ASEAN - YOUR DESTINATION FOR BUSINESS & LEISURE
With travel to ASEAN becoming ever more appealing in the global market, now is the perfect time to make a business, leisure or incentive trip to the region of spectacular landscapes, vast ecosystems, rich cultures, and thriving economies. From Indonesia’s pristine sandy beaches to Singapore’s cutting-edge infrastructure; from Cambodia’s historic jungle-clad ruins to Malaysia’s colourful cultural festivals; from Myanmar’s quietly spiritual temples to Thailand’s vibrant fine dining and nightlife scenes; from the primordial untouched forests of Laos to Brunei’s man-made architectural wonders; and from Viet Nam’s thousand limestone cliffs to the Philippines’ extravagant baroque churches, ASEAN really does have it all. Located in the heart of Asia, the diversity and contrast of the ASEAN region makes it the perfect destination for every type of traveller.

The region certainly offers an interesting juxtaposition of skyscrapers and modern infrastructure set against a medley of historic temples and traditional bustling markets. Here, visitors step into a world where the luxuries of business and leisure travel are served up on the same platter as exotic entertainment and adventure.

Complementing its leisure and recreation attributes, Southeast Asia is also a land of golden opportunities for the MICE market. With an ever-expanding number of state-of-the-art conference, convention and exhibition venues, as well as new luxury hotels and innovative infrastructure, ASEAN countries are superbly equipped to provide unforgettable experiences, warm hospitality and a great service ethic to MICE.
The ten ASEAN nations – Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam – are truly the jewels in the crown of Asia. For a unique, exhilarating and worthwhile trip, be it for leisure or business, ASEAN is the place to meet.

• **Why ASEAN for your next meeting destination?**
ASEAN offers an incredible diversity of cultures, of religions, of natural wonders and importantly, a tantalizing world of gastronomy. It is a region steeped in fascinating history but also one which embraces the future. At the crossroads of old trading routes, located half way between India and China, ASEAN represents the best of all Asian influences. The region is easily accessible with a multitude of international airports, including some of the most efficient in the world, and a fast developing transportation network with new highways and rail links. Enhanced socio-economic cooperation among the member states in years to come will integrate the region even further. This will, of course, boost business travel, including MICE activities. To be present in the ASEAN region today, doing business, organizing meetings, is the right way to understand a part of the world that is home to over 450 million industrious people.

• **What makes ASEAN a unique meeting destination?**
ASEAN accessibility is a major asset for MICE organizers. The region is just a four to five hour flight away from other large Asian countries such as China PRC, India, Japan and Korea; six to eight hours away from the Middle East and Australia; and 10 to 12 hours from Europe and America. Boosting its infrastructure with the advent of the AEC single market, ASEAN is also on the verge of being easily accessible by boat, rail and road. The region is well known for an impeccable sense of service in the tourism industry. It proudly hosts some of the best hotels in the world as well as some of the planet’s best-known restaurants, the latest
in technology and a great sense of welcome. For meeting planners, most countries have set up a special department in charge of the MICE sector. These generally offer not only free advice but also financial and marketing support to ensure that an event will be a success.

• **What are the benefits of ASEAN destinations for MICE?**
  Thanks to its warm climate, ASEAN can welcome MICE events and conferences all year around. Many cities over the last decade have modernized their meeting facilities. Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Bali, Jakarta, Manila, Phnom Penh, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City offer world-class MICE facilities. But increasingly, other large cities and secondary destinations such as Cebu, Chiang Mai, Davao, Penang, Medan, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Danang, Siem Reap and Vientiane provide attractive alternatives for MICE organizers. In particular, they offer a complete experience, not only during the event itself but also through pre- and post-tours, thanks to rich cultures and exotic landscapes.

• **What are the competitive advantages in the ASEAN region?**
  Advising, counseling, and financial incentives in support of MICE events: most ASEAN countries have set up efficient Convention and Visitor Bureaus, which are usually supported by the national government. These are a one-stop resource for MICE organizers because they provide a wide range of information and support services. Generally, the costs of organizing meetings or conferences in an ASEAN member country are financially attractive. The cost of living also remains reasonable in most ASEAN countries, while the number of hotels in most large cities matches demand. Staying in a deluxe hotel in an ASEAN member
state will, on the whole, cost a fraction of the price for a similar establishment in Europe or America. Prices of taxis, public transport and food are generally more reasonable than in other parts of the world too. Added to these great advantages, a superb sense of service pervades the region.

• Why link a MICE event to a pre / post tour in ASEAN countries?

Dramatic landscapes of rice paddy terraces, active volcanoes, misty mountains, pristine beaches and rainforests, mysterious temples and stupas, colonial cities, sweeping metropolitan skylines, unique fauna and flora and some of the best diving and golf sites of the world mean that not to do a pre- or post-tour following a MICE event would be a missed opportunity. With high quality of tourism services and affordable prices, pre- and post-tours are complementary to the business side of a trip to ASEAN. The Convention Bureaus of each ASEAN country can provide information and advice, as well as the necessary contacts, to turn a pre-or post-tour into a magical experience. The opening of borders and the improvement of transport infrastructure, are good incentives to set up multi-country itineraries. A convention in Singapore followed by a post-tour in Melaka? Or a congress in Bandar Sri Begawan in Brunei with a post-tour to discover some of the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Sarawak or Sabah? An exhibition in Bangkok followed by a leisurely cruise along the Mekong River between Thailand and Laos? These are just a few of the exotic twin-destination options open to MICE organizers.

For more information, or to learn more about the many opportunities for MICE and business travel to ASEAN, please visit www.aseantourism.travel