

OPUS Consultants & Swinburne Sarawak Collaborate To Advance Sarawak's Talent Development And Capacity Building

KUCHING, 9 January – In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at catalysing Sarawak's transformation into a hub of sustainable development and innovation, OPUS International (M) Berhad (OPUS), Malaysia's leading infrastructure asset management company, has signed a Memorandum of Business Exploration (MOBE) with Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus.

This landmark collaboration focuses on bridging industry and academia to accelerate the development of Sarawak's workforce while driving impactful, sustainable infrastructure, green buildings and energy efficiency projects. Key pillars of the partnership include creating opportunities for internships, graduate and management trainee programs as well as the advancement of research and development.

Ms Hillary Chua, Managing Director of OPUS, remarked, "This partnership represents a strategic leap forward for OPUS and Sarawak. By blending OPUS' expertise in infrastructure and sustainability projects with Swinburne Sarawak's academic excellence, we are creating a robust pipeline of skilled professionals ready to take Sarawak's infrastructure to the next level while embedding sustainability at its core."

The partnership aligns with OPUS's ongoing projects in Sarawak, including critical infrastructure and sustainability initiatives that are reshaping the state's development landscape. Notably, OPUS has been instrumental in delivering key projects such as:

1. Pan Borneo Highway Sarawak – OPUS serves as the Independent Consulting Engineer (ICE), ensuring that the project meets the highest standards of quality, safety, and sustainability. This role is critical for overseeing compliance with regulatory requirements and maintaining the integrity of the project.
2. Sarawak Coastal Road and Second Trunk Road Projects – OPUS has been instrumental in providing comprehensive consultancy and project management services for the development of the road networks. These projects are pivotal in enhancing connectivity across remote regions, reducing travel time, and boosting economic activities by improving access to rural areas. OPUS's role extends to ensuring the structural integrity of the roads, incorporating sustainable engineering practices, and implementing efficient asset maintenance strategies.

Through strategic partnerships with institutions like Swinburne University, OPUS is fostering the development of local talent by offering opportunities for internships and graduate programs, which play a pivotal role in strengthening the local value chain. Today, over 70% of OPUS's Sarawak workforce consists of local talent, underscoring its dedication to regional growth and the nurturing of homegrown expertise. These efforts further OPUS's commitment to capacity building in the region, ensuring local talent is equipped with the skills needed to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving industry.

By emphasizing capacity building and inclusivity in its operations, OPUS not only drives infrastructure development but also creates lasting positive social impact. This approach ensures that local talent is equipped to meet the demands of an evolving industry, contributing to the long-term prosperity of Sarawak and all the communities OPUS engages with.

The partnership directly supports OPUS' ongoing projects in Sarawak, transforming the state's development landscape. These initiatives focus on both sustainable infrastructure and the development of a skilled local workforce, reinforcing OPUS' role in fostering sustainable growth while contributing to the state's broader development objectives.

Vincent Tang, Head of OPUS Sarawak Regional Office, added, "This collaboration strengthens our commitment to building a future-ready workforce in Sarawak. By working closely with Swinburne Sarawak, we are offering students hands-on experience with real-world projects in infrastructure and sustainability, equipping them with the skills necessary to contribute meaningfully to Sarawak's sustainable development and growth."

The collaboration also includes provisions for OPUS to contribute to Swinburne Sarawak's engineering programs by providing industry insights, supporting final-year Capstone projects and offering expert guidance through advisory panels. This integration of academic and industry expertise ensures a future-ready workforce that meets the specific needs of Sarawak's infrastructure and energy sectors.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer Ir Professor Lau Hieng Ho said, "This partnership not only drives innovation and sustainability in infrastructure but also ensures that Sarawak's next generation of professionals will be equipped with the skills and experience necessary to lead the state's sustainable growth. Together, OPUS and Swinburne Sarawak are setting the stage for a model collaboration that will propel Sarawak into a future of excellence, both regionally and globally."

The MOBE aims to explore potential collaborations in the areas of student placements and internships, graduate trainee opportunities, management trainee programs, support to the SPINE and Capstone units, joint organisation of seminars and workshops, joint research and development initiatives, industry/course advisory panels and the promotion of sustainable practices.

Capstone is a unit designed to introduce students to engineering research by guiding them through the planning and management of an innovative Capstone Engineering research project, using research methods and reflecting on broader professional issues related to the project. SPINE is a series of scaffolded units that the university's engineering students must undertake as part of their Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) program. Through SPINE, students work on an industry-linked project in collaboration with one of Swinburne Sarawak's industry partners each semester.

The collaboration aligns with Swinburne's first "moon shot" under its Horizon 2025 Vision, which aims for every Swinburne learner to gain work experience. This highlights the university's commitment to ensuring that all undergraduate students engage in work-integrated learning and gain real industry experience, overcoming the boundary between work and study.

For more information on Swinburne Sarawak, visit its website (www.swinburne.edu.my), Facebook page (@swinburnesarawak), Instagram page (@swinburnesarawak), Twitter page (@Swinburne_Swk), TikTok page (@swinburnesarawak) or YouTube channel (Swinburne Sarawak).

For further information on OPUS and UEM Edgenta, log on to <https://www.uemedgenta.com>.

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About Opus Consultants (M) Sdn Bhd

OPUS, a wholly owned subsidiary of OPUS Group Berhad and member of the UEM Edgenta Group, is a leading Malaysian engineering, project and asset management consultancy firm. With over three decades of expertise, OPUS specialises in the planning, design and project management of infrastructure projects, along with providing comprehensive asset management consultancy.

OPUS has a distinguished track record in delivering key infrastructure and landmark projects across various sectors, including highways, roads, bridges, rail, transportation, built environment and infrastructure master planning. The company is also a recognised leader in sustainability and energy efficiency projects – reinforcing its commitment to advancing Malaysia's infrastructure with a strong focus on sustainable development.

As a member of UEM Edgenta, OPUS is dedicated to driving transformative, long-term solutions that contribute to the continued growth and development of Malaysia's infrastructure and economy.

About Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus

Swinburne Sarawak is the only full-fledged international branch campus of Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia. The Sarawak campus, a partnership between Swinburne Australia and the Sarawak government, first opened its doors in Kuching in 2000.

Swinburne represents the next gen_uni, drawing lessons from the past to shape the future, while maintaining a steadfast commitment to building a world-class institution of higher learning that is truly of technology, of innovation and of entrepreneurship. With a vision to bring people and technology together to build a better world, Swinburne's people are driven by a shared sense of purpose to create tomorrow's technology and the human talent required for a digital, tech-rich future.

Swinburne is ranked among the Top 1% of universities globally in the QS World University Rankings 2024 and the latest Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), and Swinburne Sarawak has been recognised as one of the country's Top 10 Preferred Private Universities by JobStreet.com.

As Swinburne Sarawak grows and further diversifies its course offerings, it strengthens its position as a hub for higher learning in the region, dedicated to developing globally conscious and future-ready learners ready for the challenges of a rapidly evolving world. It will continue to foster greater diversity on campus and within the local community by welcoming students from all over the globe, enriching the cultural fabric and putting Sarawak on the world map.

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