



Destination Seoul

Why GO? Fuelled by the
adrenalin of the Pyeongchang
Winter Olympics, Seoul is flush
with new hotels and venues that
blend MICE functionality with
creative and cultural offerings.

PHOTO CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES

Sunrise on Deogyusan mountains
covered with snow in winter, Korea



Oil Tank Culture Park, Seoul

in 2017 and 2018 so far. These include the new RYSE, a design-centred Autograph Collection hotel in Hongdae, as well as Lotte Hotel Seoul's Executive Tower, which will reopen this September with 278 guestrooms and four meeting rooms following a year-long renovation.

New lease of life

Seoul's recent urban renewal projects are giving planners even more exciting venue options for meetings. Even though such developments cost more than tearing down and rebuilding, the city is betting on the long-term benefits that heritage venues bring to the public as well as to the MICE industry. Park shares that spaces like the Oil Tank Culture Park and Baesan, a former warehouse turned creative venue, have even become Seoul MICE Alliance members.

"Urban renewal projects create more unconventional, captivating spaces in Seoul for MICE events. Thanks to urban renewal projects, you not only get funky, fun spaces – you also get a glimpse of Seoul's history, too."

As Seoul's large-scale event capacity approaches its limits, new upgrades are on the horizon: from 2019 to 2022, SETEC MICE Complex will be rebuilt and expanded to double its site area. By 2025, Coex and its surrounds will also have morphed into the 414,205sqm Jamsil International Exchange Complex, an international MICE hub with exhibition halls, hotels, and entertainment galore. ■

Keeping it fresh

Seoul's new hotspots cater to younger global groups seeking the "Hallyuwood" experience

WORDS BROOKE THIO

Seoul may appear nothing like Los Angeles, but it's home to a behemoth entertainment industry that has produced world-famous movies, television dramas, and pop stars – like boyband SHINee, who were appointed honorary MICE ambassadors by the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) in June.

shopped for K-pop or K-drama-related merchandise."

In order to match tourist growth as well as meet capacity demands for the Pyeongchang Olympics, Seoul's hotel boom has also seen 119 new hotels added

This new plan to utilise Hallyu to enhance MICE appeal has been a long time coming, given its proven success in attracting tourists. "We are seeing more incentive groups, especially from Southeast Asia, seeking Hallyu-themed MICE activities," says Jin-Hyeok Park, director of the Seoul Convention Bureau, Seoul Tourism Organization.

"Recent incentive trip participants, for example, visited Hallyu theme park MBC World, hosted a K-pop dance contest at their gala dinner, tried K-pop dance classes at SMTOWN@coexartium, and



A K-pop dance demonstration.

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– Jin-Hyeok Park, Director, Seoul Convention Bureau

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