

Malaysia ranked 26th most competitive tourism destination by WEF



The World Economic Forum (WEF) has placed Malaysia in the 26th spot in its Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, the bi-annual benchmarking index measuring the relative health of 136 countries' tourism sectors.

The organisation said that although Malaysia's ranking dropped one place compared to 2015, the country effectively improved

its travel and tourism competitiveness in absolute terms.

Malaysia remains an attractive destination thanks to its price competitiveness, its strong air connectivity and beautiful natural resources.

The country also offers a conducive, enabling environment for doing business, which is supported by a strong human resources and labour market.

Malaysia has also improved in ICT readiness, tourism service infrastructure, and international openness.

However, the WEF said that Malaysia's business environment and investment in cultural resources need improving.

To further enhance its competitiveness, the government could further prioritise the travel and tourism industry, and invest in the development of its cultural resources and business travel, while addressing environmental sustainability and preserving its beautiful natural environment.

This year, the top three spots in the WEF's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report were snapped up by Spain, France and Germany, in that order.

The three countries' top rankings are attributed to their having world-class natural and cultural resources, outstanding infrastructure and excellent hospitality services.

"Spain, France and Germany continue to top the travel and tourism rankings in WEF's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, released on 5 April 2017," the organisation said.

It explained that the global travel and tourism sector accounts for 10% of global GDP, grows faster than other sectors, and provides one in 10 jobs.

Underpinning this growth is the increasing accessibility and affordability of travel, although environmental challenges remain and many countries are underperforming in making technological strides.

Other countries in the top 10 are Japan (fourth), the United Kingdom (fifth), the United States (sixth, down two places), Australia (seventh), Italy (eighth), Canada (ninth) and Switzerland (10th, down from sixth spot).

Other Asian countries alongside Malaysia who made it to the top-30 ranking include Hong Kong (11th, up two), Singapore (13th, dropped two), China (15th, up two), South Korea (19th, up 10), Taiwan (30th, up two), Thailand (34th, up one), while India made the largest leap in the top 50 (up 12 places) to land in 40th place.

It is good to know that Malaysia is the second highest ranked country (26th) in ASEAN after Singapore (13th), ahead of Thailand (34th) and Indonesia (42nd position).

The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 Ranking

Country/Economy	Rank	Score	Change since 2015
Spain	1	5.43	0
France	2	5.32	0
Germany	3	5.28	0
Japan	4	5.26	5
United Kingdom	5	5.20	0
United States	6	5.12	-2
Australia	7	5.10	0
Italy	8	4.99	0
Canada	9	4.97	1
Switzerland	10	4.94	-4
Hong Kong SAR	11	4.86	2
Austria	12	4.86	0
Singapore	13	4.85	-2
Portugal	14	4.74	1
China	15	4.72	2
New Zealand	16	4.68	0
Netherlands	17	4.64	-3
Norway	18	4.64	2
Korea, Rep.	19	4.57	10
Sweden	20	4.55	3

Malaysia ranked 26th most competitive tourism destination by WEF (cont.)

Malaysia

26th / 136

Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2017 edition



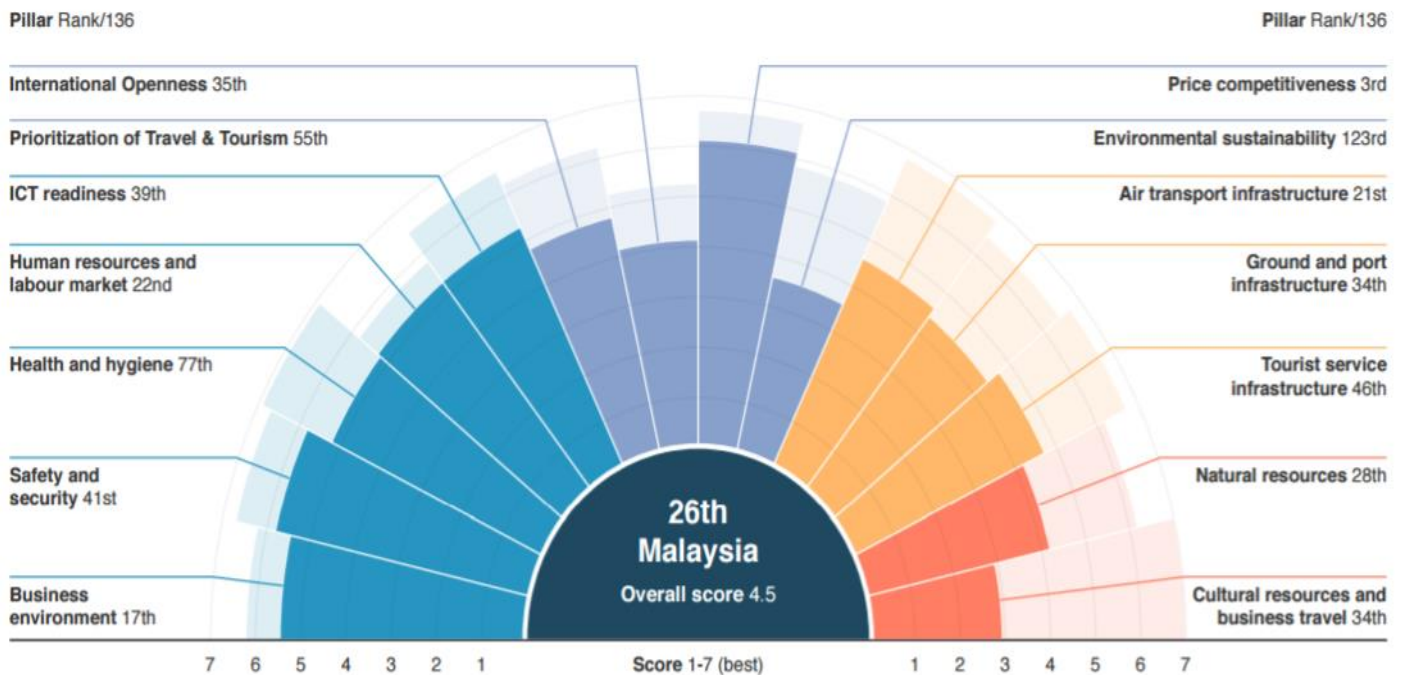
Key Indicators

Sources: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

International tourist arrivals	25,721,251	T&T industry GDP	US \$13,004.3 million
International tourism inbound receipts	US \$17,597.1 million	% of total	4.4%
Average receipts per arrival	US \$684.1	T&T industry employment	574,182 jobs
		% of total	4.2%

Performance Overview

Key Score ← Highest score



Malaysia continues to deliver a strong performance, ranking 26th. While it dropped 1 position in the rankings, Malaysia effectively improved its travel and tourism competitiveness in absolute terms, rising from 4.41 in 2015 to 4.50 in the current edition of the report. Malaysia remains an attractive destination thanks to its price competitiveness (3rd), its strong air connectivity (21st) and beautiful natural resources (28th). The country also offers a conducive enabling environment for doing business (17th), which is supported by a strong human resources and labour market (22nd, up 8 positions). Malaysia has also

improved in ICT readiness (39th, up 15 positions), tourism service infrastructure (46th, up 22 positions) and increased international openness (35th, up 11 positions). Yet, cultural resources and business travel (34th, down 7 positions) and in the business environment have slightly declined). To further enhance its competitiveness, the government could further prioritize the travel and tourism industry (55th) and invest in the development of its cultural resources and business travel, while addressing environmental sustainability (123rd) and preserving its beautiful natural environment.

Past performance

Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Edition	2015	2017
Rank	25 / 141	26 / 136
Score	4.4	4.5

Malaysia ranked 26th most competitive tourism destination by WEF (cont.)

BizWatch

Malaysia's 26th position in The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 organized by the World Economic Forum is notable given that there are around 136 countries under review.

Within the 14 pillars that were assessed, Malaysia ranked third in terms of price competitiveness which can be contributed to the depreciation of indeed the Ringgit against major currencies in the world since 2015/2016. For instance, the Ringgit has depreciated almost 20% against the US dollar since the beginning of last year, resulting in cheaper local products and services including tourism offerings in Malaysia.

According to the report, while Malaysia had improved in ICT readiness, tourism service infrastructure and increased international openness, Malaysia needs to further improve its competitiveness by investing in the development of its cultural resources and business travel while addressing environmental sustainability and preserving its natural environment.

For Iskandar Malaysia, besides the ready tourism product offerings such as LEGOLAND, Puteri Harbour Family Theme park, Johor Premium Outlets and etc, there is an urgent need to diversify and expand tourism products in Iskandar Malaysia especially to capitalize on the natural environment attributes in Iskandar Malaysia and Johor - such as the three Ramsar sites, mangrove coastlines, waterfalls and mountain ranges.

Iskandar Malaysia can take lead in sustainable tourism and we can start by looking at Pulau Kukup where infrastructure improvement works were completed in December 2016 and to expand these initiatives to Gunung Pulai and Pulai River.



Gunung Pulai Waterfalls

BizWatch

Positive property outlook for Iskandar Malaysia

(source: The Star)



IJM Land Bhd sees Iskandar Malaysia as the next growth centre in the country after the Klang Valley with good growth prospects in the long term.

Nasa Land Sdn Bhd, General Manager, Lim Hock Seng said the development and progress taking place in the country's first economic growth corridor was a testimony to what's right about the growth corridor.

He said the influx of domestic and foreign investors and new residents in south Johor would create new job opportunities as well as demand for residential and commercial properties.

'Iskandar Malaysia will continue to drive economic growth in south Johor and we are still upbeat that the property outlook remains positive', he said.

Nasa Land Sdn Bhd, a strategic partnership between IJM Land and JKG is the developer of NasaCity - a multi-million ringgit mixed development project located along the North-South Expressway (NSE).

He said the company was banking on the strategic location of the project and its accessibility to attract local buyers, as well as those from Singapore and China.

The presence of big developers from China is good for the property market in Iskandar Malaysia as they help to promote Johor Bahru to buyers in mainland China.

He said Malaysian developers in Iskandar Malaysia did not feel intimidated or threatened with the big boys from China as Chinese developers cater mainly to the needs of buyers there.

Lim said the take-up rate for its non-bumi units of the Centra Residences, Tower A - a 25-storey apartment block was good with all the non-bumi units sold out.

The prices for 196 apartments in Tower B with a floor area between 786 sq ft and 2,002 sq ft opened for sale since mid-2016 and are priced at RM500 per sq ft. The two towers would be completed by the end of 2017.

He said the company was also talking with several local and foreign parties to develop the Auto City and a stand-alone shopping mall within NasaCity.

Update on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Rail Transit System (RTS) and High Speed Rail (HSR)

BizWatch

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) together with the Rail Transit System (RTS) and High Speed Rail (HSR) would be game changer as it would improve tremendously connectivity and accessibility within / to Iskandar Malaysia and thereafter, from Johor Bahru to Kuala Lumpur, boosting Johor's economy and bring economy growth along the rail corridor.



On the BRT, currently the project is at the design stage with 3 trunk routes altogether with a service network covering about 90% of Iskandar Malaysia.

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The first phase of the Iskandar Malaysia BRT is expected to be completed in 2020. The Iskandar Malaysia BRT will link Johor Bahru City to Skudai, Johor Jaya and Iskandar Puteri.

The BRT is expected to make mobility around Iskandar Malaysia more accessible and convenient.

Once completed, the BRT is also will improve connectivity to jobs, growth areas and public facilities in a seamless manner. The Iskandar Malaysia BRT is focusing on improving frequency, reliability and service quality of Iskandar Malaysia's urban mobility

Once it is fully completed, the BRT routes will connect to the RTS and HSR providing an integrated and seamless connectivity within and outside Iskandar Malaysia.

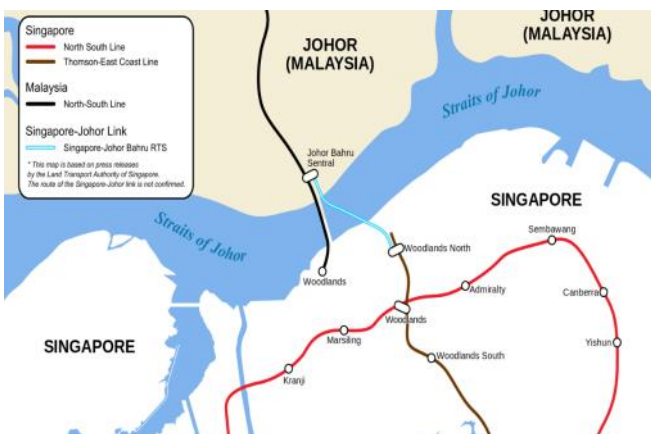
The BRT project, proposed more than 8 years ago finally saw exciting progress with the project currently at the design stage.

The RTS project which was part of the Malaysia Singapore Joint Ministerial Committee for Iskandar Malaysia under the Transportation Links Work Group will be expected to be ready by 2024 while the highly publicized Kuala Lumpur and Singapore HSR is expected to be ready by 2026.

Together with the BRT, the completion of the RTS and HSR will benefit Iskandar Malaysia not only in terms of connectivity between the region to / from Singapore as well as Kuala Lumpur but also will increase property value along the RTS and HSR alignment including providing more business opportunities surrounding the vicinity of the stations.

Improved connectivity can further deepen the identified economic clusters in Iskandar Malaysia with smaller towns acting as feeder into the large economy within Iskandar Malaysia. It enables further reach of economic wealth into the hinterlands.

Its not too late to grab the opportunities!!! Act now!!



The Iskandar Malaysia BRT will promote a greener transportation solution towards a lower carbon footprint region.

Editorial

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