

**UFI Award 2024**  
**Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Submission**  
**For Industry Partners Category**  
**Synergy in Action: Honouring Collaborative Excellence**

*Introduction*

Due to gaps in the sustainability ecosystem combined with cost and behaviour related challenges, most exhibition organisers in Malaysia face a huge dilemma in incorporating effective ways to reduce carbon footprints generated from their shows. Having established a clear sustainability direction for the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, besides putting in place and enforcing policies and procedures, we saw enabling exhibition organisers to inject environmental-friendly practices into their events as crucial. In line with that, we have taken a partnership approach with our exhibition organisers to assist them in achieving their sustainability agenda, making their events more environmentally friendly.

Constellar Exhibitions Malaysia is a long-time client to the Centre and have always chosen to hold their annual Malaysia International Food and Beverage (MIFB) show with us. In 2023, the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of the trade show was held in Exhibitions Halls 1 – 4, spanning about 10,000sqm, featuring over 600 participants from 50 countries which attracted more than 20,000 trade visitors from around the world.

MIFB is the largest and leading food and beverage focused trade event in Malaysia which offers a platform for businesses from the industry to showcase their products and services to leading buyers from the region. Aptly themed “Accelerating ASEAN’s Food Security and Sustainability, MIFB2023 showcased solutions, technologies and discussions focusing on the current challenges in the global food supply chain, playing a significant role in shaping the future of food security and sustainability for the region.

*Synergy in Action*

In the pre-event phase, the organiser of the show approached the Centre with a vision to enhance the sustainability features of MIFB2023. As this would be the first event to be conducted under this direction, the aim was to achieve a baseline target for its subsequent editions. With an ultimate goal to reduce food waste, they sought solutions and assistance in:

- i) effectively reducing and managing food waste generated at the event;
- ii) effectively communicating the initiative to exhibitors and visitors for participation; and
- iii) aligning their efforts to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

The Centre’s Sustainability Taskforce were involved from the planning stage, assisting Constellar Exhibitions to develop their food waste management strategies and the implementation plan for MIFB2023 which included segregation and composting using the venue’s resources.

The Centre also introduced a third partner, MAEKO, into this initiative. MAEKO is the proprietor of the food composting machine that is being utilised at the Centre. Besides offering educational insights on the benefits of composting and the circular economy, MAEKO's main role in this collaboration was to help ensure the composted food waste were directed to the right channel.

#### *Alignment to UNSDGs*

The Centre, with guidance from our sustainability partner, URBANICE Malaysia (the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Cities and Community Well-being under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government), helped identify the relevant UNSDG and targets for MIFB2023.

Six targets were determined to be in line with the organisers' goals in reducing overall food waste generated at the event. They are:

- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (composting improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimising release of hazardous materials)
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (composting reduce the adverse environment impact of cities through waste management)
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (Composting substantially reduces waste generation through prevention and reproduction)
- Goal 13: Climate Action (Composting diverts food waste from landfills, cuts methane gas emission and this help combat climate change)
- Goal 14: Life Below Water (Composting prevents and significantly reduces marine pollution from land-based nutrient pollutants)
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals (Collaboration between Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and Constellar Exhibitions Malaysia on food waste management and reducing event's carbon emissions showcase effective and successful private sector partnership for sustainability)

#### *Resource and Technology Sharing*

A dedicated booth was erected on the show floor of the MIFB2023 where we placed the Centre's AI-powered Winnow food waste tracking system together with waste segregation bins to collect different types of recyclable and non-recyclable wastes. The Centre's Asset and IT teams were deployed to help set up this booth, with no cost to the organiser. The tracker helped capture data of the food waste discarded such as its type and weight. Exhibitors and visitors were encouraged to dispose of both food and general wastes at this booth. This helped ensure all stakeholders of the show worked together towards achieving the goal of reducing food waste from this event.

All the collected food waste were then deposited in the Centre's food waste composting machine, oversaw by our Stewarding team, to be processed into fertiliser over 24 hours. The end product was then provided to MAEKO, who then packaged and distributed them to local urban farmers.

#### *Communications & Messaging*

The Centre also provided support in terms of developing the communications strategy, determining the key messages and crafting compelling content that highlighted the organiser's commitment to sustainable events and alignment to UNSDG. Constellar then strategically placed the messaging around the show floor to ensure maximised reach. This helped raise awareness of the initiative amongst exhibitors and visitors, drawing everyone's attention and support towards the cause, resulting in its success.

### *Collaboration for Excellence*

The collaborative effort between the Centre and Constellar Exhibitions Malaysia yielded remarkable results. The initiative proved effective as over 100kgs of food waste were collected, reducing MIFB2023's environmental impact. About 30kg of nutrient-rich organic compost was churned out by the composter which were donated to local urban farming community in need. Both the Centre and the organiser received positive recognition for this effort, attracting the attention of media and local ministers.

Hellen Woon, Event Director, Constellar Exhibitions Malaysia, said that, "The Centre's commitment and passion towards sustainability are well-aligned with our objectives and goals for MIFB this year and its future editions. It was a delight working with a venue that has sustainability solutions as part of its value-add offerings to event organisers. As a result, we were able to roll-out this effort successfully. The team's expertise, guidance and reliability put us at ease throughout the whole process. We are very much looking forward to returning to the Centre for our 2024 show."

This story exemplifies the power of collaboration, technology and strategic messaging in creating a sustainable event. The partnership between the venue and the organiser stemmed from a shared vision to create high-impact events and commitment to the environment. Leveraging artificial intelligence and technology, the Centre's food waste management solutions helped the organiser not only reduce food waste but aligned themselves to global sustainability agenda and goals, further elevating the profile of their trade show.

### *Conclusion*

The success of this partnership is a testament to possibilities of innovation and sustainability in the exhibition sector, setting a precedence for future eco-friendly events in Malaysia.

Through this collaboration, we learnt the importance of the venue taking the lead to assist event organisers in making events more sustainable. Organisers are often inundated with countless deadlines and challenges, often needing as much assistance from the venue as possible. Especially in Malaysia, where the sustainability ecosystem is also still very foundational, it is a challenge for organisations to adapt or transform as quickly. Organisers often look to the venue for ideas, solutions, and collaborations, presenting a unique opportunity for the venue in delivering to the varied needs of our clients, contributing to a strong 40% client retention rate.

We also learnt that there is significant business value in doing something innovative or remarkable. This sustainability collaboration between the Centre, Constellar Exhibitions Malaysia and MAEKO helped elevate the profile of the event amongst participants and other stakeholders. Visitors and exhibitors were curious to find out more about the initiative and the partners involved where dedicated engagement with MAEKO was subsequently arranged by the organiser.

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