



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE INAUGURAL WTM CONNECT ASIA OPENS IN PENANG

GEORGE TOWN, 18 May 2016 – The inaugural WTM Connect Asia was officially opened by the Director General of Tourism Malaysia Datuk Seri Mirza Mohammad Taiyab at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel today.

The three-day event offers a unique one-to-one format targeting the booming Asian leisure travel market. It provides an excellent platform for exhibitors to meet exclusively with elite international hosted buyers to network and explore potential partnerships and business opportunities.

WTM Connect Asia brings together almost 300 professionals from the tourism industry, including suppliers of South East Asia and international travel products, as well as outbound Chinese, South East Asian, and international hosted buyers.

“The World Travel Market is among the leading tourism trade exhibitions in the world. Hence, we are honoured and proud that Malaysia has been chosen to host the inaugural edition of WTM Connect Asia. It marks WTM’s entry into South East Asia, and we are pleased to collaborate on this together to pave the way for this event to take place here,” said Datuk Seri Mirza in his speech during the opening ceremony.

“This is also a testament to the confidence of foreign event organisers in Malaysia’s ability to host world-class events. It certainly goes in line with the Government’s objective in establishing the country as a leading business tourism destination, as underlined in the Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan. We hope to see more prestigious events like this being held in Malaysia in the future,” Datuk Seri Mirza added.

The hosting of WTM Connect Asia in George Town gives Malaysia an excellent opportunity to highlight all the fascinating tourism offerings that the UNESCO World Heritage Site offers.

“Penang certainly showcases the Malaysia Truly Asia brand perfectly and it will be a charming and wonderful introduction to the rest of Malaysia for the delegates of WTM Connect Asia,” said Datuk Seri Mirza.

The opening ceremony was also attended by the Divisional Director for Reed Travel Exhibitions Nick Pilbeam and the CEO of Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) Datuk Zulkefli Haji Sharif.

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia
Tel: +603 8891 8000; Official: malaysia.travel; Corporate: tourism.gov.my
Facebook: [friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); Twitter: [tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); Blog: blog.tourism.gov.my



“South East Asia’s inbound and outbound leisure travel markets are steadily growing and this is why Reed Travel Exhibitions has expanded into the region with the launch of WTM Connect Asia,” explained Nick Pilbeam.

WTM Connect Asia is part of Reed Travel Exhibitions WTM Portfolio, which includes other established tourism trade exhibitions such as WTM London, Arabian Travel Market, World Travel Market Latin America, World Travel Market Africa, and the International French Travel Market.

WTM Connect Asia is being held at the Straits Quay Convention Centre, Penang, from 18 to 20 May 2016. It is organised by Reed Travel Exhibitions and supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau, Tourism Malaysia, and the State Tourism of Penang.

The Chief Executive Officer of MyCEB Datuk Zulkefli Hj. Sharif said, “MyCEB is deeply pleased to collaborate with Tourism Malaysia, Penang Global Tourism, and Reed Travel Exhibitions in this strategic effort to further strengthen Malaysia’s ever-growing appeal as a preferred Business Events (BE) or Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) destination. Besides providing a platform to develop a niche Business-to-Business international leisure travel trade event, WTM Connect Asia also gives Penang the opportunity to showcase its unique culture, amazing entertainment, shopping experience, and gastronomic delights, to all visitors.”

WTM Connect Asia 2016 is expected to generate an economic impact of RM15 million. The event is expected to return to Penang next year, from 17 to 19 May.

Background information on WTM Connect

The WTM Portfolio, which is part of Reed Travel Exhibitions, will enter Asia and China this year with the launch of two events under the new WTM Connect brand, leveraging on the growth of these two markets.

WTM Connect will attract top quality buyers from the world’s leading tour operators such as Cox and Kings, Kuoni Travel, China Ctrip, and China U-Tour, to network, negotiate, and sign business deals with these growing markets.

Alongside the one-to-one meetings, a full programme of events will be scheduled offering lively panel debates, discussions, and educational content, providing delegates with a fresh and current perspective on the destinations.

ENDS

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)
No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia
Tel: +603 8891 8000; Official: malaysia.travel; Corporate: tourism.gov.my
Facebook: [friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); Twitter: [tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); Blog: blog.tourism.gov.my



For more media releases, media info and media features on Malaysia's tourism industry, kindly visit the Media Centre of Tourism Malaysia's website at <http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/>

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD OR TOURISM MALAYSIA is an agency under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia. Tourism Malaysia focuses on the specific task of promoting Malaysia at all levels. Since its inception, Tourism Malaysia has grown by leaps and bounds and it has emerged as a major player in the international tourism scene. In 2015, Malaysia registered 25.7 million tourist arrivals and RM69.1 billion in receipts.

Through the Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area), collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, other Government agencies and the private sector have been enhanced to help secure Malaysia's position as a leading tourist destination and achieve the country's target of 36 million tourist arrivals and RM168 billion in receipts by 2020.

The targets set under the Tourism NKEA will be achieved through the implementation of twelve Entry Point Projects (EPPs) clustered under five themes: Affordable Luxury; Nature Adventure; Family Fun; Events, Entertainment, Spa and Sports; and Business Tourism.

Press contact:

Media Relations Unit:

Shukri Hanafiah, Senior Deputy Director, Corporate Communication Division

Tel: +603-8891 8767

Email: shukrihanafiah@tourism.gov.my

Editorial Unit:

Anis Rozalina Ramli (Ms), Senior Editor, Corporate Communication Division

Tel: +603-8891 8759

Email: anisramli@tourism.gov.my

MALAYSIA TOURISM PROMOTION BOARD

(MINISTRY OF TOURISM & CULTURE, MALAYSIA)

No. 2, Tower 1, Jalan P5/6, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia

Tel: +603 8891 8000; Official: malaysia.travel; Corporate: tourism.gov.my

Facebook: [friendofmalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/friendofmalaysia); Twitter: [tourismmalaysia](https://twitter.com/tourismmalaysia); Blog: blog.tourism.gov.my