



Wind Energy Asia in Kaohsiung is the largest wind energy event in Taiwan

The show goes on for Wind Energy Asia

Words: Robert Campbell, Executive VP at Interplan International Corp

Even a global pandemic couldn't put Wind Energy Asia off its stride, as visitors flocked to the event in person and virtually to find out what was new and to network at the largest, most international wind energy exhibition and forum in Taiwan.



At Wind Energy Asia, we are getting used to this: a mild pandemic in Taiwan, based on travel restrictions to enter the island including a 14-day quarantine, makes attendance from international players in-person extremely difficult to say the least. However, there are several factors that allowed for a strong event despite all this.

We rely on a large part of the wind industry having their Asian headquarters in Taiwan, enjoying strong intellectual property protection, a free market that is developing ahead of most other Asian markets like Japan, Korea or Vietnam, and which even in 2035 will still be much larger than any other.

WEA's upgraded virtual platform was also critical for many exhibitors wanting to enter the market by exhibiting remotely and allowing thousands of visitors to get a feel for the industry in Taiwan from afar. This was upgraded this year so that exhibitors did not have to be online the whole time, but only when meetings



The hybrid pavilion allowed virtual exhibitors to interact with real visitors

were requested or scheduled on the platform.

For exhibitors that could not come, a number of options were open for them, including joining their trade office who took space in the hall and sent personnel to introduce their capabilities for them. They could also take space on the hybrid pavilion where they had a poster presenting their capabilities and dedicated WEA personnel to interface with real visitors who showed interest in their information.

Many companies attending the exhibition also took a booth on the WEA virtual platform. With a well-designed rendering of a booth where they could upload videos, posters, descriptions and documents to promote their services, visitors could get a strong overview, exchange business cards, leave messages and book meetings.

However, there is no doubt that in-person is preferred by all and the quality of discussions and networking is a totally different one than when meeting virtually. Many companies have tried virtual once, had a poor experience and refuse to try it again. This is understandable, but unfortunate given the potential and cost savings of digital. It will be interesting to see whether virtual continues to exist once in-person events are possible without restrictions again.

Some of the numbers of the event include 3,604 online registered visitors from 44 countries, leading to a total of 28,186 views and interactions on the platform. Whether to watch the forum sessions, investigate the market or directly to contact exhibitors and visitors, the amount of traffic was impressive. There were also 2,585 in-person or physical attendees over the three days, with 152 companies from 16 countries actively taking part, either exhibiting or speaking at the Forum, at the Bright Outlook session or in Technical Seminars.

Exhibition space extended over an area of 195 booths, with five countries having pavilions, namely Scotland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Denmark and France. And a total of 33 journalists attended. Media mentions are still being counted, but with a near doubling of the number of WEA media partners and big improvements in our social media, particularly on LinkedIn and Facebook, the increase in awareness has skyrocketed.

The rundown of the three days was impressive and busy. On day one, the opening ceremony took place, with its highlight being speeches from government officials and trade representatives. The ribbon-cutting was followed by MTIC's GWO Blade Repair Training Certification Ceremony and the official launch of Taiya Renewable Energy's local O&M team. Great ceremonies showing the interest in the industry by young Taiwanese college graduates and the strengthening of the supply chain to meet increasing localization needs.

The afternoon brought our Bright Outlook session, with presentations on the subject of localization from key industry leaders, and a webinar by NORWEP to highlight the prowess of Norwegian companies and their contribution to Taiwan's wind industry. All were very well visited.

The forum held on the second day consisted of 28 sessions by key industry professionals from both Taiwan and abroad. The morning focused more on policy from government agencies, while the afternoon sessions covered floating wind, operations and maintenance, onshore wind, education and training, among others. This year only two sessions were streamed in from speakers that were not able to travel, given that speaking slots were quickly taken by the local industry, being well aware of the prestige and coverage that speaking at WEA brings with it.



Opening ceremony

The site tour to MIRDC's training center (MITC) was a highlight of the morning of the third day and technical seminars dominated the stage in the afternoon.

WEA again had a vessel in the harbor next to the venue. The Kaohsiung Exhibition Center is unique with its position next to Kaohsiung Harbor to be able to offer this, allowing attendees to get a true feel for the industry. Thanks to Asia Marine Salvage based in Kaohsiung for making this possible.

What our visitors said about the show

Again, exhibitors were extremely happy with the quality of visitors, remarking that because WEA was purely about wind you were always talking to people from the trade which 'cut the fluff'.

'I started my job a year ago by attending Wind Energy Asia, and was immediately convinced it was a great show, particularly for the supply chain, where Scotland needed to be,' remarked Kevin Liu, Regional Representative, Head of Energy APAC, Scottish Development International in Taipei.

'So we decided to bring a delegation of 17 companies to the show and in the context of the pandemic it's miraculous that the show could go ahead and attract so many people. We have had really rewarding conversations with potential partners and suppliers and so many people at the show. I would highly recommend those companies who have not exhibited yet to definitely do so at WEA 2023.'

'Yet again Denmark has a pavilion at Wind Energy Asia because it is a great event at which to meet the right people in wind in Taiwan,' commented Bo Mønsted, Director of

The Trade Council of Denmark, Taipei. 'Taiwan is a very important wind energy market in itself, as well as being a gateway to the broader Asian region in this industry. We are confident that we will be back next year with even more Danish companies on board.'

'This is our first time exhibiting at Wind Energy Asia and it has been a great experience for us,' stated Judith Huang, Global Business Development Director of CIG Power Products. 'We want to thank the organizer, Intercon Convention Management, for their efficient connection of all members of the supply chain to the developers.'

'The event is very well planned. with all exhibitors being carefully selected. They have provided a lot of guidance, tips and advice to make sure our presentation is effective, and we can make the most of it. For sure we will be back, so see you next year.'

Paul J. Cassingham, Senior Legal Counsel at Eiger Law in Taipei commented, 'We have

been honored to be sponsors at Wind Energy Asia 2022. As a specialist in renewables, Eiger has found WEA to be great to meet and network with suppliers and developers, both in person here in Kaohsiung as with the many from outside Taiwan, who have attended virtually over the web. Well worthwhile for us as I am sure it has been for all others involved.'

After his forum presentation, Yu-Foong Chong, Country Manager Taiwan, RWE Renewables said, 'This is our fourth time at WEA. It is a great event and we will keep coming back to it. Meeting old acquaintances and new friends and despite the continued closed borders, the turnout has been really great again with the forum attendance exceptional. See you next year.'

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There was a total of 35 stage sessions at WEA 2022