

FORWARD CASE STUDY: ILIGHT MARINA BAY FESTIVAL

Successful iLight Marina Bay Festival Draws 500k Attendees, Saves 15 Tonnes of Greenhouse Gas

Festivals are an important part of the cultural “software” of a city, giving citizens the chance for recreation and enriching activities. They’re also intensive in planning, execution, and impacts—both positive and negative. Working alongside the event organizer, Smart Light Singapore (SLS), and event presenter, Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Forward was responsible for the sustainability management of [iLight Marina Bay Festival](#), Asia’s first “sustainable light art festival.”

"Very big thanks to Forward for rallying up stakeholders...to take up the 'Switch Off, Turn Up' campaign which gathered good momentum, saving a net 19,664.0 kWh and 15.01 tonne CO_{2e} removed."

- Mary-Anne Kyriakou, Festival Director/Founder, Smart Light Singapore Ltd



Situation

Following on the heels of the immensely popular and well-attended Smartlight Sydney, the iLight Marina Bay Festival was an ambitious event. Covering the entire perimeter of Marina Bay in Singapore with light art-- namely energy saving LED technology-- it used the medium in new and creative ways. It was a cultural coup for Singapore, an urban invigoration exercise for URA, and a complex operation for SLS to set in motion.

Challenge

How could an art festival serve a larger purpose? How could awareness be raised on environmental and urban issues like climate change and light pollution? How could environmental impacts, economic outputs, cultural and social engagement be

Client:

Smartlight Singapore (SLS),
Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)

Project:

iLight Marina Bay Festival

Service:

Sustainability management, project management, content and communications

Industry/Sector:

Public/Govt

Challenge:

Measure, monitor, and improve sustainability performance of a multi-stakeholder urban art festival.

Results:

Reporting to the festival director, Forward championed the following successes-

- Creation of the [pre-event sustainability plan](#) including areas of environmental, economic, cultural, and social significance.
- Enlisting help of independent environmental monitoring company [InStep](#).
- Stakeholder engagement with seven core event groups to ensure delivery of sustainability plan initiatives.
- Creation of the energy saving "Switch Off, Turn Up" campaign with property owners which saved 15.01t CO_{2e}, or 13% of the festival's original footprint.
- Provided [public talk at festival symposium](#) on sustainability initiatives.
- Served as "face" for media and public on sustainability issues.
- Featured in Reuters, Washington Post, and other global media features for the festival.
- Completion of the [first sustainability report](#) at the festival's conclusion in cooperation with InStep, outlining achievements and areas for improvement.

For more information, visit:

iLight Marina Bay Festival
www.ilightmarinabay.sg

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considered and balanced in the same picture? Could sustainability be justifiably positioned at the heart of an art event? What considerations for future civic events could the URA take on board in their planning? Both SLS and the URA wanted to leave a positive mark across all their bottom lines, and inspire others to follow suit.

Solution

Forward was engaged for its broad experience in sustainability and stakeholder management. Ahead of the event we created a sustainability plan documenting the economic, environmental, social, and cultural aspects of the event. We also championed a "Switch Off, Turn Up" energy efficiency campaign with property owners in Singapore to create reductions in their footprint to help 'offset' iLight energy usage—a programme which resulted in significant energy and greenhouse gas reductions.

During the festival period, a management and monitoring process was then put in place with the help of a monitoring company, InStep. Festival sustainability initiatives were communicated through media channels in tandem with the event's PR agency, and also through public forums and website communications. At the festival's conclusion, a comprehensive report was prepared outlining the successes and areas for improvement for the festival organizers.



Evaluation

The iLight Marina Bay Festival was immensely challenging and had numerous positive outcomes: approximately 500,000 festival visitors, 10,200 small event/symposia attendees, some SG\$22 million in economic value generated, a net 19,664.0 kWh and 15.01t CO_{2e} saved, 655L of biodiesel fuel used to power select art pieces, over 350 media features, and nearly 6 million website hits. For future events, the team learned: the planning process should begin at least six months ahead of festival launch with sustainability criteria in mind, this criteria needs inclusion in tendering and contracts, and events should conform to British Standard 8901 for sustainable event management.

The Future

There are plans for upcoming festivals around the APAC region, and Forward will be involved with these events to help festival organizers take their successes to the next level.

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