

UMT NEWSLETTER

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Ocean of Discoveries for Global Sustainability



In this issue

- ④ UMT Hosts Kick-off Meeting for RM4.1 Million Project Involving Four Countries
- ④ UMT Signs MoU with Indonesian Association
- ④ UMT Signs MoU with Nature NGO
- ④ Ramadan Baskets Put a Smile on Orang Asli Children's Faces
- ④ Roselpreneur Helps Improve the Deaf's Standard of Living



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The Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, advocates for universities and all higher education institutions (IPT) to be granted the freedom and trust to delve into new ideas and knowledge, enabling them to compete more vigorously both regionally and globally. At their core, universities were established as bastions of knowledge among others to enrich the lives of the people and the nation. As the ivory towers, universities must continue to push the boundaries of knowledge while fortifying their existing intellectual foundations.

To remain pertinent in an era defined by cutthroat competition, universities must brace themselves for the challenges of tomorrow, ensuring they remain the preferred choice for students seeking to further their education beyond the confines of traditional schooling.

Shockingly, according to the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Financial Review, fewer than 10% of students express interest in pursuing higher education. This disinterest may stem from the realization that a university degree doesn't guarantee employment commensurate with qualifications, compounded by the escalating costs of tuition fees.

In related to that, UMT remains steadfast in its commitment to research and innovation, recognizing it as a social obligation to democratize knowledge for the benefit of all. One of our flagship initiatives, "The HEIs for Sustainable Blue Economy in Malaysia and Indonesia (SustainaBlue)", valued at €797,838.00 (RM4,088 million), seeks to spearhead research into sustainable blue economy practices, benefiting local communities and students alike across higher education institutions. This collaborative effort involves partners from Malaysia, Indonesia, Greece, and Cyprus, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and expertise.

Moreover, in our quest to bridge the gap between UMT and marginalized local communities, the Roselprenuer Project has engaged nearly 100 members of the hearing-impaired community. We hope that our endeavours will contribute significantly to UMT's support for the Malaysian Madani Government's noble ambition of eradicating entrenched poverty within our borders.

At UMT, community development stands as one of the cornerstones of our pursuit of excellence. Knowledge, we believe, only holds true value when it is accessible and applicable to those it serves, rather than merely confined to dusty tomes on library shelves!



Zukiferee bin Ibrahim
Executive Editor

CONTENTS

- 1 UMT Hosts Kick-off Meeting for RM4.1 Million Project Involving Four Countries**
- 2 UMT Signs MoU with Indonesian Association**
- 3 UMT Signs MoU with Nature NGO**
- 4 Ramadan Baskets Put a Smile on Orang Asli Children's Faces**
- 5 Roselprenuer Helps Improve the Deaf's Standard of Living**

UMT Hosts Kick-off Meeting for RM4.1 Million Project Involving Four Countries

Associate Prof. Ts. Dr. Kesaven A/L Bhubalan, Faculty of Marine Science and Environment

Following UMT's appointment as the coordinator for the ERASMUS+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) project worth €797,838.00 (RM4,088 million), the university successfully hosted the Project Kick-off Meeting (KOM) in March, attended by the project's partners from Malaysia, Indonesia, Greece, and Cyprus.

As the coordinator of the project titled The HEIs for Sustainable Blue Economy in Malaysia and Indonesia (SustainaBlue), UMT and its team of researchers are responsible for spearheading the project and ensuring cooperations from the partners in order to successfully achieve the goals.

During the two-day meeting, partners were introduced, and a discussion was initiated to understand the project's benefits for local communities and students of higher educational institution (HEIs) in terms of sustainable blue economy. Also included in the agenda was devising a plan for sustaining a long term collaboration between UMT and the partners.

Items discussed at the meeting were the different work packages, project tasks and deliverables, as well as partners' roles and responsibilities.

The SustainaBlue project is expected to:

- Improve the employability potential of students of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia and Indonesia by developing new and innovative curricula in the blue economy.
- Improve the training of teachers in innovative blue economy curriculum development and implementation.
- Enhance the teaching mechanisms for HEI staff and students, innovation, knowledge base, digital capacities, as well as enhance the internationalisation of Malaysian and Indonesian HEIs, through training/capacity building, transfer of knowledge, and exchange of experience with European HEIs.
- Stimulate cooperation, capacity building and exchange of good practice among HEIs and other stakeholders in Malaysia, Indonesia, Cyprus, and Greece.
- Foster the strengthening of Malaysian and Indonesian HEIs' wider economic and social ecosystems, through knowledge transfer activities promoting sustainable



blue economy in local communities, and the operation of Sustainable Blue Economy Centres.

The delegates had the opportunity to meet UMT Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar; Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research & Innovation, Prof. ChM. Dr. Marinah Mohd Ariffin; Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic & International, Prof. Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim; Director of International Office, Prof. Ts. Dr. Lam Su Shiung; and Director of Research Management Centre, Prof. ChM. Dr. Suhaimi Suratman.

UMT Signs MoU with Indonesian Association

ChM. Asrul Azani Mahmood, Centre of Research & Field Service



UMT's Centre for Research and Field Services (PPPL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with *Persatuan Pengelola Laboratorium Pendidikan Indonesia* (PPLPI), an association related to laboratory management in educational institutions in Indonesia, on 1 April. The signing event took place at UMT's Strategic Communications Centre in Putrajaya.

PPLPI is an association that has been given the mandates by several ministries in Indonesia to improve the talent and competency of laboratory staff in the country. At present it is estimated that more than 300 educational institutions in Indonesia have registered with PPLPI.

The collaborative network between the two agencies is considered strategic as both are involved in the management of laboratories.

The proposal for a collaboration was brought up at the end of 2023 following several benchmarking visits to UMT by PPLPI, where several discussion sessions were held.

In February this year, both parties agreed to form a collaboration focusing on technical aspects such as competency development, laboratory management, laboratory staff mobility, facility utilization, and transfer of technology and innovation. Other than laboratory staff, students and researchers may also participate in the collaboration.

The first joint project after the MoU signing will be the organizing of the 2nd International Seminar on

Laboratory Innovations (NALIS), which will be held from 6 – 7 May at UMT. The event is hoped to serve as a starting point towards the development of competency and talent of laboratory staff in both countries.

For the purpose of improving the laboratory quality based on the ISO17025 accreditation system, UMT will establish a partner for inter laboratory comparison (ILB). This quality system gives the industry the confidence to acquire laboratory services for the purposes of testing, calibrations, and specific confirmations.

Through the MoU, UMT hopes to further improves its service quality, competency development, and technological advancement to become more competitive.

The MoU was signed by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar on behalf of UMT and Pak Sofyan Abdulrahman Arjawi on behalf of PPLPI.

Also present at the signing ceremony for UMT were Professor ChM. Dr. Marinah Mohd Ariffin (Deputy Vice Chancellor -Research & Innovation), Professor Dr. Tengku Sifzizul Tengku Muhammad (Pro Vice Chancellor-Strategies dan Performance), Professor Dr. Fauziah Abu Hasan (Pro Vice Chancellor – Corporate Affairs and Industry Networking), and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasrizal Shaari (PPPL Director). For PPLPI, also in attendance were Eka Fitrianto, Nurwanto, Nandang Hasanudin (Bogor Institute of Agriculture) and Yenni Putri Sari (Universitas Bengkulu).

UMT Signs MoU with Nature NGO

Dr. Siti Norasikin Ismail, Institute of Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainable Development



UMT has constantly conducted programmes for socio-economic improvement in the rural areas, and the latest event involved an activity related to bird watching.

The most recent activity was made possible when UMT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nature Sustainable Ecosystem Society (NEST) on 16 April.

Following the signing, UMT through its Institute of Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (IBTPL) has planned various programmes, including a programme to develop tourist guides among the local community and another to provide exposure to bird watching activities at several locations in the country.

According to Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abd Ghaffar, the collaboration between UMT and NEST will benefit the researchers and the surrounding community.

"The signed MoU will benefit the local community when UMT and NEST combine their resources and expertise to conduct knowledge transfer programmes on biodiversity matters and other activities such as bird watching, which includes introduction to bird species found at specific areas like Kenyir Lake," Prof. Mazlan said.

"This activity will draw the presence of tourists and further boost the economic activity, thus giving extra income to home stay and resort owners as well as food entrepreneurs," he said.

He added that various programmes that benefit the development and tourism sectors at Kenyir Lake can be conducted in the area as UMT has the expertise and research station facilities and receives support from the NGOs.

The collaboration with NEST provides the best platform to conduct research activities and produce impactful publications, through the sharing of expertise in various fields, including biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and environmental sustainability.

At the MoU signing, a launching ceremony of the Bird Watching and Research Workshop was also held. The workshop will be conducted from 3 – 5 May at UMT's Biodiversity Nature Research Station at Kenyir Lake. It will provide exposure to birdwatching techniques and other field activities to participants comprising students, researchers, lecturers, community scientists, and nature lovers.

Ramadan Baskets Put a Smile on Orang Asli Children's Faces

Amirul Salam Hasan, Corporate Communication Office



UMT's Institute of Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (IBTPL), in collaboration with its strategic partners, distributed Ramadan Baskets to children of Orang Asli (the Indigenous People) at Sungai Berua Village in Hulu Terengganu during the recent fasting month.

The Ramadan Basket@Kg Sungai Berua was an initiative by a group of researchers from IBTPL. The effort received support from the Terengganu Education Department, Department of Orang Asli Development, and several other strategic partners from different agencies.

IBTPL Deputy Director Prof. Dr. Khatijah Omar said the programme was held in conjunction with the observance of Ramadan and celebration of Aidil Fitri. The programme was deemed necessary as the Orang Asli community involved are Muslim and in need of assistance.

"We handed out Ramadan Baskets filled with food items and drinks and also some money to children of Orang Asli who have been participating in our Jungle School project," she said.

"We hope this small contribution will brighten up the community and make them more eager to celebrate the coming Raya festival," she added.

Prof. Khatijah expressed thanks to caring individuals and NGOs that provided financial assistance to make the programme a success. The latest event marks the second time such activity has been organized, with the first successfully held last year.

During the Ramadan Basket@Sungai Berua ceremony on 26 March, UMT Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Professor Chm. Dr. Marinah Mohd Ariffin gave out the Ramadan Baskets to selected Orang Asli community.

According to Prof. Khatijah, the Jungle School project has been carried out with participation from teachers at Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Berua, and the project's aim is to instil the motivation to learn among the Orang Asli children so that they will be left behind education-wise.

Jungle School is conducted in a relaxed atmosphere. There are 20 learning slots covering topics such as The Jungle is Ours, Wet Market, Sing Along, Let's Explore the Jungle, Treasure Hunt, and Show and Tell, which have been designed to increase the interest of the children to learn.

Roselpreneur Helps Improve the Deaf's Standard of Living

Amirul Salam Hasan, Corporate Communication Office



Members of a deaf association can finally breathe a sigh of relief when a project initiated by a team of UMT researchers has enabled them to improve their economic well being.

The project leader, Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr. Wan Zaliha Wan Sembok, said she and her team decided to offer help to members of the deaf community after they have successfully carried out a series of research projects for specific target groups.

"In 2020, the number of disabled people registered with the Malaysian Department of Social Welfare was 581265, and 6.3 percent were deaf people. The number of deaf people working in the government and private organizations was low, totalling only 210.

"Therefore, this group must be given the opportunity to improve themselves through acquiring the knowledge and technology relating to agriculture," Dr. Wan Zaliha said.

She added that growing roselle plants and coming up with roselle-based products can help the group, and the activity is suitable for people in the deaf community.

"We introduced this roselle planting project through our knowledge transfer programmes, and we also conducted relevant on-the-field training," she said.

About 100 members of the deaf community have joined the Roselprenuer project. If proved successful, the

project may be offered to every deaf person registered with the state.

"We trained them from the beginning, starting with nursery preparation and followed by planting, maintenance, harvesting, and creating roselle-based products, such as juice, jam, and ice-cream.

The project has been funded by Malaysian Innovation Foundation, which is under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation.

The project is expected to provide the group with an income of RM1000 per month.

The project was first introduced to the group in September 2023. The participants were carefully selected based on their willingness and capability.

The team has conducted several knowledge transfer programmes for the community in the last five years, with participants coming from various backgrounds, such as the underprivileged, single mothers, and the B40 group. These programmes include the fertilizer project, the Terengganu sweet melon project, the vegetable farming project, and the strawberry project. In addition, community farming, or Kebuniti Madani, has provided the deaf community with a good income, enabling them to be self-reliant.

"We hope these knowledge transfer programmes for the community motivate the target groups to escape poverty and improve their quality of life," Dr. Zaliha said.



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a Healthy Ocean
for Future
Generation

1ST ANNOUNCEMENT
TOMSY SYMPOSIUM 2024

THE 4th TROPICAL OCEAN AND MARINE SCIENCES INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

TOMSY2024

28 - 29 October 2024

Kuala Terengganu

Scope

- Coastal and Shelf Seas Dynamics
- Biological Oceanography
- Ocean Biogeochemistry
- Fisheries Oceanography
- Marine Geology and Seabed Mapping
- Marine Pollution
- Satellite Oceanography, Remote Sensing and GIS
- Coastal Geomorphology
- Marine Engineering and Technology
- Marine Data Management and Informatics
- Marine Endangered Species and Conservation
- Marine Biology
- Coral Reef Ecology
- Ocean Governance
- Ocean Literacy
- Blue Economy
- Marine Repository

Important Dates

First Announcement : **15 January 2024**
 Early-bird abstract submission deadline : **31 July 2024**
 Regular abstract submission deadline : **31 August 2024**
 Abstract notification of acceptance : **30 September 2024**
 Final Announcement & payment deadline : **15 October 2024**
 Symposium dates : **28 and 29 October 2024**

Fees

Local participant (Early-bird) : **RM 700**
 Local participant (Normal) : **RM 1000**
 Local student* (Early-bird) : **RM 400**
 Local student* (Normal) : **RM 600**
 International participant (Early-bird) : **USD 350**
 International participant (Normal) : **USD 450**
 International student* (Early-bird) : **USD 200**
 International student* (Normal) : **USD 300**
 Additional abstract (local participant/student) (Early-bird) : **RM 200**
 Additional abstract (local participant/student) (Normal) : **RM 500**
 Additional abstract (international participant/student) (Early-bird) : **USD 100**
 Additional abstract (international participant/student) (Normal) : **USD 150**
 Local non presenting participant : **RM 400**
 International non presenting participant : **USD 250**

* Kindly enclosed student ID proof from your respective institution.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Abstract Submission Deadline
30 June 2024

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