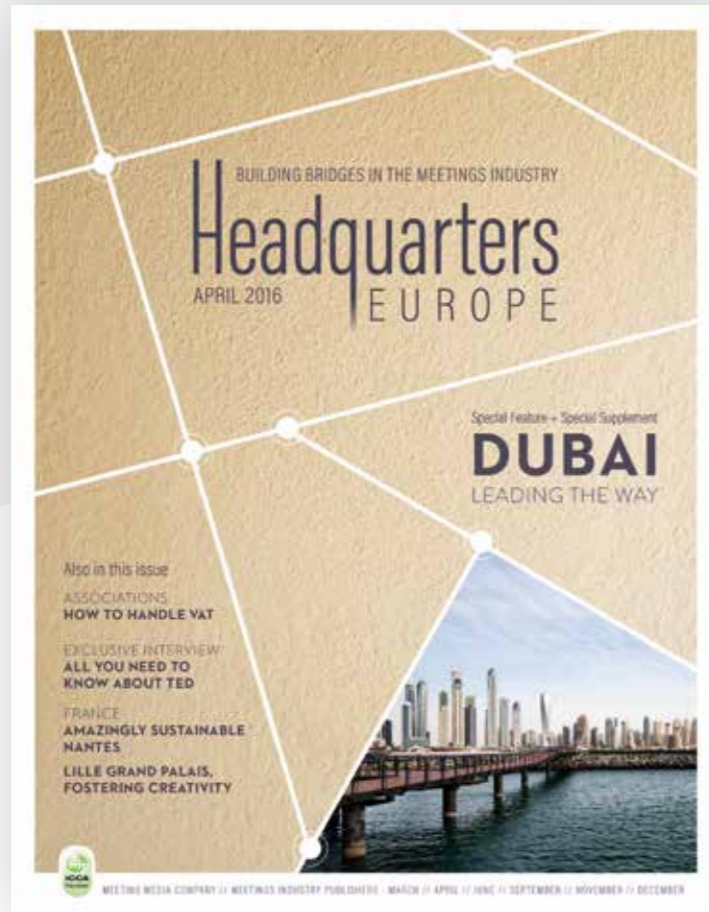
Jan Tonkin



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HEADQUARTERS

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BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

ASIA-PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR FIDUCIARY STUDIES (APAFS) A CONTINUED EXPANSION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

"For me personally, the country I have favoured for the annual conference has been the Philippines. More specifically in Makati, Manila. The city offers a highly educated workforce in the financial services industry that I have found to very open to new ideas"



15th PRIC



Founded in 2000, the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies ("APAFS") is a non-for-profit educational and charitable association based in Guam with nearly 200 members from institutional public and private benefit funds from around the Asia-Pacific Region. APAFS is dedicated to helping fiduciaries to gather, grow, and protect assets being managed, by providing the education to make better investment and business decisions. Its flagship event, the Pacific Region Investment Conference ("PRIC"), is widely considered a premier event in the Asia-Pacific region for fiduciaries seeking insights from industry experts from around the globe and building a network of like-minded professionals. Daniel A. Roland, formerly Senior Vice President and Senior Institutional Consultant at Morgan Stanley for 32 years, talks about the work of running the organisation as Executive Director since its inception. Interview Katie Lau



DANIEL A. ROLAND

What is the mission of APAFS?

Our on-going mission is to raise the level of knowledge, and standards of practice, of investment fiduciaries in the Asia-Pacific region, so that they may provide the most prudent stewardship of the funds entrusted to their care. To fulfil its mission, APAFS hosts a variety of educational conferences, provides a wide range of member services, and hosts globally recognised fiduciary certificate and designation courses of study.

Can you describe the background of your members?

As of now, we have 189 institutional members. Institutional membership encompasses endowments, foundations, public and private educational institutions, public and private employee retirement plans, public and private trusts, sovereign wealth funds and public corporations. We also have individual students as members under a "student" category. Students are free to join for no membership fee, but have no voice in the running of the association.

What is your annual conference about?

Our flagship event is our Pacific Region Investment Conference ("PRIC"), open to representatives from institutional members and other qualified organisations. During the two-day conference, delegates seek insights from industry experts from around the globe, obtain Continuing Education credits, and build a network of like-minded fiduciaries. Delegates regularly include public and private benefit fund sponsors, trustees, legislators, government officials, attorneys, accountants, and finance and investment professionals from throughout the region.

What other events does APAFS organise?

We also host events and conferences throughout the year in various countries where institutional member organisations are headquartered. Our Country Conference is a one-day conference hosted in an association member's home country. Each conference is topic-specific based on local membership needs. We also have a Student Programme, a half-day conference hosted in partnership with a college or university. The goal is to begin the education process of the region's future fiduciaries in matters pertaining to fiduciary responsibilities and investments.

Besides these conference events, we now offer formal certificate and professional designation training programmes. In partnership with U.S.-based f360, Inc., the recognised global leader in fiduciary education, APAFS hosts courses of study designed to better equip individuals involved directly and indirectly with managing investments. These courses start with the fundamentals, but delve deeper into the detail of the subject material and the implementation of it in the real world.



13th PRIC, Keynote Speaker, Lorenzo V. Tan, President & CEO, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)

What do you look for in a MICE destination?

There are a number of factors that need to be considered when planning for PRIC. One would be the need for participants, who attend from a broad range of countries, to obtain a visa. Another would be the frequency and ease of flights in and out of a city or country, from a range of originating points. The relative cost of a particular country, vis-a-vis another, as well as availability of five-star facilities at a relatively attractive price is a major factor as well.

What is the most memorable event you have organised?

For me, each event is memorable. But if I could choose one, I believe it has to be our first year of our partnership, and event roll-out, with f360 in 2011 in conjunction to PRIC. As I mentioned earlier, f360 provides a sought-after professional designation through its Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®) Designation Programme. Offering this formal training programme in the two days in advance of PRIC opened a whole new chapter for APAFS, raising our profile in the region and increasing interest in our events, almost exponentially!

Have you had a favourite MICE destination? Why?

For me personally, the country I have favoured for the annual conference has been the Philippines. More specifically in Makati, Manila. The city offers a highly educated workforce in the financial services indus-



Daniel Roland, Executive Director, Ashley Roland, Director of Administration, APAFS, and Keynote Speaker, Ernest Cu, President and CEO of Globe Telecom Inc

try that I have found to very open to new ideas, and totally gets the idea of raising the level of investment fiduciary best practices. They see the benefit not only to themselves as professionally, but most importantly, to their clients. The city itself is dynamic, growing and welcoming to visitors. We have been fortunate to have found enthusiastic co-hosts for our annual conferences, including the CFA Society Philippines, Trust Officers Association of the Philippines, Fund Managers Association, and ADFIAP. It offers close proximity to many points of origin as well as excellent travel connectivity. Lastly, compared to other economic cities of Asia, it is a relative bargain.

How do you feel about serving as Executive Director of APAFS for over 15 years?

Serving as Executive Director for the last 16 years has been a labour of love. While the annual need for fundraising is always the most challenging aspect of the role, the opportunity to work with a wide range of people from throughout the region, is constantly rewarding. The most interesting, and certainly most rewarding, part of my experience in the role, has been to observe the on-going raising of the bar of investment fiduciary practices we have been able to bring about in our region.

What changes would you like to see in your industry?

I would like to see more awareness and support from government regulators and financial industry trade associations, for the adoption of regulations and curriculums that will require certification, and on-going education, specifically related to investment fiduciary best practices for anyone who will serve in a fiduciary capacity, whether as an investment advisor, or as plan sponsor or trustee.

Any plans ahead for your association?

I see the future as a continued expansion of our educational efforts into more countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Investor demands, as well as the demands of regulators, will continue to push for prudent practices in the management of individual's portfolios by investment professionals, as well as in the oversight of public funds. The need for our programmes will certainly continue to increase. One only has to look at this trend in the U.S., Europe and more recently, Australia and New Zealand.

MORE INFO WWW.APAFS.ORG

BOARD OF EUROPEAN STUDENTS OF TECHNOLOGY (BEST)

HOW TO MANAGE A PARTICULAR FAST TURNOVER OF THE ASSOCIATION BOARD

As a non-profit association, headquartered in Brussels, BEST provides students several services, such as engineering competitions, extra-curricular education and career support, and reaches about 1.7 million students spread over 96 universities in 33 countries. Overseeing the association is the International Board, consisting currently of 7 persons.



GERT WILLEMS

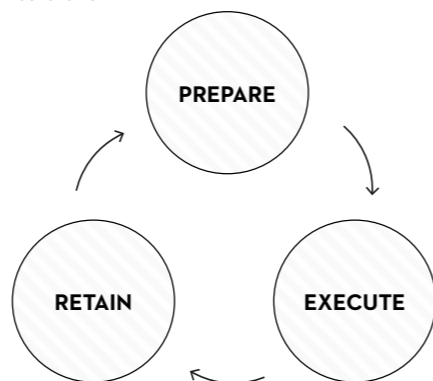
VOLUNTEERS IS WHAT BEST IS BUILT UPON

Everyone working in the organisation are volunteers, even the board of the association. This brings along some interesting characteristics: a member would typically stay only 3 years (4-5 if part of the board), will be following Technology studies besides his/her involvement in BEST and will have a different responsibility each year. Therefrom comes the general awareness throughout the organisation concerning the importance of Knowledge Management (KM).

As the organisation is managed by the board, which are generally speaking the only people working full time (60-70h/week), it is vital that they possess the needed skills and knowledge for the job.

The operational environment, however, is not very cooperative. The members of the board are generally spread out all over Europe, and there are only three dedicated board meetings (4-5 days) during their mandate (1 year). The rest of the time, all the work is done online. When I was member of the board, our virtual meetings consisted of a weekly Skype meeting, a continuous group chat and plenty of e-mails/individual chats.

One could summarise the circle of life in the board as follows:



BEST has to deal with people going off and on board, and it manages so through several techniques

PREPARING THE BOARD

Each board member starts their 1-year mandate on 1st July, barely two months after their election. Given the common need to wrap up educational obligations (e.g. finishing exams or writing master thesis), this is short. And so there is no delay: the Knowledge Transfer process starts the very next day after elections. During a two-day event, the newly elected board is given a first introduction to the organisation and the work and year flow of the International Board.

A few (1-3) weeks later, the "Board Training" is organised. This weeklong event gathers the members of new and old International Board, usually coming from different European countries. The first three days the new board is in isolation having their team-building, under the guidance of a professional/experienced trainer.

During the second part, the new board is presented with a complete overview of the history of BEST, highlights and downfalls included. This is important because it helps to understand the current situation and see the limits of the organisation. The Board Training finishes with putting their newly acquired knowledge to the test during a four-hour case study. This case study is designed to simulate the work that a board usually has to do and uses real life cases.

RETAINING THE KNOWLEDGE

Throughout the mandate year, a lot of projects are worked upon and new knowledge is created. In order for the organisation to retain this knowledge, a document repository is available - it contains reports of meetings and manuals for specific topics/situations.

One of the main conclusions of the Knowledge Management Project we ran in 2012-2013 was that a document repository (or document archive) can't



be merely a collection of documents. Unfortunately many people tend to look at it this way. Each archived document has to serve a purpose, or else it should not be archived. Too many documents will cloud the view, because if everything is important, nothing is. Having learnt this, we decided to improve our archive, which contained documents piled up over 24 years, resulting in a collection of too many documents, often not useful.

Therefore, at the end of our mandate, we spent nearly two months going through all our documents, thinking which are necessary to pass on and which are not. The selected documents were then cleaned so that anyone in the future would be able to read them and get the message straight away. We didn't tackle the documents that came before us, a clean start was our best option.

Building and maintaining a document repository is not an easy task. Time should be reserved for it. However, it is worth it, no matter if you have a fast changing board or a board that lasts for years.

BEST has to deal with people going off and on board, and it manages so through several techniques, of which I merely highlighted the association board KM aspect. However, if we compare this to the corporate world, academics and other associations, there is one vital, underlying aspect that really makes it work. It is the culture of openness, transparency and availability of information. This allows people to grow at their pace, without any structural boundary.



This article was provided by Ir. Gert Willems, Member of BEST 2009-2015, Vice-President for Local Group Support in the International Board 2012-2013. Gert is currently occupied as Marie Curie Fellow in the RAPID ITN (PhD Student at Ruhr-University Bochum).

DR. CAROLYN LAM

CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH AT THE FOREFRONT

Dr Carolyn Lam is a Senior Consultant of the National Heart Centre, Singapore and Associate Professor of Duke-NUS Cardiovascular Academic Clinical Program, and Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Association of Women's Cardiovascular Disease. Dr Lam's clinical sub-specialty is heart failure, and she is recognised globally for her expertise in heart failure with preserved ejection fraction. She also has expertise in women's cardiovascular disease, hemodynamics, echocardiography, biomarkers and clinical trials. Interview Rémi Dévé



DR. CAROLYN LAM

Could you introduce yourself for those who do not know you?

I'm a clinician scientist, meaning a medical doctor and research geek rolled into one. On the clinical front, I take care of patients as a Senior Consultant Cardiologist at the National Heart Institute, Singapore, in my Women's Heart Health Clinic and Heart Failure Clinic. On the research front, I lead clinical trials, scientific projects and research networks both regionally and internationally, as an Associate Professor at Duke-National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School, and serve as an Associate Editor of Circulation and European Journal of Heart Failure (top cardiology journals). In the

public eye in Singapore I am probably best known as the Resident Doctor of the primetime television health series "Body and Soul".

You've won a lot of awards. What are the achievements you are most proud of?

I started the first Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction Programme and Women's Heart Health Clinic in Singapore. I was awarded the L'Oreal Women In Science Award (2012) for my work in women's cardiovascular disease, and then named an InterAcademy Medical Panel Young Physician Leader at the World Health Summit in Berlin (2012), and won the award for the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World for 2014 - Singapore (2014).

But if pressed to choose an award, then this would be the Rosalind Franklin Award, because I think Rosalind Franklin is a role model for women in science: few know that it was her pioneering work on X-ray diffraction images of DNA that led to the

discovery of the DNA double helix - a discovery that was credited to male scientists Watson and Crick instead.

You've created the Cardiovascular Clinical Trialist forum for Asia. What were your motivations behind bringing this Forum here? What is your vision for CVCT Asia?

I was struck by the under-representation of Asia at the global Cardiovascular Clinical Trialist forum in Paris, despite the fact that the global burden of cardiovascular disease in Asia outweighs that in other parts of the world. I firmly believe that the time has come for Asia to take centre-stage in cardiovascular research! My vision is that CVCT Asia will be the "go-to" forum where top cardiovascular clinicians, trialists/ scientists, industry partners, regulators, and research organizations can enjoy in-depth discussions geared at advancing cardiovascular research in Asia, ultimately resulting in improved care and outcomes for our patients.

Singapore's central location, excellent infrastructure, beautiful environment and great efficiency make it the perfect setting for meetings

You are raising the awareness of the "feminisation of aging". Can you explain what it's about and what it implies?

This simply means women outlive men, such that the older the population, the greater the percentage of women (eg among 60+ year olds, ~half are women; whereas among 80+ year olds, almost two thirds are women). Implying that in aging societies such as ours, women's health is extremely important!

With so many hats that you wear, and only so much time, which are the must-attend conferences you attend?

The CVCT conferences of course! They provide the highest level of discussions and the greatest networking opportunities of all conferences... Plus they're the most fun.

In your opinion, what makes Singapore an ideal and preferred destination for conventions and conferences?

Singapore's central location, excellent infrastructure, beautiful environment and great efficiency make it the perfect setting for meetings. I have yet to meet a visitor who hasn't fallen in love with Singapore once he/she gets here. After all, what's there not to love? Beyond the direct meeting setting, the weather is always warm and sunny, people are friendly, environment is safe and food is spectacular. 🇸🇬

MORE INFORMATION ON SINGAPORE AS A MEETINGS DESTINATION ON WWW.YOURSINGAPORE.COM/MICE

FOCUS

CARDIOVASCULAR CLINICAL TRIALIST FORUM FOR ASIA

This intimate gathering of key opinion leaders assembled in the dynamic setting of Singapore creates the right environment for unparalleled levels of scientific exchange and mutual learning. During the scientific sessions, workshops and networking events, participants will brainstorm on current issues in cardiovascular drug, device and biomarker development; and trial design, conduct, ethics, interpretation, approvability and implementation in Asia. CVCT Asia has received endorsement by the Asia Pacific Society of Cardiology and the Singapore Cardiac Society. The CVCT Asia Forum follows the successful example of the main CVCT meetings in Paris (globalcvctforum.com) which annually enjoy large representation from Europe and the US. The 2016 CVCT ASIA will take place in Singapore 15-17 July 2016



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BEYOND BUSINESS CONVENTIONS IN CHIANG MAI OFFER UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

Since the opening of the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre (CMECC) in 2013, Thailand's second city has become a hot destination for conventions, ranging widely in subject and size.

All kinds of events are catered for in Chiang Mai, with knowledge areas covering a wide scope of topics, from biology and medical, to engineering, agriculture, energy, environment and natural resources

To name just a few events in 2015, the 3rd International Congress on Pathogens at the Human-Animal Interface was hosted in the city in August and the 16th ASEAN ORL-HNS Congress in November, while more than 2,000 delegates descended on Chiang Mai for the Special Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses also in November.

And 2016 looks to be even more jam-packed; May is set for the 7th Asia Pacific Lung Cancer Conference 2016 (600 delegates); July will welcome the 3rd Asia Pacific Glaucoma Congress (600 delegates) and the 2nd World Irrigation and 67th International Executive Council in November (500 delegates).

ASEAN, Asia Pacific and world events are all catered for in Chiang Mai, with knowledge areas covering a wide scope of topics, from biology and medical, to engineering, agriculture, energy, environment and natural resources. With the 50-year-old Chiang Mai University and its long-established and solid profile in both social and applied science courses and programs, it's clear to see that Chiang Mai has become a trusted convention destination. ▷



Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre

▷ Chiang Mai International Airport is undergoing rapid expansion in response to a sharp increase of travelers. Currently, there are seven airlines operating at the airport, providing 14 flights on domestic routes, including 51 direct flights to and from Bangkok – a journey that takes a mere hour. There are also 20 international airlines serving 18 overseas destinations.

Chiang Mai boasts around ten convention-ready hotels (4-5 stars) in the city. Each of these hotel venues encompasses useful breakout rooms with some halls having the capacity to accommodate up to 1,200 delegates per meeting.

There's no doubt that the gem in Chiang Mai's convention crown is the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre (CMECC), one of the largest of its kind in Southeast Asia, with 521,600 sqm of total space. The three main interconnected halls have a combined space of 8,000 sqm, and are able to accommodate up to 10,000 guests.

10,000 PAX THE MAXIMUM CAPACITY AT CHIANG MAI INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTRE

In October 2015, CMECC welcomed 1,500 guests to the 10th International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Asia/Oceanic Regional Congress, while December 2016 is set to see the same number attend the XXIX International Society of Sugarcane Technologists Congress.

What's more, Chiang Mai offers ample opportunities for pleasure. With unique Lanna culture, combining ancient temples and unusual culinary treats with traditional arts, crafts and entertainment, the charming city is also a great base for tours into the ecological wonders, while those looking for chic modern accommodations and luxury spas need not go so far.

To elevate your convention in Chiang Mai or in other Thai destinations to a higher success, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is offering support with its "Convene in Paradise" promotional campaign. 

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Thailand CONNECT 



Business with Pleasure in Chiang Mai



Culturally Themed Venue

DUBAI BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FUTURE

Dubai aims to be the number one business events destination in the world, but the city is starting the growth process from the ground up right at home. The Emirate is honing in on events and congresses around the globe that will help strengthen seven key scientific and technology sectors, creating a lasting legacy there and abroad. Lane Nieset reports

Dubai continues to rise among the ICCA rankings, increasing the number of international association meetings by 51 percent in 2014 as the host of 56 events. Last year was also one of the city's strongest for business events, but Dubai wants to not only grow the market share of existing events, the city wants to do so in a way that aligns with the mindset of UAE Vision 2021's knowledge economy goal.

With one-third of the world living within a four-hour flight, an airport capacity of 90 million, and almost 100,000 hotel rooms, attracting and hosting groups isn't a problem for the Emirate. Five years ago, the city also set up the AI Safer Congress Ambassadors Programme designed to bring high-profile international meetings and congresses to Dubai by connecting organizations to their local peers and stakeholders through ambassadors. More than 150 "ambassadors" from local associations, government institutions and businesses work hand-in-hand with Dubai Business Events to support these international bids.

This year, the 34th International Congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion will bring 4,000 delegates to Dubai, one of the major wins for the Emirate as the city beat out other potential hosts



Art Dubai 2014

like Paris and Copenhagen. Another one of the major events lined up for 2016 will take place in September when the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) hosts its Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition (ATCE) in Dubai, bringing 10,000 attendees for its first-ever event in the Middle East (see more on this event in just a few pages).

One element of the UAE's innovation strategy is to attract more events in these scientific sectors, but another is to become one of the most innovative nations in the world by 2021. With these major international conferences, as well as the projects put forward during 2015's Year of Innovation, the city is well on its way to lead the global pack in these sectors. ▷



SEVEN WAYS DUBAI IS LEADING THE PACK

In 2013, the UAE ranked 35 in the Global Innovation Index, but the country plans to be in the top 20 by 2021, as well as grow non-oil real GDP up from 3.5 to 5 percent. Here are just a few of the ways Dubai is aligning with this goal, drawing the best minds and conferences from around the globe focusing on these seven sectors:



RENEWABLE ENERGY, TECHNOLOGY & WATER

A main highlight of the innovation policy revolves around this sector, as Dubai and the UAE creates centers for energy storage solutions and expands solar energy research programs. The country will also launch a national program for water desalination working with advanced technology, all part of a "next practice" approach.

SPACE

One facet of the space sector will involve exploration, but the city plans to build a network of technology that also includes satellite communications, as well as conduct research specific to space technology in terrestrial applications. The UAE has already invested AED 20 billion into this sector, launching the UAE Space Agency in 2014 with a goal of building and bringing the first Arabic-Islamic unmanned probe to Mars by 2021. Abu Dhabi will be home to the largest (and first) space center in the Middle East and North Africa once the project is completed, allowing the region to host space trips that fall under both scientific and touristic interests.

With one-third of the world living within a four-hour flight, an airport capacity of 90 million, and almost 100,000 hotel rooms, attracting and hosting groups isn't a problem for the Emirate.

EDUCATION

Almost 1.5 billion Euros will be invested in research centres at academic institutions across the UAE focusing on the development of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Universities such as Zayed are not only promoting this idea of innovation, they're doing it in a very 21st century way. Students are trained to think independently and as leaders so they can utilize this knowledge post-graduation and contribute positively to Dubai's society.



The Archive in Safa Park

HEALTH

At the 10th World Health Tourism Congress, Dubai was named "Destination of the Year," an award that shows just how connected Dubai's tourism is with its health-care sector. Once again using 2020 as a target year, Dubai plans to become one of the world's top medical tourism hubs. The initial target in 2014 was to attract half a million medical tourists per year, but in the first half of 2015 alone, the city brought in a whopping 260,000.

Dubai already boasts over 2,700 top-notch medical facilities and specialist surgeries ranging from sports medicine to cosmetic and spa treatments, but the city is continuing to expand its offerings. Ten more hospitals are in the works and the first phase of the 300-bed hospital and medical university, Fakeeh Academic Medical Centre, is slated to open in 2017. Free zone district Dubai Healthcare City, home to over 130 clinical facilities, also plans to tack on a 2 million sqm expansion featuring medical services and hospitality.



Dubai Hospital



TRANSPORT

The main goal here is efficiency, developing new services and modes of travel by air and sea that save time and ultimately improve infrastructure. The UAE has already proved success through its national airline companies, Emirates and Etihad, some of the top in terms of air travel, and currently manages 65 seaports on six continents. With Dubai's Tourism Vision to attract 20 million visitors per year by 2020, the city is streamlining its infrastructure with new and existing developments that not only make it easy for delegates to get from one meeting to the next, they can also quickly jet off and enjoy the Emirate once the conference wraps up. 

SEOUL EXPANDS SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS EVENTS

Seoul has launched a new comprehensive support programme for business events. The package expands Seoul's programmes, further enhancing qualified business events, at every stage of their planning.

Qualified events are now eligible for customised guided MICE tours offering attendees an in-depth look at Seoul's historic sites, cultural attractions, and related industries. Three groups recently took advantage of the programme and each enjoyed unique opportunities. One opted for a tour through Huwon, the tranquil secret gardens of Changdeok-gung Palace (a UNESCO World Heritage Site); a transportation meeting took an extensive look at how Seoul's daily traffic was expertly handled using Korea's cutting-edge IT technology at the Seoul Transport Operation and Information Service center (TOPIS), while a group of VIP accompanied guests enjoyed a private culinary experience making kimchi at the Museum Kimchikan.

Another new feature event organisers can now apply for is the Seoul MICE Card for event attendees. These cards come with 5,000 KRW pre-loaded and can be used on Seoul's subways, buses, and taxis. The rechargeable and reusable cards have become a popular item for event attendees as they can also be used to make purchases at select merchandise stores and shops including bakeries, cafes, and convenience stores.



Seoul: Your Complete Convention City

These expanded support services join a range of other existing programmes including bidding support, unique venue search and site inspections. For promotional support, the city offers Seoul Welcome Kits for delegates, a complimentary welcome message at Incheon International Airport, and subsidies for the use of trained MICE Supporters to provide logistical and operational support during events.

For more information about Seoul's support programmes and services for business events as well as information about the Seoul Convention Bureau please visit www.miceseoul.com, call Seoul's Help Desk at +82-2-3788-8151 or send an email to mice@seoulwelcome.com

Expanded support services join a range of other existing programmes including bidding support, unique venue search and site inspections

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