



Industry Briefing Papers 2016

ASIA: MALAYSIA

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

While Asia-Pacific is the fastest-growing region for wellness tourism, with more than 200m wellness-related tourism trips in 2015, Malaysia is a laggard in the spa and wellness industry. Malaysia aims to create 3,540 jobs with a gross national income of RM374.1m (\$92.6m) by 2020, under its plans to develop the industry as part of the tourism national key economic area. Training programmes are encouraged and rating agencies as well as the Malaysian Association of Wellness and Spa have been set up for self-regulation and credibility. Many of the spas are attached to luxury hotels and resorts, and the country faces stiff competition from our more established neighbours such as Thailand and Indonesia. Currently, this industry is targeted mostly at tourists and the local elite. There is huge potential to establish retirement homes due to the relatively lower cost of living. Khazanah, which is Malaysia's equivalent of a national wealth fund as well as several developers both local and foreign have identified and are exploiting the potential to develop wellness and retirement communities. Malaysia is a developing country that is expected to reach the ageing population status by 2035, where 15% of its total population would be 60 years and older, posing a huge socio-economic and health problem for the country. More than half of those would not be able to sustain a healthy lifestyle due to lack of savings.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:

Spas:

High growth industry facing challenges in recruitment of qualified technicians and personnel.

Beauty:

The establishment of clinics offering modern aesthetics treatments by medical personnel enjoys high growth challenging spending on traditional facials and slimming salons.

Fitness:

There is nothing worthy of mention here.

Nutrition:

Majority of Malaysians generally have poor diet leading to increasing incidence of diabetes- 3.5 million or 17.8% of its population above the age of 18 were found to be diabetic in 2015.

Wellness Tourism:

This is a key target of both the government and private sector which recognizes the potential of this industry that has been growing at more than 10% in recent years.

Wellness Communities or Real Estate:

Retirement and assisted-living style communities, aimed at the elderly represent an untapped market with significant demand generated both locally and the Asia Pacific region due to the relatively lower cost of living in Malaysia and availability of real estate.

3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?

Traditional herbal remedies are gaining scientific proof to be safe and efficacious for addressing various health issues.

4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?

The lack of qualified and trained personnel in both the spa and wellness industry is the biggest constraint to growth.

5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference - if any - between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.

Wellness addresses the deeper holistic health issues of an individual while well-being addresses the social economic and lifestyle of an individual.

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