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**BE IN SABAH 2026 OFFICIALLY OPENS AS A REGIONAL ASIA PACIFIC PLATFORM FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS EVENTS COLLABORATION**

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**Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia – 4 February 2026** — The **3rd International Business Events Forum** — **BE in SABAH 2026** officially opened today, convening a diverse international community of policymakers, industry leaders and practitioners as a regional Asia Pacific platform advancing collaboration, capability development and long-term industry relevance across East ASEAN and beyond.

Held at **Sabah International Convention Centre**, the forum brings together **more than 900 delegates**, including government representatives, convention and visitors bureaux, global industry associations, professional conference and exhibition organisers, consulting firms, academia, venue operators and private sector stakeholders from across Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Oceania.

Anchored by the theme **“Global Collaboration Through Business Events,”** BE in SABAH 2026 positions Business Events as structured platforms that enable economic diplomacy, trade engagement, investment dialogue, professional capability-building and cross-border collaboration in an increasingly selective global environment.

The forum was officially opened by **Yang Berhormat Datuk Joniston Bangkuai**, Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister of Sabah, **representing Yang Amat Berhormat Datuk Seri Panglima Haji Hajiji Bin Haji Noor**, Chief Minister of Sabah.

In his address, YB Datuk Joniston Bangkuai emphasised that Business Events today function as a practical interface between policy and practice, global expertise and local capability. He noted that meaningful international engagement increasingly takes place where readiness, reliability and professional standards are consistently demonstrated.

He further highlighted that Sabah recognises Business Events as part of its broader economic and development approach — supporting regional cooperation, facilitating investment dialogue and creating opportunities for participation across industries, including small and medium enterprises, professionals and emerging talent within East ASEAN and the wider Asia Pacific region.

In her welcoming remarks, Datuk Dr Hajah Rosmawati Haji Lasuki, J.P, the Organising Chairperson of BE in SABAH 2026 highlighted the forum’s evolution from an initial local initiative into a returning regional platform shaped by continuity, learning and trust.

This year’s programme features **33 speakers from 18 countries and territories**, representing a broad cross-section of the global Business Events ecosystem, including international associations, convention bureaux, destination organisations, consulting and advisory firms, media and market intelligence organisations, as well as venue and hospitality operators.



Many of the speakers are active contributors to major international platforms such as **IMEX**, **AIME**, **ICCA Congress** and **The Meetings Show**, bringing current global insight and market experience into a regional Asia Pacific context.

Across two days, BE in SABAH 2026 will explore strategic issues shaping the Business Events industry, including:

- Business Events as enablers of trade, investment and market confidence
- Regional and cross-border collaboration in Asia Pacific
- Leadership, governance and industry resilience
- Artificial intelligence, innovation and data-led strategies
- Talent development, professional standards and future readiness

The opening keynote was delivered by **Dr Senthil Gopinath**, Chief Executive Officer of the **International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA)**, who shared global perspectives on industry performance, emerging risks and the importance of collaboration and standards in sustaining long-term growth.

Beyond dialogue, BE in SABAH 2026 incorporates structured pathways for collaboration, including the exchange of memoranda of understanding involving the Sabah International Convention Centre and international as well as local partners. These collaborations focus on knowledge exchange, capacity-building and destination development, and are intended to progress through continued engagement beyond the forum.

Jointly organised by the **Sabah International Convention Centre** and **Malaysian Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (MACEOS) Sabah Chapter**, BE in SABAH 2026 is supported by national and regional partners committed to advancing professional standards and long-term industry development across the Asia Pacific Business Events ecosystem.

The official opening of BE in SABAH 2026 marks the start of two days of focused exchange, reinforcing the forum's role as a regional working platform — one that supports meaningful collaboration, practical outcomes and sustained relevance for the industry.

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**BE in SABAH Secretariat**

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## **ABOUT SICC**

Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC) is owned by Innoprise Corporation Sdn Bhd of Yayasan Sabah Group – a state sanctioned organization in Sabah, Malaysia. SICC is the largest waterfront purpose-built convention, exhibition and entertainment facility in East Malaysia with a total function space of 153,197sqm. The gross built-up of the complex is 60,514sqm on a 6-hectare site. The multi-functional complex with its well-designed floor plan and extensive pre-function areas are well suited for a wide range of public and private events. For more information, please visit [siccsabah.com](http://siccsabah.com) or follow us on social media – [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

## **About MACEOS Sabah Chapter**

The Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS) Sabah Chapter represents the collective voice of Business Events organisers and suppliers in Sabah. It brings together industry practitioners across organising, venue services, logistics and event support to advance professional standards and strengthen collaboration within the Business Events ecosystem.

**BE in SABAH Secretariat**

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