

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

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Abstract

Event	55th ICCA Congress
Dates	13 – 16 November 2016
Venue	Borneo Convention Centre Kuching
Number of participants	834 from 61 countries (88% international delegates)
Delegate profile	Specialists in organising, transporting, and accommodating international meetings and events
Sectors involved	Business Events, Meetings

This case study examines the development of inter-organizational collaborations which lay the foundation for sustainability of Malaysia's business events industry. The 55th ICCA Congress held in Kuching in November 2016 was a catalyst for the generation of new collaborations for the future development and sustainability of the nation's business events industry. The methodology included 19 in-depth interviews with executives and/or managers from 12 Malaysian organizations that were involved in the preparations for the event. The case study offers evidence that suggests the inter-organizational collaborations enhanced government advocacy initiatives, provided education opportunities, supported ecological conservation, intensified community engagement, raised awareness of the industry and the destination, strengthened local committee engagement and propelled second tier cities' advocacy programs. The 55th ICCA 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.

1 Introduction

Malaysia has a goal to achieve status as a developed nation by 2020 and business events are part of the strategy. Tourism is already one of Malaysia's key economic sectors (see Table 1) and the plans for expansion include growing business tourism arrivals from 5 to 8 per cent of overall tourist arrivals by year 2020, targeting more international events, and establishing Malaysia as a leading business tourism destination (ETP Annual Report, 2013).

Table 1: Gross National Income (GNI) Value by National Key Economic Area (NKEA) Sector in 2015

NKEA Sector	GNI Value (RM billion)	%
Oil, Gas and Energy	171.1	15.2
Wholesale & Retail	168.6	15.0
Tourism	67.1	6.0
Agriculture	64.5	5.7
Financial Services	62.7	5.6
Palm Oil/Rubber	61.0	5.4
Electric & Electronic	53.0	4.7
Communication Content & Infrastructure	51.0	4.5
Business Services	46.2	4.1
Healthcare	9.8	0.9
Education	9.0	0.8
Other Industries	360.8	32.1
TOTAL GNI	1,124.7	100

Source : Pemandu National 2016: 28

In this context the decision to hold the coveted ICCA conference in Malaysia could not have been more timely. The International Congress and Convention Centre Association (ICCA) is the global expert in international association meetings. With its headquarters based in Amsterdam, it has over 1,000 members in over 90 countries. ICCA represents the specialists for the international association sector, with unrivalled data, communication channels and business development opportunities (ICCA, 2014).

In 2013, Malaysia was awarded the right to host the 55th ICCA Congress event to be held in Kuching, Sarawak from 13-16 November 2016. 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 55th ICCA Congress for Malaysia is appreciated by government and industry as an important benchmark, one that demonstrates a return on government and private sector investment. 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 hosting rights of the Congress, following the 2015 event in Buenos Aires (Argentina), 2014 in Antalya (Turkey), and 2013 in Shanghai (China).

As a global advocate for the business events industry the Congress provides its host nation with opportunities to not only organise the event but also leverage the event to deliver long-term legacies. Chalip (2004) defined event leveraging as strategies and tactics that can be implemented prior to or during an event in order to generate particular outcomes.

According to Fyall (2011) destinations are able to compete effectively by engaging with relevant industry partners to offer a more effective and integrated marketing mix and system of delivery. Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) enter into a strategic partnership with industry partners to provide a seamless experience for visitors and tourists, and this requires collaborative industry networks within the destination. Collaboration is considered a pre-requisite for destinations to deal with intense competition and environmental challenges.

Gary (1989) stated that collaboration can be used effectively through shared visions, where stakeholders recognise the potential advantages of working together. Collaboration involves relationships between stakeholders through interactions with each other in relation to a common

problem or issue (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Collaboration is influenced by industry characteristics such as core business, resources requirement, investment risk, and market competition, as well as the industry's location which provides the economic, legal and social context for its activities. Collaboration among competing firms within the industry has emerged as a source of information and resource accumulation as well as a competitive advantage (Lado, Boyd & Hanlon, 1997; Dyer & Singh, 1998; Baraldi, Gressetvold & Harrison, 2012).

Potential benefits from collaboration, particularly within the tourism context, include introducing change and improvement, increasing social acceptance of policies, ease of implementation and enforcement, greater commitment by parties involved in policy-making, creative synergy to enhance innovation, strengthening the range of tourism products available and the sustainable development of resources (Bramwell & Lane, 2000).

Driven by the aspiration to develop the business events industry to its fullest potential and to meet the 2020 business tourism growth objectives, the ICCA Malaysia members strove to leverage the benefits available from the 55th ICCA Congress. This case study attempts to highlight the importance of inter-organisational collaboration among key industry partners for sustaining and strengthening the business events industry in Malaysia. It hopes to provide policy makers with meaningful, action-based approaches to demonstrate the commitment of the host destination to secure value from the event beyond short term economic impacts, particularly for Kuching as a second tier city. It will enable the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, via its agency Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), to be more strategic and focused in developing its business case and strategic plan to secure international conferences. Recognizing the significance of business events to entities other than those related to tourism, it may promote public and private investment and uplift the business event industry's credibility alongside other industries within Malaysia's Economic

Transformation Programme, garnering support from policy makers and government as well as industry partners.

2 Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate. 19 interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders including ICCA Malaysia members, product and service providers and scholarship recipients from 12 organisations. These organisations were directly or indirectly involved in the preparations for the 55th ICCA Congress. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English and ranged in duration from 20 – 30 minutes. The interviewees included high level decision makers of the various organisations such as CEO, General Manager, Director of Sales & Marketing, and middle management appointees such as managers and department heads. The interviewees were ICCA Malaysia members from MyCEB, Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB), Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB), Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK), Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC), Sabah Tourism Board, and Yayasan Sabah Group. These organisations are the key drivers of the business events industry in Malaysia. Some of the stakeholders could not be accessed in person nor Skype, thus they provided their answers to the questions via email. Subsequent questions were later clarified via email as well, and the email responses provided further insights into the initial findings. Interview locations were chosen according to the availability of the interviewees which included offices, coffee shops and convention centres.

In addition to the interviews, data was also collected through news and media releases, email correspondence, and observations. The data was then analysed and a thematic framework that related to established concepts was identified allowing for emerging codes to be included in the results. The themes were examined for relationships and were further clustered into eight main categories. These categories have been classified as government advocacy, education, community

engagement, ecological conservation, raising awareness and profiling, ICCA Malaysia member engagement, advocacy for second tier cities and economic impact.

3 Benefits realized

All of the integrative events are planned, organised and implemented in collaboration with the relevant members, industry partners and other stakeholders. Several benefits were identified from the data related to inter-organisational collaboration in benefiting the business events industry.

3.1 Government Advocacy / Political Engagement

The topic of government advocacy was discussed during the interviews. A key outcome was the collaborative relationship that developed between Malaysia's Foreign Affairs in Buenos Aires and ICCA Malaysia during the 54th ICCA Congress in 2015. The handover ceremony attended by His Excellency Dato' Mohd. Ashri bin Muda, Malaysia's Ambassador to Argentina, demonstrated government support on behalf of the nation in welcoming the delegates to Kuching in 2016. Following that, ICCA Malaysia members arranged engagement between key personnel of ICCA World with political leaders in Malaysia. ICCA Malaysia and ICCA World shared the same commitment to connect and communicate with key leaders and policy makers to raise awareness and gain support for the business events industry in Malaysia. ICCA President Mrs Nina Freysen-Pretoris had discussions with Malaysia's Minister of Tourism & Culture and the Chief Minister of Penang, when she attended the World Tourism Conference (WTO) in Penang as a speaker in October 2016.

This demonstration of cross-leveraging was further expanded when she and ICCA CEO, Mr Martin Sirk re-routed their journey to Kuching for the ICCA Congress, with a stop-over in Kuala Lumpur to attend an inter-ministries forum on the real benefits of international conventions hosted by the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism & Culture of Malaysia. This was followed by a meeting with the Deputy Tourism Minister at Malaysia's Parliament and later by a courtesy call on

the Governor of Sarawak when both of them were in Kuching. These meetings (see Figure 1), organized by ICCA Malaysia members, provided a platform to present an overview and discuss the importance of the business events industry in developing Malaysia’s key economic areas.

Without the ICCA Congress, we won’t have a platform to immediately initiate the government advocacy program but we were able to leverage on the event to raise the awareness particularly with government and ministries to support the industry (MyCEB)

Figure 1: Political engagement



Source: Adapted from MyCEB, SCB, PCEB Facebook posts

Subsequent to these meetings, the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau together with the Ministry of Tourism & Culture presented 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 or identify an officer as a focal point within each ministry to support the business events industry in Malaysia. This will allow for effective and efficient collaboration within different organizations to ensure the success and future development of the business events in Malaysia and resulted in expressions of support for the sector from the government and political leaders in Malaysia.

3.2 Education

ICCA Malaysia's goals and objectives include developing future leaders for the business events industry. Several organizations 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 organizations collaborated in organizing programs and offered grants to attract young individuals to attend the Congress. Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre offered the Professional Development Grant and hosted three (3) young local association executives to attend the 55th ICCA Congress. The SCB awarded five scholarships through its Asia Pacific Young Professionals Development Programme in collaboration with ICCA's Asia Pacific Chapter. The Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) together with the Malaysia Association of Convention & Exhibition Organizers and Suppliers (MACEOS) and SCB hosted three (3) students from Sunway University which had won the 2016 Bid Challenge initiative conducted earlier in the year. The outcomes for the grant recipients are evident in the following quotes:

Get to know new people from different industries ... Learning something that I am unable to learn in class ... Letting people know me ... An eye-opening experience which allowed me to expose myself for more job options/ job opportunities in the future. (Bid Challenge Student Winner)

It is important for me to equip myself with the current knowledge in business event industry in terms of planning, additional supports, strategies, partnerships as well as personal development. The Congress gather all the best people where delegates able to learn about the current business event industry. This will be able to position myself to develop a reputation as an expert among peers to plan and ensure the successfulness of the event. (Professional Development Grant Executive recipient)

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.

3.3 *Community Engagement*

ICCA delegates include meeting organizers from all over the world and it was imperative for Kuching to deliver its best. The SCB and Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK) both mentioned the importance of developing local talent. 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 organize future events. They provided training and briefing sessions with local suppliers and providers in Kuching on the importance of hosting the Congress and what it would mean to the destination if it was deemed successful. Through the training and briefing sessions, the local shops were made aware of the potential business opportunity; they offered special rates for the ICCA delegates and ensured provision of a wide range of products.

To the shops along Waterfront Bazaar, we gave them pamphlets in English, BM and Chinese and explain and brief them about the ICCA Congress and requested them to stock up on their products. We also worked with our local vendors to provide WiFi, conducted training to our BESarawak partners to ensure the smooth execution of the Congress. We approached the taxi stands and also brief them about the event (SCB)

'Paint the town green' was the main initiative taken by SCB (see Figure 2), and Kuching became ICCA's very own city for the duration of the Congress. The New Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Building, the city's most iconic building, was lit up in green. It was the first time such an initiative has been undertaken for a congress. This was achieved through collaborations with the city council. The infamous cat statues in Kuching were also donned with ICCA's theme. In addition, the Sarawak Tourism Board granted permission to stage an exclusive mini Rainforest World Music Festival for the conference attendees.

Figure 2: Paint the town green



Source: Courtesy of MyCEB

Through collaboration with a local education institution based in Kuching (Segi College), MyCEB and SCB provided the Congress with 56 volunteers with the mission to make the event a success and to share knowledge freely. The 55th ICCA Congress, a world congress, meant that the delegates came from all over the world, thus, both SCB and BCKK collaborated and partnered with three event organizers based in Kuching to coordinate and manage the social events to provide unique and impactful experiences for the international delegates. This allowed the destination to showcase local talent and enhanced the capacity of the professional sector in Kuching. Each social event provided the delegates with a different theme and enhanced experience.

SCB did a number of training and getting the industry ready and developing the industry and raise the professionalism and get not just the government but the

community to understand what an international conference means to the destination. There was also feedback on Sarawak hospitality and the engagement from the community and that they were very friendly. (MyCEB)

The Congress gave the event companies a platform to showcase their capability and expertise, identify potential business partners, and raise their business profile. Other initiatives included collaborations with Malaysia airports with dedicated teams stationed to assist delegates and provide seamless transit mainly at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2). The local host also provided comfortable coaches along with special arrangements such as traffic escorts by police outriders to ease the transfers of delegates from their hotels to the congress venue and other social events.

3.4 Collaboration for Social and Ecological Contributions

Eight hundred delegates coming to Kuching to attend the Congress 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's in rural Sarawak. It managed to collect 358 books from the delegates to be distributed to five schools and two villages (see Figure 3).

According to SCB, the bookshare initiative will be adopted by future conferences and the activity has raised the awareness of such opportunities for helping rural communities. Other than that, teachers from local universities in Sarawak are now teaching English and hope to subsequently help elevate the community in rural areas.

This is the first time we work on a bookshare program with ICCA and now we have a few conferences that would like to adopt the bookshare initiatives because of the awareness raised through the media. We are also working with few universities to teach English to adults from the rural areas so that they can transfer that knowledge to their community and so the legacy lives on. (SCB)

Just imagine what changes the 358 books donated by ICCA members would bring to Sarawakians. The Bookshare initiative holds huge potential to change lives for the better. (Sarawak State Library)

Figure 3: Book donations



Source: CSR Initiatives bring change to communities (2016: 8)

The Borneo Orang-utan Project (BOP), the brainchild of both ICCA and local hosts, was initially launched at the International Business and Tourism Management trade show in Barcelona in November 2015, highlighting the plight of this endangered species. Through collaborations with Sarawak Forestry, the project focused on raising funds for the orang-utan conservation efforts in Malaysia. The SCB also teamed up with University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) to design the official congress t-shirt to bring world attention to the plight of the orang utan. Six baby orang-utans were adopted at various international business event tradeshows, 8 year old orangutan Ganya and new mom Selina were adopted by IMEX America and ICCA respectively via the Bronze package (RM20,000), and SKYCITY's New Zealand International Convention Centre took the Silver package (RM30,000). The BOP project not only attracted international attention but also raised RM70,000 through corporate adoptions.

These two initiatives 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.

3.5 Raise awareness of destination

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 organizations including Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) as well as Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK). To promote the campaign, MyCEB participated in business event-related tradeshows globally and built panel boards showcasing Malaysia to the attendees of the trade events. A panel board dedicated to the #RoadToSarawak campaign and booth activities organized by BCKK within the Malaysia's pavilion increased booth traffic and visitation. MyCEB and BCKK incorporated the 55th ICCA Congress email signature banner from November 2015 until November 2016 to promote the Congress to a larger audience. Thirty six press releases were issued from 2013 until 2017 with nearly 299 media mentions logged.

We worked together to promote the event and MyCEB supported the branding of the event at tradeshow as there was a dedicated panel at the Malaysian pavilion to promote the event and everyone uploaded the #roadtosarawak hashtags on social media. (MyCEB)

ICCA allowed us to bring our brand to its peak and so it's up to the rest of the industry to take that forward. Probably RM8 to RM10 million in terms of public relations and spreading the gospel of Sarawak and Malaysia as a destination. (SCB)

Figure 4: The Road to Sarawak



Source: Courtesy of MyCEB

For the first time, ICCAWorld did Facebook Live videos on their Facebook page and generated a reach of almost 126,000 impressions and had over 2,400 engagements and 324 link clicks. There are also three featured videos and one closing video; the most frequently viewed video was the 'Final Report: closing ceremony of the 55th #ICCAWorld congress in Kuching, Sarawak' with 3,100 views reaching 9,640 people. The number of followers for ICCAWorld Instagram increased by 5.5 per cent in November, with 856 followers and generated 363 engagements with six posts in November. With 13,200 followers, the @ICCAWorld twitter account generated a reach of over 145,000 impressions and almost 5,000 engagements and 396 link clicks in November. These outcomes indicate raised awareness of Malaysia and Kuching as a business events destination to a global audience. It received international and local media coverage that reflected positively on the conference destination.

3.6 *ICCA Malaysia Members Engagement*

The ICCA Malaysia committee met regularly from 2014 to discuss challenges and opportunities for collaboration to contribute to the success of the Congress and leverage on business opportunities.

Since Malaysia won the event, ICCA Malaysia members has contributed to local host committee by submitting reports, providing feedbacks and recommendations on areas of improvements based on our experiences attending other ICCA Congress and ICCA Malaysia members also contributed ideas on proposed content and programs of the Congress. (MyCEB)

The national bureau, MyCEB, supported the Congress financially and co-sponsored the social events as well as sending five staff members to assist at the Congress as volunteers. Pre and post ICCA Congress technical study tours were offered by Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC), Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) and Yayasan Sabah Group. A total of 13 delegates participated in these site visits throughout the country which included visits to the convention centres and potential meeting destinations. The site visits provided an opportunity for the delegates to observe Malaysia as a potential business event destination. The Yayasan Sabah Group also sponsored the social media lounge at the Congress. ICCA Malaysia members received more insights about the association meetings they are interested in and more business leads to work on through attendance at the 'Business Exchange' session. Surveys showed that 78.6 per cent of the delegates who attended the business exchange session gained new sales leads from the process (ICCA Congress Survey). The 55th ICCA Congress also became the most attended by a Malaysian delegation in the history of the event. Ninety two Malaysians attended which fostered new relationships and provided opportunities for new local and global collaborations. The event served as a networking platform for Malaysians to interact with other international delegates within the same industry. The event enabled locals who are unable to travel to network with their international counterparts.

I noticed a lot of observers as well. Some have never been to ICCA and they were so interested and they understood the sessions. It's nice to see our own industry attending the event and seeing what ICCA is about. ICCA is not just about data, it's about so many other things. (BCCK)

3.7 Advocacy for second tier Cities

One of the main initiatives proposed during the bid was an ICCA member advocacy plan targeting second-tier cities. According to the bid, there are more than 250 potential second-tier cities in the Asia Pacific region, of which only 30 are ICCA members. This program was used to reinforce Kuching's position and reputation as a second tier city to host world events. SCB participated in various ICCA bid workshops from 2014 until 2016 at Korea MICE Expo (2014), ICCA – JTA Bid Workshop, Tokyo (2015) and ICCA - MeetTaiwan Bid Workshop (2016) and conducted short presentations in Fiji and Macau to present their case study and share winning strategies with other second tier cities. This is important as one of the aims of the advocacy program is to share knowledge and expertise with other second tier cities on how to position their destination effectively to secure events.

What ICCA meant for Malaysia was to profile Kuching, Sarawak as a 2nd tier city and I think they leverage it well and they were invited to share their winning strategies and sharing of expertise and knowledge with other 2nd tier cities. (MyCEB)

3.8 Tourism and Economic Impact

In addition to the benefits highlighted earlier, the Congress also had a tourism expenditure impact for Sarawak. With nearly 830 delegates from 61 countries, the 55th ICCA Congress contributed an estimated of RM322.186 million to Sarawak in delegate expenditure (Toyat, 2016) with 42.7 per cent of attendees spending EUR 800 – 1200 throughout their stay and a total average length of stay estimated at 5.6 nights (ICCA Congress Survey). 41.1 per cent of delegates extended their stay in Malaysia while 37.1 per cent of the delegates plan to re-visit the country in the future.

Table 2: Benefits, Initiatives and Outcomes through inter-organizational collaborations

Benefits	Beneficiaries	Initiatives	Outcomes	Inter-organisational Collaborations
Government advocacy / Political engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government officials - State officials - Government agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held meetings with several key stakeholders with ICCA President and CEO - Minister and Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture - Chief Minister of Penang - Governor of Sarawak - Inter-ministries forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A catalyst for government support - Presentation at Tourism Cabinet Minister meeting ❖ Agreed on establishment of inter-ministerial mechanism for business events industry ❖ Appointment of focal point officer in each ministry and government agencies - Effective and efficient collaborations among government ministries and agencies 	MyCEB, PCEB, SCB, ICCA HQ
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young associates - Undergraduate students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asia Pacific Young Professionals Development Programme - 2016 Bid Challenge - Professional Development Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposing young associates to new knowledge, experts within the field - Exposure to future job opportunities 	MyCEB, MACEOS, KLCC, SCB
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry partners - City councils - Local suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefings and trainings to local suppliers and service providers ❖ Green town ❖ Mini Rainforest World Music Festival ❖ Student Volunteers ❖ Social events by 3 event organisers ❖ Airport transits ❖ Traffic escorts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showcasing local talents - Enhancing Kuching's reputation as a business events destination - Enhancing delegate experience 	SCB, City Council, Segi College, Sarawak Tourism Board, Malaysia Airports, Sarawak Cultural Village
Ecological conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orangutan conservation - Rural communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised RM74,000 for orangutan conservation - 358 books collected from Bookshare campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fundraising opportunities - Extended legacy ❖ Bookshare will be adopted by other future conferences ❖ Teachers visiting rural areas to teach English ❖ Conservation efforts for OrangUtan 	SCB, Librarians Associations of Malaysia, Sarawak Forestry, UNIMAS
Raise awareness on important issue and destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orangutan conservation - Kuching and Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint marketing initiatives by ICCA Malaysia members ❖ #RoadtoSarawak, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness of Kuching and Malaysia as business events destination 	SCB, ICCA, MyCEB, BCCK, KLCC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Borneo Orang Utan project ❖ Email signature banner ❖ Tradeshow panel booth and onsite activities globally ❖ 36 press releases ❖ ICCAWorld social media platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raising awareness of orang utan conservation efforts via the Borneo Orang Utan (BOP) Project 	
ICCA Malaysia Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ICCA Malaysia members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MyCEB supported financially, co-sponsored the social events and sent volunteers – Technical study tours by PICC, PCEB, KLCC and Yayasan Sabah Group – Yayasan Sabah Group sponsored the social media lounge – Business exchange and leads generation – Malaysia's largest delegation to any ICCA Congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthen relationship between all ICCA Malaysia members – Networking as a catalyst for business leads generation for Malaysia delegates – Growing local knowledge particularly for Malaysia's delegates who's able to meet and network with other global participants – Leverage on the opportunities to showcase Malaysia as a business events destination 	MyCEB, PCEB, KLCC, PICC, Yayasan Sabah Group, SCB, PCEB
Advocacy for second tier cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Kuching – Second tier cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SCB collaborated with ICCA Asia Pacific and participated in ICCA Bid Workshops ❖ 2014, Korea MICE Expo ❖ 2015, ICCA-JTA Bid Workshop, Tokyo ❖ 2016, ICCA-MeetTaiwan Bid Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Knowledge transfer – Share success stories 	SCB, ICCA AP
Value added : Tourism and Economic Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Kuching and Sarawak, Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – RM322.186 million to Sarawak in delegate expenditure – Average spend of EUR800 – 1200 per stay – Average stay of 5.6 nights – 41% extended stays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Induced tourism 	

4 Conclusion

Growth of the business event sector is part of Malaysia's strategy to achieve status as a developed nation by 2020. The findings indicate that the 55th ICCA Congress has made a contribution (see Table 2) through engaging political leaders as well as the local community to raise awareness of the needs and potential of the sector, initiating education opportunities for developing talent, enhancing Malaysia's marketing activities globally, and contributing to the ecological conservation initiative. The event did contribute incremental economic impact to the country through the influx of new money attributed to the spending of international delegates, the incremental benefits adding value to the future development of the business events industry. The findings have significant implications for project organisers and association bodies that support development programs to benefit their society.

So is Malaysia's business events industry robust and resilient now? No – not yet – but it is edging its way forward through these goal-driven, collaborative efforts among the key players of the industry. Networks of trust have now been established among industry stakeholders in Malaysia and beyond, which has resulted in supportive networks and inter-organisational collaboration. These networks are key to the sustainability of the industry, along with the provision of adequate education and training, and social and environmental efforts, which all go hand in hand with event implementation and project management.

In summary, it is clear that the inter-organizational collaboration leveraged through the 55th ICCA Congress has managed to bring together different event stakeholders in a network to cultivate collaboration and integrate different purposes into a comprehensive strategy that bodes well for the future. This case study has shown that while events alone have a short lifespan, their legacies can be leveraged far into the future for the benefit of communities, industries and economies.

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