



penang
convention &
exhibition
bureau

**BUSINESS EVENTS
PENANG
2023
ANNUAL REVIEW**

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PENANG
2023
ANNUAL REVIEW**

POWERED BY



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Chief Minister of Penang

Penang has bounced back with resilience for the year 2023 and I am proud of how far we have come. Last year, the State Government, together with PCEB, hosted a total of 604 events, the highest numbers recorded in the post-pandemic era. This was an almost three-fold increase from 2022, and in total, we achieved RM1,033,856,600 in estimated economic impact (EEI).

However, we are not one to rest on our laurels. It is clear from the numbers that the demand exists, and we are more than willing, able and ready to position Penang as a regional – if not global – business travel hub. Business events are an important source of revenue for Penang, and we would be remiss not to focus on this sector, while not neglecting other niches in the tourism portfolio.

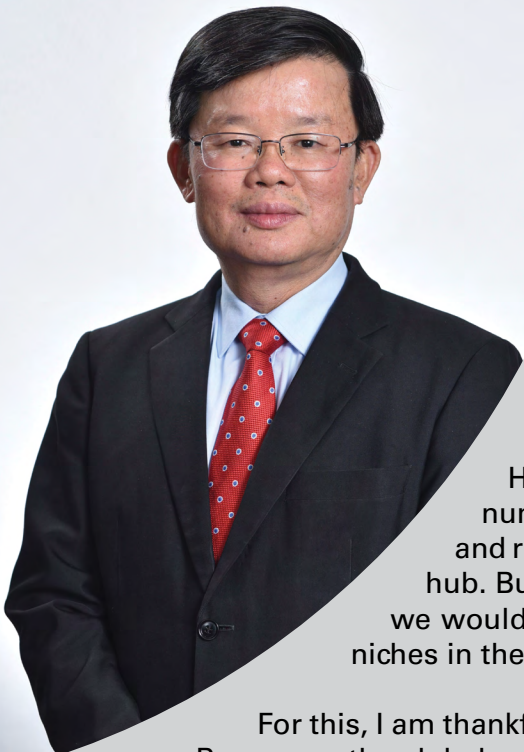
For this, I am thankful to PCEB and partners for working so hard in the past year to put Penang on the global map again. In turn, the Penang State Government aims to ensure that the macroeconomic climate is conducive for business events, elevating the travel experience for all. This includes projects like the expansion of the Penang International Airport, the Penang Light Rail Transit, the Penang Hill Cable Car and the development of Gurney Bay.

Not forgetting, the Mainland Penang Incentive Brochure was also launched in 2023 to attract high-value, high-impact events to Seberang Perai and beyond, riding on the successful launch of Butterworth Arena (PICCA), the northern region's largest convention centre. I'm confident that mainland Penang will drive substantial growth for the business events industry as Seberang Perai remains a key commitment for me. After all, Penang is not just an island!

I congratulate PCEB and thank all stakeholders for their continued trust and confidence in the Penang State Government. I'm sure that this year's annual review will provide immeasurable insights for growth in the coming years.

Thank you.

The Rt. Hon. Chow Kon Yeow



Penang State Exco for Tourism & Creative Economy

2023 was a year of business growth for Penang's state economy. My office, PETACE, is pleased to have worked closely with and through Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) to accelerate the influx of business events into the island and the mainland.

It's no secret that business travel accounts for 40% of the state's tourism GDP. Our number of events peaked towards the middle and second half of the year, in June, July and August 2023 when we saw a boom in both domestic and international arrivals. In May, we hosted 93 events, in August, we welcomed 32,405 delegates, and in September we saw a total of 149,705 room nights.

Such encouraging numbers is proof that business travel is back, and that more and more delegates are keen to attend events physically. The numbers also affirm the work we are already doing to boost Penang's economic growth. Last year, as I took office in July 2023, my team and I wasted no time in accelerating the plans already put in place by my predecessor, YB Yeoh Soon Hin, as well as to establish new projects and partnerships.

We resumed direct flights from Hong Kong to Penang, relaunched the Xiamen-Penang route, and resumed Qatar Airways' daily flights from Penang to Doha via Phuket. Accessibility and ease of connectivity into Penang is the first step into getting travellers' feet in the door, and we continue to work hard on improving structural and strategic plans – such as hotels, convention centers, transportation, tourism sights – that enhance the overall travel experience for delegates.

It has been two years since the Covid-19 pandemic and we are all but ready to leave those turbulent times behind. Together with PCEB, we are now working in "expansion mode" and we look forward to playing our part as a state agency to plan, execute, support and rejuvenate business travel in the coming years.

The Hon. Wong Hon Wai

Chief Executive Officer of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

2023 was a busy year for my team and I at PCEB, and I'm pleased to present this year's Annual Review, which highlights how vibrant, exciting and eventful it has been for the business events industry in Penang.

In 2023, the Penang state welcomed a total of 162,964 business travellers and recorded a total of 539,113 room nights. This was a marked 281% increase from the numbers recorded in 2022 (57,812 travellers and 181,066 room nights) – proof that business events are spearheading the state's tourism and economic recovery.

PCEB's objectives have always been to grow business events in Penang by planning, coordinating and providing assistance to our partners. 2023 saw several large-scale events being held at the SPICE Arena, such as the annual V-Convention 2023, which welcomed close to 18,000 delegates from over 50 countries. Another was the SEMICON 2023 Expo, hosting over 13,000 delegates.

Such large events contribute to more than 50% of Penang's Estimated Economic Impact (EEI). However we did not overlook the impact of smaller-scale meetings with a higher number of events, which is in line with our goal to make Penang a premier, sustainable, diversified and smart business events destination for years to come.

In 2023, business meetings came from as diverse a range of industries as manufacturing, engineering, robotics, orthopaedic, obstetrics and gynaecology, dermatology, marine biodiversity, advertising, marketing, accounting, landscape architecture, leadership training, halal foods, and even the gold, jewellery, hair and beauty industries.

As such, PCEB is honoured to have played its role in enabling businesses to physically network, share knowledge and expertise, grow professionally, and build stronger relationships with one another within their respective industries.

As we reflect on the key learnings and successes of 2023, we're excited about the opportunities and collaborations awaiting us in 2024. There is just so much potential for Penang! Here's to a year of growth and more positive experiences.

Ashwin Gunasekeran



Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) is a state bureau established to develop the business events and meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) industry in Penang.

PCEB aims to position Penang as the preferred location for business events activities in the region. With its rich UNESCO heritage, thriving multicultural society, state-of-the-art facilities, and vibrant natural attractions, Penang offers a truly eclectic tropical experience.

In line with its mission to incubate the growth of business events in Penang, PCEB serves as the focal point for the coordination of all business events activities,

providing expert assistance to organisations and business events planners at every step of the planning.

PCEB's team of industry experts work hand-in-hand with professional service providers, world-class hotels, convention centres, and unique venues to ensure the smoothness and success of each event organised. PCEB's goal is to enhance our business events clients' experience and at the same time, to expand the beneficial economic impact of local businesses.

Our Vision

To serve as Penang's focal point for coordinating all business events activities

To provide expert services to enhance the quality of business events clients' experience

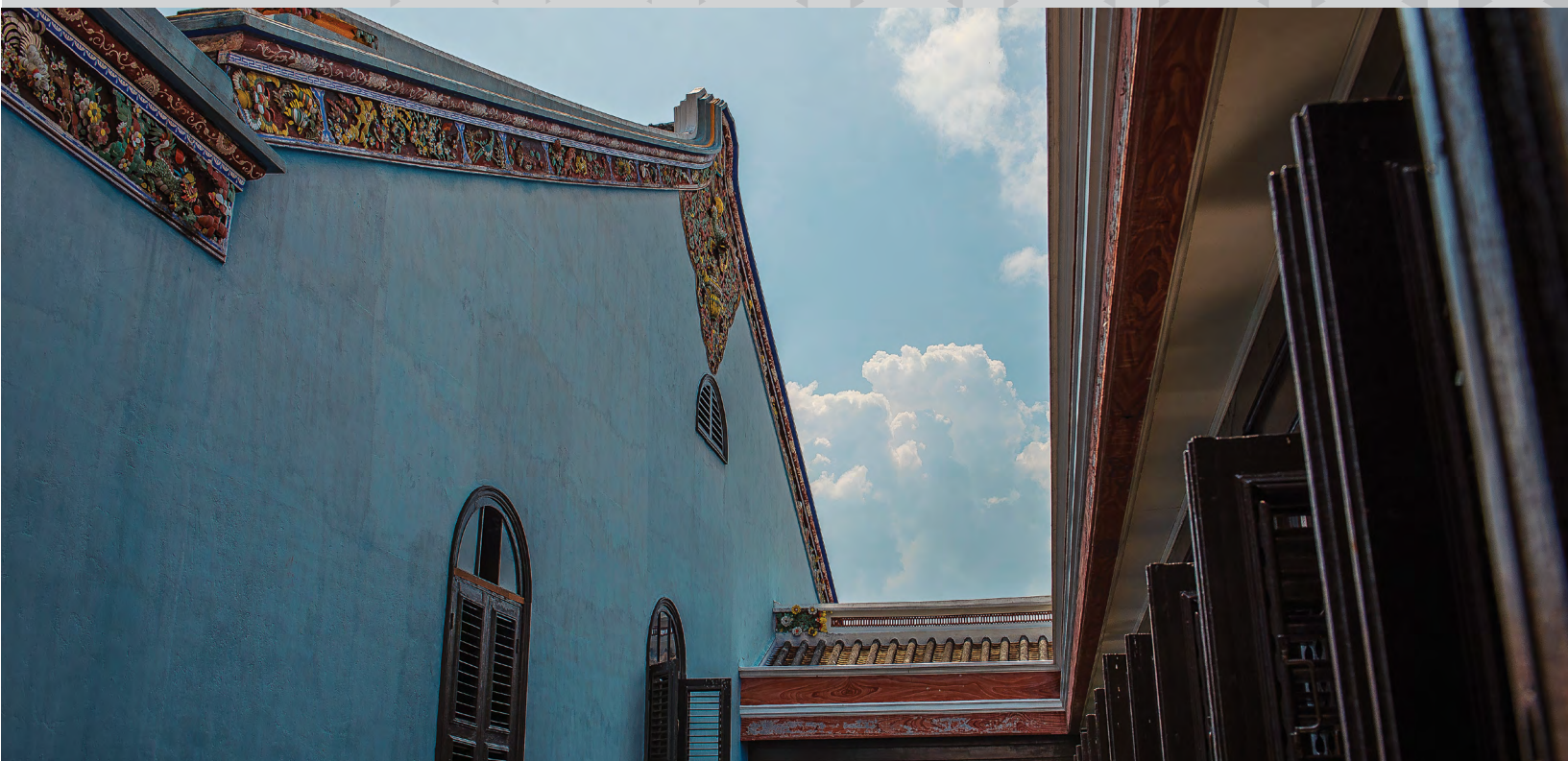
To expand beneficial economic impact of businesses in Penang

To liaise closely with stakeholders to bid for business events in Penang

To advise and assist business events organisers in planning and promoting their events internationally

To serve as the chief liaison to all levels of government departments

To assist and facilitate business events industry stakeholders and the community at large through our diverse and extensive marketing initiatives





The Hon. Wong Hon Wai
Chairperson



Datin Bharathi Suppiah
Director



The Hon. Wong Yuee Harn
Director



The Hon. Lee Boon Heng
Director



Ashwin Gunasekeran
CEO



Manroop Kaur
Executive Assistant



Siti Sarah
Head of Sales & Marketing



Nurbaiti Binti Zulkifli
Finance Executive



Terry Neoh
Manager,
Marketing &
Communications



Jessica Ng
Sales Manager



**Ahmad Salihin
Bin Yusof**
Procurement
Executive



**Arvind
S. Santhaselvan**
Executive,
Marketing &
Communications



Grace Ng
Assistant Sales
Manager



**Mohammad Ifwan Bin
Annuar**
Admin
(Driver/Dispatch)



Carenne Loh
Senior Sales
Executive

Penang Art District

George Town Literary Festival



Kenny Ng
Project Manager



**Swarna
Rajagopal**
Festival Manager



Revin Samuel
Researcher



Yin Mei Yee
Project Executive



Desmond Ngooi
Festival Coordinator



Izzardzaffi Padzil
Project Executive

BUSINESS EVENTS
REJUVENATION
PLAN

2021 – 2023

Business Events Consortium

Mainland Penang Brochure Launch

NIMA Networking

Business Events Consortium

In March 2023, PCEB established a business events consortium with partners from mainland Penang to further elevate the business events industry in Seberang Prai Utara, Selatan and Tengah. Present were hoteliers, a convention centre, attractions, destination management companies (DMCs), and travel agents. An initiative by PCEB to collaborate with travel industry partners, the aim of the consortium is to work closely with partners based in the mainland to curate exciting programmes, elevate the profile of business facilities available in Seberang and promote its strategic location to manufacturing and industrial hubs – with the hopes of bringing in more international clients and economic growth to this part of northern Malaysia.



TRAVEL AGENTS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. CSYeap Travel & Tours | 5. Sunrise BSS Travel & Tours |
| 2. Sky Transport | 6. Maxim Holidays |
| 3. Top Leisure | 7. Safar Saeid Tour & Travel |
| 4. Hot Spot Travel | |

HOTELS

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Aroma Hotel Butterworth | 5. Grand Orient Hotel |
| 2. Bertam Resort Penang | 6. Iconic Hotel |
| 3. Citadines Prai Penang | 7. Ixora Hotel |
| 4. FUHotel Bukit Mertajam | 8. The Light Hotel |

ATTRACTIONS

1. Penang Bird Park
2. Kampung Agong
3. Laguna Waterpark

SHOPPING MALL

1. Sunway Carnival Mall

MEDICAL CENTRE

1. Sunway Medical Centre Penang

CONVENTION CENTRE

1. PICCA Convention Centre @ Butterworth Arena



Mainland Penang Brochure Launch

As a result of the business events consortium, PCEB launched the Mainland Penang Incentive Brochure at the PICCA Convention Centre, also known as Butterworth Arena. In early 2023, PCEB had conducted product and site inspections to identify suitable venues for incentive groups. The result was the production of this brochure, an essential tool for international corporate event planners seeking unique experiences in Mainland Penang. The launch was followed by a networking dinner and action stalls for partners. With this initiative, PCEB aims to attract high-value, high-impact events to Mainland Penang and bring balanced growth between the island and Seberang Perai.



NIMA Networking

In 2022, PCEB signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) to boost business ties between India and Penang. As a result, on 8 August 2023, NIMA agents were invited to Penang on a tour and embarked on a day filled with meaningful and memorable experiences. Arriving at Penang Port, guests were taken to Setia SPICE Convention Centre for an opening ceremony, networking session and brunch. NIMA agents were then taken on an informative SPICE tour to view the variety of amenities on offer, such as meeting rooms and the multipurpose arena. In the evening, partners were treated to a trishaw tour in George Town, immersing themselves in the best of Penang's cultural heritage.



NIMA Networking



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



Communication Engagements

Destination Marketing

Industry Engagements

Communication Engagements

PCEB sent out advisories through the newsletter system to keep partners and clients updated on Business Events Penang. The information shared included state-wide efforts by industry partners; as well as coverage of events such as Penang Roadshows to India, Penang International Travel Exchange 2023 and BE @ Penang 2023.

Media Engagements

This year, 19 press releases were distributed to international and local news titles, which garnered 629 pieces of news coverage. PCEB's Marketing & Communications (Marcom) team also held 12 press conferences to announce events such as Electronics Manufacturing Expo Asia (EMAX) and Penang Manufacturing Expo (PMA), the 45th International Advertising Association (IAA) World Congress, the 6th World Conference on Marine Biodiversity and the 2nd Penang International Hair & Beauty Festival 2023.



Communication Engagements

Media Appreciation Night

Our Media Appreciation Night was a splendid occasion dedicated to recognising and celebrating the invaluable contributions of the media. The evening served as a heartfelt tribute to the tireless efforts of media professionals who have played a role in shaping and advancing the industry. It was an inspiring night of acknowledgment, reflection, and gratitude towards the impactful work that the media consistently delivers.

Lucky draw prizes sponsored by partners included:

- 1 x Shopping Voucher worth RM1,000 at Sunshine Mall (by Auntie Gaik Lean)
- 1 x 2D 1N Stay (Courtyard by Marriott)
- 1 x Buffet Dinner Dining Voucher for 2 pax (Sarkies, E&O)
- 2 x Shopping Voucher worth RM200 (Batek-Lah)
- 1 x Peranakan Earring (Kenny Loh Couture)
- 1 x Peranakan Belt (Kenny Loh Couture)
- 7 x Electrical appliances (PCEB)



Destination Marketing

Familiarisation Trip (Penang International Travel Exchange)

From 6 – 8 November 2023, PCEB's Marcom team arranged for a two and a half day media familiarisation trip for our media attendees as part of the Penang International Travel Exchange 2023. The trip explored both the island and mainland, providing new exposure and fresh outlook. Attractions visited were Penang Hill, Tropical Spice Garden, Kampung Agong, and various convention centres. Attendees enjoyed local delicacies which added a flavourful touch to their immersive experience.



Destination Marketing

Familiarisation Trip (BE @ Penang)

The Marcom team arranged a full day media familiarisation trip for our media attendees during the 8th edition of BE @ Penang 2023 on 9 December 2023 from 8am to 5pm. Highlights included a picturesque trishaw ride around George Town, a visit to Entopia by Penang Butterfly Farm, and to Craft Batik that showcases the making of Batik. This immersive journey provided media attendees with a firsthand experience of the vibrant cultural and natural offerings in the region.



Destination Marketing

Presenting Penang

Penang International Conference on Hospitality 2023

From 13 – 14 September 2023, PARKROYAL Penang Resort hosted the 3rd Penang International Conference on Hospitality (PITCH) 2023 for hospitality and tourism industry leaders. The theme for 2023 was “Recovery & Resilience: Strengthening the Hospitality and Tourism through Sustainable Development Goals.” PCEB’s CEO Ashwin Gunasekeran was invited as a distinguished keynote speaker, and in his speech, he shared innovative ideas, offered invaluable insights and perspectives, and shed light on how partners can collectively pave the way for a more sustainable future for Malaysia’s tourism and event industry.



International Business CEO Meeting, Chengdu, China

On 15 September 2023, PCEB’s CEO Ashwin Gunasekeran was invited as a speaker to the International Business Events Industry CEO Meeting & Global Conference Destination Competitiveness Index Launch 2023 in Chengdu, China. The purpose of the event was to bring experts together from China and worldwide, to share trends in the conference and exhibition industry. Mr Gunasekeran shared compelling insights and highlighted the positive impact that convention bureaus can have on the meetings and events industry, underscoring their role in driving economic growth and fostering industry collaboration.



Industry Engagements

Industry Partners Networking (Annual Review Launch)

PCEB's 2022 Annual Review Launch was held at The George Hotel on 10 April 2023. The event was graced by YAB Chow Kon Yeow and YB Yeoh Soon Hin with an opening speech by PCEB's CEO Ashwin Gunasekeran. With the purpose of keeping industry partners informed of 2022's business events outcomes, the launch was followed by a delicious buka puasa dinner with partners. Key insights from the 2022 review revealed that Penang achieved an EEI of RM375 million and hosted a total of 281 events.



Industry Engagements

Industry Partners Networking (Hin Bus Depot)

PCEB hosts regular networking events, and on a Friday night on 14 July 2023, industry partners from various organisations were invited to “Collaborate & Elevate” Penang’s business events industry together. Held at Hin Bus Depot at the semi-alfresco deck area, partners mingled amidst food, games, entertainment and speeches to make new connections while catching up with old ones. The event saw partners sharing insights, exchanging information, recounting experiences and helping one another propel Penang’s business events industry forward for the coming years.



Industry Engagements

Industry Partners Networking (Cheah Kongsi)

On 24 October 2023, PCEB organised another successful networking night, this time to welcome the incoming Penang State Exco for Tourism & Creative Economy, YB Wong Hon Wai. Held on the beautiful grounds of the historic Cheah Kongsi, the Industry Networking Night aimed to connect YB Wong with key stakeholders within the industry. The prestigious event was adorned with garden lights, cocktail stands, see-through marquees, a DJ set, and delicious Penang hawker fare – enabling industry partners to network and connect in a conducive setting.



SALES ACTIVITIES

Penang Roadshow to India

The Meetings Show London

IMEX Frankfurt

IBTM World Barcelona

62nd ICCA Congress 2023

Events Supported

Penang Roadshow To India

PCEB has continuously been part of the Roadshow to India, and 2023 was the 6th Penang Roadshow to India 2023 from 13 to 20 January 2023, focusing on four cities in India. The roadshow featured a B2B session, press conference and a networking dinner exclusively for Malaysian exhibitors, the Indian media and qualified Indian buyers from a prominent organisation focusing on destination management and planners for meetings, corporate incentives and weddings.

The campaign for 2023 was called “Chalo Penang”, meaning “Let’s Go Penang” in Hindi and Urdu. The objective of the roadshow was to reactivate Penang as a preferred destination for business events, weddings, filming and leisure. India remains a key market for Penang, and in 2023, the city of Hyderabad was added to the roadshow to tap into a new market. It consisted of a networking dinner, lucky draw and a good turnout of buyers who were very enthusiastic about Penang.

Apart from that, the roadshow leveraged connections with airlines, film producers and associations related to India travel agents.

Mumbai 13 FEB	New Delhi 15 FEB
Chennai 17 FEB	Hyderabad 20 FEB



Penang Roadshow To India



15
Exhibitors



563
Visitors



115
Media



1,019
Obtained
Database



The Meetings Show London

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) participated for the 6th year consecutively at The Meetings Show (TMS), London from 28 – 29 June 2023. TMS is the United Kingdom's leading exhibition for event, meeting, and conference professionals.

In 2023, Penang highlighted a bigger, brighter, and broader Penang Pavilion with a total 8 other partners who participated as co-exhibitors from the Penang industry, attending TMS together. Penang showcased a strong participation of 9 exhibitors namely:

1. Amari SPICE Penang
2. Berjaya Hotels & Resorts
3. Destination Asia Events
4. Malaysia Airlines
5. Setia SPICE Convention Centre
6. Shangri-La Rasa Sayang
7. The George, George Town Penang
8. Tourism Malaysia
9. Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau



The Meetings Show London

Over two days, more than 1,272 selected buyers took part in a series of pre-scheduled appointments with exhibitors from all over the world. In total, there were more than 600 suppliers from every sector of the worldwide meetings industry gathering in London.



13,648

Pavilion Visitors



1,272

Buyers



5,704

Unique Attendees

Highlights included captivating Teh Tarik and Roti Canai performances in the pavilion, which not only entertained the participants but also showcased the rich culinary delights of Penang.

Additionally, there was also a virtual reality corner titled “Penang - A Visual Trip!” The VR Experience Penang360 offered participants an immersive journey through Penang’s notable attractions, providing a glimpse of the city’s mesmerising beauty and vibrant culture. This captivating encounter fully immersed participants in the city’s distinctive allure in a way that was both immersive and unforgettable.

Besides that, PCEB organised an exclusive networking event at the Penang Pavilion on the first day to further enhance networking opportunities. This networking event served as an opportunity to soft launch the campaign and gave insights on what Penang has to offer as a business events destination. It also stood as a good platform to network and exchange business opportunities with potential clients.



IMEX Frankfurt

IMEX Frankfurt is where the global meetings, events and incentive travel industry comes together annually for the largest trade show of its kind in Europe.

IMEX also partnered with ExpoPlatform for its 2023 show and launched an all-new online platform with enhanced capabilities to drive buyer-exhibitor connections. A wide range of custom tools and features were developed to enhance the platform's value and boost business growth.

The 21st edition of IMEX Frankfurt took place on 23 – 25 May 2023 at Messe Frankfurt in Germany, attracting more than 11,764 participants from 94 countries. Among them were 3,883 hosted and visitor buyers from associations, corporates, agencies and independent planners. In addition, a total number of 2,900 exhibiting companies representing 150 countries showcased their offerings at the event.

There were 14 co-exhibitors participating under Malaysian Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), which includes the convention bureau, convention centres, travel agencies, and hotels.



IBTM World Barcelona

PCEB has had a long-standing presence in IBTM's events, and this year's IBTM Barcelona was held from 28 – 30 November 2023. PCEB obtained 19 leads from scheduled appointments and walk-in buyers. The focus was on buyers with interest in Asian countries like Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, and to shift their interest to Penang as a preferred destination. Apart from that, we found that most buyers at IBTM Barcelona were searching for new destinations for their business events – a positive sign for Penang.



ICCA Congress

This year, around 1,200 delegates met at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand from 12 – 15 November 2023 for the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Congress to network and exchange information.

Back in 2020, PCEB won a bid to host the 6th World Conference on Marine Biodiversity (WCMB), which finally took place from 2 – 5 July 2023 in Jen Hotel, Penang. This was the first time WCMB was held in an ASEAN country, and the winning bid was a great success story in Penang's record.

In Bangkok this year, we participated in the Global Business Exchange program to share our knowledge about this bidding process.



This year's congress focused on sustainable development and equipping the next generation to pursue a career in the business travel industry. Over the years, PCEB has benefited greatly from attending the Congress; such as in the areas of knowledge sharing, networking opportunities to increase Penang's profile to be recognised as an elite business destination, and to educate ourselves in the latest Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and ESG reporting tools to help us search for potential leads more efficiently.

TOP REASONS TO ATTEND ICCA CONGRESS

- Networking Opportunities
- Nurture Young Talents
- Latest Industry Findings
- Business Exchange Sessions
- Educational Programmes

Events Supported

Throughout 2023, PCEB worked tirelessly to support event organisers and planners, be they national or international events. Business events are crucial to Penang and for the state to shine on the international platform.

Types of support provided by PCEB were:



In-Kind



Informative



Familiarisation Trips



Subvention (grants)

Event Type	Events	Delegates	Estimated Economic Impact (RM)
Association	39	20,205	116,687,127.00
Corporate	21	52,803	478,924,093.00
Incentive	6	835	5,621,629.00
Total	66	73,843	601,232,849.00

In 2023, PCEB successfully hosted 66 events with an Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) of RM 601,232,849. Based on the table above, PCEB itself contributed up to 10.95% of the total number of events hosted in Penang.

On the brighter side, in dollar terms, PCEB contributed up to 53.07% of EEI from the total EEI of 2023. This was due to a higher and more frequent number of meetings with smaller size delegations, resulting in a higher EEI.

Regardless of the number of events, PCEB was supported by larger size events that contributed more than 50% of the total EEI, resulting in all round higher economic impact for Penang.



PCEB ANCHOR PROJECTS

**PENANG INTERNATIONAL
TRAVEL EXCHANGE (PITE)**

BE @ PENANG

Penang International Travel Exchange (PITE)

The Penang International Travel Exchange (PITE) 2023, themed “An Adventurous Expedition” was held successfully at Setia SPICE Convention Centre Penang, as it embarked on its sixth edition, taking place from 7 – 9 November 2023.

PITE 2023's objective was to elevate Penang's status as the premier Business Events and Travel Destination in the Asia Pacific region. This year, PITE partnered with 13 official hotels enabling hosted buyers to explore various facets of Penang.

The travel trade show geared up to be an unforgettable experience, gathering over 82 hosted buyers from across the globe, including Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Germany, Latvia, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Together with them, 42 top-notch exhibitors from Malaysia showcased their latest products and offerings, while fostering fruitful collaborations and partnerships.



Penang International Travel Exchange (PITE)



The remarkable 3-day travel trade show was packed with business matchmaking and a brand-new expedition of familiarisation trips, offering an exciting twist on exploring the Penang Island and Mainland. The first day included trishaw excursions to George Town, night walks, food trails, shopping trails, and visits to Pinang Peranakan Mansion, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion and Khoo Kongsi.

The second day took international buyers to Mainland Penang, allowing them to immerse in our multicultural heritage. The group visited the Minor Basilica of St. Anne Church, participated in a Malaysian traditional game of team building in Kampung Agong, and ended with a networking night at Bertam Resort & Water Park Penang amidst a sumptuous Malaysian buffet.

Countries Pax

Australia	1	Singapore	6
Brunei	1	South Korea	1
China	6	Sri Lanka	2
Germany	2	Taiwan	3
Hong Kong	3	Thailand	8
India	23	United Kingdom	3
Indonesia	9	United Arab Emirates	2
Latvia	1	United States	1
Malaysia	4	Vietnam	2
Philippines	5		



BE @ PENANG

BE Reinvents



The 8th edition of BE @ Penang was held at Setia SPICE Convention Centre from 7–8 December 2023. The theme for this edition was “BE Reinvents”. The theme is focusing on how the industry is changing and about propelling the industry into the future and embarking on a journey of transformation.

PCEB is committed to taking the business events industry to new heights and it is crucial to embrace fundamental transformation and recognise that business events are evolving.

Apart from that, the conference provided the industry with the insights and tools needed to thrive in a changing landscape. The conference also discussed sustainability and the need to have inclusion for all. The keynote speakers were

delivered by Julius Solaris, Event Industry Speaker and Entrepreneur.

Strengthening the speaker line were Makoto Batori from PACIFICO Yokohama, Dato’ Sri Dr. Haji Irmohizam Ibrahim from WTCKL, Lilian Chee from BSI Malaysia, K. Aveena Devi as Artist and Motivational Speaker, Ernest Teoh an undergraduate Blind Student and Avid Traveller, Dee Dee Quah from Conference Partners, Datin Lorela Chia from MASSCI and many more.

The conference was supported by 8 partners including Malaysia Airlines Group, Amari SPICE Hotel, Tian Siang, TIN Media, ESG Associates, SAXON and SPICE.

BE @ PENANG

BE Reinvents



116

Delegates



9

Partners



24

Speakers



GEORGE TOWN LITERARY FESTIVAL

OBJECTIVES

- Celebrate Penang and Malaysia as a cosmopolitan centre for the flourishing of literature and ideas
- Encourage a meaningful exchange of ideas between local and international writers and thinkers
- Create a platform for vibrant discussion encompassing a plurality of voices and perspectives
- Facilitate intellectual discourse on pertinent local, regional and global topics
- Expose Malaysians to world literature and promote reading, writing, translation, and publishing
- Aid the local publishing industry by creating a strong reading culture
- Catalyse multi-disciplinary skill and knowledge growth through lectures, discussions, and workshops

George Town Literary Festival

- Festival Exchange
- Exhibition

Muara 2023

GTLF 2023 at a Glance

Other Happenings

- Muara Writing Prize 2023
- Festival-supported initiatives

The 13th George Town Literary Festival



The 13th edition of the George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) took place within the vicinity of George Town's heritage core zone from 23 – 26 November 2023. While the main festival took place within those 4 days, activities and exhibitions in conjunction with the festival were rolled out a week before the festival.

Our theme for 2023 was Terra Incognita, borrowed from Latin and is a term often used in cartography, meaning unknown or unexplored territory. As such the festival explored the realm of the literary as one of voyages and excursions. Through literature we traversed uncharted territories, exploring new scapes and recasting our gaze towards unknown shores. Anchored in the limitless expanse of imagination, the theme invited us to venture afield and be comfortable with the unfamiliar and the in-between.

This edition was directed by Ms Pauline Fan and curated by Ms Adriana Nordin Manan, both reputable figures in the Malaysian literary community. The curatorial team includes two other curators for the Tamil and Chinese panels – M.Navin, a notable Malaysian Tamil writer and Dr Florence Kuek of Universiti Malaya, specialising in Chinese literature and literary criticism.

The festival saw attendees from Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Terengganu, and Kedah among others. As for international attendees, the festival attracted interest from as far as Venezuela, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and others.

“GTLF 2023 was the best writers festival I’ve attended in Southeast Asia, and among the best of many I’ve been to in the world.”

– Alvin Pang,
Poet (Singapore)

“I don’t think I’ve ever had such an experience at a literary festival where everyone was so engaged.”

– Sawad Hussain,
Writer & Translator (United Kingdom)

“It was my first time participating in GTLF, and it certainly left a lasting impression! In addition to attending a couple of Tamil events, I also joined a few English events. I found all of them to be well-planned and organised.”

– Sivanantham Neelakandan,
Writer (Singapore)

“The festival was just wonderful! Really one of the highlights of the year.”

– Janet Steele,
Academic & Writer (United States)

Festival Exchange

As part of the festival programme, the festival has forged creative partnerships with two international organisations. These partnerships are to provide a platform for local Malaysian writers as well as to widen the reach of the festival in general. These collaborations were initiated as early as February 2023.

OzAsia Festival – In Other Words (Literary Festival)

In Other Words is the OzAsia Festival's forum for conversations about Australia's engagement with Asia. Three Malaysians including one Penang writer represented the festival in Adelaide from 3 – 5 November. Likewise, two other Australian writers were at GTLF2023. This exchange is made possible with the assistance of Creative Australia, formerly known as the Australia Council for the Arts.

This exchange was also to commemorate the 50th anniversary of George Town-Adelaide Sister City Relations in 2023. This collaboration was further endorsed by the Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, who is the patron of the OzAsia Festival.

The London Poetry Society

The London Poetry Society along with GTLF commissioned two UK and two Malaysian poets to write collaboratively in an exchange of ideas and writing practices. The work they created was showcased across The Poetry Society's platforms, including in an online event, as well as an in-person session during GTLF in Malaysia.

This exchange was made possible by the support and endorsement of the British Council Malaysia.



Exhibition

When Pen Emotes

When Pen Emotes is a vision by the festival to revive the lost art of letter writing. Letter writing is an art that transcends language, allowing us to express our thoughts and feelings without speaking them aloud. A display of letters from an open call took place between March to September 2023, for which the festival had received over 80 letters in various languages and forms.

Exhibition Days: 20 – 26 November 2023

Venue: Ground Floor, Whiteaways Arcade



Clarice Lispector – The Hour of the Star of Brazilian Literature

Clarice Lispector was a sensation in Brazil's literary circles, known for her bold experimental prose and her striking beauty. Celebrating the life and work of one of the most iconic modernist writers of the 20th century, this exhibition was made possible through the collaboration and support of the Embassy of Brazil in Malaysia, Instituto Moreira Salles, and Instituto Guimarães Rosa.

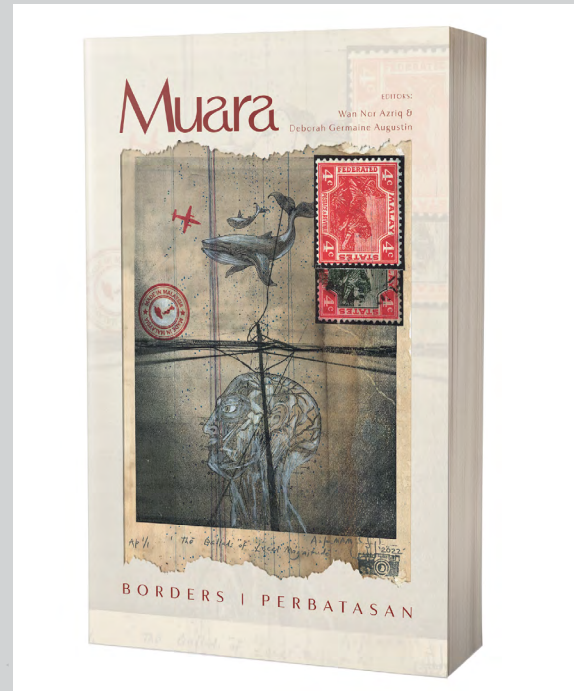
Exhibition Days: 20 November – 1 December 2023

Venue: ChinaHouse, Art Gallery

Muara 2023

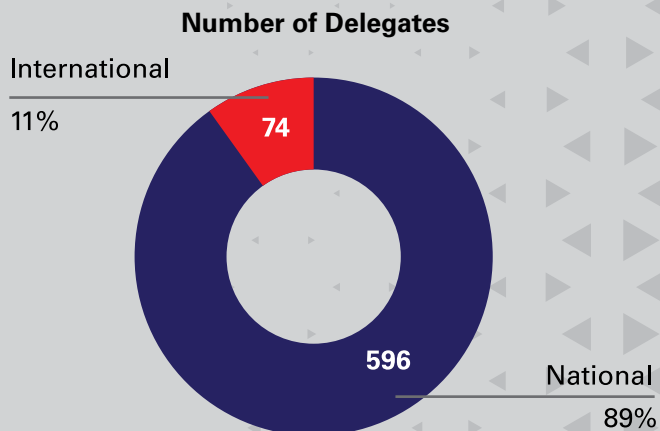
Muara, the Malay word for estuary, is a passage of fluidity and connection, where the river meets the open sea. Muara evokes a place where we find ourselves between the memory of the land and the lure of the unknown deep. In these pages, writers engage in ideas and imaginings, interpreting the shifting shoreline of our realities. The ink we leave upon this topography are traces of ourselves, inscribing this moment in the ebb and flow of existence.

Muara started off to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of GTLF, and Penang as a vibrant port and cosmopolitan city in the Southeast Asian region. Muara is now an annual GTLF publication featuring essays, short stories, poetry, book reviews, and translations, gathering established and emerging writers from Malaysia, the region, and the world. The 3rd edition of the anthology was edited by Wan Nor Azriq and Deborah Augustin with a new publishing partner, Inisiatif Buku Darul Ehsan (IBDE).



GTLF 2023 at a Glance

The figure below shows a portion of delegates based on nationality that travelled to Penang during GTLF. 11% of the participants (out of a total 670 delegates) were from international countries, majority from Thailand and Singapore, who came to participate at the festival this year. The total Estimated Economic Impact based on GTLF 2023 recorded is RM8,733,483, bringing a significant impact to Penang’s economic growth.



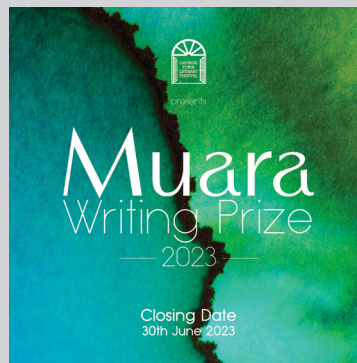
Quick Facts



Other Happenings

Muara Writing Prize 2023

Muara Writing Prize is a writing contest organised by GTLF to nurture new and emerging writers in Malaysia. The prize seeks to recognise excellence in writers who demonstrate exceptional talent and promise in the field of literature. The prize invites unpublished works of fiction, and non-fiction, in English and Bahasa Melayu, written by Malaysian citizens. The winners received cash prizes and were published in Muara 2023.



Final winners were chosen by the Muara 2023 editorial team and GTLF team. The prize was judged by industry experts passionate about nurturing talent and discovering stories that stay with you beyond the pages.

Festival-supported initiatives

Penang Writers Workshop 2023

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Malaysian National Poetry Slam 2023

The Malaysian National Poetry Slam (MNPS) is a national competitive platform which provides exposure and opportunities for youths between the ages of 7 to 25 to perform spoken word poetry in front of an audience and a panel of judges.

The event features five regional workshops in various states around Malaysia with its own Mini Poetry Slam. The Mini Poetry Slam serves as the selection platform where three to five workshop participants under Primary, Secondary and Varsity Categories were selected by the trainers to represent the state/region and compete at the national slam for free. GTLF was a partner for the Penang Mini Poetry Slam.



PENANG ART DISTRICT

WHAT WE DO



PLATFORM

- Destination
- Showcase
- Marketplace
- Lifestyle & Culture
- Placemaking



NETWORK

- Globally & regionally
- Skills & knowledge exchange
- Connecting existing spaces
- Connecting with the public



RESOURCE CENTRE

- Database
- Archive
- Knowledge Hub
- Education
- Training

Spotlight by Penang Art District 2023

Aqim Adil | Winner of Spotlight 2022

Kecik Kecik Group Show 2023 | Affordable Art Fair

Perk Reality Installation | AR Interactive Experience

Tree of Life Exhibition | International Exchange

Penang World Dance Day 2023

Community Art Workshop Series

Online Resources

Development and Cooperative Exchange

Spotlight by Penang Art District

The Spotlight Art Competition was established to provide a platform for young, aspiring, and emerging artists to express themselves and foster artistic growth. Over the past five years, the competition has discovered and nurtured local artistic talents, and played a pivotal role in inspiring creativity and cultivating young artists in the region. This year marked a significant expansion as we received a diverse array of over 120 entries from every corner of Malaysia.



The core objectives of the Spotlight Art Competition remain consistent, focusing on the following key aspects:

- **Mentorship Opportunity:** The competition offers young artists a mentorship program with an established art professional. This includes guidance, feedback, and a nurturing environment for their artistic growth.
- **Solo Exhibition:** The ultimate goal for winners is to showcase their body of works in a solo exhibition. This provides them with a platform to share their artistic journey and creations with a wider audience, furthering their development as artists.
- **Continued Success and Growth:** The positive response received over the past five years have encouraged the organisers to continue hosting Spotlight for its sixth year. By maintaining and enhancing the program, it can continue to inspire creativity and provide a pathway for young artistic talents to flourish.
- **Announcement of Sponsors:** In 2023, UOB Malaysia was the main sponsor and ChinaHouse was the venue sponsor. Support from our esteemed sponsors undoubtedly contributed to the success and impact of the competition.
- **Submission and Participation:** This year's competition received submissions from 120 artists representing states across Malaysia, showcasing the widespread reach and engagement of Spotlight. The top 10 artists were recognised and rewarded for their outstanding pieces.
- **Worth of Awards Given:** The competition continues its commitment to recognising and supporting emerging artists, with awards worth over RM30,000. This substantial investment reflects the dedication to nurturing and promoting artistic talent in the region.

The Spotlight Art Competition remains a beacon for aspiring artists, providing them with opportunities for mentorship, exposure, and recognition. The continued success and growth of the competition, coupled with the support of esteemed sponsors, emphasise its crucial role in shaping the artistic landscape. PAD is eager to witness the transformative journey of emerging artists and the lasting impact of their creative expressions on the art community.

Aqim Adil | Winner of Spotlight 2022

PASU, a solo exhibition by Aqim Adil, stands as the result of the artist winning the open call in 2022 through the Spotlight program. The exhibition took place from 3 – 25 January 2023, marking the fifth solo exhibition produced by Spotlight.

Exhibition Details: The venue chosen for PASU was Blank Canvas Gallery, one of the latest established art galleries in Penang. This gallery, founded to provide a platform for emerging artists, served as an ideal setting for Aqim Adil's showcase.

Mentorship and Artist Background: Aqim Adil had the privilege of being mentored by Syahbandi Samat, a distinguished fine art artist based in Kuala Lumpur. Syahbandi Samat, who has exhibited across Asia and is represented by Artemis Art Gallery, brought his expertise to guide and nurture Aqim Adil throughout the exhibition preparation.

Services Provided to the Winner: Services provided to the winner has remained consistent with previous years', ensuring a high standard of support for emerging artists:

- Professional High-Quality Photography**
 The exhibition received professional photography services to capture the essence of Aqim Adil's artworks, ensuring a visually compelling representation.
- Videography Introducing the Artist & Mentor Testimonials**
 Videography services were employed to create an engaging introduction to Aqim Adil as an artist. Additionally, mentor testimonials from Syahbandi Samat provided insights into the collaborative and transformative nature of the mentorship.
- Production & Printing of Art Catalogue**
 A professionally produced art catalogue was developed, showcasing Aqim Adil's artworks with precision and detail. This catalogue serves as a lasting documentation of the exhibition.
- Online Exhibition of Artist Works**
 A virtual platform was created to exhibit Aqim Adil's works online, ensuring accessibility to a wider audience beyond the physical gallery space.

PASU not only highlights the talent of the artist but also exemplifies the ongoing success of the Spotlight program in providing valuable opportunities for emerging artists. The collaboration between Aqim Adil and Syahbandi Samat, coupled with the comprehensive support services provided, contributes to the continuous growth and impact of the Spotlight initiative in the art community. As the program moves forward, it remains dedicated to fostering artistic expression and providing a platform for emerging talents to shine.



Kecik Kecik Group Show 2023 | Affordable Art Fair

Penang's rendition of the Affordable Art Fair, the Kecik-Kecik Group Show, has returned for its 3rd edition. Initiated by PAD, it aims to broaden the reach of Malaysian contemporary art by introducing an array of affordable pieces. The exhibition showcases artworks by a diverse group of selected established and emerging artists, fostering a culture of collecting Malaysian art.

- In a significant development, PAD collaborated with Arteesan.io for the 3rd edition. Each participating artwork comes with a free NFT (Non-Fungible Token) serving as a Certificate of Authenticity. This innovative approach enhances provenance and ownership verification, bringing a contemporary twist to art acquisition.

The call for artists was launched on 1 December 2022 and closed on 10 February 2023. The physical exhibition was held at Hin Bus Depot from 3 – 12 March 2023.

Outcome Highlights:

- **Platform for Contemporary Artists:** The primary objective of Kecik-Kecik is to create a platform for contemporary artists to reach a wider audience with smaller, more affordable artworks. This strategy aims to make art accessible to first-time buyers.
- **Public Feedback and Data Collection:** The exhibition seeks to collect responses and data from the general public, gaining insights into their feedback towards the showcased artworks. This information is valuable for understanding audience preferences and trends.
- **Data Compilation on Purchasing Power:** The exhibition strategically divides artworks into three target pricing categories:
 - RM 1 – RM 500 (low)
 - RM 500 – RM 1,000 (mid)
 - RM 1,000 – RM 2,000 (high)
 This approach allows PAD to compile data on the purchasing power of the audience across different price ranges.
- **Culture Instillation:** The Kecik-Kecik Group Show aims to instil a culture for the general public to engage in discussions about art, delve into artists' personal stories, and interpret artworks. This initiative contributes to a richer and more interactive art community.

Total submissions received:



291

Total artworks selected for showcase:



154

Total artworks sold:



40

Total sales:



RM22,307

The Kecik-Kecik Group Show's 3rd edition successfully achieved its goals of making contemporary art more accessible, collecting valuable public feedback, and compiling data on purchasing trends. The collaboration with Arteesan.io brings a modern touch to the exhibition, enhancing the overall experience for both artists and buyers. The outcomes reflect a positive impact on the art community, setting the stage for future editions to further cultivate the appreciation and accessibility of Malaysian contemporary art.



Perk Reality Installation | AR interactive experience

ARmenian Park, an Augmented Reality (AR) interactive outdoor installation, has successfully transformed public spaces and streets into dynamic art and cultural spaces. Utilising Perk Reality, an application platform for AR art, users can engage with artworks through their mobile devices. The brainchild of artist Aboud Fares, this innovative app has facilitated two successful art showcases at Hin Bus Depot, breaking down geographical barriers and enabling collaborations with artists globally.



- Installation Highlights:** Perk Reality, the AR app designed by Aboud Fares, has been instrumental in bringing artworks to life without the need for physical presence. This technological marvel has provided a platform to feature artists from Malaysia and around the world, extending the reach of Armenian Park beyond physical constraints. The app's success in two showcases at Hin Bus Depot highlights its potential in fostering international collaborations and broadening community engagement.
- Outcome Statistics:** The impact of ARmenian Park and Perk Reality is evident below:
 - Total AR scans: **12,709**
 - Total downloads on Android: **6,211**
 - Total downloads on iOS: **6,498**
 These numbers signify a significant engagement with the public, emphasising the widespread acceptance and appreciation for this AR-based art initiative.
- Project Objectives:** To transform public spaces and streets into art and cultural hubs using AR technology, and to foster public engagement and interaction by showcasing artistic works and storytelling. The app's capacity to rotate artistic content periodically provides a versatile platform for various artists, bridging the gap between traditional art and technology.
- International Collaboration and Community Engagement:** One of the project's major achievements is the creation of opportunities for international collaboration. By featuring artists from around the world, ARmenian Park has become a global platform, connecting artists and communities across borders. This not only enriches the local art scene but also establishes a meaningful dialogue between traditional artists and cutting-edge AR technology.

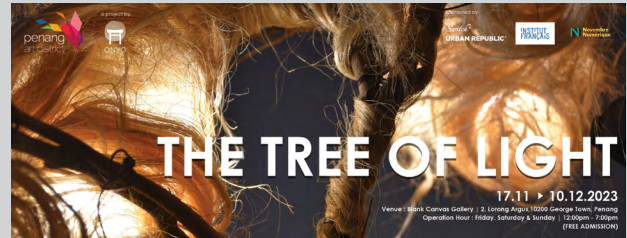
Armenian Park's AR installation, powered by Perk Reality, has successfully transcended physical limitations, creating a dynamic space for art in public areas. The impressive outcome statistics demonstrate the project's resonance with the public. This initiative not only fosters international collaborations but also serves as a bridge between traditional artistic expressions and the possibilities offered by AR technology. As ARmenian Park continues to evolve, it sets a remarkable precedent for the fusion of art, technology, and community engagement.

The Tree of Light Exhibition | International Exchange

Penang Art District, in collaboration with the French artistic team ONYO, embarked on an innovative exchange program sponsored by the Institut Français as part of the global Novembre Numérique initiative and Switch/Urban Republic. With endorsements from PETACE, the Embassy of France in Malaysia, and Alliance Française de Penang, the program aimed to foster cultural and creative connections between Penang and France.

Outcome:

- Exhibition Highlights:** The centrepiece of this collaboration was “The Tree of Light,” a creation by ONYO founders and renowned French artists, Charlotte-Amélie Veaux and Yann Garreau. This award-winning sensory experience offered a unique blend of sound, narrative, and ecological fable, inviting participants to rediscover enchantment beyond the screen-dominated reality.
- Student Involvement:** As a pivotal component of the exchange program, 25 students from the School of Arts at USM actively participated in building the sculpture for “The Tree of Light.” Guided and consulted by ONYO, this collaborative effort added a dynamic and educational dimension to the project, showcasing the potential for cross-cultural artistic collaboration.
- Visitor Statistics:** The exhibition attracted a total of 421 visitors, with a maximum of 10 participants per session. Of these, 223 were local visitors, emphasising the engagement and interest of the Penang community. Additionally, 198 international visitors contributed to the diverse audience, signifying the global appeal and impact of the exhibition.
- Project Significance:** This project stands as a milestone in cultural exchange between Penang and France, a significant step towards building a stronger international alliance in the field of art. By bringing together local talents and renowned French artists, the collaboration showcased the diversity of artistic expressions and promoted meaningful connections between the two regions.



The successful execution of “The Tree of Light” exemplifies the power of artistic exchange in cultivating cultural connections. With a diverse audience and active student involvement, this project brought a unique sensory experience to Penang and contributed to the broader goal of building lasting international alliances in the realm of art. The success of this collaboration sets the stage for future endeavours in bridging artistic expressions across borders.

Penang World Dance Day 2023

Penang Dance Day, a celebration in conjunction with International Dance Day, showcased the collaborative efforts of PAD with Penang Performing Arts Link (PEARL) and venue partner Gurney Plaza.

Outcome:

- **Participation and Diversity:** This year's celebration saw active participation from 23 groups representing local dance schools, institutions, and associations. The diverse range of participants added depth and variety to the event, reflecting the richness of Penang's dance heritage.
- **Workshops and Community Engagement:** Over 200 participants, spanning various age groups and backgrounds, actively engaged in 21 dance workshops. These sessions became a melting pot of creativity and cultural exchange, blending traditional Penang dances with modern choreography. The workshops not only facilitated learning but also provided a platform for the community to share the joy of dance.
- **Performances and Audience Impact:** The stage lit up with 22 mesmerising performances, from lively street performances to intimate indoor showcases, captivating close to 5,000 members of the audience throughout the day.
- **Global Awareness and Exposure:** Beyond the local impact, Penang Dance Day played a vital role in creating awareness for International Dance Day, showcasing the multi-disciplinary dance forms in Penang and also highlighting the region's contribution to the global dance community.

Penang Dance Day stands as a testament to the power of unity through movement. It transcended cultural boundaries, fostering a sense of community and pride in the rich dance traditions that define Penang. The event, with its collaborative spirit, not only provided entertainment but also served as a platform for cultural exchange and appreciation, leaving everyone with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the vibrant spirit of Penang's dance culture.



Community Art Workshop Series

A series of community art workshops, conducted by local artists and troupes, aimed to create a vibrant space for artistic engagement within the community. The content for these workshops was carefully curated based on public participation in events and suggestions from the community. With a focus on beginners, these workshops aimed to cultivate a long-term relationship between the public and the arts.

Workshop Structure: Local artists and troupes led the workshops, ensuring a diverse range of artistic approaches. The beginner-level workshops were designed to be inclusive, welcoming first-time participants into the world of art. This approach not only provided valuable experience for the participants but also created opportunities for local artists to actively engage with the surrounding community.

Outcome Highlights:

- **Networking and Collaboration Opportunities:** The workshops paved the way for networking and collaboration opportunities with establishments and private companies. This development opens avenues for more diverse and engaging art workshop content in the future, creating a sustainable model for artistic enrichment within the community.
- **Engagement and Experience:** Participants not only engaged with various art forms but also experienced new approaches to artistic expression. This exposure broadened their understanding and appreciation of different art forms, fostering a sense of creativity within the community.
- **Interest and Future Engagements:** The workshops sparked interest across different generations, with participants expressing a desire for future engagements. Groups and societies, such as the Rose Society, approached PAD for continuous art activities for the elderly, indicating the program's positive impact and the potential for ongoing collaborations.
- **Support for Creative Organisations and Individuals:** A total of 12 creative organisations and 19 individuals directly benefited from the program. This support not only contributed to the growth of the local artistic community but also created a collaborative environment where artists could thrive.

The community art workshops conducted by local artists and troupes have proven to be a resounding success. By fostering creativity, collaboration, and engagement, the program has created a positive impact on the community. The outcomes, including networking opportunities, diverse engagement, and support for creative entities, reflect the effectiveness of the workshops in enriching the arts experience within the local community. Moving forward, the program sets the stage for continued growth, collaboration, and artistic expression within the community.



Online Resources

In addition to providing digital infrastructure and facilitating online programs for the arts community, PAD has been actively contributing to the knowledge-sharing landscape. By regularly publishing articles online, PAD aims to support artists in adapting to the “new normal.” Notably, a recent initiative involves publishing articles in Chinese, fostering a more engaging experience for the Chinese-speaking community.



2023: A Year in Review for Malaysian Art

A jaunt down memory lane before we close the chapter on 2023, making some quick stops at some art highlights...



Year-end Tax Tips for Freelancers and Creatives

There's plenty you can do now to take full advantage of tax reliefs before the year ends. By Sofea Lee...



Step into Tranquility and Stillness with OH!Tenang

This December, find inner peace with OtherHalf Studio's immersive sight and sound installation in Gurney Plaza. By Lim Wan Phing...



Online Publications and Support: PAD's commitment to the arts community goes beyond infrastructure and programs. The platform actively shares tips and knowledge through online articles, serving as a valuable resource for artists navigating the challenges presented by the current circumstances. The publication of articles in Chinese further extends this support to a broader audience.

Performance Metrics:

 **105,000**

Page Views at penangartdistrict.com

A significant engagement with online content, showcasing the relevance and appeal of PAD's articles within the arts community.

 **18,462**

New users engaged

An influx of new users suggests a growing reach of PAD's online publications and an increasing interest and participation in its digital offerings.

Chinese Language Initiatives: The decision to publish articles in Chinese is a strategic move to create a more inclusive and engaging experience for the Chinese-speaking community. By diversifying content language, PAD aims to enhance accessibility and cater to a wider audience, fostering a sense of community among artists across linguistic backgrounds.

PAD's commitment to supporting the arts community extends beyond physical infrastructure and online programs. The regular publication of articles, especially in Chinese, reflects a dedication to providing valuable resources and fostering a sense of inclusivity.

The impressive page views and new user engagement numbers underscore the positive impact of these initiatives, affirming PAD's role as a crucial hub for knowledge-sharing and community support in the arts. As PAD continues to evolve, the emphasis on digital engagement and inclusivity is poised to further enrich the artistic landscape in Penang and beyond.

Development and Cooperative Exchange

Our Programme Partners | 2022-23

Corporate / commercial partners (international)



Corporate / commercial partners (local)



Art organisation partners



Education partners



Government partners



Penang Art District's comprehensive strategy encompasses growth, cooperative exchange, and academic collaboration. This strategic approach underscores our commitment to supporting artistic development, establishing cross-cultural ties, and advancing innovation within the realm of art. It also reflects our dedication to fostering international collaborations that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries while promoting artistic excellence.

Our comprehensive strategy consists of four key components, each aimed at achieving specific objectives:

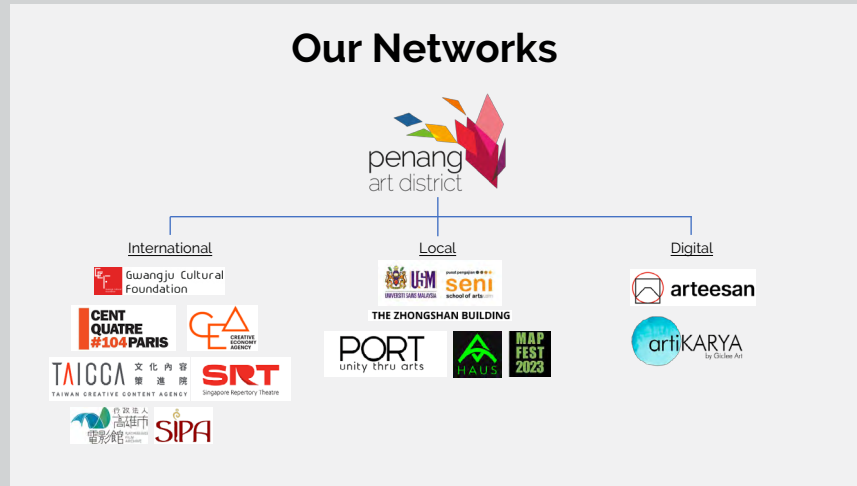
- **Establish Global Partnerships and Networks:** Over the reporting period, we have actively worked to establish global partnerships and networks. These collaborations have expanded opportunities for artists associated with the Penang Art District. These partnerships extend across continents, facilitating cultural exchange, knowledge sharing, and joint projects. They strengthen the international presence of the Penang Art District and enhance our ability to showcase local talent on a global scale.
- **Bridge the Gap Between Art Organisations and Universities:** Collaborations with universities and educational institutions have been a significant focus. These partnerships provide mentorship, resources, and opportunities for emerging talents. By connecting the academic and artistic worlds, we have created pathways for young artists to access mentorship, academic resources, and funding opportunities, ensuring their growth and success.
- **Create a Vibrant, Interconnected, and Innovative Artistic Ecosystem:** The Penang Art District has been instrumental in creating a dynamic artistic ecosystem that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. Through events, exhibitions, workshops, and cultural exchange programs, we have fostered an environment where artists from diverse backgrounds can collaborate, learn, and innovate together. This interconnectedness has enriched the local and global art scene.
- **Contribute to the Global Cultural Landscape:** Our commitment to international artistic solidarity has resulted in increased visibility for Penang and its artists on the global stage. By participating in international events, hosting foreign artists, and engaging in cultural exchange initiatives, we have contributed to the global cultural landscape and promoted Penang as a hub of artistic excellence and innovation.

Development and Cooperative Exchange

The Penang Art District's comprehensive strategy has yielded significant progress in achieving our organisational goals. We have expanded opportunities for local artists, facilitated cross-cultural collaborations, nurtured emerging talents, and contributed to the global cultural landscape.

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MARKET RESEARCH



BE Criteria and Key Terminologies

General Overview

Association

Corporate

Incentive

Exhibitions Sector

Sales & Marketing 2024

Business Events 2023 Conclusion

BE Criteria and Key Terminologies

An Overview of Business Events in Penang

Business Events, or BE, is a term that captures all business-related events and gatherings categorised as MICE, namely meetings, incentives, conventions/conferences/congresses, and exhibitions/expositions.

We have identified four criteria which define Business Events for inclusion in PCEB's annual industry report:



Minimum

10

Participants



Minimum

4

Hours

0.5

Day



Held in a venue with room rental, catering cost, etc.



Element of knowledge exchange, or professionalism

Since BE consists of various types of meetings, we have classified them into the following categories:



ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

A meeting of individuals for a common purpose. This term is used to describe events held by government bodies, organisations, associations, and special interest groups. Attendance is open to participants who are not necessarily employed by the organiser.

Types: **convention, conference, congress, forum**



CORPORATE EVENTS

An event organised by a corporate entity. This term is used to describe events with attendance restrictions; delegates must be in the employ of the organiser or the industry.

Types: **seminar, training, workshop, meeting**



INCENTIVES

Meeting events with elements of leisure tourism as part of a programme which is offered to participants as a reward for previous performances.

Types: **team building, incentives**

General Overview

Business Events of 2023



Number of Events **604**



Number of Room Nights **539,113**



Number of Participants **162,964**



Estimated Economic Impact **RM1,033,856,600**

Business events in Penang continued to demonstrate steady growth since the recovery of the tourism industry post-Covid. 2023 marked the first year events were conducted physically in Penang regardless of the type and location of the event.

In 2022, there was a limitation on the number of international participants due to international borders only re-opening on 1 April 2022. Business events – especially conferences – are now evolving into the hybrid (physical and online) mode. However, we find that international delegates are keen to attend events physically, which will eventually boost Penang’s economic growth.

In 2023, the recorded number of events conducted were 604, which is the highest in the post-pandemic era. This number justifies the growth of MICE industries as stated above. The events recorded in the year 2022 were 281. That means the number of events in 2023 is almost 3 times higher than in the year 2022.

Penang has always prioritised MICE industries, and therefore has invested in more infrastructures to provide a better experience for international delegates. Up to 2022, only Setia SPICE Convention Centre was able to cater for large events. However, in 2023, PICCA Butterworth was successfully launched. We are now looking forward to the Penang Waterfront Convention Centre (PWCC), which is expected to be completed in 2025.

Penang has also been striving for a cleaner, greener and more sustainable environment in line with the Penang2030 vision. One highlight is that our industry partners, like hotels and convention centres, have implemented the Environmental, Society and Governance (ESG) reporting, which will be a key draw for international delegates.



Association

Association events are a vital component of business events. In 2023, there were a total 230 association events conducted in Penang. Out of this number, 196 were conducted via national organisations while 34 were from international organisations.

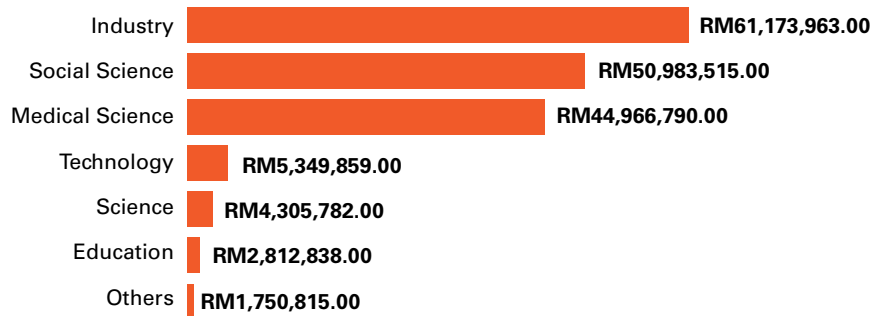
There were no international association events in the first four months of 2023. However, there were more international delegates than local delegates. In 2023, 21,885 international delegates were recorded to have attended association events in Penang, which is 63% of total delegates.

This is proof that international events conducted have been larger size meetings. It is good news as a higher number of international delegates will allow Penang to diversify its opportunities, and justifies the increase of direct flight connectivity to Penang.

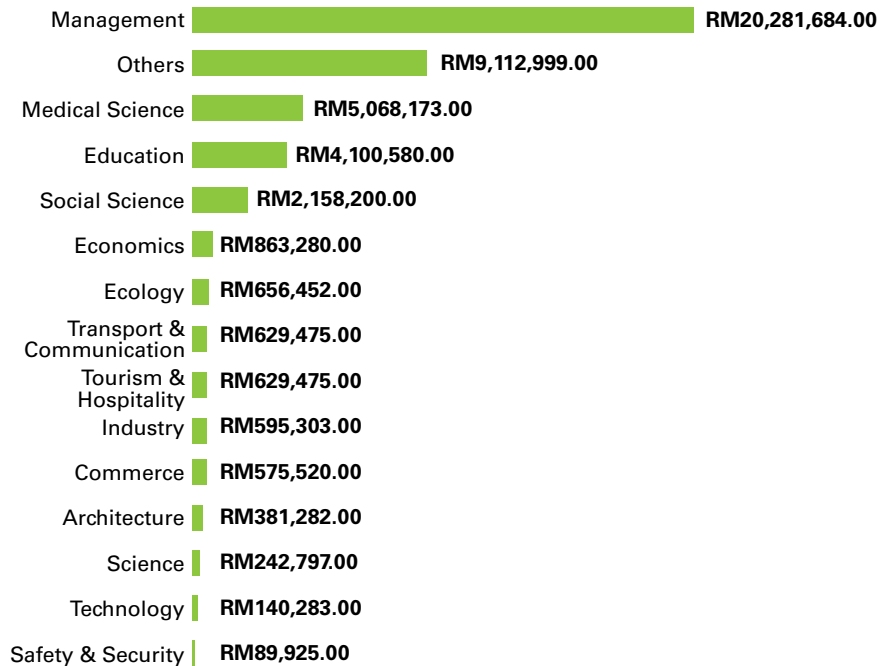
In 2023, national events were led by the Management sector, followed by Others (government and religious meetings) and Medical Science. Medical Science has been a prominent sector for Penang for years, and continues to dominate the Penang market.

For international events, they were led by the Industry sector, followed by Medical Science and Technology. The Industry sector is a huge one that encompasses a wide variety of businesses, thus resulting in higher EEI in Penang. Therefore, the Industry sector should be one to watch and further explored for more market possibilities in the future.

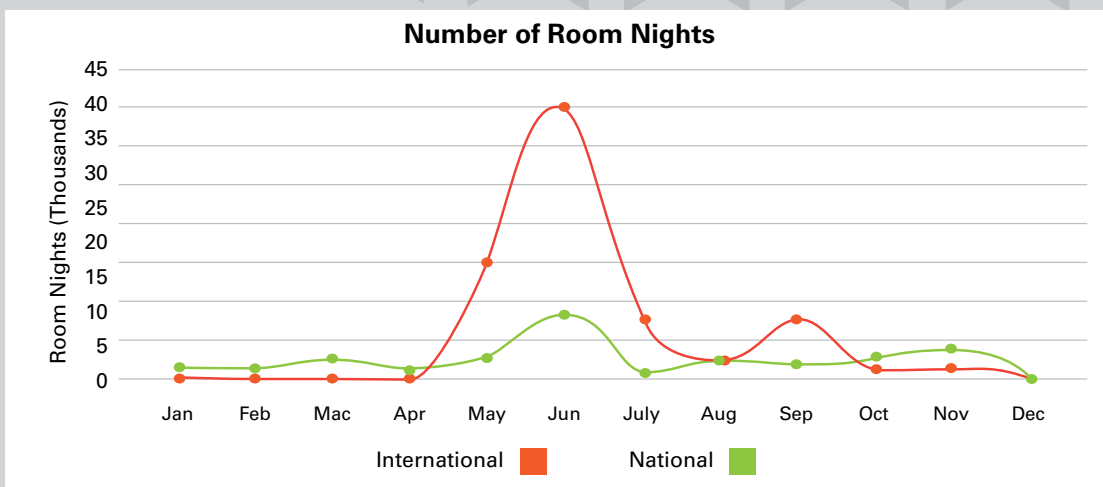
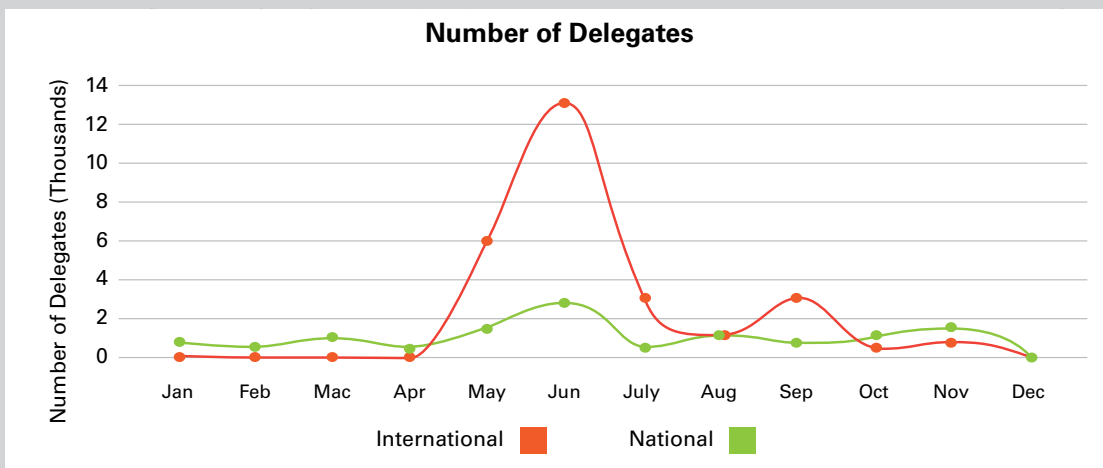
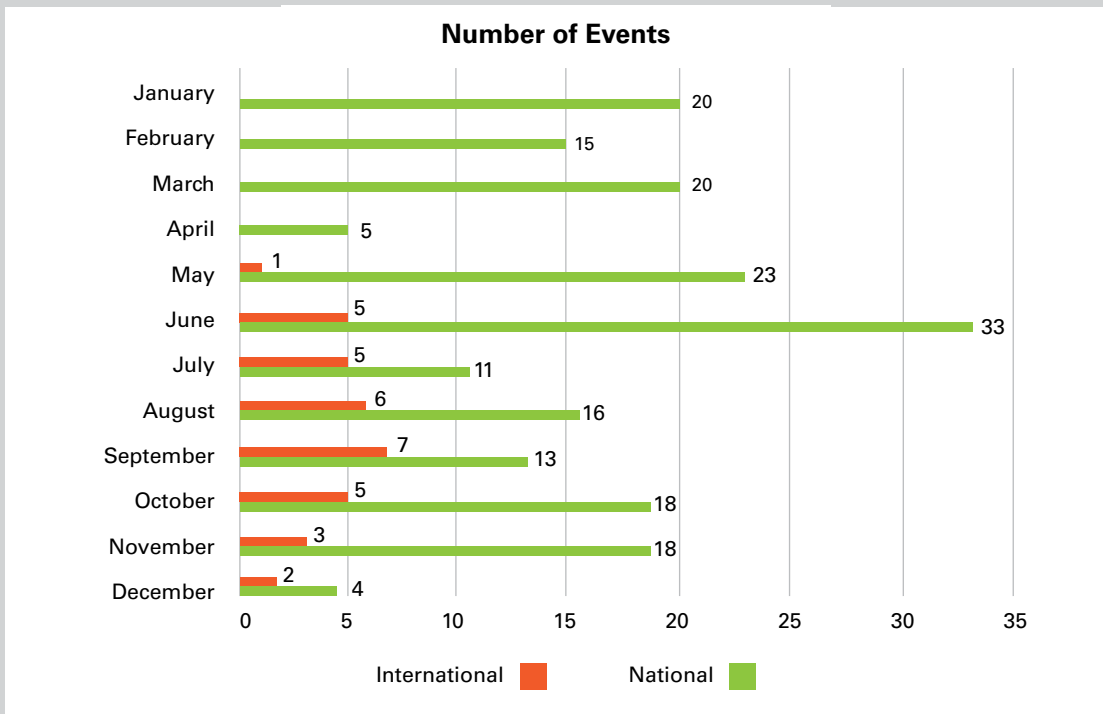
International Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



National Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



Association



Corporate

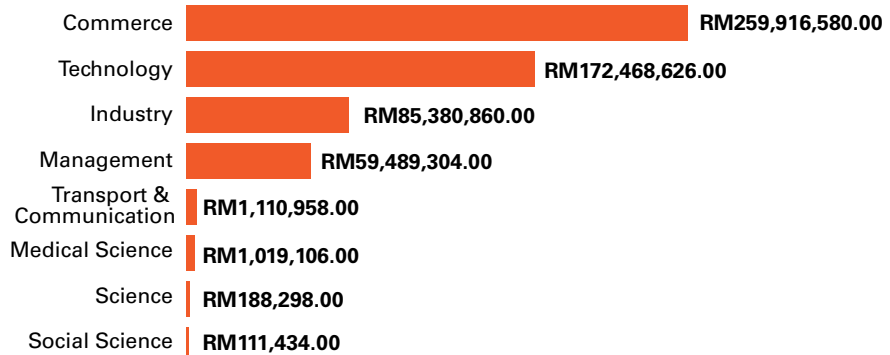
Corporate events are events that are hosted by private companies, and in 2023, a total of 366 corporate events took place in Penang. This is higher than the Association segment by 136 events.

346 of these were national corporate events, while 20 were international ones. However, the number of international delegates took up 55% of the total delegate number, which is 70,143 delegates.

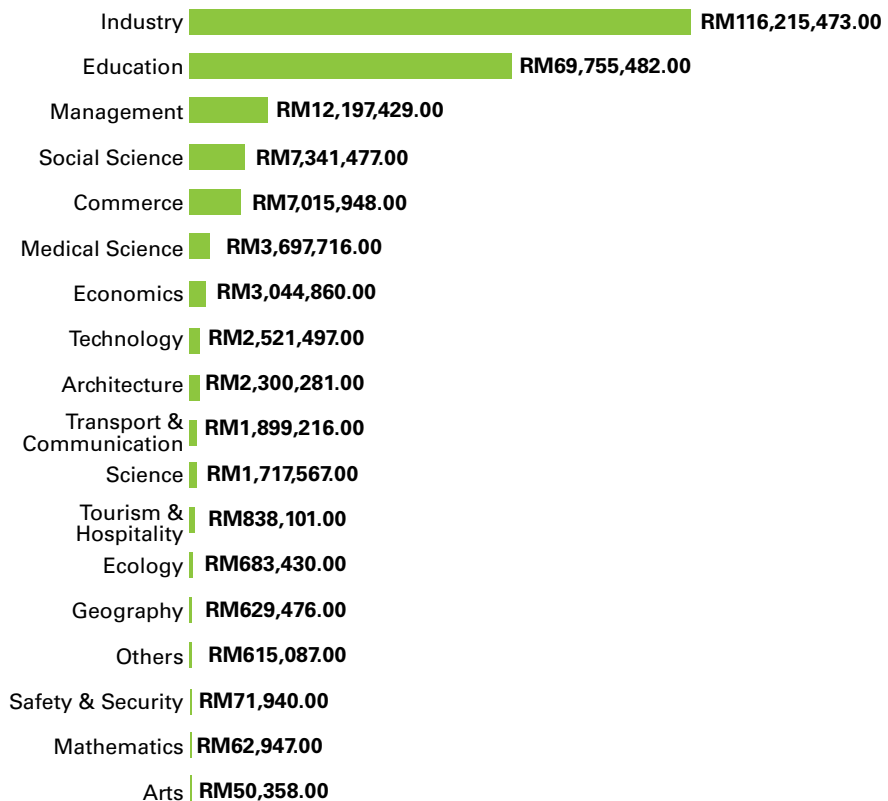
The trend is similar to the Association segment, where the number of international delegates outnumber national delegates, despite fewer international events being held in Penang. This is because the international events are larger in size, such as conferences and exhibitions.

In 2023, the sector that led for national business events was the Management sector, followed by the Industry sector and Commerce. The Management sector has always been dominant and remains undeniably a core sector for Penang. The international events, however, were led by both Management and Industry sectors, followed by the Technology sector, the latter which will contribute to Penang's sustainable development.

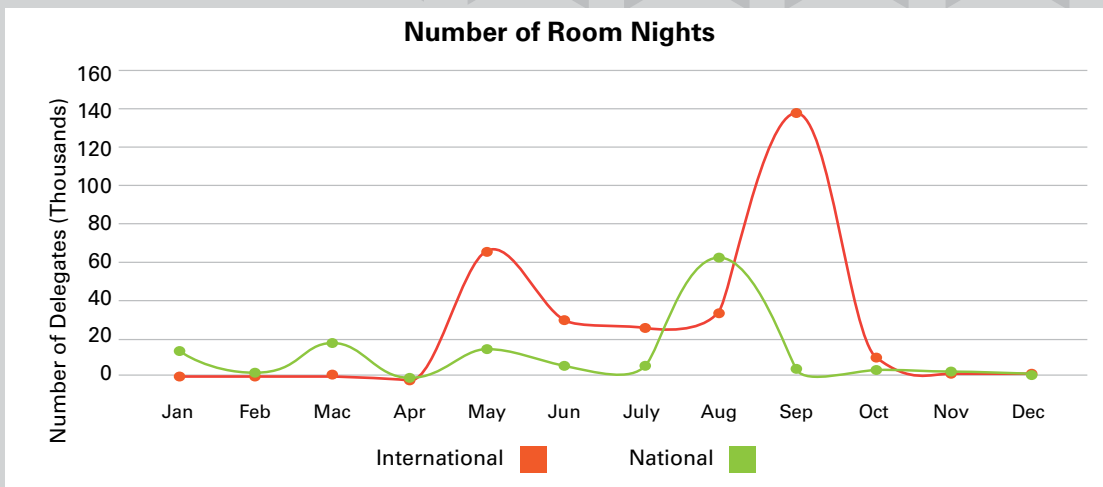
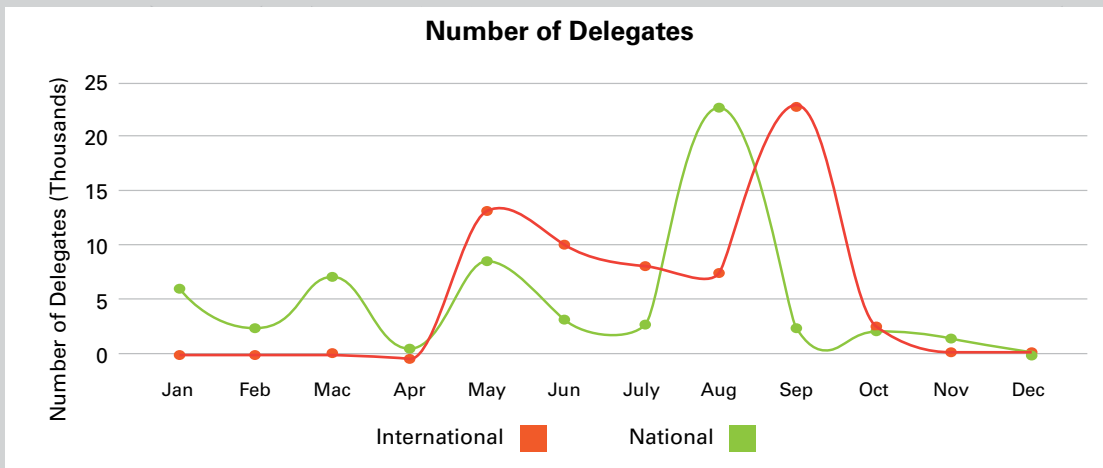
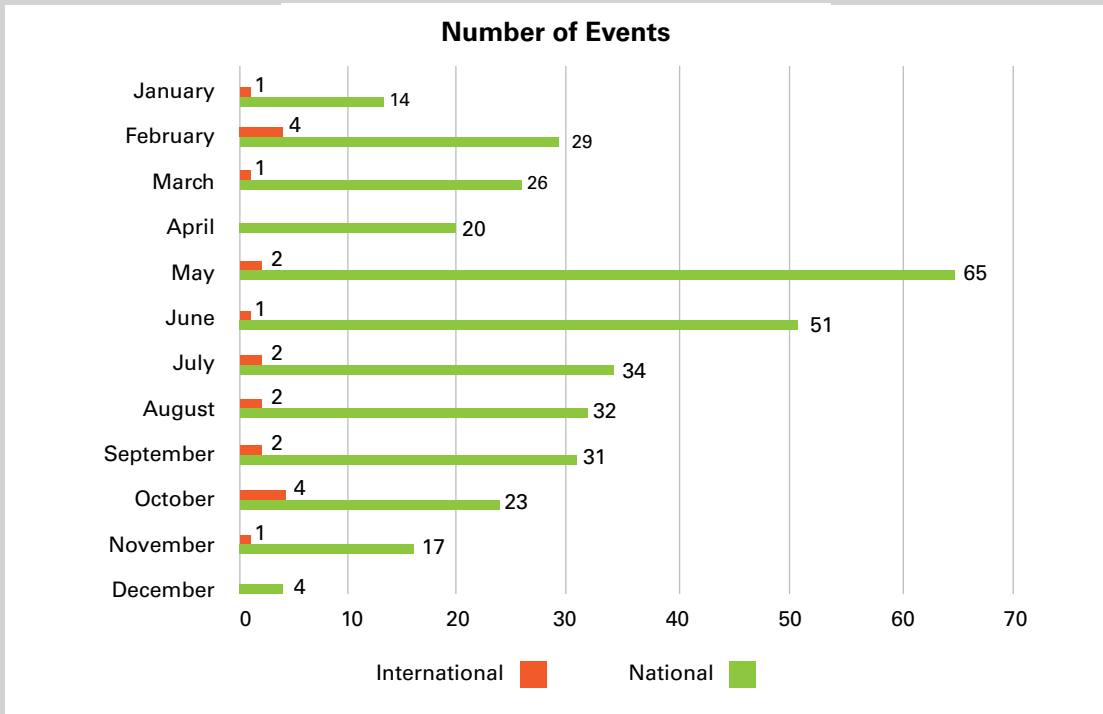
International Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



National Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



Corporate

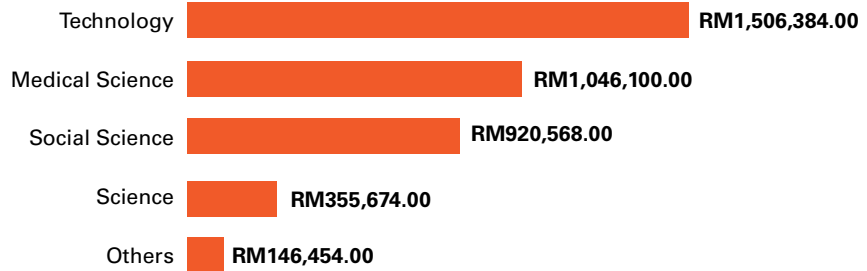


Incentive

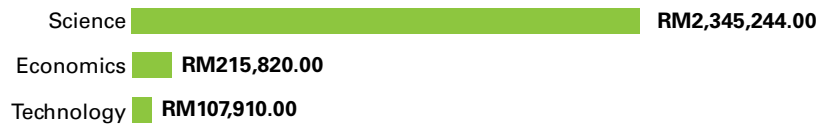
Incentive events were the least-performing segment in Penang for 2023. There were only 8 events; 3 national and 5 international. Incentive events are those conducted by an association or private company for the purpose of team building and relaxation.

Incentive events contributed 0.64% of the total EEI recorded for the year 2023, which is only RM 6,644,154. In 2023, the sector that led in this area was the Science and Technology sector. Penang is a strategic destination for business events, as shown in the Association and Corporate segments, but somehow lacks in the Incentive segment.

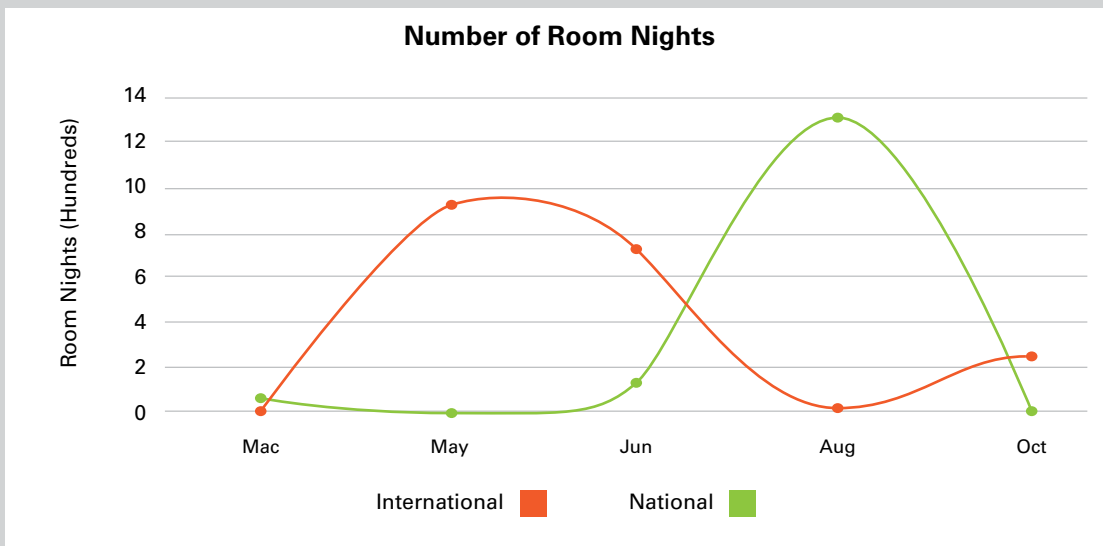
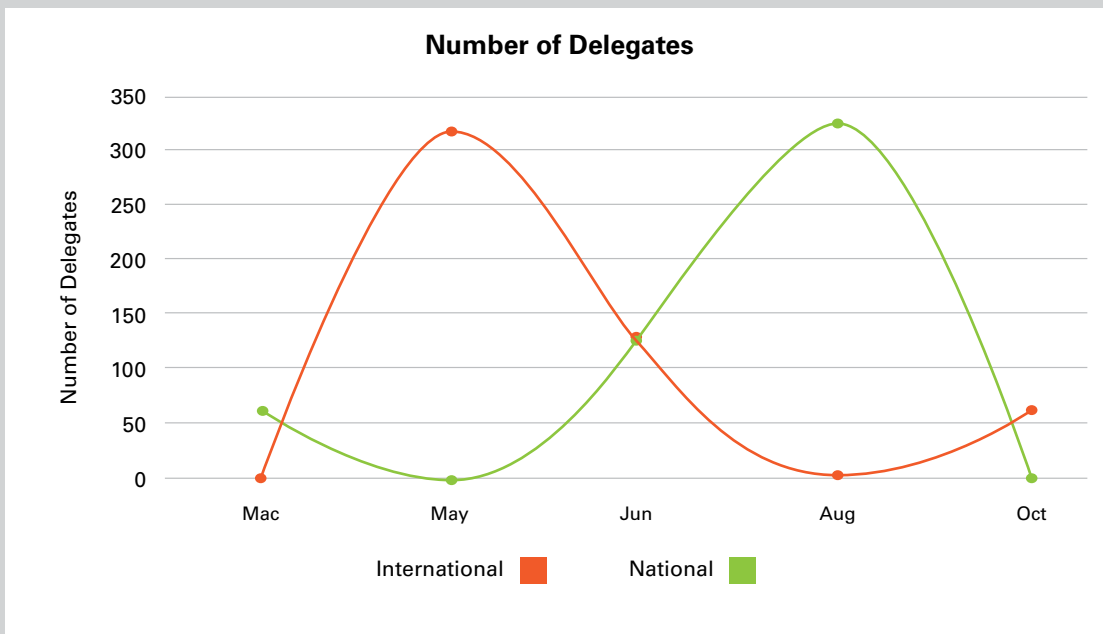
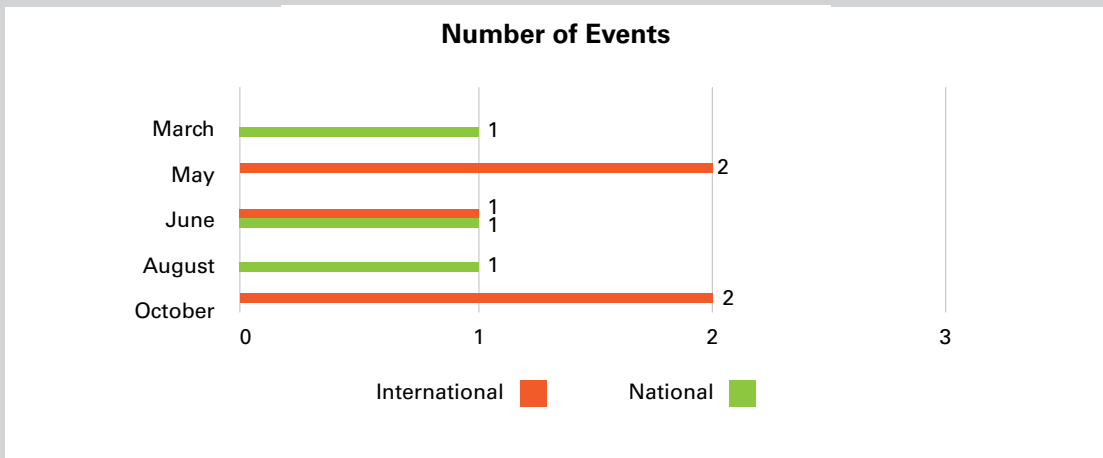
International Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



National Estimated Economic Impact (EEI)



Incentive



EXHIBITIONS SECTOR

EDUX 2023

From 13 – 14 May 2023, the EduX - Penang Education & Career Expo 2023 was held at SPICE Convention Centre, with over 5,000 local delegates attending the two-day expo. With over 70 local and international institutions and more than 1,000 job opportunities, the expo catered to recent graduates, job seekers and adult learners looking to upskill. The theme for 2023 was “Your Passport to a Better Future” and it featured a series of education and career talks, as well as the chance to meet with representatives from top universities and colleges, learn about different career paths, and network with potential employers.



SEMICON 2023

As Southeast Asia is rising up fast as a world-class electronics manufacturing hub with end-to-end R&D capabilities, SEMICON Southeast Asia has become an important exposition for the electronics industry in Southeast Asia. The SEMICON Southeast Asia 2023 show was held at SPICE Convention Centre from 23 – 25 May 2023 and welcomed over 13,000 delegates locally and internationally. The show connected decision-makers from the industry, with the aim of demonstrating the most advanced products and bringing in the most up-to-date market and technology trends.



EXHIBITIONS SECTOR

PWGS TRADE FAIR 2023

In 2023, PCEB's commitment to support the exhibitions industry was demonstrated at the PWGS Trade Fair, organised by the Province Wellesley Gold & Silver Ornament Merchants Association. Taking place from 9 – 11 June 2023 at SPICE Convention Centre, the three-day expo resulted in almost 10,000 delegates visiting Penang, of which 20% were from international shores. The trade fair featured 100 exhibitors and showcased Penang as a hub for creative industries, especially in raising the profile of local designers and craftsmen working in gold and jewellery.



EMAX 2023 & PMAX 2023

As electronics manufacturing is a key sector for Penang, it comes as no surprise that PCEB continues to support the manufacturing industry's growth in Penang. The Electronics Manufacturing Expo Asia (EMAX) and Penang Manufacturing Expo (PMAX) 2023 returned this year from 12 – 14 July 2023 at SPICE Convention Centre with a line-up of 134 local and international exhibitors. Attracting almost 8,000 delegates (of which 40% were international delegates), the expo showcased the latest advancements in electronics manufacturing equipment, assembly technology, and industrial manufacturing equipment.



PENANG SIGNATURE GOLD FAIR 2023

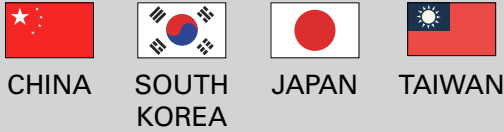
After the PWGS Trade Fair in June, another gold and gems fair was held from 18 – 20 August 2023 at the SPICE Convention Centre. This time, the Penang Signature Gold (PSG) Fair followed on smoothly with close to 4,000 local and international delegates convening at the annual trade expo to learn about the latest trends and innovation in the gold, diamond and gemstones industry. PCEB takes pride in extending its support to this prestigious event, and is looking forward to the 2024 edition which will be held in the same venue.



Sales & Marketing 2024

KEY MARKETS

East Asia



Southeast Asia

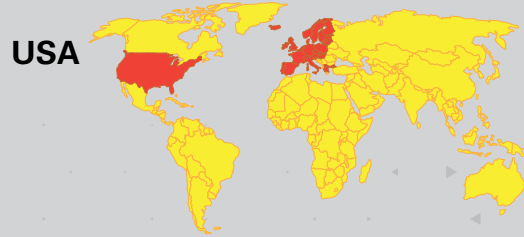


South Asia



Others

EUROPE/UK



FOCUSED SEGMENT



CONCERTS



CORPORATE INCENTIVE



EXHIBITIONS



GOVERNMENT / UNIVERSITIES

TARGET INDUSTRY



AGRICULTURE



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / ROBOTICS



EDUCATION



MARINE



TECHNOLOGY

STRATEGY



Biddings and Bid Support



Collaboration



Community Outreach



Event Support



Exhibition Segment Expansion



Government to Government Alliance



Industries Development



Investment Legacy



Social Impact Initiatives



Tradeshows Participation



Targeted Sales Call

Business Events 2023 Conclusion

Aggressive Brand Marketing

2024 marks the 8th year of the establishment of PCEB, and the organisation is still going strong as the years pass by. PCEB has been more relevant and recognised by larger MICE bureaus who are willing to support and provide more Business Events. PCEB continues with promotion work via marketing activities like audio branding, video branding, visual branding, event branding, and content marketing in international publications, newsletters, social media, and various channels.

Continuous industry development

PCEB has been very involved in its mission to elevate the development of Penang's business events industry. BE @ Penang is an annual conference where the content is focused on the future trends of business events, equipping Penang's industry partners with the latest knowledge and tools for their respective growth. Intensive programs such as bidding and lead generation workshops were attended by PCEB staff to boost Penang's EEI.

Active presence in tradeshow

PCEB's dynamic participation in major tradeshow created distinctive retention in trade buyers, airlines, and partners to instil lasting recognition and confidence in Penang's potential. Consistent presence in tradeshow alongside major regional players like Singapore and Thailand enables Penang to host more international business events.

New contact campaigns

A comprehensive contact marketing strategy was introduced to boost and strengthen the conversions created from lead-gen campaigns, sales promotions, and direct marketing. Contact campaigns are highly personal and micro-focused, concentrating on the highest-value potential clients or alliance partners.

Notes





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