

Yuelai International Convention & Exhibition City Shaping Yuelai' s 'Sustainable Development Community' via City- Industry Integration

'Ecology is the base of Yuelai while exhibition is the soul of the industries of Yuelai; it is a key strategy to build Yuelai into a "sustainable development community" via industry-city integration.'

said by **Shirly Song**

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Chairperson and General Manager of Chongqing International Expo Center Co., Ltd



Yuelai International Convention & Exhibition City (Yuelai) is in Liangjiang New Area, Chongqing Municipality. Chongqing is the hub of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle which is the 4th growth pole of the Chinese economy, the only municipality directly under the jurisdiction of central government, the economic center of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and the national central city of China. Chongqing Liangjiang New Area is China' s 3rd national-level development area approved by the State Council, following Shanghai Pudong and Tianjin Binhai, and is an important development engine driving the economic development of Chongqing.



Yuelai is high-value city characterized with CQEXPO' s international exhibition venue as a carrier of development, the exhibition industry chain as the theme of development and the ecological protection as the orientation of value. Yuelai covers a land area of 18.67 square kilometers with resident population of nearly 100,000, where Yuelai Investment Group Co., Ltd has assumed responsibility for infrastructure construction, ecological management and industry development. Yuelai Investment Group Co., Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary representing CQEXPO, is hereby applying for 2024 UFI Sustainability Award.

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Executive Summary

An exhibition industry entity, with exhibition venues and facilities, advocating for sustainable industry chain practices, will surely bring positive impact to the industry development on a long-term basis. However, on top of that, if an exhibition-oriented city is shaped to bring together all exhibition industry players and exhibition projects within the region, or to even gather infrastructures, parks and urban residents to form a "sustainable development community" based upon the exhibition industry, it will surely bring about a greater significance to the sustainable development of the whole convention and exhibition industry. Yuelai is just such an innovative "Sustainable Development Community" contributing itself to accomplishment of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Aiming at shaping a "Sustainable Development Community," an RMB 10-billion turnover exhibition industry cluster well established in Yuelai

a. Yuelai' s innovative urban design builds a "sustainable development community"

In 2010, the city of Chongqing initiated construction of Chongqing' s convention and exhibition center, which was selected in Yuelai, whilst Yuelai Investment Group was founded and assigned to urban and industry development, acting as both a government agency and an enterprise. This is regarded as an innovative mode of urban development and management.

At the very beginning of urban construction of Yuelai, Yuelai Investment Group set forth the strategic plan of building a "Sustainable Development Community" via integrated development of city with industry. The objective is to drive industrial development by urban development; drive green exhibition development by ecological development; and drive stakeholders in the exhibition industry value chain to jointly practice the sustainable development idea in such a manner that sustainable development is not only a policy requirement but is also a common value created by all industry practitioners.

(1) In terms of policy provision, for instance:

In 2018, Yuelai Investment Group promulgated the "zero plastic" regulation - Requesting catering services in Yuelai to use recyclable or environment-friendly degradable tableware, thus eliminating the use of disposable plastic tableware in the exhibition area. This measure has caused exhibitors and visitors in Yuelai to contribute to accomplishment of sustainable development goals, having reduced plastic wastes by more than 3 million tons in a period of 5 years.



In 2020, Yuelai Investment Group circulated the Opinions on Further Promotion of High-Quality Development of Yuelai International Convention and Exhibition City, which provides for an annual support of RMB50 million yuan to the convention and exhibition development in Yuelai, having attracted landing of SDGs-contributive international exhibitions such as Informa CCBD (China Building and Decoration Materials Expo) and RX CIPM (China International Pharmaceutical Machinery Expo).

(2) In terms of value creation, for instance:

Yuelai Investment Group spent RMB6 billion yuan in newbuild of China's top green digital exhibition venue – the EXPO Center, which is also a carrier for Yuelai's exhibition industry value chain development.

Up to the end of 2023, Yuelai hosted a total of 2,805 exhibition activities, with the use of the exhibition area of 18.061 million square meters, including a total of 63 international exhibitions, 78 exhibitions of use of above 100,000 square meters, 659 conferences with more than 500 participants as well as 10 self-organized distinctive exhibitions, having lifted a cumulative economic turnover of RMB335 billion yuan.

In the 10 years from 2013 to 2023, Yuelai has grown from a farming-based rural area with per capita GDP of less than RMB30,000 yuan into a convention and exhibition city with per capita GDP of over RMB100,000 yuan as backed up by the exhibition industry and other modern service industries, having realized the sustainable development and economic growth.



b. Unified eco-city planning lays solid foundation for green exhibition development

Yuelai Investment Group followed the conception of a “sustainable development community” and designed the EXPO center in a green manner, which encompassed 18 schemes covering ecological protection, environment-friendly structural construction and integration of a park system, all of which have been completed as planned. Also, some 30 eco-city evaluation indicators like the 40% plantation rate, 500-meter 100% park cover age, urban animal and plant diversity have been accomplished. Up to now, in Yuelai, CQEXPO has built 66 parklike scenes, 4 green corridors, 3 hilly city footpaths, 25-kilometer fitness trail, 6,520 mu of urban green space, 30-plus flowering species in 18 plant families and 85 visiblenatural bird species. Within the area of Yuelai, there were 298 level-1 air quality days in 2023, which provide CQEXPO's exhibitors and visitors with a healthy ecological environment, due to the healthy venue covered by the healthy city and community.



Among the healthy environment, the most innovative and effective ecological urban planning is best reflected by the self-circulating rainwater collection system and the centralized renewable clean energy utilization in the Yuelai Sponge City:

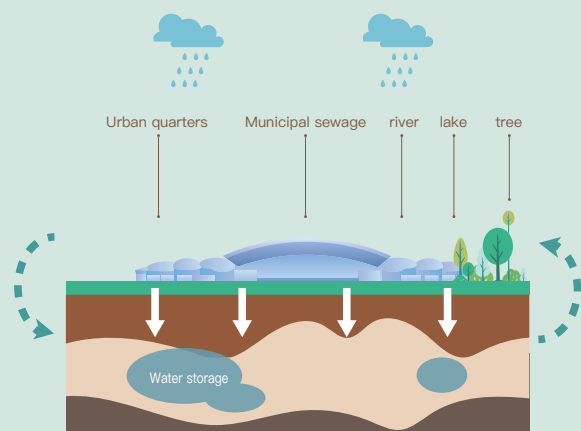
(1) Sponge City is an important part of planning of Yuelai eco-city powering industries

Yuelai is one of the first number of China's national green ecological demonstrative urban areas as well as the first of the several national sponge city pilot areas, where, by changing the traditional way of direct discharge of rainwater into the river, 80% of the rainwater in a city is innovatively absorbed and stored in a manner similar to sponging, without loss of rainwater. The advantages of sponge city are as follows:

- The problem of waterlogging in Yuelai is solved, where “no rainwater is accumulated in case of heavy rain while no shoes get wet in case of light rain” which also effectively mitigates the risk of waterlogging.
- In the process of absorbing rainwater, natural elements such as organism, soil, sand and gravel can naturally filtrate and purify rainwater to reduce urban pollution.
- Via evaporation of stored rainwater, the excess heat of the city is taken away, which effectively reduces the heat island effect of the city and indirectly reduces the energy consumption of air conditioning.

The operation principle of sponge city can be illustrated using CQEXPO's design as an example:

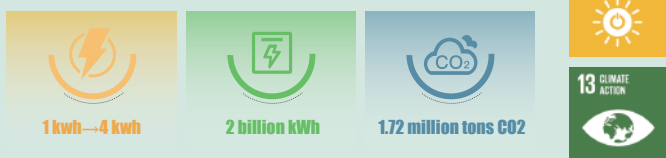
- All outdoor floors of the EXPO Center are paved with permeable bricks and asphalt road surface to form a permeable layer which ensures quick infiltration of normal rainwater into the underground storing layer, thus achieving the target of “no shoes get wet in case of light rain.”
- Meanwhile, CQEXPO has built a rainwater drainage system such as open trench, rainwater diversion trench and overflow outlet, which ensure orderly collection and discharge of heavy rainfall, thus achieving “no rainwater is accumulated in case of heavy rain.”
- CQEXPO has innovatively built an artificial wetland in the central square acting as storing layer, which not only realizes temporary storage of excess rainwater coming from permeable layer but also realizes a satisfactory combination of natural ecology with the exhibition venue.
- The rainwater in the storing layer is slowly purified through the water stable filter layer, which is composed of planting soil, strainer and gravel layer to intensively purify the rainwater in urban areas to reduce pollution.
- The purified rainwater is piped into the underground storage tank of the EXPO Center, where the reserved rainwater is used for centralized energy supply as needed.



(2) Centralized energy supply is an important planning of Yuelai which contributes to reduction of carbon emissions

Rather than discharging rainwater into river, the rainwater collected by sponge city is reclaimed for reuse in centralized energy supply, which is based upon the water source heat pump technology. The process involves the use of the collected rainwater as cold source, the recycled water of Yuelai WWTP as heat source and the use of small amount of high-potential electrical energy input, so as to realize transfer of low-potential heat energy to high-potential heat energy via special piping of water through buildings, where, in summer, the heat in the building is transferred to the collected rainwater and Jialing River water to achieve supply of cooling, whilst in winter, the heat is extracted from the reclaimed water of Yuelai WWTP to achieve heat supply. At present, the centralized energy supply has covered the whole area of the EXPO Center, providing exhibitors and visitors with renewable clean energy, each kWh of which consumed by the value chain of Yuelai is produced green and environment friendly.

According to calculation, each kWh of energy consumed by Yuelai's water source heat pump can bring users over 4 kWh of cooling / heat energy. A total of over 2 billion kWh of energy saving has been achieved in the last 3 years, which is equivalent to reduction of 1.72 million tons of CO2 emission from coal-fired power generation.



c. Establishment of a green exhibition complete value chain to drive urban industry development

With the eco-system development and the green exhibition industry growth, Yuelai Investment Group has set up 5 subsidiaries wholly owned by CQEXPO, the scope of business of which covers the upstream exhibition, the midstream venue operation and the downstream exhibition services, directly employing 1,080 local exhibition practitioners. Basing upon the 5 subsidiary companies, the Yuelai Exhibition Corporate Base has been formed, which accommodates 150-plus enterprises from the relevant industries like logistics, catering, hotel, design, booth setup, cultural tourism and advertising, having created 12,000 jobs, to the benefit of nearly 100,000 local residents. This forms Yuelai's complete green exhibition value chain, which is the result of the joint establishment of the "sustainable development community".



In the process of promoting the sustainable development of the green exhibition value chain, Yuelai has taken the following measures:

- Formulation of industry standard: In 2016, CQEXPO was the only exhibition venue operator participating in the launch of China Green Exhibition Alliance, which is the only official sustainable exhibition industry organization sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, having functioned as the vice secretary-general until now. CQEXPO, as the vice secretary-general of China Green Exhibition Alliance, was delegated by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce to participate in drafting of 2 national green industry standards, namely the Booth Classification & Technical Specification, the Display Equipment, Terminology and Booth Profiling; CQEXPO also took the lead in formulation of the Green Exhibition Venue Criterion, which is a national industry standard applicable to exhibition venue, having provided a theoretical basis and practical guideline to establishment of Yuelai's green exhibition value chain.



- Media publicity: Yuelai attaches great importance to media publicity of the green exhibition idea via integration with brand image promotion. Since 2018, CQEXPO has spent RMB750,000 yuan each year in media matrix to give publicity to the green exhibition concept as well as promotion of green exhibition in local media platforms such as the locations of airport, public buses and light rail lines of Chongqing, aiming to continue promotion of the public awareness of Yuelai's sustainable development of green exhibition value chain.



- Green booth setup: Yuelai has established its main business and exhibition service company - Chongqing Yuelai Guobo Arts and Sports Exhibition Corporation, which, relying on CQEXPO, actively guides booth builders to jointly promote the green setup of booth by a) advocacy for green setup following CQEXPO's formulated green setup specification and provision of incentives to green setup; b) advocacy for modular booth assembly to achieve zero site fabrication, zero noise and zero dust during the site setup; c) advocacy for trash recycling to increase reuse of materials and to reduce waste; d) advocacy for the use of green and standardized booth profiles. Since the full-scale promotion of green booth setup in 2018, zero site work has been realized through full assembly of booth, which not only reduces cost of setup but also reduces nearly 300,000 tons of setup-resulted rubbish. The green booth setup involved purchase of nearly 2,000 sets of standard green booth profiles which enabled setup of more than 100,000 standard booths, where the exhibition was noticeably labeled with the green signage of CQEXPO.



d. The city is people-oriented, so that the "sustainable development community" can affect everyone

In Yuelai, the smallest unit of the value chain is not an enterprise, but people, everyone is a unit of the value chain. Therefore, the philosophy of establishment of "sustainable development community" also applies to the sustainable development of people.

(1) Diversified “exhibition + sports” development to provide next generation with high-quality physical education

Supported by CQEXPO, Yuelai built up its YUE Sports in 2023, which is the first Ligue 1 China Youth Training Center, as rated by the General Administration of Sport of China. Yue Sports possesses a floor area of 83,000 square meters, which covers a sport-education integrated center encompassing 9 facilities including an outdoor football field, outdoor track and field training ground, indoor fencing, basketball, badminton, table tennis, volleyball, swimming and baseball as well as a children sport center, sport diagnosis and rehabilitation, multi-purpose fitness and physical strength room, restaurant, cafes and exhibition hall.



What makes it different from traditional sports venues, YUE Sports adheres to the concept of “sport is part of life” and focuses on sport-education integration, having built up a club-featured sport base for primary and secondary schools as well as for sport enthusiasts aged 4-18. Hence, YUE Sports has become a real sense “second classroom” for children. Since its inception, YUE Sports has executed strategic cooperation agreement with nearly 50 primary and secondary schools within 20 kilometers of the YUE Sports, having provided full-cycle sport career growth and training to more than 2,000 teenagers and children.



(2) Advocation for gender equality while making “sustainable development community” to be a public arena for female exhibition practitioners

Yuelai Investment Group ensures the equal rights of women in career development, providing job opportunities and promotion opportunities without any prejudice. In all its 5 subsidiaries, Yuelai Investment Group gives encouragement to women in career development. At Yuelai Investment Group, 51% of staffs are female; 55% of mid-level management are female; 43% of senior management are female; and the chairperson of the Group has been female for 2 terms across 8 consecutive years.



Conclusion

At present, Yuelai utilizes the city as a platform to promote industry development and has built the “sustainable development community” with the following features:

- An innovative urban management system makes sustainable development a common understanding among the global exhibition value chain.
- An ecological urban planning lays solid foundation for sustainable industry development.
- The green exhibition value chain is being extended to facilitate urban development.
- Children-centric education and women-centric career development are being promoted.

Going forward, Yuelai is prepared to

- Promote and expand the development of Yuelai’s main business while strengthening the upstream extension of the green exhibition value chain.
- Hold exhibitions outside of city; organize exhibitors’ participation in exhibition; and undertake outsourced venue management outside of city to pass on the conception of “sustainable development community” to other part of China and the world.

Yuelai, in Chinese, means a place that pleases people nearby and attracts people from afar; a place that pleases Chongqing and attracts the world.

Looking forward to meeting you in Yuelai !