

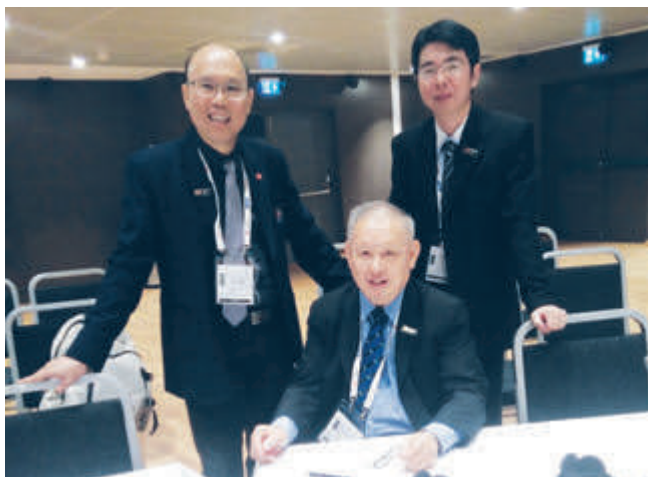
IEM Wins Bid to Host ITA-AITES World Tunnel Congress 2020 and 46th General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur

TUNNELLING & UNDERGROUND SPACE TECHNICAL DIVISION

reported by



Ir. Dr Ooi Teik Aun



Ir. Dr Ooi Teik Aun, voting delegate representing Malaysia with Ir. Dr Tan Yean Chin and Ir. Khoo Chee Min

The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM), through its commercial arm IEMTC, beat contenders Australia and India to win the bid to host the ITA-AITES World Tunnel Congress (WTC) 2020 and the 46th General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Bid Documents were submitted and accepted in January 2017 by ITA. The winning team comprised Ir. Dr Tan Yean Chin, President of IEM, Ir. Dr Ooi Teik Aun, Chairman Organising Committee, Ir. Khoo Chee Min, Deputy Chairman Organising Committee and Ir. Ong Sang Woh, Secretary Cum Treasurer Tunnelling and Underground Space Technical Division (TUSTD).

The team arrived in Bergen on 9 June 2017 with the Bid Documents which weighed over 100kg, and made haste to prepare the documents for distribution to Member Nations attending the 43rd ITA-AITES General Assembly on 11 June 2017. Bid presentations by the three candidates were made the same day.

After the presentations, the three candidates jointly hosted a dinner at a restaurant located at the city's mountain top for the attendees of the General Assembly on 13 June. The candidates were given time to make their presentations again before the dinner started.

The Malaysian team was very lucky to get the support of Mr. Edward Lim from the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) who arrived in time with the news that the Malaysian Government had confirmed a financial grant to WTC 2020. This announcement played an important role in strengthening the Malaysian bid.

Initially, the IEM team felt overwhelmed by the two other challengers which had brought big teams to the conference while there were only 5 members in the Malaysian team, including the MyCEB representative. Luckily, this was a case where the size did not matter and where substance was what really counted.

The first round of voting took place on Wednesday, 14 June, at the ITA-AITES 43rd General Assembly. It was a very close competition. IEM garnered 25 votes and Australia followed very close behind with 23 votes. India received only 4 votes and was eliminated.

IEM then had to get ready for the second round of voting. This time, IEM secured 30 votes, beating Australia which only managed to obtain 22 votes. ITA President Prof. Tarcisio Celestino then declared that the World Tunnel Congress and 46th General Assembly would be held in Malaysia in 2020.

Prior to Bergen, IEM had organised the first Southeast Asian Conference and Exhibition in Tunnelling and Underground Space (SEACETUS) in April 2017 at the Dorsett Grand Subang Hotel in Subang Jaya, Selangor.

The conference, which attracted some 400 participants and over 20 exhibitors, received great feedback and comment. Tunnel Talk, in its June 2017 issue, reported

that “Good organisation, choice and quality of the presentations at the conference, together with past and future development of underground space in the region with innovative, challenging and outstanding projects, are reasons why Kuala Lumpur wants to host the WTC 2020”.

The bid to host one of the most prestigious events in the world for the tunnelling industry, was made possible with great effort and the commitment of a team of dedicated IEM members from the Tunnelling and Underground Space Technical Division (TUSTD). The division was formed in 1999 with the encouragement of International Tunnelling & Underground Space Association (ITA).

Ir. Dr Ooi Teik Aun was elected its Protem Chairman and subsequently the Founder Chairman at the Inaugural General Meeting in 2000. In 2006, IEM TUSTD organised the first International Conference and Exhibition on Tunnelling & Underground Space (ICETUS 2006) to coincide with the opening of the SMART Tunnel.

In 2011, the TUSTD again organised ICETUS 2011 in conjunction with the launch of Interstate Pahang-Selangor Raw Water Transfer project. ICETUS 2015 was organised to coincide with the substantial completion of KVMRT-SBK line.

With its team of dedicated members, IEM TUSTD had worked very hard over the last 17 years to promote Malaysia in the tunnelling world. Over the years, it had been TUSTD’s objective to showcase our achievements in tunnel technology such as the Variable Density Tunnel Boring Machine (VDTBM) which was invented to overcome the sinkhole and blowout problems encountered in the SMART project when tunnelling through the Kuala Lumpur Limestone Formation. This invention was a first-of-its-kind in the world and was jointly developed by MMC-Gamuda and Herrenknecht, a German TBM Manufacturer. Our tunnelling industry is ready to join the ranks of the world league in Innovations & Sustainable Underground serving Global Connectivity.

To host the World Tunnel Conference was Ir. Dr Ooi Teik Aun’s vision and it dated way back to the WTC2012 in Bangkok. With the support and dedication of all the members of the TUSTD since its formation, and its current team led by Chairman Ir. Syed Rajah bin Syed Hussain, this vision has now been realised. The huge effort by the Committee members to promote IEM prior to the General Assembly in Bergen was instrumental in winning the bid. They participated in various activities and conferences overseas with promotions in San Francisco by Ir. Dr Ooi, in Singapore by Ir. Khoo Chee Min, in Dubai by Ir. Frankie Cheah, in Myanmar by Ir. Ong Sang Woh and in Croatia by Ir. Neo Boon Kheng.

IEM is proud to carry the Jalur Gemilang in hosting the WTC 2020 in Kuala Lumpur and the Organising Committee has already started preparation works to ensure WTC 2020 will be a success story for Malaysia!

For more information, visit <http://www.seacetus2017.com/> ■



43rd ITA – AITES General Assembly in Session