

## THE LEADING COMMUNITY OF CHINA'S TOP TRAVEL BUYERS

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### **WFCMS counts on MICE to spread awareness about traditional Chinese Medicine**

*WFCMS is playing an extensive role in the development of traditional Chinese Medicine, both within the country and outside China. And organizing meetings and congresses for various stakeholders is an integral part of the overall undertaking .*

**ITB China, Ritesh Gupta** - China has been proactively taking initiatives to propel the advancement of traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and working on ways for international co-operation to create new drivers of shared development.

In this context, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) is actively facilitating sharing of knowledge and information about Chinese theoretical research, clinical experience etc. with other countries via meetings and conferences.

WFCMS, which has over 60% of its MICE customers from mainland China, including from Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong, and Southern China, and also has 10% from overseas members, from USA and European countries, expects the MICE segment to growth in the coming years.

“The overall demand in the MICE is growing dramatically. The trade associations both in China and abroad render great space to MICE, and customers expect a further better chance for business. And also the government is open to MICE, which is very important,” mentioned *Li Xinxue, Department of International Liaison, Office for World Congress of Chinese Medicine, Office for the Belt and Road of TCM, World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies*. She added: “...in the next two years, we believe our meetings, conventions and exhibitions will increase 20%.”

### **Spreading awareness about TCM**

WFCMS is playing an extensive role in the development of TCM. For instance, the team is gathering a group of domestic and foreign medical experts in various fields for clinical research and product development. There is also a talent exchange programme. All of this calls for regular interactions, be it for small group meetings or even big congresses. Explaining the role of her organization, Li shared, “I work in an NGO in the field of healthcare and traditional medicine. It’s not a company but a federation. We will have organized four to five international conferences every year, and each conference may cover 800 people from more than 20 or up to 30 countries. And also will organize other medium meetings, like will cover 200 to 500 people. And we, as federation, have more than 190 branch committees, and each committee has one or two meetings each year. So in total we have more than 200 MICE events, including academic conference and inter-continental communications.”

Li shared that WFCMS usually offers a spectrum of services, and the list includes visa, helping with itinerary in terms of air tickets and accommodation, plus local city tour service for the congress delegates. Also, the organization links local medical society and institutions with delegates, and introduce cooperative programs for various parties.

“Our congress is a huge party time for TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) doctors and practitioners all over the world, and we welcome various kinds of parallel sessions. For example, during the 16th WCCM in Budapest November 2019, we had three comprehensive academic sessions, 21 parallel sessions, six workshops, nine signing ceremonies, one new book launch, 20 stands exhibition, and had 5 teams, including doctors, students, decision makers and enterprisers to Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway afterwards,” explained Li.

### **Almost equal spread of domestic and foreign MICE**

“Overseas MICE business is 40% percentage, and 60% domestic,” shared Li.

Li expects following destinations in China and in foreign markets to be popular for MICE going forward in the next three years:

1. China: Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Yunnan Province
2. Abroad: Central East European, South Africa and Asia

“We serve healthcare-related customers, and they expect us to offer cooperative and communicative path to Belt and Road countries and areas. And we would like to introduce our overseas members to China,” said Li.

When Chinese customers travel to a destination for MICE, following factors are taken into consideration before finalizing the venue: business relation, the associated cost, the academic value to medical practitioners, and the overall city attraction.

“(Prior to opting for a destination) we make sure the theme is closely related to the business of our customers, and dig out the meaning of this new city (that is being considered). Actually, the cities of each congress are totally new to 70% delegates, and we tend to provide academic, industrial and governmental cooperative chance to them,” shared Li.

As for the challenges in the travel MICE business going forward, Li referred to need for more sponsors, better qualified PCO or professional conference organizers and the overall government support.

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