

**For Immediate Release**

Press Release

21 August 2024

**Sarawak Metro and UTHM set to collaborate in education and research on rail transport**

**KUCHING:** Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd (Sarawak Metro) is set to collaborate with Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) to explore opportunities in rail transport education and research. The collaboration between Sarawak Metro and UTHM was made official today through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document exchange ceremony, which took place at the UTHM campus in Batu Pahat, Johor.

This initiative marked yet another milestone for Sarawak Metro’s Socio-Economic Enhancement Development (SEED) programme, specifically towards developing a centre of excellence in advancing the green public transport industry in Sarawak, through collaborative efforts with institutions of higher learning throughout the country.

Sarawak Metro Chief Executive Officer, Ts. Mazli Mustaffa explained the initiative was part of the company’s commitment towards nurturing skilled manpower resources as well as driving innovation and excellence in the transportation sector.

“This partnership is a significant step towards advancing education and research in rail transportation. By integrating academic knowledge with practical industry experiences, we aim to equip the future professionals in Sarawak with the skills necessary to contribute to the evolving transport sector,” said Mazli, who represented Sarawak Metro at the event, which was held at UTHM’s Faculty of Engineering Technology’s inaugural Industry Appreciation Ceremony.

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Among others, the collaboration between Sarawak Metro and UTHM aims to create a mutually beneficial partnership, which aims to provide staff and students with exposure to industrial expertise, equipment and instruments while also promoting the exchange of technical know-how and the development of joint research in transportation and engineering technology.

Additionally, the collaboration will focus on strategic human resource development initiatives to foster employment opportunities and enhance local expertise and capacity in the transportation sector, particularly in Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) hydrogen vehicles.

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#### **About Sarawak Metro and KUTS project:**

Sarawak Metro Sdn Bhd (Sarawak Metro), a wholly owned subsidiary of Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), has been entrusted by the Sarawak Government to modernise public transport through the Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS) project.

Sarawak Metro is the implementer, operator and maintainer of the KUTS project.

The project is being developed in phases, and Phase 1 includes the development of three lines: the Blue Line from Rembus in Kota Samarahan to Hikmah Exchange in the city centre; the Red Line, from Kuching Sentral to Pending; and the Green Line, from Pending to Damai.

Construction of the first package for the Blue Line is expected to complete by the fourth quarter of 2025 and all three lines are scheduled to be fully completed by the end of 2027.

The backbone of the KUTS project is the introduction of the zero-emission Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) hydrogen vehicles.

The ART vehicles will be operated on dedicated lanes, meaning they will not share the lane with other road users. The ART hydrogen vehicles will run on rubber tires, and hence the dedicated lanes will be trackless. The lanes will mostly be at-grade (road level) while certain sections of the alignment will be elevated.

The ART operation will be supported by a network of feeder buses, which will also consist of hydrogen-powered vehicles to offer the 'first mile and last mile' connectivity for commuters.

The move to use hydrogen is in line with the Sarawak Government's aspirations to advance the hydrogen economy and to decarbonise public transport in Sarawak.

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**Photo and Caption:**



Mazli (right) receiving the MoU document and mementoes from the Vice-Chancellor of UTHM, Dato' Professor Ir. Ts. Dr. Ruzairi bin Abdul Rahim, witnessed by UTHM's Dean of Engineering Technology, Associate Professor Ts. Dr. Jumadi bin Abdul Sukor

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