Günther Beissel – CEO, MITEC, Malaysia

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Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC), highlights the venue's unique proposition within Malaysia's business events industry and MITEC's journey to become Southeast Asia's leading international trade and exhibition centre.

MITEC was created in 2017. What was the rationale behind its establishment?

MITEC, the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre, was created to meet the growing demands of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) industry. Positioned as an economic catalyst and Gateway to Southeast Asia, MITEC's modern corporate philosophy is closely aligned with its vision to see Malaysia becoming the leading MICE destination in the Southeast Asia region. MITEC is the game changer in the business events industry, giving Malaysia the capability to compete and meet the demand in new growing markets, including regional and international exhibitions, particularly the 'mega-exhibition' market which will attract over 100,000 visitors and conferences or conventions between 200 to 20,000 delegates. So far, MITEC has hosted a one-day convention event with over 42,000 people occupying the entire three double volume floors.

Being the largest trade and exhibition venue in Malaysia with 45,000 sqm of space, MITEC is strategically located less than 7.5 km away from the city centre and easily accessible. MITEC

boasts 11 exhibition halls and 13 meeting rooms, the largest pillar-less exhibition hall in Malaysia with 12,960 sqm on one level. Equipped with a maximum floor loading of 50kN/sqm, MITEC has already hosted heavy industry shows by being able to support the weight of heavy machinery and vehicles for large-scale exhibitions and events – the first of its kind in the country.

Indeed, MITEC is part of KL Metropolis, a trade and business district created in Kuala Lumpur. What advantages does that bring to MITEC's offering?

MITEC is the nucleus of KL Metropolis a 75.5 acres mixed integrated development and the first component of the project located within the Kuala Lumpur's International Trade and Exhibition (Tradex) District. As it stands, it is the current location where rapid growth is taking place in its vicinity and by sharing the same neighbourhood with the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), it is perfectly poised to boost the business events or MICE industry for the country.

The master development of KL Metropolis contains a mix of hotel components, lifestyle mall and retail centres, luxury condominiums and grade A offices – a city within a city where trade, commerce, living and transport converge over the Tradex District prime land development, setting MITEC ideally to become an even greater attractive proposition for regional and international events.

Once completed, the Tradex District will provide a seamless integration within every surrounding component to create a new cultural and exhibition hub for Kuala Lumpur. Widely recognized as a global high-rise township by the expatriate community, the international neighbourhood is home to over 2,000 accommodation options (mixed use), 15,000 condominium units and residents of over 50 nationalities.

It is a premier real estate destination with prominent international influence. MITEC complements this thriving locale as it has been conceptualized to fulfil the ever-growing need for exhibition space and elevate the business landscape of the Tradex District as a whole.

MITEC is owned by MATRADE, a national trade promotion agency under MITI and the synergy brings many advantages to the Venue. Our link with the government and our good relationships with Trade Missions and embassies are an asset to facilitate businesses for international companies. Over and above providing a venue, we also nurture direct contact with the government and key stakeholders for our business partners. We are able to promptly adapt our services and

offering to different clients. For example, we conduct research on the Malaysian market and assist events companies around the world to set up targeted events in the country, providing government contacts as well to ensure their event will be a success. MITEC is very price-competitive, not only in the Malaysian ecosystem but also in Southeast Asia and we can offer all the services an exhibitor could wish for, making us a unique player.

The synergy between MITEC and the Government is well recognized and MITEC was honoured with the Special Recognition Award for Best Strategic Public-Private Partnership at the MACEOS Business Events Excellence Awards 2018. The industry recognition is awarded to MITEC for enhancing business participation and developing key economic sectors of the industry. In addition to the 'Best Strategic Public-Private Partnership' Special Recognition Award, MITEC also picked up an award in the third-quarter 2018 – the 'Leadership Excellence in MICE' at the 8th Global Leadership Awards (GLA) 2018.

What differentiates MITEC from other event venues in the country?

MITEC embraces a modern business journey which is supported by innovation, motivation and allows for an open thinking process within sound business principles. Whilst MITEC employs young and upcoming individuals with a zest to continuously exceed client service and product expectations, we ensure our Client Value Propositions and Unique Selling Points are successfully matched in achieving our Operating Context (OC) and Continuous Improvement Strategy (CIS). MITEC's modern business philosophy encourages new event opportunities for the Southeast Asia region by offering various incentives for new strategic partnerships with a focus on economic drivers who bring international investment and development for regional and national economic growth including sectors such as medical, digital automation, manufacturing/agriculture, science and technology, aerospace/innovation and education. These sectors with the enhancement of 4.0 technology will receive prioritized stakeholder support, including funding, and incubator attention.

MITEC created a Smart Trade Zone (STZ) which is a BE (Business Events) incubator program and prime opportunity to boost the economy and take advantage of the growing business events sector in Malaysia.

We are a one-of-a-kind venue with a very different outlook on our business and it is demonstrated through our #justdifferent initiative. Indeed, we are not just a venue provider but a business partner. As the third largest venue in Southeast Asia, MITEC's aim is to be Southeast Asia's leading international trade and exhibition centre.

What type of partnerships are you looking to establish now?

Partnerships are part of our fabric as our stakeholders are actually the larger community of Malaysia. Recently, MITEC sealed an exclusive collaborative partnership with the Guangdong Tanzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center (GICEC), China to further contribute towards creating an economic impact through the business events industry. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) marks the official partnership that is expected to increase cooperation and foster greater ties between two trading nations. Both parties will be working closely to jointly promote and support exchange in profitable business leads linked to trade and public shows with potentials for international outreach and economic impact.

We are currently in negotiations to increase our partnerships in G7 countries like Europe with Centres and organizers in order to facilitate new trade and business opportunities. As we are an international Centre, we are looking at building strategic partnerships globally, and not only within Asia or Malaysia. In this regard, we are building our global reputation by participating in local as well as international industry associations to build our network and showcase our capabilities. We are actively looking at the UK, European, Asian, American markets and the emerging E7 economies.

What opportunities do you see for events in the healthcare sector?

MITEC was the venue of choice for two major medical events in 2018. We hosted the Malaysia Medical Device Expo 2018, a one-stop centre for medical devices solutions. It took place at MITEC from 23 – 25 October 2018, with objectives to ensure the advancement of global healthcare, provide an in-depth knowledge on the latest medical innovations and foster effective medical innovation. Event highlights include exhibition, technology showcase and talk shows/forum by industry experts. MITEC was also the Host Venue for the Malaysian International Scientific Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology 2018, held from 26 – 29 July 2018.

We see great potential in the Malaysian Healthcare sector and we look forward to boosting the sector further. We forecast interesting opportunities in the manufacturing of medical devices in the country as Malaysia counts more than 200 medical devices manufacturing companies and over 90 percent of medical devices manufactured in Malaysia are exported. Total exports for medical devices is expected to reach RM18.4 billion in 2020 from the RM11.3 billion registered last year

(2017), making Malaysia an up-and-coming global medical device manufacturing hub.

The other opportunity lies in medical tourism. Malaysia has been recognized as the Health & Medical Tourism: Destination of the Year for three consecutive years from 2015 to 2017 by the International Medical Travel Journey. Malaysia also ranked first as the 'Four Countries with the Best Healthcare in the World for 2017' and ranked sixth (out of 10 countries) as the 'Best Retiree Healthcare on the Planet for 2017', both by the International Living. Major contributors that drive medical tourism in Malaysia are state-of-the-art medical facilities, low medical cost and world-class expertise. The fact that Malaysia is a multilingual country helps too – medical visitors from around the globe can communicate at ease in English, Mandarin, Tamil Hindi and Malay. Top five medical services offered in Malaysia are cardiology, oncology, orthopaedic services, in vitro fertilization and blood disease-related treatments.

The medical industry is one of the focus areas that MITEC would like to enhance through hosting different conferences and exhibitions. We have started engaging with the healthcare sector in Malaysia and talking to key stakeholders to realize opportunities and to present MITEC to all areas of healthcare. Our goal is to create long-lasting partnerships as a business partner in the medical sector.

What type of activities have you organized to boost MICE in Malaysia?

Since opening its doors in August 2017, MITEC has housed over 200 events and major regional and international exhibitions across all industries with an increase of 110% in booth stands size. It recorded a foot traffic of 352,148 visitors, indicating its capability to cater to large exhibitions and international events. Though, MITEC is the purpose-built for exhibitions, the large space and flexibility of the halls make MITEC the perfect venue for any type of event – sports, concerts, conferences/conventions, meetings, and lifestyle events. By welcoming events of a larger scale, we have contributed to boosting the tourism industry, bringing in large groups of Chinese tourists and filling up twice most of the hotels in Kuala Lumpur from events at MITEC.

Looking forward, what do you see as your main priorities?

Our main priority is to achieve financial sustainability from a business point of view by ensuring that we are consistently on the journey to be the leading international trade and exhibition centre in the Southeast Asia region. We also ensure that all our products and services are on par with the

objective to achieve our priority and we are promoting Malaysia and MITEC as the gateway to Southeast Asia. People are not aware of how easy it is to do business in Malaysia. The country offers value-for-money, direct air access from most major cities around the world, a safe and stable political climate and, an established industry supply chain that help boost MITEC’s attractiveness to the regional and international marketplace.

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