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SARAWAK.
CREATING LEGACY IS JUST
A CONFERENCE AWAY

MAY 2023

A Place for Human & Economic Growth

Tucked in the southeast corner of Asia, on the island of Borneo, Sarawak is Malaysia's biggest (out of 13) state. The destination offers a landscape like few on the planet with tropical rainforests, protected national parks and nature reserves, mountains and a long coastline which make up a diverse ecosystem of fauna and flora.



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The diversity in nature extends to the people of the region. Sarawak is home to 33 ethnic groups, speaking 45 languages and dialects, and each with their own stories, unique cultures, food, traditions, and beliefs. Using their heterogeneous background these tribes combine their skills in order to maintain the heritage of their homeland all while successfully and sustainably leading it into the future. This sense of unity and sustainable development is the essence of the place and has trickled down to the way business events are addressed and put to good use.

The state has recognized the value conferences have in inducing social and economic sustainability and has focused its efforts on becoming an attractive destination for local, regional and international business events. Sarawak boasts social, economic and political stability creating a safe environment for associations to thrive. The government provides the security of fully supporting high impact events meant to advocate economic and societal transformation. Not to mention that Sarawak is as affordable as they come, with good currency exchange rates, affordable flights between cities and a great selection of venues and accommodations.

The state's efforts are paying off as is demonstrated by its track record of significant business events. Since its birth as a business events destination, Sarawak has gained ground (and experience) and is now a well-established choice among international associations.

THRIVING ECONOMIC SECTORS

Sarawak's tropical location in combination with the government's commitment to create a better



future for the state and its people have allowed for the development of various industries on the island over the years. The government has recently placed its focus on the development of six: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism, Forestry, Mining and Services. The aim is that like-minded events that come to Sarawak will benefit from the expertise the place has to offer and at the same time generate positive change for the local community.

Agriculture

Palm oil, rubber, cocoa, livestock, fisheries, and rice are the region's main produce. The state plans to move the sector into commercialization so that private investment increases and productivity and growth accelerate. For that reason, financing and education of the farmers around smart farming have become a priority. Developing agro-parks and high-value downstream products are among key initiatives.

Manufacturing

Building on the benefits of the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) program (providing affordable and abundant clean hydropower), the government is making a turn towards a 4.0 economy. Initiatives include the creation of industrial parks

Notable Conferences From the Past

- International Energy Week 2018 (1119 delegates)
- Conference on Inclusive Early Childhood Education 2019 (808 delegates)
- World Engineering, Science and Technology Congress (ESTCON) 2022 (842 delegates)
- International Counselling Convention 2022 (642 delegates)
- Borneo International Water and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference 2022 (874 delegates)
- Asia Carbon Conference 2023 (500 delegates)
- Global Surgery Conference 2023 (500 delegates)

(Bio-Industrial, Petrochemical) and the involvement of local communities in small and medium enterprises as a means of alleviating socio-economic inequality between rural and urban areas.

Tourism

Between cultural diversity, natural attractions, food variety and festivals, Sarawak is a great destination for off-the-beaten-track tourism in a sustainable spirit. The state is well-connected via air and sea and is looking to enhance these connections. Business tourism has also become an integral part of the economy, as business events bring both financial and social profit.

Forestry

With vast areas covered in natural rainforests as well as planted forests, it makes sense that Sarawak is an expert in the sector. The state has taken measures to benefit from this resource in a sustainable way with controlled log export. In November 2021, a plant cloning laboratory was opened to cultivate Paulownia tree species as a source of lightweight timber.

Mining

The sector is currently driven by oil and gas upstream activities, which provide the feedstock for petrochemical industry. Sarawak is rich in mineral resources such as copper, silica sand, and kaolin, the development of which is now being supported by the state through geological mapping and new business models.

Services

The sector is probably the biggest contributor to the Sarawak economy. The state has upgraded its transport system (e.g. the Kuching Automated Rail Transit System), has launched «S Pay Global», an e-wallet that enables cashless payments of bills and retail transactions internationally and is now set on elevating social services for the wellbeing of its people.



Business Events Sarawak: Dedicated to Legacy Creation

Sarawak started its journey as a second-tier destination for business events in 2006 and has come a long way since then. The state's dedicated convention bureau, Business Events Sarawak (BESarawak), is a non-profit organization which connects meeting planners with the right stakeholders and resources to plan and organize events; it also provides comprehensive support and bidding services. Visiting Sarawak, planners can expect financial support, delegate boosting and marketing, venue, vendor and accommodation advice and tailor-made aid in event development.

By continually delivering quality services, BESarawak aims to establish the state as a leading second-tier business events destination in the ASEAN region by championing Legacy Impact; thus, delivering significant economic transformation, social development, heritage & cultural conservation, and sustainable best practices by 2030. *"Commitment to legacy-driven events has been Sarawak's pulling factor for national and international planners, setting it apart from other destinations,"* says Amelia Roziman, CEO at BESarawak.

"We see associations as our tribal ally; integral to the global tribes of business events. We explore many possibilities when we align ourselves with various associations. In addition to bringing out the best in each association's internal goals, we connect and facilitate associations with government agencies and local partners to create sustainable impact beyond the immediate economic one," she continues.

THE LEGACY IMPACT INITIATIVE

The notion of triggering long-term positive impact is well-embedded in the bureau's

actions. Even before the awakening for a more sustainable future that the pandemic brought, Sarawak saw the value of business events as a driver for change beyond merely tourism impact. In 2020, the Legacy Impact notion became officially part

of the bureau's vision and mission and its main focus (in combination with sustainability) for at least another decade.

According to Roziman, striving for legacy *"is not a coincidental or random form*



of impact. It is intentional and starts with an impact vision which will be achieved through aligned programming, observations, and validation.” Associations coming to Sarawak will be met with clear guidelines and step-by-step support on how to align their event’s goals to Sarawak’s 5 Legacy Impact Pillars (LIP), namely Sectoral, Community and Social, Trade and Investment, Environment, and Political, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) and the state’s Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030.

Through a detailed template and advice provided by the bureau, strategic activities are identified to be included before, during and after the event to achieve the association’s goals and at the same time generate positive impact on the local community. Post-event, the bureau will help record any immediate outcomes from the conference and then look for and register any long-term change that might have taken place. Based on the template, associations are asked to identify their vision for the event; design impact

Sarawak’s 5 Legacy Impact Pillars (LIP)

1. Sectoral: Progress and development in industries through new knowledge and partnerships
2. Community & Social: Social benefits such as improved health, quality of life and community awareness
3. Trade & Investment: Trading of products and services leading to positive economic impact
4. Environment: Environmental awareness and sustainability and support for indigenous cultures
5. Political: Changes in governance and public/private services

activities; mention expected outcomes; and describe potential long-term changes.

Following a legacy-oriented event planning, everyone comes out a winner. With governmental stakeholders, businesses and academia being involved in a conference, opportunities for global collaborations and policy developments arise and sectors get the attention they need to grow. Business event planners benefit from new funding possibilities and gain valuable expertise. Local partners expand their value and increase the ROI of business events and the success rate of bids and hosting proposals.

THE TRIBE NOTION

Advocating social inclusion, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability through business events is in BESarawak’s DNA. Putting its people and a sense of unity centerstage, the team created the ‘Tribe Legacy Sarawak’ campaign. It is a five-year marketing initiative launched in 2020 to showcase Sarawak’s profound creative elements as a business events destination.



The unity and expertise of Sarawakian industry partners are shown and shared under the *Tribespirit* movement, a collaboration which will lead the state to a sustainable business events ecosystem. Sarawak event planners and partners are able to work together with associations to provide the best guidance on how to create conference legacy activities suitable for both the region's evolution of sectors and community as well as the association's own development through new partnerships.

Under the umbrella of the Tribe Legacy Sarawak campaign, the bureau has also partnered with major industry players (e.g., International Congress and Convention Association - ICCA, Professional Convention Management Association - PCMA, Curtin University in Malaysia) to create the International Journal of Business Events and Legacies (IJBEL). Unique in its kind, IJBEL is an open access journal that aims to publish original research and industry



viewpoint articles on business event issues and legacies. It is a means to communicate the sector's impacts and

efforts by merging business events and legacy topics in one title, so that no impact story is left untold.

Case Study: 2nd Sarawak Conference on Inclusive Early Childhood Education (SCIECE) 2019

Every modern destination needs to create a strong foundation through education and Sibuloc, located in Central Sarawak, became the global hub for 800 delegates at the 2nd Sarawak Conference on Inclusive Early Childhood Education (SCIECE) in 2019. This success story under Sarawak's legacy impact initiative took place on July 19-21 at Kingwood Hotel and addressed the importance of inclusive education in the early stages of life, including ways that schools and other learning institutions design programs and lessons to empower children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the classroom and beyond.

Fu Yuan Kindergarten and 11 other associations involved in organizing the conference share a common goal of turning Sibuloc into a hub of excellence for special educational needs. Their approach emphasizes the significance of early education in achieving positive, lasting results. They believe that children who receive appropriate assistance have a better chance of

attending regular schools and learning alongside their non-disabled peers. Additionally, the success of students in school is dependent on parents and children having access to appropriate services. Achieving this goal is only possible when kindergarten and school teachers are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality education.

Dato Sri Fatimah Abdullah, the Minister of Women, Childhood and Community Wellbeing Development in Sarawak, plays a significant role in improving the provisions for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the region. She is a strong supporter of inclusive education. To work towards the goals set by SCIECE 2019, Dato Sri Fatimah launched the One Stop Early Intervention Centre in Kuching. This centre is the first of its kind in Sarawak and provides comprehensive support for the developmental, health, and other needs of babies and young children diagnosed with Autism, Down Syndrome, and other learning disabilities.

Business Events as Drivers of Development

In Sarawak the value business events bring to the host region was identified long before the pandemic. Since its launch, the convention bureau has been advocating that association conferences are catalysts for economic and social change. The ideas exchanged by so many great minds that come together for a few days under the same roof lead to possible solutions for local social problems and to the advancements of the relevant sector.



For this reason, BESarawak has been working closely with the state's government in order to secure cross-industry collaborations and financial support to attract conferences that can make a difference. Even though the Sarawak meetings industry is parked under the Tourism sector, this only serves as a starting point from where a number of other sectors may benefit, depending on the topic of a visiting association.

POST COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2030

The soft power of conventions which goes beyond the traditional measurements of convention ROI (through direct delegate expenditure or financial outcomes) was heightened by the pandemic. The Sarawakian government seized the opportunity created by the need for change to harness the power of business events by including the sector in its newly formed resilience plan.

In 2021, the government published its Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030), a long-term plan that "provides

the direction and strategies for Sarawak to achieve in the next decade becoming a thriving society driven by data and innovation where everyone enjoys economic prosperity, social inclusivity and sustainable environment," says Sarawak Premier, The Right Honorable Datuk Patinggi (Dr.) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg.

According to the document, there are six economic sectors anchored to PCDS 2030, the main engines of growth, namely Manufacturing, Commercial Agriculture, Tourism, Forestry, Mining, and Social Services. There are seven strategic enablers to accelerate the economic development, which are Digital Transformation, Innovation, Education & Human Capital, Basic Infrastructure, Utilities, Transport, and Renewable Energy.

Sarawak's 6 Key Economic Sectors & 7 Enablers

ECONOMIC SECTORS	ENABLERS
Manufacturing	Digital Transformation
Commercial Agriculture	Innovation
Tourism	Education & Human Capital
Forestry	Basic Infrastructure
Mining	Utilities
Social services	Transport, Renewable Energy



POLYCRYSTALLINE SILICON PLANT AT SAMALAJU INDUSTRIAL PARK, BINTULU (NORTH SARAWAK)

Specifically in Sarawak's Tourism sector where the meetings industry lies, the aim is to make Sarawak a leading destination for eco-tourism and business events in the ASEAN region. The state plans to increase connectivity by adding domestic and international flights and building a deep seaport for passenger cruises.

Heavier financial investment is also foreseen for all kinds of events, from festivals and meetings to conferences and exhibitions. Planners enjoy incentivized packages offering additional funding and in-kind assistance, as well as other products and services including hybrid event support to facilitate post-pandemic planning. The establishment of a committee for the global promotion of the destination has also been a crucial decision.

Not to mention the TriBE Digital Campus, a platform to connect planners and partners to build a stronger business events community through active engagements and continuous education. Or the Congress Certification Programme Plus (CCP+), a structured four-day program to master the tools, techniques, and processes to execute a world-class event. As a result of such commitment and expertise, BESarawak secured 100 business events for 2023 and beyond (exceeding the initial target of 90).

ENHANCING SECTORS BEYOND TOURISM

In an attempt to boost its key economic industries, Sarawak's PCDS aims to strengthen the public and private sectors with digitalized infrastructure as well as Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT) and Blockchain technologies. The digital transformation will be supported by high-speed connectivity and cybersecurity capacity and implemented in agriculture, for example, for precision farming, industry 4.0, e-learning and telemedicine.

Along with a digital upgrade, innovation becomes a driver in all sectors. Cultivating a new ecosystem of industrial parks (Bio-industrial Park, Bio-hub port) and labs (Digital Testbed and Living Labs) will attract more foreign investment and start-ups.

On the human side, Sarawak aims to optimize use of assets and government funding and develop human capital to support socio-economic development. The focus is on the right training and education to meet industrial needs of the state to progress. Improving the quality of the urban road network and transportation system (Kuching Urban Transportation System KUTS) will provide citizens with easier access to economic hubs and will enhance logistics services.

Other important initiatives include 100% statewide coverage of water and electricity and the development of a Pan Sarawak Gas Pipeline to promote industrial development. The energy boost will happen in a sustainable way, with more extensive use of renewable sources like hydrogen projects, solar parks and photovoltaics for self-consumption, and electric vehicles matched with 3-in-1 multi-fuel charging stations.

Through such initiatives and ambitious goals, Sarawak is heading full speed into a more sustainable future. By narrowing urban and rural development gaps and increasing community participation, social inclusivity is being established. Business events play a major role in the Strategy's aspirations of growth as they bring new ideas and expertise to local talent and new collaboration and investment opportunities to the local economy.

Sustainability & Legacy Stick Together

Legacy is not a disconnected term, it does not and cannot stand alone. Long-term change is positive only when it is meant to protect the environment and the people living in it. That is why sustainability efforts and legacy creation are two inter-connected notions that business events need to incorporate in their every stage in order to have added value achievements.

BE Sarawak is committed to turning the state into a leading destination for sustainable, legacy driven business events. The meetings industry has strengthened its collaboration with the government to come up with new practical policies and guidelines which enable future business events to become more sustainable and impactful for the state.

FRIENDLY TO NATURE, FRIENDLY TO PEOPLE

Since business events are part of PCDS 2030, sustainable and legacy-driven events will be key to achieving these goals. The government has already put in place initiatives to develop ecotourism attractions within the region's rich natural environment. Increasing safety with the Monitoring and Tracking System in national parks and creating a Digital Interpretation Centre are the first steps to help visitors enjoy nature.

According to the Strategy, *"Sarawak will promote Culture, Adventure, Nature, Food and Festivals (CANFF) and diversify Sarawak's tourism focus into health tourism, sport tourism, agrotourism and education tourism."* Conservation of heritage, culture, and biodiversity will hit three goals at the same time: social inclusion as local communities get more engaged in developing their

products; environmental preservation as nature is protected and local attractions are sustainably upgraded; and economic growth with the promotion of locally crafted products and the attraction of new investment and more visitors per year.

It is clear that Sarawak's focus is not only on green initiatives for the environment, but also on the social aspect of sustainability. A healthy planet needs to be inhabited by healthy people and Sarawak is making sure of that by creating jobs and

addressing poverty issues in rural and urban areas alike. Cultural preservation and education for all from early stages create opportunities for its citizens both financially and intellectually.

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH BUSINESS EVENTS IS TWOFOLD

Business events in Sarawak are doing their fair share on the matter on two fronts: a) assist the government in realizing its plans for 2030 and b) organize more sustainable meetings.





On the one hand, BESarawak works closely with the state so that the knowledge, collaboration, and investment opportunities business events bring give a boost to the region's key economic sectors.

On the other, they are upping their game when it comes to the organization of meetings. The first step came already last year, in August 2021, when Sarawak joined the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) for Business Events and Tourism by launching the GDSI Partnership Programme - Sarawak Region (GDSI-Sarawak Partner). A first for Malaysia, this initiative and partnership comprise 30 committee members consisting of local government ministries and agencies, academia, associations, and industry partners. Fully aligned with PCDS 2030, the assessment is based on 71 indicators across 4 key areas which are environmental performance, social progress performance, destination supplier performance, and destination management performance.

Under the Legacy Impact pillar of Environmental, the GDS-Index is instrumental since more business event planners are making decisions based on sustainability performances, making Sarawak a more

attractive destination. Besides, while the Index prioritizes business events and tourism, its underlying value will benefit Sarawak at large, supporting every industry in Sarawak to adopt best practices of sustainability.

The Honourable Dato Sri Abdul Karim Rahman Hamzah, Minister of Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Sarawak and appointed GDSI-Sarawak Partner's Patron, said: *"The value of the Index will support every industry in Sarawak to adopt best practices of sustainability. A proven and trusted system such as this will give us the necessary information and tools to help us make better decisions, improve business strategies, foster collaboration and innovation, promote Sarawak on a higher scale that is lucrative in today's world thus, making our state a place we all want to live in."*

SUSTAINABILITY STARTER KIT

Later last year, BESarawak introduced a sustainability starter kit, a reference for stakeholders to make conscious decisions to reduce the negative impacts of their events. The document includes an explanation that sustainability means different activities depending on the event and the city as well as a set of tips and ideas on where to start and how to communicate these to all involved for better results. It

focuses on actions regarding the venue and location, food and beverage and waste management.

Sustainability plans are in the first phase, which will run up to 2025 and include a planning and development phase where partnerships are forged, and strategies, policies and guidelines are created. This will be followed by the second phase, which is the implementation of all initiatives and action points with stakeholders, as well as further fine-tuning the initiatives. The goal is that by 2030 it will come naturally to all stakeholders to organize sustainable events with legacy impact.

Relevant events are already attracted by these initiatives. The Borneo International Water and Wastewater Exhibition and Conference 2022 (BIWWEC 2022) was successfully organized by Malaysian Water Association Sarawak (MWA Sarawak) at Imperial Hotel, Kuching, engaging 874 delegates. Sarawak is also powering the region's carbon market with the Asia Carbon Conference 2023 (ACC2023), the first conference of its kind in Asia to explore innovative and effective solutions to tackle climate change and set the tone for policymaking, investment opportunities and new technologies in the carbon market.

Where To Hold a Conference in Sarawak

There is no shortage of venues in Sarawak with the capacity and capability to hold any kind of change-inducing business event. From limited-attendee meetings to large conferences of up to 5,000 people, Sarawak's three main cities (Kuching, Sibü, and Miri) are well-equipped with a variety of convention centres and conference hotels.

KUCHING

As the capital of Sarawak and the epicentre of business and economy, Kuching tends to attract the biggest conferences arriving at the state. Associations can enjoy the city's innovation especially in the fields of medicine, pharmaceuticals, technology, arts, and culture, among others.

The Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK), the first international purpose-built convention centre in Sarawak, was built in 2009 to elevate Sarawak's image as a business events destination. With a Plenary Hall of up to 5,000 guests, 14 smaller flexible meeting rooms, and a floor area of 15,200 square metres, it is the biggest conference facility in Sarawak. Located near both parts of the city (north and south), BCKK is approximately a fifteen-minute drive from the city centre and a twenty-minute drive from Kuching International Airport. The venue has been globally recognized for its best practices, innovation, and accessibility for people with reduced mobility.

Conference hotels are always an option with the most important ones being: Pullman Kuching, Hilton Hotel, The Waterfront Hotel, Imperial Kuching Hotel, and Riverside Majestic Hotel.



SIBU

The city is located in the central region of Sarawak. Strong in the areas of freight transportation, shipping, shipbuilding and timber, Sibü's like-minded conferences are in good hands there. Conference facilities are located mostly in its big hotels (10 in total), the largest of which by amount of meeting space are the Premier Hotel, with 192 square metres of event space, the Li Hua Hotel, Kingwood Hotel and RH Hotel. 45 meeting rooms in total are available and spread all over the city with a maximum capacity of 1,200 delegates.

MIRI

It is the second largest city in Sarawak located along the coastline of the South China Sea and highly skilled in the petrochemical sector, agriculture and oleochemical sector. Miri's convention venues are luxury conference hotels (e.g., the Mercure Miri City Centre, the Imperial Hotel, Pullman Miri Waterfront Hotel, and Miri Marriott Resort & Spa) which can cater for up to 2,400 delegates in a single meeting space. The venues are fully equipped with international standard facilities for business events, like advanced audiovisual material and high-speed internet.

The talk of the town in Miri is a new convention centre, the second one in Sarawak. Still in the phase of planning, completion of the venue is foreseen for 2025 with a goal to fill in a gap for a purpose-built facility in the city and expand the convention and exhibition infrastructures in Sarawak.



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small enough to care and large
enough to make a difference

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