ITB Asia 2018: Riding the wave

Asia’s leading travel trade show opens its gates for 2018 on groundswell of tourism growth

ITB Asia opens its gates this year at a time when travel to Southeast Asia is enjoying the highest growth of all Asian subregions, with an 8.6% increase in international tourists in 2017, according to UNWTO.

Now in its 11th year in Singapore, ITB Asia is thus more relevant than ever as the meeting place for establishing high-quality customer contacts and conducting business.

This is where international exhibitors from all sectors within the travel-value chain, and Asia Pacific’s leading travel companies and emerging small and medium-sized enterprises meet with top international buyers from the MICE, leisure and corporate travel markets.

Furthermore, the line-up of speakers is again of a high standard, making the conference a must-attend event.

With impressive regional growth, a “star” destination is Indonesia, with an increase of 22%, as highlighted in our exclusive interview with Arief Yahya, Minister of Tourism of Indonesia on page 8.

ITB Asia opens its gates this year at a time when travel to Southeast Asia is enjoying the highest growth of all Asian subregions, with an 8.6% increase in international tourists in 2017, according to UNWTO.

Now in its 11th year in Singapore, ITB Asia is thus more relevant than ever as the meeting place for establishing high-quality customer contacts and conducting business.

This is where international exhibitors from all sectors within the travel-value chain, and Asia Pacific’s leading travel companies and emerging small and medium-sized enterprises meet with top international buyers from the MICE, leisure and corporate travel markets.

Furthermore, the line-up of speakers is again of a high standard, making the conference a must-attend event.

With impressive regional growth, a “star” destination is Indonesia, with an increase of 22%, as highlighted in our exclusive interview with Arief Yahya, Minister of Tourism of Indonesia on page 8.

Arief Yahya
Minister of Tourism of Indonesia

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT: ASIA

Growth in Asia Pacific (+7%) in the first six months of 2018 reflects solid intraregional demand, according to figures from UNWTO. In 2017, international tourist arrivals to Asia and the Pacific reached 323 million, a 6% increase on the 2016 figures. The region’s international tourism receipts totalled US$390 billion, an increase of 3%.

Southeast Asia enjoyed strong growth in 2017, led by countries such as Brunei (+18.3%), Cambodia (+11.8%), Myanmar (+18.4%) and the Philippines (+11%).

From page 12
ITB Asia unveils extensive conference programme

More than 200 industry heavyweights set to speak

Under the conference theme “Travel Reimagined”, ITB Asia 2018 showcases an extensive programme of presentations and discussions by industry heavyweights from the travel and tourism sector.

The conference brings together more than 260 speakers delivering over 200 hours of discussions to offer a well-rounded experience where industry leaders will network and discover the future of travel.

Key industry leaders are providing insights on major trends provoking disruption across the travel industry and how they are innovating to stay ahead.

“We have a spectacular line-up for this year’s conference on six stages and a rich and varied content programme. This year also sees the launch of several new initiatives including a new MICE and Corporate Hub, a MICE tech showcase and a new Muslim Travel Pavilion. This is a significant increase in exhibitor and speaker numbers and in the breadth of material being showcased at ITB Asia,” commented Katrina Leung, Managing Director of Messe Berlin (Singapore), organiser of ITB Asia.

To kick off the show, global leaders from Google, Microsoft and Ctrip provide insights on the major trends that will drive change and transformation within the travel industry, setting the tone of the overall show this year. This will continue Thursday where ITB Asia 2018 will host the keynote panel session on the future of travel distribution with insights from leading OTAs and intermediaries on how they are innovating to stay ahead.

Friday will then see a dedicated session on the Chinese market as the panel explores the ways to win over Chinese travellers and Chinese millennials today.

The Knowledge Theatre will explore topics which are defining and challenging the travel industry today, tomorrow as well as into the future, the Presentation Hub will showcase the latest insights and global best practices in destination marketing.

ITB Asia 2018
Australia's Daydream Island Resort set for 2019 relaunch

The Daydream Island Resort is set to reopen in early 2019, following the devastation caused by Cyclone Debbie in 2017.

Following an extensive $100 million redevelopment, the resort will offer 277 refurbished modern rooms and suites with the choice of interconnecting rooms for families and special access rooms, is billed as the new premium resort for romantics, families and groups.

The Living Reef, a free form coral lagoon, will wrap 200 metres around the central building holding over 1.5 million litres of water. Guests will be able to join the team of marine biologists who live on the island and feed baby stingrays who live amongst more than 100 species of fish, coral and invertebrates such as starfish, sea cucumbers and crabs.

Daydream Island Resort’s event space, meanwhile, will cater for major events. Guests visiting the island for conferences will have access to the latest technology audio visual equipment across three dedicated conference rooms. Special events from cocktail parties to gala dinners can be catered for across a large range of indoor and outdoor event locations, including weddings.

Daydream Island Resort’s Director of Sales & Marketing, Jayson Heron, says: “The reopening of Daydream Island is a huge milestone after the devastation caused by Cyclone Debbie. It will have been a two-year journey and we are excited to welcome our loyal regulars and new guests to the island to experience the new premium offering”.

Folia Life to debut in 2019

Italy’s Castello Dal Pozzo Resort is to open Folia Life in 2019, described as an oasis of peace in which guests can improve their health and well-being.

Folia Life is a meeting place, where guests can escape from the daily rush to immerse themselves in nature, with a panoramic terrace, an infinity pool, the scents of old trees and the unmistakable flavours of culinary excellence.

The outdoor swimming pool of Castello Dal Pozzo Resort is surrounded by a beautiful garden that guarantees fantastic intimacy and privacy. A large sundeck enables guests to enjoy the atmosphere for pleasant days of tranquility in absolute quiet.

The Folia Bar is the quietest corner of the Resort: almost hidden, but with a glimpse on the horizon of Lake Maggiore. When the heat becomes unbearable, Folia Bar will serve drinks at the edge of the pool, accompanied by some culinary treats from the Chef.

The sounds of nature keep the guest company while the barman conquers their senses with delicious signature cocktails, a spokesman for the resort explains.
Digital transformation takes centre stage

Shane O’Flaherty, Global Director of Travel and Transportation at Microsoft to deliver this morning’s opening keynote

Hospitality and travel organisations are embracing digital transformation to thrive in today’s competitive environment. We asked today’s keynote speaker, Shane O’Flaherty, Global Director of Travel and Transportation at Microsoft, to give an insight into how the company is addressing the challenge of transformation.

Microsoft solutions and its intelligent platform enable hospitality and travel organisations to combine the best of digital and in-store to deliver personal, seamless, and differentiated guest experiences by empowering people and capturing insights to drive growth.

Microsoft’s Travel and Transportation division focuses on enabling hospitality and travel organisations to digitally transform with Microsoft’s technology and its eco-system of travel partners.

What areas of transformation is Microsoft focusing on?
We are focused on four key pillars: enhancing the customer experience, driving employee empowerment, optimising operations and then assisting in transforming their products. The travel industry is making advancements with technology to transform how consumers plan and experience travel. Mobility is moving beyond basic uses to improve the total trip experience, and some of the key technologies that are driving this technology is the cloud, massive data and artificial intelligence innovation.

What advice do you have for travel companies when it comes to data handling and optimisation?
Travel companies should be looking at how to free the treasure trove of data (consumer and operational data) that they sit on, create a common data model in the cloud and then use AI to drive more operational efficiencies and an improved customer journey. We have seen many of the companies beginning this journey today and are excited for the transformative results ahead.

As you look at the travel agency marketplace, we see chat and AI voice will be quicker and cheaper than the existing models that exist today. As we get richer profiles of consumers, based on the data, the computer will be able to understand preferences even more and use that information to drive more personalised experiences.

The integrated experiences that used to be hand built by agents are now evolving with AI to be built at a global scale. Long term, it is all extending to a connected traveller experience, that no longer will be as fragmented and siloed as it is today for the consumer.

Can you explain Microsoft’s Personalisation Solution?
The Personalisation Solution intelligently customises guest experiences and streamlines operations through advanced customer experience management capabilities. Near-real-time data and tools allow your associates to connect with guests at the right time with the right offers. The solution integrates predictive analytics with customer profiles, needs, and significant events—so you can know what guests want before they tell you. By using outcomes of every customer decision, you can ensure transaction continuity. This allows you to boost customer engagement with offers that speak specifically to each guest.

Microsoft’s Employee Productivity and Collaboration solution, meanwhile, enhances employee engagement by creating a digital workplace for your hospitality and travel associates and management. The solution consists of modern collaboration tools that reduce paper or email processes and increase employee productivity and communication flows, while securing digital identities within your organisation. It allows your employees to share, automate, and find real-time information from any device. This ensures faster collaboration—and that your employees are at least as informed as the guests they serve.

How important is ITB Asia to you in terms of its conference?
ITB Asia is one of the most important conferences in the Asia marketplace and it is always inspiring to listen to and learn from companies driving innovation in the space. Microsoft is delighted and honored to participate in this travel conference.
Falling in love with the world

BBC Travel and BBC StoryWorks tap into the heart of the motivations of the new traveller

Nicola Eliot, Director, BBC StoryWorks APAC, BBC Global News will be speaking at the Presentation Hub today, addressing the transformation in the reasons people travel. We asked her to tell us more about her work.

BBC Travel and BBC StoryWorks look to tap into the heart of the motivations of the new traveller, to move past lists and itineraries into creating truly memorable moments and experiences that will shape the way they feel about the world. In our presentation at ITB Asia, we will share with you our insight into how we talk to our audiences, and how we seek to make them fall in love with the world through our stories by amazing them, immersing them, and inspiring them to connect into their next travel adventure.

Can you explain the theme of your presentation, “Fall in love with the world”? Every day, the world gets a little smaller, making it easier and easier for all kinds of people to travel. The reasons people travel, the way people travel and the people that travel have changed out of all recognition. These factors will all continue to evolve in line with the world around us, and the way we market to this audience must evolve with them or risk being left behind.

We no longer need someone to tell us the top 10 places to visit, and we don’t want to go where everyone else is going. We are spending more on travelling when our busy schedules allow, and even booking on the spur of the moment, with mobile travel-related searches for “tonight” and “today” growing over 150% over the past two years, according to data from Google.

How is adventure tourism evolving? Even our definition of adventure is changing, with risky adrenaline activities being favoured half as much as “experiencing a new culture”, according to a recent study by the Adventure Travel Trade Association and our concept of a holiday destination is changing along with it. The Middle East is the fastest-growing travel region in the world, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation’s Travel Barometer, and as social media brings remote destinations and unique cultures into view, tourist numbers are growing in places like Ethiopia, Bhutan, Paraguay and Kazakhstan – which recently gained both a Hyatt and a Hilton.

To be able to capture attention in this new diverse travel landscape requires so much more than just the facts or the ‘to do list’ of a destination; it requires a story that will amaze, connect, inspire and immerse people in a truly unique and personal experience.

At BBC StoryWorks, we work closely with BBC Travel throughout the year and are continually moved by their mission to inspire BBC audiences to fall in love with the world by telling them about places they’ve never been and showing them a new side to places they think they know. It’s time to take advantage of the myriad opportunities for travel marketing out there and this means a completely new approach for many. BBC Travel has drastically changed its approach since April 2017 and as a result the site has grown 30% overall in terms of traffic (unique browsers and page views) and now has an average dwell time of 13 minutes and 18 seconds so we know that this advice works. Telling a story works and it will draw people to your page and make them stay.

How do you advise others to tell this story? My advice is to go beyond the beaten path and try to tell stories with unexpected angles, try to make a connection to cultures around the world. Then try to focus your storytelling on just one or two leading characters and create a narrative in which their perspectives paint the most vivid picture of the place they call home.

TELLING A STORY WORKS AND IT WILL DRAW PEOPLE TO YOUR PAGE AND MAKE THEM STAY

FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD

Wednesday, October 17, 2018
4:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: Presentation Hub
Jenna Qian is CEO of Destination Marketing at Ctrip, leading a business that connects destinations with people. We asked Ms Qian how destination marketing is changing over time.

Chinese millennials are becoming the new force in China’s tourism. This massive group has a unique media consumption pattern. From PC to tablet PC to mobile; from official website to microblogs to social media channels, travel brands need consistent, concise, and accessible contents. Mobile internet has already surpassed TV in amount of time spent, and it is still growing rapidly.

You talk about the “art and science” of Destination Marketing. What do you mean by that?

The art & science is of equal significance to Destination Marketing. Though the marketing method varies, the logic and scientific analysis system behind marketing are unchanged. Through scientific analysis, we get a better understanding of target groups, their consumption preferences, and as a result, build strategy to have full marketing penetration on travellers’ decision and behaviour before, during and after the trip.

Here I would like to share an example: Ctrip’s marketing project with Peru.

The first stage is branding & awareness. Through PC and mobile landing page, Ctrip website advertisements, social media posting, and KOL sharing, beautiful images are displayed in ways that make the destination immediately desirable.

The second stage is sales conversion. Ctrip leverages its large membership and corporate partnerships to precisely reach the target audience. Taking into account differences in purchasing power, interests, demographic information, browsing history and more, we push relevant travel product to each potential tourist, and heighten sales conversion.

The last stage is maintenance. After the initial launch, we assembled a Peru Online Flagship Store that incorporated tourism info, travel products, multimedia content, and sales functions in one place to create an interface that collages all relevant tourism-related information together. From scenic spots to hotels to restaurants, visitors can visually experience and instantly make purchasing decisions.

In the past three years PATA has focused on building a financially strong organisation, increasing the number of members globally and improving engagement with its members and partners. We asked Mario Hardy what’s to come.

In the years to come, the Association will look to be thought leaders, by focusing on further engagement with its members by monitoring current trends and issues. However, PATA will always remain a strong advocate for the development of a responsible and sustainable travel and tourism industry.

What are the key trends you’re seeing in Asian travel and tourism (inbound and outbound)?

After having met with ASEAN Tourism Ministers, I can safely say that an area of focus for most destinations is the issue of tourism dispersal. Many countries suffer from overcrowded tourist destinations and often times the infrastructure in place does not support these high number of tourists. Dispersing tourists to secondary and tertiary destinations will also help local communities alleviate poverty by generating new sources of income and creating new job opportunities. This is something that PATA has been advocating for the past three years and we are extremely pleased to see countries embracing this new philosophy.

PATA will always remain a strong advocate for the development of a responsible and sustainable travel and tourism industry.

What interesting new members have you landed of late?

We value every member that joins the PATA family, however some of the more well-known brands that have recently joined include PayPal, Airbnb and Royal Brunei Airlines. In 2017, we welcomed more than 125 members from the public and private sectors to the Association.
While ASEAN’s growth was 7% in 2017, Indonesia’s growth was 22%. We asked Arief Yahya, Minister of Tourism of Indonesia to tell us more about how tourism has developed in the country.

The number of foreign tourist arrival to Indonesia in 2017 reached 14.04 million visitors. This is the result of various efforts by Ministry of Tourism to promote Wonderful Indonesia branding in our main target markets countries, such as China, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Japan, India, South Korea, and other markets like European countries. Additionally, according to Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index report 2017 by World Economic Forum, Indonesia’s rank has improved significantly, moving up from 50th rank in 2015 to 42nd rank in 2017.

During 2017, Wonderful Indonesia branding successfully won 27 awards at various events in 13 countries. And up to September 2018, Indonesia has received 31 awards at various events in nine countries.

How important is tourism as part of your economy and what are the projections?
Tourism has been declared as the leading sector under the presidency of Joko Widodo. As a result, tourism development in the country has the full commitment and support from other related ministries. As one of the key sectors to Indonesia’s economy, it has contributed to foreign exchange around US$15 bn in 2017 and employment of 12 million in that year.

The Ministry of Tourism is very optimistic on the growth of Indonesia’s tourism and it is projected to be the biggest foreign exchange earner in 2019 with around US$20bn. Indonesia is also committed to make tourism as the best in the region. Not only that, the Ministry has been targeted to reach 20 million foreign tourists by 2019.

In order to achieve those targets, the Ministry of Tourism has prepared three ultimate weapons: providing incentives for airlines, hot deals programs, and a competing destination model (CDM).

For hot deals programs, we are looking at selling excess capacity and give customers big discounts of those excess capacity. CDM is a new method of marketing by combining machine learning ability, big data analysis, and implementing precise contextual advertising on targeted potential tourists.

What are the priority destinations for Indonesia?
The Ministry of Tourism has set 10 Tourism Priority Destinations – known as 10 New Bali – Lake Toba, Cape Kelayang, Mandalika, Wakatobi, Morotai Island, Kepulauan Seribu and Jakarta Old Town, Cape Lesung, Borobudur and Bromo Tengger Semeru.

The aims for this strategy are to boost and spread out foreign visitors to other potential tourist destinations in Indonesia beyond Bali, and to distribute the economic benefit of tourism further to other areas across the country. Moreover, the development of 10 New Bali is expected to attract foreign investment to tourism sector by improving ease of doing business in those regions. The main focus of the Ministry of Tourism is developing attractions, accessibility, and amenities, as well as promoting investment in 10 New Bali.

What investments is Indonesia making at this time in its tourism infrastructure?
The achievement of investment in Indonesia’s tourism sector in 2017 reached US$1.8 bn, grew by 32% 2016, when investment reached US$1.4 bn. The development of 10 New Bali and National Tourism Strategic Area needs investment for about IDR500 tn in total, or more than US$30 bn. It consists of both government investment and private investment. For the period of 2019 until 2024, tourism in Indonesia mainly
needs investment for 120,000 hotel rooms, 15,000 restaurants, 100 theme parks, 100 diving operators, 100 marinas, 100 special economic areas and other tourism amenities.

What are the main USPs of Indonesia when it comes to tourism?

When it comes to tourism, Indonesia is considered to be a complete destination, we have everything! Indonesia is suitable for different tourist interests, we have nature, culture and heritage, cuisine – and affordable prices. However, there are two main unique selling propositions for Indonesia, which are nature (white sandy beaches spreading throughout the country, active volcanoes in Java, sublime diving in Raja Ampat, West Papua) and cultural heritage (wide variety of traditional experiences from 300 ethnic groups, home for Buddhist and Hindus temple/shrines).

These USPs have also been acknowledged by the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index report from World Economic Forum in 2017, which ranked Indonesia in the 16th position for natural and cultural resources among all the countries in the world. For price competitiveness, we are in fifth position, so for the same amount of dollars, you can get more stuff in Indonesia.

At ITB Asia, the first Muslim Travel Pavilion will appear. How is Muslim travel evolving?

In conjunction with the increased interest in Halal tourism, we are observing a trend that the spending power of middle income families around the world is increasing, which allows more Muslims to travel for leisure – beyond Hajj and Umrah trips – hence the growing demand of Muslim Travel or halal tourism.

Muslim travellers are starting to have higher expectations while traveling; beyond basic sightseeing and shopping packages, Muslim travelers now expect their needs to be met while partaking in trips ranging from adventure travel to beach holidays as well as in immersive experiences. Non-Muslim countries, such as Thailand, Japan and Korea are starting to target the Muslim travel segment and are developing products tailored to the needs of Muslim travellers. Globally there are travel companies leading the way in Halal tourism by offering unique experiences to Muslim travelers. Domestically, Indonesians are traveling more to explore their country and expect their faith basic needs to be met.

To motivate destinations within Indonesia to focus on halal tourism, we launched a series of awards. We have succeeded in creating a healthy sense of competitiveness among destinations. These internal competitions propelled Indonesia to win a series of awards including the World’s Best Halal Tourism Destination and the World’s Best Halal Honeymoon destination for Lombok, the World’s Best Halal Destination for West Sumatera, the World’s Best Halal Culinary Destination for Padang, West Sumatera, and the World’s Best Halal Cultural Destination for Aceh.

In terms of regulation we have established a Halal standard for the hospitality and food and beverage sectors, and are working on educating the industry on the importance of becoming Halal certified. Being a Muslim majority country where Halal food and Muslim-friendly facilities such as masallahs and ablution facilities are widely available, it is sometimes difficult to convince the industry of the importance of becoming Halal certified. However, we repeatedly communicate that Muslim tourists from certain destinations require the assurance of Halal certification and that becoming certified makes it easier to sell their products and services. We regularly hold informational seminars and technical workshops to educate industry players on the importance of certification and how to become certified.

With the recent tragedies in Indonesia, how will the tourism market recover?

After a tragedy happens, our first main focus is rehabilitating the people, for example by giving trauma healing to the local community and the industry. Then, we focus on rehabilitating the destination, mainly on their attraction, access, and amenity. We cannot do it on our own, we need collaboration with other ministries and stakeholders, such as Ministry of Transportation or Ministry of Public Works. Then we conduct promotion for the unaffected areas in nearby regions, to show that the tourism activities are recovering and going back to normal. Our promotion strategies will include branding, advertising and selling, both inside the country and abroad.
YES, DIGITAL BOOKING FOR ATTRACTIONS, TOURS AND ACTIVITIES IS POSSIBLE…

Xplore is described as a uniquely Asian booking system and channel manager, specifically tailored to the unique needs of Asian attractions, tours and activity operators.

Clement Wong, CEO and Founder of BeMyGuest, says: “It’s undeniable that the attractions, tours and activities space is undergoing a massive shift in their business fundamentals globally, but in such a multicultural and fragmented, largely offline market like Asia, the shift is a far greater challenge.

“For many years, BeMyGuest has been bridging the technology gap that exists between a very digitally enabled distribution landscape and a very manual and traditional supply of attractions, tours and activities products in Asia. While there is a number of booking systems available for suppliers in US, Europe and even Australia, relevant technological innovation for this region was required as a matter of urgency which is what motivated us to design and launch Xplore.”

Xplore is available in a software as a service model in multiple Asian languages; its e-commerce modules provide operators with the ability to capture online transactions, collect payments in multiple Asian currencies and run product promotions for their B2C customers on their own websites and/or ticket counters. The Channel Manager module enables suppliers to deliver electronic tickets to B2B customers, in bulk to traditional travel agents, and via a booking and content API to the operator’s online travel agent partners.

Blanca Menchaca, COO and Co-Founder of BeMyGuest, says: “Attractions, tours and activity products that are not readily available for booking in real-time and on a same-day basis are missing out on the fastest growing customer audience. This is especially so in Asia where mobile booking and payment behaviour prevails”.

---

**WeChat mini-programmes create a new real-time sales channel**

DerbySoft says its new product, WeChat Solution, which helps hotels to build a WeChat Mini-program that connects to PMS/CRS, is creating a new emerging real-time sales channel.

DerbySoft is a provider of distribution services to the hospitality industry through an array of products and solutions.

Adele Zhang, Director of Marketing at DerbySoft, says: “WeChat ‘mini-programs’ are starting to take off in China’s social media world, where the messaging platform dominates the market. Some hotels developing mini-programs find they rank among their best-performing direct channels, bringing in a large number of bookings from outbound Chinese travellers.

WeChat mini-programs act like apps – except they live in the cloud and don’t have to be downloaded, so users save on data and storage space.

Zhang says: “They’re inserted or embedded in a WeChat promotional article easily, just as you would paste a URL link. There are more than 400 million total WeChat mini-program users, 170-million of them daily users.”

Most recently, DerbySoft launched Max, a content platform that communicates over 500 aspects of hotel properties to distributors to create higher booking conversion.

Zhang says: “Build is a standard custom connectivity platform, while Go connects distributors and suppliers in a more streamlined platform for those looking for faster speed to market. DerbySoft also provides solutions for metasearch and digital marketing challenges through the Click product.”

At ITB Asia, Zhang says she has two objectives, to get as many new leads as possible and to catch-up with DerbySoft’s existing customers: “ITB Asia is the only exhibition we go to in South-east Asia, we would like to get in touch with the industry trend and landscape here as well as get new prospect/leads into our pipeline. Consumers are expecting more, not only for the price value, but also for the customer experience. Globally, people travel more and more people are starting to travel. One size fits all doesn’t work anymore, we have to offer different products and services to different segmentations”.

---

**THERE ARE 400+ MILLION TOTAL WECHAT MINI-PROGRAM USERS, 170-MILLION OF THEM DAILY USERS**

Adele Zhang
Director of Marketing, DerbySoft

---

**YES, DIGITAL BOOKING FOR ATTRACTIONS, TOURS AND ACTIVITIES IS POSSIBLE…**

---

**THERE ARE 400+ MILLION TOTAL WECHAT MINI-PROGRAM USERS, 170-MILLION OF THEM DAILY USERS**

Adele Zhang
Director of Marketing, DerbySoft
Klook targets growth through use of online technology

The online platform is expanding into the United States and Europe

Founded in 2014, Klook is one of the world’s leading travel, activities and services booking platforms. We asked Chuan Sheng Soong, General Manager, SEA Region, Klook to tell us more about the company’s development plans.

Klook has already raised US$300m to date, supported by world-renowned investors such as Sequoia Capital, TCV, Matrix Partners, and Goldman Sachs, making Klook the most-funded company in the tours and activities sector. Klook currently has more than 800 employees across 16 offices worldwide. Klook is now actively expanding its footprint into the USA and Europe, with offices in both London and Amsterdam having already been set up, with plans to set up offices in the USA as well.

What will you be talking about in your presentation at the ITB Asia conference?
I will discuss the topic “From offline market to online: Digitizing the supply in the tours and activities space”, which covers how technology can help and provide solutions for the fragmentation of supply in the sector.

What do you see as being the most important trends at the moment in tours and activities?
Mobile technology has been one of the most crucial elements in the development of the tours and activities sector, with more than 70% of Klook’s customers booking via mobile devices, according to our data. Companies like us are helping suppliers to go from offline to online so that they can capitalise on the current trends of customers booking online and on mobile.

What are the main trends you are seeing in terms of consumer demand?
Travellers are now looking for photogenic and Instagrammable spots to hop on the current trends on social media so that they don’t experience FOMO (fear of missing out). They are eager to explore different and unique destinations so that they can take photos and show off to their peers on social media. Asian travellers are getting more tech-savvy and tend to make their travel bookings on mobile devices. There is also a growing trend of in-destination bookings, where travellers purchase or book activities and services only after they arrive at their destination, further increasing the demand for booking on mobile. According to our data, more than 70% of our users purchase Klook activities/services on mobile.

What are you hoping to gain from this year’s ITB Asia?
We are hoping to expand and deepen our partnerships with travel services merchants across the world, as well as join hands with these merchants to reach broader audiences in a more efficient way. ITB Asia is an important event for us to meet with different business partners and suppliers. As Klook is the pioneer in the tours and activities space, especially in the SEA region, ITB Asia is a great opportunity for us to further showcase our strengths as well as the possibilities that we could bring to the market.

Go Global Travel targets APAC markets

Leading hotel supplier Go Global Travel has announced that it will target business in Asia Pacific in 2019 as part of its continuous global strategy.

Go Global Travel, which has more than 230,000 hotels worldwide on its platform, has a new office in Seoul, South Korea set up earlier this year, and the company has been adding to its sales team in several APAC markets, including mainland China and Taiwan.

A Chinese version of the searching portal is set to be launched soon, with the input of local contributors – proof of Go Global Travel’s desire to add value to this market.

Ophir Ben-Ezra, Go Global Travel’s CEO, says: “We have a determination to enter Asia Pacific in 2019 and it is clear that we have now laid down roots in APAC markets.”

Go Global Travel was established in 2000 and currently has clients in 93 markets.
Continued growth fuelled by solid intraregional demand

Latest figures from the UNWTO indicate continuing strong growth in international tourism in Asia in 2018.

Statistics released this month indicate a 7% increase in arrivals from January-June 2018, with SE Asia welcoming 9% more tourists.

Growth in Asia and the Pacific in 2017 (+6%) reflected solid intraregional demand, particularly from China, the Republic of Korea and Australia, according to UNWTO.

International tourist arrivals to Asia and the Pacific in 2017 reached 323 million, a 6% increase on the 2016 tourist numbers. The region’s international tourism receipts totalled US$390 bn, an increase of 3%.

Results in North-East Asia, the largest subregion in Asia, were positive overall. Solid growth was recorded in many destinations, led by Japan (+19.4%), which enjoyed its sixth straight year of double-digit figures in arrivals. By contrast, the Republic of Korea suffered a decline, due to fewer arrivals from China.

South-East Asia (+8.6%) enjoyed the highest growth of all Asian subregions in 2017, with an additional nine million international tourists. This included countries such as Brunei (+18.3%), Cambodia (+11.8%), Indonesia (+16.9%), Myanmar (+18.4%) and the Philippines (+11%).

Growth across destinations was fuelled by robust demand from North-East Asian (+3.4%) source markets. Vietnam (+29.1%) recorded the fastest growth in arrivals, while Thailand (+8.6%), the subregion’s largest destination, added three million more arrivals. Visa exemptions and improved air connectivity also contributed to the positive results.

Positive results in South Asia (+5.6%) were largely driven by the strong performance of India (+6.7%), the subregion’s largest destination, which benefited from increasing demand from western source markets and simpler visa procedures.

Against a strong first semester in 2018, growth prospects for the remainder of 2018 remain positive overall, although comparatively more moderate, according to the latest UNWTO Confidence Index Survey.

Tourism Laos launches new digital travel platform “Inspiring Laos”

Laos is officially launching a reconfigured destination web platform at ITB Asia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO).

The target is to make the destination more attractive for potential travellers as the reshaped web platform will be more modern and user-friendly. “Inspiring Laos” will regroup stories, features and travel experiences about the country.

“We are pleased to cooperate with Tourism Laos in launching the travel platform “Inspiring Laos”. Such a project will be inspirational for tourism players as well as the various tourism regions in Lao PDR”, explains MTCO Executive Director Jens Thraenhart.

“We are excited to leverage our social commerce technology. We believe that “Inspiring Laos” will enable small operators to encourage travellers to share their experiences via social media resulting in increased exposure and sales,” adds Thraenhart.

“Inspiring Laos” was built thanks to a working partnership between Tourism Laos and the MTCO, and is driven by cutting-edge social commerce management system ENWOKE.

Beyond promoting destinations and experiences, “Inspiring Laos” will also drive exposure and bookings to existing businesses in the country, especially to smaller travel operators.

“We recognise that Laos travel experiences are only possible thanks to the hard work of the many small and medium-sized enterprises, accommodation providers, restaurants, tour operators, shops and attractions,” explains Sounh Manivong, Director General of the Tourism Marketing Department with Tourism Laos.

One of Tourism Laos’ targets is to spread tourism benefits to secondary destinations in a bid to mitigate the risk of over-tourism in prime areas. “Inspiring Laos” was built to assist this effort by encouraging tourists to quickly and easily share experiences of second-tier destinations and experiences that may not have the big marketing budgets of other more prominent destinations.

Visitors of “Inspiring Laos” will be able to plan their entire trip to Laos as the platform offers all the necessary information with travellers able to search for destinations and experiences by “region” and “area of interest”.

Jens Thraenhart
Executive Director,
Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO)
Spain’s leading hotel group, Meliá Hotels International is at ITB Asia promoting the recent signing of Gran Meliá Chengdu in partnership with Chengdu Renju Tourism & Hospitality.

Gran Meliá Chengdu becomes the third Gran Meliá property to be established in China and the Meliá group’s 11th property in the Chinese market. 48 Meliá International hotels are operating throughout Asia.

Bernardo Cabot, Senior Vice President of Meliá Hotels International Asia Pacific, said: “We’re proud to embark on this new partnership with Chengdu Renju Real Estate, a strong state-owned real estate development enterprise in Chengdu, which has a proven success track record and shares the same operational concept with our company. I’m confident that with this strong partnership we can create an exceptional and unique property, and bring Spanish luxury and hospitality to Chengdu.”

Scheduled to open in 2021, Gran Meliá Chengdu will blend history, luxury and avant-garde design both inside and out. The hotel will feature 270 spacious guest rooms and an international restaurant, a Chinese restaurant with private dining room, a speciality restaurant and a lobby bar.

Gran Meliá Chengdu will also have a strong MICE offer with meeting venues and rooms available for guests.

New infrastructure planned for Sabah

With the Sabah International Convention Centre expected to open in late 2019, 11 new hotels are set to open in Sabah in the next three years.

The Sabah Tourism Board, present again this year at ITB Asia, has announced that properties such as Holiday Inn Express, Crowne Plaza Hotel and Pullman, ranging from three to five stars, are all in the pipeline.

Currently, there are more than 27,000 rooms available in Sabah, with around 3,500 rooms in five-star facilities located throughout the city, in coastal areas as well as in the heart of the Bornean rainforest.

Joining recently were Hilton Kota Kinabalu and Mercure Kota Kinabalu. This year, Kota Kinabalu Marriott Hotel was opened, and the high-end Borneo Eagle Resort at Pulau Tiga (where the first reality show Survivor was filmed) is now operational. The Borneo Rainforest Lodge also recently opened in the Danum Valley Conservation Area – a virgin rainforest.

Sabah gives a complete and exotic Bornean experience, from natural offerings such as mountains, islands, beaches, wildlife to warm and hospitable people from various background. It’s a combination of fun, adventure and total relaxation in one of the most exciting island states in Malaysia. Some 20 international cities have regular services to the state capital, Kota Kinabalu. Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Singapore, Seoul and business hubs are within short (three to six hours) direct flight and there are easy connections to other long-haul destinations.

FEELING LIKE KATHERINE HEPBURN ON THE BRAHMAPUTRA

One woman said she “felt like Katherine Hepburn on the African Queen” ... It’s known as one of the top ten river cruises in the world, and is still a secret for many. But not for long, as a cruise on “MV Mahabaahu” – claiming to be India’s most luxurious river cruise – is among the top products being presented at ITB Asia by Assam state.

Assam is the gateway to the north-eastern states and has been aptly described as the sentinel of Northeast India. In total, seven Indian states and two countries – Bhutan and Bangladesh – surround Assam, which is also close to India’s international borders with China and Myanmar.

The mighty river Brahmaputra decorates the geography of the state and one can take a Cruise along this river with first class facilities experiencing wildlife, tradition, adventure tourism on its way. The river cruise passes by the world’s largest inhabited river island, Majuli, which has several satras vaishnavite monasteries, some dating back to the 16th centuries; as well as the world’s smallest riverine island in the world - namely Umananda Temple - which was built in the 17th Century dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Assam is surrounded by hills, major rivers such as Brahmaputra and Barak and its tributaries through thick forest and tea gardens enhance the scenic beauty of Assam. So much to discover!
ALL IN ONE KOREA G_MICE Gyeonggi
With easy access, superb infrastructure and an abundance of cultural and natural attractions, Gyeonggi, the province surrounding South Korea’s capital city Seoul, is being propelled to international prominence. And the proposition keeps getting better!

Travellers from Incheon Airport to the South Korean capital, will have travelled through the Western part of Gyeonggi.

Gyeonggi, together with Incheon and Seoul, the two independently administered municipalities, have a combined 25.5 million inhabitants, around half of South Korea’s total population.

Meaning “near the capital”, Gyeonggi is today a powerhouse for South Korea’s electronics, machinery, chemicals, steel, textile and agriculture industries. Its infrastructure for MICE is equally impressive, promising planners excellent accessibility, quality and variety.

From Suwon, visitors can easily access a wealth of business facilities as well as leisure attractions. Gyeonggi’s golf courses, hot springs, art villages, theme parks and shopping malls are complemented by many industrial tours that offer overseas visitors a new perspective on South Korea’s rising influence on international business.

As a result of close collaboration between public and private sector organisations, Gyeonggi’s credentials in MICE have advanced considerably in recent years. Its readiness to host large-scale incentive tours or exhibitions is now well recognised by MICE planners worldwide.

**READY FOR MICE**

Gyeonggi’s meeting facilities are indeed world class. The Korean International Exhibition & Convention Centre (KINTEX) is South Korea’s largest venue of its kind with 100,000 sq m of exhibition space. In Hwaseong, SINTEX is a full-service, purpose-built facility with a ballroom that accommodates up to 1,000 people. Opening in March 2019, Suwon Convention Centre boasts 28 meeting rooms and a conference space for 3,000. These facilities are well served by a wide range of hotels. Unique venues such as museums, theme parks and botanic gardens add to the diverse array of facilities open to MICE planners. The Korean Folk Village is especially popular for receptions, thanks to its traditional setting and atmosphere.

**TEAMBUILDING KOREAN-STYLE**

Teambuilding can be a uniquely Korean experience. Why don’t you try military uniform and act out a scene from the 2016 hit K-drama Descendants of the Sun at the Camp Greaves Experience Centre? Or try indoor rock climbing at the Starfield Goyang? Take a peek into the future at the Hyundai Motor Studio in Goyang, the country’s largest automobile theme park, or the Samsung Innovation Museum in Suwon, which not only traces the company’s history but also its cutting-edge mobile technologies.

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

Just like the diversity of its high-achieving economy, Gyeonggi is home to a remarkable selection of leisure and cultural attractions. Heading the list are Suwon Hwaseong Fortress (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the Korean Folk Village, the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), Yeoju Ceramic Art Complex, and Icheon Ceramics Village. A mountainous region, Gyeonggi’s jagged ranges and deep river valleys are also a nature lovers’ paradise. Most of Gyeonggi’s attractions can be visited on a day trip.

**OPENING FOR EVERYONE**

Just like the diversity of its high-achieving economy, Gyeonggi is home to a remarkable selection of leisure and cultural attractions. Heading the list are Suwon Hwaseong Fortress (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the Korean Folk Village, the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), Yeoju Ceramic Art Complex, and Icheon Ceramics Village. A mountainous region, Gyeonggi’s jagged ranges and deep river valleys are also a nature lovers’ paradise. Most of Gyeonggi’s attractions can be visited on a day trip.

**STAND No. H40**

**AT YOUR SERVICE**

International MICE planners have a reliable partner in Gyeonggi MICE Bureau, a dedicated agency with market intelligence and local connections in 31 cities and counties within Gyeonggi. It also offers marketing and promotional support such as brochure and videos. The Gyeonggi MICE Alliance, a public-private joint marketing body, is another resource into which planners can for an exception MICE event in Gyeonggi. 

---

*SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE*

Just like the diversity of its high-achieving economy, Gyeonggi is home to a remarkable selection of leisure and cultural attractions. Heading the list are Suwon Hwaseong Fortress (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the Korean Folk Village, the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), Yeoju Ceramic Art Complex, and Icheon Ceramics Village. A mountainous region, Gyeonggi’s jagged ranges and deep river valleys are also a nature lovers’ paradise. Most of Gyeonggi’s attractions can be visited on a day trip.

**READY FOR MICE**

Gyeonggi’s meeting facilities are indeed world class. The Korean International Exhibition & Convention Centre (KINTEX) is South Korea’s largest venue of its kind with 100,000 sq m of exhibition space. In Hwaseong, SINTEX is a full-service, purpose-built facility with a ballroom that accommodates up to 1,000 people. Opening in March 2019, Suwon Convention Centre boasts 28 meeting rooms and a conference space for 3,000. These facilities are well served by a wide range of hotels. Unique venues such as museums, theme parks and botanic gardens add to the diverse array of facilities open to MICE planners. The Korean Folk Village is especially popular for receptions, thanks to its traditional setting and atmosphere.

**TEAMBUILDING KOREAN-STYLE**

Teambuilding can be a uniquely Korean experience. Why don’t you try military uniform and act out a scene from the 2016 hit K-drama Descendants of the Sun at the Camp Greaves Experience Centre? Or try indoor rock climbing at the Starfield Goyang? Take a peek into the future at the Hyundai Motor Studio in Goyang, the country’s largest automobile theme park, or the Samsung Innovation Museum in Suwon, which not only traces the company’s history but also its cutting-edge mobile technologies.

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

Just like the diversity of its high-achieving economy, Gyeonggi is home to a remarkable selection of leisure and cultural attractions. Heading the list are Suwon Hwaseong Fortress (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the Korean Folk Village, the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), Yeoju Ceramic Art Complex, and Icheon Ceramics Village. A mountainous region, Gyeonggi’s jagged ranges and deep river valleys are also a nature lovers’ paradise. Most of Gyeonggi’s attractions can be visited on a day trip.
Come and Visit Indonesia Pavilion at

**ITB ASIA**

17 - 19 OCTOBER 2018

NO. G-05, Sands Expo Convention Center, B2, Halls D-F

www.indonesia.travel
indonesia.travel
@indtravel
@indtravel